

# Part III

## // Embarking on your Sustainability Journey –



# Overview of the Implementation Process (Inward-out)

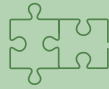


GUIDING QUESTIONS

<b>STEP 1</b> Shared Vision	<b>STEP 2</b> Mapping SD Activities	<b>STEP 3</b> Linking Activities to SDG Targets	<b>STEP 4</b> Mapping Governance & Skills	<b>STEP 5</b> Mapping Regional Challenges	<b>STEP 6</b> Alignment	<b>STEP 7</b> Gap-Analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does sustainability mean to us?</li> <li>• To which transformation modus (-&gt; Table 14) can our subsystems, such as administration and different faculties, be assigned? Subsystems can be assigned to different modes.</li> <li>• Is SD already part of our strategic orientation?</li> <li>• Does our institution's vision refer to SD? And if so, where and how?</li> <li>• Do we already implicitly refer to SDGs in our value statements? And if so, which SDGs are we referring to?</li> <li>• Who are our trailblazers? In which areas do we find them?</li> <li>• Do our internal stakeholders discuss specific SD-related topics? If so,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What SD activities are we already conducting in our core areas (education, research, outreach &amp; partnering, entrepreneurial activities, governance and campus operations)?</li> <li>• Can these activities be grouped into thematic focus areas?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which of our ongoing SD activities contribute to what SDG target(s)?</li> <li>• Which SDG target(s) are reoccurring and thus could function as focal areas?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Capacities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Which capacities are most important for achieving the identified SDG target(s)?</li> <li>• Do we already possess this capacity, or do we have to build it/develop it further?</li> <li>• What capacities do we need to develop to move towards our institutional vision?</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are our current governing structures (offices, networks, etc.)?</li> <li>• Who has the right to make decisions? Who is allowed to participate in decision-making processes?</li> <li>• Who controls what activities? Is this transparent?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What challenges does our region face today and in future (next 20 years)?</li> <li>• Are regional stakeholders aware of the regional challenges and intend to act to overcome these (problem ownership)?</li> <li>• Are these discussed among or supported by the regional stakeholders?</li> <li>• Which targets help to minimise risks and challenges in our region?</li> <li>• How is the societal climate towards SD?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are our key findings from the previous steps?</li> <li>• Can we group these in separate 'blocks', for example, using the SDS4HEI framework model?</li> <li>• What do we want to visualise for what purpose?</li> <li>• What form of visualisation is easy for us to realise?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do our focus areas (clustered targets in current actions) align with the main regional challenges?</li> <li>• Do important regional SDG targets exist that we are not addressing (gaps)? If so, what are these?</li> <li>• Do we have the capacity to address these?</li> <li>• If so, what are possible new/modified actions/measures in our core areas addressing or contributing to these targets?</li> <li>• Are we aware of any important target(s) that the region is not yet aware of and that we need to communicate?</li> <li>• How can your actions go beyond your region</li> </ul>



	<b>STEP 1</b> Shared Vision	<b>STEP 2</b> Mapping SD Activities	<b>STEP 3</b> Linking Activities to SDG Targets	<b>STEP 4</b> Mapping Governance & Skills	<b>STEP 5</b> Mapping Regional Challenges	<b>STEP 6</b> Alignment	<b>STEP 7</b> Gap-Analysis
	<p>what issues are currently discussed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we envisage to orchestrate the process of SD implementation?</li> <li>• What is the culture like in our region? What are the values, beliefs and attitudes towards SD?</li> <li>• What is it that we want to sustain in supporting best quality of live in our region?</li> <li>• What is our shared vision of SD? What does a concrete image of a sustainable HEI look like?</li> </ul>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is SD embedded in your organisation's rules and regulations?</li> <li>• Have SD-related incentive systems been established?</li> <li>• Who are the actors currently involved in SD?</li> <li>• To what extent do the existing governance structures and modes of governing facilitate or impede SD?</li> </ul>			and positively affect a global scale
<b>NOTE(S)</b>	A shared vision is the prerequisite for all strategic SD activities. It entails values, beliefs and narratives concerning SD and thus gives meaning to actions and motivates stakeholders to become active		<p>Instead of referring to SDGs, take a closer look at the sub-targets of the respective SDGs.</p> <p>Connecting these targets to regional challenges and potentials will make sustainability goals more feasible.</p>	<b>Capacities:</b> The framework helps you to identify the most relevant capacities to reach a certain SDG target in a specific implementation area. By analysing the different variables that make up a capacity, you can figure out what your HEI needs to work on to strengthen this capacity.	Although climate change is a global challenge, regional efforts can make the SDGs more feasible. The combination of sustainability and regional development can facilitate sustainable ecosystems.	The process of getting there is more important than the visualisation itself, as it entails thoughtful reflection on the insights gained. Nevertheless, visualisations facilitate internal and external communication.	The Gap Analysis is no means to its end but an instrument to identify areas of improvement. Forasmuch, it should cover all core functions of your HEI while accounting for the regional context.



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			<p><b>Governance:</b> Governance structures and modes of governing moderate transformative actions at HEIs. They must be flexible and open enough to allow for change while offering stability.</p>			<p>In doing so, the focus is not on identifying every gap but pinpointing those your organisation can meaningfully contribute to narrowing-</p>

In this realm, visualising might be beneficial to underpin your findings. There exist several ways to represent SD challenges and core findings. Infographics, maps, data visualisation tools, or network visualisations visualising the connections between the HEI's internal and regional SDG targets can be an effective way of visualisation.



### Aligning & Visualising Key Findings

- » What are our key findings from the previous steps?
- » Can we group these in separate 'blocks', for example, using the SDS4HEI framework model?
- » What do we want to visualise for what purpose?
- » What form of visualisation is easy for us to realise?



### Note

The process of getting there is more important than the visualisation itself, as it entails thoughtful reflection on the insights gained. Nevertheless, visualisations facilitate internal and external communication.



### Step 6.

Alignment

## 2.5 Gap Analysis – Unveiling Blank Spots

In the seventh step, a **gap analysis** is conducted to unveil to what extent the current SD activities at your HEI contribute to overcoming the regional challenges and thus achieving the regional SDG targets. The analysis reveals which locally significant SDG targets still lack concrete actions. As part of the gap analysis, HEIs need to realign their actions to regional targets. In so doing, HEIs should limit themselves to the most important targets that can be implemented realistically and find support structures in the region ('Contextual Frame').



### Gap Analysis

- » Do our focus areas (clustered targets in current actions) align with the main regional challenges?
- » Do important regional SDG targets exist that we are not addressing (gaps)? If so, what are these?
- » Do we have the capacity to address these?
- » If so, what are possible new/modified actions/measures in our core areas addressing or contributing to these targets?



### Step 7.

Gap Analysis

- » Are we aware of any important target(s) that the region is not yet aware of and that we need to communicate?
- » How can your actions go beyond your region and positively affect a global scale?



#### Note

The Gap Analysis is no means to its end but an instrument to identify areas of improvement. Forasmuch, it should cover all core functions of your HEI while accounting for the regional context. In doing so, the focus is not on identifying every gap but pinpointing those your organisation can meaningfully contribute to narrowing.

## 2.6 Key Performance Indicators (KPI)

Key performance indicators consist of **achievable, reliable, comparable, scalable, consistent and context-specific data** that show the effect of sustainability activities and are internally and externally communicated to make efforts visible (Rat für nachhaltige Entwicklung, 2023). Only where quantitative operationalisation is meaningful and possible indicators of goal achievement should be developed (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz, 2018). Monitoring and reporting can be viewed as a **'dynamic' tool** for self-assessment and communication, making SD visible to stakeholders, reflecting current pathways, planning changes, and initiating new actions (Fleacă et al., 2019).

Input-output models are most often used for depicting the impacts of HEIs, for example, socioeconomic, educational and non-academic impacts (policy, research uptake in business practice). HEIs should focus on assessing outcomes (e.g. sustainability literate students) instead of activities' outputs (e.g. curriculum development, students taught). That is, they should appropriate means of gauging progress and setting objectives related to outcomes (e.g., staff and student perceptions) rather than outputs (e.g., courses developed). Helpful indicators are also provided by the three most **popular ranking systems** for HEIs — the Times Higher Education (THE) University Rankings, the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings, and the Shanghai Academic Ranking of World Universities.



TOOLS

### Ranking Systems Assisting Formulation of KPIs

- **THE University Impact Ranking** (THE - The Times Higher Education)  
(<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/>)
- **QS World Sustainability Ranking**  
(<https://www.topuniversities.com/qs-world-university-rankings>)
- **STARS – Sustainable Tracking, Assessment and Rating Systems**  
(<https://stars.aashe.org>)
- **UI GreenMetric Ranking**  
(<https://greenmetric.ui.ac.id/about/welcome>)

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#### Tool 7.

Formulating KPIs

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As the cultural dimension is considered the cornerstone for SD, a KPI must be developed for measuring the impact on the 'hearts and minds' of stakeholders, leading to long-term behavioural change. Since the rankings mentioned above do not account for the cultural dimension, it might be useful to consider elaborating a 'Theory of Change', which provides maximum flexibility to integrate qualitative indicators such as perceptions and lived experiences.



### Theory of Change

A Theory of Change (ToC) or Logic Model serves as a methodology for comprehending and elucidating the change process and how interventions bring about the desired outcomes and impacts within SD in HEIs. Crafting a ToC entails defining the envisioned impact and working in reverse to delineate the outcomes and immediate outputs. This process encompasses scoping, identifying long-term impacts, intermediate outcomes, outputs, interventions, and indicators, and monitoring and assessing progress toward achieving the outcomes and impacts.



TOOLS

### Tools relating to Crafting of a Theory of Change/Logic Model

- **Social Impact Navigator** (Phineo)  
([https://www.phineo.org/uploads/Downloads/PHINEO\\_Social\\_Impact\\_Navigator.pdf](https://www.phineo.org/uploads/Downloads/PHINEO_Social_Impact_Navigator.pdf))
- **resonance**  
(<https://www.resonanceglobal.com/blog/what-is-theory->

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#### Tool 8.

Theory of Change

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of-change-and-why-it-is-important-to-sustainability-and-impact-initiatives)

- **List of software assisting you in crafting your ToC/Logic Model** (Better Evaluation)  
(<https://www.betterevaluation.org/tools-resources/theory-change-software>)