

The SDG Accord

The University and College Sector's Collective Response to the Global Goals

Annual SDG Accord Report 2022 - Progress towards the Global Goals in the University and College sector

Led by the Global Alliance - a united group of university
and college sustainability networks



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The SDG Accord 

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Foreword

The [UN Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) define our shared vision to end poverty, rescue the planet and build a peaceful world. Now, as we find ourselves well into the [UN Decade of Action](#), it is paramount that the SDGs be at the forefront of our delivery of an equitable, greener world. This year has presented a host of complex challenges, affecting peace and security among civil society, within nature and across high-level political spaces. There has not been a time more urgent to mobilise SDG integration, wherein institutions can bring about prosperity and inspiration that builds communities.

As the climate calendar circles back onto high-profile events, including COP27 this November, the education sector's responsibility is to lead on net-zero initiatives that could transform the economic landscape for the better. [The SDG Accord](#) is a network through which leading institutions can be together as one, on a platform that champions diversity in knowledge exchange and innovation. Globally, universities and colleges are committing to building resilience into their institutional frameworks that enable sustainable growth in our fast-moving world.

At the forefront of this year's SDG Accord Reporting, we see SDGs 4, 13 and 17 (Quality Education, Climate Action, and Partnerships for the Goals) take priority. We anticipate impressive developments throughout 2022 as institutions continue to show excellence in their ambition and capability to integrate the SDGs institution-wide and across borders.

Sam Barratt - Chief, Youth, Education & Advocacy
UN Environment, Nairobi, Kenya

About the SDG Accord

The SDG Accord is a high-profile international initiative that the Global Alliance through EAUC developed to allow the tertiary education sector to demonstrate its commitment to playing its part in meeting the SDGs and sharing best practice. This partnership initiative is endorsed by the UN and many other global partners, which launched at the end of 2017.

The SDG Accord provides a platform to come together in a movement, to inspire, celebrate and advance the critical role that education has in delivering the SDGs. It presents this aggregated effort in coherent [Annual Reports](#) for use by the UN, governments, businesses and wider society. While the sustainability journey of each institution will reflect its unique context, connecting them through the SDG Accord offers the opportunity for scaling of impact.

There are four types of signatory: institution, individual, supporting organisation, and student organisations.

All signatories are encouraged to follow the principles outlined, but only institutions are required to:

- Align all major efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators, including through our education, research, leadership, operational and engagement activities;
- Aim to involve members from all key stakeholder groups in this endeavour, including students, academics, professional staff, local communities and other external stakeholders;
- Collaborate across cities, regions, countries and continents with other signatory institutions as part of a collective international response;
- Using their unique ways to inform, share our learning and account to both local and global communities our progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Annually report to the [UN High-level Political Forum](#) 'how does my institution contribute to the Goals and what more can we do'.

A Global Commitment

Signatories of the SDG Accord commit to embedding the SDGs into their education, research, leadership, operations, administration, and engagement activities. The SDG Accord is a public declaration of an institution's commitment to sharing and reporting on their progress towards the SDGs – giving rich insight into the actions undertaken by higher and further education and their outcomes in our communities and the world at large.

“The well-being of people around the world, the health of our planet, and the survival of future generations depend on our willingness to come together around a commitment to collective problem-solving and action. We don’t have a moment to lose”

UN Secretary General, António Guterres



227 Institution Signatories

55 Students' Union Signatories

222 Support Organisations

1734 Individual Signatories

Methodology

SDG Accord reporting aims to demonstrate progress, with regards to the next steps toward the SDGs within tertiary education, to identify gaps and promote knowledge exchange. This is the third year of conducting the report and the information being submitted by a growing number of institutions is increasingly detailed. The data will be used to recommend various sectors' next steps and to identify the resources required to support more institutions embedding the SDGs. We asked the 227 global institutions that had signed the SDG Accord by March 2022 to report on their work with the SDGs. Of those, 102 submitted reporting, which includes an increase of 42 newly reporting institutions, therefore 35% of the total number of respondents. The reporting was delivered as an Online Survey between 29th March and 6th May 2022, thus, as reporting is mandatory, those that have not submitted for two consecutive years will be removed from the SDG Accord unless a valid reason is provided. This is to ensure a fair system for all.

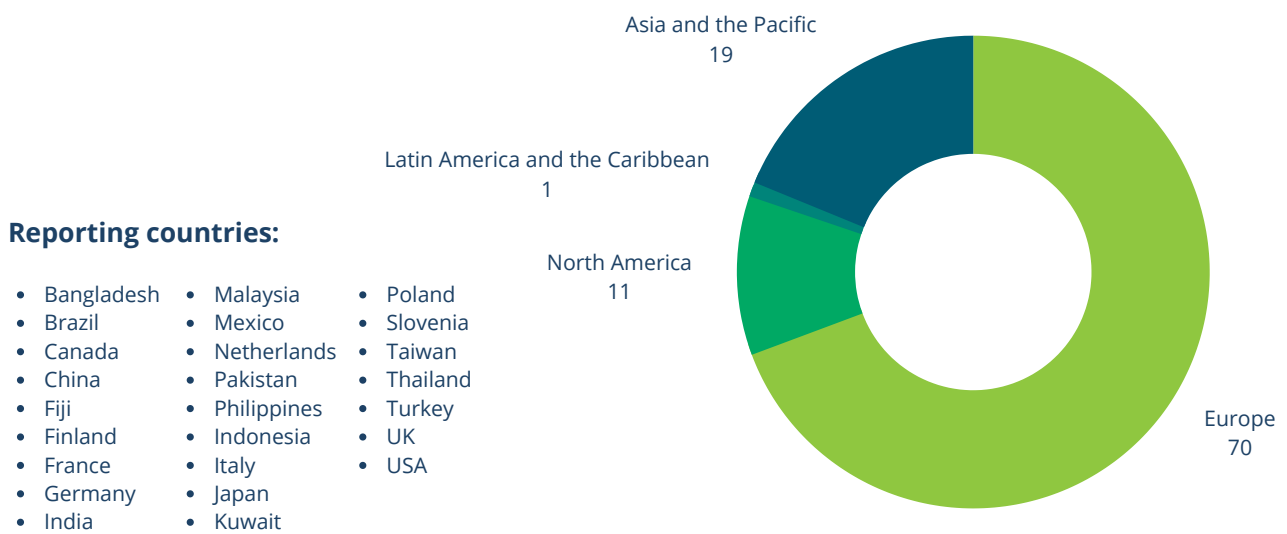
As the UN SDGs become better integrated into the wider sector, we have taken the opportunity to update the SDG Accord reporting requirements to include two separate sections. Therefore, the institutional signatories were required to submit answers to 18 questions, as well as respond to opportunities to share case studies that report good practice, and celebrate and/or outline barriers of how institutions are integrating the SDGs. Respondents stated that this year's reporting requirements improved since 2021 (26%), and others that it remained the same (44%).

Each report must have the appropriate sign-off from senior executive representatives and it includes all higher and further education institutions that vary in size and scope. Those undertaking the reporting were encouraged to collaborate holistically across their institution to capture the relevant information. This is an annual reporting process, now in its fifth year, and the findings will be presented at the [UN High-Level Political Forum in July 2022](#).

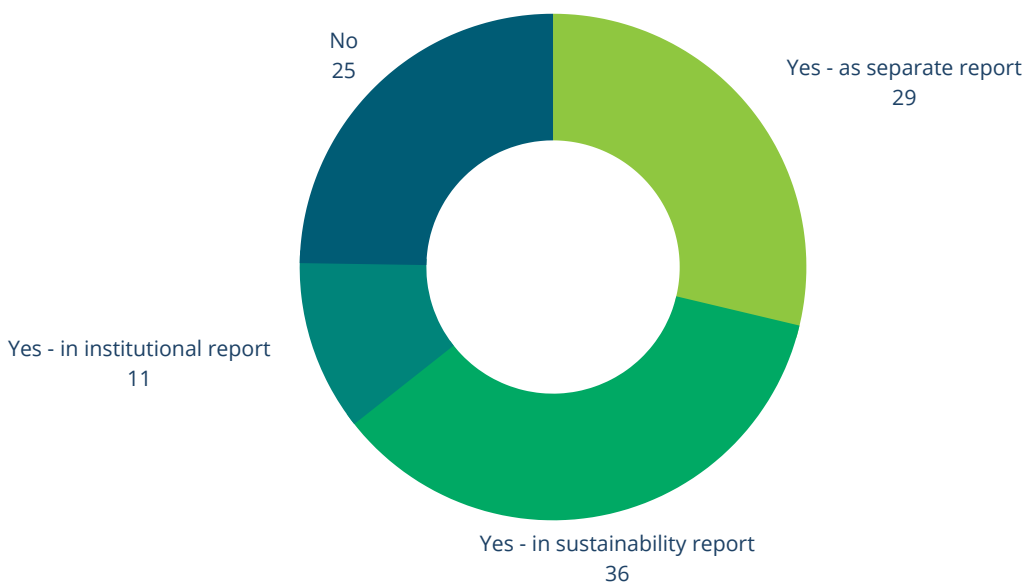
Reporting Institutions

Following 2021's observations, this year highlights that embedding the SDGs within a range of institutional activities remains a priority to signatories, which is evidenced by 75% of signatories now publicly reporting on the SDGs, compared to 70% in 2021. Also, this year's reporting represents 4 UN regions across 28 countries- a decline from 31 in 2021.

102 Institutions submitted reporting, **28%** of which for the first time:



75% of Institutions publicly reported their activities on SDGs:



Strategic Approach

Previous years have focused on institutions' integration of the SDGs at institutional levels, yet this reporting has now evolved to reveal how signatories respond to the SDGs from a strategic point of view, and at different institutional stages. There is a trend, with most respondents (62% average) having an overall strategic approach that is emerging at the four institutional stages, while fewer (27% average) stated theirs as being established.

Leadership and Governance:



Estates and Operations:



Learning and Teaching Resources:



Partnerships and Engagement:

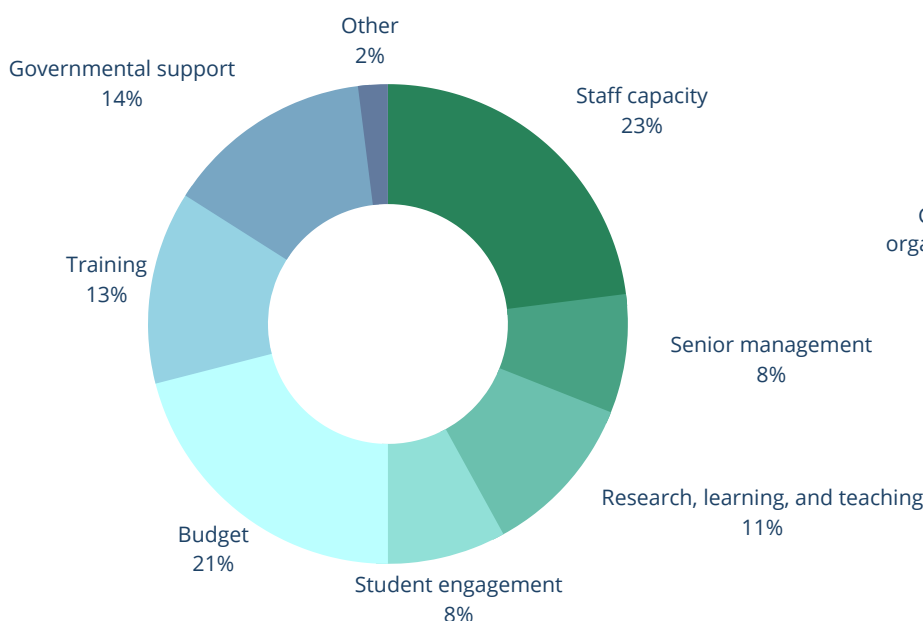


**STRUGGLING (institutions just beginning to address the SDGs); EMERGING (institutions with an established approach to SDGs); ESTABLISHED (clear structures in place to embed the SDGs across the institution)*

Whilst a positive increase in integration is visible since 2021, the findings also reveal the limitations institutions face and seek to improve. Reporting has notably highlighted staff capacity (23%), budget (21%), and training (13%) as limiting factors. This information will be used to identify resources required to support more institutions embedding the SDGs.

Funding and capacity remain primary areas of concern since last year, particularly related to the continued financial pressures of the pandemic. Further commonly reported barriers included a lack of specific SDG training, and a lack of governmental support that would help their integration. The [Sustainability Exchange](#) is producing a growing bank of best practice for the SDGs, which can support the reduction of these barriers this year and beyond.

Most affected areas limiting institutional performance:



Additional areas:

- Understanding the relevance of SDGs to and their role in partnerships
- Governance structures within the organisation and a clear pathway for Sustainability decision making

Benefits of specific SDG-integration budgets:

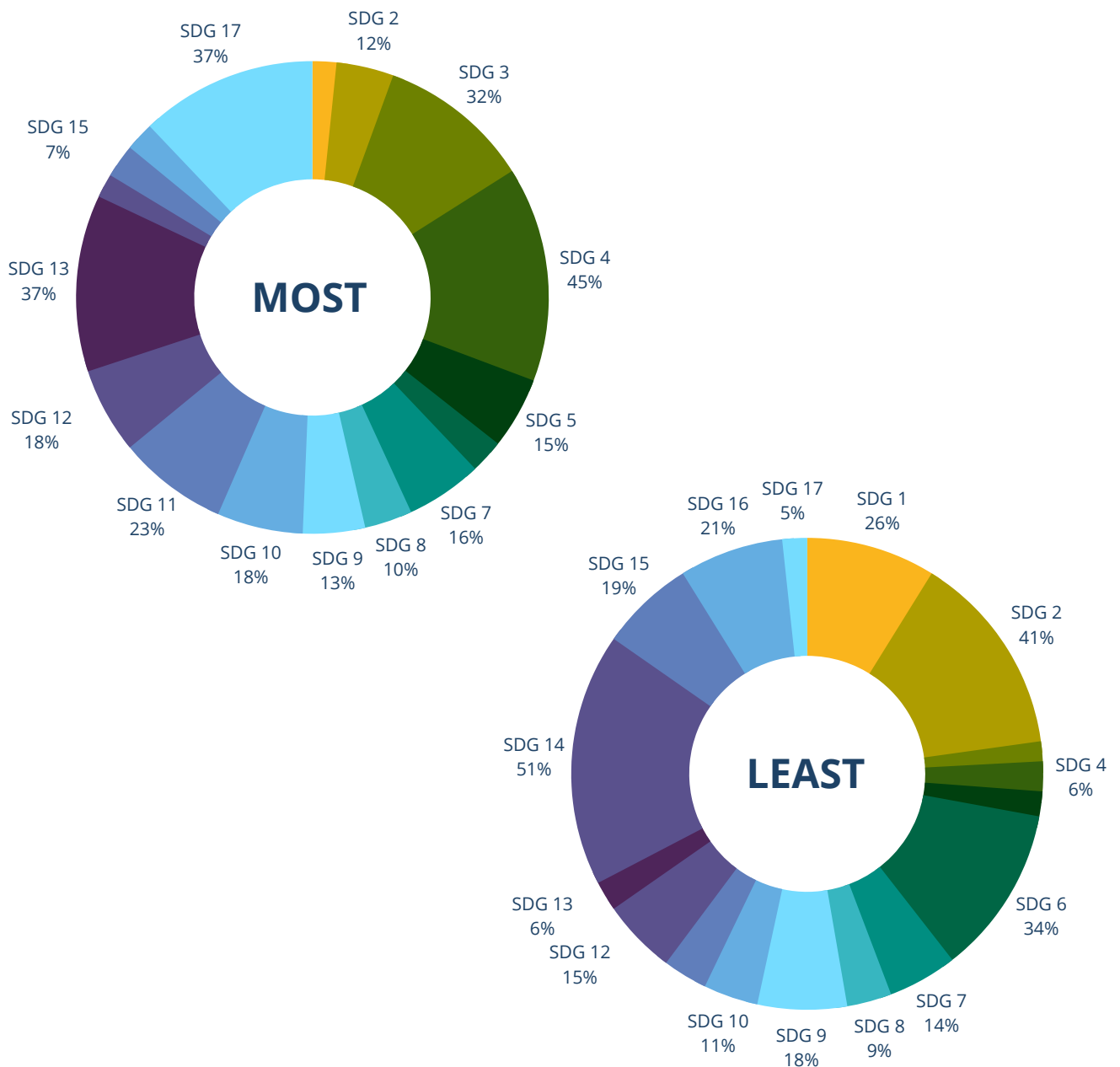
Some institutions reported having an allocated budget specifically for SDG activities, so we asked them to outline what this has allowed for couldn't have occurred otherwise:

- to initiate various long-term sustainability development projects in education, research, innovation and organisational environmental footprint;
- for staff costs associated with an SDG Integration Steering Group and related working groups;
- to apply research expansion, faculty development, organizational awareness;
- to increase global visibility and international cooperation.

SDG Influence

The SDGs that institutions have most impacted are SDG 4 (Quality Education) 44%, SDG 13 (Climate Action) 36%, and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) 36%. This responds to last year's reporting, when the need to link SDG integration into an institutional area was raised.

Top 3 Most and Least Influenced SDGs since integration*:



*Multi-answer response: Number of respondents who selected each answer option

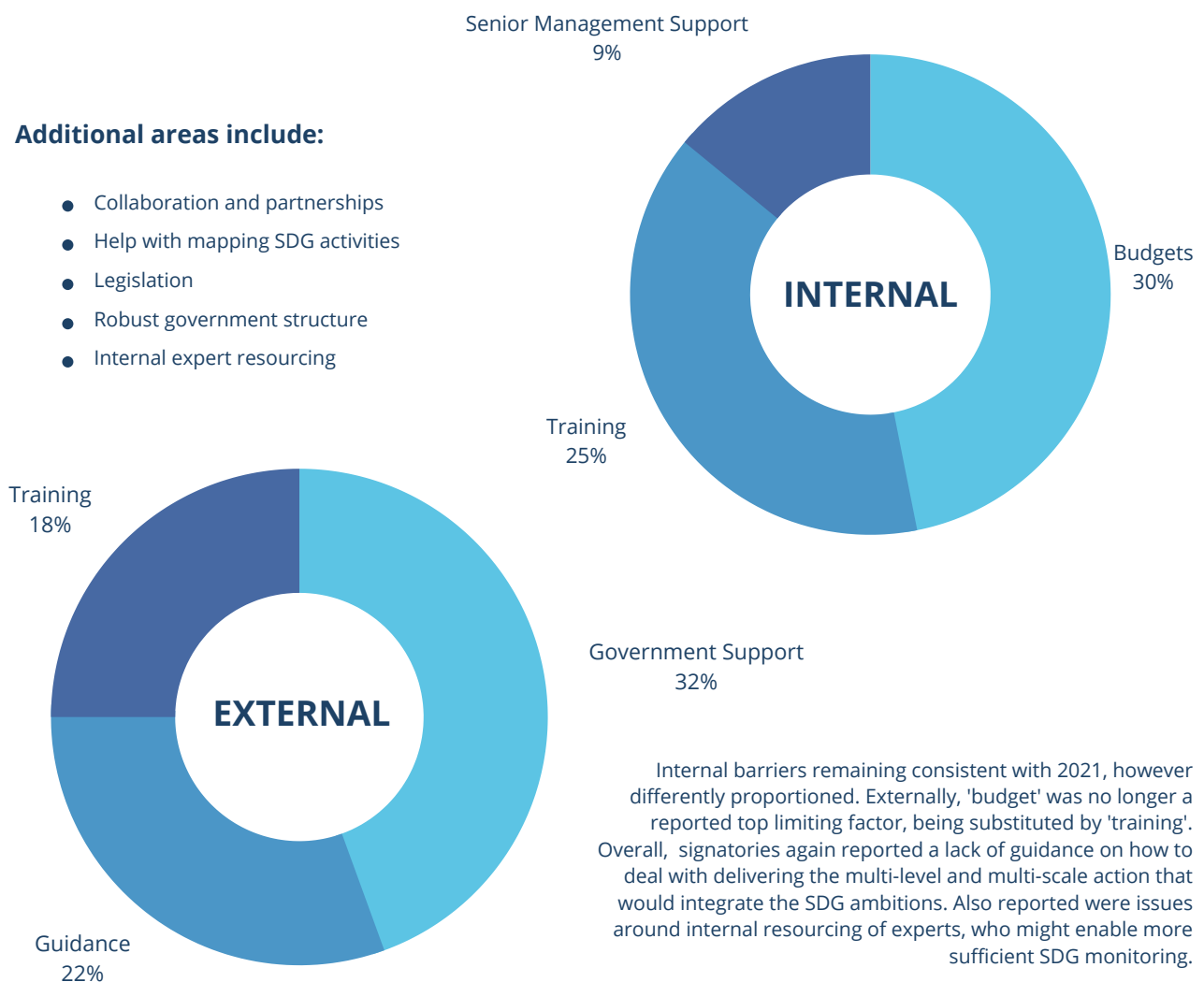
Signatories outlined the types of support that would be of particular use to advance their work on the SDGs. It has, unsurprisingly, revealed that, at the institutional level, respondents reported budgets (30%) as the primary need, followed by training (25%), and then senior management support (9%).

Advocating for a budget at an institutional level has long been an issue and shows the extent to which SDGs are a priority to senior management. It can be explained by their reported external needs, with governmental support (32%) being fundamental to further advance the SDGs, followed by guidance (22%), then training (18%).

Top 3 support areas believed to better SDG integration next year:

Additional areas include:

- Collaboration and partnerships
- Help with mapping SDG activities
- Legislation
- Robust government structure
- Internal expert resourcing



Priorities for 2022

Regarding institutions' priorities over the next 12 months, this year we employed a different approach to reporting, whereby respondents were invited to prioritise the SDGs in line with specific institutional areas.

Leadership and Governance:

4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



21%

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



18%

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



16%

Estates and Operations:

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



36%

12 RESPONSIBLE
CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



19%

7 AFFORDABLE AND
CLEAN ENERGY



18%

Learning and Teaching Resources:

4 QUALITY
EDUCATION



45%

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



13%

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



7%

Partnerships and Engagement:

17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



30%

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES
AND COMMUNITIES



20%

13 CLIMATE
ACTION



14%

We asked signatories to outline the benefits of aligning their departmental and institutional activity to those of the SDGs and, following previous years' results, we identified a pattern. Signatories are outlining that embedding the SDGs is causing their activities, projects and overall sustainability aims to experience a positive uptake.

Institutional benefits of SDG integration:

Positively influenced the institution image, showing its contribution to global and local wellbeing.

77%

Opened a more relatable, clearer dialogue on sustainability within the institution

91%

Provides a framework for evaluation and delivery of activities

71%

Encouraged staff and students to initiate innovative projects to support one or more of the SDGs

63%

Built new external partnerships based on the SDGs

60%

Opened a more relatable and clearer dialogue on sustainability with external stakeholders

62%

Created cohesion between institutional departments as they worked together on one or more SDG

59%

Caused a behaviour change, such as reducing single-use plastics and reducing air travel

50%

Captured the demand for SDG-related education and gained positive engagement from students for responding to this

40%

Produced more employable graduates that have a good understanding of sustainable development and can apply this to their career

39%

Received praise from students for their commitment to the SDGs

31%

Encouraged more students to choose the institution on the basis of their commitment to sustainable development

31%

Signatory Case Studies

We recognise that, as SDG Accord signatories, institutions have great stories to tell on how SDGs are becoming integrated within their community. As part of the SDG Accord reporting in 2022, we asked signatories to submit case studies, among which SDG 13 (Climate Action) was the most prominent focus area (28%), whereas SDGs 14 and 16 (Life Below Water, and Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) the least (each 3%).



Fiji National University

Integration of SDGs: in student engagement activities



The University recognised a need for a transformative vision for their waste management system – one that is inclusive, more equitable, and reflects the urgency of climate change. All members of the University community have been expected to work together and utilize the waste recycle bins and promote the University's effort in managing waste disposals into the allocated waste recycle bins. The University has adopted approved waste management plans and initiated the waste recycling plans as per the plan.



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

National University of Ireland, Galway

Integration of SDGs: in research

PANDEM-2 is a H2020 EU-funded project that is developing new solutions for efficient, EU-wide pandemic management. Led by NUI Galway, the PANDEM-2 consortium consists of 19 partner organisations with expertise in information technology, public health, microbiology, communications and pandemic management from across the EU. Benefits of the scheme include allowing the integration, collection and standardisation of real-time pandemic data. Real-time updates will strengthen capacity among European public health agencies for rapid response to future health emergencies



University of Northampton, UK

Integration of SDGs: in student engagement activities, research, community activities, and at a whole-institution level



The University's work around Widening Participation (WP) has been developed over the last decade and is focused on ensuring that students from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds can access HE. The strategy is underpinned by government policy, but the main driver emanates from a commitment to social innovation and impact that is underpinned by their institutional motto of 'Transforming Lives, Inspiring Change'.





Selkirk College, Canada

Integration of SDGs: at whole-institution level



Post-secondary institutions across Canada are collaborating to make more inclusive campuses, with the new Reducing Barriers to Education digital platform. Selkirk College has been an instrumental to its delivery. This platform is a place for institutions to post information about homegrown initiatives to widen access to education and eliminate systemic barriers, sharing details such as how a project was designed and funded. The platform grew out of Colleges & Institutes Canada's (CICan) commitment to support productive collaboration among institutes through the ImpAct initiative, which is making practical progress on the SDG



IPB University
— Bogor Indonesia —

IPB University, Indonesia

Integration of SDGs: in campus operations

Biodiversity Park and Inspiration Lake is a water conservation program implemented by IPB within the campus area. This program aims to sustainably manage freshwater resources and prevent water pollution in nearby lakes, rivers, and local watersheds in the IPB environment. IPB has a clean water treatment unit with natural water sources from rivers around campus with very high turbidity levels. In 2021, three artificial lakes (DAM) were built within the IPB University. The total water consumed at IPB during 2021 was 1,488,297 m³ (69% decrease compared to 2019 due to the pandemic), with sources originating from the water treatment process (74.2%), lakes (17.6%), and local water companies (8.2%).



Sunway University, Malaysia

Integration of SDGs: in student engagement activities, and in community activities



Inspired by Sunway University's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and Worldchefs' Feed the Planet initiatives, the Sunway University Young Chefs published a digital cookbook to transform edible food waste into new dishes. Identifying food waste as a cause of food insecurity and environmental harm, Sunway Young Chefs have repurposed edible food waste into a new dish before it reaches the bins. The cookbook has garnered some impressive accolades including being the national winner for the prestigious Gourmand World Cookbook Awards 2021, and was shortlisted for the Best of the World Award which will take place in Umea, Sweden in 2022.



Conclusions

The findings of this year's SDG Accord Progress Report indicated a high degree of awareness of the SDGs among universities and colleges globally, which follows a positive trend. However, there are challenges that institutions primarily face that remain a presence since last year, including access to specific internal budgets, training opportunities, and governmental support. The number of Signatories to the SDG Accord continues to rise, as does visible ambition to embed the SDGs within tertiary education institutions, as seen by the [case studies](#). This year, we are proud to observe a growth in Signatories and almost one-third reporting for their first time. The breadth of initiatives and schemes for SDG integration has been impressive, as the case studies show, and these demonstrate an ability to undertake change rapidly despite the presence of challenging circumstances and contexts. We are inspired to see this evolution in the landscape of tertiary education, across scales and among an array of communities and disciplines.

Now, two years since the start of the pandemic, the world has seen millions of lost lives and an indisputable toll taken on the global economy; recovery efforts so far have been uneven, inequitable and insufficiently geared towards achieving sustainable development. Our current crisis is not localised, but threatens people and planet unevenly, hence the urgent transition to greener, more inclusive economies must be central to policy development and institutional targets for growth. The education sector has faced pressures to adapt to Covid-19, and now during the transition back to normalcy, we face a wider array of complexities, such as internal financial constraints, as well as the widening socioeconomic gaps among staff and student bodies, exacerbated by the last two years.

The pandemic's impacts should call to action those seeking and able to mitigate limitations and create new opportunities for change. As one SDG Accord signatory commented: "Taking institutional engagement to the next level will require determining communication channels and approval processes for research-based submissions, knowledge transfer and strategic decisions."

The SDGs set us up to tackle future challenges, and there are many yet to face us. Central to all recovery plans, the SDGs should be at the heart of education and sectors beyond. They set a definitive standard for global action that understands the interdisciplinary and intersectional nature of the climate crisis, which can be most successfully overcome by working together.

List of Institutional Signatories

Aalto University*
 Abdullah Gul University*
 Abdullaziz University
 Acadia University*
 Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba Akoko, Ondo State
 Afe Babalola University
 Afe Babalola University
 African Network for Sustainable Development Education - ANSDE
 Agrocampus Quest
 AgroParisTech, Paris Institute of technology for life, food and environmental sciences
 Al Iqra Teachers Training Collefe
 Al-Ahliyya Amman University
 Applied Research Institute-Jerusalem (ARIJ)*
 Applied Science Private University
 Arab Conference Network
 ASEAN Academy of Finance and Management (AAFM)
 Asean University International
 Atlantic Technological University*
 Audencia Business School
 Bangor University*
 Bard College
 Bath Spa University*
 Belfast Metropolitan College*
 Borders College*
 Bournemouth University*
 Bridgend College*
 Buckinghamshire New University*
 Burgundy School of Business (BSB)*
 Business School Lausanne
 Canadore College*
 Canterbury Christ Church University*
 Cardiff University
 Cegep Beauce-Appalaches
 Cegep du Vieux Montreal
 Centre de Developement de a Region de Tensift
 Centre de Developpement de la Region de Tensift
 CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
 CIFE Centre
 City of Glasgow College*
 City, University of London*
 Confederation College
 Coventry University*
 Cranfield University*
 Craven College*
 Crescent International University
 Daffodil International University*
 Dawson College
 De La Salle Lipa
 De La Salle University - Dasmarinas
 De Montfort University*

List of Institutional Signatories

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 EDC Paris Business School
 Edinburgh College
 EM Normandie Business School
 Educación Superior de Celaya - Universidad de Celaya*
 Exeter College
 Faculty of Economics, University of West Bohemia
 Fiji National University*
 Fircroft College of Adult Education
 Foundation Fatima Zahra peace be upon her
 Georgian College*
 Glasgow Caledonian University*
 Glasgow Kelvin College*
 Gloucestershire College*
 GOA Institute of Management
 Government College Women University Faisalabad*
 GPBTC
 Grande Oriente Independente do Estado de Sao Paulo - GOISP
 Grenoble Ecole de Management
 Grimsby Institute of Further and Higher Education
 Howard University
 Huachiew Chalermprakiet University*
 IKDAR - Imran Khan Developmental Academic Research
 Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University
 Imam Ja'afar Al-Sadiq University
 Institut Mines-Telecom Business School
 Institut Polytechnique de Grenoble
 Institute for Environment and Development Sustainability -IEDS
 Institute of Mental Health (IMH)
 Institute of Mental Health (IMH)
 Instituto Politecnico de Viana do Castelo
 International European Campus - University College
 International European Campus - University College
 International Institute of Chartered Humanitarians (IICH)
 International Youth Council
 ITS Education Asia
 IPB University*
 Istanbul Sabahattin Zaim University
 Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology*
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 Loughborough University*
 Loyalist College*
 Lovely Professional University
 LUT University*
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 Manav Rachna Centre for Peace and Sustainability
 Mazharul Haque Institutes of Medical Science
 Mehran University of Engineering & Technology
 Middlesex University*
 National Cheng Kung University*
 National Human Rights And Humanitarian Federation
 National Humanity Global Peace Federation
 National Institute of Technology, Fukushima College*
 National University of Ireland, Galway*
 National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad
 Ndejje University
 Newcastle University*
 Nigerian Association of Engineering Craftsmen
 North East Scotland College*
 Northumbria University
 Nottingham Trent University*
 Nova Scotia Community College*
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 Olds College*
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 Polytech Montpellier
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 Quest International University Bhd
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 Saskatchewan Polytechnic*
 SBS Swiss Business School
 Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)*
 Scottish Borders College
 Scottish Universities Insight Institute
 Selkirk College*
 SGH Warsaw School of Economics*
 Sheridan College
 Shipley College*
 Soonchunhyang University
 South Devon College*
 South Lanarkshire College
 Southern Africa Future Institute of Innovation and Technology
 Sparsholt College Group
 Statera Research and Practice Center for Sustainability and Regional Development
 Sunway University*

List of Institutional Signatories

SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry
 Swansea University
 SYKLI Environmental School of Finland*
 Tampere University of Applied Sciences
 Tarlac Agricultural University*
 TERI School of Advanced Studies
 The Applied Research Institute Jerusalem Society (ARIJ)
 The College of West Anglia
 The Forum of Education Abroad
 The Rivers CoFE MAT
 The University for Sustainability
 The University of Hong Kong
 The University of Manchester*
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 Turan University, Almaty
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 UAD
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 University College of Estate Management*
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 University of Aberdeen*
 University of Applied Sciences Nordhausen
 University of Bahrain

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 University of Edinburgh*
 University of Exeter*
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 University of Leicester*
 University of Lincoln*
 University of Liverpool*
 University of Manchester*
 University of Maribor*
 University of Minnesota*
 University of Mohaghegh Ardabili
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 University of West Attica
 University of Winchester
 University of Worcester*
 University of York*
 Universiti Sains Malaysia
 University of Central Lancashire Cyprus Campus
 UST Angelicum College
 Victor Nwankwo Leadership Academy
 Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam*
 Zurich University of the Arts

**Institutions that have submitted the information for the SDG Accord Report 2022.*

SDG Accord Supporters and Endorsing Partners*



*A full list of partners can be found [here](#).



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www.sdgaccord.org.uk

