

International Conference on:

«Implementation of the UN 2030 SDGs in the Black Sea Region»


Integration of sustainable development in higher education

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The United Nations' Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is one of the most ambitious and important global agreements in recent history. The agenda, with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at its core, is a guide to tackling the world's most pressing challenges – including ending poverty and bringing economic prosperity, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and peace and good governance to all countries and all people by 2030.

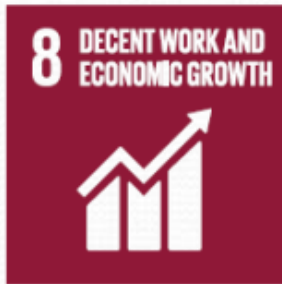
There is already a strong interest in, and response to, the SDGs by governments, businesses and organizations in most countries. The SDGs will be a major influencer on the strategies and actions of these stakeholders – as well as on development finance flows – over the next 15 years. The SDGs also have strong relevance to universities, and the tertiary and academic sectors more broadly.



Engaging with the SDGs will also greatly benefit universities by helping them demonstrate university impact, capture demand for SDG-related education, build new partnerships, access new funding streams, and define a university that is responsible and globally aware.

Education and research are explicitly recognized in a number of the SDGs and universities have a direct role in addressing these. However, the contribution of universities to the SDGs is much broader, as they can support the implementation of every one of the SDGs as well as the implementation of the SDG framework itself.


SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS






Some of these main areas of contribution are:

- Learning and teaching: Providing students with the knowledge, skills and motivation to understand and address the SDGs (broadly ‘education for sustainable development’); providing in-depth academic or vocational expertise to implement SDG solutions; providing accessible, affordable and inclusive education to all; providing capacity building for students and professionals from developing countries; and empowering and mobilising young people.
- Research: Providing the necessary knowledge, evidence-base, solutions, technologies, pathways and innovations to underpin and support the implementation of the SDGs by the global community – through both traditional disciplinary approaches and newer interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and sustainability science approaches; providing capacity building for developing countries in undertaking and using research; collaborating with and supporting innovative companies to implement SDG solutions; improving diversity in research; and student training for sustainable development research.

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- Organisational governance, culture and operations of the university:
Implementing the principles of the SDGs through governance structures and operational policies and decisions, such as those relating to employment, finance, campus services, support services, facilities, procurement, human resources, and student administration.
 - External leadership: Strengthening public engagement and participation in addressing the SDGs; initiating and facilitating cross-sectoral dialogue and action; ensuring higher education sector representation in national implementation; helping to design SDG based policies; and demonstrating sector commitment to the SDGs.



Through their current actions in these areas, universities already make important contributions to the achievement of the SDGs. However, for the SDGs to be truly successful at a global scale, universities need to become champions of sustainable development and play a leading role in the implementation of the SDGs.

For this, a whole-of-university approach is essential, and universities can use the following Steps to start and deepen their engagement with the SDGs:

1. Mapping what they are already doing
2. Building internal capacity and ownership of the SDGs
3. Identifying priorities, opportunities and gaps
4. Integrating, implementing and embedding the SDGs within university strategies, policies and plans
5. Monitoring, evaluating and communicating their actions on the SDGs

Given the size of the task of achieving the SDGs, and the critical role universities have in supporting and delivering on them, there is an urgent need for the sector to accelerate action on the SDGs. The key is for universities to get started.

GETTING STARTED WITH THE SDGS IN UNIVERSITIES

A GUIDE FOR UNIVERSITIES, HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, AND THE ACADEMIC SECTOR



http://ap-unsdsn.org/wp-content/uploads/University-SDG-Guide_web.pdf



How do the SDGs help universities?

Create increased demand for
SDG related education

Provide a comprehensive and
globally accepted definition of
a responsible university

Offer a framework
for demonstrating impact

Create new funding streams

Support collaboration with
new external and internal
partners

How do universities help the SDGs?

Provide knowledge,
innovations and solutions to
the SDGs

Create current and future SDG
implementers

Demonstrate how to support,
adopt and implement SDGs in
governance, operations
and culture

Develop cross-sectoral
leadership to guide the SDG
response

Knowledge

Learning

Demonstration

Impact

Collaboration



The case for university
engagement in the SDGs

An overview of university contributions to the SDGs.

Research on the SDGs
Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research
Innovations and solutions
National & local implementation
Capacity building for research



Education for sustainable development
Jobs for implementing the SDGs
Capacity building
Mobilising young people



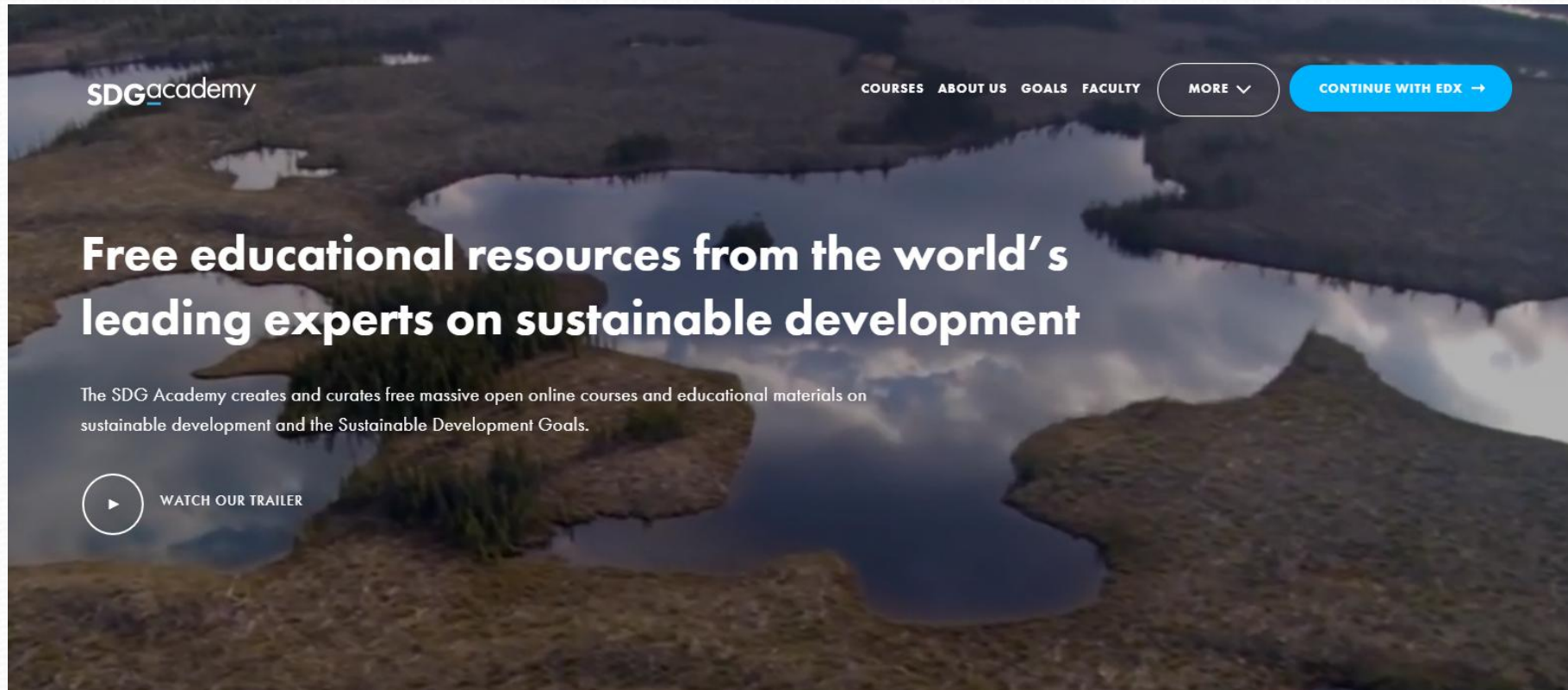
Public engagement
Cross-sectoral dialogue and action
Policy development and advocacy
Advocacy for sector role
Demonstrate sector commitment

Governance and operations aligned with SDGs
Incorporate into university reporting



SDG Academy

<https://sdgacademy.org/>



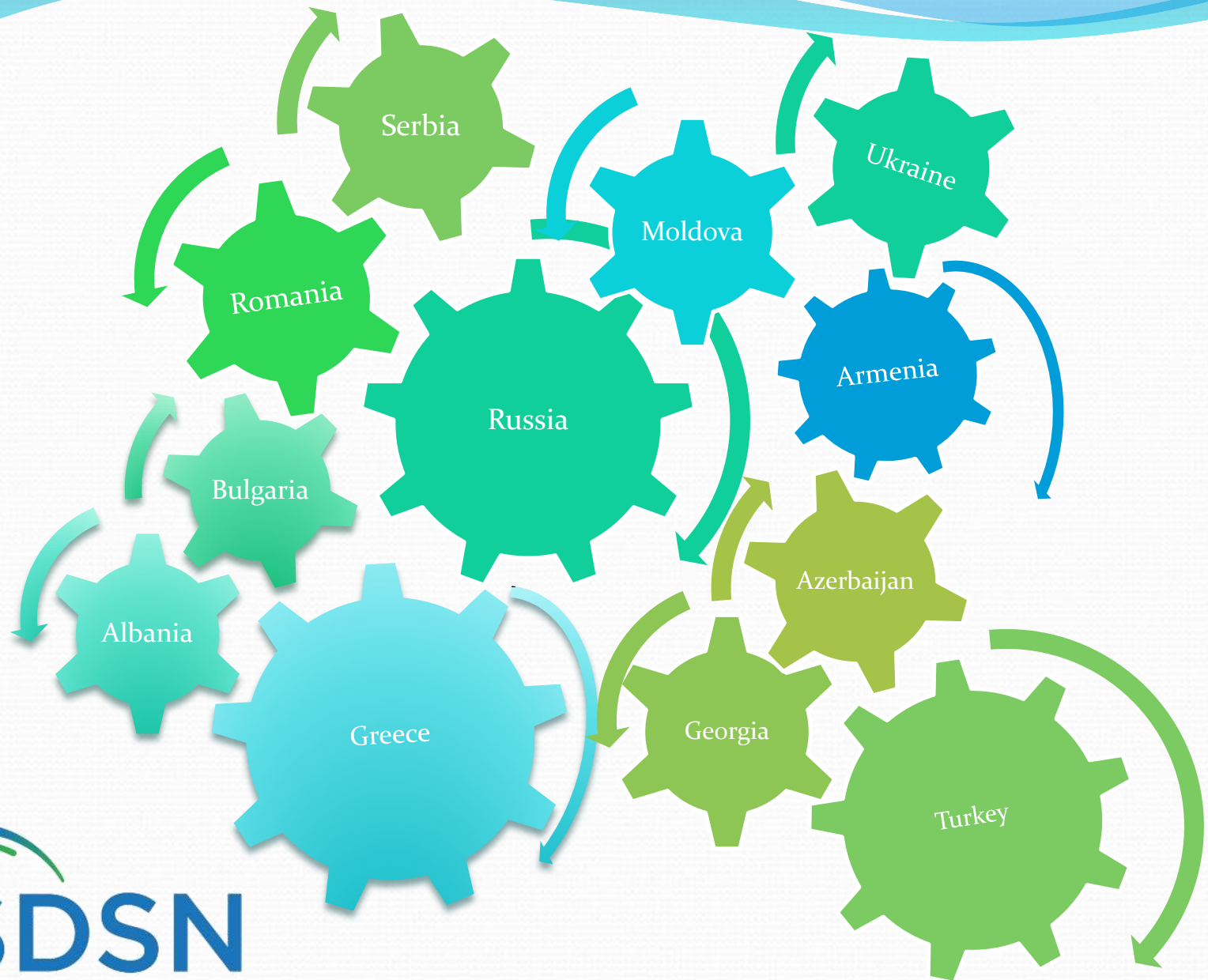
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ARISTOTLE
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THESSALONIKI

In March 2019, the Senate of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki decided to fully support the implementation of the SDGs in its academic and research activities.



The UN SDSN 4-Seas Project: Mobilizing Science Driven Sustainable Blue Growth

The Mediterranean Sea
The Black Sea
The Caspian Sea
The Aral Sea

Supported by SDSN Global and regional-
national SDSNs

The UN SDSN 4-Seas Project: Med-Black-Caspian-Aral Seas: From source to sea

AIMS:

- **RESEARCH:** To develop and support sustainable growth pathways in coastal and marine sectors, from source to sea, of the 4-seas project.
- **EDUCATION:** To create common post-graduate and life-long-learning curricula focusing on the implementation of the SDGs in the 4-seas
- **REPOSITORY:** To create an open-access data-base with relevant: research and innovation projects, policies and stakeholders of the 4-seas project region.
- **INNOVATION:** To incentivize innovation to facilitate the sustainability transition in the region of the 4-seas project through our collaboration with the Innovation Community and EIT Climate KIC
- **POLICY:** To develop links between EU WFD, MSFD, Blue Growth Initiative, Agenda 2030 and other Policy Initiatives, by developing policy alternatives to support land-sea synergies in the implementation of the sustainability transition in the 4-seas project region.