

10 March 2026

13:30 – 15:30 CET



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Background

ESD for 2030 Framework and Roadmap: ESD-Net and Greening Education Partnership

To facilitate the implementation of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), the [ESD for 2030 framework](#) and its [Roadmap](#), UNESCO supports Member States and partners through two key mechanisms – the [ESD for 2030 Global Network](#) (ESD-Net) and the [Greening Education Partnership](#) (GEP).

Through its work, ESD-Net 2030 aims to enhance knowledge sharing, collaboration, mutual learning, advocacy, monitoring, and evaluation, among a wide range of education stakeholders. One of the main activities of this initiative is a series of interactive learning webinars, which aim to highlight and promote innovative practices in ESD.

Likewise, under the ESD for 2030 framework and its Roadmap, the GEP is a global initiative to deliver strong, coordinated, and comprehensive actions, supporting countries in accelerating the transformation of education by integrating climate change education and climate action at its core. As an open and inclusive community of practice, which currently includes over 1,900 organizations and 98 countries, the

GEP aims to “get every learner climate-ready” through four pillars of action: Greening Schools, Greening Curriculum, Greening Teacher Training and Education System’s Capacities, and Greening Communities.

Higher Education and Education for Sustainable Development

In the field of ESD, higher education institutions play a key role through their contributions to education, research, and community-based approaches. A large number of higher education institutions, including relevant UNESCO Chairs, have significantly advanced ESD-related initiatives. Recently, several efforts have emerged through networks of multiple universities. For example, the UNITAR/UNESCO [Leaders in Higher Education Alliance and Programme – For Accelerating Sustainability Transformations \(LEAP-FAST\)](#) aims to inspire transformation by empowering educators and institutions to reorient curricula, adopt transdisciplinary approaches and embed sustainability across different levels. At the 30th UN Climate Change Conference (COP30), the Higher Education Climate Network of Networks and the Race to Zero for Universities and Colleges showcased a [plan to strengthen higher education for accelerated climate action](#), emphasizing the unique position of universities and colleges as enablers for climate action and broader sustainability efforts. Collaborative efforts like the [open call for universities across the Euro-Mediterranean region](#) to strengthen their role in climate action underscore the need for joint action on embedding sustainability into education systems.

Despite the increased recognition of higher education as a key driver of ESD, advancing this agenda remains challenging. There is growing concern that the SDGs and Learning for Sustainability are too often incorporated superficially in higher education — frequently as labels or add-ons rather than as drivers of meaningful transformation. Progress in higher education remains uneven compared to primary and lower secondary levels. There is considerable room to further advance ESD in higher education, including by expanding inter- and transdisciplinary programmes, strengthening study programmes on sustainability issues, adopting pedagogical strategies beyond the traditional lecture-based transmission models, and fostering stronger connections with primary and secondary education. These reflections highlight the need for deeper institutional change, sustained investment and coordinated policy action to ensure that higher education can fully realize its role in advancing ESD, which can be realized through taking a whole-institution approach.

Emerging initiatives to address this include the **GEP Higher Education group**, which seeks to strengthen collaboration among various sustainability frameworks in the higher education sector and mobilize the GEP members to mainstream a whole-institution approach to greening higher education. In addition, the **UNECE Steering Committee on ESD** is taking steps to enhance the credibility, depth, and impact of ESD by working with quality assurance professionals to support the mainstreaming of sustainability commitments in quality assurance frameworks and agendas. UNECE will support a working group of higher education quality professionals and develop frameworks for quality criteria.

Objectives

This ESD-Net-GEP webinar aims to strengthen both communities, enhance synergies, and broaden opportunities to engage with diverse themes of shared interest and relevance in sustainability. Organized in partnership with the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD, this webinar will explore approaches to ESD and greening education in higher education through highlighting emerging initiatives and good practices, discussing gaps and challenges, and strengthening understanding of ESD for Higher Education Institutes’ capacity development, management and quality assurance. Key themes and topics will include:

- Sharing good practices and discussing effective approaches to taking a whole-institution approach to embed ESD in higher education and to shape quality standards of higher education

institutions related to ESD.

- Strengthening collaboration across higher education institutions and other stakeholders.
- Identifying specific roles quality assurance agencies and networks can play in mainstreaming within institutional frameworks.

Date and modality

The webinar will take place on 10 March 2026, from 13:30 CET.
The session will be conducted in English.

Target audience

The target audience of this learning webinar includes higher education stakeholders seeking to strengthen the implementation of ESD in their learning environments, including higher education leaders and policymakers, quality assurance and accreditation professionals, ESD practitioners and researchers, national and regional education authorities, and other education stakeholders. Registration is open to all stakeholders who consider this webinar relevant.

The webinar will utilize a combination of presentations and small group discussions to share knowledge and information.

How to join the webinar?

The webinar will be held online via Zoom. To participate, please register at:
https://events.zoom.us/j/9b6aLKa8q7ENkEEtpoiF1Rq6fm43nps_LZIQjm7LjQa17sA

We encourage participants to log on 10 minutes before the start of the webinar.

Programme

Outline	
13:30 – 13:40 (CET)	<p>Welcome and introduction to ESD-Net learning webinar</p> <p>Julia Heiss, Chief of Section for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), UNESCO</p> <p>Aravella Zachariou, Chair of UNECE ESD Steering Committee; Head of the Unit of EESD, Unit of Education for Environment and Sustainable Development of the Cyprus Ministry of Education</p>
	<p>Icebreaker and Introductions</p> <p>Interactive exercise through Slido reflecting on the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What country are you joining us from today?• What is your main profession?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In your view, what are the enabling condition(s) for higher education to fulfill its critical role in advancing ESD?
<p>13:40 – 14:10</p>	<p>Panel discussion</p> <p>Moderator - Julia Heiss, Chief of Section for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), UNESCO</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Noah W. Sobe, Chief of Section for Higher Education, UNESCO - Daniella Tilbury, UK Government National Focal Point, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) - Kathleen Ng, Sulitest Liaison to UNESCO; Co-Chair, Action Group on Ratings, Rankings and Assessments, UN Higher Education Sustainability Initiative; Director, Strategic Initiatives, University Advancement - McGill University - Komait Massood, Co-Founder & Program Manager, Uplifting Syrian Youth
<p>14:10 – 15:10</p>	<p>Breakout Discussion</p> <p>Room 1: Whole-institution approach to embed ESD in higher education</p> <p>Moderator - Kathleen Ng, Sulitest Liaison to UNESCO; Co-Chair, Action Group on Ratings, Rankings and Assessments, UN Higher Education Sustainability Initiative; Director, Strategic Initiatives, University Advancement - McGill University</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Olivia Copsey, Director of Education, Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) - Aiman Albarakati, Associate Professor of Computational Science & Director, Majmaah University CIFAL Saudi Arabia – United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) - Hilligje van't Land, Secretary General, International Association of Universities (IAU) <p>=====</p> <p>Room 2: Embedding Quality and Standards in ESD within Higher Education</p> <p>Moderator - Daniella Tilbury, UK Government National Focal Point, UNECE</p> <p>Panelists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alex Ryan, Director of Student's Leading Quality in ESD Project - Yuma Inzolia, Chief of Training and Capacity Development, UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (IESALC) - Ian Menzies, Senior Education Officer (Learning for Sustainability, outdoor learning, sciences and STEM), Education Scotland
<p>15:10 – 15:25</p>	<p>Reflections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sharing key points and insights from the breakout room discussions
<p>15:25 – 15:30</p>	<p>Closing</p>

Contact

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From
the People of Japan

