Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals: how can academies help?

IAP/EASAC workshop on the SDGs

Halle
10-12 September 2018
Recap of yesterday

We heard from:

• the IAP project and how academies are – or could - support the SDGs more systemically;

• regional stakeholders (UNECE, JRC) about regional (Europe and EU) processes and national stakeholders about national processes, and how the academies /scientists could better support them;

• different parts of the academy community on existing (inter)academy practices, which could be scaled up and/or translatable for others;

• Enrico about the transformation or paradigm shift required to realise the SDGs.

And we began to identify emerging themes and opportunities
Thierry’s summary

• We need to be transformative;
• measurement of the SDGs is difficult, especially the path to progress ("distance to target");
• understanding the meaning of sustainable development is not easy (but, conversely, the implications of non-sustainability are clear);
• academic groups service the UN but IAP/ regional networks appear to be invisible – why?;
• what we already do has some value (it is not helpless or hopeless);
• we need a list of concrete, practicable actions.
Key emerging themes

- **Communicating** the SDGs (to academy members, universities and the wider public) – *stay here*;
- **Interactions** between SDGs (bridging data gaps, understanding complexity), as well as monitoring and review/metrics for SDGs – *stay here*;
- **Research funding structures and evaluation** – *room 1*;
- **Stronger connections between young and senior academies** – *room 2*
- **European influence globally / IAP role** (global, regional and national engagement)– *room 3*. 
Challenges to progress

• Aspirational rhetoric is easy. Effective policies, funding and sustained action are hard.
• SDG targets do not cover all essential elements: many indicators (an estimated two-thirds) are inadequate.
• Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) are useful, but not real action plans.
• Stakeholder engagement is weak in most countries.
• Not every country is paying attention.
• So, can we develop a practicable action plan for academies working at the national level and together at the regional and/or global level?

Bringing science “to the right place at the right time”
Figure 1: Mapping science advice in the UN SDGs process: at the UN level (simplified)

2019
SDG-4 (Education)
SDG-8 (Econ growth)
SDG-10 (Inequality)
SDG-13 (Climate)
SDG 16 (Governance)
SDG-17 (Partnerships)

UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

UN SECRETARY GENERAL

MAJOR GROUP S&T COMMUNITY (ICSU/ISSC/WFEO)

UN REGIONAL COMMISSIONS on Sustainable Development

HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM (HLPF)

Global SD Report

UN Specialised Agencies
UN Functional Committees

Products/outputs
Structures/mechanisms

UN Permanent Structures
Bespoke to SDGs

INTER-AGENCY TASK TEAM (all UN agencies)

10-MEMBER GROUP

ONLINE PLATFORM

STI MULTISTAKEHOLDER FORUM

TECHNOLOGY FACILITATION MECHANISM

These schematic organograms are illustrative.

Arrows reflect institutional links and inputs into different parts of the system, but are not scalar or proportionate.
Voluntary National Reviews

- To facilitate sharing of experiences (successes, challenges, lessons learned) between Member States

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2016</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
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Mapping out an action plan

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<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Short-term (0-12 months)</th>
<th>Mid-term (1-3 years)</th>
<th>Long-term (to 2030)</th>
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| At the regional level (as EASAC members working together) | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): |
| At the national level (as academies within national advisory systems) | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): |
| At the institutional level (what can my academy do/change?) | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): |
| At the individual level (what can I do/change?) | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): | Action(s):  
Outcome(s): |
An action plan should consider.....

• vision, objectives and timelines;
• important milestones and deliverables, with periodic evaluation and feedback;
• priorities;
• interacademy cooperation;
• partnerships with other sectors;
• STI and human capacity building (skills);
• strengthening science-policy interface;
• risk;
• shaping the STI/research agenda;
• potential funding sources.