



United Nations Economic Commission for Europe Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development

9th meeting, 3 and 4 April 2014

Information Paper 6

Developing a future implementation framework for the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development¹

Prepared by the Secretariat based on input from the Bureau

¹ This document was not formally edited.

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1. Introduction

At the 8th Steering Committee meeting, the Committee mandated the Bureau to develop with the support of the Secretariat a first draft of a future implementation framework for ESD which is expected to be presented for possible adoption to Education and Environment Ministries at a high level meeting in 2016. This information document provides an up-date about the development of the future implementation framework, including an overview of basic elements that the framework will include as well as a first draft of the framework.

It is important to note that the future implementation framework is not a new UNECE Strategy for ESD. The Strategy for ESD is expected to remain in place, including the main objectives and definitions as well as vision given by the Strategy. The new implementation framework will be rather the follow up of the Vilnius implementation framework which has been adopted by environment and education Ministries in 2005 and which spanned three implementation phases (2005-2015). It defined the practical arrangements for the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD.

According to the Steering Committee, the future implementation framework should include the following components: (a) a common vision; (b) a governance body; (c) priorities; (d) financing; and (e) time frame. The Committee underscored that the priority action areas adopted for phase III should continue to be at the core of UNECE ESD work. The implementation framework moreover should be closely linked to the UNSECO Global Action Programme on ESD. In particular, the reporting requirements should be closely aligned.

2. Limitations for drafting the future implementation framework

Currently, important information for developing a detailed future implementation framework is not yet available. This is the case, because the future implementation framework of the UNECE Strategy for ESD is majorly informed by two processes: (a) the 2014 national implementation reporting carried out under the UNECE Strategy for ESD and (b) the UNESCO Global Action Programme (GAP) for ESD.

The outcomes of the 2014 national implementation reporting are expected to include the analysis of major achievements, short-comings and information on future implementation priorities of UNECE member States. All of that information is fundamental for fleshing out future priorities and activities on regional level.

Moreover, the Steering Committee has underscored that the future UNECE implementation framework should closely relate to the GAP, especially with regard to monitoring and assessment. However, the GAP implementation practicalities, incl. reporting, implementation timeframes and opportunities for engagement with other stakeholders will only be available closer to the UNESCO World Conference on ESD.

3. Basic elements of future implementation framework

While essential information for developing a detailed implementation framework is not yet available, the Committee is invited to consider at its 9th meeting in 2014 a range of basic elements of the future implementation framework, concerning the future governing body, priority action areas, implementation time frame and monitoring. To inform the discussion, the grid below outlines a set of core questions as well as the options that a number of Bureau members have indicated as preferable.

Basic elements of a future implementation framework		Preferred option
I. Coordination of the Strategy / Terms of References for the Steering Committee		
1. Should the Committee continue to include representatives from the environment and education sector only?		Focal Points from environment and education Ministries should remain to form the core of the Steering Committee; however countries should have the explicit option of bringing other ministries into the delegation according to the situation in the country (e.g. health, agriculture, finance, etc.).
2. Shall the framework foresee bi-annual meetings rather than annual meetings? If bi-annually, would you encourage having an electronic-conference for sharing good practices in-between meetings?		With a view to the very limited resources, bi-annual meetings should be foreseen, complemented with electronic conferences.
3. Should the tasks of the Steering Committee remain the same as previously?	Tasks that were previously listed in the implementation framework:	
	Coordinate the implementation of the Strategy with other international activities?	Yes, possibly revised
	Monitor progress of implementation; prepare assessments of progress made; propose	Yes, possibly revised and in close alignment with UNESCO

	priorities for actions; identify issues; propose corrective measures	
	Liaise and cooperate closely with relevant intergov. organizations and NGOs	Yes, possibly revised
	Facilitate cross-sectoral co-ordination and international cooperation of public and private institutions	Yes, possibly revised
	Establish ad hoc working groups, task forces and other bodies as needed to implement the activities	Yes, possibly revised
	Provide guidance on the need for possible new instruments promoting education for sustainable development	Yes, possibly revised
	Serve as a forum for the consideration of issues related to ESD at regional and international level	Yes, possibly revised
	Prepare ESD-related inputs for the Commission for Sustainable Development and other relevant processes	Revised.
	Liaise, as required, with the other United Nations regional commissions for matters related to its competence	Yes, possibly revised
	Keep the UNECE Committee on Environmental Policy informed about its	Yes, possibly revised

	activities, unless it is decided otherwise	
4. Shall the informal working group on priority action areas be formally established by including Terms of References for the Group in the future implementation framework?		<p>No</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rather than formalizing the working groups, it might be better to formalize the actions which will be taken within the priority areas; - Formalization of the WG should be decided by the Bureau on the basis of existing resources
II. Priority Action Areas		
1. Priority action area (a) “Ensuring there was an ESD school plan in every school (by 2015)”	a. Should this priority action area continue to focus on primary and secondary education?	No clear preference
	b. Instead of using the term “ESD school plans”, would you agree to use the expression “ESD school planning”?	No clear preference, but tendency to change the priority action to “ESD school planning”
	c. The current deadline to install an ESD school plan in every school is 2015 - should it be extended or removed?	The deadline should be extended, it reinforces motivation for more action
	d. Shall the implementation framework underscore key implementation means/aspects for promoting the ESD School Planning?	Yes – under restricted resources, and possibly drawing on the electronic working groups

2. Priority action area (b) “Promoting the introduction of ESD into teacher education”	a. Should this priority action area continue to focus on teacher education or be expanded to include educators in general?	No clear preference, but tendency to keep teachers as a first priority
	b. Shall the implementation framework underscore key implementation means/ aspects for promoting the introduction of ESD into teacher education?	Yes, but taking account of the restricted resources
3. Priority action area (c) “Reorienting technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy”.	a. Shall the implementation framework underscore key implementation means/ aspects for promoting the re-orientation of TVET?	Yes Comments: - Request member States to nominate a representative from their country who has the expertise in this area - There should be more active involvement of professional unions and vocational training centres
III. Timeframe and implementation phases		
1. With a view to aligning international ESD processes, should the future implementation framework follow the same timeframe as the yet to be adopted UNESCO Global framework?		No clear preference Comments: - UNECE should plan according to its own timeframes but develop the flexible mechanisms to adapt to the UNESCO global action framework as soon as it is finalised - aligning with UNESCO’s Global Framework would make it easier to align with UNESCO’s Global Monitoring and Reporting process

<p>2. So far, the Strategy has had three implementation phases, with the third phase (2010-2015) focusing on the practical implementation of ESD and coming to an end in 2015. Shall the next implementation period (e.g. 2016-2021) be called an extension of phase III?</p>	<p>No, 2015+ should be called implementation phase IV –</p> <p>Comments: “to generate and scale-up practical ESD implementation with a particular focus on achieving significant progress in 4 priority action areas in order to accelerate progress towards sustainable development.”</p>
<p>IV. Monitoring</p>	
<p>The Steering Committee has expressed its wish that the UNESCO and UNECE reporting timelines and format be better aligned. This might mean to significantly cut or change the template developed by the UNECE Expert Group on Indicators and might make it hard to compare future reporting outcomes with the 2007, 2010, 2014 outcomes. Against this background, what approach to monitoring would you prefer in the future?</p>	<p>Revised and shortened UNECE template, aligned as far as possible with UNESCO reporting</p>

ANNEX: 1st Draft future implementation framework – to be revised and further developed according to relevant developments in 2014-2015

1. Progress made and challenges encountered in implementing the UNECE Strategy for ESD

Note: as soon as the results of the national implementation reporting carried out in 2014 will be available, the main achievements and challenges outlined by the analysis of the national implementation reports will be included under this headline and inform also the other chapters of the implementation framework.

2. Joint Vision of the High Level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries

The UNECE Steering Committee on ESD, as established by the High Level Meeting in Vilnius (2005), is worldwide an outstanding example of regional implementation of ESD among different initiatives developed in the framework of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development and served as a blueprint for other regions.

The UNECE region will continue to implement education for sustainable development and commits to making a tangible regional contribution to the Global Action programme on Education for Sustainable Development adopted by the General Assembly in 2014.

Member States of the UNECE Strategy for ESD reaffirm their joint vision:

Our vision for the future is of a region that embraces common values of solidarity, equality and mutual respect between people, countries and generations. It is a region characterized by sustainable development, including economic vitality, justice, social cohesion, environmental protection and the sustainable management of natural resources, so as to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Education, in addition to being a human right, is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development and an essential tool for good governance, informed decision-making and the promotion of democracy. Therefore, education for sustainable development can help translate our vision into reality. Education for sustainable development develops and strengthens the capacity of individuals, groups, communities, organizations and countries to make judgements and choices in favour of sustainable development. It can promote a shift in people's mind-sets and in so doing enable them to make our world safer, healthier and more prosperous, thereby improving the quality of life. Education for sustainable development can provide critical reflection and greater awareness and empowerment so that new visions and concepts can be explored and new methods and tools developed.

3. Governance body of the UNECE Strategy for education for sustainable development

The high level meeting of education and environment Ministries re-confirms the mandate of the Steering Committee to decide on the Strategy's implementation and review its progress. The Steering Committee should continue to include representatives from education and environment Ministries. To ensure efficient regional governance and communication, member States are requested to re-

confirm/ nominate focal points for education for sustainable development in education and environment ministries. Moreover, member States are invited to nominate additional country representatives from other departments / ministries that are involved in the implementation of education for sustainable development.

With a view to limited funding for the implementation of the Strategy, the high level meeting proposes that the Steering Committee meets bi-annually; however should funding be available and should the Committee it deem necessary, the Committee may meet more frequently. Funding would be provided to one person per eligible country to participate in these meetings. Moreover, the Committee might consider hosting electronic conferences for sharing good practices when no in-person meetings are possible due to financial. 12. Moreover, the high level meeting stresses that the “Environment for Europe” (EfE) process should continue to be used as a platform for the regional high-level coordination of the implementation of the Strategy.

Option 1: If timeframe to be aligned to UNECE process

The mandate of the Steering Committee is extended until the next Environment for Europe (EfE) Ministerial Conference, which is expected to take place in 2020 or 2021². Ministers of Education should be invited to participate in high level sessions on ESD. Funds required to assist delegates from the eligible countries to participate in such meetings should be considered within preparatory frameworks for Environment for Europe conferences.

Option 2: If timeframe to be aligned with UNESCO GAP

The mandate of the Steering Committee is extended in accordance with the UNESCO Global Action Programme until [yet to be announced].

4. Priority action areas

While member States recognize the importance to continue working on implementing all objectives of the Strategy for ESD, the high level meeting in particular stresses the importance of advancing the following priority action areas:

(a) Ensuring there was an ESD school plan in every school by [depending on timeframe, see para. 12]

ESD school plans are a crucial component of a whole school approach. Whole-institution approaches (integration of ESD into the content and methodology of education, campus/building management, the organization of school life and the facilitation of school-community interaction) are an important vehicle to achieve holistic and structural implementation of ESD in formal, vocational and higher education and to facilitate a link between formal and non-formal education. Therefore, the establishment of ESD school plans or embedding ESD in existing school plans (i.e. ESD school planning) is strongly encouraged by the high level meeting.

(b) Promoting the extension of ESD into teacher education and in training of all educators

Teachers, or, more broadly, educators, are key drivers of change in the process towards integrating ESD into education. Their capacities have to be strengthened through ESD in pre-service and in-service teacher education and other forms that support teacher development of non-formal and informal educators. Therefore, the high level meeting strongly supports the structural integration and extension of ESD in teacher education.

² Should no EfE Conference take place in 2020 and 2021, the mandate of the Steering Committee will run until 2021, and the Steering Committee should consider hosting a high level meeting of Education and Environment Ministries detached from the EfE process.

(c) Reorienting TVET in support of sustainable development and the transition to a green economy

There is a need for technical and vocational training to transition to a green, entrepreneurial and sustainable economy. In that respect, several concrete steps to prioritize could include: teaching students about the importance of moving to a green economy and making them ecologically literate; understanding the needs of industry to transition to a green economy; and ensuring that policymakers' support for educators was sufficient to enable them to provide the requisite training for new skills. Against this background the high level meeting recognizes the importance of a structural reorientation of TVET in support of sustainable development.

(d) Strengthening policy integration

ESD has to be integrated into education and sustainable development policies and the link had to be made between ESD and other relevant processes. On regional level in particular the link with the ECE environmental conventions needed to be strengthened.

5. Timeframe and monitoring

The high level meeting recognizes that the implementation of the Strategy is a continuous, long-term process.

It takes note that the member States have successfully implemented three implementation phases since the Strategy's adoption at the Vilnius High Level meeting of Education and Environment Ministries in 2005:

(a) Phase I (until 2007): countries took stock of what fitted within the remit of the Strategy and also identified priorities for action required to implement the Strategy.

(b) Phase II (until 2010): the implementation of the strategy was advanced to be well underway. Countries reviewed progress made in the implementation of their national/State strategies

(c) Phase III (until 2015): countries made considerable progress in implementing education for sustainable development.

It is proposed that in phase IV, countries generate and scale-up practical ESD implementation with a particular focus on achieving significant progress in the priority action areas, in order to accelerate progress towards sustainable development.

Developing capacity for reflective monitoring as well as long term evaluation of ESD is critical. Hence, at the end of implementation phase IV, a mandatory national progress reporting should be carried out. The reporting template used should be based on the UNECE ESD reporting template developed by the UNECE Expert Group on Indicators, and should be adapted to focus on the priority action areas of implementation phase IV. It moreover should be aligned as far as possible with the UNESCO reporting requirements under the Global Action Programme on ESD, with a view to minimize reporting burden on the member States.

6. Financial arrangements

Effective implementation of the Strategy depends, inter alia, on the availability of sufficient financial and human resources. There is a need for stable and predictable sources of funding, and a fair sharing of the burden should be the guiding principle of any financial arrangements established for this purpose.