

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

16<sup>th</sup> meeting, 10 and 11 May 2021

**Information Paper 1**

**Proposed topics for reporting on progress in the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for  
Education for Sustainable Development**

Item 2 (b) of the provisional agenda:

Implementation of the UNECE Strategy for Education  
for Sustainable Development: Progress in implementing the Strategy

Prepared by the Secretariat

*Note for your attention:* This questionnaire is not a formal reporting, but an intermediate informal reporting exercise to report on the current situation in your country at the beginning of the period 2021-2030, particularly regarding new policy developments with regard to progress on SDGs and impact of COVID-19.

Some questions follow the updated format for reporting which is currently in progress of finalising and the four strands of work which were discussed during the recent meetings of the ECE Steering Committee on ESD. A formal format for reporting will be finalised as soon as the new concept note for strategic planning 2021-2030 is approved and the questionnaire/format for reporting is brought further in line with the UNESCO scheme for reporting.

1. National reporting on the progress achieved in the implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development offers a valuable opportunity for countries to learn from each other and to share newly produced resources and materials within and beyond the ECE region.
2. In preparation for the sixteenth meeting of the ECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development, countries are requested to fill in the questionnaire below, informing on progress made and challenges encountered in working on priority action areas after the fourth mandatory reporting cycle carried out in 2018 and since the fourteenth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 2 and 3 May 2019).
4. Countries are kindly requested to submit this information in writing to the secretariat via e-mail ([nona.iliukhina@un.org](mailto:nona.iliukhina@un.org) and [esd@unece.org](mailto:esd@unece.org)) by **20 April 2021**.
5. The secretariat will review the information submitted and deliver a brief synthesis presentation at the Steering Committee's sixteenth meeting. The presentation will be followed by an interactive discussion.
6. In the below questionnaire, particular attention is to be paid to: (a) the priority action areas of the proposed newly drafted concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework (quality education and ESD; whole institution approach and ESD; digital education, information and communications technology and ESD; entrepreneurship, employability, innovation and ESD); (b) the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on ESD implementation.
7. Countries will be invited to complement the secretariat's presentation with interventions on outstanding activities and initiatives implemented since the fourteenth Steering Committee meeting (Geneva, 2 and 3 May 2019), in particular with regard to how the implementation of national strategies for ESD contributes to the new developments and challenges for ESD in the region. Given the limited time available, countries will only have up to three minutes each for interventions from the floor.

**Questionnaire for 2021 informal country<sup>1</sup> reporting on the implementation of the priority action areas of the newly drafted concept note for the post-2019 implementation framework<sup>2</sup>**

**Advances made and challenges encountered since the fourteenth Steering Committee meeting in May 2019**

**I. Priority action area (a)**

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*Encouraging countries to embed ESD into quality standards, frameworks and resources associated with formal quality assessments and institutional reviews*

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**1. Are there currently any national or subnational quality assessment/enhancement systems that address ESD in your country?**

Yes  No

- The key themes of sustainable development are included in the general provisions of the *National Education Law no. 1/2011* (NEL), being reflected in the principles which are governing the Romanian system of education: equity in access to education, respect for national cultural identity and intercultural dialogue, conservation of the national identity and cultural values of the Romanian people, rights for ethnic minorities. According to NEL the society sustainable development and plenary development of the individual are the final aim for lifelong learning.
- Starting with the new programming period 2021-2030, the key-themes of SD, as they are in the paragraph 15 of the UNECE Strategy for ESD, are addressed in Romania in the main strategic documents.
- The Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Pre-university Education is in charge with the system quality assesment and performs authorization, accreditation and periodic external evaluation of public and private early, primary and secondary education units.
- Methodological coordination and regular monitoring of curricula implementation and national examinations are assured by specialized centralized departments of the Ministry of Education (Department of Strategies, Evaluation and Curriculum Monitoring and the National Centre of Policies and Assessment in Education), having as responsibilities: monitoring school inspection activities conducted by county school inspectorates, reglementation and monitoring of national examinations organization, reports regarding students' results at the national examinations, annual improvement proposals.
- In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the state of emergency and, subsequently, the state of alert was established, starting with March 2020 (art. 37 of the Government Emergency Ordinance no. 70/2020). The external quality assessment continued and the procedure for carrying out external evaluation activities for state and private pre-university education units, was adapted to the online environment (Order of Minister of Education no. 4488/2020).
- In November 2020, the government adopted a revision of national quality standards in pre-university education, in order to properly identify and capture the progress and performance in learning, individual and institutional development, and the capacity of schools to achieve the expected results and to continuously improve them (Government Decision no. 994/2020). Quality standards and the new quality assessment methodology will come into force in the 2020-2021 school year.
- The concept of sustainable development (SD) is included in the description of competencies to be acquired by students (see point II.1). Within the process of continuous improvement of quality and students performance, in Romania the curricula reform in the primary, lower and upper secondary education started by rethinking its design from the perspective of lifelong learning, student centered, focused on skills and learning outcomes all throught the teaching process, including assessment. Concerning the specific qualifications related to SD, the level of acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes can be measured based on indicators, defined in relation to the learning outcomes.
- In the field of higher education, the Romanian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education ensures consistency with European Standards and Guidelines on Quality Assurance in Higher

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<sup>1</sup> Countries with a federal structure are free to provide several inputs or questionnaires from different states or entities, if appropriate.

<sup>2</sup> The latest draft (to be updated for the upcoming 16<sup>th</sup> meeting) is available from [http://staging2.unece.org.net4all.ch/fileadmin/DAM/env/esd/15th\\_Meeting\\_SC/Doc/Informal\\_documents/Information\\_Paper\\_No.\\_7\\_-\\_Draft\\_concept\\_note\\_post-2019\\_implementation.pdf](http://staging2.unece.org.net4all.ch/fileadmin/DAM/env/esd/15th_Meeting_SC/Doc/Informal_documents/Information_Paper_No._7_-_Draft_concept_note_post-2019_implementation.pdf)

Education, approved in 2015 at Yerevan conference of ministers responsible for higher education in the European Space of Higher Education. These standards define explicitly the activities, policies and quality assurance process.

▪ The external evaluation methodology, standards, reference standards and the list of performance indicators are approved by government decision (GD no. 1418/2006, amended by GD no. 915/2017). One of the performance indicators explicitly refer to the fact that “the study programs include topics that lead to the acquisition of transversal competencies, such as the affirmation of the student's personality in society, communication, foreign languages, teamwork, training of students in the spirit of European values, issues related to the sustainable development of society, the promotion of democracy, intercultural dialogue, which can influence their personal development and can be applied in their future careers.”

▪ The latest advances in pre-university and higher education refer to the focus of curricular reform on the acquisition of new skills adapted to current labor market challenges: basic skills, vocational skills, language skills and transversal skills, including entrepreneurial and digital skills.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

## **2. Do quality frameworks exist in your country, for integrating ESD/SDGs in teachers’ professional development?**

Yes  No

▪ In Romania, the universities have Departments for Teachers Training, specialized for the initial and continuous training of teachers. The initial and continuous training of teachers, the competencies to be acquired are mandatory for every teacher career development and are established, implemented and monitored/assessed at national education system level by competent bodies (see point I.1).

▪ The legislation in force imposes two levels of initial training: level 1, which targets the training of teachers for the mandatory education; level 2, in which are trained teachers to acquire competencies needed for secondary, post-secondary and higher education.

▪ The current academic curriculum for the psycho-pedagogical training module allows the acquisition of key competences for the future teachers: psycho-pedagogical and methodological competencies, communication competencies, organization and management of a classroom, evaluation, reflection and critical competencies, innovating educational practices, partnership between school-local community, promoting the European values. The set of competences for ESD: learning to know; learning to do, learning to live together; learning to be; learning for the future.

▪ The continuous teachers’ training is mandatory. Trainings can be offered by a large variety of providers: Teachers Houses (accredited by Ministry of Education), universities or other providers. The list of trainings offered by Teachers Houses is annually approved.

▪ The current accredited courses for SD include the following themes: education for sustainable development: developing life abilities; school-family-community partnership; environment protection and sustainable lifestyle; integrating critical thinking in the curriculum, sustainability in environment protection: integral part of the educational process; developing the life skills of pupils in the context of sustainable development; education for democracy; methods of critical thinking; learning strategies for critical thinking; volunteering for the environment: present and perspectives; education for gender equality: strategies for prevention and active intervention in the school environment; education for the environment: ways of doing it.

▪ During the school year 2019-2020, considering the measure of suspension of face-to-face teaching activities, the continuous teachers training was approved to be organized by Teachers Houses, at regional / local level, and facilitated the transition from the classical plan, face-to-face, to the hybrid one - blended learning and online. The role of Teachers Houses has been adapted to the pandemic context, including the training facilitation component, which is regulated by ministerial order.

▪ In 2019-2020 school year, great support was provided to teachers and adequate training programs in using ICT technologies and passing to the online teaching and assessment of students. Through all the support measures undertaken, Ministry of Education aimed at facilitating teachers' access to quality professional development, based on equal opportunities and sustainability, in order to develop teaching and digital skills, for a goodteaching-learning-assessment.

▪ Thus, the procedures and activities for accreditation/endorsement of in-service teacher training programs have been adapted and restructured. The normative framework regarding the initial psycho-pedagogical training for access to the teaching career was elaborated (Order no. 4812/2020). The institutional framework for teaching career development, initial and continuous training, the curricula

for teaching master's degree and career mentoring mechanism were approved in 2020 (Methodology for the establishment and organization of didactic master programs approved by Order no. 4524/2020).

- Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic
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## **II. Priority action area (b)**

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*Promoting the whole institution approach (WIA) in every institution of formal, non-formal and informal education*

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### **1. Has there been any significant advancement made in your country for promoting WIA in formal education?**

Yes  No

- The key themes of SD are included in disciplines in core curriculum or optional curriculum for primary and general secondary education in terms of general and specific competencies, learning activities, learning contents. In pre-university education, the key-themes of SD are tackled at both curricular and extra-curricular level starting with early childhood education till tertiary non-university education/post high school education of formal education, including VET.
  - The key-themes of SD, as they are in the paragraph 15 of the UNECE Strategy for ESD, are addressed in Romania in curricula as competencies, learning contents and domains, examples of activities to be developed at classroom level. According to the curricula for early education (in 2019, new curriculum approved for early childhood education), primary and lower secondary education (approved in 2017 and implemented beginning with 2017/2018 school year), the content of the following compulsory subjects approach the above mentioned key-theme: Mathematics and Environmental Exploration (preparatory – 2nd grade), Nature Sciences and Civic Education (3rd – 4th grade), Technologic Education and Practical Activities (5th – 8th grade), Critical thinking and Child Rights (5th grade), Intercultural Education (6th grade), Education for Democratic Citizenship (7th grade), Financial Education (8th grade), Biology (5th – 8th grade), Physics (6th – 8th grade), Chemistry (7th – 8th grade), History (4th – 8th grade), Geography (4th – 8th grade), Counselling and Personal Development (5th – 8th grade); examples of optional disciplines offered at national level for: primary education level - Character First, Ready for Life, Education for Life and Community, European Education, Financial Education, Education for Society, Health Education, Make Your Environment, lower secondary education level - Character First, Education for (personal) Health, Make Your Environment, Civic Education.
  - The key themes of SD are also addressed in the curricula for higher secondary general education (ISCED 3 general), within compulsory subjects like: Logic, argumentation and communication (9th grade), Geography (9th - 12th grade), Economy (11th grade), Biology (9th – 12th grade), Sociology (11th grade), Philosophy (12th grade), Social studies (12th grade), Entrepreneurial Education (10th grade), and also within optional subjects, like: Education for development, Education for (personal) Health, Ecological education and environmental protection.
  - The key themes of SD are also addressed in the curricula for higher secondary general education (ISCED 3 general) within compulsory disciplines: Logic, argumentation and communication (9th grade), Geography (9th - 12th grade), Economy (11th grade), Biology (9th – 12th grade), Sociology (11th grade), Philosophy (12th grade), Social studies (12th grade), Entrepreneurial Education (10th grade), and also within optional disciplines, like: Education for development, Education for Health, Ecological education and environmental protection.
  - The policies that incorporate SD into education are also regarding the *Second chance programs* (children and young people who abandoned school), *Education for Health in Romanian Schools; Education for Environment, Eco-kindergarten*.
  - *Higher education institutions approach sustainability* differently in accordance with university autonomy and academic programs. Most of the universities have begun to introduce key themes of sustainable development in the study programmes, new disciplines in the compulsory curriculum or in the optional curriculum. Topics include climate change, social and economic change management, economic growth, natural resource management, environmental economics, public policy and environmental management, renewable energies, wastewater, harm reduction, green technologies, food safety, HIV/AIDS and drug abuse, cultural diversity, gender equality, environmental protection, human rights, rural/urban development, citizenship, democracy and governance, social
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entrepreneurship, etc. In addition to bachelor degree programs, a large number of universities have introduced master programs aimed at sustainable development training.

▪ Thus, SD is addressed in the *formal compulsory and optional, curriculum*, at Bachelor, Master degree and doctoral degree levels. Important SD issues as sustainable production, renewable energy, waste management, and natural resources management are addressed. At bachelor level: Natural Resources and their Use, Renewable Energy Sources, Waste and Waste Management Techniques, Environmental Legislation, Optimizing the Technologic Processes, Energetics and the Environment, Optimization of Electric Power Systems, International Protection of Human Rights; at master level: Distributed Generation of Renewable Energy Sources, Cogeneration Plant, Human Resources Management; and by dedicated themes included in following courses curricula: at bachelor level: General Economy, Materials Science and Engineering, Technology of Materials, Value Engineering, Engineering of Production Systems, Labour Law, Optimization of Production Systems, Industrial Design, Quality Management, Electric Networks, Electric and Thermal Energy Production, Optimization of Electric Power Systems. At master level: Quality Audit, Conformity Certification, Energy Management Systems, Intelligent and Adaptive process Control.

▪ Universities have begun to introduce elements of sustainable development, new disciplines in the compulsory or optional curriculum, depending on the study programs. Topics cover climate change, managing the effects of social and economic change, environmental economics, public policy and environmental management, alternative energy, wastewater, pollution reduction, green technologies (in over 240 undergraduate and master's degree programs). In addition to undergraduate programs specific to their fields of study, a large number of universities have introduced master's programs aimed at training in the field of sustainable development. Environment protection and sustainable development themes are integrated to varying degrees in the studies (both compulsory and optional curriculum) depending on the specialization. As at December 2019, over 240 undergraduate and master study programmes included topics such as climate change, social and economic change management, environmental economics, public policy and environmental management, alternative energies, wastewater and green technologies. In addition to bachelor's degree programmes, universities have introduced master programmes related to sustainable development.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

## 2. Has there been any incentives in your country for integrating WIA in formal, non-formal and in-formal education?

Yes  No

▪ Learning in non-formal and informal contexts are included in the provisions of the NEL. Regarding non-formal education related to SD the following extracurricular activities, such as annual contests and events, have an interdisciplinary approach of SD concept:

▪ The *Scoala altfel (School in a different Way)* is a learning by doing programme for all students in pre-university education at national level, implemented at national level, starting with the school year 2011 – 2012. The aim of this national programme is to develop learning competencies and socio-emotional abilities of children/students and it includes educational activities for democratic citizenship, for promoting humanitarian values, for health and a healthy life style, activities of ecology and environmental protection.

▪ Contests at national and county level are organized for students in pre-university education: *The Sciences of the Earth, Business plan, Culture and Civilisation in Romania, National Contest for Environmental Projects, Young People in European Forests – YPEF, Earth is our home, Children, save the Blue Planet, Do everything to save Earth, The Friends of the Danube Delta, Earth Day, International Day for Environment, The Water Day, The Tree Day, The World Day for Animals, Eco-school, Learning About Forests, Young Reporters for Environment, Blue Flag etc.*

▪ Public awareness on ESD is addressed in the National Sustainable Development Strategy Romania 2013 - 2020-2030. Likewise, *Government Ordinance no. 195/2005 on environmental protection* states the modalities of implementing the principles and strategic elements: education, public awareness, participation in the elaboration and implementation of decisions regarding the environment; the competent authority for environmental protection, along with other central public administration authorities and local authorities, as appropriate, provide information, public participation in decisions on specific activities.

▪ The Ministry of National Education is a partner in projects aimed at education for environment: - *The ECO Students' Olympics* is a complete process, carried out at national level, which integrates two components. The first and most important component is the didactic one, this aiming at educating the

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students and stimulating the interest to the separate collection process, as means of preserving the environment.

▪ *Battery and the non - E world*: ecological education workshops for children, waste recycling activities, which is a project for used batteries recycling. Environ Association in partnership with the National Recycling System Association Batteries launched in 2019, for the ninth consecutive year, the national campaign of ecological education, *Battery Hero of Recycling* - the program that lays the foundations of recycling and the circular economy for preschoolers and students in educational institutions in our country. During the school year, students from schools enrolled in the campaign participate in concrete actions to protect the environment, being involved in competitions for selective collection of old electrical equipment and used batteries. On a quarterly basis, the most "diligent" collectors are rewarded with equipment for school, courses or activities. Details on [www.magazinbaterel.ro](http://www.magazinbaterel.ro) and <https://reciclamimpreuna.ro/educatia-ecologica-parte-din-educatia-pentru-viata/>.

▪ Environmental education projects, for example: "Great National Environmental Volunteering for Schoolchildren", which was funded by the *No PLANet B* project, carried out by the Call Service Association within an international partnership co-financed by the European Union through the *DEAR* program. The national environmental competition included 10 predefined environmental actions (greening, planting, recycling, non-formal environmental education sessions, etc.). During the 18 months of implementation, the project targeted 42,000 pupils from 105 school units across 22 counties. The participants implemented 6,858 activities of education and environment protection and 17 of the schools received prizes for their results, while 21 schools were awarded the *Eco School* label in recognition of their efforts to reduce their environmental impact.

▪ Additionally, EDD topics are addressed through broad initiatives of civic and private environmental education and intervention, such as: ecology news portal <https://www.ecomagazin.ro/>, private funding for environmental projects, for example: Lidl Romania, <http://www.romaniapozitiva.ro/romania-pozitiva/770-000-euro-in-projete-de-educatie-si-medi/>, OMV „Țara lui Andrei” funding programme <https://www.taraluiandrei.ro/idei-din-tla> etc. Moreover, non-reimbursable funding for NGOs promoting non-formal education initiatives are available through EEA and Norwegian grants, for projects promoting active citizenship: <https://www.eegrants.ro/programe/cetatenie-activa/descriere-cetatenie-activa> or environmental protection: <https://www.eegrants.ro/programe/mediu/descriere-mediu>.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

**3. Has there been any initiatives in your country for integrating WIA in non-formal and in-formal education?**

Yes  No

Please specify

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

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**III. Priority action area (c)**

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*Supporting ESD within ICT and digital education*

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**1. Did COVID-19 importantly change ICT and digital education used for teaching and learning on ESD in your country?**

Yes  No

▪ In the face of a public health crisis during the school years 2019 - 2020, 2020-2021, Ministry of Education developed the legal framework to ensure access to quality education, in the context of a higher risk of exclusion of vulnerable students, children and young people and those with disabilities from educational and training activities.

▪ Thus, all levels of education were affected, and the main measures were aimed at ensuring safe, resilient and accessible online learning environments for pupils, students and teachers. The legislative premises were ensured to carry out online teaching and training activities, using ICT, according to *Framework Methodology on conducting teaching activities through technology and the Internet*, with the respect of personal data.

- Dedicated guidelines and methodologies have been approved in order to support teachers from schools, including VET schools, in carrying out their didactic duties in good conditions, in all three scenarios: face-to-face activities, online activities and blended-learning.
- Thus, providing IT equipment with internet connection for all students was one of the prior measures. In this sense, the national program *Home School* was developed for the purchase of 250,000 IT tablets for students from disadvantaged backgrounds, 74,000 laptops for 1,100 high schools from reimbursable funds and 150,000,000 euros from European funds have been allocated for IT equipment with internet connection.

**X** Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

**Romania will make a short presentation on this topic.**

**2. In your country, do there exist any programs that support educational actors (teachers, mentors, inspectors etc) to integrate ICT and digital education in ESD?**

Yes  No

- Through all the support measures undertaken, Ministry of Education aimed at facilitating teachers' access to quality professional development, based on equal opportunities and sustainability, in order to develop teaching and digital skills, to provide teachers with adequate training in using ICT technologies and smoothly passing to teaching-learning-assessment in online environment. Thus, the procedures and activities for accreditation / approval of in-service teacher training programs have been adapted and restructured.
- Ministry of Education, with the support of county school inspectorates, psychological counsellors and mentors / education experts, Teachers' Houses and the national project Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All – CRED organized activities for teachers' professional development, in order to develop teaching skills and digital skills.
- The Teachers' Houses dedicated their digital infrastructure and tools, resources and training programs to ensure quality and diversity of online trainings, workshops and webinars such as: curriculum design, strategies for teaching - learning- assessment, curricular empowerment, student class management, school and career counseling and guidance, ICT / digital skills, education of children with special educational needs, education for sustainable development and the challenges of globalization, entrepreneurship education, environmental education, health education, intercultural education, education for democratic citizenship, education for children's rights, human rights education, management and career counseling, management and leadership in education, marketing and education, quality management in education, education policies.
- Starting with March 2020, interventions were dedicated for teachers' training in using digital platforms and tools (Zoom, Livresq, Teams/office365, Google Classroom/Google Meet), development of digital skills, ensuring access to educational platforms for all students and teachers by signing partnerships between the Ministry of Education, Google, and Microsoft; continuation of Tele-school for teachers and Tele-school program for students, especially those without access to online classes; guidelines for remedial learning; use of the educational resources' on the national portal digital.educared.ro, developed with the support of the national project Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for All – CRED); establishing a virtual library of open educational resources.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

**3. Is any assistance provided on national level for embedding ICT and digital education on ESD/SDGs?**

Yes  No

- As mentioned at point III.1 and III.2, the Ministry of Education provided national support and ensured coordination of all stakeholders involved at county levels in providing counselling, methodologies, training, access and use of digital platforms and open educational resources needed for online teaching/learning and assessment. ESD formal and non-formal learning within pre-university education is supported by digital/ICT-based instruments as follows:
  - Textbooks in digital format are available on manuale.edu.ro platform – for subjects within primary and lower secondary education. The textbooks for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades became available during the period 2019 – 2020. Digital textbooks include photos and didactic films and multimedia activities are allowed, including for assessment purpose. The printed version of the textbooks for upper secondary education are also available on edu.ro site.
  - A specific web category targeting sustainable development has been created on the website of Ministry of Education (<https://www.edu.ro/educa%C8%9Bie-pentru-dezvoltare-durabil%C4%83> ),

where the UNECE Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development, the 2030 Agenda, the National Strategy for Romania Sustainable Development 2030 and other relevant resources are uploaded: didactic lessons plans addressing SD themes for teachers' use; MoER with the Association REPER 21 and its partners, as well as with UNICEF have translated didactic lessons plans of the initiative World's Largest Lesson of the Project Everyone, who have covered all the SDGs with lesson plans, videos and comics; Guideline for Education for the SDGs Learning Objectives of the UNESCO Global Education 2030 Agenda translated into Romanian by the Department for Sustainable Development; the Public Authorities Guide concerning access to information about environment.

- The platform on <https://digital.educared.ro/> within the project "Relevant curriculum, open education for all" (CRED- Curriculum relevant, educație deschisă pentru toți) project (ESIF funded) was created for all teachers eager to capitalize on new technologies in learning activities with students. Resources for learning activities for primary education are available on the platform and Open educational resources (OER) related to curriculum for lower secondary education will be developed until 2022.

- On-line support courses are available on TELESKOALA YouTube Chanel. The TV lessons are developed within the partnership between Ministry of Education and Romanian National Television Broadcasting and are focused on preparing students facing national examination for 8th grade or baccalaureate at exam disciplines (subjects) for students within 8<sup>th</sup> grade (end grade of lower secondary education) and 12<sup>th</sup> grade (end grade of high-school education) with a view to participating at national examinations at the end of the school year.

- An ESD 3 days training curricula for teachers, developed by the Romanian NGO REPER21, is available on the platform [www.prof21.ro](http://www.prof21.ro). The platform also includes various ESD methods and tools proposed by various Romanian teachers and used in their educational activities.

- The integrated approach of all aspects of public services digitalization, including the field of education, was ensured by the National Strategy for the Digital Agenda Romania 2020. Although Romania has a wide range of internet connectivity, steps are still needed to ensure all resources and an integrated framework for access to quality education in the digital age. In this sense, the Ministry of Education launched on October 26 the public consultation of the Strategy on Education Digitalization in Romania 2021-2027. The 8 dimensions of the future strategy are: digital skills for pupils and students, lifelong digital education, initial and continuous teachers training for digital education, digital infrastructure and technological resources, connectivity, open educational resources, school curriculum for emerging qualifications and cyber security, data protection, online security and IT ethics. The document is still under public consultation to reach all stakeholders agreement.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

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#### IV. Priority action area (d)

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##### Enhancing entrepreneurship and employment within ESD

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#### 1. Do you have in your country ESD programs that support students/youth entrepreneurship?

Yes  No

- All key themes of SD are reflected in the National Sustainable Development Strategy Romania 2013 - 2020-2030, Romania's perspective on sustainable development being described through 17 objectives corresponding to the SDGs and having specific targets for 2030.

- In 2017, the legal framework for the organization and functioning of student entrepreneurial societies (SES) was provided as a mechanism for supporting, developing and encouraging entrepreneurship in the university environment, in order to increase the competitiveness of Romanian universities. SES have the following tasks: developing materials for informing and guiding students in the development of business plans and / or financing projects, organizing mentoring activities for students who want to set up a start-up, encouraging mentor-student collaboration, organizing sessions start-up projects, business ideas, organizing competitions to attract funding, coordinating the work of all business incubators, simulated enterprises and other entrepreneurial entities within the higher education institution. All universities already got involved in creating SES.

- Likewise, according to the law, all the students from every faculty are required, at the end of the year, to make an internship. Additionally, highly specialized fields, like medicine for example, require years of practice along with the academic courses. The topics related to social entrepreneurship are implicit approached through formal education within Entrepreneurial Education, a compulsory subject

for 10th grade within high school. Free textbooks for Entrepreneurial Education are provided from the state budget.

- The social entrepreneurship education receives also support by annual organisation of the contest “Business plan” addressed to high school students in Vet system at national level, from 2008-2009 school year and contribute to developing antreprenorial students’ competencies, by facilitating theoretical and practical training conection. In the school year 2019 - 2020, 323 exercise companies (firme de exercitiu) and 646 students were involved in this competition at national level. The county, regional and national stages, which were planned to take place between March and April 2020, did not take place due to the COVID pandemic 19. The *exercise company/simulated company* is a modern teaching method, which aims to develop students' entrepreneurial skills by simulating the internal processes carried out in a real company and its relationships with other companies and institutions.

- Another example, the World Wide Fund for Nature in partnership with the University of Bucharest offers, starting with the 2013-2014 academic year, the *Education for Sustainable Development (EDD) course* addressed to future teachers, respectively students of the faculties of Geography and the Sciences of Education. Education for Sustainable Development (EDD) is an optional course, open to students in year II of study. Each of the three partners - the Faculty of Education Sciences, the Faculty of Geography, WWF - contributes its own perspective and experience, through representatives. The course presents the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (EDD) starting from the theoretical perspective and reaching to practice and field visits.

- The University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Iași targeted in the curricula the following objectives: promoting sustainable development through formal, non-formal and informal education, training teaching staff for creating the necessary competences for including sustainable development in the teaching activity; promoting research in the domain of education on sustainable development; ensuring the access to appropriate instruments and materials for the education on sustainable development; the development of cooperation at the regional level with other factors involved in realizing the sustainable development, especially in the agrarian field, the field of food safety, the training of students in the spirit of entrepreneurship, as well as other categories of staff involved in various programs of continuous training.

- Faculty of Environmental Science and Engineering is one of the most modern and dynamic faculties of the Babes-Bolyai University and it provides training in environmental matters - at undergraduate, master's and doctoral level - in the newest, most attractive and most sought specialisations - Environmental Science (in Romanian and Hungarian), Environmental Engineering, Engineering of Biotechnical and Ecological Systems (undergraduate); Risk Assessment and Environment Safety, Environment Management and Protection, Engineering for Waste Valorisation and Sustainable Development and Environmental Management. More, the Governmental Department for Sustainable Development signed, a partnership agreement with the Research Center for Sustainable Development within the Babeş-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca on cooperating for the collecting of data and developing the necessary indicators. The Research Center has developed a tool for calculating the Sustainable Development Index (SDG index), as well as indicators specific to each sustainable development goal. It should be noted that the evaluation aims at each village, city and municipality in Romania to analyze how it positions itself in relation to the SDGs in SNDDR 2030. Thus, dashboards related to each sustainable development objective, as well as a general dashboard for the Sustainable Development Index (SDG index) for the Romanian communities may be calculated.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

**2. Are there any mechanisms on national level that strengthen students/youth entrepreneurship competences related to ESD?**

Yes  No

- The topics related to social entrepreneurship are implicit approached in the formal education within the classes for entrepreneurial education, a compulsory item in upper secondary education for 10th grade. Free textbooks for Entrepreneurial education classes are provided from the state budget.

- The social entrepreneurship education receives also support by annual organisation of the contest Business plan addressed to high school students in VET system at national level. The competition costs are provided from the state budget.

▪ In higher education, there has been created the legal framework to stimulate the entrepreneurial competencies of students. In 2017, it has been set up the legal framework for the organization and functioning of student entrepreneurial societies (SES) that was provided as a mechanism for supporting, developing and encouraging entrepreneurship in the university environment, in order to increase the competitiveness of Romanian universities. Universities receive public funds for developing materials for informing and guiding students in the development of business plans and / or financing projects, organizing mentoring activities for students who want to set up a start-up, encouraging mentor-student collaboration, organizing sessions start-up projects, business ideas, organizing competitions to attract funding, coordinating the work of all business incubators, simulated enterprises and other entrepreneurial entities within the higher education institution. All public universities already got involved in creating SES.

Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

**3. Are there any incentives for ESD on national level which prepare students/youth for the sustainable entrepreneurship and green jobs?**

Yes  No

▪ In terms of higher education, universities have begun to introduce elements of sustainable development, new disciplines in the compulsory curriculum or in the optional curriculum, depending on the curricula. Topics include climate change, social and economic change management, environmental economics, public policy and environmental management, alternative energies, wastewater, harm reduction, green technologies (over 240 undergraduate and master study programs). In addition to bachelor degree programs, a large number of universities have introduced master programs aimed at sustainable development training.

▪ For instance, the University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Iași promotes sustainable development through formal, non-formal and informal education, organized teachers' training for including sustainable development, research in education on sustainable development, developed cooperation at the regional level with other stakeholders involved in the agrarian field, the food safety, entrepreneurship, for various programs of continuous training.

▪ In the last years in Romania, activities related to sustainable development have expanded constantly, being centred on specific campaigns, various projects, partnerships between local authorities, NGOs, private sector, etc. For instance in its youth-led IMPACT clubs program, which is the most relevant for this indicator, New Horizons Foundation, uses two main methodologies to work with young people aged 12-19. Using experiential learning methods (games and stories, group work, discussions, reflection games), young people go through a curriculum that comprises 4 modules directly related to the sustainable development topics: active citizenship; leadership; social entrepreneurship and employment. In Romania, this foundation has a network of approximately 180 clubs and, annually, a number of approximately 3600 adolescents learning skills, knowledge and values related to the topics mentioned above. Also, the club leaders (98% teachers) acquire skills, knowledge and values needed to work with youths on SD topics. Community service-learning projects are developed with young people who have to decide their own future and the future of their communities by designing and implementing projects benefiting for all community members. Annually, each club implements at least two learning projects on topics of environment and patrimony preservation/protection, support for vulnerable groups, health, eco-tourism etc, supporting their communities to become wealthier and more well-known.

▪ Other examples: Green IMPACT – a network of 32 youth clubs in eco-touristic destinations. They are learning by implementing projects that highlight the local natural and/or cultural patrimony in order to attract tourists. Some examples: organizing events (folklore festivals, gastronomic festivals), marking trails and setting up info boards, editing touristic guides or recipe books, creating a touristic circuit of sheepfolds or water springs, etc. This way they are promoting a more sustainable tourism and contribute to the local development. The last project competition launched for the IMPACT clubs, in which the youths will implement projects under the umbrella of SDG1.

▪ The Department for Sustainable Development, under the Government direct subordination, started in 2019 in partnership with Babeş-Bolyai University, a large consultation of the higher education representatives during the event "Education for sustainable development in higher education" (28 May 2019). The conference brought together over 70 prominent representatives from 20 universities in about 10 major cities. The final aim of the event was to set up an Advisory Board on Agenda 2030 implementation to explore the opportunities that sustainable development brings to the university

environment, as well as how higher education can promote quality education for sustainable development, in the spirit of the 2030 Agenda. Furthermore, in 2020 the profession of "expert in sustainable development", which opens new perspectives for young people, but also new research horizons, was introduced in the Occupations Classifier in Romania.

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## V. COVID-19 and ESD

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### 1. Has COVID-19 impacted the implementation of UNECE Strategy for ESD in your country?

Yes  No   Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

### 2. Does your country face specific challenges for integrating ESD on the national level during COVID-19?

Yes  No   Please indicate if you wish to make a presentation on this topic or if there is an outstanding initiative in your country on this topic

### 3. What are the lessons learnt in your country from COVID-19, which, to your opinion, would strengthen the role of ESD in the national context as a vehicle for empowering youth and citizens to be more resilient in future emergencies?

Yes  No

- The role of education and training is more relevant than ever, increasing the resilience of education systems being one of the priorities in dealing with the sanitary crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Romania appreciated the cooperation at European and global level and recognizes the essential role of the continuous exchange of information on how the continuity of the teaching-learning-assessment process has been ensured at national level.
- Also, the lessons learnt this year must lead to directing national efforts towards the adaptability and flexibility of future-oriented education systems. In order to put this goal into practice, cooperation at regional and global level in education and training must integrate digitalisation, teachers training in digital environment, modern school infrastructure, curriculum flexibility focused on competencies, creating open educational resources, adapted also for technology-mediated learning.
- The project of *National Plan for Recovery and Resilience*, which will be approved after final consultation with the European Commission, highlights the importance of reforms and investments in the next generation, children and young people to promote education and skills, including digital skills, in the context of the crisis caused by COVID-19. One of the main reforms for the planned investments regards digital development in the field of education and training for a digital society and a green economy.
- Moreover, strengthening the links between the school, community and the economy has proven to be a key issue during this period in terms of how schools have managed to meet the challenges, and more efforts are needed to promote the importance of school for the community. At national level, big efforts to address early school leaving and to improve school performance are needed, especially among children in rural and economically disadvantaged areas in recent years. Thus, there is a high need for orientation of funds towards vulnerable schools and direct intervention at school level for every vulnerable child.

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