

Background

Education for sustainable development (ESD) is UNESCO's education sector response to the urgent and dramatic challenges the planet faces. UNESCO's current efforts are spelled out presently with ESD for 2030 ([Education for Sustainable Development: Towards achieving the SDGs \(ESD for 2030\)](#)), the global framework for the implementation of ESD for the period 2020-2030. ESD for 2030 and its [Roadmap](#) build upon the lessons learned from the [Global Action Programme on ESD \(GAP, 2015-2019\)](#) and the [UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development](#) (DESD), and aim to respond to the increased importance placed on ESD to promote the contribution of learning to the survival and prosperity of humanity.

As part of the implementation of *ESD for 2030* and its five Priority Action Areas¹, Member States are encouraged to develop and implement 'country initiative' to mainstream ESD in the country's efforts made for pursuing sustainable development. The country initiative on *ESD for 2030* is to have a national scope, which includes activities that have or potentially could have country-wide impact. It can build on existing activities related to ESD or create a new initiative, if necessary, in the context of SDG 4 contributions (e.g., curriculum review, teacher development, etc.) and expand them where possible. Ideally, it is recommended to integrate *ESD for 2030* country initiative into the existing national frameworks on the SDGs, in particular SDG 4, but also SDG 12 and SDG 13 among others, in order to ensure coherent action at country level.

To support countries with the implementation of ESD for 2030, UNESCO has launched the global [ESD-Net 2030](#). This network aims to provide a platform for **knowledge sharing, collaboration, mutual learning, advocacy, monitoring, and evaluation**, among a wide range of education stakeholders including governmental agencies, civil society organizations, educators, youth, research institutions, UN entities, and international development partners.

Regional Context

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe ([UNECE Strategy for ESD 2021-2030](#)), adopted at the 9th Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference (5-7 October 2022, Nicosia, Cyprus) is fully aligned with the global ESD for 2030 framework. Its four key priority strands on quality education, whole institution approach, digital education, innovation and entrepreneurship, combine and complement many of the issues and needs for ESD and contribute to improving educational systems and supporting other mechanisms (e.g. [ESD Med Action Plan](#), [GENE European Declaration on Global Education 2050](#)). In addition, recent initiatives at EU level, including the policy [Recommendation on learning for the green transition and sustainable development](#) and the [European sustainability competence framework \(GreenComp\)](#) aim to support the education and training sector in embedding sustainability throughout all parts of the system.

¹ 1) Advancing Policies, 2) Transforming Learning Environments, 3) Building Capacity of Educators, 4) Empowering Youth, and 5) Accelerating Local Level Actions.

On March 6th and 7th, 2023, UNESCO, UNECE, and the European Commission organized two virtual webinars as part of the global ESD-Net 2030 for the Europe and North America region. Here participants discussed the challenges of designing ESD initiatives that are relevant to the needs of different countries, regions, and communities. They also highlighted the importance of creating partnerships with key stakeholders such as NGOs, academia, and the private sector, to support the implementation of ESD initiatives, and discussed the potential synergies with UNECE and the work of the European Union on learning for the green transition and sustainable development, and how the role of youth organizations can be further strengthened at policy and implementation stages through regional processes and mechanisms.

Objectives of the Regional Meeting

As part of the global ESD-Net 2030, and as a follow up to the regional webinars on 6-7 March 2023, UNESCO is organizing a regional meeting for member states and stakeholders in Europe-North America to strengthen partnerships, collaboration and mutual learning across multiple stakeholders. The objectives of the Europe-North America regional meeting include to:

- strengthen the ESD for 2030 Country Initiatives, action plans and strategies,
- share good practices, resources, guides, and opportunities available to countries and partner organizations in the region,
- facilitate dialogue, partnership and collaboration between representatives of country level initiatives and other partner organizations,
- identify the ways in which EU council recommendation and the UNECE Strategy for ESD can strengthen and support the UNESCO ESD for 2030 country initiatives, and
- map ideas for stronger collaboration and synergies between countries, UNECE, UNESCO, the European Commission, and other regional partners and stakeholders.

Expected Outputs/Outcomes

The expected outcomes include:

- strengthened visibility, knowledge and capacity to implement ESD at national and regional level,
- strengthened partnerships, synergies and collaboration across stakeholders, and
- strengthened country initiative action plans and activities.

Dates

Monday and Tuesday, 26-27 June 2023

Venue

Room IX
UNESCO Headquarters
7 Place Fontenoy, Paris, France

Participants

Approximately 50 participants will be invited to the Europe-North America regional meeting from the following categories:

1. Representatives from each country's ESD for 2030 Country Initiative working group, including:
 - a) government officials involved in the Country Initiatives (including the focal point and representatives from Ministries of Education, and other ministries involved in the Country Initiative), and
 - b) key stakeholders of each Country Initiative who are expected to enhance national and regional cooperation in further promoting and implementing ESD.
2. Other key regional, national partners, stakeholders and members of ESD-Net 2030 (e.g., international agencies, NGOs, Academic Institutes, youth organizations, etc.).

Meeting format

The regional meeting will be in-person, with some sessions recorded and livestreamed for those who cannot attend in person to learn more about ESD-Net 2030, the ESD country initiatives and other good practices, resources and materials from across the region. The meeting will be technical in nature and include both plenary and breakout/group sessions to enhance dialogue, knowledge exchange, sharing of initiatives and discussion of key questions, challenges and next steps.

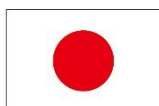
Interpretation will be available in **English and French**.

Organizers

This event is being co-organized by UNESCO, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) and the European Commission.

Contact

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From
the People of Japan