

HAMBURG SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT SUMMIT (HSDS) 2017

“What is good sustainability reporting and what are obstacles and enablers to it?”

HOCH^N-Workshop on Sustainability Reporting for Higher Education Institutions,
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Summary of ideas:

Good sustainability reporting

- Stakeholder orientated / involvement (i.e. students who have a more critical approach) / interaction (to ensure competence)
- Holistic view of the organization
- Comparable / definable / monitorable / standardised? / third-party certified
- Understandable / interesting / readable
- Qualitative and quantitative information
- Linked to SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)
- Smart target / well-defined and realistic goals
- Internationally visible
- Easy accessible
- Mix of numbers and explanations (i.e. not only how many courses on SD there are, but how SD is included)
- One comprehensive database that every part of the HEI works with/ feeds with data
- Taylor-made, based on materiality and HEI's specific SD policy
- Showing overall / long term trends, including problems
- Including social / education / research aspects / materiality (not just environmental aspects)
- Well communication internally / externally
- Contextual explanations (of likely causes for positive and negative aspects)
- Interactive format / visual layout / real-time, life information

Page 1 of 2


“What is good sustainability reporting and what are obstacles and enablers to it?”

Page 2 of 2

Obstacles

- Measuring the impact is difficult
- Collecting data
- Lack of resources
- Greenwashing / missing transparency
- Insufficient environmental accounting
- Image threatening / reputation
- Lacking knowledge, expertise / campus management / nothing to report on
- Network / stakeholders
- Unclear responsibilities (in faculties)
- Differing convictions of how i.e. research and teaching is and should be done
- Insufficient online syllabus-systems so that SD-topics cannot be traced
- Voluntariness

Enablers

- Clear indicators to measure different states of sustainable work
- Guidelines
- Good practice examples
- A framework so that change can be achieved
- Management endorsement
- Qualitative analysis to help establishing a framework
- A network that supports / demands a report (like UNPRME)
- Transfer of knowledge (i.e. if students do the reporting or are included)
- Fulltime staff working  one person assigned and to talk to / dedicated staff
- External support / content management

According questions

- Who cares about it?
- Who reads it and how often?
- Which stakeholder has which ideas/wishes related to the report?
- Is the report part of an integrated management system?
- Is the report linked to the vision of the HEI?
- How is the report linked to the SDGs / values?
- Is the reporting supported/demanded by a ministry?

Contacts

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