The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a frame of reference for internationalisation within Higher Education
Global Engagement in Higher Education

In a constantly changing world, higher education faces major challenges. Formulating a clear answer to the question of how we can properly prepare our students for the life and work of tomorrow has become an almost impossible task. In order to be able to cope with the social, cultural, ecological, economic, technological and political challenges, national and international bodies are calling for a strong focus on transversal competences in education. Examples are the ‘Lifelong learning competences’ (OECD, 2004), ‘Key competences’ (EU, 2007) or ‘21st century skills’ (P21, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2002). Studies such as the ‘ERASMUS+ Higher Education Impact Study’ (European Commission, 2019) refer to the important effect that an international learning experience has on the acquisition of these transversal competences. Hindrix et al. (2013) speak in this context of international competences, a combination of language skills, intercultural competence, global engagement, international disciplinary learning and personal growth. These are essential competences that students must acquire, including those who do not go abroad.

By encouraging internationalisation in higher education through many grant and scholarship programmes, there has been a strong growth in international mobility and partnerships between HEIs worldwide and with (inter)national and local civil society organisations. This sharp rise in international study, internship and research opportunities and the impact this generates worldwide increases the need for a cross-institutional, qualitative and sustainable internationalisation strategy (VLHORA Position Paper, VLUHR International, 2018). The deliberate choice for sustainability is also demonstrated by the Flemish government’s ‘cross-border sustainability’ paper (LNE Department, 2016). The purpose of this paper is to launch the debate on the possibilities for mutual reinforcement between the themes of internationalisation and sustainability.

The ‘UN Sustainable Development Goals’ (Agenda 2030) offer an inspiring frame of reference for linking internationalisation and sustainable development. This ambitious action plan calls on all stakeholders at all levels and all over the world to commit themselves to working for structural change in the face of sustainable development. Higher education institutions are also challenged to assume their responsibilities and thus play an active role in the search for sustainable answers to global problems. International cooperation through education and research can make an important contribution to this.

This ‘inspirational framework for global engagement in higher education’ aims to encourage discussion and reflection within higher education so concrete action can be taken at the various levels of the higher education institution.'
Internationalisation is a broad concept that consists of different aspects and therefore has a wide variety of interpretations. In this text, the most common definition of De Wit & Hunter (2015) is used. They describe internationalisation as “The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff, and to make a meaningful contribution to society.”

Internationalisation of higher education is considered by Knight & Altbach (2006) as an answer to, and even a product of, globalisation. This results in more intense global and local flows of people, ideas and capital in higher education institutions, especially in richer countries. In Flanders, too, the internationalisation of higher education is high on the agenda and has already been anchored in the vision and mission of most higher education institutions.

In the context of the increasing international and interconnected character of society, the demand for and importance of internationalisation of the curriculum will continue to increase. This will happen first and foremost under the influence of the intercultural and super-diverse society of the 21st century, consisting of actors with different backgrounds, goals and frames of reference. As world citizens, we embrace this diversity in order to make intercultural learning possible. Moreover, this internationalisation of the curriculum ensures that students learn to deal with different and international perspectives, which can be an
extra stimulus for critical thinking and world citizenship. In addition, the introduction of new perspectives through the curriculum creates the insight that the knowledge acquired can be applied in a multitude of situations. Furthermore, graduates often end up in international workplace settings or have to interact with actors from various cultural backgrounds. By internationalising the curriculum, institutions of higher education train strong, future-proof professionals (VLHORA, 2017) and thus contribute to the worldwide employability of students (Manning, 2017). The government stimulates internationalisation through the ambitious objectives of Flanders and Europe with regard to mobility, but also through the aspiration to strengthen the international positioning of Flanders and Brussels as a knowledge region and study destination (VLHORA, 2019).

There are also numerous arguments that can be placed outside the internationalisation of the curriculum, but which are important throughout the institution. Higher education institutions can, for example, support the glocal society with relevant innovative know-how and technological developments in the light of their core task of providing social services. As a result, the higher education institution is internationally recognised as a leading knowledge and education institution by both domestic and foreign stakeholders and increases the likelihood of global partnerships with international organisations, institutions and alumni. In addition, every HEI recognises and makes explicit the added value of creating an intercultural student and staff community, both on its own campus and abroad.

In addition to the many positive aspects, internationalisation sometimes also has a downside. First, there is an increased global pressure to attract international students because of geopolitical and commercial motives and because of better global positioning (Peter Scott, 2010). On top of that, the pressure for internationalisation can have the opposite effect to that intended, with superficial exchanges and unsustainable partnerships reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices. Finally, we must not neglect the ecological impact of the increase in the number of mobilities.

Internationalisation can’t be an end in itself, but rather a means that must always be weighed against the contribution it can make to the quality of education, research and its applications. According to the VLHORA Position Paper (2016), it is also a transversal process in all areas of activity within the institution. It is therefore essential that it is embraced by the institution’s management, administration, departments, students and all academic services and supporting units. This comprehensive form of internationalisation has consequences not only for campus life, but also for the outward perspective, the relationships and the partnerships of the institution itself (Hudzik, 2011). There is no doubt that internationalisation has fundamentally changed the higher education landscape, but also the internationalisation strategy itself has undergone a number of changes over the years (Knight, 2013).
The ‘UN Sustainable Development Goals’: a global agenda with adapted concepts

In order to provide a sustainable response to the global challenges and societal trends that led to these challenges, the United Nations developed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. This framework includes 17 overarching sustainable development objectives with 169 targets. The goals are all equally important, for everyone (inclusive) and indivisible. These goals can be clustered into five topics, namely ‘People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership’ and thus reflect the five dimensions or 5 Ps of sustainable development.

The particularity of these SDGs, or ‘Agenda 2030’, is that they bring together both the development agenda (the Millennium Development Goals, 2000-2015) and the agenda for sustainable development, thus turning two parallel processes into one holistic agenda. This raises both to a higher level (Benavot, 2019). This UN action plan runs until 2030 and provides a hopeful framework for achieving a more sustainable world by minimising the negative effects and maximising the positive effects.

In order to achieve this hoped-for change, the SDG framework was drawn up with an emphasis on universality. Every citizen, institution, region and country are asked to make an effort to take their responsibility. However, the focus and implementation of the goals are different for everyone. After all, each actor is confronted to a different extent with challenges in the field of, for example, social inequality, structural poverty, climate change, welfare, high-quality education, water, peace, justice and inclusive coexistence. In addition to the government, civil society and the business world, higher education is also challenged to look for this new role and its own interpretation in the pursuit of the SDGs.

Because of the scale and complexity of the goals, the focus must be on cooperation between countries, levels and domains. The increasing interdependence connects us across borders. Globalisation affects, both the nature of global problems, so-called ‘Wicked Problems’, and the possible solutions. It requires systems thinking: what we do and decide here and now has consequences for the rest of the world; what has negative consequences for nature is also negative.
for people in the short or long term; remote problems will sooner or later, because of energy scarcity, inequality, illiteracy, health and political mismanagement, also become ours. In short, “Everything is connected with everything and there are no completely separate entities; there is interdependence between everything and everyone.” (Aymara saying). That is why the SDG framework places a strong emphasis on promoting and strengthening global partnerships to achieve sustainable development.

The universality of the SDG framework also transcends the North-South concepts of development cooperation and the associated outdated terminology of donor/recipient and giving aid/being dependent. We do not deny that there are low-income, middle-income and high-income countries that have very specific challenges, but we do critically question the fact that only low-income countries are in ‘development’. In this context, the term ‘development’ has become a hollow concept and is mainly identified with growth according to a neo-liberal approach. Meanwhile, it has become clear that this type of development is neither economically, nor ecologically or socially sustainable. In this respect, high-income countries are also developing countries. Differentiation becomes a necessary complement to universality, taking into account the different national realities and capacities (Brems & Lamsens, 2016). This reasoning is partly in line with the shift in emphasis from the Millennium Development Goals (until 2015) to the Sustainable Development Goals (until 2030).

In our pursuit of a fair and sustainable world, it is therefore important to adapt our outdated - and often condescending - language to the current context. The time has come to adopt new concepts adapted to today’s realities and to make clear choices in doing so. As Dirk Geldof puts it in his book ‘Superdiversity’: “Language is not neutral and colours our view and our thinking. Words may not change realities, but they do influence them.” It is therefore crucial to dare to name outdated, generalising and stereotyping concepts and to differentiate them where necessary. The consequences of using stereotypes and prejudices can be far-reaching. They contribute to unequal power relations and discrimination (Charkaoui, 2019) and thus deprive people of opportunities for development. For instance, we might think we understand what we are referring to when we talk about developing countries, the North-South gap, the global South or DAC countries. But is that really the case? What exactly do we want to express with this and what image do we create?

Under the impulse of the SDGs, a new wind of equal global cooperation may be blowing, however, as long as we continue to make use of an outdated terminology, we will undo this paradigm shift by generating ‘old’ associations in our innovative way of acting.

Based on the SDG framework and its underlying agenda, which focuses on an adapted and differentiated language use, the time has come to take on our exemplary role in higher education as well, in order to achieve a positive and sustainable transformation of internationalisation in higher education.
In the context of SDGs, the importance of education for sustainable development is mainly recognised in SDG 4. This objective calls for “inclusive and equitable quality education and the promotion of lifelong learning opportunities for all” and, in particular target 4.7 “Ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.” Although there is only one objective within the SDG framework in which education is central, it is important to also see the interconnectedness of education with all other SDGs and the extent to which education can support their implementation.

It is therefore undisputed that every higher education institution has a great deal of responsibility to make an essential contribution to the development of a worldwide sustainable society. Many institutions are therefore attempting to integrate the SDG framework into the policy and operational management of the institution. This often includes the internationalisation aspect. Primarily, reference is made to the impact of mobilities and the reduction of CO2 emissions. This is, of course, a very important point, but it is not the only one. The role of HEIs in the context of the objectives for sustainable development should rather be linked to the core tasks of higher education, namely knowledge transfer through the provision of education, knowledge creation by carrying out practice-based research and making the knowledge acquired available for the benefit of society.
In their role as education providers, higher education institutions can provide students with the knowledge, skills and motivation they need, so that they are sufficiently equipped to be able to assume their responsibilities towards the SDGs. Higher education is challenged to educate citizens with a cosmopolitan attitude towards the world. This cosmopolitan worldview, described by Ulrich Beck (2002), can be seen as an intellectual attitude in which the student acknowledges that the old distinction between the individual and the global, between the national and the international and between the known and the foreign has faded. The “we versus they” thinking, which has served for so long to separate groups, nations, peoples, religions and social classes, is no longer of any use. Identities are interconnected and merge into one another, as well in the world around us, but also within ourselves.

Higher education institutions also have the social task to help formulate innovative answers to the major issues of our time. They can also be an important strategic actor in promoting social, ecological and economic development. More than ever, there is a need for international knowledge exchange, capacity building and research. After all, society needs a generation of competent global citizens who can deal with the current uncertainties and complexities and who can offer innovative and often interdisciplinary solutions. Education remains the driving force behind innovation, economic development and social welfare. In their role as innovators and of practice-oriented research, higher education institutions can stimulate the development of social and technological developments and solutions to SDG challenges (SDSN, 2017).

Finally, higher education institutions also play a key role in informing and raising awareness among both other sectors and the general public and in advocating the importance of SDGs (SDSN, 2017). In this context, higher education institutions, in their role as a hub of sustainable innovation, can form a connecting factor between other (inter)national stakeholders. International partnerships, contacts, events and networks are an important source of inspiration and offer a challenging learning experience. In addition, the higher education institution can initiate joint research projects, improve the quality of its own research through joint ventures and build the capacity of international partners through research related to the SDGs. In this context, HEIs can act as a neutral platform (SDSN, 2017) and play a facilitating role in the exchange of knowledge and expertise with and between partners, communities, regions and countries on how to tackle common challenges.

At the same time, it is recommended that higher education institutions also question themselves critically: does our education effectively encourage (under)graduates to contribute to global sustainability, to make a global commitment? Are our students aware of their contribution to the challenges we face? Are we, as an educational institution, sufficiently critical of our own actions? Does today’s campus culture reflect the norms and values that tomorrow’s citizens need for a sustainable future? Do we have sufficient expertise on campus to ensure the success of relevant partnerships? (Altbach, 2013)
An inspirational framework for global engagement

Since internationalisation is part of the institutional vision of all Flemish institutions of higher education and the SDGs are becoming increasingly embedded in society, it is time to review the regular activities linked to internationalisation, by means of this ‘inspirational framework for global engagement’, and thus broaden the perspective on global engagement. In this holistic framework, both the inclusive, the international and the sustainability agenda are combined to provide inspiration for discussion and dialogue within higher education institutions.

Global engagement is seen as a response to the greater forces of globalisation that affect virtually all aspects of life and society today. Global Engagement is often used to capture the interconnections and activities that define this new way of thinking and working (McGill Peterson & Matross Helms, 2013). These activities vary in scope and take place at a variety of levels within higher education systems. In essence, a global commitment to the internationalisation of higher education means entering into meaningful collaborations with partners all over the world. It reflects a movement that goes beyond traditional international activities. It implies a deeper and more long-term commitment based on reciprocity and equality (Matross-Helms & Rumbly, 2012).

As there are differences between the nature and activities of global engagement at each level of the institution, there are also differences in motivation and the areas of interest between the different actors may overlap or diverge. Nevertheless, everything and everyone is needed to come up with sustainable solutions to the social problems and thus to realise the SDGs. After all, there is no greater universal challenge than ensuring human survival on this planet.

Accountability of the structure of the framework

The ‘inspirational framework on global engagement in higher education’ is in line with a number of leading frameworks mentioned above and assembles the information relevant to internationalisation in a single frame, focusing on higher education institutions. It was built based on the 5 Ps of sustainable development: People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership (1st column). In establishing this document framework, it became clear that the 5 Ps are inextricably linked and that a clear demarcation per dimension was therefore necessary in order to avoid repetition and to keep it readable. We are thus well aware of the interdependence between the various dimensions of sustainable development, the SDGs and the accompanying list of possible action points.

The further subdivision is based on strategic objectives (2nd column), in which we want to present a number of possible objectives and the related action points (3rd column). This aims to inspire us to make certain choices in the policy on internationalisation in higher education institutions and consists of a non-exhaustive list of possible action points. For the subdivision of the action points, it was decided to list them in the order of ‘level of engagement’, at the macro, meso and micro levels. We realise that this might be a complicated exercise because each of these levels has its own specific, but often overlapping, responsibilities.

The proposed action points are considered to be possible examples and are deliberately formulated in general terms, so every higher education institution has the freedom to look for a specific interpretation, adapted to the context and functioning of the institution. The institution-specific actions may be added in a 4th column.
### SDGs

**People**

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<th>Strategic Objectives for 2030</th>
<th>Possible Actions</th>
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<td>Higher education institutions are determined to make their students aware of their role as world citizens. In doing so, the HEI provides all those involved within the institution with the opportunity to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, with a focus on acquiring competences for sustainable action and international competences, that prepare them for life and work in a globalised society.</td>
<td><strong>A.</strong> The human resources department pursues a gender-balanced recruitment and performance policy in which the International Competences for sustainable development relevant to the position are included in the job profile.</td>
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| The HEI offers them the opportunity to develop their full potential in a climate of dignity and equality. This also implies that the HEI pays attention to interpersonal relationships and dialogue in which equity, reciprocity, gender equality and respect go hand in hand. | **B.** The education policy...  
  - embeds the International Competences and the competences for Sustainable Development in the curriculum of each programme.  
  - sets up ‘Mobility Windows’ in which there is room for an international experience.  
  - facilitates opportunities for interdisciplinary learning and collaboration.  
  - provides a programme for students, who will have an international experience, focussing on pre-departure training, follow-up during the mobility and re-entry debriefing, with respect for diversity, cultural characteristics and equal relationships. |
| **1.1.** The HEI has ensured that the necessary structures are in place so that all students and staff can acquire the International Competences and competences for Sustainable Development. The HEI has screened all the structures set up against the principles of Universal Design (for Learning).  
  **International Competences:**  
  - personal growth  
  - intercultural competence  
  - language skills  
  - global engagement  
  - international disciplinary learning  
  **Key Competences for Sustainable Development:**  
  - normative competence  
  - anticipatory competence  
  - strategic competence  
  - interpersonal competence  
  - systems thinking competence | **C.** The service for educational development and professionalisation ...  
  - offers online and @campus professionalisation courses for all employees with regard to International Competences and competences for Sustainable Development, such as language courses, didactics of the International Competences, dealing with diversity etc.  
  - strengthens the capacity of staff in terms of international cooperation through the exchange of experience and good practices amongst staff.  
  - encourages its staff to set up awareness-raising initiatives that promote global citizenship. |
|  | **D.** The HEI increases visibility and communicates, both internally and externally, tailored to the ‘recipient’, about the international policy and the possibilities for acquiring International Competences, both @home and via mobilities, paying attention to the gender dimension¹¹ (via newsletters, social media, internal platforms, website etc.). |
|  | **E.** The department of student affairs ...  
  - creates equal opportunities¹² for all students to gain an international experience by removing all possible barriers (including financial, physical and mental barriers).  
  - offers qualitative support¹³ for both incoming and outgoing students with specific needs (e.g. short mobility options, targeted mobility grants, qualitative support before, during and after a mobility period, a bridge year for students with a migration background). |
### 1.2. The HEI stimulates the intercultural mix in the institution by offering a welcoming learning and working environment for all staff and students in order to promote academic and social integration.

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<td><strong>A.</strong> Adapts the infrastructure of the campus and the organisation to an intercultural and international community.</td>
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<td><strong>B.</strong> Takes into account the intercultural mix in the various training programmes and actions to promote dialogue between cultures and nationalities.</td>
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<td><strong>C.</strong> Eliminates barriers to inclusive participation in various bodies within the institution.</td>
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<td><strong>D.</strong> Offers courses in foreign languages for international students and thus stimulates the intercultural mix of students on campus.</td>
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<td><strong>E.</strong> Organising institution-wide and programme-specific activities, in order to achieve intercultural encounters and exchange knowledge.</td>
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<td><strong>F.</strong> Considers students as partners in the learning process and uses their own intercultural and international experiences as added value for the educational process and during the classes.</td>
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<td><strong>G.</strong> Organises a buddy system for international students and staff.</td>
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### 1.3. The HEI has stimulated the passion for global engagement among all stakeholders.

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<td><strong>A.</strong> Shows willingness to reflect critically on one’s own culture and tradition/society and to have a broad reflection on the global context.</td>
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<td><strong>B.</strong> Inspires and activates its staff and students to act sustainably and actively as global citizens by validating social and global engagement in the job description and curricula.</td>
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### Strategic Objectives for 2030

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<th>SDGs</th>
<th>PLANET</th>
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| In all international commitments, we make an environmentally conscious screening, take into account the ecological capacity of our planet and link this to concrete actions. We always consider: “Does what we do meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs?” (Brundtland report, 1987) | **2.1.** The HEI has made ecologically responsible choices within its international policy. | A. Screens and evaluates existing international partnerships on the basis of ecological criteria.  
B. Actively searches for projects that help provide innovative answers to ecological issues.  
C. Exchanges knowledge and expertise to serve (innovative) eco-technological developments.  
D. Consciously chooses to make ecological choices in its actions and to be CO2-neutral, among others in purchasing policy, organisation of events, travel etc. |
| | **2.2.** The HEI has a detailed plan for sustainable travel for students and staff. | A. Establishes criteria (taking into account resources, time and substantive impact) that must be met to justify air travel.  
B. Creates a list of destinations that can be reached in a sustainable way and stimulates this alternative way of travelling for both students and staff.  
C. Encourages the taking of direct flights and airlines with the smallest climate footprint.  
D. Calculates the climate damage and takes measures to compensate the carbon dioxide emissions of the air travel made by a financial contribution to sustainable projects (e.g. a fund, compensation programmes etc.). |
| | **2.3.** The HEI has offered and developed virtual alternatives for mobility. | A. Creates and supports digital tools and learning platforms for knowledge sharing and collaborative learning and cooperation, and responds to similar offers from partners. (e.g. video conference, web conference, web lectures, social media, virtual mobility etc.)  
B. Uses digital tools to strengthen the international dimension in the curricula. |
<p>| | <strong>2.4.</strong> Students and staff members are aware of their ecological impact, can reflect critically on this and adapt their personal actions accordingly. | A. Informs, sensitises and activates its staff and students by means of professionalisation programmes and institution-related initiatives. |</p>
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<tr>
<td>7. Affordable and clean energy</td>
<td>3. 1. The HEI has initiated globally relevant research projects (through research, project work, Master and Bachelor theses) and has participated in already existing ones.</td>
<td>A. Defines criteria for globally relevant research questions, based on the expertise and research focus of the institution, and in consultation with international partners.</td>
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<td>8. Decent work and economic growth</td>
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<td>B. Actively seeks out and consciously opts for broad, interdisciplinary and sustainable research projects.</td>
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<td>9. Industry, Innovation and infrastructure</td>
<td>3. 2. The HEI, together with stakeholders, has offered innovative answers to global challenges.</td>
<td>C. Actively looks for the expertise and financial resources to develop a sustainable answer.</td>
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<td>10. Reduced inequalities</td>
<td>3. 3. The HEI has ensured that the results achieved served the institution, the workplace and society.</td>
<td>D. Manages the selected research projects in a qualitative and transparent manner.</td>
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By doing so, we want to contribute to the general well-being and prosperity within both the institution and society, but we are well aware that endless growth on a finite planet is unsustainable.

A. Encourages research on ‘wicked problems’, paying attention to ecological sustainability and social justice (science for sustainability).

B. Allows time, space and resources to acquire new knowledge and expertise and to share knowledge and expertise already acquired.

A. Facilitates collaboration between (applied) research, education and internationalisation.

B. Uses its own platforms (e.g. website, newsletter etc.) to disseminate English written information about research results.
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<tr>
<td>The HEI assumes its societal role and responsibility as a defender of universal rights and justice for all. We advocate ‘education that promotes a culture of peace and non-violence, alongside world citizenship and the appreciation of cultural differences’ in order to contribute to fulfilling SDG 16. The HEI hereby attempts to achieve ‘peaceful, inclusive and sustainable societies’.</td>
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<td>4.1. The HEI is an advocate for peace, social and ecological justice within the HEI itself, in the region, but also at national and international level.</td>
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<td>A. Builds a structural commitment within all possible facets of the HEI with regard to peace, social and ecological justice.</td>
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<td>B. Critically questions current practices and, where necessary, adapts the curriculum and existing structures.</td>
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<td>C. Informs, sensitises, inspires and activates employees and students on broad social themes (UN Earth Day, International Peace Day, International Migrant’s Day, World Water Day etc.).</td>
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<td>4.2. The HEI uses adapted, non-stereotyping images and language.</td>
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<td>A. Screens her documents in function of non-stereotyping imaging and terminology about other countries, continents and cultures.</td>
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<td>B. Adjusts an outdated and stereotyped discourse in her learning material where necessary.</td>
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<td>C. Adapts internal and external communication, using nuanced concepts and imaging.</td>
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<td>D. Raises awareness among both staff and students about the use of language and images and unconsciously internalised racism and its effects.</td>
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In order to be able to respond to the increasing complexity of global challenges, the HEI consciously opts for qualitative and sustainable partnerships with organisations, both at home and abroad. A sustainable partnership can bring together people and organisations from different sectors in a structured way in order to bring about meaningful societal change and thus achieve the objectives of Agenda 2030.

In doing so, we build equal and reciprocal relationships in which we learn from each other, in an intercultural dialogue, starting from the available opportunities and with attention for an interdisciplinary approach.

The HEI strives to only enter into partnerships that transcend the exchange of students, and that are based on widely supported research projects, knowledge exchange, capacity building and the strengthening of global networks.

5.1. The HEI has a qualitative and sustainable partner policy that focuses on international cooperation with attention to the following transversal themes:
- capacity building
- ownership
- reciprocity
- recognition of each other’s interests
- the ethical framework
- the ecological impact
- a win-win for both parties.

A. Regarding the Partnership Policy
- Sets up institution-wide structures so that policy decisions are made by means of interdisciplinary cooperation and the exchange of knowledge.
- Invests time, financial resources and staff in the partnership policy based on strategic decisions taken in the HEI.
- Is willing to invest time, resources and staff in getting to know the partner (physically and digitally), both in terms of operational structure and in terms of organisational culture and study programmes.
- Defines criteria for qualitative partnerships and supports the people from the different study programmes in the screening of their current and future partnerships by using existing tools such as ©LEMONOC and ©EQUATIC.
- Is committed to honest partnerships that reflect the recognition and explicitness of both interests and expectations, as well as the uneven distribution of power.
- Seals the cooperation with partners through a Memorandum of Understanding that also focuses on the evaluation of the partnership and on an exit strategy.
- Shares information about the partners through a communication platform.
- Invests in train the trainer programmes.
- Takes on a facilitating role in the exchange of knowledge between global partners.

B. Regarding the education and research partners
- Creates and supports the possibility of reciprocal mobility for both students and staff.
- Supports and facilitates the establishment of joint ventures at curriculum level, e.g. through joints, regional and cross-border degrees etc.

C. Regarding the internship partners
- Writes the local and international internship policy with particular attention to the International Competences and their evaluation.
- Consults with its partners, based on the mutual expectations of both partners, on the selection, preparation, coaching and evaluation of the students.
- Focuses on capacity building and strengthening and knowledge exchange by means of the train the trainer principle.
- Establishes a professionalisation programme for local and global internship supervisors.
| 5.2. The HEI has strengthened the outward perspective and global engagement through a multi-stakeholder approach. | A. Develops an institutionally wide and transversal country policy in which the various stakeholders play an active role. |
| | B. Engages in both existing and start-up country platforms and thematic networks at local, regional, provincial, national and international level. |
| | C. Establishes an alumni network of incoming and outgoing staff and exchange students and captures and shares the acquired knowledge and competences. |

| 5.3. The HEI is aware of its impact on the partner. | A. Critically questions itself and its international collaborations and verifies them against international frameworks. |
| | B. Develops a methodology for impact assessment of the partnership. |
| | C. Consistently monitors, evaluates and, if necessary, adapts the partnerships. |
| | D. Informs and sensitises its staff and students about their impact on the partner. |
1. Feedback on this document can be sent by e-mail to lies.verstraete@vives.be and tine.ternest@vives.be

2. In Flanders, we can use various grant and scholarship programmes for internationalisation, such as EPOS - ERASMUS+, VLIR-UOS, VLUHR-i scholarships from the Flemish Government, the Province of West Flanders etc.

3. The term ‘glocal’ connects the local with the global. Something that is glocal is both cosmopolitan and regional.

4. The Brundtland report (1987) describes sustainable development as follows: ‘Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. In 2013 Griggs et al. proposed a new working definition: ‘Development that meets the needs of the present while safeguarding Earth’s life support system, on which the welfare of current and future generations depends’. In 1995, John Elkington launched the Triple Bottom Line, which consisted of 3 P’s (People, Planet and Profit) as a tool to contribute to sustainable development. Agenda 2030 extended the 3 P’s to 5 P’s -People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership- because Partnership and Peace are prerequisites to be successful in the other three P’s as well.

5. ‘Wicked Problems’ were first named and described by Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber in 1973. A characteristic of these problems is that they have neither a clear formulation nor a definitive solution. They are unstructured, complex and value-driven. In addition, the problems can be approached from different points of view, which requires an interdisciplinary approach in which all parties need each other in order to achieve a solution (Head & Alford, 2008).

6. Cooperation is crucial for the SDGs and is therefore included in Objective 17, and more specifically in Objective 17.16: ‘Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries’.

7. 4.7.a. ‘Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, nonviolent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.’
   4.7.b. ‘By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.’
   4.7.c. ‘By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing states.’

8. Target 3.7: ‘By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.’
   Target 8.6: ‘By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.’
   Target 12.8: ‘By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.’
   Target 13.3: ‘Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.’
   Target 16.7: ‘Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.’

9. With regular activities linked to internationalisation, we mean, for example, offering a positive and qualitative foreign experience for outgoing and incoming students and staff, international interdisciplinary research and internationalisation@home.
10. The list of actions is, as far as possible, drawn up in accordance with the macro-meso micro level. With these levels we mean:

- At the institutional level (macro level), the term refers to all centralised services of the HEI, such as student affairs, human resources, communication and education policy. These include the signing of MoUs, double and triple degrees, branch campuses in other countries, international research projects, franchising, international networks and English-language bachelor’s degrees. At this level, advice from various governmental bodies and institutions must be taken into account.
- The level of the department (meso level) includes the policy and practice of both the departments and the study programme. This includes, for example, internationalisation of the curriculum, incoming and outgoing staff and student mobility, internationalisation@home, cross-border degrees, faculty research networks, virtual mobility (e.g. projects, MOOCs and CLIL activities), group mobilities and Intensive Programmes.
- At the individual level (micro level), it covers knowledge exchange and capacity building of students and staff through all forms of mobility, international contacts and partnerships.

11. Integrating the gender dimension in texts ensures neutral communication that is free of gender stereotypes. Tips and tricks can be found on the website of the Institute for Gender Equality. (https://igvmiefh.belgium.be/nl/publicaties/overview?f%5B0%5D=im_field_publication_theme%3A2575)


13. Linked to the Charter registration of disadvantaged groups, we speak of students from underrepresented groups (students with a disability, students with a migration background, newcomers, scholarship students (and almost scholarship students), working students, non-Dutch-speaking students, multilingual students and students from short or medium-skilled environments).

14. By virtual mobility we mean a collection of ICT-supported activities, organised at the level of the institution, which, in a context of learning and/or teaching, realise or facilitate international cooperation (KU Leuven).

15. Science for Sustainability (from the Advisory Memorandum (2015) Department of LNE): ‘Sustainability science is a specific interpretation of research for sustainability, characterised by inter- and transdisciplinarity and by an explicit recognition of the normative character of research (Kates et al., 2001; Dedeurwaerder, 2013).’

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