



The Academy of Business in Society

ABIS Sustainability Assessment

Guide

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Taking institutions to greater sustainability heights

The ABIS Sustainability Assessment is a management model designed to integrate sustainability in higher education institutions (HEIs).

Its purpose is to report to decision-makers of these institutions:

- The actual status of sustainability implementation at institutional and academic level
- How to effectively enable sustainability initiatives
- The impact of sustainability actions on the institution's stakeholders
- Suggestions for priorities in developing sustainability strategies

Our hope is for each HEI to use to this tool to engage in continuous improvement by gaining awareness on how its enablers are leading to sustainable transformation (or not), and what can be improved

The report

Any HEI undergoing the Assessment will receive a tailored report by ABIS, as well as step-by-step support and instructions. ABIS will provide the institution with a survey containing different sets of questions directed to different internal and external stakeholders.

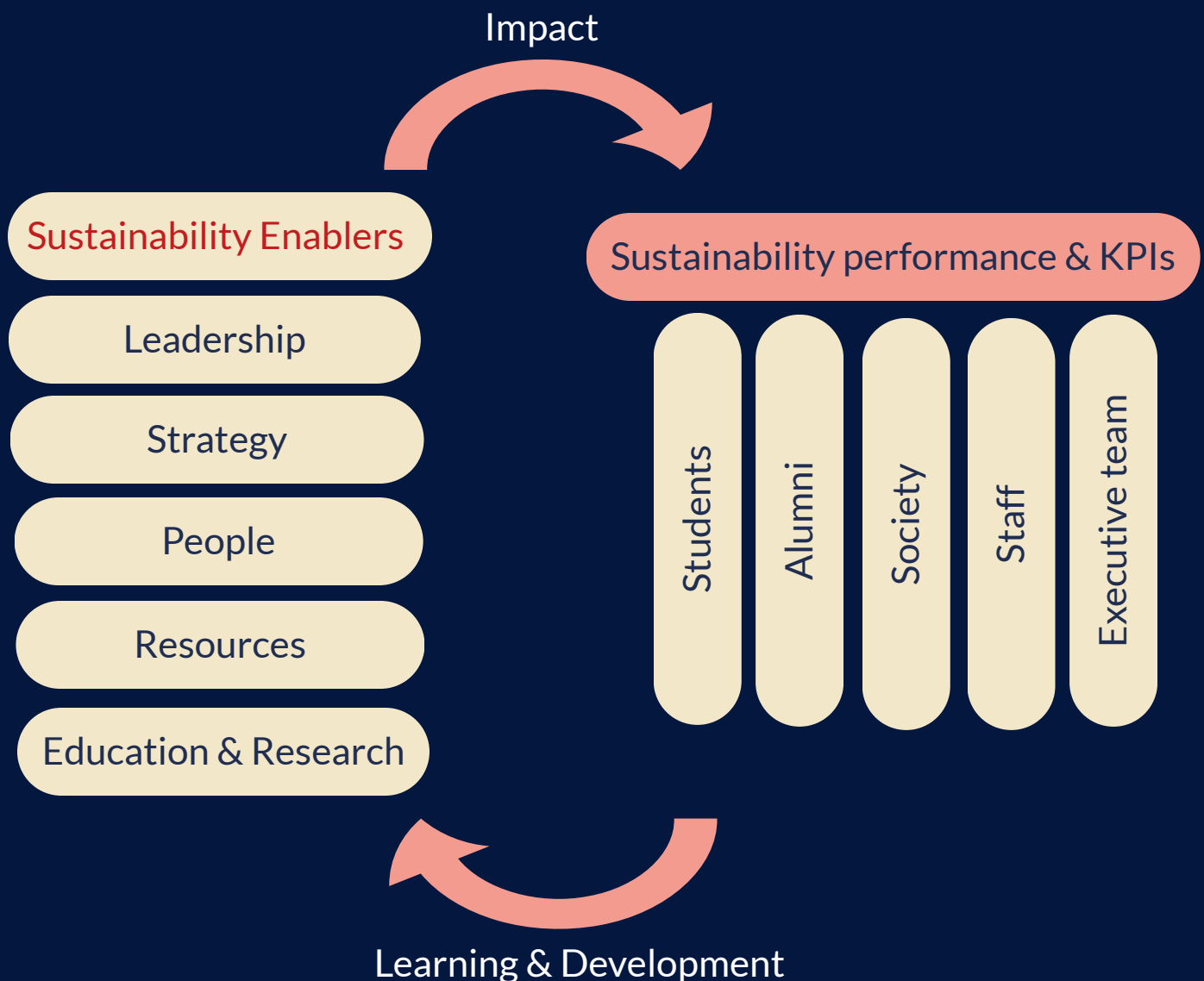
As a result, each individual respondent will need to spend only 30 minutes answering the survey. Once all required respondents (identified and nominated by the HEI) have completed the questionnaire, the answers will be processed by ABIS based on the SPA framework and will result in the institution's management report.

The intended recipients of the report are HEI executive management teams. The report can be used as part of the self-assessment report (SAR) for the institution's national or international accreditation purposes. The ABIS Sustainability Assessment report will provide context and evidence of the institution's sustainability initiatives and performance. The accreditations standards regarding sustainability and responsibility are included in the Assessment.

The framework

The ABIS Sustainability Assessment addresses a HEI's sustainability enablers and performances.

Its framework illustrates how sustainability results (with respect to internal performance, students, staff, alumni and business as well as society) are enabled by leadership and strategy and delivered through research and education processes, people, and resources.



The framework

The model:

- recognizes that there are many pathways to move towards sustainability integration and excellent performance
- highlights a virtuous innovation and learning cycle where the enablers can be improved by using feedback from the stakeholders impacted by the institution's sustainability performance, leading to increasingly better results

In this cycle, HEIs can be at a specific institutional learning and development stage. 5 learning and development stages have been identified.

The assessment

The assessment looks at HEIs across two dimensions: the enablers and performances of institutional sustainability, as managed by the institution and as perceived by the five stakeholders.

The following pages provide an overview of the five enablers, with their corresponding sub factors. In addition, it also shows the four stakeholder category of perceptions. Lastly, how the defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are measured internally.

Sustainability enablers

Leadership

- Direction
- Planning
- Implementation

How management enhances the HEI achievement of sustainability, develop values required for successful implementation. They ensure they are personally involved and engage key stakeholders.

Strategy

- Orientation
- Creation
- Implementation

How the HEI implements its sustainability vision and commitments via a stakeholder focused strategy, supported by relevant priorities, plans, objectives, targets and processes.

People

- Organization
- Development
- Respect

How academic and non-academic staff are able to take ownership for sustainability activities on the individual, team and institution-wide level and the way they contribute to the implementation of the sustainability strategy.

Sustainability enablers

Resources

- Finance
- Expertise
- Infrastructure

How the HEI plans, allocates its internal resources (e.g. infrastructure, finance, IT) and manages external partnerships in order to support its sustainability strategy and its effective implementation.

Education & Research

- Design
- Quality control
- Improvement

How the HEI fully integrates sustainability through designing, managing and improving implementation of sustainability across research and studies, thereby generating increasing value and impact for its stakeholders and society at large.

Sustainability performances

The HEIs sustainability performance is assessed from the perspectives and the perceptions of five institutional stakeholder groups, including:



Students

Perception of sustainability in studies, their influence on curriculum development and their influence on the institution's sustainability agenda



Alumni

Perception of institution's impact, the influence on curriculum development, and the influence on the institution's sustainability agenda.



Society

Perception of institution's impact, the influence on curriculum development, and the influence on the institution's sustainability agenda.



Academic & non-academic staff

Perception of institution's impact, the influence on the institution's sustainability agenda, its possibilities in initiating activities and the perceived support for sustainability competence development.



Executive team

How the executive team defines their sustainability KPIs, the way they measure and use their it as developed and defined by themselves.

Learning & development stages

In this dynamic assessment framework, an analysis of the interplay among the sustainability enablers and performance offers valuable insights on the HEI sustainability learning journey.

The assessment calculates an overall learning and development stage of any HEI with regards to sustainability through pointing to areas for improvement of the HEI sustainability performance and impact. Below are 5 learning and development stages that have been identified:

Level 1 - Starter

Growing awareness, fragmented approach to sustainability

Level 2 - Developing

Localized and repeatable sustainability initiatives with a degree of coordination

Level 3 - Mature

Common sustainability processes and approaches fully integrated in institutional practices

Level 4 - Optimized

Sustainability processes are measured and the HEI is adaptive and outward looking towards its local context

Level 5 - Advanced

HEI sustainability processes are continuously improved with an outward looking approach to the global context

The survey

The ABIS Sustainability Assessment is sent via a survey platform to key institutional stakeholders in agreement with the HEI top management.

The institution nominates and delivers to ABIS the contacts of relevant respondents for the survey from the various stakeholder groups. The ABIS Sustainability Assessment Report will be delivered to the institution's executive management.

There are 70 questions in the survey, with subsets of questions designed for different groups of respondents:

- **Top management:** the subset includes 55 questions from the enablers as well as 4 questions on the internal sustainability performance indicators
- **Internal stakeholders** (academic and non-academic): the subset includes 50 questions from the enablers and the staff section of the performance indicators (4 questions)
- **External stakeholders:** the subset includes the relevant section of the performances for each stakeholder category (only 4 questions per stakeholder category)

The offer

2 years

institutional certification after completing the ABIS Sustainability Assessment. During this period, the HEI commits to take steps to advance its sustainability implementation.

ABIS provides:


Survey
assessment


Reporting



Delivered to institution's
executive management

Fees:

€1500

ABIS members

€4500

Non-members



About ABIS

ABIS - The Academy of Business in Society is a business-academic network working to advance the role of business in society through research and education.

Our ambition is to make a significant contribution to the debate and the practice involved in equipping current and future business leaders with the knowledge, skills and capabilities for the long-term success of business in society.