

PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVES INFORMATION SHEET

Name of the Partnership/Initiative

Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP)

Expected date of initiation: September 2002

Expected date of completion: December 31, 2007

Partners Involved:

Governments:

Intergovernmental organizations: UNESCO

Major groups: Association of University Leaders for a Sustainable Future (ULSF)
COPERNICUS-CAMPUS
International Association of Universities (IAU)

Other: It is the intent to engage other stakeholders and partners (such as United Nations University), with a particular attempt to involve universities from the South.

Leading Partner:

The leading partner rotates as the GHESP Chair moves from Major Group to Major group.

Name of the lead partner (September 2002 – March 2003)

International Association of Universities

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Main objectives of the Partnership/Initiative

In 2000, three non-governmental organizations active in the field of higher education (ULSF, IAU, COPERNICUS-CAMPUS) and UNESCO agreed to join forces and signed a first *Memorandum of Understanding*, to collaborate and undertake joint actions in the area of higher education and sustainable development. As a result of the work program of the Commission on Sustainable Development, as follow up to the World Conference on Higher Education, and in anticipation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), the Global Higher Education for Sustainability Partnership (GHESP) was formed. In October 2001, a conference on “Higher Education and Sustainability: towards the World Summit on Sustainable Development 2002” was held in Lüneburg, Germany; it resulted in the *Lüneburg Declaration on Higher Education for Sustainable Development* (www.lueneburg-declaration.de) in which the partners committed to specific activities for the further implementation of *Agenda 21* after Johannesburg. GHESP is a global initiative, and its primary emphasis as a type II partnership is capacity building in the global south. In September 2002, the partnership will be renewed for a five year period in order

to implement this type 2 partnership initiative and achieve the following general objectives:

1. Promote better understanding, and more effective implementation of strategies for the incorporation of sustainable development in universities and other higher education institutions, beginning with the over 1,000 signatories to the charters and declarations sponsored by the partner organizations. Emphasis is put on the need for interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and research;
2. Undertake a global review and assessment of progress in making sustainability central to curriculum, research, outreach and operations in institutions of higher education. In so doing, assist UNESCO in its role within the UN system with respect to education for sustainable development;
3. Identify, share and disseminate widely, via internet, in print, through seminars and other venues, effective strategies, models and good practices for promoting higher education for sustainable development (HESD);
4. Make recommendations on HESD based on the partnership's research and review and in consultation with key stakeholders from North and South, including business, governments, other UN bodies such as the UNU, as well as other relevant non-governmental organizations;
5. Demonstrate that it is possible to form a partnership of non-governmental organizations working closely with the UN system to develop and implement a joint action plan addressed to achieve common goals; and analyse and evaluate this experience as an international demonstration project.

Please also provide a brief description of the relationship of the Partnership/Initiative with the objectives of *Agenda 21* as well as relevant goals and objectives of the *United Nations Millennium Declaration*:

GHESP objectives outlined above strongly support the three priorities identified in Chapter 36 of *Agenda 21*, namely the need to:

- (a) Reorient education towards sustainable development;
- (b) Increase public awareness; and
- (c) Promote training.

The objectives are also in line with the fundamental values highlighted in the 2000 *United Nations Millennium Declaration* and especially I.6, "Respect for nature", and paragraph IV, "Protecting our Common Environment". GHESP adheres to the principle objective that "prudence must be shown in the management of all living species and natural resources, in accordance with the precepts of sustainable development. Only in this way can the immeasurable riches provided to us by nature be preserved and passed on to our descendants". GHESP believes that higher education can contribute to changing "the current unsustainable patterns of production and consumption [...] in the interest of our future welfare and that of our descendants".

In reaching out to so many universities around the world, GHESP contributes to putting sustainable development on the agenda of heads of higher education institutions and urges them to adopt a new ethic of conservation and stewardship. (See: Chapter 107 – B, C and D of the Draft Plan of Implementation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development).

Expected results:

- Joint publication by IAU and ULSF of vol. 15, no.2 of the journal *Higher Education Policy* and vol. 3, issue 3 of the *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, on “Sustainability and Higher Education: Initiatives and Agendas.” Guest edited by ULSF and completed in June/July 2002, the publications are to be distributed in July/August 2002 in preparation for the WSSD;
- In conjunction with IAU’s Administrative Board Meeting and an International Conference on Globalization, GHESP will hold a special partners meeting as a direct Follow-up to Johannesburg, in Quebec City, Canada, on September 21, 2002. A new Action Plan, taking WSSD adopted resolutions into account, will then be defined.
- IAU will solicit the interest of a number of higher education institutions in developing countries that are interested and able to play an active role within the region in furthering GHESP goals. IAU will use its own World Higher Education Database and internal networks, but also take into consideration the active UNITWIN/UNESCO Chairs in Sustainable Development as well as contacts with sectoral experts in UNESCO to find partners in developing country universities working on issues of sustainable development.
- IAU will establish a Working Group to assist it in the implementation of its own activities and contribution to GHESP.
- IAU’s 12th General Conference, to be held in Sao Paulo, Brazil, will have as a theme: higher education and sustainable development.
- COPERNICUS-CAMPUS hosted the Lüneburg Conference that lead to the publication of the Lüneburg book entitled: *The Lüneburg Declaration - Stepping stone for universities and development in the context of globalization*. The book will be launched in Johannesburg during the WSSD.
- COPERNICUS-CAMPUS aims to establish an UNESCO Chair for Sustainable Development and International Cooperation for the further implementation of the *Lüneburg Declaration on Higher Education for Sustainable Development*.
- COPERNICUS-CAMPUS will, together with IAU, implement a joint project to promote regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in EU Member States and South Asia, SouthEast Asia and China in the area of sustainable development.
- ULSF will, together with GHESP partners, produce an action-oriented toolkit for universities, managers, administrators, faculty and students to assist in moving from commitment to concrete action. The toolkit will include an implementation strategy for signatories of the charters and declarations sponsored by the partner organizations. ULSF will continue to build its online resources database (www.ulsf.org/cgi-bin/search.cfm), which was launched in spring 2002, into an international information source as a supplement to the toolkit.
- ULSF will, together with IAU, develop an on-line sustainability assessment tool (based on ULSF’s Sustainability Assessment Questionnaire) primarily for use by the signatory institutions represented by GHESP partners (see “Links of Partnership/Initiative” section

below).

- ULSF will develop and disseminate a college-level curriculum on “Earth Ethics and Sustainable Development,” based on the Earth Charter, expanding on ULSF’s work with UNESCO and the National University of Costa Rica’s use of the Earth Charter.
- GHESP will ensure that initiatives of higher education institutions to promote sustainable development will be visible in the World Conference on Higher Education +5, scheduled for June 2003.
- GHESP will actively participate in the planning process for the International Decade on Education for Sustainable Development proposed to the General Assembly in the WSSD Plan of Implementation.

IAU, COPERNICUS-CAMPUS and ULSF will each draw on its own experience and on-going work to help advance the goals of the partnership. The role of UNESCO is primarily to act as facilitator for the collaborative work of the partners; provide further international context and input; and make use of and promote the outputs of the group to further innovation and international cooperation in this field, as put forward in the WSSD Plan of Implementation.

Specific targets of the Partnership/Initiative and timeframe for their achievement:

On the basis of paragraph 7 of the Lüneburg Declaration, the four organizations involved in GHESP commit to achieve the following targets within the next five years:

1. Promote expanded endorsement and full implementation of the Talloires, Kyoto, and Copernicus declarations: Over 1000 universities (approximately 50% from the global south) have committed to pursuing sustainable development using these three interrelated declarations as their guides (see “Links of Partnership/Initiative” section below). The three secretariats (IAU, ULSF and COPERNICUS) are developing endorsement and implementation protocols which will assist these institutions in realizing the principles in these declarations.
2. Produce an action-oriented tool kit for universities, managers, administrators, faculty and students designed to move from commitment to concrete action. The tool kit would include: implementation strategies for colleges and universities in teaching, research, operations and outreach; an inventory of available resources; and an inventory of best practices with a compilation of case studies.
3. Enhance the development of regional centres of excellence in both developed and developing countries, and effective networking among them. The major thrust of this partnership is to identify and strengthen universities in the Global South and CIS and Eastern European countries that have made a significant commitment to sustainable development (e.g., University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji; University of Costa Rica; St. Petersburg State University, Russia; Miriam College, Quezon City, Philippines; and others). We shall strengthen and support these regional centres.

Coordination and Implementation mechanism

Please provide a brief description of expected coordination/implementation mechanism of the Partnership/Initiative.

A steering committee composed of leaders from the three university associations and UNESCO provides overall direction to the partnership. The chair rotates among the three associations of universities, normally after twelve months. Communications are conducted regularly through e-mail and events organized by partners often serve to hold GHESP planning meetings. Websites of each partner include a section announcing events and initiatives undertaken within the framework of GHESP. In the future it is envisaged to organize more jointly sponsored activities and publications.

Arrangements for funding

Please describe available and/or expected sources of funding for the implementation of the Partnership/Initiative (e.g. donor government(s); international organization(s)/financial institution(s); foundation(s); private sector; other major groups, etc.)

Each of the three non-governmental organizations is committing significant financial resources to accomplishing the three target goals, especially capacity building in the global south. However, future fund raising by both the individual partners and by GHESP will be pursued:

- IAU's contribution to GHESP falls within the work the association carries out on its own thematic priority (higher education and sustainable development) as approved by its Board. Approximately one third of a person-year at a professional staff level and related support staff time will be allocated to the subject. Fund-raising and project-specific financing will be sought for initiatives such as seminars and meetings to which IAU wishes to bring developing country partners.
- COPERNICUS-CAMPUS will seek to generate project-related funding, especially from the European Commission or from national donors in Europe.
- ULSF will continue to contribute approximately one person year of professional and support staff time to GHESP activities. In addition to the staff time, ULSF currently raises about 30 thousand dollars a year for international education and plans to expand its fund-raising efforts in this regard.
- UNESCO will continue to play a facilitating and information gathering role and will facilitate fundraising.
- GHESP will identify specific projects to be undertaken by the partners collectively and will fundraise to ensure adequate support. The chair of GHESP at the time of submission will act as lead if one is needed.

Arrangements for capacity building and technology transfer

Please include information if the Partnership/Initiative provides for training, informational support, institutional strengthening and/or other capacity building measures:

GHESP organized seminars and expert meetings will serve as prime catalysts to capacity building for sustainability within institutions of higher education and technology transfer since all will aim to include representatives from all regions including from least developed nations. GHESP is committed to mutual learning and thus also aims to document and disseminate HESD initiatives and innovations developed by our Southern members.

Please also provide here a brief description of expected arrangements for technology transfer (if applicable).

Mainly through continuing website development, GHESP partners will provide a growing resources database, sustainability assessment instruments (such as the Sustainability Assessment Questionnaire on the ULSF website), and case studies on all aspects of the incorporation of sustainable development principles at higher education institutions.

Links of Partnership/Initiative with on-going sustainable development activities at the international and/or regional level (if any)

The founding partners will continue to expand and facilitate implementation of the different existing university charters and declarations they developed:

- COPERNICUS-CAMPUS is responsible for the *University Charter for Sustainable Development*, signed to date by 305 university heads in 37 European countries;
- ULSF serves as the Secretariat of over 280 signatories of the *Talloires Declaration* in over 40 countries, and promotes education for sustainability based on the Earth Charter; and
- IAU serves more than 650 member universities and institutions of higher education which have formally adopted the *Kyoto Declaration on Sustainable Development*.

GHESP is a global partnership. Its work aims to increase mutual sharing of expertise and cooperation with a two-way flow of ideas and experience. The networking made possible through GHESP aims at creating opportunities for more focused bilateral or multilateral partnerships between different universities around the world. Resources will need to be found by the interested parties from existing programs for financing inter-university cooperation. The development of centers of excellence at leading institutions in various Southern regions will focus in part on local sustainable development initiatives. Also, as noted in the “specific targets” section above, GHESP partners will focus specifically on promoting regional and multilateral networking between higher education institutions in EU Member States and South Asia, SouthEast Asia and China in the area of sustainable development.

Monitoring Arrangements

Please describe expected arrangements for monitoring of progress in the implementation of Partnerships/Initiative after it will be launched at the WSSD: (e.g. frequency/modalities of preparation of progress reports; electronic updates, news-letters, etc)

GHESP will provide regular information about its activities through its various publications and newsletters. It will be monitored by the internal supervisory mechanisms of each of the partners, and it will contribute to reporting to the CSD and other post WSSD mechanisms.

A report of activities will be provided by the Chair holder every time the Chair rotates to a new leading partner. This will provide a record of progress to date and help the new leading partner prepare for the work to come.

Other relevant information:

Relevant Web-sites:

- University Leaders for a Sustainable Future home page: www.ulsf.org
Link to the *International Journal for Sustainability in Higher Education* and the ULSF biannual report, *The Declaration*: www.ulsf.org/publications.html
- International Association of Universities home page: www.unesco.org/iau/tfsd_first.html
Link to the IAU Newsletter: www.unesco.org/iau/newsletter.html
- COPERNICUS-CAMPUS home page: www.copernicus-campus.org
Link to the Newsletter is to be found on the home page
- UNESCO Sustainable Development Portal at: www.unesco.org
- GHESP home page: www.unesco.org/iau/ghesp/index.html

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