

ACADEMIC IMPACT

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Leading the Transformation to an Energy Efficient Future



A view of the Middelgrunden offshore wind farm in Denmark consisting of 20 turbines (UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe)

One year ago United Nations Academic Impact announced the inauguration of the UNAI SDG Hubs, UNAI member institutions selected as exemplars for their innovative scholarship and engagement related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) who serve as resources for best practices for the UNAI network, currently composed of over 1,400 universities and colleges in more than 130 countries.

On the anniversary of the program launch, we're taking this opportunity to check in with some of the hub schools to highlight their scholarship and activities over the past twelve months and look ahead to future initiatives. The next school profiled in our anniversary series is the Energy Policy and Development Centre, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (Greece), hub for [SDG 7: Affordable and Clean Energy](#).

Sustainable Development Goal 7 is critical for achieving net zero emissions and combating climate change. Challenges and opportunities for our world are, and will be, defined by the shift of the current global economy to a sustainable green one. The implementation of SDG 7 will be fundamental in this economic and environmental transformation in the coming 25 years.

Over the past year, the Energy Policy and Development Centre (KEPA) of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens signed agreements with stakeholders such as the municipality of Moschato – Tavros, covering projects on fuel switch, energy efficiency and energy poverty as well as "smart zero energy buildings" because KEPA believes that academic action on SDG 7 must go beyond campuses and be implemented in communities.

The SDG 7 Hub made a presentation for the 7th National Communication and 3rd Biennial Report of Greece for the purpose of the review of the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Kyoto Protocol](#). It also promoted a youth contest for college and high school students from all over Greece with the Hellenic Association of Physicists to present their ideas on how to achieve SDG 7.

KEPA believes institutions of higher education must take the lead among stakeholders, and in this regard, it organized and hosted the Green Energy Investment Forum and the International Conference on Energy and Climate Change. The latter, held in October 2019, addressed issues related to green energy investments and the transition to a low carbon economy. It also covered opportunities for cross-interaction on innovative ideas and cooperation, bringing together policy and decision makers, scientists and industry representatives from different countries. In addition, the Hub also promoted research and cutting-edge technologies by issuing a call for parties interested in undertaking specific actions leading to measurable CO2 reductions to collaborate in an "SDG 7 Global Society".

The idea of this initiative is to share knowledge and experiences that could be replicated in different contexts. Along these lines, KEPA is actively promoting, including through and with the support of local governments, the development and networking of small scale liquefied natural gas installations in remote areas and islands and the progressive introduction of this type of fuel in maritime transportation.

As the coordinator of the [Green Energy Network of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation \(BSEC\)](#), KEPA participated in the meeting of its Working Group on Energy, presenting the challenges towards the achievement of SDG 7 and the critical relevance of regional cooperation initiatives in this regard, not only between governments but also between academic and research institutions, the scientific community and energy consumers.

KEPA fosters scientific knowledge about new energy alternatives and provides policy guidance to relevant parties under the premise that the combined action of academia, governments, international organizations, the private sector, students and civil society is necessary to achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and SDG 7 in particular to ensure energy efficiency and security for all.

To learn more about the UNAI SDG Hubs, including the Energy Policy and Development Centre, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, visit [the United Nations Academic Impact SDG Hubs](#).

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