



Background

A “green school” is defined as an educational institution that promotes knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes for social, economic, cultural, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development through a whole-school approach to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in its teaching and learning, facilities and operations, school governance and community partnerships.

- Climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution have led to a planetary crisis that requires an urgent response. The UN Secretary-General calls the climate crisis ‘a battle for our lives’, as we still struggle to transform our societies to reach the 1.5-degree path recommended by the Paris Agreement. In an increasingly complex and interconnected world with a real, existential threat such as climate change, there is a growing call for education to enable individuals, as agents of change, to acquire knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that lead to the green transition of our societies, as enshrined in SDG Target 4.7, and, indeed, in the entire 2030 Agenda.
- However, recent [UNESCO findings](#) show that around half of the 100 countries reviewed had no climate change mentioned in their national curriculum frameworks. While 95% of surveyed teachers felt teaching climate change is important, less than 30% felt ready to teach

about climate change in relation to their local context. This contrasts with young people's urgent call issued during the pre-COP Youth4Climate event in 2021, calling upon governments to change education systems to teach the future.

- As the UN lead agency on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), UNESCO is leading the global efforts together with partners and stakeholders to promote transformative education to tackle the planetary crisis, through the new global framework for the period 2020-2030, entitled "Education for Sustainable Development: towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals" (ESD for 2030), which focuses on five priority action areas of policy, learning institutions, educators, youth and communities to ensure all learners are empowered with the needed knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to lead the green societal transformation.
- The whole-school approach lies at the centre of this roadmap to lead the transformation of learning institutions to ensure all learners are empowered with the needed knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes to lead the green societal transformation. Efforts should be made to move the culture of the learning institution towards collaboration, solidarity, sustainable practices and inclusion of all genders and backgrounds so that students can learn what they live and live what they learn.
- Emerging from the [Action Track 2 discussion](#) of the UN Secretary General's Transforming Education Summit in September 2022, focused on learning and skills for life, work and sustainable development, the Greening Education Partnership was launched as a global initiative to respond to this urgent call. The [Greening Education Partnership](#) aims to deliver strong, coordinated, and comprehensive action that support countries to prepare every learner to acquire the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to tackle climate change and to promote sustainable development. Taking a lifelong learning approach starting from pre-primary to adult education, the Greening Education Partnership encourages countries and key stakeholders to focus on 4 action areas: *Greening Schools*, *Greening Learning*, *Greening Capacity & Readiness*, *Greening Communities*. During COP27 in November 2022, UNESCO organized an [Inaugural Meeting](#) on the Greening Education Partnership where key stakeholders, including Member States, UN partners, civil society organizations, collectively committed to engage in the Partnership and discussed how to create further synergies and impact.
- Building on this momentum, in parallel of the work undertaken through the Greening Learning pillar which will lead to a global curriculum guideline, UNESCO will initiate a project phase focused on the *Greening Schools* pillar of the Greening Education Partnership in order to develop the Quality Standard for Green Schools for whole-school approach to ESD. Member States will be supported to integrate UNESCO global standards within their own practices in making all schools climate-ready by 2030.

Objectives

- To encourage schools to integrate a whole-school approach to ESD to transform their teaching and learning; school facilities and operation; school governance; and community engagement, with particular emphasis on school's climate readiness.
- To support Member States to integrate green school schemes standards within their educational systems so that X %¹ of schools (pre-university level) across the world are "greened" by 2030.

Scope of project

Target countries: 193 UNESCO Member States

- **Thematic focus:** ESD with particular emphasis on climate-readiness
- **Levels of education:** Pre-primary, primary, secondary, tertiary, TVET

Activities

- **Desk review to map existing green school accreditation schemes** globally (undertaken spring 2022)
- **Develop a zero version of the Quality Standard for Green Schools** based on the desk review to be reviewed by UNESCO ESD Team
- **Develop a first draft version of the Quality Standard for Green Schools**
- **Convene a global network of Greening Education Partnership members, green school accreditation schemes owners and Member States:**
 - Organize consultation 1 with Greening Education Partnership members/green school accreditation schemes owners to gather their inputs on the first draft version
 - Collect feedback through pilot phase 1 with selected schools and national education stakeholders in selected countries
 - Develop the second draft version of green school quality standard based on feedback collected during consultation 1 and pilot phase 1
 - Organize consultation 2 at COP28 to collect inputs on the second draft version and circulation of the draft with Member States
 - Develop the third draft version of Quality Standard for Green Schools based on feedback collected during consultation 2 and inputs by Member States
 - Organize consultation 3 with Greening Education Partnership members/Green school accreditation owners /Member States
 - Collect feedback on the quality standard through pilot phase 2 with selected schools and national education stakeholders in selected countries
 - Develop final draft version for publication of the Quality Standard for Green Schools integrating feedback from consultation 3 and pilot phase 2
 - Encourage the owners of school accreditation schemes to integrate the school scheme standards within their practices
 - Compile a list of school accreditation schemes in each country that incorporate the standard within their practices

¹ The target number is to be defined based on an initial baseline mapping study of green school certification schemes.

- **Support Member States** to green every school
 - **Provide Member States with the quality standard and a list of accreditation schemes** available in each country that reflect the newly developed global quality standard to encourage Member States to adapt or adopt the relevant schemes to all schools in their countries
 - **Build capacities and support resources** to Member States to put in place green school schemes standards
 - **Monitor progress with regular biennial mapping** of number of schools in the world covered by school accreditation schemes that reflect the standard every two years

Timeline	
Task	Timeline
Develop zero version of Quality Standard for Green Schools	May - June 2023
Review by UNESCO ESD Team	June 2023
First draft version of Quality Standard for Green Schools	July 2023
Consultation 1 with Green Education Partnership members/Green School accreditation scheme owners and pilot phase 1 with selected schools and national education stakeholders in selected countries	July-August-September 2023
Second draft version of Quality Standard for Green Schools	September 2023
Lay out of a leaflet with key findings for COP28	October-November 2023
Consultation 2 at COP28 with key stakeholders and circulation of the draft with Member States	November-December 2023
Third draft version of Quality Standard for Green Schools	December 2023
Consultation 3 with Greening Education Partnership members/Green school accreditation owners /Member States and pilot phase 2 with selected schools and national education stakeholders in selected countries	January-March 2024
Final draft of Quality Standard for Green Schools	April 2024
Publication	June 2024

Annex. Table of content

- Foreword
- Summary
- Acknowledgements
- Introduction and Methodology
- What is Green School?
- Green School Standard
- Teaching and Learning
 - General
 - Pre-primary/ Primary / Secondary/ Tertiary/ TVET / + (informative note on non-formal institutions and learning spaces context)
- Facilities and operations
 - General
 - Pre-primary/ Primary / Secondary/ Tertiary/ TVET + (informative notes on non-formal institutions and learning spaces context)
- School governance
 - General
 - Pre-primary/ Primary / Secondary/ Tertiary/ TVET + (informative notes on non-formal institutions and learning spaces context)
- Community engagement
 - General
 - Pre-primary/ Primary / Secondary/ Tertiary/ TVET + (informative notes on non-formal institutions and learning spaces context)
- Recommendations: How to manage quality green school
- Tips on quality management
- Good practice examples
- Tools
- *Appendix: 2023 list of school accreditation schemes