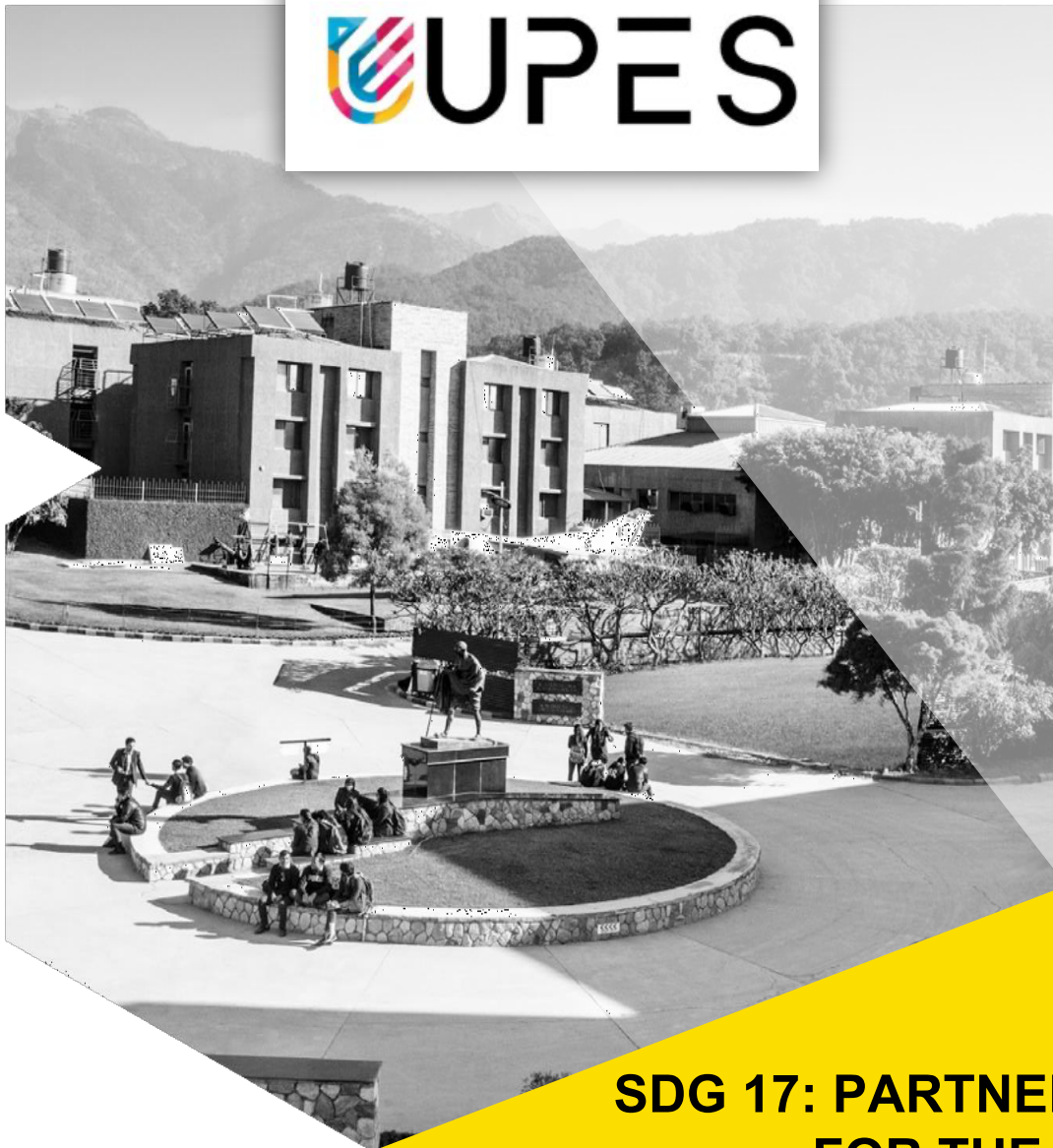




SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



SDG 17: PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

2025

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17.2.2 Does your university as a body initiate and participate in cross-sectoral dialogue about the SDGs, e.g. conferences involving government/NGOs?

UPES Initiatives in Cross-Sector SDG Dialogue

The University of Petroleum and Energy Studies (UPES) actively engages in cross-sectoral dialogue to advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In line with **THE Impact Rankings** criteria for **SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals)**, UPES has initiated and participated in numerous conferences, summits, and collaborative platforms that bring together government agencies, industry, international organizations, academia, and civil society. These engagements serve as forums for exchanging knowledge and forging partnerships, ultimately strengthening the implementation of the SDGs.

Below, we evaluate key evidence of UPES's cross-sector dialogues on the SDGs, and explain how these activities contribute to sustainable development locally, nationally, and globally.

Conferences and Forums with Government and International Agencies

One prominent example is UPES's involvement in a United Nations **Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Forum** side-event on community resilience in 2023. UPES **co-organized** this forum in partnership with India's Department of Science & Technology (DST) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), focusing on the role of Community Resilience Resource Centres (CRRCs) for post-COVID socioeconomic recovery [1] [2].

At the event, **UPES was a knowledge partner** alongside Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham and the Wildlife Institute of India [3]. UPES professor Dr. Neelu Ahuja represented the university, sharing case studies on how science and technology interventions can build community resilience. She spoke on a panel with DST's Secretary and UNDP's India Resident Representative, highlighting CRRC initiatives and innovations for sustainable livelihoods [3]. Over 100 participants from 40 countries joined this virtual forum, illustrating its truly cross-sector and global nature [1]. These discussions fed into a **blueprint for international cooperation** on resilient recovery, linking Indian community projects with broader global SDG efforts [2]. Such high-level collaboration – uniting government, UN agencies, and academia – exemplifies UPES's role in convening dialogues that influence policy and practice towards the SDGs.

Another government-linked partnership is UPES's leadership in India's **National Service Scheme (NSS)**. In 2020, UPES was selected as the **NSS Nodal Centre** for all private universities in Uttarakhand – a status that made it a fully government-funded NSS unit with 250 student volunteers sanctioned by the Ministry of Youth Affairs [4]. As a nodal centre, UPES works directly with government NSS directorates across states to co-organize national programs such as *Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat* (as part of the Fit India Movement) [4]. This platform facilitates dialogue and coordination between the university, government bodies, and youth volunteers on community development initiatives (health, education,

environmental campaigns, etc.), aligning with multiple SDGs. By serving as a bridge between **government schemes and student action**, UPES helps mobilize resources and stakeholders to advance sustainable development at the grassroots.

Dr. Neelu Jyothi Ahuja of UPES, who spoke alongside government and UN officials at the UN STI Forum 2023 side-event on Community Resilience, exemplifying the university's role in cross-sector SDG dialogue. [3]

Multi-Sector Academic and Industry Collaborations

UPES also **initiates international collaborations** that address the SDGs through cross-sector participation. A notable instance is the **World Design Challenge 2023**, which UPES co-hosted with Algonquin College (Canada) under the aegis of the World Design Organization (WDO). This global competition challenged student teams to design innovative solutions aligned with the UN SDGs, focusing on themes like healthcare access, sustainable furniture, and human-centric transportation [5].

The challenge was a **truly multi-stakeholder effort**:

WDO (an international NGO for design) facilitated it, students and faculty from two continents collaborated, and a panel of **industry experts** from companies such as BMW and Delta Airlines served as mentors and judges [5]. According to an Algonquin College release, the partnership “address[ed] the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals” by having teams tackle real-world problems and pitch solutions to industry leaders [5]. This cross-sector approach not only generated practical SDG-focused innovations, but also built lasting networks between academia, industry, and international organizations – a direct embodiment of SDG 17’s call for inclusive partnerships.

Within academia, UPES regularly convenes **international conferences and knowledge-sharing events** that draw experts from diverse sectors. For example, in December 2022 the UPES School of Liberal Studies hosted “*Intersections*” – an *International Conference on Digital Humanities*, inviting eminent scholars **from leading universities worldwide** to discuss the interdisciplinary role of digital humanities and its relevance to society [3]. Speakers included professors from Stanford, Yale, King’s College London, IITs, and more, who converged at UPES to exchange insights on research and the cultural context in India [3]. By bringing together global thought leaders, this conference created a platform for dialogue on how digital innovation and the humanities can jointly address social challenges (indirectly supporting SDGs like **Quality Education** and **Innovation**).

Similarly, UPES was the host of the **7th International Conference on Nanostructuring by Ion Beams (ICNIB 2023)**, which served as “a dynamic platform that facilitates dialogues around the advancement of nanotechnology” [3]. Such events strengthen international academic cooperation in science and technology – a key aspect of SDG 17 (which emphasizes knowledge-sharing and collaborative research for sustainable development [6]).

UPES’s **annual Energy Summit** further illustrates cross-sector dialogue, especially with industry and policymakers. Launched in 2022 by the School of Engineering, the **UPES Energy Summit** is a flagship forum that “*brings together leading energy experts, researchers, and policymakers*” to address energy challenges and solutions [7]. For instance, the inaugural *Energy Summit 2022* saw UPES students and faculty interact with global academicians **and industrialists**, with over 1,200 participants and 200+ project demonstrations showcased [8]. This open exchange allowed academics, corporate leaders, and government representatives to collaborate on topics such as renewable energy, energy security,

and climate change mitigation. By 2025 the summit's theme was explicitly "*Sustainable and Affordable Energy*," aligning with SDG 7 (Affordable & Clean Energy) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) [7]. The Energy Summit's multi-sector participation – including companies, regulators, and researchers – exemplifies how UPES acts as a convener of **public-private dialogue** to accelerate sustainable innovations in the energy sector [7]. These dialogues often lead to collaborative projects, policy inputs, and student opportunities (e.g. mentoring by industry), thereby directly contributing to SDG targets on technology transfer and capacity-building.

Engagement with Civil Society and Youth Platforms

In addition to formal conferences, UPES fosters dialogue through **student-driven and community-focused platforms**. Notably, the university's Model United Nations program enables engagement with civil society and young leaders on global issues. The **UPES MUN Club**, established in 2012, hosts an **International Model United Nations conference every year**, which has become one of the most prestigious diplomatic simulation events in North India [1]. Each annual UPES International MUN draws **300–400 delegates** from numerous other institutions (e.g. National Law Universities, colleges across India) *and from countries like Sudan, Nepal, Mexico, and France* to the UPES campus [1]. These student delegates debate and seek solutions to real-world global challenges by representing various countries, effectively simulating SDG-focused international negotiations in a youth-led setting [1].

Through such MUN conferences and related workshops, UPES provides a platform for **inter-institutional and cross-cultural dialogue** about peace, development, and governance. Students gain deep insights into issues like poverty, health, climate change and learn diplomacy and consensus-building – nurturing future leaders equipped to advance the SDGs [1].

UPES's partnership with **non-governmental organizations (NGOs)** also underpins its cross-sector engagement. The university runs a unique mandatory social internship program called "**Srijan**" for all first-year students, wherein students intern with NGOs and social enterprises working on education, healthcare, rural development and other community issues [3].

UPES has signed *Memoranda of Understanding with over 1,000 NGOs* to facilitate these internships [6]. In the 2022–23 academic year alone, 3,090 UPES students interned at approximately 770 different NGOs across India, contributing over 25 million man-hours of service [6]. Through Srijan, students collaborate with organizations like Smile Foundation, Teach For India, End Poverty, Educate Girls and many others on grassroots projects [3]. This not only gives students practical exposure but also creates a **two-way dialogue between the university and civil society** – NGOs share their on-ground expertise and community needs, while UPES contributes youthful innovation and research support. Such sustained engagement helps align the university's efforts with local SDG priorities (e.g. quality education, gender equality, improved health and livelihoods). It also demonstrates UPES's commitment to **multi-sector partnerships**: as noted on the official SDG 17 page, UPES collaborates with local NGOs and government bodies to implement community-based projects in areas like education, healthcare, and sustainable practices [9]. By integrating community stakeholders into its programs, UPES ensures that dialogues about sustainable development translate into tangible social impact.

Advancing Sustainable Development Goals through Dialogue

The above initiatives clearly show that UPES not only **hosts dialogues on the SDGs**, but does so in a manner that drives real progress toward those goals. Each cross-sector interaction creates opportunities to mobilize knowledge and resources for sustainable development. For example, UPES's collaboration in the DST–UNDP CRRC forum has helped channel scientific research into community resilience projects, directly supporting SDG targets on building resilient infrastructure and fostering innovation in public service [3] [2].

International partnerships like the World Design Challenge yield creative “people-centric, planet-positive” solutions to global problems [1], while also strengthening relationships between organizations across countries – contributing to SDG 17's mandate of knowledge exchange and technology transfer. High-level summits such as the Energy Summit influence national conversations on clean energy policy and encourage joint efforts by industry and academia to achieve affordable, clean energy for all [7]. At the same time, grassroots-oriented dialogues – through NSS activities, community internships, and youth conferences – build local capacity and public awareness of the SDGs. Students working with NGOs or debating in MUNs become more empathetic and informed, echoing UPES's mission to **prepare future leaders to drive meaningful change** [3].

Crucially, UPES ensures that these dialogues do not occur in isolation but feed into ongoing collaborations and measurable outcomes. The university's **Sustainability and CSR reports** document how ideas from conferences and partner interactions lead to new initiatives on campus and in the region (such as smart village development projects, women's empowerment programs, and green innovation labs) [10]. This feedback loop – from discussion to implementation – is what makes the partnerships effective. By engaging external stakeholders in its events, UPES has been able to launch joint research centers, co-branded programs with industry (e.g. in data science with Xebia [1]), and community projects that address specific SDG targets. In essence, **UPES leverages cross-sector dialogue as a catalyst for action**: government alliances help scale up pilot projects, industry input aligns academic training with sustainable market needs, and NGO partnerships ensure that vulnerable communities are reached. Each partnership expands the university's capacity to contribute to the SDGs beyond its campus.

In conclusion, evidence from official sources – including university news, partner announcements, and independent media – confirms that UPES actively initiates and participates in cross-sectoral SDG dialogues. Whether by co-hosting international forums with the UN and government, organizing competitions and conferences with global partners, or embedding multi-sector engagement into student life, UPES fulfills the spirit of **SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals**. These dialogues have enriched the local SDG efforts in Uttarakhand (through community resilience, education and health programs) and also fed into national and international networks aimed at achieving the 2030 Agenda. By bringing diverse stakeholders to the table, UPES is helping to **strengthen the “global partnership” for sustainable development**, demonstrating how a university can be an engine of collaboration and impact for the SDGs [6].

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