

**SDGs to go beyond geo-political zero-sum game
enhancing cooperation between Europe and Asia-Pacific regions**

Prospects for Promoting Cohesion in the EU and Asia-Pacific through SDGs

“EUNAP” ERASMUS+ Jean Monnet program

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Context note: the presentation attached was made during a workshop – lecture at Toyo University in Tokyo on November 18th, 2022.

The workshop was co-organized between Toyo University, Professor Hajime Imamura, and Deusto University from Bilbao, with Professor Beatriz Perez las Heras.

Professor Beatriz Perez las Heras is the founder and the coordinator of EUNAP, the Erasmus+ Jean Monnet program.

Professors Sam Tabuchi and Yu Namba from Toyo University were also presenters.

This note includes an abstract and the key ideas used on my presentation and a test made during the event to show the potential of cooperation between EU and Japan using the SDGs.

Abstract

After raising awareness for the SDGs, implementation is today the main challenge. How is it possible to promote acceleration at global level namely between Europe and Asia Pacific Regions? To answer this challenge the research focused on the evolution of the development concept associating it with game theory. Considering sustainable Development to be the New Development Game, Players of the game require new Rules of the Game, which addresses the cooperation challenge. Considering that development models demand an iterative and interactive search for balance movement between the game and the rules. This approach challenges players to move out of their comfort zones and to owners of the process, becoming shareholders rather than stakeholders. During the workshop, the SDGs were used to understand, following the understanding of the students, whether the goals, one at a time, were being better implemented in Japan or in Europe, considering the one with best performance could develop an SDG business to share its implementation experience to the other region. This allows to conclude that the SDGs are a new development language, that can be used to promote cohesion between different regions as well as to promote a new pipeline of SDG businesses.

Keywords: SDGs; Europe-Asia Pacific; Game theory; Rules of the Game; Players of the Game.

Key ideas following the order used during the presentation:

1. Sustainable Development: Goals 1 to 15 of the SDGs. The new development game, where economic growth and GDP were the key development KPIs, are now replaced by a People, Planet, Prosperity dimensions.
2. Rules of the Game: Goal 16 of the SDGs, Peace, justice, and strong institutions are indeed the new rules of the game. Independent from the organizations, they represent the challenge to attract the players to play the game, and simultaneously they enhance the quality of the game.
3. Players of the Game: goal 17 of the SDGs, represent today all parties namely central and local governments, private sector, civil society, and academia.
4. Infinite Game: the game that has no end and therefore where players cooperate to keep the game alive. This is the opposite of zero-sum game and goes further than non-zero-sum game. The game between man and nature, as well as the game between different countries and regions should be infinite.
5. Institutional innovation is brought in to promote the research on non-technological challenges such as: cooperation, “commons”, “common good” concepts are explored to challenge workshop participants to go beyond traditional game theory.
6. Pro-active fieldwork research is highlighted to overcome the excess use of mathematics, and “armchair theorizing” in social sciences.
7. Concepts such as: “good enough solutions”, “islands of competence”, “tilting towards the kind of economy we want”, are presented to challenge participants towards the role of policy makers.
8. A “Multilevel approach tool” is presented to cover the need to compliment top-down with bottom-up, participatory movements where all non-public players are involved to design, promote, and implement solutions.
9. The Japanese Voluntary National Review (VNR) is presented as an example of public-private cooperation, adopting “Society 5.0”, “regional revitalization”, and “the empowerment of the next generation and women to achieve the SDGs”.
10. “EU Global Gateway” is presented as an example to “boost sustainable links around the world”.

11. Top-down and bottom-up are complemented by peer-to-peer relations where parties learn actively from each other.
12. The people-centric approach is brought in to address the topic “public space design”, considering that today on top of the physical public space, the digital but above all the “emotional public space” should be developed and considered.

Question to Students to show the potential of cooperation between EU and Japan using the SDGs.

“How can we use SDG to develop businesses and contribute for countries to implement the UN2030 Agenda?”

We are a research unit identifying which country Europe or Japan is doing better implementing each SDG. The country that is doing better will develop a best practice model to share the other country how to improve SDG implementation.

21 students in class voted according to the results bellow.

Goal No.	Japan	Europe	Won
1	21	0	Japan
2	16	5	Japan
3	17	2	Japan
4	0	21	Europe
5	0	21	Europe
6	21	0	Japan
7	2	19	Europe
8	10	12	Europe
9	14	5	Japan
10	4	17	Europe
11	11	4	Japan
12	7	5	Japan
13	0	11	Europe
14	1	8	Europe
15	14	3	Japan
16	15	3	Japan
17	4	17	Europe
	Total (JP)		9
	Total (Eur)		8

