HRDA Vital Importance: Sustainable Entrepreneurship: Integrating ESG Criteria into Business Strategy for Green Business Transformation

Programme Overview

This 16-hour programme – comprising 12 hours of classroom training and 4 hours of inhouse consultation – aims to equip participants with a solid understanding of the fundamental principles of sustainable development, particularly the concept of Due Diligence across an organisation's entire value chain. Participants will learn how to identify the social and environmental impacts of their company's operations, as well as the financial risks and opportunities that may arise from environmental and societal developments—both locally and globally. They will then be guided in developing a comprehensive sustainability strategy for their organisation, one that includes setting clear goals and developing action plans based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) related to sustainability.

Moreover, this training addresses an urgent need as organisations face increasing pressure to transition toward a greener economy. This transition requires innovative changes across internal systems, processes, strategies, corporate structures, cultures, and governance frameworks, often encountering internal resistance. Many organisations struggle to incorporate sustainable practices into their operations and financial models due to a lack of specialised ESG knowledge and skills, limited access to effective organisational tools, and, most importantly, a lack of conviction among key decision-makers about sustainability as a competitive advantage. By showcasing real examples of successful transitions and integrating crisis management approaches in environmental and social domains, this programme seeks to inspire and enable leaders to drive sustainable transformation. In light of the increasing regulatory demands from European legislation on corporate social responsibility and climate-related governance, staff training and upskilling is no longer optional but essential for organisations seeking to boost resilience, innovation, competitiveness, and compliance.

Learning Objectives

- **Analyze ESG fundamentals:** Identify key sustainability topics across Environmental, Social, and Governance pillars, understand EU legislation requirements, and distinguish between greenwashing and genuine ESG policies.
- **Assess organizational impact:** Conduct Double Materiality Analysis to determine material

sustainability topics, map value chains, and identify impacts, risks, and opportunities facing their organization.

- **Engage stakeholders effectively:** Identify key stakeholders, determine their position within the value chain, and collaborate across departments to support sustainability implementation.
- Develop sustainability strategies: Build capabilities to create ESG-based strategies, set realistic short- and long-term goals, and integrate sustainability into business decision-making processes.
- **Implement sustainable practices:** Apply best practices for managing energy, water, and waste, promote environmentally sustainable practices organization-wide, and actively participate in sustainability initiatives.
- **Champion sustainability leadership:** Justify the business case for sustainability integration, challenge unfounded claims about global sustainability trends, and advocate for stakeholder inclusion in decision-making.

Training Outline

Introduction

- Defining your organisation's purpose
- The benefits of sustainability
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Stakeholder capitalism
- From Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria

Environment

- The Paris Agreement and findings from the IPCC report
- The European Green Deal
- Climate change and the path to net zero
- Energy, water and waste management
- Biodiversity loss

Society

- Human rights, diversity & inclusion

- The role of Human Resources (HR) in becoming a responsible and preferred employer
- Health & safety
- Affected communities

Governance

- How to create effective sustainable corporate governance structures
- Business ethics
- Regulatory compliance
- Anti-bribery & corruption
- Sustainable supply chains
- How innovation drives sustainability

ESG Due Diligence

- The importance of value chain mapping
- Identification & engagement of stakeholders
- Identification & assessment of impacts, risks, and opportunities (IRO)
- Double Materiality Analysis (DMA)
- Developing a sustainability strategy:
    - Setting short and long-term targets for managing material Environmental, Social, and Governance topics
    - Initial/partial development of strategy and action plan for each pillar: Environment, Society, Governance
- Best practices and sustainability strategies from leading companies

Next Steps – Plan for the In-house Training/Advisory Session

Training Style

The programme is interactive in nature. Participants will be actively involved, using their own experiences and challenges to reinforce and adapt the new knowledge and skills to their own reality, as well as examples, case studies, tools and simulations provided by the training team tailored and applied to their unique business needs. The use of assessments, tools and reflective exercises will also allow participants to increase their awareness and provide ample opportunity for reflection and discussion.

The training sessions will combine PowerPoint presentations, open discussions, case studies, audio/visual material and experiential exercises/tools.

In-house Training/Advisory Session

Upon completing the 12-hour in-class training programme, participants will engage in a tailored 4-hour in-house session offering focused guidance, advice, and training to address the specific needs and challenges of both the participants and their organisation.

During the 4-hour in-house training session, participants will apply the knowledge gained during the theoretical part by completing an Impact, Risk, and Opportunity (IRO) Assessment. Within this framework, they will be asked to map their organization's value chains and identify the relevant IROs associated with their specific operations.

Furthermore, participants will develop a draft sustainability strategy for their organization, outlining the goals and actions to be undertaken for its implementation. This strategy will consist of three main components: Environmental Strategy, Social Strategy and Governance Strategy.

Participant Profile

This training is primarily aimed at executives and professionals involved in the development of their organisation's sustainability strategy, the implementation of related actions, and the promotion of a sustainability culture within the organisation.

These individuals typically form part of the organisation's **Sustainability Team**, which may include:

- The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)
- The Chief Financial Officer (CFO)
- The Chief Sustainability Officer
- The Compliance Officer
- The Internal Auditor
- The Communications/Marketing Department
- Accounting Staff

- The Human Resources Department
- The Operations Department
- Health and Safety Personnel
- The Procurement Department

Duration

The duration of the programme is 16 hours broken down as follows:

- The total duration of the in-class training is 12 hours
    - The programme is split over two sessions of 6 hours
- The total duration of the In-house Training/Advisory session is 4 hours.

The Trainer

Irene Loucaides| Social impact strategist | Professional Certified Trainer

Irene is a social impact strategist leveraging 23+ years of experience in Sustainable Development in both the business and civil society sectors. She is the founder and Managing Director of Grow Sustainability Consulting where she assists organisations create shared value through positive environmental and social impact. With a strategic mindset, she contributes in formulating organisations' ESG Strategy and action plans using clearly defined KPI's with the guidelines of Internationally acknowledged regulations, frameworks and initiatives, the composition of Corporate Sustainability Reports, Materiality Analysis, ESG Risk Management, Stakeholder engagement and Sustainable Supply Chain Management. Last but not least, she is a certified professional trainer in providing sustainability training. She regularly speaks at conferences and writes articles in the field of Sustainability and ESG. Irene is also a member of the CSR committee of the Cyprus Chamber of Shipping as well as a Board Member of the 2025 FIBA Eurobasket Organizing Committee leading the ESG sub-committee and advising on how to make the tournament as sustainable as possible.

In her position as Head of Communication for the Louis Group she served as Head of the Louis Group's Sustainability Committee reporting to the Board of Directors and responsible for putting together the annual Sustainability report. From that same position she has been responsible for marketing 27 hotel units and 9 restaurants in various markets such as the UK, Germany, Russia and Israel including the digital marketing strategy (25+ websites, 70+ social media channels, google ads, SEO). She has led various digital transformation projects and employee wellness programs, acted as the Group's spokesperson and led its Crisis management unit. She also coordinated the Group's Public Relations activities and other publicity.

During her time at The Cyprus Anticancer Society as Head of Communication & PR she developed the Society's communication strategy and action plan identifying areas for growth and at the same time she developed, implemented, promoted and evaluated fundraising and advocacy campaigns at a national level. She managed the Society's press office, helped develop the Society's data management system to build on stakeholder relations and managed the Society's volunteer network to support the Society's functions mainly with regards to fundraising. Irene worked closely with partners such as corporate sponsors, Ministries, Medical centres, universities and other stakeholders enhancing their engagement with the Cyprus Anticancer Society.
At Telia&Pavla BBDO where she spent 13 years of her career, she acted as the agency's Strategic Planner for clients in a wide variety of business industries such as the financial sector, telecoms, public affairs, education, FMCG's etc.