



Shift2Green Guideline

Empowering SMEs for a Sustainable Future



English Version

Publication Date: January 2025

„The actions of companies have significant impacts on the lives of citizens in the EU and around the world. Not just in terms of the products and services they offer or the jobs and opportunities they create, but also in terms of working conditions, human rights, health, the environment, innovation, education and training.“

European Commission



Are you working toward sustainability? Here's how this guideline helps you:



Whether you're an SME leader, sustainability manager, VET educator, consultant, or a professional driving green transformation, this guideline offers:



Step-by-Step Guidance:

Clear, actionable advice to make sustainability achievable in any organization.



Financial Support Solutions:

Comprehensive information on grants, subsidies, and other funding opportunities to overcome financial barriers.



Skill Development:

Ready-to-use resources to enhance sustainability expertise in teams and educational settings.



Real-World Inspiration:

Success stories from businesses that prove green transformation is possible and profitable.



Adaptable Tools:

Practical resources and frameworks tailored to your unique industry and regional context.

No matter your role, this guideline equips you to lead and innovate in a greener, more resilient future.

This guideline was developed as part of the EU-funded Shift2Green project (Project No. KA220-VET-80B7D207), which supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in transitioning to sustainable business models.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Leading by Example Inspiring case studies from SMEs successfully adopting sustainable practices, showcasing practical steps and real-world insights for other businesses to start their green journey.	7
3	Financing Green Transformation for SMEs A guide to essential financial instruments and funding sources for SMEs to support their transition to sustainable practices, with country-specific insights.	21
4	Curricula for Green Transformation in SME Ready-to-use curricula and educational resources designed to empower SMEs and vocational institutions with practical skills for integrating sustainability.	32
5	Green Business Resource Hub A curated collection of resources on eco-friendly practices across sectors, with country-specific tools to support SMEs in implementing sustainable solutions.	46
6	Sustainable Skills Assessment Tools and frameworks to help educators and business leaders assess and enhance sustainable competencies, ensuring effective learning and application in real-world settings.	92

This guideline was developed as part of the EU-funded Shift2Green project (Project No. KA220-VET-80B7D207), which supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in transitioning to sustainable business models.

PAIZ Konsulting Sp. z o.o. (Lublin, Poland)

Fachhochschule des Mittelstands (FHM) (Bielefeld, Germany)

Fundacja Ekopotencjał - Przestrzeń Możliwości (Bierutów, Poland)

Cleantech Bulgaria (Sofia, Bulgaria)

Klaipėda Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts (KCCIC) (Klaipėda, Lithuania)

ReUse Austria (Vienna, Austria)

More Info

<https://shift2green.eu/>



**Fachhochschule
des Mittelstands**



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC BY-NC-SA) license. This means you are free to share and adapt the material as long as you give appropriate credit, do not use it for commercial purposes, and distribute any modified work under the same license.



1. Introduction

Charting a Sustainable Future: The Role of SMEs in Green Transformation

The growing urgency to address climate change and environmental degradation has placed sustainability at the forefront of global priorities. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), often regarded as the backbone of the economy, play a crucial role in this transition. Despite their limited resources, SMEs possess the agility and innovation potential to drive meaningful change. The Shift2Green Guideline empowers these businesses with practical tools and strategies to align their operations with sustainable principles.

Sustainability is no longer a niche concern; it is a necessity for businesses aiming to thrive in a rapidly evolving market. Consumers and regulators demand eco-friendly solutions, creating both pressures and opportunities for SMEs. Beyond compliance, adopting sustainable practices reduces costs, improves efficiency, enhances brand reputation, and fosters customer loyalty. The green transformation ensures long-term business resilience in a competitive, sustainability-focused landscape.

The Shift2Green Guideline serves as a roadmap for SMEs navigating this complex shift. It offers tailored insights to help businesses take their first or next steps toward sustainability. Through real-world examples and actionable strategies, the guideline demystifies green transformation and highlights the importance of collaboration in achieving these goals.

This guide showcases inspiring case studies of SMEs that have successfully integrated sustainable practices. These examples demonstrate how businesses, regardless of size or industry, can overcome challenges and benefit from green transformation. By illustrating practical steps and innovative solutions, the guideline encourages others to embark on their own sustainability journey.

Financial barriers often hinder green initiatives, so the handbook explores a range of funding options, from national subsidies and tax incentives to EU grants and investment programs. These tools alleviate the cost of green investments and provide businesses with the means to scale their efforts effectively.

Education and skill development are central to fostering a culture of sustainability. The guideline offers ready-to-use curricula and training materials for both SMEs and vocational institutions. These resources equip employees and leaders with the knowledge and skills needed to implement sustainable practices, ensuring that sustainability becomes an integral part of daily operations.

To further support SMEs, the handbook provides a Green Business Resource Hub, a curated collection of tools and frameworks offering practical solutions for eco-friendly operations. These resources are adaptable across sectors and regions, enabling businesses to implement sustainable practices suited to their unique contexts.

Finally, the guideline emphasizes the importance of assessing and enhancing sustainability competencies. With tools and methodologies for sustainable skills assessment, SMEs can measure progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure their teams are equipped to drive continuous innovation.

The Shift2Green Guideline invites SMEs to view sustainability as an opportunity to innovate, grow, and contribute to a better future. By adopting the principles outlined in this guide, SMEs can pioneer green transformation, setting an example for industries and communities alike. Together, we can build a more sustainable and resilient economy, leaving a legacy of environmental stewardship for future generations.

Multilingual Versions of the Guideline

To ensure accessibility and usability for a diverse audience, this guideline is available in multiple languages. You can find the full document in Polish, German, Bulgarian, and Lithuanian, enabling users from various regions to engage with the content in their native language. This multilingual approach reflects our commitment to inclusivity and supports a broader implementation of sustainable practices across Europe.



→ **English Version**

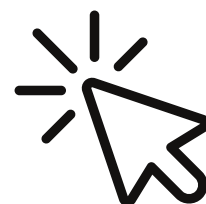
→ **Polish Version**

→ **German Version**

→ **Bulgarian Version**

→ **Lithuanian Version**

Clickable links, marked with an arrow icon, provide quick access to additional resources and detailed information, ensuring a seamless digital experience.





2. Leading by Example

Inspiring Green Transformation in SME's

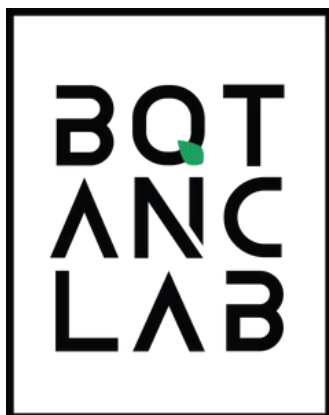
Leading by Example: Inspiring Green Transformation in SMEs

In today's business landscape, the need for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to adopt sustainable practices has never been more urgent. Climate change, environmental degradation, and the increasing demand for green solutions from both consumers and regulators are pushing businesses of all sizes to rethink their operations. For SMEs, which often operate with limited resources, the path to sustainability can seem daunting. However, the rewards of embracing green transformation are significant, ranging from cost savings and increased operational efficiency to improved brand reputation and customer loyalty.

In this chapter of the Shift2Green Guideline, we present 12 exemplary companies that have successfully embarked on their sustainability journey. These SMEs come from various industries and locations, yet they share a common commitment to reducing their environmental footprint and creating long-term value for their stakeholders. Each company profile provides a snapshot of their environmental initiatives, their journey towards sustainability, and the specific support measures they've implemented along the way. Through concise sections like Company Overview, Environmental Activities, Our Journey to Sustainability, and real-life quotes from the companies' leaders, these case studies offer actionable insights for other SMEs. The practical examples are not only informative but also inspiring, showing that sustainability is not reserved for large corporations. Whether it's energy efficiency improvements, waste reduction programs, or innovative product designs, these businesses demonstrate that with the right strategies, SMEs can lead the way in the green transformation.

These best practices are designed to inspire and empower other SMEs to take their first or next steps toward a sustainable future. By learning from those already making significant progress, companies can gain valuable insights, avoid common pitfalls, and implement proven measures to transition smoothly towards a greener business model.

Botanic Lab



Website: <https://www.botaniclab.bg/en>

Company Overview: Botanic Lab is a company for design, implementation and professional maintenance of interior and exterior landscaping, construction of conceptual plant decor and product and technological innovations in the field of landscaping. The company is a leader on the Bulgarian market in the field of interior landscaping, having delivered more than 300 projects with nearly 250 clients and completed landscaping of about 200,000 square meters, of which over 60% are for office spaces.

Founded: 2018

Location: Sofia, Bulgaria

Employees: 12

Environmental Activities:

The Botanic Lab team developed the product Botanic Wall - a smart vertical garden that represents a world-class innovation in terms of software development and product design. Botanic Wall enables intelligent, remote control of interior landscaping, optimization of resources, improvement of environmental conditions in closed urban spaces and measurement of indicators of healthy environment (air pollution, humidity, illumination and others). The aim of the Botanic Wall is to improve the quality of the environment in closed spaces, thanks to plants - noise insulation, improvement of humidity, absorption of fine dust particles and harmful electromagnetic waves. The product has time-effective maintenance thanks to intelligent management systems and ensures optimisation of energy and water usage costs.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

Our team's mission is to create a greener, healthier and aesthetically pleasing environment in urban spaces thanks to plants. Our Botanic Wall product is focused on the smart office systems and building automation market, where innovation enables people to work more productively and in optimal health conditions. Realizing that the easiest way to get closer to nature in a working environment is through plants, we strive to bring their benefits to man. The benefits don't end with improving air quality and increasing humidity. Plants manage to reduce fatigue by as much as 25% and increase focus by nearly 20%. Greenery also creates a visual and noise-insulating barrier, combined with the calming effect of the green color, it is a perfect solution for an employee in stressful times. We strive for our business to contribute to the fight against climate change by offering solutions and innovative products that optimally use resources such as water and electricity, as well as improve human health in the working environment.

Examples of Support Measures:

We take part in various initiatives and campaigns that align with our vision to develop a sustainable business and where we find the support of like-minded people. In 2018, our company became a national finalist in the entrepreneurial competition for green business Climatelaunchpad with our product Botanic Room, which is a green modular construction with three different functions - a meeting place, a presentation area and a space for a telephone conversation. For the development of the innovative Botanic Wall product, we received financial support from the Norwegian Financial Mechanism (Norway Grants) 2014-2021.

Quote:

"Sustainability is not just a trend, but a complete way of thinking and planning the business processes and value chain for any modern company"

Nusha Ognyanova,
Co-Founder of Botanic Lab



Kramp & Kramp GmbH + Co. KG

Website: <https://www.kramp-lemgo.de/>

Company Overview: Kramp & Kramp is a family-run construction company from Lemgo that specializes in the preservation and restoration of historic buildings. Since 1964, the company has stood for quality, sustainability, and commitment to craftsmanship and heritage preservation.

Founded: 1964

Location: Lemgo, Germany

Employees: 113



Die Spezialisten für Altbauten, Restaurierung und Denkmalpflege

Environmental Activities:

Kramp & Kramp is committed to sustainability through the use of ecological building materials such as clay, silicate paints and FSC-certified wood. The company's own bioheating system uses wood waste, and photovoltaic systems provide electricity. A new wastewater treatment plant reduces pollution, and continuous improvements in waste management minimize environmental impact. The company also promotes understanding of species protection through nest box and insect hotel campaigns.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

As a family-owned company with a strong sense of tradition, Kramp & Kramp views the preservation of historical buildings as a contribution to environmental protection. The responsible use of resources and the conservation of raw materials are at the forefront of our thinking. Sustainability and long-term responsibility towards the environment and society are core values of our company.

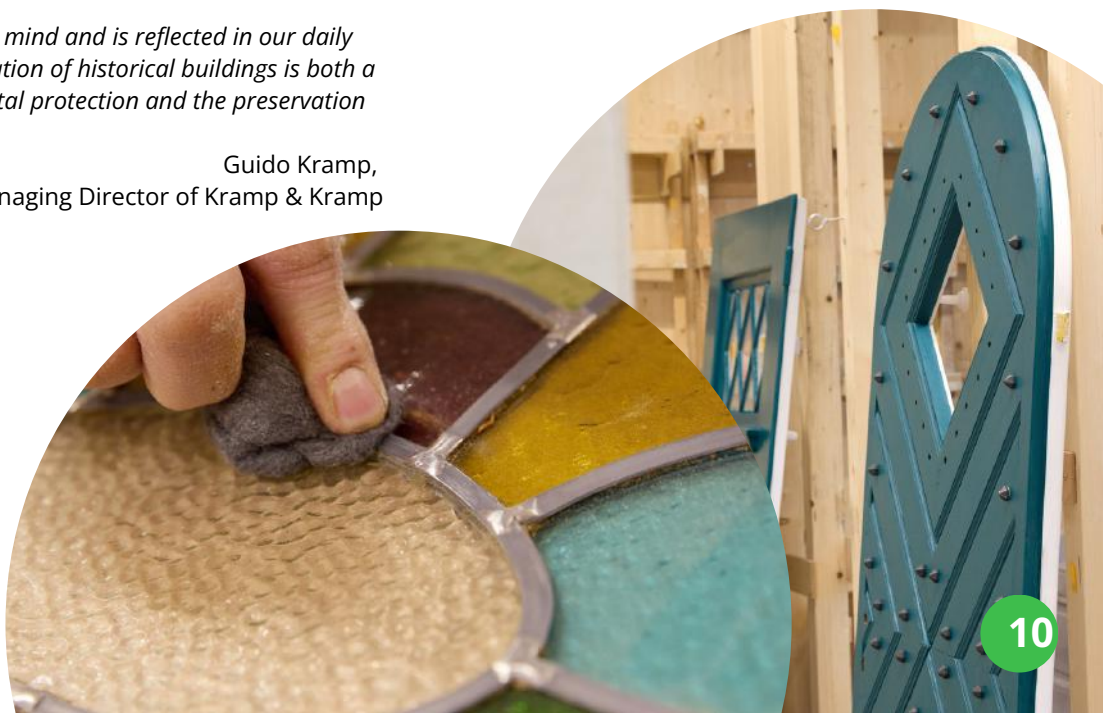
Examples of Support Measures:

Kramp & Kramp invests in modern wastewater treatment, renewable energies and sustainable materials. Employees are actively involved in environmental protection through regular training and a company suggestion scheme. The company also maintains partnerships with regional suppliers and is involved in environmental projects such as ÖKOPROFIT.

Quote:

"Sustainability begins in the mind and is reflected in our daily actions. For us, the preservation of historical buildings is both a contribution to environmental protection and the preservation of cultural values."

Guido Kramp,
Managing Director of Kramp & Kramp



LEO GmbH



Website: www.leo-gmbh.com

Company Overview: The primary goal of LEO GmbH is to employ long-term unemployed people from the region of Eastern Styria and, if possible, to reintegrate them into the primary labour market. Areas of activity are metal and ancillary building trades, provision of personnel, cleaning, second-hand goods.

Founded: 2004

Location: Styria, Austria

Employees: 45

Environmental Activities:

Leo GmbH actively contributes to environmental sustainability by replacing traditional lighting fixtures with energy-efficient alternatives and installing radiator thermostats to optimize heating. Additionally, the framework conditions for sustainable procurement have been established to ensure that resources are sourced responsibly. The company has also embraced electromobility by integrating electric vehicles into its operations, further reducing its carbon footprint. As part of its expansion, the business opened a second-hand shop, promoting circular economy principles by encouraging reuse and reducing waste.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

The company's sustainability journey has been shaped by comprehensive advice from external consultants who provided expertise on integrating sustainable practices across all operations. Employee involvement has been a key factor, with staff actively participating in processes that enhance environmental responsibility. The journey has also been supported by various subsidies, enabling the company to implement sustainable initiatives that might have otherwise been financially challenging, demonstrating a clear commitment to long-term environmental goals.

Examples of Support Measures:

Leo GmbH has sought external consultancy to guide its sustainability initiatives, ensuring that each step aligns with best practices in environmental management. Employees have been engaged throughout the process, contributing to and learning from the company's green transformation. Moreover, the company has leveraged subsidies to support projects, from upgrading infrastructure to adopting sustainable business practices, reinforcing the importance of external support in achieving its sustainability targets.

Quote:

"The ecological transformation should be in line with the company's social and ethical values and support the mission/ vision statement. The goals must be realistic and in line with industry-specific requirements. There is great potential in exchanging ideas with other companies in order to find your own path."

Peter Prettenhofer,
CEO of Leo GmbH



Brax Leineweber GmbH & Co. KG

Website: <https://www.brax.com/>

Company Overview: Brax is all about passion: passion to inspire customers with our products. It accompanies us in every project and every decision decisions we make. This is how we have developed Brax into a successful casual fashion brand, far beyond our core product, the trousers. Our customers are the designers of their lives, mainly between 35 and 59 years old, in the middle of life and have the positive attitude of having real values in mind. The brand values smart, stylish and passionate stand for the Brax outfit brand!

Founded: 1888

Location: Herford, Germany

Employees: 1085



Brax

Environmental Activities:

For us, sustainable business means being economically successful while assuming ecological and social responsibility. In accordance with our requirements for guaranteeing product safety, Brax takes all necessary measures to ensure that neither people nor the environment are harmed. One of the basic requirements for this is the Restricted Substances List (RSL) that we have defined. It contains the substances that are prohibited or restricted in production and in the product and goes far beyond the German and European requirements. In addition, we have installed a photovoltaic system at our headquarters in Herford and put it into operation this summer.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

We not only want to offer our customers stylish and fashionable clothing, but also ensure that our products can be manufactured under socially and environmentally responsible conditions. We are currently working on a new product strategy to further reduce the impact of our products on the environment. With the help of the product safety tests we carried out on the basis of our RSL, we were able to ensure the marketability of our products in 2023.

Our newly installed photovoltaic system helps to reduce our CO2 emissions by around 220 tons per year.

Examples of Support Measures:

Brax is an active member of various associations and initiatives. In this way, we receive and provide professional impetus and regularly exchange ideas with various stakeholders. In addition to our membership of amfori BEPI, we have been a member of the amfori Business Social Compliance Initiative (amfori BSCI) since 2008, which aims to improve working conditions in global supply chains. We are also involved in important committees of the Association of the Northwest German Textile and Clothing Industry, the GermanFashion Modeverband Deutschland e.V. and the umbrella organization Gesamtverband der deutschen Textil- und Modeindustrie. We are also a member of the Foreign Trade Association of the German Retail Trade (AVE) and the CSR Competence Center of GILDE Business Development.

Quote:

"Sustainable management is deeply anchored in the roots of our company. Acting responsibly and resolving conflicting objectives - these are the challenges we face."

Tanja Kliewe-Meyer,
Head of Corporate Responsibility and Product Safety



Installation of the photovoltaic system in cooperation with "Planet in Green"

pro mente

Website: <https://www.promentesteiermark.at/>

Company Overview: Support services for mentally impaired people in a professional and private context. The aim of the work is to improve the position of mentally ill people of all age groups in society and to support them in their social environment.

Founded: 1989

Location: Graz, Austria

Employees: 200

pro mente

steiermark



Environmental Activities:

Pro mente has developed and implemented a comprehensive ecological concept for all areas of the company's activities. Examples are: use of existing real estate to avoid new soil sealing, conversion of energy systems (away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energies), promotion of digitization to reduce paper consumption, waste avoidance projects (e.g. to reduce plastic waste and ensure consistent waste separation in all areas), employee training, Reducing pollutant emissions through carpooling, Central purchasing ensures economically and ecologically targeted purchasing, Repairability and availability of spare parts, Reuse of everyday objects (as long as possible), Extension of useful life (e.g. hardware is adapted to requirements to avoid replacing entire systems).

Our Journey to Sustainability:

In our work, we contribute to the participation of our stakeholders in society. Our demand for social justice at all levels also includes ecological motives. Many of our care programs are in the area of circular economy activities.

Examples of Support Measures::

Good preparation and planning with realistic objectives, milestones, involvement of all stakeholders involved, clear communication and education, acceptance and a positive atmosphere are important.

Quote:

"When implementing ecological activities, I consider the active participation of everyone involved to be important, a positive approach, the creation of incentives, acting as a role model and an orientation towards the SDGs, including attention to supply chains."

Bettina Vögl,
CEO



Koter Szkółka Krzewów Jagodowych

Website: <https://koter.com.pl/>

Company Overview: The company is a family-owned nursery. Originally started as an orchard farm, it has since evolved into a business specializing in the production of high-quality fruit shrub seedlings. Their main focus is on cultivating and selling seedlings of highbush blueberries, haskap berries, thornless blackberries, and raspberries. In addition to fruit plants, they also offer a variety of ornamental plants, including large-flowered azaleas, large-flowered rhododendrons, Japanese azaleas, and pieris.

Founded: 2017

Location: Dąbrowica, Lubelskie voivodship, Poland

Employees: 6



Environmental Activities:

Photovoltaic panels and the creation of a closed water cycle - water from drip irrigation system is discharged through pipes to a reservoir, treated there and reused. From 2025, the company will have full data on the carbon footprint of its operations.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

Koter engages in green practices primarily to reduce resource consumption and production costs. The company uses solar panels and a closed-loop water system to manage resources more efficiently. However, sustainable agriculture faces challenges, such as increasing pest resistance, which makes them selectively use organic methods, as some are financially unviable. High initial costs and a lack of experts in organic investment planning are significant barriers, but at the same time a motivating factor encouraging to delve into the topic of organic farming. Precision farming technologies and soil testing are key to optimizing the use of pesticides and fertilizers while reducing environmental impact.

Examples of Support Measures:

Koter acknowledges that financial incentives such as subsidies, tax holidays and low-interest loans can help make green investments more profitable. However, they point out the inefficiency of some schemes. An interesting example is ARIMR's "Agriculture 4.0" initiative, which allocated funds for replacing toxic hop poles, but did not include the cost of disposing of the old ones, making many companies reluctant to apply for subsidies.

Quote:

"When implementing ecological initiatives, I believe it is crucial to focus on cost efficiency, practical solutions, and precise technology, especially in agriculture. Incentives such as grants and tax reliefs are essential for making sustainable changes viable. It's also important to ensure that regulations are well-designed, providing clear guidelines and support for businesses, while optimizing resource use through precision farming and responsible water management."

Aneta Koter,
CEO



Slowhop

Slowhop

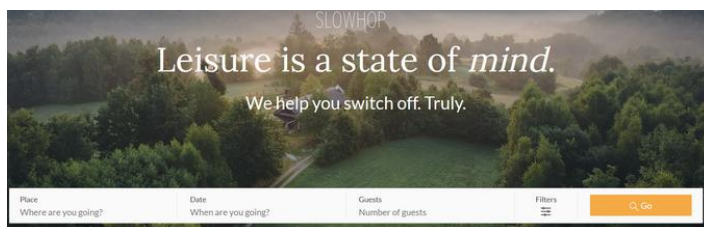
Website: <https://slowhop.com/>

Company Overview: Slowhop.com is a booking platform designed for slow travel lovers, offering unique stays that bring travelers closer to nature and local culture. It promotes responsible travel by encouraging thoughtful tourism and supporting hosts who care about their surroundings. The platform aims to make travel more responsible and seeks to bring together enthusiasts of regenerative practices that benefit both people and the planet.

Founded: 2017

Location: Warsaw, Poland

Employees: 30



Environmental Activities:

Slowhop is committed to promoting sustainable tourism through initiatives like the Responsible Travel Program, which certifies hosts, based on their environmental, cultural, and social responsibility. The platform also emphasizes ecological education and supports the regeneration of both natural and socio-cultural environments through its Kind Actions Report.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

Responsible Travel Program - a certification that, through a self-assessment, examines hosts' commitment to activities close to the idea of sustainable tourism, while smuggling in a number of questions indicating practices that support the regeneration of the socio-cultural and natural environment. It examines hosts' attitudes toward environmental protection, care for cultural heritage, concern for local communities and environmental education activities. As part of its environmental initiatives, Slowhop has implemented activities to support sustainable development, which are described in the Kind Actions 2023 Report.

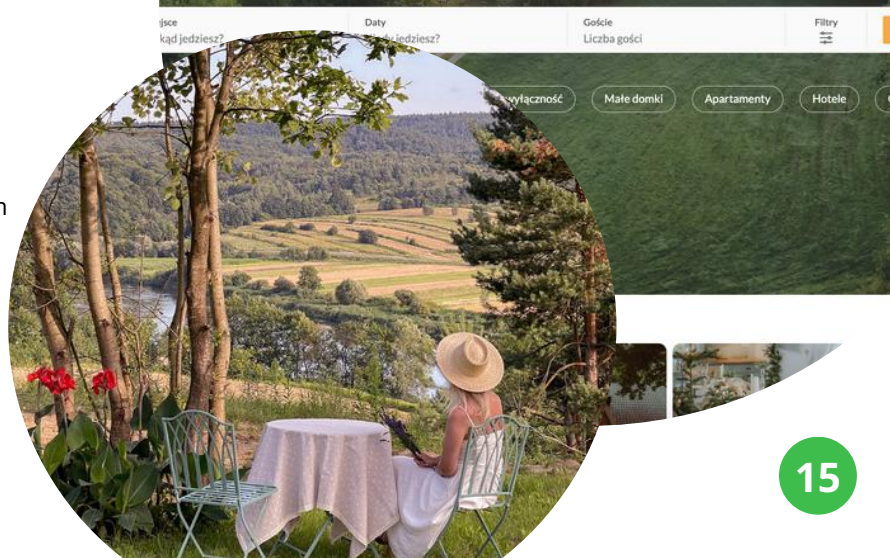
Examples of Support Measures::

Examples of support measures for implementation: 1. Financial and marketing support for hosts and SMEs engaging in sustainability. 2. Grants and subsidies for sustainable transformations. 3. Tools for measuring environmental impact and promoting eco-education. 4. Study tours and knowledge hubs for sharing best practices.

Quote:

"When implementing ecological initiatives, it is crucial to align them with both economic viability and the company's mission. Transparency is key to avoid greenwashing, and technology plays a vital role in developing tools that help our hosts and clients adopt more sustainable practices."

dr Katarzyna Barwicka,
Ecotourism Expert at Slowhop.com



Pasieka Smakulskich

Website: <https://pasiekasmakulskich.pl/noclegi/>

Company Overview: Smakulski's Apiary is an interesting example of an eco business based on the theme of bees and honey production. The example of this company shows how to develop a business and broaden the offer, how to earn money while doing something good for the world, bringing people joy and education. Starting with the production and sale of honey, the company now offers a variety of services: it runs courses and trainings for beekeepers, publishes publications on bees, conducts educational workshops on bees and biodiversity as well as runs ecological agro-tourism and offers the organisation of ecological events for companies enriched with a package of ecological workshops.

Founded: 2015

Location: Pakość, Poland

Employees: 3



PASIEKA SMAKULSKICH

Environmental Activities:

The company's mission is to educate about bees and their importance for biodiversity. It is therefore natural for the company to carry out a host of environmentally friendly practices - to lead by example. The company relies on local products and operates according to a zero waste philosophy: it not only segregates waste, but strives to reduce it. The décor of the accommodation rooms uses upcycled furnitures.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

We have been learning about the extraordinary world of bees for more than 40 years. The adventure that started with two humble hives is now a family business that connects generations. We have more than passion and experience - Smakulski's Apiary operates with a mission. We believe that knowledge of bees, understanding of bees and love of these amazing insects really do have the power to change the world. We decided that in addition to keeping bees and selling honey, we would share our knowledge of bees with others and introduce anyone who wanted to try it to beekeeping. This is how the Smakulski's Apiary publishing house and the idea of a living honey museum.

Examples of Support Measures::

In Poland, it is difficult to get financial support for existing small businesses, especially for infrastructure measures. The costs of running a company and the obligations associated with various regulations are enormous. Therefore, we try to cope on our own. It is important for us to cooperate with our business partners - organising company events. In order to carry out educational activities, we founded the MAPA Foundation, which enables us to obtain small grants for educational activities in schools.

Quote:

"No one will thank you for giving them a heart attack'. These were the words I heard from a corporate colleague after completing yet another 'arch-important' project for the company. When we started to think about it more deeply, I realised an even more important point - by working here I am not doing anything for the world. After quite a short reflection and a conversation with my most important person, my wife Agnieszka, I decided that I would do what my Dad had tried to encourage me to do much earlier."

Piotr Smakulski,
Owner



FOOD THINK TANK Restaurant

Website: <https://www.foodthinktank.pl/restauracja>

Company Overview: The FTT restaurant is part of the business activities of the 'food think tank' foundation, hence the FTT acronym. Food Think Tank is a foundation, a collective, a grassroots movement operating since 2015. We operate mainly in Wrocław, where we have built a community, bringing together experts from many areas of science, art and gastronomy in the broadest sense. Every good and service that the FTT Foundation provides as part of its business activities are certified with the 'pro-social' label.

Founded: 2015

Location: Wrocław, Poland

Employees: 16

FOOD THINK TANK



Environmental Activities:

We, as well as our employees, are concerned about not wasting food. Hence the idea of making jars. Whenever we have excess vegetables or any are left over, we turn everything into jars. Pickles, marinated vegetables, kimchi, jams, jam and vinegars and sourdough. All preserves can be purchased on site in our pantry shop. This arouses the curiosity of our neighbours and regular customers, who are happy to buy them. Since they are familiar with the spirit of zero waste, they bring their empty jars so that we can use them again. There are also situations where neighbours share their vegetables from the garden with us, thus building our local community. If we have excess food and we know we can't sell it the next day we use the foodsi app, which is popular in our town.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

FTT's Orchard and Garden restaurant focuses on seasonal dishes in line with the seasons. You will not find meat on our menu, but plant-based products. In our cuisine we try to focus on the traditions of our ancestors. We are committed to the taste we remember from our childhood, cultivating the cuisines of our mothers and grandmothers. The restaurant not only serves à la carte dishes to its customers, but also runs a series of educational workshops related to the conscious use of food products. How one product can be used in several ways, how to take care of the freshness of our vegetables, what can be done when the expiry date is over. The workshops are attended by adults as well as children.

Examples of Support Measures:

We are pro-social and therefore cooperate with many municipal institutions supporting socially excluded people. Our restaurant is a part of the FOOD THINK TANK Foundation, whose mission we pursue. Incidentally, the restaurant's seasonal menu, which excludes meat, fits in perfectly with our pro-ecological efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change.

Quote:

"We are guided by the motto 'the more you give, the more you receive'. We explore the tradition of our ancestors by combining it with technological innovations."

Aleksandra Arasiewicz,
Manager



Atlas Agro Science



Website: <https://atlasagro.eu/>

Company Overview: Our company produces bio stimulants rich in humic acids and trace elements for use in landscaping and agriculture. By turning sludge from water treatment plants into liquid bio stimulants for plants, we create a product that contributes to solving several environmental problems and at the same time has significant added value.

Founded: 2019

Location: Sofia, Bulgaria

Employees: 6



Environmental Activities:

The values and ideals of Atlas Agro Science match those of any other growing business in the field of ecology. Environmental protection, the use of recycled products and the implementation of waste raw materials in production to reduce pollution are of great importance to us. Our company not only relies on the principle of the circular economy, but also successfully manages to realise products with zero waste, which gives us a great advantage over competing but unsustainable businesses in the same sector.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

The Atlas Agro Science team is aware that the key to meeting today's consumer needs is to offer a useful and innovative product without jeopardizing the future of generations after us. People and nature are one and should not be placed in antagonistic contradictions. Nature has a significant role in the existence of humanity and its prosperity, which therefore directly results in interaction with the economy. The bottom line is that humans are too dependent on the environment and cannot afford the risk of disturbing the balance in nature. It is this principle that drives and sustains the dedication and enthusiasm of our team to fight the problems arising from both industries, namely environmental pollution from sewage treatment plant waste and soil poisoning through excessive use of chemical mineral fertilizers.

Examples of Support Measures::

We began as a start-up company with a clear vision of what we were aiming to achieve. Behind us are highly motivated and erudite scientists and entrepreneurs who helped realize and patent the technology of our products. Over the years, we have built reliable partnerships with a number of organizations, including Cleantech Bulgaria and the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), Knowledge and Innovation Communities Climate and Food. We are also a beneficiary of a project that is implemented with the financial support of the Norwegian Financial Mechanism within the framework of the "Development of Business, Innovation and Small and Medium Enterprises" Programme.

Quote:

"We support the acceleration of the transition to circular economy by reinforcing its core principles - less waste, more growth and innovation."

Gabriela Hristova,
Marketing Director



Atostogų parkas

Website: <https://atostoguparkas.lt>

Company Overview: „Atostogų parkas“ is the largest recreation and wellness complex in Western Lithuania, which has 16 swimming pools for your relaxation and health. The complex invites you to enjoy water entertainment, unique sauna programs, spa and wellness procedures, stay in a hotel or in log villas surrounded by a forest.

Founded: 2008

Location: Palanga, Lithuania

Employees: 165



Environmental Activities:

Complex "Atostogu parkas" successfully operates an innovative Swiss system called DA-GEN, which required significant investment and does not use additional chlorine. It not only conserves natural resources but also protects the health of visitors, as the quality of the disinfected water produced by this system is comparable to drinking water. The secondary use of sapropel mud used for spa and wellness treatments can also be considered one of the sustainable measures employed by the company. Rich in numerous health-beneficial mineral and organic compounds, sapropel is not discarded after the procedure but is used as a fertile fertilizer for flowers and plants. There is also installed solar collectors that provide eco-friendly electricity for the entire complex.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

To ensure even greater comfort for visitors, the "Atostogų parkas" (Holiday Park) wellness and recreation complex directs its investments towards methods that improve the quality of services provided. Swimming in water filtered by the DA-GEN based on chlorine-free water purification system feels light, the water is enriched with oxygen, and there is no unpleasant tingling in more sensitive areas of the body – it is completely safe water for children, characterized by exceptionally high quality. This is particularly important for people who are allergic to chlorine. Using this technology, swimming in the pool water is comparable to swimming in a natural water body. The installation of solar panels has reduced electricity costs, allowing us to invest more in improving the quality of services. We also contribute to environmental preservation. The energy obtained from the solar panels is used to operate the pool cleaning, air ventilation, and heating equipment (the boiler's thermal power and motor assistance).

Examples of Support Measures::

The European Union's financial support as the grants were allocated for the installation of a solar power plant on the complex's roof and for the installation of water disinfection systems DA-GEN for the pools.

Quote:

"The implementation of sustainability principles in a company helps the business to better understand and evaluate its responsibility towards the environment, employees, customers, and suppliers. The company is looking for environmentally friendly technologies. It is important to develop a long-term sustainability strategy within the company to contribute to the goals of preserving nature for future generations."

Ligita Miltenytė,
Deputy Director



Bremena

Website: <http://www.bremena.lt/>

Company Overview: UAB Bremena has been specializing for over 32 years in designing and installing economical boiler rooms and heating-ventilation systems, which help effectively manage energy consumption using A++ energy class devices.

Founded: 1992

Location: Tauragė, Lithuania

Employees: 165



Environmental Activities:

The company has designed and installed about 200 boiler rooms (from 50 to 2500 kW) using renewable energy sources such as firewood, which paid for themselves in 0.5 to 2 years. Company has started the installation of ultrasonic Danfoss (Denmark) heat meters, which helped to reduce the bills of heat consumers by 30-50%. In the field of electricity efficiency economic "Grundfoss" (Denmark) circulation pumps and frequency converters for "Danfoss" boiler flue pumps and pumps the company started to install. The company is actively interested in and boldly implements technical and scientific innovations in its activities. 3 MW boiler in the with renewable energy sources using wood chips also were installed by the company. The company successfully implemented some of the largest renewable energy projects in the Baltic States, such as the heating of Tauragė city (Lithuania) Church and parish house (1700 m²) with "Viessmann" (Germany) heat pumps and 29 wells, as well as the reconstruction of the boiler house to the elderly care facility, which is equipped with 100 m² solar collectors for hot water preparation. The first apartment building heating system with heat pumps and boreholes was installed in the region by the company UAB „Bremena“. The company was one of the first in the region having received PHARE 2000 support, installed a briquette production press and started briquette production. 3.1 MW boiler house was installed, which began to supply "green" and cheaper thermal energy to the companies of the industrial park in Tauragė city than the heat networks. Later, investments were made in automated burners, which enable the burning of sawdust briquettes produced by the company.

Our Journey to Sustainability:

Love for nature and the desire to contribute to Lithuania's energy independence. Also the commitment to behave responsibly towards nature and society, setting an example and advising our customers on how to use energy more efficiently and reduce CO₂ emissions. Also, the commitment to contribute to the implementation of the green policy goals set by Lithuania and the European Union until 2030.

Examples of Support Measures::

Trainings from equipment suppliers Danfoss, Grundfoss, Viessmann, Buderus, Komfovent and others, also participation in the specific exhibitions by gaining specific anVICES and experience from the professionals.

Quote:

"We believe in the research of scientists who have demonstrated to world political leaders at climate change conferences in Paris, Glasgow and Dubai that failure to meet these targets could lead to global sea levels rising by more than a meter by the end of the century. This would lead to liquidation costs of natural disasters and mass migration, the costs of which would be hundreds of times higher than now."

Sigitas Mičiulis,
Founder



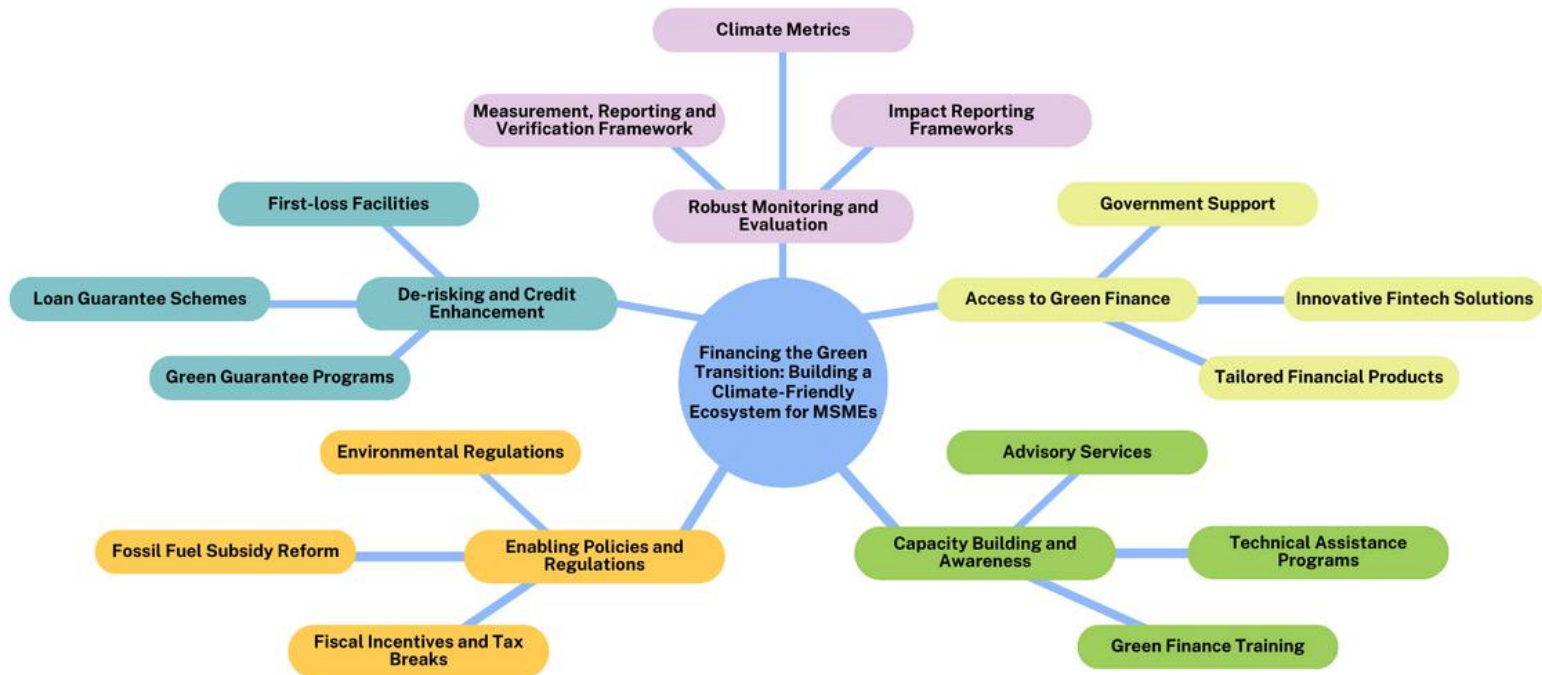


3. Financing Green Transformation for SMEs

Supporting Sustainable Business Practices
Across Europe

Financing the Green Transition

Financing the green transformation and building a climate-friendly ecosystem for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is crucial for achieving sustainability goals and mitigating climate change. SMEs play a vital role in most economies, often accounting for the majority of businesses, and their collective efforts are essential in transitioning to a green economy.



Financial Instruments

The **Tax Credits and Deductions** (benefit from tax credits and deductions for investments in energy-efficient equipment, renewable energy systems, and other sustainable practices) in all partner countries (Germany, Poland Lithuania, Austria and Bulgaria) are valued as the main financial instrument which SMEs sees as a financial resource undertaking sustainability transformation. It can be assumed that these instruments allow SMEs to recover part of the costs incurred from investments in environmentally friendly technologies and practices, making green transformation financially viable. By directly reducing the tax burden associated with green investments, these instruments make it easier for SMEs to adopt energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy systems, and sustainable business practices.

Poland should be emphasized as a country where **Government Grants and Subsidies**, as well as **Green Investment Funds** (which pool capital from multiple investors to invest in green projects and companies) and the **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)** (collaboration between the public sector and private companies to finance, build, and operate projects that have environmental benefits) are particularly highlighted as financial instruments that play a significant role for SMEs undertaking sustainability transformations.

Investment requirement

There is no common consensus among SMEs from the partner countries regarding which investment requirements are the most relevant for undertaking sustainability transformations. Investing into the **Product and Process Innovation** (research and development by investing in the development of greener products or the improvement of existing products to be more eco-friendly, upgrading manufacturing processes to be more energy-efficient) appears to be important only for SMES in Poland. Investment into the **Energy Efficiency** (upgrading insulation, lighting, heating, ventilation, and to reduce energy consumption ect.) is valued as mostly relevant action for SMEs in Germany, Lithuania and Poland undertaking sustainability transformations. The **Digital Transformation** (adopting smart technologies solutions to monitor and optimize energy usage, utilizing data analytics to improve operational efficiency and reduce waste ect) is valued as an essential investment for SMEs in Lithuania, Austria and Bulgaria. Only for SMEs in Bulgaria **Employee Training and Engagement** (training programs by investing in training employees on sustainable practices and the operation of new green technologies, implementing programs to engage employees in sustainability efforts) is seen as an important investment in undertaking sustainability transformations.

Ways of Financing

Both **national and EU level funding** has a significant importance for SMEs from most of partner countries (Poland, Lithuania, Austria, Bulgaria) to undertake sustainability transformations. Given the pressing need for climate action, these funding mechanisms provide SMEs with the financial resources, incentives, and technical assistance necessary to adopt energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy systems, and sustainable business models. This blend of national and EU-level support is essential because SMEs, which make up a significant portion of the European economy, often lack the financial and technical capacity to transition on their own. **National level funding** is emphasized as an essential of SMEs from Germany. It can be assumed that there are very strong funding programs developed there.



National Financial Framework

Subsidies and Incentives (providing financial incentives, subsidies, or grants for renewable energy projects, energy-efficient technologies) in all partner countries (Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Austria, Bulgaria) were identified as key financial resources for undertaking sustainability transformations within the national financial frameworks for SMEs. **Tax Incentives** (tax breaks or deductions for businesses, energy efficiency improvements) is also significant for SMEs in transformation forces, especially in Poland, Lithuania and Austria. **Support for Innovation** (funding research and development in clean technologies, supporting startups and small businesses in the green sector etc.) and **Education and Awareness** (investing in public education campaigns to raise awareness about the importance of sustainable practices, to promote behaviour change towards more environmentally friendly choices) are also frameworks which supports SMEs in undertaking sustainability transformations.

EU financial framework

Grants (non-repayable funds provided by the EU to support specific projects and initiatives) for SMEs are seen as a financial resource in the context of the EU financial framework in most of partner countries: Poland, Lithuania, Austria and Bulgaria. **Green Bonds and Sustainable Investments** are key financial resources in the EU financial framework for SMEs in Germany. While **European Structural and Investment Funds** such as European Regional Development Fund are exceptionally important for SMEs in Poland. **Loans** (European Investment Bank provided direct loans on increasing climate-related investments) as a financial resource provided EU are important and is used of SMEs from Lithuania, and again, Poland.

Challenges and barriers

Addressing the financial challenges is essential for enabling SMEs to implement sustainability transformations successfully. By enhancing access to capital, improving financial literacy, and reducing the risks associated with sustainable investments, stakeholders can empower SMEs to contribute to a more sustainable economy. **Initial Costs** related with high upfront costs for green infrastructure and technology were named as the main challenges and barriers of the most SMEs in Poland, Lithuania, Austria and Bulgaria. While in Germany **Technological Advancements** such as rapid technological changes which can make investments risky were indicated as challenges and barriers to implementing sustainability transformations for SMEs. **Market Uncertainties** such as fluctuations in market conditions and policy changes which can create uncertainties for investors we named as barriers and challenges for SMEs in Bulgaria and Austria while implementing sustainability transformations.

Financial instruments to support SMEs through the green transition






Financial instruments at both the national and European levels play a crucial role in bridging this gap, offering tailored solutions to support SMEs in their transition towards sustainability.






At the country level, governments are increasingly introducing grants, loans, tax incentives, and guarantees to help SMEs invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy, and sustainable production methods. These initiatives often align with national green policies and climate goals, encouraging businesses to adopt eco-friendly practices while remaining competitive. On the European level, the European Union has implemented a range of financial mechanisms, such as the European Green Deal, the InvestEU program, and Horizon Europe, designed to provide funding and technical assistance to SMEs. These instruments aim to promote innovation, energy transition, and sustainable growth across Europe, fostering a greener economy while ensuring SMEs have the necessary support to navigate this complex shift.








The financing options listed in this chapter reflect the status as of January 2025 and are subject to regular changes. They are intended to inspire and guide you in exploring available opportunities for green investments.















Financial instruments





Country specific financial instruments		
Country	Title	Short Description
Lithuania 	<u>Billion for Business</u> 	<p>The business is funded with a loan under the Recovery and Resilience Facility. Granting these loans, it is expected to promote transformation of the national economy towards a more sustainable, more innovative and safer economy, financing projects in Lithuania for environmentally friendly technologies such as developing circularity, decarbonization, energy efficiency, introducing low-waste, advanced, innovative, digital technologies, development of high value-added product production capacities (including biotechnologies), defense and security industry. Loans granted for such investments are subordinated, syndicated or direct.</p>
	<u>Direct loans for financing renewable energy projects</u> 	<p>The purpose of this financial instrument is to encourage companies to increase the use of renewable energy resources. The form of loans can be given to solar or wind power plants to build, equip, in order to produce electricity for their own consumption, to companies investing in the development projects of solar wind power parks of producing consumers.</p>
	<u>Investing in Lithuanian Economy (LTE)</u> 	<p>ILTE is a state-established financial institution dedicated to providing financial services and managing various financing programs for businesses.</p>
	<u>EU Investments</u> 	<p>This website is a comprehensive platform where businesses can explore all available EU funding opportunities and submit applications. Each funding call includes detailed contact information for consultations and additional guidance.</p>

Country specific financial instruments		
Country	Title	Short Description
Germany 	<u>KfW funding programs</u> 	<p>KfW Banking Group offers various loans and grants to promote sustainable investments. Important programs are e.g. the “KfW Energy Efficiency Program” and “KfW Renewable Energy Program”.</p> <p>The program offers low-interest loans and repayment grants for investments in energy efficiency and renewable energies. The repayment subsidy can amount to up to 27.5% of the eligible costs.</p>
	<u>Federal funding for industry and climate protection</u> 	<p>This program aims to support energy-intensive industries in reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It promotes investments in innovative technologies for the decarbonization of production processes. This particular funding line will consider applications until November 2024, but it can be assumed that similar funding lines will follow.</p> <p>Funding is provided in the form of grants that can cover up to 50% of the investment costs.</p>
	<u>Environmental Innovation Program</u> 	<p>This program supports innovative, large-scale demonstration projects that are being carried out in Germany for the first time and promise to significantly reduce environmental impact. It is aimed in particular at SMEs.</p> <p>Grants are available for up to 70% of the additional investment costs compared to conventional solutions.</p>
	<u>ZIM - Central Innovation Program for SMEs</u> 	<p>The ZIM program supports research and development projects by SMEs that develop innovative products, processes or services. Projects with environmentally friendly or energy-efficient objectives are particularly eligible for funding.</p> <p>Grants are awarded for up to 45% of the eligible costs, up to a maximum of 2 million euros per project.</p>

Country specific financial instruments		
Country	Title	Short Description
Poland 	<u>Polish Regional Operational Programs (ROPs)</u> 	Polish Regional Operational Programs (ROPs), part of the EU Structural Funds, support regional development and green transformation for SMEs in Poland. Each of the 16 regions manages its own ROP, providing grants for energy efficiency, renewable energy, emissions reduction, and sustainable practices. SMEs can fund projects like solar installations, waste management, and eco-innovation, making ROPs essential for local green investments.
	<u>National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management (NFOŚiGW)</u> 	National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management (NFOŚiGW): This agency supports projects focused on improving environmental quality. SMEs can apply for grants or loans to finance green projects, such as waste management, pollution control, and renewable energy installations.
	<u>Horizon Europe in Poland</u> 	Horizon Europe: SMEs engaged in research and innovation in sustainable sectors can access Horizon Europe funds. This program supports projects related to green energy, resource efficiency, and low-carbon technologies.
	<u>Polish Development Fund (PFR)</u> 	PFR offers funding support for SMEs through loans, equity investments, and guarantees. The fund has specific instruments targeting green innovation and sustainable development, including renewable energy and energy-efficient infrastructure projects.
	<u>Financing - PARP - SME Development Center</u> 	Grants for enterprises, start-ups, innovative projects and grants supporting SMEs from Eastern Poland in the implementation of complex projects for the implementation of a business model related to the implementation of the circular economy (GOZ) in operations (GOZ-transformation business model).
	<u>Grants and Programs Search - European Funds</u> 	Here you can search grants for your company and find support with finding financing for your projects.

Country specific financial instruments		
Country	Title	Short Description
Bulgaria 	<u>Lending to the Waste Sector</u> 	<p>Capped portfolio guarantee, stand-alone guarantees and/or risk-sharing loans with the possibility to implement a financial instrument in combination with a grant in a single operation. The instrument has indicative budget of 236.2 million EUR. The Urban Development Funds aims to provide debt financing for projects to final recipients from the private and public sectors, incl. in combination with a grant, aimed at promoting and developing measures that boost economic activity, energy efficiency, sustainable urban mobility, etc.</p>
	<u>Technology Transfer Fund</u> 	<p>With indicative budget of 56.6 million EUR, the instrument aims to address the key challenges facing Bulgaria's development, including insufficient public and private investments in research and development activities, leading to a comparatively low innovation capacity of the economy.</p>
	<u>Enterprise Innovation Fund</u> 	<p>With indicative budget of 32.17 million EUR, the instrument aims to increase the innovation potential and create a sustainable ecosystem to support SMEs with high innovation potential, enhance the access to knowledge and technologies, as well as the development of an innovation ecosystem in less developed regions, improve the level of innovation penetration and accelerating the transition to a knowledge-based economy.</p>
	<u>Human Resource Development Centre (HRDC)</u> 	<p>An institution, dedicated to enhancing skills and knowledge through comprehensive training programs and capacity-building initiatives. It collaborates with industries and institutions to empower individuals and organizations, fostering professional growth and sustainable development.</p>
	<u>Fund of Funds</u> 	<p>Fund of Funds distributes public funds from European programmes and national co-financing through financial instruments.</p>

Country specific financial instruments		
Country	Title	Short Description
Austria 	<u>KPC</u> <u>(Environmental funding in Austria)</u> 	<p>The BMK's environmental funding was and is the most important funding instrument at federal level for Austrian companies that invest in environmental and climate protection measures. The funding program offers support in many different areas of climate protection.</p>
	<u>Climate and Energy Fund</u> <u>(Klima- und Energiefonds)</u> 	<p>The Climate and Energy Fund provides various funding opportunities for companies to implement environmental measures. These grants support projects aimed at reducing carbon emissions and promoting energy efficiency. Additionally, the fund encourages businesses to adopt sustainable practices and invest in renewable energy solutions to contribute to climate protection efforts.</p>
	<u>Company environmental subsidies of the Chamber of Commerce</u> <u>(WKO)</u> 	<p>The Chamber of Commerce (WKO) offers an overview of environmental subsidies available to companies in the federal states. These subsidies aim to support businesses in implementing eco-friendly projects and improving sustainability practices.</p>
	<u>Energy management systems</u> <u>(EnMS)</u> 	<p>Grant funding for the establishment and/or certification of an energy management system in SMEs. They are supported in introducing an energy management system and building up energy know-how.</p>
	<u>klimaaktiv mobil</u> 	<p>Numerous klimaaktiv mobil funding offers provide companies with financial support for the implementation of transport measures to reduce CO2 emissions from company mobility. The program also includes training and information material.</p>

Europe-wide financial instruments	
Title	Short Description
<u>Energy Performance Contracting (EPC)</u> 	This model enables SMEs to finance sustainable investments by saving on energy costs without having to make large investments upfront.
<u>Just Transition Fund (JTF)</u> 	Just Transition Fund (JTF): Part of the EU Green Deal, this fund provides resources to regions most affected by the transition to a low-carbon economy, including parts of Poland. SMEs can apply for grants aimed at developing sustainable business models, renewable energy adoption, and innovation.
<u>Supporting the clean energy transition of the European businesses</u> 	Engaging businesses in the clean energy transition and reducing their domestic footprint is central for the European Green Deal and to deliver on the Fit-for-55 package and the REPowerEU Plan.
<u>Subsidies in the interests of climate protection</u> 	Overview of funding opportunities for companies in terms of climate protection with many further links to specific funding content.

Together, these financial instruments help address the key financial barriers SMEs face, enabling them to adopt energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy systems, sustainable production processes, and eco-friendly business models.



4. Curricula for Green Transformation in SME

Embracing Sustainability through Tailored Curricula

Curricula for Green Transformation in SMEs

Incorporating sustainability into vocational education and business operations has become a crucial step toward a greener future. As companies and educational institutions seek to embed sustainable practices within their structures, they often face the challenge of engaging staff and other stakeholders in the changes. One proven method is to create engaging, actionable learning opportunities hence this chapter presents a collection of carefully designed curricula aimed at equipping both educators and businesses with the tools they need to foster sustainable transformation.

The curricula featured here are designed for a variety of contexts, from vocational education settings to in-company training sessions. They provide practical, step-by-step guides to facilitate the understanding and application of sustainability principles, such as reducing carbon footprints, promoting circular economy practices, and implementing sustainable mobility solutions. These educational frameworks not only help learners understand the key concepts of sustainability but also offer hands-on activities, tools, and case studies to encourage practical engagement.

For educators, these curricula serve as ready-to-use resources for training vocational students or SME employees, making complex sustainability topics accessible and relevant. Companies can also adopt these materials to engage their teams through workshops and exercises that align with their sustainability goals. By focusing on collaboration and real-world problem-solving, the curricula provide a structured pathway for organizations to integrate sustainability into their daily operations.

Inspiring action and fostering change, these curricula empower both individuals and teams to make informed decisions that drive sustainability within their organizations. Whether through gamification, circular economy assessments, or carbon footprint calculators, these resources offer valuable insights and strategies to guide any business or educational institution toward a more sustainable future.

CURRICULUM 1: Employer Branding

Uniting the staff and finding together a consensus towards sustainability

Curriculum task:

To build a brand an organisation needs the goal, objectives, strategy, ideas and involvement of all who will be engaged and effected by the change. As a reaction to customer expectations but also reflection on the business influence on environment, organizations recognize the need for sustainable practices and even more for including those in employer branding. The lesson shows a way of engaging all employees and leaders in the process of rebuilding the brand.

Objectives:

Having finished the lesson, the learners will:

- understand the concept of employer branding;
- acknowledge the role everyone plays in building the brand
- get engaged in the process of building the brand
- understand that they have influence on the brand
- assume responsibility for taking care of the brand

Preparation:

The educator will go through Shift2Green gamification tasks, concentrating on the mission 6 Leadership Legacy: Forging the Future of Business. Additional reading on employer branding in the context of Circular Economy is recommended to get familiar with the concept and to get good examples of possible paths and solutions organisations introduce.

Suggested sources:

Shift2Green Gamification

- Mission: 4 Shift from Linear to Circular Economy, Challenge: [Is Circularity Squaring the Circle for You?](#)
- Mission: 6 Leadership Legacy, Challenge: Unleashing the Power of Your Team, Task: [Brainstorming for the Better](#)

Article: [Building a business brand within a circular economy](#)

Research: [Consumers are Willing to Pay More for Sustainability](#)

Article: [How to Spotlight Sustainability Without Greenwashing](#)




Article: [How to Run a Brainstorming Session](#)

Workload:

Preparation time: depending on the familiarity with the topic 1-3 hours

Estimated duration approx. 2 hours

Educational steps:

Timing	Content	Additional materials/reading/equipment
20 min	Intro: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with the question to define what employer branding means to the team; be ready to present a definition of employer branding Ask them to position themselves as customers and ask what expectations do they have from brands looking from the sustainability perspective 	Research 
10 min	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage an open exchange of ideas on the outcomes that can only be achieved through collective, team-driven efforts, focusing on the company's branding strategy and potential changes. Be prepared to share relevant examples. 	
40 min	Activity: big group and small groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start with a discussion/exchange of observation on which activities/ operations/products are already sustainable in your organization (Be prepared to share relevant examples) Write down the examples as they come Divide the team into as many pairs/trios as there are examples; assign one to each sub group and and ask them how they would use this fact/operation/procedure in employer branding Presentation of ideas 	Provide a collaborative space (whiteboard or digital platform), where participants can visually capture & share their ideas. Suggested Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mural Microsoft Whiteboard Additional Reading: For guidance on running effective brainstorming sessions, refer to this resource: How to Run a Brainstorming Session . 
30 min	Activity in pairs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin with a brief introduction to the Shift2Green Gamification, explaining its purpose and how it can support the transition to sustainable practices. Specifically, guide the team through, Mission: 4 Shift from Linear to Circular Economy, Challenge: Is circularity squaring the circle for you? for inspiration Next, ask each pair to consider their specific area of work and brainstorm ideas on how the organization and its operations could become more sustainable. Encourage them to think critically about processes, resources, and opportunities for improvement using the concepts presented in the app. Afterward, each pair will present their ideas to the larger group, sharing insights and potential strategies for integrating circular economy principles into the organization. Encourage the learners to continue the ideation process also after the workshop and drop the ideas in The Idea Box. 	Shift2Green Gamification Whiteboard/Mural etc; Mission 6 Idea box task 
20 min	With the big group review the ideas and mark the ones that can be implemented immediately and used as a leverage for sustainable brand promotion.	

CURRICULUM 2: Empowering SMEs for the Circular Economy

A Comprehensive Circularity Assessment Guide

Curriculum task:

This curriculum is designed to equip Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with the knowledge and tools needed to transition towards Circular Economy (CE) business models. By putting into practical use the principles of the Circular Economy, participants will learn to assess and implement sustainable practices within their organizations. The course leverages practical circularity assessment tools, such as the CAT platform (<https://cat.ganbatte.world>), to provide actionable insights.

Objectives:

Having finished the lesson, the learners will:

- comprehend the fundamentals of the Circular Economy: understand the core principles and the importance of transitioning from linear to circular business models.
- recognize the complexity of organizational change: acknowledge the multifaceted nature of implementing circular strategies within existing business structures.
- engage stakeholders in the change process: develop strategies to involve all relevant parties in the transition towards a Circular Economy.
- leverage influence for positive change: learn how to effectively drive and lead circular initiatives within their organizations.
- lead in areas of continuous improvement: gain the skills to guide teams in identifying and enhancing circular opportunities.

Preparation:

The educator should become well-acquainted with the Circularity Assessment Tool and prepare a comprehensive case study, ensuring it contains all the essential data for its effective application, or alternatively, make use of an existing example.

Suggested sources:

- Circularity Assessment Tool (<https://cat.ganbatte.world>)
- SME-specific data or a pre-prepared case study with relevant information for analysis
- *"Waste Free SME"* MOOC from 2Good2Go Project
- Overview of the Idea Box method <https://participedia.net/method/4825>
- Quiz <https://quizizz.com/embed/quiz/670809f7a4424d1a6076d5ad>

Workload:

Pre-Session Preparation: 1 hour




Session Activities: 5 hours 30 minutes

Post-Session Assignments: 2 hours

Total Estimated Time Commitment: 8 hours 15 minutes

Educational steps:

Timing	Content	Additional materials/ reading/equipment
30 min	<p>Intro Presentation: Linear vs. Circular Economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin with an introduction to the linear vs. circular economy models. After the presentation, have the participants complete a Kahoot quiz to test their understanding of the concepts. Review the quiz results as a group to clarify any misconceptions and reinforce key points. 	<p>Waste Free SME MOOC from 2Good2Go project for self-learning</p> <p>Waste Free SME</p> <p>Waste Free SME is a learning platform that includes training material to support SMEs for successful waste free economy transition. It is within 2Good2Go project funded by the Erasmus+ Programme. The project is a result of a strategic partnership of 13 European countries, currently involves two SMEs and many local and state actors that contribute effectively to the sustainability transition.</p> <p>Use this quiz or prepare an adequate quiz yourself</p> <p>Shift2Green icebreaker quiz</p> <p>Created by • Aleksandra Simić</p>
30 min	<p>Group Discussion: Understanding Circular Economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate a discussion on the differences between linear and circular economy models: What are the differences between circular and linear models? Prompt participants to provide examples of companies that have successfully adopted circular economy practices: Can you name any examples of adapting a circular economy model in business? 	
45 min	<p>Group Discussion: Defining Circular Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide participants with sticky notes and ask them to write down their personal definitions or keywords related to the Circular Economy (CE). Collect and discuss these on a flip chart, aiming to collaboratively define CE. Compare the group's definition with the European Parliament's definition: "Circular economy is a model of production and consumption that involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products for as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended." (European Parliament, "Circular economy: definition, importance and benefits" News European Parliament". www.europarl.europa.eu. (2015).) 	<p>Provide a collaborative space, such as a whiteboard or a digital platform, where participants can visually capture and share their ideas in real time.</p> <p>Suggested Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mural Microsoft Whiteboard <p>Additional Reading:</p> <p>For guidance on running effective brainstorming sessions, refer to this resource: How to Run a Brainstorming Session.</p> <p>How to Facilitate a Brainstorming Session</p>
1 hour	<p>Team Objective Setting and Transformation Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present the planned transformation towards circularity within the organization. Guide a brainstorming session where the team sets clear, actionable objectives for implementing circular practices. 	

Timing	Content	Additional materials/ reading/equipment
1 hour	<p>Circularity Assessment Exercise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask participants to select one area of their business to assess. Facilitate the use of the Circularity Assessment Tool, encouraging each participant to act as a manager and engage in the evaluation process. 	<p>Circularity assessment tools:</p>  <p>Learning Plattform Waste Free Economy:</p> 
2 hours	<p>Idea Box Workshop: Visualizing Circular Solutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the Idea Boxes® technique for generating and visualizing innovative solutions. Idea Boxes® is a technique developed in a joint project by Fotour SaS and Future Center Alliance. It can be applied in several ways to visualize ideas and proposals. Each participant shares ideas and solutions in group which decide how to present them in the plenary session through its Idea Box. It is a white box where each face can be used to express (with words or pictures or colors) the main features of the group's message. They can be stacked to link each box face to an affinity column. Let the participants brainstorm solutions 	<p>Materials: Idea Boxes®, markers, colored papers, etc.</p> <p>Additional Reading: Overview of the Idea Box method</p> 
15 min	<p>Closing Session: Insights and Practical Application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the key takeaways from the session. Ask participants to reflect on how they will apply the discussed concepts and strategies in their business environments. 	

CURRICULUM 3: Carbon footprint

Practical Steps for Reducing Your Company's Carbon Footprint

Curriculum task:

This curriculum is designed to provide Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) with the knowledge and tools necessary to measure and plan how to reduce their carbon footprint. By exploring the factors that influence carbon emissions within a company, participants will gain practical insights into how to implement sustainable practices in their day-to-day operations. Using tools such as the Business Carbon Calculator from SME Climate Hub (<https://smeclimatehub.org/>), learners will be guided through a process of identifying carbon-intensive activities and developing strategies to lower their company's environmental impact.

Objectives:

Having finished the lesson, the learners will:

- know which activities may influence the general company's carbon footprint.
- understand what actions can be performed to lower the carbon footprint of the company
- be aware what they can do in their everyday work environments to lower their own carbon footprint.

Preparation:

The educator should become familiar with the Carbon Calculator and gather relevant data on the company's current energy usage, waste production, transportation methods, and other key activities. Additionally, the educator should prepare a detailed presentation outlining the steps for using the carbon calculator and how to effectively interpret its results to guide sustainable actions.

Suggested sources:

- Business carbon calculator: smeclimatehub.org

Workload:

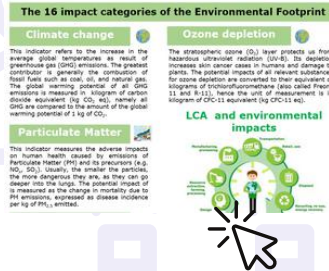



Pre-Session Preparation: 1.5 hours





Session Activities: 5 hours

Post-Session Assignments: 1.5 hours

Ongoing Activities: Approx. 5 hours over the month (10 minutes per day)

Educational steps:

Timing	Content	Additional materials/ reading/equipment
10 min	<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start by briefly introducing the concept of carbon footprints, explaining its relevance to both environmental and business contexts. Ask the group: What do you think is the importance of reducing carbon footprints? Encourage them to think about both environmental and business benefits. Be ready to expand on their answers and add more benefits. Conclude by explaining the objectives of the session. 	<p>The 16 impact categories of the Environmental Footprint:</p> 
20 min	<p>Presentation: Carbon Footprint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Present a clear explanation of what a carbon footprint is and the factors that contribute to it. Highlight common business activities that impact a company's carbon footprint, using relevant examples to engage the group. 	<p>Definition of Carbon Footprint:</p> 
30 min	<p>Group Discussion: Individual Carbon Footprint</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transition into a discussion by asking participants to reflect on their individual carbon footprints. Encourage everyone to calculate their personal carbon footprint using an online tool (e.g., https://www.footprintcalculator.org/home/en or https://footprint.wwf.org.uk). Facilitate a conversation on the results and the impact of everyday actions on their personal footprints. 	<p>Carbon Footprint Calculation Tools (for Individuals)</p> <p>Global Footprint Network:</p>  <p>WWF Calculator:</p> 

Timing	Content	Additional materials/ reading/equipment
30 min	<p>Calculate Companies Carbon Footprint:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the group calculate the company's carbon footprint using one chosen calculation tool. Guide them through the tool and provide assistance as needed. 	<p>Carbon Footprint Calculation Tools (for Companies):</p> <p>Business Carbon Calculator from SME Climate Hub:</p>  <p>Environmental Footprint Methods:</p>  <p>Carbon footprint calculators:</p>  <p>Climate Toolkit 4 Business:</p> 
1 hour	<p>Brainstorm and Discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lead a brainstorming session asking participants to list all the activities in the organization that contribute to the carbon footprint. Encourage discussion on how the organization can lower its carbon footprint. Ask: Where do you have influence? What actions can you take to reduce the organization's carbon footprint? 	<p>Provide a collaborative space, such as a whiteboard or a digital platform, where participants can visually capture and share their ideas in real time.</p> <p>Suggested Tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Mural</u> <u>Microsoft Whiteboard</u> <p>Additional Reading: For guidance on running effective brainstorming sessions, refer to this resource: <u>How to Run a Brainstorming Session</u>.</p>

Timing	Content	Additional materials/ reading/equipment
2 hours	Groupwork <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide participants into small groups and assign them a specific scenario related to reducing the organization's carbon footprint (e.g., eliminating paper usage in daily operations). Have each group identify carbon-intensive activities and propose reduction strategies using the calculator. Recalculate the footprint using the proposed strategies and compare the results. 	
30 min	Everyday Practices and Inspiration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate a discussion on simple, everyday actions that employees can take to reduce both their personal and workplace carbon footprints. Encourage participants to think about small but impactful changes 	
10 min	Conclusion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wrap up the session by encouraging participants to share their ideas and personal commitments to reducing their carbon footprints. Summarize the key takeaways and inspire ongoing engagement with sustainability efforts in the organization. 	

Post-session activities:

Write a reflection on the session, detailing what you learned and how you plan to apply this knowledge in your work environment (estimated time: 1 hour).

Complete a quiz to assess your understanding of the concepts discussed during the session (estimated time: 30 minutes).

Ongoing activities:

Implement at least one new practice in your daily work routine to reduce your carbon footprint and document your experiences over the next month (ongoing, estimated 10 minutes per day).

CURRICULUM 4: Sustainable Mobility

A more sustainable commute and travel

Curriculum task:

This curriculum is designed to provide learners with the knowledge and practical skills required to enhance sustainability in helping their employees choose more sustainable travel options. Choosing the right transportation system plays a significant role in an organization's overall environmental impact, and by optimizing travel-related practices, businesses can significantly reduce their carbon footprint. Through the use of WeCity (<https://www.wecity.it/en/>), learners will gain hands-on experience in monitoring and improving driving habits, leading to more sustainable travel during work hours.

Objectives:

Having finished the lesson, the learners will:

- understand how different mobility types can enhance sustainability.
- know how to use WeCity to monitor and improve commuting habits.
- be able to identify sustainable travel practices during work time.

Preparation:

The educator should explore the WeCity app and understand its features, benefits, and how it works. Collect data on current fleet usage, fuel consumption, and driving habits. Obtain any relevant company policies on travel and sustainability. Prepare an empathy exercise using avatars to help learners understand the impact of their driving habits on sustainability.

Suggested sources:

- WeCity app or website: <https://www.wecity.it/en/>
- On sustainable mobility (<https://uta.pressbooks.pub/sustainablemobility/chapter/chapter-1-the-basics-of-sustainable-mobility/>)



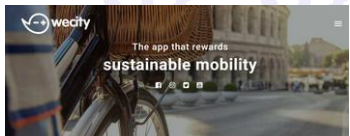

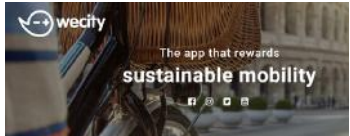

Workload:

Pre-Session Preparation: 1.5 hours

Session Activities: 3.5 hours

Ongoing Activities: Approx. 5 hours over the month (10 minutes per day)

Educational steps:

Timing	Content	Additional materials/ reading/equipment
10 min	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Briefly introduce the concept of sustainable commute management and the importance of reducing the environmental impact of company travel. Explain the objectives of the session. 	Reading: Basics of Sustainable Mobility  
20 min	Presentation: Fleet Management Systems <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discuss the role of fleet management systems in promoting sustainability, focusing on their potential to improve driving habits and reduce fuel consumption. Introduce WeCity, explaining its key features and how it measures CO2 emissions. 	Resource: WeCity website  
30 min	Using WeCity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a step-by-step demonstration of how to use WeCity. Guide participants through the process of registering and recording their commute through the app. 	Resource: WeCity app  
1 hour	Discussion on Sustainable Travel Practices (30 minutes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate a collaborative discussion, encouraging participants to analyze their current driving habits and propose strategies for more sustainable travel. Lead the group in discussing practical ways employees can travel more sustainably during work hours. Brainstorming Session (30 minutes): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Divide participants into smaller groups and ask them to brainstorm innovative ideas to enhance sustainability in company travel. Each group will present their ideas, discussing the feasibility and potential impact of their proposed strategies on the organization's sustainability goals. 	Provide a collaborative space, such as a whiteboard or a digital platform, where participants can visually capture and share their ideas in real time. Suggested Tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mural Microsoft Whiteboard

Timing	Content	Additional materials/ reading/equipment
1 hour	Empathy Exercise with Avatars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce an empathy exercise where participants create avatars representing different stakeholders (e.g., drivers, fleet managers, environmental advocates). Assign each group a role (e.g., management or workers) and ask them to empathize with their assigned avatar by identifying challenges and opportunities for improving mobility or implementing sustainable travel and/or commute practices. Encourage participants to brainstorm solutions from their avatar's perspective and present these ideas to the larger group, focusing on practical, implementable strategies. 	Provide a collaborative space, such as a whiteboard or a digital platform, where participants can visually capture and share their ideas in real time. Suggested Tools: Mural Microsoft Whiteboard
30 min	Closing Session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summarize the key takeaways from the session. Encourage participants to reflect on the ideas discussed and how they can apply the learned strategies in their daily work. Facilitate a brief discussion on the next steps for implementing sustainable practices within the organization. Invite participants to share personal commitments or specific actions they plan to take moving forward. 	

Ongoing activities:

Implement at least one new practice in your daily work routine to reduce your travel-related carbon footprint and document your experiences over the next month (ongoing, estimated 10 minutes per day) through the app WeCity.



5. Green Business Resource Hub

A Collection of Resources for Energy Efficiency, Recycling, Sustainable Finance, and Social Responsibility

Introduction

This offers a comprehensive compilation of resources aimed at supporting sustainable practices across various sectors. This collection is intended as a starting point for organizations, providing examples of sustainable activities and practices that can be tailored to diverse operational contexts. The resources are divided into specific focus areas:



Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy



Recycling and Waste Reduction



Sustainable Procurement and Production



Employee Engagement and Training



Digitalization and Paper Reduction



Mobility and Transportation



Sustainable Finance & ESG Reporting



Social Sustainability

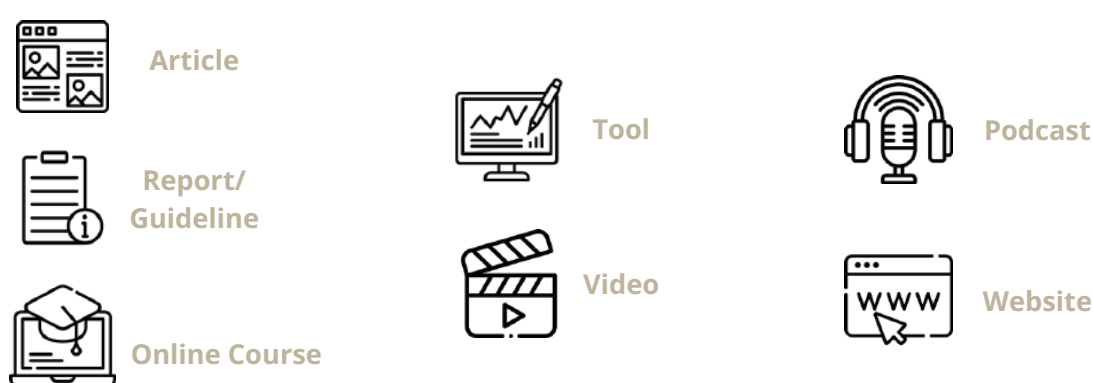


Specific Projects and Initiatives

While all sources in this compilation have been carefully reviewed, the dynamic nature of sustainability practices means that some links or information may not always reflect the latest updates. As of the publication date in January 2025, the content provides a reliable foundation for exploring sustainable practices, serving as both inspiration and guidance for organizations.

Introduction

Within each of these categories, readers will find an array of materials, including articles, reports, guidelines, online courses, tools, videos, podcasts, and websites. These resources are designed to provide general knowledge on implementing eco-friendly practices and can be accessed primarily in English. However, for ease of use across different regions, many of the resources can be translated through website translation tools into any required language.



In addition to general resources, this library includes country-specific tools and resources for SMEs. These tools are tailored to align with the regulatory, economic, and cultural contexts of individual countries, making them particularly valuable for organizations seeking localized solutions. Nonetheless, they also serve as a source of inspiration and insight for companies from other regions aiming to adapt and implement similar strategies within their own contexts.

This chapter, therefore, serves as both a practical toolkit and a roadmap for companies and individuals committed to adopting sustainable practices in their operations, regardless of their industry or country of operation. It encourages an informed approach to sustainability, offering adaptable knowledge that can lead to meaningful change across all levels of organizational activity.

Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Focuses on reducing energy consumption through efficient technologies and practices, and transitioning to renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydro power to minimize environmental impact.



Examples of Sustainable Activities

Activities where to start

1. Installation of PV systems on roofs.
2. Transition to renewable energy sources.
3. Replace incandescent bulbs with LED or CFL lighting.
4. Installation of combined heat and power units.
5. Introduction of intelligent energy management systems.
6. Install motion sensors and timers to reduce unnecessary lighting.
7. Use programmable thermostats to optimize temperature settings.
8. Regularly maintain and service heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems.
9. Invest in energy-efficient manufacturing, office equipment and appliances.
10. Choose energy providers that offer renewable energy options, such as wind, solar, or hydroelectric power.
11. Educate employees about energy-saving practices and the importance of reducing energy consumption.
12. Implement flexible work policies that allow employees to work from home, reducing energy usage in the office.



General Knowledge on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



10 tips to develop an effective business energy efficiency plan

The website offers essential tips for businesses to improve energy efficiency amidst rising energy prices and potential shortages in Europe. Key actions include optimizing lighting, managing digital devices, and improving heating and cooling systems. Long-term strategies involve conducting energy audits, adopting renewable energy, and engaging employees in sustainability practices, leading to cost savings, reduced emissions, and enhanced brand image.



11 Ways to Increase Energy Efficiency at Work

The article offers eleven tips for increasing energy efficiency in the workplace. Recommendations include training employees in sustainability, using energy-efficient equipment, promoting green transportation, recycling and reducing waste, using LED lighting, turning off and unplugging appliances, installing smart thermostats, checking insulation, using power strips, using laptops instead of desktop computers and implementing an energy management system.



Efficient Energy Tips for Manufacturing Facilities

Manufacturing accounts for the largest share of annual industrial energy consumption. The article presents nine manufacturing energy-saving ideas to reduce energy consumption in your facility.



Information about EU Energy Policies and Updates

The European Commission's Energy website provides updates on the EU's energy policies, including the European Green Deal, legislation, funding opportunities, and market data. It focuses on promoting a sustainable, integrated, and secure energy system.





General Knowledge on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Ideas for sustainable transition in the office

The Deskbird platform is full of ideas to create your work space even your home office more sustainable towards green transition processes.



Smart Energy Prosumers

Get familiar with the concept of energy prosumers by exploring eight different models by which people and companies can lead us to a smart and decarbonised energy system. The report identifies the financial and non-financial factors driving these models and the benefits they provide to society as a whole.



Energy Audits Guide

This practical guide demonstrates how energy audits can assist small and medium-sized businesses in enhancing their energy efficiency, leading to increased sustainability, profitability, and future readiness. The booklet has been created by the LEAP4SME project, which unites nine national energy agencies. LEAP4SME aims to assist European countries in creating or enhancing effective policies that encourage SMEs to conduct energy audits and implement cost-effective, recommended energy-saving measures.



Energy efficient Technologies in the Workplace

The report provides information about the green technologies in modern offices, the role of smart thermostats in energy management, solar window innovations, new standards, illuminating efficiency, eco-friendly insulation methods for temperature control etc.



Understanding the European Green Deal – History, challenges, and opportunities

This course explores the European Green Deal, examining its components, driving forces, and the internal and external challenges it faces. You can enroll in a free course created from the experts behind GreenDeal-NET. The course is self-paced, allowing you to progress at your own speed and you have the option to complete only a few modules or the entire course from start to finish.

Free online course on Understanding the European Green Deal





General Knowledge on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Clean energy and technological innovations

TA one-week free course exploring the importance of clean energy, presenting the latest advances in technology and how they're transforming the way we power our lives. You can choose between the simple or advanced course, depending on the number of modules you are interested to cover.



Business Emissions Evaluator (BEE)

The Climate Neutral Business Emissions Evaluator (BEE), created by The Climate Change Project, helps organizations quickly calculate annual emissions across all three scopes using simple financial data. It provides visual insights to identify key areas for improvement and supports companies with operations in multiple countries. With access to a comprehensive library of emissions factors, the BEE is ideal for those seeking a fast, free emissions estimate as a step toward carbon-neutral certification.



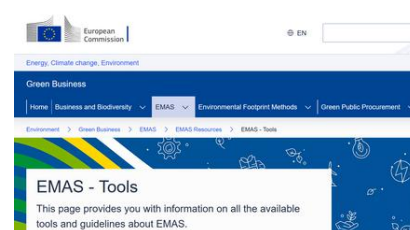
RETScreen Clean Energy Management Software

RETScreen is a free-of-charge support software provided by the Government of Canada, designed to assist in assessing the feasibility and performance of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects. The software supports users in lowering the cost of implementing practical energy projects and helps ensure that investments perform as expected in the long term. The software is available in 36 languages. The full functionality of RETScreen Expert (including the ability to save, print & export files as well as numerous advanced features) is available in Professional mode by purchasing a renewable 12-month subscription.



Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS)

Website with lots of short and long information and videos on the topic of energy saving for companies. There are general introductions, articles on specific topics (e.g. lighting, appliances) or industry-specific topics (e.g. for the catering and hotel industry).





General Knowledge on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



GHG Protocol tools

The GHG Protocol website provides comprehensive calculation tools and guidance for measuring and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It includes sector-specific tools and resources to support organizations in accurately calculating and reporting their emissions.



Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



Ecocockpit

The ecocockpit is the free solution for determining your carbon footprint. Use the ecocockpit to create the carbon footprint of your company (CCF) and your products (PCF) in just a few steps. Identify the carbon drivers in your company in an uncomplicated and practical way and derive measures to reduce them.



Calculator of Solar Electrical Benefits

This calculator is for those who save energy and protect natural resources. With the help of the calculator, you will find out how much you would pay for electricity after installing a solar power plant. You will find out what kind of power plant is needed, what amount needs to be invested and how long it takes for these investments to pay off.



Klimaaktiv - Saving energy

Website with lots of short and long information and videos on the topic of energy saving for companies. There are general introductions, articles on specific topics (e.g. lighting, appliances) or industry-specific topics (e.g. for the catering and hotel industry).



Recycling and Waste Reduction

Focuses on minimizing waste through effective recycling strategies and the implementation of waste reduction programs to conserve resources and reduce environmental impact.



Examples of Sustainable Activities

Activities where to start

1. Regularly monitor waste generation and recycling rates
2. Set up designated recycling stations for paper, plastics, glass, and metals (ensure clear labeling)
3. Minimize packaging materials and opt for recyclable or biodegradable options
4. Replace disposable items (e.g., cups, cutlery, and plates) with reusable alternatives
5. Donate surplus or unused items, such as office supplies, furniture, and equipment, to local charities or schools



General Knowledge on Recycling and Waste Reduction

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Waste Reduction Tips For Businesses

The article provides waste reduction tips for businesses, emphasizing source reduction by changing product designs, packaging, and purchasing habits and suggests practical strategies. Additionally, it encourages businesses to adopt waste prevention measures in various areas, including office operations, equipment use, communications, and landscaping, to save costs and improve environmental sustainability.



14 Ways You Can Reduce Office Waste

The article lists 14 ways to reduce waste in the office. These include composting organic waste, forming a "green team," recycling electronics, setting up an upcycling station, transitioning to digital files, printing on both sides, reusing file folders, centralized recycling stations, reducing packaging, promoting zero-waste lunches, banning single-use plastic bottles, buying coffee and tea in bulk, recycling contests and providing reusable dishware.





General Knowledge on Recycling and Waste Reduction

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Sustainable Business Models Need to Focus on Waste

The article argues that current business models are unsustainable due to their focus on efficiency and profit, which generates excessive waste. It critiques the triple bottom line approach for not requiring fundamental changes in business practices. Instead, it proposes a new bottom line: profit divided by waste. This metric encourages businesses to reduce waste, form long-term relationships, and build resilience rather than mere efficiency, thus fostering a sustainable circular economy.

Sustainable Business Models Need to Focus on Waste

One World, December 16, 2019



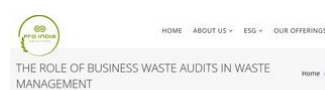
Overview, key facts and EU action on waste and recycling

The European Environment Agency (EEA) provides an in-depth overview of waste and recycling in Europe. The page highlights the EU's efforts to reduce waste generation and improve recycling rates through various policies and initiatives aimed at promoting a circular economy. It discusses the environmental and health impacts of waste, such as pollution from incineration and landfill contamination. The site also covers specific waste streams, including biowaste, electronic waste, and textiles, and addresses the importance of designing products for easier recycling and reuse.



The Role of Business Waste Audits in Waste Management

The article helps better to understand the business waste audits, the importance of waste management, key steps in conducting a waste audit, implementation of waste reduction strategies .



Reduction and Management of wastes focus on Manufacturing

The article gives a overview about reducing and tips for managing waste in the manufacturing sectors.





General Knowledge on Recycling and Waste Reduction

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Effective strategies for managing waste and cost saving in businesses

The article provides an overview of waste disposal and strategies for waste management while saving the cost in the businesses.



Guide to European Union Practices on Waste Recycling Technologies

The guide emphasizes the importance of effective waste management for a circular economy. It outlines the crucial role of local actors in implementing EU waste legislation to prevent environmental and health impacts. The guide addresses the challenges posed by various types of waste, highlighting the need for proper disposal or recycling to maintain a healthy environment amidst increasing waste generation due to industrial development.



Development of sustainable products and services

The article outlines sustainable product design through three key approaches: sustainable design, which minimizes environmental, social, and economic impacts; ecodesign, focused on reducing environmental harm and meeting regulations; and circular design, aimed at eliminating waste by keeping materials in continuous use.





General Knowledge on Recycling and Waste Reduction

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Targeted Communication Toolkits for Waste Reduction

The European Week for Waste Reduction (EWWR) website offers various tools to promote waste prevention. These include annual thematic tools (e.g. food waste, packaging), communication resources for action developers such as logos, posters and information materials, as well as targeted communication kits for citizens, schools, businesses and public authorities/NGOs. There are also resources for the "Let's Clean Up Europe" campaign and guidelines for all target groups to organize and promote waste reduction actions during sectors.



Yearly thematic tools

2024: Food Waste



10 Step Guide to Business Recycling

It's simpler than you might expect. Follow this step-by-step guide to create a recycling and waste reduction program customized to your business's needs. If your business already has a program in place, use this resource for ideas on how to enhance or expand it.



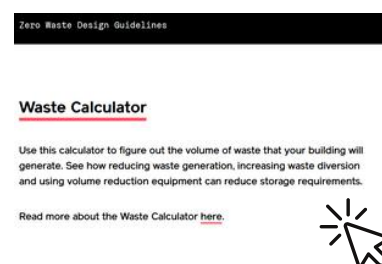
Waste Management Strategies

The online course discusses waste management strategies in a hierarchy, with prevention as the most preferred method, followed by minimization, recycling and reuse, biological treatment, incineration, and landfill disposal. It highlights the benefits of each strategy, such as reducing resource use, lowering environmental impacts, and generating energy from waste. Emphasis is placed on modern techniques like composting, anaerobic digestion, and recycling to improve waste management.



Waste Calculator

Use this calculator to estimate the volume of waste your building will produce. Discover how minimizing waste generation, enhancing waste diversion, and employing volume reduction equipment can lower your storage needs.





General Knowledge on Recycling and Waste Reduction

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Planet Reuse

A platform that promotes reusable packaging solutions across Europe, helping businesses reduce waste and foster sustainability through collaboration and knowledge sharing.



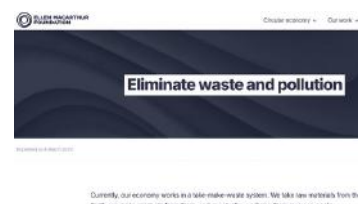
Waste emissions reduction calculator

Businesses can significantly reduce their carbon footprint by following the waste hierarchy and avoiding waste disposal in landfills.



Eliminate Waste and Pollution

This video will help you understand how system change can help reduce waste and prevent pollution. It provides several examples showcasing how the implementation of circular economy design strategies supports the shift toward sustainability.



Workplace Waste Management

Workplace Waste Management refers to the various actions and strategies implemented within a business or organization to handle and reduce waste. It is a comprehensive approach that covers the entire lifecycle of waste, from its creation to its final disposal or recovery.



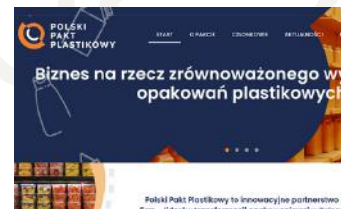


Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



Polish Plastics Pact

A cross-sector partnership to close the plastic packaging loop. Part of the global Plastics Pacts network, coordinated by the Ellen MacArthur foundation. IT helps member organizations exchange knowledge and experiences to find the best solutions for closing the plastic loop within their operations and undertake voluntary commitments in this area.



PreZero SPOT in cooperation with Packaging Cockpit

The PreZero Sustainable Packaging Optimization Tool (SPOT) is a digital platform developed in partnership with Packaging Cockpit. It helps companies assess and optimize packaging for recycling, CO2 impact, and compliance with regulations. The tool provides country-specific analysis, including recycling rates and costs for packaging materials across Europe. It offers free core features such as carbon footprint analysis and packaging costs estimation, allowing companies to simulate changes and improve their packaging sustainability.



Places where residents can drop off EEE and battery waste

Here an updated, systematized information on waste sorting and transfer to waste handlers is provided, which can be used by residents and legal entities when solving waste sorting and disposal issues.





Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs

Umweltberatung (Environmental counseling)

Waste separation in companies: The website of Umweltberatung offers detailed information on waste separation in companies. Here you will find practical tips and instructions on how to efficiently organize waste separation in your company.



Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)

Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO): The WKO provides information on how SMEs can organize their waste management. There are simplifications for companies where waste is generated in household quantities. From a certain size and type of business, it may be necessary to create a waste management concept and appoint a waste manager.



Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK):

Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK): The BMK offers a waste separation ABC that shows how to properly collect and separate waste. This is particularly useful for companies that want to ensure that they comply with all legal requirements.



Sustainable Procurement and Production

Emphasizes sourcing goods and services that are environmentally friendly and ethically produced, as well as adopting sustainable manufacturing processes to lessen environmental footprints.



Examples of Sustainable Activities

Activities where to start

1. Use of sustainable materials (e.g., from sustainable forestry)
2. Development of concepts for carbon footprinting products
3. Utilization of regional sourcing options
4. Production of goods from recycled materials
5. Identify areas for improvement and potential new suppliers with stronger sustainability credentials
6. Opt for locally sourced materials to reduce transportation emissions and support local economies
7. Obtain relevant sustainability certifications for products (e.g., Fair Trade, FSC, Organic)
8. Invest in machinery and technology that have lower environmental impacts



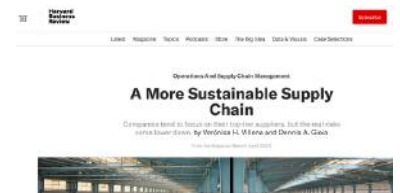
General Knowledge on Sustainable Procurement and Production

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



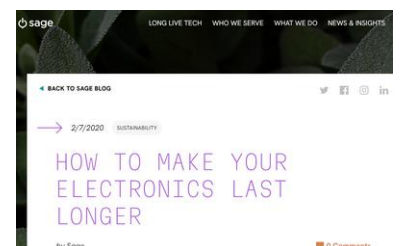
A More Sustainable Supply Chain

The article discusses the challenges multinational corporations (MNCs) face in ensuring their supply chains adhere to sustainability standards. Despite commitments to fair labor practices and environmental protections, lower-tier suppliers often fall short, posing risks to MNCs. The authors examined three sustainability-leading MNCs and found they use various strategies to promote good practices down the supply chain. Recommendations include enhancing training for procurement officers and fostering direct communication with suppliers to improve social, environmental, and economic responsibility.



How to Make Your Electronics Last Longer

This article shows, how to invest in tech that lasts longer for the organisations to reduce the e-waste as much as possible. Buying electronic products for your workspace by taking ethical practices and use of the recycled materials can help to improve the longevity of techs.





General Knowledge on Sustainable Procurement and Production

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



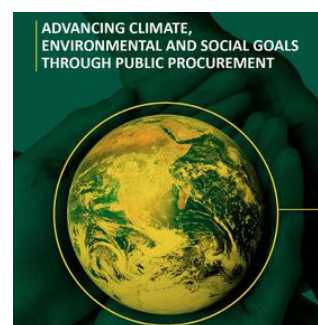
Step-by-Step Guide to Sustainable Supply Chain Management

This publication is aimed at small and medium-sized enterprises that have already established environmentally friendly practices and wish to introduce sustainable supply chain management. It offers support in developing sustainable supply chains, especially for companies with an environmental management system according to EMAS or ISO 14001. The guide explains benefits, relevant topics and basic steps for designing sustainable supply chains, including materiality analysis, target setting, process adaptation and supplier requirements. Further sources of information are recommended in Part IV.



Advancing Climate, Environmental and Social Goals Through Public Procurement

The report is published by Reuse - Europe's largest network of social enterprises active in the circular economy, with a focus on reuse, repair and recycling, and with the support of the European Climate Foundation. The document highlights best practices in socially responsible and green public procurement across Europe, with a focus on social enterprises involved in reuse-oriented activities.



Sustainable Procurement Beginner's Guide

The article emphasizes sustainable procurement steps and best practices, sustainable procurement organizations and resources, benefits and challenges of sustainable procurement



ESG framework for SMEs: A Practical Guide

This detailed guide is designed in line with the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) (EU) 2022/2464, which mandates large companies and public interest organizations in the EU to annually disclose their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance. It incorporates the new European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) developed by the European Financial Reporting Advisory Group (EFRAG).





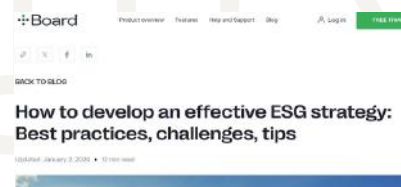
General Knowledge on Sustainable Procurement and Production

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



How to develop an effective ESG strategy

Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) strategies are increasingly crucial for businesses across industries, with over 75% of private market investors preferring ESG-compliant investments. Developing a robust ESG strategy involves understanding the organization's impact on society and the environment and integrating ESG factors into business operations and decision-making processes. In this guide you will get familiar with the ESG framework, its purpose of assessing business practices and performance on sustainability and ethics, and guiding responsible investing.



Circular Design Guide

Manufacturing sustainable products starts with adopting design methods based on circularity. This comprehensive guide steps on the Understand - Define - Make - Release framework and will introduce you to methods and activities which will help you understand how to start designing, producing and launching more circular products or services, and gain insight in the interconnectedness of business, communities, people and the environment.



Circular Economy Procurement Framework

This framework was created by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, an organization dedicated to establishing a circular economy aimed at eliminating waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in circulation at their highest value, and regenerating nature. The framework provides detailed steps on how to establish a green procurement protocol at an SME by giving guidance on performing a needs assessment, evaluating suppliers, managing the selection and contract process.



Ecolabel guide app

What is the Ecolabel Guide? The Ecolabel Guide has been developed to help consumers make sustainable product choices based on the information behind the label and to recognize the ecolabel from subsequent labels. The application contains a database of the most popular "eco", "organic" and other ecological and social labels found on products around the world.





General Knowledge on Sustainable Procurement and Production

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Sustainable Business Model Canvas

The Sustainable Business Model Canvas is a tool designed to transform ideas into viable business models with a focus on sustainability. It adopts a holistic approach, considering not just economic factors but also ecological and social impacts. The goal is to maximize positive effects on society and the environment while minimizing negative impacts.



Sustainable Procurement: It's Not Just About Being Green

Sustainable Procurement is changing how businesses acquire the resources they need and how they make careful choices in 'greening' their supply chains. But is it just about environmental credentials? It is also about tackling the challenges of implementing Environmental, Social and Governance into Procurement, Commercial & Contracting practices, including the use of ISO 20400 to embed sustainable practices.



Sustainable Procurement Platform

The website on sustainable procurement highlights the importance of making purchasing decisions that positively impact the environment, economy, and society. It emphasizes the concept of sustainable procurement, which ensures that organizations buy products and services that deliver value while also benefiting the planet and communities. The site covers aspects such as Green Public Procurement (GPP) and socially responsible public procurement (SRPP), as well as circular procurement, which focuses on the entire lifecycle of products and encourages innovative business models. Both public and private sector organizations are encouraged to adopt sustainable and circular procurement practices to align their purchasing with goals of resource efficiency, climate action, social responsibility, and economic resilience.





Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



ESG will affect everyone. Trends 2024

The article discusses the critical role of technology and data analytics in enhancing ESG reporting accuracy and efficiency, as well as the need for companies of all sizes to adapt to these changes to maintain their competitive edge and improve their public image.



Webinars from the CE Academy

The CE Academy is a series of webinars for companies on CE in practice. They are a knowledge pill on key topics related to the circular economy and the adaptation of companies to this economic model being implemented in the EU.



Betriebsgrün – the podcast for corporate climate protection

This podcast is a collaboration between the Climate Protection Companies Association and the Corporate Climate Protection Network. It discusses the many opportunities for corporate climate protection. Particular attention should be paid to episode 12 "Sustainable procurement: practical experiences of a medium-sized company".



Tvarūs sprendimai verslui apsimoka

The article provides an information about the good practice example of the company which by innovatively changing the technological processes, uses far fewer resources, but delivers more products to the market. The energy resources inside of the company are saved by making production processes more efficient, invests in less polluting transport. Companies also pay attention to more sustainable packaging and order sustainable solutions, which are used during the production process.





Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs

Guide to sustainable procurement:

Guide to sustainable procurement: The Austrian Climate Alliance offers a guide to sustainable procurement. This guide contains practical tips and examples of how SMEs can make their procurement processes more sustainable.



Sustainable production

Sustainable production: The platform "nachhaltigeuniversitaeten.at" offers a guide to sustainable procurement that also covers aspects of sustainable production. Here, SMEs can find valuable information on how to implement sustainable production processes.

Leitfaden nachhaltige Beschaffung



Green Deal Podcast: Are SMEs ready to face climate related risks?

Bulgarian National Radio (BNR) presents the Green Deal Podcast - a project implemented by the consortium of the European radio network "Euranet+", supported by the European Commission. In this episode of the podcast the focus is on Bulgarian SMEs' preparedness to face climate related challenges, as Bulgaria is located in one of the regions particularly vulnerable to sudden floods and droughts, and some companies find it difficult to react to climate changes.



Employee Engagement and Training

Centers on educating and involving employees in sustainability initiatives through training programs, awareness campaigns, and activities that foster a culture of environmental responsibility within the organization.



Examples of Sustainable Activities

Activities where to start

1. Promotion of environmental awareness through training and workshops
2. Support for employee initiatives such as environmental and mobility days
3. Support for employees through initiatives like company bikes or electric mobility
4. Form a cross-functional team dedicated to driving sustainability initiatives within the company
5. Regularly update staff on progress and celebrate milestones achieved
6. Invite external experts to provide insights and share best practices
7. Integrate sustainability into the company's core values and mission statement
8. Establish a platform for employees to submit ideas and suggestions for improving sustainability within the company
9. Choose an existing campaign dedicated to environmental protection and sustainability (tree planting, park clean ups, etc.) and make it a teambuilding experience for management and employees to participate as volunteers.



General Knowledge on Employee Engagement and Training

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



18 Ways to Raise Employee Awareness About Sustainability

In this article is avoided wordy advice and analysis, and instead opting for a quick list of 18 ways to raise employee awareness. These ideas can ultimately form pieces of a larger engagement strategy, but it focused on the initial component—simply raising awareness of the company's sustainability activities and plans.

E+Leader
FOR A SUSTAINABLE TOMORROW

■ BUSINESS ■ ENERGY ■ ENVIRONMENT ■ INDUSTRIES ■ INFRASTRUCTURE ■ TECHNOLOGY

18 Ways to Raise Employee Awareness About Sustainability

Posted Wednesday, January 22, 2014 9:50 am

jen@environmentalleader.com



Employee engagement is a hot topic in corporate sustainability circles these days—and for a good reason. Without the support and enthusiasm of staff at all levels of the company, it's difficult to fully realize sustainability goals.

In this article, I'm avoiding wordy advice and analysis, and instead outline for a quick list of 18 ways to raise employee awareness.





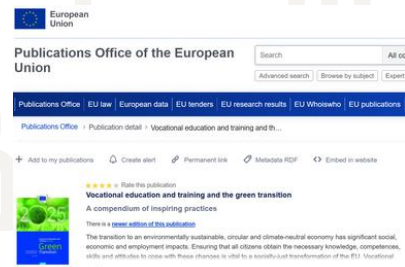
General Knowledge on Employee Engagement and Training

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



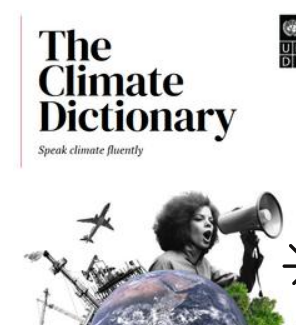
A compendium of inspiring practices

The European Education Area Working Group on VET and the Green Transition facilitates technical exchanges and contributions to support countries in implementing the principles and objectives outlined in the Council Recommendation on vocational education and training, as well as the Osnabrück Declaration. As part of its mandate, this Working Group has compiled a set of inspiring practices from across Europe, which are presented in a Compendium. The guide book is suitable for VET school managers; in-company trainers, mentors, tutors, etc., individual companies looking for inspiring ways to ensure their employees get the skills they need for the green transition.



The Climate Dictionary

A practical guide to understanding climate change, the dictionary defines 40 frequently used climate terms in a simple way to aid bridging the gap between complex scientific terms and the general public, making climate concepts easy for everyone to grasp.



How to organize sustainable hybrid events

A guide on how to ensure that your hybrid conference meets sustainability requirements. If you would like to get detailed information and tips on how to organize sustainable events, you can check the Guidelines on organising sustainable meetings and events at the European Commission and gain further valuable advice.



170 Actions to Combat Climate Change

This booklet is part of the UN's Perception Change Project's "170 Series." It offers 10 daily action suggestions for each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, providing practical steps you can take to protect the environment and reduce the impact of climate change.





General Knowledge on Employee Engagement and Training

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Climate Fresk

The Climate Fresk is a French nonprofit organization established in December 2018 with the goal of raising public awareness about climate change. It offers a collaborative serious game consisting of 42 cards, where participants create a fresco, hence the name "fresk," that summarizes the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. As of 2023, more than a million people have taken part in this activity. Explore opportunities in your country where your employees can participate in free Climate Fresk workshops as individual participants or choose the paid option to organize the workshop on your company's premises.



En-ROADS Climate Solution Simulator

En-ROADS is a global climate simulator that enables users to examine the effects of approximately 30 policies—such as electrifying transportation, implementing carbon pricing, and enhancing agricultural practices—on numerous factors including energy prices, temperature, air quality, and sea level rise. Created by Climate Interactive, the MIT Sloan Sustainability Initiative, and Ventana Systems, En-ROADS is a system dynamics model meticulously based on the best available science and calibrated against a diverse array of existing integrated assessment, climate, and energy models. Explore the network of EN-ROADS ambassadors in your country and choose one of their workshops for your company.



Shift2Green Gamification

Shift2Green is an interactive game designed to encourage environmentally friendly lifestyles. It helps users make sustainable choices through engaging activities and education, promoting green habits. The platform is supported by the European Union and aims to foster environmental awareness.



CE networking

The Circular Economy Club (CEC) is the non-profit arm of its parent organization, the Circular Economy Institute (CEI). CEC is the international network of the circular economy field, including professionals and organizations with CEC local clubs around the world.





Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



Circular Economy in practice

The "Circular Economy in Practice" page focuses on practical knowledge and solutions related to the circular economy (CE). The "Business Models" section presents innovative and sustainable business models that help companies implement circular economy principles, reduce waste, and use resources efficiently. It includes examples, case studies, and strategies for implementing circular economy practices across various industries.



Great Place To Work® employee survey

The survey provides a precise picture of an organization's strengths and areas for improvement, enabling it to systematically review and develop its workplace culture and sustainably increase its attractiveness as an employer. It also serves as the basis for certification and the Best Workplaces competitions run by Great Place to Work®.



Die Great Place To Work® Mitarbeiterbefragung
Die Great Place To Work® Mitarbeiterbefragung ist ein Jahrweiser Standard zur Messung der Arbeitszufriedenheit. Die Befragung liefert ein
und Handlungsbedarf einer Organisation und ist Basis für Zertifizierungen und Beste Arbeitgeber Wettbewerbe von Great Place To Work®.



How Companies Inspire Employee Engagement in Sustainability

The article highlights why companies should encourage employees to adopt sustainable practices. This is driven by responsibility to the planet and society, as well as the benefits of creating a positive internal environment. Clear communication about key focus areas is essential before implementing specific changes. A shared organizational vision is crucial for employee engagement in sustainability, along with educating employees on relevant topics.



Sofia Tech Park Clubhouse

The Greenhouse Club is the culmination of the fruitful collaboration between Cleantech Bulgaria and Sofia Tech Park. The Greenhouse Club grows green innovation in Bulgaria by creating space for scaling up the potential of Bulgarian green tech entrepreneurs and supporting them to expand internationally through diverse programmes and opportunities.



Digitalization and Paper Reduction

Aims at reducing paper usage and enhancing efficiency through the adoption of digital tools and processes, which also contribute to lower carbon footprints and conservation of resources.



Examples of Sustainable Activities

Activities where to start

1. Identify key areas where paper can be reduced or eliminated
2. Reduction of paper consumption through digitalization
3. Promotion of e-signatures and electronic communication
4. Use cloud storage solutions to reduce the need for physical files
5. Introduction of digital document management systems
6. Switch to electronic invoicing and billing systems to reduce paper usage
7. Encourage customers and suppliers to accept and send digital invoices
8. Implement electronic signature tools for contracts and agreements
9. Implement digital project management tools to streamline workflows and reduce printed project plans
10. Set default printer settings to double-sided (duplex) printing



General Knowledge on Digitalization and Paper Reduction

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



How Tech and Automation Can Make Your Business Eco-Friendly

Technology has revolutionized business operations, especially highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic with the rise of online, remote, and hybrid work setups. This article explores the effects of automation as significant technological advancement to automate daily management, boosting productivity and efficiency across businesses of all sizes. However, beyond these operational benefits, technology and automation also offer substantial environmental advantages.



Towards a Digital Europe

An infographic published by the Council of the European Union presenting the meaning of the digital transition for Europe's society and economy.





General Knowledge on Digitalization and Paper Reduction

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



20 Sustainable Practices To Help Businesses And Tech Teams 'Go Green'

The article offers 20 tips for businesses and tech teams to adopt sustainable practices, such as using renewable energy, reducing e-waste, and optimizing energy consumption. It encourages integrating green strategies into daily operations, like remote work and responsible sourcing, to boost long-term efficiency and sustainability.



Towards a green & digital future

This study examines how the EU can achieve both green and digital transitions, which are key political priorities. Though these transitions could support each other, digital technologies often negatively impact the environment. The study focuses on five major sectors: agriculture, buildings, energy, energy-intensive industries, and transport. It highlights the need for an integrative approach to ensure these transitions reinforce one another, providing key recommendations for successful implementation.



How to reduce paper consumption in your office

Businesses and organizations can easily cut down on paper use and costs. Most offices can achieve reductions of 20 percent or more. This is a checklist with some practical tips to help your company implement an effective, cost-saving paper reduction program.



The Digital Transformation of SMEs

The report, created by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), outlines the barriers that smaller business face on the path to digital transition. Often lacking internal resources, awareness, or due to financial issues, small SMEs have a difficulty to embrace the benefits of the digital transformation. The report analyses the role of policy makers in supporting small businesses and also provides an extensive overview of the current and future SME digital policy developments.





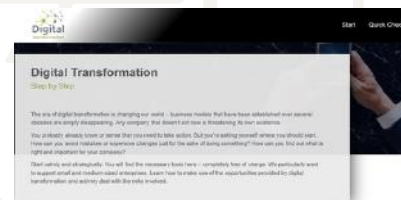
General Knowledge on Digitalization and Paper Reduction

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Digital Transformation - Step by Step

The Digital Transformation Tool is an online resource designed to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) develop a strategy for digital transformation. It provides step-by-step guidance, quick checks to assess readiness, and educational materials on digital technologies like blockchain and big data. The tool supports companies in understanding opportunities and risks associated with digitalization, all while offering consulting and training resources to aid implementation.



The Online-Flipbook-Tool: Flipsnack

The Flipsnack tool provides the features like flipbook that gives the user feeling of handling paper documents in form of digital prints in any devices, this is a helpful tool to avoid paper documents, files, charts etc.. To help your organisations go paperless



The Paper Calculator

The Paper Calculator is a free, online resource from the Environmental Paper Network* that quantifies the benefits of better paper choices. The Paper Calculator shows the environmental impacts of different papers across their full lifecycle.



Leading Digital Transformation Podcast Series

Digitaltalks is a podcast that looks for answers related to the challenges of the digital transformation. The podcast focuses on new technologies and all issues related to innovation and digital business.



Insights from thought leaders and expert practitioners to help make your digital transformation a success.

*Leading Digital Transformer is a weekly podcast series in association with The Digital Transformation People and Rob Llewellyn, digital transformation advisor and founder of CIO Transform.



Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



Digital Poland EU funding Programme

This website provides information, free advice and funding opportunities for the transformation to a digital, paperless office. The funding program will support Polish SMEs in their digital transformation.



The four fields of action of the digitization strategy for SMEs

The video shows you how to get started with a digitization strategy and create a digitization roadmap for your company.



Business digitization - practical steps

The content of the video will help to answer the question what digitization solutions are available in the small business service and trade sectors, what digital tools for more efficient business management, where to start when digitizing your business?



Funding program "KMU.DIGITAL Programm"

This website provides information, free advice and funding opportunities for the transformation to a digital, paperless office. The funding program will support Austrian SMEs in their digital transformation.



Mobility and Transportation

Focuses on promoting sustainable transportation options, reducing emissions from corporate travel, and encouraging the use of eco-friendly vehicles and alternative commuting methods.



Examples of Sustainable Activities

Activities where to start

1. Install bike racks and provide secure storage for bicycles
2. Promotion of bicycle mobility and e-bikes
3. Develop a policy that encourages sustainable travel practices, such as using trains instead of planes for short distances
4. Promote Carsharing and use of public transportation
5. Subsidize public transportation passes or provide financial incentives for employees who use public transit
6. Installation of electric vehicle charging stations
7. Transition the company's fleet to electric or hybrid vehicles



General Knowledge on Mobility and Transportation

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Information Source for Alternative Fuels and Advanced Vehicles

The Alternative Fuels Data Center provides an overview of 7 alternative, less polluting fuels, outlining their benefits, types of vehicles powered by each fuel type and greenhouse gas emissions stats.



Sustainable Transportation: Exploring Eco-Friendly Commuting Options

Discover sustainable transportation options and eco-friendly commuting methods to reduce your carbon footprint. Explore alternative modes of transportation, such as cycling, public transit, and carpooling, for a greener and more efficient way of getting around.

Green Living Inspiration Home Blog Authors About Contact

Transport Reducing Pollution

Sustainable Transportation: Exploring Eco-Friendly Commuting Options

Discover sustainable transportation options and eco-friendly commuting methods to reduce your carbon footprint. Explore alternative modes of transportation, such as cycling, public transit, and carpooling, for a greener and more efficient way of getting around.





General Knowledge on Mobility and Transportation

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



A Practical Guide to Reducing Your Corporate Travel Carbon Footprint

For companies, one significant contributor to their environmental impact is corporate travel. Whether it's for business meetings, conferences, or client visits, the emissions from air and ground transportation can add up quickly. However, with careful planning and a commitment to sustainable practices, businesses can make a positive impact on the environment.



Develop a policy that encourages sustainable travel practices, such as using trains instead of planes for short distances

A sustainable travel policy sets out the principles and goals for minimising the environmental impact associated with business travel. The policy typically promotes actions that reduce carbon emissions, conserve resources, and support sustainable transportation options.



131 Ideas for Empowerment in the Transition to Sustainable Urban Mobility

The handbook "131 Ideas for Empowerment in the Transition to Sustainable Urban Mobility" aims to give practical examples and proposals on how local authorities, universities, educational institutions and businesses can contribute to change in the individual choices of citizens.



BlaBlaCar

BlaBlaCar is the world's leading community-based travel network. No matter where you're going, by bus or carpool, find the perfect ride from our wide range of destinations and routes at low prices.





General Knowledge on Mobility and Transportation

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



EU map for charging stations

The easyCharging map provides a comprehensive overview of EV charging stations across most EU countries. Users can locate available charging points and view details such as location, connector types, and availability. This platform supports efficient route planning for electric vehicle drivers, making travel easier and more sustainable.



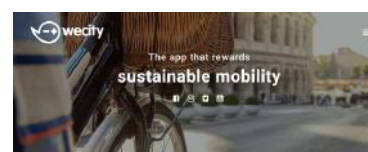
Calculate Your Travel Carbon Footprint

A Sustainable Travel carbon footprint calculator helps individuals and businesses estimate their travel emissions and purchase carbon offsets. It supports projects in areas like forestry, clean energy, and climate tech to combat climate change while contributing to broader environmental and social goals.



WeCity

A Benefit Company dedicated to promoting sustainable mobility among companies, public authorities, and citizens. Through its AI-powered platform, Wecity tracks users' travel modes, rewarding eco-friendly choices by certifying CO₂ savings. The platform encourages behaviors such as cycling, walking, and public transportation use, aiming to reduce urban pollution and enhance quality of life. Wecity's CO₂ savings are validated by RINA, an international certification body committed to combating climate change.



What Is Sustainable Mobility?

A short video explaining the principles of sustainable mobility, presenting three main goals, including how transport can become less polluting, alternative modes of transportation, and promotion of group travel.



Transportation in 2050

An insight into the future of vehicles and the radical transformation of the transport sector.





General Knowledge on Mobility and Transportation

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



How can circularity reduce the impacts of mobility?

This video podcast published by Urban Mobility Explained (UMX) explores how circular economy affects mobility. Subtopics such as circular mobility, car sharing and digitalisation are addressed, with an example of how Flandres approached circular mobility to turn theory into practice.



It's electric! The future of mobility in Europe.

The episode is part of the "Green Deal – Big Deal?" podcast, which examines various aspects related to the European Green Deal with experts from policy, business, and science. This episode explores the challenges and issues that the mobility transformation must tackle, including environmental concerns like climate change and air pollution. It places special emphasis on electrification and batteries, which are crucial to this transformation.



Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



What does sustainability mean in transportation?

The article tackle the topic: Will the ESG reporting requirement and emphasis on sustainability accelerate the technology revolution in heavy road transport? On the latest trends linking the need for growth in the TSL industry with sustainability goals



Changers Fit App

The Changers Fit App promotes health, motivation, and sustainability by offering challenges focused on walking, running, cycling, and CO2 reduction. It allows users to track activities, connect with wearables, and engage in team competitions. The app features community-building tools, rewards like coins, and options for tree planting or charity projects. Administrators benefit from a simple content management system and reporting tools. The app is designed for corporate health programs, making it easy for teams to participate in activities and track progress.





Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions calculator

The tool is free and freely available for use by any business, government institution, academic institution and The tool calculate teh direct GHG emissions that are owned and controlled by the companies themselves. For example, this level includes GHG emissions of vehicles owned by the company.



The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)

Sustainable corporate mobility: The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO) offers a tool that helps companies identify measures to reduce CO₂ emissions. This also includes corporate mobility, such as the use of cars and trucks up to 3.5 tons.



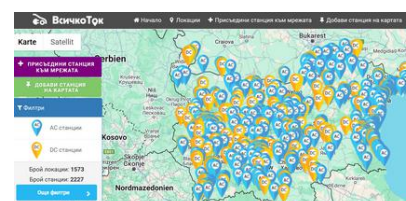
Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK)

klimaaktiv mobil program: This program of the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK) supports companies in implementing climate-friendly mobility projects. It offers advice and financial support for measures such as the use of electric vehicles and the promotion of cycling.



Map for charging stations in Bulgaria

The "VsichkoTok" website provides a comprehensive map of EV charging stations across Bulgaria. Users can find available charging points and view details such as location, connector types, and availability. This platform supports efficient trip planning for electric vehicle drivers in Bulgaria.



Sustainable Finance & ESG Reporting

Focuses on promoting sustainable financing practices and enhancing ESG reporting for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This involves evaluating and communicating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) performance, enabling businesses to attract responsible investments and demonstrate their commitment to sustainability.



Examples of Sustainable Activities

Activities where to start

1. Create annual sustainability reports that document progress and challenges in the area of ESG in detail in order to create transparency
2. Create a comprehensive plan to communicate the company's sustainability efforts, goals, and achievements
3. Dedicate a section of the company's website to sustainability efforts
4. Use social media platforms to share updates, success stories, and tips related to sustainability
5. Participation in recognized sustainability certifications (e.g. ISO 14001) or industry standards to legitimize and improve own efforts



General Knowledge on Sustainable Finance & ESG Reporting

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Overview of sustainable finance

Sustainable Finance involves integrating environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors into investment decisions to promote long-term, sustainable economic activities and projects. In the EU context, sustainable finance supports economic growth while reducing environmental impacts to meet the goals of the European Green Deal. It also emphasizes transparency and risk mitigation related to ESG factors within the financial system.



ESG Reporting for SMEs: What to Expect and Main Challenges

The article discusses the current state of ESG reporting for SMEs, noting that while they are not legally required to report under EU regulations, stakeholders increasingly demand transparency regarding sustainability practices. It highlights that many SMEs face challenges such as financial constraints, lack of expertise, and insufficient data, which hinder their ability to meet ESG reporting expectations. However, the article emphasizes the importance of proactive ESG strategies for SMEs to remain competitive and access funding, suggesting that developing a structured reporting approach can lead to long-term benefits in a market that favors sustainability.





General Knowledge on Sustainable Finance & ESG Reporting

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Green to Gold Make Your SME Shine with a Winning Sustainability Report

The video discusses an upcoming free session aimed at helping organizations prepare their first sustainability report. It highlights the challenges of creating such a report and offers insights on its purpose, structure, and compliance with regulations while emphasizing the importance of engaging stakeholders and avoiding greenwashing. The session is targeted at business leaders and sustainability professionals from small to medium-sized businesses looking to improve their reporting practices.



EU Finance Podcast: The one about sustainability reporting

On the EU Finance Podcast, this episode discusses sustainable investment with an EU Commission's expert on corporate reporting. The EU has introduced new support measures with the implementation of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) at the start of 2023. This directive updates and reinforces the regulations on the social and environmental information that companies must disclose. Learn more about the obligation of large companies and listed SMEs to report on sustainability and how reporting affects investor and citizen relations.



EU Finance Podcast: The one about sustainability reporting

EU Finance Podcast host Aude Polakiewicz talks with Thomas Doid, the EU Commission's expert



Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



Deutscher Nachhaltigkeitskodex

The German Sustainability Code is a cross-industry transparency standard for reporting on corporate sustainability performance and can be used by companies and organizations of any size and legal form.



Deutscher Nachhaltigkeitskodex (DNK)

Mehr als ein Berichtsstandard.

Wir unterstützen Unternehmen, die zu einem wirksamen Beitrag in der Nachhaltigkeit beitragen wollen und in dem Maße, wie sie dies tun, zu erfüllen. Die Ergebnisse werden in einem transparenten Bericht veröffentlicht, der von unabhängigen Dritten geprüft wird. Unternehmen können ihre Nachhaltigkeitsleistung durch die Analyse der eigenen Nachhaltigkeitsberichte und die Nutzung von Tools und Diensten verbessern.



The role of green finance

Question - Answer session about the main aspects of green finances: what the green finances are, what is their importance and the regulatory procedure, what are the products of green financing.



Dažnai užduodami klausimai





Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs

Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)



Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO): The WKO offers comprehensive information and support for SMEs affected by the new reporting requirements. This includes guides and training on how to prepare ESG reports.



Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO)



Online tools and resources: There are numerous online tools to support SMEs in creating ESG reports. These tools help with data collection and analysis, as well as with creating reports in accordance with legal requirements.



Social Sustainability

Concerns the well-being and fair treatment of employees, communities, and other stakeholders, ensuring equitable opportunities, fair labor practices, and positive social impact.



Examples of Sustainable Activities

Activities where to start

1. Creation of jobs and training opportunities for disadvantaged groups
2. Collaboration with social institutions
3. Integration of social programs into corporate activities
4. Develop policies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace
5. Provide programs that promote physical and mental health, such as fitness classes, counseling services, and wellness workshops
6. Offer parental leave, childcare support, and family health benefits
7. Organization of environmental education and public relations
8. Participation in local and regional environmental initiatives



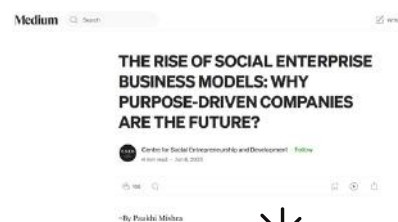
General Knowledge on Social Sustainability

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



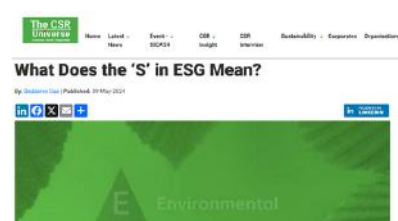
The Rise of Social Enterprise Business Models

The article by Paakhi Mishra, published by the Centre for Social Entrepreneurship and Development, discusses the growing trend of social enterprises—businesses designed to address social or environmental issues while generating profit.



What Does the 'S' in ESG Mean?

The article discusses the importance of the Social factor within ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) criteria, which investors use to evaluate a company's sustainability and societal impact. Unlike the more widely understood Environmental and Governance factors, the Social aspect often receives less attention, resulting in lower ratings for many companies in this area.





General Knowledge on Social Sustainability

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



Role of Corporate Social Responsibility in Driving Positive Social Impact

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a business approach that emphasizes the importance of a company's impact on society and the environment. It is a concept that has gained significant traction in recent years, as consumers and investors alike demand that companies do more than just make a profit. CSR has become an essential tool for businesses to create positive social impact while also ensuring long-term financial success. Article focuses on three sub-sections: the definition of CSR, the benefits of CSR, and the social impact of CSR.



20 Essential Steps To Make Social Sustainability Part Of Company Culture

20 Forbes Business Council members discuss how leaders can actionably make social sustainability an important part of their company culture. Read on to learn more about how to establish a people-first culture and redefine what it means to be a successful business.



B Impact Assessment

Used by more than 150,000 businesses, the B Impact Assessment is a digital tool that can help measure, manage, and improve positive impact performance for environment, communities, customers, suppliers, employees, and shareholders





Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



Responsible Business Forum

Responsible Business Forum (Forum Odpowiedzialnego Biznesu) is the largest Polish NGO addressing the concept of sustainability in a comprehensive manner, with the longest tradition in Poland, operating since 2000. The Forum is an expert organisation that initiates and partners in key sustainability activities in Poland.



Good Practices in Social Sustainability

Many companies with a mission for the common good are innovative and show that it is possible to do business differently. They change the system every day and enrich our world with their activities. 20 showcase examples - for each of the common good topics from the matrix - inspire with readily shared experiences.



Social sustainability of organizations is no longer a fashion, but a new reality

The article emphasizes why business must not only seek profit, but, especially through the social sphere, create a positive impact on society. A sustainable business must take care of the well-being of its employees, the needs of the community, the protection of human rights, the creation of value, and plan its activities with "tomorrow" in mind.



Social Sustainability Guide

Social Sustainability Guide: The Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKO) offers comprehensive information and guides on social sustainability. These resources help companies develop and implement social sustainability strategies.



Studies and reports to social sustainability

The report "SMEs in Focus 2023" by the Federal Ministry of Labor and Economics highlights the current challenges and opportunities for SMEs, including social sustainability. This report provides valuable insights and data that can be used for strategic planning.



Specific Projects and Initiatives

Refers to targeted sustainability projects and innovative initiatives tailored to address particular environmental or social issues, often involving unique solutions or partnerships.



General Knowledge on Specific Projects and Initiatives

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



The journey to Net Zero for SMEs

The guide "The Journey to Net Zero for SMEs" offers a comprehensive framework for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to achieve net zero emissions. It outlines practical steps for reducing carbon footprints, including energy management strategies, opportunities for carbon reduction, and the importance of communicating sustainability commitments. Additionally, it addresses long-term challenges and emphasizes the role of SMEs in contributing to a greener economy.



Circular Economy for SMEs (CESME)

The CESME project developed in the frame of Interreg Europe programme focuses on integrating SMEs into the circular economy by holding interregional meetings to identify best practices. The aim is to explore how regional and local authorities, along with business development agencies, can enhance policy instruments and design support packages to help SMEs transition into the circular economy. The project developed a return on investment analysis and a Circular Economy Toolkit to quantify the economic and social benefits of circular value chains. Additionally, a White Book provides a step-by-step guide for SMEs entering the circular economy. The CESME partnership hopes to introduce innovative circular initiatives specifically for SMEs.



ICT Innovation for Manufacturing SMEs

I4MS, ICT Innovation for Manufacturing SMEs, is a European initiative designed to support manufacturing SMEs and mid-caps in integrating information and communication technologies (ICT) into their operations. Through I4MS, SMEs can apply for technological and financial assistance to test digital innovations in their business via open calls. A catalogue of wide variety of trainings is available in IoT, Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, 3D Printing, etc, connecting SMEs with expert training providers across Europe.





General Knowledge on Specific Projects and Initiatives

Comprehensive English-Language Resources: Articles, Reports/Guidelines, Online Courses, Online Tools, Videos, Podcasts, Websites



EU project "BELT"

BELT has the objective to facilitate the transition period of the energy efficiency label (Regulation (EU) 2017/1369) informing and supporting all stakeholders and to reduce to a minimum errors at all levels of the value chain from manufacturer to consumer.



The Big Buyers Working Together (BBWT)

The Big Buyers Working Together (BBWT) project aims to stimulate market demand for innovative and sustainable products and services across Europe over the next four years. The initiative comprises ten Communities of Practice (CoPs) that focus on sector-specific opportunities and challenges in public procurement. Members, including local and regional governments, central purchasing bodies, and industry stakeholders, will collaborate to share best practices, engage in joint market initiatives, and develop sustainable procurement strategies.



Busgocircular - good practices

Through good practice and replicable examples from Europe and beyond, this document aims to raise awareness among practitioners and policymakers about their ability to promote a more circular construction sector and upskill professionals.



Clean Energy

The Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM) is a high-level global forum to promote policies and programmes that advance clean energy technology, to share lessons learned and best practices, and to encourage the transition to a global clean energy economy.



SME Climate HUB

The SME Climate Hub is a global initiative that helps small and medium-sized enterprises take climate action. It provides tools and resources to reduce emissions, build business resilience, and align with global climate goals like achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The platform supports businesses in committing to sustainable practices while improving efficiency and gaining competitive advantages.





Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



Circular Hub by Ergo Design

Company provide Circular Podcast and Circular Hub - space more than 640 meters of laboratories for circular designing of products and packaging, prototyping and research and experimentation.



Polish CE initiative

The Institute of Innovation and Responsible Development (INNOWO) is a non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting sustainable socio-economic development through innovation and systemic change. It collaborates with stakeholders, including government bodies, businesses, and academia, to implement practical solutions across various sectors. INNOWO supports decision-makers in developing effective policies that foster sustainable production and consumption while educating businesses and consumers on responsible practices.



Circular Hotspot- Knowledge exchange and networking platform

The Polish Circular Hotspot is an initiative aimed at promoting circular economy concepts by uniting diverse stakeholders, including state administration, local governments, businesses, and the scientific community. The platform focuses on developing innovative, comprehensive, and scalable solutions across various industries such as construction, food, packaging, electronics, plastics, transport, energy, and textiles. By facilitating cross-sectoral and supra-regional collaboration, the Polish Circular Hotspot enhances the efficiency of activities and initiatives dedicated to fostering sustainability in cities and regions throughout Poland. This collective effort aims to drive the transition towards a circular economy, benefiting both the environment and the economy.





Country-Specific Resources and Tools for SMEs



Mittelstand-Digital Zentrum WertNetzWerke

The Mittelstand-Digital Zentrum WertNetzWerke strengthens small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Germany free of charge and in a provider-neutral manner in order to operate successfully in efficient, sustainable and digitally supported value creation networks in the future. The target group of the SME Digital Center are SMEs in the manufacturing industry, production-related or logistics services as well as the recycling and circular economy. Topics include networked, sustainable value creation and data ecosystems, cooperative business models, the circular economy, artificial intelligence and shared values.



Žaliosios politikos institutas

This organization aims to promote sustainable business and environmental initiatives, actively contributes to climate change mitigation and environmental education.



The European Digital Innovation Hub in Construction Sector

The association, uniting the efforts of branch organizations, educational institutions, leading companies in the field of construction, innovation, project management, building materials production and information technologies aims at implementing digital transformation in the construction sector.



Green Business Essentials: Practical Tips & Common Pitfalls

Sustainable practices are increasingly essential to business strategy, offering both environmental and economic benefits. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), taking initial steps toward sustainability can seem daunting, but starting with practical, high-impact actions enables progress without large upfront investments. Embracing green practices helps reduce costs and enhances a company's resilience and reputation in response to growing expectations from consumers and regulators.



Practical Tips for Starting Your Green Transformation

Starting small and leveraging available incentives can make the journey more manageable. Many businesses find that engaging employees and setting measurable goals fosters a culture of shared responsibility and accountability, creating momentum for larger projects over time. Regular progress tracking through key performance indicators (KPIs) ensures that efforts are both effective and aligned with long-term goals.

Start Small:

- Begin with low-cost, high-impact changes such as switching to energy-efficient lighting.
- Gradually implement larger projects as savings accumulate.
- Assess your organisation: <https://www.2good2go.eu/interactive-tool-for-action-plan-implementation/> or <https://cat.ganbatte.world/>

Leverage Incentives and Grants:

- Research and apply for government and utility incentives for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects
- Use financial assistance to offset initial investment costs.
- Tax Benefits for Sustainable Practices: Explore potential tax deductions for businesses that invest in energy-efficient machinery or sustainable materials.
- Local Community Programs: Investigate local grants available for businesses that implement sustainable practices, such as reducing waste or improving resource efficiency.

Educate and Involve Employees:

- Provide training on energy-saving practices and the importance of sustainability.
- Encourage employees to suggest and participate in energy efficiency initiatives.

Monitor and Measure Progress:

- Set measurable energy-saving goals and track progress regularly.
- Use key performance indicators (KPIs) to evaluate the effectiveness of implemented measures

Partner with Experts:

- Collaborate with energy consultants, contractors, and technology providers for expertise and support.
- Attend industry conferences and workshops to stay updated on best practices and innovations.

**Check out our
financing
chapter** **3**

**Check out our
curricula
chapter** **4**

**Check out our
assessment
tools chapter** **6**



Common Pitfalls and Red Flags:

Without careful planning, sustainability initiatives can lose momentum or incur unnecessary costs. Failing to conduct essential initial assessments, for instance, can lead to missed savings opportunities, while overlooking employee engagement may limit the impact of green initiatives. Underestimating both costs and returns on investment is another common challenge that can hinder progress. Being mindful of these potential pitfalls helps ensure that sustainability efforts are impactful, cost-effective, and enduring.



Ignoring Initial Assessments:

- Failing to conduct a comprehensive energy audit can lead to missed opportunities for savings.
- Skipping baseline measurements makes it difficult to track progress.



Overlooking Maintenance:

- Neglecting regular maintenance of HVAC systems and other equipment can result in inefficiencies and increased energy costs.
- Deferred maintenance can lead to unexpected breakdowns and higher repair expenses.



Lack of Employee Engagement:

- Without employee buy-in, energy-saving initiatives may not be effectively implemented or sustained.
- Failing to educate staff on the importance of energy efficiency can result in continued wasteful practices.



Underestimating Costs and ROI:

- Misjudging the costs and expected returns on investment for energy projects can lead to financial setbacks.
- Not considering long-term savings and benefits can result in missed opportunities for cost-effective improvements.



Ignoring Renewable Energy Integration:

- Overlooking the potential of renewable energy sources can mean relying too heavily on non-renewable energy.
- Missing out on the long-term cost savings and environmental benefits of renewable energy adoption.



6. Sustainable Skills Assessment

Empowering Educators with Digital Tools for Sustainable Learning

Role of Sustainability in Vocational Education and Training (VET)

The effects of climate change have become a major concern and that is why the role of sustainability is increasingly becoming central for boosting the green transition of industries and economies. VET educators also play an important role in implementing sustainability into the competence of business leaders and employees. This mission reaches beyond just delivering knowledge as VET educators are also responsible for introducing values and competence that promote behavioural change and the adoption of sustainable practices in everyday work and personal life.

GreenComp and VET Educators

To support educators in this mission, VET educators can rely on frameworks such as GreenComp: The European Sustainability Competence Framework, which outlines a set of key competence that benefit learners to live, work and act sustainably in both personal and professional environments. Published by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), GreenComp supports educators to design curricula that integrate competence needed to promote green practices and to develop teaching materials which align with sustainability goals and industry standards.

The framework is structured in four main areas:

- Embodying sustainability values, including competence to:
 - Value sustainability
 - Support fairness
 - Promote nature
- Embracing complexity in sustainability - focuses on competence of applying:
 - Systems thinking
 - Critical thinking
 - Problem framing
- Envisioning sustainable futures - involves competence of:
 - Futures literacy
 - Adaptability
 - Exploratory thinking
- Acting for sustainability - stresses the importance of competence such as:
 - Political agency
 - Collective action
 - Individual initiative



Visual representation of *GreenComp*.

Moreover, GreenComp encourages a holistic approach to education, where learners are encouraged to think critically about sustainability issues, develop innovative solutions, and take meaningful actions. For VET educators, this means adopting novel teaching methods that are more interactive by introducing problem-based learning strategies that engage students in real-world sustainability challenges.

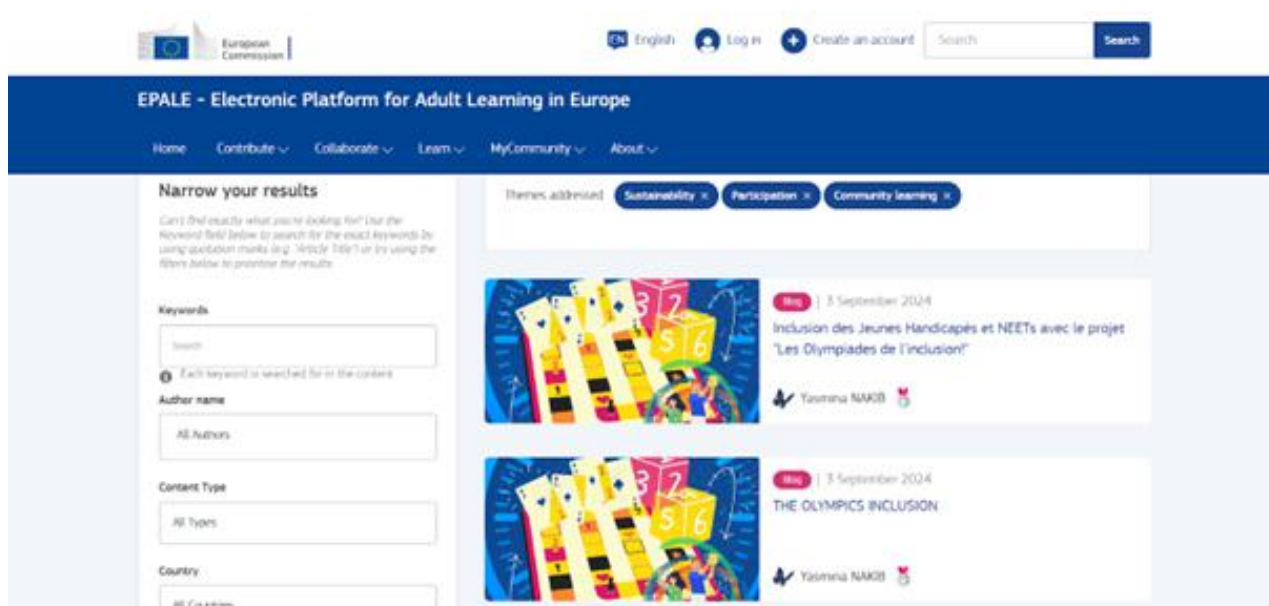
EPALE and VET Educators

Besides the GreenComp framework, which supports VET educators to incorporate sustainability in their curriculum, trainers can also rely on EPALE – the Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe. EPALE is an initiative funded under the Erasmus+ programme through the European Education and Culture Executive Agency. The platform offers access to an open membership community of adult educators and trainers, researchers, academics, and policymakers. Belonging to a community of like-minded individuals is essential to VET education. Users of the EPALE platform can connect with colleagues from all over Europe, exchange practical experiences, and browse through a high-quality and trustworthy database of information related to adult learning and sustainability.

Each year EPALE presents a list of thematic focuses which address challenges related to societal changes. For 2024, one of the three focuses is dedicated to the acceleration of the green transition as an adequate response to the effects of the climate crisis.



The Adult Learning for Sustainable Development page on the EPALE platform offers insight how educators can contribute to a more sustainable and environmentally friendly future by training workers to acquire green skills. Users can enter their preferences in a search menu by choosing content type, country of publication, themes addressed, language, etc. The platform offers a wide variety of resources, including articles, case studies and training materials which VET educators can use not only for inspiration but also for practical training and exercises with their students. Furthermore, the EPALE platform provides a space featuring policy briefs and recommendations aimed at discussing policy innovations that relate to sustainable adult education. Last, but not least, EPALE is a great networking tool, connecting VET educators from Europe and offering participation in various webinars and workshops.



Digital Assessment Methods and Tools for VET Educators

Once VET educators set their learning objectives and begin to implement their curricula, they need to rely on effective assessment methodologies and tools to track the progress of their students, evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum, and for fine tuning the training methods. Digital tools are highly recommended for evaluating students' progress for a variety of reasons, including:

- Grading quizzes, tests, and assignments automatically, which means more free time for VET educators to focus on other tasks such as student mentoring and lesson planning.
- Tools such as Learning Management Systems (LMS) support educators for easier organisation of assignments and assessments.
- Digital assessment tools can provide immediate feedback to students, allowing them to quickly understand their performance and point them to areas in need of improvement.
- Tools like quizzes and gamified experiences engage students more actively in their learning, making the process more enjoyable.

In the long run, digital tools allow educators to track students' progress over time, offering detailed insights into the performance of individual learners. Here are some categories and examples of existing tools for digital assessment methods to support VET educators:

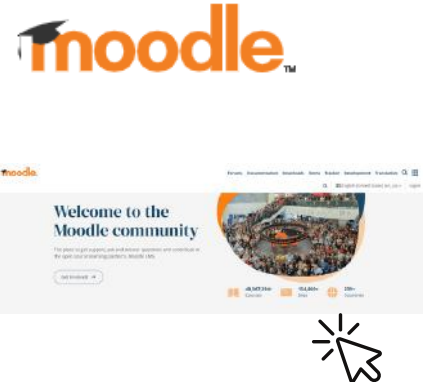


Learning Management Systems (LMS)

LMS platforms provide integrated tools for administering courses, including assessments, assignments, and tracking student progress.

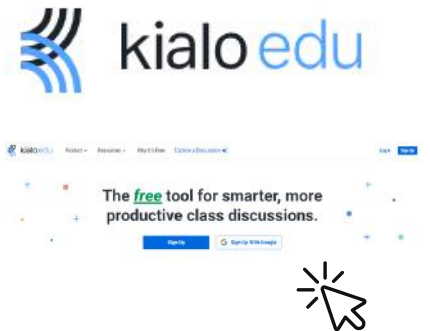
Moodle

This widely used open-source LMS includes features for quizzes, assignments, and peer assessments, useful for evaluating sustainability competences. Supports the creation and delivery of courses, assessments, resources, and activities, allowing for a wide variety of online and blended learning experiences. Very suitable in education and corporate training environments with features such as course management, collaborative learning tools, assessment options and detailed reporting. Customising Moodle to its full potential often requires technical knowledge, so institutions without IT experts on site may find it challenging to implement advanced customisations.



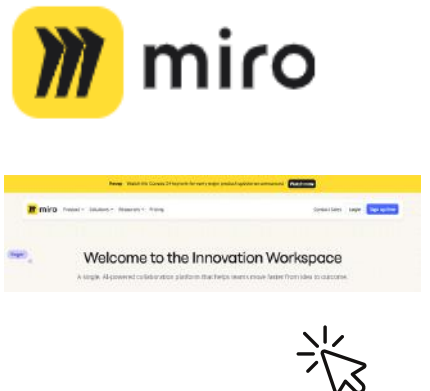
Kialo Edu

A digital tool for facilitating and mapping interactive class discussions. Students participate in discussions, adding pros and cons, engaging with each other's arguments to build an interactive map of the entire discussion. The platform allows you to visualise a discussion in two distinctive, visually appealing representations, making it easier to map how statements relate to each other. Allows engagement from multiple participants and supports the trainer in easily keeping track of students who took part. Discussions are automatically saved so both educators and students can come back for grading or reviewing. The number of features, functionality, and menus might be overwhelming.



Miro

A digital collaboration platform which elevates the “whiteboard” to a new level, providing ground for remote real time contributions from learners and design of study templates for educators. Educators can facilitate online class mapping or brainstorming sessions by either using default templates or further customising existing templates to tailor them accordingly. Students actively participate in real time mind mapping activities, contributing to the creation of visually attractive boards. Provides real time insight into the level of participation of each attendant. Whiteboards can be saved, shared and reviewed in the future. The free plan of the platform gives access to unlimited team members and boards, but only the 3 most recently created boards in your team remain available for editing or collaboration, while the rest remain locked in a view-only mode.



Learning Management Systems (LMS)

LMS platforms provide integrated tools for administering courses, including assessments, assignments, and tracking student progress.

Chamilo

An open-source and free learning management system designed to support effective online education.

Features courses, users and training cycles.

Includes a social network for learning.

Provides for time-controlled exams, tracking of user's progress and offers automated generation of certificates.

The mobile interface is not as user-friendly as other learning management systems.



Open edX

A modular platform which provides useful features needed for authoring and delivering courses online.

Offers features of personalised learning experiences with tools that adapt to the needs of learners.

Offers a diverse set of collaboration tools like discussion forums, group chats, video conferencing, and file sharing.

More tech savvy experts can design engaging learning content by integrating High Definition (HD) video, animation, simulation, and Augmented Reality (AR)/Virtual Reality (VR) learning technology.

Might prove overwhelming, since there are many features, and each needs some configuration to set it up.



Online Quizzes

These tools allow VET educators to assess students' progress level through quizzes, multiple-choice questions, and other quick assessment methods.

Google Forms

A simple yet effective tool for creating quizzes and surveys that can evaluate students' knowledge.

An existing template to create a blank quiz.

Once quiz settings are configured and questions added, the evaluator can set an answer key and use the self-grading feature which saves time.

Provides real-time results and basic analytics, including summary charts and graphs.

Sharing is easy, however working on Google forms quizzes requires a Google account

Allows basic feedback for correct and incorrect answers, but it does not offer personalised or detailed feedback options.



Kahoot!

A gamified quiz tool that makes assessments fun and engaging.

Visually appealing and offers a variety of design features.

Instant feedback encourages active participation and keeps engagement rates high.

Kahoot supports multiple-choice, true/false, and other question types, allowing for diverse assessments.

A disadvantage of the tool is the fast-paced environment so slower learners may get stressed and struggle.



SC Training (formerly EdApp)

A microlearning platform designed to deliver small-sized training modules.

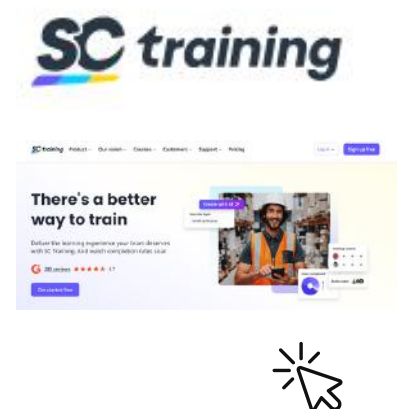
Offers a wide range of customizable courses tailored for various industries, including supply chain management.

Very flexible, optimised for mobile devices, it is particularly useful for remote learning.

Emphasis is on short, focused lessons, with detailed analytics and progress tracking included.

Incorporates gamification elements like leaderboards, badges, and quizzes, which help to increase learner engagement and motivation.

The microlearning format, while efficient for simple topics, may not be ideal for teaching complex subjects that require extended discussions or deep conceptual understanding.



Online Quizzes

These tools allow VET educators to assess students' progress level through quizzes, multiple-choice questions, and other quick assessment methods.

ClassMarker

A web-based online testing platform designed for creating and administering quizzes and exams.

Allows educators, trainers, and organisations to create customised tests, assign them to users, and track their performance through detailed reporting and analytics.

Supports a wide variety of question types, including multiple-choice, true/false, short answer, and essay questions.

Offers a free version, but many of its advanced features, such as detailed analytics, certificate customisation, and unlimited test attempts, are only available with paid plans.

ClassMarker 



Mentimeter

A useful digital tool for distributing polls, quizzes and getting instant feedback from participants.

Supports the smooth transition from presenting the learning material to having a poll or a quiz to assess the level of understanding.

Participants attend an active learning environment where all attendants can ask questions, demand clarifications, engage openly and interact in real time.

Learners only need a code to join the presentation and do not have to create an account.

Exporting functionalities are not available in the free version.

 **Mentimeter**



“We are the first generation to feel the impact of climate change and the last generation that can do something about it.”

Barack Obama



Continue your journey with Shift2Green Gamification


Shift2Green gamification transforms sustainability into an enjoyable and engaging experience, motivating more people to get involved and stay dedicated. By rewarding eco-friendly actions, it encourages the development of lasting green habits on the work place. At the same time, exciting competitions and collaborative missions create a strong sense of community and shared purpose. Complementary interactive and entertaining learning approaches help raise awareness and deepen understanding of environmental challenges and solutions.

Through gamification, Shift2Green makes the path to sustainability and gaining eco-friendly habits on the work place both fun and fulfilling. The Shift2Green Guideline and Shift2Green Gamification provide valuable insights and support companies to implement key sustainability regulations, such as the CSRD Directive (Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive) for ESG reporting, the PPWR Regulation (Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulation), and the SUP Directive (Single-Use Plastics Directive). By incorporating the tools and practices from the Shift2Green Guideline and Shift2Green Gamification into everyday actions, businesses can stay compliant while fostering a greener work environment.

Create you account and continue your journey with Shift2Green. Choose one of the missions to start your sustainability journey, invite colleagues to foster eco-friendly behaviors and practices at the workplace together.

Let's shift to green and create a sustainable future!





Mission 1

Energise Tomorrow, Conserve Today: Unleash the Power






Mission 2

Waste is Money - No Time to Waste!






Mission 3

Workvolution: Transform the way we work






Mission 4

Shift from Linear to Circular Economy!





Mission 5

Sustainable Navigator: Cruising through the Mobility Mission





Mission 6

Leadership Legacy: Forging the Future of Business





This guideline was developed as part of the EU-funded Shift2Green project (Project No. KA220-VET-80B7D207), which supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in transitioning to sustainable business models.



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.