

SUSTAIN-EU: *Exploring how the sustainability expertise & capabilities can lead transformative change within companies and organisations across Europe, towards a more sustainable and resilient future*

EPALE Article #1



SUSTAIN-EU: *transformative change to more sustainable future*

Exploring how **SUSTAIN-EU project** is using latest green skills intelligence to support organisations becoming more sustainable through qualified European Sustainability Experts

The SUSTAIN-EU project, a partnership of six organisations from Portugal, Ireland, Romania, Austria, Italy and Germany, is driving innovation in European Vocational Education and Training (VET) landscape. Funded by the Erasmus+ Programme, this 24-month cooperation partnership is focused on developing a new VET curriculum and qualification, that builds on the latest green skills intelligence, that is highly compatible and adaptable to the changing skills needs powered by the green and digital transitions.

SUSTAIN-EU aims to address some key challenges such as (i) EU skills shortages and (ii) access to high-quality and industry-focused training to upskill or reskill as a Sustainability Expert (which is limited and often prohibitive in terms of cost, access and duration), by introducing the European Sustainability Expert (ESE) course, fully online with open access to all professionals, learners, and jobseekers that wish to qualify as a Sustainability Expert in order to take up new job opportunities and pursue career advancements within the European labour market.

Project Objectives

The SUSTAIN-EU's **specific objectives** are to:

1. Contribute to the **harmonisation**, at European level, of the **skills of the Sustainability Expert** profession;
2. **Establish a new qualification and curriculum** using the ESCO classifications;
3. **Design and develop an eLearning course** at EQF Level 5 that aligns to the VET and HE standards in the partner countries, to achieve mainstreaming and curriculum integration;
4. **Invest in continuous professional development of VET educators and trainers**, so that they can fully exploit and leverage the SUSTAIN-EU training package within their VET institutions or within their teaching practice.

Outcomes

The SUSTAIN-EU project is set to deliver several **innovative and impactful results**:

1. **The European Sustainability Expert Curriculum** with the ESE Professional Profile and Competence Matrix at EQF Level 5: *a set of Learning Outcomes (Knowledge, Skills, Autonomy + Responsibility) per Competence Unit, including the*

admission pre-requirements, unit description, actions and performance criteria, expected contact hours, total workload and external resources, all aligned with EQAVET mechanisms.

2. **The European Sustainability Expert eLearning course** with intelligent tutoring and Certificates of Competence: *a pedagogical architecture with training methodology and interactive training materials, supported by an Artificial Intelligence Tutor Bot and Certificate of Competence.*
3. **The SUSTAIN-EU CPD programme for VET professionals** building an understanding of green economy and emergent labour market requirements: *a training methodology to support the successful implementation of the Sustainability Expert curriculum, a career guidance system, presenting green VET job profiles, providing expert guidance on sustainability as part of their normal provision.*

Where we are now

We are pleased to announce that our partnership has successfully completed **Work Package 2**, which focused on the development of the **European Sustainability Expert (ESE) Competence Profile and Curriculum**. This work resulted in the creation of a harmonised professional profile aligned with the **ESCO** framework, defining the key roles, tasks, and competencies required for sustainability professionals. A comprehensive 105-page curriculum at **EQF Level 5** was developed, including nine competence units (CUs) with clearly defined learning outcomes, competence matrix, workload, training methodology and assessment criteria, namely:

- CU1: Introduction to Business Sustainability (Climate change fundamentals)
- CU2: Sustainability Science
- CU3: Ways of Thinking (Design, Futures, Circular, Systems)
- CU4: Data collection & management
- CU5: Sustainability Plan Development & Implementation
- CU6: Sustainable Finance and Operations
- CU7: Carbon accounting & reporting
- CU8: Change Management and Transdisciplinarity
- CU9: Environmental Legislation & ESG Reporting and Auditing

The curriculum was designed in line with **ECVET** and **EQAVET principles**, ensuring quality, transparency, and compatibility across European qualification systems.

Following the completion of the curriculum in WP2, the SUSTAIN-EU partnership approached **WP3** and started developing the European Sustainability Expert eCourse, transforming the competence units into structured digital learning content.

The completion of WP2 represents a major milestone in addressing the European green skills gap and supporting the development of a standardised sustainability qualification.

Consortium Partners:

- Instituto de Soldadura e Qualidade, Portugal (coordinator)
- Spectrum Research Centre CLG, Ireland
- Grupul pentru Integrare Europeană, Romania
- Berufsförderungsinstitut Burgenland, Austria
- CONFIMI Industria Basilicata - Associazione dell'Industria Manifatturiera e dell'impresa privata di Basilicata, Italy
- Universitaet Paderborn, Germany

For more information about SUSTAIN-EU, visit our **website** (<https://sustaineuproject.eu/>) and follow our **social media pages**:

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