SustainEU

SUSTAIN-EU *empowers VET Trainers to advance Sustainability Education across Europe*

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SUSTAIN-EU: *Empowering VET Trainers to Advance Sustainability Education Across Europe*

From innovative learning resources to practical implementation: the SUSTAIN-EU Continuous Professional Development Programme in action

The transition towards a greener and more sustainable European economy requires more than new knowledge and professional qualifications. It also requires educators and trainers who can effectively transfer sustainability competences to learners, future professionals and the wider workforce.

Recognising this essential role, the Erasmus+ project **SUSTAIN-EU** has developed and implemented an innovative **Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Train-the-Trainer Programme**, designed to strengthen the capacity of Vocational Education and Training (VET) professionals to integrate sustainability into their educational practices.

Following the development of the European Sustainability Expert Curriculum (WP2) and the launch of the European Sustainability Expert e-Learning Course (WP3), the project has reached another important milestone: bringing its professional development programme directly to VET educators across partner countries.

From sustainability expertise to effective teaching

Developed under Work Package 4 (WP4), the SUSTAIN-EU CPD Programme provides VET teachers, trainers and education professionals with practical knowledge, pedagogical approaches and resources to support sustainability education.

The programme consists of six complementary training modules:

1. **Introduction to Sustainability Concepts and Trends** - exploring essential sustainability principles and emerging developments.
2. **Navigating the SUSTAIN-EU Curriculum and E-Learning Course** - familiarising trainers with the project's educational resources and digital learning platform.
3. **Green Economy and Labour Market Insights** - examining emerging green occupations, skills needs and employment opportunities.
4. **Career Guidance Strategies for Sustainability Professionals** - supporting learners in identifying and pursuing sustainability-related career pathways.
5. **Effective Didactic and Facilitation Techniques** - strengthening trainers' capacity to deliver engaging, learner-centred sustainability education.

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6. **Integrating Sustainability across VET Programmes** - providing practical strategies for embedding sustainability into existing training programmes and professional practice.

Together, these modules connect sustainability knowledge with educational methodology, enabling trainers not only to understand the green transition but also to actively support it through their teaching.

Learning by doing: an interactive training approach

A distinctive feature of the SUSTAIN-EU CPD Programme is its emphasis on **active participation, collaborative learning and practical application**.

Rather than relying exclusively on theoretical presentations, the programme encourages participants to engage in discussions, case studies, group activities, problem-solving exercises and reflection on their own professional experiences.

Trainers are invited to explore how sustainability principles can be integrated into different vocational subjects, identify opportunities for adapting existing teaching practices and develop practical ideas for implementation within their institutions.

This approach recognises VET educators as active contributors to educational innovation, capable of translating sustainability concepts into meaningful learning experiences adapted to their learners' needs.

From European collaboration to national implementation

An important preparatory milestone took place in July 2026, when the SUSTAIN-EU partnership organised a transnational Learning, Teaching and Training Activity (LTTA) in Vienna, Austria.

During this event, representatives of the partner organisations participated in the first live delivery of the CPD Programme, testing its modules, exploring training resources and exchanging experiences and feedback.

Building on this collaborative experience, the six partner organisations subsequently implemented the CPD Programme at national level, bringing the training closer to VET professionals working in different educational and professional contexts.

National pilot activities took place across the partnership, including training sessions organised in **Ireland in July 2026**, followed by **Austria and Romania in October 2026**.

These three national implementations involved **34 VET professionals in total**, providing concrete examples of the programme's delivery in different European contexts. **Additional national piloting activities are also being carried out in Italy, Germany**

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and Portugal, with completion expected by the end of October 2026. These activities will further expand the programme's reach, engaging additional VET professionals and strengthening its potential impact across the six partner countries.

In Romania, **Grupul pentru Integrare Europeană (GIE)** organised a 24-hour CPD course in Pitești, combining face-to-face training with self-directed learning. Fourteen participants, including VET teachers, trainers and entrepreneurs, explored the programme's six modules through interactive presentations, collaborative exercises, practical applications and reflection activities.

The national piloting phase offered opportunities to explore the relevance, usability and adaptability of the training resources, while supporting participants in considering how sustainability education could be integrated into their own professional environments.

Strengthening the multiplier effect

The added value of the SUSTAIN-EU CPD Programme extends beyond the professionals directly involved in the training activities.

By equipping VET educators with adaptable resources, practical methodologies and greater confidence in addressing sustainability-related topics, the programme creates opportunities for a wider multiplier effect.

Trainers can transfer the acquired knowledge into their own teaching activities, introduce sustainability perspectives into existing courses and encourage learners to develop competences relevant to emerging green occupations.

The programme also promotes collaboration among educators, encouraging the exchange of experiences, teaching practices and innovative approaches to sustainability education.

In this way, SUSTAIN-EU contributes to strengthening the role of VET institutions as important actors in Europe's green transition.

Looking ahead: sustaining the impact beyond the project

As SUSTAIN-EU approaches the completion of its Erasmus+ implementation period in October 2026, the partnership leaves behind a complementary set of educational resources: a European Sustainability Expert Curriculum, an open-access e-Learning Course and a CPD Programme designed to support educators in putting sustainability education into practice.

Together, these results provide opportunities for continued professional development, curriculum innovation and the integration of green competences into vocational education and training.

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The national piloting activities represent an important step in translating the project's educational resources into practical teaching experiences and preparing the ground for their continued use beyond the project lifetime.

By investing in the professional development of educators, SUSTAIN-EU reinforces a simple but essential message: empowering trainers today means preparing more sustainable professionals, organisations and communities for tomorrow.

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 the **SUSTAIN-EU** project, visit https://sustaineuproject.eu/ and explore the European Sustainability Expert e-Learning Course at https://sustaineu-platform.learninggateway.eu/.

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Photo: *Participants of the SUSTAIN-EU Learning, Teaching and Training Activity (LTTA), Vienna, July 2026.*



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