



ESG TRAINER PROFILE

The ESG trainer is expected to possess necessary competences, skills, experiences, background, and training methods in order to provide consistent information and knowledge on ESG to SMEs. The aim of this document is to develop effective and comprehensive ESG trainer profile that addresses the needs of ESG trainers from chambers, SMEs, and other kind of businesses who wish to offer ESG training. The content of this document was developed by the active involvement of partnership, ESG trainers from chambers, and SMEs through the implementation of focus group interviews. Each partner has been conducted focus groups both with ESG trainers from chambers and SMEs that are specialized in diverse areas including sectors of environment, food, telecommunication, IT companies, creative industry, automotive, sustainability consulting, etc.

Based on partners' preliminary research and the results of focus groups, the ESG trainer's profile have been divided into six main categories. The first category encompasses "*knowledge*" expected from an ESG trainer. The second category is associated with expected "*skills*". The skill category is further divided into 2 subcategories, namely *hard skills* and *soft skills*. The third category involves the traits associated with the "*competence*". The competence is also divided into two subcategories. This competence based sub-categories involve *technical competencies* and *entrepreneurial competencies*. The fourth main category involves the results of "*work experience*" that ESG trainers are expected possess. The fifth main category is about the desired "*education and background*" for the ideal ESG trainer. The focus groups 'perception regarding "*awards, recognition, and professional membership*" were included within the education and background category. The sixth category involves "*training methods*" that are expected to be used by the ideal ESG trainer. At the end of this document, an *additional part* was developed to provide training topics based on the needs analysis of the focus group.

Category 1:

Knowledge

The knowledge involves intellectual information about the topic, and it is theoretical in nature. ESG trainer should have some of the knowledge described below to effectively operate in the field:

- **Environment and climate change:** The climate change refers to long-term shifts in conditions, including weather and temperatures. The ESG trainer should have a strong understanding about climate change, its effects on environment, what business level of actions can contribute to climate change, and preventative actions at business level. In addition to this, it will add extra value to the ESG trainer if he or she has some scientific knowledge about the climate change statistics. The presentation of scientific evidence will boost the persuasiveness of information for the target group (especially for those who are resistant to believe in climate change).



- **Sustainability:** The sustainability is associated with the ability to maintain process over a long period of time. The ESG trainer should fully understand the term sustainability and its role both at ESG (at environmental, societal, and governance), resource management, and business levels.
- **Circular economy:** The circular economy involves a model of production and consumption that requires extension of life cycle of the product. This includes activities of sharing, reusing, repairing, etc. The ESG trainer should have an understanding about what circular economy means, which form it operates at various business sectors, and how it can contribute to the ESG reporting.
- **Financial & Economic:** The ESG trainer should have a fundamental level of understanding in economic and financial concepts, including financial analysis, investment analysis, corporate finance, economic principles, ESG integration in financial performance, sustainable finance and financial regulation.
- **ESG and different ESG frameworks and standards:** ESG frameworks involve principle-based guidance on the structure of ESG reporting, what topics to cover and how to prepare the ESG report whereas ESG standards are specific requirements and metrics that are needed to be fulfilled to reach predetermined ESG goals. The ESG trainer should have a solid understanding about: what ESG is, what are different ESG frameworks and their sector-specific operations, and what ESG standards and lack of ESG standards mean.
- **Business & Entrepreneurship:** The ESG trainer should have a foundational level of knowledge about business and entrepreneurship.
- **Certification:** The ESG certification signals the implementation of ESG practices in a given business sector. The ESG trainer should have the ability to clarify certification procedures, provide information about existing certifications, and their validity. In addition to this, the ESG trainer should know requirements and assessments associated with certification procedures. It is crucial to highlight how ESG standards and their fulfilment are linked with the certification process. Last but not least, the certification process should be presented as a long-lasting process that never ends, continues, and upgraded regularly.
- **Double materiality:** The double materiality is an underlying assumption behind ESG as it involves reporting the impact at financial, environmental, and societal levels. The ESG trainer should have a solid understanding of what double materiality is and how it relates to ESG reporting.
- **General Policy:** The ESG trainer should have a general knowledge about general policies, including EU Green Deal and UN's 17 Sustainable Developmental Goals, their impact on societies, and how they can balance the social, economic, and environmental sustainability.
- **Local business context:** The ESG trainer should have information about the businesses that are running at local levels and should have a knowledge whether those businesses use ESG principles.



Category 2:

Skills

Skills are defined as the ability to achieve the intended results. Unlike knowledge that is theoretical in nature, skills are likely to involve abilities that are practical in nature. The skills can be analyzed under two categories, namely hard and soft skills. Hard skills involve technical or job-related skills, whereas soft skills are personal traits that can be transferred from one job to another, irrespective of the job type. Following this description, the ESG trainer should possess a range of hard and soft skills to effectively operate in the field, including:

2.1: Hard Skills:

- **Digital skills:** The ESG trainer should have skills in using not complex tools digital tools, i.e. excel, to conduct data analysis and effectively communicate findings. In addition to this, ESG trainer should be able to integrate technological use of methods within their ESG-related implementations.
- **Data analytic:** The ESG requires data analytics to measure company's contributions to ESG and identify specific ESG factors (e.g., track employee diversity). The ESG trainer should have an ability in analysing data and utilising analytical tools to develop insights and recommendations.
- **Numerical skills:** The ESG trainer should have skills in numerical analysis and financial modelling. Also, ESG trainer should possess skill of interpreting numerical data derived as a result of analyses.
- **Risk assessment:** The ESG trainer should have a capacity to identify and assess ESG risks, and develop effective strategies to manage them.
- **Carbon footprint calculations:** The ESG trainer should have an ability to calculate how much greenhouse gases are generated as a result of your actions.

2.2: Soft Skills:

- **Strategic and diverse thinking:** The ESG trainer should have a capacity to think critically and creatively, and develop innovative solutions that address complex ESG challenges.
- **Communication:** The ESG trainer should skills to articulate complex ideas and concepts in a clear and concise manner, as well as actively listen to and engage with others.
- **Empathy:** The ESG trainer should have a capacity to empathise with diverse stakeholder perspectives and understand their values and concerns.
- **Networking:** The ESG trainer should have a capacity to establish and maintain professional relationships with various stakeholders in the ESG field.



- **Leadership:** The ESG trainer should have a capacity to provide strong leadership, vision, and guidance to individuals and teams towards ESG objectives.
- **Enhanced motivation:** The ESG trainer should have ability to inspire and motivate chambers and SMEs towards adopting ESG framework.
- **Social consciousness:** This is the ability to recognise and address social and environmental issues and strive towards positive change. The ESG trainer should have high levels of social consciousness.
- **Passion:** The ESG trainer should have a strong motivation and enthusiasm for the introduction and implementation of ESG processes in chambers and SMEs.
- **Patience:** The ESG trainer should be patient in a way that he or she should be able to work diligently and persistently towards long-term goals and outcomes.
- **Teamwork:** The ESG trainer should value teamwork and work effectively with diverse teams and promote collaboration and cooperation.
- **Creativity:** The ESG trainer should have a capacity to generate new ideas and approaches that facilitate ESG progress.
- **Multi-tasking:** This involves performing more than one task simultaneously. The ESG trainer should be able to deliver effective training by analysing the concerns of chambers and SMEs at the same time.

Category 3:

Competences

The competences can be defined as the combination of set of skills with knowledge and behaviour. In comparison to skills and knowledge, competences have a broader definition and they can be regarded as a means to achieve specific skills.

As stated, competences will involve two subcategories. The technical competencies concern the competences associated with the implementation of ESG. The entrepreneurial competencies are linked with the business and entrepreneurship in general.

3.1: Technical Competencies:

- **Financial literacy:** The financial literacy involves both financial knowledge and skills that enables efficient use of financials. ESG trainer should have knowledge that enables to understand and effectively use financial skills. This includes skills that provide understanding in budgeting and investment. As an example, having financial literacy enables ESG trainer to understand “what interest rate is” and how interest rate effects business. This involves combination of financial knowledge with numerical skills and strategic and diverse thinking.



- **Economic literacy:** In comparison to financial literacy, the economic literacy allows broader understanding of economy and its effects at wider levels. For example, economically literate ESG trainer should have a capacity to understand how changes in interest rate affect broader economy (not only business level economy as it is in financial literacy). This involves knowledge associated with financial and economy accompanied by numerical, data analytic, and social consciousness skills.
- **ESG implementation:** The ESG trainer should be practically prepared to transfer the knowledge regarding the implementations of ESG strategy through the integration of all components (i.e., Environment, Social, and Governance components). This competency requires the integration of ESG-related, financial, and economic knowledge with skills associated with analytical skills, digital skills, risk assessment skills, and strategic and diverse thinking.
- **Measurement, management, and reporting ESG risks and opportunities:** The ESG trainer should be able to combine his/her knowledge and measure, manage and report ESG-related risks and opportunities in accurate, clear, and comprehensive manner. Indeed, this involves the combination of various knowledge including knowledge associated with ESG frameworks/standards with skills associated with numerical, data analytics, risk assessment, etc.
- **Innovative:** ESG trainer should be able to think in innovative ways, such that he or she needs to update himself/herself regularly about ESG in a fast-changing environment. This competency is highly linked with the knowledge associated with financial and economics and skills including analytical skills, digital skills, and social consciousness skills.
- **Agile management:** This is an ability to adapt to changing circumstances and develop agile solutions. This competency involves ESG-related and business knowledge combined with the soft skills including strategic and diverse thinking and social consciousness.
- **Interdisciplinary competency:** The ESG trainer should have knowledge about multiple disciplines and should have skills that enable them to apply knowledge from different disciplines to understand how people, technologies, and businesses interact and contribute to ESG implementation.
- **Didactic competency:** The ESG trainer should have an ability to design and deliver effective training sessions, learning materials, and pedagogical methods. In order to deliver effective training, ESG trainer should have ESG-related knowledge (also knowledge about other themes including knowledge about business, financial, economics, etc.) and should possess all the hard skills mentioned above and soft skills, mainly involving communication, empathy, leadership, enhanced motivation, etc.
- **Mentoring:** The ESG trainer should have a capacity to provide guidance and support to the chambers and SMEs seeking to enhance their ESG competencies. This involves the combination of ESG-related knowledge together with hard skills and soft skills, mainly including enhanced motivation and patience.



3.1: Entrepreneurial Competencies:

- **Industry/Sector-specific context:** Specialised knowledge of particular industries or sectors and the capability to analyse relevant business circumstances are vital. This competency involves the integration of business-related knowledge with associated with strategic and diverse thinking, social consciousness, etc.
- **Supply chain:** This involves knowing the importance of supply chain management encompassing the ability to optimise the flow of goods and/or services, minimise costs, and enhance efficiency and customer satisfaction, while taking into consideration the ESG framework and its associated principles. Indeed, this principle involves ESG and business related knowledge and skills associated with strategic planning and multitasking.
- **Investing:** This involves knowledge of investing principles and techniques, and the ability to integrate ESG considerations into investment decision-making. This involves the combination of ESG-related and business related knowledge with the skills associated with data analytics, numerical skills, and creativity.
- **Legislation, Standards & Labels:** This competency is about understanding and being familiar with of legal and regulatory requirements as well as industry-recognized standards and labelling schemes. The ESG trainer should have comprehensive understanding about how legislation and industry-related recognized standards and labelling schemes operate in real world cases.
- **Ethical and Sustainable Approach:** The ESG trainer should be ensuring ethical applications of sustainability practices within the businesses. This requires knowledge associated with ethical implementation of ESG and business-related ethics, integrated with strategic and diverse thinking and social consciousness.
- **Long-term competitiveness:** This is an ability to monitor long-term benefits of engaging ESG at competitive level for businesses. This involves combination of ESG and business related knowledge together with skills including numerical, data analytical, risk assessment, and patience.
- **Holistic vision:** A business vision involves the statement associated with the current and future objectives of the business. The ESG trainer should have an understanding about what business vision is and how to encourage businesses to fulfil their future objectives. Indeed, this involves integration of business-related knowledge together with data analytical skills and strategic and diverse thinking, and patience skills.
- **Flexibility:** This involves flexibility in adopting goals based on current market demands. The ESG trainer should be flexible in their approach and adapt to the changing business marketing demands throughout their ESG implementation.
- **Awareness of barriers and risks:** Ability to detect barriers and risks in businesses while the implementation of ESG, requiring business and ESG related knowledge combined with risk assessment and digital skills.



Category 4

Work experience

Based on focus group results, work experience in the following fields is considered advantageous for an ESG trainer:

- Experience in the area of business & entrepreneurship
- Experience in businesses with successful implementation of ESG
- Corporate Social Responsibility
- Experience not only in environment, but also in social and governance pillars.
- Industry-specific experience

Category 5

5.1: Education and training

The results of focus revealed that work experience carries more importance than education for an ideal ESG trainer. Therefore, while possessing a degree in the relevant fields listed below may confer an advantage, it is not a prerequisite for an individual to serve as an ESG trainer.

- Sustainable development
- Business, Leadership and Management
- Studies in ecology or environmental sciences
- ESG strategy development and performance reporting
- Economic & Financial
- Legislation and EU regulations/Compliance
- Communications
- Social sciences
- Natural Sciences
- Environmental Protection
- Human Resources
- Sociology

5.2: Awards, recognitions, and professional membership

The results of focus groups did not provide any clear-cut answer regarding to this question. All participants agreed on that these can increase the credibility of the ESG trainer. However, instead of



awards, recognition, and professional membership, all participants put emphasis on experience level of ESG trainer.

Category 6

Training methods

The results of focus group revealed the need for specific training methods. Based on those results, the ESG trainer is expected to use following methods in order to develop effective training:

- **No of trainers:** It can be beneficial to offer trainings by integrating more than one trainer with different specializations.
- **Learning options (on-site vs online):** The focus groups' result revealed that on-site trainings are preferable for SMEs. However, ESG trainers should also consider those who have geographical difficulties. For this reason, learning options should be provided in blended formats, including both on-site and online options.
- **Illustration of good practices:** Training method should involve the illustration of good practices and exemplary cases in order to boost motivation.
- **Engaging and entertaining:** ESG trainers should use methods that are engaging and entertaining. This can include the use of ice-breaking activities, interactive slides, and use of videos that are engaging in nature.
- **Interactive learning:** The ESG trainer should use interactive methods throughout delivery of the training. This can be done by group activities, discussion phases, and QA sessions.
- **Cross-hierarchy training:** The ESG trainer should adopt a holistic approach and aim to train both managerial teams and employees within the SMEs in order to ensure equality and inclusion.
- **Flexibility:** ESG trainer should know that there is no one standard that can be applicable for all trainees. Therefore, ESG trainer should take those potential differences among trainees into account and should be prepared to adopt flexible approach by trying to choose best method of training depending on the profile and needs of the trainees.
- **Training material with an emphasis on social and governance dimensions as well:** The participants in the focus groups suggested additional comments by requesting focus on social and governance pillars of ESG since priority is often given for the environment pillar. The ESG trainer should equally focus on all three pillars.
- **Practical focus:** The ESG trainer should provide theoretical information and offer grounds for learners to practically implement what they have learnt in theory.
- **Experience sharing:** The ESG trainer should provide opportunities for SMEs to gather together and discuss their concerns and challenges.



Additional part

Suggestions for training topics

This part involves 7 topics in total and has been developed based on the results of focus group training topic need analysis.

- **Introduction and three pillars of ESG:** This topic covers themes including the definition/explanation of environment, social, and governance pillars of ESG with a special focus on social and governance pillars.
- **ESG strategy and fundamentals:** This topic covers themes associated with awareness, opportunities, and benefits of implementing ESG, ESG in political context, sustainable developmental goals, and historical overview.
- **ESG frameworks:** This topic includes information about legal frameworks, standards (also lack of standards), and certificates.
- **ESG management at company level:** This topic covers themes including how to analyse, measure, and report ESG-related risks and opportunities. Also, the tools for sustainability management (e.g., lifecycle assessment, lean management, etc.) needs to be covered within this topic.
- **Stakeholders' engagement:** This topic includes themes of leadership, communication, supply chain, and customer engagement.
- **Financial and economic opportunities:** This topic is at very basic level and includes fundamental financial and economic ESG-related opportunities. The materiality and double materiality themes will be discussed within that topic as well.
- **Ethics and social innovation:** This topic cover themes encompassing holistic vision of businesses, business-related ethics, ethics during ESG implementations, and human-cantered management.