



ECONEETS@WORK

Ecopreneurial Skills

Module no. 3



Co-funded by
the European Union

The European Commission's support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

Project number: 2022-1-CY02-KA210-YOU-000083292



REVISION HISTORY

Version	Date	Author	Description	Action	Pages
1.0	31/03/2023	KEY INNOVATIONS	Creation	C	8
2.0	10/07/2023	LEARNING SEED	Insert	I	27

(*) Action: C = Creation, I = Insert, U = Update, R = Replace, D = Delete

REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

ID	Reference	Title
1	2022-1-CY02-KA210-YOU-000083292	EcoNEETS@Work Proposal
2		

APPLICABLE DOCUMENTS

ID	Reference	Title
1		
2		



Contents

.....	1
Executive summary.....	4
1. Introduction.....	5
1.1 Learning objectives.....	5
1.2 Skills to be acquired.....	5
1.3 Diving into the module	5
1.3.1 Environmental Awareness	5
1.3.2 Sustainable Business Models	10
1.3.3 Entrepreneurial Skills.....	14
1.3.4 Strategies for energy efficiency.....	16
1.3.5 Green Financing Options.....	21
1.4 Assessment.....	24
1.4.1 Knowledge assessment.....	24
1.4.2 Skills assessment.....	25
2. References	25





Executive summary

The current module is designed to equip learners with the knowledge and skills necessary to become environmentally conscious entrepreneurs. The module comprises five comprehensive sub-modules, each focusing on crucial aspects of ecopreneurship. The first sub-module, "Environmental Awareness," aims to raise awareness about pressing environmental challenges and the importance of sustainable practices. Next, the "Sustainable Business Models" sub-module explores innovative approaches to integrate sustainability principles and participants will learn how to develop green business strategies. The third sub-module, "Entrepreneurial Skills," delves into the essential entrepreneurial skills and mindset required to succeed as an ecopreneur. In the "Strategies for Energy Efficiency" sub-module, participants will explore techniques and best practices to optimize energy usage in businesses. Lastly, the "Green Financing Options" sub-module introduces participants to various funding opportunities and financing mechanisms for ecopreneurial ventures.





1. Introduction

1.1 Learning objectives

After reading this module, you will be able to:

- Define what environmental awareness is and why is it important.
- Recognize and be able to apply green and sustainable practices.
- Discover what energy efficiency is.
- Explain what sustainable business models are.
- Compare different green financing options.
- Examine entrepreneurial skills.

1.2 Skills to be acquired

The current module is focused on the development of your Ecopreneurial skills, and particularly on:

- Environmental Awareness
- Sustainable business models
- Entrepreneurial Skills
- Strategies for energy efficiency
- Green Financing Options

1.3 Diving into the module

The module consists of 5 topics. Each topic aims to increase your knowledge and skills in the area of interest.

1.3.1 Environmental Awareness

1.3.1.1 *Increasing your environmental awareness*

What environmental awareness is?



According to Pachamama Alliance, environmental awareness is having an understanding of the environment, the impacts of human behaviors on it, and the importance of its protection. With other words, it is the consciousness and understanding of the environment, its issues, and the interdependence between human activities and the natural world. It involves recognizing the importance of the environment and acknowledging the impact of human actions on ecosystems, biodiversity, climate, and overall planetary health.

Environmental awareness goes beyond mere knowledge. It entails developing a deep sense of responsibility and concern for the environment, and actively seeking ways to mitigate negative impacts and promote sustainable practices. This can involve making conscious choices in everyday life, such as conserving energy and water, reducing waste, recycling, and supporting environmentally friendly products and practices.

Finally, it involves engaging in activities that raise awareness, such as participating in environmental campaigns, supporting conservation initiatives, and promoting education and research on environmental issues.

Reduce, reuse, and recycle—the “three R’s” of solid waste management—are listed in order of importance for actions that should be taken to manage solid waste.



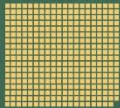
[Source: https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/recycle_6907450.htm#query=recycle&position=28&from_view=search&track=sph Image by brgfx on Freepik]



PLASTIC WASTE AND RECYCLING IN EUROPE

PLASTIC PRODUCTION IN THE WORLD*

1.5 MILLION TONNES
1950



359 MILLION TONNES
2018

*Year 2018

IN EU COUNTRIES

PLASTIC PRODUCTION BY TYPE

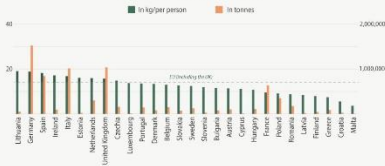


PLASTIC WASTE TREATMENT



AMOUNT AND RECYCLING RATE OF PLASTIC PACKAGING WASTE (2018)

Amount of plastic packaging waste



Recycling rate of plastic packaging waste (%)



Source: Eurostat and Euro area countries; ENV_WOPRC_ENV_2005PCE; European Environment Agency (2018)

(Photo retrieved from https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20181212STO21610/plastic-waste-and-recycling-in-the-eu-facts-and-figures?at_campaign=20234-Economy&at_medium=Google_Ads&at_platform=Search&at_creation=RSA&at_goal=TR_G&at_audience=recycling%20eu&at_topic=Plastic_Waste&at_location=GR&qclid=Cj0KCCQjwnrmlBhDHARIsADJ5b_k_kPJCKvU4Tn1I9obnzQmllbFThXSR1mwULFT-7DN0Qff9iE1m00AaAjDbEALw_wcB)





1.3.1.2 *Why environmental awareness is important to your daily life*

Environmental awareness equips individuals with the knowledge and understanding necessary to make informed decisions that consider the environmental impact. Whether it's choosing eco-friendly products, adopting sustainable practices, or supporting environmentally responsible policies, being aware of environmental issues helps guide choices that promote a healthier planet.

Environmental awareness serves as a foundation for environmental education and empowerment. It enables individuals to learn about ecological systems, environmental challenges, and sustainable practices. This knowledge empowers individuals to become environmental stewards, capable of spreading awareness, initiating change, and inspiring others to take action.

1.3.1.3 *The meaning of environmental awareness for the labor market*

Environmental awareness is an important skill, or field of knowledge, since the labour market continuously changes towards a “greener” direction. The greening of the European economy, as outlined in the EU 2020 strategy, has profound effects on the labour market and the development of the skills of the European population (CEDEFOP, 2012). The search for alternative models of growth in the midst of the financial crisis has increased interest in the "green growth paradigm" and what it means for a rich-jobs recovery ("Greening Jobs and Skills: Labour Market Implications of Addressing Climate Change" by Cristina Martinez-Fernandez, Carlos Hinojosa, and Gabriela Miranda). Firstly, the transition to a sustainable economy has led to the emergence of numerous "green jobs" that focus on addressing environmental challenges and promoting sustainability. Many companies are adopting environmentally responsible practices as part of their corporate social responsibility initiatives. They seek employees who are knowledgeable about environmental issues and can contribute to sustainability efforts within the organization. Moreover, environmental regulations and policies are becoming more stringent to protect natural resources and minimize pollution. Industries must adhere to these regulations to avoid legal consequences and reputational damage. Finally, many organizations now have dedicated sustainability departments or positions to address environmental challenges and promote sustainable practices. These roles require individuals who can assess environmental impacts, develop sustainable strategies, and monitor progress towards sustainability goals. Having environmental awareness as a skill is essential for individuals seeking employment in such roles, as it demonstrates their ability to contribute effectively to sustainability initiatives.

1.3.1.4 *How to increase your environmental awareness: Tips & tricks*

Reduce waste: The first “R,” reduce, means eliminating or decreasing the amount of waste we produce or reducing the toxicity of the materials. Redesigning products to reduce waste and make them more durable, eliminating excessive packaging, avoiding disposable products, and decreasing consumption are all great ways to reduce solid waste (Rhonda Sherman, 2019).



Important steps you can make:

- Use a reusable bottle.
- Use reusable grocery bags.
- Compost
- Shop local farmers markets.
- Buy Second hand items.

Reuse resources: The second “R,” reuse, means taking products that would otherwise be discarded and using them again in their current form, or with few repairs or changes. People often mistakenly say they are recycling something when they are actually reusing it. Reuse involves employing an item once more for either its original purpose or a different one, thereby offering both economic and environmental advantages. Reusing materials is a crucial step in reducing waste, conserving resources, minimizing environmental impact, and transitioning towards a more sustainable and circular economy. It benefits the environment, the economy, and society as a whole.

The process of reuse begins with the attitude that products and materials have usefulness beyond the owner’s original intention. Before tossing something in the trash, stop and ask yourself if it can be used for some other purpose. Can you repair the item instead of replacing it? Can you create whatever it is that you want from an item on hand? Reuse means minimizing waste and maximizing resources, and this translates into getting more for your money whether you are an individual, household, business, institution, government agency, or industry (Rhonda Sherman, 2019)

Finally, you can buy products made with recycled content. Check labels to see if a product or its packaging is made from recycled materials.

Recycle materials: The third “R,” recycling, involves collecting used materials, processing them mechanically and chemically, and remanufacturing them into new products. These activities consume energy, water, and other resources, and cause pollution. Although the resource use and pollution associated with recycling is far less than that created by manufacturing with virgin materials, it is greater than the act of simply reusing an item (Rhonda Sherman, 2019).

In order to be more environmentally aware, there are more advices you can follow:

- Use less fossil fuel-based products.
- Reduce the use of harmful chemicals.
- Use green cleaning products.
- Change your travel habits.
- Conserve water

One final piece of advice, stay informed!



1.3.1.5 Real-life examples & success stories

Bea Johnson

Ranked as the top zero-waste influencer on our list, Bea Johnson has earned the title of 'The Priestess of Waste-Free Living' by the New York Times and is widely recognized as a pioneer in popularizing the zero-waste lifestyle.

In 2008, Johnson embarked on her own zero-waste journey, which has since shaped her career as an environmental activist, motivational speaker, and author. She established Zero Waste Home, initially as a blog, which later transformed into a bestselling book translated into 28 languages. With a global reputation, Johnson has delivered inspiring talks in more than 70 countries, while her social media presence attracts over 700,000 followers.

Guided by her core philosophy known as the 5 Rs—Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Rot (in that order)—Johnson exemplifies her commitment to zero waste living. Her dedication has propelled the concept into the mainstream consciousness, inspiring countless individuals to embrace eco-friendly and sustainable lifestyles.

1.3.2 Sustainable Business Models

Sustainability should be about maximizing societal and environmental benefits alongside profitability. Joining the mission to create a sustainable business model can lead to a positive impact on the world!

1.3.2.1 Learning about sustainable business models

In recent years, a new concept has emerged in the business world—sustainable business models. Previously, the term primarily indicated the need for businesses to go beyond product or service innovation and fundamentally change how they generate profits.

Sustainable business models revolve around the idea of companies not only creating value for themselves and their shareholders in terms of financial gains but also generating value for all stakeholders, including society and the environment. As consumer and investor awareness regarding global issues like climate change and pollution increases, companies must incorporate sustainability into their business models to ensure long-term success. In fact, studies have shown that purpose-driven companies that prioritize sustainability tend to generate higher profits and have a greater likelihood of survival, as explored in various sustainability books.

Essentially, sustainable business models extend beyond the sole pursuit of financial value and aim to create a better world. They involve describing, analyzing, managing, and communicating a company's sustainable value propositions to customers and all other stakeholders, while outlining how they create and deliver this value. These business models detail how companies can capture economic value while simultaneously preserving or replenishing natural, social, and economic capital beyond their organizational boundaries.



The key characteristics of sustainable business models, also known as the "Triple P" or the three principles of sustainable business—profit, people, and planet—are derived from stakeholder theory. Traditionally, companies focused primarily on the profit principle, considering the people and planet principles as burdensome or addressing them only when seeking to improve their public image or engage in greenwashing. However, times are changing, and business models are evolving accordingly. Increasingly, businesses are recognizing the manifold benefits of simultaneously prioritizing all three principles (Ecocation, n.d)



(Image by Freepik)

1.3.2.2 Why sustainable business models are important?

In times of climate change, global pollution and the rise of global pandemics such as COVID-19, we need to find ways to manage our resources in a more sustainable way.

Today, the global economy:

- is releasing more than **10 million tonnes CO2** into the atmosphere every day.
- is cutting down more than **42 million trees** per day.
- is producing **1 million tonnes of plastic** a day, of which **32.000 tonnes** end up in the ocean every day.
- is causing that more than **150 species are going extinct** per day.

However, we need to maintain our economic activities as humanity couldn't survive without them. For example, if we would stop our modern agricultural activities that have become highly efficient over the last decades and go back to traditional agriculture, we wouldn't be able to feed the world. As a result, a large part of the human population would hunger and eventually starve.

The prominence of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) criteria has emerged as a response to addressing the issue of unsustainability in business. Originally designed for investors, the language surrounding the ESG framework has evolved over time. Nowadays, ESG is often used interchangeably with the concept of business sustainability, although this interchangeable use is incorrect. However, considering that true business



sustainability has not yet been achieved, ESG presents itself as a more relevant and applicable concept with a clear set of guidelines. The specific criteria established by the ESG framework aim to define environmental, social, and governance systems as sustainable.

The sustainable business, also known as the ESG model, represents a contemporary approach to conducting business. In the 1970s, the prevailing consensus was to adhere to economist Milton Friedman's shareholder theory, which posited that a company's sole responsibility was to its shareholders. According to this theory, maximizing profits was crucial for driving economic growth. However, little consideration was given to the consequences of prioritizing profit above all else. It is these repercussions that have prompted economists, business leaders, and scientists to reexamine their approaches. This necessitates redefining the rules of business.

The sustainable business and subsequent ESG frameworks are founded on the belief that long-term business success hinges on the well-being of environmental and social systems. Over time, various models have been proposed to illustrate the interplay between our economy, society, and the environment. One important lesson derived from these models is that a robust economy cannot be sustained without healthy social and environmental systems. Whether at the level of individual businesses or on a global scale, financial aspects are influenced by social and environmental factors.

1.3.2.3 The meaning of sustainable business models

Sustainable business models focus on optimizing business strategy for the environment, human society, and economic prosperity. A sustainable business creates value by addressing global priority issues such as environmental damage and poverty alleviation. Research shows that companies with high ESG ratings outperform the market in the medium and long term, demonstrating the financial benefits of sustainability. Moreover, a significant percentage of consumers support brands that advocate for environmental and social change, indicating a growing demand for sustainable products and services. Investors are also taking ESG factors into consideration when making investment decisions, with many institutions divesting from companies with poor sustainability performance.

In addition to financial benefits, a sustainable business attracts and engages top talent. Millennials, who make up a large portion of the workforce, prioritize working for environmentally responsible companies and are willing to take pay cuts for such opportunities. Furthermore, having a purpose-driven strategy gives employees a sense of meaning in their work, leading to increased engagement, productivity, and satisfaction. Sustainable practices also contribute to reduced costs through operational efficiency improvements, helping businesses stay ahead of compliance regulations.

A sustainable business not only enhances its reputation but also leverages new market opportunities. Companies that demonstrate strong environmental and social values establish positive brand reputations, while those that neglect proper practices risk damaging their image and incurring financial losses. Moreover, a sustainable business is well-positioned to tap into new markets and expand its offerings. By developing innovative and sustainable solutions, businesses can adapt to changing environmental and social needs, driving growth and accessing investment opportunities in sectors like green technology and sustainability.



Overall, a sustainable business generates financial returns, attracts top talent, reduces costs, improves reputation, and leverages new market opportunities. By prioritizing environmental and social considerations, businesses can create long-term value while addressing pressing global challenges.

1.3.2.4 How to create a sustainable business model

But how you can develop a sustainable business model?

1. Embrace Sustainability as a Core Value:

When shaping your business model, make sustainability a fundamental principle that encompasses social, economic, and environmental aspects of your operations. Defining sustainability values will guide your value proposition and target market, laying the foundation for your business case. Aligning your business with sustainability goals will shape your overall mission and company values, inspiring employees to join you on the sustainable journey (Falmout, 2023).

2. Evaluate the Value Chain:

Assess the entire value chain of your business, covering every step from concept to product delivery. A sustainable business model should embed responsible practices not only within your company but also among third-party vendors and suppliers. By reviewing the entire value chain, you can enhance product quality, increase profit margins, and positively impact the environment and society (Falmout, 2023).

3. Engage Stakeholders:

Involve internal and external stakeholders, including employees and customers, in the development and implementation of your sustainable business model. By considering their perspectives and expectations, you can uncover new opportunities for innovation and strengthen employee engagement and corporate reputation (Falmout, 2023).

4. Leverage Technology:

Leverage emerging technologies to streamline processes and enhance the sustainability of your business model. Technologies such as AI, cloud computing, renewable energy, and electric vehicles can improve communication with stakeholders, waste management, and reduce carbon footprints, making supply chains more efficient and environmentally friendly (Falmout, 2023).

5. Seek Inspiration from Sustainable Business Models:

Explore existing sustainable business models to gain inspiration and insights. Examples include businesses that maximize material and energy use, create value from waste through reuse and remanufacturing, adopt circular business models with durable and fully harvestable materials, and prioritize social missions, such as providing training and employment opportunities for marginalized individuals (Falmout, 2023).

1.3.2.5 Real-life examples & success stories



IKEA

Ikea has set ambitious sustainability targets for 2030, aiming to achieve climate positivity and develop products that promote healthy living. According to information on Ikea's sustainability page, an impressive 99.5% of the wood used in their products is either Forest Stewardship Council-certified (FSC) or sourced from recycled materials. The company is also dedicated to utilizing recycled materials and renewable energy in its operations, while actively working to minimize waste and support biodiversity by preserving the ecosystems from which it sources its materials (Indeed.com, 2023).

LEGO

Despite primarily using plastic for its products, Lego has made a firm commitment to transitioning to 100% renewable energy sources. Additionally, the company is striving to make a majority of its products recyclable. Lego has also engaged with its consumer base through initiatives such as "Build the Change," encouraging environmental awareness and action, particularly among children. This program serves to instill the importance of sustainability in young minds and educates them on how to implement sustainable practices (Indeed.com, 2023).

BMW

BMW places a strong emphasis on sustainability by actively working to decrease vehicle emissions and expanding its range of hybrid and electric vehicle options. The company is dedicated to sourcing environmentally-friendly materials and has taken significant steps to reduce CO2 emissions across its entire supply chain. Moreover, BMW has been at the forefront of environmental consciousness by appointing an environmental officer, whose role involves promoting environmental advocacy, awareness, and policies within the organization (Indeed.com, 2023)

1.3.3 Entrepreneurial Skills

1.3.3.1 What entrepreneurial skills mean

You can find below a list of entrepreneurial skills.

- Business Management Skills
- Communication and listening
- Critical and Creative Thinking Skills
- Strategic Thinking
- Networking Skills
- Leadership skills
- Stress management



1.3.3.2 Why entrepreneurial skills are important for your daily life

Entrepreneurship skills play a crucial role in equipping entrepreneurs to recognize opportunities, make sound decisions, transform their ideas into reality, overcome obstacles, and effectively manage resources to attain success. The significance of these skills is underscored by their ability to:

- **Foster Social Change and Enhance Lives:** Entrepreneurship skills empower individuals to create positive impacts on society by introducing innovations that improve lives and address societal challenges.
- **Generate Employment Opportunities:** Entrepreneurs, armed with these skills, become job creators, contributing to reducing unemployment rates and stimulating economic growth.
- **Drive Economic Growth and Pave the Way for New Markets and Industries:** The entrepreneurial spirit, coupled with essential skills, fuels economic expansion and fosters the birth of new markets and industries.
- **Enhance Quality of Life Through Innovation:** By nurturing novel ideas and developing functional products or services, entrepreneurs elevate the overall quality of life for individuals and communities.
- **Provide Opportunities for Personal and Professional Growth and Financial Rewards:** Possessing entrepreneurship skills offers the chance for individuals to grow both personally and professionally, leading to potential financial success.
- **Enhance Individual Capacity for Independent and Collaborative Work:** Entrepreneurs develop the ability to work efficiently on their own and in collaboration with others, fostering adaptability and versatility.



[Source Image by gpointstudio on Freepik]

1.3.3.3 How to increase your entrepreneurial skills: Tips & tricks

You can find below several approaches to foster the development of your entrepreneurship skills:





- **Set Clear Goals:** Begin by defining your business objectives, assessing your strengths and weaknesses, and determining what you aim to achieve in your entrepreneurial journey.
- **Engage in Learning:** Utilize various resources such as podcasts, books, and seminars to acquire valuable information and insights that can enhance your skill set.
- **Enroll in Online Courses:** Take advantage of online courses, which serve as an excellent platform to bolster the specific skills you seek to develop.
- **Seek Mentorship:** Seek guidance from experienced and successful leaders who can serve as mentors, as their expertise can have a profound impact on your personal and professional growth.
- **Embrace Hard Work:** Cultivate a strong work ethic and remain consistent in your efforts to continually improve and expand your skill repertoire.
- **Embrace Adaptability:** Stay receptive to change and be open to embracing new ideas and opportunities as they present themselves.
- **Foster a Growth Mindset:** Emphasize the importance of continuous learning and actively seek out opportunities to further develop and refine your skills.

By incorporating these strategies into your entrepreneurial journey, you can proactively nurture your entrepreneurship skills, increasing your potential for success and achievement in the business world.

1.3.4 Strategies for energy efficiency

1.3.4.1 Increasing your energy efficiency

The concept of being eco-friendly primarily involves making individual changes that directly affect you and your household. These changes encompass practices like recycling materials, ensuring proper garbage disposal, and opting for energy-efficient light bulbs. Although these actions may appear small on their own, their significance lies in the collective effect they have on our ecosystem, fostering positive change for the environment as a whole (Cristopher Brown, 2020).



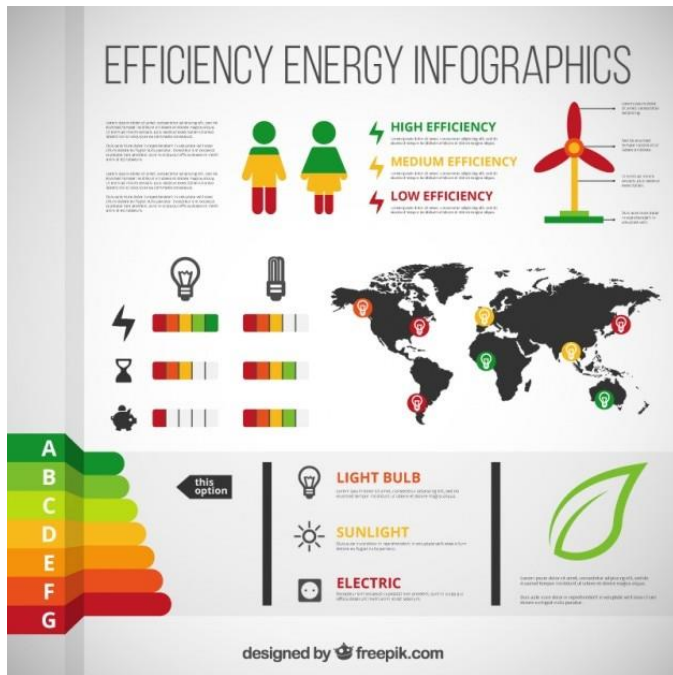
[Source: https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/eco-energy-flat-icons-composition-poster_4352469.htm#query=energy%20efficiency&position=3&from_view=search&track=ais] Image by macrovector_official on Freepik]

1.3.4.2 Why energy efficiency is important for your daily life

Energy optimization, which involves maximizing energy use in your home environment while expanding energy efficiency and savings, goes beyond simple energy conservation. By avoiding unnecessary strain on your home's systems, energy optimization can improve their overall performance. Homeowners have numerous compelling reasons to consider optimizing their energy use, ranging from clear environmental benefits and financial advantages to potential improvements in mental and physical health. In fact, energy optimization has become a sought-after feature for prospective homebuyers when considering a new property. The importance of energy efficiency cannot be overstated, as it offers an array of benefits for everyone, regardless of their motivations for energy conservation. Firstly, energy efficiency is a powerful tool in reducing your carbon footprint, contributing to a significant reduction in national greenhouse gas emissions. By investing in energy-efficient measures, such as energy-saving appliances and home upgrades, homeowners can achieve remarkable savings on their monthly utility bills, providing more financial flexibility for other expenses. (EnergySage, n.d)

Moreover, energy-efficient purchases should be seen as wise investments, as the utility savings they generate over their lifespans can offset initial costs and offer substantial returns compared to conventional alternatives. As energy prices continue to rise, these returns will only grow over time. Additionally, energy-efficient homes hold a higher value in the real estate market, often fetching higher prices than standard homes with comparable features. The increased property value comes not only from lower utility bills but also from the appeal of owning an environmentally responsible and cost-saving home (EnergySage, n.d).

In conclusion, prioritizing energy optimization and efficiency not only benefits the environment but also translates into tangible financial gains, increased property value, and improved living conditions. Embracing energy-efficient practices is a prudent decision that yields numerous long-term advantages for homeowners and the broader community (EnergySage, n.d).



[Source: https://www.freepik.com/free-vector/efficiency-energy-infographic_856615.htm#query=ENERGY%20EFFICIENCY&position=3&from_view=search&track=ais - Freepik]

1.4.3.3 Why energy efficiency is important for a business

Even if your business acknowledges the potential for energy-efficient improvements, it may prioritize investing in other profit-increasing areas. Nevertheless, implementing these changes doesn't have to be complex. Interestingly, some of the measures that make your home more energy efficient can equally benefit your business or workplace (Cristopher Brown, 2020).

From a business standpoint, while environmental considerations should not be undermined, adopting these straightforward changes can lead to significant cost savings by the end of the year. Whatever the underlying motives for these modifications, there is truly no compelling reason not to pursue them. With this in consideration, here are seven strategies to enhance your business's energy efficiency (Christopher Brown, 2020).

Energy efficiency offers numerous benefits, and when it comes to running a business, the primary motivation often stems from its impact on the organization's financial performance. While it undoubtedly has positive effects on the environment and enhances your business reputation, the key advantage lies in reducing energy waste, leading to lower energy expenses and carbon emissions, resulting in significant long-term cost savings (SEFE Energy, n.d).

According to estimates by the Carbon Trust, simple changes to office practices could enable most businesses to reduce their energy costs by at least 10%. By implementing additional measures, achieving a 20% reduction in energy costs can have the same positive impact on the bottom line as a 5% increase in sales for many companies. Therefore, investing time and resources in improving energy efficiency proves to be a highly worthwhile endeavor for businesses (SEFE Energy, n.d)



1.4.3.4 How to increase Energy Efficiency Tips & tricks

You can find below strategies for enhancing business energy efficiency.

1. Invest in Energy-Saving Business Equipment:

To boost energy efficiency, consider acquiring energy-saving business equipment. This might include paper-saving printers, efficient desk lamps, and other similar tools.

2. Power Down Electronics After Closing:

To collectively reduce electricity wastage, encourage the practice of powering down all electronics when the business closes for the day. This simple change can make a significant impact!

3. Explore Solar Panels for Business Space:

Consider the immediate effectiveness of solar panels in saving energy. They harness direct energy from the sun and can store surplus energy for later use, making them a sustainable investment.

4. Set Monthly Energy Efficiency Goals:

Sustain energy efficiency by setting monthly goals, which need not be overly complex. Simple targets, such as staying under a certain power indicator or purchasing energy-saving products, can drive continuous improvement.

5. Utilize Natural Light in the Workspace:

Leverage natural light as a key energy-efficient resource for your business. If your workspace benefits from ample sunlight, reduce reliance on artificial lighting during the day.

6. Conduct an Energy Consumption Audit:

Take responsibility by conducting energy consumption audits to understand where and how much energy your business consumes. Use the results to identify areas for improvement and implement energy-saving adjustments.

7. Implement a Monthly Energy Budget:

Establish a monthly energy output budget for your business. Setting a specific budget limit encourages eco-friendly practices to stay within that limit.

8. Maintaining Business Energy Efficiency

Sustaining energy efficiency benefits your business in multiple ways. Despite requiring some upkeep, the advantages far outweigh the costs of being eco-friendly. By adopting these strategies, your business can contribute to a greener and more sustainable future.

1.4.3.5 Real-life examples & success stories

GOOGLE



Google has maintained carbon-neutrality for over a decade, boasting data centers that are 50% more energy efficient than traditional ones. In 2019, the company achieved a remarkable feat by purchasing sufficient renewable energy to match 100% of their annual energy consumption for the third consecutive year, solidifying their position as the world's largest buyer of renewable energy. Google's commitment extends further, aiming for 24/7 carbon-free energy operation across all their facilities. They actively promote renewable energy by making long-term commitments with providers, ensuring stable financing for new clean energy projects (Peter Hawksworth, 2020).

TESLA

Tesla, with a fleet of over 700,000 vehicles, is highly regarded for its leadership in energy efficiency, even acknowledged by other car manufacturers. Their cars have collectively prevented more than 4 million metric tons of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. Early market entry and a strong focus on electric vehicles set Tesla apart, with their Model S, X, and 3 offering unrivaled energy efficiency and battery life among electric vehicles (Peter Hawksworth, 2020).

Beyond their own vehicles, Tesla's energy impact reaches far and wide. While their Model S stands as the first zero-emission, zero-gas, full-size electric vehicle, the company also manufactures components and technology for other vehicle makers (Peter Hawksworth, 2020).

STARBUCKS

Starbucks, the coffee giant, is dedicated to significant investments in clean and green energy solutions. By powering their stores with renewable energy, they reduce their environmental impact and support access to green power within the community. Over a decade, Starbucks progressively increased their purchase of renewable energy, ultimately achieving their goal of exclusively sourcing electricity from renewable sources in 2015. Moreover, Starbucks contributes to making green energy more accessible. Notably, the company invested in a 140,000-acre solar farm in North Carolina, providing solar energy not only to their stores in 6 states and Washington D.C. but also to other customers. Their commitment to sustainability extends across various facets of their operations, making a positive impact on the environment and inspiring others to follow suit (Peter Hawksworth, 2020).

COCA COLA

Coca-Cola is dedicated to energy efficiency, focusing on water conservation, waste reduction, and aiming to reduce its carbon footprint by 25% by the year 2020. The company acknowledges that carbon emissions are generated throughout various stages, including packaging, ingredients, manufacturing, refrigeration, and distribution. Given its global presence, Coca-Cola is well aware of the impact of disposable packaging on emerging communities. Consequently, the company has set three essential goals concerning responsible packaging of their products:

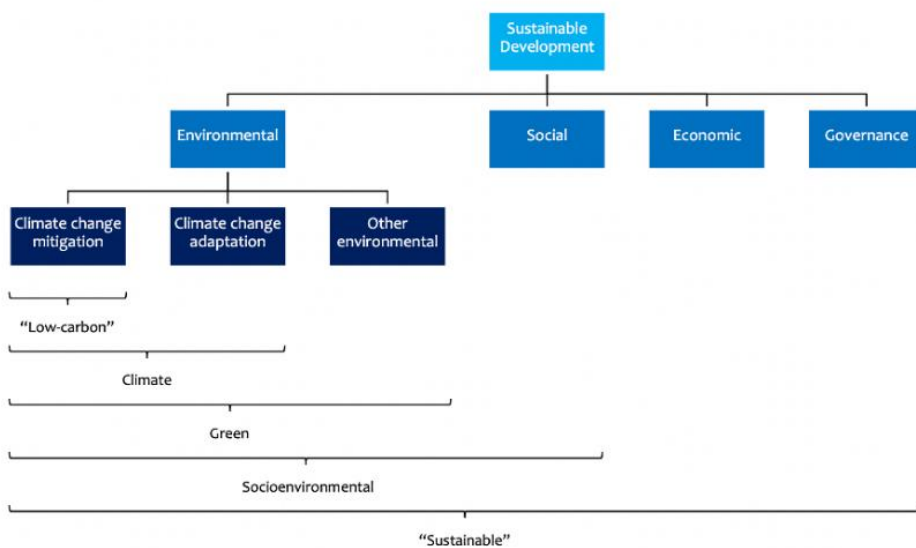
- Make all of its packaging 100% recyclable by the year 2025.
- Incorporate at least 50% recycled material in all packaging by 2030.
- Achieve recycling of one bottle or can for each one sold by the year 2030 (Peter Hawksworth, 2020).



1.3.5 Green Financing Options

1.3.5.1 Exploring green financing options

A sustainable financial system is characterized by the creation, valuation, and transaction of financial assets in a manner that fosters genuine wealth, serving the long-term needs of an inclusive and environmentally sustainable economy. While sustainable investment categories can overlap, a comprehensive analysis of related definitions reveals consensus on the distinctions between "sustainable," "green," and "climate" finance (UNEP, 2016). "Sustainable finance" stands as the most encompassing term, embracing social, environmental, and economic dimensions. On the other hand, "green finance" specifically pertains to financial instruments directed towards environmentally sustainable projects, initiatives, and policies, with the primary objective of facilitating a green economic transformation towards low-carbon, sustainable, and inclusive pathways (Green Finance Platform, n.d).



[Source: Definitions and Concepts: Background Note, UNEP, 2016]

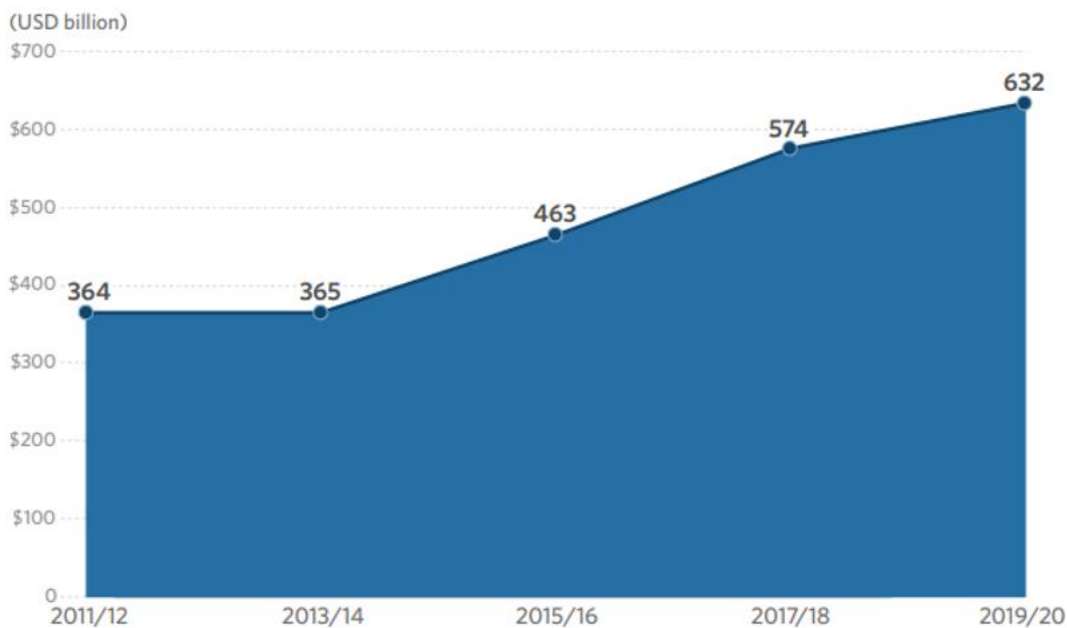
1.3.5.2 The meaning of green financing options for the labour market.

Green finance offers both economic and environmental benefits to all. By expanding access to eco-friendly goods and services for individuals and businesses, it promotes a more equitable shift towards a low-carbon society, fostering socially inclusive growth. This creates a "great green multiplier" effect, where both the economy and the environment experience gains, leading to a win-win situation for everyone involved. The awareness of green finance has significantly contributed to its growing relevance in the banking sector. Both commercial and investment banks are taking proactive steps to embrace green finance. These actions encompass integrating environmental factors into bank strategies and governance, as well as mobilizing capital for specific green assets through various financial activities like loan origination, credit and savings product offerings, and the issuance of green bonds. The global momentum behind this development is attributed to various initiatives, including the Principles for Responsible Banking and the Sustainable Banking Network (Siddhesh Shinde, n.d).



In addition to banks, Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) also play a vital role in mobilizing international climate funding and increasing financial leverage for low-carbon and climate-resilient projects. They achieve this by enhancing public and private investment planning, preparation, structuring, financing, and de-risking. Many MDBs have made significant commitments to ensure that their loan portfolios support conservation efforts and incorporate considerations of natural capital and social impacts in their investment decision-making processes. Developing countries' governments are actively engaged in constructing infrastructure aimed at improving long-term resource management, boosting the country's competitiveness, and attracting private sector investments into local green markets (Siddhesh Shinde, n.d).

This shift towards a low-carbon green development, driven by the urgent need to address climate change and environmental challenges, may transition from being a voluntary choice to an obligatory strategy. Expanding green financing can offer a competitive advantage, particularly as environmental regulations become more stringent. Businesses have the opportunity to add value to their portfolio by actively participating in and promoting green financing. By doing so, they gain a green edge that appeals to environmentally conscious investors and customers, enhancing their overall business prospects. Governments that advocate for green financing play a crucial role in safeguarding their societies from resource scarcity. By fostering and supporting local markets for renewable energy and exploring new markets with significant employment potential, they contribute to overall economic growth and resilience (Siddhesh Shinde, n.d).



[Source: Global Landscape of Climate Finance 2021, CPI, 2021]



1.3.5.3 How to increase your green financing options: Tips & tricks

Different types of green financing offer unique opportunities to support environmentally friendly initiatives. Green mortgages, for instance, provide favorable terms to homebuyers interested in properties with high environmental sustainability ratings or those willing to invest in improving a property's environmental performance.

- Green loans are specifically designed to fund environmental projects, ranging from household solar panels and electric automobiles to energy efficiency initiatives and more.
- Green credit cards, exemplified by Aspirations' Zero card, offer a novel approach by planting a tree every time a customer makes a purchase. This empowers customers to make eco-conscious choices, contributing to long-term environmental impact through their expenditures.
- Green banks operate similarly to traditional banks but deploy public funds to stimulate private investments in renewable energy and other environmentally friendly ventures. The US witnessed a significant increase in green banks, growing from one to 20 between 2011 and 2020, with \$7 billion invested in renewable energy projects.

At the forefront of green financing are green bonds, representing a substantial portion of green funding. These bonds enable investments in various green initiatives, including renewable energy, clean transportation, conservation, and more, using the proceeds from bond earnings to support environmental causes (Siddhesh Shinde, n.d).

1.3.5.4 Real-life examples & success stories

DAVID LUKE and HSBC

In early 2021, David Luke, a UK-based school uniform provider, undertook an eco-friendly initiative by installing a 1,000-panel solar PV system, made possible through an HSBC Green Loan. This six-figure loan was provided as part of HSBC's sustainable finance initiative aimed at supporting sustainability projects in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and mid-market companies. The rooftop solar PV system, with a capacity of 295kW, was expertly installed by Environmental Roofing Services, a local roofing and renewables company. Over its projected 25-year lifespan, this solar installation is expected to save a substantial 3,600 tonnes of carbon emissions.

Kathryn Shuttleworth, the Managing Director at the David Luke Group, expressed the significance of these solar panels in aligning with their long-term sustainability targets. Beyond environmental benefits, the investment is expected to yield financial returns, with the solar roof projected to recoup its cost through savings in just seven to eight years.

HSBC's Green Loan is one among several green lending initiatives introduced by major banks to promote and support investments in sustainable endeavors. This growing trend signifies the increasing commitment of financial institutions to facilitate positive environmental impact and sustainable growth.

TESCO and SANTADER



To address greenhouse gas emissions within its value chain, Tesco has initiated a sustainable supply chain program, offering financing linked to sustainability performance to its suppliers. Through The Tesco Supplier Network, over 10,000 suppliers from diverse sectors are supported in sharing best practices. Tesco's Chief Product Officer, Ashwin Prasad, expressed enthusiasm for providing suppliers access to market-leading supply chain finance linked to sustainability, fostering incentives for science-based emissions reduction targets and embedding sustainability goals throughout the supply chain. The initiative also collaborates with the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to aid suppliers in setting sustainability targets, granting participating suppliers preferential financing rates from Santander, tied to their carbon data disclosure, emissions reduction targets, and progress towards those goals. This financial support targets SMEs, enabling them to leverage improved financing rates from Santander to enhance their environmental performance. Additionally, Tesco pledges to offer online tools to facilitate supplier enrolment and participation in the program.

1.4 Assessment

1.4.1 Knowledge assessment

Question 1 (multiple choice or true/false): To boost energy efficiency, acquiring energy-saving business equipment is not important since there are other ways.

[TRUE], [FALSE]

Question 2 (multiple choice or true/false): The installation of solar panels can be part of a green loan.

[TRUE], [FALSE]

Question 3 (multiple choice or true/false): Companies with high ESG ratings outperform the market in

[the medium and long term] [the short and medium term] [long term]

Question 4 (multiple answers correct): What are the key characteristics of sustainable business models?

[property], [profit, priorities, planet], [profit, people, and planet]

Question 5 (multiple answers correct): Today, the global economy:



[is producing 1 million tonnes of plastic a day], [is releasing more than 10 tonnes CO2 into the atmosphere every day], [is cutting down more than 100.000 trees per day], [is causing that more than 150 species are going extinct per day]

1.4.2 Skills assessment

Imagine that you inherited your father's business, which was a factory of clothes in a relatively small town. Try to set the plan for a sustainable business as you know the importance it has. You should keep on mind the following:

- Purchase of raw materials
- Energy efficiency
- Packing Materials
- Shipping
- Marketing
- Green loans and other resources

Even if there is not a correct answer to this assessment, the following information is important to be mentioned in the final deliverable.

- Shop locally
- Improve energy efficiency.
- Manage the chemicals safely.
- Reduce water consumption.
- Donate Supplies in good condition.
- Reduce, recycle and reuse!
- Biodegradable and recycled packaging options
- Delivery services using electric vehicles and bicycles.
- Social media posts and your email newsletters.

And finally! Create a green product!

2. References

Atkinson, G., & Susana, S. (2003). Environmental Cost-Benefit Analysis. Retrieved from <https://www.adaptation-undp.org/resources/peer-reviewed-article/environmental-cost-benefit-analysis-giles-atkinson-and->



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (n.d.). Reducing and Reusing Basics. Retrieved from <https://www.epa.gov/recycle/reducing-and-reusing-basics#:~:text=Benefits%20of%20Reducing%20and%20Reusing,-Reduces%20greenhouse%20gas&text=Prevents%20pollution%20caused%20by%20reducing,the%20environment%20for%20future%20generations.>

Zero Waste. (n.d.). The Top Ten Zero Waste Influencers in the World Today. Retrieved from <https://www.zerowaste.com/blog/the-top-ten-zero-waste-influencers-in-the-world-today/>

