
CIFAL Victoria - ESG and Impact Fundamentals for SMEs

People

Deadline: 28 Jan 2025

Type:	Fellowship Programme
Location:	Victoria, Canada
Date:	16 Jan 2025 to 15 Mar 2025
Duration:	36 Hours
Programme Area:	Decentralize Cooperation Programme
Website:	https://impactinvestinghub.ca/learning/trainingprograms/esg-for-smes/
Price:	\$0.00
Event Focal Point Email:	majerbi@uvic.ca
Partnership:	CIFAL Victoria, , University of Victoria - Impact Investing Hub

BACKGROUND

In today's fast-changing business environment, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors have become essential drivers of resilience, innovation, and long-term success. For small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Canada, embracing ESG is no longer just about compliance or corporate

responsibility—it's a strategic opportunity.

Integrating ESG principles can enhance brand reputation, attract investment and talent, open doors to new markets, and build lasting value. At the same time, global trends in regulation are moving quickly toward mandatory ESG disclosures—including climate-related risks—for large public and private companies. These shifts will directly affect SMEs through their roles in supply chains and procurement networks, making ESG readiness a critical business capability.

EVENT OBJECTIVES

This course will focus specifically on building capacity for small and medium enterprises in ESG and Impact measurement, management and reporting to respond to investors and regulatory pressures while improving their environmental and social impact.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Understand why ESG factors matter for business success and resilience
- Identify material ESG issues for their company/industry
- Integrate ESG risk and opportunities into their business strategy and operations
- Establish relevant KPIs and track their companies' ESG and impact metrics to drive positive change for all stakeholders
- Develop an action plan to collect data, establish a baseline, set ESG performance targets and report on their ESG impact

Enhance understanding of the role of business to advance climate action and contribute to the UN SDGs.

CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

In this hybrid course, students will be introduced to key topics using a variety of instructional material and methods (including videos, readings, exercises, case studies, forum discussion and peer-to-peer learning) enhanced with experiential

learning opportunities by hearing from practitioners in live online sessions and in-person workshops. They will have an opportunity to practice what they learn through a series of exercises applied to their own companies. Students will build confidence in starting their company's ESG and impact journey and benefit support from a peer network of like-minded business leaders and community of practice.

METHODOLOGY

[Module 1 - Introduction to ESG](#)

Learning Goals:

- Explain what ESG means and why ESG matters for SMEs?
- Describe key environmental, social and governance factors for businesses.
- Explain how ESG factors affect firm performance and relationships with stakeholders (ESG materiality).
- Gain awareness of national and global trends in ESG and climate-related disclosures and implications for SMEs.

[Module 2 - Deep Dive in Environmental Factors](#)

Learning Goals:

- Explain key environmental issues and how they affect firms' value drivers and relationships with suppliers, customers, employees, investors, government and community.
- Identify material environmental issues for your industry and your company (climate change, pollution and waster, natural resources scarcity, product life cycle, biodiversity, etc.).
- Understand climate-related risks and opportunities and how they are affecting business and investment activities, in BC, Canada and globally.
- Identify key strategies for SMEs to measure, manage and report of E factors (GHG emissions, waste, water, other material factors).

[Module 3 - Deep Dive in Social Factors](#)

Learning Goals:

- Explain key social factors and how they affect your company's value drivers and relationships with stakeholders (focus on risks and opportunities related

- to recruitment, retention, productivity, customers/suppliers relations, etc.)
- Identify material social issues for your industry and your company (people management including EDI, labor relations, community engagement, product safety and security, etc.).
 - Identify key strategies for SMEs to measure, manage and report of S factors.

Module 4 - Deep Dive in Governance Factors

Learning Goals:

- Understand the critical importance of governance in SMEs context.
- Explain key governance factors and how they affect business performance (board structure, diversity, executive remuneration, transparency, financial integrity, accountability, business ethics etc.).
- Identify material governance factors for your business.
- Understand the role of the Board of Directors and explain key characteristics of effective corporate governance.
- Identify key best practices in measuring and reporting on G factors

Module 5 - Business & Reconciliation in SMEs Context

Learning Goals

- Learn about the importance of SMEs in the reconciliation process.
- Identify how businesses can positively impact Indigenous communities through economic partnerships, employment, and entrepreneurship.
- Enhance cultural competency and sensitivity towards Indigenous cultures and issues within business practices.
- Understand the importance of respectful engagement with Indigenous communities.
- Provide resources, tools and best practices to develop and implement actionable reconciliation strategies within your business.
- Motivate participants to commit to ongoing learning and engagement with Indigenous reconciliation efforts.

Module 6 - From ESG to Impact & SDG Alignment

Learning Goals

- Explain the difference between ESG and Impact, and how/when to effectively leverage them in your strategy as the sustainability reporting

landscape is shifting from single to double double materiality (outcome-driven).

- Recognize different impact measurement and management (IMM) frameworks used by investors and other stakeholders (UN SDGs, IMP five dimensions of impact; IRIS+; etc.).
- Identify suitable impact frameworks for SMEs and relevant impact metrics for your company & business model.
- Develop strategies for communicate your impact story and performance metrics to different stakeholders(investors, customers, etc.)

Module 7 - Workshop 1: Develop your ESG baseline and action plan

Hands-on workshop applied to your own company using a custom reporting template to:

- Identify material ESG issues for your company
- Find relevant metrics (quantitative ad qualitative) for your business
- Analyze your baseline ESG score
- Set targets and prepare your action plan

Module 8 - Workshop 2: Develop your impact & reconciliation action plan

Hands-on workshop applied to your own company using a custom SDG alignment template + facilitated discussion to identify key steps for your company to develop and implement actionable reconciliation strategies.

- Reflect on your company's impact goals using the SDG framework
- Identify relevant SDG targets aligned with your core business (emphasis on avoiding greenwashing)
- Practice with an impact reporting tool
- Identify key actions and resources for advancing reconciliation
- Communicate your impact story

TARGETED AUDIENCE

Mid-to-high level executive and operative staff of Small and Medium Size enterprises (SMEs), in all industries across BC and potentially in Canada.