



# Business and Ethical Leadership for Sustainability

## Online Course





# Course Description

This course will equip participants with the knowledge and skills necessary to take business ethics and sustainability practices to higher levels by using the Earth Charter (EC) as a framework. This course helps participants develop a broad approach to sustainability and make the EC Principles actionable within business contexts.

By introducing business stakeholders to ethics and sustainability theory and practices, the course intends to help participants be prepared to develop sustainable and inclusive business in an era of uncertainty and disruption. This course offers a space to learn about the nexus between the Sustainable Development Goals, the Earth Charter, and business sustainability.

This experience seeks to build a pool of experts and consultants with a systemic and ethical approach to business ethics and sustainability, capable of providing quality support and guidance to businesses that seek to incorporate ethics and sustainability into their development and planning process. It will be an opportunity to enhance the participant's ethical leadership skills.



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this course, learners will:

- Develop knowledge and deepen understanding of the business role and responsibility in sustainable development through the lenses of Earth Charter and related documents.
- Read and assess business scenario(s) based on various frameworks and worldviews and define decision-making criteria coherent to this vision.
- Use the Earth Charter as a tool to make ethical and sustainable decisions in the business development and planning processes.
- Reflect upon diverse scenarios of ethical and unethical leadership.



The Earth Charter Business Course is designed for business owners and managers at every level of business, as well as consultants, academics, and regulators within business and industry, who are interested in:

- Taking a bold step in bringing a broad vision of ethics and sustainability to their business or industry.
- Expanding their knowledge and skills to implement ethical and sustainable business practices with a comprehensive approach.
- Learning and applying the Earth Charter in their local contexts and daily work.
- Turning theories and best practices of ethical and sustainable business into actionable strategies.

# Participants Profile



# Course Format & Planning

The Earth Charter Business Course is an online, facilitated course.

Participants are introduced to the content through sessions that include videos, articles, live webinars, and discussion forums. In each session, participants are expected to actively participate in dialogue forums to share perspectives and opinions on the session's topic and to complete assignments.

At the end of the course, participants will submit a written report and a 5-minute video summary of their final project. This course will allow interaction between participants, encouraging them to build connections and collaborate with each other.





# Themes

The ethical challenges business leaders face in the 21st century  
The role and responsibility of business in social and environmental justice.

The vision of sustainability articulated in the Earth Charter and its relevance to Business.

Ethics and the Sustainable Development Goals (with a special focus on Goals 8: Decent work and economic growth, and 12: Responsible consumption and production).

Assessing ethical sustainability performance of business and industry



# Sessions

Session 1: Business, Leadership and Ethical Decision-Making  
Introductory live webinar

Session 2: Why should business care for the well-being of people and planet?

Session 3: The Earth Charter Sustainability vision and its practical application in business  
Course reflection webinar

Session 4: Assessment and analysis of business ethics and sustainability

Session 5: Ethical worldviews, benchmarks, and approaches

Session 6: Summary and practical exercise  
Course reflection webinar

Session 7: Work on final project

Session 8: Submit final project report and present report summary in a live webinar  
Final webinar



# Facilitator



## **Dr. Chris Beehner**

Dr. Chris Beehner is a business professor at Seminole State College of Florida, and has developed and taught courses for several colleges and universities. Prior to joining academia, Dr. Beehner was employed in the supply chain management industry, and he has also held nonprofit leadership roles. He has published, presented, and served as a panelist on workplace spirituality, sustainable business, and leadership topics. He is a community fellow at the University of Central Florida Center for Global Economic and Environmental Opportunity, where he collaborates with representatives from academia, industry, government, and nonprofits to discover the sustainable solutions necessary to attain the Sustainable Development Goals.



# Institution



**UNESCO Chair**

This course was developed under the framework of the UNESCO Chair on Education for Sustainable Development with the Earth Charter, coordinated by the Earth Charter Center for Education. The Chair is a collaborative effort between UNESCO, Earth Charter International, and the University for Peace to develop educational programmes and research activities related to education, sustainability, and ethics using the Earth Charter as a fundamental reference.

The Earth Charter Center for Education for Sustainable Development, established by Earth Charter International, has a mission to “promote the transition to sustainable ways of living and a global society founded on a shared ethical framework that includes respect and care of the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, economic justice, democracy, and a culture of peace,” with a special focus on education.

The Center offers a variety of executive and educational programmes in leadership for sustainable development, for policy makers, education professionals, youth, and the general public. Research projects are specially developed in partnerships with institutions of national and global relevance.



**Earth Charter Center for Education  
for Sustainable Development**