



# 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, business sustainability and its relationship with ESG (Environment, Social and Governance).

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:

- Understand the history, purpose, and significance of the Earth Charter.
- Develop knowledge and deepen understanding of the business role and responsibility in sustainable development through the lenses of Earth Charter and related documents.
- See the relationship between the SDGs, ESG and the Earth Charter.
- 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.

# Participants Profile

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.

# 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 and ESG (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

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

Session 4: Assessment and analysis of business ethics and sustainability  
[the Earth Charter, the SDGs and ESG

Session 5: Ethical worldviews, benchmarks, and approaches

Session 6: Summary and practical exercise

# 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



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**