pearl
Promoting ESG Awareness
+ Risk Literacy in SMEs

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2nd edition of the PEARL Project Newsletter!

In this issue, we would like to reiterate why the ESG issues addressed by our project are so important, what we have already achieved, and what still lies ahead.

WHAT'S INSIDE...

www.esgforenterprise.eu

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WHY SHOULD YOU CARE ABOUT ESG?

You might be wondering whether ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) really applies to your business. The answer is simple: yes! Implementing better business practices is not just about following trends – it can bring real, tangible benefits to your company.

Here's why ESG matters:

01

Reducing energy consumption, minimising waste, and optimising resource use can significantly lower operational costs. Small changes, such as switching to energy-efficient lighting or reducing paper usage, can add up to substantial savings over time.

02

Greater customer loyalty – Consumers are becoming more conscious of sustainability, and many prefer to support businesses that care about their environmental and social impact. A company that actively promotes ethical and sustainable practices can attract a loyal customer base and strengthen its brand reputation.

03

Better funding and partnership opportunities – Many investors, banks, and large corporations prioritise working with companies that adhere to ESG principles. By integrating sustainable practices, your business can improve its chances of securing funding, grants, or contracts with larger enterprises that require their partners to meet certain ESG criteria.

04

Stronger market reputation – Companies that demonstrate commitment to sustainability and ethical business conduct stand out in the marketplace. A good ESG strategy can enhance your credibility, attract top talent, and differentiate your business from competitors.

The best part? You don't need to implement drastic changes overnight. Even small, incremental steps in the right direction can make a big difference. Whether it's reducing waste, improving workplace diversity, or being more transparent with your stakeholders, every effort contributes towards building a more responsible and resilient business.

OUR GOALS DEVELOPMENT

01 ESG Knowledge Framework

A comprehensive guide designed to provide vocational education and training teachers with the necessary knowledge, guidance, and tips for implementing sustainable development practices.

02 Modular Teaching Materials (Toolbox)

Flexible and engaging resources tailored to the needs of vocational education and training programmes.

03 ESG Risk Assessment App

An innovative tool that helps small and medium-sized enterprises identify and manage environmental and social risks.

04 Interactive knowledge hub

A platform for sharing knowledge, resources, and best practices.

After completing the Competence Framework and Curriculum, which were designed to equip SMEs and VET providers with the tools and knowledge necessary for ESG literacy, project partners focused their attention on preparing further training resources, a toolbox, real-life case studies, VET packages, and the ESG Risk Assessment Application.

All these practical resources will be tested with stakeholders to support companies in understanding and implementing ESG principles effectively in their operations.

RECENT PEARL PARTNER MEETINGS

Partner meetings are an important part of a project because they help to keep the project on track, improve communication, and prevent risks. Therefore, there have been a number of online monthly partner meetings as well as some face-to-face gatherings.

The most recent face-to-face meeting in Augsburg, Germany, took place in April 2026 and commenced with an overview of PEARL processes and an update on the current status of the project. The importance of continuous monthly meetings was emphasised to track progress efficiently.

Work Packages

As in previous meetings, the focus shifted to the different Work Packages (WPs) of the PEARL project:

→ **WP2: Development of an ESG competence framework and curriculum for SMEs and VET providers.**

The PEARL Knowledge Framework and Curriculum have been finalised, with all key performance indicators (KPIs) achieved. An update was provided on activities related to the dissemination of research results.

→ **WP3: Creation of training resources and a toolbox for vocational education and training.**

The training modules, lesson plans, case studies, and train-the-trainer methodologies are currently being converted into an interactive digital format, allowing for the integration of all the content. The toolkit of 21 tools will be integrated into the training modules and tested with stakeholders, both internally and externally.

→ **WP4: Presentation of the ESG Risk Assessment Application to evaluate SME ESG performance**

The beta version of the app has been developed and currently includes approximately 175 questions structured across different ESG-related risk categories. The tool will provide maturity-level feedback rather than a single ESG score.

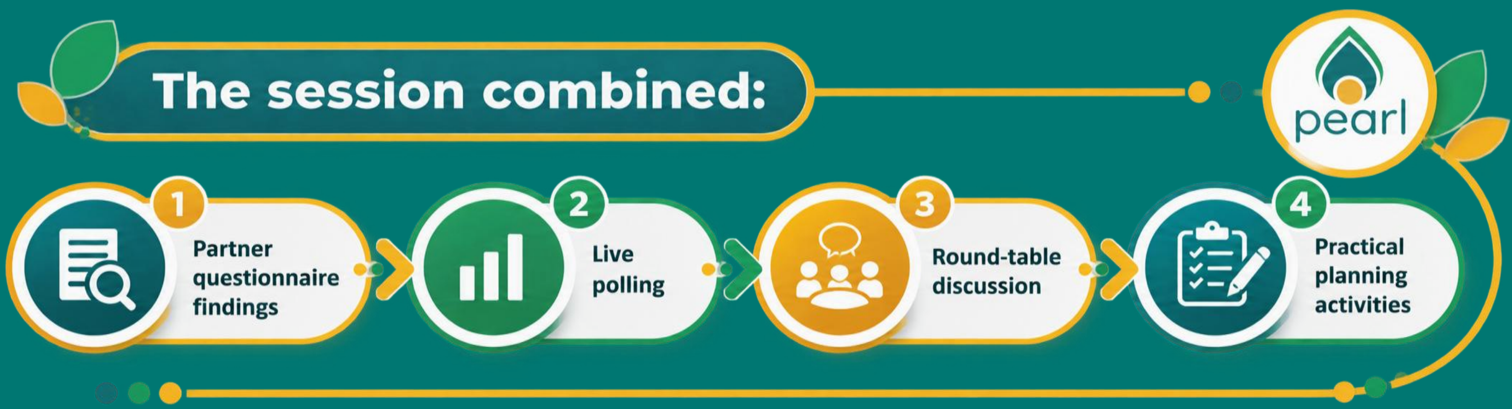
→ **WP5: Strategies for communication, dissemination, and exploitation to ensure long-term project impact.**

This is an important part of every project lifecycle. Therefore, all partners are obliged to promote project outcomes via their communication channels.

Sustainability & Exploitation Workshop

In June 2026, EUEI facilitated a dedicated Sustainability and Exploitation Workshop as part of PEARL's work to plan for the future of its results. The workshop brought partners together to reflect on what has been developed, consider where PEARL can create continued value, and explore realistic ways to support the use and visibility of its results beyond the funded project period.

The session encouraged an open and practical conversation about what should continue, who can help carry it forward, and how PEARL's resources can remain relevant over time.



Key Learnings

Keep the focus on practical value

PEARL's long-term relevance will depend on how well its resources respond to real needs, particularly those of SMEs and educators.

Think of the results as a whole

The project's outputs are most valuable when connected, shared and used together rather than as individual deliverables.

People and networks matter

Partners, educators, business support organisations and wider networks can help PEARL reach new audiences and remain visible.

Plan for what comes next

Sustainability goes beyond completing project deliverables. The workshop encouraged partners to identify realistic opportunities to continue sharing and using PEARL's results.

A shared commitment to PEARL's future

The workshop highlighted the importance of the PEARL partnership in supporting the project's longer-term visibility and relevance. Each partner brings different experience, expertise and networks, providing a strong foundation for keeping the ESG conversation going beyond the project lifetime.

Commitments and ideas from the workshop will feed into the PEARL Exploitation Strategy, helping translate discussion into practical opportunities for continued use, dissemination and engagement. By planning early, sharing learning and keeping resources accessible, the partnership can help PEARL's results reach those who can benefit from them beyond the project.

LEARN MORE

Green Finance Just Got Personal: How Sustainability-Linked Loans Are Reshaping SME Borrowing
Read more: https://esgforenterprise.eu/green-finance-just-got-personal-how-sustainability-linked-loans-are-reshaping-sme-borrowing/

From the Workshop Floor to the Wind Farm: How Europe's VET Colleges Are Rewiring the Green Economy
Read more: https://esgforenterprise.eu/from-the-workshop-floor-to-the-wind-farm-how-europes-vet-colleges-are-rewiring-the-green-economy/

Mapping What Matters: A Practical Guide to ESG Risk Assessment for Time-Poor SMEs
Read more: https://esgforenterprise.eu/mapping-what-matters-a-practical-guide-to-esg-risk-assessment-for-time-poor-smes/

The "S" in ESG: Why People Strategy Is Suddenly a Boardroom Issue
Read more: https://esgforenterprise.eu/the-s-in-esg-why-people-strategy-is-suddenly-a-boardroom-issue/

The Great ESG Reset: What the EU's Omnibus Package Really Means for Your Small Business
Read more: https://esgforenterprise.eu/the-great-esg-reset-what-the-eus-omnibus-package-really-means-for-your-small-business/

Eager for more?

Please visit our website for more news and updates:
https://esgforenterprise.eu/news/

What's Next? How Can You Get Involved?

We want PEARL to be a project created together with entrepreneurs. That's why we invite you to:

- ✓ Follow our updates and find out about the new materials we've prepared.
- ✓ Participate in free training sessions and workshops
- ✓ Share your story – maybe your company is already implementing ESG principles?

If you have any questions or would like to learn more, visit: esgforenterprise.eu

Thank you for being with us! Together, we can make businesses more sustainable and future-ready.

The PEARL Team

pearl

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Follow Our Journey

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