

Become a Competitive Startup Manager in Green Businesses

AN ENTREPRENEURSHIP SPECIALISATION PROGRAMME

The specialisation programme 'Become a Competitive Startup Manager in Green Businesses' is designed to help foster the expertise and strategic mindset needed to become a leader in the emerging sustainable business sector. This academic curriculum integrates fundamental sustainability concepts with advanced business strategies to equip participants with the knowledge they need to lead and innovate in green businesses.

The programme begins with a fundamental understanding of sustainable development, social and green business, sustainable finance, and sustainable behaviour. Building on this, the curriculum addresses practical applications such as sustainable consumption, circular business models, green marketing and the integration of sustainability into core business strategies.

This comprehensive approach ensures a thorough understanding of both the theoretical foundations and practical applications of sustainability in business.

TARGET AUDIENCE



The programme is tailored for current and aspiring entrepreneurs, founders, business managers, and professionals who aim to spearhead sustainability initiatives within startup environments or incorporate sustainable practices into existing businesses. It suits individuals motivated to drive change towards environmentally and socially responsible business models. Participants are expected to have a basic understanding of business principles, as the program builds on this to develop specific knowledge in sustainable business management.



DURATION

The program is designed to be completed in 6 months.



PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES

- Equip participants with a solid understanding of sustainability principles and their application in a business context.
- Develop skills in the design and implementation of circular and sustainable business models.
- Foster skills in strategic decision-making and leadership of sustainability-focused business initiatives.
- Improve participants' ability to engage with stakeholders and form partnerships to promote sustainability.
- Prepare leaders who can effectively integrate sustainability into business strategies and operations to achieve competitive advantage.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of the program, participants will:

- Possess a deep understanding of sustainable development principles and their application within the business context.
- Be able to design and implement sustainable and circular business models effectively.
- Have developed strong leadership and strategic management skills focused on sustainability.
- Be capable of fostering collaborations and partnerships essential for promoting sustainable practices.
- Be prepared to drive sustainable innovation within startups and existing businesses.



PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The programme is structured into two phases:

- Prerequisite courses and
- Mandatory (specialisation) courses.

The foundational phase includes courses introducing participants to sustainable development, social and green economies, sustainable finance, and sustainable behaviour. The specialisation phase comprises advanced courses focused on specific strategies and business models in sustainability, including sustainable consumption and production, circular economy principles, green marketing, and leadership in sustainability.

This structure enables step-by-step training from basic concepts to advanced applications.

No.	Prerequisite Courses	Level
1	Introduction to Sustainable Development	Beginner
2	Introduction to Social Economy	Beginner
3	Introduction to Green Economy	Beginner
4	Introduction to Sustainable Finance	Beginner
5	Green up Our (Work) Life: an Introduction to Sustainable Behaviour	Beginner
6	Unlock Your Potential as a Sustainability Leader	Intermediate



PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

No.	Mandatory Courses	Level
1	SDGs and My Company	Intermediate
2	Sustainable Consumption and Production	Intermediate
3	Connecting the Dots for Circular Ecosystems: Collaboration, Networking and Partnerships	Intermediate
4	Green Marketing	Intermediate
5	Circular Business Strategies and Innovation	Advanced

Choose at least one out of these three courses:

No.	Elective Courses	Level
1	Integrating Sustainability into the Strategy and Business Model	Intermediate
2	Green and Social Entrepreneurship Business Modelling	Advanced
3	Circular Business Models: Steps from Linear to Circular	Intermediate



APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS

GLOBAL MARKET EXPANSION FOR AUSTRIA'S SOLAR ROOF TILES: IDENTIFYING FUTURE MARKETS AND CRAFTING STRATEGIC ENTRY PLANS

- **Importance of the Topic**

As the world faces increasing pressure to combat climate change, renewable energy solutions are gaining momentum. One such solution is Austria's innovative solar roof tiles—an integration of traditional roofing materials with solar photovoltaic technology. These tiles offer homeowners and businesses the aesthetic appeal of conventional roofing while harnessing solar energy to power buildings, making them ideal for green construction projects. Currently, the product is only available in Austria, but the growing demand for renewable energy across the globe presents significant opportunities for expansion.

The integration of solar technology into building materials not only meets energy needs but also aligns with global sustainability goals. Expanding the distribution of solar roof tiles into new international markets requires strategic planning, market research, and a deep understanding of global business environments. This research aims to facilitate that process by identifying promising markets and crafting a robust market entry strategy.

- **Research Subject**

This research explores the potential for expanding Austria's solar roof tiles into international markets. The study seeks to identify regions that are likely to adopt this product based on their regulatory frameworks for renewable energy, market demand for sustainable building materials, and ease of doing business. The research also develops a comprehensive market entry strategy that will enable Austrian manufacturers to successfully introduce solar roof tiles into these markets, ensuring scalability and competitiveness.

- **Research Objectives**

1. Market Identification: To identify international markets with high potential for solar roof tiles by analysing key factors;
2. Business Environment Analysis: To assess the regulatory frameworks, trade policies, and market conditions in target regions;
3. Market Entry Strategy Development: To design a market entry strategy.



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- **Main Hypothesis**
- The introduction of Austria's solar roof tiles into international markets, particularly those with strong renewable energy policies and growing demand for sustainable construction materials, will significantly enhance the product's market penetration and competitiveness, driven by a global shift towards green infrastructure.
- **Special Hypothesis**
 - **Market Demand Hypothesis:** Markets with growing demand for energy-efficient building solutions and government-backed incentives for renewable energy adoption will be the most receptive to solar roof tiles. In these markets, customers' preference for sustainable, aesthetically pleasing roofing solutions will drive sales.
 - **Regulatory and Policy Hypothesis:** Countries with supportive regulatory frameworks for renewable energy technologies, including import incentives and tax reductions for solar installations, will offer the most favorable conditions for market entry. These regulatory supports will reduce the costs associated with market entry, making them prime targets for expansion.
 - **Partnership Hypothesis:** Collaborating with local distributors and construction firms specializing in sustainable building practices will accelerate market penetration. Partnerships will allow for faster adaptation to local market conditions and ensure compliance with regional building codes and environmental standards.
 - **Pricing Hypothesis:** Competitive pricing combined with government subsidies and incentives will be a key determinant of success in international markets. Customers will choose solar roof tiles over traditional solar panels due to their dual functionality as both an energy generator and aesthetic roof solution if offered at a comparable price.



APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS

GLOBAL MARKET EXPANSION FOR AUSTRIA'S SOLAR ROOF TILES: IDENTIFYING FUTURE MARKETS AND CRAFTING STRATEGIC ENTRY PLANS

- **Expected Scientific Contribution**

The research will provide valuable insights into the internationalization of eco-friendly products, particularly in the green construction sector. It will contribute to the understanding of how to navigate complex regulatory environments and market dynamics when expanding sustainable technologies globally. Additionally, it will offer practical strategies for scaling green products across borders, helping to advance both academic knowledge and business practices in renewable energy and sustainable entrepreneurship.

- **Application of the Research Results**

The results of this research will be of practical importance to Austrian manufacturers of solar roof tiles and other green building technologies. By identifying promising international markets and providing a detailed market entry strategy, the research will help businesses navigate regulatory, logistical, and competitive challenges in new regions. Moreover, policymakers and trade organisations can use the findings to support the export of green technologies, helping Austria play a more significant role in the global renewable energy market.

Specific applications of the research include:

- **Manufacturers:** The research will offer a roadmap for entering new markets, providing guidance on regulatory requirements, distribution channels, and localized marketing strategies.
- **Policymakers:** Insights into the regulatory barriers and opportunities will help inform policy decisions that support green exports and foster international collaboration.
- **Trade Organisations:** The research will highlight target regions where trade incentives and partnerships can be developed to support the export of sustainable Austrian products.

- **Keywords**

Solar Roof Tiles, Market Expansion, Renewable Energy, Sustainable Construction, International Business, Market Entry Strategy, Green Technology, Business Environment Analysis.



APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS

EXCLUSIVE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FOR LUXURY FASHION: COMBINING SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL IMPACT

- **Importance of the Topic**

The selling of second-hand luxury textiles through an exclusive social enterprise model addresses several critical issues at the intersection of sustainability, social responsibility, and luxury fashion. In a world where environmental concerns are increasingly pressing, the fashion industry—particularly luxury fashion—has been called upon to reduce its significant environmental footprint. By extending the lifecycle of luxury garments, the second-hand market offers a sustainable alternative to fast fashion, reducing textile waste and promoting the reuse of high-quality materials. This model not only responds to consumer demand for more environmentally conscious products but also taps into the growing desire for unique, high-end items with a story. Moreover, by operating as a social enterprise, this business model contributes to a broader societal goal beyond profit, directing all proceeds toward charitable causes. This reinforces the importance of integrating social impact into business practices, especially within the luxury sector, where affluent suppliers and customers are often motivated by more than just financial gain. The exclusivity and personalized nature of this business—where sellers and buyers can interact in intimate, offline settings—also challenges the growing dominance of impersonal, mass-market e-commerce platforms. It offers a counterbalance to the fast-paced digital shopping experience by creating rare, meaningful moments of connection, which is increasingly valued in the luxury market. In this context, the research explores innovative ways to merge luxury, sustainability, and social impact, making it highly relevant in today's evolving fashion and business landscapes.

- **Research Subject**

This study explores how a social enterprise in Europe can develop a highly exclusive, offline luxury second-hand market. The model will involve both sellers and buyers in personal, intimate events where pre-owned luxury garments are sold, with all profits going to charitable causes.

- **Research Objectives**

1. **Supplier Strategy (Attracting Affluent Sellers):** To develop a strategy for attracting high-net-worth individuals who wish to sell their second-hand luxury textiles through a prestigious, socially responsible outlet.
2. **Marketing Strategy (Online and Offline):** To develop a marketing plan that keeps the business's exclusive and charitable nature front and center, without diluting the brand image.



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3. Business Model Development (Social Enterprise): To design a business model
4. Distribution Channels (Offline Only): To develop an offline-only distribution strategy focused on hosting exclusive events where the buying and selling of luxury textiles take place.

- **Main Hypothesis**

Creating an exclusive, socially responsible market for second-hand luxury textiles that benefits suppliers, customers, and charitable causes. This hypothesis proposes that by combining exclusivity, personal interaction, and social responsibility, the social enterprise will create a successful and sustainable business model. The suppliers (affluent individuals), customers (elite buyers), and the wider community (charitable beneficiaries) all stand to gain from this win-win approach.

- **Special Hypothesis**

- Supplier Incentive Hypothesis: Wealthy individuals will be more inclined to participate in the enterprise if they know the proceeds are directed to reputable charitable causes, and if they can experience personal recognition at the exclusive events.
- Exclusivity & Scarcity Hypothesis: Customers will place a higher value on luxury second-hand textiles sold at exclusive, rare events, especially when these garments are presented in a high-end, personalized setting where they can interact directly with sellers.
- Social Impact Hypothesis: The social enterprise model, which channels all profits into a charitable cause, will not only drive customer and supplier participation but also create a positive public image for the company, increasing its reach within the luxury market.
- Offline-Only Distribution Hypothesis: The use of offline-only, exclusive, invitation-only events (as opposed to online platforms) will significantly enhance the business's reputation for luxury, privacy, and exclusivity, attracting both affluent suppliers and customers who value personalized experiences.



APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS

EXCLUSIVE SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FOR LUXURY FASHION: COMBINING SUSTAINABILITY AND SOCIAL IMPACT

- **Expected Scientific Contribution**

This research will contribute new insights into how social enterprises can operate successfully within the luxury fashion market by creating a highly exclusive, offline business model. The project will explore: Innovative ways to balance luxury, exclusivity, and social responsibility in the second-hand market. New models of personal interaction between buyers and sellers in a world increasingly dominated by online shopping. How profits directed toward charitable causes can enhance brand reputation and customer loyalty, particularly in high-end markets. This research will provide a template for other luxury social enterprises and challenge conventional approaches in both the vintage clothing market and the luxury retail sector.

- **Application of the Research Results**

- Social Enterprises: This research will offer a framework for luxury social enterprises seeking to balance exclusivity, sustainability, and social good. It will be particularly valuable for startups looking to enter the second-hand luxury market with a unique approach.
- Affluent Individuals (Suppliers): High-net-worth individuals will gain insights into how they can responsibly dispose of their luxury garments, contribute to charitable causes, and participate in exclusive, socially driven events.
- Luxury Customers: Customers will benefit from understanding the value of attending exclusive, high-end events where they can purchase unique luxury items and support charitable endeavors simultaneously.
- Charitable Organisations: The research will demonstrate how partnerships with luxury social enterprises can provide significant financial support for causes such as environmental sustainability, women's rights, or other social issues.
- Fashion Industry Stakeholders: This project will help brands and retailers understand how to create offline, personalized experiences that set them apart from online competitors while promoting social responsibility and sustainability.

- **Keywords**

Second-Hand Luxury Textiles; Social Enterprise; Circular Fashion Economy; Exclusive Fashion Events; Sustainable Luxury; Offline Distribution Channels; Charity and Social Responsibility; Customer-Seller Personal Engagement.



APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS

SUBCONTRACTING RISK MANAGEMENT - THE CASE OF THE PORTUGUESE MOULDS AND PLASTICS INDUSTRY

- **Importance of the Topic**

This study explores the implications of Subcontracting Risk Management within the Portuguese Moulds and Plastics industry. The industry, highly significant in the national setting, faces challenges in implementing Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) due to the competitiveness between Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and larger corporations, insufficient risk management reporting, and pressures from power dynamics.

- **Research Subject**

The research covers the considerable demands made on SMEs in the context of subcontracting processes by large companies and the difficulties that follow. The study highlights how important ERM is to mitigate risks and improving organisational performance, particularly in the areas of knowledge management, regulatory compliance, quality assurance, power dynamics, negotiation, and intellectual capital management.

- **Research Objectives**

- To identify and analyse the main risks encountered by subcontracted SMEs in the Moulds and Plastics industry.
- To identify and describe the risk mitigation strategies employed by subcontracted SMEs in the Moulds and Plastics industry.

- **Main Hypothesis**

Implementing effective subcontracting risk management strategies in SMEs within the Portuguese Moulds and Plastics industry will significantly reduce risks related to power dynamics, quality assurance, and regulatory compliance, thereby improving overall business performance.

- **Special Hypothesis**

- SMEs that adopt comprehensive Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) practices in subcontracting will experience fewer disruptions related to power dynamics and negotiation challenges with larger corporations.
- Effective risk management strategies in subcontracting will enhance regulatory compliance and quality assurance, leading to improved organizational performance and competitiveness.
- Proper management of subcontracting risks will strengthen SMEs' intellectual capital, enabling better knowledge management and resilience in the face of industry challenges.



APPLIED RESEARCH PROJECTS

SUBCONTRACTING RISK MANAGEMENT - THE CASE OF THE PORTUGUESE MOULDS AND PLASTICS INDUSTRY

- **Expected Scientific Contribution**

The present research project aims to contribute to the knowledge about subcontracting risk management within the Moulds and Plastics industry, specifically in SMEs by providing empirical insights through the interviews conducted. The perceptions of the participants, who are in leadership management roles within the industry serve as guidance on how to mitigate the existing risks. It will offer a detailed understanding of subcontracting risk management within the context of SMEs in the Portuguese Moulds and Plastics industry. By providing empirical data from industry leaders, the study will fill a gap in existing literature concerning the unique risks faced by SMEs in subcontracting relationships with larger companies. The project will also contribute to the development of practical frameworks for improving risk management practices, enhancing both academic discourse and the practical application of ERM in high-risk industries.

- **Application of the Research Results**

By identifying the risks in the sector, this project will provide support to companies, through training and/or consultancy, in developing strategies that will help minimise the negative impacts of these risks. In addition, it may influence public policies to support these companies.

The findings of this study will be highly valuable for SMEs in the Moulds and Plastics industry, offering practical strategies to mitigate subcontracting risks, particularly in areas like power dynamics, quality control, and compliance. The research will guide these companies in developing risk mitigation plans that can be implemented through targeted training programs and consultancy services. Additionally, the results can inform policymakers and industry associations, influencing the development of public policies aimed at supporting SMEs in managing subcontracting risks. These insights could also be applied across other industries where SMEs face similar subcontracting challenges, enhancing broader economic resilience and sustainability.

- **Keywords**

Enterprise Risk Management, Subcontracting, Moulds and Plastics Industry, Risk Mitigation, Business Ethics, Power Interactions.