Sustainable finance and ESG investing

- short, credit bearing course -

General information

Number of ECTS: 2

Language: English

Modality: Online

Proposed period: Summer Semester 2027 (10-11 and 19 May 2027)

Duration: 3 days online sessions (lectures and final test)

Target groups: undergraduate and master students

Number of Participants: 40

Prerequisites: none

Lecturers: **PhD Jelena Demko-Rihter, full professor, Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad**

Regina Bodo, assistant lecturer, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, University of Szeged

Course Objective

The increasing interests of different stakeholders regarding sustainable finance and ESG (environmental, social and governance) investing is omnipresent trend in recent years. In addition to increasing pressure of regulators, voluntary ESG reporting initiatives and climate-related disclosure have become more present in the global business environment.
The rising number of companies, stock exchanges, financial intermediaries, institutional investors, NGOs', and public authorities require disclosure of ESG performances in addition to financial performances within investment and finance analysis.

The main objective of this course is to introduce the basic theoretical and practical knowledge and tools in the field of sustainable finance and ESG investing.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the core concepts underpinning sustainable finance and ESG investing;
- Identify and evaluate the mandatory and voluntary regulatory frameworks governing ESG and sustainability reporting;
- Critically assess the limitations of existing ESG measurement and rating systems;
- Apply analytical tools to interpret corporate climate-related disclosures in support of informed investment decision-making.

Course content

- Introduction to investments; relationship between risk and return; the concept of diversification.
- Introduction to sustainable finance. The role of policy, regulation, and market incentives in shaping sustainable finance
- ESG dimensions and ESG investing.
- European taxonomy: content and practices.
- Impact investing vs. ESG investing.
- Mandatory and voluntary environment for ESG and sustainability reporting.
- EFRAG Voluntary sustainability reporting standards for non-listed SMEs (VSME)
- Ethical considerations and critiques of ESG investing.

Teaching Methods

Students will be introduced to foundational concepts through visual presentations, stimulating discussions, and case study analysis. The continuous presence and interaction of lecturers during the course will enhance the learning experience and create an environment open to discussions.

Teaching methods

- Lectures
- Case study analysis
- Debate

Reading list:

Schoenmaker, D. & Schramade, W. (2019). Principles of Sustainable Finance, Oxford University Press.
IFC (2021). The ESG Guide book.
EFRAG: European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS)
GRI Standards
Roncialli, T. (2025). Handbook of Sustainable Finance.

Course design and Assessment Criteria for Students:

Course consists of Theoretical Parts, Active Participation, and Online Test.

1. **Theoretical Parts and Active Participation (70% of the total grade):** The theoretical parts are delivered through lectures. The discussion parts are delivered through the debate. Students are expected to actively engage during lectures, case study analysis and debate.
2. **Online Test (30% of the total grade):** At the end of course, students will fulfill an online test designed to assess their knowledge regarding key concepts and methodologies taught.

Grades Marking scale: Pass, Fail.

Pass. A result that satisfies the requirements of online test and active participation in lectures and online debate.

Fail. An inadequate result with regard to results of online test and active participation.