Sustainability Governance Practices for Boards Course

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Rome (Italy)

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Sustainability governance practices for boards and executives are the structures, duties and routines through which a governing body directs and oversees how an organisation manages its environmental, social and governance ESG risks and impacts. This one-week course is for board members, executive directors and senior managers who report to them, and its final deliverable is a board sustainability oversight charter with an ESG dashboard outline.

Introduction

Three references frame the course. ISO 37000 sets out principles for the governance of organisations, including purpose, stewardship and accountability. The GRI Standards describe how an organisation reports its impacts on the economy, environment and people. IFRS S1 sets requirements for disclosing sustainability-related financial information to investors. The level is senior practitioner: the focus is what a board decides, delegates and checks, not how operational teams run sustainability projects. Teaching uses case studies from manufacturing, financial services and public services, and a simulated board meeting.

Course Objectives

- Define the oversight duties a board holds for sustainability and separate them from management responsibilities
- Distinguish impact reporting under the GRI Standards from investor-focused disclosure under IFRS S1 and select what each board report needs
- Compare committee structures for sustainability oversight and justify which one fits the organisation's size and risk profile
- Interpret sustainability KPIs, triple bottom line results and social impact assessments presented to the board
- Apply risk management and internal control principles to ESG risks such as supply chain sourcing and resource use
- Justify how stakeholder views, sustainable finance and circular economy options should shape board decisions



Target Audience

- Board members and non-executive directors who must decide which sustainability matters the board reserves for itself
- Executive directors and chief officers who must judge what sustainability information the board receives and how often
- Board and committee secretaries who must choose how sustainability items enter agendas, minutes and annual work plans
- Heads of risk, compliance and internal audit who must assess whether ESG controls give the board reliable assurance
- Senior sustainability and strategy leads reporting to the board who must select the targets and indicators put forward for approval

Course Outline

Day 1: Board Duties and Sustainability Governance Foundations

- Governance vs Management: Separating Board Oversight from Operational Sustainability Delivery
- ISO 37000 Governance Principles: Purpose, Stewardship and Accountability Applied to Sustainability
- Business Case for Sustainability Oversight: Linking ESG to Long-Term Organisational Value
- Ethics in Board Decisions: Weighing Short-Term Results Against Sustainable Development
- Board Sustainability Mandate: Defining Reserved Matters and Delegated Authority to Executives

Day 2: Structures, Committees and ESG Risk Oversight

- Full Board vs Dedicated Sustainability Committee: Choosing Where Oversight Sits
- Board Effectiveness Reviews: Testing Skills, Composition and Information Flows on ESG
- ESG Risk Integration: Placing Climate, Social and Supply Chain Risks in Registers
- Internal Controls and Assurance: Three Lines Roles for Sustainability Data and Claims
- Compliance Oversight: Tracking Changing Sustainability Rules Across Operating Jurisdictions

Day 3: Strategy, Targets and Performance Measurement

- Sustainability Strategy vs Corporate Strategy: Integrating Goals into One Planning Cycle
- Sustainability KPIs for Boards: Selecting Few Indicators That Reveal Real Progress
- Triple Bottom Line Reporting: Reading Profit, People and Planet Results Together
- Social Impact Assessment: How Boards Review Effects on Communities and Workers
- Target Approval Process: Checking Baselines, Ambition and Executive Accountability

Day 4: Disclosure, Stakeholders and Sustainable Finance

- GRI Standards vs IFRS S1: Impact Reporting Compared with Investor Disclosure
- Transparency and Disclosure Controls: Board Sign-Off for Sustainability Statements
- Stakeholder Mapping and Engagement: Hearing Investors, Employees, Communities and Suppliers
- Collaborative Governance and Conflict: Balancing Competing Stakeholder Interests at Board Level
- Sustainable Finance and Ethical Investment: Questions Boards Ask About Capital Allocation



Day 5: Board Sustainability Oversight Practice

- Circular Economy vs Linear Models: Assessing Resource Efficiency Proposals Before Approval
- Digital Tools for Sustainability Data: Reviewing Dashboards and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Metrics
- Simulated Board Meeting: Applying Committee Choices, KPIs and Disclosure Checks to a Case
- ESG Dashboard Outline: Selecting Indicators, Owners and Reporting Frequency for the Board
- Board Sustainability Oversight Charter: Completing Mandate, Committee Terms and Annual Calendar

Skills You Will Gain

- Sustainability Oversight Mandates
- ESG Risk Governance
- Committee Structure Design
- Sustainability KPI Selection
- Impact and Investor Disclosure
- Stakeholder Engagement Planning
- Sustainable Capital Allocation Review
- Board Assurance Mapping

Why Attend This Course

- From sustainability reports noted at the end of board meetings to clear decisions on what the board reserves, delegates and checks
- From long lists of environmental and social data to a short set of indicators that show whether targets are being met
- From signing sustainability statements on trust to asking which controls and assurance stand behind each claim
- From scattered governance habits to a board sustainability oversight charter with an ESG dashboard outline ready for adoption

Conclusion

Sustainability governance is the way a board makes sure that environmental, social and governance matters are decided at the right level, measured honestly and reported with care. The course makes three distinctions clear: board oversight versus management delivery, impact reporting versus investor disclosure, and full-board oversight versus a dedicated committee. It suits directors and senior executives who want five focused days on board practice, rather than a longer course that also covers the technical running of sustainability functions.



Course FAQs

What are sustainability governance practices for boards and executives?

They are the duties, committee arrangements, reporting lines and controls through which a board sets sustainability direction, approves targets, oversees ESG risks and signs off what the organisation discloses, while executives deliver the work.

What is the difference between GRI Standards and IFRS S1 for board sustainability reporting?

GRI Standards cover an organisation's impacts on the economy, environment and people for a wide set of stakeholders. IFRS S1 covers sustainability-related risks and opportunities that affect the organisation's prospects, written mainly for investors and lenders.

Which framework does board sustainability governance training follow?

The course follows ISO 37000 for governance principles and uses the GRI Standards and IFRS S1 when examining what boards approve for disclosure, alongside risk management, internal control and stakeholder engagement practice.

Is sustainability governance training suitable for a newly appointed non-executive director?

Yes. A new non-executive director needs to know which sustainability decisions belong to the board, which questions to ask executives and how to judge KPIs, disclosures and assurance, all of which the sessions address.

What do delegates produce in sustainability governance training for boards?

Delegates produce a board sustainability oversight charter covering the mandate, committee terms and annual calendar, together with an ESG dashboard outline naming the indicators, owners and reporting frequency.

