

DRAFT

Webinar

## ***Pathways to a circular economy: Adapting VET training to market needs***

Co-organized by:

[UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network \(SDSN Association\)](#)  
and [Cleantech Bulgaria](#)

12 June 2025  
14h00 - 15h30 CEST

[Register on Zoom here](#)

### **Context & Purpose**

The transition to a circular economy is a key priority for Europe towards a more competitive, sustainable and resilient future. Under the [European Green Deal](#), the goal is to achieve climate neutrality by 2050, reshaping industries and demanding a workforce equipped with new skills.

Decisions made in Europe also have global implications, impacting global value chains. New EU directives, such as the [Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive \(CSDDD\)](#) and the [Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive \(CSRD\)](#), reinforce the need for companies to integrate sustainability into their operations and supply chains. Businesses worldwide will need to comply with EU standards or seek EU-recognized certifications to maintain market access.

As industries shift towards circular models, Vocational Education and Training (VET) providers play a crucial role in ensuring that workers and businesses are prepared to adopt circular strategies, meet new environmental standards, and drive innovation. However, a significant skills gap persists, [with 70% of companies struggling to find qualified workers for green and digital jobs](#). The challenge is ensuring that VET curricula and certifications remain relevant in a fast-changing regulatory and market landscape.

The construction sector is identified as a key industry to lead this transformation. Currently, it accounts for approximately 50% of the world's natural resource consumption, 40% of unprocessed energy use, 35% of global greenhouse gas emissions, and 30% of global waste. Aligning VET programs with sustainability directives in this sector is critical to reducing environmental impact and ensuring a skilled workforce ready to meet new industry demands.

This webinar will explore how VET programs and certifications can stay relevant in this evolving landscape. The discussion will address:

- How to support greener and more circular global value chains.
- Best practices for integrating circular skills into training programs.
- The role of certifications in aligning workforce skills with industry and policy changes.
- Lessons from the built environment as a case study for industry-VET collaboration.

### Objectives

- Discuss solutions for greener, more circular global value chains in light of EU legislation, including the European Green Deal and sustainability due diligence directives.
- Use the built environment as a case study to explore how industry-VET collaboration can ensure training programs remain up-to-date.
- Discuss how certifications can evolve to reflect market and policy changes, potentially influencing non-EU countries to adopt EU-recognized certifications.

### Expected Outcomes

- **Recommendations:** Strategies for policymakers and VET institutions to future-proof training programs.
- **Guidance for the construction sector:** Best practices and policy recommendations for aligning with EU sustainability goals.

### Who should join?

- **EU Policymakers** – Representatives from European institutions working on skills, sustainability, and industry policies.
- **VET Providers & Educators** – Institutions interested in integrating sustainability skills into curricula.
- **Industry Representatives** – Employers and sectoral organizations seeking to bridge the skills gap.
- **Certification & Accreditation Bodies** – Organizations responsible for validating new qualifications.

### How to participate

We kindly ask that participants interested in joining this webinar to please register in advance on Zoom using this [weblink](#).

## Proposed Agenda (Draft)

14h - 14:05	<b>Welcome</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Professor Patrick Paul Walsh</b>, Vice President of Education &amp; Director of the SDG Academy, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)</li> </ul>
14:05 - 14:30	<b>Keynote: Adopting circular business practices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Mr. Barry Andrews</b>, Member of the European Parliament for Dublin, Chairperson of the Development Committee (DEVE) <i>(TBC)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Overview of EU policy initiatives (e.g. Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD)) shaping sustainable and circular business practices. Views on the importance of updating skills training in VET providers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
14:30 - 15:15	<b>Panel Discussion: Keeping VET &amp; certifications relevant in a circular economy</b> <b>Speakers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Elena Proden</b>, Senior Specialist, Strategic Implementation of the 2030 Agenda Unit, UNITAR <i>(TBC)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Solutions for a more sustainable global value chains</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Maria Nakova</b>, Project Leader, BuildSkills Academy; Head of digital innovation hub in construction sector; Manager of Strategic Development, Cleantech Bulgaria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Shaping the Future of the Construction Sector: Bridging Skills Demand in green and circular transition through EDIHs and CoVEs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Anthi Charalambous</b>, President of Management Board, kykIOIKOdromio (KYK) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Challenges faced by VET providers in integrating circular skills into training programs</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>Dina Padalkina</b>, Founder and City Lead, Circular Berlin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Integrating circular skills into training programs</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Moderator: Professor Patrick Paul Walsh</b>, Vice President of Education &amp; Director of the SDG Academy, UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN)</p>
15:15 - 15:25	<b>Q&amp;A</b>
15:25 - 15:30	<b>Closing Reflections: Next Steps for VET, Policy &amp; Industry</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Moderator:</b> Wrap-up of key takeaways.</li> <li>• <b>Call to action:</b> How stakeholders can collaborate to strengthen circular economy skills and certifications.</li> </ul>

