Create Green

business programme







sustainable by design

Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil Uíbh Fhailí
Offaly Local Development Company

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Introduction

Create Green is a bespoke sustainable business development programme that is specifically tailored to evolve the sustainable value of the creative and cultural, speciality food and social economy enterprises across Offaly.

The programme recognises that sustainability looks different for every business. Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all approach, Create Green helps participants understand where sustainability already exists within their business, identify opportunities for improvement and turn ideas into practical action.

Through a combination of sustainability, financial management, innovation and culture-focused learning, participants develop practical tools and knowledge to strengthen their business, improve resilience and communicate the value they create.

At the heart of Create Green is a simple idea: sustainable business development should be practical, achievable and relevant to the realities of running a small business.

The programme is designed not only to strengthen individual enterprises, but to help build a stronger network of sustainable businesses contributing to the future resilience of Offaly's local economy and communities.

Welcome message



From Aileen Duffy -
Rural Development Team leader at
Offaly Local Development Company

Create Green is a bespoke sustainable business development programme supporting creative, artisan and social economy enterprises across County Offaly. Place-based enterprises are at the heart of our rural communities. They contribute significantly to local economies while helping preserve and celebrate our cultural identity, heritage and traditions.

As the business environment evolves, enterprises face increasing expectations to demonstrate their environmental and social impact. For many small businesses, navigating sustainability reporting, emerging regulations and changing market expectations can be challenging. Yet many are already contributing to sustainable development, often without the resources or expertise to measure, communicate and evidence the value they create.

Create Green has been developed to help businesses meet these challenges. Rooted in community development principles, the programme provides practical tools, knowledge and methodologies to strengthen business resilience, improve sustainability performance and identify future opportunities. Through sustainability, innovation and culture-focused learning, participants will gain the confidence and capability to embed sustainable practices, communicate their impact and respond to emerging opportunities.

At OLDC, we recognise that sustainable enterprise development is essential to building stronger, more resilient rural economies. By investing in the skills, knowledge and capacity of local enterprises, we are also investing in the future of our communities, our environment and the unique places that make Offaly special.



Purpose of the programme

WHAT WE DO

Create Green works with local creative businesses, artisan producers and social enterprises to equip them with the skills, knowledge and tools needed to become more sustainable, resilient and future-ready.

WE KNOW YOUR VALUE

Creative and social enterprises are already part of the sustainability solution. Create Green helps them to measure it, communicate it, strengthen it and turn it into long-term business resilience.

Through a series of core and elective modules, the programme supports businesses to:

- Improve sustainability performance.
- Improve financial resilience.
- Strengthen market position.
- Communicate value.
- Prepare for future reporting requirements.

PROGRAMME JOURNEY

Understand Your Business →
Improve Your Business →
Measure Your Impact →
Communicate Your Value →
Strengthen Your Community Contribution.

Building confidence together

Many participants join the programme feeling unsure about where to start or whether they're already "doing enough". Through group workshops, shared experiences and practical activities, you'll discover that you're not alone.

CONNECTING FOR SUPPORT & LEARNING

As the programme progresses, participants often gain confidence by learning from one another, celebrating successes and exploring solutions together.
Alongside peer learning, you'll receive practical guidance and individual support to help you apply what you learn to your own business.



LEARNING TOGETHER

The in-person sessions provide valuable opportunities to build relationships, exchange ideas and stay motivated throughout your journey.

CONFIDENCE IN YOUR BUSINESS VALUE

By the end of the programme, you'll not only have new knowledge and practical tools - you'll have greater confidence in the value your business creates and in your ability to communicate and build on that impact.

Participants may arrive thinking:
"I want to make my business more sustainable."

But the programme gradually reveals:
"My business is already doing so much more than I realised."

Participants leave the programme with the understanding that their business is an important part of a much larger ecosystem that creates local economic, social, cultural and environmental value."

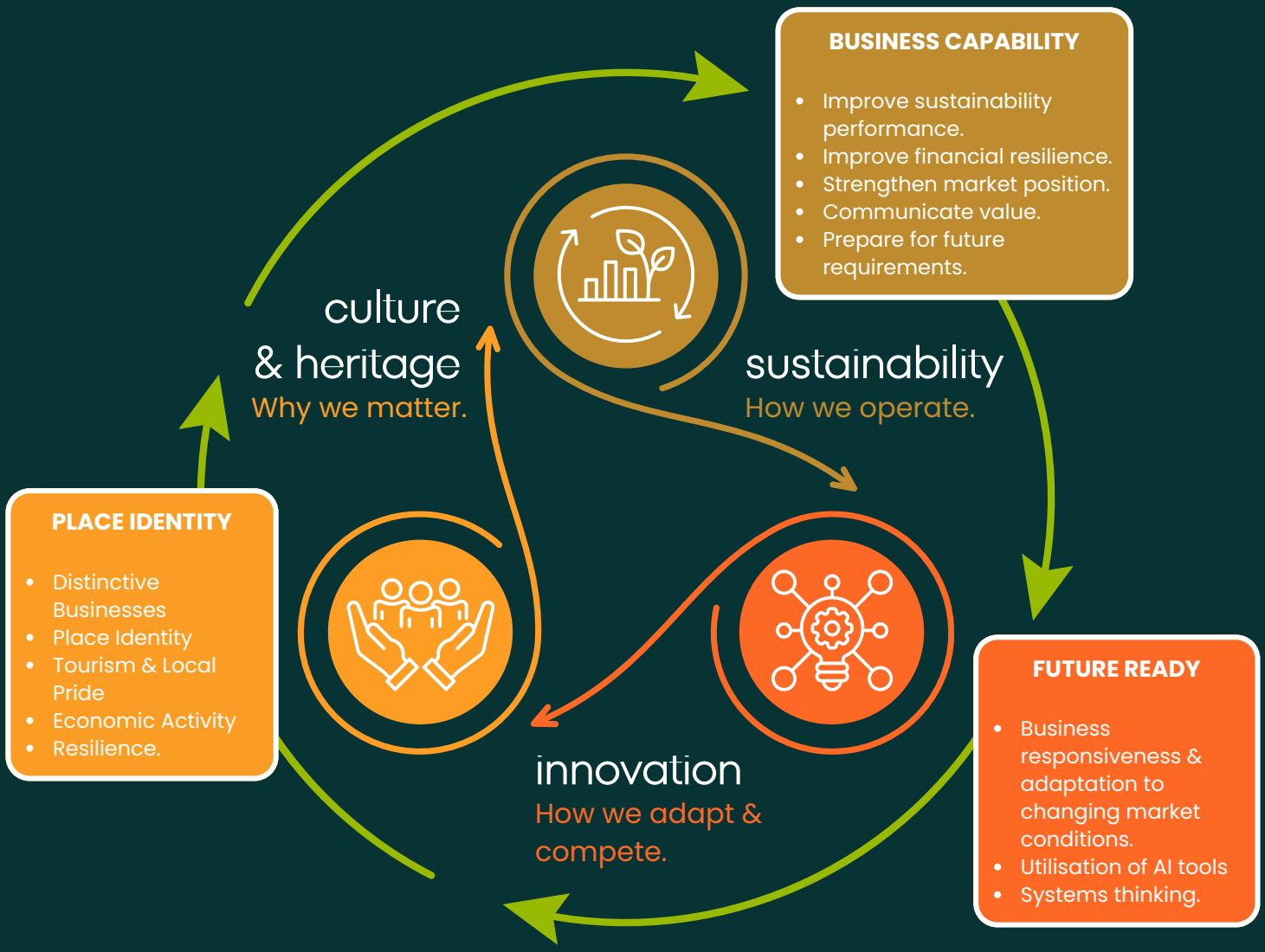


programme details

Programme Pillars → Programme Overview → Learning Objectives → Programme Modules

The programme pillars

The programme is structured through three interconnected programme pillars. As a place-based enterprise development programme we combine sustainability, innovation and cultural heritage to strengthen local businesses, support rural economies and build long term place resilience.



The core programme modules that all participants complete are in the Sustainability pillar.

You can choose to take up to 3 elective modules available under the Innovation & Culture & Heritage pillars during your time on the Create Green programme.

Details of all modules are listed on pages 12 - 19.

Programme overview

The Create Green programme modules are designed to build resilient, profitable and future-ready businesses through integrated learning in sustainability, finance, innovation and cultural value creation. Participants are equipped with practical tools and frameworks to improve business performance, reduce environmental impact, strengthen communication, and demonstrate measurable sustainable value.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The core programme is delivered through the Sustainabilty Pillar. There are 15 sustainability modules that must be completed in order to pass the course & gain digital certification.



ELECTIVE MODULES

The modules under the Innovation and Culture & Heritage pillars are optional and participants can choose to take up to 3 in addition to the core programme.

SUSTAINABILITY 1

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICE.

Supports businesses to assess current operations and embed sustainability into products, services and workflows.

6 Modules & 1 Practical

SUSTAINABILITY 2

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABILITY.

Develops core financial capability including costing, pricing, budgeting and profitability analysis to support long-term viability.

3 Modules & 1 Elective

SUSTAINABILITY 3

SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING & VALUE CREATION.

Enables SMEs to measure, structure & communicate sustainability performance using recognised frameworks such as VSME and the SDGs.

6 Modules

INNOVATION

INNOVATION FOR VISIBILITY & GROWTH.

Builds practical digital skills in social media, AI, SEO and design to improve visibility, marketing effectiveness & customer engagement.

4 Elective Modules

CULTURE & HERITAGE

CULTURE, HERITAGE & PLACE-BASED VALUE.

Recognises the role of creative, cultural and community enterprises in driving regional resilience, tourism value & community wealth building.

4 Elective Modules

Learning objectives

There are 8 Create Green programme learning objectives. These objectives describe the goals of programme and outline what participants can expect to learn and achieve by the end of the programme.

01

EMBED SUSTAINABILITY INTO EVERYDAY BUSINESS PRACTICE.

Support participants to integrate sustainability into core business decision-making, operations, product & service development, ensuring sustainability becomes practical, achievable and commercially relevant.

02

STRENGTHEN LONG-TERM BUSINESS RESILIENCE & FUTURE - PROOFING.

Enable businesses to identify risks, opportunities & efficiencies related to environmental, social and economic change, helping them adapt to emerging market expectations, reporting requirements & resource challenges.

03

SUPPORT CIRCULAR, LOW-IMPACT & RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS MODELS.

Encourage businesses to adopt circular economy principles, reduce waste, improve resource management and identify meaningful environmental improvements appropriate to their scale and sector.

04

IMPROVE FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY & COMMERCIAL VIABILITY.

Develop participants' understanding of sustainable costing, pricing, financial planning and resource efficiency so that sustainability measures support stronger financial performance and long-term enterprise stability.

05

BUILD CAPACITY IN SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING & IMPACT MEASUREMENT.

Equip participants with the knowledge & tools required to understand & apply sustainability reporting frameworks, including the Voluntary Sustainability Reporting Standard for SMEs (VSME), carbon measurement tools and SDG alignment methodologies.

06

ENHANCE COMMUNICATION OF SUSTAINABILITY & ENTERPRISE VALUE.

Enable participants to clearly communicate their sustainability actions, values and impact through reporting, storytelling and SDG-aligned visual communication that strengthens engagement with customers, funders, partners and communities.

07

STRENGTHEN SOCIAL VALUE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT.

Support businesses to recognise, articulate and strengthen their contribution to social sustainability, including fair work, inclusion, wellbeing, cultural value and community development.

08

TRANSLATE LEARNING INTO PRACTICAL ACTION.

Ensure participants leave the programme with practical tools, measurable baselines, sustainability actions and realistic implementation plans that can be immediately applied within their businesses.



programme modules

Understand Your Business → Improve Your Business → Measure Your Impact → Communicate Your Value → Strengthen Your Community Contribution.

Sustainable Business in Practice.

Discover how sustainability can become a practical driver of business success. This course supports participants in strengthening their products, improving operational efficiency, and making commercially sound, sustainable decisions. Through expert guidance and an on-site business review, participants gain tailored insights, identify meaningful opportunities for improvement, and develop a realistic action plan that enhances both business performance and long-term sustainability.

1 PRODUCT REALITY CHECK.

Participants will:

Understand their current product or service offering and business position.

Evaluate materials, processes, packaging and lifecycle impacts.

Identify sustainability strengths, gaps and improvement opportunities.

Apply programme insights through peer learning and discussion.

Develop a clear baseline for their sustainability journey.

2 SUSTAINABLE PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT.

Participants will:

Understand the principles of sustainable product and service design.

Evaluate practical material, production and sourcing alternatives.

Identify opportunities to improve longevity, efficiency and reduce waste.

Apply lifecycle thinking to product or service development.

Develop an improved or future-ready product or service concept.

3 MAKING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS DECISIONS.

Participants will:

Understand the financial impact of sustainability decisions.

Evaluate the relationship between cost, value and customer perception.

Identify opportunities where sustainability supports profitability.

Apply commercial thinking to product, service and operational decisions.

Develop confidence in making balanced business choices.

ON-SITE BUSINESS REVIEW.

Participants will:

Understand how sustainability opportunities appear within daily operations.

Evaluate processes, workflows and decision-making in a real business setting.

Identify strengths, inefficiencies and practical areas for improvement.

Apply programme learning to real-world business operations.

Develop focused actions tailored to their business environment.

Sustainable Business in Practice.

Continued.

4

SMALL CHANGES, BIG IMPACT

Participants will:

Understand how incremental improvements can drive meaningful change.

Evaluate practical opportunities to improve operations and efficiency.

Identify achievable actions that deliver immediate impact.

Apply learning from across the programme to everyday business activities.

Develop a focused set of actions for implementation.

5

COMMUNICATING YOUR SUSTAINABILITY STORY.

Participants will:

Understand the importance of clear and credible sustainability communication.

Evaluate what customers value and expect from sustainable businesses.

Identify ways to avoid greenwashing and build trust.

Apply effective messaging techniques to their business communications.

Develop an authentic sustainability story and customer-facing statement.

6

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Participants will:

Understand how to prioritise sustainability actions for maximum impact.

Evaluate realistic approaches to planning and implementation.

Identify the most feasible and effective next steps for their business.

Apply programme learning to create a practical roadmap for change.

Develop a structured 90-day sustainability action plan.

At the end of this module series, participants will:

- Understand their current business model and sustainability position.
- Have evaluated product, service and operational impacts across the value chain.
- Identified opportunities for improvement, efficiency and innovation.
- Applied sustainability thinking to real business decisions and practices.
- Developed a practical action plan for sustainable business improvement.

Module Flow: Understand → Improve → Test → Refine → Communicate → Implement.

Financial Management for Sustainable Business.

This module series equips participants with the financial knowledge and practical skills needed to build profitable, resilient and sustainable businesses. Participants will strengthen their understanding of financial management, costing, pricing, forecasting and compliance, enabling them to make informed decisions that support long-term business success.

1 UNDERSTANDING ACCOUNTS & FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

Understand the role of financial management in building a sustainable business.

Evaluate how profitability, cash flow and value creation influence performance.

Identify key indicators of financial health and business resilience.

Apply financial information to support informed decision-making.

Develop confidence in interpreting financial reports and assessing business performance.

2 COSTING, BUDGETING & FINANCIAL PLANNING.

Participants will:

Understand how costs impact profitability and business sustainability.

Evaluate practical approaches to budgeting, costing and financial planning.

Identify opportunities to improve efficiency and resource management.

Apply costing techniques to products, services and business operations.

Develop realistic budgets, sales targets and breakeven insights.

3 PRICING FOR VALUE AND PROFITABILITY.

Participants will:

Understand how pricing influences profitability, growth and sustainability.

Evaluate pricing approaches that balance cost, value and market expectations.

Identify pricing strategies suited to their products, services & customers.

Apply value-based pricing principles to strengthen business performance.

Develop a pricing policy that supports long-term profitability and resilience.

4 TAX & BASIC BOOKKEEPING - ELECTIVE.

Participants will:

Understand the key tax and compliance responsibilities of running a business.

Explore effective approaches to bookkeeping and financial record keeping.

Identify the records, processes and systems needed for compliance.

Apply good financial administration practices to day-to-day operations.

Develop confidence in managing financial records and working with advisors.

Sustainability Reporting & Value Creation.

This course enables participants to measure, understand and communicate the sustainability performance of their business using practical tools aligned to the VSME standard. Participants will explore carbon emissions, circular economy principles, social sustainability and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), culminating in a complete sustainability reporting document and a clear framework for communicating sustainable value.

1 INTRODUCTION TO SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING.

Participants will:

Understand the purpose, scope and importance of sustainability reporting for small businesses.

Evaluate key reporting frameworks and the VSME standard.

Identify how sustainability reporting applies to their own business context.

Apply the Create Green sustainability reporting structure.

Develop the foundation of their sustainability reporting document.

2 GHG EMISSIONS & CARBON FOOTPRINTING.

Participants will:

Understand carbon footprints and their role in sustainability reporting.

Evaluate the key inputs that determine business emissions.

Identify their business energy use and emissions sources.

Apply carbon measurement tools to generate a baseline footprint.

Develop the GHG emissions section of their VSME report.

3 CIRCULAR ECONOMY & WASTE.

Participants will:

Understand circular economy principles and their relevance to business.

Evaluate policy, legislation and waste management frameworks.

Identify material flows and waste streams within their business.

Apply circular economy thinking to improve resource use and reduce waste.

Develop the circular economy and waste reporting section of the VSME.

4 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY.

Participants will:

Understand the social dimensions of business sustainability.

Evaluate social impacts and relevant SDGs linked to their operations.

Identify their business's key social sustainability contributions and gaps.

Apply social sustainability reporting requirements in practice.

Develop the social sustainability sections of their VSME report.

Sustainability Reporting & Value Creation.

Continued.

5 SDGS & SUSTAINABLE VALUE CREATION

Understand the Sustainable Development Goals and their global framework.

Evaluate how the SDGs relate to business impact and policy context.

Identify opportunities to create sustainable value through the SDGs.

Apply SDG thinking to business strategy and communication.

Develop a clear understanding of their business's sustainable value proposition.

6 SDG VISUAL STORYTELLING

Participants will:

Understand how visual communication strengthens sustainability messaging.

Evaluate how SDG alignment can be translated into a business narrative.

Identify key sustainability themes within their business.

Apply SDG frameworks to create a structured visual story.

Develop a branded sustainability visual for communication and reporting.

BY THE END OF THIS MODULE SERIES PARTICIPANTS WILL:

- Understand sustainability reporting frameworks & requirements.
- Know their environmental, social and governance related impacts.
- Have measurable sustainability indicators within their own business.
- Know how to use reporting tools to gather carbon, circular economy & social data.
- Developed a complete sustainability reporting document and value narrative.
- Have a branded, SDG sustainabilty visual that can be used for marketing & communications purposes.

Demonstrate your sustainability credentials.
Respond to growing customer and supplier expectations.
Prepare for future reporting requirements.
Create a practical sustainability report aligned with emerging SME standards..

Innovation for Visibility, Growth & Resilience.

This elective series equips participants with practical digital, design and marketing skills to strengthen visibility, customer engagement and business growth. Participants will explore accessible tools including social media, AI-assisted marketing, Canva design and SEO, enabling them to communicate more effectively and adapt in a fast-changing digital landscape.

1 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING.

Participants will:

Understand the role of social media in business visibility and growth.

Evaluate strategies for engaging and communicating with target audiences.

Identify opportunities to strengthen their online presence and branding.

Apply practical techniques to create more effective social media content.

Develop greater confidence in managing and improving their social media channels.

2 AI FOR SEO & ONLINE VISIBILITY.

Participants will:

Understand how SEO supports online visibility and customer discovery.

Evaluate how AI tools can support content creation and keyword research.

Identify opportunities to improve website and online discoverability.

Apply AI-assisted tools to strengthen digital content and reach.

Develop practical strategies for improving search performance and visibility.

3 CANVA FOR BUSINESS DESIGN.

Participants will:

Understand how visual design supports branding and communication.

Evaluate the core tools and functions of the Canva platform.

Identify effective ways to create consistent, professional business graphics.

Apply Canva tools to design engaging visual content.

Develop confidence in producing branded marketing materials.

4 CANVA AI & ADVANCED CREATIVE TOOLS.

Participants will:

Understand how AI is transforming digital design and content creation.

Evaluate Canva's AI-powered image and video creation features.

Identify opportunities to enhance their visual content using AI tools.

Apply advanced Canva features to create and edit digital assets.

Develop a more efficient and creative approach to visual content production.

Culture & Heritage – Elective Modules

This elective series explores how culture, heritage and creativity contribute to sustainable development, regenerative tourism and community wealth building. Participants will examine the wider value their business creates beyond economic output and learn how to position that value within regional development, tourism and sustainability frameworks.

1 CREATIVE & CULTURAL INDUSTRIES: CULTURE AS A DRIVER OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

Understand the role of creative and cultural industries in sustainable development and low-carbon transitions.

Explore key policy frameworks supporting culture-led sustainability, including EU and UN initiatives.

Identify the economic and social contribution of the creative and artisan sectors.

Apply systems thinking to the cultural and creative economy.

Develop a clearer understanding of the sector's future growth and resilience potential.

2 CREATING VALUE IN TOURISM & REGIONAL RESILIENCE.

Participants will:

Understand the role of tourism in supporting rural and regional economic development.

Evaluate regenerative and sustainable tourism approaches and value chains.

Identify how creative and artisan businesses contribute to tourism ecosystems.

Apply value chain thinking to their own business within the regional tourism context.

Develop awareness of their business role in strengthening regional tourism resilience.

3 SDG-ALIGNED TOURISM & IMPACT FRAMEWORKS.

Participants will:

Understand how global tourism frameworks measure sustainability and impact.

Evaluate key SDG-based and EU tourism monitoring systems.

Identify relevant sustainability indicators for their own business.

Apply SDG frameworks to assess tourism impact and value creation.

Develop a clearer understanding of how sustainability reporting supports tourism visibility.

4 COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING.

Participants will:

Understand the principles of Community Wealth Building and local economic resilience.

Evaluate the role of anchor institutions and local procurement systems.

Identify opportunities for businesses to reduce economic leakage and strengthen local value retention.

Apply community wealth building principles to their own business context.

Develop strategies to increase their contribution to local economic sustainability.

Participant outcomes

"The programme helped me see opportunities within my business that I hadn't recognised before. I left with a clear plan and the confidence to put it into practice." Kevin Dooley

PERSONAL OUTCOMES

- Increased confidence in business, products & decision-making.
- Greater confidence in communicating.
- Improved presentation, networking and communication skills.
- Enhanced problem-solving and strategic thinking skills.

SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

- Increased sustainability knowledge.
- Increased financial confidence.
- Greater awareness of business impacts.
- Understanding of sustainability reporting requirements.
- Increased confidence communicating sustainability.
- Stronger peer-to-peer connections.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Adoption of sustainable business practices.
- Improved resource efficiency.
- Improved pricing and financial management.
- Sustainability reports completed.
- Stronger sustainability communications.
- Increased collaboration between participants.

LONG-TERM OUTCOMES

- More resilient businesses.
- Improved market access.
- Increased visibility and competitiveness.
- Enhanced local economic retention.
- Stronger cultural and heritage contribution.
- Contribution to climate & sustainable development goals.

Practical business tools

Core programme learning outputs & business tools - Sustainability Pillar

Course 1	MODULE	COURSE OUTPUTS
SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICE	Product Reality Check	Lean Canvas Product Reality Check Assessment Sustainability Strengths & Opportunities Review
	Sustainable Product Development	Sustainable Product Development Framework
	Making Sustainable Business Decisions.	Sustainable Business Decision-Making Framework.
	Small Changes, Big Impact	Action Tracker for Small Changes & Improvements.
	Communicating Your Sustainability Story.	Sustainability Story Statement. Custom Sustainability Pitch Deck.
	Implementation Plan.	Prioritised Sustainability Action Roadmap.

Course 2	MODULE	COURSE OUTPUTS
SUSTAINABLE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT	Understanding Accounts & Financial Management.	Financial Health Check, Green Financial Health Check.
	Costing, Budgeting & Financial Planning.	Completed Financial Action Plan.
	Pricing for Value and Profitability.	Completed Pricing Policy.
	Tax & Basic Bookkeeping.	Record Keeping System.

Course 3	MODULE	COURSE OUTPUTS
SUSTAINABLE REPORTING & VALUE CREATION	Introduction to Sustainability Reporting.	Create Green Sustainability Reporting Template. Create Green Sustainability Reporting Handbook.
	GHG Emissions & Carbon Footprinting.	Carbon Footprint Graphic. Energy Baseline Measurement.
	Circular Economy & Waste.	Completed circular economy section & waste measurement.
	Social Sustainability.	Completed social sustainability statements.
	SDGs & Sustainable Value Creation.	SDG Handbook.
	SDG Visual Storytelling.	SDG Sustainable Reporting Communications Graphics.

Training delivery







HYBRID DELIVERY

The Create Green Programme is delivered in a hybrid format of in-person and online sessions to accommodate participants needs and time limitations as far as is possible.

IN PERSON

All in person training sessions are arranged with prior consultation to maximise attendance. In person sessions typically run for 2 hours duration and a full day typically runs from 10 - 4.

ONLINE

Online sessions can be held during normal business hours or in the evening if participants prefer. Online sessions typically run from 1 - 2 hours

MENTORING

One - one mentoring is an important part of the programme and meetings can be held in person or online.

ASSIGNMENTS

Participants will fill in the provided templates during session hours. Occassionally you will receive an assignment that needs to be completed in your own time.

Training schedule & timeline

Create Green runs twice a year with each programme cycle paced over a 20 week duration. Please note that while the timeframe below serves as an accurate guide, it may be subject to small changes (if needed) to accommodate participants and trainers circumstances.
Spring programme: February - May.
Autumn programme: August - December.

WEEK	MODULE	DURATION
	COURSE 1. SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS PRACTICE	
1	Product Reality Check + Weeks 2-3 SDW*	In Person – Half Day
4	Sustainable Product Development + Week 5 SDW	In Person – Half Day
6	Making Sustainable Business Decisions + SDW	In Person/Online – Half Day
Throughout the 12 weeks	On-Site Business Review.	In Person, On Site – 3 hours
8	Small Changes, Big Impact + Week 9 SDW	In Person – Half Day
10	Communicating Your Sustainability Story + SDW	In Person – Half Day
12	Implementation Plan	In Person/Online – Half Day
	COURSE 2. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS	
13	Understanding Accounts & Financial Management	Online - 2 hours
14	Costing, Budgeting & Financial Planning.	Online - 2 hours
15	Pricing for Value and Profitability.	Online - 2 hours
16	Tax & Basic Bookkeeping	Online - 2 hours
	COURSE 3 - SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING & VALUE CREATION	
17	Introduction to Sustainability Reporting.	In Person - Full Day
18	GHG Emissions & Carbon Footprinting.	In person/online - Full day.
19	Circular Economy & Waste.	In person/online - Full day.
19	Social Sustainability.	In person or online - 2 hours.
20	SDGs & Sustainable Value Creation.	In person or online -2 hours.
Ongoing from week 20	SDG Visual Storytelling.	One on One sessions

*SDW = Self Directed Work.
1:1 Mentoring Sessions are available to all participants as needed throughout the programme with 10 sessions per participant allocated across the programme duration.

Programme duration & breakdown

Overall Programme Duration

20 weeks - 5 months.

The programme is delivered over a wide time frame allowing for the time constraints of participants.

Breakdown by Module Group

There are 15 modules in total with some courses of longer duration than others.

Weekly Structure

Either 1 Full day or half day of training per week with each full day consisting of morning and afternoon sessions of 2 hours duration each.

1 Sustainable Business in Practice:

6 Modules.
6 Half Days.
1 Online Session
1 3 hr Onsite Business Review.
Mentoring Sessions.

Daily Schedule

For a full day in person, training runs for approximately 6 hours including breaks & lunch.

2 Financial Management for Sustainable Business.

3 Modules
3 Online Sessions
Mentoring Sessions.



3 Sustainability Reporting & Value Creation.

6 Modules.
3 Full Days
2 Online Sessions
Mentoring Sessions.

Evaluation, feedback & certification

By incorporating assessment and evaluation into the Create Green programme journey we capture insights into the programmes impact. This enables us to identify areas for improvement and ensure an atmosphere of continuous learning and improvement amongst participants.

ASSESSMENT

Before the programme modules begin, participants fill in a pre training baseline assessment.

This is to help us understand your current level of knowledge around the module topics, assess your business challenges and see what you hope to achieve from the course. Continuous assessment of learning progress is ongoing through out the programme duration.

EVALUATION

All participants will be asked to fill in an online post training evaluation at the end of the programme.

This is to enable us to assess our performance against specified programme targets.



FEEDBACK MECHANISMS.

Surveys and questionnaires are distributed to participants to gather feedback on various aspects of the course. You can also give feedback and raise any concerns you may have to the course trainers and during the mentoring sessions.

Peer to peer feedback is also strongly encouraged.

PROGRAMME SCORING

Each module completed is equivalent to 5 points.
Assessment submission is equivalent to 5 points.
Evaluation submission is equivalent to 5 points.

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MARK = 90 POINTS

Completion of the 15 sustainabilty modules + 1 practical module plus completed assessment and evaluation submissions.

SUSTAINABLE PLUS BUSINESS MARK = 100 POINTS

Completion of Core Programme + 2 Elective Modules.

CERTIFICATION

On successful completion of the course, you will receive:

- The digital Create Green sustainable business mark.
- A Create Green branding pack.
- Membership to the Create Green Regenerative Business Network.

The Create Green Network

Create Green is not simply supporting individual businesses; it is strengthening the systems that enable rural communities, local economies and places to thrive over the long term.

On completion of the programme, all participants gain direct membership into the Network.
The network is the mechanism whereby businesses can utilise their collective power to further increase their sustainable value. The Create Green Network aims to build a regional economic architecture where sustainable businesses are not only supported and visible, but actively prioritised within local supply chains. The Network will engage with local and regional stakeholders to ensure that their collective environmental and social value translates into retained local wealth and long-term regional resilience.

Examples of how the Network can be utilised:

Increased visibility through the Network brand.
Businesses in the Create Green Network become recognised as verified sustainable suppliers.

Local-first procurement loops.
The Network advocates for participants, local businesses, tourism providers and local authorities to buy from each other where possible and prioritise local sustainable suppliers.

Clustered offerings (especially for tourism).
By packaging businesses in the Create Green Network together (for example - food + craft + accommodation + experience), we can market them as regenerative tourism ecosystems, not individual products.

Reframing procurement as climate action.
The Network can position procurement as "local impact choices".

We have a 5 year plan in place to develop the Network into a recognised brand that fosters the partnerships, conditions and visibility needed for it to become a beacon of regional economic resilience.



To find out more about the benefits and long term aims of the Create Green Network please see the Create Green Strategic Plan.



case studies

Kevin Dooley - Dooleys Wool→ Helen Bracken - Fox Covert Farm → Antoinette Larkin - Buddha Lounge

Case Study 1 - Kevin



DOOLEYS Wool

Sustainable Focus

Economic Sustainability

Business Overview

Dooley's Wool is a family-run business based in County Offaly, led by Kevin and Noreen Dooley. Building on eight generations of wool expertise, the business transforms 100% traceable Irish wool into premium bedding and home comfort products, including duvets, pillows, throws and mattress toppers. By sourcing wool directly from local farmers, Dooley's Wool combines traditional craftsmanship with innovation to create sustainable, natural products that support Irish agriculture, rural communities and the circular economy. To find out more visit: dooleyswool.ie

Business Challenges

1 Organisation & Structure.

Kevin had a clear vision for the business but struggled to organise and structure the many moving parts needed to bring that vision to life.

2 Bringing the Business to Market.

Although the concept was strong, Kevin lacked the confidence and practical knowledge to expand beyond his existing customer base and successfully bring his products to a wider market.

3 Turning Vision into Reality.

"I knew what I wanted, but I didn't know how to get there." Kevin.

Like many small business owners, Kevin had the ideas and ambition but needed guidance, confidence and practical support to transform his vision into a sustainable business.

The Create Green Experience

One of the biggest surprises for Kevin was how practical and user-friendly the Create Green programme was. Rather than feeling like a traditional training course, it created an environment where business owners could openly share experiences, learn from each other and develop practical solutions together. The peer-to-peer learning became one of the programme's greatest strengths. Meeting other business owners facing similar challenges gave Kevin reassurance, fresh ideas and the confidence to keep moving forward.

The sustainability modules also had a significant impact, particularly around the Sustainable Development Goals. They helped him better understand how sustainability could become part of everyday business decisions while strengthening his long-term vision for Dooley's Wool.

Looking back, Kevin believes the practical exercises and work completed between sessions were some of the most valuable parts of the programme. Although they required time and commitment, they became essential building blocks in developing the business.

What Changed?

1. **Supporting Irish Farmers**
   The programme strengthened Kevin's commitment to creating greater value from Irish wool while ensuring local sheep farmers receive a fair return for their product.

2. **A More Sustainable Business**
   Create Green helped Kevin develop a business that is commercially viable while remaining true to its sustainability values and long-term vision.

3. **Improved Confidence & Work-Life Balance**
   With greater clarity and direction came greater confidence. Kevin now approaches decisions with far less uncertainty and has achieved a healthier balance between work and family life.

4. **Confidence to Lead**
   Perhaps the greatest transformation has been Kevin himself. Today he is more confident presenting his business, communicating his vision and representing Dooley's Wool to customers, partners and industry audiences.

Today, Dooley's Wool continues to grow steadily and sustainably. Kevin's ambition is to increase the use of Irish wool as a natural alternative to synthetic products while expanding the business both throughout Ireland and internationally. With greater confidence, a clearer strategy and a stronger understanding of sustainability, he is well positioned to continue growing the business while remaining true to its values.



From Kevin

"The programme helped me see opportunities within my business that I hadn't recognised before. I left with a clear plan and the confidence to put it into practice."

Case Study 2 - Helen



Sustainable Focus

Environmental Sustainability

Business Overview

Fox Covert Farm is a family-run business based in County Offaly, producing premium Irish hemp food products from seed to shelf. Helen and her family grow, harvest and process hemp on the farm, creating a range of nutritious products including hemp seed, hemp protein and hemp oil. Sustainability has always been at the heart of the business, with a strong focus on biodiversity, traceability, local production and reducing environmental impact. By controlling every stage of production, Fox Covert Farm delivers high quality products while supporting regenerative farming practices and the local rural economy. To find out more visit: foxcovertfarm.ie

Business Challenges

1 Communicating Sustainability

Sustainability had always been central to Fox Covert Farm, but Helen found it difficult to communicate the full value of everything happening behind the scenes. She wanted customers to better understand the environmental benefits, farming practices and story behind the products.

2 Bringing Innovation to Market

As one of Ireland's few hemp food producers, Helen was introducing products that many consumers had never experienced before. Educating customers while growing market awareness required confidence, clear messaging and a stronger business strategy.

3 Finding Time to Work on the Business

Like many owner-managed businesses, Helen was balancing farming, production, administration and sales every day. Finding the time to step back, plan strategically and develop the business for long-term growth was a continual challenge.

The Create Green Experience

One of the greatest benefits Helen found through the Create Green programme was the opportunity to recognise just how sustainable her business already was. While sustainability had always guided the decisions made on the farm, the programme helped her identify, measure and communicate these strengths in a way that customers, suppliers and partners could easily understand. The Sustainable Development Goals and the personalised sustainability strategy became valuable tools, helping Helen translate everyday farming practices into clear business messages. Rather than introducing entirely new ways of working, the programme validated the work already taking place while identifying opportunities to strengthen it even further. The practical workshops, mentoring and peer-to-peer learning also provided fresh perspectives from other small business owners. Sharing experiences, challenges and ideas created a supportive environment where businesses could learn from one another while building confidence together. Looking back, Helen believes Create Green gave her the confidence to tell her story more effectively. It reinforced the importance of sustainability as both a business strength and a competitive advantage, while providing practical actions that could be implemented immediately

What Changed?

1

A Clear Sustainability Strategy

The programme helped Helen clearly identify the environmental strengths already embedded throughout Fox Covert Farm and communicate them with greater confidence.

2

Stronger Business Story

Helen now feels more confident explaining the journey from seed to shelf, helping customers better understand the quality, traceability and sustainability behind every product.

3

Greater Confidence to Grow

With clearer messaging and improved business planning, Helen is better positioned to engage with customers, retailers and suppliers while exploring new opportunities for growth.

4

Sustainability as a Competitive Advantage

Rather than seeing sustainability as simply part of farming, Helen now recognises it as one of the business's greatest strengths and an important factor in building long-term resilience.

Today, Fox Covert Farm continues to grow as one of Ireland's leading hemp food producers. With a clearer sustainability strategy, greater confidence and stronger business direction, Helen is continuing to build a resilient business that showcases how sustainable farming and innovation can work hand in hand while supporting rural communities and the environment.



From Helen

"Create Green gave me the confidence to look at my business differently. It helped me recognise the value of the sustainability work we were already doing and gave me the tools to communicate that story with confidence."

Case Study 3 - Antoinette



Buddha Lounge
by Antoinette Larkin

Sustainable Focus
Social Sustainability

Business Overview

Buddha Lounge with Antoinette Larkin is a wellbeing business offering weekly online yoga classes, monthly online workshops in breathwork and yin yoga, as well as online breathwork sessions and Reiki energy treatments. Antoinette is a highly qualified therapist and educator whose classes, treatments, workshops and retreats draw on a range of complementary wellbeing disciplines. Since 2025, Buddha Lounge has evolved its business model to focus on creating tailored luxury yoga retreats in Ireland and Spain, alongside its online offerings. To find out more about Antoinette and her work, visit buddhalounge.ie

Business Challenges

1 Limited Access to Business Support.

Like many small businesses post 2020, the Buddha Lounge was facing significant challenges. Antoinette recognised that her business needed support and actively sought opportunities through grants and business development programmes. Despite numerous applications, little support was available. When she discovered the Create Green programme, she immediately recognised it as an opportunity to help reshape her business.

2 Financial Pressure.

One of Antoinettes greatest challenges was the financial burden of running the business independently. Operating costs had increased significantly, and she found herself working 15-hour days simply to break even. While she remained passionate about her work, the business model had become unsustainable and was beginning to impact her own wellbeing.

3 Time and Wellbeing.

For four years, Antoinette had been working at an unsustainable pace with very little time for herself. Ironically, while helping others prioritise their wellbeing, she realised she was no longer practising what she encouraged her clients to do. She also became increasingly aware that the time and expertise she invested in her business were not being properly valued.

The Create Green Experience

One of the first things that attracted Antoinette to the programme was its emphasis on sustainability. The word resonated deeply, reminding her of the original vision behind Buddha Lounge: creating a business that was sustainable not only environmentally, but financially and personally. The programme's supportive environment was one of its greatest strengths. Learning alongside other small business owners created a safe space to share challenges, exchange ideas and learn from one another. Antoinette found the peer-to-peer learning invaluable, gaining fresh perspectives and practical solutions from businesses facing similar experiences. The blended learning approach suited Antoinettes busy schedule, while the trainers' expertise added real value. Each facilitator brought specialist knowledge alongside first-hand experience of running a small business. Antoinette particularly appreciated this practical, relatable approach, saying the personal connection with both trainers and participants is what sets Create Green apart from other sustainability programmes.

What Changed?

1. The Create Green programme gave Antoinette the confidence to make courageous and innovative changes to her business model. One of the biggest decisions she made was to let go of the need for a permanent physical premises. Through the programme, she recognised that an online business combined with luxury retreat experiences in Ireland and Spain was both financially viable and better aligned with her long-term vision. This shift immediately reduced overheads, eased financial pressure and gave her back valuable time.

2. Being surrounded by other small business owners also highlighted the power of collaboration. Antoinette found that hearing different perspectives unlocked new ideas and renewed her creativity. Just as importantly, she felt genuinely supported throughout the programme. Feeling seen and understood gave her the confidence to move away from a business model that was no longer serving her and to embrace new opportunities.

3. The financial modules were particularly transformative. Although Antoinette believed she had a solid understanding of her finances, working through the figures revealed that the business was not performing as she had assumed. This realisation gave her permission to step back, reassess the business and make informed decisions about its future. Reflecting on the programme, Antoinette says she gained something valuable from every module, with each facilitator offering a different perspective that helped her see her business in a new light.

Today, Antoinette has greater confidence in both herself and her business. She is more intentional about how she values her time, prices her services and plans for the future. Most importantly, she has created a sustainable business model that gives her greater freedom while remaining true to her values.



From Antoinette

"Create Green was a lifeline for my business"

Testimonials



"Create Green helped me see opportunities within my business that I hadn't recognised before. I left with a clear plan and the confidence to put it into practice."

Kevin Dooley
Dooley's Wool

"I left with a plan, not just ideas."

"Every session left me inspired to take action."



"Create Green gave me permission to step back, rethink my business and build something that is sustainable for both my clients and myself."

Antoinette Larkin
Buddha Lounge

"The peer learning was one of the best parts."





"The programme helped me recognise the value of the sustainability work we were already doing and gave me the confidence to tell that story."

Helen Bracken
Fox Covert Farm

"Practical, relevant and immediately useful."

Create Green Offaly

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Rialtas na hÉireann Government of Ireland | Tionscadal Éireann Project Ireland 2040
Arna chomhchistiú ag An Roinn Forbartha Tuaithe agus Pobail agus Gaeltachta
Co-funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht

Ár dTodhchaí Tuaithe Our Rural Future

Arna chomhchistiú ag an Aontas Eorpach
Co-funded by the European Union

LEADER
Development led by local communities

Comhlacht Forbartha Áitiúil Uíbh Fhailí
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