

Public-Private Collaborations in Sustainable Projects

Professor: Jessica Sánchez

Office hours: by appointment

Course Type: Elective

Credits: 3 ECTS

Term: Second

1. COURSE PRESENTATION

Course Description

This course focuses on the multifaceted concept of sustainability, highlighting the critical and dynamic interplay between the public and private sectors in advancing sustainable development. It examines diverse national contexts, capacities, and needs to understand the role of public-private collaborations. It covers key topics, including social movements, climate justice, the United Nations System, and international principles that are meant to maintain peace and security, protect human rights, and ensure a just transition.

Furthermore, a range of topics integral to climate action and sustainable development are covered. These include the roles of various stakeholders in the climate ecosystem, the mechanisms behind global climate discourse, and the structure and benefits of Public-Private Partnerships. This course also highlights communication and stakeholder engagement strategies to amplify sustainable projects.

The course concludes with a look at future climate collaborations, evaluating the potential of AI, the impact of democratic governments, the rising frequency of weather-related events, global risks, and emerging trends in climate partnerships across non-traditional actors (e.g. entertainment, culture, arts) based on the 'radical collaboration' concept. By the end of the course, students will have developed critical thinking skills for leading transformational change, both in the public and private sectors.

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The course in the study plan

This **elective** course belongs to the subject of **Economic Dimension of Sustainability** of the study plan. It takes place in the **second quarter**.

Learning Objectives

By the end of the course, students will:

1. Know the comprehensive scope of sustainability, with a special focus on practical cases of how public-private partnerships are used for sustainability development
2. Understand international frameworks and agreements, those that lay the foundation for sustainability-related work across sectors
3. Identify key stakeholders in the climate space and assess their importance
4. Apply effective communication and engagement strategies to amplify sustainable projects across society and with relevant stakeholders
5. Anticipate future trends in climate collaboration

Related SDGs

- **SDG 5:** Gender Equality
- **SDG 8:** Decent Work and Economic Growth
- **SDG 9:** Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure
- **SDG 10:** Reduced Inequalities
- **SDG 11:** Sustainable Cities and Communities
- **SDG 12:** Responsible Consumption and Production
- **SDG 13:** Climate Action
- **SDG 16:** Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions
- **SDG 17:** Partnerships for the Goals

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2. COURSE LEARNING PLAN

Methodology

- Structured into eight 3-hour sessions, the course integrates theoretical concepts with case studies, practical examples, and resources, ensuring a diverse representation of public-private partnerships in different national contexts.
- Students will engage in a range of activities, including debates, an interactive game, individual assignments, sectorial mappings, and presentations, all designed to foster practical understanding and application of concepts.
- Students are encouraged to share insights from their countries and professional experiences and/or career aspirations, enriching group discussions.

Hours devoted by the student (according to ECTS) 75

Evaluation criteria

- **Final exam (40%):** The final exam is used to assess the individual knowledge and understanding of the topics covered in the course. It will be structured as follows: multiple questions (30%) and a personal reflection on a certain topic (10%). A minimum grade of 5 is required to pass.
- **Class simulation (20%):** Students will participate in an interactive simulation where they will apply their knowledge through strategic decision-making. Criteria will be provided during the session.
- **Group presentation (20%):** In groups, students will make a short presentation of a public-private project of their choice based on criteria provided during the session.
- **Class attendance and active participation (20%):** Attendance in every session is expected and recorded using an attendance sheet. Punctuality will impact your score. Active participation entails meaningful participation in all activities.

Attended all the sessions + actively and consistently participated in the class discussions during the entire course period	20
Attended all the sessions + actively and consistently participated in most of the class discussions	15-19
No more than one unexpected absence + often participated in the class discussions	10-14
No more than one unexpected absence + participated in some class discussions	5-10
No more than one unexpected absence + limited or no participation in class discussions	1-5

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Otherwise	0
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Additional evaluation criteria to take into consideration:

Retake

Students who fail the course during regular evaluation will be allowed ONE re-take of the examination/evaluation. Students who pass any Retake exam should get a 5 by default as a final grade for the course. If the course is again failed after the retake, students will have to register again for the course the following year.

No-show

In case of a justified no-show to an exam, the student must inform the corresponding faculty member and the director(s) of the program so that they study the possibility of rescheduling the exam (one possibility being during the “Retake” period). In the meantime, the student will get an “incomplete”, which will be replaced by the actual grade after the final exam is taken. The “incomplete” will not be reflected on the student’s Academic Transcript.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is to use someone else’s work and present it as one’s own without acknowledging the sources in the correct way. All essays, reports, or projects handed in by a student must be original work completed by the student. By enrolling at any ESCI UPF BSM Master of Science and signing the “Honor Code,” students acknowledge that they understand the schools’ policy on plagiarism and certify that all course assignments will be their own work, except where indicated by correct referencing. Failing to do so may result in automatic expulsion from the program.

Contents and Schedule

Session #1 – 14/01/2025

Introduction to Public-Private Collaborations and the Sustainability Discourse

- Course housekeeping: Presentations, overview topics, and evaluation
- Role of public-private collaborations for sustainable development
- Intersections of sustainability: Health, migration, gender, poverty, others.
- Origins of the sustainability discourse
- Role of social movements: Making the invisible, visible

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Session #2 – 21/01/2025

The Climate Ecosystem: Analyzing Stakeholders and the United Nations System

- Public stakeholders: Local/National governments, regulatory bodies, international organizations, research institutes, and development banks
- Private stakeholders: Corporations, financial institutions, coalitions, and charters
- Other key stakeholders: Citizens, media, social movements, and lobbyists
- History of International instruments and cooperation protocols
- The United Nations System

Guest speaker: United Nations Climate Change Representative

Session #3 – 28/01/2025

Public Value and Private Value: Theories, Markets and Capitalism

- National contexts and differences (SIDS, LDC)
- The Global North and the Global South
- Climate Justice: distributional impacts and procedural impediments
- Modern capitalism: debunking public vs private sector myths
- Power dynamics: Policymakers, G7 and G20

Session #4 – 04/02/2025

Overview of Public-Private Partnerships

- Definition, history, types, and benefits of PPPs
- Phases for implementation
- Risks and rewards associated with sustainability projects
- Best practice by UNECE, OECD and EPEC
- Practical examples of PPPs

Guest speaker: Global public-private coalition representative

Session #5 – 18/02/2025

Case Study 'Brazil in the Climate Spotlight' and Group Presentations

- The first part of this session will be dedicated to all group presentations
- Brazil's socio-economical, and political context
- Current adaptation and mitigation strategies
- Public-Private structure and existing PPPs
- Expectations from Brazil at COP30

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Group Assignment: In groups, students will present a real example of a PPP from a developed country, a developing country, a Small Island Developing State (SIDS), and a Least Developed Country (LDC).

Session #6 – 25/02/2025

Course Review and ‘The Agora’ Simulation

- The first part of the session will be dedicated to reviewing key concepts from the course, addressing any remaining questions, and reflecting on the main takeaways

Group activity: In the second part, students will participate in ‘The Agora’ Simulation game, competing to rebuild a city by managing needs, resources, and threats, while applying key concepts of public and private roles and dynamics.

Session #7 – 04/03/2025

Amplifying Sustainable Projects through Communication and Engagement

- Existing narratives and advocacy efforts from leading voices
- Effective communication and multi-stakeholder engagement using Venn Diagrams
- Application of the three-pillar strategy: awareness, education, and participation
- Concept of ‘Radical Collaborations’ in practical scenarios

Guest speaker: Sustainability Strategy Director, Futerra

Session #8 – 11/03/2025

Looking Ahead: The Future of Sustainability Collaborations

- Global risks: geopolitics, extreme weather events, and societal polarization
- The ethics of Artificial Intelligence: can AI be used for good?
- The disinformation industry and regulatory challenges
- Trends in climate action: Creator’s economy, culture, and the arts industry
- Examples of innovative solutions: e.g. Climate Reality Check by Good Energy

Guest speaker: Founder & CEO, PIT Policy Lab

Final Exam – 18/03/2025 (14:00-15:30h)

3. BIO OF PROFESSOR

Jessica Sánchez García is an expert in international relations and a sustainability professional, currently working at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate

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Change (www.unfccc.int). She leads efforts to engage the private sector and other key stakeholders in achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. Her experience encompasses flagship United Nations initiatives and global coalitions, including #Together4Transparency, the Fashion Industry Charter, and UN Sports for Climate Action.

Before this, Jessica led communications and strategy at the Women's Forum for the Economy & Society in Paris, a global leading platform dedicated to promoting, influencing, and driving gender equality and inclusion across society. In this role, she designed and executed multi-stakeholder engagement strategies, collaborating with prominent partners including The New York Times, G20, OECD, UN Women, CNN, Politico, and DVF Awards.

Jessica founded The Movable Middle, a communications and engagement consultancy helping international organizations drive societal action on global issues. She has contributed to diplomatic service for the Mexican Ministry of Foreign Affairs, focusing on migration and bilateral economic relations between Spain and Mexico. She holds a Master's degree in Sustainability Management and a BA in International Relations. Jessica has lived in Mexico, Brazil, the United States, Spain, and Germany.

4. READING MATERIALS / BIBLIOGRAPHY / RESOURCES

This course does not require the use of a textbook. All necessary materials will be made available before each session. Supplementary readings, notes, handouts, datasets, or additional course material will be accessible through the course website.

At the end of each session, a list of recommended bibliographic sources and toolkits will be provided. These optional resources are intended to support students seeking an in-depth understanding or further information on the subject matter.

For students requiring specific bibliographic resources for their master's Thesis research, assistance will be offered to support their academic needs.