



ONLINE

LABOUR STATISTICS

STRENGTHENING ESC (ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND CLIMATE) STANDARDS IN COUNTRY STRATEGIES AND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

14 SEPTEMBER – 23 OCTOBER 2026

🕒 6 WEEKS, 60 HOURS

Information Note



International
Labour
Organization



International Training Centre

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Are ESC standards adequately integrated in agricultural and rural development projects?

Do current gaps in Environmental, Social and Climate (ESC) safeguards expose projects to reputational, legal and financial risks? How can stronger capacity in ESC help governments and partners achieve the SDGs, while promoting gender equality, climate resilience, and social inclusion?

Would you like to strengthen your competencies in applying ESC safeguards throughout the project cycle? Do you want to learn how to embed SECAP into project design and implementation, using practical tools and innovative digital platforms? Are you interested in joining an international community of practice of ESC specialists, government officials, PMUs, and consultants, sharing real cases and solutions?

The International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) brings to you this online tutor-based Certification of Achievement course, designed to provide comprehensive answers and hands-on approaches to applying ESC standards in IFAD-financed projects and beyond.

Through a diverse learning journey—combining self-paced modules, interactive webinars, assignments, case studies, and tutor feedback—you will gain:

- Practical skills to integrate ESC safeguards into every stage of the project cycle.
- Knowledge of internationally harmonised standards and good practices.
- Tools to address cross-cutting priorities such as gender, youth, climate, and nutrition.
- Opportunities to engage with peers and experts in a dynamic learning environment.

With this course, you will not only deepen your understanding of ESC frameworks but also be prepared to apply them in practice, ensuring that projects are socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable, and aligned with the SDGs.

DESCRIPTION

This online training course designed jointly by IFAD and the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO), aims to contribute to improving capacity in the conceptualisation and implementation of Environmental, Social and Climate (ESC) safeguards throughout the project cycle, in line with internationally recognised principles and practices.

It provides a practical approach to planning and effectively conducting the updated SECAP in IFAD-supported projects. It brings together in a collaborative and instructive online space PMUs; senior government officials assigned to project oversight; national staff from ministries of agriculture, environment and other relevant sectors; ESC regulatory bodies, ESC consultants; contractors; and non-sovereign operations, active in agriculture projects and rural development.

By combining conceptual understanding with practical application, this course equips participants to reduce risks, improve project outcomes, and advance equitable, climate-resilient, and socially inclusive rural transformation.

WHO ATTENDS THIS COURSE?

National and international Environmental, Social and Climate (ESC) specialist and practitioners in projects funded by IFAD or other International Financial Institutions (IFIs), staff of Project Management Units; senior government officials assigned to project oversight; national staff from ministries of agriculture, environment, and other relevant sectors; ESC regulatory bodies; ESC consultants; contractors; and non-sovereign operations (NSOs) personnel.



OBJECTIVE

The objective of this online course is to strengthen capacity in the application of Environmental, Social and Climate (ESC) safeguards across the project cycle, in line with internationally accepted standards and practices.

This ITCILO course aims to ensure that agricultural and rural development projects deliver stronger social, environmental and economic benefits, while advancing the Sustainable Development Goals and building resilient and inclusive societies. The programme explores the practical use of the nine ESC Standards, the application of the SECAP Screening Tool and the development of Environmental and Social Management Plans (ESCMs). It further examines the integration of ESC considerations into procurement processes and the design of effective project-level grievance redress mechanisms and stakeholder engagement.

The course prepares participants to manage risks, strengthen accountability, and improve the quality and sustainability of IFAD-financed projects.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, participants will have acquired the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes and will be able to identify areas of improvement and brush up on the technical and managerial skills:

- A comprehensive understanding of IFAD's updated SECAP (2021) standards, requirements, principles and stakeholders in the context of agriculture and rural development projects.
- Project design and implementation: linking the project and SECAP cycles for effective and sustainable project implementation.

- SECAP assessment procedures and processes: from the risk screening, through the impact and risk assessment, to the mitigation and monitoring.
- Using the ESC standards strategically to respond to project impacts and mainstreaming opportunities.
- Identification of mainstreaming opportunities, such as promoting gender equality, climate resilience, and inclusive development.
- Incorporate climate resilience and environmental sustainability into project planning and implementation.
- Address risks and ethical challenges that bear on procurement, in line with the Procurement guidelines.

STRUCTURE

The online course follows a structured weekly learning cycle that combines self-guided study, knowledge checks, practical application, and interactive discussion. Each module begins with an interactive Module—including readings, quizzes, videos, and tools—that introduces the core concepts. Participants then consolidate their understanding by completing a knowledge test, ensuring they have grasped the essential elements before moving forward.

Once this foundation is established, participants apply their new skills by working on case studies and gradually developing components of a project strategy or plan under the guidance of a coach. Throughout the process, they are encouraged to reflect not only on technical aspects but also on the human, ethical, and social dimensions of their work. Each week concludes with a live webinar of 90–120 minutes, providing the opportunity for direct interaction with experts, feedback on assignments, and collaborative exchanges with peers. This blend of self-paced study, applied practice, and live discussion ensures that learning is both rigorous and engaging.

WHY SHOULD I JOIN THE COURSE?

- This course focuses on strengthening institutional frameworks and building capacity at the country and project level. Participants learn to align with international good practices, improving project processes and closing key skill gaps for effective ESC implementation.
- It addresses the urgent need for sustainable practices in agriculture and rural development. Climate change, ecosystem degradation, and social inequalities demand integrated solutions to ensure long-term benefits for communities, economies, and ecosystems.
- Enhanced partnerships and knowledge sharing between and within regions to nurture environmental and social sustainability.
- The certification ensures effective implementation of ESC provisions through structured processes like SECAP. By applying rigorous but proportionate measures, teams can manage reputational, litigation, and financial risks while delivering meaningful project outcomes.
- A core component of the certification is risk mitigation and opportunity mainstreaming. Participants are equipped to anticipate environmental, social, and climate-related risks while identifying opportunities to promote gender equality, climate resilience, and inclusive development.
- The course also meets the growing demand for skilled ESC professionals. As projects become more complex, the certification enhances participants' credibility, professional skills, and career opportunities in agriculture and rural development.

HOW TO APPLY

Applicants are kindly asked to send us:

1. A completed online registration form: <https://oarf2.itcilo.org/DST/A9719220/en>
2. If you are financed by your organization (or a donor), an official sponsorship letter is required to finalize your registration. The letter can be uploaded to the application form or sent by email to: sustain2@itcilo.org
3. If you pay the course fees directly, please note that the payment is due before enrolment in the course. More details about payment methods can be found [here](#).

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Language: The course will be held in English.

Price: Tuition: 1200€

Certificate: Certificate of Achievement will be awarded at the completion of the course.

CONTACT

sustain2@itcilo.org

WITHDRAWAL, CANCELLATION POLICY, AND REFUNDS FOR OPEN COURSES

If an enrolled participant wishes or must withdraw from a course, they may choose to apply to a different course or be substituted by another candidate. The participant must notify the Centre, in writing, of their decision at least 14 days prior to the start date of the course. Cancellation of participation in regular courses will result in the following penalties:

- 14 days or more prior to the start date of the course: No penalty, 100% refund of amount paid less applicable bank charges
- 8 to 13 days prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 50% of course price, refund of residual amount paid (if any) less applicable bank charges
- 7 days or less prior to the start date of the course: Penalty of 100% of course price.

INFO

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

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