Graduate School of BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

Postgraduate Diploma in Development Finance

Building Africa's Leaders in Sustainable Finance

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Building Africa's Leaders in Sustainable Finance

Africa's future will be shaped by those who can mobilise capital at scale, and do so in ways that are sustainable and inclusive. Meeting that challenge takes a new kind of finance professional: one who moves fluently and with confidence between the worlds of finance and sustainability.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Development Finance at the UCT Graduate School of Business is designed to help operationalise the practice of sustainable finance. It meets a growing market need within banking, asset management, insurance, corporates more broadly and consulting, as well as within global multilateral institutions, intergovernmental organisations, and the public sector, all of which need to mobilise the capital required to drive sustainable development, climate adaptation and long-term system resilience.

Whether your background is in banking, investment, law, engineering, the public sector, or the environmental sciences, this interdisciplinary degree equips you to use finance to lead the transition towards more resilient systems and sustainable markets.

How the programme is delivered

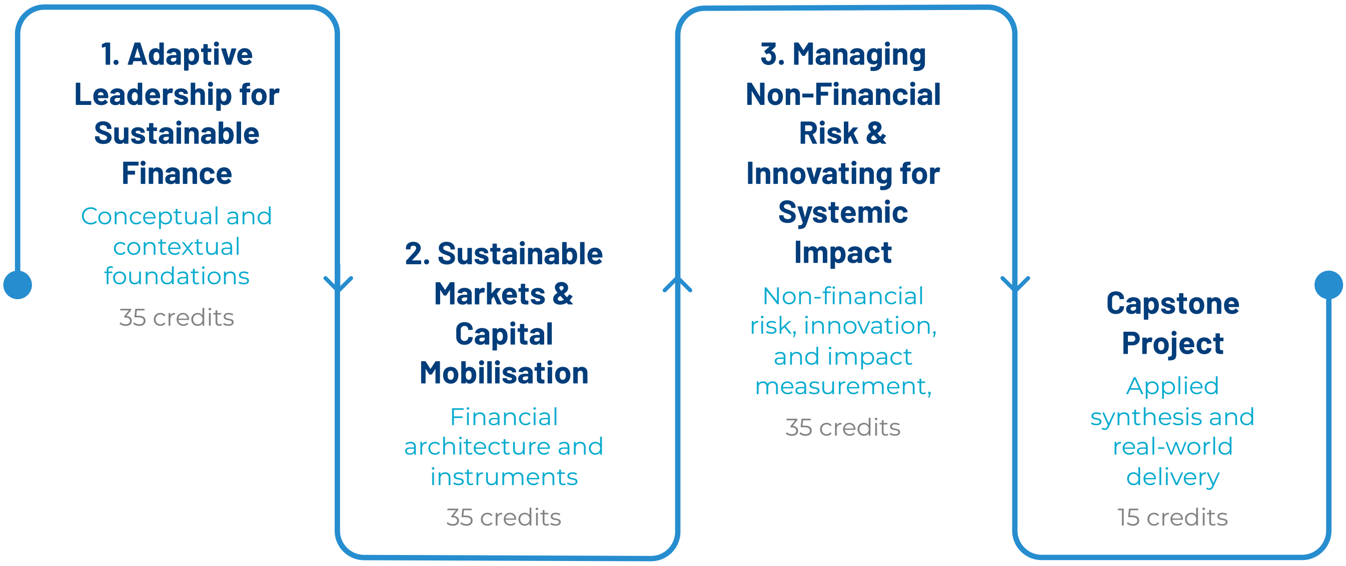
This NQF Level 8 qualification is delivered in a blended format over 12 months: intensive in-person blocks in Cape Town alongside structured online learning, so you can study while you work and apply your learning immediately.

The programme is organised around three integrated core courses and an applied Capstone Project, taking you from foundations to application. On completion of the programme, you will have the scientific literacy, regulatory fluency, and financial expertise to design credible, context-driven solutions to Africa's most pressing challenges, and deploy capital where it matters most.

Curriculum overview

The Postgraduate Diploma in Development Finance is structured to build the hybrid skill set the market now demands: the ability to move fluently between finance and sustainability. The curriculum is delivered as three connected core courses and an applied Capstone Project. Each core course is composed of five modules that cover key aspects of the topic. The Capstone provides an opportunity to synthesise learnings and apply them to a real-world project.

The learning journey



Assessment across the three core courses combines group work and an individual assignment; the Capstone is assessed individually with an oral presentation and the submission of a written report.

Course 1 · Adaptive Leadership for Sustainable Finance

The programme's foundation course builds the interdisciplinary skills and systems understanding needed to lead sustainable finance in Africa. It develops scientific literacy across climate, nature, and circularity, and grounds these concepts in the continent's geo-political realities, development priorities and the rise of AI. Students learn to interpret fast-evolving global and local frameworks, to anticipate the unintended consequences of complex, interconnected systems, and to lead through influence.

WHAT YOU'LL COVER

- Geo-political landscape, legal and governance frameworks and the economics of transition
- The African context and development priorities; addressing inequality and inclusion; business and human rights; AI governance
- Scientific literacy: climate, nature, water, resources, and circularity
- Systems thinking, systemic risk, interdependencies, and building system resilience
- Values-based leadership, stakeholder stewardship, and change management

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

Navigate evolving regulation, apply scientific evidence to financial decisions, lead systemic change through effective stakeholder stewardship, and contextualise sustainable finance solutions for Africa.

Course 2 · Sustainable Markets & Capital Mobilisation

This technical course focuses on the financial architecture and mechanisms needed to mobilise private and public capital at scale for sustainable development in Africa. Students map the sustainable finance landscape and its stakeholders, learn about the range of financial instruments, from equity and bonds to grants and guarantees, explore the mechanics of blended finance and understand project finance models and concepts. The emphasis is on providing students with knowledge of financial concepts and investment mechanisms that are critical to mobilising funds for climate and transition projects, and allocating capital in support of sustainable outcomes.

WHAT YOU'LL COVER

- The sustainable finance landscape: stakeholder mapping, financial architecture, and country platforms
- Financial instruments and their use cases, principles of valuations
- Financial risk modelling
- Introduction to project finance and modelling
- Public-private partnerships

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

Identify and navigate the sustainable finance market in Africa, apply risk modelling and valuation techniques, structure transactions, and design public-private partnerships suited to African market conditions.

Course 3 · Managing Non-Financial Risk & Innovating for Systemic Impact

Adopting a double materiality approach, this course equips students to manage a new class of risks and to innovate for systemic change. It marks the shift from traditional risk management to the integration of non-financial risk in models and scenario planning, treating environmental degradation and social inequity as systemic threats. It also introduces tools reshaping the field, including artificial intelligence for data analytics, risk modelling, and impact measurement. Students learn to see sustainability challenges as interconnected and dynamic, to use a systems perspective to impact investment, and to measure impact in ways that build transparency and drive real-world change.

WHAT YOU'LL COVER

- The path to non-financial risk accounting (carbon, nature, and social metrics) and scenario planning
- AI and data analytics for a data-constrained context
- Stewardship and ESG integration across asset classes
- Green, social, gender and outcomes-based finance innovation
- Systemic impact investing; Impact measurement

WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

Quantify and model non-financial risk and impact, practise active stewardship, deploy AI-driven tools to analyse sustainability data, use a systems lens to drive impact investments, and apply recognised measurement frameworks with a critical eye to their limitations.

Capstone Project

The Capstone Project is the applied culmination of the programme. Students integrate the frameworks, tools, and technical competencies developed across the three framework courses to design, assess, or structure a real sustainable finance solution, such as a blended finance deal, a labelled bond, a capital-mobilisation strategy, or a data-driven approach to a challenge of their choosing. Working in complex, multi-stakeholder contexts, they move sustainable finance from principle to implementation.

WHAT YOU'LL WORK THROUGH

- Problem framing and context analysis: systems mapping, policy and regulatory landscape, and capital gaps
- Financial strategy or instrument design, with justified risk allocation, governance, and capital structure
- A risk, impact, and measurement framework, including scenario planning and a data strategy
- Implementation and feasibility: institutional readiness, financial sustainability, and scalability

Teaching directed at real-world impact

Our teaching, learning, and research is directed towards building a more economically prosperous, equitable, and integrated continent. Teaching on the programme is designed to drive real-world impact, combining lectures with group discussions, interactive exercises, and practical case studies drawn from across the African continent.

Across courses, leading practitioners from around the African continent join as guest lecturers. They share best practices and real-world experience, adding a critically important applied dimension that grounds the programme's frameworks in live practice.

> "The programme deepened my understanding of how finance can drive social impact, equipping me with the tools to contribute meaningfully to responsible investment and development initiatives across Africa."
> **Gaasite Molefe** Accountant & 2024 MCom candidate

> "What I liked most were the contact sessions we had as a cohort. The fact that the cohort had such a diverse background made the class discussions so much richer, and allowed us to gain insight into the various finance industries."
> **Mathapelo More** Lead Project Engineer, The Project Company & 2024 MCom candidate

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Team and faculty leading the programme at UCT GSB

The Postgraduate Diploma in Development Finance at UCT GSB is supported by a distinguished faculty, renowned for their academic and professional contributions to the field. The faculty includes both full-time academics, visiting professors and field experts, ensuring a rich blend of theoretical knowledge and practical insight.

Dr Cecile Feront

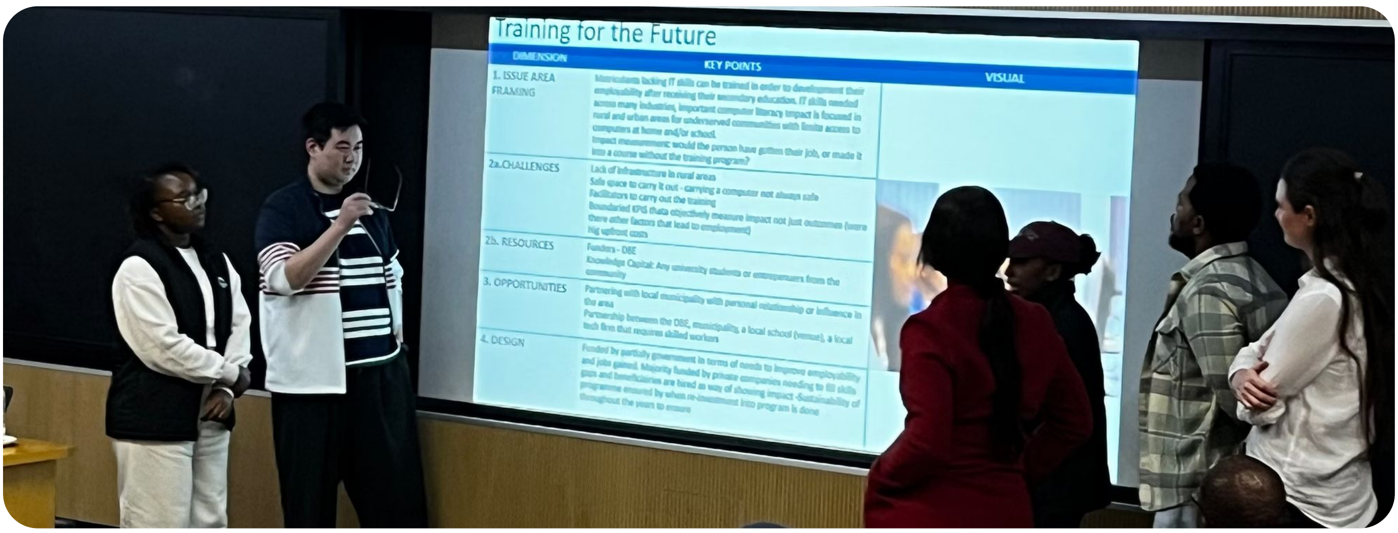
Programme Director. She teaches sustainable finance, and researches how organisations embed sustainability in their strategy. She brings broad experience in strategy and management from past roles in the software industry, renewable energy and the agri-business sector.

Ms Makhadze Baloyi

Programme Coordinator. She supports students throughout their learning journey and ensures the smooth running of the programme.


Hopewell Molefe


Luke Albert
Nelisiwe Kaba


Training for the Future
DIMENSION
KEY POINTS
VISUAL
1. ISSUE AREA FRAMING
2a.CHALLENGES
Lack of infrastructure in rural areas
Facilitators to carry out the training
2b. RESOURCES
Funders - DBE
3. OPPORTUNITIES
4. DESIGN

An interdisciplinary approach to sustainable finance

This is a finance qualification, but it is deliberately designed for people from many backgrounds. Bridging finance and sustainability is interdisciplinary work, and some of the most valuable contributions come from those who bring deep expertise in a sector and want to add the financial fluency to move capital towards it.

Entrance requirements: An NQF level 7 qualification. A minimum of one year of relevant work or internship experience.

The programme is well suited to:

Finance & Investment Professionals

Finance and investment professionals who want to move into sustainable finance or deepen their expertise.

Scientists & Technical Specialists

Scientists and specialists in climate, environmental science, energy, water, agriculture, or health, who want to translate sector knowledge into financeable solutions.

Corporate Practitioners & Infrastructure Professionals

Corporate governance and sustainability professionals who need to access sustainable finance. Engineers and infrastructure professionals structuring, delivering, or advising on the projects that need capital.

Regulators, Lawyers, & Consultants

Regulators, public-sector officials, lawyers, and consultants working on Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) regulation, energy transition, or economic planning.

Mission Driven Actors

NGO, donor, and foundation leads responsible for mobilising or deploying funding for impact.

Future MCom Applicants

Future MCom applicants preparing for advanced study in Development Finance .

No finance background? That is not a barrier. Applicants without a finance background complete a short online finance primer at the start of the programme at no additional cost.

Distinctive features of the programme

The skill set the market is asking for

Industry consultation points to strong and growing demand for professionals who can bridge finance and sustainability. You'll graduate able to speak both languages fluently, combining financial rigour with scientific literacy and systems thinking.

An applied Capstone Project

You'll finish the programme by designing or structuring a real sustainable finance solution, a blended finance deal, a labelled bond, an AI-driven data solution, or a capital-mobilisation strategy, learning to operationalise sustainable finance and move it from principle to implementation.

Rooted in Africa, fluent in global capital

The programme is built around solving the continent's challenges, grounded in its markets, development priorities, and operating realities, while situating those challenges within the frameworks that increasingly govern capital worldwide. You'll learn to mobilise international capital for local impact and to lead across African and international markets alike.

Fluency in the tools shaping the field

Work hands-on with the instruments and frameworks defining sustainable finance today: blended and catalytic capital, labelled and transition bonds, double materiality, non-financial risk accounting, and the use of data and AI to model risks and measure impact.

An interdisciplinary cohort that becomes a network

Learn alongside experienced professionals and faculty from a range of disciplines. Bridging finance and sustainability is inherently interdisciplinary work, and the diversity of the room is part of the education: you'll build cross-sector relationships that outlast the programme itself.

An optimised, work-friendly format

The blended format combines limited intensive in-person blocks in Cape Town with regular structured online learning, designed to limit time away from work so you can apply your learning immediately.

A career at the intersection of finance, development and sustainability

Graduates leave able to work where finance and sustainability meet, a fast-growing space where demand for skilled professionals is strong and rising. The programme opens doors across the ecosystem: whether you are entering sustainable finance for the first time or deepening an established career, you'll be equipped for roles that pair financial rigour with real-world impact.

Roles you'll be equipped for

- Sustainable finance, ESG, or responsible investment specialist
- Sustainability or stewardship lead for a corporate, a fund or a bank
- Impact and climate investment specialist, or sustainability risk analyst
- Blended finance and transaction structurer
- Development finance and DFI professional
- Infrastructure, project, or trade finance advisor
- Policy, regulatory, or advisory roles in the public and non-profit sectors

Sectors hiring for these skills

Commercial banks, development finance institutions, private equity and venture capital, asset managers, pension funds, insurers, infrastructure and impact funds, regulators, government and development agencies, NGOs and foundations, and advisory firms.

A springboard for further study

The diploma also provides a strong foundation for those planning to progress to the MCom in Development Finance or the MBA for advanced study.

Designed with the market. This design of the programme was shaped through consultation with leading banks, investors, development finance institutions, and advisory firms to ensure graduates leave with the capabilities employers are actively hiring for.

> "This was an invaluable programme for my career. I've utilised the skills I learnt in all my courses, in asset management and now in banking. All the courses are relevant; there isn't a single 'filler.'"
> **Mihlali Xzoza** Credit Analyst, Bank of China

Cohort 2026

Take the next step

All applicants are required to submit their ID, a CV, their degree transcripts and certificates, two referee reports, an essay of 500 words discussing the role, opportunities and challenges of sustainable finance over the next 25 years, and a two-minute personal motivation video. Places are limited and offered through a selective process, so early application is encouraged.

Intake / start date

5 April 2027

Duration

12 months, blended (in-person blocks in Cape Town + online)

Programme fee

Please visit the website

Application window

15 July 2026 to 28 February 2027

How to apply

Scan the code, or apply online at gsbconnect.uct.ac.za

Contact us

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