University of Cape Town · iYunivesithi yaseKapa · Universiteit van Kaapstad

Graduate School of BUSINESS
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN



POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA IN DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

APPLIED SUSTAINABLE FINANCE FOR AFRICAN MARKETS

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Sustainable development increasingly requires professionals who can connect environmental and social priorities with the financial decisions needed to implement them.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Development Finance at the UCT Graduate School of Business brings together sustainability science, regulation, financial structuring, capital mobilisation and non-financial risk in an applied qualification designed for African market realities.

Designed for professionals working across finance, investment, policy, energy, sustainability and adjacent technical fields, the programme develops the inter-disciplinary capability needed to assess sustainable-finance challenges and develop credible, context-driven responses.



WHY NOW

+49%

Growth in fund assets applying responsible or sustainable investment approaches over two years — sustainable finance has moved from a niche practice to a systemic consideration. **[Global Sustainable Investment Review, GSIA, 2025]**

56%

Of financial-services roles will require sustainability upskilling as ESG becomes core to the job. **[KPMG / Monetary Authority of Singapore, 2024]**

70,000

Green jobs a year South Africa could add by tripling green investment — with skills shortages named a key barrier. **[PIC & University of Oxford, 2025]**

8+

African countries have introduced ISSB sustainability standards; the AfDB validated a continental taxonomy with 60+ institutions in 2025. **[S&P Global Sustainable; AfDB 2025]**

R6 TRILLION

Investment needed by 2050 for South Africa to decar-bonise,with 15% of GDP, over 1m direct jobs and ~50% of export value at risk. **[NBI/BUSA/BCG, Dec 2022]**

US$ 1.3 TRILLION/Y

What Africa needs per year for climate and SDG finance, against roughly $30 billion per year currently flowing — leaving a significant financing gap. **[UNCTAD, 2023; African Development Bank - African Economic Outlook, 2023]**



HYBRID FORMAT

The programme is delivered over 12 months in a structured hybrid format, combining compulsory face-to-face learning at the UCT GSB Breakwater Campus in Cape Town with compulsory scheduled live-online classes.

Students attend two face-to-face blocks, an initial 10-day block in April followed by a five-day block, in October, with live-online classes normally taking place on Tuesday and Thursday evenings between campus periods.

Group work, individual assessment and applied learning continue throughout the programme, culminating in an applied Capstone Project.

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

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.

ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP FOR SUSTAINABLE FINANCE

Conceptual and contextual foundations

35 CREDITS

SUSTAINABLE MARKETS & CAPITAL MOBILISATION

Financial architecture and instruments

35 CREDITS

MANAGING NON-FINANCIAL RISK & INNOVATING FOR SYSTEMIC IMPACT

Non-financial risk, innovation, and impact measurement

35 CREDITS

CAPSTONE PROJECT

Applied synthesis and real-world delivery

15 CREDITS

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

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
- Blended finance, climate finance and public-private partnerships

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 apply 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, responsible investment and ESG integration across asset classes
- Green, social, gender and outcomes-based finance innovation
- Systemic impact investing; Impact measurement

COURSE 4
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 COVER

- 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

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE PROGRAMME



INTERDISCIPLINARY SUSTAINABLE-FINANCE CAPABILITY

Connect scientific, regulatory, institutional and financial understanding so sustainability priorities can be translated into credible financial decisions.



RISK, IMPACT AND EVIDENCE

Develop stronger judgement around non-financial risk, double materiality, impact, data and the credibility of sustainability claims.



CAPITAL MOBILISATION AND FINANCIAL STRUCTURES

Understand how public, private, concessional and development capital can be mobilised, structured and allocated for projects and institutions in African markets.



FROM PRINCIPLE TO IMPLEMENTATION

Integrate the programme's frameworks and technical tools through an applied Capstone Project focused on a real sustainable-finance challenge.













TEACHING GROUNDED IN PRACTICE

Teaching combines academic frameworks with the realities of sustainable finance in African markets. Students learn through lectures, group discussion, practical exercises, case-based work and applied assignments.

Practitioners and specialists contribute perspectives from across finance, investment, sustainability, policy and related fields, helping students connect the programme's frameworks to live professional contexts.

EXPERTISE ACROSS DISCIPLINES

The programme also draws on specialist expertise from across UCT and the wider sustainable finance ecosystem, including **Power Futures Lab, the Bertha Centre, the Embedding Project and UCT's Energy Systems Research Group.**

The programme also draws on international academic collaborations.

"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
Postgraduate Diploma in Development Finance graduate; Master of Commerce in Development Finance 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
Postgraduate Diploma in Development Finance graduate; Master of Commerce in Development Finance candidate

TEAM LEADING THE PROGRAMME AT UCT GSB



PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Dr Cecile Feront

She is the academic director of the programme, shaping the curriculum and collaborations. She teaches sustainable investment, 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.



PROGRAMME COORDINATOR

Ms Makhadze Baloyi

She is the administrative head of the programme, ensuring its optimum delivery and day-to-day management. With an academic background in development finance, she supports students throughout their learning journey.

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.

THE PROGRAMME IS BUILT FOR PROFESSIONALS ACROSS DISCIPLINES:

FINANCE, BANKING AND INVESTMENT PROFESSIONALS

Professionals who want to add sustainability, regulatory and impact capability to an existing finance base.

PUBLIC-SECTOR AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTITIONERS

Professionals who need stronger financial capability around programmes, infrastructure and institutional priorities.

SUSTAINABILITY AND ESG PROFESSIONALS

Practitioners who need greater financial fluency and implementation capability.

ENGINEERS, LAWYERS AND TECHNICAL SPECIALISTS

Specialists who want to connect sector expertise to markets, regulation, modelling and capital mobilisation.



PROFESSIONAL RELEVANCE

The programme develops capabilities relevant across banking, investment, development finance, infrastructure, sustainability, regulation, consulting and related professional fields.

It can deepen sustainable-finance capability within an existing role or give professionals from adjacent disciplines the financial language and frameworks needed to work more effectively across functions.

FURTHER STUDY

Graduates who want to continue into advanced specialist study may also progress to the Master of Commerce in Development Finance, subject to the relevant admission requirements.

WHY UCT GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

The UCT Graduate School of Business is part of the University of Cape Town and holds triple accreditation from AMBA, EQUIS and AACSB.

Students study within a globally connected African business school with a strong understanding of emerging-market institutions, economies and development challenges.

The Postgraduate Diploma in Development Finance is situated within a specialist development-finance environment that connects rigorous academic learning with the practical challenge of financing sustainable development in Africa and beyond.



PROGRAMME DETAILS
APPLICATION INFORMATION

PROGRAMME FORMATS

12-month hybrid programme

- Two compulsory Cape Town blocks: 2 weeks + 1 week
- Compulsory scheduled live-online classes, normally Tuesday and Thursday evenings
- Group work, individual assessment and applied learning
- Applied Capstone Project

ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS

- NQF Level 7 qualification
- Minimum one year of relevant work or internship experience

NO FINANCE BACKGROUND?

Applicants without a finance background complete online preparation material ahead of the programme, at no additional cost.

HOW TO APPLY / QR CODE

Apply through the Postgraduate Diploma in Development Finance programme page and submit the required supporting documentation.

Scan the QR code or visit the programme page for current programme dates, application deadlines, fees and full application requirements.

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TAKE THE NEXT STEP

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APPLY ONLINE

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