



Future-Proofing Business and the Economy – An Executive Training Programme

COURSE SYLLABUS

21 – 23 September 2026

University of Oxford

by the United Nations Partnership for Action on Green Economy (PAGE)
and the Oxford Smith School of Enterprise and the Environment.



PAGE PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION
ON GREEN ECONOMY



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DESCRIPTION

This executive training programme is designed to equip senior leaders with the insights, tools, and confidence to navigate accelerating global change and the green transition.

Leaders across government, business, finance, and social organisations are increasingly required to make decisions in an environment of growing uncertainty and complexity. The programme supports participants in navigating these dynamics – and in identifying and acting on emerging opportunities – with greater foresight, clarity, and purpose.

Over three days, participants explore how enterprises, economies, and organisations can remain competitive, resilient and inclusive in an increasingly uncertain and multipolar world – and how leaders can drive forward this transformation within their own institutions. This involves examining the key economic, environmental, and technological and policy forces reshaping economies – alongside the risks and opportunities these shifts present for business, government and society.

Through a combination of expert lectures, panel discussions, and interactive workshops, the programme strengthens participants' capacity to interpret emerging trends and respond strategically within both public and private sector contexts. With a strong emphasis on cross-sector dialogue and practical application, the programme supports participants in thinking systemically about their own organisational and policy contexts, and in identifying realistic pathways for action.



WHO IS IT FOR?

The executive training programme is geared towards:

- Senior management of private companies with a lead role in sustainability, strategy, or risk management.
- Senior officials from Ministries of Finance, Economy, Industry, Planning, Labour, Environment and other relevant government agencies.
- Executives from central banks and other financial institutions engaged in the transition towards net-zero.
- Representatives from workers' and employers' associations, civil society and the development sector engaged in a green and just transition.

WHAT WILL YOU LEARN?

By the end of the programme, participants will be able to:

- Describe the major economic, environmental, technological, and policy trends shaping the green transition, and outline their implications for economies and businesses
- Explain how macro-level trends interact with policy instruments and market mechanisms to shape competitiveness, resilience, and equity outcomes across public and private sector contexts
- Use relevant tools and frameworks to begin identifying emerging risks and opportunities from the green transition within their own policy or institutional context
- Analyse the trade-offs, political economy considerations, and distributional impacts of different policy and business scenarios and strategies
- Develop a leadership action plan that draws on the main elements of effective transition strategies to drive forward the green transition within their own institution



PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

The programme combines self-paced online learning with an intensive three-day, face-to-face training in Oxford, providing participants with exclusive access to world-renowned Oxford faculty, UN experts, and an international peer group of leaders.

Online, self-paced learning

Participants will complete 4–5 hours of self-paced online learning in advance of the 3-day in-person training. The online learning content draws from UN PAGE e-learning courses and ensures a common understanding of key terms and concepts ahead of the training in Oxford. An online introductory webinar will also be held for participants to meet before arriving for the in-person training in Oxford.

Day 1: Key Trends and Drivers of Change

Day 1 focuses on the global, macro-level forces reshaping economies and enterprises. Individual sessions examine climate risk, changing economic paradigms, technological change and diffusion, global supply chains, and digital innovation, and explore the implications these shifts have for competitiveness, resilience, inclusion and long-term transformation. Through the panel discussion and signal-scanning workshop, the day helps participants move beyond linear or siloed interpretations of change towards a more systems-level understanding of uncertainty, emerging risk, and strategic opportunity.

Day 2: Future-Proofing and Strategic Decision-Making

Day 2 examines how the macro-level forces explored on Day 1 interact with policies and markets. Sessions focus on public finance and resilience, climate policies, environmental markets, and circular economy approaches and the implications for labour markets, skills, and employment. The day is designed to help participants understand how policy choices, market mechanisms, and institutional arrangements shape behaviour, distributional outcomes, and the real-world effectiveness of the green transition, and how these can be aligned to future-proof more resilient economies and enterprises.

Day 3: Leading the Transition

Day 3 shifts the focus to organisational response and leadership in practice. Sessions examine how governments and enterprises can design and assess credible transition strategies, track progress in response to growing accountability pressures, and manage increasing legal risks. The final workshop and Leadership Challenge sessions provide a structured space for participants to translate the insights gained from the programme into practical commitments and action plans, tailored to their own organisational and policy contexts – supporting the move from strategy to execution.

	Day 1: Key Trends and Drivers of Change	Day 2: Future-Proofing and Strategic Decisions	Day 3: Leading the Transition
9:00 – 9:15	Opening: Framing the Challenge Stefania Innocenti (SSEE)	Recap and Reflection Day 1 Stefania Innocenti (SSEE)	Recap and Reflection Day 2 Stefania Innocenti (SSEE)
9:15 – 10:00	Assessing Climate Risks and Seizing Opportunities Sam Fankhauser (SSEE)	Reshaping our Economies: Public Finance, Resilience and the Green Economy in Practice Steven Stone (UNEP)	Designing strategies for Sustainability and Responsibility Bettina Wittneben (SBS)
10:00 – 10:45	Rethinking the Economy and Economics Eric Beinhocker (INET / BSG)	Designing Climate Policies for Real World Outcomes Sam Fankhauser (SSEE) Sugandha Srivastav (SSEE)	Tracking Progress and Strengthening Accountability Alexis McGivern (SSEE)
10:45 – 11:15	Morning break		
11:15 – 12:00	Mapping Economic Growth, and Technology Progress and Diffusion François Lafond (INET / SSEE)	Addressing Climate Challenges in Markets Sophus zu Ermgassen (Biology)	Managing Legal Duties and Climate Liability Rupert Stuart-Smith (SSEE)
12:00 – 12:45	Building Greener and Resilient Global Supply Chains Smail Alhilali (UNIDO) Ozumini Iti (UNIDO)	Tackling Resource Constraints through Circular Economy Strategies Caitlin McElroy (SSEE)	Leading the Transition (UNITAR)
12:45 – 13:45	Lunch		
13:45 – 14:30	Harnessing Digital Innovation in Policy and Business Reina Otsuka (UNDP)	Building Skills and Jobs for a Greener Future Hae Kyeung Chun (ILO)	Interactive Workshop: Risks and Reflexivity Amrei Horstbrink (UNITAR) Reina Otsuka (UNDP) Luciana Fontes de Meira (UNEP)
14:30 – 15:30	Panel: Navigating Uncertainty Across Technology, Narratives and the Green Transition Chair: Steven Stone (UNEP) Reina Otsuka (UNDP) Anupama Sen (SSEE) James Painter (Oxford Reuters Institute of Politics) Francois Lafond (INET / BSG)	Panel: Delivering a Just Transition Chair: Amrei Horstbrink (UNITAR) Hae Kyeung Chun (ILO) Jessica Omukuti (INSIS) Tanya O'Garra (SSEE)	Leadership Challenge – Action Planning (Parallel Sessions) Stefania Innocenti (SSEE) Lucy Erickson (SSEE) Giovani Palafox-Alcantar (SSEE) Ranjita Rajan (SSEE Business Fellow) Amrei Horstbrink (UNITAR) Reina Otsuka (UNDP) Luciana Fontes de Meira (UNEP)
15:30 – 16:00	Afternoon break		
16:00 – 17:00	Interactive Workshop: Signal Scanning Amrei Horstbrink (UNITAR) Reina Otsuka (UNDP) Luciana Fontes de Meira (UNEP)	Interactive Workshop: Future Scenarios Amrei Horstbrink (UNITAR) Reina Otsuka (UNDP) Luciana Fontes de Meira (UNEP)	Leadership Challenge – Action Planning (Parallel Sessions)
			Closing Remarks Stefania Innocenti (SSEE) Sam Fankhauser (SSEE)
Evening	Networking Activity: Oxford Walking Tour	Networking Formal Dinner: Oxford College Keynote: Cameron Hepburn (SSEE)	Networking Reception TBC: Oxford Historic Venue

DAY 1 – 21ST SEP 2026 – KEY TRENDS AND DRIVERS OF CHANGE

09:00 – 09:15 | Opening Session: Framing the Challenge

Dr Stefania Innocenti (SSEE)

This opening session sets the context for the programme, outlining its objectives, structure and underlying rationale. It frames the scale and interconnected nature of today's economic, technological and environmental challenges, and introduces the systems perspective that will underpin discussions over the three days.

09:15 – 10:00 | Assessing Climate Risks and Seizing Opportunities

Prof Sam Fankhauser (SSEE)

This session examines climate change, and our response to it, as a systemic source of economic risk and opportunity. It explores how physical climate impacts, transition dynamics and policy responses affect economic stability and growth prospects. The session also considers how climate change might reshape economic competitiveness.

10:00 – 10:45 | Rethinking the Economy and Economics

Prof Eric Beinhocker (INET / BSG)

This session explores emerging ideas that challenge the dominant economic framework of recent decades. Drawing on a broad body of interdisciplinary research and practical experience in policy and business, the session contrasts this potential new paradigm with the neoliberal consensus that shaped economic policy from the late 20th century onward. The discussion contrasts the two approaches and examines what a shift in economic paradigm could mean for policy, markets and the green transition.

11:15 – 12:00 | Mapping Economic Growth, and Technology Progress and Diffusion

Dr François Lafond (INET / SSEE)

This session explores how technological change unfolds and translates into productivity growth and broader economic transformation. It starts from the productivity paradox: if technology seems to be accelerating, why is productivity slowing down? The session answers by providing a broad historical perspective, explaining that technological progress and technology diffusion can be slow, differ widely across technologies, and that their ultimate impact depends on a multitude of factors. The session then focuses on technological change in the context of the net-zero transition, reviewing the performance of key technologies. Building on modern technology forecasting tools, it assesses whether the transition will be beneficial or costly, and how fast it will take place concluding with brief reflections on AI.

12:00 – 12:45 | Building Greener and Resilient Global Supply Chains

Smail Alhilali & Ozumini Iti (UNIDO)

This session examines how global supply chains can be strategically redesigned to remain competitive, adaptive and sustainable amid rising uncertainty and structural shifts in the global economy. Drawing on practical examples and experiences from circular economy and green industrial development, it explores how firms can enhance resilience by reducing exposure to external shocks, lowering resource intensity and accelerating decarbonization across value chains. The session further analyses how evolving trade and policy landscapes – including carbon border adjustment mechanisms, sustainability standards and new industrial policies – are reshaping production systems and market access. Participants gain actionable insights into balancing resilience, cost efficiency and sustainability to future-proof supply chain strategies.

13:45 – 14:30 Harnessing Digital Innovation in Policy and Business

Reina Otsuka (UNDP)

This session explores how countries are using digital technologies and digital transformation to accelerate the green transition. It introduces recent digital concepts, highlights practical use cases, and examines their implications for public and private sector innovation. Participants are invited to apply a whole-of-society digital transformation framework to assess their digital readiness and explore how digital tools can enhance policy implementation, business decision-making and environmental outcomes.

14:30 – 15:30 | Panel: Navigating Uncertainty across Technology, Narratives and Policy in the Green Transition

Chair: Steven Stone (UNEP); Panelists: Reina Otsuka (UNDP), Anupama Sen (SSEE), James Painter (Oxford Reuters Institute of Politics), Francois Lafond (INET / SSEE)

Drawing on perspectives from innovation economics, climate communication, digital governance and international policy practice, panellists examine how technologies scale, how public opinion and media influence regulatory choices, and how digital tools can support or hinder effective action. The discussion highlights the interplay between innovation, political economy and public trust, and considers how leaders can navigate these dynamics under conditions of uncertainty.

16:00 – 17:00 | Interactive Workshop: Signal Scanning

Amrei Horstbrink (UNITAR), Reina Otsuka (UNDP), Luciana Fontes de Meira (UNEP)

Drawing on the macro-level explored across Day 1, participants engage in a structured signal scanning exercise in small groups to identify emerging trends, signals of change, and key uncertainties relevant to their policy or institutional context. Participants cluster signals, identify

underlying drivers, and explore potential risks and opportunities. The exercise supports a more systematic understanding of how global dynamics may play out in practice, and generates insights that feed into Day 2 discussions.

18:00 Evening | Oxford Walking Tour (TBC)

DAY 2 — 22ND SEP 2026 – FUTURE-PROOFING AND STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING

09:00 – 09:15 | Recap and Reflection on Day 1

Dr Stefania Innocenti (SSEE)

09:15 – 10:00 Reshaping our Economies: Public Finance, Resilience and the Green Economy in Practice

Steven Stone (UNEP)

Economies are transformed through deliberate choices that shape how public investment flows, what governments choose to value, and how the costs of market failure are distributed. Drawing on real-world reform experiences, this session explores how governments are using public and private finance as levers for structural change: redirecting subsidies, greening budgets, developing sustainable finance taxonomies, and strengthening the institutional and informational foundations for more coherent and evidence-based decision-making. It examines what resilience looks like in practice – when it becomes embedded in policy, how reforms are sequenced, and where fiscal policy creates trade-offs and political economy frictions. The session also reflects on how countries are navigating across growth, equity and long-term sustainability objectives, including advancing a just and inclusive transition – while challenging participants to reflect on what it takes to future-proof an economy in practice, not just in theory.

10:00 – 10:45 – Designing Climate Policies for Real World Outcomes

Prof Sam Fankhauser (SSEE) and/or Dr Sugandha Srivastav (SSEE)

This session introduces a microeconomic perspective on climate policy, focusing on how governments use policy instruments to influence the behaviour of firms, households and investors. It examines the rationale for public intervention and compares the strengths and limitations of regulatory approaches, carbon pricing, subsidies and other policy tools. The session also explores political-economy challenges that shape policy adoption, implementation and durability.

11:15 – 12:00 | Addressing Climate Challenges in Markets

Dr Sophus zu Ermgassen (Biology)

This session explores the role of environmental markets in addressing climate and nature-related challenges. It examines how markets for carbon, biodiversity and ecosystem services are designed, how they function in practice, and where they succeed or fall short. The discussion highlights issues of integrity, incentives and governance, and considers how environmental markets interact with regulation and public policy.

12:00 – 12:45 | Tackling Resource Constraints Through Circular Economy Strategies

Dr Caitlin McElroy (SSEE)

This session explores the economic implications of natural capital depletion and resource constraints. It examines how circular economy approaches can reduce environmental pressure while creating new economic opportunities, highlighting risks associated with linear production models using examples from critical minerals and agriculture.

13:45 – 14:30 | Building Skills and Jobs for a Greener Future

Hae Kyeong Chun (ILO)

This session explores how the transition toward greener, more sustainable economies is transforming labour markets, business, and the demand for skills. It examines the profound implications of the green transition for employment, enterprises, and national development trajectories, highlighting why timely anticipation of skills needs is essential for competitiveness and inclusive growth. Drawing on global evidence and country experiences, the session unpacks the challenges that governments and enterprises face in keeping pace with rapidly evolving skill demands and discusses strategic responses available to policymakers and business leaders.

14:30 – 15:30 Panel: Delivering a Just Transition

Chair: Amrei Horstbrink (UNITAR); Panellists: Hae Kyeong Chun (ILO), Dr Tanya O'Garra (SSEE), and Dr Jessica Omukuti (INSIS)

This panel brings together perspectives on climate justice, labour markets, digital transformation, and environmental change to examine how the green transition affects people and livelihoods. It explores who stands to benefit – and who risks being left behind – as economies decarbonise, and how policy, markets, and governance choices shape distributional outcomes. The discussion highlights the implications for workers, vulnerable groups and communities, and considers how strategies across climate, labour, and development can be better aligned to ensure that transitions are not only effective but fair, resilient, and inclusive.

16:00 – 17:00 | Interactive Workshop: Future Scenarios

Amrei Horstbrink (UNITAR), Reina Otsuka (UNDP), Luciana Fontes de Meira (UNEP)

Building on the drivers, risks and opportunities identified on Day 1, participants engage in a scenario development exercise to explore possible future pathways across different sectors. Working in small groups, they develop scenarios based on key uncertainties, as a basis for identifying strategic responses relevant to their policy or institutional context. The exercise encourages participants to reflect on how macro-forces, policies, and markets interact – setting things up for the discussions on Day 3.

19:00 Evening | Formal Dinner + Keynote Speaker

Prof Cameron Hepburn (SSEE)

DAY 3 – 23RD SEP 2026 – LEADING THE TRANSITION

09:00 – 09:15 | Recap and Reflection on Day 2

Dr Stefania Innocenti (SSEE)

09:15 – 10:00 | Designing Strategies for Sustainability and Responsibility

Dr Bettina Wittneben (SBS)

This session revisits the purpose of strategy in both private and public institutions before examining what makes sustainability-oriented strategy distinct. Drawing on examples from enterprises, government agencies and other organisations pursuing net-zero and sustainable development objectives, it explores how private, public and social enterprises can design credible strategies and assess progress over time.

10:00 – 10:45 | Tracking Progress and Strengthening Accountability

Alexis McGivern (SSEE)

This session examines the role of tracking mechanisms and governance frameworks in driving accountability and credibility across a landscape of net-zero commitments. It explores the growth and value of increasingly convergent best practice guidance, the challenge of gathering decision-useful data in disclosure standards, and the value of stakeholder engagement in assessing progress towards global net zero.

11:15 – 12:00 | Managing Legal Duties and Climate Liability

Dr Rupert Stuart-Smith (SSEE)

This session examines the evolving nature of companies' climate-related legal duties including prospect of corporate liability for climate change impacts. It will explore how litigation informed by

developments in climate science is concretising legal duties to mitigate climate change, and the financial implications of legal action for firms and governments.

12:00 – 12:45 | Leading the Transition

(UNITAR)

This session examines what effective transition leadership looks like in practice, and how senior leaders can translate ambition into concrete action and measurable progress. It explores the challenges of navigating competing priorities, managing risk, building internal alignment, and sustaining institutional momentum in an environment of uncertainty. The session highlights the capabilities needed to lead across systems, sectors, and stakeholders, and sets the stage for the Leadership Challenge where participants apply these insights to their own institutional contexts.

13:45 – 14:30 | Interactive Workshop: Risks and Reflexivity

Amrei Horstbrink (UNITAR), Reina Otsuka (UNDP), Luciana Fontes de Meira (UNEP)

In the final interactive workshop, participants reflect on the scenarios developed on Day 2 to translate future pathways into concrete actions. Through a structured exchange in plenary, each small group defines the institutional actions that would enable them to successfully navigate the major uncertainties and risks identified during the previous two workshops. The discussions lead directly into the Leadership Challenge and Action Planning sessions that follow, where participants translate these institutional priorities into personal leadership commitments to drive transformation in their policy or organisational context.

14:30 – 17:00 (including break) | Leadership Challenge – Action Planning (Parallel Sessions)

Group A and Group B (Facilitators: Stefania Innocenti (SSEE), Lucy Erickson (SSEE), Giovani Palafox-Alcantar (SSEE), Ranjita Rajan (SSEE Business Fellow), Amrei Horstbrink (UNITAR), Reina Otsuka (UNDP), Luciana Fontes de Meira (UNEP)

The Leadership Challenge – Action Planning sessions serve to capture the key insights generated throughout the programme. In the back-to-back sessions, participants present a concrete leadership or organisational challenge they have identified and, through a combination of peer exchange, facilitator guidance, and expert input, develop a practical individual action plan tailored to their policy or organisational context. Participants are divided into groups to ensure in-depth discussion, and invited at the end of the sessions to pitch their individual action plan and commitments to the full group.

17:00 – 17:15 | Closing Remarks

Dr Stefania Innocenti (SSEE) and Prof Sam Fankhauser (SSEE)

CONTACT US

If you have any additional questions in the meantime or would like to discuss your potential participation, please do not hesitate to contact:
executive.education@smithschool.ox.ac.uk



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