



NWoW4Net-Zero

Learning Guide



NWOW₄NET-ZERO PROJECT

Learning guide



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Learning guide for users of New Ways of Working for net zero emission: HR managers, consultants, vocational/ higher education instructors



Welcome to the future of work learning guide: navigating New Ways of Working for Net Zero Emission practices in the workplace!

Today's world is often defined by common environmental consciousness, sustainable practices, and digital innovation, which means the role of Human Resources (HR) managers, consultants, and vocational/higher education instructors now goes beyond traditional boundaries. Today, these professionals are not only responsible for shaping efficient and harmonious workplaces, but are also important in driving the global shift towards a greener and more sustainable future.

This learning guide is crafted for HR managers, consultants, and vocational/higher education instructors who would like to understand the complexity of Net Zero Emission initiatives in the workplace. Whether you are looking to transform your office into an eco-friendly space, facilitate energy-conscious commuting solutions, or minimise digital pollution, this guide will equip you with the knowledge and tools needed to foster sustainable practices within your organisation or for the people's organisations who you are tutoring.

While education often feels synonymous with classrooms and textbooks, its essence extends far beyond the confines of formal institutions. In the current learning guide,

we try to adapt the online learning systems that have been recommended over the last decades to optimise the relationship between the learning requirement and content of the course in a way that the learning outcome could be obtained with minimum time and interaction expended on a course.

In this guide, three learning paths are introduced:

- **New Ways of Working:** Hybrid work: what forms of hybridity between 'office-based work' (working in the office, satellite offices, etc.) and 'remote working' (at home, in other non-office locations...) can best contribute to a positive environmental impact, and under which conditions?
- **Work-related mobility:** What methodologies and (digital) solutions can contribute to reducing travel and positively impact carbon footprint?
- **Responsible use of IT and digital sobriety:** What (digital) solutions and HR practices support Responsible Digital Behaviour and Digital Sobriety in organisations?



The ultimate goal for the learners is graphically described in Figure 1. Based on the learner's background, the learning objectives and needs, the learner will be recommended to select between the three topics and content.

The learner will then be guided to a knowledge platform, an interactive environment, in which users can easily learn and obtain information and knowledge about new ways of working and how they can be introduced into organisations via HR.

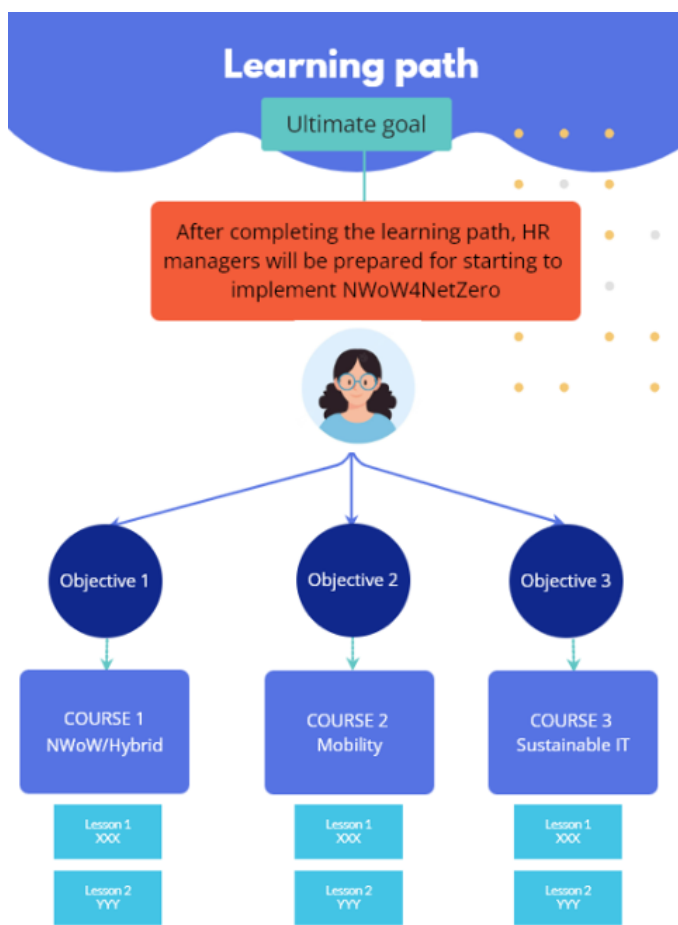


Figure 1. Ultimate goal for HR managers, consultants, and vocational/higher education instructors who would like to understand the complexity of Net Zero Emission initiatives in the workplace.

What is a learning path?

A learning path is a route that students can take through a training program that allows them to take a set of courses and weave them together into a cohesive learning journey. A learning path is defined as a *sequence* of learning tasks or activities which are designated to assist the student in improving their knowledge or skill in the particular subject (Kardan et al., 2015). Essentially, learning paths break the learning process down into manageable chunks and looks like a roadmap, with milestones that lead to the intended learning goals. In other words, a learning path is composed of several specific goals achieved when students have completed various parts and tasks of course material broken down into smaller specific modules.

How to adapt the online learning systems has been researched extensively over the last decades to optimise the relationship between the learning requirement and content of the course in a way that the learning outcome could be obtained with minimum time and interaction expended on a course (Yarandi et al., 2012). Main types of adaptation discussed are characteristics of the students, learning style, and context history (i.e. previous and/or contextual knowledge of the topic) (Knowles et al., 2020; Merriam & Berriema, 2014; Muhammad et al., 2016; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 2017) shortly introduced here:

Motivation is a key factor in adult learning, as adults are more likely to engage in learning activities that are relevant to their personal goals and interests. Adult learners are often motivated by a desire to improve their job prospects, advance their careers, or learn new skills that they can apply in their personal lives.

Self-efficacy, or an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in a particular task or activity, is also important in adult learning. Adults who have high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to engage in learning activities and persist in the face of challenges or setbacks.



Prior knowledge and experience can also play a role in adult learning, as adults often have a wealth of experience and knowledge that they can draw upon when learning new information or skills. Adults may also have preconceived notions or beliefs that can affect their ability to learn and adapt to new information or perspectives.

In addition to these factors, adult learners may also face certain barriers to learning, such as time constraints, financial limitations, or competing priorities. Adult learners may also have different learning styles or preferences, which can affect their engagement and motivation in the learning process.

Learning path in online learning systems refers to a sequence of learning objects which are designated to help the students in improving their knowledge or skill in particular subjects or degree courses. Traditionally various E-learning systems offered a “one size fits all” approach providing the same educational resources in the same way to users with different profiles which often resulted in learning disorientation and cognitive overload when users were provided with a bag of disorganised learning materials (Basu, Bhattacharya, & Roy, 2013). Therefore, personalising the learning paths has become a significant task due to differences in users’ limitations, backgrounds, goals, etc. and a variety of learning path personalization methods using different techniques and approaches has been proposed (Nabizadeth et al., 2020).

There are a few problems with this “one size fits all” approach to online-learning that result in it being harder to persuade users to take the course and/or to complete it, which include:

- restricted learning experience of users, particularly when they are not familiar with a course, or when they had limited time to learn it.
- frequent failure to complete the course when the users’ knowledge background and their ability to learn is not considered which results in them feeling that they are wasting their time with the materials they are unable to learn.
- disregarding the users’ preferences (e.g. learning style).
- ignoring the users’ progress and changes during the learning process.

Providing an optimal learning path tailoring to the context of the learners is a crucial issue in online learning adaptation. An optimal learning path could reduce the student’s cognitive overload and disorientation, keep students interested, does not undermine the self-efficacy to learn (tasks are too hard, material is too long, etc.), and makes references to the user’s personal experience. The main challenge in creating the personalised learning path is combining the wide diversity among the individuals/learners with the specific characteristic of the learning objects (i.e. considering various learning styles, cognitive styles, learning goals, as well as the knowledge structure of the topics) (Muhammad et al., 2016).



Learning approaches for adults

Adult learning theories are frameworks that help explain how adults learn and how educators can best design learning experiences to meet the needs of adult learners. There are many theories of adult learning, each emphasising different aspects of the learning process. Here we'll look at some of them which should be considered when teaching HR students, practitioners, or consultants about New Ways of Working for Net Zero Emission. We consider next four adult learning approaches as the most relevant to our context and needs, and review them shortly:

1. Self-directed learning

2. Transformative learning

3. Contextual teaching and learning

4. Competency-based training

Self-directed learning (SDL) is a "process in which individuals take the initiative, without the help of others" in planning, carrying out, and evaluating their own learning experiences (Knowles, 1975). It is estimated that approximately 70 % of adult learning is self-directed (Cross, 1981). Developed by Malcolm Knowles (1975), the importance of self-directed learning and the active involvement of learners in the learning process is considered critical when teaching adult students. Adult learners are most motivated when they can see the relevance of learning to their own goals and experiences. Most SDL occurs outside of the classroom and is an informal process. SDL is seen as "self-directed" because the learner is responsible for making decisions about the content, methods, resources, and evaluation of their learning. In this process, individuals take charge of their own learning by identifying

their needs, setting goals, finding resources, implementing a plan to achieve those goals, and assessing the outcomes. Different from a teacher-centred approach to learning, self-directed learning emphasises the active involvement and autonomy of the learner.

There are several key components of SDL, including (1) self-assessment, (2) goal-setting, (3) planning, (4) implementation, and (5) evaluation. Self-assessment involves reflecting on one's own strengths, weaknesses, and learning needs. Goal-setting involves identifying specific, measurable, and achievable learning objectives. Planning involves developing a plan for achieving those objectives, including identifying resources and strategies. Implementation involves carrying out the plan, and evaluation involves assessing one's progress and outcomes (Loeng, 2020).

The role of the teacher/instructor here is to (1) introduce the structure of the study module(s); (2) facilitate the self-assessment of the prior knowledge of the topics; (3) guide developing relevant, and achievable learning goals with realistic time-frame; (4) creating opportunities for discussion, answering students' questions and/or giving examples on particular topics; (5) creating self-evaluation tools (tests, essay, tasks etc) to check how well the material is acquired and/or can be applied in real life.

Transformative learning (TL) was originally introduced by Jack Mezirow in the late 1970s, and it is a process through which learners critically reflect on their assumptions and beliefs, reconsider their perspectives, and ultimately transform their understanding of themselves and their world. This transformation is often described as a shift in consciousness, as learners begin to question and challenge their deeply held beliefs, assumptions, and values, and ultimately create new ways of understanding and interacting with the world.



TL has been applied in a variety of educational settings, including adult education, higher education, and professional development programs. It has been used to address a range of topics, from personal growth and self-awareness to social justice and sustainability (Taylor, 2007). There are several key components of TL, including:

- (1) critical reflection;
- (2) dialogue and discourse;
- (3) transformative action.

Critical reflection involves a deep examination of one's assumptions, beliefs, and values, and an openness to new perspectives and ways of thinking. Dialogue and discourse involve the exchange of ideas and perspectives with others and can be used to challenge and expand one's understanding. Transformative action involves taking concrete steps to act on one's new understanding, and to create change in oneself and the world around them.

Instructors are expected to guide that transformative process by

- 01. Asking questions of pro's and con's of changing the ways of working to be more environmentally friendly**
- 02. Developing dialogue about the importance and possibilities of reducing the ecological impact of workplaces on environment / contributing to climate change for worse**
- 03. Identifying the prevailing discourse among employees concerning "going green" at workplaces, including how new ways of (hybrid) working contribute to reducing carbon emission, what is green IT and how to achieve it, how the current amount of urban mobility can be changed for being more sustainable etc.**
- 04. Initiating dialogue among students / employees about possible actions to change the situation at the workplace (from small steps to bigger actions) and what specifically motivates them to stick to (lifestyle) changes; what can be key indicators of progress; how small everyday actions accumulate to bigger changes etc.**

Contextual teaching and learning (CTL) emphasises the connection between classroom (online) learning and real-world situations (Hull, 1993). CTL seeks to create meaningful learning experiences for learners by connecting classroom or web-based instruction to the larger social, cultural, and economic context of the (everyday life) of learners. The basic idea behind CTL is that learning is most effective when it is situated in a meaningful context that relates to the learner's experiences and interests. This can involve using real-world examples of workplaces, incorporating local culture and history (examples of previous successful projects contributing to changing the environment and/or failures and their consequences), and addressing relevant social and environmental issues. By connecting classroom/online learning to real-world situations, CTL seeks to make learning more relevant and engaging for students, and to help them develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the world beyond the classroom / internet website.

Some of the key principles of CTL include (Merriam et al., 2007; Westera, 2011):

- Meaningful learning through real-world situations and contexts,
- Fostering active, collaborative, and inquiry-based learning,
- Using authentic assessment to evaluate learning,
- Emphasising the development of 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication,
- Incorporating technology and multimedia to support learning.

The role of instructors to support CTL are to create opportunities for discussion about new ways of working for net zero emission, provide respective examples, encourage



students to share their experiences and good practices from their workplaces, search and critically evaluate information obtained from various sources, offering solutions to practical problems in their workplaces.

For enhancing the learning experience, instructors, especially in a classroom setting are encouraged to use the following tools in case studies, role play, scenario analysis.

Competency-based training (CBT)

focuses on developing specific skills and competencies that are directly relevant to a particular occupation or job (Kerka, 1998). This approach emphasises the mastery of specific skills rather than the accumulation of credit hours or the completion of a fixed curriculum. CBT typically involves a series of learning activities, assessments, and performance evaluations that are designed to help learners develop and demonstrate the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform effectively in a particular job or occupation. The focus is on demonstrating mastery of a set of competencies rather than simply completing a course of study.

One of the benefits of CBT is that it allows learners to progress at their own pace, based on their individual needs and abilities. Learners can focus on the specific skills and competencies they need to develop, rather than being forced to complete a fixed curriculum. This can make learning more engaging and relevant, and can help learners build confidence and motivation (Cao et al., 2022)

The role of an instructor is to create assignments where learners can demonstrate how they solve specific issues related to various problems/topics of new ways of working, work-related mobility, and responsible use of IT and digital sobriety in their organisation/ workplace.

To sum up, adult learners have specific preferences when it comes to learning, and educators must be sensitive to these needs if they are to design effective learning experiences. Therefore, creating learning paths for HR managers step by step includes:

- 01. An in-depth analysis of the target audience in terms of their current competency level and learning gaps. Based on that, the main goal of an entire learning path is defined, followed by dividing it into smaller objectives;**
- 02. Creating milestones as the human brain is designed to remember information better when it is organised and divided into smaller pieces. Therefore, the training must follow a logical order of lessons, arranged from the simplest to the more complex. The result should be a logical sequence of learning topics;**
- 03. Preparing the learning content involves gathering all the learning activities together (e.g. some video lectures, guides, podcasts, and documents), and building a LP in a learning management system (an online platform that enables to create, deliver, and monitor online training in a single place).**

Three (most common) ways that users can progress through learning tracks are:

- a scheduled learning track;
- a sequenced learning track, and
- a track with free order.

A scheduled learning track enables learners to escape from scrolling through the entire path, to finish it quickly; instead, a clear schedule of which day each course/lesson in his/her pathway will open. A sequenced learning track is useful when it is relevant to control the order in which learners take the course/lesson. Learners will be automatically given access to the next course immediately after completing the previous one. A track with free order is suitable when the sequence of topics or activities is not important. In that case, all lessons can be available at once so the learners can decide in which order it is most convenient to take them.

Altogether, training for the New Ways of Working for Net-Zero emission starts with mapping the needs of learners using an online on-line checklist.



Mapping the needs and starting learning

Mapping the needs of learners consists of several steps. At first, some questions about company demographics are asked followed by questions that help the respondent to determine his/her role in HR in terms of the new ways of working for net zero emission (strategic partner, administrative partner, employee champion, change agent). Based on those answers recommendations for learning paths are recommended by the program.

By doing this, the interactive learning paths are able to provide more personalised information to the respondent. By identifying what HR archetype the respondent falls into (Strategic Partner, Change Agent, Administrative Expert, or Employee Champion), the learning path can be streamlined to allow for a more focused experience.

At second stage, an HR employee/student can evaluate how environmentally friendly is HRM in their organisations (including which aspects of sustainability policy they already

use in their workplace), as well as his/her current skills and needs for additional learning concerning specific 6 subtopics (stakeholders, culture, tools, HR processes, inspiring initiatives, recommendations) of 3 modules of the project:

- 1. NWOW-hybrid work
- 2. sustainable mobility
- 3. sustainable and responsible use of IT

Based on the answers, recommendations for learning path(s) follow (which modules and subtopics should be the most interesting/useful for the learner based on how they position themselves within their organisation in terms of a respective HR role. The structure of modules (blue columns) and subtopics (various shadows of green rows) is shown in figure 2.

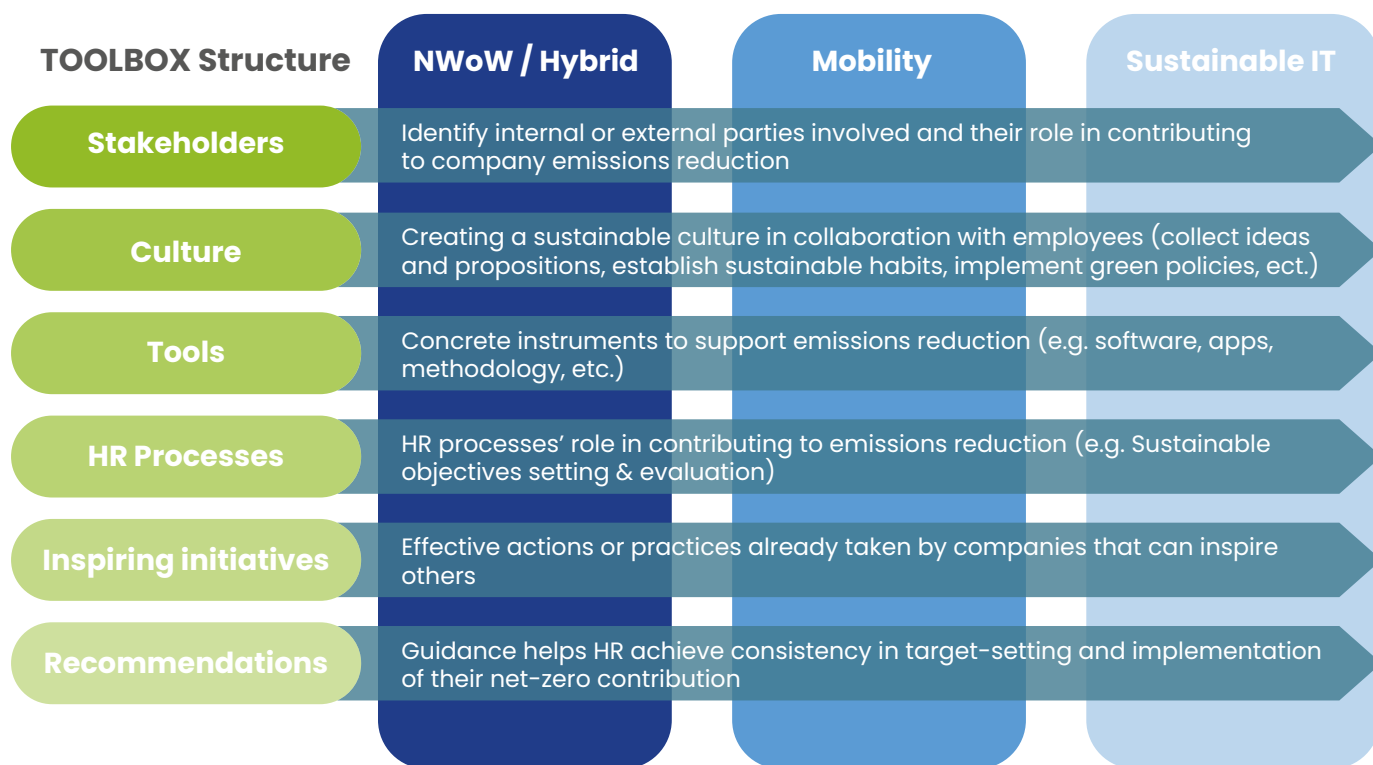


Figure 2. Structure of learning modules

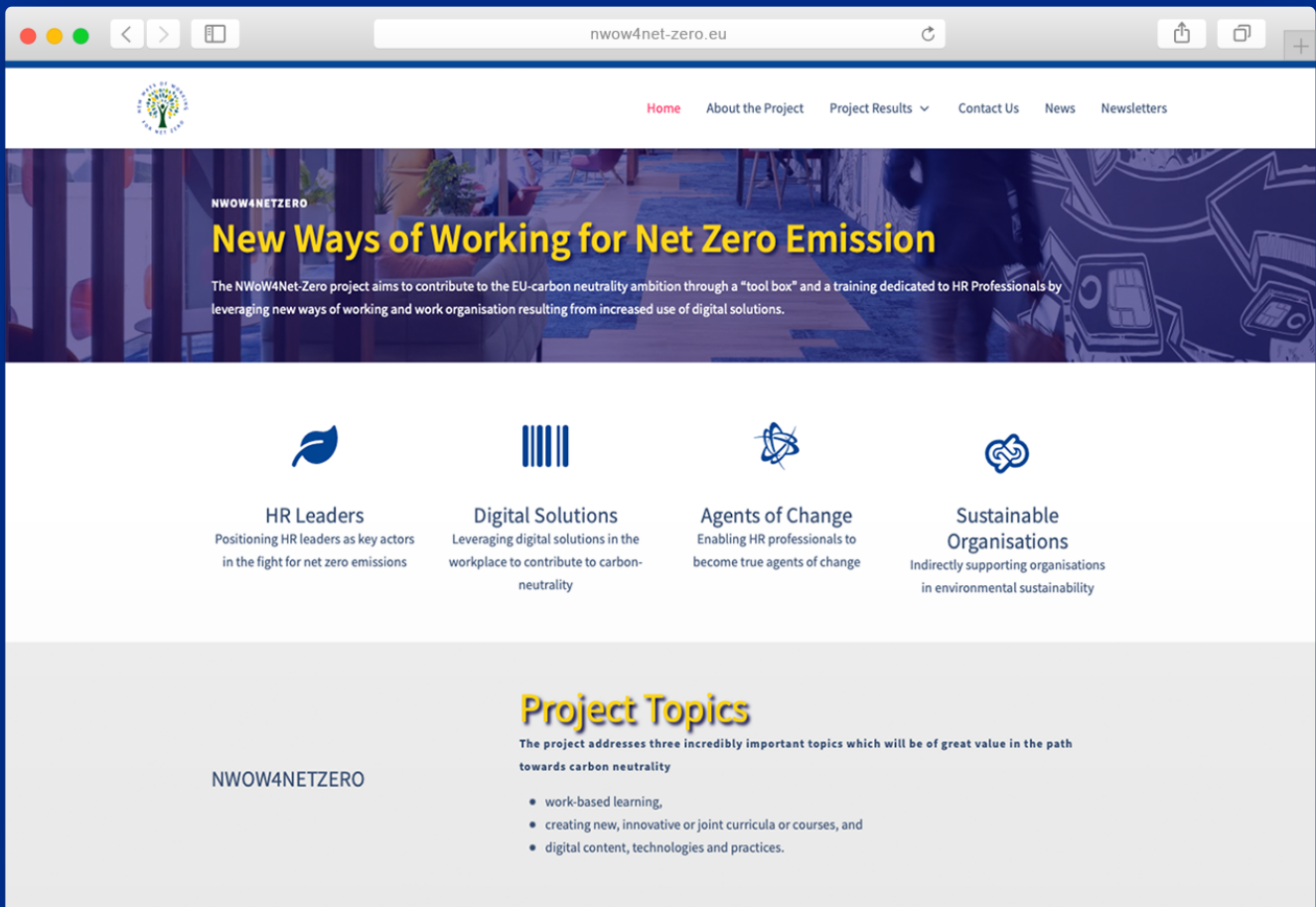
Of course, the learner is allowed to make his/her own choices and read all material available.



What next?

The learning paths are available in NWoW4NetZero webpage:

<https://nwow4net-zero.eu/index.php/en/>



You can access the training toolkits here (under Project Results):

<https://nwow4net-zero.eu/index.php/en/project-results-en-gb/pr1-training-toolkits>

You can access the learning paths here (under Project Results):

T1 New Ways of Working (NWoW)

<https://nwow4net-zero.eu/index.php/en/project-results-en-gb/t1>

T2 Work-related mobility

<https://nwow4net-zero.eu/index.php/en/project-results-en-gb/t2>

T3 Responsible use of IT and digital sobriety

<https://nwow4net-zero.eu/index.php/en/project-results-en-gb/t3>

Each learning path is divided into 6 chapters which are based on figure 2 (structure of learning models). *Chapter 1* covers stakeholders, *Chapter 2* gives an overview about creating a culture of sustainability, *Chapter 3* gives instructions for adapting HR processes to help reduce carbon emissions, *Chapter 4* presents tools to support emissions reduction, *Chapter 5* offers inspiring initiatives and finally, *Chapter 6* gives recommendations to implement the HR contribution to Net-zero.

Using the toolkits in a classroom context

Within a classroom setting, an instructor can go through these toolkits with their students to further their education. While the toolkits were developed to enhance a self-learning process, they can also easily be applied in a classroom context to support the practical learning of students of HR Management who have never been employed in the area. The tools an instructor can use are role play, case studies, and scenario analysis.

In the annex of the guide you may find several predefined roles which can be used for instructing students to begin the learning process on the platform with an assigned role. Students are then instructed to begin the

individualised learning path and present what they have learned in either an essay format, poster format, or a presentation.

Case studies or the inspirational stories which can be found at the platform by simple selection of all Toolkits and the Chapter Inspirational Stories, gives an immediate access to instructors to many case studies which can be used to provide individual and group assignments to students motivating them to explore more the topic and present the findings to their peers. More examples of these are also available in the annex.



Enrico
Consultant & Trainer
HRgoSustainable

Ex-HR Director – Now trainer
Provides training to HRD & teams

He teaches Sustainable HRM
@Fricadella Universita

Enrico sees NWoW4NetZero as a extra piece to his offer

- To HRD : focus on Strategy & Change
- To HR teams : focus on Admin & Employee



TOOLBOX Structure	NWoW / Hybrid	Mobility	Sustainable IT
Stakeholders	Identify internal or external parties involved and their role in contributing to company emissions reduction		
Culture	Creating a sustainable culture in collaboration with employees (collect ideas and propositions, establish sustainable habits, implement green policies, ect.)		
Tools	Concrete instruments to support emissions reduction (e.g. software, apps, methodology, etc.)		
HR Processes	HR processes' role in contributing to emissions reduction (e.g. Sustainable objectives setting & evaluation)		
Inspiring initiatives	Effective actions or practices already taken by companies that can inspire others		
Recommendations	Guidance helps HR achieve consistency in target-setting and implementation of their net-zero contribution		



- Enrico finds the model so amazing that he takes the full menu
- He will run an introduction course on Sustainable HRM
- Then 7 modules on Circular HRM
- Then 18 modules on NWoW4NetZero : Module 1 NWoW/stakeholders, module 2 NWoW/Culture, etc.
- With some co-creation workshops
- = a 60 hours training offer
- = 6.000 euros per participant

Using scenario analysis is another valuable tool for bringing contextual learning into the classroom. Instructors are encouraged to develop scenarios involving design of HR practices focused on reducing the carbon emission of companies. Learners are then

provided with instructions to develop different analyses and solutions by exploring the 3 toolkits at the platforms, coupled with the Guide for Assessment of the Impact of the selected HR practices on the reduction of the carbon emissions.



Start learning!

Learning starts the flame of curiosity: it encourages us to ask questions and explore new ideas. Embracing curiosity not only expands our knowledge, but also enriches our perspective, making us more open-minded and conscious individuals.

HR managers, consultants, vocational/higher education instructors are invited to embrace the challenge and use the opportunity to learn about Net Zero Emission practices. This knowledge is not just as a skill, but also as a commitment to a greener and more sustainable future.



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Annex



Kerli
HR Director in Major University
 HR Department recently modernised

3,000 staff members
 Academics + support functions

Pledge to become a net zero university
 Project-led by the Vice-Rector and Sustainability Team

Green-activist, wants to contribute

Kerli's role is mainly administrative and she sees NWoW4NetZero as an opportunity

- To align HR and business strategy
- To act as a change agent



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HR Processes	HR processes' role in contributing to emissions reduction (e.g. Sustainable objectives setting & evaluation)		
Inspiring Initiatives	Effective actions or practices already taken by companies that can inspire others		
Recommendations	Guidance helps HR achieve consistency in target-setting and implementation of their net-zero contribution		



- Staff expectation is to have more Remote work : she will first focus on **NWoW**
- She wants to develop her competencies on the **full scope**: stakeholders, culture, tools, HR Process, Inspiring initiatives and recommendations
- In the course of the training, she learns that remote work has not necessarily positive impacts on CO2-emissions
- She adds the **Sustainable IT** module on **tools & recommendations**



Françoise
HR Manager in MyStartup.ee
 Solo HR

40 staff members
 CEO 'Green Mobility' activist : he recruits only people coming to work in public transport, bicycle or net-zero vehicle

Consistency is an important feature of her character

Françoise's role is mainly administrative and employee champion and she sees NWoW4NetZero as an opportunity

- To be consistent
- To satisfy and motivate employees difficult to find on a very tight talent market



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- CEO is 'green mobility activist' and, in this IT company where NWoW is the DNA, the missing part is **Sustainable IT** : no one has thought about the impact of IT on the climate !
- To act, she must gain the support of stakeholders and propose concrete tools
- In the longer term, she wants to develop **HR Processes** in the three topics : **NWoW, Mobility and Sustainable IT**
- Some **inspiring initiatives** about mobility to please the CEO are always nice to have



Annex



Enrico
Consultant & Trainer
 HRgoSustainable

Ex-HR Director – Now trainer
 Provides training to HRD & teams

He teaches Sustainable HRM
 @Fricadella Universita



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- = 6.000 euros per participant



Donald
CHRO of BIG PHARMA
 Member of the Executive Committee

80,000 people in 24 countries
 Traditional work organisation
 No Mobility policy

Pledge to become a net zero company

CEO says : HR must contribute



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- He decides to focus on **NWoW + Mobility** and wants to have quick wins to convince ComEx to invest in long term initiatives
- First step : gain alliers → identify **stakeholders**
- After due consideration, NWoW4NetZero could be an opportunity to modernise **HR Processes**
- Operationalisation is not is problem → teams
- In the longer term, need to change the **culture** of the workplace



Annex



Flavien
HR Manager in BIG PHARMA
 Works in Donald's team

In charge of 800 people in 3 countries
 Traditional work organisation
 No Mobility policy

Pledge to become a net zero company

CHRO says : gain quick wins



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Recommendations	Guidance helps HR achieve consistency in target-setting and implementation of their net-zero contribution		

Flavien sees NWoW4NetZero as one more thing to be done:

- He has to find some solutions to satisfy his boss...
- ...after due consideration : some actions could improve employee satisfaction and help attracting talents



- He decides to focus on **Mobility** of the headquarter and on **hybrid work** as a pilote project for the Dutch subsidiary
- First step : looking at **inspiring initiatives**
- He does not know where to strat → **recommandations**
- He wants to see how others do → **inspiring initiatives**
- How to act concretely → **tools**



Samantha
Chief Happiness Officer
 Finance Ministry

17,000 staff members

Her challenge : modernisation of public administration to make it attractive to young talents (in particular ICT & Business graduates)



TOOLBOX Structure	NWoW / Hybrid	Mobility	Sustainable IT
Stakeholders	Identify internal or external parties involved and their role in contributing to company emissions reduction		
Culture	Creating a sustainable culture in collaboration with employees (collect ideas and propositions, establish sustainable habits, implement green policies, ect.)		
Tools	Concrete instruments to support emissions reduction (e.g. software, apps, methodology, etc.)		
HR Processes	HR processes' role in contributing to emissions reduction (e.g. Sustainable objectives setting & evaluation)		
Inspiring initiatives	Effective actions or practices already taken by companies that can inspire others		
Recommendations	Guidance helps HR achieve consistency in target-setting and implementation of their net-zero contribution		

Samantha has one leitmotiv:
culture
It's the economy, stupid.



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