



PRESS RELEASE

Global academy to train all bankers about the climate emergency and sustainability

- To truly align banks' strategy and practice with the objectives of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement, the global banking sector must urgently upskill bank employees to ensure sustainability is considered in all strategic, lending, product and other decisions.
- The aim of the Principles for Responsible Banking Academy is to give all bankers from the back-office to boardrooms the tools needed to apply a sustainability lens to their professional practice.
- The new Academy has been designed in partnership with banks to help signatories to the Principles for Responsible Banking implement the sustainability framework across all their business activities.
- Over the next 5 years, it is expected that all 300 plus signatories will make the Academy available to their several million employees. The Academy will be launched as an online platform to reach as wide an audience as possible via digital channels and is available to banks around the world on a scale never seen before.

Edinburgh and Geneva, 10 October 2022

For the first time, banks around the world can offer all employees access to high-quality, dedicated training to equip them with knowledge and skills that are essential to manage today's challenges - through the new Principles for Responsible Banking Academy (PRB Academy).

Aligning banks' strategy and practice with the objectives of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement will require urgently building the capacity and capabilities of the banking sector globally. The objective of the PRB Academy, which launched today at UNEP FI's Global Roundtable, is to upskill banking professionals around the world and prepare them for the huge challenges they, their businesses and their customers are facing from climate change, nature loss, pollution and social issues. Every banker needs at least a basic knowledge of these matters and to be able to apply this in the context of their daily work. The PRB Academy will help banking professionals to understand how responsible banking practices can play a part in securing an equitable and sustainable future for the planet.

The PRB Academy curriculum has been designed to help bankers apply their new knowledge across a range of roles in their day-to-day work as well as integrating sustainability into strategic decision-making, regardless of their role or seniority, including a module aimed at C-suite and non-executives to help them facilitate the embedding of responsible banking at the very heart of their organisation.

The training uses a practical and applied approach, providing all bankers with the tools needed to apply a responsible banking lens to their professional practice. The modules will also enable bankers to unlock their curiosity towards developing future skills, as well as preparing banks to proactively engage with societal expectations, incoming national laws and regulations relating to sustainability, in addition to helping them identify the opportunities that a sustainable transition offers.

Over the next five years, the Academy aims to provide training to millions of bankers worldwide and as such will become an important benchmark to demonstrate a responsible and sustainable mindset. Designed for the 300 plus banks who are signatories to the United Nations' Principles for Responsible Banking, which collectively represent around 45% of global banking assets, it will also be available to all banks worldwide. By making the Academy's education and training so widely accessible across developed, developing and emerging economies, it aims to provide an inclusive approach for the development of banking skills and knowledge regardless of location.

At its launch, the Academy will offer four training modules aimed at everyone working in banking, regardless of their career level or expertise covering the broad foundations of responsible banking; deeper insights into climate-related issues and how these topics influence banking services and operations; and a unit for bankers working with clients and customers that want to evolve as responsible businesses entities. A module has also been developed specifically for Board members and senior executives to help them facilitate the embedding of responsible banking at the very heart of their organisation.

Developed by the world's most established professional banking institute, the Chartered Banker Institute, the United Nations Environment Programme Finance Initiative, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and working with a range of banks from across the world, the PRB Academy has developed a wide-ranging curriculum that is offered via a range of accessible training modules.

Simon Thompson, Chief Executive of the Chartered Banker Institute commented:

"Aligning banking with society's goals as set out in the UN SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement requires building the capacity and capabilities of banks and bankers so that responsible banking isn't just best practice; it becomes standard practice worldwide. This doesn't mean we need all bankers to become experts in sustainability, but we do need all bankers to develop their knowledge of sustainability and apply it in the context of their role – in lending and investment decisions, in risk assessment, in designing new products and services, and in the advice they give to clients and customers. The PRB Academy aims to reach and teach all bankers worldwide, so that all banking becomes responsible banking. This is an extremely ambitious undertaking, but without vision, ambition and the leadership of UNEP FI, GIZ and the Chartered Banker Institute we will not succeed in aligning banking with society's goals."

Eric Usher, Head of UNEP FI added:

"Banks have a unique and critical role to play in pivoting the global economic system. Using their lending and financing decisions and client relationships, banks have the power to redirect capital to accelerate the pace and scale of positive change across entire economies. The Principles for Responsible Banking and its Academy provide an avenue for them to do this by enabling bank employees to align their professional practice, and the strategies and operations of their organisations with the objectives of society's goals as reflected in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement."

Axel Klaphake, Director Economic and Social Development, Digitalisation at GIZ commented:

"Emerging markets and developing countries play a crucial role in achieving the global climate and development goals. On behalf of the German Federal Ministry of Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ), GIZ supports partner countries in the Global South in transforming their financial systems and anchor sustainability practices in the financial industry. This unique partnership with UNEP FI and Chartered Banker Institute is a significant boost to build the required awareness and technical skills at scale."

Antoni Ballabriga, Global Head of Responsible Business Sustainability at BBVA, UNEP FI Global Steering Committee Co-Chair, and one of the contributors to the Executive module, added:

"Sustainability is a new set of knowledge for bankers. Capability building will be a source of competitive advantage and the PRB Academy will play a key role to help banks and their teams in this journey."

Ayşe Nazlıca, Sustainability Coordinator at Türkiye Sınai Kalkınma Bankası, another contributor to the Executive module, further added:

“As a mission bank, we emphasize the importance of knowledge sharing and capacity building to leverage our expertise with a greater influence on the culture of our workplace as well as to contribute to the country's sustainable and inclusive economic development. To this end, we closely follow sustainability efforts in the international arena as a member of various initiatives such as the PRB Academy. Beyond our membership at UNEP FI since 2009, we are a Founding Signatory of the Principles for Responsible Banking and an active supporter of the UNEP FI Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).”

Richard Winder, UK Head of Sustainability at Handelsbanken, another contributor to the Executive module, further added:

"We're committed to driving rapid progress to a sustainable economy, and we believe the Responsible Banking Academy offers the sector two crucial catalysts to achieving this: learning and perspective. Within Handelsbanken, the focus on learning and development has never been sharper, led by our ambitious sustainability goals and underpinned by a deep-rooted culture of individual and corporate responsibility."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

For more information about the PRB Academy and how individuals and organisations can register their interest, please visit <https://www.charteredbanker.com/prbacademy.html>

About the UN Principles for Responsible Banking

The Principles for Responsible Banking is a unique framework for ensuring that signatory banks' strategy and practice align with the vision society has set out for its future in the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Climate Agreement.

The framework consists of 6 Principles designed to bring purpose, vision and ambition to sustainable finance. They were created in 2019 through a partnership between founding banks and the United Nations Environment Programme's Finance Initiative. Signatory banks commit to embedding these 6 principles across all business areas, at the strategic, portfolio and transactional levels.

UNEP Finance Initiative brings together a large network of banks, insurers and investors that collectively catalyses action across the financial system to deliver more sustainable global economies. Convened by a Geneva, Switzerland-based secretariat, more than 400 banks and insurers with assets exceeding US\$100 trillion work together to facilitate the implementation of UNEP FI's Principles for Responsible Banking and Principles for Sustainable Insurance, as well as three UN-convened net-zero alliances. Financial institutions work with UNEP FI on a voluntary basis and we help them to apply the industry frameworks and develop practical guidance and tools to position their businesses for the transition to a sustainable and inclusive economy.

About the Chartered Banker Institute

The Chartered Banker Institute ("the Institute") is the oldest professional banking institute in the world. The Institute was founded in 1875, operates globally, with over 33,000 members in over 100 different countries and nearly 1,000 financial institutions worldwide. The Institute has driven an agenda of ethical professionalism throughout its existence; promoting professional standards for bankers, providing professional qualifications for retail, commercial and private bankers, and offering professional membership to qualified individuals. For more information, please visit www.charteredbanker.com

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