

# ESSEC BUSINESS SCHOOL

## Preparing the Next Generation of Leaders to Drive Sustainability

ESSEC Business School, established in 1907 in France, is one of Europe's leading business schools, recognised for its strong focus on international education and research. The school holds the prestigious "triple crown" accreditation from AACSB, EQUIS, and AMBA, underscoring its global reputation for excellence.

The school expanded its global presence by establishing its Asia-Pacific campus in Singapore in 2005. This campus serves as a hub for business education in Asia, offering programmes like the Global BBA, Master in Management (MiM), Global MBA, and Executive MBA. The campus attracts a diverse student body from around the world, providing them with international exposure and opportunities to engage with the dynamic business environment in the Asia-Pacific region.

ESSEC Business School has long been a pioneer in integrating sustainability into its curriculum, notably through its Asian Strategy Consulting Project (ASCP). Through this project ESSEC exemplifies how academic institutions can contribute to sustainability. By integrating real-world consulting projects into its curriculum, ESSEC provides students with the skills and experience necessary to tackle pressing environmental, social and economic challenges. The ASCP not only educates students about sustainability but

also empowers them to make a difference in their future careers.

### THE ASIAN STRATEGY CONSULTING PROJECT (ASCP)

Launched in 2010, the ASCP is designed to give students hands-on experience in management consulting while addressing real-world business challenges. Since 2019, the ASCP has increasingly focussed on sustainability, reflecting the growing urgency of environmental issues worldwide.

The ASCP was established as a platform for ESSEC students from the Master in Management (MiM) programme to engage with companies across the Asia-Pacific region.

Initially focussed on various business problems, the project has evolved to prioritise sustainability issues, aligning with global trends and the Paris Agreement's goals. It is a three-month programme where students are matched with multinational corporations (MNCs), startups, and public sector organ-

isations to solve real-world business problems. Each year, the MiM students work in teams to address diverse challenges, ranging from digital business model transformation to sustainability initiatives.

### Learning by Doing: The Consulting Experience

A hallmark of the ASCP is its "learning-by-doing" approach. Students undergo rigorous training that mirrors the actual consulting process. This includes an intensive one-week consultancy course on consultation and sustainability, followed by extensive desk research, fieldwork, and business analysis. Students work closely with company stakeholders, conduct interviews, and develop recommendations which are presented to a jury at the project's conclusion.

This experiential learning model not only equips students with practical skills but also instils a deep understanding of sustainability in business contexts. For example, in one of the projects, a student team worked on





an electric vehicle go-to-market strategy, providing insights that could influence the broader industry. In another project, students developed a go-to-market strategy for using green materials in the construction industry in Cambodia. Such projects demonstrate how students can drive sustainability initiatives within diverse sectors.

### Impact and Future Prospects

The ASCP's focus on sustainability has far-reaching implications. By working on projects that address critical environmental issues, students learn and at the same time contribute to solutions that can benefit society at large. For example, projects on electric vehicles and sustainable fashion provide insights that companies can leverage to enhance their sustainability strategies.

The ripple effect of these projects extends beyond the immediate outcomes. As students graduate and enter the workforce,

they carry with them the knowledge and experience gained through the ASCP. This diffusion of expertise can help drive broader systemic changes in how businesses approach sustainability.

### Bridging the Gap Between Academia and Industry

The ASCP has received positive feedback from both students and companies for its rigorous approach and high-quality work. The programme effectively facilitates the transition from theoretical learning to practical application, offering innovative solutions and fresh perspectives through student contributions. Industry professionals have recognised the relevance and impact of the research and recommendations provided, underscoring the programme's success in bridging the gap between academia and industry.

### Expanding the Scope

Looking ahead, ESSEC aims to expand the scope of the ASCP, incorporating more projects that address pressing environmental and social issues. This expansion will provide students with even more opportunities to make a positive impact and drive sustainable change across various industries and regions.

Through strong corporate partnerships, a rigorous training programme, and a focus on impactful projects, the ASCP has set a benchmark for sustainability education. As the world continues to grapple with environmental issues, initiatives like the ASCP are crucial in preparing the next generation of leaders to drive sustainable change.