



COOPERATIVE EDUCATION REPORT

**INTEGRATING ESG PRINCIPLES IN EQUITY INVESTMENT DECISIONS:
OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRIVATE EQUITY IN NEPAL**

WRITTEN BY

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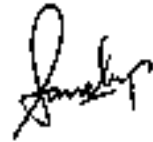
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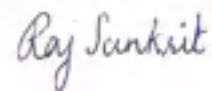
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ABSTRACT

This report summarizes my co-op internship experience at Sustainability Solutions Nepal (SSN) along with involvement in fintech company assessments over a structured internship period. SSN is a sustainability consulting and ESG advisory firm focused on integrating Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into business and investment practices in Nepal. As an intern, I contributed to ESG research, private equity analysis, ESG assessments of companies, and the development of sustainability-focused proposals and value propositions.

The internship provided practical exposure to conducting fintech company assessments, analyzing business models and financial viability, supporting ESG integration frameworks, and engaging in primary research through surveys and interviews. I also participated in organizing Earth Hour 2026 in collaboration with WWF, where I helped design and facilitate a sustainability awareness activity to promote ESG knowledge among participants. Key challenges included limited ESG awareness among stakeholders, difficulty in data collection, lack of standardized ESG frameworks, and low integration of ESG in investment processes. Despite these challenges, the experience provided valuable learning opportunities in real-world sustainability consulting practices.

Through this internship, I developed skills in ESG analysis, research design, data collection, financial modeling, proposal writing, and teamwork, while strengthening my understanding of sustainable finance and ESG advisory practices in Nepal.

Keywords: *ESG Integration, Fintech Assessment, Value Proposition Development, Sustainability Awareness*

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Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their encouragement and support throughout this journey.

Thank you,

Sincerely,

Adrija Shrestha

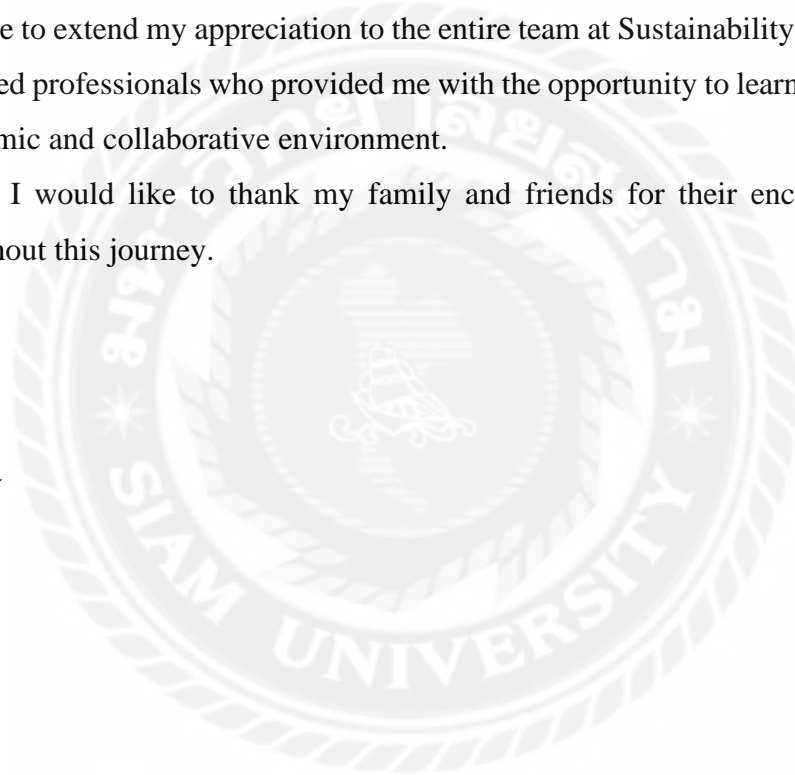


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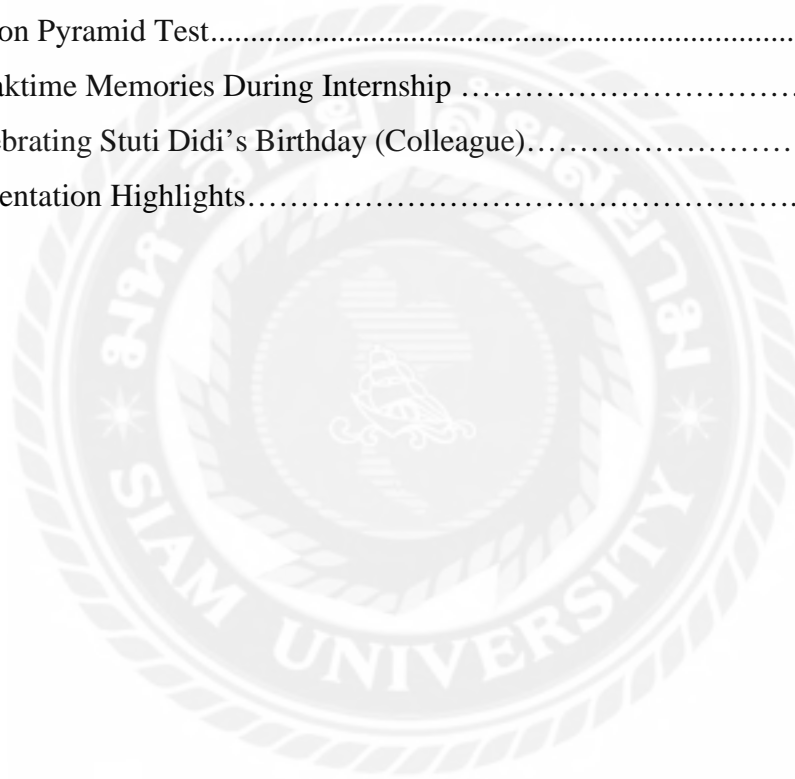
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LISTS OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Full Form
ESG	Environmental, Social, and Governance
SSN	Sustainability Solutions Nepal
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
IEE	Initial Environmental Examination
PE	Private Equity
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
HRM	Human Resource Management
PPT	PowerPoint Presentation
Co-op	Cooperative Education
eSewa	A fintech company in Nepal (assessed during internship)

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Sustainability Solutions specializes in several key areas to support the local investment landscape. Through ESG Advisory services, the organization helps businesses design and implement robust strategies and due diligence processes that align with global standards. Its Capacity Building wing, known as the "Sustainability Academy," delivers customized training programs to equip professionals and students with the skills to lead change.

Additionally, the organization provides Sustainable Business Consulting to guide enterprises in reimagining their models by integrating sustainability into operations and governance. Sustainability Solutions is also actively involved in Research and Awareness initiatives, such as exploring how ESG principles can be integrated into private equity to strengthen sustainable investing across Nepal.



Figure 1-1: Sustainability Solutions Logo

1.1 Company Profile

Sustainability Solutions is a professional consulting and advisory organization focused on promoting sustainable development and the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles in Nepal. SSN works with private sector companies, development agencies, and INGOs to support responsible and sustainable business practices. By partnering with these groups, Sustainability Solutions helps businesses move beyond traditional financial metrics to include risk management and long-term value creation in their daily operations.

SSN acts as a partner for groups transitioning toward responsible growth and long-term resilience. Sustainability Solutions focuses on connecting international ESG standards with local needs by providing customized solutions for organizations in Nepal. Through its work in research, consulting, and training, the organization helps businesses improve their environmental impact, increase their social responsibility, and develop better governance systems.

1.1.1 Company Vision

Sustainability Solutions works to create a world where businesses and communities can adapt to climate and social challenges. Instead of just reducing harm, the organization focuses on "regenerative" practices that actively restore the environment and create long-term value for society. By making sustainability "business as usual," Sustainability Solutions ensures that environmental and social responsibility is a permanent part of how every sector operates for both current and future generations.

1.1.2 Company Mission

The mission of Sustainability Solutions is to transform the way organizations approach sustainability by translating global standards and practices into locally grounded practical solutions and actionable systems. The organization enables partners to move from ambition to action by embedding environmental and social responsibility at the core of strategy, operations, and growth.

1.1.3 Services Portfolio

Table 1-1: Various Services of Sustainability Solution

S.N	Service Area	Description
1.	Sustainability Consulting	Develops purpose-driven business strategies using design thinking and business model tools to align sustainability with value creation.
2.	ESG Advisory	Provides strategic ESG guidance, assessments, and risk management support aligned with global standards.
3.	Sustainability Academy	Offers training programs, workshops, and courses on ESG and sustainable business practices.
4.	Research Center	Conducts research and produces reports, case studies, and thought leadership on sustainability.
5.	Creating Opportunities	Supports youth through mentorship, fellowships, and engagement in sustainability initiatives.

1.1.4 Core Objective of the Company

1. Promote the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles in business practices

2. Support organizations in adopting sustainable and responsible decision-making processes
3. Enhance long-term value creation while minimizing environmental and social impacts
4. Provide expert advisory services in sustainability and ESG frameworks
5. Build capacity through training, workshops, and knowledge-sharing initiatives
6. Conduct research and generate insights to advance sustainability practices in Nepal
7. Encourage responsible investment and sustainable business growth across sectors

1.1.5 Strategy of the Company

1. Integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into core business strategies and operations
2. Translate global sustainability standards into practical, locally relevant solutions
3. Focus on long-term value creation, resilience, and responsible business growth
4. Deliver services through three strategic pillars: ESG Advisory, Sustainable Business Consulting, and Sustainability Academy
5. Support organizations in ESG strategy development, risk assessment, and due diligence
6. Embed sustainability across key business functions such as HRM, marketing, operations, and governance
7. Build capacity by providing training, workshops, and skill development programs
8. Foster partnerships with governments, businesses, academic institutions, and development partners
9. Promote ecosystem development through research, policy engagement, and strategic dialogues
10. Encourage sustainability as a continuous and integral part of business practices

1.2 Organizational Structure

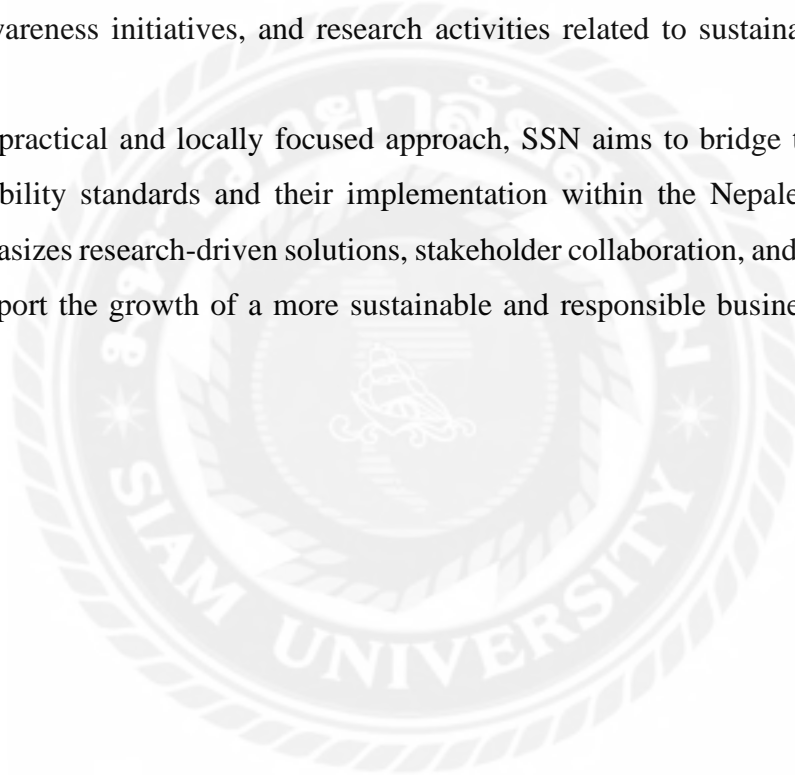
Sustainability Solutions Nepal is led by a small but highly specialized team of sustainability professionals with diverse expertise across ESG, sustainable business, climate action, and social inclusion. The team brings together practical experience and technical knowledge to deliver context-specific solutions, enabling organizations to integrate sustainability into their core strategies and operations effectively.

1.2.1 Organizational Overview

Sustainability Solutions Nepal (SSN) is a boutique ESG advisory and sustainability consulting firm committed to promoting responsible business practices and sustainable development in Nepal. The organization works with businesses, financial institutions, development partners, and academic institutions to integrate Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles into organizational strategies and operations.

SSN primarily focuses on three core areas: ESG Advisory, Sustainable Business Consulting, and the Sustainability Academy. Through these services, the company supports organizations in ESG assessment, sustainability strategy development, capacity building, research, and sustainable business transformation. The organization also contributes to policy discussions, awareness initiatives, and research activities related to sustainable finance and ESG practices.

With a practical and locally focused approach, SSN aims to bridge the gap between global sustainability standards and their implementation within the Nepalese context. The company emphasizes research-driven solutions, stakeholder collaboration, and long-term value creation to support the growth of a more sustainable and responsible business ecosystem in Nepal.



1.2.2 Diagram & Key Roles of the Organizational Structure



Figure 1-2 Organizational Structure

ESG Director & Founder:

Provides overall leadership and strategic direction, overseeing ESG advisory services and ensuring alignment with sustainability standards.

Sustainable Business Associate:

Supports sustainable business consulting projects and helps organizations integrate sustainability into operations, governance, and business models.

ESG & Climate Officer:

Works on ESG assessments, climate-related initiatives, and sustainability reporting to support data-driven decision-making.

Indigenous Peoples Specialist:

Focuses on integrating indigenous knowledge, inclusion, and social equity into sustainability projects and frameworks.

Finance Intern:

Conducts research on private equity in Nepal related to sustainability and supports basic financial analysis and documentation tasks.

Marketing Intern:

Conducts research on sustainability-related market trends and supports communication, outreach, and promotional activities.

1.2.3. My Job Position

As a Finance Intern at Sustainability Solutions Nepal, my role primarily focuses on research and analytical support in the field of sustainable finance. In line with my internship concept note, I am conducting research on private equity in Nepal with a specific emphasis on the integration of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles in investment decision-making. This involves reviewing relevant market practices, analyzing sustainability trends in the financial sector, and identifying how ESG considerations are influencing investment strategies in Nepal.

In addition to research activities, I support the organization in financial documentation, data organization, and basic reporting tasks related to ongoing projects. This role also contributes to broader assignments such as sustainability-related studies and market analysis, where required. Through this internship, I am gaining practical exposure to ESG-aligned financial systems and understanding the role of sustainable investing in shaping responsible economic growth in Nepal.

1.2.4. My Job Position in the Company's Organizational Structure

In the organizational structure of Sustainability Solutions Nepal, my position is placed under the internship category, specifically as a Finance Intern. I work closely within the support function of the organization, contributing to research and analytical tasks that assist the core advisory and consulting teams. Although interns are not part of the core management hierarchy, they play an important supporting role in project execution and organizational activities.

As a Finance Intern, I am primarily aligned with the finance and research-related functions of the organization. My responsibilities include conducting research on private equity in Nepal with a focus on the integration of ESG principles, supporting financial documentation, and assisting in data analysis for sustainability-related studies. I also collaborate with other interns, including the Marketing Intern, to support broader organizational research and outreach activities when required.

Through this position, I contribute to the organization's mission of promoting sustainable finance and ESG integration while gaining practical exposure to real-world sustainability consulting and financial research processes.

1.3. My Intention and Motivation to Choose This Company as My Co-Op Studies Workplace

My main intention for choosing Sustainability Solutions Nepal was to gain practical knowledge and exposure to sustainability practices, particularly how Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles are integrated into real-world business and financial decisions. I was interested in understanding how organizations translate global sustainability standards into practical strategies within the Nepalese context.

I was especially motivated by the opportunity to explore sustainable finance, including private equity and ESG-focused investment practices in Nepal. This aligns with my academic background in finance and my growing interest in responsible investing and long-term value creation through sustainability.

Additionally, I was attracted to the organization's multidisciplinary approach, involving ESG advisory, sustainable business consulting, and research activities. I expected this experience to help me develop my analytical, research, and professional skills while gaining deeper insight into the role of sustainability in shaping modern business and financial systems.

1.4. Strategic Analysis of the Company

Sustainability Solutions Nepal adopts a focused and niche strategy by positioning itself as a specialized ESG advisory and sustainability consulting firm in a growing but still developing market. The company strategically targets businesses, financial institutions, development partners, and academic institutions, allowing it to operate across multiple sectors while maintaining a strong emphasis on sustainability integration. By aligning its services with global ESG standards and adapting them to the local Nepalese context, SSN creates a unique value proposition that differentiates it from traditional consulting firms.

The company's strategy is built around three core service pillars: ESG Advisory, Sustainable Business Consulting, and the Sustainability Academy. This diversified service approach enables SSN to address both technical advisory needs and capacity-building requirements. Through ESG advisory, the firm supports organizations in risk assessment, due diligence, and strategy development, while its consulting services focus on embedding sustainability into business operations. At the same time, the Sustainability Academy strengthens human capital by providing training and awareness, ensuring long-term impact beyond individual projects.

From a strategic perspective, SSN leverages its strengths in research, knowledge development, and stakeholder collaboration to expand its influence in the sustainability ecosystem. The company actively contributes to research, policy discussions, and awareness initiatives, which enhances its credibility and thought leadership in the ESG space. Its collaborative approach with multiple stakeholders also allows it to navigate complex environmental and social challenges more effectively.

However, as a boutique firm, SSN's growth strategy relies heavily on partnerships, project-based engagements, and continuous innovation in ESG services. The company operates in a market where ESG awareness and regulatory frameworks are still evolving, which presents both opportunities and challenges. Overall, SSN's strategy is well-positioned to capitalize on the increasing demand for sustainable finance and responsible business practices, while contributing to the long-term development of the sustainability ecosystem in Nepal.

1.4.1 SWOT Analysis of Sustainability Solution

Strengths

Sustainability Solutions Nepal has strong expertise in ESG advisory and sustainable business consulting, which gives it a competitive advantage in a growing field. The organization has a skilled and specialized team with experience in sustainability, climate, and social inclusion. It also focuses heavily on research and capacity building, which strengthens its credibility. Additionally, SSN is capable of providing locally relevant sustainability solutions tailored to the Nepalese context.

Weaknesses

One of the main weaknesses of SSN is its small organizational size, which can limit its ability to handle large-scale or multiple projects simultaneously. The firm also has relatively low brand visibility compared to larger international consulting companies. Its operations are often dependent on project-based work and partnerships, which may affect stability. Limited financial and human resources can also restrict expansion.

Opportunities

There is a growing demand for ESG integration and sustainable finance in Nepal, which creates strong opportunities for SSN's services. Increasing awareness of sustainability and responsible investment in the financial sector also supports its growth. Expansion of ESG-related policies and regulations provides further space for advisory services. Additionally, partnerships with development agencies and private equity firms present significant growth potential.

Threats

SSN faces competition from larger international consulting firms entering the sustainability space. Limited awareness of ESG concepts among some local businesses can slow adoption of its services. Economic instability may also impact investment in sustainability initiatives. Furthermore, rapid changes in global ESG standards require continuous adaptation, which can be challenging for a small organization.



Figure 1-3 SWOT Analysis of Sustainability Solution

1.5. Statement of the Report

This report presents the overall learning experience, activities, and contributions during my internship at Sustainability Solutions Nepal (SSN). The report focuses on the practical application of academic knowledge in areas such as ESG integration, sustainable finance, investment assessment, and sustainability research within the Nepalese context.

It includes an overview of the organization, my roles and responsibilities, work processes, key learning outcomes, challenges faced, and recommendations based on the internship experience. The report also highlights my involvement in ESG assessments, private

equity research, proposal preparation, and sustainability awareness initiatives such as Earth Hour 2026.

The main purpose of this report is to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical exposure and provide an understanding of how sustainability consulting and ESG practices are implemented in real-world professional settings.

1.6 Objectives of this Co-Operative Studies

This report is a detailed reflection of my experiential learning as a Finance Intern at Sustainability Solutions Nepal. It has been prepared as part of my Co-operative Studies to document the practical application of my academic knowledge in a real-world professional setting. The experience has provided me with valuable exposure to sustainability consulting and ESG-related financial research, particularly in areas such as sustainable finance and private equity in Nepal.

1. To gain practical exposure to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices and their application in real business settings
2. To understand the role of sustainability consulting firms in promoting responsible and sustainable business practices in Nepal
3. To develop knowledge of sustainable finance, particularly private equity and ESG integration in investment decisions
4. To enhance research, analytical, and problem-solving skills through real-world assignments and projects
5. To bridge the gap between academic learning in finance and practical industry experience
6. To understand how sustainability strategies are developed and implemented within organizations
7. To improve professional skills such as teamwork, communication, and data analysis in a workplace environment
8. To contribute to ongoing research and sustainability initiatives within the organization

CHAPTER 2

CO-OP STUDY ACTIVITIES

2.1 My Job Description

As a Finance Intern at Sustainability Solutions Nepal, my primary responsibility is to support research and analytical work related to sustainable finance and ESG integration. My main focus includes conducting research on private equity in Nepal, particularly exploring how Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles are incorporated into investment and business decision-making processes.

In addition to research work, I assist in collecting and organizing sustainability and ESG-related data to support ongoing projects within the organization. This includes gathering information on ESG practices, sustainability trends, and sector-specific developments relevant to the assigned studies and reports.

Furthermore, I contribute to the preparation of basic research summaries and documentation required for internal analysis and project work. I also collaborate with team members and interns when needed, including supporting sustainability-focused market research tasks. Through these responsibilities, I am gaining practical exposure to ESG frameworks, sustainability consulting practices, and their application in the Nepalese context.

2.2 My Job Responsibilities

1. Conducted primary research and data mining on private equity firms in Nepal by identifying and shortlisting relevant firms using Excel, and developing survey tools to study their sustainability and ESG practices.

2. Designed and developed research-based survey forms and questionnaires to collect structured data on ESG integration and sustainability approaches within investment firms.

3. Worked on financial modeling for Sustainability Solutions Nepal, assisting in building a model to track consulting performance, project impact, and long-term value creation of sustainability services.

4. Assisted in ESG assessment activities by supporting the evaluation of environmental and social risks of client organizations using global ESG frameworks adapted to the Nepalese context.

5. Conducted semi-structured interviews with fund managers and investment analysts to gather qualitative insights for research on sustainable finance and private equity trends.

6. Created data visualization dashboards using Power BI, transforming raw ESG and research data into clear visual formats for presentations and internal decision-making.

7. Supported the development of educational content for the Sustainability Academy, including ESG quizzes and awareness materials to enhance understanding of sustainability concepts among stakeholders.

8. Collaborated with team members in research validation and refinement, ensuring survey tools, interview guides, and datasets were accurate and aligned with project objectives.

9. Participated in cross-functional activities and events, including contributing to the WWF Earth Hour “Knowledge Corner” by helping communicate ESG concepts to the public.

10. Shared research outputs such as shortlisted datasets and Power BI drafts with supervisors and peers for feedback and improvement before final reporting.

11. Gained hands-on exposure to sustainable finance research, ESG integration, financial modeling, and data-driven sustainability analysis in a professional consulting environment.

2.3. Activities in Coordinating with Co-Workers

Coordination with co-workers played an important role in ensuring the quality and relevance of my work during the internship. I regularly interacted with team members and supervisors to align my research activities with the organization’s objectives and project requirements.

I worked closely with senior consultants to receive guidance and feedback on my research related to private equity and ESG integration. This helped ensure that my work was accurate, relevant, and aligned with professional standards. I also collaborated with project team members to refine survey tools and interview questions used for data collection. Their inputs were valuable in improving the clarity and effectiveness of the research instruments.

In addition, I shared my progress on datasets, research findings, and Power BI outputs with the team for review and feedback before finalizing them. This peer review process helped improve the quality of my work and ensured consistency in reporting. I participated in team-based activities, including sustainability awareness initiatives and event support, where coordination with marketing and other teams was essential for smooth execution. Through these experiences, I developed better teamwork, communication, and professional coordination skills in a multidisciplinary work environment.

2.4. Job Process Diagram

1. **Receive assigned research topic:**

The process begins by receiving a research assignment from the supervisor, mainly focused on private equity and ESG integration in Nepal.

2. **Identify and shortlist data sources:**

Relevant private equity firms, reports, and ESG-related materials are identified and selected to ensure the research is focused and reliable.

3. **Develop research tools:**

Survey questionnaires and interview guidelines are prepared to collect structured and relevant primary data.

4. **Conduct primary data collection:**

Data is collected through surveys and interviews with stakeholders to gain real-world insights into ESG practices.

5. **Collect secondary data:**

Additional information is gathered from reports, research papers, and existing ESG frameworks to support and validate the study.

6. **Organize data in Excel:**

All collected data is structured and arranged systematically in Excel for easy handling and analysis.

7. **Analyze ESG and sustainability trends:**

The data is analyzed to understand how ESG principles are applied in private equity and identify key trends in Nepal.

8. **Prepare research findings:**

Key insights and observations are summarized into clear research notes and draft findings.

9. **Submit for review and feedback:**

The draft work is shared with supervisors and team members to ensure accuracy and quality.

10. **Revise based on feedback:**

Necessary changes and improvements are made based on the feedback received.

11. **Finalize documentation report:**

All findings are compiled into a final structured report for internal use and reference.



Figure 2-1 Job Process Diagram

2.5. Contributions as a Co-Op Student in the Company

During my time at Sustainability Solutions Nepal, I contributed to the organization mainly through research and analytical support in the field of sustainable finance and ESG integration. A key contribution was conducting research on private equity in Nepal, focusing on how ESG principles are incorporated into investment decision-making. This supported the organization’s efforts in understanding emerging trends in sustainable investing within the local context.

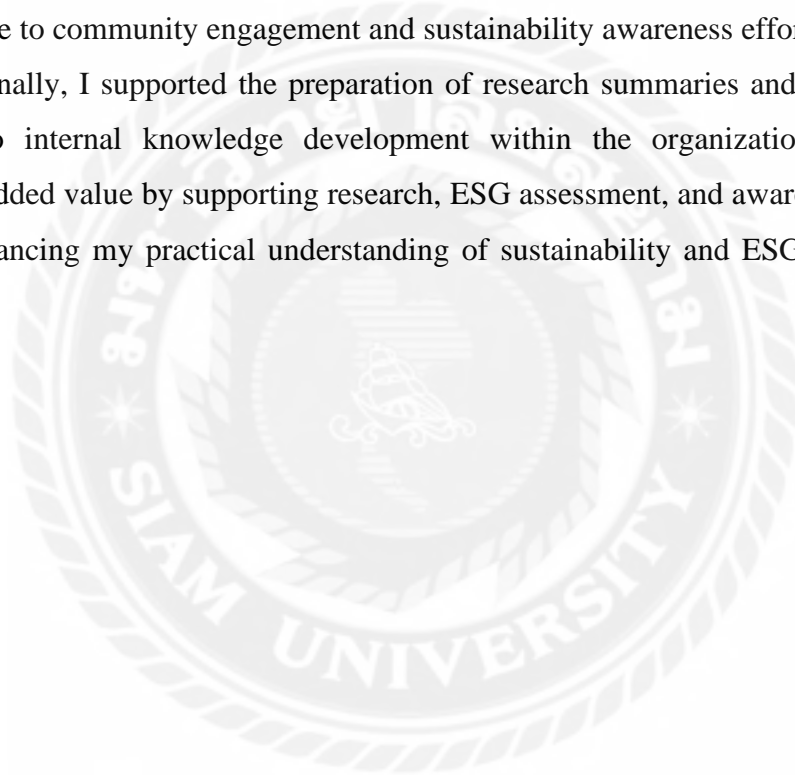
I also contributed by developing structured research tools such as survey questionnaires and interview guides, which supported effective primary data collection. In addition, I assisted

in collecting, organizing, and analyzing ESG and sustainability-related data, helping strengthen the organization's research base and ongoing project work.

Furthermore, I was involved in supporting ESG assessment activities, including contributing to the assessment of a fintech company (eSewa), where I assisted in evaluating sustainability practices based on ESG criteria. This provided practical exposure to applying ESG frameworks in real business scenarios.

Another key contribution was my involvement in organizing the **Earth Hour 2026 event** in collaboration with WWF. As part of this initiative, I helped set up and manage a "Knowledge Corner," where we conducted sustainability-related games and activities to raise awareness about ESG and sustainable practices among participants. This experience allowed me to contribute to community engagement and sustainability awareness efforts.

Additionally, I supported the preparation of research summaries and documentation, contributing to internal knowledge development within the organization. Overall, my contributions added value by supporting research, ESG assessment, and awareness initiatives, while also enhancing my practical understanding of sustainability and ESG applications in Nepal.



CHAPTER 3

LEARNING PROCESS

3.1 Problems/Issues of the Company

During my internship at Sustainability Solutions Nepal, I observed several challenges related to ESG research and implementation. Key issues included limited availability of structured ESG data, low awareness of sustainability concepts among stakeholders, and difficulty in collecting primary data through surveys and interviews. Additionally, the organization's small size sometimes led to resource and capacity constraints in handling multiple projects. These challenges provided valuable insights into the practical difficulties of implementing sustainability practices in Nepal.

3.1.1 Problem Statement

The main problem identified during my internship is the lack of structured ESG data and limited awareness of sustainability practices within private equity and related sectors in Nepal. This creates challenges in collecting reliable primary data and conducting effective research on ESG integration. As a result, it becomes difficult to analyze and promote sustainable finance practices due to inconsistent information and low stakeholder engagement.

3.1.2 Major Problems identified

- **Low response rate from private equity firms:** Many firms were slow to respond or did not respond at all to surveys and interview requests, requiring continuous follow-ups and coordination.
- **Difficulty in primary data collection:** Reaching the right stakeholders and obtaining reliable information was time-consuming and sometimes inconsistent due to limited engagement.
- **Limited awareness of ESG concepts:** Some respondents had a basic or unclear understanding of ESG, which affected the depth and quality of the data collected.
- **Greater focus on Governance over E and S:** Private equity firms tend to prioritize governance factors such as compliance and risk management, while Environmental and Social aspects receive comparatively less attention.
- **Lack of ESG integration in investment processes:** Many firms do not formally incorporate ESG criteria into their investment decision-making, indicating an early stage of sustainable finance practices.

- **Absence of ESG management systems:** Most firms lack structured ESG policies, frameworks, or internal systems to monitor and implement sustainability practices.
- **Limited ESG commitment in investee companies:** There is often low emphasis on ensuring that portfolio or investee companies adopt ESG practices, reducing overall impact.
- **Lack of regulatory pressure:** The absence of strong ESG-related regulations in Nepal reduces the incentive for firms to adopt and report sustainability practices.
- **Minimal focus on ESG reporting:** Many firms do not prepare or review ESG reports for their investments, highlighting a gap in transparency and accountability.

3.2 Proposed solutions to the identified Problems

1. **Improving stakeholder engagement:** Establishing early communication and continuous follow-ups with private equity firms to improve response rates and ensure timely data collection.
2. **Raising ESG awareness:** Conducting awareness sessions, workshops, and simplified ESG explanations to help stakeholders better understand ESG concepts and their importance.
3. **Encouraging ESG integration in investment processes:** Promoting the inclusion of ESG criteria in investment decision-making frameworks to ensure sustainability is considered alongside financial returns.
4. **Developing structured ESG systems:** Supporting firms in adopting basic ESG management systems, policies, and reporting frameworks to standardize sustainability practices.
5. **Strengthening data collection methods:** Using a combination of surveys, interviews, and secondary research sources to improve data reliability and reduce dependency on a single source.
6. **Promoting regulatory and policy support:** Encouraging stronger ESG-related guidelines and frameworks from regulators to increase accountability and compliance in the private equity sector.
7. **Enhancing collaboration with investee companies:** Encouraging private equity firms to actively engage with their investee companies to improve ESG adoption and monitoring.
8. **Improving documentation and reporting practices:** Promoting regular ESG reporting to increase transparency and support better decision-making in sustainable finance.

3.3 Literature Review

To better understand the practical challenges encountered during the internship and connect academic knowledge with real-world applications, a review of relevant literature was conducted focusing on ESG integration, sustainable finance, investment assessment practices, and sustainability management. The reviewed literature helped support and validate the activities performed during the internship at Sustainability Solutions Nepal.

1. ESG Integration and Sustainable Finance

Literature highlights that Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) integration has become an important component of modern investment decision-making. According to (van Duuren et al., 2016), ESG integration refers to the systematic inclusion of ESG risks and opportunities into traditional financial analysis and investment decisions. ESG factors help investors assess long-term risks, sustainability performance, and corporate responsibility beyond financial indicators alone.

Research also suggests that effective ESG integration improves investment analysis by incorporating sustainability-related risks into valuation models and strategic decisions. However, many organizations still face difficulties integrating ESG due to data limitations, lack of standardized frameworks, and weak regulatory systems. (Schramade, 2016)

2. Sustainability Management and Regulatory Practices

The literature also explains that integrating sustainability into organizational strategies and operations is important for long-term value creation and risk management. ESG integration supports organizations in improving governance, environmental responsibility, and stakeholder engagement. Businesses are increasingly expected to align with sustainability standards and regulatory requirements to ensure transparency and responsible operations. (Aldowaish et al., 2022)

In sectors such as hospitality and infrastructure development, environmental compliance practices such as Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) and Initial Environmental Examinations (IEE) play an important role in ensuring sustainable development and regulatory compliance. These assessments help organizations identify environmental risks and maintain compliance with environmental laws and standards.

3. ESG Challenges and Sustainability Practices in Emerging Economies

This literature on sustainability practices in emerging economies highlights that organizations often face significant barriers in implementing effective ESG systems and sustainability frameworks. Studies suggest that common challenges include lack of ESG awareness, weak regulatory enforcement, limited sustainability reporting practices, and

absence of structured ESG management systems within organizations. In investment and private equity sectors, many firms still prioritize governance-related factors while environmental and social considerations receive comparatively less attention. Research also explains that organizations face difficulties in negotiating ESG requirements with investee companies and monitoring ESG performance due to limited compliance mechanisms and lack of standardized assessment processes (Kaul, 2023). These findings closely relate to the practical challenges observed during the internship, particularly while conducting ESG-related research, surveys, interviews, and assessments within Nepal's financial and sustainability sector.

Overall, the reviewed literature supports the importance of ESG integration, sustainability-focused investment analysis, and structured sustainability management systems in improving long-term organizational performance and responsible business practices.

3.4 Recommendations to the Company

Based on the identified challenges and proposed solutions, the following recommendations are suggested to improve the efficiency of ESG research processes, stakeholder engagement, and overall sustainability consulting practices at Sustainability Solutions Nepal:

1. Strengthen stakeholder engagement and response systems:

The organization should develop a more structured follow-up system when collecting data from private equity firms and other stakeholders. Regular communication and clear explanation of research objectives can help improve response rates and reduce delays in surveys and interviews.

2. Promote ESG awareness among stakeholders:

Since many firms have limited understanding of ESG concepts, SSN can further enhance awareness through simplified ESG briefings, workshops, and knowledge-sharing sessions. This will help improve the quality and depth of responses during research activities.

3. Encourage ESG integration in investment decision-making:

Private equity firms should be guided on the importance of integrating ESG factors into their investment processes, not just focusing on governance but also environmental and social dimensions for long-term sustainable value creation.

4. Support development of ESG management systems:

SSN can play a stronger advisory role in helping firms establish basic ESG frameworks, policies, and reporting structures. This would improve consistency in ESG implementation and data availability.

5. Improve data collection and documentation practices:

A more standardized approach to surveys, interviews, and secondary data collection should be adopted to ensure better reliability, comparability, and usability of ESG research outputs.

6. Promote ESG reporting and transparency:

Encouraging private equity firms and investee companies to adopt basic ESG reporting practices will improve transparency and help track sustainability performance more effectively.

7. Strengthen collaboration with investee companies:

SSN should encourage stronger engagement between private equity firms and their portfolio companies to ensure ESG practices are actually implemented at the operational level, not just at the investor level.

8. Enhance continuous learning and capacity building:

Regular internal training sessions and knowledge-sharing activities within SSN can further strengthen team understanding of evolving ESG standards and sustainable finance practices.

3.5 Learning Outcome from the Co-Op Studies

During my internship at Sustainability Solutions Nepal, I gained significant practical exposure to ESG principles and their application within private equity and sustainable finance in Nepal. I developed a deeper understanding of how Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) factors are assessed and how they influence investment decision-making in real-world contexts. Working on research related to private equity firms helped me connect theoretical knowledge with practical industry practices, especially in the area of ESG integration.

One of the key learning outcomes was gaining hands-on experience in conducting primary research through surveys and semi-structured interviews. I also learned how to organize, clean, and interpret ESG-related data to derive meaningful insights for research purposes. This improved my analytical and research skills, particularly in handling sustainability-focused information. I also developed practical skills in using Excel for data organization and analysis, learning various techniques that improved the efficiency and

accuracy of my research work. Additionally, I gained experience in designing structured survey forms and questionnaires, which enhanced my ability to collect relevant and reliable data.

Through ESG assessment-related tasks, I understood how organizations evaluate environmental and social risks. I had the opportunity to support ESG assessment work for a fintech company (eSewa), which provided real-world exposure to applying ESG frameworks in business contexts. I also contributed to preparing business proposals related to ESG for organizations, including the hotel sector, where I learned about regulatory requirements such as Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Initial Environmental Examination (IEE). For example, hotels with more than 100 beds are required to conduct an EIA, while smaller projects must carry out an IEE before construction, ensuring compliance with environmental laws and standards. This enhanced my understanding of how sustainability is integrated into project planning and regulatory processes.

I also observed that ESG implementation in Nepal is still at a developing stage, with a clear regulatory gap that limits standardization and enforcement. Another important learning was understanding the practical challenges in ESG implementation, especially in negotiating ESG requirements with investee companies and monitoring ESG performance of portfolio companies. These areas are often difficult due to low awareness, limited compliance mechanisms, and lack of structured ESG systems within firms.

Overall, this experience helped me strengthen my understanding of sustainable finance, ESG frameworks, and their real-world limitations in the Nepalese context. It also enhanced my professional skills in research, communication, proposal writing, and critical analysis, while giving me valuable insight into how sustainability consulting firms operate and contribute to building the ESG ecosystem.

3.6 Application of the Knowledge from Coursework to the Real Working Situation

During my internship at Sustainability Solutions Nepal, I was able to apply the theoretical knowledge gained from my coursework to practical tasks, particularly in the areas of finance, sustainability, and research. Concepts related to finance helped me understand investment decision-making processes and the functioning of private equity, which was directly relevant to my research on ESG integration and sustainable finance in Nepal.

My academic learning also supported me in understanding the relationship between ESG factors and financial performance, allowing me to analyze how sustainability considerations contribute to long-term value creation. Additionally, knowledge from research-

based coursework enabled me to design surveys, conduct interviews, and systematically collect and analyze ESG-related data.

One of the most challenging yet valuable experiences was developing a financial model for a sustainability consulting company. While I had previously learned financial modeling based on traditional business structures, applying these concepts to a consulting firm—especially one focused on sustainability—was new and complex. It required me to think beyond conventional revenue models and understand how consulting services, project-based income, and long-term value creation are structured in such organizations.

Overall, this experience helped me bridge the gap between theory and practice by adapting my academic knowledge to a different industry context. It enhanced my analytical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and understanding of how financial and sustainability concepts are applied in real-world situations.

3.7 Special Skills and New Knowledge Gained

This experience enhanced my understanding of ESG practices, sustainable finance, and real-world research applications. It helped me bridge theoretical knowledge with practical exposure, especially in areas like private equity, ESG integration, and sustainability assessments. I also gained insight into the existing gaps in ESG implementation in Nepal, such as lack of regulatory frameworks and limited integration in investment processes.

1. Technical Skills

- **ESG and Sustainable Finance Knowledge:**

Developed a clear understanding of ESG frameworks and how they are applied in investment decisions, particularly within private equity in Nepal.

- **Research and Analytical Skills:**

Gained experience in designing surveys and interview guides, and analyzing ESG-related data to identify trends and gaps.

- **Data Collection and Organization:**

Learned how to collect, clean, and structure sustainability and ESG data efficiently using Excel for analysis.

- **Financial Modeling:**

Built basic financial modeling skills for a sustainability consulting firm, adapting traditional finance concepts to a service-based model.

- **Understanding ESG Gaps:**

Identified key issues such as lack of ESG management systems, weak reporting practices, and limited ESG integration in investments.

2. Soft Skills

- **Communication Skills:**

Improved ability to interact with stakeholders and clearly explain ESG-related concepts during surveys and interviews.

- **Follow-up and Coordination:**

Developed persistence in conducting continuous follow-ups with firms to ensure data collection and task completion.

- **Teamwork and Collaboration:**

Worked effectively with team members and interns in research and event-related activities.

- **Problem-Solving Skills:**

Learned to manage challenges such as low response rates and limited ESG awareness by adapting approaches.

- **Adaptability:**

Enhanced ability to apply academic knowledge to a new field and adapt to a professional sustainability consulting environment.

My experience at Sustainability Solutions Nepal allowed me to develop several technical skills related to ESG research, sustainable finance, and data analysis, such as survey design, ESG data collection, research methodology, financial modeling, and sustainability assessment support. At the same time, I strengthened my soft skills, including communication, analytical thinking, coordination, adaptability, and teamwork. Overall, this experience provided valuable insights into sustainability consulting and equipped me with the knowledge and competencies required for a career in sustainable finance and ESG-related fields.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

My experience at Sustainability Solutions Nepal provided me with valuable exposure to sustainability consulting, ESG research, and sustainable finance practices. One of the key highlights was working on research related to private equity in Nepal, where I explored how Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) principles are integrated into investment decision-making. This allowed me to understand real-world challenges such as limited ESG awareness, lack of structured data, and gaps in implementation within the financial sector.

Another major highlight was my involvement in ESG assessment activities, including supporting the ESG assessment of a fintech company, eSewa. Through this, I gained practical insight into how ESG frameworks are applied to evaluate environmental and social risks in businesses. I also contributed to preparing proposals for companies, which helped me understand how sustainability consulting services are structured and presented to clients. I was involved in developing survey questionnaires and research tools related to ESG, which were used for primary data collection through surveys and interviews. I also supported other research-based tasks within the organization, contributing to internal knowledge development and project work.

A significant experiential highlight was organizing the Earth Hour 2026 event in collaboration with WWF, where I helped manage a “Knowledge Corner” featuring sustainability-related games to raise awareness about ESG and environmental responsibility among the public. Overall, my experience was a combination of research, analysis, practical exposure to ESG assessment, and participation in awareness initiatives. It provided me with a comprehensive understanding of sustainability practices, consulting processes, and the evolving ESG landscape in Nepal.

4.1 Summary of Highlights from My Co-op Experience

My co-op experience at Sustainability Solutions Nepal provided valuable practical exposure to sustainability consulting, ESG integration, and sustainable finance practices. One of the major highlights of this experience was working on research related to private equity and ESG integration in Nepal, where I gained a deeper understanding of how investment firms approach sustainability and responsible investment practices.

I was actively involved in conducting research, designing survey questionnaires, preparing interview guides, and collecting both primary and secondary data related to ESG and

sustainability. This experience strengthened my analytical and research skills while improving my ability to work with real-world sustainability data and frameworks.

Another significant highlight was supporting ESG assessment activities, including assisting in the ESG assessment of a fintech company, eSewa. Through this process, I learned how organizations assess environmental, social, and governance risks and how ESG frameworks are applied in business operations and investment analysis.

I also contributed to preparing sustainability-related business proposals and gained practical knowledge about environmental compliance requirements in sectors such as hospitality. For example, I learned that hotels with more than 100 beds are required to conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), while smaller projects must carry out an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) before construction. This enhanced my understanding of sustainability regulations and environmental governance practices in Nepal. I developed practical skills in Excel, data organization, research analysis, and financial modeling for a sustainability consulting firm. Adapting financial concepts to a consulting-based business model was a challenging but valuable learning experience. Another memorable highlight was participating in the organization and execution of Earth Hour 2026 in collaboration with WWF. I helped prepare and manage a sustainability-focused “Knowledge Corner” activity aimed at raising public awareness about ESG and sustainable practices through interactive engagement. Overall, this co-op experience allowed me to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations while developing technical, analytical, and professional skills. It significantly improved my understanding of ESG practices, sustainability consulting, investment assessment, and the growing role of sustainable finance in Nepal.

4.2 Self-Assessment of Professional Development

My co-op experience at Sustainability Solutions Nepal played a significant role in my professional and personal development. Through this experience, I was able to apply academic knowledge to real-world sustainability and ESG-related work, which helped me better understand the practical aspects of sustainable finance, investment assessment, and ESG integration.

I improved my research, analytical, and problem-solving abilities by working on ESG-related studies, survey design, data collection, and private equity research. I became more confident in handling research-based tasks independently and learned how to work with sustainability-related data in a structured and professional manner. My involvement in ESG

assessment activities also enhanced my understanding of how businesses evaluate environmental and social risks in practice.

I also developed technical skills in Excel, data organization, financial modeling, and proposal preparation. One of the most challenging yet valuable experiences was working on financial models and reports for a sustainability consulting company, which required adapting financial concepts to a consulting-based business environment rather than traditional corporate models.

In addition to technical growth, the internship helped strengthen my communication, teamwork, adaptability, and time management skills. Conducting interviews, coordinating with team members, following up with stakeholders, and participating in collaborative projects improved my professional communication and interpersonal abilities. Participating in activities such as the WWF Earth Hour 2026 event increased my confidence in public engagement and sustainability awareness initiatives. Overall, this experience helped me become more professional, responsible, and adaptable while strengthening my interest in pursuing a career in sustainable finance, ESG advisory, and sustainability consulting.

4.3 Limitations of My Co-Op Studies

During my time at Sustainability Solutions Nepal, several limitations affected the scope and depth of my work. One of the major limitations was the low response rate from private equity firms, which made primary data collection through surveys and interviews challenging and required continuous follow-ups.

Another limitation was the lack of structured ESG data and reporting practices in Nepal. Many organizations do not maintain proper ESG documentation, which restricted the availability of reliable data for analysis. Additionally, limited awareness of ESG concepts among stakeholders impacted the quality and consistency of responses. Regulatory gap in ESG practices also posed a challenge, as the absence of clear guidelines and enforcement limited the level of ESG integration across firms. This made it difficult to assess standardized practices within the sector.

A further limitation was the challenge of developing a financial model/report for a sustainability consulting company. Since most academic learning focuses on traditional business models, adapting financial concepts to a consulting-based, project-driven sustainability firm was complex and required additional understanding beyond coursework.

Also, resource and capacity constraints within a small organization sometimes limited the extent of analysis and project scope within the available timeframe. These limitations

highlighted the practical challenges of working in sustainability consulting and provided valuable learning opportunities in adapting to real-world constraints.

4.4 Recommendations for the Company

Based on my internship experience at Sustainability Solutions Nepal, several recommendations can be made to improve ESG research processes, stakeholder engagement, and overall operational efficiency. One main thing is to strengthen stakeholder engagement mechanisms, particularly with private equity firms and other financial institutions. Developing a more structured follow-up system and clearly communicating the purpose and importance of ESG research could help improve response rates and ensure more complete and reliable data collection.

It is also important to promote greater ESG awareness among stakeholders. Many organizations still have limited understanding of ESG concepts, which affects the quality of data and participation in research activities. Regular workshops, simplified ESG guidance notes, and knowledge-sharing sessions can help bridge this gap and improve overall engagement.

Another recommendation is to encourage stronger ESG integration in investment and business processes, especially in private equity. Firms should be guided to move beyond a governance-focused approach and gradually integrate environmental and social considerations into their investment decision-making frameworks for more balanced and sustainable outcomes. The company should also work towards developing more standardized ESG tools and frameworks for data collection, assessment, and reporting. This would improve consistency in research outputs and make ESG evaluation more structured, comparable, and efficient across different organizations and sectors.

Additionally, it is recommended to strengthen internal capacity for financial modeling and consulting reporting, particularly for sustainability consulting projects. Since adapting financial models for ESG-focused consulting firms can be complex, developing standardized templates and improving internal training would enhance efficiency, accuracy, and overall quality of deliverables. Improving data management systems and documentation practices would help in maintaining better records of ESG assessments, research findings, and client interactions. This would also support smoother project execution and knowledge continuity within the organization.

Finally, enhancing collaboration with stakeholders such as regulators, investors, and development partners would help address the regulatory gap in ESG practices and support the

broader development of the sustainability ecosystem in Nepal. Stronger external engagement would also contribute to improving ESG adoption, monitoring, and reporting standards across the industry.



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Daily Worksheet

Name of Student: Adrija Shrestha

Name of the Organization: Sustainability Solution

Name of Organization's Supervisor: Mr.Sandeep Shrestha

Date: February 1, 2026 – May 21, 2026

Table 4-1 My Daily Work Update Dairy

Week 1 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	01/02	Sunday	Orientation and introduction to ESG concepts and company workflow
Day 2	02/02	Monday	Understanding private equity and sustainability research scope
Day 3	03/02	Tuesday	Initial literature review on ESG and sustainable finance
Day 4	04/02	Wednesday	Identifying private equity firms in Nepal
Day 5	05/02	Thursday	Creating initial database of firms in Excel

Week 2 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	08/02	Sunday	Continued firm database development
Day 2	09/02	Monday	Designing survey questionnaire for ESG research
Day 3	10/02	Tuesday	Refining survey questions and framework
Day 4	11/02	Wednesday	Preparing interview guidelines
Day 5	12/02	Thursday	Review and feedback on survey tools

Week 3 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	15/02	Sunday	Distributing surveys to private equity firms
Day 2	16/02	Monday	Conducting follow-ups with firms
Day 3	17/02	Tuesday	Conducting interviews with stakeholders
Day 4	18/02	Wednesday	Collecting and organizing primary data
Day 5	19/02	Thursday	Data cleaning and structuring in Excel

Week 4 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	22/02	Sunday	ESG research and analysis on collected data
Day 2	23/02	Monday	Studying ESG frameworks and practices
Day 3	24/02	Tuesday	Continued interviews and follow-ups
Day 4	25/02	Wednesday	Preparing research summaries
Day 5	26/02	Thursday	Supporting ESG assessment tasks

Week 5 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	01/03	Sunday	ESG data analysis and documentation
Day 2	02/03	Monday	Supporting ESG assessment work
Day 3	03/03	Tuesday	Preparing proposal-related documents
Day 4	04/03	Wednesday	Election Holiday
Day 5	05/03	Thursday	Election Holiday

Week 6 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	08/03	Sunday	Work from Home (Office Repair) – ESG research work
Day 2	09/03	Monday	Work from Home – Data organization
Day 3	10/03	Tuesday	Work from Home – Survey analysis
Day 4	11/03	Wednesday	Work from Home – Research documentation
Day 5	12/03	Thursday	Resume office – ESG research continuation

Week 7 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	15/03	Sunday	ESG assessment support (eSewa)
Day 2	16/03	Monday	Working on ESG assessment documentation
Day 3	17/03	Tuesday	Research on ESG integration in private equity
Day 4	18/03	Wednesday	Preparing research insights
Day 5	19/03	Thursday	Financial model development work

Week 8 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	22/03	Sunday	ESG research and proposal preparation
Day 2	23/03	Monday	Working on business proposal drafts
Day 3	24/03	Tuesday	Preparation for WWF Earth Hour event
Day 4	25/03	Wednesday	Preparation for WWF Earth Hour event
Day 5	26/03	Thursday	Preparation for WWF Earth Hour event

Week 9 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	29/03	Sunday	Holiday (Post WWF Earth Hour Event)
Day 2	30/03	Monday	ESG research continuation
Day 3	31/03	Tuesday	ESG data analysis
Day 4	01/04	Wednesday	Preparing research summaries
Day 5	02/04	Thursday	Supporting ESG assessment tasks

Week 10 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	05/04	Sunday	ESG research work
Day 2	06/04	Monday	Interview follow-ups
Day 3	07/04	Tuesday	Data cleaning and Excel work
Day 4	08/04	Wednesday	Research documentation
Day 5	09/04	Thursday	Financial modeling work

Week 11 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	12/04	Sunday	ESG research continuation
Day 2	13/04	Monday	Proposal preparation work
Day 3	14/04	Tuesday	Nepali New Year Holiday
Day 4	15/04	Wednesday	ESG research
Day 5	16/04	Thursday	Sick Leave

Week 12 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	19/04	Sunday	ESG data analysis
Day 2	20/04	Monday	Research documentation
Day 3	21/04	Tuesday	Proposal and ESG work
Day 4	22/04	Wednesday	Supporting assessment tasks
Day 5	23/04	Thursday	Preparing summaries

Week 13 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	26/04	Sunday	ESG research work
Day 2	27/04	Monday	Data organization
Day 3	28/04	Tuesday	Analysis of ESG trends
Day 4	29/04	Wednesday	Research documentation
Day 5	30/04	Thursday	Finalizing research outputs

Week 14 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	03/05	Sunday	Working on ESG research report writing
Day 2	04/05	Monday	Preparing content for ESG presentation (PPT)
Day 3	05/05	Tuesday	ESG report and PPT submission in progress
Day 4	06/05	Wednesday	Continuing ESG report refinement
Day 5	07/05	Thursday	Ongoing presentation preparation and edits

Week 15 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	10/05	Sunday	Continuing ESG report improvements
Day 2	11/05	Monday	Presentation (PPT) enhancement and structuring
Day 3	12/05	Tuesday	Review of ESG findings and data validation
Day 4	13/05	Wednesday	Supporting ongoing ESG research work
Day 5	14/05	Thursday	Coordination with team for report feedback

Week 16 Date Day Task Assigned			
Day 1	10/05	Sunday	Final ESG report adjustments based on feedback
Day 2	11/05	Monday	Finalizing presentation content
Day 3	12/05	Tuesday	Internal review and corrections
Day 4	13/05	Wednesday	Preparation for submission and presentation
Day 5	14/05	Thursday	Completion of assigned internship tasks

PHOTO GALLERY



Figure 4-1 WWF Earth Hour 2026

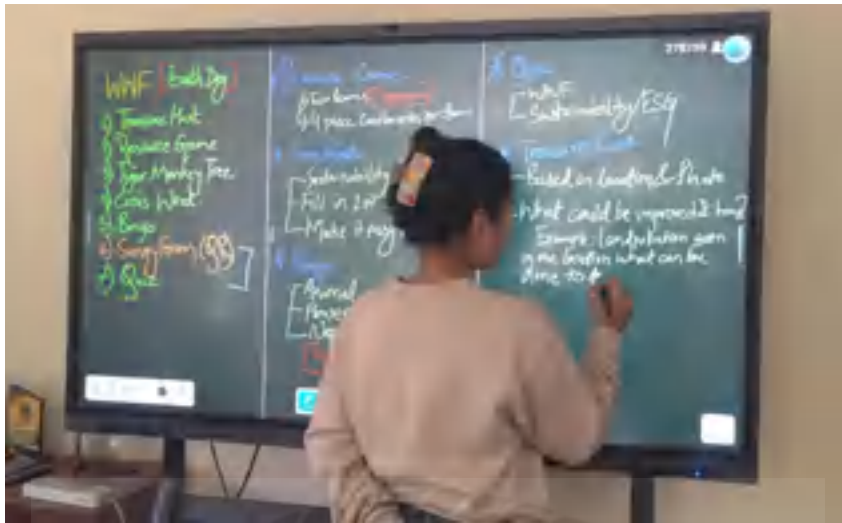


Figure 4-2 Presenting WWF Knowledge Corner Ideas



Figure 4-3 Vision Pyramid Test



Figure 4-4 Breaktime Memories During Internship



Figure 4-5 Celebrating Stuti Didi's Birthday (Colleague)



Figure 4-6 Presentation Highlights