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# The quest for sustainability: which competencies are sought by companies?

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## THE JOINT RESEARCH

The research endeavor has been undertaken by the collaboration between Sustainability Makers and Lighcast.

**Sustainability Makers** - the professional network is the Italian association of more than 300 professionals who specialise in planning and implementing sustainability strategies and projects, in business enterprises and other organisations: it's a third-sector organization which role is to qualify and enhance the skills and specialisation of these professionals through training and networking activities, studies and researches, conferences, workshops and webinars.

Set up in 2006, it represents Italy at the Global Network of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).

Its mission is: to promote the standing of sustainability professionals for the good of the company and of society; to develop the professions associated with sustainability in the interest of the common good and corporate competitiveness.

<https://www.sustainability-makers.it/>

**Lighcast** is the world's leading authority on in-demand skills, labour market trends, and talent intelligence. Lightcast insight and expertise, powered by our best-in-class data on jobs and skills is used by companies across the globe to better understand their own workforce and find new talent, by education institutions helping prepare their students for the job market, and by community leaders to develop new solutions for growth in their regions. Headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, and Moscow, Idaho, Lightcast is active in more than 30 countries and has offices in the United Kingdom, Italy, New Zealand, and India.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to the global push for more environmentally and socially responsible practices, firms are increasingly integrating sustainability into their organizational structures. This shift has given rise to a diverse array of sustainability-related roles within these organizations. However, defining the exact competencies and skill sets required for these roles has proven to be a challenge. In response to this, Sustainability Makers and Lightcast have collaborated on a comprehensive research initiative on European market. This undertaking involved a meticulous and thorough analysis of extensive data extracted from a wide range of online job postings.

By delving deep into the myriad facets of these job postings, a comprehensive and illuminating picture has emerged, shedding light on the dynamic landscape of the sustainability job market. **In the year 2022, Italy witnessed approximately 770 online job postings for positions related to sustainability, signaling a substantial interest in these roles.** However, Italy's figures fell behind those of other prominent European nations. Notably, **Germany surged ahead with an impressive fivefold greater number of sustainability job postings than Italy, followed by France with 3.2 times more, and the United Kingdom with 2.7 times more.** These disparities reflect varying degrees of emphasis on sustainability across European countries, shaped by diverse economic factors, industrial priorities, and governmental policies.

The job market for sustainability roles across Europe has experienced a remarkable surge in recent years. **Italy has displayed an exceptional trajectory, boasting a staggering 22-fold increase since 2019. Similarly, France and the United Kingdom have showcased significant growth with 12-fold and 8-fold increments respectively.** This upward trajectory underscores the mounting significance of sustainability within corporate contexts.

One of the core questions our research seeks to answer is: What are the key competencies demanded by companies for roles in sustainability? **In Italy, when it comes to job postings for sustainability roles, the requested competencies often appear quite broad and general.** These positions typically mention skills related to sustainability or ESG without delving into specific details. This approach may encompass a wide range of sustainability-related activities but lacks precision in outlining the exact requirements. In contrast, **in other countries such as Spain, France, and the UK, job postings for sustainability roles tend to specify more precise and tailored competencies.** For instance, there is an increasing emphasis on skills related to achieving net-zero emissions within organizations. This focus reflects the growing global commitment to combating climate change and the urgency to reduce carbon footprints.

The results also highlight differences in skill requirements between roles. **In Italy, for entry-level sustainability roles, there is a clear emphasis on a broad range of sustainability skills, particularly those related to environmental sustainability initiatives.** This suggests a focus on mitigating environmental

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impacts and ecological stewardship for candidates in these roles. In contrast, **roles requiring two or more years of experience place a greater emphasis on business-related skills, especially in management and strategic decision-making**. This highlights the need for experienced professionals who can effectively guide sustainability efforts and integrate sustainable practices into overall business strategies. This distinction underscores the evolving responsibilities and expectations associated with sustainability positions as candidates gain experience. Employers are increasingly prioritizing strategic thinking, leadership, and comprehensive business acumen in shaping sustainable practices within organizations.

Another key question our research seeks to answer is: What are the sustainability-related skills sought by companies in individuals occupying positions beyond the sustainability department? In Italy, job postings for other professional profiles exhibit a diverse range of competency requirements. **Skills related to employee satisfaction and diversity and inclusion, as well as environmental skills like renewable energy and mitigation, are highly sought after**. Regardless of the country, change management is a common competency requirement. **Interestingly, in the United Kingdom, there is a unique focus on competencies related to stakeholder engagement**.

The rising demand for sustainability skills in non-sustainability roles reflects a growing recognition of sustainability's importance across various functions within organizations. Businesses are placing a heightened emphasis on sustainability, leading to an increased need for professionals with expertise in sustainable practices. This shift underscores the integration of sustainability competencies into diverse professional roles, signaling a more comprehensive and holistic approach to sustainability within the job market.

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## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

In today's rapidly changing world, sustainability has emerged as a critical focus for businesses across the globe. As companies strive to adopt more environmentally and socially responsible practices, a growing number of sustainability-related roles are being created within organizations. However, as of today, the specific competencies and skill sets demanded by these roles remain somewhat ambiguous. In a world where sustainability is becoming a central pillar of corporate management, understanding the competencies required for sustainability roles has become paramount. To shed light on this pressing issue, Sustainability Makers and Lightcast joint forces to initiate groundbreaking research. The research aims to answer the following questions: What are the key competencies demanded by companies for roles in sustainability? What are the key sustainability-related competencies that companies are looking for in individuals holding roles outside of the sustainability function, such as HR or finance? By identifying these key competencies, we aim to empower aspiring sustainability practitioners to align their qualifications and develop the necessary skill sets to excel in this vital and rapidly expanding field. Furthermore, these findings will provide companies with valuable guidance in their efforts to build effective and sustainable workforces, fostering a more sustainable and resilient future for all.

The scope of our investigation encompasses five European countries: Italy, United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Spain. These nations have been selected for their significant presence in the European job market and their active involvement in promoting sustainability practices and initiatives. By examining the competencies sought in these key countries, we aim to provide insights into the current trends and demands for sustainability-related skills in diverse and influential regions within Europe. By delving into the realm of daily job postings from various companies, Lightcast gathers and examines the evolution of these postings over time. This process has allowed us to extract valuable insights into the precise skills that employers are actively seeking.

Initially, we conducted an analysis of job postings related to sustainability roles. This comprehensive approach allowed us to gain a holistic understanding of the competencies sought by companies in the realm of sustainability. Starting from the repository of job titles within the Lightcast database, we curated a selection of titles associated with sustainability. We have implemented a tailored approach in selecting keywords based on the country of origin for job postings. For job postings from the United Kingdom, we have utilized the following keywords: sustainability, social responsibility, impact. In the case of Italy, our chosen keywords include: sustainability, social responsibility, impact sostenibilità, impatto, sostenibile, responsabilità sociale, ESG, CSR. When sourcing job postings from Germany, we employed the keywords: sustainability, social responsibility, impact, nachhaltigkeit. Likewise, for job listings from Spain, the selected keywords are: sustainability, social responsibility, impact, sostenibilidad, economía circular, cambio climático, responsabilidad social, medio ambiente. Lastly, for job postings originating from France, we selected the following keywords: sustainability, social

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responsibility, impact, transition énergétique, RSE, responsabilité sociale, engagements sociétaux et environnementaux, économie circulaire, environnement. We then manually reviewed the list and excluded certain titles that were not suitable.

While it is not feasible to list all the job titles we have selected, here are a few examples: Chief Sustainability Officer, Corporate Social Responsibility Intern, Corporate Social Responsibility Manager, Director of Sustainability, Sustainability Analyst, Sustainability Assistant, Sustainability Associates, Sustainability Consultant, Sustainability Specialist.

In the second phase of our research, we extended our analysis to job postings for roles unrelated to sustainability, such as those in human resources or finance. This expansion allowed us to draw valuable comparisons and contrasts between the competencies sought in sustainability positions and those required in other functional areas within companies. The decision to analyze job postings for roles outside of sustainability stems from the need to map the demand for sustainability competencies across various functions within companies.

Once the job postings were identified, we classified them into three distinct groups based on the required work experience specified in the advertisements. These categories were established to gain a deeper understanding of how the demand for sustainability competencies varies with different levels of professional experience. The analysis is structured into two distinct groups, and the "All" category represents the combined total of these two groups. Within the first group, "Junior <2 years", are job postings that explicitly specify a requirement of under two years of work experience. This category holds particular relevance for individuals in the early stages of their careers or recent graduates seeking entry into the field. In contrast, the "Other >=2 years" group encompasses job postings mandating two or more years of professional experience. This category offers insights into the competencies sought after for mid-level to senior professionals in the field. By classifying job postings into these distinct groups, we were able to identify patterns and trends associated with the competencies requested at various stages of a professional's career.

After categorizing the job postings by years of experience, our next step involved utilizing Lightcast's Open Skills Taxonomy to identify, based on our prior knowledge, the skills typically possessed by professionals in the realm of sustainability. These skills encompass areas such as energy efficiency, waste management, sustainability regulations, environmental impact assessment, social impact assessment, sustainability reporting, stakeholder engagement.

The Open Skills Taxonomy, an expansive collection encompassing over 32,000 skills from diverse industries and domains, played a pivotal role in our analysis. Serving as a standardized framework, this taxonomy facilitated the classification and organization of skills referenced in job postings and related documents. By adhering to this structured and consistent approach, we could effectively identify and interpret the specific competencies sought by employers.

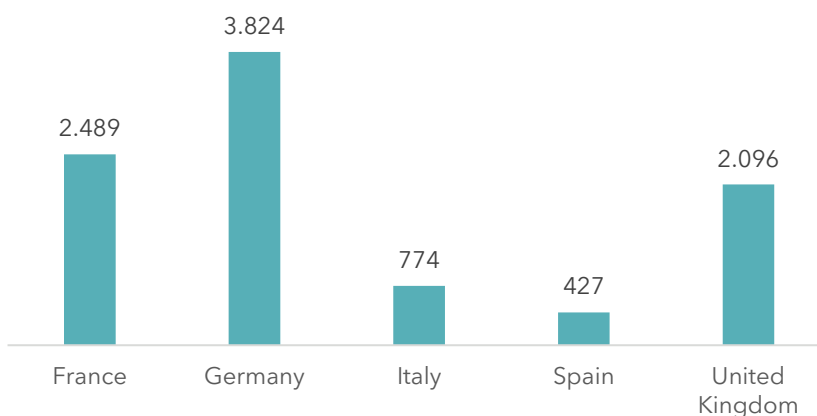
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## EMPIRICAL RESULTS

### Sustainability-related job postings

In the year 2022, the number of online job postings for sustainability-related roles in Italy reached approximately 770 (Figure 1). While this demonstrates a significant interest in sustainability roles, it is essential to acknowledge that Italy's figures were notably lower than those of other prominent European countries during the same period. Comparatively, Germany emerged as a robust hub for sustainability-related opportunities, showcasing a staggering five times more online job postings in this domain compared to Italy. France also exhibited a substantial lead, with 3.2 times more sustainability job postings than Italy, while the United Kingdom followed closely with 2.7 times more openings. Despite these differences, Italy's commitment to sustainability is relatively strong when juxtaposed with Spain, as Italy

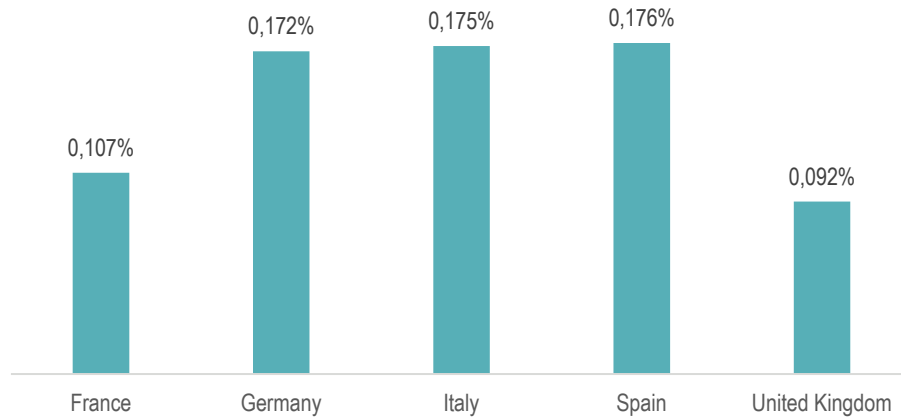
**Figure 1**  
**Number of sustainability job postings in 2022**



boasted approximately twice as many sustainability-related job postings as Spain in 2022. These statistics underscore the varying degrees of emphasis placed on sustainability initiatives across different European countries. While Italy's numbers might appear lower compared to its counterparts, it is vital to consider the broader context, including regional economic factors, industrial priorities, and governmental policies, which may influence the demand for sustainability roles. When assessing the concentration of sustainability job postings relative to the total number of professional job opportunities, Italy emerges as an impressive contender (Figure 2). In 2022, sustainability job postings constituted 0,175% of all professional job postings advertised online in the country, positioning Italy with the second

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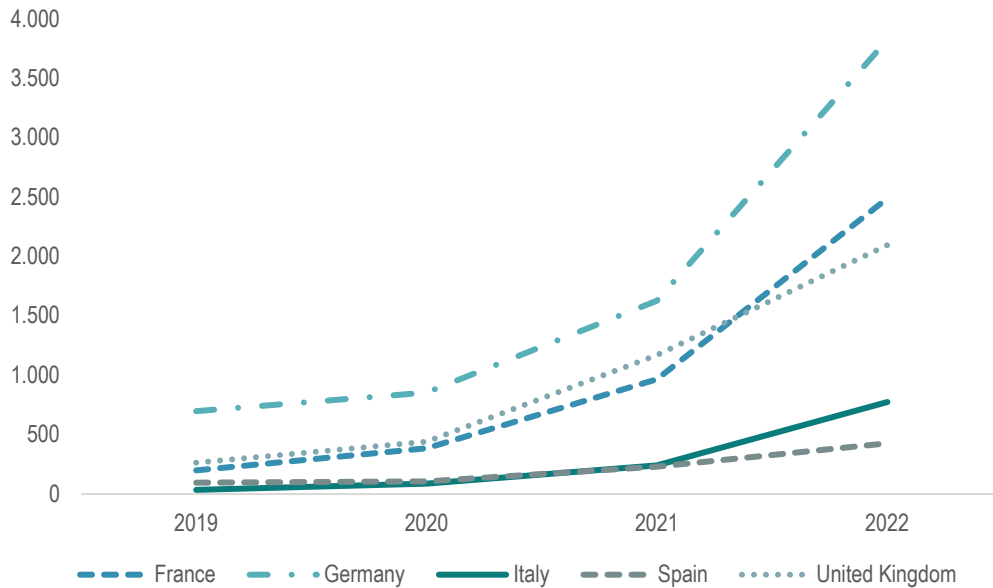
**Figure 2**  
**Sustainability job postings as a share of total professional postings in 2022**



highest concentration across the selected European nations. Spain claimed the leading position, closely overtaking Italy by a mere 0,001%, with sustainability job postings accounting for 0,176% of their total online job offerings. Germany followed closely behind, securing the third position with a concentration of 0,172%. In contrast, France and the United Kingdom trailed at a significant distance in terms of concentration. Sustainability job postings in France accounted for just 0,107% of all professional job postings advertised online in the country in 2022, while the United Kingdom registered a concentration of 0,092%. These concentration figures offer a distinctive perspective, revealing how sustainability roles are proportionately represented in the overall professional job market in each country. Italy's noteworthy performance reflects a strong commitment to sustainability-oriented opportunities within its professional landscape, reinforcing the country's dedication to advancing sustainable practices.

The online job market for sustainability roles has experienced a remarkable surge in recent years, witnessing exponential growth across all the countries under analysis. Despite starting from a relatively modest foundation in 2019, each country has demonstrated a striking upswing in sustainability-related job postings over the past four years (Figure 3). Particularly noteworthy is Italy, which has experienced the most rapid growth in this domain. In comparison to 2019, Italy now boasts an astounding 22-fold increase in sustainability job postings, a clear indicator of the escalating demand for professionals committed to sustainable practices. Following closely behind, France has also witnessed substantial growth, with 12 times as many sustainability job postings compared to 2019. Meanwhile, the United Kingdom, a key player in the European job market, has registered an impressive eightfold increase in

**Figure 3**  
**Number of sustainability job postings over time**



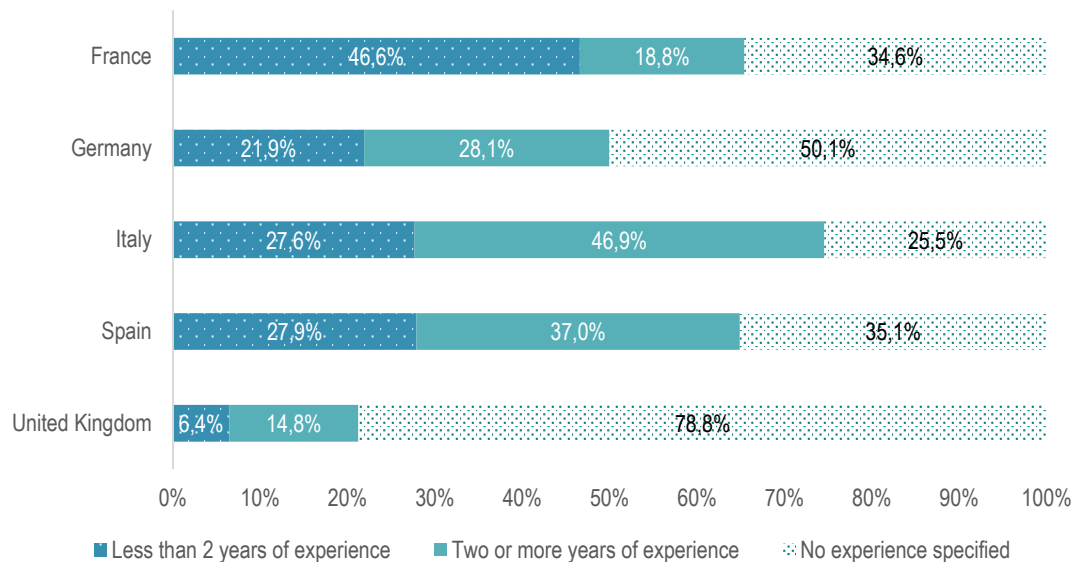
sustainability job postings during the same period. This significant growth trend underscores the increasing recognition of sustainability's importance in the corporate world and society at large.

The categorization of sustainability job postings based on specified years of experience varies significantly across different countries. In 2022, Italy emerged as the country where job postings for sustainability roles were more likely to include information about the required years of experience, with over 70% of these postings specifying this crucial requirement (Figure 4). Spain and France followed closely, with over two-thirds of their sustainability job postings also indicating specific experience prerequisites. However, the United Kingdom presented a stark contrast, where less than a quarter of sustainability job postings mentioned any requirement regarding years of experience. These disparities indicate varying hiring practices and workforce demands within the sustainability domain across different European countries. Italy's emphasis on specifying experience requirements in job postings signifies a deliberate approach towards matching candidates' qualifications with the exact needs of sustainability roles. Conversely, the UK's relatively lower number of job postings mentioning experience prerequisites suggests a more open approach, potentially welcoming applicants from diverse backgrounds and experience levels.

Analyzing the number of years of experience sought in these sustainability roles, we observed distinct patterns among the countries. In Italy, over a quarter of all sustainability job postings were tailored for



**Figure 4**  
**Sustainability job postings in 2022 split by years of experience requirements**



candidates with less than two years of experience, whereas almost half of the postings required two or more years of professional experience. Interestingly, in all other countries, except France, the proportion of sustainability job postings mandating two or more years of experience exceeded those seeking candidates with less than two years of experience. The prevalence of sustainability roles demanding two or more years of experience across most countries reflects the increasing significance of subject matter expertise and professional acumen in driving sustainable initiatives within organizations. It also highlights the value placed on practical experience and a proven track record of successfully navigating sustainability challenges.

Through the analysis of job postings data, we had the opportunity to discern the specific skills that employers seek for different roles, categorizing them into three distinct groups: common skills, specialized skills, and specific sustainability skills.

**Common skills:** These are versatile and transferable skills that hold relevance across various job postings, transcending specific industries or sectors. Examples of such skills include effective communication, leadership, problem-solving, and project management. These competencies are fundamental in ensuring a candidate’s suitability for a wide range of positions and contribute to their overall professional adaptability.

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**Specialized skills:** In contrast to common skills, specialized skills encompass technical expertise, specific knowledge domains, and proficiency in specialized tools. Examples include finance, auditing, data analysis, engineering, and project management. These skills are essential for roles that demand expertise in a particular field, enabling professionals to perform their tasks with precision and efficiency.

**Specific sustainability skills:** This category embodies a unique blend of both common and specialized skills that are explicitly tied to the field of sustainability. Here, we identify skills that are particularly crucial for sustainability-focused roles. Examples include sustainability strategy development, environmental impact assessment, circular economy practices, renewable energy technologies, and social impact analysis. These competencies reflect the growing significance of sustainability in corporate agendas, and they enable professionals to contribute effectively to sustainable initiatives and environmental stewardship.

Table 1 presents a comprehensive overview of the most sought-after common, specialized, and sustainability skills cited by employers in their quest to recruit professionals for sustainability roles across selected European countries in 2022. While certain differences exist among countries, it also underscores the commonalities in the demand for sustainability roles, transcending national borders.

In Italy, the top 5 most frequently mentioned common skills for sustainability job postings encompass proficiency in the English language, Consulting, Management, Communication, and Innovation. Remarkably, some of these common skills consistently rank high in demand for sustainability roles across all countries. Notably, communication expertise appears among the top 5 most sought-after common skills in sustainability job postings in every country analyzed, along with management skills and proficiency in the English language.

Regarding technical skills, sustainability roles in Italy necessitate competencies in benchmarking, economics, and time management, alongside finance-related skills like due diligence and auditing. Interestingly, several of these technical skills, particularly those pertaining to finance and economics, are frequently associated with sustainability job postings across all countries. Specific aspects of finance, such as auditing skills, investment skills, procurement, and due diligence, are consistently mentioned in more than one country. However, benchmarking stands out as a technical skill exclusively within Italy's top 5 technical skills for sustainability roles.

**Table 1**  
**Most in demand common, specialized and sustainability skills within sustainability job postings**

| France  |       | Germany                   |       | Italy                     |       | Spain                   |       | United Kingdom             |       |
|---|-------|---------------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| <b>Most frequently cited common skills in sustainability postings in 2022</b>         |       |                           |       |                           |       |                         |       |                            |       |
| Communications  | 38.7% | Management                | 29.9% | English Language          | 41.2% | Teamwork                | 36.3% | Communications             | 43.8% |
| English Language  | 25.3% | Communications            | 25.7% | Consulting                | 36.7% | Professionalism         | 30.4% | Management                 | 30.4% |
| Planning  | 20.0% | Innovation                | 15.7% | Management                | 32.3% | Consulting              | 30.4% | Leadership                 | 19.5% |
| Self-Sufficiency  | 17.3% | Consulting                | 11.8% | Communications            | 28.4% | Time Management         | 25.3% | Influencing Skills         | 16.1% |
| Management  | 16.9% | English Language          | 11.1% | Innovation                | 21.8% | Communications          | 21.5% | Research                   | 14.3% |
| <b>Most frequently cited specialised skills in sustainability postings in 2022</b>    |       |                           |       |                           |       |                         |       |                            |       |
| Finance   | 10.7% | Economics                 | 11.5% | Benchmarking              | 15.9% | Auditing                | 14.5% | Finance                    | 16.8% |
| Marketing   | 9.4%  | Project Management        | 11.4% | Economics                 | 10.9% | Value Chain             | 7.3%  | Auditing                   | 12.3% |
| Construction  | 7.9%  | Marketing                 | 7.7%  | Build Time                | 10.7% | Investments             | 7.3%  | Supply Chain               | 11.3% |
| Purchasing  | 7.8%  | Finance                   | 6.9%  | Due Diligence             | 9.8%  | Due Diligence           | 6.8%  | Marketing                  | 11.2% |
| Internal Communications   | 6.8%  | Know Your Customer        | 5.2%  | Auditing                  | 9.3%  | Workplace relationships | 5.2%  | Procurement                | 10.6% |
| <b>Most frequently cited sustainability skills in sustainability postings in 2022</b> |       |                           |       |                           |       |                         |       |                            |       |
| Sustainability Strategies   | 95.2% | Sustainability            | 60.5% | Sustainability            | 51.3% | Environmental Science   | 21.3% | ESG                        | 23.2% |
| Net Zero  | 95.2% | ESG                       | 13.3% | ESG                       | 37.6% | Sustainability          | 15.7% | Sustainability Strategies  | 18.3% |
| Sustainable Development   | 17.6% | Sustainability Reporting  | 5.2%  | Urban Sustainability      | 7.1%  | ESG                     | 13.1% | Net Zero                   | 17.5% |
| Sustainability  | 10.3% | Environment Management    | 4.2%  | Environmental Engineering | 6.8%  | Social Accountability   | 7.3%  | Sustainability Reporting   | 7.6%  |
| ESG   | 5.5%  | Sustainability Strategies | 3.5%  | Sustainability Reporting  | 5.6%  | Net Zero                | 5.4%  | Sustainability Initiatives | 5.6%  |

Examining sustainability skills, we observe notable variations across countries. In Italy, the top 5 most in-demand sustainability skills tend to be of a more generic nature, encompassing sustainability, ESG, and urban sustainability. Conversely, in other countries like Spain, the UK, and France, the cited sustainability skills tend to be more specific, with a focus on sustainable company management, such as sustainability strategies, sustainability reporting, and sustainability initiative skills.

These differences in the specific skills demanded for sustainability roles highlight the varying priorities and sustainability approaches within each country. Italy's emphasis on generic sustainability skills may indicate a broader and foundational interest in sustainability practices across different sectors. On the other hand, the other countries' focus on more specific sustainability skills reflects a deeper integration of sustainability principles into business operations and decision-making.

The following two tables offer an in-depth analysis of skill requirements for sustainability job postings based on the specified years of experience in each country. Table 2 showcases the top 5 common, specialized, and sustainability skills most in demand for sustainability roles that require less than two

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years of experience, while Table 3 presents a similar picture for roles necessitating two or more years of experience.

Overall, the skill-set requirements for the two types of roles are notably similar, with some interesting variations observed. In Italy, for instance, the top 5 common skills demanded for sustainability roles remain consistent regardless of the experience level employers seek. Similarly, the requirements for sustainability skills exhibit only slight changes, with sustainability reporting being mentioned for roles requiring less than two years of experience but not for those requiring two or more years. However, the most prominent disparity based on years of experience is evident in specialized skills for sustainability job postings: roles seeking less than two years of experience require economics skills, whereas benchmarking skills become particularly relevant for roles necessitating two or more years of experience.

In most countries, the ranking of the top common, specialized, and sustainability skills in sustainability job postings remains consistent, regardless of the specified years of experience. However, one exception is the knowledge of the English language. While it appears in the top 5 common skills for roles requiring two or more years of experience in each country (except the UK), it may not always be among the top 5 for roles seeking two or less years of experience.

**Table 2**  
**Most in demand common, specialized and sustainability skills within sustainability job postings requiring less than two years of experience**

| France  |       | Germany                   |       | Italy                        |       | Spain                 |       | United Kingdom            |       |
|---|-------|---------------------------|-------|------------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|
| <b>Most frequently cited common skills in sustainability postings requiring less than two years of experience in 2022</b>         |       |                           |       |                              |       |                       |       |                           |       |
| Communications  | 45.1% | Management                | 40.9% | Management                   | 50.9% | Planning              | 40.3% | Communications            | 52.6% |
| English Language  | 28.2% | Communications            | 36.4% | English Language             | 49.5% | Professionalism       | 37.8% | Management                | 31.9% |
| Planning  | 23.0% | Innovation                | 22.9% | Consulting                   | 45.3% | Teamwork              | 36.1% | Presentations             | 18.5% |
| Self-Sufficiency  | 21.7% | Consulting                | 19.4% | Innovation                   | 36.9% | Time Management       | 30.3% | Research                  | 17.0% |
| Management  | 20.8% | Planning                  | 13.7% | Communications               | 29.9% | Consulting            | 30.3% | Influencing Skills        | 16.3% |
| <b>Most frequently cited specialised skills in sustainability postings requiring less than two years of experience in 2022</b>    |       |                           |       |                              |       |                       |       |                           |       |
| Finance   | 10.9% | Economics                 | 14.3% | Economics                    | 17.8% | Auditing              | 32.8% | Finance                   | 39.3% |
| Marketing   | 10.6% | Project Management        | 12.7% | Due Diligence                | 16.4% | Value Chain           | 13.4% | Auditing                  | 25.2% |
| Purchasing  | 9.1%  | Marketing                 | 10.8% | Build Time                   | 13.6% | Design Consideration  | 11.8% | Financial Services        | 16.3% |
| Construction  | 8.7%  | Finance                   | 10.4% | Occupational Safety & Health | 12.6% | Analytics             | 7.6%  | Business Development      | 14.8% |
| Economy   | 7.2%  | Know Your Customer        | 9.9%  | Business Case                | 12.1% | Construction          | 6.7%  | Investments               | 14.8% |
| <b>Most frequently cited sustainability skills in sustainability postings requiring less than two years of experience in 2022</b> |       |                           |       |                              |       |                       |       |                           |       |
| Sustainability Strategies   | 97.7% | Sustainability            | 65.8% | Sustainability               | 61.2% | Sustainability        | 33.6% | ESG                       | 37.0% |
| Net Zero  | 97.7% | ESG                       | 20.8% | ESG                          | 40.7% | Environmental Science | 21.0% | Sustainability Strategies | 20.0% |
| Sustainable Development   | 17.4% | Sustainability Reporting  | 9.0%  | Environmental Engineering    | 14.5% | Social Accountability | 14.3% | Net Zero                  | 17.8% |
| Sustainability  | 14.6% | Sustainability Strategies | 6.7%  | Environment Management       | 13.6% | ESG                   | 12.6% | Environmentalism          | 14.1% |
| ESG   | 6.8%  | Environment Management    | 5.3%  | Sustainability Reporting     | 9.3%  | Net Zero              | 7.6%  | ISO 14000 Series          | 10.4% |

**Table 3**  
**Most in demand common, specialized and sustainability skills within sustainability job postings requiring two or more years of experience**

| France  |       | Germany                  |       | Italy                    |       | Spain                     |       | United Kingdom             |       |
|---|-------|--------------------------|-------|--------------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|----------------------------|-------|
| <b>Most frequently cited common skills in sustainability postings requiring two or more years of experience in 2022</b>         |       |                          |       |                          |       |                           |       |                            |       |
| Communications  | 27.7% | Management               | 29.6% | English Language         | 41.3% | Teamwork                  | 37.3% | Communications             | 46.1% |
| English Language  | 25.6% | Communications           | 20.9% | Consulting               | 38.8% | Consulting                | 36.7% | Management                 | 38.4% |
| Planning  | 18.8% | Consulting               | 17.8% | Communications           | 28.7% | Professionalism           | 29.7% | Research                   | 25.8% |
| Curiosity   | 15.1% | Innovation               | 16.6% | Management               | 23.4% | Time Management           | 28.5% | Leadership                 | 21.6% |
| Management  | 14.9% | English Language         | 14.4% | Innovation               | 18.7% | English Language          | 27.2% | Influencing Skills         | 19.0% |
| <b>Most frequently cited specialized skills in sustainability postings requiring two or more years of experience in 2022</b>    |       |                          |       |                          |       |                           |       |                            |       |
| Finance   | 11.3% | Economics                | 11.6% | Benchmarking             | 27.5% | Investments               | 12.0% | Finance                    | 25.8% |
| Accounting  | 8.1%  | Project Management       | 9.2%  | Differentials            |       | Auditing                  | 9.5%  | Business Development       | 17.4% |
| Construction  | 7.7%  | Finance                  | 8.8%  | Build Time               | 14.9% | Due Diligence             | 8.2%  | Accounting                 | 15.5% |
| Informatics   | 7.2%  | Marketing                | 6.7%  | Auditing                 | 11.3% | Biology                   | 7.0%  | Marketing                  | 15.5% |
| Marketing   | 7.0%  | Auditing                 | 6.6%  | Economics                | 10.7% | Project Management        | 6.3%  | Auditing                   | 14.2% |
| <b>Most frequently cited sustainability skills in sustainability postings requiring two or more years of experience in 2022</b> |       |                          |       |                          |       |                           |       |                            |       |
| Sustainability Strategies   | 95.9% | Sustainability           | 65.5% | Sustainability           | 47.7% | Environmental Science     | 28.5% | ESG                        | 29.7% |
| Net Zero  | 95.9% | ESG                      | 16.4% | ESG                      | 40.2% | ESG                       | 20.3% | Sustainability Strategies  | 19.7% |
| Sustainable Development   | 17.5% | Sustainability Reporting | 6.5%  | Environmental Science    | 8.0%  | Sustainability            | 12.7% | Net Zero                   | 15.5% |
| Sustainability  | 5.8%  | Environmental Science    | 3.4%  | Urban Sustainability     | 6.3%  | Net Zero                  | 8.2%  | Sustainability Initiatives | 10.3% |
| ESG   | 3.6%  | Circular Economy         | 3.0%  | Corporate Sustainability | 4.1%  | Sustainability Strategies | 5.7%  | Environmental Science      | 9.4%  |

Furthermore, a notable difference lies in the frequency with which certain skills are mentioned. Sustainability job postings requiring two or more years of experience are less likely to specify certain skill requirements. This is evident when examining communication and management skills, as well as various sustainability skills across all countries.

Focusing on roles requiring less than two years of experience, a significant finding emerges in Spain, where these positions frequently require sustainability skills related to social accountability. This suggests that, in Spain, these roles are associated with a broader emphasis on social sustainability rather than solely focusing on environmental impact. Lastly, for roles requiring two or more years of experience, two key findings stand out. In Germany, sustainability roles necessitate skills related to the Circular Economy, a distinct feature unique to the country. Conversely, Spain stands apart as the only country where sustainability roles require skills and competencies related to biology rather than economics.

Table 4 presents a compelling analysis of the evolving skill requirements in sustainability job postings, showcasing the top 10 fastest-growing skills for such roles in each country. To ensure robustness in our analysis and avoid small sample biases, skills mentioned in less than 1% of job postings in 2019 were excluded.

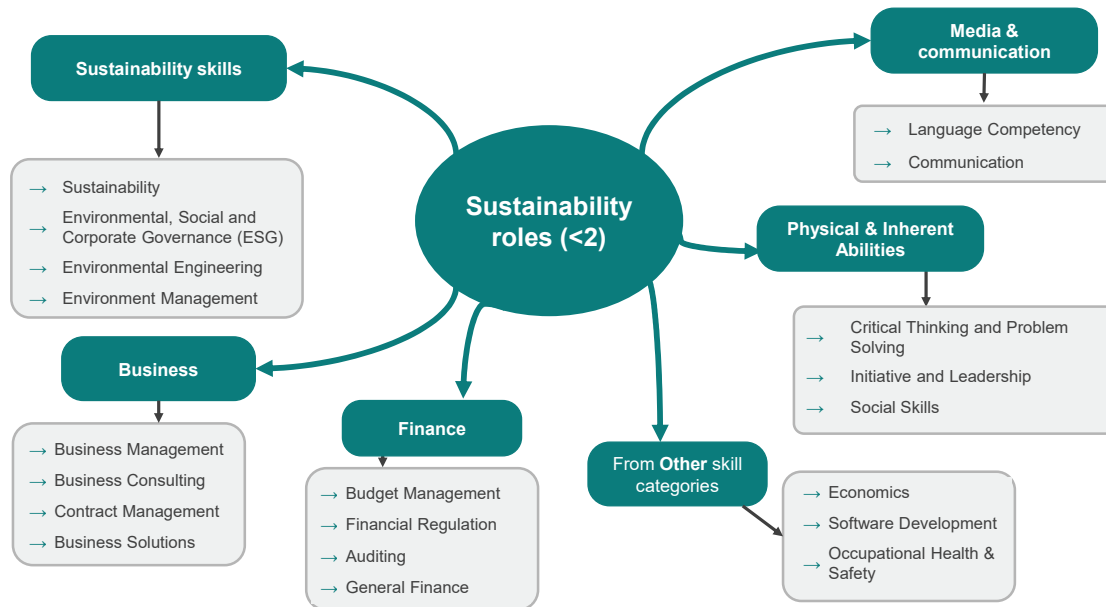
Across all countries, the top 10 fastest-growing skills exhibit a distinctive blend of common, specialized, and sustainability skills. While the specific mix varies from one country to another, it is intriguing to note that each country's list includes at least one sustainability skill. In Spain and Germany, sustainability skills are even more prominently featured, with two and three sustainability skills, respectively, ranking among the top 10 fastest-growing skills for these roles.

**Table 4**  
**Top ten fastest growing skills in sustainability job postings, 2019 - 2022 (%)**

| France             |        | Germany                  |        | Italy            |      | Spain                           |       | United Kingdom         |      |
|--------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|------------------|------|---------------------------------|-------|------------------------|------|
| Coordinating       | 379.7% | ESG                      | 827.3% | Consulting       | 230% | ESG                             | 1159% | Decision Making        | 222% |
| Curiosity          | 272.2% | Analytics                | 240.7% | Needs Assessment | 228% | Investments                     | 597%  | ESG                    | 205% |
| Innovation         | 199.8% | Operations               | 133.2% | Self-Discipline  | 214% | Presentations                   | 485%  | Risk Management        | 196% |
| Operations         | 159.8% | Finance                  | 129.5% |                  |      | Leadership                      | 485%  | Accounting             | 171% |
| Proactivity        | 134.5% | Circular Economy         | 125.9% | Presentations    | 127% | Net Zero                        | 417%  | Governance             | 149% |
| Value Propositions | 134.5% | Sustainability Reporting | 101.8% | English Language | 123% | Corporate Social Responsibility | 237%  | Thought Leadership     | 143% |
| Planning           | 133.7% | Logistics                | 82.5%  | Management       | 118% | Due Diligence                   | 226%  | Consulting             | 133% |
| Sustainability     | 127.4% | Banking                  | 69.6%  | Innovation       | 97%  | Finance                         | 192%  | Financial Statements   | 133% |
| Enthusiasm         | 113.2% | Automation               | 68.8%  | Communications   | 92%  | Timelines                       | 170%  | Problem Solving        | 124% |
| Self-Awareness     | 99.9%  | Know Your Customer       | 65.9%  | Sustainability   | 54%  | Economics                       | 170%  | Packaging And Labeling | 110% |

In Figure 5 and 6 we delve into the skills mix composition for two distinct types of sustainability roles in Italy in 2022: those demanding less than two years of experience and those requiring two or more years of experience. Both categories emphasize four key skill clusters most sought after by employers: sustainability, business, finance, and media & communication, alongside physical & inherent abilities.

**Figure 5**  
**Skills Mix: Sustainability roles requiring less than two years of experience**



However, the composition of these skill clusters varies significantly based on the years of experience required for the roles. Sustainability roles mandating less than two years of experience are more inclined to specify a wider array of sustainability skills. The most sought-after sustainability skills in both groups typically remain broad and generic. However, for roles seeking less than two years of experience, these skills exhibit a closer linkage to environment-related sustainability initiatives. This suggests that candidates for such roles may be engaged in activities centered around mitigating environmental impacts and ensuring ecological stewardship.

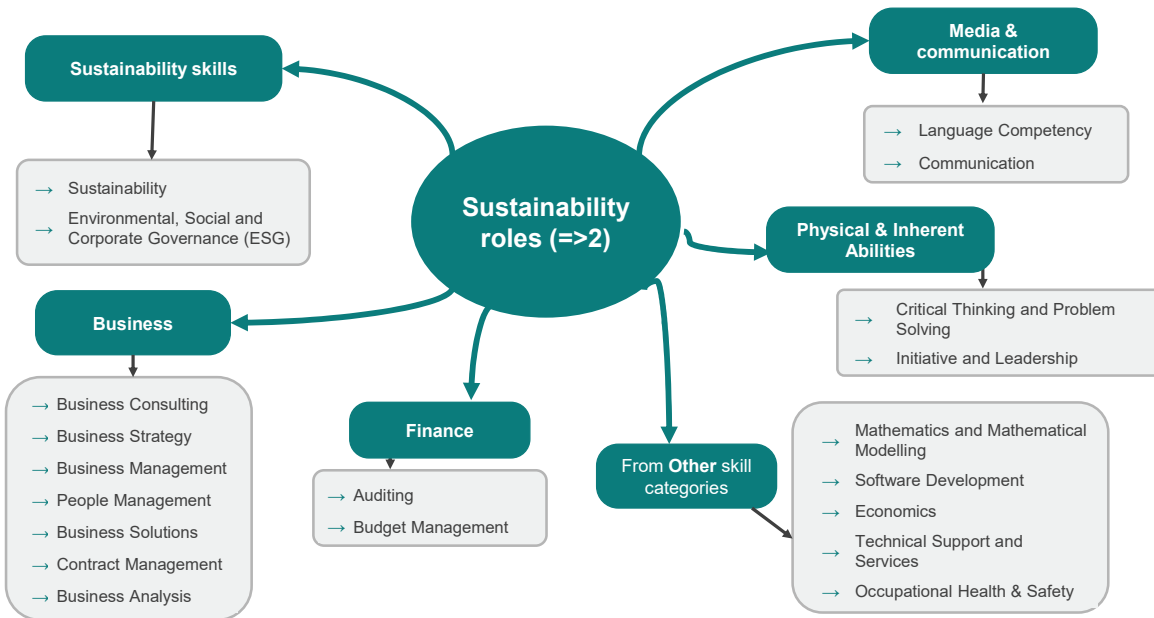
In contrast, roles demanding two or more years of experience emphasize business-related skills more prominently, especially those associated with management and strategic decision-making. This highlights the increasing need for experienced professionals capable of guiding sustainability efforts and integrating sustainable practices into overarching business strategies.

Moreover, this latter group of roles exhibits a broader range of skills beyond the four key categories mentioned earlier, indicating the multifaceted nature of sustainability roles for seasoned professionals. These additional skills encompass a diverse spectrum of competencies, potentially encompassing technological expertise, data analysis, policy development, and stakeholder engagement, among others.

This distinction in the skills mix for sustainability roles based on experience levels underscores the



**Figure 6**  
**Skills Mix: Sustainability roles requiring two or more years of experience**



evolving responsibilities and expectations associated with these positions. As candidates gain experience, employers place a greater emphasis on strategic thinking, leadership, and comprehensive business acumen in shaping sustainable practices within organizations.

### Other job postings

In 2022, the number of job postings in Italy for professional roles without a sustainability job title amounted to over 440,000 (see Figure 7). While this figure indicates a considerable number of opportunities, it pales in comparison to other prominent European countries. France, the United Kingdom, and Germany all boasted well over 2 million job postings for similar roles during the same period.

**Figure 7**  
**Growth in sustainability job postings vs other professional postings, 2019-2022 (%)**

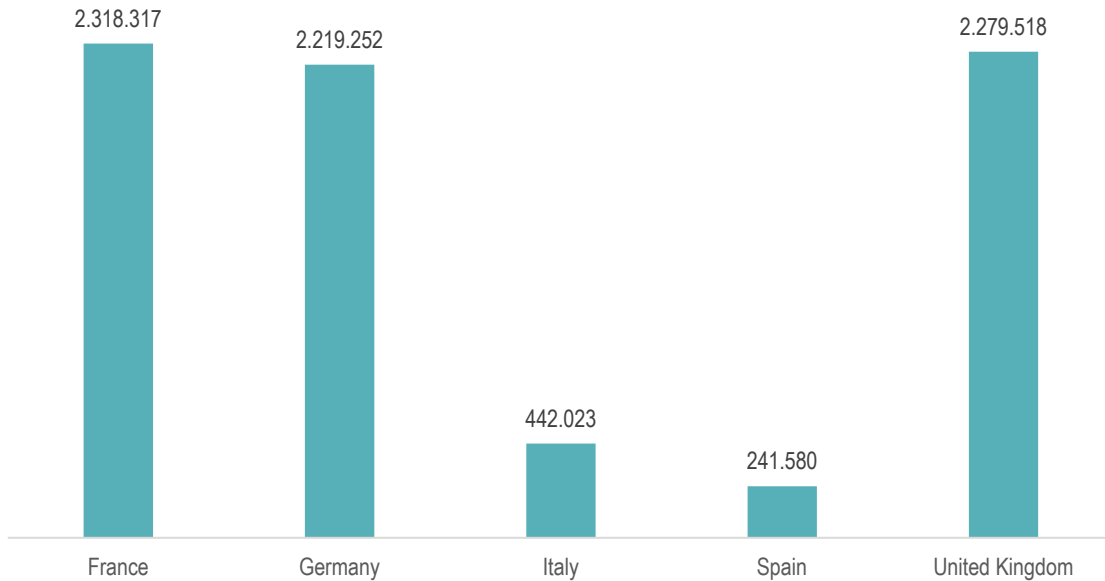


Compared to 2019, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of other professional job postings in every country, albeit at a significantly slower rate than that observed for sustainability job postings (see Figure 8). Among the selected European countries, France stands out as the nation with the most rapid surge in other professional job postings, surpassing all others by more than tripling its numbers since 2019. Following closely behind in this upward trend are the United Kingdom and Germany, both experiencing substantial growth in the same category. These findings indicate that while the demand for sustainability roles has seen a remarkable upswing in recent years, traditional professional job postings have also displayed positive growth across European countries. France's exceptional performance suggests an increased need for diverse professionals across various industries, reflecting the nation's economic dynamics and evolving job market.

However, it is worth noting that the rise in other professional job postings lags behind the growth witnessed in sustainability job postings, indicating a noteworthy shift in the employment landscape. The emphasis on sustainability-oriented roles underscores the increasing recognition of the importance of sustainability in corporate agendas and the growing urgency to address global challenges through sustainable practices.

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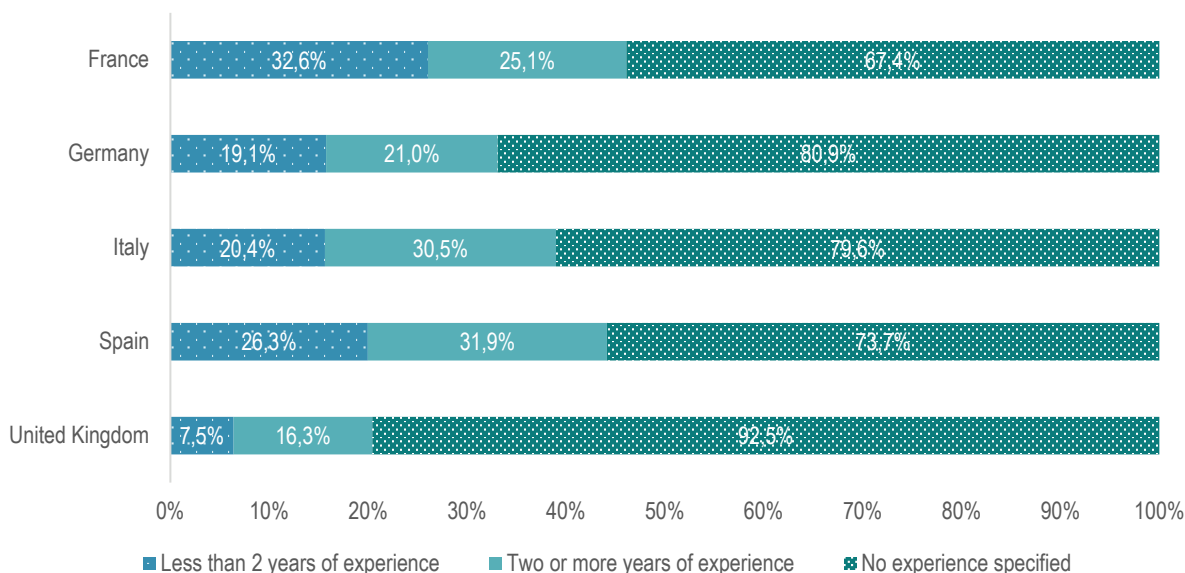
**Figure 8**  
**Number of other professional job postings in 2022**



As countries continue to navigate these changes, it becomes essential for job seekers to be aware of the evolving dynamics in their respective job markets. Understanding the demand for sustainability roles and traditional professional positions can guide individuals in making informed career choices and aligning their skills with the specific needs of their chosen industry.

When comparing job postings for other professional roles to sustainability job postings, a notable trend emerges regarding the mention of years of experience requirements in Spain, France, Italy, and Germany, with the distribution being relatively similar in the UK (see Figure 9). In France, job postings for other professional roles are more likely to specify years of experience requirements, accounting for approximately 45% of such postings, followed by Spain. Conversely, similar to sustainability job postings, the UK displays the lowest share of job postings for other professional roles with specified years of experience requirements. Analyzing the number of years of experience sought in these job postings, we find that roles demanding two or more years of experience predominate in Spain, Italy, the UK, and Germany, while the opposite is true for France. These findings suggest that in France, employers seeking other professional roles often prioritize candidates with specific years of experience, potentially

**Figure 9**  
**Other professional job postings in 2022 split by years of experience requirements**



indicating a focus on hiring individuals with well-established expertise in their respective fields. Conversely, the UK’s minimal emphasis on specifying years of experience aligns with its approach to sustainability job postings, potentially reflecting a more open and flexible hiring strategy, welcoming candidates from diverse backgrounds and experience levels. Furthermore, the majority of job postings in Spain, Italy, the UK, and Germany prefer candidates with two or more years of experience, suggesting a strong demand for mid-career professionals and individuals with proven track records. On the contrary, France exhibits a preference for candidates with less experience, indicating potential opportunities for early-career professionals to enter the job market. These insights into the role of years of experience requirements in job postings for other professional roles provide valuable information for both job seekers and employers. Job seekers can tailor their applications and career strategies based on the specific experience preferences within their target country. Employers can use this data to refine their recruitment approaches, ensuring they attract the most suitable candidates for their diverse professional positions.

Despite a lower frequency, the inclusion of sustainability skills in other professional job postings without a sustainability job title is becoming increasingly common (see Table 5). However, the number of sustainability skills required varies from one country to another, with the UK job postings featuring five sustainability skills and French job postings including as many as ten.

**Table 5**  
**Top five sustainability skills mentioned in other professional job postings**

| France  |       | Germany               |       | Italy                   |       | Spain                 |       | United Kingdom         |      |
|---|-------|-----------------------|-------|-------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|------------------------|------|
| <b>Most frequently cited sustainability skills in sustainability postings, in 2022</b>  |       |                       |       |                         |       |                       |       |                        |      |
| Climate Engineering   | 0.52% | Change Management     | 0.48% | Employee Satisfaction   | 0.90% | Renewable Energy      | 0.58% | Change Management      | 2.3% |
| Sustainable Development   | 0.52% | Renewable Energy      | 0.28% | Renewable Energy        | 0.48% | Mitigation            | 0.37% | Stakeholder Engagement | 1.0% |
| Renewable Energy  | 0.34% | ESG                   | 0.23% | Change Management       | 0.32% | ESG                   | 0.21% | Mitigation             | 0.5% |
| Social Auditing   | 0.28% | Pollution Prevention  | 0.16% | Diversity And Inclusion | 0.21% | Change Management     | 0.21% | Progress Reporting     | 0.4% |
| Photovoltaics   | 0.24% | Employee Satisfaction | 0.13% | Mitigation              | 0.19% | Social Accountability | 0.18% | ESG                    | 0.4% |
| <b>Most frequently cited sustainability skills in sustainability postings requiring less than two years of experience in 2022</b> |       |                       |       |                         |       |                       |       |                        |      |
| Sustainable Development   | 0.68% | Change Management     | 0.58% | Employee Satisfaction   | 0.84% | Mitigation            | 0.75% | Change Management      | 2.0% |
| Climate Engineering   | 0.45% | ESG                   | 0.53% | Diversity And Inclusion | 0.56% | Renewable Energy      | 0.54% | Stakeholder Engagement | 0.9% |
| Renewable Energy  | 0.34% | Renewable Energy      | 0.20% | Mitigation              | 0.52% | ESG                   | 0.50% | ESG                    | 0.5% |
| Recycling   | 0.29% | Employee Surveys      | 0.16% | Change Management       | 0.43% | Change Management     | 0.30% | Progress Reporting     | 0.4% |
| Photovoltaics   | 0.24% | Pollution Prevention  | 0.15% | Renewable Energy        | 0.38% | Employee Satisfaction | 0.17% | Mitigation             | 0.4% |
| <b>Most frequently cited sustainability skills in sustainability postings requiring two or more years of experience in 2022</b>   |       |                       |       |                         |       |                       |       |                        |      |
| Climate Engineering   | 0.67% | Change Management     | 0.55% | Employee Satisfaction   | 0.77% | Renewable Energy      | 0.72% | Change Management      | 3.2% |
| Sustainable Development   | 0.49% | ESG                   | 0.37% | Renewable Energy        | 0.60% | Mitigation            | 0.32% | Stakeholder Engagement | 1.0% |
| Renewable Energy  | 0.42% | Renewable Energy      | 0.34% | Change Management       | 0.38% | Social Accountability | 0.31% | Mitigation             | 0.7% |
| Social Auditing   | 0.31% | Pollution Prevention  | 0.15% | Photovoltaics           | 0.21% | Change Management     | 0.20% | ESG                    | 0.6% |
| Photovoltaics   | 0.24% | Recycling             | 0.14% | Diversity And Inclusion | 0.19% | Solar Energy          | 0.13% | Progress Reporting     | 0.5% |

The most frequently cited sustainability skills in other professional job postings in the UK are Change Management and Stakeholder Engagement, mentioned in approximately 2,3% and 1% of job postings, respectively, in 2022. Conversely, in all other countries, sustainability skills are cited in less than one percent of other professional job postings, regardless of the required years of experience for the roles. In Italy, the sustainability skills required in other professional roles exhibit striking similarity, irrespective of the specified years of experience. The required sustainability skills encompass both the social dimension, such as Employee Satisfaction and Diversity & Inclusion, and environmental sustainability skills, such as Renewable Energy and Mitigation.

Another significant difference between sustainability job postings and other professional job postings lies in the types of sustainability skills mentioned. In comparison to sustainability job postings, the top five most frequently cited sustainability skills in other professional job postings are more closely associated with the Human Resources field, particularly Employee Satisfaction, Diversity and Inclusion, and

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Social Auditing. Additionally, Change Management, Mitigation, and Social Accountability skills are also prominently cited in other professional job postings across all countries, regardless of experience requirements. Notably, France is the sole exception, with no mention of Change Management skills, while the UK stands out as the only country featuring sustainability skills related to stakeholder engagement.

The rapid rise in demand for sustainability skills in other professional job postings is a clear indication of the growing recognition of sustainability's relevance across various industries and sectors. As businesses increasingly prioritize sustainability as a fundamental aspect of their operations, the need for professionals with expertise in sustainable practices, change management, and stakeholder engagement has surged.

These findings underscore the importance of integrating sustainability competencies into diverse professional roles, indicating a shift towards a more holistic and comprehensive approach to sustainability across the job market. Employers seeking to foster sustainability-driven practices within their organizations are increasingly seeking candidates with a diverse skill set, capable of promoting sustainability principles in various dimensions of their business operations.

In recent years, we have witnessed a rapid and significant surge in the demand for sustainability skills in other professional job postings across all countries, albeit from a smaller starting point. The need for professionals with expertise in sustainability-related competencies has experienced a remarkable increase, indicating a growing recognition of the importance of sustainability in various industries and job sectors.

Notably, knowledge of Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) skills has seen a staggering rise of more than 1,000% in other professional job postings in Italy, France, and Spain, while Germany has also witnessed an impressive increase of over 300%. This surge highlights the critical role that ESG plays in guiding business practices towards sustainability, incorporating environmental, social, and governance factors into decision-making processes.

Moreover, various other sustainability skills have experienced significant growth between 2019 and 2022, particularly in relation to green sustainability, diversity & inclusion, and other mainstreaming areas of sustainability (see Table 6). This escalation reflects the widespread recognition of sustainability as a crucial driver of success and resilience in today's business landscape.

**Table 6**  
**Fastest growing skills in other professional job postings, 2019 - 2022 (%)**

| France                  |          | Germany           |         | Italy                   |           | Spain                   |           | United Kingdom         |        |
|-------------------------|----------|-------------------|---------|-------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-----------|------------------------|--------|
| ESG                     | 2069.8 % | ESG               | 327.1 % | Net Zero                | 30238.7 % | ESG                     | 13659.1 % | Mitigation             | 40.3 % |
| Social Auditing         | 621.7%   | Renewable Energy  | 73.1%   | ESG                     | 2715.5%   | Diversity And Inclusion | 1873.4%   | Stakeholder Engagement | 15.6 % |
| Biodiversity            | 564.2%   | Change Management | 63.9%   | Diversity And Inclusion | 1124.0%   | Mitigation              | 356.2%    | Change Management      | 12.1 % |
| Recycling               | 194.8%   |                   |         | Mitigation              | 203.6%    | Photovoltaics           | 207.8%    |                        |        |
| Photovoltaics           | 120.9%   |                   |         | Change Management       | 77.7%     | Solar Energy            | 137.8%    |                        |        |
| Sustainable Development | 112.6%   |                   |         | Renewable Energy        | 54.7%     | Social Accountability   | 102.1%    |                        |        |
| Waste Management        | 98.8%    |                   |         | Waste Management        | 39.7%     | Renewable Energy        | 71.4%     |                        |        |
| Renewable Energy        | 79.8%    |                   |         | Employee Satisfaction   | 29.4%     | Change Management       | 56.3%     |                        |        |
| Change Management       | 38.9%    |                   |         |                         |           |                         |           |                        |        |

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