



SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY PROFESSIONAL (SBEP)

GUIDELINES FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE



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SBEP Guidelines for Ethical Practice

The **SBEP Code of Ethics** outlines the values and expected behaviours that guide Sustainable Blue Economy Professionals (SBEPs) in all activities related to their professional duties. By committing to these values and adhering to the expected behaviours, SBEPs strengthen and inspire the public's confidence in sustainable practices for ocean management.

The **SBEP Guidelines for Ethical Practice**, a companion document to the SBEP Code of Ethics, uses practical examples for SBEPs to interpret and apply the SBEP Code of Ethics in their work.

In the context of a profession serving society and the environment, the SBEP Code of Ethics shapes individual practice. By adhering to the SBEP Code of Ethics, SBEPs:

1. Share a common set of values within the profession, offering a reliable professional product to the public. Practicing in both a competent and ethical manner is vital to maintaining a relationship of trust with clients and the public in general.
2. Provide societal and blue economy leadership. Trust is a fundamental element as SBEPs guide society in adopting responsibilities for the advancement of economic growth, social inclusion, and livelihoods while at the same time ensuring environmental sustainability. The public is looking to SBEPs for this leadership, particularly because of the increasing advancements in the marine economic world.

The SBEP Code of Ethics includes five tenets that all certified and in-training members must perform under to remain a member in good standing. The five tenants include:

1. Marine Stewardship
2. Blue Economy Advocacy
3. Professional Responsibility
4. Ethical and Moral Standards
5. Confidentiality

SBEP designation staff, volunteers, and board and committee members must abide by the SBEP Code of Ethics. This section describes each of these five central tenets of the SBEP Code of Ethics.



1.1 Marine Stewardship

SBEPs recognize the value of environmental efficiency and sustainability, determine the benefits and costs of additional marine and aquatic stewardship, and continue to implement sustainable solutions.

As part of their responsibilities, SBEPs must also:

- Champion Marine Stewardship
- Embrace SBEP Roles and Responsibilities
- Strive to Leave a Legacy
- Use Scientific and Traditional Knowledge
- Support and Promote Aquatic Ecological Resilience

1.1.1 Champion Marine Stewardship

Marine Stewardship involves thorough efforts to protect the global ocean systems and minimize the impacts of human activity. Although all citizens are responsible for sustaining the viability of our marine environment, SBEPs must champion marine stewardship with an objective towards sustainability.

Society must reconcile these marine stewardship needs with an SBEP's need for responsible sustainable development. SBEPs should take an active and cooperative role in helping society meet present and upcoming marine environmental challenges. SBEPs are responsible for maintaining their knowledge in areas that have a bearing on the quality and effect of their work.

When acting professionally, SBEPs are obligated to consider the implications of their work regarding marine pollution prevention and mitigation. Many aspects of a project can directly or indirectly affect marine ecology and water quality. These effects can be both positive and negative. All stages of a project (for example, marine construction or renewable energy projects) have environmental consequences, including adverse impacts on aquatic species and habitats, that must be considered early in the project. Therefore, a systematic evaluation procedure is needed to address such environmental issues effectively. Developing effective prevention or mitigation strategies requires integrated project planning. SBEPs should ensure these integrated project planning and evaluation procedures are in place to affirm they protect, steward, and promote the marine environment and coastal communities when conducting their work.

1.1.2 Embrace SBEP Roles and Responsibilities

Blue economy work is best undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team comprising SBEPs, marine industry professionals, individual businesses, non-profit organizations, communities, and governmental agencies. Due diligence requires that all reasonable steps be taken to ensure that the team comprises the necessary expertise and that this expertise is appropriately applied.



As part of SBEPs' service to society, they are accountable for their professional practice, for the professional practice of those under their supervision, and generally, for the profession itself. This marine environmental and public interest bias must take precedence over self-interest. Protection of the marine environment and the public from unethical or incompetent practices is a top priority for SBEPs. Clients and employers depend on SBEPs not only for their competence in the sustainable blue economy but also for the confidence the public has in them. In addition, SBEPs must be credible in their character and integrity to serve society.

SBEPs' duty to public service extends beyond the SBEP Code of Ethics. SBEPs should continually strive to give back to their communities through service to public bodies that draw on professional expertise. SBEPs are also encouraged to participate in activities that contribute to their communities that require professional and ethical behaviour but not necessarily the application of blue economy knowledge.

1.1.3 Strive to Leave a Legacy

SBEPs must uphold and enhance the honour, dignity, and reputation of their profession and serve the marine sector and public interests. SBEPs must strive to leave a sustainable ocean legacy while maintaining opportunities for future generations to drive responsible ocean health practices.

SBEPs recognize marine impairment as a risk to public welfare. In response, members of society are being urged to protect, preserve, and enhance the quality of the oceans and coastal communities. The long-term objectives of SBEPs and professionals employed in the marine sector are to sustain the viability of our ocean ecosystems and to safeguard the well-being of future generations so that they will not be compromised by our activities today.

SBEPs recognize that marine stewardship is a responsibility for all citizens: the public has a rightful role in setting goals for sustainable ocean management, and the public's expectations are evolving and vary widely.

Integrating ocean sustainability with social and economic considerations will require SBEPs to be innovative and creative in their planning and design. In the broader context, SBEPs are encouraged to look ahead and foresee how their role will shape the future. Not only through today's innovations but by showing others how innovations advance in the interest of the marine environment; public safety, health, and welfare; risk minimization and management; and social and cultural values.

1.1.4 Use Scientific and Traditional Knowledge

SBEPs know that the projects they work on may involve scientific knowledge, which relies on (maritime



or environmental) laws that have been established by applying the scientific method. SBEPs also need to consider and apply traditional knowledge, which has been developed over centuries through the experiences of coastal communities around the world and adapted to local culture and environment, such as sustainable fishing and marine practices.

The recognition of industry experts in this area is paramount. The SBEP must be vigilant in selecting a process or assembling a team with the appropriate knowledge for the proposed project. SBEPs must also recognize values applicable to the social and economic effects of projects. These values could include local and neighbourhood concerns, quality of life, specific-effect concerns (e.g., visual, sound, odour), along with traditional and cultural values, have all gained acceptance as pertinent and definable criteria that many jurisdictions are now interpreting and applying.

1.1.5 Support and Promote Aquatic Ecological Resilience

SBEPs must support and promote aquatic ecological resilience by incorporating information about natural variation, cumulative impacts, climate change, and ocean technology where appropriate or possible. An SBEP should evaluate and investigate their work's possible impacts on nearby coastal and marine micro-ecosystems. These impacts can be individual or cumulative and may have social and economic implications. SBEPs should, wherever applicable, monitor the effects of a changing climate on standard design practices and adapt their decisions and project designs to accommodate these changes as they evolve.

SBEPs must, at the minimum, comply with all relevant legislation, approvals, and orders relating to the sustainable treatment of marine resources and disposal of the same resources and by-products. In addition, even where not required by legislation, approvals, or orders, SBEPs should aim to increase the lifecycle of a resource to improve ocean sustainability.

SBEPs understand that they are building resilience into an ecosystem by supporting the health and function of associated sensitive marine habitats, organisms, and ecosystem processes affected by their work. For ecological systems, an SBEP understands the importance of biodiversity and functional redundancy in helping ecosystems become more resilient to changes in coastal, foreshore, tidal, intertidal, and subtidal environments. With this knowledge, an SBEP will use diverse strategies and methods to build a resilient marine ecosystem for coping with and adapting to oceanic change.

1.2 Blue Economy Advocacy

SBEPs empower coastal communities around them, enhancing the dignity and reputation of both the profession and the designation, as well as respecting the welfare, health, and safety of all persons and environment through competency, honesty, and transparency.



SBEPs can advocate for the blue economy by promoting and practicing the blue economy principles:

- Respect Indigenous rights
- Restore the Ocean and the Coasts
- Reduce Ocean Pollution
- Protect 30% of the Ocean by 2030
- Rebuild Wild Fish Stocks
- Phase Out Harmful Industrial Activities
- Fight Climate Change

As part of their responsibilities for blue economy advocacy, SBEPs must also:

- Exercise Due Diligence
- Inspire Others and Show Value in Making Ocean Health-Conscious Decisions
- Facilitate and Promote Environmentally Positive Changes
- Restrict Professional Practice to Areas of Competency and Expertise

1.2.1 Exercise Due Diligence

SBEPs shall practice due diligence and apply reasonable care in all work. SBEPs should:

- Stay apprised of the major marine environmental issues facing society so that they may inform the potential interaction of these issues with their professional activities.
- Recognize how their professional activities can affect the marine environment and coastal communities.
- Develop a system of marine monitoring tools and applications to maintain a reasonable level of understanding and awareness of ocean health issues and shipping impacts related to their expertise.
- Developing and implementing marine best management practices (BMPs) to carry out blue economy activities with optimal avoidance, prevention, mitigation, and restoration practices for ocean health and coastal communities.
- Recognize the value of Environmental Management Systems (EMS) in identifying, controlling, and reducing negative impacts on the marine environment and coastal communities.
- Use other specialists, such as Environmental Professionals (EPs), in areas where the SBEPs' knowledge is not adequate to address environmental issues.
- Comply with municipal, provincial, and federal regulatory requirements for marine management and industry activities (i.e., marine shipping, port operations, incident command



protocols etc.) and endeavor to exceed or better them by applying the best available cost-effective technologies and procedures.

- Apply professional and responsible judgment in their considerations of aquatic ecosystems.
- Integrate marine (environmental) planning and management into all their activities.
- Consider the costs of ocean protection and promotion among the essential factors used to evaluate the economic viability of projects.
- Recognize the value of ocean sustainability, consider the benefits and costs of marine stewardship, and endeavor to implement efficient and sustainable solutions.
- Openly engage and ask for input from stakeholders and strive to promptly respond to marine environmental concerns.
- Disclose information necessary to protect public safety to the appropriate authorities.
- Work actively with others to improve marine sustainability and practices.

1.2.2 Inspire Others and Show Value in Making Ocean Health-Conscious Decisions

SBEPs must demonstrate the benefits of engaging in pro-ocean behaviour and encourage clients, colleagues, employers, and the public to act towards making ethical decisions at an individual, corporate, and public interest level that support the mitigation of ocean pollution and other impacts.

SBEPs realize that no simple definition of “ocean health and public interest” exists and that environmental, technical, economic, and social issues related to marine sustainability and environmental projects are complex and interrelated. Trade-offs are frequently required.

Substantial pressure can be applied to a project based on the uni-dimensional agenda of a particular interest group. SBEPs make decisions in the best interest of ocean sustainability, even if these choices are not the most financially feasible or the easiest path forward.

The solution to complex long-term ocean issues and threats requires the participation of industry, governments, and academia. SBEPs are encouraged to interact with others to translate concepts from theoretical research into applied practice, as well as collaborate to develop eco-friendly initiatives that sustainably support the ocean economy.

1.2.3 Facilitate and Promote Environmentally Positive Changes

SBEPs are encouraged to be actively involved with ocean and other environmental issues. They should go beyond merely facilitating improvements: SBEPs must promote ocean-friendly behavior change to promote the health of the oceans and coastal communities. By being actively involved, SBEPs can be proactive—they can anticipate and prevent negative impacts on the marine environment rather than being reactive and responding late to marine pollution.



SBEPs are encouraged to develop effective prevention or mitigation strategies that support marine environmental management. This requires integrated project planning and ongoing commitment. SBEPs should verify that such evaluation procedures are in place and are followed, demonstrating their vigilance. This commitment indicates that effective marine protection strategies are integral to their activities and environmental effect prevention and mitigation will always be considerations for SBEPs when executing their work. Because of this, many projects present an opportunity to consider planning and designing alternatives that may positively affect the marine environment and the ocean economy. Employers and clients would then have the opportunity to help manage from both a project and financial perspective, avoiding negative impacts on marine environments and maximizing positive impacts on society.

SBEPs are uniquely poised between the two extremes of absolute preservation and unfettered development. Three strategies for creating positive change include:

1. SBEPs should understand and exercise "no" when they know that the right decision is not being properly considered or executed—speaking up in the interest of ocean health and not of 'self'.
2. SBEPs should be part of or involved with organizations constituted to formulate maritime laws and their enforcement.
3. The public should see SBEPs as faithful stewards of the marine environment—professionals who have practical, knowledge-based solutions that serve the best interests of ocean health, marine sustainability, and the public.

1.2.4 Restrict Professional Practice to Areas of Competency and Expertise

SBEPs must restrict their advice, opinions, and practice to their areas of competency and expertise. When the ocean issue or an aspect of a project may be outside the SBEP's specialty, they are responsible for consulting an appropriate subject matter expert. Marine and ocean science practice requires integrating diverse disciplines and philosophies. Therefore, many projects will need a team of specialists to address complex ocean issues and threats. SBEPs should engage, or recommend that their clients and employers engage, other experts or specialists best to serve the client's or employer's best interests. SBEPs shall only undertake work they can perform based on their training and experience.

Before accepting assignments, SBEPs should ensure that their clients and employers understand the extent of their professional responsibilities. Defining the SBEP's professional responsibilities and



developing their scope of services involves listing the SBEP's tasks within the terms of engagement and performance expectations. All parties, the SBEP, the employer and the client, should benefit from accurately representing skills, abilities, and expectations.

1.3 Professional Responsibility

The SBEP is committed to ongoing learning and development. Because the sector is growing and continuously changing, the SBEP needs to adapt and grow along with it. SBEPs will adhere to the ethical guidelines, understand the rules of conduct, and uphold the standard of practice. They will also maintain accountability, understand their responsibility, work within the rules and regulations, and always conduct themselves to the maximum of their expertise.

SBEPs must remember that they need the public's trust for their decisions to be impactful, respected and sought out.

SBEPs have a responsibility to:

- Promote the value of being an SBEP
- Maintain competencies and continuously improve
- Recognize when compliance is not enough
- Use the precautionary principle
- Hold others accountable and report unethical practices
- Conduct practice towards other professionals with courtesy
- Provide high quality services
- Abide by the law, regulatory guidelines, and policies
- Communicate respectfully
- Be mandate-oriented, follow policy, and agree to value a specific code (including ethics and consequences)

1.3.1 Promote the Value of Being an SBEP

At all times, SBEPs should endeavour to communicate the value of their SBEP designation to their peers, employers, and the public. Obtaining the SBEP designation validates knowledge obtained through educational and employment paths, the skillsets obtained, and the ability to meet a professional standard. The SBEP designation certifies the experiences the professional has gained in their environmental role(s) and attests to their dedication to ocean sustainability and the blue economy.

When an SBEP is presenting, speaking at an event, or writing a proposal, affirming their qualifications by highlighting their SBEP status will help gain them credibility, as well as grow the legitimacy of the



SBEP community.

1.3.2 Maintain Competencies and Continuously Improve

SBEPs must maintain competencies and continuously improve professional and ethical knowledge through education and skills enhancement. SBEPs have a responsibility to maintain a knowledgeable interest within their specialization which have the potential to impact the public interest. Environmental, technical, and professional standards of conduct are set, revised, maintained, and enforced by SBEPs. Mutual accountability within the SBEP designation and amongst SBEPs must be stringent, so they are always seen to merit societal trust. If each member of a working group is highly professional, it elevates the professionalism of the entire group. It is up to the SBEPs to continue their professional development to maintain the standard expected of them through the designation. Such standards may be provincial, national, or global and may address the following issues:

- **Code of Ethics** – protecting the public from ethical and/or incompetent practice in the highest esteem
- **Technical Requirements** – engaging in skilled practice ensures the protection of the marine environment and the public's well-being and safety
- **Continuing Competence** – concerning personal and professional development and adherence to standards and guidelines in all areas of the sustainable blue economy, including:
 - Fisheries and Aquaculture
 - Ocean Technologies
 - Offshore Minerals and Resources
 - Marine Renewable Energy
 - Marine Transport, Ports, and Shipping
 - Coastal and Marine Tourism
- **Discipline** – disciplining members who fail to comply with proper standards of marine environmental practice and ethical conduct.

1.3.3 Recognize When Compliance is Not Enough

When SBEPs recognize that compliance is not enough or is not the best they can do, they must set a higher standard. The SBEP's primary responsibility is to protect the welfare of oceans, coastal communities, and the public, whether the work is paid or voluntary. This responsibility is not reduced or diminished when the SBEP provides service to the public through an employer. Therefore, employed SBEPs are still bound by these ethical responsibilities and obligations, even if they are influenced by others, such as employers, clients, or the public. This dilemma may require SBEPs to confront company loyalty versus professional responsibility.



When an SBEP takes a professional stance, their career may be negatively affected. SBEPs must ensure that they take appropriate action or notify the proper authorities when they believe that public safety or the (marine) environment is endangered or when relevant legislation, approvals, or orders are required. SBEPs share corporate responsibility for the quality of products and services delivered.

When faced with these conflicting situations as either a consultant or employee, SBEPs must use reasoned judgement from their accumulated knowledge and experience. Recognizing ethical dilemmas and determining the actions to address them are essential skills for SBEPs. If necessary, ECO Canada and the SBEP designation can help professionals make ethically sound decisions through clarifications within the SBEP Code of Ethics.

SBEPs must understand that meeting the minimum standard is insufficient—they should always strive for higher standards. For SBEPs to have a real impact, their professional competence and project delivery should be rated as “excellent”.

1.3.4 Use the Precautionary Principle

There is not always a certainty that an activity can lead to something negative or cause harm to the marine environment. However, SBEPs have an obligation to actively try to prevent marine pollution. In Professional Practice, when there is no scientific proof upfront, an SBEP should use professional judgement based on their expertise to try and anticipate harm. SBEPs must understand and use the precautionary principle, meaning they must minimize harm wherever and whenever possible. SBEPs must keep up with society’s increased awareness of activities that can affect ocean health and economic activity; this awareness will inform an SBEP’s contribution to designing and implementing solutions recognizing the possible significant effects of their professional activities on the marine and coastal environment.

A SBEP is expected to respect the law in their conduct; they should not engage in activities outside of their professional practice that may compromise their professional or personal reputations, bringing discredit to their professions. If an SBEP is presented with a situation that may compromise their reputation or the reputation of the profession, they should be prudent and take extra care, even while they await further evidence.

1.3.5 Hold Others Accountable and Report Unethical Practices

Although they may not have formal authority, SBEPs have a responsibility to lead by example and demonstrate competence and ethical conduct of business in their organizations. To many employers,



this leadership is an asset and often a contributing factor towards offering employment to SBEPs. When a disagreement occurs between two SBEPs, the individual who bears professional responsibility for the recommendation must ensure that their facts and recommendations are correct and that the information and assumptions are communicated simply and clearly. For contentious issues, this communication should be done in writing, *by* phone or in person. If the senior SBEP chooses to overrule the other SBEP's recommendation, in full knowledge of its basis, the senior SBEP consciously takes responsibility.

When someone questions an SBEP's recommendation, the SBEP must value their opinion and seek to understand. Although the other party may not have the marine environmental technical knowledge to appreciate both the rationale of the recommendation and the potential consequences of failure, their opinion should be addressed. The SBEP must explain, describe, and defend their recommendation, and if necessary, seek support from their managers or superiors to help resolve the conflict. In such instances, the SBEP should ensure that an appropriate decision is made.

As mentioned throughout the SBEP Code of Ethics, an SBEP has a duty of care to protect public welfare and report unethical practices if necessary.

1.3.6 Conduct Practice Towards Other Professionals with Courtesy

An SBEP's behaviour toward employers and clients sets an example and demonstrates the quality of their professional brand. SBEPs must conduct their practice toward other professionals with courtesy and good faith. For example, when an SBEP is administering a contract on behalf of a client or employer, they should act with fairness and justice to all parties, including fellow professionals.

When providing services to a client, SBEPs should consider themselves as part of the client's organization or team. The foundation of an SBEP-client relationship involves the SBEP's duty of care for a client's interests, which should not supersede the SBEP's duties to protect public safety and other duties that may conflict with a client's interests. SBEPs should put their client's interests before their personal biases and act towards other professionals with respect and accountability.

The relationships of SBEPs with their business associates should be friendly but independent and free from obligating favours.

SBEPs are expected to have proper regard for all individuals. They must not violate the human rights of others and must not discriminate based on race, religion, sex, or disability.

SBEPs should take responsibility and precautions not to injure the professional reputation of another SBEP or person through troublesome or frivolous statements.



1.3.7 Provide High Quality Services

SBEPs must provide high quality services in a timely manner. SBEPs have an obligation to their client that the project and the project deliverables are completed not only to the best of their ability, but also to meet the contract requirements while keeping public interest in mind. Providing timely service does not mean doing a fast job. It means being efficient and effective in addressing concerns in a timely manner. Providing efficient customer service is part of the SBEP designation, and it is gaining a positive reputation in the marine and environmental sector.

In addition, SBEPs have an obligation to their clients to provide timely notifications and advise their clients when they believe a project will not be successful or will not meet the original agreed-upon timelines.

1.3.8 Abide by the Law, Regulatory Guidelines, and Policies

SBEPs must abide by the law, regulatory guidelines, and policies and ensure that personal actions respect marine and environmental laws. This includes marine regulatory frameworks and laws set forth by government agencies (i.e., Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Canadian Coast Guard, etc.). SBEPs shall determine which marine and environmental laws apply to the activity they are undertaking early in the project's timeline; this due diligence investigation will ensure compliance with applicable municipal, provincial, or federal environmental laws.

SBEPs should consider consulting with municipal, provincial, and federal authorities at the project scoping and planning stage. This guideline is intended to be universally applied, regardless of the size of the activity or project. Some projects will require a full environmental impact assessment and others will require thought and planning to integrate sustainable development and minimize marine pollution (environmental disruption), even if disruption appears to be minor.

Marine and environmental legislation can place responsibility for marine pollution (and environmental impairment in general) on an individual. In such cases, if the individual took all reasonable measures to prevent the offence, then they can demonstrate that they exercised their due diligence. The basis for judging these measures for an SBEP should be determined by evaluating their standard practice and their compliance to meet any legislation, approval, or order requirements relating to the project in question.

Furthermore, in recent Canadian environmental legislation, an individual can be considered party to an offence if the individual was complicit in the commission of the offence. To ensure that their personal and professional actions comply with maritime and environmental laws, SBEPs should abide



by the following principles:

1. SBEPs shall develop and maintain knowledge and understanding of legislation, regulations, approvals, codes, and guidelines, including their purposes and limitations and any changes to these requirements. SBEPs must also apply these requirements both on a procedural and substantive basis.

SBEPs must:

- Ensure that proper documentation of adherence to (marine) environmental procedures, protocols, and regulations is maintained and that relevant information is provided to regulatory agencies in a timely manner.
 - Have regard for both the reality and the trend of maritime and environmental legislation to assign personal responsibility for both action and omission. SBEPs shall reflect this reality in their professional duties accordingly as it relates to themselves, their employer, colleagues, and clients.
 - Exceed the standards and regulatory requirements to protect the health and well-being of the environment, the ocean, and the public. SBEPs are encouraged to collect evidence of cumulative, persistent, and synergistic marine environmental effects where they may not be fully considered in standards or regulations.
2. SBEPs shall disclose, accurately represent, and provide information concerning marine and terrestrial environmental effects to regulatory authorities, including:
 - Informing public regulatory authorities of all ocean pollution and environmental effects of any assignment they are involved in through the normal regulatory review and approval process.
 - Maintaining client and employer confidentiality unless otherwise required by relevant legislation, approvals, or orders. Where confidential information is disclosed to public authorities, SBEPs shall advise their employers and clients of such disclosure as soon as practicable.

They shall ensure that appropriate action or notification of proper authorities occurs in any instance where they believe that public safety or the (marine) environment is endangered, or where required by relevant legislation, approvals, or orders.

1.3.9 Communicate Respectfully

SBEPs will need to communicate with many different stakeholders and represent themselves, their organization, their clients, the public, and the SBEP profession. SBEPs must communicate respectfully to all parties. Respectful communication means having the ability to effectively convey their own views and fully listen to the views of others. When there is a disagreement or a difference of opinion, the objective should be healthy discussions. An SBEP should be open to dialogue, to share



their insights and collaborate using the strengths of different contributors to achieve the common goal.

An SBEP understands that how they communicate with others is a reflection not only on themselves, but also on the SBEP designation and profession.

1.3.10 Be Mandate-Oriented and Follow Policy, Agree to Value a Certain Code (Includes Ethics and Consequences)

The daily actions of SBEPs affect the public's trust in the profession and the public's perception of an SBEP's ability to handle increasing public expectations, specialization and complexity, and multiple constituents or stakeholders. If SBEPs are aware of and consciously consider these issues, they can address them better.

SBEPs must, therefore, manage expectations. SBEPs must inform clients of their professional responsibilities and the legal, ethical, and practical limitations of the service provided. SBEPs could provide this information through general documents (i.e., practice standards or guidelines), targeted campaigns, or, more specifically, within service contracts and company information. When applicable, SBEPs should provide relevant policy through resources such as the *National Occupational Standards for a Blue Economy* and Fisheries and Oceans Canada's *Blue Economy Strategy* to clients, employers, and other stakeholders.

SBEPs are leaders in organizations and on projects. They must be vigilant in areas beyond their direct professional responsibility; SBEPs have an obligation to report conditions or changing circumstances that present a material, immediate threat to safety, health, welfare, or the environment (or the marine environment or both terrestrial and marine environments?) in either the workplace or on the project site. Specifically, SBEPs will be involved in the management of the risks and impacts associated with marine and port operations, navigation channels, and spill/emergency response regimes. SBEPs must report these conditions first to those professionals who are responsible. If a satisfactory response is not forthcoming, then the SBEP must report it to the appropriate corporate or regulatory authorities.

Note: This facet is aimed at informing responsible professionals about unknown or changing circumstances that require action or response. It does not empower those not involved directly in the decision to challenge, without all the facts, the environmental judgements, or recommendations of those who are responsible.



1.4 Ethical and Moral Standards

SBEPs are counted on for their expertise in marine sustainability, environmental protection, and associated concerns. Because much of their work has a direct impact on public health and safety and the future of the marine environment, it is important that they are bound to an ethical code where objectivity can be ensured, where they conduct themselves with full integrity and serve in the interest of public health and safety and the marine environment. SBEPs need to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

SBEPs must:

- Conduct all professional practice honestly and with integrity
- Present facts accurately and seek understanding
- Maintain integrity
- Maintain objectivity and respect for other opinions
- Remain transparent and declare conflicts of interest
- Uphold ethical environmental requirements and practices
- Protect vulnerable sectors of the population

SBEPs should also incorporate the “three pillar” sustainability concept of environmental, social, and economic practice. When SBEPs practice ethical and moral standards to support sectors such as fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, offshore energy, and marine biotechnology, environmental protection, social equity, and economic growth should be considered.

1.4.1 Conduct all Professional Practice Honestly and with Integrity

SBEPs must conduct their professional practice honestly, with integrity, fairly, in good faith, and with due care to the public and the marine environment. SBEPs should recognize how their activities and professional membership can influence society. They should recognize the value of early involvement and action versus reaction.

SBEPs are encouraged to share their expertise and knowledge of sustainability and the blue economy with other members, governments, and the public. In working with other disciplines, SBEPs can help bring theoretical and technological research into applied practice.

SBEPs can encourage professionalism through mentoring and demonstrating their professional behaviour. In groups, SBEPs can encourage professionalism by being involved in environmental, technical, or professional areas and by promoting corporate professional responsibility.



SBEPs should not attach their professional self to activism. SBEPs have a right to make political contributions, but they also have a duty under the SBEP Code of Ethics to avoid acting in a manner that impacts their professional stature. Their professional reputation may be damaged or exposed or their intentions may be misunderstood.

1.4.2 Present Facts Accurately and Seek Understanding

SBEPs must present facts honestly and accurately and speak directly and plainly to ensure the recipients understand. SBEPs should clearly distinguish between facts, assumptions, and opinions in their professional work, in public discussion, or published articles related to their professional work. When expressing opinions or participating in public discussions on professional matters, they should clearly disclose on whose behalf they are giving opinions or statements.

SBEPs should express opinions on marine sustainability and the blue economy that only present their knowledge, experience, and honest conviction. SBEPs should ensure, to the best of their ability, that any statements related to marine, coastal, and environmental matters accurately reflect their professional opinion.

Advertisements, proposals, presentations, and other solicitations for professional engagement should be factual, clear, and dignified. The statement's intent is clear and advertising and presentations should complement the SBEP's image and enhance professionalization of the blue economy.

In contrast, some behaviors can damage an SBEP's image and professional reputation. Some examples include:

- Exaggerating project involvement, experience, or level of expertise
- Negatively comparing or commenting on competing professionals
- Suggesting or implying solutions not duly founded in fact
- Making misleading claims, self-praising language, and sensationalism that diminish the dignity of the individual and, by association, the dignity of the entire profession.

SBEPs hold specialized expertise pertaining to marine sustainability and the blue economy in both competence and ethical matters. This expertise offers a reliable resource to industry and the public.

1.4.3 Maintain Integrity

SBEPs should undertake assignments only when they are competent to complete the work. This rule clearly does not prevent SBEPs from tackling new challenges and learning new skills, provided that the successful completion of the assignment is not jeopardized, and honesty is maintained with the



client or employer. Similarly, SBEPs should not overlook the fact that today's marine, coastal, and ocean economy sectors demands specialized knowledge.

Most importantly, SBEPs should regularly review their capabilities and their organization's, to provide specific services to the public. Many proven specialty companies are available to help when required. However, if specialized help is needed, SBEPs should evaluate the company's credentials. This due diligence is particularly important when a lack of capability could result in adverse consequences. When sub-consultant expertise is retained, it should be with the client's approval.

An SBEP shall not take credit for work done by others. An SBEP shall take responsibility for their work through authorship or acknowledgement. SBEPs should not allow their name to be associated with work that has been altered.

1.4.4 Maintain Objectivity and Respect for Other Opinions

SBEPs should faithfully perform their duties and responsibilities to their clients and employers and always act with fairness and justice to all. SBEPs must maintain objectivity and have respect for the opinions of others, even if facing emotionally driven issues.

To maintain objectivity and respect for another's point of view, SBEPs must:

- Express the results of their work clearly and accurately
- Qualify the results, if necessary, when a matter is only partially resolved
- Avoid bias due to political, economic, or other non-technical factors

In both corporate and societal settings, SBEPs should focus their discussion on the facts of an issue and accurately represent their professional opinions. When presenting complex issues to a non-environmental or technical audience, SBEPs are encouraged to use plain language principles and simplify their discussion without losing the critical elements, ensuring that their audience understands. This communication approach avoids misinterpretation or misunderstanding.

Although this subsection is not meant to dissuade an SBEP from stating their personal or political interests, they should consider that their personal views may differ from their professional practice and obligations. SBEPs must present and rely on facts when expressing professional opinions.

1.4.5 Remain Transparent and Declare Conflicts of Interest

SBEPs must remain transparent and avoid and declare conflicts of interest. An SBEP will hold the interests of their clients or employers in high regard. However, some of an SBEP's duties take

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precedence over the interests of their clients or employers. These duties include:

- The duty to protect the health of the ocean, environment, and public
- The duty to act fairly and justly to all parties when administering a contract on behalf of a client or employer.

As stated previously in this document, one of the primary objectives of the SBEP designation is to protect the public and maintain professional integrity. These objectives are achieved through careful examination of each member in the SBEP designation. For an SBEP to maintain professional integrity, they must be transparent in their intentions and actions. SBEPs should make provisions so that clients and employees under their responsibility have knowledge of and comply with the laws affecting their work.

An SBEP must disclose any influence, interest, or relationship that impairs or affects their professional judgement or objectivity. Failure to disclose any real, perceived, or potential conflict situation with an employer, a client, or a stakeholder is a conflict of interest.

Under normal circumstances and before accepting assignments, SBEPs should inform their clients and their employers of any special interests, business connections, personal relationships, conflicts of interest, or other circumstances that could influence their professional services or judgement. They should never offer or accept any covert payment or benefits.

1.4.6 Uphold Ethical Environmental Requirements and Practices

SBEPs must uphold ethical environmental requirements and practices. When an SBEP becomes aware of public concerns related to an assignment they are involved in, the nature of the concern should be investigated in a timely manner. Once they have determined the validity of the concern, the SBEP should promptly communicate the information through the standard lines of responsibility.

SBEPs are encouraged to seek a second opinion (professional or specialist) on the technical validity of their conclusions whenever possible and when there appears to be a difference of opinion with the other responsible parties regarding marine environmental effects.

In disclosing information about marine environmental effects, SBEPs should communicate the information through standard lines of responsibility. Where, in the opinion of the SBEP, withholding confidential information poses a potential threat to the marine environment, the SBEP should make reasonable effort to contact responsible parties before disclosing the information to the proper regulatory authority. SBEPs must recognize, however, their individual responsibilities for reporting threats to the marine environment in accordance with legislation requirements.



There are many legal uncertainties with respect to the disclosure of confidential business information or intellectual property when an SBEP is involved in the design or supervision of a project that may pose a threat to the public or marine environment. This situation may present a dilemma to the SBEP. Hence, the SBEP must remember that it is their responsibility to protect the well-being and safety of the public. This responsibility may conflict with their duty to a client or their employer to act as a loyal agent and not disclose, without consent, confidential information concerning the client's or employer's business affairs, technical methods, or processes. Since the duty to the public is paramount, an SBEP in such conflict is required to advise the employer or client, preferably in writing, of a concern regarding the material threat to the public. If the concern is ignored or overruled and the client or employer continues to follow a course of action that is harmful, the SBEP should inform their employer or client that they are ethically bound to present the concern to the appropriate authorities and may perhaps even disassociate themselves from the project.

SBEPs must not disclose the employer's or client's confidential information gained during the term of employment (except as required by law). If the SBEP feels that withholding confidential information jeopardizes public safety, then they should make every effort to contact all parties before disclosing this information to the proper authority.

1.4.7 Protect Vulnerable Sectors of the Population

SBEPs must protect the vulnerable sectors of the population. They must recognize the importance of social and economic values in the environmental assessment process and consider local, neighbourhood, traditional, and cultural criteria through stakeholder involvement.

Understanding the vulnerability of a group requires more than just analyzing the direct impacts their project may have on an economic, social, cultural, institutional, political, or psychological level. SBEPs should address the effects on the human rights and the (marine and terrestrial) environments of the group and assess any future considerations, which may include hazards, natural or otherwise, on a larger scale.

SBEPs are responsible for developing a protection plan if the projects they are working on will in any way affect a vulnerable group. In addition, an SBEP shall immediately advise their employer or client of any concerning potential adverse effects within a vulnerable group; these concerns can arise from the work an SBEP is directly involved in or from information they discover through the project(s) on a peripheral level. If they do not receive a prompt response from their employer, client or both their employer and client, then the SBEP must know how to escalate the situation to appropriate representatives. For example, an SBEP may need to report on the potential conflict between coastal Indigenous communities and the environmental management of their land.



1.5 Confidentiality

SBEPs hold in strict confidence, except as required by law, all information they acquire during their professional relationship. SBEPs should not use this information for personal gain.

SBEPs must both safeguard confidential information and understand and respect contractual obligations.

1.5.1 Safeguard Confidential Information

SBEPs should keep confidential all information acquired during their professional duties including business affairs of present or past clients or employers. This obligation of confidentiality ends if the information legally enters the public domain. SBEPs must not use client or employer confidential information for personal gain. This confidential information is proprietary and only given to an SBEP to appraise a situation for a specific project.

Process (processed?) information and all confidential information received during professional service is the exclusive property of its owner and can only be disclosed to others with the owner's approval. Care should be taken regarding trade practices that may be unique and practices that identify the owner's special attributes.

When applicable, SBEPs must:

- **Disclose confidential information to legal authorities.** Confidential information may be disclosed if the prior permission of the client or employer, or both the client and employer, is obtained or if disclosure is required by law. If disclosure of confidential information is required by law, it should be made only to the extent required by law. Present or past clients or employers should be advised of such disclosure as soon as possible. Under certain circumstances, an SBEP should understand that withholding information is contrary to the public's safety. As a result, the SBEP should disclose only the information necessary to protect public safety to appropriate authorities.
- **Maintain confidentiality when approached by two or more competing parties.** Extraordinary circumstances may arise. For example, when a second client approaches a consulting SBEP to work on a program where they have already worked for another client, or when an SBEP is approached separately by two parties competing on a proposed project. Even disclosing to the second client that another client was actively considering a job or project would reveal competitive information about the original client. In such cases, the SBEP should use their



professional judgement to decide if the second assignment can be fulfilled using their general professional knowledge without being influenced by the first assignment. If there is a significant risk of influence by the first assignment or disclosure of proprietary information of the first client. In that case, the assignment should be declined without disclosing the interest of the first client.

- **Ensure client consent before the use and distribution of material.** The client maintains the exclusive rights and ownership of published content and designs. The SBEP must not duplicate published content or designs for others without the client’s permission.
- **Request permission to apply confidential information in new works.** If projects that SBEPs are working on or clients they are working for require using confidential knowledge obtained through other projects, the SBEP can proceed only with the consent of all parties connected with the prior confidential information or projects.

Technical knowledge gained by an SBEP through work experience may be freely used in subsequent projects without consent from other parties.

1.5.2 Respect Contractual Obligations

An SBEP must understand and respect contractual obligations. When an SBEP agrees to the terms and signs a contract, they are responsible for the agreed-upon deliverables and timelines.

Understanding the obligations and responsibilities of a contract will help SBEPs perform their duties, understand what to do when unexpected or legal issues arise, and if necessary, renegotiate the terms of the contract.

SBEPs should spend sufficient time on the job to ensure that their direction, reports, and estimates reflect actual site conditions and progress.

An SBEP can expect, and should agree with their client, that all the relevant information regarding the project will be provided either before the contract is signed or during the project.

A client may oversee the progress of a project and perhaps even may prefer a particular solution or a specific outcome. However, an SBEP may find themselves in a situation where a client may try to influence the results in a direction that doesn’t match scientific data or influence the outcome of the project that the SBEP does not agree with. If this situation occurs, the SBEP should communicate the events to both the client and employer and outline their ethical obligation to report illegal activities or practices, even if under contract.



SBEPs must also try to negotiate terms in their contracts that would be beneficial to the public good.