

Sustainability Competencies for Environmental Professionals

Main Areas of Expertise
Sustainability Strategies, Programs, Plans and Indicators
Corporate Environmental and Sustainability Plans, Policies and Procedures
Environmental Regulations and Environmental or Sustainability Standards
Environmental and Sustainability Management Systems
Environmental and Social Impact Assessments
Environmental and Sustainability Communications and Awareness Programs
Stakeholders Management

Technical Competencies	Importance
Developing Sustainability Strategies, Programs, Plans and Indicators	
Develops framework and policies, with input from key stakeholders, for identifying sustainable development approaches and solutions that balance environmental, economic, social and cultural needs.	Critical
Develops sustainability indicators and a process for reporting progress towards environmental performance targets.	Critical
Identifies/stays current with emerging developments, best management practices and guiding principles for sustainability.	Critical
Evaluates the environmental, economic, social and cultural implications (both short and long term) of potential sustainability initiatives.	Critical
Provides input in the development of sustainability strategies, plans, programs such as reasonable timelines, priority actions, indicators towards progress, etc.	High
Identify sustainability targets and indicators of environmental, economic, social and cultural change.	Moderate

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Develops sustainable development plans that integrate economic, social and cultural needs with ecosystem-based management strategies.	Moderate
Implementing and/or Monitoring Sustainability Strategies, Plans and programs	
Participates in informing, developing and/or implementing improvements to organizational operations in areas such as pollution prevention, abatement and control, energy efficiency, water and/or waste management.	High
Implements sustainable development strategies	Moderate
Developing Corporate Environmental and/or Sustainability Plans, Policies, and Procedures	
Advocates with senior management and/or other key stakeholders to ensure due consideration of and commitment to environmental/sustainability management and sustainability principles and strategies.	Critical
Advises senior management and/or other stakeholders on corporate environmental and/or sustainability responsibilities, regulatory and reporting requirements, and corporate liability.	Critical
Develops organization's environmental and/or sustainability policies and programs in alignment with regulations, corporate values & stakeholders' environmental economic, social and cultural expectations	Critical
Develops the environmental and/or sustainability policy component of the organization's strategic plan, supporting processes and practices.	Critical
Makes recommendations for improvements to organizational operations based on an evaluation of corporate environmental and/or sustainability performance.	Critical
Evaluates the environmental, economic, social and cultural impacts and implications of the organization's operations and processes.	Critical
Benchmarks environmental and/or sustainability policies and performance against those of corporate, municipal, provincial, regional, national, or international peers.	Critical
Develops strategic partnerships and relationships with key stakeholders to garner advice and gain commitment to organization's environmental and/or sustainability policies and initiatives	High
Prepares environmental and/or sustainability performance reports (i.e. Global Reporting Initiative - GRI) relative to established metrics for communication to internal management, regulatory and stakeholder groups.	High

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Evaluates the effectiveness of indicators (including economic, social, cultural, and human health) to measure progress in areas such as a reduction in emissions to the environment.	High
Assesses the cost-benefit implications of the changes in process or practices required to conform to new standards or guidelines.	Moderate
Implementing Environmental and/or Sustainability Management Systems	
Develops an Environmental and/or Sustainability Management System which is consistent with the organization's strategic plan and regulatory requirements.	High
Integrates the environmental and/or management components of new operations, new projects, facility expansions, etc. into the corporate environmental/sustainability management program.	High
Provides leadership to all aspects of the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting on the corporate environmental and/or sustainability management program.	Moderate
Ensures that corporate environmental and/or sustainability management projects and proposals meet corporate standards, and financial and budgetary requirements.	Moderate
Integrates risk management decisions into the Environmental and or Sustainability Management System and/or corporate business/strategic planning.	Moderate
Managing Environmental and/or Sustainability Management Systems and Practices	
Uses information systems to monitor and track Environmental and/or Sustainability Management Systems' requirements.	High
Revises Environmental and/or Sustainability Management System practices and outcomes to correct and prevent non-conformance.	Moderate
Benchmarks the organization's Environmental and/or Sustainability Management System against that of other companies and/or international standards (e.g. ISO).	Moderate
Interpreting, Enforcing and Complying with Environmental Regulations and Environmental or Sustainability Standards	
Provides advice and/or testimony to sr. management, internal staff, regulatory bodies, interest groups and the public regarding environmental regulations and environmental or sustainability standards' issues.	Critical

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Develops plans and programs to meet environmental regulatory requirements and/or environmental and sustainability standards.	Critical
Implements programs, including monitoring activities, to ensure regulatory compliance and standards conformance.	Critical
Evaluates compliance with environmental regulations and conformance to environmental and sustainability standards.	Critical
Defines environmental and/or sustainability performance requirements for specific jurisdictions.	High
Oversees or participates in audits of the environmental and/or sustainability performance of organizations and jurisdictions to determine the adequacy of their policies and procedures, and non-compliance/conformance issues.	High
Prepares compliance and regulatory for internal use and for filing with regulatory and/or reporting agencies.	High
Conducting Environmental and Social Impact Assessments	
Identifies which areas are likely to be significantly impacted either negatively or positively by development activities, e.g. biophysical, economic, social, cultural, and heritage resources.	Critical
Assesses environmental and/or social issues, risks or problems, including their cumulative effect and corresponding economic, social and cultural impacts.	Critical
Ensures that the impact assessment scope, criteria and conditions (geographic, environmental, economic, social, and cultural) are defined adequately.	Moderate
Consults with stakeholders to gather information regarding the perceived impacts of development activities on communities, the environment and natural resources.	Moderate
Liaising and Partnering with Stakeholders	
Liaises with stakeholders to collaborate on environmental stewardship and resolve sustainability issues and concerns.	Critical
Develops partnerships with key stakeholders to enhance environmental stewardship and address sustainability issues and concerns.	High

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Identifies concerns regarding the economic, social, cultural, and spiritual valuing of specific natural resources, and the implications for informed decision-making regarding sustainability.	High
Developing and Implementing Environmental and/or Sustainability Communications and Awareness Programs	
Demonstrates an understanding of the role of communications in increasing public awareness of environmental and/or sustainability issues.	Critical
Develops communications and public relations strategies to address employee and public concerns about environmental and/or sustainability issues and risks and/or to promote the environmental and/or sustainability interests of the organization.	High
Promotes environmental and/or sustainability programs and their implementation with media, outside audiences, organizations, etc.	High
Makes presentations to a variety of audiences to build awareness of environmental and/or sustainability issues, concerns and/or programs.	High
Establishes goals for environmental and/or sustainability awareness programs that will help ensure the intended message is accurately conveyed to the appropriate target audience.	Moderate
Develops the content of environmental and/or sustainability awareness programs.	Moderate
Assesses the effectiveness of environmental and/or sustainability communications/awareness programs in attaining their goals.	Moderate
Demonstrates an understanding of the fundamental relationships between human activities and the natural environment.	Moderate
Demonstrates an understanding of the Canadian environmental sector and sustainability issues.	Moderate
Demonstrates a working knowledge of environmental legislation and/or standards and agreements relevant to their organization.	Moderate