Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

MSS027004A Contribute to environmental decision making

Release: 1

ISC INDUSTRY SKILLS COUNCILS
Creating Australia's Future

MSS027004A Contribute to environmental decision making

Modification History

Not applicable.

Unit Descriptor

This unit of competency covers the ability to gather and analyse information about environmental issues to inform enterprise decision making and to make valid decisions within a defined scope of responsibility. Personnel are required to implement relevant enterprise policies/procedures, consult with and involve interested parties, develop well researched positions, make decisions and/or provide sound recommendations for consideration by decision makers, and to inform others about decisions. They work under the supervision of an environmental scientist or engineer, site manager or enterprise environmental manager.

Application of the Unit

This unit of competency is applicable to environmental site coordinators, environmental managers and senior environmental officers working in a range of industry sectors. such as:

- environmental monitoring, sampling and field testing (e.g. air, water, soil and noise)
- geotechnical services
- natural resource management
- occupational hygiene monitoring (e.g. air, noise and radiation)
- water supply and treatment, storm and wastewater management
- solid and hazardous waste management
- site remediation or rehabilitation
- resource efficiency (e.g. energy, water and waste auditing).

Note that the term 'manager' is used to refer to management of a function, project and /or program and does not necessarily imply line management.

Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not applicable.

Pre-Requisites

Not applicable.

Employability Skills Information

Not applicable.

Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Not applicable.

Elements and Performance Criteria

1	Confirm decision-making process with manager	1.1	Identify site/project/program environmental issues or problems that require decisions
		1.2	Examine enterprise environmental policies/procedures to identify the relevant decision maker and decision-making process
		1.3	Scope the issue or problem, context, possible causes, the needs/concerns of interested parties and the risks involved
		1.4	Seek timely advice about issues/problems/decisions that have impacts beyond own scope of responsibility
		1.5	Confirm own role in the decision-making process and the timeline, constraints and resources available
2	Identify information needs, sources and collection methods	2.1	Identify the information required for a reliable decision
		2.2	Confirm that available sources of information are reliable and sufficiently comprehensive for the required context
		2.3	Select information collection methods that are efficient, cost-effective and ethical
		2.4	Seek external expert opinion and advice in accordance with enterprise procedures, if required

3	Engage interested parties to inform decision making	3.1	Identify interested parties; their respective interests, needs and expectations; and assess their ability to contribute
		3.2	Identify appropriate engagement strategies/activities to encourage effective participation in the decision-making process
		3.3	Explain the engagement objectives and constraints and the level of influence that participants have on decisions
		3.4	Use active listening to seek input and a balanced exchange of views
		3.5	Provide accurate and balanced information using a language, style and format that is readily understood
		3.6	Acknowledge differences of opinion to encourage rigorous examination of all options
		3.7	Seek feedback to ensure that the views expressed by all participants have been understood
		3.8	Keep interested parties informed about engagement outcomes and progress of decision making
4	Gather and analyse information needed for decision making	4.1	Gather sufficient information using methods that comply with enterprise policies/procedures and legislative requirements
		4.2	Ensure objectives for analysis are clear and appropriate for the required decisions
		4.3	Analyse available information to identify significant issues, principles, legal requirements, patterns and/or trends
		4.4	Clearly distinguish between fact and opinion
		4.5	Justify assumptions made and support conclusions with reasoned arguments and appropriate evidence
		4.6	Record outcomes of analysis in sufficient detail to

enable transparent decision making

5	Make decisions and/or provide recommendations	5.1	Consider feasible options for addressing the issue/problem and the associated risks, costs and benefits of each
		5.2	Check that the preferred option complies with legislative requirements and enterprise policies/procedures
		5.3	Obtain advice from relevant personnel if unsure about decisions or draft recommendations
		5.4	Make valid, timely decisions when issue/problem is within own scope of responsibility
		5.5	Provide recommendations to relevant personnel in time to inform decision making and enable effective action to be taken
6	Communicate information and decisions	6.1	Provide timely, authorised information in accordance with enterprise policies/procedures and in a form/manner that suits the needs of recipients
		6.2	Check and confirm recipients' understanding of the information provided
		6.3	Use feedback from recipients to improve the way information is provided
7	Review contribution to decision-making process	7.1	Review information collection strategies, engagement activities and contribution to decision-making process to identify opportunities for improvement
		7.2	Report findings to relevant personnel

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Required Skills and Knowledge

Required skills
Required skills include: • accessing, interpreting and applying relevant legislative/regulatory requirements, standards, codes, guidelines and manuals • implementing environmental management plans, policy and procedures relating to community engagement, communication protocols and decision making • developing and maintaining a range of useful contacts and networks • responding effectively to complaints and requests for information • explaining environmental management concepts, principles and procedures clearly • gathering, analysing and summarising environmental information • listening actively, asking questions and clarifying points to reach mutual understanding • encouraging participation and audience feedback • adapting communication style, language and media to suit audience • drawing logical, evidence-based conclusions • making valid decisions and preparing sound recommendations • resolving differences of opinion/conflicts constructively • seeking advice when issues/problems are beyond scope of competence/responsibility • providing accurate, complete and timely reports, briefings and handovers
Required knowledge
Required knowledge includes: • environmental protection/management terminology, concepts and principles • site/project characteristics, nature of activities conducted at site, environmental management values, environmental issues, risks and impacts • environmental legislative/regulatory requirements, approvals, permits, licences and responsibilities relevant to site/project • risk/impact assessments, enterprise environmental management plans, procedures, control measures and management actions for site/project • enterprise procedures for engaging interested parties, managing stakeholder relations, responding to complaints and requests for information, and record management and reporting • good practice models for community engagement and environmental decision making • interpersonal communication, negotiating/lobbying/influencing/conflict resolution techniques • problem-solving techniques • relevant health, safety and workplace emergency response procedures

Evidence Guide

Overview of assessment	Competency must be demonstrated in the ability to perform consistently at the required standard.
Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit	Assessors must be satisfied that the candidate can competently and consistently apply the skills covered in this unit of competency in new and different situations and contexts. Critical aspects of assessment and evidence include: • applying enterprise decision-making procedures • identifying and obtaining sufficient information to make valid decisions and/or sound recommendations • consulting effectively with interested parties and keeping them informed about the decision-making process • analysing information rigorously to provide a reliable basis for informed decision making • making decisions and/or providing recommendations in sufficient time to inform decision making and enable effective action to be taken • communicating decisions clearly.
Context of and specific resources for assessment	This unit of competency is to be assessed in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment. Assessment should emphasise a workplace context and procedures found in the candidate's workplace. This unit of competency may be assessed with: • *MSS027001A Coordinate environmental management activities.* The competencies covered by this unit would be demonstrated by an individual working alone or as part of a team. Resources may include: • site/project/program history • relevant legislation, codes, standards, enterprise environmental management policies, plans, procedures and checklists • access to a computer, internet, maps, data sets, enterprise reports, published case studies and research.

Method of assessment	The following assessment methods are suggested:
	• review of environmental decisions and/or recommendations made and the supporting documentation provided by the candidate
	• review of information developed by the candidate about the issue/problem for interested parties
	• feedback from managers and/or stakeholder representatives that the candidate is able to contribute effectively to environmental decision making within scope of responsibility
	• oral/written tests involving environmental management terms, principles and procedures, enterprise procedures and strategies for community engagement and decision making, and techniques for analysing information
	• analysis of case studies involving issues/problems within scope of responsibility
	• observation of the candidate representing the enterprise to interested parties and collecting or providing information.
	In all cases, practical assessment should be supported by questions to assess underpinning knowledge and those aspects of competency which are difficult to assess directly.
	Where applicable, reasonable adjustment must be made to work environments and training situations to accommodate ethnicity, age, gender, demographics and disability.
	The language, literacy and numeracy demands of assessment should not be greater than those required to undertake the unit of competency in a work-like environment.
Guidance information for assessment	

Range Statement

Codes of practice	Where reference is made to industry codes of practice, and/or Australian/international standards, it is expected the latest version will be used
Legislation, standards, codes,	**Legislation, standards, codes, procedures and/or**

procedures and/or enterprise requirements	enterprise requirements may include:
	• federal legislation, such as:
	• Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
	• Australian Heritage Council Act 2003
	• Native Title Act 1993
	• state/territory government legislation and regulations and local government by-laws, policies, and plans dealing with:
	• land use, acquisition, planning and protection
	• environmental protection
	• cultural/heritage protection
	• vegetation management
	• nature conservation and wildlife/plant protection
	• water and water management
	• soil conservation
	• pollution and contaminated sites
	• fisheries, forestry and mining operations
	• Australian and international standards, such as:
	• AS/NZS ISO 14000 Set:2005 Environmental management standards set
	• environmental management plan, site information about applicable legislative requirements and approval requirements
	• information about community engagement, management of stakeholder relations and communication protocols
	• information about site processes and work schedules
	• monitoring/inspection procedures and management actions to prevent/control environmental impacts or risks
	• procedures for emergency preparedness and response
Environmental issues and problems	**Environmental issues and problems may include:**
	• developing/negotiating land use and other site agreements, including making changes to these
	• identifying and addressing cultural heritage issues
	• managing site amenity and access issues
	• designing/conducting environmental monitoring baseline studies and social risk/impact assessments
	• managing expectations and addressing community concerns about impacts, community development and local employment opportunities
	• responding to community or stakeholder complaints

	• responding to environmental exceedances (e.g. noise, dust and water quality) and adverse audit findings • investigating/responding to environmental incidents or adverse audit findings • informing interested parties about changes to site/project operations • involving interested parties in site/project closure planning • developing a site rehabilitation program
Information	Information may include: • legislation, regulations, guidelines, standards, codes of practice, licence conditions and approval processes • environmental management case studies, research findings and models of good practice • enterprise environmental management policies and procedures • site/project initial advice statements, risk/impact assessments and environmental management plans • records of site consultations with interested parties • site/project environmental reports (e.g. weekly and monthly monitoring) • environmental data sets, such as • satellite imagery and remote sensing data • geophysical, geochemical, geological, hydrological and meteorological data • ecological data, such as distribution of vegetation, fauna and pests • social science data, such as demographic and census information • land use data, zoning and property classifications • historical records and photographs • community surveys • maps (road and topographical) and aerial photos • site utilities/services (e.g. water, sewer, electricity and gas)
Sources of information	Sources of information may include: • government departments and agencies (e.g. environment, climate change, agriculture, mining and land use/planning) • utility authorities/companies (e.g. water, gas and electricity) • land title office and Valuer General • local government records

	• Geoscience Australia • Australian Social Science Data Archive • companies providing environmental services • internet, library/archive collections, annual reports and community newsletters
Information collection methods	Information collection methods may include: • accessing external publications • conducting internet searches • accessing enterprise files and reports • conducting interviews with enterprise personnel, government representatives and interested parties • consulting with external experts • holding discussion groups, learning circles, workshops, reference groups and community consultative committees • conducting community/stakeholder surveys
External expert opinion	External expert opinion may include: • government regulators • environmental consultants • contractors • solicitors • environmental scientists, engineers and planners • professional groups and organisations • community leaders, tribal elders and traditional owners
Strategies and activities to encourage effective participation in decision making	Strategies and activities to encourage effective participation in decision making may include: • one-on-one informal or impromptu discussions • formal interviews • regular briefings • public meetings, focus groups and workshops • a site/project visitor centre, open days and site visits • hotline or 24 hour contact numbers to record issues or complaints • websites • direct mail or newsletters • links with community liaison or advisory groups • translation of key information into local languages
Occupational health and safety (OHS) and environmental	OHS and environmental management requirements: • all operations must comply with enterprise OHS and

management requirements	environmental management requirements, which may be imposed through state/territory or federal legislation - these requirements must not be compromised at any time
	• all operations assume the potentially hazardous nature of samples and require standard precautions to be applied
	• where relevant, users should access and apply current industry understanding of infection control issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and State and Territory Departments of Health

Unit Sector(s)

Environmental

Custom Content Section

Not applicable.