



Australian Government

MSS027004 Contribute to environmental decision making

Release: 1

MSS027004 Contribute to environmental decision making

Modification History

Release 1. Supersedes and is equivalent to MSS027004A Contribute to environmental decision making

Application

This unit of competency covers the ability to gather and analyse information about environmental issues to inform workplace decision making and make valid decisions within a defined scope of responsibility. Personnel are required to implement relevant workplace 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 workplace environmental manager.

This unit of competency is applicable to environmental site coordinators, environmental managers and senior environmental officers working in all industry sectors. 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.

While no specific licensing or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication, environmental monitoring and management activities are governed by relevant legislation, regulations and/or external accreditation requirements. Local requirements should be checked.

Pre-requisite Unit

Nil

Competency Field

Management

Unit Sector

Environmental

Elements and Performance Criteria

Elements describe the essential outcomes.

Performance criteria describe the performance needed to demonstrate achievement of the element.

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| 1 | Confirm decision-making | 1.1 | Identify site/project/program environmental issues or problems that require decisions. |
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	process with manager	1.2	Examine workplace 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 workplace 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.

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| | | 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 workplace 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 workplace 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 | 6.1 | Provide timely, authorised information in accordance with workplace policies/procedures and in a |

	decisions		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.

Foundation Skills

This section describes those required skills (language, literacy and numeracy) that are essential to performance.

Foundation skills essential to performance are explicit in the performance criteria of this unit of competency.

Range of Conditions

This field allows for different work environments and conditions that may affect performance. Essential operating conditions that may be present (depending on the work situation, needs of the candidate, accessibility of the item, and local industry and regional contexts) are included.

Legislation, regulations, standards, codes, workplace procedures and requirements include the latest version of one or more of:

- federal legislation, such as the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act, Australian Heritage Council Act, Native Title Act and National Environmental Protection Measures
- state/territory government legislation and local government by-laws, policies, regulations 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
- legislation, standards and codes of practice for work health and safety (WHS), and handling of dangerous goods
- Australian and international standards covering environmental management, such as AS/NZS ISO 14000 Basic Set:2007

Environmental Management Basic Set

- registration/licensing and/or accreditation requirements
- site/project/program information, such as applicable legislative requirements and approval requirements, community engagement, management of stakeholder relations and communication protocols, site processes, work schedules, emergency preparedness and response procedures, job hazard analyses, safe work procedures and work method statements
- workplace environmental management plans and monitoring/inspection procedures and management actions to prevent/control environmental impacts or risks for specific sites, projects and/or programs (e.g. sampling, monitoring, construction and mining)
- workplace documents, such as standard operating procedures (SOPs); work schedules; recording and reporting procedures; equipment manuals and warranties; safety data sheets (SDS) and safety procedures; waste minimisation, containment, processing and safe disposal procedures.

Environmental issues and problems include one or more of:

- modifying/developing/negotiating land use and other site agreements
- 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 includes one or more of:

- legislation, regulations, guidelines, standards, codes of practice, licence conditions and approval processes
- environmental management case studies, research findings and models of good practice
- workplace 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 include one or more of:	• 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 include one or more of:	• accessing external publications, workplace files and reports • conducting internet searches • conducting interviews with workplace 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 includes one or more of:	• 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 include one or more of:

- 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.

WHS requirements include:

- compliance with relevant federal/state/territory WHS legislation at all times
- assuming that samples are potentially hazardous and applying standard precautions
- accessing and applying current industry understanding of infection control issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and state/territory Departments of Health, where relevant.

Unit Mapping Information

Release 1. Supersedes and is equivalent to MSS027004A Contribute to environmental decision making

Links

Companion Volume implementation guides are found in VETNet -

<https://vetnet.gov.au/Pages/TrainingDocs.aspx?q=5b04f318-804f-4dc0-9463-c3fb9a3fe998>

Assessment Requirements for MSS027004 Contribute to environmental decision making

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Performance Evidence

Evidence of competence in this unit must satisfy all of the requirements of the elements and performance criteria and include demonstration of:

- making decisions and/or providing recommendations about environmental issues (within scope of job role) on at least two (2) different occasions
- accessing, interpreting and applying relevant legislative and regulatory requirements, standards, environmental management plans, workplace procedures relating to community engagement, communication protocols and decision making
- identifying and obtaining sufficient information to make valid decisions and/or sound recommendations
- clearly explaining complex environmental management concepts, principles and procedures and legislative/regulatory requirements
- listening actively, asking questions and clarifying issues to encourage participation, collect feedback and resolve differences of opinion
- adapting communication style, language and/or media to suit audience
- consulting effectively with interested parties and keeping them informed about the decision-making process
- analysing information rigorously to provide logical, evidence-based recommendations and/or decisions
- seeking advice when issues/problems are beyond scope of competence/responsibility
- providing reliable and timely reports/presentations/briefings to clients and confirming their understanding
- reviewing information collection strategies, engagement activities and own contribution to decision-making process to identify opportunities for improvement.

Knowledge Evidence

- Must provide evidence that demonstrates knowledge of:
- environmental protection/management terminology, concepts and principles relevant to job role
- site/project/program characteristics, nature of activities conducted, environmental management values, environmental issues, risks and impacts
- environmental legislative/regulatory requirements, approvals, permits, licences and responsibilities relevant to site/project/program

- risk/impact assessments, workplace environmental management plans, procedures, control measures and management actions for site/project/program
- workplace 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
- techniques covering interpersonal communication, negotiating, lobbying, influencing, problem-solving and conflict resolution
- relevant hazards, health, safety and workplace emergency response procedures.

Assessment Conditions

- Judgement of competence must be based on holistic assessment of the evidence. Assessment methods must confirm consistency of performance over time, rather than a single assessment event.
- This unit of competency is to be assessed in the workplace, or a simulated workplace environment. A simulated workplace environment must reflect realistic operational workplace conditions that cover all aspects of workplace performance, including the environment, task skills, task management skills, contingency management skills and job role environment skills.
- Foundation skills are integral to competent performance of the unit and should not be assessed separately.
- Assessment processes and techniques must be appropriate to the language, literacy and numeracy requirements of the work being performed and the needs of the candidate.
- Knowledge evidence may be collected concurrently with performance evidence or through an independent process such as workbooks, written assessments or interviews (provided a record is kept in each case).
- Holistic assessment methods include:
 - review of information/recommendations/decisions/reports prepared 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 their scope of responsibility
 - oral and/or written questions to assess the candidate's understanding of environmental management terms, principles and procedures, workplace procedures and strategies for community engagement and decision making, and techniques for analysing information
 - analysis of case studies involving issues/problems within the candidate's scope of responsibility
 - observation of the candidate engaging with interested parties to collect/provide information, seek feedback and/or present recommendations/decisions.
- Access is required to all instruments, equipment, materials, workplace documentation, procedures and specifications associated with this unit including, but not limited to:
 - site/project/program history

- relevant legislation, codes, standards, workplace environmental management policies, plans, procedures and checklists
- access to a computer, internet, maps, data sets, workplace reports, published case studies and research.
- Assessors must satisfy the assessor competency requirements that are in place at the time of the assessment as set by the VET regulator.
- The assessor must demonstrate both technical competency and currency.
- Technical competence can be demonstrated through:
 - relevant VET or other qualification/Statement of Attainment AND/OR
 - relevant workplace experience
- Currency can be demonstrated through:
 - performing the competency being assessed as part of current employment OR
 - having consulted with an organisation providing relevant environmental monitoring, management or technology services about performing the competency being assessed within the last twelve months.

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