Sustainability Practitioner Body of Knowledge

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Thank you to the initial contributors of this document.

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Background

This document compiles the body of knowledge (BoK) for the job of a sustainability practitioner. For the purposes of this scheme we define sustainability practitioner as a professional who works to advance sustainability in organizations and communities. Typically this role has titles like Sustainability Director, Sustainability Manager, Sustainability Coordinator. We also include those people working as consultants to organizations fulfilling the duties as an external practitioner. This document defines the core job expectations of this position and then breaks each core responsibility into the subtasks required. It further defines each subtask by specifying the Knowledge, Skills and Attributes (KSAs) a professional must demonstrate to assure successful completion of each job task. Eventually, this document will include a description of the recommended evidence a certifying body would expect in order to credential an individual.

KSA's Defined

Special focus is given in this document to KSA's. KSA's collectively describe the specific requirements of a job.

Knowledge: **KNOW**: An organized body of information, usually of a factual or procedural nature, which, if applied, makes adequate performance on the job possible. Knowledge is expressed in the taxonomy by the categories of Remembering and Understanding

Skills: **DO**: The proficient manual, verbal, or mental manipulation of data, people, or things: observable, quantifiable, and measurable. Skills are expressed in Bloom's taxonomy by the categories of Applying, Analyzing, Evaluating and Creating.

Attributes: **BE**: The behaviors or "ways of being" that facilitate the performance of the skills and contribute to the success of the practitioner. Attributes include personal traits, codes of conduct and interpersonal skills.

Bloom's Taxonomy Action Verbs

To assure clarity of our definitions and descriptions, we refer to Bloom's taxonomy of performance objectives. Using appropriate verbs to define the KSA's adds consistency and clarity to this job analysis and facilitates the later task of assessing competency.

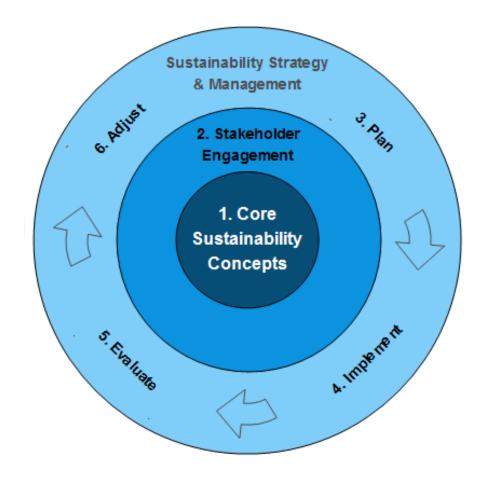
		Suggested Verbs
ledge	Remembering: can the practitioner recall or remember the information?	define, duplicate, list, memorize, recall, repeat, reproduce state
Knowledge	Understanding: can the practitioner explain ideas or concepts?	classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase
	Applying : can the practitioner use the information in a new way?	choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write
Skills	Analyzing : can the practitioner distinguish between the different parts?	appraise, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test
	Evaluating : can the practitioner justify a stand or decision?	appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, evaluate
	Creating : can the practitioner create new product or point of view?	assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write
es	Possessing: does the practitioner possess characteristics that facilitate successful job performance?	open minded, observant, logical, flexible, resilient, self-reliant.
Attributes	Relating: Can the practitioner work effectively with teams and individuals?	empathize, listen, feedback
Ati	Acting: does the practitioner act in a way that lends credibility and integrity to the profession?	ethical, reliable, honest, fair, proactive

Conceptual Organization of the Body of Knowledge

The body of knowledge that follows is organized around the framework illustrated below. At the heart of a sustainability practitioner's work is a set of core concepts related to sustainability, systems thinking and business acumen. That conceptual underpinning enables the performance of key activities related to bringing sustainability into organizations and communities.

The second tier of competencies describes the interpersonal relationship skills that support all specific job expectations. These include engaging, influencing and communicating with stakeholders.

The third tier competencies are linked together as components of a sustainability management system and are organized around the familiar plan, do, check, adjust tenets.



Body of Knowledge

1. Core Sustainability Concepts

Demonstrate a familiarity with foundational concepts of sustainability

Task	KSA's	Evidence
The key tasks and responsibilities expected of a sustainability practitioner	Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes	Performance evidence and threshold level of competence: what evidence should a professional be able to provide or demonstrate and at what level of performance?
1.1 Explain ideas and concepts of sustainability to various audiences	 Skills: Prepare presentations for executives, employees and key stakeholders on sustainability. Give a short explanation of sustainability, its benefits and strategic importance. Distill research from the field and make use of reliable and current data. Design informational messages appropriate to target audience. Recognize different learning skills. Communicate clearly and effectively in understandable language Knowledge: Demonstrate familiarity with global and local, economic and scientific issues, by describing key trends, impacts and perspectives relevant to their industry. Explain frameworks and principles and describe how they are used. Explain concepts of social justice, ecological systems, systems vs. reductionism. Recognize and summarize historically significant events, concepts and findings (e.g. Agenda 21, Kyoto, Brundtlund): Understand the interplay of various elements of concepts such as waste, water, pollution, social issues, etc. Demonstrate general (or specific) level of expertise in areas such as buildings, transportation, or materials since these are often the largest contributors to a business or community GHG inventory. 	Degree / certificate demonstrating key concepts (see Social Justice under Knowledge in middle column) Describe basic ideas and concepts in 1 to 2 sentences. Review of a presentation and ability to determine if complete and if not, what is missing. Prepare example presentation material Resume showing experience with a diversity of audiences
	 Practice Generative / integrative 	

	thinking.	
1.2 Choose appropriate third-party sustainability resources.	 Skills: Apply appropriate frameworks, etc. Evaluate and choose relevant information for the needs of the audience / system. 	Pick relevant resources from a list for various applications
	 Knowledge: Apply Systems thinking List regulatory trends and policies (e.g. whistle blower, Sarbains Oxly-Spelling?). Give examples sustainability claims, eco-labels and certifications Understand the landscape and architecture/hierarchy of global institutions, frameworks and standards relevant to the organization, its sustainability issues and its stakeholders Familiarity with relevant trends, technologies, approaches related to common sustainability initiatives (e.g. energy reduction and production, life cycle assessment, life cycle costing, bioremediation, etc) 	
	Attributes: • Critical thinker. • Integrative thinker	

2. Stakeholder Engagement

Develop and maintain interpersonal relationships with key stakeholders

Task The key tasks and responsibilities expected of a sustainability practitioner	KSA's Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes	Evidence Performance evidence and threshold level of competence: what evidence should a professional be able to provide or demonstrate and at what level of performance?
2.1 Identify, map and prioritize stakeholders and their primary interests or concerns 2.2 Develop a strategy and means of engaging with each stakeholder	Skills: • Facilitate stakeholder groups • Identify driving forces behind stakeholder motivations • Prioritize stakeholder needs and concerns • Develop stakeholder maps Knowledge: • Familiarity with personality styles • Familiarity with environmental issues, community issues and interdependencies Attributes: • Listener • Open minded • Organized • Effective communicator Skills: • Analyze and evaluate key person(s) within each stakeholder group • Understand leverage points of action • Select appropriate organizational planning techniques and strategies appropriate for each stakeholder • Access, engage and include stakeholders influencers and trusted advisors in dialogue Knowledge: • Describe industry issues and stakeholders • Describe effective techniques for engaging stakeholders • Online and offline stakeholder engagement tools, techniques, resources Attributes: • Collaborative • Listener • Open minded • Empathetic	Identify key stakeholders for a particular organization or project that could include (but are not limited to) senior management, functional management, employees, suppliers and vendors, community members, NGO's, consumers and regulators. Recommend the key attributes of key stakeholders. Lead, influence and motivate stakeholders to action Describe, select effective stakeholder engagement techniques. Demonstration of stakeholder engagement = videoetc
2.3 Implement and institutionalize procedures for engaging and communicating with internal stakeholders (e.g. senior management, functional leads, line employees)	Skills: • Manage projects • Conduct action planning with stakeholders • Apply appropriate engagement methods for varied groups • Deliver feedback on effectiveness • Develop metrics for determining effectiveness of	Develop and execute a clear, concise procedural document that outlines engagement and communications with internal stakeholder's.

	ongogomont	
	engagementBuild effective stakeholder teams	Submit example procedures. Ability to craft or edit an existing procedure.
	Knowledge:	or an on our an oxiding procoduro.
	 Familiarity with variety of tools and techniques for engagement of groups 	Select appropriate metrics for
	 Describe organizational structure and communication techniques 	engagement.
	Attributes: • Authenticity • Collaborative	
	Empathetic	
2.4 Implement procedures for engaging and communicating with	Skills:Facilitate conversations and meetings	Recognize leadership styles, influencers and power circles of stakeholders
external stakeholders (e.g. suppliers,	Build consensus among diverse groups	
industry partners, NGO's community members)	 Identify each stakeholder's motivations, needs and history 	Develop and execute a clear, concise procedural document that outlines
	Conduct community impacts assessments	engagement and communications with external stakeholder's.
	Knowledge:	
	 Understand multiculturalism and diversity 	Recognizes cultural differences versus substantive differences.
	 Understand nuances of working with various stakeholder groups 	Substantive differences.
	Attributes:	
	Inclusive	
	• Fair	
	Transparent	
	EthicalCulturally sensitive	
	Emotionally intelligent	
2.5 Build relationships across	Skills:	Describe strategies for building trusting
organizational functions	 Identify and build relationships 	relationships with stakeholders.
	 Recruit people to participate in committees, 	
	teams and meetings	
	 Explain/sell value of supporting organization and its initiatives 	
	Communicate in appropriate taxonomy	
	 Identify/leverage informal communication channels. 	
	 Define expectations of team members and 	
	supports	
	Knowledge:	
	Transition management	
	Behavior modification	
	 Organizational cultures and structures 	
	Attributes:	
	Persuasion	
	Listening	
	Collaboration	
	Empathic Influence	
	Influence	

2.6 Prepare communications with input from key stakeholders	 Skills: Demonstrate ability to work with multiple communication media Understand risks of communication Prepare balanced, honest in transparent communication Knowledge: Communication mechanisms and styles (visual, words, charts etc.) Sustainability reporting frameworks Understand green marketing and green washing aspects 	Appropriate communication provided at each level of engagement Draft appropriate communication for each level of engagement with stakeholder's.
	Attributes: • Compromise • Honesty • Ethical • Fair	

3. Plan Sustainability Strategies

Lead and influence the creation of comprehensive sustainability strategies and systems

Task	KSA's	Evidence
The key tasks and responsibilities expected of a sustainability practitioner	Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes	Performance evidence and threshold level of competence: what evidence should a professional be able to provide or demonstrate and at what level of performance?
3.1 Develop a high level, long- term sustainability road map 3.2 Articulate the business case for	 Skills: Develop project framework with components for timelines, Key Performance Indicators, resources, personnel, training needs, leadership development, management systems, etc. Coordinate and strategize multiple concepts and expectations into a clear path forward (the road map) Work with and integrate multiple perspectives and priorities Knowledge: Strategic frameworks and planning models and approaches (eg. backcasting, SWOT) Organizational business knowledge and strategy Attributes: Organized and attention to detail Accountability mind set 	Create a plan using a strategic planning framework Facilitate, create and document a strategic plan using a strategic planning framework. Define and show appropriate applications of SWOT and backcasting techniques
sustainability	 Identify drivers and concerns relevant to the stakeholders of the system. Identify trends related to sustainability that are relevant to a particular organization Demonstrate how sustainability initiatives can be accomplished to reduce financial/ regulatory risk to organization Express sustainability initiatives as strategic opportunities as well as corporate responsibilities Handle and address stakeholder objections Quantify benefits Knowledge: Business case indicators for sustainability Relevant business trends Cost-benefit analysis Professional ethics Attributes: Persuasiveness Edwin - Integrity 	 tailored to the needs of a particular organization and its situation Select appropriate sustainability drivers for different stakeholder groups. Chose appropriate tools and techniques to handle top management and stakeholder concerns and objections. 'Translate' sustainability jargon into business lexicon. Calculate a cost-benefit anaylsis.

3.3 Articulate a long term vision of sustainability for the organization and a strategy to achieve it Scott – Should move this to 4. Plan section	 Skills: Describe a fully sustainable version of an organization. Demonstrate facilitation skills to create a vision. Knowledge: Sustainability frameworks and definitions Principles and attributes of sustainability Understanding organizations current strategy/ business plan document Business case tools and frameworks Visioning and mission facilitated process 	Facilitate the creation of a meaningful vision for the organization Chose critical facilitation skills for vision creation. Ability to select most effective example of effective facilitation. Recognize and define sustainability frameworks and definitions. Recommendations/testimonials from organizations assisted,
	Influencer	
3.4 Create an overarching project framework to support the higher level framework, that can be operationalized and implemented	 Ability to engage Skills: Develop a mechanism to continuously evaluate and adapt as circumstances change Connects and prioritizes sustainability 'initiatives' into meaningful categories and milestones 	Document action, task and project items into a project management system. Experience/resume showing successful project management. Experience with project management tools
	 Knowledge: Use project management techniques Conduct a risk Assessment Identify areas of strength and weakness Identify opportunities and threats Identify costs and fees Identify system leverage points commitment to the process Calculate financial ROI Set smart targets 	Recommendations from those overseeing project management of applicant
	OrganizedFlexible	
3.5 Identify material issues and the relevant key indicators, specific metrics and targets	 Skills: Select and frame indicators in a way that is relevant to the organization's culture (including beliefs and the broader professional practices relevant to the country in which the organization operates; a sensitivity to gender-related issues and other issues of diversity) and context. (alignment to strategy) Process and synthesize complex information and create strategy Link metrics to pay; create pay for performance systems Prioritize major impacts and focus efforts 	Develop and articulate indicators, metrics and targets that are relevant and in alignment with organizational and strategic goals.
	 Knowledge: Identify methods to measure, track and display metrics Assess a range of frameworks and select most relevant for the organization (eg. GRI) Select material and relevant metrics (eg. Leading, 	

	 Lagging indicators) Differentiate the use of the various types of efficiency indicators Synthesize organizational goals and objectives into planning Recognize and integrate stakeholder interests Identify environmental and sustainability challenges Identify organization's readiness and commitment to the process 	
	Attributes:	
	Logical	
	Integrated thinking	
	Observant	
	▶ Fair	
•	Empathic	

3.6 Identify the critical components of an SMS	 Skills: Design or integrate processes and systems for the full PDCA (Plan/Do/Check/Act) cycle Define an SMS and components for SMS to the scale of the organization Develop process maps for the organization 	List and explain functionality of SMS. Select correct definition for each part of the PDCA cycle. Given a case study organization: develop or critique a process map
	 Knowledge: Describe PDCA cycle and concept Define SMS as people and supporting documentation Recognize (understanding) of applicable ISO and other PDCA (e.g. AA1000) standards 	Apply management system elements to sustainability
	Attributes: • Analytical • Observant • Collaborative	

4. Implement Sustainability Strategies

Manage the implementation of sustainability strategies and initiatives

Task	KSA's	Evidence
The key tasks and responsibilities expected of a sustainability practitioner	Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes	Performance evidence and threshold level of competence: what evidence should a professional be able to provide or demonstrate and at what level of performance?
4.1 Establish effective support and governance structures for the implementation of sustainability strategies and initiatives	 Skills: Recommend needed support and governance structures Define roles and responsibilities and staffing needs Acquire needed resources Creating effective structure Facilitate conflict management Knowledge: Understand governance models, processes, decision frameworks Organization governance structure Attributes: Logical Possessing characteristics that facilitate effective governance Good listener, communicator Logical Flexible 	Lead, guide, and consult, individuals and an organization to accomplish sustainability strategies and initiatives.
4.2Implement an SMS in alignment with accepted standards and protocols	 Skills: Develop appropriate control documents and records Establish appropriate levels of documentation Establish information security protocols Manage projects effectively Employ change management techniques Knowledge: Identify all relevant ISO standards [note: need agreed upon list of which standards to include. Alternative view: No, don't list them as this may change over time. You may have a companion document that lists resources but try to keep the body of knowledge general enough that you don't have to continually update it.] Explain the business of systems implementation Atteributes: Organized Attention to detail 	Given a description of a situation, identify what elements and functionality would be included in an SMS given the context of an organization or initiative.
	-	

4.3 Integrate sustainability principles into organizational functions, policies and practices	 Skills: Manage across complex functional matrices of relationships and systems Knowledge: Organizational change theory Operational management Project management methodologies 	Write, develop, refine or revise policies and procedures to support sustainability initiatives.
	 Systems thinking Attributes: Organized Adaptable to competing and changing priorities Broad thinker 	
4.4 Manage complex projects	 Skills: Plan, manage and coordinate projects Provide follow up and accountability to project teams Track and manage action items Establish and maintain appropriate priorities 	Lead, manage, coordinate a project that results in activities being accomplished within a desire timeframe and team participants are engaged in the process.
	 Knowledge: Project management methodologies Risk management Attributes: Organized and attention to detail Accountability mind set 	
4.5 Communicate sustainability plans and concepts and choose strategies for buy-in from all members and levels of an organization	 Skills: Ability to communicate and navigate multiple levels in an organization and cross functional matrices Knowledge: Communication and engagement tactics Project Management 	Write and craft communications in the form of emails, presentations, press releases or articles that describe strategies in a clear, concise, understandable manner.
	 Transparency processes Attributes: Ability to influence Confidence Credible Integrity 	
4.6 Launch and support teams and work groups	 Skills: Build consensus in divers groups Facilitate groups through decision making Hold teams accountable for results Lead teams through the stages of team development 	Facilitate and lead project teams that result in activities being accomplished in team members being engaged.
	 Knowledge: Conflict management Business process improvement Performance management feedback Attributes: Empowering, supportive and recognize others, 	

	Courageous, Fair	
4.7 Drive innovation, improvement and continuous learning	 Skills: Ability to synthesize the organization and identify opportunities and failures Collaborate/coordinate with continual improvement specialists Knowledge: Innovation theory, processes as defined by E. Rogers. Attributes: Innovative, creative thinker, ability to lead and inspire others, Proactive, reliable, organized, communicate effectively, adaptable, creative 	Lead and facilitate project teams in understanding challenges and developing solutions to improve strategies and initiatives.
4.8 Distribute communication and process for gathering feedback	 Skills: Anticipate and prepare for reaction to communication Clarity of what a meaningful communication and feedback process should include Knowledge: Communication and design of communications Design of feedback process Managing the feedback process Organization communications approach and methods Attributes: Can anticipate and adapt Cultural sensitivity Ethical, fair 	Design a communication process that fosters honest and clear feedback from others.

5. Evaluate Sustainability Efforts

Task	KSA's	Evidence
The key tasks and responsibilities expected of a sustainability practitioner	Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes	Performance evidence and threshold level of competence: what evidence should a professional be able to provide or demonstrate and at what level of performance?

5.1 Conduct an impacts assessment of organizational or community inputs, operations, outputs and stakeholder relationships	 Skills: Create a systems map/identify and overlay different mapping and assessment methods Evaluate assessment results against vision/goals Identify opportunities and priorities Conduct a materiality assessment Bring together relevant participants (cross-functional team, key stakeholders) to gather feedback to use in strategy planning and development/adjustment of a roadmap Diagnose business model/community practices/elements that are fundamentally aligned/not aligned with sustainability Share results of impact assessment and use in strategy planning Knowledge: Process management Design for environment Lean manufacturing concepts Assessment and evaluation techniques Attributes: Logical Flexible Ability to listen 	Conduct and facilitate assessments to understand completely the impact of sustainability initiatives.
5.2 Design, implement and maintain data systems for collecting accurate, timely and reliable data (maximally integrated with other data collection systems of the organization).	 Skills: Assess ability of current systems to collect indicator data Create or enhance existing data tracking systems Review system periodically Assure or verify data quality Analyze and report qualitative and quantitative data Knowledge: Understanding of current business systems Recognize strengths and weaknesses of additional relevant data systems and methods Identify and select appropriate data collection and management systems Attributes: Integrator Attention to detail Professional judgment 	Develop processes and implement an SMS System for an organization or initiative. Given several tables/metrics, select the most effective data sets Select an effective work instruction for data collection and analysis,
5.3 Analyze data and draw conclusions about progress.	 Skills: Identify where specific technical skills are needed and coordinate its inclusion in the evaluation process Calculate high level GHG emissions following accepted protocols Determine when LCA would be necessary and accurately interpret LCA data Material flow and accounting Ability to engage and ask questions 	Review assessment and provide critical thinking and analysis on information that results in providing recommendations on improvements to initiatives. Given case studies, analyze data and draw conclusions (select best conclusion from a list)

	 Knowledge: Statistics/uncertainty Research methods Knowledge of relevant contextual benchmarks Attributes: Detail oriented Organized Analytical Empathetic 	Give situation, appropriately determine the role of LCA.
5.4 Gather data, case studies, examples, and logically compile and order them	 Skills: Verification of data quality (what is your system) Management system of review process to organize and collect data synthesize critical info and determine what is communicated to right audience connect stories with the data so that it is meaningful and engaging 	Conduct research and find pertinent and relevant data and information that specifically relates to strategic initiatives.
	 Knowledge: Understand organization and priorities of your stakeholders How to reach target audience Attributes: Organized Creative Open minded Logical Understanding statistical significance 	

6. Adjust Plans

Task	KSA's	Evidence
The key tasks and responsibilities expected of a sustainability practitioner	Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes	Performance evidence and threshold level of competence: what evidence should a professional be able to provide or demonstrate and at what level of performance?
 6.1 Maintain and continuously refine management systems 6.2 Prioritize action based on analysis and set targets 	Skills: Use internal auditing Audit existing management systems Assure accountability for the process Engage top management and executive owners and experts Implement follow-up Knowledge: Describe the internal audit process Attributes: Organized Analytical Collaborate Enforcement Skills: Project management	Conduct assessments on the use of management systems including integrity of data, internal management system audits, reporting functionality and process of using system. Given a situation, recognize (select) nonconforming situations with the SMS. Recognize the key parts of an internal audit process Review timelines and adjust due dates of activities to meet deadlines and/or adjust
	 Knowledge: Risk Assessment Identify areas of strength and weakness Identify opportunities and threats Identify costs and fees Identify system leverage points Demonstrate commitment to the process Identify incentives and mandates Identify financing options Asset management Knowledge Financial ROI Quantitative analysis – move to "old" 3.3 Smart target setting 	to new timelines. Recommendations from those knowledgeable of candidates project management skills

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