

Sustainability Professionals

Sustainability professionals help companies build sustainable practices. They help to transform the way a company engages with the environment and communities. Sustainability professionals have a variety of skills related to sustainability. These include environmental science; operational know-how; public, community, and Indigenous relations; and corporate social responsibility practices. A sustainability professional works with teams and departments across their company. Key goals are to support company performance in the areas of environmental and social risks and to make sure these are in line with company financial goals.

Across Canada's energy industry today, there is a focus on managing significant environmental, social, and governance (ESG) risks. The way each of the pillars of an ESG program affects organizations is described below.

- **The environment pillar** focuses on managing risks related to the environment. This includes emissions and environmental impacts on water and land, and plant and animal life.
- **The social pillar** focuses on social impacts on and relations with the public, communities, and Indigenous peoples.
- **The governance pillar** focuses on standards and practices followed by a company to manage significant risks.

The sustainability professional career path often starts with a focus on one of two areas of specialization: an environmental science or a social impact specialization. If you are interested in science, math, communications, social responsibility, and building engagement and relationships, this career is a good choice for you. Sustainability professionals need to be excellent communicators and open to understanding diverse points of view. They must be analytical, innovative, and solutions oriented.

Established Energy Sectors:

Oil and Gas

Offshore Oil and Gas

Oil Sands

Energy Services

Pipelines

Refining

Emerging Energy Sectors:

Biofuels

Hydrogen

Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)

For energy sector definitions, go to [CareersinEnergy.ca](https://careersinenergy.ca)



What Sustainability Professionals Do



Risk Identification

Sustainability professionals identify significant ESG risks related to company practices and operations. They work with departments to come up with ways to manage and reduce these risks.



Conduct Sustainability Audits

Sustainability professionals use audits to check how well their solutions are working. The audits can demonstrate how much energy efficiency and carbon management measures have improved.



Develop Design Concepts and Recommendations

Sustainability professionals work with other departments to plan and redesign practices, technologies, and infrastructure. The work aims to limit ESG risks and recognize opportunities.



Conduct Sustainability Research

Sustainability professionals stay up to date on technologies, practices, and solutions used for environmental, social and governance sustainability. This includes managing research data and using it to prepare ESG reports and regulatory applications.



Implement Sustainability Solutions

Sustainability professionals support ESG goals, GHG emissions reduction targets, and energy efficiency improvements. They do this by applying improved practices to energy and environmental management, operational practices, and technologies used by the company.



Advise, Coach, and Mentor Internal Stakeholders

Sustainability professionals share their expertise with company leaders and workers. They offer advice, coach, and mentor staff. They share information about sustainability responsibilities, practices, and ESG risks.



Key Skills and Abilities Sustainability Professionals Need

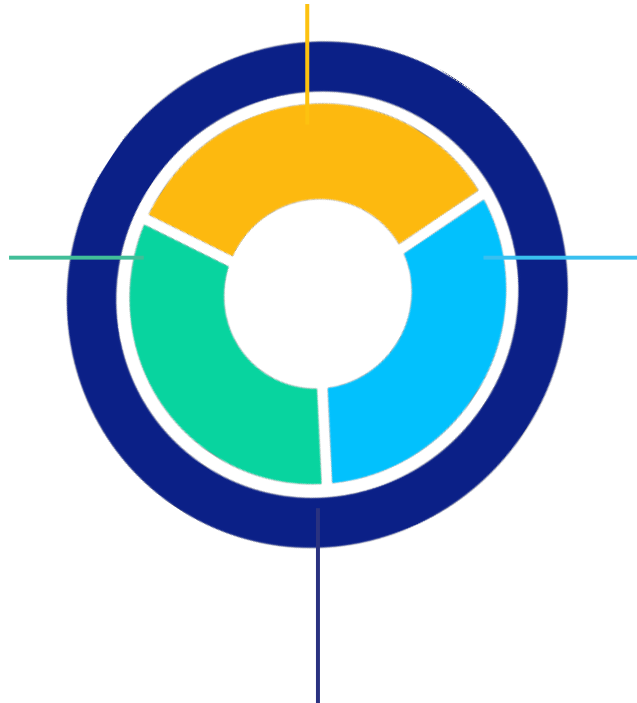
These will vary depending on the area of specialization: environmental or social.

Core Knowledge

| | |
|---|---|
| Environmental, energy, and sustainability regulations | Environmental, social, and economic impacts of energy industry operations |
| Sustainability processes and strategies | ESG reporting standards and frameworks |
| Environmental, health, and safety standards | Company processes to establish and build ESG capacity and leadership |

Technical Skills

- Building and deploying environmental sustainability programs
- Assessing and monitoring company activities and their impact on environmental and socio-economic performance
- Supporting the implementation of practices and technical solutions that improve efficiencies and environmental and social impacts
- Analysing sustainability risks to prioritize the costs of using sustainability measures
- Preparing and delivering studies, reports, and presentations
- Communicating complex information
- Negotiating conflict
- Facilitating stakeholder meetings (internal and external)



Beneficial Certifications

- Sustainability /ESG micro-credentials
- Applicable health and safety certifications, as determined by job requirements
- Class 5 Driver's Licence plus a clean abstract
- Cultural competency

Personal Attributes

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Attention to detail | Leadership |
| Active learning | Concern for others |
| Adaptability | Independence |
| Analytical thinking | Innovativeness |
| Collaboration | Stress tolerance |

Sustainability Careers in the Energy Industry

There are different types of education requirements for the sustainability professional career. It depends on the chosen specialization. Entry to this career in energy can start with relevant education, or education combined with related job experience. The chart shows how roles and educational requirements change for each career level. As you advance your career, your education and experience can equip you to take on sustainability roles that integrate all three pillars (ESG) in any sector of the energy industry.

| Career Level | Entry | Mid | Senior |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p>Types of Jobs</p> <hr/> <p>Minimum education and/or experience typically required</p> | <p>Roles or experience in the following fields can lead to a career as a sustainability professional:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biological and environmental science • Community engagement • Indigenous relations • Communication s/public relations • Engineer • Environment, health, and safety • Finance <hr/> <p>4-year university degree (in environmental science, biology, natural resource management, political science, public relations, finance [with a sustainability focus], or engineering)</p> | <p>Sustainability Advisor/Coordinator</p> <p>Sustainability Researcher</p> <p>Sustainability Specialist</p> <hr/> <p>4-year university degree (in environmental science, biology, natural resource management, political science, public relations, or engineering)</p> <p>Professional designation in specific disciplines such as P.Bio; P.Eng; P.Ag; APR (Accredited in Public Relations)</p> | <p>Senior Sustainability Advisor/Program Manager</p> <p>Sustainability Manager/Director</p> <p>Chief Sustainability Officer (CSO)</p> <hr/> <p>4-year university degree (in environmental science, biology, natural resource management, political science, public relations, or engineering)</p> <p>A graduate degree is an asset</p> |

Transferring Sustainability Professional Skills from One Energy Sector to Another

There are core skills and knowledge that all sustainability professionals need for their careers. These building blocks are needed in all energy sectors and for all specializations.

The following flow chart presents the core skills and knowledge needed to be a sustainability professional. Each energy sector uses the building blocks in similar ways.

As new entrants to training for a sustainability career, use the diagram to understand the building block skills needed to work in sectors across the energy industry. As an experienced sustainability professional, use the diagram to explore how each building block is applied across the energy sectors.

Skill: Knowledge of company business models, technologies, products, operational processes, and related risks

| Skill attributes | Sector |
|--|-------------|
| Familiarity with production, operations, maintenance, and end-of-life management of assets | All sectors |
| Ability to identify solutions that minimize environmental impacts and financial risks | All sectors |

Skill: Understanding sustainability best practices and implications to company ESG program, operations, and financial performance

| Skill attributes | Sector |
|---|-------------|
| Ensuring company technical and non-technical processes and social responsibility practices are in place | All sectors |
| Manage significant risks and opportunities for sustainable business and financial performance | All sectors |

Skill: Regulatory standards for environment, natural resources, and sustainability

| Skill attributes | Sector |
|--|-------------|
| Knowledge of government regulations and plans (provincial, federal and First Nations) and how they impact company sustainability goals and reporting | All sectors |

Skill: Ability to work with company teams to obtain support for sustainability solutions and to put the solutions to work

| Skill attributes | Sector |
|--|-------------|
| Influencing the design and implementation of low-carbon processes and technology solutions that increase efficiency, minimize risks, reduce emissions, and improve environmental performance | All sectors |
| Advanced communications skills | All sectors |

Career Outlook for Sustainability Professionals



Emerging

These occupations are new, driven by the need for organizations to focus on and address evolving environmental, social and governance (ESG) opportunities and risks.



Projected labour shortages

The demand for workers is projected to be greater than the supply of available workers.

Source: Careers in Energy, National Labour Market Outlook to 2035



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