

SUSTAINABILITY SPECIALIST

ROLE OVERVIEW

Sustainability Specialists are responsible for planning, tracking, and delivering sustainability programs, internal or external to the organization. They measure the sustainability performance of the organization or public initiatives and implement approved programs and initiatives to effect measurable changes in the organization or public's carbon pollution, emissions, waste reduction, legislated compliance, sustainability strategies and other environmental, social, and governance (ESG) impacts. They may also deliver sustainability projects.

They develop and deliver sustainability guidance tools, education, policy support, and procedures to assist employees and/or clients with sustainability objectives while identifying concerns, trends, and responsibilities toward achieving sustainable outcomes. Sustainability specialists are also responsible for reporting on key performance indicators (KPIs) obtained by researching sustainability frameworks, policy, legislation, and trends and collecting and analyzing data.

Sustainability specialists provide support and feedback to advance the organization's policy goals with key stakeholders and external organizational committees. The overall goal of a sustainability specialist is to continuously improve the sustainability performance of the organization and/or public.

ALSO KNOWN AS:

- Sustainability Advisor
- Sustainability Consultant
- Sustainability Programs Specialist
- Sustainability Coordinator
- Environmental Sustainability Specialist
- Specialist – Sustainability Communications
- Environmental Engineer – Sustainability

NATIONAL OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION:

- 41400 – Natural and applied science policy researchers, consultants, and program officers.

EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

- A bachelor's degree in environmental science, engineering, business, planning, or related field is typically required.
- Minimum of 2-3 years experience in sustainability or ESG (Environmental Social Governance) related role.
- Environmental Professional (EP) designation or Environmental Audit certificate may be considered an asset.
- Employers often prefer applicants with education, training, and experience related to Sustainability or Environmental Social Governance (ESG).
- Well-versed in environmental legislation, regulations, and codes of practice at the federal, provincial, and local levels.
- Familiarity with contracting and contract management may be an asset.
- Possesses a solid knowledge of both national and international sustainability frameworks and standards.
- Has a thorough understanding of ESG rating companies and the process of materiality assessments.
- Experience with change management approaches may be an asset.

TECHNICAL



Project Planning and Integration

Creates a comprehensive project management plan outlining execution, monitoring, and control methods, incorporating all related plans needed to carry out essential actions and complete the project.

- Defines the scope, strategy, and objectives for the technical aspects of projects and programs to establish parameters and deliverables.
- Identifies internal and external supporters that may contribute human or financial support to commit to or reduce budget funding.
- Develops a work breakdown structure to provide the project teams and relevant stakeholders with a detailed overview of the deliverables.
- Tracks operational plan progress to adjust, assess the success of strategic goals, incorporate lessons learned, and acknowledge contributions.
- Leads the development of a project schedule to establish transparent and accountable timelines to complete project phases.

Data Analysis

Uses established statistical methods to analyze historical data and spot trends, risks, and opportunities that inform strategic decisions.

- Applies quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods to determine the environmental and social impacts of an organization's campaigns and initiatives.

- Collects baseline and trend data on operational metrics to develop insights and report on crucial sustainability performance indicators.
 - Analyses and interprets structured and unstructured environmental and social data to prepare comprehensive reports and present recommendations to senior management.
 - Parses data results to identify sustainability performance trends to enable strategic decision-making.
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Risk Management

Integrates sustainability into operational and enterprise risk management, helping the organization navigate the complex landscape of ESG risks and opportunities, fostering resilience and long-term success.

- Assesses and identifies potential sustainability risks associated with the organization's operations, supply chain, and business activities.
 - Analyzes environmental and social factors that could impact the organization's long-term viability and reputation.
 - Ensures sustainability risks are given appropriate weight alongside traditional financial and operational risks.
 - Works with different departments to create and implement sustainable policies and procedures that mitigate identified risks.
 - Assesses and manages sustainability risks within the supply chain, including evaluating suppliers to ensure adherence to sustainable practices.
 - Conducts due diligence on potential business partners, acquisitions, or projects to evaluate their environmental and social impact.
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Stakeholder Relationship Management

Develops and manages partnerships with necessary agencies, departments, and institutions to achieve organization and community sustainability targets.

- Develops and maintains relationships with external ESG ratings organizations to improve an organization's sustainability awareness.
- Participates in stakeholder meetings and strategy sessions on collective implementation of sustainability initiatives.
- Establishes relationships with the local community to improve ESG disclosure, commitment, and performance.
- Maintains working relationships, both internally and externally, to foster a network of influence and connectivity to improve prospects.
- Establishes a sustainable network of partnerships to explore business opportunities and collaboration.



Attention to Detail

Review completed work by monitoring and checking information, organizing tasks and resources efficiently, and assessing all areas involved in achieving an objective.

- Establish procedures or processes to validate information to minimize disruptions and ensure the project meets deliverables.
- Adheres to standard operating procedures outlined steps when performing routine tasks.
- Provides accurate and reliable feedback when reviewing others' work to ensure consistent deliverables.
- Routinely checks in with clients to consider changing priorities or expectations to produce results that improve relationships and business objectives.

Communication

Positively directs outcomes by delivering communication that better understands goals and objectives, captures interest, and gains support for immediate or future action.

- Gives talks on sustainability topics to both public and professional audiences.
- Acts as a subject matter expert to respond to sustainability-related questions from investors and stakeholders.
- Communicates the organization's sustainability performance and progress to senior management to aid decision-making.
- Share updates on projects and issues related to sustainability with team members and senior management.
- Facilitates strategy sessions to keep stakeholders and the public informed of sustainability goals

Professional Ethics

Demonstrates honesty, responsibility, respect, and fairness in decision-making to diminish risk, increase trust, and improve long-term success.

- Accurately and honestly conveys potentially difficult information to ensure that the appropriate persons, including management, understand risks, incidents, and other pertinent information.
- Respects confidentiality and sensitive information in reports as appropriate to uphold the individuals' privacy.
- Takes an unbiased stance on interpreting new information to solve a problem objectively.
- Maintains high levels of integrity in their research by citing all sources of information (i.e. using AI or wiki-type sources).

Collaboration

Engages in professional collaborative efforts with other team members, including sharing information and expertise, utilizing input from others, conducting team problem-solving, and recognizing others' contributions to working towards a common goal.

- Work in partnership with other internal and external practitioners to execute projects.
- Shares relevant and useful knowledge, experience, or expertise to aid team members in accomplishing their objectives more efficiently or effectively.
- Works cooperatively with multiple stakeholders, demonstrating a willingness to consider alternative approaches, ideas, or insights.
- Provides team members with constructive feedback and perspective to aid in completing a task or goal.
- Share feedback from stakeholders and senior management to ensure work performance and expectations transparency.



Regulatory Compliance

Adheres to specific regulations and legislation within a defined jurisdiction to monitor organizational compliance and implement sustainability best practices.

- Monitors how new laws, environmental policies, and standards are incorporated into the organization's sustainability framework.
- Provides updates on evolving regulatory requirements to maintain the organization's compliance.
- Analyzes relevant regulations, legislations, and standards to ensure programs comply with laws, regulations, and standards on sustainability.
- Evaluates internal project applications to ensure compliance with sustainability targets and environmental regulations, legislation, and policies.
- Participates in developing internal policies and procedures to ensure assessments are conducted by all industry and legal requirements/standards.
- Assists with or creates reports for government entities, detailing organizational compliance and supporting government sustainability efforts.



Sustainability Research

Research external sustainability frameworks, industry trends, and environmental sentiment to develop performance metrics and programs that improve internal and external commitments to sustainability.

- Determines a company's internal sustainability metrics to develop a baseline for improvements and progress.
 - Leads research studies to gain information on issues related to sustainability to support the development of policy-related projects.
 - Keeps current with sustainability trends to guide the research and development of upcoming organizational practices.
 - Develops evidence-based initiatives to improve the organization's internal environmental sustainability practices.
 - Identifies opportunities for innovation and efficiency gains that align with sustainable practices.
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Sustainability Reporting

Leads/supports reporting research findings and key performance indicators on environmental, social, and governance to improve sustainability efforts and inform senior management for decision-making.

- Updates an organization's digital content to reflect reporting on sustainability topics such as water stewardship, biodiversity, waste reduction, compliance, energy management and greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Develop business cases and make recommendations to management to enhance the organization's sustainability efforts.
 - Prepare reports and briefing notes on research findings related to sustainability issues for presentation to stakeholders and external audiences.
 - Provides regular progress reports on ESG action plans and performance improvement plans to inform decision-making.
 - Leads/supports the development of annual emissions reporting.
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Environmental Policy Evaluation

Evaluate the validity of an organization's policy(s) to develop suitable alternatives to support sustainable business practices.

- Identifies sustainability policies that align with organizational values to support the development of sustainable practices.
- Identifies sustainability policies to ensure they align with current government legislation.
- Identifies potential trends in government legislation and public sentiment that may require internal policy changes.
- Collates research into organizational best practices with stakeholder feedback to identify the effectiveness of existing policy.

- Recommends valid policy alternatives to draw clear and measurable insights to evaluate new policy.
 - Encourages feedback from stakeholders to assess the content of policy changes to further continuous improvement.
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Sustainability Program Delivery

Delivers the organization's sustainability program to ensure that the program remains aligned with the organization's strategic sustainability objectives and program plans as circumstances change.

- Employs a variety of approaches, learning styles, and mediums to instruct and inform participants on sustainability initiatives.
 - Utilizes various communication/marketing techniques, such as community-based social marketing or others, to change the behaviour of target groups (e.g., the public and members of the organization).
 - Advises external stakeholders on measurable initiatives to reduce waste and emissions.
 - Collaborates with organizations, institutions, academia, various levels of government and the public to deliver sustainability programs to increase awareness and promote actionable change.
 - Coordinates surveys for new and ongoing sustainability-related projects, communicating results to senior leadership and external stakeholders to inform decision-making.
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Sustainability Program Monitoring

Monitors program activities' sustainability and environmental aspects to ensure compliance with applicable regulations, internal policies and procedures, and client expectations to improve the day-to-day functions within an organization's programs.

- Audits the sustainability program for regulatory compliance, conformity to industry best practices, strengths and deficiencies, and reports results and recommendations to the management team to promote continuous improvement.
- Resolves conflicts and complaints related to the sustainability program as appropriate, documenting deficiencies when necessary to ensure concerns are adequately addressed and the program's reputation and credibility are upheld.
- Monitors and tracks sustainability indicators, including environmental impact, social or community impact, materials selection, carbon impacts, and energy efficiency, to improve environmental and sustainability practices continuously.
- Records and tracks program successes and failures for statistical and reporting purposes and publishes essential results, including performance against organizational key performance indicators, to inform decision-makers.