

INDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANCY VALUES FRAMEWORK

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IAQATM

**Australia
Chapter**

Disclaimer

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Foreword

The Indoor Environmental Consultancy Values Framework aims to be a foundational document guiding discussions within the rapidly changing field of indoor environmental sciences in a clear and concise way, where it has not existed before. It provides a starting point for future debates and technical discussions by establishing a framework of core values that may be leveraged and built upon. This document will also help to outline professional accountability and set expectations for the Indoor Environmental Consulting (or IEC) industry as a whole.

The method of development of this document saw an anonymous open invite to industry for comment, asking three foundational questions:

1. What traits or skills would you expect an IEC to hold or maintain?
2. What would you hope the result, the value of and/or the outcome of an IEC engagement would bring?
3. What traits or scope should be avoided for within the services offered by an IEC

The global responses were distilled into seven (7) principal values that were fleshed out by the foundational core contributors. This amalgamation of ideas ensures a fair and cohesive outcome, while still allowing for flexibility in the application of the Indoor Environmental Consultancy Values Framework. Therefore, while some concepts may not be explicitly stated, they may still be inferred from the wording within this document.

The Indoor Environmental Consultancy Values Framework is intended to be a living document, subject to change, clarification and validation through application by those acknowledging a commitment to the principals found within as indoor environmental consultants.

Acknowledgement

This document is the result of a collaborative effort involving industry experts and trade associations, educational institutions, training schools, and other organizations. This was made possible by generous contributions of a dedicated group of volunteers and members of IAQAA consisting of the members listed below.

IAQAA appreciate the input and the efforts of the working group in development of this document and others that may leverage it moving forward.

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Principal Values

Best Practice

Best practice refers to a method, process, or technique that has been widely recognized as providing superior results compared to other, less effective approaches. It is not simply the application of common knowledge or the minimum effort required to meet a standard. Instead, it represents a commitment to excellence and the continuous improvement of the services provided. Best practice should be the foundation for all efforts and attitudes related to the delivery of service.

1	Acting within profession
a	Adhere to all relevant laws, regulations (where applicable), and professional standards, taking appropriate responsibility for the risks, liabilities, welfare, health and safety of all stakeholders.
b	Act within your area of expertise, knowledge, qualification and where extending these bounds seek relevant inputs in a careful and diligent manner.
c	Apply appropriate methodologies and techniques to explain your work and reasoning to complete evaluations on the basis of adequate observations, knowledge and data.
d	Dedication to continually develop relevant knowledge, skill and expertise.
e	Do not misrepresent yourself and services offered.

2 Integrity	
b	Act with honesty, good faith, equity, without discrimination as well as being impartial and objective.
d	Act with honour, integrity and dignity in order to merit the trust of stakeholders and the profession.
e	Act appropriately, and in a professional manner, when it is perceived that something could be incorrect or could negatively impact upon stakeholders, reputation or the profession.
g	Accept, as well as give, honest and fair criticism.
i	Manage perceived conflicts of interest and ensure that those conflicts are disclosed to relevant parties.
k	Do not engage in fraudulent, corrupt, or criminal conduct.
l	Act on behalf of the stakeholders and do not have biased, sectional, private or industry cohort interests or displaced stakeholders for financial advantage.
3 Respect	
a	Where relevant, take reasonable steps to inform all stakeholder parties: of the social, environmental, economic and other possible consequences which may arise from their action.
b	Treat others with courtesy and without discrimination or harassment.
c	Apply knowledge and skills without bias in respect of race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, marital or family status, national origin, or mental or physical abilities.
d	Respect confidentiality and obligations whether expressed or implied.

4	Soft Skills
a	<p>Soft skills are crucial for successful consultants. Unlike hard skills, like technical knowledge, soft skills are less tangible and encompass qualities such as communication, collaboration, problem-solving, and leadership. These skills are vital as consultants work in diverse teams and must effectively interact with stakeholders to ensure valuable project outcomes.</p> <p>Leadership skills are also vital, enabling consultants to motivate colleagues, manage work progress, and present effectively. Communication is key for explaining ideas to peers and the public, while trust-building with stakeholders depends on these skills. Other skills may include??:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work ethic Teamwork Time Management Decision making and Critical thinking

Note: Some components of this value principal may have crossover to other value principals which may offer further context.

Communication and Reporting

Establishing communication from the outset ensures all aspects of the project are understood and expectations are met, avoiding potential problems. All Indoor Environmental Consultants need to be proficient in both spoken and written communication. It is essential to accurately explain risks and hazards to alert stakeholders, without alarming or intimidating them within an appropriate time frame proportional to the findings. Writing a report requires consideration of the audience's level of comprehension. Reports should have good grammar, content, flow, context, visuals and be succinct. Reports should also have a clear conclusion with solutions that are able to be implemented.

1 Inform and Communicate with Stakeholders	
a	When receiving an intake enquiry, seek to determine stakeholder concerns and desired outcomes to communicate adequate service provisions, lead times and fees in an adequate time for the assumed risk to stakeholders.
b	Take reasonable steps to ensure that all information and material provided to a stakeholder is accurate and unambiguous, making comments and inclusions of solutions to risks and hazards supported by evidence. It is also important to ensure this information is free of bias, being sure that data is not omitted and is available where it is relevant.
c	Provide written reports and communications in the best possible manner using accessible language that may be understood by persons who may not operate within these industry circles.

d	Take reasonable steps to provide sufficient relevant information within a responsible amount of time to enable a stakeholder to make an informed decision in relation to the provision of professional services at every stage of engagement.
2 Maintain Confidentiality	
a	Must not use or disclose any confidential information of stakeholders, unless— (i) The permitting stakeholder authorizes the use or disclosure; or (ii) The IEC is permitted or compelled by law to disclose the confidential information.
b	Must take reasonable steps to adequately protect, secure and store a stakeholders document and electronic records in relation to the provision of professional services.
3 Resolve Disputes	
a	Make sure every effort is made to minimise and resolve complaints and disputes with a stakeholder that relates to the provision of professional services.
b	If a stakeholder makes a complaint to the consultant about a professional service, the consultant must inform the stakeholder of the process that the professional or their employer, if employed, has in place for resolving complaints and disputes as soon as practicable after the complaint is made.

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Knowledge, Education and Understanding

Having knowledge, education, and understanding means that a consultant is aware of the theories, concepts, and methods related to their field. This includes both theoretical knowledge and practical skills. The desire to continually improve are seen as a measure of intent.

1	Practicality
a	IECs should have an understanding of related processes, systems, other science, technology,
b	engineering and math (S.T.E.M) topics, legislation/regulations/guidelines etc. related to the service and recommendations they have been commissioned to undertake.
c	A reasonable understanding of the various components within indoor environments, including awareness of the potential consequences of recommendations on stakeholders upon implementation. This awareness encompasses health effects stemming from exposure to hazardous substances, contaminants, or conditions.

2	Improvement
a	An IEC should obtain, pursue and have exposure to relevant qualifications, accreditations and continued professional development (CPD) in applied fields of service
b	Where any knowledge gaps are identified, whether self-assessed or by other parties, make an objective evaluation and seek to obtain educational resources and training.

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Qualification/ Experience

Qualification and experience refer to official qualifications, such as a degree or certification, while experience is gained through practical application. Having knowledge, education, and understanding, as well as qualifications and experience, is important in order to determine competency and be a successful consultant.

1 Qualification and Experience	
a	Must possess and maintain the necessary scientific and technical qualifications, accreditations, certifications and/or relevant experience for the services performed.
b	Must actively pursue and have record of continued development that may demonstrate education, training and/or relevant experience in the services offered.
2 Mentorship and Inexperienced Oversight	
a	Where inexperienced, unqualified, or not yet competent individuals provide services outside of their areas of expertise it is advisable that a hierarchy of oversight is implemented by senior professionals that are mentors. Ideally company endorsed protocols are set to ensure a minimum level of quality assurance is maintained.
b	Endeavour to apply qualification and expertise to further advance the industry through policy implementation, industry authorities, compliance and/or training bodies etc.

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Risk/Liability Mitigation and Solutions Based Management

It is important to be aware that all documentation, reports and communications can be used for legal and regulatory proceedings while also showing the duty of care taken of one's expertise and knowledge. When applicable, it is necessary to identify potential risks and liabilities for each stakeholder and make efforts to reduce their exposure. The outcomes of engaging professional services should result in solutions, instructions, or management strategies when risks are identified, and strategies must be developed and implemented to reduce or eliminate risks for all stakeholders.

1 Identify and Respect Risk/Liability	
a	Obtain appropriate insurance, implement comprehensive safety protocols, maintain accurate records, conduct regular training for staff, and seek legal guidance when necessary.
b	Where applicable, identify potential hazards, risks and liabilities for each stakeholder and seek to reduce their exposure. Taking into consideration potentially vulnerable stakeholders, assets or secondary impacts while showing duty of care within your expertise/experience/knowledge and understanding.
c	Recognize the necessity for alignment with regulatory standards in all practices, while considering that reports and communications could be utilized in legal and regulatory contexts. Ensure that these documents appropriately reflect this aspect.
2 Risk and Liability Solutions	
a	Outcomes of engaging or professional services should result in solutions, follow up instructions, mitigation or management strategies where risks are identified.

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Scope Consciousness

Being scope conscious means being aware of and adhering to the boundaries and limitations of a project or task. This involves understanding what is and is not included in the scope of work, and making sure that resources are focused on completing the tasks within that scope. It also involves being mindful of how changes to the scope can affect the timeline, budget, and overall success of the project. Being scope conscious helps ensure that a project stays on track and is completed efficiently while providing the confidence required for the service provided.

1 Scope Application	
a	Ensure the scope is clearly defined by all stakeholders for the desired outcome outlining potential limitations and seek to address the scope of intent.
b	If any observed ancillary risks or limitations are apparent within the scope of work and your expertise and understanding, evaluate its validity and make a comment or consider appropriate action.
c	The decision-making process should be fair to all parties and based on ethical considerations rather than being driven by personal, financial or other consequential biased motives.

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Unbiased and Independent

It is understood that potential conflicts of interest can arise and there is a need to recognise and evaluate them appropriately. It is essential that one remains independent and acts in a manner not favoring any particular stakeholder, while aiming to reduce their risks and liabilities as much as practicable. This requires a careful balance between ensuring the proposed solutions are realistic and effective, while also adhering to ethical principles and professional standards. It is critical to disclose any conflicts of interest to all stakeholders, including where material advantage is obtained from manipulated outcomes, or endorsing particular products or services. This allows the consultant to remain honest, fair and impartial, while safeguarding the integrity of the process.

1 Duty	
a	It is imperative that an IEC act and report as an independent party and in a manner not favoring any particular stakeholder but shall aim to reduce their risks and liabilities as much as practicable.
b	Maintaining integrity while offering achievable solutions requires a careful balance between ensuring the proposed solutions are realistic and effective, while also adhering to ethical principles and professional standards which may include peer review.
2 Honesty and Fairness	
a	An IEC services must act with honesty, fairness and integrity. Remaining independent to all stakeholders is essential to ensure unbiased decision-making and maintain process integrity.
b	An IEC shall not engage in fraud, fraudulent activity, misrepresentations or deceit

c	Performing an assessment using robust data collection methods and techniques is essential to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results, while also being mindful of not over supplying a client with unnecessary services that may drive up costs.
3 Conflicts of Interest Management	
a	IECs shall avoid conflicts of interest or activities that compromise their professional objectivity, or have the potential of creating an appearance or confirming to that their professional objectivity has been compromised.
b	Prior to rendering services, situations might arise where an IEC is obliged to reveal any existing, apparent, or potential conflicts concerning personal interests or those of other stakeholders. This disclosure pertains to parties linked to or influenced by the service provision. This encompasses instances involving supplementary payments, gifts, incentives, or other tangible benefits aimed at endorsing, supporting, or reviewing a product or service. Such conflicts need to be promptly disclosed to all stakeholders as soon as the IEC becomes aware of the actual, perceived, or potential conflict of interest.

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Glossary/ Definitions

Indoor Environmental Consultants Consultancy (IEC)	Is a person or firm providing services whose primary mission is to protect human health in the built environment. The IEC needs to translate the knowledge derived from exposure science and toxicology to limit the health impacts of building occupants.
Liability	Is the state of being responsible for something or someone that may be disadvantaged, neglected or harmed based on actions, services or advice.
Mitigation	Is the process of reducing risk exposure and minimizing the likelihood of an incident or subsequent liabilities for all stakeholders. Mitigation and solutions often takes the form of controls, or processes and procedures that regulate and guide related stakeholders to manage identified risks and reduce liability for all parties.
Risk	May be a situation involving exposure to danger, harm or loss to someone or something.
Stakeholders	Can include the materially interested parties including consultant or firms themselves, the end user, client, employer, employee, insurer, insured, legal neighbors and representatives of.