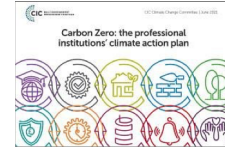


# Proposed Competence Framework for Sustainability in the Built Environment



The numerous organizations representing practitioners in the built and natural environment sector in the UK and internationally are actively working, both individually and in collaboration, on responses to the climate and biodiversity emergency<sup>1</sup>. The great majority of this much-needed work involves gathering data, providing guidance and developing skills, but to date, there has been relatively little work on defining and ensuring the competences required across the breadth of the sector to achieve legally-binding sustainability goals including the UK's net zero and bio-diversity net gain targets as well as international aims such as those set out in the 2015 Paris and 2022 Kunming-Montreal agreements and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG).

The Climate Action Plan<sup>2</sup> adopted by the Construction Industry Council (CIC) and endorsed by 40 sector institutions and organizations includes an action to fill this gap:

- 10h All PIs to take increased (and co-ordinated) measures to ensure competence in low-energy design and management amongst their membership, both on entry and at regular intervals throughout their careers

To fulfil this action, and to extend it more broadly, it is proposed to develop a Competence Framework for Sustainability in the Built Environment<sup>3</sup>. This framework will follow the path already established by the substantial cross-disciplinary work carried out on building safety following the Grenfell Tower disaster. The Competence Steering Group (CSG) on building safety led by the CIC has resulted in a series of outputs describing relevant sector competences including a series of documents produced under the aegis of the British Standards Institution (BSI) preceded by the establishing core document, BSI Flex 8670<sup>4</sup>.

The proposed framework on sustainability will be based on 8670 and be developed by a cross-industry working group led by the Edge under the umbrella of the CIC's Climate Action Plan. It will support the many knowledge and standards initiatives already underway, aimed at providing practitioners with appropriate skills for the future. Like 8670 the framework will outline the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours (SKEB) required with the intention that separate disciplines and organizations can provide the detail appropriate to their activities and roles. Echoing BSI Flex 8670, the intention is to meet the following specific objectives:

- 1) support development of a robust oversight, monitoring and feedback process for sector-specific competence frameworks;
- 2) support development of competence frameworks for key duty-holding or appointed roles in managing sustainability;
- 3) identify core sustainability criteria that are likely to be common to all sector-specific competence frameworks;
- 4) support commonality and consistency in sustainability competence across sector-specific frameworks; and
- 5) support individuals and organizations working in the built environment to move towards progressively adopting an approach based on validation and periodic revalidation.

To fulfil this objective the Edge will be recruiting a small drafting team and a much larger practitioner steering group from across the sector.

For more information please contact Simon Foxell at the Edge ([contact@edgedebate.com](mailto:contact@edgedebate.com)).

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<sup>1</sup> Inter-institutional collaborative projects include: The Net Zero Carbon Buildings Standard (NZCBS), the Built Environment Carbon Database (BECD), the Climate Framework and the Low Energy Transformation Initiative (LETI)

<sup>2</sup> Carbon Zero: the professional institutions' climate action plan, Construction Industry Council, June 2021

<sup>3</sup> The standard will cover constructed environments including infrastructure and landscapes, but not agriculture or large scale energy generation

<sup>4</sup> Built environment – Core criteria for building safety in competence frameworks – Code of practice, BSI Flex 8670, Version 3, April 2021, MHCLG and BSI.