



Institute of Environmental  
Management & Assessment

**Dedicated to creating a sustainable future through  
environmental skills, knowledge and thought leadership**

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## **Environmental practitioners deliver cost savings for UK business**

**Environmental roles are the career change of choice,  
with over a third now moving sector to join the profession**

Environmental practitioners with a combination of environmental, management and leadership skills are driving cost savings and delivering environmental improvements for business, according to research launched today by the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA).

Employing practitioners with the right environmental skills, knowledge and expertise means UK businesses could save up to £55 billion a year through energy and resource efficiency savings.

“The latest survey of our members shows that environmental practitioner roles are on the move, providing new and exciting career opportunities. People entering and progressing through the profession are bringing a wide range of management and leadership skills to complement their sound environmental knowledge. It is these environmental practitioners who are uniquely positioned to identify opportunities to add value, drive cost savings, and, ultimately, deliver change,” said Claire Lea, IEMA’s Director of Membership Services.

According to IEMA’s June 2011 survey, moving into an environmental practitioner role is becoming a desirable career change of choice with 88% of people surveyed experiencing high levels of satisfaction after making the change. Nearly 45% of people asked had made the career change because they wanted to either make an environmental difference or said they have a personal and positive interest in the environment. A further 20% reported that ‘the environment became vital to the development of an existing role’. As a result people are changing jobs from a multitude of sectors and roles, and bringing a range of valuable business skills and experience.

Overall the profession has high standards of environmental knowledge - more than four out of five respondents have a bachelor's degree or higher qualification - and increasingly they are working at all levels within organisations from delivering operational environmental improvements through to influencing strategy at Director level.

In response to rising demand for skilled environmental practitioners IEMA has mapped out the environmental skills and knowledge across all levels of experience and responsibility in organisations. IEMA's "Environmental Skills Map - a framework of knowledge and skills for the environmental practitioner" for the first time defines the career path for an environmental practitioner, and the competencies required to deliver sound business strategies that have environment at the heart of decision-making and deliver business benefits. The "Environmental Skills Map" will provide environmental practitioners, business, recruiters and training providers with structure and clarity.

"As a member of IEMA I have supported the evolution of this framework and I can see the benefits it will bring to corporates." said Ian Hill of Openreach. "In my own experience, working at Openreach (a BT Group business), a combination of financial, operational and sustainability skills has, I believe, helped me be more effective as an environmental practitioner."

Andrew Tew, Consultant at environmental recruitment specialists Acre Resources explains: "Employers are now looking for a broader mix of skills from project management to business case development. This often needs to be partnered with a sound knowledge of environmental legislation, along with an understanding of risk and commercial opportunity. The environmental job market is proving to be relatively stable during this economically challenging time (in fact salaries have risen over the past three years) partly as a result of companies realizing that tangible commercial benefits can arise from engaging with environmentally sustainable practices and products."

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to Editors**

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### **Case Studies**

We can provide a range of case studies of environmental practitioners who have made a career change moving from finance or communications into environmental practitioner roles.

### **IEMA Skills Survey**

IEMA's Environmental Skills and Talent "What's your story" member survey was carried out between Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> and Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> June 2011 via a specialist online survey platform.

The survey achieved 1622 unique responses from 12,270 eligible UK members across the Graduate (6.4% of respondents), Affiliate (16%), Associate (65.8%), Full (10.9%) and Fellow (0.9%) levels.

The survey featured three central streams which sought to understand the career histories, key motivations and levels of job satisfaction from recent Graduates (practitioners that have graduated from higher education course within the past two years), those who have always worked in environmental roles and those who have changed careers at some point in their employment history.

The "over a third" of respondents referred to in the subheading of this press release was the 36% of respondents (588 individuals) that declared that they had changed careers into an environmental role at a stage later clarified in the survey.

To download graphs, images and other survey information visit [http://www.iema.net/skills\\_media\\_hub](http://www.iema.net/skills_media_hub).

### **Defra Statistics on Energy and Waste Savings**

One of the most significant ways that organisations can achieve savings is through investing in energy and resource efficiency measures. Defra has estimated that UK plc would save around £23 billion per annum through implementing no cost / low cost energy resource and waste efficient measures (implemented by skilled environmental professionals) with around £18 billion savings opportunity in waste and around £4 billion savings opportunity in energy. Savings opportunities with a payback greater than one year have been estimated at around £33 billion.

This gives a total opportunity of around £55 billion (note: figures have been rounded). The carbon benefits achievable from implementing these resource efficiency measures are estimated at about 90 MtCO<sub>2</sub>. This represents around 13% of the UK's annual greenhouse gas emissions, which stood at 700 MtCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2008.

### **IEMA**

The Institute of Environmental Management & Assessment (IEMA) is the UK's leading environmental professional association. IEMA is dedicated to creating a sustainable future through environmental skills, knowledge and thought leadership.

IEMA is an independent and international, not for profit membership organisation that represents the views of 15,000 environmental professionals.

IEMA delivers the following services:

**Policy and Legislation** – IEMA frequently contributes to the development of key areas of UK policy and legislation. Recent contributions include:

- The House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee inquiries in to green jobs and skills and climate change adaptation. In the response IEMA recommended that the notion of ‘green jobs and skills’ is not solely a matter for the environmental goods and service sector, but that mainstreaming environmental knowledge into all sectors of the economy is an essential pre-requisite to catalyzing low-carbon and resource efficient activity in business.
- The Department of Energy and Climate Change’s (DECC’s) consultations on proposed national policy statements on energy, carbon budgets and Guidance on Carbon Neutrality.
- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on the development of guidance for the measurement and reporting of greenhouse gas emissions, a requirement under the Climate Change Act 2008.

**Professional development, training and qualifications** – IEMA sets the standard for the development of environmental skills and knowledge, ensuring that environmental professionals are equipped to make a difference as sustainability becomes a key business driver.

- **IEMA Environmental Skills Map** - a framework of knowledge and skills for the environmental practitioner

As the leading body for anyone working in environmental or sustainability roles, IEMA considers it essential that the knowledge and skills that individuals with environmental responsibility require are clearly set out. Feedback from business, employers and individual members confirms that until now there has not been a clear career or development path for the environmental profession and in particular, for those new to the profession who need more direction. The development of IEMA’s Environmental Skills Map for the environmental practitioner will address this need.

For the first time, IEMA has set out a cross sector competency framework to support:

- ✓ Anyone planning their own personal professional development;
- ✓ Employers recruiting environmental professionals or preparing job descriptions;
- ✓ Recruitment agencies advising on recruitment of an environmental professional;
- ✓ HR or Department Heads developing a graduate or management development programmes; and

- ✓ Organisations supporting the development and delivery of environmental or sustainability knowledge and skills.

The framework brings together several years of work, undertaken by IEMA, in the environmental and sustainability skills area. **A key factor of this work is recognition that individuals do require sound environmental knowledge, supported by leadership and management skills in order to apply their environmental knowledge effectively.**

- **IEMA's training courses and continuous professional development** provision cover a range of subjects from resource efficiency to environmental management, auditing, carbon reduction and procurement, spanning many levels from diploma to foundation course, tailored courses for senior executives and for those at the top of their profession, including Chartered Environmentalist. IEMA provides opportunities for members to share best practice and develop their knowledge by hosting events and discussions.

**Central source of information** – IEMA acts as a central source of information providing events, publications and knowledge sharing. These activities include:

- The Environmentalist - the monthly professional magazine that is the resource guide for environmental professionals across the UK and internationally. With a growing circulation of nearly 15,000 and an online presence at [www.environmentalisonline.com](http://www.environmentalisonline.com), the publication covers the latest research, technical news, policy updates, legislation, environmental job site and practical tools and skills updates.
- Events and conferences including 3 national events and over 100 regional workshops for environmental practitioners across the UK.

Go to [www.iema.net](http://www.iema.net) to find out more.