Ocean Alliance Canada

SBEP | DESIGNATION

SBEP Code of Ethics

Sustainable Blue Economy Professional

November, 22, 2025

Table of Contents

Introduction

ECO Canada is a Strategic Workforce Solutions Partner to Industry, Academia, and Practitioners. Its vision is to build the world's leading environmental workforce.

Eco Canada's mission is to ensure an adequate supply of people with the demonstrated skills and knowledge required to meet the environmental human resource needs of the public and private sectors.

The Sustainable Blue Economy represents a transformative approach to ocean and coastal resource management, striking a balance between economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity. This document outlines the Code of Ethics for Sustainable Blue Economy Professionals (SBEPs) working in this space, ensuring responsible and principled conduct.

Sustainable Blue Economy Professionals steward ocean and coastal resources to promote ecological integrity, social equity, and economic resilience. This Code of Conduct establishes the foundational principles and professional obligations that guide ethical behaviour, decision-making, and leadership across all marine-related sectors.

This Code reflects a commitment to responsible practice, inclusive engagement, and continuous learning. Individuals working in fisheries, aquaculture, marine technology, conservation, tourism, policy, education, and other ocean-related fields should uphold it.

Purpose

This guideline serves as the foundational code of ethical behaviour for SBEPs. Individuals, institutions, and organizations involved in the Sustainable Blue Economy, including those in education, research, policy, and industry, utilize it.

ECO Canada produces guidelines to:

- Inform and educate professional members and the public in matters of professional practice.
- Make its members aware of their duties in performing specific components of their professional roles; and to
- Help the public understand the role of SBEP and their responsibilities when performing professional services.

SBEP follows this code for best ethical practices.

Section 1: Articles of Ethical Conduct

Article I: Professional Responsibility

Sustainable Blue Economy Professionals uphold the highest standards of personal and professional integrity, recognizing that their actions shape both their own reputation and the credibility of the entire sector.

Article I Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Act with integrity, honesty, and fairness in all professional activities.**
- **Uphold the dignity and reputation of the profession through ethical conduct.**
- **Accept responsibility for the outcomes of decisions and actions.**

Article II: Environmental Duty

The health of marine and coastal ecosystems is foundational to the Sustainable Blue Economy. Professionals must act as stewards of these environments, ensuring their protection and restoration.

Article II Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Protect and conserve marine and coastal ecosystems.**
- **Avoid actions that cause unnecessary harm to biodiversity or ecological processes.**
- **Promote restoration and climate resilience in all areas of practice.**

Article III: Scientific and Technical Integrity

Sound science is essential for informed decision-making. Professionals must ensure that their work is based on credible evidence and communicated with honesty and transparency.

Article III Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Base decisions on credible, transparent, and peer-reviewed evidence.**
- **Communicate scientific findings accurately and responsibly.**
- **Disclose uncertainties, limitations, and potential conflicts of interest.**

Article IV: Transparency and Accountability

Trust in ocean governance and management depends on openness and accountability. Professionals must be transparent in their actions and willing to accept responsibility for their impacts.

Article IV Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Provide clear, timely, and accessible information to stakeholders.**
- **Justify decisions with openness and invite constructive feedback.**
- **Maintain accurate records and report unethical behaviour when observed.**

Article V: Respect for Indigenous and Local Knowledge

Indigenous and local communities possess deep-rooted knowledge of marine environments. Ethical practice requires recognizing and integrating these perspectives with respect and reciprocity.

Article V Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Recognize and honour Indigenous rights, knowledge systems, and cultural values.**
- **Engage communities through free, prior, and informed consent.**
- **Support co-management and equitable participation in decision-making.**

Article VI: Equity and Inclusion

A truly sustainable blue economy must be inclusive and just. Professionals must work to eliminate barriers and ensure fair access to opportunities and benefits for all.

Article VI Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Promote fair access to resources, opportunities, and benefits.**
- **Address systemic barriers and discrimination in all forms.**
- **Ensure inclusive representation in governance, research, and development.**

Article VII: Collaboration and Partnership

Complex ocean challenges require collective action. Professionals must foster respectful, transparent, and effective partnerships across disciplines, sectors, and cultures to achieve their goals.

Commitments:

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Foster respectful and transparent partnerships across sectors and disciplines.**
- **Share knowledge, resources, and responsibilities in an equitable manner.**
- **Work cooperatively to achieve sustainability goals.**

Article VIII: Economic Responsibility

Economic activities must support, not undermine, environmental and social sustainability. Professionals must ensure that their work contributes to the long-term well-being of their clients.

Article VIII Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- Support economic activities that are environmentally sustainable and socially just.
- Avoid exploitation of people, communities, or ecosystems.
- Promote innovation that aligns with long-term sustainability.

Article IX: Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Laws and regulations provide a framework for ethical practice. Professionals must adhere to legal standards and advocate for policies that promote sustainability and social justice.

Article IX Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Comply with all applicable laws, treaties, and regulations.**
- **Advocate for policies that advance sustainability and justice.**
- **Report violations and support ethical governance.**

Article X: Continuous Learning and Professional Development

The ocean sector is dynamic and evolving. Professionals must commit to lifelong learning to remain effective, informed, and ethically grounded.

Article X Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Commit to lifelong learning and professional growth.**
- **Stay informed about emerging technologies, policies, and the ethical challenges they present.**
- **Share knowledge and mentor others in the profession**.

Article XI: Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership is essential for guiding others and shaping the future of the blue economy. Professionals must lead with integrity, courage, and a commitment to sustainability.

Article XI Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Model ethical behaviour and inspire others to act with integrity.**
- **Challenge unethical practices constructively and courageously.**
- **Cultivate a culture of accountability, transparency, and sustainability.**

Article XII: Safety and Public Protection

Protecting human life and public health is a core ethical obligation. Professionals must anticipate risks, prevent harm, and act transparently in the interest of public safety.

Article XII Commitments

SBEP's commitment to:

- **Prioritize the safety, health, and well-being of individuals and communities.**
- **Anticipate risks and respond transparently to threats.**
- **Uphold public trust through responsible and protective action.**

Section 2: Enforcement and Review

This Code shall be upheld by all certified or affiliated Sustainable Blue Economy Professionals. Alleged violations may be subject to review by a designated ethics committee or governing body. The review process shall be fair, confidential, and based on evidence.

Disciplinary actions may include:

- Educational remediation
- Temporary suspension of certification
- Revocation of certification or membership

The Code shall be reviewed periodically to reflect evolving standards, technologies, and societal needs. Updates will be communicated to all members and stakeholders.

Appendix A – Definitions of Key Terms

- **Sustainable Blue Economy:** A framework for ocean-based economic activities that are environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and economically viable.
- **Professional Responsibility:** The duty to act ethically and competently in all professional roles.
- **Indigenous Knowledge:** Traditional ecological knowledge and cultural practices held by Indigenous peoples.
- **Transparency:** The practice of openly sharing information and decision-making processes.
- **Accountability:** The obligation to take responsibility for actions and their consequences.
- **Ethical Leadership:** The ability to guide others through values-based decision-making and integrity.

Appendix B – Alignment with Ethical Guidelines

This Code of Conduct is amplified by the Guideline for Ethical Practice for Sustainable Blue Economy Professionals, which provides:

- Detailed definitions of each ethical tenet
- Key elements and expectations for professional behavior
- Case studies and recommended solutions for real-world application
- Tools for assessment, reflection, and continuous improvement

Professionals are encouraged to use the Guideline as a living resource to support ethical decision-making and leadership in their field.

Appendix C – Case Studies

Introduction

ECO Canada is a Strategic Workforce Solutions Partner to Industry, Academia, and Practitioners. Its vision is to build the world's leading environmental workforce.

Eco Canada's mission is to ensure an adequate supply of people with the demonstrated skills and knowledge required to meet the environmental human resource needs of the public and private sectors.

The Sustainable Blue Economy represents a transformative approach to ocean and coastal resource management, balancing economic growth with environmental protection and social equity. This document outlines ethical guidelines for the Sustainable Blue Economy Professional (SBEP) working in this space, ensuring responsible and principled conduct.

Purpose

This guideline amplifies the SBEP Code of Ethics and serves as a framework for ethical decision-making and professional behavior. It is intended for use by individuals, institutions, and organizations engaged in the Sustainable Blue Economy, including education, research, policy, and industry sectors.

ECO Canada produces guidelines to:

- inform and educate professional members and the public in matters of professional practice;
- make its members aware of their duties in performing specific components of their professional roles; and to
- help the public understand the role of SBEP and their responsibilities when performing professional services.

SBEP's following this Guideline are following best ethical practices.

Definitions

Differentiating the terms moral, value, and ethic is essential in ethical practice because each term plays a distinct role in shaping professional behavior, in decision-making, and in leadership. Additional key definitions are also listed.

Moral

Morals are *personal beliefs* about what is right and wrong, often shaped by culture, religion, upbringing, and personal experiences.

Key Characteristics:

- Internal and subjective
- Often emotionally driven
- May vary significantly between individuals or cultures

Example: A person may believe it is morally wrong to exploit natural resources, even if it is legally permitted.

Value

Values are deeply held *principles or standards* that guide behavior and decision-making. They reflect what individuals or societies consider important.

Key Characteristics:

- Broader than morals (e.g., honesty, sustainability, equity)
- Can be personal or shared (e.g., organizational or cultural values)
- Influence priorities and goals

Example: A community may value environmental stewardship and prioritize conservation efforts over industrial development.

Ethic

Ethics are *formalized systems or frameworks* for evaluating conduct, often codified in professional guidelines, laws, or philosophical theories.

Key Characteristics:

- Provide standards for accountability and consistency
- External and structured
- Often used in professional or institutional contexts

Example: A Sustainable Blue Economy Professional follows a professional code of ethics that prohibits data manipulation, regardless of personal or organizational pressure.

> **NOTE:** In ethical practice it is important to clarify these terms to help you understand the difference between personal beliefs (morals), guiding principles (values), and professional standards (ethics). Keeping this distinction in mind helps you to think critically and allows you to analyze how personal morals and societal values influence ethical decisions in complex scenarios. An SBEP must navigate ethical codes in their careers, especially when personal morals or values conflict with institutional expectations.

You must be prepared to articulate and justify decisions using ethical frameworks rather than personal bias. In any controversial ocean-related scenario, you must:

- Identify your personal moral stance.

- List values that influence that view.
- Apply an ethical framework to propose a professional response.

Faithful Agent

A faithful agent has a duty to act in the best interests of their clients, ensuring loyalty and trust.

Ethical Principles

SBEP's have an obligation to society and must comply with the ECO Canada's SBEP Code of Ethics. They are held accountable for their professional practice and should exercise professional oversight for those under their supervision. They have an obligation to conduct themselves and to practice their profession duties in accordance with established and commonly accepted ethical standards. SBEP's must demonstrate technical competence and ethical practice in the performance of their work to maintain the confidence and trust of the public, ECO Canada, and their client or employer.

1.1 Safety and Public Protection

Professionals in the Sustainable Blue Economy must prioritize the safety of individuals, communities, and ecosystems. This includes anticipating risks, preventing harm, and responding transparently and responsibly to threats to public health and safety.

Keep the safety, health, and welfare of the public and the protection of the environment as your prime importance in all matters.

Key Elements:

- Risk assessment and mitigation
- Emergency preparedness and response
- Transparent communication of hazards
- Protection of vulnerable populations
- Compliance with safety regulations and best practices
- Ethical decision-making in public health and safety

Case Study

Harmful Algal Bloom and Public Notification

Sector: Coastal Resource Management / Public Health

Scenario: A regional ocean monitoring agency detects early signs of a harmful algal bloom (HAB) near a popular shellfish harvesting area. The bloom could produce toxins that pose serious health risks if consumed. However, the agency delays issuing a public advisory, hoping the bloom will dissipate naturally. Meanwhile, local fishers and tourists continue harvesting and consuming shellfish.

Ethical Dilemma: Should the agency issue a warning immediately, risking economic disruption, or wait for confirmation, potentially endangering public health?

Relevant Ethical Principles:

- Safety and Public Protection
- Transparency and Accountability
- Scientific Integrity
- Environmental Stewardship

Discussion Questions for consideration:

- What are the ethical responsibilities of public agencies in managing environmental health risks?
- How should uncertainty in scientific data be communicated to the public?
- What systems should be in place to balance economic impacts with public safety?

Recommended Ethical Solution:

Proposed Actions

- Immediate Precautionary Advisory: Issue a public warning based on early indicators, clearly stating the level of uncertainty.
- Stakeholder Communication: Engage local fishers, tourism operators, and health authorities in coordinated messaging.
- Monitoring and Updates: Continue testing and provide real-time updates to the public.
- Support Measures: Offer temporary economic relief or alternative harvesting zones to affected communities.

Ethical Justification

This solution prioritizes public health and safety while maintaining transparency and scientific integrity. It also demonstrates ethical leadership by taking proactive steps to prevent harm, even in the face of economic or political pressure.

1.2 Environmental Stewardship

Professionals must protect, conserve, and restore marine and coastal ecosystems, ensuring their health and resilience for current and future generations.

- **Protect marine ecosystems.**
- **Support conservation and restoration.**

Reference: UN Decade of Ocean Science; IUCN Marine Principles.

Key Elements:

- Responsibility
- Ecosystem-based management
- Biodiversity protection
- Pollution prevention
- Climate adaptation and mitigation
- Restoration of degraded habitats

Case Study

Environmental Stewardship – Marina Expansion and Seagrass Loss

Sector

Coastal Development

Scenario

A developer proposes a marina expansion that will destroy a seagrass bed, a critical habitat for juvenile fish.

Ethical Dilemma

Should economic development proceed at the cost of ecosystem integrity?

Discussion Questions

- What alternatives could protect the habitat?
- How should long-term ecological value be weighed against short-term economic gain?

Proposed Actions

- Conduct a full ecological impact assessment.
- Redesign the marina to avoid the seagrass bed.
- If avoidance is impossible, implement a habitat offset strategy (e.g., restoring another seagrass area).
- Monitor long-term ecological outcomes and engage local conservation groups.

Ethical Justification

This solution prioritizes ecosystem health and biodiversity, aligning with the stewardship principle of minimizing harm and promoting restoration.

Stakeholder Benefits

- Protects marine life and fisheries dependent on seagrass.
- Builds public trust in sustainable development.
- Enhances the developer's environmental reputation.

Implementation Considerations

- May require additional funding and time.
- Needs collaboration with marine ecologists and regulators.
- Should include community consultation.

1.3 Scientific Integrity

"Scientific integrity is the condition resulting from adherence to concepts of transparency, openness, high quality work, avoidance of conflict of interest, and ensuring high standards of impartiality and research ethics."

(Government of Canada - Model Policy on Scientific Integrity)

- Use validated, impartial data and peer-reviewed research.
- Disclose uncertainties.

Reference: IPCC Guidelines; IOC-UNESCO Ocean Best Practices, Government of Canada - Model Policy on Scientific Integrity.

Key Elements

- Evidence-based decision-making
- Transparency in data collection and analysis
- Peer review and reproducibility
- Disclosure of uncertainties and limitations
- Avoidance of bias and manipulation
- Ethical communication of findings

Case Study

Scientific Integrity – Aquaculture Research Pressure

Sector

Marine Research

Scenario

A research team is pressured to downplay negative findings about a new aquaculture method to secure future funding.

Ethical Dilemma

Should researchers compromise data integrity for financial support?

Discussion Questions

- What are the consequences of misrepresenting scientific findings?
- How can researchers maintain integrity under pressure?

Proposed Actions

- Publish findings transparently, including risks and limitations.
- Seek alternative funding sources that support independent science.
- Establish internal policies that protect researchers from undue influence.
- Educate stakeholders on the importance of unbiased science.

Ethical Justification

Upholding scientific integrity ensures credibility, protects public trust, and supports evidence-based policy and innovation.

Stakeholder Benefits

- Maintains public confidence in research.
- Encourages responsible aquaculture development.
- Supports ethical academic and industry partnerships.

Implementation Considerations

- May risk short-term funding loss.
- Requires institutional support for ethical standards.
- Could involve whistleblower protections.

1.4 Transparency and Accountability

The obligation to act openly, share information clearly, and take responsibility for decisions and actions, especially those affecting communities, ecosystems, or public trust.

- Communicate openly with stakeholders.
- Avoid and declare conflicts of interest
- Always remain a faithful agent and take responsibility for outcomes.
- Give credit where it due and accept fair and honest professional criticism.

Reference: GRI Ocean Disclosure.

Key Elements

- Clear and timely communication of decisions
- Public access to relevant information
- Justification of actions and policies
- Mechanisms for feedback and redress
- Ethical documentation and reporting
- Responsibility for outcomes and impacts

Case Study

Transparency and Accountability – Quota Allocation Without Consultation

Sector

Fisheries Management

Scenario

A government agency changes quota allocations without consulting stakeholders or publishing the rationale.

Ethical Dilemma

Is it ethical to make decisions that affect livelihoods without transparency?

Discussion Questions

- What mechanisms ensure accountability in resource management?
- How should agencies communicate controversial decisions?

Proposed Actions

- Release a public statement explaining the quota decision.
- Host stakeholder forums for feedback and future input.
- Establish a transparent quota-setting process with published criteria.
- Create an independent oversight committee.

Ethical Justification

Transparency and accountability are essential for fair governance and stakeholder trust, especially in resource management.

Stakeholder Benefits

- Restores trust among fishers and communities.
- Improves policy legitimacy and compliance.
- Encourages collaborative fisheries management.

Implementation Considerations

- May require policy reform and capacity building.
- Needs clear communication strategies.
- Should include mechanisms for appeal or review.

1.5 Respect for Indigenous and Local Knowledge

The recognition and integration of traditional ecological knowledge and cultural practices into marine planning, governance, and stewardship, with respect for rights and sovereignty.

- Engage Indigenous communities.
- Integrate traditional knowledge.

Reference: UNDRIP; Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition.

Key Elements

- Free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC)
- Integration of traditional ecological knowledge
- Recognition of cultural values and practices
- Co-management and co-design of initiatives
- Knowledge sovereignty and protection
- Culturally respectful engagement

Case Study

Respect for Indigenous and Local Knowledge – Exclusion from Marine Planning

Sector

Marine Spatial Planning

Scenario

A conservation NGO designs a marine protected area without consulting Indigenous communities who have managed the area for generations.

Ethical Dilemma

Can conservation be ethical if it excludes traditional knowledge?

Discussion Questions

- How can Indigenous knowledge be integrated into planning?
- What does respectful engagement look like?

Proposed Actions

- Pause the protected area designation.
- Integrate traditional ecological knowledge into planning.
- Provide capacity-building resources for Indigenous-led stewardship.
- Initiate a co-management process with Indigenous communities.

Ethical Justification

Respecting Indigenous knowledge strengthens conservation outcomes and upholds ethical engagement and reconciliation.

Stakeholder Benefits

- Honors Indigenous rights and cultural heritage.
- Enhances ecological understanding and management.
- Builds long-term trust and collaboration.

Implementation Considerations

- Requires time and relationship-building.
- Must follow protocols for free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC).
- Should be supported by legal and policy frameworks.

1.6 Equity and Inclusion

The principle of ensuring fair access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making for all individuals and communities, especially those historically marginalized or underrepresented.

- Promote fair access and participation.
- Address systemic barriers.

Reference: FAO Gender Equality; World Bank Blue Economy Framework.

Key Elements

- Fair access to resources and opportunities
- Inclusion of marginalized and underrepresented groups
- Gender equity and social justice
- Removal of systemic barriers
- Equitable benefit-sharing
- Culturally responsive policies and programs

Case Study

Equity and Inclusion – Limited Outreach in Ocean Education

Sector

Ocean Education

Scenario

A marine science program offers scholarships, but outreach is limited to urban schools, excluding rural and Indigenous youth.

Ethical Dilemma

Is access truly equitable if outreach is uneven?

Discussion Questions

- What barriers prevent inclusive participation?
- How can programs ensure equity in recruitment?

Proposed Actions

- Expand outreach to rural and Indigenous communities.
- Partner with local schools and community leaders.
- Adjust scholarship criteria to prioritize underrepresented groups.
- Provide transportation, mentorship, and culturally relevant programming.

Ethical Justification

Equity in education ensures diverse participation and addresses systemic barriers, aligning with inclusive sustainability goals.

Stakeholder Benefits

- Broadens access to marine careers.
- Strengthens community engagement.
- Promotes social justice in education.

Implementation Considerations

- May require additional funding and outreach staff.
- Needs culturally sensitive curriculum design.
- Should include ongoing evaluation of equity outcomes.

1.7 Collaboration and Partnership

The practice of working cooperatively across disciplines, sectors, and cultures to achieve shared sustainability goals through mutual respect, trust, and shared responsibility.

- Foster cross-sectoral cooperation.
- Share knowledge and resources.

Reference: Sustainable Ocean Alliance; Ocean Action Hub.

Key Elements

- Multi-stakeholder engagement
- Interdisciplinary teamwork
- Shared goals and mutual respect
- Transparent roles and responsibilities
- Long-term relationship building
- Inclusive decision-making processes

Case Study

Collaboration and Partnership – Oil Spill Response Failure

Sector

Marine Pollution Response

Scenario

After an oil spill, government agencies and NGOs fail to coordinate, leading to duplicated efforts and wasted resources.

Ethical Dilemma

What are the ethical consequences of poor collaboration in crisis response?

Discussion Questions

- What structures support effective partnerships?
- How can collaboration be improved in emergencies?

Proposed Actions

- Establish a multi-agency response protocol with clear roles.
- Develop shared data systems and joint training exercises.
- Include community stakeholders in planning and communication.
- Conduct post-incident reviews to improve future coordination.

Ethical Justification

Effective collaboration improves crisis response, resource efficiency, and ethical accountability in emergencies.

Stakeholder Benefits

- Reduces environmental damage.
- Builds trust among agencies and communities.
- Enhances preparedness and resilience.

Implementation Considerations

- Requires inter-agency agreements and funding.
- Needs leadership commitment to collaboration.
- Should be tested through simulations and drills.

1.8 Economic Responsibility

The ethical obligation to support economic activities that are environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, and contribute to long-term community well-being.

- Support ethical and sustainable innovation.
- Avoid exploitation.

Reference: OECD Guidelines; UNEP Financial Initiative – Sustainable Blue Economy Principles.

Key Elements

- Triple bottom line approach (people, planet, profit)
- Ethical investment and procurement
- Local economic development and job creation

- Avoidance of exploitation and harm
- Circular economy principles
- Innovation aligned with sustainability

Case Study

Economic Responsibility – Unsustainable Aquaculture Feed

Sector

Blue Economy Investment

Scenario

A company markets its offshore aquaculture project as sustainable but uses imported feed with a high carbon footprint.

Ethical Dilemma

Is it ethical to promote sustainability while ignoring supply chain impacts?

Discussion Questions

- What defines economic responsibility in sustainability?
- How can companies align operations with ethical claims?

Proposed Actions

- Transition to locally sourced, low-impact feed alternatives.
- Revise marketing to reflect actual sustainability practices.
- Conduct lifecycle assessments to guide future decisions.
- Engage consumers in transparent sustainability reporting.

Ethical Justification

Aligning operations with sustainability claims ensures ethical economic behavior and supports long-term viability.

Stakeholder Benefits

- Builds consumer trust and brand integrity.
- Reduces environmental footprint.
- Supports local economies and innovation.

Implementation Considerations

- May increase short-term costs.
- Requires supply chain analysis and reform.
- Should involve third-party sustainability certification.

1.9 Legal and Regulatory Compliance

The duty to follow all applicable laws, treaties, and regulations, and to support the development and enforcement of policies that promote sustainability and justice.

- Follow national and international laws.
- Advocate for strong governance.
- Follow your duty to inform employers and clients of the potential consequences if your professional judgements are disregarded.
- Follow your duty to report to ECO Canada any illegal or unethical practices or decisions by your SBEP peers or others.

Reference: UNCLOS; Canadian Oceans Act.

Key Elements

- Adherence to national and international laws
- Support for rules of law and good governance
- Advocacy for policy reform and improvement
- Understanding of jurisdictional frameworks
- Ethical interpretation of legal grey areas
- Compliance with environmental and labor standards

Case Study

Legal and Regulatory Compliance – Ballast Water and Invasive Species

Sector

Maritime Transport

Scenario

A shipping company complies with international ballast water regulations but knows its practices still introduce invasive species.

Ethical Dilemma

Is legal compliance enough when harm persists?

Discussion Questions

- Should companies go beyond minimum legal standards?
- How can ethical leadership influence regulatory reform?

Proposed Actions

- Adopt best practices for ballast water treatment beyond legal minimums.
- Invest in new technologies and crew training.
- Collaborate with regulators to improve standards.

- Monitor and report ecological impacts transparently.

Ethical Justification

Ethical responsibility includes proactive harm prevention, not just legal compliance, especially when risks are known.

Stakeholder Benefits

- Protects marine biodiversity.
- Reduces long-term liability and reputational risk.
- Demonstrates leadership in responsible shipping.

Implementation Considerations

- May require capital investment.
- Needs regulatory support and incentives.
- Should include industry-wide collaboration.

2.0 Lifelong Learning and Professional Development

The commitment to lifelong learning, staying informed about emerging issues, technologies, and ethical challenges, and continuously improving professional knowledge and skills.

- Maintain professional competence and due diligence
- Stay informed on emerging issues.
- Engage in lifelong learning.

Reference: Ocean Literacy Principles; TCMN PD Standards.

Key elements

- Ongoing education and training
- Engagement with emerging research and technologies
- Reflective practice and self-assessment
- Mentorship and knowledge sharing
- Adaptability to change
- Professional certification and standards

Case Study

Lifelong Learning and Professional Development – Outdated Technician Skills

Sector

Marine Technology

Scenario

A technician refuses to update their skills with new ocean monitoring software, leading to data errors.

Ethical Dilemma

Can professionals ethically neglect ongoing learning?

Discussion Questions

- What are the risks of outdated knowledge?
- How should organizations support continuous learning?

Proposed Actions

- Provide mandatory training on new software and tools.
- Create a professional development plan for all technical staff.
- Encourage a culture of learning through mentorship and incentives.
- Evaluate performance and learning outcomes regularly.

Ethical Justification

Ongoing learning ensures data accuracy, professional competence, and ethical accountability in technical roles.

Stakeholder Benefits

- Improves data quality and decision-making.
- Enhances staff morale and retention.
- Supports innovation and adaptability.

Implementation Considerations

- Requires time and budget for training.
- Needs leadership support and recognition.
- Should be embedded in HR and performance systems.

2.1 Ethical Leadership

The practice of modeling ethical behavior, inspiring others to act with integrity, and fostering a culture of accountability, sustainability, and social responsibility.

- Model ethical behavior.
- Mentor and guide others.

Reference: World Ocean Council; Canadian Environmental Practitioner Standards.

Key Elements

- Leading by example in ethical behavior
- Courage to challenge unethical practices
- Mentorship and capacity building
- Vision-driven and values-based decision-making
- Building ethical organizational cultures
- Promoting accountability and transparency

Case Study

Ethical Leadership – Corruption in Licensing

Sector

Ocean Governance

Scenario

A senior official discovers corruption in a marine licensing process but fears political backlash if they speak out.

Ethical Dilemma

Should leaders risk personal consequences to uphold ethics?

Discussion Questions

- What defines ethical leadership in governance?
- How can leaders foster a culture of integrity?

Proposed Actions

- Report the corruption through protected whistleblower channels.
- Initiate an internal ethics review and policy audit.
- Propose reforms to improve transparency and oversight.
- Provide ethics training for staff and decision-makers.

Ethical Justification

Ethical leadership requires courage and integrity, even in politically sensitive situations, to uphold public trust and institutional credibility.

Stakeholder Benefits

- Restores integrity in governance.
- Protects public resources and fairness.
- Encourages ethical culture and accountability.

Implementation Considerations

- May involve personal and professional risk.
- Needs legal and institutional protections.
- Should be supported by ethics committees and ombudspersons.

Implementation Suggestions

- **Curriculum Integration**: Embed principles into academic programs and training modules.
- **Professional Development**: Use for workshops, certifications, and PD fund applications.
- **Organizational Policy**: Align internal codes of conduct with these guidelines.

References

Global Frameworks & Declarations

- **UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030)**
  https://www.oceandecade.org
- **IUCN Marine Principles**
  https://iucn.org/sites/default/files/import/downloads/10_principles_for_high_seas_governance___final.pdf
- **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**
  https://www.un.org/depts/los/convention_agreements/convention_overview_convention.htm
- **United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)**
  https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/declaration-on-the-rights-of-indigenous-peoples.html

Environmental & Scientific Standards

- **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Guidelines**
  https://www.ipcc.ch/publications

- **IOC-UNESCO Ocean Best Practices**
  https://www.oceanbestpractices.org
- **Government of Canada - Model Policy on Scientific Integrity**
  - https://science.gc.ca/site/science/en/office-chief-science-advisor/scientific-integrity/model-policy-scientific-integrity#9

Governance & Reporting

- **Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) – Ocean Disclosure**
  https://www.globalreporting.org
- **IUCN Principles of High Seas governance**
  https://iucn.org/sites/default/files/import/downloads/10_principles_for_high_seas_governance___final.pdf
- **OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises**
  https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/oecd-guidelines-for-multinational-enterprises-on-responsible-business-conduct_81f92357-en.html
- **Canadian Oceans Act**
  https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/O-2.4

Equity & Inclusion

- **FAO Gender Equality in Fisheries and Aquaculture**
  https://www.fao.org/fishery/en
- **World Bank Blue Economy Framework**
  https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/oceans-fisheries-and-coastal-economies

Finance & Investment

- **UNEP Finance Initiative – Sustainable Blue Economy Principles**
  https://www.unepfi.org/blue-finance/the-principles/

Education & Literacy

- **Canadian Ocean Literacy Coalition**
  https://oceanliteracy.ca
- **Ocean Literacy Principles (US-based but globally referenced)**
  https://oceanliteracy.org

Leadership & Professional Standards

- **World Ocean Council – Leadership in the Blue Economy**
  https://www.oceancouncil.org

- **Canadian Professional Standards for Environmental Practitioners (ECO Canada)** https://eco.ca/certification/ep-designation

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