

# Terms of Reference

## Specialist Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC)

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### 1: Introduction

#### 1.1 Background

EIANZ By-Law 16 on the Certified Environmental Practitioner Scheme (Scheme) allows for certification in a field of specialised environmental practice (specialist certification). The certifying body for the Scheme, the Certification Board (CEnvP Board), appoints Registrars and Panel Convenors for the certification assessment process. Specialist Environmental Advisory Committees (SEACs) provide opportunity for consultation with and involvement of stakeholders, and ensure specialist input into the formation, operation, standards and continuous improvement of a specialist certification.

Specialist certifications available as of early 2019 are climate change, ecology, environmental impact assessment, site contamination, land rehabilitation and heritage. Other specialist certification may be approved by the CEnvP Board in the future. In the past, proposals for specialist certification have often come through an EIANZ Special Interest Section (SIS) but this is not the only pathway to creating a specialist certification category. Scheme SEACs are distinctly different from EIANZ SISs (refer to Appendix A).

#### 1.2 Scope

This Terms of Reference (TOR) applies to all current and future specialist certifications in the Scheme. All are required to have an SEAC specific to that specialist field. The CEnvP Board is transitioning existing specialist certifications to meet this requirement.

#### 1.3 Governance

An SEAC is formed when a new specialist certification category is approved by resolution of the CEnvP Board (refer appendix B for a flowchart on the formation of a SEAC).

The SEAC is an advisory committee of the CEnvP Board and operates consistent with the Scheme's Policy & Procedures manual. Its key accountabilities are for strategic, technical and stakeholder advice for the specialty.

The CEnvP Board approves the initial SEAC for a specialist certification and appoints SEAC Chairs.

SEACs have at least 5 and a maximum of 11 members. The majority of members should be either Certified Environmental Practitioners (CEnvPs) under the Scheme or other types of registered specialists. A minimum of two CEnvPs / registered specialists (or experienced practitioners eligible for specialist certification) are required for the initial SEAC of a new specialist certification.

SEAC members may include members of EIANZ or other professional associations and staff from regulatory agencies, industry bodies, corporations, consultancies, research bodies and tertiary institutions. Diversity in background of members is desirable, as are representatives from both Australia and New Zealand and geographic representation within Australia.

Committee members are appointed for a term of 3 years, extendable twice (maximum 9 years). The CEnvP Board appoints all SEAC members, determines the period(s) and terms of appointment, and can withdraw such appointments by notice in writing.

## 2: Purpose

The purpose of the SEAC is to provide opportunity for consultation with and involvement of stakeholders, and ensure specialist input into the formation, operation, standards and continuous improvement of a specialist certification.

## 3: Objectives

The objectives of the SEAC for the specialist certification are to:

- i. Establish<sup>1</sup>, operate and maintain the SEAC in accordance with Scheme governance requirements;
- ii. Prepare and negotiate a business case for establishing a specialist certification<sup>2</sup>, and if necessary, its continuation;
- iii. Assist with and advise on Registrars, Panel Convenors and panels and re-certification and stakeholder engagement processes;
- iv. Review standards and criteria, generally on a 5-year cycle, but more frequently if required, and advise the CEnvP Board on recommended changes to improve;
- v. Assess the impact on certification processes of changed or new regulation or guidelines/standards developed by industry or professional organisations or reciprocal processes, and engage on these with external stakeholders if needed;
- vi. Support the Scheme's operational assurance processes including re-certification, e.g. continuing professional development (CPD) register reviews and on retirement;
- vii. Monitor take up by professionals, industry, partners, regulators and other stakeholders e.g. partners;
- viii. Report regularly (6 monthly) and advise the CEnvP Board on technical and strategic matters including: certification criteria, the application process, unresolved issues, appeals, submissions to government or industry, marketing and opportunities to promote the specialist certification, external messaging, status of those seeking certification, reciprocal rights, re-certification, retirement, competition, specialist certification recognition and credibility;
- ix. Consider and respond to matters referred to the SEAC by the CEnvP Board;
- x. Improve standing of the specialist certification through planning for effective and efficient operations, resolving issues and initiating ongoing improvements.

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<sup>1</sup> If the SEAC is not fully formed before establishment, this part of the objective is met by a specialist stakeholder steering committee or similar.

<sup>2</sup> If the SEAC is not fully formed before establishment, this objective is met by a specialist stakeholder steering committee or similar.

## 4: Responsibilities

### 4.1 Chair

The SEAC Chair is responsible for:

- i. Being a role model for professional conduct and for promotion and endorsement of the Scheme;
- ii. Leading the SEAC and being the communications conduit with the CEnvP Board;
- iii. Facilitating operation of the SEAC including meetings, the preparation of minutes through the secretariat as appropriate, assignment and scheduling of committee roles, liaison with specialist registrars and panels as required, and timely reporting to the CEnvP Board (see Section 3(viii));
- iv. Reporting to the CEnvP Board on the achievement of all objectives listed above in Section 3(i-x);
- v. Managing change to SEAC membership and processes, as approved by the CEnvP Board;
- vi. Advising the CEnvP Board on SEAC resource matters.

### 4.2 All members

All SEAC members are responsible for:

- i. Maintaining their contributions, that support meeting the SEAC's objectives, throughout their term;
- ii. Promoting certification through professional conduct aligned with the Scheme's values.

## 5: Operations

### 5.1 Meetings

SEAC meetings are called through the Chair at least twice per calendar year, and otherwise at a frequency, as determined by the SEAC, that is required to execute their responsibilities.

The meeting quorum is two-thirds of the number of sitting committee members.

Minutes of SEAC meetings are required as a record of the SEAC's deliberations.

### 5.2 Conflict of interest

An SEAC member who has a material personal or pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at a meeting, must disclose the nature and the extent of that interest to the meeting. The person must not be present while the matter is being considered at the meeting and must not vote on the matter. This requirement does not apply to a material personal or pecuniary interest that exists only because the person belongs to a class of persons for whose benefit the Scheme is established or that the person has in common with all, or a substantial proportion of, a class of persons at the meeting.

### 5.3 Resources

SEAC activities are executed through volunteers, unless agreed otherwise. The CEnvP Board, including the Program Manager, provides for administrative support to the SEAC. Such support can include:

- i. Help with recruiting, selecting and managing specialist Registrars, panel convenors & panels;
- ii. Development of documentation (operational and marketing), systems and finance processes based on agreed requirements;
- iii. SEAC meeting secretariat duties;
- iv. Receipt and assessment of initial application and follow up with applicants, referees and work verifiers;
- v. Submission of applications to Registrar and follow up;
- vi. Convening interview panels (selection of panellists, logistical arrangements etc) and communication with all parties;
- vii. Receipt and review of Assessment Panel Reports;
- viii. Maintenance of register for CEnvP Board approval of certifications;
- ix. Issue of certification packages;
- x. Convening Appeal Panel and all related correspondence;
- xi. Records and financial management;
- xii. Re-certification financial renewal and CPD.

The CEnvP Board needs to be advised, through the SEAC Chair, of any resourcing issues that can't be resolved by the SEAC.

## Appendix A Comparison of SIS and SEAC

The purpose of an EIANZ SIS is defined in EIANZ Bylaw 15:

- Development and promotion of knowledge about specialised areas of environmental practice;
- Advancement of the professional standing and recognition of specialist environmental practitioners.

The latter purpose encompasses a broad range of activities, one of which could be to propose certification of specialist environmental practitioners under the Scheme; and in the past SISs have been instrumental in forming a specialist certification category, as provided for in By Law 16.6.5(d). For example, SIS roles in specialist certification have included liaison with industry, developing criteria, performing registrar and convenor functions, providing a pool of panellists and setting exams. This is however not the only pathway to establishing a new specialist certification category, as ByLaw 16.6.5(d) allows the CEnvP Board to take specialist certification advice from 'other specialist organisation(s)'.

SISs are created by and responsible to the EIANZ Board, comprise only EIANZ members plus members of other organisations specified by the EIANZ Board (in accordance with EIANZ Board-approved eligibility criteria). The SIS Chair is appointed by the EIANZ Board and is a member of the EIANZ Advisory Council. SISs are not accountable to the CEnvP Board, cannot be resourced by the Scheme, and importantly cannot include the wide range of stakeholders necessary to provide advice to the Scheme regarding specialist certification. The 2018 transition of site contamination practitioners certified under another scheme, into the re-badged CEnvP (Site Contamination) scheme, required agreements with other organisations including establishment of an advisory committee on which regulatory agencies were represented.

For the above reasons, the CEnvP Board created (under ByLaw 16.10.1(k)) Specialist Environmental Advisory Committees (SEACs) which are responsible to the CEnvP Board, and which may include persons from industry, regulatory agencies, academia and research, as well as EIANZ members and CEnvPs. An SEAC is governed by the CEnvP Board and the Scheme processes, whereas an SIS is governed by the EIANZ Board and EIANZ processes.

The role of each SEAC is to provide opportunity for consultation with and involvement of stakeholders, and ensure specialist input to the formation, operation, standards and continuous improvement of the specialist certification. This SEAC does not have broader functions related to development and promotion of knowledge, or the advancement of professional standing, or other roles of an SIS.

Accordingly, even when an SIS has been involved in the formation of a specialist certification category, once a SEAC has been formed, the SIS *per se* has no further role in operation and

maintenance of the Scheme. This does not however preclude some or all members of an SIS being members of the corresponding SEAC.

The requirement for an SEAC once a specialist certification is approved, acknowledges the significant consultation and liaison, specialist knowledge, technical input and volunteer effort required to review standards and update criteria where necessary, and to advise the CEnvP Board regarding specialist certification under the Scheme.

## Appendix B SEAC Formation Flowchart

