

The Recognition of Professional Qualifications and Regulation of Professions

Society for the Environment (SocEnv)

October 2020

The Society for the Environment is the body responsible for the registration of environmental professionals. We are the custodian of the [Chartered Environmentalist](#) and [Registered Environmental Technician](#) registers, and since 2004 have established a sound platform as the body tasked with championing and registering the expertise of environmental professionals.

Working as a partnership with [24 Licensed Bodies](#), we ensure the quality, relevance and awareness of our registrations and enabling our partners and registrants to work together. We are in a unique position, bringing together a range of disciplines and sectors to reflect the multi-disciplinary practice of environmental professionals.

SocEnv operates under a [Royal Charter](#) which mandates us to promote the advancement of, the dissemination of, knowledge of, and education in good environmental practice for the public benefit.

1. Please tell us in which nation(s) you are a regulator of a profession:

As a “voluntary regulator,” we operate internationally with no geographic boundaries. Anyone worldwide can apply to become professionally registered through our license holders.

2. Please state the sector(s) you regulate within.

Pan environmental

3. Please state the profession(s) you regulate.

We are a “voluntary regulator”, for pan environmental.

4. Please outline the rationale for regulation within your sector. Listed below are some non-exhaustive possible rationales for regulation you may like to consider in your answer. In each instance, please explain their importance to regulation within your sector• Protects public interest for environmental reasons• Protects public safety for health reasons• Value for money / protects taxpayer• Enables professionals to charge more for their services• Protects consumers from receiving a low quality of services• Provides training

SocEnv provides a professional registration system for those working as an environmental professional. We set standards, and quality assure professional registration at three levels, Chartered, Practitioner and Technician.

Through our Licensed Members, we admit to our registers environmental professionals who meet our competence and conduct requirements and commit to continuing professional development. Those individuals who reach the required standards are recognised by three designations CEnv, REnvP and REnvTech.

The professional registers ensure that those who receive this award are maintaining their skills and knowledge and can demonstrate this, therefore providing a quality assurance system for the public, for regulators in specific industries, and the public benefit, from healthcare to the environment.

5. Please outline any evidence you have on the consumer protection impacts provided by your regulations.

Our professional registers enable individuals to demonstrate their professional competence. All registrants commit to maintaining their competence through Continual Professional Development (CPD). Finally, all registrants sign the SocEnv Code of Professional Conduct which gives assurance of how work will be conducted by any individual registered with SocEnv. Failure to adhere to the Code of Professional Conduct can be addressed through a robust complaint mechanism.

6. Please outline your process(es) of recognising someone with an international qualification. In your answer, please include details of how this differs from the process of recognising a domestic applicant, the rationale for this/ the reasons why this is the case, and the costs of administering this route. If you have different processes for different international routes (e.g. for candidates from the EU, USA, Australia, or due to any Mutual Recognition Agreements you hold), please include details on the differences between them.

Entry onto SocEnv registers follows the mechanism, regardless of nationality or country of applicant residency. The use of knowledge equivalence is applied consistently for all registrants that require it.

7. Please outline any additional steps and their resource implications that you face in processing applicants with international qualifications?

n/a

8. With reference to any of the additional steps outlined above, what would you suggest are the priorities for the UK Government in considering future ways to recognise international qualifications? Please include any details on what an ideal system could look like, as well as how it could operate. Please consider what the priorities would be for the profession you regulate.

The role of a Professional Body is key to the process of a global community of practice. It is their role to deem if someone is eligible to apply for the award, across boundaries and

borders. The “ideal system” to recognise international qualifications would be simple, accessible and free of charge.

9. Do you require legislation to give you powers to make changes to your international recognition routes?

No

10. What level of dialogue do you maintain with your international counterparts? Please outline the benefits and challenges to cooperation. Please also outline if you are a member of any international networks of regulators, what they are and your experience with them.

SocEnv has little direct dialogue with international counterparts as this is conducted via our 24 Professional Body partners (Licensed Member), all of whom have global relationships and in many instances, international branches.

11. What are your priorities for supporting UK professionals on your register to have access to their profession in other countries? Please outline any Government support that would help.

At SocEnv, we view a consistency of competence as critical and as such transferability of professional registration as fundamental. We would like all SocEnv registers to remain Internationally accessible. Widely recognised acceptance of our registers, internationally, would be welcomed.

12. Do you have any provisions for the recognition of professional qualifications held by refugees residing in the UK?

There is no distinction made between applicants. As a voluntary regulator, we have no geographical or political boundaries in becoming professionally registered.

13. Please describe the process by which UK professionals gain qualifications to enter the profession, including detail on the types of education and training they must undergo and how long it takes to complete them.

To become professionally registered, the following academic and or equivalency criteria is required for each register:

1. REnvTech applicants **must** have a QCF level 3 qualification (England, Wales and Northern Ireland) or equivalent* learning and achievement.
2. REnvP applicants **must** have a level 5 qualification or equivalent* learning and achievement.
3. CEnv applicants **must** have a level 7 qualification or equivalent* learning and achievement.

*Although SocEnv mandates that all Licensed Members have an equivalency route, it is the responsibility of each Licensed Member to determine equivalency for their members.

Qualifications need to be within a relevant discipline or relevant practice. In the case where a relevant qualification is not held by an applicant, the Licensed Member may approve an equivalent programme of study that clearly demonstrates the correct level of knowledge.

14. Please describe the process you offer for professionals who have gained the relevant UK qualifications to be brought onto your register.

SocEnv licences bodies to assess applicants for its professional registrations using a peer-review process. Assessments involve face to face or written assessment against a set of professional standards as well as verification from a supporter. As part of the assessment process, qualifications are checked along with the relevant work experience.

Equivalency routes are also available for applicants that may not have the specific qualifications as long as they are able to demonstrate that they have the necessary skills and competency.

15. How often do you review your processes and standards? In your answer, please describe both formal and informal ways this is carried out (e.g. via consultancy, membership surveys) and include detail of any changes you have recently made based to this process.

SocEnv has a Registration Authority (RA), responsible to the Board, to oversee standards and the licensing process. A review of standards is normally undertaken every five years or when other circumstances require it. The RA has recently completed the development of the REnvP (level 5) registration. CEnv (level 7) and REnvTech (level 3) will be reviewed in 2021 and 2022 respectively. Our standards reviews include registrants, Licensed Members as well as employers across the pan-environmental sector.

16. Thinking about key changes that have been made to your qualification processes, what has been the cause for this change? Below are some non-exhaustive possible options to consider in your answer.

In developing our REnvP registration, consideration has been given to maximise accessibility. Learnings from this will be included in the upcoming CEnv and REnvTech reviews.

17. Do you feel that the current standards you set, against which applicants are assessed to enter onto the register, are a fair reflection of the level of skill, training, education, and experience required to practise their profession? Please explain your answer.

Yes. Our professional registration application process is rigorous. Applicants need to demonstrate how they fulfil the criteria through a competency-based framework. Working

in partnership with 24 Professional Bodies ensures we combine the oversight of consistent standards with the expertise of world-leading organisations and assessors.

18. Please detail any principles of regulation you follow (e.g. proportionality and transparency) and how you uphold them, and whether they support you in your duties as a regulator.

As a peer-review regulator, we undertake licence reviews every five years with interim reviews as required based on a risk-assessed model. All Licensed Members must complete an annual report on their progress in between licence reviews. We follow a principle of transparency and sharing best practice across all our Licensed members to ensure standards are consistently high, and any required lessons are learnt by all.

19. Please detail any requirements you may place on the professionals you regulate and why they are necessary. If you do not impose any requirements, please justify your reasons for not doing so

We require all registrants to undertake CPD to maintain their competence post-registration. The exact details of the CPD are a matter for the individual and the Licensed Member.

In addition, we require all registrants to sign and adhere to, the SocEnv's Code of Professional conduct. Professional registration with the SocEnv is an individual commitment on how someone will work as well as a demonstration of the competence they have.

<https://socenv.org.uk/page/CodeofConduct>

20. Please describe the process by which you determine your application fees. Please set out any principles or guidelines you adhere to when determining fee amounts.

As a not for profit organisation, fees are calculated to cover the costs of registration. Fees are normally increased in line with inflation and are set by the Board which is responsible to the Member Bodies. Changes greater than 10% would require Member Body endorsement.

21. Please detail any changes that you are considering for your sector to ensure the profession you regulate stays relevant to current challenges. Does current regulation allow for you to make these changes?

Maintenance of standards to ensure relevance. Recently introduced level 5 to recognise market need and allow a wider pool of individuals to demonstrate their environmental competence and make a commitment to a code of professional conduct.

22. Please detail any steps you take to help make sure that your standards and processes are adaptive, support innovation and promote social mobility.

Inclusion and diversity are a key responsibility and priority of the SocEnv Board. Registrations allow for reasonable adjustments. Environmental profession recognises the need to do more to increase accessibility and social mobility for the profession.

SocEnv has supported the creation of a degree apprenticeship to aid entry to the profession.

A new level 5 registration was created in 2020 to support entry level professionalism.

23. Please detail any continuous professional development that is required for professionals to remain on your register. Please include detail on how often this should take place, in what form, as well as the benefits of adhering and consequences of not adhering to these requirements.

SocEnv regards the development and enhancement of CPD critical to the pan-environmental profession and expects registrants to 'take responsibility for personal development and work towards and secure improvements for a sustainable future.'

Sufficient CPD is defined as the amount of relevant activities that individuals need to do each year to remain competent in their professional role.

Each Licensed Member must have in place its own CPD Policy detailing of its expectations for participation, monitoring, and failing / refusing to submit their CPD records when requested.

Each year LM are required to sample CPD across their registrations from either

1. from all their registrants where the total number of registrants is 10 or fewer, or
2. from a 10% sample of their registrants, with a minimum sample size of 10 registrants up to a maximum sample size of 50.

SocEnv samples and monitors these processes through license reviews.

Diversity and Inclusion

24. Do you collect data on the diversity of both your UK and international applications? For example, on gender or ethnic background.

SocEnv collates some data in line with GDPR.

25. Please outline any steps you take to eliminate unconscious bias from your recognition process.

Our Registration Authority undergoes unconscious bias training, and we encourage this for all assessors through our licensing processes.

26. Please outline any steps you take to support job creation in the profession you regulate.

n/a

27. Please outline any steps you take to attract a diverse workforce to the profession you regulate.

SocEnv utilises its marketing and communications channels to champion a diverse and inclusive workforce. Examples include

<https://socenv.org.uk/news/514643/The-Diverse-Voice-of-CEnv-and-REnvTech-Registrants.htm>

<https://socenv.org.uk/page/EnvironmentalProfessionalProfiles>

Additional Information

28. Please detail any other information or evidence that you think we should take into consideration during this Call for Evidence.

SocEnv is a partnership of 25 professional bodies:

- Arboricultural Association (AA)
- Chartered Association of Building Engineers (CABE)
- Chartered Institute of Architectural Technologists (CIAT)
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)
- Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB)
- Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM)
- Chartered Institution of Wastes Management (CIWM)
- Energy Institute (EI)
- Institution of Agricultural Engineers (IAgrE)
- Institute of Agricultural Management (IAgrM)
- Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE)
- Institute of Chartered Foresters (ICF)
- Institution of Chemical Engineers (ICHEME)
- Institution of Engineering Designers (IED)
- Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA)
- Institution of Environmental Sciences (IES)
- Institute of Fisheries Management (IFM)
- Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH)
- Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMECH)
- Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining (IOM3)
- Institute of Water (IWater)
- Nuclear Institute (NI)
- Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS)
- Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)
- Society of Operations Engineers (SOE)