



ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTITIONER PROFICIENCY TESTS EXAMINATION STRUCTURE, PRACTICE AREAS, AND CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

1. OVERVIEW

The Environmental Practitioner Proficiency Tests are designed to evaluate competencies across four progressive Levels:

- **Level A** – Foundational Competency (1hr)
- **Level B** – Professional Competency (1hr)
- **Level C** – Specialist Certification (Practice Areas) (30mins per practice area)
- **Level D** – Advanced Competency, for Fellowship (1.5hrs)

These sections collectively assess:

- Foundational knowledge
- Applied technical competence
- Specialized expertise across defined areas of practice

2. CERTIFICATION PATHWAYS

Certification Level	Required Test Levels
Associate Membership	Level A
Full Membership and Specialist Certification	Level A + Level B + Level C (relevant Practice Area(s))
Fellow	Level D.

3. EXAMINATION STRUCTURE

3.1 LEVEL A: Foundational Competency (Mandatory)

3.1.1 Purpose

To assess foundational, baseline knowledge of environmental and social systems, sustainability, and related governance. It establishes that a candidate has the baseline literacy required to work under supervision and in environmental and social practice and to progress meaningfully toward Member status.

3.1.2 Level A Target Candidates

Associate members. These include students, technicians and affiliates, and practitioners in the early years of their career (approximately 1–3 years of experience) who are yet to attain full Membership status. Candidates at this level are not expected to demonstrate specialist



competence, but rather a working grasp of core environmental and sustainability concepts, and the regulatory and professional context within which they operate.

3.1.3 Level A Curriculum

Level A proficiency tests will be drawn from the following curriculum domains. The table also provides the scoring weight assigned to each domain.

Domain	Key Content Areas	Weight
1. Environmental Science & Ecological Fundamentals	Ecosystem structure and function; environmental media (air, water, soil); basic pollution concepts; ecological principles underpinning environmental practice.	10%
2. Biodiversity & Natural Resources Fundamentals	Basic concepts of biodiversity and its value; Nigeria's major ecosystems and protected areas; introduction to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and Nigeria's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP); common threats to biodiversity (habitat loss, invasive species, poaching).	10%
3. Social Dimensions of Sustainability & Community Engagement	The substantive content of the social pillar: basic stakeholder engagement principles; community health and safety awareness; introduction to labour rights and working conditions; basic gender and social inclusion concepts; introduction to community grievance mechanisms.	10%
4. Sustainability & ESG Foundations	Concept and history of sustainable development; the UN Sustainable Development Goals; the triple bottom line (People-Planet-Profit); introduction to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) as a three-pillar concept; circular economy basics; introduction to climate change.	15%
5. Nigerian & Institutional Regulatory Framework	Federal Ministry of Environment (policy oversight); NESREA (cross-sectoral enforcement) and the Environmental Impact Assessment Act (Cap E12, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004); general awareness that state-level and sector-specific regulators also exist (e.g., for petroleum and mining); a small number of flagship international conventions domesticated by Nigeria (e.g., the Paris Agreement and the Basel Convention); brief awareness that international and national environmental and social safeguard standards exist for project financing (e.g., IFC Performance Standards, World Bank standards).	15%
6. Introduction to ESIA, Audit, ESDD & Environmental Monitoring Awareness	Basic awareness of four related but distinct concepts and how they differ: Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (a regulatory process undertaken before a project proceeds), Environmental Audit (checking ongoing compliance), Environmental & Social Due Diligence (a transaction/lender-driven check), and Environmental Monitoring (ongoing data collection on environmental conditions). Definitional awareness only, not detailed methodology.	15%
7. Waste, Pollution & HSE Basics	Waste management hierarchy; common pollution types and sources; basic health, safety and environment (HSE) practice; community and occupational health awareness.	15%



8. Professional Ethics & IEPN Structure	IEPN's mission, membership categories and practice areas; introduction to the Code of Ethics and standards of conduct; professional responsibility and accountability to the public.	10%
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3.1.4 Level A Test Format

Level A tests will be administered as 60 multiple-choice questions drawn from the curriculum domain above. The questions are to be answered within a 1-hour window, allowing approximately one minute per item. Level A tests **MUST** be passed by **ALL** aspiring candidates. The required pass mark is 70%. Aspiring candidates are allowed a maximum of two attempts within one year, per the Licensure Guidelines.

3.2 LEVEL B: Professional Competency (Mandatory for Membership)

3.2.1 Purpose

To assess the ability of the candidate to translate knowledge into a defensible course of action in realistic scenarios, and professional capability, which entails judgment and accountability expected of someone who will advise clients, engage regulators, and eventually certify reports.

3.2.2 Level B Target Candidates

Candidates with more than three years of post-qualification experience seeking admission as Members of the Institute.

3.2.3 Level B Curriculum

Level B proficiency tests will be drawn from the following curriculum domains. The table also provides the scoring weight assigned to each domain.

Domain	Key Content Areas	Weight
1. ESIA & Environmental Audit	Full ESIA process (screening to Record of Decision); scoping and Terms of Reference; baseline study design; impact prediction and significance evaluation; mitigation hierarchy and Environmental & Social Management Plans (ESMPs); environmental audit methodology, including ISO 14001 principles and compliance auditing against permits and regulatory conditions.	10%
2. Environmental Monitoring	Design and implementation of environmental and social baseline and compliance monitoring programmes, distinct from one-off ESIA baseline studies and periodic audit; monitoring across key media and disciplines — air quality and ambient noise, water quality, soil quality, groundwater/hydrogeology, geomorphology and coastal erosion, vegetation/flora, wildlife, fish and fisheries, and socio-economic/community health surveys; sampling design, QA/QC and data management; continuous emission and effluent monitoring; monitoring plans as part of ESMPs and NESREA permit conditions.	9%
3. Environmental & Social Due Diligence (ESDD)	ESDD as a distinct, transaction- and lender-driven discipline, applying the safeguard and lending standards relevant to the financier involved: IFC Performance Standards and the Equator Principles; the World Bank Environmental and Social Framework (ESSs 1-10); the	7%



	African Development Bank's Integrated Safeguards System; the Central Bank of Nigeria's Sustainable Banking Principles (NSBP) and their sector-specific guidelines (oil & gas, power, agriculture); red-flag and gap analysis; E&S risk categorisation; Environmental and Social Action Plans (ESAPs); ESDD for M&A, project finance and portfolio/lender monitoring, as distinct from regulatory ESIA or compliance audit.	
4. ESG Strategy, Sustainability Planning & Reporting	ESG strategy development and materiality (including double materiality); sustainability plan development; disclosure frameworks (GRI, SASB, TCFD, IFRS S1/S2-ISSB); stakeholder engagement strategy; sustainability performance metrics and assurance.	12%
5. Climate Change & GHG Accounting	GHG Protocol (Scope 1, 2 and 3 accounting); climate change risk assessment (physical and transition risks); carbon markets and net-zero pathways; Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and Climate Change Act 2021; adaptation and mitigation planning.	12%
6. Biodiversity, Natural Capital & Nature-Related Risk	Biodiversity screening and critical habitat assessment (IFC PS6); protected areas, Ramsar sites and IUCN Red List species; no-net-loss/net-gain and biodiversity offsets; nature-related risk and disclosure; natural capital accounting and ecosystem services valuation; environmental economics (cost-benefit analysis, green/sustainable finance).	8%
7. Social Performance, Human Rights & Community Relations	Social Impact Assessment (SIA) methodology; IFC Performance Standards PS2 (Labour and Working Conditions), PS4 (Community Health, Safety and Security), PS5 (Land Acquisition and Involuntary Resettlement) and PS7 (Indigenous Peoples); UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and human rights due diligence; ILO core labour standards; Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC); Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI); the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights; social license to operate and grievance redress mechanisms.	11%
8. Green Building, Infrastructure & Sustainable Design Standards	Green building rating systems (LEED, BREEAM, IFC EDGE, Green Star, WELL Building Standard) and the Nigeria Green Building Council; sustainable infrastructure rating (Envision/ISI) and carbon management in infrastructure (PAS 2080); life-cycle assessment and embodied vs. operational carbon; energy efficiency codes (Nigeria's Building Energy Efficiency Code) and renewable energy integration; sustainable procurement (ISO 20400); green bonds and climate finance for infrastructure.	7%
9. Nigerian & International Regulatory/Legal Framework (Advanced)	Detailed, multi-agency application of the regulatory landscape: NESREA sectoral regulations, the Environmental Impact Assessment Act (Cap E12, LFN 2004), state-level EIA/permitting regimes, NUPRC and NMDPRA petroleum-sector EHS regulations, NOSDRA, National Biosafety Management Agency, Mining Act 2007, Land Use Act 1978 (as it affects land acquisition/resettlement), and sector-specific requirements across oil & gas, mining, manufacturing and infrastructure; relevant international conventions; key Nigerian environmental case law and enforcement/liability mechanisms.	12%
10. Strategic Waste & Pollution Management	Waste planning and strategy; pollution control technologies; remediation approaches and technology selection; waste facility design and operational considerations.	5%



11. Professional Practice, Ethics & Report Certification	Professional judgement and duty of care; responsibilities and liabilities of a certifying practitioner; quality assurance and peer review; IEPN Code of Ethics and standards of conduct in practice.	7%
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3.2.4 Level B Test Format

Level B tests will be administered over 1-hour as 45 fact-based multiple-choice questions (approximately 40 minutes) plus 4 scenario-based case questions (approximately 20 minutes, around 5 minutes per case). The required pass mark is 70%. Aspiring candidates are allowed a maximum of two attempts within one year, per the Licensure Guidelines. The test **MUST** be passed by all candidates seeking Full Membership.

3.3 LEVEL C: Specialist Certification (Practice Areas)

3.3.1 Purpose

To assess specialized technical expertise in defined one or more areas of practice. The proficiency test is available only to candidates who have qualified for Level B.

3.3.2 Level C Test Format

Currently, the institute offers licensure in 15 Practice Areas (PA). Some PAs have sub-PAs relevant to specific sub-areas of specialization. Tests in each PA or sub-PA will be administered over 30 minutes. Each test will contain a minimum of 20 questions that test deep, applied competence in specific practice areas, using fact, scenario- and calculation-based items where relevant. Licenses issued to successful candidates will specify only the practice area(s) in which they have passed Level C. Candidates may attempt one or multiple Practice Areas. The pass mark for each Practice Area is 70%. Candidates seeking licensure in a specific practice area are allowed a maximum of two attempts within one year, per the Licensure Guidelines.

3.4 LEVEL D: Fellowship

3.4.1 Purpose

To determine the eligibility of candidates for admission to the Fellowship of the Institute by assessing their outstanding professional competence, leadership, and sustained contributions to the environmental profession. Fellowship is the Institute's highest professional honour and recognition.

3.4.2 Test Specification and Format

Candidates for Fellowship will be tested on exceptional skill and/or achievement in one or more selected practice areas. The test, which will comprise 30 to 40 scenario-based and applied questions, will be administered over 1.5hrs. It is expected that all Fellowship candidates would already be members of the Institute prior to their application for Fellowship.



4.0 PASS REQUIREMENT

The pass requirement for all tests is a minimum of 70%. Candidates who do not make the 70% pass mark are allowed one retake within 3 months, and if they still don't succeed, are required to wait 12 months before retaking the tests.

5.0 SCHEDULING

Subject to Council's approval, Levels A, B and C tests will be scheduled twice a year. Candidates who pass Levels A and B will be notified and scheduled to take level C at a later day. IEPN ExCo may schedule Level D tests anytime.