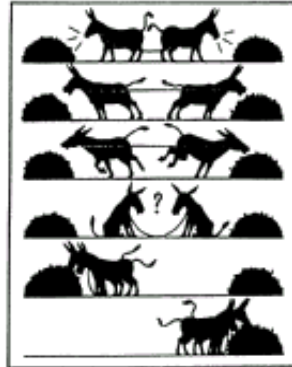


# Certificate IV in Understanding and Negotiating Sustainability Issues (52358)

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

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### Unit 1: Break complex sustainability issues down

The exercises in the first part of this unit help you map out what you already know about sustainability. You will also choose certain scenarios or case studies to work with that will enable you to apply your general ideas about sustainability to actual real-life situations. If you are taking the course as a component of professional development, case studies can be developed so that they closely align with your own work background and experience.

The next stage of training involves re-framing exercises so you can explore useful new ways of looking at certain issues. This aspect of the training helps you to make certain differentiations between key elements of a particular issue and so be better able to appreciate the way that the various elements relate to one another as a whole. These differentiations are often made between the social, the economic and the environmental elements of an issue and it is often expressed as three interlocking circles, each representing one of the three elements. This will enhance your capacity to convey ideas about 'triple-bottom-line' accountability, encompassing each of these three elements.

The re-framing exercises not only help you appreciate some of the fundamental differences between these key elements, they also help you appreciate why sustainable development requires us to think in a more integrated way when it comes to making assessments about a particular problem or making plans to remedy it.

The exercises will help you develop your confidence to articulate ideas about sustainability. It provides you with a framework for talking about sustainability in general terms. However, at the same time it shows how this general framework can also be used in a very practical way because a vast amount of complex information relating to a given scenario can be accommodated within it.

The training highlights that the way an issue is described has a huge bearing on the way we think about what needs to be done to remedy or rectify it. It will develop your capacity to think critically about the way different people are describing a sustainability issue.



## Unit 2: Indicate the stakeholders in sustainability issues

The purpose of Unit 1 is to build your capacity to describe an actual sustainability problem. In contrast, this unit helps you develop your framework further to be able to keep track of the complex and diverse range of people and organisations, the 'stakeholders', who become involved in any particular sustainability issue.

Once again, exercises are used to help you generate and map out ideas about the way various people and organisations have a stake in the particular sustainability issue you are looking at. As you record and expand on these ideas, you will begin to more fully appreciate the range of stakeholders, and that each will have their own concerns that they want taken into account in a decision-making or problem-solving process.

The re-framing exercises will prompt you to think about the differences between various stakeholders. As each will have their own interests, needs, values and goals, these exercises are a useful tool for thinking about the need to integrate different parties' concerns when making decisions or resolving sustainability problems.

This unit highlights the importance of a general framework when thinking about the way that the various stakeholders relate to one another. The existing relationships between the various stakeholders will have a huge bearing on their ability to maintain constructive dialogue with one another and ultimately look for a sustainable way forward.



## Unit 3: Indicate third parties who assist stakeholders negotiate sustainability issues

While Unit 2 focuses on developing a general understanding of the people and organisations that we would describe as stakeholders, this unit focuses on another set of parties who become involved in sustainability issues. It highlights that it is not necessarily enough to simply keep track of the actual stakeholders, as there will most likely be a range of other parties who become involved through the roles they play in decision-making or problem-solving processes. This group of secondary parties includes people who act as advocates, advisers and intermediaries. The way they become involved, and how they carry out their roles, has a huge bearing on the stakeholders' general capacity to work out a sustainable way forward. In this unit we start to steer our thinking toward the second component of the course, which is to do with the way stakeholders engage with one another when they are trying to resolve a sustainability issue.

The training in this unit is designed to help you appreciate how certain secondary roles differ from one another. It will help you appreciate key distinctions between different types of secondary roles, such as differences between advocates and advisers who assist specific parties, or different types of intermediaries whose role is more generally to direct the process itself, and this group can include adjudicators, arbitrators, mediators and facilitators.

The training in this unit helps to highlight that the roles that people might serve in 'official' processes, which are bound by clear-cut rules, may vary somewhat if the stakeholders opt to find a sustainable way forward through a relatively informal and flexible decision-making or problem-solving process, where the rules are not always clear-cut.



## **Unit 4: Indicate how communications problems exacerbate sustainability issues**

The preceding units will all help you develop a framework for appreciating the complexity of sustainability issues, in particular by looking in detail at what is at issue, the range of stakeholders who are involved and the parties who may fulfil secondary roles to assist the stakeholders work toward the resolution of a particular matter. This unit now turns the focus toward the idea that multi-stakeholder dialogue and processes of negotiation often don't live up to expectations and stakeholders are not always able to find mutually agreeable outcomes.

Some failures are perfectly understandable when stakeholders have fiercely opposing points of view. As individuals we can't wave a magic wand and find quick answers to complex and seemingly intractable problems. However, this unit is more interested in failures that, with better planning, individuals can do something about. The main focus is on failures that stem from poor planning for stakeholder engagement. It is in the preliminary stages that consideration needs to be given to the types of communications problems that can derail negotiations, even when the stakeholders start out with the best of intentions. Certain types of communications problems can result in opportunities for constructive dialogue being needlessly lost. Some of these problems can be due to misunderstandings or disagreements about the way certain aspects of an issue should be interpreted. They might also be due to disagreements as to the exact purpose of the dialogue or who should control the way the negotiations are conducted. Communications problems of this kind not only derail negotiations, they fuel feelings of distrust and animosity so that strained relationships end up going from bad to worse.

The insights and skills gained in this unit will be useful in everyday situations where people are trying to deal with contentious matters. However, they can make a really crucial difference as part of a planning strategy before people representing different stakeholder groups actually sit down and try and negotiate a sustainable way forward.



## **Unit 5: Indicate the characteristics of different types of negotiations**

The training in Unit 3 helps to appreciate that when stakeholders try and come to decisions or resolve problems through an 'official' process they have to follow set rules, whereas there is a great deal less certainty as to how more informal negotiations should be conducted (and hence a far greater risk that the negotiation process will founder or collapse). Unit 5 will help to highlight that it is the stakeholders themselves who must decide how a process of negotiation should be conducted. This training will equip you with basic insights and skills that could be crucial when it comes to planning for sustainable and successful stakeholder engagement or process of negotiation. The main focus is on helping you appreciate key differences between distributive bargaining and integrative bargaining.

The work done in previous units provides the building blocks to look at this topic, and to help you develop an appreciation of the significance of the type of bargaining that stakeholders might be willing to enter into. The type of bargaining that will be considered acceptable will be influenced by the relationships that already exist between various stakeholders. Some may already maintain close working relationships with one another and have certain interests, values and goals in common, whereas in other cases the relationships may be far less close and could even be adversarial. The existing relationships will influence whether it only seems possible for stakeholders to relate to one another through distributive bargaining. As the name suggests, the focus in this case is on matters of distribution or redistribution, a way of working out who gets what share of certain resources through a particular exchange mechanism. Alternatively stakeholders could opt to try and negotiate in a more collaborative way and through consensus work toward reaching the most mutually satisfactory outcome for all concerned. In this case they are more likely to use what is termed integrative bargaining.

A general appreciation of such differences becomes crucial for anticipating what type of decision-making or problem-solving process stakeholders might be willing to enter into, and for assessing the degree to which they have sufficient understanding of the basic differences between distributive and integrative bargaining. The type of insights and skills developed in this unit can contribute significantly to the establishment of a workable agenda and procedural guidelines that will help to keep a process of negotiation sustainable and avoid the type of secondary communications problems that needlessly derail such processes.

This unit develops the idea that one of the most constructive contributions that individuals can play to keep multi-stakeholder negotiations on track is a capacity to think ahead about how stakeholders can initially agree what sort of process would be most suitable. Forethought needs to be given to an appropriate agenda, appropriate procedural guidelines, agreement about the number of parties that should directly participate and what elements of an issue can be dealt with in the process.



## **Unit 6: Indicate ways stakeholders can negotiate about factual information**

Unit 6 highlights another reason why it is important to have at least a basic understanding of different sorts of negotiations and why certain other insights and skills will be equally helpful in order that you can play a role in fostering a sustainable process. In this case the focus is on how stakeholders can best present and share complex factual information. This training will help you develop a framework for thinking about the extent to which stakeholders could be prepared to disclose whatever relevant information is at their disposal and when, how and to whom it should be made available. This factor has a significant bearing on the capacity of the stakeholders to look for a wholly integrated outcome.

Ideas in this unit link closely with those already developed in Unit 5 because how and when stakeholders' information comes to light can depend to a great extent on whether they opt to use a distributive or an integrative style of bargaining. Integrative bargaining is much more reliant on stakeholders being open to share all relevant information. The exercises will help you generate ideas about the pros and cons of stakeholders being fully open to disclose all relevant information, and some of the secondary communications problems that might arise at this stage of negotiations.

Training then gives you a basis for considering differences between certain types of information. You can look back at the material you have already generated in previous units and consider how and when different types of information might need to be presented. It highlights the importance of forethought as to the type of information that stakeholders need to share with one another. For instance, consideration needs to be given to the extent to which different stakeholders are likely to agree or disagree about the validity and relevance of particular information. These exercises will build your capacity to think ahead about the extent to which various stakeholders are likely to find certain information familiar or unfamiliar and how this will affect their capacity to evaluate its significance.

This unit develops your appreciation of the idea that individual stakeholders need help to plan how they will cope with the complexities and pitfalls of this stage of negotiations. Again the training develops the idea that communications problems can be averted if individual stakeholders can be encouraged to review in advance the information that they intend to present. This is not just useful for re-checking whether all the information is relevant, accurate and consistent. It may need to be looked at afresh specifically to consider whether other stakeholders will find it acceptable and useful in the form in which it is presented.



## Unit 7: Indicate the importance of stakeholders accommodating diverse values

Unit 7 also helps to develop insights and skills that can make a positive contribution to planning for a sustainable process of cross-sectoral engagement. Unit 6 focuses on the importance of thinking ahead about the complex factual information stakeholders will have to share with one another in negotiations. In contrast, this unit highlights the importance of also thinking ahead about the various stakeholder groups' values. They are likely to be far more challenging to understand than relatively straightforward factual information.

The training in this unit stresses that the sustainability of cross-sectoral processes of dialogue and negotiation that are trying to maintain integrative bargaining will depend largely on capacity to acknowledge and make accommodation for diverse values. Training elaborates on the idea that even when stakeholders are willing to compromise about some of their interests, they may be less able to compromise about their values. Therefore it is important to develop insights and skills to help you plan ahead and consider whether there is scope for a cross-sectoral process of dialogue and negotiation to take into account the various stakeholders' values and how they might be reconciled.

The exercises will help you consider ideas about the anxieties and stresses that can arise when stakeholders are not only negotiating about a diversity of interests but also a diversity of values and beliefs. This training helps to show that it becomes much more significant to give forethought to these ideas if stakeholders indicate that they want to try for an integrative rather than distributive negotiations strategy as a way to look for the most sustainable way forward.



## Unit 8: Indicate influences on stakeholders' capacity to negotiate

The first two units of this course help you develop a framework you can use to more comprehensively assess and understand the complexities of an immediate situation. This later unit now focuses on developing your capacities and skills for thinking about future scenarios, the way that the present circumstances could or should change.

Training in this case involves a review of the ideas you have already generated. From the understandings you have gained about a present scenario, you can also give thought to how the different stakeholders want that scenario to change. This training builds your capacity to appreciate that various stakeholders may have certain goals that they share in common but they are also likely to have certain goals that are quite different from each other's. Training in this unit stresses the importance of thinking about the stakeholders' goals because they will influence how they interpret that actual *purpose* of a particular process of dialogue or negotiation.

This training will build your capacity to make distinctions between quite different sorts of goals. One obvious set of goals will be the ones that each of the stakeholders wants to achieve. You can then take these ideas further by thinking about which goals could be described as short-term or long-term goals, and which particular goals the stakeholders are likely to regard as more or less important. You can also consider whether certain goals might seem to be only beneficial for one type of stakeholder or whether they are likely to be viewed as being of common benefit to the wider community. These exercises prompt you to think about where things would stand in the future depending on whether stakeholders are able to achieve their goals.

Apart from building your capacity to consider specific goals that the various stakeholders might want to achieve, it also enables you to give attention to another take on the idea of goals. In this case, the focus is on the immediate goal of *how* the stakeholders want to achieve their longer-term goals. Training thus emphasises the need to consider what each of the stakeholders might see as the best or the least effective strategy for achieving their own specific goals or, for that matter, finding a mutually satisfactory outcome.

This unit helps to build your capacity to think about the role that you might play to help stakeholders clarify their ideas about what they want by way of goals and *how* they want to go about attaining them. The insights and skills you gain through this stage of the course will give you the confidence you need to constructively explore how much the various stakeholders have thought about optional strategies that might be open to them, and how much they have actually thought about the relative strengths and weaknesses of different options.



## **Unit 9: Summarise capacity to understand and negotiate sustainability issues**

This last unit asks you to summarise and explain how you have taken on board the ideas generated throughout the units of the course and how you have worked out your own framework for keeping track of your ideas. It gives you an opportunity to show in practice how you have expanded on your own ideas and how you have used the re-framing exercises to look at a particular scenario from different perspectives. It also gives you an opportunity to show how you could continue to use the framework in future if and when you need to assess a sustainability issue or practically and psychologically prepare for participation in cross-sectoral dialogue and negotiation. Finally, it gives you an opportunity to say in what way it has enhanced your understanding of the concept of sustainability and whether it has encouraged you to think how its guiding principles can be applied in practical ways in quite diverse situations.

The course develops your capacity to make assessments about sustainability issues. In some cases these assessments are about the matters that are of immediate concern to particular stakeholders but in other cases, they are as much about the efficacy and the sustainability of alternative decision-making and problem-solving processes. As well, the course will give you a repertoire of skills for planning for or participating in cross-sectoral processes of dialogue and negotiation.

