



SCOPE OF PRACTICE FRAMEWORK DISCUSSION PAPER

1. Preamble

The *Professional Governance Act (2018) (PGA)* when fully enacted will require applied biology professionals in BC to be registrants of the College of Applied Biology and present the opportunity to be licensed (Right to Practice) under the College of Applied Biology Regulation. In order to implement these changes effectively, the College is further defining the Scope of Practice for applied biology professionals.

Applied biology professionals have diverse areas of practice (zoology, botany, microbiology, biochemistry and ecology), that evolve over time throughout the course of their career and can overlap with other natural resource (NR) professionals' scope of practice. As such, defining the Scope of Practice for applied biology professionals that covers a wide range of practices, expertise and levels of competency requires thoughtful consideration, broad meaningful engagement and ultimately an overarching policy.

The purpose of defining the Scope of Practice for applied biology professionals is to ensure the variety and complexity of what applied biology professionals do -- scope of practice -- is encompassed and described while ensuring the public's interest is protected.

Regulated professionals are regarded by the public, clients and other professionals as having enhanced accountability. They are bound to a [Code of Ethics](#) that sets expectations for behavior and professionalism. Government trusts them to protect the public's interest over their own: they have entered into an agreement with government, via the regulatory body (the College of Applied Biology), to legally regulate their activities. As such, defining Scope of Practice for College members will result in improving and preserving a high level of professional accountability.

2. Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for the Scope of Practice framework development are multi-faceted. However, the primary principles are to ensure the framework protects the public's interest and is developed in a fair and transparent manner. In order to be successful further principles were essential to ensure a fair and transparent framework was developed. These include:

- 🌐 working collaboratively with other NR regulators and the government of BC
- 🌐 inclusive consultation with College members, other NR associations and regulators and non-regulated NR practitioners
- 🌐 recognizing and supporting existing practice rights and titles of other professions and associated regulators
- 🌐 being open to and incorporating innovative ideas and solutions along with traditional ideas and solutions
- 🌐 ensuring appropriate solutions are found, proposed and implemented at the right governance level; this includes but is not limited to regulation, Bylaws (Rules), policy and guidance



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3. Discussion

The College established a Scope of Practice Task Force and engaged registrants, non-regulated applied biology practitioners and other natural resource associations to provide input and considerations to appropriately define scope of practice for applied biology professionals. The overall intent of the process was to:

- 1) provide advice to government for regulating Right to Practice for applied biology professionals
- 2) provide guidance to members
- 3) inform the public on practice scope for applied biology professionals using inputs from consultation

The scope of the Task Force and engagement/consultation feedback was to develop an operational statement that encompasses the activities of applied biology professionals, to define Scope of Practice for applied biology professionals and to identify ancillary materials such as guidance documents that the College may need to develop.

As the College of Applied Biology Regulation is being developed, the primary focus for the College is to ensure a sound definition of scope of practice. As the Regulation moves to approval, the College will develop and approve associated rules/by-laws and policies that define scope of practice in more detail and set out processes to ensure consistency with the PGA and regulations.

The College will also develop policy, guidance and guidance documents for registered applied biology practitioners in areas specific to applied biology professionals' scope of practice. In areas of practice overlap with other NR professionals the College will continue to work at the staff level to resolve areas of overlapping practice. It is also expected the College will participate in joint

Concurrent Initiatives

Although the credentialing of new College registrants, regulation of firms and regulatory provisions were outside the Scope of the Scope of Practice framework, there are links. Once the *PGA* is fully enacted, anticipated to be fall 2020, it will require applied biology professionals in B.C. to be registrants of the College and potentially to be licensed (Right to Practice) under the College of Applied Biology Regulations. As such the College will be required to have options for current non-registered applied biology practitioners to become registered, regulate firms (ranging possibly from sole practitioners to large firms) and enforce regulatory provisions.

Credentialing

The College Credentials Task Force has reviewed various credentialing options to allow current non-registered applied biology practitioners to meet the College's entrance requirements (i.e. academic, work experience and report writing – where required) and become a member once the *PGA* is fully enacted. These options are practicable and take into consideration practitioners who range in both work experience and various academic streams. Academic options for degrees and technical diplomas and on the job training/work experience are varied and have changed since the College was established. These options will continue to evolve to meet the public, government and industry requirements. Consequently, the College needs to reflect changes in the Scope of Practice and be forward thinking to encompass current and future non-registrants and college and university applied biology program graduates from both BC and outside the province.

Regulation of Firms

Currently Engineers and Geoscientists of BC is leading the efforts on firm regulation. The College will work jointly with them, other regulators and government to develop a process and framework for regulation of firms that will encompass the requirements of the College. This joint work is of particular importance as many firms (small and large) employ multiple NR professionals and requires the process to be inclusive of the various professions and their associated self-regulators.



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boards to work collaboratively on guidance documents for all NR practitioners to use. These documents will follow a similar deliverable as the [Legislated Riparian Assessments in BC professional practice guidelines](#) that were jointly developed by the College, the Engineers and Geoscientists of BC and the Association of BC Forest Professionals.

4. Key Points

1: Applied Biology Operational Statement

It is recommended that the College adopt the following applied biology operational statement developed to define what applied biology professionals do through the consultation process and work completed by the Scope of Practice Task Force.

“The practice of professional applied biology is the provision of science-based advice and services in relation to the long-term sustainability of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems, their living organisms, habitats, and processes.”

Results of the College’s engagement workshops, held across the province, highlighted that there is a need for natural resource (NR) professionals, not limited to applied biology professionals, to be competent and held accountable for both their competency(ies) and levels of competency they declare. Moreover, these competency(ies) need to be clearly identified and defined. Consultation feedback also indicated that the lines between professional areas of practice amongst NR professionals are not always clear; there is overlap and currently a large number of NR professionals are working and collaborating together successfully. For successful implementation of the *Professional Governance Act (PGA)* and Right-to-Practice (RTP) for College members moving forward, the following key factors are essential:

- 1) that NR professionals work within their scope of practice, and level of competency(ies)
- 2) current avenues for collaboration between NR professionals remain in place and are able to evolve with time and
- 3) NR professionals, clients/proponents and regulators understand the greater the risk to the public’s interest (e.g. an ecosystem and/or its associated biological resources) the more critical it is to have the appropriate competent professional(s) conducting the work and/or providing advice

The College will continue to work with members, partners, regulators and non-regulators on Scope of Practice as it evolves over time.

As a fundamental principle of professional reliance, all applied biology professionals must work within their own area(s) of practice and associated level(s) of competency. A competency(ies) is more comprehensive than skill set(s) alone. A professional’s knowledge, skills and abilities in an area and/or subject determine their level of competency (competent, proficient and expert). Members will self-declare their scope of practice and competency(ies) levels to the College.

2: Scope of Practice framework competency framework

Scope of Practice for applied biology professionals will be based on a “competency framework” in which any work undertaken must not exceed each professional’s level of competency as acquired through education, training and years of experience.



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It is recommended that the following proposed Scope of Practice framework competency framework (Figure 1.0, left) be adopted. A competency framework is a model that broadly describes performance quality with an organization or sector. Frameworks commonly consist of a number of competencies, which can be applied to a broad number of roles within the organization or sector. Competencies are observable performances that can be measured and evaluated and are therefore essential in terms of defining requirements of applied biology professionals. In addition, competencies allow for professional mobility, changes and evolution. Competency frameworks are standard across many professions and sectors including but not limited to medical, legal, financial, actuary, human resource and education professions and government, energy and food and beverage in sectors in Canada and across the globe.

A competency continuum (Figure 1.0, right) for applied biology professionals was developed through the Scope of Practice engagement process and is based on other professions' competency continuums such as physicians and lawyers. Competency levels, (competent, proficient and expert) depend on an individual professional's training and experience in a specific area/subject matter which has been and will continue to be acquired through education, training, knowledge, skills, abilities and continuing professional development including but not limited to knowledge; field, policy and management experience; and working with a/under a subject matter expert. Levels of competency(ies) are linked to the competency framework.

Consultation feedback has indicated that there is overlap between professional areas of practice amongst NR professionals who are working and collaborating together successfully.

Therefore, while it is critical to identify exclusive areas of practice where there is a high risk, it is more important to describe the skills, capabilities and knowledge needed to perform specific types and areas of practice.

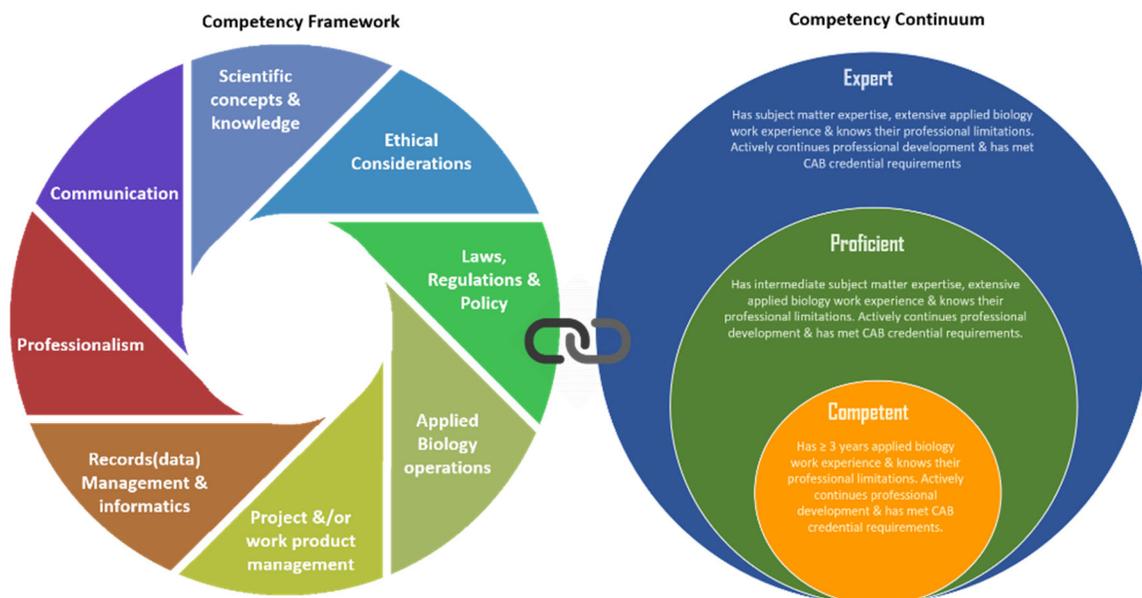


Figure 1.0 Proposed Scope of Practice Competency Framework and Competency Continuum for Applied Biology Professionals



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Noted -. Registrants are accountable and responsible for competency(ies), associated levels and scope of practice that they self-declare.

The proposed Scope of Practice framework and competency continuum will enable the College to successfully align its members' skills, capabilities and knowledge with their professional scope of practice. The purpose of using the competency framework and competency continuum enables the College as a regulator and members to have clear expectations and an understanding of what is required and expected as an applied biology professional, thereby providing a reliable and high-standard profession in which the public can have trust.

5. Resources

[College of Applied Biology Act](#)

[Professional Governance Act](#)