

VOLUNTARY GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

The QEC Voluntary ESG Framework is a voluntary tool, intended to aid explorers in identifying any sustainability issues that may be material to their business and determining how to communicate information to investors. It is based on the most relevant elements of existing frameworks and standards but has been tailored to meet the specific needs of explorers.

ESG Frameworks and Standards provide a global comparison of how companies operating across the world assess and manage ESG-related risks. Queensland's established regulatory setting already ensures it is well positioned to deliver on many of the indicators used to measure ESG risks globally. As such, explorers may find that they cover many of the indicators listed below as part of their day-to-day operations but the framework is not intended to replace explorers' sustainability targets, measures or overall sustainability strategies, though it may assist and contribute to those. Nor is it designed to monitor the regulatory compliance of an operation.

The table highlights some key ESG topics and provides space for companies to describe the processes in place to meet, or in some circumstances exceed, the requirements.

Topic	QLD legislative requirement(Y/N)	Description of additional measures/processes in place
Indicator		
Environment		
Biodiversity – Biodiversity describes the variability of living organisms from all sources within ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part. This topic includes any organisational impacts on plant and animal species and natural ecosystems from exploration activities.		
Site-level environmental management policy and/or systems in place (which specifically reference biodiversity)	Yes	

ESG TOOLBOX FOR EXPLORERS

VOLUNTARY GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

Implementation of a facility-level biodiversity conservation plan is tracked and reported regularly to senior management		
Site plans developed to minimise and monitor soil erosion (see also water management)	Yes	
Impacts and risks on habitats and ecosystems are assessed	Yes	
Emissions (air quality and noise) – this topic acknowledges the localised impacts, exploration may have on air and noise pollution.		
Strategy for monitoring and reducing noise emissions is established (including identifying local community impacts)	Yes	
Noise emissions are monitored and regularly reported		
Strategy for monitoring and improving air quality is established (including identifying local community impacts)		
Air quality is monitored	Yes	
Energy use and Greenhouse gas abatement – greenhouse gases comprise air emissions that contribute to climate change such as carbon dioxide and methane. This topic also refers to the energy usage of a business and any strategies in place to reduce and manage consumption (which may in turn reduce GHG emissions).		
Energy management strategies in place		
Emissions management system has been established	Yes	
Long and short-term strategy in place to manage scope 1 and 2 emissions	Yes	
Potential emissions for proven and probable reserves are reported	Yes	
Greenhouse gas emissions (carbon, methane, etc) are monitored	Yes	
Where appropriate, eligible carbon offsets are used		
Water management – This topic acknowledges the potential impacts of water withdrawn and used by industry on ecosystem (both quantity and quality).		
Underground water impact is monitored and reported	Yes	
Water consumption is monitored and reported	Yes	
Water reduction targets are established		
Impacts on water quality, particularly in regards to sediment transfer, is minimised and reported	Yes	
Waste management – Waste refers to anything discarded during activities. Higher volumes of waste are generally generated through the extraction or processing of resources but exploration activities may also generate some waste		
Waste management policies and procedures in place for general/ industrial waste	Yes	
Waste management policies and procedures in place for exploration, mining and metallurgical waste	Yes	

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VOLUNTARY GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

Social

Stakeholder relations - Exploration activities may take place over a number of years and have a range of community impacts. This topic acknowledges how industry might adopt various stakeholder engagement strategies throughout the project cycle to create value for communities and ensure the rights of landholders and traditional owners are upheld.

The Land access code is adhered to in all interactions with landholders	Yes	
Stakeholder engagement plan in place which identifies risks and opportunities with community rights and interests		
Landholder Engagement is undertaken in a timely manner	Yes	
Traditional owner engagement is undertaken in a timely and culturally-appropriate manner	Yes	
Social investment strategies are established		
Annual spend on social investment strategies is reported		

Expenditure, procurement and supply chains - Resource companies make numerous economic contributions through investment in local communities and projects and the payment of taxes and royalties. These are important sources of revenue for jurisdictions in which resource companies operate and the full transparency of the industry's contribution can help to demonstrate the economic importance of the industry. This also refers to the ways companies ensure ESG matters are considered and managed throughout relevant supply chains and distribution networks.

Processes in place to prioritise local procurement		
Processes in place to prioritise local employment		
High labour standards maintained throughout the supply chain		
Community contributions/investments are implemented (community donations, investments in community development initiatives, support for skills and education programmes)		
Indirect economic impacts are recorded		

Health and Safety - Safety is critical to an exploration project. This topic acknowledges the need for explorers to protect employee health and safety and to create a culture of safety.

Compliance with Health and safety legislation is maintained	Yes	
Health and safety risks are managed	Yes	
Health and safety incidents are recorded	Yes	

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VOLUNTARY GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

Governance

Fair work policies - This refers to any internal policies and procedures in place to protect workers and create a fair and transparent working environment.

Privacy and data security regulation is met	Yes	
Corruption, bribery and whistle-blower policies are in place	Yes	
Executive pay is transparent		
Workforce diversity strategy is in place		
Mental health and employee wellbeing is addressed through company policies		

Reporting and compliance - Companies must meet a number of regulatory and legal obligations as a part of their operations. This refers to how those obligations are met and reported.

Legal and regulatory compliance is maintained	Yes	
Risk management and mitigation system is established		

Additional measures - companies may choose to record additional measures below.

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