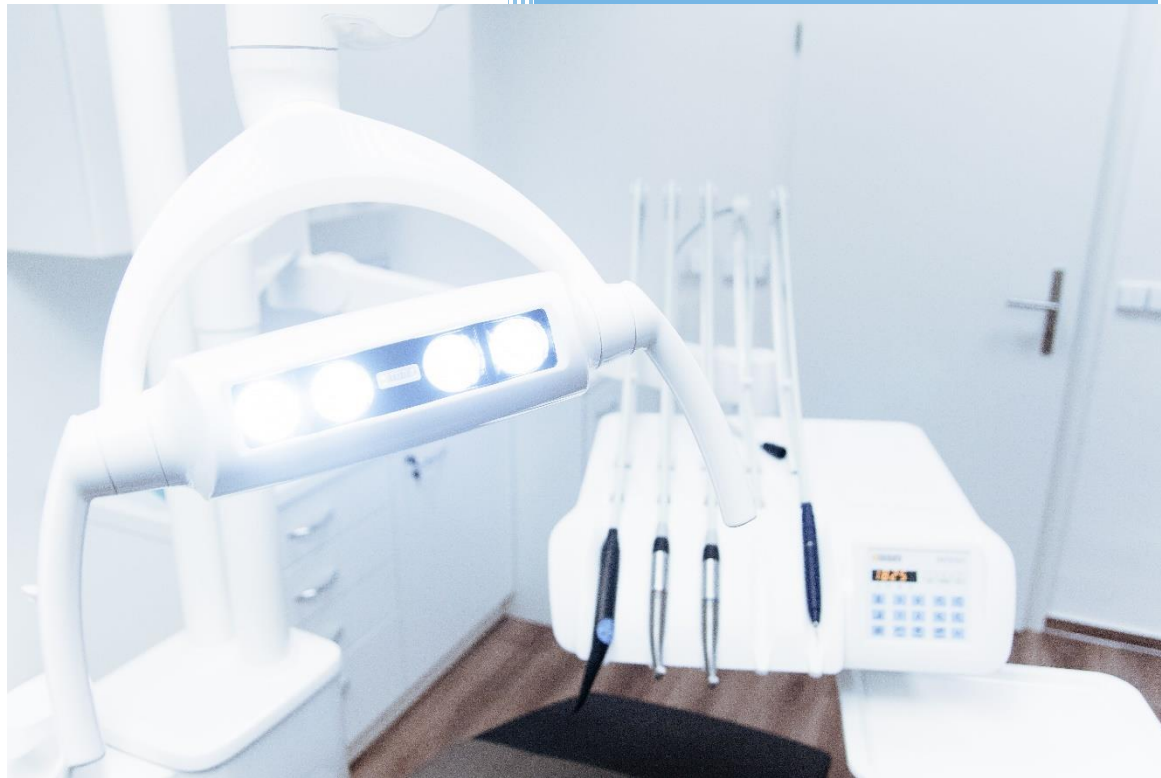


Entry-To-Practice Competencies and Standards for PEI Dental Hygienists



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Practice Standards of Dental Hygienists in Prince Edward Island

Introduction

The *Entry-To-Practice Competencies and Standards for Canadian Dental Hygienists* (January 2010) provide a national framework for dental hygienist practice. This national framework was used as the basis for these practice standards, validated within the context of the regulatory environment, scope of practice, scope of work environment in Prince Edward Island.

The *Practice Standards of Dental Hygienists in Prince Edward Island* are authoritative statements that define the legal and professional expectations of dental hygienist practice. In conjunction with the Code of Ethics for Dental Hygienists, they describe the elements of quality dental hygienist practice and facilitate mobility through inter-jurisdictional mutual understanding and agreement of expectations and requirements for practice.

What are Dental Hygiene Competencies?

Competencies are used to describe the essential knowledge, skills and attitudes important for the practice of a profession; in this document, these competencies describe the foundation necessary for the dental hygiene profession. They support the dental hygiene process of care by more clearly articulating the abilities inherent in the assessment, dental hygiene diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation of dental hygiene services.

The core abilities category includes competencies which are common to the provision of all dental hygiene services and which are shared by other health care professions. Dental hygiene service competencies describe the specialized services provided by dental hygienists.

Core Abilities Competencies:

The section core abilities is described in sections on:

Professionalism: Responsibility, Accountability, Knowledge Application, Continuous Competency, Professional Relationships, and Dental Hygienist-Client Relationship.

Dental Hygiene Services & Programs Competencies:

This section includes dental hygienist standards as a:

- Clinical Therapist;
- Oral Health Educator; and
- Health Promoter.

What are Dental Hygiene Standards?

As members of a self-regulating profession, dental hygienists are personally responsible for meeting the competencies and standards. The legislative responsibility for setting, monitoring and enforcing lies with the provincial regulatory authority. The policies and practices of employing organizations do not relieve dental hygienists of accountability to meet these competencies and standards of practice.

Standards define “how” dental hygienists must practice in accordance with their regulatory body. Where the legislation (and its regulations) and this document conflict, legislation will apply.

Dental hygienists work with clients, families and groups using a problem-solving framework; basing all decisions, judgments and interventions on current dental hygiene standards, theory and research. How a dental hygienist demonstrates a standard will be influenced by the specific role, practice setting and situation.

Where appropriate, standards are ranked in sequential order however, such ranking is more for organization rather than to denote any hierarchy of importance.

Where possible, performance indicators have been suggested to illustrate how the standards could be demonstrated within the dental hygiene practice. These indicators do not represent a complete list or the only way to demonstrate competencies.

These standards are intended to guide the professional judgment and actions of dental hygienists and inspire self-reflection and continuous professional development.

Guiding Principles

The following Guiding Principles are critical concepts that shape all dental hygiene practice.

Safety:

Safety includes all steps and or actions by a dental hygienist that will prevent harm, and if harm is present reduce or minimize the harm. This includes such things as infection control procedures, risk management strategies and ensuring competent delivery of dental hygiene services. Safety goes beyond the direct relationship with the client and needs to include attention to personal wellbeing, and recognition of impaired abilities by the dental hygienists. Maintaining a culture of safety involves ensuring health and safety in the workplace, homes and communities. Safety is enhanced when professionals work cooperatively and communicate effectively.

Quality of Care:

Quality of care is more than ensuring basic safety. Quality of care strives for the best possible outcomes for individuals receiving dental hygiene services/programs. Quality of care is achieved when dental hygienists provide services, independently or in collaboration with other professionals, which are evidence-based, and respect the autonomy and unique needs of individuals and groups.

Professional Autonomy:

Professional autonomy is the ability of the dental hygienist to practice in compliance with regulations, standards of practice and ethical principles of the profession and acknowledges the primary relationship between the dental hygienist and client and accountability to the regulatory authority.

Dental Hygiene Process of Care:

The dental hygiene process is the foundation of professional dental hygiene practice and provides a framework for delivering high-quality dental hygiene care to all types of clients in any environment. The dental hygiene process requires decision making and assumes that dental hygienists are responsible for identifying and resolving client problems within the scope of dental hygiene practice. The dental hygiene process involves dental hygiene assessment/diagnosis, planning, implementation and evaluation. The process can be applied in all settings. However, reference to the Dental Hygiene Process of Care refers specifically to direct client care and incorporates the critical thinking process in determining interventions to achieve the desired outcomes.

Dental Hygienist's Scope of Practice

The “practice of dental hygiene”, means the application of professional knowledge for the purpose of providing therapeutic, preventive and maintenance services and programs for the promotion of optimal oral health, including detection and assessment for dental hygiene treatment, the dental hygiene planning of interventions to prevent oral disease and the evaluation of oral health practices and behaviours as taught or included in the curriculum of an approved dental hygiene program or an approved dental hygiene module.

As professionals, dental hygienists are expected to:

- assure that their professional responsibility to the client prevails;
- apply provincial legislation and regulations; Practice Standards of Dental Hygienists in PEI; Code of Ethics; and regulatory bylaws, policies, and practice directives to their dental hygiene practice;
- maintain and improve their level of competence through the continuous upgrading of knowledge, skills and judgment;
- work effectively and collaboratively within interprofessional health care teams; and
- be accountable for their actions.

Practice Standards – Core

PROFESSIONALISM

As health professionals, dental hygienists have the responsibility to practise within their scope of practice, practise safely and effectively, act in a professional manner, obey the law, avoid conflicts of interest, maintain competency and put the interests of clients ahead of their own interests. In addition, dental hygienists have a social responsibility to promote access to, and delivery of, quality dental hygiene services.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES

Each dental hygienist has a responsibility to promote delivery of and access to quality dental hygiene services.

Competencies related to Responsibility include the ability to:

- 1.1 Adhere to current jurisdictional legislation, regulations, codes of ethics, practice standards, guidelines, policies, and practice directives relevant to the profession and practice setting.
- 1.2 Recognize client rights and the inherent dignity of the client by obtaining informed consent, respecting privacy, and maintaining confidentiality.
- 1.3 Use a client-centred approach, always acting or advocating in the client's best interest.
- 1.4 Apply evidence-based decision-making approaches to the analysis of information and current practices.
- 1.5 Apply the behavioural, biological and oral health sciences to dental hygiene practice decisions.
- 1.6 Promote healthy behaviours in the interest of oral health and in the context of overall health of self, colleagues, clients and the public.
- 1.7 Welcome and participate in interprofessional collaboration and consultation.
- 1.8 Act as a knowledge source for clients, professionals and the public seeking information about oral health and access to oral health care.
- 1.9 Contribute to actions that will support change and facilitate access to care; particularly for vulnerable populations.
- 1.10 Assist in the prevention and management of outbreaks and emergencies.
- 1.11 Promoting social responsibility by leading efforts, and/or supporting community partners in their efforts, to advocate for oral health programs and policies.
- 1.12 Recognize gaps in knowledge and take the appropriate steps to acquire this knowledge.
- 1.13 Facilitate client referrals to appropriate health professionals, facilities, programs or government agencies.

Practice Standards – Core

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

Each dental hygienist is accountable to the client and the public; responsible for ensuring that her/his practice and conduct meets legislative requirements and adheres to the accepted standards of the profession.

Competencies related to Accountability include the ability to:

2.1 Practice within personal limitations and legal scopes of practice including federal and provincial laws and regulations.

2.2 Apply Codes of Ethics in all endeavors while acting with personal integrity.

2.3 Report unethical, unsafe and incompetent services to the appropriate regulatory organizations.

2.4 Recognize, acknowledge and seek advice/treatment for any physical or mental condition, or any substance abuse or addiction that may affect one's ability to practise safely and effectively.

2.5 Taking responsibility for and the appropriate steps towards informing and correcting errors that occur in practice.

2.6 Ensuring adequate policies and procedures are in place to protect the privacy of client health information.

2.7 Facilitate confidentiality and informed decision-making in accordance with applicable legislation and codes of ethics.

2.8 Maintain documentation and records consistent with professional practice standards and applicable legislation.

2.9 Fulfilling mandatory reporting requirements.

Practice Standards – Core

3. KNOWLEDGE APPLICATION

Each dental hygienist uses current and relevant information to inform client care and practice decisions. The successful application of knowledge requires dental hygienists to analyze, synthesize and evaluate all new knowledge before applying it to practice.

Competencies related to Knowledge Application include the ability to:

- 3.1 Access relevant and credible resources through various information systems.
- 3.2 Apply evidence-based decision-making approaches to the analysis of information and current practices.
- 3.3 Critique literature findings to determine their potential value to dental hygiene practice.
- 3.4 Support conclusions based on a variety of resources with sound rationale.
- 3.5 Integrate new knowledge, services and/or technology into appropriate practice environments to ensure optimum client outcomes.
- 3.6 Disseminate findings to colleagues and other professionals.
- 3.7 Apply critical thinking to decision-making process and make choices to ensure optimum client outcomes.

Practice Standards – Core

4. CONTINUING COMPETENCE

Each dental hygienist maintains and continually improves her/his competence in response to changes in health care, scientific information, technology, and professional expectations.

Competencies related to ensuring Continuing Competence include the ability to:

- 4.1 Initiate positive change based on supporting literature and practice standards.
- 4.2 Self-assess professional knowledge and performance in relation to standards of practice.
- 4.3 Create personal plans for continuing competence and professional development.
- 4.4 Assume responsibility for her or his own learning by investing time, effort and other resources to improve knowledge, skills and judgment.
- 4.5 Seek opportunities to mentor colleagues and to access mentors for guidance.
- 4.6 Bring educational opportunities into own practice settings.

Practice Standards – Core

5. PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Each dental hygienist establishes and maintains relationships with colleagues, other health professionals, employers and the regulatory authority to ensure improved client care and safety, mutual respect and trust.

Competencies related to establishing Professional Relationships include the ability to:

5.1 Share information with other professionals about the dental hygienists' scope of practice

5.2 Clarify her/his role in interprofessional care.

5.3 Use effective verbal, non-verbal, visual, written and electronic communication.

5.4 Promote team relationships to support client services.

5.5 Function effectively within oral health and inter-professional teams and settings.

5.6 Promote actions that encourage shared workplace values and respect.

5.7 Disseminate oral health information to colleagues and other professionals.

5.8 Collaborate with community, health care professionals and other partners in providing, maintaining and advocating for oral health care programs.

5.9 Collaborate with community, health care professionals and other partners to achieve health promotion goals for individuals and communities.

5.10 Demonstrate commitment to the profession through community service activities and affiliations with professional organizations.

Practice Standards – Core

6. DENTAL HYGIENIST-CLIENT RELATIONSHIP

Each dental hygienist ensures client-centred care by establishing and maintaining positive, professional relationships with clients, families and significant others which are focused on client needs and based on respect, empathy, and trust.

Competencies related to maintaining Dental Hygienist-Client Relationships include the ability to:

- 6.1 Respect the autonomy of clients as full partners in decision-making.
- 6.2 Assess, diagnose, plan, implement and evaluate services for clients.
- 6.3 Recognize and avoid conflicts of interest.
- 6.4 Ensure an informed consent is obtained on an on-going basis during the delivery of dental hygiene care and services.
- 6.5 Use effective verbal, non-verbal, visual, and written communication when working with clients, family members, and substitute decision makers.
- 6.6 Demonstrate active listening and empathy to support client services.
- 6.7 Respect diversity in others; to support culturally sensitive and safe services.
- 6.8 Select communication approaches based on clients' characteristics, needs, and linguistic and health literacy level.
- 6.9 Respect the views of clients about their values, health and decision-making.
- 6.10 Clarifying her/his role in interprofessional client care.
- 6.11 Convert oral health information in a manner relevant to clients using the principles of health literacy.
- 6.12 Support clients by referring to other health professionals, community resources and government agencies that could improve client health outcomes
- 6.13 Communicate with clients in a timely way.
- 6.14 Protect the integrity, privacy and security of client records.

Practice Standards – Core

SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC

7. PRACTICE ENVIRONMENT - HEALTH AND SAFETY

Dental hygiene is practiced in a variety of settings. Regardless of the practice setting, each dental hygienist must ensure that she/he has the autonomy to practice dental hygiene consistent with legal, professional, and ethical responsibilities.

Each dental hygienist is responsible for ensuring her/his practice environment meets or surpasses accepted standards for client safety and infection control and supports the wellbeing of self, clients and other team members.

Competencies related to workplace Health and Safety include the ability to:

- 7.1 Ensure that all legislative requirements for the practice environment are met such as workplace health and safety, workplace violence, accessible client services for those with disabilities, and human rights.
- 7.2 Ensure that written policies and protocols are in place for health and safety, infection prevention and control, managing hazardous waste, emergency response, obtaining client consent, workplace violence, use of personal health information and privacy.
- 7.3 Apply current knowledge regarding infection prevention and control.
- 7.4 Respond to medical emergencies based on CPR and first aid standards.
- 7.5 Apply principles of risk reduction for client, colleague and practitioner safety, health and wellbeing.
- 7.6 Integrate principles of body ergonomics to support clinician's health.
- 7.7 Apply quality assurance standards and protocols to ensure a safe and effective working environment.
- 7.8 Take responsibility for maintaining equipment used for services, including service records.
- 7.9 Protect the environment by responsible use of consumables and disposal of waste products including biohazardous wastes.
- 7.10 Contribute to a healthy work environment for individuals involved in the practice.

Practice Standards – Core

8. PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

Each dental hygienist is responsible for ensuring her/his practice environment supports the efficient and appropriate delivery of dental hygiene services.

Competencies related to the Management of a dental hygiene practice include the ability to:

- 8.1 Manage dental hygiene services individually and as part of a team.
- 8.2 Manage time and other resources to enhance the quality of services provided.
- 8.3 Keep detailed client records that meet any regulatory requirements for recordkeeping and support the continuity of client care.
- 8.4 Use computer technology to access electronic resources and enhance communication.
- 8.5 Use information systems and reports for collection, retrieval and use of data for decision making.
- 8.6 Initiate positive change based on supporting literature and practice standards.
- 8.7 Facilitating transparent billing practices related to dental hygiene services.

Practice Standards - Dental Hygiene Services & Programs

Dental Hygiene Services & Programs

As primary oral health care providers, dental hygienists provide a variety of services for the purpose of improving the oral health of the client and the public. The delivery of dental hygiene services/programs requires the ability to determine the needs of the client/public, select and implement the most appropriate services/programs and evaluate the outcomes achieved. The Dental Hygiene Process of Care, a problem solving, critical thinking framework is the accepted professional standard for decision making by dental hygienists.

Dental Hygiene Services & Programs include all interventions performed within the dental hygiene scope of practice directed toward attaining and maintaining optimal oral health. In this context the Dental Hygiene Process of Care is utilized to assess, dental hygiene diagnosis, plan, implement and evaluate client care. In the provision of these services the dental hygienist provides:

- therapeutic/preventive therapy,
- oral health education, and
- health promotion interventions.

Dental hygiene services include all interventions performed within the dental hygiene scope of practice directed toward attaining and maintaining optimal oral health for individuals and communities. In this context the Dental Hygiene Process of Care is utilized to Assess, Dental Hygiene Diagnose, Plan, Implement and Evaluate policies, processes, interventions and outcomes. The utilization of each step, in progression, of the dental hygiene process of care, is essential to the safe and effective delivery of dental hygiene services and programs.

Generally accepted interventions, such as but not limited to, debridement, periodontal therapy, applications of antimicrobial and anticariogenic agents, stain removal, application of pit and fissure sealants, and exposing of radiographs are universally provided by dental hygienists across the country. Orthodontic procedures and placement of restorative materials in conjunction with a dentist is also practiced in PEI.

Other services and procedures that may be offered in other provinces but are **not** currently in regular practice in Prince Edward Island include:

- Local Anesthesia
- Myofunctional Therapy
- Nitrous Oxide
- Placement of a temporary restorative material independent of a dentist
- Prescribing rights
- Self-initiation
- Independent practice

Practice Standards - Dental Hygiene Services & Programs

ASSESSMENT

Definition: assessment involves the systematic collection, [*documentation*], and analysis of data to identify client needs, and oral health problems involving medical and dental histories, vital signs, extraoral and intraoral examinations, radiographs, indices, and risk assessment.

Competencies related to a Dental Hygiene Assessment include the ability to:

Therapeutic/Preventive Therapy

- Collect accurate and complete data on the general, oral, and psychosocial health status of clients.
- Use professional judgment and methods consistent with medico-legal-ethical principles to complete client profiles.
- Identify clients for whom the initiation or continuation of treatment is contra-indicated based on the interpretation of health history and clinical data.
- Identify clients at risk for medical emergencies and use strategies to minimize such risks.
- Use appropriate oral health indices for the identification and monitoring of high-risk individuals and groups.
- Recognize the influence of the determinants of health on oral health status.
- Discuss findings with other health professionals when the appropriateness of dental hygiene services is in question.

Oral Health Education

- Elicit information about the clients' perceived barriers to and support for learning when planning clients' education.
- Elicit information about the clients' oral health knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and skills as part of the educational process.
- Assess the clients' motivation for learning new and for maintaining established health related activities.
- Assess clients' need to learn specific information or skills to achieve, restore, and maintain oral health and promote overall wellbeing.
- Assess the individual client's learning style as part of the planning process.

Health Promotion

- Use information systems and reports for collection, retrieval and use of data for decision making.
- Identify barriers to access to oral health care for vulnerable populations.
- Identify populations with high risk of diseases including oral diseases.
- Analyze health issues in need of advocacy.
- Recognize political, social, and economic issues affecting the individual and community.

Practice Standards - Dental Hygiene Services & Programs

DENTAL HYGIENE DIAGNOSIS

Definition: a dental hygiene diagnosis involves the use of critical thinking skills to reach conclusions about clients' dental hygiene needs based on all available assessment data.

Competencies related to a Dental Hygiene Diagnosis include the ability to:

Therapeutic/Preventive Therapy

- Formulate a dental hygiene diagnosis using problem solving and decision-making skills to synthesize information.

Oral Health Education

- Use available literature and/or visuals and/or audio materials to aid in the discussion of the assessment findings and/or oral conditions present.
- Communicating the determinates of health and oral health with the client.

Health Promotion

- Facilitate referrals to other health care providers if the determination of needs is inconclusive or self-determined to be outside the dental hygienist's area of knowledge.

Practice Standards - Dental Hygiene Services & Programs

PLANNING

Definition: planning involves the establishment of realistic [client-centred] goals and selection of dental hygiene interventions that can move a client closer to optimal oral health.

Competencies related to Planning Dental Hygiene interventions include the ability to:

Therapeutic/Preventive Therapy

- Prioritize clients' needs through a collaborative process with clients and, when needed, substitute decision makers and/ or other professionals.
- Establish dental hygiene care plans based on clinical data, a client-centered approach and the best available resources.
- Design and implement services tailored to the unique needs of individuals, families, organizations and communities based on best practices.
- Providing the client with information on the risks and benefits of planned interventions, alternative interventions, and the sequencing and cost of mutually agreed upon interventions or programs.
- Revise dental hygiene care plans in partnership with the client and, when needed, in collaboration with substitute decision makers and/ or other professionals.

Oral Health Education

- Negotiate mutually acceptable individual or program learning plans with clients.
- Develop educational plans based on principles of change and stages of behaviour change.
- Create an environment in which effective learning can take place.
- Select educational interventions and develop educational materials to meet clients' learning needs.

Health Promotion

- Select and implement appropriate health promotion strategies and interventions for individuals and communities.
- Recognize the role of governments and community partners in promoting oral health.

Practice Standards - Dental Hygiene Services & Programs

IMPLEMENTATION

Definition: implementation of dental hygiene interventions involves the process of carrying out the dental hygiene care plan designed to meet the assessed needs of the client.

Competencies related to Implementation of Dental Hygiene services include the ability to:

Therapeutic/Preventive Therapy

- Provide preventive, therapeutic and supportive clinical therapy that contributes to the clients' oral and general health.
- Managing client pain and/or anxiety by discussing options for the control of pain and anxiety with the client, selecting and providing clinical techniques for the control of pain and anxiety and evaluating the effectiveness of the pain control method selected.
- Providing clients with appropriate pre- and post-intervention advice to include pain management, oral self-care, use of therapeutic and preventive agents, and follow-up/recare appointments.

Oral Health Education

- Incorporate educational theories, theoretical frameworks and psycho-social principles to inform the educational process.
- Include clients, family and care providers as appropriate in the education process.
- Provide health advice and assist clients in learning oral health skills by coaching them through the learning process.

Health Promotion

- Use a holistic and wellness approach to the promotion of oral health and optimal general health.
- Apply appropriate theories to initiate change at an individual and community level.
- Apply principles of health protection through prevention and control of disease and injury.
- Advocate for healthy public policy with and for individuals and communities.
- Apply knowledge of common health risks to inform public policy and educate practitioners and the public.
- Strengthen individuals' abilities to improve health through strategies that focus on community development and capacity building.
- Participate in the development and delivery of social marketing message.

Practice Standards - Dental Hygiene Services & Programs

EVALUATION

Definition: Evaluation is the measurement of the extent to which the client has achieved the goals specified in the plan of care.

Competencies related to the Evaluation of Dental Hygiene Care include the ability to:

Therapeutic/Preventive Therapy

- Evaluate clients' health and oral health status using determinants of health and risk assessment to make appropriate referral(s) to other health care professionals.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the implemented clinical therapy.
- Provide recommendations in regard to clients' ongoing care including referrals when indicated.

Oral Health Education

- Evaluate the effectiveness of learning activities and revise the educational process when required.

Health Promotion

- Use measurable criteria in the evaluation of outcomes and solicit feedback from stakeholders regarding results.
- Communicate findings to stakeholders and the public.