



The SFP™ Difference: How IFMA's Sustainability Facility Professional™ Credential Can Ensure a Facility Manager's Qualifications as Steward of Sustainable Operations

Introduction

The International Facility Management Association (IFMA) has spent more than 30 years identifying and defining facility management (FM) core competencies and performance areas. IFMA was one of the first industry leaders to recognize the impact of sustainability on the built environment, and to begin addressing how it would impact facility managers.

Every five years, IFMA conducts a Global Job Task Analysis (GJTA)—a process of surveying (evaluating the growing needs of facility professionals worldwide); validating (verifying what it takes to be a competent facility manager in today's business environment); and defining (responsibilities shared by FMs globally) FM core competencies. IFMA's most recent GJTA confirmed the increasing importance of sustainable facility management practices.

In its 2011 trends report, IFMA identified sustainability as the number-one trend expected to have the greatest impact on the future of the profession. As more workplaces mandate energy conservation, resource management and socially responsible initiatives, the greater role the FM has in assessing a facility's effect on the environment; incorporating sustainable practices and materials in facility planning; and managing daily operations in a sustainable manner.

IFMA's Sustainability Facility Professional (SFP) credential arms managers of new and existing buildings with a toolkit of sustainable practices. The SFP complements IFMA's two premier credentials: the Facility Management Professional (FMP®) and the Certified Facility Manager® (CFM®). The SFP program empowers FMs to select techniques and practices that will have the most beneficial impact on their organizations, given their own political, economic and environmental climate.

Defining Sustainable Facility Management

A company's contributions to society are judged not only on the basis of the quality of the goods and services they produce; but also on the care they show people and the environment. Facilities are an integral part of a company's efforts to satisfy social responsibilities and maintain compliance with laws and regulations. Compliance with minimum standards is not just a legal obligation; it benefits corporate stakeholders and shareholders alike and is a necessity if companies are to stay viable.

Facility professionals are expected to take steps to protect the environment and the people who use the facility, while also supporting organizational effectiveness and minimizing risks and liabilities. FMs are likely to work directly with government regulators who are charged with assuring compliance with environmental laws designed to protect the environment. They may be tasked with developing corporate sustainability programs; or they may just want to operate more efficiently with a minimum impact on the environment.

Facility professionals are perfectly positioned to incorporate sustainability into the life cycle of the facilities they manage. By taking the lead in sustainability, FMs gain another strong foothold in maintaining the authority to direct workplace programs and contribute to the triple bottom line.

The IFMA SFP Credential Program™

In order to create more sustainable facilities, FMs need the resources, knowledge and tools to create beneficial programs custom-fit to their organizations. The education of those who operate and oversee facilities on a day-to-day basis is the most effective way to create high-performance building stock that meets social and environmental goals. It also ensures that facility plans and programs align with organizational mission, vision and values.

IFMA's Sustainability Facility Professional credential program is based on the body of knowledge created by a team of facility management subject matter experts (SMEs) in alignment with the Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability core competency as defined by the GJTA. The SFP builds on the responsible activities that facility managers have been employing for years, guided by the knowledge and expertise of IFMA. While other programs focus on the building, the SFP focuses on the manager and the practice of sustainable FM.

The credential is an assessment-based certificate program. Completion demonstrates an individual's proven comprehension of environmental stewardship and sustainability in facility management. The SFP Credential Program is made up of three focus areas:

Strategy and Alignment for Sustainable Facility Management

- Organizational strategies
- Developing a strategy
- Sustainability considerations
- Establishing goals and initiatives
- Communications and reporting

Managing Sustainable Facilities

- Sustainability policy development
- Applying sustainability to FM plans
- Program development and implementation
- Change management
- Performance management tools
- Finance for sustainable facilities
- Purchasing and procuring for sustainable facilities
- Standards, systems and support

Operating Sustainable Facilities

- Energy
- Water
- Materials and resources
- Workplace management
- Indoor environmental quality
- Quality of services
- Waste
- Site impact

SFPs can improve the sustainability of their facilities in eight major categories. The program equips SFPs with the tools necessary to integrate sustainability efforts with the organization's values and strategies; present a business case for a sustainability initiative; evaluate initiatives from a financial point of view; and track and report accomplishments.

The SFP Difference: The FM as Steward of Sustainable Operations

Existing buildings and the resources required to operate and maintain them account for a large portion of the world's carbon footprint. The heightened global interest in sustainable development, resource conservation and reduced impact on the environment has caused organizations to revisit the impact of facilities in the broader context of corporate social responsibility.

The SFP has shifted the emphasis on sustainability from the facility to the manager. By virtue of the range of tasks required to manage and maintain facility operations, systems, programs and projects, FMs know how to optimize resources for the benefit of their organizations. The FM's expertise is the key to sustainable facility management; and the SFP was developed to strengthen an FM's knowledge and skills.

The SFP covers sustainability across all aspects of the facility management spectrum. With the SFP credential, a facility manager's ability to assess, lead and oversee sustainable operations is verified. The FM is better qualified to align the organizational mission and commitment to corporate social responsibility with day-to-day facility operations in a sustainable manner. The FM is more skillful in translating the financial language and practices of the organization into workable programs for more sustainable facilities. The FM is better prepared to incorporate the triple bottom line into the life cycle of each and every facility an organization owns and manages.