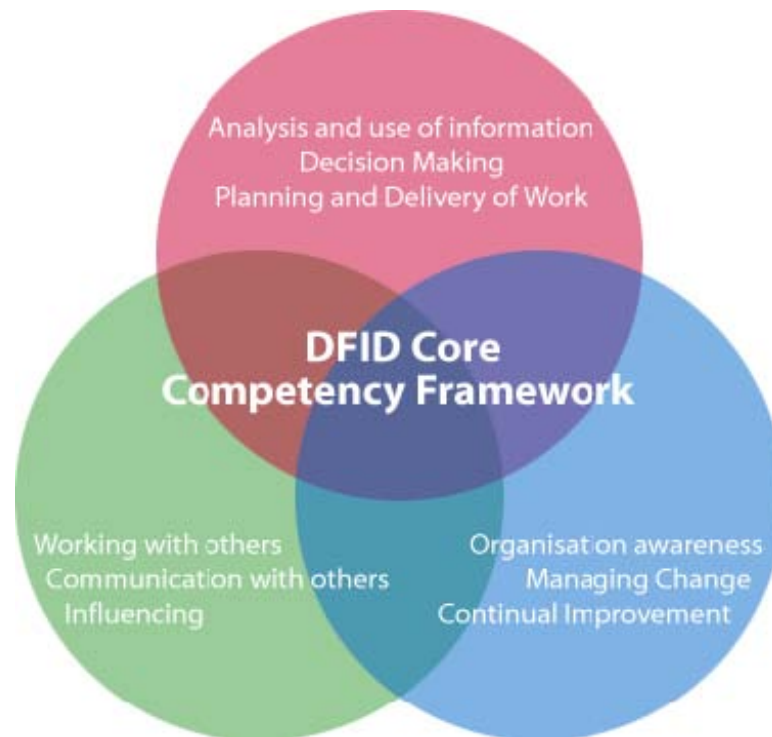


# Core Competency Framework



## What are core competencies?

**Core Competencies can be defined as** personal attributes or underlining characteristics, which combined with technical or professional skills, enable the delivery of a role/job or posting. Competencies state the expected areas and levels of performance, tell us what is valued and rewarded. Of course other factors such as personal values, motivation and type of work also play their part in job performance, which are NOT covered in this framework, but are likely to feature in your discussions with your Line Manager.

Competencies need to be structured in a logical way in order to make them meaningful, therefore we present them in a framework. The DFID Core Competency Framework is an outline which is consistent across the organisation and helps identify the types of behaviour the organisation wishes to promote, develop and is keen to engender. In **DFID we value** our:

- **Ambition and determination to eliminate poverty**
- **Ability to work effectively with others**
- **Desire to listen, learn and be creative**
- **Staff, their diversity and their need to balance work and private life**
- **Professionalism and knowledge**

Whilst we need to understand what competencies mean for us, we also need to be very clear about what they are not about. The Core Competency Framework does **not** define our technical roles and accountabilities, nor does it include the technical skills necessary to do our jobs. These are found in the Professional/Technical Competency Frameworks, many of which have been or are in the process of being developed for the various professional groups in DFID.

The **DFID Core Competency Framework** comprises of nine core competencies which are presented in three clusters as shown on the previous page:

Each of the core competencies has the following components:

**Competency** - is the title or name of the core competency. For example: *Communicating with others.*

**Competency Descriptor** - is the definition or descriptor statement explaining what the core competency means. For example: Communicating with others is described as - *the way you communicate ideas and information ensuring your message is understood.*

**Behavioural Indicators** - are examples that indicate how an individual could demonstrate that competency. Behaviour indicators are designed to show what effective performance looks like, it is not an exhaustive list. For example: some of the behavioural indicators for communicating with others are - *actively listens to people / speaks clearly and concisely / can write in a way that is meaningful to the reader / uses jargon free language* and so on. Some behavioural indicators are marked with an asterix (\*) - these are drawn from the Professional Skills for Government indicators.

Each competency also has **Levels** - which make using the behavioural indicators simple. The levels allow us to be quite specific in determining what is required for a given role or situation, allowing us to clearly focus our discussions and development efforts for the greatest improvement in performance. There are four levels of complexity and also an ineffective (just as before), they are:

0	Does not display the behaviours that would support this competency
I	Displays a practical understanding of effective behaviours for this competency
II	Displays impact for this competency by providing advice and guidance to others
III	Displays inspiration for this competency by role-modelling and influencing their environment
IV	Displays excellence and innovation for this competency and is seen as a role model to others

Each level is cumulative (reading from I to IV). This means the behaviours in the previous level are prerequisites for the next level behaviour. Ineffective behaviours are indicated with a 0. The levels of complexity are the same across all nine core competencies.

**Please Note:** Although there is some read across to the job grading guidance to facilitate the differentiation in the application of people management tools, none of the levels corresponds directly to a grade or payband. The Core Competency Framework defines behaviours ie *how we* do a job/role - it is **not** a job grading tool. The job grading guidance looks at *what* is required (tasks) by different grades. Different jobs make different demands on people in different areas of activity and may call for varying levels of individual competence.

### DFID Core Competencies – the Adviser context

- The competency titles and competency descriptors below are taken directly from DFID’s core competency framework. The behavioural indicators are also taken directly (word-for-word) from DFID’s core competency framework.
- Advisers are assessed, according to standard practice for all roles, against these core competency descriptors and behavioural indicators.
- Good assessment practice also requires a broad, shared understanding of how the core competencies relate to Advisory roles. This is provided by the “Enabling Advisers to ...” statements below. These statements highlight key accountabilities of the Advisory roles – they help to set the context for assessing Advisers by describing some of the desired outcomes of applying the competencies.
- Previously, this contextual information was embedded in the detail of the Advisory Technical Competencies, along with technical knowledge requirements and behavioural indicators that overlapped with the core DFID competencies. The new format reduces overlap and separates behavioural competencies, contextual information and technical knowledge (see new Technical Competency Frameworks for the technical knowledge required by each Group).
- In preparing a job description, the competency descriptors and behavioural indicators may be used to specify what competencies would be expected of the Adviser – the “inputs”. The “Enabling Advisers to ...” statements may be used to help specify key responsibilities and outcomes – the “outputs”.
- For selection and promotion, the Adviser is assessed against the competency descriptors and behavioural indicators (inputs). In preparation for the assessment, the Assessors should also study the “Enabling Advisers to ...” statements, to ensure a shared understanding of the Adviser context.

## Analysis and use of information

### Assesses and interprets information in order to identify issues or problems

**Enabling Advisers to:** develop evidence-based analysis to inform policy choices and implementation strategies; select appropriate methodologies and approaches for the design of development interventions; evaluate prospects for and progress in development interventions, including identifying opportunities and benefits for different groups; ensure that assumptions underlying DFID and partners' policy and programme approaches are continually tested against changing national and international realities.

### Behavioural Indicators

#### Level IV

- Develops new policy and procedures
- Develops ways of applying new knowledge and ensures lesson-learning
- Comprehends the whole life cost cycle, including cost relating to operation of systems and processes\*
- Identifies trends from complex or conflicting data
- Takes steps to address the root causes of highly complex problems

#### Level III

- Interprets complex written information
- Acquainted with the validity, relevance and limitations of different sources of evidence\*
- Generates a range of policy options and appraise them based on the evidence\*
- Analyses the significance of external events and situations on DFID

#### Level II

- Identifies and uses various sources of evidence [and feedback] to support outputs\*
- Uses evidence to evaluate policies, projects and programmes\*
- Works confidently with data before making decisions: for example; interpret trends, issues and risks\*
- Identifies links between events and information
- Ensures systems are in place to address business needs\*

#### Level I

- Interprets methods used for gathering and summarising data\*
- Recognises problems within their remit
- Interprets basic written information
- Attentive to detail
- Follows guidelines to identify issues

#### Level 0

- Interprets data incorrectly, failing to spot obvious errors or inconsistencies
- Does not use numerical, financial or statistical data effectively to identify issues or problems
- Spends an inappropriate length of time analysing the problem rather than finding a solution
- Drives through a preferred solution without considering alternatives

## Decision making

**Considers the information that is available, identifies options and makes timely decisions**

**Enabling Advisers to:** apply technical expertise and experience to put forward practical recommendations; contribute to the formulation of innovative, workable solutions to country-specific problems and challenges; act as a catalyst in moving the development agenda forward; decide when to accept others' advice or introduce others' perspectives into their own analysis.

### Behavioural Indicators

#### Level IV

- Shapes new policies and sets long-term objectives
- Understands the wider strategic environment to make appropriate resource decisions\*
- Strategically processes the impact of decisions
- Determines results which are aligned to strategic decisions
- Ensures decisions are evidence-based drawing on available knowledge and past lessons

#### Level III

- Thinks through the implication of decisions
- Breaks down highly complex information into workable components for others
- Draws together disparate information to resolve problems
- Facilitates others to generate and solve problems
- Empowers others to take creative decisions to meet business needs

#### Level II

- Assesses the impact of decisions
- Identifies causes rather than just symptoms to inform solutions
- Uses trends and patterns in information for evidence based decisions
- Confident in making decisions within policy guidelines
- Assembles available knowledge to ensure evidence based decisions

#### Level I

- Tailors own work practices
- Willing to take decisions within role
- Shares appropriate and timely information with others
- Gathers information from appropriate sources to make routine decisions

#### Level 0

- Does not recognise when a decision may embarrass the organisation
- Makes decisions without identifying and evaluating the options
- Finds it hard to make a sound judgement or take a decision when under pressure
- Uses wrong information to make a decision

## Planning and Delivery of Work

### Plans and organises work to meet individual, team and departmental objectives whilst achieving quality and value for money

**Enabling Advisers to:** provide appropriate inputs into programmes or projects when under pressure of competing demands; advise on key strategies and outcomes for planning and implementing credible sector plans; procure, co-ordinate and monitor the work of consultants to ensure delivery to a high standard; manage programmes or projects for which they are responsible.

#### Behavioural Indicators

##### Level IV

- Structures business unit to deliver key objectives and obtain and allocate resources\*
- Sets the agenda for creating policies that are consistent with the principles and mechanisms of accountability
- Leads by example in managing business relationships and project/programme risks\*
- Defines a balanced set of targets and measures aligned with delivery plans\*
- Ensures the principles of corporate risk management are met\*

##### Level III

- Deals with varied situations with limited guidance
- Leads by example when spending money and managing business relationships and risks
- Ensures appropriate resources and levels of capability to deliver to plan\*
- Promotes and enforces appropriate business rules
- Ensures policies are consistent with the principles and mechanisms of accountability\*

##### Level II

- Recognises and rewards good performance, and tackles poor performance\*
- Ensures delivery against plan, and forecasts accurately\*
- Uses project management techniques to deliver projects to plan and budget\*
- Identifies information needs and ensures systems are in place to deliver
- Ensures the relevant corporate risk management actions are taken

##### Level I

- Meets agreed performance standards\*
- Asks questions to clarify expectations
- Keeps relevant parties informed on the progress of a plan
- Manages own work to deliver on time
- Prioritises work to deliver objectives

##### Level 0

- Gets distracted, tending to hop around between jobs in a disorganised way, creating work for themselves and/or others
- Uses rules and procedures as an excuse for non-delivery
- Leaves current work in a state which, when they are absent, causes unnecessary delays to the work of others
- Does just enough to get by
- Tends to concentrate on the tasks they enjoy at the expense of others

## Working with others

### Takes responsibility to build and maintain positive relationships and value the opinion of others

**Enabling Advisers to:** establish effective relationships of trust with other departments, partner governments and donor representatives; work with other professional groups and disciplines to generate a shared analysis and collaborative work style; build internal and external networks with a wide range of contacts and complimentary professional backgrounds; engage with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds.

#### Behavioural Indicators

##### Level IV

- Develops relationships with partner/stakeholders ensuring that DFID is a respected customer and provider\*
- Creates an environment to deliver shared policy outcomes on the ground
- Lobbies partners/stakeholders to achieve outcomes
- Influences external partners/stakeholders relevant to our business

##### Level III

- Informs, consults and influences partners/stakeholders using a range of communication mechanisms\*
- Engages with relevant experts to gather and evaluate evidence\*
- Shares and implements good practice with internal and external peers\*
- Works with senior partners/stakeholders

##### Level II

- Proactive in providing and seeking support from expert colleagues\*
- Engages effectively with partners/stakeholders to better understand their requirements and develop appropriate solutions/improvements\*
- Raises difficult issues with partners/stakeholders with a view to positive resolution\*
- Proactive in building a rapport with a diverse range of people\*

##### Level I

- Knows who their customers are and their requirements\*
- Know the impact of your behaviour on others\*
- Treats all people with respect\*
- Respects and listens to different views/opinions\*

##### Level 0

- Impatient with others when they ask for help
- Conveys an impression in dealings with people that they regard their gender and their culture and values as superior to others
- Openly critical of others without suggesting how things could be done differently
- Does not consult or involve other team members working on the same or related work objectives
- Takes the credit for others' work

## Communicating with others

### Vary the way they communicate ideas and information ensuring their message is understood

**Enabling Advisers to:** communicate appropriately to all levels of audience, including ministers; explain technical concepts and conclusions to people who are less familiar with the Adviser's area of expertise; use a range of media and approaches to disseminate information and analysis on policy issues; use lessons and case studies to illustrate concepts and best practice.

#### Behavioural Indicators

##### Level IV

- Negotiates to reconcile individual competing priorities
- Communicates the organisation's priorities\*
- Produces formal communications for external bodies
- Summarises complex information in an effective manner

##### Level III

- Varies language and content to ensure understanding of audience\*
- Facilitates understanding by explanation and example
- Highlights key points for summary from detailed and complex documents
- Meets regularly with partners/customers and staff to understand local needs and raise awareness of products and services

##### Level II

- Engages with partners/stakeholders to understand needs and aspirations\*
- Clarifies important messages using appropriate language
- Considers structure and meaning when producing written communications
- Makes presentations which influence and have a positive impact on audiences

##### Level I

- Actively listens to people
- Speaks clearly and concisely
- Can write in a way that is meaningful to the reader
- Uses jargon free language

##### Level 0

- Does not communicate effectively resulting in misunderstandings and confusion
- Dominates conversations rather than listen to the views of others
- Finds it difficult to raise issues, make suggestions or voice opinions at meetings or team discussions
- Uses email when a conversation would be more effective
- Fails to capture the audience's attention



## Influencing

### Positively influences others, creating acceptance and support for ideas

**Enabling Advisers to:** gain recognition for the value that their technical expertise can add; develop and manage effective relationships with partners at different levels of government, civil society, private sector and bilateral/multilateral donors; establish credibility with colleagues and partners by contributing to policy debates that require a broader knowledge of development; build support for DFID's agenda.

### Behavioural Indicators

#### Level IV

- Influences the international development system\*
- Influences DFID strategy by utilising internal and external resources\*
- Delivers influential advice and briefing\*
- Focuses on outcomes irrespective of the source of the challenge
- Sets strategies to support a diverse workplace

#### Level III

- Ensures strategies are in place to maintain a diverse workplace
- Recognises and anticipate the needs of senior managers and Ministers\*
- Presents unpopular messages confidently
- Varies style to have the maximum impact on the audience
- Influences to maintain the balance between individual motives and department requirements
- Integrates logic and emotion to construct complex arguments on the spot

#### Level II

- Encourages and provides constructive feedback to improve performance
- Ensures alternative approaches to work are effective in meeting business and individual needs
- Remains constructive when disagreeing or challenging
- Employs appropriate techniques to support a diverse workplace
- Challenges inappropriate behaviours

#### Level I

- Gives and receives constructive feedback
- Seeks timely clarification to verify understanding
- Expresses a difference of opinion in a controlled manner
- Supports team members working on the same or related work objectives

#### Level 0

- Allows more assertive individuals to take the lead
- Agrees objectives and create plans that are unachievable i.e. too stretching or over ambitious
- Puts their own agenda first and expects others to manage around them

## Organisation awareness

### Understands how their job contributes and delivers DFID goals in accordance with DFID values

**Enabling Advisers to:** provide appropriate technical advice and support to colleagues/partners; represent DFID externally at country-level and international meetings; develop workable strategies to promote policy change; meet DFID objectives and support others without compromising the standards or Code of Practice of their own profession.

#### Behavioural Indicators

##### Level IV

- Conversant with the international aid system
- Actively engages with strategic policy
- Delivers strategy and delivery plans using evidence based best practice\*
- Politically aware and can identify key players

##### Level III

- Puts into practise the organisations core values
- Designs policies that consider the legal and political environment\*
- Experienced in the strategic environment in which international aid is delivered\*
- Anticipates and manages risk and threats to DFID and international development\*
- Understands parliamentary process, public accountability, and the roles of Ministers and civil servants\*

##### Level II

- Can explain how they are contributing to achieving DFID's vision
- Aware of regulatory and other policy impacts in their work area
- Demonstrates DFID values in all aspects of their work
- Engages effectively with appropriate colleagues/experts and provides them with routine and/or exceptional information
- Can describe how the organisation's business model contributes to the development of delivery plans\*
- Can explain how their job relates to the wider international development agenda (Millennium Development Goals)

##### Level I

- Takes responsibility for completing the job at hand
- Complies with the rules and regulations of their job
- Can describe DFID core values and the millennium development goals
- Knows how their job contributes to alleviating poverty
- Contributes to the Director's delivery plan

##### Level 0

- Fails to take account of DFID values in their work
- Undermines decisions that have been publicly supported
- Ignores organisational procedures, and does not comply with internal controls, guidelines and legal requirements
- Fails to obtain advice and guidance on business matters

## Managing change

**Supports opportunities for positive change and actively looks for ways to improve what they do**

**Enabling Advisers to:** maximise the benefit to DFID of new developments in their field of expertise; apply professional analysis to new contexts and change processes; underpin change through the development of new practices and policies, and contributions to sector reforms and monitoring; promote the capacity for change and innovation within partner institutions in their area.

### Behavioural Indicators

#### Level IV

- Evaluates the impact of change on the business\*
- Initiates attitudinal change across the organisation
- Provides appropriate support mechanisms during change\*
- Drives organisational change

#### Level III

- Encourages team members to embrace and contribute to change\*
- Presents the business need for change and can focus other on the positive aspects
- Enables others to implement change
- Anticipates obstacles to change

#### Level II

- Supports individuals in their team through periods of change\*
- Listens and responds to constructive feedback
- Initiates new ways of doing things
- Delivers change projects to successful outcomes\*
- Recognises and deals with obstacles to change

#### Level I

- Open to change initiatives and new ways of working\*
- Participates in change initiatives
- Willing to learn new things
- Supports colleagues in understanding change

#### Level 0

- Talks about change but doesn't put it into practice
- Sticks to outdated methods, putting off making changes for as long as possible or finding excuses for not doing things differently
- Dismisses corporate initiatives or improvement proposals without consideration or justification and ignoring political reality
- Looks solely at how change benefits them rather than the wider organisation
- Doesn't encourage/allow people to challenge the reasons for change

## Continual improvement

### Continually looks to improve their skills, knowledge and the way they work

**Enabling Advisers to:** contribute to capacity building within the team and organisation; meet the Continuing Professional Development requirements relevant to their role and profession; bring new knowledge and learning into the organisation (particularly from those not easily heard); propose strategies or improvements by relating their own technical knowledge to developments in the areas covered by other Advisory groups.

### Behavioural Indicators

#### Level IV

- Uses Peer and OGC Gateway Reviews (Trademark)\*
- Keeps up to date with developments that affect DFID and anticipate what may affect it in future\*
- Creates an environment which allows people to improve the way they work\*
- Creates an environment where staff, customers, suppliers, and partners work to improve the way things are done

#### Level III

- Describes what the future looks like in terms of service improvements and modernisation\*
- Motivates others to improve and develop their performance
- Sets smart targets for teams and team members and evaluates them
- Constructively challenges existing strategies\*

#### Level II

- Coaches and develops individuals\*
- Manages own development and performance
- Learns lessons from successes and failures\*
- Freely shares knowledge and findings with others
- Uses and tests new strategic tools and frameworks\*

#### Level I

- Open to learning new things\*
- Responds positively to feedback from others
- Identifies mistakes and takes constructive action to ensure lessons are learned
- Makes business and efficiency improvements through use of appropriate systems and tools\*

#### Level 0

- Sets unrealistic training and development targets
- Spends little time on their own development, claiming to be too busy
- Uses the Civil Service Code as a reason for not making improvements in DFID
- Withdraws from discussions that require them to challenge their point of view