

# Urban Competency Framework



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**The Urban Competency Framework** for Humanitarian Action (UCF) outlines the competencies and accompanying behaviours that underpin effective humanitarian action in urban crises. It includes competencies that are:

- **Contextual:** competencies arising from the specific nature of urban areas and urban crises;
- **Humanitarian:** core competencies required in all humanitarian settings.

The humanitarian competencies are drawn from the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework and adapted to highlight the specific ways in which they apply in urban contexts.

Those working in urban crises also require technical or functional competencies related to a specialism, profession or role. These may include, for example, the competencies for: structural or civil engineering, architecture, town planning, public health, education management, nutrition, project management. Due to the breadth of specialist technical and functional competencies these are not included in the framework. These competencies can be drawn from relevant technical and professional competency frameworks to complement those in the UCF.

## **The Structure of the UCF**

The UCF includes twelve contextual and humanitarian competency domains. The scope, relevance and implications for humanitarian action of these domains is explained in each introduction.

Each competency domain is divided into competencies and behaviours. The competencies outline what those engaged in humanitarian action

need to be proficient at in order to work effectively in the context as described. The behaviours are observable actions that indicate proficiency of the relevant competency. Behaviours are defined at three levels:

- Behaviours that are relevant for all: these are relevant to people regardless of type of role, whether programmatic, operational or support and are applicable at all levels of seniority;
- Additional behaviours for those whose role is programmatic or technical: these are suitable for roles with interaction with affected populations and applicable to roles with responsibility for planning and implementing programmatic or technical interventions;
- Additional behaviours for those whose role is leadership or strategic: these are suitable for roles with strategic leadership responsibilities at senior or organisational level; for roles with team leadership and management responsibilities; and for roles requiring high-level engagement with senior and influential stakeholders.

Progression across the three levels is not necessarily related to seniority in an organisation and senior operational or support staff may find that only the behaviours in the first level are relevant to them.

Further information on how the framework can be used by organisations, professional institutes, individuals and learning providers can be found in the **Urban Competency Framework for Humanitarian Action: User Guide**.

# Urban Competency Framework

## Competency domains

- 1 Working with diverse stakeholders
- 2 Operating within complex governance structures
- 3 Working in built-up areas
- 4 Adopting a holistic people-centred approach
- 5 Providing assistance based on vulnerabilities and need
- 6 Promoting social cohesion
- 7 Facilitating widespread coverage of services and infrastructure
- 8 Promoting resilience and sustainability
- 9 Applying humanitarian principles in urban contexts
- 10 Achieving results in a complex, dynamic environment
- 11 Maintaining high standards of behaviour in pressured and dynamic environments
- 12 Operating safely and securely

Urban environments comprise highly complex and overlaying systems and networks of diverse stakeholders who have competing interests. Effective humanitarian action should take into account key individuals and groups of stakeholders, and their interests and roles within multiple systems that impact

urban, semi-urban and rural areas. Those involved in humanitarian action should pro-actively engage with diverse stakeholders to promote collaboration and defuse conflict when it arises.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>1.1</b> Mapping diverse stakeholders	<p><b>1.1.1</b> Identify stakeholder groups and key individuals who impact on and are impacted by your work</p> <p><b>1.1.2</b> Assess interests and capacities of stakeholders, and their role in formal and informal networks and urban systems as they evolve and as they relate to your work</p>	<b>1.1.3.P</b> Identify key stakeholders and networks of stakeholder groups who can facilitate your engagement with populations and sub-populations	<p><b>1.1.4.L</b> Anticipate changes in stakeholder characteristics and interests over time to inform medium-term plans and long-term strategy</p> <p><b>1.1.5.L</b> Support staff to develop and maintain an up-to-date understanding of stakeholder groups and key individuals and the systems within which they operate</p>
<b>1.2</b> Promoting coordination and collaboration with and between stakeholders	<p><b>1.2.1</b> Establish and maintain productive and collaborative relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders</p> <p><b>1.2.2</b> Recognise and respect diversity whilst upholding and promoting humanitarian principles</p>	<b>1.2.3.P</b> Engage with and promote existing and new networks and coordination mechanisms	<p><b>1.2.4.L</b> Negotiate with diverse stakeholders, including representatives of marginalised or at-risk subpopulations and communities, in the interest of the urban population and subpopulation needs</p> <p><b>1.2.5.L</b> Implement mechanisms to make sure staff engage sensitively with a wide range of diverse stakeholders</p>
<b>1.3</b> Defusing conflict between stakeholders with competing interests	<p><b>1.3.1</b> Ensure your own behaviour reduces rather than encourages tension</p> <p><b>1.3.2</b> Encourage positive interactions and continuous dialogue between stakeholders to minimise tensions</p>	<p><b>1.3.3.P</b> Defuse tensions and competition by encouraging all stakeholders to focus on shared goals</p> <p><b>1.3.4.P</b> Ensure fair, consistent and equal treatment of all stakeholders by establishing and maintaining robust systems and processes</p>	<p><b>1.3.5.L</b> Mediate between stakeholders to defuse tensions and address underlying causes of conflict</p> <p><b>1.3.6.L</b> Monitor your team's role in high-conflict situations and ensure interactions defuse rather than contribute to tensions</p>

Urban environments comprise complex governance structures that consist of multi-layered, formal and informal administrative structures, regulations and restrictions which may conflict and overlap. In this context, effective humanitarian action should seek to improve humanitarian outcomes for urban populations and

subpopulations, based on an understanding of how these structures interact, and the scope and limitations of their influence.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>2.1</b> <b>Engaging with decision makers and influencers</b>	<b>2.1.1</b> Identify key decision makers and influencers from diverse stakeholder groups at various locations and administrative levels <b>2.1.2</b> Demonstrate awareness of the scope of influence and authority of key decision makers and influencers and the power dynamics between them	<b>2.1.3.P</b> Coordinate with and positively influence decision makers and influencers to lead to positive humanitarian outcomes <b>2.1.4.P</b> Build the capacity of authorities and civil society at various levels to undertake their responsibilities effectively	<b>2.1.5.L</b> Advocate for increased accountability to urban populations and participation of marginalised communities and subpopulations in decision making amongst those with authority <b>2.1.6.L</b> Challenge ineffective or discriminatory behaviours or beliefs held by decision makers and influencers that perpetuate exploitation or abuse, or that negatively impact humanitarian outcomes
<b>2.2</b> <b>Supporting effective decision-making structures</b>	<b>2.2.1</b> Actively engage with existing formal and informal decision-making structures and mechanisms at various levels <b>2.2.2</b> Demonstrate awareness of the impact of your own actions on local power structures	<b>2.2.3.P</b> Encourage efficient, evidence-based, participatory and accountable decision making within existing structures or support the establishment of new structures if none exist <b>2.2.4.P</b> Promote and model accountability by establishing systematic and appropriate processes for communicating information	<b>2.2.5.L</b> Consider the role, effectiveness and accountability of local decision-making structures in the long term when developing your strategies and exit or transition plans <b>2.2.6.L</b> Take actions to minimise any erosion of local power structures that exist at various levels including national, provincial, municipal and neighbourhood <b>2.2.7.L</b> Coordinate team members' engagement with decision-making structures
<b>2.3</b> <b>Operating in accordance with relevant regulations and codes</b>	<b>2.3.1</b> Operate in accordance with all applicable formal regulations and codes <b>2.3.2</b> Acknowledge and appropriately work with informal codes and norms in relevant neighbourhoods	<b>2.3.3.P</b> Advocate for consistent, transparent and non-discriminatory enforcement of regulations and codes to positively impact humanitarian outcomes	<b>2.3.4.L</b> Challenge and support the revision and improvement of regulations and codes that negatively impact humanitarian outcomes <b>2.3.5.L</b> Establish mechanisms for ensuring and monitoring team compliance with regulations and codes

Urban environments comprise a high proportion of built-up areas, with structures frequently being multi-use and multi-level. People move through and use these public, semi-public and private spaces in complex patterns influenced by social and cultural factors and formal and informal regulations and restrictions.

Understanding these patterns and influences, post- and pre-crisis, enables those involved in humanitarian action to build on opportunities presented by the environment and to address factors that hinder positive humanitarian outcomes.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>3.1</b> <b>Assessing access to and use of public, semi-public and private spaces</b>	<b>3.1.1</b> Demonstrate awareness of how populations and subpopulations move through, use and occupy various urban spaces in relation to pre-crisis patterns	<b>3.1.2.P</b> Identify social and cultural factors, regulations and restrictions that affect the ways in which people move through, use, occupy and own various types of spaces in neighbourhoods across the urban area  <b>3.1.3.P</b> Incorporate considerations of population density and distribution into analysis to inform humanitarian interventions	<b>3.1.4.L</b> Formulate longer-term strategies based on an assessment of current and desirable future usage patterns, influences and restrictions to impact positive humanitarian outcomes  <b>3.1.5.L</b> Support staff to maintain an up-to-date understanding of how usage patterns, and the influences and restrictions that shape these, impact on and are impacted by their work
<b>3.2</b> <b>Fostering opportunities available in built-up areas</b>	<b>3.2.1</b> Identify opportunities presented by densely built-up areas which can improve humanitarian outcomes for populations and subpopulations  <b>3.2.2</b> Establish and implement systems and processes that maximise identified opportunities	<b>3.2.3.P</b> Design and implement interventions that maximise opportunities presented by densely built-up areas  <b>3.2.4.P</b> Share information on rights and opportunities associated with the urban, built environment with populations, subpopulations and communities to improve humanitarian outcomes	<b>3.2.5.L</b> Work with stakeholders and relevant decision makers to ensure opportunities in urban areas can be exploited to increase the impact on short- and long-term humanitarian outcomes
<b>3.3</b> <b>Addressing aspects of built-up areas that negatively impact humanitarian outcomes</b>	<b>3.3.1</b> Identify restrictions on the movement, free access and usage of urban areas by populations and subpopulations	<b>3.3.2.P</b> Design and implement interventions that take into account, and seek to minimise, restrictions and hindrances in the urban environment  <b>3.3.3.P</b> Take steps to mitigate any negative effects of current temporary and semi-permanent usage patterns of your work on longer-term humanitarian outcomes	<b>3.3.4.L</b> Negotiate with diverse stakeholders to reduce restrictions on access to and usage of public spaces, and other hindering factors in the environment, to contribute to improved humanitarian outcomes

High population density, the existence of essential services and the complexity of multiple overlaying systems in urban environments, mean that, in order to be effective, humanitarian interventions should adopt a holistic approach that

considers connections between needs in the short and long term. Actors should coordinate and pro-actively work across sectors and industries to find appropriate and durable solutions.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>4.1</b> Addressing interrelated needs in urban populations	<b>4.1.1</b> Analyse needs of urban populations and subpopulations and the interconnections between them	<b>4.1.2.P</b> Design and implement programmes that address multiple needs and issues that cut across sectoral boundaries, whilst taking into account and appropriately responding to the consequences on neighbouring and connected groups of people  <b>4.1.3.P</b> Ensure meaningful participation of diverse stakeholders at all stages of programming	<b>4.1.4.L</b> Anticipate how intersecting needs will evolve in a dynamic and complex environment to inform strategic planning  <b>4.1.5.L</b> Facilitate sharing of information between sectors and industries to maximise humanitarian outcomes for populations and subpopulations
<b>4.2</b> Working across sectors and industries	<b>4.2.1</b> Demonstrate humility, willingness to learn from and cooperate with stakeholders in sectors and industries other than your own	<b>4.2.2.P</b> Undertake joint planning with relevant stakeholders from multiple sectors and industries to maximise use of resources, draw on best practice and provide assistance that is coordinated and integrated	<b>4.2.3.L</b> Analyse the comparative advantage of diverse public, private and civil society stakeholders and define organisational strategy to increase the impact of humanitarian action  <b>4.2.4.L</b> Manage a complex, multi-disciplinary team
<b>4.3</b> Linking short-term actions with longer-term goals	<b>4.3.1</b> Analyse connections between current needs and long-term goals and aspirations of populations, subpopulations and communities  <b>4.3.2</b> Take actions to achieve short-term objectives in a way that contributes to positive longer-term outcomes	<b>4.3.3.P</b> Engage with relevant stakeholders to jointly plan humanitarian interventions that align with longer-term local development goals, plans and aspirations	<b>4.3.4.L</b> Work with relevant stakeholders to adapt and refine longer-term local development goals and plans to account for the current and future impacts of the humanitarian crisis  <b>4.3.5.L</b> Support team members to identify ways in which their work can positively impact long-term outcomes

The variations in capacities, access to resources, resilience and vulnerabilities of those living in urban areas are extreme. As a result, urban crises impact individuals, subpopulations and communities in vastly different ways. Humanitarian action should identify, prioritise and support those individuals, subpopulations and

communities with the greatest vulnerabilities and offer assistance that builds on their capacities. Support should be given irrespective of whether people are from host or affected communities or their legal status.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>5.1</b> Making decisions based on vulnerabilities, capacities and needs	<p><b>5.1.1</b> Take actions to understand capacities, vulnerabilities and needs of populations, subpopulations, communities and individuals</p> <p><b>5.1.2</b> Take a participatory approach working with and building on the skills, capacities and experience of urban populations and subpopulations to address vulnerabilities and needs</p>	<p><b>5.1.3.P</b> Conduct participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments to identify populations, subpopulations and communities who are most in need of assistance and protection</p> <p><b>5.1.4.P</b> Build on existing capacities of populations, subpopulations and communities when designing and implementing interventions</p>	<p><b>5.1.5.L</b> Incorporate a focus on vulnerabilities and capacities in strategies and long-term plans</p> <p><b>5.1.6.L</b> Ensure staff conducting participatory vulnerability and capacity assessments have the appropriate competencies to work sensitively and appropriately</p>
<b>5.2</b> Ensuring access to impartial assistance for the most in need	<p><b>5.2.1</b> Identify barriers to accessing assistance and take actions to reduce or remove these</p> <p><b>5.2.2</b> Establish systems and processes that support accessibility, non-discrimination, inclusivity and impartiality</p>	<p><b>5.2.3.P</b> Identify methods, interventions and new innovations that will allow you to provide assistance to the most in need</p> <p><b>5.2.4.P</b> Collect and address feedback using mechanisms that are accessible for diverse individuals and appropriate to the context</p>	<p><b>5.2.5.L</b> Advocate with public, private and civil society stakeholders for provision of impartial assistance based on an understanding of vulnerabilities and capacities</p> <p><b>5.2.6.L</b> Set a strategic direction that ensures interventions address multiple, interconnected vulnerabilities and risk</p> <p><b>5.2.7.L</b> Foster a culture of non-discrimination and inclusivity amongst team members</p>
<b>5.3</b> Protecting those most at risk from exploitation and abuse	<p><b>5.3.1</b> Take actions to understand the shifting dynamics of violence, exploitation and abuse, and how they are impacted by and impact on your work</p> <p><b>5.3.2</b> Promote positive social and structural norms to reduce forms of violence, exploitation and abuse</p> <p><b>5.3.3</b> Take steps to ensure your work and behaviour is appropriate and sensitive and does not cause any intentional or unintentional harm or abuse</p>	<p><b>5.3.4.P</b> Promote activities and referral mechanisms that inform the populations, subpopulations and communities of their rights and how to access them</p> <p><b>5.3.5.P</b> Take actions to mitigate negative impacts of social and structural norms on protection outcomes for those who are most at risk from exploitation and abuse</p>	<p><b>5.3.6.L</b> Strategically and sensitively take steps to positively influence social and structural norms which use forms of violence, exploitation and abuse</p> <p><b>5.3.7.L</b> Anticipate how vulnerabilities may evolve and set a strategic direction that takes this into account</p> <p><b>5.3.8.L</b> Put in place mechanisms for preventing and appropriately managing with incidences of violence, exploitation and abuse</p>

Urban environments comprise high density populations made up of multiple subpopulations and overlapping communities that co-exist in close proximity. The diverse and sometimes competing social, cultural and religious norms and traditions of these subpopulations and communities can lead to tensions that may

be exacerbated at times of crisis. In this context, effective humanitarian action should be based on an understanding of social influences and actively promote social cohesion.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>6.1</b> <b>Identifying social, cultural and religious norms, influences and dynamics that impact humanitarian outcomes</b>	<b>6.1.1</b> Identify social dynamics, and cultural and religious norms, influences, and power differentials that impact subpopulations and communities and humanitarian outcomes  <b>6.1.2</b> Recognise complex dimensions of identity that affect individuals' interaction with multiple communities, groups and institutions	<b>6.1.3.P</b> Demonstrate awareness of how social dynamics impact and are impacted by your programming decisions and make appropriate changes to increase effectiveness	<b>6.1.4.L</b> Work with multiple stakeholders to analyse current and future organisational impact on social dynamics to increase people's access to assistance and reduce vulnerabilities  <b>6.1.5.L</b> Support staff to develop a nuanced understanding of how complex social dynamics and aspects of identity impact humanitarian outcomes
<b>6.2</b> <b>Promoting social cohesion and trust</b>	<b>6.2.1</b> Take actions to promote social cohesion and build trust across diverse subpopulations and communities to improve humanitarian outcomes	<b>6.2.2.P</b> Apply contextual knowledge of social dynamics and individual identity to decisions in order to promote social cohesion	<b>6.2.3.L</b> Identify and implement strategies for promoting social cohesion and defusing social tensions and exclusion in the medium and long term  <b>6.2.4.L</b> Monitor and take actions to improve your team's impact on social dynamics and cohesion

Urban environments are characterised by a presence of essential services and infrastructure although there are significant variations in quality, access and coverage across neighbourhoods. People living in urban environments are heavily reliant on collective services to address their basic needs. In this context, an

effective intervention will support the resumption, re-establishment, expansion or adaptation of resilient services and infrastructure; and facilitate access to services and infrastructure that meet current and future needs of urban populations and subpopulations to ensure all neighbourhoods are reached.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>7.1</b> <b>Supporting the resumption and appropriate adaptation of urban services and physical infrastructure</b>	<b>7.1.1</b> Demonstrate awareness of the status and coverage of services and infrastructure and the interconnections between them  <b>7.1.2</b> Identify ways in which your work can support the resumption, re-establishment and improvement of services while avoiding negative unintentional impacts  <b>7.1.3</b> Avoid creating duplicative services or systems	<b>7.1.4.P</b> Work with appropriate stakeholders to assess the quality and coverage of multiple services and infrastructure  <b>7.1.5.P</b> Support the resumption, re-establishment, improvement or expansion of existing services based on an understanding of pre-crisis challenges faced by service providers and users	<b>7.1.6.L</b> Set an appropriate strategic direction for your organisation, based on considerations regarding the current status of services and infrastructure, pre-crisis challenges and limitations, future plans and needs  <b>7.1.7.L</b> Support appropriate stakeholders to address gaps or inadequacies in service provision and infrastructure that meets current and future needs  <b>7.1.8.L</b> Monitor the impact of your team's work on existing services and take actions promptly to address any unintended or harmful consequences
<b>7.2</b> <b>Facilitating equitable access to urban services</b>	<b>7.2.1</b> Demonstrate awareness of barriers to access urban services and infrastructure faced by populations and subpopulations, including people with disabilities and marginalised groups	<b>7.2.2.P</b> Facilitate safe access to urban services and infrastructure that meet the requirements of populations and subpopulations and their diverse access needs  <b>7.2.3.P</b> Work with communities to remove and reduce barriers to access available services that impact the community or vulnerable subpopulations	<b>7.2.4.L</b> Advocate with service providers to remove and reduce barriers to access  <b>7.2.5.L</b> Support team members to identify ways in which their work can promote improved access to services

Urban environments tend to have cash-based economies with diverse formal and informal livelihood opportunities. Urban populations rely on income opportunities and access to functioning markets and economic systems to meet their current and short-term needs as well as to build their resilience and meet their longer-term needs sustainably. Access to markets and livelihoods is not equitable and

can be further negatively impacted by urban crises. Humanitarian action needs to facilitate the resumption of effective and equitable economic systems and markets, and support populations and subpopulations to access income generating opportunities paying particular attention to those who are marginalised.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>8.1</b> <b>Promoting the resumption and adaptation of markets, economic systems and financial services</b>	<b>8.1.1</b> Engage with existing markets, economic systems, financial services and structures in the urban area  <b>8.1.2</b> Take steps to avoid creating parallel markets or creating distortions in existing economic systems	<b>8.1.3.P</b> Engage with experts to understand key current and pre-crisis strengths and weaknesses of markets and supply chains  <b>8.1.4.P</b> Make programming decisions that promote the resumption and strengthening of existing markets, economic and financial systems	<b>8.1.5.L</b> Analyse interconnections between markets, supply chains and economic infrastructures across and within urban areas  <b>8.1.6.L</b> Ensure that organisational strategy and policies promote resilient markets that meet the current and future needs of urban populations and subpopulations
<b>8.2</b> <b>Supporting resilient, sustainable and inclusive livelihoods</b>	<b>8.2.1</b> Identify opportunities to promote and support sustainable livelihoods prioritising those with the greatest vulnerabilities and risk of exclusion	<b>8.2.2.P</b> Incorporate cash assistance in programming when appropriate to support longer-term economic self-reliance  <b>8.2.3.P</b> Promote inclusive livelihood opportunities that foster social cohesion within and between urban subpopulations and communities	<b>8.2.4.L</b> Advocate with key stakeholders to remove barriers that prevent equitable access to livelihood opportunities, particularly for those who are most vulnerable  <b>8.2.5.L</b> Advocate with key stakeholders to ensure the regulatory environment promotes sustainable livelihoods and economic well-being for all
<b>8.3</b> <b>Promoting resilience of urban communities and actors to cope with, adapt to and recover from future shocks</b>	<b>8.3.1</b> Identify and prioritise actions which promote resilience for urban communities and particularly those with the greatest vulnerabilities and risk of exclusion	<b>8.3.2.P</b> Identify and promote positive coping strategies amongst urban communities and actors  <b>8.3.3.P</b> Assess resilience capacities and incorporate capacity building into interventions	<b>8.3.4.L</b> Engage with municipal actors to assess their vulnerabilities and capacities to cope with, adapt to and recover from current and future shocks  <b>8.3.5.L</b> Support and advise authorities at relevant levels in emergency management planning  <b>8.3.6.L</b> Advocate for policy and planning which supports economic resilience

Those affected by humanitarian crises have a right to assistance that consistently adheres to humanitarian laws, principles and standards and that draws on best practice, tools and guidelines adapted for the specific local context to ensure it is effective and appropriate. All of those engaged in humanitarian action, regardless

of whether they identify as humanitarian professionals, have a responsibility to demonstrate humanitarian values and principles in their professional and personal lives to ensure affected populations' rights are met.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>9.1</b> Demonstrating awareness of the humanitarian context	<p><b>9.1.1</b> Demonstrate understanding of the various causes and impacts of emergencies in urban settings</p> <p><b>9.1.2</b> Build contextual knowledge of the causes and impacts of the specific urban crisis and of the national and municipal humanitarian context</p> <p><b>9.1.3</b> Demonstrate understanding of the international humanitarian sector, structures, mechanisms and key actors in relation to the specific urban crisis</p>	<b>9.1.4.P</b> Design and implement interventions that are based on an understanding of the specific urban context	<p><b>9.1.5.L</b> Make sound strategic decisions based on an understanding of the specific urban crisis and the national and international humanitarian context</p> <p><b>9.1.6.L</b> Commit the organisation to incorporate diversity dimensions, such as gender, disability, age and ethnicity, meaningfully into organisational policies and programming</p>
<b>9.2</b> Applying humanitarian standards and principles	<p><b>9.2.1</b> Demonstrate understanding of your role, strengths and limitations, and that of your organisation, within the context of the urban crisis</p> <p><b>9.2.2</b> Operate in accordance with relevant key international, national and local humanitarian principles, standards and codes of conduct</p>	<b>9.2.3.P</b> Adhere to relevant international, national and local laws and treaties applicable to the urban crisis including International Humanitarian Law	<p><b>9.2.4.L</b> Set a strategic direction consistent with all humanitarian standards and principles that apply in the urban area</p> <p><b>9.2.5.L</b> Support your team to overcome any challenges in applying relevant laws, standards and principles in the urban context</p>
<b>9.3</b> Adapting existing humanitarian tools, guidelines and best practice to the specific urban context	<b>9.3.1</b> Select and use humanitarian tools, guidelines and best practice that are applicable in urban crises	<p><b>9.3.2.P</b> Make adaptations to existing humanitarian tools, guidelines and indicators to increase relevance to the urban context</p> <p><b>9.3.3.P</b> Draw on best practice in other urban crises and adapt intervention design to suit the specific context</p>	<b>9.3.4.L</b> Engage with relevant international, national and local stakeholders to improve and adapt existing bodies of knowledge on humanitarian programming in urban crises as practices evolve
<b>9.4</b> Demonstrating humanitarian values	<p><b>9.4.1</b> Demonstrate humanitarian values and principles in personal and professional conduct</p> <p><b>9.4.2</b> Communicate and promote humanitarian values with other public, private and civil society stakeholders</p>	<b>9.4.3.P</b> Inspire others by clearly articulating and demonstrating values, core purpose and principles that underpin humanitarian work	<b>9.4.4.L</b> Ensure staff uphold humanitarian principles, values and ethical behaviours

Urban environments are highly complex and dynamic. Teams may be dispersed across the urban area and guidance, established processes and previous experience may not always apply. Those engaged in humanitarian action need to work with a high level of autonomy while understanding and operating within

appropriate levels of authority. They need to work accountably, consulting and working closely with numerous diverse stakeholders and communities, to innovatively and flexibly address problems and challenges that impact vast numbers of people.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>10.1</b> <b>Ensuring quality and impact in a dynamic environment</b>	<b>10.1.1</b> Work with relevant stakeholders to systematically collect data, analyse challenges and identify new solutions to meet changing needs of the populations and sub-populations as they apply to your role	<b>10.1.2.P</b> Establish participatory monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that incorporate analysis of the wider consequences of your interventions  <b>10.1.3.P</b> Embed learning opportunities in programming to inform iterative improvements of your activities and communication  <b>10.1.4.P</b> Identify innovative ways of working, technologies and examples of best practice in other urban crises and work with appropriate stakeholders to assess their relevance for the current crisis	<b>10.1.5.L</b> Foster a culture of learning, curiosity and adaptation in the workplace  <b>10.1.6.L</b> Work in consultation with relevant stakeholders to define an appropriate role for your organisation within the wider urban response to maximise impact and avoid duplication
<b>10.2</b> <b>Demonstrating accountability to multiple, diverse stakeholders</b>	<b>10.2.1</b> Actively listen to new and different perspectives and experiences from populations and sub-populations  <b>10.2.2</b> Act transparently and answer to crisis-affected populations, sub-populations and communities in the urban area  <b>10.2.3</b> Use your own power responsibly and positively impact the use of power by others	<b>10.2.4.P</b> Establish meaningful processes through which urban populations and sub-populations can participate in humanitarian interventions  <b>10.2.5.P</b> Establish and implement responsive, participatory and inclusive feedback and complaints mechanisms that are appropriate for the scale of the urban area	<b>10.2.6.L</b> Establish and consistently implement disciplinary and whistle-blowing mechanisms to ensure safeguarding of urban populations and sub-populations  <b>10.2.7.L</b> Ensure efficient and transparent use of resources in accordance with internal controls and in coordination with other relevant stakeholders

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>10.3</b> Using critical judgment to inform timely decisions	<b>10.3.1</b> Act autonomously and make appropriate decisions when required within assigned levels of authority  <b>10.3.2</b> Exercise critical judgment in challenging situations in absence of specific or applicable guidance  <b>10.3.3</b> Balance the competing needs and interests of multiple stakeholders when making decisions	<b>10.3.4P</b> Take informed and calculated risks to improve programming and humanitarian outcomes taking into consideration the needs of the most vulnerable  <b>10.3.5.P</b> Consider and accept responsibility for the direct and indirect consequences and implications of decisions  <b>10.3.6.P</b> Act decisively and adapt plans quickly to respond to emerging situations and changing environments	<b>10.3.7.L</b> Take timely and well-considered strategic decisions that may impact large numbers of stakeholders under pressure and without complete information if it is not available
<b>10.4</b> Adopting a flexible and adaptive approach	<b>10.4.1</b> Monitor the evolving context and make appropriate ongoing adaptations to reflect changes and to account for the unknown  <b>10.4.2</b> Embrace unexpected opportunities to improve humanitarian outcomes for urban populations and subpopulations	<b>10.4.3.P</b> Embed flexibility into the design and planning of interventions based on analysis and anticipation of city-wide and neighbourhood change  <b>10.4.4.P</b> Adopt a flexible and adaptive approach to managing projects, programmes and budgets	<b>10.4.5.L</b> Establish nimble internal systems that enable flexible interventions while ensuring accountability  <b>10.4.6.L</b> Plan for multiple and complex future-state scenarios considering how they may impact city-wide and in specific neighbourhoods

Those engaged in humanitarian action in urban areas need to engage with numerous stakeholders, balance competing interests, handle large amounts of information, adhere to overlapping and potentially contradictory regulations in a context of rapid change while sensitively supporting affected populations who have experienced loss and suffering. In addition, staff may have been personally affected

by the crisis. In this context, stress levels are likely to be high and maintaining personal well-being may be challenging. It is important for those working in these contexts to actively manage their stress and maintain high personal standards of professional and ethical behaviour.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>11.1</b> <b>Promoting well-being and dealing with stress</b>	<b>11.1.1</b> Recognise personal stress and take appropriate steps to reduce it <b>11.1.2</b> Maintain appropriate relationships and interactions with diverse stakeholders when under stress	<b>11.1.3.P</b> Maintain a constructive and positive approach when under pressure to ensure effective programming continues	<b>11.1.4.L</b> Promote well-being by helping others to recognise and manage stress and modelling appropriate self-care <b>11.1.5.L</b> Establish and implement systems to foster well-being amongst staff
<b>11.2</b> <b>Maintaining professionalism in a challenging environment</b>	<b>11.2.1</b> Demonstrate a realistic understanding of your personal strengths and limitations in relation to the complexities of the urban crisis and how they complement those of others with whom you work <b>11.2.2</b> Take responsibility for your own work pro-actively seeking support to cope with challenges if required <b>11.2.3</b> Pro-actively seek and reflect on feedback from a diverse range of stakeholders to improve your performance	<b>11.2.4.P</b> Manage expectations by defining programmatic objectives and milestones based on a realistic understanding of available capacities and resources	<b>11.2.5.L</b> Demonstrate a realistic understanding of your organisation's professional strengths and limitations to address large-scale urban crises <b>11.2.6.L</b> Foster a culture of sharing supportive and constructive feedback including encouraging feedback to senior management
<b>11.3</b> <b>Upholding high standards of ethical behaviour</b>	<b>11.3.1</b> Demonstrate awareness of and take responsibility for the direct and indirect impact of your behaviour and actions on others <b>11.3.2</b> Ensure your behaviour upholds high standards of ethical and professional behaviour in accordance with relevant codes of conduct <b>11.3.3</b> Challenge harmful or abusive behaviour by others	<b>11.3.4.P</b> Follow applicable international, national, local and organisational procedures for reporting illegal and abusive behaviour <b>11.3.5.P</b> Set an example of personal integrity in all personal and professional contexts	<b>11.3.6.L</b> Establish robust systems for reporting and appropriately managing exploitation, abuse or discrimination by staff or partners or in the wider context that directly or indirectly result from your interventions <b>11.3.7.L</b> Hold staff to account for inappropriate abusive or discriminatory behaviour <b>11.3.8.L</b> Ensure staff understand applicable laws and codes of conduct that govern their behaviours in the context and the consequences for any breaches including how any contradictions between applicable laws will apply

Urban environments carry heightened and distinct safety and security threats due to the nature of the built environment, the close proximity of communities and high population densities. Urban environments tend to be more volatile than rural areas and changes can happen very rapidly. To operate safely and securely in this environment, it is important to assess, continuously monitor and

communicate changes in risk to staff and those impacted by your work. This requires robust, appropriately resourced and integrated strategies and systems. All staff should understand the safety and security context in which they are operating, consistently follow protocols and take appropriate responsibility.

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>12.1</b> Assessing risk in the urban environment	<p><b>12.1.1</b> Demonstrate awareness of potential current and future safety and security risks that may affect the urban area or specific neighbourhoods including those resulting from the intervention</p> <p><b>12.1.2</b> Seek up-to-date information on threats, risks and changes to the context and communicate changes with colleagues</p>	<p><b>12.1.3.P</b> Routinely undertake effective risk assessments with representatives of multiple stakeholders, urban populations and subpopulations and all staff</p>	<p><b>12.1.4.L</b> Work with team to identify indicators for monitoring the context to highlight any changes which can be rapid in an urban environment</p>
<b>12.2</b> Integrating security management into operational, programmatic and strategic decision making	<p><b>12.2.1</b> Demonstrate understanding of the scope, responsibilities and limitations of your own role in terms of safety and security</p> <p><b>12.2.2</b> Implement actions based on an analysis of the security context across the urban areas and in specific neighbourhoods</p>	<p><b>12.2.3.P</b> Design and plan interventions based on detailed analysis of safety and security in the context, localised by neighbourhoods and informed by a stakeholder analysis and an understanding of local norms and laws</p> <p><b>12.2.4.P</b> Incorporate an exit strategy that takes into account safety and security considerations into the design of interventions</p>	<p><b>12.2.5.L</b> Ensure the organisation has the capacity and commitment to carry out planned interventions within an accepted risk threshold</p> <p><b>12.2.6.L</b> Commit sufficient resources to implement security strategies</p>
<b>12.3</b> Applying appropriate security strategies when working with stakeholders and urban populations	<p><b>12.3.1</b> Develop linkages with urban communities and subpopulations to build wide-spread acceptance and ensure all relevant stakeholders understand, support and feel involved with your activities</p> <p><b>12.3.2</b> Implement a range of security strategies tailored to specific neighbourhood contexts</p>	<p><b>12.3.3.P</b> Ensure security strategies are neighbourhood-specific, flexible and updated to reflect changes in population behaviour and urban environment</p> <p><b>12.3.4.P</b> Monitor and report changes in behaviour and levels of acceptance amongst populations and subpopulations across the urban areas and at neighbourhood level</p>	<p><b>12.3.5.L</b> Take into account security considerations when developing partnerships especially if they may compromise real or perceived levels of neutrality and impartiality</p> <p><b>12.3.6.L</b> Cautiously engage and appropriately communicate with all armed actors to build dialogue, acceptance and access where necessary</p>

To work well in this context you need to be proficient at:	To do this, you will:	If you are in a programmatic or technical role, you might also:	If you are in a leadership role, you might also:
<b>12.4</b> <b>Managing personal safety and security</b>	<p><b>12.4.1</b> Recognise factors that affect your personal vulnerabilities to risk and how these differ in specific neighbourhoods</p> <p><b>12.4.2</b> Follow security protocols and procedures, encourage others to do so and report any breaches</p>	<p><b>12.4.3.P</b> Make decisions at neighbourhood level to ensure local considerations are taken into account</p> <p><b>12.4.4.P</b> Monitor contexts and threats and follow organisational protocol to report changes and incidents in line with internal security reporting procedures</p> <p><b>12.4.5.P</b> Coordinate and share information with other stakeholders on risks and incidents through security coordination mechanisms in accordance with organisational policy</p>	<p><b>12.4.6.L</b> Develop and frequently review the security strategy, procedures and protocols based on an analysis of how staff, programmes and organisation are vulnerable to threats across the urban area and in specific neighbourhoods</p> <p><b>12.4.7.L</b> Ensure organisational protocols are understood and consistently followed by staff and non-compliance is addressed transparently, consistently and in accordance with policy</p> <p><b>12.4.8.L</b> Ensure all staff receive appropriate security training and briefings tailored to their profile on the security risks in the urban area and in specific neighbourhoods</p> <p><b>12.4.9.L</b> Develop and implement a crisis management plan and provide direction and support to team members in the event of a crisis</p> <p><b>12.4.10.L</b> Establish an appropriate mechanism for staff to confidentially report security concerns</p>
<b>12.5</b> <b>Minimising risk to urban populations, subpopulations and other stakeholders</b>	<p><b>12.5.1</b> Take actions to reduce risk factors for populations and subpopulations in specific vulnerable neighbourhoods in collaboration with other stakeholders</p>	<p><b>12.5.2.P</b> Incorporate measures to mitigate risk factors into the design, planning and implementation of interventions</p> <p><b>12.5.3.P</b> Support communities and subpopulations to identify strategies for minimising risk and vulnerability</p>	<p><b>12.5.4.L</b> Advocate with diverse stakeholders to mitigate current and future risk factors in the urban environment</p>



# **Urban Competency Framework**