



Urban Competency Framework

User Guide

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Glossary

Behaviours

Observable actions that show proficiency of a competency. Behaviours are defined at three levels in the Urban Competency Framework: behaviours for all, additional behaviours for those whose role is programmatic or technical and additional behaviours for those whose role is leadership or strategic.

Community

A group of people who share one or more characteristic. The term implies an element of association or interaction between members of the group which may have both positive and negative aspects.¹

Competencies

A set of behaviours a person must demonstrate, based on their knowledge, skills and experiences, to perform effectively in a given situation.

Competency Framework

An established group of competencies needed to carry out specific roles.

Employing Organisations

Organisations that employ, engage or recruit employees and volunteers to undertake humanitarian action.

Humanitarian Action

Action that is taken to save lives, reduce suffering and maintain human dignity during and after crises and natural disasters, as well as action to prevent and prepare for them. Humanitarian action is not limited to individuals or organisations whose mandate is humanitarian or who define themselves as humanitarian actors.

Humanitarian Principles

The four core humanitarian principles guiding humanitarian action: the humanitarian imperative, independence, impartiality and neutrality.

Job

A specific professional position or posting with a set of defined duties, responsibilities and terms and conditions. A job description outlines the specific details of the job and is usually unique to an individual within agreed parameters and standards of similar roles within the organisation.

Learning Provider

Organisations, companies, departments, groups and institutes providing learning services.

Neighbourhood

An area or location which has specific characteristics that define and shape the place, and which impact the people who live there. The geographical limitations of a neighbourhood vary and could be a block or two in a city, all or part of an informal settlement, or a new development, for example.

Organisation

A broad term covering a wide range of types of companies, businesses, charities and societies which could include international, national or local NGOs, faith-based organisations, private companies, professional bodies, national and local authorities.

People-centred Approach

A way of working which considers the needs of individuals, as they define them, as a starting point and making sure that people have a meaningful say in decisions that affect their lives. It involves treating people with dignity and respect.

Populations

The people who are residing in the city whether that be temporarily, semi-permanently or permanently. The term includes those who have been directly affected by the crises, for example displaced populations, as well as those who have been indirectly affected, for example 'host' populations. Its use implies also the presence of sub-populations.

Role

A type of professional position within an organisation with defined functions and characteristics. There are likely to be multiple people in similar roles across an organisation. Examples of a role might be 'project manager' or 'WASH engineer'. A role is not specific to a particular location.

Roster

A list of people who are available for deployment to work in an urban crisis and who have been pre-selected based on their demonstration of proficiency in a set of competencies and on a set of established requirements.

Skills

Abilities that a person might have. Skills, knowledge and attitudes underpin competencies.

Stakeholders

Any actor who has an interest, either direct or indirect, in an issue. In urban areas, there are typically a vast number of stakeholders exhibiting a wide diversity of characteristics and interests. In an urban context, subdividing these stakeholders into public, private or civil society actors can be useful.

Sub-populations

The characteristics of individuals within a larger population. These characteristics, which can be multiple and overlapping, could include gender, age, sexuality, race/ethnicity and disability status for example. Although similar, the terms 'community' and 'sub-population' are distinct: unlike communities, there may be no association between members of sub-populations and viewing a sub-population as a community may not be meaningful.

Urban Contexts

Settings that are urban in nature including semi- and peri-urban areas. Urban areas are those which share a particular set of characteristics. The Urban Competency Framework is based on a definition of these characteristics by ALNAP which can be found on page 8.

Urban Crises

When those impacted by a humanitarian emergency are located in an urban area this is considered to be an urban crisis. In urban crises, the disaster may have occurred in the city itself or the crisis may be the result of mass migration caused by a disaster in another location.

List of acronymns

ALNAP	Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance
CaLP	Cash Learning Partnership
CHCF	Core Humanitarian Competency Framework
CHSA	Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance
DFID	Department for International Development
ECB	Emergency Capacity Building
EUHAP	European Humanitarian Action Partnership
EUPRHA	European Universities on Professionalisation on Humanitarian Action
HA Professions	Humanitarian Action Professions
HLA	Humanitarian Leadership Academy
HPass	Humanitarian Passport Initiative
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICE	Institution of Civil Engineers
IIED	International Institute for Environment and Development
IStructE	Institution of Structural Engineers
NOHA	Network on Humanitarian Action
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PMD Pro	Project Management for Development Professionals
QALC	Quality Assessment and Learning Centre
RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
UCL	University College London
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene

What is the Urban Competency Framework for Humanitarian Action?

The Urban Competency Framework outlines the competencies and accompanying behaviours that underpin effective humanitarian action in urban crises.

The competencies defined in the Urban Competency Framework apply to people who are involved in humanitarian action in urban crises: they apply to employees, roster staff and volunteers working for or with a wide range of organisations operational in urban settings including public, private and third sector organisations.

The framework is intended to improve the effectiveness of humanitarian action in urban crises by:

- Improving the effectiveness of individuals, teams and organisations;
- Fostering cooperation and collaboration between sectors, industries, authorities and organisations.

The framework can be used by individuals, employing organisations, professional institutes and learning providers to ensure that people involved in humanitarian action in urban crises have the competencies that they need in order to be effective. It can also be used as a tool for improving collaboration since the specific nature, scale and complexity of urban crises is most effectively addressed through an intersectoral approach where local authorities, humanitarians, built environment professionals, engineers, civil society and other key stakeholders work together.

This guide is aimed at organisations that are involved in humanitarian action, in whatever way that may be, and provides advice and tools for those who wish to use the Urban Competency Framework. The guide is divided into three main sections:

- Information about the Urban Competency Framework;
- Guidance on how to use the framework;
- A toolkit of resources to support organisations to use the framework.

Information about further resources is also provided.

The Urban Competency Framework was developed by RedR UK based on an initial research report and in close consultation with a panel of twelve expert advisors. A wider section of organisations and individuals were also consulted during later stages of the framework development (see Annex 1).

The framework, research report and this guide were produced through funding provided to the International Rescue Committee from EU Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) and is part of a wider project for the Global Alliance for Urban Crises (GAUC) entitled '*Developing the skills to meet the needs of urban populations in crises through the alliance of urban responders*'.

Why do we need a framework for urban competencies?

It is widely accepted that the scale, impact and frequency of urban crises are increasing and that this trend is likely to continue as urban populations grow: it is estimated that by 2030, 5 billion people will live in cities², which will equate to approximately 60% of the world's population, and by 2050 this is likely to rise to 70%³. The international community has expressed their commitment to tackling urban crises in a sustainable way, for example, Sustainable Development Goal 11 commits to make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Existing tools and approaches used in humanitarian action, often developed for rural responses, are not well suited to the needs of the urban context and those involved in humanitarian action are facing challenges as they adapt to the new context:

*"The magnitude of urban disasters in high populations densities – combined with complex social, political, economic and institutional environments – has challenged the manner in which humanitarian agencies are used to working. Humanitarian agencies are now grappling with how to change their approaches to this reality"*⁴

As a result, actors are developing new approaches and tools, such as the Urban Competency Framework, that are relevant for the context and that are based on an evolving understanding of what characterises urban areas and urban crises, and what distinguishes them from other crises.

There are significant differences within and between urban environments and the distinctions between urban and rural areas can sometimes be blurred. However, despite these differences, urban areas share several characteristics. These characteristics are described by ALNAP⁵ as:

- Defined municipal/administrative boundaries;
- Complex, interdependent social pressures;
- Diverse livelihoods and income opportunities;
- Higher proportion of built-up areas;
- Cash-based economy;
- Presence of essential services and infrastructure;
- Concentration of administrative structures such as government and hospitals;
- High population density.

Although some of these characteristics may be observed in other contexts, it is the combination of these characteristics which makes urban areas unique and which define urban crises. These urban characteristics shape, exacerbate and catalyse crises, determine the nature of vulnerability and risk impacting urban populations, and provide opportunities for communities, and those supporting them, to cope with, adapt to and recover from shocks. UCL have described urban crises occurring over the last two decades as falling into the following broad categories which demonstrate how urban characteristics impact crises⁶ :

- **Urban areas shaped by poorly planned and managed urban population growth** where the high population densities result in an increased risk of crises such as disease epidemics, violence and internal displacement;
- **Urban areas affected by forced displacement** with an influx of people into urban areas who largely move into informal settlements that are over-crowded, have poor living conditions and limited access to the services and economic opportunities on which urban populations depend;
- **Urban areas affected by disasters and climate change** where risks from natural and technological hazards and climate change exacerbate endemic poverty, limited access to services and inadequate or ineffective governance systems causing people in built-up areas to be more vulnerable to shocks;
- **Urban areas affected by conflict and violence** caused by war as well as by state failures to adequately plan growth, provide welfare and ensure the security of the population causing a high level of civic violence;
- **Urban areas affected by complex emergencies** with multiple types of crises simultaneously impacting large numbers of people in the urban areas;
- **Urban areas affected by chronic poverty, risk and insecurity** where an acute crisis exacerbates existing vulnerabilities.

A research report⁷ undertaken to inform the creation of the Urban Competency Framework explored how these characteristics of urban areas and urban crises determine which approaches will be most effective and which competencies individuals will need in order to be effective in these contexts. The report found that in order to be effective, those working in urban crises need to:

- Actively seek to **understand the context** both in terms of the characteristics of urban areas and urban crises in general but also the specific features of the urban context they are in;
- Work **collaboratively** with a large number and diversity of stakeholders and types of organisations and industries, within complex governance systems and structures;
- Understand the multiple, complex and dynamic **interconnections** of people, communities, services and infrastructure in urban areas that function as complex, multi-layered systems that can mean that the consequences of humanitarian action and programmes can rapidly shift to have a ripple effect to other neighbouring or connected groups of people;
- Take into account the increased **vulnerabilities** that exist because at-risk individuals and groups are harder to identify due to the dynamics of cities and physical environments and because people have more possibilities to turn to highly dangerous and exploitative coping mechanisms;
- Navigate the shift that is required in humanitarian action, from what has traditionally focused on providing aid to beneficiaries, to one of **support and facilitation** within urban infrastructures, services and city plans. This necessitates more flexibility and adaptability in attitudes and approaches to coordination mechanisms and humanitarian tools and programming. It also demands a greater need for negotiating and influencing skills to diffuse tensions that frequently occur when facilitating and supporting various bodies and institutions to work together.

These broad themes, in consultation with a broad range of stakeholders, have been developed into the competencies that are described in the Urban Competencies Framework for Humanitarian Action. The intention is that by adopting these competencies and working with a common approach across organisations, sectors and industries, those contributing to humanitarian action can increase the positive impact of their work.

The Urban Competency Framework for Humanitarian Action

What competencies are included in the competency framework?

The Urban Competency Framework outlines competencies that those engaged in humanitarian action in urban crises need to demonstrate in order to work effectively in these contexts. Although the competencies have value in other contexts also, they are considered to be particularly important for all those working in urban settings.

The framework 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 adapted to the urban context.

Overview of CONTEXTUAL COMPETENCIES

- 1 Working with diverse stakeholders** with complex and competing interests and needs;
- 2 Operating within complex governance structures** that are multi-layered, complex and potentially overlapping;
- 3 Working in built-up areas** and navigating the opportunities and limitations that the environment imposes;
- 4 Adopting a holistic people-centred approach** that addresses interconnected needs with short- and long-term solutions that reach across sectors and industries;
- 5 Providing assistance based on vulnerabilities and needs** to reach and protect the people who are most vulnerable;
- 6 Promoting social cohesion** between multiple, disparate groups;
- 7 Facilitating widespread coverage of services and infrastructure** taking into account areas which may have been under-served or unserved before the crisis;
- 8 Promoting resilience and sustainability** in a predominantly cash-based economy;

Overview of HUMANITARIAN COMPETENCIES

- 9 Applying humanitarian principles in urban contexts** consistently and appropriately despite pressures and challenges posed by the urban context;
- 10 Achieving results in complex, dynamic environments** monitoring, anticipating and adapting to change appropriately;
- 11 Maintaining high standards of behaviour in pressured and dynamic environments** while experiencing multiple factors that may impact well-being or challenge ethical behaviour;
- 12 Operating safely and securely** while managing risk in the urban setting.

The contextual competencies are based on an understanding of the specific characteristics of urban areas and urban crises and of the approaches that are appropriate in those contexts. For further information on the research that informed these competencies see the *Urban Competency Framework: Informative Report*.⁸

The humanitarian competencies are drawn from the *Core Humanitarian Competency Framework*⁹ (CHCF) and adapted to highlight the specific ways in which they apply in urban contexts. Due to their fundamental importance in urban crises, two of the competencies have been mainstreamed throughout the framework. These are: working with others, and motivating and influencing. Figure 1 on page 13, shows where the fourteen competencies from the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework have been incorporated into the Urban Competency Framework.

People 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 or 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 Urban Competency Framework. More information on this can be found on page 19.

The Urban Competency Framework for Humanitarian Action

Figure 1 Comparison with the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework

Core Humanitarian Competency Framework		Urban Competency Framework
Competency Domain	Competency	Competency
Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles and standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the humanitarian context Applying humanitarian standards and principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrating awareness of the humanitarian context (9.1) Applying humanitarian standards and principles (9.2)
Achieving results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring programme quality and impact Making decisions Working accountably 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring quality and impact in a dynamic environment (10.1) Using critical judgment to inform timely decisions (10.3) Demonstrating accountability to multiple, diverse stakeholders (10.2)
Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listening and creating dialogue Working with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrating accountability to multiple, diverse stakeholders (10.2) Mainstreamed throughout
Operating safely and securely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimising risk to crisis-affected people, partners and stakeholders Managing personal safety and security 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimising risk to urban populations, sub-populations and other stakeholders (12.5) Managing personal safety and security (12.4)
Managing in a pressured and changing environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapting and coping Maintaining professionalism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promoting well-being and dealing with stress (11.1) Maintaining professionalism in a challenging environment (11.2)
Demonstrating leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-awareness Motivating and influencing others Critical judgment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporated into Maintaining professionalism in a challenging environment (11.2) Mainstreamed throughout

Structure of Urban Competency Framework

The Urban Competency Framework includes twelve competency domains. The scope, relevance and implications for humanitarian action of each of these domains is explained in 'the urban context' description.

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.

Competencies are underpinned by knowledge, skills and attitudes – see Figure 2 opposite. These are important but are not explicitly described in competency frameworks because they tend to be more context specific, more subject to change over time and require more detail to outline. Knowledge and skills, and sometimes attitudes, are outlined in curricula of study rather than competency frameworks. An example of a competency broken down into the required knowledge, skills and attitudes can be found in Table 1. The examples of knowledge, skills and attitudes in the table are not exhaustive.

Figure 2 Knowledge, skills and attitudes underpin competencies



Table 1: An example of a competency broken down into a non-exhaustive list of required knowledge, skills and attitudes

Example competency and behaviour from the Urban Competency Framework		
Competency	You will be proficient at:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applying humanitarian standards and principles (9.2)
Behaviour	You will:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operate in accordance with relevant key international, national and local humanitarian principles, values, standards and codes of conduct (9.2.2)
Underlying knowledge, skills and attitudes		
Knowledge	You will know:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The names of international, national and local documents that describe humanitarian principles, values and standards The names of any codes of conduct that apply to you and in your context The key principles, values and provisions stated in each of these documents Ways in which any of the provisions in these documents overlap, reinforce or contradict each other
Skill	You will be able to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify which of the provisions apply to you Identify specific ways in which they impact on your work Make alterations to your working habits in order to comply
Attitude	You will believe:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> That the humanitarian principles of neutrality, independence, impartiality and the humanitarian imperative are important That human rights are important

How to use the Urban Competency Framework

The Urban Competency Framework can be used by different user groups to support:

- Assessment of competencies and recruitment;
- Competency development;
- Collaborative working with partners and other stakeholders.

User groups include employing organisations, from the private, public and third sectors, that recruit, deploy and manage people working in urban crises; professional institutions whose members periodically respond to humanitarian crises; learning providers and institutes of education who offer learning programmes relevant for humanitarian action; and individuals who are involved in, or intend to become involved in, humanitarian action.

Employing organisations can use the framework to:

- Identify recruitment needs for the organisation in terms of required competencies;
- Describe the competencies required in types of roles and specific jobs;
- Plan effective interview and selection processes that will allow for competency assessment;
- Recruit and select suitable staff, volunteers and roster members with diverse profiles;
- Assess the competencies of individuals and teams to identify strengths, weaknesses and further development needs;
- Plan and offer competencies development opportunities for staff and roster members;
- Provide recognition of proficiency in specified competencies;
- Support staff to identify career progression pathways;
- Work with partners and other stakeholders to align approaches and support capacity development.

Professional institutions that support their members to apply their professional expertise in urban crises can use the framework to:

- Provide information to their members on what competencies are required in urban crises, how their existing competencies might be transferable and how the framework integrates with other professional requirements;
- Provide guidance and support for members wanting to build the competencies;
- Advocate with universities for the inclusion of competencies from the Urban Competency Framework into their professional courses.

Learning providers, including educational and adult learning institutions, learning and development departments and training providers, can use the framework to:

- Design learning programmes that support learners to build competencies that are relevant for working in urban crises;
- Assess individuals' competencies and provide recognition of their achievements.

Individuals who are involved in humanitarian action, or those who intend to be, can use the framework to:

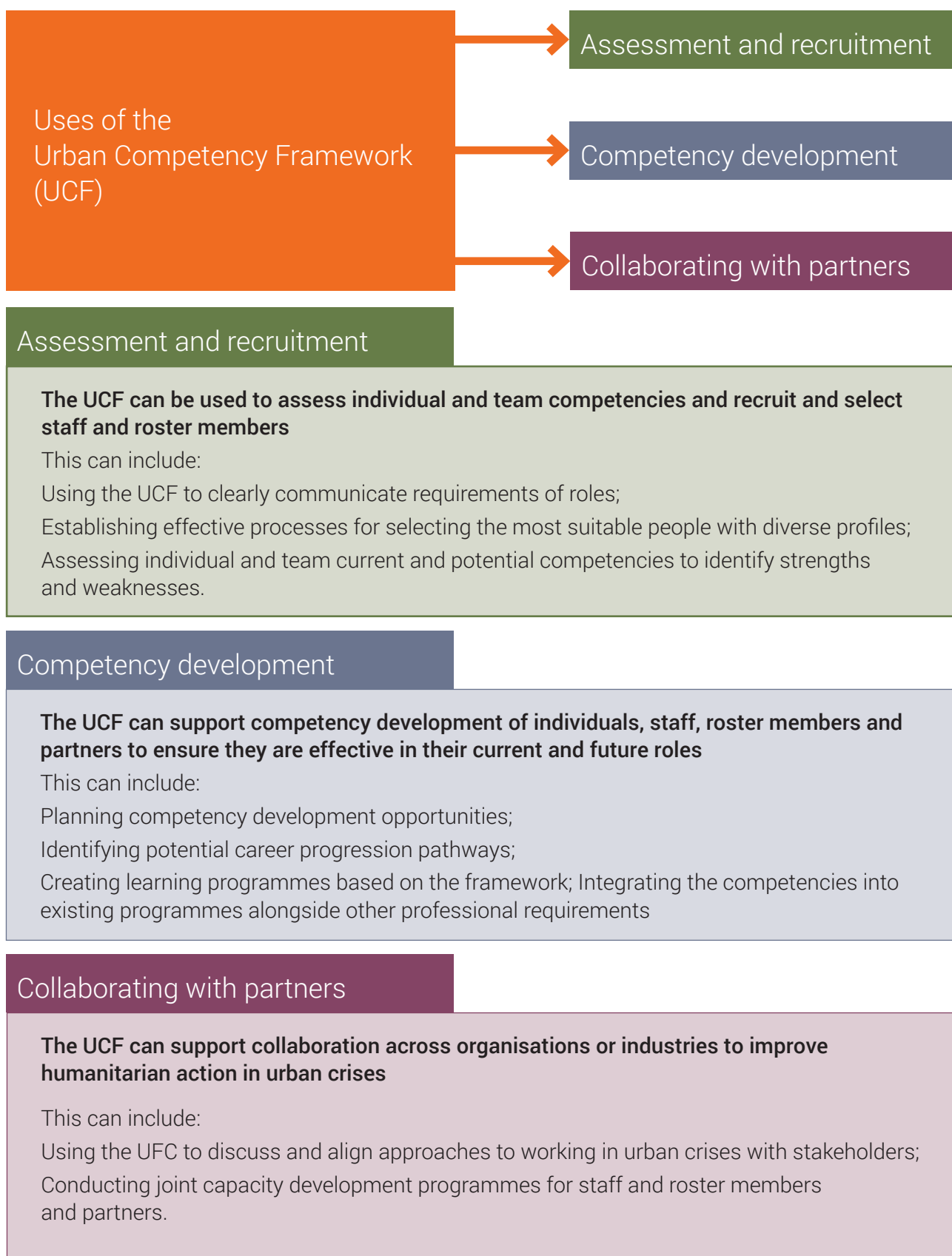
- Assess their competencies against the Urban Competency Framework in preparation for working in urban crises and to monitor and evaluate their performance on an ongoing basis;
- Take actions to strengthen their competencies or address gaps as they develop and evolve;
- Describe their competencies to support their entry into and progression through their humanitarian careers.

A diagram showing these uses can be found below in Figure 3 overleaf.

Further guidance on how to contextualise the competency framework and integrate it with other professional requirements can be found in the next section. Tools for supporting some of these functions can be found in the Toolkit starting on page 23.

Detailed information for learning providers is not included in this user guide. Guidance on developing competency-based learning programmes can be found in the *Humanitarian Learning Standards: Handbook for the Provision of Quality Learning for Humanitarian Action*, and guidance on assessing competencies can be found in the *Handbook for the Provision of Quality Assessment of Competencies for Humanitarian Action*¹⁰

Figure 3: Ways in which the Urban Competency Framework (UCF) can be used¹¹



Contextualising the Urban Competency Framework

The Urban Competency Framework has been written to be broadly applicable to a wide range of public, private and third sector organisations working in all urban crises regardless of the cultural, social or economic context, the location or size of the urban area affected and the emergency typology. This inclusive approach allows the Urban Competency Framework to be relevant in a number of scenarios but may mean that it requires contextualisation to make it an effective tool: those using the framework may want to contextualise it to ensure that it is as relevant as possible for the organisation and context. Contextualisation can involve:

- Altering the content of the framework;
- Adjusting how the framework is used.

The content of the framework can be contextualised by making alterations to the competency domains, competencies and/or behaviours. For example:

- Any of the competency domains, competencies or behaviours can be omitted;
- Competency domains and competencies can be put into an order of priority;
- Terminology that is used in the framework can be changed if it is not suitable, applicable or easily understood in the organisation or context;
- Competency domains, competencies or behaviours can be added;
- The framework can be translated so that it is more accessible to staff, local partners and stakeholders;
- Additional examples from the local, sector or industry context can be provided to supplement the framework.

The use of the framework can be contextualised by identifying:

- Any competency domains or competencies that are priorities and must be demonstrated by all staff and roster members at the point of recruitment;
- Any competency domains or competencies that the organisation is willing to support staff or roster members to develop if they show potential or if they demonstrate other requirements that are particularly important to the organisation or in the context;
- Any competency domains or competencies that are considered to be desirable only.

When contextualising the framework, it is important to consider what competencies are needed in the situation as well as what competencies existing or potential staff and roster members demonstrate or are likely to demonstrate. This is particularly important to ensure recruitment, management and support of staff and roster members is inclusive, encourages diversity and reflects other organisational requirements and values.

To support inclusive recruitment, management and support of staff and roster members, organisations need to have in place:

- Recruitment processes that allow assessors to identify potential as well as demonstrated competencies in applicants;
- Systematic processes for monitoring and developing competencies in staff and roster members;
- Review or probationary periods linked to specific development goals to measure whether staff members are making sufficient progress and to identify actions to manage issues that arise.

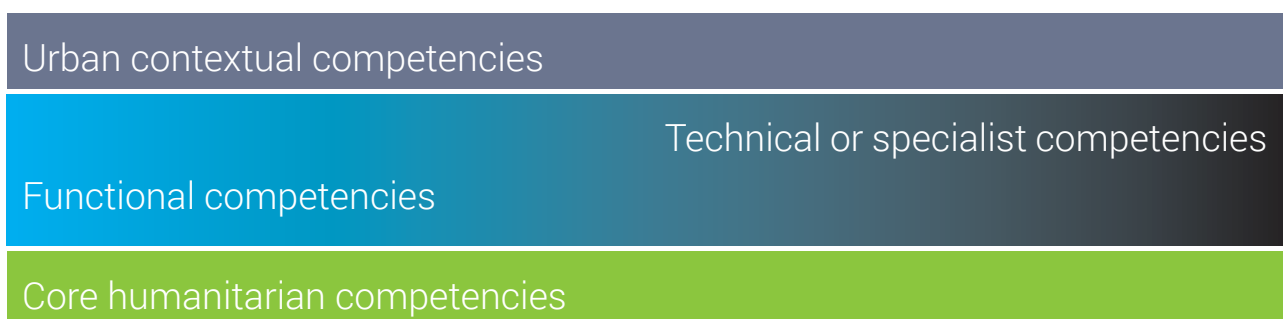
Guidance on how to support the recruitment of a diverse pool of staff and roster members is included in some of the tools in the toolkit. See page 23 for an indication of which tools can support inclusive recruitment.

Using the framework alongside other requirements

People engaged in humanitarian action in urban settings require a complex mix of types of competencies in order to work effectively. The four main types of competencies that they need are: urban contextual competencies, core humanitarian competencies contextualised for the urban setting, functional competencies, and specialist or technical competencies.

The Urban Competency Framework includes contextual competencies and core humanitarian competencies applied to the urban context. It does not include specialist, technical or functional competencies. Functional and technical competencies are shown in blue in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Types of competencies required by those working in urban crises¹²



Functional competencies are those that relate to a specific role and which define the behaviours relevant to the purpose or type of work required by a particular role. These might include competencies in areas such as project management, financial management or capacity building.¹³

Technical competencies are those that relate to a specific role and which define the behaviours relevant to the field of expertise of a particular role. These might include competencies in areas such as nutrition in emergencies or those required by chartered engineers, for example. These are sometimes referred to as specialist or thematic competencies, subject expertise or hard skills.¹⁴

An employing organisation may already have defined functional and technical competencies they require. In this case, the Urban Competency Framework can be used in addition to frameworks already in use. Documents should be checked and adjusted to make sure that there are no duplications or overlaps which can be confusing for staff and roster members.¹⁵

If an organisation has not developed their own organisational competency framework or has not defined the functional or technical competencies required for posts, the Urban Competency Framework can be used as a starting point and additional competencies can be added alongside these. Additional competencies can be written by the organisation or can be drawn from other competency frameworks as relevant.

Examples of how the competency framework can apply to various roles

Any role requires a specific mix of competencies of different types. These will be dictated by the role and context.

Example 1 - A Nutrition in Emergencies Project Manager working in an urban crisis for an International NGO focusing on children will require a mix of:

- Urban contextual and humanitarian competencies drawn from the Urban Competency Framework;
- Nutrition in Emergencies competencies drawn as relevant from the Nutrition in Emergencies Competency Framework;
- Functional competencies including project management, budget management and line management.

They will also require knowledge (e.g. methods of testing for chronic and acute malnutrition), skills (e.g. the ability to accurately use a tool to measure the mid-upper arm circumference of children and babies) and attitudes (e.g. a positive attitude to working with children and babies).

Example 2 - A WASH Engineer working in an urban crisis on deployment to a water company that provides water and sanitation services to the majority of a city's residents with the purpose of supporting the assessment and re-establishment of services will require a mix of:

- Urban contextual and humanitarian competencies drawn from the Urban Competency Framework;
- Water supply and sanitation engineering, hydraulic engineering or civil engineering competencies;
- Functional competencies which may include needs assessment, capacity building and project management.

They will also require knowledge (e.g. methods of testing water quality), skills (for example, the ability to use water testing equipment accurately) and attitudes (e.g. a willingness to continue to learn and the humility to listen to others). An organisation advertising for these posts can create job descriptions that outline the required competencies and any additional requirements. Job descriptions sometimes explicitly specify key knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required if these are essential for the post.

Example 3 - A Structural Engineer employed by a UK-based engineering firm being deployed internationally on a short-term placement as part of a multi-disciplinary team to the site of an earthquake to support the government in assessing the structural safety of key governmental and public buildings will require a mix of:

- Urban contextual and humanitarian competencies drawn from the Urban Competency Framework;
- Structural engineer competencies for a chartered engineer drawn as relevant from UK-SPEC Competence and Commitment Standard for Chartered Engineers, ICE Competency Framework and IStructE Competency Framework or drawn from similar frameworks if they exist in the affected country;
- Functional competencies including project management and capacity development as required in the role.

They will also require knowledge (e.g. key provisions in applicable building codes), skills (e.g. the ability to undertake a structural survey accurately to assess structural integrity) and attitudes (e.g. a positive attitude to working collaboratively and building the capacity of a local counterpart). It is likely they will also need to demonstrate previous experience that is relevant to the role and context.

Example 4 - An Education Officer working in the municipal education authority in an urban area impacted by large amounts of inward migration following widespread civil unrest and violence across the country will require a mix of:

- Urban contextual and humanitarian competencies drawn from the Urban Competency Framework;
- Education management competencies including education planning, school management and teacher training competencies drawn from the national frameworks and requirements for Education Officers plus competencies relevant to Education in Emergencies;
- Functional competencies including capacity building, resource allocation and stakeholder management as defined by their role.

They will also require knowledge (e.g. about how emergencies can impact children, the range of psycho-social interventions that can be used to support children who have experienced crises, and of local organisation or resources that could be drawn upon to offer these types of intervention), skills (e.g. the ability to undertake an assessment of the impact of the inward migration on schools' capacity, resources and learning environments) and attitudes (e.g. a belief that enabling children to return to school can be an important positive and normalising influence for children affected by crisis).

Example 5 - A Disaster Risk Reduction Management Officer working for a local authority alongside an elected city mayor to coordinate an emergency response in an urban area will require a mix of:

- Urban contextual and humanitarian competencies drawn from the Urban Competency Framework;
- Competencies and requirements to undertake executive functions as outlined in the national disaster response plan and any relevant local statutes;
- Functional competencies including coordination, information management, budget management, project management and resource management.

They will also require knowledge (e.g. of local disaster risk reduction management plans), skills (e.g. the ability to monitor and evaluate the plans) and attitudes (e.g. the belief that integrating disaster risk reduction and climate change into local development plans, programmes and budgets is an effective strategy in sustainable development and poverty reduction).





Toolkit of resources

Overview of tools

	Assessment and recruitment							Competency development				Partner collaborations		
Tool	This tool can help you:													
	Identify recruitment needs	Describe the requirements for types of roles	Describe the requirements for specific posts	Plan interview and selection processes	Recruit effective and suitable people with diverse profiles	Assess individuals' competencies	Assess team competencies	Plan competency development	Build competencies of staff and roster members	Provide recognition of competence	Identify career progression pathways	Align approaches with partners	Build capacity of stakeholders	
1. Competency prioritisation checklist	x	x	x		x							x		
2. Role profile		x	x		x						x	x		
3. Job description			x		x	x								
4.Planning tool for competency-based recruitment				x	x	x								
5. Competency-based interview questions					x	x				x				
6. Group activities and simulations					x	x	x		x	x			x	
7. Competency assessment matrix					x	x	x	x		x				
8. Continuing professional development plan								x	x		x			
9. Team analysis tool	x						x	x						

1. Competency prioritisation checklist

Competency prioritisation is a process of identifying which competencies are most important for staff in your organisation. You can identify competencies that are mandatory for all staff and those that are essential and desirable for types of roles or specific posts or for admission onto a roster. A simple tool for prioritising competencies is a checklist to rate competencies according to their importance against a set of criteria which you can define according to your organisation and context.

Prioritising competencies will help you to recruit more effectively and to make sure demands on staff are realistic.

This tool can help you to:	To do this effectively you can
Identify recruitment needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use the list of prioritised and mandatory competencies to inform your recruitment and staff development plans
Define requirements for types of roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Prioritise competencies that are essential and desirable for types of role in your organisation
Define requirements for specific roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Prioritise competencies that are essential and desirable for specific post
Recruit effective and suitable people with diverse profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify competencies that you require at the point of recruitment and any that you are willing to support a suitable applicant to develop once recruited
Align approaches with stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conduct joint prioritisation exercises with partners to compare, discuss and potentially align values and approaches to working

Key information or sections to include in a competency prioritisation checklist:

- Organisationally and contextually appropriate criteria for prioritising the competencies;
- Quantitative measurement against each criterion;
- Guidance on using the scoring system.

To score the competencies against the criteria, you can use a numerical rating and select the highest scoring competencies or competencies that score over an agreed threshold. The example below uses a threshold to determine whether a competency is desirable or essential. You can also indicate which competencies are essential at the point of recruitment and which you will be willing to support an applicant to develop once in post.

There is no fixed number of competencies that should be linked to a post, but a balance needs to be found between adequately describing the role and creating a list that is overwhelming and unachievable. If too many competencies are rated essential or desirable, you can adjust your threshold so that a manageable number of competencies are selected. A suggested maximum is 8 competencies in any competency family (for example, contextual or humanitarian competencies).

1. Competency prioritisation checklist

If you wish to identify competencies that are mandatory for all staff, you should identify these before considering prioritising competencies for roles. It is best to keep the number of mandatory competencies small. You can use the organisational level questions on the checklist below to identify these competencies.

Example of a competency prioritisation checklist

Role: Project manager Competency: Promoting social cohesion

Score (1-5)

Is this competency in line with and/or important to the achievement of the organisation's:

▪ Mandate, vision and mission	5
▪ Core values	2
▪ Strategy	2
▪ Operational model	3
▪ Programmes	4
▪ Operational context	5

Total score 21

Is this competency in line with and important to:

▪ Functions	2
▪ Scope of authority and responsibilities	2
▪ A currently identified weakness in the team	3
▪ Requirements of the context	4

Total score 11

Is this competency:

▪ Likely to be hard to recruit especially in some profiles of applicants?	4
▪ An area that the organisation could develop post-recruitment?	3

Total score 7

Is this competency?

Essential or desirable	Essential
Required at the point of recruitment	N

Key for scoring

- 1 No/not at all
- 2 To a limited extent
- 3 Somewhat
- 4 To a large extent
- 5 Yes/very

Use the scoring system to identify competencies that are:

- Essential for the role: competencies that receive a score of 5
- Desirable for the role: competencies that receive 50% or more

If competencies are hard to recruit and the organisation can support the applicant to develop the competency, these can be deemed to be ones that do not need to be demonstrated at the point of recruitment as long as the applicant demonstrates understanding and/or potential.

2. Role profile

Role profiles describe the competencies required for types of roles within an organisation. To ensure you are selecting the most relevant competencies for each role, you can use a competency prioritisation checklist as a basis for creating the role profile.

Role profiles have several functions: they can be used to support recruitment of roster members and staff, to support career development and improve stakeholder relationships. They are a tool for encouraging consistency, transparency and fairness.

This tool can help you to:	To do this effectively you can
Describe the requirements for types of roles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use the role profile to describe the requirements of a type of role to recruit roster members before a specific posting is identified
Describe the requirements for specific posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use the role profiles to create specific job descriptions for posts to ensure consistency across the organisation between similar posts and appropriate progression routes
Recruit effective and suitable people with diverse profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Incorporate into your role profile a consideration of whether particular requirements
Assess individuals' competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use the competencies identified in the role profile as the basis for an assessment and to create a competency assessment matrix
Identify career progression pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Encourage line managers to use the role profiles to discuss career progression routes with their team members
Align approaches with partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discuss and compare the required competencies of staff members or specific roles with partner organisations when alignment would be beneficial

Key information or sections to include in a role profile checklist:

- Competencies that are required for a type of role including contextual and humanitarian competencies as well as specialist technical and functional competencies;
- Indication of whether any competencies are mandatory for all staff members;
- Indication of whether any competencies are mandatory for a particular type of role;
- Indication of the level of proficiency required for each competency.

They can also include information about how the role links to the internal grading system.¹⁸

Two different examples are provided below. The first example is a matrix that can be used to compare the requirements of several roles across the organisation.

The second example is a format that can be used to provide more detail on each type of role. In this case, the role is an Urban Cash Transfer Programming Project Manager. The role profile lays out the competencies, drawn from the Urban Competency Framework and other frameworks, and other key requirements including experience and qualifications.

2. Role profile

Example of a role profile in matrix format

Competencies	Project Officer	Project Manager	Programme Manager	Country Director	Advisor	HR Manager	Finance Manager
Working with diverse stakeholders							
Operating within complex governance structures							
Working in built-up areas							
Adopting a holistic people-centred approach							
Providing assistance based on vulnerabilities and need							
Promoting social cohesion							
Facilitating widespread coverage of services and infrastructure							
Promoting resilience and sustainability							
Applying humanitarian principles in urban contexts							
Achieving results in complex, dynamic environments							
Keeping high standards of behaviour in pressured & dynamic environments							
Operating safely and securely							

Key

M Mandatory competency

E Essential competency

D Desirable competency

2. Role profile

Example of a role profile

Role

Title: Urban Cash Transfer Programming Project Manager

Organisational grade: 6

Years of experience required: 3–5 years

Qualifications: Bachelors level degree or above in a relevant subject
Qualification in project management such as PMD Pro at levels 1 and 2¹⁹

Competencies

Urban contextual and humanitarian competencies:

- Working with diverse stakeholders
- Operating within complex governance structures
- Working in built-up areas
- Adopting a holistic people-centred approach
- Providing assistance based on vulnerabilities and need
- Promoting social cohesion
- Facilitating widespread coverage of services and infrastructure
- Promoting resilience and sustainability
- Applying humanitarian principles in urban contexts*
- Achieving results in complex, dynamic environments*
- Maintaining high standards of behaviour in pressured and dynamic environments*
- Operating safely and securely*

Level expected: level 3 (demonstrated to a satisfactory degree) including behaviours that are expected for all and the behaviours for those working in programmatic roles

Cash transfer programming competencies as defined in the CaLP competency framework in the following competency domains:

- Cash concepts and definitions
- Assessment
- Response analysis
- Set-up and implementation
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Information management
- Cash preparedness
- Cash advocacy and coordination

Level expected: level 4 (demonstrated effectively) including all of the essential competencies and those for programme design and quality

Project Management competencies in the following competency domains:

- Project management including issue and risk management
- People management
- Fundraising, resource mobilisation and proposal development
- Finance and budget management
- Resource management including management of technical, administrative & financial resources
- Stakeholder management

** competencies marked with an asterisk are mandatory for all roles within the organisation at a minimum of level 3 (demonstrated to a satisfactory level)*

3. Job description

Job descriptions describe the context, responsibilities and requirements of a specific post. They build on the competency information outlined in role profiles and put these requirements into context. A unique job description should be created for each post by a manager responsible for recruitment in an employing organisation. Job descriptions should be frequently updated by the employee and their line manager.

Job descriptions encourage accountability as they make sure the responsibilities and requirements of a post are clear.

This tool can help you to:	To do this effectively you can
Describe the requirements for specific posts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Include the job description with the job notice so that potential applicants know what is required in the role
Recruit effective and suitable people with diverse profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Design recruitment and selection processes that assess applicants' current achievements and future potential against the competencies laid out in the job description
Assess individuals' competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Assess the competencies identified in the job description using a competency assessment matrix to identify strengths and weaknesses during recruitment or performance appraisal■ Develop continuing professional development plans with employees in relation to the competencies described in the job description and based on performance appraisals

Key information or sections to include in a job description:

- Specific context and details of the role;
- Responsibilities of the post including management responsibilities;
- Person specification including:
 - Specialist technical or functional competencies
 - Qualifications and experience
 - Contextual or organisational specific requirements such as language or value set
 - Additional skills such as: driving license, willingness to travel.²⁰

Competencies can be listed on the job description or in the role profile, provided as an accompanying document. The job description must clearly state where the relevant competencies can be found. Some requirements can prioritise a limited profile of applicants: e.g. in some contexts academic qualifications are often held by men, or by those with wealthier backgrounds. Placing more emphasis on competencies is a way to focus on what applicants are capable of doing rather than the opportunities they have had to date and can support effective recruitment of a diverse range of staff.

3. Job description

Example of a job description²¹

A. Scope of the Role	
Use this space to describe the scope of the role including: the seniority and breadth of responsibilities and details of the specific context in which the post holder will work	
B. Connected Roles	
Managed by:	List the job title of the person who will manage the post holder
Managing:	List the job title of the person who will manage the post holder
C. Skills and Competencies	
Urban contextual and humanitarian competencies	List the competencies from the Urban Competency Framework prioritising any that are particularly important for the job
Thematic and functional competencies	List any competencies here that are functional or thematic; these can be defined by the organisation or drawn from other existing competency frameworks
D. Qualifications and Experience	
Previous experience	List any specific experiences that are required here including duration
Qualifications	List any academic qualification or membership of any professional bodies that are required
E. Contextual or Organisational Specific Requirements	
<p>List any specific organisations or contexts that might require additional competencies or experience, which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Organisation specific knowledge and experience ■ Organisational value set ■ Languages ■ Country specific knowledge 	
F. Additional Skills or Requirements	
<p>List any additional skills or requirements which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ IT and computer skills ■ Ability and willingness to travel ■ Driving license may be required ■ Certificate of good conduct or police check ■ Recent attendance on a personal security course 	

4. Planning tool for competency-based recruitment

An interview planning tool helps you to decide at which stage of the recruitment process you will assess which competencies.

The planning tool will help you to ensure that you assess all the relevant competencies in an appropriate way while avoiding any unnecessary duplication. This allows you to design and use a selection process to effectively assess your applicants while being mindful of the length of time that a recruitment process can take.

This tool can help you to:	To do this effectively you can
Recruit effective and suitable people with diverse profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Ask questions that relate the competencies to the specific context to help you to assess how the applicant might perform in that context
Assess individuals' competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Use the planning tool to identify ways in which you will provide opportunities for applicants to show themselves at their best and to demonstrate their potential■ Ensure that there is no in-built bias in your recruitment process
Provide recognition of competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Use the planning tool to inform how you will assess individuals' competencies in the most appropriate way

Key information to include in a planning tool for competency-based recruitment:

- Competencies drawn from the job description or role profile with an indication of which are mandatory, essential or desirable;
- Stages or activities that will be included in the selection process which may include a combination of the following depending on the role: an application, a presentation, one or more rounds of interviews, group activity, submission of examples of previously undertaken work that are relevant to the post, a written task or a practical activity.

When deciding when and how each competency will be assessed, you should consider which method will be most suitable. For example, if you are assessing how someone might work with others in a stressful situation (Competency 11.2 Maintaining professionalism in a challenging environment), a group activity may be most appropriate.

Because of their importance, you may decide to assess mandatory and essential competencies at more than one stage to make sure that you gain an accurate picture of the applicant. You may also decide to assess these competencies at the initial application stage so that you avoid shortlisting any applicants who do not meet your essential requirements.

When planning recruitment, you should consider the environment in which you are working

4. Planning tool for competency-based recruitment

and whether it is realistic to expect that you will find suitable applicants who demonstrate all the competencies your post requires. You can use the planning tool to indicate if there are any competencies or requirements that applicants must demonstrate at the recruitment stage, and any which your organisation would be able to support the post holder to develop over time if they show suitable understanding and potential. You should also make sure that your recruitment process does not inadvertently create any bias: for example, lengthy assessment centres including an overnight stay may discourage women with small children from applying.

Example of a planning tool for competency-based recruitment

Job Title: Urban Cash Transfer Programming Manager

Criteria	Application	Interview	Practical exercise	Reference	Evidence required?
Urban competencies					
Working with diverse stakeholders*		x	x	x	
Operating within complex governance structures		x			
Working in built-up areas		x			
Adopting a holistic people-centred approach		x			
Providing assistance based on vulnerabilities and need*		x		x	
Promoting social cohesion			x		
Facilitating widespread coverage of services and infrastructure		x			
Promoting resilience and sustainability			x		
Applying humanitarian principles in urban contexts*	x		x	x	
Achieving results in complex, dynamic environments	x	x			
Maintaining high standards of behaviour in pressured and dynamic environments*	x		x	x	
Operating safely and securely*	x	x		x	
Additional technical and functional competencies					
Cash concepts and definitions	x	x	x	x	
Cash advocacy and coordination	x	x			
Cash preparedness	x	x			
Project management	x	x		x	
Budget management	x	x		x	
Qualifications, experience and additional requirements					
Bachelors' degree or equivalent	x				x
Shared values	x	x	x	x	
Up-to-date certificate of good conduct	x				x
Driving license	x				x
Right to work and travel in country	x				x

* Competencies that are mandatory for all employees are marked with an asterisk

5. Competency-based interview questions

During an interview, you can ask questions that encourage applicants to provide examples that demonstrate how proficient they are in the competencies. You should prepare a series of questions in advance of the interview and identify some potential follow-up questions that will help you to fully explore the applicant's responses.

Asking competency-based questions can help you to assess how well the applicant understands the scope and implications of the competency. It can also help you to assess whether a candidate has the potential to develop the competency even if they do not currently demonstrate it.

This tool can help you to:	To do this effectively you can
Recruit effective and suitable people with diverse profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Ask questions that relate the competencies to the specific context to help you to assess how the applicant might perform in that context■ Treat applicants consistently by preparing questions in advance and adopting a neutral, culturally aware approach in the interview
Assess individuals' competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Prepare questions that will allow the applicant to demonstrate their level of proficiency in a range of situations
Provide recognition of competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Learning providers or employing organisations can support individuals' career development by providing formal recognition of competence. This can be provided following a learning programme, at the successful completion of a deployment or as part of an organisations' sustainable exit strategy

Key information to include in a planning tool for competency-based recruitment:

- A list of the competencies that you are assessing during the interview with an indication of whether any are mandatory for all staff in the organisation or essential for the post;
- Questions that help you to assess whether the applicant understands the competency and any of the underlying concepts;
- Opportunities for the applicant to explain how they have demonstrated the competency;²³
- Opportunities for the applicant to reflect on how effectively they demonstrated the competency and identify anything they learned or would do differently next time.

Fully exploring a competency can take a long time so it is best to limit the number of competencies that you investigate in the interview. You can use the planning tool for competency-based recruitment to help you decide which competencies to focus on in the interview and which you will assess in other ways, e.g. a written exercise or a group activity.

During the interview, you should make notes on the applicants' responses so that you can refer to them when you compare applicants; this is particularly important when assessing competencies as assessment can be subjective.

5. Competency-based interview questions

Examples of competency-based interview questions

Competency domain	Example questions
Working with diverse stakeholders	<p>Competency 1.2: Promoting coordination and collaboration with and between stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you explain what diversity means to you in the context of 'working with diverse stakeholders'? Can you give me an example of a time that you successfully improved collaboration between stakeholders? What did you learn from this situation? <p>Competency 1.3: Defusing conflict between stakeholders with competing interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What do you think are some of the common causes of conflict between stakeholders and how do you think these can be worked through? Can you give an example of a time when conflicts arose between stakeholders and how you defused the situation? Is there anything you could have done differently?
Operating within complex governance structures	<p>Competency 2.1: Engaging with decision makers and influencers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you list who some of the key decision makers and influencers might be in an urban environment? Can you give an example of a time when you worked closely with a key decision maker to agree a course of action and describe the steps you took to ensure that you reached agreement? Do you think that you, or the person you were working with, might approach things differently as a result of working together?
Working in built-up areas	<p>Competency 3.3: Addressing aspects of built-up areas that negatively impact humanitarian outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you give some examples of what might restrict movement, free access or usage of particular urban areas and explain how these might impact on positive humanitarian outcomes? Can you describe a time when you have had to take any such restrictions into account when planning your work and tell us what actions you took and how effectively you achieved your objectives? Do you think you took the right course of action or would you do anything differently if faced with this situation again?
Adopting a holistic people-centred approach	<p>Competencies 4.1: Addressing interrelated needs in urban populations and 4.2: Working across sectors and industries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you describe some of the ways in which people's needs might be interconnected? Thinking about a time when you have worked with organisations from industries other than your own, can you describe what steps you took to ensure that the collaboration was effective? What have you learned about working across organisations and industries?
Providing assistance based on vulnerabilities and need	<p>Competency 5.2: Ensuring access to impartial assistance for the most in need</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you describe some of the barriers which might prevent people from accessing assistance in a humanitarian context? Please describe any measures you have taken to remove barriers or improve inclusivity in your work. How did you measure whether the steps that you took were successful?

5. Competency-based interview questions

Examples of competency-based interview questions - contd.

Competency domain	Example questions
Promoting social cohesion	<p>Competencies 6.1: Identifying social, cultural and religious norms, influences and dynamics that impact humanitarian outcomes and 6.2: Promoting social cohesion and trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you give some examples of any social, cultural or religious norms or influences that might impact humanitarian outcomes positively or negatively? Please describe a time when you have taken actions to reduce negative impacts of any norms or influences or promote social cohesion.
Facilitating widespread coverage of services and infrastructure	<p>Competency 7.2: Facilitating equitable access to urban services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you describe some of the barriers people might face in accessing services? Can you identify some ways in which a person in the role that you are applying for might be able to facilitate equitable access to services in the course of their work? Can you describe a time that you have taken into account the needs of people with disabilities or those who are marginalised?
Promoting resilience and sustainability	<p>Competency 8.1: Promoting the resumption and adaptation of markets, economic systems and financial services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you describe some of the ways in which humanitarian action can damage existing markets? Can you give an example of a time when you took steps to make sure that you fully understood the local context before planning an action? <p>Competency 8.3: Promoting resilience of urban communities and actors to cope with, adapt to and recover from future shocks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you explain some of the ways in which becoming resilient can be challenging for people living in an urban context? What did you learn from this situation that you think will be useful to you again?
Applying humanitarian principles in urban contexts	<p>Competency 9.2: Applying humanitarian standards and principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you describe any challenges that might arise in applying the humanitarian principles in an urban crisis? Thinking about a time when you have applied one of the humanitarian principles, can you describe the actions you took to overcome any challenges? Is there anything that you learned from this situation?
Achieving results in complex, dynamic environments	<p>Competency 10.2: Demonstrating accountability to multiple, diverse stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can you explain what being accountable looks like in practice? Can you describe a time when you have actively sought out the opinions and perspective of a range of stakeholders including those who benefit from your work? What did you do as a result of listening to these perspectives?
Maintaining high standards of behaviour in pressured and dynamic environments	<p>Competency 11.1: Promoting well-being and dealing with stress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What sort of situations do you find most stressful and what actions do you take to manage your stress? Can you give an example of when you had to actively manage your stress to continue working effectively and explain how successful you think you were? What did you learn from this situation and what might you do differently next time?
Operating safely and securely	<p>Competency 12.1: Assessing risk in the urban environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are common types of safety and security risks in urban crises? Can you describe a time, that you took steps to understand the main security risks and how they might impact you personally? How effective were the actions that you took to understand and mitigate the risks?

6. Group activities and simulations

Group activities and simulations are tools that you can use to assess individuals' and team competencies. They provide opportunities for groups of people to work together on a task or in a situation that requires them to demonstrate a set of competencies.

Group activities and simulations can be useful as they allow you to gain a fuller understanding of an individual's level of proficiency in a competency or as learning opportunities.

This tool can help you to:	To do this effectively you can
Recruit effective and suitable people with diverse profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make sure that there are no barriers to active participation that are unintentional
Assess individuals' competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create activities or simulations that put people into an unusual or slightly pressured situation so that they are able to demonstrate what they can achieve• Create activities or simulations that reflect the context in which the applicant would be working to assess how they might respond in a given situation
Assess team competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Create activities or simulations in which team members have to work together so that you can assess how they perform as a group
Build competencies of staff and roster members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Conduct a debriefing activity at the end of the activity or simulation so that people can reflect on their actions and what they learned
Provide recognition of competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Issue certificates or digital badges to reflect the achievements of individuals during the activity or simulation
Build capacity of stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Invite partners or other key stakeholders to participate in activities or simulations alongside staff or roster members

Key information or sections to include in a competency assessment matrix

- Details of what will happen: how long the activity or simulation will last, where and when it will be, an overview of what will be required and what follow up will take place;
- Information that the participants need to know in order to undertake the task including background information and instructions;
- Information about which competencies are being assessed during the activity.

Group activities and simulations can range in scope and scale from being a short 15-minute activity involving a few participants to a large, multi-stakeholder event involving large numbers of people. You need to carefully plan the activity you choose so that it is no more complex than it needs to be for you to achieve your purpose. You also need to take care that you do not put people in situations that will pose a threat to their safety, security or well-being.²⁴

6. Group activities and simulations

Plan for creating a desk-top simulation

	Description	Example	Documents needed
Context	Select a context that is relevant to the type of work that you do. This can be a real context or created	2015 earthquake in Nepal	Description of the context and location Photos (taken from a previous event)
Background information on the emergency	Provide a description of what happened in the emergency and what is currently happening, including information about how many people are affected, where they were and in what ways they are affected	Against the background of the earthquake which took place in 2015, a specific and fictional situation involving civil unrest in a district in Kathmandu can be described to provide a focus for the task	Newspaper reports Humanitarian reports from OCHA Maps of the affected areas Learning needs analysis results
Facilitators & observers	Several people will need to facilitate the simulation acting in role as relevant people and providing information as necessary. You will also need one or more people to observe the participants	Facilitators can take the roles of: an executive officer for Kathmandu, a UN representative and a representative of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)	Name badges Observation sheets for the observers to make notes
Roles	Divide participants into groups and provide information about the organisations that they work for and their roles in the organisation	Groups might include a local NGO, a local business, an international NGO, a local engineering firm, a faith-based group and the NDMA	Organisation descriptions Role cards
Task	The groups should be asked to conduct a task relevant to the situation that will allow them to demonstrate the required competencies. A co-operative task is likely to be more effective, but you can include competitive elements	The teams might be asked to come together to develop a plan to provide assistance and protection to the people who are living in the areas impacted by civil unrest	Task description
Complications, updates & injects	You can prepare additional pieces of information or events to be inserted as the situation unfolds. They are designed to test specific competencies more deeply or to make sure that the participants stay on track	Examples of injects might include: a curfew being imposed by the National Government; aid convoys from India being delayed at the border indefinitely; a crackdown on foreign agencies working without proper registration in Nepal; a security incident	Written information or updates in the form of news stories or emails Rumours spread verbally by facilitators in role
Competencies to be assessed	These can be selected from the planning tool for competency-based recruitment. You will need to consider how many competencies your observers will be able to observe and assess based on the ratio of participants to observers	This scenario might provide opportunities for individuals to demonstrate the following competencies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with diverse stakeholders Promoting social cohesion Maintaining high standards of behaviour in pressured and dynamic environments Operating safely and securely 	Competency assessment matrices for the observers to use

7. Competency assessment matrix

A competency assessment matrix is a tool that allows you to assess an individual's performance against a set of required competencies.

Competency assessment matrices can be used to evaluate the extent to which a competency is demonstrated and identify development needs or future potential. A competency assessment matrix can be used as part of a recruitment process, for performance appraisal, to develop a continuing professional development plan or identify career pathways.

This tool can help you to:	To do this effectively you can
Recruit effective and suitable people with diverse profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Record notes on the matrix about the applicant's performance during the interview and any activities, and make notes on their future potential
Assess individuals' competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use the matrix to assess the level of competency with a quantitative measurement and evidence to support the grading. The matrix can be used by an assessor, for example during recruitment, or together with the individual, for example during a performance appraisal
Assess team competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use the matrix as the basis for a team assessment; individuals can use the matrix and then score can be aggregated for analysis
Plan competency development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify areas for further development and record these on the matrix. How to address these development needs can be explored on a continuing professional development plan
Provide recognition of competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Conduct an assessment to evaluate an individual's demonstration of the competencies in order to issue them with a certificate or formal recognition of their achievements.²⁵ This assessment can include individuals creating a portfolio of evidence to demonstrate their proficiency in the competencies

Key information or sections in group activities or simulation:

- List of the competency domains and associated competencies;
- Quantitative measure of achievement against the domain as a whole or each competency depending on the level of complexity required;
- Guidance on the grading system to explain the values: for example, a scale of 1–5 with one being 'not demonstrated' to five being 'full mastery';
- Space for evidence to be provided.

7. Competency assessment matrix

The example competency assessment matrix below has been designed to be used by an assessor during recruitment. The columns allow for the assessor to record information from different stages of the selection process. Additional columns could be added if there are more components to the interview. To use the format for a performance appraisal, different columns can be used. For example, the first column can be a self-assessment by the individual and the second can be the line manager's comments with a final column to identify aspects of the competency to develop further.

Example of a competency assessment matrix

Competencies	Examples provided in interview	Evidence observed in group activity	Current demonstration of the competency and development needs/future potential	Score 1-5
Working with diverse stakeholders				
Mapping diverse stakeholders	<i>Applicant provided an example of a time when they created and maintained a list of all the stakeholders that they might work alongside then discussed the list with their line manager.</i>	<i>Applicant proposed to the group that they should map out all the likely stakeholders who would be impacted by the action they were planning but the method she used was not a good one.</i>	<i>Shows awareness of the importance of mapping stakeholders but could do better</i> <i>Has potential to develop this further with guidance particularly in conducting participatory stakeholder mapping</i>	2
Promoting coordination and collaboration with and between stakeholders				
Defusing conflict between stakeholders with competing interests				
Average for the competency domain				

Key for scoring

- 1 Not demonstrated
- 2 Demonstrated to a limited degree
- 3 Demonstrated to a satisfactory degree
- 4 Demonstrated effectively
- 5 Complete mastery

8. Continuing professional development plan

A continuing professional development plan is a tool that can be used to plan and review actions to address weaknesses in required competencies. It builds on the areas that were identified for development in the competency assessment matrix, and provides a format for planning specific and measurable actions to be taken to address the weaknesses.

Continuing professional development plans help you to make sure that your staff are reaching their full potential. Individuals can use the tool to make sure that they are pro-actively building their own competencies to support their future career progression.

This tool can help you to:	To do this effectively you can
Plan competency development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Use the tool to work with individuals and teams to identify actions that are needed to improve competencies and to form individual and group learning plans
Build competencies of staff and roster members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Identify specific actions, courses or learning opportunities that can be taken, and review achievement
Identify career progression pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Use role profiles to help staff identify potential future career pathways and plan learning that will enable them to move from their current level of proficiency to their desired level

Key information or sections to include in a continuing professional development plan:

- List of required competencies from job description or role profile;
- Areas identified as weaknesses in competency assessment;
- Planned actions to be taken with an indication of when they will be completed by;
- Review section to monitor what actions were taken and how successful they were.

The specific columns in the example can be altered to suit organisational needs.

When identifying actions to be taken, it is important to consider:

- Time and resources that are available for professional development;
- What learning opportunities are available, what the investment would be (in terms of time and money) and whether the outcome would be worth the investment;
- What type of learning opportunity would best suit the learning need.²⁶

A wide range of types of actions can be taken to build competency. These include:

- Formal, structured learning opportunities such as a face-to-face workshop, online facilitated workshop, online course or webinar, or a lecture;
- Informal learning opportunities working with others in the work place such as mentoring or coaching combined with self-directed study or self-briefing;
- Learning by doing, for example through a new task, increased responsibilities, a work placement, secondment or internship.²⁷

8. Continuing professional development plan

Example of a competency-based continuing professional development plan

Learning plan					Learning review					
Required competencies	Competency level (1 –5)	Specific weakness in competency identified	Actions to address competency gaps	By when?	Actions taken to address competency gap	Date	New level (1 –5)	Actions taken to implement competencies in work	Actions taken to share learning with colleagues	Further learning required
Working with diverse stakeholders*										
Operating within complex governance structures										
Working in built-up areas										
Adopting a holistic people-centred approach										
Providing assistance based on vulnerabilities and need*										
Promoting social cohesion										
Facilitating widespread coverage of services and infrastructure										
Promoting resilience & sustainability										
Applying humanitarian principles in urban contexts*										
Achieving results in complex, dynamic environments										
Maintaining high standards of behaviour*										
Operating safely and securely*										

* Competencies that are mandatory for all employees are marked with an asterisk

9. Team analysis tool

A team analysis tool allows you to analyse the competencies of your team as a whole and identify team strengths and weaknesses.

Understanding where your team's strengths and weaknesses lie can help you to plan group learning opportunities or to fill gaps with targeted recruitment.

This tool can help you to:	To do this effectively you can
Identify recruitment needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Recruit individuals to join the team whose competencies effectively complement the existing skills of team members
Assess team competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use the tool to analyse the overall performance of your team members in relation to the competencies and identify areas of strength and weakness
Plan competency development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Address areas of team weakness to identify and offer appropriate learning and development opportunities for the team

Key information or sections to include in a continuing professional development plan:

- List of competencies that are required by team members and that are being assessed;
- A method of measuring each team member's performance against the competencies;
- A method for aggregating the results;
- A tool for comparing the scores the competencies have received.

The example builds on the competency assessment matrix which can be used by each staff member to individually assess their competencies. The results from the assessment matrices should be entered into the table and an average for each competency calculated. A diagram can then be created to compare the competencies. There are two different types of diagram in the example below. The first is a radar diagram and the second is a bar chart. You can create diagrams such as these automatically using programmes such as excel, or you can create a diagram manually; bar charts are one of the easiest forms of diagrams to create manually.

The diagram can be used to easily identify which competencies are weakest and which are strongest. In Figure 5:

- Competencies 1, 6 and 11 scored less than 2 and are the weakest;
- Competencies 2, 3, 7 and 10 scored between 2 and 4 and are mid-range;
- Competencies 4, 5, 8, 9 and 12 scored over 4 and are the strongest.

For the mid-range scores, you should identify if everyone has scored between 2 and 4 or whether there is anyone in the team who has a specific need in this area which may have lowered the average.

9. Team analysis tool

Using the scores, you can plan group learning opportunities to develop the weaker competencies or, if relevant, you could prioritise the weakest competencies in your recruitment. In this example, you may decide to:

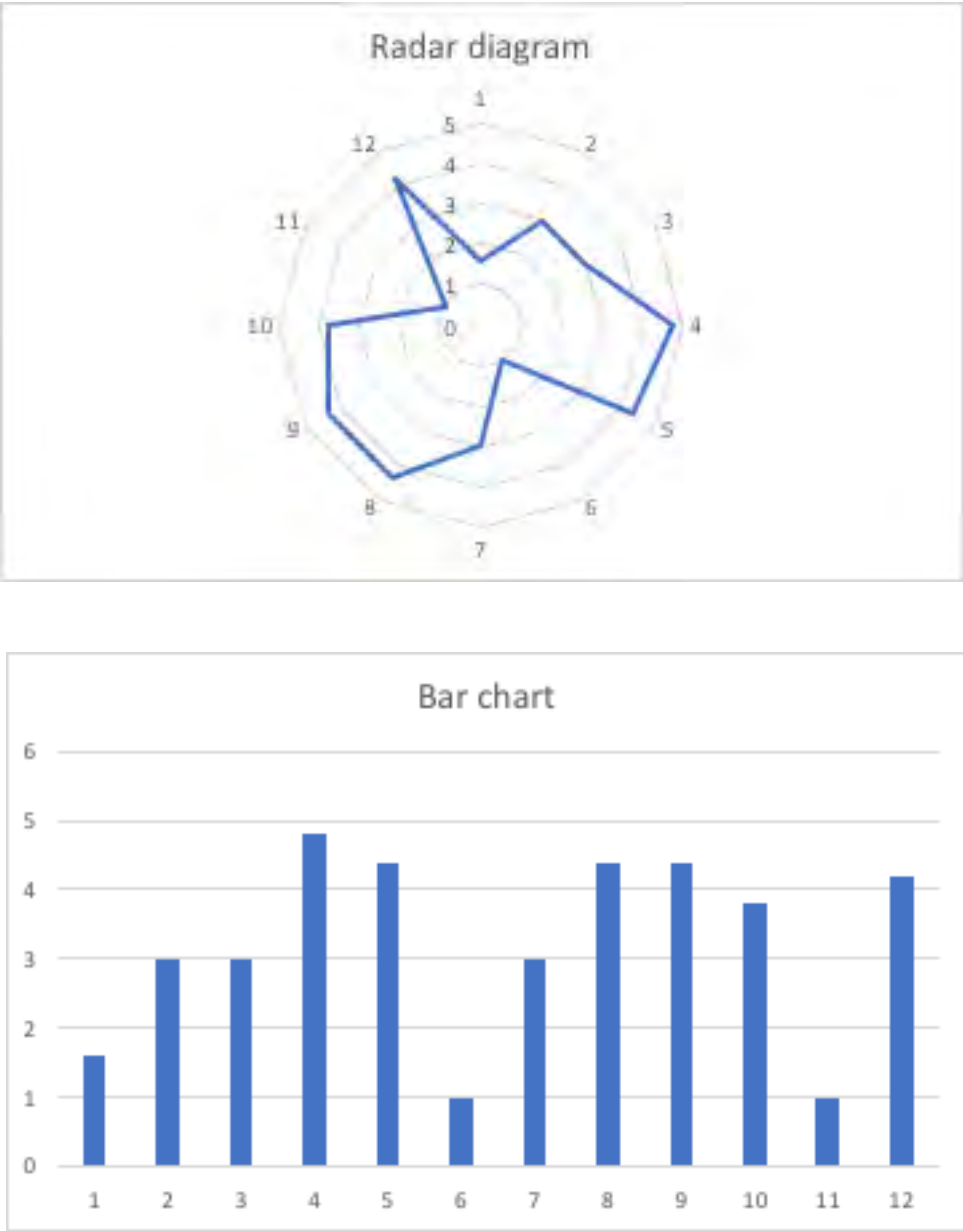
- Organise some training on Competency 11: maintaining high standards of behaviour in pressured and dynamic environments;
- Incorporate an expert in stakeholder mapping into your team to address the team weakness in Competency 1: working with diverse stakeholders.

Example of a team analysis tool

No.	Competency domain	Team member 1	Team member 2	Team member 3	Etc	Total score (all team members)	Average score
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 complex, dynamic environments						
11	Maintaining high standards of behaviour in pressured and dynamic environments*						
12	Operating safely and securely*						

* Competencies that are mandatory for all employees are marked with an asterisk

Figure 5: Example of two completed combined team competencies diagrams from Excel



NB In these diagrams 1–12 denotes the competency and the scale from 0–5 refers to the average score

Footnotes

1. A fuller list can be found in Campbell, L. (2016) Stepping Back: Understanding Cities and their Systems, ALNAP Working Paper. London: ALNAP/ODI, p. 16. Drawing on the work of Hamdi, N. (2004) Small Change: About the Art of Practice and the Limits of Planning in Cities. Abingdon: Routledge; and Kupp, D. (2012) Designing Urban Programs: Seven Challenges for NGOs. Key Challenges for Urban Project Design. Toronto: University of Toronto.
2. For a list of the types of public, private and civil society stakeholders that may be found in urban contexts see Campbell, L. (2016) Stepping Back: Understanding Cities and their Systems, ALNAP Working Paper. London: ALNAP/ODI, p. 41.
3. UN Sustainable Development Goal 11: Make Cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Available at: www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/cities/
4. OECD (2012) OECD Environmental Outlook to 2050. Paris: OECD Publishing.
5. Meaux, A. and Osofisan, W. (2015) A Review of Context Analysis Tools for Urban Humanitarian Response, IIED Working Paper. London: IIED.
6. Campbell, L. (2016) Stepping Back: Understanding Cities and their Systems, ALNAP Working Paper. London: ALNAP/ODI.
7. Brown, D., Johnson, C., Walker, J., Vivekananda, J. and Boano, C. (2015) Urban Crises and Humanitarian Response: A Literature Review. London: The Bartlett Development Planning Unit UCL/ DFID.
8. Denman, K. (2018) Urban Competency Framework: Informative Report. London: RedR UK.
9. Denman, K. (2018) Urban Competency Framework: Informative Report. London: RedR UK.
10. The Core Humanitarian Competency Framework can be accessed at: www.chsalliance.org/what-we-do/chcf
11. HPass (2019) Humanitarian Learning Standards: Handbook for the Provision of Quality Learning for Humanitarian Action. London: QALC/ HLA; HPass (2019) Handbook for the Provision of Quality Assessment of Competencies for Humanitarian Action. London: QALC/ HLA. Both available at: www.hpass.org
12. For more information about tools that can be used to support each of these purposes see the toolkit and overview of tools on page 23.
13. This model is drawn from EUHAP HA Professions work and more information can be found at <http://euhap.eu/ha-professions/>
14. Definition based on: Fereday, E. (2018) Guide to Integrating the CHCF and Other Competency Frameworks. London: CHSA. Available at: www.chsalliance.org/files/files/Resources/IntegratingCHCFwithotherframeworkGuide.pdf
15. Ibid.
16. An example of how competency frameworks can be compared can be found in The Happold Institute (2018) Engineers for Humanitarian Relief and Development. London: The Happold Foundation. In this document the Institute of Civil Engineering attributes are compared and aligned with the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework.
17. A non-exhaustive list of competency frameworks that may be helpful can be found in the Further Resources section.

18. CaLP Cash Transfer Programming competency framework can be found at: www.cashlearning.org/downloads/calp-ctp-competency-web.pdf
19. PMD Pro are project management qualifications at levels 1 and 2. More information can be found at: www.pm4ngos.org/pmd-pro-1/
20. This job description model is based on the role profiles created by the EUHAP programme which can be found at: <http://euhap.eu/ha-professions/>
21. This job description model is based on the role profiles created by the EUHAP programme which can be found at: <http://euhap.eu/ha-professions/>
22. More information about competency-based references can be found in Prescott, G., Wakefield, S. and Narayanan, U. (2017) Guide to the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework. Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance. Available at: www.chsalliance.org/what-we-do/chcf/guide
23. Your questions can follow the STAR (situation, target, action, result) format that is frequently used in competency-based interviews. More information on STAR and on conducting competency-based interviews can be found in Prescott, G., Wakefield, S. and Narayanan, U. (2017) Guide to the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework. Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance. Available at: www.chsalliance.org/what-we-do/chcf/guide
24. More information on simulations can be found in: Robertson, K. and Fereday, E. (2016) Ready to Role: Accessing the Benefits of Simulations in Humanitarian Capacity Building. London: RedR UK. Available at: www.redr.org.uk/News/2017-June/Simulations-in-humanitarian-capacity-building; Hockaday, D., Barnhardt, D., Staples, J., Sitko, P. and Bulten, O. (2013) ECB Project Case Study: Simulating the Worst to Prepare the Best: A Study of Humanitarian Simulations and their Benefits. Oxford: Oxfam. Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/ecb-project-case-study-simulating-worst-prepare-best-study-humanitarian-simulations-and-their-benefits>
25. For more information about assessing competencies, see HPass (2019) Handbook for the Provision of Quality Assessment of Competencies for Humanitarian Action. London: QALC/ HLA. Available at: www.hpass.org
26. For more information about matching learning opportunities to needs, see HPass (2019) Humanitarian Learning Standards: Handbook for the Provision of Quality Learning for Humanitarian Action. London: QALC/ HLA. Guidance on where to find learning resources can be found in the Further Resources section.
27. For information on balancing types of learning opportunities see Lombardo, M.M. and Eichinger, R.W. (2002) The Career Architect Development Planner. Minneapolis: Lominger.

Further resources

Brown, D., Johnson, C., Walker, J., Vivekananda, J. and Boano, C. (2015) *Urban Crises and Humanitarian Response: A Literature Review*. London: The Bartlett Development Planning Unit UCL/DFID. Available at: www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/bartlett.pdf

Campbell, L. (2016) *Stepping Back: Understanding Cities and their Systems*, ALNAP Working Paper. London: ALNAP/ODI. Available at: www.alnap.org/help-library/stepping-back-understanding-cities-and-their-systems

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PM4 NGOs (2016) *A Guide to the PMD Pro V 1.8*. Available at: www.pm4ngos.org/discover-pm4ngos/pmd-pro-guide/

Prescott, G., Wakefield, S. and Narayanan, U. (2017) *Guide to the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework*. Core Humanitarian Standard Alliance. Available at: www.chsalliance.org/what-we-do/chcf/guide

Further resources

Robertson, K. and Fereday, E. (2016) *Ready to Role: Accessing the Benefits of Simulations in Humanitarian Capacity Building*. London: RedR UK. Available at: www.redr.org.uk/News/2017-June/Simulations-in-humanitarian-capacity-building

The Sphere Project (2016) *Using the Sphere Standards in Urban Settings*. The Sphere Project. Available at: www.alnap.org/help-library/using-the-sphere-standards-in-urban-settings

The Sphere Project (2018) *The Sphere Handbook*, Geneva: The Sphere Project. Available at: <https://www.spherestandards.org/handbook-2018/>

Examples of competency frameworks from the humanitarian and development sectors

Bhardwaj, R. (2015) *Inclusion Competency Framework: For Humanitarian Professionals – Supporting Gender-sensitive Age and Disability Inclusion in Humanitarian Action*. ADCAP.

Bioforce and RedR UK (2011) *International Development and Humanitarian Trainer Competency Framework*. Available at: www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/training-competency-framework.pdf

British Council (n.d.) *British Council Behaviours*. Available at: www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/bc_behaviours.pdf (accessed 4 December 2018).

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IASC (2009) *Humanitarian Coordination Competency Framework*. New York: IASC. Available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/leadership-and-humanitarian-coordination/documents-public/humanitarian-coordination-competencies>

Mango (2013) *Mango Register Competency Framework*. Available at: www.mango.org.uk/pool/mango-register-competency-framework-2013.pdf

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Tina-Fisher, H. (2010) *Child Protection in Emergencies (CPiE) Competency Framework*. Interagency Initiative of the Child Protection Working Groups. Available at: www.cpcnetwork.org/resource/child-protection-in-emergencies-cpie-competency-framework/

Further resources

UNICEF (2009) *Competency Definitions and Behavioural Indicators*. Available at: www.unicef.org/about/employ/files/UNICEF_Competencies.pdf

Examples of competency frameworks from professional institutes

The Engineering Council (2013) *UK-SPEC: UK Standard for Professional Engineering Competence*. London: The Engineering Council. Available at: [www.engc.org.uk/engcdocuments/internet/Website/UK-SPEC%20third%20edition%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.engc.org.uk/engcdocuments/internet/Website/UK-SPEC%20third%20edition%20(1).pdf)

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Institution of Structural Engineers (2015) *Initial Professional Development*. London: IStructE. Available at: www.istructe.org/downloads/careers-and-development/ipd/ipd-chartered-membership-2011.pdf

RTPI (n.d.) *Core CPD Framework*. Available at: www.rtpi.org.uk/education-and-careers/cpd-for-rtpi-members/core-cpd-framework/ (accessed 4 December 2018).

Learning resources

DisasterReady is an online learning platform offering free courses on a wide range of topics relevant to humanitarian action. It can be accessed at: https://ready.csod.com/LMS/catalog/Welcome.aspx?tab_page_id=-67&tab_id=-1

Harvard Humanitarian Initiative offer a range of online learning programme relevant to the humanitarian sector. It can be accessed at: <https://hhi.harvard.edu/education#intro>

Kaya is an online learning platform offering free courses on a wide range of topics relevant to humanitarian action. It can be accessed at: <https://kayaconnect.org/>

Last Mile Learning is an online learning platform offering free courses on a wide range of topics relevant to humanitarian action. It can be accessed at: <https://lingos.org/last-mile-learning/>

PHAP offer a range of online courses and accreditation programmes relevant to the humanitarian sector. Information can be accessed at: <https://phap.org/events/training>

ReliefWeb International lists up-to-date information about training programmes on offer. It can be accessed at: <https://reliefweb.int/training>

Annex 1 - List of contributors

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We also thank everyone who participated and gave feedback during later stages of consultation on the Urban Competency Framework.



About the Global Alliance

The Global Alliance for Urban Crises (the 'Alliance') is a global, multi-disciplinary and collaborative community of practice. The Alliance acts as an inclusive platform bringing together local governments, built environment professionals, academics, humanitarian and development actors, working to arrive at systemic change in the way we enable cities and urban communities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to urban crises.

Launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016, the Alliance is guided by the Urban Crisis Charter, which outlines four main commitments made by its members: 1) Prioritize local municipal leadership in determining response to urban crisis that is aligned with development trajectories and promotes the active participation of affected people – with special attention to the participation of women – and other key urban stakeholders; 2) Adopt urban resilience as a common framework to align human rights, humanitarian and development goals; 3) Manage urban displacement as a combined human rights, development and humanitarian concern; and 4) Build partnerships between city, national, regional and global levels across disciplines and professions, as well as ensure the involvement of local government and professional associations.

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