A GUIDE TO THE

core

HUMANITARIAN COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

SUPPORTING HUMANITARIANS TO WORK EFFECTIVELY

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PART 1:
BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION

- **Background to the CHCF and the Guide**

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1.0 BACKGROUND TO THE CHCF AND THE GUIDE

'The Core Humanitarian Competency Framework (CHCF) serves as a guidance tool and resource, especially for those that do not have, or have only limited, resources and capacity to develop their own competency frameworks.'

Review and Development of the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework Report, 2016

In 2010, the Consortium of British Humanitarian Agencies (now the Start Network), supported by People in Aid (now the CHS Alliance), worked with 15 organisations to identify core competencies deemed critical to enhance capacity, and improve effectiveness of humanitarian work and assistance to people affected by humanitarian crisis. The effort, which was led by Action Aid and facilitated by People in Aid, took place between June and July 2010, and resulted in the development of a common set of core competencies that could be used as a standard guide by humanitarian organisations to strengthen capacity among their staff: the CHCF. The CHCF reflects a collaborative, inter-agency approach towards developing a set of core or generic competencies that can be used as a handy reference and resource for humanitarian workers. The CHCF is the only framework that outlines the professional competencies that are relevant for all of those who are engaged in humanitarian action. It can be used alongside other frameworks that address other aspects of people's roles such as related, for example, to their specialism.

In 2016, a review of the CHCF was commissioned by the CHS Alliance with funding through the Talent Development Programme of the Start Network. The primary goal of the review was to ascertain the relevance and practical value of the CHCF following its inception five years previously. A wide range of stakeholders were consulted, comprising diverse humanitarian organisations from different countries and regions across the world, and cutting vertically through different employee levels from frontline staff to supervisors and managers.

Stakeholder feedback from the 2016 review was almost unanimous in reaffirming the relevance of the CHCF as a vital reference for developing employee competencies in humanitarian organisations. Core competency elements in the CHCF were essentially found to be useful, practical and fit-for-purpose, as they were initially conceived (see Annex 1: Core Humanitarian Competency Framework.)

However, stakeholders did ask for greater awareness and dissemination of the CHCF, particularly amongst entry-level employees in the humanitarian sector. At the same time, stakeholders sought renewed guidance and support for experienced staff, including managers, on how to interpret and apply the core competencies in the CHCF.

Mainstreaming of the CHCF will undoubtedly further accelerate the professionalisation of the humanitarian sector, and will contribute to efforts by humanitarian organisations to render effective service to people affected by humanitarian crises in any part of the world.

Using jargon-free language, this Guide aims to provide information to users on how the CHCF can be used to introduce a competency-based approach across an organisation.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The guide has been created in response to feedback from the 2016 review of the CHCF.
The purpose of the guide is to support organisations to adopt competency frameworks such as the CHCF as part of a competency based approach.

The *Guide* will be useful for:

Managers

By reading the Guide, those managers at all levels who are responsible for monitoring, appraising and facilitating competency development of their team members should be able to:

- be aware of competencies that a team needs in order to maintain or improve performance
- assess the extent to which team members demonstrate the competencies in order to build on the strengths and provide guidance, support and a common language on how to address any gaps
- guide team members on the desired competencies required for professional development across the humanitarian sector

Senior leadership/HR practitioners

By reading the Guide, professionals involved directly or indirectly in HR, or leaders/senior managers in organisations that do not have an HR function and who are leading the implementation of competency-based approaches in an organisation, should be able to:

- propose a rationale for adopting competency-based approaches that will assist with planning future organisational performance and growth
- develop a competency framework that will help to drive the performance of an organisation
- propose a common language, guideline and framework for developing desired competencies through resourcing, performance and related professional development activities
- assist in strengthening the capacity of team members and organisational performance by identifying future requirements and creating a measurable, evidence-based system of competency development

Trainers and coaches

By reading the Guide, professionals involved in training, coaching or mentoring employees, such as trainers and coaches, should be able to:

- demonstrate how competencies can be identified and nurtured by using a common language across the sector

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1.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

There are three important principles that need emphasising when adopting the CHCF:

- As humanitarian workers, our beneficiaries – people affected by disaster and conflict – are at the centre of what we do. Adopting a competency-based approach ensures that humanitarian organisations remain focused on strengthening the behaviours that are critical to rendering effective assistance to people affected by humanitarian crises. Nurturing core competencies ensures that employees in humanitarian organisations uphold the highest standards and accountabilities in accordance with fundamental humanitarian principles.
- The CHCF is not intended to replace or supersede existing competency frameworks, tools or initiatives in an organisation. However, it contains the elements which, by consensus among a broad spectrum of humanitarian agencies, comprise core humanitarian behaviours.
- The CHCF only articulates core *humanitarian* behaviours. It is up to organisations to include the relevant technical or leadership competencies or any other behaviours that they see fit for their organisations.

1.3 SECTORWIDE INITIATIVES AND LINKAGES TO THE CHCF

'Because if you're not a professional in this game, you have no right to descend on someone in their moment of crisis and do on-the-job training. Saving human lives is no place for amateurs. Why is that? Because the poor, dispossessed and disaster-prone should have at least one basic right left to them: to be protected from incompetence.'

Jan Egeland, *With Courage, In Hope - the tsunami five years after (2009)*

Increasingly over the last couple of decades in the humanitarian sector there has been an increasing consensus that those providing support to people affected by crisis, should be professional in their approach whether they are paid employees or volunteers. As a result there have been numerous initiatives to encourage this shift, including documentation of guidelines on behaviour, codes of conduct and support for professional development. The CHCF is a central part of this drive.

The CHCF was formed after a global consultation with a variety of types of NGOs, additionally the subsequent review had a global reach in its interactions and assessments. This has ensured that it the CHCF is globally applicable and possible to use alongside other existing frameworks (as stated in '1.2 Guiding Principles' section) supplementing and supporting what is already in place.

A frequent question that has arisen during stakeholder consultations is: 'what is the relationship between the CHCF and various other tools and initiatives that are used across the humanitarian sector?'

The purpose of the Framework resonates with one of the core responsibilities identified at the World Humanitarian Summit[1], namely the localisation agenda. The localisation agenda calls for reinforcing national and local systems for a shift towards more national and locally-led preparedness and response efforts. The Framework provides a tool and common language that, once translated and disseminated further, can be used across all levels of the sector so that all are potentially working towards the same or similar competency framework.

This following list offers a brief description of some tools and initiatives that have links to the CHCF. The Humanitarian Trainee Scheme and the CONTEXT programme demonstrate how the learning leads users to appreciate how the CHCF could be integrated in entry-level and mid-level humanitarian courses.

Tool/initiative	Description	Link to CHCF
Core Humanitarian Standard	Launched in 2014, the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS) sets out Nine Commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. It facilitates greater accountability to communities affected by crisis.	Commitment 8 in the CHS is that people affected by crisis should receive the assistance they require from competent and well-managed staff and volunteers. Staff should be supported to do their job effectively, and are treated fairly and equitably. The CHCF directly contributes to this commitment, by providing a framework that allows for measurable systems for staff development, as well as comparability across the humanitarian sector. It also contributes to other commitments in the CHS by focusing on how humanitarian assistance is delivered.
PHAP Credentialing Program	The PHAP Credentialing Program offers flexible and verifiable professional certifications in competency areas especially relevant to humanitarian work, developed in line with the international standard for professional certification, ISO 17024.	The certifications offered through the PHAP Credentialing Program provide a tool for operationalizing the competencies of the CHCF, allowing individuals to demonstrate and maintain their professional knowledge and skills in a trusted and verifiable way. The certifications have been developed to cover specific domains in the CHCF, with the first three certifications focusing on the domain of 'Understanding the humanitarian context and applying humanitarian principles.'

[1] Organised by the UN, the World Humanitarian Summit was held in Turkey in 2016 with a goal to fundamentally reform the humanitarian aid industry to react more effectively to today's many crises.

Tool/initiative	Description	Link to CHCF
D Pro Certifications	The D Pro certifications provide certification-based qualifications to improve the skills of development and humanitarian workers. It currently offers certifications in project and financial management.	The certification in project management (PMD Pro) is aligned with existing internationally recognized project management standards and includes components specific to the NGO sector, and is particularly a useful tool in the subdomain of 'Ensuring programme quality and impact'.
CONTEXT Humanitarian Staff Development Project	CONTEXT is a training or learning and development programme for employees in the humanitarian sector working for national agencies. It comprises two core skills development programmes: (1) six months, and (2) nine months.	Behavioural attributes that are stressed in both learning programmes in CONTEXT are associated with and converge towards the core competencies in the CHCF.
Humanitarian Trainee Scheme (HTS)	An intensive, year-long capacity development programme, the HTS is aimed at strengthening knowledge, skills and behaviours of entry-level humanitarian workers.	The programme is based on the CHCF. The scheme lays the foundations for building the core competencies (specifically from the CHCF) in all participating 'Trainees'.
Humanitarian Leadership Academy - Volunteers Essentials	The Academy's Volunteers Essentials is an introductory self-directed and self-guided learning programme targeted at non-professionals who wish to serve as volunteers or first responders during humanitarian crises.	The Academy's Volunteers Essentials is designed to equip individuals with the necessary skills to work effectively and responsibly in humanitarian contexts, while taking care of their own well-being. CHCF has been the point of departure to understand and identify those necessary skills.
Humanitarian Leadership Academy – Humanitarian Essentials	The Academy's Humanitarian Essentials is a self-directed and self-guided programme for entry-level humanitarians; it provides an excellent starting point for a career in the humanitarian sector and a springboard to furthering learning about humanitarian work.	The Academy's Humanitarian Essentials introduce learners to four areas of the CHCF: 1. Understanding humanitarian context and applying humanitarian principles; 2. developing and maintaining collaborative relationships; 3. operating safely and securely at all times; 4. managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment.

Tool/initiative	Description	Link to CHCF
EUPHRA	In 2014, the EUPHRA project lead by NOHA launched a Humanitarian Action Qualifications Framework which describes the knowledge, skills and responsibilities required humanitarians. The framework has 8 levels and covers 6 dimensions: service to crisis-affected people, collaborative relationships, leadership, coping and safety, context analysis and reflection, and humanitarian commitment.	The HAQF is primarily designed to support the development of qualifications from beginner level through to advanced degree level and as such fulfills a different function from the CHCF which is primarily focused on providing professional and career development support to those in humanitarian roles. However, the two frameworks are complementary in that they offer a very similar outline of the requirements for working in humanitarian action and the HAQF's dimensions align closely with the CHCF's competency domains.

PART 2:
ADOPTING A COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK INTO AN ORGANISATION

- Competency frameworks and a competency-based approach
- How the CHCF is structured
- Different types of competency frameworks
- Adopting competency frameworks that align with organisational values
- Integrating the CHCF with existing competency frameworks
- Practical steps towards adopting a competency-based approach
- Communications and engagement

2.0 COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS AND A COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH

Competencies are the behaviours that employees must have, or must acquire, in order to achieve high levels of performance in their roles. The Chartered Institute for Professional Development (CIPD) describes them as:

> 'a signal from the organisation to the individual of the expected areas and levels of performance. They provide the individual with a map or indication of the behaviours that will be valued, recognised and in some organisations rewarded. Competencies can be understood to represent the language of performance in an organisation, articulating both the expected outcomes of an individual's efforts and the manner in which these activities are carried out.'

A competency framework outlines required competencies at different levels and for different aspects of a role. The CHCF is an example of a competency framework that articulates the competencies that are regarded as essential for all humanitarian workers if they are to perform in their roles and make a significant contribution to assisting people affected by humanitarian crises.

A competency based approach is a systematic way of using competency frameworks to inform the definition of successful performance of staff to support the HR function from planning and organisation design, recruitment and selection, performance development, and professional learning and development. The toolkit in part 3 is designed to support this process.

2.1 HOW THE CHCF IS STRUCTURED

Competency frameworks vary in their format but they usual comprise a set of competency domains, areas or dimensions which are described in more detail at various levels.

Using the Framework:

The CHCF is a set of *six competency domains* that humanitarian workers and their organisations should endeavour to acquire and develop. The competency domains are the overarching set of behaviours that drive performance in the humanitarian sector.

Each competency domain is further described in terms of a specific *outcome* – these are specific, observable and measurable outcomes related to a role.

Each competency domain and outcome is further broken down into sub-domains that are followed by a list of tangible and measurable behaviours.

The CHCF also stipulates *additional behaviours* for managers. This two-tiered approach, namely core competencies for all employees as well as additional behaviours for managers, sets out how employees holding managerial roles can demonstrate behaviours that are necessary for them to lead their organisations effectively.

For example:

Competency domain ···································· ▶

UNDERSTANDING HUMANITARIAN CONTEXTS, AND APPLYING HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES AND STANDARDS

Outcome ····················

Understands operating contexts, key stakeholders and practices affecting current and future humanitarian interventions

Sub-domains ···············

Core behaviours ···········

UNDERSTANDING THE HUMANITARIAN CONTEXT

> Demonstrates understanding of phases of humanitarian response, including preparedness and contingency, disaster risk reduction, response and recovery

> Applies understanding of political and cultural context and underlying causes of humanitarian crisis

Limiting behaviours:

To help users interpret, describe and identify relevant behaviours, the Framework also provides illustrations of *limiting behaviours*. This is where behaviour does not meet, or has deviated from, the requirements. It is recommended that users are aware of these limiting behaviours and use them as a reference when implementing the practical tools provided later in this guide. (See Annex 2: Limiting behaviours framework.)

2.2 DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS

The CHCF is one example of a competency framework and is designed to be relevant for all humanitarian workers. There are multiple other competency frameworks that exist in the sector and within organisations. There is no standard agreed format for a competency framework so formats vary and there may be overlaps between different frameworks.

There are different types of competency frameworks: behavioural competencies, technical competencies, functional competencies and leadership competencies. The diagram below shows the emphasis of each and the links with those in the sector.
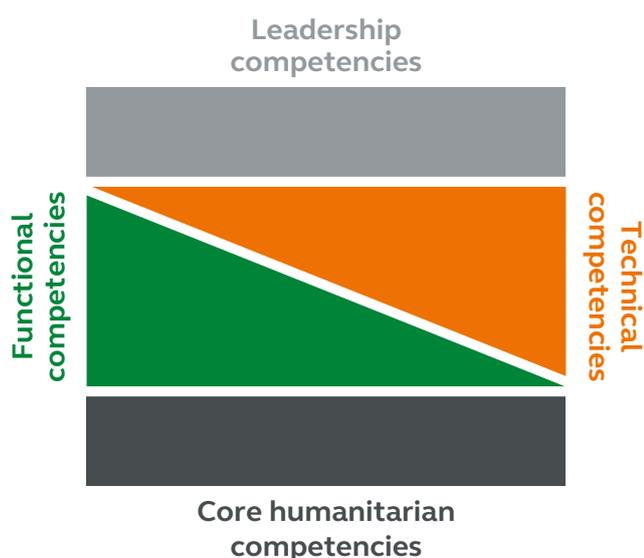
• Behaviour and skills that contribute to performance at leadership level.

• e.g. Deakin University's Leadership Behaviours

• Behaviour and skills that contribute to operational performance

• Relates to the nature of work that is undertaken

• Knowledge and skills in a technical area

• Provides guidance on required training in the technical field

• e.g Child Protection in Emergencies (CPiE) competency framework

• Core behaviours and skills critical to an individual

• Promotes a desired culture

• e.g. CHCF

Leadership competencies

Functional competencies

Technical competencies

Core humanitarian competencies

2.3 ADOPTING COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS THAT ALIGN WITH ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

The CHCF is a tool that can be used by organisations in line with their needs and organisational values.

The CHCF is a descriptive recommended competency framework, and should never be seen as prescriptive and restrictive. It should be viewed as a generic model for identifying, creating and benchmarking competencies for employees in a humanitarian organisation. It is designed to provide ideas and direction, but its success is dependent on an organisation's goals, values, culture and operating environment. It is a navigational aid for organisations to use as they develop their own competencies.

Dual mandated organisations or organisations that are solely working on development, may also develop their own organisation's list of competencies based on the CHCF.

Diagram: Competencies can align with organisational strategy, values and culture.

Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework (CHCF)

Organisation's HR strategy, policies, practices

Organisational goals, values, culture, and operating environment

2.4 INTEGRATING THE CHCF WITH EXISTING COMPETENCY FRAMEWORKS

There are a range of ways in which organisations can use the CHCF and other frameworks depending on whether they already have a competency framework. They can:

- Adopt the CHCF and other competency frameworks that they feel are relevant to their organisational needs;
- Adapt the CHCF and other existing competency frameworks so that they are more appropriate for their organisation;
- Integrate elements from the CHCF and other existing competency frameworks into their own competency framework if one has already been created;
- Develop a new competency framework relevant to their organisation drawing on existing frameworks as and when relevant.

Some humanitarian organisations already have existing frameworks which are likely to be a combination of core competencies and leadership competencies and may also be fully elaborated to include technical and functional competencies. The CHCF and other competency frameworks can still be of use in these cases. As stated in the guiding principles, the CHCF is not intended to replace or supersede existing competency frameworks, tools or initiatives in an organisation. However, it contains elements which, by consensus among a broad spectrum of humanitarian agencies, comprise core humanitarian behaviours. It may be of benefit to cross-check existing competency frameworks against the CHCF to ensure the main domains are

covered and, where gaps appear, consider their relevance to the organisation's mission. They may not be relevant, however if they are, further thought should be given to how the missing skills and behaviours can be included. It may be possible to include them through broadening the existing scope of the competencies or through making new additions to the framework.

Organisations that have not fully integrated their existing competency frameworks may benefit from using the tools and templates that are developed for the implementation of the CHCF. These tools and templates could be modified and tailor-made based on their existing frameworks. Organisations that have recently developed a competency framework may use the business case and communication plan tools to enhance the implementation of their competency framework.

CHS Alliance has produced a detailed guide which explores how to integrate various competency frameworks.

2.5 PRACTICAL STEPS TOWARDS ADOPTING A COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACH

Whether adopting an existing competency framework or integrating elements of the CHCF or other competency frameworks into an organisational competency framework, the following steps will facilitate the process.

Step 1: Present business case

Prepare and present the business case for adopting a competency-based approach in the organisation by clearly stating the benefits. The business case should introduce the concept and gain buy-in for the approach from senior management. It should also engage them in the competency framework design and implementation process (see toolkit: 1. BUSINESS CASE). Once management commitment is agreed, then the design process can start.

The provided template sets out a suggested structure for a business case. It highlights the benefits, constraints/challenges/risks, financial implications, timelines, roles and responsibilities and next steps.

Some of the main benefits of a competency-based system:

- Employees have a well-defined set of behaviours required in their work and are clear about how they are expected to perform their jobs
- The appraisal and recruitment systems are fairer and more open
- Recruiters are able to assess transferable skills and identify required behaviours regardless of career background
- There is a link between effective individual inputs to work and organisational performance
- Processes are measurable and standardised across organisational and geographical boundaries

Step 2: Identify lead persons

Consider if the competency framework will be developed internally or with external support. Then identify a few employees who will take the lead in developing the competency framework and helping others to understand it. They will also need to ensure that the competency framework is integrated into other relevant documents and systems: such as, job descriptions, performance appraisals, professional development plans.

Step 3: Review against organisational vision, mission, culture, values and strategy

The organisation's core competency framework should reflect and reinforce its vision, mission, culture, values and strategy. Based on these, brainstorm how the CHCF might reflect the organisation's core strengths now, what might be missing and what might be needed for future success. This is the start of drafting a competency framework.

Step 4: Define purpose

Based on the business case, clearly determine why a competency framework is being developed and how it will be used. This will determine how the framework is eventually structured and will help to define the work that will be involved in fully integrating the competency framework into other documents and systems to ensure it is used systematically.

Step 5: Define format, scope and structure

Evaluate if the competency framework should contain just behaviours, or also include skill and knowledge requirements. Agree which levels the framework will cover and if all roles and functions within the organisation will be included.

Step 6: Analyse roles and job descriptions

Agree on the outcomes required and analyse which behaviours are used to perform the roles covered by the framework effectively. Analyse relevant job descriptions. Interview employees and other stakeholders to reflect on, and identify, competency requirements of their roles.

Step 7: Review the CHCF and construct competency framework

Using the CHCF, add outcomes and competencies that are not included, but are important to the organisation and the organisational context. Remove core behaviours that are not relevant or inappropriate for the organisational context. Re-word terms or rewrite any core behaviours if they can be expressed in ways that are more relevant for the local context or for the organisation to help employees or volunteers more easily grasp their meanings.

Step 8: Record competencies

Record the outcomes, competencies and behaviours required for the different job roles. The competency or behaviours collected will need to be categorised into competency domains.

Step 9: Validate and finalise the competency framework

Ask if the behaviours identified are demonstrated by those who perform the work most effectively. Once the competency framework has been drafted, ensure that connections are made between the competencies and organisational goals, culture, values and strategy. Check that organisational policies and practices support the competencies, and that the competencies are integrated into any relevant documentation and systems.

Step 10: Communicate, engage and train

Treat the implementation process of the competency framework as any other major change initiative. Make sure there's adequate communication, engagement, coaching and training of employees to implement the competency framework.

2.6 COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

'Have awareness campaigns on the usage of the tool.'

'Focus should be less on what should be done but on how to do it.'

CHCF Stakeholder Consultation Review and Findings, 15 July 2016

Introducing change can be unsettling, particularly when it touches on each important phase of the employment cycle.

Past experience, including feedback from the CHCF review stakeholder consultation, tells us that the long-term success of implementing a competency framework demands a comprehensive communications, engagement and training plan. While each organisation will craft its own specific approach, there are certain essential considerations with regard to the implementation.

- **Communicate the purpose** – The first step is to find out if employees understand what the purpose is. If they don't understand how behaviours contribute to personal and organisational success, there is little point in updating or developing the framework.

- **Identify key themes** – Even if staff are clear about the purpose of the framework, it still needs to support the organisation's aspirations (goals, values, business plans). If people aren't all working towards these aspirations, then some individual efforts are likely to be diversions from organisational success.

- **Get conditions right** – The organisation's procedures, culture, resourcing and management structures need to support the framework. Be realistic: if conditions inhibit behaviours, then change the conditions or change the behaviours.

- **Tackle the root cause** – As well as goals and conditions, behaviour is also influenced by underpinning characteristics (knowledge, skills and attitude). One underdeveloped characteristic, such as communications skills, can affect many different behaviours. If managers don't understand this distinction, they may focus on trying to improve the behaviour without tackling the root cause.

- **Keep it simple** – There are two key elements that assist use – language and structure. If it's too complicated, long or detailed, it won't be used. The language has to be meaningful to the people who use it.

- **Train, don't blame** – Once the structure has been tidied up, make sure that everyone who uses the framework is trained in how to use it. A framework is a tool and, as with any tool, if users don't know how to use it, it will fall into disuse or fail to meet its full potential.

A project team should be established to maintain focus and sustain implementation in a systematic manner with goals, timelines and a constant monitoring system put in place. The project team should consist of representatives from the HR team, communications experts, as well as a senior management champion.

PART 3:
THE TOOLKIT – PRACTICAL GUIDANCE WITH COMPETENCY-BASED TEMPLATES

The diagram shows the four main areas of people management that are covered in this toolkit. The guides and templates have been developed for practical use by HR staff, employees and managers. For each area an explanation and guidance illustrate how a competency-based approach can work. All the contents are centred on the CHCF, however they can be easily adapted for use with different competency frameworks.

Given the ongoing efforts by various organisations in the humanitarian sector to develop and strengthen HR tools and initiatives, organisations planning to adopt competency-based approaches should also refer to their existing HR resources to complement their understanding.

Learning and development

Planning and organisational design

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Performance development

Recruitment and selection
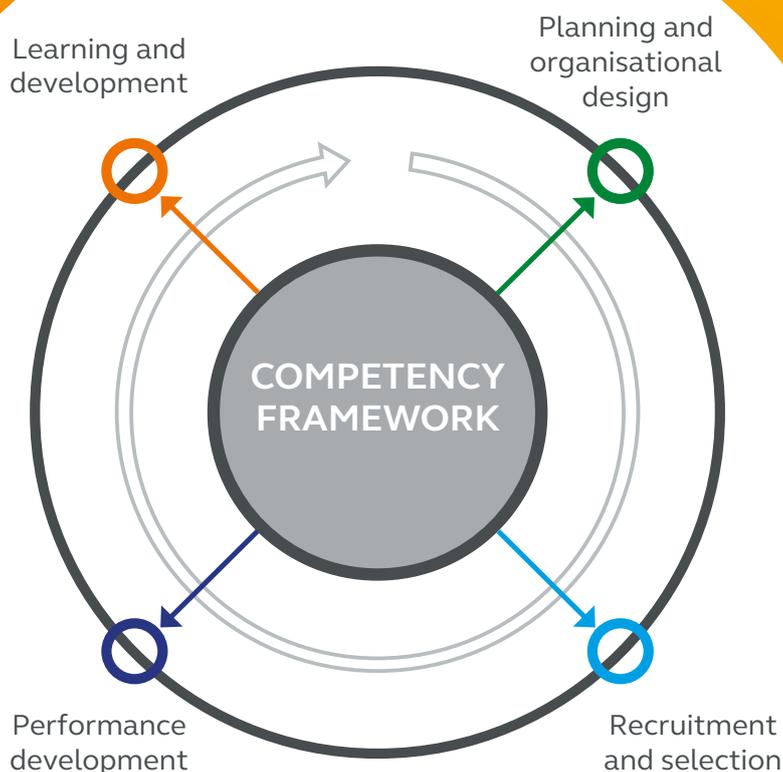
AREA AND TEMPLATE SUMMARY:

HR overview area	Competency-based guidance and template areas	Page
Planning and organisational design	Creating a business case	19
	Communications plan	25
	Competency-based talent management	27
	Competency-based job description	31
Recruitment and selection	Competency-based interview	36
	CHCF competency-based question bank	41
	Competency-based group assessment	56
	Competency-based reference questions	59
Performance development	Competency-based self-assessment	62
	Competency-based performance development	72
Learning and development	Competency-based learning and assessment planning	78

KEY AREAS, OVERVIEW AND PRACTICAL GUIDANCE WITH TEMPLATES

Planning and organisational design

Key messages

- Supports an organisation's strategic plan
- Helps identify the core competencies that are relevant to achieving organisational goals
- Provides a common language for what is required

Competency-based tools include:

✓ Creating a business case
✓ Communications plan
✓ Competency-based talent management
✓ Competency-based job description

Competency frameworks are seen as an essential tool for achieving high organisational performance by focusing and reviewing performance and potential. They can play a key role in any change management process by setting out new organisational requirements. The following table and diagram illustrates how competencies can align and focus an organisation's vision, plan and HR strategy.

Organisational development	Role of a competency framework
Organisation vision, mission, values	The competency domains set out the behaviours that relate and are important to the culture and values of the organisation
Ambition and strategic plan	Indicates the desired behaviours and outcomes required to meet organistional ambition and plans
Activities	Provides guidance on 'how' activities can be achieved and how behaviour can be measured
HR strategy (organisational design, structure, job design, capacity and capability – what already exists and what else is required)	• Assists in organisational design and job design by defining what is required in a job description and person specification • Identifies what behaviours/competencies already exist and where there are gaps across the organisation by using a competency-based talent management process to map performance and potential. This can assist in mapping out successors to key roles. • Allows for development of a focused organisational learning and development plan that is linked ot organisational need

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1. BUSINESS CASE: ADOPTING AN ORGANISATIONAL COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK AND COMPETENCY-BASED APPROACHES

This template provides a guide for preparing a business case or rationale for why an organisation should adopt a competency framework and competency-based approaches.

Introduction

Guidance notes:
Restate organisation's vision, mission, values and culture, and reiterate the fundamental goal of assisting people affected by humanitarian crises.

Proposal

Guidance notes:
Make it clear what you are asking for or proposing – this could be, for example, to introduce an organisational competency framework (either using the CHCF or using it as a starting basis for creating your own organisational framework) and to adopt competency-based approaches. This could be incremental, starting with recruitment and then moving towards performance development and learning, or it could be introduced at the same time.

Referring to the Guide, state the broad rationale for introducing an organisational competency framework. Stress how a competency framework can focus organisational performance by providing a common language that is linked to the organisation's mission and values

State current HR practices and some of the challenges or problems. For example, how they might currently limit employee development, organisational growth and capacity to fulfil its core mission – poor or unfair decisions in recruitment; high staff turnover; grievances around a performance appraisal system or limited opportunities for employees to undergo training and development.

Emphasise that the end result or intention is to strengthen the organisation's response to humanitarian situations, by nurturing the talent within.

Proposal (continued)

Benefits

Guidance notes:

Underline the fundamental goal that competency-based approaches will strengthen overall organisational effectiveness and capacity to respond to crisis-affected people. By adopting competency-based approaches it will strengthen and improve employee performance at all levels, including management.

Mention that the CHCF has been benchmarked globally and across the sector. Make the connections between competency-based approaches and current or future HR initiatives in the organisation.

Draw comparisons between the CHCF and similar, positive initiatives in other organisations and the sector, such as the Humanitarian Trainee Scheme (run by Save the Children).

Specify the benefits of competency-based approaches. For example, to: improve recruitment and hiring process and build a stronger team; introduce greater rigour and transparency to employee performance appraisal; expand training and career development opportunities for employees. Emphasise how the CHCF will reduce subjectivity in evaluating employee performance by injecting greater transparency and objectivity in employee performance appraisal.

Stress how the CHCF will provide a common language that can be used to discuss the competencies or behaviours required for increased performance both at individual employee and organisational level.

Constraints and challenges

Guidance notes:

Identify potential constraints or restrictions that may hamper the implementation of a competency framework such as: budget constraints; time; limited resources and expertise within the organisation; operational pressures such as ongoing humanitarian crises.

Discuss potential internal challenges such as anxiety among employees and perception issues around who is being targeted.

Discuss potential interruptions to routine work and how they would be addressed, such as additional work load for employees, or demands on staff time.

Address potential risks such as the project being aborted due to budget constraints or competing operational priorities, and state plans to address risks such as by providing details on funding, a comprehensive implementation schedule, and the re-designation of the roles of the members of the project team.

Project plan

Guidance notes:
Provide details of each step of the project, its duration and schedule.

Steps are likely to include:

- *Create an organisational competency framework or adapt the CHCF, and prioritise which competencies are important to the organisation*
- *Identify core processes which may change as a result of introducing a competency framework*
- *Create a communications and implementation plan (Review and evaluate the understanding of the competency framework and the impact of changes.*

Financial and resource implications

Guidance notes:
Describe the budget and resources required for the project – costs are likely to include consultancy fees (if it has been identified that external support is needed); workshop or meeting costs, materials, and travel. Resources required are likely to include staff time for training, meetings and implementation.

Communications and training support

Guidance notes:
Describe plans to communicate and engage employees and sensitise them to the competency framework.

Describe training plans on the use of a competency framework to help employees and managers understand how to use competency-based approaches.

Describe training and supplementary face-to-face and online resources that will be available to employees.

Expectations

Guidance notes:
Describe what is expected of employees, managers and the leadership team. For example, an open and supportive attitude to embrace the new initiative; willingness to participate in briefing and training sessions; preparedness to take on additional work related to the planning and implementation phase of the CHCF; willingness to learn and access resources on the CHCF; enthusiasm in giving constructive feedback to refine and improve project implementation.

Specifically for managers and the leadership team: stress the importance of demonstrating buy-in by taking the lead in participating in project activities, and alleviating team members' anxieties; acting as champions and exemplars by cultivating the leadership behaviours recommended in the competency framework early on in the implementation phase.

Next steps

Guidance notes:
Explain immediate and medium-term steps that will be taken to adopt a competency framework and competency-based approaches.

Confirm what you are asking for and when.

2. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN FOR ADOPTING A COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

This template provides a guide for what to include in a communications plan when adopting a competency framework and competency-based approaches.

Set out the background:
- When and why the competency framework is being introduced in the organisation
- How a competency framework will benefit employees, managers, the organisation and crisis-affected people.

Identify the purpose of the communications plan
- Identify the role of communications in the implementation plan, opportunities and threats and how you might address them. State a few measurable and achievable objectives of having a communications plan – this could include raising awareness of the benefits of the competency framework or deepening knowledge and understanding of how to adopt competency-based approaches.

Identify the audience
- As it is not feasible to target every category of employee in large organisations, prioritise and initially focus on key groups.
- List all stakeholders and then consider the main aim of the communications plan. Is it to inform everyone in your organisation of the change or to get buy- in from a particular group of stakeholders to progress? Once you have these areas confirmed, you can create a basic communications plan, laying out what you will send to whom and when. As the project progresses, this tool will serve as a useful reminder to make sure all stakeholders are engaged in the right way at the right time.

Create the messages
- Consistency and clarity is crucial
- Brainstorm and develop a few core messages that need to be communicated to different audiences
- A slogan may be proposed as part of messaging.

Define delivery method
- List the tools and activities that will be developed to communicate. A few:
  - Face-to-face meetings, briefings, workshops
  - Website, email, employee bulletin, organisation's intranet
  - Social media like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp
  - Staff memorandum, circular
  - Video
  - Briefing pack

Establish a timeline
- Ensure people know what the plan is by giving a specific timeframe for activities
- Repeat, refresh and reinforce communications and build this into the plan.

Example of a communications plan template:

Audience	Message	Delivery method	Delivery frequency/date	Communicator	Documents and resources needed	Aim of communication
Senior management	Invite to CHCF introduction session	Face-to-face weekly meeting	6 Oct	HR manager	Copies of CHCF and benefits list	Generate interest and attendance at introduction session
HR and admin team	Update on implementation activities	Email	Every 2 weeks	HR officer	Implementation plan with activity list and dates	Keep implementing team informed

Evaluation:

- Identify how you will measure the effectiveness of the communications plan, e.g. a focus group feedback session, or simple online survey.

3. COMPETENCY-BASED TALENT MANAGEMENT

This template has been produced to show where competencies might assist within a talent management system.

Talent management seeks to attract, identify, develop, engage, retain and deploy individuals who are considered particularly valuable to an organisation. By managing talent strategically, organisations can build high performance. Working on the basis that it is not only important to assess *what* an employee has achieved, but also *how* this has been achieved, a talent management framework working in conjunction with a competency framework will provide a holistic overview of current performance and potential.

The competency framework, in conjunction with the job description and the self-assessment tool, can be used to assist you to get to know your team's current performance. It can also help you make some judgement on future potential, identify the areas for growth, and how it relates to aspiration, ability and engagement.

Framework for assessing potential

High potential individuals have the ability and aspiration to succeed and be highly engaged.

ASPIRATION

HIGH POTENTIAL

ABILITY

ENGAGEMENT

To what extent does this individual want to progress to higher levels and/or more responsibility?

To what extent does this person demonstrate engagement with the organisation?

To what extent can this person stretch to bigger, more complex roles in the organisation? How far can they go?
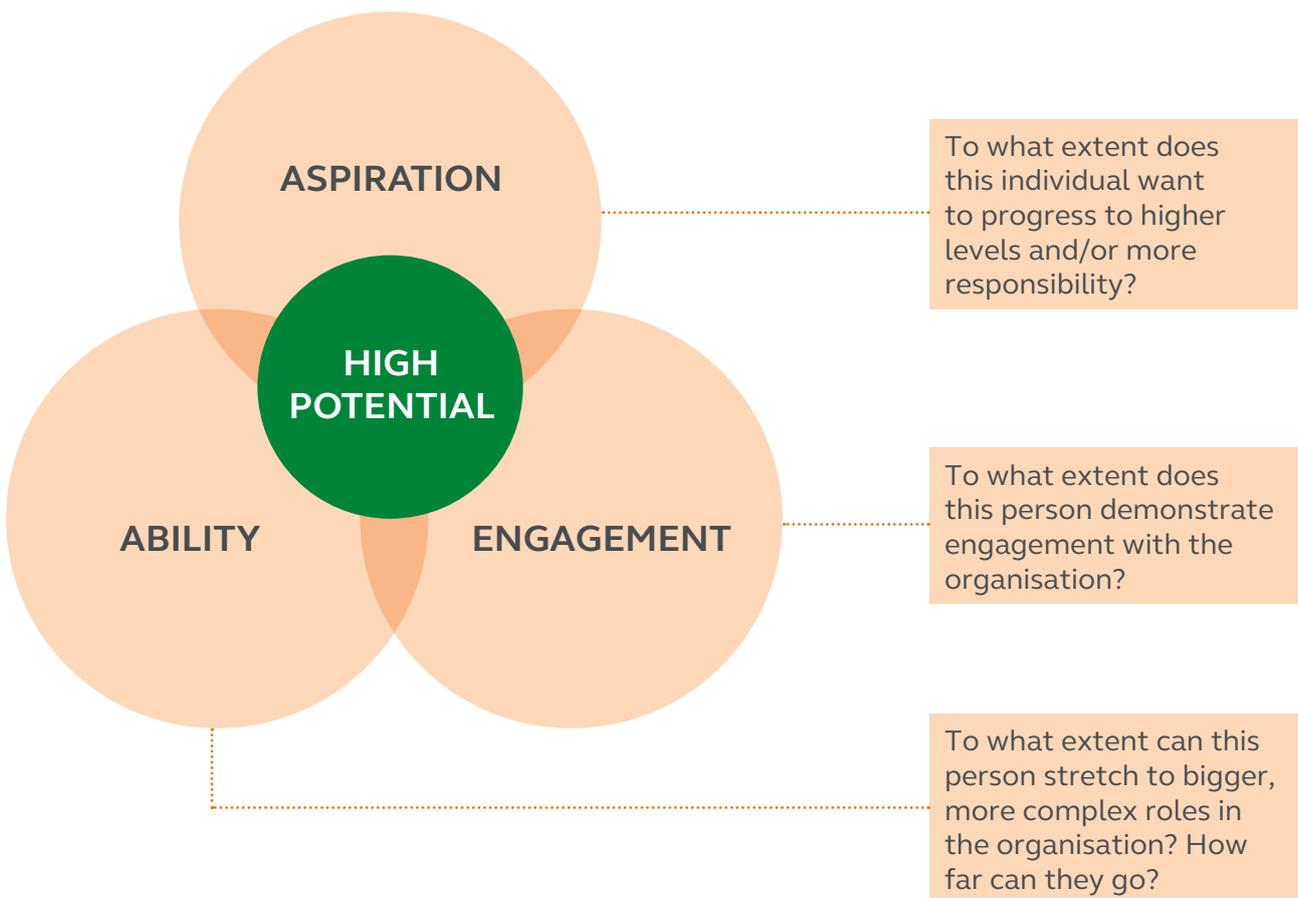
A competency framework can be used to guide the discussion, provide evidence and set out aspirations in each area.

Table 1: Using the competency framework – questions to assess performance and potential

	Criteria	Questions	Possible sources of evidence – use the competency framework as a guide
Potential	Current performance	• Does this person have a track record of delivering results both within the organisation and elsewhere? Consider what they have delivered as well has how • Is their behaviour consistent with our values and standards?	• Interim performance review, feedback and annual performance review • Self-assessment • CV • On-the-job observation
	Aspiration	• To what extent does this person want to progress to higher levels and/or more responsibility?	• Discussions with individual on their career plans and goals
	Ability	• To what extent can they stretch to bigger, more complex roles? • What are their strengths and will these support future progression? • How able are they to learn from experience and deliver in new or changing situations?	• Discussions with individual • Stretch objectives set with individuals • Observation on ability to learn and apply new learning
	Engagement	• To what extent does this person demonstrate engagement within the organisation? How is this demonstrated?	• Discussions with individual • Observations on how engaged they seem, e.g. commitment, discretionary effort, intent to stay

This assessment will then inform where individuals might be plotted on the 9 box matrix.

Table 2: Potential and performance matrix

		Below expectation	Meets expectation	Exceeds expectation
Potential	High upward potential	**Enigma** High potential to advance further, but action is needed to address performance concerns or poor fit between individual and role **Development focus:** Aim to improve in current role or reassign roles	**Growth employee** Has the potential to take on larger or more developmental roles within next 2–3 years **Development focus:** Prepare for a future role	**Future leader** Has the potential to take on larger or more developmental roles within next 1–2 years **Development focus:** Prepare for a future role
	Potential growth	**Stay in role** Not ready for a change, e.g. good fit with current role, continuing to grow in role **Development focus:** Aim to improve in current role	**Core employee** Has the potential to take on larger, more senior roles within next 3–5 years **Development focus:** Prepare for a future role	**High impact performer** Has the potential to take on larger, more senior roles within next 3–5 years **Development focus:** Prepare for a future role
	Develop at current level	**Under-performer** **Development focus:** Use a performance, not developmental, approach	**Stay in role/effective** Not ready for a change, e.g. good fit with current role, continuing to grow in role Subject matter expert who has reached career potential **Development focus:** Aim to improve in current role	**Sideways move/ trusted professional** Able to take on different responsibilities with similar scope; may have reached career potential in terms of level, but not scope **Development focus:** Consider 'stretch' assignments
		Below expectation	Meets expectation	Exceeds expectation

From this mapping, the grid below can be used to plot programme-, team- or organisation-wide talent, provide a snapshot of where the current and potential talent currently exists, and where appropriate interventions can be included in an organisational learning and development plan to support development. This might include career coaching conversations, provision of coaching and mentoring or more formal training. This information will also inform a succession plan and help identify who might be ready for a career move and when that might be.

Table 3: Potential matrix template

Plot your people on the matrix based on the questions in table 1

| Potential	High upward potential			
	Potential growth			
	Develop at current level			
		Below expectation	Meets expectation	Exceeds expectation

4. COMPETENCY-BASED JOB DESCRIPTION

A job description provides an overview of the job tasks and responsibilities – *what* a person needs to do to perform effectively. A person specification describes *how* the person should perform in the role and outlines what they will need in order to qualify for the role – experience, knowledge and skills, and the behaviours they may need to develop. It forms the basis of recruitment and selection decisions, a guideline for performance development and the identification of learning and development needs.

Managers, accompanied by HR, should take time to analyse the job requirements and identify competencies during the job design phase. This may include looking at the CHCF or your organisational competency framework (if you have one) and a technical competency framework (if necessary). Managerial roles should include additional behaviours (as outlined in the CHCF) and if the role is a leadership role, referring to a leadership competency framework may also be useful.

Putting these competencies together can be helped by using the suggested framework below which draws on the work of EUHAP but with slight variations. It recommends that there are three areas of competencies, and the mix will depend on a range of factors including the type of role, the context, the organisation and the nature of the work being undertaken. The framework shows how these competencies fit together.

Competencies groups

- *Core humanitarian competencies* are essential for all posts, a described in the Core Humanitarian Competency Framework
- *Technical competencies*, sometimes referred to as *thematic competencies*, are hard skills related to an individual's area of expertise, for example, Nutrition, Logistics or Shelter
- *Leadership competencies* – will not apply to all roles, just those in leadership positions.
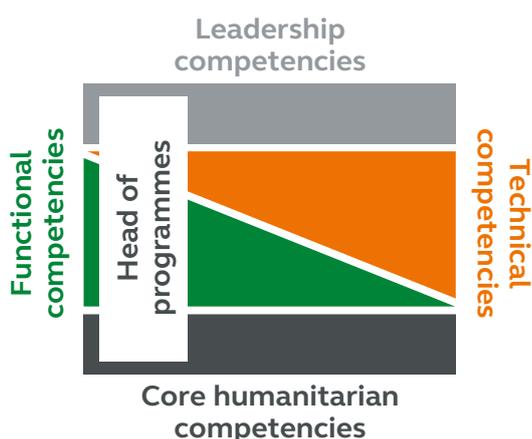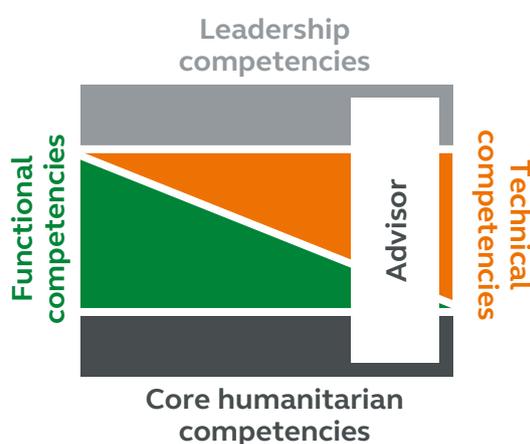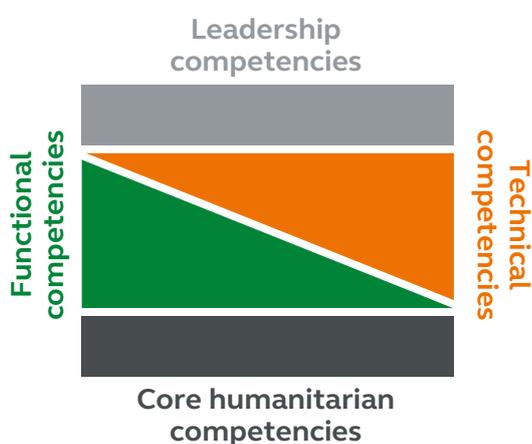
Each job profile should demonstrate the mix of competencies required. For example, Head of programmes posts do not usually have a technical focus but will require a number of competencies as outlined in the CHCF. Therefore the role is weighted towards core humanitarian competencies.

By contrast, an advisor post usually has a technical specialism and therefore requires specific technical competencies related to their area of expertise. The balance of competencies is weighted towards thematic competencies.

JOB DESCRIPTION - TEMPLATE

Job title:	E.g. Team Leader
Location:	xxx
Reports to:	xxx
Responsible for:	xxx

Job purpose:

To lead the emergency response team in the preparation and implementation of emergency responses in XXX.

Key responsibilities:

- To lead a national team of professional staff and assess the extent of the humanitarian needs (with particular emphasis on public health, water and sanitation and food security) caused during the current floods emergency in Country X.
- To coordinate activities with national organisations (NGOs, UN agencies and authorities).
- To provide technical support, where required, to existing local partners and institutions in emergency programming.
- To integrate gender analysis into programme plans and implementation.
- To ensure security of staff, partners and communities linked with emergency operations.
- To coordinate with local partners and other agencies, advise, and make necessary recommendations to the coordinators and the project teams.
- Ensure all agreed administrative and financial procedures are followed and maintained by implementing partners to ensure programme quality.
- Guarantee project quality and time schedule throughout close and horizontal coordination with implementing partners.
- To represent the organisation in meetings with government or other NGOs whenever requested.

Knowledge, experience and qualifications:

- Knowledge of Country X in terms of its political, economic and social trends plus a good understanding of the key development and humanitarian issues in the region.
- Extensive field experience in emergency and development programme management, preferably with non-government organisations.

Technical competencies (as described above):

- Proven expertise and understanding of emergency preparedness and response, and development issues.
- Competence in emergency needs assessment, project design, development and implementation.
- Able to lead non-formal, participatory-oriented project work, proven by substantial experience.
- Able to implement security policy and protocols based on experience.
- Competent in risk management based on experience.

Behavioural/Core competencies (based on the CHCF – pick those that are critical to the role):

Understanding of humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles and standards:
- Demonstrates understanding of the phases of humanitarian response, including preparedness and contingency, disaster risk reduction, response and recovery.
- Demonstrates understanding of the gender, diversity and inclusion dimensions of humanitarian situations.
- Takes into account the needs, skills, capacities and experience of crisis-affected people and applies these in the response.

Achieving results:
- Demonstrates understanding of project cycle management.
- Demonstrates understanding of when a decision can be taken and when to involve others.
- Considers the wider impact of decisions in order to achieve results.

Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships:
- Actively listens to new and different perspectives and experiences of crisis-affected people, stakeholders and team members.
- Displays empathy, respect and compassion towards crisis-affected population.
- Communicates regularly and responsibly using suitable channels and technologies with consistent messaging.
- Actively participates in networks to access and contribute to good practice.

Operating safely and securely at all times:
- Champions the importance of safety and keeps the safety of colleagues and team members in mind at all times.
- Recognises different vulnerabilities and reduces vulnerability by complying with safety and security protocols set by an organisation and adapting them to the local context.

Managing in a pressured and changing environment:
- Adapts calmly to changing situations and constraints.
- Recognises personal stress and takes steps to reduce it.
- Takes responsibility for own work and its impact on others.

Demonstrating leadership:
- Demonstrates understanding of skills and how they complement those of others to build team effectiveness.
- Communicates humanitarian values and encourages others to share them.
- Inspires confidence in others.
- Demonstrates initiative and suggests creative improvements and better ways of working.

Languages:

IT:

References

- For more information on putting different types of competencies together, see **http://euhap.eu/ha-professions/**

- You can find standard job descriptions and organograms in the sector here: **http://euhap.eu/products/ha-professions/**

Recruitment selection

Key messages

- Competency-based recruitment methods give structure and focus to the process ensuring the most appropriate candidate is selected.

- It supports diversity by concentrating on skills and behaviours and not background and education.

- It minimises bias by ensuring decisions are evidence-based.

- It ensures selection decisions are consistent and transparent through measuring and rating answers according to predetermined criteria.

- Candidates know what to expect and can therefore prepare and display their most relevant and rich experiences.

- The method is appropriate for selection of participants on to training courses.

Competency-based tools include:

- ✓ Competency-based interview
- ✓ Competency-based group assessments
- ✓ CHCF competency-based question bank
- ✓ Competency-based reference questions request

Using competency-based approaches in recruitment ensures selection is based on the behaviours set out in a framework that have been previously identified as key to the role. Assessment is therefore based on a predetermined criteria of behaviours and skills. Competencies can be used in the job advertisement and the shortlisting process, and the Guide provides tools for setting questions at interviews and obtaining references. Competency-based selection should enable objective, fair, unbiased and standardised selection.

A note on assessors and interviewers

To be able to assess experiences against set core competencies it is critical that those assessing candidates have an in-depth, robust and similar understanding of each competency (including the limiting behaviours). It may be necessary to run a core competencies orientation session before the process to ensure this.

Overview of a competency-based recruitment process

Job advertisement

The job advertisement should list the core competencies a successful candidate would require to be successful in the post (usually listed in the job description). This allows candidates to understand the importance of the behaviours required aside from the skills and knowledge.

Application form

A competency-based application form allows an organisation to seek evidence to assess the candidate's suitability, rather than asking a candidate to just list their qualifications and experience. The shortlisting of candidates during the application and selection process based on competencies could be challenging in some cases. Having a clear set of core competencies expected of a candidate will assist in shortlisting.

Selection methods

There are many ways to assess and select competencies in candidates. They range from structured interviews, group assessment days, written tests and presentations to psychometric tests. Often a combined approach will deliver the best results, e.g. a structured interview followed by a presentation asking for their ideas on future innovations within the scope of the role.

However it is important to gather all ratings together in one assessment grid to enable a full picture of the candidate's abilities to be formed and a fair comparison to be made against others applying for the role.

The following guidance focuses on the most commonly used methods of competency-based recruitment – structured interviews and group assessment.

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5. COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEW

A competency-based interview uses questions which aim to find out how the candidate has utilised specific skills in their previous working experiences and how they approach problems, tasks and challenges.

By answering these questions they will let the interviewer know what skills and behaviours they possess and at what level they are operating. This is measured against the core and technical competencies required for the job (and organisation) and recorded on an interview record sheet (see template below).

Asking questions that specifically target skills or competencies listed in the job description gives the interviewer a methodical way to assess the candidate's likely ability to perform in the role.

It is an excellent way for a future employer to understand the experiences a candidate brings with them and not just qualifications.

> **Remember**
> • All candidates **must** be asked the same predetermined questions
> • All answers **must** be scored immediately after the interview
> • At least one of the interviewers **must** be present at all interviews

STARS technique

The most common approach to conducting a competency-based interview is to use the STARS technique.

STARS stands for Situation/Task, Actions, Results and Summarise.

Candidates are asked to:

- Describe a specific, challenging work-related **Situation** or **Task**
- Describe the **Actions** taken to resolve the situation or complete the task
- Describe the **Results** of their actions

Interviewer's guidance

Situation and/or Task: Begin by asking a broad, open question about a specific situation or task, e.g. 'Describe a challenging, work-related situation or task where you …'

Actions: Try to understand the specific actions the candidate took to deal with the situation or task. This is the most important part of the answer. For example, 'What specific actions did you take to resolve the situation? Tell me what you did to ensure the necessary structures were in place'.

Results: Finish by asking the candidate what results they achieved in the end. It may also be appropriate to ask what lessons the candidate learnt. This is the follow-up question, they don't have to be the same for each candidate but they must relate directly back to the answer given.

Summarise: If you are in any doubt as to what the candidate said, it is a good idea to summarise briefly what the candidate told you. This allows you to check that you understood the candidate correctly.

Tips:
- Asking follow-up questions, such as 'what did you learn from this experience?' or 'how would you approach the same issue now?' can illustrate the candidate's ability to learn from their mistakes and adapt to changes and challenges.
- Inform the candidate it will be a competency-based interview beforehand. This will allow them time to reflect on their past experiences and select their most appropriate examples to display their skills, behaviours and overall abilities.
- **Keep it simple** or managers won't use it! Ten questions should be enough if follow-up questions are used.

Rating answers:

Answers should be rated according to the level of competency required for the role. Interviewers should consider together what level of competency is needed (based on the job description and knowledge of the role) and what sort of answer would 'exceed' rather than 'meet' the required level of competency. This will help interviewers to give the same ratings to similar answers.

After an answer, consider how the example given reflects a behaviour that meets expectations for this role or whether it would fall short of what is expected, and rate accordingly.

Occasionally, the rating system can be changed for very important competencies, so more points are awarded to a particular competency. This is known as 'weighting' and is acceptable, so long as every interview is weighted in the same way.

Template competency-based interview record sheet

Competency-based interview record				
Position applied for:		**Candidate name:**		
Interview panel:		**Date:**		
Rating system – extent to which answer displays evidence of fulfilling competency	**3** **Exceeds**	**2** **Met**	**1** **Partly met**	**0** **Not met**
Introduction question: <insert question> , e.g. What motivated you to apply for this position?			**Score**	
(mark according to how well-researched and convincing the response 0 'not at all', up to 3 for 'very')				/3
Competency-based questions				
<Insert competency domain and specific behaviour/skill> e.g. Achieves results: Maintains focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results using available resources				
Question 1: <insert question>			**Score**	
				/3
<Insert competency domain and specific behaviour/skill> ee.g. Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships: Contributes positively in the team to achieve programme objectives				
Question 2: <insert question>			**Score**	
				/3
<Insert competency domain and specific behaviour/skill> ee.g. Managing in a pressured and changing environment: Adapts calmly to changing situations and constraints				

Question 3: <insert question>	Score
	/3
<Insert competency domain and specific behaviour/skill> ee.g. Applying humanitarian standards and principles: Demonstrates an understanding of coordination mechanisms	

Question 4: <insert question>	Score
	/3
<Insert competency domain and specific behaviour/skill> e.g. Operating safely and securely at all times: Identifies and communicates risks and threats and mitigates these for self and organisation	

Question 5: <insert question>	Score
	/3
<Insert competency domain and specific behaviour/skill> e.g. Demonstrating leadership: Demonstrates understanding of skills and how they complement those of others to build team effectiveness	

Question 6: <insert question>	Score
	/3

Technical Questions	
Question 7: <insert question>	**Score**
	/3
Question 8: <insert question>	**Score**
	/3
Question 9: <insert question>	**Score**
	/3
Performance summary	
Score total	/30

6. CHCF COMPETENCY-BASED INTERVIEW QUESTION BANK

The table lists each competency from the six competency domains. Against these competencies are suggested questions for candidates, ranging from specific to broad. There is also a corresponding list of things to look for in the response and at the bottom of each domain are negative indicators for interviewers to look out for in responses.

Competency domain	Understanding of humanitarian contexts and application of humanitarian principles	
	Understanding the humanitarian context	
Competency	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Demonstrate understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, DRR, response and recovery • Apply understanding of the political and cultural context and underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis • Demonstrate understanding of the gender and diversity dimensions of humanitarian situations • Keep vulnerable people at the centre of the humanitarian response	What in your opinion, and from your experience in the field, do you think are the current three main issues in the humanitarian response debate? How do you ensure a sound technical basis for a programme at the outset (including humanitarian standards, e.g. SPHERE) in places where technical understanding and capacity is likely to be limited? Use an example from your own area of expertise Tell me about a time when you have had to adapt your work and plans to ensure that what was delivered was of use to or inclusive all members of the community, including those less able. What have you done previously in your work to ensure vulnerable people's needs are being catered for and included in planning?	Ability to demonstrate capacity to think about issues. Awareness of context, of role and wider issues. Understanding of priorities. Ability to prioritise and apply appropriate standards as a baseline. Adaptability but also clarity on core issues.

Additional manager competencies		
• Able to assess and analyse key issues in the humanitarian situation and formulate actions around them	Give an example of when you have had to assess a humanitarian situation and make recommendations regarding the actions to be taken. What were the steps that you took in making the analysis?	Ability to conduct a baseline analysis and reach appropriate conclusions. Systematic approach. Logical analysis and conclusions.
	Give a specific example of how your programme is committed to gender, diversity and inclusivity dimensions? What were the challenges in doing this?	
	How have you promoted and ensured compliance with humanitarian standards and principles that govern behaviour of staff?	

	Applying humanitarian standards and principles	
Competencies	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Ensure that programme goals and activities uphold the principles of the key national and international humanitarian frameworks, codes and commitments under which humanitarian organisations operate • Demonstrate understanding of your role and that of your organisation and others within the humanitarian system • Integrate beneficiary accountability principles into your approach • Demonstrate understanding of coordination mechanisms	Tell us about an opportunity you've had to network with representatives of similar organisations. What were the benefits to your organisation? What is your experience of using international codes of practice and law in relation to emergencies? How useful have you found them? Tell me about a time when you have had to work with other organisations in a response. What systems did you use to coordinate your work?	Ability to work within a wide context, to understand own role and relationship with other organisations and to understand the need to coordinate to achieve the greater goal. Awareness of codes of practice. Experience of applying them and ability to evaluate their application.

Additional manager competencies		
• Participate in the development of an organisational response based on understanding of the context • Actively participates in disaster coordination and interagency cooperation based on clear understanding of organisation's perspective and approach	Tell me about a time when you have developed a disaster response strategy How did you go about incorporating information from the context analysis? How did you assess the importance of information?	Ability to assess information and adapt accordingly. Awareness of context and appropriate application of information.

Negative indicators

• Consistently does not acknowledge cultural or political context in discussions

• Consistently demonstrates lack of focus on beneficiaries and does not consider their needs while addressing solutions

• Appears to be unclear about own and organisation's responsibilities

• Is overly directed by donor requirements and fails to balance these with the needs of beneficiaries and organisational priorities

Competency domain	Achieving results	
	Ensuring programme quality and impact	
Competencies	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Demonstrate understanding of agency project cycle management • Participate in the design and implementation of effective projects and programmes	What has been your experience of promoting quality and accountability in emergency programmes? What was successful and why? Give me an example of how you stay informed about issues and events in your area of responsibility. Give me an example of when you were involved with the design and implementation of a project. What steps did you follow in developing a sound project plan and what impact did your planning have on achieving the intended results? How have you monitored your team's/group's productivity or performance? Give me a specific example.	Ability to learn from experiences and improve quality and accountability. Openness to continuous improvement. Attitude of continuous improvement. Willingness to learn and introduce new thinking.

Additional manager competencies		
• Set standards in your work and follow agreed procedures at work • Document lessons learned and apply them to future projects	Tell me about a time when you have used technology to enhance the results of a programme? How can inappropriate technology hinder results of a programme? What are some of the challenges of using social media as a promotional and communication tool?	Evidence of active monitoring, evaluation and learning. An attitude of continuous improvement

Working accountability		
Competencies	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Collect, analyse and disseminate information to and from communities and other stakeholders • Demonstrate accountability to partners and disaster- and conflict-affected people and communities	Tell me about a time when you were accountable for the completion and success of a major assignment. What was the outcome? What would you do differently? Share an example of when you demonstrated accountability to other stakeholders. Why is being accountable to the beneficiaries important? How do we ensure the right level of accountability?	Experience of accountability. Willingness to take ownership of the outcomes and to learn and adapt approach.
Additional manager competencies		
• Ensure efficient and transparent use of resources in accordance with internal controls • Establish community engagement mechanisms	Organisations have a tendency to raise the expectations of crisis-affected people in various stages of project cycle, including during the needs assessment stage. How can the organisation collect, analyse and disseminate information without raising affected people's expectations? What steps have you taken to make your job easier/more efficient/more productive? Give an example.	Evidence of a proactive approach Efficient use of resources. Ownership

Decision-making		
Competencies	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Demonstrate flexibility to adapt plans and make decisions in rapidly changing environments • Demonstrate understanding of when a decision can be taken and when to involve others • Consider the wider impact of the decisions you make in your work to achieve positive results	Describe a situation where you had to change your approach half-way through a project or task following new input into the project. Describe an occasion when you decided to involve others in making a decision. Why did you do so? To what extent did you use their contributions? When faced with a situation where a group decision needs to be taken and you have a clear view on the issues, what role do you naturally take? Can you give an example? What do you do if a decision taken varies from your preferred option and is, in your opinion, the wrong decision? Tell us about the hardest work-based decision you have had to make recently and why you had to do so. What steps or actions did you have to take prior to making the decision and what was the outcome? How did you communicate your decision? Recall an incident where you demonstrated flexibility in a cultural context that is different to yours? How did the crisis-affected people respond to this?	Ability to assess new information and adapt accordingly. Examples of judgement, flexibility and adaptability. Evidence of appropriate collaboration (as opposed to indecisiveness), ability to assess input and reach conclusions. Ability to take responsibility for the decision. Role in group decision-making, and ability to accept the outcome. Willingness to go along with decisions even if they believe them to be wrong. Have they made difficult decisions in the past and what do they consider to be difficult? How did they go about making the decision, what process did they use? Were they aware of the impact of that decision?

Impact

Competencies	Suggested interview questions	Things to look for in the response
• Maintain focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results using available resources	Tell me about a time when you faced conflicting priorities/deadlines. How did you determine the top priority? What did you do about the issues you were not able to complete? Sooner or later, everyone comes under some pressure to sacrifice quality in order to get work done on time. Tell me about a time when this happened to you. What did you do? Can you share an example of when you had to manage a project or process with constrained resources? What was the situation? What did you do to ensure that results were delivered on time and within budget? How did you resolve issues that arose?	Ability to determine and focus on priorities, and mitigate issues around those deadlines not met. Ability to balance delivery with quality. Prioritisation. Use of resources.
Additional manager competencies • Clarify roles and responsibilities within your team to maximise impact • Continuously provide feedback and updates to achieve improved results • Coordinate with stakeholders to avoid duplication and maximise resources	Tell me about a time when you were responsible for determining assignments, schedules, and timelines for a project you were managing. Describe how you worked out a project plan. What happened?	Ability to deliver in a planned and focused way. Management of a project.

Negative indicators

• Displays an inflexible attitude in the face of changing plans or decisions, which can have a negative impact on project

• Consistently fails to deliver results by not focusing on outcomes

• Gives up easily when presented with challenges

• Does not seem able to meet deadlines regardless of the situation and increased resources

Competency domain	Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships	
	Listening and Dialogue	
Competencies	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Actively listen to different perspectives and experiences of stakeholders • Establish and maintain clear communication and dialogue with disaster- and conflict-affected people and other stakeholders	Tell us about a time you communicated effectively under difficult circumstances. What have you done to make your organisation's vision and values meaningful to others? Which strategies have worked, and which have not? Tell me about a time at work when you objectively considered others' ideas, even when they conflicted with yours. Can you give an example of when you have had to communicate an important message or piece of information?How did you prepare to deliver the message and decide what method of communication to use (e.g. e-mail, meeting)? What feedback did you seek/receive?	Ability to think how best to communicate in different circumstances. Adaptability in difficult circumstances. Evidence of using varying and appropriate methods to communicate complex issues in a meaningful way. Ability to observe and analyse what works and modify approach. Flexibility of approach. Willingness to listen and consider other views. Willingness to think seriously about how to communicate and what method will work best. Ability to reflect on the outcome and adapt.
Additional manager competencies • Ensure beneficiary and partner feedback is incorporated into programme design, planning and learning	How would you ensured that feedback from beneficiaries and/or partners is incorporated into your agency's future work?	Willingness to learn. Openness to the opinions and ideas of others. Awareness of the need to listen to beneficiaries and partners.

Working with others		
Competencies	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Contribute positively in the team to achieve programme objectives • Share appropriate information and knowledge with colleagues and partners as and when appropriate • Actively participate in networks to access and contribute to good practice • Challenge decisions and behaviour which breach the ICRC/NGO and individual agency Codes of Conduct	Tell us about a time when your actions inspired others to work towards achieving a common goal. Give an example from your own experience of how you manage a new or recently formed team and/or a team made up of staff and partner staff? How do you like to be managed? What do you look for from your manager? Describe a team in which you have worked and that you felt was particularly successful. What made that team successful? What did you learn from this? How can you minimise the possibility of creating a dysfunctional team? Sometimes interacting with others at work can be difficult. Describe the most stressful interaction you've had with your manager/supervisor/team leader or a peer/team member. How did you respond?	Ability to inspire others and to lead by example. Team attitude rather than directive style. Ability to apply an adaptive style. Prioritisation. Working in virtual team situations and with networks/matrix management. Willingness to keep manager informed. Adaptability. Understanding of requirements in a humanitarian situation. Have they thought about building team success or is this left to chance? What do they contribute to this process? Willingness to discuss/ recognise a negative situation. Openness to own role. Ability to handle and resolve conflict/stressful situation.
Additional manager competencies • Establish clear objectives with teams and individuals and monitor progress and performance • Establish agreed ways of working at a distance with partners and staff • Work with your team to build trust with partners, communities and stakeholders	Describe the most effective techniques you've used to encourage full participation from every member of a team of which you were part. Give an example of a situation when you used technology to enhance the quality of your work. What difference did it make to your work?	Diversity/gender awareness. Ability to adapt approach to team. Working with virtual teams.

• Foster collaborative, transparent and accountable relationships through partners to formalise and operationalise partnering agreements	Describe an innovation you introduced in a project or organisation. What challenges did you face? What was the effect of introducing the innovation?
• Use negotiation and conflict resolution skills to support positive outcomes	Recall an incident where an aid worker behaved disrespectfully with the affected population? What was the implication of his or her behaviour?
	How do you think aid workers can demonstrate greater empathy to crisis-affected people?

Negative indicators

- Does not actively listen to inputs or feedback from other team members including members, beneficiaries, partners, other NGOs, or key stakeholders

- Reluctant to assume ownership and relies on other team members to complete own tasks

- Ineffective in communicating ideas or thoughts to the team as a result of lack of confidence, over-cautious in withholding information, or limited skills in dealing with audience

Competency domain	Operating safely and securely in a humanitarian response	
	Security context and analysis	
Competencies	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Identify and communicate risk and threats and minimise these for you and your agency	What does risk mean in the humanitarian context? Give me an example of when you have identified a risk (to a project, person or organisation) and describe how you communicated and managed this risk?	
	What do you understand by the term 'security management framework'? What are the key strategies it might comprise of?	

Additional manager competencies		
• Demonstrate an understanding of wider UN/NGO security coordination and how your organisation can benefit from, and contribute to, those mechanisms	What strategies have you used to encourage others to challenge established assumptions about security and risk?	Awareness of security framework and key issues to be addressed. Treating security as a basic principle. Willingness to challenge. Lack of complacency.
• Undertake effective risk assessments and develop contingency plans		

Personal safety and security

Competencies	Suggested interview questions	Things to look for in the response
• Build and maintain a reputation, in line with humanitarian standards, and acceptance for your work • Take appropriate, coordinated and consistent action to handle situations of personal risk and situations of risk for others • Reduce vulnerability by complying with safety and security protocols set by your organisation and contextualise appropriately to local scenarios • Champion the importance of safety and keep the safety of colleagues and team members in mind at all times	Can you give an example of when you personally felt at risk? How did you manage this risk? What steps did you take to handle the situation? Tell me about, or imagine, a situation in which you have been asked by your manager/supervisor/team leader to do something that you felt compromised safety or security standards in the interest of the work. How did you/would you respond? How do you balance these conflicting issues?	Ability to assess situation, Prioritise safety/security, Use judgement, Withstand pressure and maintain balance/avoid complacency.
Additional manager competencies		
• Monitor security risks and ensure organisational protocols are consistently followed by staff • Take appropriate action and provide appropriate direction and support to team members in the event of a critical incident	Give an example of how you have implemented a responsible exit strategy within the framework of one of your projects? What was the outcome of this? What would you do differently? From your own experience, can you provide an example of how you have changed the culture of a team or organisation to encourage greater ownership and adherence to security procedures at any level?	Setting a personal example regarding security standards. Willingness to challenge the *status quo,* when standards need improving, and to inspire change.

Minimising risk to communities and partners		
Competencies	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Take measures to do no harm and to minimise risks for your partners and the communities you work with	What are the potential risks of humanitarian programmes to the communities we work with? How might you minimise these risks? What experience have you had of developing a national or local security risk assessment? How did you go about it and what aspects did you take into account? If no experience, how would you develop one and what would you take into account?	Awareness of context and key players, including partners and communities. Evidence of methodical approach.
Additional manager competencies		
• Undertake effective risk assessments with communities and partners	What experience have you had of delivering training in security and safety practice and procedures? What were the main challenges you faced? Provide an example of how you overcame the challenge.	Evidence of willingness and ability to communicate security issues to others. Awareness of need to promote security and minimise risks.
Negative indicators		

• Consistently presents ideas/opportunities that may be a risk to self or others

• Actively disregards, or lacks clear understanding, of security protocols leading to personal/organisational risk

• Demonstrates a casual attitude to risk

• Is overfamiliar with the context, leading to complacency

Competency domain	Managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment	
Competencies	**Resilience**	
	Suggested interview questions	**Things to look for in the response**
• Recognise stress and take steps to reduce it • Remain constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and sometimes threatening environments • Remain focused on your objectives and goal in a rapidly changing environment • Able to adapt to changing situations • Keep yourself emotionally stable when helping others	What was the last pressure situation you were in? How did it emerge? What was your part in the situation? What did you do to handle the pressure? How did you resolve it? Please describe your experience of working in remote, harsh or insecure environments. How do you recognise when you are becoming stressed? What do you do to manage this? Can you give us an example of when you have had to change your work plan quite significantly? Why was this and what/who instigated the change? How did you feel about it and what was the outcome?	Ability to analyse the causes of a situation, to respond in a mature way and take responsibility for dealing with it. Techniques for handling pressure. Past experience, realistic attitude, ability to take responsibility for self. Methods used to deal with stress – personal and/or involving others? Willingness to adapt plans according to circumstances. Ability to be comfortable with requirement to change plans
Additional manager competencies • Help team members to practise stress management through prioritisation of workloads and modelling of appropriate self-care	Give an example of when you have observed that a colleague or member of your team is not coping well with stress. What did you do and what was the outcome? Would you do anything differently?	Sensitivity to staff/colleagues. Ability to intervene in a positive way. Ability to reflect and learn from the experience.
Maintaining professionalism		
Competencies	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Take responsibility for your own work and for the impact of your actions • Plan, prioritise and perform tasks well under pressure • Maintain ethical and professional behaviour in accordance with relevant codes of conduct • Demonstrate personal integrity by using one's position responsibly and fairly	Have you ever been faced with an ethical or value conflict in your job? Give me an example of when this happened to you. What did you do? Tell me about a time when you had a particularly heavy workload. What impact did it have on you and how did you set about prioritising this work? Tell me about a time when you have not been able to get all of your tasks completedin the time allowed.	Integrity, ability to apply standards and deal with conflict. Past experience and coping mechanisms – realistic expectations and coping systems.

Additional manager competencies		
• Set realistic deadlines and goals • Facilitate others to carry out their roles and responsibilities • Make time to learn from experience and feedback, and apply the lessons to a new situation	Can you give me an example of when you provided feedback and assistance to another person about substandard performance? What did you do? How did you do that? What happened next?	Evidence of setting and maintaining appropriate standards. Assisting others to meet standards; Ability to learn from experience.

• Demonstrates considerable stress and does not show signs of taking steps to reduce it

• Displays unprofessional conduct that is not in line with the relevant Code of Conduct and shows demonstrable damage to reputation of agency

• Resists adapting behaviour and actions to changing environment

• Does not demonstrate a good work/life balance and shows evidence of loss of perspective.

Competency domain	Leadership in humanitarian response	
	Self-awareness	
Competencies	**Suggested interview questions**	**Things to look for in the response**
• Show awareness of your own strengths and limitations and their impact on others • Demonstrate understanding of your skills and how they complement those of others to support team effectiveness • Seek and reflect on feedback to improve your performance	Reflecting on your past experiences, what are the three things that you would be able to immediately contribute to this position? Have you received tough feedback from a manager or colleague? Did you feel that it was valid and how did you respond. If none has been received what would you do if, in your opinion, a colleague criticised your management of a situation unfairly? How would your colleagues describe you? What would they identify as your strengths and weaknesses? Tell us about a time when a mistake you made affected others and how you dealt with this.	The ability to reflect on past experiences, understand strengths and assess how they can contribute to the new role. Do they have a realistic view of themselves? Ability to take criticism and consider it. Or if none received, this may indicate insensitivity or denial, which should be explored in the hypothetical question. Ability to see self as others see them. Realistic about how they come across. Learning from the mistake. Acknowledgement of consequences. Actions taken to own the consequences and rectify the situation.

Motivating and influencing others

Competencies	Suggested interview questions	Things to look for in the response
• Communicate humanitarian values and motivate others towards them • Inspire confidence in others • Speak out clearly for organisational beliefs and values • Demonstrate active listening to encourage team collaboration • Influence others positively to achieve programme goals	Tell us about a time when your actions inspired others to work towards achieving a common goal. Tell us about a time when other members of your team disagreed with you, what happened? Describe a situation or project in which you had no formal position of authority, yet still maintained a clear leadership role. Talk us through how you demonstrated leadership. Do you have an example of a situation where you felt that you succeeded in building the confidence of others? How did you do this?	Ability to inspire others and to lead by example. Team attitude rather than directive style. Openness to others' views and to take others' ideas on-board. Ability to assess ideas, to influence where needed to reach a successful outcome. The ability to show leadership when it is not assigned. Ability to use strengths to gain respect and lead when not in a position of authority. Awareness of others and their different needs. Examples of interactions with others.
Additional manager competencies • Inspire others by clearly articulating and demonstrating the values, core purpose and principles that underpin humanitarian work • Provide regular and ongoing informal and formal feedback to recognise the contribution of others • Adapt leadership approach to the situation	What have you done to make your organisation's vision and values meaningful to others? Which strategies have worked, and which have not?	Evidence of using varying and appropriate methods to communicate complex issues in a meaningful way. Ability to observe and analyse what works and modify approach.

Critical judgement

Competencies	Suggested interview questions	Things to look for in the response
• Analyse and exercise judgement in new situations in the absence of specific guidance • Demonstrate initiative and ingenuity • Demonstrate tenacity to achieve solutions • Address difficult situations and make tough decisions confidently and calmly • Suggest creative improvements and different ways of working	Can you tell us about a situation, involving your staff or team, where you felt that things were not done well enough, or the right way? How did you take the initiative to put it right as you felt it should be? What did you learn from that experience? What new ideas would you bring to this position that others would not? Tell me about a time when you have had to take an immediate decision, with important consequences, but did not have all the facts that you would have liked? What process did you follow for decision-making in such a critical situation? What was the outcome? What would you do differently in the future? Describe a situation in which you identified a problem and took action to correct it rather than wait for someone else to do so.	Ownership and the willingness to take the initiative to resolve an outstanding matter. Innovation and ability to apply experience to a new position. Ability to deal with uncertainty, assess the risks and follow a decision-making process under pressure. Ability to assess outcome and learn from it. Evidence of a proactive approach. Willingness to take ownership
Additional manager competencies • Maintain simultaneously a broad strategic perspective and awareness of the detail of a situation • Adapt plans quickly in response to emerging situations and changing environments • Take calculated risks to improve performance • Able to act decisively and quickly	What types of organisational systems (controls, compensation, communication etc.) have you put in place to support a specific organisational strategy? Explain the process. What were the results?	Ability to implement the organisation's strategy through operational actions. Demonstrates helicopter vision and practical planning/ implementation.

Negative indicators

• Resists or delays taking decisions when it is clearly required

• Attempts to maintain control by not delegating effectively to cater to specific skills of team members, resulting in lack of confidence among the team

• Puts forward problems without solutions

• Communicates without clarity or structure in a way that is generally pessimistic

• Sees consultation as time-consuming and irrelevant

7. COMPETENCY-BASED GROUP ASSESSMENT

A group assessment involves running a dedicated selection day or half day to assess all suitable candidates at the same time. They are invited to attend and asked to participate in a variety of role-specific and nonrole-specific group activities. Each candidate is observed by an assessor (staff member) and rated on their performance during the activity against each of the core competencies.

At the end of the day a clear reflection of the candidate's skills and behaviours against the core competencies will be formed. This will often be followed by a structured face-to-face interview to further investigate the candidate's motivation, understanding of the role and additional technical skills.

Pros:

✓ Excellent solution to high volume recruitment needs

✓ Great for recruiting to the same type of position

✓ Often used to select candidates for trainee/apprenticeships

✓ Provides an insight into candidate ability to work in a team and their preferred role

✓ Helps candidates better understand the demands of the role

Cons:

x Time and staff resource heavy

x Requires access to a large room and/several breakout rooms

x All candidates have to be available on the same day

Tips:

• A huge selection of team activities can be found online

• Not every competency domain needs to be assessed in every activity, but try to ensure they are all assessed the same amount of times using the skills/behaviours listed in the job description

• Activities can be generic, e.g. the group is blindfolded and asked to make a structure with specific criteria using children's building blocks. Activities can also be role-specific, e.g.the group is given a 'field-based' scenario and five minutes to form an appropriate action plan, which should then be 'radioed' back to HQ.

• Changing assessors and candidates during the day can help create a more informed opinion of each candidate

• Each activity should have a dedicated facilitator to ensure it is clearly communicated and stays on track.

Using the grid and assessing:

• Assessors should make notes during each activity about their allocated candidate's performance against each competency.

• These notes and general remarks on overall performance should then be discussed and a final rating given during the assessors' meeting, either after each activity or at the end of the day.

• Each assessor should have a copy of the assessment grid at the start of the day, so they know who and what they are assessing, and be asked to complete it during the meeting mentioned above.

- Assessors may also record behaviours from other candidates and feed this back to other assessors during the meeting.
- In the template the CHCF has been used as an example for the assessment criteria. All competency domains and specific behaviours being sought are assessed and listed twice. This can be changed according to what competencies and behaviours need to be assessed.
- The competency to be assessed should be carefully matched to the activity. In the example the first three competency domains assessed would be suitable for a generic team-building activity *(Achieves results. Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships. Managing in a pressured and changing environment)*, whereas the subsequent three would be more suited to a role-specific activity e.g. radioing back an 'action plan' to HQ *(Applying humanitarian standards and principles. Operating safely and securely at all times. Demonstrating leadership)*.
- Behaviours will naturally be displayed during all activities and these should be noted and considered during the scoring process.

Group assessment Candidate assessment grid					
Position applied for:		Candidate name:			
Assessors' names:		Date:			
Competency domain and activity number:		SCORE extent of evidence of fulfilling competency			
		3 Exceeds	2 Met	1 Partly met	0 Not met
Activity A -<insert type of activities i.e. generic or role-specific>					
1	**<Insert competency domain and specific behaviour being sought>** **e.g. Achieves results:** Maintains focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results using available resources				
2	**Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships:** Contributes positively in the team to achieve programme objectives				
3	**Managing in a pressured and changing environment:** Adapts calmly to changing situations and constraints				
Activity B -<insert type of activities i.e. generic or role-specific>					
4	**<Insert competency domain and specific behaviour being sought>** **Applying humanitarian standards and principles:** Demonstrates an understanding of coordination mechanisms				
5	**Operating safely and securely at all times:** Identifies and communicates risks and threats and mitigates these for self and organisation				

6	**Demonstrating leadership:** Demonstrates understanding of skills and how they complement those of others to build team effectiveness.				
Activity C -<insert type of activities i.e. generic or role-specific>					
7	**<Insert competency domain and specific behaviour being sought>** **Achieves results:** Maintains focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results using available resources				
8	**Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships:** Contributes positively in the team to achieve programme objectives				
9	**Managing in a pressured and changing environment:** Adapts calmly to changing situations and constraints				
Activity D -<insert type of activities i.e. generic or role-specific>					
10	**<Insert competency domain and specific behaviour being sought>** **Applying humanitarian standards and principles:** Demonstrates an understanding of coordination mechanisms				
11	**Operating safely and securely at all times:** Identifies and communicates risks and threats and mitigates these for self and organisation				
12	**Demonstrating leadership:** Demonstrates understanding of skills and how they complement those of others to build team effectiveness.				
Summary score		/36	/24	/12	/0
Total activities score					/72
Motivation and technical interview score *(weight allocated points according to technical requirements of the role)*					/28
Total assessment score					/100

Additional comments: *(include possible competency development areas and other strengths displayed during the day):*

Candidate selected: Yes / No

8. COMPETENCY-BASED REFERENCE QUESTIONS

Competency-based references will assist a recruiter or manager to obtain focused information from a referee. The referee can be asked to describe evidence of meeting a competency if asked competency-based reference questions.

In order to develop competency-based reference questions – take the key competencies identified in the job description and write questions around the specific areas. You may want to include areas from the job description that have raised concern at the interview stage or are a key focus for the role.

As referees are busy people you will have to prioritise the areas that you question, particularly as you will also need to include generic questions around – dates of employment, disciplinary issues, attendance and issues around the code of conduct.

The questions can either be phrased as open or as closed questions where you might ask the referee to give a rating.

Some examples are given below:

Reference Questions:

Competency domain: *Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles and standards*

Competency: *Understanding the humanitarian context*

Core behaviour: *Demonstrates understanding of the phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, Disaster Risk Reduction, response and recovery*

> *Please provide evidence of how the candidate demonstrated a good understanding of the phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, Disaster Risk Reduction, response and recovery?*
> ....
> OR
> *Was the candidate able to quickly understand the humanitarian context and apply and follow the appropriate policies, procedures and requirements?*
> > • YES or NO – please provide an example of evidence
> OR
> *Please rate the performance of the candidate in their understanding of the phases of humanitarian response etc.*
> > • Exceeds
> > • Met
> > • Partly met
> > • Not met

Competency domain: *Operating safely and securely at all times*

Competency: *Minimising risk to crisis-affected people, partners and stakeholders*

Core behaviour: *Takes measures to do no harm and to minimise risks for partners and the involved crisis-affected people*

> *Please provide evidence of how the candidate took measures that minimised risk for partners.*
> ....
> OR
> *Did the candidate take measures to minimise risk for partners?*
> > • YES or NO – please provide an example of evidence
> OR
> *Please rate the performance of the candidate in the area of minimising risk for partners.*
> > • Exceeds
> > • Met
> > • Partly met
> > • Unmet

Competency domain: *Achieving results*

Competency: *Making decisions*

Core behaviour: *Demonstrates understanding of when a decision can be taken and when to involve others*

> *Please provide evidence of how the candidate took decisions.*
> ....
> OR
> *Did the candidate involve others in their decision making?*
> > • YES or NO – please provide an example of evidence
> OR
> *Please rate the performance of the candidate when involving others in decision making.*
> > • Exceeds
> > • Met
> > • Partly met
> > • Unmet

Competency domain: *Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships*

Competency: *Working with others*

Core behaviour: *Contributes positively in the team to achieve programme objectives*

> *Please provide evidence of how the candidate made a positive contribution to the programme within a team setting.*
> ....
> OR
> *Did the candidate contribute positively to the team and its programme objectives?*
> > • YES or NO – please provide an example of evidence
> OR
> *Please rate the performance of the candidate in their ability to contribute to a team and the overall achievement of its objectives.*
> > • Exceeds
> > • Met
> > • Partly met
> > • Unmet

Performance development

Key messages

• Sets out clearly the expectations and performance expected of a new and existing employee

• Identifies skills gap between desired and actual level of performance

• Identifies behaviours that can be developed and then measured in a performance appraisal

Competency-based tools include:

✓ Self-assessment
✓ Performance development

A competency framework can support the performance development process by identifying what is critical for success, and thus support and feedback can be focused accordingly. This can be done by setting objectives and then conducting an individual assessment to identify the gaps. Evidence can be gathered from the manager and through 360-degree feedback that directly relates to the performance of those competencies. This should allow for a more objective assessment based on evidence.

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9. COMPETENCY-BASED SELF-ASSESSMENT

Any individual development process starts with the employee carrying out a self-assessment of their competencies using their job profile to help identify key areas of focus.

The following self-assessment tool includes the CHCF as an example. Each organisation might have their own competency framework and will therefore need to adapt this form.

It is suggested that both the manager and the employee complete this form separately before a discussion and then compare notes and discuss.

Key to rating competency-based self-assessment

Using the descriptors in the competency framework and the limiting behaviours, place a tick in the box number according to the **extent of evidence of fulfilling the competency** against the following rating description:

> 0. Competencies not required for current role or for future career development
> 1. Not met/partially met – displays limited evidence of competencies, area for
>   further development
> 2. Met - able to display evidence of level of competencies required for the role, proficient.
> 3. Exceeds/advanced proficiency and can train others

Where possible, managers and employees should provide evidence to support the rating.

Notes of discussion and action points

- Current role: which areas require further development now or at a later stage? What type of development – support or training - can be provided by the organisation and externally? What strengths have been identified? Where support can be offered to others?
- Future role: have some areas been identified that will require support/development now or at later stage?

Additional behaviours are not included in this template, but can be added if necessary and alongside other technical, functional or leadership competencies identified in the job description.

Name:

Post currently held:

Date of assessment:

Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles and standards	0	1	2	3
Demonstrates understanding of phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, disaster risk reduction, response and recovery *Examples:* e.g. Participated in the planning process for xxxx response and was responsible for drafting the programme plan which included all phases of the response.				
Applies understanding of the political and cultural context and underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis *Examples:*				
Demonstrates understanding of the gender, diversity and inclusion dimensions of humanitarian situations *Examples:* e.g. Before drafting the plan I ensured that my team conducted a full consultation with the affected communities and feedback from different representatives in the community was included in the design of the programme and the response plan.				
Takes into account the needs, skills, capacities and experience of crisis-affected people and applies these in the response *Examples:*				

Ensures that programme goals, activities and staff behaviour uphold key national and international humanitarian frameworks, standards, principles and codes to which the organisation has committed *Examples:*				
Uses power responsibly, in line with accountability principles and standards *Examples:*				
Demonstrates understanding of role and that of the organisation and others within the humanitarian system *Examples:*				
Demonstrates understanding of coordination mechanisms *Examples:*				

Achieving results	0	1	2	3
Demonstrates understanding of agency's project cycle management *Examples:*				
Actively participates in the design and implementation of effective projects and programmes *Examples:*				

Maintains focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results using available resources *Examples:*				
Answerable to crisis-affected people for actions and decisions *Examples:*				
Collects, analyses and disseminates relevant and useful information and feedback with crisis-affected people and other stakeholders without raising their expectations *Examples:*				
Demonstrates flexibility to adapt in situations of rapid change and varying cultural contexts, always informed by a focus on crisis-affected people *Examples:*				
Demonstrates understanding of when a decision can be taken and when to involve others *Examples:*				
Considers the wider impact of decisions in order to achieve results *Examples:*				
Integrates planning and delegation when making decisions *Examples:*				

Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships	0	1	2	3
Actively listens to new and different perspectives and experiences of crisis-affected people, stakeholders and team members *Examples:*				
Establishes and maintains clear dialogue with crisis-affected people and other stakeholders *Examples:*				
Contributes positively in the team to achieve programme objectives *Examples:*				
Displays empathy, respect and compassion towards crisis-affected population *Examples:*				
Communicates regularly and responsibly, using suitable channels and technologies with consistent messaging *Examples:*				
Actively participates in networks to access and contribute to good practice *Examples:*				
Challenges decisions and behaviour which breach the International Red Cross and Red Crescent and NGOs/individual agency Codes of Conduct *Examples:*				

Operating safely and securely in a humanitarian response	0	1	2	3
Pays attention to the safety of crisis-affected people and other key stakeholders *Examples:*				
Identifies and communicates risks and threats and mitigates these for self and the agency *Examples:*				
Takes measures to do no harm and to minimise risks for partners and the involved crisis-affected people *Examples:*				

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Builds and sustains acceptance for work in line with humanitarian principles and standards				
Examples:				
Recognises different vulnerabilities and reduces vulnerability by complying with safety and security protocols set by an organisation and adapts them to the local context				
Examples:				
Champions the importance of safety and keeps the safety of colleagues and team members in mind at all times				
Examples:				

Managing yourself in a pressured and changing environment	0	1	2	3
Remains focused on objectives and goals in a rapidly changing environment				
Examples:				
Adapts calmly to changing situations and constraints				
Examples:				
Recognises personal stress and takes steps to reduce it				
Examples:				
Remains constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and challenging environments				
Examples:				

	0	1	2	3
Takes responsibility for own work and its impact on others *Examples:*				
Plans, prioritises and performs tasks well under pressure *Examples:*				
Maintains ethical and professional behaviour in accordance with relevant codes of conduct *Examples:*				
Demonstrates personal integrity by using position responsibly and fairly *Examples:*				
Aware of internal and external influences that affect performance *Examples:*				

Demonstrating leadership	0	1	2	3
Shows awareness of strengths and limitations and the impact on others *Examples:*				
Demonstrates understanding of skills and how they complement those of others to build team effectiveness *Examples:*				
Seeks and reflects on feedback to improve performance *Examples:*				

Communicates humanitarian values and encourages others to share them *Examples:*				
Inspires confidence in others *Examples:*				
Speaks out clearly for organisational beliefs and values *Examples:*				
Demonstrates active listening to encourage team collaboration *Examples:*				
Influences others positively to achieve programme goals *Examples:*				
Analyses and exercises judgment in challenging situations in the absence of specific guidance *Examples:*				
Demonstrates initiative and suggests creative improvements and better ways of working *Examples:*				
Demonstrates tenacity to achieve results *Examples:*				

Once you have completed the self-assessment you may then want to discuss the following areas with your manager:

Strengths:
Areas where you already have some skills and experience, but would like to develop further:
Critical gaps:
Top 2 or 3 priorities for future learning:
Comments from your manager about strengths and areas to improve in relation to humanitarian work:

The top learning priorities agreed with your manager can then be added to the Personal Development Plan (see tool 9. Competency-based performance development)

10. COMPETENCY-BASED PERFORMANCE DEVELOPMENT – OBJECTIVE SETTING, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN, FEEDBACK AND REVIEW

Setting competency-based objectives

Competencies provide a language when talking about the behavioural aspects of our work. This means that we can be clear about what is expected and can focus performance development towards organisational goals.

Drafting objectives will require these tools: a competency-based job description, a work plan, competency-based self-assessment, and feedback from others.

Using the tools, the manager and employee should agree on which key competencies are most important to the employee's role and identify which ones of these require further development.

Most employees will have between three and eight objectives set using a SMART approach – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-related :

What are you going to do? Tasks/goals that you need to achieve. Identify how you will know if you've succeeded.

How are you going to do it? Describe behaviours that are required to complete the task well. Think about how to achieve the objectives. Look at the competency framework and pick out a small number of competencies which are key for your objectives and on which you want to work.

During the year, seek regular feedback from your manager and others about how you're doing. This can be informal or focused on particular pieces of work.

Developing a personal development plan with competencies

As part of the performance development process, employees should also come up with a personal development plan (PDP). This will support the development of competencies needed to perform well.

The competency framework can be used to identify those behaviours needed to become more effective in the current role or in preparation for the next role. By setting objectives with template 1, this will allow for competencies to have already been identified against objectives set for the year.

When it comes to identifying activities, development does not always have to consist of formal training, but also day-to-day opportunities to learn and reflect. This may also be supported by a coach or a mentor.

Gathering feedback against competencies

As part of the performance review process, feedback can be collected from a variety of people including peers, partners and relevant stakeholders. This is known as 360-degree feedback and ensures that the manager does not just rely on their own observations when rating performance. Competency-based feedback is a very similar technique to gathering references (see previous tool). Using the competencies identified in the objectives and personal development plan (PDP), ask the person identified to give feedback to provide evidence of where the competency has been effectively demonstrated. Three key questions are suggested in template 3. Competency-based feedback can also provide a structure for evidence-based feedback that then relates back to the objectives set and provides rounded feedback to the employee.

Competency-based performance review

The end-of-year performance review will provide an opportunity for a manager and an employee to discuss the objectives, including what has been achieved and how it has been achieved. This discussion should be based on evidence gathered by the manager, the employee and those who have given feedback against the competencies. The meeting is the opportunity to share this evidence.

TEMPLATE 1: COMPETENCY-BASED OBJECTIVE SETTING

Job priorities for the year – using the job description and organisation or team work plan

1. To lead a national team of professional staff and assess the extent of the humanitarian needs (with particular emphasis on public health, water and sanitation and food security) caused during the current floods emergency in Country X.

2.

3.

4. etc.

Ensure each objective is SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-related

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Objective 1

What will you achieve?

e.g. successful implementation of a response programme during the current floods emergency over a six-month period. Success is defined by the key performance indicators in the project plan and from feedback from the community, team and manager

How will you achieve?

All of the competency domains could be applied

• Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles and standards
• Achieving results
• Develop and maintain collaborative relationships
• Operating safely and securely at all times
• Manage in a pressured and changing environment
• Demonstrate leadership

What competencies or new skills are required?

As identified in my self-assessment I will focus on developing the following competencies during this period

• Recognises personal stress and takes steps to reduce it – complete online training and discuss with manager
• Inspires confidence in others – ask for feedback from my team
• Plans, prioritises and performs tasks well under pressure – complete online training on time management and gather feedback from manager, peers and team

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Objective 2

What will you achieve?

How will you achieve it?

What competencies or new skills are required?

Objective 3

What will you achieve?

How will you achieve it?

What competencies or new skills are required?

TEMPLATE 2: COMPETENCY-BASED PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Based on your objectives for the year and your self-assessment and discussion with your manager, identify training and development needs. These should include specific core, technical or leadership competencies that have also been identified.

What development is required against the competencies that is either linked to your current role /objectives or to your career aspirations?	Activities:	Date for completion:	Record of what has been completed
Demonstrates understanding of the phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, disaster risk reduction, response and recovery	*Work experience during different phases of a humanitarian response – to gain first-hand experience.* *Coaching from an experienced humanitarian team leader – in order to allow for challenge and reflection on performance.* *Undertake study and assessment of phases of humanitarian response – in order to understand the bigger picture of why and how humanitarian response works in different contexts.*		

TEMPLATE 3: COMPETENCY-BASED FEEDBACK

Competency domain: Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles and standards

Competency: Understanding the humanitarian context

Core behaviour: Demonstrates understanding of the phases of humanitarian response including preparedness and contingency, disaster risk reduction, response and recovery

Based on evidence, describe:

What did the employee do well?

What could the employee do better?

What further areas would you identify for future development?

TEMPLATE 4: COMPETENCY-BASED PERFORMANCE REVIEW OBJECTIVE SETTING

Objective 1

Based on evidence:

What has gone well and what has been achieved?

How have the objectives been met and have the identified competencies been demonstrated?

• Exceeds

• Met

• Partly met

• Not met

Are there areas for further development?

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11. COMPETENCY-BASED LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Most organisations run or have access to learning programmes that are designed to support the development of competencies for high performance. The competency framework should provide clarity on what is needed in the current role, but can also give guidance on requirements for future roles. There are many methods of learning and a combination should provide support in different areas. Competency frameworks have also been used in the assessment process for trainee and leadership development programmes across the sector.

> This template has been produced to show where competencies might assist when putting together a learning and development plan.

THE 70/20/10 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Learning takes place in different ways and not all learning takes place in a formal setting.

This is a useful framework when designing learning interventions around competencies.

e.g. if an organisation or individual wanted to focus on the domain of:

Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles

The learning intervention might be based on:

- Learning on the job – providing or undertaking secondment opportunities
- Learning from others – identifying a mentor who has experience in this area
- Formal learning – attendance of a training course, e.g. an online training programme on the Academy's Kaya platform.

70/20/10 DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Use this framework to explore and agree development plan. Most learning takes place on the job and from others – focus efforts here.

Learning on the job (70%)	**Learning from others (20%)**	**Formal learning (10%)**
Learning that takes place within the workplace	Learning that is gained from others	Facilitator-led self-study or online learning
• Build deeper technical skill in a specific area	• Shadow line manager/ senior leader	• Business/technical/skills-based classroom learning
• Take on more responsibility	• Have a coach and/or mentor	• Online mandatory self-select learning
• Participate in more stakeholder meetings	• Increase line manager responsibility with support from experienced peers	• Education qualification or professional development programme
• Manage more senior/ different stakeholders	• Greater external interaction with stakeholders/networks	• Attending conferences/ specialist events
• Manage multiple projects		• Reading and research e.g. TED talks, profession reviews and publications
• Lead on continual improvement initiatives	• Lead or take a role on a cross-functional project with exposure to different learnings	
• Manage end-to-end process	• Interaction with senior leaders	
• Manage budgets	• Attend and participate in network events	
• Shadow a senior leader/ expert		

A template for an organisation's learning and development plan can be found in *Building an Organisational Learning and Development Framework: a Guide for NGOs* **http://www. chsalliance.org/news/blog/building-an-organisational-learning-and-development-framework-we-can-do-it** - produced for the CHS Alliance by Ann Start, March 2017.

ANNEX 1: CORE HUMANITARIAN COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

Core Humanitarian Competency Framework
Supporting humanitarians to work effectively

Competency Domains	Understanding humanitarian contexts, and applying humanitarian principles and standards	Achieving results	Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships	Operating safely and securely at all times	Managing in a pressured and changing environment	Demonstrating leadership
Outcomes	Understands operating contexts, key stakeholders and practices affecting current and future humanitarian interventions	Is accountable for own work and uses resources effectively to achieve lasting results	Develops and maintains collaborative and coordinated relationships with stakeholders and staff	Operates safely and securely in a pressured environment	Adapts to pressure and change to operate effectively within humanitarian contexts	Demonstrates humanitarian values and principles, and motivates others to achieve results in complex situations, independent of role, function or seniority
Competencies and core behaviours for all staff in humanitarian response, informed by skills and knowledge	**Understanding the humanitarian context** Demonstrates understanding of the phases of humanitarian response, including preparedness and contingency, disaster risk reduction, response and recovery	**Ensuring programme quality and impact** Demonstrates understanding of project cycle management Actively participates in design and implementation of effective projects and programmes	**Listening and creating dialogue** Actively listens to new and different perspectives and experiences of crisis-affected people, stakeholders and team members Establishes and maintains clear dialogue with crisis-affected people and other stakeholders	**Minimising risk to crisis-affected people, partners and stakeholders** Pays attention to the safety of crisis-affected people and other key stakeholders Identifies and communicates risks and threats, and mitigates these for self and organisation	**Adapting and coping** Remains focused on objectives and goals in a rapidly changing environment Adapts calmly to changing situations and constraints Recognises personal stress and takes steps to reduce it	**Self-awareness** Shows awareness of strengths and limitations and the impact on others Demonstrates understanding of skills and how they complement those of others to build team effectiveness Seeks and reflects on feedback to improve performance

Applies understanding of the political and cultural context and underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis

Demonstrates understanding of the gender, diversity and inclusion dimensions of humanitarian situations

Takes into account the needs, skills, capacities and experience of crisis-affected people and applies these in the response

Applying humanitarian standards and principles

Ensures that programme goals, activities and staff behaviour uphold key national and international humanitarian frameworks, standards, principles and codes to which organisation has committed

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Maintains focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results, using available resources

Working accountably

Answers to crisis-affected people for actions and decisions

Collects, analyses and disseminates relevant and useful information and feedback from crisis-affected people and other stakeholders without raising expectations

Making decisions

Demonstrates flexibility in situations of rapid change and varying cultural contexts, always informed by a focus on crisis-affected people

Demonstrates understanding of when a decision can be taken and when to involve others

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Working with others

Contributes positively in the team to achieve programme objectives

Displays empathy, respect and compassion towards crisis-affected population

Communicates regularly and responsibly, using suitable channels and technologies with consistent messaging

Actively participates in networks to access and contribute to good practice

Challenges decisions and behaviour which breach the International Red Cross and Red Crescent and NGOs'/individual agencies' Codes of Conduct

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Takes measures to do no harm and to minimise risks for partners and crisis-affected people

Managing personal safety and security

Builds and sustains acceptance for work in line with humanitarian principles and standards

Recognises different vulnerabilities: reduces vulnerability by complying with safety and security protocols set by organisation, and adapts them to local context

Champions the importance of safety and keeps the safety of colleagues and team members in mind at all times

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Remains constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and challenging environments

Maintaining professionalism

Takes responsibility for own work and its impact on others

Plans, prioritises and performs tasks well under pressure

Maintains ethical and professional behaviour in accordance with relevant codes of conduct

Demonstrates personal integrity by using position responsibly and fairly

Shows awareness of internal and external influences that affect performance

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Motivating and influencing others

Communicates humanitarian values and encourages others to share them

Inspires confidence in others

Speaks out clearly for organisational beliefs and values

Demonstrates active listening to encourage team collaboration

Influences others positively to achieve programme goals

Critical judgement

Analyses and exercises judgment in challenging situations in the absence of specific guidance

Demonstrates initiative and suggests creative improvements and better ways of working

	Understanding the humanitarian context	Ensuring programme quality and impact	Listening and creating dialogues / Working with others	Minimising risk to crisis-affected people, partners and stakeholders	Adapting and coping	Motivating and influencing others
	Uses power responsibly, in line with accountability principles and standards Demonstrates understanding of own, organisation's and others' role within the humanitarian system Demonstrates understanding of coordination mechanisms Considers the wider impact of decisions in order to achieve results Integrates planning and delegation when making decisions					Demonstrates tenacity to achieve results
Additional Behaviours for managers in humanitarian response, informed by skills and knowledge	**Understanding the humanitarian context** Assesses and analyses key issues and formulates actions to respond to them Commits organisation to gender, diversity and inclusion dimensions	**Ensuring programme quality and impact** Sets standards in work and follows agreed operating procedures Clarifies roles and responsibilities within team to maximise impact Proactively collaborates with stakeholders to avoid duplication and maximise resources	**Listening and creating dialogues** Ensures feedback from crisis-affected people, partners and other stakeholders is incorporated into programme design, implementation and learning **Working with others** Establishes clear objectives with teams and individuals	**Minimising risk to crisis-affected people, partners and stakeholders** Undertakes effective risk assessments with crisis-affected people and partners Demonstrates understanding of wider UN/NGO security coordination and how the organisation participates in those mechanisms	**Adapting and coping** Helps others to recognise and manage stress by modelling appropriate self-care and prioritising workload Promotes well-being and duty-of-care culture	**Motivating and influencing others** Inspires others by clearly articulating and demonstrating the values, core purpose and principles that underpin humanitarian work Provides regular and ongoing informal and formal feedback Recognises the contribution of others Adapts leadership style to time frame and changing situation

Applying humanitarian standards and principles			Maintaining professionalism	Critical judgement
Participates in the development of organisational response based on an understanding of operating context	Monitors work progress and individual performance	Prioritises and commits resources for safety and security	Sets realistic deadlines and goals	Maintains broad strategic perspective at the same time as awareness of detail of a situation
Respects international humanitarian law and relevant treaties	Establishes agreed long-distance work schemes with partners and staff	Develops contingency plans and implements a responsible exit strategy	Enables others to carry out their roles and responsibilities	Acts decisively and adapts plans quickly to respond to emerging situations and changing environments
Actively participates in disaster coordination and interagency cooperation based on a clear understanding of the organisation's perspective and approach	Works with team to build trust with communities and stakeholders	**Managing personal safety and security**	Monitors commitments and actions transparently	Takes informed and calculated risks to improve performance
Promotes and ensures compliance with humanitarian standards and principles that govern behaviour of staff	Fosters collaborative, transparent and accountable relationships with partners to formalise and implement agreements	Monitors security risks and ensures organisational protocols are understood and consistently followed by staff	Takes time to learn from experience and feedback and apply lessons learnt in new situations	
Regularly provides feedback and information to achieve improved results	Uses negotiation and conflict resolution skills to support positive outcomes	Takes appropriate action and provides direction and support to team members in the event of a crisis		
Documents lessons learned and applies them to future projects				
Promotes responsible use of latest innovation and technology to deliver results				
Working accountably				
Establishes meaningful processes through which crisis-affected people can participate in the response and share their expectations and concerns				
Ensures efficient and transparent use of resources in accordance with internal control mechanisms				

ANNEX 2: LIMITING BEHAVIOURS FRAMEWORK

Domains	Core competencies	Additional behaviours	Limiting behaviours
Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian principles and standards	**Understanding the humanitarian context** Demonstrates understanding of the phases of humanitarian response, including preparedness and contingency, disaster risk reduction, response and recovery Applies understanding of the political and cultural context and underlying causes of the humanitarian crisis Demonstrates understanding of the gender, diversity and inclusion dimensions of humanitarian situations Takes into account the needs, skills, capacities and experience of crisis-affected people and applies these in the response **Applying humanitarian standards and principles** Ensures that programme goals, activities and staff behaviour uphold key national and international humanitarian frameworks, standards, principles and codes to which organisation has committed Uses power responsibly, in line with accountability principles and standards Demonstrates understanding of own, organisation's and others' role within the humanitarian system Demonstrates understanding of coordination mechanisms	**Understanding the humanitarian context** Assesses and analyses key issues and formulates actions to respond to them Commits organisation to gender, diversity and inclusion dimensions **Applying humanitarian standards and principles** Participates in the development of organisational response based on an understanding of operating context Respects international humanitarian law and relevant treaties Actively participates in disaster coordination and interagency cooperation based on a clear understanding of the organisation's perspective and approach Promotes and ensures compliance with humanitarian standards and principles that govern behaviour of staff	• Consistently does not acknowledge cultural or political context in discussions • Consistently demonstrates lack of beneficiary focus and does not consider beneficiaries while addressing solutions • Appears to be unclear about own and organisation's responsibilities • Is too influenced by donor requirements, rather than beneficiary or organisational priorities • Refuses to participate in coordinated mechanisms without a clear rationale • Insensitive to gender, diversity and inclusion dimensions • Compromises humanitarian principles and standards easily

Domains	Core competencies	Additional behaviours	Limiting behaviours
Achieving results	**Ensuring programme quality and impact** Demonstrates understanding of project cycle management Actively participates in design and implementation of effective projects and programmes Maintains focus on delivery of timely and appropriate results, using available resources **Working accountably** Answers to crisis-affected people for actions and decisions Collects, analyses and disseminates relevant and useful information and feedback from crisis-affected people and other stakeholders without raising expectations **Making decisions** Demonstrates flexibility in situations of rapid change and varying cultural contexts, always informed by a focus on crisis-affected people Demonstrates understanding of when a decision can be taken and when to involve others Considers the wider impact of decisions in order to achieve results Integrates planning and delegation when making decision	**Ensuring programme quality and impact** Sets standards in work and follows agreed operating procedures Clarifies roles and responsibilities within team to maximise impact Pro-actively collaborates with stakeholders to avoid duplication and maximise resources Regularly provides feedback and information to achieve improved results Documents lessons learned and applies them to future projects Promotes responsible use of latest innovation and technology to deliver results **Working accountably** Establishes meaningful processes through which crisis-affected people can participate in the response and share their expectations and concerns Ensures efficient and transparent use of resources in accordance with internal control mechanisms	• Displays an inflexible attitude in the face of changing plans or decisions, which can have a negative impact on project outcomes • Consistently fails to deliver results through lack of focus on outcomes • Gives up easily when presented with challenges • Does not seem able to meet deadlines regardless of the situation and resource • Misuses resources or behaves in a way that may be considered fraudulent • Displays unhelpful or negative behaviour when facing challenges • Communicates without clarity or structure in a way that confuses others • Resists latest innovation and technology • Shows little interest in finding out about technology and innovation and applying technology and innovation to work • Culturally inept and places own need above that of others • Fails to deliver on commitments to crisis-affected people

Domains	Core competencies	Additional behaviours	Limiting behaviours
Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships	**Listening and creating dialogue** Actively listens to new and different perspectives and experiences of crisis-affected people, stakeholders and team members Establishes and maintains clear dialogue with crisis-affected people and other stakeholders **Working with others** Contributes positively in the team to achieve programme objectives Displays empathy, respect and compassion towards crisis-affected population Communicates regularly and responsibly, using suitable channels and technologies with consistent messaging Actively participates in networks to access and contribute to good practice Challenges decisions and behaviour which breach the International Red Cross and Red Crescent and NGOs'/ individual agencies' Codes of Conduct	**Listening and creating dialogues** Ensures feedback from crisis-affected people, partners and other stakeholders is incorporated into programme design, implementation and learning **Working with others** Establishes clear objectives with teams and individuals Monitors work progress and individual performance Establishes agreed long-distance work schemes with partners and staff Works with team to build trust with communities and stakeholders Fosters collaborative, transparent and accountable relationships with partners to formalise and implement agreements Uses negotiation and conflict resolution skills to support positive outcomes	• Does not actively listen to others' contributions or ask for their input (including team members, crisis-affected people, other NGOs, or other key stakeholders) • Lacks ownership and relies on other team members to complete own tasks • Is ineffective in communicating ideas/ thoughts to the team because of lack of confidence; withholding information; or inappropriateness to audience • Ignores people or ideas that do not fit with own views • Agrees to poor decisions and inappropriate compromises to please others • Communicates in language, format or media that are difficult to understand, disrespectful or inappropriate • Misses opportunities to develop and sustain new relationships or partnerships • Is unhelpful or unprofessional when interacting with stakeholders • Responds to stakeholders in a generic way, irrespective of varying stakeholder needs • Unable to relate to people from other backgrounds • Insensitive to the needs of individuals with different perspectives

Domains	Core competencies	Additional behaviours	Limiting behaviours
Operating safely and securely at all times	**Minimising risk to crisis-affected people, partners and stakeholders** Pays attention to the safety of crisis-affected people and other key stakeholders Identifies and communicates risks and threats, and mitigates these for self and organisation Takes measures to do no harm and to minimise risks for partners and crisis-affected people **Managing personal safety and security** Builds and sustains acceptance for work in line with humanitarian principles and standards Recognises different vulnerabilities: reduces vulnerability by complying with safety and security protocols set by organisation, and adapts them to local context Champions the importance of safety and keeps the safety of colleagues and team members in mind at all times	**Minimising risk to crisis-affected people, partners and stakeholders** Undertakes effective risk assessments with crisis-affected people and partners Demonstrates understanding of wider UN/NGO security coordination and how the organisation participates in those mechanisms Prioritises and commits resources for safety and security Develops contingency plans and implements a responsible exit strategy **Managing personal safety and security** Monitors security risks and ensures organisational protocols are understood and consistently followed by staff Takes appropriate action and provides direction and support to team members in the event of a crisis	• Consistently presents ideas or opportunities that may be a risk to self or others • Actively disregards or lacks clear understanding of security protocols, leading to personal or organisational risk • Demonstrates a casual attitude to risk • Does not show curiosity to learn about the context, and allows complacency to creep in • Displays offensive attitudes to crisis-affected people and local authorities

Domains	Core competencies	Additional behaviours	Limiting behaviours
Managing in a pressured and changing environment	**Adapting and coping** Remains focused on objectives and goals in a rapidly changing environment Adapts calmly to changing situations and constraints Recognises personal stress and takes steps to reduce it Remains constructive and positive under stress to be able to tolerate difficult and challenging environments **Maintaining professionalism** Takes responsibility for own work and its impact on others Plans, prioritises and performs tasks well under pressure Maintains ethical and professional behaviour in accordance with relevant codes of conduct Demonstrates personal integrity by using position responsibly and fairly Shows aware of internal and external influences that affect performance	**Adapting and coping** Helps others to recognise and manage stress by modelling appropriate self-care and prioritising workload Promotes well-being and duty-of-care culture **Maintaining professionalism** Sets realistic deadlines and goals Enables others to carry out their roles and responsibilities Monitors commitments and actions transparently Takes time to learn from experience and feedback and apply lessons learnt in new situations	• Demonstrates considerable stress, and does not show signs of taking steps to reduce it • Displays unprofessional conduct that is not in line with the relevant code of conduct and shows demonstrable damage to reputation of organisation • Resists adapting behaviours and actions to changing situations and environment • Does not demonstrate a good work/life balance and shows evidence of loss of perspective • Unaware of the impact of change on self and others

Domains	Core competencies	Additional behaviours	Limiting behaviours
Demonstrating leadership	**Self-awareness** Shows awareness of strengths and limitations and the impact on others Demonstrates understanding of skills and how they complement those of others to build team effectiveness Seeks and reflects on feedback to improve performance **Motivating and influencing others** Communicates humanitarian values and encourages others to share them Inspires confidence in others Speaks out clearly for organisational beliefs and values Demonstrates active listening to encourage team collaboration Influences others positively to achieve programme goals **Critical judgement** Analyses and exercises judgment in challenging situations in the absence of specific guidance Demonstrates initiative and suggests creative improvements and better ways of working Demonstrates tenacity to achieve results	**Motivating and influencing others** Inspires others by clearly articulating and demonstrating the values, core purpose and principles that underpin humanitarian work Provides regular and ongoing informal and formal feedback Recognises the contribution of others Adapts leadership style to time frame and changing situation **Critical judgement** Maintains broad strategic perspective at the same time as awareness of detail of a situation Acts decisively and adapts plans quickly to respond to emerging situations and changing environments Takes informed and calculated risks to improve performance	• Resists or delays taking decisions when it is clearly required • Attempts to maintain control by not delegating effectively to cater to specific skills of team members resulting in lack of confidence among the team • Puts forward problems without seeking solutions • Communicates without clarity or structure in a way that is generally pessimistic • Sees consultation as time-consuming and irrelevant • Refuses to admit own failings, and blames others instead • Does not acknowledge others' expertise or knowledge, and ignores or dismisses information that contradicts own point of view • Avoids tackling performance issues • Tolerates behaviour which negatively impacts the development, performance and morale of others • Communicates strategy and direction of the organisation in vague or inconsistent manner • Uses influence in a way that compromises professional integrity • Finds it difficult to make tough decisions • Discourages others or makes it difficult for them to speak openly

ANNEX 3: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)

'It is important to state here that adopting these competencies does not suggest that they are the only knowledge and skill sets required for humanitarian work, but they can serve to provide a common starting point and baseline across a diversity of actors and training providers.'

ELRHA 2014 Global Survey on Humanitarian Professionalisation, p. 38

As with any new initiative and change effort, there are bound to be questions in the minds of users. The following frequently asked questions (FAQs) are based on feedback from stakeholders during the review of the CHCF.

Q 1. What is the CHCF?

The CHCF stands for the Core Humanitarian Competencies Framework. It was developed in collaboration by a diverse group of international humanitarian organisations in 2011, to provide a common reference point on the core competencies that any humanitarian organisation would need to further strengthen professionalism among its employees for effective humanitarian response in any setting. The CHCF was revised in 2016 following extensive global consultation with stakeholders.

There are six core competency domains or broad competencies recommended in the CHCF as essential in humanitarian work:

- Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian standards and principles
- Achieving results
- Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships
- Operating safely and securely at all times
- Managing in a pressured and changing environment
- Demonstrating leadership

Each competency domain in the CHCF is further broken down into several specific core competencies.

Q 2. How are the competencies listed in the CHCF similar to, or different from, the qualifications and experiences that an employee in a humanitarian organisation has?

As can be seen from the description of the six core competency domains, the competencies in the CHCF state desirable *behaviours* that a humanitarian worker should acquire for optimal performance and to deliver effective services to crisis-affected people. They are quite different from academic and technical qualifications and skill sets that are required to perform a given job. However, they are essential behavioural attributes that the employee should strive to acquire, to complement the technical and operational knowledge and skill sets.

Q 3. What are the benefits of adopting the CHCF for me as an individual employee?

There are a huge range of benefits for individual employees.

You will be able to rely on a standardised and explicit competency framework against which you can develop your behavioural attributes. You will know upfront what are the core behaviours desired by employers. Further, you have access to a transparent system by which you know in advance what competencies will be used by your managers to assess your performance. You will also have a more rigorous method to detect competency gaps and identify relevant learning or training interventions to address them.

Q 4. What are the benefits of adopting the CHCF for humanitarian organisations?

Organisations will benefit in equal measure from the implementation of the CHCF or a similar competency framework. As with employees, organisations have the opportunity to establish a systematic, evidence-based tool to nurture competency development among their employees at all levels of the organisation. Management has access to a tool that can guide and assist them at every stage of the employment cycle, be it planning, recruitment and selection, on-boarding, performance management, or learning and development.

Ultimately, mainstreaming the CHCF will help strengthen professionalism among employees and contribute significantly towards sharpening an organisation's capacity to deliver effective humanitarian response.

Q 5. Is it mandatory for my organisation to adopt the CHCF?

As has been stressed in the Guide, the CHCF is *not* a prescriptive tool, and therefore it is not mandatory for a humanitarian organisation to adopt it. It is a framework or model that could be used by humanitarian organisations as a guideline to develop the competencies of its employees. Since the CHCF was developed collectively by representative organisations in the humanitarian sector, it provides useful indicators on the common competencies that are essential for providing professional and high quality humanitarian response in any setting.

Q 6. There are many different tools and initiatives that support professionalisation in the humanitarian sector and it can get confusing. How does the CHCF fit in?

The CHCF is the basic reference for describing and interpreting competencies in the humanitarian sector. It should serve as a starting point for any discussion and effort on competencies in the sector. How it relates to a few other related initiatives is spelt out in section 1 of the Guide.

Q 7. Can the CHCF be adopted in humanitarian organisations operating anywhere in the world?

This question is best answered by revisiting the six core competency domains in the CHCF that have already been mentioned:

- Understanding humanitarian contexts and applying humanitarian standards and principles
- Achieving results
- Developing and maintaining collaborative relationships
- Operating safely and securely at all times
- Managing in a pressured and changing environment
- Demonstrating leadership

The core competencies are not constrained by any particular geographical or cultural setting. They are standard or universal behavioural attributes that a humanitarian worker and organisation need to cultivate for effective humanitarian response.

Q 8. Will implementing the CHCF or variations of the framework affect existing human resource (HR) policies or initiatives in my organisation?

The CHCF should be seamlessly integrated into an organisation's already established HR policies and practices. It should *complement* and not displace existing policies and practices.

Q 9. I heard someone say that the CHCF is designed only for frontline employees and do not apply to managers. Is that true?

No. The CHCF is applicable to all employees, be it frontline staff, middle or senior managers. There cannot be two sets of competencies or behavioural attributes by which employees are evaluated. While there are common core competencies for everyone, the CHCF also recommends *additional* behaviours that employees who hold managerial or leadership roles should acquire.

Q 10. Is the CHCF applicable only for large organisations that have an HR team?

No, the CHCF is valid and relevant for any type of organisation, large as well as small and medium. Organisations without dedicated HR expertise can use the resources mentioned in the Guide, to implement the CHCF.

ANNEX 4: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Some recently produced HR resources from the CHS Alliance may be useful:

• A Manual for Managing Human Resources. Authors - CHS Alliance and Radhika Bhagat (Manifest (UK) Ltd). © CHS Alliance 2015 - **http://www.chsalliance.org/files/files/Resources/ Tools-and-guidance/CHS-Alliance-Human-Resources-Manual-final.pdf**

• Learning and Development Framework Toolkit. Authors CHS Alliance and Ann Start (Start Development). March 2017 - **http://www.chsalliance.org/files/files/L%26F%20 Framework%20-%20Final.pdf**

• A Handbook for Measuring HR Effectiveness. Authors CHS Alliance and Ann Start (Start Development). © CHS Alliance 2015 - **http://www.chsalliance.org/files/files/Resources/ Tools-and-guidance/CHS-Alliance-Handbook-for-Managing-HR-Effectiveness-Final.pdf**

• Staff Survey Toolkit. CHS Alliance and Agenda Consulting. © CHS Alliance 2015 - **http://www.chsalliance.org/files/files/Resources/Tools-and-guidance/CHS-Alliance-Staff- Survey-Toolkit-2015.pdf**

ANNEX 5: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- ACF UK
- ActionAid
- CAFOD
- CARE International
- CARE UK
- Christian Aid
- Concern Worldwide
- EUHAP
- Help Age International
- International Rescue Committee
- Islamic Relief Worldwide
- Merlin
- Oxfam GB
- Plan International
- Save the Children UK
- Tearfund
- World Vision International
- World Vision UK

October, 2017

NOTES

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'Demonstrates
flexibility
to adapt in
situations of
rapid change'