

# HUMAN ↗ RESOURCES

*at FAO*

## FAO Competency Framework



**Food and Agriculture  
Organization of the  
United Nations**

# FAO Competency Framework

## **Acknowledgements**

FAO is grateful to the UNAIDS Secretariat, which has kindly permitted FAO to re-use and adapt the explanatory text on competencies from their UNAIDS competency framework booklet.

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# WHAT IS THE FAO COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK?

The FAO competency framework consists of three main elements:

- **our values which** are three shared principles and beliefs that unite all employees;
- five **core competencies** apply to all of us;
- a parallel set of six **leadership competencies** apply to senior managers.

Competencies are demonstrated behaviours of a person that facilitate effective performance of work tasks. It's not just about what we do, but how we do it.

The framework has emerged from extensive consultations with employees from across the organization. Focus groups of all levels and grades, a survey, meetings with staff representatives, and consultations among human resource managers were undertaken, involving colleagues at country, subregional, regional and headquarters levels. Over time, the framework will be reviewed to ensure that it continues to reflect the needs of FAO.

# THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The values and competencies are defined by a set of **behavioural indicators** which provide a focused description of how the values and competencies are demonstrated in work performance.

Values					
Commitment to FAO		Respect for all		Integrity and transparency	
Core competencies					
Results focus	Teamwork	Communication	Building effective relationships	Knowledge sharing and continuous improvement	
Leadership competencies					
Results focus	Leading, engaging and empowering others	Communication	Partnering and advocating	Knowledge sharing and continuous improvement	Strategic thinking

# USING THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK TO STRENGTHEN OUR WORKFORCE

**Recruitment:** The competency framework will help us ensure that new staff share FAO's values and demonstrate the core and managerial competencies through competency-based interviewing. Competencies help us get the right person for the job by focusing on demonstrated skills and behaviours, as well as on qualifications and experience.

**Performance management:** The core and leadership competencies give us a common language to describe good performance. The behaviours outlined in each of the competencies provide an agreed-upon and transparent way to discuss both our strengths as well as the areas where we need to develop. The framework will be incorporated into a strengthened performance management process.

**Development:** A shared understanding of our learning priorities will help us provide staff members with the development opportunities they need. The competency framework provides a clear description of the skills and attributes required to build a successful career. Specific learning activities will be made available to help staff develop key competencies and a search function on the e-learning platform ([learning@fao](mailto:learning@fao)) facilitates the identification of relevant learning opportunities for each competency.

**Generic job profiles:** The competency framework will be integrated into generic job profiles. The profiles specify the key results and functions related to the job, by grade, as well as the minimum requirements, technical expertise, experience, and competencies needed to perform.

# USING THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK IN YOUR WORK

**Take charge of your development:** Use the framework to chart your way forward. Review the behavioural indicators and decide where you want to improve and develop through formal and informal learning. If you're thinking ahead to your next career move, consider the competencies you'll need to further your new position.

**Build your team:** If you're a manager, help your team members identify key competencies for development. You can also use the framework to assess potential new staff using the concrete behavioural indicators. The framework also helps managers and staff members identify how they need to build their team in order to perform at the highest level.

**Maximize your performance:** Find out how well you are demonstrating the behaviours outlined in the framework. You can get honest feedback from your peers, supervisor and external partners. As a manager, use the framework to clarify objectives for your team – and let them know how they're doing.

The competency framework is your roadmap to performance and results. Get to know it inside out – it's **your** framework, **your** organization, **your** performance.

A large, blue, geometric shape, resembling a stylized letter 'A' or a parallelogram, is positioned in the center of the page. The shape is filled with a solid blue color and has a white outline. The word "VALUES" is written in white, uppercase, sans-serif font across the center of the blue shape.

VALUES



# COMMITMENT TO FAO

Takes pride in working for FAO and actively contributes to the Organization's achievements

1. Demonstrates dedication in contributing to the Organization's achievements
2. Builds an awareness of the Organization's work and an understanding of how one's own efforts contribute to broader results
3. Promotes FAO's work and its mandate
4. Upholds the values of the organization in daily activities and behaviours

# RESPECT FOR ALL

Values others' dignity and worth and draws on diverse ideas, experiences and talents

1. Shows respect and sensitivity towards gender, culture, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, political conviction and other differences
2. Welcomes and works effectively with people from all backgrounds
3. Promotes tolerance and understanding towards individual differences
4. Values and promotes the benefit of diversity in viewpoints, skills and experiences to the Organization's work



# INTEGRITY AND TRANSPARENCY

Upholds high standards and integrity in one's work and dealings with others, balancing the need for transparency and confidentiality

1. Upholds and promotes the Standards of Conduct for the international civil service
2. Does not abuse one's position and acts without consideration of personal gain
3. Takes accountability for delivering to commitments, communicating with others proactively about potential challenges
4. Maintains impartiality and addresses potential conflicts of interest carefully and proactively
5. Embraces and encourages transparency, balancing this with the need for discretion and confidentiality as appropriate



# CORE COMPETENCIES

# RESULTS FOCUS

Takes accountability for the delivery of agreed results in service of FAO's strategic framework

1. Develops an understanding of one's client(s), their actual needs and the products and services required to support them
2. Contributes to work planning, alerting those involved of potential obstacles and helping to identify suitable alternative options as needed
3. Manages time and resources efficiently, monitoring progress and making adjustments as necessary to deliver work to set standards and deadlines
4. Takes accountability for the delivery of agreed results

# TEAMWORK

Works collaboratively within a team, supporting others and fostering a positive team environment

1. Fosters a sense of team spirit by developing a shared understanding, accountability and enthusiasm for the team's work
2. Demonstrates care and concern for other team members, proactively offering support
3. Works collaboratively with others by seeking to understand and make best use of team members' diverse ideas, working styles, skills and backgrounds
4. Encourages and shows appreciation for other team members' contributions
5. [If individual has direct reports] Coordinates and guides the work of others by providing clear direction and feedback



# COMMUNICATION

Encourages and contributes to clear and open communication

1. Presents information using language and sequence of ideas that is easy for recipients to understand
2. Adapts communication to the recipient's needs, checking key messages are understood and adjusting communication as needed
3. Encourages others to share their views, using active listening to demonstrate openness and to build understanding of different perspectives
4. Maintains open communication and keeps all those concerned informed in a timely manner

# BUILDING EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Builds and maintains relationships outside own immediate team to achieve common goals

1. Builds positive working relationships of mutual trust and empathy
2. Seeks opportunities to collaborate with others who work towards similar results
3. Develops networks with people outside of own immediate team to enhance team outputs
4. Recognizes where there may be conflicting interests and seeks solutions that will best meet the needs of all





# KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Continually seeks to improve the knowledge, skills and work processes of oneself and others

1. Maintains awareness of new developments in own area of expertise, sharing and promoting this knowledge with others who may benefit
2. Contributes to the identification of improvements to work processes and assists in implementing them
3. Develops an understanding of own strengths and development needs
4. Identifies ways to improve own and others' performance through constructive feedback and the sharing and recording of lessons learned



# LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES

# RESULTS FOCUS

Takes accountability for the delivery of agreed results in service of strategic framework

1. Develops an understanding of one's client(s), their actual needs and the products and services required to support them
2. Leads and facilitates work planning, alerting those involved of potential obstacles and helping to identify suitable alternative options as needed
3. Manages time and resources efficiently, monitoring progress and making adjustments as necessary to deliver work to set standards and deadlines
4. Takes accountability for the delivery of agreed results

# LEADING, ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING OTHERS

Coordinates, directs, facilitates and recognizes team efforts; creates an enabling environment and assists others to realize and develop their potential

1. Provides clear vision, direction and purpose, ensuring that team members understand and are held accountable for their roles and responsibilities
2. Acts as an example of the FAO values and competencies, creating an enabling environment for their effective use
3. Motivates and inspires team members by encouraging their input in decision-making, showing appreciation for their efforts and demonstrating concern for their individual needs
4. Assigns responsibilities fairly and manages performance, taking account of individual strengths, workloads and interests
5. Takes an active role in others' development by providing timely feedback, coaching, mentoring and learning opportunities



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# PARTNERING AND ADVOCATING

Promotes ideas and develops partnerships  
to advance the Organization's work

1. Persuades others of the value of the Organization's work by developing convincing arguments, tailored to the audience's key concerns
2. Builds networks and partnerships with parties outside of own team and organization in order to achieve set objectives, and assists others to do the same
3. Recognizes key players in decision-making, engaging them and building consensus for final decisions
4. Approaches negotiations with a focus on addressing the needs of all parties



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2. Leads the identification and implementation of improvements to work processes
3. Develops an understanding of own strengths and development needs
4. Identifies ways to improve own and others' performance through constructive feedback and the sharing and recording of lessons learned

# STRATEGIC THINKING

Makes informed and coherent decisions aligned with broader goals and strategies

1. Gathers information and different perspectives from others to develop a comprehensive understanding of issues
2. Identifies key issues/priorities in complex situations and how they may be related to one another
3. Involves others in the selection of the best course of action, guiding them to weigh the potential short and long-term impact of different options on various stakeholders and results
4. Makes clear, informed decisions and takes action in a timely fashion

