

# UNAIDS SECRETARIAT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

UNAIDS / JC1808E (English original, October 2010)

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*In our rapidly changing world, the demands of the global AIDS response are becoming increasingly complex. As UNAIDS Secretariat staff members, we need to meet this challenge head-on so we can continue to make a real and lasting difference. We must reflect, adapt and evolve to keep pace with the changing needs of the people to whom we are ultimately accountable.*

*This requires a shared understanding of how we do our work—the core competencies that are essential for all staff, and the managerial competencies that all managers should model. This shared understanding has been defined by you and is laid out in this Competency Framework.*

*The UNAIDS Secretariat Competency Framework underpins our Human Resources Strategy and will be progressively integrated into all our HR systems – recruitment, staff development and performance management.*

*The values and competencies set out in this Framework are directly linked to our vision statement and guide our every day work in pursuit of a results-based response to the epidemic.*

*I know that I can count on you to continue to lead the way in making UNAIDS the very best it can be.*

Michel Sidibé  
Executive Director

# WHAT IS THE UNAIDS SECRETARIAT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK?

The UNAIDS Secretariat Competency Framework consists of three main elements, beginning with our *Values*: three shared principles and beliefs that unite staff. Additionally, six *Core Competencies* apply to all of us regardless of our roles or functions. A further six *Managerial Competencies* cover managers and supervisors.

We define *Competencies* as the skills, attributes and behaviours that we are expected to demonstrate as effective staff members. It's not just about what we do, but *how* we do it.

The Framework has emerged from extensive consultations with staff members from across the Secretariat. Focus groups, interviews, telephone consultations and an all-staff survey were undertaken, involving colleagues at country, regional and Headquarters levels. Over time, the Framework will be reviewed to ensure that it continues to reflect the needs of the Secretariat.

# UNAIDS SECRETARIAT COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK



# USING THE COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK TO STRENGTHEN OUR WORKFORCE

*Recruitment:* The Competency Framework will help us ensure that new staff share the Secretariat's values and demonstrate the core and where appropriate managerial competencies. Competencies help us get the right person for the job by focusing not only on qualifications and experience, but on demonstrated skills and behaviours.

*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.

*Performance management:* The Competency Framework gives us a common language to describe good performance. The behaviours outlined in each of the values and 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 in a strengthened performance management process.

# 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 develop for 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.

# VALUES

COMMITMENT TO THE AIDS RESPONSE

INTEGRITY

RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY



# COMMITMENT TO THE AIDS RESPONSE

*This value is about demonstrating a personal commitment to the AIDS response through our day-to-day work. It involves actively advocating for and contributing to an effective response within and outside of UNAIDS. It is about being a role model for addressing stigma and discrimination against people living with HIV and key populations at higher risk, as well as seizing opportunities to raise awareness of the impact of the epidemic.*

## **Upholding COMMITMENT TO THE AIDS RESPONSE means:**

- We stay involved and informed about the response, and are aware of issues facing people living with HIV and key populations most at risk
- We uphold the UN Cares 10 Minimum Standards to address HIV in the UN workplace
- We model sensitivity towards people living with HIV and key populations, strongly promoting zero tolerance for stigma and discrimination
- We advocate for an effective response to the epidemic through our specific roles and functions
- We demonstrate our personal commitment by making decisions and taking actions that reflect our commitment to the response

# INTEGRITY

*This value is about defining, committing to and maintaining clear ethical standards. This includes acting in the interest of the organization without consideration of personal gain. It is about being transparent and forthright in our interactions within the organization and with external partners, and taking a stand against behaviour that is unethical or incongruent with our values.*

## **Upholding INTEGRITY means:**

- We act in accordance with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service
- We promote an open, fair and honest environment within our workplace
- We conduct ourselves in an ethical manner at all times and do not abuse power or authority
- We take prompt action against unprofessional or unethical behaviour
- We follow through on commitments and take responsibility when we are unable to fulfil them

# RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY

*This value is about treating all people with dignity and respect, and leveraging the diverse perspectives of our colleagues and partners. It is about becoming aware of our own biases and taking action to confront discrimination or intolerance. It includes respecting and including diverse points of view in our daily work and decision-making.*

## **Upholding RESPECT FOR DIVERSITY means:**

- We demonstrate inclusive behaviour and willingness to work without bias with all individuals and groups, regardless of gender, nationality, sexual orientation, HIV status or any other characteristic
- We examine our own biases and behaviour and take steps to become more sensitive and inclusive
- We promote and abide by organizational policies that strengthen diversity and inclusion
- We do not tolerate stereotypes, prejudice or discrimination in the workplace or with external partners
- Our communication and interaction with others shows consideration and respect for our diverse and multicultural workforce

# CORE COMPETENCIES

**WORKING IN TEAMS**

**COMMUNICATING WITH IMPACT**

**APPLYING EXPERTISE**

**DELIVERING RESULTS**

**DRIVING CHANGE AND INNOVATION**

**BEING ACCOUNTABLE**

# WORKING IN TEAMS

*This competency is about integrating with the team and working cooperatively in support of the team's objectives. It involves promoting team spirit and supporting colleagues with an aim to improve collective performance. It is about building mutually beneficial relationships with colleagues and peers to deliver results through effective collaboration.*

## Why is it important?

This competency reflects the fact that our work is performed primarily in teams. Our understanding of our role in the team defines how we contribute to its development and overall functioning. This competency highlights the importance of each individual in making teams inclusive, respectful and effective.

## Staff members who demonstrate this Core Competency:

- Show an understanding of their roles as well as the roles of others in the team
- Contribute actively to team tasks and speak positively of fellow team members outside the team
- Seek cooperation when needed, collaborate, and share information
- Are reliable and supportive of other team members, welcome requests for assistance and help others succeed
- Keep team members informed of issues that impact them, and consistently seek and give feedback
- Energize the team by maintaining enthusiasm for collaborative tasks
- Proactively resolve conflict within the team before it escalates
- Show appreciation for differences among team members and are flexible in accommodating individual needs
- Acknowledge the contribution and potential of others and share credit for success
- Demonstrate sensitivity and show interest in learning from team members from different backgrounds

# COMMUNICATING WITH IMPACT

*This competency is about conveying ideas and thoughts in a clear and convincing way and choosing the mode of communication that is best-suited to the context and objective. It involves producing clear correspondence and written reports, and expressing ourselves unambiguously in one-on-one discussions and group presentations. It is also about being proactive and creative in seeking opportunities to share information and knowledge.*

## Why is it important?

Proficiency in communication is a fundamental element of many core and managerial competencies. It enables staff members to represent the organization effectively, persuade others and facilitate mutual understanding and consensus for a specific course of action. Staff members who communicate effectively orally and in writing are able to build strong relationships and healthy teams, and to foster shared understanding of objectives and required results.

## Staff members who demonstrate this Core Competency:

- Speak clearly, audibly and at an appropriate pace in the working language of the office
- Focus on key issues and differentiate the important from the trivial in their communications
- Hold audience attention, develop arguments logically and present ideas convincingly
- Express ideas effectively through written communication that requires minimal corrections or editing by others
- Summarize key issues and communicate complex information in a direct and understandable manner
- Adapt communication to the audience and check to ensure understanding
- Maintain regular dialogue and consultations with work partners and other stakeholders
- Use email and other communication tools effectively and appropriately
- Consistently seek opportunities to share timely, relevant and accurate information with team members
- Use language that is sensitive to people living with HIV and that is respectful of diversity and cultural contexts

# APPLYING EXPERTISE

*This competency is about effectively applying the knowledge, skills and experience that we bring to the organization. It involves sharing knowledge with others, consistently striving to learn and improve performance, as well as maintaining a strong service orientation and constantly delivering results within one's field of expertise.*

## Why is it important?

The success of the UNAIDS Secretariat is driven by the diverse knowledge and skills of its workforce. However it is the effective and consistent application of knowledge and skills that translates into action and results. This focus on application also ensures that staff members continuously upgrade their skills and incorporate new thinking and methods.

## Staff members who demonstrate this Core Competency:

- Demonstrate thorough knowledge and expertise in their area of work
- Consistently apply their specific knowledge and skills in their day-to-day work
- Apply the concepts and principles that are considered best practice in their area of work
- Are trusted by colleagues and partners to provide high quality service and sound advice in their area of specialization
- Earn credibility by providing accurate information aligned with the team and the organization
- Continuously update their knowledge and skills in their field of work
- Stay informed of best practices in their subject area and suggest ways of using them within the organization
- Acquire new knowledge and integrate it into current projects and processes
- Share their personal knowledge and experience and encourage others to do the same
- Deliver competently with minimal supervision in their specific area of expertise

## DELIVERING RESULTS

*This competency is about showing initiative and delivering high-quality results in line with agreed objectives. It is about having confidence in our ability to take on challenging tasks, initiate action, and focus attention and resources on key priorities within our scope of responsibility. It is about knowing when and how to persuade, reason and negotiate to influence an outcome. It involves a commitment to excellence, an emphasis on results over activities and an aspiration to exceed minimum performance requirements.*

### Why is it important?

The UNAIDS Secretariat has adopted a results-based approach to planning and management, which depends on a drive for results on the part of each staff member. To deliver results, our workforce needs to be composed of self-starters who focus on individual and team objectives and who assume personal accountability for expected outcomes.

### Staff members who demonstrate this Core Competency:

- Set challenging performance goals, plan work carefully and define their work in terms of results
- Demonstrate an understanding of our strategic aims and how their work supports those aims
- Critically monitor outputs in order to ensure that efforts are contributing to the achievement of results
- Effectively manage time and deliver high quality work while maintaining composure under pressure
- Accept challenging tasks and push to get projects implemented despite obstacles
- Demonstrate good judgment regarding how far to push issues for best results
- Learn from successes and failures, and apply lessons to improve performance
- Respond to requests from stakeholders with promptness and accuracy
- Are flexible and adapt activities and approaches according to changing work circumstances
- Consistently demonstrate energy and enthusiasm to go beyond minimum requirements



# DRIVING CHANGE AND INNOVATION

*This competency is about remaining open and supportive of changes that further the response to the epidemic, as well as taking calculated risks and continuously finding new ways of working and improving performance. It involves developing creative ideas and imaginative solutions, communicating for buy-in, quickly adapting to new situations, building on short term wins and maintaining a positive and constructive attitude in times of uncertainty.*

## Why is it important?

To remain effective, we need to continue to change and evolve. Innovative and creative thinking is only possible when staff members are willing to critically question whether their current way of working is making the optimal contribution to the response. This openness to change results in a workforce that is flexible enough to respond effectively to changing needs and contexts. It also helps staff to remain focused on key priorities during times of change or unpredictability.

## Staff members who demonstrate this Core Competency:

- Continuously refine their work methods and adopt best practices from colleagues and partners
- Explore beyond current practices to find innovative solutions and convince others to support creative ideas
- Ensure that their ways of working evolve to keep pace with team and organizational objectives
- Show willingness to adapt to a changing environment, discussing opportunities and challenges with colleagues
- Are aware of their ability to cope with change, and realistic about the degree of change that can be achieved
- Support and encourage colleagues to generate new ideas or to adapt existing ones
- Present well-reasoned arguments for change, proposing concrete actions based on available information
- Are willing to confront new challenges and to seek help if necessary
- Persist with new ideas by finding alternative ways to move forward
- Are responsive to the evolving needs of internal and external stakeholders and clients

# BEING ACCOUNTABLE

*This competency is about planning and organizing our work with a clear and deliberate focus on our strategic priorities, taking ownership of our assigned responsibilities, fulfilling commitments and using resources responsibly and transparently. It involves taking personal accountability for results achieved, being productive and carrying our fair share of the team's workload.*

## Why is it important?

All staff members need to understand how their responsibilities contribute to the AIDS response. Building on the Delivering results competency, this competency connects individual and team performance with overall organizational performance, while ensuring that policies, procedures and agreed ways of working are respected. Personal accountability needs to be demonstrated in all phases of planning, budgeting, implementation and evaluation of our programmes and services.

## Staff members who demonstrate this Core Competency:

- Define personal and team work goals in line with the agreed strategy, time and budget
- Accurately assess length and difficulty of key tasks for which they are responsible
- Anticipate challenges, maintain flexibility and regularly plan next steps to ensure effective delivery of results
- Regularly critique the quality of their work and take action to ensure their activities remain relevant and effective
- Seek feedback from colleagues and clients to continually improve performance
- Adhere to relevant rules and regulations, and refer to policies and guidelines when necessary
- Use assigned resources in the most cost-effective way and find ways to reduce costs wherever possible
- Take responsibility for their contribution to outcomes and team performance
- Acknowledge their shortcomings and those of the team, applying lessons learned for improvement
- Do not allow personal interests to influence actions or decisions



# MANAGERIAL COMPETENCIES

**VISION AND STRATEGIC THINKING**

**LEADING TEAMS**

**MANAGING PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES**

**DEVELOPING AND EMPOWERING OTHERS**

**EXERCISING SOUND JUDGEMENT**

**BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS**

# VISION AND STRATEGIC THINKING

*This competency is about understanding the strategic direction of the organization and how to translate it into a clear vision for the team. It involves visualizing future opportunities, defining long-term goals and effectively communicating them to team members. It is about helping staff focus on the longer-term perspective and the broader AIDS response while ensuring that their work remains aligned with current priorities.*

## Why is it important?

The complexity of our work demands an understanding of the broader strategic goals to which we are contributing and ensuring that our objectives are aligned with organizational priorities. This helps teams maintain focus and sustain effort until results are achieved. It also ensures that staff members feel authentically involved and empowered by seeing how their work contributes to the wider response. This sense of connection to higher-level priorities keeps staff engaged and gives meaning to our work.

## Staff members who demonstrate this Managerial Competency:

- Clearly describe the organization's mission, vision and strategy to staff members
- Refer to the vision regularly, clarifying how it impacts team and individual work plans
- Specify to team members what needs to be done differently to achieve the vision
- Ensure that the strategy for the team is based on the overall vision of the Joint Programme
- Develop work plans with a long-term perspective, anticipating potential opportunities and obstacles
- Identify and articulate the interests and concerns of relevant stakeholders when developing strategies and work plans
- Actively seek out information and opportunities that affect the work of the team
- Encourage teams to take creative and innovative approaches to implementing the strategy
- Monitor implementation of the strategy and revise work plans if needed
- Encourage staff to take calculated risks and to change and adapt perspectives

# LEADING TEAMS

*This competency is about creating a unity of purpose and building a work environment that effectively utilizes diversity and enables the team to perform at its best. It involves fostering an understanding within the team of individual and collective roles and norms, as well as energizing and inspiring the team by communicating, maintaining a focus on goals and being inclusive in decision-making.*

## Why is it important?

To effectively lead a team, managers must find the balance between providing direction and encouraging team members to take the lead. Clearly identifying and valuing the strengths and roles of each team member and fostering open communication creates an environment in which the team can develop and function effectively, surpassing the results that each staff member could achieve individually.

## Staff members who demonstrate this Managerial Competency:

- Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of individuals and teams under their supervision
- Hold regular meetings and involve the team in planning and decision-making
- Keep the team informed of key organizational decisions and developments
- Establish a clear direction for projects and assignments, guiding and redirecting when the team is off track
- Ensure the team has the resources it requires to perform effectively
- Inspire the team to go beyond what they believe they can do; provide input without taking over
- Share credit with team members and define success as achievements by the whole team
- Champion the team and defend it from criticism when required
- Accept accountability for team decisions and actions while clarifying individual responsibilities
- Facilitate dialogue between team members, using tact and diplomacy to manage interpersonal conflict

# MANAGING PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES

*This competency is about ensuring that team objectives are consistently met, while providing the resources that team members require. This involves establishing a shared understanding of the expected results and how they can be achieved, assigning authority and resources to achieve them and clarifying standards of compliance to rules and regulations. It involves guiding staff to successful outcomes by making the best use of their strengths and managing funds responsibly.*

## Why is it important?

Managers have an important responsibility to provide the guidance and resources that their teams need to effectively deliver results. This ensures that staff members stay on track and reinforces a performance culture that is based on feedback and ongoing development. Keeping high performers motivated while actively supporting poor performers also has a major impact on the functioning and engagement of the team as a whole.

## Staff members who demonstrate this Managerial Competency:

- Set clearly defined and realistic objectives and articulate expectations in collaboration with team members
- Monitor staff progress towards work objectives and provide regular feedback on performance
- Praise good performance and recognize improvements in staff performance
- Promptly deal with poor performance and poor compliance to rules
- Carry out formal performance evaluation fairly and in a timely manner
- Keep high performers engaged by ensuring that work objectives are sufficiently challenging
- Take account of staff members' different abilities and workloads when delegating work
- Ensure that staff work plans reflect accountability for results in line with relevant policy, standards and procedures
- Manage financial resources and assets in a responsible and cost-effective way
- Monitor spending against budgetary parameters, adjusting and updating to reflect changing circumstances

## DEVELOPING AND EMPOWERING OTHERS

*This competency is about guiding and coaching staff to help them set development goals and to take advantage of learning opportunities. It is about fostering on-the-job learning by providing challenging tasks for staff to experiment, take risks and contribute in a safe environment. It involves taking the time for formal and informal coaching to share knowledge and experience while helping staff develop confidence and new skills.*

### Why is it important?

This competency highlights the role of managers in building the capacity of the organization by promoting the development of staff. While individual staff members need to take responsibility for their learning and career development, managers have a role in identifying areas of strength and weakness. This focus on continuous development helps staff seize opportunities for formal training as well as informal coaching, mentoring and peer learning. Staff are empowered when managers delegate decision-making authority and help them develop the knowledge and skills needed to use that authority effectively.

### Staff members who demonstrate this Managerial Competency:

- Help team members create personal development plans related to their work and career objectives
- Hold regular development discussions with staff
- Provide challenging tasks and assignments for staff to develop new skills and to gain new experience
- Recognize and articulate team members' potential, strengths and weaknesses to support their career aspirations
- Encourage staff members to use mistakes as an opportunity for learning
- Provide opportunities for staff to be creative and to develop their own capabilities
- Challenge and ask questions to help team members work out answers for themselves and to be self-reliant
- Acknowledge and respond to concerns raised by team members who are facing change
- Show trust by delegating important tasks and decisions, letting team members take the lead and take credit
- Share their own knowledge, skills and learning from experience to guide and enhance staff performance



## EXERCISING SOUND JUDGMENT

*This competency is about proactively gathering key information and carefully analyzing complex issues before making a decision. It involves taking the time to think things through and basing decisions on the most relevant facts while keeping the bigger picture in mind. It involves a combination of logic, analysis and reflection on experience that results in timely, well-informed and transparent decisions.*

### Why is it important?

The ability to think critically and deal systematically with information is essential for good decision-making. Sound judgment is based on the effective use of information, knowledge, and experience. Managers who take the time to reflect and weigh options will make decisions that are in line with the objectives of the Secretariat and the overall vision and goals of the Joint Programme.

### Staff members who demonstrate this Managerial Competency:

- Make decisions in line with overall organizational priorities and the work of other colleagues
- Gather and analyze relevant information and inputs to define emerging problems and solutions
- Uncover critical issues by asking the right questions
- Recognize trends, associations and cause-effect relationships that impact decisions
- Break down complex problems to highlight the key issues and required actions
- Assess risks and alternatives before making decisions
- Review the results of previous actions to guide decisions
- Consult with stakeholders in decisions that affect them
- Proactively make difficult decisions when required rather than avoid them
- Offer well-supported recommendations based on reason and appropriate evidence

## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS

*This competency is about achieving results by engaging constructively with internal and external partners. It includes taking an active interest in the culture and ways of working within the Secretariat and partner organizations, building, maintaining and strengthening mutually beneficial working relationships to support the overall AIDS response. It also involves managing diverse points of view and perceptions constructively and negotiating to secure consensus with colleagues, cosponsors and external stakeholders.*

### Why is it important?

Partnering is a key management tool that helps to effectively incorporate a broad range of points of view and contributions. In order to achieve results in a collaborative and inclusive way, managers need knowledge and the skill to work through a complex series of internal and external interactions and decision-making processes. Knowing who to involve and how to engage them will ensure that managers include in their decision-making those stakeholders that can best contribute to their key objectives and tasks.

### Staff members who demonstrate this Managerial Competency:

- Maintain strong working relationships with a diverse cross-section of people inside and outside the Secretariat
- Identify areas of common interest to plan and carry out joint initiatives
- Show interest in understanding the organizational culture and are sensitive to the way things are done
- Use formal and informal networks in a transparent way to gain information and create buy-in
- Maintain constructive expectations of stakeholders even in the face of adversity, remaining focused on results
- Resolve conflict by anticipating concerns, constraints, or resistance from internal and external partners
- Stay informed of the current priorities of partners and respond appropriately to changes in their positions
- Achieve collaboration and results by negotiating effectively with internal and external partners
- Take a focused and long-term approach to investing in relationships
- Support team members and peers in networking and building partnerships

**ZERO NEW HIV INFECTIONS.  
ZERO DISCRIMINATION.  
ZERO AIDS-RELATED DEATHS.**

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