Transversal Competencies Dictionary

Commitment to MSF’s Principles

Level 1

Demonstrates knowledge of and accepts MSF’s principles

- Respects the choices made by the organisation.
- Has basic knowledge of MSF’s mission and main activities.
- Respects and accepts the medical ethics and principles of MSF.
- Knows the difference between MSF’s activities and those of other NGOs and actors.

Level 2

Demonstrates loyalty, awareness and respect for MSF’s values

- Expresses his/her interest by talking/asking/giving informed opinions about MSF’s activities.
- Expresses he/she wants to work with MSF because of its principles and mission.
- Overtly expresses his/her satisfaction at belonging to MSF and defends MSF’s social mission.
- Refers to beneficiaries* when speaking about his/her own work.
- Always transmits a positive image of MSF in front of both colleagues and external people.
- Translates the principles of MSF into actions.

Level 3

Acts towards the fulfilment of MSF’s social mission

- Actively promotes improvements within the mission, project and department.
- Makes decisions and adjusts priorities to attain MSF’s goals.
- Ensures that changes within the organisation are in line with its values and mission.
- Develops strategies by interpreting principles and situations.
- Actively promotes MSF’s social mission internally and externally.

Level 4

Commits to MSF and takes actions to influence and develop MSF’s principles

- Pursues positive changes in beneficiaries’ situations.
- Is actively accountable to MSF and its beneficiaries.
- Takes actions to promote MSF’s principles and mission for the improvement of the organisation.

Cross-cultural Awareness

Level 1

Demonstrates an open attitude

- Considers cultural differences.
- Views multicultural environments positively and expresses satisfaction at working in them.
- Is open and eager to learn about his/her environment and the people he/she works with. Is able to recognise and respect cultural differences.
- Is able to recognise cultural norms.

Level 2

Recognises and respects different points of view

- He/she thinks before he/she acts with curiosity and sensitivity, listening and observing, not judging.
- Listens actively, asks questions, reads and systematically looks for information about the context and the people he/she works with.
- Is able to identify the shortcomings of his/her own cultural norms.

Level 3

Demonstrates an integrating attitude

- Is able to incorporate patterns and to adjust his/her behaviour (i.e. habits and customs) according to the environment (place and context) and to the culture of the people he/she works with.
- Incorporates experiences and different opinions, making references to them, interacting in an efficient, positive and integrated way.
- Acts in accordance with the codes established by the country and by MSF.
- Capitalises on the strength of a heterogeneous team.
- Evolves by trial and error, learning how to accommodate his/her own ways to those of the country, while still preserving MSF’s values and ways.

Level 4

Develops actions which stimulate integrating behaviours

- Organises events which promote openness, respect for and interest in different environments.
- Ensures that each member of his/her team has an equal right to self-expression.
- Promotes and encourages diversity in his/her team by incorporating people with cultural differences.
- Openly defends the value of diversity in his/her speech and/or shows it through his/her active behaviour.

Analytical Thinking

Level 1

Compiles information and breaks down a problematic situation into parts

- Synthesises data and/or information.
- Discerns the elements that make up a situation.
- Structures and orders information so as to make decisions and propose solutions.
- Needs guidance on the stages that lead to the resolution of a problem.
- Obtains the required information by asking questions.

Level 2

Identifies basic relationships

- Breaks a problem down into parts and analyses each part in detail.
- Assesses situations sequentially to identify the causes of the problem.
- Weighs up the pros and cons before making a decision.
- Sees beyond the superficial to get to the root of a situation, problem or potential opportunity.

Level 3

Identifies complex relationships

- Analyses and interprets data and information from a variety of sources in a way that facilitates the proposal of solutions and decision-making.
- Sets and orders priorities.
- Works systematically and carries out formal research in order to get as much information as possible using all available sources (newspapers, computer searches, etc.).

Level 4

Makes complex plans and/or analyses

- Anticipates obstacles and plans subsequent actions.
- Selects the most appropriate and effective methods or concepts in order to analyze situations, propose solutions and facilitate decision-making.
- Makes complex analyses, taking into account multiple variables that are not immediately interlinked.
- Uses various analysis techniques to identify numerous solutions and weighs up the value of each.

Strategic Vision

Level 1

Signals and identifies organisational targets and strategies

- Is familiar with MSF’s objectives, structures and way of working.
- Seeks and asks for information about the project he/she is working on

Level 2

Has an overview and links current actions with organisational objectives

- Contributes towards the global vision.
- Relates the objectives of his/her project to MSF’s objectives.
- Is able to distinguish between working activities that give value to MSF’s objectives and those that do not.
- Sets and maintains an order of priorities in his/her work according to MSF’s strategic objectives.

Level 3

Plans actions geared towards achieving objectives

- Understands trends beyond the most evident and draws up models to tackle specific situations.
- Prioritises the activities of his/her team according to MSF’s strategic objectives.
- Defines and/or adapts plans and objectives for his/her team according to the medium-term strategy* of MSF.
- Analyses the context from an overall perspective in order to detect medium-term action opportunities.
- Makes strategic proposals taking into account the evolution of the context

Level 4

Has a long-term vision

- Detects long-term opportunities and considers their impact in order to constantly adapt MSF’s work/strategies to the needs of the context.

- Has a very clear vision of contextual evolution and needs in the field and applies this to management.
- Always defines MSF’s position according to its social mission and the needs of the environment.

Behavioural Flexibility

Level 1

Accepts changes

- Accepts changes without knowing the full reasons for them.
- Accepts new ideas in a positive way.
- Positively accepts changes in his/her environment.
- Accepts arguments opposed to his/her own.
- Is willing to listen and to take on new tasks in his/her job.

Level 2

Adapts behaviour to the needs of the situation

- Accepts decisions which are not completely in line with his/her personal opinions.
- Is flexible in applying and adapting procedures.
- Adapts his/her behaviour to the characteristics of the interlocutor and/or situation.
- Learns from problems and difficulties, becoming more competent at resolving similar situations in the future.
- Looks for adaptable solutions in order to achieve objectives.
- Reassesses priorities when circumstances change, focusing on objectives.

Level 3

Facilitates and helps to bring about changes in others

- Sets up mechanisms that can minimise the impact of an “expected change” on others, for instance, a good briefing.
- Communicates and provides information even when he/she is not the team leader.

Level 4

Develops actions to promote the best response to the needs of MSF

- Initiates changes in his/her area of responsibility to anticipate and respond to MSF’s needs.
- Anticipates the concerns and objections that the team may express.
- Removes obstacles that may hinder potential improvements in the team/context.
- Changes overall plan or overall objective to adapt to new situations.
- Leads the change, obtains people’s support.

Stress Management

Level 1

Restrains emotional reactions and responds calmly

- Is able to continue working or speaking without being provoked to anger.
- Walks away from a stressful situation in order to control his/her own emotions.
- Carries on talking or working calmly in extremely frustrating or stressful situations.

Level 2

Manages own stress

- Expresses awareness of his/her own stress level.
- Is able to identify causes of his/her own stress and/or asks for help in detecting them.
- Is able to express to others his/her personal stressors at an appropriate time without overwhelming them.

Level 3

Understands other people’ s stress

- Has an understanding attitude towards other people’s mistakes and shortcomings.
- Gives calm and polite answers and repeats them patiently if necessary.
- Uses techniques or plans activities to manage his/her own stress.
- Responds and acts constructively in conflictive situations.

Level 4

Promotes stress management and reduces other people’s stress

- Develops strategies to prevent stressful situations.
- Uses techniques and plans to reduce the impact of external stressors on the whole team.
- In high-stress situations not only controls emotions and stays calm but also calms down others around him/her.

Results and Quality Orientation

Level 1

Performs his/her work

- Knows objectives of the job.
- Defines tasks to achieve objectives and establishes a working plan.
- Reviews and checks his/her work to detect mistakes and to correct them immediately.
- Values high-quality work.

Level 2

Works towards objectives, preserving established standards

- Perseveres until the objectives of the job and the team have been met.
- Complies with the procedures, processes and rules set by MSF.
- Is aware that the purpose of his/her job is to meet the specified objectives.
- Is autonomous.
- Mobilizes resources.
- Analyses problems and constraints.

Level 3

Improves performance and sets ambitious and realistic goals

- Strives to continually improve work methods.
- Suggests news ways of increasing efficiency in his/her field of action.
- Demonstrates a continuous learning attitude.

- Sets as an objective the improvement of the process.

Level 4

Seeks excellence in his/her field by challenging objectives and management indicators

- Incorporates quality management criteria in his/her activity.
- Uses tried and tested work methodologies and/or quality-control processes.
- Strives for efficiency in every aspect of his/her work and monitors this.

Service Orientation

Level 1

Knows and understands clients' needs and interests

- Identifies and has a clear understanding of who the client to be served is.
- Identifies clients' needs and concerns, and provides them with useful information and quick solutions.
- Listens to clients and asks them questions to determine their needs and motivations.
- Gets to know how the rest of the team works.

Level 2

Responds empathetically to clients and understands their concerns/needs

- Puts him/herself in the client's place to match services with individual needs.
- Manages clients' expectations by giving them the information they need.
- Offers clients alternative solutions to a problem/situation.
- Has an open-door attitude towards clients and understands why people act in a certain way at a given time.
- Is open to complaints and suggestions.
- Strives to find out more about his/her clients' environment in order to understand every aspect of their needs.

Level 3

Anticipates clients' needs

- Anticipates the need to offer information about the services provided.
- Offers services that deliver added value to clients.
- Responds to clients' needs even when the demand is not explicit.
- Thinks about the effect of his/her actions on others.
- Is proactive in ascertaining the future needs of clients and understanding their underlying needs.

Level 4

Seeks long-term benefits for clients

- Anticipates and plans the service response. Seeks long-term benefits for clients.
- Acts as a specific advisor to clients and encourages them to come to him/her with new decisions or needs.
- Provides a response while following procedures but "thinking outside the box" and advising, designing, innovating and teaching.

Planning and Organising

Level 1

He/she organises his/her work

- Organizes his/her working day.
- Sets periodic goals, defines his/her priorities and schedules his/her activities.
- Complies with plans set by others, executes but doesn’t propose plans. Identifies what could be delegated to colleagues.
- Identifies impact on team and need for support.

Level 2

Is proactive regarding planning and organising his/her job area

- Anticipates potential incidents and deviations from the planning and foresees solutions.
- Comes up with ideas to improve planning and organization.
- Keeps a record and reports fulfillment of his/her responsibilities.
- Keeps priorities identified and distinguishes between important and urgent issues.
- Suggests tools and ways tools could be improved to help establish priorities, record data on work done, etc.
- Consults others on needs to be included in their planning.
- Consults records (related data, background studies, past planning, etc.) before starting a project or job.

Level 3

Follows up, plans activities and sets priorities

- Plans actions to be carried out with a medium-term perspective, taking other team members into consideration.
- Organises his/her own work according to the constraints of the team.
- Utilises existing tools that are proved to be efficient before coming up with his/her own tools.
- Works to define timeframes and tasks in groups.

Level 4

Enables others to organize

- Provides support and offers alternatives to ensure that everyone in the team is able to plan/organise his/her own job.
- Ensures objectives are well defined, shared and acknowledged by the whole team.
- Involves the team in discussions on planning to increase efficiency.
- Is able to use other people’s planning to monitor activities.
- Enables others to organise and plan ahead, based on clear and structured vision.
- Organises plans and objectives according to the long-term vision.
- When a new situation arises, foresees the time required (by him/herself and others) and makes small organisational or time-related changes to deal with it.
- Provides reports from meetings with main points agreed and next steps proposed.
- Makes sure that everyone involved in a task is aware of its existence, knows the expected results and by when they are to be achieved.

Initiative and Innovation

Level 1

Identifies opportunities and problems

- Responds to problems and/or opportunities according to policies and procedures without needing supervision.
- Reacts to problems presented to him/her.
- Seeks the best solution to each situation rather than merely doing what is always done.
- Asks constructive questions about the way things are done in his/her job.

Level 2

Takes action in complicated and critical situations

- Works towards solving a problem despite uncertainties.
- When faced with an urgent problem, acts immediately rather than waiting for it to solve itself.
- Offers more than one solution for difficult situations when procedures and guidelines are not relevant or sufficient.
- Suggests new and more efficient ways of tackling problems in his/her job.
- Foresees opportunities for improvement that are not obvious and carries out actions to make the most of them.

Level 3

Looks ahead and creates opportunities for improvement within the MSF frame

- Encourages others to be proactive and to take the initiative.
- Takes active steps to convert problems into opportunities for improvement in the medium and long term.
- Puts in place methodologies in order to enhance other people’s creativity and innovation.
- Draws up contingency plans to tackle unusual events that may arise in the short term.

Level 4

Promotes an innovation culture for MSF

- Ensures that innovative solutions are implemented with follow-up procedures.
- Promotes participatory spaces and tools to enhance creative thinking.

Capacity to Negotiate

Level 1

Listens to the other party’s interest

- Listens to what the other party says.
- Asks for feedback on what he/she communicates.
- Asks for clarification of obscure statements.
- Correctly summarises the other party’s message.

Level 2

Communicates to others his/her own objectives and requests

- Prepares arguments prior to the discussion.
- Expresses his/her own arguments clearly.
- Sets realistic goals prior to negotiation.
- Is aware of resources available to him/her and their limitations.
- Determines how far he/she is prepared to compromise prior to negotiation.

Level 3

Empathises with the other party’ s needs

- Understands both the content and the underlying aspects of the other party’s message (emotions, problems, etc.).
- Helps to explain what MSF is.
- Presents and builds on points to which the other party is sensitive.

- Uses experts or other third parties to strengthen influence.
- Looks for compromise.
- Has the ability to differentiate between the objective of the negotiations and the aims of the individual.

Level 4

Seeks mutual benefit

- Identifies resistance, opens it up to discussion and turns it around, showing the possible mutual benefit.
- Searches for a win-win solution.
- Builds strategic coalitions and rallies support for his/her ideas to realize MSF’s mission in a sustainable long-term way.
- Summarizes the end result and checks if other party accepts it.

Teamwork and Cooperation

Level 1

Acknowledges the importance of teamwork and cooperation

- Is responsible for his/her work because he/she knows the repercussions it has on the team or on others.
- Establishes and maintains good working relationships with colleagues, is accessible and listens to others.
- Cooperates with the team and supports decisions made.
- Demonstrates a predisposition to work with others and gives help when asked.
- Acknowledges there are common goals as well as individual objectives deriving from the personal plan of action.

Level 2

Shares information and coordinates with team and/or others

- Shares significant information in a timely manner and actively seeks the opinion of team members or others through empathetic communication.
- Allows others to question work/input if this leads to improvement.
- Coordinates with other team members to ensure that common objectives are achieved.
- Shows interest in and empathy with team members.

Level 3

Encourages, engages and motivates people to work as a team

- Shows he/she values the experience and input of other team members through empathetic communication.
- Makes decisions taking into account how they affect the team.
- Actively seeks input from team members to define how they will work together.
- Makes sure the common objective is known and supported by all the team.
- Works to achieve cohesion and a spirit of cooperation in the team.
- Involves the team in the decision-making process that may affect all its members.

Level 4

Builds team spirit within the organisation

- Fosters and encourages collaboration between members of different teams, services and departments, even in difficult situations.
- Explains to others (in meetings, speeches, etc.) the importance of working in teams.
- Acts by example.

Leadership

Level 1

Communicates clearly, measuring the impact of words and actions

- Is approachable: listens actively, observes and acknowledges what he/she hears.
- Is able to get messages across clearly with suitable non-verbal communication.
- Adapts language to the interlocutor’s level and needs.
- Anticipates the interlocutor’s expectations and concerns in order to focus the argument according to his/her needs.
- Refocuses arguments according to the interlocutor’s verbal and non-verbal communication style.
- Highlights the benefits of the option put forward. Signals bottlenecks and opportunities to the team.
- Acts as a representative of the team, the project, MSF.

Level 2

Uses actions and indirect influences to persuade

- Gives solid and coherent arguments to support his/her points to the interlocutor, stressing the key information.
- Uses different communication tools and means (internal and external resources) to get the message across.
- Selects communication strategies to have a persuasive impact on the interlocutor.
- Seeks backup from experts and third parties to strengthen his/her point of view.
- Manages his/her emotions.

Level 3

Encourages, engages and motivates people

- Creates an atmosphere of enthusiasm among the team. Is approachable.
- Creates a space for participation in a group of people.
- Leads people to achieve MSF’s objectives.
- Takes responsibility for the end results.
- Takes the initiative to bring people together.
- Gives meaning and context to decisions.
- Is able to use different styles (instructive, coaching, directive, participative) appropriately in different situations.
- Signals bottlenecks and opportunities and proposes improvements or actively participates in the discussion to identify steps forward.

Level 4

Mobilises people by transmitting a convincing future vision

- Transmits a global future vision linking the individual work of each team member to the collective contribution.
- Promotes changes and critically evaluates the culture and the way of working within MSF.
- Is able to formulate a future vision and strategy.
- Promotes motivation and commitment towards future objectives.

People Management and Development

Level 1

Informs the team, explaining decisions

- Is accessible and approachable, and makes time for others.

- Has a good relationship with team members and communicates well with them.
- Adapts style of communication according to cultural diversities.
- Sets and communicates the objectives to be achieved by each team member, giving clear and logical instructions on what has to be done and how.
- Distributes responsibilities and tasks fairly.
- Ensures that everyone knows and understands what is expected of him/her.

Level 2

Gives feedback and sets limits

- Informs and gives feedback about results achieved by the team.
- Individually rectifies ineffective behaviour through constructive feedback.
- Acknowledges the positive performance of his/her collaborators, using suitable techniques for the follow-up appraisal.
- Manages any discrepancies between team members' expectations and the reality of their situation.
- Is approachable and makes time for all team members.

Level 3

Works on the growth and development of team members

- Offers each team member an equal opportunity to succeed.
- Publicly acknowledges good performance and positively reinforces it.
- Considers the personal development of each team member and proposes an individual development plan.

Level 4

Acts by example

- Makes each team member understand his/her level of responsibility and the impact of his/her performance on others.
- Coaches team members, working with them on all areas to be improved to help them grow and succeed in the organization.
- Acts by example, with charisma, and provides a reference model for the team.
- Works on the development of team members.

Security Awareness and Management

Level 1

Has a working knowledge of security guidelines and basic awareness of contextual factors and applies them to day-to-day activities and the decision- making process

- Demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of the security context by not contravening the given guidelines.
- Understands, accepts and adheres to MSF's security policy and security plans.
- Displays common sense.
- Displays understanding of decision and responsibility lines.
- Shows realistic understanding of security risks and what these may imply.
- Consults with line manager as required prior to making decisions which may affect vulnerability.
- Recognises potentially dangerous situations and communicates them.

Level 2

Recognises contextual variables that influence security and transmits relevant information to relevant people in a clear, discreet and timely manner

- Demonstrates the ability to prioritise security information based on the context.
- Recognizes potential threats and takes practical steps to reduce vulnerability to the risk.

- Demonstrates understanding of sensitivity and confidentiality surrounding security information and acts with discretion.
- Takes responsibility for the team and the organization.
- Sets a good example through personal behavior on how to apply security policy.

Level 3

Helps people for whom he/she is responsible to recognise contextual variables that influence security, understands security rules and when to apply them

- Analyses existing security regulations and proposes changes when appropriate.
- Discusses and explains situations and solutions proactively with others.
- Shows determined decision-making during insecure situations and allows decisions before or after.
- Develops and maintains a relevant network of security information contacts and (local) actors and shares it when necessary.
- Takes into consideration advice from relevant stakeholders and team members in security management.
- Rapidly prioritizes and shows leadership during insecure incidents.
- Proactively gathers security information in a sensitive and discreet way.
- Is able to present context analysis and security regulations in a clear and understandable way.
- Encourages individual responsibility in the team.

Level 4

Analyses and interprets contextual variables, applying them to the design, and adapts security rules and security management

- Anticipates contextual changes which affect the security situation.
- Develops and trains the team’s security management competencies.
- Specifies, implements, follows up and enforces security rules and regulations.
- Shows outstanding leadership and balanced decision-making during insecure situations (e.g. evacuations, medevacs), taking into account the interests of the beneficiaries, the organization and staff in order to minimize the impact of the incident.
- Is capable of developing a field security plan from scratch in any given situation.

Networking and Building Relationships

Level 1

Maintains existing networks

- Is aware of the main actors and establishes contact with them.
- Uses existing key networks.
- Easily approaches people outside the key network if this is beneficial for his/her job performance.
- Maintains dialogue and relations with relevant actors and players important to MSF.

Level 2

Develops and diversifies networks

- Interacts easily in an unfamiliar social environment.
- Can put people at their ease, awakens their interest and sustains the relationship.
- Accesses and communicates consistently with relevant actors/stakeholders.
- Identifies and connects with people irrespective of personal interest and ties.
- Is able to judge which information to share with whom.
- Displays appropriate communication style.
- Develops and maintains networks of key players important to MSF through regular communication.

Level 3

Creates network opportunities

- Understands the mechanics of the interactions between MSF and its environment and its relationship with politicians, stakeholders and partners.
- Utilises networks to carry out or unblock MSF activity.
- Cultivates relations of respect and confidence with relevant actors/stakeholders.

Level 4

Optimises interaction between MSF and its environment

- Develops new tools to optimise the interaction between MSF and its environment.
- Facilitates a sustainable network (which is not dependent on one person’s/group’s charisma) for the needs of the beneficiaries.

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