



International Institute
for Environment
and Development

Behavioural Competency Model



Behavioural Competency Model

What is a competency?

A competency is defined as any knowledge, skill or set of behaviours which enable an individual to perform effectively in their role.

IIED will be developing three competency models, covering behavioural, functional and technical competencies.

Why does IIED need a behavioural competency model?

The behavioural competency model has been designed to help individuals understand how they can be more effective in their roles, how they can better support their colleagues and stakeholders and how they can progress within IIED. Together with our overall strategy and core values, the competency model will help ensure that as an organisation IIED delivers value to our partners and stakeholders.

The model will help individuals and managers within IIED to take a more structured approach to development and progression within the organisation. It will also help ensure that IIED hires the right people with the right set of skills and behaviours.

Behavioural Competency Model

The IIED Behavioural Competency Model contains 11 behavioural competencies, each scaled from 1 to 4. Level 4 highlights limiting behaviours which should be avoided. Level 1 is the highest or most complex form of the competency.

Some competencies will be more critical to some roles than others and it would be exceptional for an individual to be demonstrating the highest level for every competency within the model. Individuals should discuss with their managers which competencies are most relevant to their role as well the “target” level at which they should aim to operate.

1. **Communicating with Impact**
 2. **Delivering Excellence**
 3. **Developing Others**
 4. **Empathy**
 5. **Flexible Thinking**
 6. **Information Seeking**
 7. **Initiative**
 8. **Integrity & Commitment**
 9. **Leading Others**
 10. **Understands Context**
 11. **Working Collaboratively**
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Communicating with Impact

Definition

The ability to influence, negotiate, build awareness and create credibility with others through the use of clear and effective communication.

Why it's important

IIED wants to influence and inform environmental and developmental policy and build awareness around key issues. To do this we need to communicate with impact both internally and externally.

Level 1

Uses a strategic approach

- ◆ Uses chains of indirect influence: “get A to talk to B so that B will tell C”
- ◆ Takes two or more steps to influence, with each step adapted to the specific audience
- ◆ Uses experts or other third parties to influence
- ◆ Assembles political coalitions in order to influence decisions, change opinion or build awareness
- ◆ Builds “behind the scenes” support for ideas
- ◆ Uses an in-depth understanding of the interactions within a group to move it towards a specific agenda

Level 2

Calculates impact of actions or words

- ◆ Adapts a presentation or discussion to appeal to the interest and level of others
- ◆ Uses clear language without jargon to enable people to understand complex issues
- ◆ Anticipates and prepares for the reaction of others to actions or arguments
- ◆ Takes a well thought-out dramatic or unusual action in order to have a specific impact

Level 3

Prepares and uses a logical approach

- ◆ Carefully prepares information and data for presentation. Makes use of concrete examples, visual aids and/or demonstrations to reinforce the message
- ◆ Makes two or more different arguments or points during a presentation or a discussion without tailoring to the needs of the group
- ◆ Appeals to reason, logic, data or the self-interest of others

Level 4

Limiting behaviours

- ◆ Relies too much on status or position in order to influence others
- ◆ Is single-minded in influencing approach and does not listen to the concerns or arguments of others
- ◆ Is aware of issues but takes no action to raise awareness or influence others

Delivering Excellence

Definition

A concern for delivering high quality work and improving performance. Consistently looks for ways to add value to colleagues, partners and stakeholders.

Why it's important

IIED's reputation is built around delivering high quality research and work for our partners and stakeholders. We need to maintain our high standards and focus on areas where we can add real value.

Level 1

Prioritises work and sets challenging goals

- ◆ Makes decisions, set priorities and chooses goals on the basis of calculated inputs and outputs (e.g. makes explicit considerations of the costs and potential benefit of work)
- ◆ Sets self and others challenging but attainable goals to push up standards within IIED and to increase the value provided to partners / stakeholders
- ◆ Makes significant improvements to the way IIED operates and adds value to partners and stakeholders

Level 2

Improves performance

- ◆ Makes specific changes in work processes / systems or in own work methods in order to improve standards and quality
- ◆ Provides others with open and honest feedback to improve performance
- ◆ Monitors quality by seeking feedback from colleagues / partners / stakeholders. Acts on feedback to make improvements e.g. responsiveness, insight, quality, efficiency.

Level 3

Delivers quality work

- ◆ Invests time and effort in delivering work to a high standard
- ◆ Is proud of work delivered and expresses a desire to do better
- ◆ Keeps track of work quality against own standard of excellence
- ◆ Focuses on new or more effective ways of meeting goals

Level 4

Limiting behaviours

- ◆ Delivers work without considering whether it really adds value for stakeholders / partners
- ◆ Delivers work late or wastes funding through inefficient working practices

Develops Others

Definition

Invests time and energy in fostering the long-term learning and development of others. This can involve the provision of practical advice, support, feedback or training to support development

Why it's important

Encouraging and supporting our colleagues to develop and grow is key to our ability as an organisation to add value and effectively support our partners in their development.

Level 1	Provides in-depth mentoring, coaching, or training
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Thinks about the specific needs of an individual and arranges appropriate and helpful assignments, formal training, or other experiences which will foster their learning and development over the longer-term◆ Understands and identifies a training or developmental need within the organisation and establishes new programs or materials to address the need◆ Provides one-to-one mentoring for individuals to help them understand their own aspirations and/or develop their skills in specific areas	
Level 2	Builds awareness to encourage development
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Thinks about the developmental needs of others and gives specific positive or mixed feedback in order to support their development◆ Gives individualised suggestions for improvement◆ Gives negative feedback in behavioural rather than personal terms and expresses positive expectations for future performance	
Level 3	Provides practical support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Gives practical support or assistance to make a job easier for someone else (i.e. volunteers, additional resources, tools, information, expert advice, etc.)◆ Gives directions or demonstrations to others and provides reasons or rationale as a training strategy◆ Asks questions, tests knowledge, or uses other methods to check that others have understood explanations or directions	
Level 4	Limiting behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Only provides development through formal training courses◆ Focuses only on task completion or own needs (i.e. skill set within team in order to deliver) rather than the aspirations and developmental needs of the individual◆ Only gives people negative feedback	

Empathy

Definition

An ability and desire to understand individuals, how they feel, their thinking and what drives their behaviour.

Why it's important

To be able to work effectively with others, manage a team or influence people we need to understand and engage with the feelings, opinions and behaviours of others.

Level 1

Understands underlying drivers

- ◆ Knows what makes individuals “tick”, and what motivates and engages them
- ◆ Has an in-depth understanding of the on-going reasons for an individual’s behaviour or attitudes
- ◆ Makes an assessment of a person’s specific strengths and areas for development, based on a deeper understanding of the individual
- ◆ Understands and reacts to the underlying reasons for people’s feelings, behaviours or concerns

Level 2

Considers reasons for behaviour

- ◆ Thinks about an individual’s reasons for behaviour and makes inferences that go beyond the explicit content and emotion, based on past knowledge or experience of the individual
- ◆ Understands current, unexpressed, or poorly expressed thoughts, concerns, or feelings
- ◆ Is sensitive to cross cultural differences and diversity and uses this awareness to understand a person better

Level 3

Recognises and understands emotion

- ◆ Understands and recognises the emotions of others, by reading body language, facial expression, and/or tone of voice
- ◆ Looks beyond explicit emotion and listens carefully to understand what an individual is actually saying / feeling about an issue

Level 4

Limiting behaviours

- ◆ Fails to recognise the emotions of others (e.g. through body language, facial expression, tone of voice)
 - ◆ Does not try to understand or engage with the feelings or concerns of others
 - ◆ Forms opinions too quickly of people, not basing opinions on facts
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Flexible Thinking

Definition

The ability to understand and appreciate issues from a wide range of perspectives and adapt one's thinking and approach based on this understanding.

Why it's important

IIED relies on the ability of its people to understand issues from a range of different perspectives and to be able to use this understanding to address complex issues for IIED and its partners and stakeholders.

Level 1

Takes a fresh approach

- ◆ Takes a truly fresh approach to issues, gathering information and perspectives from unusual sources in order to provide new insights and recommendations
- ◆ Encourages others within IIED and beyond to think beyond the obvious and come up with new and innovative ideas to tackle issues and capitalise on opportunities
- ◆ Feels confident and comfortable adapting own approach in response to changing needs of IIED or its partners / stakeholders

Level 2

Understands complexity and tailors response

- ◆ Uses understanding of issues and different perspectives to make complex ideas or situations clear, simple, and/or understandable
- ◆ Selects and decides upon the best approach to achieve an objective without being constrained by established practices and conventions
- ◆ Decides how to do something based on the situation
- ◆ Encourage others to be flexible and open-minded, and to appreciate alternative views

Level 3

Adapts own thinking

- ◆ Demonstrates willingness to change ideas or perceptions based on new information or contrary evidence
- ◆ Understands other people's points of view
- ◆ Willingly changes own thinking in the light of new information
- ◆ Understands the need for change within IIED and adapts behaviour accordingly

Level 4

Limiting behaviours

- ◆ Does not recognise the potential value or validity of different perspectives
- ◆ Fails to adapt own thinking based on new information
- ◆ Uses the same approach with different groups regardless of their particular views or needs

Information Seeking

Definition

A curiosity to find out more about people, concepts and issues. Asks questions to clarify understanding, conducts research or scans the environment for information that may be of future use.

Why it's important

To be able to understand the issues our partners and stakeholders face and how these might change in the future we need to ensure that our research and recommendations are based on up-to-date and accurate information from a wide range of sources.

Level 1	Conducts in-depth research or uses ongoing systems
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Establishes ongoing systems or habits in order to maintain up to date awareness of issues; e.g. systematically scans publications, attends conferences or holds regular informal meetings with stakeholders◆ Sets up individuals to do regular, ongoing information gathering on one's behalf◆ Does formal research, or may commission others to do so, drawing on multiple sources e.g. academic publications, governmental papers, newspapers, or computer search systems.◆ Makes a systematic effort over a limited period of time to obtain needed information	
Level 2	Digs deeper
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Gets to the root of a situation or problem by asking a series of probing questions which go beyond the surface issues presented◆ Seeks out people who are not personally involved, in order to get their perspective, background information, experience, etc.◆ Does not stop with the first answer; but digs deeper to really find out why something happened	
Level 3	Investigates
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Investigates issues or opportunities beyond routine questioning◆ Makes use of easily available information or resources in order to deepen understanding◆ Asks direct questions of those who are personally involved in order to understand their issues or why something happened	
Level 4	Limiting behaviours
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Relies on a single or narrow source of information or makes use of old or out-of-date research◆ Accepts hearsay or incomplete information without investigating further	

Initiative

Definition

Thinks ahead and takes decisive action to make the most of opportunities and avoid future issues.

Why it's important

Outstanding individuals at IIED maximise the value they bring to the organisation and to partners / stakeholders by looking ahead and taking action.

They act ahead of time to make the most of opportunities and to minimise future issues.

Level 1

Acts over the long-term

- ◆ Anticipates how external factors will impact IIED over the long-term and takes action to prepare the organisation
- ◆ Recognises the potential long-term impact of issues on partners and stakeholders and takes action now to build awareness and help minimise damage / maximise opportunities
- ◆ Ensures that research is focused not only on immediate opportunities and risks but also on the likely impact over the long-term
- ◆ Conducts in-depth analysis in order to prioritise the direction of work going forward

Level 2

Looks ahead

- ◆ Thinks ahead over a period of months to anticipates issues / opportunities. Takes action to achieve the best outcome
- ◆ Accurately identifies priorities and is decisive in calling a halt to activities and research which is not adding the most value to IIED / partners / stakeholders
- ◆ Mobilises colleagues to put in additional discretionary effort now to capitalise on a specific future opportunity

Level 3

Reacts rapidly

- ◆ Identifies and reacts to immediate opportunities and issues.
- ◆ Acts quickly and decisively in a crisis or other time-sensitive situation
- ◆ Acts with a sense of urgency when the norm is to wait, study the situation, and hope the problem will resolve itself
- ◆ Takes a logical approach in order to prioritise own work. Is flexible in response to changes in requirements.

Level 4

Limiting behaviours

- ◆ Reacts only to urgent issues and ignores potential long-term consequences of actions
- ◆ Identifies problems or opportunities but takes no action

Integrity & Commitment

Definition

Demonstrates a commitment to the values of IIED and acts in the best interest of the organisation and its partners / stakeholders

Why it's important

To have credibility with our partners and stakeholders, IIED employees need to “walk the talk”, demonstrating the values we promote to others of integrity, diversity and respect.

Level 1

Acts on values when significant risk / personal cost is involved

- ◆ Stands by decisions that benefit IIED as a whole, even if they are unpopular or negatively impacts own area's short-term gain
- ◆ Makes sure there is full disclosure, mentioning the potential costs or drawbacks of recommendations as well as the potential benefits
- ◆ Openly challenges others who are acting unethically and against the values of IIED and interest of its partners
- ◆ Challenges those in authority within and beyond IIED to act on their espoused values

Level 2

Acts on values when difficult to do so

- ◆ Acts on values to speak out, even when it might be easier to stay silent and avoid confrontation
- ◆ Takes personal responsibility for delivering and publicly acknowledges if mistakes have been made
- ◆ Makes choices and sets priorities which support the needs of IIED and fit with the mission
- ◆ Co-operates with others to achieve objectives in the larger organisation

Level 3

Acts consistently with values

- ◆ Is honest and open in dealings with others
- ◆ Values diversity and treats people with respect regardless of status
- ◆ Respects and accepts what the organisation views as important
- ◆ Promotes and/or defends the organisation's reputation with outsiders

Level 4

Limiting behaviours

- ◆ Does the minimum required to deliver within role and is not prepared to take on additional responsibility
- ◆ Does not value or respect the opinions of others within the organisation

Leading Others

Definition

Leads own team and the wider organisation, through providing clarity, energy, decisiveness and long-term direction.

Why it's important

Outstanding individuals within IIED recognise that they add the most value to partners and stakeholders by working effectively through others. They provide direction and motivation for people in order to engage and inspire them. They build cohesive teams and take a long-term view of organisational capability.

Level 1

Sets direction

- ◆ Develops a clear direction for others which is linked to the overall mission of IIED and gains buy-in and support
- ◆ Sets a good example by modelling desired behaviours, e.g. demonstrates insight and focus on partner needs
- ◆ Acts as a coach to individuals, providing advice and development opportunities
- ◆ Demonstrates a clear sense of purpose and personal conviction
- ◆ Promotes insight, clarity of focus and the desire to have a positive impact on sustainable development.
- ◆ Acts with a long-term view of capability within IIED, identifying and addressing any shortfalls, e.g. through focused recruitment / development to strengthen key areas

Level 2

Builds and motivates

- ◆ Gets the right resources and people in place for teams / projects in order to be able to deliver for partners / stakeholders
- ◆ Inspires people to believe in their own capabilities
- ◆ Removes obstacles and barriers that could hinder the success of teams e.g. minimises bureaucracy which limits ability of others to deliver
- ◆ Provides balanced feedback to team around current performance levels and progress towards goals in order to motivate and inspire them

Level 3

Creates the right team conditions

- ◆ Provides the team with clarity about objectives and accountabilities, ensuring the team's time and energy is focused on the right goals and progress against these goals is communicated to the team
- ◆ Asks the team / organisation for input in reaching important decisions and is open to challenge. Having taken input on board makes decisions and clearly explains the rationale to others rather than just imposing them
- ◆ Attracts and retains good people, thinking about the capabilities that are needed and the match to these

Level 4

Limiting behaviours

- ◆ Gives others total freedom but insufficient guidance or support
- ◆ Builds capability of own area of the organisation without considering effects elsewhere
- ◆ Develops a vision which is not supported by practical steps

Understands Context

Definition

An ability to understand the organisational, political and cultural context within IIED and across other organisations / political bodies.

Why it's important

To be able to influence colleagues, partners, stakeholders and broader policy decisions we need to understand the context within which people operate, how groups will be affected by events, who the key decision makers are and which individuals can influence them.

Level 1

Understands politics

- ◆ Understands the underlying social, political, economic and historical factors which influence the thinking and behaviour of others and uses this understanding to help shape policy or deliver change
- ◆ Recognises and/or addresses the reasons for ongoing organisational behaviour
- ◆ Recognises and/or uses ongoing power and political relationships within IIED or between organisations (alliances, rivalries) with a clear sense of organisational impact, e.g. creating networks, influencing others, obtaining funding

Level 2

Understands climate and culture

- ◆ Understands the cultural norms within organisations and uses this understanding to produce the best response (e.g. appropriate tone, style, choice of words)
- ◆ Recognises unspoken limitations within different groups / organisations, what it is and is not possible at certain times or in certain positions

Level 3

Understands formal or informal structure

- ◆ Recognises and/or uses the formal structure or hierarchy of an organisation
- ◆ Understands formal chains of command, rules and regulations, policies and procedures etc within IIED
- ◆ Understands and/or makes use of the informal structure of an organisation when formal routes are less effective
- ◆ Knows who the key actors, decision makers, influencer etc are within organisations

Level 4

Limiting behaviours

- ◆ Is unaware of the structures (formal and informal) within which they operate
- ◆ Takes an approach which does not take into consideration the structures or culture within an organisation

Working Collaboratively

Definition

A desire to work co-operatively with others to maximise the effectiveness of IIED, build knowledge and understanding and minimise duplication of effort.

Why it's important

Outstanding individuals work collaboratively with others in order to deliver quality work for partners and stakeholders. This behaviour enables IIED to add more value, undertake truly joined up research and operate more as an organisation rather than a collection of separate entities.

Level 1

Builds team commitment

- ◆ Takes personal responsibility for team delivery and drives the team's agenda when it becomes stuck, acting decisively to resolve any conflict within the team
- ◆ Involves the right people from across the organisation to achieve objectives
- ◆ Publicly credits other team members who have made valuable and important contributions
- ◆ Considers the views of other IIED areas or teams to ensure a broad perspective is gained to inform research, team processes, and decision making

Level 2

Seeks others' involvement

- ◆ Recognises the efforts of team members and ensures credit is given
- ◆ Values the diversity of others' opinions and backgrounds and actively seeks diverse points of view and opinions
- ◆ Displays a willingness to learn from others, including subordinates and peers
- ◆ Avoids wasting time and recreating what already exists by soliciting the input of others who may have useful experience or expertise to offer

Level 3

Positive attitude towards collaboration

- ◆ Encourages open communication between colleagues
- ◆ Demonstrates trust and respect for the colleagues they work with and those in other areas; expresses positive attitudes and expectations of others in team
- ◆ Shares useful and relevant information, experience and expertise, and supports team decisions
- ◆ Establishes common ground with colleagues and frameworks for working together, e.g. clarifying ground rules
- ◆ Participates willingly in group processes

Level 4

Limiting behaviours

- ◆ States difficulties in working collaboratively without offering solutions
- ◆ Gets involved in cross-area teams but remains on the sidelines when team is clearly not functioning effectively
- ◆ Keeps ideas and information within own area and does not share with colleagues