

Climate and Environment Technical Competency Framework

1. About the FCDO Advisory Cadres

World-leading technical and analytical capability is central to FCDO's mission. FCDO Advisers embody these capabilities, playing a key role in the delivery of the UK's international objectives and development impact in particular.

Advisers have a central role in the design, implementation, appraisal, and evaluation of international development programmes; in the development and implementation of foreign and development policy; and in diplomacy and international partnerships. They play an expert role in inter-disciplinary thinking and thought leadership, linking programmes and bringing deep expertise to maximise impact. They have strong links with specialist networks, research organisations, and professional bodies in the UK and globally.

Advisers are accredited to one or more of thirteen Advisory Cadres. These are professional bodies within FCDO and cover: Climate and Environment, Conflict, Economics, Education, Evaluation, Governance, Health, Humanitarian, Infrastructure, Food and Agriculture, Private Sector Development, Social Development, and Statistics. The Economics, Statistics, and Evaluation Cadres are linked to government-wide advisory services. Each Cadre has a Head of Profession (HoP), who is responsible for ensuring that professional standards are maintained both within the Cadre and for those wishing to join. The HoP provides thought leadership, quality assurance, and supports continuous professional development.

Adviser Capabilities

Advisers have certain capabilities in common. These include but are not limited to the following:

- **Expertise and thought leadership** in international policy and investment, applicable across a range of themes and geographies, and with a focus on development impact
- **Use of evidence** to inform policy and programming including the use of political economy analysis
- **Policy and programme delivery**, from design through to implementation and appraisal
- **International influence and diplomacy**, thinking and working politically and cooperatively, and through appropriate challenge, to shape norms and approaches
- **Brokering partnerships** with governments, civil society, the private sector, multilaterals, research organisations and professional bodies in the UK and globally
- **Delivering value for money** by applying key economic and commercial concepts
- **Safeguarding** to ensure the UK does-no-harm by integrating gender equality, child protection, disability inclusion, preventing sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment
- **Tackling climate change and restoring nature**, ensuring that programmes are aligned with the Paris agreement on climate change and UK commitments on nature
- **Embodying Civil Service behaviours** in applying, communicating, influencing, and leading technical and evidence-informed processes and engagement
- **Knowledge of data** relevant to operating sector and context, and application of professional expertise in interpretation and analysis of this in support of intended outcomes
- **Systems thinking**, recognising inter-linkages, real-world dynamics, and complexity to help design effective policies and interventions.
- **Innovation and digital development**, proactive in exploring and validating innovative approaches, technology solutions and creative ways to address the world's challenges.

2. About Climate and Environment (C&E) Advisers

Climate and Environment Advisers provide technical expertise to inform and guide FCDO's goal of driving international action to tackle climate change and reverse the declines in our natural world in ways that

promote sustainable, inclusive, and climate resilient growth. Advisers will continue to develop their own capabilities and amongst the wider C&E community to ensure that FCDO continues to have the knowledge and skills to address climate and environmental challenges now and into the future, to meet the C&E ambitions in the UK's 2021 Integrated Review and the 2022 International Development Strategy.

Cadre members will fulfil this role by:

1. Supplying high quality technical expertise to support and guide FCDO's C&E ambitions including the design of strategies, plans, policies, programmes, rules, and guidance;
2. Being a strong partner to Energy, Climate and Environment Directorate in delivering the UK's international C&E ambitions;
3. Drawing on the best available evidence, consulting with other specialisms or sources of knowledge and working with others to quality assure;
4. Tailoring climate and nature interventions to the development aspirations of ODA recipient countries in ways that are consistent with UK and international commitments and ambitions;
5. Integrating C&E across FCDO's work at all levels and in all sectors, taking account of the FCDO digital development strategy, advising on possible C&E risks, opportunities, solutions within policies and programmes, and providing appropriate levels of challenge when necessary;
6. Promoting and championing C&E achievements, learning and development and professional excellence;
7. Ensuring our skillset remains up to date through continual learning and professional development.

3. C&E Technical Competencies

C&E Advisers are expected to demonstrate knowledge and practice across FCDO's strategic priorities for C&E. These have been translated into three standard competencies: Low Carbon Growth and Mitigation, Natural Environment, and Climate Resilience and Adaptation. These three standard competencies are complemented by a specialist competency.

- **Standard competencies:** Each competency is described in terms of five *knowledge and practice areas* common to all three competencies: the evidence base; commitments and agreements; mechanisms; barriers and incentives for change; use of available UK levers. Under the five knowledge and practice areas are listed some of the most important issues relevant to the competency but are non-exhaustive and may be updated as priorities change. Advisers are not expected to have knowledge and practice experience in every one of the issues listed but are expected to provide evidence across all five knowledge and practice areas. For example, under the Natural Environment competency, it would be acceptable to supply evidence of knowledge and practice in sustainable supply chains or payment for ecosystem services, but there is no requirement to supply evidence for both (although supplying evidence of both would also be acceptable). Assessments will focus on the extent of knowledge across all five areas as the basis for accreditation, with depth of knowledge and practice determining the level of capability to accredit at (see Section 4).
- **Specialist competency:** To reflect a continued need for specialists in a range of C&E areas, the technical competency framework includes provision to accredit as a Specialist. Areas of specialist need are set out in Competency 4. These may be updated as priorities change.

Important notes:

- It is possible to accredit in two ways: through a standard route demonstrating capability across all three standard competencies, or through a specialist route demonstrating capability in an area of speciality and in at least two of the three standard competencies. Further details are given in Section 5.

- Accreditation rounds may emphasise particular skills within the three standard competencies and the specialist competency in order to meet demand. Details will be published at the start of the accreditation process.

COMPETENCY 1: LOW CARBON GROWTH AND MITIGATION

Knowledge and practice areas:

- The evidence base: pathways needed to avoid dangerous climate change; sources, impacts, and measurement of emissions, and areas of uncertainty; the relationships between emissions and growth; target setting principles and practice, e.g. net-zero **[science]**
- Commitments and agreements: differentiated approaches to mitigation across countries; governance mechanisms (e.g. COP), systems and processes (e.g. NDCs), and the climate finance architecture; systems of climate governance at national level, and the regional and local factors that shape and inform these **[governance]**
- Mechanisms: clean technologies, infrastructure, and carbon removals; natural resource sources and sinks including blue carbon; private finance (banking and investor) principles and mechanisms to stimulate low carbon growth **[technical sub-themes]**
- Barriers and incentives for change: market measures and distortions (e.g. fuel subsidies); carbon markets and credits; use of demand and supply-side interventions including investment and regulations; political-economy contexts; vested interests and role of elites **[governance, finance, economics]**
- Use of available UK levers: design, delivery, and appraisal of development policy and ODA programme interventions; design and implementation of trade and diplomacy measures; maximising use of diplomatic networks and relationships; internal influencing to mainstream C&E; influencing across HMG; facilitating bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements and negotiations **[finance, trade, diplomacy]**

COMPETENCY 2: NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Knowledge and practice areas:

- The evidence base: trends in biodiversity and natural resources, both terrestrial and marine, and consequences to society; direct and indirect human impacts and threats to nature and natural resources; systems of measurement and sources of data **[science]**
- Commitments and agreements: international, regional, multi-country agreements including legal frameworks and voluntary commitments for conservation and resource management; private sector commitments and standards (e.g. Environmental, Social, and Governance standards); targets, indicators, means of measurement, and reporting **[governance]**
- Mechanisms: sustainable supply chains and circular economies; payment for ecosystem services; policy and regulatory approaches; carbon markets; community engagement and participatory practices; nature-based solutions; environmental safeguards; strategic and project-level impact assessments **[technical sub-themes]**
- Barriers and incentives for change: market measures and distortions (e.g. agricultural subsidies); integration and valuation of nature and environment, including externalities, in financial and economic systems; compliance, enforcement, and transparency; supply, demand, and financial influences on commodity and wildlife trade; political-economy contexts; vested interests and role of elites **[governance, finance, economics]**
- Use of available UK levers: design, delivery, and appraisal of development policy and ODA programme interventions; design and implementation of trade and diplomacy measures; maximising use of diplomatic networks and relationships; internal influencing to mainstream C&E; influencing across HMG; facilitating bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements and negotiations **[finance, trade, diplomacy]**

COMPETENCY 3: CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND ADAPTATION

Knowledge and practice areas:

- i. The evidence base: the physical science basis for climate change; climate projections, variability, and uncertainty, how these translate into impacts through human sectors and ecosystems; climate impacts on poverty and prosperity, and the connection between prosperity and climate vulnerability; regional climate forecasts and risk assessments [**science**]
- ii. Commitments and agreements: international agreements, frameworks, and mechanisms for adaptation; national planning processes; financial commitments and mechanisms; private sector initiatives on risk and resilience [**governance**]
- iii. Mechanisms: sector and project-level risk assessments across sectors (e.g. water, infrastructure, health); links to disaster risk reduction; the role of nature; integrating measures into policy and programme development, translating theory to practical implementation; technology and innovation; local engagement in planning processes [**technical sub-themes**]
- iv. Barriers and incentives for change: role of data, systems, and human capacity to perform risk assessments and design adaptation plans; role of long-term planning; non-climate drivers of instability; effectiveness of and access to multilateral financing mechanisms [**governance, finance, economics**]
- v. Use of available UK levers: design, delivery, and appraisal of development policy and ODA programme interventions; design and implementation of trade and diplomacy measures; maximising use of diplomatic networks and relationships; internal influencing to mainstream C&E; influencing across HMG; facilitating bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements and negotiations [**finance, trade, diplomacy**]

COMPETENCY 4: SPECIALISM

Recognised specialisms are listed below:

- Biodiversity conservation and management
- Climate science
- Conflict and security
- Diplomacy and policy influencing
- Economics
- Education
- Forestry, agriculture, and natural resource commodity supply chains
- Gender and inclusion
- Governance
- Health
- Humanitarian
- Infrastructure
- Migration
- Private sector development
- Public financial management and taxation
- Social development
- Water resources management

Important notes:

- Evidence for specialisms must demonstrate how knowledge and practice relates to one or more of the three standard competencies but also demonstrates distinction from them through a high degree of knowledge and practice in the specialist area. As an example, evidence of applying a limited set of

economic tools and approaches to the natural environment would not constitute evidence of a specialism in Economics under this framework nor would it meet the requirements of the Natural Environment standard competency.

- As with the three standard competencies, evidence of knowledge and practice should be supplied across the same five areas: the evidence base; commitments and agreements; mechanisms; barriers and incentives for change; use of available UK levers.

4. Assessing Capability

Assessments will be based around a review of evidence that describes the extent of knowledge and expertise applicants hold in the relevant competencies, and also against capability levels from the FCDO Capability Framework: *Awareness, Foundation, Practitioner, and Expert* (within *Expert* the HoPs Group differentiate between *Expert* and *Senior Expert*). Note that particularly for *Senior Expert* level, consideration will be given to candidates' ability to give high quality demonstration of technical leadership and an ability to communicate and influence in their evidence.

Practitioner:

- Strong and confident day to day application of capability in common or standard situations but may need to seek expert support on more complex issues
- Holds several years of relevant experience* and may be augmented by a formal qualification of direct relevance
- Minimum level required in order to be a member of the Cadre – successful Technical Assessment dependent on fulfilling all stated criteria in the TCF

Expert:

- Recognised for specialist or technical knowledge and/or skill, underpinned by extensive experience applying it in practice on complex issues; connected with other experts
- Holds several years of relevant experience* and likely to be augmented by a formal qualification of direct relevance
- Successful Technical Assessment dependent on fulfilling all stated criteria in the TCF

Senior Expert:

- Recognised for deep specialist or technical knowledge and/or skill, underpinned by extensive experience applying it in practice on complex issues; connected with other experts
- Holds significant years of relevant experience* and likely to be augmented by one or more formal qualifications of direct relevance
- Evidence of applying specialist knowledge and skill as well as displaying leadership qualities in a range of contexts.
- Accreditation dependent on fulfilling all stated criteria in the TCF and assessment against 2 Civil Service Behaviours: Leadership and Communicating and Influencing.

* *Relevant experience* is defined as work experience in one or more sectors of direct relevance to the competency

A range of sources of evidence can be used by applicants to support their applications for accreditation and to demonstrate their technical skills.

Examples of sources of evidence include:

- A CV
- Examples of technical skills being used in Situation, Task, Action, Result format
- Work-based training including 10% cadre contribution
- Qualification

- Self-directed study
- Professional development record or learning log
- Project report
- Published or peer-Reviewed papers/dissertation
- Membership of a relevant professional body

Accreditation assessments will take into account the entire academic and professional history of a candidate and not rely solely on their most recent post.

Assessment Framework

The table below sets out the framework for how capability will be assessed at the competency level. The framework is based around the standard 1-7 scoring system used for Civil Service recruitments. During an accreditation round, the sift panel will agree a pass mark for all competencies. This could be, for example, 4. A sift will score all competencies at or above the pass mark for an applicant to pass from sift to interview. If a candidate applies for a level and does not pass, the sift panel can at their discretion agree whether they might still pass at a lower level. For example, an applicant might apply at Expert level. During the sift the panel might not pass them on all competencies, but after discussion agree to progress them to interview at Practitioner level.

Prior to interviews, the interview panel will again set a pass mark for all elements of the assessment. An interviewee must score higher than the pass mark in all areas to be considered for accreditation. If a candidate applies for a level and does not pass, the interview panel can at their discretion accredit the candidate at a lower level. Candidates who pass at a particular level cannot be considered for accreditation at a higher level, regardless of their scores. They must re-apply for accreditation at a higher level in a future accreditation round. The full set of accreditation requirements are specified in Section 5.

Standard scoring for assessment		
Score	Classification	Definition
7	Outstanding Demonstration	The evidence provided wholly exceeds expectation at this level
6	Strong Demonstration	Substantial positive evidence; includes some evidence of exceeding expectations at this level
5	Good Demonstration	Substantial positive evidence of the competency or behaviour
4	Acceptable Demonstration	Adequate positive evidence and any negative evidence would not cause concern
3	Moderate Demonstration	Moderate positive evidence but some negative evidence demonstrated
2	Minimal Demonstration	Limited positive evidence and/or mainly negative evidence demonstrated
1	Not Demonstrated	No positive evidence and/or substantial negative evidence demonstrated

5. Routes to Accreditation

There are two accreditation pathways to accredit to the C&E cadre:

- **Standard pathway:** Demonstration that knowledge and practice meets the requirement for *Senior Expert***, *Expert* or *Practitioner* in all 3 standard competencies or
- **Specialist pathway:** Demonstration that knowledge and practice meets the requirement for *Senior Expert***, *Expert* or *Practitioner* in a specialism and in 2 of the 3 standard competencies.

Those accredited at *Senior Expert*, *Expert* or *Practitioner* are considered to be accredited to the C&E cadre.

The table below outlines the two routes to accreditation at the three levels.

Accreditation pathway →		Standard			Specialist		
Capability levels →		Practitioner	Expert	Senior Expert**	Practitioner	Expert	Senior Expert**
Competencies	1. Low carbon growth and mitigation	Practitioner	Expert	Senior Expert	Practitioner in two standard competencies and a specialism	Expert in two standard competencies and a specialism	Senior Expert in two standard competencies and a specialism
	2. Natural environment	Practitioner	Expert	Senior Expert			
	3. Climate resilience and adaptation	Practitioner	Expert	Senior Expert			
	4. Specialism						

**Note that for *Senior Expert* level consideration will be given to candidates' ability to give high quality demonstration of technical leadership and an ability to communicate and influence in their evidence.