Technical Competency Framework
Livelihoods Cadre 2016

1. Introduction

About the Advisory Cadres
DFID advisers help identify, generate and utilise the best evidence, knowledge, technology and ideas to improve the effectiveness and impact of the UK’s aid programme. Advisers have key roles in programme design, management and evaluation, and in the broader development and implementation of policy. They have strong links with development networks, research organisations and professional bodies both in the UK and internationally.

There are thirteen professional cadres with a combined total of more than 850 accredited advisers, around a third of the total DFID workforce. The majority of these advisers are on-cadre¹ (a small proportion are off-cadre for various reasons but continue to retain their accreditation²) and are deployed throughout DFID HQ and overseas. The Economics and Statistics cadres are linked to government-wide advisory services.³ All DFID advisers need to continually update and refresh their skills, through their cadre programmes of continuing professional development (CPD), in line with the latest trends in global development, poverty reduction and UK policy.

How the technical competency framework should be used
DFID advisory technical competency frameworks are consistent in design and application, the only difference is in the technical content.

This framework will be used by recruiters for workforce planning, by Heads of Profession for benchmarking, standard setting aligned to cadre priorities; and resource planning, performance management and development support by Technical Quality Assurers, and by advisers themselves for planning and implementation of development priorities, postings and career planning. The framework may also be used by other government departments and external partner organisations for collaboration and partnership working.

Introduction to the Livelihoods Cadre

The Livelihoods cadre comprises approximately 55 Advisers working in DFID across the regions, in policy and research teams, and with international food and agriculture institutions.

Livelihoods Advisers’ are specialists in promoting sustained and sustainable pathways out of poverty for the rural and urban poor, connected to transformational change in market, governance and climate systems.

¹ These advisers are working in posts where at least 40% of their time is spent on technical work, they spend 10% of their time undertaking work for the wider cadre, and they undertake a minimum of 50 hours per year (with an expected range of 50 to 100 hours) on relevant continuing professional development, including attending professional development conferences organised by the Head of Profession
² Accreditation can be maintained for up to two posts or five years in off cadre posts, whichever is longer, as long as professional development is continued.
³ The Government Economic Service and the Government Statistical Service respectively
The livelihoods perspective - understanding what people do to make a living and prosper – combined with a contemporary approach to supporting change and managing risks and future uncertainty, ensures that development interventions, at whatever level, maintain a clear line of sight to the lives of poor people and deliver results that matter to them.

Livelihoods Advisers are specialists in the agriculture sector, promoting a dynamic and sustainable agri-food sector that is fit for the future, promotes responsible investment, creates markets and jobs, including for the poor, and delivers food and nutrition security (SDG2).

Livelihoods Advisers help implement the UK Government priorities by:

- working to deliver economic prosperity through commercial agriculture, dynamic rural economies, stable national and global food markets and tackling malnutrition.
- building resilience and managing risks to change, uncertainty and a range of shocks – climatic, economic, health, nutrition, conflict -particularly in fragile contexts, developing prosperity and opportunity in protracted crises and refugee settings;
- and enabling the extreme poor take steps towards prosperity so no one is left behind.

Livelihoods advisers work across government, private sector and civil society, offering a mix of field-level knowledge of poor people’s choices and behaviour and a systems perspective that is able to make the connections between macro-economic change, how markets work, the uncertainty of a changing climate and governance, and the livelihoods of poor men and women.

Livelihoods advisers develop evidence-based policies and programmes that facilitate transformation and multiple transitions: from managing uncertainty today for a profoundly different future; from subsistence to commercial agriculture; from agriculture-based livelihoods to non-farm self-employment or jobs; from rural to urban-based employment; from humanitarian relief to building resilience and market opportunities for poor people.

Livelihood Advisers also lead programme, policy and research on nutrition, responsible investment in land, forestry and governance of natural resources.

Core Competencies:
The competencies for the Livelihoods cadre fall into the following types:

1. **Advisory Competencies** which are common to all DFID advisory cadres and describe the essential skills required to be an adviser in DFID. These are used alongside the primary competencies in recruitment and promotion.

2. **Primary Competencies:** All advisers accredited to the cadre will demonstrate these competencies.

3. **Specialist Competencies:** Advisers should be able to demonstrate competence in at least two of these specialist areas, and may need to demonstrate others for specific roles. It is not expected that all advisers will be specialists in all these technical areas.

All advisers are expected to apply primary competencies and specialisms to deliver DFID/wider development priorities.

In addition to the competencies, all DFIDs advisers are expected to be able to deploy their own specialism through a number of priority lenses, taking account of cross cutting issues. Many of these lenses are embedded into the Livelihoods Technical Competencies below as they form an integral part of the expertise Livelihoods Advisers are expected to offer: knowledge on **gender equality**; understanding the **political economy** and interventions that affect incentives and behaviours; **conflict and protracted crises** and their drivers; understanding **climate and environment** and poor people’s vulnerability to environmental stresses and change. Advisers are also expected to understand the potential of digital technology to: improve the reach and value
for money of development interventions; integrate digital effectively in programmes; use digital tools to work smarter; and to collaborate and communicate effectively.

The cadre specific competencies are underpinned by the principles of the civil service, international, and where appropriate the Policy Profession competencies. These civil service wide competencies provide the foundation upon which the DFID technical competencies are built. In the delivery of technical expertise advisers must demonstrate the core values of the civil service and the behaviours set out by these broader frameworks.

Competencies and Advisory Grades:

The Civil Service competency framework provides a short narrative and examples of the desired and less desired behaviours of civil servants at all the different grades. This provides a good basis for determining grades in terms of generalist competencies and many of the descriptions hold true for technical activities as well as generalist ones.

As in the case of Generalist Civil Service competencies, Technical competencies are not different for different grades. What changes by grade are the desired behaviours and context for the technical knowledge required and the levels of risk, complexity and responsibility they will be expected and able to cover. For example:

B1/A2L advisers will meet the key competency areas and be able to provide sound technical advice in the areas they have experience of. They will be able to design, manage and lead clearly defined projects, policy issues and technical processes such as dialog and stakeholder engagement with lower levels of risk and complexity.

A2 advisers should be able to lead project and programme design, management and oversight and be able to operate at country and or departmental level independently. They should be aware of the relevant evidence in their technical area and be able to provide sound technical advice and support and lead technical discussions. This will include some level of setting direction and technical strategic leadership not just narrow technical guidance.

A1 technical advisers are expected to be able to represent DFID in technical discussions at the highest levels. Be able to design, manage and oversee the most complex, high risk and high value projects and advice on complex and tricky technical issues. They will be able to apply their generalist leadership capabilities such as setting direction in their technical work.

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4 Some cadres will maintain a guide to how to make the judgement between different grades in practice. These are advisory not a check list.
### 1. Summary of Livelihoods Adviser Competencies

**Qualifications and experience:** Normally relevant developing country context experience combined with first and postgraduate qualifications to Master’s level in a relevant technical area. A first degree can be sufficient, as can NVQ at the level equivalent to Master’s degree, if combined with strong demonstration of competences through relevant experience. More senior posts will require more technical depth and breadth, and range of developing country experience.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Competencies</th>
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| **Shared Advisory Competencies** | **SA1: Shared Advisory Competency**  
a) The changing international development context.  
b) Develop and implement policy.  
c) Using evidence to inform policy, programming and learning.  
d) Design and manage programmes and projects.  
e) Apply key economic and commercial concepts |
| **Primary Competencies** (all expected for livelihoods advisers) | **P1: Agriculture and Agri-food Systems and Markets**  
Expertise in developing a more productive, inclusive and sustainable agriculture sector; understanding change in food and production systems and markets; impacts on human health and nutrition; changing international context and institutions; investing in climate smart research; and uptake into evidence-based agricultural policy and practice |
|                            | **P2: Risk and Resilience**  
Knowledge and experience of reducing vulnerability to economic, natural-resource, health and conflict-related shocks; building resilience to shocks, to an uncertain climate, rapid change and in protracted crises |
|                            | **P3: Rural-Urban Transition and Transformation**  
Contemporary knowledge and application of adaptive approaches to development in the context of increasing uncertainty, complexity and change in the interface between urban and rural; in changing rural economies; in a transforming agriculture; and in supporting mobility |
|                            | **P4: Determinants of Change in Rural and Urban Livelihoods**  
Understanding the changing livelihoods of rural & urban poor people, the changing context affecting them and contemporary approaches to accomplishing outcomes for poor people, in more fragile as well as stable contexts |
|                            | **P5: Natural Resource Governance, Markets and Management**  
Knowledge and experience of institutional and governance aspects of natural resources, their management and the influence of political economy |
| **Specialist Competencies** (at least two) | **S1: Nutrition and Food Security.**  
Understanding the scale, causes and consequences of under-nutrition; experience in nutrition-sensitive interventions and monitoring |
|                            | **S2: Women’s Economic Empowerment**  
Knowledge and application of WEE particularly in agriculture and other natural resource-based economic activities |
|                            | **S3: Social Protection**  
Knowledge and experience of policies, instruments, approaches and impacts; links with shock-response and broader development |
| **Deep Specialism**        | Deep specialisation in certain areas, such as **Forestry Governance & Management, Land Governance & Markets, Livestock & Pastoral Systems and Animal/Human Health.** |
2. Technical Competencies

**Shared Advisory Competencies**

(i) **International Development.** Understand the processes, institutions and organisations that shape the changing international development context in which DFID operates, including the Sustainable Development Goals, ODA rules, UK legislation and government structures, and the roles of multilateral organisations and processes in development.

(ii) **Use evidence to inform policy and programming.** Analyse and critically appraise a wide range of data and evidence and engage with and implement high quality evaluation processes and design projects in a way that enables DFID to learn from its projects and programmes.

(iii) **Design and manage programmes and projects.** Have skills to undertake the Senior Responsible Owner role, including working with partners/suppliers, understanding and practising risk management, financial management, commercial awareness and value for money at all stages of the programme cycle.

(iv) **Develop and implement policy** including open and collaborative policy making and scaling-up policy solutions.

(v) **Apply key economic and commercial concepts** (i.e. incentives; choice; markets; public policy and government failure); comparing costs and benefits; assessing value for money through economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

**Primary Competencies**

P1: Resilient Agriculture, Food Systems and Markets: Promoting a more productive sector, inclusive and sustainable in a changing global context

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge and experience of developing:</th>
<th>Enabling advisers to undertake the following roles throughout the technical competencies:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• sustainable agricultural sectors and food systems resilient to a changing global context;</td>
<td>• Identify, develop, manage, adapt and evaluate cost-effective agricultural and agri-food policies and programmes that contribute to inclusive and sustainable growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>• managing risk in agriculture, including promoting responsible investment and building adaptive capacity to climate change;</td>
<td>• Design, lead or contribute to reviews and appraisals of agricultural and food systems and institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>• agriculture and agri-food sector policy and markets, including regional and national commodity markets and trade;</td>
<td>• Provide evidence and guidance to colleagues in DFID and externally on agricultural sector development assistance</td>
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<td>• the role of agriculture and the agri-food sector in inclusive economic growth and in achieving food and nutrition security;</td>
<td>• Advise on appropriate delivery of agricultural services and investments and improving the enabling environment and governance of markets and resources</td>
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<td>• the delivery of contemporary extension and business services to the sector, the role of public and private actors, and the enabling environment to facilitate this.</td>
<td>• Advise on and develop appropriate innovative instruments and partnerships</td>
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<td>• agricultural research in technology development and uptake of climate smart varieties and production systems, and innovative financing mechanisms with the private sector;</td>
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<td>• an agricultural sector reflecting the changing nature of</td>
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<td>P2: Risk and Resilience</td>
<td>Enabling advisers to:</td>
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<td>Knowledge and practical experience of managing risk and building resilience, including:</td>
<td>• Conduct evidence-based analysis and advise on responses to the ways in which people’s livelihood patterns determine (and are determined by) their vulnerabilities and resilience to future shocks</td>
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<td>• Understanding conflict, disaster and other shock risks and reduction, including factors causing and exacerbating conflict, the actors involved and the relationship between conflict and aid programming.</td>
<td>• Design and manage a wide range of policies and programmes responding to the opportunities and threats presented in a particular country/regional and investment context.</td>
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<td>• Understand climate risks and the opportunities for pathways and transitions out of risk through sustainable development, despite increasing uncertainty</td>
<td>• Lead integrated programmes that promote equity and resilience, which benefit the poorest and most vulnerable, maximising the impact of available resources.</td>
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<td>• Ability to integrate this analysis into strategies and interventions to reduce the chronic (and acute) vulnerability of the poor and build in resilience to a range of economic and natural resource related shocks;</td>
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<td>• Adaptation and mitigation to climate change in agriculture and natural resource use in particular;</td>
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<td>• Resource scarcity and the political economy of access to resources;</td>
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<td>• Nutrition-sensitive interventions and multi-sectoral nutrition approaches to addressing risks to food and nutrition insecurity;</td>
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<td>• Building resilience in fragile contexts - operating in protracted crisis, supporting development of opportunity in refugee settings - understanding the dynamics between humanitarian response and development approaches;</td>
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<td>• Social protection measures for reducing vulnerability; strengthening graduation from extreme poverty;</td>
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<td>• Assessing and managing risks for local people’s lives and livelihoods that may arise from change in policy and investment.</td>
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<tr>
<th>P3: Rural-Urban Transition and Transformation</th>
<th>Enabling advisers to:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge and experience of rural development and rural-urban transitions, with strategies that:</td>
<td>Design, manage and evaluate rural and urban development programmes and policy based</td>
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<td>• Manage priorities of achieving food and nutrition security with poverty reduction whilst promoting long-</td>
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<td>term resilience and sustainability.</td>
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- food and livestock systems and impact on global and local food security, nutrition and food safety;
- an understanding of the interface between human and animal health, the risks from a changing environment, policy and practice, including global health risks.
- strategies and interventions to promote and finance commercial agriculture and agribusiness development, including inclusive value chain development, market systems approaches and private sector investment;
- opportunities and challenges agricultural transformation creates for poor and marginal rural households and appropriate support for pathways out of poverty;
- the role of women in, and empowering them through, agriculture;
- interpret likely impact of such investments in developing countries on jobs, livelihoods, food and nutrition security
- assess the potential impact of new evidence or policy and its relevance to a country context
term structural change:
- Develop agriculture’s role in economic transformation and in poverty reduction and for rural and urban development;
- Help farmers become more commercialised (‘stepping-up’); to support a move away from own-account agriculture (‘stepping-out’) and to support and build the resilience of the most vulnerable and asset-poor (‘hanging in’)
- Support the development of sustainable livelihoods (often natural resource-based) in the context of increasing uncertainty and change.
- Support rural-urban links, the process of urbanisation, better access to urban and peri-urban markets;
- Develop transparent and sustainable land tenure systems and land markets;
- Promote opportunities and address challenges around regular rural-urban migration and mobility; importance of remittance flows; and the maintenance of livelihoods in the context of irregular migration.
- Recognise differing approaches and strategies required in stable, fragile and conflict contexts.
- Understand the political economy and policy/processes that help deliver inclusive and transparent (rural) change.

5 (see DFID Conceptual Framework on Agriculture)

P4: Determinants of Change in Rural and Urban Livelihoods

Knowledge and understanding of poor peoples’ lives in Rural and Urban contexts, and the changing context transforming their Livelihoods, including:
- In-depth understanding of the capabilities, choices and strategies that make up the livelihoods of poor rural and urban people and strategies that facilitate sustained pathways out of poverty;
- Understanding the relationship between poor people’s livelihoods, and their interaction with market processes and wider macro-economic change;
- Understanding the changing global context, future uncertainty and implications for poor people;
- Knowledge of strategies that build: poor people’s resilience to their vulnerability to climate change; sustainable use of environmental and natural resources that underpin prosperous livelihoods; and a healthy environment in which to live.
- Understanding the development of livelihoods in both stable and more fragile contexts;
- Understanding inequality and gender dimensions of rural and urban livelihoods, including legislation, UK and international commitments, gender inequalities, and the differential effects of interventions on men and women;
- Understanding of poverty, vulnerability and resilience and inequality in access to resources, assets and services;

Enabling advisers to design, manage or support programmes and policy (in any sector) that reflect a rapidly changing context and connect market opportunities or macro-economic processes with the choices, assets and capabilities of poor people in rural and urban contexts to support sustained pathways out of poverty.
P5: Natural Resources Governance, Markets and Management

Knowledge and experience of natural resource governance, management and markets including:

- institutional and governance aspects of natural resource management, including UK commitments to international agreements;
- specific knowledge in (one or more of):
  - forestry, land; fisheries, livestock and pastoralism, water use;
- political economy of access to and use of natural resources;
- the health of specific natural resource systems and the impact of climate and environmental change on them and subsequent impact on livelihoods, investment and economies.
- the development and reform of natural resource administration systems, and the policy and operational framework for investment
- national, regional and global markets and investment in natural resources and the non-market benefits.
- management and governance of natural resources-based conflict.

Enabling advisers to lead programmes and policy processes on the governance and use of natural resources to create sustainable and pro-poor economic growth.

Specialist Competencies

S1: Nutrition and Food security

Knowledge and experience of Nutrition and Food Security, including:

- Key actors (public and private) in the NFS field at national and international levels;
- the multi-dimensional causes and consequences of hunger and malnutrition (including the social and cultural dimensions) and the application of livelihoods approaches in responding to these;
- the evidence base for what works in nutrition-sensitive interventions, particularly through agriculture;
- knowledge of the key NFS monitoring systems and indicator sets, ability to understand and interpret NFS data with reference to the severity of the situation, potential causality and appropriate interventions;

Enabling advisers to develop effective, evidence-based nutrition specific and sensitive interventions and policy that complement and are complemented by wider development initiatives, and in the context of wider health systems.

S2: Women’s Economic Empowerment

Knowledge and understanding of women’s economic empowerment including:

- UK gender equality policy and legal commitments;
- the impacts of changing rural contexts on women and girls;
- the role and contribution of women in agriculture and approaches to increasing their sustained empowerment in it;
- Integrating gender issues, particularly on women, into a

Enabling advisers Ensure that all interventions and decisions are informed by this understanding and aim to maximise benefits for women, and at a minimum ensure that women are not worse off.
range of interventions and contexts, including integrating into policies, programmes and frameworks related to the livelihoods competencies.
- In agricultural transformation and transitions, including changing labour demands and practices, for example in the context of male out-migration; women's role in non-traditional value chains and jobs;
- gender analysis and gender budgeting.

### S3: Social Protection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge and experience of <strong>Social Protection approaches</strong> including:</th>
<th><strong>Enabling advisers</strong> to lead integrated programmes that promote equity and resilience, which benefit the poorest and most vulnerable, maximising the impact of available resources.</th>
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<td>- knowledge of the context in which they work and the potential impacts and benefits;</td>
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<td>- understanding a range of social protection policies and instruments;</td>
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<td>- targeting approaches and mechanisms;</td>
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<td>- delivery mechanisms;</td>
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<td>- data and management information systems;</td>
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<td>- graduation models;</td>
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<td>- lifecycle transitions;</td>
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<td>- shock-responsive social protection</td>
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<td>- linkages into broader development programmes</td>
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