

How to Use the Immunization Competencies Framework

There are a number of ways that the framework can be used. In fact, if you are doing any tasks related to the immunization workforce, the framework can probably help you.

To understand how to use the framework, imagine a dictionary. A dictionary provides an organized list of words that can be combined to write any number of things: a story, a report, or even a poem. There is no single way to ‘correctly’ use a dictionary. Similarly, there is no single way to use the competencies framework.

The competency framework is composed of three parts: a chart of attributes and two types of lists- a list of work functions and a list of competencies. These three components are organized by level, such as *national*, and domain, such as *safety of vaccines and immunization*.

Here are some ideas to get you started.

Component	Samples of uses	Example
Attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Developing program performance indicators for domains and levels of the systemChecking program performance indicators to ensure all aspects of an EPI are being monitored.Linking worker performance to outcomes	As part of its strategic planning at the national level, an immunization program reviews the attributes and confirms that it has all the components in place for vaccine delivery but recognizes that it lacks a strategy to communicate and advocate with partners.
Functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Developing/reviewing terms of reference or job descriptionsReviewing system processes for effectiveness and efficiencyRedesigning work processesIdentifying the appropriate functions at varying levels of the systemRe-organization of responsibilities, such as decentralization or centralization	A country moves from a centralized to de-centralized structure. It reviews all the functions described for national level and selects specific functions to move to the provincial level. Management could then use the competencies sections to identify which competencies will now be required at the provincial level and designs a competency development plan.
Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Linking work functions to required competenciesDeveloping/reviewing terms of reference or job descriptionsConducting training needs assessments and creating training plansDetermining criteria for career developmentDeveloping staff performance requirements	An immunization program is developing career paths, in an effort to retain their staff. It modifies the standard competencies to create job descriptions describing ‘junior’, ‘practitioner’ and ‘senior’ levels of proficiency. It then uses the new competencies to create competency-based training programs that will enable staff to advance in their career.

Important notes

1. The framework is not intended to be a regulatory document nor a training curriculum. It is expected that countries or agencies will customize it to fit their needs.
2. The attributes, functions and competencies describe an organization and workers who are fully meeting expectations in a 'typical' environment. Immunization programs may want to expand the descriptions to define additional proficiency levels such as 'junior' or 'senior'.
3. The **Human Resources and Performance Management** domain includes work functions and competencies that may be required of any manager in the immunization program, not only those in the EPI human resources department. In this way, some **human resources competencies** can be considered foundational.
4. Almost every job in immunization requires some level of proficiency in foundational competencies of **Management and Leadership** and **Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Program**. Consider this when conducting any type of task or performance analysis.
5. Competency statements by definition are broad. They are not sufficiently detailed to develop accurate training curricula. When conducting training needs assessments or training design, break down the competency statements into finer levels of detail to uncover the specific learning objectives that are needed. **See below for an example.**

Sample competency statement broken down to the learning objective level

Domain	Level
Disease Surveillance, Investigation, and Response	Provincial

Competency statement: Operate a VPD surveillance/health information system

1. This statement is quite broad. It is fine for inclusion on a job description but not specific enough for developing training.

2. Sometimes it is helpful to break down the competency statement into smaller statements. Here are 2 major components of competency in VPD surveillance operations.

Sub-competency	Learning Objectives
Analyze and interpret surveillance data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze clusters of data (time, place, person) Evaluate the reliability and validity of surveillance data Describe the types of bias that may occur in analyzing VPD surveillance data Consider limitations in surveillance data that will impact interpretation
Operate a surveillance system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the qualitative & quantitative attributes of a surveillance system (simplicity, flexibility, acceptability, timeliness, sensitivity, positive predictive value, representativeness, cost) Describe the operation of a surveillance system in your local area Analyze and report surveillance data in your local area Describe characteristics of appropriate public health responses Make recommendations based on analysis of surveillance data

3. These learning objectives are specific enough that you can develop appropriate lessons and exercises, as well as a means of evaluating competency.