

IFRC Surge Optimisation process

Towards a cohesive approach to communications in emergencies

Communications competency framework

1. Introduction to the Surge Core Competency Framework

Background

The Core Competency Framework for Surge Personnel is an underpinning element of the Surge Optimisation and Operational Excellence process. It is key to ensuring that recruitment and deployments are managed with equal access for all surge personnel, based on a framework of technical, managerial and leadership competencies. The multilateral nature of the surge tools – people from all parts of the Movement working together to deliver in an emergency response – means that there is a need for a consistent framework for recruitment, development and management of performance.

The Core Competency Framework will be used for all surge staff being deployed. It sets out the behaviours, skills and knowledge required by all staff at all levels of a response operation and applies equally to all staff. The Core Competency Framework will provide a shared and systematic way of assessing and recruiting surge staff, training surge staff and managing/appraising surge staff in the field.

There are twenty distinct competencies in the framework. The core competencies are applicable to every surge role, whatever their position in the operation. All surge roles should strive to demonstrate all core competencies at the relevant tier.

It is recommended to read through the Core Competency Framework and understand its structure, definitions and indicative role/behaviour for each tier before reading the Technical Competency Framework for Communications Surge Delegates.

2. Technical Competencies Framework for Communications Surge Delegates

There are seven competencies required of all communications surge delegates. Each competency has three tiers of mastery with a set of behavioural indicators to reflect the progression of expertise and/or managerial responsibility. These competencies can be developed in a progressive manner as the surge member develops skills and acquire experience in the area of communications in emergency response operations.

Each tier of indicators builds upon the indicators specified in the previous tier, meaning the behavioural indicators at lower tiers also apply to all subsequent tiers (i.e. The indicators are cumulative. Tier 2 indicators assume that all of the Tier 1 indicators have been met, and Tier 3 assumes all of Tier 1 and Tier 2 have been met). Each role requires a particular profile of core and technical competencies.

The tier definitions are as follows:

- **Tier 1 (Practical/ Technical application):** Displays practical understanding of this competency and able to effectively complete required tasks within this competency, as part of a Red Cross Red Crescent team.

Description:

- You are able to successfully complete tasks in this competency as requested. Help from an expert may be required from time to time, but you can usually perform the skill independently.
- Your focus is on applying and enhancing knowledge or skill. You have applied this competency to situations occasionally while needing minimal guidance to perform successfully.
- You understand and can discuss the application and implications of changes to processes, policies, and procedures in this area.

- **Tier 2 (Analytical/ Applied knowledge and skills):** Able to effectively perform the actions associated with this competency without assistance and provide advice and guidance to others within a defined scope. Translates strategic decision into sectoral direction. [SEP]

Description:

- You are recognized as "a person to ask" when difficult questions arise regarding this skill.
 - Your focus is on broader tactics and coordination. You consistently provide tactical/ practical ideas and perspectives that contribute to the operations.
 - You are capable of coaching others in the application of this competency.
 - You participate in senior level discussions regarding this competency and support in the development of reference and resource materials in this area.
- **Tier 3 (Strategic/ Recognized authority):** As a known expert in this area, you are able to provide guidance, troubleshoot and answer questions related to this area of expertise and the field where the skill is used. Operates at a strategic and managerial level in a response of any magnitude.

Description:

- Focus is strategic. You've demonstrated consistent excellence in applying this competency in a number of operations and across different types of operations.
- You are considered the expert in this area within the operation/ in country.
- You provide direction and leadership in this area and lead the development of reference and resource materials for this competency.
- You are able to explain relevant issues and elements in relation to trends, reputational risk and related operational matters in sufficient detail during discussions and presentations, to foster a greater understanding among internal and external colleagues.

Essential core competencies for surge communications profiles

While there are twenty core competencies in the framework that are applicable to every surge personnel, whatever their role or position in the operation, and all surge personnel should strive to demonstrate all core competencies at the relevant tier, the following have been identified as being of the highest importance and indispensable for all surge communication roles:

- a. Movement context, principles and values
- b. National Society capacity strengthening
- c. Coordination
- d. Assessment
- e. Direction setting and quality programme management
- f. Protection, gender and inclusion
- g. Collaboration and teamwork
- h. Interpersonal communication
- i. Cultural awareness
- j. Judgement and decision making
- k. Personal resilience

3. Technical Competencies and Behavioural Indicators for Communications Surge Delegates

Technical competencies		Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
1	Strategic communications in emergencies <i>Ability to identify and analyse communications needs and capacity, trends and issues, and plan, prioritize and implement the editorial direction and content production.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures engaging communications content informed by the humanitarian situation, issues/ concerns, and targeted to different audiences and communications channels • Produces and articulates clear and concise messages in interviews, communications materials and products • Scans all relevant communications channels for situational context, trends, rumours and potential issues, and highlights to relevant reporting and technical lines in country, regional and Geneva communications team • Manages sensitive information discreetly and professionally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies humanitarian issues, concerns and compelling story angles in country to inform production of communications messages and content • Inputs into and implements communications strategy, including supporting host National Society's communications activities • Prioritizes content gathering and focus based on the evolution of the situation in country and key audience • Identifies and coordinates communications capacity and resources in country to maximize communications impact • Identifies and mitigates reputational risks in country (with potential impact for host National Society and other Movement partners outside of the country) in a timely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops, manages the implementation of, monitors and adapts communications strategies in a complex and fast-changing environment • Analyses available data and information, media trends and situational context to identify key issues, potential risks (with potential impact for host National Society and other Movement partners outside of the country) and set communications priorities (together with the regional and Geneva communications team) • Advises management/ leadership of IFRC and host National Society in country on media and public communication matters related to the operation, and advises the operations team on general communications guidelines

			and appropriate manner	
2	Media relations <i>Ability to demonstrate an understanding of the media cycle in an emergency and identify information and angles that are relevant and of interest to media</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies international media on the ground, story angles they are interested in and opportunities to engage them Responds to media requests in an appropriate and timely manner. Gathers and develops relevant and compelling content and materials targeted to global media audience, supported by the regional and Geneva communications team Handles media interviews confidently, articulately and professionally Identifies, prepares and supports operational spokespeople for media interviews, when appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows thorough understanding of the media landscape in the country, regionally and internationally Builds relationship with international media outlets in country and proactively pitches story ideas and issues that highlight Red Cross Red Crescent's work, and position it as a leading organisation in the response Supports spokespeople in country by preparing relevant materials and guidelines for handling media requests and interviews in a variety of formats (e.g. studio, on site, skype, live interviews, etc.) Actively tracks and monitors media coverages in country and informs regional and Geneva communications team, and in country leadership of new developments and key issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plans and directs editorial focus and priority Confidently, eloquently and professionally handles media interviews in a variety of formats (e.g. studio, on site, skype, live interviews, etc.) and press conferences Delivers accurate, clear and concise messages to address a range of issues and/or to present or defend difficult positions Researches and identifies story ideas and advocacy issues that would be of interest to media to positively highlight and position Red Cross Red Crescent's work Advises communications and operations colleagues, IFRC and National Society leadership in country on handling reputational related issues in the media

3	Social media and monitoring <i>Ability to utilize social media platforms, plan and implement social media strategies, produce compelling content to engage social media audiences in generating visibility, support, interest for Red Cross Red Crescent work</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies knowledge of social media platforms and its audiences to guide the production of communications content for IFRC network and host National Society • Uses social media and its tools/ functions (e.g. Periscope, Twitter Live, Facebook Live, Instagram story, etc.) to promote, generate support and advocate for Red Cross Red Crescent's work • Demonstrates good knowledge of and applies the IFRC social media guidelines • Scans social media for trends and rumours, and highlights to line/ technical manager(s) in country, regional and Geneva communications team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates content gathering and development that is tailored and targeted to different audiences across the social media platforms • Develops materials and guidelines to support IFRC and National Society colleagues and leadership in country on social media engagement • Supports host National Society in consistently monitoring and analysing trends, tracking rumours, identifying potential issues and risks, and report findings to senior management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports host National Society in planning and executing social media strategies in country • Plans and guides editorial and content narrative for social media platforms • Advises communications and operations colleagues, IFRC and National Society leadership in country on handling reputational related issues on social media
4	Written communications content <i>Ability to produce timely, compelling and correct written content, guided by the editorial strategy and targeted to relevant audiences</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathers and develops timely written materials from the field that are guided by the editorial strategy, and targeted to different audiences and communications channels • Possesses good writing and narrative skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathers and produces high-quality and compelling written content that advocates for and positions the Red Cross Red Crescent's work • Edits and refines relevant media and external communications content as and when needed (i.e. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans and provides editorial inputs for written content from the ground • Coordinates and produces opinion pieces for IFRC and National Society leadership, features and/or cross-media materials combining written and audio-visual content for different

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates good knowledge and applies the IFRC language style-guide • Ensures information is ethical, validated and approved as needed" 	blogs, opinion pieces, etc.)	<p>communications channels</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advises IFRC and National Society colleagues on guidelines and style for written content and appropriate lexicon based on the situation and context
5	Photography <i>Ability to interact with affected people and capture compelling audiovisual content and narrative, guided by the editorial strategy, Movement's Fundamental Principles, IFRC AV guidelines, portraying affected people in a respectful and dignified manner with informed consent</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures still images that are guided by the editorial strategy and are suitable for a range of communications channels • Captures relevant and timely still images from the field, according to the IFRC's minimum standards and adhering to the IFRC Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy • Demonstrates good knowledge of and applies the IFRC photography guidelines • Systematically provides comprehensive data and information accompanying still images, including signed consent forms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures high-quality and engaging still images that highlights the humanitarian situation and Red Cross Red Crescent work, and targeted to different audiences and communications channels • Develops strong narrative through still images (i.e. photo essays, galleries, etc.), guided by the editorial strategy and informed by the ongoing humanitarian issues and concerns • Identifies opportunities and pursues story ideas that can be told through still images on a broad range of platforms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans, coordinates and provides editorial inputs and strategy for audio visual content in country • Identifies opportunities to proactively pitch audio-visual materials/ content to media outlets • Develops and edits engaging narrative by combining written and photo content for digital platforms

<p>6 Video content</p> <p><i>Ability to interact with affected people and capture compelling audiovisual content and narrative, guided by the editorial strategy, Movement's Fundamental Principles, IFRC AV guidelines, portraying affected people in a respectful and dignified manner with informed consent</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures simple/basic video clips that are guided by the editorial strategy and appropriate for a range of communications channels especially social media, using digital devices (i.e. mobile phone camera, tablet, digital camera, GoPro, etc.) • Captures relevant and timely video footage and interviews from the field, according to the IFRC's minimum standards and adhering to the IFRC Code of Conduct and Child Protection Policy • Demonstrates good knowledge of and applies the IFRC audiovisual guidelines • Demonstrates good knowledge of video editing and animation apps • Systematically provides time-coded information and translated scripts accompanying video clips, including signed consent forms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Captures and edits high-quality and engaging video content that highlights the humanitarian situation and Red Cross Red Crescent work, and tailored to different audiences and communications channels • Captures and edits high-quality b-rolls that can be pitched and used by media • Identifies opportunities and pursues story ideas that can be told through video content on a broad range of platforms • Produces strong narrative through video content guided by the editorial strategy and informed by the ongoing humanitarian issues and concerns • Demonstrates advanced video editing knowledge and skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans, coordinates and provides editorial inputs and strategy for audio visual content in country • Identifies opportunities to proactively pitch audio-visual materials/content to media outlets • Develops and edits engaging narrative by combining written and audio-visual content for digital platforms • Produces cutting-edge content using innovative tools and special effects (e.g. drones, 360-footage)
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<p>7 Advancing host National Society's public communications priorities</p> <p><i>Ability to collaborate and support host National Society in meeting its communications objectives and in ensuring effective, consistent and coherent Red Cross Red Crescent public communications efforts</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consults and seeks advice from host National Society to effectively develop and execute communications strategies and activities • Ascertains host National Society's communications capacity and objectives, and provides relevant technical support to achieve these objectives • Alerts host National Society on, key issues, potential risks and on mitigating reputational risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports host National Society in planning, developing and implementing communications strategies that are targeted and relevant for various channels to help meet its fundraising objectives and position it as an effective, trusted and credible humanitarian actor in the response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consults and advises host National Society on its communications priorities and strategies, key issues, potential risks and on mitigating reputational risks
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