

Defining Social and Behavior Change Competencies for Multi-Sectoral Nutrition

A List for Assessing, Developing, and Evaluating Staff Skills

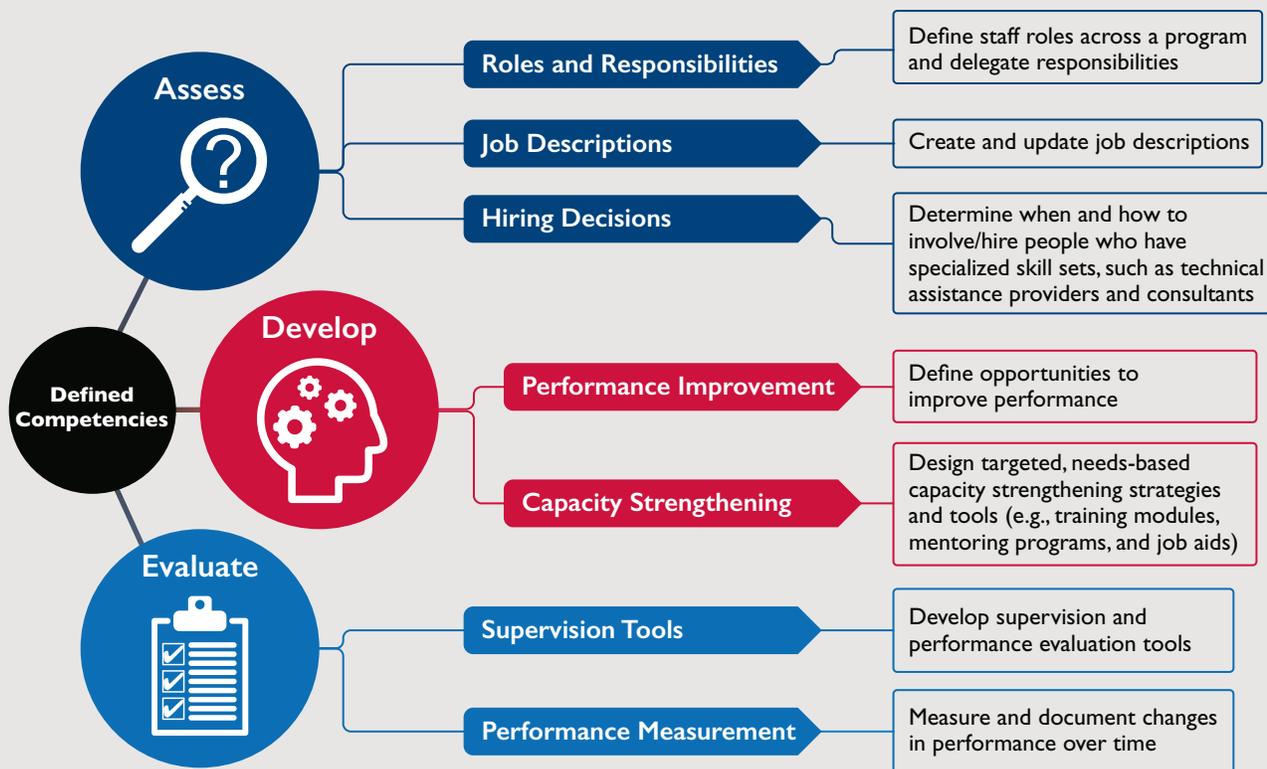
High-quality social and behavior change (SBC) is a key cross-cutting approach for effective multi-sectoral nutrition programs. To ensure program success, managers must be able to engage staff members with a range of SBC experience and know when to seek additional expertise.

This list of 52 SBC competencies guides managers and SBC practitioners to define the most relevant competencies and identify skill gaps across their teams.¹ These competencies describe the knowledge, attitudes, and skills that staff must demonstrate to design, implement, and evaluate SBC programs.

Program managers can use this list at any stage of the program cycle to determine the competencies that are relevant to their portfolio. Then they can use those competencies strategically to guide hiring decisions, identify areas for capacity strengthening, and track changes in performance over time.

How to Use a Competency List

Competencies are the building blocks for assessing, developing, and evaluating staff skills.



¹ This resource references competencies for programmatic staff and other people designing, implementing, and monitoring multi-sectoral nutrition programs. It does not cover competencies for frontline workers, such as health providers and community volunteers.

What are competencies?



Competencies are a set of measurable, observable, and clearly defined knowledge, attitudes, and skills that are critical to job performance and serve as a basis for assessing, developing, and evaluating staff.²

The SBC competencies on this list fall under four overarching categories:



FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCIES



PLANNING AND DESIGNING PROGRAMS



IMPLEMENTING PROGRAMS



MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING

The competency list differentiates between basic and specialized competencies. It may be helpful to think of these two levels in terms of roles, responsibilities, and SBC experience.

Competency Level	Description	Suggested Profile
Basic	Core knowledge, attitudes, and skills required for effective SBC programming (though it is not necessary for one person to have all the basic competencies on the list)	A person who has some SBC education and professional experience (2-5 years); or A person who has limited SBC education and experience (0-2 years), with sufficient oversight
Specialized	Advanced or highly technical knowledge and skills that may be required during shorter-term periods during the program cycle	A person who has advanced SBC education and professional experience (5+ years); and/or A person who has demonstrated expertise in the specialized knowledge and skills (e.g., a specialist in impact analysis)

² Adapted from *Defining and Advancing Gender-Competent Family Planning Service Providers: A Competency Framework and Technical Brief* (HRH2030, September 2018).



(Photo: Judiann McNulty, SPRING consultant)

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This list organizes SBC competencies into four main categories: foundational skills, planning and design, program implementation, and evaluation. Within each of these, the competencies are further grouped by theme.

For further information on the technical SBC terminology used in this list, please visit the [SBC page](#) on the USAID Advancing Nutrition website.

	FOUNDATIONAL SBC COMPETENCIES FOR MULTI-SECTORAL NUTRITION	Basic competency	Specialized competency
1	Knowledge of nutrition-specific and/or nutrition-sensitive behaviors and underlying causes of malnutrition	x	
2	Knowledge of behavior change theories and models and how to apply them for multi-sectoral nutrition	x	
3	Knowledge of the range of factors (e.g., structural, social, internal) that influence nutrition behaviors	x	
4	Knowledge of relevant national and sub-national nutrition SBC priorities and resources across sectors	x	
5	Attitude that participant groups are a core part of nutrition SBC design, implementation, and monitoring	x	
6	Ability to communicate and engage with others in a way that reflects understanding of power dynamics and positionality	x	
7	Knowledge of normative change approaches and activities		x
8	Knowledge of gender integration strategies, both gender-sensitive and gender-transformative		x

 PLANNING AND DESIGNING MULTI-SECTORAL NUTRITION SBC PROGRAMS		Basic competency	Specialized competency
 SECURING BUY-IN			
9	Capacity to advocate to staff, decision makers, and gatekeepers to invest in evidence-based SBC programming	x	
 ARTICULATING THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF SBC PROGRAMS			
10	Ability to explain the impact pathways between behaviors, factors, and approaches to improve nutrition	x	
11	Ability to explain a theory of change that promotes social norm shifts and behavior change		x
 COLLECTING AND SYNTHESIZING DATA FOR SBC DESIGN			
12	Capacity to design and execute the SBC components of a needs assessment or a situational analysis (e.g., stakeholder mapping) for multi-sectoral nutrition	x	
13	Capacity to identify and use data from existing national or sub-national analysis (e.g., related to youth, gender, markets) to plan and design SBC program components	x	
14	Capacity to design, conduct, and analyze high-quality formative research for multi-sectoral nutrition		x
 USING DATA TO PRIORITIZE BEHAVIORS AND APPROACHES			
15	Ability to use quantitative and qualitative data, especially from formative research, to inform an effective nutrition SBC program strategy	x	
16	Ability to use data to prioritize nutrition behaviors, in the context of a large number of complex behaviors and limited resources		x
17	Ability to segment participant groups (including actors and supporting actors) for each behavior to select effective, tailored approaches		x
18	Capacity to design, select, and/or adapt the most appropriate nutrition SBC approaches for the chosen behaviors and context	x	
19	Ability to apply best practices in communications to support SBC objectives (e.g., audience segmentation, channel identification)	x	
20	Ability to pretest and adapt media and materials for relevance, interest, and calls to action among intended participant groups	x	
 COORDINATING STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT			
21	Ability to coordinate development of an evidence-based SBC strategy across activities and sectors	x	
22	Ability to coordinate/align SBC content across project approaches and sectors so that all efforts contribute to achieving prioritized behaviors	x	

 IMPLEMENTING MULTI-SECTORAL NUTRITION SBC PROGRAMS		Basic competency	Specialized competency
 IMPLEMENTING HIGH-QUALITY PROGRAMS			
23	Positive attitude/willingness to engage with all technical sectors for multi-sectoral nutrition (food security, livelihoods, WASH, private, health, market systems, etc.)	x	
24	Ability to effectively communicate (e.g., adjust language for) key nutrition-related concepts and behaviors across different technical sectors		x
25	Capacity to implement SBC programs flexibly (e.g., adapting activities to a changing context) yet still in alignment with the original theory of change	x	
26	Capacity to effectively deliver/communicate information with diverse individuals and groups (in written, visual, oral form)	x	
27	Capacity to identify and use a variety of SBC approaches (e.g., environmental nudging, choice architecture, skits, demonstrations, radio, text message reminders)	x	
28	Ability to undertake approaches that enable participants to discuss experiences, identify personal needs, and practice intended behaviors	x	
29	Capacity to bring an SBC lens to analyses related to youth, gender, and/or markets	x	
 MANAGING SBC PROGRAMS			
30	Ability to track activities to ensure they are implemented according to the SBC strategy	x	
31	Knowledge of available experts, and how to call on and manage them to support SBC tasks that require specialized skills		x
32	Capacity to foster and maintain collaboration with stakeholders, including coordinating programs and program approaches	x	
33	Capacity to adapt programs to reflect the experiences and needs of project staff, participants, and other stakeholders	x	
34	Ability to plan for the end of the intervention, including long-term maintenance of gains after intervention ends	x	
 STRENGTHENING SBC CAPACITY OF OTHERS			
35	Ability to incorporate and model adult learning principles to build skills and confidence for programming for multi-sectoral nutrition		x
36	Ability to prepare SBC curricula for multi-sectoral nutrition (e.g., for project staff, frontline workers)		x
37	Ability to prepare guidance for project staff and frontline workers to implement the SBC strategy		x
38	Ability to train, coach, and support others in one or more competencies related to designing, implementing, and monitoring multi-sectoral nutrition SBC programs		x

	MONITORING, EVALUATING, AND LEARNING (MEL) IN MULTI-SECTORAL NUTRITION SBC PROGRAMS	Basic competency	Specialized competency
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	DEVELOPING MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING (MEL) APPROACHES		
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39	Knowledge of nutrition behavior indicators	x	
40	Ability to set targets for nutrition behavior change		x
41	Ability to develop high-quality MEL plans for multi-sectoral nutrition SBC programs		x
42	Ability to develop new tools, and/or find and adapt existing tools to monitor implementation	x	
43	Capacity to design consultative methods to elicit input to refine activities		x

	APPLYING MEL APPROACHES		
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44	Capacity to monitor the quality of multi-sectoral nutrition SBC activities, as well as changes in behaviors, factors, and participation, and adapt programming	x	
45	Ability to use measures and self-monitoring to guide multi-sectoral nutrition SBC activities and monitor outcomes	x	
46	Ability to systematically track unexpected and/or unintended effects	x	
47	Ability to measure the coverage of SBC activities		x
48	Ability to test program logic model and/or theory of change		x
49	Ability to conduct impact analysis to test relationships between activities, exposure, and desired outcomes		x
50	Ability to analyze MEL data of multi-sectoral nutrition SBC programs		x
51	Ability to share MEL data with other program implementers	x	
52	Capacity to document and disseminate results, lessons, and best practices in multi-sectoral nutrition SBC	x	

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