

Global Implementation Society

# COMPETENCIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION FACILITATORS



GLOBAL IMPLEMENTATION SOCIETY

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**GIS Standards  
Committee**

**Presented by the GIS Standards Committee in solidarity with all of those  
engaged in the science and practice of implementation globally.**

The GIS Standards Committee contributed to the development of the GIS Competencies for Implementation Facilitators between 2018 and 2020.

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# Introduction

*The GIS statement of competencies was developed to enable,*

- People to self-assess their competencies' strengths and weaknesses, for work to facilitate the take up of innovations or evidence-based interventions by front line staff. These people may be implementation facilitators, part or full time, and internal or external to the implementing unit or organization. Managers are implementation facilitators, and they may or may not have the support of specialist implementation facilitators.
- People can use the self-assessment to decide which learning they most need to gain from courses or other experiences, and also to give evidence from their self-assessment to those who may support their developing the competencies through different learning experiences.
- Managers recruiting staff or contracting services to facilitate implementation, to know which competencies they need to advertise for and provide a checklist for assessing candidates for the assignment.
- In addition, manager's professional self-development includes gaining some implementation facilitation competencies: this set of statements can help them self-assess which competencies they need to develop, especially in the situations where they have no facilitators to assist them such as in some low-resource settings.
- Programs and courses providing learning for practical implementers (not researchers), to assist them to focus on which practical competencies their learners need to achieve and to self-assess their programs,
- Services accrediting and certifying programs or individuals, to guide which competencies to assess which are required for practical implementation responsibilities in a service delivery setting.
- Other stakeholders, such as funding agencies wishing to support service development through implementing innovations, to understand and request the competencies and capacities necessary for implementation: "nothing gets implemented without an implementation infrastructure, which requires investment".

Managers are accountable for establishing the innovation in their service operations, but will need the specialist skills of an implementation facilitator to help them, in the same way that they need the skills of a finance specialist/accountant to assist them in managing their budget for which they are held accountable. Sometimes manager's accountability for establishing the innovation in their service operations is not clear, and one competence of an implementation specialist is to clarify accountability and roles: it is not that implementation facilitators are not accountable in any way for implementation outcomes, only that evidence and experience shows that, without clarity about managers accountability for implementation, it often happens that all responsibility for implementation is taken up by, or off-loaded to facilitators, leading to predictable problems and implementation failure.

The competencies statements were developed to help those in low resource settings at the start of their implementation experience ("beginner") as well as for "intermediate" and "more expert" implementation facilitators (there are statements covering three levels of competencies).

For each competence, we will later develop standards of performance and how to assess performance achieved on each competence (e.g., Competence: able to develop an understanding of the mission and goals of organization/unit that is implementing the intervention, Standard of performance expected – the

facilitator can describe the mission and goals of organization/unit that is implementing the intervention (0-5 from written question or interview with facilitator, and or implementation project leader).

We will also develop similar statements for education, health, and other sectors – the attached is the generic statement for all sectors implementing evidence-based interventions.

This GIS statement of competencies was developed by

- Reviewing already-published statements of competencies and standards for personnel undertaking practical implementation assignments as well as primary empirical research into this subject carried out in different service sectors,
- Synthesizing this research and compiling a draft statement of competencies,
- Discussion and revision of the draft statements of GIS competencies and standards committee (GIS C & SC) meetings and through written comments on the draft sent to all GIS C & SC members.

### *Competencies domains*

1. Knowledge about the Evidence Based Intervention and implementation methods
2. Diagnosis and Data Analysis
3. Implementation team
4. Building relations and motivation
5. Facilitating change

The levels of competence, Beginner, Intermediate and Expert, will be illustrated in more detail in another document that will state standards of performance expected for the competence, what to observe or data to collect to assess this performance in relation to the standard. Beginner competencies are basic skills for front line implementation facilitators, both specialists and managers, and including those in low income settings where training to develop these competencies is limited),

### *Rational and evidence basis for the competencies within each of the five domains:*

1. Knowledge about the innovation and implementation methods

Richie et al 2017 state that, " implementation facilitators need some "content" knowledge about the clinical innovation, its core components and how it should be implemented. They do not have to be experts in the innovation. They can collaborate with experts but without some knowledge of the particular innovation, facilitators will have difficulty performing facilitation activities such as assessing the organization's readiness for change, needs, resources, and barriers and facilitators to change". This statement is based on reviews of the evidence and experience with implementing innovations in the USA Veterans healthcare system. Knowledge about implementation methods includes knowledge from implementation and improvement sciences about effective methods that personnel can use to change their everyday working such as reminders or checklists, and which managers can use to enable personnel to make these changes.

## 2. Diagnosis and data analysis

Implementation is a fact-based activity: the intervention is already tested, and the implementation facilitator uses different data to get objective feedback about the effectiveness of the implementation activities that they and others perform. They also need data about the conditions that are likely to help and hinder the implementation and to be able to use these data to adjust the implementation or ask for help from higher management to change the conditions. Thus, knowing which data is most needed and how to get and analyze those data to help effective implementation are critical competencies of implementation facilitators. In addition, clarity is needed about main line managers responsibility and accountability for implementation success and the distinct role of implementation facilitators in supporting the managers. Implementation facilitators need to be able to diagnose “accountability for implementation” and to agree on specifications for who is responsible and accountable for what, as part of the readiness assessment.

## 3. Implementation team

The most effective workplace approach to implementing an innovation is to form a project team comprised of selected front line staff who are respected by, and influential with, service delivery personnel, and who represent areas of practice that will be affected by the proposed improvement. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) evidence-based guidance states that “the team meets regularly to review performance data, identify areas in need of improvement, and carry out and monitor improvement efforts. For these activities, the teams will use a variety of methods and tools...The team should have a clearly identified “champion”” at a higher level of management, who is committed implementing the innovation.

## 4. Understand, engage and collaborate with those implementing the innovation

Van Dyke et al 2017, after reviewing the evidence, states that “Implementation Practitioners must be skilled in developing and maintaining relationships. The change work in which Active Implementation Practitioners engage requires supporting behavior changes in people. The Active Implementation Practitioners’ abilities to build relationships, listen carefully, understand perspectives, affirm strengths, build trust, manage distress, and resolve conflicts are central to the accomplishment of any change effort. Relationship development behaviors/activities include:

- Demonstrates respect for diverse perspectives, by listening, prompting, exploring, enquiring, clarifying, and summarizing
- Encourages and makes use of feedback.

## 5. Facilitating change

Richie et al., 2017, drawing on the evidence, states that “Facilitation involves helping rather than telling. It is not a process of providing resources and stepping back or simply telling someone what to do. Rather, it requires the creation of a supportive environment within which knowledge may be exchanged, barriers to implementation identified, and processes to overcome those barriers developed, applied and refined. Implementation facilitation also involves both doing and enabling.

## 1. Knowledge about the innovation and implementation methods

1.1 Competency: Knowledge about the Innovation		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
1.1.1 Sub-competency: helping personnel to understand the innovation and reach consensus on what they need to change		
<p>1.1.1 Able quickly to understand and describe to personnel, the basic features of a chosen innovation from guidance about the innovation provided by others.</p> <p>1.1.2 Able to present and discuss the guidance about the components of the innovation with personnel taking up the intervention.</p> <p>1.1.3 Able to ask for or use practical examples to illustrate aspects of the innovation, or of implementation, and of the contextual influences that can help or hinder implementation.</p>	<p>1.1.1-1.1.3; and</p> <p>1.1.4 Able to teach personnel about the innovation or to facilitate another person, an expert in the details of the innovation who carries out this teaching, and to use and ask personnel for practical examples as part of learning facilitation.</p> <p>1.1.3.1 Having work experience in the field is an advantage</p> <p>1.1.5 Able to use the innovation guidance to discuss with personnel taking up the intervention which features of the innovation have to be followed exactly and which features may be modified, using or asking for practical examples.</p> <p>1.1.6 For those innovations which do not have practical guidance, able to translate abstract statements about the innovation into more specific statements for personnel, to help them understand the changes to practice and organization they need to make, and to give examples.</p>	<p>1.1.1-1.1.6: and</p> <p>1.1.7 Ability to find research and evidence that can be used to advise personnel taking up the innovation about how to modify features of the innovation to their setting and clients.</p>

1.2 Competency: Apply knowledge about implementation methods for enabling change to establish the new evidence based practice in every-day work.		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
<p>1.2.1 Able to describe to personnel (including management) methods they can use to make it change easier in their everyday practice,</p> <p>1.2.2 Able to work with personnel to identify the obstacles and helpers that hinder and enable them to change their everyday practice.</p> <p>1.2.3 Able to agree with personnel on what they need to do to strengthen what helps and limit what hinders them from to changing their everyday practice.</p>	<p>1.2.1-1.2.3; and</p> <p>1.2.4 Able to teach personnel about the methods and tools they can use to make the change, or to facilitate another person who is expert in the details of the innovation and who carries out this teaching, and to use and ask personnel for practical examples as part of learning facilitation.</p> <p>1.2.5 Able to discuss with personnel any implementation methods and tools described in the guidance and whether other methods might better help make the changes to everyday practice</p> <p>1.2.6 For those innovations which do not have practical guidance, able to translate abstract statements about implementation methods or tools into more specific statements for personnel, to help them understand methods they can use to help them make changes to everyday practice.</p>	<p>1.2.1-1.2.6; and</p> <p>1.2.7 Ability to find research and evidence that can be used to advise personnel about methods and tools they can use to help them make changes to everyday practice.in their setting,</p>

2. Diagnosis and Data Analysis		
2.1 Competency: Readiness Assessment		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
2.1.1 Sub-competency: Use data and analytical tools to determine readiness and improve results		
<p>2.1.1 Able to choose and administer a readiness for change assessment instrument (interview or survey)</p> <p>2.1.2 Able to perform an analysis of the data in order to recommend how to improve readiness for implementation of the innovation</p> <p>2.1.3 Able to perform an “accountability for implementation diagnosis” and ensure there is clarity about managers responsibilities and accountability for implementation and statements about the facilitators role in supporting managers to fulfill their responsibilities.</p>	<p>2.1.1-2.1.3; and</p> <p>2.1.4 Able to adapt the most suitable evidence-based readiness for change instrument, in order to better assess the conditions needed for successful implementation of a <u>specific</u> innovation.</p> <p>2.1.5 Able to analyze the data from the instrument and provide a report to management overseeing the implementation about how to increase the chances of implementation success</p>	<p>2.1.1-2.1.5 and</p> <p>2.1.6 Able to recommend changes to increase the success of the implementation, based on what implementation research has found to be necessary conditions for successful implementation of this type of innovation as well as data from the readiness assessment.</p>

2.2 Competency: Implementation progress assessment		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
2.2.1 Sub-competency: Data collection, organization and use		
<p>2.2.1 Able to decide which data to collect to assess regular progress in implementing each part of the innovation.</p> <p>2.2.2 Understand how to assess and use current data collection, and feedback loops for continuous improvement when possible to reduce burden on staff</p> <p>2.2.3 Able to collect data and assess context factors helping and hindering implementation progress, using a relevant tool.</p>	<p>2.2.1-2.2.3; and</p> <p>2.2.4 Able to help staff collect data and assess monthly progress in implementing parts of the innovation</p> <p>2.2.5 Able to help staff proactively manage expected changes in the context that could hinder implementing the innovation.</p> <p>2.2.6 Build staff capacity to use an understanding of equity issues like access, opportunity, resources, and institutional support as part of assessing progress toward successful implementation.</p>	<p>2.2.1-2.2.6; and</p> <p>2.2.7 Able to build staff competencies to choose and use data and to build systems to assess regular progress in the future and changes in the context, for other innovations that they may implement.</p>

2.3 Competency: Conditions for Sustainment Assessment		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
2.3.1 Sub-competency: assessing sustainment and context influences		
<p>2.3.1.1 Able to choose and administer a “conditions for sustainment” instrument (interview or survey) from available evidence-based tools, for assessing context influences which help and hinder maintaining the innovation in operation once it is implemented.</p> <p>2.3.1.2 Able to perform an analysis of the data in order to recommend how to improve conditions for sustainment of the innovation.</p> <p>2.3.1.3 Able to recommend actions that management, supervisors and others will need to take to monitor and sustain the innovation implemented.</p>	<p>2.3.1.1-2.3.1.3; and</p> <p>2.3.1.4 Able to help management, supervisors and others to develop systems and collect data, so that they can assess monthly sustainment of parts of the innovation and take corrective actions.</p> <p>2.3.1.5 Able to help management to develop methods to scan the environment for context influences that can help or hinder sustaining the innovation.</p>	<p>2.3.1.1-2.3.1.5; and</p> <p>2.3.1.6 Ability to find published research that can be used to advise personnel taking up the intervention and supervising sustainment about methods, and about issues to attend to, to ensure sustainment of the innovation in operation.</p>

3. Implementation Team		
3.1 Competency: Forming the Team		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
3.1.1 Sub-competency: Forming the Team		
<p>3.1.1 Able to write or use an “implementation team charter/terms of reference” describing the outcomes to be achieved by the team, the main activities to be undertaken, the time plan, how the success of the team can be assessed, and the role of the implementation facilitator and the different role of the project team leader who is accountable for implementation outcomes.</p> <p>3.1.2 Able clearly to reach consensus on and explain roles and expectations for all other team members</p> <p>3.1.3 Able to work with management and others to identify implementation team members who are qualified for the work to be done, described in the charter.</p> <p>3.1.4 Able to find new team members as required and help them quickly to contribute to team objectives.</p>	<p>3.1.1-3.1.3; and</p> <p>3.1.4 Able to negotiate and agree with management about the time allocated for each team member to undertake implementation teamwork, before the implementation starts.</p> <p>3.1.5 Able to foresee and address challenges about how the team will operate and achieve its implementation results, before the team starts.</p>	<p>3.1.1-3.1.5; and</p> <p>3.1.6 Able to select and use relevant research from “team science” and evidence-based tools to form the team</p>

3.2 Competency: Project Team Management		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
3.2.1 Sub-competency: Managing the Team		
<p>3.2.1 Able to help the accountable project leader to introduce the team to the task, motivate team members to the task, and make clear expectations and ground rules for the team operation.</p> <p>3.2.2 Able to help the team project leader and the team to enable difference in views to be expressed and heard, and to work through these to consensus</p> <p>3.2.3 Able to help the team review progress and readjust actions as necessary, using the implementation progress assessment methods noted above.</p>	<p>3.2.1-3.2.3; and</p> <p>3.2.4 Able to train the team in, and help to use, simple problem-solving tools and rapid cycle change testing, using data.</p> <p>3.2.5 Able to train project team leader(s) and members in project management and suitable project management systems for this implementation and future changes.</p> <p>3.2.6 Able to help the team know when to seek higher management help, and how to recommend to management the actions needed, based on data.</p> <p>3.2.7 Able to build in an “exit strategy” for any specialists supporting the team and a clear indication of when specialist support is no longer needed.</p>	<p>3.2.1-3.2.7; and</p> <p>3.2.8 Ability to select and use relevant research from “team science” and evidence-based tools to enable team activities and resolve issues arising.</p>

4. Understand, Engage and Collaborate with those implementing the intervention		
4.1 Competency: Working with Front Line Service Delivery Personnel		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
4.1.1 Sub-competency: Encouraging and sustaining collaboration		
<p>4.1.1 Able to establish a professional relationship of trust and openness with personnel.</p> <p>4.1.2 Able to develop an understanding of the mission and goals of the organization/unit that is implementing the innovation, and to explain how the innovation contributes to this.</p>	<p>4.1.1-4.1.2; and</p> <p>4.1.3 Able to work with front line personnel to elicit which changes to current practice will be needed to perform the innovation, which context influences may hinder this, and to assess impact on working practices and systems.</p> <p>4.1.4 Able to reduce fear of change and uncertainty and to motivate personnel to make changes required to implement the innovation.</p> <p>4.1.5 Ability to listen to and reflect concerns about change and to move through conflict to constructive plans of action</p>	<p>4.1.1-4.1.5 and below</p> <p>4.1.6 Able to help the project team to identify and recruit appropriate personnel for the first trial for performing the innovation.</p> <p>4.1.7 Able to use implementation research to help consider other changes and impacts that personnel may not have considered.</p> <p>4.1.8 Able to find, assess and use methods to gather target population feedback, if feasible, to inform continued implementation and adjustments that may need to be made to practice.</p>

4.2 Competency: Working with leaders to assist implementation and supervise sustainment of the innovation		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
4.2.1 Sub-competency: Addressing integrative and compensatory behaviors		
<p>4.2.1 Able to communicate and work with leaders at different management levels with different disciplinary backgrounds.</p> <p>4.2.2 Able to understand how leader’s performance is assessed and to explain how the implementation of the innovation will help or hinder aspects of their performance for which they are held accountable.</p> <p>4.2.3 Able to work with leaders to help them understand their role to develop systems and supervision to ensure that the changes implemented to introduce the innovation are sustained.</p>	<p>4.2.1-4.2.3; and</p> <p>4.2.4 Able to work with leaders to plan specifically how they will support and supervise the implementation of the innovation and develop systems and strategies to sustain it.</p>	<p>4.2.1-4.2.4; and</p> <p>4.2.5 Able to select and use relevant research to provide leaders with evidence-based tools and recommendations to enable them to perform their role in supervising implementation and sustainment</p>

5. Facilitating Change		
5.1 Competency: Implementation Facilitation		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
5.1.1 Sub-competency: Applying facilitation skills		
5.1.1 Able to use generic methods for effective meetings, communications, ensuring concerns are heard, and facilitating groups to agreed- and motivated- steps forward.	5.1.1 ; and 5.1.2 Able to identify issues and individuals hindering the change and apply effective strategies to work around or overcome the hinderances.	5.1.1-5.1.2; and 5.1.3 Able to find, and use flexibly, evidence-based facilitation methods,  5.1.4 Able to train and coach others to find and use relevant research to address implementation process issues.
5.2 Competency: Facilitating Change		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
5.2.1 Sub-competency: Systematic change		
5.2.1 Able to work with the implementation project team and others to break down the work of enabling change into achievable parts, and sequence activities over time using a stage-based approach.	5.2.1 ; and 5.2.2 Able to find and use research into stages of change, drivers for change and change planning that can be used address issues as they arise.	5.2.1-5.2.2; and 5.2.3 Able to train and coach others to find and use relevant research that helps them more effectively carry out systematic change.

5.3 Competency: Coaching		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
5.3.1 Sub-competency: Applying coaching skills		
<p>5.3.1 Able to use coaching principles and tools to give effective behavioral feedback to implementation project team and leaders regarding strengths and opportunities for improvement in their implementation skills and attitudes.</p>	<p>5.3.1 ; and</p> <p>5.3.2 Able to coach leaders and project team members about how to improve their implementation skills and attitudes.</p> <p>5.3.3 Able to explain and train leaders and project team members in simple coaching techniques suitable for implementation and staff challenges they face.</p> <p>5.3.4 Able to identify training and other leaning opportunities that can help develop staff in their implementation capabilities.</p>	<p>5.5.1-5.3.4; and</p> <p>5.3.5 Able to find and use research into facilitation coaching to decide and pursue effective facilitation for challenges as they arise.</p> <p>5.3.6 Able to train others to use relevant research that helps them more effectively to coach others in implementation activities.</p>

5.4 Competency: Self-development as an implementation facilitator		
Beginner	Intermediate	Expert
5.4.1 Sub-competency: my self-assessment and development as an implementation facilitator		
<p>5.4.1 Able to identify and ask one or more individuals to serve as a mentor or coach for my work as an implementation facilitator</p> <p>5.4.2 Able to apply this competencies tool and other tools to self-assess my competencies and performance,</p> <p>5.4.3 Able to request other people to carry out assessments of my competencies and performance as an implementation facilitator, using a suitable tool, and able to use the feedback to decide a self-development plan.</p>	<p>5.4.1-5.4.3; and</p> <p>5.4.4 Able regularly to review my strengths and limitations as an implementation facilitator using a suitable tool, and change my practice using new methods and feedback</p>	<p>5.4.1-5.4.4 and</p> <p>5.4.5 Able to find and use research into implementation facilitation to improve my self-assessment and action approach, using new methods.</p>

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