

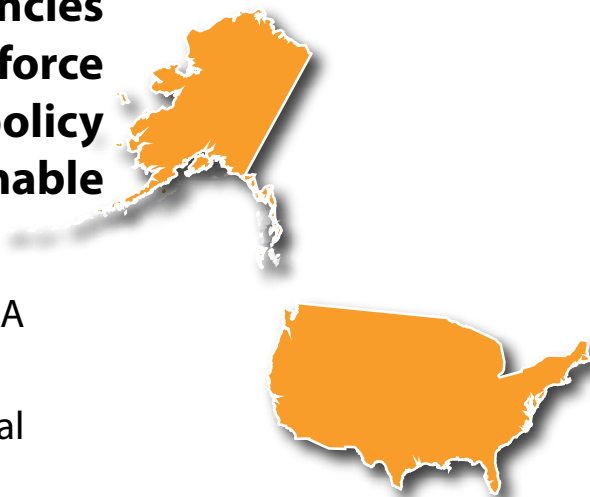
## Case study n°8

# Next Generation Core Competencies (NGCC): Standards for building a workforce with the knowledge, creativity, and policy expertise for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

**Country:** USA

**Level:** National, Subnational, Local

**SDG Addressed:** SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities



### Summary

The objective of this case study is to demonstrate how the Next Generation Core Competencies (NGCC) provide standards for the development of a future disaster risk reduction (DRR) workforce. An updated edition of DRR core competencies is important for refining the trajectory of the discipline, developing capacities requisite to reducing disaster risk and building resilient communities in a turbulent, uncertain and complex future.

The NGCC project was a multi-phase study conducted by a US Federal Emergency Management Agency sponsored focus group. Oriented toward future needs, the competencies have been built on the current DRR competencies, a review of related competencies and global risk trends, a multi-phase Delphi study, and wider DRR community listening sessions.

Core competencies are significant to establish an environment for carrying out the SDGs at all levels in a way that is consistent with approaches taken across communities, civil society and business. Understanding the competencies that will be at the core of successful future practice requires examining how the current and anticipated drivers of sustainability are intensified by the changing interactions between the social, built, and physical environments. Core Competencies guide the development of the future workforce, equipping future workers to foster more resilient communities and apply design processes in coping with the unexpected.

### Background

The NGCC project was a multi-phase study conducted by a FEMA-sponsored focus group. The future orientation and uncertainty of the outcomes current risk drivers may yield is acknowledged as a fundamental study perspective. As such, meaning was sought and interpreted through related competency findings, as well as conclusions from a range of experts. The social construction interpretation seeks understanding of the world based on historical and social positions of the community we live and work in. Correspondingly, the study utilized multiple strata of information gathering and analytic refinement of the competencies to address any bias arising in the inductive processes.

### Strategy

The NGCC are in themselves a set of standards that guide the development of the workforce through higher education, workplace development and research. As such, the NGCC are de facto standards that were required to focus DRR/sustainability capabilities. The work was achieved through an inclusive multi-phase process: 1) Focus Group, 2) Delphi Study, 3) Listening Sessions with the broader emergency management community, and 4) Development of a measurement model.

A variety of participants were engaged to inform the processes and competency development over several phases of the research. The focus group drafted the précis and conducted the data gathering,

amalgamation, and analysis. Member composition for each task and cycle was varied to reduce possible single researcher bias. The experts in the Delphi cycles provided an iterative reshaping and refining of the core competencies. As a final refining process, the summary report was posted and listening sessions were conducted for the wider community feedback. Additional independent validation study has affirmed the findings of the NGCC project.

The core competencies fall into interrelated and nested categories, which have attributes that build the individual, the practitioner, or relationships. Behavioural anchors and key actions for measurement accompany the new core competencies.

## Results and Impact

The following core competencies were identified and fell into three nested and interconnected categories:

1. DRR Competencies that Build the Individual: operate within DRR framework, principles, and body of knowledge; possess critical thinking; abide by professional ethics; continual learning
2. DRR Competencies that Build the Practitioner: scientific literacy; geographic literacy; sociocultural literacy; technological literacy; and systems literacy.
3. DRR Competencies that Build Relationships: disaster risk management; community engagement; governance and civics; and leadership.

Each core competency has connected behavioural anchors and key actions that provide an evidence-based model for measures at multiple levels of education and practice. Behavioural anchors and their key actions are specific examples of behaviours that demonstrate competency. The behavioural anchors and their key actions can be used toward observable performance measures or generating measurable learning objectives to underpin a higher education program or curriculum.

The NGCC provide a framework for application through multiple channels. Here are a few examples of ways the NGCC framework is being utilized: (i) FEMA's Executive Program. Organizational change across the sector is focused on the NGCC; (ii)

University alignment of DRR programs to the NGCC; (iii) workplace performance can be aligned to the NGCC using the Behavioural Anchor Rating Scales to guide development; and (iv) the Adapt Institute works as a bridging organization for implementing the NGCCs through independent courses for higher education and to support work force development.

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

The development of core competencies requires a long view and patience in getting a wide range of sectors to truly collaborate. Once that initial buy-in is achieved, the work can start to expand quickly. Resulting data serves as a versatile evidence base for focused improvements, the refinement of curriculum or organizational practice, and locating unknown potential. Future efforts will focus on the following:

- Develop learning materials to leverage efforts in higher education and the workplace
- Align core competency models in other Human Security fields: Homeland Security, Law, Fire, Public Health, and Humanitarian Assistance
- Develop performance measures for practice
- Develop a platform for advancing the Core Competencies

## Potential for Replication

The NGCC project has taken similar forms in other regions, including the Caribbean, Australia and New Zealand. Related human security disciplines, such as public health, have taken similar approaches in developing core competencies. Future alignment across regions and disciplines will allow the SDGs to be implemented more effectively by a focused and collaborative workforce. The value in the NGCC project is a well-defined and validated process that can accelerate the development of similar core competency projects.

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