

1. SFIA

The Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) provides a common reference model for the identification of the skills needed to develop effective Information Systems making use of Information Communications Technologies (IT). It is a simple and logical two-dimensional framework consisting of areas of work on one axis and levels of responsibility on the other.

It uses a common language and a sensible, logical structure that can be adapted to the training and development needs of a very wide range of businesses – or simply used 'off the shelf'.

SFIA enables employers of IT professionals to carry out a range of HR activities against a common framework of reference - including skill audit, planning future skill requirements, development programmes, standardisation of job titles and functions, and resource allocation.

Until now, there has been no commonly agreed classification of the jobs that exist in IT or of the skills required to perform them. This has meant it has not been possible to:

- give employers a framework which they can use to measure the skills they have against the skills they need and identify skill gaps
- allows IT practitioners and users to benchmark which skills they need for particular jobs or career paths
- gather Labour market intelligence coherently and consistently
- quantify the skill requirements of the ICT market
- identify skills which are in short supply, or report on how short the supply is
- set national education and training targets for the IT community
- tell education and training providers what the job market wants

SFIA enables the measurement and benchmarking of an organisation's collective IT skills and its processes for managing and developing these.

The framework provides a clear model for describing what ICT practitioners and users do. It is constructed as a two-dimensional matrix. A full scale version of the SFIA Framework Chart is available to download from the SFIA Foundation website.

Skills:

One axis divides the whole of IT into "skills". Skills are grouped for convenience into subcategories or "business roles". Subcategories are grouped into six categories or work areas - strategy & planning,

management & administration, development and implementation, service delivery, sales & marketing, and use. The SFIA structure allows a consistent approach to IT skills across the organisation and is not limited to a specialist department.

Levels:

The other axis defines the level of responsibility and accountability exercised by IT practitioners and users. Each of seven levels - from new entrant to strategist level - is defined in terms of autonomy, influence, complexity and business skills.

Descriptors:

The matrix shows the complete set of skills used by ICT practitioners and users. For each skill at each level, "descriptors" provide examples of typical tasks undertaken. A typical task for systems design at level 5 is "review others' system design to ensure selection of appropriate technology, efficient use of resources, and integration of multiple systems and technology".

2. SFIA update

Ron McLaren. SFIA Foundation's Operations Manager says: "SFIA has two essential features.

The first is that it really does define the underlying IT skills. There is scarcely one skill in there that did not exist when I joined the computer industry (as we called it then) in 1966. That is a good indication that SFIA addresses professional skills, rather than techknowledgy – if you'll forgive the expression!

The second is that SFIA stays relevant, being updated at regular intervals, to reflect –not dictate – current practice. It fits in with the way you want to work.

This might explain why SFIA is seen as a useful resource in over 100 countries, and is used by thousands of organisations.

The worldwide acceptance of SFIA makes it highly appropriate that we welcome itSMF as a member of The SFIA Foundation. They have already trodden the international trail with great success. ITIL gives world beating advice on how to manage your IT services, and SFIA gives the best insight into the skills needed. This really is bedrock stuff."

3. SFIAplus

SFIA**plus** is the IT skills, training and development standard widely used in the UK and beyond.

Developed and maintained for over 20 years by BCS in consultation with IT practitioners and employers, **SFI**A**plus** defines skills for the IT professional plus the training and development required to nurture and maintain them.

BCS first published their IT training and development standard in July 1986 as the Industry Structure Model (ISM).

Over 150 IT practitioners from across industry, commerce and government contributed to the standard and over 1000 organisations adopted it.

In July 2003, BCS formed the SFIA Foundation with e-skills, the IET and IMIS to promote and maintain a high level framework of skills called SFIA. Subsequently, the detailed model of the ISM was aligned with SFIA and re-branded **SFI**A**plus**.

BCS continues to develop, update and maintain the standard.

The Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) is the high level UK Government backed competency framework describing the roles within IT and the skills needed to fulfil them.

It is constructed as a two dimensional matrix.

SFIA**plus** contains the **SFIA** framework of IT skills **plus** detailed training and development resources to provide the most established and widely adopted IT skills, training and development model reflecting current industry needs.

The differences

For each SFIA [skill](#), **SFI**A**plus** contains EIGHT additional [skill resources](#). For each SFIA task, **SFI**A**plus** includes SIX additional [task components](#). The additional training and development detail for all 78 skills and 263 tasks makes **SFI**A**plus** a three dimensional model.

SFIA**plus** also forms the basis of a range of BCS professional development products and services for both [individuals](#) and [employers](#).