Using SFIA version 6 – 10 Things You Should Know

Peter Leather

1. What is SFIA?

The Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) provides the most widely accepted and globally used description of skills required in today's digital world. Although created and maintained in the UK it has been accessed by approximately 15,000 organisations from 200 countries. It is used in a range of industries and covers the private, public and not-for-profit sectors. It has been translated into **English, German, Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, and Japanese.**

2. How do I get SFIA version 6?

The framework is owned by the SFIA Foundation. SFIA is an open-source skills framework. It is open to use by anyone and is free of charge if it is used as a skills management tool within an organisation. It can be downloaded from the SFIA website.

3. What does the SFIA framework look like?

The framework is a large matrix with 2 dimensions. The first dimension is levels of responsibility and the second dimension is skills.

4. What is a SFIA Level of Responsibility?

SFIA describes 7 levels of responsibility. They each describe 4 key dimensions of responsibility: autonomy, influence, complexity and business skills. The levels are numbered and labelled for ease of reference

- Level 1 – Follow
- Level 2 – Assist
- Level 3 – Apply
- Level 4 – Enable
- Level 5 – Ensure, advise
- Level 6 – Initiate, influence
- Level 7 – Set strategy, envision

5. What are SFIA skills?

SFIA describes **97 professional skills**. Each skill has an overall definition and then a more detailed descriptor for which ever of the 7 levels that skill is valid. There are a total of **362 skill level descriptors**. Some examples of the skills described in the framework are IT governance, Business analysis, Project management, Service level management & Quality assurance.

Illustration with abbreviated descriptions
Showing just one level of this skill

6. What is the scope covered by SFIA skills?

SFIA describes skills required by professional in jobs & roles involving information and communication technologies. The 97 skills are grouped into 6 categories: Strategy & Architecture, Change & Transformation, Development & Implementation, Delivery & operation, Service Management, Skills & Quality and Relationships & Engagement. They provide definitions for all skills needed by people and organisations involved in delivering and exploiting information and digital technologies.

7. Why do organisations use SFIA?

Organisations use SFIA to improve their people management processes and to help solve critical business problems impacting their people. SFIA can support people management processes such as **organisation and role design, training and development, career development, workforce planning, resourcing, recruitment and performance management**. Typical business problems helped by using SFIA are re-skilling & up-skilling, out-sourcing, organisational transformation, and talent management in IT organisations.

SFIA and the IT Talent life-cycle

8. Is SFIA up to date?

SFIA's aim is to reflect current workforce practices not to dictate it or predict it. To this end it is produced collaboratively by the industry for the industry. In this way it stays relevant, practical and useful. The framework is constantly revised and updated. Version 3 was published in 2005, version 4 in 2008, version 5 in 2011 and the current version 6 in 2015.

Version 6 introduced changes to address the latest skills required to support the **digital workforce, cybersecurity, agile, information management, big data and the Cloud**.

9. What support is there for SFIA Users?

There is a worldwide SFIA User Forum which is a growing community of SFIA users exchanging experiences and knowledge in order to help each other implement and manage the Skills Framework. It also has a broader interest in developing the capability of Business Change and IT professionals whose roles and careers are covered by the SFIA framework. SFIA users or potential users can join at the SFIA Users LinkedIn Group .

10. When spoken; SFIA is usually pronounced like the girl's name 'Sophia'.
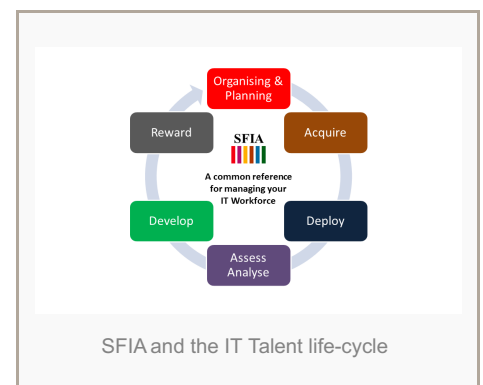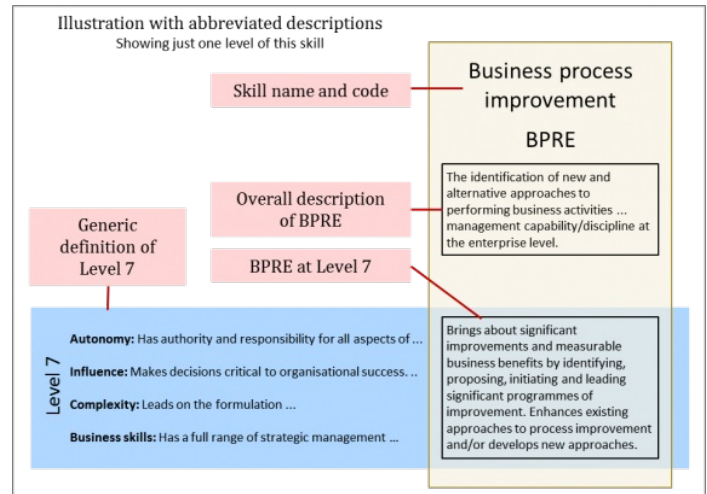
Peter Leather is a specialist in developing high performing of Business Change & IT organisations and he is a recognised expert in adopting SFIA and developing high performing IT organisations.

Do you want to know more about adopting SFIA? Are you looking for SFIA implementation support either in the

UK or internationally?

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