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FOR WOMEN**

# Introduction to The Mentoring Women in Business Competency Framework

## Introduction

The Mentoring Women in Business programme aims to foster growth and development for women entrepreneurs in low and middle income countries through structured mentoring relationships. Our Competency Framework outlines the essential behaviours and performance standards expected from both mentees and mentors. By aligning with these competencies, participants will contribute to a supportive, effective, and high-performing mentorship experience. This document gives an outline of the competencies and exercises to reflect on how to use them.

## Mentor Competencies

### Self Awareness

Has a clear understanding of their own personality and behaviour, as well as the impact this has on others. Self awareness looks like:

- Using emotional intelligence to manage own emotions and behaviours when interacting with others
- Recognising if own perspective is contaminating the mentoring process and avoiding this
- Monitors own behaviour and attitude to ensure a positive impact

### Behavioural Awareness

Has an understanding of what motivates people and how they relate to each other. Behavioural awareness looks like:

- Recognising different learning styles and offers processes that are appropriate
- Giving feedback on mentees behavioural strategies that enable them to develop more effective approaches
- Recognising and valuing differences in others

## Business/ Professional Savvy

Has an understanding of both strategic knowledge at a big picture level and specific contextual knowledge of the organisation. This can look like:

- Sharing wisdom gained from experience
- Stepping back and viewing projects and situations from an objective perspective
- Providing specific expertise on approaches that are relevant to the mentees

## Communication and Concept Modelling

Can communicate effectively and with a range of approaches depending on the situation. Effective communication can look like:

- Using active listening skills to listen attentively while mentee is speaking, paraphrasing and reflecting back on what is said while withholding judgment and advice
- Formulating questions that allow the mentee to reflect and discover their own answers
- Providing an environment that invites open and full communication to develop

## Commitment to own Learning

Demonstrates a commitment to own learning and development by fully engaging in a process of continuous learning. This can look like:

- Role modelling self-managed learning
- Experimenting with new approaches and seizing opportunities to take part in new experiences
- Seeking and using behavioural feedback from others
- Perceiving mentoring as a mutual learning experience

## Interest in Helping Others to Learn

Shows interest in others and takes active steps to help them reach their full potential. This can look like:

- Providing constructive feedback on behaviour and strategies
- Sharing own learning with mentee when appropriate
- Offering space for the mentee to test ideas and thinking

## Relationship Management

Responds to the mentee's needs with the appropriate level of directness and the appropriate balance of stretch and nurture. This can look like:

- Building and maintaining rapport establishing a positive, dynamic atmosphere within the relationship
- Providing sufficient challenge in the mentoring dialogue
- Helping the mentee take increasing responsibility for managing the mentoring relationship
- Making a point of being available and understanding in helping the mentee cope with setbacks
- Celebrating the mentee's success which enhances self-esteem and self-confidence

## Goal Clarity

Sets clear vision and understandable direction that is mentee-focused with clear boundaries and goals. This can look like:

- Coaching the mentee in identifying and setting goals
- Testing the mentee's commitment to specific goals
- Offering reality tests to goals to ensure that they can be achieved, and are not just "pipe dreams"

## Mentee Competencies

### Articulating

Demonstrates the ability to communicate goals, feelings and values effectively. This looks like:

- Taking time to logically and clearly present ideas and thoughts on personal development and business goals to their mentor
- Clearly articulating thoughts confidently, both in verbal and written communication
- Posing questions to mentor that helps make it clear what kind of help is needed

## Listening

Understands and learns from what others say. This can look like:

- Actively listening to others and being open to their ideas, allowing others to speak uninterrupted
- Asking clarifying questions that elicit clearer or more detailed information
- Giving the speaker undivided attention and appearing interested in the message

## Respect

Recognises the value of the other persons intellect and experience. This can look like:

- Showing value in the mentor's advice and/or insights, by being attentive and using the mentor's time and effort wisely
- Giving and receiving feedback in a professional manner
- Building constructive working relationships characterised by a high level of acceptance, cooperation and mutual respect
- Honouring commitment to the mentoring relationship

## Proactive

Demonstrates willingness to take initiative to work on the mentoring relationship and is prepared to invest in it. This can look like:

- Establishing personal and business development goals that will be the focus of the mentoring relationship
- Taking the initiative to contact the mentor rather than waiting to be contacted, taking the lead to drive the communication of the mentoring relationship
- Taking responsibility for the management of the mentoring relationship, such as setting the agenda and organising meetings
- Sharing learning needs with the mentor, giving them time to plan and find resources to help meet development leads

## Goal Clarity

Understanding the importance of setting goals, as well as how they may change and making adjustments accordingly. This may look like:

- Actively engaging in goal setting to ensure personal and business development needs are met and time with the mentor is used effectively
- Following through and being accountable for creating and implementing an action plan to successfully achieve goals set
- Working with the mentor to ensure short and long-term goals agreed are realistic and attainable
- Regularly reflecting on set goals with the mentor throughout the mentoring relationship, making adaptations where necessary to ensure goals remain relevant

### Self Awareness

Has a clear understanding of own personality and behaviour and the impact this has on others. This can look like:

- Making others feel comfortable and respected by being positive and friendly
- Earning other's trust and respect through consistent honesty and professionalism in all interactions
- Openness to different and new ways of doing things. Willingness to modify one's preferred way of doing things

### Committed to learning

Sees the relationship as a genuine opportunity to develop and acquire new understanding. This can look like:

- Displaying an ongoing commitment to learning and self-improvement; desiring and making an effort to acquire new knowledge or skills
- Commitment to setting goals and working toward specific learning objectives with mentor
- Seeking and using behavioural feedback from others

### Reflection and preparation

Takes time to think before and after a mentoring dialogue. What do you want from a meeting? What have the implications or the meeting been?

- Agrees in advance what will be discussed and why, prior to attending scheduled meetings with mentor
- Reflecting on what they have learned and will look to identify specific areas to grow and develop
- Continuing to identify specific areas to grow and develop

### Reflection exercise

Reflect on these questions and write your answers, wherever you prefer to record notes.

- How will you put into practice the competencies of your role?
- Which competencies do you feel confident with?
- How do you demonstrate them?
- Which competencies do you feel will be most challenging for you?
- What can you do to practice these?
- How will you measure your progress?

### Conclusion

This competency framework provides a structured approach for both mentees and mentors to ensure an effective and impactful mentoring relationship. By adhering to these competencies, participants will contribute to the success of their mentoring relationship and time on the programme, fostering personal and professional growth.