

Moving to SFIA⁶

A common language for skills in the digital world



Contents

Moving to SFIA version 6	4
Headlines	6
Changes - category by category	10

Moving to SFIA version 6

If you use SFIA version 5, this guide helps you plan the adoption of version 6.

This general update of SFIA can provide an opportunity to rejuvenate your approach to the management of skills, at a time when the availability and importance of digital skills has arguably never been more important and prominent.

The SFIA 6 Reference Guide, available at www.sfia-online.org, provides complete descriptions of all the SFIA skills. This document explains the changes which have taken place in version 6.

The need for change

Organisations and individuals use SFIA because it reflects current thinking about technology-related capabilities.

The collaborative development style involves open consultation and input from people with real practical experience of skills management in corporate and educational environments. That is what sets SFIA apart from other more theoretical approaches, and has resulted in the adoption of SFIA by organisations and individuals in nearly 200 countries.

SFIA stays current by a process of evolution, taking input from practitioners of many types from all over the world, all provided in the context of reflecting current practice. Over the years SFIA has become very influential in how people think about skills, so we will always take soundings from those working in a range of corporate, government and educational organisations.

That is how SFIA, as the world's most popular framework of information and communications technology (ICT) and digital skills, continues to evolve and stay relevant.

During 2014, we collected – mainly through the consultation website – feedback from many users of SFIA, based on their experience. Specifically, we requested suggested requirements for change, and asked that contributors confirmed the problem or opportunity, how it affected them, and how it should be dealt with. It was important that we captured this reasoning, in order to understand the need for each proposed requirement.

We received over 150 comments, telling us where the framework needed to be improved. This part of the consultation was closed in August 2014, and the validation of 'requirements' was done by members of the Project Board.

The second round of consultation sought to find solutions to the validated requirements.

In December 2014, the SFIA Foundation Board issued a statement confirming the commitment to maintaining the Skills Framework for the Information Age (SFIA) as a de facto global standard for good practice. It announced an extension to the consultation period to allow further input from employers and organisations across the globe. The extension allowed all interested parties more time to contribute. Existing identified requirements and draft solutions were made available on the consultation website, and all were invited to submit comments and suggestions for further improvement. This extended the project timeline, moving the target date for publication to June 2015.

Thanks are due to all those who have contributed by giving us the benefit of their experience.

Remember that SFIA describes individual professional skills – not knowledge, not jobs, not roles, not people, not processes, and not general areas of activity, however important they are. The comments received have been processed with that in mind.

All the content in SFIA has been reviewed, and many improvements have been made.

SFIA version 6 remains in its recognisable format but with clear improvement. It is offered as a resource for

all, to be used in all the ways mentioned in the introductory pages of the reference guide.

Rejected requirements

There were a number of inputs which haven't resulted in changes being made to version 6. Many of these have helped the discussion and supported decisions about this version. Some did reflect a misunderstanding of the scope and appropriate use of SFIA, but not many fit in this category. Of course, some did conflict with other requirements, and decisions had to be made as to the most appropriate solution. Several have been retained ready for the next version as it was felt that they could not be adequately addressed in version 6. Our work on the next version starts immediately, as all continual improvement efforts must, and it will take into account all input provided for version 6.

How to use this transition guide

Users are recommended first to read through the whole guide, identifying areas of significant change. The changes that are of significance to the organisation can then be addressed in the context of the following activities.

- **Experts.** In a large organisation that has people identified as SFIA practitioners or consultants, it will be helpful to arrange a short meeting to review the changes and decide action.
- **SFIA Accredited Partners and Consultants** should ensure that they have an in-depth understanding of the new version, so that they can provide the best quality advice and guidance to their customers.
- **SFIA-based role profiles and/or job descriptions.** These can be updated to reflect new skills, new levels, merged skills and skills that have changed significantly. Updates can also be made to **Rate Cards, CVs/Resumés, Continual Professional Development (CPD) plans, Recruitment** mechanisms, and other items using SFIA that will benefit from adopting the latest version.
- **Product and Service Providers** who incorporate, or rely on, SFIA content should plan updates to reflect the latest version, and be clear which version their offerings incorporate.
- **Databases.** Review any internal databases that refer to SFIA skills. A convenient way to update a database is to use the skills definitions issued by the SFIA Foundation in the form of a spreadsheet.
- **Development and training.** If you have documentation indicating how development needs can be satisfied by certain training and development interventions, decide whether any of the changes to SFIA affect the development advice given.
- **Training and education providers** can review and update the mapping of their offerings to SFIA, and make any necessary curriculum changes to each affected course.
- **Management.** Communicate to managers that a new version of SFIA is being adopted, and brief them on changes that require action or special attention.

Headlines

Industry hot topics

The SFIA skills and content needed to be reviewed against industry hot topics. Some contributors felt there were new skills required; others saw them as the same skills but used in a different context. Either way, the challenge for SFIA is always to demonstrate that it is relevant to the industry. The problem to be solved is that current and potential users may not see any obvious mention of the 'hot topics', and make the assumption that SFIA is not kept up to date or is not relevant.

In balancing this, it needs to be recognised that some terms are fairly short-lived and transitory, and it is difficult to predict which ones will be gone from our vocabulary long before the next version of SFIA, and which ones will have some longevity.

The contributors to the version 6 project have tried to steer a careful path of not being too extreme in either direction. Some of these terms do help in the description of skills, but there is no point in simply including popular buzzwords just to try to ensure SFIA appears in searches and appeals to those who are looking for specific words. The aim is to decide what the skill actually is, whether it is already sufficiently covered in SFIA, and if some changes or additions are required to ensure adequate coverage and avoid gaps.

Input was considered in detail, and many changes made to support those inputs. To give some examples, the following were included: social media, digital media, digital transformation and the fusion of IT and marketing and business skills; digital environment content management; the skills needed by roles such as Cloud Broker/Chief Service Office, Cloud Architect, Cloud Developer, Cloud Administrator, Automation Engineer, Cloud Coordinator/Consultant, Cloud Systems/Services Manager, Cloud Batch Administrator, Cloud Recruiter, Cloud Accountant/Financial Manager, Cloud Mentor/Educator, Cloud Security Architect/Specialist, Cloud Governance/Audit Managers and cloud interpretations of Service Catalogue Manager, Service Level Manager, Performance/Capacity Manager and Supplier/Provider Manager; managing outsourced and cloud service providers; internal account management; product management; infrastructure management – IT estate management, data centre power; communications systems – VoIP, radio, microwaves, and other VAS (Value Added Services); IP networks and satellite systems; User support; hardware store and repairs; collaboration tools; Enterprise Systems managed services.

Digital skills

A significant amount of discussion and analysis has taken place around the increased use of the term 'digital skills'. The range of opinion of what exactly is meant by the term has been researched, with members of the project team reviewing all input and agreeing some changes.

The most visible of these include the updates for **Information management**, for which there was significant input from SFIA users in government from Australia and the UK, and the updates to **Marketing** to become **Digital marketing**.

Cyber security

Many governments have stated that cyber security skills are essential as a weapon in the fight against terrorism, industrial espionage and information security attacks. Consultation participants provided input around this and information security in general, which prompted a major review of how this was covered in SFIA.

SFIA V5 contained three core skills for security professionals: **Information assurance**, **Information security**, and **Security administration**, all of which have been updated in V6, including adding a level 7 description for **Information security**, and level 1 and 2 descriptions for **Security administration**.

V5 also contained 10 skills which specifically included the word 'security'. Investigation identified another 22

SFIA skills which were regularly used to describe the roles of security professionals and were needed for security capabilities, but didn't include the word 'security' anywhere. Apart from demonstrating the limitations of using word search to identify relevant skills, which sadly many users resort to, it highlighted how much coverage SFIA already had for this area.

Security references were specifically added to **Solution architecture, Systems development management, Programming/software development, and Testing.**

The following new skills have been added:

DGFS **Digital forensics**

PENT **Penetration testing**

It was determined that the following skills should explicitly reference security: **Solution architecture, Data management, Systems development management, Systems design, Programming/software development, Testing, Network design, Change management, Storage management, IT operations** (now called **IT infrastructure**), **Supplier relationship management** (content now covered by **Relationship management** and a new skill **Sourcing**), **Conformance review**, and **Technology audit** (content now merged into **Conformance review**).

Another 19 skills used by security professionals, or related to security in a wider context, did not need an explicit reference to security.

IT

The use of the term 'IT' has been reduced, not as a mechanism to try to spread the coverage of SFIA outside of the existing space, but because the application of this term has continued to change. Many Chief Information Officers, Chief Technology Officers, and senior management personnel are involved in developing strategy, policy, and plans which they would not recognise as being just about IT. Many organisations don't have IT departments, and professionals that are covered by the skills in SFIA would not necessarily recognise themselves as IT professionals.

Where the term 'IT' was superfluous and did nothing to add to the description, it has been removed. This is an example of simplification and editing, removing text which doesn't add value and sometimes causes people to reject otherwise relevant and useful skill descriptions.

Financial management for IT has become **Financial management**

Sustainability management for IT has become **Sustainability management**

IT estate management has become **Facilities management**

Information management

As mentioned under Digital skills, the Information management area has benefited from substantial input from users around the world.

Big Data, Agile and Cloud

All of these topics received careful consideration, resulting in updates to several skills to ensure that the skills required to address these areas are served by SFIA.

SFIA levels

The seven levels remain as before, though the wording of the generic definitions has been improved in a few places.

Categories and subcategories

There are still 6 categories, there have been some notable changes.

All but one of the category names have been changed, and they now all have a similar three-word structure. Some subcategories have moved, and several skills have moved from one category to another.

One of the issues that had been recognised in observing use of SFIA was that some users incorrectly assumed that categories contained all the skills by people working in an area which resembled a category, subcategory or individual skill. For example, those working in Service Management roles expected all their skills to be in that category, when in reality many of the skills in other categories were relevant. It should be remembered that categories and subcategories are only used to provide a grouping to ease navigation, to avoid having a single flat list. There are no definitions of categories and subcategories themselves.

- **Strategy and architecture** – name remains unchanged
- **Business change** becomes **Change and transformation**
- **Solution development and implementation** becomes **Development and implementation**
- **Service management** becomes **Delivery and operation**
- **Procurement and management support** becomes **Skills and quality**
- **Client interface** becomes **Relationships and engagement**

New skills

SFIA version 6 has identified seven new skills, as follows:

DGFS **Digital forensics**

HWDE **Hardware design**

ITSP **IT strategy and planning**

PENT **Penetration testing**

PEMT **Performance management**

PROD **Product management**

SORC **Sourcing**

Retirement and consolidation

No skills have been retired through lack of use, as it was determined that all skills were still useful to some users. However, the following skills have been removed because their content is sufficiently covered or has been consolidated into another skill.

SPIM **Software development process improvement** - some amendments made to DLMG **Systems development management**

HFIN **Human factors integration** - content has been merged with USEV **User experience evaluation**

TAUD **Technology audit** – content has been merged with CORE **Conformance review**

PROC **Procurement** – content merged to form the new skill SORC **Sourcing**

SURE **Supplier relationship management** – content merged to form the new skill SORC **Sourcing**

ACMG **Account management** – content merged into RLMT **Relationship management**

Name changes

FMIT **Financial management** (previously **Financial management for IT**)

SUMI **Sustainability management** (previously **Sustainability management for IT**)

STPL **Enterprise and business architecture** (previously **Enterprise and business architecture development**)

DBDS **Database design** (previously **Database/repository design**)

ITOP **IT infrastructure** (previously **IT operations**)

USUP **Incident management** (previously **Service desk and incident management**)

DCMA **Facilities management** (previously **IT estate management**)

CSMG **Customer service support** (previously **Client services management**)

PORT **Porting/software configuration** (previously **Porting/software integration**)

LEDA **Learning assessment and evaluation** (previously **Learning and development assessment**)

MKTG **Digital marketing** (previously **Marketing**)

HCEV **User experience design** (previously **Ergonomic design**)

New levels for existing skills

SCTY **Information security** now has a level 7 description

RSCH **Research** now has a level 2 description

SUST **Sustainability strategy** now has a level 4 description

DATM **Data management** now has descriptions at levels 2 and 3

PROF **Portfolio, programme and project support** now has a level 6 description

HCEV **User experience design** (previously **Ergonomic design**) now has a level 2 description

USEV **User experience evaluation** now has a level 6 description

SCAD **Security administration** now includes descriptions at levels 1 and 2

TMCR **Learning design and development** now has a level 6 description

RESC **Resourcing** now has a level 4 description

QUMG **Quality management** now has a level 4 description

MKTG **Digital marketing** (previously **Marketing**) now has a level 2 description

Removed levels for existing skills

USUP **Incident management** (previously **Service desk and incident management**) no longer has a description at level 1 as this aspect is covered within the **Customer service support** skill.

Changes – category by category

As well as name changes and new skills, there are many examples of improved wording, and some skills have new levels.

In the tables below, new skill level-statements added in SFIA 6 have highlighted level numbers. The 'Status' column indicates the type of change in SFIA 6. 'Changed' means that the text of the skill and/or its level-descriptions have changed. 'New skill' means that the skill has been introduced in SFIA 6. 'Name/content changed' means that the label for the skill has changed (though the four-letter code for the skill is unchanged), and that the text description has also changed. 'Retired' means that the skill is not included in SFIA 6.

Strategy and architecture

Category	Subcategory	Skill	Levels	Status
Strategy and architecture	Information strategy	IT governance GOVN	5 6 7	changed
		IT strategy and planning ITSP	5 6 7	new skill
		Information management IRMG	4 5 6 7	changed
		Information systems coordination ISCO	6 7	changed
		Information security SCTY	3 4 5 6 7	changed
		Information assurance INAS	5 6 7	changed
		Analytics INAN	3 4 5 6 7	changed
		Information content publishing ICPM	1 2 3 4 5 6	changed
	Advice and guidance	Consultancy CNSL	5 6 7	changed
		Technical specialism TECH	4 5 6	changed
	Business strategy and planning	Research RSCH	2 3 4 5 6	changed
		IT management ITMG	5 6 7	no change
		Financial management FMIT	4 5 6	name/content changed
		Innovation INOV	5 6	changed
		Business process improvement BPRE	5 6 7	no change
		Enterprise and business architecture STPL	5 6 7	name change
		Business risk management BURM	4 5 6 7	changed
		Sustainability strategy SUST	4 5 6	changed
	Technical strategy and planning	Emerging technology monitoring EMRG	4 5 6	changed
		Continuity management COPL	4 5	no change
		Software development process improvement SPIM		retired
		Sustainability management SUMI	5 6	name change

Category	Subcategory	Skill	Levels	Status
		Network planning NTPL	5 6	no change
		Solution architecture ARCH	5 6	changed
		Data management DATM	2 3 4 5 6	changed
		Methods and tools METL	4 5 6	no change

Change and transformation (was Business change)

Relationship management sub-category has moved to **Relationships and engagement** (previously **Client interface**) category into a merged sub-category called **Stakeholder management**

Skills management sub-category has moved to the **Skills and quality** category

Category	Subcategory	Skill	Levels	Status
Change and transformation	Business change implementation	Portfolio management POMG	5 6 7	changed
		Programme management PGMG	6 7	changed
		Project management PRMG	4 5 6 7	changed
		Portfolio, programme and project support PROF	2 3 4 5 6	changed
	Business change management	Business analysis BUAN	3 4 5 6	changed
		Requirements definition and management REQM	2 3 4 5 6	no change
		Business process testing BPTS	4 5 6	no change
		Change implementation planning and management CIPM	5 6	changed
		Organisation design and implementation ORDI	5 6	changed
		Benefits management BENM	5 6	changed
	Business modelling BSMO	2 3 4 5 6	no change	
	Sustainability assessment SUAS	4 5 6	no change	

Development and implementation (was Solution development and implementation)

Human factors sub-category has been renamed **User experience**

Category	Subcategory	Skill	Levels	Status
Development and implementation	Systems development	Systems development management DLMG	5 6 7	changed
		Data analysis DTAN	2 3 4 5	no change
		Systems design DESN	2 3 4 5 6	changed
		Network design NTDS	5 6	changed
		Database design DBDS	2 3 4 5 6	name change
		Programming/software development PROG	2 3 4 5	changed

Category	Subcategory	Skill	Levels	Status
		Animation development ADEV	3 4 5 6	no change
		Safety engineering SFEN	3 4 5 6	no change
		Sustainability engineering SUEN	4 5 6	changed
		Information content authoring INCA	1 2 3 4 5 6	changed
		Testing TEST	1 2 3 4 5 6	changed
	User experience	User experience analysis UNAN	3 4 5	changed
		User experience design HCEV	2 3 4 5 6	name/content changed
		User experience evaluation USEV	2 3 4 5 6	changed
		<i>Human factors integration</i> HFIN		retired
	Installation and integration	Systems integration SINT	2 3 4 5 6	no change
		Porting/software configuration PORT	3 4 5 6	name/content changed
		Hardware design HWDE	4 5 6	new skill
		Systems installation/decommissioning HSIN	1 2 3 4 5	changed

Delivery and operation (was Service management)

Service strategy subcategory has been retired as those skills have moved to the **Business strategy and planning** subcategory in the **Strategy and architecture** category

Category	Subcategory	Skill	Levels	Status
Delivery and operation	Service design	Availability management AVMT	4 5 6	changed
		Service level management SLMO	2 3 4 5 6 7	no change
	Service transition	Service acceptance SEAC	4 5 6	changed
		Configuration management CFMG	2 3 4 5 6	changed
		Asset management ASMG	4 5 6	changed
		Change management CHMG	2 3 4 5 6	changed
		Release and deployment RELM	3 4 5 6	no change
	Service operation	System software SYSP	3 4 5	no change
		Capacity management CPMG	4 5 6	changed
		Security administration SCAD	1 2 3 4 5 6	changed
		Penetration testing PENT	4 5 6	new skill
		Radio frequency engineering RFEN	2 3 4 5 6	no change
		Application support ASUP	2 3 4 5	changed

Category	Subcategory	Skill	Levels	Status
		IT infrastructure ITOP	1 2 3 4	name/content change
		Database administration DBAD	2 3 4 5	changed
		Storage management STMG	3 4 5 6	changed
		Network support NTAS	2 3 4 5	no change
		Problem management PBMG	3 4 5	changed
		Incident management USUP	2 3 4 5	name/content changed
		Facilities management DCMA	3 4 5 6	name changed

Skills and quality (was Procurement and management support)

Supply management subcategory has been retired as those skills are now covered in the **Stakeholder management** subcategory within the **Relationships and engagement** category

Category	Subcategory	Skill	Levels	Status
Skills and quality	Skill management	Learning and development management ETMG	3 4 5 6 7	changed
		Learning assessment and evaluation LEDA	3 4 5 6	name/content changed
		Learning design and development TMCR	4 5 6	changed
		Learning delivery ETDL	3 4 5	changed
		Teaching and subject formation TEAC	5 6	changed
	People management	Performance management PEMT	4 5 6	new skill
		Resourcing RESC	4 5 6	changed
		Professional development PDSV	4 5 6	changed
	Quality and conformance	Quality management QUMG	4 5 6 7	changed
		Quality assurance QUAS	3 4 5 6	no change
		Quality standards QUST	2 3 4 5	changed
		Conformance review CORE	3 4 5 6	changed
		Safety assessment SFAS	5 6	no change
		Digital forensics DGFS	4 5 6	new skill
	<i>Technology audit</i> TAUD		retired	

Relationships and engagement (was Client interface)

Client support subcategory has been renamed **Stakeholder management** and now includes new, renamed and changed skills

Sales support has moved to the **Sales and marketing** subcategory

PROD **Product management** has been added

USUP **Service desk and incident management** has become **Incident management** as the service desk

elements have been consolidated into **Customer service support** (the new name for **Client services management**)

Category	Subcategory	Skill	Levels	Status
Relationships and engagement	Stakeholder management	<i>Procurement</i> PROC		retired
		<i>Supplier relationship management</i> SURE		retired
		Sourcing SORC	2 3 4 5 6 7	new skill
		Contract management ITCM	4 5 6	changed
		Relationship management RLMT	4 5 6 7	name/content changed
		<i>Account management</i> ACMG		retired
	Customer service support CSMG	1 2 3 4 5 6	name/content changed	
	Sales and marketing	Digital marketing MKTG	2 3 4 5 6	name/content changed
		Selling SALE	4 5 6	changed
		Sales support SSUP	1 2 3 4 5 6	no change
Product management PROD		3 4 5 6	new skill	

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