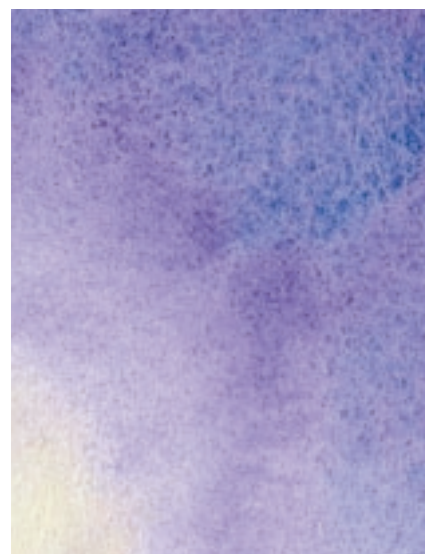


# Creating a learning landscape



A skills framework for  
community regeneration



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE

Scottish Centre  
for Regeneration  
Communities  
Scotland

You can ask for this document in large print, Braille or audio cassette,  
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Please contact Janette Campbell on 0131 479 5162 or  
email [janette.campbell@communitiescotland.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:janette.campbell@communitiescotland.gsi.gov.uk)  
for further information.

## Introduction

Community regeneration is a complex and constantly changing area of work. Participants are drawn from many different sectors and backgrounds, including practitioners, professionals, local politicians, community representatives, volunteers, and business people. Their skills, knowledge and previous experience of regeneration are equally diverse.

The Skills Framework for Community Regeneration has been developed to support everyone currently working within regeneration. It does this by detailing the common skills that those involved in regeneration have identified as crucial in helping them be effective in a wide variety of roles and circumstances.

This document outlines:

- the background research that led to the development of the framework;
- the main conclusions of the study;
- future actions; and
- the framework and a breakdown of associated skills.

I hope you find it a useful and practical document, and would welcome your views.

Craig McLaren  
Director, Scottish Centre for Regeneration

## Background

The Skills Framework for Community Regeneration came out of research commissioned by the Scottish Centre for Regeneration to study the skills required by those currently working within regeneration. It was also asked to assess current skill gaps and map existing learning provision. The research builds on the work carried out in the 'Coherent Diversity' (2004) and 'Working Together Learning Together' (2004) reports.

The Scottish Centre for Regeneration is part of Communities Scotland and its work is informed by the Scottish Executive's Community Regeneration Statement, 'Better Communities in Scotland: Closing the Gap'. This recognised the need to build expertise in regeneration. The Scottish Centre for Regeneration (SCR) has two aims:

- to help transfer knowledge of what works and what doesn't work in regeneration;
- to improve and develop the skills and competencies of those working to deliver regeneration at a local level.

To help meet these aims the SCR works with those involved in community regeneration to:

- develop the skills required for effective regeneration and help provide opportunities for people to attain these skills;
- highlight and encourage the adoption of excellent practice;
- support innovative thinking and new approaches to community regeneration practice;

- expand knowledge of regeneration policy and practice; and
- promote learning opportunities that enable those involved in community regeneration to improve their practice and skills.

## **About the study ‘Community Regeneration Skills and Competencies’**

The study and the development of the framework was carried out by a team based in the Department of Urban Studies, University of Glasgow, led by Ivan Turok and with major contributions from Peter Taylor, Duncan Kirkpatrick and Adam Rosengard.

Research methods included an updating of previous literature reviews and a survey of training providers. A central aim of the research was to provide a solid evidence base for a skills framework through a survey reaching as wide as was practical. To this end a postal survey, followed up by telephone interviews and focus group meetings, was carried out in five local authority areas.

Contact lists were obtained in each area that included people ranging from members of ‘high level’ partnerships to agencies and groups that were known to be in contact with local regeneration programmes. Postal responses were received from 343 people (27% of those sent the questionnaire).

Finally, national organisations were consulted again on a draft framework, and a number of approaches to individual or collective self-assessment of learning needs were tested.

The full study findings can be found on [www.scr.communitiesscotland.gov.uk](http://www.scr.communitiesscotland.gov.uk).

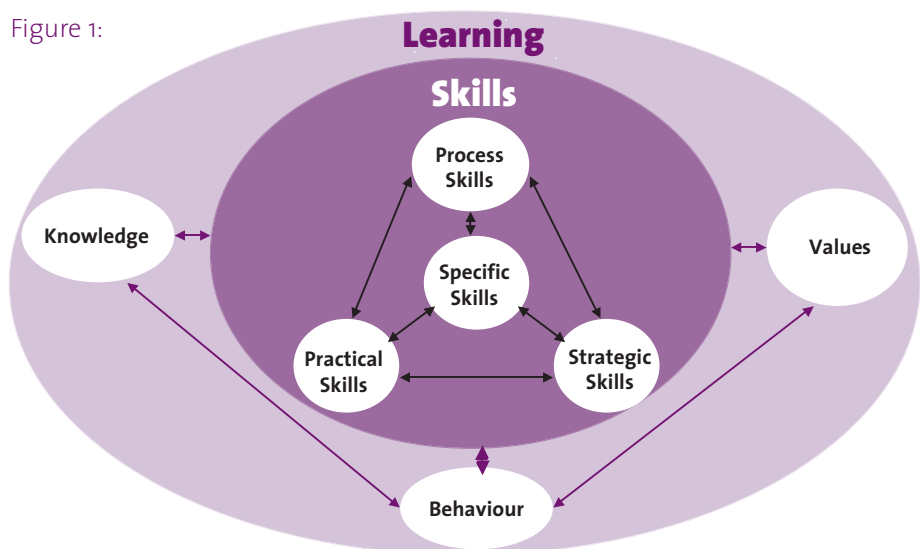
## The Skills Framework

This framework focuses on three distinct groups of skills that are needed for community regeneration work: process skills, practical skills and strategic skills. These are shown in figure 1 below. The 'specific skills' at the centre of the figure refer to people's individual skills (such as the experience of living within a community or working on a committee). These sorts of skills are not covered in detail within this framework.

Process skills help to enable change. Often called 'people skills' or 'soft skills', these are skills which would enable you to communicate effectively and be adaptable, flexible and understanding.

Practical skills help to deliver change. These are skills which would enable you to contribute to the day-to-day running of an initiative. For example, maintaining financial records, writing funding bids and developing action plans.

Figure 1:

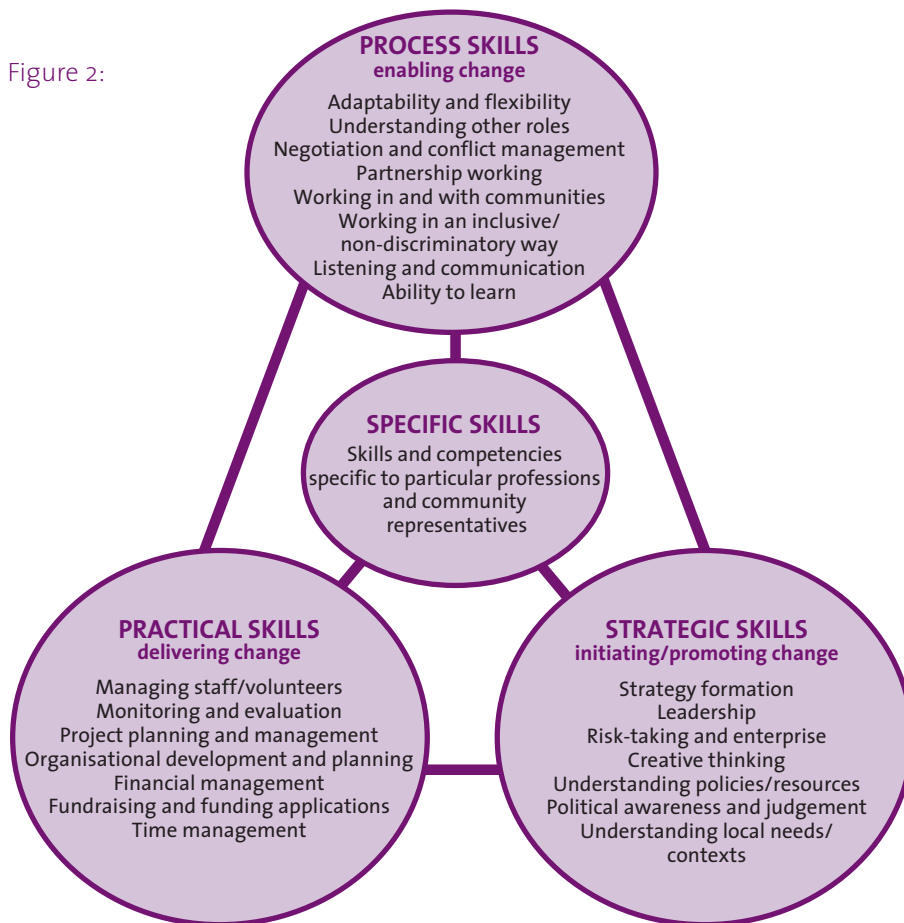


Strategic skills help to initiate and promote change. People who have any responsibility for the overall approach taken by an initiative would require these kinds of skills. They can include leadership, creativity and influencing skills.

This framework lists 22 skills in total, divided into these three skills groups (see figure 2). This classification is flexible, however, and depends on people's individual circumstances.

The 22 skills are listed in more detail from page nine onwards, along with examples of the tasks and roles they cover.

Figure 2:



## Conclusions

The main conclusions emanating from the research were as follows:

- Community regeneration currently involves people from a wide variety of professional and non-professional backgrounds.
- Most participants are involved in multiple partnerships, in multiple roles.
- There is strong agreement across sectors on the skills that are needed.
- Most people recognise a need for self-improvement in some of their skills.
- Skills can be broadly classified as 'process skills', 'practical skills' and 'strategic skills'.
- Most agree that all are essential, especially 'process skills', though people may find it easier to admit to deficiencies in 'practical skills'.
- Most people have used each of the main learning methods, but would like to have more access.
- People are most likely to feel that they have got the relevant skills from work and life experience. They seem to place most value on more outside support and exchanges of experience.
- Responses to the idea of a skills framework were generally very positive. Consultees agreed that it must be used only as a flexible guide to local needs, not prescriptively.
- People undertake 'self-assessment' in different ways and for different reasons. A 'tool kit' rather than a single 'tool' is seen as the most appropriate form of support.

## Future actions

The research found that there was support for the skills framework to assist people involved in regeneration, and that preferences for future learning in regeneration should focus around sharing experience. Given this, the Scottish Centre for Regeneration plans to initially follow up this research by:

- exploring further, through discussion, the role and potential uses of the skills framework;
- working in partnership with organisations and training providers to develop and implement practical responses to the framework;
- creating a national learners network for those involved in regeneration;
- promoting a database of training opportunities;
- publishing a support pack helping those involved in regeneration to improve their learning; and
- developing programmes aimed at learning and increasing skills through sharing experience.

To make these actions work, it is important for all those in regeneration to become actively involved. You and your organisation can participate by:

- providing constructive feedback on the framework;
- using the framework to develop a range of learning opportunities;
- reviewing current training provision in light of the research;
- sharing these views and experiences with others, including the Scottish Centre for Regeneration.

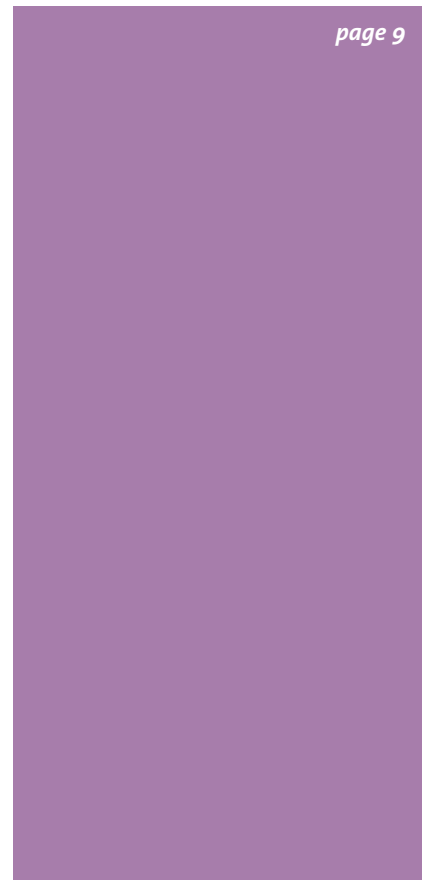
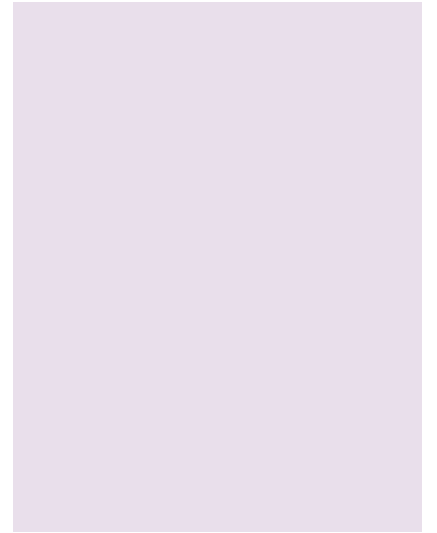
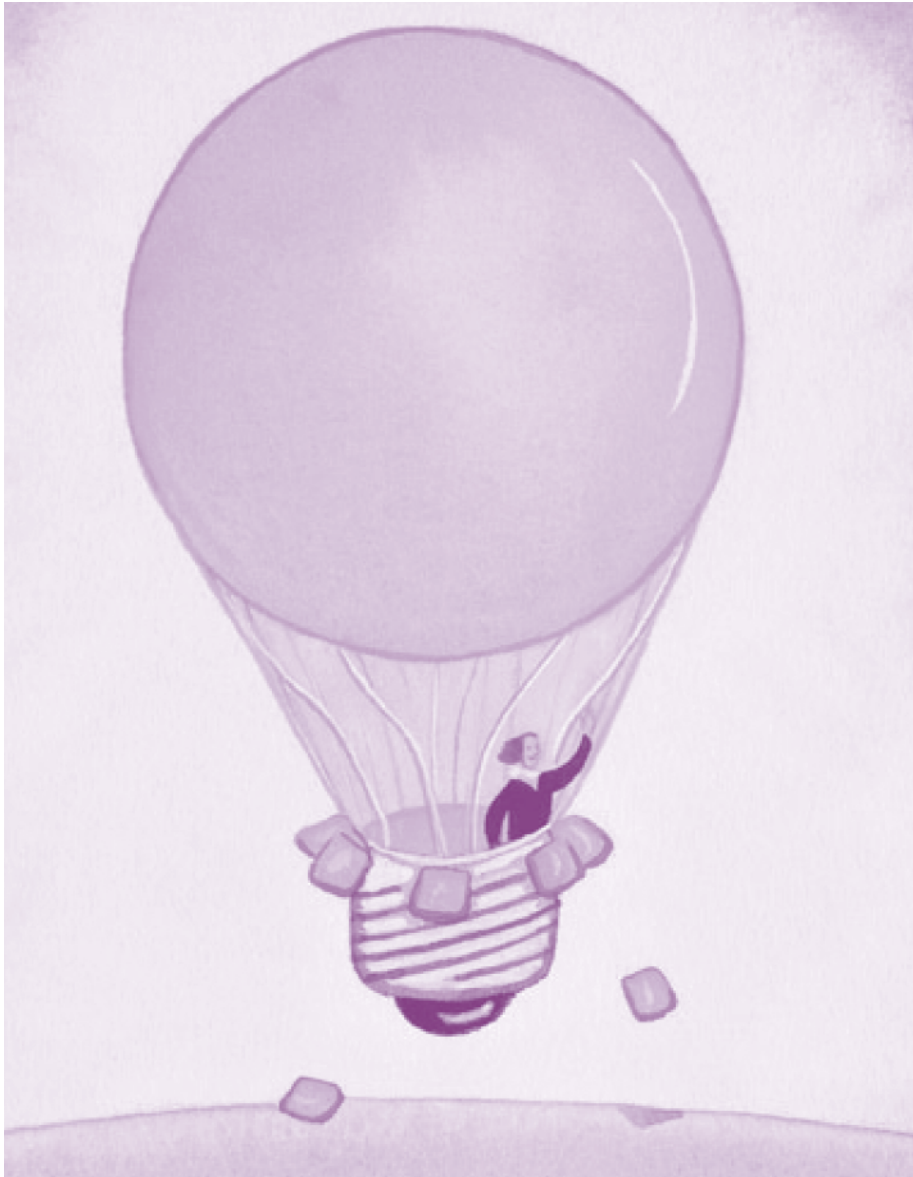
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Should you want to discuss any aspect of the framework and the associated recommendations or would like to explore ideas around the practical use of the framework then contact:

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## Skills required for community regeneration

**PROCESS SKILLS:  
ENABLING CHANGE**

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Adaptability and flexibility

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Adapt your existing skills and knowledge to new challenges
- Understand your own role and adapt it to new environments
- Explain your own role clearly, accurately and appropriately within the community or to other agencies and groups
- Evaluate your role and the impact this has on communities and colleagues
- Reflect on your own values, priorities, interests and effectiveness
- Be flexible in approach
- Accept tasks that go beyond normal professional boundaries
- Negotiate your role within wider initiatives
- Cope effectively with possible divided loyalties

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Get involved in new roles and tasks that are not part of your previous professional or business work or community activity
- Represent your own agency or group at other people's meetings or in partnerships
- Contribute to finding solutions to issues that are outwith your normal range
- Contribute to the collective efforts of partnerships, not just further your own organisation's interests

## Understanding other roles

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Respect the role of other professions and organisations
- See 'where they are coming from' and how things might appear from their perspective
- Develop and sustain effective working relationships with staff in a variety of agencies
- Respond appropriately to the differences between paid staff and volunteers
- Work with volunteers and value their contribution
- Appraise the contributions of different agencies and groups and apply these to the development of strategies
- Be alert to organisations' differing agendas
- Understand your partners and their objectives, decision making structures, and funding arrangements

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Work with people from other professions and types of organisation
- Take part in joint work by paid officers and voluntary community representatives
- Take part in multi-disciplinary teams
- Help to develop multi-agency strategies

## **PROCESS SKILLS: ENABLING CHANGE**

**PROCESS SKILLS:  
ENABLING CHANGE**

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**Working in and with communities**

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Understand the different types of people who live in areas, what type of involvement they have, and why
- Work with a wide variety of different people, organisations and groups
- Ensure that your style and methods of communication are appropriate to each
- Facilitate open discussion and make people feel welcome and comfortable
- Be sensitive to people's fears and hopes
- Design and operate methods and structures that enable people to participate effectively
- Offer support for change, development and capacity building in the community
- Accept the timescales and difficulties involved in achieving effective involvement
- Realise and apply the differences between different types of engagement – eg information, consultation, joint decision making, empowerment
- Involve communities in the definition of problems and how they should be tackled
- Provide feedback to communities and organisations on the outcomes and impacts of decisions

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Consult communities
- Represent communities
- Work in joint forums and partnerships involving community representatives
- Develop the potential for communities to contribute directly to solving problems
- Establish processes for consultation and involvement, for example in Community Planning

## Working in an inclusive and non-discriminatory manner

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Recognise and respect people's diversity
- Promote equality of opportunity and access to services
- Challenge oppressive and discriminatory practices and attitudes
- Be tolerant
- Understand the causes and effects of social exclusion
- Identify people's potential skills, talents and contributions
- Make sure that systems and structures promote equality and diversity
- Promote effective communication with individuals where there are communication differences
- Develop relationships with people that value them as individuals
- Understand how your own experience has been affected by family, class, race, gender etc, and how this impacts on your work
- Cope with challenging behaviour

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Share responsibility for a strategy or initiative that is intended to serve all the needs of a community
- Maximise involvement from all sections of the community
- Review and improve your practice to eliminate possible sources of discrimination
- Work in ways that involve new and more direct contact with people experiencing social exclusion

## **PROCESS SKILLS: ENABLING CHANGE**

**PROCESS SKILLS:  
ENABLING CHANGE**

page 14

Listening and communicating

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Be willing to listen to other points of view
- Have and show empathy with other people
- Have and show patience with other people's views and behaviour
- Show people that you have taken their views and feelings into account
- Enable the views of groups, communities and organisations to be heard through advocating on their behalf
- Know how to remove barriers to effective communication
- Be clear and to the point in speech and writing
- Present facts and views to other people in public
- Be assertive: ask questions and get your point across without being argumentative
- Write effective reports, briefings etc in plain English
- Read and understand complex documents
- Understand and use electronic means of communication

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Work in groups to achieve your objectives
- Take other perspectives into account to agree common objectives and actions
- Work with people from different backgrounds
- Influence people in other organisations or roles
- Represent your group or agency to others
- Report back to your own group or agency

## Ability to learn

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Recognise your own strengths and weaknesses
- Identify areas for personal development
- Identify methods of achieving your goals and targets
- Not be afraid to say: “I don’t know”, “I don’t understand”, “I can’t do that yet”
- Recognise the wide variety of ways of learning
- Learn from success and failure
- Learn from others
- Obtain and assess information about ‘what works’
- Observe and record positive aspects of your practice
- Share your own expertise or experience; enable others to learn from them

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Work in situations that extend your previous role and challenge your existing skills
- Find effective approaches to tackling difficult social and economic problems
- Help others to do these things

## **PROCESS SKILLS: ENABLING CHANGE**

## **PRACTICAL SKILLS: DELIVERING CHANGE**

### Negotiation and conflict management

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Be a good negotiator
- Bring about desired changes without conflict
- Be able to compromise and reach agreement
- Cope with and manage conflicts, and resolve them where possible
- Be diplomatic and sympathetic, but persuasive
- Broker solutions to problems
- See likely causes of conflict and try to prevent it happening in the first place
- Identify blocks to communication and mutual understanding and make efforts to remove these
- Identify potential allies and partners and evaluate the potential for collaboration
- Motivate participants to move beyond conflict

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Work in situations where people with different backgrounds or roles are trying to define and achieve common objectives
- Advise or facilitate a partnership in its work
- Persuade other people to support and assist the work of your group or project

## Partnership working

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Get the right people around the table
- Build trust and mutual understanding
- Agree common objectives
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Agree common actions
- Maintain regular communication and feedback
- Work to achieve shared objectives as well as your own agenda
- Form and maintain networks
- Work in multi-disciplinary teams

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Take responsibility for developing and maintaining partnerships, as a member or an adviser
- Set up structures to bring people from different backgrounds or disciplines together to tackle issues, and make these work

## **PRACTICAL SKILLS: DELIVERING CHANGE**

**PRACTICAL SKILLS:  
DELIVERING CHANGE**

Managing staff and volunteers

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Identify staffing needs and specify roles and tasks
- Recruit and select staff and volunteers
- Interview people effectively
- Supervise and appraise people's work
- Motivate people, support and encourage them to achieve their objectives
- Build teams
- Negotiate and review work plans
- Identify and address people's learning needs

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Get involved in running projects or organisations in ways that were not essential to your previous work or community experience
- Work with volunteers
- Supervise and support people to take these responsibilities

## Monitoring and evaluation

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Base decisions about a strategy on a common understanding of what it is meant to achieve and how you will know if it has achieved it
- Base actions on proven experience
- Decide whether a strategy is on track
- Identify what is and is not working
- Learn from mistakes, and adjust practice accordingly
- Integrate new information into the development of your own practice
- Assess accurately the needs that you wish to meet
- Use appropriate research methods
- Appraise proposals for projects and actions systematically and objectively
- Assess the likely impact of proposed actions
- Review the performance of projects and organisations
- Establish systems to get feedback on progress

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Share responsibility for seeing that a strategy is put into practice
- Share responsibility for deciding new strategies and approaches
- Take responsibility for seeing that a project is put into practice
- Appraise other people's proposals and allocate resources
- Report to communities, funders or other agencies on the progress that you are achieving

## **PRACTICAL SKILLS: DELIVERING CHANGE**

**PRACTICAL SKILLS:  
DELIVERING CHANGE**

**Project planning and management**

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Assess the feasibility of projects
- Estimate the human and physical resources needed
- Break the work down into manageable, achievable and measurable tasks
- Specify milestones
- Develop action plans
- Establish reporting and monitoring and evaluation procedures
- Establish clear lines of responsibility and accountability
- Plan for risk and contingencies
- Measure progress against plans and adapt accordingly
- Deliver according to plan
- Prepare for sustainability

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Plan new projects to achieve regeneration and social inclusion, and persuade other people to support them
- Share responsibility for making sure that they happen and achieve their intended results
- Supervise or support the people who are running projects

## Organisational development and planning

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Interpret and contribute to business plans
- Determine an organisation's strengths and areas for improvement
- Gather and interpret information on the opportunities and threats to an organisation
- Set up organisational structures and management systems that meet the intended purposes
- Regularly review organisational structures, established roles, processes and procedures against purpose and outcomes
- Manage change in an organisation
- Use resources to maximum effect

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Get involved in running organisations in ways that were not essential to your previous work or community experience
- Set up new organisations to achieve regeneration and social inclusion
- Change the way an organisation works so that it can make an effective contribution to regeneration
- Share responsibility for organising the use of resources allocated to a partnership

## **PRACTICAL SKILLS: DELIVERING CHANGE**

**PRACTICAL SKILLS:  
DELIVERING CHANGE**

Financial management

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Interpret and use budgets and financial reports
- Contribute to decisions about financial management
- Maintain systematic financial records and understand their importance
- Understand the legal liabilities of trustees, directors and managers
- Support others to review their own resource and financial requirements
- Act with probity and provide proper stewardship of resources
- Spot opportunities to make use of under-used resources

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Share responsibility for running projects and organisations set up to assist regeneration
- Share responsibility for the use of resources allocated to a partnership
- Advise and assist people with those responsibilities

## Fundraising and funding applications

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Design proposals which meet both your own objectives and those of potential funders
- Gather information and present a case
- Identify potential funders or investors to meet agreed requirements
- Write effective funding bids
- Identify other potential fund-raising mechanisms
- Deal with funding bodies and financial institutions
- Spot opportunities for innovative and collaborative funding

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Plan new projects to achieve regeneration and social inclusion, and persuade other people to support them
- Advise and assist people to do this
- Develop social enterprises
- Plan for the longer-term sustainability of initiatives

## Time management

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Juggle priorities
- Identify key tasks
- Set achievable goals
- Cope with stress
- Simplify and interpret information
- Identify what information is valuable and what is not

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Work in a complex multi-agency environment
- Work with ill-defined objectives and uncertain resources
- Try to deal with complex, interrelated social and economic issues
- Combine regeneration work with other responsibilities

## **PRACTICAL SKILLS: DELIVERING CHANGE**

**STRATEGIC SKILLS:  
INITIATING AND  
PROMOTING CHANGE**

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Strategy formation

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Have a vision of what should be achieved
- See how a system works as a whole
- Understand how the broader economic and social environment affects you
- See the big picture and the longer term perspective
- Analyse problems that have many different facets
- Identify and consider alternative options for action
- Design solutions and choose the right delivery mechanisms
- Think through different possible scenarios
- Recognise the timescales for complex development or social change
- Apply principles to practice
- Decide on priorities
- Pay attention to long-term sustainability

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Help to decide an overall strategy for the regeneration of an area, as part of a partnership (or planning group, forum etc)
- Help to decide a strategy for tackling the social exclusion experienced by a particular section of the community, as part of a partnership
- Advise a partnership on its strategy
- Decide what your group, agency or project can do to contribute to regeneration and social inclusion
- Incorporate regeneration policies into a statutory plan

## Leadership

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Make decisions
- Influence other people
- Motivate people and create a climate for new ideas
- Identify and engage key stakeholders and partners
- Build consensus
- Take the initiative
- Accept responsibility
- Delegate power and authority
- Apply different styles of leadership appropriately in different contexts.
- Be self confident and display assertiveness

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Start up a new regeneration initiative
- Take or share responsibility for the success of an initiative or partnership
- Bring people together to take action
- Keep people working together towards common objectives.
- Make space for others
- Share control of resources

## **STRATEGIC SKILLS: INITIATING AND PROMOTING CHANGE**

## STRATEGIC SKILLS: INITIATING AND PROMOTING CHANGE

### Risk-taking and enterprise

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Spot opportunities
- Be less cautious and more innovative
- Accept and manage risk
- Try out new ways of working
- Bring together ideas, resources and people to instigate change
- Be able to recognise and develop innovation in others

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Take or share responsibility for new ways of tackling problems
- Plan strategies that change the way groups and agencies currently work
- Develop social enterprises

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### Creative thinking

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Be creative and think laterally
- Generate ideas and be responsive to new thinking
- Solve problems
- Question assumptions
- Understand and deal with issues that cut across usual boundaries
- Be imaginative and open minded
- Challenge traditional ways of tackling social problems

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Make an active contribution to preparing innovative plans and strategies
- Make an active contribution to overcoming difficulties in putting strategies into practice
- Find ways of dealing with issues that cannot be solved by existing personal or professional ways of working alone

## Understanding policies and resources

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Interpret central or local government and other policies
- Apply them to your situation
- See how policies influence resources - and vice versa
- Work out ways of influencing mainstream resource allocation
- Propose appropriate policy changes
- Interpret the wider implications of decisions taken
- Understand how policies contribute to sustainable development
- Read complex reports effectively

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Work in partnerships that are set up as part of wider national or local programmes
- Get involved in community planning
- Get involved in neighbourhood management
- Go beyond specific projects and project funding, and influence the 'mainstream' services

## **STRATEGIC SKILLS: INITIATING AND PROMOTING CHANGE**

**STRATEGIC SKILLS:  
INITIATING AND  
PROMOTING CHANGE**

page 28

## Political awareness and judgement

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*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Be aware of the political context for your work and act in an appropriate manner
- Involve elected representatives, community leaders and other stakeholders in the appropriate decisions
- Establish constructive working relationships between elected members, community leaders and other stakeholders
- Be sensitive to popular opinion locally
- Influence the political process in appropriate ways

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Help to allocate resources between areas or groups in the community
- Work with councillors, MSPs or other elected representatives
- Deal with controversial issues
- Make the voice of groups and communities heard in the political process and advocate for policy changes

## Understanding local needs and contexts

---

*When you have skills of this kind you should be able to:*

- Communicate and put to practical use your experience or knowledge of the needs and issues arising in an area
- Judge the appropriateness of proposed actions to local circumstances
- See the differences between the needs of areas and balance them
- Develop awareness and knowledge of other areas
- Research local needs effectively
- Apply your experience of the needs of 'communities of interest' and balance these against other needs

*You will need these skills when you have to:*

- Represent the people of an area
- Represent a group with distinctive needs
- Work with people from other areas and groups
- Plan strategies and initiatives that are appropriate to the distinctive needs of areas and groups



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