Mandala Foundation: Policy Audit Checklist

Purpose: This checklist is a tool that can be used by organisations to assess the level of their current policy at each phase of the assignment cycle, in order to support the identification of starting points or priorities for intervention or process improvement.

PHASE 1:	PRE-ASSIGNMENT
RECRUITMENT & SELECTION	

ACTION	No	Partly	Yes
• Is the recruitment and selection policy and process informed by national and local legislative requirements?			
• Is the recruitment and selection process informed by local knowledge?			
• Is the recruitment policy and process inclusive and equitable?			
• Does the recruitment and selection policy allow for multiple methods of assessing potential assignees, including both technical and psychosocial competencies?			
• Are manager roles and responsibilities appropriately defined in relation to the recruitment process, including incorporating psychosocial considerations?			
• Are managers appropriately trained and resourced to ensure psychosocial risks are recognised and support mechanisms are integrated into relevant documents and recruitment and selection practices?			
• Are psychosocial risks of assignment context and role identified through consultation with appropriate stakeholders?			
• Is recruitment and selection information regarding the assignment an accurate representation of the assignment - including the psychosocial components of the assignment?			
• Is recruitment and selection information regarding the assignment delivered in a timely and appropriate manner so as to ensure sufficient understanding and integration by the assignee to their own personal context?			
• Is there a plan for psychosocial information gained during recruitment and selection to be incorporated into the next phase of preparation?			
• Is the recruitment policy up to date and regularly reviewed for organisational and operating context?			

PHASE 2:
PREPARATION

PRE-ASSIGNMENT

ACTION	*No*	*Partly*	*Yes*
• Do policies provide sufficient clarification for managers regarding their roles and responsibilities for supporting the psychosocial preparation of assignees?			
• Are preparation policies and processes informed by input from field staff with insight into the assignment context?			
• Are managers appropriately trained and resourced to ensure appropriate psychosocial risks and support mechanisms are integrated into relevant assignment preparation and briefing practices?			
• Are policies and systems in place to ensure the organisation and assignment managers share up to date information about appropriate psychosocial preparation for the assignment?			
• Are psychosocial risks and management plans incorporated into pre-assignment briefings and training of the assignee?			
• Is a system in place that identifies skill and knowledge gaps regarding psychosocial factors to inform training and preparation needs?			
• Is information, briefing and training content provided to assignees cognisant of inclusiveness, cultural considerations and context?			
• Is a mechanism in place to ensure assignees comprehend and integrate the implications of assignment information to their own needs?			
• Is there guidance for how relevant psychosocial skill and information gaps identified in the preparation phase should be incorporated into the orientation phase?			
• Is the preparation policy up to date and regularly reviewed for organisational and operating context?			

Managing Psychosocial Risk across the Assignment Cycle

PHASE 3:
FIELD ORIENTATION

ON ASSIGNMENT

ACTION	No	Partly	Yes
• Do field policies provide for activities in support of assignee orientation and adjustment?			
• Are psychosocial and cross-cultural factors that are likely to affect adjustment included in in-field assignment orientation?			
• Are receiving in-field team members included and consulted in orientation planning for the assignee, as well as being supported to prepare themselves to receive the assignee?			
• Does assignment information and documentation accurately match and reflect the current in-field and assignment conditions and psychosocial considerations?			
• Are mechanisms in place to ensure assignees comprehend and integrate the implications of in-field assignment orientation information and activities to their own needs?			
• Are in-field managers appropriately trained and resourced to ensure appropriate psychosocial risks and support mechanisms are integrated into in-field assignment orientation activities and information?			
• Do policies provide for access to formal or informal psychosocial support in the early stages of adjustment to the assignment role and context?			
• Do field policies provide for activities in support of assignee orientation and adjustment?			
• Are orientation processes and policies informed by field input?			
• Are psychosocial and cross-cultural factors that are likely to affect adjustment included in in-field assignment orientation?			
• Is the orientation policy up to date and regularly reviewed for organisational and operating context?			

PHASE 4: IN-FIELD	ON ASSIGNMENT

ACTION	No	Partly	Yes
• Are both proactive (e.g. promoting and building a healthy workplace and team culture), and responsive (e.g. critical incident management) policies for on-assignment support available?			
• Are a range of inclusive and culturally appropriate psychosocial support resources and referral sources pre-emptively available in-field prior to support needs arising?			
• Do monitoring standards required of managers throughout the assignment period include both informal team and relationship building, and formal HR management practices?			
• Do managers (in-field and remotely as relevant) ensure that monitoring of psychosocial risks, levels of resilience and coping, and performance are integrated into ongoing management practice to facilitate the effective identification and resolution of issues that arise?			
• Are relevant psychosocial skill and information gaps that were identified from the orientation phase incorporated into ongoing monitoring while on assignment?			
• Are managers encouraged and supported by the organisation to proactively model and promote effective self-care strategies?			
• Are managers appropriately trained and resourced to ensure appropriate monitoring of psychosocial risks, and facilitation of ongoing support mechanisms that are integrated into management practice and communications?			
• Are enabling organisational policies in place that are relevant to the context (such as leave; R&R; bereavement leave etc.)?			
• Are managers appropriately trained and resourced to manage critical incidents in a sensitive, inclusive and culturally appropriate way?			
• Are psychosocial risks and support practices dynamically adjusted or improved based on information gained through monitoring, feedback, or critical incidents?			
• Are organisational mechanisms in place to ensure managers monitor their own wellbeing and stress levels and consider how this may impact on others?			
• Are critical incident plans and policies up to date, accessible, and adequately resourced by the organisation?			

PHASE 5:
FIELD EXIT

ON ASSIGNMENT

ACTION	*No*	*Partly*	*Yes*
• Are policies in place that provide sufficient clarification for managers regarding their roles and responsibilities for supporting the assignee's field exit from a psychosocial perspective?			
• Are managers appropriately trained and skilled to effectively facilitate the exit process?			
• Are processes, information, and psychosocial resources in place to prepare assignees for the transition and adjustment involved in exit and upcoming re-entry?			
• Do systems exist to facilitate an effective handover of tasks, responsibilities, and assignment knowledge to a new assignee or other local staff upon assignment end?			
• Is the in-field team consulted as to the manner in which the assignee handover and farewell rituals (including ceremonies and acknowledgment) take place, and the impact of the departure on the team as a whole and individually?			
• Do processes exist for the arrangement of appropriate organisational and psychosocial debriefings and support in-field and/or upon return from assignment, including ongoing follow-up as required?			
• Are resources and support provided to the assignee to begin anticipating their own integration back into family and community upon assignment end?			
• Does the organisation ensure appropriate psychosocial resources are provided to an assignee's family and community members in order to prepare for the re-entry and re-integration process?			
• Are assignment critical incident, evacuation and medical/family emergency plans and policies up to date, accessible, and adequately resourced by the organisation?			
• Are systems in place that enable organisational feedback and learning to be incorporated into future assignment selection and preparation?			
• Is the exit policy up to date and regularly reviewed for organisational and operating context?			

PHASE 6:   *POST-ASSIGNMENT*
DECOMPRESSION

ACTION	No	Partly	Yes
• Are plans and processes in place to support a gradual exit and re-entry strategy consistent with good health outcomes and appropriate psychosocial risk management?			
• Are budgetary and resource provisions made for an intermediary geographical space or 'decompression zone' between assignment location and home base, to support a gradual transition and adjustment?			
• Are the needs of the assignee, identified during assignment exit preparation, incorporated into decompression plans?			
• Are managers appropriately trained and skilled for their role in supporting decompression processes?			
• Are structured and unstructured management activities in place to support immediate and unplanned for personal needs identified by the assignee during this time?			
• Are organisational and management resources and support provided to the assignee to implement a personal re-entry and psychosocial risk management plan, enabling the most effective adjustment back into family and community upon assignment end?			
• Do managers tailor effective advocacy and promotion of the benefits of decompression, self-management practices, and use of peer support networks to the needs of the assignee?			
• Are decompression processes planned for and delivered in such a way that they are inclusive and culturally appropriate?			
• Do policies acknowledge and manage the psychosocial risks inherent in sudden and unplanned re-entry into the home country/community environment?			
• Are managers trained for any special considerations in supporting unplanned exits and evacuations?			
• Is the policy on unplanned exits and decompression options up to date and regularly reviewed for organisational and operating context?			

PHASE 7:	POST-ASSIGNMENT
RE-ENTRY	

ACTION	*No*	*Partly*	*Yes*
• Do policies exist to ensure routine post-assignment follow-up to assignees is made available and that managers understand their responsibilities in supporting this process?			
• Is a system in place to ensure managers and/or organisational representatives are appropriately skilled, trained and resourced to conduct a re-entry debriefing and ongoing assignment re-integration support?			
• Do processes exist for the arrangement of appropriate organisational and psychosocial debriefings and support in-field and/or upon return from assignment, including ongoing follow-up as required?			
• Is a debriefing method and information recording process used to relay information to the organisation that will inform future assignees and/or policy?			
• Does the manager provide recognition and acknowledgement of performance and achievements of the assignee in a meaningful way on behalf of the organisation?			
• Are formal and informal peer support resources and referrals provided to the assignee?			
• Is provision made for the assignment manager and/or organisational representatives to follow-up with the assignee post-debrief to assist and facilitate effective re-entry?			
• Does the organisation ensure appropriate psychosocial resources are provided to the assignee's family and community members in order to assist the re-entry and re-integration process?			
• Is provision made for follow-up of any additional support and resource needs of the in-field team, as identified during debriefing?			
• In the case of critical incidents or sudden exits, are organisational and specialist debriefing and support provisions and information resources in place to support assignee recovery?			
• Do policies factor in any special considerations or support needs for local or national staff returning to their communities at the end of assignment?			
• Are policies for re-entry support regularly reviewed and updated?			

ACTION	No	Partly	Yes
• Do policies exist to ensure routine longer term follow-up to assignees is made available and that managers understand their responsibilities in supporting this process?			
• Are there appropriate systems in place to guide managers about when and how to follow-up at appropriate intervals post-assignment?			
• Are assignees supported to anticipate re-integration challenges (including throughout the assignment cycle) and provided opportunity for follow-up psychosocial support as required?			
• Is provision made for ongoing manager/organisational follow-up (formal and/or informal) with the assignee?			
• Are opportunities available to the assignee for phased provision of psychosocial support, whether general assignment re-integration or critical incident recovery, in accordance with accepted psychological recovery best practice?			
• After final contact with the assignee is there a process to summarise key learnings and relay information back to the organisation that will inform future policy and practice?			
• Is the policy regarding longer term follow-up support needs (for those assignees who do need this) up to date and regularly reviewed for organisational and operating context?			
• Are re-integration policies and practices sensitive to and inclusive of staff with pre-existing or acquired vulnerabilities or support needs (e.g. mental health issues, language barriers, health issues, disability)?			
• Do policies make provision for culturally appropriate longer term confidential psychological counselling or follow-up support for assignees who faced psychological injury or trauma as a result of their assignment?			