



ReSPA

Regional School
of Public Administration

Working Group Meeting of the
**COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE ON
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

28-29 May 2015

Zagreb (Croatia)

Draft Discussion Paper and Agenda

The role of competencies in professionalising civil services

This discussion paper addresses some of the main topics to be addressed at the next Human Resource Management (HRM) Network meeting. This takes place in Zagreb, Croatia on Thursday 28th and Friday 29th of May 2015.¹

The meeting will explore the use of competencies and a competency model or framework for recruitment, management and promotion in civil and public services. Croatia has recently developed a comprehensive competency approach and the meeting will have the advantage of learning of this process from those who were directly involved in its formulation.

The need for such an approach is indicated in the SEE2020 report “Jobs and Prosperity in the European Perspective” which under Pillar 5, “Governance for Growth” identifies the need to introduce procedures for the continuous improvement of the competence of public officials. This implies clarity around what those competencies are and an understanding of how they are developed and managed.

Traditionally, civil services worldwide have paid more attention to qualifications and given little attention to the competence of the individual either applying for or working in a position. Recruitment emphasised the oral interview as the primary method of selection. Promotion or advancement usually placed a greater emphasis on oral interviews too. Testing, where done, focused on knowledge rather than the individual’s ability to do the work entailed or their potential to develop the capacity so to do.

Civil services began to change radically in the latter years of the last century and carrying on into this one. Increasingly, they are emphasising the competencies that individuals and organisations need to work effectively to deliver benefit to their citizenry. The introduction of a competency framework requires a major strategic shift and their use often forms part of wider public administration reform. A competency framework may serve as the driver for institution change and development.

Competencies are the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attributes that an individual needs to fulfil their role. Some dispute whether attributes should be included in a competency framework as these are perceived as integral to an individual’s personality. They are included here for completeness.

A competency framework relates to individual competencies or the sum of individual competencies that affect the ability to achieve set goals. The competencies in a framework correlate with job performance and can be measured against standards as well as be improved through induction, training, internship, coaching, mentoring and modelling, experience, career counselling and guidance. The framework, therefore, consists of a set of specific competencies, bound together in an integrated way and focused on achieving

¹ This meeting is organised with the assistance of the EU Quality in Public Service project.

specified outcomes. They are sufficiently adaptable and flexible to accommodate role changes for technological, legal or organisational innovation reasons.

Moving towards a competency model or framework

The challenge for a civil service is how to move from its traditional model to a competency-based model or framework. This is where experience from other countries can prove useful and provide the examples and approaches that will help develop a change programme. Government support is essential but so too is the communication of the process to staff and interested stakeholders. While in essence such a move may seem logical and beneficial resistance to such change can be strong as employees fear that they may not have the requisite competencies to fulfil their role.

Where the introduction of a competency framework forms part of a greater strategic reform of the civil service there is a risk that it may become lost in general change process and perceived as an additional option rather than core to the process.

This is why HRM must play a central role in the introduction and implementation of a competency framework. It must be the champion and driver of its introduction but must also police its operation to ensure that it doesn't drift from the core standards established.

Moving from Personnel management to HR management

Previous meetings of the HRM Network have examined how functions move to occupy the role of human resource managers rather than the traditional role of personnel managers. The shift to a competency based framework forms a critical part of this move.

The move to competencies is a strategic one which allows the HR function to examine all work engaged in and clarify what are the competencies needed to do this effectively. The individual's role in an organisation should stem directly from its statement of strategy and the plans developed to put this into effect. It should be possible to link each role in the organisation to its organisational intent.

This network has already recognised the challenges faced in moving from a personnel management role to a HR management approach. The latter is seen as strategic and proactive with a focus on linking people management to the organisation's long-term interests. The development of a competency-based approach gives a solid foundation to this move.

A core benefit of a competency approach is that it allows for objective, unbiased and evidence-based assessment when recruiting or evaluating candidates. Such assessment becomes:

- Consistent – each candidate or staff member’s experience is comparable across the organisation
- Based on job-relevant material – the individual has a clear view of what is entailed and has the opportunity to demonstrate their job relevant competencies
- Structured – each evaluation follows a set structure which measures against set requirements.

The above characteristics are essential in an independent, professional civil service. They will only be attained, managed and developed by a HR management approach and not by a traditional personnel function.

Who should attend?

This HRM network meeting is intended for two permanent members each from the ReSPA member states and Kosovo² primarily members who attended the previous meetings in Belgrade, Serbia and Becici, Montenegro. These should be:

1. Head of national training institution/ head of department for capacity building in the relevant Ministry in charge of Public Administration; and
2. Senior Official responsible for HR Policy in the relevant Ministry in charge of Public Administration.

The participants are invited to:

- Participate fully in the discussion and workshop sessions
- Provide inputs for future network needs and activities and identify the steps needed to achieve them.

Objectives

The overall objective for this meeting is to present best practice in competency development and management and afford the participants the opportunity to compare and contrast their own activities in this regard with those in other countries. They will also have the opportunity to get practical advice on developing their own competency model. This will be achieved by examining how competency models and frameworks are established and operated in civil services facing or that have faced challenges similar to those now facing the participants’ own services. Specifically, it will examine:

- The creation of national competency frameworks, their operation and development (Croatia and Ireland)
- The application of competencies in a recruitment process using ReSPA’s recruitment of programme managers as a model

² This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

- Developing competencies for present and future top managers in national civil services

The meeting will identify practical outputs and solutions for individual civil services through facilitated discussions and work groups.

Content and approach

The meeting will use an open and participative approach. There will be formal presentations followed by an opportunity to ask questions and raise issues with the presenters. The intent is knowledge and experience sharing and the format will facilitate this as much as possible.

The morning of the first day will explore the establishment of a competency framework and will use Croatia's recent experience as an example. It will work through the process of competency identification and development, the methodologies used, the types and variety of competency developed and the STARR method used to assess competency attainment.

A presentation on the Irish experience will follow in day one. This will examine the establishment of a competency framework in that country as part of a programme of civil service reform. It will also explore the framework's development and the issues that emerged. It will look at where the system is now; how it is working and possible future directions. The presenter will also draw on experience garnered in the European Personnel Selection Office (EPSO) to highlight key learning points.

Both sessions will allow time for open discussion and exploration of the material presented.

The second day will concentrate on specific topics relating to competencies. The Quality Public Service (QPS Project) will present the ReSPA experience in recruiting programme managers using a just-developed competency framework. It will explain the selection process and how this differed from more traditional approaches. It will also offer insights into how these competencies are forming the basis of an organisational performance management system.

A second presentation will discuss the competencies that top managers need, what makes these distinct and what competencies future top managers and organisational leaders will need to lead change and development in the public service.

There will be a workshop session involving all participants and presenters whereby two groups will discuss what they have heard and identify what actions they and the network need to take to further their ability to develop and implement a broad-ranging competency framework in their national civil services.

Presenters and facilitators

Andreja Bakula

Andreja Bakula by occupation is a psychologist gaining her Master's degree in 1994. She also holds a Master of Science in the fields of social sciences, economics, management and governance (2008).

She has 21 years of professional experience and has developed a suite of competencies for her roles as: specialist /expert, trainer, head of projects/projects activities, consultant in HRM and HRD fields.

Hers special fields of interest are: performance management, change management and strategic HRM and HRD.

Since 2009. she has worked in Ministry of Public Administration of the Republic of Croatia, and has held the position of head of Service for human resource management and development in civil service since 2012.

Through non-formal education she has become accomplished in the fields of HRM and HRD. She has co-authored articles in specialist journals, on topics relating to her special fields of interest.

Padraig Love

A HR graduate and a Chartered MCIPD, Pádraig holds an MSc in Innovation Management - University of Ulster. As a senior official in Irish Civil Service, he interacted at Board level, in top level interdepartmental fora and in the ministerial/political environment. He played a key role in the establishment/development of the Public Appointments Service (PAS) which is seen as one of the premier public service recruitment bodies in Europe. Seconded to the European Personnel Selection Office - Brussels in 2008, he helped to successfully drive the implementation of a major modernisation programme. Returning to PAS in 2011, he was Head of Corporate Services and Large Volume Recruitment until March 2015. Now an Independent Consultant, he is sharing his experience and expertise with other public bodies.

Tony Bass

Team leader for the Quality in Public Service project aiding ReSPA in achieving it aims. He is a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael and an Associate Professor in the College of Europe. He holds a Masters in HRM from the University of Warwick. Prior to this he held a variety of senior positions in the Irish Civil Service in the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Finance, Marine & Natural Resources, and Tourism, Sport and Recreation. He was a senior lecturer and seconded national expert for Ireland at the European Institute of Public Administration.

Herma Kuperus

Has worked since mid 2011 at the Dutch Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations, DG Organisation and Operational Management for central public administration, Department for Organisational and HR Policy. Before that she was the Seconded National Expert from the Netherlands at EIPA (European Institute of Public Administration) in Maastricht where she spent 4.5 years. She was the deputy director HR-policy, Organisational development and IT of one of the Dutch Ministries until 2006. Before joining the Public Administration she researched and taught, mainly on labour market issues. She studied 'Urban and regional planning' in Delft and Berlin.

AGENDA:

Venue: National School for Public Administration, Zagreb

Day 1 – Thursday, 28th May 2015

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 9.00 – 9.15 | Registration |
| 9.15 – 9.30 | Welcome and introduction: <i>Mr Suad Music Director, Regional School of Public Administration</i> |
| 9.30 – 11.00 | Session I - Presentation on the development of a competency model for the Croatian Civil Service - Ms.Andreja Bakula, the representative of the Ministry for PA in Croatia |
| 11.00 – 11.30 | <i>Coffee break</i> |
| 11.30 – 13.00 | Session II– group discussion on the lessons from the Croatian experience for current Member States facilitated by Andreja Bakula with an emphasis on moving from the traditional personnel role to a HRM model |
| 13.00 – 14.00 | <i>Lunch Break</i> |
| 14.00- 15.30 | Session III Using competencies in the Irish Public Service and the Commission of the European Union – The practicalities, problems and potential.

Mr Pdraig Love former Head of Corporate Affairs, the Public Appointment Service of Ireland. |
| 15.30 – 15.45 | <i>Coffee break</i> |

15.45 – 17.00 **Session IV Group discussion and development of proposals for Member States facilitated by Mr Padraig Love with a special emphasis on the role of the HR function in competency development.**

17.00 *Close of Day 1*

17.15 - *Social event (sightseeing) - tbc*

Day 2 – Friday 29th May 2015

9.00 – 9.45 **Session V Presentation on the use of a competency framework in recruitment, the ReSPA experience - Presentation by Mr Tony Bass, Team Leader, Quality Public Service project, ReSPA.**

9.45 – 11.00 **Competencies of top managers for today and tomorrow and developing future competencies - Presentation by Herma Kuperus, Strategic Advisor, the Ministry for the Interior and Kingdom Relations, the Netherlands**

11.00 – 11.15 *Coffee break*

11.15 – 12.15 **Workshop: applying a competency model in the Western Balkans – putting the theory into practice. Led by all presenters. There will be two working groups**

12.15- 12.30 **Rapporteurs present findings to plenary session**

12.30 – 13.00 **Conclusions and summary of the two day's work**

13.00- 14.00 *Lunch*

Departure of participants