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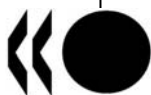
**MANAGING COMPETENCIES IN GOVERNMENT: STATE OF THE ART PRACTICES AND ISSUES
AT STAKE FOR THE FUTURE**

This document is the revised version of the document presented at the annual meeting of the Public Employment and Management Working Party in December 2009 with cote number GOV/PGC/PEM(2009)2.

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**Managing Competencies in Government:
State of the Art Practices
and Issues at Stake
for the Future**

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Prof. Dr. Annie Hondeghem

FOREWORD

The OECD Public Employment and Management working party (PEMWP) is a unique high-level practitioner-based forum, providing direction for an analytical work programme and a collaborative forum of senior practitioners seeking to address current challenges affecting public services. The OECD work on the management of competencies was carried out at the request of the PEMWP. A preliminary version of this paper was presented to and discussed at the PEMWP in its annual meeting in December 2009.

Competency management is used in the public sector in many OECD countries as it has proved to be an effective way of: (i) defining the abilities and behaviours needed for people to do their jobs well; and (ii) linking a number of key human resource management activities to ensure that an organisation is staffed by competent people who perform effectively. The focus of this document is competency management at the national level of government. The report describes some of the main features of competency management from a comparative perspective by examining various written sources from academics, practitioners, and official documents.

The countries examined in this report include Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The OECD is grateful to group of academics and practitioners who provided substantial inputs for the development of this project:

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The study was led by Elsa Pilichowski and Oscar Huerta Melchor (OECD Secretariat), under the supervision of Barry Anderson (OECD Secretariat). The report was written by Sophie Op de Beeck and Annie Hondeghem from the Public Management Institute at the Catholic University of Leuven, Belgium.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report gives an overview of current practices in the management of competencies in the public sector. Three objectives were pursued in this study. First, finding out how governments are managing their competencies in core administrations. Second, analysing the new tools and practices in the most advanced OECD countries. And third, forecasting on the competencies governments will need in the future. In order to examine these issues, case studies were developed in nine OECD countries: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These countries were selected because they are considered to have a mature competency management system.

Origin of competency management. Like most movements, competency management has no single origin. During the 1980s, competency management was first introduced in the US and the UK, parallel to the beginning of New Public Management, and as a response to the organisational and cultural changes taking place. Since the end of the 1990s, competency management has become a real trend in government. Most of the selected OECD countries introduced competency management as a part of a broader reform or change process. Competencies were meant to change the traditional personnel management into strategic human resource management.

Raising the case for competency management in the public service. The main reason for introducing competency management in the public service is that it provides leverage for change. Another often cited reason is that competencies can be used as powerful communication tool because they provide a common language and common understanding of the behaviours needed to achieve organisational objectives. Furthermore, competency management increases the employability of public servants. Overall, the reasons for introducing a competency management system in government lie in the many benefits it entails.

Competency Management as a Basis for Strategic Human Resource Management.

Competency modelling. In order to use competencies as a strategic HRM tool, they need to be integrated into a competency model or framework. All selected OECD countries, except for France, have a centrally developed competency model. The senior civil service in particular seems to be considered as a special target group of competency management in the public sector. Furthermore, the competency frameworks only contain behavioural competencies, and hardly no technical competencies. Special attention should be given to public service values, such as commitment and integrity, which can play an important role as core competencies.

Development. Overall, the competency frameworks in the selected countries are designed through a process of ‘trial and error’. A basic framework is developed, which is then evaluated and adjusted based on comments from different stakeholders.

HR governance. The responsibility for the implementation of competency management mainly lies with the agencies or departments. However, they are guided and advised by a central personnel agency.

Competency management and the various HR processes. Competencies and competency frameworks can be used in different HR processes. In the selected OECD countries, competency management is mainly

concentrated on recruitment and selection, training and development, succession planning, and career guidance. The use of competencies for performance evaluation and remuneration purposes remains limited.

Three dimensions of integrated competency management. The successful implementation of a consistent and unambiguous competency management system requires three dimensions of integration: vertical integration (alignment with the strategy), horizontal integration (integration of the various HR processes), and the implementation throughout the organisation. Although all countries are committed to these three dimensions of integration, a holistic approach to competency management is not yet established.

A roadmap for implementing competency management. This roadmap brings together some guidelines that are important in the introduction, development, and implementation of competency management. Five steps are identified: step 1 – deciding to introduce competency-based management; step 2 – organising, planning and communicating the shift to competency management; step 3 – identifying competencies and developing competency models for the specified target groups; step 4 – integrating competencies into various HR processes; and step 5 – revising and updating the competency management system on a regular basis.

Barriers and limitations of competency management. The main difficulties of competency management lie in identifying competencies and constructing the competency framework, and in ensuring the commitment and participation of senior and middle management, as well as employees. In order to overcome the barriers and limitations of competency management, it is important to take into account the factors for success. Some of the key success factors are: a well thought-out reason behind the introduction of competency management; paying attention to the specificity of the public sector; complying with the three dimensions of integration; and review and continued interest.

Recent developments and competencies for the future. New practices are continuously being unfolded and current applications modified or expanded. One trend that is occurring is the adjustment of current competency models or the development of additional models. Another occurrence is the development of a complete set of job descriptions, including competency profiles. In addition, programmes for the valorisation of experience through competencies and for the assessment of civil servants' competencies have recently been introduced.

Furthermore, the future competencies that are needed to address 21st century challenges were analysed. Based upon an explorative study of the future competencies eight 'key' competencies were identified and clustered into four meta-competencies: creative thinking, flexibility, cooperation, and strategic thinking. These future competencies all imply 'change management' and seem to be mainly suitable for leadership positions. Planning for the future competencies that are mentioned is the next step in securing a competent workforce now and in the future.

Conclusions and challenges ahead. Although it continues to evolve, competency management is now fairly mature and well integrated into the governments' HR system. The level of maturity of competency management, however, is associated with the three dimensions of integration. The main problem here lies in the third dimension of integration: implementation of competency management throughout the organisation. Overall, OECD countries experience difficulties in the implementation of centrally developed HR tools in their agencies. This leads to marked variation among the agencies with respect to the extent and intensity to which competency management is being implemented. The future of competency management in government, however, seems guaranteed as it has the potential of playing a central role in the management approaches of the public service. Still, additional research is needed in order to determine the future directions.

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this document is competency management in the public sector. The goal of competency management is identifying employees' competencies and then deploying and developing those competencies in an optimal way. Competency management is, however, not an objective in itself, but a means to develop an integrated HR policy. By facilitating horizontal (aligning HR activities) and vertical (aligning HR and the organisational strategy) integration, competency management serves as leverage for a more strategic human resource management (HRM) (De Prins & Melis, 2005).

This study concerns a review of practices in the management of competencies in OECD countries. The report describes some of the main features of competency management from a comparative perspective. The issue of competencies will be developed through the lenses of the challenges posed to government today (financial crisis, ageing society, globalisation, etc.). The study is mostly focused on answering **three key questions**:

1. How do governments manage their competencies in core administrations? What challenges do they meet? What policies are in place?
2. What are the new tools and practices in the most advanced OECD countries?
3. How are countries preparing for the future? What are the competencies countries will need in the future? How do they plan for future competencies?

To answer these three key questions, case studies were developed in ten OECD countries: **Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States**. The scope of this study concerns the national government of each country. These countries were selected because they are considered to have a mature competency management system. They have passed the stage of development and some have recently been adjusting and/or expanding their existing competency management system.

To examine these issues, different **sources** were consulted: reports of academics and practitioners (local experts), academic literature, and official documents. Also, a questionnaire on competency management was developed, which was distributed to experts in each country (see Annex 2). By comparing the answers, a comprehensive overview of how competencies are managed in government was established. This report also includes the comments and suggestions made on an early version of this paper during the 2009 meeting of the Public Employment and Management working party.

The main part of this report is **structured around six chapters**. In the first chapter, the origin and definitions of competency management is described, including the difference between a functional approach and HRM. In the second chapter, the reasons for introducing competency management in the public service are discussed. The third chapter elaborates on competency management as a basis for strategic human resource management. In this part, the application of competencies in the various HR processes, the degree of vertical and horizontal integration, and the development of competency models are discussed. Also, a roadmap for introducing competency management is explained. Chapter four identifies the barriers and limitations of competency management, but also introduces some key success factors. In chapter five, an overview is given of the most recent developments and possible innovations taking place

in the OECD countries. The future competencies that are needed to address 21st century challenges are analysed, and workforce planning is brought in as a means to plan for those future competencies. The sixth, and final, chapter of the report concludes with the current status of competency management in the public sector.

1. ORIGIN AND DEFINITIONS OF COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT

Competency management is a practice that becomes more and more important in both private and public organisations, helping them to attract and develop talented employees, identify the right person for a job, performing succession planning, training analysis, and other core human resource (HR) functions (Draganidis & Mentzas, 2006). In the public sector, competency management has become a real trend. It involves a new way of looking at careers. Traditionally careers were based on qualifications, exams, and seniority. In a competency-based system, careers are based on the ‘assets’ people have for the organisation. They are themselves responsible, to a high degree, for developing their competencies (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005).

Origin of Competency Management

Like most movements, the competency movement has no single origin. The concept of competency has been around for centuries and can be traced back to the early Romans, who practiced a form of competency profiling in attempts to detail the attributes of a ‘good Roman soldier’. In the mediaeval guilds, apprentices learned skills by working with a master and were awarded credentials when they reached the standards of workmanship associated with and set by the trade (Draganidis & Mentzas, 2006; Horton, 2000b).

The introduction of competency-based approaches within the corporate environment initiated around 1970 and their development and use since then has been rapid (Draganidis & Mentzas, 2006). The distinguished Harvard’s psychologist **David McClelland** is credited with introducing the idea of ‘competency’ into the human resource literature. It was McClelland who proposed to test for competency, as a counterargument to the growing dissatisfaction with intelligence testing and the traditional job analytic approaches to personnel selection (McClelland, 1973).

Competency management first appeared as an idea **in the private sector** in the United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) in the 1980s. The environmental context out of which the competency movement emerged was the same in both countries, i.e. changing technology, increasing competition, declining profitability, and the search for competitive advantage and improved performance (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005; Horton, 2000b).

In both countries, there were **national skills initiatives**. At first, there was a move to improve the standards and performance of their education systems. These were seen as failing both industry and young people by not meeting the needs of the labour market or equipping young people with appropriate knowledge and skills to gain employment and do a good job. Later, attention turned to the labour force itself and its lack of skills. Both countries moved to raise the level of training in the workplace by setting down national standards across all occupations. The UK introduced a system of National Vocational Qualifications led by industry itself and designed to establish standards of performance in each industrial sector. The US followed the British example and established a National Skills Standards Board in 1994 (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005; Horton, 2000b).

A second, but linked, strand in the US response to declining competitiveness was the investigation into **managerial competency**. A report for the American Management Association by a firm of

management consultants, McBer Associates, identified what appeared to be the characteristics of the most successful managers in American companies. The author, Richard Boyatzis (1982), concluded from his research that there was no single factor but a range of factors that differentiated successful from less successful managers: competencies. He produced a competency model that consisted of 19 generic characteristics grouped into five clusters covering goal and action, human resource management, leadership, focus on others, and directing subordinate groups. His work had a major impact on management thinking in the US, and was soon exported to the UK through management consultancy firms, educational institutions and American companies located in the UK (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005; Horton, 2000b). Although the competency movement originated in the US and the UK, it is now an international phenomenon and is increasingly practised throughout the OECD countries and beyond (Horton, 2000b).

Despite the similar developments in competency management, there is a **terminological confusion** that plagues the competency movement. Its origin lies in the different perceptions underlying the US and UK approaches to competency (Horton, 2000b; Lodge & Hood, 2005).

In the **UK**, the term '**competence**' (plural 'competences') was adopted to indicate the range of standards linked to occupational performance. Occupational competence is defined as the ability to apply knowledge, understanding, practical and thinking skills to achieve effective performance to the standards required in employment. This includes solving problems and being sufficiently flexible to meet changing demands (Horton, 2000b). This approach was concerned with the more concrete identification of those factors that were needed to perform, according to accepted views of good practice at a range of vocational levels (Lodge & Hood, 2005).

In the **US**, the 'y' spelling of '**competency**' (plural 'competencies') was associated with developments in social psychology that emerged in the late 1960s. The US approach to competency stressed the importance of identifying and improving those individual behavioural attitudes that distinguished excellent from merely adequate performance (Horton, 2000b; Lodge & Hood, 2005).

This differentiation between superior and less effective performance was clearly expressed in Boyatzis' (1982) definition of competency: "the behavioural characteristics of an individual that are causally related to effective or superior performance in a job". The **fundamental difference** between the US and UK approaches was the US search for 'excellence' and the exceptional compared to the British systematic identification of the skills needed to perform a role, which can be observed and assessed and, therefore, trained and developed. This has been described as "the difference between drivers of performance and standards of work" (Roberts, 1997, p. 70). Although this distinction is clear-cut, differences between both approaches became blurred during the 1990s (Horton, 2000b; Lodge & Hood, 2005).

The first steps of **competency management in the public sector** are also found in the US and the UK during the 1980s. This paralleled the introduction of New Public Management (UK) and Entrepreneurial or Re-engineered Government (US), and was a response to the organisational and cultural changes taking place. As variants of New Public Management spread throughout Europe and the OECD countries, strategic HRM and competency management became ideas in good currency (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005). A 2002 study of competency management in the public sector (Horton *et al.*, 2002), however, revealed that at the end of the 20th century it was not yet a universal practice even in those countries, such as the UK, which had led the way. Belgium, the Netherlands, and Finland were in the process of adopting it, but on a very selective basis. France, Italy, and Germany were only at the stage of identifying the need while the countries of Eastern Europe were seeking to establish more traditional systems of public administration in their post-communist transition to liberal democracies and market economies.

At this moment, each of the OECD countries studied in this report has introduced competency management to some degree. At the end of the 1990s, competency management experienced a boost in the public sector. In countries such as Australia, Belgium, and Korea, for example, the first signs of competency management appeared in their national government in the year 1999. In most cases, competency management was introduced as a **part of a broader reform or change process**. In Australia, the 1999 Public Service Act represents the changes that had been occurring over the past 25 years. That Act also introduced the shift to a values-based environment through the introduction of values, which form the broader framework for the public service as a whole. In Belgium, the revolutionary Copernicus plan was introduced to reform the public administration, including its personnel policy. Competency management was a fundamental element in the modernisation of the personnel policy. Also, the Korean government (1998-2002) thought it urgent to initiate government reforms to enhance competencies and to create a more competitive workforce. The ultimate goal was an increase in Korea's national competitiveness. Additionally, the UK, as one of the precursors concerning competency management in government, was influenced by New Public Management ideas in the reform of the role of the state and its civil service.

What is Competency Management?

There is now a substantial literature on competency management, but a great variety and a clear lack of consensus on the meaning and definition of competencies (Kirton & Healy, 2009; Nunes *et al.*, 2007). Below, we have listed a selection of definitions of the **competency** concept (table 1).

Table 1. Definitions of the Competency Model

Author	Concept
Boyatzis (1982)	A job competency is an underlying characteristic of an employee (i.e. motive, trait, skill, aspects of one's self-image, social role, or a body of knowledge), which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job.
Sparrow (1997)	Competencies are people's behavioural repertoires, i.e. their sets of behavioural patterns, which are related to work performance and distinguish excellent from average performers.
Spencer <i>et al.</i> (1994)	A competency is a combination of motives, traits, self-concepts, attitudes or values, content knowledge or cognitive behaviour skills; any individual characteristic that can be reliably measured or counted and that can be shown to differentiate superior from average performers.
Van Beirendonck (2009)	Competencies are observable characteristics in the form of applied knowledge or actual behaviour, which, in one way or another, contribute to successful functioning in a specific role or function.
Woodruffe (2000)	Competencies are the set of behaviour patterns that the incumbent needs to bring to a position in order to perform its tasks and functions with competence.

Vakola *et al.* (2007) merged several definitions and stated that "an individual job-related competency is the underlying set of behavioural patterns of an employee related to effective and/or superior work performance, acting both at individual and collective level (effective/superior performance both in solitary and inter-personal work), and that provide the organisation in which they are implemented and applied with sustainable competitive advantage."

In the management of their competencies, most of the selected OECD countries make use of their own definition of competency. A few common elements can be identified in their definitions. Australia, Belgium, Canada, Korea, the Netherlands, and the US consider competencies as behavioural characteristics that are observable. Attributes such as knowledge, skills, attitudes and other personal characteristics underlie competencies. Some of the countries also mention that competencies are related to high/effective performance or performance to a prescribed standard. This is in line with the definition from Vakola *et al.* (2007), which is referred to above.

A comprehensive definition of **competency management** is given by Income Data Services:

Competency management, sometimes called competency-based management, involves identifying the competencies that distinguish high performers from average performers in all areas of organisational activity, constructing a framework and using it as the foundation for recruitment, selection, training and development, rewards and other aspects of employee management. (IDS, 1997)

The Shift to Competency-Based Management

In the professional HRM literature the notion of competency management has taken such a strong hold that some authors have described the **move from job-based to competency-based organisations** as a paradigmatic shift (see Lawler, 1994) (Brans & Hondeghem, 2005). According to Lawler's (1994) perspective, the difference is in fact a matter of emphasis on people's characteristics and on organisational performance rather than fixed jobs. A changing world is asking for flexibility and autonomy, and job-based HR practices are not giving an adequate answer (Nunes *et al.*, 2007). Table 2 shows how subtle, and at the same time deep, the differences between competency and traditional approaches can be, concerning job description, selection, development, appraisal, and rewards.

Table 2 – Difference Between a Functional and a Competency-Based Approach to HRM

Functional approach	Competency approach
<i>Job description</i>	<i>Competency profile</i>
What is done? Cluster of core tasks and functional requirements (knowledge, skills, responsibility)	What is done, why and how? Cluster of core tasks and competency requirements (knowledge, skills, personality, attitude, values and norms, incentives)
<i>Selection</i>	<i>Selection</i>
How is the person? Selection in order to realise a fit between the function and the individual Selection in order to fill a vacancy Selection criteria based on the current function Selection criteria focusing on knowledge, personality, and attitude	How does the person function? Selection in order to realise a fit between the individual and the organisation Selection with a view of growth and development of an organisation in the long term Selection criteria based on the future Selection criteria: knowledge, personality, and attitude, but also skills, values, and behaviour
<i>Development</i>	<i>Development</i>
Development of knowledge Aimed at hierarchical promotion With a view of raising job skills	Development of knowledge, ability, and willing Aimed at horizontal mobility Aimed at the maximum use of human potential With a view of developing skills and behaviour
<i>Appraisal</i>	<i>Appraisal</i>
Focus on functioning in the job Focus on dedication	Focus on functioning in the job, performance, results, and potential Focus on behaviour
<i>Reward</i>	<i>Reward</i>
Pay according to the job	Pay according to work

The relative weight of the function determines the wage
Focus on responsibility, knowledge and seniority

The required competencies for an organisation determine the wage
Focus on output

Source: Limbourg, 1997

The **difference between a functional and a competency-based approach** appears to be quite clearly defined in the table above. The major difference between competency and traditional approaches to personnel management is that competency management stresses inputs, including behavioural characteristics of staff, while performance management is about outputs and performance on the job. However, when certain competencies are selected for a job description, they are supposed to have an impact on performance (cf. definition of ‘competency’). Competencies are the inputs that lead to the necessary performance (outputs). Therefore, the link between competencies and outputs is made indirectly. Competency management also represents a cultural change towards greater employee self-direction and responsibility, and the search for excellence rather than standard performance (Horton, 2000a). Furthermore, the focus is not today, but tomorrow. As organisations are changing so rapidly, it is important to ask what kind of people are needed in the future (Hondegheem & Vandermeulen, 2000).

Hondegheem and Vandermeulen (2000) question, however, whether there is really a fundamental difference between a functional approach and a competency-based approach. They suggest it might be better to consider both approaches as complementary as it is the actual case of Belgium (federal level). Competency management does not imply that a functional approach is not valid, but rather that it should not be the sole basis of personnel management.

2. RAISING THE CASE FOR COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

Public sector organisations introduce competency management for several reasons. Change appears to be a relevant factor determining the need to implement competency management practices.

Lawler (1994) refers to **four forces** leading to competency management. First, the nature of work has changed from mass production to consumer focused production, knowledge, and service work. Second, globalisation implies growing competition in which human resources play the role of key competitive assets. Third, the changing environment implies a growing competition between organisations. Fourth, flatter organisational structures imply a revision of traditional organisational careers. These factors explain the growing importance of competencies and competency management in private organisations, but they can also be applied to a certain extent to the public sector (Hondegheem & Vandermeulen, 2000; Lawler, 1994; Nunes *et al.*, 2007).

Additionally, competency management is seen as a vehicle for bringing about cultural change and injecting more flexibility, adaptability, and entrepreneurship into organisations (Hondegheem *et al.*, 2005). Governments usually introduce competency management as part of a process of a broader cultural and organisational reform, and use it to provide **leverage for change** (Van Schaardenburgh & Van Beek, 1998). Public administration systems throughout the world have been subjected to major reforms over the last 20 years and are likely to continue to change in the future. Competency management is supposed to support this change process. It is seen as leverage to transform a traditional bureaucracy into a modern and

flexible organisation (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005). In a bureaucracy, the civil servant is just an anonymous individual in a huge administration. A competency-based approach to personnel management puts the individual at the centre of attention and underlines the importance of human resources to reach the objectives of the organisation. Competency management can, therefore, be a tool to change the bureaucratic culture in a public organisation into a more personalised organisational culture (Hondeghe & Vandermeulen, 2000).

The ascendancy of competency management in the public sector might also be caused by the increasing competition for qualified personnel with the private sector. The public sector thus faces similar pressures as private businesses in their HR practices. Alternatively, the public sector may be **copying private sector practices** simply because competency management is fashionable (Brans & Hondeghe, 2005). Several observers of competency management in the public sector (see Horton *et al.*, 2002) believe, however, that public sector organisations do not merely copy private sector management modes, nor are they either passively going along with whatever consultants suggest or rushing to catch up with the winners of international good practice prizes (Brans & Hondeghe, 2005).

Furthermore, competencies provide a **common language** and common understanding of the necessary and desirable behaviours needed to achieve organisational objectives. Therefore, competencies can be used as powerful communication tools in order to translate business strategy and changes in structure and processes into behavioural terms that people can understand and, therefore, implement (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005; Vakola *et al.*, 2007).

In a fragmented public sector, competency frameworks are also seen as integrative instruments to maintain coherence. Ideally, competency management furthers both **vertical and horizontal integration** (cf. *infra*). Vertical integration ties individual employees and their behaviour to the mission and strategy of the organisation. Horizontal integration ties each component or instrument of the HR cycle, from recruitment to reward, closely together in one frame of reference and language. Competency management and competency frameworks thus promise to facilitate central steering in a decentralised public sector (Brans & Hondeghe, 2005).

Competency management also increases the **employability of public servants** and hence their productivity now and in the future. If the organisation decides to run a different course, then the flexible civil servants are better able to shape that new direction. In this way, the organisation reduces uncertainty by means of its employees, which can help the organisation survive in bad times (Horn, 2004).

The general intentions when introducing competency management in the selected OECD countries are numerous and divergent: e.g. creating flexibility (Australia and Belgium), increasing efficiency and effectiveness of people management (Australia and Canada), providing clarity over employees' development priorities (Denmark), overcoming the classic bureaucratic model (France), strengthening government competitiveness (Korea), creating a flexible and highly professional civil service that easily adapts to the challenges confronting government (the Netherlands), a vehicle for organisational and cultural change (Belgium and UK), or strategic alignment between the individual and the organisation (US).

The reason for introducing a competency management system in government often lies in the many benefits it entails. Some of the benefits of competency management mentioned in the literature are (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005; Marrelli, 1998; Trinder, 2008):

- Emphasising human resources as essential to the organisation's prosperity and longevity
- Moving away from narrowly defined functions and jobs to integrated processes and teamwork

- Creating the flexibility to quickly adapt to changing customer needs and business conditions through competency-based deployment of employees
- Consistency in identifying and measuring people quality at all stages of the employment cycle
- Providing employees with opportunities to develop and apply new knowledge and skills in exchange for their work and commitment
- Competency standards can test the effectiveness of training, improve recruitment, identify training gaps that should lead to improved efficiency, productivity, worker safety, and employee retention
- Creating a culture of continuous learning
- Substituting lateral growth for career ladders and promotions

Nunes, Martin and Duarte (2007) classify the benefits of competency management according to several interest groups. This shows the added value of competency management for each stakeholder in the organisation.

Table 3 – Benefits of Competency Management by Interest Groups

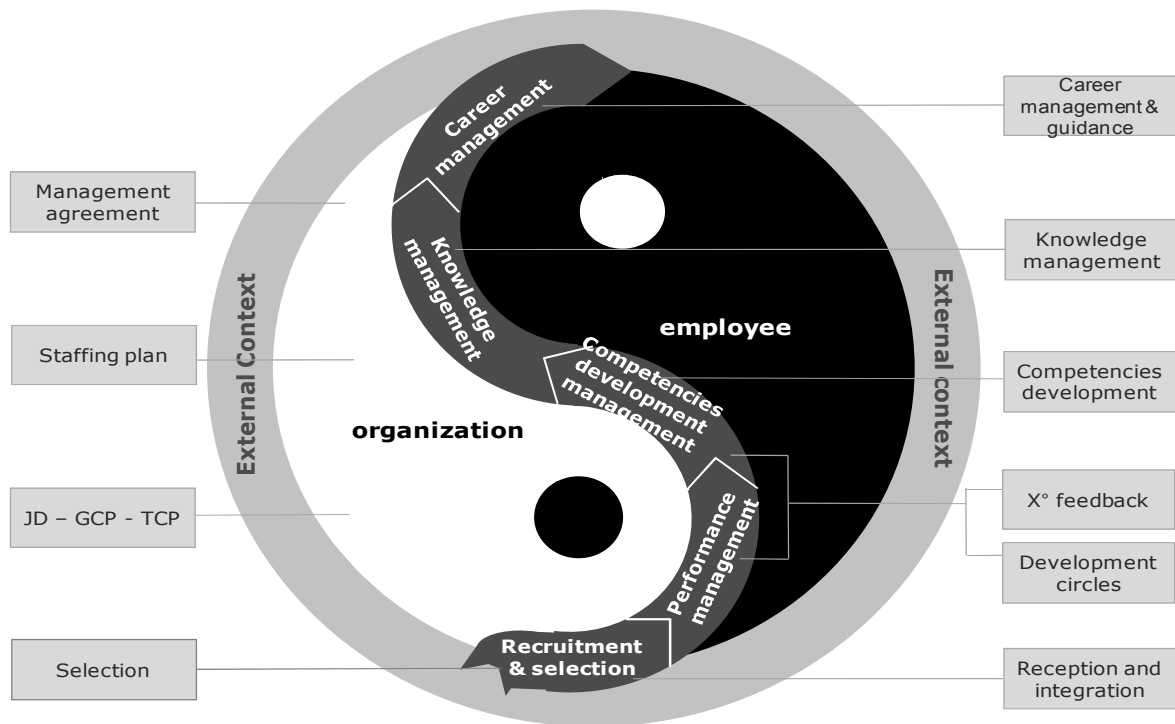
Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fair people management system • Greater encouragement for personal development • Better understanding of what is necessary to achieve high performance at work • Better understanding of the organisation's mission and their role played in the organisation
Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides an additional instrument for motivating collaborators • Shares a common language on people management • More transparent and appropriate criteria to make selection, performance evaluation, or training and development decisions
Organisations/ the state in general	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows to identify the organisational activities that need the most improvement • Provides clarity over the objectives to be met and the way to meet them • Allows to better integrate the organisation's requirements and people's characteristics • Enables the development of a global approach to HRM • Provides more useful instruments for selection, evaluation and training, and development

Some of the benefits of competency management stated by the selected OECD countries are listed below. Generally, these are similar to the benefits mentioned above.

- Common language, consistency across the public service
- Continuity in monitoring the careers of public servants
- A future-oriented perspective on personnel management
- Improved competitiveness of government
- Creating a culture of continuous self development
- Assisting in the management of change
- Useful tool when articulating, in more concrete terms, expectations regarding values and ethics, excellence and people engagement...

Box 1. Employee Life Cycle

Through the life cycle of an employee (inflow – flow – outflow) a competency model serves as a roadmap for aligning HR strategy with organisational imperatives. In other words, competency management is present and key to every component. It starts with an initial “0”-measurement and continues by tracking and assessing the further development for becoming the “best (wo)man in the best place” (FOD P&O, 2009).



JD: Job Description

GCP: General Competency Profile

TCP: Technical Competency Profile

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government 2009.

The reasons for and benefits of introducing a competency management system that are mentioned here cover the situation in the OECD countries quite well. However, in order to give an overview of more specific reasons behind the introduction of competency management, box 2 describes the reasons or benefits that were compelling in the decision made by some of the OECD countries.

Box 2. The case for competency management in selected OECD countries

Australia. In 2001, the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) (2002; 2003) conducted a three-year longitudinal study of the efficiency and effectiveness of people management in a range of APS agencies. Specifically, it focused on how line managers plan for and manage their staff to help achieve agency and program outcomes; and how the HR function supports people management practices to achieve agency outcomes. This is when ANAO recognised the importance of capability (competency) models to provide a framework for identifying key workforce capability requirements.

Belgium. Competency management in the Belgian federal government was introduced as a crucial element of a broader reform project, the Copernicus plan. In a trajectory of organisational change, it was an attractive and multifaceted tool and promised to be a useful integrative application. Before the introduction of competency management, there were some difficulties in recruitment and retention, and in personnel planning and career advancement due to the classic career systems. Competency management, however, provides the federal administration with a more attractive image in the labour market as well as signalling a move to greater flexibility in career development. It is clear that competency management was picked up by the federal government to lever not only broad organisational change, representing a strong symbolic break with the past, but cultural change as well (Brans & Hondeghem, 2005). In general, it was the intention to introduce change in the career management system. Furthermore, it created a common language between the different organisations and covered the different HR processes (FOD P&O, 2009).

Canada. Since the 1970s the Government of Canada has used various leadership competency profiles. In general, the development and modification of competency profiles in the Public Service of Canada have been motivated by human resources needs as well as the key initiatives and strategies of the Government. The *Profile of Public Service Leadership Competencies* was developed in 1998, in the context of Public Service renewal. Based on 14 leadership competencies, it included for the first time an Assistant Deputy Minister level. The profile was used in staffing and in learning and development for the Executive cadre. It served its purpose very well, however, it was thought to contain too many competencies that, in some cases, were too complex and abstract, and because it was developed in the late 1990s, it did not reflect certain more recent key initiatives such as the Management Accountability Framework (MAF) and the modernisation of human resource management. The Profile needed updating to reflect the fast-paced changes occurring in the Public Service.

Issued in 2005, the *Key Leadership Competencies* Profile, which is currently in use, establishes Values and Ethics as the foundation of leadership and links directly to the Management Accountability Framework – both priorities and key initiatives of the Government. The previous 14 competencies were collapsed into 4 main competencies and effective behaviours relating to each competency are more concrete and observable. It also includes ineffective behaviours. It extends from the supervisor to the Deputy Minister levels and was augmented in 2009 with a new “Employee” level, thereby covering the full potential of the leadership continuum and thus enabling self-assessment and learning and career planning for all public service employees, regardless of profession, function or level. One more tool for supporting Public Service renewal and its priority on leadership and employee development.

Korea. The traditional Korean civil service was incapable of success in a rapidly changing environment. In 1997, the foreign exchange crisis led to a severe slowdown in the economy, and the insufficient competitiveness of the Korean government was thought to have contributed to the economic crisis (P. S. Kim, 2000). The Korean civil service had been criticised for its lower levels of competitiveness and productivity compared with the Korean private sector (Kim & Kim, 1997). Therefore, the Korean government thought it urgent to initiate government reforms to enhance competencies and to create a more competitive workforce. The Kim Dae-Jung administration (1998-2002) sought to create “a small and efficient but better serving government,” the ultimate goal of which was to increase Korea’s national competitiveness (Namkoong, 2007). Following the major principles of New Public Management, it emphasised small size, competitiveness, openness, and performance (Moon, 2008). It required various ideas and strategies to make the government perform better with a smaller workforce without sacrificing the quality of public service (Kim & Lee 2001). The competency management system in the Korean national government was initiated in this circumstance. In sum, competency management in the Korean national government was considered as one part of reform strategies for strengthening government competitiveness and improving government performance. The benefits of competency management identified by the Korean government include the following:

- Changing to personnel management with a future-oriented perspective
- Improving the competitiveness of the government as a whole by selecting highly competent personnel regardless of seniority and backgrounds

- Realising fairer and competency-centred personnel management through a well-organised method
- Encouraging the civil servants' concerns on competencies and voluntary efforts for developing their competencies
- Measuring and predicting the competencies required in the future in a valid and objective way
- Making competency development possible through active participation in training and education
- Creating a culture of continuous self-development.

Netherlands. In the Dutch central government, competency management, which offered the opportunity to further personal development and help staff adapt to the new challenges, was introduced with several goals in mind (Van der Meer & Toonen, 2005):

- Increase the general employability and development of staff in changing organisations
- Improve the quality of labour and enhance work satisfaction
- Strengthen the bonds and commitment of staff members with the organisations and make the organisation more effective
- Decrease the focus on function and task orientation and hence create a more flexible attitude
- Promote a change in culture in the sense that civil servants are judged by the actual results they accomplish

These goals are in line with the general HRM objectives in the Dutch central government.

United Kingdom. The British civil service embarked upon a competency approach to HRM during the early 1980s. It was one of the first civil services to do so. The election of a Conservative Government in 1979, which was committed to radically reform the role of the state and the civil service, was followed by major restructuring of government departments. Using New Public Management (NPM) ideas, the government proceeded to introduce performance management and measurement to achieve economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. The reforms saw the emphasis move from a concentration on inputs to outputs that called for new skills amongst civil servants. Ideas about competencies and competency management were being disseminated through the management literature and promoted by management consultants influenced by developments in the United States (Farnham & Horton, 2002).

Competency management was clearly a vehicle for organisational and cultural change in the British central government and for the development of a more strategic HRM. The introduction of performance management and performance-related pay were also significant drivers. Furthermore, the reform movement and reforms of HRM stimulated its extension and the movement towards a holistic use of the framework.

Although there are problems with competency management, there is widespread support for its many benefits. Research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2005; 2007) confirmed the earlier findings of research on the civil service (Horton, 2000) that competency management and competency frameworks:

- Enable a common language and standard criteria to be applied across a range of HR functions (holistic approach to HRM)
- Assists both managers and employees in identifying training and development needs
- Enables the organisation to promote its values, goals, and objectives
- Assists in the management of change
- Enables employees to know what is expected of them (transparency)
- Is a corollary of performance management

CIPD also found that competency frameworks are of central importance in providing a framework for the civil servant to take responsibility for their own learning. A recent report for the European Academy of Business Strategy into Leadership Qualities and Management competencies for Corporate Responsibility (2006) found that most world-class organisations use competencies to define and drive high performance. That certainly is true in the UK where competency frameworks are used within systems of performance management.

United States. In the US federal government, competency management was viewed as a tool to provide a common language for addressing desired performance indicators at various managerial levels. It also speaks to the need for strategic alignment between the individual and the organisation. Competency models have also been promoted as means for aiding succession planning by helping to identify individual areas of strength and areas for

improvement, particularly with an advanced career plan in mind. The reliance on competencies reflects a move away from rank-in-position approaches to hiring, which focused on the technical knowledge necessary for performance on one job. Rank-in-person approaches, including competency management, reflect rapidly changing environments that require skills that extend beyond the boundaries of any one job and indicate an individual's ability to adapt and learn (see Rodriguez *et al.*, 2002).

Source: OECD Survey on competency Management in Government 2009.

3. COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT AS A BASIS FOR STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

The rise of competency management happened in the same period as the transformation of the personnel function from a 'low-profile' personnel activity into a strategic human resource partner in the organisation. Coincidence or not? Whatever the case, the characteristics of strategic human resource management make for an ideal basis to introduce competency management.

Strategic human resource management (HRM) is defined as follows: "HRM is a specific approach to personnel management, which aims to find and maintain competitive advantage by deploying highly skilled and involved employees in a strategic manner, and this by using a variety of personnel techniques" (Storey, 1989). Since the evolution to a modern personnel policy, the success of an organisation is, amongst others, dependent on the extent to which people can motivate employees and know how to use their talents and skills in an optimal way. Strategic HRM is also characterised by the involvement of line management as 'people managers'. This is also called the internalisation of personnel management (integration of HR functions into line management). Finally, strategic HRM aims for an internal fit (or horizontal integration) of the different HR functions and an external fit (or vertical integration) with the strategy of the organisation (Lievens, 2006). All of these elements contribute to an organisational mind-set that allows for the introduction of competencies.

In what follows, competency management is discussed with the nine case studies as a guide. Of course, introducing competency management starts with modelling the necessary competencies. After that, the development route and HR governance structure of competency management are described briefly. Furthermore, a lot of attention is paid to the various HR processes in which competencies can be applied. As in strategic HRM, integration is very important in competency management. Therefore, the following section elaborates on the three dimensions of integrated competency management. This chapter ends by giving a roadmap for implementing competency management as a tool for a more strategic HRM.

Competency Modelling

In order to use competencies as a strategic HRM tool, they need to be integrated into a **competency model or framework**. A competency model is the organisation of identified competencies into a conceptual framework that enables the people in an organisation to understand, talk about, and apply the competencies (Marrelli, 1998). A competency model is both a list of competencies and a tool through which competencies are expressed, assessed, and measured (Strebler *et al.*, 1997). A model may be

developed for an entire organisation or just for specific business units, functions, work processes, or jobs within the organisation (Marrelli, 1998). The content of a fully developed competency model includes: categories or clusters of competencies (i.e. a group to which homogeneous and/or similar competencies belong); the competencies that make up each cluster; a definition of each competency; and several behavioural indicators of each competency (i.e. behavioural examples that an individual should demonstrate if the specified competency is possessed) (Draganidis & Mentzas, 2006; Marrelli, 1998).

All selected OECD countries, except for France¹, have a **centrally developed competency model**. In the development of competency models, however, there is a significant difference between target groups. Often, a general competency model is developed for leadership functions (senior civil service), but not for civil servants at lower levels like in the case of Austria. For civil servants at lower levels, competency models are sometimes developed separately in the departments or agencies. The Netherlands, for example, has a decentralised system. Unique to the Australian case is the Human Resource Capability Model, a competency model developed only for HR staff. This framework articulates the capabilities required of highly effective HR staff, including, for example, alignment (HR – business) and credibility. Six countries have developed general competency frameworks that cover their entire civil service: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Korea, the UK and the US. Canada is the only country that has developed a single competency model which applies to all civil servants including senior management. In Belgium there are on-going discussions to introduce one single competency model for senior managers. In most of the other countries, at least two competency models were developed: one for senior management and one for all civil servants. From the above, we can conclude that the senior civil service in particular is considered as a special target group of competency management in the public sector.

Furthermore, we found that these general competency frameworks only contain **behavioural competencies**, while technical competencies are hardly mentioned. Because of the specificity of technical competencies, however, they are often identified at agency/departmental level. In that way, the technical competencies can be totally adjusted to the particular needs of the agency or department.

Table 4 – Competency Models: Country Overview

Country	Competency Model	Target Group
Australia	APS Values Framework Human Resource Capability Model Senior Executive Leadership Capability Model Integrated Leadership System	All Australian public servants HR staff Senior Executive Service All Australian Public Servants
Austria	Competency Model	Senior civil servants
Belgium	Federal Competency Model	All Belgian federal public servants
Canada	Key Leadership Competencies Canada also has several other (government-wide) competency profiles that are managed centrally and target functional groups across their public service. A detailed overview can be found in Annex 1.	All Canadian public servants
Denmark	Code of Public Governance Excellence	Top executives
Japan	Standard Capability to Accomplish Duties (SCAD)	Standard government positions according to the hierarchy of the organisations.
Korea	Government Standard Competency	All Korean civil servants

¹ Because of the absence of a general competency model in the national government, the case of France will be discussed only to a limited extent in the remainder of this report.

	Dictionary Junior Management Competency Model SCS Competency Model	Junior Managers Senior Civil Service
Netherlands	ABD Competency Model	Senior management
United Kingdom	SCS Competency Framework Professional Skills for Government	Senior Civil Service All British civil servants
United States	General competencies for the federal workforce Executive Core Qualifications	All US civil servants Senior management

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

Another finding is that (public service) **values** (e.g. commitment, service, integrity, etc.) can play an important role as core competencies. Australia, Belgium, the Netherlands, the UK, and the US defined values that they consider as core or fundamental competencies for their government and should be accomplished by all civil servants (or by all who reside under the competency model to which the values belong). The Australian government constructed a separate values framework for their civil service. According to them, their focus on values-based management provides them with the necessary flexibility and sets a framework of enduring principles of good public administration. In *Government at a Glance 2009* (OECD, 2009a) it is also said that there is an evolution to a broader focus on public governance, which entails reincorporating basic public values, such as integrity, transparency, accountability, equity, etc. In this way, values are considered as a foundation of the public service.

Box 3. Values-Based Management in Australia

In many respects, Australia's Public Service Act of 1999 represents the culmination of changes that had been occurring over the past 25 years in Australia. The introduction of the 1999 Public Service Act defined a new operating environment for the Australian Public Service (APS) by formalising the devolution of powers to agency heads and the move from a prescriptive rules-based environment to a values-based environment. Moreover, the Act merges the new culture of performance and achievement orientation with the traditional Westminster principles and a modern employment framework. The 1999 Act differs from its predecessors in that it is characterised by (Podger, 2003):

- The replacement of detailed, central rules governing employment, with a principles-based framework based on the articulation of 15 APS Values (see list below), together with a legally enforceable Code of Conduct;
- Giving agency heads the powers of employer, including hire and fire, and classification and remuneration, subject essentially to the same highly flexible employment framework that applies to the private sector;
- Giving the Public Service Commissioner a 'quality assurance' role, including some oversight of the Senior Executive Service, evaluation of how well agencies uphold the APS Values and ensure compliance with the Code of Conduct, and an annual report on the State of the Service to be tabled in the Parliament;
- Giving the Public Service Commissioner a role also in promoting leadership and good people management; and
- Establishing a Merit Protection Commissioner with the power to review certain employment decisions.

Under the 1999 Public Service Act, it is the APS Values (and the Code of Conduct) that provide the broader framework for the APS as a whole. The Values apply across regions, organisational structures, and activities, and underpin the cultural fabric of Australian government agencies. In other words, they are binding to all APS employees. Furthermore, the Values provide the flexibility necessary for the APS to be able to meet different responsibilities and to address change effectively and innovatively. The Values have been designed to suit the specific business needs of the APS. They set a framework of enduring principles of good public administration while giving agencies the capacity to

manage a wide range of functions and respond to environmental factors (APSC, 2003).

In one of her public statements, the former Public Service Commissioner, Helen Williams (1998-2002), stated that the APS Values are a means for the APS to understand and strengthen its capabilities to provide the best possible service to the government and to citizens. Williams also maintained that the Values are “a key tool aimed at creating a climate which enables increased levels of performance, promotes productive and rewarding workplaces, and values the best possible service to government and citizens”(Williams, 1998).

Agency heads are required to uphold and promote the APS Values, and ensure that they are compatible with the framework of their organisation. The first two functions of the Public Service Commissioner spelt out in the PS Act are to evaluate the extent to which agencies incorporate and uphold the APS Values, and to evaluate the adequacy of systems and procedures in agencies for ensuring compliance with the Code of Conduct. The APS Values are thus not just aspirational statements, but are expected to be embedded into agency systems and procedures, and reflected in the culture of the APS (APSC, 2003).

According to the Auditor-General for Australia, Ian McPhee, values and culture should establish the platform for a high-performing public service (McPhee, 2009). The Australian Government justified its **values-based approach** to reforms. In his 2002 speech, the former Public Service Commissioner, Andrew Podger (2002–2004) drew attention to the importance of ‘values-based management’, which is essentially about relationships and behaviours (Podger, 2002):

“Values-based management is becoming increasingly important as managers search for an enduring framework that might support longer term organisational capability development, while allowing more flexibility to make decisions in an environment where the rate of change continues to increase. The emphasis is turning to relationships and personal leadership capabilities and, to use the in-term, ‘emotional intelligence’.”

15 APS values

“The Australian Public Service:

- ...is apolitical, performing its functions in an impartial and professional manner;
- ...is a public service in which employment decisions are based on merit;
- ...provides a workplace that is free from discrimination, and recognises and utilises the diversity of the Australian community it serves;
- ...has the highest ethical standards;
- ...is openly accountable for its actions, within the framework of Ministerial responsibility to the Government, the Parliament, and the Australian public;
- ...is responsive to the Government in providing frank, honest, comprehensive, accurate, and timely advice and in implementing the Government's policies and programmes;
- ...delivers services fairly, effectively, impartially and courteously to the Australian public and is sensitive to the diversity of the Australian public;
- ...has leadership of the highest quality;
- ...establishes workplace relations that value communication, consultation, co-operation, and input from employees on matters that affect their workplace;
- ...provides a fair, flexible, safe, and rewarding workplace;
- ...focuses on achieving results and managing performance;
- ...promotes equity in employment;
- ...provides a reasonable opportunity to all eligible members of the community to apply for APS employment;
- ...is a career-based service to enhance the effectiveness and cohesion of Australia's democratic system of government;
- ...provides a fair system of review of decisions taken in respect of employees.” (APSC, 2009)

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government 2009.

In addition, the **public service specific emphasis** of the several competency models should be highlighted. Only in the UK, there is an absence of any reference to political, ministerial, or parliamentary relationships or public stewardship in their competency framework. The UK frameworks are

organisationally ‘neutral’ and could be used in any private or public organisation. All other countries have some kind of public service specific emphasis in their competency models.

Table 5 – Public Service Specific Competencies

Country	Public service specific competencies
Australia	Public service professionalism and probity
Belgium	Service, loyalty
Canada	Serving with integrity and respect
Denmark	Safeguard the public sector’s legitimacy and democratic values
Korea	Ethics for an official, organisational commitment
Netherlands	Affinity with public sector management (dedication, integrity, political awareness)
United States	Political savvy, public service motivation

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

Finally, out of a comparative analysis of the countries’ competency models, **common competencies** could be identified. Eleven competencies are frequently referred to: strategic thinking, vision, achieving results, building relations, commitment, adaptability, communicating, decision-making, learning, coaching/developing, and teamwork. These competencies can, therefore, be considered as crucial. On the contrary, the US Executive Core Qualifications contain some unique competencies: innovation and creativity, and public service motivation.

The Development of Competency Management

There is not a lot of information available on the development of competency management in the different OECD countries. However, overall it is found that a competency framework is designed through a process of ‘trial and error’. A draft framework is set up, which is then evaluated and adjusted based on the comments that were made by different stakeholders (HR professionals, management, civil servants, trade unions, etc.). In most cases, a competency framework is then created by a group of people, each with his or her specific expertise. Often an external (private) partner is also consulted for specific input on the management of competencies. In box 4 the development of Canada’s competency management is, next to that of Belgium and Korea, described as an example of an intensive and elaborate development process.

Box 4. Development of Competency Management in Belgium, Canada and Korea

Belgium. The introduction of competency management was coordinated by the Federal Public Service Personnel & Organisation (FPS P&O) as part of a participatory approach with the various federal organisations. Some of the methods used in the development of competency management were: thematic working groups (development of methodologies, development of the model...), working groups for the HR processes, organisational implementation through pilot projects, etc. Then competency management was introduced to the organisations and to the employees by different platforms in line with the different target groups (HR staff, line management, public servants of level A, B, C or D ...) through communications, spreading information, training, and so on.

The FPS P&O, however, wasn’t the only party involved in the development and implementation of competency management. As stated above, the FPS P&O and, more specifically, the Directorate-general for the Development of the Organisation and Personnel was responsible for the coordination of the introduction of competency management. They consulted multiple private partners for external expertise, but also worked with internal partners, such as Selor

(recruitment and selection organ), OFO (training institute), and the Directorate-general for Communication. Finally, the different federal organisations made an active contribution according to their needs.

Canada. There has long been considerable interest within the Public Service of Canada for Competency-Based Management (CBM). This interest culminated in the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) publishing a *Framework for Competency-Based Management in the Public Service of Canada* in December 1999.

The framework is the result of work by the Steering Committee on Competency-Based Management in consultation with officials from the Treasury Board Secretariat, the Public Service Commission, the Interdepartmental Committee on Competency-Based Management, functional communities, the Human Resources Council, Bargaining Agents, and other employee representatives. It builds on the experience and efforts of departmental practitioners over the past few years. It also takes into consideration the results of research on private and public sector organisations that apply CBM to their human resource management systems.

The framework was developed in collaboration with the Public Service Commission (PSC). As part of the development process, the PSC conducted a survey of 57 organisations within the Canadian federal sector in 1998. The intent of the survey was to gauge the interest in and status of CBM in these organisations. Results indicated that 32 organisations had launched competency-based projects for at least one human resource application. Also, in general, there were perceived related benefits to the organisation, and growing interest for expanding the concept to a wider population and other human resource activities.

The framework does not prescribe one common model or application but, rather, provides a roadmap of the legislative, policy, and practical parameters within which organisations can build their own CBM systems. It has served to endorse the use of CBM within the Public Service of Canada as one approach to managing people, provided that:

- it is done in a consistent, thorough, and fair manner within the Public Service's unique legislative parameters and sound CBM practices; and
- it is developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, including employees and bargaining agents.

A competency profile is considered the product of in-depth analysis and conceptual thinking. Collaborating with the various stakeholders, such as employees and bargaining agents, is seen as highly important to the process and contributes to the successful implementation and acceptance of the profile. The following essential steps in building a competency profile are recommended:

- Analysis of the strategic objectives of the organisation
- Analysis of organisational and resource capabilities
- A business case for CBM
- Design of CBM principles and architecture
- Development of one or more competency profiles and tools
- Application to human resource functions in a multiphase or evolutionary manner

In the 1990s and early 2000s, many Public Service departments started some form of pilot projects, and some TBS functional communities developed competency profiles for their target groups. The competencies have been linked, first and foremost, to the strategic objectives and capabilities of the organisation. Depending on how they are applied, competencies serve as a tool across a range of HR activities including training, development, performance management, and succession planning, and not simply resourcing. They do not, however, have to be applied in all these areas at the same time. Most organisations started out by first applying competency profiles in training and development initiatives and human resource planning. Only when employees have become familiar with the use of competencies to guide training and development activities did organisations introduce the profile in performance assessment.

The Key Leadership Competencies Profile, revised in 2005, was a joint project undertaken by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (currently housed in the Treasury Board Secretariat, but then called the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada) and the Public Service Commission (PSC). Following research and consultation, a competency model was developed. A second wave of extensive consultations (carried out at various levels across the Public Service) led to the identification of effective and ineffective behaviours related to each of the competencies in the model. The new "Employee level", issued in 2008, was the result of significant inputs from a wide range of stakeholders and potential users. Consultations included focus group sessions with employees at various levels and with no supervisory or managerial responsibilities.

Collaboration with key stakeholders, and broad and extensive consultation on resulting products, is highly important. As noted above, a wide range of internal stakeholders have been involved in the development and implementation of the *Framework for Competency-Based Management in the Public Service of Canada* and the Key Leadership Competencies Profile. Consultations were extensive, and no significant work was assigned to private-sector consultants or individuals external to the Federal Public Service.

Korea. In the case of Korea's senior civil service (SCS), the participants involved in the development and implementation of the SCS competency model were senior officials, experts from the Korean Society for Industrial and Organisational Psychology and the Korean Society for Public Personnel Administration, consultants, human resources (HR) officials in central ministries and agencies, the department staff responsible for the SCS, and the internal experts in the Civil Service Commission. After extensive discussions and an in-depth literature review of competency management in general, and of competency models in particular, consensus and knowledge sharing on the competency model were achieved among the HR officials, the department staff responsible for the SCS, and the internal experts. Many senior officials enthusiastically participated in the development process, and the various methods – such as job analysis, in-depth interviews, questionnaire surveys, benchmarking and statistical analysis – were used for establishing a valid model. External experts and consultants provided specific knowledge and advice on the competency model throughout the whole process.

In the development and implementation process, there was a fundamentally sceptical view on developing and applying competency models in the public personnel management because competency management was a new concept in the public sector and because it was thought that it was unrealistic to introduce competency assessment to the senior officials (Director-General or above). The insufficient infrastructure for competency management made it more difficult because there were few experts and cases on competency management in Korea.

However, in order to improve the validity, objectivity, and reliability of the competency model itself, the pilot tests and experts' meetings were continually conducted, and workshops and symposiums on competency management were held with the civil servants, especially with the senior officials. In order to reach consensus on then-new competency management, the Korean government held public hearings, inviting external experts, nongovernmental organisations, and mass media; international conferences, inviting foreign experts; and forums, inviting the staff working at HR departments in central ministries and agencies. Considering that performance is important in a highly competitive environment, and that improving the government's competitiveness is essential for government success, it was indispensable to transform the merit- and seniority-centred personnel management to a more scientific, systematic, and objective personnel management. Thus, competency management was introduced as an appropriate alternative for enhancing the competence and performance of civil servants.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government 2009.

HR Governance and Competency Management

When deciding to introduce competency management, one of the questions to be answered is who will be responsible for what in the development, implementation, and coordination of the new system. This is the HR governance question. In the OECD countries, competency management is mainly organised by the agencies or departments with the support and advice of a central personnel agency (table 6). The role of the central agency may, however, slightly vary from one country to another. Nevertheless, in general, the agency or department implements competency management in line with the specificity of their organisation while respecting the generic guidelines of the central personnel agency.

Table 6 – The Central Personnel Agency in Charge of Competency Management

Australia	Australian Public Service Commission
Belgium	Federal Public Service Personnel and Organisation
Canada	Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (Treasury Board Secretariat) Public Service Commission
Denmark	Ministry of Finance, The State Employers Authority, (The Centre for Development of Human Resources and Quality Management, financed as a joint venture between the

	State Employer's Authority and the State Employees' Organisations is partly responsible for the implementation)
Japan	Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications
Korea	Personnel Management Office (Ministry of Public Administration and Security) Civil Service Commission
Netherlands	ABD Office
United Kingdom	Cabinet Office
United States	US Office of Personnel Management

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

Box 5. HR Governance and Competency Management in Australia and Canada

Australia. Historically, the Australian Public Service had a common personnel management. Over the last 25 years, however, Australian governments, Commonwealth and state, underwent extensive restructuring, a process which is still continuing. The changes have been characterised by a progressive move away from substantial, centralised control of the APS administration by a central agency to an environment in which individual agencies have prime responsibility for their own management decisions and actions. The 1999 Public Service Act gave legislative effect to the Australian Commonwealth Government's new public service employment framework based on devolution and flexibility. The devolution of employment powers was in the context of substantial strengthening of accountability for performance in terms of program efficiency and effectiveness. The APS Values Framework, along with enhanced accountability for agency performance, balances this devolution of powers. The APS Values are generic throughout the Service, and agency heads are required, under the 1999 Public Service Act, to uphold and promote them in their organisations.

At the central personnel agency level, the strong directive and interventionist powers have now been replaced by a Public Service Commissioner with a quality assurance role. This role includes evaluation and annual reporting on the state of the Service, and providing management advice and assistance to APS agencies.

The agency heads now have employment powers, which they can exercise within the framework of the APS Values. A vast array of employment decisions that have been governed by legislation, regulation, and award became matters for agreement between staff at the agency level. Arrangements for appointment and advancement, transfer and mobility, managing performance and dealing with inefficiency and misconduct are decided upon by departments and agencies. It is departmental secretaries and agency heads who determine the remuneration, conditions, and terms of employment. It is departmental secretaries who decide how they will employ public servants and on what conditions of engagement. They also assign duties and delegate responsibility. This is a Bill that enables change on a grand scale, which allows employment arrangements to meet the distinct and particular needs of each individual workforce in the APS (APSC, 2003).

Canada. In February 2009, the Prime Minister of Canada announced important changes in the human resources (HR) governance structure in the Public Service of Canada as part of the ongoing commitment to Public Service Renewal and a renewed expenditure management system that launched a strategic review of the six central HR agencies. These changes will result in better delivery of policies and services, and more effective human resources management by:

- enabling Deputy Ministers to take effective responsibility for HR in their own departments, and;
- simplifying and streamlining the roles of central human resources agencies

This new HR governance structure has included the creation of an Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO), housed within the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS), and, since the summer of 2009, the OCHRO has begun delivering on its new mandate. The mandate recognises, supports, and creates the conditions for Deputy Heads to take full responsibility for people management in their organisations. It also establishes appropriate measurement, policy framework and core compensation services and programmes that are truly a responsibility of the 'centre'.

To ensure that the government's suite of management policies meets its ongoing commitment to enhance

accountabilities and management excellence, TBS continues its review of Treasury Board policies, including those related to HR and those that may be related to competency-based management. As part of this review process many outdated policy instruments have been, or will be, rescinded. Any new policy instruments take on a greater enabling, coordinating and arms-length approach by the centre. This approach contributes directly to the government's objective of clarifying responsibilities and accountabilities, and eliminating duplication of effort while reducing the 'web of rules'.

Although the Treasury Board Secretariat and the Public Service Commission continue to provide public service-wide guidance and advice on competencies, the practical application of competency management and competency profiles has become increasingly decentralised. Responsibility for "people management", including the development of any competency-based approaches, policies, and tools applicable to different departments or agencies, rests with the respective deputy heads of these organisations.

Pursuant to the Financial Administration Act, as amended by the Public Service Modernisation Act (PSMA) in 2003, deputy heads continue to be held accountable for their organisation's management of human resources, subject to any terms and conditions considered appropriate by the Treasury Board (as the Employer). Applicable to competency-based management activities within their organisation, the Treasury Board requires that, for Executive level positions, deputy heads must ensure compliance with the requirements of the EX Qualification Standard, which specifies that each competency within the Key Leadership Competencies Profile be appropriately assessed during staffing and selection processes.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government 2009.

As stated in the introduction to this section, the human resource role, including the application of competency management, is increasingly assigned to line managers (Larsen & Brewster, 2003). Contrary to this movement, the Netherlands is recently shifting their focus to expert implementation of competency management (box 6).

Box 6. A focus on expert implementation in the Netherlands

Contrary to earlier opinion that line managers should implement the competency framework, the *Algemene Bestuursdienst* (ABD, i.e. the Dutch senior civil service) now believes that the competency framework requires expert implementation. This opinion is based on the experience that assessing competencies in practice requires difficult interpretation work. An example is the definition of persuasiveness as "the ability to convince others of a point of view and gain support". When assessing persuasiveness in practice it is sensible to ask questions regarding the meaning of persuasiveness to the employee(s) and manager involved, and to ask for concrete examples. Observation and interpretation must be distinguished. Therefore, it is important to examine possible interpretations when using the competency language, since it is not self-evident that we mean the same things. However, the manager does not examine in-depth the meaning of something and the origin of different interpretations; the manager observes and interprets directly and does not distinguish between observation and interpretation. Initially the idea was that the competency framework provided a common reference without the need for further interpretation, and, therefore, it was assumed that managers could use this. But actual experience has shown that this assumption does not hold and that it requires special training to be able to distinguish between observation and interpretation. Because managers will not make the effort of becoming an expert in this, despite it being important when one discusses development of employees, implementation by professionals trained in the use of the competency framework is now considered the best option.

Managers are charged with getting good results, with making connections to the outside world, with being connected to politics, with recruiting good people, etc. Given this multitude of tasks, expert support of HR professionals is required. The central government needs to invest in such HR professionals if it is to retain qualified experts, and to support these experts in their strengths as well as in the service of organisational goals. As a matter of fact, the central government now has a mobility centre that employs career experts who can use an assessment or competency framework, and can help employees determine their career direction.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009.

Competency Management as a Basis for Various Human Resource Processes

Competencies and competency frameworks can be used in different HR processes (table 7). Competency-based personnel management systems are focused on identifying the competencies needed for effective performance and on developing those competencies in the workforce. As stated above, competency models are put to use best when all HR activities are integrated. Thinking in terms of competencies becomes a way of life in the organisation, from planning to selecting employees, and guiding and rewarding their performance (Marrelli, 1998).

Table 7 – Managing Competencies in the Various HRM Processes

Workforce planning	Competencies are used in order to evaluate the current and future organisational and individual competency needs. A gap analysis can reveal the chasm between the competencies that individual employees, groups, or even the organisation should have and contribute to the workforce development plans.
Recruitment & selection	In a competency-based selection process, the required competencies identified for the vacant position are used as the selection criteria. Selection instruments are based on these competencies. The candidates for the position are evaluated on each required competency.
Training & development	Competency gap analysis becomes the learning needs assessment. A personal development plan is created for each employee listing the specific competencies the employee needs to develop for improved performance. The objectives of all learning activities (workshops, courses...) are based on the development of specific competencies.
Performance management & appraisal	Competencies clarify what is expected from the individuals. Worker performance is evaluated against competency requirements as well as objectives. The appraisal system focuses on specific behaviour, offering a roadmap for recognition, reward, and possible advancement.
Remuneration	Competency-based remuneration systems reward employees for the development and application of the competencies the organisation has identified as important for success. Different compensation systems are possible: rewarding individuals whose actual competency level is higher than a set standard level; increasing salary based on competency development; etc.
Career development	Competencies are used to create the personal career plans of the employees. The latter can review the needed competencies of all the positions and, through comparison with the competencies they possess, they can identify potential positions and develop their career path.
Succession planning	Organisations assess potential replacements for key positions based on competency requirements. The competencies needed for each leadership position are identified and are then used to identify and rank employees with high potential for succeeding in each position. Finally, employees are trained to ensure that they are prepared to assume each critical leadership position in the event that it becomes vacant.

Source: Draganidis & Mentzas, 2006 and Marrelli, 1998

Although competencies should best be integrated in all HR processes (horizontal integration), it is possible to focus attention on one specific activity. The Dutch central government, for example, looks back on three periods with three successive emphases regarding HRM and competency management.

Box 7. Changing Focus of Competency Management in the Netherlands

In its annual report of 2005, the *Algemene Bestuursdienst* (ABD, i.e. the Dutch senior civil service) evaluates its ten year program of activities as reflecting three periods with three successive emphases (ABD, 2006). In the first period, 1995-2000, the ABD developed competency-based management instruments with a view to promote mobility of senior civil servants between ministries. In the second period, 2000-2005, the emphasis shifted to safeguarding succession planning of management positions by selecting and developing a pool of qualified candidates. This involved the creation of MD positions at the ministries, which, together with the ABD MD consultants, arrange the annual assessment ('*schouw*') that provides an insight in where management qualities are located in the ministry. The ABD Office invests in such instruments as a development programme for candidates, a management 'learning-line', and platforms for intervision. In the third period, 2005-2010, the ABD connected competency-based management with societal changes and individual manager's qualities and motives. This involved activities that are supportive of competencies related to sustainability, flexibility, and diversity.

Source: OECD Survey on competency Management in government, 2009.

Recruitment and Selection

In all of the selected OECD countries, competency management is applied to the recruitment and selection of civil servants. In general, competencies are used as selection criteria in the different selection methods. Next to being used as selection criteria, other applications of competencies in the selection process can be identified.

In Australia, the Public Service Commission provides additional assistance with recruitment. They have designed the 'Get it Right' recruitment kit, which contains, for example, capability cards. These capability cards assist in clarifying the responsibilities of existing roles and identifying effective selection options. On each card, one capability is defined and its behavioural indicators described.

A recent development in Belgium is the recognition of 'elsewhere acquired competencies'. Even if candidates don't have the required diploma, they can still be selected for specific functions if they can demonstrate the necessary competencies. This competency philosophy can only be applied in selection procedures in case of scarcity of specific qualifications on the labour market.

In Canada, the Key Leadership Competencies (KLC) Profile was originally developed for leadership development and for the recruitment and selection of Executive level positions within the federal public service. It currently remains mandatory to assess each competency within the KCL Profile when conducting an Executive level selection process.

Box 8. Managing competencies in the Japanese national public service

Between 2007-2008, the National Public Service System was reformed to include the management of competencies (capabilities) and performance management as the basic underpinnings of personnel management. The aim of the reforms was to make the personnel management more flexible. The new appointment system identifies the standard government positions according to the hierarchy of organizations and variety of jobs. The system also distinguishes the *standard capabilities to accomplish duties* (SCAD). The SCAD is a set of capabilities required of government officials in order to accomplish the duties of the standard government positions. Government officials are appointed according to the results of the personnel evaluation that assesses whether candidates to join the public

service have the necessary aptitudes and capabilities to perform their tasks. This system is expected to enhance a merit-based recruitment and make the appointment system to work effectively and efficiently. A Similar assessment is conducted to grant promotions.

Source: Presentation by Japan at the 2009 meeting of the Public Employment and Management working party.

Korea uses competency management in two out of three selection stages for junior managers. In the first stage, the basic competencies necessary for civil servants are evaluated. The second exam measures professional knowledge, and the third stage estimates competencies through interviews. If we consider professional knowledge as technical competencies, then competency management is even present in the second selection stage, too.

In the Netherlands, competencies are specifically used in creating job vacancy profiles for the senior public service and in assessment centres that check on the presence of certain competencies required for a post.

Box 9. Recruitment and Selection in Belgium and Korea

Belgium. Recently, there has been an attempt to replace the educational qualification requirements (diplomas) with competency requirements. This means that people can also be appointed to specific functions if they can demonstrate the necessary competencies (elsewhere acquired competencies) even if they do not have the required diploma (Hondeghe, 2009). The EAC logic means that candidates who don't have the appropriate diploma, but do have the right competencies (acquired through experience, training...), get the opportunity to participate in the selection procedures.

Sometimes people are willing, fit, and, through experience, able to do certain functions – especially in bottleneck jobs – but for one reason or another do not possess the required certified diploma(s) or certificate(s). If that is the case, the minister for civil service affairs can decide to overrule the obligation of having the diploma or certificate necessary to exercise or even to apply for those specific jobs. Selor, the federal selection and recruitment agency, will then organise tests to assess whether the competencies (both generic and specific) that correspond with the required qualification level, but acquired outside the system, have been mastered. The certificate will be valid for 5 years (agreed in Collective Bargaining 2009-2010) (FOD P&O, 2009).

In 2008, a pilot project was launched as part of a transition process from level B to C regarding the grade of ICT expert. The lessons learned from this pilot project should allow the EAC logic to be applied in a broader field from 2009. The initial thought is to apply it in recruitment and selection for IT professionals and other scarce jobs. Of course, all of this must happen within a clear legal framework (Vervotte, 2008).

This procedure is, however, resisted in Belgium, as diplomas are regarded as more objective and a barrier against nepotism. So far, this competency philosophy can only be applied in selection procedures in cases of scarcity of specific qualifications on the labour market (e.g. IT professionals) and it is rarely implemented (Hondeghe, 2009).

Korea. In the process of recruitment and selection, competency management is used at selection examinations. Testing for the selection of new civil servants consists of several stages, and each stage uses various selection tools for evaluating different competencies and knowledge. In a series of civil service entrance examinations for a Grade 5 position, the first exam (the Public Service Aptitude Test or PSAT) evaluates the basic traits and competencies necessary for civil servants; the second exam measures professional knowledge; and the third exam estimates competencies, attitude, and values through interviews and group discussions. Recently emphasised is the application of the competency model throughout the selection process. For example, for competency-based interviews, at the third entrance examination for Grade 5, the government identifies specific competencies for each grade and job category by applying qualitative and quantitative approaches, then constructs competency maps and a competency encyclopaedia by mapping the identified competencies. In the interviews, competency assessment, applying Behavioural Event Interview (BEI) and Assessment Center (AC) tactics, is implemented.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009.

Training and Development

All of the selected OECD countries apply competency management to their training and development programmes. The overall picture is that potential gaps between the current and desired competency level of civil servants are identified, which then result in a development plan. Another observation is that three countries, Australia, Korea, and the Netherlands, explicitly focus on the development of prospective leaders' competencies. Some of the countries' training and development activities are discussed in more detail in box 9.

The Australian Public Service Commission designed three programmes to support training and development in the agencies throughout the public service. First, the HR Capability Development Programme focuses on developing skills that will give HR people greater ability to be effective in strategic HR roles. Second, a good practice guide was launched, entitled *Building Capability: A Framework for Managing Learning and Development in the APS*. This framework aims to foster a learning culture and provides a source of audit criteria for any future evaluation in this area. Third, a Career Development Assessment Centre was established to assess members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) feeder group to help identify their development needs for possible future promotion to the SES.

In Belgium, development circles were introduced. These focus on developing competencies in order to achieve personal and organisational objectives. An individual training plan is a crucial element in the development circles and is made for each public servant. The development circle consists of four phases: function discussion, planning discussion, performance review, and assessment interview. The last phase is followed by a planning discussion, which is the beginning of a new development circle. In theory, these development circles should be based on the defined competency profiles. In practice, however, some organisations use the competency profiles while others don't. Furthermore, certified training has become one of the main competency management tools in the Belgian federal government. The goal of certified training is to develop the competencies of the public servants in order to meet the needs of the organisation. When training objectives are met, public servants receive a competency allowance in addition to their normal pay.

In Canada, learning activities at the Canada School of Public Service have been associated with the Key Leadership Competencies (KLC) to help public service employees and managers select the School's products to meet their learning needs. The KLC were also integrated in the federal government's leadership development programmes.

The Danish government has since 2007 made considerable efforts to extend and qualify the market for public sector focused on leadership development programmes. In the same period there has been a significant investment in competence development for all civil servants. Still the overall principle is that the local employers should choose the most relevant programme for their employees. The degree of central coordination is reduced to counselling local employers and securing that the market provides relevant high quality programmes for civil servants.

Korea relies on the Central Officials Training Institute for competency-based education. An example is the SCS Candidate Development Program. SCS candidates receive customised training to develop their insufficient competencies.

In the Netherlands, the ‘Management Learning Lines’-programme was recently set up. The idea is that a prospective manager follows a partly structured path toward a top management position. The programme provides learning lines, career possibilities, and instruments for development of prospective managers.

By using the UK’s Professional Skills for Government competency framework, British civil servants can seek opportunities to develop their competencies. A development plan is created by looking at what skills civil servants have and what skills they need to develop.

The US Office of Personnel Management (OPM) serves as a lead agency in competency management, while federal agencies utilise a decentralised approach in determining the best use of competencies in their HR processes. The OPM does provide guidelines, which include the leadership development programmes. The Executive Core Qualifications, specifically, serve as a guide for the Federal Executive Institute and the Management Development Centre’s curriculum.

Box 10. Training and Development in OECD Countries

Australia. The Australian Public Service (APS) Commission has been working closely with agencies throughout the APS to address some of the strategic issues around building capability in the APS. In 2001, it decided to address the development challenges of one particular group of employees: those working in human resource management areas. The role of HR practitioners has broadened in the APS, as attempts to integrate HR planning, policies, and practices increasingly link it with organisational change, workforce planning, and achieving business outcomes. The HR Capability Model articulates the capabilities required of effective HR staff in the APS. To support agencies further, and in conjunction with 13 agencies that contributed to its funding and realisation, the APS Commission designed an HR Capability Development Programme to assist participants to develop their capabilities against the Model (APSC, 2003). The HR Capability Development Programme is very practical in its approach and design. The Programme’s focus is on developing skills that will give HR people greater ability to be effective in strategic HR roles. The Programme does not explore HR theory in depth, nor does it focus on the theoretical or operational aspects of different HR practice areas. What the Programme does do, is help participants develop the capabilities necessary to understand key business issues in their agencies, and how these issues need to drive HR services and initiatives (APSC, 2009a).

In 1999, a Career Development Assessment Centre (CDAC) was established to assess members of the SES feeder group and to help identify their development needs for possible future promotion to the SES. It uses the Senior Executive Leadership Capabilities (SELIC) Framework as a basis in assessing participant performance through a series of formal scenario activities, and in supporting 360-degree feedback. Participants are measured against the SELIC Framework and the ILS, the APS Commission’s benchmarks for APS career advancement. At the end, program participants are provided with detailed feedback to guide their future development (APSC, 2009b).

Belgium. According to the OECD (2007), certified training schemes have become one of the main competency management tools in the federal government. Every six or eight years, public servants from levels A through D can voluntarily take certified training organised by OFO, the training institute of the federal government. Its goal: to update and to develop the qualifications and competencies of all civil servants. They are also the sole key to career development. Public servants are stimulated to participate in these trainings by a ‘competency allowance’, which they receive when training objectives are met. The competency allowance is a bonus to the normal remuneration (Dupont, 2006; Hondeghem *et al.*, 2005; Scheepers & Parys, 2005).

In 2009 the range of certified training programmes was extended, and new ground rules and quality requirements were fixed (Dispositions of 29th of April 2009, Official Journal of 4th of May 2009), which enhanced the transparency of the system. The certified trainings are delivered according to the position of the civil servant and the speciality he or she exercises. The trainings aim to develop generic competencies that are common to most of the functions, and are sanctioned by a test that examines the degree of compliance to the learning objectives. Some training is open to participants of different levels. In that case, there is a difference in the degree of difficulty of the test. When successful – you have to obtain 60% – according to the level, either a special competency allowance is given or access is granted

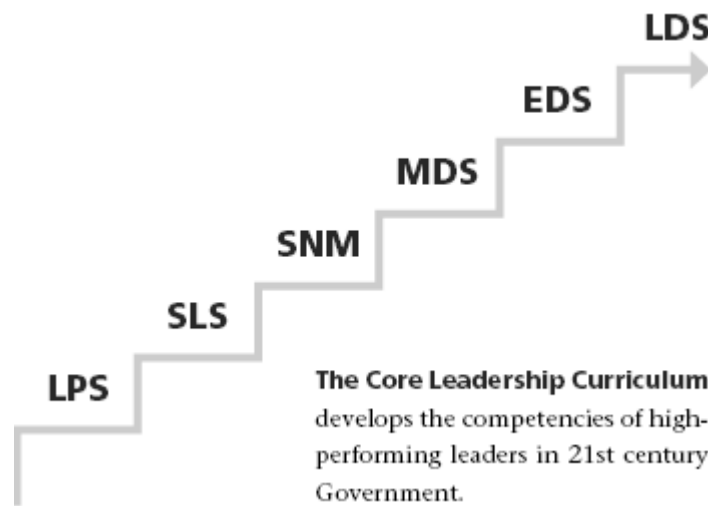
to a higher salary scale (FOD P&O, 2009).

Korea. For training and development, the Korean Central Officials Training Institute implemented competency-based education, using the competency models developed for each grade and various methods, such as online lectures and participatory case analysis. For example, since 2006, the SCS Candidate Development Program has used competency models to conduct competency-based education. In this program, division directors in the national government receive action learning-based training through a series of training procedures: (1) competency assessment, (2) competency training, (3) action learning and real-world application, (4) problem-solving activities, (5) supplementary training, (6) performance evaluation, (7) comprehensive evaluation, and (8) training completion. The SCS members could receive customised training to develop their insufficient competencies. In addition, since 2009, the Central Officials Training Institute operated the education programmes that provide problem-based practical tasks and give feedback on the results, which help the trainees identify competencies that need improvement. This kind of competency-based education, which focuses on problem-solving practical tasks, makes trainees actively participate in the learning process and effectively improves their competencies.

United Kingdom. The UK's SCS competency framework is used by senior managers as cues on how to do their own work and to identify leadership potential. Some 100 individuals are invited each year for a series of challenging leadership workshops, which are complemented by psychometric assessments designed to give the selectors a better idea of the match between competencies and the individuals. The aim is to develop a leadership profile for each candidate so that individual-specific trajectories and development interventions can be made. To what extent this has resulted in a more competent SCS than in the past remains an open question (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005).

United States The Executive Core Qualifications (ECQ), specifically, serve as a guide for Federal Executive Institute and Management Development Centers curriculum. The US Office of Personnel Management designs all its leadership development programmes around the ECQs. For the individual Federal manager or executive, the ECQs represent the guidepost along the pathway to career and organisational success. One of the most successful training programmes for Federal managers is the 'Core Leadership Curriculum' (see figure below). In this multi-phased approach, participants are engaged in a career-long process of leadership development, from the pre-supervisory level through preparation for the Senior Executive Service (US Office of Personnel Management, 2009).

Core Leadership Curriculum



- LPS: 'Leadership Potential Seminar' for emerging leaders
- SLS: 'Supervisory Leadership Seminar' for new supervisors
- SNM: 'Seminar for New Managers' for new managers
- MDS: 'Management Development Seminar' for mid-level and experienced managers
- EDS: 'Executive Development Seminar' for senior leaders and SES candidates
- LDS: 'Leadership for a Democratic Society' for senior leaders and SES candidates

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in government, 2009.

Performance Management and Remuneration

There has been an increasing focus on the use of competencies as an element of performance management, since behavioural aspects of performance are better understood. Performance is not only a question of what people do, but also how they do it in interaction with other people (OECD, 2009b). To some degree, competencies are represented in the countries' (annual) performance assessment of civil servants. Competency-related pay, however, remains underutilised and is only applied, to some degree, in Belgium, Canada, and the UK.

The values of the Australian government specifically require a focus on achieving results and managing performance. Still, there are no prescriptive rules about how this performance focus is to be achieved in individual agencies.

In Belgium, the development circles were introduced to evaluate public servants' performance. The appraisals will not only assess the quality of past performance but also identify future staff development needs. Regarding remuneration, performance-related pay remains a controversial concept. Competency-based pay, however, is one of the most important recent changes to the remuneration system. At the end of the certified training, which is mentioned above, a competency test is taken. Only after improvements in competencies are shown employees may be entitled to a competency allowance. This system might undermine the implementation of a performance-based approach, as it links remuneration to the ability and willingness of public servants to develop their competencies instead of to the way their competencies are being translated into performance.

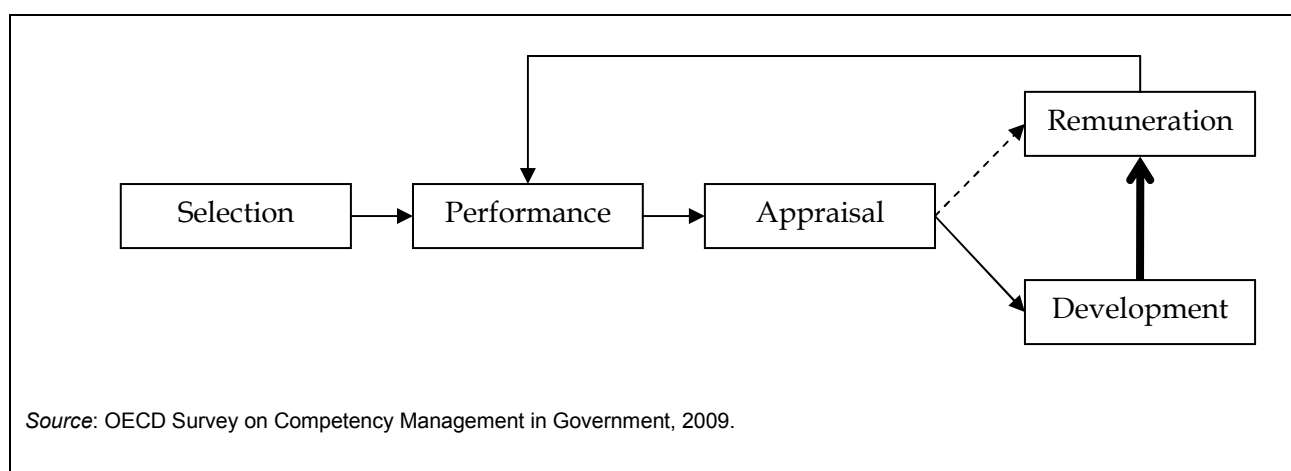
Box 11. Competency-Based Remuneration in Belgium

One of the most important changes to the Belgian federal government's remuneration system is the introduction of competency-based pay. As stated above, the new appraisal system offers public servants from levels A to D the possibility to earn an extra 'competency allowance' on top of their normal pay. This additional allowance is linked to an examination taken at the end of the certified training. Once public servants succeed in this competency exam, they receive the competency allowance each year for six to eight years depending on the public servant's specific situation. This connects remuneration to public servants' ability and willingness to develop their competencies in order to meet their personal, as well as the organisational, objectives (Hondeghe & Parys, 2002).

From the beginning, it was decided that remuneration should be linked to competency development. However, Hondeghe, Horton, and Scheepers (2005) question whether it was the right decision to install this link so soon, given the fact that competency management has only recently been introduced in the public sector.

Both OECD (2007) and Scheepers and Parys (2005) notice that competency management in the case of the federal government might undermine the implementation of a performance-based approach of HRM. That is to say, the appraisal system is disconnected from the remuneration system. At this time, remuneration is linked to the will of public servants to develop their competencies instead of to the way their competencies are being translated into (the quality of) performance (see figure below). As a result, staff and management attention may become disproportionately focused on competencies, rather than on results and individual performance. That is what Scheepers and Parys describe as the separation of performance and reward.

HR cycle in Which Remuneration is Linked to Development



Once the Canadian public service employees became familiar with the use of competencies in training and development activities, organisations introduced the Key Leadership Competencies in performance assessment. The Directive on the Performance Management Program (PMP) for Executives and related Guidelines on the Performance Management Program for Executive 2009-2010 require Deputy Heads to assess the key leadership competencies when determining the performance ratings and performance pay of executives. Performance ratings are based on results achieved (the *What*), as well as how they were achieved (the *How*). Demonstration of *Key Leadership Competencies* in the achievement of results is recognised and rewarded.

In Japan, the new personnel evaluation system includes a capability (competencies) evaluation and a performance evaluation. The capability evaluation is conducted once a year and assesses whether the employee's job performance consistently met the required levels. The performance evaluation is carried out twice a year and assesses the extent the employee achieved his/her goals set in advance with agreement with the direct manager or supervisor. This new personnel evaluation system has to meet at least two main challenges: i) how to set goals which are specific, measurable, achievable, result-based and time oriented; and ii) how to develop the evaluators' skills to conduct fair evaluation and provide appropriate coaching.

In the Danish case, a tool for self-assessment has developed parallel to the introduction of the Code of Public Governance Excellence. This self-assessment tool allows senior civil servants to review their own managerial practices in light of the recommendations put forward in the Code. Finally, the UK develops an annual performance plan for its senior civil servants (SCS), which identifies two objectives related to SCS competencies. An assessment of performance against these objectives may lead to additional pay (performance-related pay) and/or performance improvement plans.

Box 12. Performance and Remuneration in the UK

Since 2001, each member of the UK's senior civil service (SCS) has to agree on an annual performance plan that identifies four or five objectives, two of which relate to SCS competencies. The annual performance appraisal assesses and reviews performance against the goals and objectives set, and allocates individuals into one of three *tranches*: exceptional, satisfactory, or unsatisfactory performance. A system of performance-related pay (PRP) operates and those in the top *tranche* receive bonuses while those in the lower two *tranches* do not. Unsatisfactory performance involves line managers establishing performance improvement plans, which are reviewed after six months. All other staff have performance development plans, which may involve training, secondment, or other development strategies (Horton, 2005).

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

Workforce Planning and Succession Management

Australia, Korea, and even France mention workforce planning as an HR process in which competencies are being used. In general, it is about identifying a potential gap between current and desired or necessary competencies in the organisation, and developing a strategy to reduce the gap.

Australia puts an emphasis on succession planning with a focus on the development of internal or employee capability in an organisation. An important part of their succession planning is the assessment centre.

In Korea, every five years a workforce plan needs to be established by each central ministry and agency. They need to analyse the current competencies of its civil servants and the competencies required in the near future, and then make workforce plans for improving their competency levels. By the end of the five-year period, the objectives of the workforce plan have to be accomplished.

Even France actively uses 'competencies' in workforce planning. A key workforce-planning instrument, the RIME (*Répertoire Interministériel des Métiers de l'Etat*) was launched in November 2006 to provide a catalogue of competencies to be used by all departments. The RIME reviews the different job types and functions within the state administration in order to reinforce linkages with the competency needs analysis and to increase cross-departmental staff mobility. Another workforce planning instrument in France is the GPEEC (Gestion Prévisionnelle des Effectifs, des Emplois et des Compétences). Introduced in the early 1990s and restructured in 2001, the GPEEC is an ambitious government-wide strategy that analyses the current staffing picture by functions and categories, and aims at forecasting adjustments of staffing needs. The GPEEC is a cross-departmental methodology that has established a common framework across government, although each ministerial department is responsible for its own GPEEC plans, under the supervision of the central HRM body. The evaluation of current GPEEC plans shows that all ministries have made progress in aligning staff with missions and integrating HRM strategies into their GPEEC plans (OECD, 2009b).

Career Management

A last HR process in which competencies are used is career management. Korea, the Netherlands, the UK, and the US apply competency management in their career development programmes. Generally, a competency assessment results in the identification of career possibilities, development needs, etc.

In Korea, competency assessment is applied in the process of promotion to a higher grade or to the SCS. Furthermore, central ministries and agencies individually operate career development programmes for career guidance. For example, career consulting is conducted based on the results of competency analysis.

The first time competencies were put into practice in the Netherlands was when they were incorporated into the career planning forms. The ABD Office checks those forms for the need for development, and raises this point during the career planning interviews it conducts with the person concerned. The aim is to make an assessment of an ABD member's future career or personal development aspirations. Also the 'management learning lines' programme can be linked to career management, as it describes the path to senior management positions.

The UK's SCS competency framework is used to identify leadership potential. Moreover, the Professional Skills for Government Framework serves as a tool for civil servants to plan their civil service career. In the future, opportunities will also depend increasingly on a civil servant's ability to demonstrate his or her competencies.

Finally, the US government tracks its federal managers through the Core Leadership Curriculum. In this curriculum, participants are engaged in a multi-phased and career-long process of leadership development.

Box 13. Career Management in the Netherlands

In 2004 and 2005, the programme 'management learning lines' was prepared under the 'modernising government' umbrella. The idea was that a prospective manager follows a partly structured path towards a top management position. The paths may vary but will, as a rule, consist of a variety of work experiences, training, coaching, intervision, and other developmental activities (ABD, 2005; 2006). The actual offer of a variety of work experience opportunities increased, because the ABD career programme expanded to include, amongst others, the ministries and the four largest municipalities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht).

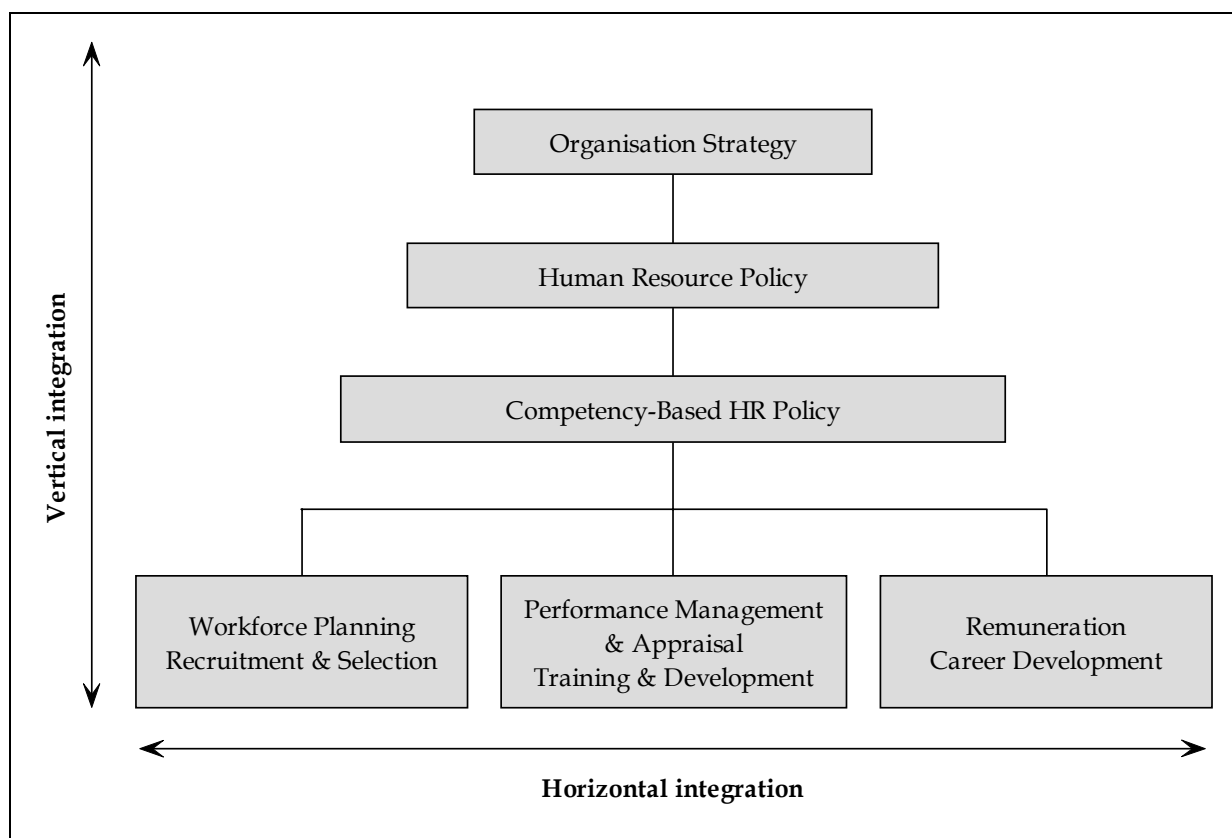
The program 'management learning lines' aims at providing learning lines, career possibilities, and instruments for the development of prospective managers. One project consists of enhancing collaboration between the ministries' management development programmes. Another project is 'portfolio management', a concept for exchanging information about the qualities, performance, and potential of people on the basis of a personalised dossier with objectified information, such as a CV, an ambition document, an assessment, and 360-degree feedback reports.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in government, 2009

Three Dimensions of Integrated Competency Management

The successful implementation of a consistent and unambiguous competency-based management includes both vertical and horizontal integration (figure 1) (Van Beirendonck, 2009). The application of an **integrated competency-based model** is important for good HRM practice in the public service. By promoting a consistent approach across all HRM activities, the framework helps ensure the management of human resources contributes effectively to achieving the government's objectives (vertical integration) and that the HRM whole is greater than the sum of the individual activities (horizontal integration). An important objective in the development of such frameworks in the public service is to promote a shared language, since it relates to performance standards and expectations (UN, 2005).

Figure 1. Figure 1 Vertical and Horizontal Integration



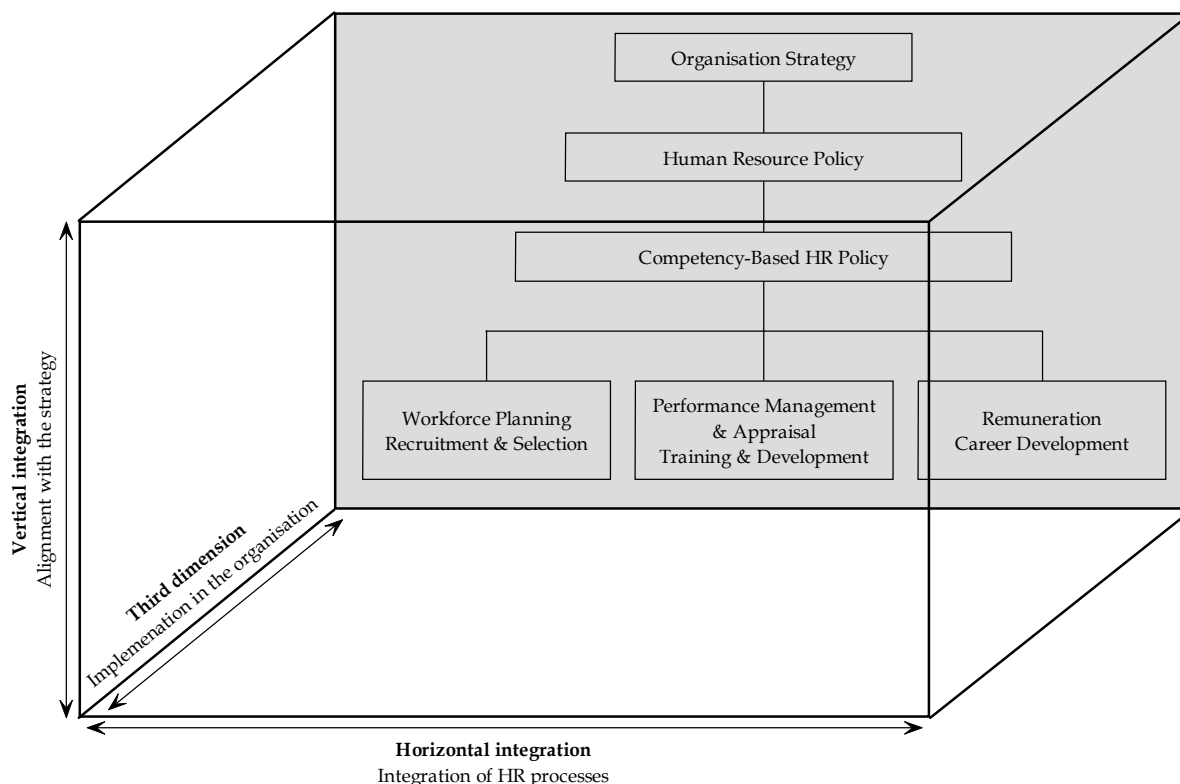
Source: Van Beirendonck, 2009

More specifically, **vertical integration** refers to the convergence of human competencies to the mission, vision, and strategy of the organisation. Individual competencies should be chosen, organised, and developed so that they contribute to the realisation of the strategy of the organisation (Van Beirendonck, 2009).

Horizontal integration refers to the coordination of the various HR activities. Competencies are an ideal means for the alignment of those HR activities. Competencies act as a clear-cut language, as a common denominator or as a linking pin. In other words, the integration of various HR activities is made possible due to unambiguous terminology (Van Beirendonck, 2009).

In his latest book on competency management (*“Iedereen competent”*), Lou Van Beirendonck (2009) identifies a **third dimension of integrated competency management**. Practice shows that implementing competency management requires a three dimensional approach instead of a two dimensional one (figure 2). The alignment with the strategy (vertical integration) and integration of the various HR systems (horizontal integration) are not the only important aspects. Rather, competency management is primarily a question of putting implementation into practice. “A competency management system isn’t developed in the office, but through the continuous dialogue with the people who have to work with it.”

Figure 2 – The Three Dimensions of Integrated Competency Management



Source: Van Beirendonck, 2009

In the selected OECD countries, both vertical and horizontal integration seem to be present to some degree. However, a holistic approach to competency management is not yet established. Moreover, the degree of vertical or horizontal integration remains very dependent on the implementation and actual practice of competency management in the several agencies or departments. The latter, more specifically, refers to the third dimension of integration: implementation in the organisation. How careful this third dimension is being monitored in the OECD countries remains to be seen.

Vertical integration can be established through several means. In Australia, for example, the public service values form the link between the objectives of the organisation and the various capability frameworks. In the Korean government, the five-year workforce plan of central ministries and agencies should guarantee a direct and dynamic link between strategy and competencies. The idea of horizontal integration is mostly dependent on the implementation of guidelines and a range of advice set down by a central personnel office. Although several HR activities are based on competency management, an effective and holistic integration of the various HR processes cannot yet be found in the selected OECD countries.

Box 14. Vertical and Horizontal Integration in Canada, Korea and the Netherlands

Canada. Government-wide, there has been greater vertical and horizontal integration given the imperative of reform, renewal, modernisation, and investment in human capital. Government-wide change/revitalisation initiatives such as *La Réleve* in the late 1990s and *HR Modernisation* in the 2000s frequently resonate in the development of various competency profiles, suggesting strong vertical integration.

The alignment of the range of HR practices with competencies is often dependent on situational contexts, and sometimes varies from organisation to organisation. In some, the competencies are primarily used for resourcing and assessing learning needs, whereas in others the entire gamut of HR processes have integrated competencies.

Korea. In the Korean government, competencies are aligned with the organisational strategies through the workforce plans of central ministries and agencies that are compiled every five years. In this process of workforce planning, the central ministry needs to analyse the current competencies of its civil servants and the required competencies in the near future and to make a workforce plan for improving its competency level. The central ministry implements its own education programmes, providing different programmes to different grades, for improving the competency level of its civil servants in order to enhance organisational performance. Thus, the workforce plan guarantees a direct and dynamic link between strategy and competencies.

Also, the practices of HRM are based on competencies (horizontal integration). Competency models are developed and applied in order to achieve goals in selection, promotion, and education. For example, competency-based education for the SCS candidates is closely related to competency assessment.

At the national level, the Korean government has an integrated competency management system for managing the competencies in the processes of HRM, such as workforce planning, selection, disposition, and education and development, and for aligning competencies with the goals and strategies of government bodies.

Netherlands. Vertical integration is a feature of the ABD (*Algemene Bestuursdienst*, i.e. the Dutch senior civil service) approach to competency-based management. The relation between organisational strategy and competencies is described by Van Vulpen and Moesker (2002, p. 77) as follows: “The mission statement and objectives of an organisation may offer clues as to what the core competencies are. Moreover, the behaviour of individual employees can be related to the mission statement and objectives of the organisation: the objectives can in turn be translated into departmental objectives and then into individual objectives. Specific behaviours, expressed in terms of individual competencies, are required to achieve individual objectives”. This description makes clear that it is possible to relate organisational strategy to the competencies that are required for the individual ABD Office holder, but the realisation of vertical integration will be dependent on actual practice in a ministry.

The idea of horizontal integration is also part of the ABD view on competency management. It is a possibility because the actual implementation is dependent on the ministries. Van Vulpen and Moesker indicate that the competency framework makes it possible to define the requirements for a particular post (recruitment and selection), and to develop an accompanying system for evaluating, controlling, and developing managerial qualities. When competency-based management was introduced by the ABD, the use of the competency framework was limited to career planning interviews with individual ABD candidates and managers, and to the support of ministries that had managerial vacancies by steering job profiles and selection procedures through appropriate competency profiles. Over time, the competency framework grew to be used by the ABD in several HR processes, notably recruitment and selection, training and development, workforce/succession planning, and career guidance.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009.

A Roadmap for Implementing Competency Management

In the roadmap below, a number of core elements are identified that are important in the introduction, development, and implementation of competency management (based on Marrelli, 1998; Ruys *et al.*, 2008 and country experiences). The steps presented here should not be followed promptly, but need to be considered as a checklist. The attention is mainly focussed on bringing together recommendations and

lessons for the future based on the results from the nine selected OECD countries. These guidelines are particularly useful for governments that either want to introduce a new competency management system or review the existing one.

Step 1: Deciding to Introduce Competency-Based Management

Deciding to introduce competency management is a strategic choice and hence a long term commitment. Competency management is, however, not an objective in itself, but a means to achieve an objective. Therefore, it is important to establish the objectives for the competency-modelling project in advance. Furthermore, formulating the objectives clearly can contribute to creating a shared perspective on competency management among the different stakeholders. Also, as required by strategic HRM, the first link to the organisational mission and vision should be made here (vertical integration). Questions that need answering in this step are: Why does the organisation want to introduce competency management? What is the rationale behind the project? And how does competency management connect with the mission and vision?

Generally, competency management starts from a need or a problem. In 1994, Lawler referred to four forces that lead to the emergence of competency management: change of the nature of work, globalisation, growing competition, and flatter organisational structures. Now, there are new challenges that need to be mastered. Twenty-first century challenges still include globalisation, but also entail the demand for a diverse workforce, financial crisis, an ageing workforce, etc. These are macro-economic factors that will further influence the need to revise traditional personnel management practices and evolve towards a competency-based system.

From the different case studies, it was found that the general intentions for introducing competency management in government are diverse. The provision of a common language and creation of a strategic alignment between the individual and the organisation are only a few of the many reasons given by the OECD countries.

The main context for introducing competency management seems to be a broader cultural and organisational reform. Competency management is then seen as leverage for change. In most cases, it is a vehicle to transform a traditional bureaucracy into a modern and flexible organisation. Also, in the nine selected OECD countries, competency management was introduced as part of a broader reform or change process. Since the 1990s, and under the influence of New Public Management, many governments have been undergoing a radical reform process. In this context, competency management often served as an underpinning in the creation of a more strategic human resource management.

The first general recommendation to emerge from these findings is that the decision to introduce competency management should not be taken lightly, as it is by no means an easy process. Nevertheless, competency management can serve as leverage for changing the organisational culture. Therefore, the introduction of competency management can be an interesting opportunity to introduce organisational change in a period of broader government reforms.

Reasons for introducing a competency management system can be found in the many benefits it entails. However, the decision to introduce competency management should also be sustained by the organisational strategy. For that reason, it is important for each government to formulate its own objectives.

Step 2: Organising, Planning and Communicating the Shift to Competency-Based Management

This second step involves three aspects: a) determining the organisation of competency management (HR governance); b) planning the approach for the development of a competency management system; and

c) developing and implementing communication plans. It is important to mention that the decisions referred to in this step need to be made before the actual development and implementation of competency management begins.

a) Organising Competency Management

Organising competency management refers to the HR governance structure that is applied. In other words, the questions to be answered are: Who will develop competency management? And who will coordinate the implementation of competency management?

The main choice to be made here is whether competencies will be managed centrally or in the agencies, departments, or ministries. General practice in the OECD countries, however, shows that governments implement a mixture of both: agencies, departments, or ministries implement competency management in line with the specificity of their organisation while respecting the generic guidelines set by a central personnel agency. Therefore, it is possible to state that the development of competency management mostly happens at the central level and implementation happens at the agency level. However, sometimes a distinction must be made between the target groups of competency management. For leadership functions, a competency framework is generally developed at the central level. Competency frameworks for civil servants at lower levels are, in some cases, developed separately in agencies. The involvement of agencies in the development and/or implementation means that the government's competency management system can be adapted to the specific needs of the different organisations. Also worth mentioning is the Dutch government's belief that a competency framework requires expert implementation (cf. box 6). Contrary to the increasing human resource role of line managers, the Netherlands are shifting their focus to expert support from HR professionals to implement competency management.

In summary, it is recommended to create a balance between the central personnel agency and the different agencies, departments, or ministries. A possible basic HR structure, which is also present in the selected OECD countries, is as follows: one central personnel agency and a separate personnel unit in each agency, department, or ministry. After planning the HR structure, the organisation has to decide who is responsible for what in regard to the development and implementation of competency management, but also concerning the distinction between target groups (leadership functions versus lower levels). Finally, the case of expert implementation is also something to take into consideration.

b) Planning the Approach for the Development of a Competency Management System

Planning the competency management approach involves defining concepts, determining the relevant parts of the organisation, and selecting the development tools. From the beginning, it is important to clarify which approach in the development of the competency management system will be used. This step is about answering the question: How will the competency management system be developed?

Defining the concepts is an essential starting point in order to avoid misunderstandings in the short term during development, but also in the long run when competency management is being implemented. The main concepts to be defined are 'competency' and 'competency management'. What is a competency? And what is understood by competency management? The definitions given in the beginning of this report are quite comprehensive. Elements of the above definitions can be used in defining the concepts for other organisations.

Furthermore, the part(s) of the organisation in which competency management will be developed should be determined. It can be the entire organisation, a certain agency, department, or ministry, or a specific employee level. In government, it seems suitable to introduce competency management

throughout the organisation. Of course, a distinction can be made between different target groups. Each government that was studied in this report has a competency management system for leadership functions. However, other civil servants aren't always covered.

Selecting the development tools to be used to collect and analyse data comes next. Examples of tools are interviews, focus groups, surveys, observations, etc. Although these different tools are not elaborated in this report, a light is shed on the general development path followed by the selected OECD countries. From those case studies, it shows that the competency management system is developed through a process of 'trial and error'. A draft competency framework is set up, implemented, and then tested for effectiveness. Based on that evaluation, adjustments can be made to the framework. Furthermore, a competency management system is mostly created by a group of people. Several stakeholders are involved, each with their own expertise. Often, also an external (private) partner is consulted. An essential factor to take into consideration here is the availability of the necessary time and resources.

A general recommendation when completing this step, is to make clear the 'what', 'where', and 'how' of introducing competency management. What is understood by competencies and competency management? Where should competencies be implemented (in what part(s) of the organisation)? And how should the competency management system be developed? It is important to answer these questions in detail and also well in advance.

c) Developing and Implementing Communication Plans

An integrated project such as the introduction of a competency management system requires a lot of support from people in the organisation. Therefore, communicating new developments on competency management to the different stakeholders (HR professionals, supervisors, employees, trade unions, etc.) is indispensable. This implies an intensive communication project, but it will be helpful in pushing competency management forward and promoting the implementation of competency management throughout the organisation (i.e. the third dimension of integration). As shown by the situation in the selected OECD countries, governments may develop a competency management system, but that doesn't guarantee the use of it in practice. For that reason, encouragement through targeted communication is necessary.

To structure the communication project, it is important to develop communication plans for everyone in the organisation who will be affected by the competency management system. Implementing the communication plan ideally begins before the analysis work starts. It is crucial to let everyone in the organisation know what to expect before they are asked to participate in the project. In particular, the support of executives and senior managers is essential from the beginning. They need to understand that, for a competency-modelling project to be successful, thinking in terms of competencies needs to become a way of life in the organisation.

Step 3: Identifying Competencies and Developing Competency Models for the Specified Target Groups

This diagnostic phase begins with specifying the target groups of competency management. Then, the competency model is specified and the competencies are identified.

Several options are possible when specifying the target groups: one set of competencies for all civil servants; one set of competencies for senior management and one for civil servants at lower levels; one set of competencies for each employee level; etc. From the countries studied in this report, it appears that senior management positions are a priority for the implementation of strategic competency management. Therefore, it may be recommended to, certainly, involve senior management when introducing competency management for the first time.

There are two ways to continue the development process: (1) top-down: start from an existing competency model and adjust the competencies to the needs of the organisation; or (2) bottom-up: identify the competencies that are needed in the organisation, and structure them in a competency model. Either way, when developing a competency model and identifying competencies, there are a few points that require attention.

First, it is wrong to believe that something like an ideal competency management system exists. A good competency management system must always be aligned with the specific goals of an organisation. Therefore, competencies must be linked to the strategic objectives of the organisation. This alignment of competencies with the organisational strategy, mission, and vision is referred to as vertical integration. Next to that, it is also advisable to take into account the current HR instruments and procedures used in the organisation.

Second, there are some guidelines in regard to the types of competencies that should be included in a competency model. In a general competency model, for example, behavioural competencies should prevail. Because of the specificity of technical competencies, it is better that they are identified at the agency level. That way, the technical competencies can be completely adjusted to the particular needs of the agency, department, or ministry.

Furthermore, a government's competency model ideally includes a mix of competencies specific to public service and competencies that appear in both public and private sector organisations. In the selected OECD countries, the competencies specific to public service generally take on the form of (public service) values. According to *Government at a Glance 2009* (OECD, 2009a), this trend to incorporate basic public values is associated with the evolution to a broader focus on public governance. Values that are considered a foundation of the public service are, for example, commitment, service, integrity, transparency, accountability, equity, etc. Other competencies with an emphasis specific to public service are public service professionalism and probity, affinity with public sector management, political awareness, political savvy, and public service motivation.

Moreover, there are competencies common to both public and private sector competency models. A comparative analysis of the OECD countries' competency models highlighted eleven competencies that are frequently referred to: strategic thinking, vision, achieving results, building relations, commitment, adaptability, communicating, decision making, learning, coaching/developing, and teamwork. These can be used as a foundation when starting a new competency model.

Finally, the content of a fully developed competency model includes clusters of competencies, the competencies that make up each cluster, a definition of each competency, and several behavioural indicators for each competency. Furthermore, it is also recommended to cast the competencies, or at least the competency clusters, in an attractive conceptual framework (e.g. Australia's Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework, Belgium's 5+1 Competency Model, and the UK's Professional Skills for Government Framework (see Annex 1)), which can then be communicated to the different stakeholders.

Step 4: Integrating Competencies into Various HR Processes

The next step is to apply the competency model(s) to people management systems, such as selection, employee development, succession planning, etc. The integration of competencies into the various HR processes can happen gradually or suddenly. When gradual integration is chosen, it is possible to start with a pilot project in one department, with a group of employees or in one HR process. For example, starting at the top of the organisation (e.g. senior management or supervisors), immediately gives a strong signal to

the base. As a result, implementing competency management for civil servants at lower levels will probably be easier.

Furthermore, the HR processes (selection, remuneration, workforce planning, etc.) to which the competency model(s) will be applied need to be selected. For more information on applying competencies in the different HR processes, please see '3.4. *Competency Management as a Basis for Various Human Resource Processes*'. In the countries studied in this report, HR processes, such as selection and employee development, already have a strong competency-basis. The link between competencies and performance, however, should be made stronger so that competency-based pay can be introduced later.

Nevertheless, competency management is more than simply using competencies in various HR processes. It is a system that needs to bring about organisation-wide dynamics. Therefore, the competency-based people systems should be integrated so that they are aligned and mutually supportive (the so-called horizontal integration). The challenge is to develop competency management as an integrated, core part of HRM and to avoid the risk of it becoming an isolated tool or an end in itself.

Step 5: Revising and Updating the Competency Management System on a Regular Basis

The last step involves revising and updating the competency management system on a regular basis. Global challenges imply changing (competency) needs for each government. Therefore, it is particularly important to grasp the dynamic nature of individual job-related competencies. In this context, the effectiveness of the entire competency management system (competency models and the integration into HR processes) needs to be evaluated. Possible questions in this step are: How can the competency management system be improved? And how well are the applications of the model working in the organisation's people management system?

In order to anticipate this need for evaluation, it is best to schedule regular updates and revisions of the competency management system. Competency modelling is a continuous process, not a one-time project. To be useful, the list of competencies needs to be revised as business strategies and conditions change. In terms of timing, there are several options, such as a periodical evaluation or a comprehensive review over several years.

When revising the competency model, it might be interesting to incorporate some of the future competencies that were identified by the OECD countries in this study (cf. infra: '5.2.1 *Future Competencies*'). Under the umbrella of change management, these countries refer to several competencies that are needed by their civil servants in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century: agility, creative thinking (creativity and innovation), flexibility (flexibility and change management), cooperation (work collaboratively across boundaries and relationship building), and strategic thinking (vision and future orientation).

4. BARRIERS AND LIMITATIONS OF COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT

Difficulties Experienced in Competency Management

One of the major difficulties of competency management lies in **identifying competencies and constructing the competency framework** (Horton, 2000a). Identifying the appropriate competencies for

an organisation and building the appropriate competency model is a complex and lengthy process (Vakola *et al.*, 2007). Recent research also shows that one of the most difficult managerial and leadership issues remains the translation of business strategy into the individual competencies needed for implementing and supporting that strategy at the operational level in organisations (Kaplan & Norton, 2005). Additionally, several competencies are still formulated at a high level of abstraction and thus are ‘fuzzy’, which reduces their usefulness (Lievens, 2006).

Nunes, Martin and Duarte (2007) find that **commitment** is one of the main problems encountered in the implementation of competency management in government. Senior and middle management, as well as employees, often have a reduced level of commitment and participation.

Another issue of concern is that the competencies defined most often end up being **backward-looking rather than future-oriented** in respect to strategy and organisational change. Competency models also tend to focus on what managers currently do rather than what is needed to perform effectively in the future, something that jeopardises the potential of competencies to act as levers for implementing change (Vakola *et al.*, 2007). Next to these general difficulties, some of the selected OECD countries have experienced other challenges linked to their particular cases.

Box 15. Barriers and Limitations for Competency Management in OECD Countries

Belgium. The transition towards competency management wasn't effortless. The scale of the federal government (83,000 public servants) makes a generic implementation within many different organisations complex. The FPS P&O experienced several more difficulties: finding the balance between a common language and respecting the specificity of the different federal organisations; finding the balance between a sound methodology and ease of use; ensuring a consistent implementation in the different organisations (FOD P&O, 2009b). Moreover, Hondeghem and Parys (2002) found several institutional factors that hinder the integration of competency management, some of which are discussed below.

Amongst others, there is a strong legalistic tradition in the Belgian public sector. Personnel management is defined in terms of the rights and duties of personnel, which are anchored in detailed regulations and procedures. This impedes flexible personnel management primarily oriented towards the organisation's objectives, which is a condition for competency management. The FPS P&O, however, sees this legalistic tradition as possible leverage for competency management, once it is introduced. Although, it may take up a lot of time, it creates a legal framework to which competency management can be applied (FOD P&O, 2009a).

Additionally, there is a hindrance caused by public sector values, such as objectivity and equality, which means that everyone should have access to equal opportunities and be treated fairly. These values are difficult to reconcile with the different treatment of individuals as a result of differences in performance or competencies. Differentiation among individuals according to added value is, however, an essential characteristic of competency management. On the contrary, according to the FPS P&O (2009a), public sector values and competency management do not have to be completely incompatible.

Finally, there is a difficulty regarding the cultural context of Belgium. The vision and mentality concerning the civil service differs between the North (Flanders) and the South (Wallonia) of Belgium. In the federal government, both cultures co-exist, which might make change and the introduction of competency management more difficult (Hondeghem & Parys, 2002). In practice, the mixture of these two cultures doesn't seem to cause any additional difficulties in their competency management. On the contrary, it is often considered to enrich it (FOD P&O, 2009a).

Canada. The application of competency-based management (CBM) in HR management practices has continued to progress within the Federal Public Service of Canada. The difficulties and challenges recently observed through the Management Accountability Framework and deputy heads' performance assessments, have related to the translation of stated priorities and commitment into concrete, measurable, and meaningful results. The challenges encountered have been in linking HR needs and the imperative of a skilled competent workforce with business needs and

operational success.

In regard to implementation, the 1998 Public Service Commission's (PSC) research revealed that organisations were applying CBM where they had identified change as critical (i.e., where the organisation's "pain" is the greatest), not necessarily where theory might dictate. The research indicated that organisations that had implemented CBM perceived that integrating CBM enhanced the role of the HR function, making it a key strategic lever in achieving business results. However, they defined and applied competencies very differently, depending on their current and future needs. This ranged from developing unique sets of competencies for specific jobs to applying broad-based generic competencies that were relevant to all jobs in the organisation. It was observed that organisations could run into difficulties when CBM became an end in itself, not a means to an end, or if it lacked rigour in process or follow-through.

Korea. The Korean government had difficulties in developing the competency model because extensive opinions needed to be collected, and conflicts between deductive and inductive methods needed to be resolved. They also had high costs in money and time. In addition, reaching consensus among the civil servants took a long time because of resistance to change.

United Kingdom. In many of the UK government's departments and agencies, problems were experienced in both the identification of competencies and the agreement on frameworks. That was not the case in the senior civil service, where they adopted a very open and participative process with full information to all senior civil servants. Some of the problems that were mentioned are (Farnham & Horton, 2002):

- Poor understanding among staff
- Lack of commitment by line management
- Lack of ownership and support by senior management
- Resistance from trade unions
- Difficulties in identifying competencies
- Problems associated with the content of frameworks, such as lack of clarity and difficulty in
- applying competency criteria

However, early problems have been largely overcome as competency management has become embedded.

United States. Despite the promise of competency management in linking key human resource management processes, a number of difficulties are apparent. First, insufficient resources (including financial resources, adequate time for studies, and necessary expertise) can stall competency management efforts. Second, decreased interest in competency models (and increased interest in results-oriented measures) necessarily present challenges to ongoing efforts to validate and update competency models. In addition, the proper use of competency models presents a challenge. Educating agencies and agency leaders on the proper role of competencies is key to avoiding misapplied models and associated frustration. Finally, illustrating job-relatedness of competency models is crucial to providing legal justification for any HR decisions based on such models.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009.

Factors Determining the Success of Competency Management

In order to overcome the barriers and limitations of competency management, it is important to take into account the success factors discussed below. In addition, Canada provides an extensive overview of necessary steps when developing a competency profile and crucial conditions that must be met when implementing competency-based management.

Success factor 1: Reason behind the Introduction of Competency Management

The reason(s) for introducing competency management should be well thought about. There are many possible grounds, but each government has to establish its own justification based on organisation-specific

needs. A common reason for introducing competencies in government is the need for a broader cultural and organisational reform. Competency management can support this reform and hence provides leverage for change. However, not all reasons are equally valid. For example, introducing competency management simply because it is fashionable in the private sector is not recommended.

Success factor 2: Commitment and Participation of Stakeholders

The introduction of competency management hinges on the support and commitment of the civil servants. Despite of its importance, commitment remains one of the major problems encountered when introducing competency management. Top and middle management especially should show the commitment and the willingness to enter competency management from the start of the project. That way, they can garner support and encourage participation from civil servants at lower levels. Support from senior management should also be kept visible throughout the process, because civil servants will not see competency management as a priority unless they see management associated with it. Also, getting support at the political level is important for public organisations.

In addition, the involvement of stakeholders is particularly important during the development process. The development of a competency management system usually is a process of trial and error. All stakeholders, each with his or her specific perspective, should be encouraged to participate in the development process. Therefore, it is necessary to create detailed development and implementation plans, which include the assignment of clearly defined roles and accountabilities for top management, line management, HR professionals, employees, and trade unions. Working with line managers to design the entire competency modelling process is particularly important so that they become co-owners of the process. Finally, employees should be provided with abundant support throughout all the stages of the competency effort.

As in any organisational initiative or change process, intensive and frequent communication is key to getting the necessary support from the different stakeholders. Once it is decided to introduce competency management, civil servants need to be informed of the purpose and the conduct of the process. If this communication is not done correctly, it can lead to tensions and resistance among civil servants. By informing them, potential conflicts and resistance can be countered to some extent.

Success factor 3: Paying Attention to the Specificity of the Public Sector

In order to emphasise the specificity of the public service, it is recommended to incorporate (public service) values and/or other public service specific competencies. Values, such as service, integrity, and loyalty, can be considered as fundamental competencies for governments. Moreover, these values support the increasing focus on public governance. Next to these values, it is also possible to add other public service specific competencies, such as political awareness and public service professionalism.

Success factor 4: Adaptability to the Needs at Agency-Level

Since competency management is mainly implemented by the agencies, departments, or ministries (with the support and advice of a central personnel agency), the competency management system needs to be adapted or adaptable to their needs. Certain competency models, such as those for civil servants at lower levels, can, for example, be developed in the agencies. Furthermore, it is recommendable to identify technical competencies at the agency level so that they can be totally adjusted to the particular needs of the agency, department, or ministry.

Success factor 5: Comply with the Three Dimensions of Integrated Competency Management

In a decentralised public sector, competency management is often seen as an integrative instrument to maintain coherence and facilitate central steering. The successful implementation of a consistent and unambiguous competency-based management requires three dimensions of integration: vertical integration, horizontal integration, and the implementation in the organisation. In case of vertical integration, it is important to continuously emphasise the connection between the achievement of organisational objectives and the identified competencies. Furthermore, competency models are put to best use when all HR activities are integrated. Thinking in terms of competencies must become a way of life in the organisation, from planning to selecting employees and guiding and rewarding their performance. Not only are the alignment with the strategy (vertical integration) and the integration of the various HR systems important (horizontal integration), but competency management is primarily a question of putting implementation into practice (i.e. the third dimension of integration). Until now, the degree of vertical or horizontal integration remained very dependent on the implementation and actual practice of competency management in the several agencies, departments, or ministries. Each of the selected OECD countries experienced difficulties in the implementation of centrally developed HR tools and guidelines in their agencies. Consequently, the main problem, but also the main challenge, lies in the third dimension of integration: the implementation of competency management throughout the organisation.

Success factor 6: Planning for Competencies

Planning for the competencies needed in the organisation is an essential step to secure a competent workforce now and in the future. Workforce planning is one of the strategies to operate in environments that are more turbulent and to anticipate 21st century challenges, such as ageing or financial crisis. However, workforce planning is still not appreciated enough as a process in the HR toolbox. Therefore, the introduction of competency frameworks is an ideal opportunity to work on workforce planning more systematically and in a more goal-oriented way (cf. infra: ‘5.2.2. *Planning for Future Competencies*’).

Success factor 7: Review and Continued Interest

Once competency frameworks are developed and implemented, efforts need to be made in order to sustain competency-based management throughout the entire government. Competency management should be reviewed periodically to identify incongruence between current competency models and changing needs. Constant review is also necessary because competency frameworks can become too static. In addition, the future of competency management depends on continued interest among top and line management, civil servants, and trade unions.

Box 16. Key Success Factors identified by Canada and Denmark

Canada. When developing a competency profile, organisations are encouraged to consider the following steps that research indicates contribute to the effective implementation of competency profiling (key success factors):

1. Define performance effectiveness criteria.
2. Build a business case for competency-based management (CBM). Business issues are often the compelling drivers for the need to change. This includes identifying the target work group and its outputs and clients, and how CBM can be applied to human resource activities to add value to the organisation.
3. Identify the short- and long-term business consequences of not implementing CBM.
4. Identify primary sources of strategic direction (e.g. senior management, corporate business plans and priorities) to ensure that the model reflects those values that are important to the organisation.
5. Integrate the strategic short- and long-term business values and priorities of the organisation into the competency profiles. Stay focused.
6. Develop a project management plan and a methodology framework that result in a model consistent with the goals of its intended application.
7. Develop present and future assumptions about the target jobs.
8. Select a sample of typical performers as a source for data on behaviours that produce the desired results

(also called a “criterion sample”).

9. Define competencies in terms that are understood by the target population.
10. Use competency language that is consistent across the target population.
11. Use a balanced approach to collect competency information on existing jobs with established performance levels. For example, this can include:
 - direct observation
 - behavioural-based interviews, critical incident, or stakeholder interviews²
 - panel of experts who know the jobs and competencies required to get results
 - focus groups involving incumbents, supervisors, clients
 - surveys (e.g. 360° evaluations)
 - job analyses
 - competency databases³
 - competency card decks
 - benchmarking with similar organisations
 - databases of information on performance.
12. Create a competency profile.
13. Cross-validate the content of the competency profile with one of the above methods, and always include focus groups in data collection and validation to improve the reliability and validity of information.
14. Analyse information.
15. Use the type of profile most appropriate for your application. For example, when selecting for specific positions or jobs, build a profile that defines competencies in terms of behaviourally anchored rating scales or conventional rating scales⁴ that are observable, measurable and consistent for the particular human resource application. This detail is not necessary if the application is at the level of a functional community.
16. Validate for reliability and whether it can be measured and observed.
17. Finalise the model through additional tests or pilot projects (“second criterion sample”).
18. Develop and apply oversight and administrative structures to maintain the system and ensure reliability.
19. Monitor and evaluate the validity and relevance of the profile over time.
20. Provide in-depth training to human resource specialists to ensure they fully understand the concept and tools.
21. Adapt the profile to new human resource uses.
22. Evaluate gains in efficiency and effectiveness.
23. Communicate progress and benefits to all stakeholders.

Implementation of competency-based management is the systematic process of determining the competencies needed to achieve the desired results of an organisation, and applying these competencies in one or more HR functions. There are certain conditions (key success factors) that are considered necessary for the process to be successful.

First of all, the organisation should have a culture that fosters participative decision-making, innovation, individual flexibility, growth, excellence in performance, and continuous learning. CBM works best when these conditions are present. In addition, there needs to be a strong drive within the organisation to implement a competency-based management approach. This is important for the building of momentum and the realisation of the concept as a living tool.

² Behaviour-based interviews are a good predictor of how a candidate will perform on the job in future by questioning him/her on how he/she handled a past critical situation (e.g. resolved a conflict).

³ Access to a data bank of competency studies can help focus on competencies that lead to success in other organizations.

⁴ Behaviourally anchored rating scales have been used in the public and private sectors for many years. When applied in CBM, a skill is defined in terms of competency levels from low to high, each anchored to points on a scale that lists behavioural descriptors. For example: Takes responsibility for own mistakes - (1) Openly acknowledges own mistakes (2) Requires prompting to acknowledge own mistakes (3) Requires pressure to acknowledge own mistakes, and may display a defensive attitude (4) Sometimes blames others for own mistakes (5) Sometimes hides own mistakes. Conventional rating scales have also been used over the years by practitioners. For example: some of these scales list behaviours for each competency and require a selection of the extent to which an individual demonstrates each behaviour (e.g. seldom too frequently).

It is important that all levels of management commit to long-term strong leadership and championship roles. If the concept is not important to management, it will not be important to the rest of the organisation. As an example, an executive steering committee can provide the platform for decision-making, clarifying business objectives, providing strategic direction, and building acceptance. Senior management must agree on a specific direction that is consistent across the organisation.

The project should also have the commitment, participation, and long-term support of key stakeholders, such as managers, employees, bargaining agents, and other employee representatives. Collaborating and holding meaningful consultations with employees throughout the development and implementation of CBM ensures that they are part of the decision-making process.

The culture of the organisation should encourage managers to take ownership and drive the process throughout the implementation cycle. The organisation needs to have a strong communication strategy in place to ensure that employees understand the reason for implementing CBM and how it can help contribute to the desired results. In the case of such fundamental change, it may take more than one message to engage an audience and secure support.

Finally, competencies need to be applied correctly; if not, they become meaningless. In concrete terms, this means coaching and mentoring for employees and their supervisors.

Denmark. The Danish government identifies several factors as being key to the successful development and implementation of competency management:

- persistence (reforms have been going on for a long time, since the 1980's);
- a commitment and willingness among key actors;
- the collective management system that institutionalises policies;
- a commitment to innovation on behalf of employees;
- sufficient time and resources; and
- political backing for encouraging competency management.

Fortunately, in Denmark, all of these factors seem to have been present for most of the recent decade.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

5. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AND COMPETENCIES FOR THE FUTURE

Recent Developments in Public Sector Competency Management

After discussing the current status of competency management in the previous chapter, the focus now turns to the most recent developments and possible innovations taking place in the selected OECD countries. All countries are working to further integrate competency management with their human resource management. New practices are continuously being unfolded and current applications adjusted or expanded.

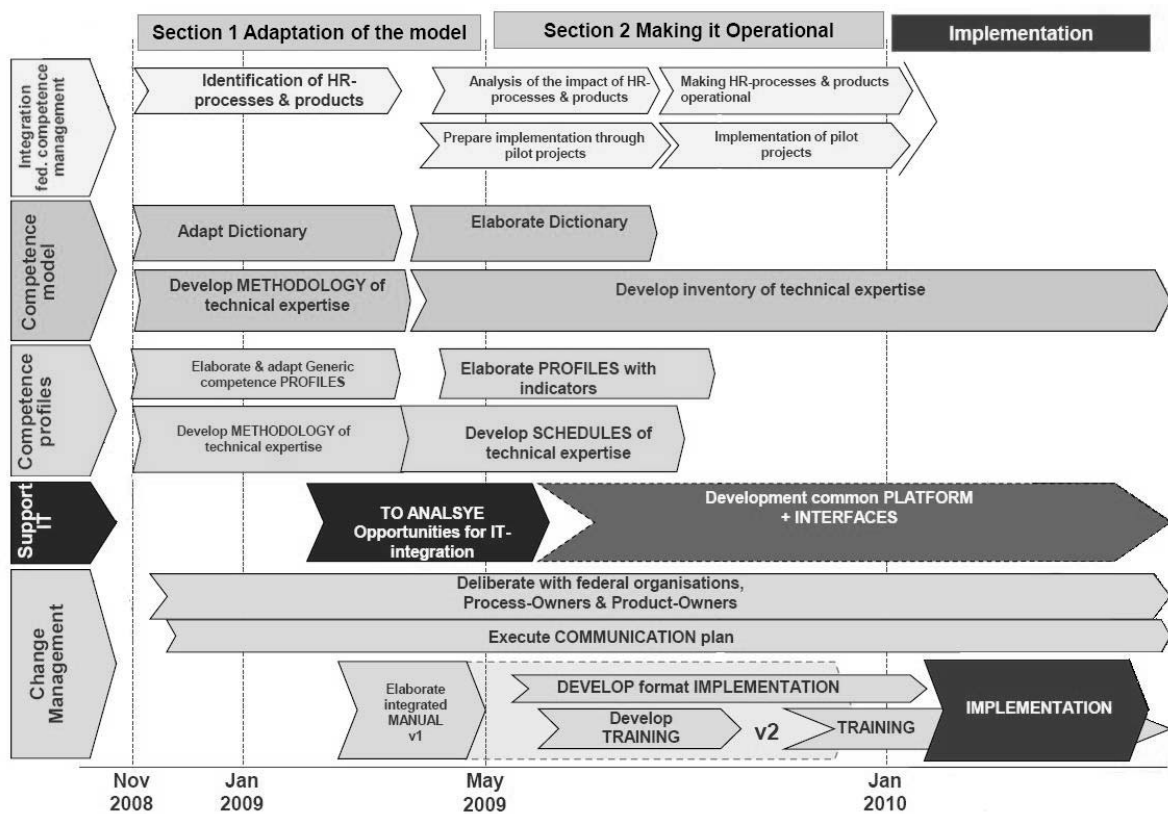
One trend that is occurring is the **adjustment of current competency models or the development of additional models**. Belgium, Korea, and the US have recently adjusted one of their competency models. Belgium reviewed its federal competency model in 2009. Although no competencies were added or eliminated, there were changes in the competencies' definition, and levels were introduced in the structure

of the behavioural indicators. Also in 2009, Korea simplified its SCS competency model to have only six competencies instead of nine. The US government revised its leadership competency model (including the Executive Core Qualifications) in 2006 to reflect changing contexts. Six competencies were separated as fundamental competencies, which together now serve as a foundation for the other meta-competency clusters.

Box 17. Adjustment of the Existing Competency Model in Belgium

In 2008, the federal administration (Federal Public Service Personnel & Organisation) decided to thoroughly analyse the existing federal competency model in order to adjust it to fit current requirements. In 2009, the 5+1 competency model was actually reviewed, based on the needs of the different federal organisations and on a five-year experience with the existing model. The results of the review are currently being finalised, after which they will be communicated to the vertical P&O units. In addition to the review of the existing competency model, the FPS P&O developed a method to list the technical competencies of the federal government. Until then, there was no set structure or enumeration regarding these technical competencies. Instead, it was the responsibility of the decentralised federal organisations. In sum, the philosophy behind this entire review process was not to change everything, but to ameliorate the existing tools. A schematic overview of the entire review process is given below.

Review Process of the Federal Competency Model



Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

Both Australia and the UK developed a new, additional competency model recently. Australia's Integrated Leadership System was designed in 2004, together with the necessary guides and tools to assist

managers and employees in capability planning. Since 2003, the UK has been developing the Professional Skills for Government (PSG) framework. It was launched in 2008 and should be embedded in departmental frameworks by 2012. The PSG framework is a structured way of thinking about jobs and careers for civil servants at all grades. It is likely that this framework will replace some, if not all, existing departmental frameworks.

Box 18. Development of a New Competency Model in the UK

During the second Labour government (2001-2004), there was a review of civil service reform, which focused on how effective the service was in implementing the government's modernisation agenda. The current emphasis on 'delivery' led to a review of many competency frameworks, including that of the SCS. Government Skills, a new body appointed to work with the government to implement its Skills Agenda, produced a framework called Professional Skills for Government (PSG). PSG is a structured way of thinking about jobs and careers for civil servants at all grades. A common framework was launched in July 2008. It was initially intended for Grade 7 and above, but it is currently being applied to the rest of the service on a departmental and agency basis. The aim is to embed this framework in departmental frameworks by 2012.

It is likely that the PSG competency frameworks will replace some, if not all of the existing competency frameworks. It is significant that the PSG framework is linked to skills and knowledge more than behaviours. This is in line with the traditional British standards approach, rather than the American behaviour/excellence approach (Farnham & Horton, 2002), which became more popular in the 1990s. Skills and knowledge have been reinstated in the context of continuing professional development.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

Another occurrence is **the development of a complete set of job descriptions** in Belgium and the Netherlands. In Belgium, a federal cartography was developed in 2008, which contained all the job descriptions for separate functions or function families in the federal administration. Each job description included a competency profile. The Dutch central government also introduced a comprehensive set of job descriptions in 2009 (box 19). It was compiled on the basis of government-wide job families and job profiles, which include competencies and other requirements. According to the Dutch government, the introduction of one comprehensive job structure for the whole of government facilitates flexibility, mobility, and quality management.

Box 19. A Complete Set of Job Descriptions in the Netherlands

Regarding the flexibility of the Dutch central government, one recent initiative is the development and introduction of a comprehensive set of job descriptions for central government as a whole. These are compiled on the basis of government-wide job families and job profiles, which include competencies and additional requirements. The ambition is that these profiles contribute to several goals (MBZK, 2009), including:

- Developing interdepartmental career policy and mobility within and between ministries;
- Creating flexibility: by using global results and development oriented profiles employee employability will be facilitated without the direct need of reorganisations;
- Steering on results by using result-oriented profiles;
- Steering on organisational development and development of employees;
- Deregulation, harmonisation and simplification;
- Increase of efficiency;

- Embedding the job profiles in the HRM-instruments of all departments;
- Transparency and user-friendliness; and
- Responsible use of capacity.

This government-wide initiative is a delicate one, not only because it is part of the process that reverses the historical trend of decentralisation of HR policies at departmental level, but also because interviewees doubt whether employees will consult the prospective governmental job structure. When jobs are described, the job profile is the base. However, managers make tailor-made agreements with an employee about what his activities will be in the future. While the competency language is attractive as a tool, the job profiles reflect a formal language. In addition, there is scepticism about the governmental job description's function in supporting interdepartmental mobility. Competencies may help make comparable aspects of jobs transparent, but there are other more important processes that influence employees' interest in mobility, such as their commitment to a certain policy field. Even within a department it is difficult to promote mobility when employees who have an interest in a particular field, such as those who do fire brigade issues, are not interested in moving to another related policy field, such as police-matters.

On the other hand, the governmental job descriptions may serve other purposes. It may help reduce the administrative burden of updating job profiles and generating comparative data about the number of policy advisors in particular departments. Such data reveal imbalances but will not in themselves help mobility and the process of achieving lean and better government.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

Furthermore, the Belgian and French government both introduced programmes for the valorisation of experience and for the assessment of a civil servant's competencies.

In Belgium, **the valorisation of experience** is realised by the system of 'elsewhere acquired competencies' (EAC) (cf. box 8). The EAC logic means that candidates who don't have the appropriate diploma for a vacant position, but do have the necessary competencies (acquired through experience, training...), have the opportunity to participate in the selection procedures. As stated above, this philosophy was, until now, only applied in cases of scarcity of specific qualifications (e.g. IT professionals). Also, France developed a principle of valorisation of experience for all employees. The principle is that civil servants obtain an academic degree if they prove they control the level of competencies corresponding to the academic level of that degree. This allows civil servants, who already exercise an activity corresponding to a higher academic level, to catch up.

Concerning the **assessment of a civil servant's competencies** in Belgium, the recruitment and selection organ Selor developed a new instrument, the so-called 'competency balance', in 2006. The competency balance is used to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of civil servants and to find out which competencies they should acquire for the function they wish to pursue. The result should be an adjusted training programme. In the context of internal mobility, this instrument serves to optimise the employability of internal talent. France introduced a similar system in the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance. Before considering a reorientation of their career, civil servants have the opportunity to conduct a competency assessment. In both ministries, the number of assessments remains limited and only involve a few dozen civil servants. In both cases, the objective seems to be an improvement in the internal mobility of civil servants.

Next to these more general trends, the selected OECD countries are also working on other projects in competency management. The increase in the recognition of professional qualifications in France is remarkable. Various incremental actions intend to introduce new ways of recognising competencies. Most French ministries are gradually replacing examinations on academic criteria by examinations directly testing the capacity of individuals.

In Belgium, the ageing issue is a particularly important challenge. The endeavour is – next to keeping staff over 50 motivated and involved – to ensure that their level of competency remains high and up-to-date, and to take care of their critical knowledge in order to ensure the continuity of service and policy advice. Therefore, since 2006, the Federal Public Service Personnel and Organisation provided support to the federal administrations in preparing and using tools for the transfer of knowledge between seniors and juniors. Several awareness campaigns were launched and methodological tools were made available. Furthermore, for those civil servants on the eve of their retirement, the federal training institute OFO proposes a number of training possibilities to help them pass on their knowledge.

In Canada, all of the learning activities from the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) have been mapped against the Key Leadership Competencies. The CSPS recently developed new interactive learning tools geared to managers and individual employees, such as ‘My Learning Planner’, which allows any of the 250,000 employees in the core Federal Public Service the ability to create -- online – their own personal learning plan.

Denmark has recently focused its investments in competency management for leaders on the launch of new formal educational programmes. An example is the new and flexible Master in Public Governance degree, run by the Copenhagen Business School and the University of Copenhagen. Similar masters are run by other universities. It is a new arrangement, that these masters are developed in a joint venture between the public sector employers’ and employees’ organisations, the universities and highly qualified management consultants.

Korea’s future plan is to broaden HRM areas encompassed by competency management and to increase the number of civil servants involved in competency management. Until now, the Korean government evaluated competency management as better than the other methods of personnel management in terms of reliability, validity, and compliance. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning the assessment centre (AC) as a new practice concerning competency management in the Korean experience. An AC can be defined as “a variety of testing techniques designed to allow candidates to demonstrate, under standardised conditions, the competencies that are most essential for success in a given job” (Coleman, 1987). It includes role playing, in-basket exercises, and leaderless group discussion. The AC was initially introduced to a process of competency assessment for the SCS candidates in June 2006, and is now widely used in estimating the competencies of candidates for the OPS positions and other senior positions, as well as the SCS. This kind of AC was also introduced to the central agencies, such as the Korean Intellectual Property Office and the Korea Customs Service, and public organisations, such as Korail (Korea Railroad Corporation) and the Korea Racing Authority.

In the Netherlands, various government-wide initiatives flow from the ‘modernising government’ programme. Next to the development of a set of job descriptions, the ‘management learning lines’ fall under the umbrella of ‘modernising government’ (cf. box 12). This programme aims at providing learning lines, career possibilities, and instruments for development of prospective managers . Additionally, the Dutch SCS Office believes that a competency framework requires expert implementation, contrary to earlier opinion that line managers should implement it. In the future, expert support of HR professionals will be required (cf. box 6).

Despite of the extended nature of the competency management system in Australia, there have been no major developments on competency management in the past few years. However, it is important to mention the Australian focus on creating a culture of innovation in this context. Innovation is viewed increasingly as being important in enabling the Australian agencies to respond to complex policy issues, to create public value, and to improve the performance and responsiveness of public services to citizens in the community.

Finally, the US sheds light on the future of competency management (box 19).

Box 20. Innovative Practices in the US

While technology must be used thoughtfully when applied to human resource management processes, computerised and web-based competency management offers potential for improving the ways in which competencies are identified and managed. The potential to organise information on the individual and organisational level offers substantial gains for identifying gaps and opportunities for development. In addition, evolving measurement techniques and advanced psychological research can help improve the competency management process. One emerging area of study is personality-focused studies, which include bio data analyses. Finally, while competency management was embraced for its ability to speak to a range of occupations, contemporary innovations centre on occupation-specific competency studies, particularly for mission critical occupations. The intention is to move away from broad clusters of occupations to competencies that offer occupation-specific insights and applications.

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

Analysis of the Future Competencies

Future competencies

“It is my hope that competencies will provide us with a shared language for talking, in concrete terms, about high performance and managerial excellence. I believe that a shared view of the standards we are striving to achieve will assist us in our continuing efforts to prepare the Organisation to meet the challenges of the 21st century.”

Kofi Annan

This quote, taken from the United Nations report (*Unlocking the Human Potential for Public Sector Performance – World Public Sector Report 2005*) reveals the power of communication that a competency approach brings to discussions about individual and organisational performance. What’s more, it shows the important role played by competencies in the proposed development framework for human resource management (Nunes *et al.*, 2007).

Employees’ competencies and the integration of HR policies and practices with business strategies play a central role in sustained competitive advantage. The culture of lifetime employment no longer exists. Rather, we are witnessing a shift from “people as workforce to people as competitive force” (Prastacos *et al.*, 2002, p. 67). This identifies strategic thinking, innovation, creativity, and business sense as critical requirements for succeeding in almost any kind of job, which drives the need to define and develop new competencies. In this context, it is particularly important to grasp the dynamic nature of individual job-related competencies and recognise the need for connecting competencies with changing business needs (Vakola *et al.*, 2007).

A changing policy environment has a significant impact on both the public service workforce and the range of skills it needs for the future. As the demands and challenges facing the public sector change, so do the skills required of its employees. The selected OECD countries were asked which competencies their civil servants will need in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century (financial crisis, globalisation, ageing, and knowledge management, diversity...). Table 8 provides an overview of all competencies that were mentioned as being important for the future. The sources of these competencies are speeches and statements from politicians and senior officials, policy notes, reports on the civil service, annual reports, and local experts’ perceptions.

Australia explicitly puts an emphasis on two global competencies for the future: **strategic thinking and agility**. “If the current financial crisis tells us anything, it is that we need to be more strategic globally so that we are able to recognise policy and implementation failures before they happen. [...] Furthermore, agility needs to become a core public service competency in our decentralised and complex world. Agility means both how quickly and how flexibly we respond in our uncertain environment.” (Briggs, 2008)

Despite of the extensive list of future competencies, the report on the Dutch government states the following: “There is a feeling that societal changes cannot be prepared for, other than by remaining open and connected to the outside world.”

Table 8 – Future Competencies for Governments

Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act early and decisive • Agility • Anticipating • Considering the big picture • Commercial skills • Creativity • Development of relationships • Early problem diagnosis • Effective & efficient • Embrace change • Entrepreneurship • Establish and maintain productive working relationships across and beyond government agencies • Establishing and managing partnerships • Facilitating • Fairness • Flexibility • Forward-looking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honesty • Impartiality • Innovation • Intellectually agile • Multi-skilled • Participatory approach • Project management • Public service excellence • Purpose and direction • Qualitative leadership • Renewing • Risk management • Strategic leadership • Strategic and creative thinking • Vision • Work across boundaries • Work swiftly • Work together
Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuing reflection of the offered solutions • Culture of ownership and loyalty • Customer orientation • Effective • Ethno communication and networking • Flexibility • Innovative and creative capacity • Knowledge management and knowledge sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leading based on results • Quality orientation • Responsible • Results orientation • Self development • Service orientation • Transparency • Vision
Korea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change management • Problem recognition and understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic thinking • Vision
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to imagine and develop connections across borders • Create space for initiative and creativity, including space for experiments with new ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make connections in a broader context • Make the best use of the talents of employees and citizens • Network collaboration

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of employees • Diversity management • Facilitate dialogue with society • Future orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional substantive knowledge • Sensitivity for societal and political developments • Sustainability
United Kingdom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asking • Building trust and genuine engagement • Campaigning skills • Change management • Collaborative mindset • Communication and technological skills • Emotional intelligence • Entrepreneurship • Flexibility • Imagination • Innovation • Learning • Listening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing skills • People management • Project management • Relationship management • Seek for alternative viewpoints • Social and interpersonal skills • Sociological and psychological skills • Spotting and nurturing talent • Staff engagement • System and process design skills • Team working • Transformational leadership • Understanding the end user
United States	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results orientation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively across boundaries

Source: OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

Based upon an explorative study of the future competencies (see table 8), eight ‘key’ competencies could be identified: innovation, creativity, flexibility, work collaboratively across boundaries, change management, relationship building, vision, and future orientation. These can be clustered into four meta-competencies: creative thinking (creativity and innovation), flexibility (flexibility and change management), cooperation (work collaboratively across boundaries and relationship building), and strategic thinking (vision and future orientation). These future competencies seem to be mainly suitable for senior management or leadership positions. Moreover, one way or another, they all imply ‘change management’. Of course, when challenges such as globalisation, ageing, and financial crisis arise, change will be inevitable.

The view of these countries on what the 21st century challenges require, in terms of competencies that governments need, has only been presented in general terms. These future competencies have not (yet) been added to the countries’ competency frameworks. The US, however, stands out, because two of the frequently cited competencies can be found in their Leadership Competency Model, namely innovation and creativity.

Since these findings are based upon a limited sample, firm conclusions cannot be drawn. Additionally, the countries didn’t specify why they appointed those competencies as important for the future. Box 20 does provide additional information on the future competencies identified by the governments of Belgium and the Netherlands. Regardless, further research into competencies for the future is needed. The limited evidence found here is, however, confirmed by OECD’s (2009a) *Government at a Glance 2009*. In that report, the requirement to think and act in the long-term (cf. strategic thinking: vision and future orientation) and to coordinate internationally (cf. work collaboratively across boundaries) is, amongst others, considered as crucial for governments when facing global challenges.

Box 21. Competencies for the Future in Belgium and the Netherlands

Belgium. Competencies are the core of the HR modernisation process. The ongoing changes that face the federal government call for an adjustment of the competencies to the requirements of new situations (Dupont, 2006). The FPS P&O identifies competencies such as *flexibility*, *service orientation*, and *self-development* as crucial in adapting to new government strategies, representing the society, and serving citizens, organisations, and institutions. The focus also lies on the five core competencies: *service*, *collaboration*, *loyalty*, *result orientation*, and *personal development* (FOD P&O, 2009).

The most recent policy note of the federal government regarding public servants, titled *Together towards quality and quality oriented public services* (Vervotte, 2008b), is based on four major pillars:

- Customer oriented public services
- Responsible, effective, and results oriented public services
- An attractive, dynamic, and innovative employer
- An integrated government

From these pillars, we can identify several competencies that government will need in the future. Public servants will need to be *quality oriented*, *customer oriented*, *responsible*, *effective*, and *results oriented*.

Adding to these four pillars, a qualitative and successful government requires a well-thought management that *leads based on results*. The top management of the federal organisations should also develop a *vision*. Additionally, to ensure a result oriented performance and culture, certain preconditions must be met. For example, the achievement of objectives should be measurable and assessable at every organisational level in a *transparent* and integrated manner. This is the only way a culture of '*ownership*' and *loyalty* can be created. Next to achieving the predetermined results, a quality-oriented government is characterised by the *continuing reflection* of the offered solutions. In this context, the *innovative* and *creative* capacity should be encouraged (Vervotte, 2008b).

The changing labour market is one of the biggest challenges at the moment. Both private and public sector organisations have experienced difficulties in finding qualified personnel. Moreover, up to 40% of federal public servants will retire in the next 10 years. Therefore, it is important to develop a proactive policy to deal with the outflow of personnel caused by retirement (Vervotte, 2008b).

Some of the challenges ahead are: ensuring that the knowledge and expertise that is present in the government today is still available tomorrow; preparing and training the leaders of tomorrow; promoting government on the labour market as an attractive employer; optimising the selection procedures; increasing internal mobility; developing the competencies of public servants through continuous training; and modernising the public servant statute. These challenges do not only fit within the issues of ageing, but also in other policy areas, such as being an innovative and attractive employer by creating a dynamic and motivating HR policy (Vervotte, 2008b).

The interpersonal differences regarding ethnicity, gender, age, health, etc. are a source of wealth for society, the labour market, and the administration. That is why the federal government aims to maximise the use of all competencies of public servants so that performance and results can be improved. To integrate all the competencies present in society, the government is embedding a diversity policy into the overall HR policy. Furthermore, in the selection of interested immigrants or people from ethnic minorities, competencies such as *ethno communication* and *networking* are considered essential (Vervotte, 2008a; 2008b).

Finally, *knowledge management* is an essential element in the development of individual competencies to the extent it deals with knowledge sharing and other processes through which the organisation can maintain existing knowledge and develop new knowledge (Dupont, 2005). *Knowledge sharing* is one of the methods to protect and develop the organisational knowhow, which is now present in the federal government (Dupont, 2006).

Netherlands. The 2006 annual report is used by the ABD to present its vision on the ABD in relation to the societal changes that are reflected in the growing lack of confidence of citizens in government, and that pose challenges to government, such as those related to an ageing population and climate change (ABD, 2007). One consequence the ABD believes will follow is that there will be lean sustainable organisations that will ensure continuity of government in the main domains of public service while temporary teams will take care of special projects. This will require broadly employable civil servants and managers, who must acquire experience in a large variety of situations, including the public sector, the private sector, non-profit organisations, and international organisations (ABD, 2007, pp.

30-31). Another consequence the ABD regards as vital is the need to develop horizontal forms of collaboration, and the *competencies to make connections in a broader context and to make the best use of the talents of employees and citizens*. Three aspects are regarded as essential (ABD, 2007, p. 32). First, managers' primary task is to get the right people together: people who have a stake in an issue, and people who have the knowledge and means to come up with solutions. This means that managers will need to commit stakeholders to various social networks and organisations for the common purpose of dealing with the social issue. Similarly, managers will need to invest in the people and talents within the ministry. Second, managers will need to *facilitate a dialogue with society* in order to find new ways of dealing with 'untamed issues', especially if this involves international policies and policies aimed at sustainable development. A vital part of this learning dialogue is the managers' ability to account for aims and actions. Third, managers have a governance responsibility as well as the task to create space for initiative and creativity, including space to experiment with new ideas (ABD, 2007, pp. 32-34).

The way the importance of diversity has been argued over the years illustrates the implications of the turn to society for a government that wants to increase its effectiveness. At first, diversity was regarded as important because civil servants, including senior managers, should reflect the diversity of the population (ABD, 2002). In 2004, *diversity management* as a managerial competence obtained a prominent place in recruitment and selection of ABD managers because of the need to be able to relate to the increasingly diverse population (ABD, 2005, p. 5). Now, organising diversity is regarded as important for three reasons. First, for improving innovation and productivity: diverse networks and teams learn and perform better. Second, for using labour market potential: every segment of the labour market should be used when recruiting talent. Third, for improving the reputation and legitimacy of the government: a diverse government is a recognisable reflection of society (ABD, 2009, p. 37). Thus, while diversity was initially regarded as an issue of social legitimacy and fair representation, now the benefits of diversity are also recognised in terms of what is called a business-case approach, which emphasises the productivity and innovative advantages of a diverse range of talents.

In the discussion concerning the application of competency management in the different HR processes, the three phases in the focus of competency management were mentioned. While continuing to support the earlier aims of mobility and succession planning, the third phase adds a new focus by connecting competency-based management with societal changes and individual manager's qualities and motives. The ABD believes that if the government is to deal with challenging societal developments, it will need managers with excellent competences in the fields of *network collaboration, of the development of employees, sensitivity for societal and political developments, the ability to imagine and develop connections across borders, and professional substantive knowledge* (ABD, 2007, p. 37). Moreover, managers must be connected with the world and with themselves.

Building on this, the ABD now stresses the need for senior civil servants to think about the impact of current political decisions on future generations. The ABD illustrates the importance of the core quality of the future orientation with the example of the Iroquois, the native inhabitants of the region north of New York City, who used to deliberate on important decisions by thinking about what the impact would be on the seventh generation (ABD, 2009, p. 3). Two future-oriented themes are brought up in this context, namely *investing in talent* and *sustainable decision-making*.

These ABD views on future challenges posed to government are not connected with the current competency dictionary. The views on the importance of *sustainability* and *future-orientation* could be translated into competencies, but that has not been done. However, there is a link with the so-called meta-competences that have been formulated as critical success factors of the top managerial group, which consists of secretary-generals and director-generals. On the basis of literature research and interviews with incumbent secretary-generals and director-generals, the conclusion is that it is unwise to formulate one common and normative frame of reference concerning the personal qualities of a top manager, because that would negate the complex and often whimsical context of their work. In addition, the personal experiences of the top manager are probably the most important factor for success. Thus, while the conclusion is that it is necessary to create a perfect match between the job and the person, and that not every top manager is capable of doing every job, there are some common critical success qualities of top managers. These are: *the ability and willingness to be accountable; the ability to read situations* (to recognise good signals in time); *the ability to write situations* (to exert influence on getting results); and *self-knowledge* (Van Vulpen *et al.*, 2006). These four meta-competencies are a means of remaining connected to the environment and also with the organisational strategy. Generally speaking, vertical integration is essential.

The ABD view on the need to invest in talents causes two concerns. First, the ABD believes that the civil service pays too little attention to innovative impulses of the younger generations. It is true that the current recruitment campaigns succeed in attracting excellent young people, but the problem is that too many talents are not retained. This is illustrated by the outflow of 26 percent of government trainees who started the traineeship in 2008 and left before the programme was completed, and the outflow of talents a few years after the completion of the trainee programme because the rigid job system does not offer them opportunities for further growth. The second concern of the ABD is the poor use of the talents of the older generation, who are concerned with essential issues, have a helicopter view,

and are less driven by the need to score or to adapt (ABD, 2009, p. 6).

These concerns are the basis for a repeated call for diversity and the stimulation of a variety of perspectives by offering 'learning lines' to young and old civil servants. The 'management learning lines' program offers a supra-departmental talent infrastructure, a broadly accessible array of specialised development opportunities and transparency about the competencies that can be developed. Another project is 'Silvering' ('Verzilvering'), which offers experienced ABD managers (those with silver/gray hair) an opportunity for special assignments, through which they can realise their personal mastery.

The societal changes that governments face and the challenges they pose have been described in successive ABD annual reports. These are the well-known ones, such as globalisation, ageing, and climate change. The ABD view on what these challenges require in terms of the competencies that governments need has been presented in general terms, but there has been no subsequent addendum to the list of central government competencies. There is a feeling that societal changes cannot be prepared for, other than by remaining open and connected to the outside world. Thus, the meta-competencies for top managers, as well as the general orientation on sustainability and future-oriented decision-making that takes the impact on future generations into account, are the new competency requirements that are emphasised. These introduce a tension with which managers and civil servants have to cope, because politics is often orientated on short-term successes that are at odds with long-term solutions. That is why it is important for managers to initiate dialogue sessions with all sorts of stakeholders, and to mobilise and connect with the knowledge that outside experts have.

Source : OECD Survey on Competency Management in Government, 2009

Planning for Future Competencies

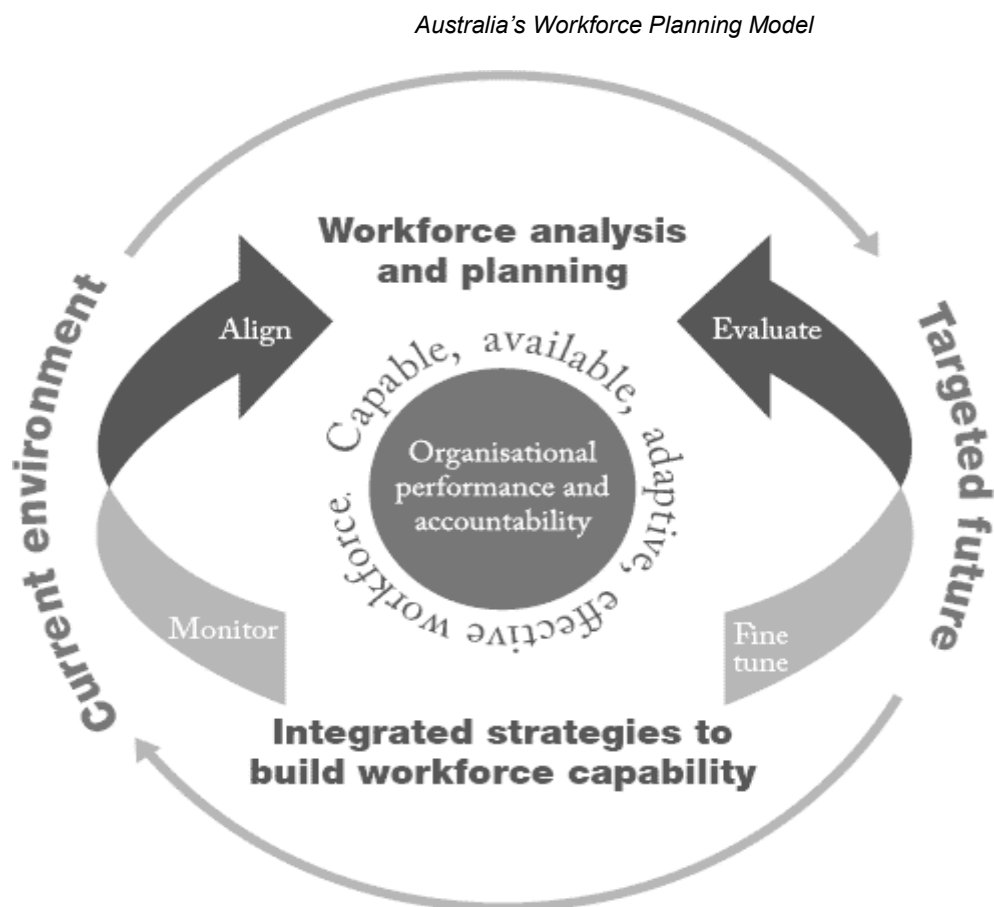
Planning for the future competencies that are mentioned above is the next step in securing a competent workforce now and in the future. An ageing workforce, for example, implies a loss of capacity and thus a loss of competencies. Workforce planning is one of the strategies to anticipate this potential loss (OECD, 2007). Once limited to calculating the gap between talent supply and demand, **workforce planning** is now a far more sophisticated process. It enables an organisation to adjust and respond quickly to immediate and future changes (The Conference Board, 2006). Workforce planning remains, however, an underutilised and underappreciated process in the HR toolbox. Meanwhile, the need for strategic workforce planning and execution of workforce plans has never been greater, as both public and private organisations operate in environments that are more turbulent and confront the 21st century challenges (Lavelle, 2007). In box 21, the Australian and Korean workforce planning process is explained in more detail.

Box 22. Workforce Planning in Australia and Korea

Australia. According to the Commonwealth of Australia, workforce planning is "a continuous process of shaping the workforce to ensure it is capable of delivering organisational objectives now and in the future". Amongst other things, workforce planning involves the identification of workforce requirements by assessing the demand (workforce required) and supply (workforce available) dimensions of the workforce to identify any capability gaps. Workforce planning can assist agencies anticipate the staffing and skill requirements of the changing environment. This is essential if the public sector is to adequately meet the demands placed upon it (ANAO, 2001; ANAO, 2005; ANAO, 2008).

The APS Commission developed a general workforce-planning model, but agencies may substitute this model with their own agency-specific model. The APS Commission's guide points out that workforce planning is not an isolated process or system, but should be integrated with business practices, incorporate an analysis of the agency's current and possible future operating contexts, and include ongoing monitoring of the environment, workforce issues, and organisational strategies. The figure below shows the central elements commonly found in most workforce

planning models.



Source: APSC, 2006

In workforce planning, it is important to focus on critical data and emerging trends. The APS Commission states that three questions should be answered:

- Where are we heading? Understanding the strategic context: e.g. identify the organisational and business unit specific skill requirements emerging from the most likely future scenarios.
- Where are we now? Knowing the current workforce and work programme: e.g. examine critical workforce data for your agency.
- How are we going to get there? Staffing for and enhancing performance: e.g. identify gaps/deviation in current and future workforce capability.

In order to identify workforce-planning issues, agencies need to know their workforce, both in the context of workforce characteristics and workforce competencies. A number of agencies now have competency frameworks in place that are being linked to performance and learning management systems. In the context of workforce planning, such systems can facilitate the identification of occupational groups or competencies required by the organisation (ANAO, 2005).

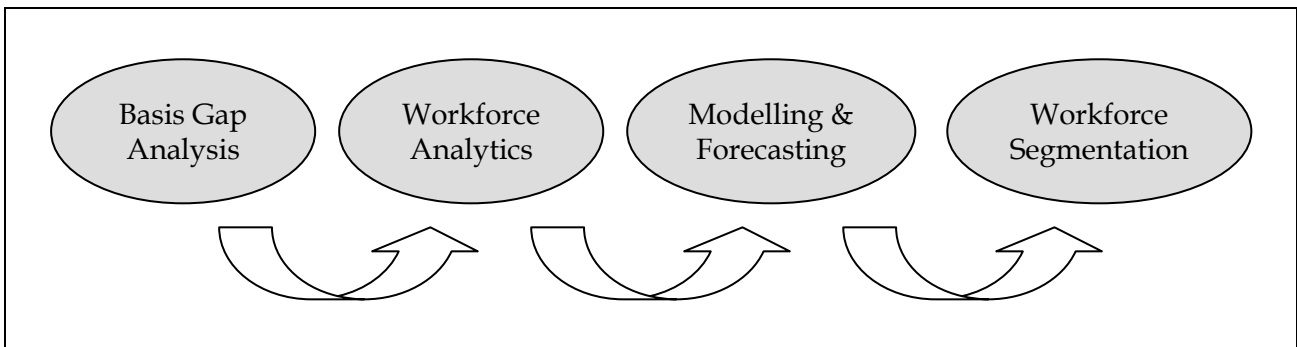
Korea. In the Korean government, a workforce plan should be established by each central ministry and agency every five years. In the process of workforce planning, the central ministry or agency needs to analyse the current competencies of its civil servants and the competencies required in the near future, then make workforce plans for improving their competency levels. The first step of workforce planning is to analyse the current workforce: personnel size, disposition, structure and composition of the workforce, recent workforce change, personnel management practices, and current competency level. The second step is to predict the necessary workforce for the next five years:

personnel size, composition, and required competencies for achieving the mid- and long-term vision and strategies. The third step is to estimate the gap between the current level and the future demand. If a significant gap is identified, predictable problems are analysed, and possible alternatives are reviewed. The final step is to make strategies for reducing the gap so that, by the end of the five-year period, the objectives of the workforce plan, personnel size, and competency level will have been accomplished. A workforce plan includes recruitment (selection, promotion, and transfer), development (education, outside training, and mentoring), and disposition (career development and job posting).

Source : OECD Survey on competency Management in Government, 2009

Nowadays, the more sophisticated process of workforce planning goes as far as creating a workforce architecture through segmentation. Lavelle (2007) charts the **evolutionary path of workforce planning** clearly (figure 3).

Figure 3 – Evolutionary Path of Workforce Planning



Source: Lavelle, 2007

The trail (and escape) from **basic gap analysis** leads first to active use of **workforce analytics**. Workforce analytics include mining current and historic data to analyse the relationships between different employment types and skill clusters, as well as the links between HR and business data. The next step on the evolutionary path is **modelling and forecasting**, which takes workforce analytics into a more dynamic setting. Activities in this stage include building various ‘what-if’ scenarios to test the strategic reliability of different staffing models. This is naturally an intrinsically difficult, resource-intensive undertaking that is fraught with unknowns and justified only when the organisation in question operates in a business environment in considerable flux. Finally, the path leads to **workforce segmentation**, which is a variety of approaches distinguishing staff in terms of strategic contribution or mission criticality. Workforce segmentation, however, seeks not to differentiate performance or individual contribution, but rather to distinguish between roles and skill sets in terms of how vital they are to organisational success. According to Lavelle (2007), workforce segmentation seems destined to play an important role in workforce planning in the future. Figure 4 is a sample outcome from one such workforce segmentation exercise, which results in a talent segmentation matrix.

Figure 4 – Dimensions of Workforce Architecture: Talent Segmentation Matrix

High Business Impact	Business	High Replacement Talent	Skill	Critical Core/Contingent Expertise	
		High Replacement Talent	Skill	Time-bound Mastery Level, Professional Talent	
Low Business Impact	Business	Low Scarcity/Cost	Talent	High Scarcity/Cost	Talent

Source: Lavelle, 2007

These two dimensions create an **architectural framework** that facilitates the evaluation of different staffing mixes and composition. Lavelle (2007) chose ‘architecture’ deliberately as a metaphor. Just as blueprints assist in weighing the relative merits of different materials in terms of weight, cost, tensile strength, and compatibility with other components, so too a workforce architectural framework can be used to examine the strength, costs, sustainability, and compatibilities of different staffing options.

The status of workforce planning in the selected OECD countries is not always clear. Although all countries exercise some form of workforce planning, it is difficult to put them on Lavelle’s evolutionary path. Furthermore, competency management is not always integrated into their workforce planning. In most cases, basic gap analysis, workforce analytics, and modelling and forecasting are part of workforce planning practices. Workforce segmentation, however, seems to be a step that is not yet considered in great detail. In Australia, there is the suggestion to identify critical priorities, which in the future may lead to a segmentation strategy. In Korea, workforce plans are based on (current vs. required) competencies. But since there are different competency models for different hierarchical ranks (SCS competency model vs. Government Standard Competency Dictionary), workforce plans need to be specified and segmented, depending on the target groups. Also, in the UK, there is evidence of workforce segmentation to enable more tailored workforce planning (box 22). Despite this, the UK government doesn’t make a difference between mission-critical and non-mission-critical functions, which Lavelle describes. In addition, agencies in the US government identify mission-critical occupations and competencies. From this, we can conclude that Korea and the US are the most advanced in their competency-based workforce planning. The Korean government makes a difference between their senior civil servants and general civil servants in their segmentation, which does indicate some form of distinction between mission-critical (SCS) and non-mission-critical competencies. Next to workforce segmentation, the Korean government doesn’t ignore the other steps in workforce planning, being basic gap analysis, workforce analytics, and modelling and forecasting. Also, the US is involved in all steps of the evolutionary path of workforce planning (box 23).

Box 23. Workforce Segmentation in the UK

In the UK Skills Strategy (Government Skills, 2008), there is evidence of workforce segmentation. Workforce segmentation is defined as “grouping employees into segments with common characteristics such as function, expertise or location”. Segmentation is not seen as an end in itself. Rather, it is a means to enable more tailored workforce planning. The aim within the public sector is to create a more capable workforce that is better placed to deliver government’s goals. In the Skills Strategy, the benefits of workforce segmentation to both employers and employees are highlighted.

- Employers can benefit from this approach because it becomes:
 - more straightforward to recruit suitably skilled staff, as a result of focused talent management
 - easier to retain capable staff due to the opportunities provided by employee development
 - and enhanced cross-sector mobility
- Segmentation also has benefits for employees, notably:
 - clearer career paths
 - greater internal and external marketability, and
 - closer engagement with their own professional communities.

Although some form of workforce segmentation is present in the UK civil service, there is no evidence of a differentiation between mission-critical and non-mission-critical functions, which Lavelle describes.

Source : OECD Survey on competency Management in Government, 2009

Box 24. Competency-Based Workforce Planning in the US

In the US, workforce planning is part of the strategic alignment system that focuses on a human capital strategy aligned with mission, goals, and organisational objectives of federal departments and agencies. It is implemented by the senior management, particularly the chief human capital officer, through analysis, planning, investment, measurement, and management of human capital programmes.

The agency approaches workforce planning strategically and in an explicit, documented manner. The workforce plan links directly to the agency’s strategic and annual performance plans, and is used to make decisions about structuring and deploying the workforce.

Mission-critical occupations and competencies are identified and documented, providing a baseline of information for the agency to develop strategies to recruit, develop, and retain talent needed for programme performance.

The agency’s documented workforce plan identifies current and future workforce competencies and the agency is closing identified competency gaps through implementation of gap reduction strategies, such as restructuring, recruitment, competitive sourcing, redeployment, retraining, retention, and technology solutions.

A business forecasting process identifies probable workforce changes, enabling agency leadership to anticipate changes to human capital that require action to ensure programme performance. Based on functional analyses, the agency is structured to achieve the right mix and distribution of the workforce to best support the agency’s mission. Based on an analysis of customer needs and workforce distribution, the agency has the right balance of supervisory and non-supervisory positions to support the agency’s mission. (US Office of Personnel Management, 2009a)

Competency management has the potential to improve recruitment, retention, and assessment in order to meet

the most pressing governance challenges of the future. Competency management is used for basic gap analysis, workforce analytics, and also modelling and forecasting. The use of competency models must be meaningful to employees and should ideally be updated every 3-5 years to reflect changes both in the workforce and in the conditions of public work. The continued application of existing competency models is particularly relevant given the US Office of Personnel Management's retirement projections. A 2008 report indicated that by 2016, a full 60% of the full-time non-seasonal federal workforce would be eligible for retirement.

Source : OECD Survey on competency Management in Government, 2009

6. CONCLUSIONS AND CHALLENGES AHEAD

The OECD countries discussed here have been able to develop a mature form of competency management over the past decade. Competency management is well represented in the public sectors of the OECD countries discussed in this report. Competency management is mainly concentrated on HR processes of recruitment and selection, training and development, succession planning, and career guidance. The use of competencies for performance evaluation and remuneration purposes remains limited. Anyway, each country confirms the added value of introducing competency management in their central government, going from creating a culture of self-development to improving a government's competitiveness. The competency-based approach also aids the efforts to meet the challenges associated with modern and strategic HR management. Moreover, it is expected that when civil servants apply their competencies to their work, the result is effective performance, which in turn leads to the achievement of government objectives. Often introduced in a period of government reform, it was meant to change the traditional personnel management into strategic human resource management.

Although it continues to evolve, competency management is now fairly mature and well integrated into the governments' HR system. The level of maturity of competency management, however, is associated with the three dimensions of integration: vertical integration, horizontal integration, and implementation in the organisation. Although all countries are committed to these three dimensions of integration, few can report a holistic approach to competency management. In most cases, there is a link to the organisational strategy (vertical integration) and, in general, several (though not all) HR processes are involved in competency management (horizontal integration). The main problem lies in the third dimension of integration: implementation of competency management throughout the organisation. Each of the selected OECD countries experiences difficulties in the implementation of centrally developed HR tools and guidelines in their agencies, departments, or ministries. Despite the encouragement from the centre, marked variation exists among agencies, departments, or ministries with respect to the extent and intensity to which competency management is being implemented. This third dimension of integration is, however, particularly important in the public sector because of its typical organisational structure. In most cases, there is a central personnel agency and multiple agencies or departments each with their own HR unit. This conflict between the central level and the decentralised level causes problems in terms of the third dimension of integration. This is contradictory: the specific structure of public sector organisations increases the importance of the third dimension of integration, but at the same time it is because of this structure that there is a lack of integration. In order to solve this problem, the central level should have more control in this matter. However, this opposes the trend for devolution of powers to the agencies and departments.

The future of competency management in government, however, seems guaranteed. Given the commitment of the senior management to competency management, it has the potential of playing a central role in the management approaches of the public service. However, it is also well known that a reform in personnel management is a long-term process that requires continuous attention over a number of years in order to achieve actual changes in civil servants' behaviour and culture. Additional research is therefore needed in order to determine the future directions. Furthermore, competency management should be reviewed on an ongoing basis to identify incongruence between current competency models and changing needs. Also, relating competency requirements to external developments and their impact on the organisational strategy is essential. Overall, the future of competency management depends on the continued interest in competency management for internal reasons (e.g. coping with demands).

In sum, there is a future for competency management in government. The real challenge lies in how to thoroughly integrate competency management and ensure its implementation is sustainable in an environment where the business of government becomes progressively more complex and dynamic.

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- Box 1 – Employee Life Cycle

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- Box 2 – Raising the Case for Competency Management in Australia, Belgium, Korea, the Netherlands, the UK and the US

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ANNEX 1 COMPETENCY MODELS: COUNTRY OVERVIEW

Australia

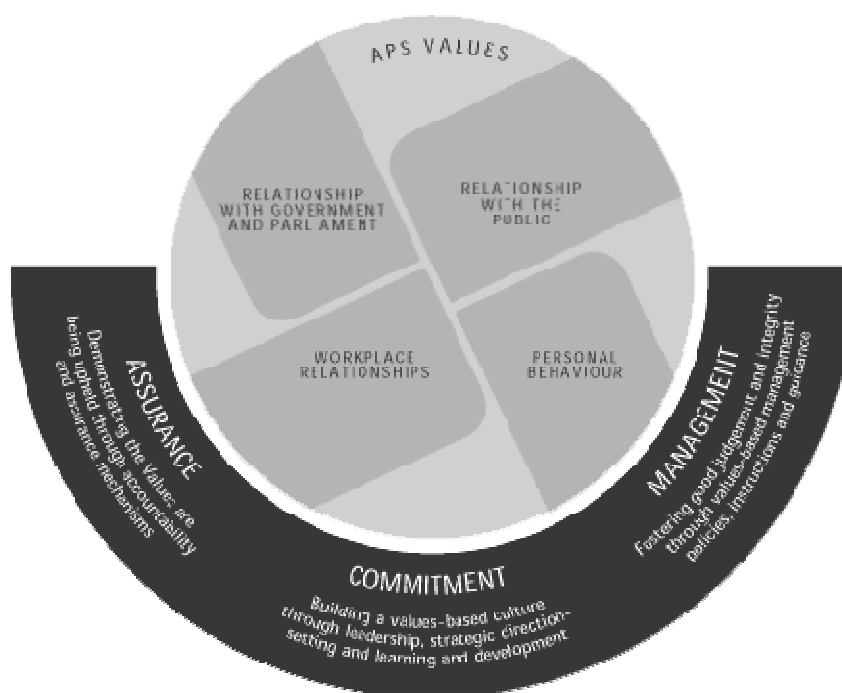
APS Values Framework

Shortly after the release of the APS Values, an APS Values Framework was established to help APS leaders promote and maintain a values-based culture within their organisation (Podger, 2003a). The framework, shown in the figure below, consists of three elements:

- Commitment, encompassing leadership, training and promotion
- Management, encompassing agency governance arrangements, instructions, and performance management systems; and
- Assurance, including action against breaches of the Code of Conduct, staff surveys, and client feedback.

The framework, and an accompanying checklist, is intended to be used by agency heads and senior executives as a tool for explaining the APS Values to employees and for assessing performance and identifying areas where more emphasis and attention are required (APSC, 2003a).

The APS Values Framework



Source: APSC, 2003a

Human Resource Capability Model

Human Resource (HR) people have a unique role in their agencies. They support the executive, line management, and staff with HR initiatives designed to get the right people with the right skills, in the right place at the right time. In other words, HR people make a direct impact on their organisations (PSMPC, 2003).

The Human Resources Capability Model (see figure below) was set up to encourage agencies to address their strategic HR capacity. It articulates the capabilities required of highly effective APS HR staff: those who effect organisational change, build agency capability, and strengthen the impact of HR on business outcomes. It can be used by: HR people to focus on their development needs; agencies to assist in defining the skills required when looking for HR people; and agency heads and line managers to see the contribution that HR people can make to business outcomes (PSMPC, 2003).

The HR Capability Model focuses on building organisational capability to deliver business outcomes. It describes two capabilities that HR people need to bring to their roles: knowledge (bringing HR to the business) and credibility (having an influential seat at the table). It also articulates four more capabilities on how HR people can work with the organisation: alignment (connecting HR with the business), innovation (bringing ideas to the business), relationships (partnering with the business), and performance (achieving high quality business results) (PSMPC, 2003).

The Human Resource Capability Model



Source: PSMPC, 2003

Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework

The Senior Executive Leadership Capability (SELC) Framework (see figure below) was an initiative of the Public Service and Merit Protection Commission, developed in 1999 in collaboration with APS agencies. It is a comprehensive statement of requirements for senior executives or more appropriately the Senior Executive Service (SES), and sets the skills, capabilities, and attitudes that characterise high performance in senior executive leadership roles in the APS. It does this in ways that can be directly applied to all areas of planning for senior executives, including as selection criteria, the basis for leadership development and performance management, and a guide for succession planning for the SES. Overall, the SELC framework seeks to establish a shared understanding of the critical success factors of performance in APS leadership roles (APSC, 2009f, 2009g).

Senior Executive Leadership Capability Framework Jigsaw, Representing the Five Capability Clusters



Source: APSC, 2009f

The SELC Framework specifies leadership capabilities against **five capability clusters**: shaping strategic thinking; achieving results; cultivating productive working relationships; exemplifying personal

drive and integrity; and communicating with influence. Each cluster consists of a group of interrelated capabilities. The capabilities are based on the requirements of the APS now and in the future. They have been identified through extensive and validated research and consultation with a wide range of leaders and potential leaders in the APS. In total, the SELC Framework includes 22 specific capabilities, with three to five behavioural indicators specified for each one. It was reviewed in 2001, with agencies indicating that it remained sound, relevant, and met the current requirements of the APS (APSC, 2009f; 2009g).

The **balance between and within the five capability clusters** will depend critically on the work of the particular agency, the demands and levels of individual jobs, and the mix of skills required in the Senior Executive Team. It is envisaged that agency-specific criteria, such as particular qualifications or mobility requirements, will be added to the SELC framework to meet agency requirements (APSC, 2009g).

The SELC Framework also complements the **APS Values** by promoting behaviours and relationship management in line with modern requirements that emphasise inspiring and motivating, rather than commanding and enforcing. In particular, leadership of the highest quality is one of the APS values, and is essential to the achievement of high performance within an environment of change (APSC, 2003c; 2009g).

Integrated Leadership System

In 2004, the Australian Public Service Commission expanded the SELC framework by developing the Integrated Leadership System (ILS). The ILS is designed to link all aspects of leadership that have an impact on the APS. The ILS provides a common language to consistently support the whole of APS capability development, and it is designed to ensure the APS has the leadership capabilities and behaviours to meet the challenges of the future. It balances the relationship between leadership, management, and technical skills in public service careers (APSC, 2007; 2009i).

It provides a foundation upon which additional agency-specific leadership capabilities can be identified. The ILS supports and expands the SELC Framework around five core capability clusters. Since 2007, these capabilities apply to **all APS employees**, although the extent to which employees are required to demonstrate skills commensurate with these capability clusters varies between levels, and to a lesser extent, across different positions. The ILS also contains guides and tools to assist managers and employees in professional development, capability planning, and agency succession management (APSC, 2008; 2009i). They include:

- The APS Leadership model, which assists agencies and individuals to address their particular requirements for leadership, management and technical expertise;
- The Leadership Pathway, which identifies and describes leadership capabilities at executive and senior levels at each stage of their career path;
- Support tools, which have been developed to assist individuals, leaders and HR practitioners. Agencies and individuals will select those tools that suit their requirements and particular contexts; and
- Information on leadership, learning and development programmes. The APS Commission delivers eight flagship programmes for SES employees and three for the SES feeder group.

The major component of the ILS is the **Leadership Pathway**, which identifies capability descriptions and behaviours for executive and senior executive levels at each stage of their career path. The Pathway expands on the ILS and provides capability descriptions and behaviours for APS 1 to APS 6 levels (APSC, 2007). The pathway is presented in two ways:

- The comparative view scans across the APS 1 to APS 6 levels to identify the changes in capability at each level.
- Another way to look at the Pathway is by individual profiles that exist for each level from APS 1 to SES B3. These profiles describe the capabilities and behaviours expected at a particular level

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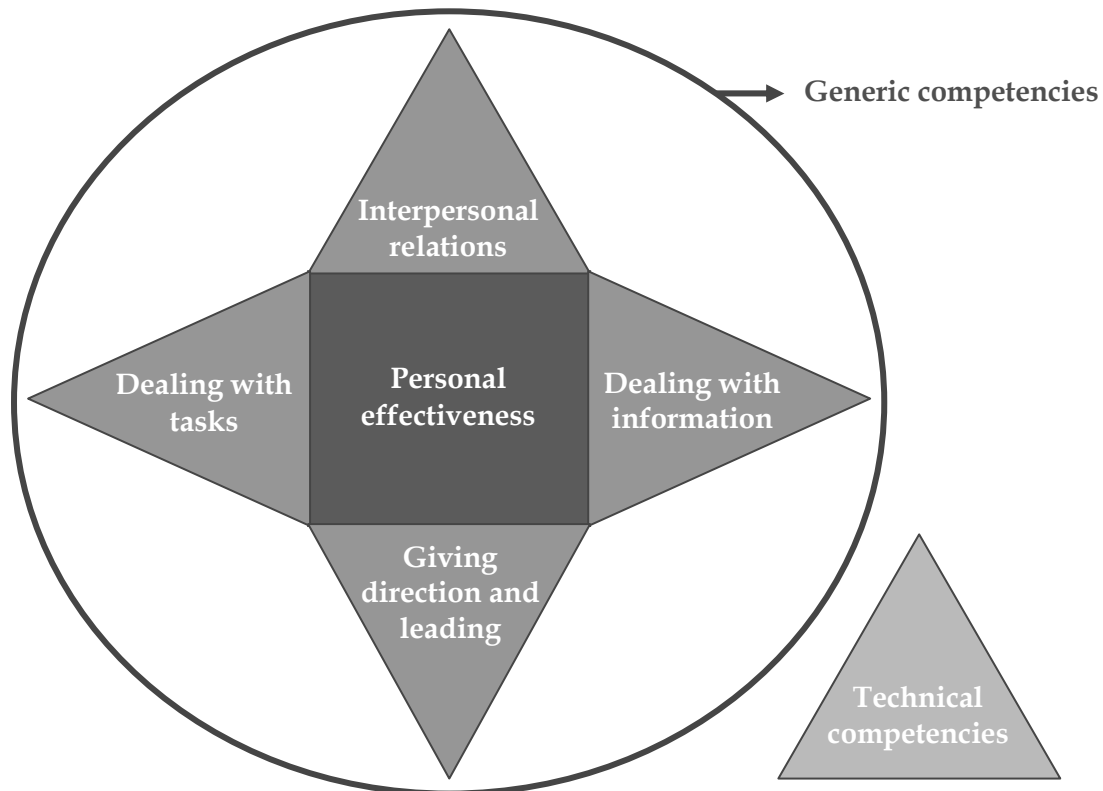
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Belgium

The existing competency model of the federal government is called the Federal Competency Model. This model consists of five clusters of generic competencies and a cluster of technical competencies (see figure below). Generic competencies are behavioural competencies. Technical competencies are specific skills and knowledge, which are needed to perform all trades or specialities. They are classified in a category ‘trade/skill/speciality’ and a category ‘support’. Each function requires a combination of both generic and technical competencies (Scheepers & Parys, 2005). Until 2009, technical competencies were

only explained in the job descriptions. While adjustments were being made in 2009 to the Federal Competency Model, however, a general framework was also being developed (FOD P&O, 2009c).

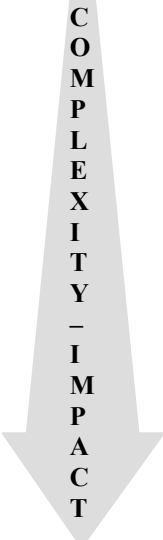
The Federal Competency Model



Source: FOD P&O, 2009c

The **clusters of generic competencies** are: dealing with information, dealing with tasks, giving direction and leading, interpersonal relations, and personal effectiveness. In each cluster (except the last one), there is a **hierarchy** in degree of difficulty of acquiring the competencies. The arrow in the figure below indicates an increase in **complexity and impact** from competencies located closest to the title of the competency cluster (indicating ‘low’) to the competencies most remote way (indicating ‘high’). For the cluster of dealing with information, e.g. the competency ‘understanding’, is easier to acquire than the competency of ‘analysing’, which is easier than ‘integrating’ etc. The reason for this hierarchy lies in the methodological construction of the model and its internal coherence: as the competencies get more complex, their impact increases. (FOD P&O, 2009c).

Competencies in the Competency Model of the Federal Government

	Dealing with information	Dealing with tasks	Giving direction and leading	Interpersonal relations	Personal effectiveness
 <p>LOW</p> <p>C O M P L E X I T Y - I M P A C T</p> <p>HIGH</p>	Understanding data	Execute tasks	Share one's know-how	Communicating	Show respect
	Assimilate data	Structure the workload	Supporting	Active listening	Adaptability
	Analyse data	Problem solving	Managing employees	Team working	Show reliability
	Integrate data	Decision-making	Motivating	Service oriented action	Show commitment
	Innovating	Organising	Coaching/developing	Advising	Managing stress
	Conceptualising	Managing the service	Building teams	Influencing	Self development
	Understand the organisation	Managing the organisation	Managing teams	Relation building	Achieving goals
	Develop vision	Guiding the organisation	Inspiring	Network building	Organisation involvement

Source: FOD P&O, 2009c

For each competency in the competency model, there exists a **definition** and an operationalisation in terms of effective behaviour, the so-called **behavioural indicators** (Federale overheid, 2003; Hondeghem *et al.*, 2005). These behavioural indicators differ according to the relevant public servant level (A, B, C or D). The definitions and behavioural indicators are presented in the competency dictionary of the federal government. Their terminology is adapted to the culture and specificity of the federal government (Federale overheid, 2003). During the 2009 review of the competency model, the vocabulary was made less interpretable and it made sure that there was no overlap between competencies (FOD P&O, 2009a).

Originally, some competencies were not integrated in the competency framework. That was because, in addition to the competencies in the Federal Competency Model, the values of the federal government were identified. These are the so-called **core competencies** of the federal government, namely: service, collaboration, loyalty, result orientation, and personal development. They should be accomplished by all public servants and contribute to achieving the mission and strategy of the federal government (Federale overheid, 2003; Hondeghem *et al.*, 2005; Scheepers & Parys, 2005). These values were not part of the initial competency model. Now, these core competencies are linked to some of the competencies in the framework to ensure internal coherence (see figure above: highlighted in bold). How these values were integrated into the Federal Competency Model is represented in the figure below. In addition, behavioural indicators related to values such as diversity, sustainable development and well-being of employees have been introduced in the competency model during the recent adjustment of the model (FOD P&O, 2009a).

Integration of Core Competencies

Core competencies/values	~	Generic competencies	⇒	Integrated core competencies
Collaboration		Team working		Team working
Service		Service oriented action		Service oriented action
Loyalty		Show reliability		Show reliability
Result orientation		Show commitment + achieving goals		Achieving goals
Personal development		Self development + adaptability		Self development

Taking the core competencies of the federal government into account, the existing competency model can also be interpreted as a matrix with the five core competencies overlapping two competency clusters: interpersonal relations and personal effectiveness (see figure below) (OECD, 2007b)⁵.

⁵ This is an interpretation, but is a priori not defined as such in the original competency model of the Belgian federal government.

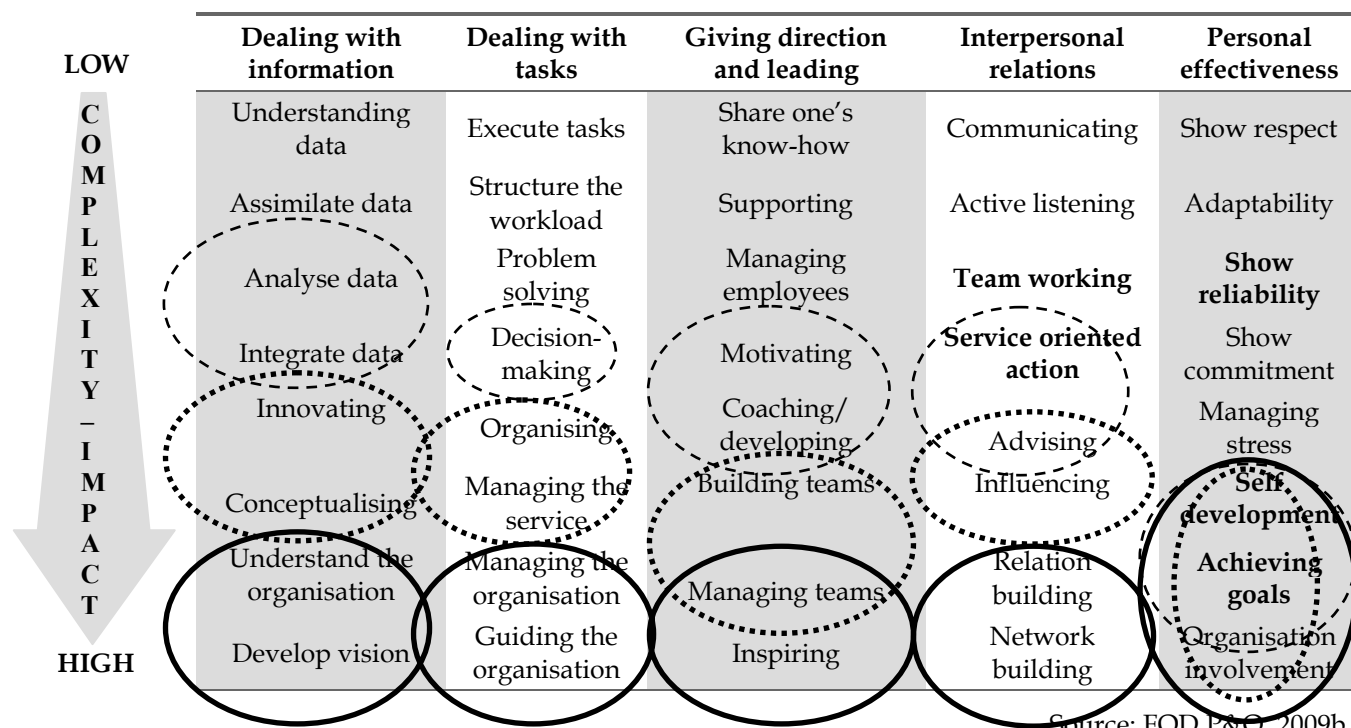
Competency Matrix

		COMPETENCY CLUSTERS			
		Interpersonal relations	Personal effectiveness		
CORE COMPETENCIES	Collaboration				
	Service				
	Loyalty				
	Result orientation				
	Personal development				

The required competencies for each function are presented in the job description. In 2008, a **federal cartography** (database) was developed, which contains all the job descriptions in the federal administration. Classification is different for level A than for the other levels. For level A, more than 1500 job descriptions are included. These are classified into 17 professional groups, which are based on the need of specific knowledge and expertise. The functions at level B, C, and D are classified and described under the form of function families, which group functions with comparable responsibilities and competencies. For level B, 24 job families have been defined; for level C, 26; and for level D, 16. The description of each function family includes the purpose, the result areas, and the competencies of a group of functions in level B, C, or D (Federale overheid, 2009). Together with the new competency model, **competency profiles** were defined. They are based on the role (expert/support – leader – project manager), level, and class of the public servant in question. The competency profile consists of a set of competencies, which is chosen out of the Federal Competency Model. Each competency comes with a set of behavioural indicators that may be different depending on the level of the function (FOD P&O, 2009a).

Recently, the leadership competencies of the federal government are being identified according to the priorities and core activities of the three distinct managing levels: line management, middle management, and top management (see figure below).

Leadership Competencies in the Federal Government



Source: FOD P&O, 2009b

- = line management
- = middle management
- = top management

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Canada

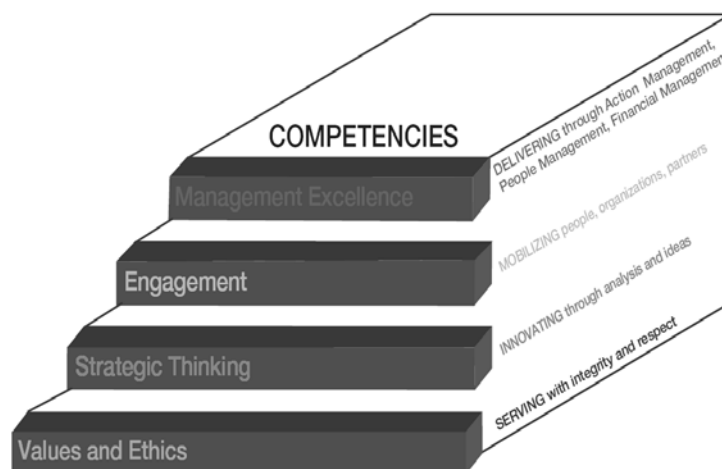
Competency management is undertaken in various HR processes across the public service. There are various competency profiles targeting different positions and functional groups of employees. For example, the leadership competencies used, nationally, within the Canadian government are referred to as the **Key Leadership Competencies (KLC)**. There are other competency profiles that are developed for specific functional groups and are applied in various HR processes.

The **KLC Profile** is a well-established tool for the Executive level (EX position classification). It is the main component of the EX Qualification Standard and, as such, its use is mandatory in assessing candidates for Executive level appointments. The KLC Profile was also integrated into the Executive Talent Management tool and in the Performance Management Program (PMP) for executives.

Using the **Public Service Values and Ethics** as its foundation of leadership, the KLC Profile contains a model with four generic competencies, two of them having sub-competencies:

1. Values and Ethics,
2. Strategic Thinking (with the 2 sub-competencies: Analysis and Ideas)
3. Engagement and
4. Management Excellence (with the 3 sub-competencies: Action Management, People Management, and Financial Management).

Key Leadership Competencies



Source: Government of Canada, 2007

As a result of consultations with users, two of the competencies were re-titled for the Employee level. *Strategic Thinking* became *Thinking Things Through*, and *Management Excellence – Action Management, People Management, and Financial Management* were modified to *Excellence Through Results – Initiative, Relationships, and Resources*.

The KLC Profile provides a distinct list of effective behaviours for each of the seven levels within the leadership continuum and applicable to all organisations within the Canadian Public Service: Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, Director General, Director, Manager, Supervisor, and Employee level. The Profile also provides one generic list of ineffective behaviours that can be used to further guide all levels. In terms of leadership competencies, the same competency profile is used for all seven target groups (i.e. Deputy Minister, Assistant Deputy Minister, Director General, Director, Manager, Supervisor, and Employee level). Other competency profiles target specific populations, many of which draw from the basic tenets of KLC.

Effective behaviours specific to each target group in the KLC Profile are identified for each competency, and one list of generic ineffective behaviours for each competency provides further guidance.

In addition to the KLC Profile, Canada also has several other competency profiles that are managed centrally and target functional groups across the Public Service (Government-wide), such as the Procurement, Material Management and Real Property, the Information Management, and Human Resources specialist (the personnel administration PE community) for example. They are listed in detail in the table below.

A Snapshot of Competency Management Practices Across the Public Service of Canada⁶					
Organisation / Department	For Who (Target group)	What (Profile / Program title)	What (Competencies)	Purpose (Use of competencies)	Website links (for further details)
1. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)	Employees and Managers at all levels (DM, ADM, DG, Dir, Manager, Supervisor)	Key Leadership Competencies (KLC) Profile	Key Leadership Competencies (KLC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values & Ethics • Thinking Things Through or Strategic Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analysis ○ Ideas • Engagement • Excellence Through Results <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Initiative ○ Relationships ○ Resources OR Management Excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action Management, ○ People Management ○ Financial Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support learning and development • Assist discussions on work objectives, leadership development and performance 	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/tal/kcl/intro-eng.asp
2. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)	Administrative Services (AS) Community	AS Learning Strategy and Roadmap (Currently under development) Other tools such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AS Competency Self-Assessment Aide • Personal Learning Plan Template • AS Community Coaches 	(Differ based on the level) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client service orientation • Communication • Interpersonal relations • Analytical thinking • Teamwork • Results Achievement • Self-management • Technological agility • Organisational knowledge • Job specific knowledge • Technical knowledge 	Support AS learning and development	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/gui/emas2-eng.asp

⁶ Depending on the department, and specific employee community (classification and levels) the activities in competency management range from resourcing/staffing, assessment, developing learning plans, performance evaluation and succession planning

<p>3. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)</p>	<p>Federal Public Service Evaluation Community</p>	<p>Competency Profile for the Federal Public Service Evaluation Community</p>	<p>(Within each of the following 4 areas, a number of sub-competencies are identified- follow the web link for details)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interpersonal ● Business Perspective ● Functional ● Leadership/ Management 	<p>A tool for managers to rebuild evaluation human resource capacity, in areas such as</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruitment ● Training and development ● Team building 	<p>http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/eval/stud_etud/compcontext_e.asp</p>
<p>4. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)</p>	<p>Executives (EX) at the EX-1 to EX-3 level</p>	<p>Accelerated Executive Development Program (AEXDP) NOTE: Being phased out by March 2012</p>	<p>Key Leadership Competencies (KLC)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Values & Ethics ● Strategic Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analysis ○ Ideas ● Engagement ● Management Excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action Management ○ People Management ○ Financial Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To identify a representative group of executives at the EX-1 to EX-3 level who demonstrate strong leadership potential ● To invest in their development and progression 	<p>http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/prg/exdcps-eng.asp</p>
<p>5. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)</p>	<p>Community of Financial Officers (Financial Administration / FI)</p>	<p>Financial Officer Competency Profile</p>	<p>(Within each of the following 4 areas, a number of sub-competencies are identified- follow the web link for details)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interpersonal ● Business Perspective ● Functional ● Leadership / Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To provide a standard profile for Financial Officers ● To introduce the computerised Assessment Tool ● To suggest an approach to using them in career planning 	<p>http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ocg-bcg/careers-carrieres/myc-gvc/comp/gfocp-gpcaf/gfocp-gpcaf01-eng.asp</p>
<p>6. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)</p>	<p>Information Management Professionals and Leaders (IM)</p>	<p>IM Competency Profile</p>	<p>(Behavioural Competencies)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adaptability ● Continuous Learning ● Communication ● Organisational & Environmental Awareness ● Creative Thinking ● Networking / Relationship Building ● Conflict Management ● Stewardship of Resources ● Risk Management ● Stress Management ● Influence ● Initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A guide to foster consistency in the IM community ● To determine the standard for IM competencies in the GC based on this the profile 	<p>http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/oro-bgc/im/im-compet-prof-eng.asp</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Leadership • Change Leadership • Client Focus • Partnering • Developing Others • Planning & Organising • Decision Making • Analytical Thinking • Results Orientation • Teamwork • Values and Ethics • Visioning & Strategic Thinking 		
7. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)	Information Technology (IT) Professionals - project sponsors / leaders / managers	IT Project Management Core Competencies	<p>(Within each of the following 3 areas, a number of sub-competencies are identified - follow the web link for details) The core competencies required for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • general management - skills that any manager must have and are required for project management • project management - based on nine knowledge areas in the Project Management Body of Knowledge developed by the Project Management Institute • IT management - the unique technical skills required to manage IT projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A guide to foster consistency in the IT Project Management community • To determine, based on this the profile, the standard for Management of IT Project competencies in the GC. 	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/emf-cag/project-projet/documentation-on-documentation/pmcc-cbgp/pmcc-cbgp00-eng.asp
8. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)	Communications Officers (Information Services / IS classification)	Professional development roadmap for Comm'n Officers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Official languages • Non official languages • Verbal and written communications • Knowledge of Canadian society • Values and ethics • Management and leadership competencies • Judgement, tact and service orientation • Competencies in a regional context 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To foster continuous learning among federal communicators (IS classification). • A tool to identify the training needs for developing relevant competencies for different levels. 	http://cco-bcc.gc.ca/careers-carrieres/rm-fdr/2009-rm-fdr_01-eng
9. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)	Potential Managers for Public Service of Canada	Management Trainee Program (MTP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cognitive capacity ○ Creativity 	To develop leaders for Public Service of Canada	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/prg/mtpsg-eng.asp

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Future-building competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visioning • Management competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action management ○ Organisational awareness ○ Teamwork ○ Partnering • Relationship competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interpersonal relations ○ Communication • Personal competencies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stamina/stress resistance ○ Ethics and values ○ Personality ○ Behavioural flexibility ○ Self-confidence 		
10. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)	Organisation and Classification (OC) Advisors	Training and learning curriculum for organisation & classification (OC) advisers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analytical skills • Client service orientation • Communication skills • Consultation • Leadership • Management • Technical knowledge 	To support the development of the competencies needed for the management and delivery of the OC Program in departments and agencies.	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/prg/mtps-g-eng.asp
11. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)	Personnel Administration Community (PE)	PE Competency Profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Strategic outlook and thinking ○ Partnership and cooperation ○ Innovation and business approach • Functional Role <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Client orientation ○ Professional know-how ○ Personal accountability • Relations with People <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interpersonal relations ○ Communication ○ Teamwork • Agents of change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Organisational know-how ○ Leadership 	To support learning and development of the functional specialists	http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/gui/cmpe-eng.asp
12. The Treasury Board of	Procurement, Materiel Management and Real	Professional Development and Certification Program for the Procurement,	A combination of:	TBS uses this Standard of competencies	

<p>Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)</p>	<p>Property Specialists (PMMRP)</p>	<p>Materiel Management and Real Property Community: Learning Toolkit</p>	<p>Fundamentals of government context Functions specific to the community Leadership & business management Personal & interpersonal skills</p>	<p>to: establish the required training courses determine which courses are mandatory for certification as a PMMRP specialist and to outline a career path for certification of PMM professionals.</p>	<p>http://www.cspsefpc.ca/lto/lrm-fs2-eng.pdf (WEBSITE INTERNAL to PS) http://publiservice.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pd-pp/lta/tk3_e.asp?</p>
<p>13. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Government wide)</p>	<p>Science and Technology Specialists</p>	<p>Science and technology management core competency profile</p>	<p>(Within each of the following areas, a number of sub-competencies are identified - follow the web link for details) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical • Self-management • Teamwork • Leadership • Client and partnering management • Management • Responsibility to society </p>	<p>To support learning and development of the functional specialists</p>	<p>http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/gui/stcm-eng.asp</p>
<p>14. Public Service Commission of Canada (PSC) (Government wide)</p>	<p>All current and potential PS employees and managers at all levels</p>	<p>Competencies</p>	<p>(Within each of the following areas, a number of sub-competencies are identified - follow the web link for details) 10 competencies traditionally associated with successful on-the-job performance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Interpersonal • Thinking • Organisational awareness • Human Resource Management • Leadership • Client Service • Business • Self-management • Technical/Operational - for using & </p>	<p>The PSC assessment instruments measure competencies for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staffing • career counselling • succession planning • training and development • team building </p>	<p>http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/ppc-cpp/hrm-grh/comptcs-eng.htm</p>

			applying the appropriate technical & operational skills & experience		
15. Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) (Nation wide)	Canadians employers, citizens, members of the Canadian labour market	Essential Skills Profiles	The essential skills included are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Text • Document Use • Writing • Numeracy • Oral Communication • Thinking Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Problem Solving ○ Decision Making ○ Critical Thinking ○ Job Task Planning & Organising ○ Significant Use of Memory ○ Finding Information • Working with Others • Computer Use • Continuous Learning 	The skills people use to carry out a wide variety of everyday life and work tasks. Essential Skills are not the technical skills required by particular occupations but rather the skills applied in all occupations.	http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/eng/workplaceskills/essential_skills/general/readers_guide_whole.shtml#1
16. Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) (Nation wide)	Organisations, governments, public health decision makers and practitioners within the public health system in Canada	Pan-Canadian Core Competencies for Public Health	Grouped under 7 domains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public health sciences • Socio-cultural • Assessment & analysis • Communication • Policy development & program planning • Leadership • Partnership, collaboration & advocacy 	The skills and knowledge essential to practice public health in Canada. They are independent of program and topic area and reflect a public health approach to health issues. Core competencies transcend the boundaries of specific disciplines and are program-independent	http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ccph-cesp/archive-archives-eng.php
17. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) (Specific to department)	Customised learning programs for different target groups (Employees, Supervisors, Managers, Senior Managers, Senior Leaders, and Functional Specialists) with 8 CLPs (employees at all levels)	Core Learning Program (CLP)	Different for different target groups AAFC Core Competencies are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adaptability • Initiative • Teamwork • Interactive Communication Various Core Competency Profiles/Guides for various functional or technical groups have also been developed.	To help the AAFC employees at all levels with core business and leadership skills needed to deliver results in an ethical and competent manner	http://www.agr.gc.ca/
18. Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) (Specific to department)	Present and potential employees for the CRA	Canada Revenue Agency Competency Catalogue	A large number of <i>behavioural</i> and <i>technical</i> competencies covering each job (Job Competency Profile) and each employee (Employee Competency Profile)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of candidates for staffing purposes – including a Pre-Qualification Process for anticipatory purposes 	http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/crrs/cmptncy/2008/menu-

			(follow the web link) Note: the CRA defined the competencies required to do almost all of its jobs. In 2008-2009 the CRA had approx. 40,000 full time employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To summarise competencies required for specific jobs within the CRA 	eng.html Relevant audit by the Office of the Auditor General: http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/docs/parl_oag_2008_12_06_e.pdf
19. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) (Specific to department)	TBS managers & leaders within the department (Assistant Deputy Minister, Director General and Director)	Key Leadership Competencies - Effective Behaviours and the Change Agenda	Key Leadership Competencies (KLC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values & Ethics • Strategic Thinking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Analysis ○ Ideas • Engagement • Management Excellence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Action Management, ○ People Management ○ Financial Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the performance management and talent management processes within TBS as a department • Assist discussions with TBS executives on their work objectives, leadership development and performance 	

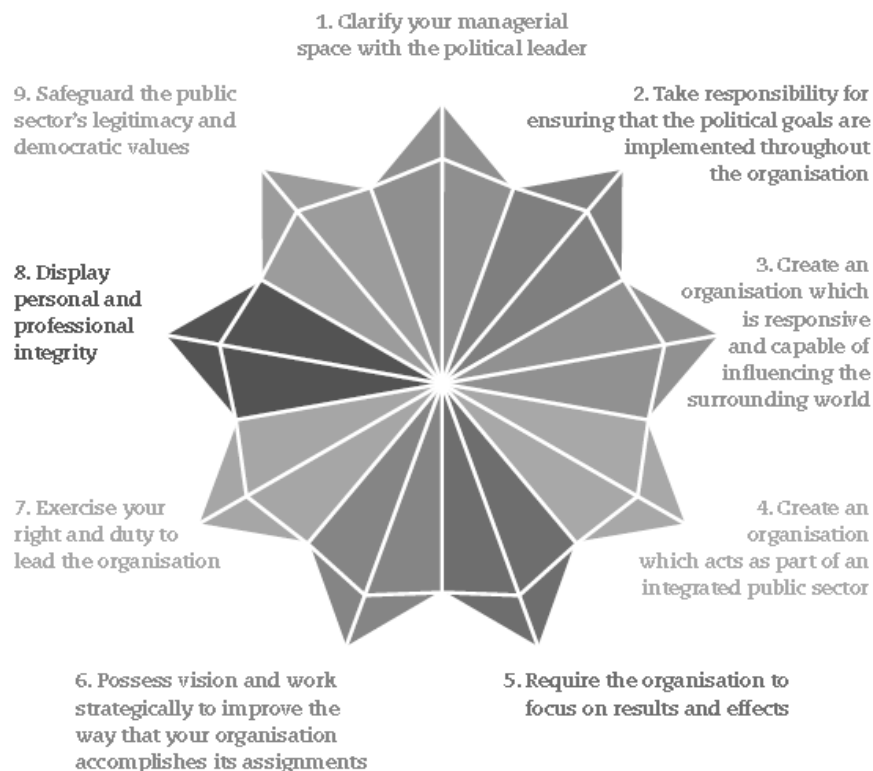
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Denmark

The Ministry of Finance, The State Employer’s Authority, is the main Danish government organisation for competency management. Since 1999 the Centre for Development of Human Resources and Quality Management is – as part of the collective agreement –financed as a joint venture between the State Employer’s Authority and the State Employees’ Organisations. It is partly responsible for the implementation of the competence management strategies. The SCKK uses the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the European Foundation for Quality Management Model and is responsible for dissemination of this model (and adjustment to the Danish context) (SCKK, 2009). The government’s existing competency model also builds on the Common Assessment Framework and the European Foundation for Quality Development. In 2005, the Ministry of Finance introduced a competency model for top executives, the so-called *Code of Public Governance Excellence*. This is a code of conduct initiated by all the government’s top managers in order to “achieve a level of excellence in public management”. The civil servants in charge of this project wanted to develop a code that applies to both the strategic tasks of top managers and the daily management of their department (Ministry of Finance, 2005). This initiative emphasises the fact that public governance and management are key elements of efficiency, progress, and coherence in the public sector. The Code of Public Governance Excellence contains nine requirements or recommendations (see figure below).

Recommendations of the Code of Public Governance Excellence



Source: Forum for Top Executive Management, 2005, p.3

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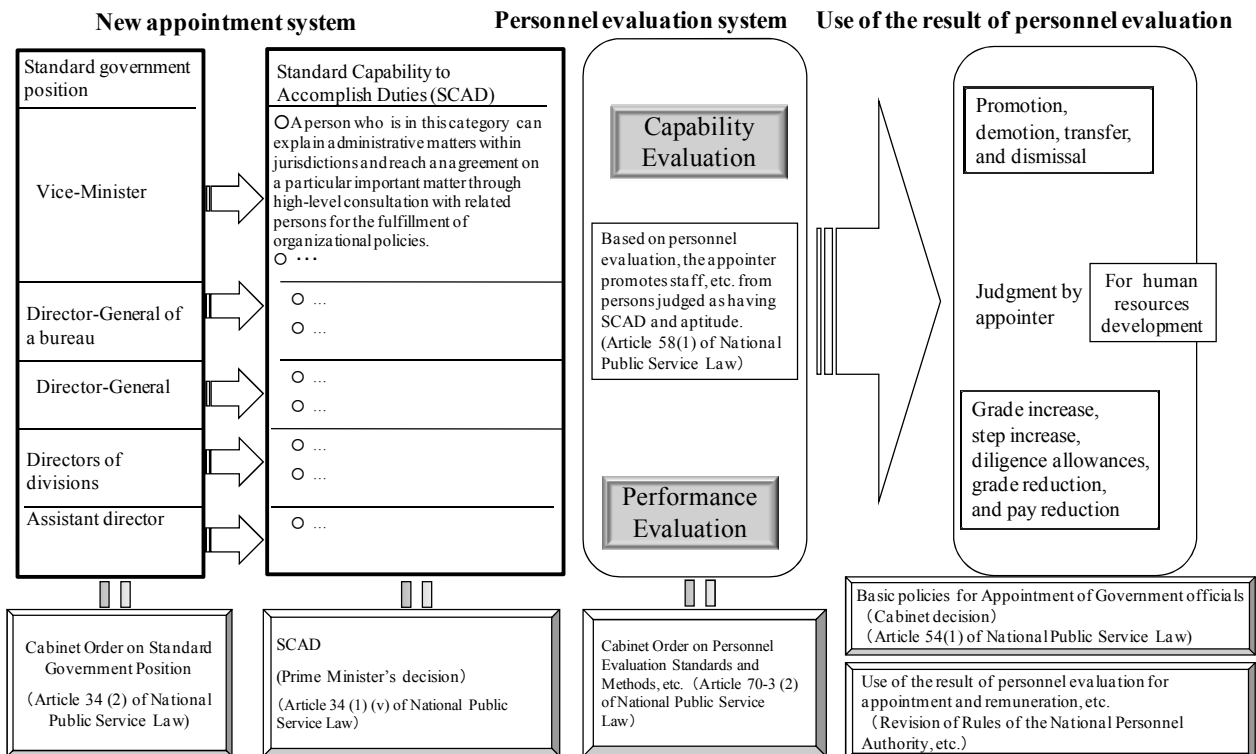
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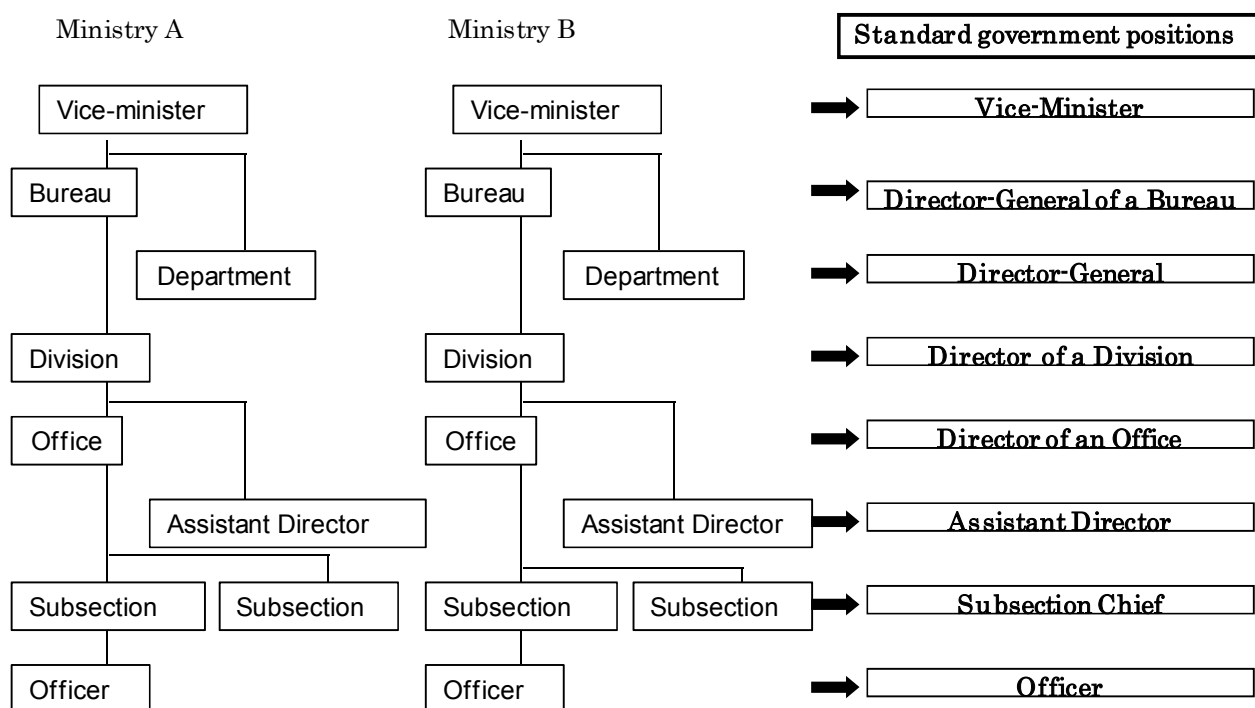
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Japan

The Japanese National Public Service is a meritocratic, career-based system. However, the lack of flexibility in personnel management deterred the career development of public servants. This led to the amendment of the National Public Service Law in July 2007 and of the Fundamental Law of Reform of the National Public Service in June 2008. The main changes in the National Public Law include the implementation of a new appointment system and a new personnel evaluation system. Indeed, the process of personnel management is based on competencies (capabilities) and performance.



The particularity of this system is that it focuses on standard government positions according to the hierarchy of the organisations and variety of jobs. Jobs are classified into 30 types (general service, research service, medical service, skilled labour service, shipping service, patent service, quarantine service, air traffic control service, etc) according to the different capabilities required for each job.



The Standard Capabilities to Accomplish Duties (SCAD) is a set of capabilities (competencies) required of government officials in order to be in a position to perform effectively and efficiently the duties of the standard government positions. Government officials are appointed according to the results of the personnel evaluation. For example, the SCAD for a director of a division at the central ministry level are:

Capabilities (competencies)	Description
Ethics	As a public servant for all citizens, a person in this category is able to accomplish his/her duties and responsibilities with high ethical standards.
Perspective planning	This person is able to design a course of action in response to the challenges faced considering citizens' point of view.
Judgement	This person is able to make proper judgements.
Explanation and adjustment	This person is able to explain administrative matters within his/her jurisdiction and reach an agreement with related persons for the fulfilment of organisational duties.
Administrative management	This person is able to work efficiently with an awareness of reducing costs.
Leadership	This person is able to achieve good performance by distributing responsibilities and instructions, and direct subordinates in respect to human resource development.

However, the new system of personnel evaluation resulted from the recent HRM reforms faces two main challenges. On the one hand, it is necessary to find out an appropriate way to set goals which are specific, measurable, achievable, results-oriented, and time-oriented (SMART principle) and, on the other, to develop the evaluators' skills to conduct fair evaluations and provide adequate and timely coaching.

Reference:

Presentation given by Bunzo Hirai (Chief Analyst of Human Resource Management) and Shinichi Hara (Office of the counsellor for Appointment System) from the Personnel and Pension Bureau, Ministry

of Internal Affairs and communications, at the 2009 meeting of the Public Employment and Management working party, OECD Paris.

Korea

At first, in 1999, the competency model for the OPS positions was established as one of the qualification standards for performing the roles and duties of each OPS position. After that, in 2001, the **Government Standard Competency Dictionary** was made as a reference for developing the competencies of general civil servants as well as the senior officials. Its primary purposes are to bring a more detailed definition to the competencies that are important for the government to achieve its strategic goals and to create a common, objective language for talking about competencies. The 19 standard competencies are identified in the Competency Dictionary through a series of benchmarking, SME (subject matter expert) workshops, and incumbent behavioural event interviews (see table below).

Competencies in the Government Standard Competency Dictionary

Competency	Definition
<i>Ethics for an official</i>	Ability to keep basic ethics as a civil servant for citizens and to behave with a basis of ethical standards
<i>Organisational commitment</i>	Ability to make every effort to improve the quality and performance of work and to study by oneself for better work performance
<i>Teamwork</i>	Ability to collaborate on a work with others or other departments and to work as a team member for achieving common goals
<i>Customer-oriented</i>	Ability and attitude to understand the demands of related target groups and people, and to make all efforts in order to satisfy the needs of customers
<i>Professionalism</i>	Ability and attitude to improve work performance and quality, to seek means for getting better performance, and to learn and use new knowledge and information necessary for better performance
<i>Business acumen</i>	Ability to study methods for maximising profits generated from policy results and to consider effectiveness and efficiency simultaneously in work process
<i>Information management</i>	Ability to effectively gather and classify information necessary for work in order to use it in time
<i>Problem recognising and understanding</i>	Ability to recognise a problem through gathering and connecting information, to understand its characteristics, causes, limitations, and effects and to identify what it is

<i>Self-control</i>	Ability to overcome heavy workload, stress, difficulties, and pressures through appropriate time schedule and health management and to maintain stable mental and physical conditions by self-regulating emotional state
<i>Communication</i>	Ability to understand the conditions and emotional state of partners and to communicate one's intention to them through speaking or writing under friendly atmosphere
<i>Vision</i>	Ability to understand the organisation's policy goals, to relate one's work with organisational policy, to make subordinates follow policy direction and to take the lead in working
<i>Adaptability</i>	Ability to understand the changes in customers, market and technology and to quickly alter the established routines and behaviour patterns to fit into changes in business and policies
<i>Strategic thinking</i>	Ability to clarify priorities through long-term and integrative perspective, to establish specific business goals, and to arrange proposal-making and implementation in one's work with organisational overall goals and direction
<i>Coaching/Development</i>	Ability to recognise subordinates as assets for developing administrative capacity in current and future, to provide appropriate challenge opportunities and environment to them, and to systematically devise their growth and development through continuous concern and counselling
<i>Resource management</i>	Ability to get and manage human and material resources for obtaining efficient and effective performance
<i>Effective implementation</i>	Ability to make a time schedule, to allocate work, to keep the schedule, and cope with unexpected crisis or outbreak without fiasco
<i>Political wit</i>	Ability to make rational proposals with considering political power relations as well as work efficiency or effectiveness and to secure support and help necessary for business or policy achievement
<i>Coordination and integration</i>	Ability to decide from the perspective of national interests on a complex matter joined with various interests and to make a balanced proposal
<i>Negotiation</i>	Ability to make a consensus reasonably through coordination and compromise and to get agreement and cooperation from partners

Source: MOPAS (2008: 24).

The Competency Dictionary includes a detailed definition of each competency, along with specific descriptions and behavioural indicators. Each competency is divided into 5 proficiency levels, and each level is described in terms of observable behaviours showing how that particular level is distinct from the other levels. This competency dictionary has been used as a basic reference for developing competency

models for different target groups and for each of the central ministries and agencies. The dictionary can also be used for a variety of purposes, including recruitment and staffing, learning, and career development. The table below shows its structure.

The Structure of the Government Standard Competency Dictionary

Competency	Components of competency dictionary	
<i>Name of competency</i>	Definition & behavioural indicators	Definition of competency Supportive reasons Behavioural indicators
	Matters to be attended when using competency	Related administrative functions Checkpoints for evaluation Relations with other competencies Criteria for proficiency level classification
	Proficiency levels	Descriptions of observable behaviours in Level 1 (lowest level) – Level 5 (highest level)

Currently there are different competency models for different hierarchical ranks at the national government level. The main target group of competency management is the managerial level, such as the SCS, division managers, and junior managers. The SCS competency model is used for the SCS members and candidates. The **SCS competency model** initially consisted of nine competencies: recognising and understanding of potential problems, strategic thinking, results orientation, professionalism, innovative leadership, communication ability, customer-oriented, presentation of vision, and coordination and integration. In March 2009, it was simplified to have only six competencies: communication ability and customer-oriented were combined to create a customer satisfaction measure; presentation of vision and strategic thinking were combined; and professionalism was deleted (see table below).

The SCS Competency Model

Competency group	Competency	Competency definition
Thinking	• Problem recognising and understanding	Recognising problems timely through information analysis, and identifying the cores of problems by studying various related issues
	• Strategic thinking	Creating long-term vision and goals, and making action plans with clarifying priorities in order to achieve vision and goals
Working	• Performance orientation	Considering various methods to maximise job performance, and pursuing effectiveness and efficiency in the process of goal achievement
	• Change management	Understanding the trends and flow of environmental change, and taking measures for making an organisation and individuals respond appropriately and adapt to changing circumstances
Relating	• Customer satisfaction	Recognising work partners as customers, understanding customers' needs, and making every endeavour to meet the demands of customers
	• Coordination and integration	Understanding the interests and conflicts among stakeholders, making decisions based on a balanced perspective, and suggesting rational solutions

The **competency model for junior managers** (Grade 5) also consists of six competencies (Table 4). The competency model for junior managers (Grade 5) is implemented for the promotion and development of junior managers, and another competency model is being developed for division managers.

The Competency Model for Junior Managers (Grade 5)

Competency	Competency definition
Policy planning	Making new policy proposals to deal with major issues and trends in the related fields, and making specific and professional reports on policy issues enable to communicate essentials
Problem-solving	Prior to formulating and implementing policies, predicting the possibilities of problems, preventing the occurrence of problems, reviewing implementation procedures, and coming up with solutions or directly tackling the problems
Information management	Gathering and analysing necessary information promptly, and understanding and diagnosing phenomena and cases
Enthusiastic performing	Devoting oneself to role, committing to work, and steadily making efforts to accomplish better performance
Collaboration and support	Building good human relations in everyday life, and heading active collaboration and support, if necessary
Teamwork orientation	Coordinating supervisors and subordinates in order to work efficiently, facilitating teamwork, and providing voluntary cooperation

Also, many central ministries and agencies have their own competency models. Seventeen of 35 central government bodies, such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Korea Customs Service, and the Korean Intellectual Property Office, have individually developed the competency models only for their civil servants.

The basic characteristics of the competency models are as follows. The general structure consists of five hierarchical levels, such as competency group, competency, competency definition, sub-elements of the competency, and behavioural indicators. For example, a competency group, consisting of multiple competencies, is described with a framework of working, relating, and thinking in the SCS competency model. The competencies are divided into common and specific competencies. The common competencies include the basic competencies that all civil servants should have and the competencies applied to each hierarchical rank. Examples are performance orientation, strategic thinking, and cognition and understanding. The specific competencies are established by the demand of each ministry and agency. For example, diplomatic negotiation is created as a specific competency by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. On the other hand, the generic competencies are used as the common competencies for general public employees and those attached to hierarchical rank. Leadership or managerial competency is applied to the SCS or managers as a kind of generic competencies. The technical or job-specific competencies are established as specific competencies by central ministries and agencies such as Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Korea Customs Service, and Korean Intellectual Property Office. The competencies focusing on the characteristics of public service are also included in the Government Standard Competency Dictionary. Examples are ethics for an official and organisational commitment. Also, public-service-specific competencies are emphasised in the competency models of ministries and agencies. Korea Customs Service includes “moving ahead” as a specific competency. The Central Officials Training Institute emphasises the characteristics of the public sector by including some competencies such as enthusiastic performing, responsibility, and public ethics in the competency model for training and development.

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Ministry of Public Administration and Security, Korea. (2008) *Assessment Center Manual*. Seoul: MOPAS.

The Netherlands

The ABD competency management system defines **seven ‘core’ competencies** (ABD, 2009a; Van Vulpen and Moesker, 2002). These are considered to be relevant for all ABD members regardless of their rank. Two of the core competencies involve what is known as the development potential of the ABD member: self-appraisal and learning potential. The remaining five core competencies pertain to so-called central government-wide developments.

These include environmental awareness, an understanding of the need for staff development, decisiveness, integrity and initiative. ‘Environmental awareness’ signifies the art of interactive policy-making and picking up signals from society and political quarters. The ‘staff development’ competency relates to the pro-active role of the manager in stimulating staff development and growth. ‘Decisiveness’ is used here to indicate behaviour targeted at convincing other parties of the relevant point of view and winning support. The ‘integrity’ competency means maintaining generally accepted social and ethical norms and answering to these norms. Finally, ‘initiative’ describes the ability to show a proactive attitude (Van der Meer & Toonen, 2005; Van Vulpen & Moesker, 2002). The above seven core competencies, or ‘the magnificent seven’, form the core of all managerial posts in the civil service.

The full list consists of 42 competencies, although the ABD competency management system consists of two levels or standards. The standard which the behaviour of civil service managers on Scales 17 and above must reach is based on 28 management competencies that are divided into seven related and identifiable clusters: coherent management, problem solving, interpersonal skills, operational effectiveness, impact, resilience, and affinity with public sector management. To discharge the duties of an ABD job at this level successfully, a senior manager will be expected to achieve an average score of ‘satisfactory’ in all seven clusters as a bare minimum.

Managerial posts on Scales 16 and below offer a greater diversity of tasks than managerial posts in the scales above. For that reason, the standard comprising 28 competencies is no longer an adequate tool. In this case, the option exists for a bespoke standard to be defined for these posts by making a selection from the ABD range of 42 competencies. The competencies for effective behaviour can be selected from this range to build up a competency profile as part of a job profile. The resulting profile constitutes the standard for the job or grade in question (Van Vulpen & Moesker, 2002).

These 42 competencies are not defined specifically for the public sector context but consist of generic managerial competencies. However, three competencies relate more specifically to government, namely:

- Dedication: dedication to tasks of government and own job – inspires others;
- Integrity: consistently maintaining social and ethical standards in word and deed;
- Political awareness: attention for relevant events, anticipating on political risks.

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United Kingdom

Competency Models in Departments and Agencies

The use of competency frameworks is widespread across British civil service organisations. Although there is no standardised or common framework in the departments and agencies, their competency frameworks generally consist of a combination of core and specialist competencies. The first frameworks tended to concentrate on higher levels of management, but eventually they covered all staff. Very few, however, have competency frameworks for manual staff, but most clerical, administrative, and managerial civil servants are covered (Farnham & Horton, 2002).

Core Values

In the UK, civil servants are expected to commit to the core values of government: integrity, honesty, objectivity, and impartiality. These values are also supported by the Four P's: pride, pace, passion, and professionalism, which should apply to all aspects of a civil servant's work (The Civil Service, 2009).

The Senior Civil Service Competency Model

The only part of the civil service that has a single competency framework common to all departments and agencies was the Senior Civil Service (SCS). The SCS consists of approximately 4,000 civil servants in the top three levels of the service, and they are spread across all government departments and most agencies. The original competency framework was developed by Price Waterhouse in 1993 for the then-top three levels. There were minor revisions to accommodate grades 4 and 5 when the SCS was created in 1996. The present competency framework was introduced in 2001 to reflect the priorities of the new Labour Government and to change the SCS culture. This competency framework consisted of only six core competencies and 53 behavioural indicators that could be used to assess performance (see figure below) (Farnham & Horton, 2002). This competency framework was introduced at the same time as a new pay and performance management system, and was used holistically across all the major personnel functions, including payment and rewards.

The 2001 SCS Competency Framework

THINKING STRATEGICALLY	
Harnessing ideas and opportunities to achieve goals	
EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR	INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitive to wider political and organisational priorities • Assimilates and makes sense of complex or conflicting data and different perspectives • Finds new ways of looking at issues • Hones in on key issues and principles • Considers the potential and impact of technology • Identifies opportunities to improve delivery through partnership • Anticipates and manages risks and consequences • Gives objective advice based on sound evidence and analysis • Communicates ideas clearly and persuasively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works only from own perspective or assumptions about the world • Fails to make connections between ideas and people • Focuses solely on detail • Focuses on intellectual debate at expense of action • Fails to consider the needs of the diverse community

GETTING THE BEST FROM PEOPLE	
Motivating and developing people to achieve high performance	
EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR	INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gets to know individuals and their aspirations • Adapts leadership style to different people, cultures, and situations • Identifies and brings on talent, especially amongst underrepresented groups • Knows when to step in and when not to • Listens and takes account of diverse views • Gives and expects frequent constructive feedback • Coaches individuals so they give their best performance • Tackles poor performance or inappropriate behaviour • Praises achievements and celebrates success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works only with the most competent people • Writes rather than speaks • Has fixed management style • Does not delegate challenging or interesting work • Is uncomfortable working with people from diverse backgrounds • Blames others • Wields the red pen • Avoids giving bad news

LEARNING AND IMPROVING	
Drawing on experience and new ideas to improve results	
EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR	INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aware of own strengths, weaknesses, and motivations • Applies learning from own and others' experience • Builds productive relationships with people across and outside the organisation • Understands, values, and incorporates different perspectives • Seeks new or different ideas and opportunities to learn • Readily shares ideas and information with others • Encourages experimentation and tries innovative ways of working • Works with partners to achieve the best practical outcomes • Adapts quickly and flexibly to change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't see things from other people's perspectives • Assumes at the outset different perspectives need not be taken on board • Does not listen • Sticks to outdated methods • Unwilling to be exposed to risk or uncertainty

FOCUSING ON DELIVERY	
Achieving value for money and results	
EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR	INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organises the work to deliver on time, budget, and agreed quality standards Negotiates for the resources to do the job Rigorous in monitoring and reviewing progress and performance Puts customers first Is not deflected by obstacles or problems Shifts resources as priorities change Seeks continuously to improve performance Makes best use of diverse talents, technology, and resources to deliver results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commits to delivery regardless of impact on team or self Focuses on the process rather than getting results Avoids dealing with difficult problems Continually fire fighting Takes sole credit for achieving results Does not manage risks
GIVING PURPOSE AND DIRECTION	
Creating and communicating a vision of the future	
EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR	INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is clear what needs to be achieved Involves people in deciding what has to be done Communicates a compelling view of the future Sets clear short and long term objectives Creates practical and achievable plans Establishes standards of behaviour and promotes diversity Agrees on clear responsibilities and objectives to deliver results Initiates change to make things happen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looks to others to provide direction Takes an overly cautious approach Assumes people know what is required of them without being told Loses sight of the big picture Allows culture which is tolerant of diversity
MAKING PERSONAL IMPACT	
Leading by example	
EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR	INEFFECTIVE BEHAVIOUR
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visible and approachable to all Acts with honesty and integrity Is valued for sound application of knowledge and expertise Resilient and determined Challenges and is prepared to be challenged Says what people may not want to hear Takes difficult decisions and measured risks Accepts responsibility for own decisions Takes personal responsibility for making progress in equality and diversity Implements corporate decisions with energy and commitment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Says one thing and does another Takes contrary views as a personal criticism Fights own corner, ignoring wider interests Accepts the status quo Aloof and arrogant Aggressive not assertive

Source: Horton, 2009

The present SCS competency framework is based entirely on behaviours. It consists of only six competencies, which are considered to be key competencies and critical for the effective performance of all staff within the SCS. These are: thinking strategically, getting the best from people, learning and improving, focusing on delivery, giving purpose and direction, and making personal impact. Each of the competencies has a list of effective behaviours and ineffective behaviours, which are the criteria used in assessing performance.

Noticeable is the absence in the framework of any reference to political, ministerial, or parliamentary relationships or to public stewardship. The political competencies, which are perhaps the most generic of all in the civil service, do not feature in the common framework at all. The framework that has been produced for the SCS is organisationally ‘neutral’ and could be applied and used to evaluate and develop people in top management positions in any private or public organisation (Farnham & Horton, 2002).

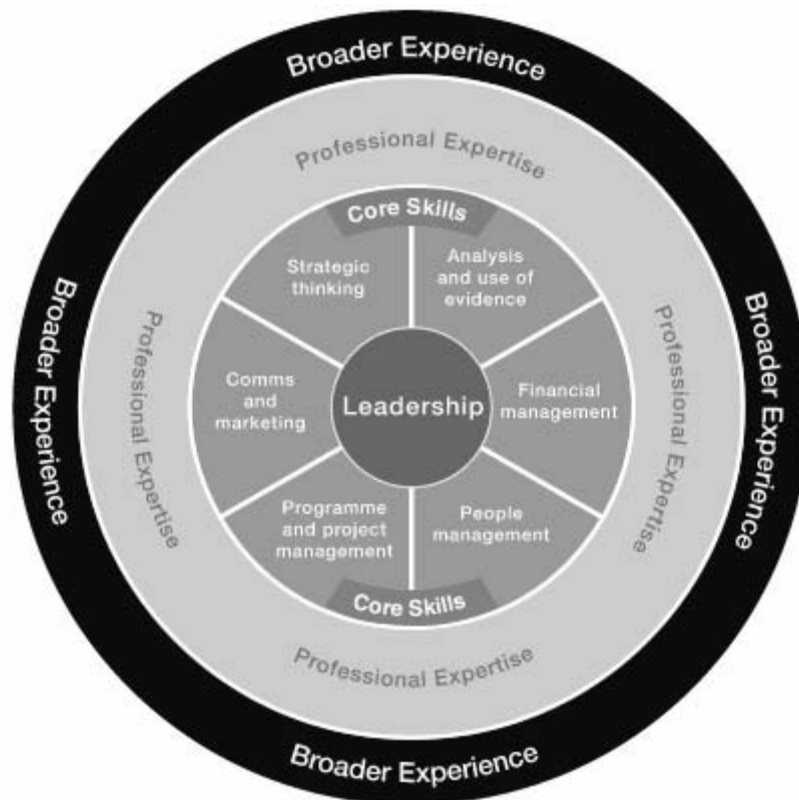
Professional Skills for Government

Since 2003, the Professional Skills for Government (PSG) has been developed collaboratively by employers, employees, and wider stakeholders in central government in partnership with Government Skills and its predecessors. Government Skills is the Sector Skills Council (SSC) for central government and is a guardian of the framework on behalf of the sector.

The Professional Skills for Government (PSG) competency framework (see figure below) is a structured way of thinking about jobs and careers for civil servants at all grades. It sets out the skills they need to do their job well as a member of the civil service, no matter what grade they are or where they work. For civil servants at grade 7 or equivalent, or at SCS pay bands 1 and 3, the PSG frameworks sets out common skill requirements.

The UK civil service is a diverse organisation and the range of skills required below grade 7 reflects this. For civil servants below grade 7, the department determines how the PSG framework applies to them in line with its own skills needs. To aid transferability of skills both within the civil service and across the wider economy, Government Skills, in partnership with departments, has developed a common framework for grades below grade 7. This framework was launched in July 2008 and should be embedded in departmental frameworks by 2012.

Professional Skills for Government Framework



Source: The Civil Service, 2009

The PSG competency framework is divided into four separate but supporting areas: leadership, core skills, professional skills, and broader experience. Civil service **leadership** qualities sit at the centre of the

framework. These are to provide direction for the organisation, to deliver results, to build capacity for the organisation to address current and future challenges, and to act with integrity (cf. infra: leadership framework). Furthermore, every civil servant needs certain **core skills** to work effectively. The four core skills at Grade 7 are people management, financial management, analysis and use of evidence, and programme and project management. In addition to these skills, those in or aspiring to the SCS need to demonstrate skills in communications and marketing, and strategic thinking. The department determines how the PSG framework applies to civil servants below Grade 7. A third PSG area is job-specific **professional skills**. Everyone in the civil service requires some professional skills to do their job, whether they work in policy development, operational delivery or corporate services, or provide expert advice. This area of the PSG competency framework is supported by heads of profession, who set standards for all professions in the civil service. Finally, for SCS members and those aspiring to the SCS, both **depth and breadth of experience** are important. Deep professional knowledge is valuable, but as civil servants progress in their civil service career, breadth of experience becomes increasingly important. This experience could be gained within your profession, within another part of the Civil Service or in other sectors (The Civil Service, 2009).

Developing leadership skills is a key priority. That is why the **leadership framework** (see figure below) sits at the heart of the PSG framework. It determines what's expected of our senior leaders in terms of delivering business results, building capability, and setting direction. It also highlights what individuals can do to improve their leadership skills (The Civil Service, 2009).

Leadership Framework



Source: The Civil Service, 2009

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United States

In 1990, the US Office of Personnel Management began work on the first government-wide competency model. Two years later, in **1992**, the agency presented the result of that effort: the **Leadership Effectiveness Framework (LEF)**. As noted by Rodriguez *et al.* (2002), as the leading agency in this effort, the US Office of Personnel Management married traditional job analysis with competency modelling, with the goal of creating a model that would effectively cover a wide range of occupations. “OPM envisioned a uniform, competency-based language that would enable federal agencies to describe jobs in the same way, eliminating inconsistencies across agencies and HR functions (e.g., staffing, performance appraisal, training.” (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2002, p. 311). This approach reflects the contemporary competency-based efforts to align individual behaviour and organisational outcomes that extend beyond job-specific criteria (see Sanchez and Levine, 2009). It is important to note that competency modelling did not seek to eliminate job analysis, but rather make use of the detail provided through such efforts.

According to Eyde *et al.* (1999) the US Office of Personnel Management’s Personnel Resources and Development Center (PRDC) reviewed both public and private sector management and leadership literature and conducted a large-scale Leadership Effectiveness Survey of over 10,000 federal executives, managers, and supervisors to identify competencies necessary for effective job performance. The investigation resulted in a list of 22 leadership competencies, including: written communication, oral communication, problem solving, interpersonal skills, managing diverse workforce, vision, creative thinking, flexibility, decisiveness, leadership, conflict management, self-direction, influencing/negotiating, planning and evaluation, financial management, human resources management, client orientation, external awareness, team building, technology management, internal controls/integrity, technical competence. Each competency was assigned a level (basic supervisory, managerial, or executive) based on a composite rating of importance and need at entry. According to Eyde *et al.* (1999), all competencies “were important to all levels of leadership, but at varying degrees,” (p. 3). Finally, the 22 competencies were grouped into five broad clusters, including: influencing/negotiating, external awareness, interpersonal skills, oral communication, and written communication (Eyde *et al.*, 1999, p. 56).

Recognising the rapidly changing context of public sector work, including downsizing and organisational redesign, the PRDC updated the model in 1996 and 1997 (utilising a behavioural indicators study, literature review, examination of private sector competency models, and focus group meetings with experts) to produce the **1998 Leadership Competency Model**. The updating efforts, according to Eyde *et al.* (1999), confirmed the 22 original 1992 competencies and identified five new competencies (entrepreneurship, partnering, resilience, political savvy, and service motivation). As a result, the 1998 model included 27 competencies, grouped (using factor analysis) under five meta-competencies: Leading Change, Leading People, Results Driven, Business Acumen, and Building Coalitions/Communication. The

meta-competencies also serve as the foundation for the **Executive Core Qualifications** (ECQs), which “reflect the qualifications needed to succeed” in the Senior Executive Service (Eyde *et al.*, 1999, p. v).

1998 Leadership Competency Model

Leading Change	Leading People	Results Driven	Business Acumen	Building Coalitions/ Communication
Continual Learning	Conflict Management	Accountability	Financial Management	Influencing/ Negotiating
Creativity & Innovation	Leveraging Diversity	Customer Service	Human Resources Management	Interpersonal Skills
External Awareness	Integrity/Honesty	Decisiveness	Technology Management	Oral Communication
Flexibility	Team Building	Entrepreneurship		Partnering
Resilience		Problem Solving		Political Savvy
Service Motivation		Technical Credibility		Written Communication
Strategic Thinking				
Vision				

In addition to the identification of leadership competencies, the US Office of Personnel Management produced a list of **37 general competencies for the federal workforce**, which was produced using the Multipurpose Occupational Systems Analysis Inventory – Closed-ended (MOSAIC) approach. This effort allowed OPM to identify crosscutting competencies that are related to occupations within an occupational group (see Rodriguez *et al.*, 2002). The general competencies identified included: Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Mathematical Reasoning, Oral Communication, Creative Thinking, Information Management, Decision Making, Reasoning, Problem Solving, Mental Visualisation, Learning, Self-Esteem, Teamwork, Integrity/Honesty, Self-Management, Interpersonal Skills, Planning/Evaluating, Attention to Detail, Financial Management, Managing Human Resources, Leadership, Teaching Others, Customer Service, Organisational Awareness, External Awareness, Vision, Influencing/Negotiating, Conflict Management, Stress Tolerance, Flexibility, Technology Application, Technical Competence, Memory, Perceptual Speed, Agility, and Stamina.

Over time, the focus on leadership competency identification and management retained prominence in the US federal government. According to the 1999 report by Eyde *et al.*, in the context of a rapidly changing public service, “leadership competencies, attributes, and behaviours are more important than managerial competencies,” (p. v). In **2006**, the **leadership competency model (including the Executive**

Core Qualifications) was again revised to reflect changing contexts in a joint effort by the US Office of Personnel Management and the Chief Human Capital Officer Council (CHCOC). As a result of that effort, six competencies were separated as **fundamental competencies** that together serve as a foundation for the other meta-competency clusters. The fundamental competencies include: interpersonal skills, oral and written communication, continual learning, integrity/honesty, and public service motivation. The current Executive Core Qualifications model (as it exists at the time of this writing) is presented below.

Executive Core Qualifications (ECQs)

Leading Change	Leading People	Results Driven	Business Acumen	Building Coalitions	Fundamental Competencies
Creativity & Innovation	Conflict Management	Accountability	Financial Management	Partnering	Interpersonal Skills
External Awareness	Leveraging Diversity	Customer Service	Human Resources Management	Political Savvy	Oral Communication
Flexibility	Developing Others	Decisiveness	Technology Management	Influencing/Negotiating	Integrity/Honesty
Resilience	Team Building	Entrepreneurship			Written Communication
Strategic Thinking		Problem Solving			Continual Learning
Vision		Technical Credibility			Public Service Motivation

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ANNEX 2. QUESTIONNAIRE ON COMPETENCY MANAGEMENT IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Introduction

Purpose and focus of the survey

The goal of this survey is to gather data that will provide a review of practices in the management of competencies in OECD countries. At the same time, it will provide OECD countries with a better picture of where they stand compared to other countries in the field of competency management.

The survey focuses on (1) how traditionally governments manage their competencies, (2) what the state of the art tools and practices are in the most advanced OECD countries, and also (3) how countries are preparing for the future.

The scope of this survey concerns the national government of each country.

Output

We prefer a written report based on the questions in this survey. If you can't write a report due to any practical reasons, then please answer the questions as fully as possible.

Timeline

It is anticipated that we will receive responses by October 15, 2009. The preliminary results of the survey will be shared with OECD countries at the 2009 meeting of the OECD Public Employment and Management Working Party to be held in Paris. The study will be finalised by February 2010.

Data

Before continuing, please fill in your data below.

- Name:
- Organisation:
- Country:
- Describe the government that your data cover:

Definitions

In this survey, we use the following definitions for the concepts 'competency', 'competency management', and 'competency model'.

- A competency is an underlying characteristic of an employee (i.e. motive, trait, skill, or a body of knowledge), which results in effective and/or superior performance in a job (Boyatzis, 1982 in Vakola *et al.*, 2007, p. 260).
- Competency management, sometimes called competency-based management, involves identifying the competencies that distinguish high performers from average performers in all areas of organisational activity and using this framework as the foundation for recruitment, selection, training and development, rewards and other aspects of employee management (IDS, 1997 in Nunes *et al.*, 2007).
- A competency model is the organisation of identified competencies into a conceptual framework that enables the people in an organisation to understand, talk about, and apply the competencies (Marrelli, 1998).

1. How do countries manage their competencies?

1.1. Definitions

Q.1. Does the national government have an own definition of the concepts below?

- Competency
- Competency management
- Competency model
 - Yes → What are those definitions? → Continue to Q.2.
 - No → Why not? → Continue to Q.2.

1.2. Characterisation of the existing competency model

Q.2. Are competencies used in the national government of your country?

- Yes → Please continue to Q.3.
- No → Why not? Are there any similar concepts used? → Continue to Q.3.

Q.3. Is competency management present in the national government?

- Yes → Please continue to Q.4.
- No → Why not? → Continue to Q.5.

Q.4. Which are the target groups of competency management (e.g. managers, senior and technical staff, administrative staff, labourers...)?

Q.5. Is there a competency model present?

- Yes → Please continue to Q.6.

- No → Which competencies are present? → Continue to Q.8.

Q.6. Are there different competency models for different target groups? Please specify.

Q.7. Please describe the existing competency model(s).

- What is the structure of the model?
- Which competencies are used?
- What types of competencies are used (generic, technical...⁷)?
- Is there a public-service-specific emphasis present in the competency model (e.g. government values such as loyalty, service...)?

1.3. Origin and development of competency management in government

Q.8. When was competency management introduced in the national government (date, context... e.g. during government reform)?

Q.9. Why was competency management not introduced earlier (e.g. not ready...)?

Q.10. What were the reasons for introducing competency management (e.g. leverage for change, as a communication tool...)?

Q.11. How was competency management developed and implemented? Which were the different steps and methods used in this process?

Q.12. Which parties were involved in the development and implementation of the competency model and what was their role (e.g. external (public/private partner) or in-house consultants, management...)?

Q.13. Were there any difficulties in the development and implementation process (e.g. in the identification of competencies and the construction of the competency model...)?

Q.14. What are the key success factors in the development and implementation process?

1.4. Competency management in practice

Q.15. For which purposes and in which HR processes has the competency management been used? Please specify the way in which competency management is being used in those HR processes.

- Recruitment & selection

⁷ *Generic competencies* are competencies which are needed more or less in each function and which are not directly linked to the job as such (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005).

Technical competencies are specific skills and knowledge which are needed for specific jobs (Hondeghe *et al.*, 2005).

- Training & development
- Performance evaluation
- Remuneration
- Workforce/succession planning
 - Career guidance
 - Other: please specify

- Q.16. Is there a central agency/department in charge of competency management at national government level? If so, what are its responsibilities?
- Q.17. To what extent is the implementation of competency management decentralised to agencies/departments at national level? What is the degree of freedom of these agencies/departments in determining competency management?
- Q.18. What are the benefits of the use of competency management (e.g. better assessment tool, useful development tool...)?
- Q.19. What are the main difficulties and challenges encountered in competency management practices (e.g. lack of commitment by staff/management...)?
- Q.20. What are the key success factors for a competency-based human resources management?

1.5. Integration of competency management

- Q.21. Is the government's strategy aligned with competencies (vertical integration⁸)? Please explain.
- Q.22. To what extent is the range of HR practices aligned with competencies (horizontal integration³)? Please explain.
- Q.23. To what extent does the national government have an integrated competency management system (holistic approach)? Is there a systematic implementation of competency management or is there only an implementation of loose elements? Please explain.

2. Review of the state of the art practices

- Q.24. What are the new or innovative practices concerning competency management in the national government? Please specify.
- Q.25. What are the future plans concerning competency management in the national government? What changes in competency management are anticipated in the future? Please specify.

⁸ & ³ “One of the differences between traditional personnel management and competency management is the idea of vertical and horizontal integration. Competency management links the individual competencies of employees to the core competencies of organizations and individual performance to the strategic aims of the organization (*vertical integration*) while the instruments of personnel management are all linked and coordinated (*horizontal integration*).” (Horton *et al.*, 2002)

3. Analysis of the future competencies

Q.26. Governments are facing several challenges: financial crisis, globalisation, ageing and knowledge management, diversity...

Q.26.a How do governments plan for those challenges? In general, what are the procedures in dealing with such challenges in the context of competency management?

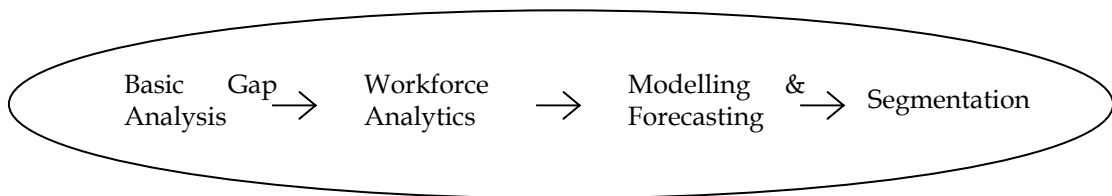
Q.26.b What do you think are the competencies governments will need in the future when faced with those challenges? Please explain.

Q.27. Is workforce planning present in the national government (possibly only for certain employee groups)?

- Yes → Is competency management integrated into workforce planning? Please explain. → Continue to Q.28.
- No → Why not? → Continue to Q.29.

Q.28. Lavelle (2007) describes an evolution of workforce planning (see figure below). Where would you place the national government on this evolutionary path of workforce planning? Please explain.

Evolutionary Path of Workforce Planning⁹



4. Evaluation regarding competency management in the national government

⁹ *Evolutionary path* (Lavelle, 2007)

- 1) Basis gap analysis
- 2) Workforce analytics: e.g. analysing current and historic workforce data
- 3) Modelling & forecasting: take workforce analytics into a more dynamic setting, building various “what-if” scenarios
- 4) Segmentation: variety of approaches distinguishing staff in terms of strategic contribution or mission criticality (e.g. table below)

<i>High business impact</i>	High skill replacement talent	Critical core/contingent expertise
<i>Low business impact</i>	Market-sourced skill needs	Time-bound mastery level, professional talent
	<i>Low talent scarcity/cost</i>	<i>High talent scarcity/cost</i>

Q.29. What is your general evaluation regarding competency management in the national government? Below, we have listed a few criteria to guide your answer.

- Added value?
- Level of maturity?
- Did it change a lot in the organisation?
- Is there a real integration (holistic approach)?
- Is there a future for competency management?

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