Manual

for the use of a competency framework in recruitment and selection for the Civil Services in Bosnia and Herzegovina

COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

civil services · recruitment and selection

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

competency framework · civil services

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

developing people

strategic planning

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Contents

1.0 Introduction

Competencies are the attitudes and behaviour patterns that underpin how people do their jobs. Competencies influence how well people apply their knowledge, technical and management skills. They recognise that success in the civil service will be determined, not just by 'what we do', but also by 'how we do it'. Commonly, they are defined as **a set of behaviours that are required to perform the tasks and functions of a job effectively.** In other words a competency framework describes how we need to go about our daily work. As such it can be a valuable management tool for raising staff performance and can be thoroughly integrated into a comprehensive system of human resources management.

The purpose of this manual is to show how a competency framework can help to ensure that better recruitment and selection decisions can be made, and to provide guidelines for the professional conduct of competency based-selection interviewing for civil service positions.

2.0 How does a Competency Framework support recruitment and selection?

2.1 Defining the requirements for individual jobs

The framework provides a structure through which an institution can determine which behaviours are consistent with positive performance in particular jobs.

2.2 Recruiting and promoting staff

When selecting a candidate from a shortlist the interviewer can ask targeted questions that will enable them to assess whether an individual is likely to show the required positive behaviours if they were selected for the job. They will be seeking evidence from past examples that demonstrates an ability to perform. Section 9.0 of this document provides more guidance on how to conduct a competency-based interview and Section 10.0 provides a comprehensive list of possible interview questions. Recruitment and selection using a competency framework is the focus of this manual.

2.3 Succession planning

Assessing current employees against a set of competencies is a useful way to diagnose where there is a risk of a capability gap in the organisation in the future, for example as staff retire and move out of the organisation. Solutions can then be sought through staff training or recruitment.

3.0 How the competency framework was developed

The aim was to identify those competencies which would be relevant to the work of the civil services of BiH over the next several years and that will enable them to rise to the challenges that all public institutions are likely to face.

The competency framework is also built upon the foundation of the job analysis activity of the EU HRM project, and close reference was made with personal profiles developed for the sample job descriptions arising from this. This is particularly relevant when it comes to identifying the **priority** core competencies for each individual position. There should be an obvious correlation between the priority competencies needed for a job and those main tasks and responsibilities that make up a high percentage of the workload. The greater the time allocation, the higher the priority of the competency.

Reference was also made to the work of civil service competence frameworks from elsewhere in the region as well as previous technical assistance projects in BiH, most notably the work undertaken by UNDP/DFID in 2009.

Both Brcko District and FBiH have developed competency lists that are used for the purpose of recruitment interviewing. These have been taken into account and have been incorporated into this framework and in some cases elaborated further.

Additionally, it should be recognised that the expectations from managers are somewhat different and indeed greater than those in non-managerial roles. For this reason two sets of competencies were developed. The first set applies to every civil servant, regardless of their grade, including managers. The second set details additional competencies for those in managerial jobs.

Finally, there is one extra competency for top managers – institution leaders.

3.1 The competencies

Core competencies for all civil servants

C.1 Professional development and integrity

C.2 Problem solving, initiative and change

C.3 Teamwork

C.4 Communication

C.5 Personal effectiveness and results orientation

Managerial competencies

C.6 Leadership

C.7 Planning and organising

C.8 Developing people

Top management competency

C.9 Strategic direction

4.0 The competency framework

In the framework below, each of the competencies has a brief definition attached to it, followed by a table that details the behavioural indicators that need to be demonstrated.

4.1 Core Competencies for all Civil Servants (C.1 - C.5)

C.1 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRITY
The continuous acquisition and application of the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours to achieve high levels of work performance, including the ability to transfer knowledge and experience to others.

C.1.1 Continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for the job
Ensures they have the knowledge and skills necessary for the job, takes steps to find out if there are gaps/changes and then addresses them.

C.1.2 Commitment to personal and professional development
Takes responsibility for personal and professional development, displaying motivation and a commitment to learning and self-improvement.

C.1.3 Knowledge sharing
Shares knowledge and information gained with others so they can learn.

C.1.4 Integrity
Engenders the trust and respect of others through consistent honesty, abides by the Civil Service Code of Conduct and challenges rule-breaking by others.

C.2 PROBLEM SOLVING, INITIATIVE AND CHANGE
The ability to act proactively and to respond positively, creatively and constructively to changing situations and new demands.

C.2.1 Initiative
Acts with initiative within his/her scope of work.

C.2.2 Innovation of new work solutions
Develops and suggests fresh ideas that provide solutions to workplace challenges; encourages new ideas and innovations; open to change.

C.2.3 Creativity
Develops creative insights into situations and questions conventional approaches.

C.2.4 Problem solving skills
Presents not just problems but proposes solutions to issues.

C.2.5 Ability to resolve difficult or complicated challenges
Resolves difficult or complicated challenges.

C.2.6 Helping others with change
Helping others with change.

C.3 TEAMWORK
The ability to work effectively in groups and teams, to cooperate with other members and to contribute through active participation in order to achieve collective goals.

C.3.1 Building constructive working relationships
Builds constructive working relationships through cooperation, acceptance and respect for others.

C.3.2 Facilitating teamwork
Promotes cooperation and commitment within a team to achieve goals and deliverables.

C.3.3 Helping others to resolve conflicts
Helps others resolve disagreements and conflicts.

C.3.4 Respecting different viewpoints, and orientations
Respects different viewpoints and welcomes diversity of cultures and orientation.

C.3.5 Ability to cooperate with other teams
Builds and maintains constructive and productive relations with other teams and their members.

C.4 COMMUNICATION
The ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing with managers, colleagues, clients and citizens, conveying information clearly, accurately and in a timely manner to relevant individual and groups.

C.4.1 Tactfulness
Has patience and uses good judgment in communication, keeping polite behaviour in all interactions.

C.4.2 Clear conveying of ideas, facts and instructions
Conveys ideas, facts and instructions, - orally or in writing - with clarity, using language the audience will best understand.

C.4.3 Active listening
Listens, understands and considers ideas of others.

C.4.4 Encouraging feedback from others
Encourages information feedback from others and offers it to other parties.

C.4.5 Adaptive communication style
Changes the communication approach and style to meet the preferences and needs of the audience.

C.4.6 Effective participation at meetings
Conducts and/or participates in meetings and group discussions efficiently and with structure.

4.1 Core Competencies for all Civil Servants (C.1 - C.5) - extension

C.5	**PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND RESULTS ORIENTATION**
	Performing consistently at a high level. Achieving goals and continuously improving the quality of service to citizens, clients and other civil service bodies.

C.5.1 Focusing on results and desired outcomes

Focuses on results and desired outcomes and how best to achieve them. Produces good quality outputs with little oversight, on time.

C.5.2 Building and maintaining client and citizen satisfaction

Builds and maintains client and citizen satisfaction with the services offered by meeting or exceeding their expectations.

C.5.3 Paying attention to detail

Pays attention to detail and produces accurate results.

C.5.4 Efficient management of time and resources

Improves productivity by managing time, priorities and resources to achieve goals and secure value for money.

C.5.5 Effective decision making

Makes timely, informed decisions that take into account the facts, goals, constraints and risks.

C.5.6 Analytical thinking

Applies analytical thinking by breaking a situation into smaller pieces, tracing the implications of a situation in a step-by-step way. Organises the parts of a problem in a systematic way, making comparisons of different aspects and causal relationships.

C.5.7 Ability to work under pressure

Keeps composure in stressful or adverse situations.

4.2   Additional Competencies for Managers (C.6 - C.8)

C.6   LEADERSHIP
Motivating people to achieve high performance in working towards the team and organisation's goals.

C.6.1   Translating strategic goals to everyday work
Links vision, values, goals and strategies to everyday work.

C.6.2   Creating positive work environment
Creates a positive work environment where staff are motivated to do their best.

C.6.3   Goal setting
Sets clear, meaningful challenging but attainable group goals and expectations.

C.6.4   Effective delegation
Manages staff by delegating and entrusting certain tasks and assisting them to succeed in their performance.

C.6.5   Staff motivation
Regularly provides both positive and critical feedback to team members to improve motivation and performance.

C.6.6   Leading by example
Is an excellent role model – leads by example.

C.7   PLANNING AND ORGANISING
The ability to plan, organise, coordinate and monitor activities and work tasks for self and team members.

C.7.1   Effective planning
Plans the best use of available resources – produces good activity and departmental plans that are understood by staff and that identify necessary resources and skills .

C.7.2   Team planning
Agrees objectives with individuals that support team plans and service goals.

C.7.3   Holding members to account for their work results
Holds team members to account for achieving the results that have been agreed.

C.7.4   Risk management
Evaluates risk and puts realistic plans in place to manage it.

C.7.5   Ensuring meeting of deadlines
Takes early action to deal with issues that affect deadlines to ensure delivery on time.

4.2   Additional Competencies for Managers (C.6 - C.8) - extension

C.8   DEVELOPING PEOPLE
Developing people to improve their performance and fulfil their potential.

C.8.1 Identification of team members' training needs
Identifies training needs in employees and takes action to meet them by formal or informal learning and development methods.

C.8.2 Talent management
Identifies talent and potential in employees and creates development plans to realise it.

C.8.3 Coaching
Personally coaches employees to improve their performance.

4.3   Additional Competency for Top Managers (appointed positions) - C.9

C.9   STRATEGIC DIRECTION
Setting the strategic direction of the organisation in response to the needs of Government and citizens, and ensuring its delivery.

C.9.1 Strategic planning
Develops strategic plans to ensure the organisation's future success.

C.9.2 Monitoring of strategic plans
Monitors plans to achieve strategic objectives.

C.9.3 Strategic resource management
Secures the resources needed to deliver strategic objectives.

C.9.4 Taking responsibility for meeting strategic objectives
Takes responsibility for ensuring the strategic objectives are met.

C.9.5 Building an effective senior management team
Builds an effective senior management team that pulls the organisation together.

5.0 Application to particular positions

The core competencies have been designed to apply to all positions in the civil service. So **all** core competencies will be expected to be demonstrated by **all** employees.

However it should be acknowledged that some competencies are especially important for particular positions (for example strong communication skills for a position dealing directly with citizens). So for each position, a set of no more than 6 'priority' competencies/indicators should be extracted from the framework and specified in the particular job description. These could also be paraphrased for inclusion in the job competition announcement. Job applicants (and indeed incumbents) would be expected to demonstrate **exemplary** deployment of these priority competencies, not merely satisfactory. In this way the competency framework can be tailored to each job.

Priority competencies should be identified by examining the particular job description, considering the most important and time consuming aspects of the job and then selecting the most essential competencies from the framework for inclusion in the Professional Profile section of the job description. As job descriptions contain descriptions of several duties/responsibilities that are carried out by an incumbent, in the process of identification of priority competencies one should focus on the duties which take at least 20 per cent of the time spent on the job. The next step would be to link each important duty with the appropriate competences.

Some examples of how competencies can be applied to particular jobs are included Section 7.0 of this manual.

It is recommended that a limited number of priority competencies be selected for each position, i.e. only those that are truly essential for the position. This is the reason why it is advisable that not more than 6 priority competencies be selected for one position.

Identification of priority competences should primarily be the responsibility of the person responsible for HRM in each civil service institution. The competencies should be identified in a process of job analysis in consultation with a high performing incumbent (during the job analysis interview) and his/her superior.

It is also possible to identify competencies in the focus groups of subject matter experts within civil service institutions (especially in large institutions) or focus groups composed of civil servants from different institutions.

A guide on how to determine competencies in such a focus group is presented in Annex 1.

Furthermore, it is advisable to determine competences for standard jobs, i.e. job which can be found in different institutions throughout the civil service (e.g. HRM, PR, IT, finance-accounting etc.). Identification of competencies for standard civil service jobs could be done within a focus group of representatives from different institutions that are subject matter experts and who will be able to identify the most important competencies for each standard job.

It is recommended that standard job descriptions with key duties and identified competencies be collected in a catalogue of jobs, which would be available to all civil servants. These standard job descriptions would serve as an example for HRM experts and ease the process of identification of priority competences for most positions in their respective institutions.

6.0 Required Professional Knowledge and Skills

In addition to core competencies, particular professional knowledge and skills are required for each different job. Knowledge requirements tend to be job related (e.g. knowledge to be an accountant, engineer, IT specialist etc.) and institutional knowledge. This is what people need to **know** to do their jobs. Skills are needed to perform the functional role and include technical skills (e.g. project management, time management, planning processes, budget management etc.).

It is normal and sensible that technical skills and abilities required for particular positions are listed in job descriptions. These usually appear in the section that describes the Professional Profile of the required staff member.

The Professional Profile flows from the main tasks and responsibilities of the job and answers the question "What skills and qualities would someone need to carry out this role?". It identifies the qualifications, skills, experience and critical competencies needed for effective performance. Using competencies clarifies the personal qualities and workplace behaviours expected of the post holder.

7.0 Sample job descriptions with priority competencies

The following 12 pages contain sample job descriptions that have been analysed and based upon the main tasks and responsibilities of the position, the top priority competencies have been identified and listed in the appropriate box in Section 10 of the job description. Any successful candidate for each job must be able to demonstrate **exemplary** application of such competencies.

Example of a job description No. 1

1. Institution: Civil Service Agency

2. Title of work post: Head of Department for Central Staff Records

3. Sector/section/service: Central Staff Records Section

4. No of staff /number of targeted staff: 1/1

5. Title of immediate supervisory work post: Agency Director

6. Title and number of directly and indirectly subordinated work posts and staff members:
Directly subordinated:
Senior Expert Associate for supervision and control of the central staff register 1
Administrator of database 1

7. Purpose of work post:
Coordination of the work of Department, compilation and submission of statistic report from the scope of work of the Agency for the needs of the civil service and improving IT system following the Strategy of e-Administration.

8. Main tasks and responsibilities:

Main tasks and responsibility	Percentage of workload
Maintaining databases of civil servants and employees via CRK application and reporting for the needs of internal labour market, creation of staff planning, records of work affairs and similar	50%
Managing the work of department and regular reporting of Agency Director on the work of Department	10%
Maintaining web page of the Agency and publishing vacancy for recruitment and final results	10%
Maintaining Agency server units – hardware and software, network infrastructures and computers	10%
Administering application for professional development and application for taking expert exam	10%
Maintaining internal databases–recruiting, training and expert exam as the basis for preparation of reports in this area	5%
Administration of e-learning system for the training of civil service officers	3%
Opening case files in the writing room, applications for vacancies, training, and for expert exam received via web page	2%

9. Contacts:

Regular weekly contacts with Agency Director in order to plan activities of Department as well as Department for planning and recruitment for the purpose of implementation of activities relating to publishing of vacancies, results of vacancies and interpretation of regulations for the reason of harmonisation of practices. Contacts are made on daily basis with all civil service bodies in order to update register, as well as with Agency web site users who apply for the vacancies.

10. Professional profile of staff member
(education degree, work experience, knowledge, skills and personal features):

Required degree, sort and work experience	University degree, 4 years of experience in information technology gained in complex systems and IT work
Required professional knowledge and skills	• Knowledge of regulations that regulate scope of labour relations • LINUX • Microsoft technology • CISCO network systems • Basics in programming
Desirable professional knowledge and skills	• Previous work experience in managing lesser number of people is desirable • Knowledge of English language
Priority competences	• Communication (4.0), team work (3.0), leadership (6.0), problem solving skills (2.4) effective decision making (5.5) attention to detail (5.3)

Staff member   Immediate supervisor   Manager of the body

Example of a job description No. 2

1. Institution: RS Tax Administration

2. Title of work post: Assistant Director

3. Sector/section/service: Sector for tax collection management

4. No of staff /number of targeted staff: 1

5. Title of immediate supervisory work post : Director of Tax Administration

6. Title and number of directly and indirectly subordinated work posts and staff members:
6 directly subordinated work posts, total of 9 staff members (11 staff members according to the BoR on Systematisation)

7. Purpose of work post:
Coordination of the Sector work and ensuring conditions for efficient collection of taxes in order to increase payment of tax debts.

8. Main tasks and responsibilities:

Main tasks and responsibility	Percentage of workload
Managing work of Sector and reports to on collection of tax debts	40%
Creation of annual and monthly plans and programs of work of Sector	20%
Monitoring regulations and creating documents (methodologies, instructions, book of rules) aiming at harmonisation of work of all regional centres	10%
Monitoring debts, payments and creating daily reports on all made payments	10%
Cooperation with courts and funds and launching bankruptcy proceedings	10%
Participates in creation of laws and by-laws in the scope of the work of Sector	10%

9. Contacts:

Communicates on daily basis with assistants Directors from the regional Tax Authority centres and the Tax Authority Headquarters (Director) aiming at information exchange within Sector area of business.

Communicates with Ministry of Finance, courts, Pension and Disability Insurance Office.

10. Professional profile of staff member
    (education degree, work experience, knowledge, skills and personal features):

Required degree, sort and work experience	University degree in economy 6 years of experience in inspection work or similar tasks in managerial positions, passed expert exam for the work in republic bodies.
Required professional knowledge and skills	• Excellent knowledge of Tax Authority work and system of collection of taxes. • Excellent managerial skills, motivation and development of employed. Computer literacy. • Ability to anticipate and foresee long-term and short-term needs and goals within the scope of Sector. • Transfer of clear and precise information in both oral and written form.
Desirable professional knowledge and skills	• A foreign language knowledge
Priority competences	• Strategic direction (9.2, 9.4), • communication (4.0), • team work (3.1), • analytical thinking (5.6), • leadership (6.0).

Staff member   Immediate supervisor   Manager of the body

Example of a job description No. 3

1. Institution: Civil Service Agency

2. Title of work post: Administrative and Technical Officer

3. Sector/section/service: Agency Secretariat

4. No of staff /number of targeted staff: 1/1

5. Title of immediate supervisory work post : Agency Director

6. Title and number of directly and indirectly subordinated work posts and staff members: —

7. Purpose of work post:
Support to Agency Director in daily business performing administrative and technical tasks and coordination with heads of Department in the course of implementation of vacancies and trainings.

8. Main tasks and responsibilities:

Main tasks and responsibility	Percentage of workload
Receives calls, informs clients based on their requests and refers clients to other colleagues from the Agency	50%
Receives and sends mail on behalf of the Agency	20%
Scheduling meeting and creating daily dairy with meetings for Director and heads from Agency	10%
Keeping records on presence of staff (attendance sheets)	10%
Procures and distributes office materials	10%

9. Contacts:

Daily contacts made with Agency Director to agree about activities. Contacts are made with heads of Department on implementation of trainings and vacancies.

Contacts are made on daily basis with minister coordinators of all ministries, as well as republic administrations and republic administrative organisations that information on vacancies are exchanged with, but also for the reason of appointment of meetings as defined by schedule.

10. Professional profile of staff member
(education degree, work experience, knowledge, skills and personal features):

Required degree, sort and work experience	High school degree – grammar school completed 6 months of experience
Required professional knowledge and skills	• Office management • Interpersonal relations
Desirable professional knowledge and skills	—
Priority competences	• Communication (4.1, 4.2, 4.3) • Professional development (1.1, 1.3) • Attention to detail (5.3)

Staff member   Immediate supervisor   Manager of the body

Example of a job description No. 4

1. Institution: Ministry of Administration and Local Self-Government

2. Title of work post: Expert Adviser for Public Administration Reform

3. Sector/section/service: Department for public administration reform and normative affairs

4. No of staff /number of targeted staff 1/1**:**

5. Title of immediate supervisory work post: Head of Department

6. Title and number of directly and indirectly subordinated work posts and staff members: —

7. Purpose of work post:
Coordination of process of public administration reform at all levels of RS public administration.

8. Main tasks and responsibilities:

Main tasks and responsibility	Percentage of workload
Analyses of progress of reform in all areas covered by reform through cooperation with supervisory teams of RS and compilation of information for the Office of Coordinator for Public Administration Reform	30%
Following implementation and creation of report for the RS Government on activities that are implemented within Public Administration Office	20%
Proposing implementation of the new reform activities through elaboration of project tasks and tender documentation	20%
Analysis and opinion giving on record made by the Steering Committee of Fund for Public Administration Reform	10%
Preparation of brochures and other sort of information for promotion of Public Administration Reform	10%
Creation of different information to attract donors for support to Public Administration Reform activities	10%

9. Contacts:

For the nature of this job, most of contacts are made out of Ministry. The highest number of regular weekly contacts is made with members of supervisory bodies of RS that are structures for implementation of Public Administration Reform (Ministry of Administration and local self-government, General Secretariat, Ministry of Economic Relations and Regional Cooperation, Republic Secretariat for Legislation, Ministry of Finance, Civil Service Agency, IT Sector, Agency for informatics society, Public Relations Sector) information on progress made in certain areas are exchanged with. Besides, there are frequent contacts with Office of Coordinator for State Administration Reform, the information on progress of reforms in RS are exchanged with, future reform activities agreed.

10. Professional profile of staff member
   (education degree, work experience, knowledge, skills and personal features):

Required degree, sort and work experience	7th degree Faculty of Law 5 years of experience in administration
Required professional knowledge and skills	• System of civil service • Operational and strategic planning
Desirable professional knowledge and skills	• English language
Priority competences	• Communication (4.0) • Tactfulness (4.1) • Team work (3.0) • Planning and organising (7.1, 7.3, 7.5)

Staff member   Immediate supervisor   Manager of the body

Example of a job description No. 5

1. Institution: Ministry for Economic Relations and Regional Cooperation

2. Title of work post: Senior Expert Associate for Personnel Affairs and Human Resources

3. Sector/section/service: Department for general and legal affairs

4. No of staff /number of targeted staff: 1/1

5. Title of immediate supervisory work post: Head of Department

6. Title and number of directly and indirectly subordinated work posts and staff members: —

7. Purpose of work post:
Offering support to the work of the Ministry in the area of development and human resources management.

8. Main tasks and responsibilities:

Main tasks and responsibility	Percentage of workload
Preparation of proposed decisions in the scope of labour relations	50%
Keeping records on employed and updating all changes in the personnel records of the Ministry	20%
Preparation of reports on presence of employees at work	10%
Creation of annual leave plans and absence of employees in cooperation with heads of organisations in the Ministry	5%
Preparation of documents for check in and check out of employees	5%
Updating coefficients, past work and other elements for calculation of salaries of employees	5%
Analysis of needs for professional development and creation of training plan for the employees in the Ministry	5%

9. Contacts:

Daily contacts with head of Department and secretary of the Ministry on execution of tasks and monitoring of implemented activities. Contacts are made with all heads of organisations about the absence of employees, training and other records.

External contacts are made with Tax Authority, that information on checking in and checking out of employees are exchanged with. Contacts are made with Civil Service Agency about the trainings and public competition proceedings.

10. Professional profile of staff member
   (education degree, work experience, knowledge, skills and personal features):

Required degree, sort and work experience	7th degree 2 years of experience in human resource management
Required professional knowledge and skills	• Knowledge of regulations that stipulate labour and legal relations • System of civil service • Creation of decisions • Computer literacy
Desirable professional knowledge and skills	—
Priority competences	• Communication (4.0) • Initiative (2.1) • Attention to detail (5.3) • Team work (3.1, 3.4, 3.5)

Staff member   Immediate supervisor   Manager of the body

Example of a job description No. 6

1. Institution: Ministry of Finance

2. Title of work post: Senior Expert Associate for Property

3. Sector/section/service: Legal Affairs Section/Department for property and legal affairs

4. No of staff /number of targeted staff: 1/2

5. Title of immediate supervisory work post: Head of Department – currently vacant post

6. Title and number of directly and indirectly subordinated work posts and staff members: —

7. Purpose of work post:
Collection of data, documentation and keeping of records on the state of immovables of the Ministry of Finance.

8. Main tasks and responsibilities:

Main tasks and responsibility	Percentage of workload
Creation of correspondence regarding launch of appeal and preparation of declarations for RS Public Attorney's Office during court disputes on Ministry's immovables	40%
Collection of data and documentation relating to immovables of the Ministry and preparing information for the RS Government	20%
Preparation of opinions for the Treasury on implementation of price of immovables	15%
Monitoring of implementation of the decision of RS government on immovables and preparation of contract on regulation of property and legal relations through close cooperation with notaries	10%
Preparation of annual reports relating to solved property and legal relations	5%
Creation and submission of report on immovables to fiscal registry of immovables	5%
Keeping records of book-kept values of the Ministry's immovables	5%

9. Contacts:

Daily contacts with Assistant Minister for legal affairs (work post of Head is vacant) about planning issue and implementation of agreed tasks. Besides, contacts are made with heads of Departments that information about purchase, sale and rent of immovables are exchanged with.

External written correspondence is done with Public Attorney's Office on conduct of court proceedings. Data on immovable are exchanged with Republic Administration for Geodesic and Property Affairs, whereas cooperation with other ministries is done on regulation of property and legal relations. Besides, written correspondence is done with notaries when it comes to implementation of contracts as well as with all legal and natural entities that appear as participants/sides in the proceedings of solving property and legal relations.

10. Professional profile of staff member
   (education degree, work experience, knowledge, skills and personal features):

Required degree, sort and work experience	7th degree of professional education 3 years of experience in the work of property and legal affairs
Required professional knowledge and skills	• Knowledge of regulations that stipulate scope of property and legal relations
Desirable professional knowledge and skills	—
Priority competences	• Team work (3.0) • Communication (4.0) • Problem solving skills (2.3) • Effective planning (7.1) • Attention to detail (5.3)

Staff member   Immediate supervisor   Manager of the body

8.0 Guidelines for recruiting and selecting using the competencies

Experience with a range of organisations shows that, when combined with an assessment of knowledge and experience, using competencies improves accuracy in assessing people's suitability or potential for different jobs. They help prevent interviewers and selectors from making hasty decisions or from assessing interviewees on the basis of characteristics that are not relevant to the job.

Once the top priority competencies have been identified it is possible to make plans for a structured competency-based interview. This is the main means of testing whether an applicant possesses the needed competencies to the required exemplary level. The premise of competency based interviewing is that **past behaviour is the best predictor of future performance.**

Competency-based interviews are interviews where each question is designed to test one or more specific competencies. Candidates are asked questions relating to their behaviour in specific circumstances, which they then need to back up with concrete examples. The answer is then matched against pre-decided criteria and marked accordingly. For example, interviewers may want to test a candidate's ability to deal with stress by asking first how the candidate generally handles stress and then asking the candidate to provide an example of a situation where he/she worked under pressure. The interviewers will then dig further into the candidate's examples by asking for specific explanations about their behaviour, seeking supporting (or indeed contrary) evidence. They also give candidates plenty of opportunity to talk. Since the purpose of the interview is to obtain evidence from the candidate it follows that the candidates should do most of the talking. The candidate should be talking for 75% - 80% of the time.

Section 9.0 contains an extensive list of example questions that may be used to seek evidence for each of the core competencies in the framework.

8.1 Preparation

Firstly, take some time to familiarise yourself with the priority competencies to be assessed during the interview. The definitions and positive behavioural indicators are available in the Competency Framework. Ensure you are familiar with the questions in this guide. Decide which of them you will put to the candidates. Also take a look at the possible follow-on probes. You may want to consider adding further probes of your own.

ALL competency-based questions should be determined before you start interviewing and every candidate should be asked the same questions.

Remember the questions are purely a tool to help you to elicit relevant information. Therefore it is most important that you probe deeply around the examples given by a candidate to understand their behaviour and experience. Probing questions cannot be planned in advance as they will depend upon the candidate's response to the previous question.

Part of the interview will be general information gathering and a discussion about their relevant work experience, for example:

"Tell me about the responsibilities you have in your current role"; "Tell me about your experience of planning conferences".

You need to plan these questions too, before moving on to the competency based questions.

8.1.1 Scheduling Interviews

We recommend scheduling one hour to conduct a behavioral interview. The post-interview scoring process usually takes an additional 15 or 20 minutes. If you're planning to conduct multiple interviews in one day, scheduling them 1½ hours apart is usually sufficient.

The following breakdown provides some guidance:

Introductions, explanation of process
5 minutes

Questions about education, experience and required skill 10 minutes

Competency-based questions
40 minutes

Applicant questions and wrap-up
5 minutes

8.2 The questioning structure

Typically, competency based questions will ask candidates for examples of how they have dealt with situations in the past.

The rationale in asking for past examples is that past behaviour is a strong predictor of future behaviour in similar situations.

Hypothetical questions (such as "What would you do if ...") should be avoided as they gather information that is a poor predictor of future behaviour.

Very often a candidate's answer to a question will give you some information but not enough to make an assessment of the competency you are assessing. What is needed then are probing questions to follow up the initial question. The funnel below shows how this can work:

Interviews should follow a clear structure, however the questions should not be followed slavishly as this will interrupt the flow of the interview. It is good practice to explain to the candidate how the interview will be structured, and that you will be asking for specific examples of when they have demonstrated the competencies required for the role. Ask them to bear in mind that you'll be interested in:

Examples from their work life;

Recent examples preferably – the last 2-3 years;

What they individually did or said, not the team as a whole (it's fine if they need time to think of an example).

The questions and probes should be structured as follows:

Situation – What is the example?

Task – Ask them to describe their detailed task.

Action - What did they do?

Result - What was the outcome? How did it go/what would they do differently?

As the panel asks their questions you should make notes, using an interview assessment form. You are looking for evidence that the criteria have been met in the responses to the questions and the examples that candidates give. Be aware that in many instances, applicants answering a question on one competency will provide insight into their proficiency in others as well.

Asking each applicant the same competency-based behavioral questions will ensure a fair evaluation of the applicants on the same set of competencies. Panel members should have the definitions of the competencies in front of them during the interview.
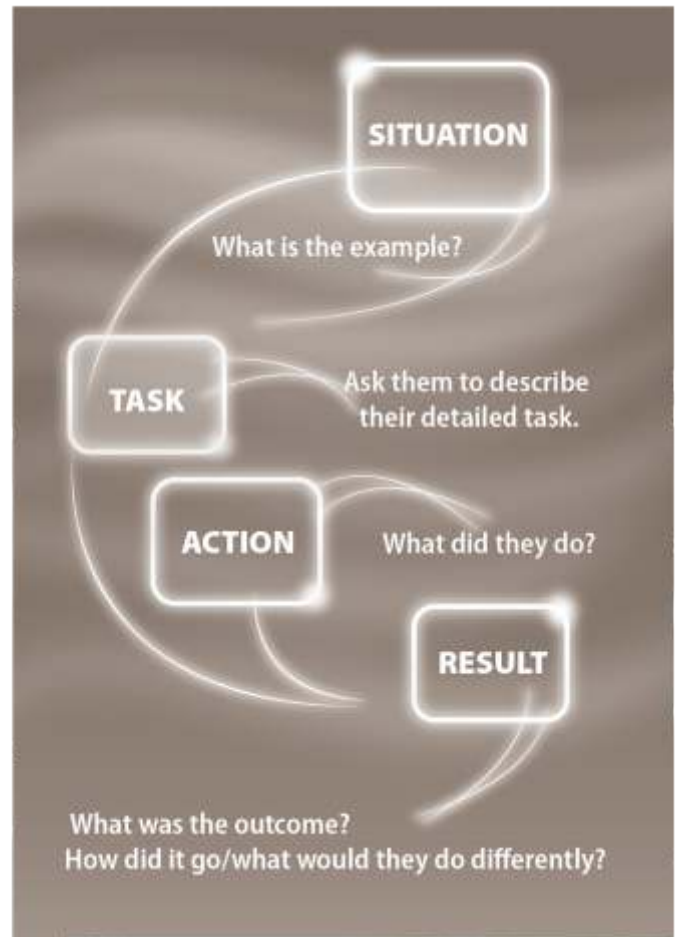

SITUATION
What is the example?

TASK
Ask them to describe their detailed task.

ACTION
What did they do?

RESULT

What was the outcome?
How did it go/what would they do differently?

8.3 Some additional techniques for conducting good competency-based interviews

Attempt to put the applicant at ease – The initial step in any good job interview is to help the applicant feel comfortable in what is usually a stressful setting. Engaging in a few minutes of "small talk" usually breaks the ice. Since many applicants have never participated in a behavioral interview, it is helpful to provide a brief explanation of the process at the beginning of the interview.

Give applicants reassurance if they have trouble recalling specific examples – Some applicants will have a difficult time thinking of specific examples in response to certain questions. Encourage them to take some time to think about the question. Remind applicants with little work experience that examples from their college experience or their personal life are appropriate. If an applicant appears to be stuck on a particular question, offer to ask the next question and come back to this question later in the interview. Often, examples that come up in later questions trigger an example from an earlier one.

Keep the applicant focused on the specifics – Some applicants have a tendency to speak in generalities. Watch for phrases like, "I always," I usually" and I never." Respond by asking for specifics, by redirecting the applicant with phrases like, "We're looking for a specific situation," or "Can you give a specific example of that?"

Keep the applicant focused on what he or she did – Some applicants tend to use the word "we" even when talking about something done individually. Since it is very important to clearly understand precisely what the applicant did, it may be necessary to politely keep reminding the applicant that you are only interested in what he or she did. Offering an explanation of why the applicant needs to use the word "I" usually helps.

Focus the applicants on facts rather than opinions – Some applicants couch their answers in the context of what they believe rather than what they did. If the applicant makes statements such as "Clients are always my top priority," you should respond by asking them to provide a concrete example.

Keep the applicant focused on past behaviors – Even if you ask for a specific example, some applicants may respond as if they were asked a hypothetical question. Simply remind the applicant that you need specific examples from the past.

8.4   Additional guidelines for members of selection committees (including the Chairperson)

Ensure that the whole selection process is carried out in a fair and transparent manner and that recruitment and selection procedures and policy have been followed correctly to avoid any claims of unfair discrimination.

Avoid asking questions related to any protected characteristics, for example; age, gender, nationality or ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, disability, pregnancy or maternity status and marriage.

If references have been received these should mainly be used to confirm factual information such as the applicant's employment and/or academic history and experience.

All panel members should make notes on candidates' answers during interviews to aid decision-making. Notes should be based on the person specification that the interview questions will be framed around. Notes should be an accurate record of what the candidate said or did, **not** the interviewer's inferences or judgments. It is important to separate observation from evaluation.

Ensure that questions are clear and test candidates against the criteria set in the person specification section of the job description and the selected competencies, and that **all** candidates are asked the same core questions.

Ask questions clearly, clarifying and following up with probes where necessary. Probing questions will have to be tailored to the responses received from the candidate. They cannot be scripted in advance.

Allow for silence on tough questions that seek specific detail to allow candidates to consider the question before answering. Put the candidate at ease, let them know they have time and you are expecting an answer.

Seek contrary evidence in your interviews. If the interview is painting a picture of negative past behavior on the job, seek to find evidence of good behavior or performance to get a balanced view of the candidate. The same is true when a candidate seems perfect, perhaps too perfect.

Assess each candidate against the criteria in the person specification and competency descriptions rather than against each other.

Determine whether each candidate is appointable or non-appointable and reach a consensus with the rest of the panel. Interviewers' comments should be supported with evidence gained during the selection process and conclusions must be based on facts not assumptions.

If there is a difference in opinion amongst the panel, reassess the candidates by going back through the person specification and scoring against each criteria again if needed. The final decision must be agreed by all.

Agree, as a panel, the feedback that will be provided to the candidates.

Ensure that the agreed feedback is an accurate and unbiased summary of the reasons for non- appointment and relates specifically to the agreed selection criteria in the person specification.

8.5 Notes for selection committee Chairs (in addition to the guidelines for all panel members)

The Chair of the panel is required to fully participate in questioning. In addition they will control the proceedings, including timekeeping of interviews, as required.

8.5.1 Before the interview:

Work with the institution HR specialist in planning the questions; ensuring that they test candidates' performance against the criteria set in the person specification section of the job description and the selected priority competencies.

Ask panel members to disclose any potential conflicts of interest.

Ask the institution's HR specialist to brief the panel on the requirements of the job if required.

Ensure that all panel members are familiar with the selection process and have all the relevant documents in advance of the interview, and that they have read and understood them.

Decide with the panel who will ask which questions and the order in which they will be asked.

Remind the panel of equality and diversity considerations.

Explain that if references have been received they will not be discussed until after the interviews. If panel members have already had sight of references they should be reminded not to breach the confidentiality of referees by revealing the contents of a reference to the interviewee.

Confirm how, when and by whom candidates will be informed of the outcome.

Arrange for the panel members to meet at least 30 minutes before the first candidate is due to arrive.

8.5.2 Actions during the interview:

Welcome the candidate and introduce panel members.

Explain the overall process to the candidate and that they can expect panel members to take notes.

Ask an opening question designed to relax the candidate and help them to overcome nerves.

Monitor the process and intervene if any panel member asks inappropriate question.

Ensure all questions are competency –based, avoiding hypothetical questions.

Ensure that the candidates have an accurate picture of both the job itself and of the terms and conditions relating to it including providing an opportunity at the end of the interview for candidates to ask any questions and provide any additional information.

Bring the interview to a close by thanking the candidate for their time. Explain the decision-making process and how and when the candidate will be informed of the outcome.

8.5,3 Actions during the decision-making process:

Keep accurate notes of the decision making process, including clear reasons for deeming someone unsuitable.

Ensure that the assessment is carried out in a fair and transparent manner and that recruitment and selection procedures and policy have been followed correctly to avoid any claims of unfair discrimination and rule out any comments or discussions relating to any of the protected characteristics.

To lead the discussion and assessment of panel members; inviting all panel members to give feedback and share their scores on the candidates, finishing with the chair's own feedback.

Provide feedback from any other tests, or invite the HR representative to do so.

Lead the panel in reaching a consensus on whether each candidate is suitable or not and   if required, identifying a rank order acceptable to the panel as a whole.

8.6 Assessing candidates

Immediately after each interview each panel member should consider their notes made during the interview, looking for evidence that the criteria have been met in the responses to the questions and the examples that candidates gave. Based on this they should complete the interview score sheet.

As already mentioned, applicants answering a question on one competency will provide insight into their proficiency in others as well. While you are considering your assessment of one competency, you will find yourself looking back into other parts of your notes to refresh your memory about information relevant to the competency you're currently considering.

It is important that there is no discussion between interviewers at this stage of the process and that each interviewer reviews their notes individually.

Each candidate deserves to be scored carefully, using the same criteria for each applicant. Having the definitions of the competencies in front of the interviewers during the scoring process will help assess proficiency levels. In assessing the proficiency level of the applicant, ask yourself questions such as:

- How recent was the example the applicant described?
- How relevant is the example to the kind of job being applied for?
- How well did the applicant handle the situation described relative to the expectations of our institution?
- How large was the applicant's role in the situation described?
- Was the outcome described by the applicant a desirable one given the circumstances?
- For middle and top-management level positions, what were the impact and scope of the applicant's examples?

Once all interviewers have completed their interview assessment form they can share information and are ready to make a decision.

8.6.1 Final evaluation and selection

At the end of all your interviews you will have amassed a considerable amount of information on each candidate. Your next step will be to consider this information along with their scores. Each candidate should be discussed in turn, assessing their experience, skills and competencies and the performance in any tests or exercises.

Each interviewer will have his/her evidence to bring to the discussion. It is to be expected that panel members will have differences of views about the candidates. Discussions and judgments should be based on discussing the evidence of facts gathered during the selection process. You are not comparing candidates, but deciding from the evidence at interview who best fits the person specification.

If there were many candidates interviewed, you may find it helpful to develop yes (appointable) and no (not appointable) piles. You can then work progressively through your yes pile to eliminate all but the successful candidate or candidates.

A scoring matrix can be used to aggregate all the interviewers scores for all candidates and assist in the decision-making process.

Occasionally applicants present themselves in a way during the interview that raises a 'red flag' such that they disqualify themselves irrespective of their other scores. Examples might include a person who uses inappropriate profanity, who is obnoxiously overbearing, or who is seriously unkempt and disheveled. Some institutions require applicants to complete a writing exercise on the premises when they appear for the interview. If the job requires the ability to write reasonably well, and applicants are unable to demonstrate their ability, they are disqualified from further consideration on that basis alone.

The purpose of an interview is to appoint the best candidate for the job, i.e. the one who most closely matches your original person specification. If none of the candidates are suitable then you should not appoint.

8.7 Assessment Errors

The process of assessment is a difficult and delicate job, yet the success and value of the interview hinges on the quality of these ratings.

Assessment errors occur when an assessor's evaluation is influenced by factors other than the agreed assessment criteria.

8.7.1 Common errors

First impressions: Unconsciously, you may judge an applicant positively or negatively from the outset, resulting in an assessment of the applicant according to your own beliefs rather than according to the qualifications required for the job and their true performance.

Leniency and stringency: These are the general tendencies to assess applicants consistently high (leniency effect) or low (stringency effect). The understanding of the requirements for the job and the qualifications assessed may differ from one assessor to another. The assessment needs to be fair to all applicants. The result of this error is that the assessment of applicants is either higher or lower than warranted.

Central tendency: This is the tendency to use only the middle points of an assessment rating scale, while avoiding the extreme points. You may be reluctant to rate applicants high or low and, therefore, rate all applicants as average, not differentiating among them.

"Halo" and "Horn" effects: These errors involve the tendency to allow one good (halo) or bad (horn) characteristic or qualification influence the evaluation of all other qualifications of an applicant. Committee members need to monitor themselves when they are so impressed by an applicant on one qualification so that they do not attribute positive qualities for all other criteria regardless of the evidence provided. Conversely, when an applicant does poorly in one area, they may be under-rated in other assessed areas.

Contrast effect: This is the tendency to assess an applicant relative to the performance of a previous applicant instead of using the person specification criteria. You have to be aware that you might encounter applicants who will stand out, positively or negatively, and that subsequent applicants may be under- or over-assessed as a result.

Fatigue: This is the tendency among board members to become fatigued during a lengthy interviewing process and to become less consistent or less stringent in their note-taking, listening or application of the assessment criteria.

Stereotypes: This is an error that occurs when your own personal biases and preconceptions of a good employee influence your evaluations. Stereotyping is often based on demographics such as sex, race, ethnicity or age, but can also involve other variables such as degree of education, politics or interests. You must be aware that personal beliefs and perceptions of what is needed for the job may affect evaluations of applicants.

Similar-to-me: This error occurs when an applicant is given more favourable evaluations than warranted because they are similar to the interviewer in some way (e.g., race, sex, age, attitudes or background). The reverse, dissimilar-to-me, can also occur where an applicant is given less favourable evaluations than warranted because of perceived differences.

8.7.2 Tips to minimise assessment errors

Train all interviewers on how to assess applicants.

Document the information that was gathered during the interview and use it as the basis to assess applicants on the qualifications.

Consistently and continually apply your assessment procedure across all applicants. After all applicants have been interviewed, review your assessments for each question to ensure consistent treatment of responses.

When using a rating scale, use it as intended – use the full range of the scale.

Have the decisiveness to allocate a particular rating when warranted by the rating scale.

Try not to place undue weight on isolated incidents.

Consistently justify your assessment by the job requirements, the assessed qualifications and behavioural indicators and the notes that you have taken on the applicant's performance.

Discuss the assessment as a group and question each other's individual assessments.

9.0 Competency based questions and example answers

The following tables provide example questions for each of the competency in the framework. Interviews should focus on testing the **priority** competencies for a particular position, whilst keeping in mind that all competencies are required of all candidates, to at least an adequate level.

For each competency an example of a 'good' answer is provided. (There are however unlimited ways to satisfactorily answer a behavioural question). Often the best answers follow the STAR structure.

As mentioned earlier, the acronym **STAR** stands for:

It provides a structure that results in a meaningful and complete answer. This is how it works:

Step 1 – Situation
In response to your question the candidate must describe a recent challenge or situation that they were confronted with. They need to set the context. It should be concise and informative, concentrating solely on what is useful to their story.

Step 2 – Task
The candidate should describe the task that needed to be accomplished. For example, if the question is about how they were able to deal with a difficult person, the candidate should explain how he/she came to meet that person and why they were being difficult. If the question is asking for an example of teamwork, they should explain the task that they had to undertake as a team and their own responsibility within it.

Step 3 – Action
This is the most important section of the STAR approach as it is where the candidate must demonstrate and highlight the skills and personal attributes that the question is testing. They now need to explain what they did. I addition they should:
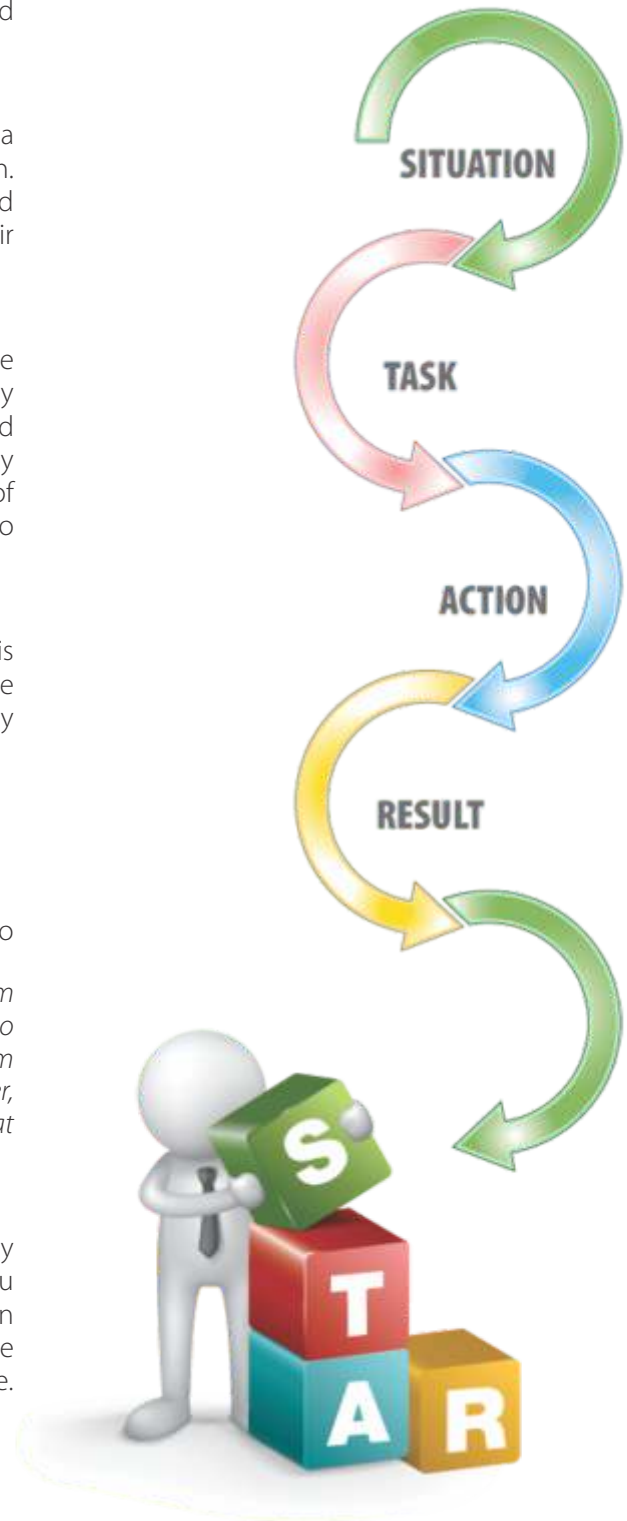
Be personal, i.e. talk about themself, not the rest of the team.
Go into some detail.
Describe what they did, how they did it and why they did it.

For example; when discussing a situation where they had to deal with a conflict they might say:
"I could sense that my colleague was irritated and I asked him gently to tell me what he felt the problem was. By allowing him to vent his feelings and his anger, I gave him the opportunity to calm down. I then explained to him my own point of view on the matter, emphasising how important it was that we found a solution that suited us both."

Step 4– Result
Explain what happened eventually – how it all ended. Ideally they also describe what they accomplished and what you learnt in that situation. They should be able to demonstrate in their answer that they took specific actions because they were trying to achieve a specific objective and not simply by chance.

Competency based questions and example answers
For all civil servants

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.1 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INTEGRITY The application and continuous acquisition of the necessary knowledge, skills and behaviours to achieve high levels of work performance, including the ability to transfer knowledge and experience to others.	How do you keep yourself informed, adopt and apply new knowledge and skills relevant to your professional development?
C.1.1 Continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills necessary for the job Ensures they have the knowledge and skills necessary for the job, takes steps to find out if there are gaps/changes and then addresses them.	Tell me about a time when you realised that you did not have sufficient knowledge or skills to do a part of your job. What did you do? Tell me about a time when you learned something unexpected, which has since proved useful. How do you keep yourself up to date with factors influencing your field of expertise? How do you keep up to date on new developments in your field? What was the last occasion you did this and what was the development? How did this improve the service to your client(s)? How do you keep up-to-date with current legislation and how it impacts on the institution and, more specifically, your job?

Examples of good answers

1. "I realised when I left university that there was a risk that I could soon become out of touch with new developments so I joined my professional association. I also volunteered to give short talks to new students, so the university keeps me up to date too. Out of all of this I have developed a network of colleagues that are always informally passing on new information. As a result, just last month I was able to give technical advice to a commercial developer on a possible construction project."

2. "When I was first promoted to my current position I needed to use some database software that I did not know. Without it I could not carry out the analyses for my monthly reports. I talked with my manager about this but the earliest I could get on a course was three months. So instead I contacted a fellow civil servant in another institution who does the same job as me and asked then if they could coach me through the essentials. Within a week I was able to do what was necessary. Since then I've been on a course and now I coach others on the programme."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.1.2 Commitment to personal and professional development Takes responsibility for personal and professional development, displaying motivation and a commitment to learning and self-improvement.	In the last year what steps have you taken to develop personally or professionally?

Example of a good answer

"More and more of my dealings are with internationals who do not speak our local language. Although we can use interpreters it is still difficult to establish good working relationships. So six months ago I started to study English online on a free website. I have now also just enrolled on a weekly course that I am paying for myself. Already it is making a real difference in how I am able to collaborate with foreigners. There are lots fewer misunderstandings."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.1.3 Knowledge sharing Shares knowledge and information gained with others so they can learn.	When was the last time you shared some new information or learning with any of your colleagues? Tell me how you did this. Give me an example of when someone came to you for help or guidance. Why did they need your support? Tell me of a time when you had to work with someone less experienced than yourself.

Example of a good answer

"In June I was lucky enough to be selected to participate in a study tour to the Netherlands to find out about how the public expenditure management system works there. Upon my return I suggested to my manager that I could run a short information session for all the others in my department. I did this and as a result we have made some changes in our own administration processes. I worked with one of our junior people to coach them on how to apply the new procedures. I've now been asked to give the same talk to another ministry department."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.1.4 Integrity Engenders the trust and respect of others through consistent honesty. Abides by the Civil Service Code of Conduct.	How do go gain the trust and respect of others? Give me a specific example. Describe a situation where you had to deal with an unpleasant or dissatisfied client. Tell me about a time when you showed integrity and professionalism. Tell us about a time when someone asked you something that you objected to. How did you handle the situation? Have you ever been asked to do something illegal, immoral or against your principles? What did you do? When have you had to lie or withhold the facts to achieve your aims? Why did you do so? How do you feel you could have achieved the same aim in a different way? Give me an example of a time when you had to work hard to build up a good relationship with other people (e.g. colleagues / clients). Tell me about a time when you realised that a fellow employee was breaking the rules of your organisation. What did you do?

Examples of good answers

1. "There was a time when my boss fell out with her counterpart in another entity. She refused to talk to him, but our two departments still needed to communicate on various project initiatives. I made contact with the Head of Sector and asked her for a coffee to discuss how we could work together. I think she was suspicious at first but I maintained friendly contact and did everything I could to make our joint activities easy for her and her manager. I made sure I did everything I promised. Later on I told my own manager that communication was good. Eventually she started to communicate directly with her opposite number herself again."

2. "A few years ago I worked in the department that issues business licences. A friend of a friend was planning to start up a business and he was keen to get going. He approached me informally outside of work and asked me to speed up his application and to make it top priority. He offered me €150 if I would do that. I refused and told him that if he asked me again I would have to report him. A few days later his application form passed over my desk. I felt I had to let my boss know that I had a conflict of interest and explained that I knew the applicant and I thought someone else should deal with the application. My boss said that was not possible, but she did agree to check over my assessment to make sure it as fair and justified. The application was eventually passed but no more quickly than otherwise."

3. "I have never withheld lied to achieve my aims. There was a time when I needed some extra time off work for family reasons and I could have lied and said I was sick. Instead I told my manager the truth. I did not get all the time that I needed, but I did get some. I had to change my plans to deal with things."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.2 PROBLEM SOLVING, INITIATIVE AND CHANGE The ability to act proactively and to respond positively, creatively and constructively to changing situations and new demands.	Give us an example of when you took the initiative in your field of work.
C.2.1 Initiative Acts with initiative within his/her scope of work.	Give us an example of a situation where you had to make a decision in the absence of your superiors but knowing you would be judged on your decision. When did you depart from the established policy to accomplish your goal? Which decisions do you feel able to make on your own and which do you require senior support to make? Have you ever gone beyond the limits of your authority in making a decision? If so, please let us about that situation.

Example of a good answer

"There was an occasion a few months ago when my boss was off sick and the Assistant Minister was travelling abroad. I was asked to make a decision about my department's possible involvement in an EU technical assistance project. The decision could not wait for their return. Although I would usually be consulted about such a matter, it would always be my boss who would make the final decision because it meant allocating resources to the project. In making the decision I considered what we had done in similar situations before. I considered the pros and cons of our involvement including our seasonal workload and the level of resource (time, office space, administration etc.) we would have to provide. I consulted with my work team colleagues and also other possible project beneficiaries in other ministries to ask what they thought. I then decided that we should go ahead. I communicated this to the project originator and made careful notes of all the steps I have taken and then emailed them to the Assistant Minister and boss for them to consider upon their return. As soon as they returned I checked with them. Thankfully, they did indeed agree with my decision and the project went ahead."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.2.2 Innovation of new work solutions Develops fresh ideas that provide solutions to workplace challenges; encourages new ideas and innovations; open to change.	Tell us about a situation where you trusted your team to derive a new approach to an old problem. How did you manage the process? Tell us about a time when you had to convince a senior colleague that change was necessary. What made you think that your new approach would be better suited? What is the most difficult problem you have had to resolve in the last 12 months? What made it difficult? What processes did you use to resolve the problem? Who else did you involve? What ideas have you identified to improve the way you work? How were these implemented? Give me an example of when you instigated a major change What initiated the change? How did you manage the impact on people? How did you communicate the changes? What methods do you adopt to elicit new ideas from others? Give me an example of when you changed your working practice to be more efficient. How did you know that an improvement was necessary? What steps did you take? Tell me about an occasion when you developed and implemented a new approach to organisational practices or processes What research did you undertake to inform your approach? What options did you identify? To what extent were you able to bring about change?

Examples of good answers

1. "After re-designing the ministry's website and optimising the homepage for our keyword strategy, the bounce rate for the homepage increased, lowering the numbers of users navigating to other pages, including the enquiries page. This seemed counter intuitive. As the tools available offered no insight into the cause of the increased bounce rate, I was required to think differently when identifying the cause of the problem and therefore, resolve the underlying problem.

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.2.2 Innovation of new work solutions - extension	

I decided to approach the issue from the visitor's point of view, qualitatively, rather than thetraditional quantitative, data driven approach. I requested that members of staff from otherdepartments not specialised in IT or web related work provide feedback on the homepage, providinga better proxy for our client audience. Similarly, I requested the download of a visitor behaviour tool,to allow me to view the actions of visitors when they land on the homepage.

Using the information gained from staff feedback, a common theme was the complaint thatthe website was too promotional and not informative. The keyword strategy had improved the website's ranking in search engines, however qualitatively, it may have been putting off visitors. The data from the visitor behaviour tool also supported this hypothesis. The content on the homepage was restructured in order to keep the optimisation for keywords, while improving the overall informative nature of the page. Subsequently, the website's bounce rate substantially decreased, and thebenefits of the keyword optimisation could finally be seen, leading to increased efficiency".

2. "When addressing improvements for selection and assessment processes at my current organisation, the option of incorporating psychometric testing was raised, and consultants specialising in this field provided a sales pitch, highlighting the benefits and advantages of psychometric testing. Historically, I have been firmly against the use of psychometric testing as a selection process in favour of interviews, being significantly more experienced in conducting interviews. Similarly, I was unconvinced as to the validity of the claims provided by the consultants at the pitch, believing traditional selection procedures to be more effective, cheaper and less stress inducing than psychometric testing.

I decided to read the literature regarding the validity of psychometric testing and otherselection procedures. The peer reviewed research suggested that psychometric testing was the mostvalid predictor of job performance, outperforming interviews and other common selection procedures. Similarly, research suggesting the return on investment and cost saving benefits ofpsychometric test also increased its appeal. Despite my reservations and my own personal opinionof psychometric tests, I recommended to my superior that psychometric testing be used in our next graduate recruitment scheme.

After presenting the peer reviewed research, and convincing my superiors of the benefits ofpsychometric testing, psychometrics were added to the graduate recruitment process for that year.Compared to previous years, graduate staff turnover decreased significantly, HR staff spent less timeconducting interviews and the overall quality of the graduates was notably improved. Although I stillhold reservations regarding psychometric testing, its advantages were clear and my personal biasesdid not interfere with making the correct decision."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.2.3 Creativity Develops creative insights into situations and questions conventional approaches.	Tell us about a project or situation where you felt that the conventional approach would not be suitable. How did you derive and manage a new approach? Which challenges did you face and how did you address them? Give me an example of when you came up with a novel/different approach to a problem/situation. What suggestions did you make? Which ideas were put into practice? What was the outcome?

Example of a good answer

"When attempting to identify why employee turnover was consistently high in a medium sized client agency, the data could not reveal the cause. Employee satisfaction surveys yielded seemingly positive results, few complaints were raised to managers and the pay levels were consistent with the rest of the civil service. However, a large percentage of staff would leave the organisation, well above bench marked averages for the civil service as a whole.

Although my specialty is handling quantitative data, I decided to conduct semi-structured interviews with members of staff outside of normal working hours, and away from the agency's offices. I did not ask the interviewees names, and requested that they remain anonymous to put their minds at ease. The conversations were recorded as to allow qualitative analysis after the interview. This style of research is uncommon at my organisation, and extensive training is provided only in quantitative analysis, and not qualitative analysis. However, since the quantitative data had failed to identify the issue, improvisation was needed.

A common theme in the interviews was that disputes between management and staff were very common. Management would frequently argue or cause disputes with staff, when consultants were not around. They stated that employee satisfaction survey results were exaggerated to avoid conflict with the management, and that employees were too intimidated to raise the issue with the management via complaints. Armed with this knowledge, I was able to facilitate and mediate a meeting between the staff and the management to address this issue. The management team subsequently gave assurances that this behaviour would stop, and began a regular series of meetings in order to foster communication between staff and management. These meetings were a success, and staff turnover rapidly declined, reaching average levels within 12 months."
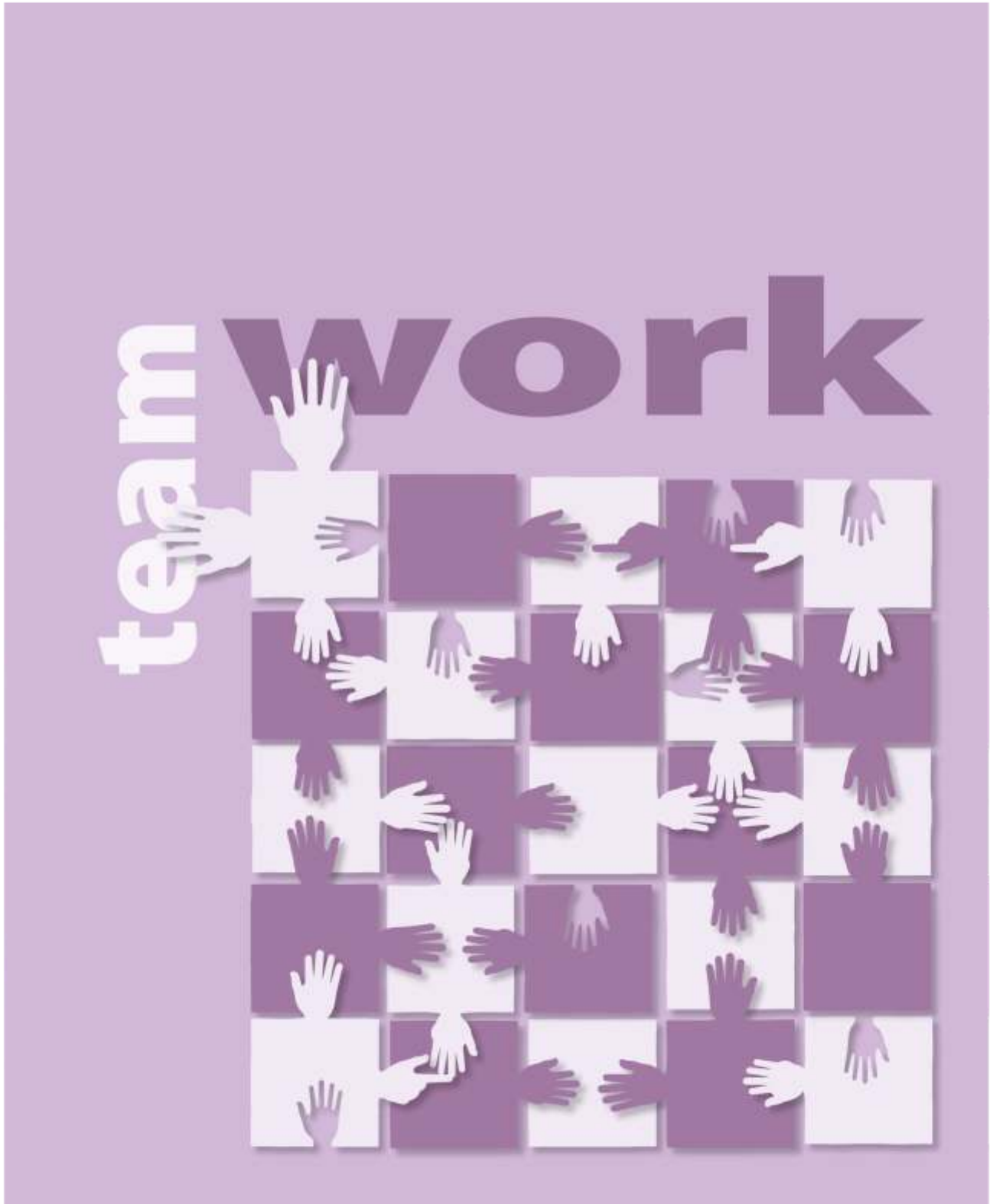
Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.2.4 Problem solving skills Presents not just problems but proposes solutions to issues.	What ideas have you developed and implemented that have impacted on the long-term development of your function? What were the challenges? What was the impact on your function's operation? How did you evaluate the effectiveness of these changes in the long term? What is the most difficult problem you have had to resolve in the last 12 months? What made it difficult? What processes did you use to resolve the problem? Who else did you involve?

Example of a good answer

"I have just introduced a system of monitoring and assessing electronic client feedback which has reduced the time it takes to deal with client service complaints from 9 days to 48 hours. I saw that we were getting a lot of client communications, feedback and complaints via email, but we had not developed any structured method to handle these. In addition we were not using them as an opportunity to learn about our client or to drive process improvement initiatives. I realised very quickly that not only was this an issue for us that I knew I could solve quickly but also I saw the potential to enhance our relationship with our clients.

I completed a business case clearly outlining the benefits of this action. I then set up a project group with the goal to deliver a system of processing and managing these emails. I recruited internally as I wanted to give my team exposure to working on such a project. I put regular reporting in place, ensured that all stakeholders were involved and communicated with. Three weeks after starting the project I lost two team members due to sickness – we were on a very tight deadline and I knew that the success of this project lay in my ability to motivate and manage the team I had. I identified key replacements and revised the plan accordingly so that work would not fall behind. I ensured the team knew what had to be delivered and by when and I got staff buy-in from very early on. During the course of the project I managed the team, rescheduled tasks as required, communicated regularly with all interested parties and ultimately delivered the project successfully.

In summary, I overcame the challenges that emerged and I delivered the new system on time and within budget. As a result of this system my team can address 100% of client service emails within 48 hours and we have reduced the volume of complaints received by 35%."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.2.5 Ability to resolve difficult or complicated challenges Resolves difficult or complicated challenges.	When do you feel that it is justified for you to go against accepted principles or policy? Describe a situation when you came up with a solution to a problem. Tell me about a particularly difficult piece of work you have faced. How did you tackle it?

Example of a good answer

"Soon after taking up my last position I discovered that the average time taken to complete a client refund was 14 days. This was unacceptable and was taking up an excessive amount of agent time and resources. I was tasked with reducing this to 2 days with added benefit of saving time and resources. In addition, we were being flooded with a large volume of client calls and negative feedback by email with questions asking why it was taking so long to compete the refund. This was giving the department a bad reputation. The first thing I did was to create a detailed brief that both analysed the problem and outlined the potential benefits of the newly proposed process. I devised a new process for dealing with refunds and I organised a project team whose task was to implement this new system. I set up a system for internal and external feedback and communication, ensuring that everyone involved was on board and up to speed. I hand-picked four software companies who specialise in the system we needed and after having demonstration and on hands testing, selected our preferred supplier. Throughout the project's entirety, I successful managed the team members, updated and revising project milestones as necessary and in the end delivered a system that performed really well. I overcame various obstacles along the way but I was able to improvise when necessary, and successfully implemented the new system on schedule and under budget. This new system now allows my team to respond to and process client refunds within the 2 day deadline."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.2.6 Helping others with change	Tell us about a time when you had to convince a colleague that change was necessary. What made you think that your new approach would be better suited? Give me an example of when you instigated a major change. How did you achieve that? How did you manage the impact on people? How did you communicate the changes? Tell me how you have accommodated operational change in your unit's activities.

Example of a good answer

"When I was working for a large ministry, we began experiencing difficulties in recruiting adequate numbers of new graduates. The senior officials held particularly traditional mind-sets with regards to attracting and recruiting staff. As a result, they were not readily keen to adopt some of the more innovative methods of employer branding, such as social media. The senior management team has been leading the ministry for a long time, and were very reluctant to make any changes. I needed to highlight the importance of employer branding to the senior officials, as their traditional passive approach was leaving the ministry relatively unknown to graduates. Similarly, I needed to overcome resistance to change from the middle management team, and prevent hard-liners from aggressively preventing the change in status quo.

During a meeting with the senior officials, I explained why employer branding has become a major issue in recent years, and highlighted top examples of organisations turning round due to good employer branding. Similarly, I proposed using innovative new technologies such as social media in order to reach prospective candidates, and express employer branding. I also recommended the development of a specialised, graduate recruitment website, which could serve as a poster for the company's recruitment scheme.

Although initially hesitant and sceptical, the management team eventually admitted that their current, passive approach was likely the cause of the recruitment schemes failings, and agreed with my proposal. The adoption of social media based advertising, a recruitment scheme website and an official employer branding strategy was implemented, providing the ministry with a healthy surplus of graduate applicants to their recruitment scheme, with a ratio of applicants to vacancies of 10:1."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.3 TEAMWORK The ability to work well in groups and teams, to cooperate with other members and to contribute through active participation in order to achieve collective goals.	Tell me about the last time you worked as part of a team. What did you do? How do you ensure that every member of the team is allowed to participate? Give me an example of how you dealt with a conflict in your team. Do you incline more to individual or team work? Please give us an example.
C.3.1 Building constructive working relationships Builds constructive working relationships through cooperation, acceptance and respect for others.	Tell me how you went about building an effective working relationship with a colleague/team. What effect did your actions have on the success of the team? How did you know? How do you build relationships with other members of your team? Give me an example of a time when you had to work hard to build up a good relationship with other people (e.g. colleagues / clients).

Example of a good answer

"I was transferred to a new project at my previous job to replace a beloved member of the team. My new team leader exhibited hostility towards me and I found myself left out of vital communications and meetings. After a few weeks, I was able to talk her into a one on one meeting. When laid out all of the key objectives for the team, the previous employees role in meeting those objectives, and then discussed goals that I could set to make sure I was able to serve as a quality replacement. In our discussion, we also identified a few underlying issues with management that she had been carrying around with her. In uncovering all of these sentiments, she was able to clearly define her situation and achieve an understanding with her supervisors. In the end, the entire team morale improved, I was able to exceed my goals and the department itself became more efficient from our teams increased performance."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.3.2 Facilitating teamwork Promotes cooperation and commitment within a team to achieve goals and deliverables.	How did you encourage other team members to co-operate? Give me an example of when you helped improve the performance of your team. What improvement did you identify? How did this improve team performance? How do you ensure that every member of the team is allowed to participate?

Example of a good answer

"We have a monthly departmental planning meeting. After a few meetings I noticed that not everyone was contributing and very often the same people would stay quiet. I spoke to my boss and suggested that the chairmanship of the meeting should rotate so that we all take a turn. She agreed and asked me to propose it at the next meeting. I did this and it was accepted. We also devised some 'meeting standards' to help the chairperson manage the meeting. That was nine months ago and since then we have all chaired at least one meeting. The general level of participation in meetings has improved too."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.3.3 Helping others resolve conflicts Helps others resolve complex or sensitive disagreements and conflicts.	Describe a time when you had to win someone over, who was reluctant or unresponsive. Give us an example where you worked in a dysfunctional team. Why was it dysfunctional and how did you attempt to change things? Give an example of a time when you had to deal with a conflict within your team? What did you do to help resolve the situation? How do you bring difficult colleagues on board? Give us an example where you had to do this Give me an example of a difficult people situation that you have had to handle within your team. Tell me about a time when you found it very difficult to get the agreement of others to an important proposal. How did you tackle this?

Example of a good answer

1. "I like to motivate people by complementing their strengths. It really depends on the person and the situation. At a past job, I once worked with a guy who never pulled his own

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.3.3 Helping others resolve conflicts -extension	

weight. Consequently, he was holding me up because I would have to rely on him to complete certain tasks. So when I needed him to drop everything he was doing and get something done for me, I would stop by his desk, chat about some of his personal interests to break the ice. Then I would talk about the company and drop subtle hints about his abilities and that he was under appreciated and that he was the only one who could help me. It worked every time and he always helped me get my job completed on-time."

2. "When I was a student I worked part-time in a shop. On one occasion two of my fellow co-workers engaged in a dispute regarding who had been entitled to commission on recently sold items. The commission gained from this sale would have exceeded £150, and the true recipient of the commission was not immediately clear.

Both co-workers claimed that the sale was theirs, and therefore, were solely entitled to the sales commission. In order to prevent this incident escalating into a heated argument, and potentially putting off clients, I needed to intervene. I took the two co-workers off the shop floor in order to prevent putting off clients and listened to each co-worker individually. I then searched for objective evidence to the co-workers claims, including payment details, client records and CCTV footage.

Using this evidence, I had come to the conclusion that both co-workers had participated equally in this sale. I brought this to the attention of our line manager, and I recommended to all parties that the commission be shared equitably. Both co-workers and our line manager agreed to share the sales commission between the two co-workers.

Upon my request, store policy was subsequently changed following my intervention, allowing multiple employees to receive commission for the same sale if multiple individuals participated. This new style of commission has led to decreased conflict within the team, and has encouraged a more collaborative culture in the shop."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.3.4 Respecting different viewpoints, and orientations Respects different viewpoints and welcomes diversity.	How do you ensure that every member of the team is allowed to participate? Tell me about a time when you had to work closely with someone from a different social background, race, culture, or belief-system to yours. What were the challenges? How did you deal with them?

Example of a good answer

"I used to work for as a liaison officer for NATO. As such I came into regular contact with people from a wide range of people from different European cultures and the USA. They also came

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.3.4 Respecting different viewpoints, and orientations - extension	

from different social backgrounds and sexual orientations. For a period of about six months I worked with a Dutch lady who made no secret of the fact that she was gay. I just made myself focus on the job in hand rather than on her beliefs and orientation. It truly made no difference to the job we had to do together. In fact eventually we became friends. One of the other challenges was that she was extremely direct when she talked with people. I was okay with this but some of my other colleagues considered this as rudeness and became offended, so I explained to them that this was just the Dutch way. I also decided to talk with my Dutch colleague about this. When I did so, she said she had not realised the effect she was having. As a result she tried to soften her approach. This seemed to help build relationships and the team started to work more smoothly together."

C.3.5 Ability to cooperate with other teams

Builds and maintains constructive and productive relations with other teams and their members.

Give me an example of when you have identified an opportunity to enhance a service by collaborating with another team. How did you identify that this was an opportunity? What was your role in developing effective partnership working?

Give an example of when you have lead a team on a major project. How did you gain support for this activity beyond your immediate team?

Describe a time when you have had to enlist the help of another department or group to complete a piece of work.

Example of a good answer

"My department was the main counterpart in a project to improve aid coordination across all levels of government and with all members of the donor community. There were several other institutions that needed to get involved if it were to succeed. I already knew one of the senior players so I asked her to write and email of introduction to all of the other key stakeholders. I then followed this up with a telephone all and another email explaining the benefits from their point of view, plus the vision and goals of the project. I invited all of them to a meeting where everyone's ideas were requested and recorded. Afterwards we went to a restaurant for a meal. I also arranged for other members of my team to visit their opposite numbers in the other teams. Very soon we had a good formal and informal network of stakeholders set up. We then set up a quarterly Donor Coordination Committee (DCC) to which all of the donor representatives were invited. Although the project has now finished, the DCC is still working well, and donor aid is now being focused more productively. "

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.4 COMMUNICATION The ability to communicate effectively both orally and in writing with managers, colleagues, clients and citizens, conveying information clearly, accurately and in a timely manner to relevant individual and groups.	Tell us about an occasion when your communication skills made a difference to a situation? What is the worst communication situation that you have experienced? Tell us about a situation when you failed to communicate appropriately. Tell me about a particularly difficult message that you had to communicate to an individual or group. What steps did you take to ensure the message was clear? How did you ensure the message was understood?
C.4.1 Tactfulness Has patience and uses good judgment in communication, keeping polite behaviour in all interactions.	Please describe a situation where you've been tactful. Can you please describe a situation where you've been diplomatic? Describe a situation when someone has irritated you. How did you respond? Tell me about a situation when someone was very slow to respond to a request of yours. How did you deal with it?

Example of a good answer

"I was working as a receptionist at a leisure centre, and I had to deal with a member who was not happy with one of the centre's rules. This rule did not allow children under 10 years to swim without an adult. Yet she wanted to leave her 7-year-old son with us to swim while she went shopping. It was difficult because she became angry when I did not want to sell her a swimming ticket for her son.

I clearly explained the rule regarding children under 10 years requiring adult supervision in the pool. I explained that this rule was there to ensure children's safety, as the centre did not have the facilities to be able to look after young children swimming without an adult. I did suggest that she could leave her son in the centre's supervised play area, and that she could go swimming with her son once she returned. The woman calmed down, and agreed to leave her son in the play area.

If I had not explained the reason behind the rule, or offered her an alternative, the woman would probably have felt that the centre was unreasonable and not client-friendly. She might have cancelled her membership. She might also have asked to speak to the centre manager. She would no doubt have done so if I had been impatient with her, or changed my tone and become rude."

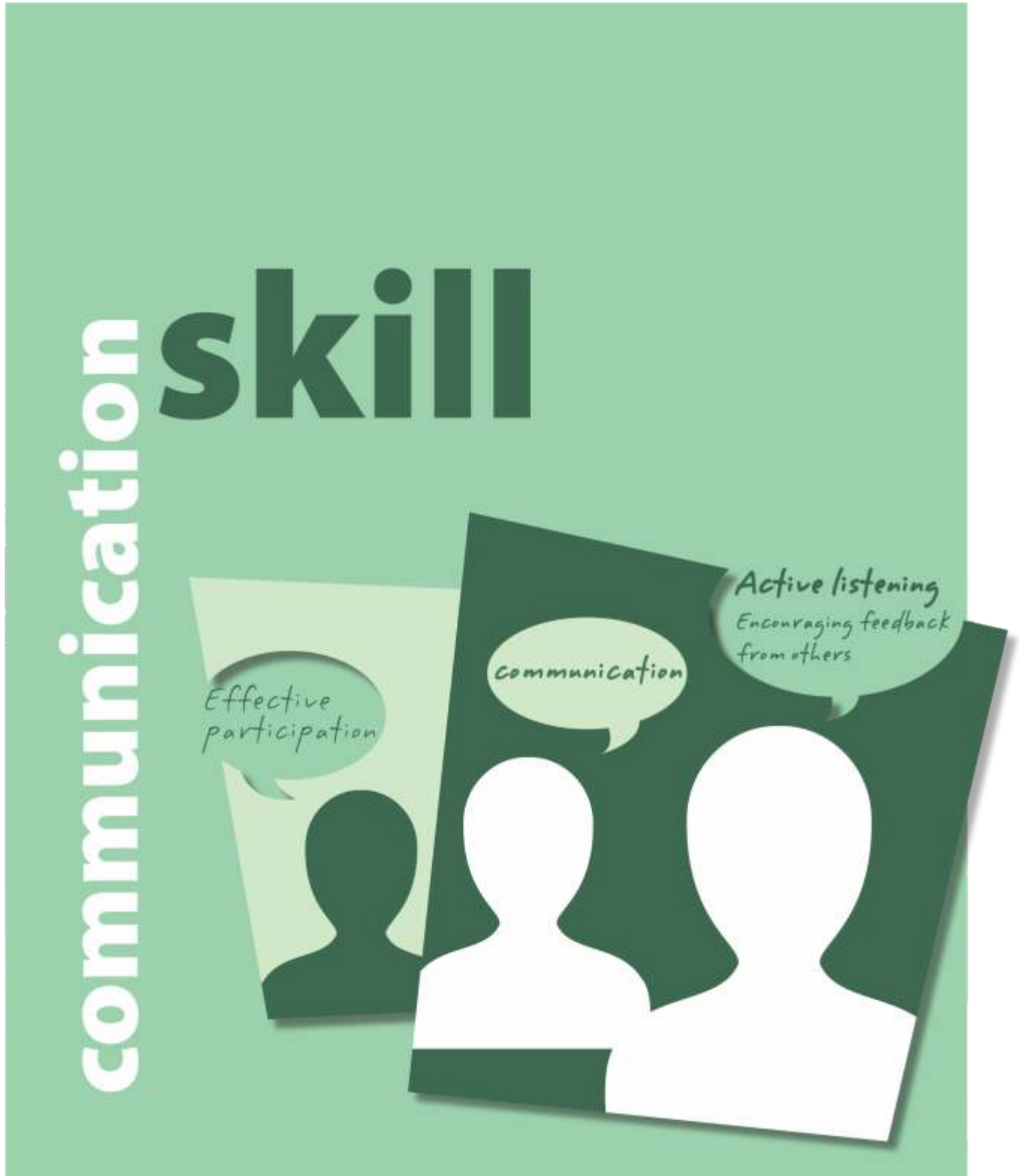| Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.4.2 Clear conveying of ideas, facts and instructions Conveys ideas, facts and instructions, - orally or in writing - with clarity, using language the audience will best understand.	Describe a situation where you had to explain something complex to a colleague or a client. Which problems did you encounter and how did you deal with them? What type of writing have you done? Give examples please. What makes you think that you are good at it? How do you feel writing a report differs from preparing an oral presentation?

Example of a good answer

1. "I used to work in the planning department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. We were intending to authorize the construction of a major industrial park. It was my responsibility to write and present the tender guidelines. We had to make sure that all of the legal and technical requirements were stipulated. The tenders had to consider the geographical, geological, financial, logistical, demographic and economic aspects of the project. I prepared a written guideline document which included indexed section on all these aspects. It provided step-by-step instructions with reference to annexes with core data, tables, diagrams, illustrations and photos. This was supplemented by a PowerPoint presentation that I delivered in person and a seminar and in a slideshare version posted online. Finally I set up a telephone enquiry line for potential contractors, to answer and queries. The result was that all of the tenders met the submission criteria and none were rejected on administration grounds. This enabled the selection panel to make a valid judgment based upon the widest range of options. The decision was made speedily as a result, without further investigations being required."

2. "In my academic career I had to write several research papers. The most recent one I wrote was on whether zero-tolerance policies about drugs in high schools are reasonable. To answer this question, I went to several high schools and interviewed their principals or top-level employees. I also interviewed students and parents. I visited the health department to gather data. Finally, I conducted the remainder of my research on the Internet. As a result, I gained perspective from every group this topic would affect."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.4.3 Active listening Listens, understands and learns from what others say.	Give us an example where your listening skills proved crucial to an outcome. Tell us about a time when you were asked to summarise complex points.

Example of a good answer

""When I presented my senior research in university, I was questioned by the members of my departmental professors as a panel. My grade was determined largely on my ability to answer the questions effectively and smoothly, which depended very much on my ability to listen carefully to what was being asked. I had seen other students slip up when they misunderstood what the panel was asking because they didn't listen well enough. I succeeded in listening carefully and did well on my presentation. I received a very good grade."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.4.4 Encouraging feedback from others Encourages information feedback from others and offers it to other parties.	Describe a situation when you have sought feedback from your clients (internal or external). Why did you seek this feedback? How did you gather the information? How did you use it to improve services? Tell me about an occasion when you had to adapt to a major change Why was it important? How did you adapt? How did you use feedback to improve your work?

Example of a good answer

""Our institution is responsible for providing training to civil servants. I often have to deliver training courses myself. Although we always ask trainees to fill in post-course evaluations I felt that sometimes there is insufficient information to know how to improve my delivery. So I decided that after every course I ask our administrator to make a telephone call to a random sample of participants to ask them how the training could be improved. On one occasion a number of people said that there had been too much presentation and not enough group activity. I then redesigned the course to increase activity levels. The next time the feedback was much more positive and I even received several complimentary emails from participants."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.4.5 Customizing the style communication to environment Adaptive communication style. Changes the communication approach and style to meet the preferences and needs of the audience.	Demonstrate how you vary your communication approach according to the audience that you are addressing. Describe a situation where you had a disagreement or an argument with a superior. How did you handle it? Describe an occasion when you needed to adopt a particular approach to get agreement from others. Have you ever had to modify your personal communication style to achieve results with a difficult individual or group? Tell me how you did this.

Example of a good answer

1. "I used to work as a science teacher at the university. One term I had a class of 30 Korean undergraduate students with advanced to beginner level of English abilities. My challenge was therefore to teach a non-language subject to a wide range of English abilities in a graduate level class. I therefore taught with visual methods using PowerPoint, class presentations, and group work, so that the more proficient students could help the others. All students improved their own language ability and were comfortable communicating to myself along with their peers at the end of the term."

2. " I do remember a small disagreement. I received an email from my boss telling me that he wanted me to stop the work I was doing on my project and give it to a co-worker. He wanted me to start on a new project immediately. I had spent two and a half weeks on this project and I only had three days left. I really wanted to finish this and it didn't make sense for me to hand this project over to someone else. So I put some thought into it, went over to my boss's office, and asked him why this project couldn't wait three days. He made his argument and I still didn't agree. We discussed this for a while and we compromised by having someone help me finish the project I was working on so I can have some time to kick-start the next project. I learned that it only takes simple dialogue and a little compromise to overcome a disagreement."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.4.6 Effective participation at meetings Conducts and/or participates in meetings and group discussions efficiently and with structure.	Tell me about an important meeting you have led or participated in. How did you prepare? What did you do during the meeting? Tell me about the most difficult meeting you have led/participated in. Why was it difficult? How did you deal with it?

Example of a good answer

"I was asked to chair a strategy review meeting for the agency. First I consulted with the chief about the time and location of the meeting and the discussion topics. Based on this I put together a timed and prioritised agenda. I sent this out two weeks before the meeting with all of the supporting documentation. I thought about the best layout for the room and arranged that. I arranged for a secretary to take the minutes. At the meeting I made my opening remarks, reminding everyone of the purpose of the meeting, and of the groundrules we would work to. I then handed over to the first contributor (I had agreed this with this person beforehand). As well as managing the agenda timing I tried to be conscious of the dynamics of the group, making sure that everyone contributed but that no-one dominated. I remained neutral myself, but tried to help the others to reach conclusions by raising questions and summrising at key stages. I made my own notes of action points as the meeting proceeded and at the end I checked that these were correct and made sure that every action had a named person responsible for it, as well as a timeline. We agreed a date for our next meeting. Afterwards I made sure that the minutes went out within two days. Everyone seemed happy with the result. My boss thank me afterwards for a job well done."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.5 PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS AND RESULTS ORIENTATION Performing consistently at a high level. Achieving goals and continuously improving the quality of service to citizens, clients and other civil service functions and institutions.	Tell me about a time when you have had to meet challenging client needs. Give me an example of where you found it necessary to change a process to meet client needs. What has been your biggest work achievement this year? How did you make it happen? Tell me about a time when you were able to improve a service to a client or another department.
C.5.1 Focusing on results and desired outcomes Focuses on results and desired outcomes and how best to achieve them. Produces good quality outputs with little oversight, on time.	When did you depart from the established policy to achieve results and the expected outcome. Describe a project or situation where you took a project to completion despite important opposition. Describe an occasion when you have had to deliver a complex project on time and to budget. What were the objectives? What key stages did you work through? How did you get people on board? What were the difficulties you had to overcome? What obstacles do you encounter and how do you overcome them to achieve your objectives? What do you do to deliver your unit's goals? Tell me of a challenging goal you have set yourself. How do you organize your day-to-day workload? What tools or methods do you use? How does this take account of interruptions and changes to your plans? Give an example of when you have set a deadline and were unable to achieve it. What issues did you anticipate? How did you plan for these? What was the result? What if anything would you do differently next time? Tell me about a time in which you were required to produce something to a high standard, within a fixed period of time. Give me an example of where you found it necessary to change a process to meet client needs. Tell me about a time when you didn't meet an objective /deadline.

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.5.1 Focusing on results and desired outcomes - extension	

Example of a good answer

1. "During my final year of university, I conducted a quantitative research project on consumer brand loyalty and client satisfaction. My project received an undergraduate research grant from the organisation of which I conducted my research in. In order to provide valuable information to the organisation financing my research project, and maintain my grade average of over 70%, I was required to conduct high quality research, within the project deadline of 4 months, and achieve a grade result of 70% or above. Simultaneously, I was required to continue with my part time job, volunteering activities and assignments for other courses. To ensure that a high quality project was produced prior to the deadline, I first attended additional training in quantitative research methodology, I attended a short course in academic writing in business, and I conducted a pilot study prior to my main project in order to gain preliminary data. Despite a heavy workload and significant pressure, my undergraduate project received a grade of 75%, and was published in the journal of consumer marketing. The organisations which provided the research grant incorporated the findings of my project in their overall marketing strategy and offered me a 7 week paid internship at their company."

2. "During my final year at university I failed to deliver my dissertation on the due date. This was because I was heavily involved in cutting-edge research right up until the end of my course and was waiting for imminent results from surveys being undertaken by researchers at other academic institutions.

Considering this was my final piece of academic work, I wanted to ensure it was based on the most accurate and up-to-date sources of information available, even if this meant a delay in production. To ensure no marks were deducted from my dissertation, I contacted my course director and personal tutor two weeks before my dissertation due date to discuss my particular situation. I argued my case, and was consequently allowed an extra two weeks to produce my work.

Although my work was delayed, I feel that this delay was justified in that the work was of the highest quality it could be. Furthermore, I sufficiently organised myself in relation to my department and tutors, so that all relevant people were aware of a possible delay in the production of my dissertation."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.5.2. Building and maintaining client and citizen satisfaction Builds and maintains client and citizen satisfaction with the services offered by meeting or exceeding their expectations.	Describe a time when you exceeded a client's expectations. How did you know you had exceeded? What did your actions achieve? Describe a situation where you had to deal with a dissatisfied client. How did the client respond to the actions you took? What did you do to ensure that the situation did not occur again with other clients? Give us an example of when you have initiated the development of working relationships with external partners to improve the quality of service. Describe a key client relationship you have built. Describe a time when you were really satisfied with the service you had given to a client. Tell me of an occasion when a client has commented on service you provided.

Example of a good answer

"My role as project manager was to ensure that projects are completed on time and on budget. My last project involved combining three office spaces into one. With a tight deadline of 90 days and dealing with multiple contractors from different companies, I knew it was going to be a struggle to complete the job in time. I set the goal of having everything completed within 80 days to give us 10 days at the end to make final corrections.

By dividing all the different contractors into three main teams and having three project managers controlling the three teams, I was able to create a more efficient and effective work timetable and ensure that downtime was kept to a minimum.

As a result of this more efficient working time we completed the job on time and reduced costs by 15%. This new way of dividing contractors into smaller teams has now been implemented into standard work procedure and seen a reduction in overall costs."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.5.3 Paying attention to detail Pays attention to detail and produces accurate results.	Describe a time when you have made a mistake and the subsequent actions that you took. Tell me about a piece of work you produced where accuracy was essential. Give me an example of the ways you check the accuracy of your work. Tell me of a time when you have felt it necessary to consult with others for more detail.

Example of a good answer

"I was involved in the drafting of a new regulation for recruitment and selection in the civil service. I had to incorporate all of the inputs from the legal experts and the human resources specialists into a final document that would then be submitted to the government. Some of the experts were foreign consultants not working in their first language. I therefore double-checked all of the translation. I also asked our own legal specialist to check that all of the terminology was correct. I then asked two of my team members to proof-read the document for typographical errors. The result was that no administrative corrections were required to the drat and it was able to proceed through the ratification process without delay."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.5.4 Efficient management of time and resources Improves productivity by managing time, priorities and resources to achieve goals and secure value for money..	Give an example of when you have set a deadline and were unable to achieve it. What issues did you anticipate? How did you plan for these? What was the result? How do you currently ensure that you manage your resources effectively? How do you consider costs to the organisation? What environmental factors do you take into account? What factors do you need to take into account when planning your budgets? How do you plan your organisation's expenditure? How do you ensure you keep to your budget? Is there anything you can do to improve your financial forecasting?

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.5.4 Efficient management of time and resources -extension	Explain how you have introduced changes to product /processes /services in your team/ department. Tell me about a time when you had to consider existing/ conflicting workloads, when planning a task/event/project. Tell me of a time when you have had to re-prioritise in response to changing requirements/strategic needs. In your current job, how do you manage your time and workload to achieve your objectives?

Example of a good answer

1. "My work involves a range of admin tasks with different time frames. Management gives us dates for completion. Most tasks are either 48 hours, or a week, for routine matters. The exceptions are urgent jobs, which have to be done ASAP. These timeframes are also the required performance standards. I prioritize my work so that I can keep track of due dates and stay organized. I set my own time of completion 24 hours before the due date, and work systematically. I do urgent matters immediately. I revise schedules if necessary, but I meet the performance standards every time."

2. "During my internship, two fellow interns suddenly dropped out of the programme without notice. Our task was to conduct challenging client work, helping a major agency form a communications strategy, before the end of the first 4 weeks of the internship. The loss of the two interns put the team in a precarious position, as everyone in the team had already been allotted specific responsibilities. Naturally, my aim was to gain valuable experience from my internship and to highlight my skills and abilities to the institution. Although the institution offered to decrease the group's workload, I convinced the team and our employers to provide us with the responsibilities of the vacated interns. I redesigned the teams' work schedules, allocated new responsibilities evenly across the team while keeping our current responsibilities. Similarly, I personally undertook two extra hours of work per day, unpaid. The team and I contributed significantly to the agency's communication strategy, which has been credited with improving the agencies standing with businesses. Due to our extra effort, the loss of the two interns did not inhibit the team's performance. Following the first 4 weeks of my internship, I was promoted to lead intern, a newly created job title to reward my efforts during the prior 4 weeks".

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.5.5 Effective decision making Makes timely, informed decisions that take into account the facts, goals, constraints and risks.	What big decision did you make recently. How did you go about it? What is the decision that you have put off the longest? Why? When is the last time that you have refused to make a decision? Tell me about it. Tell us about a situation where you made a decision too quickly and got it wrong. What made you take that decision? Which constraints are imposed on you in your current job and how do you deal with these? Tell me about a time when you took responsibility for making a key decision What was the decision? How did you defend your decision? Tell me of a time when you have had to manage a risk. Tell me of a time when you have felt it appropriate to call on others before making a decision. Tell me of a time when you have had to justify a decision you have made.

Example of a good answer

"When recruiting for additional staff I was ultimately responsible for the selection decision.

Traditionally, informal interviews have been used to select members of staff, with few other additional selection stages. Naturally, personal biases, opinions and gut feelings cannot be relied upon when selecting future employees and relying on objective selection procedures is essential, which led my decision to adopt a more rigorous selection process for these candidates. This new selection procedure included an assessment centre incorporating numerous exercises, psychometric tests and a structured, competency based interview.

When conducting interviews with candidates, a strictly structured competency based interview format was used to keep the interview processes reliable. Assessment centre exercises were conducted fairly, giving each candidate equal analysis and evaluation. Psychometric testing was used in conjunction with other selection procedures, giving a holistic view of the candidate's. Personal biases were intentionally ignored, and recorded evidence was used to make the final selection decision.

The selected candidate has continued to show exceptional ability and work ethic throughout their employment, with both co-workers and managers are extremely satisfied with my selection decision. Similarly, other departments are following suit, adopting the structured

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.5.5 Effective decision making - extension	

competency based interview format for their selection procedures, along with other objective selection tools.

Subsequently, staff turnover markedly decreased and the quality of new hires has universally Improved."

C.5.6 Analytical thinking

Applies analytical thinking by breaking a situation into smaller pieces, tracing the implications of a situation in a step-by-step way. Organises the parts of a problem in a systematic way, making comparisons of different aspects and causal relationships.	Give me an example when you have collected and analysed complex data to inform your decision-making? What approach did you take to analysing the data? What were the key issues you identified? How confident were you with the decisions made?
	What management data or information do you collect and monitor to inform your future plans and/or policies. How do you use the data?
	Describe an occasion when you have had to deliver a complex project on time and to budget. What were the objectives? What key stages did you work through? How did you get people on board? What were the difficulties you had to overcome?
	Tell me how you have handled a large task.
	Give an example of a time when you had to gather and interpret information for a particular purpose.
	Tell me about a time when you had to analyse some information and how you came to your conclusions.

Example of a good answer

"I had to give a marketing presentation while attending university. The project was about Mercator Group. We were assigned to report on key management personnel (CEO, Chairman of the Board, key executives), divisions and subsidiaries, major products/brands/services, key financials for the most recent year (sales revenue, expenses, total income, net income, sales growth or loss for the last year), market share, key competitors, mission statement, product positioning, and number of employees. Among the steps I took were visiting the company's biggest Sarajevo branch to interview employees and gather visual aids for the project. I spent a lot of time organizing and writing the presentation. I compared the company's strategy and results to some other major regional retailers. Then I spent time reviewing my speech over a period of several days. As a result, I was calm while giving the presentation and received an "A" for the project. The one additional step I perhaps wish I'd taken would have been to talk to some consumers and customers about the company's service and products."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.5.7 Ability to work under pressure Keeps composure in stressful or adverse situations.	Describe a situation where you had to deal with an angry client. Describe a situation where you had a disagreement or an argument with a superior. How did you handle it? Describe a time when pressures threatened your ability to work effectively. Tell me about an occasion when you felt under pressure. Tell me of a time when interruptions from others have affected your work. Describe when a colleague let you down. How did you respond?

Example of a good answer

"Recently the number of workers in our department was cut and as a result the amount of work I was given nearly doubled. I was asked by my manager to work overtime, and I managed to work efficiently and in a professional manner during a busy and stressful time. I showed efficiency and professionalism in spite of the stress. I manager commended me for coping so well".

Competency based questions and example answers
Managerial competencies

leadership

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.6 LEADERSHIP Motivating people to achieve high performance in working towards the team and organisation's goals.	Tell me how you manage your top team. Tell us about a situation where you had to get a team to improve its performance. What were the problems and how did you address them? Tell me about a time when you were less successful as a leader than you would have wanted to be. Give an example of when you have led a team on a major project. How did you gain support for this activity beyond your immediate team? How did you ensure your people were engaged and motivated to perform? How did you measure success?

Example of a good answer

"When I was at ABC Company, we went through some company-wide lay-offs. The team of five that remained in the department had to absorb the duties of the two that left. As a result, people were overworked and morale suffered. At the same time, more mistakes were being made because attention was so scattered. As the manager, it was my job to get performance back on track

I scheduled a meeting of the full team to discuss strategies.I communicated my appreciation for all of their hard work during a challenging time for the company. I asked for their assistance in identifying ways for us all to be more efficient –including me.! I made it clear that this was a brainstorming meeting to come up with options — that no idea was stupid and that it was a safe environment for making suggestions.We spent an hour capturing ideas on a white board, then voted on the five with the most potential. I then assigned each person to do more research on how we might implement one of the ideas

First of all, the team responded very positively to this approach. They loved the idea of being empowered to help find a solution. Instead of complaining, they channeled their energy in a more productive way once they knew that they would be heard. Really quickly we came up with two ideas that could be implemented rapidly and save us a lot of time. One idea was to eliminate a weekly report. This freed up 8 hours each week — including two hours of my time and three hours for my top account manager. Another was to train our administrative assistant, to take on some of the tasks that were burdening our account managers.We also decided to incorporate brainstorming and idea evaluation into our staff meetings each month. We are now more efficient and morale is way up. My boss even asked me to help him roll this process out to the other departments in our division."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.6.1 Translating strategic goals to everyday work Links vision, values, goals and strategies to everyday work.	Describe how you have communicated the vision/ goals of the organisation to your team. Give me an example of how you have managed the concerns of your team during times of uncertainty/change. Tell me how your unit's strategy fits with organisational goals and values.

Example of a good answer

"I was a head of department at the city's university. Our vision was to be a civic university with a reputation for academic excellence. Our goals were to be in the top 10 regional universities for both teaching and research, and to be financially and environmentally sustainable. As a middle ranking manager I reinforced the vision and goals by linking employee appraisals with them, and breaking down the institution's goals to departmental goals and individual targets and key performance indicators. I also continually challenged activities and behaviours that did not contribute to those goals. For example one of my staff members wished to attend a conference in New York. As the subject matter was also going to be freely available in an online video soon afterwards I did not consider the request either financially or environmentally sustainable. I therefore turned it down. In contract I actively publicized positive examples of activities and behaviours that contributed to our goals. As a result all of our departmental targets were met or exceeded."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.6.2 Creating positive work environment Creates a positive work environment where staff are motivated to do their best.	Give me an example of how you have used your leadership skills to manage and improve team performance. How did you get team buy in? How did you handle any difficult situations that arose amongst the team? Describe a change where you had to drive a team through change. How did you achieve this?

Example of a good answer

"When I worked with the bank during the recession, redundancies happened often. My team had to absorb the duties of other employees that had been let go, while still facing the possibility of being laid off themselves. Consequently, we were working around the clock and morale was low. Since the members of my team were very busy and working overtime, mistakes were being made. As the team leader, I was responsible for maintaining optimal performance and rebuilding morale during this difficult time.

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.6.2 Creating positive work environment - extension	

I held a meeting with my entire team to discuss strategies for dealing with the challenges we faced and let them know that I appreciated the hours of hard work they were performing, despite the stress they were all dealing with. I acknowledged that I didn't have all the answers and was looking to them to identify ways that we could more efficiently deal with the extraordinary workload. Everyone's suggestions would be respected, considered and appreciated. We spent several hours brainstorming ideas on paper, then as a team identified the three ideas with the most potential. Each member of the team was then assigned to do a little bit more research to determine how feasible each idea was.

Involving the entire team in the process of addresses the challenges we faced and finding a solution made them feel empowered. Instead of running around worried, they focused their energies on finding a solution. The ideas shared were immediate, and high quality. The team members worked together, as one, trying to find a solution that would benefit the entire team, and our employer. Within 1 hour we had come up with several very good and original ideas for addressing the problems we faced. Best of all, there was complete buy in from all team members.

One idea that everyone liked was to eliminate several policies that were necessary when the company was larger but were no longer necessary due to employee layoffs. Eliminating these policies increased productivity by at least 30%. Another idea that we implemented was to focus all our energies on our top accounts. While we did lose some smaller accounts, we were able to save most of the company's top accounts, and relationships, whereby ensuring the longer-term viability and financial stability of the firm. Soon productivity was up and the general atmosphere was much improved".

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.6.3 Goal setting Sets clear, meaningful challenging but attainable group goals and expectations.	Tell us about a situation where you faced reluctance from your team to accept the direction that you were setting. Give an example of when you have lead a team on a major project. How did you gain support for this activity beyond your immediate team? How did you ensure your people were engaged and motivated to perform? How did you measure success? Describe how you have established the priorities and activities of a team. Describe a time when you set goals for an individual or team. What goals were achieved and how did you go about it? Looking back, what would you have done differently?

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.6.3 Goal setting - extension	Tell me how you ensure the quality of your and your unit's work. How do you set objectives for you team?

Example of a good answer

"The goal of our institution was to improve its overall efficiency. My department is responsible for administering the payments process. So I considered how my team could contribute. I consulted with some of the senior members of the team and then I held a meeting to discuss the key issues. We agreed the matters we should focus on in principle. After that I gave consideration to the current workload of my team and the timeframe for the improvements. I came up with the following objectives.

 - Design, develop, and implement a system for tracking payments that are held for more than a single business day. This system is to be operational by December 31 and, by February should contain one month's data. For a given payment, the tracking system should be able to indicate its date of receipt, its dollar amount, and its date of deposit.

- By the end of the first reporting period, and by the end of each reporting period thereafter, identify at least two work process improvements having quantifiable operational or financial benefits.

- Within the next six months, reduce the reject rate for registration forms from its present level of six per cent to a maximum of three per cent.

I announced these objectives at a staff meeting and answered all questions. We also agreed how the team would report progress. Everyone accepted these objectives and 95% of the objectives were met by deadline. The reason there was a shortfall was because of staff sickness."

| **C.6.4 Effective delegation**
Manages staff by delegating and entrusting certain tasks and assisting them to succeed in their performance. | Give me an example of how you have used your delegation skills to manage and improve team performance. |

Example of a good answer

"I was a supervisor in a customer service call centre. I was responsible for running an internal project to improve the quality and efficiency of my team's work. I then decided that it was an opportunity to delegate responsibility of this initiative to my team. I firstly focused on the strengths of each of my team members. I delegated the tougher IT tasks to Selma because she was more experienced. Sandra had an eye for accuracy, so I had her run all the data checking. I handled the overall QA since I had the most experience with the details of the project. Within three months we had improved our customer service ratings by 19%."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.6.5 Staff motivation Regularly provides both positive and critical feedback to team members to improve motivation and performance.	Tell us about a situation where you had to get a team to improve its performance. What were the problems and how did you address them? Give me an example of when you have had to deal with poor performance. How did you approach the problem? What were the political/personal sensitivities you had to deal with? What were the results? With hindsight, would you have approached this any differently? Have you ever discovered you staff/team were not performing to established standards? What did you do about it? How have you motivated slow or difficult team members? Tell me about a time when you have had to deliver feedback to a colleague / subordinate.

Example of a good answer

"I had a member of my team who I had asked to make a presentation to a donor agency for certain project funds. She worked hard on the presentation, however I was disappointed when she included some out of date information. As a result the donor was not impressed. I talked with her afterwards and said that I had expected better work. She was clearly surprised as she believed she had prepared well. So I offered to go through the presentation with her again and explain exactly what the problems were. I pointed out outdated information and she realised that she had not used the most recent financial information. She then offered to research further and asked if she could rework things and prepare a new proposal for the donor. I agreed. After she had resubmitted the proposal she followed up with the donor representative to ask if he had any queries. Unfortunately we didn't secure that particular contract but the donor did ask us to submit a proposal for some different activities. My team member requested that she should research and present this second proposal and this time we won the funding"

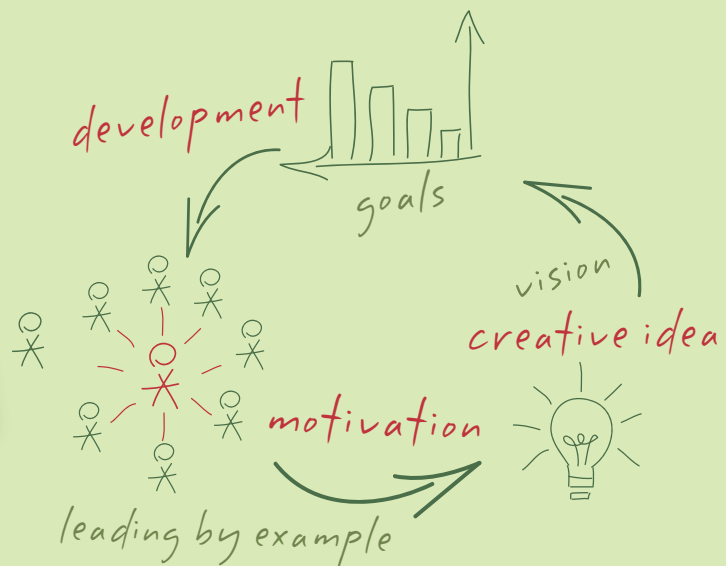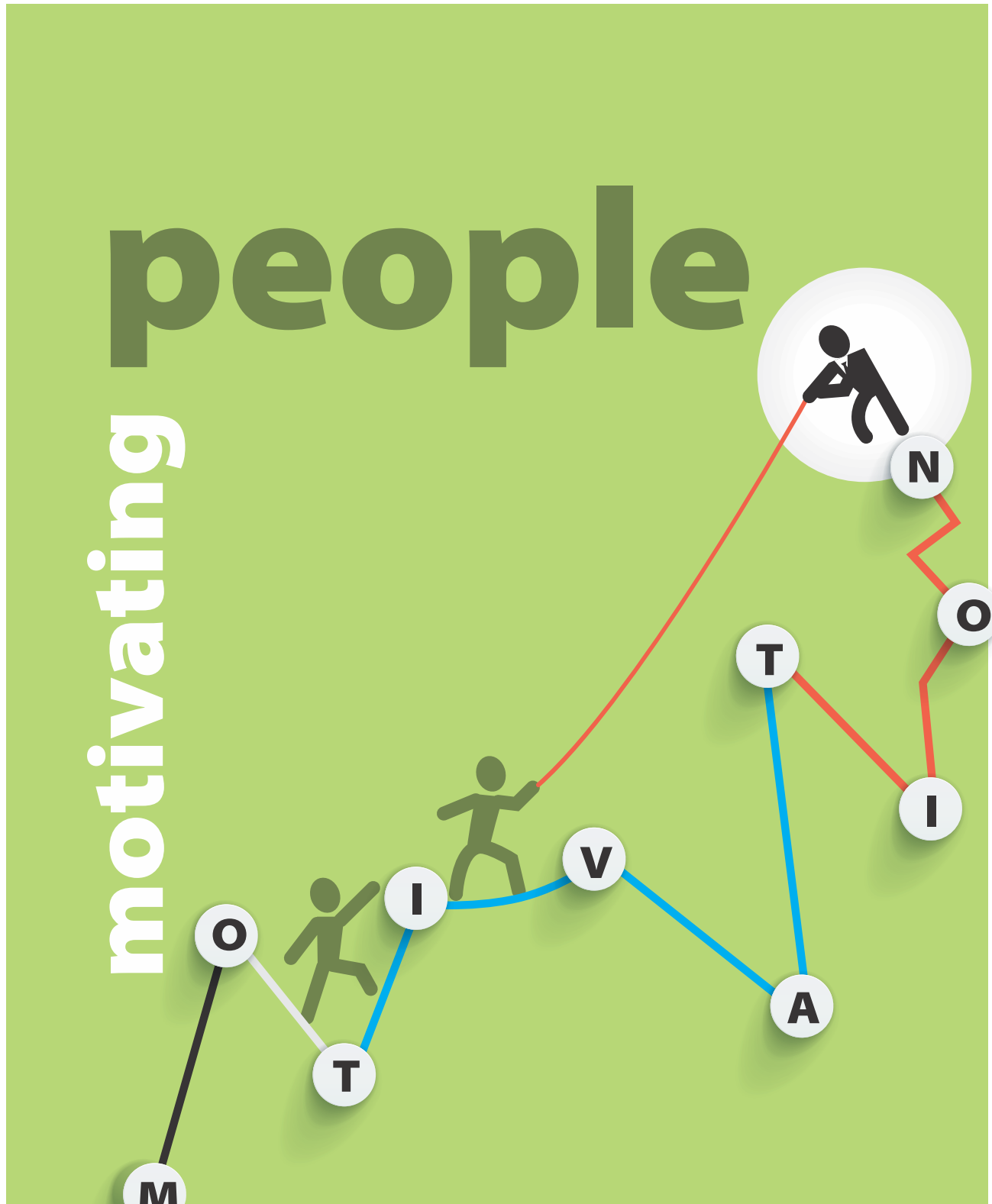| Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.6.6 Leading by example Is an excellent role model – leads by example.	Describe a situation where you needed to inspire a team. What challenges did you meet and how did you achieve your objectives? Describe a situation when you motivated those around you with your own example, to achieve team goals.

Example of a good answer

"When I took over my present role the team were under pressure and demotivated. Results were poor and sickness absence was high. I took the opportunity to get the team all together to explain my goals for the department. If they were achieved it would benefit us all. I asked them to brainstorm with me or team vision, values and standards. After a while they engaged really well. One of our standards was to meet all of our team deadlines. On one project we fell behind due to project partner letting us down. It meant we all had to work late all week. I made sure I was the last to leave the office every evening. We did hit our deadline. I then took everyone out for a meal to celebrate our success. I think I proved to my team that our values and standards applied to me too. Sickness absence over the last 6 months has reduced by 70%."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.7 PLANNING AND ORGANISING The ability to plan, organise, coordinate and monitor activities and work tasks for self and team members.	Tell me about a time when you have had to plan a project/task/event that involved other people in the implementation.
C.7.1 Effective planning Plans the best use of available resources.	Tell me about a time in which you were required to produce something to a high standard, within a fixed period of time. Tell me about a time when you have had to plan a project/task/event.

Example of a good answer

"On one occasion I was made responsible for organizing a study tour for a group of fellow civil servants to the UK, focused on public/private finance practice. Firstly I made sure I understood the goals of the visit and how we could evaluate success at the end of it. I was asked to include 15 officials from 6 different institutions. I checked the budget and it was quite tight. This would mean that we would have to find the cheapest flights, reasonable hotels and limit the duration of the tour. Based on these parameters I put a draft plan together including dates, institutions, travel arrangements and venues.. I also considered the alternative of going to Hungary, where there are lots of PFI examples too, and because it was cheaper, the duration could be longer. I presented these alternatives to the group. They decided to still go to the UK for a shorter time. I asked for the assistance of two administrators to help me make all of the contacts and arrangements and I gave them a work plan and schedule to work to. We agreed reporting arrangements. In the meantime I organized all the necessary permissions and visas etc. One week before departure we held a group meeting and presented all the details and backed this up with full documentation. The study tour was deemed to be a great success. Afterwards I received a thank you note from my Assistant Minister."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.7.2 Team planning Agrees objectives with individuals that support team plans and service goals	How do you set objectives for your team members? Give me an example where this did not work well. What was the cause? What did you do about it.

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.7.2 Team planning - extension	

Example of a good answer

"I set objectives annually with every member of my team, based upon the workplan of my department. I always try to make them specific, measureable, achievable, realistic and timebound. On one occasion, when I reviewed the performance of a team member at the end of the year it was obvious that one objective had not been achieved. (He was tasked to reduce customer complaints by 20%). This was because he had been absent due to long-term sickness and he had assumed that he would no longer be expected to deliver that objective. I realized that we were both at fault. I should not have left it until the end of the year to discuss progress and he should have taken the initiative to inform me of the situation. As a result I began to have one-to-one meetings with all my team on a monthly basis to review their activities and progress towards objectives. This seems to be keeping everyone on track."

C.7.3 Holding members to account for their work results

Holds team members to account for achieving the results that have been agreed.

Give me an example of when you have had to deal with poor performance.

How did you approach the problem? What were the political/personal sensitivities you had to deal with? What were the results? With hindsight, would you have approached this any differently?

Please give me an example of how you monitor and manage employees' performance.

What have you done when performance efficiency has not been satisfactory?

Example of a good answer

"When I ran the finance office Sanya was employed as a temporary accountant. She started as an agency worker who came back regularly. During that time she worked hard and was never absent or late to work, and her work was neat and accurate. She was a quiet person, who kept herself to herself. I found out she lives at home in with her elderly parents. She doesn't say much about his personal life.

After a few weeks she was offered a permanent position and things seemed to go well for the first few months. After that however, over a period of weeks her work performance became more erratic. Some days she works well, others she seems to be in some kind of dream land. She started making mistakes and often needs to be prompted to get on with the job. She was also late to work twice a month.

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.7.3 Holding members to account for their work results - extension	

Example of a good answer

I decided to speak with her one-to-one in private. I explained my concerns and the impact her underperformance was having on the department. She acknowledged the problems but offered no reasons despite me probing repeatedly. She just promised to raise her performance and said that she would not let me down again. I then spelled out my expectations and standards and we agreed to review the situation in a month's time. She did improve, but after two weeks she came to me and explained that her father was seriously ill in hospital. We made arrangements so that she could manage her work around her family commitments. After two months her father recovered. Sanya has been working well ever since."

C.7.4 Risk management	
Evaluates risk and puts realistic plans in place to manage it.	Tell me about a time when you have had to plan a project/task/event and how did you estimate risk?
	Tell me about a time when you've had to manage a risk.
	What' is the biggest risk you have taken at work in the last 2 years? How did it go? How did you manage the risk?

Example of a good answer

"I had to organise a conference for around 100 senior decision makers. I was in charge of the total budget. We wanted a famous international guest speaker to open up the event and to make a keynote speech. I had never heard him speak, but I had talked to a lot of people who highly recommended him. His fees were very high which meant that there would be less money for other presenters, but I decided to take the chance because of his reputation. The risk was whether he would be able to get to the event on time, because his flight would arrive only shortly before the event was due to start. It was winter so the weather could be adverse, or the plane could be delayed. I put in place a contingency plan that included transport from the airport in a fast 4x4 vehicle. I also arranged the possibility that the order of presentations could be changed if he was late arriving. I also asked the guest speaker to make a video of his opening speech that we could still show if he did not make the beginning of the conference. Finally, just in case his plane was severely delayed I negotiated that no payment would be made unless the speech was delivered. The risks were financial, reputational and natural. In the event everything went fine."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.7.5. Ensuring meeting of deadlines Takes early action to deal with issues that affect deadlines to ensure delivery on time.	Tell me about a time in which you were required to produce something to a high standard, within a fixed period of time. Tell me about a time when you have had to plan a project/task/event in a given timeframe. Tell me about a time when you had to consider existing/conflicting workloads, when planning a task/event/project. Tell me about a time when you didn't meet an objective/deadline.

Example of a good answer

"My team was working towards a major milestone on a project to build a new water pumping station. Until that milestone was reached the machinery could not be commissioned. A couple of months before the deadline our chief engineer was taken ill. The next day I held discussions with the project Sponsor who said that the original deadline must still be met. I therefore began a search for an interim senior engineer to take over. Within three days I had found a suitable candidate and he joined us the next week. The project team soon caught up on the delayed work and we still delivered on deadline."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.8 DEVELOPING PEOPLE Developing people to improve their performance and fulfill their potential.	What strategies to you operate to identify and nurture talent in your organisation? How do you ensure staff with potential are identified and developed? How has this benefited your organisation? Tell me how you manage the development of others.
C.8.1 Identification of team members' training needs Identifies training needs in team members and takes action to meet them by formal or informal learning and development methods.	Tell me how you manage the development of others. Have you ever discovered your staff/team were not performing to your standards? What did you do about it? When? Please give us an example about how you identified employees' training needs. What measures did you take to educate and develop your people?

Example of a good answer

""When I took over my present team we brainstormed and agreed our team standards. It soon became apparent that two members of my team were struggling to meet the requirements of their jobs. I had a one-to-one conversation with each of them. With the first (Aleksandra), the problem seemed to be poor personal planning, self-management and time management. With the second, (Igor) it was to do with a lack of confidence to undertake a particular technical process. I arranged a time management course for Aleksandra. For Igor I did some one-to-one coaching sessions until he felt able to undertake the process without supervision. Both of them now are delivering a very good standard of work."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.8.2 Talent management Identifies talent and potential in staff members and creates development plans to realise it.	What strategies to you operate to identify and nurture talent in your organisation? How do you ensure staff with potential are identified and developed? How has this benefited your organisation? Tell me how you manage the development of others.

Example of a good answer

"I walk the job regularly to get to know my staff better and see how people are working and to what level. This helped me to notice that one of my team is instinctively good at IT and commuting. I was really impressed with some of the data analysis proposals. At his annual performance review I mentioned this and we discussed how developing his expertise even more could help the department. I have now arranged for him to undertake a post-graduate diploma in computing. His motivation levels have also risen substantially."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.8.3 Coaching Personally coaches team members to improve their performance.	Have you ever experienced a situation when your staff did not perform to your expectations? What did you do about it? Tell me of a time when you have had to work with someone less experienced than yourself. Give me an example of how you coached someone to improve their performance.

Example of a good answer

"When I was Head of Human Resources one of the other heads of department came to me saying she was feeling very stressed because of her workload at this time of year. She asked if she could take on a temporary administrator, but unfortunately there was a ban on recruitment. By asking her questions about what she wanted to achieve, and about the current situation she clarified the situation for me and herself. I then asked her questions about the possible options she had (apart from temporary staff). She said she could ask for an extension of the deadline for the work, or she could ask for the temporary assignment of someone from another department. Another possibility was to agree some overtime payments for her current staff. I asked her which option she preferred and she decided to ask for temporary secondment of someone from another department. I then asked her how she felt she could avoid a similar situation again and she said that she needed to start to organise the end of year work earlier next time and that she would dairise it. The next year she had no problems."

Competency based questions and example answers
Top management competency

strategic direction

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.9 STRATEGIC DIRECTION Setting the strategic direction of the organisation in response to the needs of Ministers and citizens, and ensuring its delivery.	Give me an example of when you have had to gain support from stakeholders to implement a strategic decision that had potential to be controversial. How did you handle any objections? How did you get others on board? What were the political/personal sensitivities you had to deal with? What were the results?
C.9.1 Strategic planning Develops strategic plans to ensure the organisation's future success.	What ideas have you developed and implemented that have impacted on the long term strategic development of your organisation? What were the challenges? What was the impact on your organisational strategies? How did you evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in the long term? Describe an occasion when you have had to develop strategies to implement major organisational change. What were you aiming to achieve? What was your approach to planning? How did you consult and involve relevant people? What were the results? If you were doing it again, what would you do differently? Tell me how you have gone about planning for the future direction of your organisation.

Example of a good answer

"I was the manager the Investment Promotion Agency (IPA). It was decided by the Minister that we should merge our agency with the Agency for SMEs (SMEA). I was asked to lead the merger process. First I consulted with the head of SMEA and then with all other stakeholders: clients, employees, international donors, plus legal experts, about the impact of this change. Everyone was enthusiastic except the employees who were worried that they may lose their jobs, or at least they might have to change jobs. With the Minister's agreement I reassured them that everyone would remain employed by the civil service and that everyone would receive proper training for any new responsibilities. I then establish a Joint Steering Committee to oversee the implementation of the new structure. All stakeholders were represented, with participation of employee representatives from different levels of both agencies. The change to the new structure took 6 months but it went fairly smoothly. The biggest delay was caused by legal issues. If I were to do something like this again I would definitely consult with the legal experts at an earlier stage."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.9.2 Monitoring of strategic plans Monitors plans to achieve strategic objectives.	Tell me how you have gone about planning for the future direction of your organisation/function. How did you monitor its implementation? Describe a strategic change you have recently implemented. How did you monitor its implementation and keep it on track?

Example of a good answer

"On an annual basis I take the senior management team away for a two day retreat to review the strategic position of our agency and to set our future direction for the coming two to three years, based on the overall framework of the government's priorities. For all of our strategic initiatives I ensure that we have an implementation plan and project schedule. Each activity has relevant milestones and KPIs to that we can monitor performance. I have set up a monthly meeting for the senior management team so that we can review progress against the plans and take corrective action if necessary. We have been able to bring in 90% of main initiatives on time."

C.9.3 Strategic resource management Secures the resources needed to deliver strategic objectives.	How do you currently ensure that you manage your resources effectively? How do you consider costs to the organisation? What environmental factors do you take into account? Describe a strategic change you have recently implemented.

Example of a good answer

"I have established a comprehensive budgeting process. Each of my heads of department has an operational budget and project budgets. They report on these to me on a monthly basis. As and when new strategic priorities and initiatives emerge then a business case is prepared. Resources must then come from a reprioritised internal budget, or I start negotiations with the Minister and Ministry of Finance to secure new funds. I also approach international donors to explore funding possibilities. Usually some combination of all three approaches means that we are able to meet our strategic goals."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.9.4 Taking responsibility for meeting strategic objectives Takes responsibility for ensuring the strategic objectives are met.	Describe a strategic change you have recently implemented. Did it achieve its objectives? How did you ensure this?

Example of a good answer

"For all of our strategic initiatives I ensure that we have an implementation plan and project schedule. Each activity has relevant milestones and KPIs to that we can monitor performance. I have set up a monthly meeting for the senior management team so that we can review progress against the plans and take corrective action if necessary. We have been able to bring in 90% of main initiatives on time."

Competency	Example competency-based interview questions
C.9.5 Building an effective senior management team Builds an effective senior management team that pulls the organisation together.	Tell us about a situation where you faced reluctance from your senior team to accept the direction that you were setting. Give me an example of how you improve the effectiveness of your senior team in leading the organisation.

Example of a good answer

"Once a year I devote one of our Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings to an assessment of how effective we are as the SMT. In turn each of us sits in the 'Hot Seat'. The rest of us then give that person three pieces of feedback: 1. One thing that we would like more of from them (positive contribution). 2. One thing that we would like less of from them (unhelpful or dysfunctional activities/behaviours). 3. One thing that I'd like us to work on together (collaborative working). The Hot Seat incumbent is not allowed to defend themselves. They must just thank their colleagues for the feedback. It is up to them how they act on the feedback. Most respond with corrective and positive actions. At first the SMT members found this approach a little threatening but now it has proved to be really effective, everyone finds it very useful"

ANNEX 1

Competency Focus Group Guide

Identifying Competencies

With this tool you can use focus groups to identify and rank the competencies that the superior performers in your targeted classification possess.

- Identify facilitators to set up and run focus group meetings.
- The facilitator identifies *Subject Matter Experts* (SMEs) who will participate in the focus groups. The SMEs are typically exemplary employees in the target classification, exemplary Sector Heads, and HR managers.
- Use the *Focus Group Meeting Facilitator Guide* to run the meetings and record the results.

Tips:
  Assembling your Focus Groups

- Make the focus groups as diverse as possible.
- In large institutions, have three or four focus groups, one for each job family.
- Have two facilitators for each focus group – one to lead the discussion and one to observe and take notes.
- Limit the size of each focus group to eight participants.
- Schedule at least two hours for each focus group meeting.

Focus Group Meeting Facilitator Guide

Meeting Objective:	Identify and rank the competencies that the superior performers in the targeted job possess.
Targeted Job(s):	
Meeting time, Location:	
Participants:	
Meeting Materials:	• Copies of the job descriptions for each participant. • Copies for each participant of the broad list of competencies and definitions that are relevant to the targeted job. • Flip-chart; markers. • Laptop and electronic forms to record data if available.

Part 1 – Review Targeted Job:

Review and discuss the position description and discuss with the group "what it takes to do the job well."

The facilitator should lead a discussion by asking the SMEs:

What are the most important functions of the job?

What does it take to be successful in this job?

What characteristics distinguish the excellent from the average performers?

Why have people failed in the job?

Other observations about the job?

Part 2 – Identify and Rank Competencies:

Hand out to participants the list of competencies and definitions. Explain that the objective is to identify from the broad list the 6 competencies most essential for successful job performance. Use one of the methods below to help the focus group reach consensus on the 6 priority competencies.

Method 1

- Lead a discussion by asking participants to identify which competencies should be included in the list.

- After the group identifies 6 competencies, ask participants if there are any competencies missing from the list of 6.

- Once the list is complete, it will probably include more than 6 competencies. Lead a discussion about which competency/s to eliminate from the list. Sometimes it is helpful to start by getting agreement on the competencies that are most important.

- Once the list has been narrowed to 6, help the group rank order the ten in order of importance, with 1 being the highest, or most important, competency.

Method 2

- Ask participants to individually rank on their competency list the top ten in order of importance, with 1 being the highest, or most important, competency.

- Once completed, the group can break while facilitators tabulate the scores.

> **Tip:**
>
> Using Method 1 to rank the competencies may require more time, but it should result in more in-depth discussions.

- In order for the scoring-method to work correctly, convert the rankings to scores, as follows:

Ranking	Score
1	6
2	5
3	4
4	3
5	2
6	1

- Use the *Competency Ranking Template* to tabulate the scores. *The Sample Competency Ranking Template* provides an example of a completed template showing the competency scores of exemplary employees as assigned by supervisors.

- After a break, share the results with the group. Discuss the results and make any consensus adjustments to the scoring.

Sample: Competency Ranking Template

Participant	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	Total Score	Average	Rank
Competency Titles											
Initiative	1	6	5	3	3	6	3	3	30	3,73	1
Problem solving	3	5	4	1	4	3	2	4	26	3,25	5
Helping others with change	4	3	2	2	5	5	4	5	28	3,5	3
Attention to detail	3	4	6	4	2	1	6	3	29	3,6	2
Analytical thinking	5	2	3	3	1	2	1	2	19	2,4	6
Effective planning	6	1	1	3	6	4	5	1	27	3,4	4

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