

**Study on the implementation of the EU Competency Framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund**

Draft Final Report

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy

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# List of abbreviations used

| Abbreviation | Description |
| --- | --- |
| AA | Audit Authority |
| CA | Certifying Authority |
| CB | Coordinating Body |
| CF | Cohesion Fund |
| DG REGIO | Directorate General for Regional and Urban Policy |
| EC | European Commission |
| ERDF | European Regional Development Fund |
| ESF | European Social Fund |
| ESI Funds | European Structural and Investment Funds (ERDF, ESF, CF, EAFRD, EMFF) |
| ETC | European Territorial Cooperation |
| EU | European Union |
| EWRC | European Week of Regions and Cities |
| HR | Human Resources |
| IB | Intermediate Body |
| JS | Joint Secretariat |
| JWP | Joint Working Plans |
| MA | Managing Authority |
| OP | Operational Programme |
| PLAN | Learning and Development Plan |
| RPA | Robotic Process Automation |
| TA | Technical Assistance |
| TOOL | Self-Assessment Tool |

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# Glossary of terms used in the Report

| Term | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Pilot administrations | The eight administrations that volunteered to take part in the study. |
| Administrative capacity for ERDF and CF | Management results from Member States choices in terms of governance, structures, human resources, systems and tools. |
| Authority (Institution) | A national, regional or local public authority or a private body designated by the Member State to carry out the function of Coordinating Body, Managing Authority, Certifying Authority, Intermediate Body, Audit Authority or Joint Secretariat functions. |
| Beneficiary | Public or private body responsible for initiating, or both initiating and implementing operations; and in the context of State aid schemes, the body which receives the aid; and in the context of financial instruments the body that implements the financial instrument. |
| Coaching | Individual support at the workplace regarding technical and/or personal issues. |
| Competency | Capability of applying or using knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviours, and personal characteristics to successfully perform critical work tasks, specific functions, or operate in a given role or position. |
| Competency framework | An instrument for managing human resources which includes core values and sets of competencies, relevant for the development of both organisations and employees. |
| Decision making experts | This is the head of the organisation or persons that act on relatively high strategic management levels |
| EU Competency Framework | The competency framework for the ERDF and CF developed by DG REGIO |
| ERDF and CF management and implementation models | The approaches adopted for the coordination, management and implementation of programmes co-financed by the ERDF and CF. |
| Gamification | The process of applying gaming designs and concepts to training events in order to make them more engaging for the learner. Learners compete directly against one or more individuals or participate individually in an interactive experience that rewards learning performance in some way. |
| Groups assignments | A group of employees receives an assignment, which they collectively have to complete. |
| Groups of Job Roles | Three clusters of Job Roles (operational, supervisory, and decision making) developed considering tasks, sub-tasks and responsibilities carried out by each level. |
| Human resources | **In the context of ERDF and CF implementation: the personnel of an institution, its adequacy in terms of number; turnover level; experience, skills, and motivation.** |
| Institution | **Types of institutions involved in the management and implementation of the ERDF and CF according to the Regulations: Coordinating Body, Managing Authority, Certifying Authority, Intermediate Body, Audit Authority or Joint Secretariat functions.** |
| Intervision | **Self-help method used among peers or colleagues to help each other deal with technical’ or personal functioning challenges during the job. Sometimes there is a moderator available.** |
| Job Description | **A document that summarises the main responsibilities, functions and principal duties, competencies and required proficiency levels.** |
| Job Role | **Brief description of a position held by an employee responsible for management of the ERDF and CF.** |
| Knowledge sharing | **Interactive process between the ERDF and CF stakeholders at different levels encouraging the sharing of experiences, approaches, skills, and knowledge related to the management of ERDF and CF.** |
| Management and control system | **The bodies involved in management and control, their functions, procedures and tools as defined in Art. 72 of the CPR.** |
| Management competencies | **Competencies covering a managerial function and based on gained knowledge, abilities, skills, and set of values.** |
| Member States | **28 countries that are members of the European Union** |
| Moderated discussion involving experts | **An event where employees have the opportunity to address technical challenges in their job, and receive guidance, tips and tricks and solutions for those challenges.** |
| On the job learning | **An individual “learning by doing” approach where the employee learns new competencies in the regular work situation. The employee receives direct feedback while executing tasks. The person who coaches the employee observes, instructs and provides feedback.** |
| Operational competencies | Competencies required for staff to successfully manage the assigned functions related to ERDF and CF management. |
| Operational level experts | These are the experts that are directly working on the different tasks and sub-tasks within the organisation. |
| Professional competencies | Competencies required for the execution of specific professional functions and based on gained knowledge, abilities, skills, and set of values. |
| Regulation | European Structural and Investment Funds Regulations for the period 2014-2020 |
| Robotics Process Automation | Application of technology that allows to configure computer software or a “robot” to capture and interpret existing applications for processing a transaction, manipulating data, triggering responses and communicating with other digital systems. |
| Self-assessment | An evaluation of one's own proficiency level in the competencies required for the effective and efficient performance of assigned functions. |
| Self-Assessment Tool | The web-based tool used to evaluate the user’s proficiency level of competencies and identifying the competencies that need upgrading. |
| Structures | In the context of ERDF and CF implementation: the bodies assigned for the different tasks related to the management and implementation of ERDF and CF programmes. |
| Sub-task | An action performed by an authority (institution) or person that produces a result related to management of the ERDF and CF. |
| Supervision | A method where a small group of employees (peers/colleagues) come together to discuss challenges they face in performing their tasks. They are led by a senior person inside the organisation who helps the group based on his/her extended level of experience. |
| Supervisory level experts | This is the middle management level, responsible for a group of people and not directly involved in operational implementation of the programme. |

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# Executive Summary

The European Commission, Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy, has selected Ernst & Young Special Business Services for the “Study on the implementation of the EU Competency Framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund”.

This report presents the results of the study, which aims to provide concrete results that will further strengthen administrative capacity in national and regional administrations managing the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund. The aim is achieved through two objectives.

The first objective is to propose improvements to the existing version of the EU Competency Framework, its Self-Assessment Tool and User Guidelines (‘the instruments’):

* The EU Competency Framework is an instrument for the management of human resources, defining the competencies relevant for the development of both employees and institutions involved in the management and implementation of the ERDF and Cohesion Fund.
* The Self-Assessment Tool captures all the elements of the EU Competency Framework and is used to evaluate the proficiency level of competencies of employees and institutions, providing evidence for preparing learning and development plans.
* The User Guidelines are a manual, for the use of institutions, which provides guidance on the use of the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool.

The second objective is to draw conclusions and provide recommendations on what the Commission and Member State administrations should consider in order to ensure the successful and efficient roll-out and implementation of the instruments.

These objectives are linked to the results of a previous study of the Commission entitled “EU Competency Framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund”.

In order to achieve these objectives the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool have been piloted in eight administrations involved in the management and implementation of the ERDF and the Cohesion Fund.

The feedback from the pilot was used to develop a set or practical instruments:

* An updated EU Competency framework for Coordinating Bodies, Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies, Certifying Authorities, Audit Authorities and Joint Secretariats.
* An enhanced version of the Self-Assessment Tool incorporating the updates to the EU Competency Framework and improved functionalities.
* Extended User Guidelines providing a comprehensive explanation of the purpose and benefits of the EU Competency Framework, and how to use the Self-Assessment Tool to prepare competency development plans.
* A Strategy for the Commission for implementation and promotion of the instruments detailed in terms of practical recommendations that include a set of promotion tools.
* Recommendations for Member States for implementation and promotion of the instruments covering the National Level, Programme Level and institution level.
* A Roadmap consolidating the recommendations for the Commission and Member States and providing a timeline to ensure rapid uptake of the instruments.

A new set of instruments for the strengthening of administrative capacity

The programming period 2014-2020 has introduced changes in the regulations, implying new competencies are needed for managing and implementing the ERDF and Cohesion Fund. Furthermore, effective management of the funds calls for a mix of competencies that go beyond the requirements of the regulations. High turnover rates and the assigning of management functions to new institutions require systemic capacity building. Last but not least, building the capacities of new staff requires a structured approach in competency development.

In response to these challenges, the Commission has developed the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool as practical ‘instruments’ to support Member States administrations in strengthening their capacity to manage and implement the ERDF and Cohesion Fund.

The EU Competency Framework captures all the competencies relevant to the effective and efficient management of the funds, whilst the Self-Assessment Tool enables an assessment of the level of proficiency of such competencies. Both provide evidence for the preparation of learning and development plans which can leverage the capacity building instruments of the Commission and Member States. As the plans will be focused on the strengthening of relevant competencies, it is expected that administrations will be able to quickly strengthen their capacity.

The EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool are capacity building instruments. Their use is not mandatory and the results of the self-assessment are for the sole use of institutions, and are not intended to be the basis of reports to the Commission.

In the same spirit, when the instruments are implemented within an institution, it is recommended that their use is kept separate from the appraisal processes, and that the results of employee assessments are treated with confidentiality.

EU Competency Framework

The updated version of the EU Competency Framework defines all of the competencies relevant for the development of both employees and institutions involved in the management and implementation of the ERDF and Cohesion Fund.

The contents of the EU Competency Framework are broad enough to cover all type of organizational arrangement for the implementation of the ERDF and Cohesion Fund. As such it avoids stipulating a level of detail that would make it specific only to certain administrations.

The functions of the different institutions (Coordinating Body, Managing Authority and Intermediate Body, Joint Secretariat, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority) are captured in a comprehensive list of tasks and sub-tasks that reflect the requirements of ESIF regulations. Linked to these tasks and sub-tasks are the competencies that employees and institutions should develop in order to ensure efficient management and implementation of Programmes.

The complexity of Cohesion Policy calls for three different types of competencies: operational competencies are required to perform the assigned functions according to the regulations (e.g. Simplified Cost Options, State Aid); professional competencies are required to perform specific professional functions (e.g. Conflict handling, Problem solving); and management competencies are required to perform managerial functions.

The proficiency required for each of these competencies, varies in accordance with the tasks and sub-tasks and also in accordance with the responsibilities of employees. For this reason the EU Competency Framework distinguishes three groups of job roles: decision making level (generally the head of the ERDF/CF institution), supervisory level (e.g. heads of organizational units) and operational level (day to day implementation of sub-tasks).

The EU Competency Framework identifies, for each competency, a level of proficiency, which is assigned according to the task, sub-task and job role of the employee, using a proficiency scale ranging from 0-4. It represents the desired level of knowledge and skills that employees should develop in the medium term to perform most efficiently and effectively their assigned functions.

The Self-Assessment Tool

The contents of the EU Competency Framework are transposed in a web-based Self-Assessment Tool. The Self-Assessment Tool is an instrument that enables an assessment to be made of the proficiency level of the competencies of employees, and aggregate the results at an institution level.

The key strength of this instrument is its flexibility. The list of competencies on which the assessment is based draws on the tasks and sub-tasks selected by employees taking part in the assessment. This allows the assessment to be tailored to the scope of the functions of each institution, its organizational units and the specific responsibilities of employees.

Furthermore, if an institution wants to modify the contents of the Self-Assessment Tool by adding or deleting competencies, it is feasible to do so. However, it is recommended that institutions assess carefully the benefits of making such modifications against the burden of adjusting, firstly, the EU Competency Framework and then the Self-Assessment Tool.

Another strength of the Self-Assessment Tool is that it embeds a review mechanism of assessment results. Firstly, employees perform their own self-assessment, then the respective supervisor performs an independent assessment of the employee’s competencies. The supervisor’s assessment is important as employees may be biased in performing their self-assessment, under estimating or over estimating their own levels of knowledge and expertise.

For this reason, the process includes an opportunity for employees and supervisors to discuss and review the results. The discussion meeting also serves as an occasion to identify the strong areas, those that require further improvement and future competency development activities.

The Self-Assessment Tool aggregates the results of individual assessments at an institution level and enables an analysis of the proficiency level of individual competencies, as well as all of the competencies of the institution. Management plays a key role in analysing the results of the competency assessment, and selecting those competencies to be further developed, as it possesses an in-depth knowledge of the institution and of the programming lifecycle context (e.g. current status, planned activities, challenges).

A methodological framework has been developed to support institutions in selecting the most appropriate approach for competency development, which can include training, recruitment, use of external expertise, automation of tasks, participation in learning networks and implementation of relevant good practices.

It is recommended that institutions prepare Learning and Development Plans to capture the results of the competency assessment, the planned competency development actions and the roles and responsibilities required for their implementation. The Plans are intended for the sole use of the institution, and there is no requirement to submit such plans to the Commission. It is recommended that the Plans are used for planning and budgeting purposes, drawing on the financial resources available under the Technical Assistance priority of the Programme.

User Guidelines

The User Guidelines provide the key reference document for those administrations that decide to implement the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool. It is recommended that managers in such institutions familiarize themselves with this document and the instruments before starting a competency assessment.

The User Guidelines explain the benefits of the EU Competency Framework, the functioning of the Self-Assessment Tool, the sequence of phases and activities required to carry out an assessment, and provide the template for a Learning and Development Plan. They also include a technical section, describing the steps required to modify the Self-Assessment Tool, should an administration decide to go down that route.

As the Guidelines have been prepared based on the experience of administrations in implementing a competency assessment, they also contain practical suggestions on what institutions should / should not do in the implementation of the instruments.

Implementation and promotion strategy of the Commission

The Commission should aim at ensuring the widest uptake of the instruments and their continued relevance to the competency development needs of institutions.

As a priority it is recommended that the Commission consolidates the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool on the REGIO website with the rest of its capacity building offer (e.g. training events, the TAIEX-REGIO Peer2Peer Initiative and learning networks).

This will have the benefit of utilising an existing platform to draw the attention of administrations to the existence and full value of the newly updated and expanded instruments. It is also recommended that the Commission facilitates the creation of a community of practitioners around the Tool, as the social network effect will create benefits for existing users and help attract new ones.

It is also recommended that REGIO sets-sup a help-desk to support institutions on technical aspects related to the implementation of the tool. While the tool is user friendly, questions may be raised concerning possible customizations.

For the instruments to remain relevant, the contents of the EU Competency Framework and functionalities of the Self-Assessment Tool should be updated on a yearly basis. In order to do so it is recommended that the Commission establishes a monitoring and evaluation mechanism, based on the collection of feedback from the administrations implementing the instruments. While confidentiality of data should be respected, the information will also allow the Commission to further tailor its capacity building offer.

Finally, the promotion of the Instruments should become part of the communication strategy of REGIO. As a priority, meetings could be organized with Member States to present the benefits of the implementation of the instruments. Two promotional tools have been developed, in the form of an electronic brochure and an infographic, as a contribution to the Commission’s promotion strategy.

Recommendations for Member States

The EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool are capacity building instruments and should be treated as such at the level of Member Sate, following the same principles associated with the implementation of other capacity building actions.

At national level, Coordinating Bodies (or single Managing Authorities) should engage in the dissemination of the instruments, in synergy with DG REGIO. At Programme Level, stakeholders of the management and control system are invited to adopt a coordinated approach towards the adoption of the instruments. This would reap the greatest benefits in terms of capacity development and financial efficiencies in the implementation of development plans.

At administration level, the competency assessments could be coordinated by the head of the ERDF and Cohesion Fund institution, but the human resources function should be involved from an early stage. Based on the results of the first assessment, administrations should take a decision concerning future coordination of the instruments (e.g. whether it should be retained by the ERDF/Cohesion Fund authority, the human resources function or Coordinating Body).

Institutions should also consider procedural aspects of future implementation of the instruments, in terms of the frequency of their use and possible customization. In relation to resources, the staff of the institutions should be able to carry out the tasks related to competency assessment on a part time basis, and financial resources earmarked from the Technical Assistance of the Operational Programme based on the Learning and Development Plans.

Roadmap for implementation of the instruments

It is recommended that the commitment of REGIO is demonstrated by positive action between the end 2017 and first quarter 2018, in order to pave the way for implementation of the instruments in the first half of 2018.

Since the competency framework is not mandatory, no deadlines should be imposed on institutions as to when assessments should be rolled out. However, it would be useful to establish a practice for regular feedback collection from institutions, and for DG REGIO to regularly update the instruments and competency development offer.

Ongoing promotion of the instrument, and development of a network of practitioners, should increase over time the number of institutions using the instruments.

1. STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

## Objectives and deliverables

The European Commission, Directorate-General Regional and Urban Policy, has selected Ernst & Young Special Business Services for the “Study on the implementation of the EU Competency Framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund”.

This report presents the results of the study, which has the goal to produce concrete results that will further strengthen administrative capacity in national and regional administrations managing the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and Cohesion Fund (CF). The goal is achieved through two objectives.

The first objective is to propose improvements to the existing version of the EU Competency Framework, its Self-Assessment Tool and update the User Guidelines (‘the instruments’):

* The EU Competency Framework is an instrument for the management of human resources, defining the competencies relevant for the development of both employees and institutions involved in the management and implementation of the ERDF and CF.
* The Self-Assessment Tool captures all the elements of the EU Competency Framework and is used to evaluate the proficiency level of competencies of employees and institutions, providing evidence for preparing learning and development plans.
* The User Guidelines are a manual for the use of institutions providing guidance on the use of the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool.

The second objective is to draw conclusions and provide recommendations on what the Commission and Member State administrations should consider in order to ensure the successful and efficient roll-out and implementation of the instruments.

These objectives are linked to the results of a previous study of the Commission entitled “EU Competency Framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund” (see box below).

Box 1: Study “EU Competency Framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund”

|  |
| --- |
| The deliverables of the study were a set of tools to support competency development in administrations involved in the management and implementation of the ERDF and CF:   * The EU Competency Framework for institutions involved in the implementation of the ERDF and the CF. * An excel based Self-Assessment Tool resulting from the EU Competency Framework and enabling the competency assessment at employee and institution level, providing evidence for the implementation of competency development plans and accompanied by technical instructions * A Blueprint for training, addressing the competencies identified in the EU Competency Framework, and an inventory of existing education and training programmes. * An inventory of good practices in competency management in eight Member States.   The study confirmed the need for a competency framework and a self-assessment tool, but highlighted **also a number of recommendations** for REGIO and Member States for future implementation of the instruments:   * The recommendations for REGIO included the development of a web-based instrument to improve the stability of the excel tool, to update the tool after the first experiences and establish a help desk. * The recommendations for ERDF/CF institutions of Member States highlighted the importance of embedding the instruments in the existing human resources development strategies and using the evidence of the competency assessments for tailoring capacity building actions.   In light of these recommendations, REGIO developed a web-based version of the Self-Assessment Tool and launched the present study to pilot the existing version of the EU Competency Framework and newly developed web-based Self-Assessment Tool. |

In order to achieve these objectives the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool have been piloted in a sample of administrations involved in the management and implementation of the ERDF and CF. The Key activities and deliverables are presented below:

Figure 1: Key activities and deliverables of the project



At the end of the pilot each administration was provided with a Report covering both the feedback on the instruments and the results of the competency assessment. The feedback on the instruments was consolidated in order to develop an improved version of the:

* **EU Competency framework** for Coordinating Bodies, Managing Authorities and Intermediate Bodies, Certifying Authorities, Audit Authorities and Joint Secretariats relevant for all ERDF and CF programmes. The aim was to ensure that its contents cover all the knowledge and skills required for managing and implementing the ERDF and CF, while avoiding elements that apply only to specific programmes, contexts or institutions.
* **Self-Assessment Tool** incorporating the updates to the EU Competency Framework and enhanced functionalities based on the feedback of institutions. The piloting aimed in particular at testing the new web-based version of the Tool in terms of effectiveness for identifying competencies that require improvement, efficiency (time required for the competency assessment) and user-friendliness.
* **User Guidelines** providing a comprehensive explanation of the purpose and benefits of the EU Competency Framework, how to use the Self-Assessment Tool and prepare Learning and Development Plans, based on the lessons learned through the pilot.

The new instruments and the analysis of the results of the competency assessments, were used to obtain insight on what the Commission and Member States should do to ensure the widest uptake of the instruments, resulting in:

* **A Strategy for the Commission** for implementation and promotion of the instruments detailed in terms of practical recommendations. As the instruments are not mandatory, their quality, relevance and flexibility does not guarantee uptake on behalf of institutions.

This means for the Commission clearly defining and promoting the purpose of the instruments and providing an enabling environment for their implementation. It also means reflecting on how to organize a feedback mechanism that can ensure their continued relevance and whether a virtuous learning mechanism can be established to constantly improve the capacity building offer of the Commission and ensure alignment with the development needs of institutions.

* **Promotion tools** including a Brochure in electronic format and an infographic to be used for dissemination purposes.
* **Recommendations for Member States** covering the national Level, programme level and institution level. At Member State level it is necessary to reflect on whether the non-mandatory nature of the instruments should be maintained and what should be the role of Coordinating Bodies (or single Managing Authorities). At programme level it is necessary to clarify who should be responsible for implementation and how to ensure that competency development plans are implemented. Finally at institution level it is necessary to define practical arrangements such as periodicity of assessment and updates.
* **A Roadmap** consolidating the recommendations for the Commission and Member States and providing a timeline to ensure rapid uptake of the instruments.

## Methodology and data sources

The methodological approach was centred on the pilot implementation of the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool in 8 administrations that volunteered to take part in the study. Data were collected via the (1) Self-Assessment Tool; (2) feedback surveys; (3) workshops and (4) observation of the implementation process. The participation of the administrations in the pilot has been substantial as summarized in the table below:

Table 1: Overview of institutions and employees involved in the pilot

| **Country** | **Type of institution** | **Administration** | **N. Self-Assessments**  **Completed** | **N. Feedback surveys**  **Completed** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Austria | MA | Investments in Growth and Employment Austria 2014-2020 – OP for the use of the ERDF funds. | 13 | 8 |
| Bulgaria | MA | OP Environment 2014 - 2020 | 29 | 21 |
| Estonia | AA | OP Cohesion Policy Funding 2014 - 2020 | 10 | 13 |
| Estonia | IB | OP Cohesion Policy Funding 2014 - 2020 | 89 | 7 |
| Greece | MA | OP Western Macedonia | 16 | 6 |
| Hungary | MA | Environmental and Energy Efficiency OP | 29 | 20 |
| Poland | MA | Regional Operational Programme for Dolnoskie Voivodeship 2014 - 2020 | 122 | 105 |
| Romania | JS and MA | INTERREG V - A Programme Romania - Bulgaria | 20 | 19 |
| Total | | | 328 | 199 |

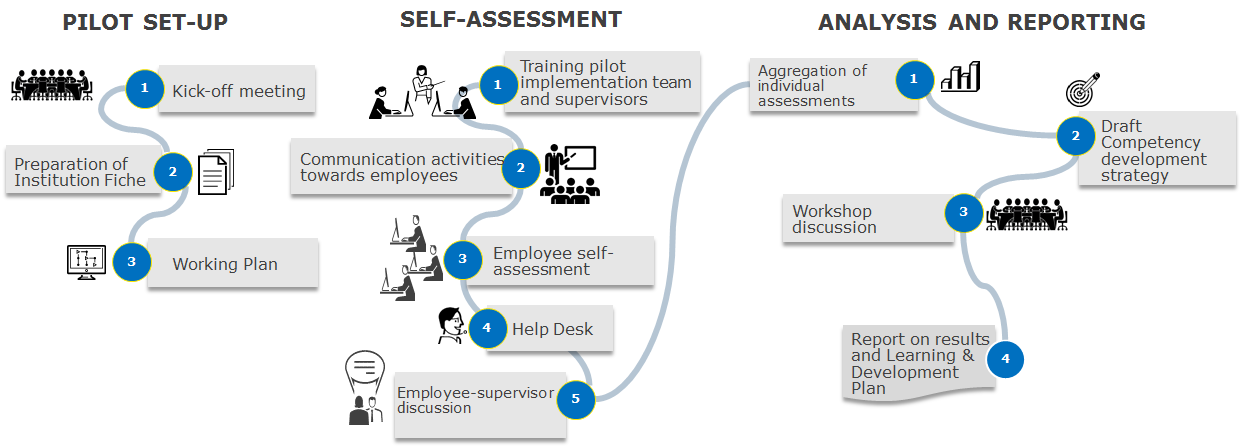
While the numbers of the pilot may appear small compared to the total number of employees and institutions involved in the management and implementation of ERDF and CF, the results are to be considered relevant due to diverse characteristics of the administrations involved:

Table 2: Overview of pilot characteristics

| **Authorities** | **Funding sources** | **Geographic Scope** | **EU Budget** | **Thematic Objectives** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5 Managing Authorities | 3 programmes:  ERDF | 4 programmes: national scope | Min:  EUR 200 million | Min:  1 Thematic Objective |
| 1 Intermediate Body | 2 programmes:  ERDF, CF | 2 programmes:  regional scope |
| 1 Audit Authority | 1 programme:  ERDF, ESF | 1 programme:  Cross-border region | Max:  EUR 3.5 billion | Max:  11 Thematic Objectives |
| 1 Managing Authority and Joint Secretariat of ETC | 1 programme:  ERDF, CF, ESF |

The pilot was organized in three phases summarized in the figure below:

Figure 2: Phases and activities of the pilots



* “Phase 1 Pilot-Set-up” aimed at engaging the pilot administrations, understanding the correlation between the EU Competency framework and organizational structure of the institutions and agreeing on a working plan for roll out of the assessment.
* “Phase 2: Self-assessment” started with the organization of training and communication activities towards employees, followed by employee self-assessment, supervisors’ assessment of the employees and employee-supervisor meeting to discuss results.
* “Phase 3: Analysis and reporting” started with the evaluation of the institution level results of the assessment, followed by the creation of a strategy for addressing the competency gaps, which were the subject of discussion within a workshop. Evidence was used to prepare a Report on the results of the pilot, which included a Learning and Development Plan.

The outcomes of the pilots were also discussed during a TAIEX-REGIO PEER2PEER workshop with the pilot administrations organized by REGIO in Brussel and then analysed in depth to prepare the deliverables presented in the following chapters.

1. EU COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK, SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL AND USER GUIDELINES
   1. The instruments and rationale

Why an EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment tool

EU cohesion policy is delivered through shared management, enabling implementation adapted to national/regional conditions and systems. The performance of Member States and regions is to a large extent influenced by the quality of the administrative capacity of their public administration.

As cohesion policy has evolved over time the scope of know-how and competencies required to implement it has widened. In view of this the Commission has been putting more emphasis on supporting Member States in their efforts to strengthen the administrative capacity of the national and regional administrations managing the ERDF and CF through implementation of concrete actions.

In 2016 the Commission produced an EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment tool as main deliverables of the study "EU competency framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund".

The EU Competency Framework is an instrument for the management of human resources, which defines the competencies relevant for the development of both employees and institutions involved in the management and implementation of the ERDF and CF. The Self-Assessment Tool is an instrument used to evaluate the proficiency level of competencies of employees and institutions, providing evidence for competency development actions.

There is a need for an EU Competency Framework as the current programming period has introduced changes in the regulations, implying new competencies are needed. Furthermore, effective management of the ERDF and CF calls for a mix of competencies that go beyond the requirements of regulations. High turnover rates and the assigning of management functions to new institutions require systemic capacity building. Last but not least, building capacities of new staff requires a structured approach in competency development.

The EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment tool are capacity building instruments, thus the European Commission does not intend to make their use mandatory. Assessment results are for the use of institutions and shall not be used for reporting towards the Commission, nor for a cross comparison of institutions across or within countries.

For the same reason at institution level it is recommended that the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment tool are not used for the appraisal of employees, as employees would tend to provide desirable answers and assess their proficiency levels higher than in actuality. Results of the assessments of employees’ competencies should be treated with care and confidentiality, to identify competency development plans for individual employees and by aggregation for the whole institution.

The EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment ToolT

The EU Competency Framework initially developed by the Commission is customized and applicable to all key authorities involved in the management of ERDF and CF financed programmes: Coordinating Body, Managing Authority, Intermediate Body, Joint Secretariat, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority. The overview of the EU Competency Framework is presented in the picture below and further described in the paragraphs that follow:

Figure 3: Overview of the EU Competency Framework

The EU Competency Framework includes the different mixes of tasks and sub-tasks that can be assigned to programme authorities, designed taking into account the 2014-2020 period ESIF Regulations. Furthermore, it covers 3 groups of job roles, i.e. decision making level (generally the head of the ERDF/CF institution), supervisory level (e.g. heads of organizational units) and operational level employees with different degrees of seniority.

For each of the identified tasks and sub-tasks, sets of competencies that are relevant for each job role are assigned. Competencies are clustered in three groups: operational competencies are those required to perform the assigned functions according to the Regulations (e.g. Simplified Cost Options, State Aid); professional competencies are required to efficiently perform specific professional functions (e.g. Conflict handling, Problem solving); management competencies are required for employees who perform managerial functions and to a certain extent, to staff at operational level (e.g. Delegation, Leadership).

The EU Competency Framework includes also proficiency levels for each competency. A proficiency level represents the level of knowledge and skills that is desirable for such competency, defined in consideration of the type of authority, tasks and sub-tasks, and group of job roles.

The Self-Assessment Tool is built on the EU Competency Framework and its purpose is to assess available competencies of individual employees and institutions and to identify those that are lacking or need upgrading. The evidence can then be used to design and implement competency development plans for the institution and individual employees.

The first version of the Self-Assessment Tool was developed in excel, and then transposed by the Commission into a more user-friendly version using as technical solution a “software as a service”, functioning as a survey administered via web. A detailed explanation of the functioning of the Self-Assessment Tool is included in Annex 6 and summarized below.

The Self-Assessment Tool has a high level of flexibility in order to conduct tailor made assessments of employees, based on the tasks and subtasks performed in a specific authority.

Hence, the tool allows for selecting the job role, tasks and sub-tasks relevant to the employee. Based on this selection, the tool generates the competencies and proficiency levels to be assessed according to the EU Competency Framework, allowing for a tailor made assessment per employee.

The actual assessment is based on the self-assessment of the individual employee, and the assessment of the competencies of that employee by the respective supervisor. The reason for the involvement of a second person in the assessment is to ensure that biases towards own competencies are identified and discussed.

The supervisor’s final assessment is then compared to the proficiency level identified in the EU Competency Framework. This process allows the identification of the key competencies that are missing or need upgrading and linking competency gaps with developmental actions at individual level.

The results of individual self-assessments are recorded in the web-based tool and are usable for analysis at institution level. The web-based tool offers two options for data analysis, respectively built-in functions and the extraction of raw data in excel format.

The built-in function consists of data-analytics dashboards which allow for aggregated analyses of responses of individual competencies, for the authority overall or in relation to a specific task. The raw data extracted from the system can be used to create an overarching view of the development of competencies at an institution level. Data elaboration enables the generation of an analysis of each competency, by job role, task and desired proficiency level.

All the above evidence can then be used to identify competencies that require further improvement and the most appropriate competency development actions, taking into account both the current and desired levels of proficiency.

* 1. Lessons learned and adaptations made as a result of the pilot
     1. EU Competency Framework

The main lesson learned from the pilot is that the contents of the EU Competency Framework are relevant to ERDF and CF institutions independently from the Thematic Objectives of the programme managed/implemented, funding sources, financial allocation, geographic scope and Member State. The feedback collected from pilot administrations has enabled the relevance of the EU Competency Framework to be improved via a limited number of changes captured in the updated version included in Annex 1 and summarized in the figure below.

Figure 5: Final Version of the EU Competency Framework and changes compared to initial version



The following paragraphs describe the lessons learned in relation to the contents of the EU Competency Framework and how such lessons have been reflected in its updated version.

Tasks and sub-tasks

The tasks and sub-tasks of the EU Competency Framework are adequate to describe the functions that institutions need to carry out based on the ERDF and CF regulations. This applies to all types of institutions, i.e. Coordinating Body, Managing Authority, Intermediate Body, Joint Secretariat, Certifying Authority and Audit Authority.

As all tasks and sub-tasks are contained in the Self-Assessment Tool, the immediate implication is that institutions using the instruments will find an extensive list of tasks and sub-tasks some of which may not be carried out by the institution. Thus, during the employee assessment, if certain tasks and sub-tasks are not performed due to the organizational set-up or employee job-description, the idea is that such tasks and sub-tasks will simply not be selected. In this way the competency assessment can be used to focus only on those competencies linked to the tasks and sub-tasks relevant to the institution or individual.

Whilst it is entirely possible to add extra tasks and sub-tasks, this should only be considered if an institution intends to capture, in the EU Competency Framework, activities that go beyond the regulatory requirements, or if an additional level of detail is considered desirable to reflect functions performed by the institution, organizational units and employees.

Institutions that intend to add extra tasks and sub-tasks should firstly develop a tailored version of the EU Competency Framework and then update consistently the Self-Assessment Tool. If undertaking this process, institutions are advised to evaluate carefully what would be the benefits of adding extra tasks and sub-tasks versus the complexity that this would create.

Two main changes to the list of tasks and sub-tasks resulting from the pilot consisted of adding the task “Supervision of Intermediate Bodies” for Managing Authorities and Certifying Authorities, and further detailing the sub-tasks of Audit Authorities. The changes and updated EU Competency Framework are included in Annex 1.

Groups of job roles

The EU Competency Framework includes three groups of job roles. Decision makers are generally the heads of the ERDF/CF institutions, who retain final responsibility for all tasks within their institutions; supervisors are the heads of organizational units with responsibility for the implementation of one or more tasks; and operational level employees who are directly involved in the implementation of one or more sub-tasks.

The three groups of job roles are relevant to distinguishing the hierarchical relations within institutions and determining the assessment process. In the context of the competency assessment, employees are assessed by their supervisors; supervisors are assessed by the decision maker of the institution and decision makers perform a self-assessment.

The downside of these three broad categories of job-roles is that the level of seniority of employees is not captured. This has implications in particular for the job-role of operational level employees which generally includes employees with different levels of responsibility and seniority and thus with different expectations in terms of knowledge and skills.

The groups of job roles however have not been changed. Including additional groups of job roles in the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool, and linking them to tailored levels of proficiency, would create substantial complexity without the guarantee that the changes would fit the specificities of all institutions.

Operational, professional and management competencies

The main lesson learned is that the operational, professional and management competencies included in the EU Competency Framework capture, in overall terms, the knowledge and skills required by employees and institutions to deliver their respective tasks and sub-tasks. Operational competencies tend to differ by type of institution, while professional and management competencies are the same across all types of institution.

As for tasks and sub-tasks, the competencies are also relevant across all programmes, regardless of the Thematic Objectives covered, funding sources, financial allocation, geographic scope and Member State. Therefore, if tasks and sub-tasks are assigned within institutions coherently with the EU Competency Framework, and reflected in the job-descriptions of employees, then the use of the instruments will enable the identification of all relevant competencies that require improvement. The implementation of Learning and Development Plans to address such competencies will have a focused contribution to the strengthening of administrative capacity.

The list of competencies, in particular operational ones, is rather broad. Especially in the case of large institutions, where the responsibilities of employees may be narrow, some of these competencies may not apply. For this reason the Self-Assessment Tool allows such competencies to be excluded from the assessment through the selection of a “Not applicable” option.

As with the tasks and sub-tasks, institutions have the opportunity to add extra competencies to the EU Competency Framework if they consider it necessary or desirable to do so; in such cases he Self-Assessment Tool should be updated accordingly. However, institutions are advised to evaluate carefully what would be the benefits of adding competencies versus the burden it creates, organizationally and for employees, in terms of the time required to update the instruments and administer an extended assessment.

The proposed changes to the list of competencies identified through the pilot, mainly concern the streamlining of existing ones and, to a limited extent, adding new operational competencies for Managing Authorities, Intermediate Bodies and Joint Secretariats. The changes and updated EU Competency Framework are included in Annex 1.

Proficiency levels

The EU Competency Framework includes proficiency levels that capture the desired level of knowledge and skills for each competency, tailored to consideration of the type of institution, group of job-role, task and sub-task.

In the context of the pilot, proficiency levels were used in the calculation of results of competency assessments. For employees, results were displayed as competency gaps calculated as the difference between supervisor assessment and proficiency level included in the EU Competency Framework. At institution level, competency gaps were used to calculate for each competency, the number of employees with gaps for each desired level of proficiency.

The proficiency levels used during the pilot resulted in numerous negative competency gaps that were not fully acknowledged both at the level of individual assessment (by employees and their supervisors) and institution assessment (by the management of the institution). The proficiency levels were considered artificially high and thus results were useful to identify competency areas that require further improvement, rather than precise competency gaps.

The main lesson learned is that expectations in terms of proficiency levels are different across institutions and within institutions for junior and senior employees performing similar tasks; as a consequence institutions advocated for an EU Competency Framework that allows for their full customization. This feedback has been taken into account in two different ways.

Proficiency levels are no longer used for the calculation of competency gaps, nevertheless they are still included in the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment tool, to represent the medium-term learning goal for employees and institutions. Individual results are displayed in terms of employee’s self-assessed level, supervisor’s assessed level and desired proficiency level. At institution level, for each competency it is possible to view the distribution of employees according to the supervisor’s assessed level of proficiency.

Second, institutions have the opportunity to adjust the proficiency levels of the EU Competency Framework to reflect expectations of management and transpose those changes in a tailored version of the Self-Assessment Tool. This option however is not recommended due to the fact that competency gaps are no longer calculated and that the changes in the Self-Assessment Tool create an additional burden for the institutions.

Another issue that emerged during the pilot was that the existence of different proficiency scales (0-3 for operational competencies and 0-4 for professional and management competencies) made the assessment more challenging for employees. In order to address this comment, a single 0-4 scale has been introduced for all groups of competencies. As for operational level employees, the proficiency level has been raised to 4 only for few competencies under each task and sub-task, the overall effect is in lowering the requirements for operational level employees. The description of the new scales is included in Annex 1.

* + 1. Self-assessment tool

The Self-Assessment Tool is the job-aid used to assess the proficiency level of competencies of employees and institutions. It is developed using a technical solution in the form of a “software as a service” functioning as an online survey form. There is a survey form for each type of institution, consistent with the contents of the EU Competency Framework.

The pilot revealed that the tool is fully functional, with over 300 assessments completed and few technical questions raised. Pilot administrations also provided specific feedback on the functionalities of the tool, which were taken into account to develop the updated version. The sections below describe the functioning of the Tool according to the phases of pilot set-up, competency assessment, analysis and reporting. The main lessons learned are highlighted as well as how they have been transposed in the updated Tool included in Annex 2.

Assessment Set-up

Each administration that decides to use the Self-Assessment can obtain a copy from the Commission, along with a username and password. The copy is accessed via web and there are no requirements in terms of hardware, software or programming knowledge, which makes the tool usable by any administration.

As pilot administrations considered the issue of data treatment a sensitive one, the landing page of the Self-Assessment Tool now includes a disclaimer confirming that assessment data are for their exclusive use and won’t be accessed by the Commission or any other EU Institution. Furthermore, as assessment data are stored on the cloud of the service provider the applicable data protection policies have also been clarified[[1]](#footnote-2).

As mentioned in the previous section, administration may decide to customize the EU Competency Framework, by adding or deleting tasks, sub-tasks, competencies or changing proficiency levels. In such case customization of the Self-Assessment Tool has to be performed, by modifying the contents of the survey form. While customization is feasible it is not a recommended option, as modifying the assessment form is a time consuming operation with limited added value considering the exhaustive contents of the instruments.

Furthermore, the tool is structured flexibly: if any of the tasks, sub-tasks or competencies do not apply to an institution and its employees in considering the scope of functions or employee job role, they can be excluded from the assessment. In such case, the decision maker or supervisors can instruct employees on the appropriate selection of contents or this can be done directly by employees during the self-assessment.

Last it should be noted that the contents of the Tool are set-up in English. For ensuring an easier roll-out of the instrument across member states, a “Glossary” covering tasks, sub-tasks, competencies, explanation of proficiency levels could be made available on REGIO’s site or in alternative future versions of the Self-Assessment Tool could be made available in all languages of Member States.

Assessment roll-out

The competency assessment is initiated by administering among operational level employees a link to the online “survey form” which contains the competency assessment. The employee logs onto the form by generating a username and password and starts the self-assessment, which can be completed within less than one hour.

The employee is first prompted to provide primary information concerning job role, tasks and sub-tasks, based on which a list of competencies is generated, consistent with the contents of the EU Competency Framework.

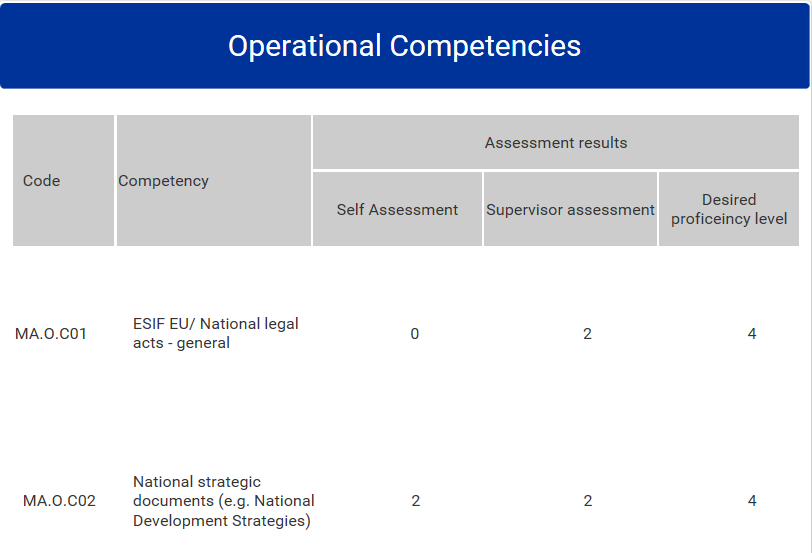
A drop-down list with proficiency scales, including a “Not Applicable” option allows employees to rapidly perform the self-assessment, and a commentary box can be used to provide qualitative information related to the self-assessment or development needs. It is important to stress that employees do not need to possess all the listed competencies, and that using the “Not Applicable” option whenever relevant, allows employees to focus development actions only on the competencies that matter.

Once the employee completes the assessment, he/she provides the username and password to the respective supervisor to perform an assessment of his/her competencies. The two assessments have been clearly separated in the new version of the Tool. On the other hand employees and supervisors have to use the same username and password; under this circumstances, trust and understanding of the purpose of the instrument, should deter from manipulation of results on behalf of either party.

Once the supervisor assessment is completed, the Tool generates the results of the employee assessment. Based on the feedback of institutions competency gaps are no longer calculated; rather for each competency results showcase the employee’s assessed level of proficiency, supervisor’s assessment and medium-term learning goals corresponding to the proficiency level set in the EU Competency Framework (see figure below).

The experience of the pilot confirms the usefulness of discussing the results in an employee-supervisor meeting. Such occasions serve to clarify any discrepancy between the respective assessments, modify the supervisor’s assessment where appropriate (as this is used for the purpose of institution level analysis), and note down in the system conclusions and follow-up actions. After the discussion the employee assessment is closed, results are no longer editable and an assessment report can be generated by the Tool.

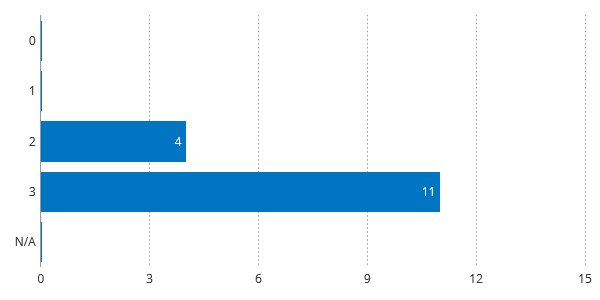
Figure 6: Results of the employee assessment



Analysis and preparation of Learning and Development Plans

The results of individual assessments are recorded in the web-based tool and are usable for analysis at institution level, for which the Tool offers two options, i.e. a data analytics dashboard and the extraction of raw data in excel from the system.

The data-analytics dashboard allows aggregated analyses for individual competencies which are intuitive and easy to use. In practical terms it is possible to calculate for each competency the distribution of the number of employees by (supervisor assessed) proficiency level:

Figure 7: Institution results for Competency MA.O.C1 - ESIF EU/ national legal acts

For a broader view of the level of competency development within the institution, raw data of individual assessments can be extracted from the Tool in excel format and used to generate analyses using semi-automated excel templates. This operation is quick to perform and does not require advanced knowledge of excel functions.

There are two types of analyses. The first analysis presents for each assessed competency, the total number of employees assessed for such competency and their distribution according to the supervisor’s assessment. This provides a clear view of the overall level of development of competencies within the institution; however there is no information concerning the medium term development goals of employees, which makes the identification of the most appropriate development actions more complex.

Table 3: Institution level analysis – Supervisor assessed proficiency levels



The second type of analysis is more complete. The distribution of employees according to the supervisor’s assessment takes into account the desired level of proficiency of each employee.

Figure 8 : Institution level analysis – Supervisor assessed proficiency levels vs desired levels



For instance in the example in the figure above, there are a total of six employees who are expected to have a desired level of proficiency 2 for the operational competency “MA.O.C43 Knowledge of Engineering relevant for the sector”. Among these six, there are three employees who have already achieved the medium-term development goal, and three who have already exceeded it.

To conclude, the Self-Assessment Tool and the semi-automated excel templates for institution analysis are user friendly and effective instruments. The following section explains the main points to note in considering their roll-out at institution level and how to use the results for building Learning and Development Plans.

* + 1. User Guidelines

The User Guidelines included in Annex 3 are the key guidance document for implementation of the instruments at administration level. It is recommended that they are carefully reviewed by the employees of the administration who will be in charge of the implementation of the instruments before the competency assessment starts.

The User Guidelines integrate an in depth explanation of the functioning of the self-assessment tool with the sequence of phases, activities, steps and templates required to carry out an assessment. They also include suggestions on what institutions should / should not do in the implementation of the instruments, derived from the experience of the pilots.

The Guidelines also include a technical section, describing the steps required for modification of tasks, sub-tasks, competencies and proficiency levels inside the Tool. Annexed to the Guidelines is a template for preparing Learning and Development Plans which institutions are recommended to use to consolidate and follow-up on the results of the assessment.

The following paragraphs summarize the key points to note for administrations when implementing the instruments, which are further detailed in the User Guidelines.

Assessment set-up

During this phase, the commitment of the management of the institution to implement the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool is translated in an appropriate organization. The key success aspects to be considered are:

* The management of the administration should commit to active involvement throughout the assessment from an early stage. Decision Makers and Supervisors are in the best position to understand the links between results of the competency assessment, programme performance and development needs of the institution.
* A lean pilot implementation team should be appointed. It is advisable that the team includes a supervisor from the ERDF/CF administration team with responsibility for day to day implementation and a representative from the human resources function to ensure transparency of the process. The team should familiarize with the instruments before start of the assessment.
* For the competency assessment to be most relevant it is recommended that it covers all the operational level employees of the institutions and supervisors.
* It is recommended that the administrations do not perform any customization of the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool. As explained earlier in this report, this would add considerable complexity and limited value. However should the administration desire to perform a customization it would need to be completed at this stage and tested before the assessment starts.
* Finally it is recommended that a work-plan be established for the roll-out of the competency assessment. Based on the experience of the pilots it can be implemented in 2 months or less. In defining the period and duration of the self-assessment, the institution may consider (1) Employee workload and compliance with other deadlines of the institution; (2) Link to other activities, such as preparation of training / hiring plans.
* Equally, taking into account possible resource constraints, institutions should consider whether external support is required in order to ensure an effective and efficient completion of the assessment. If support is needed, financial resources could be committed from the Technical Assistance budget of the operational programme.

Assessment roll-out

This Phase starts with training and communication activities targeting employees of the institution, followed by the self-assessment of employees and supervisor assessment of employees. An employee-supervisor meeting is then organized to discuss the results of the assessment, strong areas and areas of improvement that can be addressed via competency development actions. The results of the individual assessments are then finalized.

The key success aspects to be considered are:

* Training should target supervisors and focus on their role in terms of review of employee assessment and approach to the discussion meeting. Communication should target all employees with the aim of informing them about the objectives and benefits of the assessment. In smaller administrations the activities can be organized jointly.
* Employees and supervisors should approach the competency assessment in the knowledge that this is not an appraisal and with mutual trust. Assessments should be performed objectively and proficiency levels selected taking into account the description of the proficiency scale.
* Changes to the respective assessments should not be made before the supervisors and employees meet. The discussion meeting between employee and supervisor gives the opportunity to perform any adjustment to the results of the assessment. It is strongly recommended that this discussion takes place as a face to face meeting as it is an effective way to identify the competency development needs and actions and to strengthen relations between staff.

Analysis and preparation of Learning and Development Plans

At this stage individual results based on supervisors’ assessments are aggregated to generate analysis at the level of the institution. The role of management is very important for selecting the competencies that require further improvement and designing a Learning and Development Plan.

The key success aspects to be considered are:

* Extract raw data in excel format from the Self-Assessment Tool and use the semi-automated templates in order to obtain an overarching view of the level of development of competencies within the administration.
* The decision makers and supervisors of the institution should be involved in the analysis of results to confirm the competencies that require improvement and select the most appropriate competency development methods. A workshop discussion aimed with this objective is a good practice and national schools of public administration may be involved to explore available learning offers relevant to the ERDF and CF.
* In order to facilitate the selection of competency development methods and actions, a methodological framework has been developed and is presented in the figure below:

Figure 9: Framework for the identification of competency development methods and actions



* The principles of the methodological framework are summarized as follows:
* **Training is the preferred option for competency development**. The selection of the most appropriate training method should take into account the level of proficiency to be achieved. Higher levels of proficiency are associated with more interactive methods. For training organization there are two options: i.e. attendance at existing training events or the organization of customized events for the institution. The choice should be made taking into account the "Value for money" based on 1) Relevance; and 2) Cost (people to be trained \* training cost per participant).
* **Recruitment is suggested** when the current level of development of a competency is low compared to a desired one, and there is an urgent need to close the gap. Recruitment should be considered mainly for internalizing resources with a proficiency level 3 or 4 to close a specific competency gap that cannot be filled quickly by means of training.
* **Outsourcing, intended as the sourcing of external expertise** to address specific competency gaps, should always be considered in correlation with one or more tasks or sub-tasks. For strategic tasks the institution may consider outsourcing as a temporary solution only until internal competencies are sufficiently developed. It is also advisable that competency development activities are included in the scope of outsourcing. For non-strategic tasks outsourcing can be considered as a long-term option, but a minimum level of competency should also be developed within the institution.
* **Participation in learning networks:** there are a number of learning networks linked to the competencies, which are established at European Level and operated either by the Commission or academic institutions[[2]](#footnote-3). Participation should be considered as a complementary learning option to those highlighted above.
* **Good practices:** there are good practices in competency development which are available on the REGIO’s site[[3]](#footnote-4). Similarly to participation in learning networks, the adoption of good practices should be considered as complementary learning option.
* At the end of the pilot, institutions are recommended to prepare a **Learning and Development Plan** synthetizing the results of the pilot and the agreed follow-up actions. It is good practice to align the planning of resources from the Technical Assistance budget of the operational programme managed/implemented by the institution to the activities included in the plan.
* In occasion of the preparation of the Plan, institutions could also reflect if there are any adjustments of the organizational structure that should be considered based on the list of tasks and sub-tasks included in the EU Competency Framework. This would allow to further clarify the allocations of roles and responsibilities among organizational units.

1. Recommendations for implementation of the instruments
   1. Recommendations for the Commission
      1. Implementation and promotion strategy

The Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool have been developed by REGIO with the objective of providing ERDF/CF institutions with an instrument that can contribute to the improvement of administrative capacity. A wide implementation of the instruments across institutions and Member States, will eventually contribute to the achievement of Cohesion Policy objectives.

REGIO should therefore define an implementation and promotion strategy aimed at ensuring the widest use of the instruments. This means in practical terms defining (1) what is the set of coherent, mutually reinforcing activities that should be put in place by REGIO for achieving this objective and (2) how value is created for Institutions and the Commission.

In order to design this strategy, a number of strategic analysis frameworks[[4]](#footnote-5) have been applied to understand the current set-up, define the strategy of REGIO and provide recommendation for its implementation. The analysis frameworks cover:

* **Technological approach,** as a means for value creation.
* **Market approach** to build widespread use.
* **Organizational** aspects on the side of the Commission.

Strategy objective

The recommended strategy for implementation and promotion of the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool should have the objective of ensuring their widest diffusion and continued relevance for the capacity improvement needs of ERDF/ CF institutions. The specific objectives of this strategy may be defined as:

* Providing instruments relevant to the needs of institutions.
* Achieving the widest uptake of the instruments.
* Further developing competencies in institutions.

In order to achieve this objective the suggested approach is (1) to ensure that the necessary organization and support system within REGIO and Commission services are in place, (2) create a platform in DG REGIO where the EU Competency Framework is accessible with other capacity building instruments, (3) develop a community of practitioners to create greater value for institutions, (4) ensure IT support is available for institutions and (5) provide appropriate assistance for REGIO for implementing a “Monitoring and Evaluation Plan” for the instruments, (6) integrate the promotion of the instruments in REGIO’s broader communication strategy and (7) develop specific contents for competency upgrade. The elements are further developed below.

Recommendation n. 1: Organization and support system within DG REGIO

DG REGIO should ensure that there is appropriate organization and support in place to implement and promote the EU Competency Framework based on:

* **Leadership commitment:** the EU Competency Framework should be defined as a strategic priority for REGIO in the coming years in an appropriate document, signalling the relevance of the instrument. The document should state the vision of DG REGIO, e.g. “*Ensuring the widest uptake of the EU Competency Framework and its future versions until 2020*”.
* **Key activities:** a planning document should also identify one or more of the actions included in these recommendations and the respective implementation timeline.
* **Human Resources:** responsibility for implementation of the EU Competency Framework and its implementation and promotion strategy should continue to be allocated to the Competence Centre for Administrative Capacity Building. The Centre should continue to be assisted by the Geographic Units for coordination with Member States and if necessary an internal cooperation protocol should be signed with the IT services of the Commission to ensure assistance is available and prompt.
* **Financial Resources**: as some of the activities may be outsourced by REGIO (e.g. components of promotion strategy; IT helpdesk) the necessary financial resources should be available in the upcoming years, ideally under a framework contract for rapid contracting.

Recommendation n. 2: Development of an EU Competency Framework Platform

The EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool should be combined with the **complementary capacity building tools** developed by REGIO as this will make their use more appealing. The instruments should be easily accessible from a repository on the webpage of REGIO. The complementary offer is described in the table below:

Table 5 Contents of the Competency Development Platform

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| EU Competency Framework   * Online request form * EU Competency Framework in excel * Data analysis templates   Instructions and enablers   * Instruction Guidelines * Learning and Development Plan * Glossaries in languages of Member States   Social Network   * Online communities for institutions | Capacity Building instruments   * TAIEX Peer2Peer Initiative * Trainings / Link to other sections * Updated News feeds on REGIO trainings   Promotion materials   * Testimonials * Brochures * Success stories   Technical Help-Desk   * Online support services for technical issues |

Recommendation n. 3: Social Network development

DG REGIO has also made steps towards the creation of a **network of institutions** around the topic of EU Competency Framework by means of the TAIEX Peer2Peer Initiative workshop and by providing pilot institutions access to a Facebook page where they can freely communicate and exchange experience. This is a valuable step towards the **creation of a virtuous network cycle** where increased network size, leads to increased network benefits for participants, increased credibility and finally increased adoption.

It is recommended that REGIO creates a **community of EU Competency Framework practitioners** either by promoting a new community or developing a dedicated channel for instance on the **RegioNetwork Yammer group**[[5]](#footnote-6). The greater the network the greater the benefits for participants and the higher the adoption; discussions in the community can be used as testimonials on the main page.

Recommendation n. 4: Establishing an technical Help-Desk

We understand that REGIO intends to implement a Technical Help-Desk for supporting institutions in trouble shooting issues related to the implementation of instruments. The service will be available free of charge for institutions and cover additional support to the one already accessible via the provider or the software service:

* Customizations to local versions.
* Online assistance (e.g. mail and phone).
* Correcting errors reported by institutions.
* Implementing updates to the instruments.

Recommendation n. 5: Maintaining an open innovation system

REGIO will release shortly a version of the instruments usable by institutions, and incremental updates over time taking into consideration the feedback of institutions and technological developments in an open, innovative approach. REGIO has already started this process by means of the pilots and the TAIEX Peer2Peer Initiative workshop and should continue to do so.

The feedback from institutions should be captured by organizing annual feedback sessions with users in Brussels, listening to the discussion taking place on the social network of REGIO, promoting open feedback from users and recommendations derived from the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.

Recommendation n. 6: Implementing a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

A multi-annual “Monitoring, Evaluation and Updating Plan” should be developed, aimed at:

* Monitoring the progress of the Implementation and Promotion Strategy;
* Evaluating the performance of the Strategy and of the progress towards the achievement of its objectives, including recommended changes.
* Providing recommendations for the periodic update of the EU Competency Framework and recommending improvements to the Self-Assessment Tool to be implemented by the Technical Help-Desk.

An indicative structure of the monitoring indicators is included in the table below:

Table 5: Result indicators, output indicators and sources of information

| Results | Output | Source |
| --- | --- | --- |
| EU Competency Framework instruments updates relevant to institutions | Number of updates to the EU Competency Framework | REGIO |
| Number of updates to the Self-Assessment Tool | REGIO |
| Number of requests for support | Technical help-desk |
| Number of satisfied institutions | Survey  Social Media listening |
| Widest utilization of instruments is achieved | Activities of the promotion strategy implemented | REGIO |
| Number of institutions using the instruments | Self-Assessment Tool |
| Improved capacity building | Aggregated results of the self-assessment | Survey |
| Instruments developed by REGIO relevant to the EU Competency framework | REGIO |

Based on the above indicators, the Commission could consider preparation of the following:

* Annual Progress Reports of the “Strategy for Implementation and Promotion of the Instruments”
* Annual Evaluations on relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, impact of instruments.
* Updates to the contents of the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool based on the recommendations of the evaluations and implemented by the Help-desk.

Recommendation n.7. Promotion of the instruments on behalf of the Commission

REGIO has been promoting the EU Competency Framework since the first study which is available on the Commission Site, the tools have already been presented at the European Week of Regions and Cities in 2015 and there are different presentations related to the EU Competency Framework appearing in web-searches.

It is recommended that the Commission continues promoting the instruments via different tools and that the EU Competency Framework is included in the Communication Strategy for 2018 either as a self-standing priority or embedded in the other actions of the Commission. Based on the learning of the pilot implementation and taking into account the communication instrument of REGIO, the following instruments are recommended:

* **Roadshow promotion:** a first round of promotion should be initiated by means of presentations with Coordinating Bodies of Member States (or Managing Authorities). Creating awareness and engagement at national level could facilitate implementation in the national context.
* **Digital instruments:** The institutions that have piloted the EU Competency Framework, did so on a voluntary basis. They can be compared to the “Innovators” of the “Innovation adoption lifecycle”[[6]](#footnote-7). Under this perspective, the institutions most likely to implement the instruments are the young and dynamic ones, in the context of Cohesion Policy. Older and more traditional institutions are likely to adopt the instruments only once most others institutions have done so. Using the digital instruments is expected to be the best promotion strategy to target the early adopters and early majority of institutions.
  + Inforegio website: a dedicated page on REGIO’s site should be the main gateway to access the instruments and the complementary assets.
  + Regional Policy social media accounts (Twitter, Flickr, Youtube, Google+, Pinterest, Facebook, LinkedIn): should be used to promote the instrument and updates
  + RegioNetwork platform: should be the basis for the social network built around the EU Competency Framework.
* Events & exhibitions:
  + The instruments will be presented at the European Week of Regions and Cities (EWRC) in October 2017 and two pilot institutions will also be presenting their experience. Presence at the EWRC should be secured also in the years ahead and institutions that are implementing the instrument could be invited to share their experience.
  + In addition, presentations could be made at different Commission events and exhibitions/stands as well as at events organised by third parties.
* Publications and information products
  + Panorama magazine (subscribers 26,500; 23 languages) could be used to present an extended article about the EU Competency Framework, the experience of the pilot including the Peer2Peer workshop and the broader implementation Strategy.
  + Thematic publications and studies, RegioFlash email alerts could also be used to provide coverage about the initiative.
* Multipliers
  + INFORM network (communication officers from Managing Authorities), Mailing lists, and where appropriate the Europe Direct (Information Centres and Contact Centres) may also be considered
    1. Competency development activities

Recommendation n. 8. Tailored learning offer of the Commission

One of the basic principles concerning the implementation of the EU Competency Framework across Member States is that the results of individual institution assessments will not be visible to REGIO or any other European Institution, unless the ERDF/CF institution decides to make them public.

On the other hand, the pilot showed that the aggregated analysis of results across institutions and their presentation in an anonymous way can provide insightful information (1) on the level of development of competencies across Member States and (2) on the learning methods that institutions find more effective to address competency gaps, which in the case of the pilot pointed firmly to the organization/attendance to training events.

Thus, the information gathered anonymously by REGIO through the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan can be used to adjust its competency development offer so as to better address the emerging needs of institutions. This option appears to be more implementable in the short term compared to the development of an overarching learning curriculum covering all competencies and proficiency levels[[7]](#footnote-8).

In support of this recommendation, the following paragraphs include the evidence from the pilot. They present an aggregated view of the institution level assessments followed by an overview of the selected learning methods as captured in the Learning and Development Plans that were prepared for institutions during the pilots.

Aggregated results of competency assessments

During the implementation of the pilot, results of the competency assessment at the level of institution were presented in the form of competency gaps; however institutions considered that the identified competency gaps had limited accuracy due to the limited relevance of proficiency levels.

These results were therefore taken into account only in part by institutions when selecting the competencies to be further improved and including them in the Learning and Development Plan. In order to have a more accurate view of the competencies considered problematic across piloted institutions, three indicators were calculated for each competency:

* The number of institutions that selected a competency for improvement in the Learning and Development Plan. Competencies are ranked according to this number.
* The average supervisor assessment expressed according to the proficiency scale (0-3 for operational competencies and 0-4 for management and professional competencies).
* The number of employees with a competency gap for such competency.

The results are presented jointly for MAs, IB and JS as the EU Competency Framework used for these types of institutions has the same contents. The results for the Audit Authority are presented separately. Separate analyses are prepared based on the job role of employees. For the purpose of synthesis, the tables include only competencies that were selected by more than three institutions.

Managing Authority, Intermediate Body and Joint Secretariat

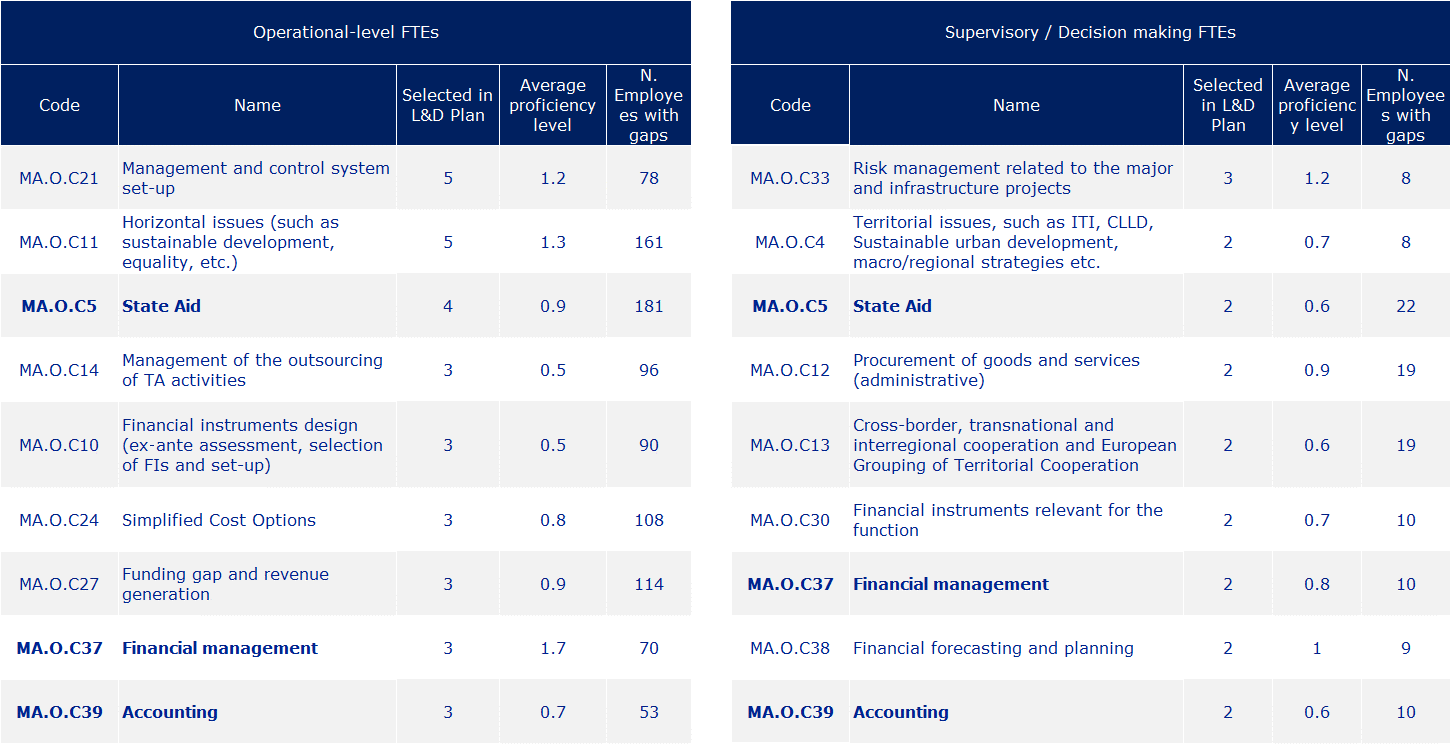
* Operational Competencies

For the operational job role, there are nine competencies that have been selected by at least three of the eight institutions[[8]](#footnote-9), which also present an average supervisor assessment between “Level 1 - Awareness” and “Level 2 - Trained”, and number of employees with competency gaps ranging between 50 and 180.

When comparing results with the supervisory/decision making level role, it can be observed that there are three common competencies selected for both job roles, respectively “MA.O.C5 State Aid”, “MA.O.C.27 Financial Management” and “MA.O.C39 Accounting”.

As a preliminary conclusion, the aggregated results of the competency assessment for MA, IB and JS in terms of average proficiency levels and number of employees with gaps are coherent and explain the choices of institutions concerning competencies to be improved.

Table 6 – Analysis of Operational competencies

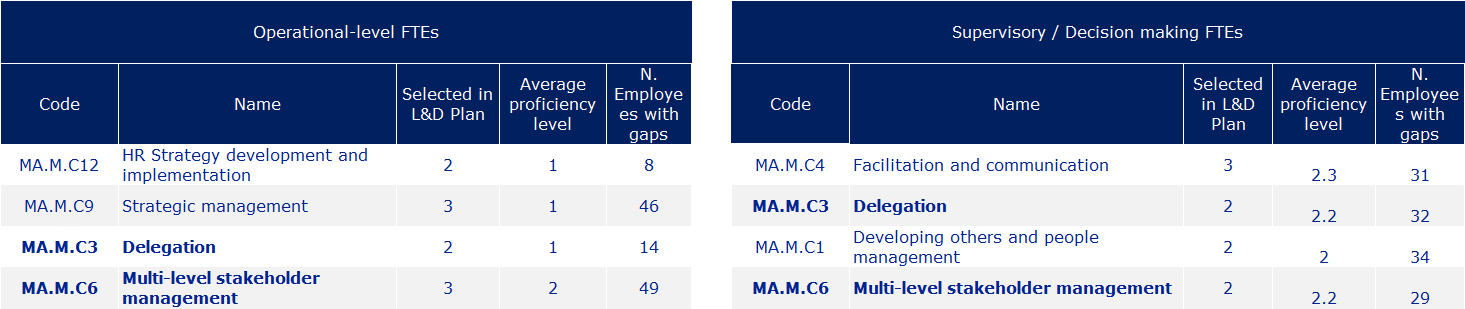


* Management competencies

The total number of employees assessed is significantly lower for this group of competencies and a smaller number of institutions chose to address management competencies in their Learning and Development Plans.

Out of the 12 management competencies, the table below presents the four competencies selected for further development by at least two pilot institutions[[9]](#footnote-10). In this case “MA.M.C3 Delegation” and “MA.M.C6 Multi-level stakeholder management” have been selected consistently across job roles.

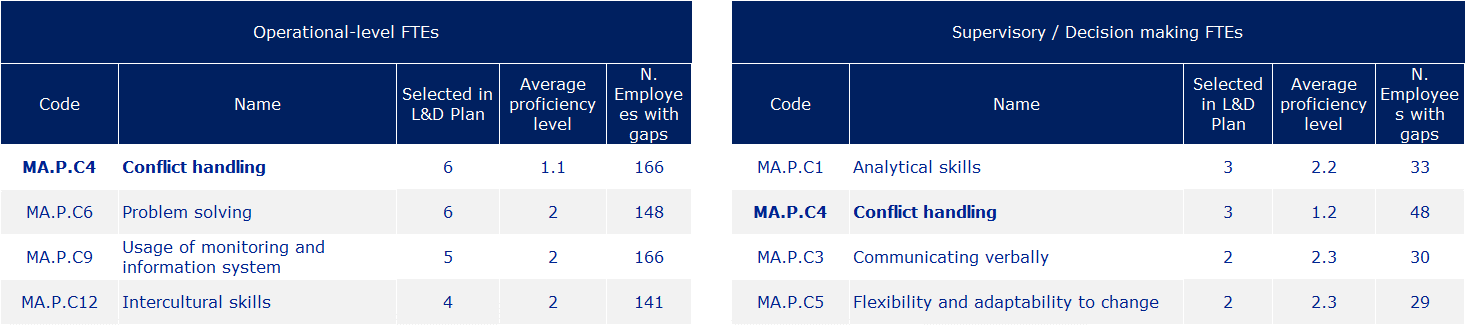
Table 7 – Analysis of Management competencies



* Professional competencies

Out of the twelve professional competencies, two were selected by five institutions for further development, namely “MA.P.C4 Conflict Handling” and “MA.P.C6 Problem solving”[[10]](#footnote-11). Among the twelve professional competencies, only one was selected for both job roles, i.e. “MA.P.C4 Conflict handling”.

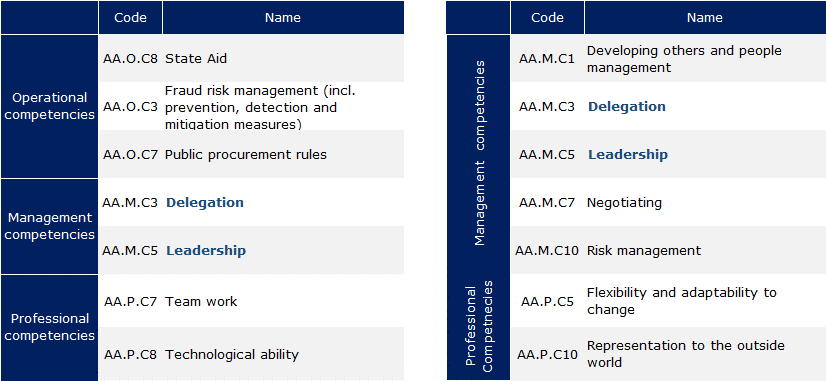
Table 8 – Analysis of Professional competencies



Audit Authority

The Audit Authority, similarly to the other institutions, considered the results of the competency assessment as of limited relevance due to the limited relevance of the proficiency levels. Nevertheless, a number of competencies where selected for further improvement. As a single Audit Authority is involved, the number and percentage of employees with gaps is not included in order to ensure the confidentiality of results.

Table 9 - Audit Authority selection of competencies for further development

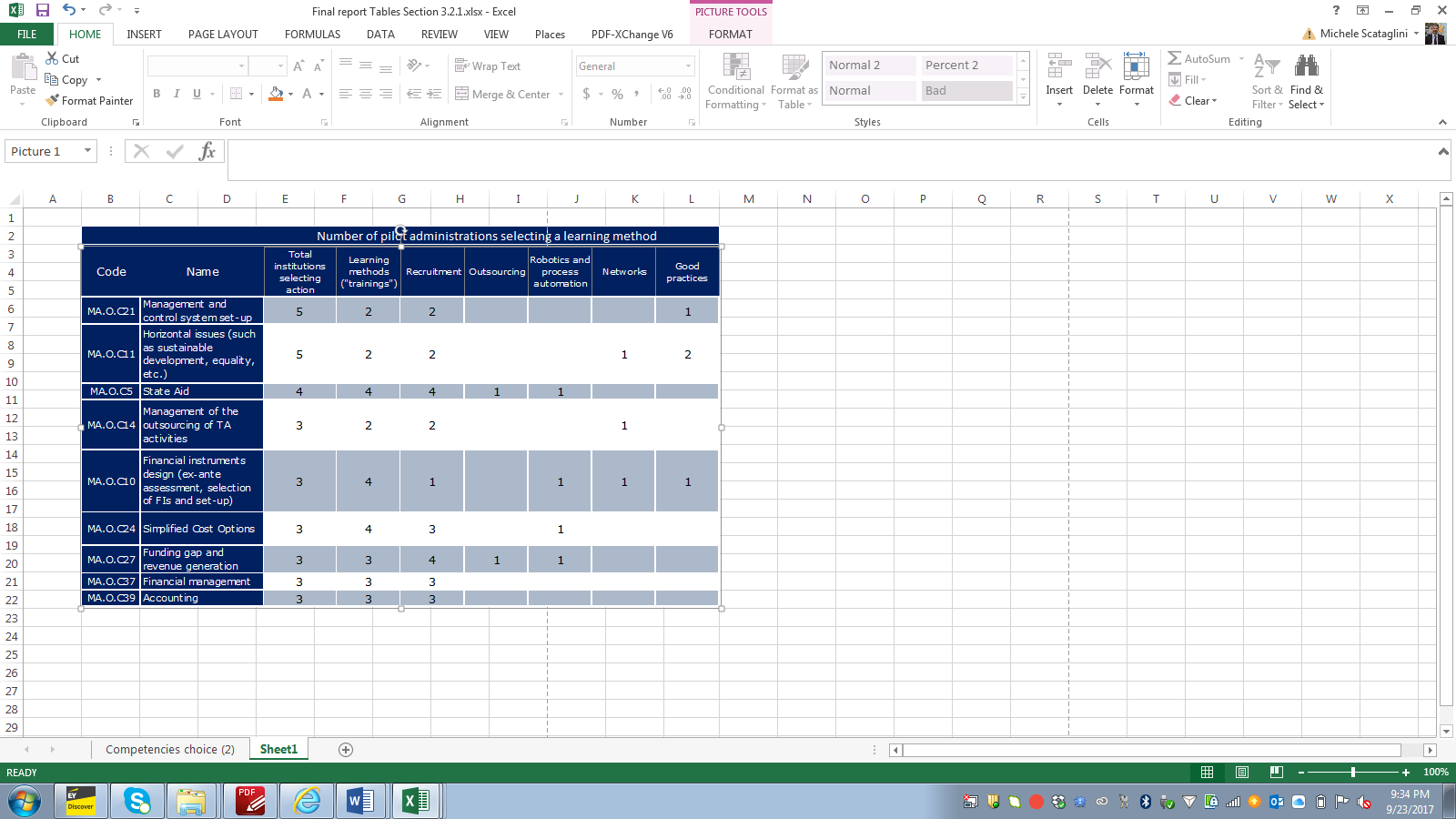


Overview of Learning and Development Plans

The Learning and Development Plans developed for the pilot institutions captured the competency development actions selected for addressing competency gaps.

For the competencies presented in Table 6 – Analysis of Operational competencies, below we summarize the competency development actions chosen by institutions.

Table 10 Immediate actions to address operational competency gaps



The table and insight from discussions with institution reveals that:

* Training is the action most commonly selected by institutions.
* When Recruitment was selected, pilot institutions indicated that they intend to include the missing competencies in the job descriptions for future hiring. In the case of some public administrations however, the procedures for the hiring of the new staff do not allow detailing competency requirements to a level of detail comparable to the contents of the EU Competency Framework.
* Outsourcing, intended as the sourcing of external expertise to address to address specific competency gaps has been selected by institutions in particular for “MA.O.C5 State Aid”, “MA.O.C10 Financial instruments design (ex‑ante assessment, selection of FIs and set-up)”, “MA.O.C24 Simplified Cost Options”, “MA.O.C27 Funding gap and revenue generation”.
* Another option for addressing competency gaps is Robotics Process Automation (RPA), i.e. the introduction of customized software for performing repetitive sub-tasks. Though part of the pilot institutions positively considered integrating RPA into their activities, none of them was able to decide on the full potential of RPA in filling in competency gaps. Interested institutions raised the need of a detailed feasibility study to assess the ways in which RPA can assist their operations.
* The large majority of institutions is already using EC professional Networks for developing and strengthening competencies to a varying degree. Yet, when presented with the full-length of theme-specific professional networks[[11]](#footnote-12), institutions indicated that they do not take full advantage of these and expressed their intention to further participate in existing networks.
* A small share of pilot institutions have identified suitable Good practices methods they can use for addressing competency gaps. Example good practices that were selected by pilot institutions include the organization of internal training sessions and induction trainings for new staff. 
  1. Recommendations for Member States

The use of the EU Competency Framework is not mandatory, i.e. there is no compliance requirement in the ESIF Regulations; it is a capacity building instrument and should be treated as such at the level of Member Sate, following the same principles of implementation of other capacity building actions.

The following paragraphs include a number of recommendations for Member Sates organized in terms of immediate actions and medium-long term actions which are based on the experience of the pilot and the Learning and Development Plans.

* + 1. Immediate actions

Recommendation n.1 – Approach at national level

We have recommended REGIO to organize workshops at national level with Coordinating Bodies (or Managing Authorities) in order to present the instruments. In case the instruments are deemed relevant, the national authority could consider further dissemination of the instrument as well as establishing a feedback mechanism on training needs. More specifically:

* **Dissemination activities:** the national authority could consider including the EU Competency Framework in its communication strategies towards ERDF/CF institutions or national capacity building plans where available.

As part of the dissemination strategy, promotional materials, training materials and guidelines could be translated into national languages, the instruments could be presented on the occasion of national meetings and institutions could be invited to participate in the network of practitioners promoted by REGIO.

* **Feedback mechanisms:** the national authority could establish a regular feedback mechanism from institutions that implement the instruments, in order to collect needs in terms of competency development actions. In response, competency development actions could be organized at national level and some specific needs related to professional and management competencies could be addressed in coordination with Schools of Public Administration. We understand institutions may not be willing to provide detailed results of the assessments, so an option would be collecting results via an anonymous survey.

Recommendation n. 2 - Approach at programme level

The implementation of the EU Competency Framework will be even more beneficial if extended to all stakeholders of the management and control system of an operational programme:

* MAs, CAs and AAs could discuss how to approach implementation, for example within the Monitoring Committee or other Working Groups organized at programme level.
* The implementation of the Tool could be made mandatory or optional to institutions, including Intermediate Bodies, in line with the approach to other capacity building tools.
* Institutions could opt for a coordinated approach, aligned in terms of timing and with consolidation and sharing of results at programme level.
* Coordination could be facilitated by creating an ad-hoc working group of the representatives of the respective institutions. Participation could be extended to Schools for Public Administration and authorities in charge of the management of Technical Assistance operational programmes (if the programme does not include Technical Assistance budget).
* This would allow for the organization of competency development actions at programme level, for the benefit of individual employees, institutions and the programme, allowing the most efficient use of financial resources from Technical Assistance.

Recommendation n. 3 – Quick start at institution level

At institution level implementation should be coordinated by the head of the ERDF/CF authority. Implementation will raise a number of questions related to governance of the instruments, coordination with human resources function, and procedures. However, institutions may consider answering all these questions after a first cycle of implementation, as most of the answers will come from the hands on experience. Thus for the first cycle:

* Implementation shall be coordinated by the head of the ERDF/CF institution, but the human resources function should be involved from an early stage.
* The implementation team in charge of the day-to-day organization of activity should involve staff from the institution as well as the human resources function. This will also help create greater trust among employees.
* The capacity building purpose of the instruments should be clearly communicated and kept in mind throughout the assessment. It is recommended that the competency assessment be implemented independently from staff appraisals or other human resources processes.

Recommendation n. 4 – Assess the need for Technical Assistance Support

The pilot experience showed that the tool is user friendly and that institutions did not face any particular challenge in implementation. However institutions that face time / resource constraints should consider external support, for an efficient and effective roll out of the EU Competency Framework.

Recommendation n. 5 – Roll-out according to the instructions

At institution level the EU Competency Framework should be rolled out following the User Guidelines. It is highly recommended that any adjustments to the contents of the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool are avoided, or kept to an absolute minimum, as these could create additional burdens for the institution with limited return in terms of added value or benefits. If adjustments are nevertheless considered necessary, it is important that these are fully evaluated before implementation to ensure that the benefits outweigh the burdens involved. Management involvement in the analysis of competencies and selection of development actions is of the highest importance.

Recommendation n. 6 – Formalize results in a Learning and Development Plan

It is recommended that at the end of the competency assessment cycle, the institution prepares a Learning and Development Plan and that there is accountability for following-up on its contents. The Plan should include (1) scope and methodology of the self-assessment; (2) institution level results of the competency assessment; (3) immediate actions for competency development; (4) a competency development roadmap and (5) considerations of the medium-long term use of the instruments.

* + 1. Medium-long term use of the instrument

Recommendation n. 7 – Responsibility, implementation procedures and resources

After the first implementation cycle, institutions will have an opinion on the future use of the instruments. For institutions that intend to further use the tool, it is recommended that the Learning and Development Plan includes considerations concerning who will be responsible for the instruments, implementation procedures and resource requirements.

The aspects are further explained below based on the experience of the pilot:

* In terms of responsibility there are three possible scenarios:
  + In the first scenario the ERDF/CF authority is responsible to coordinate implementation of the competency assessment, this may apply in particular when HR function is located in the hosting public institution.
  + In the second scenario, HR Function of ERDF/CF institution is responsible for coordination of the competency assessments.
  + Last but not least, Coordinating Bodies, where they exist, could be responsible for coordinating implementation of the competency assessments. This would ensure consistent implementation of the instruments and synergies in the planning of competency development actions.
* Procedures: there are two main aspects to be considered when formalizing the approach to implementation:
  + Implementation cycles: assessments should be organized at least once a year and changes in competency development monitored across cycles.
  + Customizations to the EU Competency Framework: should the institutions decide to customize the tool, customization needs should be assessed yearly.
* Resources: in terms of human resources the ERDF/CF institution should consider assigning responsibilities to one person, who would be dedicated part time to the implementation of the assessment and supported by a resource from the HR function. In terms of financial resources, the need relates to the implementation of the competency development actions, which should be covered by the Technical Assistance resources of the programme.

Recommendation n. 8 – Competency based human resources strategy

Institutions are invited to reflect at the end of the first cycle on possible long term use of the instrument to develop a competency based HR strategy.

A competency based HR strategy extends beyond the use of the EU Competency Framework as an instrument to assess competency gaps and defining competency development actions, it fully leverages on the potential of the instruments for attracting, developing, motivating and retaining productive and engaged employees as presented in the Figure overleaf, with the exception of appraisal processes.

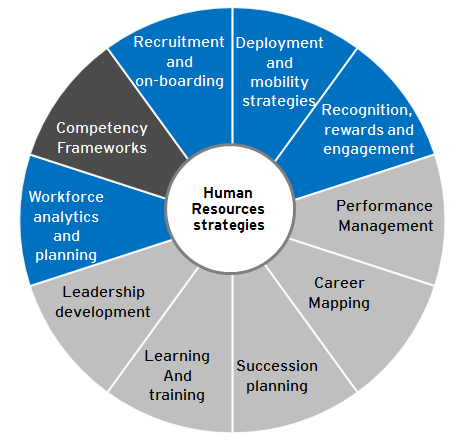
Institutions involved in the pilot considered the following long-term uses:

Figure 10 – Competency based HR strategy

* + Workforce planning for different phases in the programme lifecycle.
* Since different phases incorporate different tasks, and hence, different competencies, the tool can be useful in mapping existing and future requirements in terms of competencies and proficiency.
  + Recruitment and in particular preparation of job descriptions that capture required competencies.
  + Mobility process where information regarding available competences is considered for job rotation and appointment of new roles
  + Establishing long-term measures for learning and development and leadership development. The tool could be used for establishing learning paths for employees and, particularly, for those employees targeted for a leadership role.

In addition:

* + One institution considered promoting the use of the EU Competency Framework and Self-Assessment Tool among beneficiaries. The capacity building purpose of the instruments should be maintained and its use should not translated into a requirement for accessing funding.
  + Another Pilot administration, considers the opportunity to extend its implementation within the Public authority within which it is hosted.
  1. Roadmap for implementation of the instruments

The roadmap brings together the recommendations for REGIO and Member States with a timeline in alignment with the overall strategy objective of ensuring the widest uptake of the instruments.

It is recommended that during the last quarter of 2017, the main focus of REGIO is on establishing an internal support system for the strategy. Also the EU Competency Framework and other competency development tools should be consolidated on REGIO’s site.

It is also recommended at this stage that REGIO clarifies if it intends to build a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan for the following years that will provide insight on updates to the EU Competency Framework, Self-assessment Tool, User Guidelines and periodic update of REGIO’s training offer.

Once these elements are clarified, meetings should be organized with Member States at national level so as to obtain support for promotion of the Tool at programme level. Ideally this would enable new assessments to be performed within the first half of 2018.

Since the EU Competency Framework is not mandatory, no deadlines should be imposed on institutions as to when assessments should be rolled out. Nevertheless it would be useful to establish a practice for regular data collection from institutions, and the updating of training contents on behalf of the Commission. Ongoing promotion of the instrument, and development of a network of practitioners should increase over time the number of institutions using the instruments.

A high level timeline for the implementation of the roadmap is presented overleaf.

Figure 11 – Rodamap for implementation of the EU Competency Framework



1. eu competency framework and main updates

The full version is included in a separate file, capturing the updates listed below.

TASKS AND SUB-TASKS:

MA, IBs, JS - Inputs for the Final Version

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **N.** | **Task** | **Sub-Tasks** | | | | |
| 1 | Programming | Definition of the guiding principles for selection of operations | | | | |
| 2 | System set-up, development of procedures and tools | Legal system set-up | | | | |
| 3 | Project generation, preparation of calls for proposals, project selection and contracting |  | | | | |
| 4 | Monitoring on project level |  | | | | |
| 5 | Monitoring on programme level | Monitoring the progress of implementation of the Partnership Agreement (rephrased) | | | | |
| 6 | Evaluation |  | | | | |
| 7 | Financial management on project level |  | | | | |
| 8 | Financial management on programme level | Measurement of the financial performance of the operational programme (planning, monitoring, forecasting, revising and corrective actions). | | | | |
| 9 | Communication |  | | | | |
| 10 | Supervision of Intermediate Bodies | Supporting IBs in setting-up the management and control system | Drafting of the delegation agreement | Planning of the audit of IBs | | Audit of the management and control system of IBs |
| Audit of the management and control system of IBs | Regular review of results reported by IB | Review of a sample of operations carried out under the responsibility of the IBs | Drafting of procedures and guidelines | |
| Procurement of goods and services under Technical Assistance | | Ongoing support to IBs | | |

Audit Authorities - Inputs for the Final Version

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sub-Tasks** | | | | | | | | | |
| Audit strategy preparation | Risk Assessment | Planning of the Audit | Carrying out audits on systems | Carrying out Accreditation audit | Selection of sample of operations | Annual control reports and accreditation audit | Carrying out audits on operations | Carrying out audits of the accounts certified by CA | Procurement of goods and services under TA |

Certifying Authority - Inputs for the Final Version

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **N.** | **Task** | **Sub-Tasks** | | | |
| 2 | Supervision of Intermediate Bodies | Supporting IBs in setting-up the management and control system | Drafting of the delegation agreement | Planning of the audit of IBs | Audit of the management and control system of IBs |
| Audit of the management and control system of IBs | Regular review of results reported by IB | Review of a sample of operations carried out under the responsibility of the IBs | Drafting of procedures and guidelines |
| Procurement of goods and services under Technical Assistance | | Ongoing support to IBs | |

Coordinating Body - Inputs for the Final Version

* No changes in tasks and sub-tasks.

Joint Secretariat - Inputs for the Final Version

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **N.** | **Task** | **Sub-Tasks** |
| 2 | System set-up, development of procedures and tools | Legal system set-up |

OPERATIONAL, PROFESSIONAL AND MANAGEMENT COMPETENCIES

MA, IB, JS - Inputs for the Final Version

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Operational Competencies | |
| Type of change | Competency |
| New competency | “MA.O.C43 Knowledge of Engineering relevant for the sector”. |
| “MA.O.C44 Audit standards, procedures and methodologies” |
| Changes in links with tasks and sub-tasks | “O.C32 Forecasting and planning of performance targets / performance framework”:   * Added to Task 1 Programming: Sub-Task “Preparation of the Performance Framework”. * Added to Task 8 Financial management on programme level: Sub-Tasks “Measurement of the financial performance of PA/Measure (planning, monitoring, forecasting, revising)”; “Financial management of operational programme (planning, monitoring, forecasting, revising and corrective actions)”, “Reporting to Monitoring Committee and European Commission including management declaration and annual summary (CPR 125.4(e))”. * Removed from Task 4. Monitoring on project level. |
| Rephrased | * “MA.O.C1: General provisions of ESIF EU / National legal acts”. * “MA.O.C2: National strategic documents (e.g. National Development Strategies, relevant thematic and sectoral policies)”. * “MA.O.C17: Management and implementation provisions included in ESIF EU / National legal acts (programming, selection of operations, monitoring, controls and audits, evaluation, publicity)” |
| * “MA.O.C39 Communication provisions included in ESIF EU / National legal acts”. |
| * Competency “MA.O.C12 Procurement of goods and services (administrative)” rephrased as “MA.O.C12: Administrative procedures for procurement of goods and services from Technical Assistance”. |
| Merged | * Competencies “MA.O.C37 Financial management” and “MA.O.C38 Financial forecasting and planning” merged into a single competency “MA.O.C37: Budget planning, management and forecasting”. |
| Management Competencies | |
| Type of change | Competency |
| Rephrased | “MA.M.C9 Strategic management” rephrased as “MA.M.C9 Strategic management of goals and initiatives” |
| Professional Competencies | |
| Type of change | Competency |
| Rephrased | “MA.P.C10 Representation to the outside world” rephrased as “MA.P.C10 Representation of the institution to the outside world” |

Audit Authorities - Inputs for the Final Version

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Operational Competencies | |
| Type of change | Competency |
| Rephrased | “AA.O.C17: Additionality assessment” rephrased as “AA.O.C17: Incentive effect” |
| Management and Professional Competencies | |
| Type of change | Competency |
|  | Multiple management competencies added to Operational level employees |

Certifying Authority - Inputs for the Final Version

* No competencies added
* Changes in operational, management and professional competencies regard wording and are consistent with the changes presented above.

Coordinating Body - Inputs for the Final Version

* No competencies added
* Changes in operational, management and professional competencies regard wording and are consistent with the changes presented above.

Joint Secretariat - Inputs for the Final Version

* Changes in operational, management and professional competencies are consistent with those proposed for the Managing Authority and Intermediate Bodies.

PROFICIENY SCALE FOR ALL COMPETENCIES

| Level | Description of the proficiency |
| --- | --- |
| N.A. - Not Applicable | The competency is not applicable to the job role and should not be assessed. |
| Level 0 - No knowledge | No knowledge of the competency.  No ability to apply the knowledge. |
| Level 1 - Awareness | Basic knowledge of the competency (e.g. general concepts).  Basic ability to apply knowledge to daily tasks (e.g. identify and research aspects, understand and interpret documentation and situations). |
| Level 2 - Trained | Good working knowledge of the competency.  Ability to apply knowledge to daily tasks (e.g. identify critical aspects, propose solutions and prepare relevant documentation). |
| Level 3 – Intermediate | In depth knowledge of the competency.  Extensive ability to apply knowledge in daily tasks (e.g. advise others, develop new approaches, select the right course of action in a broader context) |
| Level 4 - Expert | Extensive expert knowledge and skills with regards to the competency.  Ability to highlight the (dis)advantages of each of the processes related to the competency whilst linking them to the bigger picture.  Ability to provide tailored advice and to support the advice with relevant and context specific arguments when responding to internal and external queries.  Viewed by others as a role model who is capable of leading or teaching others in the area of the competency |

2. self-assessment tool and institution-level analysis templates

Self-Assessment Tool access:

<https://fs26.formsite.com/sa_tools/form110/index.html>

Username: DGREGIO Password: Commission

Institution-level analysis templates: see separate excel files.

1. USER GUIDELINES

See separate files.

1. E-brochure

See separate file.

1. INFOGRAPHIC

See separate file.

2. Revisions to THE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

See separate file.

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1. Personal data are protected by The EU-U.S. and Swiss-U.S. Privacy Shield Framework. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. http://ec.europa.eu/regional\_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/comp\_fw/eu\_comp\_fw\_report\_en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. http://ec.europa.eu/regional\_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/comp\_fw/eu\_comp\_fw\_annex7\_en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. TMO Model: Technology, Markets, Organization. Oxford SAID Business School, 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. http://ec.europa.eu/regional\_policy/en/newsroom/news/2013/05/what-can-regionetwork-do-for-you [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Everett Roger’s research on technology adaption [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. See recommendation on “Training ls on Coordination, management and implementation of ERDF and CF 2014-2020” in the previous study at http://ec.europa.eu/regional\_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/comp\_fw/eu\_comp\_fw\_annex8\_en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Out of the remaining 34 operational competencies, 12 have been selected by two institutions, 18 by one of the institutions and four by none of the institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. In total, eight management competencies were selected by two of the institutions and the remaining four by one institution. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Other four competencies were selected by four institutions, a different four were selected by three, one by two and one by just one institution. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. REGIO study “EU Competency Framework for the management and implementation of the European Regional Development Fund and the Cohesion Fund”. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)