# Assessment of Civil Servants' General Competencies while Implementing the Civil Service Competency Model in Lithuanian Municipalities

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**Abstract**

This paper presents summarized results of a survey on the new Civil Service Competency Model implemented in the Republic of Lithuania. Mažeikiai District Municipality was chosen for this survey.

This complex study using qualitative research (semi-structured individual interviews) and quantitative research (questionnaire with closed questions for opinion investigation) methods confirmed scientists' opinion about the benefits of a centralised assessment of key competencies in the selection process and showed that a general aptitude test should be continuously revised and updated. Municipal authorities emphasised that specific and so far not assessed but very important competencies, such as decision making, project development, managerial, should be assessed. 25 civil servants from Mažeikiai District Municipality, who took part in the competition for a position and passed a general aptitude test, supported centralised assessment of general competencies as contributing to the objectivity and transparency of the selection process.

**Keywords:** civil service, competence, competency model, general competencies.

## Introduction

Currently, there is a common understanding of and a political consensus on the implementation of a Civil Service Competency Model (hereinafter CSCM) in Lithuania as one of the most important cross-cutting measures seeking to implement a public administration reform and make the civil service effective, open and efficient. Lithuania successfully adopted innovations in public administration and experiences of West European countries, that can be identified as a step towards public administration modernisation thus analysis of this process is relatively new and relevant in science.

The Civil Service Department (http://www.vtd.lt) responsible for coordination of the implementation of the CSCM in Lithuania effectively used EU support (measure VP1-4.1-VRM-01-V *Civil Service System Strengthening*) and, together with the institutions concerned about developing and improving the civil service, prepared and implemented project *Analysis of Civil Service Competency Framework and Job Profiles of Civil Servants. The Concept of Civil Service Development* was approved in 2010, and during 2013-2014 JSC Human Study Centre together with JSC Ernst & Young Baltic designed a CSCM as well as its application methodology (Civil Service Competency Model and its Application Methodology, 2014) to carry out changes. According to scientists who participated in this process, the CSCM firstly focuses on competencies that have a positive impact on activity effectiveness (Rekašienė, Sudnickas, 2014, 592).

Scientists (V. Gražulis, E. Markuckienė A. Raipa, A. Krupavičius, S. Pivoras, D. Šaparnienė, V. Nakrošis, R. Rekašienė, T. Sudnickas, V. Smalskys, J. Šiugždienė et al.) got actively involved in developing, initiating, discussing and formalising the CSCM thus an increased number of publications on the civil service and competency frameworks during the last years is understandable. The designed CSCM was published in the newsletter of the Civil Service Department online (2014-2015) and discussions with public authorities and institutions were held, however, the opinion of municipal authorities was lacking. A case analysis of a separate municipality can provide intermediate insights from the inside which can be used seeking to modify the new CSCM

and better define, identify and assess competencies as well as apply in vertical and horizontal career planning, performance assessment, etc.

CSCMs of various countries as well as experiences of organising the selection process on a centralised basis (e.g. Belgium, the Netherlands) or on a non-centralised basis (e.g. Sweden, UK) were analysed before the Lithuanian CSCM was designed. A general aptitude test (hereinafter GAT) was developed.

The Lithuanian CSCM focuses on 35 general competencies as well as on such personal values as courage, vitality, flexibility, initiative, etc. The civil service selection process is made of several stages:

firstly, candidates applying for all posts in the civil service submit documents and take a centrally administered GAT. Only having successful passed it, they take part in other stages, organised locally.

According to the data from the Civil Service Department, in 2013, the CSCM was used in 6 civil service institutions out of 543, meanwhile in 2016 – in all 597. Since 2016, the number of posts in the civil service dropped from 58 041 to 53 573, in municipal institutions – from 14 456 to 13 304.47 (92%)[1] but it seems that in some cases positions were not filled because candidates did not meet the job requirement. Since the middle of 2013, about 65% of candidates passed the GAT (see Table 1).

Table 1

**The CSCM in the selection process (30 June 2013-31 August 2016)**

| | Number |
|---|---|
| Applications submitted<br>Candidates with higher education – 95%, with a Master degree – about 50%; by age: the majority (47%) – 18-30 years old, about 30% – 31-40 years old | 17 484 |
| Documents were checked and accepted | 15 474 |
| Took and passed the GAT (management competencies were checked) | 11 620 |
| Took and passed the GAT (%) | 65 |
| Management competencies were evaluated (%) | 69 |
| Took and passed a centralised foreign language (English / German / French) proficiency test (writing, level B1-B2) (%) | 71 / 47 / 63 |
| Took and passed a foreign language (English / German / French) proficiency test (speaking, level B1-B2) (%) | 62 / 61 / 66 |

*Source*: Civil Service in Numbers. Available at http://statistika.vtd.lt/index.html [Accessed 31 August 2016]

Taking into account that transparency, impartiality, openness should be ensured in the selection process in practice questions arise: How should the selection process be organised at state and municipal institutions (agencies)? What is selection process participants' opinion about the new order? What do authorities responsible for organising the second stage of the selection process at the institution (agency) propose to improve it? What is the opinion of municipal authorities about the new CSCM?

*The aim of the article is* to present the results of the survey carried out in a municipality about the benefits of a centralised selection of civil servants and as well as the assessment of their competencies using the Lithuanian CSCM. *The object of the survey:* civil servants and their general competencies. *The subject of the survey:* a need of general competencies of civil servants' at Mažeikiai District Municipality and their assessment using the new CSCM. Methods used: 1) *scientific literature analysis* – to provide a theoretical basis for the structure of general competencies; 2) *structured individual interviews* – to identify the opinion of

the municipal authorities responsible for organising the second, decentralised, stage of the selection process, about general competencies assessment using the CSCM; 3) *quantitative study* – to identify the opinion of civil servants at Mažeikiai District Municipality who passed the GAT about the benefits of the centrally administered GAT.

## General competencies in the civil service: theoretical framework

In this survey, like in the works of the majority of contemporary foreign and Lithuanian scientists and politicians, the concept of *competence* is linked to the ability of a civil servant to appropriately carry out activities using gained knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, values, behaviours. *Qualification* is perceived as the unity of functional, cognitive and general competencies needed for a particular profession. We also support the opinion of Rekašienė and Sudnickas (2014) that civil servants

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[1] Civil Service in Numbers. Available at http://statistika.vtd.lt/index.html [Accessed 31 August 2016].

need *core competencies,* motives, features, attitudes, self-perceptions, knowledge, skills, behaviours to function in workplace and carry out their duties effectively; they all can be assessed using the selected criteria. Thus, *a competency model* is a set of interlinked knowledge, skills, behaviours and features a person needs to carry out assigned duties effectively and should be used in staff management (staff planning, selection, assessment, training, career planning, competence development) with the aim to make the civil service efficient, transparent and responsible and increase input.

Recently many scientific works on the civil service reform and modernisation have been published in Lithuania where special attention has been given to general competencies, their assessment and development and why the civil service selection procedures should be started from a centralised assessment of general competencies using the GAT. Its aim is to make the civil service objective, effective, efficient and responsible while analysing information and making decisions (Domarkas, Juknevičienė, 2007; Smalskys, 2010). A rapid technological change (Machado, Davim, 2014), a need to use financial resources efficiently, involve the community and the general public are those challenges that the civil service has been facing therefore civil servants need new competencies (such as strategic management) to modernise and improve the civil service (Arimavičiūtė, 2012; Visockytė, 2012; Tunčikienė, Skačkauskienė, 2012). Cognitive abilities (analytical, conceptual thinking, etc.), flexibility, the ability to react to changes, professionalism (Rekašienė, Sudnickas, 2014, 593, quot. Boyatzis, 2008) as well as managerial, leadership, specific professional competencies are part of general competencies therefore special attention has been paid to them in the CSCM.

## The CSCM and the assessment of general competencies

The currently introduced CSCM covers the assessment of three groups of competencies:
*   General competencies – applicable in any activity field;
*   Managerial and leadership competencies – necessary for managing an institution or a department;
*   Specific professional competencies – necessary for carrying out professional activity (Rekašienė, Sudnickas, 2014).

The designers of the new CSCM analysed civil service selection procedures in European countries (the UK, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands), their civil service competency frameworks and assessment models and chose a partly centralised one (similar to that used in Belgium and the Netherlands), where emphasis is placed on general competencies which are defined clearly. The CSCM of the Netherlands covers the assessment of 35 general competencies (e.g. courage, initiative, flexibility) (Gražulis, Markuckienė, 2013, 143).

In the *Civil Service Competency Model and its Application Methodology* (2014), the following **general competencies** have been defined as obligatory:
*   *The ability to create added social value* – the purpose of the civil service is to contribute to added social value creation
*   *Organisational* – the ability to plan activity and time, identify priorities, take immediate actions
*   *Reliability and responsibility*: the ability to fulfil obligations, take responsibility for activity and outcomes, continuously improve
*   *Analytical and logical thinking* – the ability to carry out situation analysis (break a problem down into parts, find links between them, identify the essential information, make a decision)
*   *Communicative* – the ability to convey information effectively, to communicate face-to-face and with the public, in both written and oral forms, via emails, letters, reports, phone calls, etc.

**General competencies and workforce planning.** Using EU support and under the coordination of the State Civil Service Department, in 2014, *Workforce Planning Methodology* was prepared. In order to plan workforce so as to meet short-term as well as long-term needs and effectively deal with workforce shortage or surplus, competencies of civil servants in various positions, their lack in the future and additional workload should be evaluated (PPIM, 2014, 23-37). The ordinary practice is that nowadays the head of the department prepares a job description with duties and submits a request to fill that position to the head of the institution. Usually general and/or special activity spheres, functions, subordination, special requirements including the title, the level and category of the position are described. Special requirements, for example, the level of education, work experience, foreign language proficiency, computer literacy, knowledge of legal acts, etc. are directly linked to the functions (PPIM, 2014, 10). Making staff redundant long-term needs should be taken into account and competencies of the staff evaluated.

**Recruitment to the civil service.** In accordance with the Law on Civil Service of the Republic of Lithuania, the Government approved *Guidelines for Organising Recruitment to the Civil*

*Service.* From 1 June 2013, the recruitment procedure shall consist of two stages, the first stage, centralised, shall be organised by the Civil Service Department and shall include a general aptitude test, management competence assessment of those applying for a senior position and a foreign language proficiency test. The second stage shall be organised by the organisation holding a vacancy. A candidate has to register at the Civil Service portal www.testavimas.vtd.lt for a GAT, management competence assessment and, if applicable, a foreign language proficiency test. The GAT consisting of two parts shall evaluate the candidate's: 1) cognitive abilities – the ability to learn, verbal abilities, verbal reasoning, numerical reasoning, logical thinking, communication skills, 2) the ability to apply basic knowledge of legal acts. The results of the test shall be valid for 36 months so the candidate will be able to take part in other competitions. Having passed the first stage the candidate will be able to take part in the second, decentralised, stage of the selection procedure organised at the institution holding a vacancy. Then the candidate's specific professional competencies shall be assessed so a to meet the requirements for the open position. General competencies are the basis for gaining and developing other groups of competencies. The Civil Service Department also prepared *Practical Guidelines for the Staff Selection Commission* (2014): the authority of the institution holding a vacancy shall review the job description, duties, functions, competencies, performance indicators, rationally evaluate the situation with the staff at the institution, other related issues and shall organise the second stage of the selection procedure (Valstybės tarnybos aktualijos, 2014, March). The authority of the institution shall draw up a workforce development plan, analyse competencies of currently emplued staff, evaluate their need in the future, training needs and opportunities, etc.

**General competencies and staff training**. It has already been mentioned that the CSCM can help identify training needs objectively. An increasing competition for workforce between the private and the public sector in terms of salaries shows that it is relevant to carry out competency analysis. Having identified the cornerstone positions and taking into account a need for changes, training plans for motivated staff should be drawn up at the institution. It is important not only to identify what general competencies staff must develop (organisational, communicative, responsibility, etc.) but also to evaluate their potential to do that. The ability to learn and integrate new knowledge, undertake additional tasks, gain wider competencies are part of general competencies.

The Government has approved *Civil Servants' Training Strategy for 2014-2017* (2014) which sets out that it is important to develop specific and general competencies focusing on *strategic competencies* (management, leadership, change management, communicative, analytical), customer service skills, professional ethical behaviour, corruption prevention.

To sum up, it can be stated that institutions while analysing and planning workforce needs for a shorter or longer period should take into account long-term goals of the institution, changes caused by external factors and that a need of employees with general competencies motivated to continuously develop shall grow in the future.

## General competencies and the CSCM: the case of Mažeikiai District Municipality

The CSCM has been approved by the legal acts on the civil service and integrated into the National Progress Strategy *Lithuania 2030,* the *National Progress Programme for 2014-2020* (2012). Since then local government institutions have started using it because a well-defined set of competencies, identified as general competencies, such as responsibility, reliability, organisational, focus on results, strategic, analytical thinking, communicative competencies, etc. are the main drivers of civil service advancement and optimisation.

Mažeikiai District Municipality (300 civil servants) of Telšiai county (26 municipal institutions, over 13 000 civil servants), one of the most distant Lithuanian counties, was selected for this survey. Mažeikiai District Municipality is an institution where the number of civil servants per 1 000 inhabitants has increased insignificantly (+0,3%), the ratio of civil servants/inhabitants is 5,5%/1 000 (state average – 7,44%/1 000). The activity of this municipality was positively evaluated by external institutions. It can be stated that the case of a separate institution can reveal the picture of introducing the CSCM and contribute to its improvement.

Semi-structured interviews were used for this qualitative research, respondents – municipality staff (usually members of the selection commission in stage 2) who make staffing decisions. **Respondent selection criteria:** 1) management position; 2) duties linked to staff selection. 6 persons met these criteria, the Head of the Strategic Department refused to participate thus 5 respondents were interviewed (see Table 2).

A questionnaire with closed questions was used to identify the benefits of using the CSCM respondents – civil servants working for Mažeikiai District Municipality who took and passed the GAT, sample size N=25.

Table 2

**Respondents**

| | Position at Mažeikiai District Municipality | Code |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Head of the Personnel Department | I-1 |
| 2. | Mayor | I-2 |
| 3. | Director of Administration | I-3 |
| 4. | Deputy Director of Administration | I-4 |
| 5. | Head of the Department for General Affairs | I-5 |

The respondents were given similar questions in the same order. The responses were analysed and systematised, more important aspects were identified as codes and put into the categories important for the analysed topic. The terminology proposed by Gaižauskienė, Valevičienė (2016) was used for the analysis of the interview data.

The analysis of the responses to the questions *How is workforce planned at the municipality, who decides on a need for new entrants, on their qualifications and competencies? How are decisions made?* (see Table 3) showed that: *competencies of new entrants are defined in accordance with the nature of position, decisions on a need of new entrants and competencies are made by department heads taking into account changes in the municipality.* The responses showed that the old model is partially used *planning workforce* at the municipality, a need of new entrants is identified taking into account current structure and/or new functions (4 statements) that require particular qualification and specific professional competencies. A rather active position of the Director of Administration (I-3) revealed a system attitude towards the issue: he pointed out changes made in workforce planning. It is positive that managers/leaders of different levels interact, prepare for the selection procedure, discuss in-sourcing possibilities.

Table 3

**Workforce planning and decision making**

| Code | Statement | Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Category: Competencies are identified taking into account the functions of the position** | | |
| **Competence requirements for open positions** | "Competence requirements for new entrants are determined in accordance with the nature of the position" (I-3). "... First of all, we look for employees with necessary competencies among those **who are already working for us,** they could have necessary **qualifications**. Thus, we motivate people who are already working" (I-4). Need for employees is determined by <...> assigned <...> **functions, activities**, <...> (I-3). **Specialists** in the fields of education and social care are in demand today" (I-2). | **4** |
| **Competence requirements for new functions** | "Description of the position is provided by the head of the department depending on **what functions will be performed in workplace**" (I-3). "A need for employees is determined by several factors such as <...> **new functions are assumed**" (I-3). | **2** |
| **Category: Need for new competencies is identified taking into account changes in the municipality** | | |
| **External and internal changes** | "A need for an employees is determined by several factors, such as new functions, assigned or assumed, ongoing reorganization aiming at improving the performance of the institution, employee turnover" (I-3). | **1** |
| **Category: Staffing decisions are made by the authority of the municipality** | | |
| **Director of Administration** | "Decisions are made by the Director of Administration, <...>" (I-1). "Everything is coordinated with the Administration Director" (I-4). "Of course, depending on the situation, issues are negotiated with the management" (I-5). | **3** |
| **Heads of the Departments** | "… the Heads of Departments submit proposals <...> for each position" (I-1). | **1** |
| **Head of the Personnel Department** | "<...> the Head of the Personnel Department makes a decision on the position" (I-1). | **1** |

The responses to the question *What other aspects are taken into account in the second stage of the selection procedure in addition to the already existing information on the qualification and GAT results?* confirmed that short term needs matter much in addition to the qualification and formal indicators (see Table 4).

Table 4

**Selection criteria at Mažeikiai District Municipality**

| Code | Statement | Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Category: Special skills and qualifications** | | |
| **Qualifications** | "The focus is on **specific skills**. Testing is just a formality" (I-1). "The employee's **qualification and competence** were evaluated..." (I-3). | 2 |
| **Formal indicators** | "Employee selection is based **on the highest number of earned points in** competence evaluation" (I-4). | 1 |
| **Category: Character traits and general competencies** | | |
| **Character traits / personal qualities** | "Having evaluated <...> important **character traits** of the employee" (I -3). "In the interview such questions are asked that suggest answers that make it easy to evaluate ... **character traits**" (I-4). | 2 |
| **General competencies** | "In the interview, such questions are asked that suggest answers that make it easy to evaluate **general competencies**, <...>" (I-4.) | 1 |

*Personal qualities* were mentioned by 2 respondents meanwhile *general competencies* – only by one respondent. The Head of the Personnel Department was rather sceptical about the GAT saying that it is a formality.

The respondents were asked to rank *competencies by importance* (managerial and leadership, specific, professional, general) from 1 to 4 (1 – most important, 4 – least important). The findings showed that *general competencies* were most important, followed by *managerial and leadership competencies,* e.g. strategic management, activity management, etc. (see Table 5).

The Head of the Personnel Department (he gave priority to general competencies) was of an opinion that those who fail the GAT should not apply for a post in the civil service. Competency ranking showed that the respondents identified the following competencies as specific competencies needed to carry out functions: a political insight, information management, networking, negotiation, intercultural communication, conflict management, process control, support, customer service skills, influence making and confused them with *professional competencies* that depend on the position held. For example, the Head of the General Affairs Department and Deputy Director of Administration placed more emphasis on specific than professional competences.

Table 5

**Competency ranking at Mažeikiai District Municipality**

| Respondent | Competency group | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Managerial and leadership | Specific | Professional | General |
| **I-1** | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| **I-2** | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| **I-3** | Determined in accordance with the nature of the workplace | | | |
| **I-4** | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| **I-5** | 4 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

*1 – most important, 4 – least important*

The responses to the question *What general competencies are required at the municipality? Does that depend on the position or job specificity (explain how)* are provided in Table 6. It should be noted that the Head of the Personnel Department responsible for workforce planning linked competencies with the position in the department. There was a lack of linking up general competencies and institutional aims. It is positive that three respondents (Mayor, Deputy Director of Administration, Head of the Personnel Department) emphasised that *strategic competencies* are required as highlighted in the documents on civil servants' training. According to the respondents, *project management competencies* (assumed as additional to general competencies) are not needed if project management is not the main function of the position.

Table 6

**Competencies required at Mažeikiai District Municipality**

| Code | Statement | Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Category: General competencies depend on the activity of the department** | | |
| **Determined by the position** | "Of course, general skills and competencies are necessary as they are required in accordance with the **Department's specificity**" (I-1). "Depending on the **position and job specificity**..." (I-3). | **2** |
| **Category: Managerial and leadership competencies** | | |
| **Strategic thinking** | "**Strategic skills are necessary** working with foreign countries, keeping contact" (I-2). "**Generating strategies** and ideas" (I-4). "**Strategic management <...>**" (I-1). | **3** |
| **Leadership** | "**Generating ideas** and strategies" (I-4). "We focus on professionals who can work with projects, **develop them <...>**" (I-2). | **2** |
| **Category: Project management competencies** | | |
| **Project management** | "We also focus on professionals who **can work with projects,** develop and implement them" (I-2). "**Project management** is of great importance" (I-3), (I-5) | **3** |

The responses to the questions *How are staff development needs identified at the municipality? Is the employee's wish to develop general competencies taken into account?* allow to state that 1) training needs are periodically reviewed during the annual assessment; 2) training is suggested by the Head of the Department. It is positive that the respondents noted that training needs are objectively assessed and defined depending on performance results but are discussed only once a year with the head of the department.

Table 7

**Staff development**

| Code | Statement | Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Category: Training needs are identified during the annual assessment** | | |
| **Needs are identified at the end of the year** | "Needs are identified during **the annual assessment**" (I-1). "A need for training can be seen **during the annual assessment**" (I-2). "Proposals regarding needed training, <...> are usually **made during the annual assessment**" (I-3). "A need for training is defined during **the assessment"** (I-4). | **4** |
| **Training proposals are made by the Head of the Department** | "This issue is dealt with individually. Each employee has strengths and weaknesses. <...>. Proposals regarding needed training, are made by **the supervisor**, usually during the annual assessment" (I-3). | **1** |
| **Category: Training needs are identified depending on performance results** | | |
| **Training needs must be linked to performance results** | "**Activities should be evaluated** and training needs defined <...>. It is most important to develop job **specific competencies**" (I-5). | **1** |

Speaking about the respondents' opinion about *the training system* functioning at the municipality, it can be stated that it was evaluated positively ("The system is good" (I-1); "Positively. Seminars, workshops are held" (I-2); "I think the training system at the municipality is functioning well, contributes to general competencies development" (I-3); "I suppose it is functioning well" (I-4); "I would give 4 points from 5" (I-5)). The topics of seminars and workshops organised at Mažeikiai District Municipality in 2015-2016 as well as the results of the implementation of the Strategic Activity Plan for 2016-2018 showed that in 2015 more than 100 employees took part in workshops on the use of the new computerised documentation system, 85 – on the use of the project management sub-system, 70 – on the use of the financial management and accounting system and activity planning. 8 workshops on human resources management and administration were held, e.g. E-procurement, Contract law, Public speaking, Finance management, Communication psychology, Strategic planning and management, Etiquette and image building, etc.

The responses to the question *Why does the municipality invest/not invest into staff development?* showed that the municipality 1) is seeking to achieve better results and higher quality, 2) is preparing for changes (see Table 8).

Table 8

**Investment into staff development**

| Code | Statement | Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Category: Competency development is linked to performance results** | | |
| **Performance results** | "**Performance results** and work quality depend on staff competencies" (I-1). "Self-development, interest in various fields allow to achieve **better results**" (I-2). "Our **mission** statement can be implemented by competent staff" (I-5). | **3** |
| **Work quality** | "Performance results and **work quality** depend on staff competencies" (I-1). | **1** |
| **Category: Competency development is linked to changes** | | |
| **Preparation for changes** | "Facing new **challenges state and local institutions must prepare for changes.** Institutions must invest into their employees and their development" (I-3). "The ability to develop is very important, especially **during the period of changes**" (I-4). | **2** |

Analysing the responses to the question *Does the new selection system help recruit, select, retain and develop workforce?* it was found that **its effect has not been analysed (**"Our staff are qualified, they are self-motivated to develop; the new order has changed nothing" (I-1); "Specialists have enough competencies and meet requirements for the position they hold, they show good results. The new selection system has made no change. The staff are qualified" (I-2); "I think the new system hasn't changed anything" (I-3); "Our results are good, we got high evaluations" (I-4)).

We interviewed those who have experience in the selection procedure to find out how the centralised selection system could be improved (question *How should the selection system be modified to recruit the most competent candidates?*). The responses allow to conclude: 1) there is no need to conduct a centralised assessment of general competencies, 2) managerial competencies and customer service skills should be assessed (see Table 9). The first category shows a **disapproval of a centralised assessment of general competencies (using the GAT)**. The second one contradicts the recent endeavour of Mažeikiai District Municipality to focus on specific and general competencies of its staff.

Table 9

**Opinion about a centralised assessment**

| Code | Statement | Total |
|---|---|---|
| **Category: Critical opinion about a centralized assessment of general competencies** | | |
| **Against centralized assessment** | "To my mind, the first section of the GAT is not necessary" (I-1). "Centralized assessment makes one think that local institutions are not trusted" (I-2). "Centralized assessment does not correspond to reality" (I-4). | **3** |
| **Difficult to assess the most important general competencies** | "The most important general competencies cannot be assessed exactly" (I-3). | **1** |
| **Category: Assessment of document management competencies and customer service skills** | | |
| **Assessment of general competencies** | "We would like that document management, legislative and customer service skills were assessed" (I-5). | **1** |

Having systematised the significant categories and links between them, the results of using the CSCM and its improvement areas were identified (see Table 10).

Table 10

**Identified significant categories**

| Topic according to the questions | Category | Code |
|---|---|---|
| Competencies planning and decision making | Competencies are set according to the functions of the position | Competencies needed for the position |
| | Changes in the organization call for new competencies | External and internal changes |
| | Decisions are made by the authority of the municipality | Director of Municipal Administration |
| | | Heads of Departments |
| | | Head of the Personnel Department |
| Selection criteria | Special competencies and qualifications (priority) | Qualification |
| | | Formal indicators |
| | Personal qualities and general competencies (in addition to the above) | Personal qualities |
| | | General competencies |
| Valued competencies | Special and professional competencies (firstly) | Special competencies |
| | | Professional competencies |
| | General competencies over managerial and leadership competencies | General competencies are required in any position |
| Required competencies | General competencies (depending on department activity) | Depending on the position |
| | Managerial and leadership competencies | Strategic competencies |
| | | Leadership competencies |
| | Project management competencies | Project management competencies |
| Staff development | Development needs are identified during the annual assessment | Development needs are identified at the end of the year |
| | | Training proposals are made by the Head of the Department |
| | Development needs are defined by linking to performance results | Development needs are defined by linking to performance results |
| Staff development system | The system is good | The system focuses on the development of general competencies |
| Investment into staff development | Performance results depend on staff competencies | Performance results |
| | | Work quality |
| | A need to prepare for changes | Preparing for changes |
| The benefits of the new selection system | Not clear | No influence so far |
| Opinion about a centralised assessment of general competencies | Critical about centralized assessment of general competencies | Disapproval of centralized assessment |
| | | Problematic assessment of general competencies |
| | Document management and customer service competencies should be assessed | Requirement for general competencies should be higher |

The survey showed that:
- The CSCM has no influence on municipality staff development; the assessment is being carried out properly; a need to assess project management competencies was noted.
- In the previous staff selection system, general competencies were not assessed; the selection system could be improved by placing emphasis on the assessment of document management competencies and customer service skills.
- When identifying specific professional competencies short-term needs are taken into account but more emphasis should be placed on planning long-term needs.
- Very important special professional competencies should be assessed together with managerial and leadership competencies.
- The staff is satisfied with assessment of general competencies and their development at the municipality.
- General competencies have an impact on performance results and work quality, they are important preparing for changes.
- Development needs are identified at the end of the year during the annual assessment and linked to performance results.

**Results of quantitative survey.** Taking into account that selection at the municipality organisers

did not see any benefits of the centrally organised GAT and have highlighted the importance of general competencies, 25 persons who recently passed the GAT and got a job at Mažeikiai District Municipality were interviewed. A questionnaire with closed questions was designed and distributed online, the collected data were processed using MS Excel. The anonymous questionnaire consisted of 2 blocks: 1) demographic (education, gender), 2) closed questions regarding the current selection system.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents: women – 68%, men – 32%, by age: 20-30 years old – 52%, 31-40 years old – 36%, 41-50 years old – 12%, the level of education: university – 68% college – 27% PhD – 5% (1 respondent). Since the correlation between responses and gender and education was not significant it was not analysed.

The majority of the respondents (68%) supported the new selection system, 92% thought that the system is more objective than the one used in the private sector, 96% stated that the system is transparent.

The respondents opinion about the new selection system: procedures are transparent (86%), complicated (76%), should be improved (63%), it helps select best candidates (84%), candidates are provided with sufficient information on the selection procedures (72%), objectivity is the most important factor in selection (66%), objectivity helps select candidates to the civil service (57%).

## Conclusions

A typical Mažeikiai District Municipality was selected for this research. Its aim was to identify a need of general competencies at municipalities, problem using the CSCM and the GAT, the role of general competencies which are the basis of conceptual thinking.

This complex survey revealed that a clear legal and methodological basis for introducing the CSCM was provided, resolutions of the Government passed, strategies, methodologies, practical guidelines developed, a coordinating institution appointed, online discussions held, conferences organised, etc. However, municipal authorities did not notice any significant impact of the CSCM at their institution and were  sceptical about the GAT because insufficient attention was paid to a more thorough assessment of  such important competencies as project preparation and management,  document management and customer service skills.

Municipal authorities placed emphasis on a need of specific professional competencies, they noted that while staffing short term needs are taken into account, there is no long term strategy. They were of an opinion that it is difficult assess specific professional competencies because the CSCM is being used for a rather short time,  managerial and leadership competencies required in policy making should be assessed.

Municipal authorities were rather critical about a centralised assessment of general competencies, they noted that have great influence on work quality and performance results. Staff development activities carried out in 2015-2016 were in line with the national strategy for qualification development of civil servants and focused on the development of communication, electronic document management, strategic management competencies.

The surveyed who took part the selection procedures and passed the GAT positively assessed the CSCM launched in Lithuania in 2013: it contributes to building a positive image of the civil service, makes the selection process objective, develops a deeper understanding of the structure of general competencies, their role and impact on activity effectiveness.

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**Valstybės tarnautojų bendrųjų kompetencijų vertinimas Lietuvos savivaldybėse įgyvendinant valstybės tarnautojų kompetencijų modelį**

Santrauka

Prie šiuo metu diegiamo Lietuvos valstybės tarnyboje valstybės tarnautojų kompetencijų modelio (toliau – VTKM) inicijavimo, kūrimo, formalizavimo aktyviai prisidėjo daugelis mokslininkų (V. Gražulis, E. Markuckienė, A. Raipa, A. Krupavičius, S. Pivoras, D. Šaparnienė, V. Nakrošis, R. Rekašienė, T. Sudnickas, V. Smalskys, J. Šiugždienė ir kt.), todėl per paskutinius metus išaugo publikacijų, tyrimų valstybės tarnautojų kompetencijų tematika skaičius.

Pradėjus diegti VTKM, „Valstybės tarnybos aktualijose" (Valstybės tarnybos departamento naujienlaiškis, 2014–2015 m. numeriai) nuolat vyko diskusijos, buvo aktyviai reflektuojamos modelio diegimo patirtys ir rezultatai. Savivaldybių institucijų pozicijos, nuomonės trūkumas ir buvo viena iš paskatų gilintis į atskiros savivaldybės atvejį, tikintis pamatyti VTKM įgyvendinimo tarpinius rezultatus „iš vidaus", taip pat siekiant papildyti šiuo metu jau išsakomas modulio tobulinimo kryptis (įvairinti kompetencijų nustatymo ir vertinimo metodus, naudoti modelį vykdant vertikalų ir horizontalų darbuotojų karjeros planavimą, atliekant veiklos vertinimą ir kt.).

Tyrimui pasirinktas bendrųjų kompetencijų poreikio ir raiškos savivaldybėse aspektas, nes, įvedus centralizuotą bendrųjų gebėjimų testą visiems, pretenduojantiems į valstybės tarnybą, tikėtina, per trejus metus jau buvo pasiekta veiklos rezultatų, susidarė nuomonė šiuo klausimu. Kaip žinia, Lietuvoje šiuo metu diegiamame VTKM išskirtos 35 bendrosios kompetencijos ir tokios asmeninės vertybės kaip drąsa, energingumas, lankstumas, iniciatyvumas ir kt. Tik perėję bendrųjų gebėjimų patikrinimo (tikrinami bendrieji mąstymo gebėjimai, bendrosios kompetencijos ir bendrosios teisinės žinios) etapą, pretendentai dalyvauja jau decentralizuotai vykdomuose kituose atrankos etapuose.

Atliekant tyrimą buvo pasitelkti šie metodai: 1) mokslinės literatūros analizė naudota teoriškai pagrindžiant valstybės tarnautojų savivaldybėse bendrųjų kompetencijų struktūrą; 2) kokybinis tyrimas (struktūruotas individualus interviu) pasitelktas siekiant ištirti už vėlesnius atrankos etapus atsakingų savivaldybės administracijos darbuotojų poziciją, vertinant VTKM diegimą ir jame aktualizuotas bendrąsias kompetencijas; 3) kiekybinis tyrimas, kuriuo buvo siekiama išsiaiškinti Mažeikių rajono savivaldybės administracijos darbuotojų, išlaikiusių bendrųjų gebėjimų testą ir atėjusių dirbti į savivaldybę, nuomonę apie bendrųjų gebėjimų vertinimo tikslingumą.

Kokybinio tyrimo informantai buvo atrinkti pagal šiuos kriterijus: 1) yra vadovas; 2) savo pareigomis susijęs su darbuotojų atranka. Tyrime sutiko dalyvauti 5 atstovai: rajono meras, savivaldybės administracijos direktorius, jo pavaduotojas, Personalo tarnybos vedėjas ir Bendrojo skyriaus vedėjas.

Kokybiniame tyrime (uždarų klausimų anketa) dalyvavo visi 25 savivaldybės darbuotojai, nuo 2013 m. vidurio iki 2016 m. pradžios atėję dirbti į savivaldybę pagal naują tvarką, po bendrųjų kompetencijų vertinimo, taikant centralizuotą konkursą.

Susisteminus interviu gautą medžiagą ir ją užkodavus, išskyrus svarbias kategorijas, galima aptarti reikšmingus ryšius tarp šių kategorijų ir įžvelgti VTKM diegimo savivaldybės administracijoje pirminius rezultatus bei proceso tobulinimo kryptingumą. Matyti, kad Mažeikių rajono savivaldybės administracijoje:
- kol kas nepastebima didesnės VTKM įtakos savivaldybės žmogiškųjų išteklių kokybei. Dabartinis personalas puikiai vertinamas, konstatuojamas augantis projektų valdymo kompetencijų poreikis;

- stebimas pritarimas ankstesnei darbuotojų atrankos sistemai, kai nebuvo centralizuoto I etapo, tikrinančio bendruosius gebėjimus. Respondentų nuomone, bendrųjų gebėjimų vertinimą reikia tobulinti didinant dokumentų valdymo, orientacijos į klientus gebėjimų vertinimo svorį;
- orientavimasis į pareigybei reikalingų specifinių ir profesinių kompetencijų nustatymą pagal funkcijas liudija, kad kol kas nėra jokios pareigybių įkūrimo ar naikinimo ilgalaikės perspektyvos, nėra žmogiškųjų išteklių planavimo praktikos ir strategijos;
- itin aktualizuotos specifinės ir profesinės kompetencijos painiojamos arba tapatinamos, kaip ir atskirais atvejais bendrosios kompetencijos su vadybinėmis ir lyderystės (strateginė prieiga, lyderystė);
- bendrosios kompetencijos yra svarbios šiai institucijai, jų ugdymas taikant dabartinę institucijoje galiojančią mokymų praktiką savivaldybės darbuotojus tenkina;
- pripažįstama, kad bendrosios darbuotojų kompetencijos turi įtakos veiklos rezultatams, kokybei, jos būtinos rengiantis pokyčiams;
- reikalingos darbuotojams kompetencijos išsiaiškinamos metų pabaigoje, atliekant metinį vertinimą. Jau yra manančiųjų, kad reikalingas kompetencijas reikėtų planuoti atsižvelgiant ir į veiklos rezultatus.

Kiekybinio tyrimo dalyviai – 25 respondentai – elektroniniu būdu pildė anketą, sudarytą iš dviejų blokų: 1) demografinio (išsilavinimas, lytis), 2) uždaro tipo klausimų, vertinančių dabartinę atrankos į valstybės tarnybą tvarką pritarimu ar nepritarimu jai. Nors respondentų struktūra buvo gana įvairi (68 proc. tyrimo dalyvių sudarė moterys, 32 proc. – vyrai; 52 proc. priskiriami 20–30 m. amžiaus grupei, 36 proc. – 31–40 m., 12 proc. – 41–50 m.; 68 proc. turi aukštąjį universitetinį išsilavinimą, 27 proc. – aukštesnįjį arba aukštąjį koleginį, apie 5 proc. (1 tarnautojas) – mokslo laipsnį), bet, analizuojant tyrimo dalyvių nuomones, jų demografiniai duomenys nebuvo reikšmingi.

Nuomonės tyrimas parodė, kad dauguma asmenų, laikę bendrųjų gebėjimų testą, pritaria naujajai atrankos į valstybės tarnybą sistemai, laiko ją objektyvia, sąžininga, nors ir sudėtinga, mano, kad šiuo metu yra didesnė tikimybė atrinkti geriausius pretendentus ir kad ši sistema paskatins gabius žmones dalyvauti konkursuose į valstybės tarnybą.

***Pagrindiniai žodžiai:*** valstybės tarnyba, bendrosios kompetencijos, kompetencijų modelis.