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Practitioner Toolkit on Knowledge Management

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EUROPEAN NETWORK OF PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

Practitioner Toolkit on Knowledge Management

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SECTION 1. Introduction

1.1 What is this toolkit about?

This Public Employment Services (PES) practitioners' toolkit presents concepts, tools and practices for PES management, teams and individual staff members to ensure that the right knowledge is available and used at the right place at the right time to achieve the objectives of the organisation. Without using the term 'knowledge management' (KM), many organisations have consciously or intuitively recognised that the successful use, development and preservation of knowledge are critical to reaching their objectives and in particular to ensure customer satisfaction.

This toolkit will provide guidance to:
- assess the level of current KM practices;
- develop and deploy tailored KM action plans and strategies;
- create effective KM practices;
- apply the most effective KM tools;
- design training and intervention programmes for efficient knowledge transfer and retention
- learn from good practice of PES.

The delivery of consistent, high-quality and effective PES through efficient processes requires the mobilisation of all relevant knowledge resources and quick learning across and beyond organisations. Knowledge-oriented organisational culture and evidence-based leadership practices are crucial for knowledge-sharing and innovation.

Managing knowledge in organisations has two dimensions: firstly, managing knowledge to ensure effective delivery of current services, and secondly, developing information and KM systems to support strategic planning.

Challenges frequently faced by PES include improving accountability, making evidence-based decisions, enhancing collaboration and strategic partnerships with stakeholders, and retaining the knowledge and expertise of staff who are leaving the organisation. Expert KM is also imperative for the development of digital government strategies. These require organisations to make information and knowledge more usable and accessible in order to create open, participatory, inclusive and trusted PES. In practice, operational KM means finding the right answers to the nine questions summarised in Table 1.

KM enables individuals, teams, organisations and networks to create, share and apply knowledge collectively and to systematically achieve their strategic and operational objectives. KM contributes to sustaining and increasing the competitiveness, efficiency and effectiveness of operations and innovation, and to developing a learning organisation (North and Kumta, 2018, p. 13).

Table 1. Questions to be answered in an integrated information, knowledge and competence management (Source: North, 2016)

	Create transparency	Make available	Exchange and learn
Information	Where to find which information?	Which user/client needs, which information in which form and how can we make it available?	How can we disseminate and exchange up-to-date information rapidly?
Knowledge	Who knows what or is responsible for a topic?	How can we prepare and present knowledge in its context (e.g. story-telling)?	How can we learn from experiences and share knowledge?
Competence	Which competencies do we have, and which do we need?	How can we ensure that we have the right competencies for our jobs?	How can we develop the needed competencies?

1.2 Who is this toolkit for?

This toolkit is aimed at the following target groups of PES practitioners.

PES senior management, including heads of central and local offices/units. They are responsible for aligning KM with strategic planning and the current and future needs of stakeholders. They play an important role in enhancing knowledge-oriented organisational culture and leadership practices. The toolkit also provides guidance on how to integrate KM into functional units such as human resources (HR), organisational development and information technology (IT) and digitisation.

PES middle management (team leaders, project leaders) are in charge of effective service delivery and enhancing knowledge-sharing within and across teams. At this level – with pressure to meet delivery objectives, often with limited resources – quick access to relevant information and knowledge is crucial. Retaining the organisational knowledge and expertise of staff who are leaving, and effective on-boarding of new colleagues with systematic learning from their peers are also essential. At the operational level, PES middle management is responsible for creating the knowledge-management practices described in Section 3.

PES front-line staff, including individual counsellors and assistants, have to manage information and knowledge in order to deliver the processes for which they are responsible, ensure service quality, and maintain this when they are absent. The pressure to keep up with frequently changing administrative instructions can be alleviated by systematic use of knowledge management. Therefore, PES staff will be particularly interested in the KM tools presented in Section 4.

Information and knowledge managers are responsible for creating and monitoring relevant KM processes and maintaining a user-friendly and updated information and communication infrastructure. Information and knowledge managers assist in the development and implementation of KM strategies and action plans. KM managers assist colleagues in the application of KM tools. The toolkit provides a good introduction for them, which can be complemented by further resources.

1.3 How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is divided into the following sections, which reflect the key steps in implementing KM in a cycle of continuous improvement and learning, as follows:

- **Section 2** provides a basic understanding of KM and allows a self-assessment of the level of current KM practices.
- **Section 3** describes how to create effective KM practices. As KM practices vary widely within and across organisational levels, the toolkit assumes three levels of practice: initial, intermediate and advanced.
- **Section 4** covers the most effective KM tools.
- **Section 5** provides guidance on how to implement KM in the organisation, including structuring action plans in a modular way and considering initial, intermediate and advanced levels of practice. The role of knowledge managers is described. Information is also provided on how to monitor the KM process.
- **Section 6** concludes the toolkit and suggests the way towards developing modern PES 'learning organisations'. It consists of a detailed discussion of the resources the PES Network offers and explains how this knowledge could be managed in PES organisations.

In each section, a number of examples of good practice identified in PES across Europe are given. Additional resources and further suggestions for further reading are provided for those interested in deepening their understanding of the topic.
Annexes I and 2 contain the self-assessment checklist and a job description for knowledge managers respectively.

SECTION 2. Understand and assess Knowledge Management (KM)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

This section clarifies the types of knowledge PES have, draws attention to the importance of tacit knowledge and creates an understanding of value creation from information via knowledge to competence. Practical implications for strategic and operational KM are given. Awareness of typical KM challenges faced by PES is raised. This section also includes advice on how to approach KM and establish a framework allowing systematic integration of KM in PES management oriented towards organisational excellence. A checklist consistent with the framework allows PES to assess their current level of KM.

2.1 Basic concepts: information, knowledge, competence

2.1.1 Explicit and tacit knowledge

Knowledge in organisations takes many forms. Knowledge includes the competencies and capabilities of employees, knowledge about clients and citizens, the know-how to deliver specific services, and codified knowledge in the form of process descriptions and guidelines. Knowledge is embodied in routines or algorithms to perform activities, and in organisational structures and processes. Knowledge is embedded in beliefs and behaviours. Knowledge is the product of individual and collective learning and is embodied in products, services and systems.

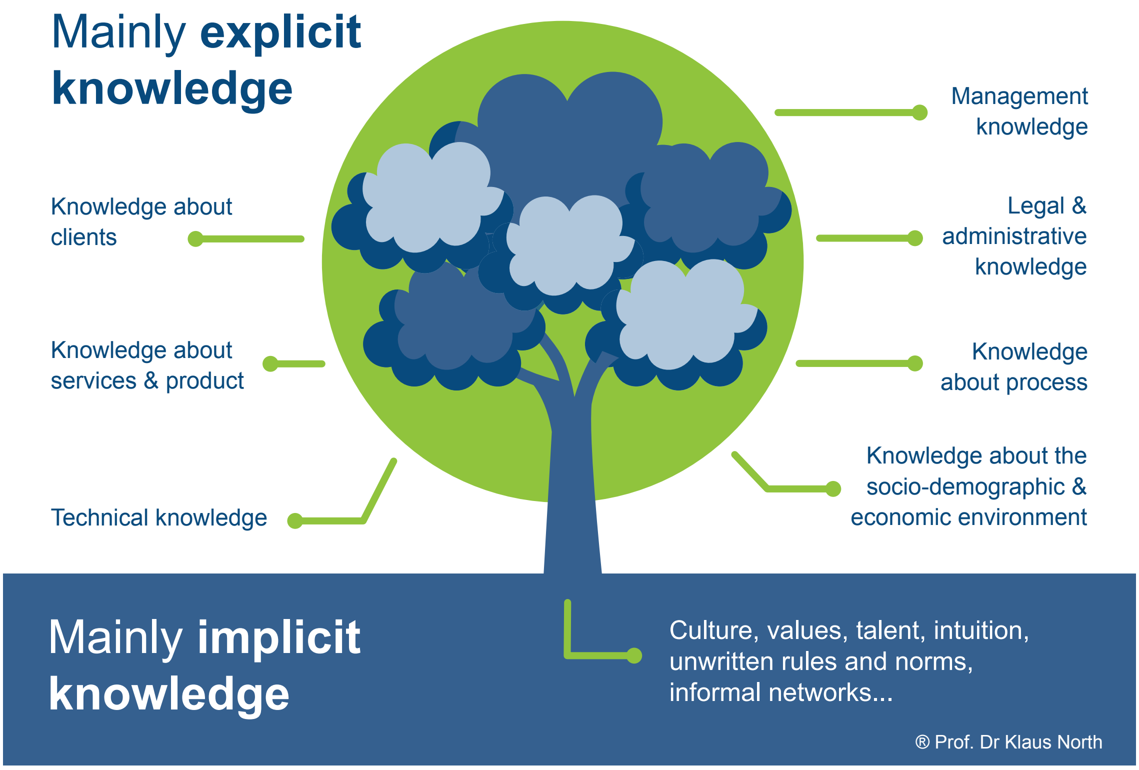
As the knowledge tree of an organisation shows (see Figure 1), there are two types of knowledge: explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is symbolised by the roots of a tree, comprising the values, and the organisational and country or regional cultures in which behaviour is 'rooted'. On an individual level, tacit knowledge represents often unconscious personal experience. It comprises subjective insights and is difficult to describe (e.g. 'I am able to establish a good working relationship with jobseekers, but I cannot tell you in detail how I do it.'). It is based on education, values and the socialisation of the individual person. The behaviour of employees based on a specific organisational culture (i.e. the unwritten rules) is tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge in organisations is mainly passed on by socialisation processes (observe, imitate, get feedback, reflect, adapt behaviour). Mentorships and management as role models for desired behaviour are therefore important if a PES wants to enhance client orientation or integrate new staff.

Unlike tacit knowledge, explicit knowledge is methodical and systematic and is present in an articulated form. It is stored in the media outside the brain (i.e. is disembodied) of an individual and can be transferred and stored by means of information and communication technology (ICT). Examples of explicit knowledge are all the documents of an organisation, detailed descriptions of processes, written administrative procedures and guidelines, quality documents, etc. Tacit knowledge (such as successful counselling practices) can be made explicit by observation, discussion and reflection on how we are doing an activity step by step, what is critical in this activity, etc.).

2.1.2 Value creation in knowledge-based service

Creating value through the use of knowledge-based services is a step-by-step process. There are various steps to enriching resources. In the following, we explain the relationship between

Figure 1. The knowledge tree of an organisation



improved knowledge management and greater added-value by means of the 'knowledge ladder' (see Figure 2) and where this input leads us to fields of action for PES.

The organisation of **symbols into data** represents the first step in the creation of value, which, at the next stage, are given meaning to become information. **Information** serves as an input for decision-making and actions. It requires the capability to use information selectively, and to make sense of it and interpret it.

From this perspective, **knowledge** is the result of information processed by the conscious mind. While information is organised data, knowledge refers to the tacit or explicit understanding about relationships among phenomena.

The value of knowledge becomes evident only if it is applied. This requires that people are motivated to make the best use of their knowledge and that the organisation empowers them. The ability or capacity to act appropriately in a specific situation is known as **competence**. This capacity to make an appropriate choice of actions depends upon a wide repertoire of potential actions based on experiences and expertise developed over time. **Value** is the result of the interplay between multiple competencies of a person, a group, a network, an intelligent system or an institution, based on its unique information and knowledge resources.

From this perspective, competitiveness is the result of the capability to bundle competencies uniquely and to renew them to create a unique customer value. Public organisations compete for resources and need to attract skilled staff and proof their effectiveness.

As in a real staircase, you need all of the steps which are equally important (see Figure 2). You must build all of these steps: ensure easy access to up-to-date information, have an effective training system and develop competencies.
The bottom-up view reflects the operational processes of information and knowledge management, whereas the top-down view reflects the strategic view in defining the competencies of an organisation and its staff that will ensure the objectives of the organisation are achieved.

A PES should excel in the following three fields of action.

Strategic knowledge management passes through the knowledge ladder from top to bottom to answer questions such as 'What do we need to know and be able to do to meet our objectives and the needs of citizens today and in the future?'. In a strategy process, the core competencies and mission-critical knowledge of the organisation are reviewed periodically and reflected in the strategy. Important qualifications and skills of employees are determined and periodically evaluated, while the education and training of staff are effectively aligned with strategic and operational knowledge and competence goals.

Operational knowledge management particularly involves connecting information to knowledge, know-how and actions. The manner of organising the process of transferring individual knowledge into collective knowledge and vice versa is decisive in successful KM. However, this process requires effective incentives. Therefore, user-friendly KM entails systems that encourage the creation, distribution and use of knowledge. Operational management of information, knowledge and competence requires three issues to be addressed at each level: we need to 'create transparency', 'make available' and 'exchange and learn' (see Table 1 in Section 1).
Information and data management is the basis for knowledge management. The knowledge ladder in Figure 2 shows that the supply, storage and distribution of information are prerequisites for creating and transferring knowledge. Many public sector organisations have developed their intranet and one-stop-shop websites or platforms to better serve citizens. E-government strategies and digital transformation initiatives in the public sector contribute to more user-friendly and more widely available digitised services for citizens. ICT applications, however, only work to their full effect in appropriate organisational conditions and culture.

2.2 Typical knowledge management challenges in PES: people, processes and organisational culture

KM challenges in PES may arise from several sources: the general institutional constraints of public administration, the need for collecting and exchanging accurate information at the heart of job exchange, which is the core business of PES, and new external challenges.

Figure 2. The knowledge ladder

Implications for managing knowledge
1. Most of our knowledge is tacit. Effective teamwork and knowledge-sharing require a common understanding of why and how we act. Mentorships can support socialisation processes.
2. In a strict sense, we cannot share knowledge, but we share information, which needs to be digested and integrated into the knowledge of the receiving person. This might lead to misunderstandings. If you want to share your knowledge, put yourself in the position of the receiving side, and prepare documents with a clear focus on the needs of the user.
3. Having lots of knowledge does not automatically mean that we act in a competent manner. The development of competence requires people to apply their knowledge, get regular feedback and reflect on their experiences.

2.2.1 General institutional constraints

The typical constraints of public administration are summarised in Table 2. These mainly relate to the lack of resources and rigidities in HR management. PES may face staff shortages and/or high turnover, which disrupts both the accumulation and the transfer of knowledge between experienced staff and new recruits. Some PES have limited resources for staff training. In some countries where PES have limited autonomy, there may also be bureaucratic constraints to providing flexible and PES-specific training to staff. The lack of resources or rigid hierarchical structures may also hamper the development of internal and external information systems.

Core business of the PES

The traditional function of PES is job matching, which entails collecting, continuously updating and combining information about vacancies and jobseekers. Some of this information can be recorded in IT platforms: the challenge is to develop systems that can record counsellor–client communications and records of discussions. Accordingly, it is a major challenge to ensure that the data in internal and external IT systems is up to date, accurate, complete and shared in a user-friendly way for all users (i.e. PES counsellors, managers, jobseekers, employers, external service providers, municipalities and social partners). The other major challenge is to ensure that other, wider information accumulated by individual counsellors is systematically shared within their teams and passed on to new recruits. Such information may relate to the finer details of conditions or skill requirements of jobs, the quality of external providers, the job-readiness of a jobseeker, or whom to contact at an external partner organisation. The sharing of such information needs to be systematised.

New external challenges

There are also new external challenges that affect KM within PES. The increasing pace of change in labour markets calls for the development of labour market forecasting systems. The broadening functions of PES, especially the related need to cooperate with other service providers, increases the importance of exchanging knowledge and information with partners. There is also a change in the traditional clientele of PES: their new, more diverse clientele (including the traditional core group of skilled people, single parents, disabled jobseekers, youths, migrants, etc.) calls for differentiation in how and what is communicated to clients. Lastly, the general trend of digitalisation poses a challenge, as well as an opportunity. Digitalisation has increased the quality and amount of information that may potentially be used and processed by the PES to facilitate job exchange and other functions. At the same time, it has also augmented client expectations regarding the accuracy, quality and timeliness of information, and its accessibility.
Subsection 2.3 explains how the systematic use of KM can support PES to tackle these challenges.

Table 2. General KM challenges in public administration (Source: adapted from North, 2017)

Challenge	Implications for managing knowledge in the public sector
Hierarchical leadership and few incentives to transfer knowledge	Knowledge-sharing needs to be valued in the organisation
ICT and IT systems outdated and underused	Need to make up-to-date and well-prepared information easily available/accessible to users
Shortage of personnel and resources	Need to allow more time for documentation and knowledge-sharing
Pressure to increase efficiency and demonstrate added-value of public service	Pressure to collect information on costs and benefits Need to exploit KM in order to increase efficiency Need to communicate added value

2.3 Knowledge Management framework for PES: assess your level of knowledge management

As new public management (NPM) and e-government gain acceptance around the globe, KM is integrated into the business excellence models adopted by public agencies. A case in point is the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), a total quality management (TQM) tool developed by the public sector for the public sector, inspired by the Excellence Model of the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM®) (EIPA, 2013). For the PES Network, this approach is not new, as it is the foundation for the Benchlearning process the network has been implementing since 2015[1].

CAF sub-criterion 4.4 ('Manage information and knowledge') defines a number of practices that organisations are asked to evaluate and improve, as follows:

- developing systems for managing, storing and assessing information and knowledge in the organisation in accordance with strategic and operational objectives
- ensuring that externally available relevant information is acquired, processed, used effectively and stored
- constantly monitoring the organisation's information and knowledge, ensuring its relevance, correctness, reliability and security; also aligning it with strategic planning and the current and future needs of stakeholders.
- developing internal channels which cascade information throughout the organisation to ensure that all employees have access to the information and knowledge relevant to their tasks and objectives (intranet, newsletter, house magazine, etc.)
- ensuring a permanent transfer of knowledge between staff in the organisation (e.g. mentorship, coaching, written manuals)
- ensuring access to, and exchange of, relevant information and data with all stakeholders in a systematic and user-friendly way, taking into account the specific needs of all members of society (such as elderly people, disabled people, etc.)
- ensuring that key information and knowledge of employees are retained within the organisation in the event of their leaving the organisation.

We look deeper into these practices and what they mean for PES in Section 3.

2.3.1 The knowledge management cycle

In addition to overarching organisational excellence frameworks (such as CAF), quality management standards provide guidance on the integration of KM into management systems. This is the case of the ISO 9001:2015 quality standard.

A new clause on organisational knowledge (7.1.6) was added to ISO 9001:2015. The requirements of this clause are as follows:

- Determine the knowledge necessary fo the operation of its processes and achieve conformity of products and services.
- This knowledge shall be maintained and made available to the extent necessary.
- When addressing changing needs and trends, the organisation shall consider its current knowledge and determine how to acquire or access any necessary additional knowledge and required updates.

Considering both CAF and ISO, as well as the basic principles of managing knowledge, this toolkit proposes a **KM Framework for PES** (see Figure 3).

Based on an appropriate organisational culture ('learning organisation') and the information and knowledge-base of the organisation, the KM cycle contributes to effective and client-oriented service delivery and the development and innovation of future services, taking into account the economic, socio-demographic and legal environment.

Central part of the framework is a KM cycle which contains the following essential elements.

Determine the required knowledge: The first step is to identify the knowledge and skills required to meet the needs of customers. A broader interpretation should include analysis of the needs of all stakeholders. This can be done in relation to services and processes. This includes the following practices:

[1] See the PES Network Benchlearning Manual, 2017 https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18857&langId=en

Figure 3. The KM Framework for PES

- The current and future requirements of customer/citizens and other stakeholders, and (labour) market and technology trends are analysed and translated into the organisational strategy.
- From the organisational strategy, objectives of knowledge and competence are derived: what do we need to know and be able to do in order to satisfy the current and future needs of our stakeholders?
- Systematically identify critical knowledge for effective service delivery.

Analyse existing knowledge: The second step is to analyse the existing knowledge and to identify the gaps in relation to the required knowledge and competencies. This includes the following practices:

- A periodical analysis at all levels of the organisation is performed to ensure that the right knowledge and competencies for effective service delivery today are available. Gaps between required and existing knowledge and competencies are identified.
- The organisation investigates what are the right knowledge and competencies for effective service delivery and service innovation in the future and identifies the gaps.
- The HR department has an effective system to determine and evaluate important skills and competencies of employees.
- Information relevant to processes, intellectual property rights and information systems are documented and evaluated.

To structure the required knowledge and relate them to existing knowledge, the KM tool ‘Knowledge map and taxonomy’ (see Section 4.4) is a useful instrument.

Acquire the necessary knowledge: relevant knowledge must be accessible. ISO 9001:2015 in footnote 2 of the chapter ‘Organisational Knowledge’ gives tips as to how knowledge can be acquired using:

- internal sources (e.g. intellectual property, knowledge gained from experience, lessons learned from failures and successful projects, capture and sharing of undocumented knowledge and experience, results of improvements in processes, products and services);
- external sources (e.g. standards, academia, conferences, collection of knowledge from clients or external suppliers).

In a dynamic environment, rapid learning loops are essential.

Acquiring the necessary knowledge includes the following practices:

- There is a strategy and systematic approach to acquire knowledge internally and/or externally.
- Our training and learning systems are effective.
- Different flexible and mobile forms of learning support the acquisition of the necessary knowledge (e.g. training, e-learning, work-based learning, team learning).
- We learn systematically from mistakes. Lessons learned are systematically analysed and used.
- The organisation develops and systematically uses external sources of knowledge (e.g. cooperation with research institutions/services and educational services, consultants, clients, suppliers, online services, etc.).

After-action reviews or lessons learned (see Section 4.2) and communities of practice (see Section 4.5) can support this. A skill and competence matrix visualises the skill and competency levels of staff and their development needs (see Section 4.3).

Share knowledge and make it available: acquiring the necessary knowledge is linked to knowledge-sharing within and beyond an organisation. It is important to understand that the knowledge of the organisation is reflected in documents and processes, and embedded in IT systems and in the organisational structure, etc. The organisation always needs people who are capable of capturing, enriching and exchanging knowledge, as well as external knowledge that complements internal resources. An open organisational culture (see Section 3.1) represents a key factor for success. Sharing knowledge includes the following practices:

- An enterprise culture and incentive systems promote knowledge-sharing and learning as a whole.
- Training and learning are efficiently aligned with the strategic and operational objectives of the organisation.
- The recruitment and induction of new workers and the transfer of the knowledge of workers who rotate to other positions, leave work or retire are systematic.
- The individual knowledge of the experts is made available to the organisation via personal exchange, communities of practice and documentation.
- Media and information systems (e.g. databases, intranet, social media) support user-friendly access and the exchange of internal/external information and knowledge.
- Networks and communities are an important means of sharing knowledge (see Section 4.5)

Preserve and protect knowledge: the final step in the knowledge cycle is to maintain and update existing and acquired knowledge. This can be done by both documenting the necessary knowledge in order to preserve it for the organisation, and transmitting it to new workers so that it is preserved for the next generation. Systematic identification of risks from loss of knowledge, for example through retirement or staff turnover, is an important prerequisite for being able to establish effective measures for the conservation of knowledge. This includes the following practices:

- There is a strategy and systematic approach to securing, documenting and updating critical knowledge for success.
- The risks of loss of knowledge are systematically identified, and expert knowledge that is concentrated in an individual is effectively passed on in due time before staffing changes.
- Legal possibilities for the protection of knowledge (e.g. trademark protection, patents) are systematically used.
- A skill and competence matrix shows where the organisation is vulnerable (see Section 4.3)

You are now invited to assess the level of your KM practices with the complete checklist in Annex 1.

In the following sections, we delve deeper into each element of the knowledge cycle and provide practical guidance on how implementation can be carried out in the organisation by developing systematic KM practices.

SECTION 3. Creating effective knowledge management practices

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Following the self-assessment, this section assists PES to implement effective KM practices. Each of the practices is described at three levels (initial, intermediate and advanced) and ideally good practice examples from PES are given. As each of the practices might rely on several KM tools (and there is an overlap in the tools used for several purposes), these are described in Section 4.

3.1 Knowledge-oriented organisational culture and leadership practices

KM practices are conscious organisational and managerial practices aimed at achieving the objectives of the organisation through an efficient and effective management of the knowledge resources of the company.

3.1.1 Why enhance knowledge-oriented culture and leadership?

A PES can only work effectively if employees actively support the objectives of the organisation, make best use of their knowledge and openly share their experiences. A main driver for the adoption of KM initiatives in PES is the development of an open, participative and trustful organisational culture that is closely related to leadership and HR management practices.

3.1.2 How to develop a knowledge-oriented organisational culture and leadership practices

Though it seems logical that employees who know the purpose of their job and support it completely, who participate and get recognition, and who feel secure in their employment are the ones who make the best use of their talents for the benefit of the organisation, this is not always the case. The checklist in Table 3 allows you to assess the situation you experience in your team, unit or agency. Please also note the ideas for measures of improvement.

It is the task of leaders at all levels to align activities and shape conditions to reach the objectives of the organisation or unit. According to Peter Senge (1997), a leader has three roles, as follows:

- **The leader as a designer** shapes the strategic and learning context and creates the conditions fundamental to achieving strategic success.
- **The leader as a teacher**, instead of giving all the answers, asks the right questions. In particular, he/she makes the employees and the organisation aware of the limitations of the existing models of thought and works on enhancing these models.
- **The leader as a steward** is aware of his/her responsibility towards employees and the organisation, and therefore strives to serve both the employees and the overall goal of the organisation and tries to interlink the two. In this role, leaders emphasise to their team(s) the links between the knowledge to be developed and the objectives of the organisation.

Ask a simple question that makes a difference: in the meetings of your team or unit, have a regular timeslot to discuss the following question: 'What have we learned this (last) week?' Capture the learning, draw conclusions and share your insights with other teams.

Table 3. Checklist to assess knowledge-oriented organisational culture and leadership practices

	Completely agree	Partly agree	Do not agree	Measures for improvement
1. I know what is expected of me at work.				
2. The goals of my organisation and my team inspire me.				
3. I have or set goals that are challenging and develop my potential.				
4. My organisation supports me fully in achieving my goals.				
5. My organisation encourages open communication.				
6. We regularly discuss errors and what we can learn from them.				
7. My interaction with colleagues and superiors is characterised by openness and trust.				
8. My work was recognised and appreciated in the last seven days.				
9. At work I am treated in a fair manner.				
10. I get encouragement and support for self-development.				

Organisations should encourage 'networkers' (community builders) as well as formal leaders. These are people who often do not have formal hierarchical line-management authority in the organisation, such as counsellors or experts. These people link employees and ideas, and thus help to detect new opportunities at the right time. They are a source of inspiration and encourage a good work atmosphere and commitment.

Knowledge-oriented leadership practices include the following[2]:

- **Leaders highlight to their team(s) the links between knowledge to develop and the objectives of the organisation.** They make transparent which competencies are needed and how these are currently distributed (i.e. by using a skill and competence matrix), and ensure that training is consistent with the strategy. Take time to reflect – Where are we now? What are the gaps?

- **Knowledge-sharing and mutual learning are explicit values that are practised regularly.** In an organisation, several formats are **regularly** used for knowledge-sharing (e.g. sessions in which 'colleagues learn from colleagues', joint coffee breaks, peer reviews, etc.). Job rotation within and across teams is practised frequently, and after-action reviews are common practice (like brushing your teeth after a meal).

- **Leaders behave as role models to promote the values of knowledge-sharing and mutual learning.** It is important that leaders not only promote knowledge-sharing, but also act accordingly, particularly in situations where there are resource constraints and conflicting priorities (e.g. urgent operational tasks). This can be done, for example, by regularly asking the question 'What have we learned?'. Encouraging employees to take time to reflect, sharing knowledge regularly across the senior management team, preventing 'silo behaviour', and frequent communication (both top down and bottom up) help create an atmosphere where people are encouraged to share and learn.

- **Superiors value the contribution of individuals and teams in developing relevant knowledge.** To energise colleagues, the leader of a learning organisation should encourage, recognise and reward knowledge development and sharing. Simple examples of managers practising what they preach include regular feedback to staff, participatory staff meetings or retreats, and active participation in knowledge-sharing activities. Effective and active knowledge-sharing should be recognised as an essential skill/competence for future leaders. People wishing to progress to managing interesting projects and gaining the opportunity to participate in development training or events should be aware of this (see also Section 3.3. on knowledge-sharing).

- **Organisational structures, functions and responsibilities to manage knowledge are set and practised** (see Section 5).

3.1.3 Three levels of knowledge-oriented leadership practices and organisational culture

Level I (initial): Some managers give people the time to share and learn, but there is little visible support from the top. There is, in general, a positive attitude towards collaboration and knowledge-sharing, but time constraints are put forward as the reason it does not happen regularly. Ad-hoc networking takes place to help individuals who know each other.

Level II (intermediate): Superiors value the contribution of individuals and teams to develop relevant knowledge. Knowledge exchange and mutual learning are practised regularly, but formats used (such as after-action reviews or communities of practice) and results are not evaluated systematically.

Level III (advanced): Knowledge exchange and mutual learning are explicit values and practised regularly. Leaders behave as role models to promote the values of knowledge-sharing and mutual learning. Senior executives are actively involved in projects to improve knowledge management. Organisational structures, roles and responsibilities for managing knowledge are established and practised.

Staff empowerment through 'self-leadership', Sweden
The 'self-leadership' approach was initiated by the new PES management of Arbetsförmedlingen (Swedish PES) in order to give more freedom and initiative to PES staff. A two-day training initiative was created and held for PES managers (approximately 800 people) in 2016 with the support of external consultancy (Gaia Leadership). The PES managers who participated in the training are expected to transmit to their teams the approach and the knowledge gained in the training. The training was also followed by an update on the intranet, where PES staff can access resources that help them in applying the self-leadership approach in their daily tasks. Feedback from interviews shows a more collective way of working inside the PES, as well as better equipped managers as a result of the training and applying this approach.

Source: European Commission (March 2017): 'Self-leadership' approach (good practice fiche) https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=17305&langId=en

[2] Source: Federal Personnel Service of Belgium (2010)

Teambox, Flanders, Belgium
Following a fundamental reform and organisational changes inside the VDAB (Flemish PES), a new online tool called Teambox was introduced in the spring of 2018. The main objective of Teambox was to support the team leaders in adhering to the new requirements of their position set by the reform. Teambox is a practice-oriented toolbox that contains practical tips and tricks, and examples that help in assembling new teams and achieving self-sufficient teams. It was developed by 17 team coaches who coach team leaders and their teams but are not able to coach all of them personally. Team leaders on the central as well as the regional level were involved in the implementation.

Source: European Commission (December 2018). Promising PES Practice: Teambox (good practice fiche) https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20538&langId=en

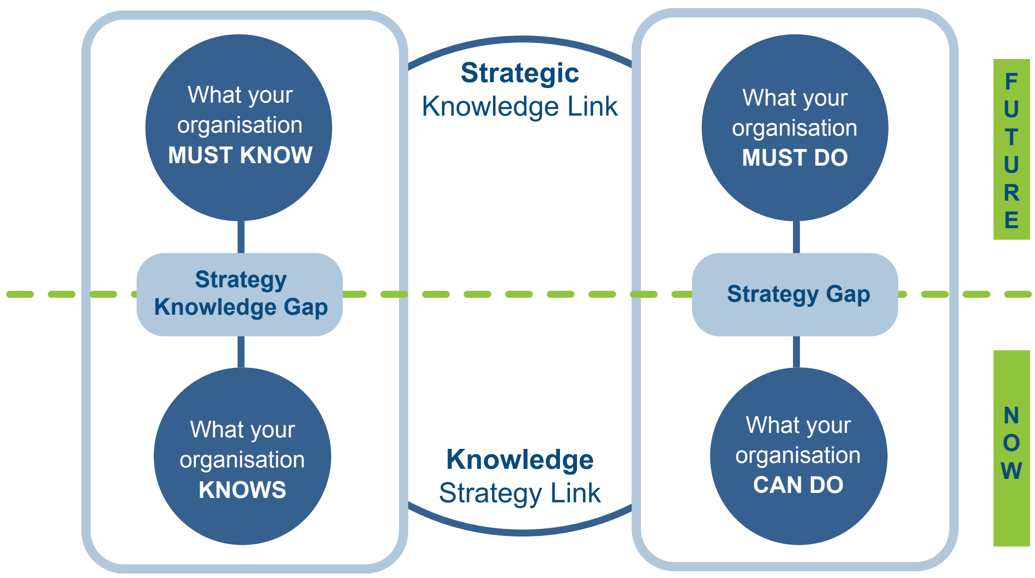
3.2 Aligning knowledge management with strategic planning and the current and future needs of stakeholders

3.2.1 What do we need to know?

The alignment of KM with strategy has three purposes.
Firstly, ideally everybody in the organisation knows the strategy of the organisation and is able to translate it into objectives and required competencies for his or her own work.
Secondly, the organisation is able to watch the current and future needs of the stakeholders and draw relevant conclusions.
Thirdly, the organisation ensures that at all levels, the PES has or can develop the specific expertise needed.
The overall question, therefore, is: **What do we need to know and what can we do in in order to satisfy the current and future needs of our clients?**

Figure 4 shows the four questions an organisation has to address in a knowledge-gap analysis in order to operationalise its strategy.

Figure 4. Strategic knowledge gap analysis (Source: Tiwana, 2000)



Strategic staffing in PES, The Netherlands
The Dutch PES applies PESTLE analysis for ranking the impact and uncertainty of driving forces such as political, economic, social, technological, etc., and develops four different scenarios for the direction of the organisation. The HR strategy is derived from the results of this analysis. In each scenario, human capital (including talent management) is essential, alongside staff planning in dialogue with top managers. Special attention is paid to attracting enough skilled people to do particular jobs, such as labour market experts, ICT professionals and financial controllers.

Source: European Commission (December 2018) Summary Report: Follow-Up Visit to The Netherlands PES on 'Human Resource Management: How to Attract, Retain and Develop Talent', Netherlands, PDF https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20478&langId=en

3.2.2 How to develop these practices

In many organisations, there is no clear link between the overall strategy, competence development and transformation in the work of teams and individuals. Successful organisations have developed at least six practices (see Table 4).

3.2.3 Three levels of aligning knowledge management with strategic planning and the needs of stakeholders

Level I (initial): Strategy is developed by a small circle of leaders. There is no explicit link between strategy and knowledge/competence development. Some leaders and teams link the strategy to competence development.

Level II (intermediate): Strategy is implicitly linked to required knowledge and competence. It is cascaded top down to units and teams. Some motivated leaders take action to ensure that the required knowledge and competencies are available.

Level III (advanced): The organisation develops its strategy with intensive stakeholder interactions and practises participative strategy development. Everybody has a clear idea what the implementation of the strategy means for their own job. An explicit knowledge management strategy aligned with the overall PES strategy guides knowledge and competence development. Leaders at all levels regularly review the strategy with employees and take necessary corrective actions. HR development is clearly linked to the organisational strategy.

InnovAction, France
The Pôle Emploi (French PES) launched the online platform InnovAction in 2014. Its main objective is to share ideas, encourage participation and engage employees in the development of services. After senior managers have initiated a 'challenge' online, job counsellors may contribute to innovation by submitting their solutions in the form of new ideas or good practice, as well as by commenting and voting on these ideas. Experts and regional management decide whether an idea should be tested at the local level or not. Once the ideas are tested and evaluated, they might become regional and later national practices. Every two months, a list of ideas to be tested at national level and those becoming national practices is published by a committee of national PES managing directors, so that job counsellors can follow the progress of their ideas.

There are moderators who promote the platform and ensure quality, experts who review the practices, and a team of evaluators in every region. The platform is managed by the Department for Innovation and Corporate Social Responsibility at the national office, which also supports testing and evaluation of the ideas at the national level. By March 2016, 70% of all PES employees engaged on the platform and 21% of the practices were implemented on a regional or national level (January 2016). It was planned that the platform would also be opened to other stakeholders (employers, trade unions).

Source: European Commission (March 2016). InnovAction is a collaborative platform to put ideas into practice https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15341&langId=en

Participative strategy events, Estonia
Since 2009, the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund (a PES) has organised an annual two-day event where managers and experts discuss with team leaders different topics. Examples of topics include strategic objectives, the development plan, annual action plan goals, activities and indicators. The team leaders are chosen from among PES staff members and summarise the discussions. The participants at the event all take part in each team leader's discussion across four or five teams.

Source: European Commission (March 2017). Strategy days with employees (good practice fiche) https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=17546&langId=en

Table 4. Checklist to assess how KM is related to strategy

	Completely agree	Partly agree	Do not agree	Measures for improvement (some examples)
1. In our organisation, we have good ways to communicate the strategy.				Communication is dominantly one-way: need to develop feedback, especially from local units
2. There is a participative process to discuss strategy issues at all levels.				As above: need to strengthen forums for involving local units.
3. I have a clear idea what the strategy means for my work.				
4. Competence development is explicitly aligned with strategy.				Need to establish regular dialogue between HR unit and KM experts and integrate KM-related tasks into competence development plans.
5. The organisation has a good process to integrate views on future stakeholder needs across levels and units.				
6. At team level, we have a plan of how to develop the knowledge and competencies needed for the next one to three years.				There is a plan, but it is focused on updating 'hard' skills and knowledge (e.g. IT and changes in rules, or ALMP design), and does not cover 'soft' competencies (e.g. leadership skills, or teamwork).

3.3 Sharing knowledge and learning

3.3.1 Why knowledge-sharing?

Sharing knowledge and learning across and beyond the organisation improves quality, productivity and the speed of service delivery. Avoiding redundant effort by capitalising on experiences saves time and money and avoids 're-inventing the wheel'. Apart from actively sharing knowledge within the PES, learning from other organisations (be that PES from other countries, public organisations in your country or practice in private firms) can be immensely beneficial for enhancing PES effectiveness (see Section 6).

Using EU PES Network resources to improve quality management, Le Forem, Belgium

Le Forem (the PES of the Walloon region in Belgium) started a project on quality management in June 2019, partly in response to recommendations of the second cycle of the EU Benchlearning assessment in December 2018. The project is managed by a dedicated committee composed of experts. The International Department of Le Forem used the European PES Network's Benchlearning Dashboard (in particular the qualitative data and the networking sections) to identify the Austrian PES (AMS) as a potential source of good practice in quality management. They searched for further information on the PES Knowledge Centre and found the summary report of a study visit on quality management in AMS and a promising PES practice on the AMS 'Chances and risk management strategy'. The PES's international department helped the project committee to contact the relevant experts in Austria. The documents drawn from the PES Network are systematically integrated into a repository maintained by the international department and are accessible to all Le Forem staff.

Source: PES Network webinar on Knowledge Management, 2019

Knowledge-sharing in the PES Network can thus be one important source for PES. As shown in Figure 5 and the example below, the PES Benchlearning Dashboard helps in finding PES that already have advanced systems (as well as peers that may be considering reforms) in a particular area. Descriptions of promising practices are available in the PES practices repository[3], the toolkits, studies and reports published in the PES Knowledge Centre[4], as well as Benchlearning reports and thematic learning dialogue reports on the PES Benchlearning Dashboard. As an example, Figure 5 depicts a screenshot of the learning network module of the Dashboard, for the topic of "Ideas management and good practice transfer". On the right side of the screen, the red arrows (as well as the map) show which PES can contribute as "teachers" while blue arrows show which PES may benefit as "learners" in this topic. This helps users identify not only potential teachers but also the peer PES that may be interested in discussing development initiatives. On the left side of the screen, there are links to the further resources mentioned above.

3.3.2 How to develop these practices

Knowledge-sharing happens to some extent in all organisations. The challenge, however, is to make knowledge-sharing and learning a systematic practice extended across the organisation.

You are invited to use the checklist in Table 5 to find out your organisation's current state of play on knowledge-sharing.

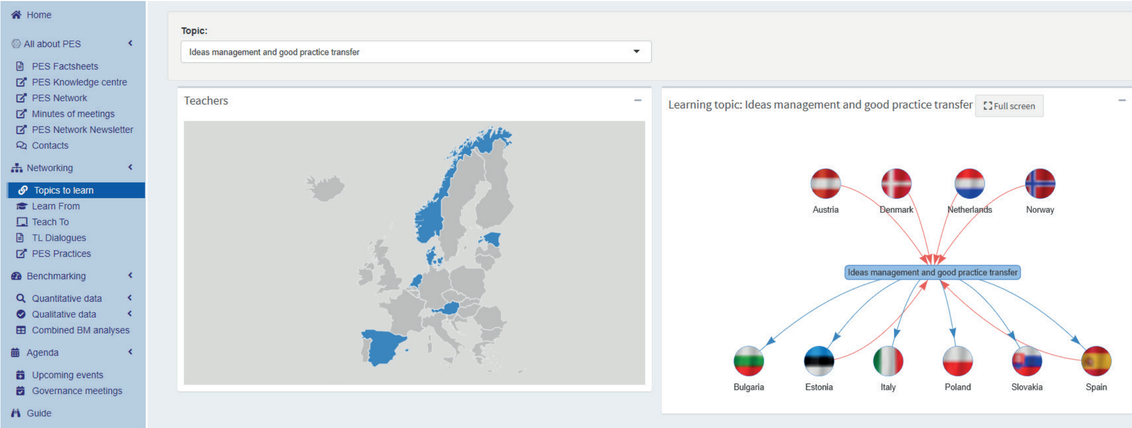
In the following, you will find some tips on how make your knowledge-sharing more effective.

1. **Have a clear purpose for knowledge-sharing.** Knowledge is not an end in itself; it serves a purpose. A common problem for different teams taking part in an overall improvement programme is that new challenges such as digitalisation trigger collaboration and knowledge-sharing. Management can consciously design such purposes. Networks and communities of practice should be clear as to what they want to achieve and

[3] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1206&langId=en

[4] https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1163&langId=en

Figure 5. Display of 'teachers' and 'learners' in a relevant topic of the PES Network Dashboard



should be organised around business needs. Defining concise deliverables or desired results also motivates people to contribute.

2. **Actively search for and implement good practice.** 'Good practice' or 'best practice' is a source that has been shown to produce superior results (e.g. in bringing the long-term unemployed back to work or increasing the effectiveness of labour market programmes). Systematic and fair internal benchmarking of local PES can help identify effective units[5]. The next step is to assess the reasons for their effectiveness and collect success stories. The third step is a systematic review process by CoP or the human resources or organisation development unit, followed by documentation and transfer to other units. Such identification of good practice can also be used externally, as in the case of the PES Network's Benchlearning initiative, for transferring knowledge between PES in different countries.

3. **Create opportunities and multiple formats for the exchange of knowledge.** There might be regular, formalised formats for exchange (e.g. annual events, networks and communities, peer-coaching sessions, etc.) as well as informal methods (e.g. a team breakfast, a brown-bag lunch, lunchtime bingo where people meet at random to have lunch together, etc.). Increasingly, social media and chatting are used for informal exchanges.

4. **Encourage exchange over different levels of hierarchy.** In many organisations, knowledge does not flow well across hierarchies. Discussion across hierarchies (as shown in the Estonian example above), a blog by top management, visits by upper management to decentralised units or skip-level meetings (where leaders meet at random with employees for a coffee or lunch) all enhance knowledge-sharing across hierarchies.

5. **Incorporate competence development and knowledge transfer into employee appraisals.** In order to encourage, monitor and reward knowledge-sharing and learning behaviour, the regular performance appraisal should also address this topic. In the appraisal form or the discussion, employees might be asked 'What have you done to share your knowledge with colleagues?', 'How have you contributed to the further development of the knowledge-base of the organisation (e.g. by cooperating with networks, inserting presentations in the information system, presenting project reports, etc.)?' and 'How did you improve your competencies?'. The appraisal can also be used to agree on knowledge-sharing learning objectives for the next period.Encourage knowledge transfer by rotating jobs, organising teams and planning substitutions. While there are specific formats for knowledge-sharing, carefully planned organisational measures create the need for sharing knowledge. Job-

[5] Fair benchmarking is part of effective performance management. For more details, see the earlier toolkit on Performance Management in PES, EC 2016.

rotation schemes, exchange of members across teams and planning substitutions for departing employees are necessarily associated with acquiring new skills and sharing experiences. Also, staff exchanges across organisations, for example between EU PES, are a good means of sharing experiences and learning.

6. **Provide time for the exchange of knowledge.** When it comes to explicitly providing time for knowledge-sharing, most organisations are reluctant to dedicate specific budget or definite timeslots. If management really wants to encourage knowledge-sharing, it has to plan for it. Experience from practice suggests that 5% of time for knowledge-sharing and learning (e.g. 2 hours a week in a 40-hour/week job) might be a realistic target, not including specific training courses).

7. **Encourage playful motivation.** Knowledge-sharing should be fun and interesting. That is why playful, creative and interactive ways should be chosen, such as choosing a nice location, organising a role play, telling a story, drawing a picture, having a speed-dating exercise between experts and users, etc. Also, gamification approaches are gaining in importance, in particular among the millennial generation. Users are rewarded with points for performing various tasks, such as contributing to the shared knowledge-base, submitting a wiki article, replying to a discussion forum question or posting to a blog.

Peer coaching, Croatia
Peer coaching is a problem-solving tool: a structured process for a small group of peers to discuss a problem within one hour. The vocational training unit of the Croatian PES adapted the method in an EmployID project and then introduced a basic online course on peer coaching to the internal learning management system (LMS) as a self-learning course for all staff. After additional training by project experts, the peer-coaching process has become a standard tool used in staff meetings and in the reflective community platform.

Source: Response to Knowledge Management Questionnaire, Adriana Cudina Ruzic

Table 5. Checklist to assess knowledge-sharing in your organisation (adapted from Janus 2016, p. 15)

	Completely agree	Partly agree	Do not agree	Measures for improvement
1. In your organisation, knowledge-sharing is power.				
2. Management recognises knowledge-sharing as a valuable behaviour that improves organisational performance.				
3. Systems, platforms, and processes that foster systematic knowledge-sharing are actively used by the members of the organisation.				
4. Knowledge-sharing is largely based on the intrinsic motivation of employees.				
5. Teams are rewarded for collaboration that leads to faster or better results.				
6. We have an effective process to identify good practice across and beyond the organisation and implementing it across the organisation.				
7. In our organisation, knowledge-sharing networks work effectively.				
8. The members of the organisation contribute to the organisation's knowledge repository regularly.				
9. The organisation provides time for knowledge-sharing.				
10. Office architecture and communication zones encourage exchange of knowledge.				
11. Knowledge-capturing-and-sharing are continuously monitored and evaluated to improve the quality of outcomes and operational relevance.				

3.3.3 Three levels of knowledge-sharing practice

Level I (initial): Knowledge-sharing happens but is not systematic. Some units and teams have established sharing mechanisms. Management talks about the importance of knowledge-sharing without allotting time for it. Knowledge hoarders are still prevalent in the organisation.

Level II (intermediate): Knowledge-sharing happens at all levels of the organisation depending on the initiative of individuals, but there is no systematic approach: networks and communities follow their own interests. Stories of good practice circulate in the organisation. There are some regular events to share good practice across the organisation. Management is supportive in general, without announcing a specific intention.

Level III (advanced): Knowledge-sharing is systematically addressed at the organisational level, time is allocated for sharing and learning, the organisational culture supports the view that 'knowledge-sharing is power', and networks and communities are working effectively, based on business needs. Good practice is systematically identified and transferred across the organisation and beyond. Knowledge-sharing is encouraged, monitored and recognised systematically. Multiple formats close to operations enhance formal and informal knowledge-sharing.

Ideefix, Austria
The Ideefix databank was launched by the Arbeitsmarktservice (Austrian PES) in 2001 and since then has been made accessible to all its employees. Its main objectives are to improve performance, share knowledge and promote innovation. Employees are encouraged to submit a description of the problem together with the suggested solution and the expected outcome. When an idea is implemented by the PES, its author receives a bonus ranging from €50 to €950, depending on the level of implementation and impact). Furthermore, there is an annual ceremony where the best three ideas from all those that have been implemented are given an award.
The databank is managed by the 'idea manager' within the national department for organisational development who works with the HR department. The line managers are responsible for quality assurance – they make sure that the submitted ideas are new. There were 11,000 ideas submitted between 2001 and 2015. In 2015, 202 ideas were implemented, which meant €31,800 paid in bonuses.

Source: European Commission (March 2016). Idea management (good practice fiche) https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=15351&langId=en

Sharing knowledge on how to bring long-term unemployed people back to work
Sarah is very successful in bringing long-term unemployed people back to work. She is prepared to share her experiences with fellow counsellors. But how?

Initial level: She shares her experiences at occasional informal meetings with other counsellors in the region. If asked, she helps with tips and tricks.

Intermediate level: The head of the local/regional employment agency is proud of Sarah's results and mentions them at a regional agency managers' meeting. He/she provides time for Sarah to act as a mentor for less experienced counsellors in other agencies. On request, she conducts after-action reviews (see Section 4.2) of successful and less successful back-to-employment cases. She starts to systematise her findings and connects with other 'high-performing counsellors'. Some results are published in PES-wide newsletters.

Advanced level: Sarah and counsellors interested in the topic create a forum on the intranet of the PES, which is endorsed by upper management. A community of practice (see Section 4.5) emerges which systematises experiences in a guide titled 'Tips and tricks to bring long-term unemployed back to work'. This guide is used for counsellor training and is developed further by the community.

3.4 Developing competencies systematically

3.4.1 Why targeted competence development?

Skill, competence or talent management ensures that employees have the capability to carry out their jobs effectively and have development plans. Competence development needs to be aligned with organisational strategy. Some related questions are: 'Do employees have the competencies necessary for today's and future tasks?' and 'How can we organise selective training and learning processes for our current employees and which profiles do we need?' The organisation is often unaware of what individual experts know. Competence profiles help identify 'hidden experts' and assist in targeted knowledge transfer.

Competence development is part of HR management and merits a toolkit of its own. Therefore, we will discuss only some essential headlines in this section[6].

Competency model, Estonia
The competency model was developed by the Estonian PES between 2017 and 2018 with the aim of providing PES managers with a list of skills and behaviours that support their high performance. Among the most important competencies of managers are: 'strategic and analytical thinking, leadership and taking responsibility, planning and organisation, cooperation and networking, and self-management.' The aim is to evaluate these competencies every year and to discuss their improvement during a personal development interview. The evaluation of competencies includes self-assessment and assessment by a superior. During the development interview, priorities and methods for improving competencies are agreed upon. The outcomes of each manager's evaluation are incorporated in the development programme. As a result, the development programme consists of a general part (e.g. on strategic planning, teambuilding) and a more individualised part reflecting each manager's development needs (offering them individual coaching).

Source: Łukasz (2018); European Commission (August 2018) Thematic Paper: Human resource management: how to attract, retain and develop talent, p. 16. https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20127&langId=en

3.4.2 How to develop these practices

The competence of a person encompasses a combination of skills and behaviours necessary to carry out a task (e.g. counselling of a jobseeker). Competencies embrace several skills. A skill is an ability that is learned and practised for a period of time (e.g. conducting an interview). In contrast, talent refers to a 'natural' ability of a person that is inherent, inborn, or naturally occurring (e.g. musical talent). Even though the term 'talent management' is widely used, in practice the most important task is to manage competencies.

The establishment of a competency-management system would typically have the following steps:

1. Identify the desired behaviours and skills needed to achieve the desired results for specific roles or jobs (e.g. 'What makes a successful job counsellor?').
2. Describe the competencies that have a direct impact on results, based on a competency model (i.e. a structured repertoire of 10–20 competencies).
3. Evaluate employee competency using a competency model and grade the level of proficiency. Usually this would combine self-evaluation and peer–to-peer evaluation or rating by a superior.
4. Implement employee development strategies to close the gap between real and desired competency levels.

For each of the competencies, a description and proficiency level need to be formulated. For the purpose of structuring these, competencies are typically categorised as 'hard' or 'soft'. Whereas technical and functional competencies are considered 'hard' skills/competencies, creativity, interpersonal and behavioural skills are often described as 'soft' skills/competencies.

After describing individual competencies, the level of each should be evaluated. Different expertise models are recommended in the literature; however, in practice, the three-tier evaluation of

[6] For further information please consult the PES Thematic paper 'Human resource management: how to attract, retain and develop talent'

professional and method competence is standard.

Beginners have theoretical knowledge with less experience of applying such knowledge and are able to apply theoretical solutions to solve real problems (e.g. a project management course was conducted successfully and the first experience of executing project was collected).

The proficient have multiple experience in application and can even react appropriately to new unforeseen situations (e.g. multiple projects of different complexities were carried out on one's own authority).

Experts are capable of anticipating problems to a large extent by means of self-organisation and intuition. They are also capable of solving these. They stand out through their profound knowledge of topics (e.g. managing complex and novel projects, contributing to further development in methods of project management). Further nuances are possible depending on how specialised they are. Social competence can be assessed through levels such as 'less distinct', 'distinct" and 'more distinct'.

The results of a skill and competence assessment can be visualised in a skill and competence matrix, displaying the skill or competence distribution within a team or unit. This useful tool is described in detail in Section 4.3.

3.4.3 Various methods of competency development

The execution of new, challenging tasks is a motivation and an opportunity for learning. The opportunities offered by digital learning platforms and mobile devices enable learning when and where the need occurs. Initiatives such as 'colleagues learn from colleagues' support mutual learning among peers.

Coaching and supervision help knowledge workers reflect upon their learning process and can provide personal support for specific individual needs.

Project learning is an effective integrated approach where team members learn while carrying out project works.

In a few countries, e.g. in Germany, highly specialised formal courses are also available for the development of skills required in a PES. The German University of Applied Labour Studies (UALS) offers highly practice-oriented, interdisciplinary courses at BA and MA level. In partnership with the Academia Network, UALS also offers training for PES practitioners from other EU member states interested in German PES system and practices. In Belgium, Actiris has a new project to develop an academy for PES staff and partners.
How is competence development integrated into HR management? The quick assessment in Table 6 provides guidance on what is needed.

Table 6. Checklist to assess the competence management of your organisation (source: adapted from North & Kumta, 2016, pp. 138–139)

How do we manage competencies?	Completely agree	Partly agree	Do not agree	Measures for improvement
1. Core competencies are defined and updated regularly.				
2. Job descriptions contain up-to date and validated competence requirements.				
3. Employees have a competence profile for core processes or core functions. Profiles are updated regularly.				

How do we manage competencies?	Completely agree	Partly agree	Do not agree	Measures for improvement
4. HR development is based on a systematic competence evaluation.				
5. Learning has a high priority (time and budget provided for every employee).				
6. Informal learning is supported with suitable measures (coaching, mentoring, etc.).				
7. Individual development plans are implemented consistently.				
8. Training is always connected to application.				
9. Competence development is supported consistently by incentive systems.				

3.4.4 Three levels of competence management

Level I (initial): Skill requirements have been defined for some jobs. Many different forms of training and skill-upgrading exist without a systematic approach. HR development is ad hoc to deal with pressing skill shortages.

Level II (intermediate): Competence requirements are described for priority jobs, but there is no consistent competency model. Jobs descriptions refer to required skill/competencies; Human Resource Development operates on a more long-term basis.

Level III (advanced): The organisation makes use of a consistent competence model aligned with the HR strategy. Job descriptions contain up-to-date and validated competence requirements. HR development is based on a systematic competence evaluation. Employees actively manage their own competence portfolio. Many formats support learning close to the job.

3.5 Retaining the knowledge of leaving employees and on-boarding new colleagues effectively

3.5.1 Why retain and transfer knowledge?

As many PES face mass retirement of experienced officials and new staff need to be operational quickly, KM practices are urgently needed to retain experience and knowledge of officials who are leaving and to get new colleagues on board, in order to maintain the quality of service delivery.

'Intergenerational' collaboration and knowledge-sharing, Austria

In PES in Austria, a knowledge management project was decided by the executive board due to the critical age structure of the workforce with a tendency to obsolescence. Particular attention was paid to the development of an active generation management.

Project objectives

The project objectives were defined as:

- sensitise all involved to dealing with different generations;
- accept the diversity of generations in terms of attitudes, values, competencies needs, expectations and behaviour;
- promote intergenerational cooperation;
- transfer individual knowledge into collective knowledge;
- secure knowledge for the organisation through the planned retirement of older people;
- increase attractiveness as an employer;
- use generation management as a further development tool of the corporate culture;
- instil age-appropriate and life-phase-oriented leadership, with strong orientation and commitment to the active transfer of knowledge.

Results

- a New Generation-Sensitive Understanding of Attitudes and Behaviour of Leaders has been developed: today, leaders demonstrate how important the quality of contact among all employees is and how they actively use the strengths of all generations.
- In day-to-day collaboration, generation-discriminating statements and behaviour no longer find room. All employees respect and value cooperation with all generations in the company and strive for an active exchange of knowledge and experience. The cooperation of young and older employees is actively promoted by supporting mobility within the organisation.
- Organisation policies, rules and systems take into account positive generation-specific differences, thereby promoting cooperation. Diverse communication systems and tools are actively built and used to improve the exchange between all generations.

Source: Tavolato, Reichstamm and Müller (2017)

3.5.2 How to develop these practices

The intergenerational relay

When staff leave a team, they take with them the valuable knowledge, experience and contacts they have built up during their time there. The team, and organisation, suffer if this knowledge is not shared before the member of staff leaves. Estimates suggest it takes up to six months before staff taking on additional duties or new recruits contribute effectively to the organisation.

To retain the experience and knowledge of departing staff, successful approaches combine long-term organisational measures with individual handovers.

Long-term organisational measures should start by identifying key areas of knowledge and employees. Subsequently, it should be ensured that knowledge is distributed among several people. Establishing teams and rotation within and across them helps to reduce dependence on individual expertise. A systematic structuring of documentation eases access to information so it does not depend upon the availability of an individual official. Furthermore, knowledge transfer needs to be established as a regular process and to be integrated into employee handovers. At the individual level, there are basically four measures:

- motivation for knowledge transfer;
- establishing a (simple) transfer plan;
- providing time for knowledge transfer;
- accompanying the transfer with mentoring or coaching.

Arbetsförmedlingen, Sweden

When an employee terminates his employment at the Arbetsförmedlingen, the nearest manager is responsible for conducting a termination interview. The interview is facilitated by support material with examples of suitable questions, and managers also have the opportunity to get support from their HR partner. There is no process or other structured way to utilise the reflections and feedback from these interviews, though there may be individual good practice at the local level.

Source: Information provided by Arbetsförmedlingen, August 2019

A similar approach of transferring valuable knowledge in the Welsh Government, called Headstart, encourages line managers to capture the knowledge held by an individual within their team who is leaving either to another department or exiting the organisation. The focus is on capturing the less tangible elements of how an individual does their job, i.e. through their experience and know-how, which is not necessarily obtained through more traditional methods, such as desk instructions or handover notes. Headstart doesn't aim to replace these traditional methods of capturing information but to supplement them.

There are a few simple questions visualised in the decision tree in Figure 6 to determine whether going through the Headstart process is optional, recommended or important. The decision tree can be used by managers to determine whether a Headstart discussion is optional, recommended or important.

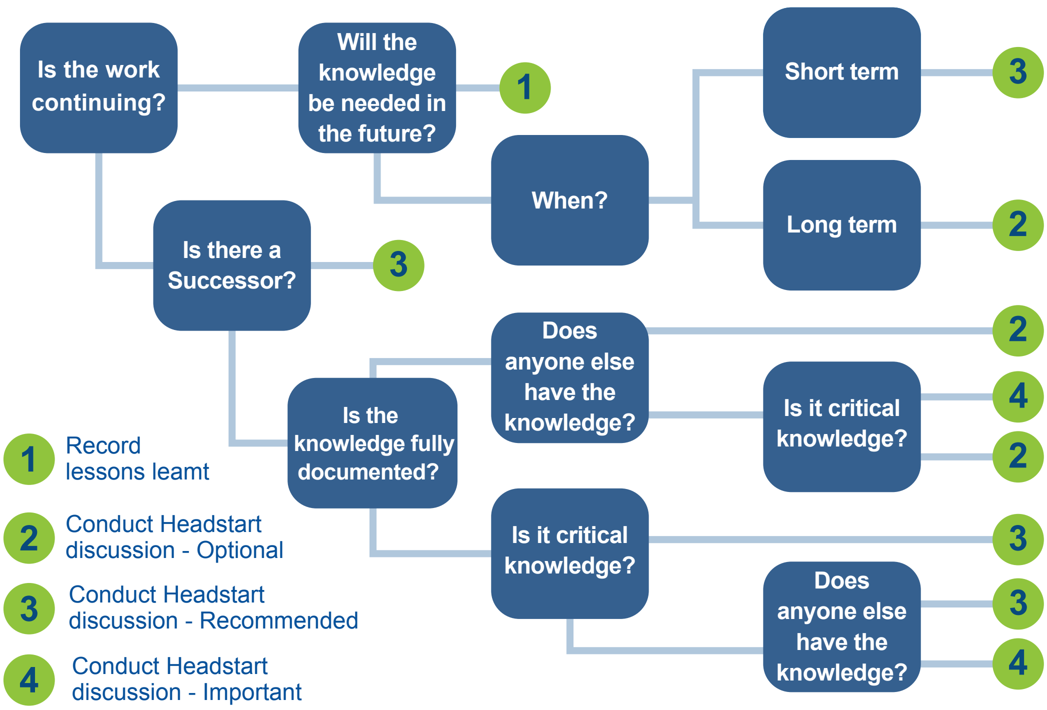
On-boarding of new staff members

When new staff members join or change position within the organisation, they need a well-structured introduction in order to become operational quickly.

Many organisations have developed differentiated programmes for this purpose. The Swedish PES (Arbetsförmedlingen) is a good case in point. The introductory programme varies according to the roles, e.g. for employment officers, administrators or specialists. The duration of the programme is 17 weeks and it is preceded by training for the supervisor (appointed by the responsible manager) who supports the on-boarding of the new employee. The supervisor training materials are available on the intranet. The introductory programme is planned by the manager, the supervisor and the new employee.

For example, the introductory programme for employment officers covers nine themes, such as the role of the employer officer, employer relations, working with jobseekers, job matching, and labour market policy assessment. The themes are illustrated with examples following the work processes in the new employees' offices. Additionally, in the first year of employment, the employer officers complete two compulsory courses on professional interviews and contact with employers.
The themes of the introductory programme are implemented through work-based learning

Figure 6. Decision tree to decide on the knowledge transfer required (source: Murphy, 2017)



(local introduction), web training tutorials and classes led by education leaders. Recently, the entire programme has been strengthened by adding more teacher-led training days, creating a clearer structure for examinations linked to competencies, and increasing the share of work-related elements[7].

LeForem (Belgium) has a systematic approach to supporting new recruits. This includes three elements: an introduction on their first day for all people who start working at the PES. On their second day at the PES, a package of HR information is communicated face to face to each new recruit. Subsequently, three meetings are held within a year between the new recruit and his/her direct supervisor. These are devoted to setting up the new person's personal objectives. For each objective, concrete actions are specified (e.g. following a specific course or meeting a specific person)[8].

Combining an introduction phase with a more long-term mentoring or coaching of new staff has also proven effective.

3.5.3 Three levels of handover and on-boarding

Level I (initial): Depending on the initiative of line managers and leaving or incoming staff, transfer of knowledge is organised. There is a standard on-boarding procedure.

Level II (intermediate): Handover is accompanied, but not in a systematic manner. Teams are active in capturing and retaining the knowledge of departing colleagues. Apart from central on-boarding events, units and teams take action to on-board new colleagues.

Level III (advanced): A systematic process to accompany handover is in place. Critical knowledge is identified and captured. Organisational measures ensure that critical knowledge is available for various staff members. Handover is seen as an opportunity to review task distribution and jobs. There is a differentiated on-boarding process, and mentoring, coaching or similar measures ensure on-boarding is tailored to the needs of individuals. The effectiveness of on-boarding is monitored.

3.6 Ensuring user-friendliness and effectiveness of information and communication systems

3.6.1 Why are information and communication systems crucial for service delivery?

Depending on the task, PES staff spend a major part of their working time in activities related to information and communication. Therefore, effective information and communication systems play a crucial rule in the delivery of services. In addition, digital government strategies require information and knowledge to be more usable and accessible. Information and communication management is a topic of its own that merits an own toolkit. Therefore, in the following, we only deal with some basic principles on how to deal with information and communication.

Visualising data in the counsellor dashboard, Estonia

The Estonian PES is currently working on a dashboard for counsellors and regional managers to support them in providing services, planning resources and organising their work. The interactive dashboard enables counsellors to see at one click the list of clients within each category (for example the list of clients with insufficient skills) and thereby offer them suitable services. It also gives an overview of changes in the volume of clients in the portfolio over time. As such, the dashboard supports the caseworkers in analysing their client portfolio, e.g. in annual performance dialogues. Managers of PES regional offices can see the customer portfolio of their region as a whole and they have the ability to compare portfolios of different counsellors.

The dashboards are created by using Tableau business intelligence software, which is connected to the PES' data warehouse. The dashboards are developed by the analysis department in close cooperation with counsellors and regional managers.

Source: Scharle and Csillag, 2019

[7] Source: Information provided by Arbetsförmedlingen, August 2019

[8] Source: Questionnaire preceding the Knowledge management webinar of May 2019

3.6.2 How to develop these practices

In a PES, information and communication systems (ICS) have to support managerial and operational tasks. The managerial activities are focused on decision-making and require good analytics to support their decisions. There is a need to pull together information from multiple sources and draw conclusions as accurately as possible. It therefore becomes necessary to filter relevant information from a large pool of data and from various sources. Big data analytics can support this, as shown in the example below from Denmark.

Jobeffekter knowledge bank, Denmark

Jobeffekter.dk is a website created by the Danish PES (STAR) in 2013 in order to facilitate evidence-based policymaking. The database contains studies on the effectiveness of labour market programmes. The effects are presented with the evidence level and the number of studies and can be searched by target groups (e.g. vulnerable, job ready), labour market policy type, gender and age. The main target groups of the website are policymakers, researchers and practitioners. The website is currently available solely in Danish with a plan to create an English version in the near future. As of March 2017, there were 400 studies with the focus split equally between vulnerable target groups and job-ready target groups.

The database is maintained by the data and analysis division of the Danish PES. However, the content is created independently of PES staff. The studies are collected, and their quality is assessed by social policy and labour market researchers based on guidelines. Aggregated policy effects are automatically calculated through an algorithm based on the information entered by the researchers. The researchers are selected once a year to assess all the newly published studies, while two or three times a year they review studies that are focused on specific target groups, based on national priorities.

Source: European Commission (March 2017). Danish Knowledge Bank – Jobeffekter (good practice fiche) http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=17364&langId=sl

The operational activities are characterised by capturing, processing and disseminating relevant information as fast as possible to enable the value chain to function efficiently and respond to both internal and external customers more effectively. The challenge is getting relevant information from various processes and sources to the point of action. Such activities require good process support and the availability and accessibility of information through various ICS.

Workplace productivity increases if optimum use is made of existing information and knowledge rather than re-inventing the wheel. Many organisations have implemented wikis to share experiences and provide easy-to-use information on various topics. With the increasing amount of information available, there is a need to select and prepare relevant information in a user-friendly format. Many organisations have defined the role of ‘information and knowledge curators’, who perform these tasks close to operational business. Job counsellors, for example, should not need to browse enormous amounts of information but should have the most relevant forms, documents and information resources at their fingertips in a well-prepared form. Increasingly, collaborative platforms and social media applications are gaining in importance to enable rapid responses and action by PES staff.

The checklist in Table 7 allows assessment of the status of your organisation’s information and communication management.

3.6.3 Three levels of information and communication management

Level I (initial): There are a number of more or less connected databases. Integrated searches are difficult. Although workflows are partly supported by ICS, there are still many individual repositories of data that are not available to the team/unit. The re-use of existing information and knowledge is rudimentary.

Level II (intermediate): Relevant information is available, but it takes time to find it. Most workflows are supported by ICS, and many applications are in place, but these are not used to their full potential. Experiences are captured (e.g. as wikis), but not systematically.

Level III (advanced): Information and knowledge are easy to get to and easy to retrieve. Relevant knowledge is pushed to users, and curators and networks constantly capture, refresh, distil, structure and prepare relevant information and knowledge in user-friendly formats. ICS effectively support workflows. There is effective collaboration via specific platforms and applications. Interactions with clients are digitalised to a great extent. Staff are using systems to their full potential.

Table 7. Checklist to assess the status of your information and communication management

How do we manage competencies?	Completely agree	Partly agree	Do not agree	Measures for improvement
1. I need a lot of time for reading, deleting and answering irrelevant emails.				
2. I have effective strategies to overcome information overload.				
3. It is easy to retrieve relevant and up-to-date information.				
4. Our ICS are user-friendly and effectively support workflows.				
5. Expert and decision-support systems assist me effectively in my tasks.				
6. Platforms and applications support collaboration effectively.				
7. I have adequate knowledge and skills to use ICS.				
8. Interaction with clients is done predominantly through digital channels.				
9. Wikis or similar applications capture important information				
10. Specific applications ('expert finder') allow me to find experts in the organisation easily.				
11. We use social software applications for quick and informal interactions between colleagues.				

3.7 Assess the level of your knowledge management practices

As a summary of Section 3, Table 8 allows you to rate the level of KM practices in your organisation and to create your current knowledge management profile. This assessment is more detailed than the assessment based on the KM cycle presented in Annex 1.

Table 8. Checklist to rate the level of KM practices in your organisation and to create your current knowledge management profile

	Level I (initial)	Level II (intermediate)	Level III (advanced)
Enhancing knowledge-oriented organisational culture and leadership practices	Strategy is developed by a small circle of leaders. There is no explicit link between strategy and knowledge/ competence development. Some leaders and teams link the strategy to their competence development.	Strategy is linked implicitly to required knowledge and competence. Strategy is cascaded top down to units and teams. Some motivated leaders take action to ensure that the required knowledge and competence are available.	The organisation develops its strategy with intensive stakeholder interactions and practises a participative strategy development. Everybody has a clear idea what the implementation of the strategy means for their own job. An explicit KM strategy aligned with the overall PES strategy guides knowledge and competence development. Leaders at all levels regularly review the strategy with employees and take necessary corrective actions. HR development is clearly linked to the organisational strategy.
Sharing knowledge and learning	Knowledge-sharing happens, but not in a systematic manner. Some units and teams have established their sharing mechanisms. Management talks about the importance of knowledge-sharing without allotting time for it. Knowledge hoarders are still prevalent in the organisation.	Knowledge-sharing happens at all levels of the organisation, depending on the initiative of individuals, but there is no systematic approach. Networks and communities of practice follow their own interests. Stories of good practice circulate in the organisation. There are some regular events to share good practice across the organisation. Management is supportive in general without specific dedication.	Knowledge-sharing is systematically addressed at the organisational level, and time and a budget for sharing and learning are defined. The organisational culture supports ‘knowledge-sharing is power’ networks and communities are working effectively based on business needs. Good practice is systematically identified and transferred across the organisation and beyond. Knowledge-sharing is encouraged, monitored and recognised systematically. Multiple formats close to operations enhance formal and informal sharing of knowledge.

	Level I (initial)	Level II (intermediate)	Level III (advanced)
Developing competencies systematically	Skill requirements have been defined for some jobs. Many different forms of training and skill-upgrading exist without a systematic approach. HR development deals ad hoc with pressing skill shortages.	Competence requirements are described for priority jobs, but there is no consistent competency model. Job descriptions refer to required skill/competencies. HR development acts on a more long-term basis.	The organisation makes use of a consistent competence model aligned with the HR strategy. Job descriptions contain up-to-date and validated competence requirements. HR development is based on a systematic competence evaluation. Employees actively manage their own competence portfolio. Many formats support learning close to the job.
Retaining knowledge of leaving employees and on-boarding new colleagues effectively	Depending on the initiative of line managers and leaving or incoming staff, transfer of knowledge is organised. There is a standard on-boarding procedure	Handover is accompanied, but not in a systematic manner. Teams are active in capturing and retaining knowledge of departing colleagues. Apart from central on-boarding events, units and teams take action to on-board new colleagues.	A systematic process to accompany handover is in place. Critical knowledge is identified and captured. Organisational measures ensue that critical knowledge is available from various staff members. Handover is seen as an opportunity to review task distribution and jobs. There is a differentiated on-boarding process, and mentoring, coaching or similar measures ensure on-boarding is tailored to the needs of individuals. The effectiveness of on-boarding is monitored.
Ensuring user-friendliness and effectiveness of ICS	There are several more or less connected databases, but integrated searches are difficult. Workflows are partly supported by ICS. There are still many individual repositories of data that are not available to the team/unit. The re-use of existing information and knowledge is rudimentary.	Relevant information is available, but it takes time to find it. Most workflows are supported by ICS and many applications are in place, but these are not used to their full potential. Experiences are captured (e.g. as wikis), but not systematically.	Information and knowledge are easy to get to and easy to retrieve. Relevant knowledge is pushed to users. Curators and networks constantly capture, refresh, distil, structure and prepare relevant information and knowledge in user-friendly formats. ICS effectively support workflows. There is effective collaboration via specific platforms and applications. Interactions with clients are digitalised to a great extent. Staff are using systems to their full potential.

SECTION 4. Applying proven tools[9]

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

In this section, four of the most commonly used tools are described with comments: What is it? Why use it? How is it applies? Ideally, a short PES example is given for each tool. Links/references help the reader in applying the tool. In the introduction, KM tools, the reader learns which tool to use in which phase of the KM cycle and to support which KM practices.

4.1 Toolbox: most frequently used knowledge management tools

KM tools are methods and techniques to support the structuring, representation and visualisation of knowledge as well as to facilitate interaction between people for capturing tacit and explicit knowledge. Out of the huge number of tools available, we have selected those that are most frequently used in practice and have proved effective. In Section 6, information is provided on toolkits and descriptions and examples of further tools.

In Table 9, KM tools are related to the use in the KM cycle described in Section 2 and in the KM practices detailed in Section 3. In the following, each of the four tools is described.

Table 9. Where to use which KM tool

	Use in KM cycle	Use for KM practices
After-action review and lessons learned	Acquiring and sharing the necessary knowledge	Sharing knowledge and learning
Skill and competence matrix	Visualising existing and required skills/ competencies; sharing as well as protecting knowledge	Developing competencies systematically; retaining knowledge
Knowledge map and taxonomy	Structuring required knowledge and relating it to existing knowledge	Aligning KM with strategic planning and needs of stakeholders; retaining knowledge
Community of practice	Sharing and developing new knowledge	Sharing knowledge and learning; retaining knowledge

[9] Tool descriptions adapted from North and Kumta, 2018

4.2 After-action reviews and lessons learned

4.2.1 What is an after-action review?

An after-action review (AAR) is a simple process used by a team to capture the lessons learned from past successes and failures, with the goal of improving future performance. It is an opportunity for a team to reflect on a project, activity, event or task so that they can do better the next time. It can also be employed in the course of a project to learn while doing. AARs should be carried out with an open spirit and no intention to blame anyone.

4.2.2 Why use AARs?

- The AAR is the basis for learning from project success and failures. It is the starting point for improvements in future projects.
- Team members can identify strengths and weaknesses and determine how to improve performance in the future by focusing on the desired outcome and describing specific observations.
- The project team can document the lessons learned and make these available to the rest of the organisation to improve decision-making.

4.2.3 How to apply AARs

1. Hold the AAR immediately, while all the participants are still available, and their memories are fresh. Learning can then be applied right away, even the next day.
2. Create the right climate. The ideal climate for an AAR to be successful is one of openness and commitment to learning. Everyone should participate in an atmosphere free from the concept of seniority or rank. AARs are learning events rather than critiques. They should certainly not be treated as personal performance evaluations.
3. Appoint a facilitator. The facilitator of an AAR is not there to 'have the answers', but to help the team to 'learn' answers. People must be drawn out, both for their own learning and the group's learning.
4. Ask 'What was supposed to happen?'. The facilitator should start by dividing the event into discrete activities, each of which has (or should have) an identifiable objective and plan of action. The discussion begins with the first activity: 'What was supposed to happen?'.
5. Ask 'What actually happened?'. This means the team must understand and agree facts about what happened. Remember, though, that the aim is to identify a problem, not a culprit.
6. Now compare the plan with reality. The real learning begins as the team compares the plan with what actually happened in reality and determines an answer to the questions 'Why were there differences?' and 'What did we learn?'. Identify and discuss successes and shortfalls. Put in place action plans to sustain the successes and to improve on the shortfalls.
7. Record the key points. Recording the key elements of an AAR clarifies what happened and compares it with what was supposed to happen. It facilitates the sharing of learning experiences within the team and provides the basis for a broader learning programme in the organisation.

Table 10 provides a suggested layout for an AAR.

Table 10. Lessons learned checklist (source: North and Kumta, 2018)[10]

	Title of the project or plan	
	Object	
	Description of experiences	
	What went well?	
	What went wrong?	
	Which lessons can be learned?	

4.3 Skill and competence matrix

4.3.1 What is a skill and competence matrix?

A skill and competence matrix is a widely proven and suitable method for structuring, evaluating and visualising the distribution of skills or competencies in a unit or a firm (an example is shown in Figure 7). It is also easy to apply in small- to medium-sized enterprises.

4.3.2 Why use a skill and competence matrix?

- The matrix shows where skills/competencies are lacking or are unevenly distributed.
- The matrix helps you to assess training needs.
- By using the matrix, recruitment of new staff ('Which competencies and skills do we need?') and succession planning are supported.
- A wider skill/competence distribution (multi-skilling) increases the flexibility of the organisation.

4.3.3 How to create a skill and competence matrix

1. List the tasks and the skills/competencies needed to carry out these tasks.
2. The employees and skills/competencies are placed together in a matrix (see Figure 7). Thus, you get an overview of the performance profile of your company. You can see whether particular competencies are covered satisfactorily and plan the creation of new competencies systematically. In a table, the skills that are typically found in daily work in the company are placed next to the names of employees. You might structure skills/competencies according to process steps, technologies, language and social competencies.
3. Every employee does his/her own evaluation, and in parallel, the supervisor assesses the competencies of collaborators. In an appraisal meeting, evaluations of both sides are discussed and unified.

[10] Based on www.kstoolkit.org/After+Action+Review, www.skyrme.com/tools/index.htm.)

4. You can read the competence profile of an individual employee vertically. Horizontal axes give an idea of how well the respective competence is covered in the company. This can enable you to set minimum standards. Depending on the size of the company, one or more employees should have top grades in each competence.
5. Knowledge gaps are formed if none or (in a larger company) only one employee has top grades for a competence category. If this person is missing, the efficiency of the company reduces because no other employee can substitute with matching skills. You should bridge such knowledge gaps. Create a goal for yourself: for example, 'In my company, each competence category should have three employees with "+++" and two employees with "++".'
6. You can extend the table by entering new competencies. The central question is 'Which skills/competencies must be available in the company in one, five or ten years?'. Subdivide the objectives into smaller actions or necessary individual skills. You can set a deadline in the table for these tasks. It would be useful to note down not only the name of the employees, but also further information such as cost centre, scope of work, activities or qualifications (for instance, the ability to operate certain machines, first-aid knowledge etc.).

4.4 Taxonomy and knowledge maps

4.4.1 What is a taxonomy and a knowledge map?

A taxonomy is a technique that provides the structure to organise information and documents in a consistent way. Information and knowledge are put in hierarchical or contextual order (like a folder structure in your Windows Explorer or a mind map).

4.4.2 Why use taxonomies and knowledge maps?

This structure assists people in efficiently navigating, storing and retrieving data and information across the organisation. It builds a natural workflow and knowledge needs in an intuitive structure.

Figure 7. The skill and competence matrix: who can do what and how well?

	Gita	Arun	Maria	Iman
Word	● ● ●	● ●	● ●	●
Power point	● ●		● ●	
Excel	● ● ●	●		●
Access			●	

● ● ● High competence ● ● Medium competence ● Basic competence

4.4.3 How to develop a taxonomy and knowledge maps

Developing a taxonomy involves finding an appropriate breakdown for the diverse forms of information contained and used by different actors within an organisation.

1. Start with a general category for the area of work being addressed, e.g. ‘processes’ or ‘competencies’.
2. Establish the subcategories for this category. These can be developed by answering the question ‘What types of, for example, processes or competencies are there?’. Repeat the process of division, based on the planned application of the taxonomy, and the users involved. The division used should be consistent with the expectations of the users, otherwise it becomes hard for them to navigate the system intuitively. Decide on standard terms and naming of documents. These should follow the same logic and consistency across different types of item, following the same pattern for similar situations so that, once they are learned, the user can reasonably predict how they will apply in a new situation.
3. Decide on the kind of visualisation of the taxonomy that will be used (e.g. folder hierarchy, mind map, knowledge tree, etc.).
4. Optional: assess the maturity and depth of information/knowledge in each ‘branch’ of the structure.

Table 11 provides a suggested layout.

The knowledge-base platform, Slovenia
The Slovenian PES has developed a tool on the intranet to support call-centre staff. The tool provides up-to-date information and links to relevant documents related to the main activities of the organisation. The search function allows very quick access to the information. The content is structured around frequently asked questions by main topics related to PES activities and services (e.g. registration requirements and procedures, content of services and ALMP, benefit entitlement conditions, etc.). The content is regularly updated by call-centre staff.

The tool was first developed for call-centre staff and then extended to the virtual assistant of the PES website. As it proved very efficient, it was also made available to other staff members within the PES. It is now widely used by front-line staff informing clients via email or in person.

4.5 Community of practice

4.5.1 What is a community of practice?

Communities of practice (CoPs) are groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 4). CoPs are vital to strong performance in the changing public sector, but they require a collaborative framework and rigorous evaluation in order to deliver effective results.

Table 11. Structuring a knowledge taxonomy

Type of knowledge	Reference ‘Lighthouse’	Maturity 1–5 (low to high)	Where is the knowledge documented? Who is responsible for the topic?

4.5.2 Why use communities of practice?

- CoPs are a means for joint learning, and for the exchange and interpretation of information.
- They can enhance knowledge intuitively, unlike databases or manual recording (although the enhancement in AI is changing this picture). The tacit elements of knowledge are maintained and passed on and adapted to local terms of use. Thus, these communities are also ideal for inducting new employees, educating them and sharing experiences with them.
- CoPs help develop competencies further and bring about the latest developments in the organisation. They are often faster and less bureaucratic than the business units.
- They are a 'home' for identities. In times when the project, short-term teams and allocations to business units change faster than ever, CoPs build a long-term professional identity for their employees. In flat hierarchies, CoPs build a space for experimenting and learning in which employees can often exchange ideas.

4.5.3 How to develop a community of practice?

One of the most important requirements for a successful CoP is to have a dedicated resource to moderate or facilitate it, i.e. to drive activity. The biggest single reason for CoP failure is not having such a resource.

Checklist: CoP –10 factors of success: how do your communities perform?

Management challenge

1. Focus on topics that are important to the business and community members.
2. Find a well-respected community member to coordinate the community.
3. Make sure people have time and encouragement to participate.
4. Build on the core values of the organisation.

Community challenge

5. Get key thought leaders involved.
6. Build personal relationships among community members.
7. Develop an active, passionate core group.
8. Create forums for thinking together as well as systems for sharing information.

Technical challenge

9. Make it easy to contribute and access the community's knowledge and practices.
10. Personal challenge
11. Create real dialogue about cutting-edge issues.

Programa de Intercambio de Buenas Prácticas, Spain

The Spanish PES launched a performance evaluation programme (EVADES) in 2017 as a replica of the PES Network's Benchlearning model. As part of EVADES, it re-established the Programa de Intercambio de Buenas Prácticas. This involves regular meetings of regional and local PES managers to share good practice and knowledge in a systematic way. The mutual learning conference is a two-day event organised quarterly where all the regional PES share their best practice with presentations, facilitated discussions and debates, which lead to common conclusions, formal agreements and the launch of working groups. A programme to exchange and use good practice is implemented with the objective of improving employment services.

Source: European Commission (2019). Success Story: Organisational development to modernise services of the national and regional Public Employment Services in Spain. https://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=20869&langId=en; Questionnaire preceding the knowledge management webinar of May 2019.

Knowledge Café in Germany

The German PES has recently started experimenting with a new format of Knowledge café to discuss the needs of the organisation. The café is organised in the so-called #MACHMIT (Join in) format, which brings together a group of people for an open, creative discussion on a topic of common interest. The format enables the transfer of knowledge across hierarchical structures. It consciously breaks the "old traditions" by abandoning the U-style seating and by people using only first names, not knowing the management level of their discussion partners. Different methods (e.g. OpenSpace) are used in an open framework in order to tackle tasks or problems. During each event, only one topic is discussed, and the structure of the discussion is determined by the participants.

The results of the event are published on the intranet under "topics that move us" so they can be accessed anytime, and are further discussed and processed in an online discussion forum.

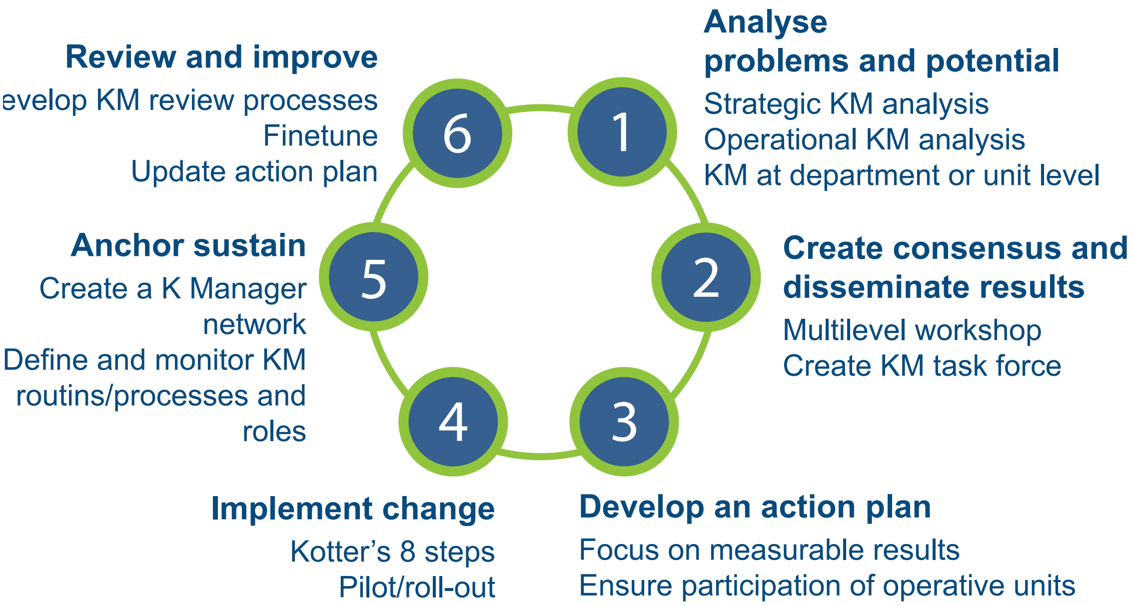
Source: Response to Knowledge Management Survey, Stefan Schließke, Bundesagentur für Arbeit

SECTION 5.
Six steps to implement knowledge management in the organisation[11]

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

All PES practise knowledge management to some extent, otherwise they would not be able to deliver their services. Some PES might be at an initial level and in others the levels of KM might vary widely across the organisation, depending on the initiative of line managers and team leaders. In order to enhance the effectiveness of service delivery and prepare for the future, this section proposes six steps to systematise or professionalise KM (see Figure 8). Each step is explained below.

Figure 8. Six steps to implement KM in organisations



[11] For this six-step procedure, some text blocks have been adapted from Janus (2016), from in North and Kumta (2018), and from https://www.ttmassociates.com/resources/embrace-your-millennial-workforce/

5.1 Analyse knowledge management problems and potential

The first step consists of an analysis of the current status of KM in the organisation. It is advisable to link this analysis to an overall concept of business excellence such as the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) or to quality management such as ISO 9001:2015. The CAF or the checklist provided in Annex 1 will give you a good first insight into the 'health' of KM in your organisation. For senior management, other leaders and staff in the organisation to be fully on board, it is useful to make a compelling business case for KM. What concrete business challenges can it address? How can it contribute to improving service delivery or policy implementation? Anchoring KM in some (or all) of the core operations of an organisation will help people see its value.

Another focus for analysing the current status of KM is to identify good practice that already exists in the organisation. This can motivate staff to build on these good experiences and not just to concentrate on deficits.

The above analysis can be performed across the organisation or at the level of a local employment agency or central unit or at team level.

5.2 Create consensus and disseminate results

Once the results of analysis are available, the main findings need to be disseminated, for example at staff meetings or on a dedicated intranet page, ensuring that people can comment in a process seeking consensus. It needs to be made clear why action is needed and what the benefits of this will be.
Communications and branding are critical to the success of any change-management process. Involving stakeholders in the discussions early on will pay off in the form of stronger buy-in because staff will experience being part of the process. Give the KM initiative a creative and inspiring name and continue communicating about it regularly with all stakeholders. Depending on accepted practice in the organisation, use flyers, posters, email, web newsletters, blog posts and events to build momentum.

5.3 Develop an action plan

Usually, a smaller task force or network representing different stakeholders will be commissioned to develop an action plan. Be aware that improving knowledge-sharing does not necessarily require a big organisation-wide project. Some quick action may be taken by line managers, e.g. to perform regular interaction reviews or to regularly ask the question 'What have we learned this week?'.

In designing a KM initiative, you should consider the following three principles:

1. **Be 'super selective': less is more!** As it is impossible to organise all the knowledge of the organisation fully, concentrate on success-critical knowledge and priority topics (e.g. criteria for the preparation of documents, intranet content and navigation, structuring the work of communities, training units etc.). Be selective!
2. **'Self-service': help for self-help!** Provide easy-to-use KM tools and services (e.g. templates for AARs) so that operational units can implement KM with a minimum of assistance, thus ensuring the penetration of KM across the organisation with little central intervention. The federal Belgian HR service is a case in point. It has created a website allowing not only its own analysis of KM, but also providing a number of manuals and tools so that government agencies can take the initiative without much assistance[12]. A similar approach could be taken by PES.
3. **'Social self-organisation': users for users!** Increasingly, colleagues interact using social software. Collaborative platforms and micro-chatting are allowed, enabling questions to be posted to colleagues or a specific community. KM initiatives should encourage this type of information and knowledge-sharing between colleagues. It should be easy to offer a webinar or upload learning units to an internal video channel. Thus, the organisation learns and organises in an agile manner close to business. CoPs should be enabled to offer training, certification, topic-mapping and self-

[12] https://fedweb.belgium.be/fr/a_propos_de_l_organisation/gestion_des_connaissances (French version)

management of knowledge and competence. Depending on the situation of the PES, typically a KM action plan would be a combination of decentralised components at team or unit level and overall organisational measures. A quick action strategy would be to ask units, teams or local employment agencies to each propose three to five concrete measures to improve KM in their field of responsibility. Figure 9 displays typical components of a KM action plan.

5.4 Implement change

Implementing systematic KM in organisations requires in most cases significant changes in behaviour. Therefore, developing a knowledge-sharing organisation requires careful change management.

To integrate knowledge-sharing in the organisation, anchor it in the senior management team or even create direct reporting lines to the head of the organisation. Some organisations choose to establish a 'chief knowledge and learning officer', while others embed knowledge and learning as part of the competencies of the chief operations officer. Bringing on board mid-level management is also necessary to ensure strong uptake in all departments but be very cautious about putting the communications and especially the IT department in charge. There is a danger of alienating the core operations staff, who might conclude that knowledge capture and sharing is a support, not a core, function. (Specific roles and structures are presented in greater detail in Section 2.)

Many organisations create a steering committee to manage the KM change process. It is best led by a member of the senior management team who is a proven champion of the agenda. Its membership should be drawn from departments throughout the organisation to demonstrate the scope of the initiative: knowledge-sharing and learning are everyone's business, and the committee needs to reflect that.

To bring about change, forge a broad coalition of champions who have taken ownership of the new agenda and who take pride in inspiring others. Every organisation has champions. They may not be highly placed on the organisational hierarchy, but they are the staff members that colleagues look to for guidance and whose signals can influence individual behaviour. They exercise informal leadership. As role models in their own right, these champions should be enlisted as part of the change to a knowledge-sharing culture. Other natural allies are colleagues in the HR function and any staff members tasked with knowledge management and learning.
We recommend following Kotter's eight steps of change to successfully root new behaviours in the organisation.

Figure 9. Typical components of a KM action plan

Kotter's eight steps of change

1. Establish a sense of urgency.
2. Form a powerful guiding coalition.
3. Create a vision.
4. Communicate that vision.
5. Empower others to act on the vision.
6. Plan for and create short-term wins.
7. Consolidate improvements and keep the momentum for change going.
8. Institutionalise the new approaches.

Source: Kotter, 1996

5.5 Anchor and sustain

The KM of the future is closely coupled with strategy, organisational development, innovation management and HR development. Link KM to an overall concept of business excellence or quality management (CAF or ISO 9001:2015).

The World Bank (Janus, 2016) guide on knowledge-sharing elaborates on different governance structures of KM, which is at the crossroads of core and support functions. The knowledge being shared is typically that of the core operational departments, but knowledge-sharing needs the involvement of knowledge and learning support staff to ensure maintenance of the KM process. A federated model in which all departments are involved in knowledge-sharing works well: there is a central coordinator of KM who collaborates with a network of KM coordinators from departments who dedicate a part of their job to KM and might have other responsibilities for HR or quality management. In a nutshell, the knowledge manager acts as coach and provider of tools and services, and also sets KM standards and monitors KM implementation. Annex 2 contains a sample job description for a knowledge manager, which might vary according to the governance model adopted.

The 'knowledge organisation' includes further actors, such as competence centres that support present and future business development. Named subject matter experts charged with systematisation and dissemination of relevant know-how, as well as communities of practice linking expertise both internally and externally, should also be involved. As technical experts usually lack experience in how to document, share and learn knowledge, they need either to be trained in these issues or to be supported by professional KM services (see below).

KM behaviours and practices will only be sustained if they become part of mainstream standards and routines (like 'tooth-brushing after a meal'). The task of setting and monitoring compliance with these standards and routines (e.g. regular AARs) can be best accomplished if KM is attached to existing functions that are already responsible for standards and procedures such as quality management, process and information management, or organisational development.

Independently of the organisation, embedding KM systems should involve the integration of KM in the daily practices of each employee, in each unit and in the management structures of the organisation, as for other management disciplines (e.g. finance, people, projects and quality management). Just as for these other disciplines, KM needs a management framework within which it can be embedded. Furthermore, knowledge workers need to develop the relevant skills to manage their information and knowledge.

5.6 Review and improve

Once KM initiatives are implemented, organisational units should regularly review and improve their knowledge management practices. This follows the 'plan, do, check, act' logic of total quality management (called the PDCA cycle). Organisations are advised to carry out a periodic review of their KM. For this, similar approaches and instruments as are used in the analysis phase should be applied, e.g. the periodic self-assessment within the Common Assessment Framework. The review will also lead to an update of the action plan.

If there is a concrete business case for a KM project and performance indicators have been defined, then monitoring and review require checking whether the objectives formulated have been reached. Have KM practices increased effectiveness and the quality of services? What are the further steps to be taken to ensure that the organisation has the right competencies for the future?

SECTION 6.
Next steps: the way towards modern PES as a ‘learning organisation’

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Developing a learning organisation is a challenging task for more than one reason. It affects several aspects of the delivery process within PES and usually requires adjustment from all staff members. Hence, it requires strong leadership on the part of PES managers. In addition, it concerns the **management of knowledge resources to deliver current services** effectively, as well as **preparing for the future** through the ongoing enhancement of KM systems.

Many PES across the EU have already made remarkable progress in developing KM practices and tools. These can be used as a foundation for building integrated KM systems, following the systematic approach outlined in this toolkit.

The first step in developing or further developing a KM system is to assess the existing formal and informal KM practices in your organisation and to identify areas that may be improved (see Section 5). Transitions to becoming a learning organisation are achieved through a ‘virtuous circle’, i.e. an iterative process with continuous feedback loops reinforcing the previous steps taken. This means that systematic evaluation and learning are not only part of the KM system to be developed, but also part of the development process. This includes the technical side of KM systems, but also concerns building the positive culture upon which success can be achieved.

There are several sources that PES may draw on for support and inspiration during this development process. They may consult the guidelines of international organisations and turn to other public organisations or private organisations with a similar function that have embarked on similar reforms in their own country. The Benchlearning initiative of the European PES Network is by its very nature another obvious source of knowledge.

The Benchlearning initiative can be used in various ways. It offers self-assessment tools as well as an external assessment mechanism that may be used to identify strong and weak elements of existing KM systems or practices that may become building blocks in such a system. The PES Benchlearning Dashboard helps in finding PES that already have advanced KM systems, as well as peers who may be considering such reforms. The ‘Topics to learn’ networking module of the Dashboard includes two subtopics (‘Ideas management’ and ‘Knowledge strategy’ under ‘Evidence generation’) that are closely related to KM and several others that have some relevant parts (e.g. ‘Generation management’ under ‘Human resource management’). Descriptions of particular practices are available in the PES practices repository, the PES Knowledge Centre and the PES Benchlearning Dashboard (see Section 3.3.1. for further detail on using the tools and resources of the Benchlearning initiative) Interested PES may receive further support via a number of learning formats including working groups, thematic review workshops, study visits and mutual assistance projects. Most of these are programmed on an annual basis, but some can be provided upon request and tailored to the individual PES’s needs.

SECTION 7.
References and further resources

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Further resources

Textbook:

- North, K. and Kumta, G. (2018) Knowledge Management: Value Creation through Organizational Learning (2nd ed.) Springer

International Standards and frameworks:

- EIPA (European Institute of Public Administration) (2013) CAF, European CAF Resource Centre: https://www.eipa.eu/portfolio/european-caf-resource-centre/
- ISO 9001:2015 Quality management systems
- ISO 30401:2018 Knowledge management systems

KM guides and toolkits:

- Tools for Knowledge and Learning - A Guide for Development and Humanitarian Organisations Developed by the Overseas Development Institute: www.odi.org.uk/resources/docs/188.pdf
- Guide on KM prepared by the Asian Productivity Organization APO: http://www.apo-tokyo.org/00e-books/IS-43_KM-Tools_and_Techniques_2010/IS-43_KM-Tools_and_Techniques_2010.pdf

Annex 1:
Checklist of knowledge management practices based on knowledge management cycle

Determine the required knowledge (what is needed?)	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Customer/citizens and further stakeholder (future) requirements, (labour) market and technology trends are analysed and translated into the organisational strategy.					
From the organisational strategy, objectives of knowledge and competence are derived: what do we need to know and be able to do in order to satisfy effectively the current and future needs of our stakeholders?					
We systematically identify critical knowledge for effective service delivery.					
Analyse existing knowledge (What do we have? Where are the gaps?)	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Unsure**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
We analyse periodically at all levels of the organisation if we have the right knowledge and competencies for effective **service delivery today**. We identify the gaps between required and existing knowledge and competencies.					
We analyse periodically at all levels of the organisation if we have the right knowledge and competencies for effective **service delivery and service innovation in the future**. We identify the gaps between required and existing knowledge and competencies.					
Our HR department has an effective system to determine and evaluate important skills and competencies of employees.					
Information relevant to processes, intellectual property rights and information systems are documented and evaluated.					

Acquire the necessary knowledge	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
There is a strategy and systematic approach to acquiring knowledge internally and/or externally.					
Our training and learning systems are effective. Different forms of learning support the acquisition of the necessary knowledge (e.g. training, e-learning, work-based learning, team learning).					
We learn systematically from mistakes. Lessons learned are systematically analysed and used.					
The organisation develops and systematically uses external sources of knowledge (e.g. cooperation with research institutions, services and educational services, consultants, clients, suppliers, online services, etc.).					
Share knowledge, make it available	**Strongly agree**	**Agree**	**Unsure**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**
Enterprise culture and incentive systems promote knowledge-sharing and learning as a whole.					
Training and learning are efficiently aligned with the strategic and operational objectives of the organisation.					
The on-boarding of new workers and the transfer of the knowledge of workers who rotate to other positions, leave work or retire are practised in a systematic way.					
The individual knowledge of experts is made available to the organisation via personal exchange, communities of practice and documentation.					
Media and information systems (e.g. databases, intranet, social software) support user-friendly access and the exchange of internal/external information and knowledge.					

Preserve and protect knowledge	Strongly agree	Agree	Unsure	Disagree	Strongly disagree
There is a strategy and systematic approach to securing, documenting and updating critical knowledge for success.					
The risks of loss of knowledge are systematically identified, expert knowledge concentrated in an individual is effectively passed on in due time before staff changes.					
Legal possibilities for the protection of knowledge (e.g. trademark protection, patents) are systematically used.					

Annex 2: Job description model for a knowledge manager

Organisational integration

Chief: Board member (may also be a knowledge manager, which is also basically what is recommended, but in practice this is usually not the case)
Subordinate: Workers (to assist in various activities, especially when the knowledge manager is a board member)
Attached: Worker/colleague (within the knowledge management unit or in the knowledge management team)

Basic tasks

The knowledge manager is responsible for the development and implementation of a corporate strategy based on knowledge as well as for generating, maintaining and improving systematic, integrated and specific support of knowledge management tools. They are responsible for defining the relevant knowledge, and for its acquisition, availability, distribution, use, recovery and conservation, in order to achieve the goals of the company.

Main activities

- Advice and management support through the development and implementation of a business strategy based on knowledge, as well as the design of integrated and specific knowledge management tools.
- Seek and obtain sufficient attention and competence in knowledge management in all relevant knowledge management groups.
- Development of an annual work plan for knowledge management and coordination of its execution.
- Development of a culture of knowledge and the linking of tasks related to knowledge management in job descriptions and in the evaluation system of workers.
- Inform, train, advise and assist workers in the application of knowledge management in their area of activity.
- Link knowledge management in the management system.
- Management of a knowledge management team to implement knowledge management strategy in all divisions.
- Design, improve or support the internal processes of knowledge, processes of innovation and learning, and flows of information and communication.
- Optimise business processes through optimal access to knowledge.
- Development and promotion of internal and external knowledge networks.
- Development, implementation and monitoring of knowledge management indicators and their inclusion in the control panel of the organisation.
- Periodic review of knowledge management and implementation or initiation of improvement measures.

Basic requirements

- Capacity in knowledge management with relevant training and several years of practical experience. Strategic thinking, targeting, results and impacts.
- Leadership, communication and team skills.
- Broad basic knowledge of the company's economy and a solid understanding of the company's specific performance processes.
- IT knowledge, experience in the management of integrated communication and information systems.
- Excellent English language skills, intercultural competence, diversity management.
- Capacity and experience in evaluation.

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