ComProCom

COMMUNICATING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE

Developing competence standards

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ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΚΡΑΤΙΚΩΝ ΥΠΟΤΡΟΦΙΩΝ ΙΚΥ

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Introduction

This presentation introduces some key points relating to the development of competence standards, particularly as used in ComProCom.

There is more detail in Part 2 and Annexe 1 of the methodological manual, available on the ComProCom web site, www.comprocom.eu. (Part 2 discusses general processes, while Annexe 1 is more specific to the process used in ComProCom).

There is also a short video available where I summarise some of the main points, and a more detailed step-by-step guide adapted from the one used in ComProCom.

The overall process

Six areas are discussed here:

- Resourcing
- Scoping
- Researching the field
- Mapping out key areas
- Developing the detail
- Consultation and trialling.

These are in the rough order that they take place, but some may need to be revisited after consultation and trialling .

1. Resourcing

This is an essential step at the start of the process. The development process will typically need:

- A project manager.
- A facilitator/editor/consultant who is familiar with the relevant methodology; this may be the same or a different person as the project manager.
- Occupational experts, who have in-depth, up-to-date knowledge of the field – between them covering its full breadth.

Occupational experts should be drawn from across the field, but avoid people representing specific organisations or interests – this can be accommodated in a steering group or advisory group.

Allow at least nine months for the overall project.

2. Scoping

This is another essential step, that defines:

- What the framework is intended to be used for.
- The field that it applies to. This will be researched in the next step, but setting out the broad focus of the framework is a conceptual task. This could include for instance whether it needs to cover:
  - A broad field (e.g. law), more specific field (solicitor), or role (commercial conveyancer)?
  - One generic level (e.g. lawyer), or more than one (paralegal as well)? (But avoid too many levels based on qualification levels or career steps).

Some aspects of the initial scoping may need to be revisited after researching the field.

3. Researching the field

It is essential to develop a ‘rich picture’ of the field before starting to structure the framework. This will include things such as:

- The types and sizes of organisations that the field covers, how it is spread across sectors, how distributed geographically, how organised including self-employment and specialist firms.
- The legal, political, commercial etc. environment that it operates in.
- Routes for entering and training in the occupation, different patterns of career development.
- Common roles in the field, and the activities that they cover.
- Current and expected trends in the context, organisation, technology etc. affecting the field.

See the sections in the manual about occupational analysis and role mapping. Poor research at this stage can lead to standards that are too narrowly focussed and become out-of-date quickly.

Rich picture

collections mgr
tutor/trainer

12+ specialisms

UK university courses 11 (⇩)
Entrants from EU (⇧)

Roles
conservator/restorer
preventive conservator
collections care mgr (⇧)
conservation scientist
conservation technician

Entry
Non-graduate c. 10%
First degree 20%
Master's 70%
Significant 2nd career

HNDs replaced by degrees

c. 15% via structured training posts

Conservation
c. 4000 people

Prof quals
No legal restrictions
ACR – 900
CTQ (techs) – 120
ACR ⇧ for senior posts/ project leader & req'd for register of practices

Workforce
50% private practice (⇧)
- most 1-3 people
50% public/voluntary (⇩)
- museums & galleries
- heritage orgs
- archives
- local gov't
- HLF etc projects

Prof bodies
Icon 3500
BAPCR, BAFRA
(ARA, MA, BHI)

Other stakeholders
DCMS, CCSkills
EH, NT, NTS etc

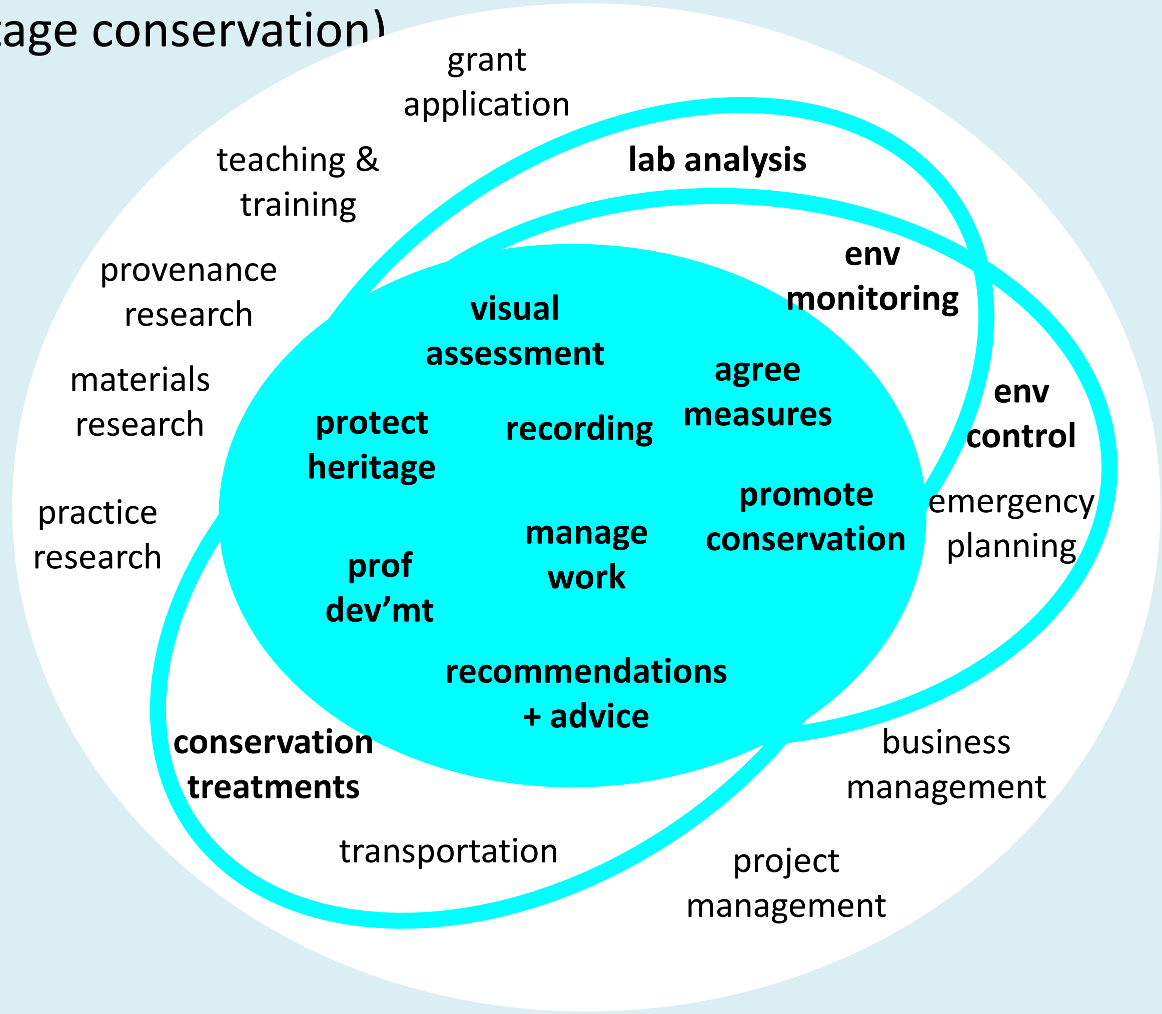
Related
Curatorial
Archives
Historic buildings conservation

Distribution
London 40%, other cities 45%

Note: this is for illustrative purposes only and does not claim to be an accurate representation of the field.

Role mapping

(from heritage conservation)



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4. Mapping out key areas

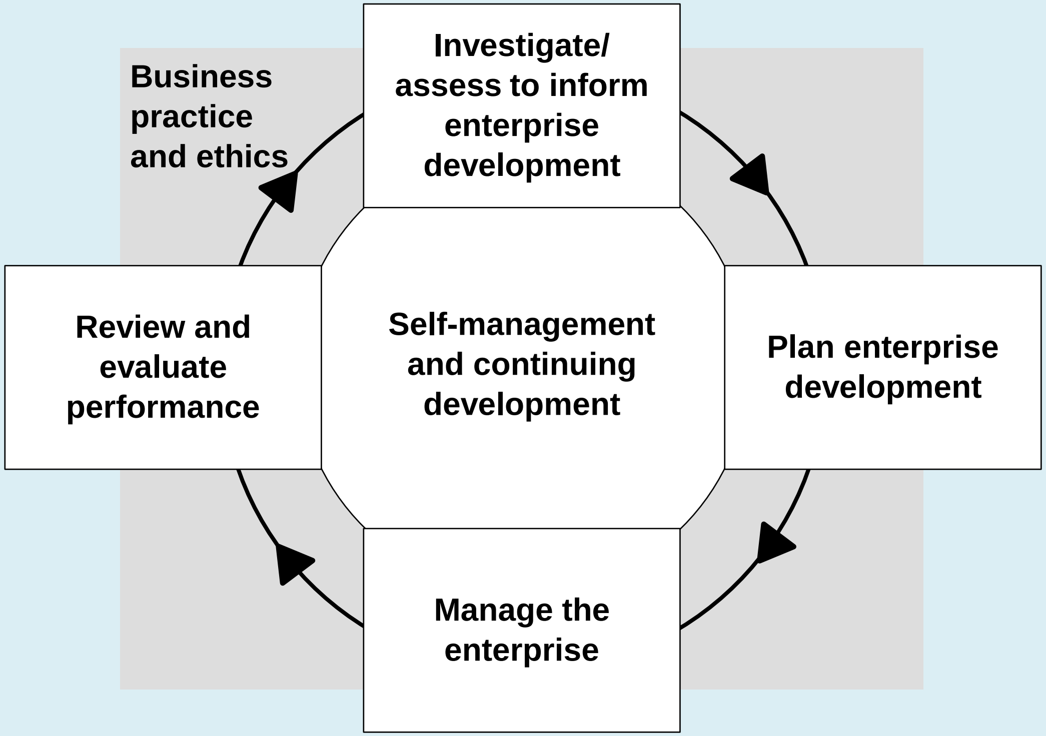
The first stage in developing the framework involves setting out the key areas of activity covered by the work of the field.

- One way of doing this is via a project cycle (investigation/assessment, planning/decision-making, implementation, review/evaluation). An alternative is to use key themes or areas of practice.
- In addition, are there generic areas of activity – e.g. (self) management, self-development, communication/client relations – that underpin effectiveness in the whole field?
- Finally, many fields will have an underpinning section covering ethical competence and professional judgement.

Two examples – a cyclic framework from ComProCom, and a thematic one, follow.

A cyclic model

(from social entrepreneurship)



A themed model
(from accountancy)

Financial accounting

Auditing

Financial management

Information and financial systems

Taxation

Organisational management

People and communication

Project and process management

Professionalism and ethics

5. Developing the detail

The next step will normally draw on both structured expert methods and field research: see the appendices to Part 2 of the manual.

- Two more levels of detail are usually sufficient: activity headings, and a description or set of points explaining what each involves.
- A rule of thumb is no more than seven points at each level – but three to five are often enough.
- Descriptions should be precise and concise, but allow for interpretation across the contexts that they are meant to apply to.
- Avoid trivial detail or trying to explain how a job is done.
- Use concise, clear, active language. The most readable format is as if prefaced by ‘You should be able to…’.

Examples for one of the cyclic areas and for an ‘ethics and judgement’ section follow.

Detail from the Social Enterprise standards (1)

2. Plan for the development of the enterprise

2.1. Develop a business plan and associated policies, plans and strategies to ensure the effective and sustainable operation of the enterprise.

2.2. Ensure that policies, plans and strategies are feasible, ethical/moral and support the aims of the enterprise.

Detail from the Social Enterprise standards (2)

2.1. Develop a business plan and associated policies, plans and strategies to ensure the effective and sustainable operation of the enterprise.

This includes:

- Developing a business plan for the enterprise that defines activities, resources, economic objectives and social objectives
- Developing associated policies, plans and strategies that support the business plan and provide a framework for the management and development of the enterprise
- Developing proposals for employment and deployment that meet the needs of the enterprise, make effective use of people's capacities, and provide opportunities for unemployed members
- Ensuring that policies and plans are mutually supportive and complementary to each other.

Policies, plans and strategies may include, according to the nature and context of the enterprise, a human resource policy and plan; a quality and internal evaluation system; a health and safety policy; a communication strategy; and a marketing strategy, among other things. Where advantageous, the manager would normally draw on the expertise of others both inside and outside the organisation in order to draw up the business plan and associated policies, plans and strategies.

Detail from the Conservation standards

Professional Judgement and Ethics

You must:

- understand the principles of conservation and demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the specific area(s) of your practice
- be conversant with national and international principles, philosophies and guidelines relevant to your practice
- understand the wider contexts in which conservation is carried out, the implications of context for practice, and the implications of conservation measures for the context
- use an adequate level of critical thinking, analysis and synthesis in approaching conservation problems and developing appropriate solutions
- appreciate and be prepared to consider alternative, valid methods and approaches that are relevant to your practice
- understand the ethical basis of the profession and the responsibilities of the conservation professional to cultural heritage and to wider society
- understand and observe your professional body's code of ethics and practice

…

6. Consultation and trialling

Consultation and trialling provide feedback from the field about whether the standards work in practice. They are essential steps, but don't expect them to compensate for poor initial research.

- Consultation should normally be done with a broad sample of practitioners and stakeholders from across the main contexts covered by the field. Ask specific questions, and be aware of the 'response effect' – respondents often don't challenge the structure that they are presented with.

- Trialling normally involves a smaller sample than consultation, but gets practitioners more deeply involved through activities such as preparing for assessment, self/peer assessment, etc.

Consultation and trialling will normally require some revision at the detailed level – and sometimes a rethink of fundamentals.

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