

**CAIRNGORMS NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY
STAFFING AND RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE**

FOR DISCUSSION

Title: DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

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Purpose

This paper is to update the Staffing & Recruitment Committee on the development and introduction of a competency framework which will be used to allow greater clarity for staff and managers on the levels of competencies required in different posts across the organisation.

Executive Summary

Munro Consulting worked closely with us in devising a competency framework for use across the CNPA. This is now complete and the work of allocating competency levels to individual jobs is well underway. The competency framework will be used to aid discussions on performance in appraisals and to give all staff an understanding of the behaviours required of them in their current jobs or in roles to which they aspire. It may also provide a framework for job evaluation in the future.

1. The CNPA Competence Framework describes the behavioural competencies that an individual needs to perform a job effectively, to the standards required in the work place. Technical knowledge and experience required for the job are described within individual job descriptions.
2. The essential purpose of the Competence Framework is to help secure performance improvement through offering suggestions about the development and assessment of the key competencies which CNPA has adopted. The seven competencies have been defined following extensive work reviewing the strategic context in which the organisation operates and which are important to drive performance both now and in the future.
3. The seven core competencies identified which apply to all posts across the CNPA are:
 - a) Initiative and Judgement
 - b) Decision Making and Personal Impact
 - c) Communication and Relationship Management
 - d) Planning and Achieving Results
 - e) Professional Knowledge
 - f) Customer Focus
 - g) People Leadership
4. These were identified as core competencies due to their fundamental importance to the business performance of CNPA. Each of these is required to varying degrees or levels in all posts. There are five levels set out for each competency and the descriptions of each level are set out in the annex to this paper.
5. The benefits to CNPA of having a clearly defined set of job related competencies are as follows:
 - a) Staff and managers have a clear understanding of the behaviours expected of them in their role
 - b) Levels of responsibility are more clearly defined
 - c) Staff can see what competencies they will need to develop to meet career aspirations
 - d) Discussions on performance and development can be focussed on clearly defined personal skills
 - e) Performance can be measured more objectively against clearly defined and agreed competencies for the job

Agreeing the Required Level for Each Job

6. The HR manager is currently working through the job descriptions and person specifications allocating competency levels to each post across the organisation. The previous job evaluation scores are being used to inform this process. Once this is complete, the resulting frameworks for each post will be passed to the relevant Heads of Group for approval. If there are difficulties agreeing competency

allocations for specific jobs, a panel will be convened to make a final agreement in the same way job re-evaluations are currently decided.

Use of Framework in Appraisals

7. The framework allows managers and staff to discuss an individual's performance in relation to the required level for their individual job. If the person displays the essential elements of each competence area as required by the job but just needs slightly more underpinning knowledge or a better understanding of the other non-essential behavioural indicators within the same level and range then they are competent.
8. If the level most closely met is below that required by the job it highlights that the individual is not yet competent and therefore gives a guideline on training and development needs, which will help the individual to meet the levels required.
9. It is also practical using level criteria to agree "personal target levels" as a means for individual development or "stretch targets" where these may in fact be above the minimum required by the jobs. It should be noted that these "personal target levels" are for development purposes and an individual should not be penalised on any subsequent appraisal rating if they do not meet the higher level but do continue to meet the job profile level.
10. If the individual constantly displays higher levels than required, this may indicate scope for future progression into other work areas that require different competence criteria. Once again, by knowing the standard targeted, and the areas that an individual needs to develop will give a focus to training and development requirements.

Future use in Job Evaluations

11. The competency framework has been set up in a way that it could be used in future for job evaluations. This would allow a level of consistency to be achieved in the construction of new job descriptions, allocated competencies, evaluation of the job and monitoring of performance against the job description and competency framework.

Proposed Roll out of the Framework

12. The current proposed timescale is to roll out the framework over the coming months, and for it to be used for the first time in the March 2008 appraisals. There is a programme of management training for Band 2 and 3 managers being delivered from October to March 2008, which has been designed around the competency framework. This will allow middle managers to develop a clear understanding of the framework before using it in appraisals. Heads of Group will have been

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involved in the process through agreeing the competency levels for the posts within their groups, and have been kept informed of the development of the framework to date through Management Team meetings.

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