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SKOPJE

COMPETENCES SURVEY IN STATISTICS LITHUANIA

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1. Introduction

The decision to carry out a competences survey in Statistics Lithuania was stipulated by the need to plan staff training and financing allocated for it more efficiently. Therefore, it was decided to identify the key competences in order to make a detailed analysis of competences held by the staff of Statistics Lithuania, as well as to identify gaps to be filled in. Taking into account the fact that activities of branch statistics divisions and functional divisions are completely different and mostly need different competences, while supervising staff needs specific management competences, it was decided to carry out a three-stage survey:

- Competences appraisal in branch statistics divisions;
- Competences appraisal in functional divisions;
- Competences appraisal of division heads.

2. Competences survey

For the first time, the competences survey was conducted by the Personnel Division in 2007. The periodicity of the survey is biannual; therefore, next time the survey will be carried out in 2009.

2.1. Competences survey in branch statistics divisions

Official title: Competences appraisal of civil servants and employees working under labour contracts, participating in the process of the preparation of statistical information.

Main tasks

The first stage of the survey is aimed at determining the compliance of the available competences necessary for the processes of the preparation of statistical information, as well as the gaps to be filled in.

Organization of the appraisal

During the first stage of the appraisal procedure, immediate supervisors (deputies Director General, division and subdivision heads) of the employees involved in the preparation of statistical information together with the employees (via an interview) are requested to fill in performance appraisal questionnaires, which are submitted to the Personnel Division at the set terms.

Structure of the questionnaire and the process of the appraisal

The questionnaire reflects the main tasks of the survey: first, to identify what competences are necessary; second, to evaluate the level of the necessary competences.

The questionnaire was designed to cover the entire process of the preparation of statistical information, i.e. six sub-processes:

1. Decision to execute a survey, general plan;
2. Survey methodology, compilation of a survey plan, possible sources of administrative data, their identification, sample plan;
3. Implementation of the survey plan, data collection;
4. Editing and coding, data validation, calculation of estimations, analysis of primary results, analysis of time-series, further analysis;
5. Dissemination (of data and metadata), confidentiality and disclosure;
6. Archiving and further management.

The major share of branch statistics divisions were involved in the preparation of the survey questionnaire: experts dealing with the preparation of statistical information were requested to submit their proposals what competences are key for certain sub-process. Information was compiled by the Personnel Division and put in a final version of the questionnaire. The questionnaire starts with a general part, containing identification data of employees (name and position), a list of general competences which are necessary for everyone involved in the preparation of statistical information (methodological knowledge and experience in the respective field, general knowledge of statistics and economics, etc.) and a list of six sub-processes of the preparation of statistical information named above. In this part, immediate supervisors of employees are asked to evaluate general competences and to indicate sub-processes in which the specialist participates (usually specialists are involved not in an entire survey, but only in some stages thereof; therefore, they need different competences). A special part consists of the lists of competences allocated to the six sub-processes. The respondents are asked to evaluate the competences allocated only for those sub-processes which were selected in the general part of the questionnaire. Although the sub-processes in different branch statistics are more or less similar, they are not exactly the same: different methods are used for sampling, interviewing, editing, data analysis etc., thus the questionnaire was constructed in such a way that only competences necessary for a certain branch of statistics could be chosen and evaluated.

A scale from 1 to 4 is used for the evaluation:

- 1 – not competent;
- 2 – slightly competent;
- 3 – partly competent;
- 4 – competent.

Survey results

All information collected from the respondents was aggregated by the Personnel Division. General maps of the competences for Statistics Lithuania were worked out. Maps were also worked out for each division separately, as well as lists of the competences for development: a list of priority competences to be improved (lower evaluation) and a list of competences recommended for improvement (higher evaluation). All information was presented to the administration. Maps, general for the entire Statistics Lithuania, were placed on the intranet and are accessible to the entire staff. Each division received individual maps and a list of competences to be improved.

2.2. Competences survey in functional divisions

Official title: Competences appraisal of civil servants and employees working under labour contracts in functional divisions.

Main tasks

The second stage of the survey was aimed at determining the compliance of the available competences necessary to fulfil functions in different functional division (Economics and Finance, Personnel, Internal Audit, etc.), as well as to identify the gaps to be filled in.

Organization of the appraisal

This stage is organised using exactly the same procedures as during the first stage: immediate supervisors of employees (deputies Directors General, division and subdivision heads) together with the employees (via an interview) are requested to fill in performance appraisal questionnaires, which are submitted to the Personnel Division at the set terms.

Structure of the questionnaire and the process of the appraisal

The questionnaire was worked out by the Personnel Division and consists of 8 parts:

1. Computer literacy;
2. Language skills;
3. Administrative skills;
4. Quality issues;
5. Legal issues;
6. Other competences necessary to execute allocated functions.

The same scale as for the survey in branch statistics division was chosen for the evaluation of competences:

- 1 – not competent;
- 2 – slightly competent;

- 3 – partly competent;
- 4 – competent.

However, having in mind that activities of different functional divisions are quite specific, another scale for evaluation was added to determine priorities of the competences:

- 1st priority – competence is needed **permanently**;
- 2nd priority – competence is needed **often**;
- 3rd priority – competence is needed **seldom**;
- 4th priority – competence is not **needed**.

(if the 4th priority of the competence is determined, the competence shall not be assessed in scores).

Survey results

The survey results were aggregated and information was presented in the same way as during the first stage of the survey: common maps of the competences necessary for the functional divisions of Statistics Lithuania were worked out. Maps were also worked out for each division separately, as well as lists of the competences for development.

2.3. Competences appraisal of divisions heads

Main tasks

The third stage is aimed at determining the level of the competences necessary for efficient management, as well as the gaps to be filled in.

Organization of the appraisal

During the third stage, a different approach was selected and more related parts were included in the survey:

All division heads are appraised during this stage.

The questionnaires are filled in by:

- 1) Supervisor of the division head (Director General or his deputies);
- 2) 3 employees of different levels subordinate to the division head (e.g. sub-division head, senior specialist, chief specialist). If less than 3 employees are subordinate to the division head, the questionnaire shall be filled in by the whole staff of the Division;
- 3) 3 heads of other division: the head of the division to which the division of the analysed head provides information, functional division heads, and the head of the division from which the division of the analysed head receives information.

The questionnaire of the survey is partly anonymous – the analysed head receives information separately about the supervisors' appraisal and the generalized appraisal of employees and heads of

other divisions; however, the surnames of the employees and division heads who executed the appraisal shall not be known to him.

The questionnaire consists of seven main management competences:

1. Communication;
2. Leadership;
3. Adaptability;
4. Relationships;
5. Tasks performance;
6. Productivity;
7. Development of employees;
8. Personal developments.

The number of skills necessary to fulfil the named competences are identified and evaluated by persons indicated above.

Having in mind that this stage of the survey differs from the first and second stages and is more orientated towards provision of information to the appraised heads for personal development, a different evaluation scale was selected:

- 0- competence **is not needed** (shall not be turned into scores);
- 1- **never** demonstrates this competence;
- 2- **seldom** demonstrates this competence;
- 3- **sometimes** demonstrates this competence;
- 4- **usually** demonstrates this competence;
- 5- **always** demonstrates this competence.

Survey results

After survey data aggregation, the maps reflecting evaluation of the competences were provided to each appraised head and their supervisors. General maps including appraisals of all heads by different competences were produced.

3. Outcome and conclusions

As an outcome of the survey, a training plan for the year 2008 was prepared, including areas which were named as priority for development. Whereas the survey is biannual, the results of the current survey will be used for the preparation of a training plan for the year 2009. Training plans compiled on the basis of the survey allow efficient planning of development of specialists' competences, as they cover topics which are key and which are identified as requiring improvement.

Continuous performance of the survey will also contribute to the evaluation of training efficiency. The results of the next survey will be compared with the current analysis in the areas where training is carried out. The comparison will show whether certain training events were selected appropriately and will give valuable information for further organisation of trainings. In the future results of competence survey will be used also for carrier planning. So far system of the carrier planning is under development and will be introduced in Statistics Lithuania in a few years.