

L.E.A.D.E.R. COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

A Common European Public Administration
Leadership Framework

Developed under the European Public Administration Leadership Programme (EU PALP)



The European University Institute (EUI)

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Views expressed in this publication reflect the opinion of individual author(s) and not those of the European University Institute or the Florence School of Transnational Governance.



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The L.E.A.D.E.R Competency Framework has been developed under Work Package 2 of the **European Public Administration Leadership Programme** (EU PALP), an EU-funded initiative supported through the Technical Support Instrument (TSI) of the European Commission. The EU PALP programme is implemented by the Florence School of Transnational Governance (STG) of the European University Institute (EUI), in cooperation with the Secretarial-General Reform and Investment Task Force (SG REFORM) and the national Schools of Public Administration of Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Latvia, Poland, and Romania.

It builds on a comprehensive **landscape analysis** that synthesised national leadership competency frameworks, relevant literature, inputs from participating Member States, and selected examples from EU and international organisations, highlighting common themes, emerging leadership priorities, and areas of convergence across governance contexts. Its main aim is to serve as a common reference model for the development of capable, future-ready public leaders across EU Member States, defining the core behaviours, mindsets, and capabilities required to operate in increasingly complex and interconnected governance environments.

The framework was designed with the conviction that **leadership is one of the most powerful levers for public sector transformation**, particularly in contexts of organisational change, institutional reform, geopolitical instability, and evolving citizen expectations. Public administrations play a pivotal role in translating political objectives, legal frameworks, and societal expectations into concrete outcomes for citizens. Their capacity to act effectively, legitimately, and responsibly depends not only on formal rules and structures, but critically on the competencies, judgement, and leadership practices of those who work within them. In an era marked by digital transformation, geopolitical uncertainty, and declining public trust, leadership capacity within public administrations has become a key determinant of institutional resilience and democratic governance.

Strengthening leadership capacity is, therefore, essential for enabling administrations to navigate uncertainty, drive innovation, and sustain trust in public institutions. Recognising the need to re-shape leadership for modern public service, the framework intentionally moves beyond traditional lists of attributes. To this end, the framework also introduces several innovations, including a systemic lens, transversal leadership dimensions, and a flexible implementation tool that enables tailored development for diverse organisational needs. This integrated, systemic view of leadership places the **citizen at the centre**, emphasising public value, integrity, collaboration, and responsiveness amongst its core principles.

Most importantly, the framework seeks to **foster a collective understanding of what public administration leadership means in today’s Europe**. This understanding emerges through structured exchanges and peer learning across administrations, resulting in a common language and reference point that is collectively shaped rather than imposed. In doing so, the framework strengthens cooperation, mutual learning, and trust across EU Member States, while remaining flexible enough to adapt to the particular needs of national and organisational realities. To this end, its purpose is not to prescribe one ideal leadership profile, but to support a **context sensitive and jointly developed understanding** of what effective public administration leadership means today across EU Member States.



L.E.A.D.E.R.

- **LEARNER**
Evolving through Continuous Learning & Self-Development
- **EMPOWERING**
Empowering, Inspiring & Leading with Humanity
- **AUTHENTIC**
Leading Authentically for Collaborative Public Impact
- **DRIVER**
Innovating and Driving Digital & Sustainable Transformation
- **ETHICAL**
Championing Ethical & Accountable Public Leadership
- **RESULTS-ORIENTED**
Re-Shaping Vision & Leading Strategically

At its core, the framework is organised around six competency clusters, the L.E.A.D.E.R. logic, which captures six equally important and interdependent ways of leading. These clusters reflect the full range of leadership challenges faced by public leaders today. They are non-hierarchical and non-sequential and, as such, they should be understood as mutually reinforcing leadership capabilities rather than stand-alone levels or priorities.

Each letter represents one way of leading:

- **Leader** focuses on continuous self-development and resilience.
- **Empowering** addresses how leaders enable and support people and teams.
- **Authentic** emphasises trust, communication, and collaboration across institutions and society.

- **Driver** refers to leading innovation, digitalisation, and sustainability responsibly.
- **Ethical** highlights integrity, accountability, and public service values.
- **Results-oriented** focuses on strategic vision, evidence-based decision making, and long-term public impact.

Together, the 6 clusters offer a coherent foundation for programme design, assessment, and leadership capability building.

Complementing the six clusters, the framework also introduces a **set of transversal leadership dimensions or postures** that reflect how leadership is enacted across different relational levels and environments (“me”, “the team”, “the organisation”, “me & the team”, “me & the organisation”, “the team & the organisation”). These dimensions cut across all L.E.A.D.E.R. domains and highlight that leadership in public administration is simultaneously personal, organisational, and systemic. They support leaders in reflecting not only on what they do, but also where and with whom leadership is exercised.

Importantly, it is also essential to clarify that the L.E.A.D.E.R Framework is not intended as a prescriptive checklist or a uniform standard. Rather, it **functions as a menu and a compass**; a flexible repertoire of interconnected competencies that organisations can prioritise according to their strategic needs and that individual leaders can draw upon depending on context, role, and maturity. It therefore supports the creation of differentiated, meaningful, and context-sensitive learning pathways rather than assuming that every leader must master every competency.

Overall, the L.E.A.D.E.R Competency Framework provides a forward-looking, adaptable, and citizen-centred foundation for strengthening public leadership across the EU, guiding both organisational development and individual learning within the broader vision of the EU PALP Programme. For EU PALP participants, the competency framework supports structured reflection, peer exchange, and leadership development within the programme. Beyond the immediate participant group, it may serve as a reference for Member States when designing learning paths, leadership development programmes, and dialogue formats aligned with senior public leadership roles.

1

INTRODUCTION & KEY OBJECTIVES

1.1. CONTEXT

European public administrations are operating in a context of rapid change, increasing complexity, and growing instability and insecurity. They must simultaneously manage the digital and green transitions, demographic shifts, and increasingly demanding citizen expectations regarding quality, transparency, and responsiveness of public services, while facing heightened geopolitical uncertainty, economic volatility, and more frequent and complex crises. At the same time, Europe is experiencing a period of reduced geopolitical stability; external destabilising actions beyond the EU, give rise to internal security challenges and sustained crisis pressure for public administrations. These dynamics, encompassing both traditional and hybrid threats, further increase complexity and risk, requiring public leaders to operate with resilience, sound judgement, and system-wide awareness beyond day-to-day administrative contexts. Public administrations are therefore required to adapt faster, to act more strategically agile, and strengthen collaborative forms of governance in order to remain effective, resilient, and legitimate.

Responding to this dynamic environment, the **European Public Administration Leadership Programme** (EU PALP) has developed an innovative European leadership competency framework for senior public officials. The framework is intended to support public officials in strengthening the skills and competencies necessary to lead effectively in such an environment. It conceptualises leadership as an evolving and interconnected journey across multiple competency clusters, spanning personal, organisational, and system level leadership, with the overarching objective of strengthening public value and impact.

The framework aims to be both future-oriented, by addressing emerging developments such as the growing use of Artificial Intelligence (AI), climate transitions, and geopolitical uncertainty, while remaining firmly grounded in the everyday realities of European public administrations. As such, the framework is designed to support leaders who operate both within their domestic systems and across the wider European governance ecosystem, enabling them to work effectively vertically (across ministries and levels of administration) and horizontally (with European and transnational partners).

Importantly, this initiative seeks to foster a collective understanding of public administration leadership across EU Member States. It provides a clear and ambitious compass for countries to strengthen leadership frameworks and development programmes that systematically build the capacities of current and future senior public officials across Europe.

1.2. RATIONALE

Now more than ever, effective leadership in public administration is essential for successfully navigating these complexities, ensuring institutional resilience and responsiveness, as well as fostering public trust. Senior public officials have increasingly become focal points of public frustration and scrutiny, particularly during times of crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic but also by external security threats, including hybrid and traditional forms of warfare that directly affect state stability and administrative functioning in several parts of Europe. As the most visible representatives of the state, senior public officials are often held accountable not only for administrative shortcomings but also for broader systemic failures. These dynamics have contributed to a growing sense of scepticism among citizens, underscoring the urgent need for more credible, transparent, and responsive leadership in the public sector.

The development of the EU PALP leadership competency framework arises from this critical need to enhance leadership capabilities across European public administrations as a strategic response to evolving demands. Recognising that **leadership is a cornerstone of resilient and high performing public administrations**, the EU PALP task force sought to create a comprehensive, shared, and future-oriented approach to guide leadership development across EU Member States.

The conceptual underpinning of the framework centres on cultivating **values-driven and ethical leadership competencies** that transcend individual goals and external influences while reinforcing neutrality, public interest, and professional integrity. At its core, the framework champions a **human-centric approach**, with the ultimate goal of driving sustainable public impact for society and citizens. It aims to do so in a systematic and systemic manner, achieved through the empowerment and engagement of teams, the building of strategic networks (both internal and external), and the demonstration of core values beyond individual influences. The framework adopts a **systemic and holistic lens**, emphasizing that leadership value emerges within three distinct spheres of influence, referred to the leaders themselves (“Me”), their “Team(s)”, and the “Organisation”, but also within the respective intersections of those three spheres.

The rationale of the framework is grounded in a **systemic perspective¹ on public leadership**, recognising that today’s complex governance environments demand leaders who can operate across boundaries, connect multiple actors, and navigate interdependencies rather than rely solely on individual skill sets. From this lens, leadership is not defined only by the possession of a fixed list of attributes. Instead, the framework functions as a **menu of interconnected capacities**, enabling leaders to draw on the most relevant behaviours depending on the context, role, and specific organisational needs.

¹ A systemic perspective describes an approach that views an organisation as an interconnected system, emphasising the interactions and interdependencies between its various components. It promotes holistic thinking and problem-solving by considering not just individual parts, but the dynamics of the entire system to address complexities, lead change, and achieve sustainable outcomes.

This systemic perspective naturally brings us to the concept of **situational leadership**², highlighting the leader's capacity to adapt their style to circumstances, the environment, and to specific target groups. Accordingly, the framework is not conceived as a static or evaluative checklist but as a **compass**, an evolutive instrument to assess leadership maturity and guide continuous learning paths. In this way, the framework becomes both a reflection of the complex systems in which leaders operate and a guide for continuous, contextually grounded growth.

In practical terms, treating the framework both as a 'compass' and a 'menu' means that it is not intended to prescribe a uniform set of competencies for every leader. Instead, it offers a structured guide from which organisations can identify and prioritise the competencies that best align with their strategic objectives, reform agendas, and operational realities, creating tailored learning paths to develop skills and competences that will best serve these goals.

1.3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A. VISION AND MISSION

The L.E.A.D.E.R. Framework is firmly anchored in a clear vision and mission, articulating its fundamental purpose and aspirational future, and drawing inspiration by the values underpinning the **EU Multiannual Financial Framework 2028-2034**³.

Our Vision: To strengthen values-driven public administration leadership across EU Member States by fostering a shared understanding of effective leadership in practice, aligned with public needs, and contributing to enhanced citizen trust and societal impact.

Our Mission: To design a common reference leadership competency framework that supports public administration leaders across EU Member States in effectively addressing current and future challenges and in fostering resilient, agile, sustainable, and citizen-centric public administrations.

These statements reinstate the role of the framework as a supporting tool for public leaders, helping them navigate complex leadership demands with integrity, respond to public needs, and enhance citizen trust and broader societal impact in public service.

² Situational leadership describes an adaptive leadership approach based on the varying needs of teams and stakeholders, as well as the demands of specific situations, while also considering the context and cultural factors which influence team dynamics and organisational behaviour.

³ Strategic Foresight, Adaptive Leadership, Collaborative Governance, Ethical Stewardship, Citizen-Centered Decision-Making, Financial Sustainability.

B. COMPETENCIES SELECTION

When selecting the competencies, the following principles guided the choice:

Cross-cutting and non-sectoral: The competencies identified represent transversal leadership capacities relevant to all public administration leaders, no matter where they are employed. To this end, they are designed to not be sector-specific and could universally apply across national, regional, and local levels of governance within the European public administration space.

Behavioural (competencies) rather than technical (competences): The framework focuses on leadership behaviours, mindsets, and values, rather than technical expertise (i.e., domain-specific substantive and procedural knowledge, including policy, legal, regulatory, and administrative expertise relevant to a given field of public administration). One of the guiding principles of this work was the recognition that technical expertise can vary greatly depending on the organisation and department where one is employed but can also continuously evolve according to mandates and policy/reform priorities. In contrast, behavioural competencies provide a universal, stable, and adaptable foundation for senior leadership across diverse contexts.

To this end, the L.E.A.D.E.R Framework adopted the following working definition of Competencies:

Behavioural Competencies: Refer to a specific set of skills, behaviours, mindsets, and attributes that enable individuals to perform effectively in their roles. These competencies encompass the knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics that contribute to successful job performance, aligned with organisational values and goals.

C. TARGET AUDIENCE

The L.E.A.D.E.R Framework is explicitly designed as a supporting tool for leadership development. Its target audience is, therefore, senior public officials and top-level public leaders in formal leadership and management positions within EU Member States. Therefore, its main focus is on individuals who:

- Hold strategic, managerial, or coordination responsibilities;
- Lead departments, units, agencies, or cross-government initiatives with decision-making competence;
- Oversee teams and large organisational resources;
- Shape institutional cultures, reform, and public value creation;
- Operate at the interface of policy, management, and implementation in an executive capacity.

Depending on the administrative and cultural differentiation of such roles within the EU Member States, these could include, for example: Directors-General, Deputy Directors-General, Directors, Secretaries-General, Secretaries, Directors of Directorates, Heads of Department, Heads or Chiefs of Unit, Senior Policy Directors, and Executives of Public Agencies.

While the L.E.A.D.E.R framework is specifically tailored to the strategic and systemic responsibilities typical of senior public officials, its results may also serve a broader purpose beyond the immediate target audience. In particular, the framework may function as a valuable reference and inspiration tool for EU Member States when designing or updating leadership development initiatives. In this context, the framework may inform national approaches in the development of future senior leaders, including public officials who are expected to transition into senior leadership roles over time. This may include mid-level managers, heads of teams, senior specialists, or policy and programme coordinators who demonstrate leadership potential.

For senior public officials, the competency framework serves as an integrated development and reflection tool within the programme. For secondary user groups, notably emerging leaders addressed through national follow up or domestic leadership initiatives, the framework may function as a reference and orientation instrument.

In both cases, the framework provides:

- A clear and structured overview of behaviours, values, and mindsets associated with senior leadership in public administration;
- A developmental roadmap to help identify strengths, growth areas, and competencies relevant for progression toward senior roles;
- A tool for aligning their professional leadership development with the strategic and systemic needs of public administration;
- A shared language for leadership across EU Member States, enabling learning beyond national or institutional contexts.

This dual function of the framework not only lies in offering different content to different groups, but in enabling distinct modes of use: direct application within the EU PALP target audience (senior public officials), and indirect use by Member States in the identification and development of 'high potential' officials, thereby supporting leadership continuity, reform capacity, and public value generation over time.

D. INTENDED USE OF THE EU L.E.A.D.E.R COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK

The L.E.A.D.E.R Competency Framework is designed as a flexible reference tool with two clearly differentiated, but complementary, uses: first, as an **integral development and reflection instrument for senior public officials participating in the EU PALP (L.E.A.D.E.R.) learning programme**; and second, as a resource for national institutions and partners to support leadership development at national level. Across both uses, the framework is intended to function as a **practical compass for leadership** in complex European governance environments. It supports leaders in orienting themselves in complex situations, choosing priorities, and reflecting on their leadership posture depending on context, rather than prescribing a single or ideal leadership profile.

Most importantly, the framework serves as a tool for the **collective development of a shared understanding of public administration leadership in Europe**. This shared understanding emerges through structured exchanges, peer learning, and joint reflection across administrations, resulting in a **common language and reference point** that is collectively shaped rather than imposed. In this way, the framework supports cooperation, mutual learning, and trust across administrations, while remaining adaptable to national and organisational realities.

For senior public officials participating in the EU PALP (L.E.A.D.E.R.) programme, the framework is meant to be used to:

- support structured self-reflection and peer exchange on leadership practice;
- guide individual and collective learning paths throughout the programme;
- facilitate reflection on leadership challenges across different institutional and national contexts.

For national institutions and partners, the framework can be used to:

- Inform the design or revision of national leadership development programmes and curricula;
- Support structured dialogue and collective reflection on leadership roles, expectations, and reform challenges;
- Provide a shared reference language that facilitates coordination and learning across organisations and levels of government;
- Support talent development and succession planning;
- Enable qualitative self-assessment and learning-oriented evaluation of leadership development initiatives.

In all cases, the framework should be used in a **non-prescriptive and context-sensitive manner**. Its value lies in enabling orientation, dialogue, and collective sense-making, helping public leaders and public administrations to develop a shared yet flexible understanding of what effective public administration leadership means across EU Member States.

2

FRAMEWORK ARCHITECTURE & INNOVATIONS

FRAMEWORK STRUCTURE

2.1. THE L.E.A.D.E.R. LOGIC

A Compass for Building Customised and Bespoke Leadership Development Paths



L.E.A.D.E.R.

- LEARNER**
Evolving through Continuous Learning & Self-Development
- EMPOWERING**
Empowering, Inspiring & Leading with Humanity
- AUTHENTIC**
Leading Authentically for Collaborative Public Impact
- DRIVER**
Innovating and Driving Digital & Sustainable Transformation
- ETHICAL**
Championing Ethical & Accountable Public Leadership
- RESULTS-ORIENTED**
Re-Shaping Vision & Leading Strategically

WAYS TO LEAD:

At its core, the L.E.A.D.E.R Framework is organised around the L.E.A.D.E.R. logic, **six clusters**, embodying **six equally important and interdependent ways to lead**, and which represent the major domains of contemporary public leadership. These domains are **non-hierarchical** and **non-sequential** and, as such, they should be understood as mutually reinforcing leadership capabilities rather than stand-alone levels or priorities. Each cluster captures a distinct but complementary leadership function, articulated through detailed sub-competencies and observable behavioural indicators to ensure clarity, developmental relevance, and applicability across diverse administrative contexts. Together, they offer a coherent foundation for programme design, assessment, and leadership capability building.

Those are represented in **6 distinct high-level clusters**, presented below:

- **Learner:** Evolving through Continuous Learning & Self-Development
- **Empowering:** Empowering, Inspiring & Leading with Humanity
- **Authentic:** Leading Authentically for Collaborative Public Impact
- **Driver:** Innovating and Driving Digital & Sustainable Transformation
- **Ethical:** Championing Ethical & Accountable Public Leadership
- **Results-oriented:** Re-shaping Vision & Leading Strategically

LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS / POSTURES:

Complementing these clusters are **six transversal 'leadership dimensions' or 'leadership postures'** which cut across all competency areas. These dimensions reflect the fundamental orientations through which leadership is enacted. They serve as a meta-layer that helps interpret how competencies interact in practice and how leaders can adapt their posture and style according to the circumstances, target audiences, as well as the context in which they are asked to operate. Together, the clusters and dimensions form a coherent and versatile architecture.

The framework's **systemic and holistic lens** emphasises that leadership value emerges in the interactions of **six distinct dimensions**, which together give rise to seven different leadership postures. Six of these postures reflect how leadership is exercised across different relational levels, between the individual, teams, and the organisation, while the seventh represents the overarching purpose that connects and animates them.

- **"Me"**: Relates to how individuals understand themselves as leaders and act with awareness and responsibility in their role;
- **"Me & The Team"**: Concerns how leaders interact with and support their team in everyday work and collaboration.
- **"The Team"**: Reflects how leadership is expressed collectively through the way a team works together and delivers results.
- **"The Team & The Organisation"**: Focuses on how teams connect with organisational structures, priorities, and ways of working.
- **"The Organisation"**: Relates to leadership as it shapes and sustains organisational direction, coherence, and purpose.
- **"Me & The Organisation"**: Reflects how individuals exercise leadership within organisational roles, responsibilities, and constraints.

Each dimension is represented visually by a distinct colour. The three primary colours (red, yellow, and blue) correspond to the core spheres: **Me**, **My Team**, and **My Organisation**. When these spheres interact, they generate new rainbow colours - Orange (**Me & The Team**), Green (**The Team & The Organisation**), and Purple (**Me & The Organisation**).

The **7th dimension, "Public Impact"**, is represented in the middle of the visual representation of the framework to stress that it is the utmost objective and essence of leadership work in all public administrations. This visual metaphor reinforces a key message: *leadership is a journey that takes shape through continuous exchange with the team and the organisation, ultimately creating meaningful impact for citizens, the society, and the world.* If we consider the colour metaphor, light - the impact that illuminates society - emerges from the combination of all colours. It represents the intentional, ongoing interactions guided by the competency compass embedded in the framework.

IMPLEMENTATION TOOL

To support implementation and personalisation, the framework also incorporates an **implementation tool for developing bespoke learning paths**, enabling Member States, institutions, and individual leaders to map their development needs, prioritise competencies, and design targeted learning journeys. The implementation focus areas within each thematic cluster are designed to help leaders choose the learning path that best supports them at each stage of their career and within their unique context. Development could begin with competencies focused on the **"Me"** dimension (self-awareness and self-development), evolving to master competencies relevant to the **"Me & The Team"** dimension, culminating in excellence through competencies at the intersections of **"Me & The Organisation"** and **"The Team & The Organisation"**.

This systemic perspective reinforces the concept of situational leadership, highlighting the leader's capacity to adapt their style to circumstances, the environment, those invited to follow, and to specific focus groups. The framework is seen not merely as a static tool but as a "compass", an evolutive instrument to assess leadership maturity and guide continuous learning paths. Furthermore, it supports progressive tailor-made learning journeys suitable for all, from aspiring to experienced leaders. This tool ensures that the framework is not only descriptive but also actionable, adaptable, and aligned with the goals of the EU PALP Programme.

The implementation table can be found in **Annex II**.

2.2. KEY INNOVATIONS

The L.E.A.D.E.R Framework introduces several key innovations and adheres to a set of core principles that define its forward-looking nature, designed to be iterative and evolutive while opening future perspectives for development. These key innovative aspects can be resumed as follows:

Next Generation Leadership: The framework is explicitly designed to address the evolving demands of public administration, anticipating the complexities of the future landscape. It prepares public leaders to navigate emerging challenges by fostering innovative thinking, adaptability, and a deep understanding of social and environmental dynamics. By emphasising foresight and strategic vision, the framework equips leaders with the skills and insights necessary to drive transformative change, engage diverse stakeholders, and cultivate a more inclusive future. This forward-looking perspective ensures that leaders are not only resilient but also proactive in re-shaping a new sustainable vision for the future.

Easily Measurable Behaviours: The behavioural indicators that represent each competency within the framework, though not exhaustive, are designed to highlight the positive impact of these behaviours or actions on the team(s), the organisation, and, ultimately, the society. This approach ensures that they are clearly observable and measurable through tools such as 360-degree feedback, coaching sessions, staff surveys, and public consultations. These recommended methods can serve as appropriate assessment tools for evaluating leadership effectiveness.

Human-Centric A.I. & People Caring: The framework integrates A.I. and digital technologies within a human-centric approach, highlighting an innovative perspective that balances technological advancement with digital ethics, quality of life, and well-being. It emphasises the need for leaders to leverage A.I. to free up time for strategic, value-added tasks and, most importantly, to focus on nurturing talent through a people-centric approach to leadership development.

Systemic and Holistic Lens: The framework's innovative core lies in its systemic view of leadership, where the interactions between the "Me," "My team," and "My organisation" dimensions drive impact opening opportunities for new ways of leadership development. This mirrors practices in other international organisations like the OECD, EPSO, NATO and certain national academies which also increasingly work with systemic leadership models in a "whole-of-government" approach⁷.

Duality of Competencies: The framework encourages leaders to cultivate both critical and analytical thinking alongside intuition and mindfulness, thereby bridging what might initially appear to be non-compatible or contradictory competencies. This duality promotes a holistic cognitive approach for leaders, strengthening decision-making capabilities (evidence combined with human judgment) in an increasingly ambiguous and uncertain environments.

Adaptability & Bespoke Leadership Development Paths: The practical implementation and assessment of PALP competencies are facilitated by a matrix table design, which maps and classifies competencies across six distinct leadership dimensions. These dimensions represent the leader's spheres of influence: "Me," "My Team," "My Organisation," and their three critical intersections. The implementation tool proposed enhances the accessibility and usability of the framework by all EU administrations, regardless of their leadership maturity level., Most importantly, it allows the design of bespoke Learning & Development paths based on the needs of the organisation, the requirements of the role, but also the personal talents of each leader, following a strength-based leadership development approach.

⁷ A "whole-of-government" approach is a collaborative strategy that integrates efforts across various government agencies and levels to address complex societal issues effectively. This approach emphasises coordination and communication among different stakeholders to create cohesive policies and programs.

3

FRAMEWORK TAXONOMY

**CLUSTERS:
"6 WAYS TO LEAD"**

Re-shaping Vision & Leading Strategically

This cluster captures the strategic leadership capabilities senior public leaders need to set a clear direction, steward public value, and ensure the alignment of public institutions toward a shared goal. It emphasizes foresight, long term thinking, evidence informed judgement, and coordinated implementation across administrative systems. Leaders in this domain anticipate emerging challenges, allocate resources strategically, manage risks, and ensure policy coherence, strengthen whole-of-government collaboration, and maintain crisis preparedness and institutional resilience so that public institutions deliver sustained, meaningful results for society.

- Purpose-driven Mindset
- Foresight & Strategic Planning
- Public Sector Effectiveness & Execution Focus
- Evidence-Informed Decision-Making
- Crisis Response & Preparedness Capability

Championing Ethical & Accountable Public Leadership

This cluster encompasses the ethical standards, behaviours, and responsibilities that ensure public leaders act with integrity, impartiality, fairness, and respect for democratic principles such as the rule of law, political neutrality, resistance to corruption pressures, and accountability to citizens. Leaders in this domain strengthen public trust by ensuring decisions remain accountable, transparent, and aligned with public interest, and by safeguarding institutional integrity, impartial civil service professionalism, and non-partisan conduct under political pressure.

- Ethical Conduct & Transparency
- Inclusion & Diversity Commitment
- Public Service Ethos
- Managerial Courage & Boldness
- Public Resources Accountability

Innovating and Driving Digital & Sustainable Transformation

This cluster encompasses the capabilities senior public leaders require to steer responsible innovation, digitalisation, and sustainable transformation across complex public-sector systems. It emphasises the ability to experiment responsibly, leverage human-centric and ethical technologies, and embed long-term sustainability principles into strategy and delivery, even in uncertain environments. Leaders in this domain shape future-ready public administrations that are agile, inclusive, citizen-centric, and resilient, supporting long-term institutional modernisation and cultural change.

- Strategic Innovation & Scaling
- Human-centric A.I. & Digital Mindset
- Sustainability Orientation
- Adaptive Complexity Management
- Systemic Transformational Capability

Evolving through Continuous Learning & Self-Development

This cluster captures the strategic leadership capabilities senior public leaders need to set a clear direction, steward public value, and ensure the alignment of public institutions toward a shared goal. It emphasizes foresight, long term thinking, evidence informed judgement, and coordinated implementation across administrative systems. Leaders in this domain anticipate emerging challenges, allocate resources strategically, manage risks, and ensure policy coherence, strengthen whole-of-government collaboration, and maintain crisis preparedness and institutional resilience so that public institutions deliver sustained, meaningful results for society.

- **Self-Awareness & Reflection**
- **Agility & Resilience**
- **Self-Development & Continuous Learning**
- **Emotional Intelligence & Relational Awareness**
- **Humility & Openness**

Empowering, Inspiring & Leading with Humanity

This cluster encompasses the interpersonal and people leadership capabilities that senior public leaders need to cultivate mission-driven, inclusive, and high performing teams and public organisations. It highlights the ability to create psychologically safe environments, nurture diverse talent, strengthen team coherence across administrative boundaries and support sustainable performance under pressure. It reflects a leadership approach grounded in trust, engagement and collective commitment to delivering public value, supporting civil service professionalism across functions and evolving work arrangements.

- **Positive Influence & Impetus**
- **Strengths-Based Performance Enablement**
- **Team Synergy & Co-creation**
- **Values Nurturing & Alignment**
- **Sustainable People Management**

Leading Authentically for Collaborative Public Impact

This cluster captures the outward facing relationship and influence capabilities senior public leaders need to build trust, legitimacy, and coordinated action across ministries, agencies, levels of governance, including the European multilevel system, and societal actors. It emphasises transparent communication, authentic engagement, and diplomatic navigation of diverse interests as essential to coherent policymaking, cross government alignment, and citizen responsive implementation. Leaders in this domain contribute to strengthening societal legitimacy and public trust through effective narrative stewardship and cross border collaboration.

- **Coherent & Impactful Communication Skills**
- **Strategic Relationship-Building & Diplomacy**
- **Multi-level Stakeholder Engagement & Networking**
- **Constructive Dialogue Ability**
- **Citizen Engagement & Societal Responsiveness**

COMPETENCIES & BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

LEARNER - Evolving through Continuous Learning & Self Development

COMPETENCY	BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS
SELF-AWARENESS & REFLECTION	
<p>Cultivates self-awareness of personal strengths, limitations, and biases to support sound judgement and effective leadership decisions, using reflective practices that enhance self-regulation, presence, and clarity under pressure.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I develop awareness of my strengths, limits, and triggers to support self-regulation and sound judgement.• I seek feedback (e.g., 360-feedback) to identify blind spots.• I pause and reflect under pressure to adapt my behaviours intentionally.• I maintain presence and clarity in demanding situations to support the quality of leadership decisions.• I align my actions and decisions with my values and leadership purpose and maintain perspective.
AGILITY & RESILIENCE	
<p>Develops adaptive resilience to maintain focus, emotional balance, and effective leadership during crises or change by adjusting approaches, learning from setbacks, and turning challenges into opportunities for confident and stabilising influence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I maintain focus and stability during change or pressure.• I recover constructively from setbacks and help others maintain motivation and personal balance.• I adapt priorities and actions to evolving contexts.• I prioritise and sustain my well-being to remain effective.• I help others maintain motivation and balance.
SELF-DEVELOPMENT & CONTINUOUS LEARNING	
<p>Develops active pursuit of continuous learning, experimentation, and curiosity to evolve professionally, adapt to new contexts, and promote a culture of ongoing improvement through seeking feedback, acquiring diverse experiences, and rapidly applying new knowledge.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I remain open and curious to new knowledge, ideas and perspectives.• I seek development opportunities that stretch my capabilities.• I experiment new ways of working and learn from outcomes.• I integrate lessons learned from feedback into my professional practice.• I role-model and promote a culture of continuous learning.

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE & RELATIONAL AWARENESS

Develops emotional intelligence to accurately recognise and interpret emotions in oneself and others, fostering trust, empathy, and respect to create supportive relationships, influence constructively, and enhance psychological safety and collaboration.

- I communicate my emotions in a constructive and appropriate manner.
- I recognise emotional signals and demonstrate genuine care in others, respond thoughtfully to support their well-being and build strong relationships to understand others' perspectives and concerns.
- I skilfully navigate and constructively influence emotional dynamics, fostering psychological safety where my team(s) openly share ideas, ask questions, and express feelings without fear.
- I practice active listening and non-violent communication, seeking to understand other's perspectives and concerns.
- I adapt my communication approach to support diverse needs, fostering inclusiveness and trust within the team.

HUMILITY & OPENESS

Acknowledges personal limitations fostering an environment of openness and continuous learning where diverse contributions are genuinely valued, thereby building profound trust, enhancing collective wisdom, and driving more inclusive and effective public service outcomes.

- I openly acknowledge personal limitations and proactively seeks input from diverse colleagues and stakeholders, which fosters a culture of continuous learning and adaptive problem-solving.
- I practice active listening, genuinely valuing varied perspectives and expertise, which strengthens relationships and enhances the quality of collective decisions for the public good.
- I take responsibility for errors, including my teams', and encourages constructive feedback, which builds psychological safety and fosters a climate of continuous improvement.
- I prioritise the collective mission and empowers team members to take initiative and ownership, which cultivates shared purpose and drives higher levels of engagement in public service delivery.

EMPOWERING - Empowering, Inspiring, and Leading with Humanity

COMPETENCY

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

POSITIVE INFLUENCE & IMPETUS

Energises and motivates people by communicating a compelling, values-driven vision and purpose, and by fostering a positive, engaging climate that recognizes contributions, thereby cultivating deep commitment to drive citizen-centric outcomes.

- I articulate a compelling vision that genuinely connects individual efforts to our collective purpose, inspiring deep commitment and alignment towards citizen-centric outcomes.
- I recognise and celebrate individual and team achievements, reinforcing a sense of purpose and collective success.
- I foster an environment of trust and engagement by encouraging open dialogue and actively listening to others' ideas and concerns.
- I lead by example, demonstrating passion and commitment that inspires others to embrace challenges with confidence and optimism.

STRENGTHS-BASED PERFORMANCE ENABLEMENT

Enables high performance by cultivating individual strengths, confidence, and autonomy through coaching and guidance, thereby creating a psychologically safe, growth-oriented environment where individuals flourish and contribute meaningfully to high-quality organisational outcomes.

- I build and develop teams and networks based on individuals' or entities' strengths, so that they are complementary and achieve enhanced learning and performance.
- I offer constructive feedback that is respectful, and focused on growth, helping others deploy their best talents to improve performance.
- I mentor others by sharing my experience and insights, empowering them to take on new responsibilities and challenges based on their strengths with confidence.
- I identify and enable personalised growth paths that contribute to overall organisational capacity through individual and team coaching.
- I use positive performance dialogues to reinforce expectations, support development, and enhance accountability.

TEAM SYNERGY & CO-CREATION

Builds a collaborative team culture by facilitating open dialogue, inclusive engagement, and shared ownership, which harnesses collective intelligence for innovative problem-solving and fosters mutual respect, trust, and high-quality outcomes through unified effort.

- I encourage active participation and input from all team members, ensuring diverse perspectives are valued and integrated.
- I deploy and promote participative management methods and tools to facilitate collaborative discussions that promote shared ownership of goals and solutions.
- I build an environment of trust and openness, fostering cooperation and collective commitment to achieving common objectives.
- I bring together various expertise and ideas to co-create innovative solutions that address complex challenges effectively.

VALUES NURTURING & ALIGNMENT

Acknowledges personal limitations fostering an environment of openness and continuous learning where diverse contributions are genuinely valued, thereby building profound trust, enhancing collective wisdom, and driving more inclusive and effective public service outcomes.

- I exemplify and promote shared values through my actions, encouraging others to embrace and embody them in their daily work.
- I align team goals and decisions with organisational purpose and public service values to create societal impact.
- I actively create an environment where team members feel ownership, understand, and embody the shared values that guide our work and collaboration.
- I communicate clearly about expected behaviours and support the team in translating values into daily practices, fostering cohesion and a strong team identity.

SUSTAINABLE PEOPLE MANAGEMENT

Develops a supportive work environment that sustains people and performance over time by balancing workload, encouraging healthy practices, fostering motivation and ensuring job commitment.

- I create clarity in priorities and workload expectations to prevent overload and ensure team sustainability.
- I recognise early signs of stress or fatigue, and adjust work design, and timelines, or support internal mobility, job enlargement, or job enrichment.
- I ensure individuals have the resources, autonomy, and support they need to remain effective over the long term.
- I model healthy work behaviours (boundaries, rest, pacing) and the right to disconnect.

AUTHENTIC - *Leading Authentically for Collaborative Public Impact*

COMPETENCY

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

COHERENT & IMPACTFUL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Communicates strategically with clarity and intention, tailoring complex information into accessible insights for diverse audiences, thereby building trust and strengthening credibility by ensuring words and actions are aligned to foster shared understanding and coordinated action.

- I consistently align my words with my actions, as reflected in follow-through on commitments and feedback from colleagues and stakeholders, thereby building trust and credibility.
- I tailor my communication to different audiences and contexts, adjusting messages, formats, and channels based on audience needs and feedback.
- I translate complex ideas into clear, relatable messages that support shared action.
- I demonstrate through my actions the principles and messages I convey, which builds unwavering trust and reinforces the credibility of our public administration's commitments.

STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING & DIPLOMACY

Builds and maintains trust-based relationships with key actors, understands institutional dynamics and navigates differing interests with tact and diplomatic sensitivity, thereby identifying opportunities for alignment and strengthening cooperation to advance organisational and policy objectives.

- I foster trust and reciprocity by showing genuine interest in others' perspectives and needs, using empathy and openness to build mutual understanding.
- I build and sustain trust-based relationships through regular dialogue and engagement with key counterparts, as evidenced by continued cooperation and joint initiatives.
- I navigate disagreements constructively, seeking alignment and mission-focused solutions, and contribute to outcomes that preserve working relationships.
- I use effective negotiation techniques to find common ground, balancing assertiveness with collaboration to reach sustainable agreements.

MULTI-LEVEL STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT & NETWORKING

Engages and activates diverse stakeholders across governance levels, building trust, promoting inclusive collaboration, and leveraging collective expertise to drive coherent, coordinated, and impactful responses to common challenges.

- I actively engage stakeholders across governance levels and nurture partnerships, demonstrated through inclusive consultation processes and collaborative initiatives.
- I communicate compellingly, clearly articulating benefits and aligning messages with citizens' needs and societal goals.
- I co-design initiatives that reflect diverse needs, perspectives, and interdependencies.
- I foster trust and reciprocity in multi-actor collaborations, even when interests diverge.
- I adapt strategies based on stakeholder feedback and system dynamics, documenting adjustments and lessons learned.

CONSTRUCTIVE DIALOGUE ABILITY

Skilfully transforms divergent views into growth opportunities by guiding structured dialogue and negotiating compromises, thereby clarifying underlying interests and fostering consensus around solutions that reduce friction, preserve relationships, and advance shared goals in challenging contexts.

- I treat conflict as a chance for growth and deeper understanding.
- I facilitate structured and respectful dialogue that surfaces tensions and leads to agreed next steps or decisions.
- I remain calm and impartial, focusing on shared values and long-term goals.
- I support others in resolving conflict by modelling empathy and solution-oriented dialogue, as reflected in reduced escalation and sustained collaboration.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT & SOCIETAL RESPONSIVENESS

Engages actively with citizens, communities, and civil society to understand and integrate diverse societal perspectives into decision-making, ensuring that public policies and services meaningfully respond to needs, while strengthening social legitimacy, responsiveness, and trust between institutions and the people they serve.

- I involve citizens and communities in shaping solutions through participatory formats, consultations, or co-design processes.
- I ensure outreach includes marginalized and underrepresented groups.
- I systematically integrate societal insights into planning and decision-making, demonstrating how input is reflected in policies or services.
- I champion transparent and accessible communication channels, fostering open dialogue that builds trust and mutual understanding between my institution and the people we serve.

DRIVER - Innovating and Driving Digital & Sustainable Transformation

COMPETENCY

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

STRATEGIC INNOVATION & SCALING

Strategically champions and scales innovative solutions by identifying, developing, and effectively implementing transformative action plans, driving organizational agility, fostering resilience, and delivering future-proof impactful, citizen-centric outcomes.

- I champion new ideas, experimentation and creativity, fostering a learning-orientated culture that values responsible risk-taking and learning from both success and failures.
- I identify innovation opportunities aligned with organisational mission, citizen needs, societal challenges, and regulatory contexts, translating them into clear priorities and actionable initiatives.
- I ensure successful innovations are adopted, scaled and embedded by enabling uptake across teams, adjusting structures and processes, and promoting system-wide learning and diffusion.
- I consider governance requirements, regulatory implications, and risk management early when designing and scaling innovative solutions, ensuring legitimacy alongside innovation.

HUMAN CENTRIC A.I. & DIGITAL MINDSET

Embraces and ethically leverages digital technologies, including Artificial Intelligence (A.I.), to develop innovative, human-centred solutions that enhance efficiency, thereby freeing up leadership capacity for talent development and strategic initiatives, while ensuring ethical use of technology (such as responsible A.I. governance, data ethics, cybersecurity awareness), and compliance with legal requirements, to maximise positive societal impact.

- I champion the responsible and secure use of digital tools and A.I.-driven insights, ensuring transparency, data protection, and ethical governance while streamlining processes and foster a culture of continuous learning.
- I design and implement human-centred digital solutions, involving users and stakeholders to ensure usability, inclusiveness and alignment with ethical, legal and societal expectations.
- I systematically identify where A.I. and digital tools can safely and lawfully automate routine tasks, managing associated risks, and reallocating time to higher-value, people-centred activities.
- I monitor the impact of digital and A.I.-driven initiatives on people, services and rights, adjusting approaches when risks, security concerns or exclusionary effects emerge.

SUSTAINABILITY ORIENTATION

Champions long-term environmental, social, and economic sustainability by integrating principles into all decisions, strategies, and operations, aligning with broader sustainability goals to create enduring value, impact, and resilience for the organization, its people, the community, and its ecosystem, fostering future-proof public administrations.

- I integrate environmental, social, and economic sustainability considerations into everyday decisions, ensuring alignment with long-term public value and European sustainability commitments.
- I assess the long-term societal and environmental impacts of strategies, policies, and resource allocations and use these assessments to guide choices and prioritisation.
- I champion sustainable practices by promoting innovation, cross-sector collaboration and inclusive solutions that address long-term societal challenges.
- I model sustainable behaviours and practices such as responsible resource use, balanced planning and long-term stewardship.
- I inspire others to adopt sustainability-minded approaches.

ADAPTIVE COMPLEXITY MANAGEMENT

Interprets evolving technological, regulatory, social, environmental, and institutional complexities, systemically addresses ambiguous situations to develop adaptive, systems-level solutions, and tailors strategies to multi-level governance challenges to ensure timely, coordinated, and flexible organisational responses within the wider European and international ecosystems.

- I map and interpret the wider system to understand how actors, drivers, constraints and trends interact in complex situations.
- I identify patterns, interdependencies and emerging risks to inform holistic, integrated and systemic responses and solutions.
- I adopt strategies, priorities, and ways of working in response to changing conditions, ambiguity and new information.
- I help others make sense of complexity by providing clarity, engaging diverse perspectives, and encouraging collaborative problem-solving.

SYSTEMIC TRANSFORMATIONAL CAPABILITY

Leads and facilitates complex organisational and cultural change by inspiring buy-in, guiding adaptation, removing barriers, and aligning structures, processes, and mindsets to ensure systemic and sustainable reforms.

- I plan and lead change systemically using structured project management tools and methods (adjusting approaches when needed).
- I clearly communicate the purpose, benefits, and expected impacts of change in a structured and transparent way, ensuring clarity to all stakeholders.
- I actively listen to concerns, anticipate resistance and address it by involving relevant stakeholders early, and providing tailored support.
- I reinforce and model the new behaviours and working methods, ensuring they become embedded in organisational routines to sustain change and ensure long-term success.

ETHICAL - *Championing Ethical and Accountable Public Leadership*

COMPETENCY

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

ETHICAL CONDUCT & TRANSPARENCY

Embodies ethical integrity, transparency, and accountability by consistently upholding organisational values and political neutrality, acting with fairness, openness, and consistency, and resisting undue influence or corruption pressures, to ensure decisions and processes are transparent and well-reasoned, fostering an environment where integrity and ethical behaviour are expected, reinforced, and clearly communicated.

- I define and communicate clear expectations for ethical conduct, transparency, political neutrality, and integrity across the organisation.
- I enable open, secure and trusted communication to raise concerns, including potential misconduct or corruption risks, ensuring that issues are addressed promptly, fairly, and without fear of retaliation.
- I proactively identify, address and manage ethical dilemmas, conflicts of interest and corruption risks, using recusal, controls or other safeguards where appropriate.
- I model ethical behaviour under pressure, demonstrating resistance to undue influence, corruption pressures, or political interference, and placing integrity above convenience or personal interest.

INCLUSION & DIVERSITY COMMITMENT

Fosters fairness, respect, and inclusion by valuing diverse backgrounds and perspectives (gender, age, cultural and linguistic background, disability, socio-economic status, professional expertise), addressing biases, and adapting communication and collaboration to ensure equitable access and participation for all, thereby strengthening an inclusive and representative public service.

- I create mechanisms that harness diverse backgrounds and perspectives as strengths to improve decisions and outcomes.
- I tailor communication channels, formats and engagement methods to cultural, linguistic and accessibility needs so information and participation are genuinely available to all.
- I systematically gather input from diverse internal and external stakeholders and incorporate those perspectives into decisions, plans and evaluations.
- I identify disparities and bias and adjust decisions and process to reduce unfair outcomes.
- I create a psychologically safe environment by modelling inclusive behaviours, inviting input and intervening when exclusionary conduct occurs.

PUBLIC SERVICE ETHOS

Consistently embodies a profound commitment to serving the public good, prioritising citizen needs and collective welfare above personal interests, thereby upholding principles of impartiality, fairness, and accountability, building trust, and driving impactful, citizen-centric outcomes for a resilient European Union and EU member states.

- I involve citizens and service users, including marginalized and underrepresented groups, in shaping policies and services that reflect their everyday challenges.
- I advocate for accessibility, equity and inclusiveness in public services, removing barriers that prevent equal participation and enhancing well-being
- I lead by example, inspiring others to dedicate themselves to public service with a deep sense of purpose and ethical responsibility.
- I prioritise decisions that serve long-term societal benefit over short-term gain.
- I measure success by the positive impact created for people, planet, and future generations.

MANAGERIAL COURAGE & BOLDNESS

Demonstrates the courage to address risks and question decisions that compromise standards, acting with principled judgment under pressure to foster constructive challenge and safeguard institutional integrity through loyalty and unwavering adherence to public service values.

- I initiate difficult conversations and decisions that are necessary for the long-term benefit of the organisation, even when they are unpopular.
- I speak up against practices or decisions that compromise ethical standards, integrity, or anti-corruption safeguards, regardless of potential personal or professional risk.
- I champion innovative and bold solutions, taking calculated risks to drive significant progress and positive impact for citizens.
- I constructively challenge the status quo and make difficult, principled decisions for the public good, even in the face of significant opposition or uncertainty.

PUBLIC RESOURCES ACCOUNTABILITY

Holds accountability for the ethical, efficient, and transparent use of public resources by diligently overseeing budgets, operations, and compliance with all requirements, thereby safeguarding public funds and capabilities to strengthen public trust and enable optimal service delivery.

- I allocate public resources responsibly, ensuring transparency, efficiency and alignment with long-term public value.
- I translate budgets using public resources into delivery commitments with clear KPIs and owners.
- I monitor and enforce compliance with financial, legal, and administrative requirements, including controls to prevent misuse, fraud or corruption.
- I verify that resources are used efficiently and for their intended purpose and take prompt corrective action if inefficiencies are identified.

RESULTS-ORIENTED - *Re-Shaping Vision & Leading Strategically*

COMPETENCY

BEHAVIOURAL INDICATORS

PURPOSE-DRIVEN MINDSET

Champions an ambitious, transformative vision for the organisation's societal contribution, strategically defining and communicating a clear mission aligned with public needs, and ensuring coherence across vision, values, goals, and resource allocation to drive impactful and future-proof contributions to society.

- I establish and articulate a clear vision of how the organisation, its employees, and networks can positively contribute to social, environmental and economic goals.
- I understand the strengths, value-added, and competitive advantage that my organisation has in the broader landscape of networks and actors, and I leverage those to provide public value.
- I ensure that the values and mission of my organisation are embedded into its strategic processes and procedures (budgeting, HRM, procurement, controls, etc.).
- I take an ambitious and transformative perspective by focusing on building systems and long-lasting mechanisms for change that sustain the values and purpose of the organisation well into the future.
- I ensure the vision, strategy, resources and operations of the organisation remain aligned with its core values and purpose.

FORESIGHT AND STRATEGIC PLANNING

Develops and applies long-term thinking to anticipate future trends, risks, and opportunities, enabling the formulation of strategic priorities and actionable plans that proactively address emerging issues and positively shape the future of public services and communities.

- I utilise evidence-based and future-oriented methods such as horizon scanning, trends analysis and simulations to develop my organisation's strategy.
- I assess and mitigate internal and external risks to my organisation and its operations and have updated contingency plans in place.
- I develop clear and comprehensive strategic plans with defined objectives, targets, allocated resources, responsible actors, and implementation deadlines.
- I regularly revisit the organisation's strategy and operations to ensure they remain agile and adapt to changing circumstances.
- I periodically stress-test my organisation to ensure it remains resilient and adaptive to changing circumstances.

PUBLIC SECTOR EFFECTIVENESS & EXECUTION FOCUS

Ensures long-term impact for citizens by continuously evaluating and refining processes, structures, and systems, using evidence and feedback to drive reforms and ensure disciplined implementation, operational effectiveness, and achievement of strategic objectives.

- I ensure my organisation collects robust, accurate and timely information on activities, outputs, and outcomes to support delivery and execution.
- I develop and monitor key performance indicators to ensure effective implementation, efficiency, operational performance and strategic impact.
- I align performance goals with management processes and decision-making, including budgetary planning, programme management and operational planning.
- I regularly discuss progress and performance with other senior leaders in the organisation with a view to promote mutual learning, good practices, and develop shared solutions.
- I use evidence to address implementation gaps, strengthen delivery capacity, and adjust policies and programmes where execution falls short.

EVIDENCE-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

Develops and takes well-informed decisions in complex, uncertain environments by integrating contextual insight, data analysis, and stakeholder input, considering interdependencies and systemic impacts to ensure effective and responsible outcomes.

- I research and synthesize evidence from multiple sources and disciplines and can distinguish between reliable and unreliable information.
- I am comfortable reviewing research and evidence and am aware of methodological limitations when interpreting results.
- I draw from past experiences, weigh various options, consider different outcomes, and think critically before taking a decision.
- I seek and consider the expertise and views of other experts before making a decision.

CRISIS RESPONSE & PREPAREDNESS CAPABILITY

Interprets ambiguous, fast-evolving information to make timely, high-stakes decisions, gives clear guidance, and leads agile, coordinated responses during disruptions. Ensures operational continuity, manages risks and priorities under pressure, reduces uncertainty through transparent communication, and embeds learning to strengthen organisational preparedness and resilience for future crises.

- I proactively develop and implement robust contingency plans which ensures rapid, coordinated, and effective responses when disruptions occur.
- I act decisively and strategically during crises, which minimizes operational disruption, protects critical assets, and maintains essential business continuity.
- I establish clear, transparent, and empathetic communication channels during periods of uncertainty, which builds and maintains public trust.
- I conduct thorough post-crisis reviews and integrate lessons learned into future preparedness frameworks, which strengthens organisational resilience and responsiveness to potential future shocks.

4

ANNEXES

ANNEX I: DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

A. DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

A Collaborative and Co-Creative Endeavour

The L.E.A.D.E.R Framework is the product of a deeply collaborative, multidisciplinary effort and based on a benchmarking exercise mapping similar frameworks and models. It aims to balance rigor and pragmatism with:

Expert Collaboration: Its development involved a collaborative effort from experts bringing decades of experience in strategic and operational leadership within national, European, and international administrations.

Multidisciplinary Expertise: The team comprised a rich mix of expertise drawn from the public sector, private industry, and academia, ensuring that comprehensive and diverse perspectives were integrated into the framework's design.

Co-Creative Approach: The development was led through a co-creative process, involving an intensive residential workshop combined with regular remote technical meetings, fostering a dynamic and iterative creation environment. This co-creative approach mirrors the leadership behaviours promoted in the framework.

"Walk the Talk Principle"⁴: The task force committed to embodying the very competencies included in the framework during its development, ensuring a practical and experience-based approach.

B. DEVELOPMENT PHASES

A small Task Force was established to undertake the development, design, and drafting of the deliverables of this Work Package. The task force consisted of six experts, all with distinct backgrounds and expertise, bringing unique viewpoints and insights to this exercise, and working in close collaboration with the EU PALP project team. The development of the L.E.A.D.E.R Competency Framework had **four distinct development phases**:

PHASE 1

Landscape Analysis (October – November 2025): The experts and team members involved in this Work Package collected and reviewed existing leadership competency models and frameworks, and strategic HR documents from beneficiary MS, other EU countries, EU Institutions, and selected international organisations. The main aim was to identify patterns and areas of convergence and divergence, growth areas, and best practices which could inform the design and development of the framework.

⁴ "The Executive Challenge: How to Make Good Decisions and Lead Effectively", Chris Argyris (1993); "Overcoming Organisational Defenses: Facilitating Organizational Learning", Chris Argyris (1990)

While the detailed results of this analysis were presented separately via a dedicated **Landscape Analysis report**, several areas emerged as particularly significant and relevant to the development of this leadership competency framework. Namely:

- *There is currently more agreement than disagreement between European administrations in their vision for public service leadership, with the most frequent 'core' areas⁵ being reflected across most frameworks;*
- *Certain ambitious updates are needed to fill leadership gaps in the context of arising needs associated with the twin (green and digital) transitions, changing expectations from citizens, and a world increasingly characterised by fast-paced change and growing complexity;*
- *Greater emphasis on the inner world of leaders is being observed in newer frameworks;*
- *A shift from transactional to transformational leadership is being observed on how governments should work, bringing to the surface more purpose-driven, consensus-based, and human-centred approaches;*
- *Conceptualisation of networked governance⁶ as a key focus of newer frameworks;*
- *Competency frameworks alone are not enough; they should be accompanied by ambitious HRM and civil service reforms that allow them to be implemented more effectively and create a positive enabling environment that attracts top talent and allows leaders to truly thrive and exercise their roles to their full potential.*

PHASE 2

Drafting of Competency Clusters (October – November 2025): The experts developed draft competency clusters based on the findings of the landscape analysis and their expert review. The first draft of the framework focused on key high-level competency clusters, sub-competencies, and illustrative behavioural indicators. The aforementioned were co-developed over several online and residential sessions, following a detailed work plan. A residential workshop took place in Florence at the end of October 2025 (over 1 and half days), to consolidate the work done independently from the experts, and come to a shared understanding of the competencies to be included in the framework.

⁵ Strategy, people and team management, achieving results, communications, cooperation, and values such as ethics and integrity.

⁶ The concept is borrowed from political science literature and has been used by scholars to describe 'Governance networks' that address complex policy problems which cannot be solved by one actor alone but require the collective actions of several actors (Mandell, 2001; Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Network governance (which includes both actor strategies and network management strategies) consists of the collection of actors' interactions within a governance network, influencing policymaking and public service delivery to solve public problems (Frederickson, 2005; Bryson et al., 2006)

PHASE 3

Stakeholder and Expert Consultation and Feedback (December 2025): A group consultation with selected MS representatives and experts from EU Member States and the European Commission was set up to receive feedback on the first draft of the Framework. This feedback round focused on refining the draft by identifying gaps, strengths, and areas for improvement, as well as increasing its credibility and acceptance among stakeholders by making sure it reflects the current and future demands of the public administration sector.

PHASE 4

Finalisation and EU-level Review (December 2025 – January 2026): Following the consultation, the task force implemented the changes outlined in the feedback received. After its consolidation, the framework was submitted to the EU PALP Project Steering Committee for review and confirmation to ensure that it is aligned with the objectives and priorities of the programme.

ANNEX II: IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

CLUSTER	LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY	LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS / POSTURES					
		ME	ME & TEAM	TEAM	TEAM & ORG	ORG	ME & ORG
LEARNER							
	Self-Awareness & Reflection	ME					
	Agility & Resilience	ME					
	Self-Development & Continuous Learning	ME					
	Emotional Intelligence & Relational Awareness	ME	ME & TEAM				ME & ORG
	Humility & Openness	ME					
EMPOWERING							
	Positive Influence & Impetus		ME & TEAM	TEAM			
	Strengths-Based Performance Enablement		ME & TEAM	TEAM			
	Team Synergy & Co-Creation		ME & TEAM	TEAM			
	Values Nurturing & Alignment		ME & TEAM	TEAM	TEAM & ORG		
	Sustainable People Management		ME & TEAM	TEAM	TEAM & ORG		
AUTHENTIC							
	Coherent & Impactful Communication Skills				TEAM & ORG		ME & ORG
	Strategic Relationship-Building & Diplomacy						ME & ORG
	Multi-Level Stakeholder Engagement & Networking						ME & ORG
	Constructive Dialogue Ability		ME & TEAM				ME & ORG
	Citizen Engagement & Societal Responsiveness						ME & ORG

CLUSTER	LEADERSHIP COMPETENCY	LEADERSHIP DIMENSIONS / POSTURES					
		ME	ME & TEAM	TEAM	TEAM & ORG	ORG	ME & ORG
DRIVER							
	Strategic Innovation & Scaling			TEAM	TEAM & ORG	ORG	
	Human-Centric A.I. & Digital Mindset			TEAM	TEAM & ORG	ORG	
	Sustainability Orientation			TEAM	TEAM & ORG	ORG	
	Adaptive Complexity Management				TEAM & ORG	ORG	
	Systemic Transformational Capability				TEAM & ORG	ORG	
ETHICAL							
	Ethical Conduct & Transparency		ME & TEAM				ME & ORG
	Inclusion & Diversity Commitment		ME & TEAM				ME & ORG
	Public Service Ethos		ME & TEAM				ME & ORG
	Managerial Courage & Boldness		ME & TEAM				ME & ORG
	Public Resources Accountability					ORG	ME & ORG
RESULTS-ORIENTED							
	Purpose-Driven Mindset			TEAM	TEAM & ORG	ME & ORG	
	Foresight & Strategic Planning			TEAM	TEAM & ORG	ME & ORG	
	Public Sector Effectiveness & Execution Focus					ME & ORG	
	Evidence-Informed Decision-Making					ME & ORG	
	Crisis Response & Preparedness Capability					ME & ORG	

ANNEX III: GLOSSARY

Behavioural Competency

For the EU PALP Competency Framework, the focus has been on behavioural competencies. They refer to a specific set of skills, behaviours, mindsets, and attributes that enable individuals to perform effectively in their roles. These competencies encompass the knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics that contribute to successful job performance, aligned with organisational values and goals. They are, therefore, representing interpersonal, leadership, and personal attributes, and are distinct from technical skills or competences.

Behavioural Indicators

Behavioural indicators are observable examples of actions or behaviours that show how a competency can be demonstrated in practice. In this framework, they are intended to support reflection and development, not to act as prescriptive or exhaustive criteria.

Citizen-Centricity

Citizen-centred public service considers citizens' needs and voices at every stage of public service design, delivery, and evaluation processes.

Context Sensitive/Non-Prescriptive Manner

A context-sensitive and non-prescriptive manner describes an approach that allows competencies to be interpreted and applied according to different organisational and institutional contexts, without imposing a uniform or fixed standard.

Leadership Competency Framework

A leadership competency framework defines the key behaviours and skills associated with effective leadership within a given organisational or institutional context, aiding in the creation of a common leadership language.

Leadership Development Pathways

Structured yet flexible approaches used by public administrations to support the progressive development of leadership competencies over time. In the context of this framework, leadership development paths may be informed by the competency model, while remaining fully adaptable to national HR systems, career structures, and institutional contexts.

Leadership Dimensions/ Postures

Leadership dimensions or postures, refer to the different spheres in which leadership may be enacted. They help interpret how competencies interact in practice and how leaders can adapt their posture and style according to the circumstances, target audiences, as well as the context in which they are asked to operate.

Situational Leadership

Situational leadership describes an adaptive leadership approach based on the varying needs of teams and stakeholders, as well as the demands of specific situations, while also considering the context and cultural factors which influence team dynamics and organisational behaviour.

Systemic Perspective on Public Leadership

A systemic perspective describes an approach that views an organisation as an interconnected system, emphasising the interactions and interdependencies between its various components. It promotes holistic thinking and problem-solving by considering not just individual parts, but the dynamics of the entire system to address complexities, lead change, and achieve sustainable outcomes.

**European Public Administration
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More information:

EU-PALP@eui.eu



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