

# TECHNICAL COMPETENCY DICTIONARY

## Explanatory Note

### Immovable Asset Management

#### Introduction

The National Treasury has developed a series of technical competency dictionaries (the *Competency Framework - CFFM*) covering the major occupational groups in the field of public financial management. These dictionaries set out a series of descriptions of the skills and knowledge required of a competent practitioner in carrying out a number of standard tasks at various levels of responsibility within the overall function.

A total of 10 technical competencies dictionaries have been developed with the intention of contributing to human resource development in public financial management. This particular framework deals with the *management of immovable assets* – the stock of fixed assets owned or leased by the government such as buildings, fixed plant and other permanent infrastructure. A separate framework deals with the management of movable assets.

#### Developing the Framework

The immovable asset management competencies dictionary was produced following a period of research carried out on behalf of the National Treasury under the Capacity Building Model for Financial Management (CBMFM) project. This research included the following:-

- PFM related legislation,
- applicable regulations, instructions and practice notes,
- national and international standards and guidance on best practice,
- current practices applied in the workplace.

The research was supported by a series of consultative workshops with practitioners, who provided guidance on drafting the competencies, and evaluated and commented on the competency statements as they were developed. The attached technical competency dictionary represents the outcome of that developmental process. However, this dictionary and explanatory note remain living documents and will continue to be updated in the light of experience as they are used. Any comments on their contents and applicability will be welcomed, and should be submitted to the Capacity Building section of National Treasury.

#### Definition and Scope

The management of immovable assets involves all the procedures necessary to ensure that the permanent physical infrastructure of the government is acquired and disposed of efficiently and economically, and utilised and maintained effectively whilst it is in use. Responsibility for carrying out these tasks, however, is divided between experts in infrastructure management (often referred to as 'public works') such as engineers, architects, maintenance operatives – and financial management specialists who deal with the funding and costing aspects. This technical competencies dictionary deals only with the role of finance specialists. The dictionary also reflects the fact that the user of immovable assets rests with the departments which use them –

the role of the finance specialist is to provide advice, support and technical and professional expertise to assist line managers in fulfilling their responsibilities.

The major functions performed by asset managers cover the following areas:-

- strategic financial planning relating to the long-term acquisition, deployment and disposal of immovable assets;
- the provision of advice from a financial perspective to line managers about immovable asset management policies and procedures including funding methodologies, and maintenance schedules;
- monitoring of the use of immovable assets including physical verification and user asset management plan ( USER-AMP)

This dictionary however, deals only with asset management related issues – matters pertaining to other financial procedures such as supply chain management, budgeting, accounting and auditing are dealt with in other dictionaries, though a number of competencies in the framework do address aspects of engagement with these functions. The dictionary also excludes consideration of the following:-

- completion of the infrastructure reporting model (IRM);
- any real estate component in public works including;
  - lease agreements,
  - transfer of immovable assets,
  - expropriation of immovable assets;
- immovable assets contracts management,
- activities dealt with by the Department of Land Affairs.

### **Assumptions**

The dictionary has been designed on the assumption that financial managers working in national and provincial departments of government are subject to broadly the same working practices and use common IT and other operational systems. At the same time it is recognised that there can be variations in detailed practice between central and provincial administrations, and between individual provincial administrations, so the specifications have been carefully drafted at a level of generality that ensures that such variations have been accommodated. In this dictionary, for example, it is recognised that departments use different approaches to recording immovable assets on an asset register, so the *System Maintenance* competency cluster of the dictionary refers to an electronic immovable asset register (not spreadsheet based) and not manual systems. In some provinces the Department of Public Works maintains the immovable asset register, but the dictionary excludes competencies within such departments (see Definition and Scope above).

### **The Immovable Asset Management Dictionary – Knowledge and Skills**

The technical competencies dictionary takes the form of a database containing two main elements:-

- the knowledge (and understanding) required to carry out efficient and effective immovable asset management;

- the skills required to carry out efficient and effective immovable asset management.

However, the levels of skill and knowledge required vary substantially according to the level of responsibility of the individual employee in the organisation. To address this, both skills and knowledge descriptions are provided at four different levels.

#### *Skills*

All descriptions of *skills* required are offered in four tiers (*occupational roles*) which broadly correspond with the levels of administrative, technical, supervisory and managerial responsibilities.

#### *Knowledge*

The actual *knowledge* required to support any competency is the same for all four occupational roles. However, the depth of that knowledge, and the extent of underpinning understanding required varies according to the responsibilities being exercised. Therefore knowledge requirements are also specified at four levels which broadly equate with the descriptions working, technical, in-depth and expert.

It should be noted that whilst the level of knowledge and understanding specified in the dictionary generally escalates with occupational levels, there are instances where the level of knowledge is not the same as the occupational level ie a greater or lesser depth of knowledge is required than would normally be expected in that occupational role.

More comprehensive details are provided in the attached **Table 1**.

### **The Immovable Asset Management Dictionary – Competency Descriptions**

The knowledge and skills are listed against the principal components of the function. The function is therefore broken down into a series of *competency clusters* which are high-level segments of the function consisting of one or more sub-components. Each cluster is then broken down into these sub-components – *competency titles* – which are the level at which the definitions of the skills and knowledge are provided. Each definition is supplemented by a *competency description* which summarises the scope of the competency defined. **Table 2** (attached) contains a list of the competency clusters and competency descriptions used in this dictionary with an indication in each case of the occupational roles to which they relate.

Because of database limitations in the dictionary, general areas of knowledge (such as primary legislation) and other regulations and guidance, some of this knowledge has had to be summarised, so a full statement of the knowledge required under these competency titles is set out in attached **Table 3**. This knowledge is applicable throughout the dictionary and is not normally repeated at the competency title level. Knowledge statements at that level relate to more detailed or supplementary knowledge required specifically for that competency, and are included in full in the technical competencies dictionary.

## **Generic Competencies**

The technical competency dictionary deals only with competencies that are specific to tasks in financial management. However, many of the tasks carried out within the function covered in this dictionary require more general competencies of a clerical, administrative or managerial nature. These *generic*, or *core*, skills are required for competence in many fields besides financial management, and have therefore been defined in a separate *core competencies dictionary*. In addition research has identified a number of *behavioural* competencies which further supplement the technical competencies in this dictionary. Bringing all three sets of competencies together will enable government financial managers to identify, understand and articulate clearly the range of skills and attributes needed by staff at all organisational levels for the competent discharge of their responsibilities.

## **Conclusion**

The Immovable Asset Management competency dictionary, along with its nine companion dictionaries, marks a significant step forward for government financial management. Departments may now apply its content to address issues in:-

- recruitment and selection,
- staff training and development,
- performance management,
- career planning and
- succession management.

**Table 1 – Definitions of Terms Used in the  
Immovable Asset Management Technical Competencies Dictionary**

<b>Description</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Competency Cluster</b>	High level segment of the function.
<b>Competency Title</b>	A short description defining the specific competency of the sub-component.
<b>Competency Definition</b>	A brief description of the competency title.
<b>Skills Requirement</b>	Statement of the skills required within each occupational role and competency title.
<b>Specific Knowledge Requirement</b>	Specific knowledge requirements are noted that are directly related to a particular competency title

<b>Knowledge Descriptors</b>	
<b>Knowledge Level 1</b>	Requires a working knowledge with a practical understanding applied in straightforward circumstances
<b>Knowledge Level 2</b>	Requires a working knowledge with a good understanding applied in circumstances of limited complexity
<b>Knowledge Level 3</b>	Requires a thorough knowledge with an in-depth understanding applied in complex circumstances
<b>Knowledge Level 4</b>	Requires an expert knowledge with a comprehensive understanding to be applied in highly complex circumstances

<b>Role Descriptors</b>		
<b>Role Descriptors</b>	<b>Examples of Relevant Positions</b>	<b>Post Levels</b>
<b>Role 1 Administrative</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant State Accountant</li> </ul>	Post levels 1- 6
<b>Role 2 Technical</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Accountant</li> <li>• Senior State Accountant</li> </ul>	Post levels 7 - 8
<b>Role 3 Supervisory (Tactical)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assistant Manager</li> <li>• Deputy Director ( Manager)</li> </ul>	Post levels 9 -12
<b>Role 4 Managerial (Strategic)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Director (Senior Manager)</li> <li>• Chief Director</li> <li>• Deputy Director General</li> </ul>	Post levels 13 -16

**Table 2 – Structure of the Immovable Asset Management Technical Competencies Dictionary**

<b>Competency Cluster</b>	<b>Competency Title</b>	<b>Occupational Role 1</b>	<b>Occupational Role 2</b>	<b>Occupational Role 3</b>	<b>Occupational Role 4</b>
Legislative Environment	Legislative regulatory framework	√	√	√	√
	Departmental policies and procedures	√	√	√	√
Planning	Development and implementation of the immovable asset management strategy	√	√	√	√
Physical Verification	Performance and management of the immovable asset physical verification process as per the user asset management plan	√	√	√	√
Maintenance	Management of the departmental immovable assets maintenance plan	√	√	√	√
Reporting	Performance and management of the monthly, quarterly and annually reporting on immovable assets.	√	√	√	√
System Utilisation	Optimal utilisation of the system	√	√	√	√
Safeguarding	Safeguarding of immovable assets	√	√	√	√

**Table 3 – General Knowledge Requirements for the Immovable Asset Management Technical Competencies Dictionary**

Acts of Parliament		Internal Regulations, Systems and Guidance	External Standards and Guidance	Other Relevant Knowledge
Finance Related	Others			
Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996	National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act	National Treasury Regulations	International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS)	Accounting Principles
Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 1999	Government wide Immovable Asset Management Act (GIAMA), 2007 (Act 19 of 2007)	Practice Notes and Circulars		Government Policy Priorities
Prevention and Combating of Corrupt Activities Act, 2004 (Act 12 of 2004)	Land Administration Act (National and Provincial)	Public Sector Accounting Standards		Principles of Internal Control
Financial Intelligence Centre Act, 2001 (Act 38 of 2001)	Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998)	Government Accounting Systems		Principles and Practice of Capital Budgeting and Life-cycle Costing
Remuneration of Public Office Bearers Act	Labour Relations Act, 1995	National Treasury Asset Management Framework		
Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPFA) 2000 (Act 5 of 2000)	Code of Conduct for the Public Service promulgated in 2007	Departmental Immovable Asset Management Policies and Procedures		
Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, 2004	Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000)	Delegations of Authority		
Companies Act of 2009	Electronic Communications and Transactions Act ( Act 25 of 2002)	Provincial Treasury Instructions		

Acts of Parliament		Internal Regulations, Systems and Guidance	External Standards and Guidance	Other Relevant Knowledge
Finance Related	Others			
	Protected Disclosures Act, 2000 (Act 26 of 2000)	Accounting Officer System (AOS)		
	Amended Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act 85 of 1993)	Minimum Anti-Corruption Regulations (Public Service Commission)		
	BEE Code of Good Practice			