

An inclusive approach

A STRATEGY FOR DIVERSITY IN THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT SECTOR



Arbetsgivarverket

SWEDISH AGENCY FOR GOVERNMENT EMPLOYERS

Foreword

This strategy is aimed at you as a manager of a government agency.

It has been developed to provide support and act as a tool to reach our shared policy goal for employers – that state operations shall be characterised by managers and employees with a “mixture of background and competence that is of importance for your operation’s work, quality and customer orientation” (diversity).

The strategy has been developed in broad cooperation for employer development together with the members of the Swedish Agency for Government Employers. It is based on a joint approach for state employers and emphasises the importance of a strategic, long-term development work to ensure a competence management adapted to each business through an inclusive approach. The strategy is also an important part of the development work to strengthen the attractiveness of state employers.

The starting points for the diversity efforts are the needs, requirements and financial conditions of each agency. This corresponds with other standpoints for employer policies.

The strategy was adopted by the Board of the Swedish Agency for Government Employers on June 12, 2008.



Göran Ekström

Generaldirektör





Challenges, Policy strategy for government employers 2007 – 2010
(Swedish Agency for Government Employers)

Diversity – a challenge for employer policy

In May 2006, at the Annual General Meeting of the Employers' Council, 173 managers of government agencies adopted the "Policy strategy for state employers 2007 – 2010, Challenges". The Employers' Council is the highest decision-making body within the Swedish Agency for Government Employers and comprises all managers of the Agency's members.

One of the top priorities in "Challenges" is to ensure that state operations are characterised by integration and diversity. In "Challenges", diversity is defined as a "mixture of background and competence that is of importance for work, quality and customer orientation".

This strategy has been developed to support and act as a tool for you as the manager of a government agency in your long-term development work to accomplish diversity in your business.

Challenges related to employer policies

Citizens expect government agencies to be efficient, to provide good service and act within the principle of legal security. The demands that will be placed on state employers in the future entail many challenges that require dynamic employer policies. The workplace of the future will be characterised by increased mobility and by a "mixture of background and competence that is of importance for work, quality and customer orientation" (diversity). The need for change and an increased international exchange will demand flexibility and long-term planning. Technical solutions and an increased focus on leadership and employeeship will result in a workplace with more flexible ways of working and working hours.

Efficiency demands a long-term supply of competence

Demands for improved productivity entail increased demands for a long-term competence management to ensure the development of government agencies. It is essential for the agencies to be able to develop and retain the competence they need, but also to divest the competence that is no longer in demand. Demands for improved efficiency with unchanged or reduced costs may bring about a shift toward fewer employees with more qualified tasks, but also more extensive streamlining of tasks as duties are coordinated and concentrated. Demographic changes and changes in access to labour are significant factors in this context. Generally, there is no lack of manpower today. However, the state administration has older employees than the private sector in particular. Many employees will retire in the next decade. This could bring about changes in the need to recruit new employees.

Favourable results require a good working environment, gender equality and a mixture of background and competence that is of importance for work, quality and customer orientation (diversity).

Greater mobility in the labour market has resulted in increased demands for attractive workplaces and employment conditions. For example, effective leadership and a healthy working environment are necessary to develop stimulating, creative and attractive workplaces. Equal opportunities for career and competence development for women and men, ethnic and cultural diversity, and an equal distribution according to gender and age are other important factors in this context. In terms of these issues, state employers have considerable potential to profile themselves in the labour market and create a positive impression in the minds of the public. It is extremely important that state employers are capable of conveying the shared founding values, including democracy, efficiency and acting within the principle of legal security, on which state employer policies are based.

Integration and the mixture of background and competence that is of importance for work, quality and customer orientation (diversity) shall characterise the operations.

Integration and the mixture of background and competence that is of importance for work, quality and customer orientation (diversity) shall characterise the operations. A workplace that is well integrated from a diversity perspective and that utilises all competencies contributes to efficient operations and increases an employer's power of attraction. This pertains not only to employees with different ethnic or cultural backgrounds, but also differences in terms of personality, educational background, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, interests and so on. Diversity within the operations creates a higher level of creativity.

When different experiences, opinions and approaches are expressed, the information used to make decisions broadens and the development of ideas and new thinking is stimulated. For several years the government has set requirements for state agencies to work to increase ethnic and cultural diversity among their employees on all levels. Government employers cannot afford to overlook the competencies that Swedish inhabitants with international backgrounds have. In addition, government agencies with employees with varying language and cultural experiences will increase their opportunities to provide better service to citizens.

A workplace with terms of employment and work methods that suit both women and men, where everyone's capabilities are used and where both genders are represented at all levels of the organisation is also one of the foundations of an attractive, efficient workplace. A change strategy for increased diversity must be based on a holistic approach with shared goals and broad participation in the entire organisation together with a parallel work focusing on recruiting, changing attitudes and an overhaul of current organisational structures. State employer policies must comprise a joint strategic approach toward how members can create increased diversity in the workplace.

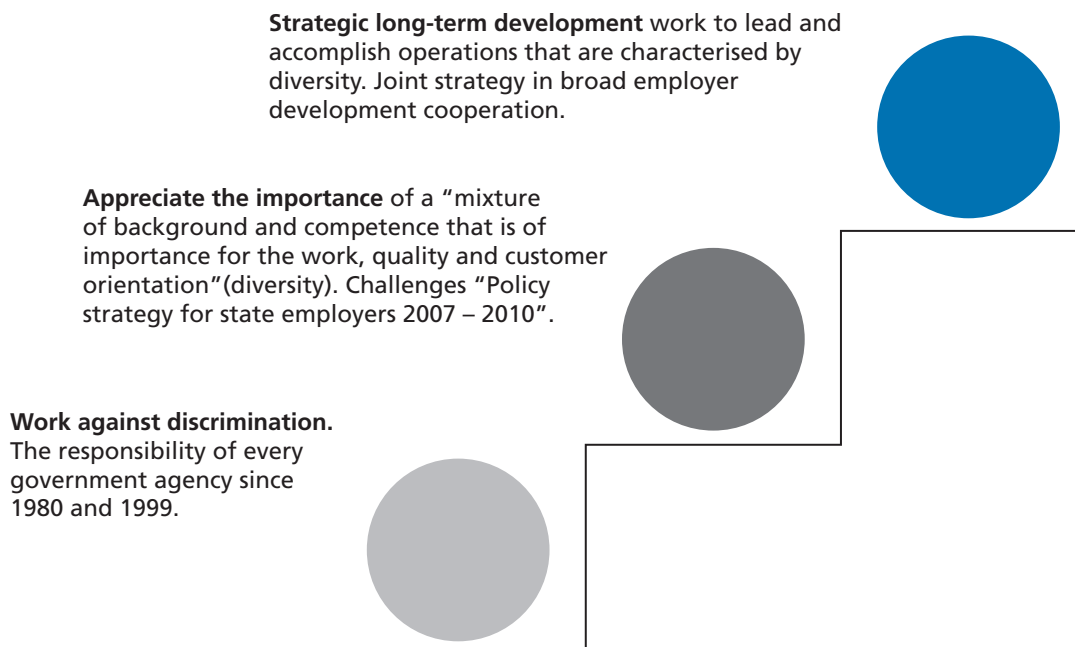


“Diversity is not a goal. The mixture of background and competence that is of importance for work, quality and customer orientation is a means to accomplish a better business.

Director General Göran Gräslund, Swedish Data Inspection Board

What is required to accomplish diversity – on moving from anti-discrimination to inclusion

The efforts to accomplish the mixture of background and competence amongst managers and employees that is of importance for work, quality and customer orientation (diversity) in operations comprises three steps. You have already initiated the first two steps.



The first step

The first step is about the work against discrimination that is performed in every agency. These efforts have been under way since 1980 and 1999, depending on when the various anti-discrimination laws came into effect. The efforts to counteract and prevent discrimination are characterised by categorisation and pertain to the groups of people who are protected by anti-discrimination laws.

However, it is far from sufficient to rely on anti-discrimination when the objective is a business that functions well and has a competence management suited to its purpose and an ability to adapt to new conditions and constant demands for increased efficiency. But experience and research indicate that actively working against discrimination lays the foundations for the next step – the ability to be aware of and use the value of diversity to achieve more efficient operations.

The second step

The second step entails shifting the focus from working to counteract and prevent discrimination of various groups of people to appreciating the value of diversity for ensuring the efficient use of the total competence in the workforce. State employers have set a high value on diversity as a prerequisite for efficient government agencies and increased power of attraction by supporting the “Policy strategy for state employers 2007 – 2010, Challenges” and by promoting diversity as a prioritised employer policy issue in this strategy. This is because the mixture of experiences and competencies that are relevant for the operations also have the greatest value.

The third step

The third and final step concerns shifting from valuing diversity to working in a strategic, long-term manner to ensure operations characterised by an inclusive approach and diversity. As a manager of a government agency you fulfil the third step when you incorporate and live up to the employer policy strategy for accomplishing diversity. The strategy can thus be used as a tool to shift the emphasis from anti-discrimination and what one may not do, to inclusiveness and how the state can attract, retain and develop employees who represent a mixture of background and competence that are of importance for the operations. Achieving this objective demands both a strategic supply of competence as an integrated part of your management and an inclusive approach as a part of your agency’s culture.

Said about inclusion

Inclusion is about the changing of structures and systems so that they, without obstacles along the way, support the possibility to utilise the relevant competence that people have.

An inclusive approach means a climate in which everyone can endorse his or her knowledge and talents so that these can be used in the most efficient way and to the greatest benefit for the operations.

Inclusion is not a strategy to make people fit into existing systems and structures. Inclusion is not equivalent to integration.

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“A clear, goal-oriented approach is important for the creation of inclusive workplaces. It provides support for me and the line managers to prioritise and secure the competence management that we strive to obtain.”

Vice-Chancellor Pam Fredman,
University of Gothenburg

“The joint approach presents an image of a state administration as a modern administration. It can show how we perceive ourselves, so it provides credibility outward. It is an identity that we convey.”

Director General Lars-Erik Holm,
Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare

“The joint approach is based on an outlook on society that we want to have in Sweden and that includes everyone.”

Museum Director Anne Louise Kemdal,
Board of the Swedish National Museum of Science and Technology

“I can promote this joint approach as a founding value, stand behind it 100 percent.”

Rector and President Mille Millnert,
Linköping University

“Flexible solutions and agreements can make the state attractive as an employer. We work to find individual solutions to attract the best competence.”

President Harriet Wallberg-Henriksson,
Karolinska Institute

“This joint approach is favourable for state employers as a ‘back-ground’ to their work in their own government agencies. Everyone agrees that we should live up to this.”

Director General Anders Engvall,
Swedish National Veterinary Institute

A joint approach to accomplish diversity

The image of state employers is improved by the fact that you, as the manager of a government agency, can base your activities on a joint approach that comprehensively indicates what you and other managers of government agencies have decided shall apply. Incorporating this joint approach into your operations contributes to ensuring that government agencies achieve the shared employer policy objective of making diversity a part of operations.

Government agencies shall **act within the principle of legal security, be efficient, provide good service with high accessibility and be citizen-oriented with an inclusive approach.**

To achieve success in this regard, a **strategic competence management** is required that, in both the short term and the long term, makes use of different background and competence that are of importance for work, quality and customer orientation (diversity).

A prerequisite for this is to use **clear management and flexible agreements and solutions** to create **inclusive workplaces** with working environments that are **free of discrimination.**



“I want to emphasise that it is a prerequisite for top managers to exert themselves and clearly show that this is important. This is what we are going to work with.”

Director General Ewa Persson Göransson,
Swedish National Board of Institutional Care

“The standpoints are an example of a concrete tool. I could use them in my business. I would take this up with my managers, who in turn would take it up with their managers. At every level, managers would adapt them to their own operations and pick out those we can really make use of.”

President Harriet Wallberg-Henriksson,
Karolinska Institute

“I can use these standpoints as an effective support, for example when I am talking to the managers but also as a base when recruiting managers.”

Director General Lars Rekke,
LFV Group Swedish Airports and Air Navigation Services

“The standpoints shall be related to the business and everyone in the organisation shall be involved in the discussions. What does this mean in our government agency?”

Director General Göran Gräslund,
Swedish Data Inspection Board

Strategic standpoints

As support for incorporating the joint approach, there are a number of strategic standpoints. These comprise the framework that you, as the manager of a government agency, and your subordinated managers, need to work with to accomplish diversity.

The first standpoint focuses on your role, while the others are based on what you have to ensure that you and your managers do and convey.

To accomplish diversity, you as the manager of a government agency need to:

- **Take an active stand**
- **Manage towards diversity**
- **Convey an inclusive approach**
- **Recognise and utilise competencies that are of importance for operations**
- **Identify the needs of competence in the business**
- **Use the criteria of skilfulness as a support**

On the following pages, you will find examples of what each standpoint can mean for you in your work to create diversity in your business.



"I take an active stand through our core values and vision. It's about reminding people of this in various situations."

Director General Lars Nylén,
Swedish Prison and Probation Service

"I have to talk about it until diversity is stating the obvious."

Director General Maria Ågren,
Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI)

"As a manager and as the top manager it is important to take an active stand. It influences how others see things and how they see me as a manager. As a manager you should be the good example."

Permanent Secretary and Head of Administration, Jan Landahl
Government Offices of Sweden

"As a director general one is an important symbolic person."

Director General Per Thullberg,
Swedish National Agency for Education

"Yes, it is possible to take an active stand and to generally say that we should have a mixture and why. Clarify that it is not about general benevolence but about obtaining the best competencies and that the mixture results in more creative organisations in the long run."

Director General Maria Ågren,
Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI)

Take an active stand

Take an active stand to accomplish the mixture of background and competence that is of importance for work, quality and customer-orientation (diversity) in the business.

Within the framework of employer policies, state employers have agreed on a joint objective for diversity. The objective entails that government agencies shall have managers and employees with the mixture of background and competence that are of importance for work, quality and customer orientation (diversity).

To succeed with this type of objective, national and international experience and research shows that you, as the top manager, must actively show that you are taking an active stand. This is a strategic tool for you as you lead your operations. You taking an active stand also legitimises the follow-up of expected results.

Taking an active stand demands knowledge, willingness and an understanding of why diversity is a priority in employer policies.

When you actively take a stand, you reinforce:

- Your clarity
- Your credibility
- Your normative impact on the behaviour of your organisation

Taking an active stand entails that:

- You, as the top manager, continuously convey and address what you wish to achieve and what you believe in. As the top manager, you must show that your involvement is genuine by being consistent and practicing what you preach.
- You are clear in your communication so that it is obvious to all organisational levels that the prerequisite for success is the existence of processes, procedures and attitudes that support the desired development.
- You reinforce the organisation's behaviour by conveying your own wants and values. You thereby increase the chances that subordinate managers and employees will take decisions that are in line with what you want to achieve.

As the top manager, you need to show that you are taking an active stand on two levels. Firstly as the conveyor of the state employer policy, by supporting and communicating the joint objective of the employer policy. Secondly, as the manager of a government agency, by applying the objective to your own operations, and together with your management team, transform it into actions and activities that are needed to ensure that your organisation is characterised by diversity.

By taking an active position, you create the conditions for and expectations of dialogue and follow-up since you are clear about what you want. Through your own knowledge, you can motivate and engage others!

“I wholeheartedly believe in this. Through management and by demonstrating what kind of results I expect. When it comes to management I am careful not to be too detail-oriented. The hard part is finding a balance in the management.”

Director General Maria Ågren,
Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute



“I would take the standpoints to my management group and make them operational. Ask them: how do you relate to this? How do we proceed to break it down and make it operational? Then I would form a group to create concrete proposals such as recommendations as to what I should do in my role, how to incorporate it into the operational plan, the budget work and the planning work.”

Director General Curt Malmberg,
Swedish Social Insurance Agency

“The strategy and the standpoints would be a helpful aid and tool. I would use them as a tool for us to consider: How do we deal with each of these standpoints? I would have a discussion regarding this in the management group. The joint approach and the standpoints would help us measure our temperature: What have we done? What knowledge do we possess? I would enlighten and educate the management group. Our HR manager would have to assess our recruitment process and evaluate how we recruit. I would make the budget and the increasing competition for work in the Swedish labour market the starting point.”

Director General Marie Hafström,
Swedish Defence Forces

“I have a results-based contract with all managers. I do follow-ups each quarter. What have you accomplished? What have you not accomplished and why? The results-based contracts comprise the employees, competencies, atmosphere and culture of a department, personnel turnover, etc.”

Director General Yvonne Gustafsson,
Swedish National Financial Management Authority

Manage towards diversity

Manage your managers and employees by providing direction, creating the necessary conditions, following up and supplying feedback about the work being carried out to achieve inclusive workplaces characterised by the mixture of background and competence that are of importance for work, quality and customer orientation (diversity).

To manage your business toward the objective of being characterised by diversity need not be different than managing it toward other objectives. However, repositioning yourself from focusing on anti-discrimination and activities and actions aimed at specific groups to focus on inclusion aimed at ensuring a competence management may require altered processes, procedures and follow-up systems within the framework of your management.

Assisting you in establishing the framework within which the work needs to be developed are the strategic standpoints. By going through the meaning of the standpoints with your management team, the standpoints can be translated into relevant actions. The standpoints may also be used as a dialogue tool between you and management and in communicating with other members of the organisation.

As manager of your agency you can create commitment and involvement among your managers and employees by using your own motivation, knowledge and understanding of the joint employer-policy task to accomplish diversity. As in other matters, you can guide the organisation's behaviour in the desired direction through clear and consistent leadership.

By establishing the direction you also legitimise follow-up and assessment. As an agency manager, you add weight to and strengthen the employer role of your managers when you, as manager of the agency, request results, follow up and evaluate the measures that your managers and employees implement to achieve the objective of an inclusive workplace.

Although ultimate responsibility for accomplishing diversity rests with you as agency manager, the HR function comprises a natural support in the work to ensure a competence management adjusted to the agency through an inclusive approach. With support from HR, you can ensure that existing processes such as identifying competency needs, recruiting and recognising and utilising competence do not pose obstacles to achieving the objective.

Establish direction

By establishing the direction as agency manager, you are communicating the reason your agency needs and will benefit from an inclusive approach and having the mixture of background and competence among managers and employees that are of importance for work, quality and customer orientation. If the standpoints for example are incorporated in the operational plan, they can be broken down into goals that can be measured and followed up. To increase clarity, these goals can be linked to the agency's mission, including future needs that can be identified.

Create the necessary conditions

As the top manager, you need to be involved in the matter being prioritised. This is achieved in the same manner as other management matters, which is to say by ensuring the conditions necessary for your managers and employees to achieve your objectives. The prerequisites may be allocating time, personnel or other financial resources but also expanding knowledge and arenas for discussion and development.

Follow-up and feedback

Follow-up and feedback are vital for all business and employer development. As an agency manager, you must ensure that procedures are in place for providing feedback on conclusions and results aimed at identifying the need for additional measures, training, etc. One way for you to reinforce and facilitate follow-ups is by specifying what needs to be implemented in the short and long term to accomplish diversity through agreements with your managers. To demonstrate the priority of the work, the consequences of not achieving objectives need to be clear. It is also important to recognise favourable results to create a sense of involvement around the importance of achieving shared objectives.



“Our business must be inclusive. It is the most effective way to accomplish diversity.”

Vice Chancellor Pam Fredman,
Gothenburg University

“A good leader has the ability to convey culture into an organisation. You must stand up for culture as a manager. Naturally, this also applies to me.”

Vice Chancellor Pam Fredman,
Gothenburg University

“It is an extremely important standpoint, perhaps the most important task for a manager. Leadership boils down to setting goals and following up, creating enough structure and concentrating on the culture.”

Director General Göran Gräslund,
Swedish Data Inspection Board

“This is always the central issue. I stand for openness, clarity and tolerance.”

Director General Dan Eliasson,
Swedish Migration Board

“An inclusive approach makes you think. It is a strong valuation.”

Director General Curt Malmberg,
Swedish Social Insurance Agency

“The concept of inclusion is part of our foundation. Our business is built on inclusion to create democracy.”

Director General Per Thullberg,
Swedish National Agency for Education

“As a university, we must be inclusive or as we say, welcoming in order to recruit the best competence. This competence must feel welcome regardless of background.”

Rector and President Mille Millnert,
Linköping University

“The culture, to convey and create an inclusive culture is of course something we can influence. We have trained about 150 people in management courses. It is a way to make an impact.”

President Harriet Wallberg-Henriksson,
Karolinska Institute



Convey an inclusive approach

Convey an inclusive approach as part of your organisation's culture by requiring your managers to create inclusive workplaces within the framework of their management.

To succeed in achieving the mixture of background and competence among managers and employees that are of importance to achieve the objectives of your organisation, you and your managers need to create inclusive workplaces. Inclusive workplaces that can bring out the best in managers and employees.

Being inclusionary is the opposite of being exclusionary. Inclusion is something else than integration. Integration builds on an existing system or structure that someone or something must adapt to.

"Working toward an inclusive workplace and counteracting exclusion means ensuring long-term competence management. This demands that we, both as individuals and within our organisation, review our outlooks and values, reflect and be prepared to change ingrained patterns. This in turn, affects the authority's work organisation and employer and staff policies from recruiting, staff development and wage setting to reduction and redundancy issues".¹

That government agencies have an inclusive approach has both an internal and external focus. Internally, it is primarily about how you and your managers act as employers and with the managers and employees' attitudes toward one another, which is to say how you create inclusive workplaces. Externally, it's about your contact with customers, users, citizens, supervisors, and partners, among others, but also with former and potential employees.

As a manager of an agency, you convey an inclusive approach as part of your agency's culture:

- You and your management team specify what an inclusive approach means to you and how this will be expressed in your organisation.
- You ensure that managers at all levels know what an inclusive approach means for your organisation and what is required for them to be able to create inclusive workplaces.

¹From "See the human in the business", The Development Council for the Government Sector 2007

“I commission each manager to deliver X number of persons who can be developed into managers. For example, I have currently commissioned one manager to bring forward 50 persons suitable of being managers, or senior managers if they are already managers. She is responsible for ensuring these people are provided with the competence development they need to continue developing for various management positions.”

Director General Lars Rekke,
LFV Group Swedish Airports and Air Navigation Services

“We focus on openness and I believe that we have been successful with this in recent years. We work on supporting one another in the management group, on ‘tearing down’ departmental borders and utilising the competency in the organisation. We need both in-depth and broad competence. This is discussed in the management group.”

Director General Yvonne Gustafsson,
Swedish National Financial Management Authority

“Managers who do not allow their employees to develop or advance internally are told that this is not good. The needs of the organisation shall be guiding. In addition, we need to think ahead since our employees are attractive to other employers, commissions’ and government departments. We have examples of managers actively keeping in touch with employees who are no longer working with us so that they can return. It is delightful when an employee returns, then they have acquired new experiences and that I find beneficial for the operations.”

Director General Yvonne Gustafsson,
Swedish National Financial Management Authority

“It is important that the management group realises that they are responsible for the entire organisation. It is not a forum where individual departments ‘fight’ for their own department. The organisational structure is always a compromise. Networks and projects overlapping organisational borders is one way to remedy the compromise. We encourage internal movement. But the management group must always work from the basis of an agency-comprehensive perspective.”

General Director Per Thullberg,
Swedish National Agency for Education

“This standpoint is a key matter for the agency to function in a good way. It is important to develop the ones you have. Then it is important that different people can be in different departments and positions with a comprehensive perspective.”

Acting Director General Ulf Troedsson,
National Swedish Board of Housing, Building and Planning

“This is very important when it comes to management development, that the managers learn to recognise and utilise relevant competencies. Amongst other things we have the employee survey to follow up and ensure that this it works like this.”

Director General Dan Eliasson,
Swedish Migration Board

Recognise and utilise competencies that are relevant to your organisation

Ensure that you and your managers recognise and utilise competencies relevant to the organisation when leading and delegating work and in cases of internal and external recruiting. This also includes recognising and utilising employee competencies across organisational borders.

Recognising and utilising competence entails a more efficient utilisation of resources in your organisation. Employees develop and the employer's power of attraction increases both internally and externally. The standpoint, from a comprehensive perspective and based on the needs of your organisation, is about you strengthening the competence-supply strategies to accomplish diversity. Recognising and utilising relevant competence means that diversity shall be used to achieve the best possible results for the organisation.

As a manager, you can have an effect on diversity not only during recruiting but also when you lead and delegate work. An altered mixture of background and competence that is of importance for the operations can also be accomplished through the existence of structures that support the visibility and utilisation of manager and employee competence.

As the manager of your agency, ensuring that all managers recognise and utilise the agency's relevant competence means that:

- You clarify that efficient utilisation of resources presupposes that competence is recognised and utilised and that this is included in the mission of all managers.
- As manager of an agency, you create a management climate in which existing and necessary competence is always recognised and analysed based on a comprehensive perspective of the operations.
- You order a continuous working process in which competence is mapped out and made visible in a way that is relevant for the operations.
- You clarify that potential obstacles and factors that may hinder the efficient utilisation of resources shall be eliminated. This may involve changing administrative systems to ensure that they support competence utilisation across organisational borders, etc.



“This we have to do all the time, to constantly consider what competencies we need from a strategic perspective. This includes reflecting what we mean with the term competence.”

Director General Marie Hafström, Swedish Defence Forces

“We have discussions in the management group concerning how we shall act when it comes to the competence management. We discuss this when vacancies arise, sometimes in the management group but more often with the HR manager. When we plan this year’s business, we also address the matter of what to do in the case of key employees leaving. All departments have mapped out their competencies and accordingly, identified their competence needs in the coming years. We have looked at our strategic goals and asked: What will you be doing in three years? Describe this. What will you be proud of in three years and how will you achieve this? Using this method, you ‘recognise’ what you need to achieve success in terms of competence management, among other factors.”

Director General Yvonne Gustafsson,
Swedish National Financial Management Authority

Identify competence needs in your organisation

Ensure that you and your management team identify the organisation's short and long-term competence needs in order to be and remain an agency that acts within the principle of legal security, is efficient, provides good service with high accessibility and is citizen-oriented with an inclusive approach.

To accomplish the objective of being characterised by diversity, you and your management team need to identify the competence needs of your organisation. You need to do this from a comprehensive perspective and for the long and short term. By achieving this goal, you will improve the prerequisites for the agency to utilise the existing competence in a more efficient manner and to attract the right competence when recruiting. In addition you will also gain a base on which you can create potential guidelines.

As manager of your agency you are ultimately responsible for the agency's competence management. The competence management means ensuring that competence is available to achieve the objectives of the operations and fulfil its needs in both the short and long term. The concept of competence supply comprises the employer's work related to attracting, recruiting, developing, maintaining and terminating competence.

That you ensure the identification of competence needs means that:

- You request and order information regarding the short and long-term competence needs of the operations based on the requirements to act within the principle of legal security, be efficient, provide good service with high accessibility and be citizen-oriented with an inclusive approach.
- You conduct a discussion at the management level regarding future competence needs.
- You follow up to ensure that the identified needs for competence are requested in conjunction with recruiting.

“This is also about thinking about what one means by ‘competence’. What is the outlook on competence? Is it about formal merits? Or do you select favourable ‘raw material’ and develop it yourself? ... You make it simple for yourself if you only use education or the level of education as a sorting mechanism. You can choose to pay to shape employees yourself instead of having a certain level of education as a basis. This is a strategic choice and reflects another view of the criteria of skilfulness. How do you value experiences and other abilities that may be more important for the business than education?”

Jan Landahl, Permanent Secretary and Head of Administration,
Government Offices of Sweden

“The preparatory work before a recruitment is important. You need to be aware in the recruiting process and think: What do we need? Should we actively bring in someone with a background that differs from those we already have in our business? Recruiting should be broad and mindful and that applies to both internal and external recruiting. Internal recruiting is very important; the supply of competence is not only about external recruiting.”

Director General Marie Hafström,
Swedish Armed Forces

“I think it is positive that we highlight the criteria of skilfulness. The risk is that you think that you are already doing what is stated in the standpoint, namely choosing the most skilful candidate, the best suited for the job. You think you are choosing the best person because you do not have sufficient knowledge of what you need. Instead, you recruit more of the ones you already have because “you know that they function”.”

Director General Ewa Persson Göransson,
Swedish National Board of Institutional Care

“Everyone supports the idea that we should have the best competence for our operations. But how do we value it? Does hidden discrimination sneak in when we define the best competence?”

Director General Maria Ågren,
Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI)

“In the academic world, there is a long tradition of using experts to assess competence. They choose the candidate who appears to be the most competent, regardless of background. We work with external reviewers when we are hiring professors, for example. I see it as a secure system compared to other systems. The criteria of skilfulness provides support both when you identify competence and in the recruiting process itself.”

Rector and President Mille Millnert,
Linköping University

Use the criteria of skilfulness as a support

Ensure that you and your recruiting managers use the criteria of skilfulness as a support to accomplish the mixture of background and competence that is of importance for work, quality and customer orientation (diversity) in your operations.

The criteria of skilfulness² in “merit and skill” is sometimes conveyed as an obstacle for accomplishing diversity in the national government. This can be the case if, out of routine, an employer sets the same requirements as in previous recruitment processes or when the requirements set are too formal or too extensive in relation to the work that is to be performed.

If you and your recruiting managers, prior to each recruitment, define the criteria of skilfulness based on the competency requirements of the operations and the actual requirements of the job you will improve your options to recruit employees with a background, experience and knowledge that appropriately complement those already found within your agency.

To use the criteria of skilfulness as a support entails that, as the manager of a government agency, you need to:

- Mediate the significance and importance of defining the criteria of skilfulness based on the actual requirements of the job and competency requirements of the operations from a comprehensive perspective, in the short and long term.
- Request/order a recruiting process that clarifies that the requirement profile is to be established based on the competency requirements of the operations and the actual requirements of the job, and how the selection process will take place up to and including the hiring decision.
- Request/ensure that managers define the criteria of skilfulness prior every recruitment for the purpose of accomplishing the mixture of background and competence that is of importance for work, quality and customer orientation in the operations.

² In accordance with section 11:9 of Sweden's Constitution (RF), only such factual grounds as merit and skill are to be considered when recruiting for positions in national government. “Skill” refers to the factors that are of importance for assessing a candidate's suitability for the position in question. Such factors usually include theoretical and practical education, personal qualities and working experience.

How you can use the strategy

"The strategy is a tool to accomplish the objectives of employer and administration policies. This strategy is not a duty – it is our joint approach and voluntary and it should be underlying in everything we do. The strategy should fit my organisation in the long term, in contrast to regulations which I see as limiting."

Museum Director Anne Louise Kemdal,
Board of the Swedish National Museum of Science and Technology

"I would take the standpoints to my management group and make them operational. Ask them: how do you relate to this? How do we proceed to break it down and make it operational? Then I would form a group to create concrete proposals such as recommendations as to what I should do in my role, how to incorporate it into the operational plan, the budget work and the planning work."

Director General Curt Malmborg, Swedish Social Insurance Agency

"The standpoints are a basic framework for the process. I can use them in my business. It is rational to have joint standpoints and a joint approach. But this is not just about showing six points at an operational meeting. It requires a plan and continuous work."

Director General Anders Engvall, Swedish National Veterinary Institute

"It is positive to have a joint approach. In a comprehensive way, it indicates what applies. The standpoints are an example of a concrete tool. I could use them in my operations. I would take this up with my managers, who in turn would take it up with their managers. At every level, managers would adapt them to their own operations and pick out those we can really make use of."

President Harriet Wallberg-Henriksson, Karolinska Institute

"I would bring the joint approach to my management group to compare it with our personnel concept and show them that it does not have to be more difficult than this. The joint approach confirms that this is self-evident and simple."

Director General Maria Ågren,
Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute (SMHI)

"The joint approach and standpoints can be a tool for dialogue and a link between top management and the personnel department."

Director General Lars-Erik Holm,
Swedish National Board of Health and Welfare