

## Competency Assessment of NIA UPRIIS Administrative and Finance Employees: Basis for Competency-Based Human Resource Development Program

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**Abstract.** This research study is focused mainly on the assessment of key competency areas of Administrative and Finance Division (AFD) personnel at the National Irrigation Administration – Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation Systems (NIA UPRIIS). This study involves the application of descriptive type of Research and formulation of analysis and interpretation of data acquired using the Accidental Sampling Methods. The respondents were 50 current AFD personnel of NIA UPRIIS. A survey questionnaire adopted from the standardized Competency Assessment Form of the said Agency was the main instrument used in data gathering. All data and information gathered from the respondents were tallied, analyzed and interpreted using various statistical tools and techniques. The findings of this study show that the employees are very good and highly competent in terms of the performance of regular or assigned duties diligently and in the timely manner, asking follow-up questions to clarify/confirm understanding, and being ready and open to receive communication. They also have high competence when it comes to identifying the name and location of different offices, discussing NIA's VMGO to the Agency's stakeholders, and following appropriate template when drafting routine correspondences. The areas that need improvement include breaking down a complex system into its component parts and process, as well as beginning document with relevant and interesting introduction and ending it with clear conclusion/summary. Through the Human Resource Unit and Training and Education Team (TET), NIA UPRIIS AFD shall conduct the following human resource development program based on the competency assessment of its personnel. As an ISO-certified government agency, the Knowledge Management Team (KMT) of NIA UPRIIS shall work closely with TET in terms of securing the copies of training materials and Training Completion Reports for reference. This study may also serve as a benchmark for future research undertakings about the topics that are related to this study.

*Keywords:* Competency; Human Resource; Learning and Development

## 1. Introduction

Competency assessment has served as one way of evaluating the capabilities of employees. It is a basis for the provision of learning and development interventions to capacitate and improve the skill set of personnel. The study of Abante, Estrella, Mendoza, Merilles, and Vigonte (2024) stated that competency will never be outdated in this modern world, especially in the government sector. Competency is the foundation towards attaining effective governance, promoting public trust, ensuring efficiency and accountability, adapting to change, and encouraging professional advancement. All of these will lead to a more efficient and effective public service.

Abante et al (2024) also highlighted the fundamental role of the Competency-Based Learning and Development Program (CBLDP) in improving the capabilities and skills of civil servants. This ensures that government employees possess the necessary skills to efficiently perform their tasks. In this regard, the use of competency-based approaches is crucial to meet the changing needs of the stakeholders.

In the work of Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (2021) entitled “Public servants as partners for growth: The government shift to competency management”, it was emphasized that the government sector has been strengthening the adoption of competency management as a guide to clearly define the specific set of skills, knowledge, and behavior that is prerequisite in work performance. From traditional modes of job descriptions, recruitment and selection, learning and development, performance management system, and rewards administration, strategic workforce plans were introduced tactically improve the employees’ capabilities. This would contribute to create more career opportunities for government employees.

In the Philippines, the competency assessment of government employees is based on the Competency Assessment Forms administered by the Human Resource Management Officers (HRMOs). The said forms determine the level of competencies that employees have in performing each of their actual work function.

At NIA, adoption of a Competency-Based Human Resource Management and Development (CBHRMD) system serves as one of the Agency's performance commitments to the Governance Commission for Government-Owned and Controlled Corporations (GCG). It is the initial step in fulfilling the CBHRMD. NIA's Competency Framework was developed in partnership with the Center for Organizational Development of the Development Academy of the Philippines.

The Competency Framework is a model in which the characteristics, features, and work processes are clearly defined for a certain position or organization. Determining employees' competence level follows the competency framework. The assessment includes evaluating and developing employee's competence level to meet a given standard. The said process is adding value to employees by capacitating them to effectively perform their work functions, duties, and responsibilities.

Considering all of this, this study was conducted to assess the competence level of AFD employees of NIA UPRIIS for Calendar Year (CY) 2024. The evaluation will be based on the objectives of the study.

The competency level was assessed in terms of the five major areas of competency assessment form, namely, Accountability, Interpersonal Communication, Organizational Awareness, Analytical and Creative Thinking, and Technical Writing.

An empirical gap was identified because there has been no study yet conducted about the competency assessment of NIA UPRIIS AFD employees. Although there are existing literature and studies about the evaluation of competencies in the government sector, there is no research undertaking that focused on the said locale.

With all of these factors, the researchers decided to analyze the competence level of AFD employees to develop a proposed Competency-Based Human Resource Development Program. All of these are aimed towards the improvement of NIA's service delivery and uplifting the lives of greater Filipino farmers.

## 2. Methodology

This study used the Descriptive Method of Research which aims to determine the competence level of 50 NIA UPRIIS AFD personnel in Cabanatuan City, Nueva

Ecija. The respondents were chosen using an accidental sampling, a non-probability sampling method where in the study will be conducted to all personnel who happened to be at the office when the survey was administered.

Survey questionnaires were utilized in this study. The questions were adopted from the standardized Competency Assessment Survey of the Agency. The researchers sought the permission and formal approval from the management of NIA UPRIIS AFD before conducting the study. After securing the management permission, the researchers explained the purpose of the study to the respondents and made sure that they are bona fide employees of the Agency.

To personally answer all questions from the respondents during the administration of the questionnaires, the proponents maintain open lines on chat and personal communication. The employees' refusal to participate in this study and their rights under the Data Protection Act were respected.

All data gathered from the respondents were statistically treated using the Frequency and Percentage Distribution, Percentage Approach, and Weighted Mean. The generated results shall be used for academic purpose only

### 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 1** Distribution of Results in terms of Accountability

Accountability	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
1) Performs regular or assigned duties diligently and in a timely manner.	3.18	Good and Competent	1
2) Checks completeness and correctness of documents before submitting.	3.06	Good and Competent	2
3) Manages own time to ensure that all tasks are accomplished on time.	2.92	Good and Competent	3
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.05</b>	Good and Competent	

Based on the table, the performance of regular or assigned duties diligently and in the timely manner gained the highest mean rating of 3.18. This means that the respondents are good and competent to perform the functions demanded by their respective positions. In addition, the respondents are also good in checking the completeness and correctness of documents before

submitting with a mean rating of 3.06, as well time management to ensure that all tasks are accomplished on time with a mean score of 3.18.

**Table 2** Distribution of Result in terms of Interpersonal Communication

Interpersonal Communication	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
4) Listens attentively with an open mind without interrupting.	3.14	Good and Competent	3
5) Asks follow-up questions to clarify and confirm understanding.	3.32	Very Good and Highly Competent	1.5
6) Keeps oneself ready and open to receive any communication from stakeholders.	3.32	Very Good and Highly Competent	1.5
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.26</b>	Very Good and Highly Competent	

Based on the responses, asking follow-up questions to clarify/confirm understanding and being ready and open to receive communication from stakeholders both gained a mean rating of 3.32. This means that the respondents are very good and highly competent in terms of interpersonal communication. Meanwhile, the respondents are good in attentive listening with an open mind without interrupting.

**Table 3** Distribution of Result in terms of Organizational Awareness

Organizational Awareness	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation	Rank
7) Explains the NIA's Mandates, Mission, and Vision in his/her own words to clients and other stakeholders.	3.44	Very Good and Highly Competent	3
8) Identifies the name and location of the different offices / departments / units of the NIA accurately.	3.68	Very Good and Highly Competent	1
9) Explains the basic steps or procedures of the simpler transactions clearly and courteously to clients.	3.52	Very Good and Highly Competent	2

<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>Very Good and Highly Competent</b>	
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Given the results of the study, identifying the name and location of different offices garnered the highest mean rating of 3.68 with a descriptive assessment of Very Good or Highly Competent. This is followed by explaining the basic steps or procedures of simpler transactions clearly and courteously to clients with a mean rating of 3.52 (Very Good and Highly Competent), and discussing NIA's VMGO with a mean rating of 3.44 (Very Good and Highly Competent).

**Table 4** Distribution of Result in terms of Analytical and Creative Thinking

<b>Analytical and Creative Thinking</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
10) Breaks down a complex system into its component parts and processes.	2.34	Needs Improvement	3
11) Distinguishes between critical and irrelevant pieces of information.	2.74	Good and Competent	2
12) Shows receptivity to new ideas and a willingness to try out new things.	2.94	Good and Competent	1
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.67</b>	<b>Good and Competent</b>	

Based on the results of the study, showing receptivity to new ideas and distinguishing between critical and irrelevant pieces of information both gained a good mean rating of 2.94 and 2.74, respectively. However, breaking down a complex system into its component parts and process only gained a mean rating of 2.34 with a descriptive assessment of "Needs Improvement".

**Table 5** Distribution of Result in terms of Technical Writing

<b>Technical Writing</b>	<b>Weighted Mean</b>	<b>Verbal Interpretation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
13) Ability to write concise but comprehensive and well-organized documents that are responsive to the purpose, audience, and situation.	2.78	Good and Competent	2

14) Follows appropriate template when drafting routine correspondences, memos, documentations, reports, and other similar documents.	3.46	Very Good and Highly Competent	1
15) Begins the document with a relevant and interesting introduction and ends the document with a clearly stated conclusion or summary.	2.50	Needs Improvement	3
<b>Composite Mean</b>	<b>2.91</b>	<b>Good and Competent</b>	

With the results of the study, it is evident that following appropriate template when drafting routine correspondences, memos, documentations, reports, and other similar documents gained a very good mean rating of 3.46 (Highly Competent).

On the other hand, writing concise but comprehensive and well-organized documents that are responsive to the purpose, audience, and situation gained a good mean rating of 2.78 (Competent). However, beginning document with relevant and interesting introduction and ending it with clear conclusion/summary only gained a mean rating of 2.50. This means that the respondents need improvement in the overall composition of documents.

**Table 6** The Results on the Five Key Competency Areas Presented Altogether in One Table

Key Competency Areas	Composite Mean	Verbal Interpretation
Accountability	3.05	Good and Competent
Interpersonal Communication	3.26	Very Good and Highly Competent
Organizational Awareness	3.55	Very Good and Highly Competent
Analytical and Creative Thinking	2.67	Good and Competent
Technical Writing	2.91	Good and Competent
<b>Average Mean</b>	<b>3.09</b>	<b>Good and Competent</b>

Based on the table, Organizational Awareness and Interpersonal Communication both gained a very good mean rating of 3.55 and 3.26, respectively. On the other hand, the remaining areas, such as Accountability



(3.05), Technical Writing (2.91), and Analytical and Creative Thinking (2.67) all garnered a good assessment. Overall, the competence level of NIA UPRIIS AFD personnel gained a mean rating of 3.09 with a descriptive assessment of Good/Competent.

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the foregoing findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn and presented:

1. NIA UPRIIS AFD personnel are very good and highly competent in terms of the performance of regular or assigned duties diligently and in the timely manner, asking follow-up questions to clarify/confirm understanding, and being ready and open to receive communication. They also have high competence when it comes to identifying the name and location of different offices, discussing NIA's VMGO to the Agency's stakeholders, and following appropriate template when drafting routine correspondences.
2. The personnel are good and competent in checking the completeness and correctness of documents before submitting, managing time to ensure that all tasks are accomplished on time, listening attentively with an open mind without interrupting, showing receptivity to new ideas, and distinguishing between critical and irrelevant pieces of information. They also have competence when it comes to writing concise but comprehensive and well-organized documents.
3. The areas that need improvement include breaking down a complex system into its component parts and process, as well as beginning document with relevant and interesting introduction and ending it with clear conclusion/summary.

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusions of this research study, the following recommendations are hereby presented for consideration:

1. NIA UPRIIS AFD, through the Human Resource Unit and Training and Education Team (TET), shall conduct the following human resource development program based on the competency assessment of its personnel. These capability-building activities shall be included on the priority trainings of the Agency for CY 2025:

- 1.1. System Thinking. The Agency shall develop trainings about system thinking to address the low competence of personnel in terms of breaking down a complex system into its component parts and process.



1.2 Technical and Creative Writing. A training on technical and creative writing shall be organized to improve the competence level of personnel in terms of writing interesting introduction and clear conclusions/ending on its correspondences and office communications.

2. The Agency shall conduct the following human resource development program based on the competency assessment of its personnel. Despite being good/competent in some areas, the office shall invest in capacity-building activities to reach high competence level.

2.1. Training on Correspondence, Reporting, and Writing. This training may be conducted to develop the ability of the personnel to write concise but comprehensive and well-organized documents that are responsive to the purpose, audience, and situation.

2.2. Seminar-Workshop on Data Management. This seminar-workshop may be organized to help the personnel distinguish the differences between critical and irrelevant pieces of information.

2.3. Trainings on Art Appreciation, Digital Media, and Innovation. These training may be conducted to improve the ideas of personnel and grasp relevant knowledge and skills in digital age.

3. The Knowledge Management Team (KMT) is one of the core teams of ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System (QMS). As an ISO-certified government agency, the KMT of NIA UPRIIS shall work closely with TET in terms of securing the copies of training materials and Training Completion Reports for reference.

4. This study may serve as a benchmark for future research undertakings about the topics that are related to this study

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