IN THE *KNOW*

KMSA Knowledge Management South Africa

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IN THIS ISSUE

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FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome to the KMSA Newsletter IN THE KNOW. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep members informed of programmes, the latest news, and upcoming events, academic and research studies. We are excited about the upcoming KMSA Virtual e-Imbizo 2022 taking place from 23 – 26 August 2022. The KMSA team is hard at work planning a learning experience full of learning, connections, and collaboration. We look forward to sharing this experience with you all. To register, please visit the KMSA website for the details.

In this edition, we are introducing the KMSA Competency Framework to spark a discussion on this critical matter for the profession. We will discuss this further with you to get your input. We also share an update from the Department of Public Service and Administration regarding the Knowledge Management Programme. Getting to Know KMSA Members introduces Ms Patricia Mweene Lumba, a very active KMSA member from Zambia, whom members know from active involvement in KMSA events. We are sharing insights from the Knowledge Management Learning Exchange of May 2022 hosted by MILE with the theme "Knowledge Management influencing operational efficiency and service delivery in the public sector." We were honoured to partner with the National School of Government (NSG) to host the inaugural National School of Government Knowledge Management Conference in June 2022. In his address, Prof Busani Ngcaweni, the Principal of NSG, articulated the importance of practicing knowledge management in all aspects of life, particularly the public sector.

We look forward to welcoming you to the KMSA Virtual e-Imbizo 2022.

In the meantime, stay healthy and safe.

REFILOE MABASO | KMSA CHAIRPERSON

We are already halfway through our 2022 program! For members that missed any one of our monthly sessions, you are able to access the recording of the session via the website. Join today to unlock the knowledge center! Non-members, please consider becoming a member!

 In August is e-Imbizo time – register now to secure your place for this excellent event. The theme for the conference is Knowledge Collaboration and Connection. The speakers will share a range of case studies, thought leadership talks and research papers. A first at the KMSA conference is the Chairperson's Award – a very special acknowledgement of KM excellence. Professionalisation is one of KMSA's top priorities and progress with regards to this key initiative will be shared during the conference. Members, we invite you to join our Annual General Meeting where the KMSA Chairperson will share "the state of KMSA"! There is also ample time for networking! We are looking forward to your attendance, support and participation. I would like to invite you to share any other topics with me **(hanlie.smuts@up.ac.za)** that you may want to present or learn about.

"There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning." —
Jiddu Krishnamurti

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Knowledge Management South Africa Competency Framework - a guide to competencies, behavioural indicators, and proficiency levels

1. CONTEXT

Although South African organisations are beginning to implement KM more aggressively, there are still a variety of incoherent sectoral knowledge strategies. Therefore, their efforts have little impact on social outcomes. It is a common cause throughout the world that knowledge is an essential prerequisite for sustainable competitive advantage and development, and particularly as a necessary component for the maintenance of products and services as envisaged in ISO 9001:2015 subclause 7.1.6, and give effect to ISO 30401, and South Africa is no exception. Implementation of ISO 30401 is the only framework that drives coherent KM strategies across industries and sectors, enabling value creation and cross-organizational knowledge exchange. When knowledge is harmonised and exploited at scale, portable and scalable across all organisations, value is created. Without the standardised approach, scalability and portability become difficult, and unpredictable.

The lack of skills, particularly technical skills, including KM skills, remains one of the key problems facing South Africa. Consequently, the quality of products and services rendered by these KMers cannot be guaranteed and the value creation as promised by the ISO 30401 cannot be realised. This brings reputational paralysis for the profession and calls into question the value of the professional certificate. This is because the individual will have failed to demonstrate the necessary skills and education that have been attained.

Hence, KMSA exists to advance KM thought leadership in South Africa through building strong and engaged KM practitioners. So, a committee was set up to engage and apply to become an accredited body, which awards designations according to SAQA processes and facilitates the definition of KM competency framework to support the KM professionalization effort, and to build Personal Knowledge capability, which guarantees the quality of KMers' work, as well as to support the high level of reputation of the profession. In addition to this, KMSA aims to convert this professionalisation opportunity into sustainable portfolios and partnerships with SAQA, academic institutions, corporates (particularly recruiters and learning and development), and KM Service Providers.

2. WHY KM COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK IS IMPORTANT FOR SOUTH AFRICA

Implementing ISO 30401 as intended, requires a well-rounded KM implementation experience. There are quite a few KM initiatives that would tick all the boxes if we are to be subjected to an ISO audit. The reason for this is that there is no consistent KM competency language across South Africa. This leads to inconsistent job profiles of similar KM roles being advertised across different industries, which has a serious impact on standardisation, selection, and development of KM talent. Considering that the competency framework is used for Organization Design (OD) and employee development, workforce planning, talent acquisition as well as remuneration and benefits, etc., its absence has a tremendous impact on the KM profession in general and particularly in South Africa.

Therefore, the KMSA Competence Framework seeks to create a single repository to achieve Five outcomes – to help in determining what success looks like for the profession through addressing five critical factors. First, facilitate the administration of a single, integrated professional designation framework for the KM profession in South Africa. Second, provides standards and practices for the desired behaviors and required skills and competencies for the KM profession. Third, showing up as our best selves means KMSA must encourage ethical, professional, and social responsibility and accountability within the KM profession. Fourth, create certainty about the quality of professionals, making it easier for KM professionals to access and progress through education, training, and career paths. This includes the integration of prior experience they have gained in the workplace. Lastly, establish a common competency framework to which human resource management activities, including recruitment and selection, performance management, training and development, and succession planning, can be aligned.

3. THE KMSA COMPETENCY FRAMEWORK UNPACKED

In developing the KMSA Competence Framework three steps were followed. First, the definition of the Guiding Principles of the KM Competency Framework was initiated. Second, define and develop behavioral, and core competencies (core KM competencies). Third, SHL technical KM competencies are adapted to deliver excellent service in all three KMSA designations based on their level of complexity. In addition, it recognizes prior learning in a way that facilitates KM career paths and supports continuous professional development.

3.1 Guiding Principles informing the framework

ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System explicitly refers to knowledge as an asset and resource and specifies expectations for its management. Knowledge managers are expected to identify and manage knowledge to ensure the functioning of their organisation's processes in order to achieve product and service conformity. ISO 30401:2018 Knowledge Management Systems includes guidelines for establishing, implementing, maintaining, reviewing and improving an effective management system for knowledge management in organisations. These two pieces of KM governance framework provide clarity on what need to be done hence the Knowledge Management Competence Framework adopts the 8 (eight) guiding principles of ISO 30402:2018 as they are relevant to the framework: Nature of knowledge, Iterative, Culture, Value, Focus, Adaptability, Shared understanding and Environment.

3.2 Developing the KMSA Competence Framework

3.2.1 KMSA Professional Designation and Competence Framework

Professional designation is a certification from a professional association that demonstrates that an individual has attained proven skills or education in a specific profession. Certification may include the right to use a title or letters after the licensee's name representing the designation awarded by the certifying professional body. KMSA Professional Designation Policy has outlined three (3) professional designations to which the KMSA Competence Framework expanded into five (5) Certified Master, Certified KM Specialist 1 and 2; and Certified KM Practitioner 1 and 2. The expansion is necessitated by the HR Managers' need to define the level of complexity and responsibility and proficiency level amongst others congruent to pay scale, allowing for career pathing and mobility within a similar rank as well as mapping a development path. In this regard, Proficiency level is the degree of aptitude to which an individual has mastered the criteria of a competency. The competency scale classifies observable and measurable behaviours (behavioural indicators). The proficiency target is the expected proficiency level for a certain role / level within the organization for each competency.

The KMSA competence, definitions are outlined below:

Type of Competency	Definitions
1. Behavioral Competencies	• Competencies which reflect the desired attributes across all occupational levels and roles, i.e. set of demonstrable behaviours required for each competency mapped per proficiency level. • This category will assess two key areas, i.e.: • Emotional intelligence or emotional quotient (EQ), and strengths of the individual in areas like leading self & others; social and cultural awareness, and relationship management • Professional conduct which includes people skills and professional ethics. **Source:** The Competency Framework for Financial Management of South African National Treasury (2010)
2. Core Competencies	• Competencies that are the foundation of and unique to Knowledge Management. Professional skills that all KMers in South Africa should exhibit. **Source:** The KM Life Cycle and the ISO 30401 Clauses 4.5 and 4.6 Detailed Core Competencies – refer to Annexure C
3. Technical /Functional Competencies	• Functional and technical competencies that provide for different levels of complexity described in accordance with the occupational levels. • Role-based skills required to succeed in a certain job –typically not applicable to all individuals in the organization. **Source:** Informed by SHL's "Great Eight" Competencies.

Table 1: Components of the Competency Framework

4 CORE COMPETENCE

The Core Competencies were developed in line with well-known KM Life cycles starting with a knowledge Audit. However, because different organisations emphasise different processes based on their KM strategy (i.e., exploitation vs exploration or personalization vs codification strategies) the framework used the ISO 30401 process naming convention- (dimensions of the KMS) to enforce standardization.

KM LIFE CYCLE (PLUS KNOWLEDGE AUDIT)

Knowledge Sharing
Clause 4.6. Knowledge Conveyance and transformation
1. Human Interactions | 2. Representations
3. Combinations | 4. Internationalization & Learning

Knowledge Organization
Retaining Current Knowledge

Knowledge Acquisition
Acquiring New Knowledge

Knowledge Application
Applying Current Knowledge

Knowledge Audit
Handling outdated and Invalid Knowledge

5. NEXT STEPS

- Review KM jobs in key recruitment platform, over the past 12 months, against the framework.
- Member organisations will be expected to review their job profiles and align or customised the same with the KMSA Competence Framework thereby beginning to create a KM Competence standard for South Africa.
- Agree on the batteries to be used for KM competence assessment in line with the framework
- Partner with private and public organization and interest group (e.g. Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA), South African Society of Archivists (SASA)), including tertiary institutions to develop a Standard KM Curriculum (KM Implementation guide) based on ISO 30401.
- Develop an ISO 30401 aligned assessment (audit) Tool.

The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you." — **B.B. King**

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Knowledge Management in the Public Service, an update from the Department of Public Service and Administration

Knowledge Management (KM) is a powerful tool to ensure an effective, efficient, professional, highly productive, and capable public service. It affords the opportunities and platforms to deal strategically with the challenges presented by the knowledge economy. Sound decisions and effective action rely on having the right knowledge in the right place at the right time, in the right context.

The major challenges facing public service stem primarily from the dynamic and continuous nature of service delivery. The management and leverage of knowledge for sharing and learning in government can enable better planning and decision-making, leading to improved and innovative service delivery. Government institutions are learning organizations, therefore, the empowerment of public servants with operational knowledge is key in driving effective and efficient service delivery.

The Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) National Knowledge Management Strategy Framework (NKMSF) was approved in 2019 to facilitate and define a standardized way for government departments across the spheres to identify, source, store access, and manage knowledge. As well as providing conceptual clarity and leadership that will allow public service institutions to implement KM successfully. In 2011, the first draft of the document was sent to practitioners for consultation. In ensuring that the strategy development is in line with the needs of the Public Service, a task team composed of government departments was formed. This task team assisted with the review of the draft documents. The document was consulted widely with KM practitioners through the Public Service in KM Forum, the KM standing committee within the GITOC Council as well as some of the HoD forums in the provinces. In an attempt to facilitate consultation on the framework, presentations and workshops were shared during the KM Forum meetings held nationally between 2019-2022.

The DPSA rolled out a KM Maturity Assessment (KMMA) in 2018, as part of strategy implementation in order to determine the current state of KM within the various public sector organisations. The KMMA's purpose was to determine the state of KM within the various public service organizations measured in seven dimensions namely, Leadership & Governance; Business Alignment; People & Culture; Technology; Knowledge Processes; Learning & Innovation; as well as Monitoring & Evaluation. Analysis of the various departmental submissions also served to identify critical areas within the NKMSF that would need to be strengthened and developed through guidelines and capacity building. The results of the Assessment revealed, among others:

a. The need for leadership support for the effective implementation of KM in the public service. Both in terms of senior management championing of the KM function and in terms of provision of resources for KM programs.
b. Government departments are failing to acknowledge the risk of loss of critical knowledge for informed decision-making.
c. The validation showed that the location of the KM function in the organizational structure plays a significant role in ensuring that the mainstreaming of KM processes and initiatives are effectively embedded in the department's standard operating procedures.
d. The organizational culture has a significant impact on knowledge sharing.

"Wisdom is not a product of schooling but of the lifelong attempt to acquire it." — *Albert Einstein*

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e. Senior management participation enhances the quality of knowledge shared whilst also setting an example to employees. As a result, knowledge-sharing forums are poorly attended and are not regarded as a critical activity for officials to participate in.

f. The findings confirmed the need for government technology to support knowledge transfer, collaboration, and learning over and above the communications function. The available technology is not effectively utilized for knowledge storing or sharing, mostly due to the lack of the necessary training and support for end-users.

g. Most departments do not have dedicated KM systems for storage and collaboration due to a lack of financial resources.

h. The other challenge identified is the assignment of the KM function to officials who have no training or experience in implementing knowledge management and the need for ongoing training and development to enable them to become more accomplished in knowledge management

i. Informal learning is not recognized as a key aspect of professional development resulting in less, time and resources are not allocated to learning opportunities.

j. The indicators and measurements for the true impact of KM on departmental performance require much more investigation and standardisation.

This process also assisted in gathering lessons learned that could be shared across the public service and highlighting pockets of excellence on KM practice.

A colloquium was held in 2020 with the aim to provide a platform for knowledge management practitioners within the public sector to discuss their work and to recommend how government can support all public servants to apply KM principles in their day-to-day operations. This was an opportunity to promote collaboration amongst government knowledge workers towards driving a knowledgeable economy. The DPSA KM program has identified the need for the development of a KM Strategy assessment (KM Audit) guide which has to provide guidance on how a strategy assessment (or audit) should be conducted within the public service, as well as share proposed methodologies and templates to be used by the designated KM official.

Furthermore, the DPSA is working to provide comparable practices for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of KM within the public service. Towards this aim, the DPSA has requested departments in the Public Service to submit approved three-year KM implementation plans to the DPSA in June 2022. These plans will be used for ongoing monitoring and analysis to assist the DPSA in collaboration with the Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation to identify indicators for KM performance that can be incorporated into the performance measurement of governance in the Public Service. These indicators will also be aligned with the ISO Standard 30401 to ensure that the public sector performance can be matched to KM performance in the private and academic sectors.

"In the end we retain from our studies only that which we practically apply."
— *Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe*

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MS PATRICIA MWEENE LUMBA

Tell us about you and your work?

Hello, my name is Patricia Lumba from Zambia, and currently working as a Senior Knowledge Management Officer with the African Union InterAfrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR). My background is a Bachelor's Degree in Information Science from Loughborough University, the United Kingdom, followed by a Masters in Philosophy in Information and Library Studies from the University of Cape Town, SA. My first jobs involved a lot of HTML coding and database work, followed by a blend of positions relating to Partnership Management associated with Information Communication Technologies for Development (ICT4D).

I moved from Information Science to Knowledge Management in 2005, when I took a module in Knowledge management during my honours programme at the University of Cape Town. I became interested in KM after "I could connect with the dots obtained from a previous job as Partnership Manager for a continental international network that I had worked for. That drove my enthusiasm to take an MPhil with the University of Cape Town. The MPhil dwelled solely on 'Knowledge Management in International Networked Organisations." Which opened up my understanding of issues surrounding partnerships and collaboration within the context of the Sustainable Development Goals and promoting processes that "collect and connect" for decision making.

What is the nature of your work? And how is knowledge management part of your work?

The African Union as a whole facilitates policy formulation and implementation processes across the continent, through stakeholder engagement. I work in a technical office of the African Union known as the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources. AU-IBAR is in charge of animal resources development. AU-IBAR's mandate is broad and looks at fisheries, aquaculture, blue economy, livestock, apiculture, and wildlife, plus cross-cutting sustainable development issues that impacts human and animal development – such as natural resources management, women and youth, agribusiness.
At AU-IBAR, I oversee the strategic development and implementation of processes aligned with knowledge management. My key role is fostering an atmosphere of continuous stakeholder collaboration and improving Knowledge Management in animal resources to facilitate informed and timely decision-making. So my work cuts across processes that promote data management, information curation, and decision making (knowledge). Knowledge management is an essential driver of the AU-IBAR's strategic objectives concerned with Human and Institutional Capacity Utilization & Strengthening; Promoting policy development & coherence for the development of Animal Resources in Africa; Coordination, Participation & the African Voice, and Active Private Sector Engagement.

What are some of your key achievements?

Being a relatively new position (I clocked 3 years this year), I have established new strategies, systems and tools from data to knowledge management, specifically with collaboration. Developing tools is one thing, and using them can be a journey. I have been part of a journey of learning and discovery. I have had to tell myself, "I am developing tools, not for Patricia, but for what the stakeholders want." The journey to developing and using systems is one of my key achievements.

What are some of the challenges you are facing with knowledge management?

The sector still presents many challenges regarding practical solutions. I have had to balance my textbook knowledge of knowledge management with "what works for people." With practice knowledge management in place, I believe that organisations can spread information and raise the level of expertise held by specific individuals or teams to improve the efficiency of their practices. People generally will not use tools if it is too much work. Each organisation and sector set-up presents unique challenges. As knowledge managers, we should be challenged to think outside the box by implementing proactive knowledge management programmes that incorporate multiple new processes. To achieve the goal of knowledge management, I think it is also essential for companies to enable and promote a culture of learning and development, creating an environment where stakeholders are encouraged to share information to better the collective workforce. The human element of knowledge management will always present challenges, which is why tacit knowledge management is complex.

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How is COVID-19 impacted your work/industry; and how industry responding to this challenge?

I am passionate about knowledge management systems and their ability to store and retrieve all sorts of information, including better collaboration and more efficient problem-solving. During the past three years at AU-IBAR, I have been able to introduce strategies and practical tools to support curation and collaboration. I found a very implicit culture. With the advent of COVID-19, there is significant acceptance of the role of IT and what it can do, especially across distances. But again, we are social beings, and IT can do only so much. Overall there has been some change in mind-shifts relating to integrating IT into processes.

What do you wish to learn and improve on Knowledge Management?

Believe it or not, I am still learning. I have been honoured to work in several sectors promoting various development goals and have learned the importance of being flexible enough to accommodate multiple stakeholders' needs. I would want to improve how stakeholder engagements can be improved through knowledge management. I am pursuing a PhD that is building a model to promote open knowledge sharing – chiefly based on the Cynefin model. I am studying the animal resources stakeholder environment and have been presented with many questions such as: how to make such processes work daily and in times of 'urgency'; how to address issues of inclusion, openness, power and empowerment, and how to address technical issues of information scaling between countries, at the regional level and global level, and information sharing between practitioners (mainly small-scale farmers) and policymakers can be strengthened.

**Any other information/ quote/motivation you wish to share.**

We are dealing with complexity as organisations are ever-evolving, expanding into new areas and defining their approach to doing business. Despite our uniqueness, being in a global village means finding ways of connecting, and adopting significant knowledge common to other stakeholders. Dave Snowden notes that "Everything is fragmented", which should challenge us to think of solutions. Which pockets of knowledge for stakeholders to utilise, and how and which they should be connecting with.

I believe that one of the best ways to stay ahead of the curve is to build organisations intelligently and flexibly, which means placing ourselves on a learning journey. And that is our niche as knowledge managers. At KMSA, the sharing and learning is priceless, and I see it as a platform that provides open minds in linking theoretical and practical elements of our profession. As members, we should capitalise on this.

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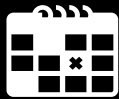
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National School of Government Knowledge Management Conference, 23 – 24 June 2022

The month of June 2022 saw the collaboration between the National School of Government and Knowledge Management South Africa (KMSA). KMSA is a society of Knowledge Management (KM) professionals that supports the research and development of KM practices both in the private and public sectors. This collaboration brought about the 2022 Knowledge Management Conference supported by the European Union (EU) as part of the Public Service Training and Capacity Building Programme. The Principal of the NSG, Prof Busani Ngcaweni, in his opening address defined KM as a system that should be adopted and practiced by all officials in an organisation. He further stated that KM Practitioners in the public sector carry the burden of advocating for good principles of information and KM. Thus, emphasising that KM practitioners must be assertive in carrying out this responsibility.

Dr Candice Borgtstein, representing KMSA delivered the organisation's message of support to the NSG. She highlighted the importance of partnerships and further noted that KMSA is open for engagement and building KM within South Africa. Various presentations were given during the Conference which highlighted the crucial role of KM in departments. Importantly, sharing the opportunities that KM practitioners should be ready to exploit and the risks that need to be mitigated. On day two of the Conference, amongst other discussions, insights on KM policy framework and a summary of all conference activities and way forward was done by Director: Knowledge Management, Mr Mmakwena Molala.

Prof Busani Ngcaweni,
Principal of NSG

Dr Candice Borgtstein,
KMSA

Mr Mmakwena Molala,
Director: Knowledge Management, NSG

MILE Knowledge Management Learning Exchange from 25th -27th May 2022

MILE hosted a hybrid Knowledge Management Learning Exchange from 25th -27th May 2022 at the Durban ICC and virtually on Zoom. The theme of the event was "Knowledge Management influencing operational efficiency and service delivery in the public sector." The objective of this Learning Exchange was to create awareness about KM and understand it's value in influencing operational efficiency and service delivery. The Learning Exchange featured informative presentations on topics such as: Status of KM, KM Innovation and Technology and KM in the Public Sector. During day two delegates participated in a Knowledge Café session on determining public sector challenges in terms of KM. Day three featured a panel discussion session facilitated by the South African Cities Network.

During his address, Prof Ngubane urged delegates to digest information and examine ways in which they can implement these ideas in their own context. He said, "Learning platforms are useless if it becomes a talk shop or a getaway from work. We must put knowledge management practice into action if we want to see improvements in business efficiencies. With facilitated discussion sessions and informative presentations, the event provided a platform to examine the status of KM and the general challenges organisations are experiencing. Some of the key challenges raised were the lack of leadership in driving KM in organisations, the lack of allocating budget for KM initiatives and the lack of enabling technology.

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