

**USFWS Mission Critical Senior Leader Competencies**

**Senior Leader**

*Decisiveness Partnering Accountability  
Influencing/Negotiating External Awareness  
Strategic Thinking Developing Others*

## **ACCOUNTABILITY (ECQ - RESULTS DRIVEN)**

### **Definition**

Assures that effective controls are both developed and maintained to ensure the integrity of the organization. Holds their self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities and can be relied upon to ensure that projects within their area of specific responsibility are completed in a timely manner and within budget. Monitors and evaluates plans while focusing on results and measuring attainment of outcomes.

### **Importance**

Accountability application ranges from individual responsibility for setting and meeting high standards for personal performance to the very definition of government workers as stewards of the commonwealth. It is the vehicle through which value is created for the public dollar, and public services are improved. The accountable individual remains in touch with the changing needs of those who are served, and earns their ongoing trust. Accountability is a mark of a mature worker and is dependent on each individual being held responsible for achieving agreed upon outcomes. It is essential to a well-functioning organization that each individual proactively take the responsibility to follow work through to completion, to provide both quality products/services and quality customer service, while meeting commitments in a timely manner and within budget. Government workers must also hold themselves accountable for protecting the privacy of employees, customers and members of the public. The leader is also accountable for the results of their team.

### **How do Senior Leaders (GS-13/14) Demonstrate This Competency?**

Organizational success requires all employees be held accountable for achieving agreed upon outcomes so senior leaders must establish a positive performance culture throughout the organization and develop and maintain a strategic framework for accomplishing the tasks of the organization. They oversee the establishment, development, promulgation, monitoring, maintenance, and enforcement of an organization-wide performance management system and ensure that work priorities, performance standards, return on investment and time expended are consistent with the overall strategic direction. Senior leaders must work broadly both within the organization (division) and with stakeholders to create a shared vision which balances and reconciles interests. They must make sound decisions based on research, benchmarking, and evidence and never allow personal advantage or political pressure to dictate actions or decisions that work against the mission of the agency.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Establishes an environment for success.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generates and implements sound strategies to accomplish the goals of the Service.</li> <li>• Operates with personal integrity in all actions and decisions by not allowing personal advantage or political pressure to dictate actions or decisions.</li> <li>• Ensures that subordinates have the tools and resources necessary to accomplish their job.</li> <li>• Develops strategic plans to allocate resources in a way designed to achieve the Service mission.</li> <li>• Operates within established policies, regulations and laws.</li> <li>• Promotes innovation, efficiency and greater effectiveness of programs through the use of appropriate business tools.</li> <li>• Implements HR strategies that result in the hiring and development of high quality staff whose skills match the changing needs of the organization.</li> <li>• Leverages the resources with other public and private organizations when beneficial to the Service's mission.</li> </ul>
Takes responsibility for personal and organizational performance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursues excellence diligently.</li> <li>• Addresses performance issues.</li> <li>• Seeks feedback regarding performance.</li> <li>• Seeks self-development opportunities.</li> <li>• Ensures that employee performance plans focus on accountability for results.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Continually evaluates and improves policies and programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creates a shared vision.</li> <li>• Makes decisions using the best available information (ex. research, consultants, peers, cost data, etc.).</li> <li>• Reviews programs to ensure that they remain relevant, appropriate and effective.</li> <li>• Develops and utilizes information systems and processes to support ongoing review and evaluation.</li> <li>• Uses lessons learned to make program improvements.</li> <li>• Takes the initiative to share insights, information, effective program models and evaluation results with others.</li> <li>• Distinguishes clearly between failure of a policy or program itself vs. operational failures due to implementation and acts accordingly.</li> </ul>
Conscientiously assesses and manages risk.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes and supports risks that are ethical, legal, reasoned and commensurate with potential gain.</li> <li>• Assesses organizational risks.</li> <li>• Empowers others to experiment and take risks by establishing and communicating clear guidelines for others.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

There are numerous activities an employee may engage in that provide the opportunity to develop this competency at the Senior Leader (GS-13/14) level. These activities may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, details, shadow assignments, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. These activities provide the *opportunity* to develop for those dedicated to their individual growth as a leader. Specific examples of developmental opportunities for this competency include:

### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Participate on or lead an organizational review team.
- Participate in performance setting or goals setting for an organization.
- Lead workshops or seminars on projects, issues, and practices relevant to the organization.
- Ensure you know applicable policies and procedures. If in doubt, do research.
- Follow through with positive and negative rewards and consequences.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Work with OIG during a program PART review.
- Serve on an interview or application review panel for mid-level leader positions and competitive training opportunities.
- Take a 360-degree assessment tool as a way to receive feedback from others.
- Obtain relevant professional certifications.
- Actively seek out a mentor and/or coach.
- Stay current on best practices in your profession.
- Get actively involved in professional societies.
- Volunteer to fill in for your supervisor in an “acting” role when the opportunity exists.

#### *Training*

- Apply for the Service’s [Advanced Leadership Development Program \(ALDP\)](#).
- Attend training on the performance management system.
- Attend time management training and/or priority setting training.
- Stay current on ethics training.
- Take training at [The Federal Executive Institute and Management Development Centers](#) of the Office of Personnel Management.

## **DECISIVENESS (ECQ - RESULTS DRIVEN)**

### **Definition**

Exercises good judgment by making sound and well-informed decisions; perceives the impact and implications of decisions; makes effective and timely decisions, even when data are limited or solutions produce unpleasant consequences; is proactive and achievement oriented.

### **Importance**

As the pace, degree, and “unpredictability” of change escalates, sound, well-informed decisions that are made in a timely manner (often with incomplete data) and with a commitment to action are essential for satisfactory job performance at every level of the organization. Note that decisiveness reflects the skills essential to problem solving together with a resoluteness of character and a commitment to action, unless reliable and credible information arises that requires reevaluation of the decision.

### **How do Senior Leaders (GS-13/14) Demonstrate This Competency?**

Senior Leaders demonstrate decisiveness by identifying, developing and implementing policies and procedures that encourage decision-making and action orientation throughout the organization. They must balance analysis with action. They must identify and act promptly upon opportunities and threats to the organization while allocating resources necessary to achieve the organization’s mission/goals. They evaluate the potential and actual impact of decisions on subordinate managers, staff members, and external stakeholders. Senior Leaders must analyze situations and prepare scenarios for crisis situations that may occur within their sphere of influence to be able to lead decisively regardless of circumstances. To prepare themselves for crucial decisions, they must reflect on past actions and must lead an organization which gathers and analyses lessons learned. Senior Leaders must balance courage and wisdom.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Takes action and makes timely decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commits the organization to a course of action and provides the resources to accomplish it.</li> <li>• Thinks and acts quickly and logically even when there are no clear instructions.</li> <li>• Formulates objectives and strategies under pressure or in complex situations.</li> <li>• Thinks and acts quickly and effectively in crisis.</li> <li>• Responds flexibly when planned actions don't work.</li> <li>• Removes obstacles and overcomes resistance in order to achieve objectives.</li> </ul>
Possesses self awareness and confidence in one's decisions and actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates courage when making difficult decisions.</li> <li>• Makes decisions with the organization's best interest in mind, over personal preferences.</li> <li>• Actively seeks feedback on decisions.</li> <li>• Accepts responsibility for the consequences of own decisions.</li> <li>• Responds appropriately to questions and challenges about a decision by articulating the rationale for the decision.</li> </ul>
Takes reasonable and ethical risks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assesses the potential gain or loss associated with the risk.</li> <li>• Takes reasoned, educated and informed risks to achieve agency/organization goals.</li> <li>• Develops and implements contingency plans as necessary.</li> <li>• Empowers others to take risks, supports them when things go wrong and expects them to learn from setbacks and failures.</li> <li>• Seeks and implements outside the box thinking and creative solutions.</li> </ul>
Gains commitment of others on decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides background information regarding decisions to full range of stakeholders.</li> <li>• Confirms others' understanding of issues, options and actions, and solicits input as appropriate.</li> <li>• Influences others using formal and informal channels to gain support for decisions.</li> <li>• Develops and implements strategic communications plans.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

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### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Seek out opportunities to serve in “Acting” role for supervisor, and potentially in Senior Leader positions in other programs.
- Seek out leadership roles in community organizations (as coach, referee, etc.)
- Seek out a variety of experiences throughout your career (internal and external).
- Volunteer for an assignment outside of your technical expertise (outside your comfort zone).
- Volunteer to lead project or task force.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Facilitate meetings internally and externally to help groups get to a decision.
- Experiment with creative and “risky” solutions in your own program.
- Seek out a coach or other role model for advice.
- Meet with local political, NGOs, community and professional groups to build your network.
- Read the book “Getting to Yes, Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In” by Roger Fisher and William Ury and “Getting Past No, Negotiating Your Way from Confrontation to Cooperation” by William Ury.
- Reflect on whether you state as facts things that are really biases, opinions or assumptions.
- Study other decision makers such as Bill Gates and Winston Churchill. Pay attention to how they made decisions in their life and careers. Consider what things they did that you could apply to yourself.
- Reflect on whether you thoroughly define the problem and do enough analysis before making a decision.

#### *Training*

- Seek training in dealing with difficult people and difficult conversations.

- Take training on documenting/taking adverse personnel actions.
- Consider whether facilitation training would help you lead to better decisions.
- Take training on goal setting and establishing priorities.

## **DEVELOPING OTHERS (ECQ - LEADING PEOPLE)**

### **Definition**

Develops the ability of others to perform and contribute to the organization by providing ongoing feedback and by providing opportunities to learn through formal and informal methods.

### **Importance**

Employees play a critical role in the success and strategic agility of the Service. People will only achieve what they are truly capable of when they are supported by ongoing development initiatives, an organizational culture of learning and idea exchange, and leadership that takes the initiative to help others by providing opportunities, direction, support, and a positive role model. Developing others is the internal organizational expression of service motivation.

### **How do Senior Leaders (GS-13/14) Demonstrate This Competency?**

Senior leaders assess and identify talent and potential and foster these through a broad range of development strategies. They work with their employees to define developmental goals and expectations and link them to organization goals and objectives. They should assess the effectiveness of training and development initiatives and work with their employees to incorporate their new learning and skills. Senior Leaders design and implement knowledge management systems to transfer learning and share it across the organization.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Develops IDPs in concert with employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzes employees' skills and aspirations and work with employees to identify appropriate developmental activities.</li> <li>• Ensures that identified developmental activities address needed competencies and organizational needs.</li> <li>• Measures effectiveness of all training and development initiatives.</li> </ul>
Supports a "learning organization" culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies tools and techniques of knowledge management to capture explicit learning and share it widely across the organization.</li> <li>• Identifies and disseminates best practices from high-performing organizations with similar missions.</li> <li>• Helps the members of the organization learn from customers and stakeholders and to translate that learning into improved ways of performing.</li> <li>• Creates opportunities for employees to contribute their views in a risk-free environment to include innovative ideas and process improvements.</li> <li>• Supports knowledge sharing and the expression of new ideas.</li> <li>• Participates in setting expectations for learning.</li> </ul>
Uses effective coaching techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops and implements performance management systems to maximize employee talent and contributions.</li> <li>• Provides opportunities for employees to use newly learned skills.</li> <li>• Models expected behaviors.</li> <li>• Pushes down decision making to lower levels in order to develop talent when practical.</li> <li>• Recognizes and communicates contributions and progress towards goals.</li> <li>• Understands the strategic advantage of building on employee strengths and talents.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Mentors others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Counsels employees on the culture of the organization.</li><li>• Assists employees in developing networks.</li><li>• Explores career opportunities with employees.</li><li>• Helps employees identify their core values and aspirations.</li><li>• Serves as a “sounding board” to help others identify their options.</li></ul>

## Developmental Activities

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### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Volunteer to serve as a formal or informal mentor to a Service employee.
- Serve as a mentor in a community organization.
- Be a coach/leader for a community youth group (sports team coach, scout leader, church group leader, etc.)

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Find your own mentor or coach in or outside of the organization.
- Focus effort and time on one of your own employees who needs guidance and support.
- Subscribe to newsletters about successful organizations and business practices, such as Gallup.
- Actively participate in organizational “retreats” and volunteer to organize one.
- Volunteer to serve as an NCTC instructor for a training course.
- Conduct workshops/brown bag lunches – share your knowledge with others.
- Read books to expand your knowledge base.
- Develop good performance plans for all of your employees with measurable criteria.
- Become more knowledgeable about giving constructive feedback to others. Establish a buddy system so people can get continuing feedback.
- Give the people under your level the opportunity to have assignments outside of their functional area.
- Reflect on whether you are equitable in how challenging work assignments are parceled out in your organization.

### *Training*

- Take additional supervisory training if warranted.
- Take NCTC’s [“Coaching for Effective Performance”](#) LED6179 course.

- Participate in “brown bag seminars” and other informal learning opportunities.
- Facilitate teambuilding training for your work group.
- Consider taking a class on writing performance plans.
- Set aside quality time to spend discussing your employees goals and how they align with organizational goals.
- Apply for the Service’s [Advanced Leadership Development Program \(ALDP\)](#).

## **EXTERNAL AWARENESS (ECQ - LEADING CHANGE)**

### **Definition**

Identifies and keeps up-to-date on key national and international policies and economic, political, environmental, and social trends that affect the organization. Understands near-term and long-range plans and determines how to best be positioned to be an effective advocate for the Service's mission for the public in government and the environmental community.

### **Importance**

Successful organizations look beyond their organizational boundaries as part of the strategic planning and management process. They understand the internal and external environments they work within and develop strategies accordingly. It is a systems oriented approach to thinking and to strategy that is essential to collaboration, public service and complex problem solving in the USFWS.

### **How do Senior Leaders (GS-13/14) Demonstrate This Competency?**

Senior Leaders must monitor and analyze national and international environmental, social, political, technological, and economic trends. They synthesize and apply the information to optimize performance, organize resources, and address threats to the Service's mission. They understand the increasing interdependence of federal, state, local agencies, private entities, NGOs, and international organizations. They identify information and best practices to develop, adopt and implement policies and procedures to improve performance. Senior leaders recognize the possible impact of national and international events, issues and crises on the Service's mission; assess the organization's capability to meet current and future requirements; and develop organizational plans to meet the requirements. They must recognize and respect the perspective of others and they must be politically adept and build alliances among key stakeholders and use a systems approach to organizations (including the Congress) that will be involved in achieving their strategic goals.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Understands the Federal Government, the Department, the Service, the relevant laws, regulations, policies and procedures that affect the organization, and the systems within the agency including its overall mission and role, and the major functions, programs, and processes within the Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognizes the possible impact of international events and global issues of environment and economy on U.S. society, the Government, and the agency.</li> <li>• Identifies the implications of political, environmental, economic and social changes.</li> <li>• Identifies the context for policy implementation based on external factors.</li> <li>• Recognizes the increasing interdependence of federal, non-federal, public, NGO, and international organizations and accounts for the relevant organizations in the development of plans and policies.</li> <li>• Works with stakeholders, partners, and related organizations to coordinate policy decisions, address problems and share knowledge and ensures Agency and employee participation in such networks.</li> <li>• Builds mission related capacity across programs and agencies, with NGOs, and international organizations to address problems effectively--in a sustained, respectful, and articulated manner rather than stove piped fashion.</li> <li>• Is politically adroit in addressing, informing, and negotiating buy-in from all key stakeholders.</li> </ul>
<p>Scans the domestic and international political, social, technological, economic and demographic environments to identify trends that may affect their organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitors political, economic and social trends that may affect the organization.</li> <li>• Uses participative and empowering collective inquiry, bringing together full representation of key stakeholders in planning and decision discussions.</li> <li>• Utilizes knowledge systems to gather current, accurate information and relevant perspectives.</li> <li>• Identifies stakeholders, including Congress, which will be involved in achieving organizational, Service, and Departmental goals and incorporates their interests into strategic planning.</li> <li>• Promotes an informed, active and dynamic customer focus throughout the organization that is proactive, widely participative, and interactive.</li> <li>• Solicits, understands, and anticipates the changing needs and expectations of stakeholders and remains alert to opportunities to serve constituents better.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Bases plans, decisions, and strategies on an understanding of how the internal and external environments influence and are influenced by these decisions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops, communicates and implements an organizational strategy that is based on accurate, current information which reflects a holistic understanding of the relevant issues and those affected by them.</li> <li>• Considers external issues affecting the organization when making program decisions.</li> <li>• Anticipates the broader consequences of one's actions to include second order effects and beyond.</li> <li>• Adapts strategic responses and tactics to fit fluid circumstances.</li> <li>• Translates Congressional and other stakeholder mandates into effective strategies and achievable programs of action.</li> <li>• Understands functional boundaries as arbitrary definitions that can outlive their usefulness and works to transcend those boundaries.</li> <li>• Crafts responsive, sustainable policy through networks, critical stakeholder groups and other outside constituencies.</li> <li>• Shifts strategies and tactics as resources and priorities change.</li> <li>• Organizes resources and activities to focus on long-term problems and opportunities.</li> <li>• Influences the decision making processes so that policies, programs and other developments are informed, customer driven, and considered within the broad political framework.</li> <li>• Evaluates employee and organizational skills and strengths to identify organizational capability to meet current and future requirements.</li> <li>• Develops integrated solutions crossing traditional boundaries, fostering consistency and cooperation.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Establishes a learning organization which uses partnering, knowledge management, benchmarking, and other means of soliciting, monitoring and organizing diverse insights in order to respond quickly and well to external changes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Researches, identifies, adopts, and implements best practices to increase organizational effectiveness.</li> <li>• Establishes systems to share information and insights to build strategic awareness throughout the organization.</li> <li>• Encourages communities of practice to include external organizations and individuals.</li> <li>• Develops systems to gather and share information broadly so that the organization is informed, recognizes success, shares feedback, and remains alert to change and opportunity.</li> <li>• Works within a broad network to understand interrelated issues and work towards common goals and to learn from common experience.</li> <li>• Identifies the underlying needs of critical stakeholders, beyond the obvious or those expressed initially by the stakeholders themselves.</li> <li>• Approaches problems from multiple perspectives.</li> <li>• Routinely exchanges information with stakeholders and customers.</li> <li>• Seeks opportunities to share information across functional boundaries.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

There are numerous activities an employee may engage in that provide the opportunity to develop this competency at the Senior Leader (GS-13/14) level. These activities may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, details, shadow assignments, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. These activities provide the *opportunity* to develop for those dedicated to their individual growth as a leader. Specific examples of developmental opportunities for this competency include:

### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Seek out a detail in External Affairs, WO, CITES or International Affairs in the Service.
- Explore opportunities for cross program/agency/NGO details.
- Volunteer to work on cross program and multi-agency projects.
- Perform details at complex stations with multi-disciplinary issues involving multiple stakeholders.
- Serve on external committees as opportunities arise.
- Consider details from WO to the field or field to WO to learn the perspective of each other.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Observe and conduct interviews with those who do well in external awareness.
- Correspond with leaders who exhibit external awareness and/or work in that capacity.
- Develop external relationships/networks with other organizations such as National Geographic, Wildlife Conservation Society, etc.
- Read business books, national newspapers, Federal News, Govt. Executive, political/legislative publications to broaden your perspective.
- Subscribe to Government Executive magazine and appropriate online periodicals.
- Keep abreast of legislation, policies, political trends and climate.
- Shadow an AD/RD in the Service.
- Obtain membership in an organization and attend their meetings such as your local Chamber of Commerce, NGO, Convention and Visitor's Bureau or [Toastmasters](#) club.

*Training*

- Take other training opportunities offered by the Division of Education Outreach at NCTC such as [Working with the News Media](#) OUT8181, Congressional Operations Seminar, [Congress and the Field Office](#) OUT8191, [Conservation Partnerships in Practice](#) OUT8118.
- Take training in ethics and values.

## **INFLUENCING AND NEGOTIATING (ECQ - BUILDING COALITIONS AND COMMUNICATION)**

### **Definition**

Persuades others; builds consensus through collaboration; gains cooperation from others to obtain information and accomplish goals; facilitates “win-win” situations; maximizes use of resources within applicable regulatory limits.

### **Importance**

The essence of successful leadership is embodied in the paired competency of influencing and negotiating which are integral to achieving individual, team, workgroup, and organizational performance at levels beyond those met merely through regulation, compliance, and enforcement. Individuals at all levels with influence skills that include interpersonal skills, facile oral and written communication skills, empathic sensitivity, and technical credibility, exhibit personal authority that is not dependent solely on formal authority. This personal authority enables them to lead change in good times or in times of turmoil. The ability to negotiate facilitates dialog, and thus enhances one’s ability to gain cooperation, to develop optimal solutions, to work better with others who may be seen as “difficult,” and to resolve issues that impede organizational or personal success. Through these tools, senior leaders can greatly enhance their effectiveness by building and working through a variety of innovative partnerships.

### **How do Senior Leaders (GS-13/14) Demonstrate This Competency?**

Senior Leaders know and use diverse methods to persuade and influence others to achieve organizational results and to adopt change. They know and communicate internal and external factors and interdependencies that have an impact on policy setting and the work of the organization. Senior Leaders develop effective business cases for change and new initiatives and utilize a variety of communication approaches and technology (email, radio, television, video conferencing, etc.) to present, repeat and reinforce the message. They collaborate and negotiate with external stakeholders, staff, other managers, and superiors to develop lasting agreements that involve broad components of the organization and build an environment (physical, virtual and relational) designed to positively influence all stakeholders to contribute their best.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Uses oral and written communication and non-verbal skills to influence behaviors or perceptions constructively.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively shapes the debate and influences how an issue and potential solutions are perceived by others.</li> <li>• Builds support for a shared vision using facts, reason and persuasion.</li> <li>• Seeks face-to-face communication.</li> <li>• Knows and communicates internal and external factors and interdependencies that have an impact on policy setting and the work of the organization.</li> <li>• Inspires trust and commitment among employees and stakeholders by being honestly engaged, personable, visible and recognizable.</li> <li>• Adapts arguments and presentations to the specific interests of the audience.</li> <li>• Distills the vision and new ideas into focused messages that can inspire and guide others in times of change.</li> <li>• Creates a sense of energy and importance around change and motivates employees to join the change effort.</li> <li>• Develops and communicates effective business cases for change and new initiatives that transcend current practices.</li> <li>• Helps all stakeholders understand the Service's priorities and can translate these into organizational plans and actions.</li> <li>• Selects and uses a variety of media with an understanding of which media will best communicate or reinforce the message.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Builds and maintains strong relationships based on confidence and trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Builds and strengthens enduring bases of support.</li> <li>• Gains and develops rapport with higher-level leadership by demonstrating competence, courage, honesty and respect.</li> <li>• Seeks to understand the interests of stakeholders.</li> <li>• Communicates with customers, employees and other key stakeholders with openness and transparency.</li> <li>• Engages broadly in consultation that is participatory and empowering.</li> <li>• Understands the dynamics between elected officials and public servants and uses this knowledge strategically and with tact to remove obstacles to understanding and mission accomplishment.</li> <li>• Recognizes the role of indirect influence and understands how secondary and tertiary relationships may help or hinder the impact of their message.</li> <li>• Builds, promotes and uses coalitions and partnerships.</li> <li>• Identifies power bases and influences them appropriately to guide events and outcomes.</li> <li>• Involves potential opponents in discussions to provide accurate information, build consensus, broaden access to other groups, and/or develop collaborative solutions.</li> </ul>
Manages the internal environment to achieve desired behaviors and outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicates evolving conditions upward and makes their implications for the health of the organization clear.</li> <li>• Leads collaboratively to gain buy-in and commitment from employees and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Empowers others to get things done.</li> <li>• Uses legitimate authority to achieve compliance when other methods of influence are unsuccessful.</li> <li>• Creates a climate that broadly encourages employees to take new or innovative approaches, providing them a safety net in case of “responsible” failure, and treating them as useful lessons.</li> <li>• Fosters a climate that allows subordinates to challenge ideas or processes and develop alternative approaches.</li> <li>• Develops subordinates to enable delegated decision making authority.</li> <li>• Keeps internal stakeholders informed of progress towards goals and sustains support and motivation.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Implements the theory and practice of negotiation; especially to find common ground and win-win solutions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leads complex and/or contentious multi-party negotiations on issues that may have impact on Regional or program level issues or policies.</li> <li>• Develops and communicates negotiating strategies that recognize the needs and perceptions of key stakeholders, balance and weigh competing interests effectively, and take into account Regional, Program, and/or Service level implications of successful or non-successful negotiations.</li> <li>• Leads negotiating teams and provides opportunities for less experienced members of the team to have substantial roles to build negotiating capacity in the organization.</li> <li>• Brings expertise into the negotiating process (i.e., facilitator, subject matter experts, legal experts, etc.) when required to achieve outcomes beneficial to the Service.</li> <li>• Employs a full range of negotiation techniques from win-win to no deal with win-win as the preferred outcome.</li> <li>• Remains objective.</li> <li>• Uses <u>interests</u> instead of <u>positions</u> to evaluate strategies and solutions.</li> <li>• Understands and uses active listening, effective verbal communication, personal integrity, flexibility, emotional control, and analysis and evaluation skills in negotiations.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

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### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Work on joint labor-management groups to influence outcomes and effectively contribute to collective bargaining agreement process.
- Serve on a conflict resolution team.
- Audit a multi-party negotiation.
- Serve on a multi-program/agency project team.
- Volunteer to lead a public meeting/hearing.
- Detail to the solicitors office, Washington, or Capitol Hill.
- Detail to WO Budget office during budget formulation and passback.
- Participate on a team developing Service or Departmental policy.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Negotiate effectively for services and/or equipment with external sources.
- Interview/shadow experienced negotiators.
- Volunteer to shadow an ARD.
- Read the book “Getting to Yes, Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In” by Roger Fisher and William Ury and “Getting Past No, Negotiating Your Way from Confrontation to Cooperation” by William Ury.
- Follow the progress of a state or Federal legislative proposal.
- Reflect on whether self development in interpersonal skills is warranted.

#### *Training*

- Consider attending team/group dynamics training at NCTC or from a private vendor.
- Consider attending the following NCTC courses; Interest-Based Negotiations OUT8121, Applying Collaboration to Environmental Issues, and [Effective Facilitation](#) LED5122.

## **PARTNERING (ECQ - BUILDING COALITIONS & COMMUNICATIONS)**

### **Definition**

Develops networks and builds alliances, engages in cross-functional activities, collaborates across boundaries, and finds common ground with a widening range of stakeholders. Utilizes contacts to build and strengthen internal support bases.

### **Importance**

Collaboration is a critical dimension of modern leadership in public service today. Highly effective government today requires partnerships, coalitions, and other collaborative, participative approaches. Leaders must be ready to seek out and work with others to make interdependent decisions and implement solutions based on an understanding of the issues and resources that partnering with others brings. The Service must move away from being rule-based and be guided by principles and outcomes. This will require leaders who involve others, manage change, and communicate an overarching mission and common purpose. Partnering provides the opportunity to build an effective community between the Service and its stakeholders, reduce or avoid duplications, establish a team culture, and deliver superior service.

### **How do Senior Leaders (GS-13/14) Demonstrate This Competency?**

Senior Leaders have primary responsibility for fostering a culture that understands the organization's goals and is willing to work collaboratively towards the achievement of those goals. They establish communications processes within the organization to enable greater recognition of common issues. They seek out and initiate opportunities to achieve organizational goals through partnering and collaboration, utilizing knowledge management and networking systems while contributing to the establishment and implementation of a management structure that supports partnerships. Senior Leaders emphasize developmental opportunities for staff to enable them to identify, develop, and employ a broad range of processes and tools. They foster benchmarking as a means of addressing continual improvement; explore collaborative possibilities that are innovative in type and scope; network with a wide range of stakeholders to identify and pursue alliances; and ensure evaluation processes measure the success of partnership efforts.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Facilitates the establishment and health of a partnering culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fosters a culture that understands goals in the broader context, and which works collaboratively towards the achievement of those goals.</li> <li>• Minimizes stove-piping and other sources of disruptive competition among work groups.</li> <li>• Designs and implements knowledge management and networking systems both within the organization and among relevant discipline and managerial networks.</li> <li>• Emphasizes developmental opportunities for staff which enable them to broaden their abilities to seek out, develop and employ a broad range of processes and tools.</li> <li>• Establishes communications processes within the organization which enable greater recognition of common issues, and which foster the organization's ability to address these collaboratively.</li> <li>• Builds trust within and across partnerships.</li> <li>• Treats partners fairly.</li> <li>• Helps others focus on ideas, processes, interests and outcomes instead of personalities and positions to minimize conflict and its inherent win/lose focus.</li> <li>• Maintains agreed upon confidentiality.</li> </ul>
Creates and communicates strategic opportunities to partner with others towards the achievement of common goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops integrated, pragmatic, process solutions which cross traditional department boundaries and which foster agency-wide and "enterprise-wide" consistency and cooperation.</li> <li>• Establishes collaborative partnerships to enhance organizational capacity to reach mission goals.</li> <li>• Strategically plans to advance seamless and inter-departmental approaches to services and products.</li> <li>• Establishes partnerships to maximize resource availability and organizational performance.</li> <li>• Explores collaborative possibilities that are innovative in type and scope.</li> <li>• Manages change strategically through many others.</li> <li>• Promotes cooperation across functions/departments to achieve objectives.</li> <li>• Is alert to opportunities to maximize resources, improve services, and avoid unnecessary duplication through collaborative and partnership efforts.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Manages existing partnerships; monitoring achievements and progress.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes to the establishment and implementation of a management structure for partnerships, including structures and accountability across the partnership itself, as well as to regulate the relationship between the partnership and the home agency.</li> <li>• Understands, practices and promotes virtual teamwork and the effective use of social networks.</li> <li>• Defines clearly and comprehensively partners' roles and responsibilities, purpose, expected outputs, and realistic performance measures.</li> <li>• Monitors partnerships for value added and analyses successes and failures in order to build on lessons learned.</li> <li>• Establishes procedural ground rules regarding how decisions will be made, how information will be distributed, and the role of representatives.</li> <li>• Contributes resources equitably.</li> <li>• Ensures rigorous evaluation processes to measure the success of partnership efforts by comparing results with expectations and analyses how partnerships can be improved.</li> <li>• Ensures that all those affected by the work of the partnership are involved.</li> <li>• Understands and uses formal, written agreements to outline expectations among the partners.</li> <li>• Contributes real resources to the collaborative effort.</li> <li>• Uses tools that clearly communicate the project status and needs among all partners and which reach all key decision makers.</li> <li>• Adopts a common set of standards for seamless systems, data and business process integration.</li> <li>• Finds flexibility within the rules to support innovative collaborative partnerships within and outside of the agency.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

There are numerous activities an employee may engage in that provide the opportunity to develop this competency at the Senior Leader (GS-13/14) level. These activities may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, details, shadow assignments, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. These activities provide the *opportunity* to develop for those dedicated to their individual growth as a leader. Specific examples of developmental opportunities for this competency include:

### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Lead multi-agency teams and cross-program activities.
- Lead a national scale committee/project.
- Develop a cross-program Regional level policy.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Shadow another Service leader to see how they find and develop their partnership efforts.
- Develop a grant proposal for an innovative partnership effort.
- Identify a resource issue and the people who have a stake in it, and work to develop that partnership.
- Identify a successful partnership and learn from their approach and the participants.
- Learn about other agencies/programs by doing some individual research to see if there are partnering opportunities.
- Learn about the different type of funding mechanisms/partnership agreements available to you.
- Read books on team leadership and establishing partnerships.
- Shadow someone who is considered a partnership champion.
- Identify a resource issue and the stakeholders to see if partnership opportunities exist for the Service.
- Learn about different financial agreements available for funding partnerships.
- Gain experience writing effective project proposals involving multiple partners.

### *Training*

- Apply to the Service's [Advanced Leadership Development Program \(ALDP\)](#).
- Learn how to write a grant proposal by attending [Grant Writing in Conservation](#) OUT8116.

- Consider partnership courses at NCTC such as Building Partnerships Between Gateway Communities and Public Lands (ITV Workshop) and [Conservation Partnerships](#) OUT8110.
- Attend training on team leadership/team building from NCTC or from a private vendor.
- Attend training on interpersonal relationships and communication at NCTC or from a private vendor.
- Attend training on political savvy.

## **STRATEGIC THINKING (ECQ - LEADING CHANGE)**

### **Definition**

Formulates effective strategies consistent with the mission, vision and priorities of the Service in the global environment. Examines policy issues and strategic planning with a long-term perspective. Determines objectives and sets priorities while anticipating potential threats or opportunities.

### **Importance**

Strategic Thinking is the conceptual process that underlies two of the elements most critical for success in any organization—strategic planning and strategic management. It is the apex of managerial and executive thinking and is simultaneously considered both the most difficult and most important challenge for any public or private organization and its leaders. It is imperative that the senior leadership of the Service continually scan the environment and engage in strategic thinking to develop a compelling strategy for the organization, and motivate all within the organization to think strategically, aligning plans and policies to support and promote the Service and organizational mission, vision and priorities.

### **How do Senior Leaders (GS-13/14) Demonstrate This Competency?**

Senior Leaders assist in long-range planning to enhance organizational performance and survival, involving internal stakeholders in the planning process for the organizational unit. They employ systems thinking, collaboration and an integrated approach to problem solving and develop, align and communicate unit strategies to accomplish the organization's goals. Senior Leaders prioritize outcomes and prepare unit goals including staffing and resource requirements. They establish partnerships to maximize resource availability, organizational performance, and share best practices. They educate and support supervisors' understanding and success in the achievement of plans, recognize the system-wide outcomes of program implementation, and accept and support changing strategy, structure and staffing as needed to support organizational realities.

## Elements of the Competency and Distinguishing Behaviors

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
Utilizes an understanding of the organization, its mission, its customers and its evolving environmental realities to develop strategies to accomplish organizational goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goes beyond assumptions/“givens” in assessing issues and changing circumstances.</li> <li>• Seeks, identifies and accounts for perspectives and issues outside of their program, the Service and/or the Federal government in developing organizational strategies.</li> <li>• Enhances their own and organizational knowledge of the broad environmental context of their work and mission.</li> <li>• Transcends functional and organizational boundaries to enhance long-term performance, efficiency, and sustainability.</li> <li>• Communicates the customer focus throughout the organization.</li> </ul>
Plans and works towards long-term success, affordability and sustainability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employs systems thinking and other analytical forecasting tools to assess risk and prioritize among options, programs and initiatives.</li> <li>• Builds long-term strategic plans with specific goals, strategic objectives, actions, and performance measures that are driven by mission requirements.</li> <li>• Implements a human capital management system that hires, develops and trains the right people to achieve long-term strategies.</li> <li>• Leads development of knowledge management systems to facilitate knowledge creation, sharing, and reuse.</li> <li>• Uses a metrics based approach to assess strategy effectiveness and identify proactive measures to adapt organizational initiatives to overcome obstacles.</li> <li>• Seeks long-term cost-reduction or efficiency opportunities that do not compromise responsiveness and quality.</li> <li>• Prepares organizational unit goals including staffing and resource requirements that are in alignment with long term goals.</li> <li>• Ensures employees have adequate training in analytical processes necessary to forecast long-term outcomes and manage risk.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Aligns and integrates efforts, core processes, activities, and resources with the Service's mission, long term strategies and priorities to maximize effectiveness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plans the implementation and management of the organization's strategic plan.</li> <li>• Communicates the interrelationships within the Service and organizational missions and forges connections amongst programs and work units.</li> <li>• Establishes partnerships to maximize resource availability and organizational performance.</li> <li>• Develops integrated, pragmatic, process-oriented solutions that cross traditional boundaries and foster consistency and cooperation across those boundaries.</li> <li>• Builds consensus on long-term plans and strategy with internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>• Plans for and invests in training and other developmental activities for self and others that enhance the abilities of the organization to meet strategic goals.</li> <li>• Involves internal and external stakeholders in the planning process which translates the overall strategic plan into specific goals and actions for the organization.</li> </ul>
<p>Realigns resources, processes and approaches swiftly and proactively to account for the evolving realities of global, environmental technological, and workforce change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remains alert to opportunities to enhance organizational effectiveness and acts, even if some risk is involved.</li> <li>• Establishes mechanisms for the exchange of ideas and information.</li> <li>• Promotes organizational involvement in continuous improvement by establishing mechanisms that provide continuing feedback on processes and services.</li> <li>• Empowers informed decision makers on all levels to make effective, timely decisions.</li> <li>• Realigns processes and resources to accommodate changes in the organization's strategic plan.</li> </ul>

Element	Distinguishing Behaviors
<p>Establishes and values the importance of objectives and performance measures which help achieve Service goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops and implements budget and performance integration strategies.</li> <li>• Builds support for organizational change and restructures assets to align with identified priorities and to improve organizational effectiveness.</li> <li>• Develops and uses criteria for determining the optimal use of available resources based on mission priorities.</li> <li>• Implements employee performance management systems to align employee performance with the strategic plan and performance targets.</li> <li>• Matches rewards for performance with successful achievement of strategic goals.</li> </ul>
<p>Communicates Service and organizational strategy to all stakeholders.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works with internal and external stakeholders to gain support for identified changes and leverages their support with other affected or interested parties.</li> <li>• Describes and clearly communicates the urgency and importance of the organization's strategy and performance objectives throughout the organization and to external stakeholders.</li> <li>• Communicates how the organization's and employees' work fits into the bigger picture.</li> <li>• Develops, communicates, and implements effective change strategies.</li> <li>• Informs the organization and employees of progress towards goals on a routine basis and sustains employee motivation to achieve the goals.</li> </ul>

## Developmental Activities

There are numerous activities an employee may engage in that provide the opportunity to develop this competency at the Senior Leader (GS-13/14) level. These activities may include, but are not limited to, on-the-job experience, details, shadow assignments, participating in training as a leader or participant and other life experiences. These activities provide the *opportunity* to develop for those dedicated to their individual growth as a leader. Specific examples of developmental opportunities for this competency include:

### *Primary Developmental Activities*

- Consider detail assignments at a higher level than you currently occupy.
- Consider a detail in the WO Budget Office during budget planning times.
- Volunteer to be an officer in a community group.
- Volunteer to work on a programmatic strategic plan.
- Consider a detail in a WO or Regional program planning office.
- Consider a detail in Congressional Legislative Affairs.
- Consider a detail in DOI or another federal bureau.

### *Supporting Developmental Activities*

#### *Experiential Developmental Details or Assignments*

- Interview or shadow a member of the Service or Department Directorate or a leader in another bureau.
- Read books to expand your knowledge base.
- Reflect on whether you have a broad enough perspective to pull together varying elements into a coherent strategic view.
- Are you curious? If not, why not?
- Read numerous strategic case studies in business publications and journals.
- Reflect on whether you are delegating enough day-to-day activities to others so that you could have more quality time to think strategically.
- Reflect on how your short term strategic plan affects the long term plan.

#### *Training*

- Apply for the [Advanced Leadership Development Plan](#) (ALDP).
- Take training on structured decision making and critical thinking/writing courses offered by NCTC.
- Take college courses on strategic management.
- Consider the [Center for Creative Leadership](#)'s course "Developing the Strategic Leader."