Streamlining professionalisation in public procurement: Romanian competency frameworks as a case study (Part B)

Șerban Filipon
*Department of Procurement Consulting, Integrate Investment,
Bucharest, Romania, and*

Violeta Simionescu
*Department of Teacher Training, Universitatea Tehnica de Constructii
Bucuresti, Bucharest, Romania and Integrate Investment, Bucharest, Romania*

Abstract

Abstract – **Purpose** – Competency frameworks can support public procurement capacity development and performance. However, literature on connecting professionalisation with national procurement contexts is limited. This paper aims to explain and conceptualise recent Romanian experience with developing bespoke competency frameworks at national level for public procurement that reflect the features of the Romanian public procurement system. The approach used could guide in broad-brush, mutatis mutandis, other (national) public procurement systems with comparable features, mainly those seeking a shift from a rather administrative function of public procurement towards a strategic function.

Design/methodology/approach – This case study reflects on the methodology used for analysing the Romanian public procurement environment in EU context to develop bespoke professionalisation instruments, and on ways to integrate competency management approaches in Romanian public procurement culture. That methodological mix has been mainly qualitative and constructionist, within an applied research approach. It combined desk research with empirical research and included legal research in this context.

Findings – A principled, methodological and pragmatic approach tailored to the procurement environment in question is essential for developing competency frameworks capable to resonate to and address the specific practical needs of that procurement system.

Social implications – Competency frameworks can uphold societal objectives through public procurement.

Originality/value – Using valuable insights into the development of the Romanian public procurement competency frameworks, the paper provides a conceptual framework for instilling competency management approaches to public procurement professional development where the latter is governed by a rather distinct, public administration, paradigm. This conceptual framework can guide other public procurement systems and stimulate further research.

Keywords Public procurement, Competency framework, Procurement personnel,
Competency management, Strategic function of public procurement, Professionalisation,
Education and training, Procurement context, Procurement research,
Public procurement law and policy, Romania, Eastern Europe

Paper type Research paper

This article is published in two parts.

Part A – which covered Section 1 and Section 2 to sub-section 2.3.2 – included the introduction to the article, and it then proceeded to describing and conceptualising the case study in respect of: the context of the Romanian public procurement system; competency management as an approach to addressing public procurement professionalisation; the development of the Romanian public procurement competency frameworks at national level in terms of the reasons for generating two such competency frameworks, the main elements involved, and adaptations needed in light of the administrative environment and constraints.

This Part B – which starts with sub-section 2.3.3 of Section 2, and includes Sections 3 and 4 – continues the description and conceptualisation of the case study by: addressing the methodology used for the development of the Romanian public procurement competency frameworks at national level, the principled approach used, as well as the structure and internal logic of the competency frameworks; then, the results are analysed and discussed in terms of uses and potential uses of the competency frameworks in domestic context, lessons learnt, and potential relevance of certain approaches outside Romania; finally, concluding remarks and recommendations are provided.

2. The case study (continued)

2.3 Development of Romanian competency frameworks at national level in public procurement: challenges, reasoning and solutions (continued)

2.3.3 Methodology mix. In part A of this article, we considered the multitude of issues involved in the effort to streamline professionalisation and capacity development in public procurement at national level. With so many complex matters to handle in the same exercise, an applied, qualitative and constructionist methodological approach in procurement management was used. The features of the methodology mix are documented in World Bank and NAPP (2021/06 c), mainly pp. 7–8 and 18–20 [adapted from van Maanen as quoted in Easterby-Smith *et al.* (2003, p. 85), and see also pp. 9–10 and 42 in the latter source].

A central objective was to obtain insights and nuances of public procurement policy and practice, regarded as a phenomenon at national level and in the European Union, because such knowledge forms the basis of intervention by way professionalisation instruments. But the methodology used aimed specifically at identifying solutions to specific *practical* problems, together with the beneficiaries of the project action. At the same time, the project context of the exercise has involved a dynamic use of a combination of research techniques and sources, permitting adaptation, as appropriate, to interim results or problems encountered, an efficient use of resources and the need to complete the action within a reasonable time limit. Reliability and validation of the exercise arose from correlating and/or juxtaposing multiple perspectives (sources, data collection instruments and interpretation techniques), as well as acceptance by the beneficiaries of the research results as incorporated in the solution or product developed: the competency frameworks.

The exercise thus has not involved fundamental research, but it did involve document, legal and empirical research, generating new knowledge capable of solving the problem tackled, i.e. the development of competency frameworks that truly respond to and address the specific Romanian public procurement context. Figure 1 below shows, in a simplified way, the overall methodology mix and preparation/validation route for the design and development of the competency frameworks.

It is noteworthy that while in legal research normative instruments tend to be analysed mainly in their capacity to generate rights and obligations upon the parties they apply to, the perspective is quite nuanced for developing competency frameworks. Yes, for the
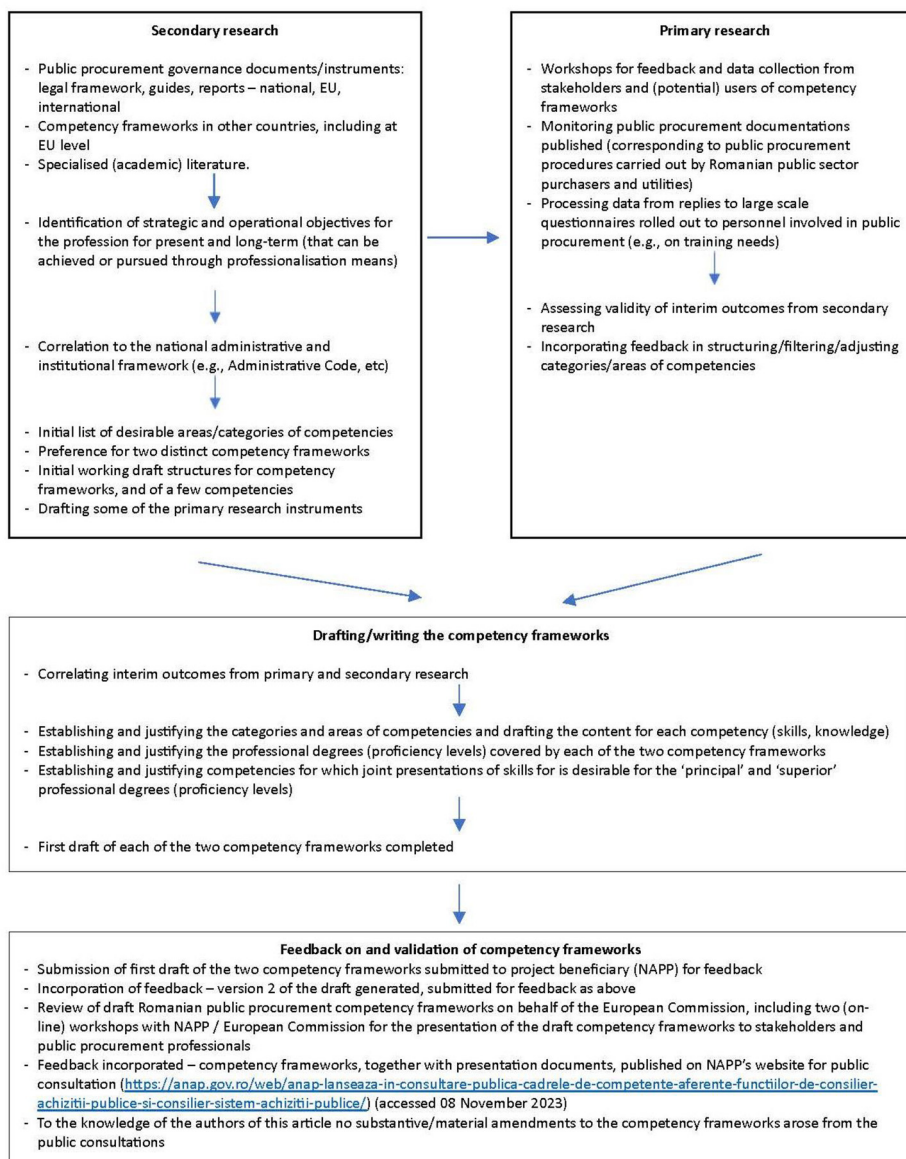
Secondary research

- Public procurement governance documents/instruments: legal framework, guides, reports – national, EU, international
- Competency frameworks in other countries, including at EU level
- Specialised (academic) literature.

- Identification of strategic and operational objectives for the profession for present and long-term (that can be achieved or pursued through professionalisation means)

- Correlation to the national administrative and institutional framework (e.g., Administrative Code, etc)

- Initial list of desirable areas/categories of competencies
- Preference for two distinct competency frameworks
- Initial working draft structures for competency frameworks, and of a few competencies
- Drafting some of the primary research instruments

Primary research

- Workshops for feedback and data collection from stakeholders and (potential) users of competency frameworks
- Monitoring public procurement documentations published (corresponding to public procurement procedures carried out by Romanian public sector purchasers and utilities)
- Processing data from replies to large scale questionnaires rolled out to personnel involved in public procurement (e.g., on training needs)

- Assessing validity of interim outcomes from secondary research
- Incorporating feedback in structuring/filtering/adjusting categories/areas of competencies

Drafting/writing the competency frameworks

- Correlating interim outcomes from primary and secondary research

- Establishing and justifying the categories and areas of competencies and drafting the content for each competency (skills, knowledge)
- Establishing and justifying the professional degrees (proficiency levels) covered by each of the two competency frameworks
- Establishing and justifying competencies for which joint presentations of skills for is desirable for the 'principal' and 'superior' professional degrees (proficiency levels)

- First draft of each of the two competency frameworks completed

Feedback on and validation of competency frameworks
- Submission of first draft of the two competency frameworks submitted to project beneficiary (NAPP) for feedback
- Incorporation of feedback – version 2 of the draft generated, submitted for feedback as above
- Review of draft Romanian public procurement competency frameworks on behalf of the European Commission, including two (on-line) workshops with NAPP / European Commission for the presentation of the draft competency frameworks to stakeholders and public procurement professionals
- Feedback incorporated – competency frameworks, together with presentation documents, published on NAPP's website for public consultation (https://anap.gov.ro/web/anap-lanseaza-in-consultare-publica-cadrele-de-competente-aferente-functiilor-de-consilier-achizitii-publice-si-consilier-sistem-achizitii-publice/) (accessed 08 November 2023)
- To the knowledge of the authors of this article no substantive/material amendments to the competency frameworks arose from the public consultations

Source: Created by authors; simplified presentation; information processed from World Bank and NAPP, 2021/06 c, pp. 11-19; and World Bank and NAPP, 2021b, pp. 12-17

Figure 1.
Methodology mix
and preparation/
validation route

preparation of the competency frameworks the procurement directives and relevant national laws and other legal instruments have been reviewed using legal interpretation techniques – literal, logical, systematic and/or teleological, as appropriate (e.g. Popa, 2002, pp. 236–249) – but surely law does not "regulate" competencies. Vice versa, procurement laws are not a direct consequence of procurement competencies. Instead, laws can encourage, impose or prohibit certain (professional) behaviour, from which some of the needed skills and knowledge can be *inferred* (see also World Bank and NAPP, 2021/06 c).

The contribution of the legal framework to the identification of needed competencies is essential but not singular. A competency framework is intended to outlive legislation changes, as well as to accommodate more than one sector of procurement regulation, e.g. public and utilities. From a competency perspective, the review of normative instruments has focused mainly on matters of principle, process and interpretation, rather than detailed legal technicalities. This calibration of legal research corresponds to contemplating a shift in public procurement professionalisation from mere compliance and focus on procedure, towards process and strategy (in addition to compliance). Also, the use of neutral procurement terminology has been sought to the extent possible, namely, mere concepts rather than specific legal terminology involving its *current* legal definition. This is also a key on how the competency frameworks should be read, even where the terminology (concepts) used overlap(s) with specific legal terms (see also World Bank and NAPP, 2020).

Beyond the relevant normative instruments, many other categories of documents were analysed that might be called "official orientation documents" (World Bank and NAPP, 2021/06 c; Integrate Investment, 2020, pp. 3–4 and pp. 23–24) in public procurement or other relevant areas, at national, EU or international level (e.g. OECD, 2015, 2018, 2019b). This stage also involved a review of existing procurement competency frameworks from other states or organisations, including concerning other areas of public administration, as well as a scrutiny of academic literature on relevant subjects (e.g. Meyer, 2019; Petrovna Gladilina, 2017). Already existing competency frameworks in other countries are, undoubtedly, an important source assisting development of new competency frameworks. However, we submit that those existing competency frameworks, including *ProcurComp^{EU}*, should rather cultivate the skill of identifying, structuring and describing competencies, including distributing skills by proficiency levels *in relation* to the specific procurement environment that the new competency framework seeks to address, as mapped out through comprehensive research concerning that particular environment. Examples could include the underlying rationale of distributing skills amongst professional degrees (proficiency levels) in relation to the complexity of a certain procurement process (Scottish Government, 2021), or grouping competencies around strategic or operational or tactical objectives in procurement (CIPS, 2021). This involves an in-depth analysis of both the existing competency frameworks and the domestic procurement context, rather than a superficial derivate from an or some existing framework(s) elsewhere, subject to minor adjustments. It is not just about terminology, it is *also* about concepts, internal logic, scope and even style. For instance, it has been considered that a more detailed description of certain skills and knowledge is appropriate for Romanian competency frameworks, to provide stepping stones for capacity development. In other environments some of these descriptions might be regarded as dispensable.

Also, primary sources have been investigated and data processed. These relate to direct experience, knowledge and perceptions of procurement personnel involved in procurement activities, and to the direct results incorporating their work, such as the procurement documents they contribute to. Primary sources included large-scale professionalisation questionnaires prepared under the project and rolled out through the NAPP's website [1] that enabled an assessment of knowledge and experience of procurement personnel and revealed competency needs of procurement personnel in contracting authorities.

Interim findings (mainly from secondary research) were discussed with both the NAPP and procurement personnel from contracting authorities within a series of three workshops. These were structured to facilitate exchanges of data and perspectives, as well as collection of relevant data from these beneficiaries and future users of the competency frameworks. The research and discussions generated conceptual prerequisites for the professionalisation approach, including an outline of its essential "cells", such as "competency", "skill" or "knowledge", and enabled drafting of the competency frameworks. Preparatory versions were then subject to review by and discussions with the project beneficiary (NAPP - The Romanian National Authority for Public Procurement; in Romanian "Agenția Națională pentru Achiziții Publice").

In general terms, the "path" that procurement competencies took for inclusion in the frameworks followed this succession: from programmatic documents and legislation at EU and national levels to confirmation (or otherwise) through outcomes of primary research and – when it came to writing – informing content, concepts and style from domestic sources (World Bank and NAPP (2021/06 c). Draft frameworks were then subject to a review on behalf of the European Commission (conducted by PwC) [2], and the process was completed by publication of the competency frameworks on NAPP's website for public consultation [3]. The mere fact that public consultation generated very limited replies (or concerns), and, to our knowledge, none having caused any material amendments to the versions prepared for the consultations, are clear indications that the development process had been thorough [4]. This is particularly so considering the novel approaches and angles on procurement competencies these frameworks bring to light.

2.3.4 Continuity of underlying principles: from preparation to application. Given the purpose of streamlining procurement professionalisation efforts at national level, a principled approach to both the preparation and implementation of competency frameworks guides the *versatility* of the developed instruments. World Bank and NAPP (2020, pp. 7–11) describe six principles. Rather than regarding each of these principles individually, they were conceived and applied as interconnected in the development of the frameworks.

2.3.4.1 Principle of comprehensiveness and principle of pragmatism/flexibility. The principle of comprehensiveness refers to the intention that frameworks cover, in terms of *competencies*, all aspects that procurement activity relates to or should address, in a variety of contexts. But the "generic reference" nature of the frameworks also implies that they need to be interpreted pragmatically and adjusted when applied to specific situations or for specific purposes. A competency framework should not be regarded as a template (or "stamp") that applies mechanically and rigidly to every purchaser and every officer; such an approach would defeat the purpose of a framework, potentially generating restrictions to professional access, promotion or mobility, and rendering the profession unattractive (e.g. *ProcurComp^{EU}*, pp. 18–19). These would be exactly opposite effects than those intended through professionalisation efforts.

The domestic frameworks themselves invite interpretation in several ways. For example, in the case of the competency framework for the function of public procurement councillor, in respect of the area of public procurement specific competencies, skills are presented jointly for the principal and superior professional degrees/proficiency levels. The recommended criteria for apportioning skills relate to the *strategic importance* and *complexity* of the procurements contemplated by a contracting authority for an envisaged role, using an adjusted form of the classic Kraljic (1983) matrix relating to managing procurement portfolios (World Bank and NAPP, 2020, pp. 19–20). This does not affect further tailoring of a role or profile using proficiency levels, as shown in s.2.3.2. Also, knowledge is presented in terms of content for each individual competency, but not broken down by professional degrees; still, criteria for differentiating the level of knowledge corresponding for each professional degree/proficiency level are provided for in the

presentation document accompanying the competency framework for public procurement councillors (World Bank and NAPP, 2020, p. 17).

2.3.4.2 Future orientation. This principle relates to competency frameworks being intended as longer-term professionalisation instruments. It derives from the first two principles (above) and from the purpose of addressing both current and, to the highest possible extent, future professionalisation needs. However, a competency framework should not be regarded as intangible or unchangeable; instead, it should be viewed as a working instrument and improved or adjusted going along. But frequent changes, of detail, for example, to accommodate every legislation amendment, could work seriously against streamlining professionalisation from a competency management perspective. That level of detail is not a calling of a competency framework, rather it may come into play when developing more specific competency management instruments using the framework, such as training programmes, performance criteria, and so on.

The role of a competency framework should be regarded as mainly *formative* rather than just informative. Properly defined competencies are far less susceptible to changes than various elements of a procurement context, because competencies themselves *must* include skills for practitioners to adjust to potentially changing or dynamic environments, if they are to meet their professionalisation purpose. While the public procurement field is particularly dynamic, in terms of policy, regulation, practice, as well as studies and research (see, e.g., University of Nottingham, Public Procurement Research Group, "Bibliography on Public Procurement Law and Regulation", www.nottingham.ac.uk/pprg/documentsarchive/bibliographies/bibliography.pdf), the skills enabling professionals to update themselves with rapidly evolving environments tend to be, essentially, perennial. Competency frameworks thus include competencies such as adaptability and change management, critical thinking and analysis, professional judgment and research (e.g. World Bank and NAPP, 2021/06 b, sections 15, 16, 2 and 5). These should not be regarded as isolated; such skills need to be embedded into the fabric of the procurement content throughout a procurement competency framework. For instance, the competence titled "legal drafting" (our translation) relating to public procurement system councillors is not just addressing legal drafting techniques and processes, in relation to the current public procurement legal framework (in terms of national and EU law), but also legal interpretation methods and approaches to transposing EU legislation into domestic law that might be considered as part of future policy approaches (ibid, section 6).

Further, the commercial aspects inherent in any procurement transaction tend to be rather stable in time, irrespective of changes in certain aspects of public procurement "governance". It is this present–future continuum in terms of the necessary competencies to pursue strategic objectives that paints a competency framework. It construes competencies deemed necessary going *along the track* towards strategic (longer-term) objectives.

2.3.4.3 Methodological approach and research. The competency frameworks promote methodological and research competencies/skills. The term "research" here is used in its general sense and not necessarily as "academic research". It includes "documentation", and it should be regarded as applied research or action research on-the-job (e.g. Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 2003, pp. 10–11). This approach has been significantly elevated into the "generic training curriculum" at national level that seeks to promote and instil "reflective practice implying *reflection, anticipation and action* enabling individuals to act in a competent and responsible manner" (OECD, 2016, p. 20; OECD, 2019a) in the exercise of public procurement functions (see further s.3.1).

Matching the (expected) procurement needs/requirements of the purchaser with the features of the relevant market segment in a way that yields added value and effectiveness requires a thorough understanding of these elements for *every* procurement exercise. This does require

on-the-job documentation, research and analysis in action. The outcomes of these investigations should then "radiate" throughout a procurement process. They form the basis for identifying and defining specifications, suitability/selection and award criteria, contractual clauses, performance requirements, approach to the market, procurement method, and so on, all of which certainly need to comply with the applicable legal framework.

Nevertheless, the mere application of the legal regulations concerning a certain award procedure might not, on its own, generate performance (effectiveness) where a procurement was improperly designed in commercial terms. Similarly, a properly designed and executed procurement may fail to generate effectiveness where the resulting contract is inadequately managed. Regulation and compliance can encourage a level playing field, contribute to deterring corruption, guide ethical conduct, shape fair and responsible conduct. But regulations alone cannot provide all answers in conducting public procurement. Many options that purchasers have available under the law need to be assessed using concepts and techniques from economics and management (e.g. cost-benefit analysis, market analysis, etc.) and technical intelligence. The multi-disciplinary nature of procurement emphasises the importance of documentation, research and methodological approach in action.

2.3.4.4 Professional advancement, development and mobility. This principle derives from those discussed above, and it is supported by the organisation and internal logic of material in the developed competency frameworks (s.2.3.5). Because the competency frameworks are structured by professional degrees/proficiency levels, they facilitate a meaningful, competency-based professional advancement from one degree to the subsequent one. While the Administrative Code regulates such progression in general terms, the competency framework will be able to guide such process in terms of specific procurement skills and capability. Similarly, it can enable a procurement specific competency-based performance assessment, as well as professional development involving improvement current skills and knowledge or acquiring additional ones for a different professional role (e.g. from procurement process officer to procurement portfolio officer) even where the shift does not involve progression in terms of professional degree.

Competency frameworks and the approach to the generic training curriculum also facilitate the development of transferable skills. Professional mobility may involve transfer from one department to another, from one sector to another (e.g. public to utilities or vice versa), and from the public procurement councillor function to that of public procurement system councillor or vice versa. This last aspect of professional mobility has been dealt with specifically in devising the two competency frameworks (s.2.3.1). From designing and managing public procurement policy at national level to carrying out procurement activities in contracting authorities, there is in fact an array of potential competency "roles" (World Bank and NAPP, 2021/06 c, p. 14).

2.3.4.5 Inclusion and consensus. The preparation of the two competency frameworks involved significant stakeholder consultation (s.2.3.3). This approach went beyond mere transparency and consisted of an ongoing validation process for the instruments having been developed, consistent with the methodology applied. This principle is also reflected in seeking to make the competency frameworks useful for as wide a range of procurement activities and of staff involved in procurement as possible, despite the current scope of the exercise that covers execution functions, and not management or support functions (s.2.3.2). Similarly, the developed competency frameworks are intended not just for members of the civil service but also for contractual personnel, and a specific approach has been taken to facilitate application in this way (ss.2.1.2 and 2.3.2).

2.3.5 Structure and internal logic. The main structure of the two competency frameworks is presented in Table 9 below (see World Bank and NAPP, 2021/06 a, 2021/06 b).

Table 9.
The main structure of the two Romanian public procurement competency frameworks at national level

Area	(A) Public procurement councillor		Area	(B) Public procurement system councillor	
	Category	Competencies		Category	Competencies
(A).1. Public procurement specific competencies	(A).1.(i) Competencies specific to the managerial procurement function at level of contracting authorities	8 competencies: - procurement portfolio planning - procurement cycle - legislation - electronic procurement - sustainable procurement - procurement of innovation - category management - management of tenderers and contractors	(B).1. Competencies specific to the public procurement system and public procurement function	(B).1.(i) Essential competencies specific to the overall public procurement system	7 competencies: - system design, strategic approach and planning - professional judgment - preparation, monitoring and evaluation of public policies - promoting ethics and transparency; prevention of irregularities - research and analysis - legal drafting - international cooperation
	(A).1.(ii) Competencies specific to the public procurement process	11 competencies: - requirements assessment - market research and analysis - contracting strategy - specifications - tender documentation - tender evaluation - negotiation - contract management - contract results and payments - performance of procurement process - dispute settling and mediation		(B).1.(ii) Competencies specific to the public procurement function	7 competencies: - drafting procurement guidance - procurement portfolio - electronic procurement - sustainable procurement - procurement of innovation - joint and centralised procurement - public procurement process

(continued)

(A) Public procurement councillor			(B) Public procurement system councillor		
Area	Category	Competencies	Area	Category	Competencies
(A).2. Horizontal professional competencies	(A).2.(i) Competencies for improving personal performance	4 competencies: - adaptability and change management - analytical and critical thinking - communication - ethics, integrity, conformity	(B).2. Horizontal professional competencies	(B).2.(i) Competencies for improving personal performance	4 competencies: - adaptability and change management - analytical and critical thinking - communication - ethics, integrity, conformity
	(A).2.(ii) Competencies for improving performance in regard to teamwork and stakeholder collaboration	3 competencies: - collaboration - stakeholder management - team management and leadership		(B).2.(ii) Competencies for improving performance in regard to teamwork and stakeholder collaboration	3 competencies: - collaboration - stakeholder management - team management and leadership
	(A).2.(iii) Competencies for improving performance at institutional level	4 competencies: - institutional awareness - project management - performance orientation - internal control and risk management		(B).2.(iii) Competencies for improving performance at institutional level	4 competencies: - institutional awareness - project management - performance orientation - internal control and risk management

Source: Derived from World Bank and NAPP (2021/06 a, 2021/06 b)

Table 9.

The structuring of competencies, including into areas and categories, serves organisation purposes and should not be regarded as separators. Skills and knowledge are interrelated in the context of individual competencies and across a competency framework. For example, in the framework for public procurement councillor, competencies related to legislation, electronic instruments and procurement supporting horizontal objectives [under category (A).1.(i)] will (also) be needed in the implementation of individual procurement processes of a contracting authority [for which competencies are specifically classified under category (A).1.(ii)]; and vice versa market research and needs assessment competencies [under category (A).1.(ii)] would also be needed for and integrate with the portfolio planning competency [under category (A).1.(i)].

In broad brush, the structure of the Romanian competency framework for public procurement councillors corresponds to that of *ProcurComp^{EU}* [5] (p. 29). There have been some adaptations of structure as regards the area of competencies specific to public procurement [area (A).1] to secure better correspondence with domestic guidance on public procurement, which procurement officers are likely to be more familiar with. But there are no differences in structure as regards the area of horizontal professional competencies [6] [area (A).2]. Content though is used/expressed throughout the Romanian frameworks in such a way as to facilitate understanding and embracement by practitioners in the country while being aligned with *ProcurComp^{EU}*.

Variations are more significant in respect of the Competency Framework for the Function of Public Procurement System Councillor. The reduced number of competencies in this framework resulted from the specific content and structuring needed, and does not imply "less" skills and knowledge. As shown, this competency framework refers only to officers working within the NAPP in relation to managing the overall public procurement system, and it is also aligned with *ProcurComp^{EU}* (European Commission, 2020c). By correlating the two categories of "specific procurement" competencies [under the first area of competencies, i.e. categories (B).1.(i) and (B).1.(ii) under area (B).1] in this competency framework with the main "tasks" of NAPP, it can be noticed that the focus of the first category [(B).1.(i)] is on managing the overall procurement system, whereas the focus of the second category [(B).1.(ii)] is on the unitary application of rules by contracting authorities/entities and ex ante control (by NAPP) of public procurement processes conducted by contracting authorities/entities. However, there are many interconnections between the two categories, because most of the competencies in the first category [(B).1.(i)] need to be backed by the procurement content specifically addressed in the second category [(B).1.(ii)], and vice versa.

The category of competencies concerning the public procurement function in the public procurement system councillor framework [category (B).1.(ii)] can be regarded as the "bridge" between the two Romanian public procurement competency frameworks, facilitating professional mobility between the two public functions relating to procurement (i.e. the function of public procurement councillor and the function of public procurement system councillor) (ss.2.3.1 and 2.3.4). That category reorganises competencies relating to procurement activities carried out in contracting authorities using NAPP's perspective as regulator and (potential) controller over those processes, while emphasising the strategic objectives of the national public procurement system and of NAPP. As regards the second area of competencies of the framework for public procurement system councillors – horizontal professional competencies [area (B).2] – there are no differences in *structure* from either the Romanian competency framework for public procurement councillors [the relevant area of competencies being (A).2], or *ProcurComp^{EU}* (see the group of "Soft" competencies in that document) [7].

Finally, the "micro-structure" under each competency within the two Romanian frameworks is very similar, and includes a competency title, its object of consideration, a description of the

competency, its relevance, the knowledge component and the skills component. The knowledge component is not broken down by professional degrees/proficiency levels and thus requires interpretation in applying the frameworks (s.2.3.4). In contrast, the skills component of each competency is broken down by professional degrees. In general, skills are arranged separately for each of the three professional degrees: assistant, principal and superior. However, for the 19 competencies in the area of public procurement specific competencies for public procurement councillors [area (A).1, including both categories under it: (A).1.(i) and (A).1.(ii)], skills are presented jointly for the principal *and* superior degrees, also requiring interpretation in applying the framework (the recommended approach for apportioning skills between the two professional degrees/proficiency levels is shown in s.2.3.4, whereas here we have looked at the overall structure and internal logic of the two competency frameworks). Table 10 below shows the overall picture of how knowledge and skills are structured in the two competency frameworks (for each competency) by reference to professional degrees and in relation to categories and areas of competencies.

3. Analysis of results and discussion

3.1 Uses and intended uses of competency frameworks in domestic context

At national level, the competency framework for the function of public procurement officer has formed a basis (a starting point) for developing the national generic training curriculum for public procurement professionals, which is intended to guide (in detail) postgraduate academic educational programmes in public procurement involving 720 teaching/training hours (World Bank and NAPP, 2020a, 2020b). The development of the generic training curriculum has been a part of the overhaul of the occupational standard for the public procurement expert occupation [8]. Actually, a competency framework might be described as a "target" for a generic training curriculum. Attainment or development of the skills and knowledge listed in the competency framework, as desirable from a labour market perspective for the profession, needs to be supported by learning outcomes envisaged by the training curriculum. Developing a training curriculum from a competency framework can be construed as reverse engineering: the skills and knowledge needed by a profession drive the type and features of training programmes to meet those professional demands (see, e.g., National Authority for Qualifications and Ministry of National Education, Romania, 'Methodological guide for writing learning outcomes', in Romanian "Ghid Metodologic privind Scrierea rezultatelor învăţării", pp. 21-23, www.anc.edu.ro/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Ghid_Metodologic_privind_scrierea_rezultatelor_invatari.pdf). From this perspective (as shown in s.2.3.4), a main objective of the "generic training curriculum" at national level is to promote and instil "reflective practice" (OECD, 2016, p. 20; OECD, 2019a) in the exercise of public procurement functions, and to do this the curriculum provides an advanced and original approach to public procurement teaching, training and learning referred to as multi-disciplinary integration at granular practical level that was specifically designed to address domestic training needs. The preparation of the Romanian generic training curriculum on public procurement is a complex (and relevant) subject in its own, and the authors of this article intend to write a separate article (case-study) explaining thoroughly that process, in due course. Nonetheless, it is relevant to point out here the main interactions between the competency framework and the generic training curriculum – which are illustrated in Figure 2 below.

The mere fact that the generic training curriculum – that used as a basis/starting point the competency framework – has been approved by the relevant institutions (see endnote 7 to part A of this article) represents a significant use of the developed competency frameworks, as well as a confirmation of their soundness. The developed competency frameworks also facilitated orientation for other professionalisation activities under the project at national level and,

Table 10.
Structuring of knowledge and skills by reference to professional degrees in relation to categories and areas of competencies in the two Romanian public procurement competency frameworks at national level

Area	(A) Public procurement councillor		Area	(B) Public procurement system councillor	
	Category	Competencies		Category	Competencies
(A).1. Public procurement specific competencies	(A).1.(i) Competencies specific to the managerial procurement function at level of contracting authorities	8 competencies: For each of the competencies: (i) knowledge is presented jointly for all three professional degrees; (ii) skills are presented: jointly for the 'principal' and 'superior' professional degrees; distinctly for the 'assistant' professional degree.	(B).1. Competencies specific to the public procurement system and public procurement function	B.1.(i) Essential competencies specific to the overall public procurement system	7 competencies: For each of the competencies: (i) knowledge is presented jointly for all three professional degrees; (ii) skills are presented distinctly for each of the three professional degrees covered by the competency framework.
	(A).1.(ii) Competencies specific to the public procurement process	11 competencies: For each of the competencies: (i) knowledge is presented jointly for all three professional degrees; (ii) skills are presented: jointly for the 'principal' and 'superior' professional degrees; distinctly for the 'assistant' professional degree.		(B).1.(ii) Competencies specific to the public procurement function	7 competencies: For each of the competencies: (i) knowledge is presented jointly for all three professional degrees; (ii) skills are presented distinctly for each of the three professional degrees covered by the competency framework.
(A).2. Horizontal professional competencies	(A).2.(i) Competencies for improving personal performance	4 competencies: For each of the competencies: (i) knowledge is presented jointly for all three professional degrees; (ii) skills are presented distinctly for each of the three professional degrees covered by the competency framework.	(B).2. Horizontal professional competencies	(B).2.(i) Competencies for improving personal performance	4 competencies: For each of the competencies: (i) knowledge is presented jointly for all three professional degrees; (ii) skills are presented distinctly for each of the three professional degrees covered by the competency framework.

Area	(A) Public procurement councillor		Area	(B) Public procurement system councillor	
	Category	Competencies		Category	Competencies
	(A).2.(ii) Competencies for improving performance in regard to teamwork and stakeholder collaboration	3 competencies: For each of the competencies: (i) knowledge is presented jointly for all three professional degrees; (ii) skills are presented distinctly for each of the three professional degrees covered by the competency framework.		(B).2.(ii) Competencies for improving performance in regard to teamwork and stakeholder collaboration	3 competencies: For each of the competencies: (i) knowledge is presented jointly for all three professional degrees; (ii) skills are presented distinctly for each of the three professional degrees covered by the competency framework.
	(A).2.(iii) Competencies for improving performance at institutional level	4 competencies: For each of the competencies: (i) knowledge is presented jointly for all three professional degrees; (ii) skills are presented distinctly for each of the three professional degrees covered by the competency framework.		B.(2.(iii) Competencies for improving performance at institutional level	4 competencies: For each of the competencies: (i) knowledge is presented jointly for all three professional degrees; (ii) skills are presented distinctly for each of the three professional degrees covered by the competency framework.

Source: Derived from World Bank and NAPP (2021/06 a, 2021/06 b)

Table 10.

Competency management approach				
Preparation and implementation of competency framework		Preparation and implementation of generic training curriculum		
Profession needs / labour market needs / Objectives of profession / Strategic objectives of public procurement at national level (as a Member State of the EU)	Competency framework: Desired/needed competencies, i.e. knowledge and skills to meet strategic objectives of the profession and of the public procurement system	Desired learning outcomes from education and professional training	Education/training content, formats, delivery methods, criteria and mechanisms for assessing learning outcomes	Learning outcomes that trainees gain support development of the competencies in the way identified by the profession or by the labour market (as defined in competency framework)

Sources: Created by authors, using data and discussion on concepts from NAPP (2020b, pp. 19–23); also, more generally on relevant concepts and approaches, e.g. Cedefop (2022), Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes: a European handbook – second edition (Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union), http://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2801/703079

distinctly, can prove useful for preparing customised training programmes at *institutional* level to address specific organisational circumstances of individual contracting authorities/entities or of NAPP.

Another potential use of the national competency frameworks relates to developing job profiles, such as procurement portfolio officer, procurement process officer and contract officer. These can be designed by allocating appropriate proficiency levels to each relevant competency in the framework (s.2.3.2). Job profiles can be rather generic, as exemplified in *ProcurComp*^{EU} (pp. 70–74), possibly sweeping an entire public procurement system, and guiding any interested contracting authority or entity in that system, or they can be specific to individual contracting authorities/entities. The design and implementation of *competency-based* job profiles should be encouraged, in particular for larger contracting authorities/entities, and from this perspective additional guidance at national level would be desirable.

A further use of a national competency framework at the level of individual contracting authorities/entities may involve the development/customisation of bespoke institutional competency frameworks based on the national one. It is for each contracting authority/entity to judge in its context whether such customised framework is necessary or whether it can rely (directly) on the national one for the purposes of talent management within the organisation.

Downstream uses could also involve the development of *competency-based* job descriptions and recruitment criteria. An analysis conducted under the project into publicly available job descriptions and/or recruitment criteria (for public procurement positions in Romania) has found that in many cases such requirements tended to be quite bureaucratic, focusing on tasks rather than responsibilities and on an administrative approach rather than on the strategic function of procurement (Integrate Investment, 2020, p. 23). References to the developed competency frameworks, and to other tools in relation to the overhauled occupational standard for public procurement experts, such as the "List of tasks and responsibilities for the public procurement

expert occupation" (Integrate Investment, 2022/03), should support a shift in the carrying out of duties by procurement officers, by linking activities to expected standards or results, not just to literal application of legal requirements.

Other uses of competency frameworks at the level of contracting authorities/entities may involve the development of competency-based staff performance assessment mechanisms, of professional development plans for procurement officers and of training programmes (including on-the-job). At the level of individual procurement officers, a main use of competency frameworks relates to self-assessing competencies. The *ProcurComp*^{EU} self-assessment tool [9] could be used by Romanian procurement officers and contracting authorities/entities, with some adjustments, though "national" or "employer" guidance is probably needed concerning the desirable adaptation in performing or interpreting the outcomes of the exercise.

Figure 3 below illustrates in a simplified way the uses and intended uses of the competency framework at national level for the function of public procurement councillor, as well as relationships and potential relationships between such uses of the competency framework.

As shown in section 2.1.1 above, the inclusion in the National Public Procurement Strategy for the period 2023–2027 (2023; see endnote 6 to part A of this article) of a strong emphasis on professionalisation, significantly building on the competency frameworks and on the revised generic training curriculum (occupational standard) for public procurement, is very welcome. Thus, the 2023–2027 Strategy, defines five objectives, which include professionalisation, along with strategic public procurement, centralised public procurement, transparency in public procurement and monitoring. A main group of programmes (directions of action) under the professionalisation objective relates directly to "Developing the public procurement profession, starting from the competency frameworks and the revised occupational standard" (our translation). This group covers nine programmes (A35–A43) ranging from institutional ones at the level of NAPP, to potentially setting a minimum level of training and certification for certain categories of public procurement practitioners based on the occupational standard; to offering guidance on using the competency frameworks, the occupational standard and the *ProcurComp*^{EU} self-assessment tools by managers, for recruiting, assessing and developing staff; to the development of a distinct competency framework for procurement managers, including the requirement for their training in specific areas; and others. All these, together with the
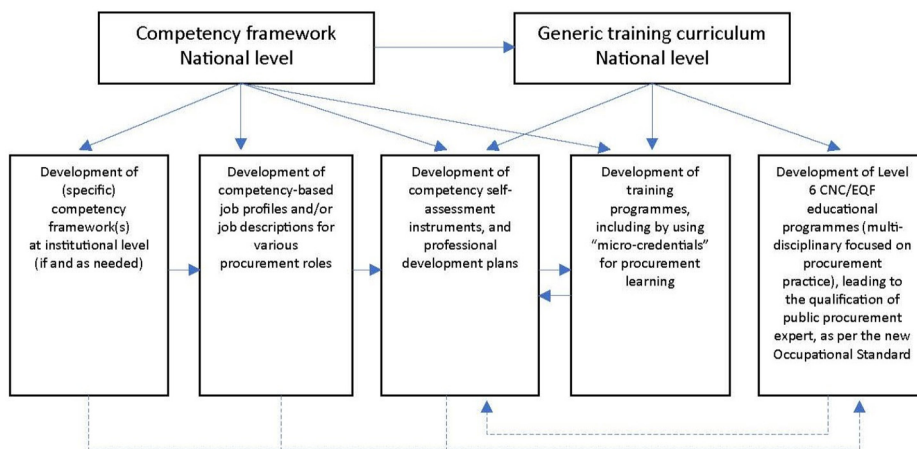

Figure 3.
Uses/intended uses of the national competency framework for the function of public procurement councillor, and relationships/potential relationships between them (simplified presentation)

Source: Created by authors

Government's "firm commitment" to implement it "thoroughly" (s2.1.1) implicitly reconfirm the validity of, and the approaches/directions set in terms of professionalisation by, the developed nationally tailored generic competency frameworks for public procurement and the overhauled occupational standard for the occupation public procurement expert, including the generic training curriculum.

With so many purposes, approaches for "avoiding traps" in using competency frameworks are self-explanatory throughout this article (and are briefly described in presentations of the competency frameworks, e.g. World Bank and NAPP, 2020). A pragmatic approach is needed, since a competency framework should not be regarded as a prescriptive instrument, but a streamlined and documented source of inspiration for competency management. Thus, literal and narrow interpretations should be avoided in using/applying the competency frameworks. Instead, adjustments, detailing, expansion, updating or restructuring, should be considered in the implementation process, taking account of the objectives pursued and the relevant context. A proper assessment of that specific environment (for instance, of the institution in question) is an essential prerequisite for successful application. Equally, inclusion and objectivity should be at the core of any use of competency frameworks because the purpose of competency management is to attract, retain and promote performing staff based on objective merits, aligned with strategic institutional objectives, and with individual professional development objectives and performance.

From a related perspective, both the national generic competency frameworks and the national generic training curriculum can be used to facilitate implementation of "micro-credentials" for public procurement learning. For any subject matter, not just procurement related ones, "[m]icro-credentials certify the learning outcomes of short-term learning experiences, for example a short course or training" (https://education.ec.europa.eu/education-levels/higher-education/micro-credentials). In the public procurement area, including in a national environment, micro-credentials can thus provide a useful and flexible way for procurement officers to develop much needed skills and abilities (at a granular level), as well as get larger numbers of training providers and academic institutions involved in various procurement education/training formats.

3.2 Lessons learnt

In this article, we have presented the development of the Romanian competency frameworks for public procurement, in context, as a case study. We have not only shown *what* was done but focused on *how* and *why* things have been done as they were. Answers to the "what" questions lead to conspicuous outcomes and courses of action. Answers to the "how" and "why" type of questions bring to light the reasoning behind options and approaches taken for the development of the competency frameworks, the procurement environment and its objectives that reflect into and drive professionalisation efforts. Answers to the "what" questions tend to be specific to Romania. The objective of the project has been to develop professionalisation instruments that are capable to address substantively the *domestic* public procurement system, as part of the EU public procurement system. But answers to the "how" and "why" questions can help turning the framework document "live" through pragmatic, balanced, multi-layered application, as well as point towards wider relevance beyond the Romanian public procurement system.

A competency framework should be regarded as a means, rather than an aim. The real objective consists in the longer-term raising of the level of procurement professionalisation through widespread use of the framework for generating specific talent development instruments and systems, within a competency management approach that also incorporates administrative law requirements applicable to public procurement personnel in

public administration. Thus, a competency framework should inspire continuous practical action for professionalisation in the longer-run, rather than "instruct" short-term "recipes". In a public procurement environment that is still quite prescriptive, such as Romania's, the risks of a competency framework being perceived or applied rather commandingly needs to be addressed and mitigated pro-actively, because that "approach" could seriously undermine the usefulness of the tool, if not hinder professionalisation efforts.

The Romanian experience with developing competency frameworks (and other professionalisation instruments) for public procurement at national level revealed four main intrinsic orientations. Firstly, it emphasised that a strong methodological basis is essential. As shown (s.2.3.3), "strong" does not necessarily mean "rigid", it rather refers to suitability in relation to the specific (domestic) procurement context and what professionalisation seeks to achieve strategically. We have seen that Romania seeks to shift the procurement approach of procurement practitioners from a focus on procedure to one on process *and* strategy. The methodological approach involves thus two major interlinked components: one refers to examining the relevant procurement environment, while the other refers to actually developing a competency framework (or a related instrument) that resonates to that environment and that supports professionalisation. In our view both methodological components are vital, and the development of a competency framework without a 360 degree analysis of the procurement environment is unlikely to lead to conducive outcomes. An overarching applied, qualitative and constructionist methodological approach has been appropriate for Romania since the aim of the exercise involved an in-depth, nuanced, but purposive understanding of the complex phenomenon of how public procurement was being carried out versus how it should be carried out to improve real procurement performance in a wide sense, including value-for-money, effectiveness and supporting wider societal goals and digital transformation. Related to this, the Romanian experience also emphasised that the real meaning of professionalisation in public procurement involves many facets, and it is specific to the features and objectives of the procurement system in question.

Secondly, the Romanian experience has revealed some of the potential benefits and complexities of trying to introduce a competency management approach for public procurement professionalisation. On the positive side, the approach, for which a competency framework is a main instrument, seems capable to integrate and streamline a huge volume of heterogeneous input from various disciplines and from practice for designing comprehensive and coherent professionalisation mechanisms, incorporating institutional, national and EU objectives in public procurement, as well professional objectives of procurement officers. The fact that the public procurement field is subject to policies involving longer-term objectives, as well as its substantial professional content and impact, make this field amenable to competency management (s.2.2). For a procurement environment that so far has lacked a clear professional path in public procurement, as in Romania (s.2.1.2), competency management offers the opportunity to crystallise professional development mechanisms structured around an objective basis. But blending competency management approaches into the intricacies of the administrative system may not be straightforward an exercise in certain respects, as explained.

Thirdly, it has been clear in the preparation of the Romanian competency frameworks that the role of existing public procurement competency frameworks from other countries, including *ProcurComp^{EU}*, was mainly to inform how each of the latter addressed the particular procurement context that had generated it, the internal logic, and the "skill" of writing skills, rather than the content and structure themselves. The last two elements would arise from the domestic environment, though certainly, as a Member State, alignment with *ProcurComp^{EU}* is highly desirable. But this needs not envisage narrow or superficial

similarity. The two Romanian public procurement competency frameworks are aligned with *ProcurComp*^*EU* (European Commission 2020c), but in different ways, each substantiated in the domestic procurement environment.

Fourthly, the review of legal instruments governing public procurement can/should be used (in conjunction with other data sources, data collection techniques and methods for analysis) during the process of preparing a competency framework in public procurement; however, the aim should not be to provide a detailed "legalistic" analysis, but rather to carry out a deductive exercise into expected professional conduct concerning various aspects of the public procurement profession and inferring potentially desirable skills and knowledge therefrom.

3.3 Potential wider application of certain approaches outside Romania

Turning to how the Romanian experience with developing competency frameworks might be helpful in other countries, we emphasise that such orientation to other systems could relate to the reasoning that we presented in explaining the various options taken in the preparation of the Romanian frameworks. While the detailed approach will always need to be specific to the features of the procurement environment of the country in question, there are some principal avenues that could guide countries in this exercise, arising from the present Romanian case study. Thus, the overall methodological scheme presented is likely to be relevant in some respects (subject to adaptations justified by specific contexts) to countries with comparable procurement environments, potentially some Eastern European EU member states. They share some common (general) features in terms of their public procurement systems, such as somewhat limited a tradition in public procurement in the current sense of the term – that of public entities purchasing from a free-market economy (Trepte, 2004, p. 19). The centralised economy history of these countries (prior to 1989) means that the public procurement profession is also "younger" here, with developments likely to have been mainly "pulled" by the EU accession, rather than occurring organically.

Their legal systems belong to the civil (continental) law system [10], meaning that the main sources of legal obligations consist of (written) legislation enacted by Parliament, or under delegated procedures, such as laws, ordinances, codes and so on. This "codification" facility could come along with some convenience but might encourage a prescriptive *approach* to public procurement regulation itself by the regulators, as well as a prescriptive *perception* by users of that regulation – a false "safety" feeling that regulation provides "all answers" to public procurement practice. It is not to say that civil law systems automatically render themselves into prescriptive public procurement regulation but rather that in some countries, various combined factors and traditions (may) have resulted in this approach. Certainly, nothing prevents a civil law system from generating more flexible legal provisions, and such preoccupation might have become noticeable in Romania as well [11]. But in the context of this article, rather than addressing the issue thorough legislative means, the main focus is on how to approach and mitigate a potential tendency towards undue rigidity – in both regulation and implementation – through professionalisation to improve procurement performance.

At the same time, some of the Eastern European member states may well find themselves, broadly, in a comparable stage wishing to make a shift from procedure and/or process to strategy and performance in public procurement. A glimpse of this could be reflected, for example, in the Estonian experience with *ProcurComp*^*EU* that involved "[. . .] an organisational gap analysis, targeting the State Shared Services Center (RTK), which is the central purchaser for government authorities" in order, amongst others, to "better align the training activities of the RTK with its training needs by shifting the rationale for training *from a legal/compliance type of exercise to evidence-based analysis of training gaps/needs*" (our emphasis) (European Commission, 2020d). The mere question as to whether a national competency framework is

needed in the first place (in a certain state) hinges upon several factors, such as the functioning and "maturity" of procurement workforce management systems. It could be that in some countries those systems perform properly in relation to desired objectives in the absence of a national competency framework, or they might rely directly on *ProcurComp^{EU}* to develop more specific professionalisation instruments, such as training programmes.

The institutional setting in those countries may also influence such possibilities, for example in the case of more centralised public procurement systems. In contrast, the rather decentralised nature of the Romanian public procurement system, in conjunction with other features described in this article, justify the tailoring of the two fully fledged competency frameworks for public procurement at national level. Thus, domestic contracting authorities/entities of various types and sizes can relate to more familiar a reference for preparing and implementing specific competency/capacity development instruments at institutional level. According to the "Reports from implementation case studies" in relation to *ProcurComp^{EU}*, the intervention so far appears to have focused on organisational gap analyses in two countries (Estonia and Malta) and on the development of nationally tailored competency frameworks in the other two (Romania and Slovenia) [12].

The Romanian experience reported in this article could be relevant to the wider region, possibly including some states aspiring to EU membership. That there may be some "affinity" among such procurement systems is illustrated by a statement of a Ukrainian delegation to Bucharest in March 2021. In a broader context of public procurement reform at that time, the Ukrainian side "expressed an interest in the Romanian model and pointed out that this was a source of documentation for selecting a legislative frame in public procurement [in Ukraine]" (reported by NAPP, http://anap.gov.ro/web/vizita-de-lucru-a-delegatiei-din-ucraina/; our translation from Romanian).

4. Concluding remarks and recommendations

Competency frameworks can offer key instruments for strategic talent management in public procurement, provided they thoroughly reflect the procurement context they address and long-term objectives of the procurement system (or organisation) in question. The Romanian public procurement competency frameworks at national level are completed and accepted by NAPP, as well as publicly available, and this article presented the development of these competency frameworks, as a case study, focusing on the bespoke methodological and principled approach used and analysing the potential orientation that this experience could provide for other countries.

The development process concerning the national competency framework for public procurement councillors could provide some inspiration for countries in Eastern Europe or aspiring to EU membership, with a rather decentralised procurement system, and wishing to use professionalisation means to support the shift from mere compliance to strategy and performance. Furthermore, the preparation of the distinct Romanian competency framework for public procurement system councillors involved pioneering work, as shown, and may offer inspiration for national public procurement policy and regulation agencies even further afield. But in either case such inspiration would need to be incorporated into and take account of the specific circumstances of the public procurement system in question. From this perspective, the article provides suggestions on methodological approaches for applied research to investigate those features, as a basis for constructing responsive professionalisation instruments.

Returning to public procurement professionalisation in Romania, further guidance at national level will be useful concerning the relationship between the Romanian competency framework for public procurement councillors and the *ProcurComp^{EU}* self-assessment tool, and concerning the development of job profiles (World Bank and NAPP, 2021b, p. 30). Also,

the setting up of a competency framework implementation help desk mechanism for users, of an implementation feedback collection and updating mechanism, and regular measures promoting the developed instruments are needed to maintain beneficiaries' interest in using the frameworks (World Bank and NAPP, 2021b, p. 30). Furthermore, the expansion of the coverage of the national competency frameworks to include procurement managerial functions, and address more comprehensively knowledge and skills corresponding to the "expert" proficiency level of *ProcurComp^{EU}*, should be considered a priority (European Commission, 2020c). The sooner its preparation can start, the better the premises for comprehensive and integrated procurement professionalisation are likely to be. We have seen in s.2.1.1 and s.3.1 that the National Public Procurement Strategy 2023–2027 pushes forward the agenda concerning many of these matters, which is a welcome development.

While incorporating competency management into the domestic administrative system was carefully considered during the preparation of the public procurement competency frameworks, it is essential that this approach cascades into implementation. The National Public Procurement Strategy 2023–2027 provides credible paths in this connection, and it appears to confer sustainability to the professionalisation approaches enshrined in the competency frameworks and the revised training curriculum.

Further empirical research, to be conducted preferably within a few years, should assess the extent to which competency management has actually blended into the carrying out of day-to-day public procurement activities in Romania, and the intended uses of the developed professionalisation instruments and approaches materialise. Also, further research should investigate the impact of the current case study on the development of professionalisation instruments at national level in other countries, as well as other approaches used for the development of such instruments.

Notes

1. October 2019 - January 2020.

2. For findings of the review see https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2021-03/procurcompeu-romania-en_0.pdf (accessed 12 June 2023).

3. See, in Romanian, https://anap.gov.ro/web/anap-lanseaza-in-consultare-publica-cadrele-de-competente-aferente-functiilor-de-consilier-achizitii-publice-si-consilier-sistem-achizitii-publice/ (accessed 12 June 2023).

4. The final versions of the competency frameworks "package" are available in Romanian on NAPP's website via http://anap.gov.ro/web/rezultate-sipoca-625/ (accessed 12 June 2023).

5. Note in this context that *ProcurComp*^{EU} uses the term "category" for first-level groupings of competencies (corresponding to "area" in Romanian frameworks), and the term "cluster" for second-level groupings (corresponding to "category" in Romanian frameworks).

6. However, these are referred to as the "category" of "soft" competencies in *ProcurComp*^{EU}. See also n.11 to Part A of this article, and n. 5 above (in this Part B of the article).

7. See n. 6 above (in this Part B of the article).

8. Approved and published as per n. 7 to Part A of this article.

9. See https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/tools-public-buyers/professionalisation-public-buyers/procurcompeu-european-competency-framework-public-procurement-professionals_en#procurcompeutoolbox (accessed 12 June 2023).

10. Whether deriving from the French or Germanic legal traditions.

11. For example, the draft Government Urgency Ordinance for amending procurement legislation in the defence and security sector, available in Romanian via http://anap.gov.ro/web/proiect-de-ordonanta-de-urgenta-privind-modificarea-si-completarea-ordonantei-de-urgenta-nr-114-2011/ (accessed 12 June 2023).

12. Reports available at: https://commission.europa.eu/funding-tenders/tools-public-buyers/professionalisation-public-buyers/procurcompeu-european-competency-framework-public-procurement-professionals_en#procurcompeuontheground (accessed 12 June 2023).

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About the authors

Șerban Filipon (MCIPS) is senior public procurement and management consultant with Integrate Investment, Bucharest, Romania. He has a PhD in public procurement law at the University of Nottingham (2018), and an MSc in procurement management, with distinction, at the University of Strathclyde (2006). He has 20 years of experience in public procurement practice and research, including in operations, management, policy, regulatory and strategic matters in procurement, mainly within internationally funded projects. Geographically, his experience relates to Romania, the UK and Australia. He is the author of an academic book on public procurement published in the UK in July 2023. Șerban Filipon is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: serban.filipon@in-in.ro

Violeta Simionescu (MBA, MCIPS) is a Lecturer in economics at the Technical University of Civil Engineering (UTCB), Bucharest, Romania, within the Teacher Training Department and director at

Integrate Investment, Bucharest, Romania. She is also acting as senior public procurement, processes or projects management consultant for initiatives of international financial institutions addressing public procurement systems. She possesses extensive experience exceeding two decades in public procurement. Besides effectively managing procurement projects of varying complexities and scales for public or private organisations, she is involved in performing policy formulation and capacity-building initiatives at the level of public procurement systems.