

ICMCI COMMON BODY OF KNOWLEDGE

Introduction

For many years the ICMCI has provided an outline of a common body of knowledge (CBK) for management consultants (MCs). Equally, there are a number of national institutes that have developed their own CBK for MCs. Given the rapid changes in and variety of sectors and areas in which consultants work, ICMCI believes that we should avoid detailed descriptions of content (and, for that matter, tools, techniques and functional skills). The current version of the ICMCI CBK is therefore defined at a high level to set out the topics that should be covered in a local CBK, but is not prescriptive of content.

The CBK is not used to assess competence or to describe competency. There is therefore no intention that the CBK substitutes for any statements of competence as used, for example, in assessing the suitability of candidates for the award of CMC. It should therefore be able to stand alone.

This document builds on the content of previous statements of CBK, allocating them to the following sections:

1. The profession of management consultancy
2. Functional knowledge
3. The structure, processes and environments of organisations
4. The business of consultancy
5. Adding value to clients
6. Engaging effectively with colleagues and clients

1. The profession of management consultancy

Definitions: of management consultancy, a management consultant and management consultancy practice; and other common terms used in consultancy

Roles and activities of management consultants: understanding the ways in which consultants deliver value to clients. Structure of supply (who provides it) and demand (who buys it) in the sector

What constitutes professionalism: regulations and regulatory bodies. Code(s) of conduct and sanctions applying if they are breached. Common ethical dilemmas and conflicts of interest and how to deal with them.

Maintaining personal performance; the role of CPD.

2. Functional knowledge

This is the subject matter expertise of the consultant and therefore outside the scope of a CBK that relates to the process of delivering that expertise to the benefit of the client.

(It is worth noting, however, that some form of assessment of subject matter expertise might be needed for a competency based assessment).

3. The structure, processes and environments of organisations

The generality of how organisations work and the environment in which they do so.

Features of organisational performance

The role of strategy and operations. Measures of organisational success and how they might differ between sectors. Organisational goals and their relevance to consulting engagements.

Features of organisational structure

Issues of governance as they might affect the work of a consultant. Understanding the organisation of work as manifest in structure and processes. Nature of organisation culture. Change in organisations and factors affecting its successful implementation.

Management within organisations

The relevance of different functional areas in organisations. The main management processes within an organisation, particularly

- ▶ planning and the range of activities this applies to (e.g. budget cycle, projects)
- ▶ organizing

- ▶ leading; different styles of leadership and their effectiveness in different situations; processes of social influence
- ▶ controlling; management information systems

The organisational environment

The main elements of political, economic (macro and micro), social, technological, legal and environmental factors as they affect business.

4. The business of consultancy

Managing a consulting business. The economics of a consultancy firm; basic financial models describing consulting businesses. Contracting; the basis of setting and charging fees. Running a consultancy business and the requirements of individual consultants. Handling conflicts of interest. Processes involved in running a consultancy practice, notably:

- ▶ marketing and selling
- ▶ setting fee rates and pricing proposals and other bids. Other methods of generating income and cost recovery
- ▶ monitoring utilisation
- ▶ product development in consultancy; IPR
- ▶ managing consultant performance

5. Adding value to clients

Deploying the consultant's knowledge to the benefit of the client, both in the pre-contract stage (i.e. while selling) or in post-contract (delivery). The consultancy engagement process, including:

- ▶ scoping need and defining what needs to be done
- ▶ the varying roles of a consultant and how a consultant adds value to a client
- ▶ proposal development, including exploring potential for success of a project and the benefits arising
- ▶ project management (i.e. delivering results within limited resources of people and time).
Managing your own time
- ▶ problem solving. Processes of data collection, tools and techniques for analysis and diagnosis

- ▶ formulation of solutions and their implementation. Key processes involved in implementing change as a consultant; different methods of intervention
- ▶ closing and learning from consulting engagements

6. Engaging effectively with colleagues and clients

Personal skills of effective communication and teamwork. The importance of good client relationships and the main factors influencing them. Understanding clients as political systems and how best to set up projects. Managing conflict. Formal communications using different media (particularly presentations and reports) and when to use each appropriately. Dynamics of groups and how to facilitate their performance. Methods of influence and persuasion.