

EU3 LEADER

Developing entrepreneurial third
sector leaders across Europe

REGENERATING EUROPE'S THIRD SECTOR

13 competences our next generation of leaders will need and
7 reasons why



Executive Summary

'Intellectual Outputs' (IOs) 1-3 of EU3Leader

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EU3Leader: progress statement

EU3Leader is a project designed and implemented by six organisations committed to building leadership capacity in Europe's third sector. From December 2016 to May 2018, we have on a European scale:

- researched the state of the third sector
- reviewed academic literature on leadership, management and entrepreneurship
- outlined leadership development offers and gaps
- summarised the EU's professional education frameworks

Based on evidence from the above, we have:

- created a framework of 13 core competences for 'entrepreneurial leadership'
- developed a beta-version of a self-assessment tool based on the framework

This short report serves as an executive summary of our findings to date.

From June 2018 to May 2019, we are piloting a blended (online and offline) learning module and a fully online learning module based on the framework with a group of 60 participants from around Europe.

EU3Leader: concepts

In EU3Leader, we define **leadership** as purposeful interventions in organisations by one leader or a group of actors, designed to affect the strategy, the climate, the decisions and the structures of that organisation, with responsibility for its survival and success.

It is important, though not always easy, to distinguish leadership from **management**. According to leadership scholar Keith Grint, management refers to a form of activity directed at solving 'tame' – that is, regularised – issues that may have a required response or correct way of operating. Or to put it another way: "... management is the equivalent of déjà vu (seen this before), whereas leadership is the equivalent of vu jà dé (never seen this before)." (Grint, 2010).

In turn, we borrow our definition of **entrepreneurship** from the EU's framework of entrepreneurial competences (EntreComp): "entrepreneurship is when you act upon opportunities and ideas and transform them into value for others" (FFE-YE, 2012).' Furthermore, the EntreComp framework explicitly includes multiple types of entrepreneurship including social entrepreneurship and refers to "value creation in the public, private and third sector or any hybrid combination of the three" (EntreComp). Within the EntreComp, entrepreneurship can be practised individually or collectively – which is appropriate for third sector organisations, in which leadership is intended to be collective and participatory.

The literature highlights another defining element of entrepreneurship located in the third sector – the diversity of the sector itself (Andersson, 2011). The third sector as a whole consists of organisations of different shapes, forms and sizes, and can have varying roles, functions and activities. This means how entrepreneurship is understood, experienced and practiced will differ across the sector. We take an inclusive view of the third sector, covering civil society organisations, social enterprises, non-profits, NGOs, associations, foundations, mutuals and cooperatives.

Having reviewed academic literature on the multiple concepts of leadership, management and entrepreneurship, EU3Leader partners resolved to emphasise three aspects in designing a framework of competences and associated resources:

- (1) Entrepreneurial leadership is **about practice not just characteristics**: we want to not only look at what individuals need to become a 'good leader', or at their actions, but also focus on how leadership is practised day by day within an organisation and what this says about the organisation.
- (2) Entrepreneurial leadership is **distributed and inclusive**: we want to broaden the focus beyond the notion of an individual 'leader', and instead adopt a more inclusive view of how leadership can be informed by different individuals, with more emphasis on the collective nature of leadership.
- (3) Entrepreneurial leaders should be **self-aware**: they should be encouraged to undergo a process of self-discovery. However, this should not only focus on self-awareness, to understand their strengths and weaknesses; leaders should also see this as an opportunity to broaden their gaze and consider the context around them. This can involve seeking critical perspectives and asking awkward questions.

Third sector organisations are usually defined as organisations independent from both the state and the market. The third sector plays an important role in Europe (Evers & Laville, 2004), is a vital element of Europe's identity, and a major productive field. In most European countries, third sector organisations are growing in number and in size and becoming more professionalised. They are recognised as a strong economic power and count more than 28 million full-time equivalent workers (paid and voluntary) – 13% of the EU workforce in 2014 (Salamon & Sokolowski, 2016).

State of the third sector

Despite overall growth within the third sector and the persistence of different legal structures among organisations, common trends or barriers have been observed (Brandsen et al., 2016; Pape et al., 2016). Generally, conditions in Europe have significantly changed as a result of the global economic crisis, including decreasing levels of public funding and changing modes of relations with the state. The following common trends can be observed:

First, there is more demand for managerialism, which means that third sector organisations are increasingly gaining legitimacy by applying business-like methods and taking on business-like organisational forms. That creates an inherent tension between the non-profit mission, and the need to succeed within a market economy.

This trend is somewhat mixed up with the notion of professionalisation. While the traditional notion of professionalism encompasses "occupational control of the work" through professional associations (Freidson, 2001), in third sector discourses the term often refers to efficiency and effectiveness, to stakeholders' needs and innovation (Meyer et al., 2013). Among managerialist third sector organisations, the term "professional" refers to being controlled by management boards, and since the 1990s organisations have increasingly applied management methods and hired management staff.

A driving force towards increasing managerialism is the pressure towards accountability (Christensen & Ebrahim, 2006; Ebrahim, 2005, 2009; Hittleman, 2007). Third sector organisations are not only expected to act in accordance with accounting standards and management control. They are also more and more compelled to document and quantify their impact. Philanthropy is now based less on trust and support for an organisational mission, and more on the social investment logic, which expects a tangible return on investment (Maier et al., 2015) or on a demonstrable social impact (Lingane & Olsen, 2004).

These developments are accompanied by – and partly caused by – changing relations between the public sector and the third sector. This includes the declining budget of the public sector, especially true at regional and municipal levels, and concepts of public management that focus on service contracts instead of subsidies. The “worldwide shift toward market solutions for solving public problems” (Wijkström & Zimmer, 2011, p. 10), is also witnessed in Europe in the form of deregulation and outsourcing of social services. We assume that competition could become even more tough, since social services are increasingly financed by grants given directly to clients instead of to third sector organisations.

Generally, the increase in the volume and concentration of private wealth and changing practices in public spending means private donors have gained importance – not primarily in terms of their financial weight, but in their influence and in how they are increasingly capturing attention. Third sector organisations increasingly focus on foundations as potential donors or investors – which also has implications for the professionalisation of management.

The blurring of boundaries, leading to more “hybrid” actors like social enterprises, social businesses, venture philanthropy and public-private partnerships, as well as to a certain convergence of all sectors, seems to be a trend in most European countries. An aspect of this development is the accelerating competition between third sector and for-profit organisations. Developments in European competition law may lead to further liberalisation and increased competition between for-profit and non-profit organisations and thus may have even more severe effects on the sector (Herzig, 2006).

In recent years many policy fields in which third sector organisations are substantially engaged have gained importance, for example sustainability, ageing and care, migration, health, social inequality, youth and education. Demographic changes will further accelerate these developments (European Commission, 2012). Two general trends are evident. First, in the field of social services, demand for quality – which had been rising in the last decades (Simsa et al., 2004) – will probably increase further. Clients and their relatives expect professional services, tailored to their needs. Second, as a consequence of growing social inequality and structural unemployment as well as reduced public infrastructure, new demands will arise (Maaser, 2009). In any case, third sector organisations will not run out of work.

Regarding civic engagement, we find more diversity, but less stability and loyalty. The third sector is confronted with a slight reduction in volunteering mainly due to urbanisation and lower engagement rates in cities compared to rural areas (More-Hollerweger & Rameder, 2013; Rameder & More-Hollerweger, 2009). Further, there is a basic shift in individuals’ motivation to volunteer. Civic engagement and volunteering has become more project-oriented and increasingly linked to individual goals and values. Thus, it will be an ongoing challenge to develop management strategies and organisational structures to cope with quantitative and qualitative changes in volunteering. It is clear that long-term commitment is on the retreat. This is best exemplified by the difficulty of recruiting board members, while more temporary engagement enjoys high popularity (Brandsen et al., 2016; Pape et al., 2016).

Seven Key Challenges: why we need entrepreneurial leadership

In the following, we elaborate challenges and opportunities for the third sector in EU member states. Some challenges and opportunities are specific for certain countries or regions. Rich countries in Northern or Central Europe face a different situation than Southern European countries, which have been hit more severely by the economic crisis, or Central and East European countries, which show specific conditions as a consequence of the transition from communist to capitalist

systems. The key challenge in Northern and Central Europe is competition within the third sector or with the private sector. In Southern Europe, it is simply about survival from one month to the next. In Central and Eastern European countries, the key challenge is the lack of public trust.

The development of leadership competences is both a challenge and an opportunity. In the last decade, in many countries in Northern and Central Europe large parts of third sector organisations have already undergone significant processes of professionalisation. Still, there is a need for further capacity building, especially in smaller and grassroots organisations. In Southern and Eastern European countries, a lack of leadership capacity and also of management skills is reported as a problem.

(1) Funding

Funding is a challenge in almost all countries we surveyed. Traditionally, the third sector has been highly dependent on government funding. Generally, a decrease in public funding (due to the economic crisis and neoliberal policies) is observable; organisations in most countries report financial strains. Most leaders in the sector see a need to diversify funding sources and to commercialise fundraising to ensure stable, sustainable resources. Although new forms of finance are emerging, the sector is still dependent on public funding.

The transfer from public subsidies to service contracts leads to higher requirements regarding accountability, including resource-intensive (impact) measurement. In some countries, high financial dependency on public funding also implies high political dependency. This puts the third sector at risk of losing its watchdog function.

Donations from the public are one source of income that can help to protect this function. But amounts of household donations to the third sector vary considerably between European countries, as shown by 2013 figures (table 1): from 16,380 million Euro in the United Kingdom with 64.1 million inhabitants, down to 91 million Euro in Hungary (9.8 million inhabitants). Moreover, some countries report a decrease in private donations and/or membership fees (e.g. Greece, the Netherlands).

Another challenge in this context is the strong focus on social entrepreneurs and other forms of hybrid organisations (e.g. in Ireland). As attention and resources shift to these areas, the financial situation of traditional non-profit organisations is comparatively worsening.

A major opportunity is EU funding and other international funding sources. But access, knowledge and resources vary widely amongst different countries, with richer countries having considerable advantages: EU projects require general professional skills, substantial human resources and language skills, and bring a high administrative burden. EU and country-level projects are an important source of funding in most countries and thus an opportunity for this sector. Nevertheless, the short (or medium-term) project logic – when funding is focused on interventions of a few years at most – is not helpful for an organisation's long-term sustainability.

New forms of financing strategies like social impact bonds or crowdfunding are encouraging; however these are not yet well-developed in many countries.

(2) Innovation

In light of the funding squeeze, new social problems and other challenges, social innovation and entrepreneurial thinking are seen as important opportunities in all EU countries. Yet experts and sector leaders from some countries report a lack of entrepreneurial thinking. There is criticism in some quarters of top-down attempts to define social entrepreneurship and concomitant calls for

greater independence and the bottom-up development of new social enterprises. Third sector organisations tend to be innovative in finding solutions for social problems and those who see themselves as social entrepreneurs specifically seek out new ways of working.

Further, the call for more entrepreneurship is a symptom of the aforementioned shift toward market solutions for public problems. While social entrepreneurs might indeed be providing new products or services, they tend to experience a high degree of insecurity, low wages and a large amount of unpaid work (Hartmann, 2012, p. 251). A crucial challenge is thus to promote innovation and entrepreneurship while ensuring adequate working conditions.

(3) Human resources management

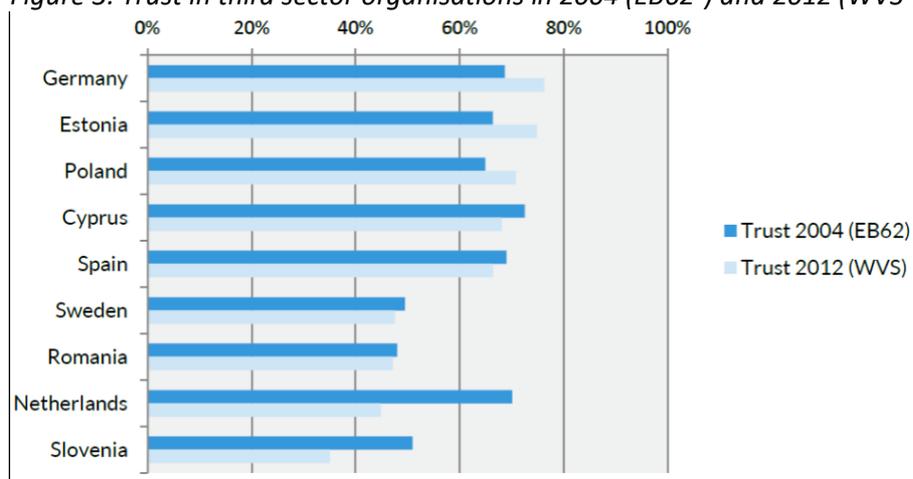
Human resources management brings diverse challenges. First, mobilising, keeping and training volunteers is challenging. With decreasing numbers, organisations in all EU member states have to develop new, flexible strategies to mobilise, manage and retain volunteers. Increasing capacities to mobilise and attract more citizens to participate in civic actions would also enhance the sector's advocacy and thus its democratic power.

Second, motivation of regular staff is sometimes reported as a challenge, because of low wages in the sector and demanding working conditions.

(4) Public image and trust

In some countries, such as Austria, Germany and the Netherlands, third sector organisations enjoy high credibility, even while the future is uncertain. They increasingly have to prove their right to exist even in these countries, due to governmental expectations that the best solutions will come from the market, rather than from non-profits. In the post-Communist countries, public image and trust is rather low, but higher than in Denmark, Sweden and Finland (Bekkers & Verkaik 2015). Thus it is a challenge to increase trust in the sector by communicating its impact and its benefits.

Figure 3: Trust in third sector organisations in 2004 (EB62¹) and 2012 (WVS²)



Source: Bekkers & Verkaik (2015)

¹ Eurobarometer 2004

² World Value Survey 2012

(5) Accountability and governance

Strong accountability and good governance are significant requirements in all countries. Third sector organisations are expected to prove their impact – which might be an opportunity for larger and better-resourced organisations, since impact measurement enables them to communicate their achievements in a language that is easily understood. A focus on impact can also benefit organisational learning and efficiency. But for smaller and less well-funded organisations, this shift towards resource-intensive impact reporting is a challenge.

On governance, third sector organisations need to ensure their structure enables transparency, democracy and participation, and sufficient oversight of management by boards and members. While governance tends to be strong in many countries – with discussions around what for-profit organisations can learn from the third sector – in others, there is much room for improvement.

(6) Intra- and inter-sectoral cooperation

Ensuring effective cooperation within the sector, but also with other organisations and stakeholders, is both a challenge and an opportunity in most countries.

A recent study shows that innovation and organisational learning are often linked to cooperation across fields or sectors (Christanell et al., 2017). Apart from being a means to improve financial sustainability and quality of services, collaboration is also a means to improve the sector's public image and its power to advocate. Collaboration may also lead to an improved operating environment (public funding, suitable legal frameworks, etc.).

In some countries there are umbrella organisations which simplify and promote both intra-sectoral and cross-sectoral cooperation. Countries that lack such umbrella organisations report more divisions within the sector between different organisations and movements.

Government relations depend widely on national welfare systems and the historical context. Nevertheless, ensuring good relations with public bodies is important for the third sector in all EU countries.

(7) Legal and governmental framework

In a number of countries (e.g. Hungary, Poland, Spain, Greece), the political situation is challenging the watchdog role of the third sector. By limiting civil rights and by restricting funding of critical organisations, governments are making advocacy and other political activities very difficult. In some countries, it is hard to access information on non-profit and social enterprise law.

The structure of government also plays a role. Federal structures bring both bureaucratic structures but also a proximity to local citizens. Overly centralised structures make it difficult to work on a local level. However, this topic is very country-specific and cannot be fully addressed by EU regulations or EU-wide capacity-building.

Leadership development: a patchwork

In spite of the common challenges faced by the third sector across much of Europe, there is little evidence of common attempts to develop leadership. Even at national level in most EU Member States, frameworks for leadership and training for leadership development appear to be sporadic.

They are developed by individual training providers — universities, training companies or third sector umbrella bodies.

We are not in a position to make a value judgment on whether such diversity is good or bad for leadership development. However, it does lead us to conclude that there is a space for a framework like EU3Leader. After project end, it is also our aspiration that EU3Leader could serve as a resource for training providers to re-assess their offer – as well as offering some training resources directly to managers aspiring to become entrepreneurial leaders.

EU-level umbrella organisations in the third sector have mainly been focused on advocacy and research. Where they have focused on capacity-building or training, this has been based on peer-to-peer learning around practices or professions specific to societal challenges and to specific areas such as volunteering or fundraising. This is essentially the gap that led us to launch the EU3Leader project, and our review of leadership development offers confirmed this assessment. In addition, the increasing importance of EU funding to the sector provides justification for addressing leadership development at a pan-European rather than merely a national scale.

Across the European countries that responded to the survey, third sector leadership programmes and training appear to be at different stages of development; they vary by European region and by key developments in specific countries.

Some European countries have excelled in developing leadership programmes targeted at third sector leaders. For example, the Central European countries (Austria, Slovakia and Czech Republic) all appear to have developed sophisticated and accessible courses targeted at third sector leaders. Other countries with noticeable development in such programmes are the United Kingdom and Sweden.

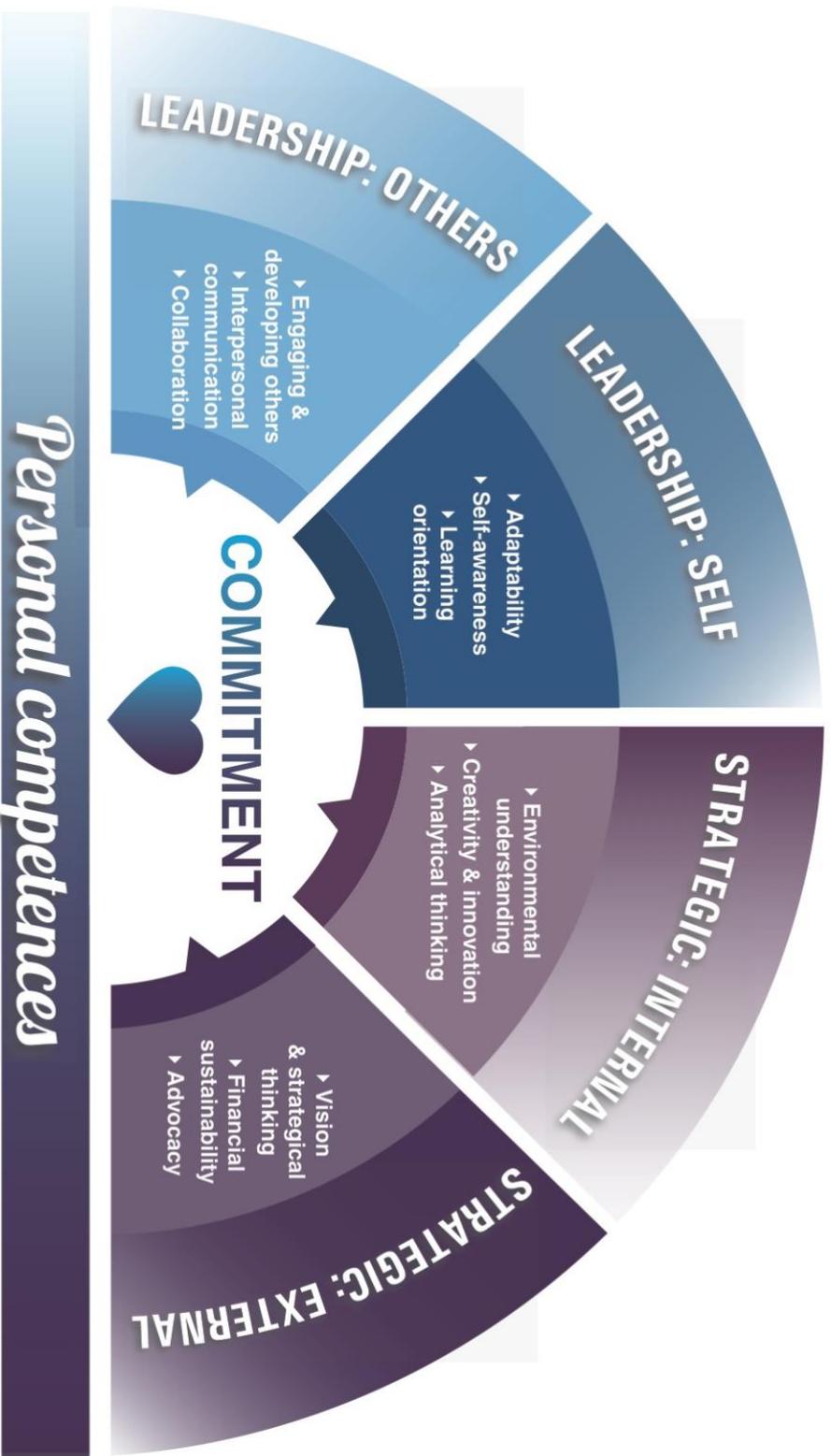
In contrast, most countries in the Central and Eastern European region reported little access to third sector leadership development — other than Poland, which had a few local projects running. One reaction to the lack of leadership development in some European countries was for third sector managers to seek and access training and courses in neighbouring countries. Here is one respondent's experience of accessing third sector leadership programmes abroad, with the desire to bring back such expertise to their home country, Latvia:

"I did leadership training when I worked for the NGO Centre, sponsored by Soros foundation, UNDP and Adult lifelong learning programme. And Forum SYD (SIDA) from Sweden. The point is that a lot of people - NGO leaders - are getting trainings from those mentioned organisations (I got all [of these] trainings)... But the problem is - somebody has to pay for it. NGOs in Latvia are starving, they are not ready to pay for training.....It was my dream after I visited John Hopkins University and my other colleagues in USA, Canada and Europe - to prepare the special course for Baltic state NGO leaders. This is still my dream."

While specifically designed and delivered third sector leadership development programmes are less common, most European countries did demonstrate a market of more general leadership programmes. Many were delivered by the public and corporate sector, which could be accessed by third sector leaders. There was also a wealth of programmes delivered at a university level across European countries. Interestingly, in many countries the training was not necessarily branded as 'leadership' development, but often used other terms, such as management or business studies — but arguably covered similar issues and topics. This can make it difficult for third sector leaders to understand what leadership training opportunities are available in their country.

The response from the Latvian expert quoted above also demonstrates common barriers to accessing leadership development: limited funds and capacity. For many organisations, particularly smaller ones, it can be challenging to find time to devote to leadership development, particularly when leaders are overstretched and undertaking multiple roles. In tough times for the sector, leadership development can be perceived as a luxury, rather than a necessity. Programmes often charge substantial or prohibitive fees, especially those delivered in the corporate sector or at a university level. Proximity can also be an issue: many third sector leaders have to visit larger cities or even neighbouring countries to access training.

Among the European countries that reported accredited leadership programmes, these were mainly at university level. There were very few accredited courses on third sector leadership development outside universities. Again, this echoes similar barriers on funding and capacity to access such courses.



Additional Competences

PLANNING & ORGANIZING IMPACT ORIENTATION ALLIANCE BUILDING

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EU3Leader: the competences explained

The EU3Leader competences are organised into four headings around a core competence called ‘commitment’. The four headings are strategic – external, strategic – internal, leadership – self, and leadership – others.

Many of our findings are well reflected in the EU’s EntreComp framework. We concluded that the specificities of the third sector demanded a completely new framework, rather than merely some additions to EntreComp. In particular, the challenges of building public image and trust, HR management, governance, cross-sectoral collaboration and advocacy would need greater attention in EU3Leader. This was foreseeable because EntreComp was conceived as a framework and resource for all sectors, so was necessarily broad as well as deep.

CORE	Commitment	concerns the motivation to commit to the vision, mission and values of the organisation, aligning one’s own interests and behaviours with the needs, priorities and goals of the organisation.
Strategic: External	Vision and strategic thinking	concerns the ability to identify objectives, anticipate opportunities and foresee future scenarios, which contribute to the achievement of an organisation’s mission.
	Financial Sustainability	refers to the ability to obtain funds from a range of sources to cover the full operating costs as well as a programme and delivery costs, from strategic plans to individual actions, understanding environment to identify opportunities and to create value to funders and to the organization. This also implies knowledge and understanding (e.g. financial analysis, accounting, budgeting) to accurately identify opportunities and risks in organisation strategies.
	Advocacy	is about persuading or influencing someone to change his/her position, achieving positive outcomes in support of for the mission of the organisation. This may also include campaigning, agenda-setting, channel spontaneous movements and protests both in own market/sector or country but also Europe-wide and globally.
Strategic: Internal	Environ-mental Understand-ing	concerns the ability to clearly read opportunities and threats in the sector/market and weaknesses and strengths in the organisation, to identify the most appropriate strategic response.
	Creativity & Innovation	is about developing original, purposeful and impact-focused solutions, ideas or approaches to improve effectiveness and efficiency in reaching the organisation’s goals.
	Analytical Thinking	is the ability to identify problems, analyse significant information, look for and present relevant data to figure out a conceptual map that can help to make decisions and solve the issue. It also includes the ability to identify patterns or keys in complex situations that are not obviously related.

Leadership: Others	Engaging and Developing Others	is about encouraging, inspiring and supporting others to develop confidence and capability to help them realise their full potential and to achieve common goals as a team.
	Interpersonal Communicaton	is the ability to listen, seek and express ideas and messages effectively, using coherent speech (verbal, nonverbal and emotional) in private or public situations, and active listening to fully comprehend what others are saying.
	Collaboration	is about working in a cooperative way with others, both within and outside the organisation, even beyond own market/sector or country, combining individual with interdependent and common goals, based on common values and a shared culture.
Leadership: Self	Adaptability	is about effectively adapting your behaviours to a variety of situations, individual or groups, either expected or unexpected. It also shows versatility to accept changes or difficulties in achieve goals, individual or organisational.
	Self-Awareness	is about identifying own beliefs, values, strengths and weaknesses, and understanding the impact that they have on emotions and behaviours. It is also about controlling emotions in difficult situations, responding appropriately, recognising own 'triggers' and how one's behaviour impacts on others.
	Learning Orientation	is the capability to keep focused on updating and increasing knowledge, skills and experiences to consistently improve performance. To do this, one seeks learning opportunities, shares knowledge with others and applies learning to the job.

EU3Leader framework: a user's guide

The most common definition of a 'competence' is a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that brings an effective performance. In EU3Leader, we define every competence through specific behaviours. The behavioural indicators allow third sector managers to identify, develop and assess their competences. Any observable behaviour is evidence that a competence has or has not been acquired – and at what level. The list of observable behaviours provide an indicator to evaluate learning outcomes.

The EU3Leader framework is not made for experts in competences. On the contrary, it could be used by any manager, employee or volunteer interested in third sector leadership. No matter the organisation's size, activity or country, following these competences should help a manager to develop into an entrepreneurial third leader, S/he would do so by practising and so embedding the behaviours set out under the competences.

Each behaviour belongs under one of four levels, from least to most sophisticated:

- Level 1 behaviours are about the individual being able to motivate her/himself, create short-term effect, and be reactive or passive.
- Level 2 behaviours move from reactive to active – they include managing relations in small groups, teamwork motivation and medium-term effects.
- Level 3 behaviours are about taking initiative, having effective relations with larger groups of people, teams and multidisciplinary profiles. His/her effects are medium and long-term and s/he is an example to others.
- Level 4 behaviours are about anticipation, global vision and multi-dimensional action. The leader creates impact on the whole organisation and explores and creates long-term effects.

It is important to notice that people are not linear in their behaviour. That means it is perfectly possible that in one competence someone behaves at a higher level, yet not in a lower one. That is the 'human factor' in these frameworks.

The EU3Leader self-assessment tool is designed to give managers a rapid, yet basic overview of their global strengths and weaknesses according to the framework. It does so by asking how frequently a manager practises certain behaviours.

Please visit <http://euclidnetwork.eu/portfolio-posts/eu3leader/> to find out more.

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