

EPPLEY INSTITUTE PROJECT PROFILE

Research: Global Parks Competency Framework Revision

Project Overview & Applications

The Need for Global Competencies

Prior to 2010, few park professionals worldwide could seek credentials through a national certifying body. In 2011, the Eppley Institute proposed an international competency-based certification program through what would become the World Parks Academy (WPA). The original WPA international Competency Framework was finalized in 2014 and became the foundation of the Certified Park Professional (CPP) certification, which has certified 100+ park professionals globally.

The 2013-2014 Competency Framework

Based on evolving global trends in parks and recreation and a mission to maintain a relevant parks certificate program, this project sought to update the 2014 Competency Framework through a modified Delphi research approach.

Guiding Questions

(1) Which competencies remain important to the international parks and public lands field? (2) Are there competencies that require revision? and (3) Should any new competencies should be added?

New and Revised 2022 Competencies

Ultimately, 78 competencies were validated by an international panel of experts through two study phases. Two competencies were added related to Interpretation and Native & Indigenous Peoples and many competencies were revised to reflect current practice and trends.

Applications

This foundation allows for the use of these competencies as standards for training and development, standards in hiring processes, tools for employee feedback, and frameworks for career advancement.

“I’m very glad WPA and Indiana University are doing this highly valuable work!”

Ross Hoover, Director, Parks and Recreation
Tualatin, Oregon, USA

Stats at a Glance



Study Design

Employing a Modified Delphi Technique, this study developed and validated professional competencies in two phases. Pre-study initiation work reviewed literature and feedback from the 2020 World Parks Congress.

- **PHASE 1:** Focus groups with park professionals to finalize competencies for inclusion in Phase 2.
- **PHASE 2:** Two rounds of an online survey which collected feedback and degree of consensus (“strongly agree” + “somewhat agree”) for each competency.

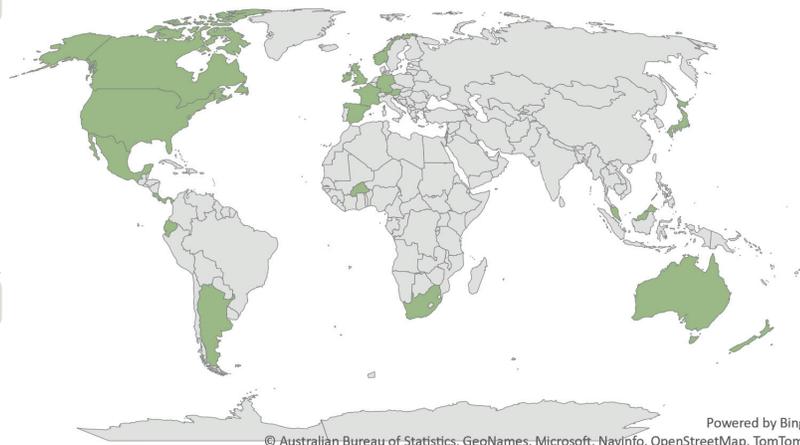


FIGURE 1. Global Region of Respondents

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Expert Input

The 70 experts included in the Phase 2 represented 22 countries and 6 continents (Figure 1). Additionally, more than 80% reported more than 21 years of experience in the parks profession. 43% had a CPP certification.

Parks Experiences of Expert Participants (in Years)

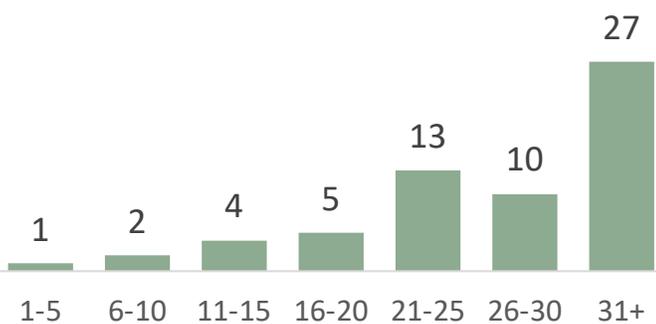


FIGURE 2. Distribution of Parks Experience, in years, among Round 2 Participants

Results

- Results indicate a high level of consensus to arrive at a well-validated set of competencies.
- Most of the competencies identified in 2013-2014 remain important to a group of highly experienced park professionals from around the world. Several competencies remain important but were edited to reflect current understandings and remain relevant.
- Themes that emerged in respondent feedback were biodiversity, climate change and resilience, diversity and inclusion, especially of indigenous cultures and practices.
- Two new competencies (“Relationships with Native and Indigenous People” and “Interpretation as a Tool and Resource”) were added based on respondent feedback.
- The updated framework has fifteen categories, with 78 sub (“child”) competencies. Each competency had at least 80% agreement in one or both expert survey rounds, with many achieving as high as 100% agreement among more than 60 professionals.

“Incredible list of competencies”

Ruth Holmes, London Legacy Landscape Architecture, United Kingdom

Competency Framework Overview

PARK MANAGEMENT

1. Leadership
2. Management and Supervision
3. Project Management
4. Business Acumen
5. Asset Management
6. Operations and Maintenance
7. Landscape and Outdoor Management
8. Resource Stewardship
9. Education and Interpretation
10. Recreation
11. Health and Wellness

INTERNATIONAL

12. Transcontinental Park Management
13. Global Perspective
14. Standards-Based Multidisciplinary Issues
15. Global Management Approaches

Discussion

This study updated a set of park professional competencies that are relevant globally and used by the World Parks Academy for its certifications. Drawing from an assembly of international experts in the field, the competencies refined in this study provide the professional foundation for the important work of park, recreation, and protected area managers.

This framework is the result of a high level of consensus among experienced park professionals worldwide.

Acknowledgements

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