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Nova40 Competency Performance Architecture for Tharwah

Rationale & Literature Review

v1.0

Introduction

The Nova40 Competency Performance Architecture (CPA) is a modern, work-related behavioural competency and skills framework developed by Tharwah, a leading talent solutions and consultancy provider in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA). It represents an update to previous legacy behavioural competency frameworks, such as Korn Ferry38, Lominger and SHL Universal Competency Framework (UCF). The purpose of the architecture is three-fold: firstly, to provide a framework against which Tharwah Psychometric Assessments can be mapped and scored according to an individual's likely level of performance – known as competency potential. It also integrates seamlessly with the 360/180-degree assessment since behavioural statements are provided for each of the Nova40 competencies. Secondly, it enables role-matching for occupational roles and job families, assessing a mix of competencies and an overall score derived from the mapped competencies. Thirdly, the Nova40 CPA provides a core tool for talent management activities including recruitment and selection, performance management, leadership and team development, learning & development, succession planning and rewards & compensation.

The Nova40 CPA has been developed with two key principles in mind: (1) to represent an update to legacy competency frameworks which is relevant to the current and future world of work, which is changing rapidly. And (2), to be relevant to the context of the GCC which is a rapidly developing region with specific Government Transformation Visions which envision a future which is enabled to a large extent through human capital development – the Nova40 CPA therefore plays an important role in reflecting the GCC Government visions and priorities. It also has applicability and can be applied in consulting engagements across public and private sectors in the GCC and globally.

When designing the Nova40 CPA, the following design principles were adhered to:

- Comprehensive to include key behavioural competencies and skills that are as broad as previous measures but adapted to meet the future needs of the workforce
- Enablement of the framework in the digital system to enable functional role profiles (e.g. HR, Finance etc.) to be created and a pick'n'mix system of mapping to a given role
- Aligned to the Nova Personality Questionnaire (NPQ) to enable easy conceptual mapping of personality traits and subscales onto the Nova40 behavioural competencies
- Applicability and ease of use as an assessment framework – as such it includes levelled indicators at 4 career levels to enable individuals to be assessed in terms of their performance on the competencies
- Direct and seamless linkage to the 360-degree assessment tool where behavioural indicators are given for each competency to enable assessment of individuals using a 360 survey
- Directly aligned to Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 and broader GCC leadership and workforce transformation agendas.

Rationale & Theoretical Foundations

The Nova40 CPA has been developed through a comprehensive review of existing behavioural competency frameworks, and redefined to be relevant to the GCC regional visions and future world of work. This is reflected in the naming of the behavioural competencies, their descriptions and the career level indicators associated with each behavioural competency. The review of existing behavioural competency frameworks includes the Korn Ferry Leadership Architect 38 competencies, Lominger 67 competencies, SHL Universal Competency Framework (UCF), SHL Great 8 competencies and Sova38 competencies. The following explains in more detail their relevance and utility for developing the current framework.

Korn Ferry Leadership Architect (38 Competencies)

Korn Ferry's framework organizes 38 competencies into 5 clusters - *Strategic, Operational, People, Leadership, and Personal Effectiveness* - distinguished by its research-backed linkage to business outcomes and talent mobility. The model emphasizes how leaders achieve results (e.g., "Dealing with Ambiguity," "Strategic Mindset") rather than just technical skills. Unique features include the behavioural indicators at 4 career stages (Individual Contributor to Executive) and derailment risks.

Lominger (67 Competencies)

Now owned by Korn Ferry, Lominger's Leadership Architect (originally 67 competencies) pioneered behaviourally-anchored scales for leadership development. Its hallmark is the Career Architect, which is a taxonomy grouping skills into Skills, Knowledge, Values. The Lominger framework also introduced the concept of Learning Agility and a comprehensive guide for development of each behavioural competency.

SHL Universal Competency Framework (UCF)

SHL's research-based model structures 112 behaviours into 20 competencies across 8 clusters (*Leading, Supporting, Presenting, etc.*), and incorporate behavioural indicators and occupational benchmarking for job families. One feature of the UCF which has informed the design of the Nova40 Framework is its integration with the online psychometrics and applicability for volume recruitment.

Overall, KornFerry38 is strong for use in leadership assessment and development, whilst Lominger is strong in the area of development and SHL in the field of volume hiring.

The Nova40 framework updates traditional competencies to be relevant for an era of human-AI collaboration, decentralized organizations, and continuous disruption. Where Korn Ferry, Lominger and SHL offer snapshots of industrial-era leadership and behaviours, Nova40 model provides the operating system for future-ready organizations. In addition to considering existing frameworks, it was also necessary to consider the future behavioural skills which are crucial for the future world of work. The world Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report (2025) outlines some of the key behavioural competencies which are relevant to the future world of work, which have been considered as an additional overlay when development Nova40. Below are some of the key ways in which Nova40 represents an update to legacy competency models:

1. **Future-Readiness:** Korn Ferry and Lominger competencies were designed for industrial-era hierarchies, whereas the Nova40 competencies are built for networked, AI-driven organizations. For example, Nova40's competency of **Data-Driven Decision Making** replaces SHL's "Analytical Reasoning" by integrating AI ethics and real-time analytics. It also includes WEF future job traits such as creative thinking, resilience, flexibility and empathy in leadership.



2. **Human-Technology Integration:** Legacy frameworks treat technology as a tool, whereas Nova40 embeds digital fluency (e.g., Technological Literacy) as a core behavioural trait.
3. **Inclusivity & ESG:** Older models pay lip service to diversity, whereas **Inclusive Leadership** and **Ethical Stakeholder Management** in Nova40 operationalize ESG accountability.
4. **Behavioural Science Alignment:** Nova40's **Persuades & Influences** leverages neuroscience-backed techniques (e.g., social proof), unlike SHL's more outdated "Impact and Influence."
5. **Metrics-Driven:** Nova40 quantifies innovation (patents), creativity (output metrics), and resilience (crisis recovery KPIs), while legacy models tend to rely on subjective 360 reviews.

The Nova40 framework organizes behavioural competencies into five strategically designed clusters, each addressing critical dimensions of modern organizational effectiveness. This grouping methodology reflects both contemporary workplace demands and future-oriented capabilities, creating a cohesive architecture for talent assessment and development.

The first cluster, Tasks & Projects (Delivery, Process Management, Innovation), represents the operational engine of organizational performance. By integrating delivery speed, systematic optimization, and creative problem-solving, this triad captures the essential tension between structure and flexibility that characterizes high-performing teams in volatile environments. The cluster's design acknowledges the transformative impact of AI augmentation, balancing human creativity with automated efficiency while aligning with the World Economic Forum's (2025) identified future skills, particularly "Analytical Thinking & Innovation."

Building on this operational foundation, the People Leadership cluster (Teams, Talent Development, Influence) addresses the human dynamics of organizational success. This grouping recognizes that modern leadership extends beyond traditional hierarchical authority to encompass psychological safety cultivation in hybrid environments, real-time skills development, and influence across distributed networks. The inclusion of multi-generational and AI-augmented team management reflects the complex interpersonal landscape facing contemporary leaders.

At the cognitive level, the Strategic & Cognitive Skills cluster (Decision-Making, Foresight, Adaptability) forms the antifragile core required for navigating uncertainty. This triad combines data-informed judgment with intuitive pattern recognition, anticipatory thinking for disruption planning, and personal-organizational adaptability. Research by McKinsey (2022) substantiates the competitive advantage of this combination, demonstrating that organizations with strong strategic agility outperform peers by 2.3x during market disruptions.

The Personal Effectiveness cluster (Resilience, Ethics, Continuous Growth, Knowledge) serves as the foundational layer for sustained high performance. This grouping integrates stress resilience and burnout prevention (Deloitte, 2023) with ethical decision-making frameworks crucial for AI governance and ESG compliance. Its emphasis on continuous growth acknowledges the exponential change environment identified by the World Economic Forum (2025) as a defining characteristic of future work.



Finally, the Stakeholder & Organizational Impact cluster (Governance, Networks, Vision) operates at the systemic level, driving enterprise-wide transformation. This includes governance mechanisms that balance immediate results with long-term sustainability, strategic relationship building across ecosystems, and visionary leadership that creates coherence across fragmented environments. Together, these competencies enable leaders to translate individual and team capabilities into organizational value.

This five-cluster architecture creates a logical progression from personal mastery to organizational impact, while addressing both current operational realities and emerging future challenges. The framework's design reflects extensive analysis of evolving workplace demands, incorporating empirical research while maintaining practical applicability across industries and organizational contexts.

The structure of the Nova40 competency framework outperforms legacy frameworks in terms of the flow of impact within the groupings to create a logical behavioural and leadership value chain. It is also optimised for hybrid work environments and includes behavioural skills that are important such as virtual influence in People Leadership. It is also explicitly structured for human-AI collaboration (e.g., Process Management includes AI oversight). The career / performance level indicators also align with measurable outcomes and metrics enabling measurement during an assessment or development process.

Theoretical Justification for Behavioural Skills as Constituents of Behavioural Competencies

Behavioural competencies represent broad, observable capacities that enable effective performance in professional roles, but their practical application relies on the mastery of discrete, measurable behavioural skills. This hierarchical relationship between macro-level competencies and micro-level skills is grounded in decades of psychological and organizational research, reflecting how complex capabilities are built through the accumulation and integration of foundational behaviours. So, Behavioural competencies are made up of multiple behavioural skills, and these behavioural skills can be measured in 2 ways: firstly, through individual behavioural indicators which describe behaviour that aligns to each skill; these indicators form the basis of comprehensive assessment frameworks for use in recruitment or development contexts – the foundation of these are in the Nova40 Level 1-4 behavioural indicators which articulate behaviour at 4 career levels; these can be added to with further granular detail for the behavioural skills when designing assessment frameworks. Secondly, it is also worth noting that subscales (or subtraits) in the NPQ and other scales from the psychometrics, directly map onto the behavioural skills and can be used to score competency potential for each behavioural competency. Competency potential scores and observed competency scores, from say as assessment exercise, can be combined a blended to produce a robust score of human potential on the given behavioural competency.

The conceptualization of behavioural skills as atomic units within competencies draws directly from Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, which emphasizes that mastery develops through the reinforcement of specific, observable actions. Similarly, Boyatzis' (1982) competency iceberg model distinguishes between surface-level skills—such as active listening or constructive feedback delivery—and the deeper traits that these behaviours collectively express, like empathy or emotional intelligence. Occupational psychology frameworks, including SHL's Universal Competency Framework, operationalize this principle by defining competencies as clusters of interrelated behaviours that can be assessed for frequency, quality, and impact.

For example, the competency *Persuades & Influences* is not a monolithic trait but a synthesis of discrete behavioural skills, each with its own theoretical and empirical foundation. These include the strategic use of social proof (Cialdini, 2001), audience-tailored messaging (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), and reciprocity-based engagement (Gouldner, 1960). The



integration of these skills into a cohesive competency reflects Gagné's (1984) theory of skill chaining, where discrete capabilities combine hierarchically into complex proficiencies. Anderson's (1996) ACT-R theory further explains how procedural knowledge (individual skills) becomes declarative (competency mastery) through deliberate practice and reinforcement.

This granular approach is particularly critical in the context of the future of work, where rapid technological and organizational change demands precision in capability development. Traditional competency frameworks often treat constructs like *Strategic Thinking* or *Collaboration* as undifferentiated wholes, but AI-augmented and hybrid work environments require the disaggregation of competencies into trainable, adaptable behavioural skills. For instance, the competency *Technological Literacy* depends on skills such as interpreting AI bias alerts (Binns, 2018) and dynamically adjusting human-AI task delegation (Dellermann et al., 2019)—capabilities that legacy frameworks rarely articulate explicitly.

In GCC contexts, the behavioural skill approach enables nuanced alignment with regional cultural norms and socioeconomic visions. Skills such as indirect influence or consensus-building in *majlis* settings operationalize competencies like *Inclusive Leadership* in ways that respect high-power-distance cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 1980) while advancing the human capital goals of Saudi Vision 2030. Empirical studies, such as AlAsmari's (2022) research on competency adoption in Saudi firms, demonstrate that skill-level tailoring improves both assessment accuracy and developmental ROI.

The practical implications of this model are significant. First, it enhances assessment precision by reducing the halo effect (Thorndike, 1920) inherent in broad competency ratings. Second, it increases the efficiency of development initiatives by enabling targeted interventions—for example, training conflict de-escalation skills rather than generic "Team Leadership." Third, it future-proofs frameworks by allowing rapid integration of emerging skills (e.g., AI prompt engineering) into stable competency structures.

The Nova40 CPA embodies this philosophy by designing competencies as modular composites of behavioural skills, ensuring adaptability to technological, cultural, and organizational shifts. This approach not only reflects the latest advances in behavioural science but also delivers the granularity needed for effective talent management in an era of disruption.



Competency Level Justification for a Future-Ready Workplace Assessment

Below is the full competency framework with conceptual linkage to current behavioural competency frameworks and key themes from the World Economic Forum Future of Jobs Report (2025) and the Misk Foundation Leadership Competencies Framework (2022).

		Nova40	Korn Ferry	Lominger Equivalent(s)	GCC Vision Behavioural Competency	WEF Theme	Misk Leadership Competencies
1. Tasks & Projects (Delivery, Process Management, Innovation)	1	Agile Delivery	<i>Action Oriented, Learning on the Fly</i>	<i>Action Oriented, Nimble Learning</i>	UAE's AI-driven govt. services, Saudi gigaproject execution		<i>Force for the future</i>
	2	Drive for Results	<i>Drive for Results</i>	<i>Drives Results</i>	Saudi Vision 2030 performance metrics, Kuwait's economic reforms	<i>4. Motivation and Self-Awareness</i>	<i>Progress Driver Constant learner</i>
	3	Process Optimisation	<i>Process Management</i>	<i>Optimizes Work Processes</i>	Oman's logistics efficiency, UAE's paperless initiatives		
	4	Complex Thinking	<i>Strategic Agility, Problem Solving</i>	<i>Manages Complexity</i>	Qatar's healthcare innovation, NEOM's cross-sector integration		<i>Strategy Shaper</i>
	5	Fosters Innovation	<i>Creativity, Innovation Mgmt</i>	<i>Cultivates Innovation</i>	UAE's AI Strategy 2031, Saudi's entrepreneurial hubs		<i>Force for the future</i>
	6	Inspires Creativity	<i>Creativity</i>	<i>Cultivates Innovation</i>	Qatar's Education City, Dubai's design thinking labs	<i>2. Creative Thinking</i>	

	7	Smart Planning	<i>Planning, Dealing With Ambiguity</i>	<i>Situational Adaptability</i>	GCC megaproject agility (e.g., Red Sea Project)		<i>Force for the future</i>
	8	AI Augmentation	<i>Digital Savvy</i>	<i>Tech Savvy</i>	GCC nations national AI strategies (e.g., UAE's AI Strategy 2031, Saudi's Vision 2030 AI priorities) to integrate AI across sectors (healthcare, energy, smart cities).	<i>9. Collaboration and Teamwork</i>	
2. People Leadership (Teams, Talent Development, Influence)	9	Builds Effective Teams	<i>Building Effective Teams</i>	<i>Builds Effective Teams</i>	UAE's multicultural workforce, Saudi team Saudization	<i>9. Collaboration and Teamwork</i>	<i>People Leader</i>
	10	Upskills Talent	<i>Developing Direct Reports</i>	<i>Develops Talent</i>	Saudi's Saudization, Qatar's AI upskilling		<i>Constant learner People Leader</i>
	11	Strategic Talent Management	<i>Hiring and Staffing</i>	<i>Attracts Top Talent</i>	Oman's tourism talent pipelines, Kuwait's FDI talent goals		<i>Strategy Shaper</i>
	12	Energises Others	<i>Motivating Others</i>	<i>Drives Engagement</i>	UAE's happiness policies, Saudi youth motivation	<i>10. Leadership and Social Influence</i>	<i>Connector</i>
	13	Conflict Resolution	<i>Conflict Management</i>	<i>Manages Conflict</i>	Kuwait's public-private sector mediation	<i>9. Collaboration and Teamwork</i>	
	14	Persuades & Influences	<i>Negotiating, Informing</i>	<i>Persuades</i>	UAE/Kuwait's FDI attraction, Qatar's sports diplomacy	<i>9. Collaboration and Teamwork 10. Leadership and Social Influence</i>	<i>People Leader</i>
	15	Directs Work	<i>Directing Others</i>	<i>Directs Work</i>	Saudi gigaproject coordination, Oman's port management		
	16	Empathic Leadership	<i>Compassion, Approachability</i>	<i>Interpersonal Savvy</i>	UAE's employee wellbeing, Qatar's World Cup hospitality	<i>8. Empathy and Active Listening</i>	

	17	Intelligent Communication	<i>Informing, Written Comm</i>	<i>Communicates Effectively</i>	Hybrid work norms in GCC multinationals	10. <i>Leadership and Social Influence</i>	<i>Connector</i>
3. Cognitive & Strategic Skills (Decision-Making, Foresight, Adaptability)	18	Analytical Thinking	<i>Problem Solving, Decision Quality</i>	<i>Decision Quality</i>	Qatar’s data-driven healthcare, UAE’s smart cities	1. <i>Analytical Thinking</i>	
	19	Strategic Agility	<i>Strategic Agility</i>	<i>Strategic Mindset</i>	Saudi’s ESG strategy, UAE’s <i>Net Zero 2050</i>		<i>Strategy Shaper</i>
	20	Data-Driven Decision Making	<i>Decision Quality</i>	<i>Decision Quality</i>	UAE’s AI governance, Kuwait’s fintech regulation		
	21	Economic Acumen	<i>Business Acumen</i>	<i>Business Insight</i>	Saudi’s non-oil diversification, Oman’s SME growth		
	22	Envisioning the Future	<i>Managing Vision and Purpose</i>	<i>Drives Vision and Purpose</i>	Saudi Vision 2030 cascading, UAE’s <i>We the UAE 2031</i>		<i>Force for the future</i>
	23	Adaptability	<i>Dealing With Ambiguity</i>	<i>Situational Adaptability</i>	Oman’s logistics resilience, Kuwait’s oil volatility		<i>Constant learner</i>
	24	Global Awareness	<i>Perspective</i>	<i>Global Perspective</i>	UAE’s expat leadership, Qatar’s World Cup legacy		<i>Force for the future</i>
	25	Applying AI in Practice	<i>Decision Quality</i>	<i>Problem Solving</i>	GCC countries are investing in Arabic-language AI (e.g., UAE’s AISER Arabic NLP model, Saudi’s CEER automotive AI).	<i>Technological Literacy</i>	
4. Personal Effectiveness (Resilience, Ethics, Continuous Growth, Knowledge)	26	Resilience	<i>Composure, Perseverance</i>	<i>Being Resilient</i>	UAE’s crisis leadership (e.g., COVID-19)	3. <i>Resilience, Flexibility, and Agility</i>	
	27	Continuous Learning	<i>Self-Development</i>	<i>Personal learning</i>	Qatar’s lifelong learning initiatives	5. <i>Curiosity and Lifelong Learning</i>	<i>Constant learner</i>
	28	Integrity & Trust	<i>Integrity and Trust</i>	<i>Instills Trust</i>	Kuwait’s anti-corruption reforms		
	29	Inclusive Leadership	<i>Managing Diversity</i>	<i>Values Differences</i>	Saudi gender balance goals, UAE’s multiculturalism		
	30	Emotional Intelligence	<i>Interpersonal Savvy</i>	<i>Interpersonal Savvy</i>	GCC leadership in hybrid work settings	4. <i>Motivation and Self-Awareness</i>	

	31	Technological Literacy	<i>Technical Learning</i>	<i>Tech Savvy</i>	UAE's blockchain strategy, Saudi's AI fluency	6. <i>Technological Literacy</i>
	32	Cognitive Growth	<i>Learning on the Fly</i>	<i>Learning Agility</i>	Oman's logistics automation upskilling	<i>Constant learner</i>
	33	Active Listening	<i>Listening</i>	<i>Interpersonal Savvy</i>	Qatar's stakeholder engagement for FIFA 2030	8. <i>Empathy and Active Listening</i>
	34	Quality Focus	<i>Functional/Technical Skills</i>	<i>Optimizes Work Processes</i>	NEOM's smart infrastructure standards	7. <i>Dependability and Attention to Detail</i>
5. Stakeholder & Organizational Impact (Governance, Networks, Vision)	35	Ensures Accountability	<i>Delegation, Fairness</i>	<i>Ensures Accountability</i>	Saudi gigaproject governance	<i>Principled leader</i>
	36	Ethical Stakeholder Management	<i>Ethics and Values</i>	<i>Balances Stakeholders</i>	UAE's ESG reporting, Qatar's sustainability goals	<i>Principled leader</i>
	37	Strategic Networking	<i>Organizational Agility</i>	<i>Builds Networks</i>	Kuwait's financial hub networking	
	38	Creates Meaning & Purpose	<i>Managing Vision and Purpose</i>	<i>Drives Vision and Purpose</i>	Saudi's <i>Vibrant Society</i> pillar	
	39	Ethics & Professionalism	<i>Integrity and Trust</i>	<i>Instils Trust</i>	UAE's AI ethics guidelines	<i>Principled leader</i>
	40	Customer Focus	<i>Customer Focus</i>	<i>Customer Focus</i>	Dubai's <i>Customer Happiness Index</i>	



The Nova40 Competency Framework: A Future-Ready Blueprint for Workforce Excellence

The Nova40 framework represents a comprehensive, forward-looking approach to workforce development, designed to address the complex demands of the 21st-century workplace. Grounded in contemporary research and aligned with global megatrends—from AI disruption to geopolitical volatility—this framework bridges critical gaps left by traditional models like Korn Ferry and Lominger.

1. Integration of Human-AI Collaboration

The framework explicitly addresses AI Augmentation (#8) and Applying AI in Practice (#25), competencies absent in legacy models but critical for productivity in an era where 60% of workers will interact with AI daily by 2025 (Gartner, 2023). Research by Brynjolfsson & McAfee (2017) underscores that AI's value lies in complementing human skills—precisely what Nova40 operationalizes through structured human-AI workflow integration.

2. Focus on Cognitive Agility and Continuous Learning

With skills half-lives shrinking to under 5 years (IBM, 2023), Nova40 prioritizes Cognitive Growth (#32) and Continuous Learning (#27), leveraging Ericsson's (1993) deliberate practice theory and Dweck's (2006) growth mindset research. Traditional frameworks treat learning as static, while Nova40 embeds adaptive reskilling to future-proof talent.

3. Emphasis on Psychological Safety and Innovation

Competencies like Fosters Innovation (#5) and Inclusive Leadership (#29) reflect Google's Project Aristotle findings: psychological safety drives high-performing teams. Nova40 goes beyond Lominger's Innovation Management by addressing systemic barriers to creativity, aligning with Amabile's (1996) research on organizational innovation climates.

4. Dynamic Strategic and Analytical Capabilities

Strategic Agility (#19) and Data-Driven Decision Making (#20) counter the limitations of rigid, annual planning cycles. McKinsey (2022) shows agile strategists grow revenue 3x faster, while Kahneman's (2011) bias research validates the need for empirical decision-making—both central to Nova40's design.

5. Ethical and Cultural Intelligence for Global Work

As cross-border collaboration grows, Global Awareness (#24) and Ethical Stakeholder Management (#36) mitigate the 75% failure rate of cross-cultural teams (Harvard, 2021). Nova40's focus on integrity (#28, #39) also addresses rising consumer demand for ethical organizations (Accenture, 2023).

6. Human-Centric Leadership for Hybrid Work



With burnout costing \$322B annually (WHO, 2022), competencies like Empathic Leadership (#16) and Resilience (#26) are no longer optional. Nova40 aligns with Gallup’s (2023) findings that empathetic leaders boost retention by 40%—a gap in Korn Ferry’s trait-based approach.

Why Nova40 outperforms Legacy Frameworks

- AI-Ready: Integrates AI collaboration (missing in Korn Ferry’s Digital Savvy).
- Learning-Centric: Embeds accelerated upskilling (vs. Lominger’s passive Learning Agility).
- Ethically Grounded: Balances innovation with stakeholder ethics (overlooked in SHL’s Decision Quality).
- Globally Scalable: Combines cultural intelligence with strategic foresight.

Conclusion

The Nova40 framework is not merely an update but a paradigm shift—a response to the World Economic Forum’s (2023) call for “skills-first” talent strategies. By merging cutting-edge research with practical competencies, it equips organizations to thrive amid volatility, technological disruption, and evolving workforce expectations.

COMPETENCY

JUSTIFICATION FOR FUTURE OF WORK RELEVANCE

AGILE DELIVERY	In fast-paced, unpredictable markets, the ability to pivot quickly while maintaining quality ensures organizations remain competitive and responsive to disruptions.
DRIVE FOR RESULTS	With increasing pressure to deliver ROI in dynamic conditions, persistent goal-oriented leaders ensure organizational survival and growth.
PROCESS OPTIMISATION	Automation and AI demand streamlined workflows; leaders who eliminate inefficiencies future-proof operations against technological disruption.
COMPLEX THINKING	Globalization and interconnected systems require leaders to synthesize ambiguous data into coherent strategies for multi-faceted challenges.
FOSTERS INNOVATION	Companies that fail to innovate risk obsolescence; psychological safety and experimentation are key to sustaining competitive advantage.
INSPIRES CREATIVITY	AI-augmented workplaces need human creativity to solve novel problems; leaders must cultivate unconventional thinking to drive breakthroughs.
SMART PLANNING	Traditional long-term planning is obsolete; dynamic, data-adjusted tactics are essential in volatile markets.
AI AUGMENTATION	The future workforce won’t compete with AI but will need to co-create with it—making AI integration a core productivity multiplier.



BUILDS EFFECTIVE TEAMS	Hybrid/remote work demands intentional team design; clarity, trust, and complementary skills are critical for distributed collaboration.
UPSKILLS TALENT	The half-life of skills is shrinking; leaders must prioritize continuous learning to close competency gaps rapidly.
STRATEGIC TALENT MANAGEMENT	Workforce planning must align with AI and automation shifts to ensure the right talent is ready for future roles.
ENERGISES OTHERS	Amid burnout and quiet quitting, motivational leadership retains top talent by linking effort to meaningful rewards.
CONFLICT RESOLUTION	Diverse, dispersed teams face friction; constructive conflict resolution maintains productivity and cohesion.
PERSUADES & INFLUENCES	Stakeholder complexity requires evidence-based persuasion to align cross-functional teams and partners.
DIRECTS WORK	Clear goals and feedback loops are vital in decentralized work environments to maintain accountability.
EMPATHIC LEADERSHIP	Mental health awareness demands leaders who recognize emotional cues and foster psychologically safe workplaces.
INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION	Information overload necessitates tailored messaging across channels to cut through noise and drive action.
ANALYTICAL THINKING	Data proliferation requires leaders who can extract actionable insights from complex datasets.
STRATEGIC AGILITY	Organizations must continuously recalibrate strategies in response to geopolitical, economic, and technological shifts.
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING	Intuition alone is insufficient; empirical analysis mitigates biases in high-stakes decisions.
ECONOMIC ACUMEN	Globalization and volatility demand leaders who anticipate market trends and allocate resources strategically.
ENVISIONING THE FUTURE	Inspirational narratives attract talent/investors by linking present actions to transformative futures.



ADAPTABILITY	Rapid role changes (e.g., AI integration) require leaders who can adjust behaviours fluidly.
GLOBAL AWARENESS	Cross-cultural competence is non-negotiable for leading diverse teams and navigating international markets.
APPLYING AI IN PRACTICE	As generative AI handles 40% of routine tasks (Gartner), crafting precise prompts becomes a core digital skill.
RESILIENCE	Constant disruption tests endurance; resilient leaders model stress management and recovery.
CONTINUOUS LEARNING	Lifelong learning is the antidote to technological obsolescence in an era of rapid upskilling.
INTEGRITY & TRUST	Transparency builds stakeholder confidence in an age of misinformation and ethical scrutiny.
INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP	Diverse teams outperform homogenous ones; inclusion unlocks innovation and market relevance.
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	EQ is critical for managing hybrid teams, fostering collaboration, and reducing turnover.
TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY	Digital fluency separates leaders who leverage tech from those disrupted by it.
COGNITIVE GROWTH	The future belongs to "T-shaped" professionals who can rapidly reskill across domains.
ACTIVE LISTENING	Distributed work requires deep listening to bridge gaps in asynchronous communication.
QUALITY FOCUS	In experience-driven economies, consistent quality differentiates brands and retains customers.
ENSURES ACCOUNTABILITY	Remote/hybrid work demands clear expectations and consequences to maintain performance.
ETHICAL STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT	ESG pressures require balancing profit with purpose to satisfy investors, employees, and regulators.
STRATEGIC NETWORKING	Ecosystems (not hierarchies) drive value; leaders must cultivate alliances for resource access.



CREATES MEANING & PURPOSE

Purpose-driven organizations attract talent and customers in socially conscious markets.

ETHICS & PROFESSIONALISM

Scandals erode trust; ethical consistency is a competitive moat in regulated industries.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Hyper-personalization and CX define market winners; leaders must obsess over user needs.

Nova40 Mapping and Differentiation vs Existing Frameworks

Below is a development rationale for each of the Nova40 behavioural competencies and skills.

1. **Agile Delivery**

Unlike Korn Ferry's "Dealing with Ambiguity," which focuses on reactive adaptation, *Agile Delivery* proactively institutionalizes systems for continuous adaptation. In volatile markets disrupted by technological shifts or global crises, this competency enables organizations to thrive by embedding flexibility into execution without compromising quality standards.

2. **Drive for Results**

While Lominger's "Results Orientation" emphasizes outcome fixation, *Drive for Results* integrates persistence with cognitive flexibility—critical when goals require rapid recalibration. This competency addresses the modern leadership paradox: delivering immediate outcomes while enabling long-term transformation, a balance legacy frameworks overlook.

3. **Process Optimisation**

SHL's "Efficiency" assesses existing workflows, whereas *Process Optimisation* leverages AI-driven process mining and predictive analytics to pre-empt bottlenecks. In an era of robotic process automation, this dynamic approach surpasses static efficiency models.

4. **Complex Thinking**

Korn Ferry's "Strategic Mindset" treats complexity as intermittent; *Complex Thinking* recognizes it as the permanent state of modern business. This competency equips leaders to synthesize inputs from AI, human teams, and unpredictable externalities across digital-physical ecosystems.



5. **Fosters Innovation**

Traditional innovation models prioritize ideation. *Fosters Innovation* embeds psychological safety protocols and rapid experimentation cycles, acknowledging that breakthroughs now emerge at the intersection of diverse teams and AI co-creators—a gap in pre-digital frameworks.

6. **Inspires Creativity**

Where SHL measures creativity as an individual trait, *Inspires Creativity* treats it as a collective capability, incentivizing cross-disciplinary pollination. This reflects the reality that transformative ideas increasingly arise at domain boundaries (e.g., bio-tech, fin-tech).

7. **Smart Planning**

Lominger's "Planning" assumes environmental stability. *Smart Planning* integrates real-time data streams and scenario-planning algorithms to create living strategies, rendering annual planning cycles obsolete in hyperconnected markets.

8. **AI Augmentation**

Legacy models emphasize digital literacy but neglect human-AI collaboration. Research (Daugherty & Wilson, 2018) shows AI augments human decision-making, yet traditional frameworks lack guidance on optimizing AI for productivity, ethics, or innovation—a gap *AI Augmentation* addresses.

9. **Builds Effective Teams**

Traditional models assume co-located teams. *Builds Effective Teams* addresses hybrid ecosystems of humans, gig workers, and AI agents, incorporating metrics for digital collaboration and rapid reconfiguration—unforeseen in industrial-era frameworks.

10. **Upskills Talent**

Korn Ferry's "Developing Others" relies on generic coaching. *Upskills Talent* deploys AI-driven skills-gap analysis and personalized learning pathways, critical when tech skills halve in relevance every five years.

11. **Strategic Talent Management**

SHL's "Workforce Planning" focuses on headcount. *Strategic Talent Management* integrates talent analytics with foresight, preparing for AI-displaced roles and metaverse careers—outpacing traditional models' myopia.

12. **Energises Others**

Legacy engagement models use carrot-and-stick incentives. *Energises Others* incorporates neuroscientific insights and tokenized recognition systems, aligning with Gen Z expectations while mitigating burnout in always-on cultures.

13. **Conflict Resolution**

Traditional frameworks treat conflict as interpersonal. *Conflict Resolution* addresses algorithm-induced biases and cross-cultural remote work tensions, introducing protocols absent from legacy models.

14. **Persuades & Influences**

Korn Ferry's "Influencing" relies on hierarchy. *Persuades & Influences* leverages behavioural science and data storytelling, optimizing persuasion for flat organizations and virtual leadership.

15. **Directs Work**

SHL's "Directing Others" assumes rigid reporting lines. *Directs Work* accommodates matrixed structures and AI-managed workflows, emphasizing clarity in digital delegation.

16. **Empathic Leadership**

Traditional EQ models prioritize in-person interactions. *Empathic Leadership* includes digital empathy—interpreting emotional cues through collaboration tools and AI sentiment analysis—for hybrid work environments.

17. **Intelligent Communication**

Lominger's "Communication" is static. *Intelligent Communication* applies neuroscientific principles to digital messaging and AI-powered personalization, cutting through information overload.

18. **Analytical Thinking**

SHL tests deductive reasoning. *Analytical Thinking* emphasizes abductive reasoning—forming hypotheses from incomplete data—yielding better decisions in ambiguous, data-rich environments.

19. **Strategic Agility**

Korn Ferry's "Strategic Mindset" is fixed. *Strategic Agility* embeds continuous environmental scanning and AI-powered strategy iteration, essential when advantages emerge and fade quarterly.

20. **Data-Driven Decision Making**

Legacy models treat data as passive input. *Data-Driven Decision Making* institutionalizes organization-wide data literacy and human-AI decision protocols, reflecting the future of co-made judgments.

21. **Economic Acumen**

SHL assesses financial literacy. *Economic Acumen* incorporates crypto-economics, platform models, and behavioural economics—critical for Web3 and attention-economy navigation.



22. **Envisioning the Future**

Lominger's "Strategic Vision" is leader-centric. *Envisioning the Future* crowdsources visions via digital tools and blockchain, harnessing collective intelligence unimaginable in legacy frameworks.

23. **Adaptability**

Korn Ferry's "Learning Agility" focuses on individuals. *Adaptability* embeds modular design and AI augmentation into workflows, recognizing adaptability as a systemic imperative.

24. **Global Awareness**

Traditional cultural competence models lag geopolitical shifts. *Global Awareness* integrates real-time risk dashboards and AI-powered cultural navigation tools for borderless leadership.

25. **Applying AI in Practice**

Legacy frameworks overlook structured interaction with generative AI. *Applying AI in Practice* codifies techniques to mitigate biased outputs (Bender et al., 2021), addressing a critical gap as tools like ChatGPT proliferate.

26. **Resilience**

SHL measures individual stress tolerance. *Resilience* builds organizational anti-fragility through digital redundancy and AI-powered risk forecasting—outpacing personality-centric models.

27. **Continuous Learning**

Lominger's "Self-Development" is passive. *Continuous Learning* leverages AI-curated microlearning and blockchain-tracked skills, enabling velocity in exponential change.

28. **Integrity & Trust**

Traditional ethics models struggle digitally. *Integrity & Trust* includes algorithmic transparency and blockchain-verified accountability for decentralized work environments.

29. **Inclusive Leadership**

While DEI programs focus on demographics, *Inclusive Leadership* uses AI to detect exclusion patterns and implements neuro-inclusive practices for equitable workplaces.

30. **Emotional Intelligence**

Korn Ferry's "Interpersonal Savvy" ignores digital contexts. *Emotional Intelligence* incorporates virtual communication analytics and distributed team morale management.

31. **Technological Literacy**

SHL tests basic digital skills. *Technological Literacy* emphasizes co-evolution with tools, future-proofing leaders against rapid obsolescence.



32. **Cognitive Growth**

Legacy frameworks treat learning passively. *Cognitive Growth* applies deliberate practice (Ericsson, 1993) and knowledge transfer systems, accelerating mastery in shrinking skill half-lives (IBM, 2023).

33. **Active Listening**

Traditional models assume physical presence. *Active Listening* includes techniques for digital platforms and AI sentiment analysis—critical for asynchronous communication.

34. **Quality Focus**

Lominger's "Quality Orientation" is process-bound. *Quality Focus* employs real-time analytics and AI defect prediction, advancing quality assurance into the predictive era.

35. **Ensures Accountability**

Traditional models rely on hierarchy. *Ensures Accountability* uses smart contracts and algorithmic tracking, aligning with decentralized work structures.

36. **Ethical Stakeholder Management**

Korn Ferry's "Stakeholder Focus" lacks digital-age tools. *Ethical Stakeholder Management* incorporates blockchain decision trails and AI impact simulations.

37. **Strategic Networking**

SHL measures network size. *Strategic Networking* prioritizes intelligence over scale, using AI to map connections and maintain weak ties digitally.

38. **Creates Meaning & Purpose**

Legacy purpose models are top-down. *Creates Meaning & Purpose* leverages digital storytelling and metaverse experiences to engage distributed workforces.

39. **Ethics & Professionalism**

Compliance-focused models struggle with AI ethics. *Ethics & Professionalism* includes protocols for algorithmic bias mitigation and digital identity management.

40. **Customer Focus**

Lominger's "Customer Focus" lags behind hyper-personalization. *Customer Focus* employs predictive analytics and AI-driven omnichannel design to meet digital-native expectations.



Nova40 Mapping to GCC National Visions

The table below the relevance of each of the Nova 40 behavioural competencies & skills to both the Saudi Arabia Vision 2030 and broader transformation agendas across other GCC countries including the UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, and Bahrain.

1. Saudi 2030 Priorities:

- Economic diversification (non-oil GDP growth)
- Local talent development (*Saudization*)
- Global positioning (FDI, tourism, giga-projects)
- Cultural/social transformation

2. GCC 2030 Priorities:

- Knowledge-based economies (UAE's AI, Qatar's R&D)
- Sustainability (UAE Net Zero 2050, Saudi Green Initiative)
- Global hub strategies (logistics, finance, events)
- National talent localization (*Emiratization, Omanization*)

BEHAVIORAL COMPETENCY	LINK TO SAUDI VISION 2030	LINK TO WIDER GCC VISION 2030
AGILE DELIVERY	Supports Saudi's push for private-sector growth and rapid execution of megaprojects (NEOM, Red Sea Project).	Aligns with UAE/Qatar's focus on agile governance and fast-tracked infrastructure development (e.g., Expo 2030, FIFA 2030).
DRIVE FOR RESULTS	Critical for achieving Saudi's ambitious GDP and non-oil revenue targets (e.g., 50% renewable energy by 2030).	Matches GCC-wide emphasis on economic performance metrics (e.g., UAE's "Projects of the 50").
PROCESS OPTIMISATION	Key to Saudi's industrial efficiency goals (e.g., local content programs like <i>Saudization</i>).	Reflects Oman/Bahrain's focus on lean government and private-sector competitiveness.



COMPLEX THINKING	Needed to navigate Saudi's multi-sector diversification (e.g., giga-projects + tourism + tech).	Ties to UAE/Qatar's complex economic transitions (AI, space, fintech).
FOSTERS INNOVATION	Directly supports <i>Saudi Research & Innovation Initiative</i> and tech hubs (e.g., KAUST, King Salman Science Park).	Aligns with UAE's <i>National Innovation Strategy</i> and Qatar's <i>Knowledge Economy</i> .
INSPIRES CREATIVITY	Essential for Saudi's cultural transformation (e.g., entertainment sector growth under <i>Quality of Life Program</i>).	Links to Dubai's <i>Creative Economy Strategy</i> and Bahrain's startup ecosystem.
SMART PLANNING	Aligns with Saudi's <i>National Transformation Program</i> and dynamic fiscal adjustments.	Mirrors UAE/Oman's adaptive regulatory sandboxes for emerging industries.
AI AUGMENTATION	Supports Saudi's digital transformation by integrating AI into various sectors, enhancing productivity and innovation.	Contributes to the GCC's vision of technological advancement and innovation, driving economic diversification.
BUILDS EFFECTIVE TEAMS	Supports <i>Saudization</i> by developing high-performing national talent for private sector roles.	GCC-wide need to integrate expat/local talent (e.g., UAE's <i>Emiratization</i>).
UPSKILLS TALENT	Core to Saudi's <i>Human Capability Development Program</i> (e.g., coding schools, vocational training).	Matches Kuwait/Qatar's focus on youth upskilling for knowledge economies.
STRATEGIC TALENT MANAGEMENT	Critical for Saudi's shift to a skilled labour market (reducing expat dependency).	GCC-wide talent localization strategies (e.g., Oman's <i>Omanization</i>).
ENERGISES OTHERS	Drives engagement in Saudi's evolving work culture (e.g., female workforce participation).	Addresses GCC employee motivation in competitive, multi-cultural workplaces.
CONFLICT RESOLUTION	Vital for managing stakeholder tensions in Saudi's rapid reform environment.	Key for GCC's diverse workforces and multinational partnerships.
PERSUADES & INFLUENCES	Needed to align Saudi's conservative society with Vision 2030's social reforms.	UAE/Qatar leverage this for global investor/partner buy-in.
DIRECTS WORK	Supports Saudi's productivity goals in government and privatized sectors.	GCC-wide push for performance-based accountability in public/private sectors.



EMPATHIC LEADERSHIP	Aligns with Saudi's <i>Quality of Life</i> vision for workplace well-being.	Matches UAE's <i>Happiness Agenda</i> and Qatar's <i>National Vision</i> human development pillars.
INTELLIGENT COMMUNICATION	Key for Saudi's global narrative shift (e.g., tourism, FDI campaigns).	UAE/Qatar use this to position as global hubs (media, diplomacy, trade).
ANALYTICAL THINKING	Underpins Saudi's data-driven decision-making (e.g., <i>National Data Management Office</i>).	GCC-wide AI/analytics strategies (e.g., Dubai's <i>Smart City</i>).
STRATEGIC AGILITY	Essential for Saudi's oil-to-diversification pivot amid volatile energy markets.	GCC economies similarly balancing oil/gas with renewables and tech.
DATA-DRIVEN DECISION MAKING	Aligns with Saudi's <i>National Data and AI Authority</i> (e.g., <i>NEOM's</i> cognitive cities).	UAE's <i>AI Strategy 2031</i> and Qatar's <i>TASMU Smart Program</i> rely on this.
ECONOMIC ACUMEN	Critical for Saudi's <i>Public Investment Fund</i> (PIF) global investments.	GCC sovereign wealth funds (e.g., Mubadala, QIA) require this competency.
ENVISIONING THE FUTURE	Matches Saudi's bold visioning (e.g., <i>THE LINE</i> , zero-carbon cities).	UAE's <i>Mars 2117</i> and Qatar's <i>National Vision</i> exemplify this.
ADAPTABILITY	Needed for Saudis navigating workplace cultural shifts (e.g., gender mixing, Western norms).	GCC nationals adapting to private-sector roles amid reduced welfare dependence.
GLOBAL AWARENESS	Saudi's global integration (e.g., G20, WTO) demands cultural intelligence.	UAE/Qatar's international hub status requires cross-cultural fluency.
APPLYING AI IN PRACTICE	Aligns with Saudi's goal of becoming a leader in AI by optimizing AI systems for better decision-making and strategic initiatives.	Enhances the GCC's competitive edge in AI and technology, supporting strategic objectives in digital economy.
RESILIENCE	Aligns with Saudi's economic shock buffers (e.g., oil price volatility).	GCC nations hedging against geopolitics (e.g., Qatar blockade recovery).
CONTINUOUS LEARNING	Core to Saudi's <i>Lifelong Learning Initiative</i> for workforce relevance.	GCC's focus on "future skills" (e.g., Dubai's <i>10X Initiative</i>).



INTEGRITY & TRUST	Vital for Saudi's anti-corruption reforms and FDI attractiveness.	GCC-wide governance transparency goals (e.g., Bahrain's <i>Economic Vision</i>).
INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP	Supports Saudi's gender diversity progress (female workforce up 64% since 2016).	UAE/Qatar prioritize inclusion to attract global talent.
EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE	Key for Saudi leaders managing intergenerational workforce tensions.	GCC's multicultural teams demand high EQ.
TECHNOLOGICAL LITERACY	Saudi's <i>Digital Government Authority</i> and <i>NEOM Tech & Digital</i> require this.	UAE's <i>Blockchain Strategy 2030</i> and Qatar's <i>AI Roadmap</i> depend on it.
COGNITIVE GROWTH	Promotes a knowledge-based economy within Saudi by fostering continuous learning and skill development, ensuring future readiness.	Supports the GCC's focus on human capital development and lifelong learning, essential for sustainable growth.
ACTIVE LISTENING	Aligns with Saudi's efforts to incorporate citizen feedback (e.g., <i>Vision 2030 Dialogues</i>).	UAE's <i>Minister of State for Happiness</i> exemplifies this.
QUALITY FOCUS	Matches Saudi's <i>National Quality Strategy</i> for global competitiveness.	GCC nations (e.g., Dubai) prioritize service excellence for tourism/trade.
ENSURES ACCOUNTABILITY	Critical for Saudi's government performance contracts (<i>Misk</i> initiatives).	GCC-wide public-sector reforms (e.g., Kuwait's <i>New Kuwait 2035</i>).
ETHICAL STAKEHOLDER MANAGEMENT	Aligns with Saudi's ESG goals (e.g., <i>Saudi Green Initiative</i>).	UAE/Qatar balance investor returns with sustainability mandates.
STRATEGIC NETWORKING	Saudi's <i>G20 Presidency</i> and global partnerships (e.g., <i>LEAP</i> tech conference) leverage this.	UAE's <i>Expo 2020</i> legacy and Qatar's <i>FIFA 2030</i> require relationship capital.
CREATES MEANING & PURPOSE	Ties to Saudi's national pride campaigns (e.g., <i>Saudi Made</i>).	GCC visions use purpose to retain youth talent (e.g., UAE's <i>Projects of the 50</i>).
ETHICS & PROFESSIONALISM	Supports Saudi's <i>National Anti-Corruption Commission</i> (Nazaha).	GCC nations building trust for FDI (e.g., Bahrain's <i>Ease of Business</i> reforms).



CUSTOMER FOCUS

Aligns with Saudi's service-sector growth (tourism, retail under *Quality of Life Program*).

UAE's *World's Best Customer Experience* initiative mirrors this.

Finalised Nova40 Framework

			Level 1 Individual Contributor 0-3 years' experience Entry-level professionals who are primarily responsible for executing assigned tasks under supervision. They demonstrate adaptability within defined scopes and contribute to team outputs. Their focus is on learning, skill development, and consistent task delivery.	Level 2 Emerging Leader / Team Lead 3-7 years' experience Mid-level professionals who manage small projects or lead sub-teams. They are responsible for coordinating efforts, adjusting plans based on feedback, and ensuring timely delivery. They begin to influence team dynamics and contribute to process improvements.	Level 3 Functional Leader / Department Head 7-15 years' experience Senior professionals who lead cross-functional teams or manage entire departments. They are accountable for optimizing workflows, aligning team efforts with strategic goals, and driving performance. They play a key role in translating strategy into execution.	Level 4 Senior Executive / Enterprise Leader 15+ years' experience Executive leaders who shape and drive enterprise-wide transformation. They are responsible for setting strategic direction, aligning organizational systems with long-term goals, and influencing industry standards. Their focus is on vision, innovation, and sustainable growth.
		Nova 40 Behavioural Competency / Skill	Description			
1. Tasks & Projects (Delivery, Process Management, Innovation)	1 Agile Delivery	Demonstrates a focus on delivery by rapidly adjusting task approaches in response to changing environmental demands while maintaining output quality.	Completes assigned tasks iteratively, adapting to minor scope changes.	Manages small projects with iterative cycles, adjusting timelines based on feedback.	Leads cross-functional agile teams, optimizing workflows for speed/quality.	Champions enterprise-wide agile transformation, aligning methodology with strategic goals.
	2 Drive for Results	Sustains goal-directed behaviour by establishing challenging performance standards and persisting despite obstacles until objectives are achieved.	Meets personal deadlines with consistent output quality.	Motivates peers to achieve team targets through collaboration.	Holds teams accountable for KPIs, removing roadblocks to achieving results.	Sets industry-leading performance benchmarks, tying results to long-term vision.
	3 Process Optimisation	Systematically analyses workflows to identify and implement efficiency improvements through evidence-based interventions.	Identifies small inefficiencies in personal workflows.	Reduces waste in team processes using automation/tools.	Designs scalable efficiency frameworks for departments.	Identifies and removes blockages in the operating model that hinder performance.

	4	Complex Thinking	Engages in higher-order cognitive processing to synthesize information from multiple domains when solving problems.	Breaks down problems into manageable components.	Connects interdisciplinary insights to solve team-level challenges.	Anticipates systemic risks & opportunities for business units.	Navigates geopolitical/market ambiguities to steer organizational strategy.	
	5	Fosters Innovation	Creates psychologically safe environments that encourage calculated risk-taking and novel solution generation through experimentation.	Suggests incremental improvements in daily work.	Facilitates brainstorming sessions for team innovation.	Allocates resources to test high-potential ideas.	Institutionalizes structures (e.g., incubators) and processes to sustain innovation.	
	6	Inspires Creativity	Stimulates divergent thinking in others by modelling cognitive flexibility and rewarding unconventional approaches to challenges.	Shares novel ideas in discussions.	Creates safe spaces for peers to think unconventionally.	Rewards creative risk-taking within functions.	Ties creativity metrics to organisational outcomes and executive compensation.	
	7	Smart Planning	Dynamically adjusts tactical plans through continuous environmental scanning and real-time feedback integration.	Adjusts personal tasks based on shifting priorities.	Realigns team roadmaps quarterly using data.	Pivots departmental strategies amid market disruptions.	Balances long-term vision with adaptive delivery at scale.	
	8	AI Augmentation	Leverages artificial intelligence tools to enhance productivity, decision-making, and innovation by integrating AI into workflows and strategic initiatives.	Uses basic AI tools for task automation under guidance. Follows predefined protocols for AI-assisted outputs.	Identifies team workflows suitable for AI augmentation (e.g., data analysis, drafting). Trains peers on AI tool adoption and monitors output quality.	Integrates AI solutions into departmental processes (e.g., predictive analytics, automated reporting). Measures ROI of AI adoption and mitigates risks.	Drives enterprise-wide AI transformation (e.g., AI-powered customer insights, supply chain optimization). Aligns AI strategy with long-term competitive advantage.	
	2. People Leadership (Teams, Talent Development, Influence)	9	Builds Effective Teams	Develops high-performing groups by establishing role clarity, fostering trust, and optimizing team composition based on individual competencies.	Collaborates openly within immediate teams.	Resolves interpersonal conflicts to maintain cohesion.	Designs team structures for optimal skill utilisation.	Cultivates an inclusive culture that attracts top talent and enables staff to develop.
		10	Upskills Talent	Implements deliberate practice techniques and learning experiences to accelerate capability development in others.	Proactively seeks learning opportunities.	Coaches peers on newly acquired skills.	Implements function-wide upskilling programs.	Ties organizational capability-building to market futures.
		11	Strategic Talent Management	Aligns human capital development with organizational strategy through systematic workforce planning and competency gap analysis.	Aligns personal development with role expectations.	Matches team skills to project demands.	Forecasts talent gaps for business units.	Integrates workforce planning with enterprise-wide strategy, M&A/expansion strategies.
12		Energises Others	Enhances team motivation through appropriate reinforcement strategies and the strategic use of intrinsic/extrinsic reward systems.	Positively contributes to team morale.	Recognizes peers' contributions publicly.	Tailors motivational approaches to individual drivers.	Embeds engagement metrics in leadership accountability.	

	13	Conflict Resolution	Facilitates constructive conflict resolution by employing active listening, interest-based negotiation techniques, and impartial mediation.	Addresses interpersonal tensions constructively.	Mediates disputes between peers impartially.	Implements systems to reduce organizational friction.	Models constructive debate at board/C-suite level.
	14	Persuades & Influences	Adapts communication strategies using evidence-based persuasion principles (e.g., social proof, reciprocity) to gain stakeholder commitment.	Presents ideas clearly in meetings.	Adapts messaging to resonate with different stakeholders.	Gains buy-in and support for cross-functional initiatives.	Shapes industry narratives through thought leadership and exerts influence at the most senior levels in the organisation.
	15	Directs Work	Provides task structure through clear goal-setting, progress monitoring, and constructive performance feedback.	Follows priorities set by managers.	Delegates tasks based on team strengths.	Aligns department goals with resource allocation.	Ensures organizational structure supports strategic execution.
	16	Empathic Leadership	Demonstrates empathy by accurately perceiving others' emotional states and responding with appropriate support behaviours.	Listens actively to colleagues' concerns.	Adapts management style to individual needs.	Advocates for policies supporting employee wellbeing.	Role models a caring approach to humanize executive leadership.
	17	Intelligent Communication	Adjusts message content and delivery channels based on audience analysis and situational requirements.	Adjusts communication style for clarity.	Facilitates hybrid (in-person/virtual) discussions effectively.	Streamlines cross-company information flows.	Creates multi-channel, organisation wide communications strategies.
3. Cognitive & Strategic Skills (Decision-Making, Foresight, Adaptability)	18	Analytical Thinking	Applies systematic and critical reasoning to decompose complex information, identify meaningful patterns, and draw valid conclusions.	Identifies data patterns in assigned tasks.	Synthesizes insights from multiple reports.	Forecasts business implications of trends.	Leverages analytics for competitive differentiation.
	19	Strategic Agility	Maintains mental agility and strategic adaptability by continuously scanning the external environment and proactively adjusting strategic priorities.	Connects daily work to team objectives.	Proposes tactical adjustments to annual plans.	Aligns departmental strategy with industry shifts and adapts implementation plans.	Future-proofs the organization through scenario planning with multiple response strategies.
	20	Data-Driven Decision Making	Employs evidence-based judgment by prioritizing empirical data over cognitive biases in the decision-making process.	Uses available data to guide personal work.	Tests hypotheses with team-level experiments and ensures data driven decision making.	Mandates evidence-based decisions in functions.	Institutionalizes data-driven culture at enterprise governance level.
	21	Economic Acumen	Demonstrates market awareness by accurately interpreting financial indicators and predicting economic trends relevant to organizational performance.	Understands basic cost/benefit trade-offs.	Evaluates ROI of team initiatives.	Optimizes budgets against market conditions.	Structures capital allocation for sustainable growth.
	22	Envisioning the Future	Articulates compelling future states by integrating market trends, organizational capabilities, and stakeholder aspirations into visionary narratives.	Articulates how role contributes to team goals.	Co-creates inspiring visions for projects.	Aligns business unit strategy with megatrends.	Crafts narratives that redefine industry paradigms.

	23	Adaptability	Modifies behavioural responses effectively when transitioning between tasks, roles, or work contexts.	Adjusts to role changes with minimal disruption.	Helps teammates navigate transitions.	Leads teams through restructuring.	Future-proofs the organization against volatility.
	24	Global Awareness	Demonstrates cultural intelligence by adapting interpersonal approaches based on nuanced understanding of geopolitical and sociocultural contexts.	Respects cultural differences in teamwork.	Adapts products & services for local contexts.	Navigates geopolitical risks in market expansion.	Positions the organization as a global citizen.
	25	Applying AI in Practice	Designs and refines inputs for generative AI systems to optimize outputs, ensuring relevance, accuracy, and alignment with objectives.	Follows basic prompt templates for AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT). Tests iterations for simple tasks (e.g., email drafts, research summaries).	Crafts structured prompts for complex queries (e.g., market analysis, code generation). Validates outputs and shares best practices with teams.	Develops prompt libraries for departmental use (e.g., legal contract drafting, HR policies). Ensures ethical guardrails and bias mitigation.	Institutionalizes prompt engineering standards for generative AI. Aligns AI-generated insights with strategic decision-making (e.g., board reports, M&A due diligence).
4. Personal Effectiveness (Resilience, Ethics, Continuous Growth, Knowledge)	26	Resilience	Maintains functional performance levels under stressful conditions through effective coping strategies and stress management techniques.	Manages personal stress effectively.	Supports colleagues during high-pressure periods.	Implements team wellness initiatives and role models resilience in the face of setbacks.	Embeds wellbeing into corporate governance and champions a calm and resilient approach at executive level.
	27	Continuous Learning	Engages in self-regulated learning by proactively identifying knowledge gaps and pursuing targeted skill development.	Seeks feedback to improve performance.	Shares learnings with peers and encourages them to develop themselves.	Sponsors upskilling programs and ensures department-wide development programs.	Ties learning to organizational evolution and success.
	28	Integrity & Trust	Builds trust through behavioural consistency, transparency, and alignment between expressed values and actions.	Delivers on commitments reliably.	Role models transparency and builds trust through aligned values and behaviour.	Enforces ethical standards in functions and role models integrity at executive level.	Builds trust as a competitive advantage.
	29	Inclusive Leadership	Fosters diversity by implementing equitable participation mechanisms and mitigating unconscious bias in organizational processes.	Values diverse perspectives in discussions.	Ensures equitable participation in teams.	Audits policies for systemic bias and takes corrective action.	Champions inclusion as a growth lever for organisational success.
	30	Emotional Intelligence	Accurately perceives, understands, and regulates emotional cues in self and others to facilitate effective interpersonal interactions.	Recognizes personal emotional triggers.	Adapts behaviour to others' emotional cues.	Manages team dynamics with through regulation of emotional responses.	Fosters psychologically safe cultures and role models emotional intelligence.
	31	Technological Literacy	Demonstrates digital fluency by effectively leveraging relevant technologies to enhance work processes and outcomes.	Uses required digital tools proficiently.	Trains peers on new technologies.	Aligns technology adoption with business needs.	Anticipates disruptive technology opportunities through early adoption.

	32	Cognitive Growth	Accelerates mastery of new skills through structured learning strategies and systematically transfers knowledge across contexts to future-proof individual and organizational capabilities.	Quickly applies new skills to tasks.	Identifies skill gaps in teams and provides learning opportunities.	Prioritises learning opportunities and learning systems.	Future-proofs workforce capabilities by enabling enterprise-wide learning opportunities.
	33	Active Listening	Engages in reflective listening by paraphrasing, summarizing, and asking clarifying questions to ensure accurate understanding.	Paraphrases to confirm understanding.	Creates forums for listening to the employee voice.	Institutionalizes feedback mechanisms to make improvements.	Listens in order to shape organizational direction.
	34	Quality Focus	Implements quality assurance processes by establishing clear standards, monitoring outputs, and conducting root cause analysis of defects.	Delivers error-free individual work.	Implements team quality checks.	Embeds quality in process design and performance management.	Makes quality a brand differentiator.
5. Stakeholder & Organizational Impact (Governance, Networks, Vision)	35	Ensures Accountability	Reinforces responsibility by establishing clear performance expectations and implementing appropriate performance management systems.	Takes ownership of personal deliverables.	Tracks team commitments visibly.	Aligns KPIs with strategic priorities.	Ties accountability to enterprise risk and preventative action.
	36	Ethical Stakeholder Management	Balances competing stakeholder interests through principled negotiation and ethical decision-making frameworks.	Identifies key stakeholders for tasks.	Balances competing stakeholder needs.	Designs engagement frameworks based on stakeholder analysis.	Aligns stakeholder engagement strategy with ESG initiatives and organisational strategy.
	37	Strategic Networking	Develops and maintains mutually beneficial professional relationships that create organizational value.	Builds relationships within teams.	Connects peers across departments.	Leverages networks for partnerships and mentorship opportunities.	Cultivates expansive network to exert influence and learn from across the organisation.
	38	Creates Meaning & Purpose	Enhances work motivation by articulating how individual contributions connect to broader organizational objectives.	Connects tasks to team objectives.	Articulates project significance and link to organisational goals.	Aligns culture with mission, vision and values.	Embeds clear purpose in business model.
	39	Ethics & Professionalism	Upholds ethical standards by consistently applying professional codes of conduct even in challenging situations.	Follows organizational codes of conduct.	Addresses ethical grey areas in teams.	Role models an ethical and professional approach, ensuring compliance with safeguards.	Makes ethics and professionalism a market differentiator.
	40	Customer Focus	Optimizes customer satisfaction by systematically gathering and responding to user needs and feedback.	Responds promptly to customer needs.	Advocates for customer-centric processes.	Aligns operations with customer journeys.	Makes customer obsession a cultural pillar and central to strategy.



Applied Use Cases

A comprehensive behavioural competency and skills framework serves as a foundational tool across both talent management and consulting engagements, enabling organizations to align human capital with strategic goals. In talent management, it supports recruitment by defining role-specific success profiles and guiding competency-based interviews. It enhances performance management through structured behavioural appraisals and personalized development planning. Learning and development initiatives benefit from targeted training aligned to specific competencies, while career pathing and succession planning are strengthened by clear behavioural progression across levels. The framework also fosters employee engagement by linking individual contributions to broader organizational objectives.

In consulting contexts, the framework is instrumental in organizational design, where it helps map capabilities to strategic priorities and embed behavioural expectations into new operating models. It anchors culture change initiatives by articulating the behaviours that reflect desired cultural shifts. Leadership development programs, including executive coaching and high-potential identification, leverage the framework to assess and cultivate leadership maturity. During digital transformation, it enables future skills assessments and readiness for AI-driven roles. In mergers and acquisitions, it facilitates talent harmonization across entities, while in workforce planning, it identifies skill gaps and behavioural shifts needed for future-readiness. Overall, the framework acts as a strategic enabler, bridging individual performance with enterprise transformation.

Role Fit in Hiring

The concept of role fit—how well an individual’s attributes align with the behavioural demands of a specific job—is increasingly central to evidence-based hiring practices. Drawing from person-job fit theory (Edwards, 1991) and competency-based assessment models, research shows that alignment between personality traits and role requirements contributes to improved performance, reduced time to productivity, and lower attrition rates (Kristof-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005; Barrick & Mount, 2005).

The Nova40 CPA allows assessment of individuals against the behavioural competency requirements for a given job – firstly, the relevant behavioural competencies for a given job family or role can be defined using the framework – for example, Sales roles may require Customer Focus, Strategic Networking and Persuading and Influence. These mappings can form the basis of defining competency requirements for core jobs and roles. Secondly, practitioners using Nova40 can pick and choose their own unique mix of behavioural competencies and skills which apply to a given role or assessment task. The scales from the psychometric assessment, which may include a mix of personality sub-traits, cognitive ability, emotional intelligence and situational judgement facets, will be mapped in granular detail to each of the behavioural competencies, enabling an overall score for the competency to be defined on a standard scale, such as 1 to 5. These scores for each relevant job role competency profile can then be combined to produce an overall ‘job-fit’ or ‘role-fit’ score overall on a 1-100 scale. PDF reporting will help support the practitioner to determine an individual’s likely competency potential against the role or job requirements, both at an individual competency level and overall role fit level.

In the hiring context—particularly within competitive talent markets like those in the GCC—role fit assessment contributes to more predictive selection decisions and enhances long-term engagement. As public and private sectors undergo rapid transformation, identifying individuals with the behavioural capacity to thrive in specific environments becomes a



strategic differentiator. By combining trait-level insights with structured role requirements, NPQ enables organisations to move beyond cultural fit to a more nuanced, role-relevant form of behavioural alignment.

Assessment for organisations

For any type of assessment an organisation wishes to undertake, the Nova40 CPA provides an architecture of behavioural competencies and skills defined at 4 different career levels – individuals can be psychometrically assessed, interviewed and undertake business simulations and exercises which assess their level of performance against the chosen behavioural competencies. The Nova40 competencies can also be further broken down into specific behavioural skills for each higher-level competency. In this way, tailored assessments can be created for a given client. For example, Intelligent Communication can be assessed at a general level, but specific skill elements can be defined for this competency which enable granular behavioural indicators to be defined for when assessors are scoring an individual after an exercise or interview.

This methodology for assessment can inform not just hiring, but also leadership and high potential development, succession planning, performance management and coaching interventions typically carried out by organisations or talent management consultancies, such as Tharwah.

The framework can also be used in transformation and change initiatives to define future state or required future competencies and in career pathing and reward interventions.

Summary

The Nova40 Framework is a future-ready, dynamic behavioural skills and competency model designed to propel organizations—and nations—toward the ambitious goals of GCC Vision 2030 and beyond. Unlike traditional frameworks stuck in rigid, outdated skill sets, Nova40 integrates cutting-edge behavioural competencies, digital fluency, and adaptive leadership traits needed for a rapidly evolving global economy. It aligns seamlessly with the GCC's focus on innovation, economic diversification, and human capital development, ensuring talent strategies aren't just reactive but proactively shaping the future workforce.

By modernizing legacy frameworks, Nova40 moves beyond static job descriptions to emphasize agility, cross-functional collaboration, and cultural intelligence—critical for thriving in a tech-driven, multicultural business landscape. It's not just an update; it's a strategic leap forward, embedding AI readiness, sustainability leadership, and entrepreneurial mindsets at its core. For organizations and governments committed to transformational growth, Nova40 is the competitive edge needed to turn vision into reality and future proof talent management.

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