

The MIRA Framework

Why competence needs a shared language — and how that language is translated into concrete work

Few broad competences — many expressions. The map has to be small enough to remember, strong enough to guide, and flexible enough to translate.

1. The problem: too many words for competence

Working life uses a great many words about people and competence: collaborative, reliable, flexible, solution-oriented, structured, professionally skilled, proactive. The words are not wrong. The problem is that everyone uses them slightly differently.

On top of that, we routinely mix three entirely different things:

- how a person is — personal preferences and traits
- what the person has learned — education, courses, formal documentation
- what the person can actually do at work — competence in use

When these three blur together, competence conversations lose precision. Two managers can both say “good at collaboration” about the same person and mean completely different things. And we can end up assessing personality while believing we are assessing competence.

Put simply: MIRA gives us a shared language for what people can do — and a way of translating that language into what they actually do at work.

2. Why not simply write a longer list?

The obvious answer is to describe more. But if every sector, company and job describes competence in its own way, the number of concepts explodes. The same competence gets several names, and different competences become so similar that the distinction disappears.

Too many competences produce	Few broad competences produce
Overlapping concepts	A recognisable language
Unclear assessments	Simpler progression
Harder learning design	Better comparison
Less shared language	Clearer prioritisation

Too many competences produce	Few broad competences produce
Weaker link to job roles	Room for context

When everything becomes a competence, the concept loses its power to guide anything. A framework should help us see patterns, not name every individual action. MIRA therefore rests on one simple principle: few broad competences — many expressions.

3. Why not just describe the tasks — or just the general concepts?

One could ask whether we need the competences at all. Why not simply list the tasks? Because tasks vary enormously. Describe only tasks and it becomes impossible to see what recurs across settings. Two people can do completely different work and still draw on the same competence: an early childhood care worker and an industrial operator both display responsibility, collaboration, problem solving and the ability to learn.

The opposite fails too. Say only “collaboration”, “responsibility”, “communication” and “problem solving” and it stays unclear what we actually mean. What does good collaboration look like right here? How does responsibility show up in this role? What is the person supposed to do?

We need both: the general, so competence can be recognised and compared, and the concrete, so it can be learned, performed and assessed. In MIRA the generic description must be clear enough to give direction, yet open enough to survive different working contexts.

4. Think of MIRA as a map

A map does not show every tree, stone and footprint. It shows the main structures, so we can orient ourselves. MIRA works the same way.

- The broad competences are the map.
- The workplace is the terrain.
- What the person actually does is the footprints.

The map gives overview. The terrain gives the competence meaning. The footprints show how the competence is expressed. Almost all confusion in this field comes from collapsing these three layers into a single sentence.

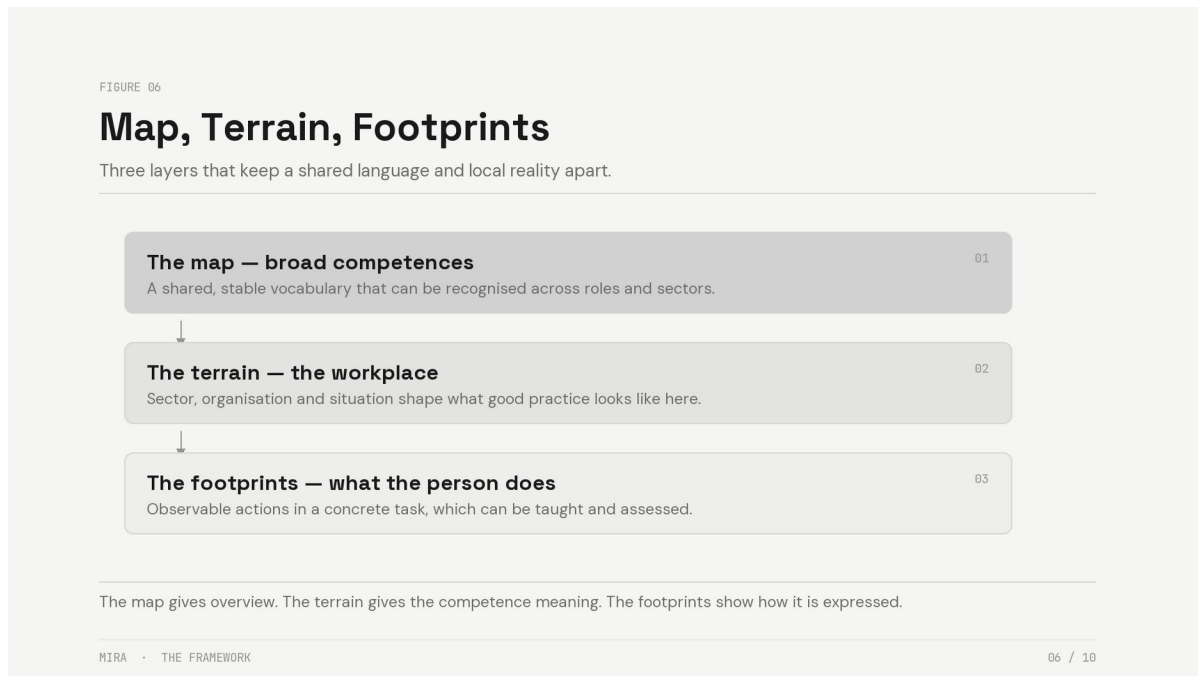


Figure 1: The three layers. The map is stable, the terrain varies, the footprints are what we can observe.

5. Three main domains

MIRA distinguishes three main domains. They are connected, but they describe different sides of functioning at work.

Domain	What it describes	Contents
Transversal skills	Skills that can be used across many subjects, roles and sectors.	Digital competence · intercultural competence · communication and interaction · critical and analytical thinking · learning and development · organisational and personal leadership · collaboration and teamwork
Personal effectiveness	How the person makes themselves function well at work.	Learning and adaptation · reliability and interpersonal skills · professional integrity · self-development and growth
Workplace skills	What is required to carry out the work in a concrete professional setting.	Leadership and strategy · problem solving and innovation · collaboration and communication · technical expertise — down to the specific skills a given job requires

Transversal skills travel with us across working and learning situations. A person needs communication in healthcare, industry, schools, offices and services alike — but what good communication looks like varies from place to place.

Personal effectiveness is about how we manage and regulate ourselves at work. The crucial point is that this can be developed. I may have particular personal preferences and at the same time learn strategies that let me function well at work. This is precisely the line between personality and competence.

Workplace skills are what it takes to get the actual job done. This domain can be closely tied to professional knowledge, methods and technology within an occupation — and it is here that the most tool- and field-specific skills belong.

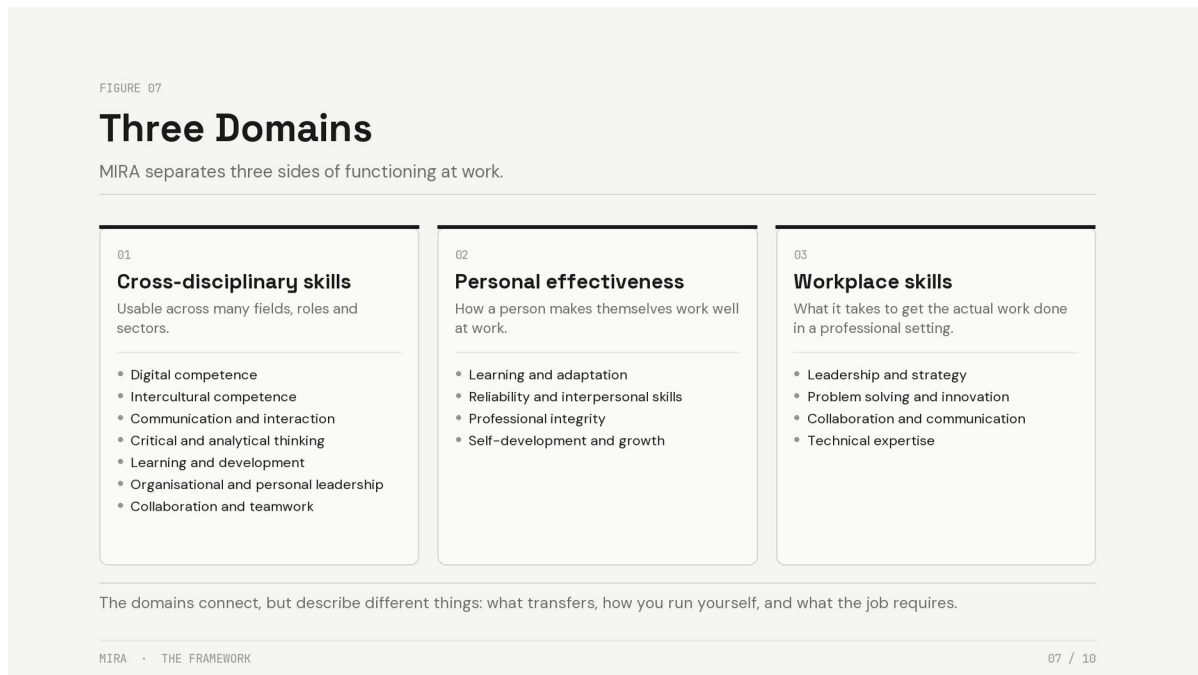


Figure 2: The three main domains and their subcategories.

6. One competence can look entirely different

Take collaboration. The core is the same everywhere: contributing constructively with others to solve tasks and reach shared goals. The expression is not:

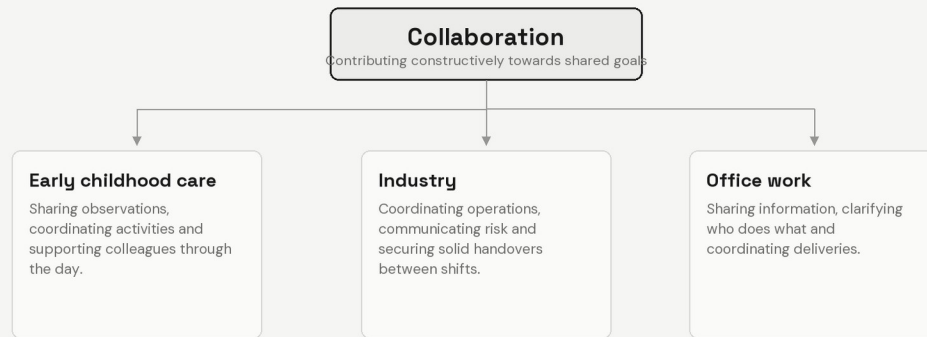
- Early childhood care: sharing observations, coordinating activities and supporting colleagues.
- Industry: coordinating operations, communicating about risk and securing clean handovers.
- Office work: sharing information, clarifying responsibility and coordinating deliverables.

The core is stable. The expression is contextual. This is why MIRA does not turn every single work task into its own competence — the framework would then grow with the variation of working life and lose all comparability.

FIGURE 08

One Competence, Three Contexts

The core is stable. The expression is contextual.



This is why MIRA does not turn every task into its own competence — the same core surfaces differently.

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Figure 3: Same core, three expressions. The competence is recognised across settings but assessed locally.

7. The anatomy of a generic competence description

For this to work in practice, the generic descriptions need a fixed shape: precise enough to give direction, open enough to hold different contexts.

Element	What it answers
Core	What the competence is about across sectors
Purpose	Why it matters in work and learning
Indicators	What typically shows the competence in use
Progression	How it develops from foundational to advanced
Context questions	What must be clarified before local assessment

Equally important is what must stay out. The generic text should not contain sector-specific routines, tools or job requirements. Those belong to the next layer — the specific skills.

8. The translation chain: from competence to concrete work

MIRA works as a translation chain from shared language to concrete practice. Five steps, each adding context without changing the core.

1. Broad MIRA competence — shared term and definition.
2. Sector expression — what the competence looks like in this kind of work.

- 3. Company practice — local routines, standards and expectations.
- 4. Tasks and actions — what the person actually does in the situation.
- 5. Signs of mastery — what can be observed, documented and given feedback on.

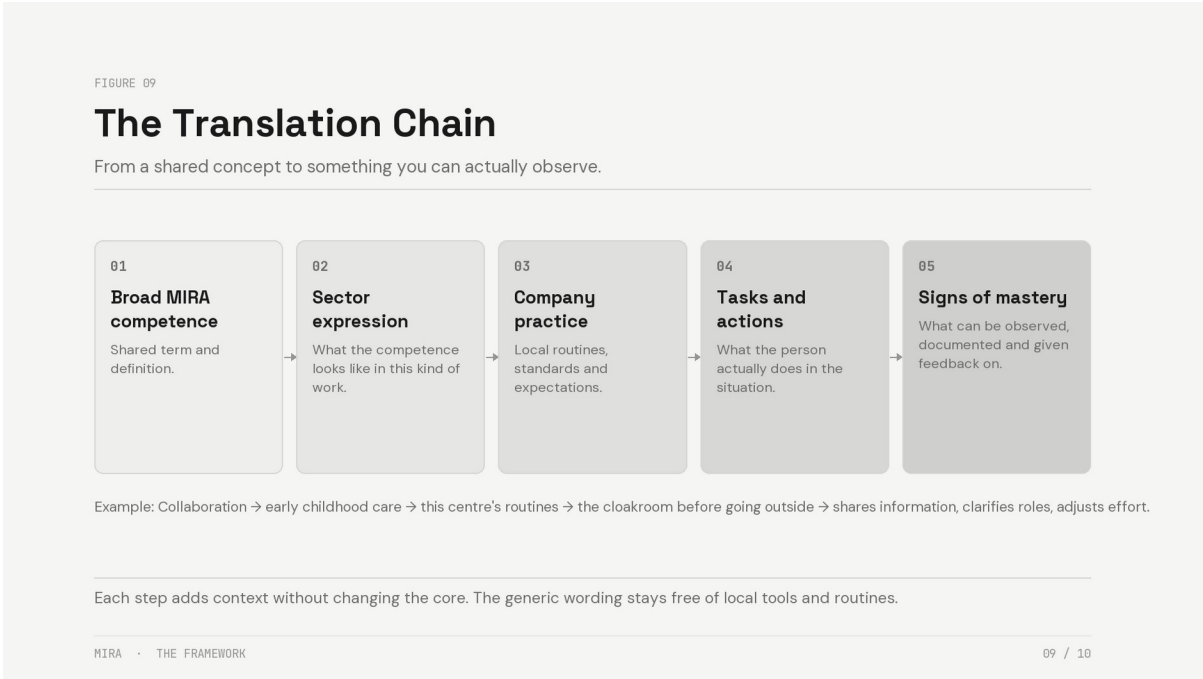


Figure 4: The translation chain in five steps.

A concrete example: collaboration in early childhood care

Broad competence	Concrete practice
Collaboration: contributing constructively with others to solve tasks and reach shared goals. Sector: early childhood care. Situation: the cloakroom before the children go outside.	The employee shares the necessary information, clarifies who does what, helps colleagues when needed and adjusts their own effort to the situation.

We have now moved from a general concept to something we can actually see. That is the whole point of the chain: the generic definition cannot be observed, but the last column can.

The same logic applies to job roles. A role should be understood from the tasks it actually consists of, while still being linked to a generic job family. Roles are built from the bottom up; comparability comes from the top down. That is what resolves the tension between the local and the generic.

9. Progression: the six MIRA levels

Competence is not on or off. MIRA defines six levels describing progression in autonomy, responsibility and complexity. Every competence has its own ladder of six steps; below are the general level descriptions.

Level	EQF	Autonomy	Responsibility	Complexity
1 Basic understanding	2	Guided	Own task	Familiar
2 Developed skills	3	Within boundaries	Own work	Some variation
3 Competence	4-5	Independent	Shared result	Compound
4 Advanced expertise	6	Developing	Development and quality	Complex
5 Leadership and strategy	7	Direction-setting	Strategic area	Strategically complex
6 Visionary leadership	8	Pioneering	Systemic development	Novel and systemic

What matters is that the levels do not simply mean “better and better”. Three parallel movements take place:

Autonomy	Responsibility	Complexity
Guided → within set limits → independent → improving practice → setting direction → innovating	Own task → own work → shared result → development and quality → strategic area → systemic development	Familiar → somewhat varied → composite → complex → strategically complex → novel and systemic

FIGURE 05

Three Parallel Movements

Rising through the levels is not simply “getting better” — three things shift at once.



The same six levels, read three ways. A level is a combination of all three — not a score.

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Figure 5: The three parallel movements through levels 1 to 6.

The six MIRA levels are mapped to the EQF, the European Qualifications Framework, which has eight levels: MIRA 1 to EQF 2, MIRA 2 to EQF 3, MIRA 3 to EQF 4–5, MIRA 4 to EQF 6, MIRA 5 to EQF 7 and MIRA 6 to EQF 8. An organisation can choose whether to use MIRA or EQF as its reference — the descriptions are the same, only the outer scale differs.

10. Why this can be done technically: semantic matching

A framework with few, well-described competences and six clear steps is not only pedagogically tidy — it is also machine-readable. This is why competence proposals can be automated without becoming mechanical.

Selection happens in four main steps:

1. The job description is ready. Description, work functions and tasks are complete and approved as the data basis. Only then are proposals unlocked.
2. Semantic matching. The engine compares meaning, not words. “Keep the team informed” and “internal communication” count as close even without shared vocabulary.
3. Choosing competence and level. All competences are ranked per domain; the top five per domain are selected, at most two per subcategory. Then a level is chosen per competence and the level descriptions are generated.
4. You choose and save. Proposals appear grouped by domain with level and level description — and it is the consultant or HR adviser who reviews, edits and adds.

The level proposal is read from three elements side by side — not as an average, but as an interpretation an experienced HR adviser would make: the job's tasks, the competence ladder, and the reading of which step the job actually describes. The proposal also shows which tasks it rests on, so you can see why it landed on step 4 rather than 3 or 5.

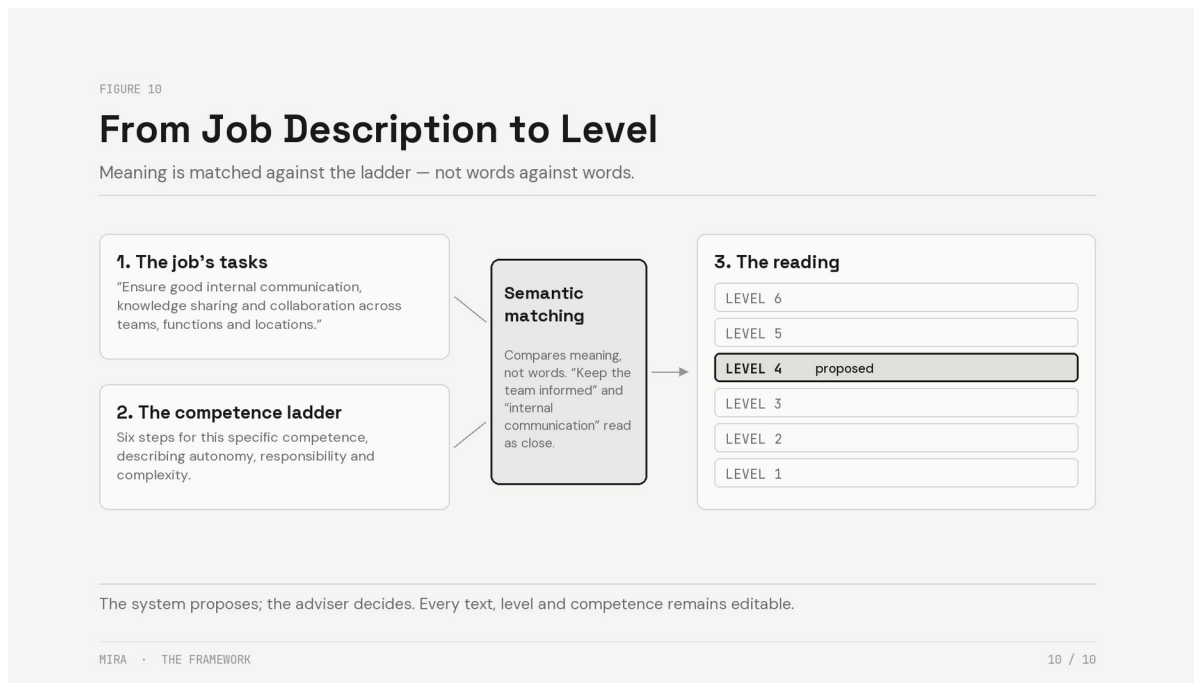


Figure 6: From job description to level. The system proposes, the human decides.

The system proposes	You decide
Which competences fit	Whether the competence enters the profile
Which step the job appears to require	The level, in the same dropdown as before
One sentence on what is expected in practice	The sentence, in the same editable field
Which tasks the proposal rests on	"Why it matters", with or without help

11. The essential point

MIRA has to hold several things together at once:

- A shared language, so competence can be recognised across settings.
- Context, so competence has meaning in the actual job.
- Concrete skills and actions, so competence can be learned and observed.
- A line between personal traits and competence, so we do not confuse how someone is with what they can learn and master.

MIRA should therefore be small enough to remember, strong enough to guide, and flexible enough to translate.

12. The next document: transferability and level

This document explains what MIRA is and why few broad competences work. The second document in the series, “The Transferability Axis” (v5), addresses how a single skill is placed: how broadly it applies (0–100) and how deeply it sits (level 1–6). Together the two documents give both the structure and the way to read it.