

Board Secretary

FF01 General management and executive · ISCO-08 3343 · CBS 0423 Office managers and executive assistants · seniority senior · Also known as: Corporate Secretary, Company Secretary, Governance Secretary

Supports the executive board and supervisory board with meeting documents, minutes and governance, and ensures decisions are formally and traceably recorded.

The board secretary prepares meetings of the executive and supervisory boards, tracks the decision making calendar and drafts minutes and action lists. Unlike an executive assistant, this is not just about agenda management but about safeguarding statutory and governance obligations. Selection often fails on secretarial skill alone, while the role stands or falls on flagging when a decision is not procedurally sound, even to a director in a hurry.

Key figures for this profile

24 skills · 9 competencies to measure · 6 knockout skills · centre of gravity: Leadership and organising 32%, Business operations, commerce and entrepreneurship 19%, Cognitive ability and problem solving 14%

1 Competencies to measure

These are the behavioural and ability constructs in this profile. Each one shows which hrmforce questionnaire measures it.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Decisiveness Competency (50-framework): Decision-making ability Knockout	■■■■■ N5	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback	Situational Judgement Test	Decides on irreversible matters with major consequences, records the trade off and sets which decisions others may take themselves.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Developing vision Competency (50-framework): Vision Knockout	■■■■■ N5	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Assessment centre	Formulates a multi-year vision for the whole organisation, underpins it with scenarios and uses it as a test for investments.
Integrity and dependability Competency (50-framework): Integrity Knockout	■■■■■ N4	Big Fifty (Integrity Scale), 360 Feedback, Structured interview	Personality questionnaire	Reports a possible conflict of interest on own initiative and asks for review before a decision is taken.
Persuasiveness Competency (50-framework): Persuasiveness	■■■■■ N4	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Assessment centre	Chooses per counterpart the argument that matches their interest and checks along the way whether the agreement is genuine.
Organisational awareness Competency (50-framework): Organizational Sensitivity	■■■■■ N4	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Situational Judgement Test	Assesses which interests a proposal touches, involves the right people beforehand and chooses a suitable moment to raise it.
Taking difficult personnel decisions Competency (50-framework): Decision-making ability	■■■■■ N4	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Assessment centre	Takes a substantiated decision after a completed improvement track, discusses it in person and records the grounds in the file.
Stress tolerance Competency (50-framework): Stress resilience	■■■■■ N4	Big Fifty, 15PF, Mental Resilience (4C)	Personality questionnaire	Keeps working in a structured way at peak load, keeps agreements with clients clear and flags early which results are at risk.

Competencies to measure	Target level	hrmforce instrument	Assessment method	Behavioural anchor at target level
Market orientation Competency (50-framework): Market Orientation	 N4	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback	Assessment centre	Links signals from customers and competitors to the own offering and proposes adjustments on that basis.
Dealing with ambiguity Competency (50-framework): Flexibility	 N4	Big Fifty, Mental Resilience (4C), Competency Check	Situational Judgement Test	Formulates explicit assumptions when information is missing, proceeds on that basis and revises the approach once new data arrives.

2 Full skill profile

Every skill in this profile, sorted by weight. The behavioural anchor under each skill belongs to the target level.

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	Decisiveness Decides on irreversible matters with major consequences, records the trade off and sets which decisions others may take themselves.	 N5	5	yes	Situational Judgement Test	Big Fifty, 360 Feedback
G	Developing vision Formulates a multi-year vision for the whole organisation, underpins it with scenarios and uses it as a test for investments.	 N5	5	yes	Assessment centre	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Strategic thinking Develops scenarios for the whole organisation, weighs uncertainties explicitly and sets the strategic agenda together with the executive board.	 N5	5	yes	Assessment centre	Ability Scan, Competency Check
G	integrity and dependability Reports a possible conflict of interest on own initiative and asks for review before a decision is taken.	 N4	5	yes	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty (Integrity Scale), 360 Feedback, Structured interview
K	Reading and interpreting financial reports Compares reports across several periods, calculates ratios and names which items explain the deviation.	 N4	5	yes	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Risk assessment Estimates the main risks for the own process, orders them by likelihood and impact and takes measures.	 N4	4	no	Work sample test	Competency Check, Work sample test
G	Persuasiveness Chooses per counterpart the argument that matches their interest and checks along the way whether the agreement is genuine.	 N4	4	no	Assessment centre	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Stakeholder management Assesses influence and interest per party, chooses a fitting form of contact and discusses conflicting wishes before a decision is taken.	 N4	4	no	Assessment centre	Competency Check, 360 Feedback
G	organisational awareness Assesses which interests a proposal touches, involves the right people beforehand and chooses a suitable moment to raise it.	 N4	4	no	Situational Judgement Test	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Change management Makes a change approach for the team with those involved, chooses interventions per group and follows the implementation.	 N4	4	no	Assessment centre	Competency Check, 360 Feedback

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
K	Governance and compliance Tests intended working methods against law and internal rules and submits deviations with substantiation to the responsible officer.	 N4	4	yes	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)
V	Scenario thinking and futures literacy Works out three scenarios for the own process with assumptions and consequences and names the first signals per scenario.	 N4	3	no	Assessment centre	Competency Check, Structured interview
G	Taking difficult personnel decisions Takes a substantiated decision after a completed improvement track, discusses it in person and records the grounds in the file.	 N4	3	no	Assessment centre	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Decision making in governing bodies Writes a decision memo with options and consequences, defends the proposal in the meeting and records the decision.	 N4	3	no	Assessment centre	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
G	Stress tolerance Keeps working in a structured way at peak load, keeps agreements with clients clear and flags early which results are at risk.	 N4	3	no	Personality questionnaire	Big Fifty, 15PF, Mental Resilience (4C)

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
G	Market orientation Links signals from customers and competitors to the own offering and proposes adjustments on that basis.	 N4	3	no	Assessment centre	Big Fifty, Competency Check, 360 Feedback
V	Budgeting and cost control Makes the budget for an own project, follows realisation per period and proposes measures in case of deviation.	 N4	3	no	Work sample test	Knowledge test (client-specific), Work sample test
V	Developing business models Designs a business model for a new service, calculates the cost structure and tests it with those involved.	 N4	3	no	Work sample test	Work sample test, Knowledge test (client-specific)
V	Correspondence and record keeping Formulates answers to unusual questions independently, records the considerations briefly and keeps the file complete and up to date.	 N3	3	no	Work sample test	Work sample test
V	Talent development and succession Assesses with fixed criteria who is ready for a next step and makes a development plan per person.	 N3	3	no	Structured interview	Career Orientations, Competency Check, Development Review

T	Skill	Target level	Weight	Knockout	Assessment method	hrmforce instrument
V	Digital strategy and transformation Translates an organisational goal into concrete digital improvements, builds support and tracks whether the intended effects occur.	 N3	3	no	Structured interview	Structured interview, Portfolio
G	Dealing with ambiguity Formulates explicit assumptions when information is missing, proceeds on that basis and revises the approach once new data arrives.	 N4	2	no	Situational Judgement Test	Big Fifty, Mental Resilience (4C), Competency Check
K	Basic contract law knowledge Assesses contracts on liability, termination and payment and proposes amendments within the own mandate.	 N3	2	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)
K	AI literacy Judges per work task whether AI is suitable, names the main limitations and explains how it works to colleagues.	 N3	1	no	Knowledge test	Knowledge test (client-specific)

3 Levels per seniority

The same profile with the job family seniority adjustment applied. Target levels are clamped to 1 to 5.

Skill	medior	senior
Decisiveness	N4	N5
Developing vision	N4	N5
Strategic thinking	N4	N5
integrity and dependability	N3	N4
Reading and interpreting financial reports	N3	N4
Risk assessment	N3	N4
Persuasiveness	N3	N4
Stakeholder management	N4	N4
organisational awareness	N3	N4
Change management	N3	N4
Governance and compliance	N3	N4
Scenario thinking and futures literacy	N3	N4
Taking difficult personnel decisions	N3	N4
Decision making in governing bodies	N3	N4
Stress tolerance	N3	N4
Market orientation	N3	N4
Budgeting and cost control	N3	N4
Developing business models	N3	N4
Correspondence and record keeping	N2	N3
Talent development and succession	N2	N3
Digital strategy and transformation	N2	N3
Dealing with ambiguity	N3	N4
Basic contract law knowledge	N2	N3

Skill	medior	senior
AI literacy	N2	N3

4 The proficiency scale

Level	Label	Autonomy	Complexity	Scope	Depth of knowledge
N1	Guided	works under supervision and follows instruction	routine, one variable at a time	own task	basic understanding of terminology
N2	Applying	works independently within set frameworks	familiar situations with limited variation	own role	working knowledge, applies standard approach
N3	Proficient	sets own approach and seeks input proactively	several variables, some ambiguity	own team or process	thorough knowledge, weighs alternatives
N4	Advanced	directs others and decides on the approach	complex, with conflicting interests	several teams or a department	in-depth knowledge, advises others
N5	Leading	sets the standard and the policy	strategic, under high uncertainty	organisation, value chain or profession	authority, advances the profession

5 Behavioural anchors per skill

Anchors sit at N1, N3 and N5. N2 and N4 are deliberately not anchored: raters interpolate between them, following the O*NET convention.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Decisiveness Makes a choice within the time available, also when not all information is present, and stands behind its consequences.	Decides on standard cases within the own task and refers deviating cases to the supervisor in good time.	Cuts through conflicting advice, communicates the decision and states when it will be evaluated.	Decides on irreversible matters with major consequences, records the trade off and sets which decisions others may take themselves.
Developing vision Sketching a coherent picture of where the organisation or team will stand in a few years, based on trends, signals and own judgement.	States in own words where the team wants to stand in a year and which work belongs to that.	Connects trends in market and profession into a picture for the own team and tests it with colleagues.	Formulates a multi-year vision for the whole organisation, underpins it with scenarios and uses it as a test for investments.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Strategic thinking Analysing developments in the environment, market and technology and deriving strategic choices and alternatives from them for the longer term of an organisation or unit.	Collects data on market and competitors on request and summarises the main developments for the manager.	Places figures, customer signals and trends side by side and names two or three strategic options with their consequences.	Develops scenarios for the whole organisation, weighs uncertainties explicitly and sets the strategic agenda together with the executive board.
integrity and dependability Acting in line with applicable standards and agreements, also without supervision, and being transparent about own interests, mistakes and doubtful cases.	Keeps to agreements and rules of conduct made and reports an own mistake to the manager.	Reports a possible conflict of interest on own initiative and asks for review before a decision is taken.	Sets the organisation's integrity standards, enforces them also with influential parties and explains the resulting choices publicly.
Reading and interpreting financial reports Reads balance sheet, profit and loss account and cash flow statement and derives from these how an organisation or unit stands financially.	Points out the revenue, cost and result items in a periodic report and names the period used.	Compares reports across several periods, calculates ratios and names which items explain the deviation.	Assesses annual accounts and management reports of the organisation, sets the reporting standard and advises the board on it.
Risk assessment Names what can go wrong, estimates likelihood and impact and links control measures or a deliberate acceptance to them.	Spots unsafe or deviating situations in the own work and reports them according to the applicable procedure.	Estimates the main risks for the own process, orders them by likelihood and impact and takes measures.	Sets the risk appetite and the assessment method for the organisation and accounts for accepted residual risks.
Persuasiveness Moving others towards a position, decision or behaviour they initially resisted, using substantive arguments, examples and personal presence.	Puts forward an own proposal in a meeting and supports it with one concrete example from practice.	Chooses per counterpart the argument that matches their interest and checks along the way whether the agreement is genuine.	Wins board and external parties over to a far reaching change of course and sustains that support when resistance increases.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Stakeholder management Mapping who has an interest in an initiative and maintaining contact with those parties so that decisions keep their support.	Maintains a list of those involved and informs them about progress according to the agreed rhythm.	Assesses influence and interest per party, chooses a fitting form of contact and discusses conflicting wishes before a decision is taken.	Maintains a network reaching governance and political bodies, connects parties with differing interests and safeguards the position of the organisation.
organisational awareness Recognising how formal and informal relations, interests and decision making work in the organisation and taking these into account in own actions.	Asks who needs to be involved in a topic before a proposal is shared with others.	Assesses which interests a proposal touches, involves the right people beforehand and chooses a suitable moment to raise it.	Sees through relations between organisational units and external parties and steers decision making by organising support at an early stage.
Change management Planning and guiding change by involving stakeholders, phasing steps, influencing behaviour and tracking the results the change is meant to deliver.	Adapts own way of working to an announced change and asks for explanation when steps are unclear.	Makes a change approach for the team with those involved, chooses interventions per group and follows the implementation.	Leads organisation wide change programmes, aligns with works council and supervisors and sets the change approach of the organisation.
Governance and compliance Knowing which laws, codes of conduct and internal rules apply to the own field and how supervision, mandate and accountability are arranged in the organisation.	Names the main rules for the own work and looks up the applicable procedure when in doubt.	Tests intended working methods against law and internal rules and submits deviations with substantiation to the responsible officer.	Draws up the governance framework of the organisation, defines mandates and oversight arrangements and accounts for compliance to external supervisors.
Scenario thinking and futures literacy Explores several possible futures for an issue, describes the consequences per scenario and names signals that point to a scenario.	Names two possible outcomes for a plan and states what would then have to change in the own work.	Works out three scenarios for the own process with assumptions and consequences and names the first signals per scenario.	Draws up scenarios for the organisation with a horizon of years and links decision moments and measurable signal values to them.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Taking difficult personnel decisions Deciding on improvement tracks, transfer or termination of employment, with careful documentation and a clear explanation to the people involved.	Raises concerns about the performance of a colleague in time and with examples to the responsible manager.	Takes a substantiated decision after a completed improvement track, discusses it in person and records the grounds in the file.	Decides on far reaching reorganisation and dismissal cases, weighs legal and human consequences and accounts for the choice to board and works council.
Decision making in governing bodies Preparing, tabling and taking decisions in bodies such as a management team or steering group, with clear options, substantiation and recording of the decision.	Delivers requested documents on time for a meeting and summarises the decision taken correctly.	Writes a decision memo with options and consequences, defends the proposal in the meeting and records the decision.	Chairs decision making at executive level, weighs conflicting interests explicitly and determines which decisions belong where in the organisation.
Stress tolerance Keeps delivering work of the same quality under time pressure, opposition or unexpected turns and maintains a businesslike tone with others.	Keeps working on the current task as pressure rises and asks the supervisor which task can wait.	Keeps working in a structured way at peak load, keeps agreements with clients clear and flags early which results are at risk.	Keeps the organisation workable in crises, takes decisions under high uncertainty and sets the standard for composed action under pressure.
Market orientation Follows what happens in the market, with customers and with competitors and includes that information in own choices and proposals.	Reads the customer newsletter and the sector news and raises striking signals during the team meeting.	Links signals from customers and competitors to the own offering and proposes adjustments on that basis.	Translates market developments into the strategic agenda of the organisation and repositions the offering for the longer term.
Budgeting and cost control Draws up a budget for a task, team or project, tracks spending against that budget and intervenes when overspending threatens.	Tracks spending in the supplied overview and reports deviations above the agreed limit.	Makes the budget for an own project, follows realisation per period and proposes measures in case of deviation.	Sets the budget framework for the organisation, decides on reallocation of resources and accounts for it to the board.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Developing business models Describes how an activity creates, delivers and captures value and aligns customer groups, channels, costs and revenue streams.	Fills in a model on an existing canvas with the data of a familiar service of the organisation.	Designs a business model for a new service, calculates the cost structure and tests it with those involved.	Revises the business model of the organisation or chain and determines which revenue streams are built up or wound down.
Correspondence and record keeping Drafting business letters, emails and conversation records and filing them so that the handling remains traceable later for colleagues and regulators.	Sends standard letters from the system, saves attachments in the agreed location and notes the date of dispatch.	Formulates answers to unusual questions independently, records the considerations briefly and keeps the file complete and up to date.	Designs the correspondence and archiving standard for the organisation, checks compliance and accounts for file quality during an external audit.
Talent development and succession Mapping talent and potential, agreeing development paths and preparing succession for key positions, so that critical roles remain filled over time.	Notes per team member which tasks they enjoy doing and passes this on to the manager.	Assesses with fixed criteria who is ready for a next step and makes a development plan per person.	Builds a succession plan for all key roles in the organisation and discusses the risks yearly with board and supervisors.
Digital strategy and transformation Links technological possibilities to organisational goals, sets out a change route and steers the introduction of new digital ways of working.	Provides input for a digitalisation plan by factually describing bottlenecks in own work process.	Translates an organisational goal into concrete digital improvements, builds support and tracks whether the intended effects occur.	Sets the organisation's digital strategy, prioritises investments and accounts for choices to the board and shareholders.
Dealing with ambiguity Works on when the assignment, information or division of roles is incomplete or contradictory, makes workable assumptions and tests them once more becomes clear.	Asks what is meant when an assignment is unclear and then works according to the answer given.	Formulates explicit assumptions when information is missing, proceeds on that basis and revises the approach once new data arrives.	Sets direction under high uncertainty, makes the remaining uncertainty explicit and keeps the organisation moving until a decision can be taken.

Skill	N1	N3	N5
Basic contract law knowledge Knows the main rules on offer, acceptance, breach of contract and general terms and recognises when legal advice is needed.	Uses the standard agreement of the organisation and refers deviating clauses to a legal adviser.	Assesses contracts on liability, termination and payment and proposes amendments within the own mandate.	Sets the contract templates and legal frameworks of the organisation and decides on deviations with major risk.
AI literacy Knows how AI systems work, what they can and cannot do, states where they fit or not and uses correct terminology.	Explains in own words that a language model predicts from patterns and can therefore produce incorrect output.	Judges per work task whether AI is suitable, names the main limitations and explains how it works to colleagues.	Defines what AI literacy means in the organisation, measures the level and links it to training and deployment policy.

6 Assessment methods and validity

The validities are the corrected meta-analytic estimates from Sackett, Zhang, Berry and Lievens (2022) in the Journal of Applied Psychology, which replace the older Schmidt and Hunter (1998) figures. The spread matters as much as the mean: with a high SD, validity varies strongly by context.

Assessment method	rho	SD	What it is
Situational Judgement Test	0.12	0.11	Scenario with response options, scored on knowledge or behavioural tendency.
Assessment centre	0.29	0.09	Multiple exercises, multiple assessors, dimension-wise scoring.
Personality questionnaire	0.40	0.15	Self-report of behavioural preferences. At hrnforce the Big Fifty and the 15PF.
Knowledge test	0.40	0.13	Test of declarative job knowledge, usually assembled per client.
Work sample test	0.33	0.09	The candidate performs a representative work sample under standardised conditions.
Structured interview	0.42	0.19	Behaviour-based interview with fixed questions and a rating scale per question.

7 Assessment instruments for this job

hrnforce instrument	Skills	What it measures
Competency Check	13	Behavioral-Level Competency Assessment
360 Feedback	10	Multiple assessments based on behavioral anchors
Big Fifty	9	Personality questionnaire, 150 items, 25 factors
Knowledge test (client-specific)	6	Professional knowledge test, customized for each client
Work sample test	4	Representative work sample under standardized conditions
Structured interview	3	Behavioral interview with a fixed structure
Mental Resilience (4C)	2	Mental Resilience According to the 4C Model
Ability Scan	1	Aptitude Test: Verbal, Numerical, and Abstract Reasoning Skills
Big Fifty (Integrity Scale)	1	
15PF	1	Personality Profile, a shorter alternative to the Big Fifty

hrmforce instrument	Skills	What it measures
Career Orientations	1	Career Anchors and Work Values
Development Review	1	Structured development interview
Portfolio	1	Evaluation of prior work against fixed criteria

8 How to use this profile

1. Agree the profile with the hiring manager before the first candidate is measured. Weights shifted afterwards make the outcome indefensible.
2. Choose the assessment method per skill from the Assessment method column. Combine at most three methods per candidate.
3. Calibrate the assessors in a two-hour session using the anchors in chapter 5. Anchors without rater training deliver little.
4. Fill in the match calculator and discuss the gaps in the development conversation. Type A and type G are selection criteria, not one-quarter development goals.

Source: hrmforce Skills Framework 2.0, version 2.0.0, built 2026-09-08. Crosswalks to ESCO v1.2.1, O*NET 31.0, Lightcast Open Skills, SFIA 9, DigComp 3.0, EntreComp, LifeComp, GreenComp, Allit, WEF Future of Jobs 2025, ISCO-08 and the Dutch CBS occupational classification BRC 2014 edition 2025. This profile is a starting point, not a standard: align it with your own organisation before selecting on it.