Emergia Methodology Brief

The scientific model behind Emergia, the high-potential (HiPo) profile, built by VIFM on its own instruments

Version 1.4 · 17 November 2026

1. What the model measures

High potential is the likelihood that an individual can rise into a more senior role and succeed once there. Emergia reads it through two measured pillars plus one manager-rated element, all on a shared 1-5 scale. The three elements (aspiration, ability and engagement) follow a widely cited definition of high potential (Martin and Schmidt, 2010). Published research also notes that definitions of potential vary between organizations (Silzer and Church, 2009). The markers, the 60/40 blend, the nine-grid archetypes and the manager survey are VIFM's own work (see §9 for references).

Pillar	Question	Source
Aspiration	Will they rise?	Persona™ - eight drive and growth markers, measured through five framework competencies
Ability	Can they succeed at the next level?	Persona™ behavioral competencies + Logica™ reasoning
Engagement	Does the line manager observe commitment to stay and grow?	Twenty-statement survey rated by the line manager

The three questions describe what each pillar is designed to indicate; they are not predictions. Evidence that the scores predict promotion or later performance has not yet been established.

The two measured pillars place the individual on a **nine-grid** (3 x 3) of Aspiration x Ability. Engagement never changes the grid placement - it informs the recommended action based on the placement, because commitment to stay cannot be read from an assessment sitting and a manager judgment should shape the conversation, not the arithmetic.

Engagement is the line manager's observation of commitment signals. It is a proxy for, not a direct measure of, the individual's own intention to stay, and no evidence has yet been collected that it predicts retention.

2. Pillar 1 - Aspiration (the drive and growth markers)

Aspiration is built on eight behavioral drive markers from the VIFM competency framework, selected because they evidence drive, initiative, growth appetite, and the courage to step up:

1. Proactive Initiative
2. Outcome Ownership
3. Accountability for Commitments
4. Learning by Doing
5. Mobilizing Around Purpose
6. Principled Courage
7. Adaptive Learning Capacity
8. Continuous Self-Development

Each marker is scored through the framework competency that covers it. On the current VIFM competency framework (version 2, 21 competencies), the eight markers are covered by five competencies:

Framework competency	Aspiration markers covered
Proactive Initiative	Proactive Initiative
Delivery & Accountability	Outcome Ownership; Accountability for Commitments
Learning Agility	Learning by Doing; Adaptive Learning Capacity; Continuous Self-Development
Mobilizing Around Purpose	Mobilizing Around Purpose
Integrity & Principled Courage	Principled Courage

The Aspiration score is the unweighted mean of the individual's scores on these five competencies, so each competency counts equally whatever the number of markers it covers, and the report lists the five competencies with their scores. Integrity & Principled Courage is broader than the original marker: it also covers ethical conduct and trust and credibility. A sitting completed on the earlier framework version is scored on the eight markers individually.

These are self-rated in the Persona sitting (forced-choice and Likert items, some of them reverse-keyed). Self-report shows how the individual sees their own drive; the report directs the reader to triangulate with observed behavior and, where available, a Reflect 360™ view.

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3. Pillar 2 - Ability (a stated 60/40 blend)

Ability blends two evidence streams with **stated weights**, so that the scoring is transparent and explainable:

- **Behavioral ability (60%)** - the mean of the remaining measured Persona competencies (everything outside the aspiration set): the leadership-relevant behavioral repertoire.
- **Cognitive agility (40%)** - the Logica™ reasoning result, mapped from accuracy onto the shared 1-5 scale.

The report shows both components separately, next to the blended Ability score.

How the scores reach the shared scale. Persona competency scores are already on the 1-5 scale. Each Logica subtest is scored as the percentage of its questions answered correctly, and that percentage is mapped in a straight line onto the 1-5 scale: 0% correct is 1.0, 50% is 3.0, 70% is 3.8 and 100% is 5.0. Cognitive agility is the unweighted mean of the subtests in the attached Logica result. Ability is then 0.6 x behavioral ability + 0.4 x cognitive agility. The mapping reflects accuracy on the test; it is not a comparison with a norm group.

Recommended Logica configuration: Inductive reasoning (used here as an indicator of learning agility - the ability to spot patterns in unfamiliar material is associated in published research with learning new and less-defined work more quickly; VIFM has not yet validated this link for Emergia) and Numerical reasoning (senior roles in the region's banking, government and corporate context are data-intensive and financially demanding) are recommended as the minimum; Deductive reasoning is recommended for senior or governance-heavy pipelines. Cognitive agility averages every reasoning subtest the sitting included; the default package includes all four (numerical, verbal, inductive and deductive).

When no Logica result is attached. The 60/40 blend is not applied: Ability equals the behavioral ability score alone, and the report says so (the Ability reading is labeled "behavioral evidence only" and cognitive agility is shown as "Not sat"). In that case both grid axes rest on self-report from the same Persona sitting. A placement produced without Logica should be treated as provisional: the same Ability score is not comparable with a blended score, and the nine-grid then reflects self-perception on both axes. VIFM recommends adding the reasoning tests before a placement is used in a nomination discussion.

4. The nine-grid

Each axis is banded on the shared 1-5 scale. Scores are rounded to two decimal places before the band is assigned:

Band	Score
Developing	below 3.00
Solid	3.00 up to, but not including, 3.80
Strong	3.80 and above

A score of exactly 3.00 is Solid, and a score of exactly 3.80 is Strong. The same bands apply to the Engagement score. The nine cells each carry a VIFM archetype with a narrative and a development focus:

	Ability: Developing	Ability: Solid	Ability: Strong
Aspiration: Strong	Eager Developer - Build Foundations	Emerging Potential - Stretch with Support	High Potential - Accelerate
Aspiration: Solid	Steady Performer - Focus Development	Solid Contributor - Grow Steadily	Quiet Strength - Ignite Ambition
Aspiration: Developing	Early Journey - Foundational Development	Developing Contributor	Untapped Expert - Re-engage

The report renders the grid as a color-graded chart (blue tonal zones deepening toward the high-potential corner) with drawn X/Y axes and the individual plotted in their cell.

5. Engagement (manager-rated)

Twenty observable statements answered by the line manager on a 1-5 agreement scale, taking about five minutes: stay-intent, retention-risk and disengagement signals (three statements are reverse-keyed), discretionary effort, acting on development, purpose and values alignment, appetite for bigger responsibility, advocacy, pride, energy, ownership, resilience, relationships, long-term orientation, learning, initiative, reliability, and whether they would recommend the organization.

The Engagement score is the mean of the answered statements, after reverse-keying, on the shared 1-5 scale. At least 15 of the 20 statements must be answered for a score to be produced. Surveys completed under the earlier six-statement version of the survey remain valid and are reported on the statements that were answered. Where more than one survey has been completed for an individual, the report uses the most recent.

The score renders as a third gauge, with a page listing each answered statement, and specific combinations produce an overlay note - for example, a Strong-Aspiration placement such as High Potential with Developing engagement carries a retention caution: address engagement before heavy development investment.

This is a single-rater management judgment, prone to recency and halo effects. The report labels it as such and treats it as a conversation opener, never a verdict.

6. Development output

The report closes with a development plan built from the three lowest-rated behavioral competencies in the sitting (with up to three actions each, drawn from the VIFM development-tip bank, which as of 17 November 2026 holds 116 tips in service, at least three for each of the 21 competencies) plus reasoning-practice activities for any Logica subtest below the Solid band (below 3.0 on the shared scale, which is under 50% correct).

7. Scope and limitations

- Band cuts are scale-midpoint based and **indicative until a VIFM norm sample is established**.
- Aspiration and behavioral Ability are self-reported; cognitive Ability is performance-tested; Engagement is a single-rater judgment. The report identifies the source of each score.
- The Emergia profile is **one input to a high-potential nomination, never the decision itself**. No score in this model is a pass/fail signal.
- A sitting must cover at least four of the aspiration competencies and at least four broader competencies. Otherwise the report is not generated, so that no pillar is reported without sufficient evidence.

8. Delivery

Generated from a Bespoke Bundle sitting (Persona + Logica completed in one session). Available to VIFM staff and, through the client portal, to the client organization; client-downloaded copies show "manager-rated" without naming the individual manager, and the manager's optional free-text context note is not scored and is never included in the report.

9. References

- Martin, J., & Schmidt, C. (2010). *How to keep your top talent.* Harvard Business Review, 88(5), 54-61.
- Silzer, R., & Church, A. H. (2009). *The pearls and perils of identifying potential.* Industrial and Organizational Psychology, 2(4), 377-412.