

# PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN



# Personal Development Plan

## The importance of learning

One of the purposes of the Performance Management and Development System (ST/AI/2010/5) is to promote a culture of high performance, personal development and continuous learning.

The emphasis on mobility and learning at present within the UN requires people who can fit in quickly and adapt to a variety of challenges and assignments. The ability to demonstrate the skills, attitudes and abilities that would allow us to become a global, adaptable and dynamic workforce is essential for the success of our Organization.

All staff members are, therefore, expected to complete a 'personal development plan' at the beginning of each performance cycle. This plan typically includes competencies the staff member wishes to strengthen, learning opportunities the staff member wishes to participate in and career aspirations for future assignments.

## Five-day target for professional development

All staff members are expected to attain a five-day target for professional development (see ST/SGB/2009/9 Learning and Development Policy)

Learning and development activities should be interpreted in the broadest sense, including self-study programmes, group activities, one-to-one learning and experiential learning (learning from direct experience, such as on-the-job coaching or temporary developmental assignments).

The first reporting officer is encouraged to create opportunities for staff members to test and develop new competencies and knowledge by offering challenging responsibilities and assignments.

# Ideas for professional development

## (1) Engage in a challenging assignment

Most of the best learning and development occurs on the job, by taking on new tasks or committing to 'stretch assignments'.

These examples below will require more commitment of your time and effort and the agreement of your supervisor but the benefits are invaluable. Some examples:

- Taking on a tough project where others have failed
- Taking on a task you dislike
- Working short rotations in other units in functions you have not been exposed to
- Filling a vacancy until the new staff member comes on board
- Becoming someone's mentor
- Taking over for someone on vacation or mission assignment
- Teaching something you know a lot about
- Becoming a change agent; champion significant change and implementation
- Training someone to do something
- Fixing something; cleaning up a mess or a system breakdown
- Inducting a new colleague

# Ideas for professional development

## (2) Learn by doing

Developmental and learning assignments may be grouped by competencies. Some examples from the [Competency Development Guide](#):

### PROFESSIONALISM

Attend and participate in a meeting to which you are invited. Arrive on time and participate actively.

### COMMUNICATION

After giving a presentation, identify colleagues who are present and are recognized within the Organization as being effective communicators. Ask these people for feedback and attempt to incorporate their feedback into future presentations.

### TEAMWORK

If you supervise staff, consider organizing a team-building event for you and your staff, perhaps with the help of an internal or external specialist.

### PLANNING AND ORGANIZING

Next time you have an assignment to complete, make an effort to ensure that there is a clear deadline. It is important that you indicate how much time may be necessary for completing the work and that you stick to this time allocation.

### CLIENT ORIENTATION

Develop a client satisfaction survey to assess how satisfied your clients are with the service they receive. It may be useful to ask what changes they would like to be made to the service you provide.

### MANAGING PERFORMANCE

Prepare a list of issues concerning your team's performance which you know could be improved; think about what you can do to address each of these issues.

# Tips for getting your supervisor's support

- Request a meeting
- It is best to have this conversation without distraction, when you have your supervisor's full attention.
- Prepare, in advance, an idea or two for a learning activity: Make sure it has a clear timeframe for completion, and your role is defined, along with any support that might be needed.
- Clearly state how this learning assignment would be helpful for your professional development.
- When you present the idea, be sure to note how it would benefit the unit's performance goals.
- Consider an assignment that addresses at least one UN core competency (i.e. teamwork, technological awareness, accountability, etc.).
- Ask for feedback about the idea – what does your supervisor think? Does he/she have any ideas to enhance this idea?

