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United Nations Institute for Training and Research

MEMORANDUM

To: Managers

Date: 21 September 2008

From: Marina Vasilescu
Chief, Human Resources Section

Subject: Performance evaluation

The revised human resources strategy seeks to put greater emphasis on management by results and accountability for performance. The goal of the performance evaluation policy is to manage individual performance and development in an effective manner leading to a result-based management culture of the Institute whilst supporting individual accomplishment at the same time.

When going through the PERs, as submitted to HR, I have noticed that in the first part of the PER, in most cases, staff members describe their daily tasks and activities during the year. The PER is not a duplication of the Job description, but a performance management tool indispensable to the Managers. It should take into account **what** has been achieved and **how** it was achieved and the process should be conducted on a continuous basis throughout the year, in the form of one-to-one meetings between the supervisor and his/her staff. At least one hour is normally needed for each phase, in a place where a confidential discussion may occur.

In the Performance Evaluation Report form here attached, the "objectives" have been replaced by "key result indicators/expected results" and the learning development objectives and actions have been integrated as part of the report since learning is integral to staff development and linked to performance management and career planning.

The performance evaluation process should be fair, objective and honest. The PER, if used correctly, is an important tool for effectively managing staff performance and development. It is fundamental to the career development of staff members by inspiring and motivating staff.

The performance evaluation cycle is a one-year cycle and will start for each staff on the first day of their contract. The process consists of the following steps:

- 1. Defining key result indicators for the duration of the cycle.** This is the first section of the PER. Each staff member should be provided with a

copy of the work plan of the Programme/Unit and the result indicators should be defined based on the objectives of the Programme/Unit as reflected in the plan. The indicators should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound. They should be based on and reflect the work plans for your Programme. At the same time specific areas that need improvement or further development should be identified and the learning and development plan should be reviewed, with learning and development objectives and actions agreed by the staff member and the supervisor. They should be concrete and realistic and should support their results as reflected in the PER. The learning and development plan is now integrated in the PER (section 4).

2. Mid-term review is now included in section 2 and consists in an informal performance discussion in order to review progress, give feedback and discuss possible changes to the key result indicators/results expected, if required. The supervisor must ensure follow up with the staff member on the implementation of the learning actions, and on the effectiveness of the learning and development measures. This must take place at the mid-cycle and is meant to discuss any changes in the expected results. Revisions must be reflected in the PER after the discussion.

3. At the end of the cycle, a formal performance discussion will take place. The incumbent is required to complete **the self-assessment part**, together with progress on the implementation of the learning actions. The staff member is encouraged to assess his or her own performance and identify his or her strengths and area of development.

4. During **the overall performance discussion and assessment by the supervisor**, the supervisor will go through the results and review the learning and development objectives and actions and will assess the performance for the whole period covered by the evaluation. At the same time, the supervisor and the staff member **should define the key result indicators/results expected and the learning development objectives and actions for the next cycle**.

When assessing performance, the supervisor must provide qualitative, objective and constructive comments in writing for each key result indicator taking into account the results achieved and assignments accomplished as well as how they have been achieved/accomplished. Account should also be taken of circumstances that may have prevented the staff member from achieving results.

5. The staff member must have the opportunity to **discuss the appraisal with the supervisor before making comments in the report and rate the work environment** in section 6 of the report.

Before a supervisor/staff member is reassigned or leaves the Institute, the supervisor must prepare a PER for his/her subordinate(s).

Poor performance, which is characterized by serious, recurrent performance problems, should be dealt with as early as possible. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to give prompt and appropriate feedback and help staff members to improve their performance. In such cases **a formal**

performance improvement plan should be prepared and agreed upon between the supervisor and the staff member. This should clearly address the areas that need improvement and describe how the improvement should be attained through specific performance indicators.

It is the immediate supervisor's obligation and responsibility to discuss and define key performance indicators, learning and development objectives and actions to be agreed and prepare a performance report for his/her subordinates within the period required by taking the necessary steps at each stage of the process. Performance evaluation should be carried out objectively and without fear or favour.

If a staff member wishes to contest his/her PER and the issue cannot be resolved with his/her supervisor directly, he/she shall, no later than seven working days after receiving the report signed by his/her supervisor, submit to the Chief of the Human Resources Section, a concise written account of his/her objections and the facts and conclusions on which they are based.

As you may know, we are in the process of producing an institutional competency framework. As soon as it is finalized, the PER will be adapted to reflect the competencies related to each specific category of staff and will result in a competency based performance evaluation.

Please let me know your comments by 31 October 2008.

Thank you for your cooperation.