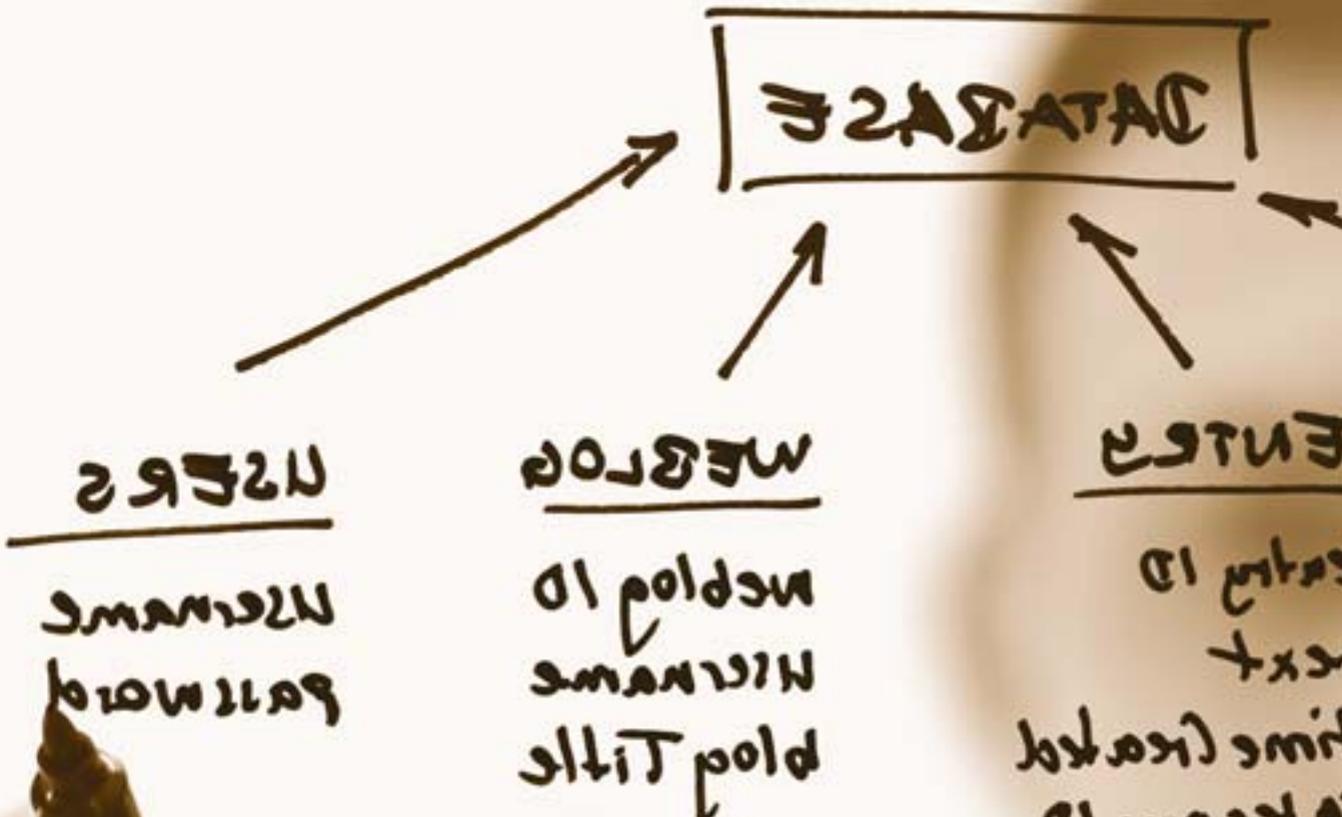


# Internal Management, a Process of Change

THIS IS A VNG INTERNATIONAL PRODUCT



Are you a local government manager?  
Are you responsible for your own team of staff?  
Are you expected to produce high quality services?  
This publication on internal management of local government provides the reader with practical exercises and techniques to understand strengths and weaknesses, and offers suggestions to make simple but effective improvements in performance. In eight concise chapters, the handbook takes the reader through a series of discussion points, questions and answers, and solutions and ideas for effectively meeting the challenges of working in local government. Topics include changing internal management, time and problem analysis, the manager's role, planning and objective setting, performance appraisal, communication and other key management functions and operational processes. Short and to the point, it is an essential starting point for organizing and managing improvements in local government management.

# Internal Management, a Process of Change

*For Managers, Elected Officials,  
and Organizations*



## **Colophon**

This publication has been developed in the framework of the LOGO East programme.

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# Introduction

This publication is for managers, and aspiring managers, politicians, and all those involved in the development and improvement of services in the public sector. This publication will provide a reference source of functions and techniques to improve all areas of civil service administration.

The different chapters cover different aspects of good practice, and it is not necessary to read the handbook from page 1 to the end in sequence. Instead, the handbook is structured to allow you to dip in and out of it, to compare your approach in a certain area with what is advised, and to undertake periodic reminders of best practice.

Although there is a logical sequence, you will not miss anything by reviewing specific chapters only when a particular difficult situation arises.

Good local government depends on efficient and effective administration. The public (the 'customers' of the government) expect certain standards from government administrations, and their politicians. As representative of constituents, a politician is in a position to influence and direct the administration. Knowledge of best practices and key administrative methods will enable politicians to be more effective in directing their administrations, and to improve services to their constituents.

The handbook commences with an introduction to management and continues in the following chapters to address in more detail what the key management tasks are.

These focus on the following:

- Planning** – developing strategy, and setting objectives
- Organizing** – time, workload, people, making decisions
- Leadership** – motivating, setting direction, maintaining effective teams
- Performance management** – appraising performance, correcting errors
- Communicating** – getting the message across, being effective
- Problem analysis** – what goes wrong, why, how to develop solutions

There are many 'self-analysis' tests throughout the publication, and it will be of benefit to undertake these during your review of the appropriate chapter. It will also be an interesting exercise to duplicate the tests and have your subordinates complete them also. This will assist you in knowing more about your team, and what should make it more effective and efficient.

# 1 Is changing internal management necessary?

It is said that the only 'constant' in life is change! What this short chapter considers are the reasons for change in the context of regional and local government, and the main factors behind making the changes effective and sustainable.

## 1 Factors behind effective and sustainable changes

Management in local government is essentially about being able to maximize three sometimes conflicting issues:

- Delivering high quality customer services
- Operating within a limited (and fixed) budget
- Maximizing the output of existing and future personnel

In a perfect world, these three aspects are synchronized, or in balance. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case and so careful and constant management of them is necessary. Being willing and able to change previously held practices and procedures is a key to developing a more receptive and customer-friendly service ethic and orientation.

Improving customer services creates more contented citizens, and a more responsive population for future development and change. Maintaining control over the budget ensures that future budgetary requests are most likely to be approved, and developing the skills of the staff improves morale, and increases performance, thus delivering better quality services. Managing all three well creates a 'virtuous circle' that is sustainable and self maintaining.

Now, ask yourself the following questions:

- Does the unit you are responsible for have clear performance objectives?
- Does every sub-unit have clear objectives that lead to the overall objectives of your unit?
- Are there clear job descriptions for the staff employed in these units?
- Are the personnel in these units sufficiently able to perform their responsibilities?
- Do the procedures to which they adhere assist or inhibit their performance?

There should be one overriding principle that guides the operation of the administrators in local government offices. How does my work output support the delivery of services to the citizens to whom I am directly or indirectly responsible? As the reader of this handbook, this is also your main concern.

## 2 Example of departmental analysis

Take a department with which you are familiar and make an analysis based on the following questions:

- 1 What are the responsibilities and objectives of this department?
- 2 Who is responsible for delivering these outputs?
- 3 Do these personnel have clear job descriptions?
- 4 Do these job descriptions clearly describe the expected outputs?
- 5 Can personnel actually complete their tasks effectively?
- 6 How effective are the procedures? Are they clearly written?
- 7 When were the procedures written? Are they still current?
- 8 Are there appropriate levels in the department hierarchy?
- 9 How is performance measured?

From this information it should be possible to assess the quality of service delivery from the ability of the personnel and the functionality of the underlying process. This is further explained in the chapter 'Problem analysis'.

Highlight those aspects and specific problems that prevent the department delivering high class services. These 'barriers to progress' will become future points of capacity building or organizational development. They may also highlight strategic areas or weaknesses that should be addressed at the political level to change either the focus of the services, or the means through which these services are delivered.

Consider forming work groups or committees to review your findings and develop strategies to improve performance based on either changes to services, or process/personnel development. If improvement of efficiency can be achieved, this will ease the pressure on budgets and allow for other pro-active initiatives to be taken.

These may include, but not be restricted to new promotional campaigns for existing or new government services, developing new services that are important to the local community, improving communication with key local groups and community leaders, etc.

### Action Memo to self

**Now that you have considered some of the key issues in change management, what will you do to make this a more focused and realizable process?**

**I will improve my organizational assessment by .....**

## 2 Problem analysis

One of the keys to effective problem analysis is not deciding what the 'problem' is before examining all the evidence. It may sound obvious, but frequently many of us prefer to pick the first plausible solution, rather than really investigating the underlying facts.

Whenever considering a problem, ask yourself two questions. Is it 'current', that is, is it a problem that is affecting us 'now'. And is it 'real', that is, does it constitute a problem that still exists.

Analyzing problems requires an open mind, but a critical and disciplined analysis. Beware of 'lazy' descriptions of problems. 'Insufficient machines' is not a problem as such, it is a description of a condition or state of being. If this type of comment is given to you as a problem, ask yourself 'what could we do differently if we did have the machines?' The answer to that question may give a better indication of what the problem really is.

### 1 What are the issues?

Find out what is causing the greatest concern among the team or staff. Break down the issues into component parts. You can do this by collecting information from different sources and discussing the resulting range of interconnected problems with your team or others.

A clear understanding of the issues is essential to finding the optimum solution. The more you can identify and clarify issues in a systematic and structured approach, the easier you will identify the best solution.

So, to define a problem, you need to investigate, discuss, analyze and review all the available inputs from all affected parties. If you try to find solutions before you fully understand the nature of the problem, you are almost certain to have trouble clarifying what you want, and will, at best, only find a temporary or partial solution. The real problem will remain.

### So how to do it?

- Has a similar problem arisen in another part of your organization? Find out what others have done about this problem: what worked, what didn't, and why?
- Decide on a broad focus for resolving (fixing) the problem but be prepared to amend this proposed solution if more information leads to a different issue.

### Questions you can ask

- What is the problem or issue of concern?
- What are the reasons for or causes of the problem?
- What do we know about the issue? What research do we have? What's been done already? Who's been involved?
- Are the alternatives we wish to promote practical?
- Is it necessary to formulate our solution in terms of short, medium or long-term goals?
- How will the resolution of this problem assist in improving the performance of my team, or organization?

## 2 Another approach - Critical Incident Reporting

There may be occasions when a significant problem (or incident) arises in your place of work. The consequences of this problem are far reaching, and a solution needs to be found to correct it and prevent it recurring. To be of value, the solution must be based on really understanding what went wrong. This process is well established, but the principles can also be applied to any difficult problem or situation. First, understand what went wrong.

Critical Incident Reporting deals with problem analysis with four key questions.

- 1 Approximately how long ago did it happen?
- 2 What specific circumstances led up to the incident?
- 3 Exactly what did you, or the person you observed, do?
- 4 What resulted that made you think that this was an effective action?

The first question sets the problem into a relevant time period. This may be important in case other events have actually overtaken the problem, and in fact, the problem is no longer current or real (see above).

The next question establishes exactly what happened immediately prior to the problem occurring. This may reveal other problems that have to be rectified first. This is the beginning of a possible 'cause-effect' chain relationship which reveals more and deeper rooted problems.

Question three establishes what people actually did or were doing when the incident occurred. This may reveal difficulties in techniques, or missing skills and knowledge. It may also reveal if there is a systemic problem based on poorly drafted procedures.

The final question establishes the consequences of the problem. This may be relevant in determining a priority of problem resolution when there are scarce resources – particularly limited financial budgets.

Brief written reports should be made by everyone connected with the incident.

These should be examined to determine the relation between different actions to see how they contributed to the incident. Each of these actions should be noted on 'post-it' pads (one to a leaf) and arranged in a cause-effect relationship. By undertaking this simple analysis, the depth of the problem can be assessed, and appropriate alternative solutions developed appropriate to the different levels of the problem.

#### **Action Memo to self**

**Now that you have completed this chapter, what do you need to do to improve the way that you assess problems? Complete the following statement, and try to live up to it.**

**I will improve my problem analysis skill in future by .....**

# 3 The manager's role

## 1 What is management?

There are many different definitions and as many different opinions, and every manager you speak to will probably give a different answer. But whatever they say, there are a number of key roles that any manager must perform, and perform well.

For the purposes of this handbook, we define management as:

**'Leading a team to achieve planned objectives'**

To be a manager within an organization requires knowledge, insight and skills. You need to know the organization, you need to know your employees but you also need to know your beneficiaries, citizens and clients. Only through really knowing all aspects of the task and through having an ability to direct and focus the team will you be truly successful.

## 2 Management roles

Four distinct management roles can be defined. These are:

- Director
- Controller
- Planner
- Organizer

These different roles require different capacities and include the following:

### Director

Observing the organization and how it functions  
Resource management  
Communication  
Training  
Team development

### Controller

Setting standards for staff and operations  
Monitoring performance  
Measuring performance  
Evaluating performance  
Correcting performance

### Planner

Budgeting and financial issues  
Setting objectives  
Decision-making  
Problem solving  
Forecasting

### Organizer

Reaching objectives  
Structural change  
Effective delegation  
Change management  
Leadership

***Manager as Director***

Directing the operation of your team requires an ability to see the whole picture within the unit of the responsible manager. This includes observing how individual staff perform and the environment in which they have to operate and carry out their tasks.

It also requires an ability to communicate effectively, both within the unit of responsibility, but also with other units within the organization. In addition there is a clear requirement to communicate effectively with those organizations and agencies that are relevant stakeholders in the overall deliverables of your organization. These may include individual businesses, but also other interest groups.

Managing the limited resources of the organization is a practical and ongoing requirement, but as these resources improve, effective management becomes more important to ensure that there is maximum efficiency and minimum waste of these limited resources.

The on-going training of personnel is crucial to ensuring continuous improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization. Skills and knowledge need managing in accordance with the needs of the organization, and these activities must be co-ordinated to meet ever-changing requirements.

Finally the careful development of the teams within the organization is critical to its continued growth and success.

***Manager as Controller***

This aspect of management refers to the capacities associated with the actual performance of the organization. This encompasses many inter-related factors and a comprehensive approach.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this is the ability to formulate and set appropriate standards of performance. This would include the use of SMART<sup>1</sup> objective setting and the individualization of performance standards and requirements (see chapter on 'Planning and objective setting' below).

Performance needs to be monitored, measured against established criteria, and properly evaluated and analyzed. Managers need to possess the skills that will enable them to properly respond to this key requirement in their functions.

Finally, managers are required to correct underperformance in individuals and units, and have the skills to re-assess standards and criteria against actual performance and changes in the working environment.

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<sup>1</sup> SMART: Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Realistic; Time-based (see also chapter on 'Planning and objective setting').

***Manager as Planner***

The requirements of this aspect of the manager's role refer to the ability to analyze the organization, or their respective unit's SWOT, that is its **S**trengths, **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats. This enables managers to consider how to plan activities within the capacities of the unit, or team, and to make arrangements to improve the effectiveness of these same teams or units.

Although not specifically within the ordinary manager's responsibility, the ability to understand how to formulate policy is a skill required at senior levels in the organization.

Being able to forecast effectively and to monitor and update these forecasts is an additional requirement. This includes the ability to make decisions in many different areas of operation of the organization.

***Manager as Organizer***

Managers need to be able to answer the question 'How will we achieve the objectives set for the organization or my unit in it?' This requires managers to be able to analyze and review the resource needs and requirements of the organization to ensure the maximum performance outputs are met. How can limited human and physical resources of the organization be deployed most efficiently and effectively?

There also needs to be an ability to consider the organizational and structural implications on the organization. Are systems in place that allow the maximization of activities, e.g. communication, reporting processes and practices?

Are there clear capacities at all levels to ensure that the necessary responsibilities and authorities are well managed and clearly understood and functioning well?

The ability to review and amend these factors to improve the overall outputs of the organization will define its success as roles and responsibilities change over time.

**Action Memo to self**

**Now that you have completed this chapter, what do you need to do to improve the way that you manage yourself? Complete the following statement, and try to live up to it.**

**I will improve my management skills in future by .....**

## 4 Planning and objective setting

Planning and objective setting concern setting goals and targets and the means by which these will be reached.

Generally take a simple approach to setting overall targets for your team, unit, organization, etc. Base your targets on past performance, and within the limits of available personnel, finance, products and services.

Overall goals and targets should be allocated to departments or operational units of the organization according to their ability to deliver the required results. Within these operational units, targets should be further allocated to individual teams, or even individuals themselves. These objectives need to be set carefully.

### 1 Planning checklist

Here are a number of key questions to consider when starting the planning process.

*Experience* – Where are we coming from?

- Traditions
- Culture / management style
- Resistance to change

*Direction* – Where are we heading?

*Situation now* – Where are we now?

- Specifically
- Evidence

*Outcome desired* – Where do we want to be?

- Mission
- Objective

*Deadline* – When do we want to arrive?

- Specifically

*Action steps* – How will we get there?

- Strategy (options / choice)
- Sub-objectives
- Resources needed

## 2 What is an objective?

An objective is a description of a desired end situation or result.

If objectives are not reached, there can be several reasons:

- Not really believing in an objective as others set it
- Not being realistic and setting goals too high
- Not taking external influences into account
- Formulating objectives in too vague or unclear a manner
- Not planning properly to achieve them

In general you can say that the more concrete, real and time-bound objectives are formulated, the higher the chance they will be achieved.

Objectives help measure performance, but beware:

- Be sure you are measuring the right thing. Remember, what gets measured gets managed, but what gets measured is also often what is simply easy to measure.
- Are there too many things to measure on which to focus?
- Are you using measurements in a negative, punitive way?
- Do people understand how measurement fits in the bigger picture?
- Are the measurements imposed or do staff have input in the process?
- Are individual measurements or team measurements better?
- Do you review and change measurements as priorities change?

## 3 Using SMART

The acronym SMART is often used as a simple tool to bring clarity and focus to the setting of personal and team objectives. An objective should respond to all five criteria:

**Specific** – the objective should be phrased in a way that is clearly understood and has a clear meaning. Vague or general terms such as 'improve' or 'better' without quantification can be misinterpreted and misunderstood.

**Measurable** – there is an old saying that 'if you can't measure it, you can't manage it'. What this means is that as a manager you need to be able to have a way of measuring performance. How will you know when an objective has been achieved if you have no way of measuring it.

**Achievable** – if staff are to be inspired or motivated to perform well, they need to know that their objectives are possible. Setting impossible or even very difficult targets will not achieve them. On the contrary, this is demotivating, and reduces performance. Any task needs to be possible with effort. This also means that the objectives you set should require some hard work.

**Realistic** – this follows from the above. It is important that the objective is within the capacity and responsibility of the individual or team, and it is possible through the efforts of individual or team. If completion of the objective depends on external factors over which people have no control, this will be a further demotivator.

**Time-based** – this means a time limit must be set within which a task must be completed. This also needs to be based clearly on the above, in particular on the realistic possibility of achieving the objective in the time allowed.

If you wish to enhance team performance, develop some team measure (the team is usually best placed to do this). Measures can be set around:

- Overall objectives and targets for the team
- Quality objectives
- Customer satisfaction targets
- Absenteeism targets
- Team skill levels

It is important that individual and team objectives do not work against each other but complement the bigger picture. And, remember to celebrate team success!

#### **4 Setting personal development objectives**

We all want to improve, we all believe we can improve, and we all have to start somewhere. The following exercises are intended to give you the opportunity of assessing where your own strengths and weaknesses are, and to set a strategy for improving them. The key to this exercise is honesty. Don't try to fool yourself. This is for you alone, there is no need to share your results with anyone else.

Assess yourself on the basis of the competences shown below. You give yourself a score from 1 to 5, where 1 is poor and 5 is excellent.

Consider where the priorities are in your work. For each of the following competences, any whose importance is high, but your personal assessment is low should be prioritized for your personal development. Be specific about what you plan to do. For example: attend a training course, read up-to-date reports or research the web, etc.

Set yourself a target date to complete your development. Ideally try to work with a colleague. This provides a further incentive, and the 'peer' support is a positive encouragement to keep going.

Competence	Importance High/low	Score	Remarks / Comments What will you do?
<b>Communication</b>			
1 Oral communication		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
2 Listening		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
3 Written communication		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
<b>Motivation</b>			
4 Motivation		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
<b>Personal</b>			
5 Flexibility		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
6 Initiative		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
7 Perspective		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
8 Resistance to stress		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
9 Perseverance		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
10 Independence		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
<b>Interpersonal</b>			
11 Sensitivity		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
12 Flexibility		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
13 Co-operation		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
<b>Leadership</b>			
14 Group leadership		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
<b>Supervision</b>			
15 Coaching		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
16 Training		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
<b>Decision making</b>			
17 Problem analysis		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
18 Making judgements		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
19 Thinking development		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
20 Creativity		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
21 Decisiveness		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
<b>Management</b>			
22 Organizing own work		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
23 Monitoring progress		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	
24 Singleness of purpose		1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5	

Description of the competences above

### **Communication**

#### **1 Oral Communication:**

Spoken language that is clearly understandable to others

#### **2 Listening:**

Understanding of thoughts and feelings from the wording used by others

#### **3 Written communication:**

Writing that is clearly understandable to others

**Motivation**

- 4 Motivation:**  
Personal dedication to do a job in the best way possible

**Personal**

- 5 Flexibility:**  
Ability to handle frequent changes in tasks
- 6 Initiative:**  
Ability to introduce, start up and complete activities on one's own behalf
- 7 Perspective:**  
Ability to take the environment, history, and external ideas related to an issue into account
- 8 Resistance to stress:**  
Ability to operate well and achieve objectives under tense and stressful circumstances
- 9 Perseverance:**  
Ability to keep going typically under difficult circumstances
- 10 Independence:**  
Ability to think and take decisions on one's own responsibility

**Interpersonal**

- 11 Sensitivity:**  
Ability to empathize, and understand the feelings of others
- 12 Flexibility:**  
Ability to adapt to needs of others
- 13 Co-operation:**  
Ability to work positively and constructively with others towards a common goal

**Leadership**

- 14 Group leadership:**  
To be able to lead a group (typically of up to 15 people) to attain pre-set goals

**Supervision**

- 15 Coaching:**  
Ability to impart experience to and guide others in their work to improve performance
- 16 Training:**  
Ability to instruct and transmit knowledge to others in a structured manner

**Decision making**

- 17 Problem analysis:**  
Ability to understand, and break down a problem
- 18 Making judgements:**  
Ability to assess a situation

**19 Thinking along development-related lines:**

Ability to look at a phenomenon on its own, but in a sequence of linked events

**20 Creativity:**

Ability to bring up new or original ideas or solutions to problems

**21 Decisiveness:**

Ability to take sound decisions even in complex situations

***Management*****22 Organizing own work:**

Ability to prioritize tasks, especially when under pressure

**23 Monitoring progress:**

Ability to keep track of one's own and others' work and progress

**24 Singleness of purpose:**

Ability to stay in touch with the objective(s) originally set

**Action Memo to self**

Now that you have completed this chapter, what do you need to do to improve the way that you plan and set objectives? Complete the following statement, and try to live up to it.

I will improve my planning and objective setting by .....

# 5 Organizing time

One of the main purposes and rewards for managing time well is the feeling of being in control. Not only in control of the work to be done but also in control of yourself, being in control of stress. But still many people do not manage their time well. If the phone rings they answer and talk for a long time. If something insignificant happens they may be sidetracked. This chapter deals with time management from two main aspects - the effectiveness of you and your team.

## 1 Analyzing time

In each case it is important to find out where your time is used and then seek to optimize it. After all, you only have a fixed amount of time. The secret is to use it to best effect. The first step is to analyze how you and your team uses its time.

The first step in managing time is to know what you did with it. By keeping track of all the activities you and your team normally do, you will see what the normal tasks are and what the time-wasters are. By comparing these actions with the actions you're supposed to do you can make decisions like reallocating tasks and duties: delegation of responsibilities or activities, postponement and discarding of work or tasks.

Arrange for you and your team to maintain a diary for several weeks (two weeks as a minimum). You can also use a pre-formatted table with topics you can score. The following is a good starting point, but feel free to add to the list anything which you know is a problem. Get your team members to do the same.

Complete this grid for every time that you are interrupted, or you 'lose' time. After the month is over, assess what are the critical time wasters. You can 're-use' the grid at any time in the future that you think you or your team is losing control of time usage.

Time wasters	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
1 Telephone calls					
2 Interruptions, drop-in-visitors					
3 Meetings unscheduled					
4 Crises, fire fighting					
5 Lack of objective					
6 Lack of priorities, daily plans					
7 Cluttered desk and office					
8 Ineffective delegation					
9 Doing routine tasks					

Time wasters	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5
10 Attempting too much at once					
11 Unrealistic time estimates					
12 Ineffective communication					
13 Indecision, day-dreaming					
14 Inability to say 'No'					
15 Jumping from task to task					
16 Failure to listen					
17 Involved in too much detail					
18 Socializing, idle conversation					
19 Lack of self-discipline					
20 Constantly switching priorities					
21 Mail, reports, reading					
22 Failure to do first things first					
23 Travel, waiting, commuting					
24 Others .....					
25 .....					
26 .....					
27 .....					
Total					

Now that you have collected this data, hold a meeting with your team to see where the main pressure points are in the overall management of time. What are the consequences for each unit or department or individual? What are the consequences on the outputs and service delivery to the citizens in the local government or regional government area?

It may help to focus especially on the following issues:

- Which time waster is predominant?
- What is the impact on service delivery?
- How do you realize your objectives despite this 'lost' time?
- How does time management affect accomplishment of these objectives?
- How do you deal with time and energy?
- How do you deal with the people in your surroundings?
- Do you delegate tasks? (which you do and which you do not?)
- Can you say NO to your boss or colleague?

Modern time management is more than just keeping a schedule. Time management is more than organizing, it is a mental state and about choices and influence. It is about making fundamental decisions. This takes time and effort and you have to be aware of your planned and current activities. You have to change your behaviour and think in terms of control, status, security, commitment, relationships, etc.

Your 'new' actions based on the decisions you make could affect a lot of people. For instance saying 'NO' more often can influence your relationships (people like you because you always do whatever they ask) and delegation means less control for you as a manager (you set objectives but the way the assignment is done is the responsibility of the employee). It also means that you have to dedicate time to overseeing the task delegated, and giving support to the individual given the task (don't worry, in the end you will get this time back many times over. It is worth the effort).

## 2 Prioritizing time

Are people doing the right things? Prioritizing is probably one of the most important tools for a manager in dealing with time effectively. Looking at the tasks that your team is responsible for, you can define two different kinds: the essential tasks, and the urgent tasks.

The essential tasks contribute directly to the objectives of the organization and focus on the long term. Urgent tasks, on the other hand, are short term and more demanding. But they don't have to be essential. One problem today is that all tasks tend to be considered urgent.

In order to prioritize better, consider using the model in figure 1.

This generic model has been in use since the 1960s

		Important	
		+	-
Urgent	+	<b>++</b> <b>Do it yourself</b>	<b>+ -</b> <b>Delegate</b>
	-	<b>- +</b> <b>Plan</b>	<b>--</b> <b>It can wait or say NO</b>

First consider the diagram from your perspective as a manager. If something is important and urgent it should be dealt with immediately by you. If something is not important and not urgent, you can say no or postpone the task. This is easy. The real problem is in the other two fields: planning and delegating.

With a large number of urgent tasks and an inability to delegate, a manager has little time left for planning. And because he cannot plan he cannot influence his surroundings. It is a vicious circle. A good time manager plans his time carefully and simultaneously influences his surroundings by delegating.

#### ***Tips for time management***

Some of these may not be surprising but by mentioning them it makes you aware of your own behaviour. Remember time management is mostly a change of your own behaviour and that of your team.

#### ***Plan tomorrow***

Plan your next day today. This will give you a head start and you will feel organized, you are in control. Otherwise you are being guided by other events and not in control.

#### ***Plan one important task***

Plan at least one important task you want to finish. You will have a good feeling of finishing an essential task by the end of the day. This also gives you space to negotiate if somebody comes up with an urgent task they want you to do immediately.

#### ***Plan important tasks on quiet days or parts of the day***

Every day has its rush hours. Analyze where the rush hours are and keep this in mind when you plan your tasks.

#### ***Plan at active periods***

Everyone has their favoured part of the day. Some people are 'morning' people, others prefer the afternoon or evening. During your own favourite part of the day you are most active and full of energy. Plan your important tasks in this period and this will enhance the possibility of getting the job done well.

#### ***Use routine***

Use routine to order your day. Plan tasks in sequence. Although beware that variation might be challenging and pleasant and change can cost time and extra energy. Organize 'block' hours to meet with colleagues and employees so you can focus the rest of your time on important tasks.

#### ***Piles of paper and mail***

Deal with your mail and reports in one session. By working through piles of paper in one session you will avoid creating other piles and having to go through the pile once again.

***One thing at a time***

Do one thing at a time and define a time constraint. Do not postpone important, but unpleasant, tasks in favour of more pleasant (but often less important) tasks. People often tend to focus on the pleasant tasks and are stressed about the more important ones. Reward yourself when you finish an unpleasant but important task.

Now think about your team. They also have distinct tasks to do which also fall into one of these four categories. Like your own personal tasks, the first two – ‘important and urgent’, or ‘not important and not urgent’ – can be dealt with in the same way.

The remaining criteria are more problematic. Planning is critical. It has been said many times that ‘if you fail to plan, then you plan to fail!’ So don’t fail to plan. At the beginning of each week hold a short (maximum 15 minutes) planning meeting with your key team members. Clarify what their tasks are, what the priorities are, and whether there are any changes since the week before that will alter these priorities.

**3 Matching process to output**

Now that you have thought about some of the issues in managing time, it is time to consider what people actually do, and how to maximize their input to the overall process of preparing, managing, and delivering services.

Take any one process that your team has responsibility for. Map out the process on a blank sheet of paper using ‘boxes’ for each step of the process. Under each box note the person responsible for that part of the process. For each person (or function) revisit their job description (assuming they have one) to ensure that it is clear from this form what they are supposed to do, and what their responsibilities are. If no job description exists, consider using the following template as a guide.

Why is this important? If you want to maximize the impact of your team, every member needs to be clear about their own personal responsibilities. Having clear job descriptions helps to focus on the real tasks and duties, and therefore, on those functions that are more critical to the local authority unit.

Clear job descriptions also highlight where there may be developmental or training needs, and form the basic document for the recruitment and selection of candidates for the different posts in a municipal office.

## 4 Drafting a job description

Creating a job description is a key step in the recruitment process but it also provides a means of reviewing and reassessing an existing position. It is important to know what the requirements are, so that you can make appropriate allocation of resources. Ensure that a job description is explicit in its wording. Make it concise and targeted.

Consider the following points when drawing up a job description:

- **Salary:** consider the level of the job, relative seniority, skills and required experience.
- **Job title:** ensure the job title accurately reflects the role.
- **Location and hours:** determine the core working hours and outline whether any travelling will be required.
- **Hierarchy and reporting lines:** how will the role fit into the current municipal structure and who will the person report to?
- **Role overview:** summarize the key objectives of the job.
- **Functional responsibilities:** detail the key responsibilities of the position, identifying the regular and occasional tasks.
- **Competences:** outline the key competences required and any competences that might be required in future as the role develops.
- **Deliverables:** identify the key deliverables, detailing how performance will be measured and outlining Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART) objectives.
- **Education, experience, skills:** define what is essential and desirable for the post.
- **Personal profile:** examine the styles and values of the team and determine what qualities you are looking for in the person for the position.

A good job description can be used throughout an employee's career, helping both employer and employee to determine development and growth.

The job description also forms the basis for evaluations of an employee's work during a year (or other period) and provides the starting point for an assessment of their performance.

## JOB DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE

**Status:** e.g. Full Time; Part Time; Contract staff

**Salary Grade / Coefficient:**

**Job Title:**

*How the job fits into the organizational structure of the local authority, etc.*

**Based at:**

*Specify where the position will be located*

**Reports to:**

*Indicate reporting line*

**Key responsibilities and accountabilities:**

*The principle, main duties and responsibilities of the employee. These need to be explicit and unambiguous. For example:*

- *Communication (in relation to whom, what, how - and this is applicable to all below)*
- *Planning and organizing (of what..)*
- *Managing information or general administrative support (of what..)*
- *Monitoring and reporting (of what..)*
- *Evaluating and decision-making (of what..)*
- *Financial budgeting and control (of what..)*
- *Producing (what..)*
- *Maintaining/repairing (what..)*
- *Quality control (for production roles normally a separate responsibility. Otherwise this is generally incorporated within other relevant responsibilities) (of what..)*
- *Health and safety (normally the same point for all job descriptions of a given staff grade)*
- *Equipment and systems (what..)*
- *Creating and developing things (what..)*
- *Self-development (normally the same point for all job descriptions of a given staff grade)*

**Other duties**

*Periodic or occasional duties and responsibilities*

**Qualifications**

*The minimum requirements to perform the job. These will include formal educational qualifications, as well as relevant experience or previous positions.*

**Working conditions**

*The physical environment of the job, on and off site*

# 6 Improving performance and staff appraisal

Time is a finite resource so we should manage that time and maximize our work within this constraint. Consider the task and underlying functions necessary to complete the task(s) effectively. The job description does this and assists us in looking at how well someone has done their job. This section considers aspects of preparing and undertaking such a performance review.

## 1 Formal and informal appraisal

Firstly, it is important to realize that a performance review is not a process of criticising or finding fault with a member of staff. Rather it should be considered as an opportunity to assess the progress an individual is making, to find areas that can be improved (if necessary), to establish possible training and development needs in line with the function and responsibility of that member of staff, and finally (if possible) to fix rewards.

There are two types of appraisal, the formal and informal.

### *Informal appraisal*

An informal appraisal is the continuous assessment of an individual's performance by their manager in the normal course of work. Informal appraisal is ad hoc, typically the result of the day-to-day relationship. It is typically used to highlight areas for attention and correct behaviour before it is too late.

### *Formal appraisal*

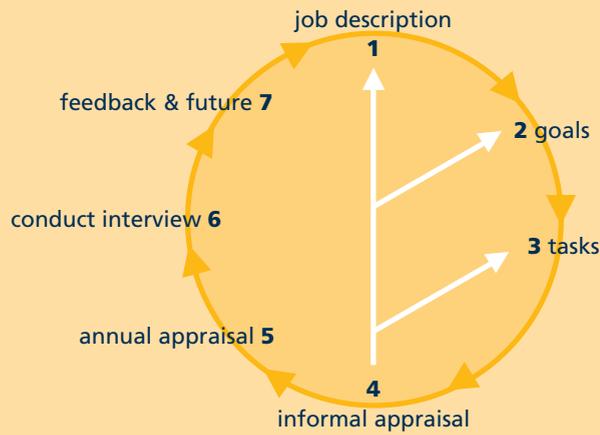
Formal appraisal is an organized and rational appraisal whereby the employee is assessed in a more systematic and planned way. In formal appraisal the timing is known, and manager and employee have the opportunity to prepare for it.

The objectives of a performance appraisal are:

- To identify an individual's level of performance
- To identify the employee's strengths and weaknesses
- To provide a basis for rewarding good performers
- To provide a basis for disciplining poor performers
- To identify training and development needs
- To provide information for human resource and promotion planning

## 2 Appraisal cycle

The process of appraisal takes the form of a cycle. The employee works based on a task (job) description. During this work he or she makes mistakes or does things very well. The manager reviews their work and sets new objectives according to previous performance or proposes a development or training programme to improve unsatisfactory performance. The employee then starts working according to the new objectives. After a period of time the manager speaks with the employee again and the cycle starts again. The following diagram illustrates this.



### ***Review/agreement on job description***

The job description should be explained, be made available and be achievable. The position, function, responsibilities and standards of performance expected should be clear (see section above).

### ***Establishing goals***

A goal is a statement of results to be achieved (see also the chapter on 'Planning and objective setting' for examples).

### ***Agreeing on standard of work***

A standard refers to an agreed and acceptable criterion which has to be attained. For example the departmental filing backlog should not exceed one week. Any record requested should be available within five minutes of the request. Goals apply more to managers / professional staff, while standards apply more to workers engaged in routine tasks.

### ***Performance appraisal: the continuous informal exercise***

In this framework regular performance reviews take place. This can be done each 3-6 months. Based on the agreed standards, performance is discussed and new task agreements made.

***Performance appraisal: the (bi)annual formal exercise***

This is done based on performance reviews, by filling-in an official appraisal form, and applying transparent procedures.

***Conduct appraisal interview***

The interview is part of the formal exercise of annual performance appraisal (5) and feedback and future plans (7) on corrective measures (transfer, salary, promotion).

**3 The appraisal interview**

The appraisal interview is a formal face-to-face meeting between the jobholder and his or her manager at which the employee's performance is discussed and after which certain key conclusions concerning job performance, promotion, salary, training, etc. are reached. For this a personal appraisal form can be used.

***Pre-interview planning***

- Fix a mutually convenient time
- Explain the purpose and objective of the meeting including format and procedure
- Review the relevant job descriptions, standards and priorities
- Give appropriate time for preparation

***During the interview***

- Create a relaxed informal atmosphere
- Get the employee to assess him/herself first
- Ask open ended questions (What, When, How, Where, Why, Who)
- Make your assessment known – be honest
- Point out areas of improvement and agree these with the employee
- Listen to what he/she says
- Summarize the discussion and agreements
- Agree what happens next
- Set the performance standards and objectives for the next period

**4 Interview styles**

There are three basic approaches:

***Tell and sell approach***

The manager tells the employee how he is doing, and endeavours to persuade him/her to accept what has been decided in terms of improvement.

***Tell and listen approach***

The manager tells his employee how he/she is doing, but then sits back and listens to the individuals' viewpoints about the appraisal and follow-up action.

***Problem solving approach***

The manager puts aside the role of judge in order to join the employee in mutual reflection on progress and discussion about required action.

Depending on circumstances, personalities, personal relationships and objectives, elements of each of these interview styles all have a role.

Benefits of appraisal interview:

- Feedback for the employee
- Opportunity to discuss problems
- Opportunity to discuss job improvement plans
- Discuss training and development needs
- Explore employee potential
- Create closer working relationships
- Improve communication
- Agree

**5 Problems that can arise in the performance appraisal process**

During the interview a manager can make some common mistakes without being aware of it. The most common mistakes are listed here.

***Introductory impression***

The tendency to evaluate individuals based on initial impressions, rather than on sustained performance over time. Try not to think of the most recent problem or success, rather consider the whole period and performance over that period.

***Error of judging people the same***

The tendency to rate all employees as average. But likewise beware of inflating performance evaluations. Most staff will fall into the 'average / satisfactory' level. A few will be poor in some areas, and a few will be exceptional (note that the use of SMART objectives gives you a better source of measurement. The more specific they are, the easier it is to measure performance).

***Leniency error***

The tendency to assign favourable ratings to all employees being evaluated. It can be difficult to criticize staff performance. Again, the setting of clear objectives gives you an unbiased range of criteria against which to measure performance.

***Strictness error***

To rate all employees harshly in the performance assessment exercise (as above, be SMART).

***The halo effect***

To allow the rating of an individual in one category to influence either positively or negatively, the rating in other categories. If you find that you are rating an

individual with the highest grades in everything, then think carefully whether this is really justified, or if you are guilty of inflating their performance.

***Different from me***

To assign poorer ratings to employees who demonstrate characteristics or behaviours different from those of the rating person.

***Same as me***

To assign higher ratings to individuals who demonstrate traits or behaviour similar to the rating person.

***Person-to-person***

To compare individuals with other individuals rather than to rate them by established standards.

***Spill-over effect***

To rate individuals based on their past evaluations, rather on their own current performance.

***Recency error***

To assign ratings on the basis of the most recent behaviour rather than on a person's performance over an entire period.

***Get an employee to talk freely***

Successful discussion leaders have their employees do most of the talking. This can be achieved by using good communication skills such as plenty of open ended questions and an atmosphere that encourages discussion.

Employees often say very little during an appraisal discussion. There are several reasons for this:

- The employee may not understand the purpose of the appraisal, and be afraid to express an opinion
- The employee is not given the opportunity to express an opinion
- The employee is not given time to prepare for the discussion
- The employee's thoughts and ideas are brushed aside or discounted
- The employee feels the process is meaningless

A manager can overcome this reluctance to enter into dialogue by creating the right type of non-threatening atmosphere.

***Be descriptive rather than judgmental***

When a manager is judgmental about an employee's performance, it often brings out defensive behaviour. A better climate is established when descriptive terms are used to describe problems. This makes it less personal and emotional (and makes it easier for the leader and employee to discuss solutions), or even better, a solution generated by the employee. Note the differences in the examples on the following page:

*Judgmental*

'How could you do such a silly thing?'

*Descriptive*

'Can you explain what caused the incident?'

Leaders who use descriptive, non-judgmental language in the appraisal discussion, show a desire to analyze and resolve a problem, not to find a scapegoat or a way to demean the employee.

***Be supportive, not authoritarian***

Managers sometimes purposely, and sometimes inadvertently, display an authoritarian attitude in discussion. This can create resentment and defensiveness. It is usually better to respect the employee's ability to contribute to the solution of a problem. Here is an example:

*Authoritarian*

'Here is what we will do to get this done on time'

*Supportive*

'What do you suggest we do to get this done on time in the future?'

Supportive practices generate options for problem-solving because the employee is encouraged to make suggestions. They also focus on the problem, not the employee. In addition, the supportive approach promotes better listening by both parties, and permits a climate where disagreement is not only acceptable, but invited.

***Reflect equality, not superiority***

Managers who put too much emphasis on their position and power, often create barriers between themselves and their employees. Managers who share information with employees and then seek their opinions, provide a flavour of equality. Here is an example:

*Superiority*

'I was doing it this way before you were born'

*Equality*

'We have done it this way for years, but I would like to hear your ideas on how we can do it better'

Try to keep this simple phrase in mind: 'Deal with the problem, not the person'

Employees appreciate a leader who shares information, asks for opinions and listens to ideas. Leaders who understand this have appraisal discussions that are more enlightening and productive.

***Be accepting, not dogmatic manager***

Dogmatic tends to approach decisions, plans and problems with a predetermined opinion and thus tells employees there is no need for other ideas or solutions. Things have already been decided. This can demoralize an employee who has ideas and wants to contribute. Leaders who listen to an employee's input, or allow their own ideas to be challenged in a search for the best solution, stimulate enthusiasm, creativity and productivity. Here is an example that contrasts the two approaches:

***Dogmatic***

**'This is the best solution'**

***Accepting***

**'This is the best solution I could come up with. What other possibilities do you see?'**

A manager, who accepts an employee's input, recognizes the value, capitalizes on their knowledge and builds confidence in the group.

What follows is an example of an appraisal form. Ideally, the form should be completed by the person being appraised (or appraisee) before the meeting, and finalized during the meeting. It is based on common issues and sections and is a guide only. Remember the overriding principle is that this format should assist in developing an objective appraisal, and a means of recognizing and improving performance.

## 6 Performance appraisal

### PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL FORM TEMPLATE

org/division/dept:		location/based at:	
name:		position:	
year or period covered:	time in present position:	length of service:	
appraisal date & time:		appraiser:	

#### Part A Appraisee to complete before the interview and return to the appraiser by (date)

A1 State your understanding of your main duties and responsibilities.

A2 Discussion points:

- 1 Has the past year been good/bad/satisfactory or otherwise for you, and why?
- 2 What do you consider to be your most important achievements of the past year?
- 3 What do you like and dislike about working for this local government?
- 4 What elements of your job do you find most difficult?
- 5 What elements of your job interest you the most, and least?
- 6 What do you consider to be your most important tasks in the next year?
- 7 What action could be taken to improve your performance in your current position by you, and your manager?
- 8 What kind of work or job would you like to be doing in one/two/five years time?
- 9 What sort of training/experience would benefit you in the next year?

A3 List the objectives you set out to achieve in the past 12 months (or the period covered by this appraisal) with the measures or standards agreed - against each comment on achievement or otherwise, with reasons where appropriate. Score the performance against each objective (1-3 = poor, 4-6 = satisfactory, 7-9 = good, 10 = excellent):

objective	measure/standard	score	comment
-----------	------------------	-------	---------

A4 Score your own capability or knowledge in the following areas (1-3 = poor, 4-6 = satisfactory, 7-9 = good, 10 = excellent). If appropriate bring evidence with you to the appraisal to support your assessment. The second section can be used if working towards new role requirements.

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 commercial judgement                | 11 problem-solving and decision-making     |
| 2 product/technical knowledge         | 12 team-working and developing others      |
| 3 time management                     | 13 energy, determination and work-rate     |
| 4 planning, budgeting and forecasting | 14 steadiness under pressure               |
| 5 reporting and administration        | 15 leadership and integrity                |
| 6 communication skills                | 16 adaptability, flexibility, and mobility |
| 7 delegation skills                   | 17 personal appearance and image           |
| 8 IT/equipment/machinery skills       | 18 others as agreed                        |
| 9 meeting deadlines/commitments       | 19 others as agreed                        |
| 10 creativity                         | 20 others as agreed                        |

---

A5 In light of your current capabilities, score your performance against past objectives, and your future personal growth and/or job aspirations, what activities and tasks would you like to focus on during the next year.

---

**Part B To be completed during the appraisal by the appraiser – where appropriate and safe to do so, certain items can be completed by the appraiser before the appraisal, and then discussed and validated or amended in discussion with the appraisee during the appraisal.**

---

B1 Describe the purpose of the appraisee's job. Discuss and compare with self-appraisal entry in A1. Clarify job purpose and priorities where necessary.

---

B2 Review the completed discussion points in A2, and note the points of and action.

---

B3 List the objectives that the appraisee sets out to achieve in the past 12 months (or the period covered by this appraisal - typically these objectives will have been carried forward from the previous appraisal record) with the measures or standards agreed - against each comment on achievement or otherwise, with reasons where appropriate. Score the performance against each objective (1-3 = poor, 4-6 = satisfactory, 7-9 = good, 10 = excellent). Compare with the self-appraisal in A3. Discuss and note points of significance, particularly training and development needs and wishes, which should be noted in B6.

objective	measure/standard	score	comment
-----------	------------------	-------	---------

---

B4 Score the appraisee's capability or knowledge in the following areas in the context of their current (and if applicable, next) role. (1-3 = poor, 4-6 = satisfactory, 7-9 = good, 10 = excellent). If appropriate provide evidence to support your assessment. The second section can be used for other criteria or if the appraisee is working towards new role requirements. Compare scores with the self-appraisal in B4. Discuss and note agreed points training/development needs and wishes (to B6).

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 commercial judgement                | 11 problem-solving and decision-making     |
| 2 product/technical knowledge         | 12 team-working and developing others      |
| 3 time management                     | 13 energy, determination and work-rate     |
| 4 planning, budgeting and forecasting | 14 steadiness under pressure               |
| 5 reporting and administration        | 15 leadership and integrity                |
| 6 communication skills                | 16 adaptability, flexibility, and mobility |
| 7 delegation skills                   | 17 personal appearance and image           |
| 8 IT/equipment/machinery skills       | 18 others as agreed                        |
| 9 meeting deadlines/commitments       | 19 others as agreed                        |
| 10 creativity                         | 20 others as agreed                        |

---

**B5** Discuss and agree the appraisee's career direction options and wishes, and readiness for promotion, and compare with and discuss the self-appraisal entry in A5 (some people do not wish for promotion, but everyone is capable of, and generally benefits from, personal development - development and growth should be available to all, not just people seeking promotion). Note the agreed development aim(s):

---

**B6** Discuss and agree the skills, capabilities and experience required for competence in current role, and if appropriate, for readiness to progress to the next role. Refer to actions arising from B3 and the skill-set in B4, in order to accurately identify all development areas, whether for competence at current level or readiness to progress to next job level/type. Note the agreed development areas:

---

**B7** Discuss and agree the specific objectives that will enable the appraisee to reach required competence and to meet required performance in current job, if appropriate taking account of the coming year's plans, budgets, targets etc., and that will enable the appraisee to move towards, or achieve readiness for, the next job level, or if no particular next role is identified or sought, to achieve the desired personal growth or experience. These objectives must adhere to the SMART rules - Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic, Time-bound.

---

**B8** Discuss and agree (as far as is possible given budgetary availability and authorization considerations) the training and development support to be given to help the appraisee meet the agreed objectives above.

---

Appraisers should note that personal development and support must be offered to all employees, not just those seeking promotion. Also, training is not restricted to sending someone on an external course - it includes internal courses, coaching, mentoring (mentoring someone else and well as being mentored), secondment to another role (e.g. deputizing for someone while they are away on holiday), shadowing, distance-learning, reading books, watching videos, attending meetings and workshops, workbooks, manuals and guides, researching, giving presentations; anything relevant and helpful that will help the person develop towards the standard and agreed task. Avoid committing to training expenditure before suitable approval, permission or availability has been confirmed - if necessary discuss likely training requirements with the relevant authority before the appraisal.

---

**B9** Any other issues (to be covered separately to this appraisal):

---

Signed and dated appraisee:

appraiser:

---

Grade/recommendation/summary as applicable:

---

Distribution of copies/confidentiality/accessibility details:

#### Action Memo to self

Now that you have completed this chapter, what do you need to do to improve the way that you organize your time? Complete the following statement, and try to live up to it.

I will improve my time management skills in future by .....

# 7 Performance management

In an earlier chapter we spoke about objective setting (in the scope of planning for results) and this chapter considers how to manage this process, and what to do if it goes wrong.

## 1 Monitoring of expected outcomes

If you have set SMART objectives (see above) then it is easy to monitor the completion or achievement of these results and expected outcomes. You will have a number of clearly verifiable measures against which the performance can be graded. One of the benefits of SMART objectives is that it makes managing them easy!

First establish the overall goals or targets for your team. Agree these with your team and assign specific targets to individual team members (note that the individual team outputs must equal the overall target of the team as a whole).

Next you need to establish interim performance targets. These may not necessarily be simply dividing the overall target by 12 and allocating this equally month by month. You must take into consideration seasonal and other factors that influence the possibility to achieve results throughout the year. For example holiday periods may increase or decrease activity and demand by the public for your organization's services. This needs to be factored into the distribution of targets throughout the year.

Agree these interim targets with your team and prepare interim objectives for the individual members of the team (do not forget to include yourself!).

So, by now you should have developed individual and team targets for the year, apportioned by month. Your task is to monitor actual performance against these targets.

Only three possible things can happen. The target is exceeded, the target is achieved, or the target is not reached. The key question to ask for all of these results is, *WHY?* Try to resist the temptation to just ignore things if targets are met, apparently without difficulty (maybe the targets are too easy, and people stop trying once that month's target is reached).

### ***Why ask why?***

Why is a demanding question. It requires clear and descriptive responses. It requires explanation.

## 2 How to identify which results to measure?

An organization comprises different complex and dynamic processes, co-ordinated by various structures and controls. An organization is continually exchanging resources and information with its external environment. Consequently, the management of organizational performance can be very complex. There are numerous results, measurements and standards to consider among the numerous levels and related areas (or domains) in the organization.

When thinking about results, measurements and standards in the organization, it helps greatly to think of the organization as a system. This has various aspects, including inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. Ongoing feedback occurs among these aspects of the system. The overall system has various subsystems, e.g. financial management processes, departments, teams, employees, etc. Ongoing feedback occurs among aspects of these systems, as well as with the overall organization and its external environment. As noted above, when looking for what results to measure, consider outputs from the system. Measure results in terms of units of performance, considering timeliness, cost, quantity and quality.

## 3 How to measure to evaluate results?

Look for outcome measures and driver measures. Swanson describes outcomes as measures of effectiveness or efficiency relative to the core outputs of a system or subsystem. Outcomes are generic across organizations. Drivers 'measure elements of performance that are expected to sustain or increase system, subsystem, process or individual ability and capacity to be more effective or efficient in the future'. Swanson adds that drivers are leading indicators of future outcomes, and tend to be unique to the organization.

For example, a) management development and change, and b) employee's noticing the change and increasing productivity may be drivers to the outcome of c) increased sales.

### *View outcomes and drivers together*

Drivers and outcomes should be considered together. Otherwise, one gets a flawed picture of the performance system. For example, focusing on drivers alone might lead one to believe that the driver (e.g. learning) always produces the outcome (e.g. units of sales). Focusing on outcomes alone might lead one to take short-term actions (e.g. massive layoffs) which adversely affect long-term outcomes (e.g. sales).

### *Classification of a measure (outcome and driver) depends on the context*

A measure can be either an outcome or a driver, depending on the situation. For example, an increase in customer satisfaction might be a driver for the organizational outcome of an increase in sales. However, the increase in customer satisfaction might also be an outcome measure for the customer service department.

***Consider outcomes and drivers relative to the performance domains***

For example, the performance driver measures of knowledge and expertise in the individual performance domain may produce the performance outcome measure of productivity for that domain. The drivers of innovation and leadership might produce the outcome of team effectiveness for the critical subsystem domain.

**Action Memo to self**

Now that you have completed this chapter, what do you need to do to improve the way that you manage your results? Complete the following statement, and try to live up to it.

I will improve my management of results by .....

# 8 Communication systems and mechanisms

Communication is probably the most important issue for many people. Without communication, there is no understanding. Without communication there is no co-operation. Without communication there is no growth and development.

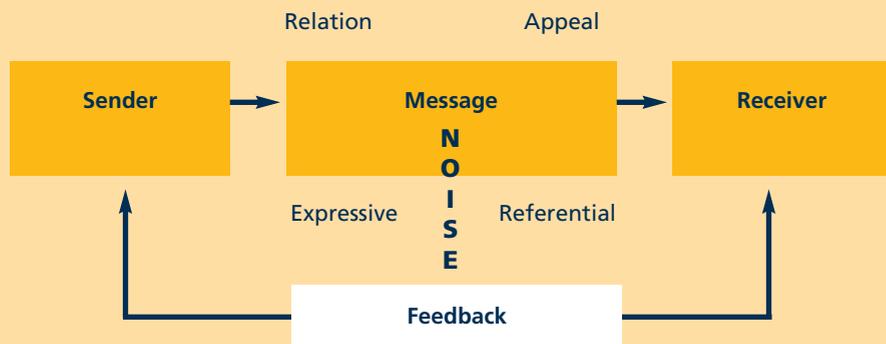
So possibly the one most important skill for the manager is to communicate. Communicate with your employees, your bosses, your colleagues and clients. Communication is about listening and speaking. But also by acting. Every act, every movement tells something about you and what you aspire to. This chapter gives some insight about communication in general.

## 1 Definition and model

Communication is an interactive process of exchanging information. Within communication a message is transmitted from sender to receiver. This message is always packed in a special way; by means of language, attitude, the carrier or media (written report, computer, telephone, etc.).

Communication also takes place inside you (whispering and thinking), but also from a medium to you. In this chapter we focus on interpersonal communication. In other words communication between people.

Communication between people can be shown as follows:



You send a message to (for instance) one of your employees. The message will not only be received in the form of what you say, but also in the way you say it. The employee (the receiver) will react by giving his opinion and becomes a sender himself.

So there is interaction. One outgoing message receives a reaction. And this reaction in turn leads to another reaction and so on.

In reality it is not as easy as described above. There is always 'noise on the line'. We do not only speak but use mannerisms and show discontent with body language or listen selectively. This noise can even jeopardize a message and ruin a relationship. We use filters or are distracted by an event that occurs next to us but has nothing to do with the message.

Effective communication is helped by people clarifying the message with feedback to the sender: 'Did you mean to say I function well within your parameters?' Feedback is a tool of clarification and justification. It helps avoid misunderstandings and damage to a relationship.

To complete the model there are four different components which are always present in a message. These are:

#### ***Referential***

The actual spoken or written message. The words and style of the message. It addresses the receiver.

#### ***Relationship***

Within each message there is an element which tells the receiver something about the relationship the sender has with the receiver. E.g. 'I don't like you' or 'I am very fond of you'. Eyes and attitude reinforce this message.

#### ***Appeal***

Every message demands a reaction. Every sender wants the receiver to do something with the message. Or at least to accept a particular line of thinking.

#### ***Expressive***

Last but certainly not least is the non-verbal component of a message. Extra information that is not communicated in words - the image of the sender's state for instance - bored or excited, open or closed. The expressive component is a very important component of a message as it rarely lies.

## **2 Verbal and non-verbal communication**

Verbal communication is communication by language (spoken and written words). Non-verbal communication consists of such factors as attitude and facial expressions, voice volume, intonation, gestures, and other non-verbal signs. In communication as a whole, estimates suggest that the verbal part represents as little as 7% of the message received. And as much as 93% of the effect of communication on the receiver can be from the non-verbal part. Non-verbal communication is thus very important.

Communication is considered effective if the non-verbal and verbal components are in line with each other, in other words they are 'telling the same story'. This is called congruent communication. People seek congruence because that confirms they are clearly understanding the message. However, if the two components do not show congruence people tend to 'listen' only to the non-verbal rather than the verbal component.

To communicate effectively, you must send a congruent message and this demands you balance thinking, feeling and acting.

### 3 Barriers and filters in communication

A barrier to communication is any factor which hinders the exchange of information between sender and receiver. Barriers to effective communication interfere with the receiver's understanding of the intended meaning of the sender's message.

Types of barrier to communications:

- Different perceptions
- Language differences
- Noise
- Emotionality
- Inconsistent verbal and non-verbal communication
- Distrust

People with different backgrounds may perceive the same phenomenon from different perspectives. People easily see differences in language meaning – for a message to be understood; the words used must mean the same to sender and receiver (what is meant by a 'short' time?) – Jargon, for instance, often causes misunderstandings.

Noise is typically a distraction from effective communication. And emotionality - such as anger, love, defensiveness, hate, jealousy, fear, etc, can strongly influence the way we understand others' messages, and the way we influence others with our own messages. Noise can also be inconsistent verbal and non-verbal communication – we say one thing, but by means of factors such as body movement and position, gestures, facial expression, eye movement and body contact, we communicate something different.

#### ***Filters***

One of the most important factors that influence communication are filters. Everybody looks at the world through their own special private glasses, in other words everybody has their own perception of the world. These filters are created by culture, upbringing, values, beliefs, society, etc. Because people differ, the filters also differ. Filters tend to be very stable and are not easily changed. Worse, a filter may be strengthened or reinforced to justify actions and decisions made.

**So use Feedback!**

Beside questions, the tool of feedback is very powerful. The manager will use feedback to clarify things as well as to tell someone something without endangering the relationship. Feedback is effective and important. It feeds back information to the sender to let him/her know the receiver understood the message without judgement (or not as the case may be).

***Do not judge***

Feedback is most useful to show the receiver understood a message. But try not to judge. As soon as you make a judgement the sender is reluctant to say any more as the receiver already has a closed mind.

***Concrete and direct***

In many cultures this can be a problem. Direct communication is considered impolite and attacking (in the same way as people in some cultures have problems with others looking them directly in the eye). But direct communication is also important, the art is to be direct and considerate at the same time.

***I want I think***

Avoid words like must, can't or not allowed. This suggests you are not in control and not accountable for you actions. This may mean the receiver will not take you seriously. If you are not in control, why bother talking to you.

***Process***

The best way to give good feedback is to keep the following steps in mind:

- Repeat what you have seen or heard (to confirm your understanding of the facts)
- Explain what this means to you (your own feelings)
- Ask if the receiver recognizes (clarification)
- Tell the sender how to improve or continue (action)

**Action Memo to self**

**Now that you have completed this chapter, what do you need to do to improve the way that you communicate with others? Complete the following statement, and try to live up to it.**

**I will improve my communication skills in future by .....**

## 9 Conclusions

We hope you have found the information in these chapters of interest and use. But now that you have read it, please do not put it in the back of a drawer or on a shelf to gather dust. It is a source of reminders, and of useful guidance for the present and future.

At the end of each chapter there were 'action memos to self ...' These are the basis for your own development process. So, in order to give yourself the best possible chance to succeed, in whatever capacities you plan to develop, and goals you attempt, it is best to divide-up the overall goal into manageable pieces.

Each action plan should consist of:

- An overall goal
- A set of actions which are clear, measurable and focused on the desired outcome
- A timescale within which to measure progress
- Details of others involved
- How you measure the achievements

Every three months review how you progress towards these goals and objectives, and what new management problems have arisen.

This is a continuous process, we all continue to develop, and face challenges and problems to overcome. The local government situation will certainly undergo change in the future, how you respond to these new situations will be a measure of your own development.

We wish you well.



# VNG International International Co-operation Agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities

*Committed to strengthening democratic local government worldwide*

The key task of VNG International is strengthening democratic local government. It is a small, dynamic company annually managing some 60 plus projects and programmes with a focus on decentralization and capacity building. VNG International supports local governments, their associations and training institutions in developing countries and countries in transition.

## **VNG International's approach**

For VNG International, strengthening democratic local government means working on three inter-related levels:

- **the individual level**-training and motivating municipal staff and elected representatives
- **the organizational level**-advising local authorities on their organization structures and working methods
- **the institutional level**-adapting financial relations, laws and institutional arrangements

The VNG International approach builds on:

- Colleague-to-colleague co-operation
- Institutional linking

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# Romanian Federation of Local Authorities

*To become the unified voice of Romanian local governments in representing their interests towards central government and Parliament*

The key task of the Romanian Federation of Local Authorities is to represent the interests of local authorities in the context of national and political systems and provide services and professional assistance to local authorities, including member associations. The services seek to improve the professional relations and accelerate and improve the exchange of information. The Romanian Federation of Local Authorities was founded in 2001 from the Association of Romanian Municipalities (AMR), the Romanian Association of Towns (AOR), the Romanian Association of Communes (ACoR) and the Union of County Councils of Romania (UNCJR).

## **Scope of work of the Romanian Federation of Local Authorities**

The main activities carried out by member associations are related to platform and communication tasks, while the Romanian Federation has an important role in lobbying (recognized by the central government as its partner representing local and regional authorities), and international relations (recognized by many international institutions and donors). Training activities take place both at the levels of the associations and the Federation and are generally financed by international donors. Depending on content, these programmes can address any or all local and regional authorities, focusing on specific issues. International co-operation projects and information provision play a critical future role for the Romanian Federation of Local Authorities.

*January 1st 2007 Romania became a member of the European Union. This meant a new approach to international co-operation and the process of creating cohesion and equality. The LOGO East programme provides us the opportunity to see and to understand clearly what an association of local authorities can do to develop its international activities and to assist its members' twinning processes. It also creates opportunities to aspire the achievements of others and plan future regional projects and replicate LOGO East performance of local authorities in neighbouring countries.*

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# National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria

*Strengthening local democracy and developing local communities*

Founded in 1996, the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria represents and defends the common interests of municipalities at the central level. According to the Local Self-Government and Local Administration Act it is entitled to develop proposals for change and improvement in local self-government regulations, to prepare opinions and proposals on the draft budget of the country concerning municipalities, and to be a member of international associations.

## **Scope of work of the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria**

Representatives of the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria participate in the councils of regional policy, social policy, small and medium-sized enterprises, tourism, cadastre and property registry, application and monitoring of the national plan for agricultural and rural area development, and others. Representatives also participate in the governing bodies of the pre-accession programmes ISPA and SAPARD as well as in the governing committees of many donor programmes facilitating financial support to municipalities.

- **Consultative papers:** consultative papers are regularly written to assist members in preparing and implementing municipality budgets, determining local fees, service charges and handling other complicated issues;
- **Handbooks and reference books:** containing information on relevant topics such as municipal property and finance, concessions, civil registration, successful practices of local governments in Europe, legislation, health care and education, lobbying etc.;
- **Training:** experienced trainers, timely topics and interactive exercises assist members to improve their capabilities;
- **Information services:** twice a month the Information Bulletin is issued; in a circulation of 1500 copies.

*The projects implemented by Bulgarian municipalities on the basis of their bi- or trilateral partnerships within the framework of the LOGO East programme support the build-up of capacity for the provision of high quality services in public transport, services for children and youths assistance in the development of sustainable projects, one-stop information provision, urban planning and water management, reducing water losses etc.*

*LOGO East is a door to partnership, a spring of ideas to enrich municipal know-how, and a source of improvement of the services we provide to citizens.*

*Mr. Bogomil Blchev, NAMRB Managing Board Member  
Mayor of Gabrovo municipality*

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# Union of Municipalities of Turkey

*To gather municipalities that are contemporary democratic local bodies into one framework*

The Union of Municipalities of Turkey is an umbrella organization which aims at improving the operating effectiveness of contemporary democratic Turkish municipalities. The Union of Municipalities of Turkey undertakes initiatives at parliamentary, national and international government levels to represent municipalities and safeguard their interests such as providing assistance to improve municipalities' financial, social, legal and political efficiency.

## **Scope of work of the Union of Municipalities of Turkey**

Convinced that municipalities with well trained staff raise the quality of services provided to citizens, the Union of Municipalities of Turkey provides training activities for both elected and appointed municipal staff. Training is conducted through seminars, round table meetings, symposiums and international conferences. The Union also provides assistance to municipalities in preserving their interests regarding trade unions, social, economic and personnel issues. The Union is also a significant channel of communication between local administrations and parliament and public opinion.

The Union operates with three key components. The Council is the main decision-making body of the Union. The Unions' President is head of administration and representative of the legal personality of the Union. The Executive Committee is composed of the President and fourteen mayors elected from among members by the Council for a term of one year.

*The LOGO East programme is showing us that town-twinings can lead to favourable concrete results. The programme has introduced new practices to pilot municipalities in a wide range of public service delivery, from social services to waste management. An important fact is that small municipalities involved in the programme have been successful in conducting international partnerships.*

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# Association of Ukrainian Cities and Communities

## *Safeguarding Communities*

The Association of Ukrainian Cities and Communities, founded in June 1992, is a voluntary union of local governments formed to promote members' interests, raise the effectiveness of local government, and progress advocacy, interaction and co-operation.

## **Scope of work of the Association of Ukrainian Cities and Communities**

The Association of Ukrainian Cities and Communities provides:

- Assistance in drafting of laws
- Analysis and expertise
- Information and training
- Legal advice and assistance
- Partnership services to international organizations and foreign associations
- National section of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)
- Co-ordinate activities for the municipal movement in the Ukraine

*The LOGO East Programme supports Ukrainian cities in resolving problems in the social area and housing and utilities sector, and obtaining access to experience of EU countries in internal management and optimally delivering services to citizens.*

*Such programmes support Ukrainian communities to contribute to the integration of Ukraine into Europe.*

*Mr. Myroslav Pittsyk, Executive Director AUC*

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# Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities in Serbia

*To represent interests, provide high quality service, and support development and improvement of local government through joint effort of its membership in line with European standards*

The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities supports local governments in their efforts to upgrade their legal and financial capacity. The Standing Conference is dedicated to fostering co-operation and dialogue among local governments and to supporting their initiatives vis-à-vis central government. It also represents the key note of information flows on issues relevant to towns and municipalities. The Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities in Serbia is the national association of local authorities founded in 1953 following the examples of local government associations in the countries in Western Europe.

## **Scope of work of the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities**

To become a complete and reliable representative of local government's interests, the Standing Conference has set out strategic goals and aims:

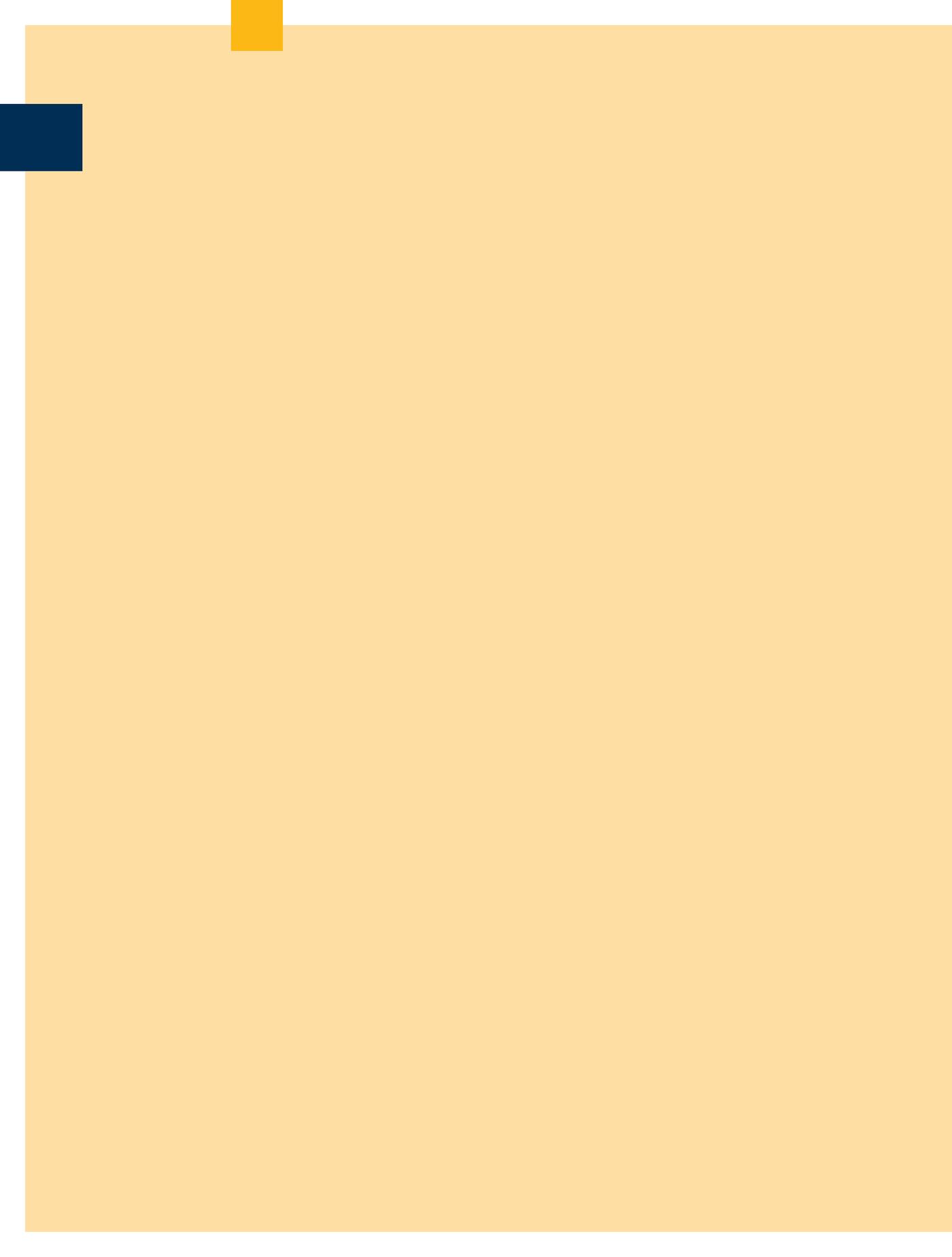
- Complete and reliable participation in legislation building process;
- Providing services to its members according to their needs and interests;
- Development of wide field of training programmes for local officials;
- Representing interests and needs of local governments to Central Government;
- Offering and organizing expert assistance;
- Ensuring long-term effectiveness by building modern organization systems and structures.

The Standing Conference enjoys well-developed international co-operation with many other national associations of local governments as well as with relevant international associations.

*The programme LOGO East provides an excellent opportunity for Serbian municipalities to get acquainted with good practices of local governments from the Netherlands, strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones. As the Standing Conference of Towns and Municipalities and VNG International have had fruitful co-operation for many years, I hope it will continue long into the future, and that the number of municipalities involved in the programme will grow strongly.*

*Mr. Djordje Stanicic, Secretary General*

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**Buitenlandse  
Zaken**

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This publication is supported by practices designed to improve the internal management of local and regional governments. The practices are a review of achievements made within the programme LOGO East; they describe the process of change and are intended to be used as guide to action. The programme LOGO East fosters innovations and improvements in the local and regional government sector in Central and Eastern Europe through exposure to good local and regional government practices in the Netherlands.

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