

Workflow: Training

Toolkit 14.1

Skills Development Planning

target audience

Farm, operations and production managers, and HR managers.

what it is

A skills development plan summarises the key skills and competencies the work force requires, including those of managers and specialists, to manage, operate and develop the business, and then plans the development and acquisition of these skills by the employees and teams.

A skills development plan has a number of components:

- A current organisational chart (organogram), indicating roles and accountability clearly.
- Job descriptions for each role/job type which also list the key skills/competencies for that role/job. Clear, short job descriptions that are simple to read and to the point are ideal.
- A list of key skills per role/job or operational area, e.g., managers, supervisors, production, harvesting, administration, etc.
- Training and skills development interventions, e.g., on-the-job training, internal coaching, internal training session, training courses, etc.

In short, a skills development plan is a document that defines the skills your managers, supervisors, employees, and teams should master, what the current status or skills level is, what actions should be taken, and when to steadily develop these skills. It is a dynamic, living document that will change as the team develops, and it should be updated regularly (at least once a year).

why it is important

The success of your farm depends almost completely on the leadership, managerial and operational skills of your team. Human capital (intellect, skill, and contribution) is by far your greatest advantage. Even though investment and working capital (money) are critical enablers, human ability and attitude deserve top spots and are often the primary factor for success, which in turn results in other important elements such as capital investment, funding and working capital.

Especially in the case of developing farms, where the farm may be dependent on the support of a strategic partner, it is vital to develop the organisational and operational capacity at the farm level. Only in this way will you ultimately be able to say that you are an independently and

autonomously successful business. Skills development planning is fundamental to transformation and empowerment.

Finally, continuous improvement is only possible when your employees and teams are empowered. Continuous improvement (CI) may be manager lead, but it is employee- and team-owned.

success factors

- **Current Organogram and Job Description** – Ensure that you have an up-to-date organogram and at least basic job descriptions. Refer to [Toolkit 1.2 - Organisational Structure and Capability](#). You should include:
 - A complete organogram, including the temporary (seasonal), specialist (external resources), and strategic partner resources you need to run a competitive and successful operation. You may very well have vacancies (whether for permanent staff or contracted resources) but show them nonetheless and mark them red or orange. This approach forces you to think of the full team (skills base) you need to operate optimally.
 - Job descriptions for every job or job group, which includes a list of skills, competencies, and where necessary qualifications/certifications required.
- **Defined Skills** – The above provides you will a list of key skills or competencies.
 - Group them in categories if required, e.g., managers, supervisors, production, harvesting, admin in a way that is logical for your operation. Refer to the [Skills Matrix example resource](#).
 - A Skills Matrix – A skills matrix summarises the skills per person in a tabular form, with the skills on the one side and the employees (in job groupings/categories if required) on the other. Refer to the [Skills Matrix example resource](#).
 - Each person is evaluated by indicating whether they are competent or not. This can be done in various ways, e.g., Y or N, tick or X, or more detailed methods. Refer to the [Denoting Skills Level Using a Square resource](#).
- **Analysis and Interpretation** – A completed skills matrix allows you to interpret the following:
 - The skills level of each employee.
 - The skills level of a team and whether there are critical gaps or whether the team collectively has the skill to function well (even if not every team member is fully competent).
 - Any “single points of failure”, i.e. a situation where only one person has a critical skill. This is a problem if anything should happen to that person preventing him/her from working.
- **A Plan** – The skills development plan can then be complete by:
 - Highlighting the key development requirements.
 - Placing them in order of priority.
 - Deciding which ones to address within a defined period/planning cycle (who, what, when, etc.).

- Defining how the skills improvement/development/training will take place. This includes coaching, on-the-job training, online training, courses, and more formal study and qualifications.
- **The Link to Personal Development Plans** – Ideally, your skills development plan should link with personal development plans.
 - As part of performance reviews, you will include the personal development of the employee. Ensure that the plans and promises you make in the performance review reflect in your skills development plan.
- **Assessment** – At the end of each planning cycle, you should assess the effectiveness of your skills development. Indicators of success could include:
 - The training completed (measuring input/action).
 - The improvement in business performance, e.g., fruit picking injuries, water use, agrochemical use, reduced equipment failure, reduction in other waste, etc.

execution steps

1. Review or develop your organisation's organogram and current list of job descriptions.
2. Group skills and competencies in a defined list or categories
3. Develop a skills matrix from above information.
4. Analyse and interpret skills matrix to glean critical information about the state of your skills development strategy.
5. Complete skills development plan for your organisation using all the above information gathered.
6. Review the above by assessing how effectively you were able to complete your annual WSP/ATR and also by the improvements in your business performance metrics.

assessment questions

Please Note: There is no minimum / maximum amount of questions you can add

1.	Do you have an updated organogram?
2.	Do you have a complete and updated list of job descriptions?
3.	Have you developed a skills matrix for your organisation?
4.	Did you do an analysis and interpreted the results/ information found in your skills matrix?
5.	Do you now have a completed skills development plan for your organisation?
6.	Did you submit a WSP/ATR to AgriSETA during the last 12 month period?
7.	Have you seen improvements in the various aspects of your business' key performance indicators?

resources

1.	Skills Matrix example
2.	Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) (2019)
3.	Skills Matrix example