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**SEMINAR ON HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRAINING  
SESSION I**

Conceptual approach to human resources development at the Federal Statistical Office<sup>1</sup>

Submitted by the Federal Statistical Office of Germany

I. INTRODUCTION

1. Staff is the central resource for increasing quality and efficiency. For this reason, the Federal Statistical Office has addressed the issue of human resources development. A project group comprising representatives of the Federal Statistical Office's (FSO) specialised and administrative departments, and of various bodies, was set up in March 2000. It was commissioned to elaborate a concept for a systematic and target-oriented human resources development; the concept was submitted in April 2003. In the meantime, the issue has become well established in the FSO and the former project group has developed into an organizational unit, namely the Human Resources Section. The section of this paper on Modular structure (section II B.) describes, from the perspective of the former project group, the modules which have been successfully implemented in the FSO.

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<sup>1</sup> This paper has been prepared at the invitation of the secretariat.

## II. GENERAL ASPECTS

### A. Definition and goals of human resources development at the Federal Statistical Office

2. Human resources development (HRD), as part of the FSO's corporate culture and Total Quality Management, is a systematic and continuous process allowing to identify, maintain and promote the individual performance and learning potential of any staff member at any level. From the FSO's point of view, HRD should meet the qualitative and quantitative demand for human resources in a sustainable way. From the staff members' point of view, the task of human resources development is to give weight to their skills and interests. The goal is to reconcile these two target components to permit the best possible fulfillment of the tasks of the FSO.

3. This definition contains the main goals of HRD. Any other goals can be derived thereof as sub-goals, while any effort here is subordinate to the principle that staff must be provided to ensure the best possible fulfillment of tasks at the FSO. This is why HRD starts with recruitment, involves all staff members and accompanies processes of change. It is important to maintain and develop the qualification of the staff members. This is the only way to meet future challenges for official statistics.

4. Therefore, HRD is not a single subject aimed at short-term effects. HRD follows the strategic goals of the office and the corresponding organizational developments. It takes up new issues and helps to make management decisions for the future. HRD involves efforts and cost. Practicing HRD means that everyone involved has to make greater efforts. Time and commitment is invested in the people. Such investment is for the benefit of the FSO and of every individual.

### B. Modular structure

5. Any HRD measure is based on seven job profiles, which have been derived from practical work at the FSO.

6. HRD modules are based on job profiles. Each module describes a consistent HRD measure. Depending on the requirements of the job and the staff member concerned, modules may be supplemented, omitted or re-weighted, without changing the overall concept.

### C. Human resources development as a management task

7. HRD take place "on the spot", i.e. it is a task for the higher management. It is they who can best identify the requirements of a specific job and the potential or possible deficiencies of their staff. It is the joint responsibility of the staff and their superiors to agree upon required and suitable HRD measures. It is one of the duties of managers to actively support HRD and to contribute to transparency and acceptance of HRD measures.

### III. MODULES OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT AT THE FEDERAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

#### A. Efficient recruitment

8. HRD starts with recruitment. Errors in recruiting suitable staff are almost impossible to correct later through HRD.

9. In order to draw the attention of as many potential candidates as possible to the FSO as an employer, the following measures are important.

a) Improving Internet presentation

The FSO intends to increase its publicity as a potential employer by intensifying its presence in the media, in order to attract more qualified applicants.

b) Increased use of trade fairs and information events

The FSO makes use of its participation in trade fairs to increase public awareness of possible jobs at the Office.

c) Granting traineeships and diploma dissertations

It is intended to grant traineeships and diploma dissertation themes to students of institutions of higher education. This will allow the FSO to become better known as a potential employer and thus facilitate contact with suitable candidates.

d) Optimising the selection procedure

The quality and efficiency of the FSO's selection procedure has been considerably improved. A crucial factor, apart from subject-related skills, is social competence. Social competence can be assessed through the following criteria: ability to work in a team; social behaviour in a group; active listening; using arguments; ability to moderate; assertiveness; persuasiveness; and self-confidence.

#### B. Career start programme for the higher service employees

10. The purpose of the career start programme for the "higher service employees" is to integrate the new staff members in the Federal Statistical Office and to prepare them for their further career. It should also:

- (a) contribute to the staff members' identifying themselves with the Federal Statistical Office;
- (b) increase mobility, flexibility, and range of potential employments;
- (c) allow solid assessment of the new staff regarding their permanent employment; and
- (d) promote the Office's attractiveness as an employer.

11. The programme consists of courses and seminars, in which all new staff members in the higher service have to take part, and of other measures supporting integration.

#### C. Feedback to superiors/staff inquiries

12. The purpose of feedback to superiors and staff inquiries is to obtain information on the management situation and staff satisfaction at the Federal Statistical Office, so that well-aimed improvement measures can be taken.

a) Feedback to superiors

In giving feedback to superiors, staff members anonymously assess the personnel management behaviour of their superiors, following a given pattern. The aggregated assessments are revealed only to the superior concerned and, where appropriate, discussed with him/her by third parties; this should help him/her to identify his/her strong and weak points in personnel management behaviour and to take well-targeted improvement measures (help for self-help). Personnel management behaviour may be improved, for instance, by participating in personnel management courses or by holding (maybe moderated) discussions with the staff members. The feedback aggregated for a group of superiors is circulated within the Office. Drawing conclusions on individuals is not possible here. The personnel management situation is thus examined in general. Any superior may compare his/her self-image with how he/she is seen by the group, and the President/Vice-President may identify weak points to be remedied.

b) Staff inquiries

The FSO has – as part of TQM - committed itself to "demonstrably" improve staff satisfaction. To measure staff satisfaction, staff inquiries are therefore conducted at regular intervals (every 2 years, starting in 2005). Among other things, they provide information on how staff motivation and performance can be improved.

D. Staff management interviews and individual planning of advanced training

13. Staff management interviews are of major importance for practical HRD. In such annual interviews, the superiors and their staff members discuss, negotiate and plan in a binding manner the items that are important to both parties. Annual and formalised interviews aim at a contract between staff members and their superiors. They are very important for the implementation of target-oriented management.

14. An important basis for staff management interviews is the annual planning of the organisational unit concerned, from which the targets for the concrete jobs are derived. A brochure on staff management interviews sets requirements and provides assistance for such interviews.

15. Another important element of staff management interviews is the individual planning of advanced training. The goal here is that superiors and staff members agree in a well-informed and binding manner on advanced training and that both groups commit themselves to contributing to successful advanced training. All staff members should acquire the knowledge they need to fulfill their present and future tasks.

16. Setting up individual plans of advanced training is facilitated by the job profiles. They provide information on the knowledge and skills required to fulfill the tasks. When a staff member takes over a different job, the individual advanced training plans have to be adjusted to the new requirements.

17. To make advanced training planning more concrete, a selection of suitable advanced training themes is offered for each job profile component in a standardised IT procedure. Superiors and staff members discuss what training measures might be suitable and agree on a maximum of 4 seminars to be attended in the following year. It is also possible to propose seminar themes that are not contained in the seminar catalogue. The result of the discussion is documented in writing and transmitted to the department responsible for training matters. There, the total of individual advanced training plans forms the basis for planning the advanced training programme of the FSO for the following year.

E. Specialists in the higher service

18. Staff members who, due to their suitability and qualification, are to be entrusted with functions in important strategic areas of the Office - without necessarily the intention or requirement of also entrusting them with staff management responsibilities as superiors - should be promoted.

19. Such staff members take over permanently or for several years a special function, or they participate in or manage a large-scale project. They function as heads of fixed organisational units (heads of section, heads of division, heads of department) and are classified in salary brackets according to the requirements of the task to be performed.

20. Changing between functions is possible. This requires, however, that the criteria of the relevant job profile are met. In concrete terms, this means, for instance, that before a candidate can take over the function of head of division, he/she must prove to have acquired experience in staff management (as specified by the job profile).

#### IV. OUTLOOK

21. Apart from the above-mentioned successful modules of human resources development, a trainee programme for higher service employees is currently under discussion, which will ensure the introduction of a transparent and performance-oriented procedure for "Selecting the best" to fill management and specialist positions.

22. Basically, the trainee programme will include the following components:

- (a) changing between different work units and appraisal of work results by the superiors of the relevant spheres of work;
- (b) potentials analysis;
- (c) team work and appraisal of the results by the head(s) of the Office.

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