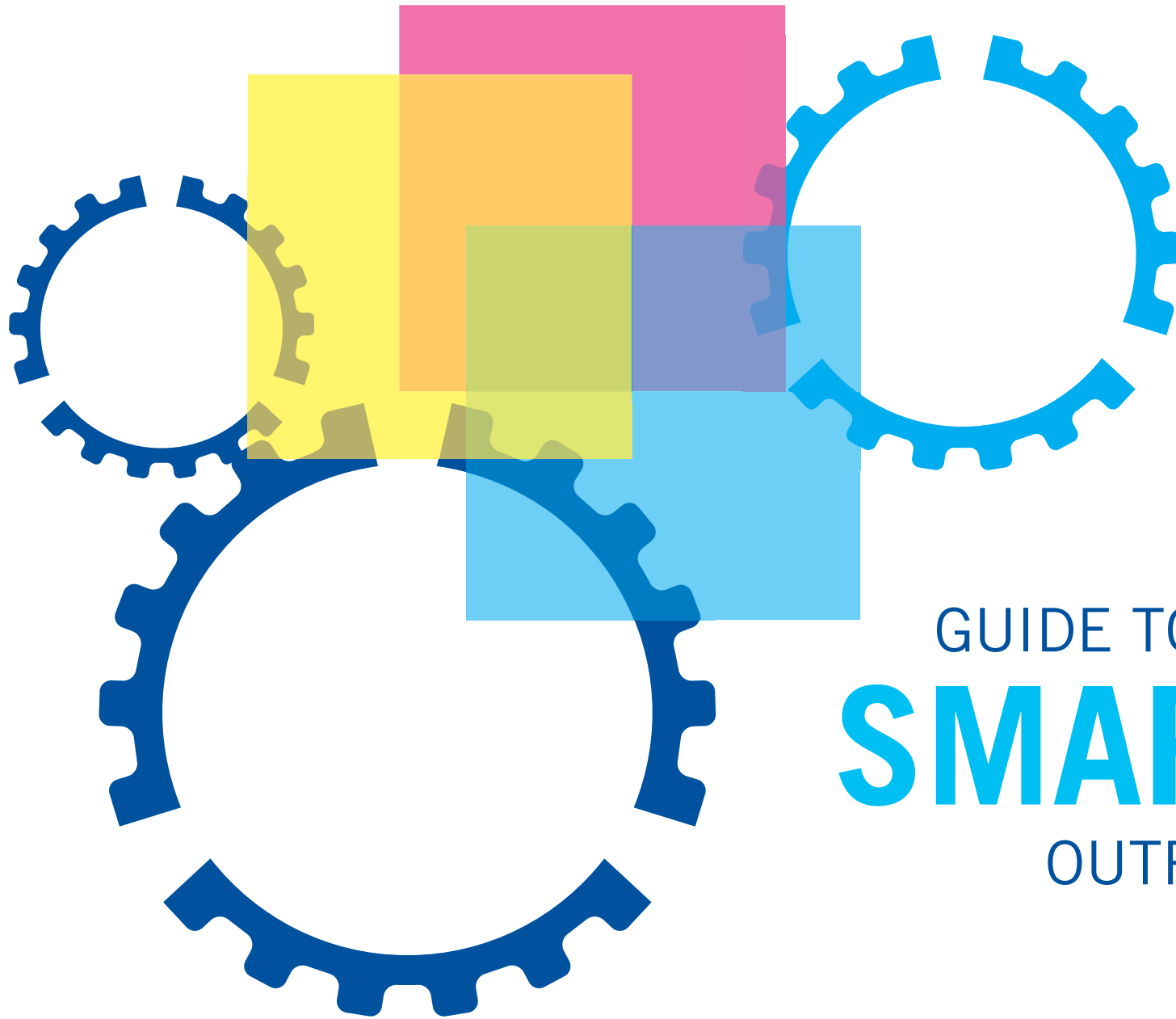


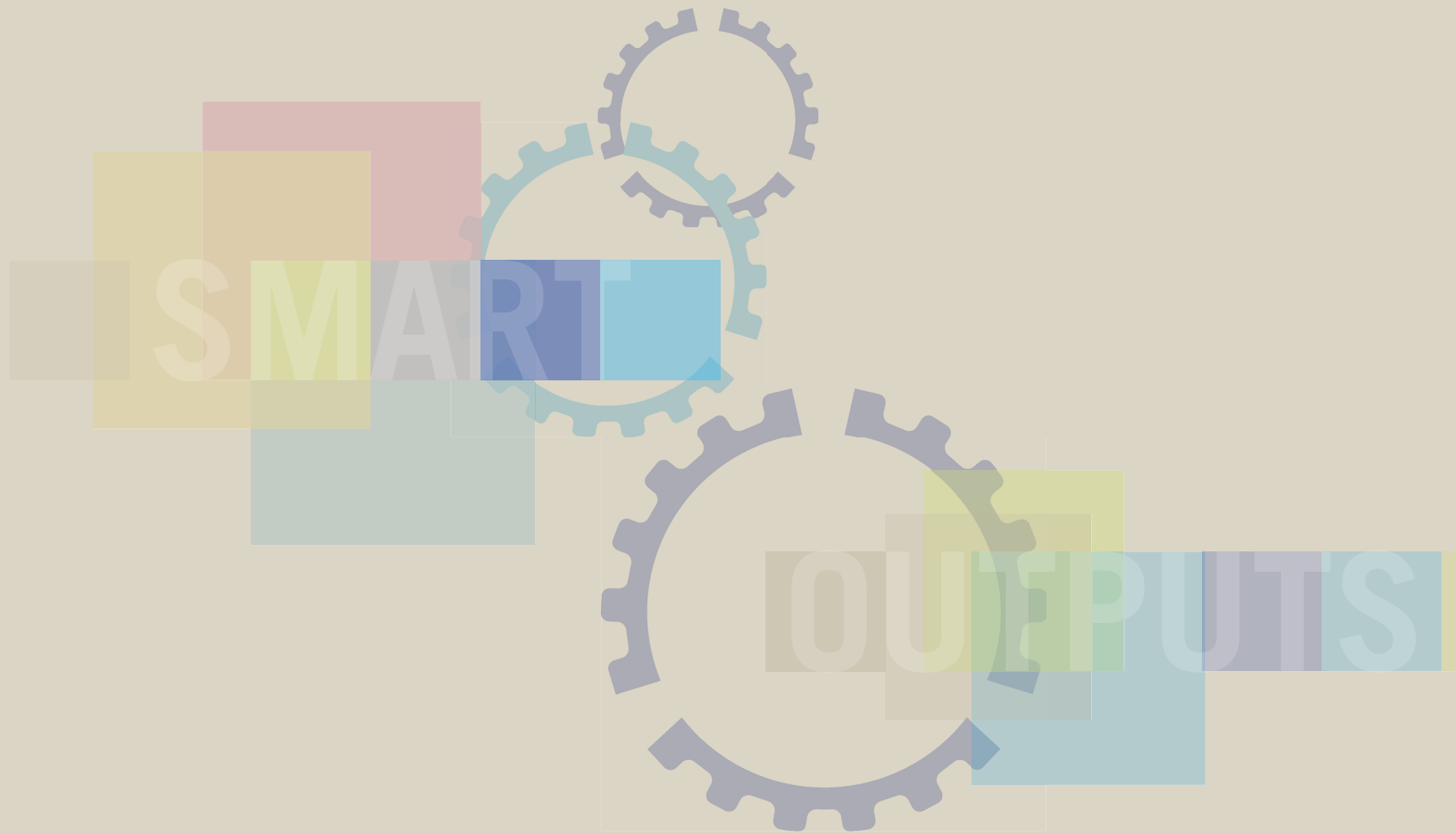


International  
Labour  
Organization



GUIDE TO WRITING  
**SMART**  
OUTPUTS

HRD  
Talent  
Management





# INTRODUCTION

One of the key elements of the ILO's Performance Management Framework (PMF) is the establishment of outputs at the beginning of a performance cycle. Outputs are specific statements of what you aim to achieve in a given performance cycle and by when you aim to achieve it. The development of outputs through the PMF emphasizes the link between individual results, unit workplans and organizational outcomes. Outputs contribute to the realization of outcomes and outcomes, in turn, contribute to ILO's long-term impact on the world of work.

This is a guide to assist you with writing performance outputs that are SMART and aligned with your unit workplan and main areas of your job. A formal assessment of your achievements will be provided during the End of Cycle appraisal.

THE GUIDE CONTAINS  
THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:

- **WHAT IS SMART?**
- **WHY ESTABLISH SMART OUTPUTS?**
- **HOW DO I DEVELOP SMART OUTPUTS?**
- **HOW DO I USE ACTION VERBS IN SMART OUTPUTS?**
- **WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF SMART OUTPUTS?**
- **WHAT SMART RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE?**





## WHAT IS SMART?

SMART refers to an acronym; Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time bound and is built around the characteristics of meaningful outputs:

### OUTPUTS SHOULD BE:

<b>Specific</b>	State clearly and precisely what is to be delivered
<b>Measurable</b>	Define quality (how good) quantity (how many), time (how long), resources (how much)
<b>Achievable</b>	Be within resources, skills and competencies, jointly determined, challenging
<b>Relevant</b>	Be linked to the unit workplan and be within your job role
<b>Time bound</b>	Have specific deadlines, start and finish dates



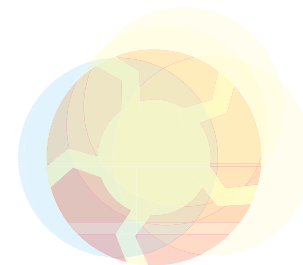
WHAT IS SMART?

## WHY ESTABLISH SMART OUTPUTS?

Establishing SMART outputs is important. It focuses the organization on delivering results over a period of time and can motivate staff to meet the outputs set. More specifically, establishing SMART outputs facilitates the:

- Creation of a shared understanding about performance activities and how the work will be measured and assessed.
- Setting of meaningful goals.
- Development of the professional relationship and communication between you and your supervisor.

It is important that outputs be written in an effective way. The SMART model is in line with Results-based Management (RBM) and provides a structured approach for thinking more deeply and methodically about what needs to be achieved. A SMART output is one which describes to you and anyone else what products and services you are expected to deliver within a performance cycle.





# HOW DO I DEVELOP SMART OUTPUTS?

## 1. REVIEW RELEVANT INFORMATION

When developing outputs it is important to be clear about what you need to accomplish in the given performance cycle and how this is going to be achieved. In addition, outputs should link to the unit workplan and the main areas of your job. Together, these establish the basis on which the Office will deliver on its goals and objectives.

Please review the following information as a starting point for developing your outputs:



DEVELOPING OUTPUTS

### YOUR UNIT WORKPLAN

The contribution of individual staff members should be aligned with the unit workplan as defined by the Strategic Policy Framework, biennial programme and budget, outcome-based workplans and other relevant management strategies and Office action plans (such as the action plan for Gender Equality). Examples of management strategies include Knowledge Management, Evaluation, HR, IT and Technical Cooperation.

The unit workplan is drafted by the manager and serves as the basis for the identification of priority outputs on which individual performance will be assessed.

### YOUR JOB DESCRIPTION

The job description provides an outline of the expected job tasks and level of performance in general terms. The Office is taking steps to ensure over time that all officials have up-to-date job descriptions, and that these are progressively revised to include references to accountabilities.



# HOW DO I DEVELOP SMART OUTPUTS?

## 2. ESTABLISH YOUR OUTPUTS

You should normally set between three and five SMART outputs at the beginning of a performance cycle that reflect the **priority** areas of your work – this may include a mix of new tasks and ongoing tasks. Please keep in mind that the established outputs are not intended to cover all work-related tasks.

For some staff (particularly when the work is project-based), outputs often reflect different activities each cycle. For others (with more routine duties), outputs may reflect very similar tasks cycle-to-cycle. However, even in the latter situation, it is many times the case that some degree of change or improvement (e.g., reassignment of tasks, looking for better ways to do things, introducing a new procedure) will be required at the beginning or during the performance cycle. Outputs need to illustrate such expectations.

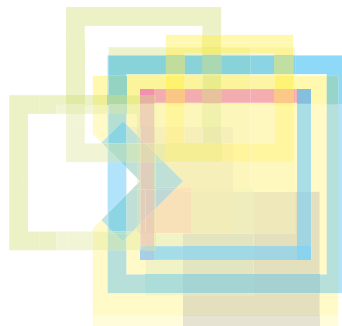
Here is some additional information regarding the SMART criteria and questions to consider when formulating your outputs:

### SPECIFIC

Outputs should specify what you are expected to deliver. Specific, in this case, does not mean detailed. Rather, outputs need to be clear and concise, as opposed to generalized or ambiguous. Use action verbs to describe what needs to be done.

*Questions to consider:*

- **WHAT** actions need to be taken to deliver the output?
- **WHY** is this important to do?  
Will these actions lead to the desired result?
- **WHO** is going to do what?  
Who else needs to be involved?
- **WHEN** does this need to be completed?
- **HOW** will this be delivered?





# HOW DO I DEVELOP SMART OUTPUTS?

## MEASURABLE

Outputs should include a quality and/or quantity reference(s) so that you can assess whether or not you have achieved them. These references can be stated as rates (90% accuracy), ranges (+/-50%), or absolute quantities (3 projects). They can also be stated to reflect specific requirements; for example, *“to meet written specifications”*, *“according to project guidelines”*, *“within the identified budget”*.

*Questions to consider:*

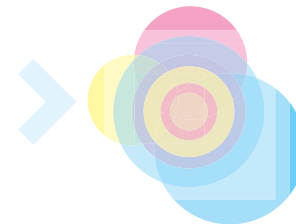
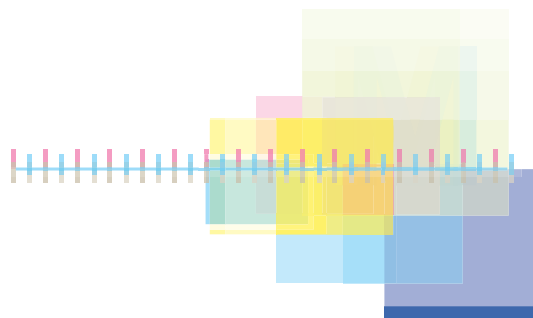
- How will I know when the output has been delivered?
- What will be the measures?  
How much?  
How many?  
What is the expected quality of the final product?
- Can these measures be obtained?

## ACHIEVABLE

Outputs should be challenging but achievable. Outputs should also take account of the skills, knowledge and resources required to achieve them. You may consider if you need any training, development or other support to achieve the outputs.

*Questions to consider:*

- Is the output challenging but still within your skills and competencies?
- Can it be delivered in the proposed time frame?
- Do you understand the limitations and constraints?
- Are the resources available to deliver this output?





# HOW DO I DEVELOP SMART OUTPUTS?

## RELEVANT

Outputs should be agreed between you and your supervisor and add useful value within the context they are being set in – such as being aligned with the unit workplan and higher organizational goals.

*Questions to consider:*

- Does this output relate to what the unit/department/Office is trying to achieve?
- What will be the impact?
- What would be the consequence if this output was not delivered?

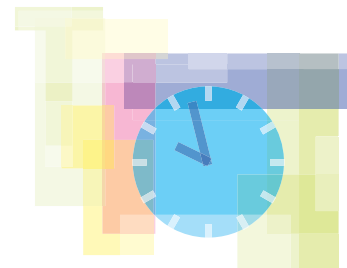
## TIME BOUND

Outputs should have a specific time frame or deadline for accomplishing the output. If there is a long timeline involved, you may need to identify the key steps you need to take to deliver the overall output and identify how long each step is likely to take in order to agree on a target date.

Time frames can be specific dates (9 May), times of the year (by the end of June), tied to significant events (before the launch of the Century Project), or ongoing (daily, weekly).

*Questions to consider:*

- When must the output be delivered?
- Can it be delivered in the proposed time frame?
- Do you understand the constraints and limitations?







# HOW DO I DEVELOP SMART OUTPUTS?

## 3. ESTABLISH YOUR PERFORMANCE MEASURES

Measures of performance reflect the critical success factors that indicate whether the outputs are achieved and to which extent. They are established when outputs are set, so it is clear to you what success will look like during a particular performance cycle. The measures of performance should be quantifiable and can include indicators regarding quantity, quality, and timeliness.

Below is an illustration of an output which is non-SMART and SMART:

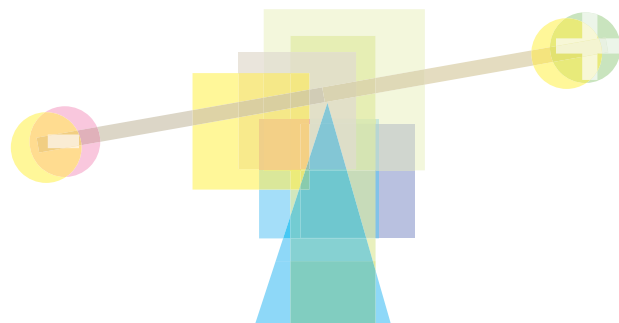
**Non-SMART output:** Tripartite Constituents will be trained on the Local Economic Development (LED) toolkit.

This output is not SMART because it is not specific, measurable, or time bound. It can be made SMART by specifically indicating the results you want to achieve, how many constituents will be trained, where they will be trained and by when the trainings will be conducted.

**SMART Output:** By the end of the biennium, at least 20 constituents trained on the Local Economic Development (LED) toolkit in 2 ILO target countries.

This output can be linked to a unit workplan and the given measures of performance as shown below:

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
By the end of the biennium, at least 20 constituents trained on the Local Economic Development (LED) toolkit in 2 ILO target countries.	Local Economic Development toolkit finalized by 28 February including revised guidelines.  Training materials developed and available in English, French and Spanish by 31 May.
UNIT WORKPLAN	2 workshops delivered in Tunisia and Iraq for at least 20 constituents by 31 October.  LED guidelines revised by 31 December based on workshop evaluation feedback.
<i>Capacity of Tripartite Constituents increased to apply tools for peace reconciliation through technical training.</i>	





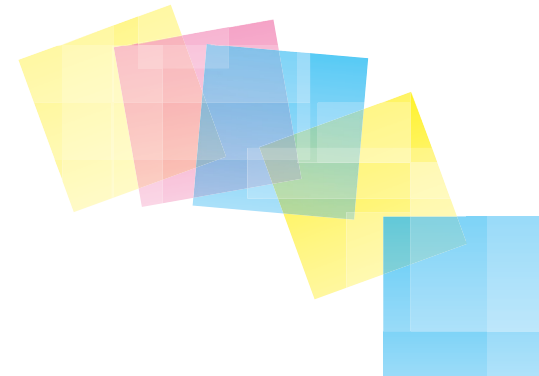
# HOW DO I DEVELOP SMART OUTPUTS?

## 4. HINTS AND TIPS

- Focus on the results you want to achieve – avoid writing outputs which describe what you are going to do.
- Review outputs throughout the performance cycle and modify as needed:

*Outputs established at the beginning of a performance cycle may not unfold precisely as planned, especially in a dynamic work environment such as the ILO. This may require a redirection of efforts that could lead to changes to the existing outputs or measures of performance. The Mid-term Review provides a formal opportunity to record any adjustments.*

- Outputs should reflect the level and range of responsibilities that you have.
- Outputs should be challenging and aim to achieve positive results – avoid setting outputs that are too difficult or too easy as both can be de-motivating.
- Outputs should be achievable within the period covered by the Beginning of Cycle.





# ACTION VERBS FOR SMART OUTPUTS

Use action verbs when writing an output to help your output be more action-oriented and focused. Action verbs are more measurable and better able to communicate the intent of what is to be implemented. Here are some examples<sup>1</sup>:

achieve  
acquire  
act  
activate  
adapt  
administer  
advise  
analyze  
arrange  
assemble  
assess  
assist  
audit  
budget  
build  
calculate  
centralize  
clarify  
classify  
coach  
collaborate  
collect

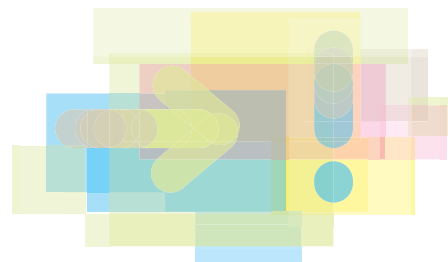
communicate  
compile  
complete  
compose  
compute  
conceptualize  
conduct  
connect  
consolidate  
construct  
consult  
coordinate  
counsel  
define  
deliver  
demonstrate  
design  
determine  
develop  
diagnose  
direct

discover  
display  
distribute  
document  
edit  
eliminate  
ensure  
establish  
estimate  
evaluate  
expand  
expedite  
experience  
experiment  
facilitate  
finalize  
finance

forecast  
formulate  
generate  
guide  
handle  
help  
indentify  
illustrate  
implement  
improve  
install  
instruct  
integrate  
interpret  
introduce  
invent  
investigate  
judge  
launch  
learn  
lead  
make  
maintain  
manage  
market  
monitor

motivate  
navigate  
negotiate  
obtain  
open  
operate  
organize  
originate  
participate  
perform  
plan  
prepare  
present  
prevent  
process  
procure  
produce  
program  
propose  
purchase  
quantify  
reconcile  
reconstruct  
record  
recruit  
redesign  
reduce  
reorganize

report  
represent  
research  
resolve  
restore  
restructure  
retrieve  
review  
revise  
schedule  
secure  
select  
solve  
staff  
standardize  
streamline  
structure  
supervise  
supply  
survey  
systemize  
teach  
test  
train  
translate  
unify



<sup>1</sup> Adapted from: SMART Objectives Checklist, Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006.



# EXAMPLES OF SMART OUTPUTS

Below you will find some examples of SMART outputs and measures of performance to be used for guidance and inspiration when writing your own outputs and measures.

Each output follows the SMART writing style and as such contains; a verb that conveys the action that will be carried out; a specification of the deliverable(s) that will be produced by the action; and a deadline for completion. A reference to the unit workplan has also been included to illustrate the link between unit outputs and individual outputs.

Examples have been developed for the following areas:

## 1. SUPPORT WORK

- Administrative
- Documentation/Publication
- Driver
- Finance
- Human Resources

## 2. TECHNICAL WORK

- Research
- Technical Support
- Project Implementation
- Policy Guidance

## 3. MANAGEMENT WORK

- Supervision
- Coordination
- Representation
- Outreach





# SUPPORT WORK

## ADMINISTRATIVE

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>Daily administrative support provided to the Regional Director and 20 officials.</p>	<p>Staff inquiries regarding administrative matters answered within 24 hours.</p> <p>Correspondence for Director organized on a daily basis including drafting of routine communications. All correspondence is accurate, free from errors and follows the ILO style guidelines.</p> <p>Missions and meetings scheduled and organized for the Regional Director in accordance with established deadlines and ILO policies and procedures.</p>
<p>▶ UNIT WORKPLAN</p>	
<p><i>Administrative operations at the Regional Office streamlined and implemented in accordance with ILO policies and procedures.</i></p>	<p>Personal actions (PA) are processed within 2 working days of request when all supporting documentation is provided.</p>

## ADMINISTRATIVE

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>4 Geneva-based learning events organized and delivered in accordance with established deadlines.</p>	<p>Invitations and agenda sent out 3 weeks prior to event and include accurate information.</p> <p>Information communicated to participants upon the supervisor's request. Written communications are clear, concise and free of errors.</p> <p>Venue reserved at least 3 months in advance of event and necessary items ordered within 2 weeks of event (e.g., food, equipment).</p> <p>Required documents and materials prepared and available at least 2 days before event.</p>
<p>▶ UNIT WORKPLAN</p>	
<p><i>Awareness of the evolution of ILO's mandate and activities among constituents enhanced through learning events</i></p>	<p>Supplier payments verified and paid within 30 days of receipt.</p>



# SUPPORT WORK

## DOCUMENTATION / PUBLICATION

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>By 28 October, 3 publications produced and distributed to at least 4 external expert networks.</p>	<p>Design layouts meet ILO publication standards.</p> <p>External expert networks identified by 28 February in coordination with supervisor.</p>
<p><b>UNIT WORKPLAN</b></p>	<p>Contact information obtained by 31 March and publications distributed in accordance with established deadlines.</p>
<p><i>Awareness of international labour standards concerning migrant workers increased externally through dissemination of ILO materials.</i></p>	<p>Printing requests conform to ILO financial regulations.</p>

## DRIVER

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>Safe driving practices implemented and assigned vehicle monitored and maintained on a daily basis.</p>	<p>100% compliance with local traffic laws and safety regulations.</p> <p>Vehicle kept neat, clean and properly equipped.</p> <p>Mini risk assessment carried out before each trip including a visual check of the vehicle, tire conditions, windows, lights, etc.</p>
<p><b>UNIT WORKPLAN</b></p>	<p>All traffic violations and accidents reported to management within 8 hours.</p>
<p><i>Health and safety initiatives implemented to increase security of ILO personnel.</i></p>	



# SUPPORT WORK

## FINANCE

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>Timely and accurate financial monitoring and reporting of staff and non-staff resources provided on a monthly basis.</p>	<p>Financial transactions processed within 2 working days when all required documentation is provided.</p> <p>All financial transactions conform to ILO's rules and regulations.</p> <p>Status report on non-staff budget produced weekly.</p> <p>Financial reports provided to the Director by the 7th of each month.</p>
<p><b>UNIT WORKPLAN</b></p>	
<p><i>Department's delivery objectives met on time and within budget.</i></p>	<p>Year end close completed for all sources of funds in accordance with FINANCE's instructions.</p>

## HUMAN RESOURCES

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>Timely management and daily follow-up on staffing related matters provided for 100 officials.</p>	<p>Relevant staffing documents concerning ILO-Office officials correctly filed in the local personnel file within 3 days of receipt.</p> <p>New information concerning global ILO staffing matters communicated to all officials within 5 days of receipt.</p>
<p><b>UNIT WORKPLAN</b></p>	
<p><i>Country office staff briefed on staffing related issues/ policies and P-files organized in accordance with global ILO standards.</i></p>	<p>Briefings organized and delivered to all new officials within 15 days of arrival including information on insurance, pension, contracts, salaries and safety.</p>



# TECHNICAL WORK

## RESEARCH

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>By 1 November, one high quality background paper prepared and submitted for the World Employment Report (WER).</p>	<p>Existing research reviewed and research gaps identified by 31 March.</p> <p>Relevant data collected and analyzed through different quantitative techniques by 30 June.</p> <p>Background paper drafted by 31 August.</p> <p>Internal (2) and external (1) peer reviews carried out and feedback integrated by 31 October.</p>
<p><b>UNIT WORKPLAN</b></p>	
<p><i>Cutting-edge research provided on labour and social issues to policy makers through ILO publications.</i></p>	<p>Positive comments received from peer reviews and the WER Coordinator.</p>

## TECHNICAL SUPPORT

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>At least one assessment of a national skills development system carried out and implementation advice provided in one target country by 31 October.</p>	<p>Target country identified through consultation with Regional Office by 1 February.</p> <p>Existing national skills development strategies reviewed and implementation advice provided by 30 June.</p> <p>3-day training delivered for social partners and existing strategies refined based on technical advice by 30 September.</p>
<p><b>UNIT WORKPLAN</b></p>	
<p><i>Capacity of skills experts increased to develop national/regional strategies for skills development through the provision of technical support.</i></p>	<p>Technical reviews receive positive feedback from the Regional Office and considered as high quality.</p>





# TECHNICAL WORK

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>CRE project deliverables completed for year one within budget, on schedule and in line with established workplan.</p>	<p>Implementation strategy developed by 31 January for 5 CRE countries.</p> <p>Findings of mid-term review addressed by 30 June.</p> <p>Satisfaction survey developed and provided to CRE country team managers by 31 December.</p>
<p>▶ UNIT WORKPLAN</p>	<p>Survey results inform the implementation of year two project activities.</p>
<p><i>Competitiveness of small and medium enterprises improved through the effective implementation of CRE.</i></p>	<p>50% of donor funds spent by 31 December.</p>

## POLICY GUIDANCE

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>By the end of biennium, support provided to 3 member States in developing and implementing policies/legislation on Equal Remuneration.</p>	<p>National policies drafted upon request, and legislation reviewed and recommendations provided by the specified deadline.</p> <p>Comments provided on policies and legislation are comprehensive and accurate.</p> <p>Existing gaps in national legislation identified and guidelines to address these gaps developed by 31 December.</p>
<p>▶ UNIT WORKPLAN</p>	<p>Assistance provided to at least 3 member States to bring their national policies and legislation into greater conformity with the provisions of relevant ILO Conventions and Recommendations.</p>
<p><i>National tripartite policies on Equal Remuneration adopted by 5 member States with ILO support.</i></p>	



# MANAGEMENT WORK

## SUPERVISION

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>Unit workplan implemented in accordance with established deadlines and personnel supervised on a daily basis.</p>	<p>Implementation of unit workplan monitored on a quarterly basis and required revisions incorporated.</p> <p>Unit priorities identified and distribution of work tasks assigned during weekly staff meetings.</p> <p>All performance discussions and appraisals carried out and approved according to ILO performance cycle deadlines.</p>
<p><b>UNIT WORKPLAN</b></p>	
<p><i>Unit workplan implemented and effectiveness of unit operations increased through follow up and teamwork.</i></p>	<p>Annual satisfaction survey shows improvement in the quality of services and support the unit provides across the Office.</p>

## COORDINATION

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>SMR project coordinated and launched by the Regional Project Team in accordance with established priorities and deadlines.</p>	<p>Regional priorities defined in line with the Global Action Plan by 1 March and adjustments made as required.</p> <p>Project team briefed on major program updates within 2-3 days and project work plans and implementation rates reviewed every two months.</p> <p>7 project documents designed and endorsed within the deadlines defined by the Program and Planning Section and the Regional Office.</p>
<p><b>UNIT WORKPLAN</b></p>	
<p><i>Capacity of constituents to influence socio-economic policies and labour market governance at the regional level strengthened.</i></p>	<p>Technical proposals revised for quality and accuracy and feedback provided within 1 week of receipt.</p>



# MANAGEMENT WORK

## REPRESENTATION

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>National participatory forums convened and attended throughout the biennium and decent work outcomes included in the UNDAF.</p>	<p>At least 3 outcomes relevant to the Decent Work Agenda, or one of its pillars, included in the UNDAF.</p> <p>The ILO Office has participated in at least 95% of all UN Country Team meetings.</p> <p>ILO comparative advantages reflected in at least 2 reports issued by the Resident Coordinator's Office or Regional UNDG Team.</p>
UNIT WORKPLAN	
<p><i>Decent Work Agenda increasingly understood and mainstreamed into national development strategies.</i></p>	<p>One workshop delivered for at least 20 constituents on "working with the UN".</p>

## OUTREACH

OUTPUT	MEASURES OF PERFORMANCE
<p>By 31 December, 3 public events delivered and 10 press releases prepared, distributed and translated.</p>	<p>Two press conferences organized to present three ILO flagship reports by 31 March.</p> <p>Reports distributed to members of parliament and employers and workers organizations within 2 days of publication.</p> <p>Press releases translated into Portuguese within 1 working day after receipt and published on ILO website.</p>
UNIT WORKPLAN	
<p><i>Local visibility and outreach of the ILO-Office increased through press releases, reports and public events.</i></p>	<p>Public event organized by 30 September together with one local foundation.</p>



# AVAILABLE RESOURCES

## ENGLISH

### **ILO Performance Management – Internal e-Learning Course (Module 2):**

*ILO applications / HRD Training Folder / PM-Performance Management*

### **Guidebook for Applying Results Based Management in the ILO (Version 2)**

*Available on the ILO intranet*

### **Results for Technical Cooperation: Formulating Outputs and Outcomes**

*Available on the ILO intranet*

### **Heriot-Watt University: Performance and Development Review Handbook**

*<http://www.hw.ac.uk/hr/htm/pdr/06b%20SMART%20Objectives.pdf>*

### **Human Resources Service Centre Edith Cowan University, Australia**

*<http://www.hr.ecu.edu.au/mps/html/mps-smart-eg.cfm>*

### **Performance Management: Creating SMART Objectives**

*<http://hrs.boisestate.edu/td/pdf/SMARTgoals.pdf>*

### **Top achievement website:**

*<http://www.topachievement.com/smart.html>*

## FRENCH

### **E-Learning: Cours sur la gestion axée sur les résultats au BIT (Module 2)**

*ILO applications / HRD Training Folder / PM-Suivi du comportement professionnel*

### **Manuel de mise en œuvre de la gestion axée sur les résultats à l'Organisation Internationale du Travail (Version 2)**

*À paraître sur l'intranet de PROGRAM*

### **Directives du bureau «La gestion axée sur les résultats au BIT» datée du 25 août 2009 – IGDS numéro 112 (Version 1)**

*À paraître sur l'intranet*

### **Formuler des objectifs SMART – Fedweb**

*[http://www.fedweb.belgium.be/fr/binaries/cd\\_fichechef7\\_formuler\\_des\\_objectifs\\_smart\\_tcm119-17969.pdf](http://www.fedweb.belgium.be/fr/binaries/cd_fichechef7_formuler_des_objectifs_smart_tcm119-17969.pdf)*

### **Objectifs SMART**

*<http://www.mindomo.com/mindmap/objectifs-smart>*





# AVAILABLE RESOURCES

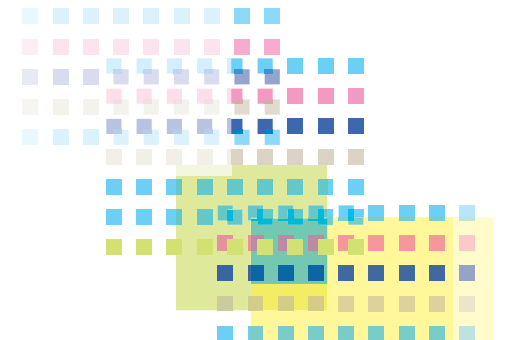
## SPANISH

### **E-Learning: Curso sobre la gestión del desempeño en la OIT (Modulo 2)**

*ILO applications / HRD Training Folder / PM-Gestión del Desempeño*

### **Guía para la Aplicación de la Gestión Basada en Resultados en la Organización Internacional del Trabajo (Segunda Versión)**

*Por aparecer en intranet de PROGRAM*



HRD TALENT MANAGEMENT

