



Secretariat

30 May 2023

Administrative instruction

Performance Management and Development System

The Secretary-General, for the purpose of updating the policies and procedures for performance management and development, pursuant to Staff Rule 1.3, promulgates the following.

Section 1

Scope of application

1.1 All staff members who hold appointments of at least one year shall have their performance evaluated in accordance with the Performance Management and Development System (“PMDS”). The present instruction does not apply to staff members holding initial appointments of less than one year, who may be evaluated under the provisions of the administrative instruction on administration of initial appointments of less than one year (ISBA/ST/AI/2022/1).

Section 2

Purpose, roles and responsibilities

2.1 The key goals of the PMDS are to establish a framework that allows for the fair and equitable evaluation of the performance of staff members and to foster a culture of regular feedback.

2.2 Staff members, including first and second reporting officers, have a duty to fulfil their obligations and to be active participants in the development and assessment processes, as well as to fully comply with the procedures established herein. Heads of offices/units have a duty to ensure that staff members fully comply with the obligation under staff rule 1.3 (c).

2.3 The purpose of the PMDS is also to improve the delivery of programmes by optimizing individual performance at all levels, which will be achieved by:

(a) Promoting a culture of accountability and adherence to the International Seabed Authority’ standards of conduct:

(b) Promoting a culture of high performance, personal and professional development and continuous learning;

(b) Empowering managers and holding them responsible and accountable for managing the staff under their supervision;

(c) Encouraging a high level of staff participation in the planning, delivery and evaluation of work;

(d) Recognizing successful performance and addressing underperformance fairly and equitably.

2.4 The function of the PMDS is to promote communication between staff members and supervisors throughout the performance management and development cycle, including on the goals and key results to be achieved and success criteria by which individual performance will be assessed. The PMDS enables a culture that promotes continuous learning and personal and professional development, recognizes successful performance and addresses performance shortcomings.

2.5 The PMDS is supported by an electronic application that captures the main stages of the performance process, namely the workplan and end-of-cycle performance review. The application also acts as a reporting tool that provides key metrics in support of the performance management and development cycle.

Section 3

Performance management and development Cycle

3.1 The performance management and development cycle should normally be 12 months, beginning on 1 April of each year and ending on 31 March of the following year. However, as provided in sections 3.2 and 3.3, the performance period may be shorter or longer than the 12-month cycle, normally no less than 6 months or longer than 18 months.

3.2 When a staff member takes up new duties upon recruitment, transfer or assignment in the course of the cycle, an individual workplan should normally be established within the first two months of assumption of the new functions. If a staff member actively serves with the Authority for less than six months during the cycle, no performance document is required to be completed.

3.3 Upon a staff member's separation from service, or when a staff member takes up new duties upon reassignment or transfer, the performance document shall be completed by the staff member and the staff member's supervisor for the period between the beginning of the performance period and the date of reassignment, transfer or separation. If the staff member performs the same functions but serves under successive supervisors during the year, the supervisor of the staff member at the time at which the cycle ends shall complete the end-of-cycle evaluation, and prior supervisors should be consulted or, if applicable, act as additional supervisors for the relevant workplan goals.

3.4 To ensure the timely completion of the performance document, if supervisors separate from the Authority, it is their responsibility to complete the PMDS duties required of them before the date of separation. Separation procedures and processing of final entitlements of supervisors may be delayed until any duties relating to the evaluations for which they are responsible are completed.

Section 4

Staff members

4.1 All staff members shall fulfil their responsibilities under the PMDS. Staff members are responsible for:

- (a) Understanding the larger organizational goals;
- (b) Soliciting clarification on individual performance expectations;

(c) Participating in discussions with the first reporting officer to facilitate the development and finalization of the individual workplan and maintaining milestone discussions during the reporting period. Milestone discussions occur at a frequency agreed upon at the start of the cycle and are recorded by the first reporting officer;

(d) Participating in performance conversations with the first reporting officer on recognition of good performance, identifying areas for further development and addressing shortcomings, if any, at the time at which they arise. Performance conversations occur outside the regular intervals set initially for milestone discussions and are not necessarily recorded;

(e) Taking steps to complete each stage of the process for which they are responsible without delay.

4.2 Non-compliance with the terms of the present instruction by a staff member shall be recorded in the individual performance document and reflected in the overall rating. The staff member prepares and uploads the workplan. Any disagreement between the staff member and the first reporting officer may be resolved with the second reporting officer in accordance with section 5.4. If the staff member does not take the required action in time to submit a workplan for the cycle, the first reporting officer may upload a final workplan to the system.

Section 5

Reporting officers and additional supervisors

5.1 A first reporting officer shall be designated for each staff member at the beginning of the performance management and development cycle. The first reporting officer is responsible for:

(a) Developing the workplan with the staff member, incorporating appropriate competencies into the workplan and emphasizing core values in support of the performance management process;

(b) Conducting milestone discussions at a frequency agreed upon at the start of the cycle, and recognizing good performance and any shortcomings as they become apparent at any time during the cycle, as appropriate, in performance conversations outside the regular intervals set initially for the milestone discussions;

(c) Conducting and recording the final evaluation;

(d) Advising, supporting and coaching the staff member on professional development and in the development of a personal and professional development plan;

(e) Developing a performance improvement plan in consultation with the staff member in the case of performance shortcomings or underperformance, if applicable;

(f) Ensuring that the performance documents of the staff supervised by the first reporting officer are completed in accordance with the prescribed procedures.

5.2 The first reporting officer should normally be the supervisor of the staff member. However, under exceptional circumstances, heads of offices may approve, when warranted, a first reporting officer who is not the staff member's supervisor, but who is in a position to fulfil the roles and responsibilities of a first reporting officer as outlined in the present instruction.

5.3 Up to two additional supervisors may be designated when a staff member works for more than one supervisor more than 25 per cent of the time or on assignments of at least 30 working days, provided that such arrangements are put into place with the agreement of the first reporting officer at the work planning stage, at the beginning

of the additional assignment or when the staff member's supervisor changes during the cycle.

5.4 The second reporting officer, who should normally be the first reporting officer's supervisor or the equivalent, is responsible for:

(a) Ensuring that the first reporting officer understands and applies the principles and procedures of the PMDS;

(b) Holding the first reporting officer accountable for developing, in a timely manner, together with their staff, workplans with fair, realistic and consistent performance expectations and ensuring linkages between the priorities of the office/unit with the individual workplans;

(c) Holding the first reporting officer accountable for the timely completion of the staff member's end-of-cycle evaluation;

(d) Providing regular feedback on and evaluating the first reporting officer's ability to manage and support the performance of the staff member supervised by the first reporting officer;

(e) Resolving disagreements between the staff member and the first reporting officer in the implementation of the PMDS;

(f) Overseeing the establishment and implementation of a performance improvement plan in case of performance shortcomings or underperformance, as provided for in section 10 of the present instruction.

5.5 Second reporting officers also have the broader responsibility of ensuring that the PMDS is consistently and fairly applied across the work units by all first reporting officers who report to them. The second reporting officer should ensure fairness and consistency throughout the cycle, in particular when defining performance expectations and communicating performance standards. The second reporting officer should ensure that:

(a) There is consistency between the comments on and the overall rating of individual staff members for a given performance management and development cycle;

(b) Ratings and comments given are factually sound, free of bias, constructive and consistent;

(c) Managers incorporate appropriate competencies into the workplan and emphasize core values in support of the performance management process.

5.6 A staff member normally has one second reporting officer at any given time in the reporting cycle. The first reporting officer and the second reporting officer usually should not be the same person. However, in cases the heads of offices act as the first reporting officer, they should also act as the second reporting officer.

5.7 Non-compliance with the terms of the present instruction by first or second reporting officers should be recorded in their performance documents and be reflected in their overall ratings. To this effect, their workplans should include a goal for timely implementation of and compliance with the PMDS.

Section 6

Unit workplans and individual workplans

A. Unit Workplans

6.1 Before the beginning of the performance management and development cycle, and for the purposes of strengthening accountability in the Secretariat, heads of

offices should meet with the Secretary-General and identify the priorities of the relevant office. Priorities of each office should be translated into workplan of the office and/or units. Office/unit workplans should be developed in consultation with staff members concerned on an annual basis, and regularly reviewed by the first and second reporting officers to ensure that the plans remain relevant and achievable. Heads of offices are responsible for ensuring that managers and staff fully understand what is expected of them for the reporting period and how those individual expectations fit into the wider mandates of the Authority.

B. Individual plans

6.2 At the beginning of the cycle, supervisors should meet with the staff under their direct supervision to ensure that the objectives of the office/unit are understood and individual workplans are prepared. Supervisors may meet with the staff under their supervision either as a group or individually.

6.3 First reporting officers shall work with staff members whom they supervise on the development of the staff member's individual workplan for the cycle. The work planning stage includes establishing individual performance evaluation criteria by setting goals, key results and achievements, incorporating competencies into the formulation of those goals, key results and achievements and formulating a personal and professional development plan, as follows;

(a) **Workplan:** Each staff member prepares a draft workplan for discussion between the staff member and the first reporting officer. Upon the conclusion of the dialogue and an agreement with the first reporting officer, the staff member revises, if necessary, and submits the final workplan to the first reporting officer. The workplan should include results-oriented elements such as goals, key results and achievements, actions to take to achieve each goal, key result and achievement and measurement, through a statement of success criteria, performance expectations and behavioural indicators, for the purpose of evaluating performance at the end of the cycle. When more than one staff member performs similar functions, performance expectations may be collectively developed while allowing for individual variations, where appropriate;

(b) **Competencies:** All staff members are held accountable for demonstrating the three core values of integrity, professionalism, and respect for diversity. In their dialogue on the workplan, the staff member and the first reporting officer shall list in the workplan the most relevant competencies related to each of the goals, key results, and achievements identified for the reporting cycle and, where appropriate, managerial competencies. Staff with managerial or supervisory responsibilities must include managing performance among the selected competencies. Specific job-related competencies may be added, where appropriate;

(c) **Personal and professional development plan:** Every staff member is expected to complete a development plan. Staff members may indicate competencies they wish to strengthen and career aspirations for future assignments. Every staff member is expected to set a minimum target of five days for professional development per year in accordance with the Secretary-General's bulletin on the learning and development policy (ISBA/ST/SGB/2018/1).

Section 7

Performance conversations and milestone discussions

7.1 During the cycle, the first reporting officer and the staff member should have ongoing performance conversations, whether verbally or in writing, which should be used to acknowledge good performance and address any shortcomings.

7.2 The first reporting officer should conduct milestone discussions at regular intervals agreed with the staff member, which usually include a midpoint review in October. Such discussions should indicate the progress made and an explanation of any updates to the workplan goals, key results and achievements. The first reporting officer should also note the progress made in demonstrating the competencies and in implementing the personal and professional development plan. The staff member may note the progress made towards the goals set in the workplan, the competencies and the personal and professional development plan. Documentation of the milestone discussions is the responsibility of the first reporting officer.

Section 8

End-of-cycle performance review

8.1 After the end of the performance management and development cycle, the first reporting officer and the staff member shall meet, by electronic means if necessary, to discuss the staff member's overall performance during the cycle. The meeting should be held within three months after the end of the cycle.

8.2 Before the end-of-cycle evaluation between the first reporting officer and the staff member, the staff member should conduct a self-evaluation of the manner in which the staff member has implemented the workplan defined at the beginning of the cycle. The self-evaluation can contain a short description of the progress to date related to each goal, key result, and achievement, and comments on the competencies demonstrated during the period.

8.3 The first reporting officer shall evaluate the extent to which the staff member has achieved the goals, key results and achievements set out in the workplan. The first reporting officer shall also consider and comment on the manner in which the staff member demonstrated the core values and competencies incorporated into the goals. The first reporting officer may comment on the staff member's self-appraisal during the evaluation of the staff member. First reporting officers are encouraged to discuss the career aspirations of staff during the end-of-cycle review. An overall rating on the staff member's performance shall be given by the first reporting officer pursuant to section 9.

8.4 The second reporting officer shall review and endorse, as appropriate, the evaluation of the first reporting officer, in accordance with the second reporting officer's role as described in sections 5.4 and 5.5. Should the second reporting officer have queries on or concerns regarding the application of the PMDS, they should be discussed with the first reporting officer to ensure an overall consistent performance document.

8.5 All parties should electronically sign or acknowledge the completed performance document. The electronic signature of the staff member constitutes an acknowledgement that the performance review has been conducted. It does not indicate that the staff member is in agreement with the evaluation. The rebuttal process outlined in section 11 cannot be initiated unless the staff member has signed off on the finalized evaluation. A performance document submitted for electronic signature to a staff member that the staff member does not sign is considered to be signed by the staff member after 14 days of its receipt by the staff member. A staff member who does not sign the performance document shall be so notified, and the 14-day period for submission of a rebuttal statement by the staff member, pursuant to section 11.1, shall begin as of the date of such notification to the staff member.

Section 9

Rating system

A. Individual core values and competency

9.1 Staff shall be appraised on the basis of the indicators that correspond to each of the core values and competencies as incorporated into the goals, key results and achievements, and shall be given one of the following four ratings:

- (a) Outstanding;
- (b) Fully competent;
- (c) Requires Development;
- (d) Unsatisfactory.

9.2 Each of these individual ratings establishes the level of demonstration of each of the core values and competencies by the staff member during the performance management and development cycle. The appraisal should be based on the degree to which the individual has been observed as acting or behaving in accordance with the particular competency or value. Competency and value ratings are a basis for staff development and shall be taken into consideration when determining the overall performance ratings.

B. Overall performance ratings

9.3 Staff may be given one of the following four overall ratings:

- (a) Frequently exceeds performance expectations
- (b) Successfully meets performance expectations
- (c) Partially meets performance expectations
- (d) Does not meet performance expectations.

9.4 A rating of “Frequently exceeds performance expectations” should be considered in cases where the staff member has surpassed the defined success criteria and/or performance expectations for the majority of the defined goals, key results and achievements, has continually gone beyond expectations or has significantly surpassing success criteria and/or performance expectations in quantity and quality during the cycle, including in demonstrating core values and competencies, as applicable.

9.5 A rating of “Successfully meets performance expectations” should be considered in cases where the staff member has fully achieved the defined success criteria and/or performance expectations for the majority of the goals, key results and achievements during the cycle, including in demonstrating core values and competencies, as applicable.

9.6 The ratings of “frequently exceeds performance expectations” and “successfully meets performance expectations” establish full satisfaction with the work performed and justify awarding a salary increment in accordance with section 12.3. The ratings shall be so viewed when staff members are considered for selection for a position without prejudice to the discretionary authority of the Secretary-General to appoint staff members.

9.7 A rating of “partially meets performance expectations” should be considered if the staff member did not meet the defined success criteria and/or performance expectations for some of the goals, key results and achievements but demonstrates potential for and a commitment to developing and applying the required skills.

9.8 A rating of “does not meet performance expectations” should be considered if the staff member did not meet the defined success criteria or performance expectations for the majority of the goals, key results and achievements and demonstrates an inability to develop and apply the required skills or a lack of commitment thereto.

9.9 A rating of “partially meets performance expectations” or “does not meet performance expectations” indicates the existence of performance shortcomings.

Section 10

Identifying and addressing performance shortcomings and unsatisfactory performance

10.1 During the performance cycle, the first reporting officer should continually evaluate performance. When a performance shortcoming is identified during the performance cycle, the first reporting officer, in consultation with the second reporting officer, should proactively assist the staff member in remedying the shortcoming. Remedial measures may include counselling, transfer to more suitable functions, additional training and/or the institution of a time-bound performance improvement plan, which should include clear targets for improvement and a provision for coaching and supervision by the first reporting officer in conjunction with performance conversations, which should be held on a regular basis.

10.2 If the performance shortcoming was not rectified following the remedial measures indicated in section 10.1 and if, at the end of the performance cycle, performance is appraised overall as “partially meets performance expectations”, a written performance improvement plan shall be prepared by the first reporting officer. This shall be done in consultation with the staff member and the second reporting officer. The performance improvement plan may cover up to a six-month period, usually for three months.

10.3 If the performance shortcoming was not rectified following the remedial measures indicated in section 10.1, a number of administrative actions may ensue, including the withholding of a within-grade salary increment pursuant to section 12.4, the non-renewal of an appointment or the termination of an appointment for unsatisfactory service in accordance with staff regulation 9.1.

10.4 If, at the end of the performance cycle, performance is appraised overall as “does not meet performance expectations”, the appointment may be terminated so long as the remedial measures indicated in section 10.1 included a performance improvement plan that was initiated no less than three months before the end of the performance cycle.

10.5 Should unsatisfactory performance be the basis for a decision for non-renewal of a fixed-term appointment, and should the appointment expire before the end of the period covering a performance improvement plan, the appointment should be renewed for the duration necessary for the completion of the performance improvement plan.

Section 11

Rebuttal process and ad hoc performance review panel

11.1 Staff members who disagree with a “partially meets performance expectations” or a “does not meet performance expectations” rating received at the end of the performance cycle (“the concerned staff member”) may, within 14 days of signing the completed performance document, submit to the Director of the Office for Administrative Services, a written rebuttal statement setting forth briefly the specific reasons that a higher overall rating should have been received. Staff members who

have received the rating of “consistently exceeds performance expectations” or “successfully meets performance expectations” cannot initiate a rebuttal.

11.2 The Director of the Office for Administrative Services should acknowledge receipt of the written rebuttal statement as soon as possible, and usually in no more than three days. After acknowledging of the receipt, the Director should immediately send a copy of the rebuttal statement to the head of the office which have conducted the performance evaluation for the concerned staff member (“the concerned office”).

11.3 After acknowledging the receipt of the written rebuttal statement by the Director for Administrative Services, an ad hoc performance review panel should be established within 14 days, which should be composed as follows:

- (a) a staff member designated by the Secretary-General;
- (b) a staff member designated by the concerned staff member, who is equal in grade or higher than the staff member;
- (c) a Chair designated by the Secretary-General after consultation with the Staff Committee, who can be a staff member of the Authority or a staff member of other United Nations entities in Kingston with the knowledge and experience required to review the appraisal and its rating.

11.4 After receiving a copy of the rebuttal statement, the head of the concerned office shall, within 14 days, prepare and submit to the performance review panel, if so established under section 11.3, a brief written statement in reply to the rebuttal statement submitted by the staff member. A copy of the reply to the rebuttal statement shall be given to the staff member. The panel shall hear the staff member, the first and second reporting officers and, at the discretion of the panel, other individuals who may have information relevant to the review of the appraisal rating.

11.5 The performance review panel shall prepare, within 14 days of the review of the case, a brief report setting forth the reasons that the original rating should or should not be maintained. In the event that an overall rating should not be maintained, the panel should designate the new rating on the performance evaluation. The report of the panel shall be placed in the staff member’s official status file as an attachment to the completed performance document.

11.6 The performance rating resulting from the rebuttal process shall be binding on the head of the concerned office and on the concerned staff member, subject to the ultimate authority of the Secretary-General, who may review the matter as needed on the basis of the record. Any change in the final rating, as well as the date of the decision, shall be communicated to the Human Resources Officer, with an annotation that the rating was changed as a result of a review of the performance management and development rebuttal and including the final rating recommended by the performance review panel.

11.7 Should unsatisfactory performance be the basis for a decision of non-renewal of an appointment, and should the appointment expire before the end of the rebuttal process, the appointment should be renewed for the duration necessary for the completion of the rebuttal process.

11.8 The rating resulting from an evaluation that has not been rebutted is final and not subject to appeal. However, administrative decisions that stem from any final performance appraisal and that affect the conditions of service of a staff member may be resolved through the system of administration of justice under Staff Regulation and Rules.

Section 12
Performance Management and Development System and Salary Increments

12.1 Under staff rule 3.2 (a), the granting of salary increments is subject to the satisfactory performance and conduct of staff members as evaluated by their supervisors, unless otherwise decided by the Secretary-General in any particular case. The determination that service is satisfactory with respect to performance, as well as the procedures for withholding a salary increment when such a determination cannot be made, are governed by the provisions of the present section.

12.2 The decision to award or withhold a salary increment on the basis of performance shall be made by the second reporting officer, based on the rating awarded by the first reporting officer as reflected in the performance document.

12.3 The following ratings, as specified in sections 9.4 and 9.5, shall justify a determination that awarding a salary increment is warranted:

- (a) Frequently exceeds performance expectations;
- (b) Successfully meets performance expectations.

12.4 The following ratings, as specified in sections 9.7 and 9.8, shall justify a determination that awarding a salary increment is not warranted:

- (a) Partially meets performance expectations;
- (b) Does not meet performance expectations.

12.5 When a salary increment is withheld owing to the rating “partially meets performance expectations”, the increment shall be withheld pending the outcome of a performance improvement plan. If the staff member’s performance improves following the completion of the performance improvement plan, the staff member shall be granted the salary increment effective from the date of successful completion of the performance improvement plan.

12.6 The decision to withhold a salary increment shall be communicated to the staff member in writing, before the decision is implemented by the Office for Administrative Services.

12.7 Should the Performance Management and Development System rating on the basis of which a salary increment has been withheld be upgraded at a later stage as a result of the rebuttal process described in section 11, and should the new rating justify the award of the salary increment, the increment shall be awarded and made effective as from the date on which it would otherwise have been paid.

Section 13
Implementation and monitoring by heads of offices

13.1 Heads of the offices are responsible for the implementation of the PMDS.

13.2 Primary responsibility for the timely execution of, overall compliance with and consistent and fair implementation of the PMDS rests with the head of office, who should promote communication between staff members and their supervisors, encourage regular feedback through performance conversations and milestone discussions and ensure that any change in the mandate or priorities of the office is communicated to staff.

13.3 The head of office is responsible for compliance with, and consistency and fairness in the implementation (including ratings) of the PMDS and the provision of relevant data concerning performance management and development completed

during the cycle, to the Human Resources Officer by no later than 30 June of each year. The Human Resources Officer should ensure that completed individual official records are maintained.

13.4 The head of office shall hold all managers and supervisors accountable for the effective use of the PMDS throughout all stages of the process and shall provide advice and recommendations, where warranted. The head of office should ensure that the office's priorities are communicated to all staff members of the office. The head of office may also establish performance standards for the office as the basis for individual success criteria.

13.5 One of the functions of the Senior Management Group should be to assist the Secretary-General in establishing a performance management and development strategy for the Secretariat and its implementation.

13.6 At least once a year, the Senior Management Group should devote a meeting to performance management and development. At that meeting, the Group should review staff development and career support needs in the light of strategic human resources management issues for the Secretariat, including training and succession management. The Group may also provide guidance on recognition of successful performance and on addressing performance shortcomings at the organizational level.

Section 14

Entry into force and transitory provisions

14.1 The present instruction shall enter into force on the date of its issuance.

14.2 [ISBA/ST/AI/2017/3](#) is hereby replaced. However, performance documents issued before the performance management and development cycle 2022/23, as well as any documents created before 31 March 2023, shall be conducted and completed in accordance with the procedures described in [ISBA/ST/AI/2017/3](#).



Michael W. Lodge
Secretary-General