

Legislative Council
Panel on Public Service
Meeting on 21 January 2002

Departmental Annual Training and Development Plan

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the latest civil service training initiative for all government departments to draw up their departmental annual training and development (T&D) plans starting 2002-03.

Background

2. The Government places great emphasis on the importance of upgrading the civil service's human capital by promoting lifelong learning and providing suitable training for the civil service workforce. In April 2001, a Three-Year Training and Development (T&D) Programme was launched to provide an additional 90,000 training places to staff in the next three years. To further strengthen our effort in this area and to encourage departments and grades to provide T&D activities in a more systematic manner, it was announced in the 2001 Budget Speech that 'Heads of departments and grades will draw up detailed training and staff development plans'. The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) and the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI) have recently promulgated a Guide on Preparing a Departmental T&D Plan at Annex A to assist departments in preparing their T&D plans.

Content and benefits of a T&D Plan

3. We believe that it is the responsibility of management to bring out the best in its staff. The management has to create an environment that is supportive of learning and an annual T&D plan is one such tool to achieving that. A departmental T&D plan serves to outline the objectives and range of T&D activities to be organized by a department to address the T&D needs of the department and its staff. The benefits of drawing up an annual T&D plan include -

- (a) Encouraging departments to think through and set out clearly their training targets, align T&D activities with their strategic objectives and operational requirements, and ensure that sufficient resources are allocated for the purpose. Through this process of developing their plans, learning suited to the particular circumstances and needs of a department can be promoted;
- (b) Making the development of a T&D plan an integral part of management process would help promote linkage between T&D and other HR management functions of a department on a continuous basis. The drawing up of such an annual plan demonstrates departments' commitment to invest in staff; and
- (c) Providing a basis on which its T&D activities can be assessed at the end of the year. Furthermore, information in the plans submitted by departments, together with the evaluation on T&D needs and programme effectiveness, would enable CSB to better set the overall strategic direction on training and development in the civil service and offer departments the assistance and support they required.

4. Developing a T&D plan is not completely new initiative in the Government. At present, about half of the departments already have annual T&D plans. The Guide at Annex A will provide pointers on how departments can further improve their staff training and development and encourage those which have not yet got a T&D plan to develop one quickly.

Guide on Preparing a Departmental T&D Plan

5. The Guide answers the what, why, how, who and when to do what questions. It sets out the main components of and the steps in drawing up a T&D plan. In addition to charting out formal T&D programmes, departments are also advised to consider launching supplementary learning activities and making available self-directed learning tools. Sample T&D plans are also drawn up for reference. Some of the more important considerations in developing a departmental annual T&D plan are highlighted below.

Process in Drawing Up a T&D Plan

Determining T&D needs

6. Departments will need to systematize their T&D functions and determine the T&D needs required to facilitate achievement of planned business objectives. In identifying the staff's T&D needs, departments may gather feedback from staff, line managers and customers, and take into account the management requirements necessitated by manpower/succession planning, career development and recruitment decisions. Individual departments are tasked with the responsibility for post-tied training to enable their staff to meet specific operational needs and to help achieve the organisational goals. Respective Heads of Grade will continue to take care of the long term career development needs and provide generic skill training to their officers.

Formulating the plan

7. Heads of Department are required to pay personal attention to the development and training of staff and the T&D plan has to be endorsed personally by respective Heads of Department. Meanwhile, departments are expected to disseminate the contents of the plan to all staff. Staff are also encouraged to participate in the planning process and take ownership of their T&D.

Evaluation

8. It is important for departments to develop and update the plan continuously. A year-end evaluation of the plan covering the achievements/shortfalls, the effectiveness of T&D activities, problems encountered, etc. should be properly conducted. The evaluation results will serve as a useful input for drawing/revising T&D plan for the following year(s). The information is also useful to CSB in reviewing the T&D plan approach and setting out the strategic training policies and direction on a service-wide basis.

Assistance from CSTDI

9. CSTDI will provide advisory services to departments to assist their drawing up of the plan. In particular, it will organise a series of experience sharing session in January 2002 to walk through with departments the process of preparing T&D plan. Information on various learning approaches to reinforce learning at the individual, group and organisational level will also be distributed to departments.

Financial and Staffing Implication

10. Departments will absorb any additional financial and staffing implications arising from the drawing up and implementation of departmental annual T&D plan. On the other hand, the T&D process will help departments to achieve a more rational allocation of T&D resources.

Implementation

11. All government departments will have their T&D plans for 2002-03 ready by May 2002. A copy of the plan will be forwarded to CSTDI so that the Institute may offer suitable support and assistance in the course of its implementation and evaluation.