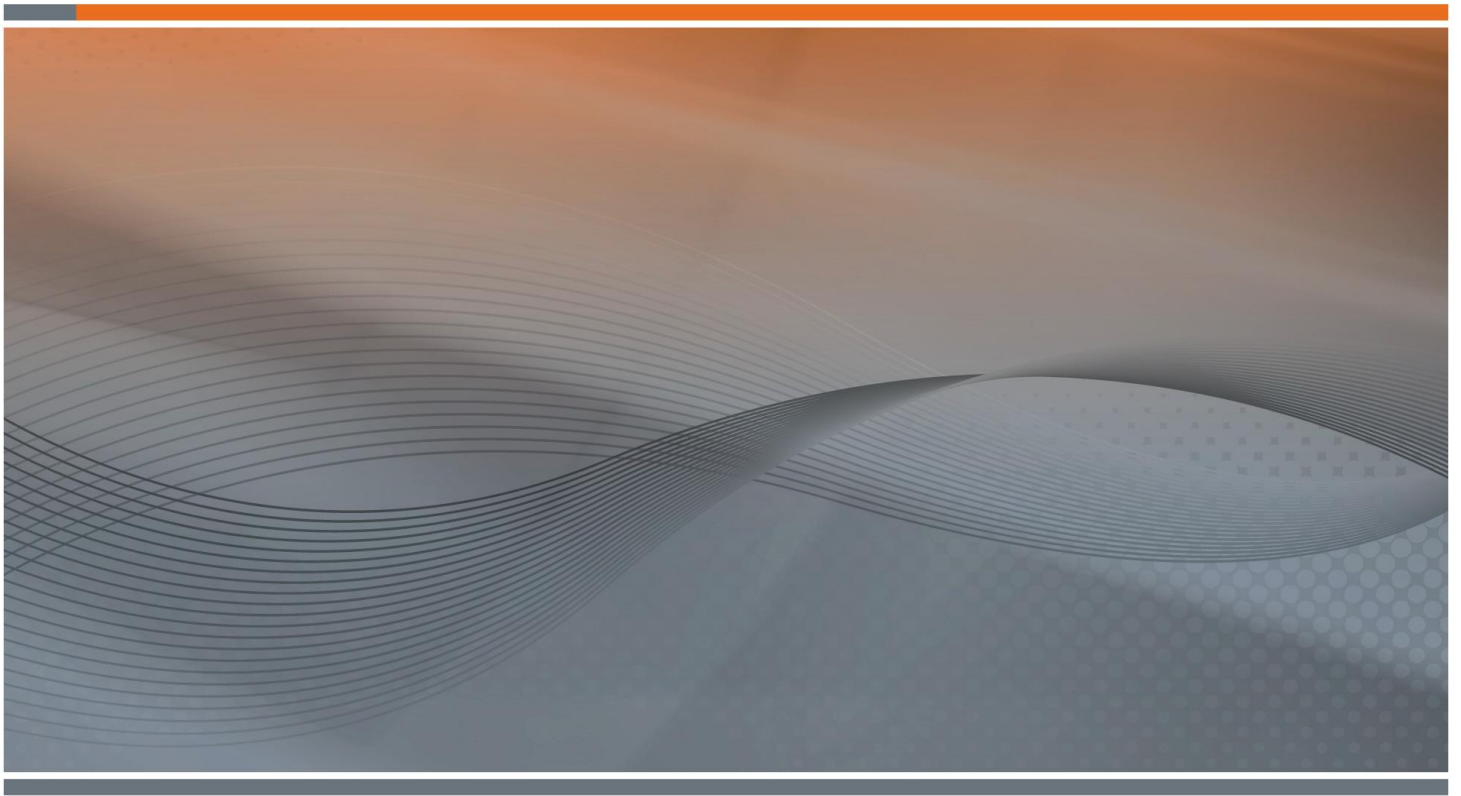




Australian Government
Department of Defence
Defence People Group

A GUIDE TO THE SENIOR EXECUTIVE SERVICE TALENT, PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK



July 2018



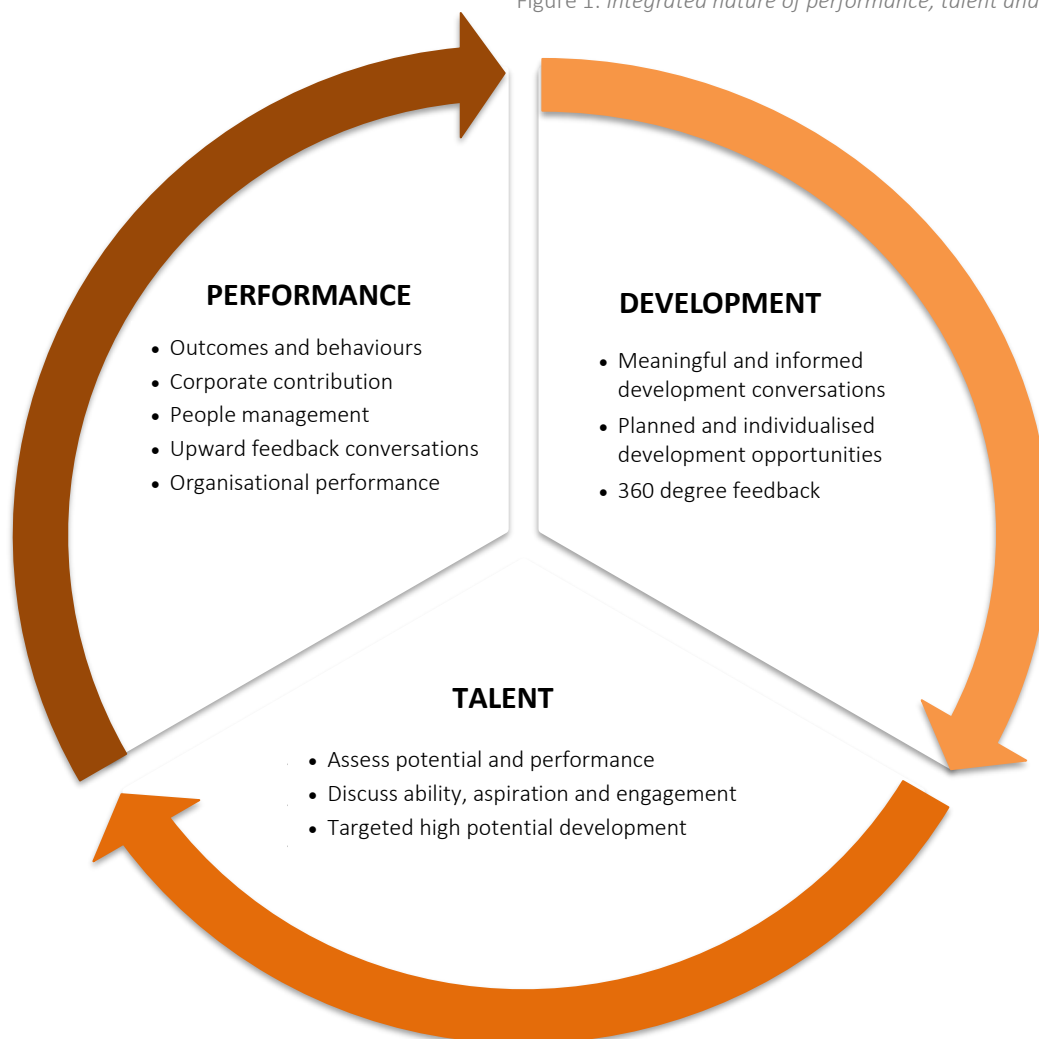
INTRODUCTION

The Defence White Paper, the First Principles Review and Pathway to Change require Senior Executive Service (SES) with a focus on achieving an accountable capable and unified workforce with a strong performance culture at its core where leadership, professionalism and corporate behaviors are valued and rewarded.

To enable this the SES Talent, Performance and Development Framework consists of a number of elements that support senior leaders to have regular, meaningful performance and development conversations with their managers and direct reports. These conversations will give senior leaders more insight into their individual performance and accountabilities, and contribute to building a strong performance culture.

The Framework integrates SES performance, development and talent. This includes a deliberate and informed approach to the allocation of development opportunities through the Nine Box Grid Potential Matrix and a performance rating approach to support more meaningful performance and development conversations.

Figure 1: *Integrated nature of performance, talent and development*



SES PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ELEMENTS

The annual performance cycle runs from 1 September to 31 August each year.

It consists of three main elements:

- Performance and behavioral expectations;
- Performance conversations and assessment; and
- Development of SES

The **timeline** on page 14 outlines key date and further details are outlined below.

PERFORMANCE AND BEHAVIOURAL EXPECTATIONS

There are four key areas of performance and behavioural expectations for SES, these are:

- Behaviours;
- Outcomes;
- People Management; and
- Corporate Contribution.

These expectations will be set and assessed through the Framework.

- **Defence Values and behaviours:** Defence SES are expected to promote and model the Defence Values and Behaviours at all times.
- The Defence Values and Behaviours define the leadership philosophy and drive the culture we need to position Defence for the future.
- The Defence Values and Behaviours support Defence's values and cultural intent articulated through *Pathway to Change: Evolving Defence Culture 2017-22*, namely: Respectful, Trusted and Proven to Deliver.
- The behaviour of leaders has a significant impact on employee engagement with an organisation's values and reform initiatives, as well as on organisational performance. Key to the expected behaviours is the need for Defence Senior Executive to demonstrate Defence's Values and Behaviours in their words and actions.
- **Outcomes:** In order to deliver Defence's outcomes each year expectations of individual outcomes and deliverables will be set for the SES employee with their supervisor. The expectations will align with the responsibilities identified in the individuals role charter and be based on enterprise, corporate and business plans.

The key deliverables and outcomes will be captured as Key Expected Results (KERs) in the performance agreement. The KERS will be assessed on not only what is achieved but on how it is achieved (behaviours).

- **People management:** Effective people management is critical to achieving a strong performance culture. A Defence Senior Executive is expected to demonstrate strong people management. This includes:
 - holding regular performance conversations with their people;
 - considering reward, recognition and development options to manage performance and talent; and
 - addressing under performance.

- **Corporate contribution:** SES are responsible for contributing to the broader Defence organisation and public service. SES performance agreements should include explicit references to proposed corporate contributions, which can be achieved by:
 - Mentoring or coaching activities;
 - Champion roles (such as Diversity Champions);
 - Speaking at, or participating in, panels at leadership programs;
 - Participating in interview panels outside their work area; or
 - Assisting with graduate assessment centers.

Our Values

Service
The selflessness of character to place the security and interests of our nation and its people ahead of my own.

Courage
The strength of character to say and do the right thing, always, especially in the face of adversity.

Respect
The humanity of character to value others and treat them with dignity.

Integrity
The consistency of character to align my thoughts, words and actions to do what is right.

Excellence
The willingness of character to strive each day to be the best I can be, both professionally and personally.

Our Behaviours

To live Our Values I will:

- Act with purpose for Defence and the nation.
- Be adaptable, innovative and agile.
- Collaborate and be team-focused.
- Be accountable and trustworthy.
- Reflect, learn and improve.
- Be inclusive and value others.

To defend Australia and its national interests in order to advance Australia's security and prosperity
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PERFORMANCE CONVERSATIONS & ASSESSMENT

The foundation of the Framework is quality performance conversations. This includes the ongoing conversations regarding performance and development as well as defined conversations to set, review and assess performance, to gather upward feedback regarding people management and behaviours and conversations regarding organisational climate.

ONGOING CONVERSATIONS

There is an expectation that frequent quality performance conversations will occur regarding performance and development throughout the performance cycle.

By regularly discussing performance, sharing ongoing feedback and acknowledging achievements and performance, supervisors and employees create a sustainable strong performance culture.

There is also an expectation that frequent quality performance conversations that occur between an employee and their supervisor will be held and modelled by Defence's Senior Executive with their employees.

These conversations demonstrate the accountability and reinforce the obligation of all Defence APS employees to continuously focus on improving their performance and delivering results in order to achieve Defence objectives, as identified in the Defence Corporate Plan, the Defence Business Plan, and Group, Service and Division Business Plans ("Defence's enterprise corporate plans").

START-CYCLE CONVERSATION - SET EXPECTATIONS

The start-cycle conversation occurs in September between the SES and their supervisor.

During this conversation performance and behavioural expectations are discussed and set. Following this meeting five Key Expected Results (KERs) and the expected corporate contribution are documented in the performance agreement.

Key Expected Results should align to goals as outlined in the Defence Corporate Plan, and key responsibilities in the position's Role Charter.

MID-CYCLE CONVERSATION - REVIEW PERFORMANCE & IDENTIFY DEVELOPMENT REQUIREMENTS

The mid-cycle conversation occurs in February between the SES and their supervisor.

During this conversation, performance to date should be reviewed including outcomes, behaviours, people management and corporate contribution.

The mid-cycle conversation should also have a strong focus on learning and development for the SES. See page four for more details.

END-CYCLE - ASSESS PERFORMANCE

The end-cycle performance conversation should occur by 31 August between the SES and their supervisor.

During this conversation the individual's performance in achieving their outcomes (KERs), behaviours, people management and corporate contribution is assessed.

After the conversation, the supervisor will recommend a performance rating of the SES employee. The second level supervisor will determine the final rating.

Performance rating scale:

- **On track:** Individual is consistently meeting and/or exceeding expectations against all four factors of outcomes, behaviours, people management and corporate contribution over the year.
- **Not On Track:** Improvement is required in relation to personal performance, behaviour, people management or corporate contributions. Individuals who receive a not on track will be expected to improve performance.
- **Too Early to Assess:** Where an individual has been in their role or at a new level for less than four months. Performance decision will be deferred until mid-cycle performance conversation. Employees in their role or at a new level for between four and six months may be assessed as *On Track* or *Not On Track*, however may not be eligible for pay progression.

SES employees who have performed exceptionally well over the course of the performance cycle will be recognised through the formal commendation system and/or a personalised note from the Secretary.

UPWARD FEEDBACK CONVERSATIONS

Upward feedback conversations inform end-cycle performance conversations and should be held before August each year.

Upward feedback conversations involve SES' supervisors facilitating a conversation with the SES' direct reports to receive constructive feedback on their delivery of outcomes, leadership behaviours and their people management. This is followed by the supervisor having a summary conversation with the SES on the feedback received.

ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE CONVERSATIONS – LEADERSHIP CLIMATE SCAN

Organisational performance conversations are held from November each year.

Defence requires its leaders to be accountable for raising organisational performance, including having regular meaningful performance conversations with their people. The *Leadership Climate Scan* provides an overview to support conversations around organisational performance and organisational climate including how a workgroup perceives their leadership and workplace. It is expected that the SES will have conversations with their supervisor and teams around the *Leadership Climate Scan* to identify areas requiring further focus, as well as what is working well to lift organisational performance utilising the leadership climate scan.

DEVELOPMENT OF SES

The Defence White Paper identifies that one of the most important and challenging jobs that Defence will have in the coming decades is to maintain the capability of the workforce to achieve Defence's objectives. One key priority is that employees have the right skills and knowledge to perform in their jobs, as well as having access to appropriate and planned opportunities to expand their skills and develop their careers.

To ensure the capability of the Defence Senior Executive, the Framework includes a planned and informed approach to the development of the SES. This includes development conversations and development opportunities informed by a tool that aids supervisors to assess performance and potential, The Nine-Box Grid Potential Matrix (the Potential Matrix) detailed on page 13.

The Potential Matrix will aid supervisors to identify the performance and potential of their people, and have open, informed conversations about appropriate development options for the individual in their current and future roles. It will allow supervisors to identify high potential individuals and consider targeted development programs.

The Potential Matrix will be used to inform the organisation's approach to SES talent management and succession planning.

THE PROCESS FOR IDENTIFYING DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS

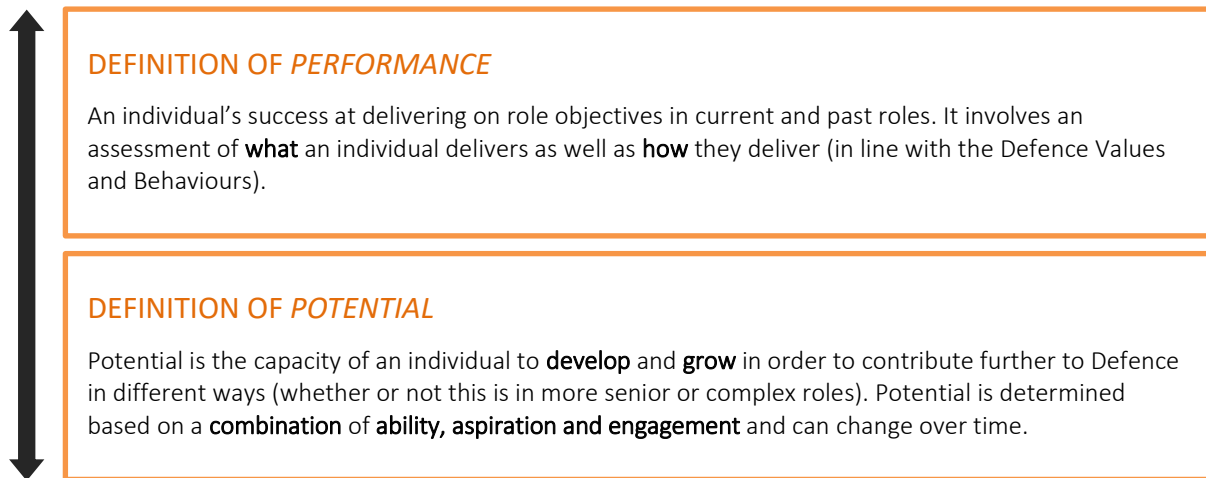
There is a four stage process.

1. Group Heads consider and place their SES on the Potential Matrix.
2. Supervisors consider skills gaps and capabilities of their SES in line with the Potential Matrix and associate development opportunities.

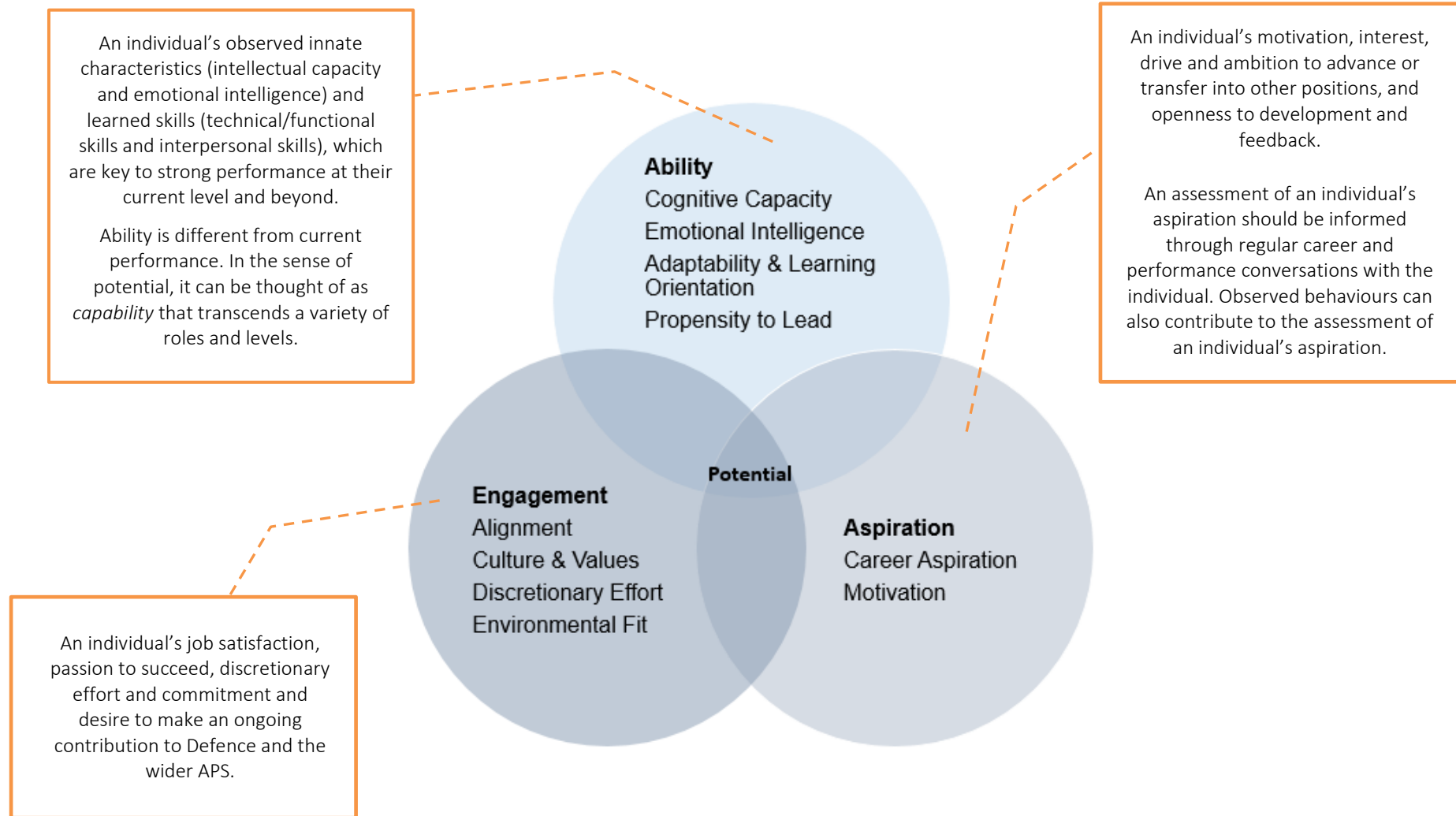
3. Defence Civilian Committee endorsement of development opportunities.
4. Supervisor and SES employee discuss development opportunities.

Group Heads assign a placement on the Potential Matrix: In February each year, Group Heads will place their SES employees on the Potential Matrix. For placement of SES Band 1 employees, this will be done in conjunction with Division Heads.

Placement of an individual on the Potential Matrix involves considering an individual's performance and potential in conjunction. Placement on the Potential Matrix is a point in time assessment, as an individual's performance and potential can change over time. Defence expects to see most of its people sitting in the middle box of core, consistent contributor.



ASSESSING POTENTIAL: A COMBINATION OF ABILITY, ASPIRATION AND ENGAGEMENT



CONSIDER SKILLS GAPS

Following placement on the Potential Matrix, the supervisor will consider the skills and capabilities the individual currently has, and what they need to develop to perform in their role now and into the future. This will include consideration of the leadership capabilities for the most senior APS roles, developed by the Secretaries Talent Council (refer figure 2).

This will help determine which development options would be most beneficial for the individual.

The mid-cycle performance conversation is a useful point for a conversation to occur with the SES on this topic.

DISCUSS PLACEMENTS AT CIVILIAN COMMITTEE

During February and March each year, the Defence Civilian Committee will endorse the SES Potential Matrix placements and use the placements to inform a discussion on the allocation of development opportunities.

This will help Defence have a clear picture of the development needs of the SES and have a planned approach to development across the organisation.

DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS CONVERSATION

Following endorsement by the Defence Civilian Committee, supervisors will have a conversation with their SES about their placement on the matrix and the development options that were considered beneficial for that individual and determine the way forward for their development.

The development options available to SES include a suite of mandatory training programs, as well as individualised development options.

Mandatory training programs for the SES include:

- APSC Leadership Programs and Orientation
- Capstone
- Appearing before Parliamentary Committees
- Engaging with the Senate
- Mastering the Political Environment; and
- Defence Media Awareness & Skills Course.

Figure 2: Leadership capabilities for the most senior APS roles



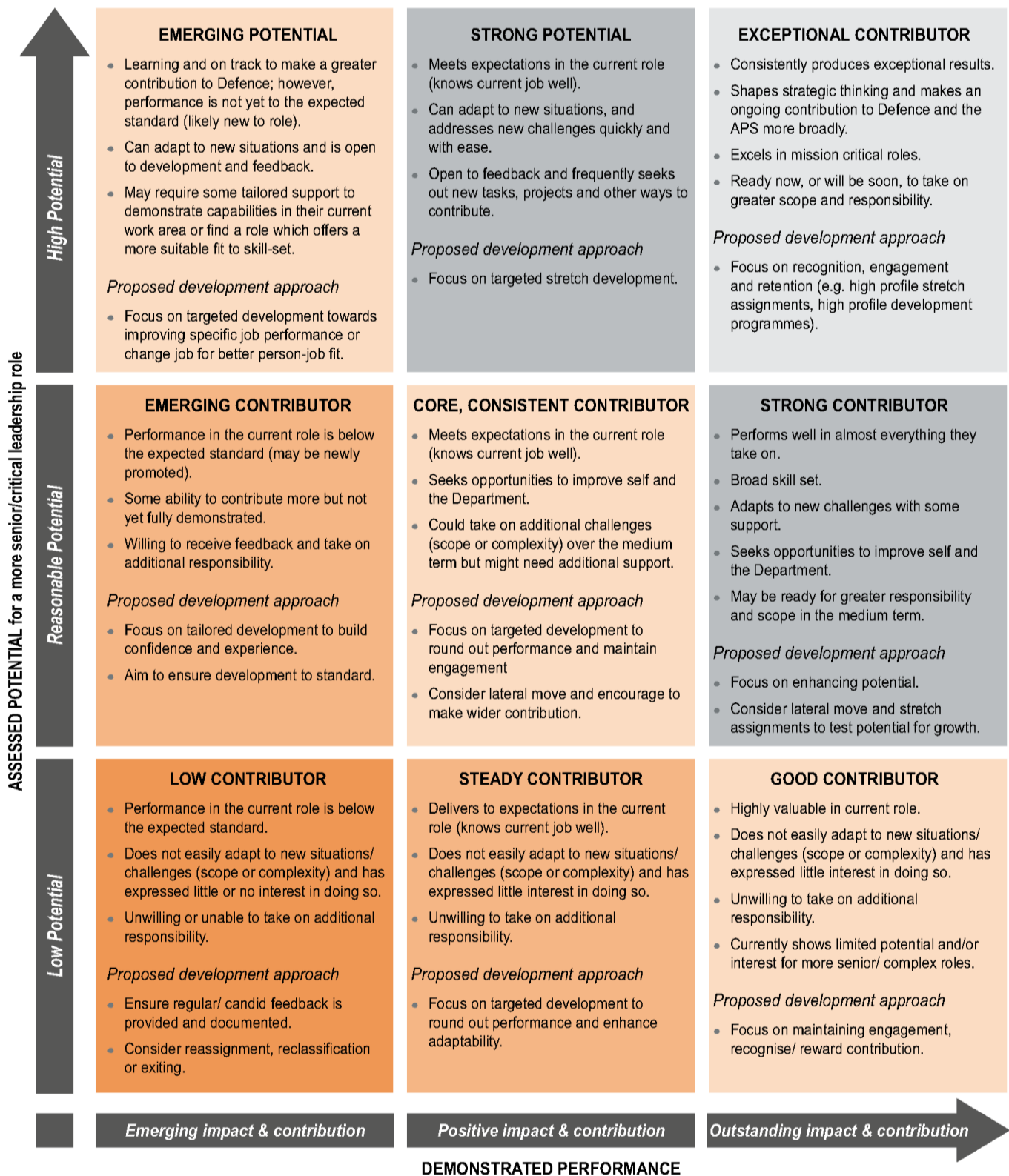
The following tools will help supervisors identify appropriate individualised development options:

- **Applying assessed potential:** Following placement on the Potential Matrix and a skills gap assessment, [Annex A](#) contains key development questions for managers to consider to help them identify appropriate development options.
- **The nine-box interactive development guide** provides development options for each grid placement, aligned to the Experience, Exposure and Education model.

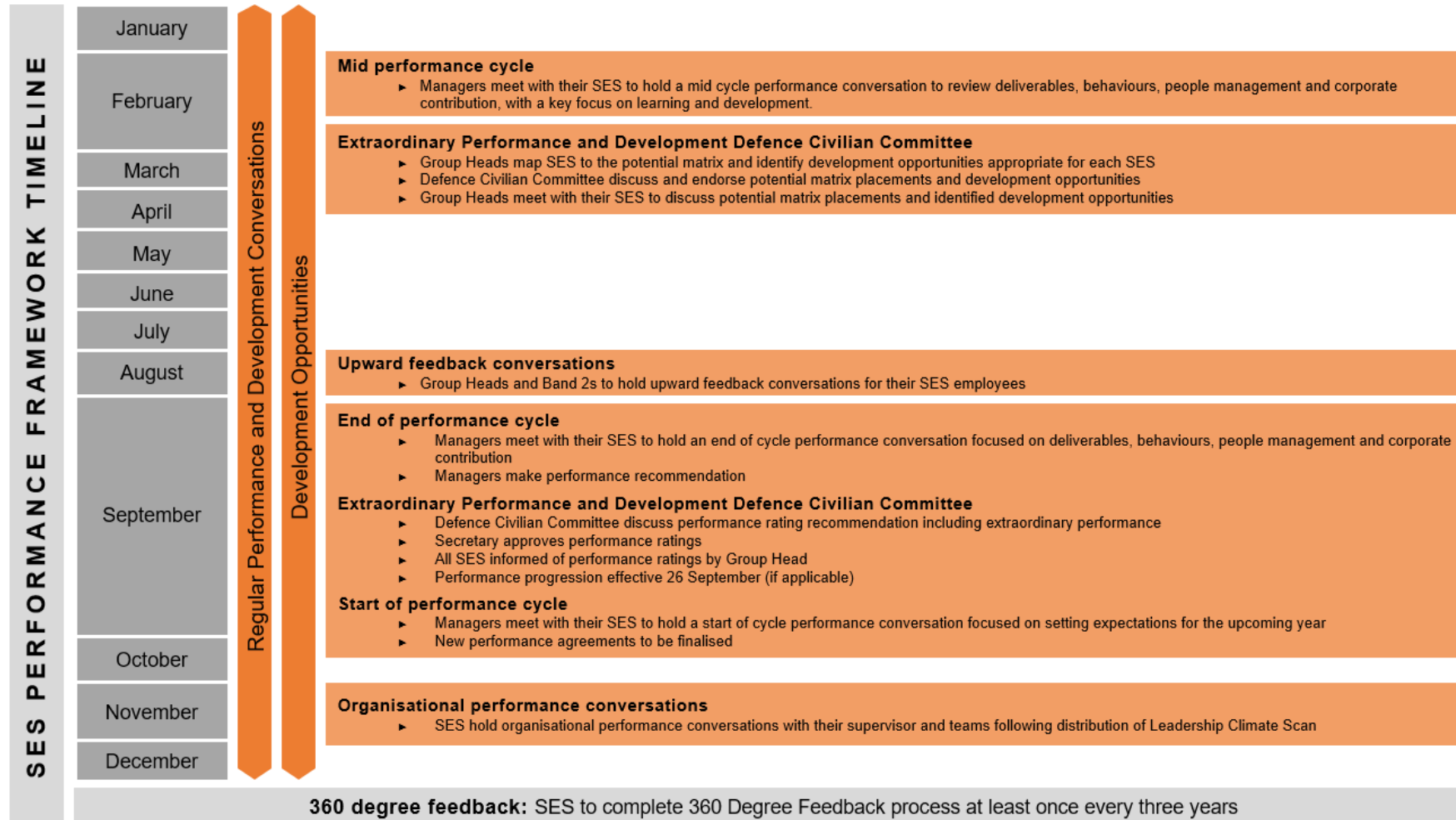
360 DEGREE FEEDBACK

The 360 degree feedback program provides SES with holistic feedback from their manager, peers, direct reports and stakeholders on their performance. This is a valuable development opportunity as it provides individuals with insight into areas they may or may not have realised were strengths and can highlight opportunities for improvement. Each SES officer must complete a 360 degree feedback process every three years.

THE POTENTIAL MATRIX



SES PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK TIMELINE



SES SALARY PROGRESSION

SES not yet at the top of the salary range will be eligible for salary progression where they have demonstrated at least six months observable performance at the SES level within Defence, and receive an *On Track* rating. Individuals who do not participate in the performance management process will not be eligible for advancement.

SES remuneration details is available on the [Directorate of Senior Officer Management \(DSOM\) website](#).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The following documents support the information contained in this Guide and should be read in conjunction with this Guide:

- Nine Box Interactive Development Guide
- The [DSOM website](#): Contains further information on SES performance including Performance Agreements templates and Upward Feedback Guide.

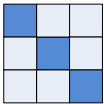
ANNEX

A: Applying Assessed Potential

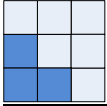
ANNEX A: APPLYING ASSESSED POTENTIAL



For individuals who are rated...	Exceptional Contributor, Strong Potential or Strong Contributor
The key message is...	What is the right future investment in this person to maximize their potential and contribution?
Key questions are...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How can we stretch this person to give them more responsibility? ▪ How do we focus on recognition, engagement and retention? ▪ What experiences does this person need to step into desired future roles? ▪ What do we need to do to create the necessary feedback, support and incentives so this person learns the lessons sought? ▪ Would a high level leadership program be appropriate? ▪ Would a secondment to a next level role be appropriate? ▪ Would participation in a taskforce, project or assignment be of value?



For individuals who are rated...	Emerging Potential, Good Contributor or Core, Consistent Contributor
The key message is...	How can we maintain or build potential and contribution?
Key questions are...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How can we get this person to take on more responsibility or lift their performance to the next level? ▪ Could development be targeted toward improving specific job performance, or could changing job for better person-job fit be suitable? ▪ How do we ensure that their performance does not plateau and that their potential is realised? ▪ What does this person need to learn to do? (This includes both technical/subject lessons about how best to act/operate) ▪ What experiences could offer those lessons? ▪ What do we need to do to create the necessary feedback, support and incentives so this person learns the lessons sought? ▪ Would a mentoring or coaching relationship be of value? ▪ Would revisiting core management and leadership training be of value?



For individuals who are rated...	Low Contributor, Steady Contributor or Emerging Contributor
The key message is...	<p>If the individual is developing (i.e. they may not have had enough time in their role to show significant results or demonstrate their potential) how can they be supported in their role to round out performance?</p> <p>If the individual is not performing, how can they be supported to improve performance?</p>
Key questions are...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What is the nature of the low performance? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Are they new to their role? Should they be performing better? Is there an absence of skill, knowledge or ability? Are there issues around productivity, quality or interpersonal skills? Is there something in their life that is impacting their performance? ▪ What course of action do we need to take? Is it about clarifying expectations and raising awareness? ▪ What tailored development would build confidence and performance and support resilience? ▪ Would this person benefit from a lateral move, closer job fit or different work to lift their performance? ▪ What do we need to do to create the necessary feedback, support and incentives so this person improves? (Think regular and clear feedback). ▪ Would a mentoring or coaching relationship be of value?