Developing the Human Resources System

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Verification scope

Consistency of the published material, its links, edition information and limits of use. Consult the relevant specialist within the organization before adopting a procedure or professional decision.

The following pages retain the original English guide material and formatting. Review dates within that material refer to its original edition. Current edition controls appear here and on the guide webpage.

Current edition and contact

https://uhrda.net/en/organizations/guides/hr-systems/

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Arab Union for Human Resources Development

Developing the Human Resources System

Practical guide | October 2026

1. Starting point and outputs

The human resources system is an interconnected set of policies, processes, data, and decisions that enables an organization to secure, develop, and retain the capabilities it needs. This guide presents a practical approach proposed by the Arab Union for Human Resources Development, beginning with business needs and ending with a system that is managed and measured. Purchasing software may support implementation, but it does not replace clear roles, fair procedures, or reliable information.

Who benefits

- Human resources and organizational development directors.
- Leaders, department directors, and holders of critical roles.
- Digital transformation, data, and policy review teams.

What you will produce

- A map of HR services linked to organizational and employee needs.
- Consistent policies and procedures with defined responsibilities and version control.
- Role and competency profiles, and an actionable capability and talent plan.
- A data dictionary, indicator dashboard, and access and quality controls.
- A transition, training, and user support plan.

Inputs to prepare

- The strategy, approved structure and roles, and organizational decisions.
- Workforce, employee movement, and skills data, accessed at the required authorization level.
- Current policies, procedures, forms, and review findings.
- Employee service request volumes, employee complaints, and managers' observations.
- Budget and regulatory constraints, data retention requirements, and requirements of the competent authority.

2. Working methodology

Link the system to the employee life cycle

Connect workforce planning with recruitment, selection, onboarding, performance, development, career progression, and then transfer or separation. Each stage needs a clear input and an output passed to the next stage. For example, the job description defines selection criteria, onboarding objectives, and competencies to develop. Using different definitions of the role across these stages creates conflicting decisions, even if each procedure works well on its own.

Share responsibility and clarify governance

HR owns policy design, service delivery, and data stewardship within its mandate, while managers identify business needs and oversee performance and implementation. Leadership approves choices with organization-wide effects, and the competent functions review regulatory matters. Performance assessments and needs estimates should not be left to one party without evidence and review. The system should also explain how an employee can correct their data, request an explanation of a decision, or raise a grievance under the applicable rules.

Build a sound foundation before automation

Start by defining roles, processes, data, and who is authorized to change them. Test the procedure manually on a limited scale, then convert its rules into technical requirements. Limit permissions to what is needed, and retain an audit trail of data changes and approvals. Use analytics to support professional judgment, checking for data bias and avoiding consequential decisions about individuals based on unreviewed automated assessments. The proposed model does not confer accreditation or demonstrate conformity with an international standard.

> This is an adaptable practical approach developed by the Union with reference to the sources below. Adjust steps, timeframes and measures to the organization and its data. It is not a certificate of compliance or accreditation by the referenced organizations.

3. Implementation steps

1 Diagnose services and weaknesses

Inventory HR services, such as recruitment, onboarding, leave, data updates, performance, and development. Ask employees and managers where services are delayed, information is repeated, or answers differ. Link each problem to request records or a sample of files, and classify it as a policy, procedure, skills, data, or technology issue. Identify critical services whose failure has a direct impact, and start with them rather than rewriting every document at once.

Suggested owner
HR director and improvement team.

Required output
A service map and diagnosis of priorities.

Progression check
Each priority has a documented impact and a known owner.

2 Standardize roles and required competencies

Review the purpose, outputs, and responsibilities of each job family, distinguishing job title, grade, and actual role. Define observable technical and behavioral competencies at clear levels, with examples of the required behavior. Test descriptions with managers and job holders, and avoid copying lengthy lists of generic attributes. Set the required competency level to match the role's duties, and do not treat length of service alone as evidence of proficiency.

Suggested owner
Organization design, human resources, and specialist managers.

Required output
A job guide and competency dictionary with defined levels.

Progression check
The same definition can be used in selection, assessment, and development.

3 Plan capabilities and the workforce

Translate business objectives into the volumes and types of tasks and skills required, then compare them with current and projected capacity. Separate headcount gaps from skills gaps and poor work allocation. Develop options including development, internal transfers, process improvement, and recruitment where permitted, estimating time to readiness, cost, and risk for each. Present at least two scenarios when demand is uncertain, and review assumptions when the service or technology changes.

Suggested owner
Planning, human resources, and finance.

Required output
A capability plan linked to the business plan.

Progression check
Every recruitment or development request is based on a specific, reviewable need.

4 Build consistent policies and procedures

For each policy, state its purpose, scope, approving authority, rules, and exception and grievance mechanisms. Translate it into a procedure specifying the input, steps, responsible person, duration, and closure output. Review conflicts among performance, promotion, training, and reward policies, and refer regulatory details to specialists. Assign a version number, effective date, and update owner, then publish the current version in one accessible place and withdraw old forms.

Suggested owner
Human resources and the competent regulatory functions.

Required output
An approved policy, procedure, and forms manual.

Progression check
Employees can understand what is required, the request pathway, and their right to ask questions.

5 Connect performance with learning and development

Set job objectives that express results over which the employee has reasonable influence, including appropriate quality, timing, and professional behavior. Train managers to provide ongoing feedback and discuss evidence, then calibrate ratings to reduce differences in interpretation. Turn verified skills gaps into development plans, and gaps in tools or authority into management actions. The annual appraisal should not be the first time an employee hears about a performance problem.

Suggested owner
Line managers and human resources.

Required output
A performance cycle, development plans, and a rating review.

Progression check
Each gap is linked to an appropriate action and follow-up date, with a review route available.

6 Organize data and define digital requirements

Create a dictionary defining each field's meaning, source, owner, and who may view and edit it. Standardize identifiers and check duplicates and missing values in a sample, then across the full scope. Write system requirements as work scenarios, such as updating and approving employee data and tracking the change. Test reports, permissions, integration, export, and recovery, and define a retention and deletion policy in line with local requirements before migrating files.

Suggested owner
Human resources, information technology, and data security.

Required output
A data dictionary, functional requirements, and migration plan.

Progression check
Source errors or overly broad permissions are not transferred without documented remediation.

7 Pilot the system and train users

Choose a department or job family representing a suitable volume and complexity, then run a complete service cycle. Test exceptions, absence, errors, and grievances alongside the normal path. Train employees and managers on their actual tasks, and provide short instructions, a support channel, and a named responder. Collect errors and frequently asked questions, and adjust the procedure before scaling up. Do not judge readiness by training attendance without testing users' ability to perform the work.

Suggested owner
Project manager and representatives of the pilot department.

Required output
A pilot report, defect log, and training package.

Progression check
Users can complete core scenarios and critical defects are resolved.

8 Operate governance and continuous improvement

Launch a focused dashboard combining service quality, capability, data, and development, and assign an action owner for every deviation. Review complaints and exceptions as signals for policy improvement rather than merely individual cases. Periodically review access permissions and update roles and skills, and set a policy review date. Document improvement decisions and results so the system does not depend on one person's knowledge or inconsistent practices across branches.

Suggested owner
HR director and governance committee.

Required output
A review cycle, improvement register, and management report.

Progression check
Every indicator has a definition, source, owner, review schedule, and potential decision.

Guide and editable templates: https://uhrda.net/en/organizations/guides/hr-systems/

4. Working templates

Review the illustrative row, then complete a copy of the blank row using your organization’s information. Download each template as CSV or print it within the guide.

HR service brief

Define what the service user sees and what the delivery team commits to. The example is hypothetical; timeframes require local approval.

Service	Input	Service owner	Output	Closure condition
Update an employee qualification	A request and verification document	Employee data officer	An updated personnel record	Approve the update, notify the employee, and log the change

Download CSV template

Capability gap register

Use with business plans; it rules out judging employees on general impressions.

Role or job family	Required capability	Evidence of the current situation	Intervention	Evidence of readiness
HR analyst	Analyze workforce movements	A practical test revealed an error in the indicator definition	Coaching and practice using de-identified data	An accurate report reviewed by a specialist

Download CSV template

5. Hypothetical example: standardizing onboarding and performance arrangements

A hypothetical organization with multiple departments hired twenty employees in one period. A file review showed that only eight had written, approved onboarding objectives, and managers used different follow-up forms.

- Onboarding requirements were standardized by job family, and a manager was assigned responsibility for each new employee.
- Practical tasks and milestone reviews were added instead of relying solely on handing over an employee handbook.
- The system was tested on a subsequent cohort of twenty employees, verifying task completion.

Interpreting the result

In the hypothetical example, accepted onboarding files were completed for eighteen employees: 90% compared with 40%. This measures process completion only; work quality, integration, and subsequent retention must be examined before drawing conclusions about wider impact.

Learning from the case

Standardized definitions, manager responsibility, and reliable verification matter more than adding forms or treating a signature as sufficient evidence of readiness.

6. Measures and follow-up

Agree each definition, data source, baseline, target and accountable owner before measurement. Targets require organizational approval. A zero denominator makes a ratio not calculable rather than zero.

Measure	Calculation	Source	Review frequency
Completion of accepted onboarding requirements	Employees meeting accepted onboarding requirements on time ÷ employees whose onboarding completion deadline fell within the period × 100.	Onboarding checklist and evidence of manager acceptance.	Monthly by hiring cohort.
Employee data field quality	Correct and complete critical fields in the sample ÷ total critical fields examined × 100; fix the sampling method.	A data audit report checked against approved supporting documents.	Monthly during development, then quarterly.
Coverage of development plans for critical gaps	Critical gap cases with an approved plan, an owner, and a defined assessment ÷ all verified critical gap cases × 100.	Competency assessment register and development plans.	Quarterly; coverage does not mean improvement has been achieved.
Compliance with HR service timeframes	Requests completed within the approved timeframe ÷ all requests of the same type completed during the period × 100; show overdue open requests separately.	Employee services register and receipt and closure dates.	Monthly for each service type.

7. Indicative implementation plan

The periods below are adaptable planning stages, not guaranteed delivery times.

Period	Action	Deliverable
Foundation: a suggested four weeks	Diagnose services and standardize role definitions and critical data.	A priority map, initial dictionary, and responsibilities.
Development: a suggested six to eight weeks	Develop policies, performance arrangements, capability plans, and technology requirements.	A procedure package ready for piloting.
Implementation: a suggested eight to twelve weeks	Pilot, train, and transition gradually; adapt durations to organizational size and the approval cycle.	An operational system, monitoring dashboard, and impact review.

8. Common pitfalls

Starting the project by buying a system before defining the service.

Convert approved processes into requirements and test them with scenarios before acceptance.

Treating HR as solely responsible for performance.

Define the responsibilities of managers, employees, and leadership at each stage.

Using one assessment for every job.

Balance role outcomes and competencies, with clear behavioral criteria.

Collecting more data than the service needs.

Specify the purpose, access permissions, and retention period of each field.

Measuring activity only by course or request counts.

Add measures of service quality, readiness, and learning application.

9. Review checklist

- ☐ There is a service map with clear owners.
- ☐ Roles and competencies are connected to selection and performance.
- ☐ Policies are consistent and have been reviewed locally.
- ☐ Critical data have definitions, sources, and access permissions.
- ☐ The pilot covers exceptions and the right to ask questions.
- ☐ The dashboard balances service quality, capabilities, and data.

Use this checklist at the final review. Record observations, the decision owner, approval date and document version.

10. Further reading

Original practical material prepared for the Arab Union for Human Resources Development. Sources support the concepts and further reading; the illustrative models and cases belong to this guide. Reviewed: 16 October 2026.

1. OPM — Talent Management

   A reference for linking organizational needs to attracting, developing, and retaining skills, and for shared responsibility between leadership and human resources.

2. OPM — Performance Culture

   A reference for a performance culture that includes feedback, continuous learning, and linking individual results to objectives. US regulatory provisions are not presented as local requirements.