



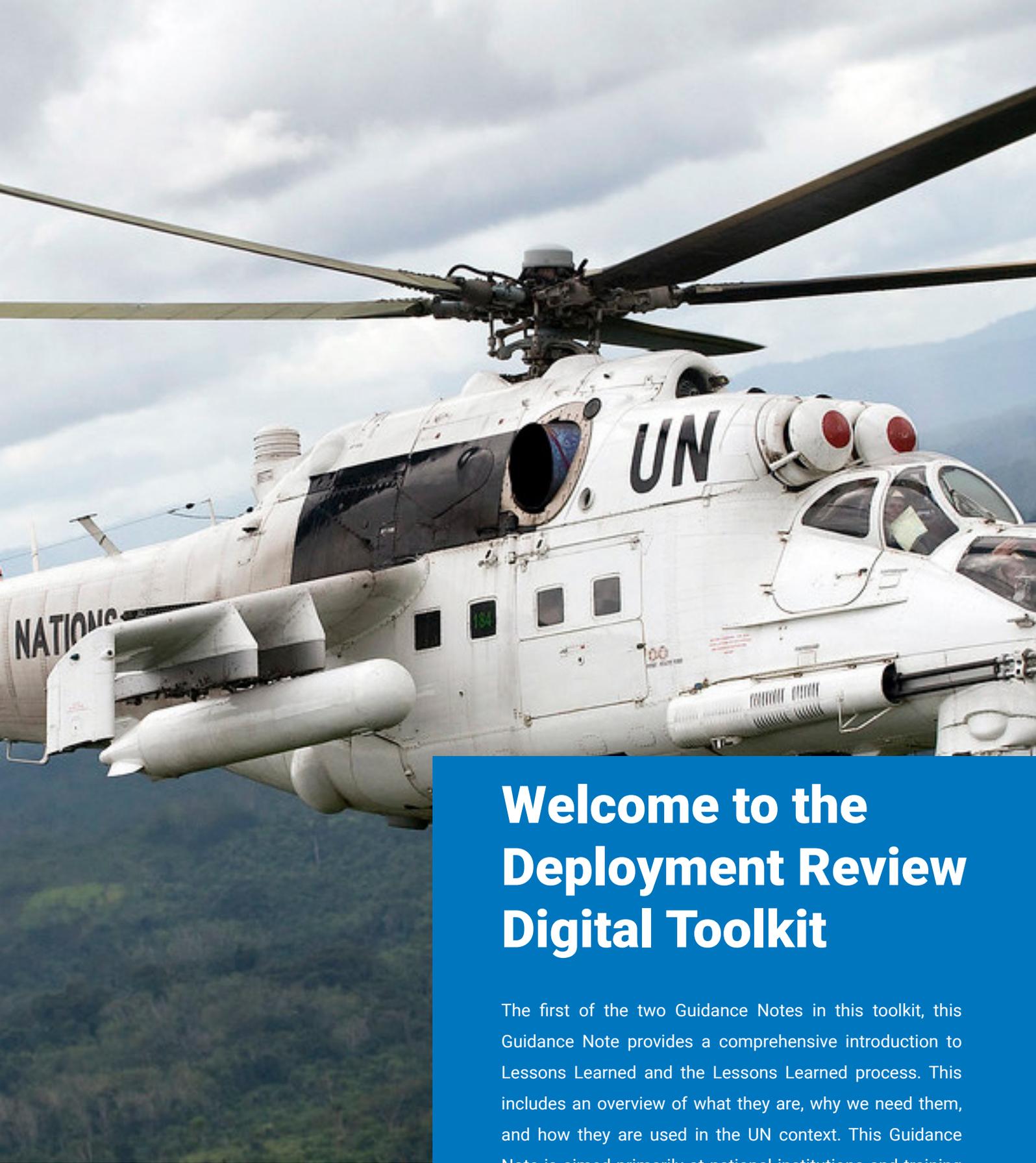
Digital Toolkit

DEPLOYMENT REVIEW



Guidance
Note

LESSONS LEARNED



Welcome to the Deployment Review Digital Toolkit

The first of the two Guidance Notes in this toolkit, this Guidance Note provides a comprehensive introduction to Lessons Learned and the Lessons Learned process. This includes an overview of what they are, why we need them, and how they are used in the UN context. This Guidance Note is aimed primarily at national institutions and training centres and academies but may also be beneficial for other users.



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PREFACE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Deployment Review Digital Toolkit was produced by the Light Coordination Mechanism (LCM) of the United Nations Department of Peace Operations (DPO), and the development of the mobile application and graphic design of the PDF documents was completed by the Capacity Development and Operational Training Service (CDOTS) of the United Nations Department of Operational Support (DOS).

The Toolkit was developed in response to the need for lessons learned guidance expressed at the 2019 LCM meeting, held in Uganda, by Member States in their capacity as Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries, as well as training and capacity-building providers and recipients.

The LCM would like to take this opportunity to thank the Governments of the Kingdom of Denmark and of the Kingdom of the Netherlands for their financial support in the development of this toolkit.

Furthermore, the LCM would also like to thank the Member States who shared their lessons learning guidance material to inform the drafting of the toolkit, as well as their feedback throughout the process. These Member States included Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, Ghana, India, Ireland, Japan, Morocco, the Netherlands, Togo, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

The LCM would like to express its thanks and gratitude to all of its partners who have provided their invaluable insight, feedback and support throughout the development process, including the Integrated Training Service (ITS), the Office of Military Affairs (OMA), the Police Division (PD), and the Policy and Best Practices Service (PBPS).

As the Deployment Review Digital Toolkit serves as a living document which will be updated and expanded based on feedback provided by its users, the LCM will continue to work closely with all T/PCCs and capacity-building providers to ensure that it reflects their needs and ambitions.



PURPOSE & SCOPE

In order to effectively respond to the complex and rapidly evolving operational environment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, the tactics, techniques and procedures of future military contingent and formed police unit (FPU) personnel and their training and preparation must be based on the good practices and lessons developed by those previously deployed to these situations.

This requires uniformed personnel deploying to peacekeeping operations to identify, collect and develop lessons to be shared with those responsible for the uniformed preparation process. As a result, the various stakeholders involved (including national institutions responsible for operational programming, planning and support, as well as training centres and academies) can then adjust their planning, training and support of future contingents and individual uniformed personnel in order to improve operational readiness and performance.

This Toolkit aims to guide the various national military and FPU stakeholders involved in United Nations peacekeeping operations to review their pre-deployment, deployment and post-deployment experiences. Such efforts will support the identification of lessons which can be shared with other Member States to help their fellow peacekeepers to work smarter; more efficiently; more effectively, and more safely. The Toolkit is made up of a series of guidance notes, practical templates, and summary sheets:

Item	Purpose	Audience
1. Guidance Note on Lessons Learned	An introduction to lessons learned (what are they; why do we need them) and their use in the UN context.	National institutions and training centres and academies.
2. Guidance Note on Lessons Learned Planning Considerations	An overview of the necessary planning considerations for developing and implementing a lessons learned process.	National institutions, training centres and academies and contingent commanders.
3. Observation Collection Template	A template to facilitate observation collection, lesson development and remedial action proposal.	Contingent commanders and deploying peacekeepers.
4. Lessons Learned Log Template	A template for storing lessons learned information to facilitate later referencing and reviewing.	Contingent commanders and deploying peacekeepers.
5. Deployment Report Template	A template to support a methodical review of the deployment process by the contingent commander.	Contingent commanders and deploying peacekeepers.
6. Lessons Learned Summary Sheet	A condensed version of Guidance Note 1 that outlines the key points.	National institutions, training centres and academies and contingent commanders.
7. Lessons Learned Planning Considerations Summary Sheet	A condensed version of Guidance Note 2 that outlines the key points.	National institutions, training centres and academies and contingent commanders.



WHAT ARE LESSONS LEARNED?

First and foremost, it is important to understand the purpose of the lessons learned process and how it relates to the organizational learning and knowledge management processes. This chapter will explain what is traditionally meant by lessons learned and the added value they provide; the key terminology and functions involved, as well as the important considerations related to the guiding principles, necessary mindset, and the relevant roles and responsibilities involved in the lessons learned process.

1.1 How Organizations Learn

While we work, we are constantly presented with opportunities to learn. Regardless of whether these opportunities come from good or bad experiences, we will change our approach in the future based on the lesson we learn from these experiences. The more lessons we learn, the more efficient and effective we become, and the more we can improve as individuals.

Equally, the lessons we learn can also benefit others. Everyone within an organization – at all levels and in all roles – has the responsibility to come together and share what they have learned with others. This shared learning allows the organization to develop a bank of institutional knowledge that everyone can draw on. As new knowledge becomes available, successes can be replicated, mistakes avoided, and approaches adjusted. As a result, everyone within the organization benefits from each other's lessons, and the overall performance of the organization will improve.

Looking ahead, what happens after someone leaves the organization and new personnel are faced with similar situations or challenges? Without being able to learn directly from those who have previously experienced these issues, it is likely that previous mistakes will be repeated. To avoid this, organizations can adopt smarter ways of working, as well as develop guidance and training materials based on its extensive bank of institutional knowledge in order to update current approaches, effectively train new personnel and maintain high levels of performance.

Understanding the value of the knowledge gained through experience, institutions and organizations of all kinds aim to develop processes to systematically collect this information. Within the United Nations, the processes of collecting, managing and applying this information are collectively referred to as Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning. These two terms can be defined as follows¹:

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management is a set of processes by which an organization gathers, organizes, disseminates, and analyses its experiential knowledge, drawing upon and mining unstructured information throughout the organization in order to form a body of institutional knowledge.

¹ [Policy on Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning \(DPO 2020.11/DPPA 2020.2\) paragraph 41.](#)

Organizational Learning

Organizational learning is the process of creating, retaining and transferring knowledge within the organization that allows it to stay effective in an ever-changing environment. It is a continuous process that enhances the organization's collective ability to accept, make sense of, and respond to internal and external change.

In other words, knowledge management is about grouping the lessons we have learned, and organizational learning is about using this information to update and change existing practices in order to improve performance. This can be achieved through either a simple change in approach or through the development of new training and guidance materials. However, at the heart of both processes, as well as many other efforts to improve performance, are the lessons that actually need to be learned by an organization and its personnel. This leads us to the lessons learned process.

1.2 The Lessons Learned Process

The collection, development and application of lessons learned is a continuous process which directly supports knowledge management and organizational learning efforts. The lessons learned process involves collecting examples of good and bad experiences; reviewing the lessons that we can learn from these experiences; determining how to adjust our approaches in response to these experiences to replicate successes and avoid repeating the same mistakes, and – most importantly – sharing this information with all the relevant stakeholders.

In the context of peacekeeping operations, the knowledge management, organizational learning and lessons learned processes are incredibly important. Given the constantly evolving complex operational environment of a United Nations peacekeeping operation, military and police peacekeepers are constantly learning from their experiences and adapting their approaches in order to achieve their mission mandate. The lessons learned from their successes, innovations, challenges, and mistakes should therefore be shared with the appropriate stakeholders so that a bank of institutional knowledge can be created to share smarter ways of working and to support efforts to update existing policies and training and guidance materials, as well as to develop new ones. By using these new approaches and materials to adjust the preparation of future rotations, contingents will be able to operate more efficiently, more effectively and more safely upon their arrival to the Mission area.

1.2.1 Lessons Learned: Identification to Application

While sections 1.2.2. and 1.2.3. will provide a detailed overview of the lessons learned process, including the key terminology and functions involved, not every incident requires such a formal process.

For example, sharing our experiences with others and adapting our approaches based on what has been learned from these experiences can be done by asking at the start of a meeting: “what have we learned since the last time we met?” From a simple question like this, we can share the work that has gone on to replicate successes and avoid repeating mistakes, and then share these practices with others who can potentially benefit from them. A simple approach such as the above example may not necessarily require the development of new training and guidance materials: identified smarter ways of working can be shared in such meetings, and changes can be made more quickly.

Bearing this in mind, below is a Simple Lessons Learned Loop which outlines the broad stages of the lessons learned process, from the identification of an issue to its application within an organization.



Figure 1:
Simple Lessons Learned Loop

It is also important to note that the lessons learned process is designed to address issues which arise due to inadequate approaches, training, or preparation. These issues will repeatedly occur over time and will have an impact on our ability to conduct our duties. Other issues which occur due to one-off factors, such as obvious user errors, poor drills or a lack of focus, do not require such a process. We are all human and we all make mistakes – no process can change that. For example:

What was the result?	Was standard procedure followed?	Is there a lesson to be learned here?	Why?
Success	No	Yes	The event was a success because personnel varied from standard procedure and used an innovative approach. As this innovative approach was more successful than standard procedure, there is a lesson to be learned.
Unsuccessful	Yes	Yes	The event was unsuccessful despite standard procedures being followed. This means that these procedures are not effective and should be changed: there is a lesson to be learned.
Success	Yes	No	The event was a success because standard procedure was followed. This means these procedures are effective and do not need to be changed: there is not a lesson to be learned.
Unsuccessful	No	No	The event was unsuccessful because standard procedure was not followed. This does not mean that procedures need to be changed, but that personnel should use these procedures to be successful.

1.2.2 Terminology

This section lists the terminology commonly used by both Member States and the United Nations with regards to the lessons learned process.

Term	Definition
Observation	An observation is a summary of the observed or experienced conditions. This can refer to various types of lessons learned information, such as successes, innovations, challenges, mistakes, and other good and bad experiences. At this stage, all we know is what has happened, and we are now seeking to understand why it occurred.
Lesson	We can learn from both good and bad experiences. Generally, we refer to these as lessons, i.e., knowledge or understanding gained through experience which has not yet been shared with others. These lessons can be divided into two main categories, detailed below.
Good Practice	A good practice is a practice or activity that has proven successful in a specific situation and setting and that may be recommended to be replicated in other situations, with the potential to become an institutional best practice (see below).
Lesson Identified	A lesson identified refers to an action or activity that has not had the intended outcome, meaning that this approach should be either improved upon or avoided entirely in other situations. This information must first be shared with others and result in a change of approach before it can be considered a 'lesson learned' (see below).
Remedial Action	A remedial action is a step or a series of steps taken to adjust or correct an existing institutional approach so that others can replicate more successful approaches, avoid ineffective approaches, or improve existing approaches when faced with the same situation in the future. These can be simple, requiring a minor change to our practices, or they can be complex, requiring new policies or guidance and training materials to be developed and approved.
Lesson Learned	A lesson learned comes from applied or considered good practices or lessons identified from past actions, projects and/or operations. This means that the information has been shared with others and has been proven to be applicable in other situations. Lessons learned can be positive or negative, meaning that they may recommend that an approach be replicated or avoided in the future.
Best Practice	A best practice is a specific type of lesson learned. For a lesson learned to be labelled a best practice, the way of carrying out the activity must have proven its effectiveness across contexts and situations and therefore be institutionally recognized as the best course of action in the specific situation.

1.2.3 Functions

How do we go from a simple observation to a finalized lesson learned or best practice, and what does this actually involve?

For any lessons learned programme to be able to convert initial observations into good practices or lessons identified and subsequently best practices and lessons learned, there are several functions which must be part of the programme. Below is a

brief overview of what each of these functions entail. Please note that a more detailed explanation of the various functions is provided in the Guidance Note on Lessons Learned Planning Considerations which is also provided as part of the Deployment Review Digital Toolkit.

1.2.3.1 Collect

Main Effort: Collect sufficient information about the observed event and the situation in which it occurred in order to put the event into context.

Any organization aiming to learn from its experiences must first have the ability to collect information about its ongoing activities. It should seek to do so from the very beginning of the planning phase of any new operation right through to the end. Specifically, the organization must be able to record successes, innovations, challenges, mistakes, and other good and bad experiences in order to later be able to assess how its training and preparation contributed to these events. However, simply recording whether these events were successful or ineffective is not sufficient for others to be able to learn from these experiences. To do so, further information about the context and situation in which the event occurred needs to be collected. For example:

- Who was involved? (What was the impact of the participation (or lack thereof) of women peacekeepers?)
- Where did the event occur? (Was it in the jungle/desert/an urban area?)
- When did the event occur? (Was it during the day or at night?)
- How was the incident different to what was expected to happen?

By collecting this information, we can:

- Gather facts to enable evidence-based decision making;
- Develop concrete and replicable good practices;
- Support operational record-keeping, and facilitate the development of deployment reviews and reports.

1.2.3.2 Analyse

Main Effort: Determine the root causes of a good or bad experience in order to be able to develop remedial actions to a) replicate success and b) avoid repeating mistakes.

Having collected sufficient contextual information about the observation, the next stage is to analyse this information and produce a clear and replicable good practice or lesson identified. This includes looking at the 'who, what, where, when, why and how' of the issue in more detail to better understand its root causes. For example, how

did these factors cause the observed incident? What can we change to ensure that good practices are replicated and that others can learn from our lessons identified in the future? By doing so, remedial actions can then be proposed to ensure that the developed lessons can be learned by the organization and its personnel. The proposed remedial actions – the necessary change in approach – must clearly state what needs to be changed so that it can be acted upon by the relevant stakeholders.

While the ability to conduct informed analysis is a vital component of any lessons learned programme, it is worth noting that detailed analysis as its own individual function may not always be required. For some observations, the necessary change in approach may be immediately obvious. This means that the observation, good practice or lesson identified and proposed remedial action would essentially be developed at the same time.

1.2.3.3 Record

Main Effort: Ensure information about observations, lessons and remedial actions is continually recorded to support later reference and review.

As we collect observations and develop good practices, lessons identified and remedial actions, this information must be stored in a central location so that it can be reviewed and developed during an event, such as a deployment. This also allows for patterns and trends to be identified, such as issues that improve or deteriorate over the course of an event. Simply put, to ensure that the knowledge we gain from our experiences can be shared with others for their benefit, it needs to be written down on paper or typed up on a computer for safekeeping.

1.2.3.4 Share

Main Effort: Share the collected lessons and proposed remedial actions with the relevant stakeholders so that the necessary changes in approach can be implemented and verified.

To ensure that others can learn from our experiences, we should be able to share the information we have collected and analysed with the relevant stakeholders, such as national institutions, training centres and academies, as well as other partners, such as the United Nations and other training and capacity-building providers. This ensures that adopted innovative approaches and good practices can be replicated by others and that the proposed remedial actions to address more complex issues can be implemented for the benefit of the military or police institution. For example, this may be done through reports, after action reviews, email bulletins, verbal briefings, and various other types of lessons learned studies.

1.2.3.5 Implement

Main Effort: Implement the proposed remedial actions in order to ensure that successes are replicated and mistakes avoided in the future.

Having captured a good practice or lesson identified, the proposed remedial actions must now be implemented to ensure that others within the organization can benefit from them. Such actions can vary in terms of complexity and the resources required: some may only need a change in procedure; some may require that existing training or policies be amended, whereas others may require the development of new guidance and training materials. However, if the implemented remedial action does not allow successes and mistakes to be widely replicated or avoided, then further analysis will be needed in order to develop an updated good practice or lesson identified.

Where possible, the observer should seek to implement the proposed remedial actions, or simply adopt approaches which have been identified as being smarter or more efficient. However, understanding that this may not always be feasible due to restraints related to the level of authority, time, or resources required, it is likely that remedial actions will need to be passed up the chain of command to senior decision-makers so that the necessary changes can be approved and implemented.

1.2.3.6 Verify

Main Effort: Verify whether the change in approach has allowed others to successfully replicate a success or avoid repeating a mistake to finalize the lesson learned or best practice.

A lesson can only become a lesson learned when the implemented remedial action is proven to allow others within an organization to replicate a success or avoid repeating a mistake. If this is indeed the case, the lesson can be considered a lesson learned and can then be fine-tuned over time to ensure that it becomes a best practice when dealing with the relevant scenario. If the remedial action does not have the desired impact, further analysis will be required to identify another possible remedial action and the process will continue.

1.2.3.7 Archive

Main Effort: Archive lessons learned and best practices for future reference when preparing for new tasks and when facing new challenges.

After potential lessons learned and best practices have been verified as allowing other personnel to replicate a successful approach or avoid an unsuccessful approach, this information must be archived as part of the organization's body of institutional

knowledge. This institutional knowledge can then serve as a reference point in the development or revision of policies and guidance and training materials, as well as guide future responses to new challenges.

1.2.3.8 Detailed Lessons Learned Process

Building upon the simple version of the Lessons Learned Loop discussed in Section 1.2.1., below is a more comprehensive loop detailing the entire lessons learned process and how the different terms/functions relate to one another.

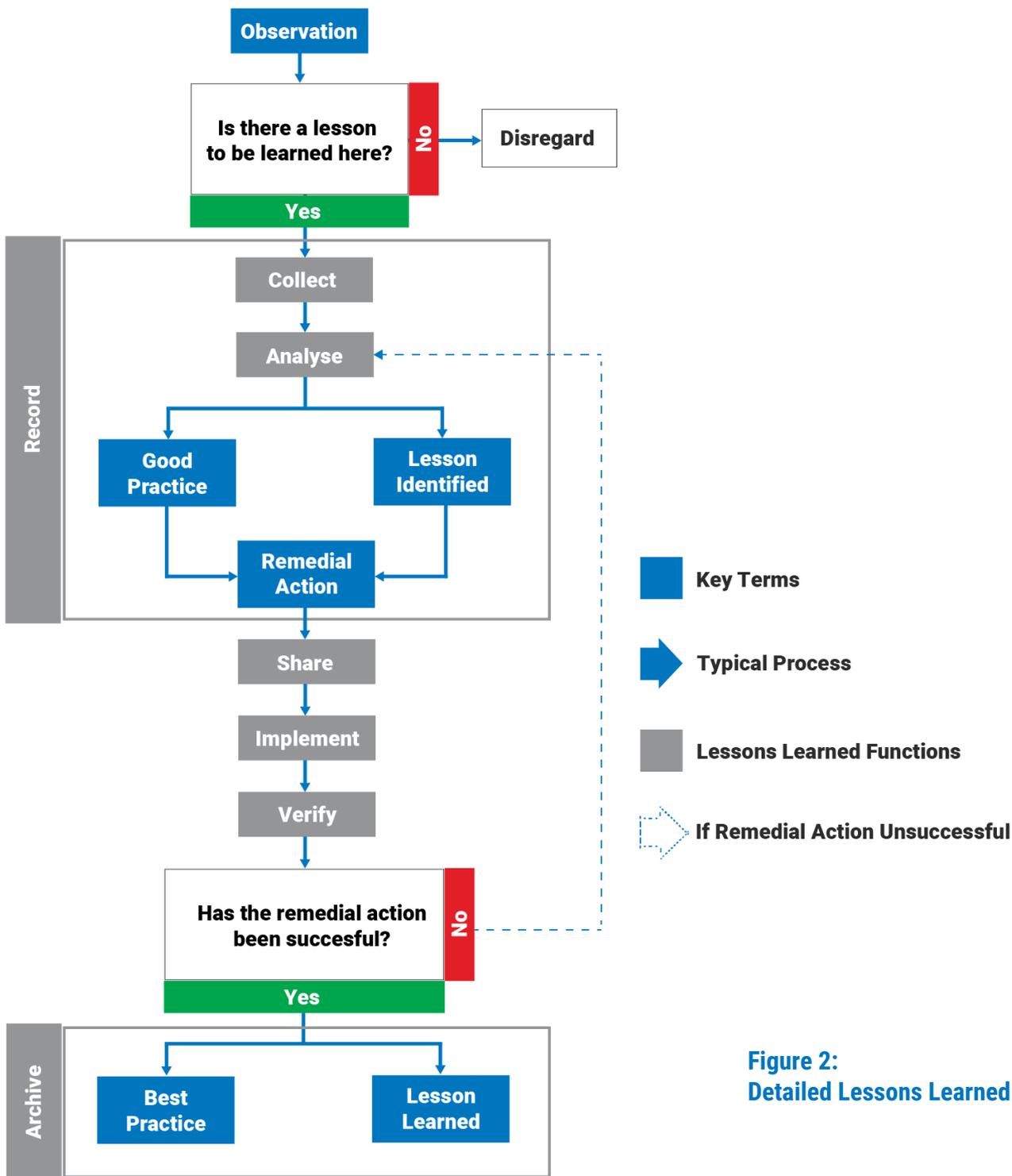


Figure 2: Detailed Lessons Learned Loop

1.3 Considerations for an Effective Lessons Learned Process

For any lessons learned programme to be able to operate, it must be capable of conducting the above-mentioned functions. While the Guidance Note on Lessons Learned Planning Considerations will outline the practical considerations for doing so, what follows is an overview of what makes for an effective lessons learned capability. This will include the guiding principles of the lessons learned process; the necessary mindset with regards to managing such a capability, and the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders involved in the process.

1.3.1 Principles

Below are four of the key principles at the heart of any lessons learned capability.

1.3.1.1 Collective Responsibility

Within a military or police institution, personnel work in varying roles and at various levels of seniority. As a result, they are exposed to different opportunities to learn. However, while these opportunities can be incredibly beneficial for the individual and others in that specific role, it is unlikely that they will be of equal benefit to everyone within the organization. For example, the challenges a logistics director is likely to face will be entirely different to those of an interpreter working within the same organization. As a result, if the responsibility for the lessons learned process was left entirely to the logistics director, the only person who would be likely to benefit from this information would be the next logistics director.

The same is true for the uniformed context: if the only people collecting observations are commanders, the only people that are going to benefit from the lessons learned process are future commanders. To be truly effective, a lessons learned capability is reliant on as many personnel as possible – at all levels and in all roles – being actively involved in the collection, development, learning and application of lessons.

1.3.1.2 Leading by Example

While a successful lessons learned programme relies on everyone being involved,

junior personnel and even certain commanders may not necessarily have the authority to make changes to the organization's approach. Given the vertical command structure of military and police forces, this is especially true among the uniformed component. Nevertheless, the lessons learned process should still be command-led with senior-level buy-in. This requires leadership to play an active role in ensuring that lessons learned considerations are incorporated into both the planning process and routine activity of units at all levels. Once incorporated, commander supervision is then required to ensure personnel remain engaged in the process throughout the deployment.

1.3.1.3 Low-Level Implementation & Resolution

While all lessons learned should become part of an organization's body of institutional knowledge, this does not mean we must wait for others to take action when we can resolve the issue ourselves. Information relating to observations, lessons and remedial actions should be conveyed up the chain of command so that it can be added to the organization's body of institutional knowledge for the benefit of personnel and the organization as a whole. However, in the interest of making the best use of the organization's time and resources, every effort should be made to change and adapt approaches at the lowest level possible. In such instances, the Simple Lessons Learned Loop (section 1.2.1.) best represents how changes are adopted: an issue is identified, we determine why it happened, we share what we have learned, and we adopt a new approach. If low-level resolution is not possible, perhaps due to the observer not having the required resources or level of authority to implement the necessary remedial actions, these issues can be progressively passed up the chain of command to senior personnel so that they can be addressed.

1.3.1.4 From Lessons Learned to Lessons Applied

Finally, in order to enable continuous improvements in performance and effectiveness, new lessons learned and best practices should be continuously integrated into guidance development, training curricula, and business and planning processes. In addition to the relevant national and United Nations guidance, all personnel should consult lessons learned and best practices before undertaking any significant project or activity. This information should also be incorporated when developing national organizational guidance.

Essentially, once lessons learned and best practices have been collected, they should be used to inform future approaches and the development of policies and guidance and training materials to ensure that the organization as a whole is able to learn from them. If this is not done, all efforts up to this point will most likely have been a waste of time and resources.

1.3.2 The Right Mindset

In addition to the above principles, individual military contingent and FPU personnel and their respective institutions should also have the right mindset with regards to the purpose of the lessons learned process and how it is used. Below are three key issues to consider.

1.3.2.1 Continuous Process

It should be understood and accepted that the lessons learned process is a continuous, ongoing process. It requires investment: not all problems can be addressed immediately, and tackling these issues takes time. In fact, it is highly likely that, in the context of a military or FPU deployment, the personnel observing the issue will have completed their tour and returned to their home unit by the time their lessons can be fully learned by the rest of organization. This also highlights the importance of the principle of low-level resolution: understanding the time it can take to realise organization-wide change, efforts must be made in order to begin the process ourselves and adopt smarter and more efficient ways of working whenever lessons are identified.

As such, those working to collect observations and develop lessons should understand that while their work may not indicate immediate results, collecting observations, developing lessons and proposing remedial actions will ultimately help improve the preparation of future rotations by allowing them to learn from previous experiences.

1.3.2.2 The Difference Between Lessons Learned and Evaluations

A common misconception is that the lessons learned process is an official form of evaluation or assessment. This is not the case: lessons learned information shared with the United Nations **is never used** to evaluate the performance of a contingent or to select future contingents for deployment. Similarly, military contingents and FPUs looking to implement their own lessons learned process should not use it for this purpose, as this compromises the process entirely. The purpose of lessons learning is to improve existing approaches by exploring the root causes behind successes, innovations, challenges, and mistakes in order to enhance an organization's body of institutional knowledge; it is not to be used to punish individual or collective underperformance.

As an example of what separates the two, consider the differences between the following questions.

An evaluation would aim to grade the contingent's performance against set criteria

by asking questions such as:

- Is the unit able to operate effectively in an urban environment?
- Is COE regularly and effectively maintained?
- Is the contingent able to operate effectively in an integrated setting?

Note that the above questions are all closed-ended questions (they can only be answered with 'yes' or 'no'). To develop lessons learned, we need to take this process a step further and ask open-ended questions, such as:

- What barriers stand in the way of the unit reaching peak effectiveness in an urban environment?
- What factors affect the ability of the contingent to maintain its COE to the required standard?
- What factors have allowed the contingent to operate so effectively in integrated operations?

Doing so will look past whether an event was a success or a failure and point to how we can learn from our experiences in the future.

1.3.2.3 Open Atmosphere for Information Sharing

Personnel should also understand that the lessons learned process will not function if there are no open channels (in line with existing confidentiality considerations) for sharing information and knowledge within the contingent and with the appropriate national institutions. Personnel may not appreciate the benefit of discussing what has happened given that the past cannot be changed. All those involved in the lessons learned process should understand the added value that comes from information sharing and be willing to play an active role in the process.

However, despite the obvious benefits of sharing information, the fact remains that while we are happy to discuss our successes, openly discussing our mistakes can be a challenge for many of us. That said, this information is key to establishing an effective lessons learned capability: in the context of a UN peacekeeping operation, understanding where things have gone wrong in the past can save lives. As such, contingent commanders should work to ensure that personnel feel free to discuss planning and operational mistakes with the chain of command, critically and honestly, without fear of being reprimanded or punished. One way of doing this would be to allow personnel, as appropriate, to submit observations to the lessons learned process anonymously. While the provision of contact details allows for additional information to be collected for further analysis if necessary, the primary aim of the lessons learned process is to understand why the event occurred and not who should

take the credit or blame for it.

1.3.3 Roles & Responsibilities

This section will outline the various stakeholders involved in the lessons learned process in the uniformed context and explain their roles and responsibilities. More detailed planning considerations for each group of stakeholders will be discussed in the Guidance Note on Lessons Learned Planning Considerations. There are four main groups of stakeholders involved in the process:

1. National Institutions
2. Training Centres and Academies
3. Contingent Commanders, Staff Officers & Support Staff
4. Individual Peacekeepers

1.3.3.1 National Institutions

When it comes to the lessons learned process, national institutions have two primary responsibilities:

Firstly, for a lessons learned process to be developed in the first place, there needs to be active support and participation among national institutions. This investment in organizational learning will ensure that an institutionalized lessons learned process is developed within its contingents: if the collection, development and application of lessons is not a priority at the national level, this lack of engagement will be reflected at lower levels. This requires national institutions to convey the importance of lessons learned with subordinate personnel to ensure that lessons learned considerations are incorporated into existing routines and procedures.

Secondly, national institutions are responsible for collating the lessons collected by deployed contingents and ensuring that lessons are learned and subsequently applied for the benefit of the organization. This involves ensuring that SOPs, policies, guidelines, and training and guidance materials are regularly updated to reflect changes to the organization's body of institutional knowledge; that the training and preparation of future personnel is based on this body of institutional knowledge, and that it is used to inform responses to future challenges that may arise.

In short, national institutions are responsible for kick-starting the process and ensuring that the efforts of deployed personnel do indeed result in changes in approach which improve the safety and security of future personnel and allow them to better conduct

their mandated tasks.

1.3.3.2 Training Centres and Academies

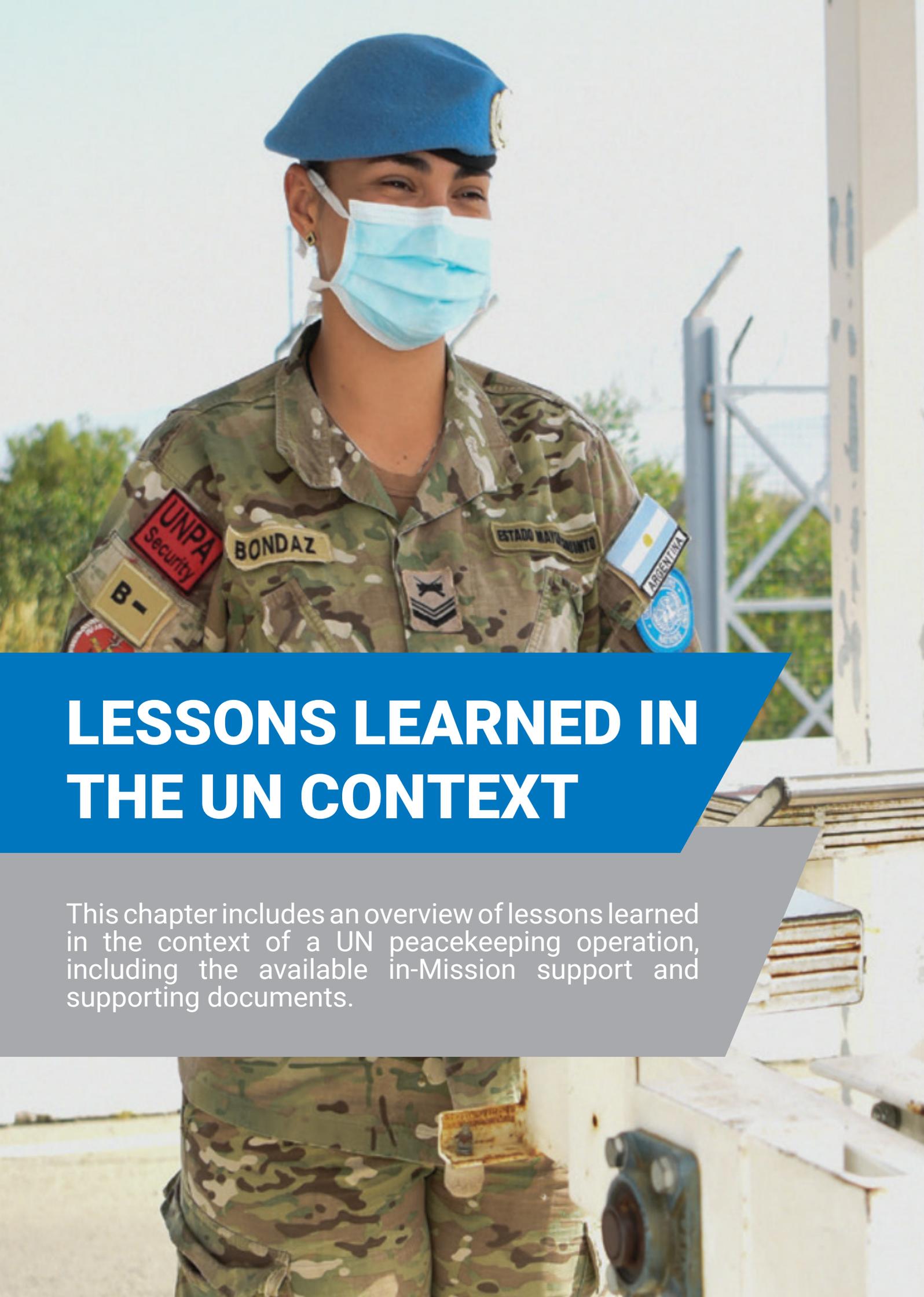
National training centres and academies have the critical responsibility of training and preparing military contingents and FPU's for their upcoming deployment. As the situation on the ground evolves and changes, the training and guidance materials used by training centres and academies should reflect these changes based on the lessons shared with them by previously deployed contingents. By regularly updating the materials used to prepare contingents, national academies and training centres can play an active role in ensuring that their organization is continually learning.

1.3.3.3 Contingent Commanders, Staff Officers & Support Staff

Commanders at all levels are responsible for ensuring that lessons learned considerations are incorporated into the contingent's standard routine from the initial planning phase right through to rotation or repatriation. This includes ensuring that the relevant contingent personnel are familiar with the principles of the lessons learned process and the necessary mindset; that the contingent can conduct the various lessons learned functions, and that internal contingent SOPs and guidelines are regularly reviewed based on what the contingent has learned from its experiences. The collected information should then be shared with the relevant institutions, training centres and academies so that it can be added to the national body of institutional knowledge and used to address and resolve issues wherever possible.

1.3.3.4 Individual Peacekeepers

The lessons learned process becomes more effective if more personnel can both understand and contribute to the process. Individual peacekeepers should demonstrate a commitment to continuous learning and knowledge sharing by regularly collecting, sharing and applying lessons learned. Doing so will ensure the establishment of a body of institutional knowledge that is as broad possible, and that the lessons learned process actively benefits as many future personnel as possible.



LESSONS LEARNED IN THE UN CONTEXT

This chapter includes an overview of lessons learned in the context of a UN peacekeeping operation, including the available in-Mission support and supporting documents.

2.1 Uniformed Contingents & Lessons Learned

In the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations, lessons learned considerations should be incorporated into the routine procedures of teams at all levels – from deployed military contingents and FPU through to the Mission HQ. In this context, the general principles of the lessons learned process still apply. Everyone is responsible for collecting observations, developing lessons and proposing remedial actions, and commanders should create an encouraging environment to do so. Lessons learned considerations should be incorporated into the contingent's routine from the beginning of the pre-deployment training phase until the end of the deployment drawdown. Lessons drawn from UN operations and exercises should then be shared as widely as possible both within the Mission and with UNHQ for support and advice as well as for review and further dissemination. Once shared with national institutions and training centres and academies, these lessons should be learned and subsequently applied, resulting in an improved organization-wide approach.

Additionally, as contingents often work in an integrated manner (i.e., with Mission community liaison assistants, human rights officers, and other civilian components), contingents should work to collect lessons learned information regarding these processes in support of the Mission. As outlined in the 2020 DPO-DPPA Policy on Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning, all organizational learning initiatives should also incorporate cross-cutting considerations, such as Gender and Women, Peace and Security, Youth, Peace and Security, and human rights and protections considerations². The policy goes on to note that there are specific instances in UN peacekeeping operations where lessons learned information must be collected and developed in support of UN Mission-led organizational learning efforts (in addition to internal contingent efforts):

“Any significant activity, incident or event (e.g. that involves multiple personnel/offices/departments, and/or significant resources, and/or that is likely to reoccur) shall be followed by a timely exercise to capture personnel experiences and good practices, identify opportunities for improvements and recommend actions to tackle inefficiencies. Certain major activities, incidents and events shall require a written

² Policy on Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning (DPO 2020.11/DPPA 2020.2) paragraphs 10-12.

lessons identification exercise and a time-bound follow-through process as governed by other organizational policies.”³

There are several required practical applications of this information. As with any lessons learned capability, the collected good practices, lessons identified and other changes in approach should then be replicated and implemented by as wide an audience as possible. This requires that information regarding lessons related to mandated tasks and responsibilities be shared with national and UN stakeholders, as well as with newly arrived counterparts within the following rotation, to add to the respective bodies of institutional knowledge. Doing so ensures that the training and guidance developed and delivered to future rotations by both the UN and national institutions can be regularly reviewed and updated; that future personnel can work smarter and more effectively, and that continuity of operations is maintained for future contingents.

A comprehensive list of supporting policy and guidance materials can be found in Annex A.

2.2 Available Support

Contingent commanders have the primary responsibility of managing their own lessons learned capability. However, as the UN provides in-mission support, they do not have to do everything on their own. Two main groups provide this support: Policy and Best Practice personnel and Integrated Mission Training Centres. Further resources are also available online through the Peacekeeping Resource Hub.

2.2.1 Policy and Best Practice (PBP) Personnel

Within a UN peacekeeping operation, PBP personnel support other personnel in conducting the lessons learned, knowledge management and organizational learning processes. They serve as the go-to subject matter experts where further assistance relating to these processes is required. PBP personnel also have online access to additional United Nations policy and guidance documents from current

³ [Policy on Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning \(DPO 2020.11/DPPA 2020.2\) paragraph 13 and footnote 10.](#)

and former peacekeeping operations which can be used to support both contingent planning processes and remedial action review. There are three different types of PBP personnel, and those present in a specific operation or Mission will depend on the funding and resources available.

Policy and Best Practice Officers (PBPOs) or Focal Points (PBP FPs)

PBPOs are full-time civilian personnel responsible for training personnel on the use of knowledge management tools, promoting and facilitating the production and sharing of reports as well as the use of online platforms for knowledge sharing. In addition, PBPOs provide other learning and research services and are responsible for coordinating guidance development within their Mission. PBP FPs offer the same services, but are part-time civilian personnel appointed when a Mission does not have a dedicated PBPO position.

Military and Police Policy and Best Practice Officers (M-PBPO/P-PBPO) or Focal Points

When Missions have military or police components, M-PBPOs, P-PBPOs or focal points will be appointed to provide support specifically for their respective component. This support will be the same as that offered by PBPOs and PBP FPs but for their component. Uniformed focal points, like their civilian counterparts, shall serve as knowledge management resources in a part-time capacity.

2.2.2 Integrated Mission Training Centres (IMTCs)

IMTCs are responsible for providing training to all civilian and uniformed peacekeeping personnel within a UN peacekeeping operation. Supported by the Mission's military and police training entities, these trainers have practical, in-country experience and are a major contribution to the continuous efforts to build on lessons learned. The in-mission training provided includes induction training to be delivered to peacekeepers upon arrival to the Mission operating area that covers issues deemed important to the Mission. It also includes ongoing training which can consist of 'refresher' training to reinforce previous training or 'on-the-job' training to address identified performance gaps and shortfalls.

As part of the induction programme organized for new personnel by the IMTC, a component on knowledge management and organizational learning is provided. It

will also include the provision of key guidance (in addition to the guidance referenced in Annex A) and a handover note from the previous rotation.

As the ongoing training aims to both reinforce pre-deployment training courses and either address identified gaps or improve skills or capabilities in various areas, it can prove highly beneficial for a deployed contingent. Given the aims of this training, it is an ideal resource to support efforts to implement remedial actions through the delivery of additional training, as and when necessary. However, it must be noted that the delivered training may not necessarily be based solely on addressing potential remedial actions. This will require discussions with local trainers to determine whether their implementation is possible.

2.2.3 Online Support: The Peacekeeping Resource Hub (PRH)

The [**PRH website**](#) is designed to serve as the primary resource for United Nations Member State decision-makers, training centres and academies, and other partners on UN peacekeeping-related issues. It serves as a repository for all official DPO and DOS training and guidance materials and provides links to other related UN documents and resources. It also offers links to real-time news and updates on the United Nations peacekeeping world.

The Integrated Training Service within the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training of the Department of Peace Operations (DPO/DPET/ITS) is responsible for maintaining and regularly updating the content related to training with the aim of ensuring that all current UN training standards and related training materials and guidance are accessible to Member States and training centres and academies in a timely manner.

Some of the available material includes the following (click/tap on the blue text to go to the website):

Under the **Training** tab of the PRH, various pre-deployment, in-mission and other functional training materials are provided. Access to these peacekeeping training materials is open to the public and does not require an account to be accessed; it can be freely accessed prior to deployment in support of the preparation phase.

The **Policy and Guidance** tab also provides access to various policies, SOPs and guidelines to provide direction and support work processes through the Dag Hammarskjöld Library website. To access these documents, you need to register for an account. User accounts will be issued to UN Member States government

institutions, as well as training centres and academies. You can fill out the registration form by clicking [here](#), or this can be arranged through your Permanent Mission.

The **News and Events** tab is regularly updated with the ITS update. This electronic newsletter, issued three times per year, provides updates on guidance and training materials development and offers direct access to the UN Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials (CPTM), and Specialized Training Materials (STMs).

ANNEX A

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

This annex is intended to serve as a springboard which can be used to find out more about existing UN policies, guidance documents and SOPs related to lessons learned, knowledge management and organizational learning procedures, as well as processes related to uniformed contingents deploying to UN peacekeeping operations. This UN documentation may help reinforce national processes.

Organisational Learning, Knowledge Management and Lessons Learned

- [Policy on Knowledge Management and Organisational Learning \(DPO 2020.11/DPPA 2020.2\)](#)
- [SOP on End of Assignment Reports \(DPO 2020.12/DPPA 2020.2\)](#)
- [Guidelines on the Design, Delivery and Evaluation of Training \(Training Cycle\) \(DPO 2019.14\)](#)
- [Policy on Records Management \(DPKO/DFS 2016.19\)](#)
- [Joint Inspection Unit Report on Knowledge Management in the United Nations system \(JIU/REP/2016/10\)](#)

Combined Documents

- [Handbook on the Protection of Civilians in United Nations Peacekeeping \(DPO, 2020.09\)](#)
- [Guidelines on Combined Military and Police Coordination Mechanisms in Peace Operations \(DPO, 2019.16\)](#)
- [Practical Guide to Peacekeeping Training Evaluation \(DPO, 2019\)](#)
- [SOP on Information Labelling, Filing and Clean-up \(DPKO/DFS, 2016.20\)](#)
- [Policy on Operational Readiness Assurance and Performance Improvement \(DPKO/DFS, 2015.16\)](#)
- [Policy on Training for all Peacekeeping Personnel \(DPKO/DFS, 2010.20\)](#)
- [United Nations Manual for Generation and Deployment of Military and Police Units to Peacekeeping Operations \(DPO/DOS, 2021.05\)](#)

Military-Specific Documents

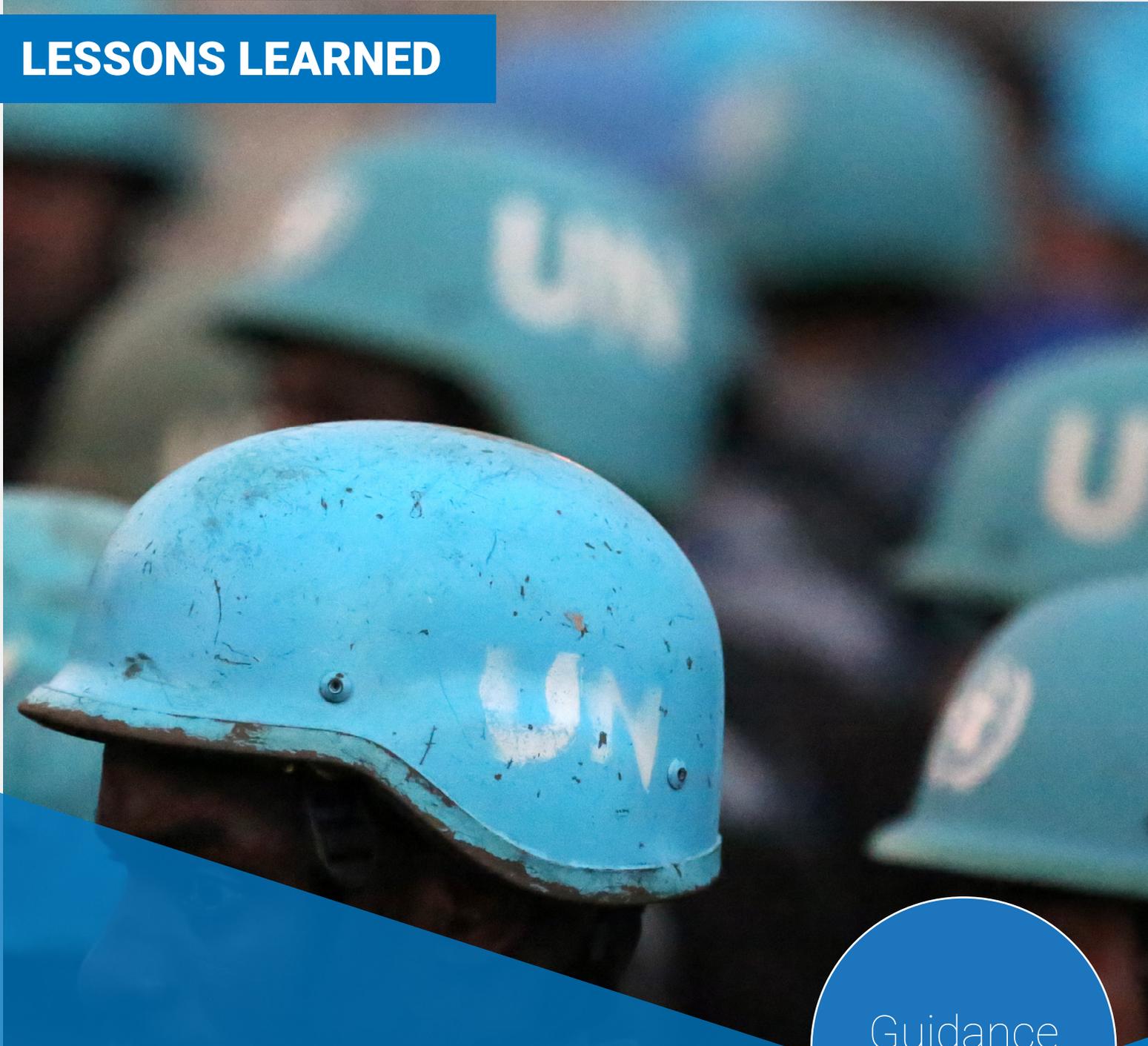
- [United Nations Infantry Battalion Manual \(UNIBAM\) \(DPO, 2020.01\)](#)
- [Policy on Peacekeeping Intelligence \(DPO, 2019.08\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping ISR Staff Handbook \(DPO, 2020.15\)](#)
- [United Nations Military Peacekeeping Intelligence Handbook \(DPO, 2019.36\)](#)
- [Guidelines on Operational Readiness Preparation for Troop Contributing Countries in Peacekeeping Missions \(DPKO/DFS, 2018.29\)](#)
- [United Nations IED Threat Mitigation Military and Police Handbook \(DPKO/DFS, 2017.18\)](#)
- [Guidelines on the Use of Force by Military Components in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations \(DPKO/DFS, 2016.24\)](#)
- [SOP on Evaluation of Force Headquarters in Peacekeeping Operations \(DPO, 2016.16\)](#)
- [SOP on Force and Sector Commander's Evaluation of Subordinate Military Entities in Peacekeeping Operations \(DPKO/DFS, 2016.02\)](#)
- [Protection of Civilians Implementing Guidelines for Military Components of United Nations Peacekeeping Missions \(DPKO/DFS, 2015.02\)](#)
- [Generic Guidelines for Troop Contributing Countries Deploying Military Units to United Nations Peacekeeping Missions \(DPKO, 2008\)](#)
- [Guidelines on the Use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\) Capabilities \(DPO 2019.05\)](#)
- [United Nations Policy on Weapons and Ammunition \(DPO/DOS, 2019.03\)](#)
- [United Nations Manual on Ammunition Management \(DPO/DOS, 2019.27\)](#)
- [SOP on Loss of Weapons and Ammunition in Peace Operations \(DPO/DOS, 2019.04\)](#)
- [United Nations Military Engineer Unit & CET Search and Detect Manual \(DPO, 2020.03\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military EOD Unit Manual \(DPO, 2021.11\)](#)
- [United Nations Military/Combat Transport Unit Manual \(DPKO/DFS, 2016\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Police Manual \(DPKO/DFS, 2015\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Reconnaissance Unit Manual \(DPKO/DFS, 2015\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Riverine Unit Manual \(DPKO/DFS, 2015\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Signals Unit Manual \(DPKO/DFS, 2015\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Force Headquarters Support Unit Manual \(DPKO/DFS, 2015\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Aviation Unit Manual \(DPO/DOS, 2021.04\)](#)

- [United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Logistic Unit Manual \(DPKO/DFS, 2015\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Maritime Task Force Manual \(DPKO/DFS, 2015\)](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping Missions Military Special Forces Manual \(DPKO, 2015\)](#)

Police-Specific Documents

- [SOP on the Assessment and Evaluation of Formed Police Unit Performance \(DPO, 2019.11\)](#)
- [Manual on Mission-based Police Planning in UN Peace Operations \(DPKO/DFS, 2017.13\)](#)
- [Guidelines on the Role of United Nations Police in the Protection of Civilians \(DPKO/DFS, 2017.12\)](#)
- [Guidelines on Police Administration in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions \(DPKO/DFS, 2016.26\)](#)
- [Policy \(revised\) on Formed Police Units in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations \(DPKO/DFS, 2016.10\)](#)
- [Guidelines on Police Operations in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions \(DPKO/DFS, 2015.15\)](#)
- [Guidelines on Police Command in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions \(DPKO/DFS, 2015.14\)](#)
- [Guidelines on Police and Capacity-building and Development \(DPKO/DFS, 2015.08\)](#)
- [Guidelines on United Nations Police in Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Missions \(DPKO/DFS, 2014.01\)](#)
- [Guidelines for Integrating Gender Perspectives into the Work of United Nations Police in Peacekeeping Missions \(DPKO/DFS, 2008.30\)](#)

LESSONS LEARNED



DEPLOYMENT REVIEW

Guidance
Note



Digital Toolkit