



### Three essential skills for effective teams and organisations

Every team needs a range of specialist skills, but all team members need the social skills to cooperate and communicate. While technical skills may often be specific to individuals, social and conceptual skills are of a general character, and need to be developed by all team members.

Conceptual, social and technical skills are required at all levels in an organisation, but to different degrees. Conceptual thinking is most essential and more comprehensive at senior management level. Organisational leaders must understand the changing environment and develop the vision, values, goals and strategies that guide the development of the organisation to meet future demands and needs.

Middle managers translate the vision, goals and strategies into operational plans and action. They require strong social skills to manage staff, build teams and facilitate cooperation between departments. Staff should understand the strategy and be committed to achieving the goals, and this is best achieved by involving everyone in planning and evaluation processes.

Supervisors and staff who run the daily operations have the technical expertise. They are best placed to improve work processes, and should be encouraged to assess what they are doing and make improvements. Top managers should stay away from the technical detail, but know enough to assess the needs and options for technological and other development, as an aspect of strategy.

People on all levels require good social and communication skills in order to interact and cooperate with colleagues in effective teams, which realise the diverse potential of their members. Good leaders understand the needs of their people. They give direction and support, and facilitate learning and capacity development. They maintain a healthy working culture in which people reflect on experience and discuss ideas, concerns and questions.