

ILPO55 REFERENCE FRAMEWORK - EMPLOYABILITY PORTFOLIO

TOOL 7 – SELF-REFLECTION EXERCISE

Background Information

Self-Reflection is the exercise by which individuals take an introspective look at themselves, in an attempt to learn more about their fundamental nature, purpose and essence. Self-Reflection is an important element which helps individuals make informed decisions about themselves helping them to analyse their past to learn about their present and plan for their future. Through Self Reflection, individuals will be able to learn more about their general state of mind, their goals and aspirations and their abilities to achieve such goals.

Self-Reflection is a very important aspect which is central to the ILPO55 Reference Framework, especially the Employability Portfolio. The ILPO55 Reference Framework aims at helping Over 55 employees in the Financial Services Sector to make informed decisions about their future and the future of their professional development, and one of the ways it tries to do this is by getting the over 55 individuals to evaluate themselves and identify their strengths and weaknesses. The Employability Portfolio is composed of seven tools. Through the application of each of these tools, individuals have to constantly ask themselves about their own objectives for the future, analyse their skills and competences to verify whether they fulfil the necessary requirements to meet such objectives and plan accordingly.

The ability to self-reflect is one of the main skills which every professional should possess. Donald Schön (1983) wrote about Self-reflection as a tool for professionals and introduced 2 types of reflection: Reflection on Action and Reflection in Action. Reflection in Action¹ is the reflection which is done while an action (or event) is occurring. Such reflection will affect any decisions taken in relation to that action/event and might result in a change of action prior to the end of the event in order to obtain a better result. In other words, Reflection in Action is the reflection which is done in real time, prior to the end of an event. It will give the individual the opportunity to improve the work which s/he is currently doing in order to better meet any pre-set specifications or targets. On the other hand, Reflection on Action² is the reflection done on an action or event which has ended. The thought process for reflection on action would normally come after the following pattern “what would I improve? or what would I do differently... next time or if I had the opportunity to do this again?” Both forms of reflection, offer the individual the opportunity for continuous improvement, and hence their importance and inclusion within the ILPO55 Framework and Employability Portfolio.

The ILPO55 reference was designed with the Over 55 employees in mind and aims at improving their employability and relevance to the industry. The ILPO55 Employability Portfolio features both elements of reflection identified by Donald Schön. Reflection in Action is featured in the main concept of the Employability Portfolio, which is intended to be used by the Over 55 employee whilst s/he is still in employment, in order to identify how s/he can progress his/her career. Moreover, the tools forming part of the Employability Portfolio, such as the Competence Evaluation Questionnaire, the E-Portfolio and the Career Development Plan, all encourage the O55 Individual to self-reflect on a number of factors about him/herself as an employee and about his/her future to identify potential ways of improving his/her current position.

¹ Adapted from The Reflective Practitioner by Donald A. Schön - 1983

² *Ibid.*

Alternatively, the Self Reflection Exercise, at the end of the Employability Portfolio, takes the role of Reflection on Action. At this point of the Portfolio Process, the Employee should have gained a high dose of experience on self-reflection through the use of the other tools and reached a point where s/he needs to reflect on the benefits (or lack thereof) obtained through such an experience. Guidance should have been provided to the individual, in the form of a mentor, throughout the entire Employability Portfolio Process and the individual should now have developed a higher level of self-awareness which facilitates the self-reflection process and enables him/her to reflect deeper. The aim of the Self Reflection Exercise is that of guiding the over 55 individual to reflect on his/her experience and:

1. validate its effects on himself/herself as an individual, on his/her career and on his/her prospects for the future;
2. reflect on the effectiveness of the ILPO55 Reference Framework and the tools forming part of the Employability Portfolio within the financial services industry, and;
3. suggest ways in which tools and their provision can be improved.

The Self Reflection exercise is divided into four main sections as follows:

Section A - Personal Detail:	The Self Reflection exercise is an integral part of the ILPO55 Reference Framework – Employability Portfolio. Although one of its aims is that of gathering feedback for improvement it is not intended to be an anonymous exercise.
SECTION B - Reflection on own experience with the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio:	This section is meant to guide the Individual to reflect on the general experience with the tools forming part of the Employability Portfolio including a chronological reflection on the events leading the individual to follow the ILPO55 process and the reasons behind such decisions. The Individual is invited to reflect on the difficulties encountered and the solutions taken to overcome them, and the areas and tools which in his/her opinion were more satisfying.
SECTION C - Reflection on Personal and Professional Growth through the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio:	In this section the individual is invited to dig deeper and reflect more about the changes s/he, as an individual, has undergone through the use of the tools forming part of the ILPO55 Reference Framework especially the Employability Portfolio. The individual is invited to reflect on who s/he was prior to the Employability Portfolio Process and who s/he has become at its completion, focusing on a number of points such as (self-confidence; self-discipline; employment position; personal aspirations and goals; etc.).
SECTION D - Recommendations for Improvement:	This is meant to provide information to the organisation, offering the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio Process, in order to gather feedback for improvement in view of future offerings. Such a reflection might also reveal to the individual areas where s/he could have improved his/her performance.

Each section within the Self Reflection Exercise template is made of a number of questions in order to help the thinking and reflection process of Over 55 individuals. Questions are closely knit to one another and some may seem very similar and/or repetitive. This was done on purpose to ensure that the reflection process for each section follows a pre-determined path. Whilst it is not necessary to answer each and every question directly (given the sheer volume of questions), The ILPO55 consortium recommends Over 55 individuals cover as many questions as they can in their reflective process.

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TOOL 7 – SELF-REFLECTION EXERCISE

Introduction

The final step in the ILPO55 process is a self-reflection exercise aimed at analyzing your awareness of your own professional development as a result of your experience with the tools forming the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio Process.

Self-reflection is a skill which any professional should possess. It gives you the opportunity to learn more about yourself, your interests and preferences, your personal and career goals, your strengths and weaknesses etc. Through self-reflection you will be able to devise ways in which you can meet your goals and aspirations, master skills you already have and/or identify weaknesses and address them by finding ways for continuous improvement.

The aim of the Self Reflection Exercise is that of consolidating your experience with the ILPO55 Framework especially the Employability Portfolio and reflecting on the process which led to the situation you are in today. The ILPO55 Framework refers also at the intergenerational cooperation, therefore, we expect you to use this exercise to reflect also on this issue, from a personal perspective.

Recommendations for Use

The self-reflection exercise should be filled in by all participants making use of the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio tools. The ILPO55 Consortium recommends that this is filled in even by users who did not follow the entire portfolio process, although in this case the level of reflection will be lower.

A number of questions have been designed to help individuals in their reflection process. Each question is meant to provoke thoughts and to help users reflect on their personal experience/s. There is no need to answer each and every question directly; however, it is recommended that individuals cover as many of them as possible.

Some questions might seem repetitive; this was done on purpose so as to ensure that self-reflection process follows its intended path and meets its intended goal. Through this Self Reflection exercise the user will be:

1. drawing a summary of his/her experience (which s/he can refer to in the future) using the Employability Portfolio tool and;
2. providing feedback to the organisation offering the tools forming part of the ILPO55 Reference Framework and Employability Portfolio (as a source of feedback for continuous improvement).

The ILPO55 Consortium recommends that the user is given enough time to fill in the Self Reflection exercise but suggests that this does not exceed a maximum of 20 days from the completion of the final last tool used, so as to ensure that the user is still fresh from the Employability Portfolio Experience. Moreover the ILPO55 Consortium also recommends that the completion of the Self-reflection exercise is not left to the discretion of the individual, as the outcomes of the reflection carried out, if done correctly, will have multiple benefits for both the individual and the organisation.

ILPO55 REFERENCE FRAMEWORK - EMPLOYABILITY PORTFOLIO
SELF REFLECTION EXERCISE
SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

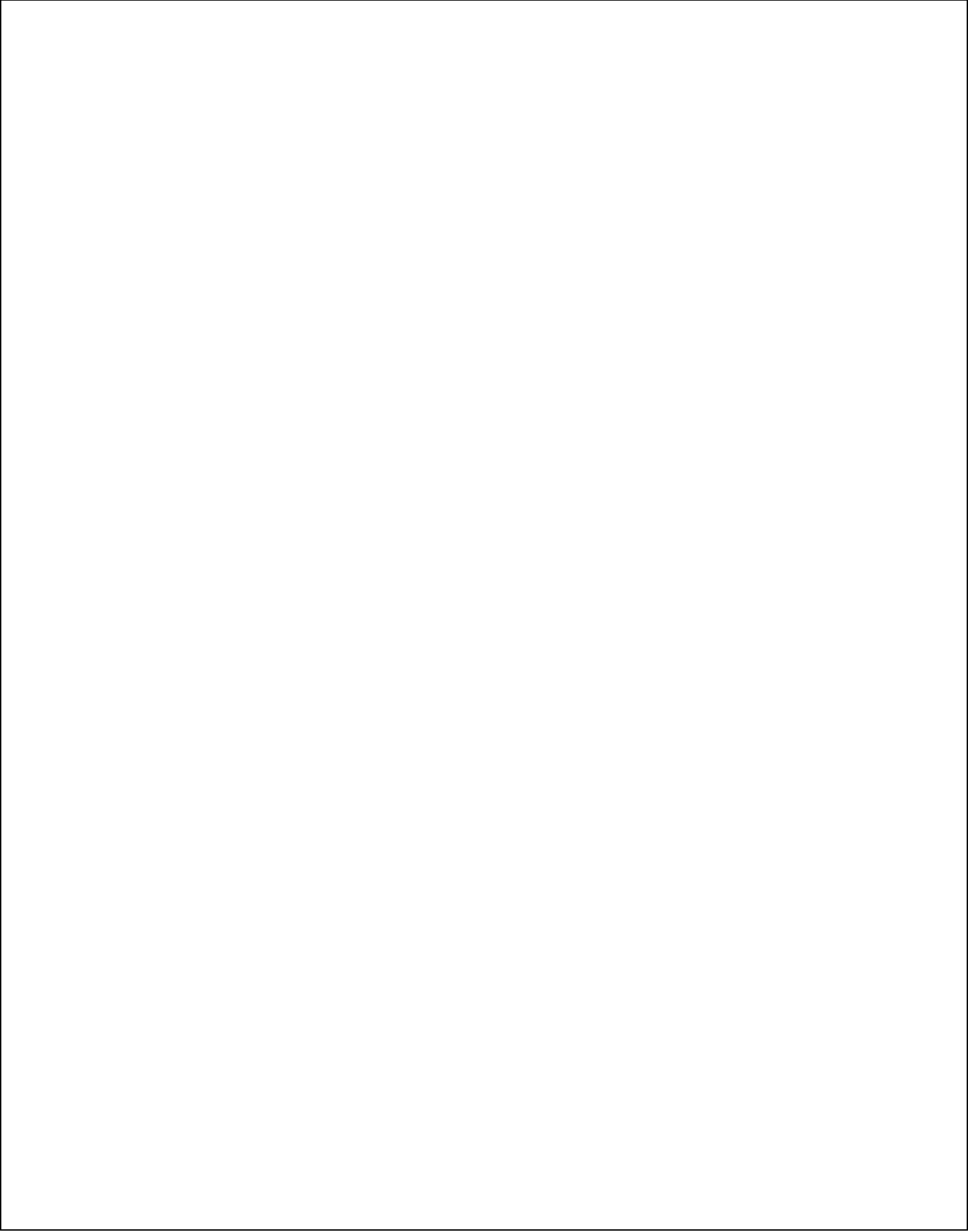
Name and Surname		Date of Birth	
I.D./ Passport Number		Currently in Employment?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Name of Organisation currently employed in			
Current Role in Organisation		Date	

SECTION B: REFLECTION ON OWN EXPERIENCE WITH THE ILPO55 EMPLOYABILITY PORTFOLIO

In this section you are expected to reflect on your personal experience with the ILPO55 Reference Framework and Employability Portfolio process; how you got to know about it and what your general opinion of the process is. The questions below will guide you to reflect on your experience.

- How much did you know about Active Ageing and Intergenerational cooperation within the Financial Services Sector in your country before the ILPO55 Reference Framework?
- How did you come to know about the ILPO55 Reference Framework and the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio?
- Why did you choose to follow the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio Process?
- Were you assigned a mentor to guide you through your process? Was this helpful?
- What problems/difficulties did you encounter while you were working on the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio? How did you overcome them? Where there any particular difficulties you couldn't overcome? What course of action did you take in this case?
- What was especially satisfying to you about the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio Process? Why? Did you ever follow a similar process?
- Which tool or tools from the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio did you particularly like/dislike? Why?
- Would you recommend the Employability Portfolio to a friend or colleague? Why?

Your Comments Here



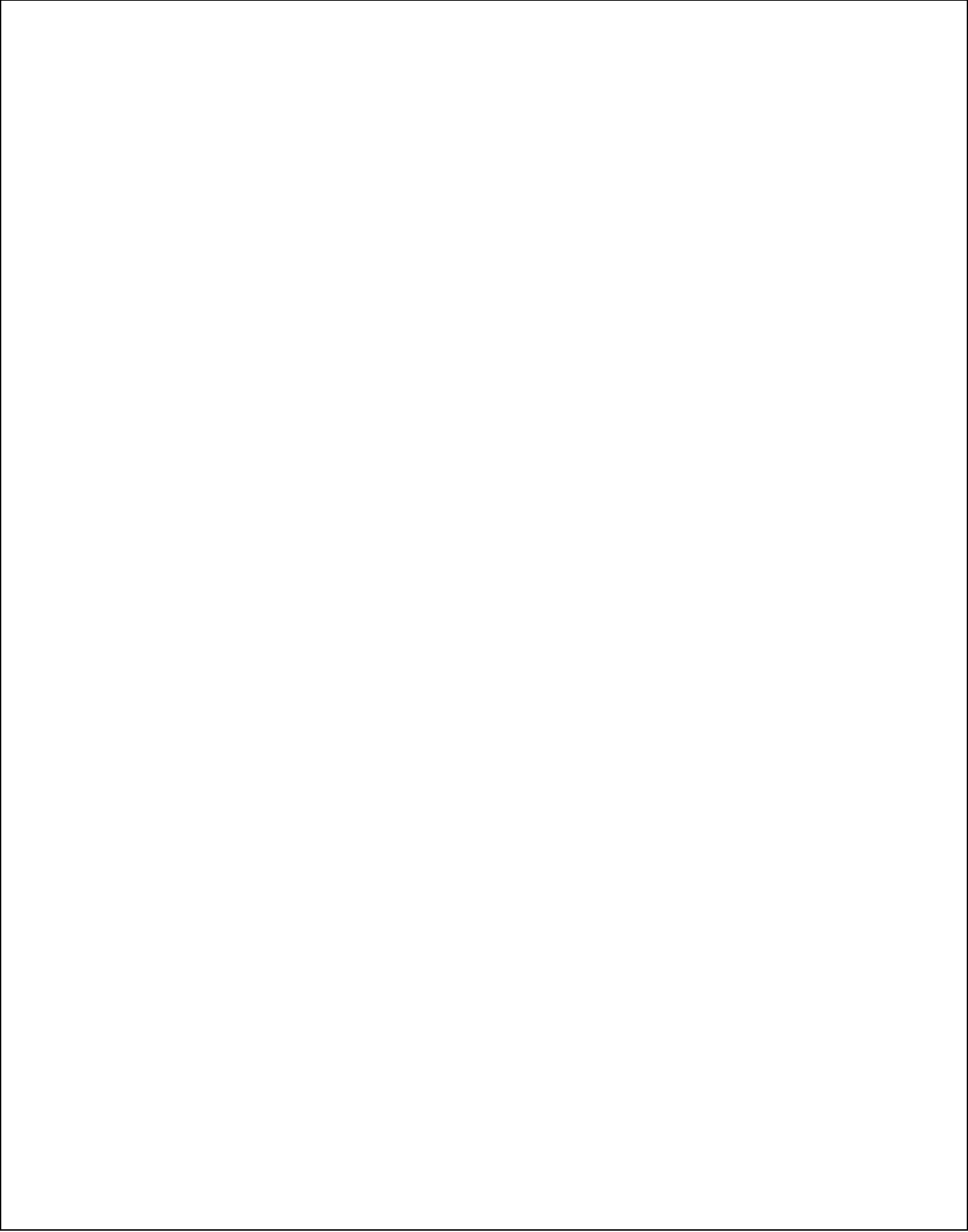
SECTION C: REFLECTION ON PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH THROUGH THE ILPO55 EMPLOYABILITY PORTFOLIO

In this section you are required to dig deeper and reflect more about the changes you, as an individual, have undergone through the use of the tools forming part of the ILPO55 Reference Framework especially the Employability Portfolio. Here you should reflect on who you were before starting the Employability Portfolio Process and who you have become at its completion, focusing on a number of points such as (self-confidence; self-discipline; employment position; personal aspirations and goals; etc.).

The questions below will guide you to reflect on your personal and professional growth.

- What were your personal and professional goals at the beginning of the ILPO55 Reference Framework? Did your goals change as you worked through the Framework?
- In your opinion, do you think that the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio was helpful to your own personal and professional growth? What were the outcomes of your ILPO55 Employability Portfolio Process?
- What did you learn about yourself as you worked through the ILPO55 Reference Framework and the various tools associated with it?
- Which tool helped you most in your process for progression?
- Had you ever considered a change in your career focus before starting work on the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio/ or after?
- Did the work on the Employability Portfolio help affect your perception of Active Ageing and intergenerational cooperation?
- Do you feel more confident to remain in employment and to progress to a higher position? Is the process for progression clearer?
- Did you reach the goals you set at the start of the Employability Portfolio? If Yes how if no Why?

Your Comments Here



SECTION D: RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

In this section you will be asked to reflect on the process you followed and provide feedback on how it can be improved. In the process of such reflection you might:

- discover areas which you would do differently next time;
- provide hands-on insight on the improvement of specific tools and or methods within the ILPO55 Reference Framework;
- provide feedback for improvement to organisations on the implementation of the ILPO55 Framework and its tools;
- suggest/ encourage the application of the ILPO55 Framework by other organisations/individuals

The questions below will guide you to reflect on possible recommendations for improvement.

- One thing I would like to see improved is...
- Which tool/s from the Framework and the Portfolio would you change if you had the chance? (*The Tools are: The 1) Mentoring Plan; 2) The E Portfolio; 3) the Competence Evaluation Questionnaire 4) The Interview 5) The Career Development Plan; 6) Recognition of Prior Learning; 8) Self-Reflection on the ILPO55 Framework process*)
- From your experience what are the aspects which need to be improved in the provision of the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio (For example: more time on specific tools; less focus on others; more time for mentoring; more help; more independence etc.)
- What would you change, from your performance, if you had to re-do the Employability Portfolio process?
- Why, in your opinion, should Over 55 employees undergo or not undergo the ILPO55 Employability Portfolio process?
- Why, in your opinion, should organisations provide the opportunity to O55 employees to remain in employment?

Your Comments Here

