Recruitment and Selection for Local FTAs and International
FTA Posts not Covered by Candidate Pools
Effective 1 November 2011

Section 1.0 Description

Introduction

1. This policy describes the recruitment and selection process for filling local FTAs and international FTA posts, which are either non-rotational or are rotational posts but not covered by candidate pools. For selection of international FTA posts through candidate pools, see the Selection and Reassignment Policy for International Rotational Posts.

2. This policy supersedes the relevant recruitment and selection policies, guidelines and Chapters in UNDP’s Personnel Manual (Volumes I & II) and those within the UNDP Recruitment Strategy of 4 April, 2005.

Definitions

3. Local: Posts in both the General Service (G-1 - G-7) category and the National Professional (NO-A - NO-E) category.

4. Non-Rotational: An internationally recruited UNDP FTA post in the professional and higher category is considered non-rotational when its professional profile, in terms of stated qualifications, experience, skills and competencies and expected contribution in terms of level of responsibility and outputs, is generally not found in other posts in the organization making rotation impracticable. TA posts are, by definition, non-rotational as they are established for a limited duration (less than one year) and for limited purposes.

5. Rotational: An internationally recruited UNDP FTA post in the professional and higher category is considered rotational when its professional profile, in terms of stated qualifications, experience, skills and competencies and the expected contribution in terms of level of responsibility and outputs, is generally similar to another UNDP post in any duty station (i.e. is replicable). Or if the rotational nature of a specific post is otherwise in the interests of UNDP.

Recruitment and selection process

6. Once an FTA post has been classified, budgeted and designated rotational or non-rotational, the strategy, selection criteria and techniques for recruitment and selection for the post must be determined prior to initiating the recruitment and selection process.

7. The Hiring Unit, in consultation with the Office of Human Resources (OHR), shall decide on the methodology and techniques to be used for identifying and evaluating candidates at each stage of the selection process, based on the requirements of the post, including the weight to
be assigned to each assessment technique in the overall evaluation of the candidates. Achieving UNDP’s diversity and gender balance requirements must be reflected in these techniques.

Vacancy management

8. The recruitment of international FTA posts is centralized at Headquarters and carried out by OHR/BOM for the following posts:
   a. HQ-based international professional FTA posts budgeted as management project;
   b. Rotational FTA posts irrespective of funding or location.
   c. Senior management positions irrespective of funding (D-1, D-2, ASG);
   d. LEAD posts
   e. Any position that is considered corporate for the purpose of centralized recruitment.

9. The recruitment of any other international FTA post (P-1 to P-7) which are for development project functions and certain management project functions at HQ whose duration is not ongoing will be decentralized and carried out by the Hiring Units in accordance with the Staff Regulations, Rules and applicable UNDP policies.

Preparing the vacancy announcement

10. The Hiring Unit, in consultation with the OHR Recruitment Section, shall prepare the vacancy announcement (VA) using the established templates and including all required information, noting the post’s rotational, or non-rotational status and centralized or decentralized recruitment authority. Qualifications (required or desirable) must be specified in the VA for the position.

Minimum academic and work experience requirements

11. The minimum standard for all international Professional and higher posts is usually a completed, advanced university degree (Masters or equivalent), combined with a number of years of relevant work experience. In certain cases, and prior to advertising the post, the Hiring Manager may decide to consider candidates holding a completed Bachelors’ degree with two additional years of relevant work experience in cases where specialized job requirements do not necessarily call for a Masters’ degree or the local labour market makes the requirement impracticable. The minimum standard for General Service posts is completion of high school (secondary school), combined with a number of years of relevant work experience For further information on minimum academic qualifications and relevant work experience requirements for recruiting staff in UNDP, including requests for a waiver and step determination, refer to the policy on Minimum Academic Requirements.
Vacancy announcement

12. The Vacancy Announcement (VA) for the post must state all the competencies and other corporate requirements for the position, in conformity with the post description and corporate standards. It may also indicate qualifications that are desirable for the post. Only those qualifications (required or desirable) that are indicated in the VA should be used to assess candidate suitability for the post.

13. UNDP has established four separate categories to advertise VAs. All centrally managed posts will normally be advertised internally first, unless there is a compelling business case to advertise internally and externally concurrently. For posts that fall under the hiring managers' decentralised managed authority, in consultation with OHR/HR, it is their purview to decide which level or levels a position should be open to. The four levels include:

   a. Level 1 - ‘Internal’ open to internal UNDP candidates only (i.e. PA/CA UNDP staff members and UNDP FTA holders whose selection was reviewed by an Advisory Body (APB/APP, or CRB/CRP);
   b. Level 2 - ‘UNDP’ with staff contracts: open to all Level 1 category staff as well as UNDP FTA holders whose selection was not reviewed by an Advisory Body (APB/APP, or CRB/CRP), JPOs with an EOD before 1 July 2009;
   c. Level 3 – ‘UN Common System’: open to all Level 1 and 2 staff as well as holders of PA/CA/FTA of entities of the UN Common System;
   d. Level 4 – ‘External’: open to all Level 1, 2 and 3 staff as well as UNDP TA holders and any other external candidate (including SSAs, SCs and UNVs).

14. FTA vacancies will normally be posted for a minimum of one week. All International FTA vacancies must be posted on the UNDP corporate website. OHR is responsible for quality control and review of the VA prior to posting on the UNDP Job Site for editorial consistency and for compliance with eligibility and other corporate requirements. All VAs for local FTA posts outside New York Headquarters must be posted on the appropriate office website (or other medium, if necessary).

15. All local FTA posts will normally be advertised first internally, unless a solid business case can be made to OHR/HR for advertising the post internally and externally at the same time. Country offices vary in terms of size and availability of candidates for certain positions. Nevertheless, the practice of simultaneous advertising (external and internal) should always be cleared by OHR/HR in advance.

Additional means to identify potential external candidates

16. Hiring Units are encouraged to use appropriate means to identify potential external candidates, including websites, job portals, newspapers and other publications, as well as networking with professional associations, academic and research institutions, think tanks, NGOs/CSOs, and directly with individuals who may have an interest in the post.
Furthermore, the Hiring Units may identify suitable candidates from a roster of previously screened and assessed (see paragraphs 21-25, below).

17. Hiring Units may also consider employing a recruitment consultant or firm to identify potential candidates, or to support the recruitment process in other ways, including screening of applications or conducting reference checks. The OHR Recruitment Unit should be consulted for technical advice when considering employment of a recruitment consultant.

Receipt and review of applications

18. All candidates for an FTA post shall apply through submission of an application electronically via the UNDP Job Site, including a completed, updated and signed Personal History Form (P-11), certifying that the information contained therein is fully accurate. **No candidate shall be given further consideration for the post without first having submitted a completed P-11 as part of the application for the position.** Please see UNDP Policies on Academic Qualifications and Family Relations for specific required procedures on verifying information in P-11 forms.

19. UNDP is under no obligation to consider late or incomplete applications, or to confirm receipt of an application. Where there is a business case imperative, OHR may elect to accept late applications to a vacancy.

20. The closing date for applications may be extended, following a preliminary review of applications if the Hiring Unit finds that the quality, quantity or diversity of the candidates is not sufficient to conduct a competitive selection process.

Establishment of rosters

21. A roster is a list of pre-screened or pre-assessed candidates who have applied for a similar post over the past twenty-four months and were found to be qualified for the position and have been approved by an advisory body. Rostered candidates must be fully suited and meet all of the qualifications and criteria for the post.

22. With the approval of the Director, OHR, Hiring Units may elect to create rosters of candidates. In the event that a Hiring Unit wishes to create a roster, procedures must be established to describe its use and maintenance, including the methodology for designating individuals from the roster as candidates for vacant post. The Hiring Unit is responsible for maintaining the roster.

23. Rostered candidates may be added to the list of applications for a post, with the concurrence of the candidate.

24. In the event that a post becomes vacant within 12 months of being filled, or an identical vacancy is opened, Hiring Units, in consultation with OHR/HR, may offer the post to rostered candidates without re-advertising the position.
25. The application from the rostered candidate may be submitted after the closing date for applications. Names of candidates added from the roster should be so noted on the list of applications.

**Reviewing candidates**

26. Technical experts may be used to conduct an initial assessment of applications based on the technical selection criteria specified in the VA. This may be useful especially when an external advertisement has generated a large number of applications for certain highly specialized posts.

27. Only those criteria specified in the VA may be used in the review of applications and screening of candidates for the post. The reasons for screening in or out of a given application must be documented at each stage of the selection process.

28. **Long-listing process:** The long-listing of candidates involves an initial screening of applications by the Hiring Unit against minimum corporate requirements, including eligibility, academic qualifications, years of relevant work experience, language fluencies and the order of retention (PA, CA, long serving FTA and qualified women, in that order).

29. No candidate will be given further consideration who does not meet all the requirements for the position (e.g. academic, experience; languages; etc) as specified in the VA.

30. **Short-listing process:** Following the long-listing process, the remaining candidates are reviewed for short-listing. To arrive at a short-list of candidates, the Hiring Unit engages in a closer review of a candidate’s professional and managerial background against the requirements of the post, giving additional weight to those candidates who possess one or more of the desirable variables for the post, as specified in the VA.

31. The short-listing process also involves additional fact-finding. Hiring Units are encouraged to use a telephone screening to test language fluencies and to clarify issues raised in the job application, including the P.11. Hiring Units may wish at this stage to employ a simple technical screening to assess a short-listed candidates actual relevant skills. The additional information or assessment results obtained from a telephone screening must be fully documented.

32. This review should also look into potential issues involving residency requirements applicable for the duty station.

**Performance reports**

33. UNDP Internal candidates [see paragraph 13 a] under consideration for short-listing must submit their three most recent Results and Competency Assessments (RCAs) to the Hiring Unit, where applicable. Candidates from the UN Common System are also required to submit their last three performance reports, where applicable. The RCAs and similar UN
performance reports are an important input into the selection process, as an evaluation of a candidate’s recent accomplishments and demonstrated competencies.

**Reference checks, verification of academic qualifications and family relations**

34. No recruitment and selection process is complete without proper and thorough verification of critical information, including academic qualifications, languages, nationality, prior UN employment, family relations within the UN Common System and detailed reference checks. The Personal History Form (P-11) is mandatory for all recruitments and selections and relevant candidate information on these matters requires verification and, in particular, the candidate’s employment history. Please see [UNDP Policy on Academic Qualifications](#) which spells out specific procedures and criteria for verifying academic qualifications and [UNDP Policy on Family Relationships](#).

35. Former UNDP or UN Common System staff: Prior to completing the short-listing process, the Hiring Unit, to the extent possible, must conduct a preliminary reference check on candidates who indicate on their P-11 form that they were formerly employed by UNDP or elsewhere in the UN Common System. The Hiring Unit is expected to verify the competencies and integrity of these candidates directly with their previous UN employers, as well as their employment history, and to determine the circumstances under which they were separated from service.

36. Reference checks for all candidates, whether current UN Common System staff or not, should be conducted only after the Hiring Unit has consulted with the candidate and obtained permission prior to contacting the current employer for the purpose of conducting a reference check. It may be appropriate to conduct the mandatory reference check only after a short-listing process and an interview is conducted.

**The short-list**

37. A short-list of candidates should consist of a minimum of two and (generally) a maximum of four candidates.

38. The short-list of candidates will include a minimum of one and preferably two or more qualified women from the pool of applications. The reasons for not short-listing women candidates for these posts must be fully documented. Where no qualified women have been identified for short-listing, the Hiring Unit should review the applications to ensure that no qualified women have been overlooked. In the event that no additional qualified women have been identified, the Hiring Unit is encouraged to re-advertise the post, and take affirmative steps to bring the post to the attention of qualified female candidates. Such actions should be fully documented.

39. OHR may add the names of other staff members to the short-list of candidates in furtherance of UNDP talent management and diversity priorities, including unassigned PA, CA and FTA staff members with good performance records. In such an instance, the total number of short-listed candidates may be increased to more than four.
40. The Hiring Unit shall comply with the rules conferring priority consideration to staff members who are unassigned before deciding that a candidate is not placed on the short-list, including a written explanation of the decision (refer to the Recruitment and Selection Framework).

41. If, at any time during the long or short-listing processes, where there appears to be fewer than three candidates who meet all the requirements of the post, the Hiring Unit may elect to re-advertise the position, or proceed with the selection process. In the event that only one suitable candidate has been identified, the Hiring Unit may elect to re-advertise or, in consultation with the Chief of Recruitment, proceed with interviewing one candidate.

Assessment of short-listed candidates

42. All short-listed candidates will undergo the same selection process and by the same means, whenever practicable.

43. Hiring Units are strongly encouraged to use a range of assessment tools and techniques to evaluate short-listed candidates. Such tools and techniques shall include but are not limited to, technical testing, interviews or an assessment of work samples; performance reports; reference checks; competency-based panel interviews. The Hiring Unit shall consult with OHR/HR to ensure the selection process uses the most appropriate approaches.

44. Technical Assessment: To assess a short-listed candidate’s technical competencies, the Hiring Unit is encouraged to use at least one of the following:

   a. technical interview;
   b. on-line written test; or
   c. technical test administered at the office.
   d. work samples

45. The technical interview panel should be comprised of individuals with the substantive background to evaluate the technical suitability of the candidate for the post. Panelists may be drawn from within or outside the Hiring Unit and on occasion may include persons external to UNDP. Members of the technical panel should not sit on the competency-based interview panel to avoid the appearance of undue influence over the final selection decision (although OHR is cognizant of the difficulty of this in small Country Offices).

46. Only those candidates who have met the minimum technical competencies for the post, as determined by a technical assessment based on pre-determined standards, may be given further consideration for the position.

47. Competency-Based Interview: Every short-listed candidate for FTA international posts will be invited to participate in a panel interview.
48. The Hiring Unit will identify up to five competencies from the VA that are the most essential to success in the post for assessment at the interview.

49. When evaluating a candidate, the panel should consider only the information provided to them during the course of the interview.

50. The panel will rate a candidate on each of the competencies being assessed, assigning a score for each rating, to arrive at an overall score of the candidate for the interview. The panel will also assign one of three recommendations for each candidate including; recommended, recommended with reservations or not recommended and rank candidates in order of suitability for a position. The scoring of each candidate will be reflected in the panel’s interview report which will also detail the reservations, if any, noted by the panel. Candidates who are recommended with reservations must still meet the stated qualifications for the position. The reservations may relate to objective perceptions by the panel as to various aspects of the candidates overall fit and anticipated performance but not in terms of a defect of the qualifications listed in the vacancy. Only those candidates who, in the view of the interview panel, possess the minimum competencies required for the post and meet UNDP’s ethical standards, may be given further consideration.

51. No recruitment and selection process is complete without proper and thorough verification of critical information, including academic qualifications, languages, nationality, prior UN employment, and detailed reference checks. The Personal History Form (P-11) provides a useful source of candidate information on these matters that requires verification and, in particular, on the candidate’s employment history for purposes of reference-checking. Please see UNDP’s Policy on Academic Qualifications which spells out specific criteria for verifying academic qualifications.

52. Given the importance of the verification process to the proper selection of a candidate, under no circumstances may a proposed initial appointment be submitted to the CRB or an offer of appointment be extended or otherwise communicated to a candidate, without the hiring unit first having completed all reference checks and found them to be satisfactory.

53. Conducting the reference check by telephone is often the fastest way to obtain a reference, and may yield important information that might not otherwise be obtained through a more formal, written process. Reference checks by phone should follow a consistent format of questions, with questions and answers documented in detail.

Selection of a candidate

54. The results of the various assessment techniques used in the evaluation of short-listed candidates shall be summarized in a candidate assessment report prepared by OHR/HR for submission to the Hiring Manager for consideration.

55. When selecting a candidate for the post, the Hiring Manager shall take into account the results from all the assessment methods used to evaluate the short-listed candidates,
including the technical assessment/interview; competency-based panel interview; reference checks and performance reports.

56. The Hiring Manager shall also give due regard to internal candidates for the post, in conformity with Staff Regulation 4.4, and priority consideration to those unassigned staff members who are holding PA, CA or FTA appointments with good performance records.

57. In the event that a fully qualified candidate cannot be found following a competitive selection process, the Hiring Unit may re-advertise the position with the view of attracting additional applications, or may have the job description revised and reclassified at a lower level, and proceed with a new recruitment and selection process.

Accountability

58. The Hiring Manager will ensure throughout the recruitment and selection process that the specific strategy decided upon for filling the post has been followed and any deviations noted.

59. The Hiring Manager will ensure that all individuals who contributed to the recruitment and selection process (interview panel members, candidate referees, technical consultants, etc.) are fully briefed on the post, including its functions and requirements, and their respective roles in the process.

60. The Hiring Manager will ensure that there is a proper and thorough verification of critical information used in the selection process, and that the entire process is properly documented.

61. The Hiring Manager will ensure and sign off that the principles stated in the Recruitment and Selection Framework and applicable Staff Rules and Regulations have been applied.

Review by the CRB

62. The Compliance Review Board (CRB) at UNDP Headquarters (New York) will review all initial appointments and promotion decisions of international FTA staff up to the D-1/P-6 level. Selections involving lateral moves do not require CRB review. The accountability for these submissions rests with the hiring managers.