**Rest and Recuperation** Structure Element - Description​

1. Rest and Recuperation (R&R) is provided to alleviate stress and promote the health and wellbeing of staff assigned to designated locations.    R&R is neither additional annual leave nor financial compensation or incentive for the hardship of the duty station; rather it is an investment in productivity and wellness for those assigned to dangerous and stressful duty stations where regular absences from the stressful location is a necessary form of stress relief.

**Governance**

1. In order to harmonize R&R practices across the agencies of the UN common system a framework for establishing rest and recuperation has been developed by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC). The ICSC has statutory authority to regulate the methodology governing R&R.  The Standing Committee on Field Duty Stations (Field Group) of the Human Resources Network of the Chief Executives Board (CEB) determines the duty stations that qualify for R & R, the R & R frequencies and designates the destinations, in accordance with the framework established by the ICSC and on the basis of information on conditions reported by the UN Country Team (UNCT) and the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS).

1. Rest and recuperation is composed of periodic travel away from the duty station and approved time off from work.   The two elements, time off and travel, cannot be separated, accrued, transferred or carried over.

1. The following definitions apply:

a)   **R&R designated duty station:** a duty station for which the entitlement of R&R has been established.

b)  **R&R destination:**a duty station or location established in consultation with the Field Group of the HR Network that is suitable for R&R and is the basis for setting R&R travel costs.  UNCTs do not have the authority to establish R&R destinations.

The established destination is applicable for locally recruited staff members on detail or on travel status from outside the country where the designated R&R duty station is located.

  For locally recruited staff members on detail or on travel status within the same country, their R&R destination is their original duty station, security clearance permitting.

c)  **R&R Cycle**:  the frequency of approved R&R trips, which is consistent with the framework established by the ICSC and in consultation with the Field Group.

Structure Element - Relevant Policies

​**Eligibility**

1. The following individuals shall be eligible for R&R:

a)   internationally recruited staff members including Temporary Appointment (TA) holders posted in, or on detail to, or on travel status to the R&R duty station;

b)   locally recruited staff members including TA holders on detail to or on travel status to the R&R duty station; and

c) internationally recruited United Nations Volunteers (UNVs) posted in the R&R duty station.

1. The following individuals are not eligible for R&R:

a)   locally recruited staff members including TA holders serving in the R&R duty station;

b) consultants/Individual Contractors serving in or on travel status to the R&R duty station;

c) family members or dependents of individuals who are authorized to be present at duty stations approved for R&R purposes;

d) any staff member or individual whose assignment to the R&R duty station is shorter than two R&R cycles; and

e) any other individual not specifically mentioned as eligible

**Duration**

1. The duration of R&R consists of a maximum of five consecutive calendar days not charged to annual leave (AL), in addition to the actual travel time in each direction to/from the R&R destination.

**Combination with other types of authorized absence**

1. Subject to exigencies of service, R&R may be taken in conjunction with the following:

a)   Official holidays that occur either in the R&R designated duty station or R&R destination do not change the duration of R&R.

b)   Annual leave, when prior approval has been obtained from the manager, except when such leave is taken for home leave or family visit travel.  In such cases, AL must be taken after the R&R period has been completed, not before (to ensure that the qualifying period in the duty station has been served).  In such cases, the count towards eligibility for the next R&R, which includes travel time, begins upon return to the duty station, not at the end of the R&R period. Where R&R is combined with annual leave, any illness occurring during the period of annual leave shall be subject to the provisions of [staff rule 6.2 (f)](https://policy.un.org/browse-by-source/staff-rules#Rule%206.2).

c)   Certified sick leave, subject to appropriate medical certification;

d)   Travel on official business, subject to the following:

i.  When staff members or eligible individuals are permitted to combine rest and recuperation with travel on official business for their personal convenience, any additional costs above the normal entitlement in respect of the official business travel shall be borne by the individual.  No additional travel days are granted when R&R is associated with official duty travel.

ii.  UNDP shall not be responsible for any additional expenses or liabilities that may be incurred as a result of combining R&R with travel on official duty travel, including any costs incurred in connection with delays, ticket changes, cancellations or fare increases.

1. R&R may not be combined with any of the following:

a)   Travel on home leave, family visit or reverse education grant travel. Should such a combination occur after the approval or commencement of R&R, all days previously authorized as R&R shall be charged to annual leave;

b)   Parental Leave or Uncertified Sick Leave. Should such a combination occur after the approval of either R&R, all days previously authorized as R&R shall be charged to annual leave; or other leave, as appropriate;

c)   Travel on departure from the R&R designated duty station at the end of the staff member’s or other eligible individual’s appointment or assignment, unless they are transferred or reassigned without a break to another duty station designated for R&R, and they do not take any leave.

10. In the event that an R&R break or travel time should fall on non-working days, there is no entitlement to annual leave or compensatory leave for these days nor can the total duration of R&R be extended beyond the total of 5 consecutive calendar days.

1. If the duration of the R&R is shortened by the staff member or individual, no carryover is possible to the next R&R.  Similarly, any unused R&R trips cannot be carried over, added to the total of the next R&R, or commuted to cash.

1. Any deviations in timing or change of destination on R&R must be communicated to the Office Management in a timely fashion.

**Qualifying Service**

1. Staff members shall be on full pay status while on R&R.

1. The period of qualifying service is determined by the R&R frequency.  R&R must be taken within one month following the completion of the period of qualifying service.  It shall be forfeited if the staff member elects in writing not to take it within the prescribed period.

1. Managers must ensure that R&R breaks are taken at the appropriate time.  Should exigencies of service, as determined in writing by the head of office, make it impossible for a staff member to take rest and recuperation within that period, it may be taken during the following month on an exceptional basis.

1. R&R may not be taken in advance, carried forward from one qualifying period to the next or combined with subsequent R&R periods.

1. In order to be considered as “qualifying” for R&R purposes, service at a rest and recuperation designated duty station must be uninterrupted. Qualifying service is considered interrupted by any of the following:

a) Travel on official business outside the rest and recuperation designated duty station, including travel for training purposes, if the staff member or other eligible individual takes more than three days of annual or special leave in conjunction with official travel;

b) Absence from the duty station on family leave, family visit travel, home leave or sick leave, special leave or annual leave for more than three consecutive calendar days.

1. The period of qualifying service shall run from the date of arrival of the staff member or other eligible individual at the duty station, or from the date of return to such a duty station after an interruption of qualifying service, or from the date of return to such a duty station after an absence on rest and recuperation.

1. When qualifying service has been interrupted, such service accrued before the interruption shall be forfeited and a new period shall begin upon the return to duty by the staff member at the duty station designated for rest and recuperation purposes.

1. Qualifying service shall be considered suspended when a staff member or other eligible individual travels on official business outside the duty station, including travel for training purposes, to a duty station that is *not* approved for rest and recuperation purposes. The period of qualifying service will resume from the date of return to the duty station approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

**Qualifying R&R duty stations**

1. The applicability and periodicity of R&R depends upon the conditions prevailing in a particular location, and can be activated or discontinued according to changes in conditions at the location.

1. The following duty stations may qualify for R&R:
   1. **Non-family duty station**: A *Non-family* duty station is defined as a duty station where the medium- or longer-term presence of recognized dependents is deemed dangerous or unsuitable for reasons of their safety and security.
   2. **Difficult duty station**: A *Difficult duty station is a duty station with high levels of hardship and is* classified as category “D” or “E” by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for the purpose of the mobility and hardship scheme. These classifications are based on the assessment of local living conditions and infrastructures such as climate, health-care facilities, availability of housing and other goods and services, and personal security.

**Frequency of R&R**

1. The frequency of R&R breaks is set out in the ICSC Framework for R&R.  More frequent R&R cycles apply to duty stations with acute security conditions.

**Utilization of R&R**

1. In order to ensure staff well-being, UNDP strongly encourages staff members and other eligible individuals to avail themselves of the R&R break.  Managers are responsible for organizing work to allow staff to utilize their R&R as there is no provision for carrying over of unutilized R&R.

1. Staff members will not be obliged to perform work-related tasks during periods of R&R.  However, staff may be requested to perform official duties before or after their R&R at the R&R destination.  Such days will be counted as on official travel status with payment of DSA.

1. R&R travel not exercised 30 days before a staff member’s separation from service or reassignment from the duty station shall be forfeited and shall not be payable or credited to annual leave.

1. R&R is not to be used as an end of service break.  R&R is intended to provide rest and recuperation thus allowing continued wellbeing for service in stressful locations.  End of assignment breaks are achieved through Annual Leave.

1. If a staff member on R&R chooses not to return to their duty station for the mandatory 30 calendar day period prior to separation or reassignment, the cost of their last R&R travel is recovered.  If the reason for non-return is exigency of service or certified sick leave there is no recovery.

**R&R Destinations**

1. R&R destinations consist of locations near the R&R duty station that are suitable for R&R purposes in terms of cost and convenience of transportation, and which allow for periods of reduced stress.

1. When the R&R entitlement has been approved, R&R destinations are established by the Field Group after the recommendation of the UNCT (taking into account travel cost and other operational considerations).

1. R&R destinations establish the entitlement for cost purposes.  However, staff may choose to exercise their R&R in any other location, provided that any additional costs above the established amount for the approved R&R destination are borne by the staff member.

1. In the case of locally recruited staff members on travel status/loan within the same country of recruitment, the R&R destination will be their usual (originating) duty station unless the place is not accessible due to conflict in the area. In the latter case, the Head of Office has the authority to designate another R&R destination within the country.

1. Staff members and other eligible individuals may travel to other destinations of their choice for the purposes of R&R, subject to security clearance. In such cases, they will be required to meet any additional costs involved.

**Travel**

1. UNDP pays for the cost of travel based on the lowest fare, economy class or by the cheapest and most direct route from the R&R designated duty station to the R&R destination. The Country Office may purchase the ticket or provide a lump sum payment equivalent to the cost of the air ticket the Organization would have otherwise purchased had the staff member travelled to the designated R&R destination.

1. Whenever United Nations transportation is available, it will be provided free of charge and no payment for travel costs will apply. Should a staff member or other eligible individual choose for their own convenience to travel on a date when United Nations transportation is not available, no payment for travel costs will apply.

1. As stated above, R&R may be combined with travel on official duty travel. DSA and terminal expenses are not, however, payable for continuation of travel on rest and recuperation. Regardless of the destination chosen by the staff member or eligible individual to rest and recuperate, which may be different from the designated R&R destination, the Organization’s financial responsibility is limited to the travel costs as indicated above.

1. The staff member may opt to go to a different place than the approved R&R destination, subject to security clearance. However, UNDP will only pay the lower of the two following transportation costs:

a)   travel from the R&R designated duty station to the approved R&R destination and return; *or*

b)  travel from the R&R designated duty station to the place where R&R is exercised and return.

38. If the Organization has designated two R&R destinations and a lump sum is provided in lieu of purchasing a ticket, the Organization will determine the lump sum amount applicable for each rest and recuperation destination. If the lump sum amounts vary, the Organization shall provide the lower of the two. The higher of the two lump sum amounts shall only be payable upon the staff member’s or other eligible individual’s request; they must provide proof of travel to the rest and recuperation destination for which the higher lump sum is applicable.

1. In accordance with the section above, transportation or payment for travel costs shall not be provided to family members who are authorized to be present at duty stations approved for rest and recuperation purposes.

1. Staff members or other eligible individuals who are in receipt of payment for R&R travel  are obliged to keep their proof of travel documentation (i.e. boarding passes and tickets) and submit these upon request for up to two years.  Staff or eligible individuals who do not travel on their approved R&R and fail to return their payment would have a  recovery of their lump sum amount, potential loss of future R&R entitlement, and would be subject to relevant disciplinary measures as appropriate.

1. DSA is not payable while the staff member or eligible individual is on rest and recuperation travel.

**Relationship of R&R with duty travel**

1. If an eligible individual is sent on official duty travel (DT) to another R&R designated duty station, the count of the qualifying service towards the R&R break will continue while the individual is on official duty travel.

1. If an eligible individual is sent on official travel to a duty station that is not an R&R designated duty station, the count of the qualifying service towards the R&R break will be suspended and will resume following the staff member’s return at the R&R designated duty station.

1. When eligible individuals go on official duty travel to a location not qualifying for R&R travel within normally two weeks before or after the date they are due for R&R travel, the following applies:
   1. the official duty travel replaces the R&R travel; or
   2. the duration of the official duty travel should be extended to add the approved authorized period of R&R (i.e. five days);
2. The count towards the next R&R travel starts the day following the eligible individual’s return to the R&R duty station.

**Relationship of R&R with other entitlement travel**

1. All entitlement travel must be taken when it becomes due and thus replaces any R&R that might otherwise have been taken. In these cases, qualification for the next R&R break will start the day following the staff member’s return to the R&R designated duty station. R&R may not be combined with travel on departure from the location at the end of a mission.

1. R&R does not affect the periodicity or accrual of other forms of travel or leave entitlement (e.g. family visit, home leave or reverse education grant travel).  However, travel on home leave, family visit or reverse education grant shall not be authorized until at least three months after the eligible individual’s return from R&R. However, for those duty stations with a six- or eight-week R&R travel frequency, the normal minimum three-month interval for entitlement-related travels (e.g. home leave, family visit or reverse education grant travel) is reduced to six or eight weeks.

Structure Element - Flow Chart

Structure Element - Deliverables

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Structure Element - Roles & Responsibilities

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Responsible party​** | **Responsibilities​** | **Remarks​** |
| ​**International Civil Service Commission (ICSC)** | * ​Determines classification of duty stations * Regulates R&R framework and establishes R&R cycles | ​ |
| **​HR Network Standing Committee on Field Duty Stations (Field Group)** | * ​Establishes qualifying R&R duty stations * Determines the frequency of R&R breaks * Establishes R&R destinations | * ​Determined by hardship classification and security criteria as set out in the ICSC R & R framework * Based on cost, geographic proximity, connectivity and security conditions * According to ICSC R&R Framework |
| ​**OHR Policy** | * ​Chairs the Field Group and provides secretariat support. * Maintains a list of duty stations at which R&R applies |  |
| **​Staff Member** | * ​Familiarizes with the R&R policy * Takes R&R break when it becomes due to ensure self well-being | ​ |
| ​**Head of Office** | * ​Ensures work of office is planned taking into consideration the R&R entitlements of eligible staff * Ensures R&R breaks are taken at the appropriate time * Approves R&R breaks for all eligible individuals in their office | ​ |
| ​**Regional Bureau Director** | * ​Approves R&R breaks for Heads of Office | ​ |
| ​**Operations Manager** | * ​Verifies, processes and certifies Travel Authorization | ​ |
| ​**Leave Monitor** | * ​Maintains R&R records | ​ |

Structure Element - Templates and Forms