

**CEB Human Resources Network  
Harmonization of Business Practices**

**Harmonization of vacancy advertisement and selection process at country level  
for General Service and National Officer positions**

**Introduction:**

1. This project proposal, prepared by UNESCO, was approved for release and funding by the HLCM Steering Committee for Business Practices. It was reviewed and approved by the HR Network on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2011. The HLCM, at its 22<sup>nd</sup> session, endorsed this initiative and agreed to communicate its full support to the relevant organizational units and country offices.

[At the 24<sup>th</sup> session of the HR Network, UNESCO reiterated its commitment to lead this project however, given the current situation the Organization is facing since end 2011; the launch of the project has been delayed. **It is hoped the project will commence in July 2012 - subject to the identification of resources – both human and financial – see paragraph 15 below**].

**Project Objective:**

2. The objective of the 'Project of Harmonization of the Vacancy Advertisement and Selection Process at country level for Gs and NPO positions' is to:
  - a) **Develop standardized vacancy advertisement**
  - b) **Harmonize the recruitment criteria for similar posts**
  - c) **Introduce common selection tools and mechanisms**

**Project Purpose / Reason:**

3. A **standardized vacancy advertisement, harmonized recruitment criteria** and **common selection tools/mechanisms** will contribute to streamline the sourcing and hiring process of staff locally, and increase the collaboration of UN Agencies at country level, in the area of Human Resources.
4. Greater harmonization in UN agency mechanisms and processes governing hiring of staff at country level (General Service and National Officers) will contribute to greater effectiveness in recruitment operations at country level.

## **Expected Benefits:**

5. The main benefits from this project is expected to be:
  - An improved outreach for qualified candidates at country level;
  - Reduced competition amongst Agencies;
  - Provision of greater career development opportunities amongst UNCT local staff;
  - Streamlined and harmonized mechanisms for local hiring such as pre-screening and interview panels with UNCT members that have the potential to reduce transaction costs and increase efficiency and collaboration at the country level;
  - standardised tools (such as reference checking, competency-based interview templates, tests (clerical, accounting, IT ..) that improve the quality of recruitment at country level;

## **Background:**

6. The General Assembly has emphasized the need for harmonization of business practices (including human resource practices) to support the Delivery as One at country level.
7. The HR Network commissioned a review of contractual arrangements, staff regulations and rules, policies and practices which was completed by a consultant in 2010. Part 2 of the Consultant Report reviews the selection processes for vacant positions and makes recommendations notably on the harmonization of vacancy notices, the use of agreed upon assessment tools for local recruitment, the use of inter-agency interview panels and consideration of UN employees as internal candidates for all UN staff locally etc.
8. This is the first project of the HR Network Plan of Action to be initiated. The project will cover the first two phases of the recruitment process, e.g. the vacancy notice/definition of job profile and the Evaluation phase (screening, testing, interviews, reference checking etc.); the project will not cover the Review process (joint staff management review bodies), nor the selection decision process.
9. Once the pilot is assessed, and if successful, then an extension of the scope of the project, as well as to other country offices will be envisaged.

## Proposed Activities and Outputs:

<b>Activity 1</b>	<b>Develop harmonized recruitment criteria for similar posts</b>
Output 1	Harmonized recruitment criteria (qualifications, professional experience, skills/knowledge requirements) for GS posts of same profile and level
Output 2	Harmonized recruitment criteria (qualifications, professional experience, skills/knowledge requirements) for NPO posts of same profile and level
Output 3	Harmonized recruitment criteria for GS posts adopted by local UN Agencies
Output 4	Harmonized recruitment criteria for NPO posts adopted by local UN Agencies
<b>Activity 2</b>	<b>Design a harmonized, common vacancy format</b>
Output 5	A model vacancy format for GS post at country local
Output 6	A model vacancy format for NPO posts at country level
Output 7	Model vacancy formats for GS and NPOs successfully piloted at country level and implemented by Agencies
<b>Activity 3</b>	<b>Develop common selection/recruitment mechanisms</b>
Output 8	Analysis of tools and mechanisms in use locally for GS and NPO posts
Output 9	Assessment of best practices locally (mechanisms and tools)
Output 10	Development of proposal for introducing common panel interviews and harmonized pre-screening mechanisms
Output 11	Development of tools for common UN use at country level : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• competency-based interview templates</li> <li>• models of clerical tests</li> <li>• model reference checking templates</li> </ul>
Output 12	Selection mechanisms successfully piloted at country level and adopted by Agencies
Output 13	Selection/screening tools successfully piloted at country level and adopted by Agencies
<b>Activity 4</b>	<b>Pilot the opening of vacancies (GS and NPOs) to staff from other Agencies on a reciprocal basis</b>
Output 14	Assess policies and provisions in force on the opening of vacancies (GS and NPOs) to staff from other Agencies
Output 15	Develop a proposal for the pilot of opening of vacancies (GS/NPO) to staff from other Agencies on a reciprocal basis
Output 16	Pilot with one Gs post and one NPO post at the location
Output 17	Based on the pilot, make proposals for the implementation in other Agencies (including harmonization of provisions in force)

10. It is important that there is a clear legal framework for the project. Therefore, for each activity envisaged under the project, a clear assessment of the legal implications will be made, prior to the start of the activity, to ensure that any legal hurdles are cleared/addressed beforehand.

11. The project will include a benchmarking phase, as well as identification of local initiatives and best practices locally. Building on successful local initiatives will be a key consideration.

12. Hanoi and Montevideo, 2 Delivering as One countries have been selected as the pilot locations. The involvement of at least two other UN Agencies (one Fund and one Specialized Agency), present at country level, will be required, and a precondition to the start of the project. UNESCO and these 2 other Agencies will constitute a **sub-working group of the HR Network** on this “harmonized local recruitment process” project. The Staff Federations would be involved in the project.
13. UNESCO will lead the project, be responsible for hiring consultant(s), for liaising with the other Agencies and for reporting regularly on progress to the HR Network.

### Expected Outcomes and Success Indicators:

14. The project is expected to deliver outcomes at individual/country level of participating UN agencies/organisations which can be monitored:
  - Recruitment criteria for GS and NPO posts.
  - Templates for competency-based interviews.
  - Harmonized tests (such as clerical tests), drawing on best practices.
  - Common vacancy formats for NPO and Gs posts.
  - Enhanced efficiency quality in the hiring process at country level.

### Timeframe and Resourcing:

15. This project will require dedicated resources for a minimum of 12 months. At least 2 travels to the pilot country by the consultant(s) and the staff responsible for the project will be required.

Resource	Duration	Cost. USD
Consultant (P-1/2 level)	12 months	90,000
Senior Executive Consultant (ex-D1/D2 level of experience)	6 months	130,000
Administrative Support	6 months	10,000
Missions		40,000
<b>Total</b>		<b>270,000</b>

16. Provided that the required resources are available, the project will start in July 2012 and end approx. in June 2013. This timeframe should be viewed as indicative, and minimal. It may have to be reassessed, in the course of the project.

**Risks and prior obligations:**

- The project hinges on the successful recruitment of a consultant, with experience in HR in the UN system, preferably in the recruitment area with knowledge of field procedures and challenges. A legal background would be an additional asset. The consultant must also be able to build effective relationships with other Agencies. Other skills required include: Advocacy and communication skills, analytical and drafting skills.
- Successful outcome may require revisions of Agency provisions governing recruitment, as well as changes to recruitment processes and mechanisms. These areas are within the exclusive preserve of Agencies. Hence success will depend on the possibility and interest of Agencies and their governance to consider changes to the relevant provisions.
- Timely completion of the project (expected 12 months from EOD) depends on funding availability, and on the recruitment of suitable temporary expertise for the project.