

**Staff recruitment in United Nations system  
organizations: a comparative analysis and  
benchmarking framework**

**The recruitment process**

*Prepared by*

***Papa Louis Fall  
Yishan Zhang***

**Joint Inspection Unit  
Geneva 2012**



**United Nations**



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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACABQ	Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions
CEB	United Nations Chief Executives Board for Coordination
CRB	Central Review Board
DFS	Department of Field Support
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FCRB	Field Central Review Board
HLCM	High-level Committee on Management
HRM	Human Resources Management
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IAU	International Association of Universities
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organization
ICSC	International Civil Service Commission
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMO	International Maritime Organization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JIU	Joint Inspection Unit of the United Nations system
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
RCAC	Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNWTO	World Tourism Organization of the United Nations
UPU	Universal Postal Union
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization
WMO	World Meteorological Organization

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) Human Resources Management Framework of 2000 identified recruitment/placement as the starting point of an organization's overall employment policy, but considered it a non-core element for human resources management across the organizations of the United Nations common system. It stated that "while recruitment and placement/selection should be based on shared principles, such as merit, geographical distribution and gender balance, organizations should continue to be responsible for designing recruitment systems that meet their unique needs."<sup>1</sup> The present note reviews the various recruitment systems at the United Nations system organizations. An analysis of the findings is presented in chapter II below and in the annexes; chapter III addresses the issue of timeliness in the recruitment process; chapter IV considers the issues of transparency, impartiality and fairness; and chapter V briefly reviews issues related to the harmonization of recruitment business practices. As with JIU/NOTE/2012/1, benchmarks are proposed to enable the organizations to align their systems with good practices.

## II. THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

2. The Inspectors found that the recruitment process is fully administered in-house in most of the organizations. Outsourcing is an exception, found at only a few organizations in the form of assessment centre services. Studies suggest that outsourcing is not generally viewed as a viable option for public-sector human resources services, even though the recruitment outsourcing market is dynamic and fast growing, and organizations that outsource some human resources functions are highly satisfied with the results. The benefits of outsourcing include a more efficient and faster recruitment process and additional data collection that allows for better information and more pro-active planning.<sup>2</sup> It was not within the scope of this review to consider the benefits of outsourcing recruitment services for the United Nations system organizations; however, the Inspectors encourage the organizations to assess the available options when planning their human resources strategies.

3. For the purpose of this review, the recruitment process has been broken down into two phases: (a) job opening, vacancy announcement and pre-screening; and (b) shortlisting, assessment and selection.<sup>3</sup> The recruitment process is a complex process that involves many tasks and many players. Some tasks are routine, others require judgement and decision-making, for which there may be delegation of authority, as discussed in JIU/NOTE/2012/1. The steps in the recruitment process are shown in the flow chart below.

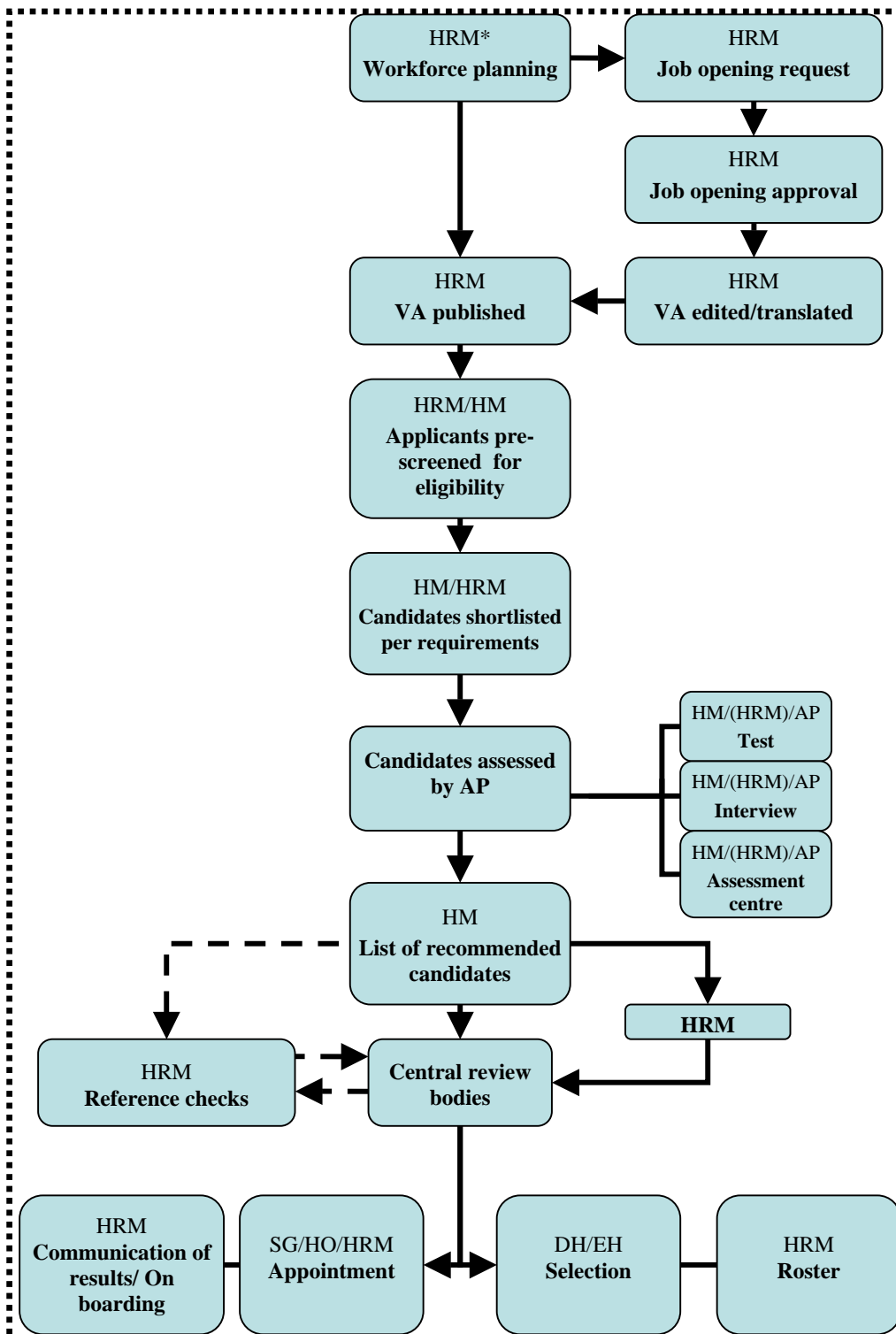
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<sup>1</sup> ICSC, *A Framework for Human Resources Management* (2001), p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> Public sector human resource services most commonly outsourced include test development, screening applicants and testing candidates; see International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR), *Recruiting and staffing in the Public Sector*. Results from IPMA-HR Research Series, (summer 2007), pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> Once the selection is completed, the on-boarding phase begins. This review does not cover this stage of the recruitment process.

### Steps in the recruitment process



\* AP: assessment panel; HM: hiring manager/line manager/post holding office; HO: head of office; HRM: human resources management; DH: department/division head; EH: executive head

### A. Job opening, vacancy posting and pre-screening

#### **Benchmark 8**

**The job opening, vacancy posting and pre-screening phase of the recruitment process is governed by written procedures and guidelines that follow good practices in respect of standard job descriptions, profiles and vacancy announcements, and adheres to strict timelines.**

This phase entails:

- (a) Workforce planning undertaken beforehand to determine which posts will be opened, when and how, and to define the ratio of external recruitment to internal placement or promotion;
- (b) All vacant posts are advertised, including senior-level posts. The recruitment process is initiated at least six months in advance in the case of known vacancies such as retirement, newly created posts or posts subject to rotation, but in any case, no later than the month in which the post becomes vacant;
- (c) All posts are classified in accordance with ICSC standards and a specific or generic job description or profile is made available. The relevant job description is reviewed and updated as required. For new posts, a classified job description or generic job profile is created;
- (d) Standard or generic vacancy announcements are used for certain categories and levels of posts;
- (e) Vacancy announcements include evaluation criteria, minimum requirements for education/qualifications and skills, related work experience, languages, competencies, as well as the assessment method to be used;
- (f) Vacancy announcements are translated into the relevant working languages of the respective organization and the language of the duty station, as mandated;
- (g) All vacancy announcements are posted online and disseminated by other media as required, including specialized media and technical boards for specialized jobs;
- (h) Vacancy announcements are posted for a period not exceeding one month; and
- (i) Applications are pre-screened with regard to minimum eligibility requirements.

#### **Job openings**

4. A job opening entails the process of issuing a vacancy announcement for a particular post or set of posts. Many job openings can be identified well in advance of the post vacancy and workforce planning is an important tool in this regard, as discussed in JIU/NOTE/2012/1. In the case of known vacancies due to retirement, for example, the recruitment process should be initiated several months in advance, but in any case no later than the month in which the post becomes vacant.

5. In most United Nations system organizations the process is formally initiated by a request from the post holding office or hiring manager, accompanied by a draft vacancy announcement. The request usually goes through a number of approval actions (involving the human resources



recruiter, the staffing table manager, the classification officer or a review body), before the vacancy announcement is translated – it may take more than a month to get to this stage. At ILO, staff representatives have the opportunity to comment on the job description of all posts; while at WFP, only the job descriptions for GS posts are submitted for comments. The Inspectors found that the job opening process was too long and suggests that human resources managers find ways to simplify it. One approach would be to have a bank of approved standard vacancy announcements in all the required languages, so as to avoid delays relating to approval and in particular translation, a significant source of delays at the United Nations Office at Geneva, for instance.

### **Handling of vacancies**

6. In 2010, the United Nations Secretariat and WHO each posted more than 1,000 vacancies, followed by UNICEF (more than 800) and WFP (more than 600). The lowest volume, in the range of 15 to 40 vacancies, was reported in some of the small specialized agencies (IMO, UPU, WMO and UNWTO). UNDP was unable to provide any relevant data. In terms of the proportion of vacancies to the number of posts, ILO, FAO and UNESCO posted the lowest rates at 3.7, 5.4 and 7.6 per cent, respectively.

7. At most organizations, the decision to create a job opening comes from the hiring manager of the post holding office, with the assistance of the human resources office (see JIU/NOTE/2012/1, annex II). In a few cases, however, the decision is taken by the executive head of the organization, as is the case for director-level posts at IAEA and professional-level posts and higher at WMO.

8. This review found that the organizations were not required to advertise vacant posts within a set time limit, contrary to good practice. Furthermore, the length of time that vacant posts remained unadvertised was not monitored. In the absence of controls in this regard, it has become common practice to fill vacant posts with short-term appointments, which may be continually renewed. Although some organizations have recently taken steps to address the issue of continual short-term appointments, the measures are generally not sufficient to ensure prompt posting of vacancies for regular recruitment/appointment.

9. Workforce planning and periodic monitoring of vacancies are essential for efficient vacancy management. Posts encumbered by short-term appointments should be counted as vacant in the monitoring exercise. Some organizations, including the United Nations Secretariat, do monitor vacancy rates, and the data indicate the need for stronger measures to bring vacancy rates down.<sup>4</sup> The high vacancy rates at some field duty stations, particularly for peacekeeping and political missions, is a serious concern for the proper management of human resources, budgets and programmes.

10. The Inspectors consider that in those instances where hiring managers run the risk of not meeting programme objectives because posts are vacant, the need for related budgetary resources should be questioned and posts that have been unencumbered by a regular appointment for more than one budget year should be cancelled. All posts due to be advertised should be closely monitored and the vacancy announcement issued no later than one month prior to the date that the post is vacated, and preferably earlier; this should apply to all posts.

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<sup>4</sup> Review of the Human Resources Action Planning assessment for 2009 showed that only eight of 30 departments/offices met the target of 5 per cent vacancy rate for regular budget professional posts, and 4 per cent for extrabudgetary professional posts; only one office met the target of 100 per cent of foreseen retirement vacancies posted six months in advance.

### **Job classification standards**

11. Vacancy announcements are normally based on an approved or classified job description and/or a previously approved job opening or a generic job profile. For each vacancy, it is important for the post holding office to undertake an analysis of the functions of the job, as it may be necessary to update the job description and reclassify the post to reflect new requirements and conditions of service. The Inspectors observed that this step is often omitted. They recommend that the job analysis and update of the job description, as applicable, be included in the HRM checklist for job openings in the request from the post holding office or hiring manager.

12. The use of classified job descriptions in vacancy announcements, as well as an independent review of the applicable evaluation criteria, is control mechanisms to ensure compliance with established ICSC standards by category of job and grade. Such control is established practice at most United Nations system organizations. The use of narrow job-specific profiles with restrictive requirements reduces the applicant pool and restricts competition. Such vacancy announcements may be justified for specialized or technical jobs, but are often seen as being tailor-made for a pre-selected candidate, which could amount to malpractice.

13. Generic job profiles are standard classified job descriptions that encompass a large group of related jobs with similar characteristics in terms of duties and requirements. They are increasingly used for batch recruitment and for creating rosters of available qualified candidates for normal or surge recruitment. At the United Nations Secretariat, they are used to fill project or mission-related positions in the field, rather than for established positions. Other organizations using generic job profiles include UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, ILO and WHO.

14. Organizations have found that the use of generic job profiles has increased the applicant pool, and at the same time speeded up the process and reduced administrative costs, although they may be too general in some cases. The Inspectors consider that such practice constitutes a large net benefit and recommend that generic job profiles be more widely used for recruitment.

### **Vacancy announcements and posting**

15. Vacancy announcements should include the evaluation criteria used to assess applicants; the minimum requirements for the job in terms of qualifications, skills and experience; the required competencies and languages; and other desirable attributes. They should also ideally indicate the assessment methods to be used. When managerial experience is required, the scope and level of responsibility should be outlined. In addition, they should describe the organizational setting, duties and responsibilities of the job, terms and conditions of the offer (type of contract and compensation package), application method and deadline for submitting applications. A standard format should be used and each announcement should be duly referenced and registered for proper handling.

16. A sample review indicated that vacancy announcements generally include all the required elements, except for the assessment method to be used. The United Nations Secretariat was the only organization to state this in all instances, whereas other organizations included only the mandatory tests required for certain positions. The United Nations Secretariat approach is considered good practice that should be replicated by all the organizations.

17. In all cases, vacancy announcements are posted on the websites of the organizations and circulated to Member States. Organizations seeking specialized technical skills, such as IAEA, UNIDO and WMO, may advertise in specialized media, job boards or national centres. Headhunting, practised for example by UNICEF for some positions, as well as direct contact with

professional networks and specialist websites to identify individuals with the required technical skills and viable recruitment options.

18. Targeted advertising or outreach campaigns may be helpful in attracting applicants from underrepresented countries, as in the case of the Junior Professional Programme at several organizations. In some cases, joint recruitment missions to specific countries have been organized, which is innovative and good practice.

19. Bearing in mind multilingualism policies, vacancy announcements should be translated into all official languages prior to posting; this does not seem to be the case currently. At the very least, the announcements should be translated into the working languages of the respective organization and language of the duty station, as mandated. The languages in which organizations reported posting vacancy announcements are shown in annex I; all organizations post vacancies in English, and some post also in French and Spanish.

20. Annex I also provides an overview of current practices in the respective organizations regarding external posting of vacant posts, which may lead to recruitment, as opposed to internal posting which leads to placement or promotion. In this regard, the Inspectors are of the view that organizations should base their recruitment decisions on workforce planning and strike an appropriate balance between the need for staff development and the need for fresh talent, as discussed in JIU/NOTE/2012/1. The majority of organizations advertised most positions externally, although ultimately, preference may be given to internal candidates in line with relevant provisions of their staff regulations and rules (see JIU/NOTE/2012/1, annex I). Three organizations (UNDP, UNHCR and WFP) initially post all vacancies (except for entry-level posts) internally (for two weeks to one month) and fill them through internal promotion, transfer or reassignment. They undertake external recruitment exceptionally for specific categories or skills when no suitable internal candidate can be found. This policy is explained by the need to rotate/reassign staff periodically to different duty stations. It should be noted that UNICEF, which has a similar rotation/reassignment policy, advertises most posts externally; however, a reduction in the number of posts advertised externally is expected as of 2012, with the implementation of new staffing policies on direct selection from Talent Groups.

### **Posting period**

21. The posting period varies greatly among the organizations, but about one half advertise vacancies for one month (ICAO, ILO, FAO, IMO, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNRWA, WIPO and WMO) or less (UNDP, UNFPA, UNOPS, UNIDO and WFP). In contrast, the United Nations Secretariat posts vacancies in established professional posts for two months, as do ITU and UNESCO for external vacancies. An overview of posting periods can be found in annex I.

22. In the interest of efficiency, the Inspectors are of the view that posting periods should be kept as short as possible. Indeed, the United Nations General Assembly has stressed time and again the paramount importance of speeding up the recruitment and staffing process. The Inspectors therefore urge the United Nations General Assembly to reduce the posting period to no more than 30 days, in line with repeated requests from the Secretary-General. These requests have been rejected on the grounds that technology gaps limit access of candidates from some countries to the United Nations website. Yet in 2010, more than half of applicants were from developing countries, and less than 30 per cent were recruited, reflecting a slight decrease compared with 2005. The issue therefore is not about opportunities at the time of application, which in principle should increase over time, but rather about how applicants from these regions are considered during the selection process. Furthermore, an applicant for a United Nations job in the professional category would be expected to have access to and skills in computer technology.

There is little evidence to suggest that longer posting periods have any significant impact on recruitment from unrepresented or underrepresented countries, which would be better addressed through targeted recruitment campaigns.<sup>5</sup> The Inspectors recommend that all organizations adhere to the 30-day time limit.

23. The implementation of the following recommendation will enhance the efficiency of the recruitment process at United Nations system organizations.

**Recommendation 3**

**Executive heads of United Nations system organizations that have not yet done so should reduce the posting time for vacancies to no more than 30 days and seek the approval of the legislative bodies as appropriate.**

**Eligibility requirements and pre-screening**

24. A person's eligibility to compete for a post is determined primarily by the extent to which his/her educational qualifications, work experience, language proficiency and competencies meet the requirements of the post as set out in the vacancy announcement. However, other organizational factors also determine eligibility, including those governing the internal or external status of the applicant, the type of contract being offered, policies on geographical distribution and gender balance, age limit and existing employment of family members. These factors are obviously outside the control of an individual applicant.

25. The present review found that eligibility requirements vary greatly among the organizations, which may lead to undue competition between them. Differences were found in both the minimum requirements expected of the applicants (see below), and in organizational factors. For example, only FAO and the United Nations Secretariat consider professional-level staff of other organizations as eligible to apply for P3/P4 posts as internal candidates, on a reciprocal basis. At UNAIDS, WHO and WIPO, those on temporary appointments are not eligible to apply as external candidates, while at the United Nations Secretariat, interns and consultants are not eligible to apply for a post within six months of completing their assignment.

26. Differences in eligibility requirements among the organizations raise concerns about equality and fairness, career development and system-wide mobility. This complexity is also detrimental to the objective of system-wide harmonization of recruitment business practices (see chapter V below).

27. Applications for vacancies should be pre-screened in order to exclude those that do not meet the minimum eligibility requirements. This step is particularly important in organizations that attract large numbers of applications for each post, but less so for agencies that are seeking highly specialized personnel.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See A/59/263; A/61/255; A/63/285; A/65/305, paras. 39-40; and A/65/537, para. 11, for ACABQ support.

<sup>6</sup> At the United Nations, for example, there are over 150 applicants on average for each vacancy announcement.

28. Manual pre-screening is generally done by human resources officers, although in a few organizations, it is done by the hiring managers (UNDP, WMO) or both (ITU and ICAO). In a few organizations, pre-screening takes place automatically via the e-recruitment system with the aid of filters and pre-screening questions. In several organizations where the online system also offers the possibility of filtering the applicant pool, pre-screening is still done manually. Some officers interviewed for this report did not have confidence in electronic pre-screening, which is not error-free. In the United Nations Secretariat, human resources officers address this problem by undertaking spot checks and tests to detect system deficits that may disqualify eligible candidates.

29. Application forms are available online for all the organizations, although their content may differ. The forms cannot always be electronically uploaded and processed. At IMO and FAO, applications can be submitted by email or in hard copy, whereas UNDP “encourages” candidates to submit applications electronically. The Inspectors note that a common application form would help to harmonize business practices and facilitate inter-agency mobility. They also consider an automated application process as an important internal control that brings efficiency gains. With large applicant pools, electronic pre-screening reduces the workload of both human resources officers and hiring managers and is more transparent than manual methods.

## **B. Education, work experience and language requirements**

### **Benchmark 9**

**The minimum educational qualifications, work experience and language requirements for professional and general services staff at all United Nations system organizations are harmonized to support inter-agency mobility and the One-United Nations goal.**

This requires that:

(a) The same level of educational qualification is applied (equivalent to a bachelor’s or master’s degree). A first degree may be required for entry-level positions and an advanced degree for higher-level and senior positions; a doctorate may be required for certain highly qualified positions at specialized agencies and IAEA;

(b) The degree must be from an officially recognized university or institution and is subject to equivalence and validation for consistency at the pre-screening stage in reference to the World Higher Education Database published by IAU/UNESCO Information Centre on Higher Education on a yearly basis and available on CD-ROM;

(c) Minimum educational qualifications are linked to the number of years of work experience for posts at the professional level and above; no work experience is required for P1 entry-level posts;

(d) Secondary school certification or equivalent and an equal number of years of work experience is required for each grade of the general services category system-wide; and

(e) Due consideration is given to knowledge of at least two working languages for posts at the professional level and above (very good knowledge of one is required, and working knowledge of another), including the language of the duty station, as mandated. This language knowledge is particularly important for senior officers and human resources staff who should lead by example.

## Educational qualifications

30. Many of the specialized agencies and some United Nations funds and programmes require an advanced university degree for posts at the professional level and above, as shown in the table below. A first (bachelor's) degree is accepted in some organizations, provided it is combined with some years of work experience, although the exact number is not generally specified in vacancy announcements. The degree should be in a relevant field as indicated in the evaluation criteria, and must have been awarded by an officially recognized university or other educational institution.

**Table 1**

### Minimum educational qualifications for professional level and above

Degree	Organization
Bachelor's	United Nations Secretariat, UNHCR, UNOPS, WFP, FAO, ICAO, WMO
Master's	UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, IAEA, (up to P3), ILO (except P2), ITU, UNESCO, UNIDO, UPU (except P1/P2), WHO (P4 and above).
PhD	IAEA (P4 and above).

Source: Responses to JIU questionnaire

31. While the Inspectors acknowledge the requirement for an advanced university degree or even a doctorate for highly specialized posts, they question whether the differences in minimum educational requirements among the organizations can, in general, be justified.

32. The United Nations General Assembly has requested the Secretary-General "to continue to ensure equal treatment of candidates with equivalent educational backgrounds during the recruitment process, taking fully into account the fact that Member States have different education systems and that no education system shall be considered the standard to be applied by the Organization."<sup>7</sup> In this regard, educational qualifications should be subject to equivalence and validation to ensure consistency, since titles and contents of degrees differ between countries.

33. Reference publications for these purposes include:

- International Association of Universities (IAU), *International Handbook of Universities* (2012 edition);
- IAU, World Higher Education Database (2012);
- UNESCO, *World guide to higher education: a comparative survey of systems, degrees and qualifications* (Paris, 1996);
- UNESCO, *Study Abroad 2006-2007* (Paris, 2006);
- UNESCO Portal to Recognized Higher Education Institutions.

<sup>7</sup> General Assembly resolution 65/247, para. 15.

34. FAO and UNICEF reported that they use the IAU handbook for equivalence and validation, while the United Nations Secretariat and WFP recognize educational qualifications from institutions that have been certified by competent national or international authorities, including UNESCO. The Inspectors note that the United Nations Inspira system is the only e-recruitment system with the capability to filter academic qualifications through a database of recognized institutions and degrees published by the IAU/UNESCO Information Centre on Higher Education.

35. The Inspectors consider that UNESCO has a key role to play in determining the equivalence of educational qualifications from different countries. Given the importance of educational equivalence in the recruitment process system-wide, the Inspectors urge the organizations to examine the modalities for UNESCO to provide a common service in this area, to be financed on a cost-sharing basis.

36. This review found that for the general services category (G), there is a minimum requirement of secondary school certification or equivalent technical or commercial school common across the organizations. ITU requires three years of apprenticeship in a relevant field for some positions and WFP makes a distinction between support staff at headquarters and locally recruited field staff for whom requirements may differ.

### **Work experience**

37. ICSC job classification standards set out the minimum number of years of work experience required for posts at the professional level and above. However, it was found that in practice this can vary, sometimes significantly, between organizations, particularly for entry-level posts and managerial posts at the D1 level (see annex II (a)). Some organizations, such as ILO, UNESCO and WHO, also require a certain number of years' experience at the international level.

38. At the United Nations Secretariat and some funds and programmes, a higher-level degree may be substituted for a certain number of years of work experience. At the United Nations Secretariat, all advanced university degrees (PhD, MPhil and master's) require the same number of years of work experience, but bachelor's and undergraduate degrees require progressively more experience (see annex II (b)). While the data show some inconsistencies that need to be addressed, the Inspectors consider that matching work experience requirements to the level of academic qualifications offers the best approach and should be applied as a good practice system-wide, including at the P1 level where there is scope for greater employment.

39. This review found that about one half of the organizations do not recruit staff at the P1 level and those that do, limit recruitment to very low numbers (less than 1 per cent of the total workforce). The Inspectors note that there is a critical mass of unemployed young graduates with limited or no work experience who could be hired cost effectively.

40. Data submitted by some organizations for the general services category suggest that the number of years of work experience required at different levels is not consistent, with the greatest discrepancies at the highest level (see annex II (c)).

41. The work experience of candidates should be relevant to the functions of the post, and managerial experience should have been acquired progressively over time. Determining the relevance of work experience to the functions of a post requires an in-depth examination, normally carried out at the time of shortlisting candidates and during the reference-checking process. At a few organizations, establishing the relevance of work experience is part of the pre-screening process.

## Language knowledge

42. This review found significant variations in minimum language requirements among the organizations. A few of the funds and programmes and most specialized agencies require a minimum of two working languages for posts at the professional level and above, with the level of proficiency ranging from advanced/intermediate for one language to intermediate/minimum for the other. ITU requires advanced knowledge of the language of the duty station, but may waive the two languages requirement for candidates from developing countries.

43. In contrast, only one working language is required at IAEA, the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP, UNESCO (two in the case of senior-level posts), UNFPA and UNIDO (English), UPU (French), and WIPO (English or French).

44. Language requirements may not always be linked to operational needs, which may impact on the effectiveness of programme delivery. For instance, the language of the duty station is not always a requirement even when it is one of the working languages of the organization. This may be an impediment to the interaction between United Nations staff and the local population in the field, seen as essential by the United Nations General Assembly, which affirmed that “good command of the official language(s) spoken in the country of residence should be taken into account as an additional asset during [the selection process]”.<sup>8</sup>

45. The Inspectors were disappointed that the practice in many organizations with regard to language requirements falls short of that expected under the principle of multilingualism and the value of cultural diversity. They strongly believe that proficiency in at least two working languages should be required for posts at the professional level and above, and particularly for senior and managerial positions, as recommended in a recent JIU report on multilingualism.<sup>9</sup>

46. The JIU survey also highlighted concerns about the organizations’ commitment to multilingualism. About one third of the respondents to the JIU questionnaire indicated that each working languages was only rarely or very rarely given the same weight in shortlisting, recommending and selecting candidates.

47. Another area of concern is the assessment of the language skills claimed by applicants, which is considered in section C below.

## C. Shortlisting, assessment and selection

### **Benchmark 10**

**The phase of the recruitment process from shortlisting to assessment and selection is governed by written procedures and guidelines that follow good practices in respect of shortlisting, interviewing, testing, rating and ranking, selection and review, with due regard for transparency and timeliness throughout.**

To achieve this:

(a) Detailed written procedures are in place and human resources officers, hiring managers and panel members receive thorough training;

<sup>8</sup> General Assembly resolution 61/244, sect. II, para. 17.

<sup>9</sup> JIU/REP/2011/4, recommendation 11.



(b) The hiring manager evaluates each pre-screened application against the requirements of the post as stated in the vacancy announcement, using pre-approved evaluation criteria and ratings;

(c) A shortlist of at least three candidates is drawn up, reviewed and approved by the assessment/selection panel or appointment board. Shortlisted candidates are subject to an in-depth assessment of their qualifications, experience, competencies, language skills and other skills through mandatory interviews, oral/written tests and other assessment methods, as appropriate;

(d) In line with delegation of authority for recruitment, ad hoc interview, assessment and selection panels are set up for each vacancy or group of vacancies, including for high-level positions, to interview and evaluate candidates and draw up a list of recommended candidates;

(e) Interview, assessment and selection panels comprise at least three individuals all trained in competency-based interviewing techniques. Both genders are represented and one member of the panel is from outside the hiring office. Human resources representatives participate in, at least, an advisory capacity;

(f) Standard oral/written tests are administered to candidates for professional and higher positions by job category and grade; clerical or other specialized tests are administered for general services support positions and specific positions in finance, information technology or other. Language tests are administered to test the level of proficiency in the required language(s). These tests are designed and conducted by human resources officers and hiring managers;

(g) Candidates for managerial positions are evaluated using multiple assessment techniques, preferably at an assessment centre;

(h) The effectiveness of the various assessment methods used is periodically evaluated and the results fed back into the process;

(i) Previous performance appraisals are reviewed and reference checks conducted systematically regardless of positions and grades;

(j) Review bodies verify that the shortlisting, assessment and recommendation process has followed rules and procedures, and provide advice on whether the recommendations meet the requirements of the post and the evaluation criteria. Human resources officers and staff are represented in these bodies;

(k) Written records are kept of the reasons for selecting or rejecting each candidate at the shortlisting, recommendation and final selection stages;

(l) Targets and indicators are set up with the objective of enhancing the quality of the recruitment process, including those that measure the effectiveness of ad hoc assessment panels and standing bodies; compliance is regularly monitored; and

(m) Those who manage and take the final decision in the recruitment process are held accountable for the outcome and for any resulting valid claims.

48. The shortlisting, assessment and selection phase of the recruitment process involves many tasks that, in most organizations, are the responsibility of the hiring manager, supported by human resources officers. In the United Nations Secretariat, the process is entirely managed by the hiring manager, whereas in UNHCR and UN-Women, the human resources department manages the process in consultation with hiring managers. They are the owners of the most

critical and lengthy stage of the recruitment process, and have a large responsibility for its quality, reliability, timeliness, transparency, fairness and credibility. Although these tasks are rarely performed by one individual in isolation, but rather by a group of people constituted in selection and appointment panels and eventually verified by review bodies, hiring managers should be held accountable for the outcome of this process, along with those who make the final decision. However, they rarely are held accountable.

### **Shortlisting of candidates**

49. Through shortlisting the number of candidates for a given post is narrowed to a manageable figure for further assessment/testing. Each pre-screened application is evaluated against post requirements stated in the vacancy announcement using pre-approved evaluation criteria and ratings. The direct relevance to the job of the applicants' educational background and work experience is given decisive consideration and those not fully meeting the criteria are rejected. A shortlist is then drawn up, preferably with at least three candidates, as this is considered the minimum number to ensure a proper competitive process. The shortlist should be reviewed and approved by the assessment panel. The hiring manager should provide the panel with written justifications for the decisions taken with regard to each pre-screened candidate at the shortlisting stage.

50. The review found that some organizations (FAO, ILO, IMO, United Nations, UNIDO, WHO and WMO) have rating systems in place for both shortlisting and assessment, while others do not have any formal procedures, so that rating is not consistently applied across the organization. As for written justifications of all decisions at the shortlisting stage, this is a requirement in those organizations using e-recruitment systems, such as the United Nations Secretariat, but in others, records are kept for shortlisted candidates only. These issues need to be addressed to bring organizations into line with good practice.

### **Assessment of shortlisted candidates**

51. Shortlisted candidates are generally subject to an in-depth assessment of their qualifications, experience, technical and language skills and competencies. This should preferably be undertaken by a panel and through different assessment methods to determine those that fully meet all criteria. Interviews and written tests are the most commonly used assessment methods in the United Nations system organizations. The type of assessment method is determined to some extent by the category, grade and level of the post, with candidates for managerial posts often subject to more rigorous scrutiny, sometimes in the form of assessment centres. Systematic assessment of shortlisted candidates using assessment methods appropriate to the post, as outlined below, should result in a "scorecard" of ratings for each candidate, recommended or not, on which the selection decision should be based.

### **Interviews**

52. As shown in annex III, most organizations use interviews as the main method to assess candidates, but interviews are mandatory only at ILO, UNAIDS, UNESCO, United Nations Secretariat, UNOPS, UNIDO, UNRWA and WFP, and also UNHCR for external candidates. In ITU, interviews are only conducted if deemed necessary, as is the case at UNHCR for internal candidates. UNIDO and WFP conduct telephone interviews at the shortlisting stage in addition to subsequent panel interviews. For international vacancies, UNRWA uses telephone and personal interviews, both of which are led by a panel. Interviewing is generally conducted face-to-face, although video-, tele-conferencing and Skype are increasingly used by some organizations to save travel costs, for example UNRWA.

53. Interviews should be conducted by a panel of individuals trained in competency-based interviewing techniques. All candidates should be asked the same questions focusing on the attributes and behaviours needed for the job, and answers should be rated using a uniform rating system. Candidates should be rated with regard to the requirements of the post and not in relation to each other, but this is not always the case.

54. It is difficult to assess the quality of work of interview panels in the various organizations. Delegation of authority for recruitment to the substantive departments has meant that in many cases human resources officers are no longer members of the recruitment panels, rather providing only secretariat functions; at the United Nations Secretariat, they are entirely absent. There is no independent appraisal of the organization of the panel, the professionalism of its members or the relevance of the competency criteria used.

### **Written tests**

55. Written tests are the second most commonly used assessment method. They are applied to assess a range of technical skills. Ideally they should be standardized by job category and grade and designed and administered jointly by human resources officers and hiring managers. Online (remote) testing is increasingly used in some organizations and this should be explored further for cost effectiveness.

56. The review found that written tests are not carried out regularly and are mandatory at only a few organizations. There is no standardized approach to written tests at most of the organizations, except for specific categories of posts. At the United Nations Secretariat, the Administrative Support Assessment Test (ASAT) is required for all general service posts, while a pass grade on a specialized test, such as secretarial skills or accounting, is mandatory for posts in certain occupational groups. Some organizations (UNAIDS, UNDP and UNOPS) require the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) for general service posts. At IAEA, candidates for all posts may be required to take a written test to demonstrate their competencies for the relevant post.

### **Language tests**

57. Language tests are required in some organizations and some examples of good practice are shown in the box below. In most organizations, the knowledge of languages is less formally tested in oral interviews. The Inspectors are of the view that language testing should be a required feature of the selection process, and tests should be professionalized and procedures established.

#### **Language testing**

IMO: Shortlisted candidates must pass the BULATS examination (an online language test developed by the University of Cambridge) and additional in-house tests complement the testing process.

WFP: Knowledge of a second language is assessed prior to the interview, except for candidates whose language of education is one of the official languages of the Programme or who have a proficiency certification from a United Nations organization or a member of the Association of Language Testers in Europe (ALTE). English, the first required language, is not tested since all interviews are conducted in English. The tests are facilitated by the human resources department and conducted via telephone by an external company.

FAO: Candidates for general service positions are tested by the human resources language training unit.

58. In the majority of organizations, written and language tests are left to the initiative of hiring managers and there is no consistent approach. At a few organizations, such tests are designed and administered by the human resources department and at assessment centres, in particular language tests. As with the work of interview panels, it is difficult to assess the quality and effectiveness of written tests in the absence of independent appraisal.

### **Other assessment methods**

59. Other assessment methods include oral presentations, written outputs to assess technical knowledge, review of performance appraisals, and psychometric assessment of personality, cognitive ability, work styles and motivation. UNDP uses psychometric tests for managers, and IAEA uses them for director-level posts. Research indicates that combining cognitive ability tests with personality tests will provide a better prediction of work performance. Such tests are useful for all positions, but in particular for leadership roles, and should be administered by professionals.<sup>10</sup>

### **Combining different assessment methods**

60. For all posts, but particularly higher-level posts, a combination of different assessment methods should be used, but this is not always the case. UNIDO conducts substantive assessment by telephone interviews, written tests, oral presentations and face-to-face interviews over two days. UNOPS uses mandatory written tests and interviews with oral presentations for P5 positions and above.

61. UNDP reported that assessment techniques and methodology used to evaluate selected candidates for a given candidate pool may vary depending on the competencies and the level of proficiency required. This may include a combination of the following approaches: committee nomination/recommendation, technical test designed to look at substantive knowledge, analytical skills and proficiency in the required working languages, multi-rater performance assessment designed around the managerial and leadership competencies relevant to the candidate pool, face-to-face behavioural- (or competency-) based interview to assess the core and managerial competencies of proposed candidates, interviews with an organizational psychologist and references from previous and current supervisors.

### **Assessment centres**

62. Several organizations (FAO, ICAO, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, WHO and WIPO) use assessment centres for higher-level posts, particularly managerial positions and leadership roles. They are used for posts at the P4 level and above at UNFPA, heads of country offices at FAO and WHO, director-level positions at UNESCO, and D2 posts only at ICAO. In contrast, ILO uses assessment centres for both professional and general service positions for external applicants, and for movement of internal candidates into the professional category.

63. Assessment centres may be set up in-house, with some tasks fully or partially outsourced. An overview of some assessment centres is provided in the box below. The Inspectors consider that the most comprehensive and effective centre is the UNDP centre, administered on behalf of the United Nations system for resident coordinators positions.

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<sup>10</sup> State Government of Victoria, Department of Planning and Community Development, *Best practice recruitment and selection - a tool kit for the community sector*, Victoria, Australia, 2010, pp. 35-37, available at [www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/communitydevelopment/community-sector/workforce-development/recruitment-and-retention](http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/communitydevelopment/community-sector/workforce-development/recruitment-and-retention).

### Assessment centres

UNDP Resident Coordinator Assessment Centre (RCAC): Three-day residential assessment conducted by an external company which assesses coordination and leadership competencies. Candidates are sponsored by a United Nations agency, usually their own. Requirements are senior managerial experience, development/humanitarian experience, representational experience, and a minimum of four years before retirement. The average failure rate is 50 per cent. The RCAC range of assessment scenarios has developed over time, and increasingly conflict and disaster case studies are standard. With regard to its effectiveness, nominations are not always regarded as fully satisfactory in terms of competencies or the professional experience of proposed candidates (development, humanitarian, managerial). Furthermore, the exclusive reliance on assessment centre performance to assess the suitability of candidates ignores past performance assessments, reference checks and other measures. And the assessment methodology should add more weight to humanitarian response, since the testing tends to focus on problem-process-solution as opposed to rapid problem-solution. Nevertheless, the RCAC does constitute a fairly thorough assessment and is unique in the United Nations system.

WHO: An external provider supported the design and functioning of the WHO assessment centres in the initial stages in 2009, when 15 assessment centres were set up. Currently much of the work is done by staff trained as centre managers, however, for the time being tests continue to be administered by the consultancy company. Each centre can assess up to 12 participants and is designed to evaluate participants for the key competencies identified as essential for the head of a WHO country office. The process involves preparatory online work to complete a career review questionnaire for use in the competency-based interview and three exercises: an occupational personality questionnaire and two ability tests, addressing numerical critical reasoning and verbal critical reasoning. These complement the interview and simulation exercises. The online tests are available in a wide variety of languages and the one-day assessment is conducted in English, French or Spanish. The outcome of the assessment will enable participants to leverage their identified strengths and to work on areas in need of development.

ILO: The assessment consists of a half-day analytical exercise and behavioural interview aimed at assessing competencies. It is managed by the human resources department and conducted jointly by external assessors and internal staff trained for this purpose and jointly selected with the staff union. There are four levels of assessment: for P1/P2/P3 positions without managerial responsibilities; for P4/P5 positions with managerial responsibilities; for G3/G4 and for G5/G6 positions, none for director-level positions. The ILO competency framework is used throughout the panel interview stage. At the end of the process each candidate receives a written report with the scores obtained and comments on major strengths and areas for development. Passing the assessment is a pre-requisite for all shortlisted external candidates, as well as internal general service staff and national officers applying for professional positions, in order for them to be invited to the technical panel interview. Internal candidates are not required to go through an assessment because they would have done so at the time of recruitment; however, where relevant they may take a technical examination set by the technical interview panel, a practice that is encouraged rather than mandatory. The efficiency and effectiveness of assessment centres is yet to be evaluated, but a survey launched by the ILO staff union recently revealed more satisfaction than dissatisfaction with these centres, with most criticisms relating to the relevance of competencies and independence of assessors.

64. UNFPA outsources the assessment of shortlisted candidates for managerial positions to a consultancy company, which conducts a range of different tests, then reports to UNFPA for selection. At WIPO, an assessment centre run by a service provider is sometimes used for certain key positions at the director level. The assessment may include psychometric testing, competency-based interviews, staff management role-playing and strategic analysis presentation exercises.

65. In general, assessment centres are known for their effectiveness. It was also reported that they increase the perception of fairness, enhance quality control and help to standardize recruitment approaches and processes. These are important benefits, but they have to be offset

against the costs incurred.<sup>11</sup> One organization suggested in its comments to the draft report that there should be a single assessment centre for the recruitment of all senior staff at United Nations system organizations, which would offer both synergies and cost-savings. The idea is appealing but the Inspectors were not in a position to examine it at this stage of the review, as they did not assess the cost-effectiveness of assessment centres during the course of the review. They nonetheless underscore the need for periodic evaluation of the performance of such centres.

### **Reference checks**

66. Conducting reference checks is a critical part of the selection process, which is frequently underestimated despite its potential to predict future behaviour from past performance, particularly when competency-based reference checks are done. The Inspectors found evidence of inadequate reference checking at most United Nations system organizations and decided to conduct an in-depth review as part of the Unit's programme of work for 2012. Such review will be the subject of a separate report and will propose system-wide guidelines.

### **Selection procedures**

67. The assessment of candidates leads eventually to a selection decision. The Inspectors found considerable differences among the organizations at this final stage of the recruitment process, although many were simply procedural.

68. The most fundamental difference concerns the process by which recommendations are drawn up for the selection decision. In the majority of organizations, ad hoc assessment/interview/selection panels for a vacancy or group of vacancies are responsible for evaluating all pre-screened, shortlisted and assessed candidates, and submitting a list of recommended candidate(s), which may or may not be ranked, for review to a standing review body. This body reviews the process for compliance with rules and procedures before the final decision is taken by whoever has the delegated authority to do so. This model is followed by the United Nations Secretariat, funds and programmes (except UNHCR), as well as FAO, IAEA, ILO, IMO, UNESCO and WHO (see annex III (a)).

69. In a few organizations (ICAO, ITU and UNIDO), the ad hoc assessment/interview/selection panel submits its findings to a standing appointment body, which is responsible for making the recommendations (see annex III (b)). At UNWTO, WIPO and WMO, there are no ad hoc assessment panels, only a standing appointment body (see annex III (c)). This is also the case at UPU, although an ad hoc panel may be constituted when there are many applicants. These organizations do not have independent review bodies.

70. In general, where authority for recruitment decisions has been delegated to the substantive department, the final selection decision will be made by the head of department, based on the outcome of the assessment and following a review by the appropriate standing body. However, as noted in JIU/NOTE/2012/1, the executive heads of some organizations may still choose to confirm or exceptionally override the decision.

71. Good practice calls for written records of the reasons for selection or rejection of each candidate at both the recommendation and the final decision stages. This helps to ensure transparency and proper auditing of the process. It is a requirement at some organizations, such as

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<sup>11</sup> UNDP RCAC costs US\$15,000 per candidate; UNFPA outsourcing costs US\$2,000 per candidate.

the United Nations Secretariat, and an integral part of their e-recruitment systems. In general, however, written records are kept only for shortlisted candidates who are recommended.

72. Ranking of recommended candidates is also good practice, but one that is not carried out at most organizations, with the exception of UNIDO which ranks up to three recommended candidates. Organizations (United Nations, UNDP, WFP) that have rosters/pools of pre-selected candidates in place tend to recommend many candidates so as to populate the rosters.

### **Assessment panels**

73. In most organizations, an ad hoc interview/assessment/selection panel is constituted for each vacancy or group of vacancies in the case of batch recruitment, and disbanded when the process is completed. The composition, function and titles of these panels vary among organizations, as is shown in annex III (a) and (b).

74. As a guide for good practice, such panel should have a minimum of three members, with both genders represented. Panel participants should not be at a grade lower than the position to be filled. Panels should comprise (i) the hiring manager or head of service/department or his/her representative, (ii) an individual from outside the department, and (iii) a human resources representative. This is the case at IMO, ILO, ITU, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNRWA, UNOPS and WHO.

75. At IAEA, a human resources representative participates only for supervisory positions. At ILO, the human resources officer has a range of responsibilities relating to the conduct of the interview, including taking notes, and normally leads the candidate evaluation discussion. Delegation of authority for recruitment to the substantive departments has meant that in many cases, human resources officers are no longer members of these panels, but provide only secretariat functions; in the United Nations Secretariat, they are entirely absent.

76. By contrast, at UNFPA, one member of the panel is a human resources officer who is also responsible for setting up the panel, acting as panel facilitator, conducting tests, if any, and preparing the submissions for review by the managers that include the results of interviews and tests, as well as reference checks and performance reports. At WFP, one panel member is the Staffing Coordinator, a senior staff member (P5 or above) designated by the division director to assist in the coordination of staffing requirements for the specific functional area, including workforce planning, recruitment of external candidates, promotion and reassignment of internal candidates for rotational posts, career guidance and feedback, and preparing annual staffing plans for submission to the Staffing Committee. The Inspectors consider the UNFPA and WFP models to be well balanced. They are also of the view that ascribing a substantive role to human resources professionals adds value to the selection process.

77. Staff representatives are not included in assessment panels, except at ITU (pre-selection panel), WFP (general service only) and WHO. At ILO, staff representatives have the opportunity to comment on the technical evaluation report.

### **Standing review bodies**

78. Standing review bodies were first established at the United Nations Secretariat and are now in place at most funds and programmes, some specialized agencies and IAEA (see annex III (a)). Generally, there are separate review bodies by category or grade of staff and by location

(headquarters or field) and they are established for a fixed period (two years non-renewable).<sup>12</sup> The composition of the review bodies is very similar across organizations, usually with an equal number of members selected by the head of the organization and by staff representatives. There may be a gender focal point in an advisory capacity. A human resources officer may participate in an ex-officio capacity with no voting rights, but sometimes provides secretariat functions.

79. The standing review bodies review the selection recommendation(s) of the ad hoc assessment panels to ensure that rules and procedures have been properly applied, and provide advice on whether the recommendations meet the requirements of the post and the evaluation criteria.

80. To avoid adding delays to the process, it is important that review bodies meet with sufficient frequency in relation to the volume of recruitment. At UNICEF, a daily rolling Central Review Board (CRB) became operational in March 2012, at the United Nations Secretariat, weekly meetings are held, while smaller organizations may hold monthly meetings (ITU) or on an as-needed basis (ICAO). Most meetings are held in person, though some review bodies function electronically.

81. The Inspectors note certain limitations in the work of the standing review bodies, for example, although they verify that rules and procedures have been followed, they accept, without question, the assessment of the candidates provided by the ad hoc panels and hiring managers. The Inspectors have some concerns that this amounts to little more than a “rubber-stamping” exercise; however, it was difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from the data reported by three organizations on the review body acceptance rates.<sup>13</sup>

### **Standing appointment bodies**

82. Standing appointment bodies are established for a year or more with a fixed membership; meetings are held periodically to consult on selection recommendations for different vacancies. The composition, functions and titles of these bodies differ among organizations, although membership usually includes managers and staff from various departments, human resources professionals and staff council representatives (see annex III (b) and (c)). There may also be non-voting advisory members, such as a gender advisor.

83. At ICAO, ITU and UNIDO, the standing appointment boards review the findings and recommendations of the ad hoc panels and may revise them before the selection decision is taken by the relevant authority.<sup>14</sup> At UNWTO, UPU, WIPO and WMO, in the absence of ad hoc panels, the standing appointment boards are directly involved in finalizing shortlists, conducting interviews and making recommendations.

### *Efficiency and effectiveness of recruitment bodies*

84. Based on the responses to the JIU survey, members of assessment panels and standing bodies felt that these entities worked efficiently and effectively with regard to frequency of

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<sup>12</sup> At UNICEF, membership on the Central Review Board (CRB) is usually two years, or a maximum of four consecutive years.

<sup>13</sup> Review body acceptance rates in 2010 at the United Nations Secretariat, UNDP and WMO were 60, 78 and 100 per cent respectively; no case was rejected by the United Nations review body; UNDP reported a 2 per cent rejection rate.

<sup>14</sup> At ICAO, the standing appointment body may use up to three rankings to rank candidates, based on competency, geographical distribution of equally qualified candidates, and gender of equally qualified candidates. The Inspectors found this to be unique practice in the United Nations system.



meetings (some 66 per cent agreed or strongly agreed); decision rules applied (some 77 per cent), and the way in which meetings took place (some 78 per cent). Among the minority of dissenting voices, some indicated that meetings were sometimes convened at short notice with little time for a proper review; some panel members did not know the rules and procedures well enough; and pressure could be put on panel members to influence their decision in favour of specific candidates. These are serious issues, but it is difficult to know if they are pervasive in the organizations because of the statistical limitations of the survey. The Inspectors believe that such problems might be at least partly addressed by the presence of human resources officers and staff representatives in these bodies. The internal oversight services of the respective organizations should also engage in regular audits and investigations as required.

85. Targets and indicators should be set up to measure the efficiency and effectiveness of these ad hoc assessment panels, as well as and the standing appointment and review bodies, but this is not generally the case. Compliance should be regularly monitored and steps should be taken to address problems and improve processes. Above all, those who manage the recruitment processes must be held accountable for the outcome, but this is rarely the case.

#### **D. Rosters/pools**

##### **Benchmark 11**

**Rosters/pools of pre-assessed candidates are established in line with organizational needs for recruitment for specific categories of posts and occupational groups, as appropriate to expedite the selection process.**

This entails that:

- (a) Rosters/pools of assessed candidates who have been recommended for either a specific vacancy or a generic job opening, but not yet selected;
- (b) Roster managers ensure that the expectations of hiring managers are met in terms of availability of candidates and length of time that candidates remain on the roster;
- (c) Relevant roster databases are up-to-date and user friendly; and
- (d) Periodic evaluation of roster/pool systems is undertaken and results fed back into the process.

86. The use of rosters or pools of assessed and approved candidates is relatively recent in United Nations system organizations and is not yet widespread. Only the United Nations Secretariat and some offices, as well as UNDP, UNICEF, UNRWA, WFP and WHO have reported using such systems. There are two broad approaches: rosters of assessed candidates who have been recommended for specific vacancies but not selected in the end; and rosters of candidates assessed and approved for generic job openings but not yet selected.

87. Speed in filling vacancies is the major advantage of using the roster approach for recruitment, and rosters may be especially well suited to the needs of field operations, particularly in humanitarian emergencies and disaster relief. One example is the field roster system introduced in 2009 by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); at end 2010, 85 per cent of field vacancies had been filled through the roster compared to the target of 70 per cent, the field vacancy rate was reduced from 20 to 15 per cent (target: 12 per cent), and the average

recruitment time was 51 days. Similarly, the United Nations Department of Field Services (UN/DFS) reported that the vacancy rate across missions had dropped from some 26 per cent in 2009, when the mission roster system was introduced, to 19 per cent in mid-2011.

88. Serious consideration should be given to finding a system that can speed up the recruitment process in the United Nations system organizations, as the length of the recruitment process is a major inefficiency for human resources management in all the organizations (see section below). An outline of existing roster systems is shown in the box below.

#### **Roster systems**

United Nations Secretariat: Rosters constituted of internal and external candidates recommended by hiring managers after review by a Central Review Body, but not yet selected. Candidates retained from a specific job opening up to D1 are pre-approved for similar functions at the job opening stage and can be selected by hiring managers for a subsequent job opening. Candidates retained from generic job openings are placed on the relevant occupational roster after review by a Central Review Body. In either case, they remain on the roster for two (male) or three (female) years; rosters of successful candidates for the G to P levels and from the NCE/YPP examinations. Rosters built up from specific job openings will be accessible through the e-recruitment system.

UN/DFS: Mission rosters for peacekeeping and political missions introduced in 2009 as the primary method of filling positions, with the aim of ensuring prompt deployment and reducing the high number of vacancies; rosters set up through the issuance of generic job openings, assessment of applicants by expert panels, and review and endorsement by the Field Central Review Body; rosters managed in e-recruitment. Missions with core recruitment functions select candidates from the rosters based on job-specific requirements.

OCHA: Field roster system introduced as a pilot in 2009, fully operational since mid-2010, and intended to fill an annual average of 150 professional field vacancies. Based on lessons learnt from the pilot phase, the roster will be replenished, through targeted outreach, with suitable candidates available for hardship locations. A candidate skill-set database will also be developed to assist with internal management of the roster.

UNDP: Recruitment framework established candidate pools to support succession planning in the context of the biannual re-assignment exercise and to ensure that critical management positions are filled expeditiously. The system is designed to identify and maintain a source of pre-screened candidates for UNDP senior management positions. A pool candidate is a qualified staff member proposed by the Career Review Group, pre-assessed and recommended by a Corporate Panel and pre-approved by a Compliance Review Board as suitable to perform the functions of a substantially similar set of rotational posts in a given job family. Members of a given candidate pool who are available for assignment/re-assignment may bid for vacant or anticipated vacant posts in their candidate pool.

UNICEF: Talent Groups are rosters of internal and external candidates who have undergone a competitive assessment and selection process reviewed by a competent Central Review Body. Candidates in Talent Groups can be appointed to a position through direct selection, provided that a similar post was advertised within the past year. This initiative was launched in 2009 as part of the new staff selection policy, with measures in place to monitor quality of candidates.

UNRWA: Internal and external candidates for a vacancy recommended and approved for appointment by a hiring director (P3 and below) or the Commissioner-General (P4 and above), but not selected, are placed on the roster of pre-approved candidates for up to two years to be considered for future vacancies requiring broadly similar qualifications and competencies. There are three types of rosters: international professional, general service and locally recruited staff at headquarters.

WFP: General service roster to fill short-term positions at the G2/G3 level and to fill internal G2/G3/G4 fixed-term positions. A committee reviews applications for inclusion in the roster in relation to the required

qualifications and experience specified in generic job profiles. Candidates meeting the requirements are recommended for inclusion in the database. If professional rosters are up-to-date and have been advertised externally on a regular basis, hiring managers may skip advertisement and identify a list of qualified candidates directly from the rosters in order to shorten the recruitment timeline. External applicants are retained on roster for one year. There are no rosters for P5 and above, or for G5/G6/G7 positions.

WHO: Rosters already set up for heads of country offices and GS staff, and roster set up in progress for administrative officers and epidemiologists, with internal and external candidates. A review panel representing senior staff, from regional offices and headquarters, makes the final recommendations for inclusion in the global roster. It is intended that all heads of country office be recruited from the global roster.

89. Rosters are also used by some organizations to meet surge recruitment needs in the face of humanitarian emergencies and disaster relief. These may be internal staff rosters, such as the OCHA emergency response roster and the UNICEF emergency response team, or standby arrangements with external partners (UNFPA, UNICEF and WFP).

90. Data provided to the Inspectors show that uptake of candidates from rosters has so far been quite limited, except at the United Nations Secretariat (see table 2 below). It appears there is some resistance from hiring managers who may be concerned that the assessment of roster candidates was made by others, which is indicative of ownership and confidence issues. In addition, roster systems may not be user-friendly, which is a system-design problem.

**Table 2**  
**Roster uptake, 2010**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Number in roster/selected from roster as of 2010</b>
<b>United Nations Secretariat</b>	6,081/1,783
<b>UNICEF</b>	In 29 categories: 219/1
<b>UNRWA</b>	Professional: 29/4 General Service: 2/0 Locally recruited: 43/8
<b>WFP</b>	Professional: 1,662/27 General Service: 562/52
<b>WHO</b>	Head of country office: 186/50 General Service: 536/89

91. The Inspectors were also informed that there was a huge backlog in processing applicants for UN/DFS mission rosters due to lack of both dedicated resources and capacity for technical interviews, which take place in Brindisi.<sup>15</sup> There are, therefore, rosters of pre-vetted candidates

<sup>15</sup> As at June 2011, 6,003 applications had been reviewed and endorsed by the FCRB and placed on rosters for the Professional and Field Service categories in 24 occupational categories. The processing backlog included some 250,000 applications pending assessment from the time the roster system was introduced,

who have not yet been assessed and approved by the Field Central Review Board (FCRB), in addition to the roster endorsed by the FCRB. UNAMI officials reported that the FCRB roster had not yet generated a sufficient number of external candidates who were readily available and willing to deploy at short notice, so that most staff hired were taken from the uncleared roster, though the proportion had declined from about 85 to 50 per cent due to a more stringent policy.

92. Other problems reported to the Inspectors during interviews with field staff included:

- Cases of mismatch between the minimum requirements for the purpose of the roster as per vacancy announcements based on generic job descriptions, and the requirements of specific jobs, so that roster candidates released to hiring managers may not be qualified for the post in question;
- Time lags that oblige serving staff to constantly re-apply for the roster in order to be considered for future assignments;
- Need for additional checks for P4/P5 positions;
- Reference checks not conducted, or the difficulty of doing so in war zones;
- Risk of fraudulent practices for online tests, which have an impact on the reliability of rosters.

93. The Inspectors are concerned that rosters set up for generic job openings may not always be cost effective in their current design functioning, given the high number of applicants that need to be processed compared with the small number that are actually qualified and retained, as well as the need to constantly renew the rosters and the various shortcomings identified above.<sup>16</sup> In contrast, rosters based on specific job openings have the potential to add value and appear to be cost effective. The Inspectors encourage the organizations to adopt rosters for specific categories of posts and occupational groups, as appropriate.

### **E. Electronic recruitment processes**

#### **Benchmark 12**

**Efficient and cost effective electronic recruitment systems are developed to fully automate recruitment processes and improve transparency.**

This requires that:

- (a) Recruitment processes are standardized and duly documented throughout the organization;
- (b) E-recruitment systems are developed to meet client specifications and are user-friendly;
- (c) E-recruitment systems are thoroughly tested before rollout;
- (d) E-recruitment systems are comprehensive, including standard/generic job profiles, issue of vacancy announcements, pre-screening of applicants, pre-approved evaluation

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plus about 80,000 in 2010. Only 5 per cent of applicants were considered suitable and even fewer met the requirements and were available at the end.

<sup>16</sup> It should be noted that UNICEF reported satisfactory results with using Talent Groups on a generic vacancy announcement basis.

criteria for assessing candidates, systematic recording of assessments, tracking of status, approval process, offers of appointment and follow-up;

(e) The system provides comprehensive data collection for monitoring and reporting; and

(f) The efficiency and cost effectiveness of the e-recruitment system is periodically evaluated.

94. The development of electronic business processes in recent years has presented opportunities for significant efficiency gains, including process speed, accuracy, record keeping and lower office costs. But there have also been challenges in terms of cost and time overruns in developing and rolling out such systems and in dealing with functionality issues. Most United Nations system organizations have introduced electronic recruitment systems to automate their recruitment processes. The Inspectors are of the view that the longer-term efficiency gains outweigh the costs, particularly for large organizations with high-volume recruitment. Electronic pre-screening of applicants, systematic recording of assessments, standardization of processes and enhanced monitoring though efficient data collection are some of these benefits. E-recruitment also has “green” credentials.

95. The United Nations Secretariat has been at the forefront of e-recruitment in the United Nations system with the introduction of its Galaxy system in 2002. This led to an immediate broadening of the pool of applicants in terms of number and nationality, but with a concomitant increase in screening, processing and length of recruitment time. The new system facilitated the introduction of standard job profiles, pre-approved evaluation criteria and competency-based interviewing, all considered enhancements. Galaxy was replaced in 2010 with a new web-based tool known as Inspira, which is expected to provide technological support for staffing, performance management and learning for about 44,000 staff at headquarters, offices away from headquarters and field missions.

96. In terms of recruitment, Inspira offers a portal to the United Nations jobs site and a reporting facility. It has improved functionality in many areas, and should simplify and shorten the selection process through an added function that allows automated pre-screening of applicants’ eligibility. While the development and rollout of the new system has been beset by problems and early experience suggests it is cumbersome to use, particularly for recruiting offices, the Inspectors are encouraged by the enhanced reliability and transparency of the new system, which should ensure due process, documentation and more effective oversight.

97. Among the main United Nations funds and programmes, UNDP is in the process of developing a fully automated recruitment system based on the UNFPA model. The UNICEF system, introduced in 2009, has integrated human resources systems and data and a single platform housing the entire recruitment cycle. Since its launch, there have been a number of enhancements and the system has effectively reduced recruitment time. WFP has developed a system in-house that is fully automated except for shortlisting applicants.

98. Among the specialized agencies, ILO and WHO have jointly developed a system that is almost fully automated and offers pre-screening of applicants. The Inspectors understand that this system is also being used by some smaller Geneva-based organizations (ITU, UNAIDS and WIPO). For small organizations with low-volume recruitment, the costs of e-recruitment systems, whether developed in-house or adapted from commercial packages, may not be justified and joint ventures offer an alternative. This may be an option for IMO and UNWTO, which do not have e-

recruitment in place. FAO, UNESCO, UNIDO and UPU expect to have e-recruitment systems fully operational in 2012, while WMO is in the process of testing and finalizing a system.

99. It is important that e-recruitment systems are developed in consultation with clients/users and thoroughly tested before rollout. Many organizations reported that the functionality of their e-recruitment systems mostly met expectations, although some data reporting and monitoring facilities need to be better developed. As these functions are essential to the transparency of the recruitment process, the Inspectors urge organizations to add any necessary enhancements to their systems as a matter of priority.

### III. TIMELINESS OF THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS

#### **Benchmark 13**

**Recruitment time from vacancy posting to selection decision does not exceed 120 days.**

This entails that:

- (a) Each stage of the recruitment process from vacancy posting to selection decision is assigned a maximum length;
- (b) Batch recruitment and rosters are used, as appropriate, to facilitate the timeliness of the process;
- (c) Effective e-recruitment systems are developed to speed up the process and track delays; and
- (d) Monitoring systems and accountability mechanisms are in place.

100. The recruitment process at United Nations system organizations is complex, as shown above, and can take a long time to complete. The sometimes inordinate length of time taken to fill vacant posts is a major management inefficiency and a significant obstacle to effective programme delivery. Member States have long been pre-occupied with this seemingly intractable problem, as have programme managers, human resources professionals and oversight bodies. A large majority of respondents to the JIU survey felt that inefficiencies in the recruitment process are due to the lengthy process.<sup>17</sup>

101. Information provided to the Inspectors on average recruitment times in 2010 is shown in annex IV. Some organizations do not track recruitment times, which is a management shortcoming. In those that do, definitions and methods of calculation differ among the organizations, so that it is not possible to compare data for benchmarking purposes.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the figures confirm that lengthy recruitment time remains a problem. It also appears that recruitment of professional staff takes longer than that of general services.

102. The biggest delays are experienced at the shortlisting and assessment stages. The translation of vacancy announcements may also be a source of delay, as well long posting periods.

<sup>17</sup> Some 43 per cent agreed; 35 per cent strongly agreed.

<sup>18</sup> Recruitment time may be measured from job opening, vacancy posting date or vacancy closing date to date of final selection decision or date on which the offer letter is signed or issued.

103. Steps taken to reduce the length of the recruitment process include limiting the number of approval actions required, using standard/generic job descriptions and vacancy announcements in several languages and making them available online as templates, batch recruitment, maintaining rosters of pre-approved candidates and automating processes. Close monitoring by human resources departments and proper accountability are key elements for improving the situation. Some examples of good practice are given in the box below.

#### **Monitoring**

ILO: Under the 2008 Recruitment, Assignment and Placement System (RAPS) for professional regular budget positions, run in biannual batches, some 30-40 posts are advertised externally in February and August of each year and decisions are communicated within a maximum period of four months from the date the job vacancies are published. By grouping vacancies, a more targeted effort and closer monitoring has resulted in a significant reduction of the recruitment time from 139 days in 2005 to 112 days in 2010 for professional-level posts. Another benefit of the system is the standardization of processes and procedures, including generic job descriptions, assessment centres, reporting format and use of a report writer.

UNDP: In the annual performance and career development review, internal candidates (P3 to D1) on rotational posts are identified for assessment by a corporate panel that decides on placement of candidates in the pools. These candidates will bid for unanticipated vacancies as they become available or are published in a compendium as part of the biannual reassignment exercise.

UNICEF: Talent Groups, streamlined processes, monitoring and the e-recruitment system have helped to reduce the average recruitment time. In addition, the New and Emerging Talent Initiative (NETI), launched in 2008, is a streamlined recruitment process conducting a targeted annual recruitment process for specific positions and job categories for external and internal candidates at entry and mid-career levels.

UNRWA: The Recruitment Section monitors the status of all active recruitments and reports bi-weekly to all directors and senior management on the status of recruitments in relation to the 120 days timeline. The average duration of recruitment is analysed at year end and provided to senior management and auditors.

WFP: An annual recruitment exercise is launched in December of each year for all international positions due for reassignment and retirement in the following year.

104. Several organizations have introduced targets for recruitment time (FAO, ICAO, United Nations, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNOPS and UNRWA). These range from 75 days at UNESCO (from advertisement to recruitment decision) to 180 days at ICAO (from posting to final appointment decision). The Inspectors are of the view that setting targets is good practice, but to be effective, this should be accompanied by close monitoring and accountability measures.

105. The United Nations Secretariat has set up a target of 120 days (from posting to selection) and monitors recruitment time in relation to this; however, the results have been disappointing. After a decrease from 174 to 162 days in 2006 and 2007 respectively, the figure increased to 182 days in 2008 and 197 in 2009 for non-field locations. It is hoped that closer monitoring and clearer accountabilities introduced with the new scorecard and e-recruitment systems will improve the situation.

106. The importance of timeliness in the recruitment process is already reflected in the benchmarks above, and in recommendation 2. The Inspectors are of the view, however, that a recruitment time target is essential in order to provide impetus to the process, lessen inefficiencies and ultimately enhance programme delivery. Targets and indicators provide managers with a

means to track performance and take corrective action; they also facilitate effective oversight. The Inspectors consider that recruitment time from vacancy closure to selection decision, including selection for a roster, should not exceed 90 days. Each stage of the recruitment process should be assigned a maximum length within that time period and a responsible official.

#### IV. TRANSPARENCY, IMPARTIALITY AND FAIRNESS

107. A strong institutional framework for recruitment, as set out in JIU/NOTE/2012/1, combined with clear, comprehensive and documented processes, as set out above, are necessary conditions for transparency, impartiality and fairness in the recruitment process. Whether they are sufficient conditions is another matter, since no system, however well designed, can fully remove the subjective element that is likely to arise in the assessment of candidates and in selection decisions. It may be difficult to determine the point at which subjectivity becomes bias, or even malpractice, but in any case, perceptions are likely to differ.

108. The JIU survey asked members of ad hoc assessment panels and standing appointment/review bodies whether the recruitment process in their respective organizations was fair, transparent and free from bias. Responses indicated a clear division of opinion, as is shown in table 3 below, with a sizeable proportion undecided or neutral. This suggests a lack of confidence in the process by those most closely involved in its implementation.

**Table 3**  
**Perceptions of all respondents**  
*(per cent for all the organizations)*

<b>In your opinion, the recruitment process at your organization is...</b>	<b>Disagree or disagree strongly</b>	<b>Neutral or undecided</b>	<b>Agree or agree strongly</b>
<b>...fair</b>	30.8	24.2	45.0
<b>...transparent</b>	37.3	22.4	40.3
<b>...free from bias</b>	39.7	28.2	32.2

109. Interviews conducted for this review with human resources managers and staff representatives indicated a gap at many organizations in how the process is perceived by these two groups. This was confirmed by the survey responses from hiring managers, heads of offices and human resources officers on the one hand, and staff members and staff representatives on the other, as is shown in table 4 below.



**Table 4**  
**Perceptions among groups of respondents**  
*(per cent for all the organizations)*

In your opinion, the recruitment process at your organization is...		Disagree or disagree strongly	Neutral or undecided	Agree or agree strongly
...fair	staff/staff reps	35.5	29.9	34.6
	HM/HO/HR	24.7	17.4	57.8
...transparent	staff/staff reps	44.5	25.2	30.4
	HM/HO/HR	28.4	18.9	52.6
...free from bias	staff/staff reps	42.7	32.9	24.3
	HM/HO/HR	35.8	22.6	41.6

HR: hiring managers; HO: heads of offices; HR: human resources officers

110. Further analysis of survey responses showed that members of standing review bodies are also divided on these questions, with 39.5 per cent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing that the recruitment process is fair, 45.8 per cent that it is transparent, and 49.6 per cent that it is free from bias. This suggests a fair degree of scepticism about the recruitment process from those involved at the final review stage.

111. More generally, respondents were almost equally satisfied/very satisfied with the recruitment process at their organization as dissatisfied/very dissatisfied, as shown in the figure below. Again, there was a perception gap between hiring managers, heads of offices and human resources officers, who were generally satisfied, and staff members and staff representatives, who were dissatisfied,



Source: JIU survey, December 2011

112. Of the 317 suggestions made by survey participants to improve the recruitment processes at United Nations system organizations, 74 per cent focused on five areas of concern (out of 28 major issues) and these were voiced by members of six organizations (see annex V). Some 15 per cent of these suggestions related to perceived biases in selection, discrimination and lack of neutrality or fairness, while 11 per cent focused on lack of transparency. Written comments in the responses to other questions in the survey also emphasized respondents' concerns about the lack of transparency and fairness of the process and biased selections.

113. The Inspectors are of the view that human resources officers and staff representatives should participate in the standing appointment/review bodies as guardians of the rules and procedures and upholders of staff interests. Notwithstanding delegation of authority for recruitment to heads of offices, the participation of human resources professionals and staff representatives should enhance the transparency, legitimacy and fairness of the process, or at least enhance the perceptions thereof.

114. There must also be accountability measures in place to address compliance failures, including through performance appraisals and/or disciplinary actions, as mentioned in JIU/NOTE/2012/1. In addition, the internal oversight services of the respective organizations should undertake regular audits of the recruitment process, the results of which should be publicly reported, as well as investigations of all cases of suspected malpractice.

## **V. HARMONIZATION OF RECRUITMENT BUSINESS PRACTICES**

115. The Inspectors are confident that the proposed benchmarking framework offers the organizations a foundation upon which to build a recruitment system that is transparent, impartial and fair. Furthermore, aligning recruitment practices to the proposed benchmarks would create an enabling environment for the harmonization of recruitment business practices among the organizations of the United Nations system. It is imperative that further progress be made in this regard given that greater system-wide coherence has been mandated by the United Nations General Assembly.

116. The Inspectors recognize that ICSC has a key role to play in this regard, particularly in the area of job classification and note the development in 1981 of ICSC Master Standards that set out a common classification of posts in the professional and higher categories based on education, work experience and job responsibilities as well the work undertaken recently to provide new job evaluation standards for the general services and related category. This has included a Master Standard and grade level descriptors, a new definition of general services work and changes to the Common Classification of Occupational Groups. A new job description format has been developed, as well as benchmark job descriptions. The Commission approved the new system with effect from March 2010 and the CEB High-level Committee on Management (HLCM) Human Resources network described it as "transparent, flexible and simple".

117. The Inspectors believe there is a need to update and simplify the 1981 ICSC classification system for posts at the professional level and above, as has been done for the general services category. ICSC itself, in its 2001 annual report, recognized that the system was complex, costly to administer, overly rigid and inhibitive of new ways of working, indicating that changes were required. At the very least it required updating to reflect new and emerging occupations, the use of competencies and generic job descriptions and/or profiles, and streamlining of the current point factor system.

118. This review found substantial differences among the organizations in minimum eligibility requirements for posts in the professional and higher categories, despite the existence of the ICSC Master Standards, as well as for general services posts, as discussed in section B above. The Inspectors firmly believe that common minimum education, work experience and language requirements should be applied across all organizations in support of system-wide coherence and the goal of “One United Nations” and to facilitate staff mobility across the system. This is an area where harmonization is desirable and possible. A common harmonized approach is also possible in the use of standardized online applications forms, a database of UNESCO recognized academic institutions and reference checks, also discussed above.

119. The CEB/HLCM HR network is actively involved in initiatives for the harmonization of business practices in human resources management across the United Nations system. Human resources network officers informed the Inspectors that there were only limited efforts to harmonize business practices in the area of recruitment since, in view of different organizational needs, recruitment was considered to be organization-specific. However, inter-agency mobility was one area that did merit attention. The human resources network work plan for 2010-2011 includes a review of staff regulations, rules, policies and practices relating to issues arising from the “Delivering as One” pilot countries, such as harmonized job descriptions, classification and grading systems, common performance and promotion systems and the management of internal vacancies.

120. A pilot project was approved by the human resources network in 2011 for the harmonization of vacancy advertisement and selection at country level for General Service and NPO positions within the “Delivering as One” concept. It is led by UNESCO and is being implemented as a test in two of the pilot countries. The aim is to standardize vacancy announcements, harmonize the recruitment criteria for similar posts and introduce common selection mechanisms with the purpose of streamlining the sourcing and hiring process of staff locally. It is expected to reduce competition in recruitment among the agencies, reduce transactions costs and increase efficiency and collaboration at country level. Based on the results of the pilots, proposals will be made for extension to other locations. However, it is considered too complex to develop a similar project for international professional positions.

121. The Inspectors commend the harmonization initiatives in recruitment that are taking place at country level and encourage the organizations to continue to collaborate through CEB/HLCM and extend their efforts in this regard to other areas, including those mentioned above.<sup>19</sup> The implementation of the following recommendation is expected to enhance cooperation and coordination among system-wide organizations.

**Recommendation 4**

**CEB/HLCM should continue to pursue initiatives for harmonizing business practices in recruitment and should extend the scope of its activities in this area.**

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<sup>19</sup> See also paragraph 65 above.

**Annex I**  
**Posting of vacancy announcements (VA)\***

Organization	Posting period	VAs language posting	Internal/external posting	Number of VAs (2010)
<i>United Nations and funds, programmes and offices</i>				
<b>UN Secretariat</b>	GS: 30 days P and above: 60 calendar days (30 days if approved by OHRM or local HR office) PKOs and special political missions: 30 days (unless DFS exceptionally approves 15-day deadline)	GS: E P at HQ: E and F; Some other duty stations: E	P: external GS: internal up to G4; internal and external for G5 and above	n/a
<b>UNCTAD</b>	Same as UN	Same as UN	Same as UN	Internal: 44 (temporary VAs) External: 31
<b>UNEP</b>	Same as UN	Same as UN	Same as UN	n/a
<b>UNHCR</b>			First internal posting of VA compendium; if no suitable applicants, posted internal and external. Expert positions (requiring skills not readily available): internal and external	n/a
<b>UNRWA</b>	International vacancies: normally 30 days (in urgent cases, can be shortened to 2-3 weeks)	International P and G: E Area posts in the field: A for lower grades	Internal and external. DIR-HR may decide to post internally only.	Internal: 2 External: 80
<b>UNDP</b>	3 weeks; 1-2 weeks for surge recruitment. FTA external posts: min. 2 weeks (exception: fast-track policy in emergency situations)	Mainly E, some duty stations also E, F, S.	2 weeks internal posting before posting external. Hiring managers can post externally, but must ensure that internal staff are given priority in shortlisting.	n/a
<b>UNFPA</b>	Minimum 2 weeks, up to 3 weeks	For national positions (NPOs and GS): official UN language and local	Internal and external	Total: 177 (headquarters only)

\* A: Arabic; C: Chinese; DFS: Department of Field Support; DIR-HR: Director of the human resources department; E: English; F: French; FO: Field office; FTA: Fixed-term appointment; GS: posts in the General Service category; HQ: Headquarters; n/a: no information available; NPO: National Programme Officer; P: posts in the Professional category; Pt: Portuguese; R: Russian; RO: Regional office; S: Spanish; VA: Vacancy Announcement.

Organization	Posting period	VAs language posting	Internal/external posting	Number of VAs (2010)
		language P: E, sometimes also F		
<b>UNICEF</b>	External recruitment: 2 to 4 weeks maximum Surge recruitment: 7 to 14 days recommended, but can be waived if 3 qualified candidates available	E	External for almost all VAs	Total: 843
<b>UNAIDS</b>	4 weeks	E and/or F, depending on duty station and needs of RO/FO At local level sometimes A, C, S or R also, occasionally others	Internal and external	Internal: 23 External: 75
<b>UNWOMEN</b>	2 weeks	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>UNOPS</b>	G and P: 3 weeks (can be reduced by hiring manager, based on the exigencies of the service)	E mainly; can be any official UN language, but mostly UNOPS working languages (E, F, S)	Internal and external. Majority of posts advertised externally; hiring managers may request internal posting with justification.	Internal: 8 External: 277
<b>WFP</b>	10 working days (may be extended)	E	GS: internal. If no suitable candidate, VA posted either in UN common system or externally NPO: external International P: first internally for reassignment process. If no suitable candidate, external advertisement	Type 1 (Internal VAs opened to applicants in GS roster): 634 Type 2 (Internal VAs for G5-G7 vacancies for positions based on generic job profiles): n/a Type 3 (specific VAs for commercially advertised posts): 27

Organization	Posting period	VAs language posting	Internal/external posting	Number of VAs (2010)
<i>Specialized agencies and IAEA</i>				
<b>ILO</b>	G and P: 30 days	G and P: E, F, S P in Latin America: E, S; P in Africa: E and F; P in Asia: E	G: mostly internal and open to short-term or TC contract holders P: internal and external (if internal candidates not shortlisted, written justification by line manager required)	Internal: GS: 7; P: 9 External: GS: 6 (GS circulated to TC/ST: 10); P: 50
<b>FAO</b>	GS HQ: 2 weeks P: Regular programme-funded: 1 month; project-funded: 15 days	GS : E P: E, F, S	GS: internal unless required expertise cannot be found in-house P, regular programme-funded: mostly external, only limited number internal (waiver needed, line manager must provide justification)	Internal: GS: n/a; P: 11 External: GS: n/a; P: 176
<b>UNESCO</b>	1 month internally, 2 months externally (except for G1-G3: 1 month). NPOs: 1 month GS in field: 2 weeks to 1 month.	Internal: E or F External: E, F	G1-G3: external; G4-G7: internal (if special skills required, in specific cases external advertisement possible) GS in the field: internal or external, as appropriate. NPO: internal and external, as appropriate P1-P5: first internal for 1 month; if no suitable candidate found, external advertisement possible. D1/D2: external	Internal: GS at HQ: 19; P at HQ and field offices: 34 External: GS at HQ: 39; P at HQ and field offices: 57
<b>ICAO</b>	GS: 10 working days P1-P5: 1 month D1/D2: 2 months (extension possible if quality of applications received not adequate)	P: E D2: all six official ICAO languages Field Staff posts: mainly E, sometimes F and S	GS: entry level positions internal and external; higher level positions examined on case-by-case basis P: internal and external For reclassified occupied positions first internal, if no suitable candidate found, post external	Internal: GS: 13; P: 0 External: GS: 16; P: 57
<b>WHO</b>	GS and NPOs: minimum 3 weeks P: minimum 6 weeks	GS: local language in HQ and in some regions P: E and F	Usually always circulated internally at WHO and other UN agencies. Currently, external posting only exceptionally subject to HR approval	Internal: 106 External: 922
<b>UPU</b>	Up to 3 months, average 6 weeks.	GS: F, E P: E and F A, S, Pt, R for member countries.	Internal and external	Internal: 4 External: 21
<b>ITU</b>	G internal: 2 weeks, G external: 3 weeks	E, F; in special cases S, A, R	Internal and external	Internal: 14 External: 60

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Posting period</b>	<b>VAs language posting</b>	<b>Internal/external posting</b>	<b>Number of VAs (2010)</b>
	P internal: 3 weeks; P external: 2 months.			
<b>WMO</b>	GS: internal: 2 weeks; external: 30 days P: 30 days	E, F	GS: initially internal, if no qualified candidate, posted external P: external	Internal: 5 External: 24
<b>IMO</b>	1 month	GS: E P: E, F, S.	Internal and external	Internal: n/a External: 39
<b>WIPO</b>	GS: internal: 2 weeks; internal and external: 3 weeks P and higher: 4 weeks	E and/or F VAs published in all languages	GS posts: internal, unless specific requirements unavailable internally. P and higher: generally external and internal.	Internal: 53 External: 51
<b>UNIDO</b>	G and P: 3 weeks	E	Internal and external	Internal: 16 External: 72
<b>UNWTO</b>	6 weeks to 2 months, depending on post level	E, F, S	External	Internal: GS: 3 External: GS: 8
<b>IAEA</b>	GS and P posts: 4 weeks	E	All VA: external	External: 200 P+GS
<i>Other</i>				
<b>IFAD</b>	2 weeks to 45 days. Internationally advertised posts: min. 30 days	n/a	GS: internal Other: external advertising as default procedure	

**Annex II**  
**Minimum eligibility requirements: educational qualifications and work experience**

**Annex II (a)**  
**Minimum work experience required at the professional level and above**  
*(in years)*

	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	D1/P6	D2/P7
<b>UN Secretariat</b>	0	2	5	7	10	15	+15
<b>UNDP</b>	0-1	2-3	5-6	7-9	10-11	15-16	+15
<b>UNICEF</b>	1	2	5	8	10	12-13	+15
<b>WFP</b>	1	3	5	8	11	13	+15
<b>ILO</b>		3	5	7	10-15	15	
<b>FAO</b>	1-2	3-4	5-6	7-9	10-12		
<b>UNESCO</b>	2	2-4	4-7	7-10	10-15		
<b>WHO</b>	1	2	5	7	10	10	
<b>ITU</b>	1	3	5	7	10	15	20
<b>WMO</b>		3	5	8	10	12	15
<b>IAEA</b>	0	2	5	7	10	15	15

Source: Responses to JIU questionnaire

**Annex II (b)**  
**Combined minimum educational qualifications and work experience required at the Professional level and above, United Nations Secretariat**  
*(in years)*

Level	PhD or equivalent	MPhil or equivalent	Master's or equivalent	Licence or equivalent	Bachelor's or equivalent
<b>P1</b>	0	0	0	1	2
<b>P2</b>	2	2	2	3	4
<b>P3</b>	5	5	5	6	7
<b>P4</b>	7	7	7	8	9
<b>P5</b>	10	10	10	11	12
<b>D1/P6</b>	15	15	15	16	17
<b>D2/P7</b>	+15	+15	+15	+15	+15

Source: Responses to JIU questionnaire

**Annex II (c)**  
**Minimum work experience required at the General Services level**  
*(in years)*

	GS-1	GS-2	GS-3	GS-4	GS-5	GS-6	GS-7
<b>UNDP</b>	0	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>FAO</b>	0	1	2	3	4	6	6
<b>UNESCO</b>	1-2	1-2	2-3	3-5	5-7	8-10	10+
<b>WHO</b>			2	2-4	5-7	8	10-15
<b>WMO</b>		1	2-3	4	5	8	10

Source: Responses to JIU questionnaire



### Annex III Selection procedures

#### Annex III (a) Assessment panels and standing review bodies\*\*

Organization	Ad hoc assessment/interview/selection panel	Standing review body
<i>United Nations Secretariat, funds, programmes and offices</i>		
<b>UN Secretariat UNCTAD UNODC</b>	Ad hoc assessment panel Composition: 3 members (2 from department/office, 1 external, at least 1 female); subject matter experts at the same or higher level of the vacancy. D2: 3 members (at least 2 from outside the department/office, at least 1 female).	Several panels for different grades G5 and related categories: CRP Up to and including P4: CRC P5/D1: CRB Composition: staff members of the same or higher level as the post under consideration; 3 members and 3 alternates (for D1 in NY: 7 alternates); other duty stations: 3 members, 3 alternates, selected by SG; same number of members selected by staff representative body; one additional member selected jointly by all the members; HR officer as ex officio non-voting member and gender advisor; balanced representation with regard to geography, gender and departments/offices. Function: approve evaluation criteria; review proposals for filling vacancies; ensure the selection process adheres to principles, rules and regulations; raise concerns; request clarification.
<b>UNEP</b>	Interview panels; no mandatory staff/gender representation; HR officers only on request and in potentially difficult panels.	Same as UN Secretariat; mandatory training for members.
<b>UNHCR</b>	Interview panel; Composition: at least 3 members, including the manager of the post or designated representative,	The Joint Review Body at HQ. Field: for GS: Appointments, Postings and Promotions Committees (APPC); for NPOs: Appointments, Postings and Promotions Board (APPB).

\*\* ADB: Bureau of Administration and Services; ADG: Assistant DG; APB: Appointment and Promotion Board; ASG: Assistant Secretary-General; CRB: Central Review Board; CRC: Central Review Committee; CRP: Central Review Panel; D: posts in the Director category; DD: Deputy Director; DG: Director-General; DIR: Director; DSG: Deputy Secretary-General; GS: posts in the General Service category; HM: Hiring manager; HR: Human resources; HRC: Human Resources Committee; HRM: Human resources management; HQ: Headquarters; MTHR: IAEA Division of Human Resources; NPO: National Programme Officer; P: posts in the Professional category; RO: Regional Office; SG: Secretary-General; SRR: Staff Regulations and Rules.

Organization	Ad hoc assessment/interview/selection panel	Standing review body
	a designated representative of DHRM, an expert in the same functional area, if necessary from outside UNHCR.	Composition for all panels: 8 full and 8 alternate members evenly nominated by Management and Staff Council, all from P category - between P4 and D1, including 8 members from among staff serving at HQ, and 8 staff members serving in the field; gender and geographical balance and cross-functional membership must be respected; non-voting ex-officio member from HR department, legal advisor and secretary nominated by DIR-HR. Function: review the recruitment processes conducted at UNHCR offices in the field.
<b>UNRWA</b>	Interview panels. Composition: 4 members, including the HM/DIR, 1 representative from the hiring department, 1 representative from HR and an independent panel member or field Director; gender balance; geographical diversity considered. Function: prepare and conduct competency-based interviews, evaluate references/performance appraisals, make recommendation to Hiring Director.	For P4 and above, in certain cases, as requested by the DIR-HR: Advisory Committee on Human Resources (ACHR). Composition: 5 members and 5 alternates; Chairperson: Deputy Commissioner-General; DIR-HR attends meetings, other staff members may be invited if expertise needed; Staff Union representatives may participate as non-voting participants. Function: review and advise the Commissioner-General.
<b>UNDP</b>	Interview panels.	HQ: Compliance Review Board. Local/regional level: Compliance Review Panels. Composition similar to CRBs at UN Secretariat, based on nominations by Bureaux, reviewed and approved by Staff Council.
<b>UNFPA</b>	Interview panels. P4 and above: assessment outsourced to external assessment service "Select International".	For posts up to D1/P6, P and higher and GS at HQ: Compliance Review Board (CRB) at HQ. Composition: staff reflecting a broad representation of organizational units, gender and geographic regions. Function: review process for compliance with selection criteria and general UNFPA rules, regulations and policies; no review of substance of recommendation of interview panel. For NPOs and GS in the field: local CRBs established in each office to perform the same functions as CRB at HQ. CRB members shall not decide on recruitment for positions higher than their current grade.
<b>UNICEF</b>	Ad hoc selection panel. Composition: Division Director or Head of Office or a representative as Chair of panel, direct supervisor of the post, a subject matter expert, who can assess the technical expertise and suitability of the candidates, HR representative - all having full voting rights, optionally other	Central Review Bodies. Function: review the recommendation for filling a position made by the selection panel and ensure that the selection process complies with applicable regulations and rules.

Organization	Ad hoc assessment/interview/selection panel	Standing review body
	<p>members whose expertise is deemed valuable; gender and geographical balance.  Members may come from other UN organizations – exceptionally, even non-UN staff members may be designated.  HR unit arranges interviews, conducts reference checks before recommendations are made; special selection panels can be instituted for recruitment campaigns and batch recruitment.</p>	
<b>UN WOMEN</b>		
<b>UNOPS</b>	<p>Interview panels established by HM.  Composition: Minimum of 3 voting members, including a Chair who is/represents the HM, technical expert and HR representative, all preferably at least at the level of the vacant post.  For project-funded posts: other members may be invited; gender and geographical balance desirable; non-voting secretary, preferably with HR background, takes care of logistics.</p>	<p>Central Review Bodies:  HQ Appointment and Selection Panel (ASP) for GS to NOE posts in HQ and small ROs.  Composition: 3 members and 3 alternates, can be both international and local; in ROs with 20 or more locally recruited staff members, Regional ASP is constituted with 4 members and 4 alternates.  2 Appointment and Selection Boards (ASB): one for D1/D2; one for P1-P5.  Composition: 6 voting members, 6 alternates, all internationally recruited; at least 1 member and 1 alternate serving in a UNOPS RO or operations centre; non-voting secretary and alternate for each panel/board  Function: ensure compliance with UN SRR and UNOPS policies and procedures.</p>
<b>WFP</b>	<p>Ad hoc selection panel.  Composition: for GS: 4 members: HM (or designate), staff member from same division, HR representative, staff representative.  P1-P4: HM (or designate), Staffing Coordinator (or designate from the functional area), an international Professional HR officer.  P5 and higher: HM (or designate), DIR-HR as Staffing Coordinator (or designate), another Senior Manager.  Panel members must be at least of the same grade level as post under consideration; gender and geographic diversity respected to the extent possible.  Function: conduct interviews and recommend</p>	<p>Regional Bureaux and Country Offices: Compliance Review Panels (CRP).  Composition: 8 staff members, 3 (and alternates) selected by Regional/Country Director, 3 selected in consultation with staff members, 1 additional member jointly selected by those members; ex-officio non-voting secretary, usually from HR.  GS at HQ(G5 and above): Appointment and Promotion Committee (APC).  Function: advise, oversight and review compliance with applicable recruitment and selection policies and procedures.</p>

Organization	Ad hoc assessment/interview/selection panel	Standing review body
	candidates.	
<i>Specialized agencies and IAEA</i>		
<b>ILO</b>	Interview panel. Composition: responsible chief of post holding office, an independent panel member (staff member from a section/unit/technical area/division not reporting to the same Executive/Regional Director), HR representative. For P5: recommend Executive/Regional Director participates in the panel; gender balance	
<b>FAO</b>		GS in HQ: Human Resources Officer/TAP Manager for entry-level GS recruitment (“TAP”), General Service Staff Selection Committee (GSSSC) for vacancies. P category: Professional Staff Selection Committee (PSSC) for regular programme-funded positions. Project-funded positions: P1-P4: Field Staff Selection Panel; P5: Senior Field Staff Selection Panel; D1/D2 project-positions: Office of the DG. Composition: staff members nominated by divisions and staff representation appointed by DG Function: review the process, have power to change content of recommendations.
<b>UNESCO</b>	Evaluation panel. Composition: minimum 3 staff members, including the immediate supervisor of the vacant post and 1 external, preferably at higher grade than post advertised or at least equal; HRM representative for P5 and above. For field posts: Head of field office chairs (by tele-/audio-conference). For AO posts: at least 4 staff members, slightly different composition. Members from as wide a geographic basis as possible, for P5 and above: gender balanced. Functions: supervisor of post may set up a single panel to pre-select, evaluate (including interviews) and recommend candidates (alternatively, there can be a pre-selection committee for the pre-selection stage, composed of at least 2 staff	All international P and GS at HQ: Advisory Board on Individual Personnel Matters (PAB); no PAB for D category and above, Heads of Office, NPOs and local field posts. Composition: Chairperson, 2 members elected by staff and 2 appointed by DG; 2 Staff Associations are represented as observers (1 representative per Association); secretariat provided by HRM; usually, members are of same category as post under consideration, one staff member of another category may be included. Function: exclusively advisory role, review recommendations and ensure compliance with SRR.

Organization	Ad hoc assessment/interview/selection panel	Standing review body
	members of different nationalities from different divisions, one of whom may be the supervisor of the vacant post).	
<b>WHO</b>	<p>Ad hoc advisory selection panels.  Composition: up to/including P5: DIR/supervisor (or designate) of post holding unit as Chair, staff member from another unit chosen by DIR of concerned unit after consultation with HR and Staff Committee, a recruitment specialist, a staff representative (designated by Staff Committee); recruitment specialist provides support services.  D1/P6 and higher: ADG of cluster with position (or designate), another ADG designated on rotational basis (or designate), DIR-HR (or designate), staff representative; diversity to be maintained; participation of staff representative and recruitment specialist not restricted by grade, remaining panel members shall be at least at same grade as or higher than post being filled.  Function: draw up shortlist of candidates for interview and test, conduct interviews, review tests, propose 3 candidates in rank order.</p>	<p>Objective review can be undertaken, if appeals or requests for administrative review are filed.  Formal evaluation of recruitment process done on case-by-case basis.</p>
<b>IMO</b>	<p>Interview panel.  Composition: normally 3 to 4 members: line manager (normally Chair), at least one additional manager (preferably from another Division), HR staff member</p>	<p>GS and P1-P3: APBs  Composition: Chair (Director of Administration or as an alternate the Head of HR), 5 members, each one nominated by their respective Division Director, with the exception of the Administrative Division; and a member appointed on each occasion by the Staff Committee;  Head of HR (or representative) acts as secretary  Function: review shortlists.</p>
<b>IAEA</b>	<p>Interview panel.  Composition: normally 3 members minimum: MTHR, administrative officer or assistant and 1 or more from other divisions.  For P and GS positions (G5 or higher) and for interviews for GS to P: representative from</p>	<p>Joint Advisory Panel on General Service Staff, Joint Advisory Panel on Professional and G7 Staff.  Composition: all DDGs and representative of Staff Council.  Function: given 5 days to comment on recommendations.</p>

Organization	Ad hoc assessment/interview/selection panel	Standing review body
	MTHR; diversity in terms of gender and geographic origin; MTHR advises on interviews and helps prepare interview questions.	
<i>Other</i>		
<b>OECD</b>	Recruitment panel established by HM. For staff at grades A1 to A3, L1 to L3, B and C: at least 2 representatives. For staff at grades A4 or L4 and above: at least 3 representatives.	Management Review Board for posts of grade A5 to A7 or L5

**Annex III (b)**  
**Assessment panels and standing appointment bodies**

Organization	Ad hoc assessment/interview panel	Standing appointment body
<i>Specialized agencies</i>		
<b>ICAO</b>	Interview panel, nominated by HM with advice from HR: staff members at same or higher grade as post advertised; at least one staff member from another bureau; and at least one female member, if possible; HR only represented for a HR position or if specifically requested by HM. Panel of Directors responsible for entire selection process for D1.	GS: APB II. Composition: at HQ: 2 D1-level staff members, including one from the post holding branch; at RO: 2 P-level staff members, including one from the post holding entity; serving non-voting gender advisor may be appointed; non-voting secretary; Chair: DD/ADB at HQ; Regional Director at RO. P-level posts: APB 1. Composition: all D2 Bureau Directors; Regional Director if RO is concerned; non-voting gender advisor and secretary; Chair: Senior Director of Bureau. D1: Panel of Directors; Composition: DIR-ADB, two other Directors of Bureau. D2: Panel consisting of SG, President of Council, assisted by the Director, Bureau of Administration and Services; HRC to assist SG in D1/D2 selection process. Functions: APBs review findings of the interviews and propose to SG a final list of candidates in rank order; HR advises and provides secretariat.
<b>ITU</b>	Ad-hoc pre-selection panel. Composition: HM, HR representative, staff representative.	Appointment and Promotion Board. Composition: representative of General Secretariat, representatives of the three Bureaux; in addition,

Organization	Ad hoc assessment/interview panel	Standing appointment body
	<p>Tasks: examine pre-evaluation done by manager, sign off list of pre-selected candidates. Interview panels not mandatory; managers may decide whether to use of this option; no requirements concerning composition, but an HR representative is always present.</p>	<p>For GS and P1-P5: 2 Staff Council representatives; both genders represented; Chief of Personnel Department (or designated representative) as ex-officio member and secretary. Function: examine recommendations and establish shortlist for manager's decision or interviews, as the case may be.</p>
<b>UNIDO</b>	<p>Interview panels established by Managing Directors. Composition: maximum 4 members, including a functional as well as a HR specialist; 1 member should be external to recruiting unit and nominated by HRM and external. For P posts: Branch Director must be 1 of the 4 panel members, unless he decides otherwise. Function: assess candidates and prepare assessment report according to an established format based on weighted average system: 40% technical, 40% competencies, 10% education, 10% languages; report to be signed by all panel members. For D2 posts: interview process can be outsourced; external panel interviews.</p>	<p>APB. Different panels for different categories/grades except staff in the Office of the Director-General, heads of Bureaux reporting to the DG; G1/G2 and GS positions in the field recommendations for the latter directly to DDG for approval. D posts: D2 and D1 Selection Panel. Composition: Managing Directors, Chief of Cabinet and any person appointed by DG; DIR-HRM branch as secretary. P posts at HQ: Professional Selection Panel; P posts in field: Field Service Selection Panel. GS posts at HQ: General Service Selection Panel. Composition of all panels: 1 Chair and 1 alternate, appointed by DG; 1 member and 1 alternate from each division, appointed by DG from list proposed by Managing Directors; 2 members and 2 alternates, appointed by DG from list proposed by Staff Council; DIR-HRM branch or representative as non-voting member; HRM branch provides secretary. Function: advise on appointments.</p>
<b>IFAD</b>	<p>Interview panel. Composition: HM (who is not the Chair), designated panel members from Staff Association, HR, etc.; HR tries to achieve balanced panel composition by having the relevant departments represented based on the respective VA. Function: recommend to HM (for GS posts) or to Appointments Board (for P posts).</p>	<p>Appointments Board. Composition: designated approval authority and interview panel. Function: approve or disapprove the recommendation of interview panel. If interview panel submits (in order of priority) more than one candidate for selection, the Chairperson of the Appointments Board may authorize the appointment of any of the recommended candidates, with justification.</p>

**Annex III (c)**  
**Standing appointment bodies**

Organization	Standing appointment body
<i>Specialized agencies</i>	
<b>UPU</b>	<p>Appointment and Promotion Committee.            Composition: 5 members of which 3 from International Bureau (DDG as APC Chair, Director of HR and Director of the Directorate concerned by the post), 2 International Bureau staff appointed by Staff Association Committee, all at least the same grade as post to be filled; Staff Administration and Social Affairs Programme Manager with the HR Directorate (or deputy) as non-voting secretary.            Function: conduct interviews and recommend 3 candidates to DG.</p>
<b>WIPO</b>	<p>Appointment and Promotion Board.            Role and composition currently being reviewed.            Function: select candidates for interviews, conduct interviews and make recommendation to DG.</p>
<b>WMO</b>	<p>For GS: Appointment and Promotion Body.            Composition: Chief HR Department, HM, staff representative.            For P: Staff Selection Board.            Composition: DSG, ASG, D/REM and/or Chief HR Department, HM, staff representative; HR also serves as secretary.            Function: review and establish shortlist, interview shortlisted candidates.</p>
<b>UNWTO</b>	<p>Appointment and Promotion Board: Executive Director invited to participate.            Function: Finalize shortlist for interviews, conduct interviews.</p>



**Annex IV**  
**Average recruitment time in 2010**

Organization	Average recruitment time
<i>United Nations Secretariat, funds, programmes and offices</i>	
UN Secretariat	187 days (2011)
OCHA	All posts: 242 days* P and higher: 244 days*
OHCHR	All posts: 240 days* P and higher: 256 days*
UNCTAD	236 days
UNODC	All posts: 203 days* P and higher: 217 days*
UNOG	All posts: 160 days* P and higher: 180 days*
UNOV	All posts: 159 days* P and higher: 176 days*
UNEP	All posts: 202 days* P and higher: 207 days*
UN-HABITAT	All posts: 203 days* P and higher: 217 days*
UNHCR	n/a
UNRWA	108 days
UNDP	n/a
UNFPA	4 months (2010) (from advertisement of post to provisional offer)
UNICEF	110 days
UNAIDS	148 days
UN Women	n/a
UNOPS	No statistics available, usually done within a 100-day timeline, sometimes more - up to 148 days
WFP	131 days (from external recruitment to entry on duty)
<i>Specialized agencies and IAEA</i>	
ILO	GS posts: 120 days; P posts: 112 days
FAO	266 calendar days (from VA closure date to appointment signature)
UNESCO	Internal: 106 days; External: 174 days (from advertisement date to final decision)
ICAO	GS posts: 133 days; P posts: 222 days (from vacancy publication to final appointment decision)
WHO	At HQ: 5.3 months
UPU	6 months
ITU	220 days
WMO	GS posts: 117 days; P posts: 168 days
IMO	95 days
WIPO	n/a
UNIDO	4 to 5 months
UNWTO	Around 6 months (from VA publication)
IAEA	n/a
<i>Other</i>	
IFAD	GS: 60 days P: 144 days
OECD	No data available at this point due to introduction of a new system supporting the recruitment process; previously 6 months (from publication to time of hire)

\* HRAP Assessment December 2010: average selection time from VA posting to selection by head of department in Galaxy only; no data available from Inspira.

**Annex V**  
**Issues most frequently mentioned in response to the JIU survey question**

*“What do you suggest to improve the recruitment process at your organization?”*

Issue	Comments (total: 317)	Organization	Main issues
Biased selection/ discrimination/ lack of neutrality/ fairness	No. of comments: 50 % of total comments: 15.4%	52% by UN 10% by UNICEF	Not a fair, impartial, unbiased, open-ended process; tailored vacancy announcements; selection decision made in advance; corruption, patronage and favouritism; selection determined by political considerations; impartiality, professionalism and integrity of hiring managers. Selection should be based on merit, competencies and UN rules and regulations
Transparency	No. of comments: 35 % of total comments: 11%	62.9% by UN 8.6% by UNICEF	Lack of transparency, both within the organization and towards the applicants; selection criteria not clear, status of application not known. Rules should be transparent, more information on all steps of the recruitment process.
Efficiency/ simplification/ length of the process	No. of comments: 75 % of total comments: 23.7%	56% by UN 9.3% by FAO 6.6% by UNESCO	The selection process should be streamlined, shortened, simplified and made more efficient; vacancy times need to be shortened; process too bureaucratic and cumbersome; not tailored to needs of organizations. Timelines should be introduced for all steps of the process.
Delegation of authority	No. of comments: 30 % of total comments: 9.5%	50% by UN	Decentralization; further and clear delegation of authority in accordance with the needs of the organizations; clearly differentiated tasks and accountability of the various actors in the recruitment process. No intervention by higher levels with execution of delegated authority at lower levels.
Improving the assessment procedure/ methods	No. of comments: 45 % of total comments: 14.2%	37.8% by UN 15.6% by ILO 8.9% by UNDP	Use comprehensive assessment through various methods such as performance evaluation, interviews, tests, assessment of competencies etc. based on pre-determined strong assessment/selection criteria and clear weighting of the different parts of the assessment in order to select best qualified candidate in accordance with the needs of the organization; give more and better feedback to candidates