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327 (Appendix A) - Teleworking

GUIDELINES ON TELEWORKING

These guidelines set out the conditions under which staff members of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) may be authorized to work from home or from any other agreed workplace outside their normal office.

No staff member is automatically entitled or guaranteed the opportunity to telework and no staff member will be required to telework.

Teleworking applies to staff members¹, working on a full or part-time basis, at Headquarters and offices outside Headquarters

1. TYPES OF TELEWORKING

Teleworking may be arranged on either an "occasional" or a "regular" basis.

Occasional Teleworking

An "occasional teleworking" arrangement is one that involves working outside the office for limited periods, for a few hours or few days, during and/or outside regular working hours. For example, this type of arrangement would be particularly suitable in situations involving a task that can be more effectively performed outside the office environment, because it requires uninterrupted concentration (typically, this could be the case where a substantial research or writing assignment needs to be completed within a tight deadline).

Regular Teleworking

A "regular teleworking" arrangement is one that involves working outside the office on a regular basis and for a regular part of the working day or a regular part of the working week. Regular teleworking arrangements may be used to accommodate personal situations where a staff member finds it more convenient not to have to come to the office on a regular basis, has shown the ability to work independently and can satisfy the needs of the workgroup by performing his/her assigned duties efficiently and productively at a teleworkplace.

2. CONDITIONS FOR TELEWORKING

Staff members working outside of the office under these Guidelines will remain subject to FAO administrative provisions as if they were working on the Organization's premises. In this regard, teleworkers must adhere to the principles and practices stated in the Organization's Policy on Fraud and the Improper Use of the Organization's Resources (ACs 2004/19 and 2007/11) and in the Policy on the Use of the Organization's Information Technology Resources (AC 2008/26). Staff members will remain bound by the Organization's standards of conduct while working at the teleworkplace.

Teleworking shall only be permitted if, in the judgement of both the immediate supervisor and the division director or head of office, the work to be carried out will be performed with at least the same effectiveness. In other words, the supervisors must be satisfied that the staff member's productivity and the quality of work output will be sustained, and that absence from the workplace will have no adverse effect on his/her working relationship with other staff. To help ensure this, the following conditions relating to the staff member, the work and the hours of work should be satisfied; these conditions may limit access to regular teleworking arrangements for certain categories of staff and types of work:



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The staff member

The staff member who is being authorized to work outside the office should have:

1. a full understanding of the work to be performed;
2. consistently demonstrated a fully satisfactory level of performance;
3. the ability to work efficiently with minimal supervision, to establish priorities and to manage his/her own time; and
4. a proficiency in the required software applications, intra/internet and e-mail functions.

The assigned work

The work that the staff member is authorized to carry out outside the office should be:

1. measurable in terms of quality and quantity;
2. non-reliant on information, materials or facilities that are not readily accessible from the teleworkplace; and
3. non-reliant on confidential materials.

Hours of Work

Teleworking staff will be expected to complete the prescribed number of working hours per day (which may vary depending on the staff member's duty station and whether he/she works part-time). The time staff members devote to their work may occur during or outside regular office hours (in the evening, during the week-end or official holidays, etc). Supervisors may require however, that certain "core hours" be worked if they consider it essential for the teleworkers to be accessible by telephone or electronic mail during these hours. Compensation shall not be granted to teleworking staff for overtime performed outside the office.

3. PROCEDURES

A proposal for a teleworking arrangement (occasional and regular teleworking) must be authorized by the staff member's immediate supervisor and division director or head of office and copied to the SSC.

Each arrangement should be decided on a case-by-case basis and must be suitably documented, in the form of a Teleworking Agreement (TWA) (see [form AFH 211e](#)). The TWA must be signed by the staff member and his/her immediate supervisor and approved by the concerned division director or head of office. A copy should be sent for information to the SSC which should indicate:

- the duration the staff member is authorized to telework;
- whether terms of reference apply or specify the task(s) to be undertaken, and expected results;
- the teleworking schedule and the requirements for reporting work progress;
- requirements for the staff member to visit and/or work at his/her normal office; and,
- the location, telephone numbers and e-mail address of the staff member.

Should a staff member's request for teleworking not be approved, a written explanation as to why this is the case should be provided.

Teleworkers need to be made aware that unplanned and longer visits to their normal office may be necessary



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when the nature of the workload so requires.

The teleworker's immediate supervisor is responsible for informing the staff member's colleagues in the work unit and, as necessary, other concerned FAO staff about the teleworking arrangement.

Staff authorized to telework will be marked present for attendance purposes, with the understanding that (i) prior approval will be required for annual leave, and (ii) when a staff member is sick, the immediate supervisor is promptly informed. Current rules for official holidays will apply to full-time and part-time staff working outside the office.

4. TERMINATION OF ARRANGEMENTS

The immediate supervisor, the staff member's division director, or head of office, may terminate the teleworking arrangement at any time if, in their judgement, the conditions required for teleworking are no longer met. The teleworking staff member may also terminate the arrangement and return to working at his/her normal office. In any case, a two-week notice period shall be given before the agreement may be terminated by either party.

If the staff member transfers from the work unit or duty station, the teleworking arrangement with the former unit or duty station will be terminated and all equipment will be returned to the former unit or duty station. The staff member must submit a new request to telework and a new arrangement must be made with the supervisor of the new unit or duty station and the division director or head of office concerned, if appropriate.

5. CONSIDERATIONS PERTAINING TO COST AND LIABILITIES

The staff member who has been authorized to telework ensures that a proper work environment

The teleworking staff member is responsible for providing a reasonably safe and secure working environment to carry out his/her responsibilities. FAO will not be liable for damages to the staff member's personal property while he/she is performing official duties or while using FAO equipment. It is advisable that, in the case where the staff member's home has been designated as the teleworkplace, the teleworker reviews his/her home insurance policies as the use of the home as an office may not be covered by existing contracts (however, any increase in home insurance coverage as a result of teleworking is the responsibility of the teleworker).

The staff member who has been authorized to telework will be covered by FAO's Compensation for Death, Illness or Injury Plan (Manual Section 342 refers). Coverage will be deemed to apply in cases of death, injury or illness resulting from an accident occurring while staff members are performing official duties at the agreed place of teleworking. The staff member will bear responsibility for seeking prompt medical treatment for any work-related (service-incurred) injuries, following the established procedures for reporting such injuries, i.e. informing the Social Security Branch, AFHS of the injury at the earliest possible time, and providing details and certification of the conditions of injury as required.

3 for teleworking is maintained. Except as set out below, the staff member will be responsible for any costs incurred to set up and maintain the proper work environment. FAO will not be responsible for operating costs, maintenance of the teleworkplace, or any incidental cost associated with the use of the staff member's residence. Incremental utility costs (including telephone line installation, FAX machines, network services, office furniture, answering machine or voice mail, additional electrical outlets), as well as travel costs from/to the teleworkplace will not be reimbursed by FAO. Similarly, FAO will not be responsible for any tax implications of maintaining a home office area. The only exceptions will be official long-distance telephone calls which will be reimbursed by FAO and office supplies which will be provided by FAO.

6. PROVISION OF FAO EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORT



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To the extent possible, staff members should use their own equipment when their teleworking assignment do not require any access to FAO's network (e.g. FAO's network for electronic mail, Intranet and network-resident software) or only access to FAO's network for electronic mail.

In the event where the staff member does not possess the requisite equipment or where a teleworking assignment requires a higher-function connection to FAO's network, FAO will provide, to the extent possible and as necessary, the teleworking staff member with appropriate hardware and software as well as access to the FAO's network for electronic mail, Intranet and network-resident software. However, staff needs for hardware, software or support for teleworking will have to be accommodated from existing departmental/office appropriations and equipment. Accordingly, the availability of the requisite equipment may influence the decision of a department/office to approve or decline requests to telework.

The equipment is provided to the teleworker primarily for use on official assignments. However, teleworkers can use it for reasonable personal purposes so long as this does not create a conflict of interest with their obligations as international civil servants. Other household members or persons other than official FAO staff should not use the equipment provided.

FAO-owned equipment provided to teleworkers will be maintained and repaired by FAO at the office site only. No technical assistance will be provided at the teleworkplace. FAO will not upgrade, maintain or support staff-owned computer equipment. The KCT Help Desk (KCT-Help-Desk@fao.org) will provide support on a best effort basis during normal working hours, except on Official holidays. Offices outside Headquarters should first contact their local IT specialist, if any, for support prior to contacting KCT.

In all cases, participating staff will be responsible for transporting FAO-owned equipment as well as all paper and electronic documents they need to effectively perform their duties to and from off-site work locations as no courier service will be provided. When taking FAO-owned equipment off premises, teleworkers are expected to ensure that adequate precautions and due care is taken to protect it from theft, damage or misuse as, if it is damaged or stolen, they may be held financially responsible in accordance with the provisions of Staff Rule [303.2.3](#) on Financial Responsibility (also refer to Manual Section 503 on Property Accountability). Teleworkers will neither perform nor permit copying of FAO-owned software and data files (whether purchased or developed in-house by FAO) except for the purpose of backup. Individual staff members who are authorized to telework, their immediate supervisors and the division director or head of office approving arrangements for teleworking, are responsible and accountable for ensuring that FAO-owned equipment, as well as software and data files, are returned to FAO at the termination of the teleworking assignment.