United Nations
Climate Change Secretariat

Nations Unies
Secrétariat sur les changements climatiques

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

This document describes the recruitment process in the UNFCCC Secretariat and all the provisions should be strictly followed. However, none of its provisions, or any omission therein, can replace or alter the terms of the Recruitment and Selection policy as outlined in the Staff Selection System (Administrative Guideline AG/2014/4 dated 31 October 2014.

This standard operating procedure shall enter into force on 31 October 2014.

(signed) Christiana Figueres
Executive Secretary

1.   Introduction and Scope

1.1   The purpose of this Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is to establish a step-by-step guideline for the selection of staff within UNFCCC.   The procedures set out in this SOP implement the policy outlined in the Staff Selection System (Administrative Guideline AG/2014/4) and incorporate recommendations made in the LEAN review of recruitment and selection processes, observed best practices and action items outlined in the gender equality strategy.
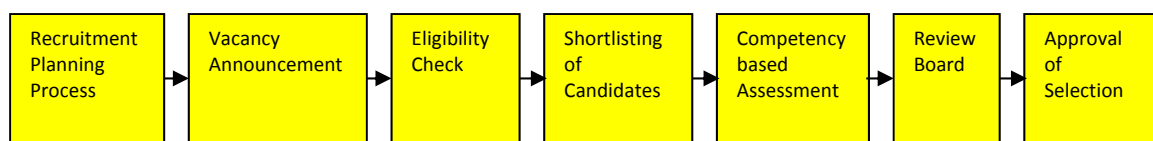
1.2   In developing the SOP, the following guiding principles were followed:

- **Fairness –** ensuring that all candidates are assessed against clearly articulated job skills, knowledge and competencies;

- **Consistency** – ensuring that the agreed process is applied consistently across the secretariat.   While it is recognized that a variety of recruitment and selection methods can be used, depending on the circumstances, it is essential to have a record of the methods used and the selection decisions made;

- **Transparency** – ensuring that the assessment criteria for all phases in the selection process are transparent to management, staff and candidates to the fullest extent possible;

- **Efficiency** – ensuring that the role of each stakeholder is clearly defined and a collaborative approach is adopted for improved communication and efficiency;

- **Diversity** – striving to achieve gender and geographical balance for all posts in the Professional and higher categories.

1.3   All staff members who are responsible for the different steps in the processes are expected to follow the procedures set out in this SOP.

1.4   The procedures and rules detailed in this document only apply to the selection process for fixed-term job vacancies.

1.5   The selection process involves the seven distinct steps which are depicted in the following diagram.

Recruitment Planning Process	Vacancy Announcement	Eligibility Check	Shortlisting of Candidates	Competency based Assessment	Review Board	Approval of Selection

2. Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this SOP.

2.1   *External candidates*[1]: all candidates, excluding internal candidates, but including staff currently serving under a temporary appointment, junior professional officers, interns and consultants

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[1] Staff Selection System, paragraph 2.1.2

as well as staff members of the UN secretariat, separately administered United Nations funds and programmes.

2.2   *External rostered candidates*[2]: external candidates whose inclusion in the roster has been approved by the Executive Secretary following a regular recruitment process.

2.3   *Executive Secretary*: The head of the UNFCCC secretariat and the officials in whom he or she delegates the authority and the responsibility to review and approve recruitment cases as specified in the document "Delegation of authority in HR matters".

2.4   *Hiring manager*[3]: the official responsible for filling a vacant position.   The hiring manager is accountable to his or her head of programme and is responsible for effectively and efficiently managing staff and resources placed under his or her supervision in order to ensure the delivery of mandated activities.

2.5   *Internal candidates*[4]: serving UNFCCC staff members holding an appointment under the Staff Rules, other than a temporary appointment, who have been recruited after a competitive process under staff rule 4.15 (review by a UNFCCC review body).

2.6   *Internal rostered candidates*[5]: internal candidates whose inclusion in the roster has been approved by the Executive Secretary following a regular recruitment process.

2.7   *Programme Administrative Team (PAT)*: the staff member(s) responsible for providing decentralized administrative support to the programme.

2.8   *Review Board*[6]: an advisory body established under the UNFCCC secretariat administrative guideline on Review Board (AG/2014/5) or any amendments thereto.

2.9   *Roster*[7]: a list of candidates who have previously been endorsed by a review body for a particular vacancy but were not selected for it, and who have indicated an interest in being considered for selection for a future vacancy with similar functions at the same level. Placement on the roster is for posts up to and including P-4 level and is valid for a period of one year.

2.10   *Spouse*[8]: a partner in a legally recognized marriage or contracted domestic partnership as defined by the laws of the country where the partnership was officially established.

3.   Initial Steps in the Recruitment Process

3.1   The programme may begin the recruitment process as soon as a vacancy or anticipated vacancy is identified. For vacancies that arise due to staff reaching retirement age, the process should start nine months (or more) before the anticipated retirement date. The HRU produces and monitors a list of staff reaching statutory retirement age in the coming year and sends it to respective PATs.

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[2] Staff Selection System, paragraph 2.1.3
[3] Staff Selection System, paragraph 2.1.5
[4] Staff Selection System, paragraph 2.1.6
[5] Staff Selection System, paragraph 2.1.7
[6] Staff Selection System, paragraph 2.1.9
[7] Staff Selection System, paragraph 2.1.10
[8] Staff Selection System, paragraph 2.1.12

3.2   When a vacancy is identified, the hiring manager should first evaluate the current organizational structure to ensure that the need for such a position still exists and consider whether the functions entailed in the post could be fulfilled by other means. Key questions to consider include:

- Are the functions still needed, or needed at a different level?
- Does the job still serve its purpose?
- Can the duties be better distributed among existing staff?
- Does the job description reflect future programme/organizational requirements?
- Is the funding for the post still available?

3.3   The planning meeting

Based on the outcome of the review described in 3.2, the hiring manager normally initiates the planning process by scheduling a meeting with the Human Resources Unit (HRU) and the PAT to discuss the following items:

a. The requirements of the post under recruitment and the profile of potential candidates. The first set of requirements refers to what kinds of educational qualifications and technical work experience should be considered as relevant to the post. In determining these requirements, consideration should also be made as to whether the ideal candidate should be an expert or someone who has the potential to grow in the organization. Another set of requirements is related to competencies which refer to a combination of skills, attributes and behaviours that are directly related to successful performance on the job;

b. The types of technical experience to be considered as relevant, with examples;

c. A recruitment plan that includes the posting date and potential dates for technical evaluation and interviews;

d. The range of recruitment sources to be used to attract qualified candidates, with due consideration of the secretariat's diversity requirements;

e. The range of assessment methods to be used to evaluate candidates against the required technical knowledge and competencies.

3.4   Preparation of the job description

3.4.1   To kick off the recruitment process, the hiring manager, with the support of the PAT, prepares/revises the job description using the standard template on the UNFCCC intranet (Form section). A brief guideline on how to write a job description can be found by clicking here. Should circumstances require, the hiring manager may request the HRU to conduct a desk review and help draft the job description.

3.4.2   Once the job description is finalized, the head of programme with the support of the PAT initiates the approval process by preparing the "Request for approval of HR action on posts" form. The completed form along with the finalized job description and an organizational chart is sent to the HRU for classification.

3.5   Preparation of the recruitment profile

3.5.1   In conjunction with the preparation of the job description, the hiring manager, in consultation with the HRU, develops the recruitment profile.

3.5.2   The recruitment profile sets out the selection criteria used for shortlisting and interview i.e. education background, experience, specific professional knowledge, job related skills, evaluation criteria, language and competency requirements. These requirements can be categorized as either "essential" or "desirable".

3.5.3   In developing the selection criteria, the hiring manager should ensure that they do not disproportionately exclude certain groups of candidates due to their nationality and gender.

3.5.4   While an advanced university degree (or equivalent) in the relevant field is a typical requirement for P-3 level and above posts, this academic requirement may be relaxed for certain job categories if the shortfall can be compensated by additional relevant working experience on top of the number of years normally required for the level of the post[9]. This waiver needs to be clearly stated in the vacancy announcement.

3.6   Job classification

3.6.1   Upon receipt of the finalized job description, the HRU aims to complete the classification within **five** working days.

3.6.2   The HRU analyses the job based on the key accountabilities outlined in the job description and the organizational setting as shown in the organizational chart and classifies it using the ICSC[10] job evaluation systems to ensure that fairness and relativities are maintained within the secretariat.

3.6.3   Professional posts are classified using factors such as the nature of work (scope and deliverables, scope and context); the enabling environment (organizational context, management focus and exposure/risk); partnership (engagement and communities of interest); and results (impact of actions and leadership roles).

3.6.4   General Service posts are classified using factors such as the nature of work (focus and deliverables, scope and knowledge/skills/expertise); organizational context and managerial guidance received; teamwork and relations (engagement, contacts and language); and results (impact of actions and team roles).

3.6.5   The draft job classification is subject to a two-tier review process using a "maker and checker[11]" concept for increased transparency and accuracy.

3.6.6   Professional posts are classified by the Associate HR Officer or HR Officer ("the maker").

3.6.7   General Service posts are classified by a trained HR Assistant or Associate HR Officer ("the maker").

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[9] Staff Selection System, Annex1, paragraph 1
[10] International Civil Service Commission

[11] "The principle of maker and checker means that for each transaction, there must be at least two individuals necessary for its completion. While one individual may create a transaction, the other individual should be involved in confirmation/authorization of the same. Here the segregation of duties plays an important role. In this way, strict control is kept over system software and data keeping in mind functional division of labor between all classes of employees." Available at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maker-checker

3.6.8   Before the classification is finalized, the proposed rating for each factor is compared with the rating for other similar jobs in the secretariat to see if any aspects of the ratings are not in line with other ratings. If irregularities or discrepancies are discovered, the maker discusses the rating in question with the HR Officer or Chief, Human Resources, and then decides whether any changes are needed before the ratings are considered final.

3.6.9   The proposed rating for General Service posts and Professional posts is sent to the HR Officer and Chief, Human Resources, ("the checker") respectively for review and sign off.

3.6.10   If the evaluation is deemed inappropriate by the head of the recruiting programme, the case should be escalated to the Coordinator, Administrative Services, for review via Chief, Human Resources.

3.6.11   If the outcome remains unsatisfactory, the Coordinator, Administrative Services, sends the case to the Job Classification Unit of United Nations of Geneva (UNOG) for an independent review.

3.6.12   Once the classification is finalized, the HRU signs off the Job Description form confirming the grade level and sends it to the PAT together with the signed Recruitment Profile form. The PAT sends both forms, together with the "Request for approval of HR action on posts" form, to the Coordinator AS to confirm availability of funds and establish a post number, and to the Executive Secretary for final approval. In addition, the HRU will update the job classification database and save a copy of the job description in the designated database.

4.   The Vacancy Announcement

4.1   The HRU prepares the vacancy announcement (VA) in cooperation with the hiring manager within **five** working days of the receipt of approval of the recruitment.

4.2   The VA should specify the deadline for application; key responsibilities of the post; requirements of the post in terms of education, experience, specific professional knowledge, job related skills, language requirements; and selection process which includes the competencies that will be assessed during the interview[12].

4.3   The VA, alongside the job description, is the most important document in the recruitment process. It serves the dual purpose of:

- Providing potential candidates with the information they need to determine whether or not to apply for a vacant post, how to apply and how applicants will be judged;

- Specifying the selection criteria to be used by the hiring manager, selection panel and the HRU to assess the candidates during each stage of the recruitment process.

4.4   Once the VA is finalized, the HRU will, within **two** working days, post it both internally and externally at the same time with a deadline of 30 calendar days (in pursuance of paragraph 5.5 of the Staff Selection System).

4.5   Prior to the closing of a VA, if the pool of candidates does not have sufficient number of eligible candidates or is not sufficiently diverse in the light of secretariat targets for gender equality

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[12] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.4

and equitable geographical distribution[13], the vacancy announcement period may be exceptionally extended up to a maximum of 45 calendar days to perform a more targeted search[14].

4.6   As a general rule, 50% could be used as a benchmark to determine the sufficiency of eligible candidates from underrepresented groups such as women and Non-Annex 1 countries. This percentage, however, could be adjusted depending on the nature of job and supply in the market.

4.7   Prior to the closing date of a VA, the HRU will check on the application status and advise the hiring manager as to whether there are sufficient numbers of candidates from underrepresented groups.   If the need to extend the VA is established after taking into account the view of the head of the Administrative Services programme, the head of the recruiting programme should send a request to the recruitment team by email.

5.   Recruitment Sources

5.1   The secretariat aims to utilize a wide range of media to ensure that VAs reach the target audience. Particular actions should be taken to identify sources to attract qualified candidates from underrepresented groups.

5.2   The current standard recruitment sources are as follows:

Vacancies for both General Service and Professional and higher categories are posted via:

- UNFCCC website;
- All UNFCCC staff;
- Bonn/Cologne Anzeigeblatt;
- Websites of the international community.

Vacancies in the Professional and higher category i.e. P-2 and above are also posted or circulated via:

- Member states via focal points;
- UN jobs;
- UN HR Network;
- UNIC.

5.3   Based on the outcome of the discussion with the hiring manager, additional sources could be used which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Advertising to targeted institutions;
- Advertising in highly specialized online media and magazines;
- Advertising through social media such as LinkedIn;
- Approaching potential candidates directly to invite them to apply and/or using headhunting firms or the LinkedIn search tool to actively seek qualified candidates. All candidates identified through this active search process are required to submit their application through the online recruitment system.

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[13] For each biennium, the Executive Secretary will set priority order between gender and geographical distribution.
[14] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.5

6. The Eligibility Check

6.1   The HRU will complete the eligibility check for all applications received within **five** working days of the respective due date[15]. The check involves assessing whether the biographical data provided by the candidates in the online UNFCCC Personal History form (P11) meets the essential requirements, which include minimum academic qualifications, relevant work experience, age limit, family relationship and minimum time in post.

6.2   Determining academic qualifications

6.2.1   The minimum academic standard for recruitments and selections to Professional and higher category posts is a completed university degree (or equivalent, including professional certifications).   An advanced degree is expected for posts at P-3 level or higher (see table in 6.2.5).

6.2.2   The minimum academic standard for all General Service posts is completion of high school (secondary school) combined with a number of years of relevant work experience.

6.2.3   When evaluating whether a degree is recognized, the HRU will be guided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) list of higher education institutions recognized or otherwise approved by competent authorities in participating countries. Degrees requiring little or no actual course work, degrees awarded for a payment of fees only, and degrees granting substantial credits for "lifetime achievement" or "life/work experience" will normally not be recognized.

6.2.4   Incomplete degrees are unacceptable to the secretariat as proof of academic qualification, even if they are associated with a recognized higher education institution.

6.2.5   A combination of relevant academic qualifications and additional experience indicated in the table below may be accepted in lieu of an advanced degree depending on the nature of the job.

Post level	Minimum years of relevant experience	Minimum academic requirements	Additional years of relevant experience to replace lack of advanced degree
P3	5 at professional level	Master or equivalent degree	Bachelor degree + 2 additional years of experience
P-4	7 at professional level	Master or equivalent degree	Bachelor degree + 3 additional years of experience
P-5	10 at professional level	Master or equivalent degree	Bachelor degree + 5 additional years of experience
D-1	12 at professional level	Master or equivalent degree	Bachelor degree + 9 additional years of experience
D-2	15 at professional level	Doctoral or equivalent degree	Bachelor degree + more than 9 additional years of experience

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[15] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.12

6.3   Determining relevant experience

6.3.1   The total number of years of relevant experience will be calculated up to the posting date of the VA.

6.3.2   Based on the details provided in the VA, HRU will determine "relevancy of experience". In case of doubt HRU will consult with the hiring manager.

6.3.3   Relevant part-time work will be prorated as a percentage of full time (40 hours per week) employment.

6.3.4   If the candidate holds two jobs in a relevant field at the same time, only one will be taken into account.

6.3.5   An employment that involves multiple functions with one or more relevant to the post advertised may be counted at 100% of Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) when determining months of relevant experience.

6.3.6   If the candidate has undertaken a relevant internship, traineeship or apprenticeship (or practical experience) after obtaining a relevant degree, this may be counted towards relevant work experience at up to 50% of FTE.

6.3.7   The time period for successfully completing a recognized full-time doctoral degree in a field relevant to the job may be counted at 50% of FTE. Any remunerated part-time teaching and/or research assistant work during study towards a doctoral degree will not be taken into account.

6.3.8   In determining relevant experience for professional posts, any relevant experience, even if it was gained before the completion of the relevant university degree, will be counted if the work involved was relevant, analytical, evaluative, conceptual, interpretative and/or creative and required the application of the basic principles of an organized body of theoretical knowledge, such as a field of science, learning or specialized discipline.

6.3.9   In determining international experience, any relevant experience gained through performing work which crossed national boundaries will be counted, for example, work in a local organization with responsibility involving more than one country or work in an international organization.

6.3.10   For internal General Service staff applying for professional posts, any relevant experience in an office support function at G-5 level within UNFCCC will be counted at 50% of FTE, regardless of whether it was gained before or after completion of the relevant university degree. Any relevant support function experience gained at the G-6 level or above within the UN common system will be counted at 100% of FTE. For external candidates in the General Service category, only relevant experience gained at the G-6 level or above will be counted. It is important to note that this special consideration will only apply to professional posts up to P-2 level.

6.3.11   The experience requirement will be waived for those internal General Service staff members who have passed the Young Professional examination in a field relevant to the P-2 level post under recruitment.

6.4   Age limitation

6.4.1   External candidates who would reach the applicable retirement age before completion of the full period of the initial fixed-term contract of eighteen months will be rendered ineligible[16].

6.5   Family relationship

6.5.1   In order to avoid real or perceived family influence or conflicts of interest, candidates will be considered ineligible for appointment if they bear any of the following relationships to a UNFCCC staff member: father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister.

6.5.2   In support of dual careers, spouses of serving staff members at D-2 level and below are eligible to apply if the appointment is fixed-term and has no direct line of authority to the staff member and the candidate, or administration by the staff member and the candidate. This provision, however, will not apply to spouses of ASG level staff members; they are not eligible to apply under any circumstances[17].

6.5.3   A relative, including a spouse, of candidates working for other UN organizations is eligible to be considered for appointment.

6.6   Minimum time in post

6.6.1   Fellows and professional officers seconded by governments are not eligible to apply within six months of the conclusion of their current assignment with the secretariat, counted from the posting day of the vacancy announcement. Bilaterally funded junior professional officers (JPOs) may apply for a vacancy that has been advertised after completion of one year of continuous service in their UNFCCC JPO assignment[18].

6.6.2   Candidates who on the posting date of the vacancy announcement are serving on a temporary appointment with UNFCCC may be considered for a post one level higher than his or her current grade only if they have completed one year of continuous service at the current level and only if they fulfil the requirements for the post[19].

6.6.3   It is expected that an individual who was competitively selected for a fixed-term post should remain in that post for at least one year. Therefore, at the time the vacancy announcement is issued, an internal candidate must have served in his or her current post for a minimum of one year[20]. The minimum time-in-post requirement is automatically waived in cases when:

- The encumbered post is abolished; or
- The incumbent becomes unassigned as a result of a realignment/reorganization or change management exercise; or
- The encumbered post is advertised as a result of reclassification.

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[16] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.7 (d)
[17] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.7 (b)
[18] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.7 (a)
[19] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.7 (c)
[20] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.6 (c)

6.7   Reporting eligibility

6.7.1   The HRU records the evaluation result in the online recruitment system (E-P11) and classifies each candidate as either eligible or ineligible.

6.7.2   The HRU identifies qualified candidates on the roster and includes them in the eligible list. The HRU notifies these internal and external rostered candidates that their application is being reviewed.

6.7.3   Once the eligibility check is completed, the HRU sends two lists (eligible candidates and ineligible candidates), including rostered candidates, to the hiring manager with a brief background summary of each candidate. In addition, the hiring manager is given access to the E-P11 system via the PAT to view the details of candidates from the roster for similar posts and the P11s of all candidates.

6.7.4   If the hiring manager is of the view that the HRU has incorrectly assessed some candidates as ineligible, a written request for a re-evaluation with justification should be sent by e-mail to the HRU. Upon completion of the review, an updated eligible list with a detailed explanation of how the assessments were made will be provided to the hiring manager.

6.7.5   Once the eligible list is agreed and finalized, the HRU informs all ineligible internal candidates of the evaluation results in writing, with a brief explanation of the shortfall, within **five** working days. As part of this information, the HRU notifies all ineligible internal candidates that they can contact the recruitment team if further clarification is required.

6.7.6   Ineligible internal staff members should also be informed that, if not satisfied with the evaluation, they may raise the concern to the Chief, Human Resources, for a further review. A written response will be provided within **five** working days of receipt of the request.

7.   The Selection Panel

7.1   A selection panel will be established with a mandate to provide support in the shortlisting process and evaluate the shortlisted candidates using competency based assessment.

7.2   The panel normally comprises at least four members: two from within the hiring unit and two from outside the recruiting programme. Of these four members, two should be subject matter experts and the other two should have subject matter knowledge[21]. As a general rule, the hiring manager is one of the panel members and will chair of the panel, particularly for a vacancy up to the level of P-5. However, this may vary, depending on the specific circumstances of the vacancy. When appointing the panels, the following guidelines must be observed:

- Only fixed-term staff can be nominated as panel members;

- All appointed panel members should have undertaken the competency based interview course offered by the HRU. This will become mandatory once the training programme has been implemented;

- The number of representatives from the hiring unit will be balanced against the number of representatives from outside the hiring unit.

- The panel members should be as geographically diverse as possible and must include at least one female panel member;

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[21] Staff Selection System, paragraph 2.1.11

- The panel members should be at the same grade/level or higher than the level of the post under recruitment. However, on an exceptional basis, if no female representative at that level can be found, a female panel member can be appointed who is one grade below the job under recruitment;

- The members will be free from any relation in the recruitment process that might constitute a conflict of interest. For example, staff members should avoid involvement in an selection panel if one of the candidates is likely to be someone with whom they already involved in a close personal relationship.

7.3   The hiring manager may request non-UNFCCC personnel to participate in panels (in particular, colleagues from other Common System partner organizations) if they are able to offer an objective and substantive perspective to the recruitment process and if no, or an insufficient number of, UNFCCC staff members with relevant skills and knowledge are available.

8.   The Shortlisting Process

8.1   Upon receipt of the finalized eligible list, the hiring manager has up to **10** working days to complete a review of candidates against the technical and functional requirements of the post. Selection for the shortlist must be made by assessing candidates in relation to the essential requirements as detailed in the recruitment profile, not by comparing candidates with each other.

8.2   When assessing candidates, the hiring manager should consistently use the selection criteria set out in the recruitment profile. No new criteria beyond those advertised in the VA should be introduced, nor should the criteria be modified. If the post has changed, the selection process should be stopped to determine if a vacancy with a different job description should be advertised.

8.3   The hiring manager should keep a record of how the shortlist of candidates was established by documenting the selection criteria which have been met by the shortlisted candidates and those that the deselected candidates failed to meet[22].

8.4   <u>Initial shortlist of candidates (the longlist)</u>

8.4.1   If there is a large pool of eligible candidates, the hiring manager may consider creating a longlist (approximately 10 candidates). All eligible candidates will be assessed against the technical and functional requirements of the post. The longlist must be established based on the result of a comprehensive review of the biographical data provided in the P11 and/or additional information obtained through phone screening or other sources. For General Service posts, all candidates on the eligible list are subject to an aptitude test.

8.4.2   To the extent possible, longlisting must be conducted by at least two members of the selection panel who are knowledgeable about the technical requirements of the post. The composition of the panel may include the hiring manager. This collaborative approach enables different perspectives to be included. It also increases transparency and counters the perception that the hiring manager, alone, decides who is selected. During this process there is no need for a representation from HRU.

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[22] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.13

8.5   Final shortlist of candidates (the shortlist)

8.5.1   To establish the shortlist of candidates, all individuals (both internal and external candidates) on the eligible list, or longlist if applicable, will be further assessed. At this stage, the focus will be on the technical and functional requirements such as professional knowledge and skills as specified in the recruitment profile. The assessment will be made by phone interview, online interview, technical written test or a combination of these.

8.5.2   The hiring manager is responsible for designing questions for technical assessment. For this task, the guidance below should be adhered to:

8.5.2.1 The questions for the assessment should be sent to the HRU for review to ensure their relevance to the assessment criteria and their objectivity in the light of the principle of equality of treatment of candidates. Regarding the latter, questions that would require specific knowledge of the organization and internal processes on a particular issue, (which an external candidate might not possess) are not considered to be objective.

8.5.2.2 The hiring manager should decide the purpose of technical assessment − an eliminatory tool, part of the overall evaluation of candidates or a combination of the two. To ensure all candidates are systematically evaluated against agreed criteria, a marking scheme should be developed to provide a guide to awarding marks to candidates' answers.

8.5.2.3 A pass score should be set to determine which candidates are able to perform at an acceptable level. The pass score should be set taking into account the nature and difficulty of the test questions. It should also be set bearing in mind that, if set too high, it could eliminate potential candidates who have a written test anxiety.

8.5.2.4 If the technical assessment is being used as part of the overall evaluation of candidates, the hiring manager should decide on what weighting will be attached to this tool.

8.5.2.5 Once the assessment methods and pass threshold are determined, they should apply consistently to all candidates both internally and externally.

8.5.3   The HRU conducts the written test; the PAT of the hiring programme is responsible for scheduling the test with candidates. Each candidate will be assigned a unique code to ensure anonymity during the marking process. Upon completion of the test, the HRU will send the scripts to the hiring manager for marking.

8.5.4   The shortlist for interview should generally be comprised of a minimum of three and a maximum of five candidates. However, if there are several strong candidates, an exception can be made to the minimum number.

8.5.5   At least one female or Non Annex 1 candidate should be included on the shortlist. If no female or Non Annex 1 candidate is included on the shortlist, the hiring manager must document the reasons and the efforts that have been made to identify qualified female and Non Annex 1 candidates in a report and send it to the head of programme for clearance. If the head of programme is not satisfied with the efforts, the hiring manager may be asked to revise the selection criteria to ensure that they are not so rigorous as to exclude potential female or NA1 candidates and/or widen recruitment sources to attract more candidates. In this regard, the vacancy announcement will be closed and a new VA will be issued.

8.5.6   When the shortlist of candidates is finalized, the hiring manager will update the E-P11 system by checking the "short-list" box of the chosen candidates.

8.5.7   If the shortlist contains rostered candidates, but no eligible internal candidates, the head of programme may recommend to the Executive Secretary that he or she selects a rostered candidate without a competency based assessment and referral to the RB[23]. However, if there are eligible internal candidates, rostered candidates should be assessed and compared against other non-rostered candidates both internally and externally.

9.   Competency Based Assessment

9.1   The shortlisted candidates will be assessed against the competencies evaluation criteria as specified in the vacancy announcement. The hiring manager should aim to complete the competency based assessment within **three** working weeks. It is important to note that job success is the result of a combination of many factors which include not only technical expertise but also skills such as team work, communication and leadership. The competency based assessment should focus on all these factors ─ not just the application of technical expertise ─ to ensure effective performance in the vacant post.

9.2   The competency based assessment shall be conducted by the selection panel[24] to evaluate the shortlisted candidates against the key evaluation criteria using positive and negative benchmarks and make a recommendation ─ with a list, ranking the candidates ─ to the hiring manager and head of programme for consideration.

9.3   The selection panel shall involve an ex-officio member – a representative from the HRU – to provide advice and support to the chair in facilitating discussion, and to advise the chair if the process is not properly followed.

9.4   Selection of assessment methods

9.4.1   All shortlisted candidates should be invited for a competency based interview as follows:

- For posts up to and including the P-3 level, the interview should be conducted via an online system such as Skype, or Videomeet.

- For posts at the P-4 level or above, in-person interviews may be conducted.

9.4.2   To increase the validity of overall assessment and reduce potential errors, the hiring manager may consider using multiple assessment tools. This approach takes into account that candidates may respond differently to different methods of assessment. For example, some candidates excel at written tests but do not do well at interviews; others have a written test anxiety but do well at interviews.

9.5   Presentations

9.5.1   Depending on the job requirements, a verbal presentation might be necessary for posts at P-4 level and above.

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[23] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.21
[24] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.13

9.5.2   The hiring manager in consultation with the panel and HRU determines the topic, the duration, the audience, the marking scheme and the relative weight of the presentation in the overall assessment.

9.6   Assessment centre

9.6.1   For posts at D-1 level and above, the hiring manager should consider using an assessment centre[25] to test the candidates on a range of different competences which include: interpersonal skills, oral and written communication, planning and evaluating, and reasoning and problem-solving abilities.

9.6.2   Given the complexity of this assessment method, the HRU will engage an external specialized service provider to organize and facilitate the exercises.

9.6.3   The service provider will work closely with the hiring manager and panel to decide what exercises should be used and the relative weighting of various exercises in the overall assessment.

9.7   Staff panel

9.7.1   For those posts in the Professional and higher category which require a supervisory role, the hiring manager should consider seeking the approval of the head of programme to set up a staff panel that involves subordinates who are supervised by the holder of that post evaluating the leadership skills of candidates.

9.7.2   The staff panel under the direction of the hiring Manager and HRU designs questions and sends them to the HRU for review; the evaluation provided by the staff panel is considered as advisory in the form of additional information to facilitate the hiring manager in arriving at its recommendation.

9.8   Competency based interviews (CBIs)

9.8.1   Interview principles

a.   The primary objective of a competency based interview is to determine the degree to which a candidate possesses key skills/aptitudes and core values, as required by the post and set out in the vacancy announcement.

b.   The same interview method should be consistently used for all candidates in order to create a level playing field for fair comparison of the applicants' abilities. For example, if interviews are conducted using an online system, the same technology should be used for both overseas and local candidates.

c.   While interviews should be structured in order to ensure all candidates are assessed consistently using a set of predetermined questions, the panel may use probing questions if a candidate is not providing enough information, or is struggling to understand the initial question.

d.   For online interviews, the panel should be aware of the potential transmission lag and take time to ensure all interview questions posed are well understood by

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[25] Assessment center involves candidates completing a number of different tasks as part of the selection process. The tasks might include in-tray exercises, analytical work, problem solving, group discussions and role-play.

candidates. Should a system failure occur during an interview and it cannot be rectified, the chair of the panel may consider continuing the interview by phone. Alternatively, arrangements can be made for the panel to interview the applicant on another occasion. The chair needs to ensure that the incident is documented and forms part of the selection report.

e.   The recommended duration of each competency based interview is one hour and thirty minutes. Each member of the selection panel should take notes during the interview to document any critical observations made during the interview regarding positive and negative behaviour of a candidate.

9.8.2   Interview preparation

a.   The questions to assess each evaluation criteria as required by the post must be determined by the panel at least **two** working days prior to the interview and sent to the HRU for review.

b.   It is important to note that the interview questions should be focused on skill/aptitude assessment and should not be used to assess technical fit. Technical assessment should be done separately during the shortlisting process using alternative methods such as pre-tests or case studies. Furthermore, the questions should be formulated to assess the competencies requirements as specified in the vacancy announcement.

c.   During the interview, it is essential to collect evidence from the candidate against behavioural indicators for each assessed competency. At the same time, there is a need to unfold the candidate's story to ensure that the breadth and depth of his or her experience is revealed. To do this effectively, a range of good quality questions should be designed to elicit what the candidate actually did in previous positions.

d.   The HRU will check the questions to ensure that they are fair to all candidates.

9.9   Selection panel assessment

9.9.1   Once all assessment activities for each candidate are completed, the panel members should immediately conduct a joint review of their interview notes as well as other assessment results, summarize the positive and negative behavioural indicators for each competency examined, and come to a consensus on the extent to which the candidate has met the expected requirements for each competency. Based on the above, the panel should select one concluding remark for each competency i.e. the candidate is "unsuitable", "acceptable with reservations", "acceptable" or "above requirements".

9.9.2   The panel should determine an overall rating to each candidate based on the rating for each individual competency. The following table can be used as a guide to determine overall rating at "acceptable" and "above requirement".

Overall Rating	Minimum requirement
Above Requirement	• At least two-thirds of competencies are rated at "above requirement" level and no competency rated at below "acceptable" level.
Acceptable	• All competencies are rated at "acceptable" level or above except one at "acceptable with reservation" level.

9.9.3   If, despite best efforts, the panel is unable to come to a consensus, the reasons for this and the diverging views must be documented in the selection report.

9.9.4   Based on the assessment results, all candidates with an overall rating of "acceptable" or above will be ranked in order of suitability. The panel should also decide if the candidate ranked second should be recommended in case the best suited candidate is not available. For posts up to and including the level of P-4, the panel should decide if any remaining qualified candidates should be placed on the roster for future vacancies for the same function and level. Only candidates who were rated as "acceptable" or "above requirements" for all competences can be recommended on the roster.

9.9.5   The HRU will conduct reference check for those top candidates who are potentially considered for appointment.

9.9.6   Within **10** working days after the completion of the interviews, the hiring manager, with the support of the rapporteur, will complete the selection report using the template in Appendix 1. The finalized report will be sent to the panel members for comments.

9.10   Final ranking list and recommendation

9.10.1   The hiring manager proposes a final ranking list for the appointment to the head of programme. In determining the final ranking list of best qualified candidates, the hiring manager should take a holistic review of all shortlisted candidates taking into account the recommendation made by the selection panel, the technical assessment results, the performance appraisal reports and the results of reference checks.

9.10.2   The hiring manager makes a recommendation if there is a clear distinction between the top candidates and the rest on the ranking list, based on the overall assessment result as revealed in 8.10.1.

9.10.3   When two top candidates are considered as "substantially equal", priority should first be given to internal candidate for appointment of posts up to and including P-3 level before applying gender balance and geographical distribution consideration[26]. The term "substantially equal" is used where both candidates fulfil the technical and competency requirements of the vacant post and were rated within the same score range in the overall assessment. For example, if both candidates were rated as "acceptable" on a four-point scale as adopted in the selection report template (Appendix 1), they would both be considered as "substantially equal", regardless any difference in the actual score.

9.10.4   If female or NA1 candidates are considered substantially equal to the top candidate and the hiring manager recommends a male or Annex 1 candidate, the hiring manager must justify the case by submitting to the head of programme a written analysis, with appropriate supporting documentation, indicating how the profile of the recommended candidate, when compared to the core requirements of the post, is clearly superior to those of the female or NA1 candidates who were not recommended.

9.10.5   Within **two** working days after the finalization of the selection report, the hiring manager should send the recommendation to the head of programme, along with the following supporting documents:

- The vacancy announcement;

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[26] Staff Selection System, paragraph 3.5

- The job description;

- The list of candidates and HR memorandum;

- The selection panel report;

- The results of two reference checks of the proposed candidate;

- The latest two performance appraisal reports for those candidates who have been the staff members of the UN system.

9.11   Review of the recommendation by the head of programme

9.11.1   The head of programme is accountable for the "Recommendation for Appointment" which is sent to the Executive Secretary for approval via the Review Board. The expected time line to complete the review process is **two** working days upon receipt of the recommendation from the hiring manager.

9.11 2   The head of programme reviews the appropriateness of the recommendation made by the hiring manager by assessing the profile of proposed candidates against the selection criteria and checking if any significant concerns were raised by the panel and the HRU during the selection process.

9.11.3   The head of programme reviews whether best efforts have been made to address the secretariat's diversity requirements on geographical distribution and gender balance. In cases where the head of programme is not satisfied with the efforts, he or she may request the hiring manager to restart the recruitment process.

9.11.4   The head of programme reviews the ranking order of the final recommendation to ensure that the "substantially equal" requirement has been addressed.

9.11.5   Once the review is completed, the head of programme completes the "Recommendation for appointment" form (Appendix 2) and sends it, along with the selection report, to the Review Board through the Executive Secretary[27].

9.12   Review by the Executive Secretary

9.12.1   The Executive Secretary reviews the recommendation and may add comments before forwarding it to the RB for review.

9.12.2   Should the candidate proposed by the head of programme be an eligible rostered candidate, the Executive Secretary may appoint the candidate without referring the case to the RB for review[28].

10. Review Board Requirements

10.1   In pursuance of the Administrative Guideline AG/2014/5, two review bodies (collectively titled the "Review Board") have been established for the selection of candidates for all fixed-term appointments by the Executive Secretary to ensure compliance with the Staff Selection System by hiring programmes.

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[27] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.14
[28] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.15

10.2   The composition and operation of the Review Board (RB) are set out in Administrative Guideline AG/2014/5.

10.3   The RB is normally scheduled to meet once a month to review cases. Details of the schedule can be found here. Any submission should reach the HRU at least **eight** working days in advance of the next scheduled meeting. Otherwise, the case will be submitted in the following month.

10.4   If there are justifiable reasons to expedite the review process, either additional RB meetings may be scheduled, subject to the availability of members, or the review can be undertaken by e-mail exchange among RB members.

10.5   The mandate[29] of the RB is to ensure that the selection procedure, as outlined in the Staff Selection System, has been followed and the evaluation criteria were properly applied. In performing this role, the RB considers whether:

- The recommendation made by the head of programme is reasoned, objective, justifiable, and based on the evaluation criteria;

- All steps in the selection process have been properly administered in accordance with the Staff Selection System and related SOP;

- The head of programme has taken into account the secretariat's diversity requirements with regard to geography and gender balance;

- The record indicates the existence of a mistake in action or a mistake in the proper application of a rule or procedure that could have prevented a full and fair consideration of the requisite qualifications and experiences of the candidates.

10.6   If the RB finds that the evaluation criteria were properly applied, due consideration has been made to diversity requirements and the applicable procedures were followed, it advises the Executive Secretary to approve the proposed candidate(s) for selection or placement on a roster.

10.7   If the RB has questions or doubts regarding the proper application of the evaluation criteria and/or the applicable procedures, it requests additional information from the head of programme.

10.8   Once the review is completed, the RB informs the Executive Secretary of its advice.

11.   The Selection Decision

11.1   Upon receipt of the advice by the RB, where applicable, the Executive Secretary selects the candidate he or she considers to be best suited for the functions of the post, giving full consideration to candidates already in the service of the secretariat and taking into account the secretariat's goal of geographical and gender balance[30].

11.2   If the proposed candidate requires further development, normally limited to one competency area, before he or she is fully competent to perform the functions of the post, the Executive Secretary in consultation with the recruiting Coordinator/Director, may appoint the candidate at one level below the level of the advertised post[31]. The initial appointment will be for one year with a probationary period of six months, which can be extended to a maximum of a further six months. Prior to the start of the probationary period, and in consultation with the candidate, a development plan needs to be established.   Only upon successful completion of the probationary period, will the appointment be

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[29] AG 2014/- Review Bodies, paragraph 4.4
[30] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.18 & 5.19
[31] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.23

converted to the level of the advertised post and the contract extended to cover the remaining balance of the appointment duration specified in the VA.

11.3   Upon receipt of the Executive Secretary's decision, the HRU will inform the head of programme of the hiring programme and request him or her to make the offer to the successful candidate within **two** working days[32]. The HRU will also request the head of programme to communicate the selection decision in person to unsuccessful internal candidates and advise them on areas for improvement within **two** working days.

11.4   Once the head of programme has informed the unsuccessful internal candidates, the HRU will write to all interviewed candidates to inform them that they were not selected for the particular position.

12.   Internal transfer

12.1   The Executive Secretary has the authority to transfer staff members to vacant posts at the same level across the secretariat, after consultation with the staff member and without advertisement of the vacant post or review by the Review Board[33].

12.2   The head of programme in consultation with the Coordinator, Administrative Services may transfer staff members to vacant posts at the same level and with similar characteristics in terms of duties and requirements within the same programme, after consultation with the staff member and without advertisement of the vacant post or review by the Review Board[34].

12.3   To process a request for internal transfer, the HRU will review the job description of the vacant post to ensure the job requirements are similar to the original post occupied by the transferee.

13.   Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

A summary of roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the recruitment and selection process is shown below.

The hiring manager:

As the initiator of the post, the hiring manager is the head of the selection team and will be involved in every step of recruitment and selection process. The specific roles include the following:

  a. Drafts and prepares the job description for classification;
  b. Conducts the shortlisting process including the desk review of applications and collection of additional information by candidates (if necessary);
  c. Updates the E-11 system after completing the shortlisting process;
  d. Documents the shortlisting decisions;
  e. Determines the shortlist of candidates within **10** working days of receipt of the eligible candidates from the HRU;
  f. Determines the scope of technical testing by preparing case studies, topics for presentations and interview questions;
  g. Chairs the selection panel including its planning and wrap-up meetings;
  h. Conducts the selection panel discussion in its assessment of the candidates;

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[32] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.24
[33] Staff Selection System, paragraph 6.3
[34] Staff Selection System, paragraph 6.4

i. Assigns a staff member to act as a rapporteur during the competency based interviews and is responsible for ensuring the draft selection report is ready within **10** working days of the conclusion of the last interview;

j. Recommends a candidate for selection after taking into account the selection panel's report, the result of reference checks and past performance as revealed by the PAS, and the secretariat's diversity requirements.

The head of programme:

The head of programme performs a critical function regarding the hiring decision and is responsible for making an appointment recommendation based on the advice from the hiring manager. The specific roles include the following:

a. Reviews the recommendation made by the hiring manager;

b. Ensures efforts have been made to achieve the secretariat's diversity requirements;

c. Completes and submits the "Recommendation for Appointment" form to the Executive Secretary for review within **five** working days of receipt of the recommendation from the hiring manager.

The PAT:

The PAT is accountable for providing necessary logistic support for the selection process. The specific roles include the following:

a. Coordinates with candidates for scheduling technical tests and interviews;

b. Enables hiring managers to access the E-11 system to conduct shortlisting;

c. Arranges all the logistic arrangements for both online and in-person interviews.

The HRU:

The HRU is accountable for providing policy advice and administrative support as well as ensuring that every step in the recruitment and selection process is carried out in accordance with the Staff Selection System. The specific roles including the following:

a. Initiates recruitment planning meeting(s) with the hiring manager;

b. Provides support in finalizing the job description;

c. Conducts and completes the job classification within **five** working days of receipt of the finalized job description;

d. Provides advice on the recruitment and selection policy and active recruitment measures to be employed to improve the overall quality of applications and increases the number of applications from candidates from underrepresented groups;

e. Drafts and finalizes the vacancy announcement within **five** working days of receipt of the approval of the recruitment action;

f. Assists in developing the interview questions and clearing tests and/or presentation topics;

g. Conducts eligibility checks on all applications received by the closing date of the vacancy announcement and forwards the ranked eligible applications to the hiring manager within **five** working days from that date;

h. Enables the hiring manager to access the E-11 system, via the PAT, so that he or she can view the details of eligible candidates and update the system after completing the shortlisting exercise;

i. Acts as ex-officio for the whole selection process and provides expert advice on interviews and evaluation procedures;

j. Asks probing questions during the interview, as necessary, and supports the selection panel's discussion on the assessment;

k. Raises any concerns about the selection decision in the interview report;

l.   Prepares and presents cases for review by the RB and provides the secretariat with support during the meeting;

m. Conducts the reference check and reports its results to the hiring management.

The Selection Panel:

The selection panel provides support in the technical assessment and is accountable for conducting a competency based assessment to ascertain expected competency requirements in each candidate. It is also responsible for ranking all assessed candidates, based on the evaluation results. The specific roles include the following:

a.   Participates in the technical assessment (at least one member along with the hiring manager)

b.   Holds a preparatory/interview planning meeting on the day of the interviews to discuss and agree on the questions that candidates will be asked during the competency based interview.

c.   Provides assessment of the candidates' strengths/weaknesses based on results of testing and interviews;

d.   Provides a ranked final recommendation based on the outcomes of overall assessments.

The Review Board:

The Review Board provides the final confirmation that the recruitment and selection process for a specific vacancy complies with the Staff Selection System and provides advice to the Executive Secretary. The specific roles include the following:

a.   Convenes to determine that all steps in the recruitment and selection process for each vacancy have been conducted in accordance with the Staff Selection System;

b.   Checks that the head of programme has taken into account the secretariat's diversity requirements when making the recommendation.

c.   Checks the recruitment records to see if there are any mistakes in action or mistakes in the proper application of a rule or procedure that could have prevented a full and fair consideration of the requisite qualifications and experiences of the candidates. The records should cover all steps of the selection process including initial screening, shortlisting and competency based interview.

d.   Highlights any concerns to the Executive Secretary to facilitate his or her decision.

e.   Sends the RB report to the Executive Secretary within **five** working days after the meeting.

The Executive Secretary:

The Executive Secretary is the decision-maker for each appointment after taking into account the recommendation from the head of programme and advice from RB.   The specific roles include the following:

a.   Reviews the submission from the head of programme and adds comments if needed before sending to RB for review, as required;

b.   Makes the final selection decision after receiving advice from the RB as required.

Appendix 1

Selection Report

To: Enter name of head of programme
            Enter title and programme

From: Enter name   **Date:** Click here to enter date
            Chair of the Selection Panel

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1.   Profile of ideal candidate:

Describe profile of ideal candidate

2.   Shortlisting process:

I.   Creation of the long-list with approx. 10 candidates (if applicable):

Summary of criteria on which the long list was established; put "n/a" if not applicable

II.   Creation of the shortlist with approx. 4 candidates[35]

a.   Written test:

State purpose of written test; including information on pass mark.
If there was no written test, enter "n/a"

Candidates for written test:
            Enter # applicants in total
            Enter # NAI applicants
            Enter # female applicants
            Enter # NAI / female applicants

b.   Technical telephone interviews:

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[35] At least one female or Non Annex 1 candidate should be included on the shortlist. If no female or Non Annex 1 candidate is included on the shortlist, the hiring manager must document the reasons and the efforts that have been made to identify qualified female and Non Annex 1 candidates in a report and send it to the head of programme for clearance.   If the head of programme is not satisfied with the efforts, the hiring manager may be asked to revise the selection criteria to ensure that they are not so rigorous as to exclude potential female or NA1 candidates and/or widen recruitment sources to attract more candidates. In this case, the vacancy announcement will be closed and a new VA will be issued.

State purpose of telephone interview.
If there were no telephone interviews, enter "n/a"
Candidates for technical telephone interview:

>Enter # applicants in total
>Enter # NAI applicants
>Enter # female applicants
>Enter # NAI / female applicants

2. In-person interviews:

I. Selection panel:

>Enter name, title, grade and programme - Chair
>Enter name, title, grade and programme.
>Enter name, title, grade and programme
>Enter name, title, grade and programme;
>this entry allows for additional panel members and/or observers
>Enter name - HR ex-officio
>Enter name or "n/a" – Rapporteur

II. Candidates interviewed:

Start with internal candidates and enter name, nationality, grade and programme.
For external candidates enter name and nationality.

III. The choose an item conducted on enter date(s) and interview mode, e.g. Skype. Candidates were asked questions that were based on the competency criteria pre-determined prior to issuing the vacancy announcement.[36]

3. Evaluation of candidates

Enter the name of the candidate

Opening question: Enter text or "n/a" – This is optional and not subject to assessment

[Select competency [for description and indicators see questionnaire]
Summary of candidate's answers:
Observation and evaluation by panel:
Choose assessment
[Select competency [for description and indicators see questionnaire]
Summary of candidate's answers:

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[36] Add any additional information that is relevant, e.g. presentations.

Observation and evaluation by panel:
Choose assessment
Select competency [for description and indicators see questionnaire]
Summary of candidate's answers:
Observation and evaluation by panel:
Choose assessment
Select competency [for description and indicators see questionnaire]
Summary of candidate's answers:
Observation and evaluation by panel:
Choose assessment

Overall rating[37]: **Choose assessment**

HR Comment[38]**:**

Enter the name of the candidate

Opening question: *Enter text or "n/a" – This is optional and not subject to assessment*

[*Select competency* [for description and indicators see questionnaire]
Summary of candidate's answers:
Observation and evaluation by panel:
Choose assessment
[*Select competency* [for description and indicators see questionnaire]
Summary of candidate's answers:

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[37] Add any additional information regarding the overall assessment, if needed.
[38] Required only if there are any concerns about the assessment

Observation and evaluation by panel:
Choose assessment
Select competency [for description and indicators see questionnaire]
Summary of candidate's answers:
Observation and evaluation by panel:
Choose assessment
Select competency [for description and indicators see questionnaire]
Summary of candidate's answers:
Observation and evaluation by panel:
Choose assessment

Overall rating[39]: **Choose assessment**

HR Comment[40]**:**

5. **Recommendation for appointment and/or placement on the roster, including justification:**

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[39] Add any additional information regarding the overall assessment, if needed.
[40] Comments required only if there are any concerns about the assessment.

Appendix 2

Recommendation for Appointment

Recommendation by the Head of Programme:
Programme / Sub-programme or unit:

Functional Title / Grade:

VA Number:

Based on the advice provided by the hiring manager and my own assessment, I hereby recommend under my responsibility, as follows:

Recommendation for appointment:

Recommendation for the roster:

I confirm that efforts have been made to contribute to the UNFCCC gender and geographical balance[41]:

_____   _____

(Head of programme)   (Signature)   (Date)

Please submit to the Review Board

_____

Executive Secretary

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[41] Staff Selection System, paragraph 5.14