

Annex to the Agreement

between

The Government of the Kingdom of Belgium

and

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

Annex concerning the
Belgian Associate Professional Officers (APO) Programme

ANNEX
CONCERNING THE SELECTION AND RECRUITMENT PROCESS FOR
ASSOCIATE PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS (APO) FUNDED BY BELGIUM
FOR
THE FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS

This Annex constitutes an integral part of the Agreement concluded between the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium (hereinafter referred to as "the Donor") and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (hereinafter referred to as "FAO" or "the Organization"). This Annex establishes the selection and recruitment guidelines for the Belgian Associate Professional Officers (APOs) Programme.

Recruitment and Selection Policies and Procedures for APO posts

1. Funding of Posts

At the beginning of the calendar year, the Donor will decide on the number of APO positions to be financed that year. The Donor will notify the Organization accordingly within a reasonable period of time.

2. Selection of Posts

The Organization will submit to the Donor an updated APO proposals list, together with detailed Terms of Reference.

The Donor will notify the Organization by e-mail about its choice and the Organization will earmark the selected post(s).

The notification is considered a firm commitment from the Donor to the funding of a post.

3. APO Terms of Reference

No selection process shall commence without valid APO Terms of Reference approved by the receiving duty station/hiring unit, the donor and the Organization. The Terms of Reference must describe the functions, competencies, and requirements of the APO post, including academic qualifications, relevant work experience, and language requirements.

4. Establishment and Publication of Vacancy Announcements

When a post has been earmarked and funding confirmed, the Organization in cooperation with the Donor (and in accordance with the Agreement between the Donor and the Organization on the APO Programme) will prepare the vacancy announcement.

The vacancy announcement for the APO post must state all competencies and other corporate requirements for the position in conformity with the APO Terms of Reference. It may also indicate qualifications that are desirable for the position. Only those qualifications (required or desirable) that are indicated in the vacancy announcement may be used to assess candidates' suitability for the APO post.

All APO vacancies will be posted on the Website of the Donor and the Organization. The vacancy announcement may also be posted using other appropriate means for identifying potential candidates (job portals, newspapers and other publications etc.). The APO vacancy announcement will normally be posted for a minimum of two weeks.

5. Requirements and Qualifications for Selection

The qualifications below are the eligibility criteria for selection.

a) For European nationals:

- Have EU citizenship.
- Hold a Master level degree.
- Have a minimum of two years of relevant work experience for the chosen function; previous experience in development is desirable.
- Have successfully completed the CIG (Cycle d'Information Générale) by BTC/CTB (Belgian Development Agency).
- Be no older than 32 years of age on 31 December of the year of application.

b) For nationals of Belgium's partner countries:

- Have a nationality of one of Belgium's partner countries.
- Hold a Master level degree.
- Have a minimum of two years of relevant work experience for the chosen function; previous experience in development is desirable.
- Be no older than 32 years of age on 31 December of the year of application.
- Applying for an APO position outside the country of origin/nationality.

6. Applications

All applicants to a vacant APO post must submit an application and motivation letter, together with a duly completed Personal History Form. The Personal History Form provides relevant information on a candidate's personal and professional background: academic record, work history, prior UN experience, residence status, knowledge of languages, nationality, family relationships, and other matters that are essential to making a well-documented decision.

The Personal History Form is the most important source for relevant information on a candidate and serves as the basis for detailed reference-checking. Therefore, only those persons who have submitted a duly completed and updated Personal History Form, certifying that the information contained therein is fully accurate, may be considered for the post.

7. Receipt and Review of Applications

Candidates will submit their application electronically through the Organization's online application system.

The Donor will provide specifications to the Organization on the criteria to be used for the application system.

The Organization will set up an online system fitting Belgium's criteria in terms of age (no older than 32 years on 31 December of the year of application), nationality, completion of BTC/CTB course, holding at least a Master's level degree and having a minimum of two years of relevant work experience for the chosen function.

Applications will only be accepted in English, French or Spanish.

Upon request, the Organization will provide a list of applicants to the Donor.

Candidates can apply for a maximum of 3 posts.

All candidates will receive a message acknowledging receipt of their application and advising that only candidates who will be invited for interviews will be contacted.

The Organization will be available for questions from applicants (by e-mail/phone).

Candidates shall only be considered for a post after having submitted a completed Personal History Form as part of the application for the position. The information provided in the Personal History Form allows verification that certain requirements are met.

The Organization is under no obligation to consider late or incomplete applications, or to confirm receipt of a late application. If there is an imperative business case, the Organization may opt to accept a late application.

The closing date for applications may be extended, following a preliminary review of the applications, if the Organization and the Donor consider that the quality or quantity of the candidatures is not sufficient to conduct a competitive selection process.

8. Conditions for Selection

In filling a vacant APO post, priority will be given to the qualifications, demonstrated competencies, and relevance of experience in relation to the duties and selection criteria stated in the vacancy announcement. Only candidates meeting the pre-defined requirements for a post as outlined in the Terms of Reference and the vacancy announcement can be selected.

9. Reviewing Candidatures

The Organization will carry out the pre-screening of applications and the preparation of a shortlist of candidates to be interviewed.

Only those qualifications specified in the vacancy announcement and the APO Terms of Reference may be used in the review of applications and the screening of candidatures for the post. The reason for accepting or rejecting an application must be documented at each stage of the selection process.

Long-listing process: The long-listing of candidates involves an initial screening of applications. The screening will be undertaken against minimum corporate requirements, including eligibility, academic qualifications, years of relevant work experience, knowledge of languages, etc.

Candidates will not be given further consideration, if they do not meet all requirements for the position as specified in the vacancy announcement (e.g. academic, experience, languages, etc.).

Short-listing process: Candidates considered qualified during the first long-listing process are further screened for short-listing. To arrive at a short-list of candidates, a closer desk review of the candidates' professional background is undertaken against the requirements of the post, giving additional weight to those candidates who possess one or more of the desirable attributes for the post, as specified in the vacancy announcement. Consultation with the hiring unit to scrutinize relevance of academic qualifications and professional experience of individual candidates may be carried out to narrow down the candidates.

Clarifications from candidates may be sought through telephone, should the Organization consider the additional information crucial for the short-listing process.

Long-listing and short-listing procedures must be followed and findings must be documented. The reason for accepting or rejecting an application must be documented at each stage of the selection process.

A short-list of APO candidates should consist of a minimum of two and a maximum of six candidates per post.

The short-list of candidates will include a minimum of one and preferably three or more qualified women from the pool of applications. The reason for not short-listing any female candidates for a given post must be fully documented.

At any time during the long- or short-listing process, if it appears that less than three candidates meet all requirements for the post, it may be decided to either re-advertise the position, or proceed with the selection process.

The Organization will present the list of candidates that have been short-listed for interviews to the Donor for final approval prior to undertaking the interviews.

The Organization will contact the candidates who have been short-listed for interviews.

10. Interviews of short-listed Candidates

The Organization will coordinate the planning of the interviews with the Donor.

The Organization will send out invitations to candidates and set up a schedule of interviews.

Interviews of European candidates will take place in Brussels. The Donor will make practical logistical arrangements (booking of meeting rooms, telephone facilities, coffee, etc.).

Face-to-face interviews are the preferred option, however, video conferencing and telephone interviews may also be undertaken. All modalities may be applied in the interview phase of any one position.

Interviews in Brussels will be carried out by the representatives of the Organization. The Donor will participate as an observing member of the interview panel for APOs.

Interviews of nationals of Belgium's partner countries may be conducted by video conferencing, Skype or telephone, from the Organization's headquarters or decentralized offices. To the extent possible, the selected candidate will also be assessed by the Belgian Embassy.

11. Assessment of short-listed Candidates - Interview

The purpose of the interview is to further verify and clarify relevance of academic qualifications and professional work experience through the interaction with candidates and to assess competencies required for the assignment. During the interview, fluency in languages will also be assessed. Certain aspects of the job application, including the Personal History Form, and possibly also issues related to residency requirements applicable to the duty station may be discussed.

All short-listed candidates will undergo the same selection process and by the same means, to the extent possible.

In consultation and cooperation with the Donor, the Organization will use a range of assessment tools and techniques to evaluate short-listed candidates. Such tools and techniques may include, but are not limited to, technical testing, interviews or an assessment of work samples, competency-based panel interviews.

Competency-Based Interview: Every short-listed candidate for an APO post will be interviewed by a panel.

The Interview Panel: The interview panel will include a minimum of two members. A Donor representative will participate as an observer.

The Organization will conduct the competency-based interviews.

The Organization will identify up to five competencies from the vacancy announcement that are the most essential for a successful APO assignment for the purpose of interview. The interview panel will also conduct an assessment of corporate values and ethics.

When evaluating a candidate the panel should consider only the information provided to them at the interview.

The panel will rate a candidate on each of the competencies being assessed, and assign a score for each rating, in order to arrive at an overall score of the candidate for the interview. The panel will also assign one of the following three recommendations for each candidate: "recommended", "recommended with reservations" or "not recommended" and rank candidates in order of suitability for a position. The scoring of each candidate will be reflected in the panel's interview report which will also detail any reservations.

Candidates who are recommended with reservations must still meet the stated requirements for the position. The reservation may relate to neutral and unbiased views by the panel as to various aspects of the candidates' overall suitability and anticipated performance but not to a lack of meeting the required qualifications listed in the vacancy announcement. Only those candidates, who, in the view of the interview panel, possess the minimum competencies required for the post, may be given further consideration.

12. Selection of a Candidate

When selecting a candidate for the post, the Organization shall take into account the results from all the assessment methods used to evaluate the short-listed candidates, including the technical assessment/interview and competency-based panel interview.

In the event that a fully qualified candidate cannot be found following a competitive selection process, the Organization and/or the Donor may re-advertise the position with a view to attracting additional applications.

The Organization will make the final selection of the candidate for each post, in consultation and cooperation with the Donor.

The Organization will notify the interviewed candidates who are NOT selected.

The Organization will notify the interviewed candidates who ARE selected.

The Organization will conduct reference checks for recommended candidates.

The Organization will verify the academic qualifications of the candidates.

The Organization will be available for questions from candidates who are not selected.

In the unlikely case that no candidates are found suitable for the post, the Organization can decide to re-advertise the post.

13. Final approval by the receiving Duty Station

The Organization will present the selected candidate to the respective duty station for final approval.

In the unlikely case that a candidate is not accepted by the duty station, the Organization will propose another duty station.

14. Reference Checks and Verification of Qualifications

No APO recruitment and selection process is complete without proper and thorough verification of essential information, including academic qualifications, knowledge of languages, nationality, prior UN employment, family relations within the UN System and detailed reference checks. The Personal History Form provides a useful source of information on those matters that require verification and, in particular, on the candidate's employment history for purposes of reference-checking.

Reference checks for the recommended candidate will be conducted after completion of the interview. Reference checks from a current employer will be conducted only after the Organization has consulted the candidate and obtained permission to contact that employer for the purpose of conducting a reference check.

References should be obtained from minimum three referees identified by the candidate, including one former supervisor of the candidate.

Conducting the reference check by telephone is often the fastest way to obtain a reference, and may yield important information that might not otherwise be obtained through a more formal, written process. Reference checks by phone should follow a consistent format of questions, with questions and answers documented in detail.

15. APO Appointments

After finalization of the selection process in line with the present guidelines, the APO will be appointed under an FAO fixed-term contract and will have the status of an FAO fixed-term staff member at the P-2 level, in line with the Organization's Rules and Staff Regulations. Steps on the salary scale will be determined by the Donor, in consultation with the Organization considering the candidate's previous experience and other Rules and Regulations followed by the Donor and the Organization.

16. Administrative Support Costs

The Organization will incorporate in the budget estimate that is submitted to the Donor an administrative support cost of 14%.