

# THE UNHCR JUNIOR PROFESSIONAL OFFICER PROGRAMME

## *1. Background.*

The Junior Professional Officer (JPO) Programme provides the opportunity for young university graduates, and young qualified professionals to obtain training as well as exposure to UNHCR's humanitarian work in the field or at Headquarters. UNHCR's website: [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org).

As at March 2011, sixteen Governments/Organisations sponsor over 90 JPOs under the UNHCR JPO Programme. These are: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and USA. The duration of a JPO assignment varies according to the sponsor Government (2 to 4 years)

Certain Governments (such as The Netherlands and Italy) also at times sponsor JPOs from other countries under the Developing Country Scheme (JPO/DC).

In UNHCR, the JPO gains working experience, while under supervision from UNHCR officers, in the fields of protection, the provision of humanitarian assistance in various emergency and special programmes, and in other areas such as technical support services or donor and external relations. The areas of expertise which UNHCR looks for in candidates, are in particular in law, public administration and social sciences. JPOs are expected to have excellent knowledge of English and/or French (depending on the geographical area to which they are to be assigned); knowledge of other official UN languages is a definite advantage. The JPO age-range is from 25 to 32, although in exceptional cases this limit may be waived. The age limit (if there is one) will be imposed by the sponsoring Government.

Minimum requirements individuals must meet for being considered as JPOs are:

- Degree equivalent to a Bachelor's Degree or a Master's Degree in a field equivalent and/or relevant to the functions requested in the job description.

- At least two to four years of relevant work experience (two years with a Master Degree (or higher) or 4 years with a Bachelor Degree).
- Proficiency in English (spoken and written). Knowledge of a second language of the United Nations a strong asset.
- Computer literacy in standard software applications.
- Keen and demonstrated interest in the United Nations and humanitarian issues, in particular, and ability to live and/or serve in hardship locations.
- Ability to establish and maintain good working relations with people of different national and cultural backgrounds.

## ***2. Recruitment procedures.***

### **A. National JPOs**

List of JPO vacancies are regularly submitted to participating Governments, requesting them to select/earmark the posts they can sponsor through the recruitment of a JPO. An interested sponsor Government then initiates its own recruitment search and pre-selection process, upon completion of which it submits to UNHCR its nominations. These nominations are subsequently screened and evaluated by UNHCR, and interviews organised when appropriate.

This procedure could vary depending on the sponsor, whereby grouped interviews are scheduled and organised by the sponsoring Government on a yearly basis.

Once a JPO candidate has been selected for a particular vacancy, the sponsor Government is informed accordingly and the recruitment procedure of the candidate is initiated as soon as the necessary funds are made available by the sponsoring Government. JPOs are appointed at the P-2 level normally, but some Governments limit the appointment to the P-1 level, at least the first year. The total costs of a budgetary estimate will vary depending on the grade of the JPO, the location of the assignment, and his/her marital status. The number of JPOs sponsored by each Government will depend on their budget, and there are no minimum or maximum number of JPOs expected to be sponsored by them at any point in time. Some sponsors recruit JPOs every other year, some every year, some on a case-by-case basis.

Newly recruited JPOs are requested to attend a 3 to 4 days induction at HQs before taking up duties in their respective duty stations. Moreover, throughout their JPO assignment, participation to workshops, seminars and other relevant training is made available to JPOs.

The status of JPOs within UNHCR is limited to the contracts issued under the JPO scheme without any expectation of renewal or conversion to any other type of contracts.

Interested applicants can obtain more detailed information by sending an e-mail or browsing the Website of their respective Government's authorities, as listed below:

**AUSTRALIA:**

Currently, Australia does not have a JPO programme. Positions have been funded by the Australian Government on an ad-hoc basis

**AUSTRIA:**

Austrian Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Department II.5):

Website: [www.bmaa.gv.at](http://www.bmaa.gv.at)

E-mail: [abtii5@bmaa.gv.at](mailto:abtii5@bmaa.gv.at)

**BELGIUM:**

Website : [www.dgic.be](http://www.dgic.be) rubrique : "Travailler dans la coopération au développement"

**CANADA:**

<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca>

**DENMARK:**

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida

Department for NGO and Personnel Assistance

Asiatisk Plads 2

DK-1448 Copenhagen K

Denmark

Tel. +45 33 92 18 57/59/58/61

Fax: +45 33 92 18 53

E-mail: [danidajob@um.dk](mailto:danidajob@um.dk)

General information (in Danish!) about Danida's multilateral JPO programme is available at:

<http://www.um.dk/danida/personelbistand/multilateralejpo/index.asp>

**FINLAND:**

Ministry for Foreign Affairs  
Department of Development Policy  
Unit for UN Development Issues  
PL 512  
FIN-00023 VALTIONEUVOSTO

Main information source on:

<https://www.cimo.fi/Resource.phx/cimo/kv-harjoittelu/jpo.htx>

Further information on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website at:

<http://formin.finland.fi/public/default.aspx?nodeid=15196&contentlan=1&culture=fi-FI>

**FRANCE:**

[www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/mfi](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/mfi)

**GERMANY:**

Bureau for International Organizations Personnel (BFIO)  
Villemombler Str. 76  
53123 Bonn  
Tel. 0049- 228 - 713 1331  
Fax. 0049-228-270 - 1036  
Email: [Bonn-zav.bfio@arbeitsagentur.de](mailto:Bonn-zav.bfio@arbeitsagentur.de)

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development  
Bundesministerium fuer Wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung  
(BMZ)  
Friedrich-Ebert Allee 40  
53113 Bonn  
Germany  
[www.bmz.de](http://www.bmz.de)

**ITALY:**

[www.undesa.it](http://www.undesa.it)

**JAPAN:**

[mission.japan@ties.itu.ch](mailto:mission.japan@ties.itu.ch)  
[http://www.mofa-irc.go.jp/boshu/jpo\\_haken.htm](http://www.mofa-irc.go.jp/boshu/jpo_haken.htm)

KOREA (Republic of):  
[mission.korea-rep@ties.itu.int](mailto:mission.korea-rep@ties.itu.int)

LIECHTENSTEIN:  
[info@aaa.llv.li](mailto:info@aaa.llv.li)

LUXEMBOURG:  
<http://cooperation.mae.lu>

NETHERLANDS:  
[www.minbuza.nl](http://www.minbuza.nl)

NORWAY:  
Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
P.O. Box 81 14 Dep.  
NO-0032 Oslo  
Norway  
e-mail: [post@mfa.no](mailto:post@mfa.no)  
<http://odin.dep.no/ud/norsk/dep/stillinger/>

PORTUGAL:  
[mission.portugal@ties.itu.int](mailto:mission.portugal@ties.itu.int)

SPAIN:  
[www.aecid.es](http://www.aecid.es)

SWEDEN:  
SIDA (Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency)  
SE-105 25 Stockholm, Sweden  
E-mail address: [marie-louise.dagrup-strand@sida.se](mailto:marie-louise.dagrup-strand@sida.se)

SWITZERLAND:  
[www.cinfo.ch](http://www.cinfo.ch)

UNITED KINGDOM:  
*Currently, UK does not have a JPO programme. Positions have been funded by the UK Government on an ad-hoc basis*

USA:  
[www.state.gov/g/prm](http://www.state.gov/g/prm)

B. JPOs from Developing Countries.

In the case of recruitment of JPOs under the JPO from Developing Country Scheme (JPO/DC) the responsibility for the recruitment and selection of candidates is delegated to UNHCR. The procedure for the assessment of candidates is, in the first instance, entirely done by UNHCR. This procedure comprises the following steps:

- A specific donor agrees to sponsor a specific JPO position by recruiting a candidate from a developing country.
- If there is one, the JPO position is advertised on the UNHCR Website (vacancy announcements) and invites candidates from developing countries to submit their candidatures directly to UNHCR.
- His/her suitability is assessed by UNHCR, on the basis of the existing JPO vacancy selected by the sponsor, an interview (if applicable) and reference checks;
- His/her education is checked against original certificates or with the University;
- Particular attention will be given to candidates from the least developed countries and/or from the least represented nationalities in the Organisation.

The candidate's application is then presented to the sponsoring Government for the vacancy that the sponsor had selected in the first place as per (A) above. The sponsoring Government assesses the application and informs UNHCR of its decision as to whether to admit the candidate to the JPO/DC programme.

The only exception to date within this procedure is with the Italian Government: Candidates from Developing Countries have to submit their candidatures directly to the Italian Government, through:

The United Nations Office for Human Resources  
for International Co-operation (HRIC)  
Corso Vittorio Emanuele II, 251  
00186 Roma – Italia  
Website: [www.undesait](http://www.undesait)

When appointed, the status of JPOs from Developing Countries within UNHCR is limited to the contracts issued under the JPO scheme without any expectation of renewal or conversion to any other type of contracts.

### *3. Summary.*

The JPO programme provides a bank of trained and experienced staff. It also provides for the JPO concerned, an introduction to the international humanitarian aid environment, and helps to put him/her on the tracks of an international career, be it within or outside UNHCR. It should be noted that, upon completion of their assignment, recruitment of former-JPOs is not automatic. As of 2010, JPOs having served for a minimum of two years under a JPO contract are considered internal candidates for vacancies advertised within UNHCR. However, applying for vacancies is still a competitive process governed by internal rules and regulations. More info on career opportunities can be found on our website: [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org).

Geneva, March 2011