

## CL 153/3 Adjustments to the Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17

### Information Note no. 5 – November 2015

#### *Workforce planning and flexibility in vacancy rates*

1. In preparing to implement the Programme of Work and Budget 2016-17, workforce planning is being undertaken in line with corporate human resources policies to ensure that the Organization has the right people, with the right skills and competencies at the right location. The process of identifying skills requirements and skills gap analysis at headquarters and in the decentralized offices is based on priorities to achieve FAO's Strategic Objectives (SOs) and address emerging challenges such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as well as relevant governing body guidance.
2. As mentioned in Information Note 2, in line with the workforce planning exercise being led by the two Deputy Directors-General, it will be necessary to prepare new job descriptions with re-profiling of some of the vacant or to-be vacant positions. The exercise will enable enhancement of technical capacity where required in headquarters, as well as in subregional and regional offices where there is high demand and low or non-existent FAO technical expertise. Particular attention will be given to priority areas of work such as statistics, climate change and nutrition.
3. In view of this, and in order to make this workforce planning exercise meaningful, it is considered essential to maintain a certain degree of flexibility in the vacancy rate of around 10-15% at this time, so that implementation of the programme of work can be adapted in a dynamic manner to new circumstances and emerging priorities. The current higher vacancy rate results in large part from staff who are leaving the Organization on agreed terms, all of which in non-technical or support areas. This will allow for re-profiling of positions in non-technical and administrative functions to technical areas as a result of the Organization's continued pursuit of efficiency and value for money.
4. It is important to note that, while maintaining flexibility in vacancy rates, attention is being given to ensure that the sensitive, critical and essential positions such as managerial positions, team leaders, and Secretaries of Commissions including the Article VI and XIV Bodies, among others, are filled without any delay. This also extends to the Office of the Inspector General, and the Office for Evaluation, where the vacancy rate is virtually zero.
5. Table 1 presents the vacancy rates by technical and non-technical areas at headquarters and in regional offices. As noted recently by the External Auditor and by the Finance Committee,<sup>1</sup> there have been significant improvements to the processes for recruitment at FAO, and in particular on the overall timeframe for recruitment. However, staff turnover means that at any given point in time, there are recruitment actions underway against a number of positions. The vacancy rate in the last column of Table 1 therefore provides the most accurate, prevailing picture by technical and non-technical area.
6. For example, the effective vacancy rate in non-technical areas at headquarters under DDO stands at 20%, which is higher by one percentage point than in technical areas at headquarters under DDN and ES. In addition, there are 11 technical positions for which recruitment processes are underway under DDN and ES, compared to only 1 under DDO. This is line with the Organization's prioritization of technical capacity at headquarters, and at the same time, the retention of flexibility for re-profiling of non-technical positions towards priority areas within the context of the workforce planning exercise.
7. It is also worth noting that, when a post is vacant, it does not mean that there is no one to carry out the functions of the post. In fact, in a large majority of cases, employees on short-term staff and non-staff contracts are engaged to carry out the programmed tasks and functions under the guidance of FAO staff. For

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<sup>1</sup> CL 153/7 Report of the 160<sup>th</sup> session of the Finance Committee (para. 23.a)



instance, as of 16 November there were 82 short-term professional staff and 311 international consultants working in technical areas at headquarters, compared with 89 vacant positions, and 23 short-term staff and 100 international consultants in regional offices, compared with 41 vacant positions.

8. In addition, the use of short-term employees to perform the functions of vacant positions has benefits for programme delivery and longer-term human resources management. It ensures that quick action can be taken to have the relevant functions carried out in a satisfactory manner, especially when terms of reference need to adapt to a changing environment. The involvement of short-term employees in the work of the Organization serves also to ascertain their performance for possible inclusion in a pool of experts with potential to serve the Organization in long-term contracts at a later stage.

9. In terms of cost for the Organization, as an example, the standard costs for, a P-4 in Rome is USD 16,308, while the average cost of an equivalent consultant would be in the range of USD 7,875 and USD 9,450 for honorarium. Those recruited on an international basis are eligible to a monthly living allowance, in lieu of DSA, ranging from USD 100 to USD 2,500. Therefore the total cost of a consultant performing P-4 level functions is within a range of circa USD 7,975 and USD 11,950. Similarly, the standard cost for a P-3 in Rome is USD 12,976, while the total cost of an equivalent international consultant would be between USD 6,400 and USD 10,375.

**Table 1. Vacancy rates by technical and non-technical areas**

	PWB Established Posts	Vacant Posts	Vacant Selection Started (out of the vacant posts)	Vacancy rate	% of vacant posts for which selection is on-going	Current Projected vacancy rate
<b>APEX</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Directors and above	13	0	0	0	0	0
Professional	138	33	4	23%	3%	20%
<b>DDN+ES</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>19%</b>
Directors and above	33	7	4	21%	12%	9%
Professional	387	82	7	21%	2%	19%
<b>DDO</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>20%</b>
Directors and above	11	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Professional	186	41	1	22%	1%	22%
<b>TC</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>28%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>22%</b>
Directors and above	13	2	0	15%	0%	15%
Professional	98	29	7	30%	7%	22%
<b>TOTAL Headquarters</b>	<b>879</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>3%</b>	<b>19%</b>
Directors and above	70	9	4	13%	6%	7%
Professional	809	185	19	23%	2%	20%
<b>ROs +SCC Budapest</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>15%</b>
Directors and above	11	0	0	0%	0%	0%
Professional	178	41	13	23%	7%	16%