

UNFPA

Policies and Procedures Manual:

Human Resources: Policy and Procedures for Contracting Individual Consultants

Policy Title	Policy and Procedures for Contracting Individual Consultants
Previous title (if any)	Individual Consultants
Policy objective	The purpose of this policy is to set out how Hiring Offices can contract the temporary services of individuals as consultants.
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Risk control matrix	Control activities that are part of the process are detailed in the Risk Control Matrix
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POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR CONTRACTING INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS

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I. PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this policy is to set out how Hiring Offices can contract the temporary services of individuals as consultants.

II. POLICY

2. The policy outlines the conditions and procedures for contracting individual consultants and identifies control actions to mitigate potential risks related to the process as summarised below.
 - (a) The authority to engage individual consultants is delegated to division directors and heads of offices at headquarters, and to heads of regional offices, sub-regional offices, and country offices.
 - (b) A competitive selection process is required for individual consultancy assignments at or above an aggregate value of US\$20,000 for local consultants and \$40,000 for international consultants.
 - (c) Individual consultants must not be engaged cumulatively on a series of contracts beyond the equivalent of 11 months within any 12 month period, or consecutively for more than 11 months after which a one month break in service is required.
 - (d) The level of the fee for an individual consultant is based on a determination of the level and qualifications required to perform the assignment and will be approximated with the grade level of regular staff. Exceptions to the maximum fee level require approval from the Chief, HR Services Branch.
 - (e) Hiring Offices must complete a verification process prior to contracting an individual consultant such as checking academic and professional credentials and ensuring the consultant has appropriate medical insurance coverage. Consultants who will travel or provide services from UNFPA premises must also provide a health statement and complete mandatory security courses.
 - (f) Except in the case of low value consultancies below \$2,000, prior to the issuance of an individual consultant contract, Hiring Offices must ensure the individual consultant has created a profile in UNFPA's consultant roster.
 - (g) The individual consultant's details and related documentation must be entered and uploaded to UNFPA's consultant monitoring tool.
 - (h) Payment to an individual consultant is made in arrears upon confirmation by the Hiring Office of satisfactory performance.

III. PROCEDURES

Initiating request for individual consultant

3. The office requiring an individual consultant (“Hiring Office”) must complete the [Terms of Reference for Individual Consultant Form](#) which will include the following information:
 - (a) Hiring Office;
 - (b) Purpose of consultancy;
 - (c) Scope of work: description of services, activities, or outputs;
 - (d) Duration, place where services are to be delivered, delivery dates;
 - (e) Details on how work will be delivered (*e.g.* electronic, hard copy etc.);
 - (f) Monitoring and progress control, including reporting requirements, periodicity, format and deadlines;
 - (g) Expected travel;
 - (h) Required expertise, qualifications and competencies, including language requirements;
 - (i) If applicable, inputs and/or services to be provided to the individual consultant by UNFPA or an implementing partner (such as support services, office space, or equipment);
 - (j) Other relevant information.

Verifying availability of funds

4. The Hiring Office must prepare a full [Individual Consultant Cost Estimate](#). This will include the anticipated fee, the expected cost of any official travel required, any applicable rent recovery to cover the cost of individual consultants who provide services on UNFPA premises or premises shared with other United Nations organizations, and any other special conditions.
5. If the budget for the consultancy is available the Hiring Office must raise and approve a requisition to pre-encumber and therefore secure the funds.
6. If however, there is no budget available for consultancy costs, the Hiring Office must first ensure that the budget is redeployed prior to commencing the selection process. This may include redeployments from vacant positions. The process to follow depends on the source of funding as outlined below.
7. For programme funded positions (regular and other resources), the Hiring Office must:
 - (a) Update the budget revisions in the relevant workplan in the Atlas Global Programming System (GPS);
 - (b) Request the Division for Human Resources (DHR) to freeze the vacant programme position for the number of months needed to offset the total cost if a vacant position is being used to budget the consultancy;
 - (c) Raise and approve a requisition to pre-encumber and therefore secure the funds.

8. For institutional budget funded positions the Hiring Office must request budget redeployment through the [Integrated Service Desk](#) (Finance and Budget – Institutional Budget Services – IB Allotments - Redeployment), utilising the information prepared in the Individual Consultant Cost Estimate. The vacant post number from Atlas should be provided as well as the number of months it would be frozen to offset the total consultancy cost (number of months prorated using the [Standard Post Cost tool](#) available in the Resource Planning and Budgeting Branch (RPBB) section of the DMS microsite).
9. RPBB will review the request and either make the budget redeployment or deny the request if funds are not available. RPBB will also request DHR to freeze the vacant institutional budget position that funds the consultancy for the necessary number of months.
10. Once the budget has been redeployed and funding authorized, the Hiring Office must raise and approve a requisition to pre-encumber and therefore secure the funds.

Selection process

11. Once availability of funds has been secured through an approved requisition in Atlas, the Hiring Office should initiate selection of a suitable candidate.

UNFPA's Consultant Roster

12. The Hiring Office may make use of UNFPA's [Consultant Roster](#) as part of the selection process in several ways:
 - (a) To assist in identifying a suitable, potential candidate when there is no requirement for a competitive selection process;
 - (b) To waive the competitive selection process where there is a suitable vetted individual included in the UNFPA Consultant Roster;
 - (c) To assist in identifying suitable potential candidates to be included in a competitive selection process.
13. The Consultant Roster can effectively support the hiring of individual consultants provided it includes vetted consultants in all relevant areas of expertise. Therefore, each regional office and headquarters should establish a vetting process.

Selection without a competitive process

14. A competitive process for the selection of an individual consultant is not required for:
 - (a) International individual consultants below an aggregate value of US\$40,000;
 - (b) Local individual consultants below an aggregate value of US\$20,000.

The aggregate value of an individual consultant is the total cost to UNFPA of each independent consultancy assignment of the same individual under the same TOR. This includes the fee and any other related costs such as all official travel (airfare, daily

subsistence allowance, and terminal expenses) required to take up the assignment as well as during the assignment, including any subsequent contract extensions.

15. In cases in which a competitive process is not required, the Hiring Office must, however, ensure that the prospective individual consultant is fully suitable according to the TOR.

Selection with a competitive process:

16. A competitive process for the selection of an individual consultant is required for:
 - (a) International individual consultants at or above an aggregate value of US\$40,000;
 - (b) Local individual consultants at or above an aggregate value of US\$20,000.
17. A vacancy announcement based on the TOR must be posted internally and externally in the same manner as for a post vacancy and remain open for at least five calendar days.
18. The Hiring Office may consider potential candidates contained in UNFPA's Consultant Roster in addition to candidates who have applied to the vacancy announcement when screening and preparing the shortlist.
19. The Hiring Office should establish a Selection Panel with a minimum of three persons, paying due regard to the diversity of the panel members. The Selection Panel should apply appropriate selection tools such as one or more of the following: desk review of resumes, interviews, tests, or review of writing or work samples. The Selection Panel should evaluate and rate the candidates in the [Selection Panel Assessment for Individual Consultant](#).
20. The Hiring Office should carry out reference checks and must ensure the academic and professional credentials of the prospective individual consultant have been verified and documented. The Hiring Office should also confirm that the prospective individual consultant is not on the [Consolidated United Nations Security Council Sanctions List](#) or the [United Nations Global Marketplace](#) vendor ineligibility list.
21. The best candidate as determined by the Selection Panel should be selected unless documented reference checks or other justifiable reasons support a different conclusion, in which case the reasons for selecting a lower ranked suitable candidate must be documented.
22. A competitive selection process may be waived under the following circumstances:
 - (a) There is a suitable vetted individual included in UNFPA's Consultant Roster, and there is a match between the vetted and the required expertise;
 - (b) There is no competitive marketplace for the requirement, such as where the requirement involves a proprietary service;
 - (c) Previous engagements require that the services are provided by a particular individual consultant or by an individual consultant drawn from a limited group of individuals;

- (d) The proposed consultancy is the result of cooperation with other organizations of the United Nations system;
 - (e) Offers for identical requirements have been obtained competitively from the individual consultant within a reasonable period (not exceeding a year) and the fees and conditions offered remain competitive;
 - (f) When a competitive selection process has not produced satisfactory results within a reasonable prior period (not exceeding a year);
 - (g) There is a genuine exigency or emergency;
 - (h) The Hiring Office otherwise determines that a competitive selection process will not give satisfactory results.
23. A written explanation substantiating the reason for waiving the competitive selection process must be completed in the [Waiver Form](#) and signed by the Requesting Officer and the Approving Officer in the Hiring Office.

Fee setting and verification process

24. After a suitable prospective individual consultant has been selected, the Hiring Office must undertake a preliminary enquiry with the intended candidate to confirm availability and discuss fee expectations. During this process, the candidate has to be made aware that this enquiry does not constitute a commitment to hire. To facilitate the fee setting and verification process the Hiring Office may issue a [Letter of Intent](#) indicating that it is UNFPA's intent to retain the prospective individual consultant provided certain conditions are fulfilled.
25. The amount of the fee should be agreed with the individual consultant on the basis of the parameters set out in paragraphs 71 to 77 of this policy.
26. Prior to the issuance of an individual consultant contract the requirements outlined below must first be met. Hiring Offices should check the [Consultant Monitoring Tool](#), which provides on-line storage and central access to all consultancy records, to see if a consultant has previously been contracted by UNFPA and some of these requirements have already been met.
27. While the contracting of individual consultants is not a procurement process, for payment purposes individual consultants must have an Atlas vendor profile created as outlined in UNFPA's [Procurement Procedures](#).
28. Only individual consultants whose assignment involves travel or who will provide services from UNFPA premises must submit a [Health Statement for Individual Consultant](#) from a recognized medical practitioner confirming they are medically fit for the assignment. This statement shall be valid for one year unless otherwise indicated by the medical practitioner. An updated statement will be required if the existing statement will expire during the consultancy or if the individual consultant will travel to a location not covered by the statement. UNFPA may reimburse reasonable medical costs related to the issuance of the health statement, consistent with the amount that would be reimbursable for a staff member.

29. The prospective individual consultant must provide a [Certification of Health Insurance](#). This should confirm that the prospective individual consultant holds appropriate medical insurance coverage (including coverage for medical evacuation if the individual consultant will be travelling to locations without adequate medical facilities as part of the assignment) and acknowledge that UNFPA will not provide any medical insurance.
30. Only individual consultants whose assignment involves travel or who will provide services from UNFPA premises must complete the BSAFE security awareness training and submit a printed copy of the certificate to the Hiring Office.
31. While individual consultants do not have to be sourced from UNFPA's Consultant Roster, the Hiring Office must normally ensure that prior to being contracted the prospective individual consultant has created a [profile in the Roster](#). Registration in the roster is mandatory except in the case of a low value consultancy in which the individual consultant is only expected to be contracted once or on a series of contracts that will not exceed a cumulative aggregate value of \$2,000 within a 12 month period.
32. After completing the fee setting and verification process, the Hiring Office prepares the UNFPA [Individual Consultant Contract](#) entering the details of the consultancy and uploading all related documentation to the [Consultant Monitoring Tool](#).

Issuing the IC contract

33. For Hiring Offices outside headquarters, the Approving Officer must review and approve the information in the [Consultant Monitoring Tool](#) confirming that all relevant requirements for contracting the individual consultant have been met and ensure the purchase order has been approved in Atlas. The Approving Officer will then sign the individual consultant contract for issuance by the Hiring Office to the individual consultant for his/her signature.
34. For Hiring Offices at headquarters, the Approving Officer should review and approve the information in the [Consultant Monitoring Tool](#), and sign the individual consultant contract. The signed contract should be sent to the PSB focal point that manages the individual consultant purchase order requests (for further information refer to the guide on [Individual Consultant Requisition Creation](#)). PSB will issue and approve the purchase order in Atlas and notify the Hiring Office which will issue the signed contract to the individual consultant for his/her signature. Since contracting individual consultants is not a procurement process the purchase order created by PSB is solely a payment instrument. PSB does not review compliance and creates the purchase order on the basis of the signed contract provided by the Approving Officer. The signed contract verifies that all the requirements for issuing the contract have been met and the related documentation has been uploaded to the [Consultant Monitoring Tool](#).
35. Under no circumstances can an individual consultant start work without a contract. The execution of an IC contract on a retroactive basis is not permitted. An individual consultant is not permitted to undertake any activities including travel until the individual consultant contract has been signed by the individual consultant and returned

to UNFPA. The individual consultant must also not continue to provide services to UNFPA after the individual consultant contract has expired and before an appropriate individual consultant contract amendment has been concluded.

Evaluation and Fee payment

36. The work and performance of the individual consultant should be monitored by the Hiring Office. Payment for services rendered by the individual consultant is made in arrears on completion of service, completion of phases of the individual consultant contract, or submission of pre-agreed deliverables.
37. The Hiring Office will send certification as required to release fee payments to the individual consultant in accordance with the payment schedule in the individual consultant contract. Payment is initiated by the Hiring Office in the [Certification of Payment](#) which is then provided to the individual consultant for completion and signature. The Requesting Officer in the Hiring Office will countersign the form to certify that the individual consultant provided the services satisfactorily, receive the service in Atlas, and forward the form for payment to the Division for Management Services (DMS) for headquarters, or the Finance Officer in offices outside headquarters. At the time of the payment, DMS or the Finance Officer will also charge the applicable rent recovery through an internal transaction.
38. At the end of the assignment, the Hiring Office will evaluate the overall performance of the individual consultant in the Post Evaluation section of the [Consultant Roster](#). The final payment of the fee must only be released by DMS or the Finance Officer after the individual consultant's services have been evaluated. It is not necessary to attach the evaluation, however, a certificate must be printed from the Consultant Roster confirming that it has been completed and attached to the payment request. The final performance evaluation is not required in the case of a low value consultancy in which the consultant has not been registered in the roster in accordance with paragraph 32 above. In such cases, the performance evaluation will be considered to have been done as part of the certification of payment process.
39. In the event of unsatisfactory performance by the individual consultant, UNFPA should withhold full or partial payment of the fee as appropriate.
40. If an individual consultant has performed unsatisfactorily, the Hiring Office should ask the Roster Administrator to remove the individual consultant from the active view of UNFPA's Consultant Roster through the Integrated Service Desk (Category: Programme: Knowledge Sharing: UNFPA Consultant Roster).
41. At the request of the individual consultant, the Hiring Office can issue a certificate of employment.
42. International individual consultants shall be paid in US Dollars or Euros. Local individual consultants shall normally be paid in the currency in which staff members performing comparable functions in the same location would be paid. In exceptional circumstances in which staff members would not normally be paid in US Dollars, Euro

or a similar currency, payment of part or all of the fee in such currency may be necessary in extraordinary situations, such as highly volatile local economic conditions or civil unrest. This requires the prior written approval of the Chief, HR Services Branch.

43. Individual consultants are not United Nations staff members and therefore are not exempt from income taxes on remuneration paid to them by UNFPA. Payment of any relevant income taxes is the responsibility of the individual consultant, who has no right of reimbursement from UNFPA.

Terminating and amending IC contracts

44. The individual consultant contract may be terminated in accordance with the provisions contained in the General Conditions of the individual consultant contract.
45. It may be necessary to amend an individual consultant contract to modify its terms. For example to extend or reduce the duration, modify the working schedule, or change the travel requirements.
46. The Approving Officer is authorized to sign and issue an **Individual Consultant contract amendment**. In the same way as for an initial contract, when amending the individual consultant contract, the Approving Officer must ensure it complies with the conditions established in this policy such as breaks in service, medical requirements, aggregate values requiring a competitive process, and rules related to former United Nations staff members in receipt of pension benefits from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF).
47. A written justification for any amendment shall be included in the individual consultant file.
48. In the event of a substantive change to the TOR, or a change in the level of the fee, an existing individual consultant contract normally cannot be amended. Instead, the Approving Officer should terminate the existing individual consultant contract in accordance with its General Conditions (if the individual consultant contract has not already expired), prepare new TOR, and undertake a new selection and contracting process under the new TOR.
49. In exceptional circumstances, in the interests of the Organization, the Approving Officer may be authorized to sign an amendment to the existing individual consultant contract, amending the TOR and/or Fee Level. This requires the prior written approval of the Chief, HR Services Branch, DHR.

Summary of roles and responsibilities

AREA	RESPONSIBILITIES
Hiring Office	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies need for services of individual consultants • Develops Terms of Reference for proposed individual consultant assignments • Prepares cost estimates for proposed individual consultant assignments and ensures availability of funds against applicable budget code • Raises and approves a requisition to pre-encumber and secure funds • Requests freezing of vacant programme positions in Atlas for the duration needed to offset the cost of the consultancy • Proposes fee payable to individual consultant • Manages selection process for individual consultant • Ensures consultant has created a profile in the Consultant Roster • Provides related logistical support to individual consultant • Assures quality of services provided and certifies release of payments • Conducts individual consultant performance evaluations • Keeps formal records for individual consultants hired by the Office in the Consultant Monitoring Tool
Approving Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approves contracts for individual consultants ensuring compliance with related terms and conditions for individual consultants • Signs and issues individual consultant contract amendments
Procurement Services Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On basis of signed contract provided by Approving Officer verifying all related requirements for issuing the contract have been met, PSB issues and approves purchase order in Atlas for individual consultants at headquarters
Resource Planning and Budgeting Branch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviews requests for funding consultancies from vacant Institutional Budget posts and makes the budget redeployment or denies the request if funds are not available • Requests freezing of vacant Institutional Budget positions in Atlas for the duration needed to offset the cost of the consultancy
Finance (HQ/Field)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effects payments under the terms of individual consultant contracts according to Hiring Offices instructions and certification
Division for Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishes policies and procedures for hiring

Resources	individual consultants <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitors compliance with policies, procedures and standards • Approves proposed fees that exceed a designated maximum • Approves exceptions to maximum contract durations and waivers of breaks in service • Freezes vacant posts in Atlas
Programme Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages and makes available the on-line Consultant Roster for individual consultants for mandatory use by Hiring Offices

IV. OTHER - INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Approving authorities for individual consultant contracts

50. The Deputy Executive Director (Management) has been delegated the authority to engage individual consultants as well as to further delegate that authority to staff members. The Deputy Executive Director (Management) herewith delegates the authority for engaging individual consultants to the following “Approving Officers”:
- (a) Division directors and heads of offices at headquarters (Procurement Services Branch and Liaison Offices are treated as part of headquarters, and the Approving Officer is the applicable director);
 - (b) Heads of regional offices, sub-regional offices, and country offices.

General conditions of individual consultant contracts

51. An individual consultant is not entitled to any right, benefit, payment or compensation that is not expressly contained in the individual consultant contract.
52. The General Conditions of individual consultant contracts shall not be subject to any alteration, modification, change or revision without the express, written authorization of the Director, DHR. The Director, DHR, will obtain legal advice from the Legal Unit, Office of the Executive Director (OED), as appropriate.
53. An individual consultant is not eligible for benefits such as sick leave or annual leave, pension, or dependency allowances. An individual consultant is only eligible to take fixed (not floating) United Nations official holidays at the relevant location if they work on a full-time schedule from UNFPA premises and are not remunerated on a daily basis.

Use of services of an individual consultant

54. Individual consultants are hired in their capacity as individuals. Individual consultant contracts, therefore, cannot be used to appoint companies, organizations, firms, or other entities.

55. An individual consultant may be hired for an assignment which is temporary in nature and cannot be performed by regular staff due to a lack of specialised expertise, or because of peaks in workload, or to cover staff functions due to absences or vacancies.
56. Individual consultants may not undertake:
- (a) Supervisory functions over staff members;
 - (b) Representative functions for UNFPA; or
 - (c) Functions that are explicitly reserved for staff members under the UNFPA Financial Regulations or Rules, the PPM Internal Control Framework, or other applicable rules, administrative issuances or policies.
57. Cumulatively, an individual consultant can be engaged on a series of contracts for up to the equivalent of 11 months within any 12 month period. Consecutively, an individual consultant can be hired for up to 11 months after which a minimum break in service of one month is required. A one month break in service will also apply to an individual moving to an individual consultant contract from a staff appointment. The Chief, HR Services Branch, DHR, may authorize an exception in writing in certain circumstances such as declared emergency or humanitarian situations. No break is required for an individual moving from an individual consultant contract to a staff appointment.
58. An individual consultant may also be hired on a retainer basis, for services on an ‘as needed’ basis. The fee will be at a pre-agreed rate and within the maximum fee and duration limits provided for in this policy. In the case of a retainer contract, the individual consultancy contract should indicate the overall duration of the contract and the maximum period up to which services may be provided within this overall duration. The Hiring Office will arrange payment to the individual consultant based on services actually provided.
59. It is permissible for an individual consultant to be engaged by UNFPA if the individual has a contract with another employer provided that there is no actual or perceived conflict of interest and that performance of the required services for UNFPA is feasible (for example, if both contracts involve a part-time working schedule or if the individual will be working on a retainer basis). In addition, in cases in which an individual consultant works under multiple consultancy assignments with UNFPA, the time accumulated under all UNFPA contracts will count towards the maximum service period of the equivalent of 11 months within any 12 month period.
60. Individuals who volunteer their services to UNFPA may be issued an individual consultant contract with either a “nil” or token fee (for example US\$1). As appropriate, they may be permitted to travel and may be paid daily subsistence allowance (DSA).

Diversity considerations

61. Hiring Offices should give due regard to diversity considerations when hiring individual consultants, in particular to the goal of obtaining gender balance, and when hiring international individual consultants to candidates from the widest possible geographical base.

Contracting spouses/partners and immediate family members

62. A member of a UNFPA staff member's immediate family (father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister) may only be hired as an individual consultant when another equally well qualified person cannot be identified.
63. Hiring Offices are encouraged to give preferential consideration to equally well qualified candidates for a consultancy who are expatriate spouses or recognized partners of United Nations staff members.
64. To contract a family member or spouse / partner all the following additional conditions must also be met:
 - (a) The individual consultant will not be supervised by the staff member;
 - (b) There is no actual or potential conflict of interest;
 - (c) Neither will participate in any review or decision-making process affecting the other;
 - (d) The selection must have been made as the result of a competitive selection process regardless of the aggregate value of the consultancy assignment. A waiver of a competitive selection process is not possible in such cases.
65. If a family member or spouse / partner of a UNFPA staff member is contracted as an individual consultant, a statement confirming compliance with the relevant conditions, signed by the Hiring Office, should be included in the individual consultant file.
66. The same conditions outlined above will apply to the family member or spouse / partner of another individual consultant being contracted in the same office.

Contracting former United Nations staff members

67. A former UNFPA staff member in receipt of a United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) pension must not be contracted as an individual consultant for a period of three months following separation from service. All other former UNFPA staff members must not be contracted as an individual consultant for a period of one month following separation.
68. Former United Nations staff in receipt of a UNJSPF pension, must not receive more than US\$50,000 in fees (not including travel related expenses and DSA) and must not be retained for more than six months within UNFPA during any calendar year. In addition, they must not receive a fee at a level higher than when they separated from the United Nations and they must not be paid at a level higher than that at which regular staff members are remunerated for the same function.
69. When dealing with a former staff member in receipt of a UNJSPF pension, the Hiring Office should request the prospective individual consultant to provide a statement of payments made by UNFPA and lengths of engagement during the calendar year, to establish whether the individual may be retained as a consultant, and for what duration.

70. An individual who has encumbered one of the following term limited posts and by Board Decision is barred from re-entry to UNFPA is not permitted to be contracted by UNFPA as an individual consultant in any capacity:
- (a) Director of the Evaluation Office;
 - (b) Director of the Office for Audit and Investigation Services;
 - (c) Ethics Advisor.

Individual consultant fee

Setting fee levels

71. The level of the fee will be based on a determination of the level and qualifications required to perform the assignment as outlined in the TOR, and will be approximated with the grade level of regular staff (in the General Services, National Officer or International Professional categories) performing duties at a comparable level. It should be noted that this approximation is to determine the scope of responsibilities for fee setting purposes only and to determine the qualifications and experience requirements necessary to carry out the assignment. Individual consultancies themselves do not carry grade levels.
72. For individual consultants approximated at General Service level, possession of a minimum of completed secondary education is a mandatory requirement that cannot be substituted by additional years of relevant experience. Additional academic qualifications in a relevant specialization in excess of the standard required may be considered as a substitute for a certain amount of relevant working experience. However, this will be limited given that the nature of these assignments normally means successful job performance is influenced more by relevant work experience, and a higher level of education is not necessary to perform these duties. In considering the fee level applicable the following combination of academic qualifications and working experience in a relevant field should be taken as a guide:

Level of appointment	First-level degree or higher and minimum years of relevant experience	Completed secondary education and minimum years of relevant experience
GS-1	0	0
GS-2	2	2
GS-3	3	3
GS-4	4	4
GS-5	4	5
GS-6	5	6
GS-7	6	7

73. For individual consultants approximated at professional level the standard educational requirement is an advanced university degree. Possession of a minimum of a first level university degree in a relevant specialization is a mandatory requirement, which cannot be substituted by additional years of relevant experience. Where a candidate possesses only a first level degree, this may be off-set by additional years of relevant experience.

In considering the fee level applicable the following combination of academic qualifications and working experience in a relevant field should be taken as a guide:

Level of Appointment	Master or Higher + years of relevant experience	“License” + years of relevant experience	Bachelors + years of relevant experience
P-1/NO-A	0	1	2
P-2/NO-B	2	3	4
P-3/NO-C	5	6	7
P-4/NO-D	7	8	9
P-5	10	11	12
D-1/P-6	15	16	17
D-2/P-7	>15	>15	>15

74. Individual consultants approximated with the grade level of:
- General Service staff (GS-1 to GS-7) must be available and legally allowed to be contracted within the duty station.
 - National Officers (NO-A to NO-E) must be available and legally allowed to be contracted within the duty station. The assignment is at professional level but does not require international expertise. However, unlike National Officer staff, an individual consultant approximated to National Officer level only has to be legally allowed to work in the duty station and does not have to be a national (hold the citizenship) of the country of the duty station.
 - International Professional assignments are at professional level and require international expertise. The individual consultant may be hired globally. However, in cases in which the international professional is contracted within the duty station benefits such as travel costs to take up the assignment and DSA while on assignment in the duty station will not be applicable.
75. The fee offered to the selected candidate for:
- Locally hired individual consultants, must not exceed the equivalent of the [gross salary for General Service or National Officer staff](#) in the prevailing salary scales for the relevant location. In H category duty stations which do not have National Officer staff salary scales, the fee for locally-hired individual consultants at the professional level will be set in the same way as for internationally-hired individual consultants;
 - Internationally hired individual consultants, must not exceed the gross salary listed in the prevailing [International Professional staff salary scale](#) (and excluding post adjustment).
76. Depending on the qualifications and experience of the candidate, the fee should be set against the appropriate step level within the relevant grade. This fee level represents the maximum amount that may be payable to the consultant. To ensure best value for money to the Organization a lower fee should be negotiated whenever possible.

77. The total fee payable is specified in the individual consultant contract as a gross amount. The fee may be agreed to as follows:
- (a) As an output-based lump sum;
 - (b) As a monthly rate (calculated on the basis of the annual salary divided by 12);
 - (c) As a weekly rate (calculated on the basis of the annual salary divided by 52);
 - (d) As a daily rate (calculated on the basis of the annual salary, divided by 12, then divided by 21.75), payable only for days actually worked.

Requesting exceptions to standard fee levels

78. Every effort must be made to identify potential individual consultants who can be contracted within the maximum fee limit established above. If an individual consultant contracting proposal has a fee that would exceed the maximum fee limit, the Hiring Office must send a justification and relevant supporting evidence to obtain prior written approval for an exception from the Chief, HR Services Branch, DHR. Possible grounds that could merit consideration for an exception may include (but are not limited to) the following.
- (a) The United Nations Country Team has standard consultancy rates in place which are in use by other United Nations organizations in the same location. In such cases, the Hiring Office can seek a blanket exception allowing application of these rates for all consultancies at the duty station;
 - (b) The proposed consultancy is the result of a cost sharing agreement with other organizations of the United Nations system or implementing partners;
 - (c) The proposed consultant will be working in an emergency or humanitarian situation in which fast track selection procedures have been activated;
 - (d) Following completion of a competitive selection process, the Hiring Office has been unable to identify any other suitably qualified candidates who could carry out the assignment within the standard fee rate, or at a lower fee rate than the proposed consultant;
 - (e) A higher fee level was exceptionally approved for a consultant whose contract is subsequently amended to extend the duration under the same terms of reference;
 - (f) The proposed consultant has previously been contracted by UNFPA and received a higher fee for the previous consultancy assignment. Approval of an exception will be contingent on the Hiring Office demonstrating that the proposed consultant was identified as the outcome of a competitive selection process that did not generate a suitable alternative candidate who could carry out the assignment within the maximum fee level;
 - (g) The proposed candidate for an international consultancy is available to provide services in the duty station in which the assignment is based and will not be travelling or in receipt of DSA for the full duration of the assignment. The proposed consultant must have been identified as the outcome of a competitive selection process that did

not generate another suitable consultant who could carry out the assignment within the maximum fee level. In such cases, the fee level offered to the consultant can never exceed the equivalent of the normal maximum fee level together with the DSA rate applicable at the duty station. In such cases the agreed fee rate for this assignment cannot be used as the basis for requesting an exception under subparagraph (g) above, to pay a higher fee rate for future assignments in which the consultant will be in receipt of DSA.

Official travel and DSA

79. Official travel associated with the assignment will be specified in the TOR of the individual consultant contract, and will be authorized, arranged, and the related costs such as DSA paid in accordance with [UNFPA's Duty Travel Policy](#) and procedures. Under UNFPA's travel policy, regardless of flying time, UNFPA individual consultants are only entitled to travel in economy class.
80. Any travel undertaken by an individual consultant must be pre-approved by UNFPA. Although it is preferable for UNFPA to arrange the travel, in cases in which agreement is reached for individual consultants to purchase their own ticket, a threshold amount first needs to be established by UNFPA's travel provider. After completion of travel, the ticket can be reimbursed up to the threshold upon receipt of proof of travel (invoice and boarding passes). Any advance payment of DSA and Terminal Expenses to an individual consultant shall not exceed 80 percent of the total amount payable.
81. If an international individual consultant is travelling to take up an assignment at a duty station, rather than undertaking mission travel, instead of paying DSA for the duration of the assignment particularly in the case of longer assignments, the Hiring Office may elect to negotiate a different lumpsum amount to compensate for subsistence costs. The amount must be clearly specified in the TOR of the individual consultant contract and may not exceed the total DSA amount that would otherwise be payable.
82. Should the individual consultant undertake travel in connection with the contract, the individual consultant or Hiring Office shall request travel security clearance through the [UNDSS Trip system](#) in accordance with relevant Security policies.

Permits, visa and travel documents

83. Locally engaged individual consultants should hold all necessary work permits and visas to be legally allowed to work in the country in which they are retained.
84. If, exceptionally, a locally engaged individual consultant is assigned to travel on duty outside the country, UNFPA may reimburse reasonable costs for the issuance of visas and permits. This is managed by the UNFPA field duty station with appropriate support, as required, from the UNDP country office or Global Shared Services Unit (GSSU).
85. Internationally engaged individual consultants shall themselves obtain all necessary permits and visas. UNFPA will assist or facilitate and may reimburse reasonable costs

incurred for the issuance of visas and permits. At headquarters this process is managed through DHR. In the case of the United States this usually entails the issuance of a G-4 visa to the international individual consultant (unless the international individual consultant is a United States citizen or permanent resident). At UNFPA offices outside headquarters this is managed by the UNFPA office with appropriate support, as required, from the UNDP country office or GSSU.

86. Individual consultants are not issued a United Nations *laissez-passer*. For identification purposes, a United Nations certificate may be issued for individual consultants while undertaking international travel. This certificate may be obtained through the Travel Unit with certification from DHR at headquarters, or through the UNDP country office or GSSU in offices outside headquarters.

UNFPA provided insurance coverage and liability

87. Only individual consultants who will either be travelling for UNFPA or working from UNFPA premises are covered by the Malicious Acts Insurance Policy (MAIP). In order to ensure eligibility to coverage, the individual consultant must comply with all security directives and procedures.
88. In the event of service incurred injury, illness or death of the individual consultant, the individual consultant or his/her dependents are entitled to compensation as provided in the General Conditions of the individual consultant contract.

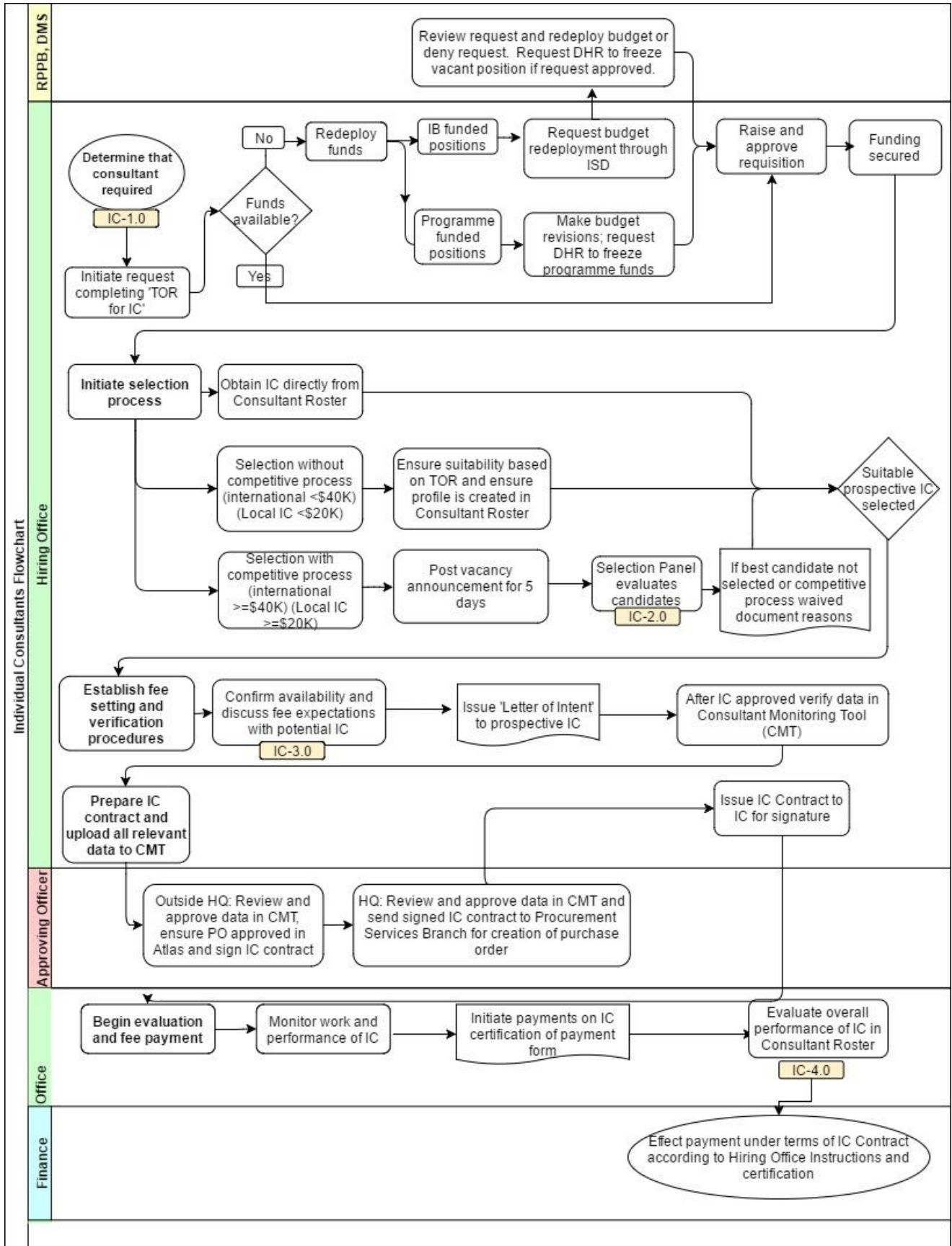
Standards of Conduct

89. The individual consultant must comply with the standards of conduct contained in the General Conditions of the individual consultant contract. This includes not engaging in any conduct that would constitute sexual exploitation or sexual abuse.

Dispute resolution

90. Whenever possible, an attempt shall be made to settle any dispute arising from the interpretation or execution of this contract by informal negotiations between the individual consultant and the Hiring Office.
91. As provided in the General Conditions of individual consultant contracts, disputes are subject to binding arbitration in accordance with the prevailing United Nations Commission on International Trade Law arbitration rules. In the event a declaration of arbitration is received, it should be forwarded without delay to the Chief, Legal Unit, OED. Under no circumstances shall any officer of UNFPA declare arbitration against any individual consultant.

V. PROCESS FLOWCHART



VI. RISK CONTROL MATRIX

Control	Risk Description	Control Objective	Control Activity Description	Who Performs
IC-1.0	Consultants used to perform core services that should be carried out by staff compromising the continuity of UNFPA's operations.	Ensure the continuity and sustainability of core operations. Safeguarding and building institutional memory.	Maximum duration set on consultancy services. Any exceptions must be approved by DHR.	Chief HR Services Branch
IC-2.0	Consultant contracted does not meet requirements to perform consultancy resulting in poor quality work.	All consultants deliver high quality results on requirements outlined in TOR.	Consultants thoroughly vetted and reference checked. A selection panel evaluates consultants.	Approving Officers.
IC-3.0	Fees paid to consultants exceed what is reasonable for services provided leading to inefficient use of resources.	Services received from consultants represent best value for money.	Fee structure based on level of services and expertise required. Any exceptions for higher fees must be approved by DHR.	Chief, HR Services Branch
IC-4.0	Consultant who perform unsatisfactorily are rehired.	All consultants on roster are highly qualified and expected to deliver excellent results.	Performance evaluation conducted at end of consultancy assignment. Poorly performing consultants removed from active view of consultant roster.	Hiring Office