

Resources for Applying to Vacancies at Rome-Based UN Agencies and International Organizations

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NOTE THAT THIS IS NOT AN OFFICIAL UN HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDE OR DOCUMENT. INSTEAD IT IS A RESOURCE DEVELOPED BY THE U.S. MISSION TO THE ROME BASED AGENCIES USING UN AND OTHER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION.

PART 2 PROVIDES ORGANIZATION SPECIFIC INFORMATION WHERE AVAILABLE.

Part 1: General Information

UN Pay Grade System

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Level	Grade	Required Experience
Entry	P-1 (Professional-level)	Rarely advertised, 0-2 years of work experience.
Entry	P-2	Minimum 2 years of work experience. No experience is required if applying to the young professionals program.
Entry	P-3	Minimum 5 years of work experience.
Mid	P-4	Minimum 7 years of work experience.
Mid	P-5	Minimum 10 years of work experience.
Senior	D-1 (Director-level)	Minimum 15 years of work experience.
Senior	D-2	More than 15 years of work experience.

Note that these are *MINIMUM* requirements!

http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/salaries_allowances/salary.htm

Useful UN Wide Links

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Application Tips from the Bureau of International Organization Affairs:
<http://iocareers.state.gov/Main/Content/Page/application-selection-process>

UN website for its application process:

<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=AP>

Additional information on core values and competencies:

https://careers.un.org/lbw/attachments/competencies_booklet_en.pdf

UN applicants manual:

<https://careers.un.org/lbw/attachments/ManualfortheApplicant.pdf>

Options for Junior Candidates

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- **Internships:** Generally unpaid opportunities for graduate students, and no prior work experience is required. A few organizations occasionally offer stipends. Internships provide an opportunity to learn about the organization and in rare cases graduate internships can lead to other contract work.
- **Young Professionals Program:** Check annually to see if the United States is eligible. A first-level university degree is required, though no prior professional experience is.
<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=NCE&lang=en-US>
 - ✦ *Note that FAO and WFP's programs have slightly different requirements (see later slides).*
- **Junior Professionals Program:** Sponsored by the United States

Types of Contracts

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- **Consultancies/Short-Term Staff**
 - Very common in most UN agencies, with contracts often lasting from 3 months to 1 year.
 - Can be recruited either internationally or nationally.
 - Become available depending on projects/budget.
- **Fixed term, professional (P and D) staff**
 - Often recruited internationally and at higher professional levels. Typically a limited number of vacancies are open per year at the organizations in Rome.

What does the UN Look For?

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- **Core Values (personality traits):**
 - Integrity, respect for diversity, professionalism
- **Core competencies (skills)**
 - Teamwork, communication, planning & organizing, accountability, creativity, client orientation, commitment to continuous learning, technological awareness

For more information; see:

<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=WWLF>

How Will I Be Evaluated?

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Application



Assessment



Interview

Stages of Application Process

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Application: Screen for general eligibility (ex: education level.) If you meet the requirements, you'll be invited to do an assessment.

Assessment: Test language abilities and job-specific skills. Increasingly, proficiency in a second UN language is tested for both oral and written communication. If successful, you'll be invited for an interview.

Interview: Chance to learn more about your experience and judge your fit for the organization. If successful, you'll get the job.

Application Process

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- Apply online (submit personal history form, resume, and cover letter) to posted vacancies only (Except where noted below in Part 2, most organizations do not accept general applications or solicitations).
- If your background matches the position requirement, you will be contacted for an interview.

Resume Tips

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- Target your resume to the specific position.
- Choose your words carefully– be concise, specific, and use action words.
- Proofread your materials before submitting.
- Focus on your responsibilities and achievements, not tasks, but do not exaggerate.
- For some UN organizations, resumes/CVs must be submitted through the Inspira system. Check format before submitting!
- For more resume tips:
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/pdf/preparing%20resumes.PDF>

Cover Letter Tips

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- Your cover letter should be about 3-4 paragraphs (not more than one page), targeted, and addressed to an organization or person (avoid 'to whom it may concern').
- Keep it personal but professional. Your goal is to distinguish yourself and explain how your background matches the position. Note language skills and international experience. Be specific!
- Cover letter tips can also be found here:
<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=CYJA>

General Note on Language Assessments

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- Be honest about your language abilities, as they will be tested. Even basic language skills can distinguish your application from others.
- If you list a language skill, be accurate about your competency level as you may be expected to test and communicate in this language for work.
- FAO's language categories can be found here:
<http://www.fao.org/3/a-az771e.pdf>

Interviews

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- UN Agencies and other international organizations use ‘competency-based interviews,’ or behavioral interviewing techniques.
- The goal is to evaluate you and your fit with the core values and competencies.
- You will be asked to talk about your experiences, goals, and what you will bring to the organization. The interview will focus on your past experiences, which are seen as the primary indicator of how you will perform in future positions.

Interview Tips

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- **Typical behavioral interview questions:**
 - *Tell us about a situation when you went above and beyond your manager's expectations.*
 - *Give an example of a time when you used your problem solving abilities to resolve an issue.*
 - *Tell us about a time where you had a number of demands being made on you at the same time. How did you handle it?*

Interview Tips

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- Tell stories in the “Challenge—Action—Results” framework.
 - Describe the challenge, what you did about it, and what the outcome was.
- Pick stories that highlight a key skill gained from past experience
- Use action words when telling stories
- For more information:
<https://careers.un.org/lbw/home.aspx?viewtype=AYI>
(There is also a helpful video tutorial on the site!)

Part 2: Organization Specific Information

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- **FAO Information: Slides 16-22**
- **WFP Information: Slides 23-27**
- **IFAD Information: Slides 28-34**
- **IDLO Information: Slides 35-38**

Typical Employment Opportunities at FAO

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- **Junior Professionals Program** (FAO's version of the UN wide Young Professionals Program)—requires 1 year of experience. Apply directly through FAO.
- **Associate Expert Program** (FAO's version of UN wide Junior Professionals Program). Check if United States is eligible.
- **Consultancies** and project-specific positions vary by position, check regularly for openings.
- **Fixed term positions**, often at senior levels, check regularly for openings.

FAO Strategic Framework 2010-2019

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- FAO's vision is: "A world free from hunger and malnutrition where food and agriculture contribute to improving the living standards of all, especially the poorest, in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner."

- FAO's three Global Goals are:
 - 1) eradication of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition, progressively ensuring a world in which people at all times have sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life;
 - 2) elimination of poverty and the driving forward of economic and social progress for all, with increased food production, enhanced rural development and sustainable livelihoods; and
 - 3) sustainable management and utilization of natural resources, including land, water, air, climate and genetic resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

*Taken from: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/027/mg015e.pdf>

The FAO Strategic Objectives

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1. Help eliminate hunger, food insecurity, and malnutrition
2. Make agriculture, forestry and fisheries more sustainable
3. Reduce rural poverty
4. Enable inclusive and efficient agricultural and food systems
5. Increase the resilience of livelihoods from disasters

See link for additional information: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/027/mg015e.pdf>

FAO's Competency Framework

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- **Values:** Commitment to FAO, Respect for all, Integrity and Transparency
- **Competencies:** Results focus, teamwork, communication, building effective relationships, knowledge sharing & continuous improvement, leading/engaging/empowering others, communication, partnering & advocating, strategic thinking
- For more information: <http://www.fao.org/3/a-az770e.pdf>

Helpful Resources to Review Before Interviewing

- FAO's organizational structure:
<http://www.fao.org/about/structure/en/>
- Past FAO Council and Committee meeting reports:
<http://www.fao.org/about/meetings/en/>
- FAO's work with other UN agencies, the private sector, and civil society organizations:
<http://www.fao.org/partnerships/en/>

FAO Interview Tips

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- Understand the requirements of the position you are interviewing for. Study the minimum requirements and the selection criteria and think of your past or current work experience or qualifications which are related.
- Use the STAR approach to answering questions: Situation, Task, Action, Results
- Be ready to discuss your strengths and your ability to learn from past experiences. Also think about how you could contribute to the work of the Organization and to the specific position you are applying for.
- Share information you feel is appropriate and relevant to the job you are interviewing for, or to the Organization.
- Listen to the question carefully. Keep to the point. Be as specific as possible.
- Learn as much as you can about the Department and Office you are applying to and the work it does.
- Practice your answers, although there is no set format that each interview follows, prepare answers to some of the most common questions about strengths and weaknesses.
- Stay calm. Good preparation is the key to staying in control. Remember that your interviewers are just normal people!
- Ask questions about anything that is unclear about the position. The interview is your chance to ask all of your questions.

World Food Program (WFP) Mission Statement

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- The mission of WFP is to **end global hunger**. WFP will continue to:
 - Use food aid to support economic and social development;
 - Meet refugee and other emergency food needs, and the associated logistics support; and
 - Promote world food security in accordance with the recommendations of the UN and FAO.
- *Taken from:
<https://www.wfp.org/about/mission-statement>

WFP's Work

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- The core policies and strategies that govern WFP activities are to provide food aid:
 - to save lives in refugee and other emergency situations;
 - to improve the nutrition and quality of life of the most vulnerable people at critical times in their lives; and
 - to help build assets and promote the self-reliance of poor people and communities, particularly through labor-intensive works programs.
- *Taken from:
<https://www.wfp.org/about/mission-statement>

WFP's Strategic Plan

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1. Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies;
2. Support food security and nutrition and (re)build livelihoods in fragile settings and following emergencies;
3. Reduce risk and enable people, communities and countries to meet their own food and nutrition needs;
4. Reduce under-nutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger.

WFP Employment Specifics

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- Read the requirements for each position carefully. Though WFP uses the same UN wide names for each job category (P2, P3, etc.), the requirements may differ.
- Language skills are key—applicants need to speak at least 2 working languages to be considered for fixed term positions (though Portuguese, a working language of WFP, counts).
- Consultancies are also common. Most run for 6 months to 1 year, and can be renewed.
- Junior professional officers can be placed at WFP, depending on position availability (apply through United States for this program)

Application Guidelines

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- Apply online for positions, or for the “talent pool” roster (where applications are saved and will be picked from depending on vacancies).
- Interviews and assessments fall into the same framework as other UN agencies, though they look for people who are willing to work on the ground and in high-risk areas.
- Staff say they enjoy seeing the direct impact they have when helping people through projects.

Strategic Vision 2016-2025

- Inclusive and sustainable rural transformation, with the goal of having poor people overcome food insecurity and rural poverty.
- See link below for more information:
- <https://webapps.ifad.org/members/repl/10/2/docs/IFAD10-2-R-2.pdf>

IFAD's Strategic Framework 2016-2025

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- After several years of growth and reform, IFAD is recognized for its experience, knowledge and performance in this domain; it stands ready to achieve greater impact and it is well positioned to play a larger role in helping countries fulfil their priorities relative to Agenda 2030. For it to do so, it needs to work in a way that is bigger, better and smarter:
 - **Bigger:** by mobilizing substantially more funds and resources for investment in rural areas;
 - **Better:** by strengthening the quality of IFAD's country programs through innovation, knowledge-sharing, partnerships and policy engagement; and
 - **Smarter:** by delivering development results in a cost-effective way that best responds to partner countries' evolving needs.

*Taken from: <https://www.ifad.org/who/sf/overview>

IFAD's Objectives

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- **Increase poor rural people's productive capacities.** Means that they focus on access to natural resources, access to agricultural technologies, inclusive financial services, nutrition
- **Increase poor rural people's benefits from market participation.** Thematic areas of focus are diverse employment opportunities for people in agriculture, rural investment environment, rural producers organizations, and rural infrastructure.
- **Strengthen environmental sustainability and climate resilience of rural people's activities.** Areas of thematic focus are environmental sustainability & climate change.

* For more information, see

<https://www.ifad.org/documents/10180/ff341db0-be16-42e3-8860-72a848322b2e>

IFAD's Competency Framework

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- **10 competencies expected from all employees:**
 - Strategic thinking and organizational development
 - Demonstrating leadership
 - Learning, sharing knowledge and innovating
 - Focusing on clients
 - Problem-solving and decision-making
 - Managing time, resources and information
 - Team working
 - Communicating and negotiating
 - Building relationships and partnerships
 - Managing performance and developing staff

*Taken from: <https://www.ifad.org/who/job/tags/apo/8001915>

Staff Categories at IFAD

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- **Professional category**

- The Professional category demands a high degree of analytical and communication skills, substantive expertise and/or managerial leadership ability. Typically, these positions require the incumbent to make decisions after careful analysis and evaluation of problems involving discretionary choices between alternative courses of action.
- Within the Professional category, Directors are ultimately responsible for IFAD programs and projects, provide leadership to formulate and implement the substantive work program of their division, determine priorities, and allocate resources for the completion of outputs and their timely delivery.

- **National Professional Officer category**

- National Professional Officers (NPOs) are normally locally recruited and perform functions at the professional level. The qualifications for an NPO are the same as for the Professional category, but in addition NPOs must be nationals of the country in which they are serving.

- **General Service category**

- The functions in the General Service and related categories include administrative, secretarial and clerical support as well as specialized technical functions—for example, printing, security or building maintenance. The work carried out by General Service staff supports the functioning of the organization and is typically procedural, operational or technical in nature

- *Taken from: <https://www.ifad.org/who/job/tags/apo/2792648>

IFAD Contract Types

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- Internships (6 months)
- Junior professional officers (sponsored by United States)
- Consultancies
- Short-term assignments (maximum of 18 months, can be renewed for another 18 months).
- Fixed-term assignments (minimum of one year).
- Some opportunities with sponsor organizations of IFAD
- *Taken from: <https://www.ifad.org/who/job/tags/apo/2792648>

Interviewing at IFAD

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- Competency-based, behavioral interviews.
- IFAD recommends using the Situation, Task, Action, Result (STAR) framework in interviews:
 - Provide a description of the **situation**
 - Clearly describe the **tasks** or specifics involved in the situation
 - Talk about the actions required to **address** the situation
 - Present a clear statement of the **results** of the actions
- *Taken from: <https://www.ifad.org/who/job/tags/apo/8001915>

IDLO

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- IDLO is an intergovernmental agency promoting the rule of law and development. It was granted UN observer status in 2001.

From IDLO's website:

- “We enable countries to design, reform and strengthen those laws and institutions most apt to deliver justice, dignity and economic opportunity.
- We do not champion law for law's sake: if we promote well-functioning courts, we also strive to make them accessible. For us, helping draft a national Constitution means giving a voice to the rural widow.
- The same emphasis on the end-user informs IDLO's record on commercial law, intellectual property law, environmental law, and every other area of law, national or international.”

*Taken from: <http://www.idlo.int/about-idlo/mission-and-history>

IDLO Strategic Plan 2013-2016

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- The Strategic Plan guides IDLO's development as an organization and how it mobilizes resources.
- Plan goals:
 - **Focus** – making hard choices based on IDLO's comparative advantage to achieve clear and measurable results;
 - **Reform** – improving IDLO's organizational systems and structures so that it can do more and better with less; and
 - **Resources** – broadening IDLO's donor base and increasing its predictable and flexible income to achieve financial sustainability.

*Taken from: <http://www.idlo.int/about-idlo/governance/strategic-plan?render=overlay>

Career Tracks at IDLO

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- **Professional Staff:** IDLO *Professional Staff* provide legal expertise on the establishment of the rule of law and good governance in the development process, or are professionals with a high degree of work experience and academic credentials in other supporting functions of the organization, including, but not limited to, human resources, information systems, finance, administration, and external relations. Managers of specific units or Director-level positions responsible for the management of various functions of the Organization are also classified as Professional Service Staff.
- **General Service Staff:** IDLO *General Service Staff* includes technical and administrative personnel in Assistant-level or other types of supporting roles.
- **Project Consultancies:** IDLO regularly hires *Project Consultants* on a short- or mid-term basis. These consultancies are not part of the long-term organizational structure and are typically hired to assist with direct programming needs on a time-limited basis. These positions may be located in IDLO's Headquarters office in Rome, in the office in The Hague, or in one of IDLO's field offices, which are primarily in post-conflict countries.
- **Internships:** The IDLO *Internship Program* is open to applicants from all over the world who are interested in IDLO's activities. Applicants must have a strong command, both written and spoken, of English. Other languages, in particular French, Spanish, Russian, Chinese, and Portuguese are an advantage. An average internship of three months is highly recommended and will not exceed six months. Unsolicited internship requests are not accepted.

*Taken from: <http://www.idlo.org/english/employment/Pages/EmploymentHome.aspx>

What IDLO Looks For

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- “At IDLO, we take pride in attracting and retaining individuals with exceptional skills and talent.
- It is imperative that we continue to hire individuals with impact – the kind of people who will make a difference, and those with a genuine passion for the organization’s mission.
- We offer a diverse and collaborative environment that respects and promotes ongoing professional development.
- We set high professional standards and we recruit based on a rigorous set of criteria to ensure future excellence in our organization.”

*Taken from: <http://www.idlo.org/english/employment/Pages/EmploymentHome.aspx>