

HR.SOP.XVII.6.3.4.001
WHO Surge Capacity
Global External Roster
for Emergencies
Placement and Selection
HRT/TAM

ER Standard Operating Procedure
Target Audience: All Staff

I. Introduction

This standard operating procedure (SOP) describes the process by which external candidates are

- (i) placed onto the WHO Global External Roster for Emergencies (hereafter referred to as the External Roster) and
- (ii) how they are selected from the External Roster for deployment in response to a graded emergency.

The Headquarters (HQ) Talent Acquisition and Roster Management Team (the HQ TAR Team), under the Human Resources and Talent Management Department (HRT), manages the External Roster and works in collaboration with the Emergency Response Divisions in all Regions responding to surge requests. WHO emergency rosters are mainly used for acute events, including acute events within a protracted crisis.

II. Definition and scope

WHO's primary objective in an emergency, whether natural or man-made, is to reduce avoidable loss of life and the burden of disease and disability. The Organization is committed to working closely with Member States and other stakeholders so that suffering and death in crises are minimized and health systems are protected and repaired.

To this end, the HQ TAR team manages the External Roster, which is comprised of individuals who can provide short-term technical support and have the intention of being available for immediate deployment. This roster provides core/standing capacity and is a crucial component of WHO's overall emergency preparedness and response capacity.

The External Roster is made up of pre-qualified candidates, across relevant functional areas, who meet the Organization's requirements for deployment within a specific timeframe to supplement available internal capacity to respond to an event.

Major offices (HQ and Regional Offices) use the External Roster to select candidates for field emergency surge requirements at the country level.

The functions covered by the External Roster correspond to the WHO incident management system (IMS) in the following major areas:

- Leadership (including incident management and communications)
- Partner Coordination
- Planning and Information
- Health Expertise and Operations
- Logistics and Operations Support
- Administration and Finance (including grant management and report writing)

Other functions may be requested depending on the nature of the emergency and the level of response required. Generic Post Descriptions (PDs) are used to facilitate rapid deployments and are available [here](#).

Temporary appointments under SR420.4 are typically used for positions responsible for leadership, representation, supervision, management and administration/finance, and/or human resources and where a High Residual Risk exists. Consultant contracts are typically used to contract individuals in a technical/advisory capacity for an outbreak response.

Announcements for replenishment of the External Rosters are posted on an ongoing basis to ensure a sufficient pool of qualified candidates is available at all times (the link to current vacancies can be found [here](#)).

III. Structure of the External Rosters

The External Roster includes experts from various occupational areas identified through a selection process as suitable for short-term technical support. The experts on the External Roster applied as individuals and are not affiliated with any external agency nor partnership arrangement. The size of the External Roster depends on the agreed-upon priorities and the number of candidates available for deployment.

IV. Eligibility (application for placement on the External Roster)

Sources of potential candidates for consideration for placement on the External Roster can originate from, but are not limited to, any of the following avenues:

- Applications received through vacancy notices specific to the External Roster
- The existing pool of WHO consultants
- Referrals from WHO staff and partners
- Ad hoc expressions of interest from individual candidates
- Participants from specific training workshops
- Sourcing of candidates through social media

All candidates must undergo a selection process before being considered for inclusion on the External Roster.

V. Selection process

Interested candidates for the External Roster are invited to submit their applications for consideration. They then undergo a selection process subject to standard WHO policies and procedures in relation to selections for temporary appointments.

The HQ TAR Team manages the selection process, which involves the following:

- Screen applications to ensure that the minimum requirements listed in the Post Description/Vacancy Notice (if published) are met (i.e. relevant work experience for the position, education qualifications and language skills) and compile a short-list of candidates.
- The short-listed candidates are technically assessed by the relevant technical expert and are invited to participate in a video-recorded interview to assess if they meet the requirements of the role.
- For positions responsible for leadership, representation, supervision, management and administration/finance, and/or human resources and where a High Residual Risk exists, a written test and panel interview are required.
- External candidates who have been assessed through the selection process as suitable for placement on the External Roster will be considered as pre-qualified and may be placed on the External Roster and considered for short-term assignments, subject to satisfactory references and ClearCheck vetting.

Former WHO staff/consultants with emergency-related experience and documented satisfactory performance may also be considered as pre-qualified candidates for the External Roster.

Candidates will remain on the External Roster for a period of five (5) years. Those who are deployed from the Roster and have documented satisfactory performance may remain indefinitely on the Roster provided mandatory trainings are up to date.

VI. Pre-boarding and placement

Pre-boarding enables candidates to undergo mandatory pre-contracting formalities, which if successfully completed enable them to be contracted and deployed as quickly as possible in the event they are selected as part of the surge capacity for a graded emergency.

Pre-boarding formalities

The candidates are required to perform the following pre-boarding actions:

1. Ensure their WHO profile is current
2. Provide contact details of three referees
3. Provide education certificates
4. Complete mandatory trainings (link to current list of trainings here).

External candidates who successfully complete the above requirements will be officially informed of their placement on the External Roster.

VII. Commitment

Inclusion on the External Roster entails a general commitment from the external candidate to deploy within 2 to 4 weeks from the time a request for availability is made for a period of up to 6 months, which may be further extended depending on operational needs.

Placement on the External Roster does not guarantee a commitment from WHO to recruit or hire the Roster Member in emergency responses as this depends on operational needs of the Organization.

VIII. Selection from the External Roster for deployment for a graded Emergency

This section sets out the specific actions taken to request and identify candidates from the External Roster, after the process for [Defining HR Requirements and Sourcing Mechanisms for Graded Emergencies](#) has taken place.

Upon request from WHE HR in the Regions/HQ, the HQ TAR Team issues a call of interest to External Roster candidates with preliminary information on the context of the emergency, contract type and duration of the potential deployment. Profiles of candidates who indicate interest and availability are shared with the requesting office.

The WR or the IM selects candidates and informs the relevant WHE HR team, ideally within 48 hours, and ranks the remaining ones, indicating any who are not suitable and specifying the reason.

This begins the deployment process of an External Roster member that can be found [here](#).