



## **Internal Procedure on Recruitment and Selection of Temporary Agents and Contract Staff**

## **Article 1. Purpose**

The purpose of this procedure is to define the recruitment and selection process at ECDC within the general framework of the Staff Regulations and Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Communities (hereinafter CEOS).

## **Article 2. Scope**

The procedure is applicable to recruitment and selection of Temporary Agents and Contract Staff. The engagement of Seconded National Experts, trainees, consultants and interim staff is not covered by the provisions laid down in this document.

## **Article 3. Background/legal base**

The legal framework for recruitment and selection of Temporary Agents and Contract Staff at ECDC is defined in:

- Title II 'Temporary staff' in the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Communities (CEOS) that governs the conditions of recruitment of temporary staff;
- Title IV 'Contract staff' in the CEOS which governs the conditions of recruitment of contract staff;
- Title III 'Career of officials' in the Staff Regulations sets out the rules applicable to officials. Although these provisions do not apply directly to other categories of staff, the Centre considers it appropriate to apply them for recruitment of temporary agents.

The following articles of the Staff Regulations and the CEOS are deemed to be relevant:

- Article 5 of the Staff Regulations;
- Article 11 of the Staff Regulations;
- Article 28 of the Staff Regulations;
- Article 8, 10,12 of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Communities (CEOS);
- Article 82 of the Conditions of Employment of Other Servants of the European Communities (CEOS).

Furthermore, the following implementing rules adopted by the Centre are applicable:

- Implementing Rule n°22 on the procedure governing the engagement and the use of contract staff in the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control;
- Implementing Rule n°23 on the procedure governing the engagement and the use of Temporary agents in the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control;
- Implementing Rule n°24 concerning the criteria applicable to classification in grade and step on appointment or engagement in the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

## **Article 4. Description**

ECDC applies by analogy the provisions laid out in Article 27 of the Staff Regulations stating that 'Recruitment shall be directed to securing for the institution the services of officials of the highest standard of ability, efficiency and integrity, recruited on the broadest possible geographic basis from among nationals of Member States of the Communities.'

The ECDC Multi-annual Policy Plan 2011-2013 states: 'Of key importance when building up, and after 2010, when reaching the full capacity of the Centre, is the recruitment of highly qualified professionals in operational as well as in administrative and management functions. This is especially important since ECDC is to be a Centre of excellence in a 'knowledge sector'. Moreover, the Centre needs to cover a broad range of specialist areas (including specialists in 55 diseases and conditions, and broad public health functions such as emerging infection, health determinants, burden of disease, training, response capacity, preparedness planning and disease surveillance and monitoring), which makes it essential to have access to a solid and broad basis of the best professionals.'

In order to achieve the above mentioned goals, ECDC conducts a structured recruitment process that aims at selecting candidates that best match the requirements of the post.

### **4.1. General principles**

The various parties involved in the process of recruitment act independently and in a transparent manner and above all respect the principles of equality and equity between the candidates.

These principles involve a proper consideration of the differences in educational systems, mutual recognition of degrees, and an exact and clear understanding of the intrinsic value of professional experience.

Candidates are assessed on the basis of their relative merits to the vacant post. The final selection decisions may take into account geographic equilibrium of staff members among the Member States and gender balance at ECDC.

Selection procedures are organized either to select candidates for specific posts and/or to constitute a reserve of suitable candidates to be considered for future recruitments. No other procedure may be followed to recruit Temporary Agents and Contract Staff.

### **4.2. Selection Committee**

#### **4.2.1. Appointment of Selection Committee and composition**

The Selection Committee consists of minimum three members. The Director of ECDC as the Appointing Authority nominates two members, one of them holding the function of chairman of the Selection Committee. The third member is nominated by the Staff Committee among its members or other staff members invited by the Staff Committee to act on its behalf. The staff committee representative is a full member of the Selection Committee.

Appointment of Selection Committee members follows a set of requirements: employment grades of the committee members cannot be lower than the grade of the post; there should be a



broad geographical representation in the Selection Committee and, additionally, gender balance shall be maintained.

Experts external to ECDC may also be invited, should specific expertise be needed to properly assess candidates' competency in relation to the role. In such cases they can be either formally appointed members of the Selection Committee or provide independent expertise to assess candidates without being part of the Selection Committee.

A Selection Committee is appointed for each selection procedure. It is essential that all members of the Selection Committee are available for the entire selection process until final recommendations are made to the Director and that change of individuals as members is avoided. If a designated member of the Selection Committee is prevented from taking part, Human Resources (hereinafter referred to as HR) must be informed immediately stating the reason for withdrawal. A new member is proposed and an amendment to the appointment of the Selection Committee is signed by the Appointing Authority.

#### **4.2.2. Role and responsibility of Selection Committee**

The main task of the Selection Committee is to assess the applicants in order to determine their suitability for the post. The Selection Committee is bound by the vacancy notice as published. The deliberations of the Selection Committee are strictly confidential and must not be disclosed outside of the committee.

Throughout the entire selection process members of the Selection Committee should refrain from any kind of behaviour that could be interpreted as partiality vis-à-vis candidates.

The Selection Committee members and experts must sign a declaration of non conflict of interest prior to the assessment of applications. In case of family/personal link or financial interest with a candidate, a member of the Selection Committee should – as soon as the name of the candidate has come to his/her attention - immediately inform the Chairman of the Selection Committee and discuss whether the potential conflict of interest may hamper the member of the committee from participating in the selection and if specific mitigating controls can be considered (e.g. that the member provides the assessment of the candidate after the rest of committee has made their assessment). If, after discussions, it is evident that the personal link will hamper an objective assessment, the concerned member of the Selection Committee should withdraw from participation in the entire procedure.

Selection Committee members are involved in the following steps of recruitment proceedings:

1. Preparation of Evaluation grid and questions for written tests
2. Screening procedure
3. Interviews and testing of candidates
4. Recommendation of a short-list/reserve list

#### **4.2.3. Role of Human Resources**

HR is in charge of ensuring supervision that current rules are respected throughout the whole procedure. HR makes necessary arrangements enabling the Selection Committee to perform its tasks (publication of vacancy notice, handling incoming applications, preparing relevant forms for Selection Committee members, arrangements of meetings and interviews, coordination of

written tests, drafting minutes of all steps of the Selection Committee's proceedings, filing & archiving, etc.). HR may also through its expertise support the Selection Committee in their assessments of the candidates' suitability for the post.

#### **4.3. Call for application – vacancy notice**

The content of the vacancy notice is crucial since it will steer the selection process to reach decisions based on pre-defined criteria.

The unit where the post is located receives a template vacancy notice from HR in order to prepare the content of the post announcement. The unit may decide to conduct broader consultation to define the job role using the best possible expertise. The draft vacancy notice should be returned to HR for final proof-reading (grammar and content), aligning formal requirements, processing and publication. The Appointing Authority approves the final version of the vacancy notice before it is published.

Vacancy notices are posted internally on the intranet and on the ECDC website and on the EPSO website. It might be considered to widen the audience or to target specific group of applicants by disseminating vacancy notices in other sources. Examples of other publication media could be: web sites of collaborating institutions in Member States, WHO or reputable journals and magazines with an international circulation or postings through social media, for instance the ECDC facebook page.

##### **4.3.1. Formal requirements**

Formal requirements comprise a set of eligibility criteria which applicants need to fulfil in order to qualify for a specific selection procedure.

In order to be eligible applicants need to have the required level of education and, if applicable, a specific duration of professional experience as defined in the vacancy notice.

The duration of professional experience is counted from the date on which the applicant acquired the minimum qualification granting admittance to the profile in question (e.g. secondary certificate or post-secondary diploma for AST profiles, university degree for AD profiles or if applicable, professional training in a relevant technical domain). When calculating professional experience, only duly documented professional activities can be taken into account.

When it comes to education requirements, only certificates issued by EU Member State authorities and certificates recognised as equivalent by the relevant EU Member State bodies are accepted. If studies took place outside the European Union, the applicant's qualification must have been recognised by a body officially delegated for this purpose by one of the European Union Member States.

There is also a set of criteria defined in the vacancy notice as formal requirements which are identical for all selection procedures<sup>1</sup>. The applicants must:

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<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Article 12 of the CEOS



- Be nationals of a Member State of the European Union or a national of Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland<sup>2</sup>;
- Enjoy their full rights as a citizen<sup>3</sup>;
- Have fulfilled any obligations imposed by the laws concerning military service (if applicable);
- Produce the appropriate character references as to their suitability for the performance of their duties;
- Be physically fit to perform their duties<sup>4</sup>;
- Have a thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the European Union<sup>5</sup> and a satisfactory knowledge of another official language of the European Union to the extent necessary for the performance of their duties.<sup>6</sup>

The predominant working language for internal and external communication in the Centre is English. Therefore, the ability to communicate in this language is an essential requirement in all profiles.

Candidates who fail to comply with one or more of the eligibility criteria are deemed ineligible and cannot be considered for further steps of the selection process.

#### **4.3.2. Selection criteria**

The vacancy notice lists the skills and requirements expected of the successful candidate and these selection criteria must be followed when performing the screening process. Consequently, the selection cannot be based on any criteria other than those listed in the vacancy notice. It is of critical importance to ensure that the vacancy notice is not discriminating in any way (nationality, gender, age, etc.). Criteria cannot be added or removed during the selection process once they have been set out in the vacancy notice.

The vacancy notice also lists advantageous requirements which are considered as assets for the selection and the lack of compliance does not entail exclusion from the process.

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<sup>2</sup> The Member States of the European Union are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

<sup>3</sup> Prior to appointment, successful applicants will be required to provide a police certificate confirming the absence of any criminal record.

<sup>4</sup> Before the appointment, successful applicants will be required to be medically examined by one of the institution's medical officers in order to ensure that they fulfil the requirements of article 12 (2) (d) of the Staff Regulations of the Officials of the European Communities.

<sup>5</sup> Official EU languages are: Bulgarian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Finnish, French, Irish, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Maltese, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, and Swedish.

<sup>6</sup> In addition, in order to be eligible for their first promotion, staff members have to have a working knowledge of a third EU language, as described in the applicable Staff Regulations and Implementing Rules (Article 45 (2) of the Staff Regulations).

#### **4.4. Preparation of the Evaluation grid and the written test**

After the vacancy notice is published but prior to the Selection Committee receives applications as well as the screening and selection of candidates to be invited for interviews, the Selection Committee should agree on the types of questions they would like to ask to probe each assessed area deriving from the selection criteria specified in the vacancy notice. The Selection Committee members agree on the interview structure (the 'Evaluation grid'), the maximum points to each question and the questions for the written test. The chairman of the Selection Committee prepares the final version of the evaluation grid.

#### **4.5. Screening of applications**

Applications submitted to a particular selection procedure are assessed by the Selection Committee in an objective, impartial and transparent manner against the specific competencies and skills (essential and advantageous) set out in the vacancy notice.

Role of HR: pre-screening of applications on the basis of formal requirements as stated in the vacancy notice and thereafter Selection Committee examines all applications to determine and decide whether or not applicants are eligible for selection procedure.

Screening of applications is done by evaluating each application individually against the selection criteria applicable - derived from the vacancy notice. The candidates assessed to best match the selection criteria are invited for an interview. Depending on the number of applications received, the selection committee may apply stricter requirements within the aforementioned selection criteria.

As the final outcome of the screening meeting, the Selection Committee draws up a list of most suitable applicants who are invited to an interview.

#### **4.6. Interviews**

Before candidates are invited for face-to-face interviews, it is recommended for the Selection Committee to conduct phone/skype interviews focusing on verifying candidates' ability to communicate in English (being the working language of the Centre), or if English native speaker the second language stated in the application, as well as their professional experience as indicated in the application documents. Phone/skype interviews will have a selective role before candidates are interviewed by the Selection Committee in person.

Candidates selected by the Selection Committee for interviews will be invited by HR. Should any of the candidates be hindered from attending an interview, HR will seek the chairman's advice on how to proceed (possible solutions being either to conduct videoconference or phone interview, exclude the candidate from the selection or to reschedule the interview).

On the day of the interviews, the Selection Committee members will receive a copy of the application documents submitted by candidates, vacancy notice, Evaluation Grids as well as the interview schedule.

It is recommended to conduct interviews in a structured way to make comparison of candidates.



Questions regarding personal life, religion, sexual orientation etc. are in no way allowed since this could lead to discrimination. Should candidates choose to disclose such personal information, it cannot be taken into consideration when doing the final evaluation.

A standard duration of an interview is 30-45 minutes with an additional 15 minutes for immediate discussion among the Selection Committee members and assessment of the interview and preparation for the next candidate. If the Selection Committee deems the post requirements more complex, the duration of interviews may be extended provided that each candidate is allowed an equal amount of time.

When all candidates have been interviewed, one original set of the 'Evaluation grid' must be completed with comments and conclusions prepared by the Chairman and signed by all Selection Committee members. This also comprises the conclusion of interviews listing all recommended candidates in order of priority. The minimum required threshold for candidates to be considered for short-listing is 70% of the total interview score. The total interview score is by default 100 points, therefore the minimum pass rate is always 70 points. Candidates who obtain 70% and above of the total interview score are by default placed on the short-list and the reserve-list, provided that they obtain a minimum of 50% of the total score in the written test.

#### **4.7. Tests**

As part of the recruitment process, candidates are required to take a written test. It consists of three parts related to the following areas: EU knowledge, English language proficiency and professional expertise.

The minimum required pass rate for candidates to be considered for short-listing is 50% of the total test score, provided that they also obtain a minimum of 70% of the total score in the interview. The total written test score is by default 20 points (5 points for EU knowledge, 5 points for English language proficiency and 10 points for professional expertise) therefore the minimum pass rate is always 10 points. Candidates who obtain lower scores in the written test cannot be considered for the short-list. On exceptional basis, should the post rely heavily on application of specific practical skills, it could be decided to allocate more weighting to the test; e.g. in the case of posts such as an editor, graphic designer, etc.

In order to ensure objectivity of the assessment, completed tests are scored blindly by each member of the Selection Committee which is followed by the consensus decision regarding final scores obtained by each candidate in the written test. Only after the Selection Committee agrees on the final scores, the identities of candidates are disclosed.

A standard duration of the written test is 30 minutes. If the Selection Committee deems it necessary due to the post requirements, the duration of the written test may be extended provided that each candidate is allowed the same amount of time. Late submission of tests by candidates will result in a reduction of points. The test should be completed by candidates on their own without consulting any additional resources. In case of doubt, additional testing of candidates may be conducted as a matter of quality control.



The Director may choose other types of assessment tools (such as assessment centres, psychometric testing, etc.) if deemed necessary for the post. This will be indicated in the vacancy notice.

#### **4.8. Recommendation of candidates**

After the interview stage is concluded the Selection Committee draws up a recommendation for the Director who is accountable for the final appointment of new staff members. The conclusive ranking of candidates put forward by the Selection Committee is the result of the combined scores obtained by candidates in the interview and the written test. Both parts of the selection contribute to the final assessment outcomes.

The recommendation, constituting the document 'Evaluation Grid', consists of:

- Title of the post(s) to be filled;
- Detailed scores obtained by each interviewed candidate;
- List of candidates called for interview (with indication of candidates' nationality and gender);
- Names of candidates positively evaluated;
- Names of candidates who were evaluated as unsuitable for the short-list;
- Recommendation of preferred candidates in descending order of priority.

It is important to keep in mind that the Selection Committee's task is to evaluate candidates with regard to their technical and interpersonal suitability for the post in question.

The decisions should be taken by consensus. All members of the Selection Committee should be given the opportunity to present their views.

On rare occasions when a discussion does not lead to consensus and the Selection Committee is not unanimous, the chairman decides upon the priority listing of the applicants. In such cases it should be clearly indicated in the final recommendation that the committee could not reach a consensus on the matter. Other members of the Selection Committee are in such cases allowed to explain their independent opinion annexed to the recommendation.

The recommendation should be drawn up carefully. Any information that might be perceived as prejudiced or discriminatory vis-à-vis one candidate or specific group of candidates (with regard to their age, gender, nationality, etc) is strictly forbidden.

HR should receive the signed 'Evaluation Grid' which is then presented to the Director for the appointment decision.

#### **4.9. Appointment**

The Director of ECDC as the Appointing Authority makes the final selection and appointment based on the recommendations of the Selection Committee. Prior to taking a decision, the Director may hold individual meetings with all or some of the short-listed candidates considered suitable for the post by the selection committee. The Director may request the presence of other staff members in the meeting in order to take a considered, well-informed appointment decision.

Apart from fulfilling the requirements of the post, other factors, such as: gender balance, geographical equilibrium, etc., might be taken into account when deciding on appointment. Should the Director decide not to follow the recommendation of the Selection Committee, he/she will motivate the appointment decision. The validity of the appointment and subsequent offer is subject to necessary documentation being submitted by the successful candidate.

#### **4.10. Reserve list**

Candidates who are put on the short-list of recommended candidates are also placed in alphabetical order on the reserve list for similar posts available in the future. The reserve list is approved by the Appointing Authority.

The validity of the reserve list is indicated in the vacancy notices and its duration might be extended if deemed necessary. The established list may be used later when recruiting for similar positions.

#### **Article 5. Appeal procedure**

A candidate who feels that he/she has been treated incorrectly may ask to have his/her application reconsidered by sending, within 20 calendar days of the date of notification, a request for review via email to: [recruitment@ecdc.europa.eu](mailto:recruitment@ecdc.europa.eu). The candidate should quote the number of the selection procedure concerned and address the request to the Chairman of the Selection Committee.

The selection panel will reconsider the application and notify the candidate of its decision within 45 calendar days of receipt of the request.

If a candidate considers that he/she has been adversely affected by a particular decision, he/she can lodge a complaint under Article 90(2) of the Staff Regulations of Officials of the European Communities and Conditions of employment of other servants of the European Communities, at the following address:

Director of ECDC  
European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control  
171 83 Stockholm  
Sweden

The complaint must be lodged within 3 months. The time limit for initiating this type of procedure (see Staff Regulations as modified by Council Regulation No 723/2004 of 22 March 2004 published in the Official Journal of the European Union L 124 of 27 April 2004—<http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex>) starts to run from the time the candidate is notified of the act adversely affecting him/her (i.e. from the time the candidate is first informed of the outcome of the recruitment procedure).

If the complaint is rejected the candidate may bring a case under Article 236 of the EC Treaty and Article 91 of the Staff Regulations of officials of the European Communities and Conditions of employment of other servants of the European Communities before:

The European Union Civil Service Tribunal



Postal Address:  
L-2925 Luxembourg

The Appointing Authority does not have the power to amend the assessment decisions of a Selection Committee. The Court has consistently held that the wide discretion enjoyed by Selection Committees is not subject to review by the Court unless rules which govern the proceedings of Selection Committees have been infringed.

It is also possible to complain to the European Ombudsman pursuant to Article 195(1) of the Treaty establishing the European Community and in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Decision of the European Parliament of 9 March 1994 on the Staff Regulations and the general conditions governing the performance of the Ombudsman's duties, published in Official Journal of the European Union L 113 of 4 May 1994.:

European Ombudsman  
1 Avenue du Président Robert Schuman – BP 403  
F-67001 Strasbourg Cedex

Complaints made to the Ombudsman have no suspensive effect on the period laid down in Articles 90(2) and 91 of the Staff Regulations for lodging, respectively, a complaint or an appeal with the European Union Civil Service Tribunal under Article 236 of the EC Treaty.

#### **Article 6. Data protection**

The personal information requested from applicants is processed in line with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

#### **Annexes:<sup>7</sup>**

- I. Vacancy notice template*
- II. Appointment of Selection Committee*
- III. Declaration of interest and confidentiality form*
- IV. Screening grid*
- V. Telephone interview – evaluation template*
- VI. Evaluation grid*
- VII. Form for supporting documents*
- VIII. Note for the record*
- IX. Appointment report*
- X. Offer letter*

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<sup>7</sup> Annexes can be modified if proved necessary for effectiveness of the process

