


<b>UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME</b> <b>BUREAU FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY (BDP)</b> <b>THE KNOWLEDGE PROJECT</b> <b>MISSION REPORT SUMMARY</b> <b>Date: 19 July 2004</b>		
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<b>Travel Authorization #:</b>		
<b>Approved Mission Itinerary:</b> New York/Bratislava/New York		<b>List of Annexes:</b> Report details, attached (1)
<b>(From)</b> 12 July 2004	<b>Inclusive Travel Dates</b> 17 July 2004	<b>(To)</b> 
<b>Key counterpart (s) in each location:</b> - Andrea Cuzyova, Policy Support & Programme Development Unit, Bratislava Regional Center		
<b>Purpose/Objective of Mission:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To finalize specifications for the release version "1.0" of the corporate consultant referral system ("Best Experts and Institutions Roster") and, determine the next steps, and define specifications for subsequent releases (including organizations and possibly UNDP staff. The workshop follows the design workshop held in July 2003 in Beirut and incorporated the results of pilot experiences from BCPR and DGO.</li> <li>I also took the opportunity to discuss the RBEC pilot on the "how-to" aide with Francois Fortier and Cindia Luest, which will be covered in a separate report.</li> </ul>		
<b>Brief Summary of Mission Findings:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants were from SURFs/Regional Centers in each Region plus BCPR and TCDC; relevant sessions added the Operations Deputy Bratislava, and teleconference with a Policy Specialist and his consultant, the Dakar SURF, and DGG Facilitator and Research Officer. Consensus was reached on all outstanding issues with respect to the gap analysis for version 1.0 and initial search criteria. A strong business case was confirmed for the system, including assignment tracking, for both consultant referrals and for organizational links to consulting services as well as for working partnerships. Incorporating UNDP staff in this system was not recommended, and would be established with the MSI and Practice Experience Map.</li> <li>Only three major business rules were modified from the July 2003 specifications, which relate to making the Assignment Tracking effective (for the Version 2.0 release). First, a process should be incorporated into Atlas to make consultant payments contingent on feedback being provided to the sponsoring Roster. Second, consultant feedback ratings should reflect on the performance of the Roster's unit and not on the individual sponsor's RCA. And third, having all rostered consultants sponsored by one of the rosters "owners" should not be mandatory, but performance feedback would be required for all sponsored and unsponsored consultants and organizations.</li> <li>In my view, the meeting validated both the design of the consultant referral system as an easy-to-use, flexible and universally adaptable tool for UNDP and the UN system, which would establish a federation of rosters linked to the WIDE database, as well as its potential to enable UNDP to provide the "best" – e.g., most appropriate and highest quality – consultant to any requesting unit.</li> </ol>		
<b>Expected Results and Follow-up actions:</b> Programme modifications and the finalized keyword list will be ready by end July. The work will be brought within the Knowledge Project's work plan as one of the "Quick Wins" once a formal announcement on the Project is issued. Launch of version "0.9" is foreseen for end of August by all rosters who have migrated their data by then; other rosters will join when ready. Version "0.9" implies that feedback and modifications suggested by users will be incorporated into the "1.0" release after a few additional weeks. Work on Version 2.0 will include Assignment Tracking and the Organizations roster, and will proceed simultaneously.		<b>Distribution: (Copies to)</b> To: - Participants - BDP RMT - SURF managers & network facilitators

## **Back to office report (details)**

### **Corporate Roster Version 1.0 - Validation Workshop, Bratislava 14-16 July 2004**

The following are the main detailed findings of the three days of the workshop. The meeting retained most of the key features of the Roster identified in the Beirut meeting last July (see earlier correspondence). Experience with the roster from BCPR and DGO were instructive, and both units were positive about its features.

The Workshop Goals were to determine the issues and work entailed in finalizing the following:

1. *Gap analysis on Version 1.0*
2. *Search simplification*
3. *Assignment tracking*
4. *Adding institutions and adding staff in the next version*
5. *The work plan and next steps*

#### **Gap Analysis:**

The meeting went over all the forms and fields in the system. The main focus was on the “Professional Profile Editor”, which the consultant could fill in under the self-service mode, and the “Member Status and Activity Log”, which the Roster Manager would use to track comments and feedback about the consultant.

#### **Professional Profile editor:**

- The PPE is to have “fielded data” on each consultant for two purposes (a) for essential information that can be quickly searched, and (b) for adding any important information that may not have been include in the CV. For (a) it was decided to make the CV mandatory, and let the consultant know that if items – such as special skills – were not fully captured in the fielded data they would be picked up in a full-text search. With a CV always attached, it would enable the form to contain minimal information, and facilitate completion. For (b), some fields on the form, such as spelling out each assignment under “work experience”, could be expanded to allow each work experience to be included, or simply skipped if the work experience is contained in the CV. (With the expanded format it would still be possible to use the PPE in place of a CV in the event a unit decided not include the mandatory CV in their roster system.)
- A “suggested synopsis” field was included for the consultant to put a 5-6 line abstract of the resume, which the Roster Manager could use when clients requested candidates. This field would be copied to the Member Status and Activity Log (see below)
- Additional “user-defined” fields would be allowed for individual roster managers to customize their roster – such as the “availability” fields in the current RBEC roster, to enable individual rosters to introduce different items for experimentation and possible wider adoption.
- Other specific amendments to the form’s fields were identified and suggestions/comments made and included in a separate specifications table. Also, a paragraph would be added explaining the purpose of the form, privacy considerations, how long it should take to fill out etc.

#### **Member Status and Activity Log:**

- The field could be the repository for all information about a consultant. In addition to fields for member status and screening comments, the sponsor would be identified here.
- The suggested synopsis field from the PPE would be included here. If none was created then the Roster Manager would draft the synopsis.
- Also, new fields could be continually added, with a check box to identify the drafter as either:
  - the referee (used when vetting the CV);
  - the recommender (used to record recommendations or comments from colleagues);
  - the sponsor (used to record comments from the consultant’s sponsor in the roster);
  - user feedback (used to record the feedback after each consulting assignment).

- The form would become the “Work History” in the Results Screen. For this, the “user feedback” template would need more fields to track assignment information.
- This form could be linked to a workflow process in a subsequent version. A pre-screening form developed by BCPR would allow for a Research Assistant to select out unqualified candidates.

**Note on Sponsorship:** For units electing to have their consultants sponsored by a roster owner, the option should exist to include unsponsored candidates. Unsponsored candidates would be those with good prospects but not yet field-tested, or they could be those “pushed” on the unit which no unit member wants to risk his or her reputation on.

### **Search simplification**

- The power of the search engine would eliminate the need for having more than two or three levels in the keyword list. CVs could be tagged with only these higher levels and more detailed skill sets could be obtained through a text search of the CVs. To this end, the existing keyword list would be adjusted to 2-3 levels through an empirical exercise using as the basis the 3,000 consultant records already tagged. Searching could be made easier with the ability to search the sub-set of initial results, and by allowing sorting by columns (with the default being the relevance indicator.)
- As a principle, Practice Groups should define the set of keywords relevant to their practice. Changes and additions would be recommended to a UNDP Keyword Manager who would be responsible for the governance of the basic keyword set maintained by UNDP.
- A major issue for the use of Verity is how well it is able to map related or equivalent terms to the base term. We were promised by the vendor that this could be done automatically using an algorithm as part of its indexing function. If this is not possible, and each equivalent term would have to be manually reviewed and physically mapped to create “topic lists” around the base term, then it would be an extremely time consuming and complex job, which could call into question the viability of the application to do the work it was purchase to do.
- The results screen would have two versions – the initial short form with up to 3 lines per result, and each record could be expanded to a longer form with a mouse click. The short form would have three icons representing the viewable PPE, the CV, and the Work History (the viewable version of the “Member Status and Activity Log” above); plus relevance result, consultant full name (first name(s); last name), e-mail, sponsor, and date the CV was last updated. The expanded record would also show the fielded information from the “advanced search” fields selected, nationality, gender, languages, countries of experience, UNDP/UN System experience, plus the abstract.
- Consultants on multiple rosters would show information in the Work History and sponsors from all rosters.
- The Results Screen heading would indicate the search criteria that derived the result, and be savable/printable.
- Searches could be on sponsored candidates, unsponsored candidates, or both.
- The Results screen should have a tag which can be enabled for shortlisting candidates, and then it could generate an email from a template which pulls in the relevant synopses for editing and sending to a client.
- Results Screens should be customizable for the specific roster, which would be particularly important for promoting its use to other UN agencies. The common elements, to maintain the “federation” concept, should be basic tables.

### **Assignment Tracking**

- One important innovation suggested to ensure the success of this feature was to modify the original idea of a feedback interview after the consultant was paid. Instead,
  - The Consultant Evaluation Form presently mandated but rarely used should be included as a requirement in the consultant payment process – it must be completed by the contracting party and forwarded to the relevant “Member Status and Activity Log” prior to certification.
  - The consensus was that a single rating would be sufficient if the other questions were responded to – using the consultant again in a similar assignment, and describing any strengths and weaknesses.
  - The “Contact me for details” message would also be acceptable, particularly for questionable outcomes, which would be a signal for the consultant’s sponsor or other potential users considering hiring the consultant to follow up for off-line details.

- Another innovation suggested was not to factor the performance into the RCA but into the performance of the Roster's unit. This would ensure that the team worked collectively to ensure the best consultants were provided. The team factor could be included as a question on the Products & Services survey (if a support unit roster) or the client survey (if a CO roster)
- Bangkok RSC had additional comments on the process flowchart, which was to be forwarded.

Assignment Tracking should be only one dimension of a broader effort to manage relationships with the client offices on the one hand and with the consultants on the other. Consultants should be invested in by offering them training about UNDP and its expectations, holding "open house" days to identify prospective new talent etc. Greater use by country offices of the best consultants should be promoted, and the Regional Centers should be continually engaged in identifying new talent so as not to be concerned about overcommitting the good consultants.

### **Adding organizations and adding staff in the next version**

#### ***Adding organizations***

- Organizations can be maintained in a separate table with similar fields from the point of view of basic information – changes might be limited to website or prospectus instead of CV and adding a contact person.
- Organizations would not have individual sponsors, but would be included as a member of a unit roster.
- Organizations would be considered as sponsors of consultants working for them. Their consultants would be on the consultants' roster, and the relevant organization would complete the consultant's PPE. Consultant performance would follow the normal performance feedback procedures being put in place.
- In this way, the feedback and the ratings would form the basis of the judgment on the performance of the contractor in carrying out its obligations.
- Organization types should be identified to allow the roster to distinguish between those with consultants for hire and those, such as UN Agencies or NGOs, available for partnerships. The current list will be reviewed to ensure it can enable this.

#### ***Adding Staff***

For the time being, it was considered that it would not be appropriate to combine the systems to be used for identifying staff on assignments – the MSI and potentially the Practice Experience Map – and the consultants' roster. Staff would be at an unfair advantage if compared to consultants, since they would cost less; providing a rating would be a more sensitive issue; a system to address staff assignments should also cover career development needs as well as specialist missions; the idea of staff being seen as consultants may be too dramatic a cultural change to introduce at such an early stage. However, by using the same tables and the same search parameters it would allow users to search across consultants and staff.

### **Work Planning and Next Steps**

- Adjustments to the tables and forms for the first release could be completed by the end of the month, and some rosters could have their consultants included and be ready to launch by end of August. The end-August launch would be done for as many rosters as are ready by then, and the others can come in when they are ready.
- Prior to the launch, it is assumed that the Roadmap message will be out, and additional consultations and pilot offices invited to try out the roster. Views of CO staff and other policy specialists and practice staff will be sought. To encourage wider involvement, the version launched in August would be the "0.9" version, and the "1.0" version could be released after this additional testing.
- Development of the Assignment Tracking and Organizations roster under version 2.0 should proceed, with the development of a detailed work plan, and consultations with the ATLAS team on the modification to the procedure for payment of consultants.

### **Other issues:**

#### **Costs and workload implications**

Sourcing new talent, consultant and client relationship management, data entry and maintenance, shortlisting, referrals and follow-up imply considerable workload implications for the Roster Management function in a

relatively large roster the size of a SURF. The Bangkok Center has proposed a “Knowledge Services Team” which it considers could satisfactorily accommodate these new requirements as one part of their wider KM-related role. I would propose that the Bangkok model should be considered as the prototype for all of the 8 SURF/Regional Centers, taking over the role of the former SURF Coordination Unit. Specifically, the Regional Center has designed a five-person team to cover all the knowledge service responsibilities:

- One Specialist, as Team Leader (at the former Deputy SURF Chief level), to cover the liaison responsibilities and KM support for the work of the Practices, the Country Offices and the regional center management
- One KM Specialist (at the former NO level), to carry out KM related work and addresses the KM substantive requirements of the region.
- One Analyst, to provide research results in support of queries (including shortlists for consultants)
- One Analyst, to support customized research requests from policy specialists and referrals
- One Associate (at the former GS staff level), to maintain web sites, workspaces, knowledge base maintenance, consultant pre-screening etc.

With this configuration and unit size, it is felt that the KM requirements could be met. Except for the two Research Officers, who could be financed from the Regional Programme, all these positions currently exist.

Country Office rosters may have fewer consultants, and so the work could be factored into the role of the Knowledge Manager/Learning Manager.

Headquarters unit rosters may need staff to operate them, but it may be possible to accommodate the requirements within existing KM roles. BCPR has so far successfully managed their work using a specialist in each Service Line, along with the Systems specialist (Cesar Silang-Cruz), but they are requesting additional staff to support their KM Work Plan in general. BDP and Regional Bureaux needs would have to be determined as the pilot proceeds.

From the perspective of budget requirements, no additional recurrent operating costs are foreseen in terms of licenses or operating expenses.

### **Building a Business Case for the Roster**

Given the potential additional workload for the Roster Unit and the consultants, and the introduction of new procedures for maintaining rosters, is it worth the effort? The group intensively discussed this issue among themselves and with the others consulted during the workshop, and they came up with a definitive “yes”.

The concept of the “best” expert or organization should be clearly understood to be the most appropriate and highest quality consultant for the assignment – whether this assignment calls for the topmost world authority or a junior member of a project formulation team. The overwhelming sense of the group is that there is a widely held perception that a good majority of consultants hired by UNDP are mediocre. The need to be met is to reduce the number of mediocre consultants and increase the number or excellent ones.

#### ***UNDP hires a lot of mediocre consultants, because:***

- *The choices can be limited to only the few consultants a requesting officer has knowledge of.* A system where everyone in UNDP can easily view everyone else’s roster, as well as see what their colleagues think about the consultant’s performance, will greatly expand choices.
- *Consultants who perform poorly in one job keep coming back – they can easily find another job with another unit in UNDP.* The assignment tracking system is specifically designed to prevent this from occurring.
- *No system of accountability is in place to promote and enforce quality standards for consultants.* The feedback and sponsorship system proposed is likely to make such a system a reality.
- *People in UNDP sometimes hire their friends and relatives with no consideration of their calibre.* If the caliber of a consultant is featured as a part of the system which all can view, then this behavior should become more limited.
- *UNDP recruits mediocre consultants because we can only pay them below-market rates.* While this may be true for the North American or European consultant, it is not as true for consultants from developing countries. The fact that the system is linked into the WIDE database will greatly expand the potential pool of people who consider the UNDP rates as good remuneration.

**Other considerations for the business case:**

- *Country Offices do not rely on rosters to source consultants, since they already have a network in place.* This varies per region, and is likely to be more true for some offices (e.g. in the LAC region) than for others. Rather than have one roster in the SURF or Regional Service Center serving the region, the “federation” concept allows country offices to set up their own individual rosters to keep track of their own consultants, and to identify potential consultants from their colleagues’ rosters.
- *Specialists do not want to share their best consultants, since they may lose them to other UNDP units.* An important part of the work of the Roster Manager should be to continually source for new talent, so that the net result is more high-quality consultants available to UNDP as a whole.
- *The consultant might be good as a subject matter specialist, but was unable to adjust to UNDP’s unique characteristics.* The Roster effort should be part of a wider effort to invest in the consultants we hire, through training in UNDP’s policies, practices and capacity-building approach.
- *The consultant might be good but the assignment is not clearly thought through, producing a mediocre result.* The Roster effort should also be part of a wider effort to invest in the country office’s ability to design a good TOR and to ensure that the use of the consultant is maximized.
- *Feedback is presently already provided when consultants do a poor job, so we don’t need to put a new system in place to capture it.* This kind of feedback is already provided, but it is less often provided when consultants do a good job, and the result is a biased perception of the performance of our consultants. A system that provides feedback on all assignments will give UNDP a better picture of what is really happening.

Participants list and Agenda

Participants:

1. Francisco Simplicio, TCDC, New York
2. Steve Glovinsky, the Knowledge Project, BDP New York
3. Martin Backlund, BDP Directorate, New York
4. Cory Brandt, the Knowledge Project, BDP New York
5. Emmie Wade, Johannesburg Regional Center
6. Lina El-Habre, Beirut SURF
7. Johan Arvling, Bangkok Regional Center
8. Wilairat Singhachai, Bangkok Regional Center
9. Nanette Svenson, Panama SURF
10. Andrea Cuzyova, Bratislava Regional Center
11. Jura Khrapunov, Bratislava Regional Center

Tuesday 13 July Arrival

- *Discussions with Francois Fortier and Cindia Luest on the RBEC “How-to” Aide pilot*

Wednesday 14 July

- Opening and clarifying the agenda – Steve and Francisco
- Review of key database fields (Professional Profile Editor) – Francisco
- Search fields; keyword lists – Cory

Thursday 15 July

- Search fields, continued – Cory
- Assignment Tracking – Steve
- Assignment Tracking, continued – Steve
  - *Teleconference with New York: Democratic Governance Facilitator Kim Henderson and Research Officer Haley Horan; and with Dakar SURF: Pierre Danjinou (from Paris), his consultant Gaston (?) and Coumba Mar Gadio*

Friday 16 July

- Finalizing search parameters – Cory
- Including Staff in the Roster – Steve
  - *With Erdal Esin, Deputy Director (Operations) Bratislava*
- Specifications for “institutions” (organizations) dimension of the roster – Steve
- Remaining database fields – Francisco
- Work Plan and next steps – Francisco