

UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME JUNIOR PROFESSIONAL OFFICER REQUEST

General Information

Post Title: Associate Programme Officer – Sustainable Urban Planning
Office/Division/MEA UNEP Economy Division/ Energy and Climate Branch
Unit Cities Unit
Location: Paris, France
Duration: Two years

Background information on UN Environment Programme and the requesting Unit

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the United Nations system's designated entity for addressing environmental issues at the global and regional level. Its mandate is to coordinate the development of environmental policy consensus by keeping the global environment under review and bringing emerging issues to the attention of governments and the international community for action. The overall objective of UNEP's Economy Division is to encourage decision makers in government, local authorities and industry to develop and adopt policies, strategies and practices and technologies that promote sustainable patterns of consumption and production, make efficient use of natural resources, ensure safe management of chemicals and contribute to making trade and environment policies mutually supportive. It promotes the development, use and transfer of policies, technologies, economic instruments, managerial practices and other tools that assist in environmentally sound decision making and the building of corresponding activities.

The UN Environment Programme's Cities Unit works to increase the number of decision makers, city planners, and city practitioners that identify, develop, and implement actions that are influenced by research and science-based policy making and prioritize integrated approaches for city sustainable planning and management. In line with the Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025 that highlights the key environmental crisis – climate, nature and pollution – and the Weight of Cities report produced by the International Resource Panel, the focus is on low-carbon, resilient, and resource efficient city planning and design.

The IPCC recently confirmed that integrated spatial planning to achieve compact and resource efficient urban growth could reduce GHG emissions between 23% and 26% by 2050 compared to the business-as-usual scenario (IPCC, 2022). People-centred and sustainable neighbourhood design, including through nature-based solutions, is also an opportunity to address environmental challenges of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, alongside socio-economic priorities such as poverty, food insecurity and gender-equity creating places for people and nature. They provide an opportunity to empower communities in taking action to achieve climate goals and localise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). Acting as 'innovation labs', they can be proof of concept for replication at city level and once scaled up will result in connected, dynamic, diverse, and vibrant cities composed of distinct green and thriving neighbourhoods. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted examples of more resilient communities to global crises due to, for instance, the promotion of urban gardens, urban-rural linkages, as well as the '15-minute city' concept into their planning.

The Cities Unit is promoting integrated approaches to urban planning and people-centered and sustainable neighbourhood design, in particular through the GEF-funded UrbanShift programme and the Green and Thriving neighbourhood partnership.

Within UNEP, this work builds on and leverage several workstreams, including:

- Walking, cycling and e-mobility (Mobility Unit)
- Urban food systems and urban and peri-urban agriculture (Cities Unit)
- Nature-based solutions and ecosystems restoration (Cities Unit; Ecosystems Division)
- District Energy and Cooling (Cities Unit)
- Net-zero buildings (Cities Unit / Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction)
- Circular Economy and food waste prevention (Cities Unit; R&M Branch)
- Lifestyles (Resources and Market Branch)

Beyond UNEP, the Cities Unit also works closely with partners such as UN Habitat, FAO, ICLEI, C40 Cities, the World Resources Institute, as well as a broader group of NGOs and private sector representatives.

Tapping into the expertise within these existing work streams, the Cities Unit is building an integrated offer for cities to tackle the opportunity of transforming neighbourhoods. Acting as 'innovation labs', they can be proof of concept for replication at city level and once scaled up will result in connected, dynamic, diverse, and vibrant cities composed of distinct green and thriving neighbourhoods.

Why is the Junior Professional Officer requested/needed?

The Associate Programme Officer will help develop an integrated offer for green and thriving neighbourhoods and bring together UNEP's expertise at local scale. He/she will focus on engaging other teams within UNEP, partners and private sector stakeholders to build a Solution Centre to support of local and national governments committed to use local, integrated approaches towards low-carbon, resource efficient, and resilient cities.

Supervision

The Associate Programme Officer will be working under the direct supervision of Sharon Gil, and the general supervision of Mark Radka, both in UNEP's Energy and Climate Branch. The Associate Programme Officer's performance will be appraised through the organization's e-Performance system. Additional details are provided in the section below.

First reporting officer:

Elsa Lefevre Programme Management Officer
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Second reporting officer:

Sharon Gil Head a.i., Cities Unit,
Industry and Economy Division
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Content and methodology of the supervision

With support from the second reporting officer as needed, the first reporting officer will:

- Introduce the Associate Programme Officer to the work of the Branch, especially its cities portfolio, and the specific elements for which he or she would be responsible.
- General objectives, desired results and anticipated problems will be discussed beforehand with the JPO. A workplan will be discussed and established within the first three months of the assignment.

- Meet weekly with the Associate Programme Officer to assess progress regarding the duties assigned to him or her, review problems encountered, gauge his or her job satisfaction, professional development, and learning objectives.
- Meet twice a year with the Associate Programme Officer for a more formal discussion and evaluation of work progress
- Provide regular feedback, guidance and mentoring about work-plan development and project implementation.
- It is expected that the supervision provided will be more frequent in the first year of the JPO assignment to consider the needs for the JPO to get used to his/her new working environment. The JPO will be supported by a Buddy and a Mentor who will be identified within the Unit Team prior to the beginning of his/her assignment.

Duties, responsibilities and output expectations

Terms of reference

Under the supervision of the Head of Unit, the Associate Programme Officer will support UNEP's sustainable urban development portfolio and will strengthen UNEP's capacity to address the transversal issues around integrated urban planning, such as mobility, food, energy, lifestyles. Activities to achieve this objective will include the following:

Research and tool development

- Under the supervision of respective project managers, liaise with organizations, universities, industry partners, national and local governments, and research institutions around the world to develop knowledge products and tools, and pilot practical examples to support the emergence of green and thriving neighborhoods.

Networking and coordination

- Support the organization of conferences designed to advocate for integrated approaches at city level and green and thriving neighbourhoods. Tasks will include but are not limited to preparing inputs to briefings and presentations; draft concept papers and event agendas.
- Work with C40 and UN Habitat on scaling up the Green and Thriving Neighbourhood partnership, including fundraising effort to support additional pilot cities.
- Support the set up of a Green and Thriving Neighbourhood Solution Centre, including reaching out to organizations that could provide technical assistance to cities
- Ensure alignment of the work with other UNEP teams and networks, such as for the urban food systems, urban agriculture and food waste prevention with the One Planet Sustainable Food Systems Programme and Urban Food Systems Coalition.

Project management

- As appropriate and relevant, support project development work led by the Cities Unit and liaise with other teams within UNEP; sister agencies active in this space, particularly UN-Habitat; and city networks, particularly ICLEI, C40 and WRI
- Support to project management, awareness raising and administration for related projects
- Undertake any other duties and responsibilities within the incumbent's expertise that can be reasonably expected to help maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of the inter-agency response to sustainable urban development issues.
- Assist in other Unit activities deemed necessary.

Output expectations

- National and local governments, international and national buildings and construction companies are aware of and engaged in UNEP-led programmes working towards low-carbon, resilient, and resource efficient cities.
- Knowledge products and case studies developed; key messages disseminated.
- Additional cities are supported to pilot integrated approaches at neighbourhood level,
- Sustainable urban planning and climate resilience solutions are mainstreamed into the projects, such as urban gardens and green infrastructures. .

Travel

Missions and costs of travel envisaged during first year of assignment

Two to four missions with a cost of US\$ 5,000 to US\$ 8,000

Missions and costs of travel envisaged during second year of assignment

Two to four missions with a cost of US\$ 5,000 to US\$ 8,000

Missions and costs of travel envisaged during third year of assignment (if applicable)

UNEP's Energy and Climate Branch will provide any part of the mission cost that exceeds those covered by the donor government.

Training and Learning Elements

Training

The Associate Programme Officer will be provided with training (language, computer, gender equality, and security training as well as support for specific professional development areas) depending on specific personal needs considering work requirements. Training will also include technical components of climate change mitigation issues and energy efficiency related to cities and buildings, as well as urban energy systems, depending on needs. In addition, the UNESCO staff training unit in Paris offers a wide variety of courses available to UN staff.

Learning elements

After one year the Junior Professional Officer will:

- Have a comprehensive overview of UNEP's urban portfolio as well as multi-level governance and public private partnerships, as well as key challenges and opportunities faced by developing countries and emerging economies in meeting the UNFCCC climate objectives, objectives under other key multi-lateral environmental agreements as they intersect with the portfolio, and national and sub-national government's own commitments.
- Have a deep understanding of the role of UNEP within the UN system and have gained familiarity with UN rules and regulations.
- Have a good understanding of efforts by international organizations, NGOs, and industry groups working towards a low carbon, resilient, and resource efficient cities.
- Enhance his/her negotiating, editing, writing, reporting, organizational, and evaluation skills.

After two years the Junior Professional Officer will have:

- Gained experience working with the many actors and partners in the sustainable urban development space, especially in sustainable buildings and construction and urban energy.
- A deep comprehension of the various policy, technology, and investment mitigation options as well as of best practices, opportunities and challenges for achieving low-carbon, resource efficient, and resilient cities, buildings and integrated urban energy systems.
- Acquired knowledge on and contributed to the cutting-edge area of integrated urban planning, contributing to UNEP's resource efficiency and climate sub-programmes, with the overall objective of enhancing the scope, relevance and efficacy of UNEP's activities.

Qualifications and experience

Educational qualifications

- Graduate degree(s) in urban planning, architecture, law, environmental management economics, physics, chemistry, or engineering. Other academic fields of relevance to the position will be considered.

Skills

- Excellent analytical, communication, planning and organization skills.
- Fluency in English, both written and spoken is required; a working knowledge of French and/or other UN languages would be an asset.
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relations within a multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary working environment.

Work experience

- Relevant work experience of not less than three years at the national level or two years at the international level in sustainable cities, circular economy, urban planning and implementation of environment-related programmes, projects and activities. Prior experience in climate change, circular food systems and/or resource efficiency issues is advantageous.
- Experience in working with emerging economies and in developing country contexts would be an advantage.

Competencies required

- *Professionalism* Shows pride in work and in achievements; is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results; shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges and remains calm in stressful situations.
- *Communication* Speaks and writes clearly and effectively; listens to others, correctly interprets messages from others and responds appropriately; asks questions to clarify, and exhibits interest in having two-way communication; demonstrates openness in sharing information and keeping people informed, Excellent drafting ability and communications skills, both oral and written; proven ability to communicate complex concepts orally; ability to prepare written reports that are clear, concise and meaningful
- *Teamwork* Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals; is willing to learn from others; places team agenda before personal agenda; supports and acts in accordance with final group decision, even when such decisions may not entirely reflect

own position; shares credit for team accomplishments and accepts joint responsibility for team shortcomings.

- *Planning and organizing* Able to develop clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies; identifies priority activities and assignments; identifies priority activities and assignments; allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for contingencies in planning; monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary; uses time efficiently.