

## UN ENVIRONMENT JUNIOR PROFESSIONAL OFFICER REQUEST

### General Information

Post Title: JPO - Associate Programme Officer - Life-cycle approaches

Office/Division/MEA: UNEP – Industry & Economy Division – Resources and Markets Branch

Unit: Life Cycle Initiative

Location: Paris

Duration: 2 years

### Background information on UN Environment Programme and the requesting Unit

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is the leading global environmental authority that sets the global environmental agenda, promotes the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.

This position is in the Life Cycle Unit of the Resources and Markets Branch within UN Environment Programme's Industry & Economy Division, which supports approaches to Decouple human development and economic prosperity from resources consumption and environmental degradation. As recognized in several UNEA resolutions<sup>1</sup>, and as it is clear in the current UNEP Medium Term Strategy 2022-2025, a life-cycle approach is the entry point for inform science-based decisions addressing the three planetary crises (nature, pollution and climate) in high impact sectors. Life cycle approaches ensure the identification of key hotspots in the production and consumption system by considering all potential impacts (on climate, ecosystems, toxicity, jobs, economy, etc) caused by products / goods / services, in each stage of their life cycle, from the extraction of raw materials, processing of secondary materials, to product manufacture, distribution, maintenance and use, and end of life management. In this way, a life cycle approach also helps addressing potential trade-offs between environmental impacts and sustainability pillars, and can orient the selection of the best solutions for the environment with best socio-economic implications. Hence, UNEP has been coordinating work in the Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) area for over 20 years, including through the multi-stakeholder Life Cycle Initiative (launched in 2002). UNEP's Programme of Work 2024-25 is designed towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Nationally Determined Contributions for the Paris Agreement faster and more efficiently, by embedding life-cycle approaches into policies and private sector practices to enhance their sustainability. This Programme of Work is integrated also in the Life Cycle Initiative strategy until 2027, by when the following targets will be achieved:

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<sup>1</sup> especially UNEP/EA.5/Res.7 on the sound management of chemicals and waste; 5/11 on enhancing the circular economy; 5/12 on the environmental aspects of minerals and metals management; and 5/14 on ending plastic pollution; UNEP/EA.4/Res.1 on Innovative Pathways to Achieve Sustainable Consumption and Production; several other UNEA4 resolutions on plastics, marine litter, sustainable mobility, sustainable business practices, etc.; UNEP/EA.2/Res.8 on Sustainable Consumption and Production; as well as UNEP/EA.4/ Ministerial Declaration.

1. Mainstream the use of Life Cycle Thinking, by countries and private sector partners of UNEP, into at least four high-impact intergovernmental or sector-specific processes for global sustainable development
2. Develop the capacity for effective use of Life Cycle Knowledge in decisions and policies towards sustainable development in at least five high-impact sectors and ten priority countries
3. Increase by ten times the access of high-impact sectors, measured by queries on LCA databases, which are available globally in an interoperable way.

To achieve the above targets, Partnerships are targeted with key global initiatives across UNEP such as the One Planet network, the Partnership for Action on Green Economy, as well as relevant regional or national initiatives such as Europe's Environmental Footprint or China's National Green Product Policy, and private sector platforms such as the Ellen MacArthur Foundation's New Plastics Economy. Specific examples include:

- a hotspots tool to assess country-level impact drivers in consumption and production in order to inform national action plans for sustainable consumption and production and nationally determined contributions to the Paris Agreement (co-developed with the International Resource Panel and the One Planet network);
- identify and manage hotspots in the plastics value chain that help address plastic pollution, by co-designing the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment and the One UNEP Plastics Initiative;
- design and implementation of projects on sustainable textiles as well as buildings & construction;
- collaboration with the Strategic Approach for International Chemicals Management to define specific tools for the sound management of chemicals over their life cycle; linking the UN Sustainable Development Goals to life cycle impact pathway frameworks for businesses; to name a few.

*Organigram of UN Environment Programme's Industry & Economy Division, with a highlight of the Life Cycle Initiative unit (blue) and other UNEP teams the Life Cycle team currently interacts with (green).*

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**INDUSTRY AND ECONOMY DIVISION DIRECTOR'S OFFICE**

**Director, D2, 3808558, EF, Regional Econ. S. [Maine]**  
P4, 3808553, EF, Econ. H.  
G7, 3808554, EF, Econ. E.

**Deputy Director, D4, 3808554, EF, Econ. S. [Paris]**  
G5, 3808557, EF, Econ. E.

**Coordination and Information [Paris]**  
P4, 3808562, EF, Econ. D.  
P5, 3808402, EF, Health/Ind-Japan, S.  
P2, 3808407, EF, Macdonald, H.

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### **Why is the Junior Professional Officer requested/needed?**

The JPO is needed to support the Life Cycle Initiative team in UNEP in broadening and strengthening its engagement in substantive projects and initiatives and to enhance the use of life-cycle approaches in high-impact sectors (e.g. buildings and construction, textile, mobility, plastics, food, etc.) as required by the UNEP Medium-Term Strategy 2022-2025. In doing so, the JPO will engage colleagues in UNEP across different Divisions and Regional Offices, in addition to collaborating with leading experts in the life cycle community, including from public and private sector and from academia.

The requested duration is 2 years, with possibility of extension if agreed with donor government.

## Supervision

The JPO will work under direct supervision by the Head of the Life Cycle Initiative / Unit, while working in close collaboration with other members of the Life Cycle team as well as colleagues in the Branch and Economy Division. The first reporting officer holds regular (weekly) meetings with all the staff in the unit, as well as individually, to ensure progress is tracked through the year, in addition to the normal reporting times in the e-Performance cycle.

### **Content and methodology of the supervision**

Like every staff member of the team, the JPO will receive an induction to the work on life-cycle approaches within the Branch and Division, and UNEP Programme of Work, Mid-Term Strategy and Project Management Manual, including the work of the Life Cycle Initiative. For the first 3-4 months the JPO will work alongside unit colleagues in running meetings and working group / task forces discussions, as well as in outreach and communications with some of the key partners. During this period the JPO will also be given the opportunity to work alongside / shadow colleagues in developing collaboration agreements with external partners as one of the common ways of working in the unit, from call for proposals through to the contracting phase. After 6 months the JPO is expected to be able to run some of these meetings independently and take increasing responsibility for the outreach to partners and development of substantive outputs of the Programme of Work, including the lead in at least one of the broad areas of Technical and Policy Advice.

As a minimum, appraisal meetings are held with the supervisor with the e-Performance cycle, at end of March and September; these are the meetings where specific development / training plans are defined. Normally, however, regular meetings are held with each staff member to provide feedback on performance and identify problems / issues that require attention. The supervisor also actively seeks feedback on the JPO from colleagues and external partners on a regular basis, to obtain a more rounded picture of strengths and opportunities for development, and in this way guide the JPO in career development.

In addition to the Unit colleagues, one or two “buddies” will be identified, ideally more experienced JPO / P2 colleagues working in the Branch, who can provide support and advice on the day-to-day work and ways of working in UNEP. As can be seen in the organizational chart there are several JPOs currently working in units within the Branch where regular interaction occurs.

First appraising officer: Ms. Archana Datta

Title first appraising officer: Life Cycle Programme Management Officer

Unit first appraising officer: Life Cycle Initiative

Location first appraising officer: Paris

Second appraising officer: Mr. Llorenç Milà i Canals

Title second appraising officer: Head of Secretariat

Unit second appraising officer: Life Cycle Initiative

Location second appraising officer: Paris

### **Duties, responsibilities and output expectations**

Terms of reference

The JPO is expected to contribute to the following duties:

- Contribute to the coordination and advancement of UNEP activities to implement UNEA resolutions pertinent to the uptake and dissemination of life-cycle approaches;

- Provide substantive input on the application of life cycle-based approaches, including through environmental footprinting and circular economy related topics focusing on (but not limiting to) one specific high-impact sector TBC based on interest from funding government, e.g.:
  - food,
  - buildings and construction,
  - textile,
  - mobility,
  - and plastics;
- Organize and assist with capacity development activities for officials of public institutions, academics and representatives from business and industry in emerging economies and export-oriented developing countries on life-cycle approaches including LCA databases, LCA impact assessment methods, environmental footprint and life-cycle management. Ensure the inclusion of such capacity development efforts across the UNEP agenda.
- Participate in field missions, including provision of substantive and administrative support, data collection, etc.

#### Output expectations

The expected result is an effective and timely run Programme of Work for life-cycle approaches and a more effective delivery of Action sub-programmes in UNEP's MTS, with the JPO liaising and interacting with colleagues and concerned parties internally and externally. Partners are well informed, and the necessary projects are run effectively.

Depending on the high-impact sector(s) area assigned to the JPO, the output expected will include significantly improved decision making in such area, with potential links to enhanced delivery of UNEP's MTS and ultimately the SDGs.

#### Travel

The Junior Professional Officer will undertake missions and travels related to the Terms of Reference and if applicable.

#### Training and Learning Elements

The JPO will work within a multi-stakeholder setting and interact regularly with partners from diverse constituencies: governments, industry, science / academia and civil society, including world experts on Life Cycle Assessment methodology and front-runners in the application of life cycle approaches in public policy and business decision making.

Through the support in the different work areas of the Initiative the JPO will achieve on-the-job training about scientific consensus-building in the field of sustainability assessment, as well as of its uptake in public- and private-sector decision making. This on-the-job training will build a significant professional network for the JPO (within and outside the UN), which will be useful when going back to home country.

#### *Training*

Formal training opportunities will be identified with Life Cycle Initiative partners, depending on the specific areas of work selected with the JPO (LCA tools in specific high-impact sectors; IT programming for LCA database networking; impact assessment models; national statistics work; etc.). Appraisal and Results Management training will be delivered as required through the Performance management cycles, and experience on these managerial skills will be gained through managing consultants when relevant. Training on UN languages is available in the Paris office through the UNESCO services.

*Learning elements:*

- After one year the Junior Professional Officer is able to: Coordinate the discussion among colleagues and partners on life cycle assessment related topics, providing communication updates to the global Life Cycle community. Understand the different types and implications of partnering with governments and with private sector from the UN.
- After two years the Junior Professional Officer is able to: Manage the budget and financial aspects of project management according to UN standards. The JPO is becoming proficient in life-cycle approaches applied to one of the high impact sectors (e.g. life cycle management of plastics, chemicals, LCA of buildings and construction, sustainable mobility, sustainable food systems, national development plans, etc.), and can formulate job descriptions and draft legal instruments.
- After three years (if relevant) the Junior Professional Officer is able to: Coordinate independently specific applications / sub-projects of life-cycle approaches to one of the high impact sectors, and leads on consultancy recruitment processes and establishment and management of legal instruments. The JPO has built a personal professional network among the internal and external partners.

**Qualifications and experience**

*Qualifications*

Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in a field related to natural or social science and/or environmental policy (environmental sciences or engineering, biology or other science, natural resources, business management, planning, economics, etc.), or equivalent experience. A first-level university degree in combination with four years of qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.

*Skills*

Familiarity with information systems and experience in the dissemination of information is desirable. Excellent written, communication, organisation and computer skills (word processing, data manipulation, and graphics generation) are required. Knowledge and application experience (at least at academic level) of life-cycle approaches for sustainable consumption and production is required. Knowledge of the UN system is an asset. Experience in project/programme management, administration or related area is highly desirable. Ability to establish and maintain effective working relations within

multicultural working environment. Fluency in English is essential. Working knowledge of other UN languages is an asset.

*Working experience*

At least 4 years at the national level, or 2 years at the international level in the sustainable development or environmental field focusing on value chains and/or life-cycle approaches is required. The candidate should have a good understanding of environmental policy making and its applications.

*Languages:*

English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For the position advertised, fluency in English (oral and written) is required.

**Competencies**

- **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; tailors language, tone, style and format to match audience; demonstrates openness in sharing information and keeping people informed.
- **Teamwork:** Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals; solicits input by genuinely valuing others' ideas and expertise; 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& Organizing:** Develops clear goals that are consistent with agreed strategies; identifies priority activities and assignments; adjusts priorities as required; allocates appropriate amount of time and resources for completing work; foresees risks and allows for contingencies when planning; monitors and adjusts plans and actions as necessary; uses time efficiently.

**Living conditions at duty station**

Paris – Normal living conditions in Europe