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FINANCE COMMITTEE

Hundred and Fifty-fifth Session

Rome, 27 - 28 October 2014

**Process for the Selection and Appointment of the WFP External Auditor
for the term from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2022**

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

Mr Philip Ward
Secretary to the Executive Board *ad interim*
World Food Programme
Tel: +3906 6513 2917

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The term of office of the current External Auditor, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, is due to expire on 30 June 2016.
- This paper establishes the process for the selection of the WFP External Auditor for the term 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2022. Based on the process approved in 2009, which also governed the selection and appointment of the current External Auditor, it sets out: i) the timeframe of the process; ii) the mandate and composition of the Evaluation Panel and arrangements for its continuity; iii) the selection procedure; and iv) the criteria for evaluation, with relative rating weights. As per its terms of reference, the Audit Committee will be invited to “provide advice on the selection of the External Auditor”.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- The Finance Committee is requested to note the Process for the Selection and Appointment of the WFP External Auditor for the Term from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2022 and to endorse it for approval by the Executive Board.

Draft Advice

- **In accordance with Article XIV of the General Regulations of WFP, the FAO Finance Committee advises the WFP Executive Board to approve the “Process for the Selection and Appointment of the WFP External Auditor for the Term from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2022”.**

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**Executive Board
Second Regular Session**

Rome, 10–13 November 2014

RESOURCE, FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

Agenda item 5

For approval



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PROCESS FOR THE SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF THE WFP EXTERNAL AUDITOR FOR THE TERM FROM 1 JULY 2016 TO 30 JUNE 2022



NOTE TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

This document is submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

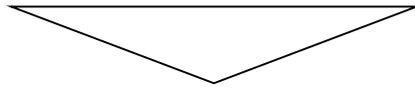
The Secretariat invites members of the Board who may have questions of a technical nature with regard to this document to contact the WFP staff focal point indicated below, preferably well in advance of the Board's meeting.

Secretary to the Executive Board Mr P. Ward tel: 066513-2917
ad interim PGB*:

Should you have any questions regarding availability of documentation for the Executive Board, please contact the Conference Servicing Unit (tel.: 066513-2645).

* Executive Board Secretariat Division

DRAFT DECISION*



The Board approves the proposed “Process for the Selection and Appointment of the WFP External Auditor for the term from 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2022” (WFP/EB.2/2014/5-C/1).

* This is a draft decision. For the final decision adopted by the Board, please refer to the Decisions and Recommendations document issued at the end of the session.

BACKGROUND

1. The term of office of the current External Auditor, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India, is due to expire on 30 June 2016.
2. This paper establishes the process for the selection of the WFP External Auditor for the term 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2022. Based on the process approved in 2009,¹ which also governed the selection and appointment of the current External Auditor, it sets out: i) the timeframe of the process; ii) the mandate and composition of the Evaluation Panel and arrangements for its continuity; iii) the selection procedure; and iv) the criteria for evaluation, with relative rating weights. As per its terms of reference,² the Audit Committee will be invited to “provide advice on the selection of the External Auditor”.

RELEVANT PROVISIONS IN THE WFP FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

3. The following WFP Financial Regulations are relevant to the appointment of the External Auditor:
 - **Financial Regulation 14.1:** The Board shall appoint an External Auditor to perform the audit of the accounts of WFP. The External Auditor shall be the Auditor-General (or official holding the equivalent title) of a State Member of the United Nations or the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
 - **Financial Regulation 14.2:** The External Auditor shall be appointed through a competitive selection process for a non-renewable six-year term. Another appointment may be possible after a break of at least one term.³

¹ “Process for the Selection and Appointment of the WFP External Auditor for the Term from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2016” (WFP.EB.2/2009/5-E/1) was approved by correspondence on 6 October 2009 and submitted to the Board for information at EB.2/2009.

² WFP/EB.2/2011/5-B/1/Rev.1.

³ Financial Regulation XIV provides full details on the arrangements for External Audit; its terms of reference are contained in the Annex to the Financial Regulations.

TIME FRAME

4. The term of office of the new External Auditor will start on 1 July 2016, upon conclusion of the current External Auditor's mandate. The appointment of the External Auditor is scheduled to occur at EB.2/2015; the Bureau recommends adhering to the time frame shown below.

| | |
|---|------------------|
| "Process for the Selection and Appointment of the WFP External Auditor for the Period 1 July 2016–30 June 2022" submitted to the Board for approval | EB.2.2014 |
| Invitation for proposals (with a 10-week deadline to reply) | early March 2015 |
| Receipt of proposals | mid-May 2015 |
| Short-listing of proposals | mid-June 2015 |
| Interviews with short-listed candidates | mid-July 2015 |
| Final evaluation and recommendation | end August 2015 |
| Comments from the FAO Finance Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) | October 2015 |
| Appointment by the Board | EB.2/2015 |

EVALUATION PANEL

Mandate of the Evaluation Panel

5. The process for the selection of the External Auditor will be carried out by the Evaluation Panel, which will have the overall responsibility to: i) initiate and oversee the competitive selection process; ii) evaluate the qualifying proposals received; and iii) present to the Board the results of the selection process together with its evaluation and recommendation.

Composition of the Evaluation Panel

6. For the purpose of the selection process of the External Auditor, the Board will constitute the Bureau elected for the year 2015 into the Evaluation Panel.
7. The President of the Bureau will act as Chair of the Evaluation Panel. In the event that the President of the Bureau is unable to chair, his/her functions will be assumed by the Vice President. Should there be a proposal from the Auditor-General (or official holding the equivalent title) of one of the State members of the Evaluation Panel, that member shall withdraw and be replaced by his/her alternate.
8. If any member of the Evaluation Panel is unable to carry out his/her functions, his/her alternate member in the Bureau will substitute him/her. The 2015 Bureau members, and their alternates, shall serve in their individual capacity.
9. As regard to the proceedings of the meetings of the Evaluation Panel, the majority of the members of the Evaluation Panel shall constitute the quorum.

Continuity of the Evaluation Panel

10. In accordance with the time frame set under paragraph 4, the selection and appointment process shall be completed by November 2015.
11. However, the Evaluation Panel will continue to function in its original composition even beyond that date, if the completion of the selection process so requires.

SELECTION PROCEDURE

12. **Stage 1: Preparation of the request for proposals.** The request for proposals will be prepared by the relevant technical divisions from the Secretariat and submitted for approval to the Evaluation Panel through the Audit Committee.

Stage 2: Invitation. Based on the above, the request for proposals will be sent to the membership, inviting eligible External Auditors to submit separate technical and financial proposals for the audit of WFP's financial statements for the period 2016–2021. The External Auditors eligible are the Auditors-General or officials holding equivalent title of a State Member of the United Nations or FAO.

Stage 3: Receipt, opening and preliminary evaluation of technical proposals. The receipt and opening of proposals will be performed by the WFP Procurement Division in accordance with existing WFP tender receipt and opening procedures. A WFP Technical Group comprising representatives of relevant WFP offices will screen and perform a preliminary evaluation of the technical proposals, clearly identifying those that do not meet essential criteria.

Stage 4: Evaluation by the Evaluation Panel and review by the Audit Committee. The above package, along with the advice of the Audit Committee, will be transmitted to the Evaluation Panel, which will evaluate, award total scores and produce a short list of candidates.

Stage 5: Opening of financial proposals. After clearance by the Evaluation Panel, the WFP Procurement Division will open the financial proposals of the short-listed candidates and transmit them to the Technical Group for further review.

Stage 6: Interviews with short-listed candidates. Short-listed candidates will be interviewed by the Evaluation Panel. The Audit Committee will assist the Evaluation Panel, including by helping to formulate a standard set of areas to cover and questions.

On the basis of the total score awarded and of the results of the interviews, the Evaluation Panel will make its final evaluation and recommend a preferred candidate.

Stage 7: Solicitation of comments from the advisory bodies. The report of the work of the Evaluation Panel, including its final evaluation and recommendation of a candidate, will be submitted to the FAO Finance Committee and the ACABQ for comments.

Stage 8: Appointment. The Evaluation Panel will present to the Board its final evaluation and recommendation of a preferred candidate. The Board will also have available the comments and advice from the advisory bodies. The Board will appoint the External Auditor.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

13. The selection criteria recommended for the selection of the External Auditor in 2016–2022 are as follows:

- **Integrity:** Adherence to a code of professional and ethical conduct applied to all staff and reviewed and updated at least annually. This is an essential prerequisite that candidates must meet fully in order to be considered further by the Evaluation Panel.
- **Objectivity:** Objectivity in the discharge of duties and responsibilities. This is an essential prerequisite that candidates must meet fully in order to be considered further by the Evaluation Panel.
- **Qualifications of officials and staff:** Conformity to the auditing standards of the United Nations Panel of External Auditors and ethics governing their work; professional qualifications, skills, and size of work force; participation in internationally recognized accounting or auditing bodies such as the International Organization of the Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) and the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC); proficiency in English; and ability to work in other WFP official languages on an as-needed basis.
- **Training and experience:** Existence of a programme for a continuing professional education for staff; experience in the audit of United Nations organizations or national public sector organizations or international non-governmental organizations; experience with the audit of financial statements prepared in accordance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS); and staff well trained in current trends of auditing and with extensive audit experience.
- **Audit approach and strategy:** Comprehensive work plans to ensure comprehensive audit coverage of all WFP resources; performance of financial and compliance audits as well as economy, efficiency and value-for-money audits; proposed approach to external audit staffing to minimize WFP's compliance costs; collaboration with WFP's internal audit to optimize the use of limited audit resources; and delivery of audit results.
- **Quality control:** A well-functioning internal quality review process and exposure to external INTOSAI review.
- **Communications:** Timely communication of audit results presented to management through comprehensive management letters, audit reports and meetings, as necessary. Communications should be tailored according to the audience. The audit reports should be presented within the United Nations deadlines.
- **Cost:** Overall cost will be considered as one criterion.

RATING SYSTEM OF CRITERIA

14. The proposals will be assessed against the criteria defined above, using a score scale from 1 to 5 (1 – meets none of the criteria; 5 – fully meets the criteria). Scores will be assigned for each criterion based on the replies completed by the invited State Auditors.
15. Each criterion will be weighted to indicate its relative importance, as indicated below. Technical criteria will total 80 percent and the financial criterion will account for 20 percent.

| | Rating weight (%) |
|---|-------------------|
| - Qualifications of officials and staff | 15 |
| - Training and experience | 20 |
| - Audit approach and strategy | 20 |
| - Quality control | 15 |
| - Communications | 10 |
| - Cost | 20 |
| Total | 100 |

16. For each selection criterion, the Evaluation Panel may define further sub-criteria and assign weights to these if required.
17. The scores for selection criteria will be multiplied by the weight to arrive at a total score for each criterion. The total scores for each criterion will then be added up to arrive at an overall total score obtained by the candidate.
18. A shortlist of candidates with the highest overall scores will be prepared by the Evaluation Panel. The Panel may, if appropriate, adjust the scores after having interviewed the short-listed candidates.
19. The Evaluation Panel will recommend to the Board the candidate with the highest overall score achieved.
20. The Annex provides more detailed information and guidelines for scoring of criteria.

ANNEX**SELECTION OF THE WFP EXTERNAL AUDITOR
GUIDELINES FOR SCORING OF CRITERIA**

1. As is the case in WFP procurement procedures and practices, the Evaluation Panel will measure the proposals against the specific criteria defined (see paragraph 16), assigning a score scale from 1 to 5 (1 – meets none of the criteria; 5 – fully meets the criteria). Scores will be assigned for each criterion based on the replies to the request for proposals completed by the invited State Auditors.
2. For example, a maximum score of 5 would be awarded if all the requirements are fully met. The lowest score of 1 would be awarded if none of the requirements are met.

| | | |
|------------------|-----------|---|
| | Criteria | |
| TECHNICAL | | |
| Integrity | | |
| | Integrity | <p>Audit institution has a code of professional and ethical conduct applicable to all its staff and this code is frequently updated.</p> <p>Audit institution has clear and documented disciplinary procedures and these are applicable to all audit institution staff in the case of deviation from the code of professional and ethical conduct.</p> <p>Evidence that the audit institution abides by the code of professional and ethical conduct of the institution, such as having staff sign off on yearly compliance statements.</p> |

| | | |
|--------------------|---|---|
| | Criteria | |
| OBJECTIVITY | | |
| | Objectivity in the discharge of duties and responsibilities | Audit institution work is demonstrably guided and performed in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. |

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| | Score | 5—Highest, fully meets criteria |
| | Criteria | |
| QUALIFICATION OF OFFICERS AND STAFF | | |
| | Conformity to the auditing standards of the United Nations Panel of External Auditors and ethics governing their work | Audit institution demonstrates its officers and staff have extensive experience in the performance of work in conformity with auditing standards of the United Nations Panel of External Auditors and ethics governing their work. |
| | Professional qualifications, skills and size of work force | <p>Audit institution demonstrates it has high number of qualified professional accountant staff (and professional qualification certificates are from an internationally recognized board or standard), including staff with accounting, finance, operations, procurement, transport and information technology audit experience, particularly in client/server applications such as those used by WFP.</p> <p>Audit institution demonstrates it has sufficient and commensurate number of professional staff to ensure adequate audit coverage of all resources of WFP, as well as to maintain any other commitments the institution may have in addition to the audit of WFP.</p> <p>Audit institution demonstrates its staff have relevant skills and experience in the audit of other United Nations agencies, international NGOs, etc.</p> |
| | Participation in an internationally recognized accounting or auditing body such as INTOSAI and IFAC | Audit institution demonstrates participation in an internationally recognized accounting or auditing body. |
| | Language proficiency | Audit institution demonstrates it has sufficient number of staff who speak and are proficient in English and that it has the ability to work in other official languages on an as-needed basis. |

| | Score | 5—Highest, fully meets criteria |
|--|-------|---|
| Criteria | | |
| TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE | | |
| Existence of a programme for a continuing professional education for staff | | Audit institution professional staff required to attend continuing professional education training of at least two weeks every two years, and the institution demonstrates how this requirement is monitored and adhered to. |
| Experience in the audit of United Nations organizations or national public sector organizations, or international non-governmental organizations | | Audit institution demonstrates its officers and staff have extensive experience in performance of audit work at United Nations organizations or national public sector organizations, or international non-governmental organizations, and that its officers and staff are up to date on emerging issues and trends in the audit and businesses of these organizations. |
| Experience with the audit of financial statements prepared in accordance with IPSAS | | Audit institution demonstrates its officers and staff have proven experience in audit of financial statements prepared in accordance with IPSAS. |
| Staff adequately trained in current trends of auditing and with extensive audit experience | | Audit institution demonstrates that its officers and staff regularly and proficiently attend auditing “best practices” professional seminars or other means of adequate training in modern and emerging audit trends and techniques, and that officers and staff individually have extensive audit experience. |

| | Score | 5—Highest, fully meets criteria |
|--|-------|---|
| Criteria | | |
| AUDIT APPROACH AND STRATEGY | | |
| Comprehensive work plans to ensure adequate audit coverage of all WFP resources | | Audit institution demonstrates it prepares extensive and comprehensive work plans, coordinates and communicates this with management of the audited organization. The audit institution demonstrates its audit methodology conforms to best practices, including the consideration of risks. The audit institution demonstrates it implements adequate quality assurance procedures and programmes to ensure audit work is always of high standard. |
| Performance of financial and compliance audits as well as economy, efficiency and value-for-money audits | | Audit institution demonstrates it has extensive experience in conducting financial, compliance, economy, efficiency and value-for-money audits. Audit institution demonstrates it has adequate division and structure in the organization of responsibility along lines of types and nature of work undertaken (to ensure specialization and extensive audit skill and experience resources available to the institution). Audit institution demonstrates it is able to take initiative and to deal effectively and in an innovative manner, in coordination and cooperation with management, with new and emerging or particular issues relevant to the audit and business of WFP. |
| The proposed approach to external audit staffing to minimize WFP's compliance costs | | The audit institution's approach to staffing the audit demonstrates an appropriate balance between providing continuity of audit staff so as to minimise the learning curve for new audit staff and the ability to draw on additional audit staff or specialist skills where needed. |
| Collaboration with WFP's internal audit to optimize the use of limited audit resources | | Audit institution demonstrates extensive experience and reliance placed on work of internal audit units. The audit institution demonstrates how the use of limited audit resources was optimized in the institution's own experience, and how the institution will optimize this in the audit of WFP. |
| Delivery of audit results | | Audit institution demonstrates results are delivered in a timely and appropriate manner. |

| | | | |
|------------------------|---|-------|--|
| | Criteria | Score | 5—Highest, fully meets criteria |
| QUALITY CONTROL | | | |
| | Quality review process in place to ensure quality control | | Audit institution demonstrates it has an internal quality review process and exposure to external INTOSAI peer review. |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------|--|
| | Criteria | Score | 5—Highest, fully meets criteria |
| COMMUNICATIONS | | | |
| | Timely communication of audit results presented to management through comprehensive management letters and audit reports and meetings as necessary | | <p>Audit institution demonstrates how it delivers messages to various functions, including the Audit Committee.</p> <p>Audit institution demonstrates its audit reports are structured in a format judged to be adequate to convey clearly results of the audit. Audit institution demonstrates it conveys audit results in a timely manner and with effective basis to management, discusses audit results on a preliminary basis with management, provides opportunity to management to make comments and provide input before management letters or audit reports are finalized, and reflects in the final management letter or audit report management's comments and input, as necessary.</p> |
| | Audit reports are presented within United Nations deadlines | | |

| | | | |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------|--|
| | Criteria | Score | 5—Highest, fully meets criteria |
| COSTS | | | |
| | Most competitive fees | | Audit institution's fees are very competitive and judged to be adequate and proportionate to the work to be undertaken, and the institution demonstrates these fees are not too low so as to inhibit effective and efficient execution of audit work or too high as may be judged to be disproportionate to the work to be undertaken. |

ACRONYMS USED IN THE DOCUMENT

| | |
|---------|--|
| ACABQ | Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions |
| FAO | Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations |
| IFAC | International Federation of Accountants |
| INTOSAI | International Organization of the Supreme Audit Institutions |
| IPSAS | International Public Sector Accounting Standards |