Field Administration Manual

Version 1.1

Author: Global Procurement & Logistics

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FIELD ADMINISTRATION MANUAL

2006

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose and Scope

The Field Administration Manual (FAM) outlines Mercy Corps' standardized policy for administrative procedures in all field offices. In the context of this manual administration encompasses: human resources, office management, facilities management, and sometimes information technology. These tools and procedures are essential for proper administrative management and have been designed to comply with donor regulations and Mercy Corps policies. Administrative systems as described in the Field Administration Manual carry the weight of Mercy Corps policy and are mandatory for each field office. Field offices are expected to comply with the policies and procedures set forth in this manual and are encouraged to seek clarification if necessary. All documents discussed in this manual are available on the Digital Library. Field offices will be audited against the policies specified here.

Each Country Director – or equivalent – should have current printed and electronic copies of the manual. Heads of office, staff responsible for administration management and finance managers should also have copies and are encouraged to distribute the manual to other appropriate staff to ensure their familiarity with its contents. All relevant staff must be trained in the procedures contained in this manual. Copies should be made available to all staff in each field office for reference.

1.2 Making Changes to the Field Administration Manual

Authority over this manual rests with the Director of Procurement Administration and Logistics Management (PALM). Field offices are encouraged to provide input, suggestions and corrections, but may not alter or change any part of the manual. Suggestions or requests for changes should be addressed to the Director of PALM at palm@mercycorpsfield.org. Periodically, the manual will be updated to reflect current circumstances as well as new policies and procedures. Field offices will be notified of updates by e-mail and directed to the Mercy Corps Digital Library to access the revised sections. The Digital Library will always reflect the most current version of the manual. Managers should contact the Mercy Corps Digital Librarian or PALM staff for assistance in accessing the Digital Library if needed. This manual frequently refers to documents and tools located on the Digital Library that should be used when managing human resources, field offices, facilities, and information technology systems.

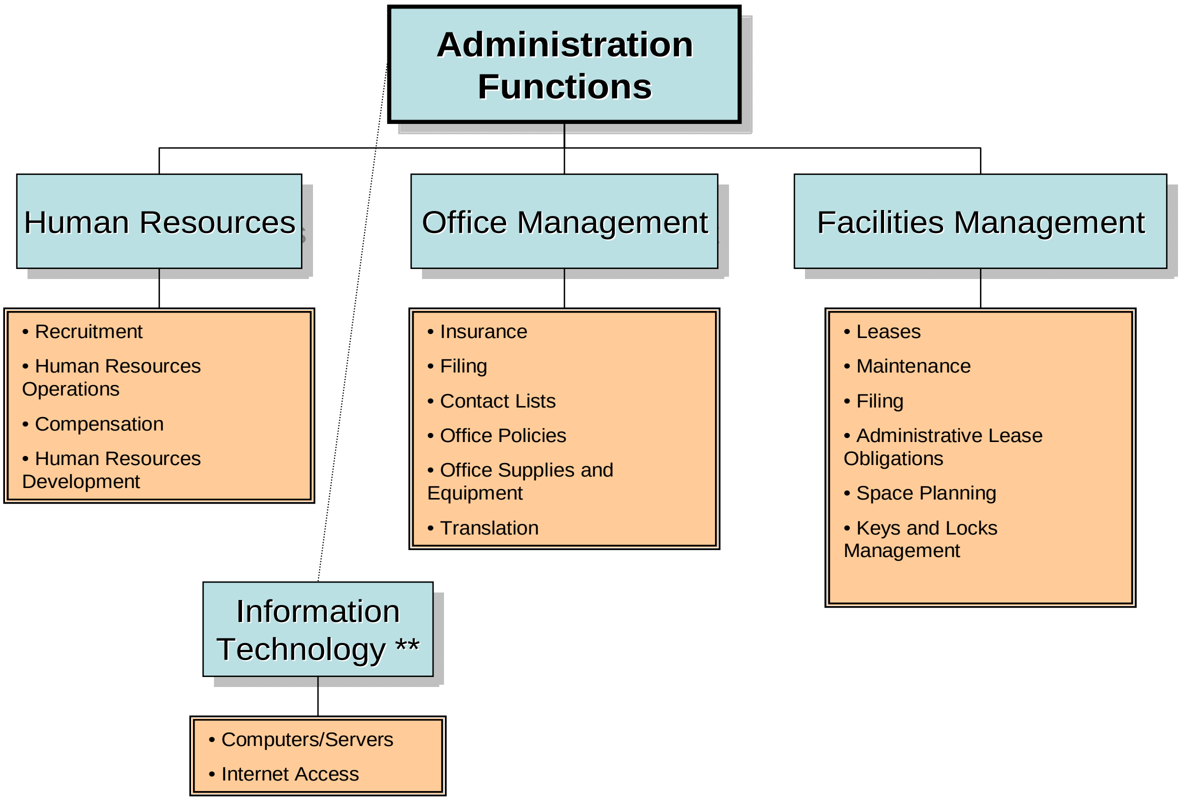
1.3 Country/Field Office-Specific Modifications

Since Mercy Corps works in a large number of locations throughout the world, this manual cannot take into account all situations that may occur in the field. Field offices may find the need to develop specific policies and procedures that take into account the organizational structure in the office, geographic considerations, or other unique circumstances. This manual also identifies areas where field offices are required to develop local policies or procedures. Local policies and procedures may be compiled in a Country Office Administration Manual. The country office manual may not supersede this manual, but should be considered a supplement. Country office administration manuals must be reviewed by the PALM team.

It is Mercy Corps policy to conduct its operations in compliance with the laws and regulations of the host country. Local law may require modifications of these policies. Documentation of such laws must be attached to a copy of this manual. Human resources procedures must be reviewed by legal counsel to ensure compliance with local labor laws – this manual discusses specific instances when this is required. HQ Legal Counsel should be notified of the employment of local legal counsel, in advance whenever practicable, along with local counsel's direct contact information. In order to identify or select local counsel, new country offices are encouraged to refer to Mercy Corps' Digital Library for a list of local counsels representing Mercy Corps or other selected organizations in certain counties. Translation of this manual into local languages is recommended.

1.4 The Administration Department in the Organizational Structure

The chart below depicts the functional elements of an administration department. When the scale of a field office does not allow for full staffing of positions described in the chart, it is advisable to organize the field office, and delegate responsibilities to ensure each *function* is performed. It is the Country Director's responsibility to assign the completion of these functions to relevant staff. For consistency, throughout the Human Resources section of the Administration Manual the person(s) delegated responsibility for Human Resources will be referred to as the Human Resources Officer (HRO).



**Note: Depending upon the size of a field office or country program, Information Technology management may require a separate IT department, or the functions of IT management could be assumed by Administration.

2 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Human resource systems should be designed to maximize management's ability to recruit and retain the best employees possible. Excellent employees are Mercy Corps' most important assets. It is the responsibility of the Country Director to have the human resources policies and procedures reviewed on a regular basis by local legal counsel to ensure they are in compliance with local laws. These policies apply to national staff only. They do not apply to expatriate staff, whose policies are administered by HQ offices in Portland or Edinburgh. It is Mercy Corps policy to clearly and accurately document human resources procedures and activities.

2.1 Recruitment

2.1.1 Recruitment Process

All Mercy Corps field offices are required to follow the national staff recruitment process as it is described here. This section outlines in detail, procedures, documentation, roles, and responsibilities during the entire recruitment process. It is Mercy Corps policy that the recruitment process encourages fair and transparent hiring without discrimination to tribal affiliation, race, color, religion, sexual orientation, age, national origin, gender, disability, marital status, or any other characteristic that may be protected by law. The process should facilitate timely and compliant hiring.

Salary costs are one of Mercy Corps largest operational expenses. Prior approval for all spending, including the hiring of staff, is required and must be documented. Prior approval also ensures sufficient funds exist in budgets before the recruitment process begins. Adherence to the recruitment process as described in this manual is the responsibility of the Country Director. Reference to the Segregation of Duties found in FFM (Section 2.4) is required when implementing the recruitment process. Recruitment is centralized and coordinated by the human resources department or HRO to ensure fairness and consistency. The entire process of posting vacancies, application review, short listing, interviewing, reference checking and selection should be completed in a timely manner. It is important to give equal consideration to maintaining the flow of Mercy Corps activity by filling vacancies quickly, while allowing sufficient time for a fair and thorough recruitment process.

Section 2.1.10 is a summary of the steps that should be followed when recruiting for an open position. Detailed procedures are discussed in this section. These procedures apply for newly created positions and openings created by the termination, transfer, or promotion of an employee. The recruitment process applies to the following position categories: full-time, part-time, and temporary employees. It does not apply to consultants or service contracts. The process for procuring international consultants is described in the Field Finance Manual, Section 5 and is performed by the Headquarters Human Resources department (HQHR). The process for procuring local consultants is described in the Procurement Manual and is performed by the HRO. The process for procuring service contractors (such as translation or printing services) is described in the Procurement Manual, Section 8.3 and is not an HRO function. The Position Categories and Documentation Table, 2.1.1.1 lists the different HR requirements for employees, consultants and contractors.

2.1.1.1 *Position Categories and Documentation Table*

Position	**All local (national staff) Mercy Corps Employees** – includes regular, part-time and short-term staff.	**Local Consultants** - usually a highly-skilled person who is contracted to perform a specific task/report and is not an Mercy Corps employee.	**Contract Staff** – individuals contracted by Mercy Corps to complete a programmatic or administrative task. They are not a Mercy Corps employee.
Binding Document	**Work Agreement/Employment Contract**	**Consultancy Agreement**	**Service Contract**
Description of responsibilities (must be signed by appointee and head of office or supervisor)	**Position Description** or **PD** (sometimes called Job Description JD) ▪ Makes reference to monthly wage ▪ Makes reference to MC National Staff handbook ▪ Makes reference to work station ▪ Makes reference to start/end dates of service.	**Consultancy Agreement & Scope of Work - SOW** ▪ Makes reference to a specific deliverables within a specific timeframe. ▪ Details of task and work station should be outlined clearly ▪ May indicate numbers of days to be worked within this timeframe ▪ Should indicate a "total fee" for accomplishing the task ▪ Indicates all allowable expenses (and limits if applicable) paid to consultant ▪ Details Mercy Corps responsibilities (use of vehicles, guesthouses, phone, ▪ Indicate that no benefits are offered: vacation, holiday, extra compensation, ▪ Indicates payment terms (with last payment usually held until after completion ▪ Indicates MC contact person responsible for managing consultant's work plan and	**Service Contract** ▪ Makes reference to a specific task within a specific timeframe. ▪ Details of task and work station should be outlined clearly ▪ May indicate numbers of days to be worked within this timeframe ▪ Should indicate a "total fee" for accomplishing the task ▪ Indicates all benefits (if any) awarded to appointee (for example, per diem, use of MC ▪ Indicate that no leave time is accrued (or taken), no awarding of compensation, ▪ Indicates terms of payment (last payment usually held until after completion ▪ Indicates MC contact person responsible for managing and approving work output.
Other Documentation and details	▪ Personnel file is opened ▪ Personnel Action Form ▪ See New Hire Orientation Packet Checklist ▪ Personnel Request Form	▪ Waiver of MC liability (for insurance purposes) – if applicable ▪ Conflict of Interest/Disclosure Form may be required. ▪ No other MC HR documentation applicable, must not use personnel activity	▪ Waiver of MC liability (for insurance purposes) – if applicable ▪ Conflict of Interest/Disclosure Form, if applicable ▪ No other MC HR documentation applicable ▪ Purchase Request
Process and relevant department	Recruitment, Field Office Human Resources	Consultants - see Section 5, FFM, Field Office Procurement	Contracting of services, Field Office Procurement

2.1.2 Creating Open Positions

The staff person (hiring manager) wishing to create an open position must submit a completed Personnel Request Form (PRF) and a written Position Description (PD) to the HRO. A completed PRF includes signatures from staff with authority to spend on the cost center and a financial review as indicated on the Approval Authority Matrix (AAM) in the Field Finance Manual.

Once the proper signatures are on the PRF, the hiring manager submits the completed PRF and PD to the HRO. A PRF submitted without a PD will not be processed. The department that wishes to hire a new staff member bears responsibility for completion of the PRF and the PD. Human resources can assist by providing the correct salary range, a PD template, and examples of similar PD's but does not complete the PRF or the PD.

Documents and Tools

2.1.2.1 *Personnel Request Form*

The Personnel Request Form must be used and is a pre-approval to initiate the hiring process and incur the expenses associated with an employee. Particulars such as: the salary range, desired start date, cost center, etc. are required on this document. When creating several identical job openings, for example, when hiring 6 new drivers, the completion of multiple PRF's is not necessary and can be shown by simply noting the number of identical openings on one PRF.

Signatories: originator, hiring manager, financial review – all authorities as on AAM.

2.1.2.2 Sample Completed Personnel Request Form

MercyCorps

PERSONNEL REQUEST FORM

To be submitted to HR with Program Approval -- Completing this form is the **required** FIRST STEP in the hiring process.

TYPE OF POSITION: ☒ New Position ☐ Existing Position (hire will replace a staff member)
NUMBER OF OPENINGS: __*1*__

Proposed Start Date:	*1 September 06*	Title of Supervisor:	*Livelihoods & Econ Dev Mgr.*
Duration of Assignment:	*12 months*	Cost Center:	*555*
Department:	*Livelihoods*	Grant Start & End Dates:	*01 June 06 - 31 May 08*
Title of Position:	*Livelihoods Prog Man*	Salary Range/Level:	*Level 5 Rs 1000-1300*
Name of Supervisor :	*Mahmoud Doe*	Potential Candidates:	*none*

ADVERTISMENT PLACEMENT: ☒ Newspaper ☐ Radio ☐ TV ☐ Internet ☐ Other ________
*If you do not plan to advertise the job, within or outside of Mercy Corps, please provide a detailed "sole source" memo with this PRF, explaining why the job will not be advertised

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS: ☒ Position Description

COMMENTS:
Background in natural sciences is required for this position, see PD
Post vacancy notice in Jakarta newspaper: reach JKT University and Faculty of Natural Sci
Looking for a hands on manager, more important than academic background
Will manage a team of 12 technical specialists, must have community development skills.

Originator:	Name:	Signature:	/ /
Program/Dept Approval:	Name:	Signature:	/ /
Financial Review:	Name:	Signature:	/ /

2.1.2.3 Position Description

The Position Description template should be used in the format provided. The content may be changed for creation/editing of position descriptions.

All employees must receive a Position Description (PD) accurately detailing the responsibilities of their job. Both the employee and supervisor must each sign two original copies of the PD to document understanding and acceptance of these responsibilities. The employee retains one signed original and the HR department retains the other signed original in the employee's personnel file. The PD is one of the documents used to measure performance and therefore should be clear, concise and must be written in a language the staff member understands.

Information on a PD includes: job title, duty station, position category, salary level (in reference to the country salary scale), program/department summary, position summary, job functions (technical, managerial, and other Mercy Corps requirements), supervisory and accountability structures, knowledge and experience required, and success factors. Also detailed are limitations and guidelines on representation, and requirements for reporting and accountability.

Position Descriptions (PD) reflect the actual needs of a program or operations, irrespective of the strengths a particular candidate may possess. Hiring managers, (supervisors or department management) are responsible for making Position Descriptions. PD's should be reviewed by the Head of Office and HRO for consistency with the salary scale and organizational structure. Templates for most position descriptions may be provided by the HRO, or can be found in the Office in a Box on the Digital Library. Position descriptions are reviewed during every performance review (probationary and annual).

Signatories: Supervisor, Employee

2.1.3 Posting Vacancies / Identifying Candidates

The HRO posts the vacancy announcement as indicated on the PRF. The Vacancy announcement should specify if curriculum vitae's (CV's or, resumes) or applications are required and include a deadline for submission. Applications are usually used for lower level positions such as guards, cleaning staff, maintenance, drivers and other similar positions (these candidates rarely have CVs) or where CVs are uncommon. If current Mercy Corps employees want to be considered for the open position, they should, as a courtesy, inform their supervisor and forward a current CV or application to the HRO. It is best practice (particularly for lower level positions) to post both English and local language Vacancy Announcements.

The HRO is responsible for the accuracy and timely posting of all vacancy announcements.

Mercy Corps recruits applicants from both internal and external sources. Human Resources should meet with the supervisor/hiring manager to decide on recruitment strategies for candidates. This may include reviewing CVs of recently interviewed candidates that did well in previous applications but were not hired.

Vacancy announcements advertise vacant positions to potential candidates. They should include the exact job title, required and desired qualifications, general description of the position, submission method and deadline for CVs and for applications. Since the situation in each country is unique, strategies on posting Vacancy Announcements will vary but they should provide for the widest exposure to potential applicants. Announcements can be posted on the Mercy Corps office announcement/information board and those of other NGOs, newspapers, International Labor Organization offices, UNOCHA, radio and TV spots, websites, listserves, local associations or guilds, local university faculties, community gathering points, areas of high traffic, etc.

When considering advertising for candidates outside of the immediate work area, the need and budget for relocation assistance payments should be evaluated. The decision should be specific to the position and not individual candidates. For US government funded grants, the requirement that relocation payments be refunded to the grant if the employee voluntarily resigns prior to 12 months of employment should also be considered. Relocation Assistance and other benefits should be clearly detailed in the National Staff Policy Handbook (see section 2.2.7).

Documents and Tools

2.1.3.1 Vacancy Announcement

The Vacancy Announcement may be edited to suit local requirements.

It should contain at least the following information: desired and required qualifications, responsibilities, work location, address details, submission method and deadlines for receiving applications.

2.1.3.2 Sample Completed Vacancy Announcement

MercyCorps

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Mercy Corps is an International NGO implementing programs in Banda Province, Whereistan. Mercy Corps is a non-profit organization that is currently recruiting for positions in the Banda office. Successful candidates will meet the education and experience requirements for each position description and will have a strong knowledge of spoken English and knowledge of Banda Province, local languages and geography.

Mercy Corps Banda is currently seeking to fill the post of:

Livelihoods Program Coordinator

Qualifications include: University degree in a natural science feild. Minimum five years work experience in engineering project implementation and supervision. Demonstrated management of diverse, professional staff. Spoken and written English proficiency is essential. Proficiency in a variety of local languages preferred. Physically able to spend the long periods of time in the field is a requirement for this position.

Responsibilities include: Responsible for the identification, design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of Livelihoods project activities and administrative tasks. To supervise site staff in order to effectively implement planned projects. To manage administration and security of MC Livelihoods activities in the assigned sites. For this position, Mercy Corps seeks someone highly motivated for this post with a strong sense of humanitarian principles.

Please contact HR Officer at any of the Mercy Corps offices listed below for more details by Tuesday, 16 August, 2005.

All applications will include CV, salary requirements, references, and all relevant official documents, and should be submitted in person to any of the Mercy Corps offices listed below.

DEADLINE for ALL APPLICATIONS: 17 August, 2005 – 4pm.

Address:
Mercy Corps Banda (ADDRESS & E-Mail)
Mercy Corps Country Office (ADDRESS & E-Mail)
Mercy Corps Other Office (ADDRESS & Email)

2.1.4 CV Collection

The HRO or designee collects CV's and applications. Receipt of CVs or applications should be logged.

CVs or applications are collected by a specified individual in the office and all are logged immediately upon receipt. Generally, the responsibility for receipt and logging of CVs or applications is assigned to reception or staff at the front gate. CVs, applications and logs should be kept in the position's respective job file.

It may be helpful to use an electronic database or spreadsheet to help manage the vast number of CVs received at Mercy Corps field offices. This is best organized with variables of qualifications and skills for easy sorting. At a minimum, CVs should be organized by profession for future use. Generally, applications and CVs are maintained and considered for one (1) year after receipt.

Documents and Tools

2.1.4.1 Application Form

The Application Form is available in English only, and in bilingual form, It may be edited to suit local requirements, but should be printed in both English and suitable local languages, if applicable.

An application form includes: the name and contact details of a candidate, work and education background (including dates, location and specific title) and references.

The HRO is responsible for making Application Forms readily available at the front desk or gate.

2.1.4.2 CV Receipt Log

The CV Receipt Log may be edited to suit local requirements.

A separate CV or application receipt log is prepared for each vacancy. It should contain at least the following information: open position, name of applicant, time/date received. The use of CV/application receipt logs ensures that all CV submissions are documented, reviewed and therefore, considered for selection.

2.1.5 Short-Listing

Mercy Corps demands standards of excellence in professional and personal qualifications. Therefore only those candidates with suitable skills will be given the opportunity to interview for existing openings.

Human resources staff and designated hiring staff review the submissions to determine if any suitable applicants should be interviewed. CVs or applications are short-listed according to criteria determined by hiring managers prior to review of candidates. CVs or applications are filtered by a standard review of qualifying features and experience relevant to the open position. Additional, more restrictive criteria may be included to the short listing process if there is an abundance of qualified applicants. If sufficient qualified applicants are not received for a post, it is recommended the position be reposted to a larger audience rather than lowering selection criteria or requirements.

2.1.6 Interviewing Process

Screening interviews are conducted by the HRO or designee to filter the short-listed eligible candidates. Screening interviews can be conducted over the telephone and are simply meant to confirm the following:

- genuine interest in the position
- understanding and fit with the offered salary range
- availability
- integrity of the information provided in the CV or application

CVs can be removed from consideration based on the answers provided in the screening. The HRO schedules interviews with remaining candidates as per the request of the hiring manager.

A hiring committee must be established for formal interviews of candidates who have successfully passed the screening process. One representative each from the hiring department, human resources and preferably a third Mercy Corps representative should be on the hiring committee. The committee should be balanced with staff so as not to represent only one ethnicity or other grouping. This will lessen the potential for real or perceived biased. To ensure a consistent evaluation of candidates, all committee members must interview all candidates under consideration. During the initial interview, it is recommended that all committee members be present. This may not always be feasible, and interviews may be conducted individually, although it is recommended the interviews be conducted with at least two Mercy Corps staff present. Having an additional person present will protect Mercy Corps staff from allegations of improper or inappropriate questioning. In addition, hiring decisions are to be made by the committee based in part, upon the interview process. In instances where consensus cannot be reached by the committee, the final decision rests with the Country Director or Head of Office.

The hiring manager and the HRO prepare a list of initial questions to be asked of all applicants. The list should be typed up and notes of each candidates responses should be taken during the interview process. The HRO should be delegated to lead the interview, introduce the hiring committee, and provide background on Mercy Corps and the position. It is helpful to rehearse interview questions beforehand and decide upon who will ask each question. Questions should allow for a comprehensive profile of the candidate and reveal their technical capacity, work ethics and interpersonal skills. When suitable, a technical test may be given to candidates. For example, an accountancy test, writing sample, or engineering aptitudes test may be appropriate. Questions such as salary expectations, availability and willingness to relocate are all acceptable. The interview should be a conversation, and additional questions may be asked to follow up on candidate's responses.

Candidates should be evaluated on a standard grade sheet. After evaluating the candidate based on in terms of fit, qualifications, start dates and affordability, the entire committee should agree on the decision before making an offer. If no suitable applicants are found, the hiring manager and the HRO should meet to decide on strategies for recruiting additional candidates.

The HRO is the designated person for contacting the candidate and offering the position and compensation package. Any deviances from a standard benefits package must be agreed on by the committee and approved by the Head of Office.

Documents and Tools

2.1.6.1 Sample Interview Questions

Sample Interview Questions contain a list of suggested interview questions and may be edited to suit local requirements and specific positions.

Initial interview questions are to be prepared before an interview occurs. Lists of basic introductory questions may be prepared before the interview takes place and distributed to all those on the interview panel. Notes may be taken on this document.

Interview questions are prepared jointly by the HRO and the interview panel. All questions should be relevant to the position and required experience.

2.1.6.2 Interview Grade Sheet

The Interview Grade Sheet may be edited to suit requirements for the position.

The grading sheet is the form used to quantify and summarize the results of all interviews. Different weight/importance can be placed on the different skill sets or characteristics. Weighting of characteristics and skill sets will be different for every job vacancy. Similar to a quotation analysis, all interview committee members sign agreement to the ranking of candidates. It should contain at least the following information: Skills sets/characteristics and their importance (shown as a percentage %), names of all interviewed candidates, grades and grade summaries and a space for approval of agreement.

2.1.6.3 Technical Test

The Technical Test may be edited to suit local requirements and is not applicable for most open positions.

Technical positions such as IT Systems Administrator, Engineer, Finance Officer and other similar, technical roles may all be given a test to demonstrate competency.

This test and answers should be prepared by an experienced individual in this field.

2.1.7 Hiring Process

Once a candidate is agreed upon by the committee, the HRO must check at least two of the candidate's references. In accordance with Mercy Corps' Ineligibility and Compliance Checking (I&CC) policy, the HRO must also check the candidate in the World Tracker software. If no World Tracker matches are found, and two positive references are received, the officer makes a verbal offer to the candidate. For further details on the ICC policy or World Tracker, refer to the Digital Library.

The level (from the salary scale) assigned to the position description (PD) is not to be altered to reflect the qualifications or salary expectations of an individual under consideration for a post. Unless the candidate has significant experience, new hires should start with a salary at the bottom end of the pay range at their level. See section 2.3.1, Salary Scales for more information. Generally, employees at lower levels (guards, drivers, etc) are always hired at the entry level step despite their work experience.

It is the responsibility of the HRO to ensure the offered salary complies with the salary scale. The hiring committee agrees on a salary within the range at the appropriate level before a verbal offer and negotiations. In the event of disagreement among the committee members, the Country Director or Head of Office will decide the final salary offered. New employees should be hired at the full salary designated for their grade and scale. No salary increments or position description changes should be conducted after, or as part of, a probationary review. All negotiations are undertaken by the HR department and terms of all negotiations are set by the committee.

Upon the agreement of terms and conditions with the candidate, the HRO prepares the Personnel Action Form (PAF) for the candidate and submits it for approval and signature. It is then forwarded to the Finance Department to trigger processing the addition of the new employee into the payroll system. Until a completed PAF and a signed Work Agreement/Employment Contract has been submitted to finance, new staff are not officially hired and will not be added to payroll.

An Offer Letter is the document used to formally offer a position to successful candidates. An Offer Letter will detail the salary, position title, and expected start date. New hires should also receive a New Hire Packet as described in this manual, section 2.1.7.4. The HRO is responsible for its issue. A New Hire Packet is not a substitute for a more comprehensive orientation process described in section 2.1.9. Other documents may be required for specific positions or countries. For example, these additional documents may include copies of certifications. See the Personnel File Content Checklist and the New Hire Packet Checklist for other required hiring documents

Documents and Tools

2.1.7.1 Employment Reference Check Form

The Employment Reference Check Form document may be edited to suit local requirements.

The reference check form should contain at least the following information: person giving reference, professional relationship to applicant, position held by the candidate, and a space for notes/comments on specific skill sets/characteristics required for this position.

The reference check form is prepared by the supervisor and Human Resources. Generally, Human Resources is responsible for collecting references (references collected over the telephone, email, faxes are all acceptable).

2.1.7.2 Personnel Action Form

The Personnel Action Form (PAF) must be used to document all changes to the relationship between Mercy Corps and employees, including: hiring, transfers, promotions, termination, and salary changes, among other changes.

Signatories: Supervisor, HRO, finance, for cost center as on AAM.

2.1.7.3 Sample Completed PAF New Hire

MercyCorps

PERSONNEL ACTION FORM

Employee Name: Mahmoud Doe   ID #: **WA 2999**   Office: **Banda , Whistan**

NEW HIRE

Start Date (dd/mm/yy): *25 / 08 / 05*   Cost Center: *555*

Monthly salary: *RS 1200*   Supervisor's Name: *Helen*

Interview notes attached? ☒ World Tracker report? ☒ 3 references attached? ☒

CHANGES

Anticipated length of assignment at new post? _ Effective Date (dd/mm/yy): / /

Type of Change	From (Current):	To (New):
Field Office		
Job Title		
Supervisor		
Review Date		
Salary		
Cost Center *		
Job Status		

* Only required for transfer between departments

New PD and Work Agreement ready for signature? ☐   Ann/Prob.Performance Review attached? ☐

(Note: NO salary increase will be processed without a signed evaluation or documented justification.)

TERMINATION

Effective Date (dd/mm/yy): / /

Please Select One: ☐ Resignation/Voluntary Seperation ☐ End of Funding/Contract

☐ Involuntary Separation ☐ Dismissal

Reason for Termination:

End of Service Checklist complete? ☐

Notes:

SIGNATURES

Employee's Supervisor: ____________ Date: / /

Cost Center Approval : ____________ Date: / /

Human Resources Manager: ____________ Date: / /

Financial Review: ____________ Date: / /

2.1.7.4 Offer Letter

The Offer Letter may be edited to suit local requirements.

The offer letter is a formal means of offering a position to a candidate and documenting offered terms of employment. An Offer Letter is particularly helpful when making an official offer to an individual via mail or email. When used, it must contain at least the following information:

position title, work location, start date, salary, duration of contract, reference to the benefits package, and any special agreements and space for signature of agreement.

Offer letters are prepared by the HRO and include details agreed upon by the interview committee.

2.1.7.5 Sample Completed Offer Letter

MercyCorps

OFFER LETTER

Thursday, August 03, 2006

Mr. Mahmoud Doe
JL. Seulawah Lr. Km Yunus No. 7 Setui
Banda, Wheristan
+62 813 600 34 555
DaviidT@yahoo.com

Dear Mahmoud,

Mercy Corps Whereistan is pleased to offer you the position of Livelihoods Program Coordinator in Banda Banda under the supervision of the Livelihoods and Economic Development Program Manager. Specifically, your responsibilities include: management and coordination of the technical units in the Banda Livelihoods program and ensuring the implementation of strategic, ecologically sound implementation of the 2005-6 Livelihoods strategy. Please refer to the attached position description for more detail.

At this time, Mercy Corps is able to offer you a permanent contract with a three month probationary period. The projected start date of this position is: 21 August 05 but can be negotiated between you and HR management in Banda Banda. The salary for this position is: Rupees: 12000 per month. All Mercy Corps Whereistan regulations and policies apply to this position. The normal work week is 5 days/week at 8 hour/days.

Benefits: All regular employee benefits apply to you in this position, including insurance, leave days and Social Security contribution. (see attached benefits summary) Additionally, you will be eligible for benefits specific to Mercy Corps Banda relocated staff, as outlined in the attached benefits. (see attached policy)

Please let us know if you agree to the terms and conditions indicated in this letter, and I will proceed with the contract.

Kind Regards,
NAME
HR Officer
Mercy Corps Banda

I accept the terms and conditions outlined in this letter of offer.

____
Name / Signature / Date

2.1.7.6 New Hire Packet Checklist

The New Hire Packet Checklist should be edited to suit local requirements.

The new hire packet list details the documents that must be included in a new hire packet and given to new hires. Additional documents may be added to the list, but no documents may be deleted.

2.1.7.7 Bilingual Emergency Contact Information

The Bilingual Emergency Contact Information document may be edited to suit local requirements.

The emergency contact information sheet must contain, at minimum, the following information: name and home address/telephone/email (one of the three, or another way to contact family members) of family members, name and home address/telephone/email (one of the three, or another way to reach contacts) of primary and secondary contacts.

All staff must receive, complete and return this form to HR.

2.1.7.8 Bilingual Conflict of Interest Statement

The Bilingual Conflict of Interest Statement must be used and documents an employee's agreement to disclose any potential conflicts of interest between their personal interests and Mercy Corps business. Additionally, this confirms the employee agrees not to disclose any confidential information about Mercy Corps. Should be in English and appropriate local languages.

Signatories: Must be signed by all staff.

2.1.7.9 Bilingual Family Co-Worker Statement

The Bilingual Family Co-worker Statement must be used and documents an employee's agreement to disclosure of any employment of family members by Mercy Corps in any capacity.

Signatories: Must be signed by all staff.

2.1.8 Work Agreement/Employment Contract and Position Description Signing

When negotiations are complete and the PAF has been submitted to finance, the new hire must be issued an orientation packet (contents listed in New Hire Packet List) that contains, among other documents two copies of a Work Agreement/Employment Contract (signed by appropriate Mercy Corps representative, see AAM) and two copies of the PD signed by the supervisor. The employee signs all copies as required, and keeps one of each of the Employment Contract/Work Agreements (WA) and Position Description (PD) and returns one signed copy to Mercy Corps. An Offer Letter and orientation packet should not be issued until after a PAF is completed and submitted to finance.

Documents and Tools

2.1.8.1 Work Agreement/Employment Contract

Formal work agreements/employment contracts should be used for national staff. The legal implications of using employment contracts must be checked with local counsel. The WA/EC should be used in the provided format and must be adapted to local laws. Work Agreement/Employment Contract templates must be reviewed by local legal counsel.

If used, the Work Agreement/Employment Contract must be signed by the employee and contain the terms and conditions under which the employee is hired, including name, position title, salary or wage rate and the basis for calculation, probation period and duration of the Work

Agreement/Employment Contract (start and end-date), location, and hours and days per workweek.

The validity of the contract should not exceed one year in length unless mandated by local laws, and must be kept current. Work Agreement/Employment Contracts must not be combined with a position description; changes to a position description would then effectively change the contract and then impact the legal relationship between the employee and Mercy Corps. Also, contracts must not detail specific benefits since changes to benefit packages would effectively impact the contracts validity. An original, signed copy of the WA/EC will be stored in the employee's personnel file and the other original, signed copy will be retained by the employee.

Signatories: Authority of Mercy Corps representative to sign employee contracts is referenced on the Approval Authority Matrix for each field office, see FFM 4.4.1. Refer to FFM Section 2.5 Approval Authority and Section 4, National Staff Payroll.

2.1.8.2 Sample Completed Work Agreement/Employment Contract

MercyCorps

WORK AGREEMENT/EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

Mercy Corps Whereistan enters into this work agreement/employment contract with: Mahmoud Doe (Employee), to the position of Deputy Program Director for Mercy Corps Whereistan for wages of Rs 1200 per month fixed, with effect from 1 October, 2005. This Agreement will terminate on 30 September, 2006, or earlier in the event of an earlier termination of this Agreement.

Specific terms and conditions are as follows:

1. The Parties agree as follows:

   1.1 Employee's employment will begin on the above said date and is conditioned on funding availability. This Agreement can be terminated by either party upon two weeks' notice or immediately for the following reasons: i) an evacuation due to security reasons; ii) *force majeure;* or iii) the cessation of programming as a result of expiry or withdrawal of authorization for Mercy Corps to operate in Banda, Wheristan. Mercy Corps can also terminate this Agreement for disciplinary reasons at any time.

   1.2 New employees, and reassigned employees are subject to a 3-month probation period, during which Mercy Corps can terminate this Agreement at any time.

   1.3 This post is in Banda, Whereistan and immediate environs.

   1.4 Employee will be entitled to all benefits, including the accrual of vacation days, and is subject to all policies outlined in the Mercy Corps Whereistan National Staff Policy Handbook unless otherwise stated in this Agreement.

   1.5 Any income or other taxes will be withheld from the Employee's monthly salary and are the responsibility of the Employee.

   1.6 Employee shall have no authority to incur any debt or other liability or to obtain any credit facilities either in the name of or on behalf of Mercy Corps and has no express authority generally to bind Mercy Corps, unless expressly approved by an authorized Mercy Corps staff member.

   1.7 Employee acknowledges that Mercy Corps is the owner and proprietor of all and any patents, registered designs, copyright and/or trademarks, and documents used by Mercy Corps and its employees in relation to its business or which relate to its business.

2. The Employee agrees to:

   2.1 Carry out the duties and functions as described the job description (attached hereto), or as modified by his/her supervisor according to Mercy Corps' program directives and regulations.

   2.2 Be subject to be called to duty at any time. However, the normal workweek is 9 hours per day, 5 days per week. Only under exceptional circumstances, and with the prior approval of the Head of Office will the Employee be asked to perform duties outside of normal working hours for a set, hourly fee. Employee will not be eligible for overtime pay.

3. Mercy Corps agrees to:

   3.1 Compensate the Employee as detailed above. However, Mercy Corps has no responsibility or liability for any costs incurred by the Employee except as specifically provided in this Agreement.

   3.2 Supervise the activities of the Employee and to take appropriate action for performance review, promotion, termination or change of duty.

By his/her signature below, the Employee understands and agrees to all the terms and conditions mentioned in this Agreement above and the attached job description, indicated. The signature of the Country Director or authorized designee of Mercy Corps indicates approval of this Agreement.

-------------------------------------	**3-Aug-06**
Employee	Date
-------------------------------------	**3-Aug-06**
Country Director	Date

Mercy Corps Whereistan **1 of 1** Work Agreement

2.1.9 Orientation

Proper orientation of new staff is essential to ensure that new employees understand their specific role and responsibilities, as well as basic Mercy Corps policies and procedures. Some staff may receive a more detailed orientation than others. However, ALL staff must receive a briefing on Mercy Corps, its mission statement, global operations and country programs/history.

It is important they understand Mercy Corps' mission and objectives. Each employee should be viewed as a potential Mercy Corps representative in the community. The employee should be familiar with Mercy Corps' activities so they can answer questions that will be posed by family, friends, neighbors and others. In addition to providing good public relations information, staff members help strengthen security through local acceptance.

Human resources should coordinate with supervisors when scheduling an orientation for each new employee. A matrix of orientation topics may be a helpful guide to roles and responsibilities for each office function. The supervisor of the new hire has the ultimate responsibility for scheduling orientation times with all necessary personnel and office departments.

All new staff should also receive general information on office operations, including: office hours, contact lists, lunch hours, personnel activity reports (timesheets), and payroll, etc. Depending on the level of authority and responsibility, new employees should also be briefed on rules and procedures of those departments in which they will interact, i.e. - Human Resources, Information Technology, Finance, Procurement and Fleet. Employees should receive an orientation from the relevant staff in each department and receive all tools necessary for them to effectively perform their new role.

Documents and Tools

2.1.9.1 Orientation Matrix

The Orientation Matrix document may be edited to suit local requirements.

The orientation matrix should contain at least the following information: positions/names responsible for presenting office functions and tools/forms. New hires are given the matrix and a training time for each topic is established in coordination with the relevant officer. All office functions may not be required for every new employee.

2.1.10 Recruitment Process Flow Chart

Creating Open Positions (Pre-approval)

As with all expenses, documented pre-approval for recruitment is mandatory. This is accomplished using a Personnel Request Form (PRF). The PRF must be submitted with a Position Description (PD). All PRF's are approved by management and reviewed by finance (for budgeting purposes) before submittal to HR for processing. It is not HR's responsibility to complete and get signatures for PRF's, or to create PDs. Program implementation plans should allow for sufficient time for the recruitment process.

CV Collection/Short-listing

A Vacancy Announcement advertising the position, requirements and submission due date is created. A Vacancy Announcement should be given the most exposure possible to ensure a wide range of candidates will learn of the job openings (newspapers, local radio, faculties, UN and ILO, town information boards, etc.). CVs are collected at a centralized place and opened by HR only. All received CVs are logged. CVs are short-listed jointly by hiring managers and HR staff based on criteria established in the PRF and PD.

Interview Preparation

Screening interviews of short-listed candidates are conducted by HR (or designated staff) to filter unsuitable candidates. This often done over the telephone and follow up interviews are scheduled. An Interview Committee is established (consisting of hiring and HR staff; senior management should be included on the recruitment of senior or strategic staff) person in charge of HR leads the interview process and a set list of questions (to establish technical capacity and character). Technical tests are prepared for technical staff.

Interviews

All committee members should have a copy of the CV or application, interview questions and a grade sheet and should be familiar with the PD. It is best practice to rehearse the questions before the interviews begin. All candidates are asked similar questions and graded against the same criteria. Notes are kept of interviews. All committee members interview each candidate. In the event of telephone interviews, a conference call or multiple calls from each member is best practice. The length of interviews should be consistent.

Selection and Position Offer

A salary is determined within the range for the position and in unusual circumstances, the candidate's experience in considered. The candidate's name must be checked through the World Tracker software, and references checked before employment is offered. An offer is made to the candidate, and terms are negotiated. When verbal agreement is reached, an Offer Letter is issued by the person in charge of human resources. HR prepares the PAF, Work Agreement/Employment Contract and orientation package.

Contract Signing/Orientation

An HR file is opened and ID number issued. All required HR documents are signed and filed. An orientation schedule with the necessary departments is arranged in consultation with the new hires supervisor. Each orientation is tailored to the individual's job responsibilities. Special effort is given to introduce the employee to Mercy Corps' mission and policies.

2.2 Human Resources Operations

2.2.1 Filing Procedures and Documentation

Maintaining accurate and current documentation of HR activities is a crucial part of human resources management. It is extremely difficult to recall events or to justify the rationale for decisions without current and accurate files. In the eyes of subsequent managers, auditors, attorneys, and local labor laws, if there is no documentation of a personnel action it is likely to be considered to have never happened, be unjustified, or without proof. Should litigation or other legal disputes involving Mercy Corps occur, a legal defense is likely to rely heavily upon documentation. Because of their importance and sensitivity, human resources files must be stored in a separate and secure location away from other office files. It is the responsibility of the Country Director or head of office to maintain these files as described in this manual.

An individual personnel file must be established for all every local Mercy Corps employees. Each file should contain information related to the employee's employment history with Mercy Corps. Personnel Files must be kept current and are subject to review and audit. In addition, for every open position created a job file must be created. A system to store and retrieve CVs for future openings should also be established.

2.2.2 Job Files

The HRO will open and maintain a job file for each "open" and "closed" position for which there is an approved Personnel Request Form. All documents related to the recruitment and hiring for this position should be included. The job file should contain the following: Personnel Request Form (copies if multiple openings were created by a single PRF), Position Description, vacancy announcements (including notes on where/when it was posted), newspaper adverts, CV log, relevant memorandums, interview notes and interview panel recommendations and a copy of the Personnel Action Form.

All current openings should have a corresponding "open" job file. Once a job has been filled the job file becomes "closed."

The following documentation should be completed and kept in job files:

- Personnel Requisition Form
- Position Description
- Curriculum Vitae Log (CV Log) or Application Log
- Curriculum Vitae's of short-listed candidates
- Vacancy Announcement (with reference to where it was posted and dates posted)
- Copies or clippings of advertisements and receipts for advertisement.
- Reference checks
- Interview notes
- Grade Sheet analysis
- World Tracker – search result
- Personnel Action Form
- Related memos or other communications

In case of a serious threat to office security resulting in evacuation, these files must be marked for destruction or evacuation and stored in, or easily transferred to, a portable container. It is a serious security threat to local staff and Mercy Corps to leave behind jobl files to be accessed by unauthorized individuals.

Tools and Documents

2.2.2.1 Job File Content Checklist

The Job File Content Checklist lists the documents required for each job file in all field offices. This checklist may be printed out and attached to the cover of each individual job file, with items checked off as they are completed and filed.

2.2.3 Applicant Files

Applications will be maintained for one year after receipt (or as determined by the country office) in separate files organized by skill and qualifications.

In case of a serious threat to office security resulting in evacuation, these files must be marked for destruction or evacuation and stored in, or easily transferred to, a portable container. It is a serious security threat to local staff and Mercy Corps to leave behind applicant files to be accessed by unauthorized individuals.

2.2.4 Personnel Files

All documents related to the legal relationship between Mercy Corps and an employee are required to be kept in individual personnel files. Files must be kept in locked containers and stored in a locked office to ensure the confidentiality of these sensitive documents. Local legal counsel must be consulted for guidance on required/forbidden documentation and timelines for keeping documents. Personnel Files contain private, personal information including salary histories, home addresses, disciplinary warnings and other sensitive information. Consequently they must be kept in a locked space with restricted access, such as a locked filing cabinet in the human resources office which must also be kept locked.

The following documentation should be completed and kept in each staff member's personnel file upon hiring:

- Completed application form (if applicable)
- Curriculum Vitae
- Personnel Action Form (s)
- Signed Work Agreement or Employment Contract
- Signed Position Description
- Relevant certificates of education and training
- Passport copies or other identification
- Copy of Mercy Corps ID card
- Copy of National ID card
- Emergency Contact Information
- Signed acceptance of policies within National Staff Policy Handbook.
- Signed Conflict of Interest / Non-Disclosure of Confidential Information form
- Signed Code of Conduct (all staff)
- Signed Code of Conduct Procurement Activities Statement (Procurement Staff)
- Signed Family Co-Worker Statement
- Signed acceptance of policies within Field Security Manual
- Copy of driver's license (if employee drives Mercy Corps vehicles)

Additional documentation that should be added to personnel files during employment:

- Orientation Matrix
- Personnel Activity Reports
- Annual and Probationary Performance Evaluations
- Notification of successful completion of probationary period
- Individual Operating Plans
- Leave Requests
- Leave tracking sheets
- Disciplinary notices
- Transfer letters
- Training documentation
- Training tracking sheets.
- Termination letter (original)
- Changes of address, names, and employment status.
- Clearance form
- Copy of reference letters
- Exit interview notes
- Any other changes that relate to position, position description, complaints, relevant personal details.

Employees may review the contents of their own personnel file by making an appointment and supervisors may review the files of their subordinates. All access to these files by non-HR staff must occur under the supervision of the HRO, or as dictated by local labor law. Documents related to the recruitment and hiring of a staff member must not be kept in the personnel file – these files are to be kept in the Job File. The employee, when reviewing their file, should not be able to review hiring documents associated with their hire. This includes but is not limited to, reference checks, screening notes, and interview notes. Documents relating to health status, grievances, harassment or similar processes must not be kept in the personnel file - a separate file should be kept for this information. When supervisors review an employee's file, they must not be allowed to review any private information such as health status, grievance filings, etc.

In case of a serious threat to office security resulting in evacuation, these files must be marked for destruction or evacuation and stored in, or easily transferred to, a portable container. It is a serious security threat to local staff and Mercy Corps to leave behind personnel files to be accessed by unauthorized individuals. Personnel files are not discarded upon the termination of an employee and are kept for future reference, see FFM, Section 17.

Tools and Documents

2.2.4.1 Personnel File Content Checklist

The Personnel File Content Checklist lists the documents required for each employee in all field offices. This checklist may be printed out and attached to the cover of each individual personnel file, with items checked off as they are completed and filed.

2.2.5 Grievance/Investigation Files

A separate file system should be established to store files for grievances, complaints or internal investigations. Each separate case should receive its own file. The file should contain the date of the complaint, date or time period of the incidents or practice (if applicable), and a detailed description of the incidents or situation, subsequent procedures and actions, and how it was resolved. Only the HRO and the Country Director should have access to these files.

In the circumstance where Mercy Corps is required to retain information on the health status, or other sensitive information for each employee, a separate file or system should be established to maintain the integrity, privacy, and safety of this information.

In case of a serious threat to office security resulting in evacuation, these files must be marked for destruction or evacuation and stored in, or easily transferred to, a portable container. It is a serious security threat to local staff and Mercy Corps to leave behind these files to be accessed by unauthorized individuals.

2.2.6 Organizational Structure

Organizational and staffing structures should be clearly communicated and understood by staff. This includes staffing structure, responsibility of departments, reporting lines and relationships between the various departments or functions of the office(s). Organizational charts or a similar tool that clearly communicates such information should be used by each country program. It is recommended that when designing organizational structure, staffing relationships be designed to meet program and operations needs and should not be designed to accommodate existing personnel. Approved vacancies and supervisory relationships in position descriptions may be cross-checked with the structure to gauge the appropriateness of current recruiting efforts and staffing. It is the responsibility of the Country Director to ensure the organizational structure is clearly communicated and tools kept current and accurate.

Documents and Tools

HQ to Field Relationship Organizational Chart
Program Organizational Chart Sample
Management Organizational Chart Sample
Operations Organizational Chart Sample

2.2.7 National Staff Policy Handbook

A policy handbook detailing national staff policies is mandatory for all Mercy Corps country offices. The National Staff Policy Handbook (NSPH) details the operational procedures of

Mercy Corps country operations as it relates to national staff and details the standards of behavior and actions required from national staff. There may be country specific policies described in this book that also apply to expatriate staff, such as Internet and email policies, travel policies, or codes of conduct. It is recommended that such policies be identified clearly and communicated to expatriate staff and their understanding and agreement is documented.

This is a critical document. Its completion and release should be one of the highest priorities for all programs that are not operating in a life-saving emergency phase. The handbook will provide for consistent, fair, and transparent policies for the national staff, thereby maintaining morale. It will also save management's time by guiding decisions and policy. This will prevent repeated ad hoc or case by case decisions which may be inconsistent with previous decisions.

It is Mercy Corps policy to conduct its operations in compliance with the laws and regulations of the host country. These policies must adhere to local labor law and may require approval by the relevant governmental department. Specifically, tax withholding, statutory benefits, working hours, termination procedures, and national holidays, among others, are dictated locally. Each country must have the handbook reviewed by local legal counsel to ensure its compliance with local law and practice.

When possible, various aspects of national staff policies (benefits, salary scale, per diem rates holiday schedule etc) should be listed in an Appendix format and not included as text in the handbook. This allows the specific policies to be changed as required without reprinting the entire document.

The handbook's contents should be edited for local context, but each heading in the template provided must be addressed. The handbook must be translated into a language(s) appropriate to the locale. As necessary, meetings, trainings, sessions for illiterate staff, etc. to facilitate understanding of the policy handbook by all staff are required. All employees (including guards, cleaners, drivers) must be given a copy of the NSPH upon hiring, and must sign and submit to HR, the statement indicating they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the policies described in the handbook.

Once local adaptations and local legal review is complete, the National Staff Policy Handbook must be reviewed by the PALM team and approved by the Senior Vice-President of Program before becoming official country policy. The National Staff Policy Handbook template has been approved by Mercy Corps as the starting point to customize a handbook applicable to local field offices. Annually, the National Staff Policy Handbook must be reviewed by the Country Director and HRO for required updates. Any necessary changes or updates must be reviewed by the PALM team and approved by the Senior Vice-President of Program. It is best practice for a copy of the handbook to be kept in each office for reference. Management decisions (corrections, clarifications, resolutions, etc.) must be consistent with the spirit of the policy. These instances are noted for consideration during a future policy handbook review or amendment process.

2.2.8 Staff Roster

A roster of all current and terminated staff must be kept by the HRO. The information on the roster must be kept accurate and current with the data contained in individual hard copy personnel files. This roster may be in a database or spreadsheet format depending on local computer capabilities. A roster with all employee information allows for easy generation of reports and provides managers easy access to pertinent information such as start-dates, salary, contract dates, review status, etc.

This file may be in Access, Excel or other computer application. It is maintained by the HRO.

Documents and Tools

2.2.8.1 Staff Roster Template

The Staff Roster Template (with sample fields completed) may be edited to suit local requirements.

The roster must contain at a minimum, the following information: ID number, name, location, cost center, title, salary, level, grade, start dates, work agreement/employment contract end dates, annual performance review dates, and contract status (e.g. – part-time).

2.2.9 Identification Numbers

When hired, each employee should be assigned with a unique Employee ID number. This number should be referenced in all forms or actions pertaining to that employee. An ID number eliminates the possibilities of errors resulting from staff with multiple names, or when last names are not used. Staff ID numbers should not be reused after an employee termination. The use of ID numbers allows for better organization in the event of sudden growth of an office or country program.

ID numbers are most effective when kept simple, it is recommended that ID numbers be assigned in numerical order. Using a Social Security or National Identity number does not allow for a logical filing system. In many countries citizens do not have identification numbers, or there are privacy issues involved in their use.

In countries where multiple field offices are functioning, it is best to apply a prefix to the ID number identifying the location. Examples of multiple office employee ID numbers are below:

Kandahar	Kabul	Taloqan
KND 3209	KBL 001	TLQ 081
KND 3210	KBL 002	TLQ 082
KND 3211	KBL 003	TLQ 083

2.2.10 Identification Cards

At the Country Directors discretion, employees may be issued an identification card. Consideration of the use of ID cards off of the Mercy Corps premises should be dictated by local, security protocols. All ID cards must be returned to Mercy Corps upon termination of their contract. Temporary employees receive ID cards valid during the period of their expected employment. ID cards must specify an expiration date of no longer than one year from date if issue.

Documents and Tools

2.2.10.1 ID Card Template

The ID Card Template may be edited to suit local requirements.

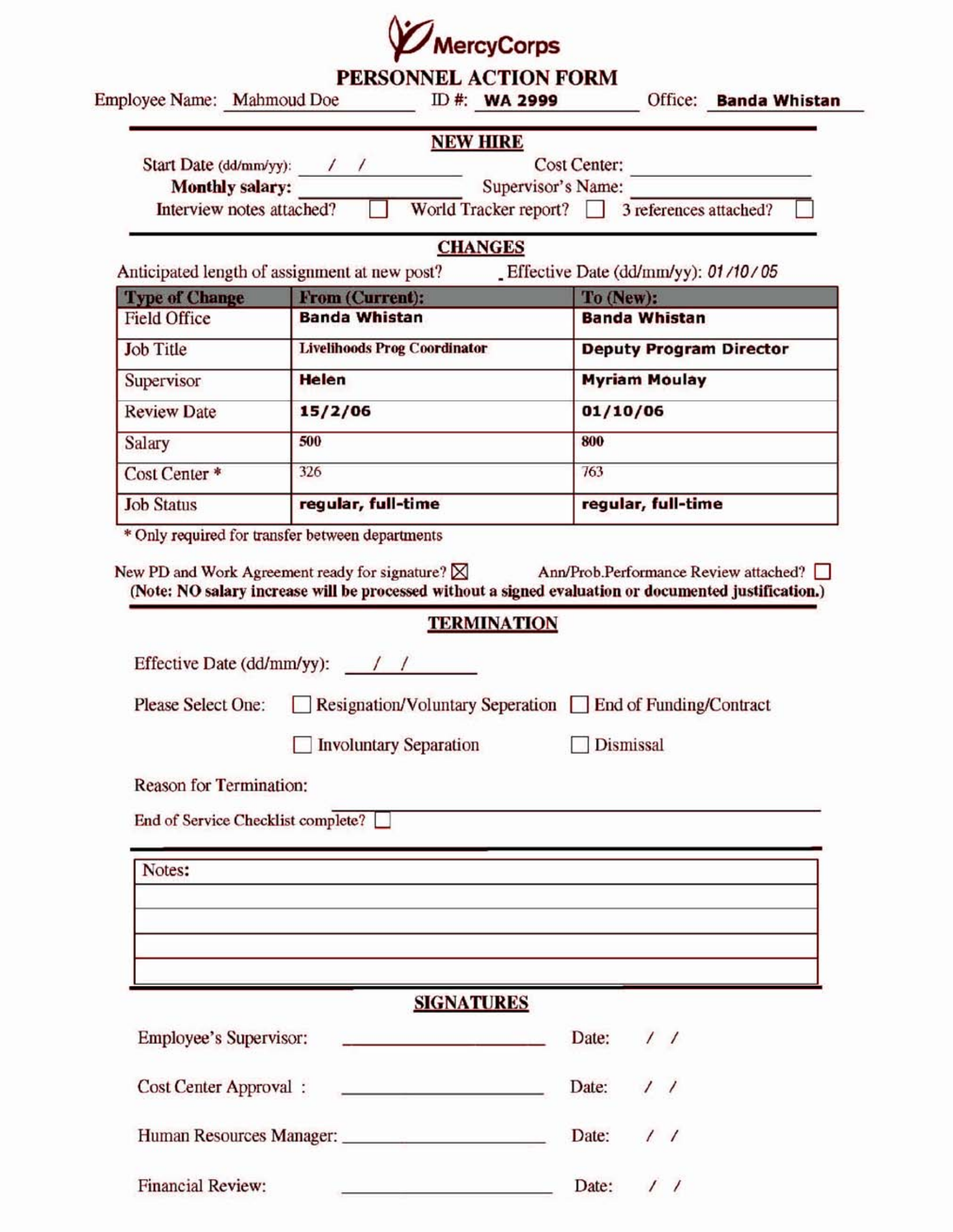
The ID card should contain at least the following information: a current and recognizable photo of the employee, ID number, employee name, title, duty station, location, signature of Mercy Corps representative, date of issue and expiration date.

Approval: Country Director/Head of Office

2.2.11 Transfers, Promotions, changes to Work Agreement/Employment Contracts

Employees may have the opportunity to move within the organization to new roles, departments and offices. These events should follow recruitment procedures. Any resulting changes must be indicated and documented on an approved PAF and submitted to finance and human resources. These changes must also be reflected in a new Position Description and work agreement or employment contract.

2.2.11.1 Sample Completed PAF Transfer/Promotion


MercyCorps

PERSONNEL ACTION FORM

Employee Name: Mahmoud Doe ID #: WA 2999 Office: Banda Whistan

NEW HIRE

Start Date (dd/mm/yy): / / Cost Center:

Monthly salary: Supervisor's Name:

Interview notes attached? ☐ World Tracker report? ☐ 3 references attached? ☐

CHANGES

Anticipated length of assignment at new post? Effective Date (dd/mm/yy): 01 /10 / 05

Type of Change	From (Current):	To (New):
Field Office	Banda Whistan	Banda Whistan
Job Title	Livelihoods Prog Coordinator	Deputy Program Director
Supervisor	Helen	Myriam Moulay
Review Date	15/2/06	01/10/06
Salary	500	800
Cost Center *	326	763
Job Status	regular, full-time	regular, full-time

* Only required for transfer between departments

New PD and Work Agreement ready for signature? ☒ Ann/Prob.Performance Review attached? ☐

(Note: NO salary increase will be processed without a signed evaluation or documented justification.)

TERMINATION

Effective Date (dd/mm/yy): / /

Please Select One: ☐ Resignation/Voluntary Seperation ☐ End of Funding/Contract

☐ Involuntary Separation ☐ Dismissal

Reason for Termination:

End of Service Checklist complete? ☐

Notes:

SIGNATURES

Employee's Supervisor: Date: / /

Cost Center Approval : Date: / /

Human Resources Manager: Date: / /

Financial Review: Date: / /

2.2.12 Disciplinary Action

Disciplinary procedures are subject to local laws and must be outlined in the National Staff Policy Handbook. Disciplinary action may include verbal warnings, written warnings, withholding of annual wage increases, withholding of promotion, demotion, leave with or without pay, and dismissal with or without payment of compensation in lieu of notice. An employee may be dismissed for serious infractions without prior warning. Staff terminated for cause or poor performance are not eligible for recommendations by Mercy Corps.

Issues of misconduct should be addressed no later than one month after the discovery of the infraction. However, serious misconduct, i.e. - fraud, embezzlement, coercion, or theft may result in appropriate disciplinary action at any time.

A verbal warning should be given for minor violations. In the case of poor work performance, the supervisor of the employee should issue a performance plan over a set period of time. At the end of this period the employee's performance should be re-evaluated. If proven unsatisfactory the following actions should take place:

A clear written explanation of the violation should be given to the employee for serious or repeated minor violations. Usually, a third written warning within one year will result in dismissal. To formalize and document the violation, it is crucial to clearly communicate what behavior has instigated the warning, and also what corrective behavior is required. The National Staff Handbook should be cited, when possible.

All of these processes should be recorded in the employee's personnel file and given to the HRO for review and filing.

Since disciplinary actions taken may affect the ability to terminate an employee later, it is important to understand the impact of local labor law on these procedures. Disciplinary procedures must be reviewed by local legal counsel and adapted to meet the country specific situation.

Documents and Tools

2.2.12.1 Disciplinary Notice

The Disciplinary Notice may be edited to suit local requirements.

A disciplinary notice should contain at least the following information: date, employee name, employee ID, title, name of manager issuing notice, number of notices, reason, detailed description of incident, action required for improvement, acknowledgement of receipt. In all cases, the guideline or policy that was breeched is referenced in a disciplinary notice.

Signatories: Supervisor, HRO, employee

2.2.13 Termination Process and Documentation

Termination of staff should be well documented and compliant with both local labor law and the procedures set forth in the National Staff Policy Handbook. Reasons for termination may include – but are not limited to – resignation, retirement, downsizing, disciplinary action, poor performance, misconduct, or the closing of a grant. The National Staff Policy Handbook defines eligibility and guidance for final payments, and Finance will calculate final salary payments.

In the event of termination as a result of disciplinary action (typically after three successive warnings within one year or immediate termination due to misconduct) the termination letter should cite the breeches to the code of conduct outlined in the National Staff Policy Handbook. All termination letters should be reviewed by local legal counsel for adequate notice (effective date of termination) and sufficient grounds for termination. Suspension (with or without pay) while an extensive investigation and termination process is undertaken may at times be appropriate. Terminated employees may be declared “ineligible for rehire by Mercy Corps” on the PAF.

The employee must submit a final timesheet, before any final payment. Based upon the timesheet, the approved End of Service Checklist, and the approved PAF, Finance will calculate final pay. Asset and inventory management, the employee’s supervisor and finance should all be consulted to verify all outstanding advances have been cleared, and equipment or remaining reports have been returned before final pay is given. All Mercy Corps property (including ID and business cards) are to be returned. The termination process is documented using the PAF, which must be signed by the supervisor, finance and human resources. Termination approval must follow the authority levels determined on Position Descriptions. The Head of Office should be alerted to all terminations before any action is taken.

The final pay including severance benefits (if any) is calculated by finance and noted on the termination letter. A signature indicating the employee’s confirmation of the information on the form is recommended. If the employee refuses to sign, it should be noted on the End of Service Certificate.

When warranted, an exit interview should be conducted by the HRO and the Head of Office.

Documents and Tools

2.2.13.1 Letter of Reference

Letters of Reference may be edited to suit local requirements and follow local custom.

Letters of reference should contain at least the following information: position held, dates this position was employed. Only employees in good standing are awarded a letter of reference. It should be reviewed by local legal counsel.

Letters of reference are prepared by the supervisor and must be approved by the Head of Office before being issued.

Approval: The Head of Office

2.2.13.2 Letter of Termination Immediate Notice

The Letter of Termination Immediate Notice may be edited to suit local requirements.

Letters of termination must contain at least the following information: date of issue, date of final working day, reason for termination, mention of any benefits or final pay outs (separate than a pay-slip produced by finance). It should be reviewed by local legal counsel.

A letter of termination is issued by Human Resources and approved by an officer with authority to terminate (indicated on Position Descriptions)

2.2.13.3 Letter of Termination Program End

The Letter of Termination Program End may be edited to suit local requirements.

Letters of termination must contain at least the following information: date of issue, date of final working day, reason for termination, mention of any benefits or final pay outs (separate than a pay-slip produced by finance). It should be reviewed by local legal counsel.

A letter of termination is issued by Human Resources and approved by an officer with authority to terminate (indicated on Position Descriptions).

2.2.13.4 Letter of Termination Unsatisfactory Performance

The Letter of Termination Unsatisfactory Performance may be edited to suit local requirements.

Letters of termination must contain at least the following information: date of issue, date of final working day, reason for termination, mention of any benefits or final pay outs (separate than a calculation sheet produced by finance). This document must also reference warning letters, performance reviews and any other actions taken in the past to alert the individual of their poor performance. It should be reviewed by local legal counsel.

A letter of termination is issued by Human Resources and approved by an officer with authority to terminate (indicated on Position Descriptions)

2.2.13.5 Employment Verification Letter

The Employment Verification Letter may be edited to suit local requirements and according to local custom.

Employment verification letters should contain at least the following information: name and ID number, position title, start and end dates of service. This letter is typically used when a letter of reference is requested by an employee whose performance has not been good enough to warrant a positive reference letter, however their performance has not been so poor to warrant a refusal of a reference letter.

Employment acknowledgments are issued by Human Resources with the approval of the Head of Office.

2.2.13.6 End of Service Checklist

The End of Service Checklist must be used and outlines all proper check-out procedures. It should be complete before the final payout and processing of a terminated employee.

Signatories: Supervisor, HRO, asset management, finance manager, and employee.

2.2.13.7 Sample Completed End of Service Checklist

MercyCorps

END OF SERVICE CHECKLIST

***The following information must be provided and approved before release of final pay check:*

EMPLOYEE NAME: *Mahmoud Doe* **DATE (dd/mm/yy):** *29 / 08 / 06*

ID #: *WA 2999* Department/Location: *Banda*

Supervisor Name: *Helen*

ITEMS TO BE RETURNED BY EMPLOYEE:

	Returned	N/A
Keys	☒	☐
Laptop/PC	☒	☐
Computer Software	☐	☐
Digital Library CD-ROM	☒	☐
Books	☐	☐
Project Documents	☒	☐
Project Documents	☐	☐
Passwords (PC, phone, etc.)	☒	☐
Mercy Corps ID Card	☒	☐
Cellular Phone	☒	☐
Other: ____	☐	☐
Other: ____	☐	☐

OTHER PROCEDURES:

☒ All Outstanding Advances Cleared ☒ Closing Report/Handover Notes Submitted ☒ Close Digital Library account

REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:

☒ Letter of Resignation (if applicable) ☒ Final Timesheet ☐ Additional Documentation (as applicable)

SIGNATURES:

Supervisor: Name: ________ Signature: ________ / /

Human Resources: Name: ________ Signature: ________ / /

Asset Manager: Name: ________ Signature: ________ / /

Finance Manager: Name: ________ Signature: ________ / /

Employee: Name: ________ Signature: ________ / /

2.2.13.8 Exit Interview Template

The Exit Interview Template may be edited to suit local requirements.

An exit interview is designed to learn from exiting employees so as to improve Mercy Corps policies and retention of staff. Specifically, the interview should discuss the employee's opinion of Mercy Corps services/policies, work environment during their tenure, and their reasons for leaving. It should contain at least the following information: name, position, and dates this position was held, and section for rating various aspects of the Mercy Corps office and reasons for leaving. An exit interview is not necessary for all terminations.

2.3 Compensation

Responsibility for the payment of national staff compensation rests with field offices. Payment procedures must be detailed in the NSPH. Employees should be informed of payroll policies and procedures. Any changes to procedures should be well planned and communicated in advance. For further information see FFM 4.4.1.

When available, field offices should require employees to open a bank account when hired, as bank transfers are the preferred method of payment for Mercy Corps. Employees may only be paid in cash when no other options are available.

National staff Work Agreement/Employment Contracts as well as salary payments must be made in local currency. National staff salaries may only be paid in USD in extraordinary circumstances, such as when the US dollar is used as the de facto local currency or when local currency is unavailable or otherwise infeasible. The practice and procedure for making salary payments in USD should comply with local laws. Local currency fluctuation in relation to the USD is not a valid circumstance for paying salaries in USD. In the event the USD must be used, implementing a local currency payment policy should be made as soon as it is feasible.

National staff Work Agreement/Employment Contracts should reflect the gross salary amount due to the employee rather than the net salary amount. Gross salary is the total salary amount before income tax or other deductions owed by the employee. Net salary is the salary amount after any employee-owed taxes or other deductions have been made and is usually referred to as the employee’s “take-home pay”. While Mercy Corps may be required by national employment law to withhold a portion of the employee’s pay and remit this directly to the government, it must be clearly stated in Work Agreement/Employment Contracts that personal income taxes and other social taxes required to be paid by employee under local law are the responsibility of the employee.

In cases of emergency or extreme hardship, national staff payroll advances may be authorized on a case by case basis as follows, unless otherwise provided for under local law:
(a) Individual payroll advances may be approved by Regional Program Directors up to an amount equal to two month's salary and for a period not to exceed two months;
(b) All other individual employee advances must be approved in writing by the Senior VP of Program, Chief Financial Officer or Senior Director of Program Operations.

2.3.1 Salary Scale

A salary scale is a matrix of position levels and pay ranges with corresponding salaries and sample positions. Its principal purpose is to provide guidelines when calculating salaries, and to ensure that staff with similar responsibilities, receive similar compensation.

The HRO and Country Director/Head of Office must maintain consistent salaries for similar workloads and responsibilities across all departments and programs in the country (and across the area of operations for regional programs that operate in multiple countries). Country offices and regional programs must create and maintain salary scales. Periodical and documented salary surveys with peer organizations working in the same region are recommended. The salary scale should provide the minimum and maximum gross salary amount for each position and contain levels and associated pay ranges that reflect qualifications, prior experience and number of years in the position. HQ Human Resources and the PALM team may provide guidance on conducting salary surveys and designing a salary scale.

The benefit of standardizing all forms of compensation throughout a country cannot be overstated. A salary scale should reflect the market value of specific positions in a local market and all efforts should be made to keep them uniform throughout a country. Different salary scales for different projects or departments within a Mercy Corps office must not be created. While the budget for a project is a consideration in determining when staff may be hired, it may not be used as a basis for the salary scale.

In the event Mercy Corps management within a country is decentralized and separated because of geographic or political reasons, (or when multiple countries are working closely) it is best practice for coordination of salaries and compensation packages amongst regional management to ensure consistency and fairness among neighboring Mercy Corps offices.

Pay Levels and Ranges

Pay levels reflect the educational requirements, responsibilities and experience required for positions. Levels are clearly indicated on position descriptions and not assigned to individuals. Generally, sample titles are listed in the salary scale for reference and are supported with a narrative detailing the qualifications and responsibilities of each level. Titles may change from grade to grade in different countries and the qualifications of technical positions should be well researched.

If an individual has significant experience in the capacity for which they are under consideration, on rare occasions a salary at a higher point within the range may be warranted. This is at the discretion of the Project Manager, HR Officer and the Head of Office, after careful consideration of the budget and salaries of current staff of the same title/responsibility.

When reviewing the salary scale and range for placing a new hire, the bottom, opening amount indicated in the range is usually given, with an exception being made for positions at the higher levels on the salary scale. Mercy Corps values relevant experience and skills, and may award a higher salary within the range in these instances. However, compensation should be awarded based upon the level of responsibility relevant to that position, not upon age, or non-related experience or qualifications. When determining the salary of a new employee with relevant experience, discretion must be used to ensure consistency within existing staff salaries and levels of responsibility.

In some Mercy Corps country offices, higher level(s) on the salary scale are sometimes granted for local staff with the capacity to effectively take on the role of an expatriate employee in terms of management, donor and policy compliance, strategy and language skills. In many countries, these are returnees or individuals who have been educated and worked abroad in a western setting. Often, a salary for these individuals far exceeds local staff salaries and clear criteria of qualifications and capacity should be outlined for placement in this level (see Level ID Narrative 8 in the sample Salary Scale). The Senior Vice President of Program or Senior Director of Program Operations should approve all positions and hires of individuals in this position.

Documents and Tools

2.3.1.1 Salary Scale Template

The Salary Scale Template may be edited to suit local requirements.

The salary scale is a matrix showing salaries per position level and reflects changes over multiple years of work. It must contain at least the following information: position levels, position titles (sample positions may be indicated), pay ranges for each level and starting salaries.

The salary scale narrative is a required addendum to a salary scale and is located on another worksheet within the same salary scale excel file. The salary scale details the responsibilities and experience required of each position level. It should contain at least the following information: reference to position levels and ranges, and a detailed narrative of the technical, managerial, financial, budgeting and reporting responsibilities, and qualification requirements.

Salary scales are considered a policy tool and must be approved by the Country Director.

2.3.2 Salary Surveys

Data from salary surveys in all areas of the country should be considered before establishing a country salary scale. Periodic salary checks should occur to ensure Mercy Corps wages remain competitive and consistent with other INGOs.

Salary surveys can be informal and conducted at inter-agency meetings during an office start-up or emergency setting, but should be more detailed when time permits. Salary surveys are most effective when weighing the responsibilities of a position and not a position title. Salary survey results are generally shared only with agencies who have participated with agency names kept anonymous on shared materials. When gathering salary survey data, it is important to understand the components of the salary so it can be compared on a similar basis to the Mercy Corps scale. For example, is it gross or net? Does the salary contain any benefits or other distorting components? It is also important to note that the UN, ICRC/IFRC, USAID and similar agencies typically pay higher salaries than Mercy Corps and other INGOs. Ideally, Mercy Corps salary comparisons are with other INGOs of a similar size and structure.

Documents and Tools

2.3.2.1 NGO Salary and Benefits Survey

The NGO Salary and Benefits Survey may be edited to suit local requirements.

Generally, salary and benefits surveys are used to ensure Mercy Corps salary and benefits package remain competitive with peer agencies in the same region or area. Generally, agency names are identified in a cover letter but not labeled on the actual summary sheet. Information obtained from surveys is confidential and not shared with exterior bodies without the approval of all participating agencies. The survey should contain at least the following information: space for salary ranges for sample positions, space for data input on benefits package.

Salary and benefits surveys are conducted by Human Resources at the approval of the Head of Office.

2.3.3 Salary Budgeting

The HRO and the country salary scale should be consulted when budgeting staffing costs for new proposals. Budget figures should always reflect a buffer for annual cost of living adjustments and salary increases.

2.3.4 Salary Increases

A salary increase policy must be established and approved by country management. A template is available in the Administration section of the Office In A Box. Raise policies contain specific information including maximum increments per year (reflected as a % of salary) and circumstances in which raises are awarded. Equity in the application of salary, benefits and raise policies is a requirement in all Mercy Corps offices.

Generally, raises are awarded under the following circumstances:

1. Merit increases

Salary increases may be awarded as a result of annual performance evaluations and are based solely on an individual's score on an annual performance evaluation. Such salary increases are not automatic and must be merit based. A cap is placed on salary increases and indicated in the grading section of the Performance Review. This cap must be competitive and will depend upon the local conditions. A salary/benefit survey and analysis may be undertaken to document and determine average and maximum salary increments. Annual evaluations are not used to offset inflation, see item #4 below.

2. Increased level of responsibility: change of title, job description

Employees may be awarded an increase in salary when their responsibilities increase within the organization. The changes must be accompanied by a change in job description. The salary assigned with the new role should be in accordance with the salary scale used by the office.

3. Change in local labor market – increased demand for a specific skill or position

An increase in demand for a specific skill-set may be sufficient reason for an increase in salary. Quality employees can be lost to other organizations because of differences in salary packages. If such discrepancies are thought to exist, a thorough survey should be made amongst other NGOs or employers to determine an appropriate, competitive salary for the position. The Country Finance Manager should review and assist in making these adjustments.

4. Cost of living increment

If necessitated by inflation, the Country Director, in consultation with the Country Finance Manager may award a separate, country-wide salary and salary increment increase based on well documented cost of living changes or inflation.

Documents and Tools

2.3.4.1 Salary Increase Policy Template

The Salary Increase Policy Template may be edited to suit local requirements.

The salary increment policy details criteria that are used to decide on the amount, if any of a merit based salary increase. Raises must be consistent with the current rates on the approved salary scale allowing a maximum percentage based on annual performance evaluations. This can be checked through a salary/benefits survey. It must contain at least the following information: acceptable reasons for raise, maximum amount awarded (shown as a %) and the amount awarded at varying scores on the annual performance evaluation.

The Salary Increment Policy becomes official policy once approved by the Country Director.

2.3.5 Benefits

National staff benefits are defined in the NSPH developed by each country office. Benefits provided to national staff are normally limited to those required by law, or to keep Mercy Corps' offerings competitive in the local labor market.

Similar to a salary survey, it is best practice to consult peer INGOs to determine an appropriate package. A benefits package summary can be presented to potential employees during the recruitment process, and distributed to employees for upon hiring.

Common benefits include leave days, health insurance or stipends, pension or social fund contributions, severance pay, etc. Care should be taken to clearly define eligibility and the methodology for calculating and paying benefits in the national staff policy handbook. As stated in FFM Section 4.1.2, it is Mercy Corps' policy to comply with all host country taxation laws and requirements. Those benefits that are not required by law must be reviewed by the Portland Human Resources Department and approved by the Senior Vice-President of Program.

Leave

Vacation is expected to be taken as it is earned and should not represent a material payout at the end of an employee's tenure. All vacation and leave policies must contain a maximum accrual cap to prevent excessive accumulation of vacation or leave pay. FFM 4.5.2.1

Leave days are requested in a written document that indicates approval and available leave days. Approved Leave Requests are kept with HR and attached to personnel activity reports (timesheets) and used to update a leave tracking system. Bereavement, sick leave, and leave without pay should also be tracked, and cannot be paid out or accumulated over limits.

Holiday
Mercy Corps provides national staff with 10 paid holidays per calendar year. This is the maximum number of holidays to be offered to national staff unless otherwise required by local labor law. Senior expatriate and national staff should meet to decide which western and local holidays should be made official field office holidays.

Some countries recognize a very high number of official or national holidays. It is Mercy Corps policy to comply with all local laws, therefore proper staffing and program planning must consider the number of holidays that will be granted during the calendar year.

Health Insurance/Stipends
In most cases, an insurance plan will provide better health coverage than a stipend. Although in some countries, insurance coverage is not available. Procurement of an insurance plan must be managed in the same manner as the procurement of any other service with a proper survey of available carriers. See section 3.2 Insurance for additional details on HQ-based insurance coverage.

Human Resources at Mercy Corps Headquarters may be contacted to assist in identifying reputable, local contacts through the HQ-contracted insurance broker.

Some benefits, such as severance pay, are earned over time and will only be paid out at a later date as defined by policy as outlined in the NSPH. In order to reflect the future commitment to pay as well as the proper allocation of the expense to projects, these types of benefits must be accrued monthly on the finance books. It is the responsibility of the Country Finance Manager and the finance department to ensure that benefits accruals are prepared and recorded in the books.

Documents and Tools

2.3.5.1 Benefits Summary
The Benefits Summary document may be edited to suit local requirements and details the approved, country benefits package.

Benefits summaries are given to all new staff during the time of hire or to potential employees. It must contain at least the following information: benefit title, benefit description, details of eligibility, and details on how the benefits are administered. Human Resources maintains the benefits summary with approved updates.

2.3.5.2 Holiday Schedule
The Holiday Schedule may be edited to suit local requirements.

2.3.5.3 Leave Request
The Leave Request may be edited to suit local requirements.

It must contain at least the following information: employee name, proposed dates, total days absent, purpose, Signatories: a supervisor approves a leave request and the HRO verifies sufficient vacation days have been accumulated. Leave requests are attached to the monthly Personnel Activity Report (timesheet).

Holiday Schedule Sample

2.3.6 Personnel Activity Reports (Timesheets)

Each staff must complete a Personnel Activity Report (commonly referred to as a timesheet) each month demonstrating hours worked each day with a correlating cost center. Instructions for completing Personnel Activity Reports as well as the required form (FFM Form 4.2B) are found in the Field Finance Manual, Section 4.2, which is available from the finance department or the Mercy Corps Digital Library.

National staff compensation must be allocated to cost centers based on the actual hours each staff member spent on a project and in accordance with Mercy Corps cost allocation policies. The cost centers should be taken from the Personnel Activity Reports which are completed monthly by each employee. The Finance Department is responsible for calculating allocations and for ensuring that employees are aware of cost center codes (FFM 4.4.6).

Personnel Activity Reports (timesheets) are completed throughout the month and given to supervisors for review and approval on the last working day of the month. Approved personnel activity reports are consolidated with HR for entry in to a leave tracking system. Leave Requests and any PAF indicating a change to an employee contract are attached to the personnel activity report as supporting documentation. Personnel activity reports must not be completed ahead of time. They should not be submitted to supervisor or HR before actual days are worked.

Signatories: employee, supervisor

Related Items
Field Finance Manual, Form 4.2B, Personnel Activity Report
Field Finance Manual, Section 4.2

2.3.7 Payroll

Policies on national staff payroll are outlined in the Mercy Corps Field Finance Manual (FFM), Section 4. The timing of national staff payroll payments should be in line with local practice and comply with local laws. Typically, the payroll cycle will be monthly, with payments being made in the week following the month end. The timing should take into account the complexity and magnitude of the transactions, but payment should take place as soon as possible after the end of the calendar month. Field offices should establish regular pay dates when employees can expect to be paid. In emergency cases, Country Directors may change the pay date to authorize the partial payment of salaries earned through the revised pay date. Payroll may not be paid in excess of earned salary, except on a case by case basis as approved by the Senior VP of Program, Chief Financial Officer or Senior Director of Program Operations (FFM 4.4.2). Payroll is prepared by the Finance Department, reviewed by the person in charge of HR and approved by the Head of Office or as outlined in the Approval Authority Matrix. Since the payment of salaries is dependent upon receiving timely and accurate employment information, good communication and collaboration between HR and finance is essential.

After the HR Department has collected and verified personnel activity reports (timesheets) for the month, the following information is submitted to the finance department:

- copies of the signed personnel activity reports for the payroll period
- a copy of any signed Personnel Action Forms (PAF's) documenting a change to salary or cost center executed during the payroll period
- a copy of any new Work Agreement/Employment Contracts executed during the payroll period.

Calculations of pay are based on local labor law, or in absence of local law, a consistent country policy. For example, daily rates can be calculated at a 22 workday/month rate for all partial months worked. Payroll is produced from actual documentation and therefore, payments should not be made without the submission of approved documents such as PAF's or monthly personnel activity reports. In the event that personnel activity reports are delayed due to security issues or distance of work sites, payroll will be based on the standard monthly salary and any adjustments will be made in the following payroll period.

After the payroll has been calculated, a summarized control report is submitted to the HR Manager for review and verification. Verification refers to ensuring completeness and accuracy, checking for missing staff, departed staff, vacation hours, etc. Final payroll is then submitted to the Head of Office for approval.

After payroll has been distributed the finance department prepares allocations based on personnel activity report (timesheet) data and Mercy Corps allocation policies.

As outlined in payroll (section 2.3), national staff salaries and wages must be paid by check or bank transfer. Employees may only be paid in cash when no other options are available. Field offices may require employees to open a bank account if necessary. When paying in cash employees must sign for the payment. This may be done by signing a copy of the pay slip or by signing a roster developed by the finance office. The finance office must maintain documentation that payment was received. FFM 4.4.4

When paying in cash, field offices should require employees to collect their monthly pay at the finance office during designated times. When this is not feasible, a paymaster should be designated from the finance or administration department to distribute pay at project sites. Project managers may not be given the responsibility for distributing pay since it creates an opportunity, either real or claimed, for the abuse of power. Paymasters should be accompanied by at least one other Mercy Corps person when distributing cash.

All employees should receive a pay slip with their salary payment that documents the details of the particular payroll calculation. The pay slip format is not mandated since local requirements vary widely and use of local language may be necessary. Sample pay slips may be obtained from HQ Finance or the Mercy Corps Digital Library. At a minimum, pay slips should include the following information:

1. Name of employee and employee identification number
2. Period to which the payment applies
3. Units, rate, and extended amount of gross salary or wage payments
4. Units, rate, extended amount and description for each additional category of pay
5. Units, rate, extended amount and description for each deduction
6. Taxes withheld on behalf of the government or other taxation authority
7. Subtotaled net pay amount

2.4 Human Resources Development (Professional Development)

Human Resources Development is an on-going process involving a routine, objectively administered performance review process, identification of individual goals, and design of a plan to achieve these goals. The tools used in this process are Performance Reviews, Position Descriptions, and Performance Plans. This process applies to all Mercy Corps employees regardless of their level or seniority. It is the responsibility of managers to ensure that reviews and plans are objective, realistic and facilitate the professional growth of employees.

The Country Director is responsible for establishing and maintaining the schedule for the Performance Review and Performance Plan cycle including probationary reviews. Staff at HQ may provide additional guidance on professional development, specifically, The Director of Training and Staff Development, or the Executive Counselor and other HQ staff.

2.4.1 New Hire Probationary Review

Usually after three months, new Mercy Corps national staff should undergo a performance evaluation before moving to regular status. A probationary review is not as comprehensive as an annual review and serves the purpose of:

1) Acknowledgment by a supervisor and department head to move an employee to regular status, terminate or extend a probationary period,
2) Detailing strengths and weaknesses, conditions for success, job fit, concerns, etc.
3) Recommend required trainings or improvements,
4) Reviewing expectations of the supervisory relationship.

New employees should be hired at the full salary designated for their grade and scale. No salary increments or position description changes should be conducted after a probationary review.

2.4.2 Transfer/Promotion Staff Probationary Reviews

Probationary Reviews should also be completed after the first three months following employee transfers to a new position. This is done to measure performance against the Position Description and the new responsibilities. The employee is aware that he/she is on probation and this is indicated on the transfer PAF document. Previous positions are not held for staff during the probationary period and the employee should be made aware of the risks associated with job transfers.

When possible, a transferred (promoted or parallel transfer) employee who demonstrates inadequate performance in a new role, should be helped to return to return him/her to their previous position or allowed to apply for a similar position. However, no positions are created to accommodate an individual.

2.4.3 Performance Probation Reviews

In the event a staff member has been underperforming, he/she is generally placed on a Performance Probation status and a probationary review is conducted at a set interval. Clear goals and standards of performance are established. If employees remain in the same position after a performance warning, indicators of acceptable performance and a date for a review is set. Termination may result if poor performance continues.

2.4.4 Annual Performance Reviews

A regular, non-probationary employee’s performance is managed with regular, on-going feedback throughout the year, and an annual review during the month of each employee’s year anniversary of service with Mercy Corps. This is completed using the Performance Review document detailing an employee's performance in relation to his/her Position Description, professional characteristics and Performance Plan. A formal discussion(s) between the employee and supervisor is held addressing the performance of the employee in relation to stated objectives, the position description, and Mercy Corps' performance expectations.

Performance Management is an on-going process involving communication, documentation and discussion throughout the year and is not limited to the formal annual evaluation. An annual evaluation formally documents, in summary form, discussions during the review period. These discussions should be taking place throughout the year since feedback in managing performance is best if given in a timely and context driven manner. The content or tone of an annual review should not be a surprise to an employee. A performance review should allow for self-assessment by the employee in both written and verbal forms.

Evaluations should occur at the one-year anniversary of each employee's hire and are a routine, annual event (offices may choose to conduct more frequent reviews but merit raises are awarded annually). Annual reviews based upon date of hire, rather than a standard review date shared by all staff are required.

The previous period's Performance Plan and Position Description are used as reference documents in the review process. Achievement or non-achievement of goals detailed in a Performance Plan are detailed in a Performance Review. The following lists characteristics that are evaluated in Performance Reviews:

2.4.4.1 Mercy Corps Performance Expectations

1. Performance: Fulfill the requirements of the Position Description and demonstrate flexibility with other duties as assigned;
2. Team Objectives: Achieve the objectives in the Annual Workplan (*sometimes called the Individual Operating Plan*) and contribute in a significant way to meet the objectives of the office, department, or unit;
3. Interpersonal Skills: Conduct oneself with sensitivity, awareness and respect when working with diverse groups of people, including Mercy Corps staff, beneficiaries and partners, and colleague agencies;
4. Dependability: Act at all times as a reliable and effective team player, volunteering to help without being asked;
5. Initiative and Results: Proactively enhance the quality of programs, outputs, workplace environment and relationships;
6. Representation: Represent Mercy Corps and its programs to constituent groups (the team, program participants, donors, partners, government and the public) by demonstrating a personal commitment to the mission and values of Mercy Corps and a sound knowledge of the organization, its principles and its programs;
7. Leadership and Social Entrepreneurship: Demonstrate leadership by being a positive example to others, a positive force programmatically and organizationally; foster a culture of innovation;
8. Commitment to Learning and Growth: Demonstrate commitment to develop, acquire, document and apply best practices in related fields, and apply solutions to obstacles to organizational effectiveness.
9. Attendance and work record;
10. Adherence to Mercy Corps policies and procedures;

Performance reviews may result in a merit increase, however it is important to clarify that reviews do not automatically result in an increase. A "percentile value" is assigned to a review resulting in a merit increase based on the country raise policy. A numerical system is often used to rate performance and this number is assigned a percentage increase that is outlined in a country raise policy. The numerical value should not be part of the review documents where contextual narratives and examples are much more beneficial to the performance review process. It is advised that supervisors and line managers assign a percentage increase independent from the review process, based on the documentation and real performance throughout the year. Reviews are meant to be thoughtful and comprehensive of the rating period and raises are not given without documentation. It is advised that at a minimum, the Program Manager or the head of a department review proposed raises for their staff. All merit increases must follow the raise policy set forth by country management.

During the review process, an employee's position description is reviewed and changes may be made for relevancy, accuracy and completeness. The PD must accurately capture and describe the individual's responsibilities. All revised PDs should be signed by both the employee and the supervisor, with one original copy stored in the employee's personnel files and the other given to the employee.

2.4.5 Performance Plans

A Performance Plan provides shape and focus to an employee's work and development; it is a tool for the employee and supervisor to capture and communicate future goals. A Performance Plan is prepared by the employee, and references their Position Description. Specific areas where professional or personal growth is desired are listed as personal objectives and a plan for achieving these objectives is detailed. Performance plans are designed to be similar to a log frame and include Objectives, Activities, Time Frame, Deliverables/Indicators, Required Support, and Performance

Performance Plans are kept in employee personnel files with copies to both supervisors and the individual for periodic reference. Performance plans are made at the same time as a Performance Review and upon the receipt of a new Position Description. The HRO may assist in facilitating adherence to a Performance Plan by tracking documents and holding routine check-in meetings and assisting with training opportunities.

The overall responsibility of this aspect of performance management lies with the individual and supervisor.

Objectives in a Performance Plan should be specific to the role and responsibility of the individual and contribute to the objectives of the program and office. This includes technical, managerial and behavioral points.

Documents and Tools

Performance Management Instructions

2.4.5.1 Probationary Review

The Probationary Review and Development Plan may be edited to suit local requirements.

The purpose of the probationary review is to document an employee's status at the completion of the probationary period (new hire; transfer, promotion; disciplinary, poor performance, etc.) and detail particular strengths or weaknesses and determine eligibility for regular employee status. It must contain at least the following information: hiring date, and end of probationary period date, status of the employee, and space for notes on their performance and details of steps for professional growth.

Signatories: Supervisor, employee and HRO

2.4.5.2 Performance Review and Performance Plan

The Performance Review and Development Plan form must be used to conduct routine, performance evaluations for employees (typically conducted annually). This is an evaluation of performance against the responsibilities indicated in a Position Description and details steps for a professional growth.

Signatories: Supervisor, employee, HRO. The final approval of a Performance Review and Performance Plan (before a raise is awarded) is approved according to authorities set in the AAM.

The Performance Review and Performance Plan is the document used to detail steps for a professional growth.

3 OFFICE MANAGEMENT

General office management practices may be adapted to suit local needs. However, in some cases, practices are mandated by policy and may not be altered. Such examples are indicated below in description text and often are implemented in coordination with other HQ or country policies. Other topics covered in this section are best practice and meant to provide guidance to field administration management on establishing standard operating procedures.

3.1 Country Registration and Legal Status

In order to commence operations, specific legal and administrative procedures are required to establish new country offices. It is necessary to obtain legal status as well as comply with all local laws, tax and labor requirements. Local legal counsel should be employed to guide and facilitate the registration process, and tax exemption status. Counsel should also review legal documents including but not limited to registration, memoranda of understanding, and all other agreements with local authorities. HQ Legal Counsel should be notified of the employment of local legal counsel, in advance whenever practicable, along with local counsel's direct contact information. In order to identify or select local counsel, new country offices are encouraged to refer to Mercy Corps' Digital Library for a list of local counsels representing Mercy Corps or other selected organizations in certain counties.

The process of completing registration in a country can vary greatly and is beyond the scope of this manual. Significant coordination with HQ as well as delegated authority (via a Letter of Authority) is required for this process. For more information on Letters of Authority, see FFM 2.6. The HQ Program Officer and HQ General Counsel should be contacted for matters related to legal entity status and registration.

3.2 Insurance

Mercy Corps maintains insurance plans arranged by headquarters that provide coverage to Mercy Corps field offices. These plans provide various levels of coverage to properties, assets, commodities, work-related accidents and vehicles. Summaries of these policies are available on the Digital Library. These plans are updated and renegotiated annually and are subject to change. It is important to note that additional local coverage, particularly for vehicles, may be required to ensure complete coverage. This may be required as not all levels of coverage or categories of coverage may apply to the local context. Additional coverage may also be required as updates and changes to HQ-based coverage are negotiated.

This section does not refer to health insurance plans for national staff. See Human Resources/Benefits section for more details.

Coverage in an HQ-based plan is not automatic. To ensure coverage, HQ General Counsel must be notified of the establishment of a new office or acquisition of vehicles and buildings. For specific requirements about HQ notification, see the section below or contact the HQ-based HQ General Counsel. It is the responsibility of the Country Director or designate, and the HQ-based Program Officer to provide the HQ General Counsel with the necessary information (outlined below) for the field office to activate the insurance plan.

3.2.1 Reporting

It is the responsibility of the Country Director to ensure the following mandatory information is submitted by field offices.

- **Annual insurance update**: An insurance questionnaire is sent to country offices annually. Information requested includes data on staffing numbers, salaries, assets, vehicles and properties. Email response is sufficient.

- **Vehicles update**: All vehicle purchases and donations of vehicles where Mercy Corps retains title must be reported to HQ General Counsel within one month of purchase. Email notification is sufficient and should include make, model, chassis and engine numbers, location, and acquisition cost.

- **New office start up**: Report provided within one month of the establishment of a new office. Email notification is sufficient and should include detailed address of office(s), data on staffing numbers, salaries, assets, vehicles and properties.

3.2.2 Submitting Claims

If an incident occurs (accident, property loss, etc.) that may warrant an insurance claim on an HQ-based policy, contact the HQ General Counsel. In the event a claim is warranted, claims must be reported within two working days of the incident and may require follow up activities from the field office such as police reports, photographs, quotation for repair etc. For further information on such reporting refer to the Asset Management Manual, Section 7.2.

Related Items
Insurance Summary
Vehicle Master List Template
Foreign Auto Coverage Matrix

3.3 General Office Filing

Filing procedures outlined in this and other Mercy Corps policy manuals must be followed. Filing systems should ensure that authorized staff members have access to information that is required for the performance of their duties. All mercy corps documents must be stored in a safe and secure location, protected from damage, loss or theft. Some documents (finance, HR) should be filed in a manner where access is restricted to authorized personnel.

3.3.1 Critical Documents

Critical documentation must be kept in fireproof and locked storage. Critical documentation includes (but is not limited to):

- Correspondence with government entities and officials: agencies, ministry, embassies
- Correspondence with donors, and embassies, etc.
- Registration papers, charters, and other documents related to Mercy Corps' status as a legal entity.
- Tax certificates
- Documentation required by Mercy Corps policy manuals.
- Legally binding documents and other commitments.
- Insurance policies

3.3.2 Grant Agreement Files

Copies of all grant agreements, budgets, amendments, reports, documentation, donor correspondence and other key program documents should be kept in a centralized location as a permanent office record of Mercy Corps projects. All original grant documents are archived in the HQ Finance Department. In cases where an exception has been approved and a grant agreement is signed in the field, the original copy of the signed agreement must be submitted to the HQ Regional Finance Officer.

All sets of grant/program documents should be organized into a set of folders labelled as follows: 1. Proposals, 2. Agreements, 3. Amendments/Modifications, 4. Reports, 5. Correspondence. Colored **Bold** type suggests 'hanging folders' with color-coded labels used for each of the above 5 categories. Examples of these labels can be seen below. Regular type indicates contents of each separate labelled manila sub-folders (it is recommended to color-code the manila folder *labels* to the same color as the category the folder is stored in) which can be held within a hanging folder.

The sets of files should be sorted alphabetically by country name, by donor (including grant or project number assigned by donor), by program name, by date.

Folder sets and sub-folders should be in the following order:

- **Proposal folder set [YELLOW]**
  - RFA (if applicable)
  - Questions, RFA clarifications
  - Technical Application
  - Cost Application

- **Agreement folder [BLUE]**
  - Copy of agreement
  - Copy of approved budget

- **Amendments/ Modifications/ Extensions [RED]**
  - Requests (for extension, modification, amendments) and Donor Response (each request along with the donor response should be filed in a separate manila folder, which should state what sort of a request it was and the date the request was made).
  - Modifications

- **Reports (As stipulated in the agreement) [GREEN]**
  - Program Reports (All quarterly reports should be in one manila folder, annual reports in one, performance reports in one, i.e., the reports should be grouped by category and the labels should specify the type of report the manila folder holds)
  - Finance Reports
  - Evaluations
  - Work-plans

- **Correspondence [ORANGE]**
  - Internal Correspondence
  - Correspondence with donor

<u>Examples of labels for hanging folders</u>

Kosovo PRM 91043
Emer Relief Commodities to Kosovo
Proposal (Start Date – End Date)

Kosovo PRM 91043
Emer Relief Commodities to Kosovo
Agreement (Start Date – End Date)

Kosovo PRM 91043
Emer Relief Commodities to Kosovo
Amendments (Start Date – End Date)

Kosovo PRM 91043
Emer Relief Commodities to Kosovo
Reports (Start Date – End Date)

Kosovo PRM 91043
Emer Relief Commodities to Kosovo
Correspond. (Start Date – End Date)

The following is an example of a label that could be used for each individual manila folder within the appropriate hanging folder (labelled as above).

Kosovo PRM 91043
Emer Relief Commodities to Kosovo
Tech App. (Start Date – End Date)

Kosovo PRM 91043
Emer Relief Commodities to Kosovo
Agreement (Start Date – End Date)

Kosovo PRM 91043
Emer Relief Commodities to Kosovo
1st Quarterly Rport (Start Date – End Date)

Documents and Tools

<u>File and Folder Label Templates</u>

3.4 Office Policies

The authority to approve local office policies rests with the Country Director. Approved office and country policies must be translated into a language(s) appropriate to the locale, printed and posted for viewing by all staff.

Office policies may cover topics including, but not limited to, the management of telephones, per diem and travel. The implementation and oversight of policies is delegated by the Country Director and these responsibilities should be included in position descriptions. Staff should receive sufficient training on office policies as described in the orientation process section of this manual.

It is important to note that several additional office policies are found in the National Staff Policy Handbook. Some of those policies may also be applicable to expatriate staff, such as the information systems policy and communications policy. Therefore it may be necessary to have expatriate employees sign forms acknowledging understanding and agreement to abide by such policies.

3.4.1 Travel

Mercy Corps' travel policies are outlined in the Field Finance Manual, Section 6. These policies apply to all field office personnel refer to forms which must be used for approvals, advances and reimbursements. In addition, country offices are required to develop a local policy which addresses the following:

- Lodging policies (including the use of guest houses, preferred hotels, Mercy Corps staff housing and the notification/booking procedures for lodging);
- Transportation options
- Notification requirements/approvals, and ticketing procedures
- Required lead times for booking travel

The local travel policy should be developed in consultation with the Finance Manager and approved by the Country Director.

Responsibility for organizing and facilitating travel in each office should be assigned to a staff member by the Country Director. Depending on the size of the office and traffic, this assignment may be a full-time position or consist of partial responsibilities. This staff member ensures proper procedures are followed and approvals are acquired before travel commences and commitments are made. A crucial role is the timely communication of all necessary information to those involved in the travel arrangements, especially the individual traveling. This information includes: pick up times, travel tips and communications with HQ staff if applicable. This staff member is also responsible for hotel and airline bookings, visas, and other travel arrangements.

As required by volume, hotels and travel agents should be contracted through a preferred supplier agreement, as outlined in the Procurement Manual. In all cases, the country-specific security protocols are applicable during the preparation of travel policies and the consideration of specific travel requests. Policies and procedures related to international travel are outlined in the Field Finance Manual, Section 6.

3.4.2 Per Diem

A per diem is a pre-determined rate given to a Mercy Corps staff member to cover expenses incurred by the employee while working away from their assigned duty station. A per diem policy should be established in each country office including rates, processing procedure and clear guidelines on eligibility, including clarification of which in-country movements are eligible for per diem. Only employees are eligible for per diem.

As any other expense, all per diem and travel is pre-approved as outlined in the Approval Authority Matrix.

Travel polices may involve reimbursement of actual expenses with a specified cap or a flat rate. In the event actual expenses are reimbursed, policies must require receipts and provide clear guidelines and examples of acceptable costs. Fixed per diem rates should be based on realistic, fair amounts and should be surveyed and updated, as needed. The responsibility of requesting and obtaining per diem is that of the traveling employee.

NOTE: Per diem is not, in any way, meant to be a benefit or addition to a salary. Position Descriptions and Work Agreement/Employment Contracts should indicate one duty location. Per diem should only be given for days away from the duty station.

Documents and Tools

Travel and Per Diem Policy Template

Related Items
Field Finance Manual, Section 6
FFM Form 6.5A, Travel Approval/Advance Request
FFM Form 6.6A, Travel Expense Report

3.4.3 Telephones

Mercy Corps country offices should have policies on the use of telephones and other communication equipment. Telephone systems in each country will vary depending on availability and local infrastructure. Policies should ensure that use of Mercy Corps telephones is tracked and reimbursement of personal calls is required. Telephones providing access to international calls should be limited and monitored. When possible, access should be locked with a code that is changed periodically. Employees should avoid using personal and hotel telephones for making work-related telephone calls, when possible.

The Country Director should assign responsibility to a staff member to develop a local policy that ensures adequate controls over the telephone systems so as to minimize misuse.

Regardless of the type of phone system, telephone exchange systems providing itemized bills and call details are preferred. When possible, advanced systems which assign entry codes should be used for monitoring purposes, when possible. Monthly bills are reconciled with the log book and any discrepancies investigated. Any personal calls are highlighted at this time and the individual responsible for the personal calls makes the payment directly to finance.

Fixed-location telephones
Log books are kept for each fixed telephone (non-mobile, usually land-lines and satellite). Log books record the name and title of the user, date and time, person called, number and purpose of the call, and duration of the call.

Cellular phones
In the course of business, some Mercy Corps staff may be required to use cellular telephones. Eligibility for cell phones should be clear and relevant to actual duties. As with land lines, systems which provide itemized statements are preferred over pre-paid voucher systems for management. For positions with higher turn-over or when the need is less critical, a pre-paid phone card system is preferred.

Phone cards

When pre-paid telephone cards are to be used, a set amount should be determined as reasonable and appropriate for a particular position. The cards should be distributed on a routine basis by the administration department. Reimbursement of phone cards on expense reports should be avoided as it is more difficult to control phone abuses. The primary use of tracking tools for phone cards is to monitor use and maintain a current record of who has been assigned these cards.

Documents and Tools

Sample Telephone Use Policy
Telephone Log
Personal Call Charge Statement
Telephone Card Issue Record Sample

3.4.4 Office Supplies

Each field office should develop a policy for the purchase, storage, and distribution of office supplies. Mercy Corps office supplies and office equipment are for business use only. Administrative management is responsible for the proper storage and the stocking of office supplies. Improper use should be reported to management.

Scheduled routine purchases should be conducted to minimize paperwork and purchasing trips by the procurement department. This requires good planning and projections. A ready stock of supplies should be maintained by the administration department and minimum levels of stocks properly stored. The distribution of office supplies is logged by administration. Allocation of office supply expenses are determined by the finance department. A preferred vendor for office supplies should be identified according to procedures outlined in the Procurement Manual.

Documents and Tools

Sample Office Supplies Policy
Office Supplies Request Template

3.5 Office Equipment

The day to day upkeep and management of office equipment (examples of office equipment include photocopy machines, binding and laminating machines, LCD projectors, digital cameras, fax machines, telephones, etc.) is assigned to a specific staff member. As necessary, an individual may be employed to regulate use or operate office equipment so as to avoid misuse or damages. This individual should also be responsible for equipment and for maintaining records of services and repairs.

3.6 Stamps

All official rubber stamps (or their equivalent: seals, paper embossers, etc.) with the Mercy Corps logo, address, tax or registration number used to certify approval by authorized Mercy Corps representatives are controlled items. They must only be produced under the direction of the Country Director. Stamps must be assigned to specific individuals in the office for specific purposes and not shared. Stamps must be tracked, signed for, and returned upon termination - similar to an asset. Stamps must be kept in a locked space and their loss or theft reported to the Country Director.

3.7 Print Materials

Stationery should be made available and kept in quantities sufficient for normal use. Printing of materials such as letterhead, envelopes, business cards, etc. using the Mercy Corps logo, tagline, mission statement and addresses is required in the routine course of business in all offices. The logo and guidelines for its use can be found in the Graphic Standard Guidelines which is available for download at identity.mercycorps.org

Login: mercycorps
Password: courage05
Email: brand@mercycorps.org (email with questions on usage, etc.)

Avoid the unnecessary distribution of logo tool kits and any electronic files of the Mercy Corps logo. Use of Mercy Corps letterhead should be monitored.

The printing of donor, partner, and other external organization logos should follow branding and positioning protocols specific to each organization.

Printing of materials is a service and should be procured as described in the Procurement Manual.

3.8 Scheduling

Administration functions are essential for effective implementation of program activities and administration staff should be scheduled to provide continuous, reliable support as needed. It is the responsibility of the Country Director or designee to ensure constant coverage and identify replacements during absences. For example hiring three to guards perform 8-hour shifts every day is not adequate staffing sand scheduling as it does not allow for leave, absences, or provide for a regular workweek.

3.9 Translation

Oral and written translation services may be required for office operations. Translation services may be contracted or Mercy Corps may employ translators. Technical translation needs can be outsourced, as needed. Legal translations or official documents may need to be translated by, or approved by, a notarized translation service or as otherwise required by local laws.

Office documents and policies are translated as needed, to ensure all staff are provided complete access to policies and procedures. Review is required to ensure a proper translation of concepts and details. It is best practice for translated documents to show both the translated language and corresponding English for reference. In all cases, the English version of a document is the legally binding version should a dispute or misunderstandings arise.

Forms required in the Field Finance and Field Procurement Manuals must remain in English as this is required for accountability to donors. In cases where staff may need a translated version to properly complete the form, a translated version may be printed on the back side.

3.10 Contact Lists

A contact list for all offices and employees should be kept current and distributed monthly to all staff and to Mercy Corps headquarters. This responsibility is typically delegated to an administrative staff member.

Documents and Tools

3.10.1.1 Country Contact List Template

The Country Contact List Template may be edited to suit local requirements.

Contact details for each field office should include address, telephone and fax numbers, and email address (if applicable).

Staff contact details should include full names, position title, e-mail address (if applicable), business telephone contact numbers and home telephone numbers (if appropriate).

3.11 Reception

Administration is responsible for ensuring that an appropriate guest reception area is provided in all offices.

Protocols on guest reception are established in coordination with the security protocols of the country. In all cases, guests are registered in a log book and the individual with whom they will meet informed of their arrival. In larger offices or countries with security concerns, a numbered, guest-identification card may be given to each guest to distinguish them from staff. The guest ID and identify them with the log book. All non-Mercy Corps employees are escorted when in the office or compound.

The entry of all non-employees to Mercy Corps facilities will follow the established, country, security protocols.

Waiting rooms and office space should display the Mercy Corps logo, Annual Reports and other visibility items that communicate Mercy Corps branding and positioning. The waiting room and offices should provide visitors access to information on Mercy Corps in-country programs and Mercy Corps programs worldwide. Sufficient quantities should be stored in each relevant field office.

3.12 Courier Services

Courier services may be used to facilitate routine shipments and correspondence with headquarters and other country offices. Courier services are costly and it is best practice to establish standard periodic (usually monthly) shipment dates for routine packages sent to headquarters, thereby avoiding the cost of multiple shipments.

When possible, a contract and account should be established in country offices for post-paid billing at the most competitive rates. This service is procured and managed as a preferred supplier agreement outlined in the Procurement Manual.

3.13 Internal Message/Mail Systems

It is recommended that each office establish a message system, using message trays/boxes that are labeled with the name of individual staff members and field offices. Incoming mail, correspondence from other field offices, messages, and other paperwork, etc. can be left in an individual's box for pick-up at their convenience. It is also recommended to establish an out-box addressed to every other field office in the region. Staff traveling to another field office can then deliver the items addressed to relevant individuals and offices, or routine deliveries can be scheduled.

3.14 Subscriptions

It is recommended that field offices purchase subscriptions to local newspapers, magazines and other periodicals. They are an excellent source of local news, government activity, and security information. Publications specific to programs or departments are charged to relevant cost centers and procured as any other service.

4 FACILITIES

4.1 Lease Guidelines

All Mercy Corps facility rentals or leases must be documented by a lease agreement or other legally binding contract. Templates for lease agreements must be reviewed by a local lawyer to ensure compliance with local laws and practices. Mercy Corps standard Lease Agreement format should be used for renting properties by making the necessary changes in the template referred to in the Procurement Manual. Lease agreements are signed and reviewed as authorized in the Approval Authority Matrix. Two originals of each lease (in English and local language) should be signed by both parties with an original held by the lesser and the other by the lessee. Facility leases must be approved in accordance with the authorities defined in Section 2.5 of the Field Finance Manual. It may be useful to include an annex of property, furniture or other items owned by the landowner that will be returned upon termination of the contract.

The selection of facilities and the contracting of lease agreements should follow the procedures set out in the Field Procurement Manual, Section 8.2.3.

4.2 Maintenance

Maintenance supplies and services must be procured according to Mercy Corps policy regarding procurement and contracting of services. A staff member should be given the responsibility to conduct or oversee repair and maintenance of facilities. This position can be part of either the administration or logistics department in an office and will often have limited purchasing authority.

4.3 Lease Filing

Copies of lease agreements are to be kept in a separate Lease Agreements File. Original Lease Agreements are kept with Finance. A Lease Matrix should be maintained – indicating all leases, description of property (ex. Expat House 1, WH, etc.), lease period, monthly rent in local currency, monthly rent in USD, and payment dates. Documents to be included are:

- A copy of the Lease Agreement
- Any subsequent agreements between the property owner and Mercy Corps should be included in the lease folder.
- Permissions to construct or change a structure;
- Agreements authorizing Mercy Corps to incur costs for repairing a structure that may be taken off subsequent rent payments
- A copy of the property deed should be included in the lease folder.
- The contact information and photocopy of the ID of the landowner should be included in the lease folder.

Documents and Tools

Lease Matrix

4.4 Non-financial Lease Contractual Obligations

4.5 Space Planning

4.6 Keys and Locks

All keys to Mercy Corps rented/owned premises, individual offices, cabinets, safes, locks, etc. must be tracked and signed for. Finance manages keys for safes and cash boxes. The issue of all keys should be recorded and signed for using a key log book or sign-out sheet. In addition to the sign-out sheets, a master list should be kept indicating all the keys (including copies) associated with each office. This list should indicate the current custodian or location for each key. Unauthorized duplication of keys is strictly prohibited. The distribution of keys should be limited to essential staff only. After loss or theft of a key, or when assuming new premises, locks should be changed. When possible, locks with keys that cannot be duplicated are fitted in doors. Keys are returned as part of the routine, check out process at termination of an employee.

A locked master key box with duplicate copies of all the keys to the premises, including individual offices, cabinets, safes, and locks (excluding the safe and cash boxes) is kept under the responsibility of the Head of Office. Avoid labeling keys with stickers or key chains that clearly identify a room or location. Key numbers and staff member assignment should be logged with a master list.

Documents and Tools

Key Sign-out Sheet
Key Inventory

5 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Clear and detailed guidelines on the appropriate use of Mercy Corps IT equipment and systems are required of all offices. The responsibility of establishing and maintaining an adequate IT system lies with field offices. An IT system includes: equipment, software, internet connections, back-up systems, office set-up or network wiring, and maintenance and user policies. An IT System Administrator is to be budgeted and hired or contracted to carry out IT responsibilities. The HQ IT department should be notified of the contact details of this person and when staff changes occur. In all cases, the IT support unit at Mercy Corps headquarters can be contacted for assessments and guidance.

5.1 Equipment

IT equipment includes but is not limited to computers, printers, networking equipment and accessories, internet equipment and other accessories such as digital cameras, scanners, external hard drives, and other related items. Before making purchases, check guidelines for standards on equipment maintained regularly by the IT Support Unit in HQ on the digital library or by request. Equipment should be compatible with local power supplies and external converters should be avoided. It is recommended to have a local, IT specialist review specifications before purchasing and conduct inspection/quality control when receiving new IT goods.

Generally, the set up and maintenance of IT equipment (including repairs, upgrades, virus updates etc) is the responsibility of the IT Systems Administrator in each office. While many staff may have knowledge of computers and applications, standards of use and maintenance follows established standards.

Mercy Corps procedures on asset management as outlined in the Field Asset Management Manual must be applied in the purchasing, marking, routine checks and disposal of all IT equipment. Software is also included on either the IT Equipment inventory or Asset Inventory of an office and controlled with the same attention as equipment. Separate inventory of all IT general equipment is maintained by the IT Officer. All changes or additions to IT equipment must also be reported to the officer maintaining the office asset list.

5.2 Software

It is Mercy Corps policy that only original software is used on all Mercy Corps equipment and networks. When making software purchases, Mercy Corps IT support unit in headquarters should be consulted for advice in terms of compatibility and troubleshooting. If Mercy Corps breeches license agreements it will jeopardize our discounts and the large-scale donations from companies like Microsoft and Adobe. Software that duplicates any standard Mercy Corps operating systems required by policy (for example: alternative finance or procurement tracking software) should be avoided unless otherwise recommended by HQ management.

Software CDs and license keys should be stored in one location and responsibility for their safekeeping assigned to one individual by the country director.

5.3 Local Area Network

A thorough assessment of needs and options should be undertaken before committing to a network design.

Local area networks can be established using a variety of technologies. A cost analysis of actual needs and available equipment should be undertaken before committing to a system. Each network design should include security protocols that protect a network from viruses and unauthorized usage. Security protection includes password, firewalls and appropriate security protocols. It is recommended to use cable for connecting personal computers to a central system. Network systems should allow for future additions.

5.4 Internet

A thorough assessment of needs and options should be undertaken before committing to type of internet connection. The procedure for procuring such services should be followed as described in the procurement manual.

Various technologies for accessing the internet are available in different countries. Options may include dial up, digital and satellite connections as well as portable satellite equipment and satellite telephones which can be used when no infrastructure is available. Because of the potential high cost of satellite systems, the IT support unit at HQ should be consulted for assistance and guidance when considering such options.

Country policy dictates access to the internet from office computers. Use of chat programs and restricted sites is prohibited. While the internet is an invaluable tool, excessive and non-structured use can disrupt daily work habits, hampering productivity. In all cases, downloading music and visiting inappropriate sites are forbidden. When restricting internet access from personal computers, a shared work station in a central location with internet access is a recommended solution to the problem of distracting or unauthorized personal, internet browsing. For further details on country IT policies see the National Staff Policy Handbook.

5.5 E-Mail

Whenever possible, business related email correspondence should be conducted over business accounts. Mercy Corps email addresses may be assigned to employees as determined by need. Email addresses can be assigned through the IT Support unit at headquarters or through local servers. Eligibility for business addresses is determined in-country.

In most cases, Mercy Corps work addresses will be accessed through a client mail program that will be set up on computers. All Mercy Corps work related email correspondence is to be conducted through these email addresses

5.6 Digital Library – Field Offices

It is a common misperception that only expatriates should be allowed access to the Digital Library – this is false. The Mercy Corps Digital Library (DL) is a venue in which institutional documents and data are made available for reference by all staff, including national staff. The Digital Library is maintained at Mercy Corps HQ by the Digital Librarian. The DL can be accessed over the internet. Quarterly, several copies of DVDs containing the entire contents of the DL are sent to each field office from HQ. The DVD can be installed onto a Windows PC server on your local network, a Cobalt Qube or Clark Connect Server. Online accounts can be setup for any individual staff member by the Digital Librarian or local administrator.

The Country Director should appoint an administrator to assign and maintain a list of usernames & passwords for digital library access for national staff members. The administrator will then receive instructions on how to add and delete local users from the Digital Librarian (dlibrarian@mercycorps.org). National staff members are presumed to be given access to the DL. All staff members must first sign a confidentiality agreement, which is to be stored in the employee personnel file, in order to be given access. The administrator deletes them from the user database when their employment with Mercy Corps is terminated.

5.7 Data Backup

Backing up data regularly is vital insurance against the potential loss of data and each field office is required to establish and implement a policy on backing up data. The Help Desk at HQ is available to advise on back up options and review established procedures.

5.7.1 Backup Plan

A backup plan must be developed and followed. It should be based on the size of office/department and available resources and outline regular intervals for occurrence. All backup plans should balance expense and effort against risk. Few backup routines are 100% airtight -- and those that are may be more trouble to implement than they are worth.

A backup plan should be established that includes:

- Type of data and system that is being backed up: i.e. - network file shares, designated folders on individual hard drives – both desktop and notebook (laptops should be backed up) systems, etc.
- Media used by the backup system: e.g. - tape, CD/DVD, network drive, USB drive.
- Type of backup: full or incremental.
- Frequency of backup.
- Frequency of a test restore.
- Staff member(s) responsible for performing backups.
- Staff member(s) responsible for monitoring backups to ensure they are being performed successfully and tested on a periodic basis: perform a restore to make sure the process is working.

5.7.2 Backup Contents

What is most critical to backup will vary according to your job function. For finance group, database and accounting files are probably the most critical data assets. For a program group, grants information and staffing info might be the most critical. In any case, the files should be backed up before and after any significant amount of data entry or system upgrade. Each group may have different backup strategies and time tables. For example a finance group should back up daily, while a program group may choose to back up only on a weekly basis.

It is not usually necessary to back up the complete contents of each hard drive -- most of that space is taken up by the operating system and program files, which can be reloaded from CD if necessary. The only exception is if your office has a dedicated file server; it's a good practice to do a full backup of the centralized file share on your server so that you are able to restore the files on another system.

5.7.3 Backup Location and Rotation

Backups should be stored off-site to maintain data integrity in the event of a site-specific disaster such as a fire, earthquake, break-in, or flood. Ideally, you should store your backups in a secure location (e.g. safety deposit box or at a separate geographic location). Generally, it is recommended to rotate a set of backups off-site once per week. Tape backup devices are not available in all offices. In that case individual systems should be backed up to CDRW's and then rotated off-site.

5.8 IT Policies

Guidelines for eligibility, maintenance, use, and repairs of equipment should be established in each country office to outline appropriate use and protection of Mercy Corps equipment and data. Many of these policies are contained in the National Staff Policy Handbook (section 2.2.7).

Documents and Tools

IT System Administrator Position Description

Computers and Safe Computing – HQ Guidelines Document