

United Nations JPO Programme



TERMS OF REFERENCE 21P002

JPO (Associate Expert)

I. General Information

Title:

JPO in International Trade Law

Sector of Assignment (e.g. Political Affairs, Humanitarian Affairs, Administration etc):
International Trade Law

Organization/Office:

Substantive secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), International Trade Law Division (ITLD), Office of Legal Affairs (OLA)

Duty Station:

Vienna, Austria

[Non-Family Duty Station: yes / no

Duration:

1 year (with possible extension for another year)

[Extension of appointment is subject to yearly review concerning priorities, availability of funds, and satisfactory performance]

II. Supervision

Title of Supervisor:

Director, UNCITRAL Secretariat, International Trade Law Division

Or

Principal Legal Officer, International Trade Law Division

Content and methodology of supervision:

Establishment of a Work Plan: During the first month of the assignment, the Junior Professional Officer (JPO) will work jointly with his/her direct supervisor to finalize an agreed upon work plan. The final work plan will be discussed and mutually agreed to by the JPO and his/her supervisor.

Evaluation: The United Nations Performance Evaluation System (e-performance) will serve as a primary platform to evaluate of the JPO's performance.

Individual guidance provided by the supervisor and one or more Senior Legal Officers; participation in staff meetings where the policy of the Division is elaborated and individual work products are discussed.

III. Duties, Responsibilities and Output Expectations

- Preparation of comparative law studies and research on particular questions of investor-State dispute settlement and other issues in international trade law and practice by examining textbooks, journals, legislation and case law; analyzing and synthesizing the results of that examination; preparing a draft report, as appropriate;
- Preparation of legal texts (e.g. draft conventions and model laws) by preparing components of those texts with linguistic and conceptual clarity; legislative support to law reform in developing countries, with particular emphasis to regional efforts for the modernization of commercial legislation in Africa, in the sub-region covered by the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA); coordination of activities with the Organisation Internationale La Francophonie;
- Preparation of commentaries on draft or final legal texts produced by UNCITRAL (United Nations Commission on International Trade Law), which are circulated to Governments and international organizations, by preparing a draft of segments of a lesser scope or difficulty for review by senior officials, as appropriate;
- Servicing of sessions of UNCITRAL and its Working Groups by performing pre and post session duties, and assisting in the preparation of the draft report of the meeting;
- Preparation and editing of compilations of legal texts and commentaries;
- Preparation of presentations or lectures on various aspects of the work of UNCITRAL in support of the capacity building programme occasionally run by the UNCITRAL Secretariat in developing countries and any subsequent assistance with law reform projects;
- Performance of other related duties, as assigned.

IV. Qualifications and Experience

Education:

Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in law with emphasis on international commercial law, private international law or comparative law. A first-level university degree in combination with qualifying experience may be accepted in lieu of the advanced university degree.

Work experience:

Two years of experience in matters relevant to the private law of international trade.

Languages:

Fluency in English and French, knowledge of another official UN language is an asset. Skills in English and French must be of a standard sufficient to enable the incumbent to draft legal texts clearly and precisely.

Other skills:

- Demonstrated ability to apply good legal judgement in the context of assignments given;
- Fully proficient computer skills and use of relevant software applications, and in particular use of information data bases, internet/intranet services, library sources, etc.;
- Ability to establish and maintain effective working relations with people of different national and cultural backgrounds.

UN competencies:

Professionalism:

Shows pride in work and in achievements; demonstrates professional competence and mastery of subject matter; is conscientious and efficient in meeting commitments, observing deadlines and achieving results; is motivated by professional rather than personal concerns; shows persistence when faced with difficult problems or challenges; remains calm in stressful situations. Takes responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives and ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work.

Communication:

Speaks and writes clearly and effectively; listens to others, correctly interprets messages from others and responds appropriately; asks questions to clarify, and exhibits interest in having two-way communication; tailors language, tone, style and format to match the audience; demonstrates openness in sharing information and keeping people informed.

Teamwork:

Works collaboratively with colleagues to achieve organizational goals; solicits input by genuinely valuing others' ideas and expertise; is willing to learn from others; places team agenda before personal agenda; supports and acts in accordance with final group decision, even when such decisions may not entirely reflect own position; shares credit for team accomplishments and accepts joint responsibility for team shortcomings.

V. Learning Elements

On completion of the assignment, the JPO will have/be able to:

- Prepare comparative law studies and draft legal texts of statutory, contractual or other nature in the field of uniform commercial law;
- Lecture at the university level on most legal instruments produced or in preparation by UNCITRAL.

VI. Background Information

The International Trade Law Division of the Office of Legal Affairs, United Nations, is the secretariat of UNCITRAL, which is the core legal body in the United Nations system in the field of international trade law. UNCITRAL's principal task is the promotion of the progressive unification and harmonization of international trade law. The primary work of the Division consists of research, analysis, synthesis and the drafting of reports, legal texts and commentaries. Since no one could be conversant with all the knowledge required for any one of the items on the work programme, several members of the Division participate in the work on every item. The assignment of staff is by project and there are no permanent subdivisions within the Division. All members of the Division are required to perform the same general types of activities.

Examples of possible projects which could be assigned (drawn from the current programme of work of UNCITRAL which is decided upon at its yearly session) include: international commercial arbitration; electronic commerce; insolvency law; micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME); investor-State dispute settlement reform (ISDS); judicial sale of ships, etc.

The International Trade Law Division of the Office of Legal Affairs would welcome the participation of suitably qualified female and male candidates in this technical field. The recipients of these terms of reference are, therefore, urged to make every effort to locate and nominate suitable candidates, both female and male, for the vacancy. It should be emphasized that engaging the JPO fully in all tasks performed within the International Trade Law Division will certainly add to the professional competence of the JPO.