

CONCEPT NOTE

PDA Fellowship Programme

UNDP Oslo Governance Centre (OGC) and the UNDP-DPA Joint Programme

Background

The renewed Oslo Governance Centre was officially opened in June 2015 as a convening hub for applied research and policy discussion in governance and peacebuilding. The Centre is planning to establish a fellowship programme, one stream of which will involve Peace and Development Advisors (PDAs) deployed under the auspices of the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme on Supporting National Capacities for Conflict Prevention. PDAs are a unique cadre of UN staff possessing hands-on experience and knowledge of conflict, peace and development. They are often seen to be a personification of the inherent linkages (and increasingly close collaboration between and within) the UN's political and developmental arms. While the PDA function varies across country contexts, the PDA cadre has broad experience in, among other aspects, developing national capacities for conflict prevention, accompanying and facilitating community dialogue, supporting national architectures for peace, capacitating national institutions in early warning mechanisms, and contributing to mitigating tensions around elections.

The purpose of the OGC Fellowship Programme for PDAs is to a) capture and disseminate the rich insights of these practitioners, b) gauge their views and experiences on challenges, opportunities, and trends in conflict prevention, peacebuilding, development and governance in transitions to inform policy and practice; c) strengthen the exchange amongst PDAs and the broader community of practice; and finally d)) encourage PDAs to explore the impact of their work and learn from their peers. This exercise will also provide the opportunity for participants to share experiences and good practices on substantive matters and operational challenges, ultimately contributing to a more effective support of PDAs to national partners and UN Country Teams. The outcome of the fellowships will also be used to inform, update and enrich relevant training courses.

Process

To support learning from the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme, OGC will invite a number of interested PDAs to participate in a short-term fellowship at the Oslo Governance Centre.

PDA Fellows will engage in facilitated reflections with their peers on pre-identified issues of interest.¹ The issues will be identified through consultations between OGC and the partners to the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme (UNDP/BPPS, DPA, and PBSO), based on the needs and interests identified by PDAs

¹ Potential topics identified for 2016-2017 include, but are not limited to, cross-border approaches to peacebuilding and conflict prevention; gender and peacebuilding; and strategies for addressing violent extremism.

themselves and the key issues, challenges, and opportunities related to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the countries and regions in which they are deployed (or are otherwise supported by the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme).

The PDA Fellowship will be launched in 2016 with 3-4 PDAs invited for each session. Participation will be open to PDAs that have recently finished their assignment, or are in between assignments as well as serving PDAs, contingent on their availability. Each fellowship period will last 2-3 weeks and will take place twice a year (April and October is envisioned for 2016).

In an effort to bring different perspectives and experiences to the discussions and strengthen the linkages between the PDA cadre and their peers, member(s) of DPA's Standby Team of Mediation Experts will also be invited to participate in specific sessions, as appropriate.

The OGC will ensure that participants have access to the necessary resources during their fellowship, including facilitation of the reflection, and access to relevant experts and practitioners working in the Nordic region (i.e. NGOs, think tanks, academic institutes). Opportunities for PDA fellowship intakes to be hosted by, or otherwise engage with, Sweden's Folke Bernadotte Academy or other research and academic institutions in the region, particularly on their areas of expertise will also be explored, as relevant.

OGC will establish a dedicated focal point to support the PDA fellows and work closely with the Secretariat of the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme. The focal point will be responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the programme from selection of PDAs to the subsequent management and liaison with PDAs through the duration of the programme.

At the end of each intake, the OGC will also ensure de-briefing and opportunities for feedback aimed at improving the quality of the fellowship programme.

OGC will be responsible for the logistical and administrative arrangements for the Fellowship Programme.

- **Selection of Participants**

Participants will be selected on the basis of interest, availability, and experience working on the topic under consideration (as reflected in their workplans, reporting and other outputs) with due consideration given to regional and gender representativeness. The selection of PDAs will be done in consultation with respective Resident Coordinators.

- **Deliverables**

Ahead of the Fellowship, participants will be asked to prepare a 2 page draft case study outlining their experience on the topic at hand, and provide an initial reflection to the key questions to be raised subsequently during the Fellowship.

At the end of the fellowship, the participants will share their reflections in two ways:

- An individual output, such as blog(s) or short paper(s); and

- A joint presentation and/or short report presenting key findings/conclusions, which can be published and shared with the research and policy community in Norway and elsewhere under the auspices of the OGC as well as the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme.

When relevant the proposed outputs could be adjusted to feed into knowledge initiatives carried out by the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme and its partners. The products resulting from the fellowships will be widely disseminated by the OGC as well as through the various networks available to the Joint UNDP-DPA Programme, and will also be made available on relevant content repository platforms.²

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² Including, UNDP, DPA (Standby Team of Mediation Experts, Mediation Support Network, Academic Council), PBSO, UN DOCO, DPKO, UN Staff College, UN Task Team on Conflict Prevention, UNU-WIDER, etc.