



Northern Ireland - Ireland

European Regional Development Fund

VICTIMS SUPPORT PROGRAMME

&

PEACE IV

Guidance Note on the Recruitment of Staff

G4/VSS

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Please note: in this document “Programmes” refers to both the Peace IV and the Victims and Survivors Programme. Peace IV refers to the EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland and the Border Region of Ireland 2014-2020.

1. Introduction and Background

This Guidance Note outlines the key principles and the **minimum** steps to be followed by any Organisation recruiting staff.

For Organisations with recruitment policies and processes in place incorporating their own tools and templates, which meet or go beyond the requirements of this guidance note and employment legislation, the Organisation may still use and refer to its own policies and tools.

This Guidance Note should be read in conjunction with:

- Standard Terms and Conditions of Grant for the VSS Programmes with particular attention to the following sections of that document:
 - 10.0 Governance
 - 11.0 Conflict of Interest
 - 12.0 Staff Employment

Examples and sample templates attached in the Annex of this Guidance Note are intended as a guide only. These should be adapted and changed as necessary to reflect the actual position being advertised.

This guidance note consolidates and documents specific training in this area provided to VSS funded organisations in April 2017.

2. Recruitment Code

There are 4 key principles when carrying out a recruitment exercise:

- 1.1 **Principle 1** – Appointments should be made on merit. Merit is the core principle on which recruitment must be made.
- 1.2 **Principle 2** – The appointment process should be fit for purpose. All recruitment processes and practices adopted should be consistent with the Merit Principle and correspond with best practice.
- 1.3 **Principle 3** – The appointment process should be fair and applied with consistency.
- 1.4 **Principle 4** – Appointments should be made in an open, accountable and transparent manner.

Equal Opportunities

In addition, all staff involved in the management of recruitment and selection must ensure they are trained in and have knowledge of the implications of anti-discrimination legislation in respect of Age, Disability, Gender, Race, Religion/Politics and Sexual Orientation.

Additional information regarding Equal Opportunities in Employment can be found at www.equalityni.org.

3. The Recruitment Process

The key steps when undertaking a recruitment process are outlined in [Annex 1 – Recruitment Process Map](#)

This should be considered prior to commencing the recruitment process.

Further detail is outlined in the following sections.

4. Identifying Panel Members

- 4.1. The panel identified must include a senior representative, paid senior manager, or chair of the Board/Committee, and at least one member with recognised competence in the core areas of the post to be filled. If, for example, the post requires a third level qualification in a specialist area it may be appropriate for the panel member with specific competence in this area to possess a similar or better level qualification.
- 4.2. An interview and selection panel must be set up. This should be considered prior to the competition planning stage.
- 4.3. VSS will pay for reasonable travel and subsistence for panel members. A daily panel member rate up to a maximum of £125 may be eligible if a panel member external to the organisation with specific competence and expertise is required. This must be agreed in advance with VSS and be within the current budget of your organisation.
- 4.4. Any conflicts of interest should be made known and recorded. All reasonable steps should be taken to ensure, as far as possible, that each panel is balanced in terms of gender and community background.

5. Competition Planning

- 5.1. The Candidate Information Booklet should be prepared and available to potential applicants for all recruitment competitions, including permanent, temporary, full-time or part-time.
- 5.2. Preparation of Candidate Information Booklet
The Candidate Information Booklet should include the following:
 - Introduction paragraph about the role of the organisation;
 - Job Description setting out role of post holder and key responsibilities;
 - Salary;
 - Eligibility and shortlisting criteria;

- Person specification to include core competences and behaviours, considered essential for effective performance in the post;
- Application process;
- Recruitment Process including contact details;
- Anticipated test / interview dates;
- Declaration of any adjustments required;
- Where it is known at the outset of a competition that more than one vacancy exists, or that the competition may be used to fill similar positions, then this should be clearly stated in the Candidate Information Booklet;
- Equal Opportunities Policy and Equal Opportunities Monitoring. (Additional information regarding Equal Opportunities in Employment can be found at www.equalityni.org);
- Vetting requirements for the post.
- A sample Candidate Information booklet is attached in [Annex 2](#).

5.3 Competition Initiation Meeting

The panel should meet to formally approve all the information in the Candidate Information Booklet, including:

- Agreement of the background, duties and responsibilities of the post.
- Agreement of the eligibility and shortlisting criteria – these must be justifiable against the duties and responsibilities of the post and be published in the Candidate Information Booklet.
- Application – An application form should be designed to obtain only that information required for the purposes of determining the eligibility and suitability of candidates. The panel may decide to accept CVs and a cover letter in lieu of an application form. This must be applied consistently across all applicants. An **example** of an application form is attached in [Annex 3](#).
- Interview Criteria.
- Advertisement - Consideration and agreement of advertising media, where and when to advertise.
- Agreed timetable for all stages of the competition.

6. Advertising Vacancies

6.1. The key objective in advertising vacancies is to encourage applications, representative of the entire community, maximising the chances of appointing the best possible person and as a result contributing to improved business performance.

6.2. The advertisement should include:

- Post Name (and reference number, if applicable)
- Salary
- Employer's Name and Logo
- Location
- Nature of Appointment (Permanent/Temporary, Full-time/Part-time)
- Key Essential Criteria
- How to Request an Application Pack (i.e. Online, in writing or by telephone)
- Deadline for the receipt of completed applications
- 'Further appointments may be made from this competition should positions become vacant which have similar duties and responsibilities'
- 'All applications for employment are considered strictly on the basis of merit'
- VSS Logo
- PEACE IV Logo (**THIS IS MANDATORY** if a Peace IV funded post) – refer to SEUPB Publicity and Marketing Toolkit
<http://www.seupb.eu/media/ProjectCommunications.aspx>

6.3. Advertising must take into account 6.1 above and should include at least 2 of the following options:

- Local, regional or national newspaper.
- Jobcentre advertisement.
- www.communityni.org or an alternative on-line jobs advertiser.

The job should also be advertised on the Organisation's website if one is available.

7. Returned Applications

- 7.1. Date stamp each received application and record the time received.
- 7.2. Monitoring forms should be separated from the applications, with no access given to members involved in the selection process.
- 7.3. Applications should be screened for completeness prior to being sent to the panel.
- 7.4. Applications received after the deadline cannot be considered.

8. Application Sift Process

- 8.1. The panel should meet to shortlist applications and determine candidates suitable for interview.
- 8.2. It is important that the processes used to determine candidates' eligibility are reasonable and fair.

8.3. Sift documentation

The following documentation should be included in the sift pack and must be copied to each person attending the sift meeting:

- Eligibility / Shortlisting information
- Candidate Information Booklet
- Decision Matrix. An example is attached in [Annex 4](#).

8.4. Sifting Applications

Applications should be anonymised where appropriate and sifted to determine if they (a) meet the eligibility criteria and, if appropriate, (b) meet the shortlisting criteria. Any criteria used to shortlist candidates, along with the order in which shortlisting criteria will be applied, must have been made clear in the Candidate Information Booklet.

8.5. Each panel member must complete an eligibility and shortlisting grid. See example in [Annex 4](#).

8.6. Panel members should individually assess each applicant against each criteria and come to an agreed consensus.

9. Interview Planning

9.1. The most opportune time for panels to formally plan their interviews is immediately following the sift meeting. The Panel should agree candidate questions designed to test each criterion at the interview.

9.2. During the interview

All interviewers must ensure that they treat each candidate equally and fairly and that they fully cover their own specific questions with each candidate.

9.3. Chairperson's responsibilities

The Chairperson of the panel must also ensure that:

- The interview process is explained to the candidate.
- Each candidate is tested against the established criteria in a fair and equitable manner.
- The '*time in*' and '*time out*' of interview is recorded accurately.
- All candidates are asked the same questions, in the same order.
- Panel members have completed in full, signed and dated their interview questions and notes. An example is attached in [Annex 5](#).
- All notes (regardless of how minor) and documentation are returned at the end of the interviews.

10. Pre - Employment Checks

10.1. Baseline Personnel Security Standard

For this check each applicant will be required to provide the following:

- a) Passport *OR*
- b) A document verifying permanent National Insurance number (e.g. P45, P60 or National Insurance card) *AND* birth certificate which includes the names of parents (long version).
- c) Other acceptable documents are listed on www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk.
- d) A specimen signature at any assessment event and have this validated against passport, driving licence, application form, etc.

The Baseline Personal Security Standard vetting involves verifying the following four elements:

1. Identity
2. Nationality and Immigration Status
3. Employment History (past 3 years)
4. Criminal Record Check (unspent convictions only)

All information received in relation to employee vetting must be dealt with in a confidential manner and information relating to convictions must be destroyed after a decision is made.

10.2. Qualifications

Evidence of qualifications asked as part of the eligibility or essential criteria must be requested. This includes:

- Original Certificates.
- Evidence of membership to a professional body (if applicable).

Original documents must be inspected, copies taken, marked as 'certified', signed and dated.

11. Offer of Appointment

11.1. Contract of Employment / Offer Letter

It is vital that the offer of appointment includes the correct terms and conditions of appointment. The content must include:

- Name of the post being offered
- Main duties and responsibilities
- Hours of work
- Whether it is full-time, part-time, fixed term, etc
- Reporting instructions and starting salary
- Payroll arrangements
- Annual leave allowance
- Confidentiality paragraph
- Probationary period
- Mobility paragraph (if required)
- Instructions for return slip
- Instructions to new entrants to bring P45
- Pensions paragraph
- Any allowances payable

12. Upon Appointment

12.1. Induction Training

An induction programme should be developed for each new member of staff to include at a minimum familiarisation of the:

- Organisation's policies and procedures
- Organisation's aims, objectives and key activities
- Roles of responsibilities of key staff and committee members.

12.2. Job Description

The individual's job description should be documented and agreed between the employee and the line manager.

12.3. Work Plan and Objectives signed off.

An individual work plan and objectives for the employee should be agreed with the line manager, in line with the Organisation's aims, objectives and key activities.

13. Monitoring

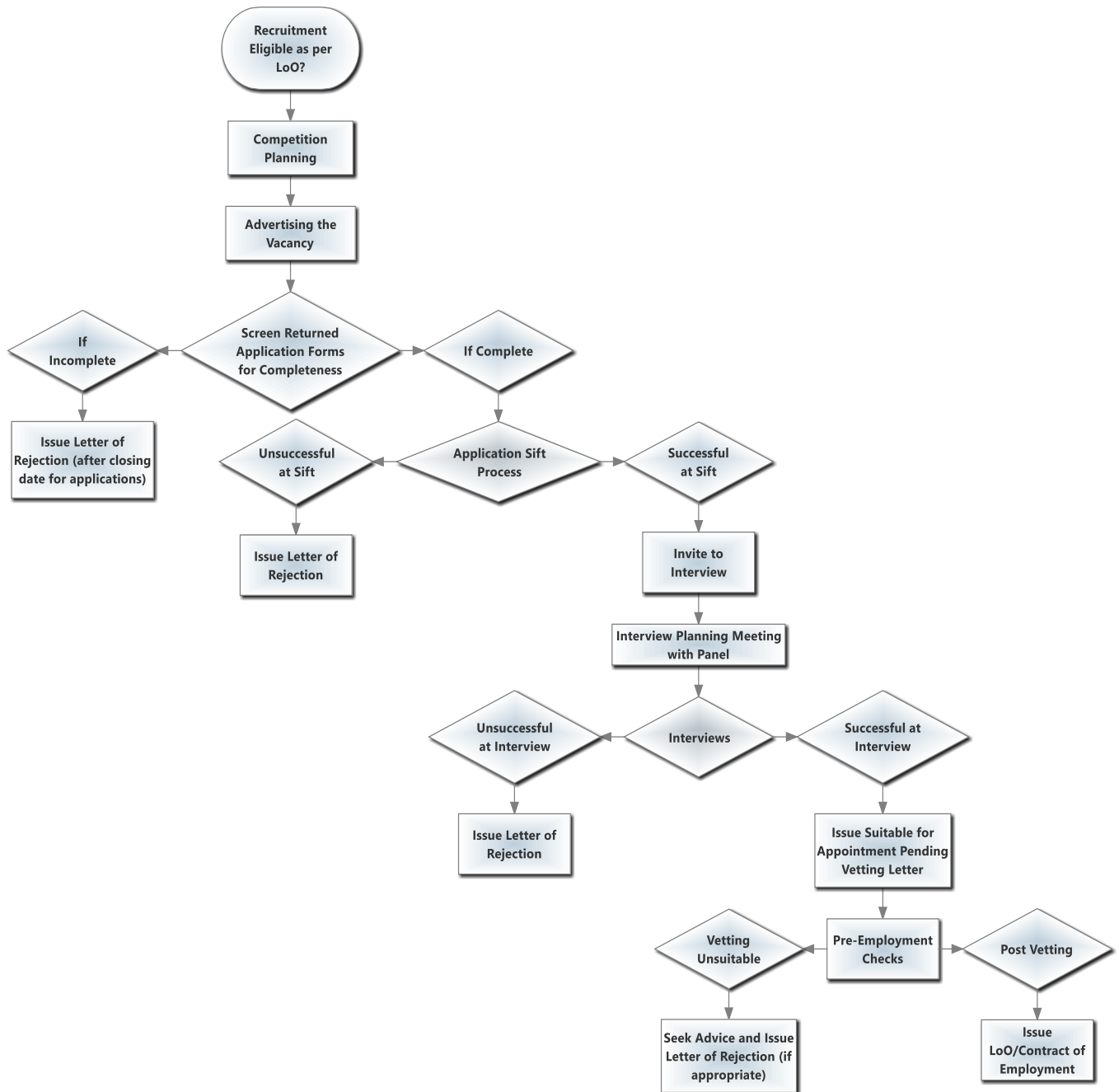
Employers with 11 or more employees, each working 16 or more hours per week in Northern Ireland must register with the Equality Commission and:

- Monitor the community background composition of applicants and employees (a sample monitoring form can be found at www.equalityni.org).
- Conduct periodic reviews of the composition of the workforce and employment practices (Article 55 reviews).
- Have regard to the Fair Employment code of practice when conducting these reviews.
- Take affirmative action, where it is reasonable and appropriate to do so.

The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland provide a step-by-step guide to monitoring: at www.equalityni.org. Look under "Site Map" for Monitoring and Review.

14. Annexes

14.1 Annex 1 – Recruitment Process Map



14.2 Annex 2 - Sample Candidate Information Booklet

Example

Candidate Information Booklet

(insert job title) (Insert Ref)

Closing date for applications:

(Insert time and Date)

Job Description

Job Title:

Organisation:

Location:

Salary:

Reports to:

Background

Insert the key aims and objectives of your Organisation. This is usually available in your Organisation's Strategic Plan or the VSS Application for Funding.

Pull out 4-5 key bullet points.

Purpose of the Role

Insert key role and responsibilities and include the purpose and objectives of the post. i.e. why the post is needed.

Organisational Structure

Insert a diagram of the organisational structure and identify the employee's position

Responsibilities

Outline up to 5 key elements of the role with more detailed day to day tasks below.

For Example

Key Element: Management of Finances and Human Resources

Day to Day Tasks

- Manage the day to day running of the Finance Function through the use of appropriate systems, processes, policies, procedures and practices to meet the needs of the business.
- Ensure the appropriate financial procedures, controls and structures are in place for the effective, efficient and economic management of public funding and monitor their outputs and outcomes.
- Ensure that good governance and effective controls are in place and maintain a strategy for the management of risk.
- To contribute to the planning, agreement and monitoring of financial targets.
- Management responsibility for staff
- Managing the activities of the Payroll function to ensure accurate and timely processing of information.

The foregoing is not an exhaustive list of duties.

Role Competencies

Essential Eligibility Criteria:

By the closing date for applications, candidates must have:

Include qualifications necessary and up to 5 key areas of experience e.g. 3 years experience of managing budgets

Short-Listing Criteria:

In addition to the above qualifications and experience, other shortlisting criteria may be applied. E.g. previous experience of working with vulnerable adults

Person Specification - Behavioural Competencies:

Insert the type of behavioural competencies required by the candidate.

Examples include: These should be changed to reflect the needs of each individual position

People

Developing, maintaining and enhancing effective working relationships with a wide range of external contacts which will include members of the public, the statutory and voluntary/community sector, colleagues and other appropriate stakeholders. The post holder must possess excellent people management, influencing and negotiation skills.

Planning and Organising

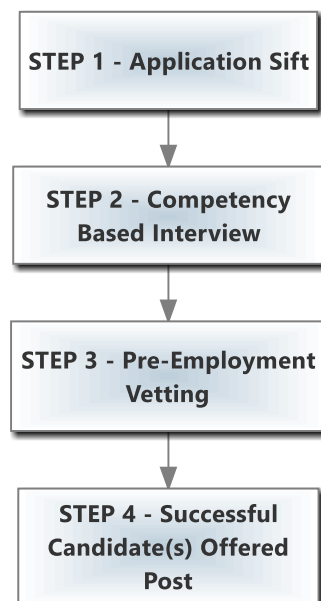
The planning and organising of work to ensure the most effective use of available time and resources. Obtaining and organising information and resources to support work activities in line with policies and procedures. Working to tight deadlines and have the ability to work under pressure. Attention to detail and accuracy with figures are essential.

Information and Communication

Communicate effectively both orally and in writing. Has the ability to receive, process and gather relevant information and to communicate information and advice in a manner that is understood, is timely and is tailored to the needs of the recipient. The post-holder requires strong IT skills and competence in the use of all aspects of Microsoft Office.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process should be outlined to potential candidates. **Example**



GUIDANCE FOR MAKING YOUR APPLICATION

This should outline the application process i.e. application form or CVs and cover letter.

Application Submission

- Completed applications can be submitted by:
 - Posted or hand delivered to (INSERT name and address of Organisation)
- We will not accept incomplete application forms, application forms received after the closing deadline or reformatted application forms.
- Applicants using Royal Mail should note that 1st class mail does not guarantee next day delivery. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that sufficient postage has been paid to return the form to meet the required deadline.
- Should you have any queries please contact (insert name and number)

INTERVIEW GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

This should include the dates of interview.

This should outline that at interview, the selection panel will assess candidates against the behavioural competences, qualifications and experience for the post.

FURTHER APPOINTMENTS FROM THIS APPLICATION

Where a further position in the Organisation is identified which is considered broadly similar to that outlined in this candidate information booklet, consideration will be given to filling the position from this competition. The reserve list resulting from this competition will be valid for a period of up to one year.

DISABILITY REQUIREMENTS

You should ensure that any reasonable adjustments required by a candidate for attending interview are referred to here.

VETTING PROCEDURES

Insert the vetting procedures of your Organisation which may include:

- Your passport
- a document verifying your permanent National Insurance number (e.g.P45, P60 or National Insurance card)
- Your birth certificate which includes the names of your parents (long version).
- Proof of qualifications
- Receipt of 2 satisfactory references (References will not be sought until after the final stage of the assessment process)
- Baseline Government Security Check (or change to reflect the level of check required for the particular post)

14.3 Annex 3 – Sample Application Form

Job Application

(Insert Job Title) (Insert Reference)

Applicants must complete the application form in either Arial font size 12, or legible block capitals using black ink.

Closing date for applications:

Insert Date

JOB APPLICATION FORM**POSITION APPLIED FOR:**

Job Title:
Ref No:
Where did you see this post advertised?

1. APPLICANT DETAILS

Title:	Surname	Forename
Home Address:		
Post Code:		

Contact Details:

Daytime no:	
Evening no:	
Mobile no:	
Email address:	
National Insurance No:	
Town of birth:	
Country of birth:	
Do you hold a current driving licence?	Yes / No:
How much notice do you need to give your current employer?	

2. EMPLOYMENT RECORD**Please start with your most recent employer.**

Employer Name:		
Address:		
Job Title:	From: / /	To: / /
Brief description of duties:		
Reason for leaving / changing:		

Employer Name:		
Address:		
Job Title:	From: / /	To: / /
Brief description of duties:		
Reason for leaving / changing:		

Employer Name:		
Address:		
Job Title:	From: / /	To: / /
Brief description of duties:		
Reason for leaving / changing:		

Employer Name:		
Address:		
Job Title:	From: / /	To: / /
Brief description of duties:		
Reason for leaving / changing:		

Employer Name:		
Address:		
Job Title:	From: / /	To: / /
Brief description of duties:		
Reason for leaving / changing:		

Employer Name:		
Address:		
Job Title:	From: / /	To: / /
Brief description of duties:		
Reason for leaving / changing:		

6. ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

By the closing date for applications, candidates must have:

6.1) **Insert a separate section per each essential criteria for the post**

Yes No

7. DESIRABLE CRITERIA

Should it be necessary to shortlist candidates to go forward to interview the following shortlisting criteria will be used:

7.1) **Insert per shortlisting criteria for the post?**

Yes No

Please provide details of the policies written and/or audited.

8. SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

As an Equal Opportunity Employer we wish to ensure that all applicants have the opportunity to perform to the best of their ability in either a test or interview situation.

Please let us know if you require any reasonable adjustments, or arrangements to enable you to attend for interview.

9. Referees

If you are responding to a public advertisement, please provide the required information of two persons not related to you, to whom references may be sent. One of your referees must be either your current or previous employer (if any) and both should be able to comment on your ability to carry out the particular tasks of the job. If you do not wish us to contact your present employer, please provide your most recent previous employer:

Current or previous employer (if any)

Name:

Job title:

Name of organisation:

Address (including post code):

Contact telephone:

Other employer or nominated character referee

Name:

Job title (if applicable):

Name of organisation (if applicable):

Address (including post code):

Contact telephone:

10. DECLARATION

- A) I have read and understood the information provided in the Candidate Information Booklet.
- B) I undertake to inform the (insert name of organisation) in writing of any changes in my circumstances which may occur between the date of my application and any possible date of appointment.
- C) The responses detailed in this application form are true and accurate to the best of my knowledge and belief. I understand that if I am found to have suppressed any material fact or to have given false answers I will be liable to disqualification or, if appointed, to dismissal.
- D) I confirm I am aged 16 or over.
- E) I give my consent for a criminal record check to be carried out as detailed in the 'Vetting' section of the Candidate Information Booklet.

Signed:

Date:

Please send this completed application form to:

Insert name and address

Your application must be received no later than: insert time and date

14.5 Annex 5 – Sample Interview Template



Insert Job Description

CANDIDATE NAME: _____

INTERVIEWER NAME: _____

INTERVIEWER SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____

TIME IN: _____

TIME OUT: _____

INTERVIEW – Insert Job Title

INSERT COMPETENCY

1. The post holder will be responsible for **(INSERT COMPETENCY)**.

Could you provide an example of when you have **(INSERT SKILL REQUESTED IN CIB)**

Probes:

- What was your role?
- How long did you perform these duties?
- Who did you involve?
- What difficulties did you face?
- What was the outcome?

Notes:

Comments:

One page per question