



UNDP CAREER GUIDE



UNDP is committed to support all its personnel in building successful careers that entail fulfilling work and relevant professional development aligned to business priorities and personal aspirations. **The purpose of this guide is to describe UNDP's new Career Management Framework, help UNDP personnel understand how to build an exciting and meaningful career in UNDP and help managers coach personnel in that process.**

Careers have changed dramatically over the past two decades because of changes in employee expectations, business needs, and the nature of work overall. There is now more career versatility than ever before with individuals developing careers that span diverse fields. The focus of careers has shifted from upward progressions to multidirectional moves that offer enriching, diverse experiences and give employees the capacity needed to navigate with agility in an environment of constant change. These growth-oriented experiences not only better enable personnel to contribute to UNDP priorities, they also give them a highly marketable and portable portfolio.

As a starting point in creating the foundation for a more structured and transparent approach to career development, UNDP defined four guiding principles that clarify what we value and encourage:

1. **Continuous experienced-based learning and growth** that goes beyond structured learning programs to foster continuous and career-long exposure to different challenges, work scenarios, client groups, geographies, successful practices, and disciplines through on-the-job stretch assignments and multidirectional job moves. Diversity of work experiences and purposeful efforts to constantly develop and embrace new knowledge builds the capacity to innovate and integrate across disciplines and organizational boundaries.
2. **Shared responsibility for career management.** Managers are responsible for providing coaching and challenging career experiences to all staff; employees are responsible for taking initiative in planning their careers, seeking self-development, and maintaining high levels of performance. When both managers and employees fulfill these responsibilities, it increases the likelihood that career moves will meet both employee aspirations and business needs.

3. **Building both breadth through diversity of experiences and technical depth through specialization.** Breadth of experience across the organization as well as thematic and functional areas will continue to be valued, especially, but not exclusively for manager and executive roles; building depth of expertise within disciplines or thematic areas will receive renewed emphasis too, for positions in various functional career streams.
4. **A strategic mix of developing staff internally and bringing in experienced talent through multiple entry points at different levels to amplify UNDP's expertise, agility and innovation.** While mid-career hiring and contracted services will continue to be important sources of UNDP's essential expertise, an increased emphasis will be placed on broadening entry-level hiring to attract young talent and develop an in-depth knowledge of UNDP that is necessary for future integrator roles. At the same time UNDP will ensure internal personnel receive the development they need.

While this guide provides a career management overview that is helpful for all employees, the examples that follow primarily cover staff in professional and managerial positions. A subsequent version of this guide will include General Service category examples as well as transitions from different contractual modalities into career tracks.

CAREER MOVE OPTIONS

To determine what career moves are best for you, it is important to first understand your career options. This process starts with answering the following questions:

1. *What type of work do I want to do or am I best suited for?*
2. *Where in the organization do I want to work (e.g., what functional area) and what do I want to focus on?*
3. *What am I ready for and what type of influence do I want to have?*

Career tracks define your options in answering the first question. UNDP clusters its jobs into three career tracks based on type of work performed. These career tracks are:

- **Managerial and Executive**, which includes roles such as directors, deputy directors, resident representatives, deputy resident representatives, managers, and heads that are responsible for managing the performance and resources of an office or function. These roles are typically at grades P4/NOD and above.
- **Professional/Expert**, which includes roles such as analysts, specialists, officers, coordinators and advisors that perform analytical, evaluative and conceptual work as an individual contributor, and **may** include additional responsibilities for supervising the work of others. These roles are in grades P1/NOA and above.
- **General Service**, which includes roles such as associates, assistants, clerks and drivers that predominantly provide procedural and processing support to the work of an organizational unit and/or team as an individual contributor and **may** include additional responsibilities for supervising the work of others. These roles are in grades GS1-7.

Career streams help you determine where you want to work in the organization – in **Corporate Operations** or **Policy and Programme** — and what discipline you want to focus on or specialize in. In Corporate Operations, your possible areas of focus align with traditional internal management functions, such as finance and budget, human resources, procurement, legal, information technology, and public relations and communications. In Policy and Programme, you may prefer either policy or programme work within any of the thematic practice areas that align with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), such as environment, energy, gender, governance, poverty, health and HIV, crisis prevention and resilience, and SDG integration.

Job roles show you what job you are currently ready for based on its responsibilities, qualification requirements and grade level. Becoming aware of different job roles across UNDP helps you define your career aspirations.

The graphic below illustrates how career tracks, career streams and job roles fit together.

Career Tracks	Career Streams Example of Job Roles Covered					
	Corporate Operations	Policy/Programme				
Managerial and Executive ICS 11-14/P4-5/NOD, D1-2 and above	Central Bureau Director/Deputy Director Functional Office/Unit Director/Deputy Director Chief of Staff Independent Office Director/Deputy Director	Administrator Associate Administrator BPPS, CB and Regional Bureau Director/Deputy Director Global Policy Center Director /Deputy Director Regional Hub Director/Deputy Director Resident Representative/Deputy Resident Representative				
Professional /Expert ICS 8-14, P1-7/NOA-NOD, D1-2	Job roles such as Analyst, Specialist, Advisor, or Team Leader in each of the Corporate Operations career streams : Communications Financial Management Human Resources ICT Legal Monitoring and Evaluation Strategic planning Partnership Communications Procurement Gen. Administration Safety and Security Audit Risk management	Within each of the eight thematic career streams are the following job roles: <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Policy</th> <th>Programme</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> Team Leader, Chief Regional Cluster Leader Policy Analyst/Specialist/Advisor Technical Specialist/Advisor Regional Technical Specialist/Advisor </td> <td> Team Leader, Chief Programme Analyst/Specialist/Advisor Portfolio Specialist Project Management Analyst/Specialist </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Policy	Programme	Team Leader, Chief Regional Cluster Leader Policy Analyst/Specialist/Advisor Technical Specialist/Advisor Regional Technical Specialist/Advisor	Team Leader, Chief Programme Analyst/Specialist/Advisor Portfolio Specialist Project Management Analyst/Specialist
Policy	Programme					
Team Leader, Chief Regional Cluster Leader Policy Analyst/Specialist/Advisor Technical Specialist/Advisor Regional Technical Specialist/Advisor	Team Leader, Chief Programme Analyst/Specialist/Advisor Portfolio Specialist Project Management Analyst/Specialist					
General Service ICS 1-7/GS 1-7	Driver Executive Assistant/Associate Clerk, Assistant, Associate in: Administrative Communications Security Finance, Human Resources ICT Monitoring and Evaluation Procurement, etc.	Policy Clerk/Assistant/Associate Country Programme Assistant/Associate Programme Clerk/Assistant/Associate				

Note: While Resident Representatives and Deputy Resident Representatives fall primarily under the Policy/Programme Career Stream, their roles also include a Corporate Operations component.

Throughout your work in UNDP, you can pursue multidirectional moves to different job roles within the same or different career tracks and career streams based on business needs, available opportunities, and meeting relevant qualifications and other requirements.

MANAGING YOUR CAREER TO BUILD A DIVERSE PORTFOLIO

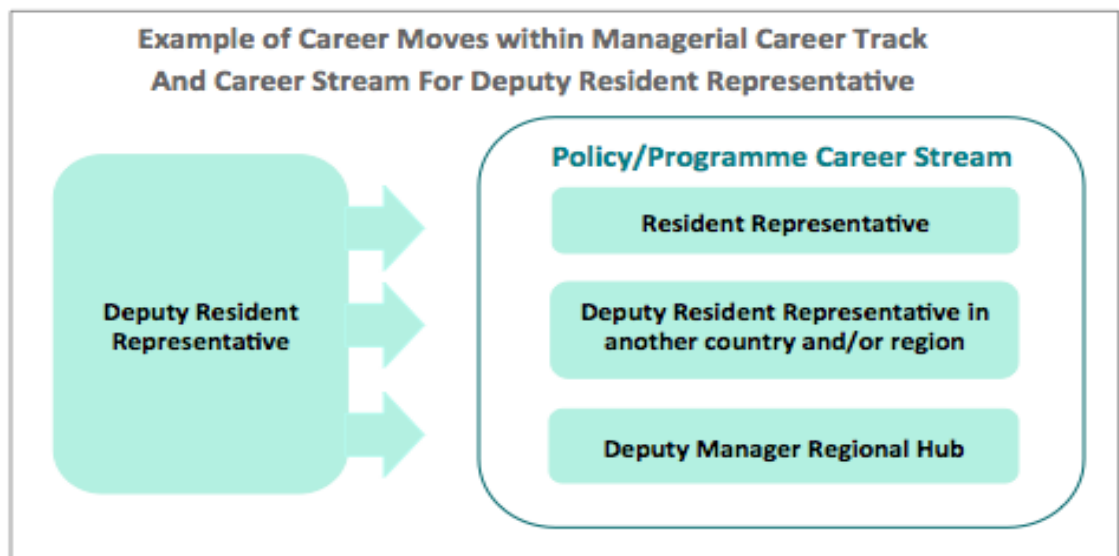
Managing your career involves the continuous process of reflection, planning and taking action. Start by being clear about what you value, your talents and capabilities, and your ambitions. Ensure that you know the **UNDP Competency Framework** which will help you to understand the Organization’s expectations, your capability gaps and development needs, and explore roadmaps to grow and develop. Reflect on the type of work activities you find most fulfilling, the feedback you have received particularly as it relates to your strengths, and what you would like to be doing five years from now. Explore your immediate and longer-term options. In the short-term, your best option may be to continue to grow in your current role to deepen your skills, while also seeking developmental assignments to learn about new roles, disciplines, geographies. When you have fully mastered the competencies of your current position, you may be ready to move to a new role. Lateral moves are a great way to build breadth of experience that help prepare you for more senior

roles. **While there are many more opportunities to make lateral moves than there are for promotions, they both open doors to continuous learning, growth, influence and impact.**

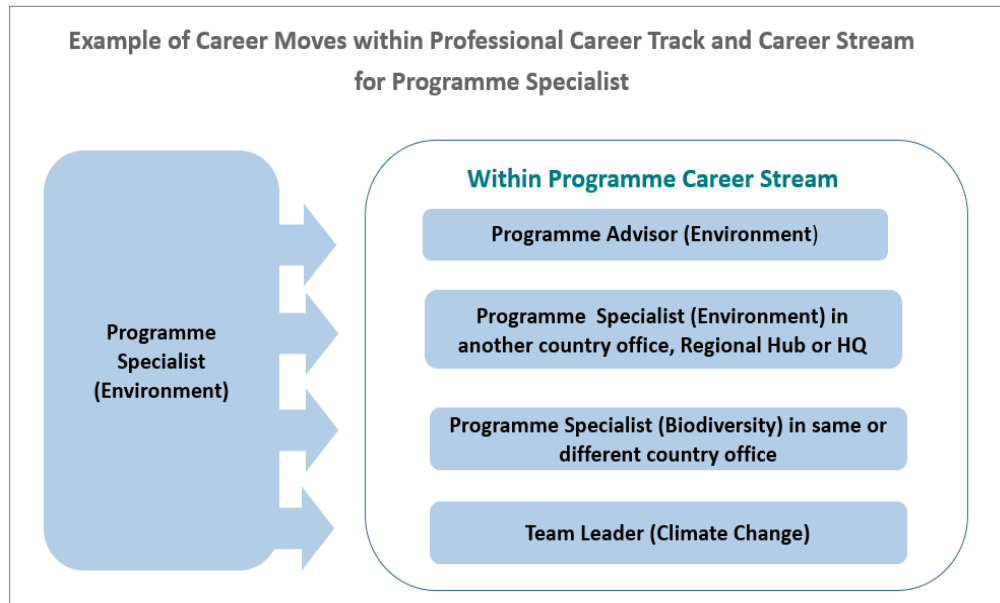
Here are some examples of how to build a diverse career portfolio:

Within a career track and career stream.

- *Managers or executives* can move to different offices, such as functional units, country offices, or regional hubs; to different countries, regions and/or headquarters. The purpose of these moves is to gain diversity of experience as well as increased complexity and scope.



- *Professional staff* can move to different types of roles, such as being primarily an individual contributor, a leader of various project teams, or a team leader or supervisor of an intact team. Moves can be made to different offices and/or countries to experience new internal or external client groups and their unique challenges. Moves also can be made to different sub-sectors or specialty areas within a broader discipline or thematic career stream. All of these moves help develop breadth by providing exposure to a broader range of issues and perspectives, and depth by building the necessary expertise.

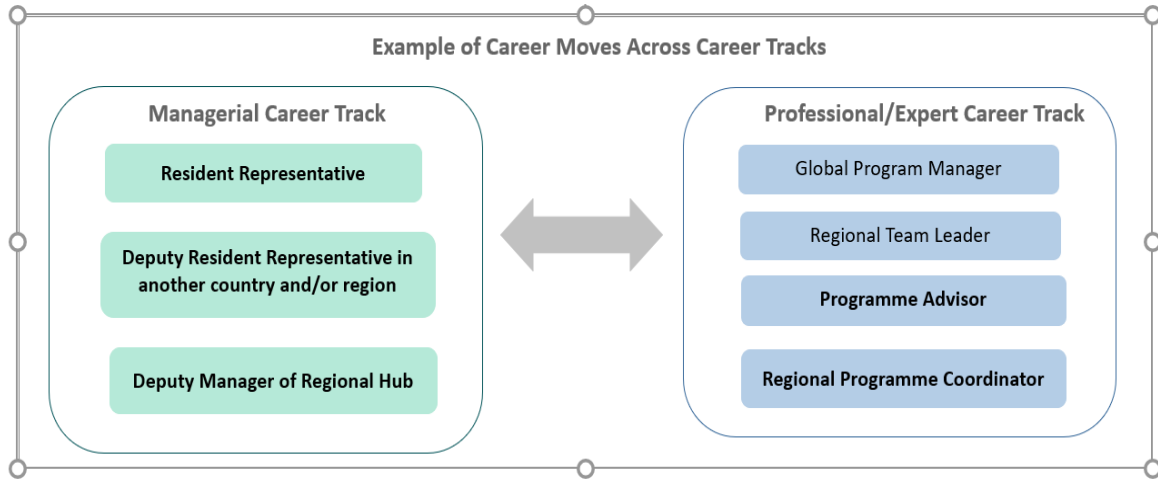


Across career tracks. Staff interested in moving ***from the professional/ expert to the managerial career*** track can best position themselves for that move by focusing their development in the following areas:

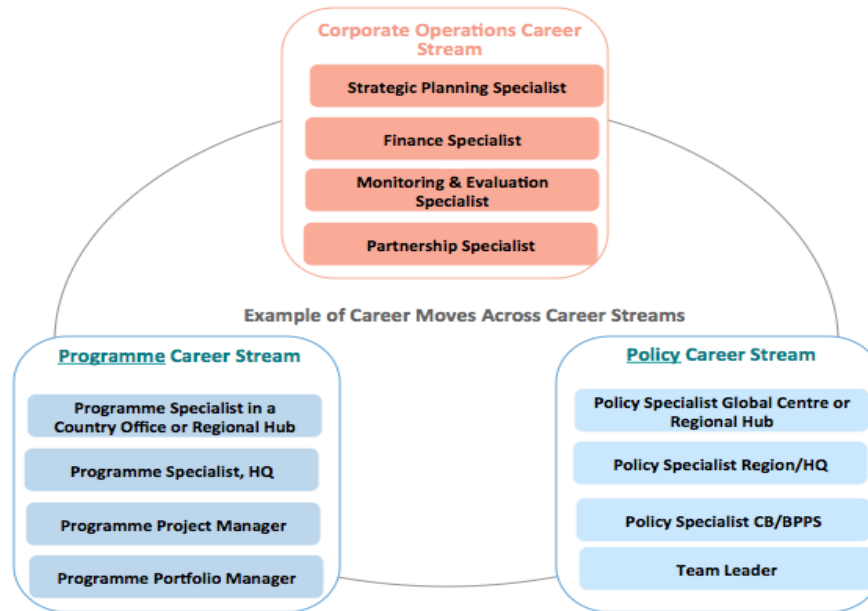
- Build and demonstrate strong people management skills by leading projects or serving in a supervisory role. Discuss your interest in gaining supervisory experiences with your manager to obtain their support for taking on these additional responsibilities.
- Gain a corporate perspective and understanding of corporate-wide issues by rotating through a headquarters position and/or working across more than one Bureau.
- Proactively learn about core management functions such as human resources, financial resource management, strategic planning by taking advantage of UNDP’s many training options, and/or providing support to managers in the fulfillment of their managerial responsibilities. This will help you better understand what managerial positions entail and assess your interest in those activities.
- Build networks beyond your immediate work unit. They can be invaluable to draw upon in getting information, resources and collaboration needed to accomplish program priorities.

It is also possible to move ***from the managerial to the professional/expert career track***. Managers may want to return to the professional career track to focus their efforts on research, analytical or project work. Managers can best prepare for this type of transition by staying

connected with their professional affiliations and networks, visibly contributing to other technical forums, and keeping abreast of what is happening in their field to maintain their technical expertise and credibility.



Across career streams. There are several types of moves across career streams, such as moving between specialized and generalist roles, between policy and programme roles, from one thematic area to another, and between Policy/Programme and Corporate Operations. It is typically easier to move from specialized to more general roles than the reverse. Preparing to move to a more specialized role could include seeking a developmental assignment, a professional certificate or even a full-fledged degree in a specialized area. It can also include providing cross-organizational support to a specialized area, working on cross-sector projects to gradually gain depth in a new area of specialization, looking for a broad role that works across specialized areas such as resource mobilization, strategic planning, and/or portfolio roles. Moving into a new specialization is more easily accomplished at the P3 or NOC level and below because of the depth of expertise required for technical roles at the higher levels.



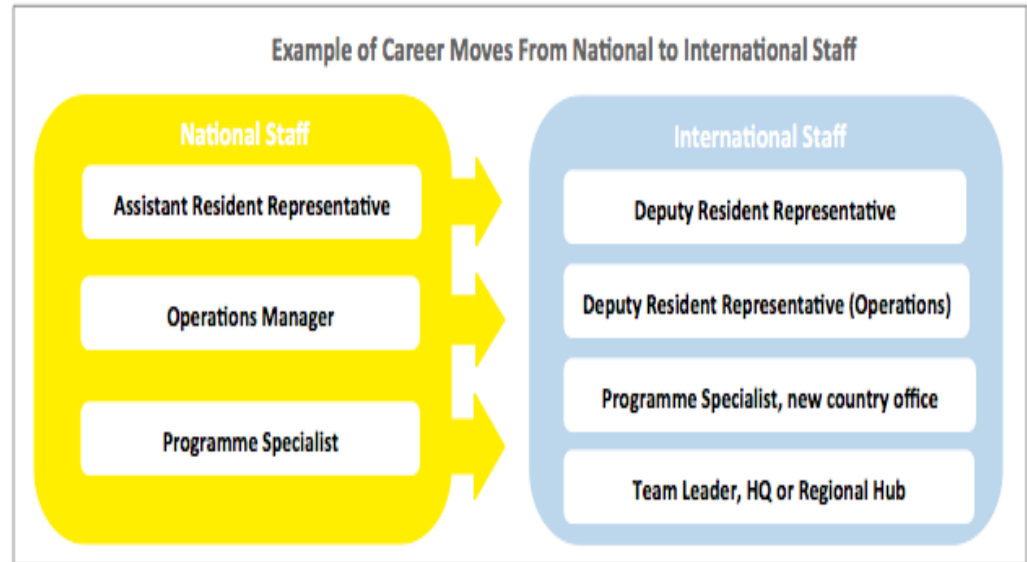
From National to International Staff. Many National Officers place great value in being able to contribute to the economic, social and environmental development of their own country. If this is your interest, there are several avenues to continue to grow, for example:

- Learn about different functions, disciplines and fields within the country office through stretch assignments.
- Make improvements to the country office operations, systems or procedures.
- Learn about what other countries are doing by participating in a detail assignment to another country office to bring back successful practices to your home country.
- Take an assignment in another UN agency within your home country.
- Take advantage of the many virtual learning and leadership programs offered by UNDP.

This same growth path can provide a launching point for National Officers who want to move to International Professional roles. Detail assignments in different countries, regional hubs, and headquarters are particularly valuable experiences to prepare for international roles. If you are interested in the international roles of:

- *Deputy Resident Representative and Resident Representative*- it is valuable to gain experience in both operations and programmes by moving through roles such as Operations Manager and Assistant Resident Representative.

- *Technical specialist, advisor or team leader - it is important to specialize in a discipline or thematic area, while also gaining cross-discipline or thematic area exposure to identify integration and innovative opportunities that are applicable in other countries.*



Moves across career tracks, career streams, job roles and from national to international provide enriching experiences that are very common in UNDP. However, they require employee initiative, deliberate effort, and preparation to find and capitalize on the right opportunities.

Keep your CV and online profiles up-to-date to capture your growth building experiences. Your manager will also support and monitor your development as a result of career conversations with you as well as periodic talent review discussions with other office managers to collectively ensure all staff are receiving the development needed to meet current and future business priorities and career interests.

CAREER TOOLS AND SUPPORT

Career Pathways and Readiness Criteria

Career pathways are developed to illustrate the sequencing of multidirectional moves and what experiences can be gained with each move to best prepare for various important roles, such as Bureau Deputy Directors, Resident Representatives, Deputy Resident Representatives, technical managers and team leaders, Assistant Resident Representatives and Operations Managers, and more. ***Career pathways are not prescriptive, rather they show possible career moves to open thinking and stimulate discussion on how to best prepare for specific roles.*** You can use these career pathways to reflect on your own career, what career moves

interest you, and when the timing of those moves makes the most sense for you given your professional development and personal considerations.

Career pathways are supplemented with readiness criteria for each key role that describe: (1) the depth and diversity of experiences and skills that best prepare candidates for the role and (2) the experiences and skills typically lacking when a candidate is not yet ready for the role. Readiness criteria and career pathways can serve as references in career conversations to:

- Test your interest in a key position and assess whether it is a viable aspiration in the short term or would require considerable planning to prepare over the longer-term.
- Identify what experiences you still need as the basis for creating a development plan that could include areas to emphasize in your current work program, developmental or stretch assignments, cross-support work, or formal training.
- Identify your next career move as well as the ideal sequencing of subsequent career moves.

The career pathways and readiness criteria are based on the UNDP requirements and expectations for the respective roles as well as career experiences of their successful incumbents and their insights on what is needed for success in those roles now and in the foreseeable future. These career pathways can be useful even if you are not interested in the respective roles because they show how to be strategic about planning an interesting and diverse career that provides valuable breadth and depth building experiences for a wide range of roles.

Career Development Support

Career development support is provided to all UNDP's workforce to promote continuous learning, help personnel better understand how to navigate their careers, and help managers fulfill their roles in coaching staff on their careers and ongoing development. Career development support covers a wide range of activities that help staff take advantage of the different avenues of learning: *Education*, such as formal in-person and online training programs; *Experience*, such as learning by doing on-the-job and through detail assignments; *Exposure*, such as learning through relationships with others in the form of feedback, coaching, mentoring and communities of practice; *Environment*, such as learning through [online resources and tools](#) that provide career guidance through UNDP's Career Journey Website, Virtual Career Labs, career development plan tool, and career conversation toolkit for managers and staff.

The resources and structure are now in place to give you the support you need in creating a fulfilling career. Managers will be taking a stronger role in providing career coaching. Please use these resources to reflect, plan and take action.