



UNDG Guidance Note: Handover Note and End of Assignment Report for Resident Coordinators

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Table of Contents

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE	3
2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES	3
3. DEFINITIONS	3
4. HANDOVER NOTE.....	4
4.1 Purpose.....	4
4.2 Timing	4
4.3 Content.....	4
4.4 Procedures	4
5. END OF ASSIGNMENT REPORT	5
5.1 Purpose	5
5.2 Timing	5
5.3 Content.....	5
5.4 Procedures	6
6. MONITORING.....	7
Annex 1:	8
Resident Coordinator (ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, DO) Handover Note Template	8
Annex 2:	10
Resident Coordinator (ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, DO) End-of-Assignment Report Template	10
Annex 3:	12
Resident Coordinator (ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, DO) End-of-Assignment Report – Confidential Information	12

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this Guidance Note is to provide information on the process for requesting, drafting and submitting a Handover Note and End-of-Assignment Report (EoAR) for Resident Coordinators (RC) as linked with other functions such as Executive Representatives of the Secretary-General (ERSG), or Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG) or Deputy Special Coordinator (DSC), or Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), and/or Designated Official (DO) functions.

The overall objective is to ensure information sharing and leadership continuity, and to improve the organization effectiveness and efficiency in implementing its mandate by documenting lessons learned and best practices. The development of a systematic mechanism for lessons learned and knowledge sharing is also intended to strengthen policies, procedures and practices.

2. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Applicability – this document is meant to cover all the possible circumstances and country situations, where the RC function may also be linked with the DO function, the HC function, and/or an integrated mission function, such as the DSRSG, ERSG or Deputy Special Coordinator DSC function. The RC is also the holder of the UNDP Resident Representative (RR) function. Guidance on the Handover Note for RRs is provided separately by UNDP.

Accountability - the lines of accountability of the different functions should be maintained when submitting the EoAR and the Handover Note. The EoAR is a personal account of a staff member's professional experience and does not necessarily represent the policies of the organization, in addition, it does not need to receive clearance from the staff member's reporting officer.

Monitoring – each UN entity, Regional UNDG Teams, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Department for Safety and Security (DSS), Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO)/ Department of Political Affairs (DPA) will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this guidance note and arranging for follow-up actions.

Sensitivity – confidentiality will be ensured of the management of the information generated through the submission of the Handover Note and EoAR. Sensitive information should be limited to the designated sections of the annexed templates and will be removed by the reporting officer before sharing the reports internally.

Information flows – the sharing of information generated from Handover Note and EoAR is considered a working level exchange and is expected to be shared with relevant staff who can benefit from such material. This should be done without compromising the sensitivity and confidentiality of the information provided.

Validation – lessons learned and good practices will be identified by the different UN agencies and validated through the inclusion into policies, guidance material, procedures and trainings.

3. DEFINITIONS

Handover Note - is a factual note created by the current Resident Coordinator of a country who may also have ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, and/or DO functions, and who is about to leave his/her position, either temporarily or permanently, to assist their successor to carry out his/her duties.

End-of-Assignment Report (EoAR) - is a personal account of a staff member's professional experience on the implementation of his/her responsibilities as ERSG, DSRSG, RC, HC, DO as well as on the organization's institutional capacity to carry out mandated tasks. The EoAR content does not necessarily represent the policies of the organization.

4. HANDOVER NOTE

4.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Handover Note is to provide the successor with key knowledge and information regarding the position so that the transition period is as smooth as possible.

Any Resident Coordinator, including with ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, and/or DO functions who is about to leave the position permanently is required to write a Handover Note. In the case of a temporary absence, particularly if the absence is longer than four weeks, the RC prepares a written Handover Note for the identified UNCT/SMT/HCT member who will take the RC/HC/DO ad interim functions, using the template provided in Annex 1.

4.2 Timing

The Handover Note is expected to be finalized prior to the departure and sent to the successor and to the RC Office. In the case of permanent absence, the document is expected to be also shared with the Chair of the Regional UNDG Team (copying the Director of DOCO), OCHA CRD Director (Coordination and Response Division), Assistant Secretary-General in DSS, as applicable, for information. If the successor has not yet been appointed, the Handover Note should be shared with the identified ad interim. When the successor assumes his/her functions in the duty station, s/he should request a handover note from the predecessors or the supervisor, if one was not received already.

4.3 Content

The Handover Note should be no longer than three-four pages, excluding attachments, in the case of temporary absence. For permanent absences and at the discretion of the RC, the document can be longer and include detailed and comprehensive overviews of key on-going activities and matters that will require immediate follow up by his/her successor. It should contain factual information in accordance with the attached template (Annex 1) and the information provided should support the successor in carrying out his/her RC role, as well as ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, RC, HC and/or DO functions, as applicable.

4.4 Procedures

The departing RC, including with ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, and/or DO functions should prepare the handover note three weeks prior to departure and provide a copy of the document to his/her successor or the ad interim/officer in charge (If a gap is foreseen between the departure and the arrival of the newly appointed RC), and share with the respective Headquarters support offices (Regional UNDG Teams, OCHA, DSS, DPKO/DPA/DFS) for information or when particularly sensitive situations require external support. The successor and the RC Office should maintain a copy of the Handover Note in the files and update the document for the next successor, if feasible and still relevant. The document will not be uploaded on organizational intranets or document sharing platforms.

It is strongly encouraged that communication is established between the departing and the incoming RC. This can be organized via face-to-face meetings, if possible, or via tele/video conferencing.

5. END OF ASSIGNMENT REPORT

5.1 Purpose

The EoAR aims at taking stock of the challenges, lessons learned and good practices of the work of the Resident Coordinator, including with ERSG, DSRSG, HC, DO functions (as highlighted in the respective ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, RC, HC, DO job descriptions) in the implementation of their mandates, in accordance with his/her own areas of responsibility. The report also aims at providing insights and recommendations for his/her successor, the country office and the organization as a whole by giving advice on policies, procedures, practices and support available from Headquarters. RCs are encouraged to share lessons learned from both successful interventions, and also from outstanding challenges or less successful experiences from which useful lessons for future action can be drawn.

5.2 Timing

The EoAR is expected to be completed prior to separation or reassignment

5.3 Content

The report should briefly describe the role of the RC, including, with ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, and/or DO functions, in country from a humanitarian, political, security, peace/recovery, human rights, and developmental perspective. The report should focus on the functions carried out as per the respective ERSGs, DSRSGs, RCs, HCs, DOs job descriptions and emphasize lessons learned and good practices, and highlight replicable factors. Good practices should be of an operational/political nature. It is also encouraged to place emphasis on 'less successful' practices to allow for learning experiences from failures. A report template is attached in Annex 2.

Drafters should seek to answer the following questions:

- What has been learned/noted during the assignment that should either be replicated or avoided elsewhere?
- What can the organization do in terms of policy development or otherwise to improve its capacity to support similar activities/operations in the future?

Sensitive and confidential information should be limited to the Annex 3 'End-of-Assignment Report – Confidential Information'. The following can be considered confidential and sensitive information, which should be limited to the 'Confidential Information' section and/or debriefing sessions, and will be removed before circulating and uploading the report:

1. Politically sensitive information that could affect on-going peace / humanitarian / political / security / human rights / developmental processes or significantly harm relationship with Member States, Government of the host country, or other organizations;
2. Information that if released could harm the security and safety of UN personnel;
3. Information that could legally affect individual staff members (e.g. accusations of corruption or any other wrong-doing) or could create liabilities for the organization.

5.4 Procedures

Request and timing:

Six weeks prior to the separation or reassignment, the Human Resources Office of the relevant UNDP Regional Bureau will send the request for submission of the EoAR. The UNDP Regional HR Advisor will be responsible for following up on the submission of the document and should be informed once the document has been shared with the relevant offices (Regional undg Chair, OCHA, DSS, DPKO,DPA).

Submission and compliance:

Depending on their functions, all RCs including with ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, and/or DO functions, who are about to end their assignments should submit as appropriate their EoARs to:

- the Under-Secretary-General (USG) for Political Affairs with a copy to Policy and Mediation Division], in DPA [dpa-policy@un.org]
- the USG for Peacekeeping Operations as appropriate for the ERSG and DSRSG functions, with a copy to the Policy and Best Practices Service in DPET [peacekeeping-bestpractices@un.org]
- the relevant Chair of the Regional undg Team for the RC function, with a copy to the Director of DOCO
- the USG for Humanitarian Affairs for the HC function, with a copy to the CRD Director in OCHA
- the USG for Safety and Security for the DO function with a copy to the Assistant Secretary-General in DSS

In addition, a copy should be provided to the successor of the position.

The request to submit the EoAR will be sent by the Human Resources Office of the relevant UNDP Regional Bureau, six weeks prior to the separation/reassignment, and it is expected to be submitted three weeks prior to leaving the via fax, e-mail or by pouch. This will allow the different UN entities to arrange for debriefings, discussions, clarification and follow-up, as needed, within one month from the departure.

Confidentiality

The USGs have the discretion to remove the confidentiality section (limited to the 'End-of-Assignment Report – Confidential Information', Annex 3) and distribute the report as deemed appropriate.

The submission of the EoAR to the relevant offices will need to be confirmed to the UNDP Office of Human Resources, Staff Administrative Services, when finalizing the submission of documents related to the separation/reassignment.

Debriefings:

Following the submission of the report, and to the extent possible, the relevant offices (Regional undg Teams, OCHA, DSS, DPKO/DPA/DFS) will be responsible for arranging debriefing sessions at Headquarters/Regional Offices or via tele/video conferencing with the departing RCs, including with ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, and/or DO functions. In this eventuality, the End-of-Assignment Report should be submitted three weeks prior to arriving in New York/Geneva of the scheduled video/tele conference. Debriefing sessions, either via tele/video conferencing or in person, should be organized within one month from the final departure from the duty station.

Access and archive:

The report will be uploaded by the relevant UN entities (DPKO, DPA, OCHA, UNDG/DOCO, DSS) on their intranet and document sharing platforms for access and consultation by appropriate agency staff and country offices. The 'Confidential Information' document although linked with the End-of-Assignment report when submitted to the reporting lines of the RCs, will not be shared/uploaded on public platforms.

The archived End-of-Assignment Reports will be available at the following password protected weblinks:

DPKO – <http://ppdb.un.org/Nav%20Pages/PolicyFrameworkDefault.aspx> (available for Secretariat staff only)

DSS – United Nations Security Managers Information Network (www.unsmin.org)

DPA – <http://dpaintranet.un.org/dpaintranet/pages/EndOfAssignment.aspx>

OCHA – OCHAnet

UNDG – password protected page of the UNDG website: www.undg.org

Follow-up:

The reports will be analyzed regularly and on an annual basis by the policy units of the different UN entities to feed the development of policies and procedures, and to enhance the support system provided by Headquarters to ERSs/DSRSs/DSCs, RCs, HCs, DOs in their functions.

Each UN entity (DPKO, DPA, OCHA, UNDG/DOCO, DSS), through the work of their policy-making units, will develop an appropriate mechanism for considering and, if appropriate, following up on the local and/or global recommendations generated by the report.

The UNDG, through the work of the Regional UNDG Teams and the Working Group on RC System Issues (WG-RCSI), will ensure that the submitted reports are analysed on an annual basis. If deemed appropriate, the results will be used to develop systemic-level recommendations and integrated into official guidance material, policies, and procedures.

6. MONITORING

Following its adoption, this guidance note and the process listed in the document will be regularly monitored and reviewed by the UNDG Working Group on RC System Issues, in close consultation with all the relevant UN entities (Regional UNDG Teams, OCHA, DSS, DPKO/DPA/DFS). The WG-RCSI will be responsible for updating this guidance note according to experience and practices, to ensure the benefit and effectiveness of the proposed system.

Annex 1:
Resident Coordinator (ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, DO)¹ Handover Note Template

Name and functions:

Duty station:

Date of Handover Note:

Duration of assignment (include start and end date):

Length of the absence (temporary or permanent):

Regular/re-occurring meetings, reports or procedures:

- ESG/DSC/DSRSG (if applicable)
 -
 -
- RC
 -
 -
- HC (if applicable)
 -
 -
- DO (if applicable)
 -
 -

Key pending issues (projects/reports/meetings/consultations):

1. ESG/DSC/DSRSG (if applicable)
 - Issue (project/report/meeting/consultation)
 - Status
 - Pending actions
 - Partners
 - Focal point (contact information)
 - Budget (if applicable)
 - Critical issues/challenges/priorities
 - List key documents

Repeat as many times as necessary and indicate priority.

2. RC
 - Issue (project/report/meeting/consultation)

¹ This document is meant to cover all the possible circumstances and country situations, where the Resident Coordinator (RC) function may also be linked with the Designated Official (DO) function, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) function, and/or an integrated mission function, such as the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG), Executive Representative of the Secretary-General (ERSG) or Deputy Special Coordinator (DSC) function. In this document the reference to DSRSG does not include the political DSRSGs. The RC is also the holder of the UNDP Resident Representative (RR) function. Guidance on End-of-Assignment Report for RRs is provided separately by UNDP.

- Status
- Pending actions
- Partners
- Focal point (contact information)
- Budget (if applicable)
- Critical issues/challenges/priorities
- List key documents

Repeat as many times as necessary and indicate priority.

3. HC (if applicable)

Issue (project/report/meeting/consultation)

- Status
- Pending actions
- Partners
- Focal point (contact information)
- Budget (if applicable)
- Critical issues/challenges/priorities
- List key documents

Repeat as many times as necessary and indicate priority.

4. DO (if applicable)

Issue (project/report/meeting/consultation)

- Status
- Pending actions
- Partners
- Focal point (contact information)
- Budget (if applicable)
- Critical issues/challenges/priorities
- List key documents

Repeat as many times as necessary and indicate priority.

Calendar of major activities and/or events (optional):

Contacts (internal and external):

Name and Title	Organization	Phone	E-mail	Comments

Your contact information after departure:

- Phone:
- E-mail:

Suggested attachments:

- ERSG/ DSRSG/DSC, RC, HC, DO job description and country profile
- Mission/Office staffing table, division of labour, organigramme
- Key documents relevant for the ERSG/DSC/DSRSG, RC, HC, DO position

Signature and Date:

Annex 2: Resident Coordinator (ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, DO)² End-of-Assignment Report Template

Name and functions:

Duty station:

Date of End-of-Assignment Report:

Duration of Assignment:

1. Short Narrative on UN mandate implementation from a humanitarian, political, security, peace, human rights, and development (if applicable) perspective, in respect to your functions:

Briefly, (within max 1-2 pages), the author should provide:

- A brief description of the specific area of responsibility
- The status of UN mandate implementation, in respect to your functions, upon arrival
- Brief summary of highlights of UN mandate implementation, in respect to your functions, during the tenure

2 Issues and Recommendations:

This is the main section of the report. The departing RC, with ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, and/or DO functions should identify issues that pertained to or influenced the implementation of the UN mandate in his/her area of responsibility.

2.1 ERSG/DSC/DSRSG (if applicable)

2.1.1 Issue: “.....”

Background

Describe any relevant background information or context regarding the issue.

Good practices³

Describe good practices related to the issue and the benefits they brought.
Explain why they were good practices

Challenges and lessons⁴

Describe challenges identified related to the issue. Describe attempted solutions and results, including lessons learned, if any, and a brief analysis.

Recommendations for successor/country office/HQ⁵

List recommendations that are applicable only to the particular country office.
Recommendations should be actionable.

[Continue with as many issues as necessary]

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³ Good practice is the way of carrying out an activity that has proven its effectiveness in one situation and may have applicability in another situation.

⁴ Lessons that have been identified from past actions projects, and operations and which are been applied or taken into account. Lessons can be positive or negative, in that they may recommend that an approach may be replicate or avoided in the future.

⁵ Sensitive information on the challenges and recommendations relates to the country situation, the UN System or the UNCT should be included in Annex 3: End-of-Assignment Report – confidential information.

2.2 RC

- 2.1.2 Issue: “.....”**
Background
Good practices
Challenges and lessons
Recommendations for successor/country office/HQ

[Continue with as many issues as necessary]

2.3 HC (if applicable)

- 2.3.1 Issue: “.....”**
Background
Good practices
Challenges and lessons
Recommendations for successor/country office/HQ

[Continue with as many issues as necessary]

2.4 DO (if applicable)

- 2.4.1 Issue: “.....”**
Background
Good practices
Challenges and lessons
Recommendations for successor/country office/HQ

[Continue with as many issues as necessary]

2.5 Multi-hatted function (if applicable)

Briefly describe key opportunities and challenges of a multi-hatted function, highlighting recommendations for your successor and the organization as a whole.

3. Personal Observations (if necessary, 1-2 pages):

Observations that are not necessarily linked to recommendations or change. This section could include information regarding key interlocutors and contacts. Biographical sketches of interlocutors may be included as well.

5. Contact information (optional)

Email address and telephone number where the author can be reached in the future.

Signature and Date

Annex 3: Resident Coordinator (ERSG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, DO)⁶ End-of-Assignment Report – Confidential Information

Name and functions:

Duty station:

Date of End-of-Assignment Report:

Duration of Assignment:

1. Confidential Observations (if necessary, 1-2 pages)⁷:

The RC, with ESG/DSRSG/DSC, HC, and/or DO functions, can include confidential observations that are politically sensitive in this section. This report in its entirety, including this section, will be made available only to the direct reporting lines of the ESG, DSRSG, RC, HC, DO, as applicable. This section, and any other elements of the report identified as confidential, will be removed before sharing and uploading the document on the intranet and other organisations sharing platforms.

⁶ This document is meant to cover all the possible circumstances and country situations, where the Resident Coordinator (RC) function may also be linked with the Designated Official (DO) function, the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) function, and/or an integrated mission function, such as the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General (DSRSG), Executive Representative of the Secretary-General (ESG) or Deputy Special Coordinator (DSC) function. In this document the reference to DSRSG does not include the political DSRSGs. The RC is also the holder of the UNDP Resident Representative (RR) function. Guidance on End-of-Assignment Report for RRs is provided separately by UNDP.

⁷ The following can be considered confidential and sensitive information, which should be limited to the 'Confidential Observations' section and/or debriefing sessions, and will be removed before circulating and uploading the report: 1) Politically sensitive information that could affect ongoing peace / humanitarian / political / security / developmental processes or significantly harm relationship with Member States, Government of the host country, or other organizations; 2) Information that if released could harm the security and safety of UN personnel; 3) Information that could legally affect individual staff members or could create liabilities for the organization.