

Physical Site Planner Officer Profile

Various Locations

Grade: Junior (P2), Mid (P3) and Senior (P4) Level Positions

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect and assist refugees and other persons of concern. It is constantly seeking talented, compassionate candidates with high-integrity to strengthen its capacity to respond urgently to crises with the right skills. Given the nature of UNHCR's work, it is essential that its workforce has the right mix of skills and qualities to fulfil its mandate.

The Physical Site Planner provides specialised support to emergency operations in designing and developing sustainable settlements to host people of concern to UNHCR. Within the context of UNHCR's Global Strategy for Settlement and Shelter (2014-18), a settlement should take into consideration the spatial allocation of functions while addressing the needs of the population, the availability of resources, the amelioration of living conditions, the provision of services, enhancing transportation networks as well as recreational spaces.

In the past, the functions of the physical site planner were largely limited to designing new and isolated settlements in rural environments. Nevertheless, largely due to the global trend of increasing urbanization, the majority of the world's refugees now live outside of camps. Consequently, many refugees share accommodation, live in non-functional public buildings, collective centres, in slums and informal types of settlements. The incumbent will therefore be expected to analyse the variety of settlement options available to accommodate the population of concern, be it in a rural or urban context. Settlement solutions may range from the development of a planned settlement, hosting arrangements, collective centres or rental accommodation. Taking into account factors such as the population size/profile, local context, culture, available resources, absorption capacity and skills, the physical site planner will advise and subsequently support the implementation of the most suitable settlement option.

The incumbent for this position should possess a strong academic qualification in architecture or civil engineering, demonstrated professional experience of physical site planning and knowledge of the variety of settlement options available within the specific context.

Responsibilities include:

- UNHCR's country operation is technically sound in the field of site planning and thus better able to meet the needs of persons of concern.
- Ensure that selection of sites for refugees and other persons of concern (POC) are based on approved technical guidelines, giving full consideration to relevant factors like land availability, accessibility, security, water resources and absorption capacity.
- Conduct technical feasibility studies (site assessments) for identification of adequate sites in close coordination with Local Authorities at Provincial, District and Divisional levels, as well as with the concerned line Ministries and implementing partners.
- Ensure that basic technical criteria of land availability/property, accessibility, security, topography, water resources, absorption capacity, and adequate terrain for proper sanitation facilities are taken into consideration while selecting potential sites. Other factors such as national reserves, migration corridor, and flooding, possible conflict with local population (grazing land) have also to be taken into consideration when identifying potential settlement solutions.
- Within an urban context, assess the structural safety of public buildings, measure the absorption capacity within a community for host arrangements while ensuring that humanitarian standards are met to ensure dignified living conditions.
- Develop, in close coordination with implementing partners and other concerned parties, settlement plans and their implementation modalities, including construction/rehabilitation of communal infrastructures (latrines, water points, etc.), taking into account the overall needs of target groups, their cultural preferences and the concerns of the local communities.
- Ensure that settlement designs take into consideration protection oriented issues such as sexual and gender based violence and the specific needs of women, men, girls and boys. The security and privacy of all people of concern, the adequate location of sanitary/health/education facilities, communal services and distribution areas should also be addressed.
- Coordinate with the affected committees, Local Authorities and other partners the identification of potential needs related to shelter and NFIs and ensure that NFI identification/distribution is coordinated among all the actors.
- Advise on matters related to the procurement of sector related materials or equipment, including the development of technical specifications for bid documents, technical evaluation of bids, review/inspection of the quality of products/works.
- Assist Programme colleagues in analysing budgetary implications of technical components, as well as ensuring the technical integrity of all sectoral interventions.
- Work in close coordination with all functional Units in UNHCR (Protection, Programme, Community Services, Field, Administration, and Supply) for all issues related to protection, population of concern figures and assistance.
- Maintain regular contact with the Shelter and Settlement Section in Geneva regarding all technical matters.

Minimum Qualifications and Professional Experience Required:

For positions at the P2 level

- Education: Degree in Architecture or Civil-Engineering
- Job experience: Minimum 2 years of relevant experience with graduate degree (equivalent of a Master's), 3 years with undergraduate degree (equivalent of a BA/BS).
- Languages: Proficiency in English is required.

For positions at the P3 level

- Education: Degree in Architecture or Civil-Engineering.
- Job experience: Minimum 5 years of relevant (international) job experience with graduate degree (equivalent of a Master's), 6 years with undergraduate degree (equivalent of a BA/BS) of which a minimum of 2 years of international field experience.
- Languages: Proficiency in English is required.

For positions at the P4 level

- Education: Degree in Architecture or Civil-Engineering.
- Job experience: Minimum 8 years of relevant (international) job experience with graduate degree (equivalent of a Master's), 9 years with undergraduate degree (equivalent of a BA/BS) of which a minimum of 4 years of international field experience.
- Languages: Proficiency in English and knowledge of a second UN language (Arabic/ Chinese/French/Russian/Spanish) at B2¹ is required.

To apply and read a detailed Job Description, please visit: [Current vacancies](#).

The UNHCR workforce consists of many diverse nationalities, cultures, languages and opinions. UNHCR seeks to sustain and strengthen this diversity to ensure equal opportunities as well as an inclusive working environment for its entire workforce. Applications are encouraged from all qualified candidates without distinction on grounds of race, colour, sex, national origin, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation and gender identity.

¹ See <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).