

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250

DEPARTMENTAL REGULATION		NUMBER: 4030-002
SUBJECT: Personnel Management of USDA Employees Assigned to Reconstruction and Stabilization Activities	DATE: September 23, 2010	
	OPI: Office of Human Resources Management	

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this directive is to outline the roles and responsibilities of the Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agencies and Staff Offices regarding the personnel management of employees assigned to Reconstruction and Stabilization Activities (RSAs).

2. BACKGROUND

USDA provides technical assistance for the stabilization and reconstruction of the host country's agricultural sector through the deployment of employees to serve as agricultural advisors and experts. USDA works in partnership with the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the U.S. Military, and the host country's Government, as well as other organizations, to undertake meaningful stabilization and reconstruction projects. Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and RSAs are military/civilian-led units typically composed of about 50 or more military and civilian personnel.

3. POLICY

It is USDA's policy to support employees who voluntarily answer the call to serve in the host country by applying and being selected for an agricultural expert or ministry expert position. This directive applies to all USDA employees except those serving in Senior Executive Service and Foreign Service positions.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

- a. The Secretary, or designee, is responsible for reviewing and concurring with all denials of an employee's initial selection for assignment to an RSA by an Agency or Staff Office.
- b. The Director, Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) is responsible for:
 - (1) Issuing policy and procedures that address how selections will be documented and processed within USDA; and
 - (2) Providing technical human resources guidance to Agencies and Staff Offices as necessary.

- c. The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) is responsible for:
 - (1) Soliciting and identifying candidates for deployment to RSAs;
 - (2) Administering necessary deployment activities to prepare candidates for assignment;
 - (3) Processing Time and Attendance (T&A) Records for all employees assigned to them under dual appointments using this directive beginning with the effective date of the appointment;
 - (4) Conducting necessary Leave Audits and resolving any T&A discrepancies prior to the end of the employee's deployment and return to their home Agency or Staff Office;
 - (5) Advising the home agency of all T&A discrepancies that were corrected; and
 - (6) Preparing and providing any required reports.

- d. The Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS) Human Resource Division (HRD) is responsible for:
 - (1) Maintaining an Ombudsman position to provide program management;
 - (2) Providing End-to-End human resource services to employees (including, but not limited to workers compensation, benefits, restoration of leave, etc.) assigned to FAS as part of this initiative;
 - (3) Serving as the focal point for all inquiries related to RSA assignments, both for the Agencies and Staff Offices, as well as for deployed employees;
 - (4) Ensuring all actions are authorized and approved in accordance with the requirements set forth in this directive;
 - (5) Preparing an SF-50 and instruction memo to the Agency or Staff Office to document the employee's assignment to FAS;
 - (6) Obtaining a signed Dual Appointment Agreement for each selected employee. See Exhibit 1 for a copy of the Agreement; and
 - (7) Initiating the Dual Appointment Processing Checklist. See Exhibit 2 for a copy of the checklist.

- e. Agency and Staff Office Heads are responsible for:
 - (1) Adhering to the policy outlined in this directive;
 - (2) Returning selected employees to either their position of record or similar position as outlined in Sections 6 and 7 of this directive;

- (3) Preparing an SF-50 to document both the employee's placement in a leave-without-pay (LWOP) status upon their assignment to FAS and their return-to-duty (RTD) to the Agency or Staff Office upon the completion of the assignment;
- (4) Conducting a leave audit and resolving any discrepancies prior to the effective date of the LWOP personnel action (deployment); and
- (5) Providing the necessary personnel information and leave audit to FFAS HRD (for example; SF-75 information).

5. RULES PERTAINING TO ALL RSA EMPLOYEES

- a. Employees who apply and are selected to serve on a RSA will be released for deployment unless there is a significant negative impact on the losing Agency or Staff Office.
- b. Employees will be placed on dual appointments for the duration of their deployment consisting of:
 - (1) LWOP using nature of action (NOA) code 460, authority code DAM, Reg. 630.101 for federal employees and no authority code for FSA County Office employees in their Agency or Staff Office of record. All actions should be annotated with a Remark Code: 499, that states, "Employee is on a dual appointment with FAS and assigned to Reconstruction & Stabilization Activities. All provisions of DR 4030-002 apply to their appointment"; and
 - (2) Excepted Service Appointment (NOA) code 171, authority code UFM, Schedule B, 213. 3213(a)(1) to FAS for the duration of the assignment (deployment).
- c. Agencies or Staff Offices that deny an employee the opportunity to deploy must submit their reasons for denial to the Secretary, or designee, via OHRM, for review and concurrence within 30 days of the denial.
- d. Employees will continue to be granted consideration for promotion or other career enhancing opportunities that they apply to while deployed. This includes promotions, training opportunities, developmental assignments, or other career enhancing opportunities.
- e. Employees may be selected for new opportunities while in a LWOP status (deployed) and may have a delayed effective date and/or report date. Effective dates and reporting dates will consider both the gaining mission requirements and the deployment requirements.
- f. Employees retain the right to return to a position within their home Agency or Staff Office as outlined in sections 6 or 7 of this directive as applicable.
- g. Employees opting to retire at the end of their time on the Excepted Service appointment will be returned to the home Agency or Staff Office so that the retirement is processed from their career position on their home Agency or Staff Office rolls.

6. EMPLOYEES SERVING ON A RSA FOR A PERIOD OF UP TO 13 MONTHS

- a. Successful candidates will be deployed to the RSA by means of an officially documented action as outlined in Section 5 b of this directive.
- b. Employees will be put in a LWOP status in the home Agency or Staff Office for a period of 13 months while they are placed on a dual appointment with FAS.
- c. While on a dual appointment with FAS, the employee's official duty station will be Washington, DC, and the employee will receive Washington, DC, locality pay, unless the employee currently receives a higher locality pay based upon their position of record.
- d. Agencies and Staff Offices may recruit to fill behind the employee on a temporary basis for the duration of the employee's appointment with FAS.
- e. Employees will be returned to their position of record at the expiration of their appointment with FAS.

7. EXTENSION OF THE ASSIGNMENT BEYOND 13 MONTHS

- a. Any extension to the original 13 month appointment with FAS must be approved by the employee, FAS, and the employee's Home Agency or Staff Office.
- b. Agencies or Staff Offices who approve such requests may:
 - (1) Continue to allow the employee to occupy their position of record while they are in a LWOP status and temporarily fill behind them; or
 - (2) Fill behind the employee on a permanent basis and grant the employee return rights to a position of similar grade, level, responsibility and within the employee's commuting area prior to their selection for deployment.

8. RETURN RIGHTS OF THE RSA EMPLOYEE

All employees assigned to support the operations of the host country will be returned to the position they held prior to their deployment, or to a position of similar grade, level, responsibility, and in the same commuting area within the same Agency or Staff Office upon completion of the assignment as outlined in Sections 6 and 7 of this directive. A RTD personnel action will be processed placing them in pay status on their home agency's roles in accordance with Section 4 e. of this directive.

9. INQUIRIES

Agency and Staff Office employees should direct their questions to the FFAS Ombudsman responsible for program management.

Exhibit 1
Reconstruction and Stabilization Activity (RSA)
Dual Appointment Agreement

I UNDERSTAND THAT:

1. I will be placed in a Dual Appointment with USDA/Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) while in a Leave – Without-Pay (LWOP) status with my home Agency or Staff Office.
2. I will be appointed to an Excepted Service position using a Schedule B appointment authority in FAS. The Schedule B appointment is a time-limited appointment not to exceed 13 months. The excepted service position will have a duty station of Washington, DC, unless I am already in a higher locality pay area.
3. My position of record will be held for my return for a period of 13 months. It may be filled on a temporary basis during my absence.
4. The Excepted Service appointment with FAS may be extended at the discretion of FAS management, myself and my home Agency or Staff Office. If the Excepted Service (Schedule B) appointment is extended beyond 13 months, my home Agency or Staff Office is not obligated to hold my position of record. Upon my return, I will be placed in a position of similar grade, level, responsibility, and within the commuting area of the position I held prior to my appointment with FAS.
5. As an employee I:
 - May be separated from the Excepted Service appointment at any time, with advance written notice;
 - Will maintain a current medical and security clearance. Failure to do so may result in termination from the excepted service position;
 - Will continue to occupy my position of record in a Leave Without Pay (LWOP) status during the period of the dual appointment with USDA/FAS;
 - Will maintain my current career status on my home agency's rolls and have the protection of reduction-in-force procedures with my home agency;
 - Will continue to earn leave based upon my service time in my position of record; and
 - Will continue to be eligible for health, life, and retirement program coverage based upon my position of record as I am entering the dual appointment without a break in service. Deductions from pay will be withheld from my excepted service appointment.
6. Positions filled under the Schedule B authority are of a project nature involved in international technical assistance activities. Service under this authority may not exceed 5 years on a single project for any individual, unless delayed completion of the project justifies an extension up to but not exceeding 2 years (maximum 7 years). Management determines the:
 - need for these positions,
 - initial appointment length and any subsequent extensions, and
 - termination date of appointments/projects.

Employee

Date

Home Agency/Staff Office Supervisor

Date

Home Agency/Staff Office HR Official

Date

FFAS HRD Official

Date

Exhibit 2

DUAL APPOINTMENT PROCESSING CHECKLIST

Step	Task	Agency Responsible		
		Home/Losing	FFAS HRD	Completed
Initial Deployment - Appointment				
1	Notify Home Agency HR office of Selection/ Request SF 75 information *		X	
2	Provide SF 75 * information to FFAS HRD	X		
3	Coordinate Personnel Action Effective Date		X	
4	Process LWOP Action (effective date last day of Pay Period)	X		
5	Conduct Leave Audit. Zero Out Leave Balances (Leave is transferred to FAS)	X		
6	Process Excepted Service Personnel Action		X	
7	TINQ in Leave Balances (Leave is transferred to FAS account)		X	
8	Coordinate Transferring TA responsibilities to FAS		X	
9	Send copy of Excepted Service Personnel Action to Home/Losing Agency HR Office		X	
10	Coordinate with NFC to transfer all benefits to Agency 10 (FAS)		X	
11	Process ongoing personnel actions/needs		X	
End of Deployment – Return to Duty				
12	Notify Home Agency of Effective Date		X	
13	Provide SF 75 information* to Home Agency Include (adjusted) Service Computation Dates (Retirement, Leave, and TSP)		X	
14	Coordinate Personnel Action Effective Date		X	
15	Process Termination of Appointment Personnel Action (last day of Pay Period)		X	
16	Coordinate with NFC to transfer all benefits back to Home Agency		X	
17	Conduct Leave Audit. Transfer Leave to Home Agency.		X	
18	Process Return to Duty (RTD) Personnel Action (first day of Pay Period)	X		
19	Reset Service Computation Dates (retirement, leave, and TSP). TINQ in Leave Balances.	X		
20	Transfer Payroll responsibilities back to Home Agency		X	

SF 75 Information*

IRIS 101	IRIS 102	IRIS 110	IRIS 114
IRIS 115	IRIS 116	IRIS 117	IRIS 118
IRIS 120	IRIS 122	IRIS 122 2	IRIS 124
IRIS 132	IRIS 136	IRIS 138	IRIS 139
IRIS 301	IRIS 306		

Point of Contact: FFAS Ombudsman Name: _____ Email: _____ Phone#: _____
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