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**NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency**  
**Agence de Planification et de Coordination du NEPAD**

# **THE NEPAD GUIDE**

## **On**

# **YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAMME**

**A Policy Guideline of the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency**

**JANUARY 2013**

## Table of Contents

1.0	Introduction.....	1
1.1	NPCA Human Development Strategy .....	1
1.2	NPCA Young Professionals Guide .....	1
1.3	General Objective.....	2
1.4	Specific Objectives.....	2
2.0	OVERVIEW OF THE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAMME.....	3
2.1	Programme Duration.....	3
2.2	Assignment Rotations.....	3
2.3	Eligibility of Participants .....	3
2.4	Compensation & Benefits.....	3
3.0	INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME.....	4
3.1	Programme Duration.....	4
3.2	Eligibility of Participants .....	4
3.3	Compensation and Benefits .....	4
4.0	FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME.....	5
4.1	Programme Duration.....	5
4.2	Eligibility of Participants .....	5
4.3	Compensation and Benefits .....	5
5.0	VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME.....	6
5.1	Duration.....	6
5.2	Eligibility of Participants .....	6
5.3	Compensation and Benefits .....	6
6.0	Programmes Rollout.....	7
6.1	Selection and Recruitment Procedure .....	7
6.3	Programmes support and Governance Structures.....	7
6.4	Expected Impact.....	7

## Executive Summary

### The NEPAD Guide on Young Professionals Programme

Investing in the future of Africa is inextricably linked to the effective impact of youth development programmes and projects. This requires a strong foundation built on successful practices that will contribute to youth participation in development and leadership. Indeed, the AU considers African Youth as a special resource that requires special attention. African youth constitute up to 40% of the population. They are a formidable creative resource that can be harnessed for Africa's socio-economic development. The African Union in the African Youth Charter is clearly convinced that *"Africa's greatest resource is its youthful population and that through their active and full participation, Africans can surmount the difficulties that lie ahead"*.

In affirming the AU's position in the Youth Charter, the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) is operationalizing a Young Professionals Guide specifically aimed at involving young professionals in carrying out its role as the technical body of the African Union. Through this policy guide, a number of programmes are being considered.

Overall, the **Young Professionals Programme** is aimed at providing a pool of talented, multidisciplinary young professionals who will assist the NPCA achieve its mandate.

The programmes in this Guide are:

- a. **Internship Programme:** to provide opportunities for graduate and postgraduate students from diverse academic backgrounds to enhance their educational experience through practical work assignments and periodic attachments at the NEPAD Agency.
- b. **Fellowship Programme:** to assist AU Member States especially NEPAD national focal points to have an in-depth understanding of the NPCA mandate and NEPAD implementation.
- c. **Volunteer Programme:** to mobilize volunteers to serve and support the NEPAD Agenda and African development in general.

Support structures for the programme will be under a management committee made up of representatives from Directorates, Programmes and Divisions under the direction of the NPCA CEO. The Human Resources management Division in conjunction with relevant Programmes/Divisions/Units will be directly in charge of running the programme in terms of recruitment, placement and supervision.

Through this YPP policy guide, NPCA aims to improve excellence in the delivery of its mandate by attracting motivated young Africans to serve in various capacities towards achieving the NEPAD vision and agenda. In addition, the policy also aims to offer young professionals the opportunity to develop their technical and leadership potentials whilst enhancing practical working knowledge of Africa's developmental strategies, especially, NEPAD.

## **Programme Rollout**

The planned programmes will be rolled out and implemented at various stages beginning with the Internship programmes. In this regard, NPCA Directorates, Divisions, Programmes and Units will consult with the Human Resources Management Division on the process of recruiting and placing interns in the Agency to support of programme implementation and delivery.

## The NEPAD YPP Guide

### Young Professionals Programme – An overview

- To provide the NPCA with a pool of young, talented, multidisciplinary young professionals
- To build institutional capacity and assist succession planning by filling senior positions in the long term.
- To provide young professionals the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the African development agenda

### Internship Programme

- To provide opportunities for graduate and postgraduate students to enhance their educational experience through practical work assignments
- To expose interns to the development focus of the African Union and the NPCA
- To support the NPCA with qualified students specialized in various professional fields.

### Fellowship Programme

- Promote strategic human resource development to help African countries reach national economic and social development objectives
- Assist AU member states especially NEPAD national focal points to have an in depth understanding of the NPCA mandate and NEPAD implementation.

### Volunteer Programme

- To Mobilize volunteers to serve and support the NEPAD Agenda and African development
- Create opportunities for ownership and participation in NEPAD implementation

### Expected Impact

- Improvement in quality of Human Resource base by attracting motivated young Africans to serve in various capacities towards achieving the NEPAD vision and agenda.
- Offering young professionals the opportunity to develop their technical and leadership potentials whilst enhancing practical working knowledge of Africa's developmental strategies, especially, NEPAD.

## 1.0 Introduction

After a decade of existence, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is poised to enter the future with a clear focus on implementation of continental and regional priority programmes/projects. Since its designation in 2010 as the technical body of the African Union (AU), the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) has been given a stronger and clearer direction to deliver on its mandate.

As a programme of the African Union, NEPAD over the years has developed a number of policy frameworks to guide the implementation of programmes and projects in critical thematic areas of Africa's development. The NPCA as the institutional vehicle charged with implementing NEPAD is keen on accelerating the implementation of these policy frameworks aided by a solid institutional human resource base. Human resource constitutes the most important asset in development-oriented institutions such as NPCA.

### 1.1 NPCA Human Development Strategy

As the technical body of the African Union, the NEPAD Agency is responsible for coordinating the implementation of key priority regional and continental programmes. In view of this enormous responsibility, the Agency has placed significant emphasis on developing a Human Resource Strategy that is in line with the NPCA strategic direction and the policies and practices of the AU. Accordingly, the Agency is developing a comprehensive organizational human development strategy that takes into account human resource development as a pre-requisite for the NEPAD Agency to achieve its mandate. A Key component of the NPCA's human development strategy is to develop the capacity, skills and knowledge of young professionals for Africa's transformation.

Accordingly, the NPCA among other strategies is developing its human resource base through a Young Professionals Policy (YPP) that is primarily aimed at attracting a dedicated core of progressive Africans for the continent's developmental process and agenda.

### 1.2 The NEPAD Guide on Young Professionals Programme

Guided by the position of the AU on developing the potential and leadership qualities of the youth, the NPCA has developed a policy on engaging and integrating young professionals as an essential component of its Human Development Strategy. Engaging the services of young professionals is widely practiced by many institutions that have mandates and objectives similar to those of the NPCA. Indeed, most inter-governmental and supra-national institutions such as the United Nations, European Union, African Development Bank, FAO and World Bank have developed Young Professionals programmes to harness the potential of the youth.

Primarily, the Guide on Young Professionals Programme is aimed at supporting institutional strengthening and capacity development within the Agency. In this regard, the Guide proposes the development of programmes to support institutional strengthening and capacity development within the NPCA.

The NEPAD Young Professionals Programme comprises:

- I. Interns and Attaches
- II. Fellows
- III. Volunteers

### **1.3 General Objective**

The NEPAD Agency is committed to advancing policy reform and coherence towards poverty reduction and economic development in Africa by providing a platform for young, dedicated African professionals to support the NEPAD vision and agenda.

### **1.4 Specific Objectives**

- I. To provide a pool of, talented, multidisciplinary young professionals who will assist the NPCA in achieving a diversity of targets for gender, age, geographic distribution and fulfill its mandate
- II. To develop institutional capacity and assist succession planning for filling senior positions in the long term by building a pool of seasoned young professionals who will be equipped with the skills to fill different levels of senior positions.
- III. To provide young professionals the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the African development agenda
- IV. To provide opportunities for young professionals and interns in Africa and Africans in the Diaspora to acquire practical experience in their field of study
- V. To strengthen the long-lasting relationships between the NEPAD Agency and African knowledge centers, including the academic institutions, and enable these centres to mainstream the NEPAD vision and values into their curricula.
- VI. To assist young professionals create a network of contacts and improve their chances of getting high profile jobs whilst achieving highest scores in their academic goals

## **2.0 NEPAD GUIDE ON YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAMME**

The Programme is designed to attract outstanding, highly qualified and motivated individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to development, supported by academic success, professional achievement and potential for leadership. It is a starting point and unique opportunity for young people who have a desire to contribute to Africa's development. The programme shall prioritize inclusion of professionals who are engaged in a field relevant to the NPCA's key thematic focus areas including Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Security; Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Development; Regional Integration and Infrastructure; Human Development; Economic and Corporate Governance; and Cross-cutting issues of Capacity Development and Gender.

### **2.1 Programme Duration**

Successful participants for the programme will be expected to undergo a two-year attachment programme with the possibility of securing a regular staff position dependent on the availability of vacancies and funding. Through this process, NPCA can absorb the diligent and exceptionally talented Young Professionals smoothly and gradually into its regular staff roll, on the condition of available vacancies and funding.

### **2.2 Assignment Rotations**

Young Professionals will be required, where applicable, to undertake up to two rotational positions in different Directorates/Divisions/Programmes/Units of the Agency for a period not exceeding twelve months. Through this process, participants of this programme will be encouraged to undertake assignments outside their areas of expertise whilst developing capacity and exposure to other important areas of the Agency's activities.

### **2.3 Overall Eligibility of Participants**

- I. Citizen of an AU member state or an African in the Diaspora
- II. Age consideration as per the time of application
- III. Have at least a University degree or equivalent
- IV. Be fluent in English or French or other AU working languages
- V. Multi-disciplinary background and a minimum of three years relevant work experience
- VI. Demonstrated commitment to African development (field experience on the continent and/or in other developing countries is an added advantage)
- VII. Knowledge of the workings of the AU and its NEPAD Programme is an added advantage
- VIII. Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English or French or AU languages
- IX. Ability/motivation to work in a multi-cultural work environment and leadership potential
- X. Computer literacy

### **2.4 Compensation & Benefits**

Young Professionals will normally be recruited on individual basis, seconded by development partners, civil society or private sector organization or sponsored by their national governments, based on agreement. Therefore, remuneration for young professionals shall be paid by the sending parties. However, where necessary, the NEPAD Agency may consider a subsistence allowance for the Young Professional on the basis of availability of funds.



### **3.0 INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME**

The Internship Programme seeks to attract outstanding students who are pursuing either undergraduate or post graduate studies. The programme aims to

- a. provide a framework by which graduate and postgraduate students from diverse academic backgrounds may be assigned to the NPCA, where their educational experience can be enhanced through practical work assignments;
- b. expose them to the development focus of the African Union and the NPCA; and
- c. Provide the NPCA with the assistance of qualified students specialized in various professional fields.

#### **3.1 Programme Duration**

Internships within the NPCA will be for an initial period of three months, renewable for up to six months (maximum). Interns shall not be considered as staff members and may not be accepted as substitutes for staff to be recruited against posts authorized for the implementation of mandated programmes and activities. Interns shall not be eligible to apply for, or be appointed to, any post in the NEPAD Agency for a period of six months following the end of their internship.

#### **3.2 Eligibility of Participants**

- Citizen of an AU member country or an African in the Diaspora
- Be 30 years of age or younger at the time of application
- Be fluent in English or French and proficiency in other AU working languages: Arabic and Portuguese are strongly desired
- Specialty in a field relevant to the NPCA's key thematic focus areas
- Be currently enrolled in final year of under-graduate (BA/BSc) or in a graduate (Masters) programme or have graduated within the previous six months
- Demonstrated commitment to African development (field experience on the continent and/or in other developing countries is an added advantage)
- Ability/motivation to work in a multi-cultural work environment

#### **3.3 Compensation and Benefits**

Internship positions within the NPCA shall be self-sponsoring as Interns are not financially remunerated directly by the NPCA. However, NPCA may cover an allowance for costs and arrangements for travel, visas, accommodation and living expenses during official missions, based on availability of funds.

## **4.0 FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME**

Fellowships shall form a critical component of the NPCA Human Resources Management and technical cooperation strategies. The Fellowships are intended to respond to the needs of AU member states for national skills development and enhancing NEPAD implementation at national levels. The fellowship programmes are intended to give persons entrusted with functions important to the development of their countries the opportunity to broaden their professional knowledge and experience by acquainting themselves with Africa's development strategies including NEPAD.

The fellowship programme aims to:

- Promote strategic human resource development to help African countries reach national economic and social development objectives
- Assist member states especially NEPAD national focal points to have an in depth understanding of the NPCA mandate and NEPAD implementation.
- Build national capacity for development in areas that are of relevance to NEPAD implementation by addressing shortage in advanced professional skills

### **4.1 Programme Duration**

The Fellow will be attached to the NPCA for a period not exceeding twelve (12) months and shall be nominated by national governments, higher institutions, civil society organisations, private sector, and development partners or through Fellowships

### **4.2 Eligibility of Participants**

- Citizen of an AU member country or an African in the Diaspora
- Not older than 45 years but not less than 30 years at the time of application
- Be fluent in English or French and proficiency in other AU working languages
- Specialty in a field relevant to the NPCA's key thematic focus areas
- Nominated by national government, higher institutions, private sector , civil society organizations, partners or fellowship in consultation with the NPCA
- Demonstrated commitment to African development (field experience on the continent and/or in other developing countries is an added advantage)

### **4.3 Compensation and Benefits**

Fellows shall be assigned to the NPCA and sponsored on individual basis, sponsoring organizations or by national governments or Fellowships. Remuneration for fellows shall be borne by sponsoring party or institutions. However, NPCA may cover an allowance for costs and arrangements for travel, visas, accommodation and living expenses, based on availability of funds.

## **5.0 VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME**

The proposed NPCA Volunteer programme is geared at promoting volunteerism, solidarity and dedication to Africa's development process by Africans. Volunteers will be expected to work in cooperation with the NPCA in support of the institution's mandate. The aim of the programme is to:

- Mobilize volunteers to serve and support the NEPAD Agenda and African development
- Create opportunities for ownership and participation of NEPAD.

As a first step, the NPCA will pilot an online volunteer programme that will connect volunteers with the Agency and its programmatic activities in various parts of the world. Volunteers will be required to contribute their skills online in support of the NPCA mandate.

Online volunteers shall be selected from professionals, students, and expatriates from across the globe who will essentially support research and the think tank role of the NEPAD Agency.

### **5.1 Duration**

The vast majority of assignments will be based on three to twelve month periods and renewable based on performance.

### **5.2 Eligibility of Participants**

- A university degree or expertise in a development field
- A minimum of two years of working experience
- Good working knowledge in at least one of the four AU languages.
- Specialty in a field relevant to the NPCA's key thematic focus areas
- The minimum age for NEPAD volunteers is 25. There is no upper age limit.

***In addition, volunteers should be able to demonstrate:***

- A strong commitment to the values and principles of volunteerism;
- The ability to work in a multi-cultural environment;
- The ability to adjust to difficult living conditions;
- Strong interpersonal and organizational skills;
- Prior volunteering and/or working experience in a developing country is an asset

### **5.3 Compensation and Benefits**

The key benefit of being a NEPAD volunteer is derived from the personal satisfaction of volunteers contributing to the development of Africa and supporting the implementation of NEPAD programmes. Participants will therefore be unpaid and shall bear all the costs involved in working as a volunteer.

## **6.0 Programme Roll-Out**

The planned programmes will be rolled out and implemented at various stages beginning with the Internship programmes. In this regard, Directorates, Programmes, Divisions and Units of the NPCA may in consultation with the Human Resources Management Division recruit interns to support implementation.

### **6.1 Selection and Recruitment Procedure**

An open and transparent process for engaging the services of young professionals shall be pursued by the Agency through regular advertisements on the NPCA website and social media outlets. Candidates will be selected according to their suitability and needs and specific circumstances of the NEPAD Agency at the time of selection. They will be expected to apply and go through a selection process as necessary.

Applicants for placement under the NEPAD YPP must provide a motivation letter, CV and necessary references. Indication of age and citizenship of an AU member country or an African in the Diaspora is essential

### **6.2 Termination of Contracts**

Upon being admitted to any of the programmes under this policy, the successful applicant will be expected to sign a contract with the Agency. The contract may be withdrawn if stipulated conditions are not met.

### **6.3 Programmes support and Governance Structures**

The NPCA will provide comprehensive support structures for programmes under this policy. A standing management team set-up by the Chief Executive Officer of the NEPAD Agency which shall advise on the implementation of this Policy Guide. The YPP Management team shall report periodically to the Chief Executive Officer of the NPCA.

### **6.4 Expected Impact**

Through the Young Professionals Policy, NPCA aims to improve excellence in the delivery of its mandate by attracting motivated young Africans to serve in various capacities towards achieving the NEPAD vision and agenda. The policy also offers young professionals the opportunity to develop their technical and leadership potentials whilst enhancing practical working knowledge of Africa's developmental strategies, especially, NEPAD as a programme of the African Union.

The ultimate goal of the NEPAD Young Professionals Programme is to contribute to the realization of the Africa's transformation agenda by developing the leadership skills of the Continent's Youth.