

***Recruitment of U.S. Citizens for Vacancies in IAEA  
Safeguards***

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## Recruitment of U.S. Citizens for Vacancies in IAEA Safeguards

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### **ABSTRACT**

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) relies on its member states to assist with recruiting qualified individuals for positions within the IAEA's secretariat. It is likewise important to the U.S. government for U.S. citizens to take positions with the IAEA to contribute to its success. It is important for persons within and outside the U.S. nuclear and safeguards industries to become aware of the job opportunities available at the IAEA and to be informed of important vacancies as they arise. The International Safeguards Project Office (ISPO) at Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) is tasked by the U.S. government with recruiting candidates for positions within the Department of Safeguards at the IAEA and since 1998, has been actively seeking methods for improving outreach. In addition, ISPO has been working more closely with the IAEA Division of Personnel.

ISPO staff members attend trade shows to distribute information about IAEA opportunities. The shows target the nuclear industry as well as shows that are unrelated to the nuclear industry. ISPO developed a web site that provides information for prospective candidates. They have worked with the IAEA to understand its recruitment processes, to make suggestions for improvements, and to understand employment benefits so they can be communicated to potential U.S. applicants. ISPO is also collaborating with a State Department working group that is focused on increasing U.S. representation within the United Nations as a whole.

Most recently Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice issued a letter to all Federal Agency heads encouraging details and transfers of their employees to international organizations to the maximum extent feasible and with due regard to their manpower requirements. She urged all federal agencies to review their detail and transfer policies and practices to ensure that employment in international organizations is promoted in a positive and active manner. In addition, she wrote that it is important that agencies examine their policies and practices for returning employees from details and transfer to ensure that reintegration procedures result in both the agency and such employees receiving optimal benefit from the international organization experience. This paper follows a 1999 paper on the same topic.

### **INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

The U.S. Support Program to IAEA Safeguards (USSP) provides extrabudgetary assistance for research and development projects to resolve technical safeguards questions. The USSP assists the IAEA in its mission to verify that nuclear material placed under IAEA safeguards is not diverted for non-peaceful purposes.

The International Safeguards Project Office (ISPO) at Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL) provides technical oversight and manages the USSP. The USSP is primarily funded through the U.S. Program of Technical Assistance to IAEA Safeguards (POTAS). Policy oversight is

provided in Washington, DC, by the Subgroup on Safeguards Technical Support (SSTS), an interagency committee that determines which IAEA requests will be approved. The SSTS is composed of representatives of the Department of Energy (DOE), the Department of State (DOS), the Department of Defense (DoD), and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

Tasks sponsored by the USSP may provide human resources support to Agency staff. Cost-free experts and extrabudgetary staff, whose salary and benefits are reimbursed by the POTAS, work for the IAEA on specific projects for two or more years. The USSP also sponsors a number of shorter-term consultants. The national laboratories and the private sector carry out research and development tasks. Typically, between 80 and 100 tasks are active at any given time. Postings for IAEA staff vacancies, expert positions, and task requests are listed on the ISPO website at [www.bnl.gov/ispo](http://www.bnl.gov/ispo).

A main objective of the USSP is to ensure that the IAEA Department of Safeguards has an appropriate mixture of regular staff and extrabudgetary experts who are qualified to meet the IAEA's technical needs, and to increase U.S. representation at the IAEA to meet those objectives. The USSP recruitment program increases awareness within the United States of employment opportunities at the IAEA and provides a coordinated mechanism for recruitment.

The United States is committed to maintaining its representation at the IAEA at appropriate levels, particularly in the IAEA Department of Safeguards. U.S. experts provide critical technical and scientific expertise in support of IAEA efforts to safeguard nuclear facilities and materials worldwide, and therefore make an important contribution to global and U.S. national security.

## **CHALLENGES**

One challenge facing the IAEA Department of Safeguards involves the unprecedented attrition of Safeguards inspectors. Large numbers of experienced inspectors have been retiring and this trend will continue for a few more years. Another concern is the retirement of baby boomers within the nuclear industry such as analysts, chemists, engineers and technicians. This circumstance creates a gap in knowledge and expertise, leaving a limited pool of well-qualified and skilled individuals from which to recruit. The rate of attrition requires the IAEA to recruit and place individuals at an extraordinary pace. It is not always possible to find the correct mix of education, skills, and experience required for the positions. In order to meet special technical needs the USSP provides Cost-Free Experts (CFE's), consultants, and junior professionals to assist with the IAEA's workload.

In April 2006, global U.S. representation at the IAEA was at 12 percent, only a slight increase in comparison with March 2005, which was at 11.3 percent. Also as of April 2006, U.S. citizens filled 13 percent of the professional staff positions subject to geographic distribution within the Department of Safeguards. This figure does not include CFE's or other extrabudgetary staff. Overall the United States would like to increase the percentage of U.S. citizens working at the IAEA to 16 percent. (The United States' assessment is 25 percent of the IAEA's regular budget, but it is not expected that U.S. citizens will fill 25 percent of the positions.). The United States remains interested in supporting this important organization, and must redouble its efforts to identify well-qualified U.S. citizens for IAEA assignments. When recruiting inspectors it is important to recruit for entry-level applicants at the P-3 level, since most current senior IAEA

inspectors are recruited from within the organization. Also, there are other key positions that require inspection experience as a prerequisite.

## **PAST RECRUITMENT EFFORTS**

BNL has been recruiting U.S. citizens for IAEA Safeguards positions since the early days of the USSP. The main activities included recruiting at the Institute for Nuclear Materials Management (INMM) and American Nuclear Society (ANS) meetings and reviewing applications. Staff from BNL's personnel division were involved in recruitment until 1999. Additional activities undertaken to strengthen the recruitment program since 1998 are as follows:

- Advertising material distributed.
  - ISPO staff distribute pens, golf towels, combs, toothbrushes, business card holders, etc., encoded with the ISPO website address to individuals at tradeshow in an effort to increase exposure and awareness of the ISPO website and to IAEA job opportunities.
- Increased tradeshow activities.
  - With each passing year ISPO has broadened its scope to target two to three new areas where interest in working at the IAEA would be welcomed and where qualified workers would be discovered, such as the computer industry, the military, the Department of Homeland Security, Society of Women Engineers (SWE), Electric Power Conference, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE).
- ISPO website revision.
  - The ISPO website has undergone several upgrades. For the user, information is easier to find and easier to access. For security purposes, the site is now behind the BNL firewall, and for the programmer, the pages have mostly been designed using .asp (active server pages).
- Establishment of an internship program.
  - In 2002, the USSP established an internship program. Although this program is currently on hold, it was very successful in creating awareness of the IAEA among college students and recent graduates. In all, there were 40 interns who are now part of the potential pool of candidates for P1-P2 positions, and who have learned of the benefits of living and working in Vienna, Austria.
- Career fairs attended.
  - For the internship program ISPO staff solely, and in coordination with the Office of Educational Programs at BNL, Argonne National Laboratory (ANL), and DOS representatives, have attended career fairs for the purpose of recruiting students to apply to the internship program, and to increase awareness of the IAEA to the younger generation. ISPO staff have also made presentations at colleges and universities.
- Attended classes on recruitment and staffing strategies.
  - ISPO staff attended classes at the Cornell University campus in Manhattan, NY, to learn tips and techniques on selection and staffing strategies. Although staffing for the IAEA is a unique situation, the class offered suggestions for locating qualified candidates, such as attendance at scientific tradeshow, targeting

specific journals, magazines and newspapers with ads, the military and other UN organizations. It was also helpful to learn about the effects surrounding the retirement of baby boomers and to realize just how small the pool of candidates is with respect to the nuclear industry and how imperative it is to be proactive in filling the gap.

- Designed a brochure entitled *Employment Benefits at the IAEA*.
  - The purpose of this brochure is to offer a quick overview of employment benefits for professional staff and CFEs working at the IAEA. The pamphlet provides brief explanations and computations of the base salary, post adjustment, pension contribution, dependent benefit, vacation leave, education grant, and installation and repatriation grants, to clarify the benefits for potential applicants.
- Exhibitor Conference
  - In 2003, ISPO staff attended a tradeshow that specifically targeted the exhibitor. The conference coordinators informed the exhibitor with techniques of what to do and what not to do while exhibiting. The expo offered classes on etiquette and professionalism of booth staff, design schemes and colors, attractions, advertisements, recruitment efforts, and follow up strategies. The vendors demonstrated the latest technologies for display boards, equipment for retaining individual contact information, and new promotional items. This event was extremely beneficial to ISPO.
- Upgrade of the ISPO tradeshow display.
  - In 2004, ISPO purchased an updated display board and redesigned the text and graphics to explain the roles of ISPO, the IAEA, and the USSP, along with their goals and purposes in relation to recruitment, and to better attract and capture the attention of potential candidates. Generally, in the past ISPO would attend a tradeshow to recruit professional staff for the IAEA Department of Safeguards. ISPO has broadened its strategy to include regular staff and extrabudgetary positions as well as IAEA requests for technical assistance. ISPO also teams with representatives of ANL, the State Department and the IAEA to promote opportunities in other Departments of the IAEA.



The new display board, a graphic of which is shown above, lists the four main areas of requests: Interns/Junior Professional Officers (JPOs), CFEs, Professional Staff, and SP-1 Task Requests. By attracting appropriate audiences to the booth, discussion of all aspects and efforts of the IAEA recruitment program naturally arise.

### **CURRENT RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES**

On a daily basis, as part of its support to the SSTS and the State Department, ISPO conducts activities aimed at recruiting U.S. citizens for job vacancies in the Department of Safeguards. These efforts include:

- Working closely with applicants for submission of their Personal History Form (PHF) and resume to better coincide with the IAEA Job Vacancy Description.
  - ISPO corresponds with and distributes an information sheet compiled by ANL and the U.S. Mission Vienna (UNVIE) to prospective candidates to assist with tips and techniques for filling out the PHF in order to increase chances for qualification and acceptance.
- Creation of a brochure/fact sheet containing specific information regarding the roles and responsibilities of a Safeguards Inspector. During tradeshow events, many individuals inquire about the roles and responsibilities of a safeguards inspector. As a result, ISPO developed a brochure in conjunction with the IAEA to explain the inspector's job.
- Revising and updating the ISPO *Guidebook for US Citizens Going to Work for the International Atomic Energy Agency in Safeguards*. The last revision to the ISPO Guidebook was in 2003. This book is currently being revised according to the latest policies, technology updates, and new requirements. It will be released in the second half of 2006. A separate guidebook for interns has been completed.
- Attending trade shows and career fairs.
  - This year ISPO staff attended or will attend the Military West 2006, the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual INMM, the Maritime Security Expo, the IEEE, Society of Women Engineers, and the ANS.
- IAEA vacancies are now linked to the Department of State's webpage, and advertised on Office of Personnel Management's webpage - USA jobs.
- Coordinating efforts with IAEA personnel, the U.S. Mission, and the State Department working group.
  - ISPO is collaborating with the State Department working group to coordinate recruitment efforts for non-Safeguards positions as well as Safeguards positions. Personnel of the U.S. Mission in Vienna have recently begun to organize quarterly digital video conferences (DVC) as a forum for discussions on recruitment efforts, topics of concern, accomplishments, to raise questions, to resolve issues, to discuss status of vacancy positions and to establish points-of-contact among all interested parties, etc. One particular topic of discussion is the BNL White Paper on Obstacles to Recruitment. This paper has been distributed to all representatives participating in the DVC. Actions are being taken to effectively address all items mentioned in the paper.
- Collected resumes are retained in electronic format in order to perform search functions for specific vacancy positions.

- Vacancy notices are distributed monthly to points-of-contact at laboratories, the database of applicants, university contacts, and potential candidates from tradeshows, etc.
- A Web Trends profile for the ISPO website was established in 2006 to perform analysis and determine the number of visitors to the site, their geographical location, the pages most visited, and how often they are visited, etc.

## **ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF RECRUITMENT PARTNERS**

As stated previously, ISPO works closely with the IAEA, ANL and U.S. government agencies to increase awareness of job opportunities with the IAEA. These organizations have also made significant contributions to increasing the success of the United States' recruiting activities. A few notable examples are the following:

- The IAEA developed an on-line application system for the collection and review of PHFs from applicants. This new system adds greater efficiency to recruitment efforts and the application process. To date the system has been operating effectively and is available for applicants worldwide.
- The IAEA developed a brochure entitled, "Women at the IAEA," to "explain the advantages for Professional women of employment with the International Atomic Energy Agency." (IAEA, 2005) The brochure includes profiles of women working at the IAEA.
- ANL has been working closely with the State Department, UNVIE, ISPO, and an interagency working group on IAEA staffing issues, specifically focusing on non-Safeguards positions. ANL efforts include:
  - Ensuring that IAEA vacancy notices are distributed to as broad an audience as possible (DOE, DOE labs, NRC, DOS, key U.S. experts in nuclear sciences and applications).
  - Assisting with coordinating interagency efforts in IAEA staffing.
  - Assistance with recruiting efforts (develop contact lists, encourage qualified individuals to apply, monitor the status of applications by working with UNVIE).
  - Providing monthly updates to the UNVIE.
  - Participation in regular DVC meetings.
  - Assist with the creation of JPOs and internships in other departments.
  - ANL has developed and currently maintains a web-based entry system that all recruitment partners can use to share and track information about vacancies and candidates. This ensures that everyone has the information they need to advise candidates on the status of their applications, to help better coordinate efforts among all key personnel and so that the government can measure the success of the strengthening activities.

## **NEW DIRECTIONS**

ISPO will continue to strengthen its recruiting activities. Ideas for the future include:

- Improving the orientation and support system for individuals selected for positions with the IAEA.
- Make presentations at universities:

- To continue with recruitment of young talent to target P1 – P2 positions, as an increase in the number of requests for JPOs is expected.
  - As an outreach effort to inform alumni of IAEA employment opportunities.
  - To increase awareness of the nuclear industry as a possible direction for students.
- Designing a brochure to inform candidates about employment opportunities for spouses. Many candidates are interested in knowing of the opportunities for spouses to work in Vienna and proper responses must be provided to these individuals. There are very few opportunities for spouses, but it is not impossible for them to obtain relevant work. In this case, information is being compiled regarding possible options that may be available, IAEA policies regarding spousal employment and any avenues of assistance to the spouse while in Vienna. In today's society, two income families are common in the U.S. It has become increasingly difficult to recruit individuals due to the fact that both partners want to work in Vienna. This matter should also be of concern due to gender distribution statistics. While the United Nations Women's Guild and the American Women's Association provide support for wives, a support system for husbands is also needed.
  - Obtain feedback from former IAEA employees.
    - In the past, ISPO designed an entrance and exit interview/questionnaire to be filled out by interns. ISPO discussed revising these forms accordingly and distributing them to former IAEA professional staff as well. To further identify ways to improve the program, an orientation packet for new hires is also being proposed.

## GOALS

Identifying well-qualified individuals to assist the IAEA with its mission is a main priority of the USSP. The following tactical goals have been recognized as a means to help the U.S. government achieve the optimum results.

- Identify well-qualified U.S. citizens for IAEA Safeguards regular staff positions and experts as needed and develop tools, brochures and policy position papers for recruiting.
- Discover and target new or non-traditional pools of expertise for recruitment.
- Promote the appeals of working at the IAEA.
  - An added bonus of working at the IAEA is being in the heart of Europe. There is a great opportunity to experience the culture of many countries. Vienna is well-known for its music history.
  - Key employment benefits: tax-free salary; education grants; six weeks vacation.
  - The IAEA offers many different clubs to join. Skiing is a huge attraction to Austria. Most often, people want to work in Austria just to be able to enjoy the skiing.
- Provide a host family for newly hired IAEA staff.
  - The USSP has traditionally matched CFEs working in Vienna with new arrivals to help with the adaptation process. ISPO intends to work closer with the U.S. Mission to locate and identify families that would be willing to participate as points-of-contact for newcomers to Vienna. Also, the housing office is a good resource for assistance with locating affordable housing and reviewing contracts.

## **CONCLUSION**

The importance of recruiting well-qualified U.S. citizens to work as foreign nationals sparked a concentrated effort from the U.S. government since as early as 1964 (Johnson, 1964). Proper U.S. representation became a significant issue and genuine concern. Much attention and assistance was called upon for all agencies to strengthen efforts and to remain focused along this path. ISPO has been assisting in this area since 1977.

As previously stated, along with pooling our recruitment efforts to strengthen IAEA safeguards, policies must also be revisited and revised to meet existing conditions. These policies should address employee concerns regarding issues such as obtaining leaves of absence with reemployment rights (Nixon, 1970), retention of security clearances, and accrual of retirement benefits. Standardization of laboratory policies may be one solution that can be established in order to benefit all parties. Once in progress they can be enforced with the commitment of the U.S. government. IAEA assignments benefit the IAEA, the laboratories, and the U.S. government, and therefore should be encouraged and rewarded. Accepting employment at the IAEA is a valuable and career-enhancing option for U.S. citizens.

## **REFERENCES:**

1. IAEA, Women at the IAEA, December 2005.
2. Johnson, The Memorandum to the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies (signed by Lyndon Johnson, 1964).
3. Nixon, Executive Order 11552, Providing for Details and Transfers of Federal Employees to International Organizations (signed by Richard Nixon, 1970).
4. Rice, Letter from Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to the Attorney General dated May 2, 2006.

## **ENDNOTE:**

1. For instructions on applying for a position at the IAEA visit their website at <http://www.iaea.org/About/Jobs/howtoapply.html>. This page will explain how to apply directly to the IAEA via the online system. Once in the system, an applicant will be instructed to register and set up a password for future entry, and may also submit background information to be considered for future positions that he/she may qualify for.