



**ADMINISTRATIVE MEMORANDUM No. 143**

**SUBJECT: BACKGROUND CHECKS POLICY FOR CANDIDATES SELECTED FOR A POSITION IN THE  
GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (GS/OAS)**

**CONSIDERING,**

That background checks are an effective means of validating information about potential hires.

That conducting background checks protects the workforce and reputation of the General Secretariat of the Organization of American States (GS/OAS), improves the quality of hires, prevents and/or reduces unethical activities, and thereby contributes to more efficient and effective recruitment practices.

That, from November 2021 to May 2022, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) carried out a pilot project and conducted background checks for candidates selected through competition to fill positions in different areas of the GS/OAS.

**THE DECISION:**

Starting July 1, 2022, the GS/OAS will conduct background checks for candidates selected through competition in accordance with Article 44 and Article 20 bis of the General Standards to Govern the Operations of the General Secretariat of the OAS, and candidates selected for Trust positions governed by Article 21.

To adopt the GS/OAS Background Checks Policy for Candidates Selected for a Position in the GS/OAS.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jay Anania".

Jay N. Anania  
Secretary for Administration and Finance



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Secretariat for Administration and Finance (SAF)

Original: English  
Version 1

## **BACKGROUND CHECKS POLICY FOR CANDIDATES SELECTED FOR A POSITION IN THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES (GS/OAS)**

**June 2022**

## I. Background

In accordance with the recommendation of the Office of the Inspector General, the Department of Human Resources (DHR) developed a background checks policy for candidates selected for a position in the GS/OAS through competition in accordance with Article 44 or Article 20 bis of the General Standards to Govern the Operations of the General Secretariat of the OAS, and candidates selected for Trust positions governed by Article 21.

## II. Purpose

Background checks are one of the principal means of validating information about potential hires. The purpose of conducting background checks is to help ensure a sound hiring decision, certifying that the candidate selected for a position does not have a criminal record or record of misconduct and has the experience/background they purport to have.

Conducting background checks protects the GS/OAS workforce and the reputation of the Organization, improves the quality of hires, and prevents and/or reduces criminal activity, contributing to more efficient and effective recruitment practices.

## III. Guidelines

1. The DHR will coordinate background checks for candidates recommended upon competition for staff positions in the professional and general services categories. This includes current staff members and current consultants when they are selected to fill a vacant post.
2. DHR will also conduct background checks upon the initial hiring of Trust Personnel or upon transfer to another position of Trust.
3. The type of background verification to be conducted includes the following components:

| BASIC COMPONENTS               | DESCRIPTION   | TURNAROUND TIME IN WORKING DAYS |
|--------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <b>Employment verification</b> | An employment history verification is conducted to confirm that the employment information included in the candidate's job application is accurate. This includes name(s) of employer(s), job titles, principal duties and responsibilities, dates of employment, base salary earned and information on established misconduct and/or pending formal investigations for the past ten (10) years by contacting employers via email or telephone to obtain proof of the employment history. | 15 days                         |

|   |   |         |
|---|---|---------|
| <b>Verification of academic credentials</b> | Confirms the candidate's claimed educational institution, including the years attended and the degree/diploma received. Provider will send the requisite instructions to the candidate for how to contact an academic institution to obtain proof of degree.  | 15 days |
| <b>Qualitative suitability check</b>        | Request for verification of integrated knowledge, behavioral skills, technical competencies, judgment, ethics and attributes by contacting professional references. The service provider will as a standard contact the current or most recent supervisor, other past supervisors or other professional referees in order to secure a minimum of three (3) references, with the most recent supervisor being mandatory. | 15 days |
| <b>(Mis)conduct checks</b>                  | Service provider will conduct a search through: The Interpol and Europol Most-Wanted Lists, The UNSC Consolidated Sanctions List and EU Consolidated Financial Sanctions List and the Clearcheck Database.  | 5 days  |

4. Background checks will be performed by an external service provider and only for the candidate recommended to fill a specific position.
5. Prior to a background check being performed, the DHR will inform the hiring manager and candidate. Following this, the external service provider will send a general consent and waiver of liabilities form to the candidate. Consent will be obtained directly by the external service provider.
6. Background checks will be conducted after the panel interview, if applicable, and before the candidate is offered a contract or document of appointment with the GS/OAS.
7. Background check results will be used to confirm the qualifications and suitability for employment in a specific position.
8. DHR will share a copy of the report with the candidate as soon as it is made available by the service provider.
9. In instances where the background check produces a concerning but not adverse result, the candidate will have the opportunity to clarify minor discrepancies in the report. The DHR staffer will assess the potential risks and liabilities vis-a-vis the job's requirements and determine whether the candidate should be hired, making a recommendation to the DHR Director. The DHR Director may make the final decision, and if desired, may consult the hiring area or the Secretary for Administration and Finance before reaching a conclusion.
10. In the case of an adverse screening result, DHR will send the candidate a letter informing them that their candidacy will not be given further consideration and will include a copy of the report. In the case of candidates who are current staff members or consultants, their contract may be terminated in accordance with the applicable Staff Rules or Performance Contract Rules.

11. DHR will not retain a record of the screening results for candidates other than GS/OAS staff members. This will protect the confidentiality of the personal information of these individuals.
12. For GS/OAS staff members, DHR will maintain screening results in the staff member's confidential personnel file.
13. Background checks are valid for five (5) years from the original screening issuance date and will be reviewed should the staff member be recommended for another staff position during this period. After five years, DHR will conduct a new background check if the staff member is recommended for another staff position. Internal transfers or appointments to a higher-level post without competition do not require an additional background check.
14. Background checks are valid for five (5) years from the original screening issuance date for former GS/OAS employees who seek re-appointment.

#### **IV. Administrative Process and Workflow**

##### **Provider**

Background checks will be performed by the outside service provider **OneHR**, the United Nations Global Center for Human Resources Services, the provider of reference verification for the United Nations System and partner organizations.

##### **Oversight**

A designated DHR officer will oversee the administrative process including background check requests, encumbrance of funds and payments to service provider.

##### **Cost**

The costs of each background check will be US\$ 250 per request processed. The amount will vary over time.

##### **Source of Funding**

This is a routine cost and will be charged accordingly as part of the hiring process. Starting July 1, 2022, background checks conducted for posts funded by the Regular Fund (RF) will be covered from the Recruitment and Transfer account (Subprogram 124G).

The cost of background checks conducted for posts funded by Specific Funds (SF), or the Indirect Cost Recovery (ICR) fund must be covered by the hiring Secretariat or Department and should be charged to the same account financing the post.

##### **Allocation of Funds and Payment**

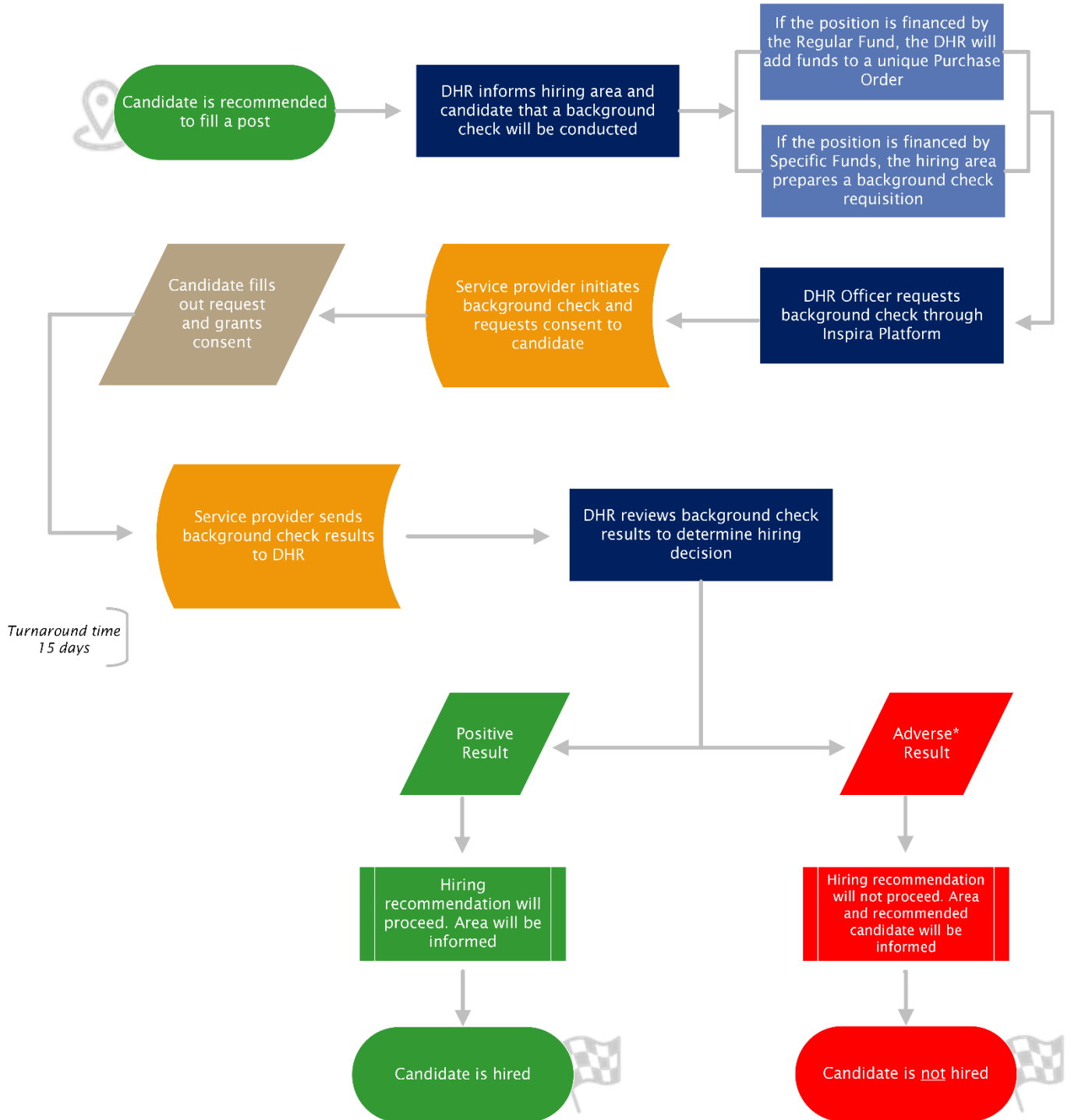
Starting July 1, 2022, hiring areas of the GS/OAS will cover background checks for posts funded by Specific Funds. A purchase order number and receipt number will be required by the DHR to submit a background check verification request. Hiring areas should prepare a requisition with the following information:

Supplier: OneHR

Amount: \$ 250 per background check

Account/Project: Hiring areas should identify proper, ICR or SF account/project

# Background Checks Workflow



\* In the case of candidates who are current staff members or consultants their contracts may be terminated in accordance with the applicable Staff Rules or Performance Contract Rules.