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## CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN CONSULTING: DEVELOPMENT

### Description of the Field

Development consulting firms are for-profit agencies, which enter into contracts to support and supply expertise to international development projects coordinated by larger agencies such as the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and The World Bank. According to James Fay, Ph.D., in *Guide to Careers in World Affairs*, "Over 4,000 international consulting firms are registered with The World Bank. USAID maintains records on 1,000 U.S. consulting firms." Regardless of their firms' sizes, development consultants generally address two broad areas: technical services, such as agriculture and engineering; and social services, which include such areas as education and healthcare. For example, some development consulting organizations may manage projects geared toward financing small businesses; others teach and train indigenous people in nutrition and healthcare, agricultural and livestock methods and community planning.

### Career Paths and Entry Salaries

In the field of development consulting, positions for research, administrative or associate project assistants, interns, or procurement specialists, as well as project monitors will offer the greatest opportunity for entry. After one or two years, larger organizations allow for movement into research associate and program assistant positions. Other firms regard recruitment managers or directors, directors of Offices of Human Resources, or junior development staff as middle-level positions. With five to ten years of experience and a Master's degree, development consultants typically hold positions at the officer level for financial, evaluation, and project positions. There are typically no senior-level positions for generalists, and specialists require a Ph.D. or MBA/MPA/MPH.

As this work often is contracted through the government, expect starting salaries to be modest to low, typically in the high 30s. The range goes up to approximately \$40,000 to \$80,000 or more after one to two years.

Because most organizations in the field have a hierarchical management structure, if you are not experienced (see qualifications), be prepared to work your way up from an entry-level administrative position. Stay in the system; everyone starts with grunt work, but entry-level positions can be grown into technical ones. "Get your foot in the door, and make yourself indispensable," says Rachel Peterson, recruitment manager of Development Alternatives, Inc.

The first-year development consulting employee can expect to be conducting research or writing and editing reports/proposals. Expect to spend two to three years writing proposals; however, there may be opportunities for short-term field assignments after one's first year.

Overseas assignments are possible with significant prior overseas experience. Consultants typically have more than 10 years of experience in a specific technical area or are Ph.D.s with overseas research experience. After five years, long-term assignments abroad are possible.

### Demand

Development consulting firms have a small permanent staff. Additional hiring is based exclusively on new and anticipated contracts in the field of development consulting. "But if you do your homework, you can find out where the money is going to get your foot in the door early," says Ms. Peterson. USAID's annual budgets are published in book form, stating the types of projects they are funding for the coming year, as well as where they are located. For example, the *Consumer Business Daily* lists USAID's requests for proposals (RFPs) for all

upcoming project work. If you know someone in the country, ask them to find out who is bidding for the project and write to them.

Because organizations usually promote from within, there is a great deal more accessibility at the entry level. For positions that hire in the \$30,000 - \$55,000 range, there is limited opportunity for entry at this mid-career level. Beyond this, however, it is extremely unusual to be hired from outside of the firm.

### **Qualifications Necessary to Enter the Field**

The basic expectations for people entering the field are that they will have strong analytical and writing abilities. Development consulting firms also look for skills in computer systems, media, statistics, administration and management. A foreign language, overseas experience in a developing country, and experience in the private sector are three *big* pluses.

Two or more years of overseas experience, or a Ph.D. with overseas research, are required for people who desire assignments abroad early in their careers. Some organizations require technical experience in agriculture, architecture, public health, hydrology, economics, or engineering as a hiring prerequisite, even at the entry levels.

### **Sample Group of Employers – worldwide**

ABT Associates, Inc.	International Science & Technology Institute
Agrer	Institute for Sustainable Communities
Altair Asesores	International Business & Technical Consultants, Inc.
AMEX International	IDBC
ARD Inc.	International Management and Communications Corporation
Arden Price	Intrados Group
Aries Group	IRG (International Resources Group)
Arthur D. Little, Inc.	J.E. Austin Associates
Atos Origin	John Snow, Inc.
Bannock Consulting	Kalimanjaro International
Birch & Davis International, Inc.	K&M Engineering and Consulting Corporation
Booz Allen Hamilton	KPMG/Bearing Point
Cambridge Consulting Corporation	KPMG/Barents
Casals & Associates, Inc.	Land O'Lakes International Development Division
Carana Corporation	Lincoln International
CDM	Lloyds TSB Bank
Center for International Private Enterprise	Louis Berger Group
Checci and Company Consulting, Inc.	Management Systems International
Chemonics International Consulting	Mendez England & Associates
Clapp & Mayne Inc.	Nathan Associates
Coopers and Lybrand	Options
Cowater International	OFT Group
Creative Associates International, Inc.	Overseas Projects Corporation of Victoria
Dalberg	PA Consulting
Deloitte & Touche	Padco Inc.
Development Alternatives Inc.	PDP Australia Pty Ltd.
Development Associates	POHL Consulting & Associates
DevTech Systems	P.E. International Consultants Ltd.
Ebony Consulting	PriceWaterHouseCoopers
Economic Consulting Associates	Prosperity Strategies
Emerging Market Economics Limited	PWA International
Enterplan	Resources Management International Solutions for Progress

Equinoccio  
FACET  
GFA Management of GFA Luso  
GRBW  
GRM International  
GTZ International Services  
Hub Consulting

TCG International  
The IMC Group  
The Mitchell Group  
TSG  
The Pragma Corporation  
ULG Sustainable Development Worldwide

### **Nonprofit Organizations that do Development Consulting**

ACDI-VOCA  
Bellanet  
CHF International  
Concern Universal  
Enterprise Works  
Institute for Public-Private Partnerships  
Integration

Integration  
International Relief and Development  
MEDA – Microfinance  
RTI International  
Strategies for International Development  
SNV Netherlands Development Organization  
Technoserve

### **Future Challenges of the Profession**

With the current and anticipated reductions in defense contracts, the pool for bidders on other contracts is growing and, therefore, becoming more and more competitive. The reductions in contracts extended by the USAID are also shrinking opportunities for new work in the development consulting field. As a result, many firms hope to develop new contracts through the various regional development banks and United Nations agencies.

There is growth, however, in projects being developed for the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Such projects are calling more and more on people with strong Russian Slavic language skills, as well as private sector and finance experience.