

## **Recruitment Process**

Breakthrough Media (BTM) delivers a broad range of strategic communications programming for clients in East Africa, Middle East and North Africa, South Asia and Eastern Europe. On a day-to-day basis we operate across multiple thematic areas to access, recruit and mobilise technical and support staff in fragile and conflict-affected states across the globe, including in four 'high-fragility' states. We have a proven track record of rapidly establishing multi-disciplinary and multi-lingual teams to deliver rapid, targeted interventions aimed at supporting stability. For example, in 2016 we recruited five technical services staff in Somalia to deliver a US State Department-funded project to deliver counter-violent extremism messaging within three-weeks of the request for services.

**1. Role requirements:** Our dedicated HR Team create 'Role Profiles' and 'Person Specifications' (e.g. Digital Forensics Lead, Gender Inclusion Specialist, Financial Inclusion Manager, Stakeholder Engagement Manager) with clearly defined criteria for each role. These documents are based not only on requirements within the request for services but informed by our deep organisational knowledge of rapidly recruiting and mobilising expert teams in hostile environments. These documents provide a framework for quality assurance to ensure we recruit suitably skilled staff with the appropriate qualifications, experience and contextual understanding (e.g. cultural sensitivity in Baghdad) to operate within our expert multidisciplinary teams.

**2. Redeployment:** BTM's existing teams include 200 UK staff and 50 international staff. Throughout the company, 51% of all employees are women and 48% of mid to senior management roles are occupied by women. We also have a roster of more than 150 freelance consultants including experts, mentors, instructors, training teams, logistics staff and technical service staff. Our HR Team will assess whether the role can be filled by these existing individuals. This route often provides the most timely, cost-effective access to individuals who have already demonstrated the skills, qualifications and experience required to deliver successfully on our projects. Redeployment provides fast-track access to high-quality personnel by using pre-vetted, trained staff.

**3. Advertising:** BTM delivers high-profile, socially engaging projects across the UK and internationally, generating significant interest in the work that we do. We advertise widely to generate a large pool of candidates from a range of thematic backgrounds and functional areas. For example, we have over 12,000 followers on LinkedIn – a recruitment channel through which we receive 100 applications on average for every role advertised; and through which we recruit 90% of new staff. Our locally-embedded Account Directors drive recruitment at an international level, using their personal professional networks to identify candidates and advertise through local online job boards and recruitment agencies. For example, in 2016, we used MSELECT to recruit 10 technical services staff in Iraq, including a digital content strategist, researcher, training advisor and designer.

Additional recruitment channels and networks we use to identify staff in the UK and internationally, include: ♦ marketing opportunities at relevant conferences (e.g. the Digital Content Summit) ♦ accessing 65,000 CVs via *developmentaid.org*. (media platform for the global development community) ♦ and engaging Civil Society Organisations (e.g. Fursad Fund in Somalia) to access their local networks.

**4. Shortlisting:** Our HR Team anonymise all applications to remove unconscious bias in the shortlisting process, selecting candidates against clearly defined criteria within each Job Profile, Team profile and Person Specification. Through this we create a long-list of high-quality personnel who: ♦ are legally able to work in the required jurisdiction (e.g. can obtain a work permit / visa) ♦ are suitably skilled to perform the role (e.g. social media management in a specific language) ♦ possess appropriate qualifications required (e.g. PhD for UN Team Leader positions) ♦ and will work well within the team by providing the most suitable balance of skills and experience. The Project Lead will use this long-list to shortlist candidates to invite to interview based on the skills and experience demonstrated on their CV and application.

**5. Interviewing:** Successfully shortlisted candidates are interviewed by a Manager and a member of the HR Team, ensuring where possible a gender-balanced interview panel. All Managers and HR staff are trained in competency-based interviewing to ensure candidates can demonstrate the necessary skills to perform all key tasks required by the role. Depending on the seniority of the position advertised and the recruitment timeframe available, candidates may be required to attend

up to four interviews with different BTM personnel to robustly quality assure their professionalism and experience. Depending on the role, candidates may be required to undertake further assessments (e.g. written tasks and/or presenting to a panel).

**6. Vetting and Onboarding:** Our Head of Security and Risk will oversee a due diligence process to ensure staff achieve the relevant official security clearance levels to work on the contract. This will be tailored to any request for services and could include:

Relevant staff vetting	Our approach	UK	Global
Personal identity verification	3 <sup>rd</sup> party researchers conducting 'network-link analysis' (e.g. LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter connections)	X	X
Links to extremism check		X	X
Social media / online presence			X
Political exposure			X
Integrity / CV check	As above and/or in-house research through online research and Lexis Nexis database	X	X
Security Check (SC) e.g. criminal records, public records	Sponsored SC Baseline Personnel Security Standard (BPSS)	X	
Published work fact-check	In-house peer review		X

Where required, our Project Lead will present preferred candidates to the client for their sign-off prior to making an offer of employment.

### **Mobilising and Inductions**

Wherever possible we recruit staff who are qualified and able to commence delivery on a project immediately. For example, earlier this year we capitalised on our network of consultants to mobilise a multilingual team of researchers for an FCO disinformation research project within one week of the request for services. All personnel undertake an induction at a BTM site in the UK or a local field office overseas to ensure they are fully briefed on: the aims and objectives of the project; their role in delivering the services; BTM Code of Conduct (aligned to CSSF Code of Conduct); relevant security procedures; and relevant contextual (e.g. cultural, political, geographical) awareness.

Where our Head of Security and Risk deems it necessary, and in line with FCO travel advice, all operational staff receive: ♦ a certification in Hostile Environment and First Aid Training (HEFAT), or a refresher ♦ road safety and trauma training ♦ an approved field guide to the environment detailing our Operating Standards ♦ a verbal security briefing before deployment and continued briefings throughout operations ♦ and local mobile with credit and an emergency contact list. Staff carry copies of travel documents at all times and any relevant additional documentation. Depending on the operating environment, trauma and first aid kits and personal protective equipment are provided.

### **Training and Continuous Professional Development (CPD)**

Every staff member at BTM is encouraged and supported to co-create a Training and CPD Plan with their Manager to enable them to access training and continue to learn, develop and progress their career at BTM. All staff are required to complete mandatory e-learning training via our *CascadeGo* HR system, including modules in relation to Safeguarding, data protection and GDPR regulations, understanding of gender and conflict concepts, and Code of Conduct and Ethics.

Wider CPD opportunities include: ♦ employee coaching, mentoring and training workshops delivered by senior leaders within BTM (Head of Production on video-editing/production and Gender/Conflict Specialist on mainstreaming gender/conflict sensitivity into projects) ♦ job-shadowing to learn about other roles within BTM ♦ weekly show and tell by individuals to discuss the functions of their role and projects they work on (e.g. our M&E lead discussing how they develop a Theory of Change for projects) ♦ job rotations to give staff a broader understanding of the organisation and support career progression ♦ funding subscriptions to educational material (e.g. all staff have full access to 'Lynda.com' – a multilingual digital learning library of videos created by industry experts) ♦ and giving staff study leave to undertake relevant qualifications.