Executive Office Directive Ref. EOD.ED.2021.01 Occupational Health & Safety and Social & Environmental Management

Authority:

This Executive Office Directive (EOD) is promulgated by the Executive Director, on the basis of my authority under UNOPS Financial Regulation 3.01.

Purpose:

The purpose of this EOD is to affirm my commitment as UNOPS Executive Director to occupational health & safety (HS) and social & environment (SE, and together with HS, HSSE) management, and to set out the principles UNOPS shall follow in this regard.

Effective Date:

This EOD shall become effective **immediately**.

Consequential changes:

This EOD version abolishes and replaces EOD.ED.2017.03: Occupational Health & Safety and Social & Environmental Management of 13 March 2017. The purpose of this revision is to strengthen the commitment to embed a risk-based approach to HSSE management in all of UNOPS activities, to ensure that projects are adequately resourced for HSSE management, and to raise the capacity of contractors and personnel to enable them to meet the requirements of this policy. The commitment to demonstrate compliance with ISO requirements has been replaced with a commitment to aligning with best practices in line with applicable national legislation, international standards and the UN Common System Frameworks and policies.

The policy strengthens the commitment to holding people accountable for occupational health and safety performance.

[signature redacted]

Grete Faremo
Executive Director, UNOPS

1. Introduction

1.1 UNOPS governance shall be based on the following organizational principles and governance model.

1.2 This policy shall apply to all UNOPS activities and facilities as well as to all UNOPS contracted and/or subcontracted activities and facilities.

2. Objectives and Requirements

2.1 UNOPS shall put measures in place to ensure the occupational health, safety and welfare of all individuals involved in its activities and facilities. This shall include UNOPS personnel, partners, service providers, contractors, visitors, communities and any other parties affected by or participating in UNOPS activities or visiting a UNOPS facility.

2.2 In managing our activities and facilities, UNOPS shall adopt a people-centred approach, upholding rights, promoting active participation, including disadvantaged groups and individuals and leaving no one behind.

2.3 UNOPS shall promote environmental sustainability and resilience in its activities and facilities, systematically preventing and addressing negative impacts on the environment.

2.4 To this end, UNOPS shall implement a health, safety, social and environmental management systems approach that:

- Is risk-based, ensuring that health and safety risk-mitigation is embedded in all activities and that planning, resource allocation, supervision and performance monitoring are adequate for keeping UNOPS workplaces free of occupational injuries and illnesses.
- Promotes excellence in HSSE, by aligning with international standards and best practices as appropriate and consistent with applicable national legislation and standards and the UN Common System Frameworks;
- Operates in a way that will meet or go beyond the organization's compliance requirements;
- Monitors and continuously improves HSSE management by setting appropriate targets, measuring performance against the targets and ensuring that performance gaps and non-compliance with requirements are addressed;
- Engages on HSSE issues with UNOPS personnel, partners, contractors, suppliers, sub-suppliers and any other people who work under UNOPS; ensures that everyone understands the requirements and their obligations under this Policy and have a chance to participate in HSSE decisions and actions;
- Encourages stakeholders and partners to protect the environment and foster positive social development.

2.4 To meet the objectives of its health and safety management system, UNOPS shall:

- Create and maintain a safe and healthy working environment in all work areas by systematically identifying hazards and risks associated with its activities and implementing measures to control these risks.
- Create safe and healthy work conditions by taking reasonable measures to maintain safe plant and equipment, safe systems of work and to prevent or address personal injuries, ill health and damage to property.
- Ensure that workers have the appropriate awareness, knowledge, qualifications, skills, experience and safety culture required for them to work safely.
- Ensure that processes are in place for reporting incidents, investigating causes and putting in place actions to prevent the recurrence of incidents.
- Ensure that processes are in place for measuring the health and safety performance of business units and addressing poor performance where it exists.
- Put measures in place to ensure that members of the community at UNOPS project locations are not harmed as a result of UNOPS activities.
- Ensure that adequate resources for meeting the requirements of this policy are included in project funding agreements with partners and in contracts with service providers.
- Ensure contractors, service providers and entities which UNOPS directly supervises adopt good health and safety practices and aim to raise their working standards;

2.5 To meet the objectives of its social and environmental management system, UNOPS shall:

- Identify the major hazards and risks associated with its facilities as well as risks to the environment and society arising from its activities and take the necessary steps to eliminate or manage these risks;
- Manage its activities and facilities in a manner that respects the principles of social and environmental responsibility, with the primary purpose of protecting people and the environment, and mitigating the negative risks and impacts of its activities and facilities.
- Conduct its operations in alignment with the objectives and the vision of the UN System's strategies for environmental sustainability: to integrate environmental and social sustainability considerations across its work in an effective way, while practising the principles that it promotes and leaving a positive legacy.
- Screen projects with respect to their environmental and social risks and opportunities taking into consideration the organizational context and the needs and expectations of interested parties;
- Determine the social and environmental risks and impacts of its activities, using a participatory and inclusive life cycle approach where applicable and where UNOPS has control or influence;
- Promote meaningful and effective engagement, consultation and participation of project affected people throughout the project life cycle; and their access to a mechanism for reporting their project-related grievances for the whole duration of the project.
- Minimize negative social and environmental impacts of its activities and identify opportunities to strengthen positive impacts in all its operations, projects and functions, following the principles of the mitigation hierarchy;
- Identify measures to improve resource efficiency, reduce energy and water use, and where feasible adopt sustainable, low-impact technologies and promote the use of renewable resources;
- Prevent pollution to air, water and land by adopting sound environmental practices;

- Minimise the negative environmental impacts of waste generation by preventing and minimising the generation of all types of waste, especially hazardous waste; encouraging reuse and recycling of materials and products; and optimising the final disposal methods according to the waste hierarchy.
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions in all operations and projects, in support of international and national mitigation strategies and commitments;
- Identify impacts on biodiversity; prevent, minimize and remedy adverse impacts, while recognizing opportunities for the protection, promotion and recovery of biodiversity;
- Incorporate principles of green design, sustainable infrastructure, sustainable consumption and production, sustainable procurement and resilience thinking into the solutions developed for partners;
- Uphold the Universal Human Rights Principles in all UNOPS activities and facilities including the human rights principles of accountability and rule of law, participation and inclusion, and equality and non-discrimination. Prohibited grounds for discrimination include but are not limited to race, colour, ethnicity, gender, age, language, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, political or other opinion, national or social or geographic origin, property, birth or other status including as an indigenous person or as a member of a minority;
- Anticipate, avoid or minimize adverse impacts on the rights of minority groups or vulnerable people; and promote accessibility and inclusion of people with disabilities; • Promote gender equality and advance equal opportunities between men and women in all projects and operations; adopt measures that seek to prevent and respond to incidents of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment that may take place in connection to operations and facilities.
- Avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse impacts of physical and economic displacement on affected people;
- Uphold and enhance decent work for all project stakeholders in line with ILO conventions and instruments; and especially uphold the Fundamental Conventions on freedom of association; the elimination of all forms of discrimination at work; and on elimination of forced labour and child labour.
- Encourage the protection of tangible and intangible cultural heritage for current and future generations;
- Safeguard the rights of indigenous people who may be affected by UNOPS project activities

2.6 The above HSSE commitments shall be implemented progressively, in accordance with the Executive Office Instruction(s) (EOI(s)) to be promulgated under this EOD.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 The overall responsibility and accountability for HSSE management in UNOPS shall be with the Executive Director. The Executive Director may delegate roles and responsibilities across all levels of the organization from senior management to all personnel.

3.2 In this regard, the Director, Shared Services Centre, under the leadership of the CFO and Director of Administration, shall be responsible and accountable for:

- Establishing and facilitating effective arrangements across UNOPS to ensure the requirements of this Policy are met;
- Establishing and providing the technical support and oversight needed for operational units to comply with this EOD;
- Issuing instructions, guidance, training and tools that may be necessary to effect the implementation of this EOD.

3.3 For each country where UNOPS has activities and facilities, the Director of the Region overseeing the country in question, or the UNOPS personnel to whom the Regional Director has delegated authority to do it, shall be responsible and accountable for:

- Ensuring that the requirements of this EOD are operationalized in UNOPS activities and facilities under their responsibility in accordance with the EOI(s) to be promulgated under this EOD;
- Reporting on HSSE performance including significant incidents occurring in their units in accordance with the EOI(s) to be promulgated under this EOD, so that corporate performance may be collated.

3.4 For Denmark, the above shall be the responsibility and accountability of the Director, Shared Services Centre. For the United States, it shall be the responsibility and accountability of the Director, New York Office.

3.5 All UNOPS personnel that have HSSE responsibilities in their delegations of authority and/or terms of reference shall be strictly liable[1] for ensuring compliance with this EOD, including by:

- Complying with all HSSE requirements set out in the EOI(s) to be promulgated under this EOD;
- Taking all reasonable actions to prevent and address incidents – including stopping work when significant hazards or issues are identified;
- Reporting of HSSE incidents and assisting in the review of the incidents in accordance with the EOI(s) to be promulgated under this EOD;
- Contributing to positive HSSE planning, implementation and performance in operations and projects; and
- Identifying opportunities for improvement.

[1] For this purpose, “strictly liable” means that a person is legally responsible for the consequences of non-compliance even in the absence of fault, intent and/or knowledge on the part of that person.