Operational Directive Ref. OD.PCG.2017.01
Human Resources, Ethics and Culture

Authority:

This Operational Directive (OD) is promulgated by the Director, People and Change Group under Executive Office Directive Ref. EOD.ED.2017.01 – Legislative Framework of 13 March 2017, on the basis of a delegation of authority from the Executive Director.

Purpose:

The purpose of this OD is to establish the principles that shall underpin the management of UNOPS personnel in order to achieve a workforce that upholds the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity. This includes principles relating to human resources, ethics and travel.

Effective Date:

This OD shall become effective **15 August 2017.**

Selection actions initiated before the effective date may be finalized according to the provisions in the policies effective on the date when the Vacancy Announcement was advertised.

Promulgation Date:

13 Jul 2017

Consequential changes:

This OD shall supersede and replace the Organizational Directives listed in Annex I.

[signature redacted]

Tina Hansen
Director, PCG

1. UNOPS Personnel

1.1 UNOPS personnel consist primarily of individual contractors retained under individual contractor agreements (ICAs), and staff members employed through letters of appointment issued under the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules. UNOPS personnel also include other individuals retained under a UNOPS-specific contractual modality such as Internship Agreements, and Volunteer Agreements.

2. Guiding Principles

2.1 The fact that UNOPS is not subject to the labour legislations of any of the Member States of the United Nations requires the UNOPS to develop its own Personnel Management Framework (PMF) to govern UNOPS relationship with its personnel. In the development of the PMF UNOPS shall be guided by the following principles:

2.1.1 UNOPS shall offer personnel a workplace that respects diversity, pursues equality, including gender equality, and encourages responsible leadership. In turn, all UNOPS personnel shall contribute to maintaining a working environment that nurtures excellence.

2.1.2 UNOPS shall at all times manage personnel with fairness and impartiality.

2.1.3 UNOPS shall ensure that personnel have adequate protection, including from discrimination, harassment or abuse of authority.

2.1.4 Maintain a diverse UNOPS that treats people fairly and equally, engages in a two-way communication process with personnel and personnel associations and recognizes and rewards performance.

3. UNOPS Personnel Management Framework

3.1 The PMF shall be developed in a way to ensure that the UNOPS is able to attract and retain people of the highest calibre, with diverse skills and experience, able to bring their expert, technical, and management knowledge to wherever UNOPS and its partners need it, whilst upholding the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity, as well as manage a global, dynamic, and adaptable workforce, and to ensure that human resources are aligned with strategic and organizational priorities.

3.2 In order to achieve its objectives, the PMF shall focus on key priority areas: Leadership, talent, diversity and security. Solid leadership will be required for performance management of personnel, talent identification and development also addressing UNOPS' gender and diversity requirements. As such, the PMF shall:

Talent acquisition, retention, and management

[Sections 3.2.1., 3.2.2. and 3.2.3. abolished by POLICY.PCG.2026.01 - Talent Acquisition Policy w.e.f. 6 November 2026.]

Diversity/gender diversity

3.2.4 Pursue gender equality using gender targets to increase its female workforce in all locations and at all levels through the use of measures specifically developed to achieve the goal of gender parity.

3.2.5 Promote diversity using specific targets for the attraction and retention of personnel on as wide a geographic basis as possible.

Security

3.2.6 Promote the wellbeing and safety of UNOPS personnel by ensuring they are cared for, recognizing their often difficult working environment and providing appropriate benefits and working practices.

Performance management

3.2.7 Secure the linkage between (a) individual performance and the corresponding rewards and sanctions, and (b) individual performance and organizational results.

3.2.8 Deliver efficient, fair and transparent HR practices including the administration of contract provisions and/or benefits and entitlements and manage personnel's exit from the organisation (as applicable).

3.2.9 Contribute to the advancement of the fit-for-purpose efforts in the UN System in the area of HR.

3.2.10 Enable the human resources function of UNOPS to serve a business advisory role in support of the core business areas.

3.2.11 Support professional development of personnel in a project-based organization through a learning and development system that utilises a blended approach to learning and is linked to a performance management system that is consistent, objective and fair.

4. Standards of Conduct, Integrity, and Accountability

4.1 All UNOPS personnel shall adhere to the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. UNOPS personnel shall refrain from any action which might reflect adversely on their position as personnel of UNOPS. UNOPS personnel shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any authority external to UNOPS other than the Secretary-General or any person to whom the Secretary-General has delegated authority to make decisions on matters affecting UNOPS (such as, without limitation, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security).

4.2 UNOPS personnel shall comply with the duties and responsibilities set out in the Charter of the United Nations, the United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules, the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service (as defined, from time to time, by the International Civil Service Commission) and with other relevant instruments in the UNOPS Legislative Framework.

4.3 UNOPS requires the same standards of conduct of all its personnel, regardless of their contractual modality, except to the extent such standards are, in the opinion of UNOPS, inherently inconsistent with the status of non-staff personnel engaged as independent contractors, interns, volunteers or other status as defined by UNOPS. Part-time staff members are at all times subject to the same standards as full time staff members even when not working on UNOPS-related activities, including while on special leave without pay. In the case of UNOPS personnel other than staff, and in particular those who are engaged on a part-time or retainer basis or on a very short term contract, UNOPS recognizes that it

may be appropriate that certain standards of conduct only apply during the period that such personnel are actually working on UNOPS-related activities.

4.4 UNOPS personnel who are managers or supervisors shall act as role models and have therefore a special obligation to uphold the highest standards of conduct. Supervisors shall be held accountable for their failure to take appropriate action towards those supervisors or managers under their supervision whose management of others is found to be unsatisfactory. While issues of management style may not constitute misconduct warranting disciplinary or administrative action, it is the responsibility of supervisors overseeing those managers or supervisors found to be deficient in their management, treatment or supervision of people to take appropriate action. In particular, supervisors of managers or supervisors shall:

4.4.1 Take measures to coach or train managers in appropriate people management skills;

4.4.2 Take appropriate performance related actions, such as reflecting any issues or development needs during performance discussion or at the time of evaluation performance formally;

4.4.3 As appropriate, issue letters of reprimand, take other non-disciplinary measures, or administrative measures, or any other appropriate action.

4.5 UNOPS personnel are subject to:

4.5.1 restrictions on their ability to engage in outside employment and activities;

4.5.2 a general prohibition from accepting in the course of their duties gifts or hospitality from outside sources; and

4.5.3 an obligation to disclose actual or potential conflicts of interest.

4.6 Disciplinary or administrative actions shall be imposed on any UNOPS personnel failing to abide by the required standards of conduct. Managerial action may be imposed on personnel to correct departures from the expected standards of conduct not amounting to misconduct, or to complete managerial or administrative actions.

4.7 All UNOPS personnel have a duty to report suspected wrongdoing.

4.8 Any UNOPS personnel who reports suspected wrongdoing in good faith or who cooperates in good faith with an investigation or audit or other duly authorised fact finding activity has the right to be protected against retaliation. Any UNOPS personnel facing retaliation in violation of that right may seek protection against retaliation through the Ethics Office.

4.9 Personnel are encouraged to seek confidential advice from the Office of the United Nations Ombudsman, regarding workplace-related concerns, and on how to resolve conflict through informal means, as appropriate.

5. Confidential Independent Advice and Guidance on Ethical Issues and Ethical Dilemmas:

5.1 Pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/11 of 30 November 2007 (as amended) on "United Nations systems-wide application of ethics: separately administered organs and programmes", the Ethics Office functions independently and reports directly to the Executive Director.

5.2 The Ethics Office can be approached directly by any UNOPS personnel, regardless of their contractual modality, for confidential advice and guidance on ethical issues and ethical dilemmas. The Ethics Office cannot be compelled by any United Nations official or body to disclose issues brought to its attention.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 The operationalization of this OD through the promulgation of appropriate OIs and the development of required processes in the Process and Quality Management System (PQMS) shall be the responsibility of the relevant directors, as follows:

6.1.1 The Director, PCG shall be responsible for maintaining a harmonious and efficient work environment through the exercise of his or her delegated authority in matters relating to human resources management for UNOPS, which includes setting up the conditions under which UNOPS retain personnel as well the conditions under which UNOPS provides human resources services to different partners.

6.1.2 The Ethics Officer, Ethics Office, shall be responsible for the functioning of the Ethics Office. Pursuant to Secretary-General's bulletin ST/SGB/2007/11 of 30 November 2007 (as amended) on "United Nations systems-wide application of ethics: separately administered organs and programmes", the ultimate goal and principle of the Ethics Office shall be to cultivate and nurture a culture of ethics, integrity and accountability. Pursuant to Financial Rule 105.5, the Ethics Office has been directed by the Executive Director to issue OIs in respect of the UNOPS financial disclosure and conflict of interest programme (including defining the personnel subject to such programme), outside employment and activities, gifts and hospitality and whistle-blower protection and generally in respect of standards of conduct. The Ethics Office will also provide and maintain PQMS content in respect of OIs issued by the Ethics Office.

6.1.3 The Director, CSG shall be responsible for establishing the conditions and limits under which UNOPS personnel, partner personnel, or third parties may be required to travel, at the expense of UNOPS.

6.2 In the exercise of their respective responsibility 6.1, each Director must ensure that all the required processes published in PQMS comply with the framework established by this OD and the corresponding OIs.

Annexes

- Annex I
