

# Vacancy announcements: Examples of Good Practice

## Top Tips for Inclusive Vacancy Announcements:

1. **Include Value Statements, e.g. diversity inclusion, zero tolerance on discrimination and abuse, work/life balance**
2. **Use Gender Neutral Language**
3. **Emphasize Potential Rather Than Experience**
4. **Incorporate a Gender Indicator in the Evaluation Criteria**

### 1. Include Value Statements

#### Actions

- Include statements that demonstrate the organization's values, e.g. diversity, flexible working or other enabling practices, zero-tolerance approach with regards to harassment;
- Include value statement at the beginning of the vacancy announcement, rather than the end;
- Rethink how you write the value statement, e.g. **bold** or underline;
- Streamline the vacancy announcement system so that these statements automatically appear on every job announcement regardless of contract modality, location or seniority;
- Ensure that the respect to diversity is reflected in the procedures, e.g. signpost to options for different formats or ways for candidates with disabilities to apply;
- Consider having a dedicated webpage that demonstrates the organization's values;
- Use pictures to communicate diversity, especially when posting on social media.

#### Examples of ensuring statements appear on every vacancy announcement

- **ODA:** All vacancy announcements include the standard clause that encourages female candidates to apply, which is pre-populated in the system;
- **ILO:** Vacancy announcements for vendors include a standard header clause about the vendor's responsibility regarding diversity and inclusion and specific examples of what these mean. These examples are tailored depending on the service being provided. Clauses are included in the TOR template to ensure that they will be included in the sample TORs that are shared with staff worldwide to support colleagues outside of HR who may also be hiring similar services.

#### Examples of diversity inclusion statements

- **UN Women:** "At UN Women, we are committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment of mutual respect. UN Women recruits, employs, trains, compensates and promotes regardless of race, religion, color, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, physical or mental disability, national origin, veteran status or any other basis covered by appropriate law. All employment is decided on the basis of qualifications, competence, integrity and organizational need. If you need any reasonable accommodation to support your participation in the recruitment and selection process, please include this information in your application."
- **ILO:** "The ILO values diversity among its staff. We welcome applications from qualified women and men, including those with disabilities. If you are unable to complete our online application form due to a disability, please send an email to [ilojobs@ilo.org](mailto:ilojobs@ilo.org)."

- **ILO:** Vendors are required to pay attention to diversity and inclusion. The standard header for vendors' vacancy announcements is: "The contractor will ensure that attention is given to gender equality and non-discrimination on the basis of age, race, gender, religion, colour, national extraction, social origin, marital status, pregnancy, family responsibilities, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, union membership or political conviction in the manner in which services are delivered." Examples are given including:
  - "The contractor will develop and use communication materials (quotes, photographs and images, videos, books, etc.) that reflect diversity (including in terms of gender, race and disability), that integrate women and men's perspectives, that are non-discriminatory and that may also challenge stereotypes and common misconceptions about roles and capabilities.";
  - "The contractor will ensure that all materials are accessible to the broadest possible audience including users with disabilities.";
  - "The contractor will promote equality by creating a friendly and safe learning environment towards disability as a factor of human diversity.";
  - "When facilitating, the contractor will use a language that is gender sensitive and non-discriminatory, avoid gender stereotypes, promote gender equality and will call equally upon women and men for comments and responses to questions."
- **UNFPA:** "UNFPA provides a work environment that reflects the values of gender equality, teamwork, embracing diversity in all its forms, integrity and a healthy balance of work and life. We are committed to maintaining our balanced gender distribution and therefore encourage women to apply. UNFPA promotes equal opportunities for all including persons with disabilities."
- **UNICEF:** "UNICEF is committed to diversity and inclusion within its workforce, and encourages all candidates, irrespective of gender, nationality, religious and ethnic backgrounds, including persons living with disabilities, to apply to become a part of the organization."
- **UNAIDS:** "Applications from people living with HIV are particularly welcome. Applications from women and from nationals of non- and under-represented member states are particularly encouraged."
- **UNU:** "UNU is committed to diversity and inclusion within its workforce, and encourages all candidates, irrespective of gender, nationality, religious and ethnic backgrounds, including persons living with disabilities to apply and become part of the organization."
- **UNOPS:** "With over 4,000 UNOPS personnel and approximately 7,000 personnel recruited on behalf of UNOPS partners spread across 80 countries, our workforce represents a wide range of nationalities and cultures. We promote a balanced, diverse workforce — a strength that helps us better understand and address our partners' needs, and continually strive to improve our gender balance through initiatives and policies that encourage recruitment of qualified female candidates."
- **UNOV/UNODC:** "The United Nations Secretariat is committed to achieving 50/50 gender balance in its staff. Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply for this position. Due regard will be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible. The United Nations places no restrictions on the eligibility of men and women to participate in any capacity and under conditions of equality in its principal and subsidiary organs."
- **UNFCCC:** "Qualified women candidates and candidates from developing countries are especially encouraged to apply." (Included for P-positions)
- **ESCAP:** "ESCAP is committed to promoting diversity and gender equality within the Secretariat. Women candidates are strongly encouraged to apply." (Included for JOs, at Professional level and above)

- **UNON:** “The United Nations Secretariat is committed to achieving 50/50 gender balance in its staff. Female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply for this position.”
- **UN Globe** informs that the preferred language to use in vacancy notices is “Persons of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.”

#### **Examples of Zero Tolerance on discrimination and abuse statements**

- **UNICEF:** “UNICEF has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNICEF, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination. UNICEF also adheres to strict child safeguarding principles. All selected candidates will, therefore, undergo rigorous reference and background checks, and will be expected to adhere to these standards and principles.”
- **UNU:** “UNU has a zero-tolerance policy on conduct that is incompatible with the aims and objectives of the United Nations and UNU, including sexual exploitation and abuse, sexual harassment, abuse of authority and discrimination.”

#### **Examples of work/life balance value statements**

- **UNOPS:** “Work life harmonization - UNOPS values its people and recognizes the importance of balancing professional and personal demands. We have a progressive policy on work-life harmonization and offer several flexible working options. This policy applies to UNOPS personnel on all contract types.”

#### **Examples of linking vacancy announcements to specific web pages and/or pictures**

- **UNDP:** All vacancy announcements refer to a specific webpage on diversity inclusion: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/jobs/gender-and-diversity.html>
- **IOM:** A dedicated webpage on diversity and inclusion, which is referenced in all vacancy notices, highlights the organization’s commitment to diversity and existing policies and accommodations for the needs of staff, particularly for parents and families, women, LGBTIQ+ staff, staff with disabilities and diversity of nationality and ethnicity. Information includes a link to commitments the IOM has made at programme level for the Global Disability Summit 2018, an online form for a webinar on diversity at IOM, and links to the UN-SWAP and the System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. Furthermore, IOM’s vacancy notices include a list of non-represented Member States and encourages nationals of those countries and qualified female candidates to apply [please see the Supplementary Guidance on the Enabling Environment Guidelines, p25]. <https://www.iom.int/diversity>
- **UNOPS:** Each UNOPS vacancy announcement shared from their external recruitment career portal on social media automatically has a picture composed of people from minority groups and features mostly women (below). It has been developed based on recruitment outreach and inclusive communication best-practices. The tagline “We’re recruiting” is translated in French and Spanish, also for inclusion purposes.
- **ILO:** ILO Jobs website <https://jobs.ilo.org/>



## 2. Use Gender Neutral Language

### Actions

- Ensure that vacancy announcements use gender neutral language throughout;
- Require hiring managers to be trained on eliminating unconscious bias in job application processes, including job design, job descriptions and vacancy announcements;
- Consider the country-specific context and the level and types of inequality in the country;
- Avoid using words which are traditionally associated with men as women will be less likely to apply. Obvious masculine words to avoid are e.g. he/his, mankind – instead use she/her or they/their and humankind;
- Be aware of words that, according to research (<http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/about>), are coded as gendered, for instance:
  - Masculine coded words: leadership, persistence, challenges, autonomy, challenging;
  - Feminine coded words: trust, support, understanding, sharing, responsibility.

### Examples

- **ODA:** All vacancy announcements are screened by the ODA gender team to ensure use of gender-neutral language and that educational and experience requirements are formulated in a manner that seeks to attract a diverse applicant pool;
- **ILO:** Attention is paid to either use neutral nouns/pronouns in job descriptions (e.g. “the position will be under the supervision of...”) or to consistently use “she/he” rather than using “he” by default. In French and Spanish, job titles are in both masculine and feminine forms i.e. Funcionario/a, Infirmier(ère);
- **UNOPS:** UNOPS job titles are currently being standardized across the organization in order to ensure their gender-neutral tone in English, French and Spanish. The organization is also currently evaluating solutions based on artificial intelligence to ensure that vacancy announcements have a gender-neutral tone;
- **DGACM:** All vacancy announcements ensure gender-neutral language in English, French and Spanish (examples at the end of the document);
- The **Gender Decoder tool** (<http://gender-decoder.katmatfield.com/>) reviews job descriptions to identify gendered words that may make candidates feel excluded and thereby limit the applicant pool. The free tool can be used for any document to eliminate bias-triggering language, and it is

particularly useful for vacancy announcements in UN official languages that use grammatical genders;

- **GenderTerm**, developed by UN Women, is a searchable gender-inclusive lexicon in English, French and Spanish (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/genderterm>) that can be used to ensure that terms are gender-inclusive.

### 3. Emphasize Potential Rather Than Experience

#### Actions

- Craft job descriptions for the broadest audience;
- Ensure that only the essential qualifications and the “must-haves” in the evaluation criteria are mentioned in vacancy announcements and job descriptions to attract the widest pool of applicants. The “nice-to-have” and nonessential criteria could discourage the non-represented and under-represented groups from applying. For instance, women tend to apply only if they feel they meet all criteria. Especially, avoid restrictive criteria, for instance:
  - qualifications or licenses specific to some countries or groups of countries;
  - prior field experience;
  - knowledge or skills which can only be acquired in the UN.

#### Examples

- **UNOV/UNODC**: Attention is paid in vacancy announcements to avoid gendered language and experiences that may favour one gender (e.g. field experience) and are not included as “mandatory” but only “desirable”;
- **UNOPS**: UNOPS is currently piloting a project to hire people with a focus on their potential to perform a given job, rather than exclusively based on past experience. Consequently, these vacancy announcements mention a reduced (by half) number of years of experience required, compared to regular jobs at the same level, which enables UNOPS to consider candidates with less years of experience. This is particularly beneficial for women (especially mothers) and other under-represented groups within the UN system and minorities who did not have the same opportunities to accumulate official years of work experience. These candidates go through an additional assessment to demonstrate transferable skills and potential to perform the job;
- **UNOPS**: UNOPS is piloting a project where vacancy announcements at lower contract levels must mention the possible different combinations of requirements between education and work experience. For example: “Bachelors with 0 years of experience or Secondary school degree with 4 years of experience”. This additional transparency attracts candidates who would otherwise not apply, and supports the selection of candidates from diverse backgrounds.

#### 4. Incorporate a Gender Indicator in the Evaluation Criteria

##### **Actions**

- Ensure that job openings demonstrate the organization's commitment to gender equality and diversity by including a gender indicator in the competencies required under the evaluation criteria;
- When evaluating candidates, require them to demonstrate that they can incorporate a gender perspective into their work.

##### **Examples**

- **UN Secretariat:** In the UN Secretariat, all job openings include a gender indicator in the competencies required in the position. For leadership positions (P-5, D-1 and D-2 level) the indicator is included under the competency of leadership, for all others it is under the competency of professionalism.
  - P-5, D-1 and D-2: "Provides leadership and takes responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives and ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work; demonstrates knowledge of strategies and commitment to the goal of gender balance in staffing."
  - P-1 to P-4, FS-6 and FS-7 and National Professional Officers: "Takes responsibility for incorporating gender perspectives and ensuring the equal participation of women and men in all areas of work."
  - FS-1 to FS-5, and General Service and related categories excluding National Professional Officers: "Demonstrates commitment to implementing the goal of gender equality by ensuring the equal participation and full involvement of women and men in all aspects of work."
- **ILO:** All job descriptions contain the following behavioral competency: "Ability to work in a multicultural environment and to demonstrate gender-sensitive and non-discriminatory behavior and attitudes."

#### Further Tools and Examples

**Guidelines on gender-inclusive language with best practices and strategies for more gender-inclusive communication, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/guidelines.shtml>**

**Toolbox for using gender-inclusive language for training materials, activities and resources to better understand how to apply the Guidelines, available at: <https://www.un.org/en/gender-inclusive-language/toolbox.shtml>**