



VACANCY PROPOSAL FOR JUNIOR PROFESSIONAL OFFICERS (JPO) Job Description Template – Headquarters and field positions

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Title: Junior Professional Officer in *Empowering Women through Productive and Sustainable Enterprises*

Duty station: *Geneva, Switzerland*

Duration of the assignment: 12 months, renewable

Grade: P2

Department/ Field Office: *Department of Sustainable Enterprises, Productivity and Just Transition*

Organisational unit: *Micro, Small and Medium sized Enterprises Branch*

INTRODUCTION

The position is located in the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Branch (MSME) of the ILO's Department on Sustainable Enterprises, Productivity and Just Transition. Within the Department's mandate to promote sustainable enterprises, the MSME Branch seeks to unlock the potential of creating more and better jobs in MSMEs, which are the backbone of many economies, particularly in developing countries, and vital for decent work, economic growth, and social justice. However, MSMEs often face low productivity, poor working conditions, and vulnerability to economic, political, and environmental shocks, limiting their sustainability and impact.

Women, in particular, often face legal, regulatory, and socio-cultural barriers when starting, managing, or growing their businesses. While many women entrepreneurs successfully lead enterprises—accounting for approximately one-third of all MSMEs in developing countries—they continue to face gender-based inequalities that restrict their access to resources, markets, and spaces. As a result, many women entrepreneurs operate in the informal economy, where low productivity and poor working conditions are prevalent. These structural barriers limit their ability to fully leverage entrepreneurship as a pathway to economic empowerment and sustainable enterprise growth.

The ILO's Women's Entrepreneurship Development (ILO-WED) programme provides assistance to women entrepreneurs globally to contribute to gender equality and women's economic empowerment as well as decent work and inclusive economic

growth. The programme addresses gender imbalances in enterprise development through a twin-track approach. This includes targeted rights-based and people-centred interventions focusing on women-owned and led enterprises operating in the formal and informal sector. In parallel, the programme works with governments, social partners and other actors to ensure that sustainable enterprise initiatives consider gender equality and women's economic empowerment in their formulation and roll-out.

Having supported national partners in implementing women's entrepreneurship development interventions in approximately 70 countries across Africa, the Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Central Asia, and Latin America, the ILO is contributing to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including in particular SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities).

The main role of the position is to support the promotion of sustainable and productive enterprises as a means of empowering women entrepreneurs. This involves contributing to the design and implementation of programmes, tools and initiatives that foster an enabling business environment for decent work where women can start, operate, and grow sustainable enterprises, as well as work in inclusive and gender-equal enterprises that promote fairness and opportunity. The JPO will also provide support on following up on already developed concept notes as well as the contribution to the development of further concept notes for potential Development Cooperation.

A key focus is addressing structural barriers and inequalities that hinder women entrepreneurs, particularly those linked to informality, limited access to resources, and gender-based constraints. This includes enhancing access to finance, business support services, market opportunities, and skills development to strengthen the productivity, resilience, and competitiveness of women-owned and led enterprises. It also involves supporting transformative actions and promoting social norms and gender roles that foster women's entrepreneurship development.

The position will also support the advancement of efforts to integrate gender considerations into enterprise development initiatives, ensuring women benefit from emerging opportunities in areas such as digital transformation, environmental sustainability, and in the care economy.

By reducing gender-based barriers and strengthening enterprise productivity and sustainability, this role will help create a more inclusive and resilient economic landscape, enabling women to fully participate in and benefit from sustainable enterprise development.

The incumbent works under direct supervision of the Technical Officer, Women's Entrepreneurship Development.

A time-bound work plan will be agreed between the JPO and the supervisor upon appointment. The supervision will involve regular bi-weekly meetings between the JPO and the supervisor to discuss progress and give detailed instructions and guidance as necessary. The JPO will also collaborate with colleagues in the MSME branch as well as field offices, projects and other ILO units in Headquarters. Work will be discussed with, and reviewed by the supervisor at various stages before completion in order to ensure learning and quality control. The JPO will accompany and assist the supervisor in

webinars and meetings and will have access to online courses provided by the ILO. The JPO will also support backstopping of development cooperation projects. Apart from these on the job training opportunities, staff development measures will be available and the supervisor will encourage the JPO to make use of these opportunities. Performance management will be reviewed in accordance with ILO's Performance Management Framework, as applicable to Junior Professional Officers.

KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSABILITIES

Under the direct supervision of the supervisor, the JPO is expected to be actively involved in the provision of technical support on women's entrepreneurship development, gender equality in enterprise development, and women's economic empowerment to advance women's empowerment through productive and sustainable enterprises.

Under the direct supervision of the supervisor, the JPO will perform the following duties and responsibilities:

- Support the technical work of the Women's Entrepreneurship and Informality Team within the MSME branch, with a focus on women's entrepreneurship, reducing gender- and informality-related inequalities, and promoting productive and sustainable enterprises.
- Provide technical assistance in gender mainstreaming, women's entrepreneurship development, including with a focus on enterprise productivity, decent work and sustainability. This includes supporting initiatives that enhance working conditions, business resilience, access to markets, and the enabling environment for women.
- Contribute to the development, adaptation, and dissemination of materials and approaches that support women's entrepreneurship, sustainable business practices, and gender equality in MSME development.
- Assist in systematizing information related to ILO training programmes. This includes managing data to track and monitor capacity-building efforts.
- Participate in seminars and workshops as a resource person on women's entrepreneurship, gender-responsive enterprise development, informality reduction, and productivity-enhancing strategies for sustainable enterprises.
- Develop case studies and communication materials on women's entrepreneurship and sustainable and productive MSMEs, to be shared with stakeholder groups (ILO constituents, donors, national counterparts, international organizations, etc.).
- Support the development of project proposals related to women's entrepreneurship, gender-responsive enterprise development and productivity for decent work. Contribute to technical assistance, project implementation, monitoring, and reporting to ensure that initiatives promote inclusive, resilient, and sustainable enterprises.
- Perform other relevant tasks that may be assigned by the supervisor, with a focus on promoting productive and sustainable enterprises for women entrepreneurs.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Education:

An advanced university degree / Master's or Postgraduate Diploma in business administration, economics, political science, gender studies, or other relevant social science discipline.

Work experience:

Minimum:

At least two years of experience working in technical areas related to MSME development and gender equality, women's economic empowerment, or women's entrepreneurship development.

Desirable:

At least three years of relevant professional experience, including two years at the international level. Some experience in development cooperation activities would be an advantage. ILO working experience and/or experience in MSME development and gender equality, women's economic empowerment, or women's entrepreneurship development and productivity is highly desirable.

Languages:

Minimum:

Excellent command of English, both verbal and written.

Desirable:

A working knowledge of a second working language of the ILO (French or Spanish) would be an asset.

ILO competencies:

In addition to the ILO core competencies, the following is required:

- Knowledge and technical/behavioural competencies
- Knowledge and understanding of theories, concepts and approaches relevant to the area of enterprise development, MSMEs, gender equality, women's economic empowerment and women's entrepreneurship.
- Knowledge of IT applications for information collection, management and dissemination.
- Ability to use analytical tools and qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Ability to identify sources and develop methods for data collection.
- Research and analytical skills.

- Communication skills.
- Drafting skills.
- Ability to adapt quickly to new IT software and systems.
- Ability to maintain effective and collaborative working relationships.
- Ability to prepare and deliver internal presentations and messages, using a range of techniques and technologies.
- Ability to work effectively in a multicultural environment and to demonstrate and model gender-responsive, non-discriminatory and inclusive behaviour and attitudes.

TRAINING COMPONENTS AND LEARNING ELEMENTS

Training components:

The MSME Branch puts a very strong emphasis on training and learning throughout the career of its staff. The JPO will be extensively trained on the job and be able to attend a wide range of training courses in collaboration with the ITC-ILO with which the MSME branch has a close partnership. Attending other training courses in the technical field is encouraged and supported by the team. Initial field missions will be conducted with the support of experienced ILO officials to ensure learning and feedback. Supervision will include structured feedback, coaching and establishing a learning path.

Learning elements:

The incumbent will gain insight into the operations of a UN agency, particularly the functions and mandate of the ILO. They will refine their communication and analytical skills by conducting field missions and providing advice to project partners and constituents. The role will provide strong exposure to project management, including drafting and executing projects in line with project cycle management.

The incumbent will also learn how to prepare executive reports and summaries for higher-level decision-makers and develop a broad knowledge base on women's entrepreneurship development, gender equality in enterprise development, women's economic empowerment, productivity and sustainable business practices. A portion of their time will be reserved for proposing innovations or developing their own work-items related to the overall theme of SME productivity, gender equality, and improved working conditions for women entrepreneurs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

More information about the ILO's programme on Women's Entrepreneurship Development is available [here](#). Information on the ILO's programme on Productivity and Working Conditions can be found [here](#).

The ILO values diversity. We welcome applications from qualified women and men, particularly those with disabilities and from non – or under - represented member

States. If needed, reasonable accommodation will be provided in the recruitment phase as well as during the JPO assignment to ensure equality of opportunities.

The ILO has a smoke-free environment.