



# Roadmap Screening 2.1

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# 1. Introduction

In October 2018, as part of the Joint Integrity Action Plan, the first version of the Roadmap Screening was developed by several Partos members and an external agency. The aim was to tighten the screening process of new employees (employees and volunteers), known as pre-employment screening (hereafter abbreviated to 'screening'). The objective is to obtain a standard and uniform policy throughout the sector concerning this screening process, to make a vital quality improvement and to have a strong preventive effect. This makes the Roadmap Screening part of an organisation's integrity and HR policy.

This document is intended for integrity officers, those in charge of HR, managers looking for employees, communications officers drafting and posting job advertisements, and external recruitment agencies.

## Screening yields the following:

- 1) Organisations have means whereby (future) employees can be tested for integrity.
- 2) Screening provides information that allows you to determine whether to hire someone and to prevent individuals with 'risk profiles' from re-employing at another organisation within the sector. After all, these are filtered out by the steps in the screening process.
- 3) There is a preventive effect and a signal function of sector-wide use of a uniform screening procedure concerning integrity towards current and future employees.
- 4) Employees become more aware of what behaviour is and is not tolerated within the organisation.

In June 2023, the memorandum 'Aanvraag Verklaring Omtrent het Gedrag (VOG)' from June 2020 was included in this Roadmap Screening. This memorandum describes the operation of the sector-specific reference profile. In the autumn of 2023, a working group of Partos (members), Goede Doelen Nederland and the DRA (Dutch Relief Alliance) revised and checked the entire text for accuracy.

The Roadmap Screening shows the key steps and resources in the screening process, why they can/can't be taken, and what policies, tools and resources are involved. Not every method listed in the roadmap needs to be applied. This will also depend on the function group and organisation. For instance, if an organisation is a member of the Dutch Relief Alliance, the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme will be mandatory.



It is best to use *at least two* screening methods.

Concrete examples of texts and forms have been developed to make their use as easy as possible. Screening methods are discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 6 contains sample texts and documents that can be used. There is a separate focus on screening volunteers and other non-paid staff, such as ambassadors and board members (chapter 4) and screening existing staff (chapter 5).

The Roadmap also looked at international developments in this area. Hence, the *Humanitarian Response Steering Committee's Misconduct Disclosure Scheme* is also included in this Roadmap.

The Roadmap Screening contains elements that organisations in our sector can use to sharpen and improve their (already existing) screening policies: nothing stops them from getting started today!

Do you have any questions about the Roadmap? If so, you can, of course, contact Mariska Keizer of Partos at [info@partos.nl](mailto:info@partos.nl). Or via the general telephone number +3120 320 99 01.

## 2. Requirements process screening (recruitment and selection)

Recruitment and selection is the collective term for attracting, selecting and appointing suitable candidates for a paid or volunteer position, whether temporary or long-term.

This chapter is about screening paid staff. See Chapter 4 for more information on screening volunteers. Screening is a tool to reduce integrity risks by selecting and hiring trustworthy employees. Screening involves the employer requesting information about potential employees to assess their integrity better.

### 2.1 General requirements

Regarding the screening of future employees, the following general requirements apply:

#### a. Legitimate interest

Screening a potential employee is only allowed if you, as an organisation, have a legitimate reason (legitimate interest) for doing so and if the screening is necessary.

An interest is considered justified if the organisation's interest in knowing whether a new employee is trustworthy outweighs the interest in protecting the employee's data. It is necessary if, as an organisation, you cannot achieve your goal (hiring employees with integrity and trustworthiness) in any other way - by a less intrusive means - than through screening.

#### b. Consideration for which functions

The organisation should carefully determine which positions require screening. The functions existing within the organisation are grouped.

For each job group, use the corresponding job requirements to identify the specific risks. For example, jobs where staff work with confidential information involve the risk of selling or passing on this information. As an organisation, you first try to reduce the risks with organisational measures, such as spreading competencies or double internal controls. Screening is necessary if this does not (sufficiently) eliminate the risks. So, screening does not look the same for every position within the organisation.

#### c. Data relevant to the function

Screening should only request data from the potential employee relevant to the position they are applying for.

#### d. Screening deadline

The period covered by the screening should be as limited as possible, but at least five years.

#### e. Informing potential employee

Afterwards, the employer must inform the potential employee about the screening results.

**f. General Data Protection Regulation (AVG):**

- You may not use the data obtained from the screening for any other purpose than that for which the screening served,
- You should not keep the data longer than necessary for the purpose of screening.
- You don't collect more data than necessary.
- You secure the data correctly (double authorisation check, password, secure environment, etc.).

**g. Data retention period if procedure stops**

Suppose the potential employee does not proceed further in the procedure after the outcome of the screening. In that case, the data may be kept for a maximum of four weeks, provided that the potential employee gives permission for his data to be kept for one year.

**h. Data retention period on entry into service**

Suppose the potential employee continues in the procedure after the screening outcome, and the employee eventually joins the company. In that case, the data may be kept for the duration of the employment insofar as it is relevant for executing the employment contract. Indeed, the general rule is that personal data should not be kept longer than necessary.

The personnel file, which includes data on the employment contract, performance, certificates, diplomas, and absence frequency, may be kept for up to two years after the employment termination date. This is not a statutory but an advisory period under the AVG (General Data Protection Regulation). In principle, information gathered from screening may not be kept longer than necessary for the screening. This applies to all application documents. This is possible if it is essential for the position to hold, for example, the VOG or references longer. In the in-house regulation 'screening new employees', it can be substantiated which documents from the screening are kept longer. After the end of employment, a maximum retention period of two years also applies to these documents. Criminal records from screening may be saved if processing these records is necessary to protect the employer's interests, such as security and integrity (Article 33(3), AVG). A prerequisite is that decision-making when adopting the company's own 'screening new employees' regulation follows the rules laid down in the Works Councils Act (Wor).

Payroll tax statements and a copy of the employee's proof of identity are kept for five years after the end of employment in connection with possible audits, for example, by the Dutch Labour Inspectorate.

## 3. Screening resources

### 3.1 Hiring Integrity Checklist

This checklist<sup>1</sup> covers all the steps to be taken through the screening procedure, which are gone through for each potential employee at the start of the application process:

- Screening has been announced as part of the application process.
- The potential employee's passport or ID is genuine.
- Diplomas and mark sheets are convincing.
- The potential employee's CV is consistent with other data.
- Conflicts of interest from the list of ancillary activities are excluded.
- The executives of two previous employers were asked for a reference.
- No 'suspicious' posts were found on social media/internet.
- The employee completes and signs a self-declaration of integrity.
- The potential employee appears (not) in registers relevant to the job.
- Any findings were discussed with the potential employee.
- If required, the potential employee has issued a Certificate of Good Conduct.

### 3.2 Announcement of screening procedure in a job advertisement



**Note:** If you do any screening, regardless of the methods chosen, *always* announce it in the vacancy text! Do this on all channels your organisation uses (job boards, website, social media, etc.). See section 6.1 for an example text.

When viewing the vacancies, the potential employee is thus informed that your organisation has an integrity screening procedure. By applying, the potential employee agrees to the conditions of screening.

### 3.3 Self-declaration of integrity

A self-declaration means 'a self-declaration of good conduct'. It is a statement drawn up by the organisation in which the potential employee, by signing, declares not to have been in contact with the police and the judiciary or otherwise involved (or having been involved) in integrity issues. Should a potential employee state that they have been involved in an integrity issue, the offences may be considered relevant to the job. So, it *does not mean* someone involved in an integrity issue should be rejected for a position anyway.

If the organisation uses an application form on its website, the self-declaration of integrity can be included therein. See section 6.2 for the example of a self-declaration of Integrity.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: Justis: <https://www.justis.nl/sites/default/files/2023-03/Brochure%20Screening%20van%20personeel.pdf>

Regarding the self-declaration of integrity, the following applies:

- Make it known in the job description that a self-declaration of integrity will be used.
- In addition to the application form (if used), the potential employee receives the self-declaration of integrity form by e-mail before the start of the first job interview and mails the forms back completed before the start of the job interview or submits them completed at the job interview.
- If the potential employee does not proceed further in the procedure, the data may be kept for a maximum of four weeks, or for the duration of one year if the potential employee gives consent.
- If the potential employee proceeds further in the procedure and eventually enters employment, the data may be kept during employment if necessary for the position. The retention periods of the various data in the personnel file are listed in chapter 2, 'Process screening requirements' under point h. The information from the self-declaration is included in the personnel file.

### 3.4 Reference check

In a reference check, the organisation inquires about the performance and integrity of previous employers declared by the potential employee.



**Note that** a reference check can never be used as a method on its own. There will *always* have to be a second way of screening.

The reference check falls into two parts: a written and a telephonic part.

#### **For the written part:**

- In the cover email of the written reference check, indicate that you will contact them by phone for integrity-related questions after submitting the written information, as your organisation is doing its best to prevent misconduct. Indicate that your organisation operates with a code of conduct and an organisational culture of integrity and safety for all employees and that you want to ask these questions for that reason.
- Double reference check: this means requesting a reference from two previous employers, including at least the second to last employer (this one is formally no longer of interest). This can be done with the (former) supervisor (or else head of HR) of the potential employee (the supervisor or head of HR must be authorised to have/get access to the personnel file)
- The person responsible for HR takes stock directly via the application form, should it be used, of which persons references can be requested from
- The person in charge of HR will send the reference request form by e-mail. See section 6.3 for an example.
- The two previous employers must return the references within the specified deadline.
- Written references must be signed ('completed to the best of their knowledge at the time') by the person issuing the reference. This makes the reference check within the industry as objective and transparent as possible. It also contributes to diligence.
- Make it clear in the job description that references will be requested.



- If the potential employee does not proceed further in the procedure after checking the references, the data may be kept for a maximum of four weeks, provided the potential employee gives permission to keep their data for one year.
- If the potential employee continues in the procedure after checking the references and eventually joins the company, the data may be kept during employment, if necessary for the position, up to two years after the end of employment.

**For the telephonic part of the check applies:**

- You make a telephone appointment with the person who also completed the written part of the reference check. Questions you might ask are:
  - Has the employee been involved in integrity issues? If so, what kind of issues?
  - Has a sanction been imposed on the employee? If so, which one? (There may be several)
  - Why did the employee leave the organisation?
  - If the employee resigned, can you confirm whether the employee resigned during an investigation? If yes, ask for details.
- Above all, ask further questions on the answers given by the referent. Make a short interview report and add it to the written reference. Based on the reference check, make a rough statement about why the potential employee is or is not suitable for the job. Do not record any specific details should they have been mentioned in the telephone conversation.
- Add the report to the personnel file if the potential employee is actually hired.

### 3.5 The Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS)

The Misconduct Disclosure Scheme was launched by the *Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR)* in 2019 to prevent individuals proven to have committed misconduct from moving around the sector unnoticed and being hired elsewhere all the time.

Organisations subscribing to the MDS have committed to the following:

- To conduct systematic checks with the potential employee's previous employers regarding sexual misconduct. This means the Statement of Conduct will be requested for all new employees.
- To respond to MDS reference requests from other organisations.
- Reporting implementation dates to MDS.

The MDS allows participating organisations to request information easily and share information regarding misconduct from (former) employees at the end of the recruitment process. This is done by completing and sharing a Statement of Conduct (section 6.4). In principle, the MDS focuses on sexual harassment, sexual abuse and exploitation. Still, as an organisation, you can also add questions on fraud and corruption to the Statement of Conduct document. Upon publication of roadmap 2.1 in 2023, 213 organisations are working with the MDS, including all organisations which are members of the Dutch Relief Alliance. MDS publishes annual implementation figures on their website.

The [Misconduct Disclosure](#) Scheme website (under 'legal') contains a toolkit developed by the Dutch Relief Alliance. It describes, among other things, how an organisation within Dutch law can best implement the scheme.

#### **The Misconduct Disclosure Scheme reference check works as follows:**

- For the MDS, information is requested from employers where the potential employee has worked for at least the past five years (five years is the minimum, preferably longer). The reference is requested with the potential employee's consent from the former employers. Retrieval can be done through the ['registry'](#) via the MDS website, which lists all e-mail addresses of organisations that have signed MDS. If there is no relevant contact address listed, the organisation may ask the potential employee to provide it.
- The person responsible for HR will send the Statement of Conduct form by e-mail to request the reference. See section 6.3 for an example.
- The two references must be returned by the specified deadline.
- Written references must be signed ('completed to the best of their knowledge at the time') by the person issuing the reference. This makes the reference check within the industry as objective and transparent as possible. It also contributes to diligence.
- Should it be someone who has worked a lot as a consultant, the organisation may ask several clients to fill in the Statement of Conduct form.
- Disclose in the job description that the organisation will ask for MDS references.
- If the potential employee does not proceed further in the procedure after checking the references, the data may be kept for a maximum of four weeks, provided the potential employee gives permission to keep their data for one year.
- If the potential employee continues the procedure after checking the references and eventually enters employment. In that case, the data may be kept in the personnel file for the duration of the employment, if necessary for the position, up to two years after the date of termination of employment.

## **3.6 Certificate of Good Conduct (VOG) and sector-specific reference profile**

The VOG is a certificate showing whether a potential employee's past behaviour does not constitute an objection to performing a specific task or function. It checks whether the person concerned is registered in the JDS (Judicial Documentation System). In principle, a review period of four years applies; in the case of sex offences, there is an unlimited review period. Justis is the implementing agency of the Ministry of Justice and Security in charge of administering the VOG.

#### **Sector-specific reference profile**

In a collaboration between COVOG (Centraal Orgaan Verklaring Omtrent het Gedrag), Hunter Management, the DRA (Dutch Relief Alliance), Partos and Goede Doelen Nederland, a [sector-specific reference profile](#) was developed in 2020. This reference profile maps out which functions specifically require attention concerning integrity violations. For this purpose, the job/wage structure used in the biennial remuneration survey within our sector was used.

This enables uniform processing by Justis of an application from a charity or development cooperation organisation falling under Goede Doelen Nederland or Partos. Unfortunately, automated processing of this is not (yet) possible. Until then, when applying for a VOG, the risk areas must be ticked manually based on this [table](#) (see also 3.6.1 The application). Justis employees will also use this table when assessing the application.

### 3.6.1 The application

A VOG is already a standard part of the screening policy for positions with a high-risk profile at many organisations. An application for a VOG is made to [Justis](#). The organisation logs in and fills in the organisational details. The potential employee receives an e-mail that the application form is ready for further completion. The e-mail contains a link and application code. Below is an explanation for filling in the form correctly so that it is recognisable to Justis that it comes from our sector:

1. Part 1 must be completed by the (future) employee.
2. Part 2 must be completed by the applicant organisation:
  - a. 2.1 and 2.2: data organisation and purpose of application speak for themselves;
  - b. at 2.3 states that it is a charity and/or development cooperation organisation affiliated to Goede Doelen Nederland and/or Partos;
  - c. at 2.4 choose b: general screening profile. Using the [table](#), you can tick the risk profiles yourself;
  - d. at 2.5 sign and submit.



Because of the importance of screening staff for integrity, Partos and Goede Doelen Nederland advise a VOG application using the table when recruiting new staff for positions with a high-risk profile and using it for VOG applications for current staff in these positions.

#### Regarding the VOG, the following applies:

- The VOG application is made either after a positive first interview or after carrying out reference checks.
- Your organisation can include in the integrity policy that every minimum of two years, a VOG application is reapplied for the - then - employee (see also Chapter 5).
- The added value of the VOG is that it is a transparent, objective, and uniform means of conducting an integrity check on the potential employee.
- Only whether the (potential) employee has a criminal record is looked at. In the case of general or financial misconduct, the last four years are looked at; in the case of sexual misconduct, the entire history is looked at. This is the primary check. If this person appears in the JDS, an assessment based on an objective and a subjective criterion then takes place.
- Three requirements to consider:
  - 1) The time from VOG application to receipt of the VOG can span 8 weeks.
  - 2) The correct documents must be used in the VOG application. The employer provides the application form digitally, and the potential employee then completes the application digitally. There are costs associated with the VOG application, which must initially be paid by the potential employee and can then be claimed from the employer.
  - 3) It must be objectively clear when the term of the resolute condition will run.

Objective means that the employer should not have any influence on the occurrence of the resolutive condition. Requirement 3 applies when an employment contract is already concluded with the potential employee to start work, pending the outcome of the VOG application;

- An example text of a resolutive condition clause in the employment contract could be:  
*The Employment Agreement is entered into under the condition that the employee can submit a Certificate of Good Conduct, screening profile number(s) XX - to the employer within 2 months after the date of signing the Employment Agreement. As soon as and if the employee has not submitted the VOG by DATE at the latest, this employment contract shall end by operation of law.*
- An example text regarding the cost of the VOG:  
*The employee is entitled to reimbursement by NAME ORGANISATION of costs incurred by him in connection with the application for a VOG. Reimbursement will take place based on a claim accompanied by proper supporting documents.*
- If you start requesting a VOG from current employees in such high-risk positions and the situation would occur that the VOG application is refused, are you allowed to dismiss the employee? Yes, if it concerns a subject that was lied about when applying.
- Costs for applying for VOG are for the organisation. Even if the VOG is not issued.

### 3.6.2 Information VOG in European and international context

The VOG system is Dutch and unique and not comparable to other countries. Similar systems exist in other European countries, but any conduct document obtained there does not have the same status as a VOG in the Netherlands. What data is used for assessment in VOG-like schemes in other European member states varies from country to country. In some countries, only convictions are considered, sometimes acquittals or arrests. Special rules apply to sex offences in most countries.

- **Someone with Dutch nationality but living abroad** (i.e., not listed in BRP)?  
That person must apply directly to Justis by e-mail, i.e., not via the appropriate digital portal route.
- **Someone without Dutch nationality and not living in the Netherlands?**  
A Dutch VOG cannot be applied for this person, as no information is available in the Dutch judicial documentation system. A treaty may be an exception to this. A VOG equivalent from the country where they have had a main residence for the past four years can be requested for this person. A recognised certificate translation is required to be submitted as a person.



**Recommendation:** if your organisation has an office in the person's country of origin/country of main residence for the past four years, request that someone from the office in the country of origin apply for a 'VOG'. Before this, of course, you also ask for the person's written consent (by e-mail) or use a declaration form.

- **European citizenship?**  
If it concerns a person from an EU country, the Dutch government can request the judicial past of this person, also in the country of origin. To this end, the VOG application form (English translation) must be emailed directly to Justis (due to missing BSN) with this request. So, not via the digital system as usual. Since December 2013, EU countries also are obliged to implement the directive on combating the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, under which judicial data is exchanged, except for Malta, Portugal and Slovenia.

- **Someone without Dutch nationality but living in the Netherlands?**

This person can, however, apply for a VOG. But this is only screened for offences committed in the Netherlands and any other European countries where the person has lived.

### 3.7 The job interview

General integrity questions can be a mandatory part of job interviews within organisations. Consider questions like: what does integrity mean to you, or have you ever experienced misconduct? You can also describe an integrity situation and then ask the applicant to respond.

## 4. Screening volunteers

There are several types of volunteers who all need their own screening policies. In this chapter we mean volunteers who work.

We distinguish the following categories:

- **Board members:** always screen according to one or more of the methods listed in Chapter 3.
- **Ambassadors:** always screen according to one or more of the methods listed in section 3.
- **Volunteers who work with vulnerable groups** in 1-to-1 contact: someone who accompanies a vulnerable person for a day or gives a lesson at a school. Always screen according to one or more of the methods mentioned in Chapter 3.
- **Volunteers who do not work with vulnerable groups** in 1-to-1 contact: consider, for example, volunteers selling t-shirts at an event. These do not need to be screened.



**Please note** that when a volunteer's position is changed, the person responsible for HR should always check whether or not the volunteer should be screened in the new category.

## 5. Screening and monitoring existing employees

This guide is mainly about *pre-employment screening*, i.e., before hiring an employee. However, an organisation may also decide to screen existing employees. Even for interim screening, the organisation should carefully determine which high-risk positions require screening (see Chapter 2). The conditions and implementation of temporary screening will be laid down in writing. If the company has a works council, prior consent of the works council is required (Article 27(1) under I Wor). The most common practice is to apply for a (new) VOG statement once every at least two years (see chapter 3.6.1 for the procedure).

## 6. Sample texts and forms

### 6.1 Sample screening procedure text for use in the job advertisement

Screening for integrity is part of the application process of <NAME ORGANISATION>. <NAME ORGANISATION> considers it essential to ensure the reliability, professionalism and integrity of its organisation and its employees.

*If applicable, also include in the text:* <NAME ORGANISATION> uses a request for two references/ request a Certificate of Conduct/ the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.

Include integrity under job requirements as well.

### 6.2 Self-declaration integrity format

Declaration of own conduct<sup>2</sup>

Candidate:

Date:

Function:

1. Have you ever committed fraud, corruption, sexual or other forms of harassment, sexual exploitation or abuse, bullying, child labour, child abuse or human trafficking, been investigated for it or are you currently under investigation for it?

Ja  Nee

If you answered yes to the above question, please explain:

.....  
.....  
.....

2. By proceeding with this application, you certify that the above information is accurate and that, if this offer of employment is confirmed, you will notify [ORGANISATION] if there is a significant change in your circumstances that relates to the screening process (e.g., an investigation into misconduct related to the matters listed above, or if criminal charges or convictions have been brought).

Initials please: .....

3. By proceeding with this application, you authorise [ORGANISATION] to verify with your previous employers the accuracy of the information you have provided about previous alleged and proven misconduct.

If an employment contract is entered into by signing, you agree that this declaration will be kept

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<sup>2</sup> Based on UNICEF PSEA Checklist, PSEA-Sensitive Recruitment, Contracting and Performance Management, 6 January 2020

in your personnel file.

Please initial: .....

I confirm that the information provided is accurate.

Candidate's signature: .....

Date: .....

### 6.3 Request format reference

Reference request form

(Strictly private and confidential)

Please email your completed reference to <email address>

Name of candidate	
Position applied for	

Reference details

Name	
Employer	
Job title	
Relationship to candidate	

Details candidate

Function within organisation		
In service	From	To



Comment on the following regarding the applicant: (add/use own competencies/skills checklist)

Professional/technical skills
Interpersonal skills
Do you have any other comments?

Signature of referent:	Date:
------------------------	-------

Verification of reference (for internal use, not to be filled in by referent)

Date of receipt reference:	Date verification completed:
Signature (HR):	
Name:	Date:

## 6.4 Misconduct Disclosure Scheme

The [Statement of Conduct](#) template:

### ORGANISATION XXX

Organisation XXX participates in the Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme. This Statement of Conduct adopts the definitions used in the Scheme.

### STATEMENT OF CONDUCT

This Statement is provided in answer to a request by (name), (title), (organisation)

1. Name of Candidate:
2. Duration of employment/term with Organisation XXX: from ..... to .....
3. 3.0 Was the Candidate found<sup>3</sup> to have committed Misconduct (sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment) during this period?

No

Yes,

The nature of the Misconduct is:

.....  
.....

I am unable to provide an answer

3.1 If the answer is yes, what was the Disciplinary Measure imposed upon the Candidate? <sup>2</sup>

Yes, the Disciplinary Measure was:

.....  
.....

Date of Disciplinary Measure: .....

No, for the following reasons:

.....  
.....

I cannot provide an answer

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<sup>3</sup> "Found" for these purposes shall mean that, in accordance with the Organisation's own relevant internal processes and standards, Misconduct has been determined to have occurred.

3.2 Is the Candidate currently being investigated for an allegation of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse or sexual harassment<sup>4</sup>?

I am unable to provide an answer<sup>5</sup>

No

Yes, the nature of the Misconduct is:

.....  
.....

4. Organisation XXX adopts the following definitions of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment:

OR

Organisation XXX adopts the United Nations definitions of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment.<sup>6</sup>

Name and Title:

.....

Date:

Signature:

.....

.....

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<sup>4</sup> In accordance with section 6.3 of the Scheme, section 3.2 of the Template Statement of Conduct is optional; it is within each Participating Organisation’s discretion whether to include it.

<sup>5</sup> Where option (c) is selected under question 3.0, 3.1 or 3.2, follow-up with the responding organisation is suggested, to better inform the hiring decision.

<sup>6</sup> Sexual harassment is defined in the [UNSG's bulletin ST/SGB/2008/5](#). Sexual exploitation and abuse is defined in the 5 Oct 2016 [UN Glossary on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)