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Educational, Scientific  
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# 217 EX/4.IV.C Add.2

## Executive Board

Two hundred and seventeenth session

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### FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD AND THE GENERAL CONFERENCE AT THEIR PREVIOUS SESSIONS

#### PART IV

#### HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES

#### ADDENDUM 2

#### COMMENTS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL STAFF ASSOCIATION OF UNESCO (ISAU)

#### SUMMARY

#### **C. Human Resources Management Strategy 2023-2027**

Pursuant to Item 9.2.7 of the UNESCO Human Resources Manual, the International Staff Association of UNESCO (ISAU) submits its comments on human resources issues (document 217 EX/4.IV.C).



Job: 202303238

### **The principles set out and reflected in the new strategy**

1. We note that the draft human resources management strategy submitted to the Executive Board at its 217th session makes no concrete revisions, despite the decisions adopted by the governing body at its last session. In fact, the document is virtually identical to the latest draft presented to the Member States. We had hoped that, following the shortcomings raised by the Division of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) in its evaluation of the previous human resources management strategy (IOS/EVS/PI 207) and the comments and suggestions made by ISAU, a more ambitious draft strategy, with a workplan and timetable, would have been presented to the Organization's governing bodies this autumn. That is not the case.
2. For example, the Member States had requested from the Administration a revised version of the strategy which would, *inter alia*, "strengthen the role of the Bureau of Human Resources Management in ensuring transparency and compliance with rules and regulations of recruitment, and continue to enhance the internal justice system" ([216 EX/Decision 5.III.A, paragraph 4\(iii\)](#)). While there are a few proposals in the section of the document dealing with "key guiding components" (paragraphs 9 to 19 of Annex I to document 217 EX/4.IV.C), we do not see any measures to strengthen HRM's role in recruitment among the actions and indicative measures of success included in the rest of the document, which make up the body of the strategy. The strategy does not, for example, address the observation by IOS that HRM has a low level of involvement in the recruitment processes. While it is certainly appropriate for HRM to step up initiatives aimed at improving the Organization's human resources processes, it is doubtful whether its action can be truly effective in the long term if the sectors are not subject to real control, which is the only way to nurture a genuine culture of accountability. We reiterate that IOS highlighted the lack of transparency and accountability within our Organization.
3. The Administration refers to "training in leadership and accountability", which would support "effective performance management with the aim of fostering a culture of trust [and] transparency", as well as conflict resolution, which would be "a key feature of management training". Paradoxically, however, this type of accountability programme does not entail any obligations, and ISAU continues to believe that resolution of conflicts between staff will be all the more effective if staff rights are guaranteed.
4. The "360-degree" assessment is another example of a subject on which HRM demonstrates the same contradiction between its desire to promote a culture of accountability and its refusal to hold the sectors to account. So, while this 360-degree assessment could be one of the most ambitious actions of the new strategy, we note that it has been reduced to a coaching tool with no connection whatsoever with professional assessments.
5. Indeed, in document 217 EX/4.IV.C, Annex I, page 10, Key Objective II of Strategic Aim 4 clearly states that 360-degree assessment and feedback for managers<sup>1</sup> will be developed, the success of which will be measured by the number of managers undertaking the 360-degree assessment programme.<sup>2</sup> However, despite an apparent willingness to increase transparency, foster a culture of accountability and establish "a **respectful and ethical work environment**", the Administration's intentions seem, once again, destined to remain a dead letter. During ISAU's meetings with HRM, the latter stated that its project in this area was not to set up an "assessment", but a kind of feedback. HRM contradicts itself in its explanations, asserting, on the one hand, that the terms "assessment" and "feedback" are interchangeable, but that, on the other, the use of the second term would be more constructive in that it emphasizes a cooperative approach and the creation of an environment conducive to growth, development and open communication. This is all the more surprising given that the strategy document refers to assessment, not feedback. There is

<sup>1</sup> In the English version of document 217 EX/4.IV.C, under "Actions" it says: "Expand 360-degree assessment and feedback for managers".

<sup>2</sup> In the English version of document 217 EX/4.IV.C, under "Indicative measures of success", it says: "Number of managers undertaking 360° assessment programme".

plenty of scope to mislead Member States into adopting what they think is a performance assessment policy when in fact the proposal is to invest in a personalized coaching programme.

6. HRM replied that there is already a formal performance appraisal procedure which applies to directors, as to all staff. However, it is precisely because this procedure is largely flawed that the systemic shortcomings of human resources management in terms of transparency and accountability must constantly be brought to the attention of Member States.

7. HRM asserts that it is a question of perception, not reality. In other words, the HRM project is essentially about obtaining subjective feedback on directors' skills, rather than making an objective assessment of their performance. Ultimately, the aim appears to be simply to improve their managerial skills. However, we will not be able to improve personnel management if we assume from the outset that not all the skills managers should possess will be fully taken into account in their appraisal, and that some will simply be subject to feedback which, moreover, will be confidential. Establishing two parallel processes – one formal and compulsory, the other informal – makes no sense, and will be neither effective nor efficient. It is therefore important that the 360-degree assessment becomes an integral part of current performance management policy.

8. Given that HRM's project has not yet been finalized, and that ISAU has submitted its comments and recommendations to HRM, we urge Member States to demand that HRM revise its project in order to ensure a genuine 360-degree staff assessment policy, rather than simply offering personalized coaching.

9. It should be recalled that these failings in terms of transparency and accountability, in addition to the suffering unjustly caused and sometimes prolonged by these failings, end up costing UNESCO exorbitant amounts in the many lawsuits it loses before ILOAT (see in particular [215 EX/Decision 5.IV.A](#)).

10. Transparency and accountability, which are necessary for performance assessment, are also necessary for recruitment. In this respect, we are delighted to read, in paragraph 17 of document 217 EX/4.IV.C, that “[s]taff appointments will be made through a transparent, competitive process” and that “the selection of staff will be made”, finally, “without distinction as to race, sex or religion”. These principles, obvious as they are, heralded and enshrined since the foundation of the Organization, have been neglected for too long, and we can only hope that they will eventually be applied.

### **Content of the new strategy**

11. The revised strategy document, currently being presented to Member States, refers to the “physical and normative structures” that “will be updated [...] the aim being to facilitate accessibility for all UNESCO personnel and to ensure decent and engaging working arrangements”. These new objectives are welcome, as they reflect a more concrete commitment than that expressed in the previous version of the strategy, which, referring to the promotion of diversity and inclusion in all their forms, stated that “[t]his will, however, require substantial investment, both in funding and of time, as it entails updating physical and normative structures, and to some extent changing mindsets” (document 216 EX/5.III.A, Annex I, paragraph 18). ISAU fully supports the updating of the physical and normative structures outlined in the new version of the strategy, but we ask that this policy be accompanied by key objectives and precise success indicators, which alone will enable the implementation of these commitments to be monitored and evaluated over time.

12. We also wonder why the reference to a “fair and inclusive internship programme” was deleted from paragraph 19 of document 217 EX/4.IV.C (see document 216 EX/5.III.A, Annex I, paragraph 19). In view of the importance of this measure, which is constantly highlighted in our comments on the Board document concerning geographical distribution, we regret that the new strategy does not mention it at all.

13. We have already drawn attention to the fact that it is not the “number of qualified applicants from non- and under-represented countries” that is important (see indicative measures of success under Key Objective I in document 216 EX/5.III.A), but the number of people from these Member States who have actually been appointed. We note that an additional role has been assigned to the Director of HRM, who will henceforth be responsible for establishing key performance indicators for senior managers in terms of geographical staff representation. While this is a positive step, it is felt that the only change this measure will bring is that managers will be asked to provide an overall justification for the recruitment of individuals which they have already justified at the time of recruitment. We would like to reiterate the serious imbalances that Member States have vigorously contested in recent times and emphasize that only greater involvement of HRM in the recruitment process will ensure the effective application of all existing rules and regulations in this area.

14. Transparency and accountability are at the heart of ISAU’s concerns, as they are the only guarantees of efficiency and justice within an organization. The elements discussed above are just one example of a more general attitude on the part of the Administration, which tends to pay lip service to transparency and accountability, but then thwarts its commitments by implementing procedures that systematically evade its obligations. We thus see HRM multiplying the number of training courses, but most of our colleagues complain of constantly encountering obstacles to their career development. In this respect, the measures aimed at contributing to career development, however laudable, must not be limited to young professionals and mid-level professionals. A career development support programme must involve all the Organization’s staff, who are constantly pointing out the obstacles they encounter in this area.

#### **Issues relating to affiliate personnel**

15. As a preliminary point, we must call attention to what we consider to be an inaccuracy in the presentation of the data in Annexes II and III of document 217 EX/4.IV.C. In 216 EX/Decision 5.III.A, concerning the human resources management strategy, the Executive Board requested the Director-General to “report on the financial and legal implications of the possibility of applying the new UNESCO human resources strategy to **non-staff**”, and invited her to provide “a mapping on the **non-staff** by location and strategy” (see paragraph 6 of 216 EX/Decision 5.III.A).

16. We note, however, that the “affiliate workforce” (Appendix II) and “non-staff” (Appendix III) include temporary staff. However, individuals hired on temporary contracts are considered as staff members in accordance with Item 13.6 of the Human Resources Manual. Moreover, the Administration itself confirms this on several occasions, for example in paragraphs 1 and 6 of Annex III to document 217 EX/4.IV.C, and also in document 217 EX/4.IV.A on the use of affiliate personnel (see, for example, table 1 of Annex II to document 217 EX/4.IV.A). We would like to have an explanation of this presentation of a category of staff as “non-staff” and, if necessary, a rectification in the matter.

17. The situation of these personnel, as described by the Administration in document 217 EX/4.IV.C, illustrates the urgent need to remedy this problem. Among other things, it is impossible for affiliate personnel to have access to the internal justice mechanisms, and this inequality is all the more damaging as it significantly increases their risk of exposure to injustices against which, by definition, they have no recourse. This is unquestionably an extremely worrying situation for an organization that claims to defend and promote human rights.

18. Inequalities are apparent on many levels, such as between Headquarters and the field. HRM recalls that holders of service contracts in the field are not subject to any maximum contract duration, unlike service contracts at Headquarters, resulting in long-term insecurity that no mechanism can correct.

19. Finally, the high percentage of people with a significant number of consecutive years of service at UNESCO are equally worrying and should prompt Member States to act more decisively on this issue. As the Administration itself admitted in the initial version of its document: “[c]onsecutive

extensions of contracts for lengthy periods of service contract holders working alongside fixed-term staff with different conditions of service, is in itself an increasing legal and financial challenge”.<sup>3</sup> The Administration asserts that people hired for periods of six, eight or ten years would be medium- or long-term employees, as if there could be any structural justification for the temporary and precarious nature of their contracts. Everything suggests that sectors and many offices are systemically abusing the provisions of temporary contracts, sometimes to save money and often to avoid having to engage in the procedures required by the most protective contracts. In any case, it is not possible to argue that people present for such long periods would be performing tasks that do not in fact correspond to regular and permanent tasks of the Secretariat, and that it is HRM’s responsibility to regularize them. Here again, HRM fails to be transparent and accountable, since its practice of passively observing the continued presence of many staff on temporary contracts that have been diverted from their intended purpose amounts to an endorsement of what is tantamount to genuine arbitrariness on the part of the sectors (which choose to keep certain individuals in precarious employment, while creating new posts and granting decent contracts to others).

20. The implementation of an end-of-service grant or separation payment is certainly commendable but does not remedy the professional instability experienced by these staff, nor the impact this instability has on their lives and mental health. Moreover, the Administration is fully aware of this, since it was able to reveal the real reason behind the introduction of such a grant, which, in reality, “[would reduce] the risk of service contract holders filing lawsuits before national courts or pursuing litigation against the Organization”.<sup>4</sup>

21. The same applies to the search for a global health insurance scheme for service contract holders. While ISAU supports the spirit of this initiative insofar as it provides better protection for individuals in situations of vulnerability, we must warn Member States against its undesirable effects, since it risks endorsing the practice of constant renewal of this type of contract, which would remain highly precarious by its very nature.

22. Solutions that could help solve the problem include recruiting such staff under other types of contracts. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the main obstacle to this measure is not so much the absence of applications from affiliate personnel “for vacant posts at UNESCO”, as the Administration seems to suggest, but rather their non-recruitment when they do apply.

23. Obviously, the essential and main solution to the problem would be to “regularize” them, a term that the Administration even used before modifying it in paragraph 13 of its document.<sup>5</sup> ISAU therefore fully and firmly supports the regularization of “core, continuous functions” through the creation of “more stable positions in particular in the context of the field reform”.

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<sup>3</sup> Paragraph 10 of Annex III of the initial French version of document 217 EX/4.IV.C:  
“As noted in para. 3 above, there are 1005 persons employed under the service contract modality as at January 2023 of which 805 (80%) are located in the Field. 11% (91 persons) have cumulated more than 10 years of consecutive service, 14% (113 persons) have between 6 and 10 years and 28% (226 persons) between 2 and 6 years of service with UNESCO, all of which can be categorized as medium to long-term employment. Consecutive extensions of contracts for lengthy periods of service contract holders working alongside fixed-term staff with different conditions of service, is in itself an increasing legal and financial challenge [...]”.

<sup>4</sup> Paragraph 10 of Annex III of the initial French version of document 217 EX/4.IV.C:  
“[...] This being said, one of the enhancements in the conditions of service introduced in January 2023 for service contract holders is the implementation of an end-of-service grant/separation payment, which reduces the risk of service contract holders filing lawsuits before national courts or pursuing litigation against the Organization.”

<sup>5</sup> Paragraph 13 of Annex III of the initial French version of document 217 EX/4.IV.C:  
“The Joint Inspection Unit is currently undertaking a review of ‘non-staff’ personnel in the UN common system, the recommendations of which should assist in shaping a longer-term UN and organizational-wide strategy which will review and assess from both a programmatic and budgetary perspective the intent and purpose, adjusting and refining the terms and usage, including where possible the regularization of core, continuous functions through more stable positions in particular in the context of the field reform, with due regard to the nature of, and predictability in earmarked funding”.



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**FOLLOW-UP TO DECISIONS AND RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED BY THE EXECUTIVE BOARD  
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**PART IV**

**HUMAN RESOURCES ISSUES**

**C. Human Resources Management Strategy 2023-2027**

**SUMMARY**

In accordance with 216 EX/Decision 5.III.A, the Director-General presents a revised Human Resources Management Strategy for 2023-2027, which reflects the discussions and outcomes of the 216th session of the Executive Board as well as the intersessional consultation session that took place with Member States on 7 June 2023.

Decision required: paragraph 7.



Job: 202302764

## Introduction

1. In May 2023, the Director-General submitted to the Executive Board, at its 216th session, a draft Human Resources Management Strategy for 2023-2027 (hereafter referred to as the “HR Strategy”), further to 215 EX/Decision 5.IV.A. The draft HR Strategy took into consideration the findings of the Division of Internal Oversight’s evaluation of the Human Resources Management Strategy for 2017-2022 which was also presented to the 216th session of the Executive Board to Member States in [document 216 EX/13](#).
2. The Executive Board took note of the proposed draft HR Strategy for 2023-2027 and requested the Director-General to present at its 217th session, a revised Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027, reflecting the following:
  - (i) prioritize achieving geographical balance in hiring and in retaining staff;
  - (ii) increase the focus on hiring expertise;
  - (iii) strengthen the role of human resources management in ensuring transparency and compliance with rules and regulations of recruitment and continue to enhance the internal justice system.
3. The full text of the revised HR Strategy with the above considerations is presented in **Annex I** to this document.
4. At the same session, the Executive Board requested the Director-General to report on the financial and legal implications of the possibility of applying the new Human Resources Strategy to non-staff personnel, in addition to providing a mapping on the non-staff personnel by location and sector. This report and the mapping are presented respectively in **Annexes III and IV** to this document.
5. The Executive Board also requested the Director-General to include a career development plan for Junior Professional Officers, Young Professionals and National Programme Officers in order to assist and encourage them in applying to vacant posts in the Organization. The need for a tailor-made plan which will include specific mentoring and coaching for these three categories of staff has been integrated into the proposed initiatives under strategic aims 2 and 4 of the revised Strategy.
6. In addition, and as requested in 216 EX/Decision 5.III.A (para. 7), “*an inclusive consultation with the Member States on the draft Strategy*” was organized on 7 June 2023. In this regard, the Secretariat wishes to thank Member States for the contributions and suggestions received which, to the extent possible, are reflected in the revised HR Strategy presented in **Annex I**.

## Proposed draft decision

7. In light of the above, the Executive Board may wish to adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Executive Board,

1. Recalling 216 EX/Dec. 5.III.A,
2. Having examined document 217 EX/4.IV.C,
3. Takes note of the revised Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027;
4. Also takes note of the report contained in Annex III of document 217 EX/4.IV.C;

5. Requests the Director-General to present the Human Resources Strategy for 2023-2027 to the General Conference at its 42nd session for endorsement, and to report thereafter to the Executive Board twice a year on its implementation.

## ANNEX I

### HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY FOR 2023 – 2027

#### I. INTRODUCTION

1. UNESCO's success rests largely on having a diverse, highly skilled and committed workforce, one which is empowered and supported by an organizational culture and environment that enables staff to grow, be creative, develop and realize their potential within a secure, inclusive, modern and flexible working environment.
2. To achieve its goals, UNESCO must attract and retain the very best of talent, provide innovative learning, career development and mobility opportunities to allow staff to reach their full potential, encourage and reward excellence, creativity, and high performance. The Organization must support its leaders and management as they conduct the necessary changes in UNESCO's organizational culture, by promoting, *inter alia*, a values-based culture in a diverse, inclusive and engaging workplace, where equity and well-being for all personnel are paramount.
3. We recognize that our people are our most valuable resource in the effective delivery of our strategic objectives across all its fields of competence, contributing to the ultimate achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in particular those where UNESCO has a strategic contribution to make and where its comparative advantage is recognized.
4. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on progress towards the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda and has further magnified the challenges of global economic recovery, peace, and sustainable development. UNESCO, as a specialized United Nations agency with its unique yet broad mandate, will accelerate and prioritize actions aimed at achieving the SDGs; will support Member States across its recognized areas of expertise and leadership; will strengthen its commitment to its two global priorities: *gender equality and Africa*; and will step-up its involvement with the United Nations system and its network of partners.
5. The aims outlined in this ambitious five-year HR Strategy align with, and support UNESCO's strategic, operational and programmatic priorities across all its fields of competence and functions as outlined in UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy for 2022-2029 ([41 C/4 Medium-Term Strategy](#)).

#### II. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

##### *An enabling and inclusive approach*

6. The Strategy was developed following a broad series of consultations held with key stakeholders including Member States, senior management, directors, staff at Headquarters and in the field/institutes, the staff associations, and Young UNESCO. These consultations were followed by smaller thematic discussion focused on the strategic aims of the Strategy. A framework of the draft Strategy was also presented on four separate occasions to UNESCO's Executive Board as well intersessional consultations and information sessions to gauge their support and direction.
7. The results of [the Global Staff Survey](#) 2021 informed the Strategy. It was even more significant in that it was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic when occupational health and staff wellbeing gained prominence in service delivery. New ways of working (flexible working arrangements including telecommuting) were institutionalized thereafter.
8. This inclusive approach allowed for a range of valuable inputs and resulted in the identification of four Strategic Aims (see Part V, below) as the main areas of focus for the next five years, with each aim interdependent to some degree on the other. In addition to our statutory governance reporting cycle, and a formal mid-term review of the implementation of the Strategy of 2024/2025 (to

be reporter in 2026), we will continue to reach out regularly to our key stakeholders to review and assess progress achieved and/or adapt the Strategy to emerging needs, at key milestones over the next five years.

### III. KEY GUIDING COMPONENTS

#### *A Strategy that considers broader UN strategies and processes*

9. While its foundations are anchored on UNESCO's strategic directives and priorities, the Strategy also takes stock of recommendations and decisions emanating from the International Civil Service Commission, internal and external audits, JIU and OAC recommendations as well as HR priorities formulated in a number of action plans on important issues such as the Anti-Harassment, the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, and Gender Equality. One of the Strategic Aims focuses particular attention on the recommendations of the [Executive Board's Working Group on Geographical Distribution](#), approved by the 41st session of the General Conference in efforts to achieve equitable geographical distribution.

10. The Strategy also considered United Nations System-wide drivers, programmes and initiatives including [the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy](#), [the Secretary-General's Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing Programme](#), [the Action Plan for Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All](#), [the Secretary-General's report on Multilingualism](#) as well as emerging initiatives from the ongoing CEB "Future of Work" initiative which builds on the lessons learned of COVID-19 on flexible ways of working and contractual modalities for all types of personnel. To the extent possible, UNESCO will align with these broader United Nations initiatives all the while taking into account our unique requirements as a specialized agency.

#### *A Strategy that builds on achievements and lessons learned*

11. [The Evaluation of HR Management Strategy for 2017-2022 \[216 EX/13\]](#) led by the Division of Internal Oversight confirmed that substantial progress was made in many areas, notably in improving gender equality amongst different levels of staff and the roll-out of successive mobility exercises. It was recognized that some progress had been made in other primary areas such as workforce planning, recruitment, and performance management but that efforts in these domains need to be intensified over the next five years.

12. Other recommendations on the decentralization of HR expertise and processes to support field operations, the designation of HR business partners in the sectors, a shift towards a more embracing approach to diversity and inclusion, as well as strengthened communication and data analytics functions have been integrated to the extent possible in the Strategy. With regard to learning and organizational development, the Strategy takes into account the need to incorporate training and capacity building as a vital element of workforce planning, employee retention, and other priorities, though this cannot be done without additional financial investment by the Organization.

#### *A Strategy for the entire workforce*

13. As at the end of January 2023, UNESCO's total workforce amounted to 4,757 individuals (cf. **Annex II**), including 2,319 staff and some 2,438 affiliate personnel located in 93 countries worldwide. Over the last years, UNESCO has seen a steady increase in its affiliate population, which currently represents 51% of the entire workforce.

14. The UNESCO affiliate workforce has become an essential part of the ability to meet ever-evolving operational requirements. We increasingly rely on their capacity and skills to complement those of staff. While these individuals, often impersonally categorized as 'non-staff personnel', work alongside UNESCO staff, they are employed under a range of different contractual modalities. It is for this reason that the HR Strategy considers the workforce as a whole: all personnel regardless of contract type. We must ensure fairness and equity vis-à-vis the application of HR policies and

procedures, appropriate remuneration and conditions of service, and access to learning opportunities and career support, in particular for long-serving personnel.

### *A Strategy that better supports field operations*

15. Another key feature of this Strategy supports UNESCO's shift to a more field-centric approach. Over 64% of the workforce are based outside of UNESCO Headquarters (Paris): 15% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 14% in Africa, 12% Asia & Pacific, 7% in the Arab States, 3% in Europe & North America and 13% in Category 1 Institutes.

16. With the initiation in 2023 of the first phase of the UNESCO field network reorganization, the Strategy seeks to put in place robust HR structures and partnerships, by reviewing HR delegated authorities to streamline and empower decentralized decision-making and developing mechanisms to support and provide field operations with the necessary flexibility to rapidly respond to emerging challenges or crises including needs for specific expertise.

### *A Strategy that promotes and upholds the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion*

17. One of the strategic aims identified by key stakeholders for prioritization is the promotion of a diverse and inclusive workforce by achieving in particular an **equitable geographical distribution and gender balance**. The IOS Evaluation salutes UNESCO's progress in terms of achieving gender parity across the Organization, however sustained efforts to achieve an equitable geographical distribution must continue to be deployed taking into account Article VI.4 of the UNESCO Constitution<sup>1</sup>. Staff appointments will be made through a transparent, competitive process in order to secure the highest standards of efficiency, competence and integrity and on as wide a geographical basis as possible. Moreover, the selection of staff will be made without distinction to race, sex or religion<sup>2</sup>. UNESCO is strongly committed to upholding this fundamental principle and will continue to build a geographically diverse and gender-balanced workforce with highly skilled, committed and motivated staff who embody UNESCO's core values and uphold the highest standards of efficiency, integrity and competence. Regular monitoring and reporting on progress achieved against the established C/5 targets and measures on geographical distribution and gender balance will continue to be of primary importance for the Organization.

18. UNESCO is firmly committed to establishing an organizational culture that fosters a **respectful and ethical work environment** for all its personnel regardless of nationality, gender, race, age, religious beliefs, language, disability or any other distinguishing feature. The IOS Evaluation commends UNESCO for the progress made in raising awareness of ethical commitments and UNESCO's zero-tolerance policies and mandatory trainings notably on anti-harassment and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Other awareness raising trainings to address unconscious bias will be developed in the context of promoting a respectful and inclusive environment (e.g. persons with disabilities, mental health and wellbeing etc.). Physical and normative structures will be updated to the extent possible, the aim being to facilitate accessibility for all UNESCO personnel and to ensure decent and engaging working conditions including flexible and family-friendly working arrangements that will attract and retain qualified candidates from multicultural and diverse backgrounds. Trainings on leadership and accountability will be reinforced in support of effective performance management with the aim of fostering a culture of trust, transparency, honesty and continuous dialogue and collaboration with staff. Conflict resolution will be a key feature of management training with the roles and responsibilities of UNESCO's internal justice system more consolidated and widely communicated to staff at large.

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<sup>1</sup> Article VI.4 of the Constitution: *"The Director-General shall appoint the staff of the Secretariat in accordance with staff regulations to be approved by the General Conference. Subject to the paramount consideration of securing the highest standards of integrity, efficiency and technical competence, appointment to the staff shall be on as wide a geographical basis as possible."*

<sup>2</sup> Staff Regulation 4.3: Selection of staff members shall be made without distinction as to race, sex or religion.

*An ambition requiring investment*

19. The successful implementation of the Strategy will depend on the buy-in and support from all levels of the Organization. This is reflected in the collective responsibility statement in section IV below. Managers must be encouraged and enabled to consider not only their team's performance, but rather take action and make decisions as part of the leadership of the Sector and Organization. For example, supporting individual learning and development (both financially and managerially), by releasing individuals on short-term assignment or taking the time to train and mentor newcomers to the team, provides a long-term benefit to both individual, the related team and the Organization.

#### IV. AN ORGANIZATION-WIDE STRATEGY: A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

Achieving the aims of UNESCO's HR Strategy is a collective responsibility with a set of accountabilities to be undertaken by each concerned stakeholder, and not solely the responsibility of the Bureau of Human Resources Management.

##### UNESCO Core Values

##### Commitment • Integrity • Diversity • Professionalism

###### Leaders will:

- Lead by example by demonstrating the UNESCO core values of commitment to the Organization: integrity, respect for diversity, and professionalism;
- Establish & communicate strategic goals and organizational priorities;
- Drive & champion organizational change and reform;
- Refocus HR planning to better support future challenges such as field network reform.

###### Managers will:

- Inspire and motivate teams through open and continuous dialogue;
- Encourage and recognize high performance;
- Ensure personnel understand job responsibilities and expectations;
- Promote transparency by open and honest communications;
- Manage underperformance;
- Initiate the difficult discussions with personnel;
- Understand how to be inclusive and supportive of diversity;
- Make measurable progress in achieving geographical representation and gender balance amongst the staff of the Secretariat;
- Ensure the wellbeing of their teams;
- Apply HR policies and processes in a consistent and fair manner;
- Nurture the careers of personnel;
- Avail of people management training opportunities.

###### Staff will:

- Conduct functions in a professional manner and with integrity;
- Maintain personal high performance;
- Take reasonable care of their health and safety and not place others at risk;
- Treat others with respect;
- Avail of career development and training opportunities;
- Be responsible for their own career management;
- Support a spirit of collaboration with colleagues and teams;
- Contribute to joint staff-management mechanisms ensuring staff perspective continues to feed into the Strategy.

###### The Director of HRM will:

- Lead, coordinate, monitor and assess the successful implementation of the Strategy;
- Provide strategic advice and guidance to managers;
- Develop, implement & communicate effectively with staff, managers and key internal stakeholders on new policies, tools and processes to ensure consistent and fair application across the Organization;
- Foster a culture of mutual trust and respect across the Organization;
- Ensure a safe and healthy work environment for all personnel;
- Embed diversity, equity and inclusion into policies and processes;
- Establish Key Performances Indicators for senior managers for achieving greater geographical representation of staff of the Secretariat;
- Establish and maintain a network of strategic partners both within the Organization and with other United Nations agencies;
- Strive to build HR professional capacity and expertise.

## I. OUR VISION

UNESCO is an agile and desirable place to work which attracts and retains qualified and talented individuals who are motivated to deliver on UNESCO's mission and programmes.

**In order to achieve this, we will:**

### AIM 1

#### Attract and retain talent & expertise

- Develop a talented & qualified workforce that can deliver the UNESCO mandate effectively.
- Promote an organizational culture of accountability.

### AIM 2

#### Promote inclusion & diversity by achieving in particular an equitable geographical distribution & gender balance

- Identify and address challenges to achieving equitable geographical distribution.
- Foster an organizational culture of mutual respect that enables inclusion, equity and diversity.

### AIM 3

#### Adapt for the future

- Improve the agility and flexibility of the Organization.
- Put in place strong HR structures and partnerships to better assist managers and personnel to improve performance and operations.
- Enhanced HR systems to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of HR processes.

### AIM 4

#### Attain better results & impact

- Ensure a safe and healthy work environment.
- Encourage positive and constructive staff-supervisor relationships.
- Support career development.

## ACHIEVING AIM 1

### ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENT AND EXPERTISE

A skilled & high performing workforce worldwide is key to ensuring that UNESCO can deliver on its mandate. Identifying qualified individuals and providing the necessary support, training and professional development opportunities to personnel (regardless of contract types) throughout their UNESCO careers is critical.

#### **Key Objective I: DEVELOP A TALENTED & QUALIFIED WORKFORCE THAT CAN DELIVER THE UNESCO MANDATE EFFECTIVELY**

Actions:	Indicative measures of success:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic workforce planning with sectors;</li> <li>• Deliver an effective recruitment and outreach strategy;</li> <li>• Establish in-house talent pools including leadership pools;</li> <li>• Develop 3 key/critical training programmes for upskilling the workforce;</li> <li>• Update learning policy;</li> <li>• Develop a comprehensive induction and on-boarding programme, consistent across the Organization;</li> <li>• Introduce improvements in an employee's career experience: applying at UNESCO, joining the Organization, when moving within UNESCO, and upon separation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR biennial plans per sector in place and updated on a regular basis;</li> <li>• Increased number of qualified applicants from non- and under-represented countries;</li> <li>• Leadership talent pool in place by end 2024</li> <li>• 3 skills development programmes delivered by 2026;</li> <li>• Global staff survey satisfaction on fostering a culture of continuous learning opportunities;</li> <li>• Induction &amp; on-boarding programme/platform developed and implemented by 2025;</li> <li>• Pulse surveys for new staff and those transitioning to new posts undertaken twice per year.</li> </ul>

#### **Key Objective II: PROMOTE AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY**

Managers play a critical role in the organizational culture and are responsible for facilitating the development and performance of their teams. They are also responsible for creating an environment which enables personnel to thrive and be motivated.

Actions:	Indicative measures of success:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reinforce an accountability framework for HR management with clear expectations of leaders as managers and role models;</li> <li>• Assess the performance of supervisors in people management with targeted development opportunities to address areas identified for improvement;</li> <li>• Equip supervisors to manage underperformance and conflicts;</li> <li>• Establish mechanism/scheme to recognize high-performing teams.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish mechanism/scheme to encourage innovation and recognize high-performing teams as from 2025</li> <li>• People management element to be incorporated in (Leadership) Development Programme by end 2023;</li> <li>• Peer-exchange mechanisms with groups of managers established to support and foster good practices (e.g. provision of master classes) by end 2023;</li> <li>• Performance rating distribution.</li> </ul>

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ACHIEVING AIM 2

PROMOTE INCLUSION & DIVERSITY BY ACHIEVING IN PARTICULAR AN EQUITABLE  
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION AND GENDER BALANCE

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UNESCO is firmly committed to creating a diverse and inclusive working environment where all staff feel valued and respected not only in terms of nationality and gender but also in terms of race, disability, religious beliefs, language, age, socio-economic backgrounds and cultures.

**Key Objective I: IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS CHALLENGES TO ACHIEVING EQUITABLE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION**

In line with [General Conference Resolution 41 C/Res.64](#), adopted in November 2021 following the recommendations of the Executive Board Working Group on Geographical Distribution, UNESCO will implement all the measures contained in the aforementioned Resolution, in particular the drive to increase the recruitment of qualified candidates from non-and under-represented countries, achieving a target of 50% of external appointments to geographical posts.

<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Indicative measures of success:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fully implement all measures outlined in the 41 C/Res.64;</li><li>• Ensure direct targeted outreach to increase the diversity of candidates from non- and under-represented Member States [diversity targets];</li><li>• Maximize the use of digital tools for better outreach;</li><li>• Establish formal talent pools of high potential candidates;</li><li>• Assess the implementation of the Mid-level Professional Programme (MLPP) pilot exercise and expand its implementation accordingly;</li><li>• Address career development issues with regard to the Young Professionals Programme.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Action plan on addressing geographical distribution developed and implemented taking into account the measures outlined in 41 C/Res.64;</li><li>• Increased applications through social media channels;</li><li>• Talent pools in place and actively used for sourcing qualified candidates;</li><li>• Continued successful implementation of Mid-level Professional Programme (MLPP);</li><li>• Dedicated coaching and mentoring programme in place for Young Professionals (YPP) to motivate and encourage professional development</li></ul>

**Key Objective II: FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE THAT RESPECTS AND ENABLES INCLUSION, EQUITY AND DIVERSITY**

<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Indicative measures of success:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop an Action Plan on gender parity for all levels of staff;</li><li>• Introduce improvements in an employee's career experience: applying at UNESCO, joining the Organization, when moving within UNESCO, and upon separation;</li><li>• Ensure inclusion by critically reviewing/updating policies, procedures and processes for institutional biases;</li><li>• Identify and address barriers to effective participation/accessibility of targeted groups of staff in the work of UNESCO;</li><li>• Review, update, and mainstream the UNESCO Competency Framework, including the core values.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Action Plan on gender parity developed and implemented;</li><li>• Increased staff engagement and feedback (Global Staff Survey) in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) activities;</li><li>• Diversity, equity and inclusion to be embedded in key policies and processes by end 2027;</li><li>• Number of managers and personnel trained on unconscious bias [new staff within 6 months of on-boarding];</li><li>• UNESCO Internship Programme updated by 2024;</li><li>• UNESCO Competency Framework revised to incorporate/strengthen DEI in the workplace by 2026.</li></ul>

ACHIEVING AIM 3

ADAPT FOR THE FUTURE

While the COVID-19 pandemic has brought more flexible ways of working, further improvements are needed to ensure that UNESCO is able to adapt to future challenges and opportunities, in particular support to field operations in emergency or post-crises settings. This will involve decentralization and increased efficiency of HR and operational support including the provision of accurate information, advice, and data to managers.

**Key Objective I: IMPROVE THE AGILITY AND FLEXIBILITY OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Actions:	Indicative measures of success:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a transparent selection process for emergency and post-crisis situations;</li> <li>• Develop a pilot programme for decentralization of HR expertise and processes as part of the implementation of UNESCO's field network reform;</li> <li>• Strengthen career development opportunities for National Professional staff;</li> <li>• Review and update contractual frameworks for more flexibility and alignment with the present &amp; future workforce;</li> <li>• Identify and upscale on smarter, more agile ways of working;</li> <li>• Implement measures to make UNESCO a more flexible and family-friendly Organization.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific mechanism/HR plans in place to support field operations by end 2024;</li> <li>• Mapping of HR processes and authorities to be delegated to the field by 2024;</li> <li>• Number of national staff promoted to Int. Professional posts;</li> <li>• Flexible working arrangements evaluated and further developed by end 2025;</li> <li>• Updated HR policies on parental leave (maternity, paternity etc.) in 2023.</li> </ul>

**Key Objective II: STRONG HR STRUCTURES AND PARTNERSHIPS TO BETTER ASSIST MANAGERS AND PERSONNEL TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AND OPERATIONS**

Actions:	Indicative measures of success:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertake functional review of HR functions by end 2023;</li> <li>• Align HR structures to business needs, taking into account the field reform;</li> <li>• Explore designation of HR business partners in programme sectors;</li> <li>• Position HR partnerships (external expertise) to complement the workforce in implementing UNESCO's mandate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRM structure/staffing readjusted ensuring it is fit-for-purpose and will facilitate implementation of HR Strategy (for 2024/2025);</li> <li>• HRM staffing to allow for outposting of HR Int. posts (funds needed) to Regional Operational Platforms by 2026/2027;</li> <li>• Number of sectors making shift to designate HR business partner model;</li> <li>• Increased number of personnel working under HR partnerships framework.</li> </ul>

**Key Objective III: ENHANCED HR SYSTEMS TO IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF HR PROCESSES**

Actions:	Indicative measures of success:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and implement digital solutions for HR processes in line with UNESCO's IT Strategy;</li> <li>Develop SOPs for common procedures and processes to ensure consistent application of HR regulations;</li> <li>Increased communication of HR policies and processes using digital solutions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR systems, applications and platforms harmonized by end 2027;</li> <li>SOPs for key processes developed by end 2027;</li> <li>HR dashboards upgraded to facilitate access to key stakeholders on real-time progress.</li> </ul>

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ACHIEVING AIM 4

ATTAIN BETTER RESULTS AND IMPACT

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**Key Objective I: SAFE AND HEALTHY WORK ENVIRONMENT**

Actions:	Indicative measures of success:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and implement an employee wellbeing framework focusing on occupational health and safety and accountability including prevention measures to address key mental health risks;</li> <li>Progressive transition of Medical Service to an Occupational Health Service [monitoring the health of the workforce, preventing work-related illness in the workplace by encouraging safe working practices, and monitoring and supporting the management of sick leave].</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcomes from wellbeing surveys including Global Staff Survey, and actions implemented;</li> <li>UNESCO's occupational health &amp; safety policy developed by 2026;</li> <li>Measures to facilitate return to work after extended (sick or other) leave established;</li> <li>Reduction in sick/absenteeism rates.</li> </ul>

**Key Objective II: POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE STAFF-SUPERVISOR RELATIONSHIPS**

Actions:	Indicative measures of success:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen supervisors' management skills with a focus on managing remote/agile teams;</li> <li>Expand 360-degree assessment and feedback for managers and implement relevant training (e.g. conflict mgmt.) based on feedback (2023);</li> <li>Proactive support to managers and personnel, as and when necessary [mediation, early prevention/ conflict management];</li> <li>Develop Code of Conduct for UNESCO staff [Ethics Office: lead].</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased number of supervisors participating in management training;</li> <li>Number of managers undertaking 360° assessment programme;</li> <li>Global Staff Survey feedback on staff-supervisor relations;</li> <li>Code of Conduct developed (2023) and proactively communicated.</li> </ul>

**Key Objective III: SUPPORT CAREER DEVELOPMENT**

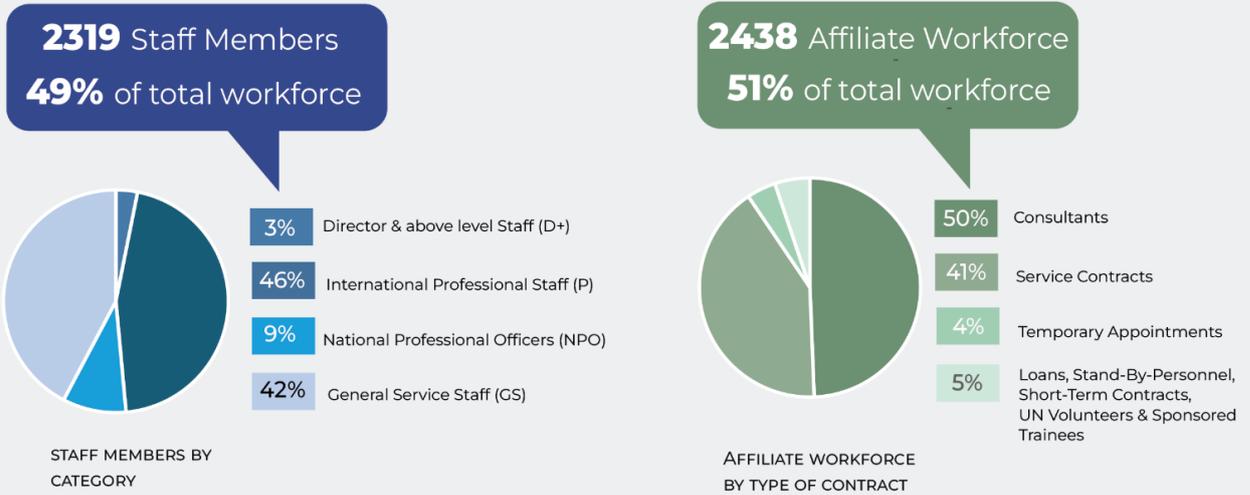
<b>Actions:</b>	<b>Indicative measures of success:</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training not just for the job you have but for the job you want!</li> <li>• Develop an assessment and development process to ensure a rapid and inclusive identification of Heads of Field Offices, with emphasis on people mgmt. skills;</li> <li>• Refine the Functional Mobility Programme based on lessons learned from the Pilot (2022/23);</li> <li>• Further improve the Geographical Mobility; Programme vis-à-vis candidate experience/feedback (2023/2024);</li> <li>• Provide career development advice and support service to managers and employees;</li> <li>• Develop Career Development Plan for Junior Professional Officers (JPOs), Young Professionals (YPs) and National Professional Officers (NPOs).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment methodology for identifications of Heads of Field Offices developed and implemented by 2025;</li> <li>• Number of functional mobility moves per year;</li> <li>• Decrease in the average time-in-post (all staff categories);</li> <li>• Decrease in the number of staff having exceeded their Standard Duration of Assignment (SDA);</li> <li>• Effective mechanism in place for Short-Term Assignment (STA) [including funding mechanism];</li> <li>• Global Staff Survey satisfaction with regard to staff morale and motivation.</li> <li>• Career Development plans for JPOs, YPs and NPOs developed and in place by 2nd semester 2024.</li> </ul>

***Communication, Monitoring and Reporting***

20. The Bureau of Human Resources Management (HRM) will ensure an effective communication strategy with the aim of promoting collective ownership and raising awareness on the implementation of the various HR actions and initiatives outlined in the Strategy. HR personnel and Administrative Officers at Headquarters and the field will be trained on communicating more effectively about key messages of the Strategy, new initiatives, systems and tools which should contribute to improving transparency, coherence and effectiveness of HR policies and processes. With regard to monitoring and reporting, an on-line dashboard complete with KPI's will be established for the regular monitoring on the progress of the implementation of the proposed actions in complement to the annual reporting to the Executive Board on the overall strategic outcomes of the HR Strategy.

## Annex II - UNESCO WORKFORCE AT A GLANCE - January 2023

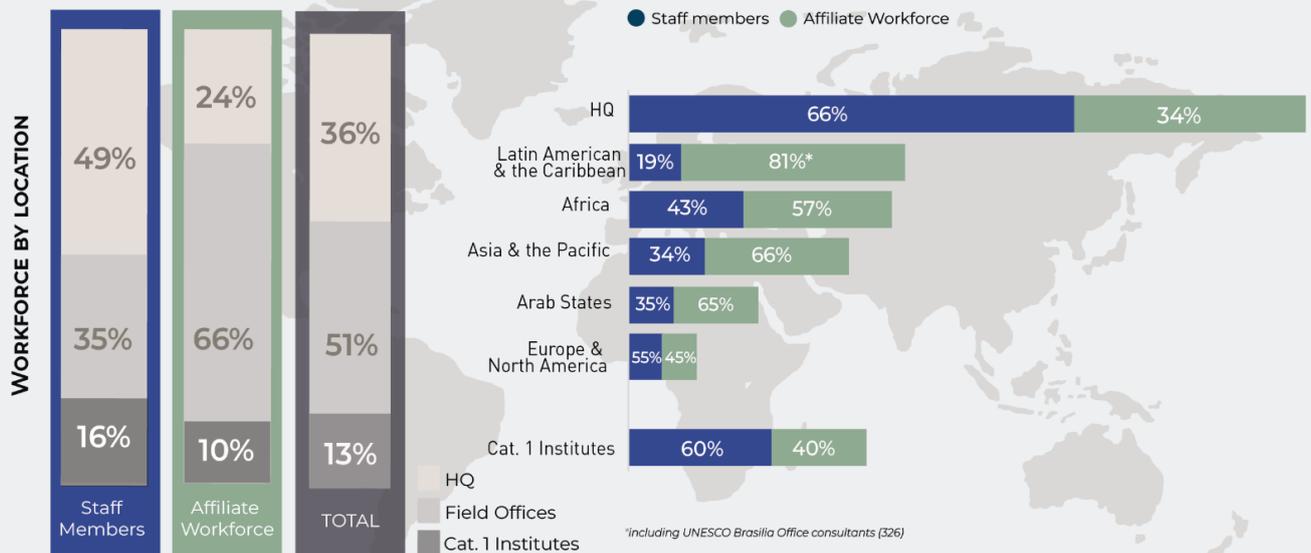
### 4757 PERSONNEL AT UNESCO



**Staff Members:** Fixed-Term contracts, Junior Professional Officers, Project Appointments & Secondments. Staff on Leave Without Pay are not included.

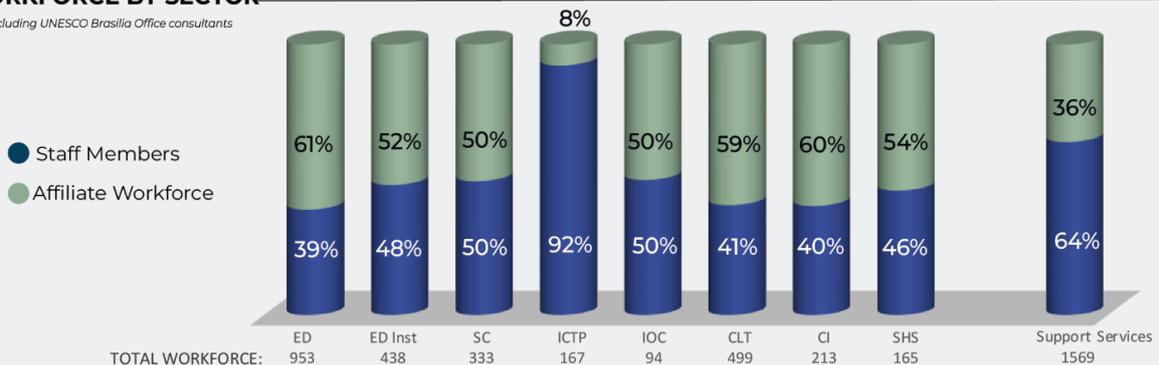
**Affiliate Workforce:** Temporary Appointments, Short-Term contracts for free-lance interpreters and translators, Service contracts, Short-term contracts, Consultants, UN Volunteers, Sponsored Trainees and Loans.

### WORLDWIDE PRESENCE

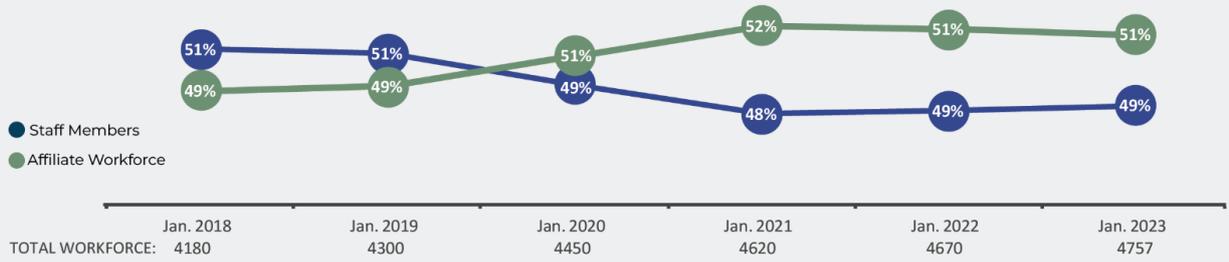


### WORKFORCE BY SECTOR\*

\*not including UNESCO Brasilia Office consultants



**EVOLUTION OF THE WORKFORCE SINCE JANUARY 2018**

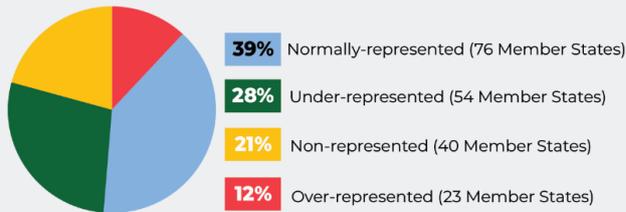


**DIVERSITY**

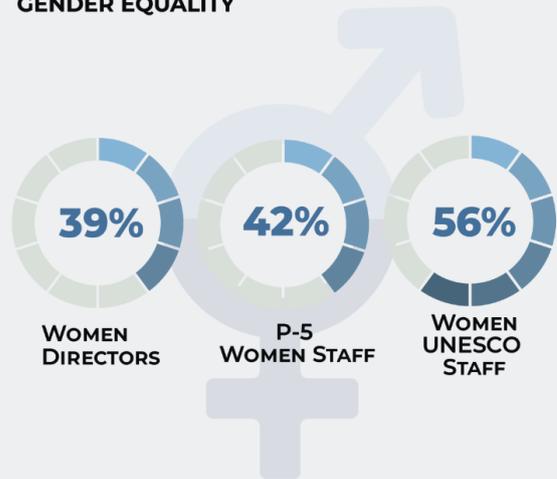
**2319 STAFF MEMBERS FROM 168 NATIONALITIES**

**GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION**

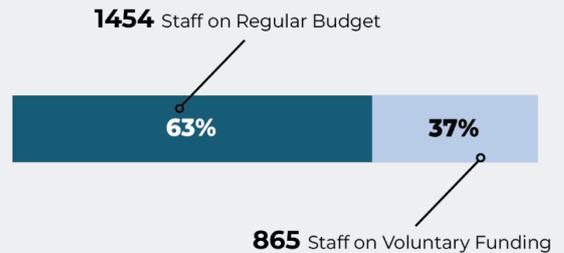
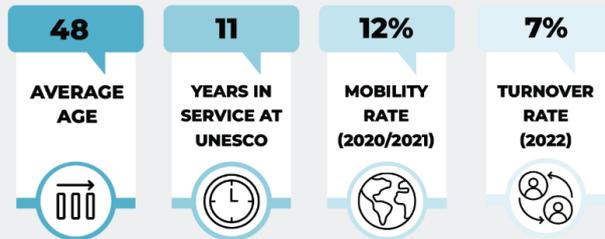
**193** Member States of which **79%** are represented  
[Geographical Professional posts only]



**GENDER EQUALITY**



**FUNDING SOURCE**



**ANTICIPATED RETIREMENTS OF STAFF ON ESTABLISHED POSTS BETWEEN 2023 & 2027**



For more detailed information, please refer to the Key Data on UNESCO Staff [January 2023]

**ANNEX III**

**Financial and legal implications of applying the new HR Strategy to “non-staff” hereafter referred to as “affiliate personnel” (Ref. 216 EX/Decision 5.III.A).**

**Introduction:**

1. UNESCO regularly hires individuals for temporary assistance, for limited periods of time, to deal with short-term work overload, temporary activities, core activities when it is not possible to create an established post, or to bring in ad-hoc outside expertise which is not generally available within the Secretariat. There are different categories of temporary assistance each with their own purpose and intent, minimum and maximum durations, specific responsibilities, benefits and entitlements and applicable legal framework (cf. Table 1 below).

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Duration</b>	<b>Social Security</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Funding</b>
<b>Service Contract (SC)</b>	Temporary activities or workload, <u>locally</u> hired individuals	Initial Min 1 month Max 12 months, renewable (Max 24 months in 36 consecutive months <u>at HQ</u> )	Yes: local public or private social security scheme (medical and retirement pension) (contributions paid by the SC holder and UNESCO)  X Not eligible for MBF or UNJSPF  ✓ Limited cover for injury, disability, or death directly attributable to the performance of official duties	Affiliate personnel	Regular Programme and Voluntary contribution
<b>Individual Consultant Contract</b>	Expertise for a specific deliverable or service	Min. 1 day Max. 11 months in 12 consecutive months	No  X Not eligible for MBF or UNJSPF  ✓ Limited cover for injury, disability, or death directly attributable to the performance of official duties	Affiliate personnel	Regular Programme and Voluntary contribution
<b>Short-term contract (STC)</b>	Short-term tasks of a support nature  ( <i>mainly used for technical support, i.e. conferences/ events</i> )	Min. ½ day Max. continuous duration: 20 days Overall max.: 180 days in a calendar year	Yes: local social security scheme (medical and retirement pension) (contributions paid by the STC holder and UNESCO)  X Not eligible for MBF or UNJSPF  ✓ Limited cover for injury, disability or death directly attributable to the performance of official duties	Affiliate personnel	Regular Programme and Voluntary contribution
<b>Temporary Staff Appointment</b>	(a) Short-term activities or  (b) Attached to a vacant established post or temporarily vacant functions of an established post.	Continuous period <12 months; normally initial Min 6 months  Extension: continuous period up to 12 months  Overall max: 24 months in 36 consecutive months	Yes, if appointment > 6 months:  ✓ Participate in Medical Benefits Fund (MBF) ✓ Enrolled in United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF)	Staff members	Regular Programme and Voluntary contribution

2. These “temporary assistance” personnel make up a significant portion of UNESCO’s affiliate workforce, which is also complemented with additional in-kind resources/HR partners including stand-by personnel, UN volunteers, loans and sponsored trainees.
3. Annex II of the HR Strategy for 2023-2027 provides the composition of this affiliate workforce which represents some 51% of UNESCO’s entire workforce as at January 2023. Half of this affiliate workforce (1,204 persons) are individual consultants (short-term expertise), most of whom are contracted for durations of less than six months. Of the remaining half, 1,005 persons are Service Contract holders and 229 persons composed of temporary appointments, short-term contract holders, loaned personnel, stand-by personnel, UN volunteers and sponsored trainees. A detailed mapping by location and strategy of this affiliate workforce as at January 2023 is provided in **Annex IV** to this document.
4. UNESCO relies more and more on these flexible workforce contract modalities in order to effectively deliver on its programmes and projects. While these individuals work alongside regular staff members, i.e. fixed-term and project appointments, junior professional officers, seconded experts, they do not carry the same status or conditions of service. However, they are bound by the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service.
5. UNESCO recognizes that the management and care towards this component of the workforce has evolved, in particular for those performing recurring core tasks and functions that cannot be covered in the normal course of duty by regular staff members and/or when it is not possible to create an established post, i.e. Service Contract holders.

Legal framework:

6. Individuals benefitting from the status of “staff members”, such as fixed-term, project and temporary appointments, are subject to UNESCO’s Staff Regulations and Staff Rules, the provisions of the Human Resources Manual, the related policy framework as well as the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service. Affiliate personnel are governed by the specific provisions of the Item of the Human Resources Manual relating to their contractual status (Service Contract, individual consultant contract, short-term contract), their contractual provisions, the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service, and the policies applicable to all personnel regardless of their status, including the Policy on the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, Anti-harassment policy, Whistle-blower Protection Policy, UNESCO Safety and Security policy.
7. Regarding occupational health and safety, the Statutes of the Consultative Committee on Health, Safety and Ergonomics are under revision (Item 16.3 of the Human Resources Manual). The new Occupational Health and Safety Consultative Committee will have the revised mandate to promote and improve the occupational health of all personnel, promote their well-being at work, reduce occupational risks and prevent occupational accidents and illnesses.
8. With regard to the available mechanisms for the settlement of disputes, personnel with staff member status (including temporary staff appointments) have access to the internal justice mechanisms (administrative review and Appeals Board), and to the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization. On the other hand, affiliate personnel do not have access to the internal justice mechanisms but can resort to alternative recourse mechanisms for the settlement of disputes, such as mediation, negotiation and arbitration, whose disputes are submitted either to the Chairperson of the UNESCO’s Appeals Board or to an arbitrator in accordance with the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Arbitration Rules. Affiliate personnel can also avail themselves of other internal channels, as applicable according to the policy, such as Ethics Office, Division of Internal Oversight Services, the Mediators etc.

Service Contract holders: legal implications

9. Service Contract holders are locally hired personnel at Headquarters, in the field and in category 1 institutes and centres. At Headquarters, the maximum duration of a Service Contract is 24 months over a period of 36 consecutive months. However, in the field, there is no maximum duration *per se*; contracts can be renewed year-by-year, subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funds.
10. As noted in para. 3 above, there are 1,005 persons employed under the Service Contract modality as at January 2023 of which 805 (80%) are located in the field. Eleven percent (91 persons) have cumulated more than 10 years of consecutive service, 14% (113 persons) have between six and 10 years and 28% (226 persons) between two and six years of service with UNESCO, all of which can be categorized as medium to long-term employment. One of the enhancements in the conditions of service introduced in January 2023 for Service Contract holders is the implementation of an end-of-service grant/separation payment in recognition of their lengthy periods of service.

Financial implications:

11. Building on the improved conditions of service already implemented for Service Contract holders as of January 2023, e.g. paid sick leave, parental leave, part-time work, salary advances, and other well-being measures such as breastfeeding arrangements, eligibility for telecommuting, staggered working hours etc., UNESCO is currently exploring the provision of a global medical scheme for field-based Service Contract holders, either through a service provider or through the participation in the medical scheme of another United Nations common system organization given the difficulties encountered by some Offices in identifying local medical insurance schemes. The overall objective of these enhancements is to equip UNESCO with an effective contractual framework adapted to programme needs and compliant with audit recommendations and best practices in the United Nations common system while providing the contract holders with conditions of service and benefits aligned with the Aims of the HR Strategy.

Estimated cost: US \$520,000 per annum representing a top-up to the current 5% of the salary contribution to medical insurance payable by the Organization (to be in-built into the cost of a Service Contract which will have an impact on field activity budgets).

12. Increasing the number and capacity of corporate training programmes, for example, on skills development, or increased resources for individual career counselling and support as well as the purchase of additional licences for access to the e-learning platform are other enhancements that can be considered in the framework of the HR Strategy and would encourage affiliate workforce to compete for vacant posts at UNESCO and the United Nations common system.

Future strategy:

13. The Joint Inspection Unit is currently undertaking a review of “non-staff” personnel in the United Nations common system, the recommendations of which should assist in shaping **a longer-term United Nations – and organizational-wide strategy** which will review and assess from both a programmatic and budgetary perspective the intent and purpose, adjusting and refining the terms and usage, including where possible the identification of core, continuous functions through more stable positions in particular in the context of the field reform, with due regard to the nature of, and predictability in earmarked funding.

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