

Twelfth session of the Assembly  
Abu Dhabi, 15 – 16 January 2022

**Report of the Director-General  
Human Resources Trends**

### Human Resources

During the biennium 2020-2021, the work of Human Resources spanned administrative, operational, and strategic activities. Significant effort was placed on aligning human resource policies and processes more closely with the Agency's strategic and programmatic objectives, including additional personnel sourcing and building organisational capabilities that are needed to achieve the Agency's operational objectives with the right combination of skills, knowledge, competencies, and expertise, while promoting geographical, cultural, and gender diversity.

Human resources practices, rules, and procedures have continued to be refined and updated to ensure effective and efficient responsiveness to the emerging and evolving needs and challenges of the Agency while safeguarding its core values and principles. Attracting, developing and retaining highly qualified staff is key to the Agency's success.

In this respect, IRENA has stepped up its outreach efforts to attract talent from all over the world, including tapping into Members' expertise and through the mechanisms provided by the decision of the Assembly at its second session (A/2/DC/5), such as loan arrangements and Junior Professional Officer Programme. From 1 January 2021 to date, 87 vacancies (core and project, including interns and consultants) were announced, and over 12,300 applications were received.

Out of 93 core posts, 89 are filled or under recruitment (74 filled and 15 under active recruitment), and 4 are vacant. The 74 staff in core posts are from 44 nationalities out of which 46% are women, and 54% are men. There are also 108 project posts that are currently filled or under recruitment (86 filled and 22 under active recruitment). Combined core and project posts amount to a total of 160 staff, who come from 69 nationalities, with 47% women and 53% men. It should be noted that the Secretariat also initiated a programme for personnel from developing countries, which had to be put on hold due to the pandemic.

### Summary of Trends

- HR Trends covers Professional and higher and General Service staff on fixed-term and temporary appointments funded under regular (core) and project (non-core) budget.
- As of 28 November 2021, 197 out of the 201 core and project staff positions are encumbered or are under recruitment (Annex I-A).
- Staff Turnover Rate (Annex I-B): The average turnover rate previously reported by the Agency over the past 8 years was around 16% annually. After an increase to 23% in 2016, the overall turnover has decreased to 13% in 2021 to date. All separated staff who left the Agency, left before reaching the maximum tenure period.
- Staff Vacancy Rate (Annex I-C): A slight upward trend in staff position vacancy rates from 11% in 2019 to 20% 2021 is due to higher active recruitments in the last couple of years and challenges caused by the global pandemic which has impacted both recruitment and onboarding processes.
- The average length of service of current staff of 4.21 years shows an increase from the last report of 3.58 years which would be interpreted as normal in a growing organisation (Annex I-D).

**Programmatic Implications of higher staff turnover.** A high turnover in IRENA staffing is likely to yield considerable disruptions to the Agency's Programmes and negatively impact institutional memory that is crucial to the implementation of these Programmes.

### **Elements Contributing to Staff Turnover**

Since 2018, IRENA has regularly requested that all departing employees complete exit surveys. The surveys are designed in such a way that the information gathered is anonymous and cannot be traced back to a specific member of staff. The surveys have been completed by 21 current and former employees.

The Agency has informed employees that the findings are intended to improve the organization and identify areas for change and attention. IRENA will continue to administer the surveys to all departing employees and will closely monitor the results. According to the surveys, the following issues have been raised by departing employees:

- Employee well-being and family issues (for example, extended separation from families, spouse employment, contract renewal and length);
- Alternate job opportunities;
- Lack of career development opportunities;
- Issues with supervision and workload;
- Tenure limits;
- Internal culture: centralised decision making, lack of staff engagement, transparency and internal communication.

It is recognized that the tenure policy is not the only reason why employees leave the company. A large portion of the turnover can be attributed to one or more of the issues mentioned above. For comparison, the Agency obtained information directly from several international organizations, as well as details contained in a UN Joint Inspection Unit Note (JIU/NOTE/2012/2) report, indicating that staff turnover rates in various organizations range from 3.7 percent (UN Secretariat) per year to 16.4 percent (FAO).

Further differences exist between staff categories, with higher rotation rates reported for Professional level staff than for General Services staff.

### **Human Resource Management**

The Agency has undertaken a review and assessment of workforce planning, working conditions for the staff and mobility arrangements.

In light of the information obtained the Agency developed an HR action plan to create a workforce that meets the rapidly expanding mandates and operations of IRENA through the recruitment and retention of high-caliber and highly skilled staff with high standards of competence, efficiency, and integrity; and by providing strategic HR support, enhanced performance management, and staff development frameworks.

Objectives also include promotion of staff well-being and work-life balance, as well as provision of HR data reports and statistical analyses to assist in organizational planning and strategic decision making.

### Main Achievement in the biennium

- Flexible working arrangement including working from home and outside Duty station for all staff and in all locations
- Coordination mechanism with health insurance providers in place to support staff during the pandemic – Including stress counselor private (one to one) on online sessions with staff.
- Coordinated actions with UAE authorities for special arrangement for IRENA Staff to get COVID-19 vaccines.
- Regular reminders to staff on safety and security related measures related to the pandemic
- Introduction of electronic workflow and electronic approval of all HR document and processes under a secured platform.
- Optimized full filing system for audit purposes to be electronic, instead of files and cabinets. (Paperless)
- Online e-PAR (Performance Appraisal System) allowing progress and status updates to be recorded throughout the year instead of waiting for the end of performance cycles.
- e-PAR status and monitoring reports for HR to ensure compliance by staff and managers. Available as a Dashboard.
- IRENA Executive Dashboard designed to provide real-time data and graphics of key HR metrics.
- The Executive Dashboard includes the option to track key recruitment indicators, including personnel gender parity and geographical distribution.
- Continuously Providing hiring divisions with timely, fair, and rigorous talent acquisition services, resulting in recruitment of competent and diversified personnel.
- The integration of online interviewing tools into IRENA HR SOP to facilitate the shortlisting of applicants and other recruitments processes.
- HR Team has a hot line email address providing necessary and instant technical support to candidates to enable a smooth application process.
- As part of the induction process, a new onboarding guide and a checklist for new hires have been developed to facilitate integration into the Agency.
- Approved Guidance relating to Teleworking and Telecommuting outside the Duty Station
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) documents offered upon return to office premises, and teleworking and telecommuting processes have been developed.

## On Going HR activities

Support and Direction on Strategic and Operational Matters			
The fostering of individual and institutional excellence mandates responsive and creative support for both management and staff and the facilitation of agency-wide communications on HR-related matters			
Action Plan			
Action	Description	Activities	Status
1. Update and develop new policies for streamlining processes and for improving HR overall support	Identification of critical HR policies and procedures requiring updates/revisions or areas where new SOPs or procedures may be needed	Comprehensive review and update of the HR Policy Manual	In Progress
		Finalizing of a directive on guidelines and detailed procedures for the engagement of consultants	In Progress
2. Enhance Performance Management System	Implementation of an online system, issuance of an updated Performance Management Directive, and institution of the relevant training courses in Abu Dhabi and in Bonn	Launched an online e-PAR (Performance Appraisal System) to replace the manual system for the Goals-Setting, Mid-Year, and End-Year evaluation phases. The system also allows recording of progress and status updates throughout the year without waiting for the end of the performance cycle.	Completed
		Developed e-PAR status and monitoring reports for HR to ensure compliance by staff and managers	Completed
		Finalizing a new directive on Performance Management to focus on continuous discussion of and collaboration on performance goals, the enhancement of the quality of appraisal processes, the strengthening of accountability, and provision of guidance for timely and successful completion of the evaluation process.	In Progress

<p>3. Continually improve reporting and analytics tools to support planning and decision making</p>	<p>Identification of measures to give management the appropriate data and analytics with which to flag issues and challenges and to establish their operational priorities</p>	<p>Launched an Executive Dashboard designed to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Real-time graphics of key metrics of different areas such as human resources and budget,</li> <li>• Assist Managers in strategic decision-making and</li> <li>• To allow regular self-service access to up-to-date reports with filtering options.</li> </ul>	<p>Completed</p>
<p>4. Expand IRENA partnership and outreach for capacity building</p>	<p>Internal capacity enhancement within the units and collaboration with organizations for opportunities at IRENA</p>	<p>Assist in Agency's collaboration with internal and external stakeholders and partners</p> <p>Expand outreach activities to academic institutions and other institutions, e.g., job fairs and school symposiums</p>	<p>On Going</p>
<p>5. Identify issues and provide strategic advice to Senior Management in all HR areas</p>	<p>Enhancement of support given to management by providing advice on alignment of HR with IRENA strategic priorities, business needs, and evolving challenges.</p>	<p>Align HR policies with IRENA's corporate and strategic priorities</p>	<p>On Going</p>
<p>6. Provide guidance to Divisions on matters relating to personnel/workforce planning and organizational structure</p>	<p>Provision of optimal frameworks for planning and organizing work and staffing organization within units</p>	<p>Providing authoritative HR policy advice and interpreting IRENA Rules and Regulations to guide managers and advise on staffing, organisational, and structural issues</p>	<p>On Going</p>
<p>7. Coordinate job classification exercises including consultation with all stakeholders</p>	<p>Comprehensive reviews of IRENA jobs against UN classification standards</p>	<p>Review results of initial position classifications and work closely with ICSC-recommended experts on job classification standards to evaluate and confirm methods of implementation.</p>	<p>In Progress</p>

<b>Talent Acquisition</b>			
To attract and recruit talent to meet the Agency's operational and strategic needs as well as to address recurring and emerging challenges.			
Action Plan			
Action	Description	Activities	Status
1. Accelerate recruitment process to efficiently meet staffing requirements	Improvement of recruitment turnaround time, starting from the creation of the vacancy to the approval of the selected candidate	Finalizing a new "Directives for Recruitment and Selection Process" which will highlight basic principles, processes, and timelines and introduce other selection and placement methods such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lateral moves,</li> <li>• creation of rostered candidates, and</li> <li>• desk reviews.</li> </ul>	In Progress
2. Ensure comprehensive recruitment and selection processes	Management of recruitment processes in accordance with the current recruitment directives and policies	Providing Hiring Divisions with timely, fair, and rigorous talent acquisition services to ensure that IRENA hires, onboards, and retains competent and diversified personnel	Ongoing
		Expanding implementation of online interviewing tools to Evaluation Panel members, like SONRU, to facilitate shortlisting of applicants.	Completed
3. Review proposals to adopt new online recruitment platform	Realization of benefits of the new platform, additional functionalities to expedite applicant screening, facilitate status monitoring and reporting, and assist in decreasing recruitment timelines	Implemented a new recruitment platform, started developing real-time reports with ICT to monitor the timeliness of individual hiring processes, and development of a management dashboard to track key recruitment indicators, including gender parity and geographical distribution.	Completed
4. Enhance candidate experience	Proactive and continuous communication with candidates	Providing necessary technical support to candidates to ensure a smooth application process	Ongoing
		Providing feedback at various stages of the recruitment and selection processes	

5. Review policies and procedures on selection and engagement of consultants	Evaluation of use of consultancy agreements to meet staffing requirements for specific expertise and skills	Developing SOPs and procedures for effective engagement and management of Consultants in line with established principles and procedures	In Progress
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Employment Opportunities, Diversity, and Inclusion			
To ensure a high-quality workforce while also advising, coaching, and providing guidance on contract issues and ensuring gender equity and geographical representation			
Action Plan			
Action	Description	Activities	Status
1. Improve new staff induction process	Enhancement of the onboarding experience and recruits' arrival and transition.	An onboarding guide and a checklist for new joiners were introduced to the induction process; both will be modified and updated as circumstances change.	Completed
2. Ensure proper due diligence of HR processes	Conformity to principles of competition, fairness, objectivity, transparency, accountability, and diversity.	Continuously enhance quality of HR services through improved HR policy development, compilation of best practices, and feedback from staff, management, and other stakeholders.	Ongoing
3. Increase recruiting and outreach to qualified female candidates and those from unrepresented or underrepresented countries.	Enhancement and expansion of career opportunities for candidates from underrepresented gender identity and geographical origin.	In conjunction with the issuance of the new Recruitment directive, develop procedures to promote consideration of qualified female candidates and applicants from unrepresented or underrepresented countries.	In Progress



<b>Training and Staff Development</b>			
Develop, promote, and nurture individual and organizational performance by establishing and delivering a wide range of innovative programmes that support IRENA's commitment to professional growth.			
Action Plan			
Action	Description	Activities	Status
1. Establish effective Training and Staff Development systems	Implementation of a framework for the continuous development and training of staff towards organizational and career goals, both on site and via e-learning	Developing a comprehensive training and staff development programme, initially through an assessment of agency-wide or unit-specific training needs, including leadership and management, performance management, and language courses.	Planned for 2022
		Develop a Learning Management System (LMS) and career management platform to promote and foster continuous learning and development. Establish a certification program when appropriate.	Planned for 2022
		Support language proficiency courses through organized classes or online training	Planned for 2022
2. Provide continuous support to develop management skills	Development of programme for the enhancement of leadership and managerial skills	Setup management training and coaching programmes.  As part of the comprehensive training programme, design, develop, and deliver a new leadership development initiative for all supervisors and managers.	Planned for 2022
3. Include opportunities for staff development in new employees' welcome packages	Emphasis on continuous learning and accessibility of skill and competency upgrading and development	Developing detailed induction process which including information on training and self-development opportunities, such as access to LinkedIn online courses.	In Progress
		Finalizing Onboarding Tool Kit for Managers to assist them in inducting and supporting the new hires in their respective teams.	In Progress

HR Information Management			
Offer effective and creative solutions via effective governance and monitoring of the IRENA ERP and other digital and online services			
Action Plan			
Action	Description	Activities	Status
1. Enhance HR modules and functionalities in the IRENA ERP and IT systems	Provision of an effective, reliable system to enter, approve, and report HR and payroll actions as well as implementation of a user-friendly self-service module for staff to request leave, payments, entitlements, or benefits	With ICT, finalize the deployment of an online module for claim and payment approval processes for Education Grants.	In Progress
		With ICT, finalize an online request form for Dependency benefits as recommended by the Internal Audit Office.	In Progress
		Improve the online e-PAR modules to facilitate the completion of each performance management cycle and to improve on the necessary status tracking and reporting required by both HR and the Divisions.	In Progress
		With ICT, Consult with Oracle to create a new and simplified recruitment module with an integrated user interface consistent with the ERP design.	In Progress
2. Develop Workforce BI reporting	Continuous improvement of data analytics and tools	Worked closely with the ICT team to generate real-time and easily accessible HR reports, such as staffing reports, to position management and related budget requisitions, gender ratios, nationality representation, vacancy and Staff turnover rates and average length of service, etc.	Completed
3. Improve communication with staff and management of HR-related matters	Strengthening of connections and interactions with HR clients and internal stakeholders	Through the IRENA intranet and other IT tools, communicate vital information about staff well-being, health and insurance issues, entitlements, and benefits, etc.	Ongoing
4. Coordinate continually with ICSC and UN agencies on Common-System issues in UAE	Participation in UNCS inter-agency activities relating to salaries and entitlements, conditions of service, and staff welfare in UAE, as relevant.	Support ICSC and UNCS country offices in conducting post adjustments and cost-of-living surveys.  Assist in providing information on local labor conditions and in conducting salary surveys.  Maintain close communication with the UN Coordinator's office regarding health and staff welfare issues, especially during the pandemic period.	Ongoing

<b>Staff Well-being and Reduced Staff Turnover</b>			
To attract and retain employees, enhance health and productivity and cultivate a diverse and inclusive workplace culture. Broaden benefits and health programmes available to staff and family members.			
Action Plan			
Action	Description	Activities	Status
1. Review Medical-Vision- Dental Insurance coverage	Assurance of optimal benefits to be provided by the health insurance provider	Set up an online help-desk center for staff to submit health insurance-related issues. This will facilitate HR support to resolve, monitor, and report such issues for evaluation and discussion with the insurance provider.	In Progress
2. Develop measures to support staff on emerging issues related to occupational safety, health, and well-being	Continuously support staff well-being, particularly as regards the global pandemic	In coordination with other units, obtain and share information on health issues, movement restrictions, testing and vaccination requirements, etc.	Ongoing
		Establish or update temporary measures and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) documents upon return to office premises and update teleworking and telecommuting options.	Completed
3. Establish a work environment that enables a healthy work-life balance	Introducing more flexibility into the way managers and staff deliver their work to promote work-life balance	Draft directives under review on policies and procedures for Flexible Working Arrangements, using practices at other international organizations as reference.	In Progress
4. Establish adequate channels by which staff can submit appeals or requests for independent review, and report misconduct or wrongdoings.	Facilitation of the establishment of an Appeals and Arbitration board and coordination of actions relating to staff complaints.	Work closely with senior management and the Staff Association to identify viable solutions and establish the necessary work plan to implement the arrangements.	Planned for 2022

## ANNEXES

IRENA Human Resources Trends<sup>1</sup>

## I-A. Staffing

## I-A-1. Filled/under recruitment core and project posts by level as of 28 November 2021

Level	Filled or Under Recruitment	Total
ASG	1	1
D-2	1	1
D-1	7	7
P-5	22	22
P-3/4	73	74
P-2/1	55	55
Sub-total Professional and above	159	160
General Services	38	41
Total	197	201

## I-A-2. Loaned Personnel as of 28 November 2021

Division	Title	Loaned from
ODG	Liaison and Protocol Officer	United Arab Emirates
ODG	Programme Officer, Planning and Programme Support	United Kingdom
IITC	Programme Officer, State Grid Corporation of China (SGCC)	China

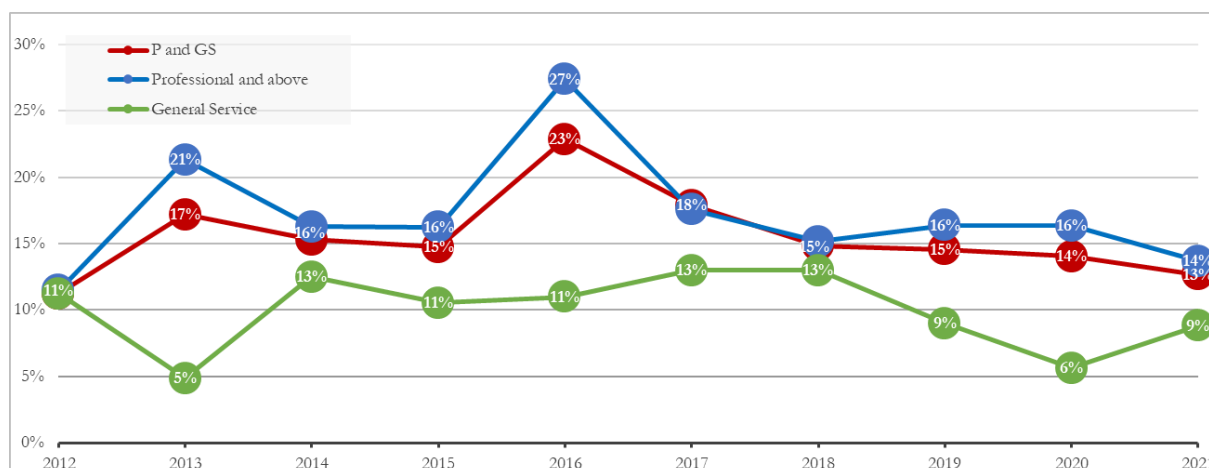
## I-A-3. Seconded Officers (Voluntary Contributions) as of 28 November 2021

Division	Title	Seconded from
CEP	Programme Officer	Republic of Korea
PFS	Associate Programme Officer, Climate Finance and NDC	Republic of Korea
ODG	Advisor to the Director-General	Italy
IITC	Analyst – Renewable Energy Scenarios and Roadmaps	Denmark

<sup>1</sup> This document covers IRENA staff in the Professional and above and General Service categories on fixed-term and temporary appointment funded by regular (core) and project (non-core) budget as of 28 November 2021. It does not cover personnel with other types of contracts.

I-B. Staff Turnover<sup>2</sup> from 2012 to 2021

## I-B-1. Evolution of Staff Turnover from 2012 to 2021



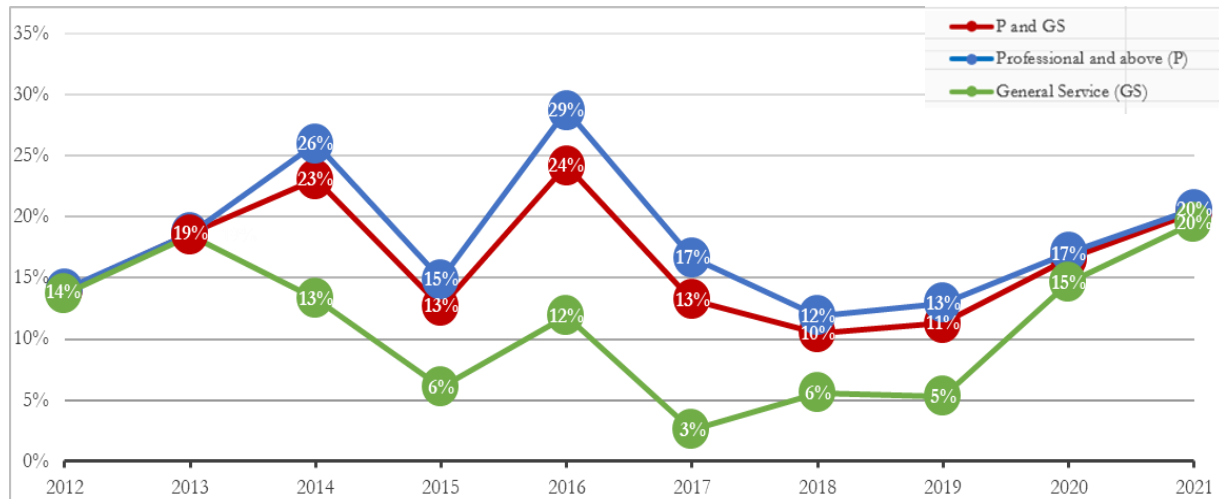
## I-B-2. Staff Turnover Rate from 2012 to 2021

Year	P and GS	Professional and above	General Service
2012	11%	11%	11%
2013	17%	21%	5%
2014	15%	16%	13%
2015	15%	16%	11%
2016	23%	27%	11%
2017	18%	18%	13%
2018	15%	15%	13%
2019	15%	16%	9%
2020	14%	16%	6%
2021	13%	14%	9%
<b>Average Turnover Rate</b>	<b><u>16%</u></b>	<b><u>17%</u></b>	<b><u>10%</u></b>

<sup>2</sup> Turnover rate: The number of staff separations in one year divided by the average number of active staff during the same period, multiplied by 100.

I-C. Staff Vacancy<sup>3</sup> from 2012 to 2021

I-C-1. Evolution of Staff Vacancy from 2012 to 2021



I-C-2. Staff Vacancy Rate from 2012 to 2021

Year	P and GS	Professional and above	General Service
2012	14%	14%	14%
2013	19%	19%	19%
2014	23%	26%	13%
2015	13%	15%	6%
2016	24%	29%	12%
2017	13%	17%	3%
2018	10%	12%	6%
2019	11%	13%	5%
2020	17%	17%	15%
2021	20%	21%	20%
<b>Average Vacancy Rate</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>11%</b>

<sup>3</sup> Vacancy rate: The number of vacant staff positions divided by the total number of staff positions, multiplied by 100.

## I-D. Average Length of Service

## I-D-1. Average Length of Service of Separated Staff

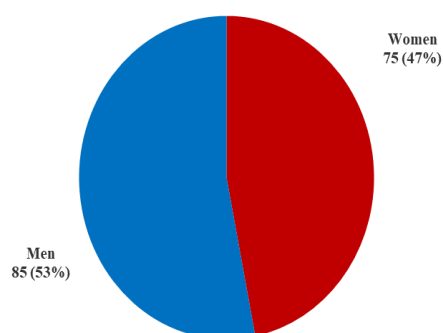
Year	Employee Category	Average Length of Service (Years)
2012 - 2021	Professional and above	2.59
	General Services	2.64
	<b>P and GS</b>	<b>2.60</b>

## I-D-2. Average Length of Service of Current Staff

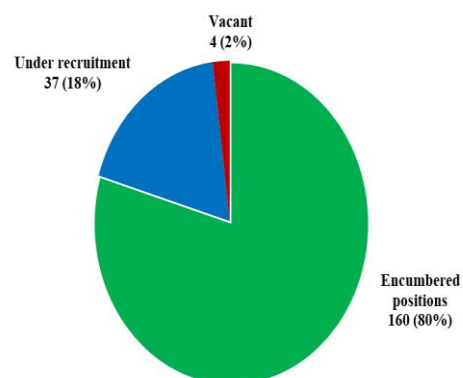
Year	Employee Category	Average Length of Service (Years)
2021 (as of 28 November 2021)	Professional and above	3.72
	General Services	6.11
	<b>P and GS</b>	<b>4.21</b>

## Staff Status as of 28 November 2021

Gender Distribution (as of 28 November 2021)



Staff Status (as of 28 November 2021)



*Geographical distribution (core and project posts) as of 28 November 2021**\*Staff Only – Professional and higher and General Service*

No.	Country	Staff Only*
1	Afghanistan	2
2	Argentina	-
3	Australia	2
4	Austria	2
5	Bangladesh	1
6	Brazil	3
7	Bulgaria	1
8	Cameroon	1
9	Canada	3
10	China	2
11	Colombia	2
12	Costa Rica	1
13	Cote d'Ivoire	1
14	Croatia	-
15	Djibouti	1
16	Ecuador	1
17	Egypt	3
18	Fiji	1
19	France	4
20	Germany	7
21	Ghana	1
22	Greece	2
23	Guatemala	2
24	Hungary	1
25	India	11
26	Indonesia	2
27	Iraq	1
28	Ireland	1
29	Italy	9
30	Jamaica	1
31	Japan	1
32	Jordan	4
33	Kenya	5
34	Kyrgyzstan	1
35	Lebanon	4
36	Lithuania	2
37	Malaysia	1
38	Maldives	1
39	Mauritius	1
40	Mexico	5



41	Morocco	1
42	Nepal	1
43	Netherlands	4
44	New Zealand	1
45	Nigeria	1
46	Oman	-
47	Pakistan	5
48	Palestine	1
49	Panama	1
50	Peru	1
51	Philippines	3
52	Poland	1
53	Portugal	
54	Republic of Korea	4
55	Romania	2
56	Russia	-
57	Serbia	2
58	Slovakia	1
59	Slovenia	1
60	South Africa	1
61	Spain	3
62	Sri Lanka	1
63	Sudan	4
64	Tajikistan	1
65	Togo	1
66	Trinidad and Tobago	2
67	Tunisia	2
68	Turkey	4
69	Uganda	2
70	Ukraine	1
71	United Kingdom	6
72	United Republic of Tanzania	1
73	United States of America	5
74	Uruguay	-
75	Yemen	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>160</b>