

Twenty-sixth meeting of the Council
Abu Dhabi, 19-20 October 2023

Report of the Director-General Human Resources Management and Trends

I. Background

1. This report provides an update of Human Resources (HR) trends as requested by the Council at its twenty-fifth meeting (C/25/SR/L.1, paragraph 143) and outlines Human Resource Management issues that pertain to the current trends and aim to position IRENA as an employer of choice.
2. The document describes the latest initiatives and activities in Human Resources which are either in progress or have been lately undertaken with a view to strengthening the delivery of HR programmes and services to IRENA's management and staff. The following sections of the report provide information on the status of the various activities, outline human resource analytics and trends and the next steps.

II. Human Resources Initiatives

A. Talent Management

3. The Agency conducted two job classification reviews in 2019 and 2021 undertaken by two different job evaluation experts. Given that these reviews resulted in some divergent views between the two experts (representing around 8% of the total number of the evaluated Agency posts), it was determined that the remaining posts should benefit from an additional assessment. For this purpose, the Agency has engaged a seasoned job classification specialist to evaluate selected posts. This process is ongoing and once completed, the Agency will put in place implementation plans and corresponding budgets to effect necessary changes.
4. IRENA is currently strengthening its HR policy framework. A number of HR policies are being introduced or developed with a view to enhancing the quality of HR services delivered to Agency employees. New policies on Performance Management and Recruitment and Selection have recently been promulgated Agency-wide. At the same time, further work is ongoing with regard to the policies on flexible working arrangements and consultancy management. All these new policy issuances will pave the way for the revision of HR Policy Manual which is scheduled to take place towards the end of 2023. Another new policy governing the conditions of re-engagement of former staff as Agency consultants has been included in the sessional documents for this Council meeting for consideration by the members.

5. Since early 2023, the Agency has been systematically working on its succession plans given the current tenure policy and planned senior staff departures. The succession plans are instrumental in enabling proactive strategies towards filling essential Agency positions in managerial and professional roles. To-date, the Agency has successfully completed recruitment for the post of Director, IITC. Also, recruitment processes for the posts of Director, Knowledge, Policy and Finance Centre, Director, Planning and Programme Support, and Director, Administration and Management Services are well underway. Given the ambitious timelines and drastic staff shortages in HR team at present, the Agency contracted a reputable executive search firm to assist in recruiting and selecting qualified candidates for these roles. The current succession plans envisage that posts at D1 and P5 levels will be advertised 9 to 12 months prior to the departure of their incumbents. Also, division directors will continue to assume responsibility for training and capacity building of their staff to succeed departing senior colleagues or serve as back-ups. This approach is intended to ensure smooth transition and continuity in senior and middle management roles going forward.

B. Enabling Work Environment

6. In April 2023, IRENA contracted a consulting firm (KPMG) to conduct a comprehensive assessment of staff retention, turnover and related issues in the Agency. KPMG delivered this engagement through a two-phased approach. The first phase involved an in-depth analysis of IRENA's current workforce practices, revealing areas for improvement. The second phase focused on developing targeted initiatives and a transformation work plan that provides a roadmap for implementing the identified initiatives. This work plan offers actionable steps and timelines to guide IRENA in enhancing its workforce practices and achieving long-term growth and success. In presenting the transformation work plan, KPMG also proposed the sequencing and resourcing options for these HR initiatives in terms of allotted time and engagement of internal and/or external expertise in their development and implementation. KPMG analysis indicates that IRENA faces workforce challenges, amongst others attributed to the constraints imposed by the fixed term contract, limited funding, shortage of staff in the HR function and challenges with employee engagement, recognition, career development and progression. These challenges involve talent attraction and retention, capability building, and employee motivation. Based on these findings, six strategic initiatives were considered to enhance the workforce practices. By implementing these initiatives, IRENA can foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and a thriving work environment. It can better attract and retain talent, promote knowledge transfer, ensure project stability, and enhance team dynamics. Furthermore, these initiatives will allow the Agency to adapt to the evolving needs of the renewable energy sector, strengthen its workforce capabilities, and position itself as a leader in driving sustainable energy transformation globally. More details on this project are provided in Information Note C/26/INF/X (“Independent Human Resources Audit”) in the AMS sessional documents.
7. Further to the suggestions from some members in the 25th Council meeting, IRENA surveyed opinions of its staff with regard to how favourably they view Agency participation in the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund (UNJSPF) versus its current participation in the Staff Provident Fund (SPF). 47% of Agency staff favoured the Agency's joining the UNJSPF with 53% supporting the continuation of its participation in SPF. To ensure a completely objective assessment of the implications of joining the UNJSPF by IRENA staff, the Agency is scheduling a dedicated session with all IRENA staff with the engagement of representatives from UNJSPF New York before the end of 2023.

8. In parallel with the KPMG assessment, the Agency also conducted a review of staff exit survey administered to all separating staff since 2018. Throughout the reporting period (2018-2023), the leading reasons for separation among staff in the Agency have been: 'family reasons' (i.e. 'lack of employment opportunities for spouse' and 'prolonged separation with family' – this is especially pertinent to staff based in Abu Dhabi), 'alternative job opportunity' and 'lack of career opportunities'. Also, the satisfaction section of the survey highlights 'career development options', 'training and learning options' and 'quality of inter-divisional communication' as the aspects of work with the least satisfaction rating while 'relationships with colleagues', 'overall level of entitlements and benefits' and 'relationships with supervisor' are among the leading aspects of work on staff satisfaction. These staff perceptions corroborate some of the findings of KPMG in that more effort needs to be made by the Agency in support of staff retention and employee engagement and motivation programmes such as career management, staff learning and development.
9. Subject to the endorsement of the recommended HR initiatives by the members, the Agency is planning to conduct a staff satisfaction survey in the first quarter of 2024. The results of this survey will serve as a baseline in relation to future periodic assessments of staff engagement and satisfaction throughout the various stages of implementation of these initiatives. This will help to gain a more nuanced understanding of staff perceptions in respect of specific transformation actions taken by the Agency with a view to implementing further improvements and/or remedial measures as warranted.
10. Since the beginning of 2023, the Agency has been in regular contact with the UN Country team in the UAE regarding a salary survey for its GS staff. According to the Staff Rules and Regulations of IRENA, the remuneration of Agency GS staff is set in conformity with the salary survey methodology of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) who sets HR policies for organizations of the UN Common System and is headquartered in New York. In implementing its mandate, the ICSC delegated the authority to conduct salary surveys to the organizations of the Common System, which for this purpose established a dedicated office of the UN Secretariat located in Bonn, Germany, called 'One HR Centre'. One HR Centre conducted a salary review earlier this year using the new ICSC salary survey methodology and advised that the revised GS salary scale will be published by mid-October 2023. According to the latest advice from the One HR Centre, the salary scale shall have a retroactive effect as of 1 April 2023. It is noteworthy that the GS salary scale in the UAE has not been revised by the ICSC/UN since January 2013. It remains to be a matter of serious concern for the Agency and, to this end, IRENA decided to join the UN HR Network (the UN inter-agency consultative body) as a non-common system IGO. This will enable the Agency to participate in consultations pertaining to the revision of GS salary scale with an observer status.

III. IRENA Human Resources Trends

Summary of HR Trends

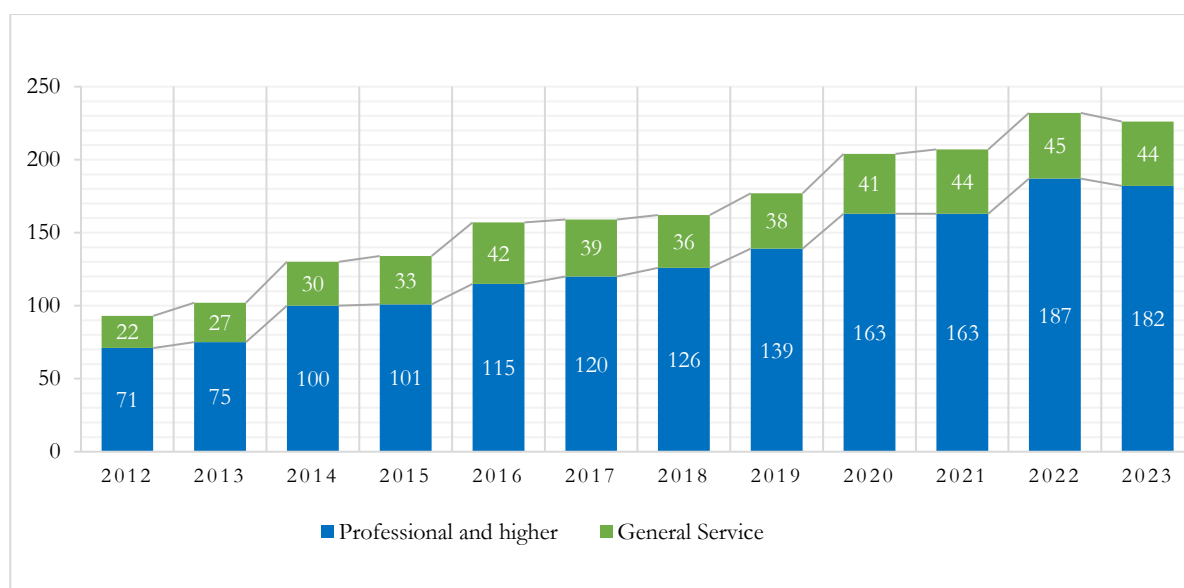
- a) HR Trends covers Professional and Above and General Service staff on fixed-term appointments funded under regular (core) and project (non-core) budget.
- b) As of 31 August 2023, 217 out of the 226 core and project staff positions are encumbered or under recruitment (I-A).
- c) Annual Growth Rate (I-A-3):
A steady upward trend has been noted in the number of staff positions since 2012. Compared to 2012, the Agency expanded by 143% with a total number of 226 posts. The Agency has grown at the average annual rate of 8.55% during the period 2013-2023.
- d) Staff Turnover Rate (I-B):
The average turnover rate previously reported by the Agency over the past 13 years was approximately 16.67% annually.
Since 2017 the overall turnover stabilized around 15%-16% and dropped further to 9% as at 31 August 2023.
Except for one staff previously at ASG level, all separated staff left the Agency before reaching the maximum tenure period.
As of 31 August 2023, 16 staff members separated from the Agency in the year 2023.
- e) Staff Vacancy Rate (I-C):
A steady upward trend has been noted in staff position vacancy rates, from 11% in 2019 to 24% 2022 and 19% in Q3 2023.
The vacancy rates comprise the nexus of staff turnover and new job vacancies; the ascending trend in vacancy rates begins in 2018 and peaks in 2022 (24%) followed by a slight decline in Q3 2023 (19%).
- f) Average Length of Service (I-D)
The average length of service of current (183) staff is 4.5 years. This average shows a minor increase from 4.4 years of the last report, which can be interpreted as normal in a growing organization. The average length of service of separated (237) staff, however, is 2.8 years.

I-A. Current Staffing

I-A-1. Filled/under recruitment core and project posts by level as of 31 August 2023

Level	Filled or Under Recruitment	Total
ASG	1	1
D-2	1	1
D-1	7	7
P-5	22	24
P-3/4	79	81
P-2/1	68	68
Sub-total Professional and above	178	182
General Services	39	44
Total	217	226

I-A-2. Evolution of the number of staff positions from 2012 to 31 August 2023



I-A-3. Headcount breakdown by gender per employee category as of 31 August 2023

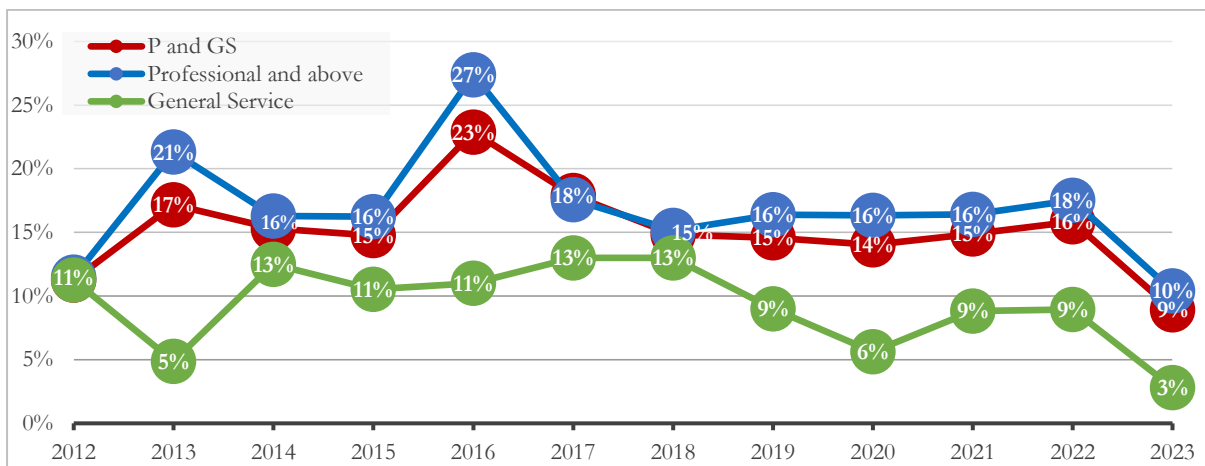
Employee Category	Male	Female	Total
Professional and Higher	82	64	146
General Service	14	23	37
Total	96	87	183

I-A-4. Evolution of the organizational annual growth¹ from 2013 to 31 August 2023

Year	P and GS	Professional and higher	General Service
2013	10%	6%	23%
2014	27%	33%	11%
2015	3%	1%	10%
2016	17%	14%	27%
2017	1%	4%	-7%
2018	2%	5%	-8%
2019	9%	10%	6%
2020	15%	17%	8%
2021	1%	0%	7%
2022	12%	15%	2%
2023	-3%	-3%	-2%
Average Growth Rate	8.5%	9.3%	7%

I-B. Staff Turnover² from 2012 to 31 August 2023

I-B-1. Evolution of Staff Turnover³ from 2012 to 31 August 2023



¹ Average annual growth rate is calculated for the period 2013-2023.

² 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.

³ The staff turnover rate for 2023 is calculated based on data till 31 August 2023.

I-B-2. Number of Separated Staff from 2012 to 31 August 2023

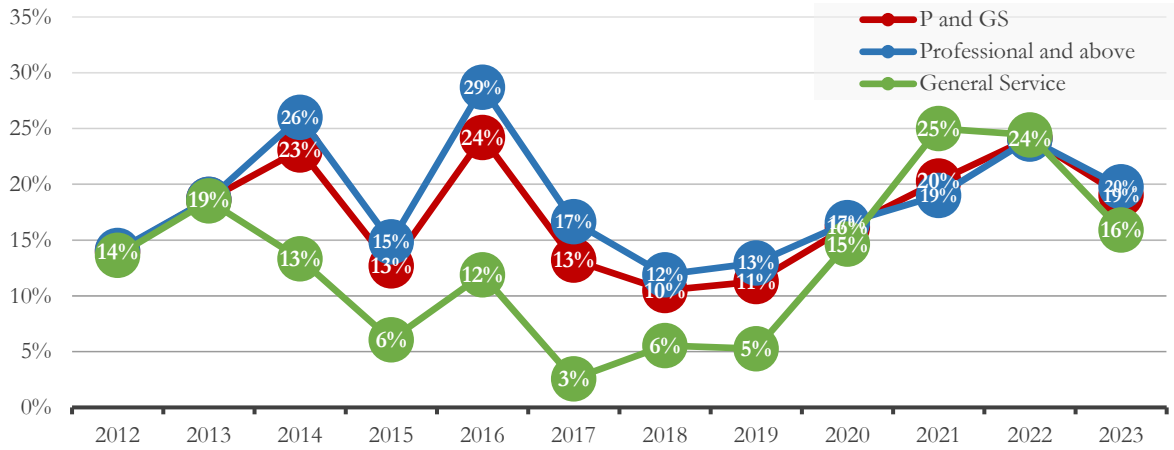
Year	P and GS	Professional and higher	General Service
2012	9	7	2
2013	14	13	1
2014	14	11	3
2015	16	13	3
2016	27	23	4
2017	23	16	7
2018	21	16	5
2019	22	19	3
2020	23	21	2
2021	25	22	3
2022	27	24	3
2023	16	15	1
Total	237	200	37

I-B-3. Number of Separated Staff in 2022 and 2023 by Division

Division	Separated Staff in 2022	Separated Staff in 2023	Total
AMS	2	4	6
CEP	7	1	8
IITC	11	2	13
KPFC	3	2	5
ODG	2	3	5
PFS	2	4	6
Total	27	16	43

I-C. Staff Vacancy⁴ from 2012 to 31 August 2023

I-C-1. Evolution of Staff Vacancy from 2012 to 31 August 2023



I-C-2. Staff Vacancy Rate from 2012 to 31 August 2023

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	16%	17%	15%
2021	20%	19%	25%
2022	24%	24%	24%
2023	19%	20%	16%
Average Vacancy Rate	17%	19%	13%

⁴ 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 - 2023 (as of 31Aug 2023)	Professional and above (200 out of 237)	2.8
	General Services (37 out of 237)	2.8
	P and GS (total 237)	2.8

I-D-2. Average Length of Service of Existing Staff

Year	Employee Category	Average Length of Service (Years)
2023 (as of 31Aug 2023)	Professional and above (146 out of 183)	4.0
	General Services (37 out of 183)	6.5
	P and GS (total 183)	4.5

I-D-3. Professional Positions Impacted by Tenure through 2032

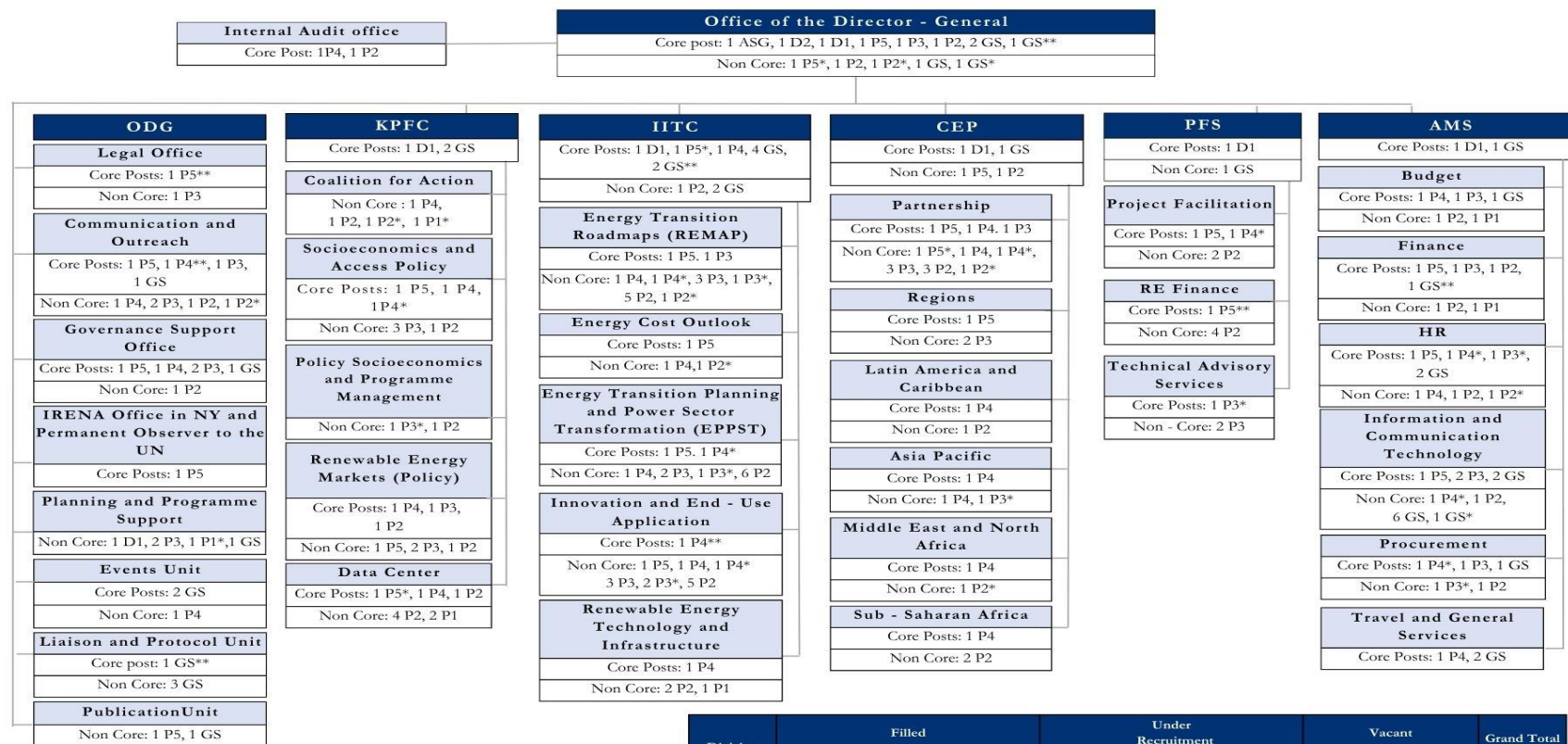
	2024		2025		2026		2027		2028		2029		2030		2031		2032		Incumbents Impacted	Total Posts
	13 years	9 years	13 years	9 years	13 years	9 years	13 years	9 years	13 years	9 years	13 years	9 years	13 years	9 years	13 years	9 years				
D1	2		1				1				1		1				1	7	7	
P5			3			3	1	1			1	2		4		4		18	24	
P4	1		2			2	1	2	1	3	3	1	1	2		3		2	24	35
P3	2				2	4	1	5		1	1	4		5		9		3	37	46
P2	1						1	3	2	3	1	8		4		20		10	53	61
P1	1											1				2		1	5	7
Total	7		6		2	9	4	11	3	7	6	17	1	16		38		17	144	180

As of 31 August 2023, the Agency has two groups of Professional and Above staff with different tenure limits – 26 staff with the 13-year tenure limit who joined before 15 January 2017 and 118 staff with 9-year tenure limit who joined after 15 January 2017. The table (Annex I-D-3) illustrates the number of Professional and Above staff from each group reaching tenure limits in the subsequent years through 2032.

I-E. Evolution of HR Risk Areas from 1 January 2023 to 31 August 2023

HR Risk Area	Solution / Recommendation	Risk Level (High-Medium-Low)
HR staffing	Continue the ongoing recruitment effort (3 professional posts); readvertise as necessary	High
Administrative Justice System (AJS)	Consider systemic approach to developing and implementing Agency AJS through engaging internal and external expertise as necessary	High
HR Policies & update of HR Policy Manual	Continue developing/implementing HR policies including on consultancy management and flexible working arrangements as well as new HR Policies/strategies as detailed in KMPG assessment report (subject to endorsement by the Council); update existing HR Policy Manual based on recent HR policy issuances	Medium

IV. IRENA Overall Organization Chart



ODG	KPFC	IITC	CEP	PFS	AMS	Total
48	32	59	30	14	43	226

Division	Filled			Under Recruitment			Vacant		Grand Total
	Core	Non - Core	Sub Total	Core	Non - Core	Sub Total	Core	Sub Total	
AMS	21	14	35	3	4	7	1	1	43
CEP	10	15	25		5	5			30
IITC	11	35	46	2	8	10	3	3	59
KPFC	10	17	27	2	3	5			32
ODG	21	18	39		5	5	4	4	48
PFS	2	9	11	2		2	1	1	14
Grand Total	75	108	183	9	25	34	9	9	226

Note: (As of 31 August 2023)

*Under Recruitment

**Vacant

V. IRENA Consultants Chart

List of Consultants with contract duration of six (6) months or longer

ODG			KPFC			IITC			CEP			PFS			AMS		
Title	Mo*	##**	Title	Mo*	##**	Title	Mo*	##**	Title	Mo*	##**	Title	Mo*	##**	Title	Mo*	##**
Consultant - PFS/ODG	12	1	Consultant, Renewable Energy Auctions	12	1	Consultant, Administrative Assistant (Office of Director)	6	1	Consultant, Assessment of DRE Solutions for PAS in Guinea	12	1	Consultant, Energy Transition Finance	11	1	Consultant, Classification and Job Title Review***	12	1
Consultant, Administration Support New York Office	12	1	Consultant, Geospatial Analysis	12	1	Consultant, African Continental Power Systems Masterplan	12	1	Consultant, Assessment on DRE Solutions for Powering the Agriculture Sector in Zimbabwe	12	1	Consultant, Geographical contexts- Southwest Asia	12	1	Consultant, Junior Consultant, Human Resources	8	1
Consultant, Chairperson of Review Board***	6	1	Consultant, GIS Developer	12	1	Consultant, ASEAN Center for Energy	12	1	Consultant, Caribbean Focal Point	12	1	Consultant, PFS	12	1	Consultant, Project Facilitation and Security	12	1
Consultant, Communication, ODG	9	1	Consultant, Global Atlas	7	1	Consultant, Capacity Building (French)	12	1	Consultant, Clean Cooking	12	1	Consultant, Project Facilitation and Support	12	1	Consultant, Procurement	12	1
Consultant, Communications ODG	12	1	Consultant, Global Atlas Cities	10	1	Consultant, Critical Materials for WETO	6	1	Consultant, Decentralised Renewable Energy (Local Coordinator)- Guinea	8	1	Senior Consultant, PFS	12	1			
Consultant, Communications, ODG	9	1	Consultant, Green Hydrogen	12	1	Consultant, Developer RE Markets and Technology	9	1	Consultant, DRE Solutions for Powering the Agriculture Sector in Malawi	12	1						
Consultant, Communications, ODG	9	1	Consultant, Jobs, Leveraging and Targets	12	1	Consultant, Graphic Designer and Layout Specialist	12	1	Consultant, Energy Access Work in Country	12	1	Consultant, Local Coordinator- RRA Chad	12	1			
Consultant, Communications, Video Creation	12	1	Consultant, Renewable Energy Auctions	12	1	Consultant, Innovation for the Energy Transition	6	1	Consultant, Local Coordinator- Bosnia and Herzegovina	12	1	Consultant, Local Coordinator- RRA Solomon Islands	12	1			
Consultant, Ethics	12	1	Consultant, Renewable Energy Deployment and Innovative Policies	12	1	Consultant, Long term planning	11	1	Consultant, Pacific Focal Point	12	1	Consultant, Post Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction	9	1			
Consultant, Inhouse Graphic Designer	12	1	Consultant, Resource Assessment, Bioenergy	9	1	Consultant, Quality Infrastructure Roadmap	10	1	Consultant, Regions-NDC	12	1	Consultant, RRA Honduras	12	1			
Consultant, Legal Advisor	12	1	Consultant, Reviewer	10	1	Consultant, Quality Infrastructure Roadmap America	12	1	Consultant, RRA- Honduras	12	1	Consultant, RRA- Somalia (Lead)	11	1			
Consultant, Legal Office	12	1	Consultant, UX/UI Designer	10	1	Consultant, SPLAT model interface	12	1	Consultant, RRA- Somalia (local Coordinator)	12	1	Consultant, RRA- Sudan Lead	12	1			
Consultant, Remote Graphic Designers	12	1				Consultant, WETO	12	2	Consultant, RRA- Sudan Local Coordinator	12	1	Consultant, Solutions Powering Agriculture and Food Value-chains in Nepal (DRE) - Lead	12	1			
Consultant, Report Writer	12	1							Consultant, Post Disaster Recovery and Reconstruction	9	1	Consultant, Solutions Powering Agriculture and Food Value-chains in Nepal (DRE) - Local Coordinator	12	1			
Consultant, Senior Adviser to the Director-General***	12	1							Consultant, Regions-NDC	12	1	Consultant, STP Data Collection	12	1			
Consultant, Senior Advisor ODG for Africa***	12	1							Consultant, RRA- Somalia (Lead)	11	1	Consultant, Strategic Heating and Cooling Plan for Mongolia	12	1			
Consultant, Senior Advisor to Director General***	12	1							Consultant, RRA- Somalia (local Coordinator)	12	1	Consultant, Decentralized RE Solutions for Improved Agriculture	12	1			
Consultant, Senior Advisor to Director-General***	12	1							Consultant, RRA- Sudan Lead	12	1	Consultant, NDC- Practitioner Network (NDCPN)	12	1			
Consultant, Technical review of IRENA publications	12	1							Consultant, RRA- Sudan Local Coordinator	12	1	Consultant, NDC- Practitioner Network (NDCPN)	12	1			
Consultant, Youth Engagement, GSO	12	1							Consultant, Solutions Powering Agriculture and Food Value-chains in Nepal (DRE) - Local Coordinator	12	1	Consultant, RRA Honduras- local Coordinator	12	1			
Consultants, Generic Editors and ProofReaders***	11	14							Consultant, STP Data Collection	12	1						
Junior Consultant, GSO	12	1							Consultant, Strategic Heating and Cooling Plan for Mongolia	12	1						
Consultant, Planning and Programme Support Office	9	1							Consultant, Decentralized RE Solutions for Improved Agriculture	12	1						

Note:
 *Mo: duration of the current contract in months
 ** #: Number of Consultant/s
 ***Retainer: The consultants working for up to a maximum of 30 to 90 days for the duration of their contracts