



联合国
粮食及
农业组织

Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Organisation des Nations
Unies pour l'alimentation
et l'agriculture

Продовольственная и
сельскохозяйственная организация
Объединенных Наций

Organización de las
Naciones Unidas para la
Alimentación y la Agricultura

منظمة
الغذية والزراعة
للأمم المتحدة

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Hundred and Seventy-fifth Session

Rome, 18 - 22 March 2019

Human Resources Management

Queries on the substantive content of this document may be addressed to:

Mr Fernando Serván
Director, Office of Human Resources
Tel: +3906 5705 2299

*This document can be accessed using the Quick Response Code on this page;
an FAO initiative to minimize its environmental impact and promote greener communications.
Other documents can be consulted at www.fao.org*



FC 175

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Committee is presented with main achievements in human resources management at FAO, for information.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- Members of the Finance Committee are invited to take note of main achievements of human resources management.

Draft Advice

- **The Committee:**
 - a) **noted the information provided in the areas of recruitment and career development; alignment of HR management to the strategic and programmatic needs of the Organization; as well as the nature of FAO as a United Nations specialized agency; and of increased efficiency in HR processes and procedures;**
 - b) **encouraged the Secretariat to continue improving the information presented in future reports; and**
 - c) **encouraged the Secretariat to pursue its efforts to address the challenges identified in the document.**

1. The Organization is reporting on the main improvements in the area of human resources policy and management over the last reporting period. In managing human resources, FAO is continuing to follow a vision based on four main drivers: (i) recruitment and development of the highest calibre of employees; (ii) alignment of HR management to the strategic and programmatic needs of the Organization; (iii) reflection of FAO's nature as a United Nations system specialized agency; and (iv) increased efficiency in HR processes and procedures. This document reports achievements according to these drivers.

2. In keeping with the policies implemented since 2012, the latest reporting period demonstrates that FAO's human resources policies continue to produce a workforce that is fit-for-purpose to enable the Organization to deliver against its mandate and objectives. This includes highly qualified, younger staff through the junior professional officer (JPO), associate professional officer (APO), and the internship, volunteer and fellowship schemes. It is manifest in the unprecedented levels of equitable distribution of staff and consultants, with only 6% non-represented member countries, and just 2% over-represented countries as of 14 February 2019¹. The 2019 call for expression of interest in general service positions builds on the past success, with 117 different countries now in the roster. Similarly, the gender representation of staff at all levels continues to improve, as already recognized at the UN wide level. Geographic mobility continues to enrich the Organization, and technological improvements, including the use of new platforms such as Taleo, make HR processes more efficient and user-friendly. This benefits candidates who apply and are recruited, as well as existing staff members. At the same time, policies have been tightened to enable staff members and employees to work in an environment free from harassment and sexual harassment. All of these measures ensure that FAO benefits from the highest quality human resources, where employees are enabled to harness their potential in the service of the Organization and its goals.

Recruitment and development of highest calibre of employees

a) Recruitment of Professional Staff

3. In accordance with its workplan, in 2018 OIG undertook an audit of FAO's policies and procedures for the recruitment and onboarding of Professional staff to Regular Programme (RP) positions. The Audit on Recruitment and Onboarding of Professional Staff, submitted in November 2018, identified many good practices and improvements, including: the development and standardization of generic job profiles; composition of the Professional Staff Selection Committees (PSSC); and generally a stronger role from the Office of Human Resources (OHR) ensuring greater quality and consistency in the process. The review found that most recruitment actions run smoothly and result in the hiring of technically competent candidates in line with recruitment objectives and guiding principles. The report identified also room for improvement in some phases of the recruitment and onboarding process.

4. The report included twenty (20) agreed actions to introduce improvements in specific area of the recruitment process. As at February 2019, the Organization implemented 14 actions and is working to implement the remaining ones by June 2019. Thanks to these efforts, the Organization introduced significant improvements in the different areas identified in the audit report.

5. In particular, to better measure the efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness of the various phases of the recruitment process and monitor them, FAO introduced a practical monitoring tool to track all the different steps, from the issuance of a vacancy announcement to the actual entry on duty of the new staff. This monitoring tool allows the Organization to analyse the time taken by each phase of the recruitment process, on-line and off-line, monitor the status of defined KPIs, easily identify bottlenecks and introduce corrective measures. In addition, by the first quarter of 2019, a reporting

¹ This refers to appointments already finalized with signed Terms of Employment, but with an entry on duty date after 15 February 2019.

dashboard will be available in the new recruiting platform, allowing a quarterly monitoring of the online steps of the recruitment process to identify further improvements needed.

6. In addition, guidelines for hiring managers to help them in defining assessment methods in a more consistent and transparent way were developed. Following the same principle, specific instructions were developed for the members of the interview panel to provide guidance for their work. Based on the requirements of the position, different assessment methods can be identified, including, but not limited to: screening of candidate's profile; education verification checks; written tests, in particular for positions that require writing skills; pre-screening interviews, through video platforms or telephone; technical testing, to evaluate the knowledge and abilities of the applicants against the specific technical/functional skills; language proficiency tests, etc. The information pages of the FAO Handbook related to professional recruitment were also updated to provide additional documentation to internal stakeholders, putting at their disposal all the information needed about process requirements and guidelines.

7. As described in the Audit report, the use of Generic Job Profiles (GJPs) ensures standardization and consistency of job descriptions and Vacancy Announcements. The use of GJPs was strongly supported by a JIU review² as a means of ensuring compliance with established International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) standards, increasing the applicant pool, speeding up the process and reducing administrative costs. Therefore, the Organization reviewed the library of Generic Job Profiles to update them as needed and to create additional profiles in line with the requests of the technical offices.

8. Guidelines to describe the guiding principles and procedures to be followed for the use of the Professional Employment Roster were prepared, with the objective to obtain and ensure an optimal, fair, transparent and consistent usage of this recruitment instrument. The Guidelines provide detailed procedures to be followed by all stakeholders involved in the process, to guarantee the selection of the most suitable candidates, ensuring that new recruits support the work of the Organization, reinforce its technical capacity and its ability to deliver on its programmes.

9. Great efforts are directed in widening the scope of reference checks for prospective staff members. In particular, FAO defined procedures to ensure that pre-employment checks are conducted in a thorough, systematic and timely manner and include a combination of different types of checks (Educational checks, Employment records checks, Competency-based reference checks, Character or personality checks, Disciplinary record checks, Security checks). In addition, the Organization is evaluating the possibility to use a customizable automated reference check service from an external provider that will enable FAO to streamline the reference check procedures for all employee categories and create a comprehensive database of reference checks undertaken, avoiding duplication of work and maintaining reliable records.

10. To strengthen the reference checks for candidates to professional positions, the Organization created a dedicated team with staff from OHR and SSC to immediately implement the revised reference check process, in alignment with the Audit recommendation. Currently, this process is applied to candidates for professional and general service staff positions. In addition, the use of an automated reference check service will guarantee a sustainable reference check process implemented for all candidates for employment with FAO. The full implementation of this solution is under way finalizing the required risk assessments and procurement reviews.

b) Associate Professional Officers Programme

11. The Organization continues to collaborate with donor partners through the Associate Professional Officers (APO) Programme to offer a structured learning experience to nationals from

² JIU/NOTE/2012/2 - Staff recruitment in United Nations system organizations: a comparative analysis and benchmarking framework. The recruitment process

different countries through exposure to international activities, while enabling them to apply their technical specialization under the supervision of an experienced FAO staff member.

12. As of February 2019, FAO has 31 APOs on board funded by 14 donor partners. In addition, the Organization is in the process of recruiting eight APOs funded from the China Scholarship Council, three from Germany and one from Japan.

13. Efforts are underway to align APO assignments with areas where the Organization requires increased technical capacity in different duty stations. This will allow young professionals to be exposed to FAO's main programmes and projects, and will strengthen retention efforts, thanks to alignment of the APO areas of expertise with the priorities of the Organization.

c) Junior Professional Officers Programme

14. The Junior Professional Officers Programme (JPP) is a centrally coordinated and structured programme involving a streamlined recruitment process, which enables the Organization to recruit young, motivated and talented professionals on a fixed-term basis and benefit from their competencies and knowledge from the duration of the assignment. The programme assists FAO in rejuvenating its workforce through the establishment of a pipeline of young professionals suitable for future employment.

15. In December 2018, three Calls for expression of interest for Junior Professional Officers were issued to attract young talents from specific regions. The Calls were issued for the Asia and the Pacific region, the Gulf region, the Latin America and the Caribbean region. The Organization increased outreach efforts to promote the Calls in the different regions, in close collaboration with regional and sub-regional FAO offices.

16. The Calls or Expression of Interest successfully attracted a wide-range of candidates: 2 474 applications, 1 263 from male candidates, 1 211 from female candidates and 201 from applicants that are nationals of non and under-represented countries. The Organization is currently finalizing the interview processes to create a solid pipeline of highly qualified candidates and to fill other JPO positions, as soon as they become vacant, saving time and resources.

d) General Service recruitment

17. Since 2015, the recruitment of General Service Staff in Headquarters and in Regional Offices is carried out through Global Calls. This allows FAO to recruit highly qualified candidates, with diverse backgrounds, from a global marketplace, fit for a UN-system international organization like FAO. Through Global Calls, applications from internal and external candidates are received and, at the end of different selection phases, the qualified candidates are included in the GS rosters. These procedures have resulted in a much quicker selection process and a considerably reduced recruitment time. In addition, this competitive process results in greater transparency, leading to the appointment of highly qualified candidates and a diversified workforce.

18. The recent Global Calls for headquarters and the Regional Offices, with closing date of 31 January 2019, will enable the Organization to have new GS Rosters. Qualified candidates found through the Calls will be placed on 2019 Rosters which will enlarge the pool already established in 2018. In the Global call launched for headquarters in 2019, the Organization received 71% of applications from external applicants from 117 Nationalities, confirming the successful outcome of the approach in increasing the geographic diversification in the GS recruitment.

e) Geographic Mobility Programme

19. The FAO geographic mobility programme is now entering its sixth year and has become part of the Organization's corporate culture. This Programme was introduced in 2014 as a mandatory process for professional staff members (P-1 to D-1 level) recruited on positions funded by the Regular

Programme. The main aim of the Programme is to share knowledge and experience across the Organization, to mobilize and retain a dynamic, adaptable and global workforce that will effectively meet current and future mandates, and evolving operational needs, in particular between Headquarters and Decentralized Offices. In addition, it aims to provide opportunities for varied experience, career development and professional advancement. To ensure that the Organization has an adaptable, global, multi-skilled and versatile workforce, the Geographic Mobility Programme has a target of 75 mobility transfers per biennium.

20. Since 2014, the number of mobility transfers increased from 22 in 2014 to 51 in 2018, as shown in Table 1. It should be noted that the number of mobility transfers approved in 2016-17 was 104 and 108 in 2018-19. In certain cases, some mobility transfers were not implemented due to operational reasons or due to specific individual reasons of the staff members concerned.

Table 1 Number of effective mobility transfers per year

Year	Number of mobility transfers
2014	22
2015	34
2016	43
2017	49
2018	51

21. Staff members transferred under the FAO mobility programme cover different areas of technical expertise required in the Organization, both in Headquarters and Decentralized Offices. Table 2 below shows the number of staff involved in the programme broken down by technical area.

Table 1 Mobility transfers per technical area since 2014

Technical department	Number of transfers
AG	29
DDN/CB	12
DDP (including TC, DPS and SP teams)	35
ES	32
FI	20
FO	13
APEX offices	23
DDO (including OSD, CIO, CS)	35

22. The mobility transfers between Headquarters and Regional Offices allows the Organization to share knowledge and to become truly “One FAO”. During 2016-18, the total number of staff transferred to RAF was 20, while 14 left RAF to other duty stations. These numbers are 28 incoming - 9 outgoing for REU, 18 in and 9 out for RLC, 8 in and 6 out for RNE, and 23 in and 10 out for RAP, thus resulting in strengthened technical capacity in decentralized offices.

23. In order to gauge the impact of the programme as a whole throughout the Organization, OHR organized a set of interviews in October 2018 with senior management, i.e. the Deputy Directors-General in Headquarters and Assistant Directors-General in Headquarters and in the Regional Offices. Interviews were carried out to collect experience gained with past mobility exercises, challenges faced and suggestions for improvements to the programme. All managers agreed that the mobility programme was very important and essential for the full delivery of FAO’s objectives and mandate, and identified the following challenges:

- Timelines to identify staff for mobility
- Identification of matching skills, grades and languages of proposed staff with available vacant positions;
- More clarity in eligibility criteria and transfer targets;
- Increased communication between the HQ departments and the regional offices;
- Incentives for staff member to go on mobility;
- Availability of vacant positions in the decentralized offices;
- Need for awareness raising

24. Measures to address these challenges were already implemented in the 2019 exercise (involving 43 transfers) as follows:

- a) Timelines for the mobility programme. As the mobility exercise is an annual activity, the different dates for each step of the process, including identification of staff for mobility, will be planned with a regular yearly calendar, so managers and staff are aware of the timeline and can plan accordingly.
- b) Eligibility criteria and transfer targets set for each department: as of the 2019 exercise, greater flexibility was exercised in identifying staff for mobility and volunteers were actively encouraged. Under particular circumstances, staff members at the beginning of their careers with FAO could also be given the opportunity to be part of the programme in order to widen the pool of staff available for mobility transfer.
- c) Communication between the Headquarters departments and the Regional Offices: with support of the Deputy Director-General, Operations, better communication took place between the HQ departments and the Regional Offices with regard to the mobility proposals. For future mobility exercises, a needs assessment will be undertaken at the regional level so that capacity gaps can be evaluated and addressed at the start of the process. The Organization will endeavour to reinforce this through its integrated workforce management plan activities.
- d) Awareness-raising: more knowledge regarding the work of Decentralized Offices is required because many staff who transfer to these offices sometimes do not have sufficient knowledge of the type of work done at regional level and the senior managers consider that some type of training/induction would be highly beneficial. In this regard, the possibility of developing an induction e-learning course on the mobility process, the work of Decentralized Offices, working with Member States, etc. is currently being examined.

25. The Organization is making continuous efforts to consolidate the mobility programme and embed it in the organizational culture in order to support a more effective delivery of the work.

f) Professional Vacancy status

26. The Organization continues to consider it essential that a certain degree of flexibility in the vacancy rate for professional positions is maintained in order that the implementation of the Programme of Work and Budget 2018-19 can be adapted in a dynamic manner to new circumstances and emerging priorities.

27. It is important to note that, while maintaining flexibility in professional vacancy rates, the Organization continues to pay careful attention to ensure that sensitive, critical and essential positions are filled.

28. The Organization is maintaining the vacancy rate of professional position below 15% not only at corporate level, but also in each department and regional office. These targets are met through an effective workforce planning which takes into account forecasted vacancies due to retirement of incumbents or resignations/transfers.

29. As at 15 February 2019, the projected corporate vacancy rate is 14.8%, in Headquarters is 14.1% and in the Decentralized Offices is 15.8%, as shown in Table 3. This takes into account all selection processes currently in the final phases of recruitment.

Table 3 Projected Professional Vacancy Rates (February 2019)

	Posts PWB 2018-19	Total posts occupied	Total Vacant Posts	Vacancy Rate
Total Headquarters	870	747	123	14.1%
Total Decentralized Offices (excluding FAOR)	259	218	41	15.8%
Total Decentralized Offices (including FAOR)	323	270	53	16.4%
Total	1193	1017	176	14.8%

g) Geographical Balance of Consultants

30. In line with the requests from the Governing Bodies³, the Organization continued its efforts to improve the geographical balance of consultants for more effective delivery of programmes and activities, while retaining merit as the primordial criterion for recruitment. In this respect, the Organization has been concentrating efforts in fully implementing the competitive selection process introduced in August 2017, in strengthening the use of technical rosters, reinforcing the outreach activities and monitoring on a regular basis the situation at corporate and at departmental/regional office level.

31. In line with the recommendations outlined in the Review of Individual Consultancies in the United Nations System report by the Joint Inspection Unit⁴ and an internal audit report, a mandatory competitive selection process for consultants was introduced in August 2017. The Organization transformed its selection procedures for consultants, from being non-competitive and non-transparent to being structured, global and competitive. FAO is currently one of the few UN agency that issues vacancy announcements for all consultancy assignments, thereby providing external candidates with an opportunity to compete for jobs in the Organization. The revised selection process reinforced merit-based criteria in the selection and hiring of consultants.

32. Thanks to the open and global selection process and renewed outreach efforts, the Organization receives many more applications from qualified individuals, which contributes to the creation of larger rosters of qualified candidates. In this regards, it should be noted that to improve the geographical balance of consultants efforts need to be done to improve the geographical balance of candidates in the rosters. Rosters are an important element for improving geographic diversity, as it provides managers with a potentially large pool of qualified candidates for appointments. This could be achieved through various methods, including planning consultancy needs well in advance to expand the consultancy pool and exploring ways to attract candidates from all countries. At roster level, improvements in the last period have been satisfactory, showing a constant and substantial increase of countries represented, as indicated in Table 4. From October 2017 to February 2019, the number of countries represented in the rosters increased from 54 to 176.

³ CL 158/REP, para 12 k) and CL 159/REP, para 13 h)

⁴ JIU/REP/2012/5. <http://undocs.org/JIU/REP/2012/5>

Table 4 Trends of rosters for consultants in Taleo

	Oct-17	Dec-17	Feb-18	Apr-18	Jun-18	Aug-18	Oct-18	Dec-18	Jan-19
N. of Vacancy Announcements	0	113	184	249	143	31	97	27	51
N. of rosters	65	79	87	87	88	90	90	92	93
N. of candidates included in the rosters	102	425	1720	2728	2648	2721	2774	3917	3934
N. of countries represented in the rosters	54	93	149	150	149	150	150	176	176
% of female candidates in the rosters	47%	52%	50%	49%	49 %	49%	52%	48%	48%
N. of consultants (GF) hired	1218	971	713	691	676	472	615	380	436
N. of nationalities of hired consultants (GF)	123	125	112	108	109	101	106	92	96
% of female candidates hired as consultants (GF)	47%	49%	53%	54%	54%	54%	56%	56%	57%

33. In particular, the Organization focused its efforts in attracting more qualified candidates and enriching the pool of potential consultants in each technical roster. Substantial improvements in the geographic balance of each organizational rosters have been achieved. As shown in Table 5, the number of countries represented in each departmental roster increased during the period May 2018 to February 2019. These improvements demonstrate the efforts and commitment of hiring units that are preparing the basis for a geographic balance of hired consultants.

Table 2 Data on rosters of consultants and consultants hired as at 25 January 2019

Departments	Number of Candidates in the roster	Number of Countries represented in the roster	Number of Consultants (RP) hired	Number of Countries (RP) represented
APEX	281	79	63	32
DDO	222	61	53	27
DDP	842	114	100	38
ES	656	92	69	28
AG	365	86	16	9
CB	289	58	17	15
FI	243	58	22	18
FO	242	60	14	11
RAF	210	62	12	12
RAP	225	73	17	14
REU	164	56	23	17
RLC	90	32	17	14
RNE	98	42	12	9
Total	3934*	176	435	96

* Some candidates are included in more than one roster.

34. The increased number of potential consultants, from such a high number of nationalities, results in greater possibilities for decentralized offices to hire expertise locally available with knowledge of the region and/or countries. Due consideration is given to recruitment of consultants that are nationals of the regions, particularly when the knowledge of the local work environment is fundamental, notably for South-South cooperation. Table 6 shows the positive trends in maintaining or increasing the percentage of consultants working in regions for which they are nationals, in particular in RAF and RNE. Additional efforts are needed in expanding the rosters of consultants to include nationals of the region in RAP.

Table 6 Percentage of consultants funded by Regular Programme working in the Regional Offices (Jan)

		RAF	RAP	REU	RLC	RNE
As at 25 January 2018	Total Consultants	19	31	23	21	23
	From the region	11	14	21	17	7
	% From the region	58%	45%	91%	81%	30%
As at 25 January 2019	Total Consultants	12	17	23	17	12
	From the region	11	4	18	12	7
	% From the region	92%	24%	78%	71%	58%

35. As shown in Table 7, there is a balanced distribution of technical competencies in the rosters in the three categories of expertise (A- senior, B-intermediate and C-junior).

Table 7 Breakdown of consultant rosters as of 1 February 2019

Technical Competency	Consultant Categories			Grand Total
	A	B	C	
Agriculture experts	167	331	141	639
Environment experts	68	212	166	446
Fishery experts	78	106	97	281
Forestry experts	49	160	65	274
Social science experts	15	104	102	221
Nutrition experts	42	51	28	121
Economists	8	62	53	123
Statisticians	26	72	41	139
Management support specialists	317	919	454	1690
Grand Total	770	2017	1147	3934

36. Periodic reports on departmental and regional rosters of consultants and hired consultants are issued allowing a better monitoring of the geographic balance by hiring units. This monitoring process has been key to ensure a wider dissemination of vacancy announcements, more opportunities for nationals of member nations to be interviewed and, as a consequence, richer and geographically balanced rosters. At the same time, hiring units receive information on the status of their geographic balance of consultants and, if appropriate, are encouraged to make additional efforts to improve it.

37. The actions implemented have produced tangible results. Table 8 presents the changes in the share of top nationalities since January 2016. As it can be noted, the share of consultants funded by the regular programme for the top 5 or 10 nationalities decreased considerably, as a result of the measures introduced.

Table 8 Share of the top nationalities of origin of consultants (COF.REG)

	25-Jan -16	25-Jan-17	25-Jan-18	25-Jan19
Regular Programme				
Countries represented	96	110	111	96
Share of top 5 nationalities (%)	52.53%	51.19%	49.55%	37.39%
Share of top 10 nationalities (%)	64.32%	62.88%	59.79%	51.15%
Total	653	881	674	436

38. Regarding cost implications, data in the tables below show an overall decrease in monthly honorarium and living allowances associated with the decrease in the number of consultants hired. Total monthly expenditures for honorarium decreased from about USD 4.2 million in January 2018, to USD 2.7 million in January 2019. Average monthly cost per consultant increased slightly from USD 6 662 to USD 6 800, or 2%, due to inflation.

39. Overall, monthly expenditures for living allowances decreased too, from USD 203 013 in January 2018 to USD 116 726 in January 2019. The number of consultants receiving living allowance changed from 215 in January 2018 to 132 on January 2019. The average monthly living allowance for consultant decreased from USD 944 in January 2018 to USD 884 in January 2019 (-6%).

Table 9 Cost of consultants (monthly honorarium and living allowance) funded through General Fund as of 15 January 2018 and 2019

	15 January 2018			15 January 2019			Change in average
	Number	Total honorarium per month (USD)	Average per person per month (USD)	Number	Total honorarium per month (USD)	Average per person per month (USD)	(%)
HQ	508	3,339,240	6,573	319	2,100,160	6,584	0%
RAF	18	118,316	6,573	11	84,458	7,678	17%
RAP	31	256,410	8,271	18	161,040	8,947	8%
RLC	20	119,479	5,974	15	114,451	7,630	28%
RNE	25	185,130	7,405	10	88,440	8,844	19%
REU	23	144,917	6,301	24	150,940	6,289	0%
Total	625	4,163,492	6,662	397	2,699,489	6,800	2%
	Number	Total living allowance per month (USD)	Average per person per month (USD)	Number	Total living allowance per month (USD)	Average per person per month (USD)	(%)
HQ	161	105,324	654	97	52,564	542	-17%
RAF	12	24,027	2,002	9	19,495	2,166	8%
RAP	17	31,503	1,853	4	5,446	1,362	-27%
RLC	7	11,404	1,629	9	17,852	1,984	22%
RNE	8	16,994	2,124	4	6,686	1,672	-21%
REU	10	13,761	1,376	9	14,683	1,631	19%
Total	215	203,013	944	132	116,726	884	-6%

40. The geographic balance of consultants has improved considerably. However, further improvements will be achieved once the corporate culture will assimilate the concept and benefits emerging from a more diverse workforce, with consultants with knowledge of the regions of their deployment.

h) Internship, Volunteer and Fellow Programmes

41. Since the revamp of the FAO Global Internship, Volunteers and Fellows (IVF) Programme in 2017, FAO continued to diversify the type of participants, which now come from non- and under-represented member countries, indigenous communities and from the Global South. The Programme is being leveraged as an inclusive platform to promote youth engagements to support the Organization's work to realize a Zero Hunger world. It continues to expand the participation opportunities in Decentralized Offices, supporting local and regional capacity building.

42. In 2018, 348 participants from 85 member countries were assigned to 55 duty stations; 75 participants (22 %) were from non- and under-represented member countries, 10 participants came from indigenous communities and 66% were female. 31% were assigned to Decentralized Offices.

43. In 2018, 13 new sponsorship agreements were signed with governments, academic institutions, civil society and private sector entities, including several from under-represented countries. The majority of the new funding partners are from East Asia and Europe. As a result, 21% of the newly hired interns/volunteers/fellows were externally sponsored.

44. With the support of the FAOR networks and Liaison Offices, the Organization will continue to strengthen the outreach efforts to increase the number of participants, with a focus on improving the geographic and gender balance. New collaborations are being formalized with IFAD and UNHCR to jointly mobilize larger numbers of indigenous youth to benefit from the IVF Programme. With the support of the relevant member countries, more effective global outreach campaigns is being rolled out in 2019.

Alignment of HR management to the strategic and programmatic needs of the Organization

a) Capacity development and targeted learning strategy

45. The Organization is implementing a learning strategy based on clear identification of staff learning needs and appropriate selection of training modalities. To address these learning needs, FAO is focusing its capacity building efforts in five main areas:

- Administrative training, to reinforce knowledge of FAO's internal systems and procedures and improve the operational capacity of staff in carrying out their duties;
- Results-based management (RBM), covering training related to RBM, management for results and strategic framework;
- Technical training, to maintain the technical competencies of staff and refresh their knowledge based on current trends;
- Language training, to improve the multilingual capacities of staff in the FAO languages; and
- Personal Development, to improve management and leadership capabilities and soft skills, and to provide practical guides on career development.

46. Over 2018, and following internal audit recommendations, the Organization has focused its efforts on the identification, development and delivery of specific training to strengthen the use of functionalities in GRMS including a blended online training on NSHR recruitment processes and an e-learning course on Accounts Payable. To increase understanding of governance related areas, the Organization recently released two online courses, one on prevention of fraud and corruption and another one on internal controls.

47. In line with FAO's zero-tolerance policy towards harassment in any of its forms, the Organization has focused on raising awareness regarding the policies on prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority including the release of a short video and a more comprehensive e-learning course named "Working Harmoniously Together", aligned with the course of the UN Secretariat. In addition, a video on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse was finalized and made available to all FAO employees.

48. To further enhance management and leadership skills, the Organization offers two virtual interactive blended learning programs. The first program is targeted to senior managers P5 and above and combines executive coaching with online learning modules. 76 managers completed the training since its launch in 2017. The second program aims to strengthen the knowledge and skills of supervisors in the P2-P4 and NPO grades. Since 2014, 319 staff have completed the training.

49. To strengthen soft skills, the Organization introduced new courseware through its online learning module in you@fao. The Organization also focused attention on analysing specific learning needs and delivering tailored in-house workshops on presentation skills, effective report writing, customer service, and facilitation and negotiation skills through a new pool of external providers.

50. The Organization is also ensuring the promotion of multilingualism in the work environment through the delivery of online language courses targeted to staff based in duty stations with limited access to language training.

51. As shown in table 10, the Organization is reinforcing the offers of online training and promoting the use of this cost effective modality. This approach allows the Organization to reach all employees in the various duty stations and to avoid replicating costs each year for the same course. Since 2015, there has been a steady increase in the use of online training doubling from 29% of the total training undertaken to 58% in 2017.

52. There has been a significant increase of online training sessions from 4 687 in 2017 to 14 036 in 2018, due in part to the fact that the Organization introduced four mandatory online trainings on the prevention of harassment, sexual harassment and abuse of authority, gender equality, staff security (BSAFE) and the prevention of fraud and other corrupt practices.

Table 10 Training per area and modality attended by staff in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018

		2015		2016		2017		2018	
		P	GS	P	GS	P	GS	P	GS
Online	Admin/RBM/Technical Training	743	683	1337	1160	2026	1114	6751	5248
	Language Course	-	-	38	7	19	0	39	11
	Self-development course	386	558	767	983	675	853	867	1120
In House	Admin/RBM/Technical Training	1567	1134	1453	648	942	703	564	164
	Language Course	707	534	465	527	585	507	539	529
	Self-development course	1385	510	425	379	330	329	334	174

53. The Organization is also developing training in the emerging priority areas to support FAO staff in increasing their technical knowledge and competencies, following the requests arising from stakeholders. In 2018, the Organization delivered strategic media skills training to 43 FAO spokespersons in strategic teams aimed at strengthening communications on priority themes including zero hunger.

b) Relations with Staff Representative Bodies (SRBs)

54. The Organization maintains a continuous and substantive engagement with the Staff Representative Bodies – Association of Professionals in FAO (AP-in-FAO) and the Union of General

Service Staff (UGSS) regarding consultation on all issues affecting conditions of service of staff. Formal meetings take place through the Staff Management Consultative Committee (SMCC). The Committee is the forum for dialogue and consultation between Management and SRBs on matters pertaining to terms and conditions of employment and general welfare of staff and to provide recommendations and advice to Senior Management.

55. In 2018, ten meetings of the SMCC were held. For 2019, a workplan of items for consultation has been discussed and agreed between the SRBs and management at the first meeting of the year, with the objective of using it as a roadmap and consequently focusing the consultation process towards priority items. This workplan forms the basis of the consultation process and the main topics included are: Commissary matters, JAC/MC and Medical Insurance, Geographic Mobility Programme, Rental Subsidy in the decentralized offices, Staff Satisfaction survey and reinforced flexible working arrangements. Regular meetings of the SMCC have created the opportunity for an open forum at which dialogue and discussion take place and, together with bilateral meetings, these have formed a pivotal and successful joint staff management mechanism which has contributed to the successful implementation of new initiatives and improvements/updates to procedures.

Reflection of FAO's nature as a UN system specialized agency

a) Implement measures and track progress in achieving corporate geographic representation targets

56. In December 2018, the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed the inclusion of the workforce diversity component in the human resources management framework, following the work undertaken by the International Civil Service Commission regarding the updated human resources management framework⁵. The report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 2018 states: Staff composition throughout the organizations of the United Nations common system should reflect a workforce that is diverse from a variety of perspectives (including equitable geographical distribution and gender balance, as well as cultural, generational and multilingual perspectives and the perspectives of persons with disabilities), and this diversity should be embraced in decision-making to strengthen the performance of the organizations.⁶

57. In taking decisions on recruitment, the Organisation has always followed the criterion of merit to ensure the selection of the best qualified candidates; at the same time, in line with guidance provided by the Governing Bodies, continues to give due attention to ensure an equitable geographic representation of member countries. In appointing the staff, and subject to the paramount importance of securing the highest standards of efficiency and of technical competence, the Organization gives priority to recruiting personnel on as wide a geographical basis as is possible, making particular efforts to recruit candidates from non- and under-represented countries.

58. Thanks to its constant efforts, the Organization reduced to a considerable extent the number of non-, under- and over-represented countries in the Secretariat, thus increasing the number of equitably represented countries. Many countries that were non- and under-represented, such as Belize, Brunei, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Laos, Libya, Namibia, Saint Kitts & Nevis, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Timor Leste, Tuvalu, are becoming equitably represented. Following the completion of the new recruitments, the percentage of non-represented countries is 6%, of under-represented countries is 4%, and of equitably represented countries 88%.

59. Efforts in this respect continue to be guided by the *Action Plan for the achievement of equitable geographic distribution and gender parity of FAO staff*⁷. At regional level, the Organization strengthened the communications with FAOR and regional HR Officers to increase the promotion of

⁵ General Assembly of the United Nations, United Nations common system, Report of the Fifth Committee, A/73/676

⁶ Annex V, Report of the International Civil Service Commission for the year 2018, A/73/30

⁷ CL160/4 Add.1

vacancy announcements and to facilitate the attraction of local candidates through ad hoc actions. Thanks to the approach used for the Calls of Junior Professional Officers, the Organization attracted a large number of applicants from non- and under-representative countries. A similar approach can be replicated for other specific recruitment campaigns.

b) Improved gender representation

60. FAO recognizes that achieving equal gender representation amongst the workforce is a fundamental goal and a necessary condition for the achievement of UN objectives. The Organization is accordingly committed to promoting gender equality in its technical work and gender parity in staffing at all levels, including in the Professional and higher levels categories.

61. The Organization bases its efforts to achieve the gender parity of staff on the principles of transparency and merit in staff recruitment and promotion, working to remove systemic and cultural barriers that perpetuate inequalities in gender representation and to improve policies and practices, which contribute to an inclusive workplace and address harassment and discrimination based on gender.

62. The Organization continues its efforts toward gender parity in the workforce. Female staff accounted for 36% in professional positions at the beginning of 2012. In February 2019, thanks to continued and expanding recruitment outreach efforts to professional institutions and universities within selected countries, this figure rose to 43%. Another notable improvement that should be observed is the increase of female staff in senior positions that accounted for 21% at the beginning of 2012; now they encumber 25% of senior positions.

63. The Organization elaborated a specific strategy to achieve gender parity, illustrated in the document *Action Plan for the achievement of equitable geographic distribution and gender parity of FAO staff*, mentioned above. On the basis of the action plan, FAO gender parity at professional level should be achieved by 2022, and for senior positions by 2024.

64. In alignment with the UN System-Wide Gender Parity Strategy, the action plan to achieve gender parity of FAO staff focuses on three key areas: Leadership and Accountability, Recruitment, Retention, Progression and Talent Management, and Enabling environment. The Organization continues its efforts to implement the Action Plan and different activities are already in place.

65. In particular, FAO introduced different measures to ensure that hiring managers are fully aware and responsible of their role in achieving gender parity, and to support them in promoting a gender-equal workplace. As for the recruitment and progression policies, FAO already allows all staff to apply for positions where they fulfil the requirements with no obstacles other than qualifications and meeting minimum criteria, in contrast to the system of other UN agencies of only allowing staff members to apply to positions one grade higher. This approach facilitates merit-based career progression in alignment with the principles of the Organization. In addition, FAO is implementing measures to eliminate unconscious bias in different steps of the selection process. For example, recruitment policies ensure the balanced composition of interview panels and the Organization is reviewing the text of the vacancy announcements to ensure gender-neutral wording.

66. As for gender parity in senior positions, the Organization is aware that it needs to increase the proportions of women leaders. As the challenge to achieve gender parity is a shared one, the Organization is collaborating with other Rome-based agencies for the creation of a shared database and pipeline of qualified female candidates, and is coordinating similar efforts with other UN entities through the CEB Human Resources Network.

67. The Organization has already endorsed the Enabling Environment Guidelines for UN System and is committed to maintain and reinforce specific measures to create a working environment that prizes diversity and flexibility, provides equal opportunities, recognizes that staff are also family and community members, and ensures a safe environment in which to work. Policies for the prevention of

harassment and abuse of authority, ethics, conflict resolution and protection against retaliation are in place and implemented, and FAO is actively involved in the CEB task force on addressing sexual harassment in the organizations of the UN system. FAO has already implemented a breastfeeding policy and introduced flexible work arrangements, such as flexible work schedules, teleworking, part-time employment, and compressed work schedules.

68. The Organization recognises that the organizational culture plays an important role to achieve and sustain gender parity. Therefore, FAO is elaborating an internal communication campaign to foster the benefits of a diverse work environment to promote an organizational culture that values diversity.

Increased efficiency in human resources (HR) processes and procedures

a) Implementation of the new recruiting platform

69. The Organization is modernizing the recruitment platform to take advantage of new functionalities available in the market and to improve the experience of applicants and future FAO employees. Following a competitive review, the product Taleo was selected for this purpose. Taleo is an application platform that provides a modern fully fledged talent sourcing, recruitment, as well as a modern case management tool supporting career transitions, from onboarding, separations and transfers of staff and non-staff human resources.

70. This new platform ensures that all applicants have complete data available, which is synchronized with FAO's core ERP platform GRMS. This integration provides an improved architecture providing enhanced compliance and controls in support of human resources policies such as enabling for the transparent selection of the most qualified candidates taking into consideration academic requirements, experience and language proficiencies. Each Vacancy Announcement is easily tracked and monitored thereby improving visibility in the processing steps, which is expected to lead in the improvement of key KPIs such as the time to hire.

71. The new technology also introduces support for a number of leading practices helping FAO's talent sourcing needs while providing access to potential applicants in three FAO languages, English, French and Spanish.

72. From October 2017, all Vacancy Announcements and related selection processes for General Service staff, National Officers, National Project Personnel (NPPs), Consultants, PSA, Interns, Volunteers, and Fellows are managed through the new recruiting platform (Taleo).

73. In February 2019, the last phase of deployment of the Taleo recruitment platform was completed, with the deployment of vacancy announcements and selection processes for International Professional positions and senior level positions through Taleo. The new recruitment platform then reached the final stage of its implementation and serves now as the only repository and recruitment platform utilised in the Organization.

b) Performance management

74. In April 2018, the Organization carried out a review of the Performance Evaluation and Management System (PEMS) to identify potential improvements to better align the system with the requirements of the Organization. The review focused on a quality analysis of the implementation of PEMS in 2016 and 2017. One of the main elements analysed was the effectiveness of the work plans, as they link the technical skills of staff to specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound tasks and outputs. The review showed that the process to elaborate the work plans effectively allows the Organization to assess the technical skills of staff based on their outputs.

75. The Organization also launched a survey aimed at obtaining feedback from staff. The PEMS survey was designed in collaboration with the Staff Representative Bodies and distributed in March

2018 to 2 683 eligible staff members. The response rate was 45%. Survey results showed that over 60% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed with the benefits of the PEMS process, and that the current PEMS policy clearly defines the process, roles, responsibilities and rating scale.

76. Based on the results from the PEMS quality review and staff survey, an action plan has been established and activities to further improve PEMS are being implemented starting with the 2019 PEMS cycle. This comprises additional training for staff and managers including the development of three online learning tools on clarifying the PEMS process, writing SMART performance objectives and giving and receiving feedback. A fixed annual timeline for all PEMS phases has been put in place starting with the 2019 PEMS planning launched on 1 December 2018. The multi-rater process has also been enhanced as managers can now select up to three direct reports to provide feedback at year-end, in addition to their other multi-rater choices. The Organization has also been reinforcing the PEMS policy and process through webinars with PEMS focal points.

77. To further strengthen performance management appraisal and compliance, the Organization is automating the Probationary Performance Appraisal Report (PPAR) for fixed-term staff members in the online performance management module in you@fao.

78. The Organization is aligning its performance appraisal and management approach to the principles and guidelines recommended by the International Civil Service Commission including options for rewards and recognition, which will be discussed further with senior management and Staff Representative Bodies.

c) Integrated workforce management plan

79. The Organization is developing an Integrated Workforce Management Plan (IWMP) in order to enable a seamless management of the diverse global workforce. The IWMP articulates six defining attributes of the desired workforce. They are in line with the FAO Competency Framework and the new UN Leadership Framework. The Plan is comprised of 10 building blocks, namely: 1) alignment of skills profiles and the workforce distribution towards the strategic priorities; 2) effective recruitment; 3) rejuvenation of the workforce; 4) performance management and staff development; 5) geographic mobility; 6) succession planning; 7) targeted talent acquisition; 8) conducive work environment; 9) real-time integrated workforce management information system; and 10) internal coordination and oversight mechanism.

80. The IWMP reflects the results of a questionnaire survey that OHR conducted in November–December 2018. This online survey targeted hiring managers and was designed to deepen the understanding of current workforce-related challenges as well as opportunities for improvements. OHR validated the survey results through the internal HR network. 68 units, including 46 decentralized offices, provided their insights, as summarized below.

- 53% of decentralized offices and 72% in headquarters responded that they have the right talent in place to implement the CPFs, Regional Initiatives and/or to achieve KPIs.
- 58% of decentralized offices and 59% in headquarters have the right mix of staff/NSHR to undertake programmatic and administrative tasks.
- 57% of decentralized offices and 85% in headquarters have a mechanism in place to plan for foreseen changes in the workforce, such as retirements, separations or reassignments.
- 41% of decentralized offices and 59% in headquarters have a mechanism in place for handover between ongoing and incoming personnel for business continuity.
- 65% of decentralized offices and 73% in headquarters are satisfied with the Geographic Mobility Programme.

81. Recognizing that this survey touched only the surface, it nonetheless indicates that there remains a significant room for improvement in the Organization's workforce management globally.

82. In intensifying targeted outreach efforts, both the Junior Professional Officers (JP) Programme and the Associate Professional Officers (APO) Programme will be expanded. Higher numbers of qualified young women and men will be mobilized from wider geographic regions, in particular from non-/under-represented member countries.

Challenges

83. While human resources management continues to improve in the Organization, a number of areas for intervention have been identified and require attention and efforts to keep moving towards achieving a modern organization with sound human resources management practices.

84. One priority is the efficient implementation of the integrated workforce plan, in alignment with the other HR activities. The Organization worked to create the basis that will support the holistic approach of the workforce plan in better connecting the workforce to the Organization's results delivery by getting the right person to the right job at the right time. The main pillars are the Geographic Mobility Programme, the revised recruitment and selection process, and the corporate targets to achieve equal gender distribution and balanced geographic representation. The implementation of the workforce plan will integrate to these pillars a structured succession plan, applying the Mandatory Age of Separation at 65, and a reinforced employer branding campaign in alignment with a revamped talent acquisition campaign.

85. The Organization is committed to continue its efforts to fully implement the remaining Audit recommendations on recruitment. The main purpose is not only to close the recommendations, but also to effectively integrate the revised procedures in the work practices, working with the different stakeholders involved in the process to ensure that all are aware of the importance of the new measures.

86. The Organization is resolute to continue implementing the activities to attract and retain talents. Particular efforts will be dedicated to attract and retain highly specialized profiles, to support the Organization in strengthening both its programme delivery and technical capacity. Therefore, the Organization is improving its outreach activities, to attract highly qualified profiles and target audiences. In parallel, the Organization will launch a Staff Satisfaction Survey in the second part of 2019, to measure the level of engagement, identify areas for improvement and elaborate specific retention measures.

87. Another key priority is the introduction of a thorough performance evaluation methodology. The revised methodology will include the conditions for a rewards and recognition policy and the formalization of fair methods to manage underperformance. These efforts are in line with the Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly on 24 December 2017⁸.

⁸ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 24 December 2017, A/RES/72/255