



COMMUNICATION 18/19

Joint statement delivered by FICSA on behalf of the three Federations on ICSC agenda item 6: review of the GS Salary Survey Methodology

To: Chairs, Member Associations/Unions
Members of the Executive Committee
Chairs, Members with Associate Status
Chairs, Associations with Consultative Status
Presidents, Federations with Observer Status
Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Standing Committees

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From: Imed Zabaar IAEA SA, and Pilar Vidal, PAHO WHO SA, Members for Compensation Issues

Mr Chair,

FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA welcomed the opportunity to participate in the working group on the review of the General Service salary survey methodologies. We appreciated the spirit of open dialogue that prevailed among all the members of the working group during the discussions. At this time we would wish to comment on five related matters: use of external data; calculation of benefits; national civil services; secondary scales; and roles and responsibilities.

In regard to the use of external data, FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA note that, as in the case of the previous review conducted from 2009 to 2011, none of the contacted vendors proved able to obtain data in accordance with the requirements of the ICSC methodology. Consequently, off-the-shelf data were taken into consideration. Even though many of the criteria had to be relaxed in order to accommodate the use of such data, the data provided showed minimal or no coverage of public/non-profit sectors. Moreover, the data selected for demonstration purposes was overwhelmingly focused on specific subsectors (manufacturing, transport and wholesale) as distinct from those normally surveyed (finance, banking, insurance, etc.). Furthermore, the need for confidentiality and the high level of data aggregation did not permit quality control or verification of the sources of the data provided, particularly in countries where vendors sub-contract the collection of data to local partners.

Given the insufficient quality of the data provided and the methodologies applied by the two vendors, FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA are convinced that on account of the huge methodological divergence, the data cannot be used to pilot the use of external data.

Were such a pilot scheme to be considered, FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA believe that a number of prerequisites would first have to be met, including:

- Setting up a data model and identifying the exact data requirements for the survey (such as data related to staff composition, benefits and salaries);
- Defining core requirements for data quality and structure;
- Defining additional potentially practical requirements;
- Debating the vendor data collection methodology and determining whether it matches the current methodology.

Furthermore, the procedure would have to include: processing and analysing data obtained from at least three independent data sources; defining minimum criteria for accepting the results; and setting parameters for acceptable simulations. The extent to which external data could be used (both in terms of employer data and geographical coverage) would have to be discussed further.

FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA recommend that the current methodologies be reviewed with a view to facilitating the comparators' participation. For example, one could relax the criteria governing the number of employers to be retained and the calculation of benefits. As they stand, both factors discourage the participation of competitive employers or result in others being dropped from the sample, while the commuting distance also has a negative impact.

FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA consider that the quality of the data collected by the ICSC secretariat and/or the responsible agencies in cooperation with the Local Salary Survey Committees (LSSCs) is more accurate than the data provided by potential vendors. Adherence to the customary approach makes for the full participation of all stakeholders in the determination of conditions of employment for locally recruited staff.

In the light of the foregoing shortcomings and for want of information on experience with the use of external data for category V, FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA consider that any additional pilot scheme for using external data would be both inappropriate and not cost-effective.

Calculation of benefits

With the exception of the quantification of non-pensionable items and services, FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA support using the market value of benefits as a general approach to the quantification of benefits. Such an approach should be coupled with the elimination of the 75% minimum utilization ratio threshold for quantification.

Were consideration to be given to the lump-sum approach proposed, it would require analysing data on the basis of country-by-country experience.

National Civil Service (NCS)

FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA support the option of the non-mandatory use of Ministries of Foreign Affairs. Ancillary thereto would be the establishment of a threshold to contain their impact as compared to the rest of the sample.

LSSCs would be responsible for selecting and proposing a representative mainstream national civil service provider for the one-to-one comparison. The Staff federations would encourage

cooperation with national authorities and missions in order to secure appropriate participation.

Secondary scales

FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA oppose the promulgation of secondary salary scales, should survey results prove negative. In accordance with established practice in the labour market and UN practice up until 2012, the salary scales in effect immediately prior to the reference date of the salary survey should be frozen until the gap is closed either through the implementation of interim adjustments or until the following survey.

Roles and responsibilities

FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA suggest the inclusion of an agenda item on the roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders with emphasis on the vital role of the LSSCs in fostering the outreach of the surveys, dialogue, transparency and fairness during all phases of the process. FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA maintain the position that LSSCs should retain their current role, even if eventual changes in the methodology are adopted - and irrespective of the nature of those changes.

FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA request that while conducting the review, the working group should bear in mind the role of the LSSCs in ensuring fairness and transparency of the consultative process.

In conclusion, FICSA, UNISERV and CCISUA support the way forward presented in document ICSC/89/R.12 and look forward to another constructive meeting in the near future.