

## REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL SERVICE QUESTIONS AND PERMANENT TECHNICAL COMMITTEE (PTC/GSQ)

### Introduction

1. The Standing Committee on General Service Questions (GSQ - see Appendix 1 for participants) met virtually on 17 January and in person on 5 and 7 February 2023 to address its agenda. Giorgio Lalli (FAO/WFP-UGSS) served as rapporteur.

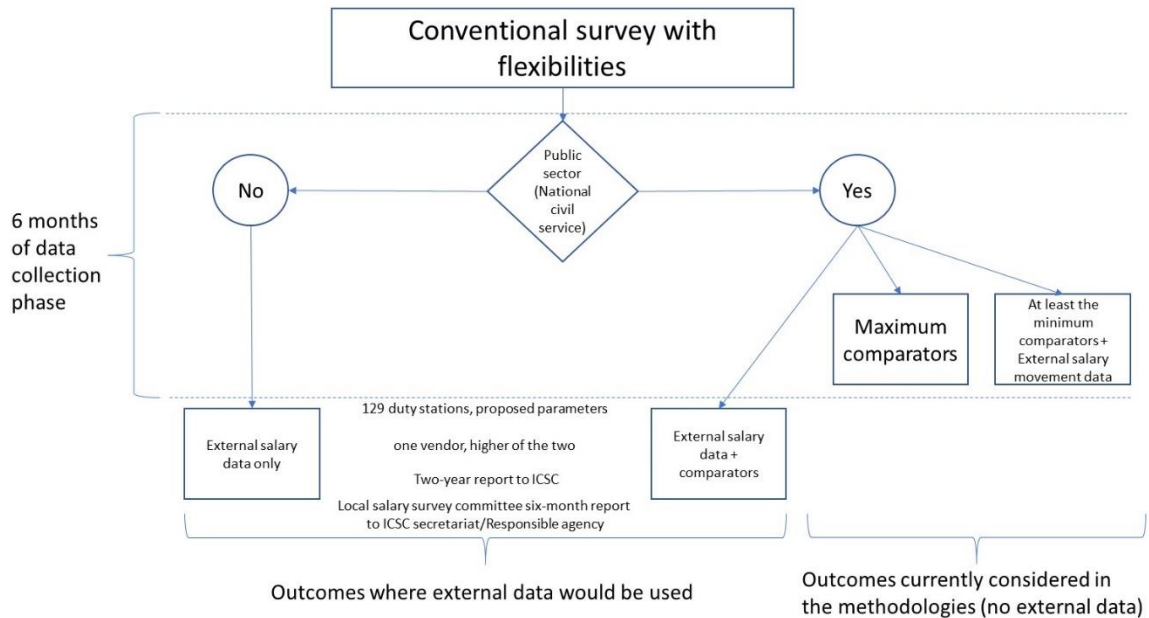
### Activities in 2022

2. Considering the [decisions of the 75th session of the FICSA Council](#), GSQ noted that their implementation was complete. As to decision FICSA/C/75/D/19, the training package on salary survey methodologies was ready to be delivered soon after the conclusion of the 76th session of the Council. To follow up decision FICSA/C/75/D/21, the GSQ core group members needed to assess the policies for recruitment of General Service (GS) staff that had been collected, to identify best practices for communication to FICSA members. It remained advisable for staff representatives to be included as early as possible in the recruitment process.

### Local salary survey methodologies

3. GSC considered a presentation on the two methodologies, delivered by Yuri Orlov, Chief of the Salaries and Allowances Division, ICSC, and Bart Willemsen, Chief Compensation and Classification Section, UN Secretariat, and discussed and adopted the report of its Permanent Technical Committee (PTC/GSQ – Appendix 2).
4. The presentation highlighted the major changes introduced during the latest review (2018–2022):
  - a. use of external salary data under certain circumstances (the Pilot Project – Fig. 1).
  - b. revised requirements for the retention of employers.
  - c. additional method of interim adjustment available to all duty stations.
  - d. discontinuation of dual scales, with phasing out of any existing one;
- a. limitation of grandfathering of dependency allowances to one year from the next survey.

- b. standardization of the number of longevity steps (one step unless local practice warrants additional steps).
5. The main features of Methodology I were:
- a. applicable to the eight HQ duty stations: New York, Montreal, London, Paris, Madrid, Geneva, Rome, and Vienna.
  - b. implementation of the Flemming principle to ensure that UN salaries are among the best in the local labour market.
  - c. retention of the best 20 employers.
  - d. reduced size of comparators.
  - e. comparison of average salaries.
  - f. 75th percentile ranking of data on a job-by-job basis; and
  - g. 10% weight applied to the national civil service employer.
6. The main feature of Methodology II were:
- a. availability of traditional surveys for all duty stations.
  - b. new indicators for the categorization of duty stations:
    - Category I: 15 employers (e.g., Beijing, Copenhagen, Mexico City, Brussels, New Delhi)
    - Category II: 10 employers (e.g., Sofia, Brazil, Nigeria)
    - Category III: 7 employers (e.g., Luanda, Tirana, Kathmandu)
    - Category IV: 5 employers (e.g. N'Djamena, Port-au-Prince, Mbabane, Podgorica)
    - Category V: 3 employers (e.g., Stockholm, Belmopan, Marshall Islands) (Duty stations fall into Category V when the number of locally recruited staff members is less than 20, irrespective of the development of the local labour market.).
  - c. revised requirements for the retention of employers
7. The Pilot Project as shown in the diagram below will be conducted at all methodology I and II locations where external salary data from two selected vendors are available based on the following four outcomes:
- a. external salary data only: data from the public sector cannot be secured.
  - b. external salary data plus comparator data: data from the public sector have been secured, and data from the private sector are waived or not at all data is secured within six months of the start of data collection.
  - c. comparator data only; and
  - d. when the minimum number of comparators is reached but not the required number, the missing comparators are replaced by external data on salary movement.



8. The PTC/GSQ Coordinator shared the schedule of the 2023 salary surveys for HQ duty stations (see Appendix 2), which was available on a new website dedicated to [Salaries and Allowances for Staff Members in the Locally Recruited Categories in the United Nations Common System](#), along with an updated schedule of surveys for all duty stations, an online training tool, and other useful resources to support members of local salary survey committees (LSSCs).
9. FICSA members organizations needed to invest in capacity building and, in particular, to start preparing for their salary surveys as early as possible; as much as one year in advance. That included identifying LSSC members and starting preparation for training at least a year before the date of the salary survey, when possible. To be able to conduct the survey according to conventional ICSC methodology, the LSSC would have to compile a list of good comparators well in advance of the data collection date.
10. As decided at the 75th FICSA Council session, FICSA would start a training-the-trainer programme in spring 2023 to assist member organizations in in that task. Trainers would be needed to conduct training in various languages (English, French, Spanish and Arabic). FICSA had allocated funds for the training-of-trainers plan in 2021. The host organization would be responsible for all associated costs, however, including travel-related expenses and DSA for each trainer.
11. Several participants requested FICSA training in the GSQ meetings, for reasons including their duty station's having been moved to a new methodology and the lack of trained LSSC members. In addition, a representative asked for training to assist in efforts to cope with the current unstable situation in Egypt; an ICSC representative indicated that that could be provided early in 2024. The Chair concluded the discussion by noting that the train-the-trainers programme would enable FICSA to have a wider number of trainers in various languages to respond to requests for training on salary survey methodologies.
12. GSQ adopted PTC/GSQ's recommendations on FICSA's train-the-trainers programme.

## Recommendations

- The GSQ/PTC recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should respond to members' requests for training on salary survey methodologies by ensuring the availability of trainers in accordance with the guidelines of the FICSA Training Fund.
- The GSQ/PTC recommended that FICSA members interested in becoming trainers should send brief resumés as soon as possible to the FICSA Secretariat for review and consideration by the ExCom.

## Joint session with Standing Committee on Conditions of Service in the Field (FIELD)

13. GSQ and FIELD met in a joint session to consider two important issues:
  - the effects the context of the current economic turndown and high inflation on the remuneration of locally recruited staff in field duty stations, who were paid in non-hard currencies; and
  - representation of staff in non-HQ duty stations by federations of UN Staff Associations (FUNSAs).
14. As to the former, the joint session discussed the provisions in the new methodology II to establish salary scales in US dollars based on the prevailing local competitors used for the salary surveys. Further, it was explained that the denomination of the scale depended on which currency comparators denominated their scale in the country concerned. As to the latter, the joint session discussed the degree to which FUNSAs were formally recognized by UN resident coordinators' offices, and the need for FUNSAs to be strengthened by reviewing the current statutes to ensure their operational capacity and continued relevance.

## Recommendation

- **The FICSA Executive Committee and regional representatives, in a view to strengthen the role of the Federations of UN Staff Associations (FUNSA), should review their current model statutes and present a draft revision for approval to the 77th session of the FICSA Council.**

## Latest updates on GSQ-related topics

15. GSQ decided to review the documents shared on selection and recruitment practices in order to identify best practices and disseminate the results.

## Nomination of officers and core group members

16. The Standing Committee for GSQ nominated:
  - Silvia Mariangeloni (FAO/WFP-UGSS) as Chair
  - Kay Miller (WHO/EURO), Annarita Palumbo (UGSS), Erik Glass (IAEA), Glenda Moreira Lopez (PAHO) and Mina Nagy (WHO/EMRO) as Vice-Chairs
  - Imed Zabaar (IAEA) as coordinator of PTC/GSQ.

All participants in its meetings would be included as core group members.

## Appendix 1. Participants

GSQ/PTC Coordinator

Imed Zabaar (IAEA)

Rapporteur

Andrew Brown (ICAO)

FICSA General Secretary

Cosimo Melpignano (UNGSC)

ICSC

Yuri Orlov

OHRM

Bart Willemsen

### Staff association/union

FAO/WFP-UGSS

Enzo Giorgio Lalli, Silvia Mariangeloni, Susan Murray

Mark Brown, Dina Franchi, Luca Vecchia

IAEA

Erik Glass

ICAO

Andrew Brown

IMO

Shereen Barry, Folake Odulana, Ivana Goode

ITC/ILO

Cristina Pierini, Zakaria El Ghormli

PAHO/WHO

Glenda Moreira Lopez

UNESCO

Lina Oweis, Federica Delconte

UNFCCC

Marjorie Manduli, Mary Jean Abrazado, Sarah Klinghammer

UNGSC

Salvatore Brunori, Annarita Palumbo, Alessandra Marcorio

UNIDO

Steve Eales

UPU

Stephane Vuillemin, Silvia Baratech

WHO/EMRO

Mina Nagy

WHO/EURO

Kay Miller

WHO/GSC

Aizat Khalid

WHO/HQ

Neddy Mafunga, Jerome Zanga Foe

WHO/SEARO

Ritesh Singh

### Members with Consultative Status

EBRD

Ishssane Iraqi

## Appendix 2. Report of the Permanent Technical Committee for General Service Questions

- Following a briefing by ICSC, OHRM (Office of Human Resources Management) and the FICSA ExCom Member for Compensation Issues on the revised methodologies for surveys of the best prevailing conditions of employment on 5 February 2023, the permanent technical Committee on General Services Questions (PTC/GSQ) met to discuss its agenda; Andrew Brown (ICAO) was elected as rapporteur.

### Schedule of 2023 surveys

- After approving the revised methodologies, the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) initiated consultations about the schedule of the next round of surveys with executive heads of headquarters duty stations. Table 1 shows the final schedule approved by ICSC.

**Table 1. Schedule of Methodology I surveys during the eighth round of surveys**

<i>Duty station</i>	<i>Notification to executive heads</i>	<i>Pre-survey consultations</i>	<i>Pre-survey document to Chair</i>	<i>Survey date</i>	<i>End of data collection phase</i>	<i>Survey review</i>
Rome	January 2023	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	November 2023	May 2024	Summer 2024
Montreal	June 2023	Autumn 2023	Winter 2023 - 2024	April 2024	October 2024	Spring 2025
Paris	December 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	October 2024	April 2025	Summer 2025
London	July 2024	Autumn 2024	Winter 2024-2025	May 2025	November 2025	Spring 2026
New York	December 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025	October 2025	April 2026	Summer 2026
Geneva	November 2025	Winter 2025 - 2026	Spring 2026	September 2026	March 2027	Summer 2027
Madrid	January 2026	Spring 2026	Summer 2026	November 2026	May 2027	Summer 2027
Vienna	June 2026	Autumn 2026	Winter 2026 - 2027	April 2027	October 2027	Spring 2028

- Bart Willemsen, Chief, Compensation and Classification Section, UN Secretariat, who was also present in the meeting, indicated that OHRM had published a new website dedicated to [Salaries and Allowances for Staff Members in the Locally Recruited Categories in the United Nations Common System](#). It contains an updated schedule of surveys in all duty stations, an online training tool and other useful resources to support members of local salary survey committees (LSSCs).
- Immediately following the approval of the methodologies, a working group was established to update the training material in preparation for upcoming surveys. In September 2022, in collaboration with the Chief, Compensation & Classification Section, Enrique Alberto Ramirez (ICSC Secretariat) and Mauro Pace (FICSA Resource Person), the Chair of PTC/GSQ met in Vienna, at which they finalized the training material for both methodologies.

### Train-the-trainers plan

- As decided at the 75th FICSA Council session, to assist member organizations in the preparation for their upcoming salary surveys and to ensure a wider geographical representation, FICSA

would start a training-the-trainer programme be initiated in spring 2023. Members who had participated in salary surveys and had a good understanding of the ICSC methodologies were invited to express interest to be trained as trainers. Trainers would be needed to conduct training in various languages (English, French, Spanish and Arabic).

6. The Chair emphasized the need for member organizations to invest in capacity building and in particular to start preparing for their salary surveys as early as possible, as much as one year in advance. To be able to conduct the survey according to conventional ICSC methodology, the LSSC would have to compile a list of good comparators well in advance of the data collection date.
7. The ICSC representative added that training would need to be done at least six months prior to the survey date. Training would be location specific as there were up to 180 duty stations worldwide to be considered. The training sessions would also include a number of tests to ensure the readiness of the members of the LSSC.
8. Several participants requested FICSA training on salary survey methodologies for reasons including their duty station's having been moved to a new methodology and the lack of trained LSSC members. In addition, a representative asked for training to assist in efforts to cope with the current unstable situation in Egypt; ICSC indicated that that could be provided early in 2024.
9. FICSA had allocated funds for the training-of-trainers plan in 2021. The host organization would be responsible for all associated costs, however, including travel-related expenses and DSA for each trainer.
10. The Chair emphasized that the train-the-trainers programme needed to be initiated as soon as possible after the 76<sup>th</sup> FICSA Council session, and asked for volunteers to be identified and trained as trainers well in advance of upcoming round of surveys. He concluded the discussion by noting that the train-the-trainers programme would enable FICSA to have a wider number of trainers in various languages to respond to requests for training on salary survey methodologies.

#### **Recommendations**

- **The GSQ/PTC recommended that the FICSA Executive Committee should follow up on the requests for training in salary survey methodologies and ensure the availability of trainers.**
- **The GSQ/PTC recommended that potential trainers should send brief resumés as soon as possible to the FICSA Secretariat for review and consideration by the ExCom.**

#### **Any other business**

12. A representative asked what would happen if a major increase in salaries were the outcome of the use of external data and in particular if an organization could not afford the implementation of that increase.
13. In accordance with the revised methodology, the ICSC representative replied, when external salary data are used, a positive result will be implemented if it is within the range of up to three times the most recent external salary movement percentage reported by the vendor used. Any percentage of the increase not implemented at the time of the comprehensive survey will be carried forward for implementation during subsequent interim adjustments. The total interim adjustment will be calculated by adding the remainder percentage rebased to the current level

of salaries to the interim adjustment. Total interim adjustments will also be subject to the same threshold.

14. The ICSC representative highlighted that this is a pilot project which will be reviewed by the Commission at the end of the accelerated round of surveys taking into consideration the feedback received from the pilot monitoring mechanism. With regard to the results of salary surveys, he indicated that these are recommendations of the ICSC to the Executive Heads of the participating organizations. The ICSC regularly informs the United Nations General Assembly on the implementation of the ICSC recommendations and UNGA decisions.
15. The Chair indicated that UN Common System organizations are bound by the methodologies established by the ICSC and approved by the UN General Assembly for compensation of staff in the General Service and Professional and Higher categories. Failure to comply with those principles would incur a severe violation of the conditions of employment of staff.



## Appendix 2.1. Members of PTC/GSQ

15. The Chair confirmed the current membership of the PTC/GSQ as follows:

Organization	Name	Email address
IAEA	Imed Zabaar	<a href="mailto:I.Zabaar@iaea.org">I.Zabaar@iaea.org</a>
FAO/WFP-UGSS	Silvia Mariangeloni	<a href="mailto:silvia.mariangeloni@wfp.org">silvia.mariangeloni@wfp.org</a>
FAO/WFP-UGSS	Susan Murray	<a href="mailto:susan.murray@fao.org">susan.murray@fao.org</a>
SCBD	Véronique Allain	<a href="mailto:veronique.allain@cbd.int">veronique.allain@cbd.int</a>
UNGSC	Cosimo Melpignano	<a href="mailto:melpignano@un.org">melpignano@un.org</a>
WHO/EURO	Kay Miller	<a href="mailto:millerk@who.int">millerk@who.int</a>
WHO/GSC	Irwan Mohd-Razali	<a href="mailto:irwan.mohdrazali@un.org">irwan.mohdrazali@un.org</a>

16. Members wishing to join the PTC/GSQ should submit a request to FICSA Secretariat through their respective Staff Associations/Unions.