

170th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Washington, D.C., USA (hybrid session), 20-24 June 2022

Provisional Agenda Item 6.2

CE170/27
14 April 2022
Original: English

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU

Background

1. This report summarizes the strategies for human resources management of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB or the Bureau) during 2021 and provides workforce trends and statistics for the period 1 January to 15 December 2021, unless otherwise specified. The report focuses on activities aligned with the three pillars of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) People Strategy.

2. During 2021, the Bureau's personnel continued to show resiliency and commitment to deliver timely and effective technical cooperation to Member States, adapting work plans, activities, and procedures while innovating to respond to programmatic priorities and the COVID-19 pandemic. The many achievements reported to Member States have demonstrated once again that the Bureau's greatest asset is its workforce.

Status of the People Strategy 2.0

3. The Bureau concentrated its efforts in 2021 on high-priority activities aligned with the three pillars of the People Strategy 2.0.¹ These pillars include *agility* (“we deliver”); *functional optimization* (“we update”); and *innovation* (“we transform”).

Agility: “We deliver”

4. Activities under this pillar focus on designing and implementing human resources strategies to ensure that the required personnel are available to carry out technical cooperation under the Strategic Plan of the Pan American Health Organization 2020-2025 (PAHO Strategic Plan). In addition, acquisition of new talent is critical for ensuring that fixed-term positions are reprofiled and filled in a timely manner.

¹ The People Strategy 2.0 incorporates high-priority activities from the Pan American Health Organization People Strategy 2015-2019 and is aligned with the Strategic Plan of the Pan American Health Organization 2020-2025, as reported in document SPBA15/10.

5. In March 2021, and in preparation for the 2022-2023 biennium, the Bureau began development of the Biennial Work Plan and Human Resources Plan through a bottom-up costing exercise. These high-level corporate processes allowed managers to review priorities, define work plans, and estimate the financial and human resources required to deliver on the priorities set by the Member States for the 2022-2023 biennium.

6. The results of the bottom-up costing exercise provided the baseline for the next phase of the process: a corporate human resources (HR) planning process for 2022-2023. Under the HR planning exercise launched in September 2021, each manager conducted a strategic review of their entity's staffing structure and its suitability to carry out the activities of the PAHO Strategic Plan and other related mandates. The HR planning exercise provided a path for succession planning by including a critical review of each position, taking into consideration upcoming retirement plans and other emerging needs. The overall purpose was to assess the financial and programmatic sustainability of the organizational staffing structure to ensure that the Bureau remains fit for purpose in a resource-constrained environment.

7. The HR plan is a core component of effective and efficient human resources management throughout the Bureau. It serves as the blueprint for critical human resources functions such as forecasting talent acquisition, organizational design, learning, and contract management.

8. A robust talent acquisition strategy is critical for ensuring that fixed-term positions in the Bureau, which are limited in number, are properly defined and filled in a timely manner. However, the unpredictability of funding is a continuing challenge that has a direct impact on the effectiveness of talent acquisition at the Bureau. When the timing of funding availability is uncertain, as was the case during most of 2020 and early 2021, the Bureau is unable to make contractual commitments for new fixed-term staff and must rely on contingent workers to deliver technical cooperation. While contingent workers should be engaged for specific products or services, such as supporting emergency response or time-limited projects, a significant proportion of the contingent workers hired in 2021 were engaged to deliver technical cooperation and in some cases undertake core functions that are normally performed by staff.

9. In 2021, after the financial situation of the Bureau improved, the cost-containment measures were eased to allow the recruitment of fixed-term positions affected by the hiring freeze of 2020. As a result, the Bureau had an increase in its recruitment and selection activities. In total, 76 competitive selection processes were completed for fixed-term appointments: 55 positions in the international professional (PRFP) category, 5 in the national professional officer (NOP) category, and 16 in the general service (GSP) category. The gender distribution of the 60 individuals selected for professional positions was 32 females and 28 males. Of these, there were 34 professional positions at grade P4 and above, and the gender distribution of this group was 14 females and 20 males. Also, 81 temporary positions were filled. The distribution by category was 36 temporary professionals and 45 temporary general service staff.

Functional optimization: “We update”

10. Activities under this pillar focused on leveraging the PASB Management Information System (PMIS) to further streamline administrative processes and continue gaining efficiencies. Initiatives to update human resources policies were also carried out in 2021.

11. In order to further streamline and fully utilize the PMIS Workday system, the Bureau acquired the Workday Recruiting module. This is a single recruiting management application platform that will be fully integrated with the Human Capital Management module within PMIS. It will be used to manage the entire talent acquisition lifecycle, from advertisement to onboarding of fixed-term staff, short-term staff, and contingent workers.

12. In 2021, access to virtual learning through online platforms was available to all personnel through PMIS. These platforms are the Workday Learning Module, the World Health Organization (WHO) Learning Management System (iLearn), and LinkedIn Learning.

13. Following the recommendations of the External Auditor of PAHO, the Bureau revised its policy on consultants. The new policy will take effect during the third quarter of 2022. It incorporates additional internal control mechanisms, using PMIS as a tool to guarantee transparency and compliance with the competitive selection process. An emphasis on the use of rosters will contribute to a robust pool of qualified candidates and a faster hiring process, particularly in cases of emergency. The new consultant policy reflects the main purpose of this contractual modality, which is the delivery of products and services offsite and not the delivery of core functions on premises.

14. In order to strengthen the selection process for fixed-term staff and consultants, the Bureau is using, through WHO, a United Nations (UN) system-wide database known as Clear Check, which is used to screen UN personnel for instances of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment.

15. The Bureau has a zero-tolerance policy for all forms of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, and sexual harassment. To reinforce this policy, the Bureau has joined WHO’s organization-wide campaign to ensure that all personnel have the knowledge and capacity to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse. A mandatory training course on the “Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)” has been launched, and all PAHO personnel are required to complete this course by 25 May 2022. The purpose of the course is to raise awareness among all personnel and partners about how acts of sexual exploitation and abuse impact individuals and whole communities.

16. Also, as part of the coordinated efforts with WHO to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and raise awareness of this issue in the Region of the Americas, WHO is providing funding to PAHO for the establishment of two dedicated professional positions at the P4 and P5 grade levels. Additionally, PASB has formed a working group with representatives from different offices to develop and implement a comprehensive action plan to prevent SEA, facilitate the filing of complaints, and support victims. Furthermore,

in addition to using the Clear Check database, the Bureau is examining how to conduct worldwide background checks for all candidates who have been selected for positions or assignments in the Organization.

17. The policy on interns was revised to make experience in PASB available to more students and recent graduates, particularly those from key and least developed countries. The revised policy will offer opportunities for virtual internships, allowing interns to remain in their home country or place of study. The option of having interns physically present in PAHO facilities will be offered only after premises are back to normal operating status. A major change to the internship program is the introduction of a stipend. This is expected to encourage all individuals, irrespective of their financial situation, to apply and avail themselves of the opportunity to gain experience and share their skills and knowledge. The revised intern policy will go into effect in 2022.

18. A revised telework policy was issued in April 2021 and will go into effect after the end of the current mass emergency telework period. The implementation of the policy, which will increase the number of days that personnel can telework, is expected to generate efficiencies and savings for the Bureau while allowing personnel to achieve a better balance between their personal and professional lives. The policy is expected to contribute to maintaining business continuity during future emergency events throughout the Region of the Americas. Other policies revised in 2021 that incorporate a remote work approach are the consultant and internship policies.

19. To strengthen corporate functions and utilize resources efficiently, the Bureau conducted a skills and competencies gap analysis. The study was carried out by an external consulting firm. The purpose of the analysis was to establish the inventory of skills and competencies of personnel and identify gaps in critical skills, knowledge, and technical competencies needed to perform and meet the strategic goals of the Bureau at the regional, subregional, and national levels.

20. To promote employee engagement, the study included a survey, focus groups, and individual interviews with managers at different levels, including members of Executive Management. Furthermore, the external firm conducted a benchmarking analysis with other UN agencies of similar size and structure to compare their existing performance and analyze potential improvements.

21. The final report of the study underscored the progress made by the Bureau in becoming more strategic and innovative, using technology, and providing high-quality leadership training. It also highlighted the potential for scaling up the existing team-specific knowledge-sharing programs. Regarding the existing barriers to effective learning, the study highlighted lack of time, lack of funding to support learning and development, and the staff's perceived lack of opportunity to apply learning.

22. The report's specific recommendations included the establishment of learning priority categories, with corresponding continuous and timely budget allocation to support

the learning program; development of more flagship programs for technical and enabling functions; and the adoption of strategies for expanding access to learning.

23. The Bureau is working on a plan to implement the recommendations presented in the final report of the study, focusing on cost-effective initiatives and the optimum use of the existing learning platforms to guarantee the sustainability of the corporate learning strategy.

24. As the Bureau prepares for the 2022-2023 biennium and a post-pandemic era, several initiatives were carried out to promote functional optimization and an effective staffing structure that will allow the Organization to continue delivering on its mandates within the expected resource-constrained environment. These strategic reviews are fully aligned with the pillars of the People Strategy 2.0.

Innovation: “We transform”

25. This pillar focuses on promoting and developing mechanisms to incorporate innovation throughout the Bureau. It is about empowering employees to build their skills and competencies. The Bureau has refocused its efforts to develop and offer tailored learning programs and activities to ensure continuous learning and expand the skill sets of personnel to meet the emerging needs of Member States.

26. As the world continues to transition from physical offices to increasingly virtual workplaces, the Bureau has examined its current policies and practices to incorporate virtual collaboration modalities that respond to the needs of Member States. The uninterrupted delivery of technical cooperation during the COVID-19 pandemic has provided valuable information and lessons about how to expand virtual working options and integrate them into the human resources management of the Bureau.

27. In 2021, the Bureau offered a virtual Leadership and Management Program to strengthen the skills and competencies of mid- and senior-level managers. The program aims to update and strengthen the competencies and capabilities of managers and supervisors, providing them with tools to lead in complex, demanding environments and to lead change faster and more effectively. The program also included individual coaching sessions to identify individual strengths and development opportunities. A group of 48 managers (28 female and 20 male) from PAHO/WHO Representative Offices (PWR Offices), Pan American Centers (Centers), and Headquarters completed the program offered by the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC).

28. To continue fostering a learning culture and update the skills of all personnel as part of the People Strategy 2.0, a new learning subscription was obtained with the UNSSC. This virtual learning tool offers over 40 modules on a variety of topics such as leadership, management, communication, ethics, change management, and risk management, among others. Information sessions were held to promote the use of the new learning tool with the learning focal points in all PWR Offices and Centers. This subscription complements the learning platforms already in use in the Organization.

29. Another learning strategy used widely in 2021 was knowledge-sharing workshops conducted by internal experts. Senior officers and heads of PWR Offices shared their knowledge, skills, and expertise through virtual capacity-building sessions open to all personnel. The topics of the sessions included negotiation of grants, proposal development, and increasing financial resource mobilization, among others. Developing a knowledge-sharing culture fosters and stimulates innovation, increases productivity, and promotes engagement.

30. In 2021, the Language Program offered virtual group classes to all personnel in PWR Offices, Centers, and Headquarters. The classes were offered in all four official languages of the Organization (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish). This year a total of 78 individuals participated and successfully completed the 10-week program.

General Human Resources Activities

Duty of Care

31. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, vaccination has been regularly promoted during dialogues and sessions with all personnel. A reporting module was created in PMIS to allow personnel to record their COVID-19 vaccinations. Executive Management has been kept informed on the overall levels of vaccination among the Bureau's workforce. Currently, approximately 1,000 individuals have reported their vaccination status to the system. Confirmed and suspected cases of COVID-19 among personnel continued to be monitored, utilizing a contact-tracing protocol. As of 31 December 2021, 140 individuals have tested positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic, with two deaths.

32. In terms of vaccination efforts, PASB actively helped facilitate the roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines purchased by the United Nations for personnel working in PWR Offices and Centers in the Region. The UN launched a consolidated information technology platform to register personnel in preparation for the vaccination campaign, and the Bureau registered almost 3,000 eligible workers and dependents.

33. Special attention has been given to personnel in Headquarters, PWR Offices and Centers working directly on the response to the pandemic. A survey was conducted with the heads of PWR Offices to identify the risks associated with the high stress levels experienced due to the demands of work during this emergency period. Additional group counseling sessions were offered to help personnel cope with the stress and anxiety they experienced. In April 2021, coverage under the Employee Assistance Program was expanded to include all personnel and their dependents in PWR Offices and Centers. Additionally, the services of the psychological counselor include seminars on stress management.

Contract Administration

34. The 2020 annual dependency verification process was launched in May 2021. The purpose of this annual review is to verify the eligibility for allowances and benefits of staff

members holding fixed-term appointments. This is an exercise to ensure compliance with the Staff Rules. Of the 582 records reviewed, 17 payroll adjustments were made for overpayments or underpayments.

Administration of Justice

35. From January to December 2021, there were five cases of alleged wrongdoing involving PASB staff that were confirmed by the Bureau and led to the imposition of administrative and/or disciplinary actions, as outlined in the table below. Some of these cases were under review in 2020, and the final administrative and/or disciplinary actions were taken during 2021. As of 31 December 2021, other cases of alleged wrongdoing remained under review and may be subject to administrative and/or disciplinary action in 2022.

Nature of Wrongdoing	Category of Staff	Administrative/ Disciplinary Action
Failure to establish clear supervisory boundaries/acceptance of small personal favors from a supervisee	Professional	Administrative letter
Misconduct (harassment)	Professional	Administrative reassignment and disciplinary action
Negligence (failing to properly record absences in accordance with staff rules and policies)	Professional	Administrative letter
Misconduct (failing to report a personal relationship with a supervisee)	Professional	Disciplinary action
Engaging in gossip	Professional	Administrative letter

PASB Workforce

36. The annex to this document provides the annual workforce statistics as of 15 December 2021 (or other year as indicated). It includes information regarding the number of personnel in the Bureau and an analysis of their distribution by type of contract, sex, location, and other staffing data, with five-year trends noted.

Action by the Executive Committee

37. The Executive Committee is invited to take note of this report and provide any comments it deems pertinent.

Annex

Annex

PASB Staffing Statistics

Report by the Pan American Sanitary Bureau

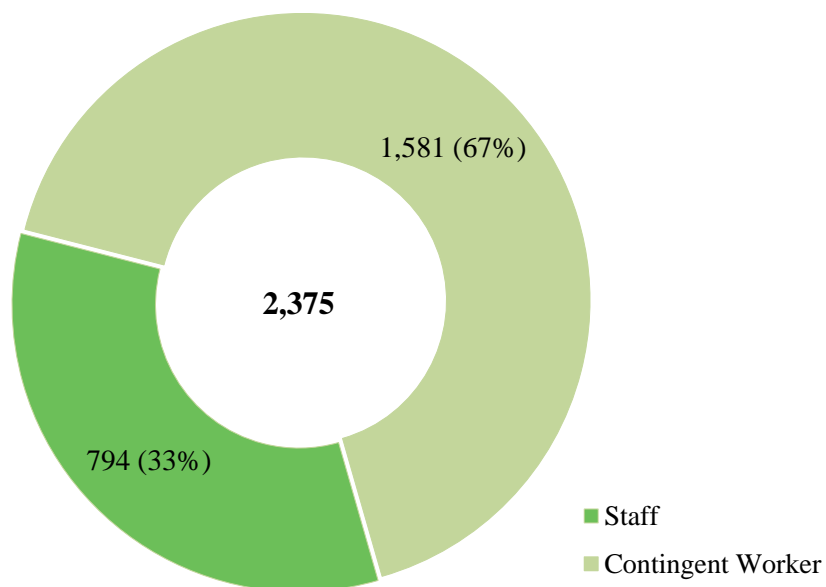
1. This report provides data from the PASB Management Information System (PMIS) on the profile of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB or the Bureau) human resources as of 15 December 2021, unless otherwise specified. It includes information regarding the number of personnel in the Bureau by type of appointment, type of contract, sex, nationality, grade, and location.

Workforce Composition

2. Figures 1-3 present an overview of the Bureau’s workforce composition in 2021.

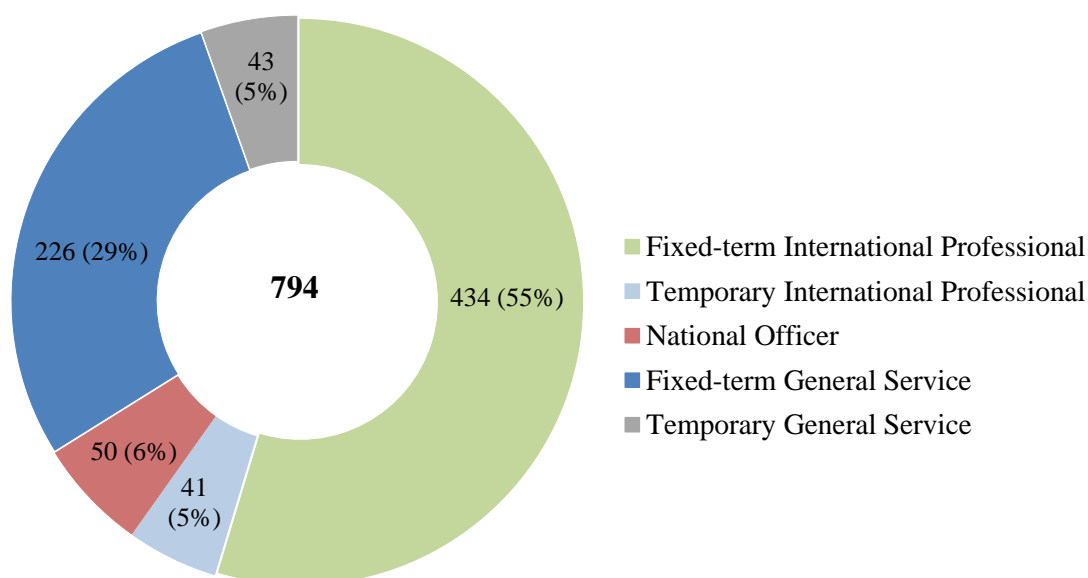
3. As of 15 December 2021, the total number of personnel was 2,375. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of the workforce into two types of positions: staff, who are individuals holding fixed-term and temporary positions, and contingent workers, referring to all personnel hired under non-staff contractual mechanisms. The 794 staff members made up 33% of the workforce, while the 1,581 contingent workers made up 67%. This workforce composition reflects the funding constraints faced by the Bureau, which have led to an increase in the use of contingent workers.

Figure 1. Personnel by Position Type, 2021



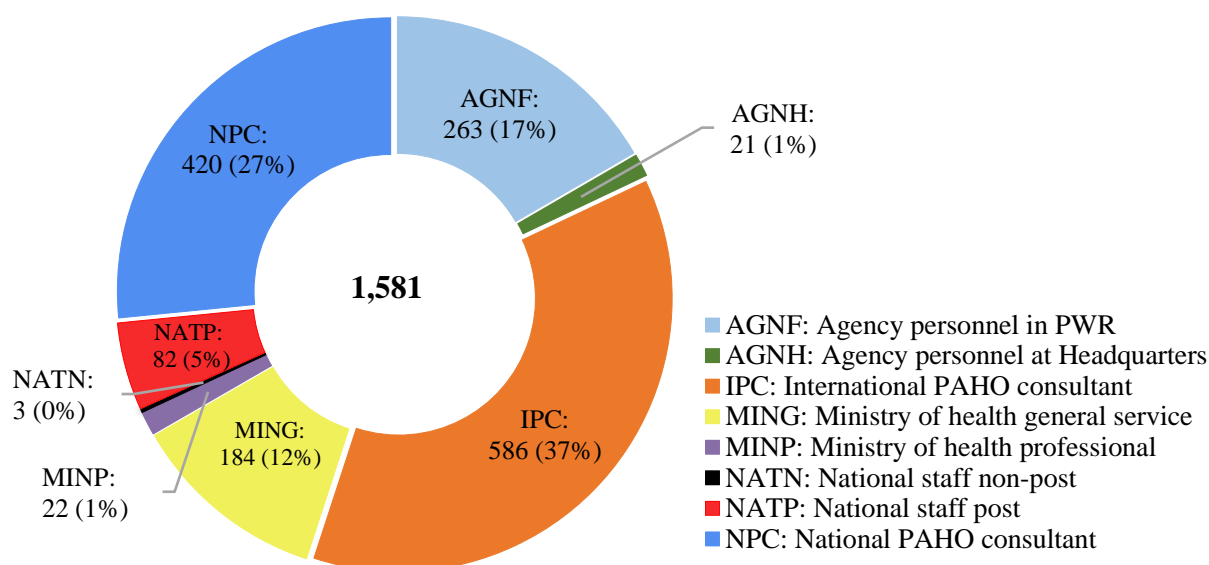
4. Figure 2 shows the staffing composition by category and appointment type. The total number of staff was 794, with a breakdown of 710 fixed-term staff and 84 temporary staff. The duration of a fixed-term appointment is one year or more. Temporary appointments have a duration of 11 months or less, with the possibility of extension up to a maximum of two years.

Figure 2. Staff by Category and Appointment Type, 2021



5. Figure 3 shows the personnel working under non-staff or non-United Nations personnel contractual mechanisms (contingent workers), who total 1,581. The contingent worker modalities include administrative agency personnel in PWR Representative Offices and Headquarters (AGNF and AGNH); administrative personnel hired under local conditions of employment (NATP and NATN); administrative and professional personnel seconded by the Ministry of Health in PWR Offices (MING and MINP); and international and national PAHO consultants (IPC and NPC).

Figure 3. Contingent Workers, 2021



Workforce: Distribution by Sex

6. With respect to staff in the international professional and national professional officer categories, PASB maintained a distribution of 51% female and 49% male staff in 2021. The sex distribution of staff at Headquarters was 54% female and 46% male, while in the PWR Offices and Pan American Centers it was 47% female and 53% male. A breakdown by grade, sex, and location is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Fixed-Term International Professional and National Professional Officer Staff, Distribution by Grade, Sex, and Organizational Location, 2021

Grade	Headquarters				PWR Offices/Centers				All			
	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%
UG1			1	100%							1	100%
UG2			1	100%							1	100%
UG3	1	100%							1	100%		
D2	1	50%	1	50%	1	100%			2	67%	1	33%
D1	12	80%	3	20%	1	33%	2	67%	13	72%	5	28%
P6	3	75%	1	25%	6	60%	4	40%	9	64%	5	36%
P5	14	47%	16	53%	8	50%	8	50%	22	48%	24	52%
P4/NOD	55	48%	59	52%	63	59%	44	41%	118	53%	103	47%
P3/NOC	28	40%	42	60%	9	39%	14	61%	37	40%	56	60%
P2/NOB	11	33%	22	67%	16	48%	17	52%	27	41%	39	59%
P1/NOA	1	33%	2	67%	7	41%	10	59%	8	40%	12	60%
Total	126	46%	148	54%	111	53%	99	47%	237	49%	247	51%

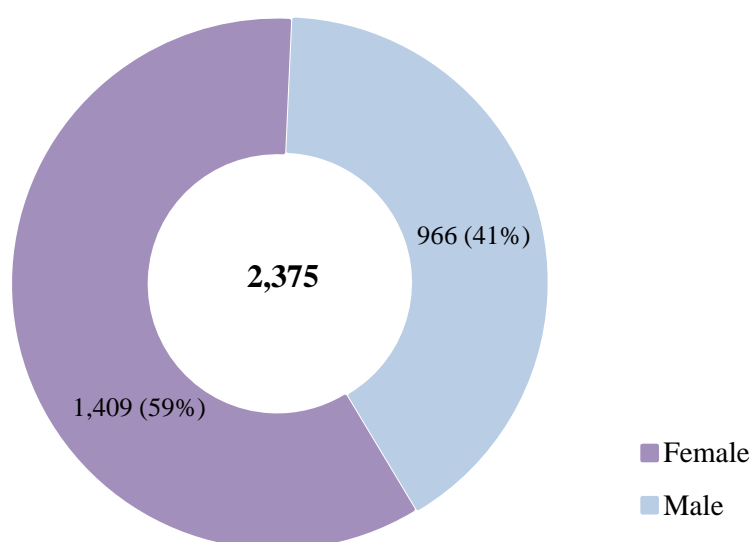
7. The sex distribution of international PAHO consultants was 54% female and 46% male, and for national PAHO consultants it was 65% female and 35% male, as reflected in Table 2.

Table 2. PAHO Consultants, Distribution by Sex, Organizational Location, and Contract Type, 2021

Contract Type	Headquarters				PWR Offices/Centers				All			
	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%
International PAHO Consultant	225	44%	282	56%	44	56%	35	44%	269	46%	317	54%
National PAHO Consultant					146	35%	274	65%	146	35%	274	65%
Total	225	44%	282	56%	190	38%	309	62%	415	41%	591	59%

8. The overall sex distribution within the entire workforce remained at 59% female and 41% male, as reflected in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Personnel by Sex, 2021



9. Table 3 provides consolidated information about the distribution by nationality of staff in the international professional category with fixed-term appointments. This table excludes staff in the national professional category to avoid a misinterpretation of geographic representation. Staff in the national professional officer category are nationals of the country of assignment, so including them in the total count positively skews the representation of nationalities in the Region of the Americas.

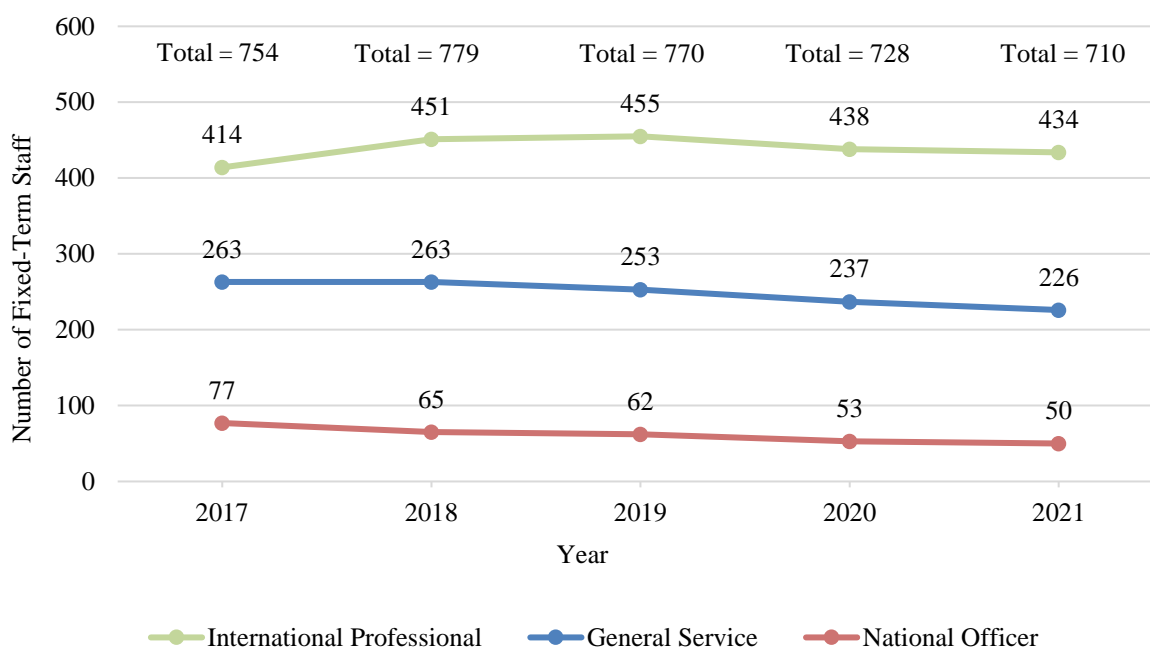
Table 3. Fixed-Term International Professional Staff, Distribution by Nationality, 2021

Country of Nationality	Total	Country of Nationality	Total	Country of Nationality	Total
Argentina	25	France	11	Philippines	3
Austria	1	Germany	1	Portugal	1
Barbados	2	Guatemala	11	Rwanda	2
Belgium	4	Guyana	1	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	3
Belize	6	Haiti	3	Singapore	2
Bhutan	1	Honduras	5	Spain	33
Bolivia	3	India	1	Suriname	2
Brazil	47	Ireland	1	Switzerland	1
Canada	9	Italy	5	Trinidad and Tobago	4
Chile	11	Jamaica	9	Turkey	1
Colombia	42	Japan	1	Uganda	1
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	1	Malta	1	United Kingdom	10
Costa Rica	9	Mexico	12	United States of America	60
Cuba	8	Netherlands	4	Uruguay	6
Dominica	1	Nicaragua	9	Uzbekistan	1
Dominican Republic	3	Panama	2	Venezuela	6
Ecuador	13	Paraguay	4	Total	434
El Salvador	10	Peru	21		

Workforce Trends

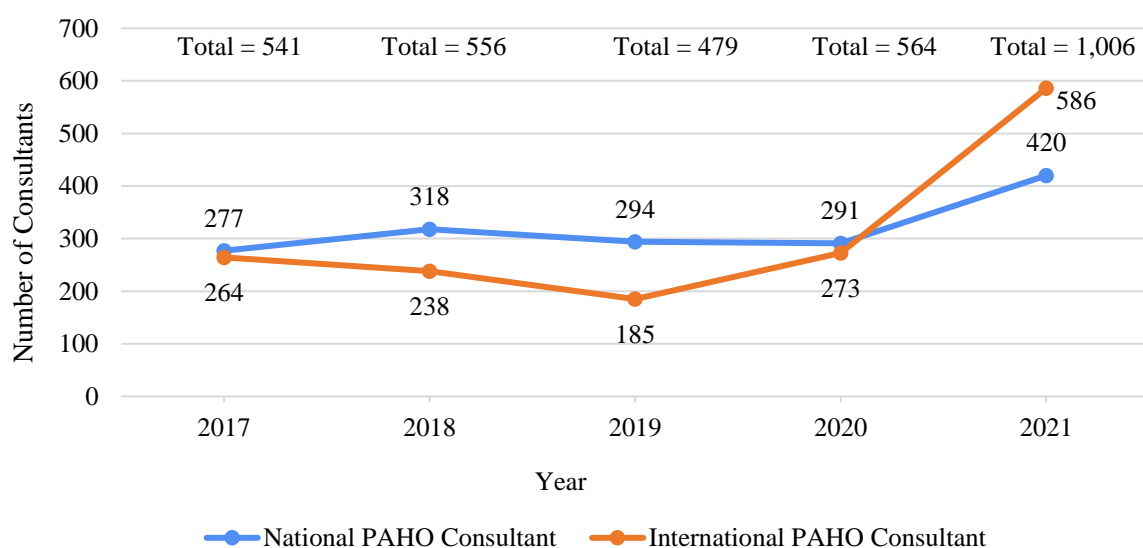
10. Figure 5 highlights the trends for fixed-term staff in different categories for the period 2017 to 2021. A decrease in the number of fixed-term staff in 2020 and 2021 was a direct consequence of the financial constraints faced during this biennium. As indicated in paragraph 8 of the report, in 2020 the Bureau exercised prudence in relation to filling vacant fixed-term positions to avoid long-term obligations and instead relied on consultants to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and technical cooperation demands. The number of staff in fixed-term positions decreased by 5.8%, from 754 in 2017 to 710 in 2021. However, it is important to note that based on the corporate strategic human resources (HR) planning for 2022-2023, the Bureau will carry out recruiting activities to fill critical vacant fixed-term positions. In implementing the approved HR plans, the Bureau will continue to make efforts to ensure its financial sustainability, including containment of personnel costs.

Figure 5. Fixed-Term Staff, Distribution by Category, 2017-2021



11. Figure 6 shows that the number of consultants increased by 85.9%, from 541 in 2017 to 1,006 in 2021. This was the highest total number of consultants in the past five years, with more consultants employed (1,006) than international and national professional staff with fixed-term appointments (484).

Figure 6. National and International PAHO Consultants, 2017-2021



12. Table 4 shows female representation in the P4 and higher-graded professional positions in the Bureau, which reflects trends in achieving gender parity among staff in the international professional category. The percentage of women at grades P4 and P5 was maintained at 48% between 2017 and 2021; however, an increase occurred between 2020 and 2021. The percentage of women as heads of PWR Offices increased 9% between 2017 and 2021.

Table 4. Gender Parity Trends, 2017-2021

Category	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change between 2017 and 2021
Women in grades P6, D1, and D2	32%	34%	34%	32%	31%	-1%
Women in grades P4 and P5	48%	49%	48%	47%	48%	No change
Women as heads of PWR Offices	43%	46%	52%	50%	52%	9%
