



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

E

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Two Hundred and Third Session

Rome, 10-14 March 2025

Human Resources Strategy and Action Plan 2025-28

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

Mr Serge Nakouzi
Director, Human Resources Division
Tel: +39 06570 55100
Email: Serge.Nakouzi@fao.org

Documents can be consulted at www.fao.org

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Human Resources (HR) Strategy 2025-28 provides a unifying strategic vision to position the Organization's resources and operating modalities, using a systems-oriented approach within all FAO's interventions.
- The efficient and effective management of FAO's human capital is vital in enabling the Organization to deliver on the full breadth of its mandate and strategic objectives. The Human Resources (HR) Division serves as an enabler of FAO's strategic objectives by fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and high-performing organizational culture, and by ensuring that we have the right people, in the right place, at the right time.
- The HR Strategy outlines key strategies and transformative initiatives to enable the HR Division to achieve its outcomes and outputs.
- Annex 2 provides an update on the assessment of the recruitment process that was considered by the Committee at its 202nd Session in November 2024.

GUIDANCE SOUGHT FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

- The Finance Committee is invited to take note of the HR Strategy 2025-28, the strategic context and challenges that the HR Division faces, and the various measures outlined within the framework of HR transformation that will position the division to achieve its strategic goals.

Draft Advice

The Committee:

- **took note of the Human Resources (HR) Strategy 2025-28 and welcomed the progress made towards the implementation of the HR Action Plan, noting the progress reported towards the achievement of outcomes and outputs, and key performance indicators; and**
- **acknowledged that the HR Strategy 2025-28 was designed to address the internal and external environmental challenges that FAO faces in delivering its mandate, as well as respond to feedback and guidance provided by Member Nations.**

Human Resources Strategy and Action Plan 2025-28

Introduction

1. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s Strategic Framework seeks to support the 2030 Agenda through the transformation to more efficient, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agrifood systems for better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind.
2. The [FAO Strategic Framework 2022-31](#) provides the unifying strategic vision to position the Organization's resources and operating modalities, using a systems-oriented approach within all FAO's interventions. As one of the four cross-cutting "accelerators" for this vision, human capital is a key complement that impacts all FAO's programmatic interventions.
3. The efficient and effective management of FAO's human capital is vital in enabling the Organization to deliver on the full breadth of its mandate and strategic objectives. The Human Resources (HR) Division, in collaboration with the regional HR teams and the SSC, serves as an enabler of FAO's strategic objectives by fostering a dynamic, inclusive, and high-performing organizational culture, and by embedding a "fit for purpose" HR management function centred on service delivery and solutions, ensuring alignment with the FAO Strategic Framework to have the right people, in the right place, at the right time.

Vision

4. A strategic HR function that partners effectively with stakeholders and fosters a culture of inclusivity, innovation and continuous development, empowering all employees to contribute their best towards achieving a world free of hunger and malnutrition.

Mission

5. To attract, develop and retain a diverse and highly skilled workforce, providing equitable opportunities and a supportive environment. We strive to enable our employees to excel in their role, fostering collaboration and excellence to advance FAO's mission of ensuring food security and sustainable agriculture for all.

Strategic context and challenges

6. FAO faces a global context characterized by modern technology automation, a transformation to digital agriculture and Artificial Intelligence (AI), fluctuating demands for expertise, a new talent landscape with changing skills needs and competition for talent, and responses to new and complex emergencies. In addition, there are internal developments such as new, improved structures for divisions, offices and centres, and an overall faster pace of doing business.
7. Feedback received has reaffirmed the need to enhance HR practices, rules, capacity and structures. Clients also requested more assistance in accessing and leveraging strategic HR support to achieve programmatic goals and effective delivery of operations.
8. There is a need for more frequent and strategic communication and collaboration between the HR teams in headquarters, Decentralized Offices and the Shared Services Centre, and *inter alia* between these HR providers and the clients they serve.
9. Strategic workforce planning requires strengthening through better resource and budget planning at the onset of programme and project formulation to ensure that long-term needs and core functions are met through staff modalities, rather than Affiliate Workforce (NSHR) contracts. The ratio of staff to Affiliate Workforce (NSHR) across the Organization, particularly in the Decentralized

Offices, is high,¹ creating a precarious balance for knowledge management, equity, governance, and business continuity.

10. At its 199th Session in May 2024, the Finance Committee emphasized the importance of reducing the vacancy rate² of staff positions in the Professional category funded by the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB), and particularly in Decentralized Offices, where the vacancy rate is the highest. The increase in the time to recruit³ staff was also a concern as it currently exceeds the 120-day key performance indicator, while the number of recruitments being conducted continues to increase.⁴

11. As the complexity of challenges faced at the global level in the areas falling under FAO's mandate continue to expand impacting the development narrative accordingly, the role of HR in ensuring that the Organization acquires and retains the requisite technical capacity through the filling of its vacant posts becomes increasingly pivotal.

12. Managers within the Organization require support to access and apply HR best practices as well as assistance with forward planning and management of their workforce. They need trusted advisors who are specialists in the HR discipline, that deeply understand the business and understand how to meet their clients' needs through the effective application of HR tools, policies, processes, and practices.

HR transformation

13. The FAO Strategic Framework seeks to create a reinvigorated business model that is fit for purpose, enabling FAO to transform into an agile, results-oriented Organization with reduced internal bureaucracy and improved service orientation. It aims to simplify and rationalize its business processes, procedures and systems, building on reforms in HR.⁵

14. In order to support and enable a reinvigorated FAO business model and address the above strategic challenges and gaps, the HR function must apply its own agile business model. In doing so it must connect with the evolving world of HR best practices, align itself with successful practices in other UN agencies, and take advantage of lessons learned. It must shift from a reactive, administrative focused HR function, to a proactive, strategic, business partnering model to design effective solutions with the end user in mind.

15. The HR Division must identify areas where it can add value, and in collaboration with managers and senior leaders proactively connect HR to strategic business objectives to help the Organization achieve its goals. The HR function must understand not only the business of HR management, but also the strategic goals and objectives of the Organization, its strategic drivers, and operating models.

16. It must also operate as a unified One HR Team, seamlessly integrating regional HR within a cohesive framework that aligns policies and practices across the Organization, ensuring consistent, high-quality services while leveraging collective capabilities to develop the most effective solutions for clients.

17. Lastly, to reposition FAO effectively to address the arising challenges and the evolving development narrative also means embracing the opportunities that innovation and digitalization offer, whether in terms of business processes and systems, knowledge management, interdisciplinary collaboration, programming, partnerships, or talent management. A transformed HR function must not

¹ Affiliate Workforce (NSHR) constitute 79 percent of the workforce overall, and 90 percent at Decentralized Offices as at 31 December 2024, as indicated in the 2024 HR Annual Report.

² Twenty-four percent overall as at 31 December 2024.

³ The number of days from opening of the vacancy announcement to the selection decision. As of 31 December 2024, it was 228 days.

⁴ More than 30 percent increase since 2022 as reported in the HR Annual Report 2023.

⁵ [Strategic Framework 2022-31](#), paragraph 111, p. 28

only produce data, but must use it to communicate and engage audiences, identify gaps, generate insights, measure impact and design solutions.

18. The HR transformation is underpinned by a strategic mindset where HR experts, organizational leaders, Member Nations, and relevant stakeholders collaboratively reflect on what the Organization needs to do, its key deliverables, and the requirements to fulfil its mandate. This approach drives the HR strategy, aligning organizational structures, supported by policies and procedures, and engaging, communicative, end-to-end talent and people management.

19. Strategy, structure, policy, procedures, and people management – including their development, learning and engagement – are all key pillars to an effective HR service, and an HR function that enables the Organization to deliver in an increasingly complex environment.

Summary of strategic goals

20. These strategic goals and their outcomes are designed to build on and support each other, synergistically and coherently improving the overall competency and delivery of the HR function and service, and of the Organization as a whole.

21. The below summarizes the key goals of the HR transformation, describing priorities and expected outcomes. They do not include all the ongoing programmes and operations but rather the priority focus and where efforts will be primarily directed over the period 2025–2028, noting that certain initiatives commenced in 2024. Further details describing each goal are included in the high-level Action Plan.

Strategic Goal 1: Improved workforce planning and design of organizational structures

22. Comprehensive support and advice are provided for strategic workforce planning, including forecasting staffing needs, addressing skills gaps and implementing staffing plans. This includes guidance on organizational design, structure reviews and position management to ensure alignment with evolving priorities and adherence to International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) standards for job evaluation. Emphasis is placed on identifying emerging thematic areas, defining skill requirements and enhancing succession planning to strengthen organizational capacity and adaptability. Efforts are also directed toward reducing the vacancy rate by streamlining recruitment processes and optimizing talent acquisition strategies. Outputs will be linked to targeted learning and development opportunities under the new Career Development Framework.

Strategic Goal 2: Integrated approach for attraction, acquisition, development and management of talent

23. Create an agile talent management function, better integrating outreach, recruitment, learning, and performance management activities to form an end-to-end, integrated talent management approach. The aim is to connect internal HR capabilities and expertise with the end user in mind for a more client-oriented approach to talent management and facilitate access to HR products and services. The new approach will include the implementation of an HR business partner model and mindset, with senior HR business partners aligned to streams/offices, flexible resourcing to respond to HR priorities and workload surges, targeted learning programmes, and strengthened performance tools and approaches to foster a culture of high performance and accountability.

Strategic Goal 3: Reduction of the vacancy rate and time to recruit

24. Reinforced focus and commitment to filling vacancies of staff positions in the Professional category funded by the PWB. This includes a reduction of the time to recruit, with heightened emphasis on the timely hiring for Project and Trust funded posts. This will also include a renewed emphasis on outreach. The aim is to have fully staffed operations for the effective leadership, implementation and delivery of the Organization's mandate.

Strategic Goal 4: Updated and in-place policies and procedures

25. Empower personnel and managers to navigate through their HR needs by ensuring clear, relevant and transparent policies. Providing effective guidance to promote equity and consistency in policy application, creating a culture of trust for FAO's HR policy framework. Ensure that HR policies remain relevant and up-to-date and are effectively communicated through communication products and channels.

Strategic Goal 5: Better business intelligence and data-based HR solutions

26. Improved integration of HR tools, to enhance the quality of data, analytics, and the development of robust HR dashboards. The aim is to build up capability in using and interpreting data, ensuring personnel understand the data they have access to (self-service), and to inform HR decisions and address challenges, including evidence-based decisions for programme development, communication efforts and reporting of results.

Strategic Goal 6: Foster engagement, well-being, caring for personnel and a fair, respectful work environment for everyone to thrive

27. In response to changing requirements and identified future growth areas in strategic human resource management, the HR Division will flexibly expand its capacity to provide specialist service delivery, e.g. in workplace relations and administrative law. The establishment of an appropriately resourced administrative law unit will provide more guidance and practical support to managers and teams. The social security and medical insurance services team will make efforts to incorporate aspects of well-being as a preventative method for health issues.

Strategic Goal 7: Coherent, frequent communications and engagement with internal and external clients

28. Engender trust in and increase the visibility of HR by proactively assisting clients to have a better understanding of HR products and tools through improved communication channels, capacity and products. Link internal and external communication and outreach efforts to reinforce the FAO brand and Employer Value Proposition (EVP), and assisting with talent acquisition, development, and retention. Cultivate a culture of engagement and continuous improvement by providing useful, dynamic, clear, consistent, client-oriented communications in a timely manner.

Strategic Goal 8: One HR Team

29. Lead efforts to provide the Organization with a seamless HR service through regular interaction and collaboration within the wider organizational HR team – specialist teams at headquarters, the Shared Services Centre (SSC) and Decentralized Offices. Create a community of practice that enables clients to access the right HR products and services from the right HR experts, at the right time. Create a business partner mindset and competency throughout the HR function to become a more coherent, well-rounded and informed organizational HR team.

Conclusion

30. These goals are designed to address the internal and external environmental challenges that FAO faces in delivering its mandate, as well as respond to feedback and guidance provided from Members, stakeholders and clients, and to achieve our KPIs and UN system-wide commitments to action plans and strategies. Annex 1 outlines the goals in detail, the actions planned to achieve these goals, and the mechanisms for measuring our success.

31. For this HR transformation and new strategy to be successful, it will require many players, each playing their parts as either HR experts and practitioners, people managers, organizational leaders and personnel who embrace opportunities, resources and tools on offer.

Annex 1

High-level Action Plan and details of strategic goals

32. All actions are designed to support more than one strategic goal and will operate synergistically, supporting an overall augmentation and achievement of outputs.

33. Most of these actions are to be initiated in 2024 and early 2025, and many have already begun. Many actions may take up to one year to become established and will then become ongoing actions. As with all transformations, further changes and actions will become apparent as the process is initiated, and as results and new challenges are revealed. Therefore, a review of this Action Plan will be scheduled as part of this process, with further actions for 2026/2027 to be designed/refined as appropriate.

Strategic Goal 1: Improved workforce planning and design of organizational structures

34. Workforce planning is a systematic assessment and analysis of the current workforce to determine actions for future staffing needs. Actions may be dependent on external factors (e.g. available talent in the market) and internal factors (e.g. skills available internally, age of workforce). These factors determine if future skill needs will be met by recruiting, training, or outsourcing work.

35. FAO's strategy and emerging thematic areas will also guide workforce planning including determining the required skill mix, succession planning, end-to-end talent acquisition and management, structures of entities, and the design of units. Accurate profiling of roles and skills, numbers and levels of resources are key to effective delivery and to attraction, acquisition, or hiring of temporary resources. Up-to-date refreshed profiles and structures also assist in filling vacancies in a timely manner.

36. A building up of the organizational design capacity in the HR Division is desired to support the current priority focus on filling of vacancies, and to help business leaders in the long term with decisions on Organizational structures and staffing needs. Strengthening its resources for the advisory function in organizational design, workforce planning and position management will assist to develop and implement optimal operating models for our organizational units and entities. The strategic HR business partners assigned to relevant streams and offices will work closely with this capacity in resolving and designing business solutions for staffing and timely delivery.

Actions for Strategic Goal 1	Date initiated	Estimated completion date
Develop and implement workforce planning pilot in the Office of Innovation (OIN) with OSP technical support (PIRES Support Team).	Jan 24	On-going
Enhance and increase capacity in the Organizational Design, Workforce Planning and Position Management teams. Augmented advice and support of Decentralized Offices, divisions, offices and centres in organizational design/workforce planning/position management. ⁶	Jan 24	Dec 25
Review and implement the Country Office Network in collaboration with OSP.	Sept 24	Dec 25
Develop a Workforce Planning Framework integrated with the corporate Human Resources Information System (HRIS).	Jan 24	Dec 26

⁶ These actions were recommended as part of the Action Plan from the global HR workshop 2023.

Strategic Goal 2: Integrated approach for attraction, acquisition, orientation, development and management of talent

37. Creating an agile approach for talent acquisition and management, supported by dedicated strategic HR business partners, an outreach strategy, improved workforce planning, updated policies and procedures, and better data and analytics is a way of improving support to candidates, personnel, managers and teams in meeting their HR requirements, resourcing and development needs. It also responds to direct feedback about HR services and products being difficult to find and navigate. Rather than offering the services of talent management via different channels and relying on the client to correctly identify and access them, an integrated model provides a holistic, agile, proactive service by combining specialities that can leverage from each other and flexibly support the evolving needs of the Organization.

38. Seeking to implement a strategic HR business partner model will provide proactive business partnership with the Organization and assist the business to better acquire and manage their human resources, leverage them to deliver, and help to reposition FAO for the increasingly complex challenges it faces. It will also help the HR function to better service its clients and create and design the products, tools and services they need by receiving direct and continuous feedback. Finally, it positions the HR function and its specialists in a strategic helping role, showing how HR can assist the effective operations and strategic mandate of the Organization.

39. An integrated approach and an HR business partner model and mindset will enable the One HR Team to engage with clients from a strategic standpoint, devolving transactional, administrative tasks, and allow the development and delivery of a portfolio of business relevant solutions. It aims to better link the Organization's needs with timely processes, as well as to provide a supportive environment for individuals to grow amidst a culture of performance, respect, and diversity.

Actions for Strategic Goal 2	Date initiated	Estimated completion date
Targeted training, learning resources and career support to help personnel and managers develop the essential skills and agile mindset to navigate the evolving workplace.	Jan 25	Ongoing
Enhanced performance management capabilities , using an integrated talent approach as a strategic tool to drive continuous development, foster a high-performance culture, and improve managers' ability to effectively manage individual performance.	Jan 25	Ongoing
Promote an inclusive workplace by providing capacity building initiatives to support managers in fostering a harmonious work environment.	Jan 25	Ongoing
Virtual orientation programme designed, piloted and delivered biannually.	Sep 24	Ongoing
Integrated Talent Management Model (ITMM) drafted, consulted and piloted in a phased approach.	Apr 24	Dec 27
Explore the implementation of a strategic HR business partner model. Strategic HR business partners work with senior leaders/directors of the streams/offices to provide immediate, critical assistance, strategic support and proactive leadership for talent acquisition and workforce planning. Dedicate one senior-level HR Officer per stream, and one to cover the Independent Offices (IOs) at headquarters, and explore the creation of a senior-level HR business partner for each region.	Oct 24	Jun 26
Set up integrated, agile talent management approach for improved delivery to clients. Create a new Talent Acquisition and Management	Jan 25	Dec 25

Actions for Strategic Goal 2	Date initiated	Estimated completion date
(TAM) Team with all members currently in the Learning and Recruitment branches. End-to-end process established for attraction, acquisition, management, development and planning of human resources. Resources allocated, team structure and roles defined. Communication and engagement with clients and HR colleagues to implement the integrated talent management approach.		
Create a pool of agile HR problem solvers within the new TAM Team to focus on priority tasks for clients centred on the development of solutions. Agile HR eliminates specialized silos that only provide fixed offerings. The initial priority area/temporary assignment could be a recruitment taskforce to focus on the reduction of the vacancy rate.	Jan 25	Dec 25

Strategic Goal 3: Reduction of the vacancy rate and time to recruit

40. Immediate efforts and a new focus are required to reduce the vacancy rate for PWB posts, along with ensuring the timely filling of all posts, including Project and Trust funded posts. Clear feedback received from Member Nations, audits, JIU reviews and internal feedback from FAORs, directors and heads of offices continues to show concern, not only for the continually rising number of vacant positions and increase in the time to recruit, but for its potential to undermine FAO's ability to meet delivery on its mandate and the impact on geographic representation and gender parity. There is also a concern that the high vacancy rate contributes to the misuse of the Affiliate Workforce modality.

41. A precarious balance has been reached in the ratio between staff and non-staff, impacting not only on delivery and results but on the efficiency, equity and sustainability of operations and overall risk profile of the Organization. The need to address the systemic and recurring issues with regard to the hiring of the Affiliate Workforce (NSHR), e.g. contract types, supervisory span and control, governance structures of offices, and project management, has already been identified⁷ and many of the actions below and in the following sections will assist with this while addressing the primary objective of reducing the vacancy rate.

Actions for Strategic Goal 3	Date initiated	Estimated completion date
Corporate Workforce Planning initiative. In communication with organizational directors, all vacant PWB posts identified and action requested, i.e. issuance of vacancy announcements (417 in total). ⁸ Managers requested to review and update profiles of encumbered positions (2 100 in total). ⁹	Jan 24	Dec 25
Internal review of current recruitment business processes. Immediate standardization where possible, streamlining and faster, more proactive response times. Upskill and allocate available/returning/added resources across all recruitment processes. Supported by external review.	Jan 24	Dec 25
New recruitment guidelines with streamlined processes drafted, consulted, and issued with communications. Engagement with personnel to support implementation (awareness sessions, briefings, helpdesk	Apr 24	Mar 25

⁷ In various internal and external audits, corporate-level action plans, and the [Human Resources Strategic Action Plan \(2020-2021\)](#). Specific audits include AUD1021 (Recurring and Systemic Issues in FAO Country Office Operations), AUD0721 (Decentralized Offices' Governance Structure and Capacity), AUD1119 (Programme Budget and Work Planning), AUD0620 (Non-Staff Human Resource Management), MOPAN and JIU reviews.

⁸ 167 Professional/National Officer posts, 250 General Service posts.

⁹ 1 200 Professional and National Officer posts, 900 General Service posts.

Actions for Strategic Goal 3	Date initiated	Estimated completion date
set-up, capacity building for panel members, including hiring managers and tools for technical assessments, plagiarism/Artificial Intelligence detection, etc.). ¹⁰ See Communications strategy under Strategic Goal 7 for details on recommendations and support for launching new HR products/services.		
Integrated Young Talent Programme to empower young talent and communicate a coherent youth programme as a dynamic engine for FAO. Integration of the Junior Professional Programme, Global Internship, Volunteer and Fellows Programme, and Young Professional Programme.	Jan 25	Dec 25

Strategic Goal 4: Updated and in-place policies and procedures

42. Policies and procedures empower and equip personnel to manage themselves and their teams. Personnel need to know that policies and procedures are in place and what the processes are for accessing them. Clear and relevant policies, procedures as well as guidance ensures personnel of equitable practices and applications.

43. Better business intelligence, including better collaboration and understanding of the needs of the Organization through the strategic HR business partners working closely with senior leaders, will inform the development of new policies as required.

Actions for Strategic Goal 4	Date initiated	Estimated completion date
Roles & responsibilities defined with each new policy/guidance document (manager/HR RO/SSC/headquarters HR teams). ¹¹	Jan 24	Ongoing
FAO Learning Framework implemented, guiding the planning, execution, monitoring and evaluation of staff learning and training activities.	Jan 24	Ongoing
Temporary Development Assignment policy drafted, consulted and issued with communications.	Mar 24	Jun 25
Career Development Framework drafted, consulted and implemented in a phased approach.	Apr 24	Dec 27
Assessment of PEMS conducted in line with the Audit of the FAO Accountability Framework (AUD0624), with a view to introducing changes to procedures, guidelines and policies as needed.	Sep 24	Dec 26
Preparation of users for implementation of/access to new policies, procedures and practices through communications and engagement. ¹² See Communications strategy for details on support for launching new HR products/services.	Jun 24	Ongoing
Workplace conduct and related mandatory training courses reviewed , considering new policies/guidelines, consolidated and/or updated.	Jun 24	Dec 26

¹⁰ These actions were agreed with the decentralized HR Officers, in the Action Plan from the global HR workshop 2023.

¹¹ These actions were agreed as part of the Action Plan from the global HR workshop 2023.

¹² Evidence and feedback received shows that sending out/uploading a document may not have desired changes to behaviours or result in desired business benefits unless personnel are made aware of and supported to use and correctly apply the new policies, practices and procedures.

Strategic Goal 5: Better business intelligence and data-based HR solutions

44. Fragmented and outdated tools in FAO's HR operations contributes to a lack of efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, all HR personnel require competency in the use of data analytics to better design and implement HR solutions.

45. Better use of data by HR experts will ensure that HR adds value to the business, by using analytics to translate strategy into practical, tailored, evidence-based solutions. Data and analytics currently available from Taleo, Cornerstone and other sources require more proactive use for workforce planning and other strategic HR needs, including overall planning.

46. HR needs to carefully assess the need for digital tools to drive organizational effectiveness, greater oversight and accountability. The development and delivery of an integrated talent solution, including an internal talent marketplace, will enhance operational efficiency in the workplace, enhance the candidate experience, and allow for more effective talent data, intelligence and analytics. This in turn will support proactive, faster and more informed decision -making and transparent goal setting.

47. The HR workstream is a key participant in the assessment phase of the corporate HRIS programme of work. Focusing on what needs to change in HR processes and systems to enable HR to shift from the current administrative centric, reactive way of working to becoming more strategic, streamlined and an effective business partner.

Actions for Strategic Goal 5	Date initiated	Estimated completion date
Standardizing information collection with current tools (particularly in Taleo) to ensure more accurate reporting, monitoring and accessibility (including HR problem solvers in new TAM Team, and strategic HR business partners with their streams/offices).	Apr 24	Dec 25
Provide HR data and build capacity on the use of data (self-service). Ensure access to information and knowledge of how to use data tools is provided to all HR teams (headquarters, regions, etc.) as appropriate. Provide information to managers/division directors/office heads to enable better planning and management of resources.	June 24	Mar 25
Definition of end-to-end HR functions, processes and system solutions (HRIS) to connect workforce planning, talent acquisition, learning, performance management and skills framework as part of HRIS cloud implementation programme of work.	Jan 25	Dec 27
Mandatory training dashboards developed and utilized to visualize and monitor corporate and organizational unit compliance.	Feb 24	Dec 25

Strategic Goal 6: Foster engagement, well-being, caring for personnel and a fair, respectful work environment for everyone to thrive

48. Creating a respectful, healthy, inclusive, safe workplace where everyone can thrive, and where personnel feel engaged, valued, and have a sense of belonging is a key component for organizational performance. Dedicated, qualified and experienced resources in these areas are a vital part of the HR function. They provide advice for managers, support awareness, help with resolution and prevention of conflict, and ensure that robust frameworks are in place.

49. The appropriate resourcing of a new Administrative Law Unit will assist in further supporting supervisors to perform their people management role. It will also help to ensure compliance with rules, policies and practices.

50. Promoting a work-life balance, health and mental well-being for individuals is part of creating an overall culture of well-being.

Actions for Strategic Goal 6	Date initiated	Estimated completion date
2024 Employee Satisfaction Survey (E2S) conducted and results inform action planning at both the corporate and unit levels.	Oct 24	Dec 27
Update the policy for Compensation for Death, Injury or Illness (MS 342) to address gaps, clarify ambiguities, simplify process and reduce risks.	Jan 24	Dec 24
Enhance medical insurance plans to align well-being needs, innovate plan designs to ensure fit-for purpose, long-term financial sustainability.	Jan 24	Dec 26
Continue to streamline pension administration , pilot integrated client-centred customer relationship management (CRM) digital solutions.	Jan 24	Dec 26
Lead the conclusion of the medical insurance tender and the Group Life, Accident and Disability Insurance Plan tender for UN system organizations, maximize efficiencies and financial benefits through UN system-level collaboration. Implement transition of the insurance plans.	Feb 24	Dec 24
Upgrade and improve utilization of the occupational health system (Cority) to streamline workflows, improve reporting and better manage risks.	Jun 24	Dec 25
Update and simplify communication materials related to the staff compensation plan, the medical insurance plan and the Group Life, Accident and Disability Insurance Plan (GLADI), to raise awareness of coverage and encourage self-service.	Oct 24	Jun 25
Evaluate aspects of well-being as a preventative method for health issues, with the goal of implementing a psychological risk management system, developing a well-being toolkit for managers and supervisors and developing capacity building through improved literacy and skills developments on recognizing mental health conditions.	Jan 25	Dec 27
Use new digital health technologies for improved accessibility of well-being services by personnel and their families.	Jan 25	Dec 27
Encourage staff members to complete the mental health trainings.	Jan 25	Dec 27
Develop and communicate a culture emphasizing well-being. Encourage supervisors to check on staff working conditions and mental health.	Jan 25	Dec 27
Evaluate conditions in non-family duty stations , formulate action plan.	Jan 25	Dec 26
Build a global network of family support and well-being focal points for challenging situations and emergencies.	Jan 25	Dec 27
Create a process to address long-term sick leave , implementation of return-to-work guidelines to support managers with delivery of work and well-being of personnel.	Apr 25	Dec 27
Develop onboarding materials for Level 3 and non-family duty stations.	Jun 25	Dec 27
Implement CRM tools for pension, medical insurance and service-incurred operations.	Jan 26	Dec 26

Strategic Goal 7: Coherent, frequent communications and engagement with internal and external clients

51. In today's attention-driven world, effective communication is essential for keeping people informed, motivated and engaged throughout their careers. Senior leaders and managers require practical and sound HR advice for workforce planning and to attract and manage their talent. During recruitment and onboarding, HR plays a key role in attracting top talent and helping newcomers feel welcome and informed. Throughout the personnel lifecycle, HR provides support with policies and procedures, access to training and learning opportunities, and guidance on performance management. Colleagues come to HR for advice on career development, workplace conflicts, medical insurance and pension plans, and other aspects that concern them as personnel and managers.

52. HR communication needs to align with organizational priorities, promote collaboration within the HR community, and focus on meeting people's diverse needs. By doing so it builds trust, enhances HR's visibility and relevance, and ensures our business clients effectively have their HR requirements met.

53. HR strategies, policies and services need to be communicated in a timely manner, coherently and consistently, fostering a culture of transparency, openness and trust. This in turn will support the implementation and effectiveness of all the other strategic goals, empowering people with easy access to updated information, allowing HR to connect with personnel to increase internal commitment and create a sense of belonging, and bringing HR practitioners together to facilitate excellence and collaboration. In addition, internal and external communication efforts and outreach need to be linked and aligned to reinforce the FAO brand, assisting with attracting, acquiring and maintaining talent, filling vacancies and effective workforce planning.

Actions for Strategic Goal 7	Date initiated	Estimated completion date
Targeted communications and engagement to create awareness for change. Where there are new or updated HR services and products, support implementation, awareness, access, use with communication products, tools and resources (written materials, proposals, guidance, town halls, team meetings, individual conversations, engagement with business directors/senior leaders, focal points).	Jan 24	Ongoing
Develop a communications strategy and action plan for HR communications including analysis of key audiences, channels, products, services, branding, resources required and proposed actions for better use of channels and products. Support the creation of a communication mindset within the HR Division and shared roles and responsibilities for communication and engagement with clients.	Apr 24	Dec 25
New HR visual identity , launch and share internally.	May 24	Completed May 24
HR annual reports drafted, consulted on and presented to Finance Committee in the respective spring session. Reader-friendly version designed and issued internally.		Ongoing
New HR intranet and career webpage. Update/refresh/redesign and populate the HR intranet as a key communication product and tool.	Jan 25	Jun 25

Strategic Goal 8: One HR Team

54. There are many members of the HR community and operating as One HR Team is key. It leads to better overall application of HR services, and more people-centred approaches both for practitioners, policy and programme managers, and designers. It provides a way of sharing success stories and solutions that can then be transferred across all of FAO. The exchanging of views as a community of practice results in shared understanding, leading to better-informed HR practitioners.

55. At headquarters, operating as One HR Team assists in better design, management and guidance for the implementation of the HR strategy and its actions. Shared knowledge and understanding also leads to clarified procedures, guidance and support for experts and practitioners at the Decentralized Offices.

56. Operating as One HR Team means providing tailored services but finding creative solutions and streamlining as a whole team, leveraging our specialities but standardizing quality. At the same time, it needs to be clear to the business what the differences are, where to go for first responses, who does what and when, so that we avoid duplication.

Actions for Strategic Goal 8	Date initiated	Estimated completion date
Quarterly global HR town halls. All HR colleagues consult, share and discuss vision, strategy, key HR directions, updates, issues, and exchange knowledge.	Jan 24	Ongoing
Monthly global HR management calls/meetings. HR managers (headquarters, SSC, regional officers/teams) provide updates, exchange knowledge, develop solutions and strategic directions.	Jan 24	Ongoing
Weekly headquarters HR Management Team meetings. HR managers (headquarters and SSC HR manager) provide updates, exchange knowledge, develop solutions and strategic directions.	Jan 24	Ongoing
Share all key HR documents, presentations and proposals with all HR colleagues (HR annual report, HR strategy, etc.), Ensure collaboration and co-creation of new approaches and strategy as appropriate.	Jan 24	Ongoing
Keep all regions and SSC informed of progress/plan for HRIS in HR areas. Ensure active participation of Global HR Team in shaping future HR solutions (technology and processes/services). ¹³	Jan 24	Ongoing
One HR Team global retreat. Following on the success of the global HR workshop held in October 2023.		Ongoing

Roles and responsibilities

57. Every member of the HR Division and the global HR community plays a crucial role in implementing the HR strategy. The Office of the Director of Human Resources provides overall leadership and direction for implementing the HR strategy and efforts under the Action Plan. The HR Management Team members are responsible for leading and executing this strategy within their respective expertise areas and ensuring with their teams that actions are undertaken, monitored, and reviewed.

58. Key partnerships within the Organization will be crucial for the implementation of the strategy. These include the Core Leadership, Office of Communications (OCC), focal point networks (Interns, Volunteers and Fellows, training focal points, respectful workplace facilitators and gender focal points), affinity groups (Women's Committee, Youth Committee, UN-GLOBE), division directors and hiring managers.

59. Finally, all personnel are responsible for their workplace conduct, career development, performance, health and professional development. Each manager, including Core Leadership, is responsible for upholding practices and implementing policies that support the Organization's values and people management goals.

¹³ These actions were agreed as part of the Action Plan from the global HR workshop 2023.

Key performance indicators and metrics

Strategic goal	Measurement/KPI	Baseline	Target	Impact
1	Percentage of standard HR ToRs for Affiliate Workforce (NSHR) used for “calls for expression of interest”.		90%	Adherence to corporate standards, ensure alignment and minimize discrepancies. Reduction of HR Division’s time to review.
1	Percentage of divisions/offices/centres which adopted a workforce planning framework also in the context of restructuring/realignment exercise as needed.		90%	Increased productivity, succession readiness to minimize gaps.
1	Number of new generic job profiles developed and classified in consultation with divisions/offices/centres.		n/a	The development of new profiles and functions may be necessary to meet evolving programmatic needs and reflect emerging trends.
1	Number of post actions approved aimed at establishing new profiles or reprofiling existing vacant and encumbered positions to facilitate workforce planning and talent acquisition.		n/a	As the Organization’s needs evolve, roles may need to be redefined by incorporating specialized skills and expertise to maintain operational and strategic efficiency and effectiveness.
2	Staff indicate they are provided opportunities to learn new skills to carry out their job.	68% (2024)	68% in agreement (agree, strongly agree)	To gain insights into the effectiveness of the Organization’s learning and development initiatives.
2	Overall compliance with mandatory training for all employees.	87.2% (2024)	70%	Build a common foundation of knowledge, strengthen the Organization’s core values, promote a shared culture, and ensure familiarity with key policies, rules and processes.
2	Percentage of generic job descriptions for key D-level positions used for vacancy issuances.		90%	Adherence to corporate standards, ensure alignment and minimize discrepancies. Reduction of HR Division’s time to review.
3	Percentage of vacant posts in the Professional category funded by the Programme of Work and Budget (PWB).	24% (2024)	10.7%	Improved recruitment efficiency, workforce planning and turnover assessment.

Strategic goal	Measurement/KPI	Baseline	Target	Impact
3	Time to recruit: The number of days from opening of the vacancy announcement to the selection decision, for staff positions in the Professional category funded by the PWB.	228 days (2024)	120 days	Improved productivity, recruitment process efficiency, workforce planning, candidate experience (Organization's reputation).
3	Percentage of vacant positions acted upon, e.g. vacancy announcements issued, for staff positions in the Professional category funded by the PWB.		80%	The Organization is responsive and proactive in addressing staffing needs. Recruitment efforts are initiated promptly after a position becomes vacant.
3	Gender parity in the combined Professional and above categories: - P-1 to P-5 by 2024 - D1 and above by 2026	48% P1-P5 27% D and above (2024)	Parity achieved and maintained	To enhance representation of women and promote an inclusive workplace.
3	Geographic representation: Percentage of equitably represented countries for staff positions in the Professional category funded by the PWB.	73% (2024)	75% or above	To gain insights into the Organization's geographic representation and make data-driven decisions to enhance representation across different regions.
4	FAO has effective policies, processes and procedures to address harassment and other unacceptable behaviour.	74% (2024)	70% in agreement (agree, strongly agree)	To measure the effectiveness of the Organization's policies and procedures and take proactive steps to create a safer and more respectful work environment.
5	Number of capacity building sessions on the use of HR data organized per year.		n/a	To make better use of HR data and empower HR teams.
6	Number of global outreach sessions on social security benefits organized per year.		- Three global sessions - Five country-specific sessions	To maximize employee awareness and utilization of benefits under the medical plans offered.
7	Average readership on HR-related intranet articles.		n/a	To measure the effectiveness of the HR communications strategy and take data-driven actions to improve engagement with HR-related content.
7	Unique page visits to the HR intranet page.		n/a	To improve access to relevant HR information and take data-driven actions to improve engagement with HR-related content.

Strategic goal	Measurement/KPI	Baseline	Target	Impact
8	Number of global HR town halls organized per year.		Four town halls per year	The One HR Team consults, shares and discusses vision, strategy, key HR directions, updates, issues and exchanges knowledge.
8	Number of monthly global HR management calls/meetings organized per year.		Monthly meeting	HR managers (headquarters, SSC, regional officers/teams) provide updates, exchange knowledge, develop solutions and strategic directions.
8	Number of weekly headquarters HR Management Team meetings organized per year.		Weekly meeting	HR managers (headquarters and SSC HR manager) provide updates, exchange knowledge, develop solutions and strategic directions.

Annex 2

Update on the assessment of the recruitment process

60. At its 202nd session in November 2024, the Finance Committee considered document FC 202/6, *Assessment of Recruitment Process* that highlighted the findings of a review by an external contractor, “Deloitte” of FAO’s recruitment process.

61. The alignment of Deloitte’s recommendations for improving FAO’s HR processes with the draft HR Strategy (2025-28) demonstrates a unified approach to addressing organizational challenges and achieving strategic goals. The following points summarize the integration of these recommendations into FAO’s HR priorities:

62. This alignment with the recommendations for enhancing FAO’s HR processes with the HR Strategy highlights a comprehensive and strategic approach to addressing organizational challenges while ensuring the effective delivery of FAO’s mandate. This analysis illustrates how these recommendations integrate seamlessly into the HR priorities set for the coming years, fostering a modern, efficient and inclusive workforce.

Streamlining recruitment process efficiency

63. One of the key challenges identified by Deloitte was the length and complexity of the recruitment process. Currently averaging 228 days, the recruitment timeline exceeds the target of 120 days, leading to delays and bottlenecks. To address this, Deloitte proposed reducing recruitment times through innovative solutions such as leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI) for pre-screening and testing candidates, consolidating administrative tasks within a dedicated team, and providing targeted training for hiring managers and panel members.

64. The HR Strategy aligns with these recommendations by focusing on enhancing recruitment efficiency through Strategic Goal 3, which prioritizes reducing vacancy rates and timelines. Specific areas of focus to bring about greater efficiencies include the development of service level agreements (SLAs) and operational level agreements (OLAs) for pre-screening, time taken to short list, etc. with key performance indicators (KPIs) for each step in the recruitment process.

65. This includes introducing advanced tools, such as AI and data analytics, to automate processes and improve transparency. Furthermore, under Strategic Goal 5, the integration of AI-based solutions will enhance real-time tracking and reporting, allowing for more streamlined decision-making. Together, these initiatives aim to modernize recruitment processes and foster a more agile and responsive workforce.

Advancing workforce planning and talent management

66. Deloitte’s findings emphasized the importance of a skills-based human capital framework to support strategic workforce planning and talent management. This involves integrating workforce planning with talent systems and developing an internal talent marketplace to ensure resources are utilized effectively and flexibly.

67. FAO’s HR Strategy incorporates these elements under Strategic Goal 1, which focuses on comprehensive workforce planning. This approach includes addressing skills gaps, aligning staffing with organizational priorities and implementing succession planning initiatives. Strategic Goal 2 further supports this by fostering an integrated talent management model that combines recruitment, learning and performance management into a cohesive framework. Additionally, the development of a unified HR Information System (HRIS) under Strategic Goal 5 will connect these efforts, enabling seamless planning, acquisition and development of talent.

Enhancing operational efficiency in HR

68. Deloitte also highlighted the need for operational improvements, including automating workflows, integrating Taleo with other systems and modernizing the HR Information System (HRIS) environment to eliminate inefficiencies. These steps are crucial for ensuring that HR processes are both effective and sustainable.

69. The HR Strategy addresses these challenges through Strategic Goal 4, which focuses on simplifying policies and procedures to empower personnel and managers. By embracing the “One HR Team” model under Strategic Goal 8, FAO aims to enhance collaboration and consistency across its Decentralized Offices and headquarters. Moreover, Strategic Goal 5 emphasizes the adoption of advanced digital tools and automation through a unified HRIS to improve data accuracy, streamline operations and enable proactive decision-making. These initiatives collectively ensure that HR operations are aligned with the Organization’s broader strategic objectives.

Fostering engagement and well-being

70. The well-being of employees and the creation of a respectful workplace were key areas of focus in Deloitte’s recommendations. These factors are vital for mitigating operational risks and building a collaborative and productive organizational culture.

71. FAO’s HR Strategy addresses these concerns through Strategic Goal 6, which prioritizes fostering a fair and inclusive work environment. Initiatives under this goal include enhancing engagement, promoting mental health and well-being, and ensuring all employees feel valued and supported. Additionally, Strategic Goal 7 emphasizes the importance of coherent and transparent communication strategies to build trust, improve employee awareness and reinforce FAO’s commitment to an inclusive and respectful workplace.

Integrated action plan

72. The HR Strategy sets forth a detailed and integrated action plan to implement Deloitte’s recommendations effectively. Central to this approach are:

- a) **A proactive HR business partner model:** Senior HR business partners will play a pivotal role in addressing recruitment challenges, providing strategic workforce planning and delivering tailored solutions to managers and teams.
- b) **Expanded technological capabilities:** Advanced tools, including AI, a unified HRIS and automation, will be deployed to enhance recruitment processes, talent management and operational intelligence.

Conclusion

73. The alignment between Deloitte’s recommendations and the proposed HR Strategy underscores a cohesive, forward-looking approach to modernizing HR processes. By integrating these recommendations, FAO is well positioned to address its organizational challenges, enhance operational efficiency and build a high-performing workforce capable of achieving its strategic goals. This alignment not only supports the Organization’s immediate needs but also lays a foundation for long-term sustainability and success.