

GLOBAL REWARDS CHANGES

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Last updated: **MAY 2025**

Our workforce is evolving. More locally hired staff (LHS) are undertaking senior positions and internationally mobile staff (IMS) come from more countries. How we work is evolving too, with new operational and support models, more intersectional activities and a growth in entities hosting staff from other countries. The outcomes of Rewards Review will clarify reward policies and processes, evolve staff groups, and implement a common global grading system, all of which will help address inconsistencies in pay and benefits for staff groups and will result in a rewards system that provides more equity, transparency and consistency and will better enable MSF to nurture an increasingly diverse workforce with the right balance of skills for today's operational needs and tomorrow's humanitarian challenges.

Below is a thorough list of questions that have been raised by various staff across MSF, with current responses. You can jump directly to a specific topic by clicking on a link below or browse through each question.

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REWARDS CHANGES (GENERAL BACKGROUND, PROCESS, TIMELINE)

Q: Why does MSF think changes to Rewards is necessary?

A: MSF has been faced with widely acknowledged, longstanding problems relating to the current system of rewards, which is seen by many as obsolete and not supporting the organization in responding to its operational mandate.

These problems include unnecessary and inequitable differences in pay and benefits of different staff groups. These problems are seen as evidence of institutional racism and discrimination in the organisation. As a result, MSF leaders, staff and association members have called for fundamental changes in how MSF rewards its staff, including motions passed in the International and other General Assemblies.

These challenges also impact how MSF jobs are valued. Different grading approaches and criteria are used across the organisation to grade positions in headquarters and entity offices and hubs. Further, although the IRFFG ("field function grid") provides common criteria for grading positions across MSF projects, there is no ability to compare or align across the movement, making career planning difficult. With so many different grading approaches, work is not valued consistently across the organisation which leads to lack of transparency, inequity, and perceptions of unfairness.

MSF has evolved with intersectional and regional hubs, increased hosted positions around the world, and more mobility of staff from non-contracting sections. Our rewards policies and processes need to evolve too, to better enable MSF operations. The full Case for Change can be found [here](#) (requires access to MSF SharePoint).

Q: What is the timeframe, and where are we now?

A: The Rewards Review has achieved significant impact for MSF and for staff through:

- A broad reflection on our approach to pay and benefits including wide stakeholder engagement and technical analysis.
- A Case for Change highlighting the problems that need to be addressed, agreed by MSF's leadership.
- A shift to a global workforce approach rather than fragmented by staff group and entity.
- Broad awareness and support for these deliverables.
- An implementation roadmap outlining concrete workstreams, agreed by MSF's leadership.

Many of these deliverables have already been implemented and are benefiting large numbers of staff, including the removal of the indemnity for IMS, the improved Living Wage methodology, more attractive pay for LHS coordinators, new paid leave provision and a ceiling of 48 working hours a week. Other deliverables are very well developed and will begin to be applied soon, including the Global Grading Framework and the Mobile Salary Grid. Several other deliverables have been deprioritized due to changes in external factors, legal constraints and other challenges. The IDRH continues to prioritise high-impact and high-value deliverables that will have the biggest impact on our ability to support MSF's social mission. Detailed timelines can be found [here](#).

Q: Who is responsible for implementing these changes to rewards?

A: MSF's leadership has consistently emphasized the urgency and importance of these changes to Rewards policies and practices, stressing that **it is a collective responsibility of all entities**. The Full ExCom confirmed through a unanimous vote that every member accepts responsibility for managing, implementing and allocating the needed resources to support this process and any agreed changes. In May 2023, the Full ExCom reconfirmed the responsibility of all members to **implement collective decisions on global rewards consistently**, and requested monitoring, evaluation, consistency and accountability mechanisms to follow up these collective decisions.

Q: How will these changes improve attraction and retention of qualified and skilled staff?

A: There are several ways we believe changes to global rewards will improve talent attraction and retention.

- The Global Grading Framework will improve consistency in how jobs are valued and enable people to see how jobs are aligned regardless of the entity. This will allow staff to see clearer career options and what skills and experience are required for jobs across the organisation, improving motivation to build a career in MSF.
- Changes to pay – namely the improved Living Wage Policy and the increased Attractiveness for Country-Based Coordination - will improve how we benchmark salaries, making salaries more attractive for many country-based MSF staff. We anticipate this will reduce the number of gaps in key positions in programmes by making MSF more competitive and attractive to staff in comparison to other organisations in similar contexts.
- A set of minimum standards for core benefits (e.g. healthcare, leave, retirement savings) will enable MSF to be more competitive and attractive to staff and is also aligned to more equitable benefits, particularly supporting women staff in MSF.

Q: Will the Rewards Review outcomes be applied retroactively?

A: Changes to policies are not retroactive. Upon approval and finalisation of the implementation plan, the changes begin as per the agreed schedule and approach, which in some cases may be phased country-by-country requiring many months to be implemented throughout the organisation.

Q: Is MSF engaging with other organisations and external experts?

A: The Rewards Review is informed by practices of other actions/organisations. We participate in several fora for exchanging information with other organisations.

We also have bilateral meetings with other organisations who have carried out similar ambitious projects. They have shared their experience in rolling out staff benefits and their approach to staff engagement in developing these benefits. We are also part of a network of international NGOs called Project Fair (www.project-fair.business-school.ed.ac.uk), where different NGOs exchange experiences and challenges in relation to fairness in remuneration.

Finally, we get technical advice from HR consultancies that have worked with other sectors and organisations and know the range of policies and tools that are available and good practice. At different stages and on some deliverables, we use external consultants. For example, one of our major consultants is [Korn Ferry](#), the owner of the Hay methodology that was used to build MSF's International Field Function Grid (IRFFG).

The planning and design of different rewards changes are also done through extensive engagement and contribution with a number of intersectional platforms, working groups, subject-matter-experts, and teams across the organisation. This broad and intersectional approach to planning, design and implementation ensures this is aligned to the needs of all entities and prioritised by all entities.

Q: How do changes to rewards contribute to DEI and to tackling institutional racism?

A: The Rewards Review has several different deliverables, and many aspects of the deliverables and anticipated outcomes enable increased diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Rewards Review deliverables strive to eliminate any unnecessary differences in remuneration while also considering how best to ensure mixed teams, mobility, and staffing of key roles in diverse contexts and will remove elements of the existing rewards system that are associated with privilege such as per diem. In doing so MSF will attract new and diverse staff who may have been disadvantaged by the long-standing inequities. The deliverables will also bring much more equity and transparency into our rewards system. The Rewards Review does not address every commitment of MSF's DEI priorities. The [Core ExCom Action Plan to Tackling Institutional Discrimination and Racism](#) contains many more actions unrelated to rewards.

Q: How will volunteers and Ministry of Health (MoH) partners be affected by MSF's revised rewards system?

A: Salaries, payments, and benefits for Volunteers and MoH partners are not in scope of the Rewards Review. We recognize that the way MSF rewards these two groups may be perceived as inequitable. However, MSF has decided that the scope of the Rewards Review is limited to **staff** who are on MSF employment contracts, given that MSF has capacity to autonomously decide on their remuneration.

There may be a perceived risk that by increasing salaries of country-based staff in programmes (often referred to as locally hired staff) MSF will either generate or increase the gap between MSF and MoH staff, and that this could increase tensions between MSF Staff and MoH working alongside or encourage MoH staff to work with MSF instead.

This perceived risk was assessed, and it is believed it should not be a high risk. The groups of staff that are foreseen to have an increase due to Rewards measures are mostly the lower-level positions and the highest-level positions. Issues of tensions between MoH salaries and MSF salaries has always been a challenge, and we have never conducted a formal analysis on the internal market impact. That said, MSF is also focused on standard of care and expectations related to being a Responsible Employer.

Q: How are these rewards changes implemented in countries where both programmes and HQ/offices exist?

A: All country-based positions (formerly separated into HQ positions and locally hired staff positions) will be treated in the same way. When rewards policies are implemented in countries that have programmes and entities co-located, for instance Kenya or Poland, there is a commitment to consistent and aligned implementation. For example, when the improve paid leaves policy is implemented in Kenya, it will be implemented by all programmes and by MSF Eastern Africa at the same time, reinforcing the commitment to aligned implementation.

In another example, when implementing the Global Grading Framework, all positions (formerly separated into HQ and Field functions) will be graded using a global framework with the same consistent approach to valuing a position's grade/level, bringing more consistency and transparency particularly in countries where both programmes and HQ offices exist. Learn more about the global grading framework [here](#).

Q: Have the legal implications of labour legislation across all countries been considered?

A: The Legal Departments of all entities are regularly consulted to determine the legal implications of both proposals and implementation approaches. An analysis of legal impact by context is built into the development of rewards policies, as it is customary for any change in policy for MSF.

Q: What if local regulations are different from MSF standards in rewards?

A: It is essential to refer to the local legislation and cultural context when developing local leave policies. Local legal requirements, when more favourable than MSF minimum standards will be applied. In every global rewards policy change implemented by MSF there are implementation guidance tools to ensure this analysis and comparison is completed per context.

Q: How is MSF considering the financial impact of these changes to rewards?

A: As always, MSF leaders are carefully managing the longer-term impact of increases in the wage bill. The International HR (IHR) team regularly reviews cost impact estimates of changes in MSF rewards and shares these with the FinDirc, the IDRH and the ExCom. These estimates are adjusted regularly as FTEs change and more details of the actual costs become available. It is important not to overlook that NOT addressing the problems identified by the Rewards Review also has a financial impact (e.g. increased admin costs resulting from turnover) and impacts on operations. The [Case for Change](#) continues to be applicable.

Concerns have been expressed about the financial impact of the future implementation of the Global Grading Framework (GGF), however analysis of the financial impact of adjusting the Programme Function Grid (currently called the IRFFG) to the GGF is not yet complete. The ExCom will take decisions on how best to implement the GGF, depending on this analysis.

A salary is determined by both the job grade and the salary grid. Because salary grids are informed by how similar graded roles are paid in other organisations in the same context, changes to job grading must be implemented at the same time as a salary review. This means changes in grading will need to be phased with salary reviews, which will help manage cost impacts. Decisions on when to implement salary reviews are taken by OCs, ensuring alignment where more than one OC is present.

The financial impact of rewards changes has been included in the multi-year budget of MSF since 2023. The ExCom has reconfirmed that improving the way MSF staff is remunerated is a priority for the organisation and that is taken into account in the operational ambitions for the coming years.

MSF STAFF GROUPS

Q: What will the new staff groups look like, and what is the purpose of changing existing staff groups?

A: A Staff Groups model means that types of positions are grouped together for the purposes of defining how these groups receive pay and benefits. It is a model that provides consistency and transparency in decisions on pay and benefits. Currently, there are three staff groups: internationally mobile staff (IMS), locally hired staff (LHS), and headquarters staff (HQ). These staff groups no longer reflect the reality of how MSF works or the needs of our global workforce. For example, MSF has both HQ staff and country-based staff in programme working in the same context and in the same location, yet are rewarded very differently in the current model, reinforcing perceptions of inequity. Another example, MSF has seen an increase in regional hubs and hosted staff across the organisation, diversifying our operating model but highlighting the inequities in how staff that either do the same job or are based in the same located are rewarded. The model for new staff groups takes into consideration these issues of inequity. The new model has been developed using strategic directions provided by the ExCom, analysis from a broad group of stakeholders, and feedback from a broad group of MSF staff.

One of the key objectives in reviewing the model for staff groups is to reduce differences in the way people are remunerated by switching the focus from the individual to the position that the individual occupies. This way, MSF will be able to significantly reduce some of the differences that exist today between staff groups, although not all differences will disappear as they will include specific allowances for mobility or other considerations.

The model will move to two new staff groups to replace the existing three. These are:

- **Country-based positions:** Positions performed in the same context over an extended period of time, and not entailing international mobility. Paid on the local salary grid where the work is taking place. Includes positions filled by staff hired locally in programmes (formerly called “Locally Hired Staff in Programmes”) and in offices (formerly called “Locally Hired Staff in HQ/Offices” or “HQ staff”).
- **Mobile positions:** Positions that involve moving internationally to take on assignments limited in time in programmes. Mobile positions will be paid using a mobile salary grid (*see definition in this glossary*), irrespective of where the mobile staff come from.

In general terms, we can say that:

- all mobile staff will be paid according to one single grid, differently than what happens today with IRP2.
- all staff in country-based positions will be paid according to the host country salary grid, with specific recognition of international experience to guarantee attraction for senior profiles with international experience.

The decision to pay all staff on the same grid (specifically on the Mobile Salary Grid for mobile staff) comes out of the multiple motions agreed by different General Assemblies (including the International one) which considered that using domicile to determine the salary of Mobile Staff was unfair and potentially discriminatory.

Q: In the initial description of Staff Groups, there was a description “relocated positions”, what happened to this staff group profile?

A: In 2023, the Full ExCom validated a major change in the definition MSF staff groups. The decision taken at that time was that MSF would go from having three staff groups to having only two (Country-based and Mobile staff). As part of this change the Full ExCom decided it was important to differentiate between staff moving internationally to undertake programme positions for limited periods (“Mobile” group), and staff relocating to another country for a long-term position over years in the same country (“Relocated”).

Following this Full ExCom decision, the feasibility of this change was explored thoroughly, including legal and administrative analysis, together with in-depth discussions on the potential impact on staff and operations. The ExCom

decision to continue guaranteeing home contracts (contracts issued by the Contracting Section of the country where the international staff has residence) for staff working internationally in programmes was a key factor in the analysis.

Taking into account the complexities identified in the feasibility analysis, the challenges in implementing such a complex change and the limited number of staff that would be impacted, in early 2025 the IDRH and ExCom decided to de-prioritize this specific change in order to guarantee sufficient capacity and resources for other imminent changes. This means that **the implementation of the “Relocated” staff is not being pursued for the time being but will be discussed again in the future.**

This does not impact the decision to have only two overall staff groups in MSF (“Country-based” and “Mobile”). The small portion of staff moving to another country to work in programmes for a long period of time will be considered and remunerated as part of the Mobile staff group. Staff moving to another country to work in offices will be part of the Country-based staff group, in line with what is already happening now.

Q: Who will determine if a position will be mobile or country-based?

A: Having mobile or country-based positions will largely be informed by operational needs of MSF and to an extent the availability of staff to fill positions. The assessments will be made by the individual OC as the needs determine.

ON PAY

Q: How much will individual salaries change?

A: How salaries are calculated in programmes for country-based staff (previously referred to as Locally Hired Staff) have already started changing. MSF has redefined minimum standards for pay, which will ensure more consistency across different parts of the organization in how we set salary. The policies impacting country-based staff in programmes rolled out include:

- Attractiveness for Country-Based Coordination. The positioning of Country-based Coordination positions (Level 12 to 15 of the IRFFG) will be established between the median and the 75th percentile of the country’s INGO market taking into account specific criteria that can be found [here](#).
- Living Wage policy. The existing methodology has been adjusted to improve how we define our 'Living Wage', through a global policy that aims to ensure that the minimum salary level, which must meet or exceed the living wage, provides adequate living conditions for all staff members. This also reinforces all Operational Centres use the same methodology when reviewing salary grids. This workstream of the Rewards Review resulted in agreements on improvements to the current methodology and confirming or agreeing hitherto unclear elements of it. The key improvements to the [MSF Living Wage policy](#) can be found [here](#).

The changes vary context by context, so the specific impact on individual salaries will be determined by each programme country and is based on the salary reviews and market benchmarks conducted in individual programme countries. Additional changes to benefits available for country-based staff have also begun to be implemented. More information on benefits can be found [here](#).

For Internationally Mobile Staff, the cost modelling is ongoing and no decisions on implementation of the future Mobile Salary Grid have been made yet. More concrete information, including how impacts will be measured and how individual salaries for mobile staff will change, will be available in late 2025, with an anticipated implementation date in mid-2026.

Q: Will there be a standard formula and time for reviewing salaries in countries where MSF has programmes?

A: There is now a commitment to complete salary reviews every 2 years in all countries with MSF programmes, whereby previously these salary reviews were conducted every 3-5 years. This improved timeline responds to the needs of many MSF staff who saw their salaries impacted by inflation and unstable markets over a short time.

Salary reviews are conducted by MSF's Benchmarking Unit (BMU) making the methodology and approach consistent across all OCs and programmes. Salary reviews require time and effort and can be temporarily disruptive to operations. Although MSF has increased the review period to every 2 years, it is not feasible to conduct such reviews any more frequently unless in situations of extreme [economic turmoil](#).

Q: How does MSF define a Living Wage?

A: MSF's living wage is defined as the full-time wage necessary to support the purchase of goods and services needed to provide a healthy standard of living for the staff member and their core family in modest surroundings, taking into account other income earners. Due to the variety of contexts and countries where MSF has activities, there are no external indicators that can be used in all locations where MSF is present to ensure consistency. MSF has thus developed its own Living Wage methodology and data collection, which determines how data are collected and processed to arrive at what MSF calls the MSF calculated living wage for a particular country. We use it as a critical indicator during salary reviews to check against the labour market data and aims to align its starting pay (lowest level) at least at a living wage in all locations.

Q: In the past MSF has positioned itself in the lower half of the market. Has this changed?

A: The current positioning of MSF salaries varies depending on the staff group. One of the aims of the Rewards Review is to make sure that MSF is both attractive and fair as an employer. However, this does not imply we will aim to pay at the top of the market. We are also going to continue comparing ourselves to other relevant employers. MSF is introducing a common standard for pay (Global Pay Policy), which will provide a framework for how MSF sets pay for its staff. It covers the different components that make up pay, who MSF compares itself to in setting salaries and how MSF adjusts salaries.

Q: Why can't we pay all staff in euros or dollars?

A: While salaries in some economically volatile contexts are currently set using "hard currencies" (e.g. the US dollar), there are disadvantages in doing so and this is not appropriate or feasible for many contexts, and this will continue to be the case. [This internal reference document](#) provides more details on this.

Q: Will changes to pay have an impact on how much tax I pay?

A: Tax remittances remain a personal (and legal) obligation of staff. Salaries will be taxed according to the legislation of the contracting country. Because changes to pay policies will result in higher salaries for many staff, this may mean an increase in the amount of taxes paid by an individual. MSF adheres to the local laws related to income taxation.

Q: What are "mandates" for coordination positions?

A: Staff in coordination positions in programmes are mandated for a maximum duration of 3 years, renewable once for a maximum of 6 years (often viewed as 3+3 years). This is in line with "[MSF Human Resources Principles on Staff](#)"

[Mobility and Team Diversity](#)” approved by the Core ExCom in March 2018 which confirmed that any coordination position is subject to temporary assignment. As stated in the HR principles on staff mobility and team diversity, “MSF wants to maintain a balance in staff turnover of top management positions to ensure dynamism and continuity and to avoid complacency, in particular linked to resources and people management. To keep its operational reactivity, it is important to limit the amount of time a person can spend in the same position. Coordination assignments should therefore not exceed three to six years. This principle is valid for any MSF employee in a coordination position.” While the Principles were validated by the Core ExCom, no concrete steps were taken at movement level to translate them into concrete policies to enable OCs to establish temporary assignments (also known as fixed mandates) in all programme settings.

Completion of the fixed coordination mandate will be rewarded by an “End of mandate payment”, with the objective of increasing stability in such positions and to partially compensate for the loss of job guarantee that the fixed mandates imply.

Implementation of this change began in January 2025. Full details of this policy change can be found [here](#).

Q: How will we address the need to be competitive in pay for certain jobs that we have difficulties to hire?

A: How we reward different specialized skills will be partially addressed through how jobs are valued, through the global grading framework. The Global Grading tool consistently assigns a level to jobs on the global scale to demonstrate the value of a job to MSF. Medical positions have been undervalued in MSF in the previous IRFFG, which will be addressed in the Global Grading Framework. This makes it possible to compare similar jobs across different entities and – where necessary – through specific measures dealing with scarcity of skills in specific locations.

MSF recognizes that in some contexts a shortage of a particular skill and/or qualification may require adjustments to salaries. Guidance on this can be found in the Global Pay Policy.

Q: A policy was implemented to cap the maximum contracted hours to 48 hours per week. Although I am contracted at fewer than 48 hours/week, many staff work more than this average per week. How will this be addressed?

The IDRH prioritized this measure to remove an exception in the current policies for country-based staff in programmes (Common Frame) that allowed for some country-based programme staff to work for up to 60 hours per week. This change does not target Mobile staff because no mobile staff are contracted for more than 48 hours / week.

The working group in charge of the Rewards Review workstream dedicated to working hours is now reviewing current practices and gathering detailed data on working hours to identify the next priorities, but currently this remains a discussion at programme or team level to encourage a stronger work life balance.

MOBILE SALARY GRID

Q: With one mobile salary grid how do you compensate for the imbalance in the difference in the cost of living between countries and the levels of purchasing power in their respective countries of residence?

A: The decision to pay all staff on a Single Mobile Salary Grid for mobile staff comes out of the multiple motions agreed by different General Assemblies (including the International one) which considered that using domicile to determine the salary of Internationally Mobile Staff was unfair and potentially discriminatory. In this sense the rationale is to go towards the concept of “same job salary” within each staff group. For instance, if two doctors are working beside each

other doing the same job in Country X and exposed to the same expenses because they are not working in their country of residence, they will be rewarded consistently (aligning to the concept of same job same pay). Although purchasing power in individual countries of residence may differ, the requirement of mobile staff while on contract is to be away from their country of residence and are therefore beholden to the same expenses as other mobile staff in each context.

Mobile staff who would be remunerated lower than their current individual salary will receive salary protection until the single mobile salary grid catches up to their individual salary. In the few entities where the future Mobile Salary Grid might be lower than the current IRP2 grid, some measures in terms of additional benefits will be considered to make sure MSF remains sufficiently attractive in the future.

Q: How do you respond to situations when there are mobile staff and country-based staff working in the same role in same country? Will this affect the principle of same job same pay?

A: Overall, MSF's aim is the principle of "same job same salary", although it recognizes there are factors that do not enable to reach this objective at 100%. "Same job same salary" is a concept often used to advocate for equal pay for individuals who perform the same job in the same location.

MSF also needs to consider how best to ensure mixed teams, mobility, and staffing of key roles in diverse contexts. This means that although the basic salaries for the same roles in the same location will be the same, additional allowances may be paid to staff who need to relocate (live temporarily in a different country) to undertake a position. Current differences in remuneration between staff in the same role already exist - not only between Locally Hired and Internationally Mobile Staff, but also between Internationally Mobile Staff coming from different countries. While it is not a perfect solution, the inequitable differences will be substantially reduced and will depend on tangible factors such as the staffs' experiences, their experience in key roles and the level of relevance that MSF assigns to different contexts.

The Global Grading Framework (GGF) will also provide more consistency for similar jobs. The GGF transparently assigns a level on the global scale to demonstrate the value of a job to MSF, regardless of the staff group of the individuals in the positions. This means that two positions with similar responsibilities and accountabilities and complexities will be graded the same level regardless of their location. This may not mean they will have the same salary but it makes it possible to compare similar jobs across different entities.

Q: What happened to the proposal of identifying a 'Returnee' package? It was originally part of the proposals related from the Rewards Review but it is no longer discussed.

A: There was a proposal to provide Returnees (internationally mobile staff returning to their own country to work with MSF) with additional allowances for a determined period in recognition of international experience and their intention to remain working with MSF in their own country. The definition of these potential measures is currently being discussed with the objective of a developing them for validation by the end of 2025.

Q: How will changes to pay impact current packages for international mobile staff with specific packages, such as LTA 12/24 months, Vocationer, Leap. Etc.?

A: A partial review of the existing packages for international mobile staff is ongoing to make sure they are aligned to the spirit of the Rewards Review and continue to respond to operational staffing needs. The focus will be mostly on Emergency Response related packages, as this has been reconfirmed as the most critical priority for MSF at this stage.

PER DIEM

Q: What analysis was done to come to the decision to replace per diem?

A: Per diem has been consistently perceived as a “badge of privilege” that generates unjustifiable differences within MSF staff. Several General Assemblies voted for its removal in the past few years. While the decision to remove per diem has been unanimous, work is ongoing to define what are the best ways to provide access to cash in local currency to all mobile staff, irrespective of the context where they work. The Per Diem received by mobile staff will be replaced with a new mobile salary grid that will be higher than the existing salary plus per diem combined for most mobile staff.

Q: How will mobile staff access cash without per diem?

A: Access to cash in programmes is currently being discussed as part of the implementation planning. Mobile staff will be able to obtain advances in the local currency to facilitate local living costs where banking systems may be weak. Regular discussions and workshops are conducted with finance and HR departments in each OC to ensure sufficient access to payment methods in relevant currencies in programmes and operations around the world, as well as with stakeholders in Contracting Sections to ensure contractual and legislative compliance. More information is expected later in 2025.

CHANGES IN BENEFITS

Q: Will the Home Child Allowance for mobile staff change?

A: With the removal of the indemnity period in October 2023, the Home Child Allowance (HCA) became a fixed allowance, applicable for all eligible internationally mobile staff who have special mobility packages such as Vocationers and LTAs. OC-specific conditions have disappeared, but conditions related to length of unaccompanied assignment will remain. The HCA was originally calculated based on the indemnity period however this now becomes a separate allowance with amounts set at their current level until such time as the mobile salary grid and total package for mobile staff is developed. Home Child Allowance is linked to mobile positions and is not a general family allowance. As a result, it is not part of the package provided to country-based staff. A decision was taken in early 2025 not to include the revision of the Home Child Allowance as part of the wider revision of the mobile remuneration package (Mobile Salary Grid).

Q: What benefits are being reviewed as part of the Rewards Review?

A: Benefits included in the scope of this work are life and disability, healthcare, paid leaves, and eventually retirement / pension. Some will be based on existing benefits provided to staff with some adjustments and others will be benefits that not all staff currently receive.

Benefits not in scope of the Rewards Review include meal and transport allowances, and other non-compensatory rewards such as learning, training, and professional development which continue being responsibility of programmes and entities.

Q: The Leaves Policy has changed and is being implemented, but where can I learn more about the specific provisions for paid leaves?

A: The Leaves Policy and more details on the specific types of leaves eligible for MSF staff can be found [here](#). The Leaves Policy has started to be implemented country by country as of January 2025. To confirm whether the country in which you work has begun applying the revised paid Leaves Policy please contact your programme's HRCO. For Mobile Staff the policy is implemented effective July 1st, 2025 but to confirm the specific changes you are entitled to please contact your entity HR team.

Q: What exactly will be changing in healthcare services for country-based staff in programmes?

A: Healthcare and the coverage of its costs is organized very differently, depending on the context: sometimes it is covered by insurance (global or local), sometimes by reimbursement, and sometimes it is delivered directly by MSF. As part of the intended healthcare plan, we are working with Staff Health Units to define a core package for healthcare for all staff, which will guide changes in each country. The aim is to address key differences that exist today (e.g. what is done in case of work-related situations, what services to include etc.) bearing in mind that we cannot bridge all the differences in availability, quality and legal realities of healthcare services across the world.

The Healthcare plan will be a guidance document for programme countries to define the scope of healthcare services for staff & their dependents. It will provide a practical framework to help staff health implementers ensure access to these core healthcare services across a variety of MSF contexts. The full details will be made available later in 2025.

Q: What type of healthcare will be included in the healthcare plan and who will have access to this healthcare?

A: Mental health will be included in the health services that MSF considers important for its staff. MSF considers mental health an important aspect of staff well-being. Basic dental care will also be included in the health services that MSF considers important for its staff.

The priority will focus first on programme countries where the needs are higher. Programme countries are also where most of our workforce live and work, and the Full ExCom specifically directed that programme countries are prioritised when reviewing benefits and rewards for MSF staff. MSF will continue to provide access to healthcare for dependents residing in the same country with the staff member considered part of an employee's core family (spouse(s) and dependent children). Core family members not residing with the staff member (either country-based or mobile staff) are currently not covered. This possibility is being investigated and has not been decided yet.

Q: How and when will the healthcare plan be implemented?

A: Due to the wide variety of contexts and the differences in healthcare provision today, roll-out will look different depending on the context, impacting differently according to the local situation.

Analysis of existing healthcare services, access to healthcare and other considerations must first be analysed in each country's context. The starting point is different in each context: the type of staff health policy already in place, health risks are not the same everywhere with varied healthcare services available in country. At completion of this analysis a roll-out strategy will be determined. We expect additional clarity on this approach in late 2025.

Q: Retirement Savings / Pension: Will all staff receive a pension/contribution to retirement savings?

A: The core benefits being reviewed as part of the Rewards Review include retirement savings however based on the agreed priorities and timelines, policy design and decisions on retirement savings or pension contributions for MSF staff

will not be reviewed until at least 2026. This means that MSF aims to ensure that we contribute for all staff to prepare their retirement. However, this is organized very differently depending on the country. The objective at this stage is to ensure MSF contributions are within a minimum range for all staff provided either through social systems and/or private local or global savings schemes depending on the context.

ON JOBS/FUNCTIONS AND THE NEW GLOBAL GRADING FRAMEWORK

Q: What is this Global Grading Framework (GGF)?

A: The GGF is a tool that provides a systematic approach and consistent criteria to grading Jobs across MSF, regardless of where the job is located or the staff group it belongs to. It has been developed using the [Korn Ferry](#) HAY methodology, a trusted scoring methodology used globally by companies and NGOs including many entities in MSF, which has been customized to the operational reality of MSF. The same framework will be used to grade jobs in Programmes, Offices, Regional Hubs or any other existing or future structures within MSF.

The GGF covers 20 levels which include all MSF jobs, from the highest executive director (level 25) to the lowest unskilled job (level 6). The GGF is simple to use: A job will be assigned to a **Job Family**. Each Job Family clusters jobs that reflect a similar type of work (e.g. technicians, health specialists, advisors, etc.) and allows several levels. Each Job Family describes a set of **differentiating factors**. By identifying which differentiating factors apply to the job, the job's level will be determined. Find the most updated version of the GGFs Job Families here: [Architecture and Job Families](#)

Q: What elements are assessed by Korn Ferry's methodology for grading a job?

A: Korn Ferry's job evaluation, also known as HAY Methodology, assesses the following factors to grade a job:

Know how: Relevant knowledge, skills and experience needed to achieve the job's purpose. This includes:

- Practical / Technical Knowledge (formal/academic and informal/experience). This dimension is used to recognize increasing specialization required by the job.
- Managerial Knowledge (planning, integrating different activities, organizing, directing, controlling or executing overtime). This might be exercised directly or in an advisory/consultative way.
- Communicating / Influencing Skills (human relations skills needed to communicate or influence others, within or outside the organization).

Problem solving: What problems does the role need to solve, and which is the amount and nature of the thinking required to solve them? This includes:

- Freedom to think: To which extent is the job constrained by rules, methods, procedures, precedents, policy, strategy, etc.?
- Thinking challenge: This refers to complexity of the problems and extent of original thinking required to reach solutions.

Accountability: Measures the effect of the job on end results. It includes:

- Freedom to Act: The extent to which the job decides (decision making).
- Nature of Impact: Degree of influence on end results.
- Magnitude of impact: Area of the organisation impacted by the job.

Q: What is the difference between the GGF (grading tool), a Function grid, and a salary grid?

A: The GGF sets the criteria to consistently grade jobs across MSF. There will be one common tool and methodology (the GGF) for the whole of MSF.

A Function Grid is used to design work and demonstrate organisational hierarchy, support pay structures and career paths within a particular entity or project. Each entity or programme in MSF will have its own Function grid, based on the needs of the Entity or Programme. A salary grid (or salary structure) is linked to a specific country and entity and determines how much an employee should get paid based on the position they hold on personal elements (e.g. seniority, etc.) and on the market practices of the location where the job is based. Each entity in MSF has its own Salary Grid. A more detailed description of these different concepts is found [here](#).

Q: What impact does the GGF have on salary scales?

A: A salary is determined by both the job grade and the salary grid. Because salary grids are informed by how similar-graded roles are paid in other organisations in the same context, salary scales will need to be reviewed to ensure alignment with new job grades and corresponding local market practices. This means changes in grading should be phased with salary reviews.

For instance, if job A is currently in grade 5 and, after being mapped to GGF, it is expected to be in grade 7, what the local market is paying to such job will no longer be relevant in defining the salary linked to grade 5 but instead will be used to define the salary of level 7 instead.

Q: How will entities and programmes apply the Global Grading Framework?

A: The process for entities typically follows these steps:

- Each entity will appoint a “Mapping Team” (i.e. staff who will be trained in GGF, thus ensuring capacity within each Entity).
- Existing jobs will be mapped to GGF (this is, assigned to a Job Family and to differentiating factors within that Job Family). The outcome will be a given GGF level for each Job.

This will either be done directly by Korn Ferry consultants (“Do it for Me” approach) or by the entity’s Mapping Team. Korn Ferry will always do a quality check.

- Once mapped, an impact analysis will be done to anticipate the social and financial impact of its implementation.
- MSFs Leadership (ExCom for programmes and Full ExCom for Entities) will determine the timeframe and deadlines to align to the validated mapped outcomes and ensure MSF can operate globally under the GGF.

A similar mapping exercise was conducted with jobs currently found in the IRFFG, involving the consultation and input from all relevant platforms and subject matter experts. Jobs in the IRFFG were mapped to the GGF and analysis is being conducted to determine the financial and operational impact. MSF’s Leadership (ExCom) will determine how the GGF will be implemented with jobs in programmes.

Q: What is the maintenance process of the Global Grading Framework?

A: The IDRH created an intersectional GGF Steering Committee (GGF SteerCo) to guide key intersectional approaches and ensure the successful adoption of the GGF across MSF to achieve intended outcomes.

Besides the GGF SteerCo, the Global Grading Group (GGG), an intersectional body comprised of technical experts, will provide grading support to entities and programmes to ensure that jobs are graded equitably and comparatively to existing functions within MSF. As trained technical experts, the grading process will be consistent and the resulting grade will be transparent. More information about the Global Grading Group can be found [here](#).

Q: What is the Global Grading Group (GGG), and what do they do?

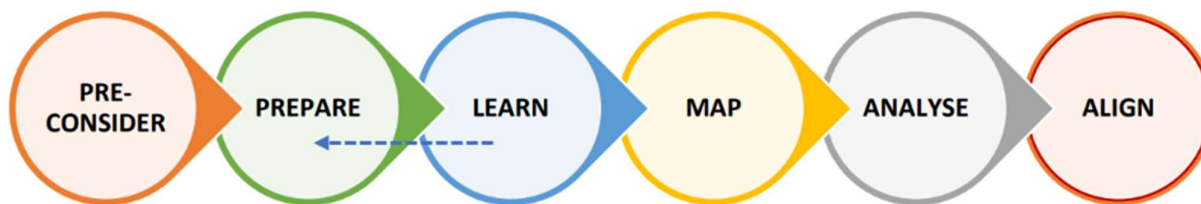
A: The GGG is the intersectional group of technical HR experts representing OCs and Partner Sections who support all entities in MSF with function grading issues. These technical experts are trained in the Korn Ferry Hay methodology and were involved in the design of the GGF architecture. The GGG ensures consistency in grading across all entities applying the Global Grading Framework (HAY methodology). The GGG will confirm the GGF level of hosted jobs and/or new programme functions. The GGG meets weekly, ensures that jobs are fairly scored comparative to the GGF, without bias, and acts as support for technical referents in all MSF entities until they are confident with the GGF grading process.

Q: What does mapping to the GGF mean?

A: Mapping refers to the process by which a job is assigned to a GGF Job Family and to a level within that Job Family. The mapping phase is considered complete once all jobs have been mapped to the GGF. This phase will be followed by an impact analysis, and actual implementation of the mapping. Watch this brief explanatory video for better understanding: [KF-GGF Mapping Explainer Video](#).

Q: How does the mapping process work?

A: Each entity will plan and resource its mapping process. Korn Ferry and the IHR Team will support entities to ensure consistency. There is a detailed Mapping Guide picturing the steps and requirements for the process, which is available together with a Mapping Toolkit in this site: [Mapping](#)



It involves several previous steps, including pre-considerations (e.g. budget, assess stakeholders, etc.), a preparation phase (e.g. update job descriptions and org charts, appointing a mapping team, etc.) and training of the entity's mapping team (e.g. on GGF or how to update job descriptions, etc.). The mapping step itself includes assigning each job to a Job Family and a level within that Job Family. Interviews are conducted with the entity's leadership and senior line managers, to ensure each job's dimensions are well captured before being mapped. After the mapping process is complete, each entity will analyse the changes with the support of Korn Ferry and IHR, and the outcome of the mapping will be agreed by the entity's MT. The outcome will also include the entity's implementation plan.

Q: What tools and training will be provided for compensation and benefits staff who will be responsible for mapping and eventually implementing the Global Grading Framework?

A: There will be training provided for mapping teams in each entity. MSF has designed user guidelines with many tools that can support entities through the mapping process. All these resources are stored and accessible [here](#). Once implemented, entities can rely on the support of the Global Grading Group, an intersectional group of technical referents where questions or concerns on how to grade new or complex functions can be escalated.

Q: What about jobs that are scored lower in the GGF, compared to their current level? Will salaries be decreased?

A: Individual salaries are protected against changes based on the GGF grade, until the moment when the salary corresponding to the new assigned level exceeds the individually protected salary (it will then be unprotected and increased as defined for the new assigned level).

Q: Some jobs do not perfectly match to one job family. For example, what if an HR/Admin dual job matches to two job families?

A: Job families and differentiating factors are necessarily generic and abstract, considering they need to cover many different jobs within a global scope. It is perfectly possible that more than one could be considered, which is the reason why each job family includes a description of its main purpose, examples of jobs covered and a brief reference to main accountabilities, activities and results that will provide guidance to choose the most appropriate one.

A job will qualify for a job family based on the majority of the job matching and should be assigned to only one job family. Once assigned to a job family, the job's level will be defined by determining the best fitting differentiating factors as described by the chosen job family.

Q: Do we make a distinction between Field, hubs, and HQ in how jobs are graded?

A: The GGF job families are covering all MSF functions regardless of where they are based. Unless otherwise required, the only exception is the management job families. GGF distinguishes program management job family from HQ management job family because the requirements and the differentiating factors applicable are not comparable.

Q: Why do the levels within Job Families vary? For instance, some jobs have 4 levels and others have 5.

A: The number of levels in the different job families reflect the needs and complexities of the jobs expected to fit within that job family in MSF. There are different differentiating factors per family, and different main accountabilities across level descriptions. For instance, a nurse can be graded to many levels depending on the complexity and responsibility of that job in a given context. The responsibilities and complexities within jobs called 'nurse' are not equal, and therefore they should not be graded at the same level.

Q: Certain positions do not have an obvious match to a GGF job family. For example, where are Fundraisers, Facilities, support roles, Council, and Association roles?

A: GGF architecture considers both generic job families (e.g. Advisor, Analyst, Manager, Administration, Team Leader, etc.) which can be used to assign jobs no matter the department or area where they are assigned to, and more specific job families designed to fit particular areas or departments (e.g. Public Engagement & Marketing, Operational Communications, Supply Chain Specialist, HR Generalist or Medical Doctors).

Q: The differences in Specialist levels are confusing. How do they align between different specialist jobs (Logistics, Finance, IT, etc.)?

A: Hands-on technical specialist roles in programmes are expected to fall within the lower-medium levels of the job family, while higher levels will allow matching jobs that might include broader accountabilities or impact (e.g. managerial, advisory or reference accountabilities) while still fitting within the same job family.

Q: Programme jobs currently found in the IRFFG are not reflective of the future operational needs and need to be revised. How will GGF manage changes to job descriptions?

A: The GGF was designed in part to address the inflexibility of the current IRFFG - a concern we received from many stakeholders. The GGF is responsive to MSF's unique context and is adaptable to the evolving needs both in programmes and in entities. Because the GGF is designed based on differentiating factors, such as responsibility levels and accountability, it is much easier to determine grades for new or revised jobs.

The Global Grading Group, an intersectional body comprised of technical experts, is in place to grade future new programme-level jobs or revised programme function jobs, which will ensure the jobs are graded equitably and comparatively to existing functions within MSF. The Global Grading Group is comprised of trained technical experts, so the grading process will be relatively fast (assuming the Job Description is complete) and will be consistently and transparently applied.

Q: There is a likelihood that certain country-based positions in programmes will be valued equally or higher than their functional manager level in HQ, based on the grading criteria. How will this be managed?

A: All jobs across the organisation are valued using the same set of criteria, rather than differentiating value by simple geography. The consistent application of scoring criteria to our functions shows that the Country-based coordination functions in programmes carry large responsibilities in the direct management of MSF projects and therefore score higher in accountability than some advisory functions in the desk. Advisory roles might require higher levels of specialist knowledge and functionally provide the coordinator with processes and specialist information, but the coordinator role has higher accountability scores and direct impact on operations. This needs to be recognized internally and integrated into the future staffing, recruitment, and career development policies (long-term). A consistent valuation of roles regardless of geography allows us to be both internally equitable across senior leadership while also being more truthful of the responsibility of country-based positions in programmes and therefore more relevantly attractive.

Q: Some jobs appear to be graded several levels different (up or down) compared to their grade in the current IRFFG. Does this mean there will be salary impacts?

A: There is no confirmed financial impact from the GGF, as benchmarking would still be required regardless of whether jobs shift grades in the GGF. The salary of a job is defined by the local job market, which is confirmed through salary reviews (often called benchmarking) to ensure market alignment. Any shift from a job grade in one grading framework to the GGF does not necessarily lead to adjustments in individual salaries.

For instance, if job A is currently in grade 5 and, after being mapped to GGF, it is expected to be in grade 7, what the local market is paying to such job will not anymore be relevant to define the salary linked to grade 5 but to define the salary linked to level 7 instead.

Q: What is the new process to have hosted jobs graded using the Global Grading Framework?

A: The hosting procedures and revised tools can be found [here](#). New jobs that will be hosted, effective June 2025, are required to be graded using the Global Grading Framework.

There are 4 possible scenarios that might slightly impact the process to grade hosted jobs:

Scenario 1: Both the Managing Entity (ME) and the Hosting Entity (HE) have implemented the GGF: Managing Entities (ME) are the owners of the job and are responsible for managing and hiring the person(s) who performs the job. As such, the ME is also responsible for grading the job and indicating a grade level in the Global Grading Framework (GGF). The Managing Entity shares job description and proposed GGF level with the Global Grading Group using the GGF online [request form](#). The Hosting Entity receives the job description, the confirmed GGF grade (by the GGG), and information about the selected candidate, and determines salary using the Hosting Entity's salary grid. If there is any dispute about the grade of the job, the GGG will review and confirm the grade.

Scenario 2: Only the Hosting Entity (HE) has implemented the GGF: In this case, the GGG will confirm the level under the GGF in collaboration with the ME, which will then be applied by the HE.

Scenario 3: Only the Managing Entity (ME) has implemented the GGF: In this case, the ME will grade the job using the GGF and shares it with the GGG for confirmation. Once confirmed, it will be shared with the Hosting Entity who will translate as well as possible to their current function grid to determine the salary.

Scenario 4: Neither the Managing Entity (ME) nor the Hosting Entity (HE) have aligned to GGF: In this case, the previous process will be followed (i.e. the Hosting Entity accommodates the hosted job within its Function Grid and structure, not using the GGF).

Q: When executive or leadership levels are hosted by another entity, how can salary scaling be achieved based on the hosting entity if the executive job grade is higher than the highest job grade of the hosting entity? For instance, if a Hosting Entity highest salary level is 21, but they are requested to host a senior level job which is graded at level 23 (2 levels higher than the highest salary level in the hosting entity's salary scale) how is this achieved?

A: The hosting entity will determine the salaries for those exceptional grades as required, which should be based on local market data as well as a discussion between the managing entity and hosting entity.

For example: MSF UK hosts 4 executive/senior level jobs for other entities. These 4 jobs are graded between Level 23 and 25. MSF UK's current grading framework and salary grid only goes as high as Level 22. This means the 4 hosted senior positions are graded higher than MSF UK's domestic grid and there is no corresponding salary range for these levels. MSF UK worked with Korn Ferry to project out the higher grade levels using the same strategic criteria used when setting the original grid. Grading for the jobs was the responsibility of the managing entity which was then cross checked by MSF UK and then placed on the extended UK grid.

Q: If the hosting entity has not yet completed their mapping, why do hosted jobs from a managing entity need to be graded using the GGF?

A: MSF's Global Grading Group confirm the job grades of hosted jobs in order to start building an overview of hosted positions and to ensure some consistency in grading. This also reduces grading bias and challenges between hosting entities and managing entities. In grading hosted jobs using the GGF, the Global Grading Group will build familiarity with the tool and terminology, enhancing level of consistency and expertise.

ON STAFF ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

Q: How is feedback from staff taken into consideration?

A: We have regularly engaged with staff since early 2022, through an extensive series of focus groups, town halls, and presentations. Several staff communications have been provided, including video presentations, information tools, and project updates.

We also engage with MSF staff through existing platforms and working groups across all entities on a regular basis. There are more than 10 different intersectional platforms that contribute to workshops and decisions on the various workstreams and policies resulting from the rewards review, including RIOD and all other Directors' Platforms, Field HR Platform, Recruitment and Pool Management Platform, HR29, DEI Community of Practice, DirMeds and MedOps among many others.

OCs and Sections consult and engage staff through their already-established staff representation mechanisms and associations. There is a dedicated Focal Point for each Section, to enable regular and direct connection within each section. They conduct entity-specific engagement events and methods to collect feedback and consult with stakeholders and ensure these voices are represented in the design and implementation of these changes.

END