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## HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN THE PAN AMERICAN SANITARY BUREAU

### Background

1. This report summarizes the human resources management strategies implemented by the Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB or the Bureau) during 2023 and provides workforce trends and statistics for the period from 1 January to 15 December 2023, unless otherwise specified.
2. The Bureau successfully transitioned from the COVID-19 emergency response approach to post-pandemic technical cooperation. PASB personnel were essential in incorporating the many lessons learned from 2020 to 2022. They adapted effectively to a new hybrid work environment, demonstrating their commitment and resilience to address emergent public health challenges and opportunities for enhanced delivery of technical cooperation to Member States of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO). This highlights that PASB's greatest asset continues to be its highly competent and dedicated personnel.

### Status of the People Strategy 2.0

3. The overall objective of the People Strategy is to attract, retain and motivate the best talent and provide them with a world class work environment to enable them to achieve the highest productivity, fully realize their potential, and, through technical cooperation, achieve the goals set out in the PAHO Strategic Plan 2020–2025.
4. During 2023, PASB continued to implement the People Strategy 2.0,<sup>1</sup> which focused on its 3 pillars: agility, functional optimization, and innovation. The Strategy promotes organizational change aimed at modernizing and streamlining administrative operations, developing flexible human resources policies, promoting learning and an inclusive work environment to empower personnel to deliver on the Bureau's mandate to provide technical cooperation to Member States. The People Strategy was enhanced with the introduction of the PAHO Forward initiative, specifically the fifth pillar—permanent modernization and improvement of PAHO management. PASB will develop an updated People Strategy 2.0 action plan for the 2024–2025 biennium which will incorporate several PAHO Forward activities.

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<sup>1</sup> The People Strategy 2.0 incorporates high-priority activities from the 2015–2019 People Strategy and is aligned with the PAHO Strategic Plan 2020–2025 as reported in Document SPBA15/10 (2021).

5. The major achievements of the People Strategy 2022–2023 action plan include the following.

***Agility: “We deliver”***

*Human Resources Strategic Planning*

6. One of the main activities is the corporate strategic human resources planning process, which is fully incorporated within PASB’s Operational Planning. This process enables managers to analyze the workforce composition and determine the actions required to prepare for future staffing needs. The process also includes succession planning, allowing managers to review core leadership and critical technical positions that will need to be filled during the biennium.

7. During 2023, PASB conducted the planning process for the 2024–2025 biennium, requiring managers to reassess and strategically review and plan priority areas of work and estimate the financial and human resources required to deliver on the priorities set by the Member States for that biennium. This analysis resulted in an approved Biennial Work Plan and human resources plan for every organizational entity.

*Talent Acquisition*

8. The Bureau continued its strategic approach of ensuring that fixed-term positions, which are limited in number, are properly defined, and filled in a timely manner. In 2023, PASB successfully completed 103 competitive selection processes for fixed-term staff appointments. These comprised 65 positions in the international professional category, 12 in the national professional officer category, and 26 in the general service category.

9. Among the 77 individuals selected for professional positions, 41 were females and 36 were males. Of these, 51 were professional positions at grade P4 and above—with a gender distribution of 24 females and 27 males. In terms of temporary positions, 89 were filled, including 46 temporary international professionals (25 females and 21 males) and 43 temporary general service staff.

10. To improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability in the completion of competitive selection processes for fixed-term positions, specific key performance indicators were developed and implemented during the last quarter of 2023. These aim to optimize performance, providing metrics, targets, and benchmarks to assess and enhance recruitment and selection efficiency.

11. The implementation of the indicators identified areas for improvement in the selection process, leading to changes that are expected to yield results in both short- and fixed-term recruitment and selection processes. The average time to complete recruitment and selection processes for fixed-term positions was 191 calendar days or 6.2 months in 2022, decreasing to 183 calendar days or 6 months in 2023.

12. Since 2022, PASB has been utilizing the United Nations ClearCheck database for pre-employment checks of all staff, consultants, and interns, demonstrating PASB’s strong commitment to accountability. ClearCheck is a secure online centralized database that permits sharing of information among United Nations agencies regarding former personnel with substantiated

allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse or sexual harassment. It also includes former members who separated from a United Nations entity while allegations were still pending, aiming to prevent re-employment within the United Nations system. In July 2023, the vetting process was expanded to include all workforce categories, such as ministry of health personnel assigned to PAHO/WHO country offices, agency personnel, and outside service providers. Furthermore, in November 2023, PASB initiated criminal background checks for all new staff through a third-party service provider.

13. As a result of the new intern policy, PASB standardized the process of issuing vacancy notices for internship opportunities. Two corporate announcements were issued, resulting in 1426 applications submitted, from which 48 interns (40 female and 8 male) were selected for various internship opportunities throughout the Organization. The nationality of interns includes many countries in the Region of the Americas: Argentina, Brazil, British Virgin Islands, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, the United States of America, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela; and other countries out of the Region: Australia, Germany, and the Republic of Korea. The internship program has proven to be an excellent opportunity for young professionals to explore careers with PASB and for the Organization to benefit from their specialized knowledge and skills.

### ***Functional Optimization: “We update”***

#### *Human Resources Information Systems*

14. The Bureau continued to update and leverage the Human Capital Management module within the PASB Management Information System (PMIS) to further streamline business processes. This allows PASB to operate more efficiently, leverage technology, and update human resources business processes with a focus on optimizing operations, maximizing flexibility, and promoting work/life balance for personnel.

15. In 2023, PASB successfully implemented PMIS Adaptive Planning, which is a new module for automating the human resources planning process. This module allows for greater efficiencies and promotes collaboration across the Organization for managers to prepare and submit their human resources plans. Similarly, the staff onboarding process was updated. This strategic initiative resulted in a significant improvement in the efficiency of onboarding procedures, streamlining the entire process, and ultimately enhancing the experience for new staff members joining the Organization.

16. A review of the PMIS Talent and Performance Module was conducted to improve the user experience; thus fostering staff development and performance. The review provided recommendations for updating the module to enhance the planning and performance evaluation process with the overall objective of improving employee and manager experience through a streamlined performance review process and promoting compliance. To complement the system review, a working group including the Staff Association reviewed the performance appraisal process to provide recommendations for enhancing and streamlining it.

17. During the second half of 2023, PASB initiated the process of updating and configuring the PMIS module for recruitment and selection for staff positions. This is an applicant tracking system that is already fully functional for advertising consultancies and internships and, with the addition of

staff positions, it is expected to significantly streamline, standardize, improve, and expedite the entire talent acquisition life cycle, from advertising vacancies to hiring personnel. The goal is to continue leveraging innovative solutions to optimize the operational workflows and ensure a positive and seamless recruitment, selection, and onboarding experience for managers to carry out the hiring of new personnel effectively.

18. For learning and development systems, PASB continued providing all personnel with access to virtual learning through online platforms through PMIS. These platforms are the Workday Learning Module, the World Health Organization (WHO) Learning Management System (iLearn), LinkedIn Learning, and the United Nations System Staff College (UNSSC) learning platform known as the "Blue Line".

### *Personnel Engagement*

19. In keeping with PASB's decision to promote personnel engagement to create a thriving work environment, the third Personnel Engagement Survey was launched in June 2023. To conduct this in an independent manner, the Organization retained Gallup, an external firm specialized in analytics and advisory services. The survey achieved an 80% response rate, with 1923 personnel participating out of a total of 2408. This marked a 9% increase in the number of respondents compared with 2022 (71%).

20. The Bureau obtained a score of 3.93 on a scale of 1 to 5, placing PASB in the 37th percentile of the Gallup database. Based on these results, Gallup estimated that 43% of PASB personnel are engaged. This represents an increase of 1% compared with the 2022 results (42%). These results, while modest, are encouraging and indicate that the implementation of the engagement action plans is moving the Organization in the right direction.

21. The results of the survey have been widely shared with managers and personnel, and updated action plans with measurable results have been jointly developed by staff and managers, which will be implemented during the 2024–2025 biennium. To enhance managers' skills in leading the process of building greater team engagement, an instructor-led virtual course on creating an engaging workplace was offered. The course emphasized the principles of employee engagement, gaining an understanding of the factors that influence engagement, and leading individual and team conversations about engagement throughout the year.

### ***Innovation: "We transform"***

#### *Staff Learning and Development*

22. To continue fostering a learning culture, updating the skills of all personnel, and considering the limited resources, the learning activities are mostly delivered virtually. PASB promoted the use of the Blue Line Learning Platform of UNSSC. This learning tool is available for all personnel. The platform contains more than 50 curated online modules that personnel can access to create their own learning paths, including a path tailored to PAHO's People Strategy. It also provides an opportunity to explore a growing collection of tools and share learning experiences with fellow United Nations colleagues through online discussion forums and live events.

23. The Bureau continued offering the Learning Flagship programs, including the Leadership and Management Certificate Program for supervisors and managers. A group of 20 managers (14 female and 6 male) from country offices and Headquarters completed the program offered by UNSSC in 2023. It is through these types of learning initiatives that staff with supervisory responsibilities can update and strengthen their competencies and skills. These initiatives provide them with tools to lead in complex and demanding environments, as well as to lead change faster and more effectively. As part of the learning program, managers also benefit from individual coaching sessions. Similarly, the Language Program offered virtual group classes to all personnel in the 4 official languages of the Organization (English, French, Portuguese, and Spanish). This year a total of 140 individuals participated and successfully completed the 2 10-week courses that were offered.

24. To support staff development, PASB joined the United Nations mentoring tool, the “Together Mentoring and Networking” program. This platform is available to all United Nations organizations and offers eligible staff at all levels and regardless of their duty station the possibility to participate as a mentor and or mentee, promoting learning, knowledge sharing and professional development. All PAHO staff were invited to participate in the program based on their areas of interest, either as a mentor or mentee. Mentoring relationships are known for improving productivity, staff engagement and retention.

#### *Human Resources Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

25. During 2023, PASB revised its Gender Parity Action Plan to review progress achieved and align with the United Nations System-wide Strategy on Gender Parity. PAHO’s Gender Parity Implementation Plan (2023–2024) formulates its commitments to promoting gender equality for more inclusive, diverse and gender-equal workplaces and practices. The overall goal of the plan is gender parity in PAHO for professional fixed-term positions, with a focus on achieving parity at senior-level positions. As of 2023, PASB has achieved overall gender parity among staff in the professional and higher categories, 50% female and 50% male. PASB has also made progress in reaching parity among senior-level positions, such as P6, D1, and D2 with 38% female, compared with 32% at the end of 2022.

26. To promote inclusion and a respectful workplace, PASB offered Unconscious Bias training to senior managers, including Executive Management, PAHO/WHO Representatives, center directors, and department directors (51 participants). The course was given by an external service provider, Franklin Covey, who used its proven methodology to create a common understanding and language around what bias is, how bias impacts organizational results, and tools leaders can use to ensure their systems, communications, hiring, and retention practices are free from bias. It provided the participants with practical and helpful tools to use with their teams. Based on feedback received from participants, PASB will expand participation in the program in the next biennium.

#### **General Human Resources Activities**

##### *Duty of Care*

27. In April 2023, an in-house Staff Counselor was hired to provide psychosocial support and promote well-being activities for PASB personnel. The activities of the Counselor included the

following: counseling sessions, individual and group stress management interventions, psychoeducation sessions, response to critical incidents, advisory sessions to managers, country missions and coordination, and collaboration with other United Nations system agencies, funds and programs for the implementation of mental health and well-being strategies and plans.

28. The activities of the Staff Counselor are complemented by the Employee Assistance Program, available to the entire workforce and their dependents, regardless of the type of contract. To date, the Counselor has held 100 individual counseling sessions, 13 group sessions for a total of 391 group participants, 24 advisory sessions for managers, and completed 2 country missions.

29. For 2024, it is envisaged to further expand the psychosocial support service, the external professional referrals network, and the development and implementation of pre- and post-emergency deployment briefings. In addition, PASB will develop a mental health action plan, aligned with the United Nations Mental Health and Well-being Strategy.

#### *Contract Administration*

30. The 2022 annual dependency verification process was launched in May 2023. This annual review verifies the eligibility for allowances and benefits of staff members holding fixed-term appointments and to ensure compliance with the Staff Rules. Of the staff in receipt of an entitlement, 100% completed their verification and 12 payroll adjustments were made for overpayments or underpayments, which include adjustments for non-compliant staff. This is a reduction in the number of adjustments made compared with the preceding year, indicating that staff are proactively reporting changes in personal status ahead of the verification exercise.

#### *Administration of Justice*

31. From 1 January to 15 December 2023, PASB confirmed 4 cases of alleged wrongdoing involving PASB personnel, leading to administrative and/or disciplinary action, as outlined in the table below. As of 31 December 2023, other cases of alleged wrongdoing remained under review and may be subject to administrative and/or disciplinary action in 2024.

<b>Nature of wrongdoing</b>	<b>Category of staff</b>	<b>Administrative/ disciplinary action</b>
Fraud	General service	Dismissal
Sexual misconduct	Contractor	Termination of contract and notification to national authorities
Harassment	Contractor	Service contract ended during investigation and not extended. Individual will not be re-hired.
Misconduct (inappropriate and aggressive behavior)	Professional	Written censure

**Pan American Sanitary Bureau Workforce**

32. The Annex to this report provides the annual workforce statistics as of 15 December 2023 (or other years as indicated). It includes information on the number of personnel in PASB and their distribution by type of contract, gender, location, and other staffing data, with five-year trends noted. The staffing trends show that while the number of fixed-term staff has decreased since 2019, the number of consultants has continuously increased since 2020. This workforce composition reflects the funding constraints for establishing fixed-term positions.

33. In order to integrate the staffing statistics of the WHO Regional Office for the Americas within WHO's workforce reporting—and in line with the Bureau's vision for efficiency, transparency, and accountability—PASB has established a mechanism to share statistics on its fixed-term staff composition. This information will be published in WHO's Country Presence Portal.

**Action by the Executive Committee**

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

Annex

## Annex

### Pan American Sanitary Bureau Staffing Statistics

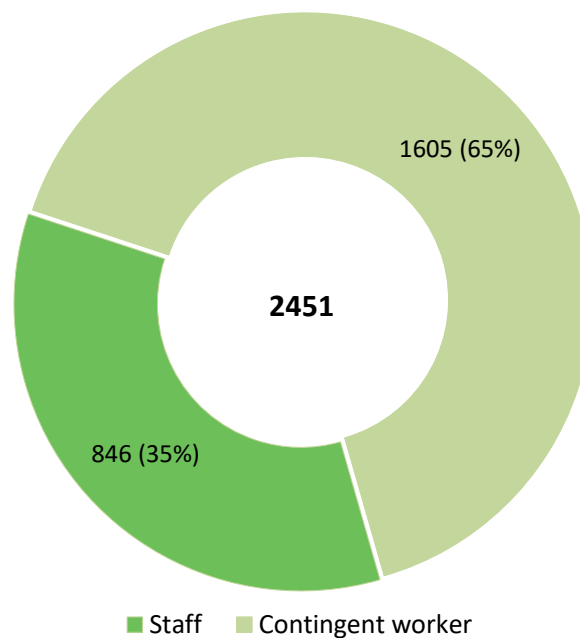
1. This report provides data from the PASB Management Information System (PMIS) on the profile of Pan American Sanitary Bureau (PASB or the Bureau) human resources as of 15 December 2023, unless otherwise specified. It includes information on the number of personnel in PASB by type of appointment, type of contract, gender, nationality, grade, and location.

#### Workforce Composition

2. Figures 1–3 present an overview of PASB’s workforce composition in 2023.

3. As of 15 December 2023, the total number of personnel was 2451. Figure 1 shows a breakdown of the workforce into 2 types of positions: staff, who are individuals holding fixed-term and temporary positions; and contingent workers, referring to all personnel hired under non-staff contractual mechanisms. The percentages are consistent with prior years.

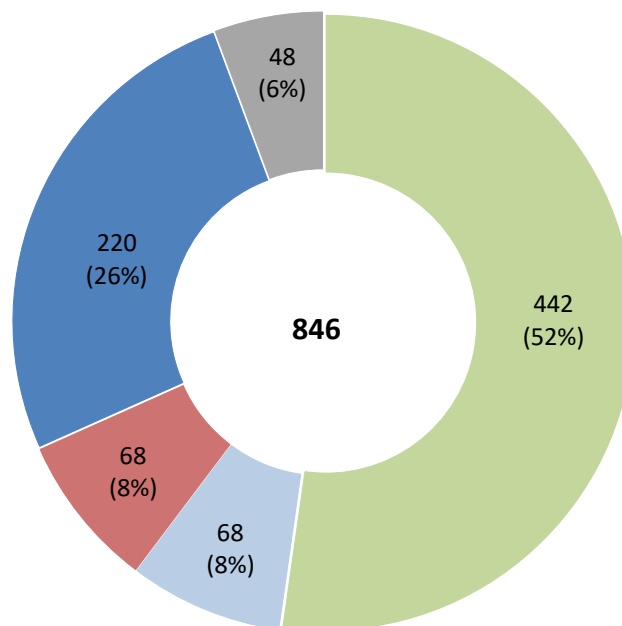
**Figure 1. Personnel by Position Type, 2023**





4. Figure 2 shows the staffing composition by category and appointment type. The total number of staff was 846: comprising 730 fixed-term staff (fixed-term international professionals, national officers, and fixed-term general services) and 116 temporary staff (temporary international professionals and temporary general services). The duration of a fixed-term appointment is 1 year or more. Temporary appointments have a duration of 11 months or less, with the possibility of extension up to a maximum of 2 years.

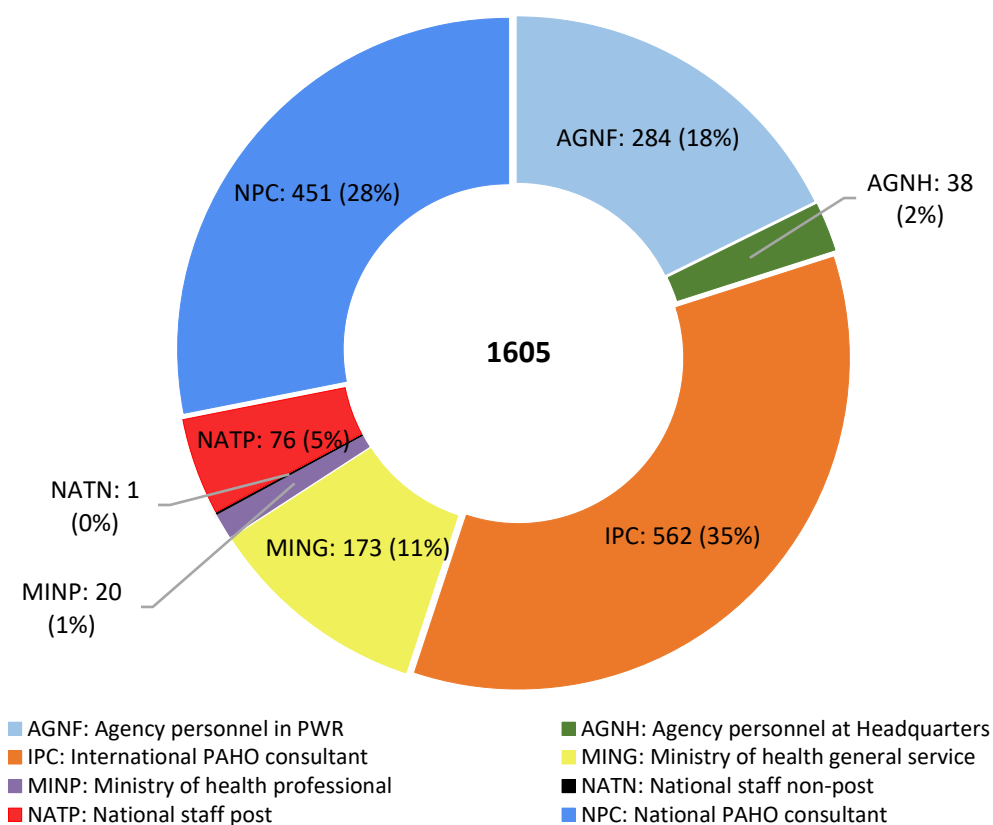
**Figure 2. Staff by Category and Appointment Type, 2023**



- PRFP: Fixed-term international professional
- PRFN: Temporary international professional
- NOP: National officer
- GSP: Fixed-term general service
- GSN: Temporary general service

5. Figure 3 shows contingent workers, employed under non-staff or non-United Nations personnel contracts, who total 1605. The contingent worker modalities include administrative agency personnel in country offices and Headquarters (AGNF and AGNH); administrative personnel hired under local conditions of employment (NATP and NATN); administrative and professional personnel seconded to country offices by the ministry of health (MING and MINP); and international and national PAHO consultants (IPC and NPC).

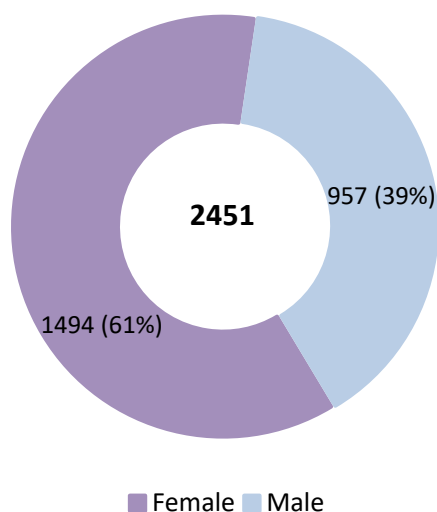
**Figure 3. Contingent Workers, 2023**



## Workforce: Distribution by Gender

6. The overall gender distribution within the entire workforce was 61% female and 39% male (Figure 4).

**Figure 4. Personnel by Gender, 2023**



7. Regarding staff in the international professional and national professional officer categories, PASB obtained parity with a distribution of 50% female and 50% male staff in 2023. The gender distribution of staff at Headquarters was 53% female and 47% male, while in the country offices and Pan American centers it was 48% female and 52% male (Table 1).

**Table 1. Fixed-term International Professional and National Professional Officer Staff, Distribution by Grade, Gender, and Organizational Location, 2023**

Grade	Headquarters				Country offices/Centers				All			
	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%
UG1	1	100%							1	100%		
UG2			1	100%							1	100%
UG3			1	100%							1	100%
D2	2	67%	1	33%					2	67%	1	33%
D1	9	64%	5	36%	4	67%	2	33%	13	65%	7	35%
P6	3	75%	1	25%	3	43%	4	57%	6	55%	5	45%
P5	18	51%	17	49%	11	55%	9	45%	28	51%	27	49%
P4/NOD	54	50%	55	50%	61	59%	43	41%	116	54%	97	46%
P3/NOC	37	47%	42	53%	10	43%	13	57%	47	46%	55	54%
P2/NOB	9	29%	22	71%	26	47%	29	53%	35	41%	51	59%
P1/NOA			2	100%	5	33%	10	67%	5	29%	12	71%
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>257</b>	<b>50%</b>

UG1-UG3: Ungraded  
(Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director)

P1-D2: Professional (P) and  
Director(D)

NOA-NOD: National Professional  
Officer

8. The gender distribution of international PAHO consultants was 59% female and 41% male and for national PAHO consultants, it was 70% female and 30% male (Table 2).

**Table 2. PAHO Consultants,  
Distribution by Gender, Organizational Location, and Contract Type, 2023**

Contract type	Headquarters				Country offices/Centers				All			
	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%	Male	%	Female	%
International PAHO consultant	194	39%	301	61%	36	54%	31	46%	230	41%	332	59%
National PAHO consultant					134	30%	317	70%	134	30%	317	70%
<b>Total</b>	194	39%	301	61%	170	33%	348	67%	364	36%	649	64%

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

**Table 3. Fixed-Term International Professional Staff, Distribution by Nationality, 2023**

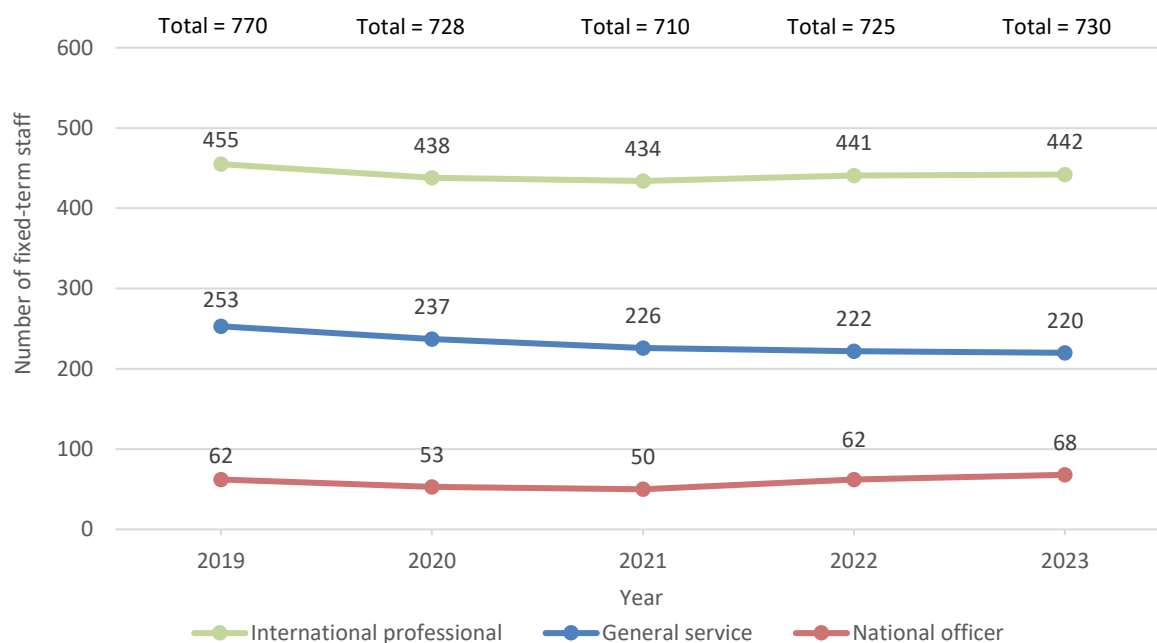
Country of nationality	Total	Country of nationality	Total	Country of nationality	Total
Antigua and Barbuda	1	Finland	1	Philippines	3
Argentina	25	France	11	Rwanda	1
Australia	1	Germany	1	Saint Lucia	1
Austria	1	Greece	1	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	4
Barbados	3	Guatemala	12	Singapore	2
Belgium	2	Guyana	1	Spain	31
Belize	4	Haiti	4	Suriname	2
Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	5	Honduras	4	Switzerland	1
Brazil	53	India	1	Togo	1
Cameroon	1	Ireland	1	Trinidad and Tobago	2
Canada	10	Italy	5	Türkiye	1
Chile	13	Jamaica	8	Uganda	1
Colombia	43	Liberia	1	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	6
Congo (Democratic Republic of the)	1	Mexico	10	United States of America	63
Costa Rica	11	Mozambique	1	Uruguay	6
Côte d'Ivoire	1	Netherlands	2	Uzbekistan	1
Cuba	9	Nicaragua	8	Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	8
Dominican Republic	2	Panama	3	<b>Total</b>	<b>442</b>
Ecuador	13	Paraguay	2		
El Salvador	10	Peru	22		

## Workforce Trends

10. Figure 5 highlights the trends for fixed-term staff in different categories for the period from 2019 to 2023, with the total number of staff in fixed-term positions decreasing by 5%, from 770 to 730.

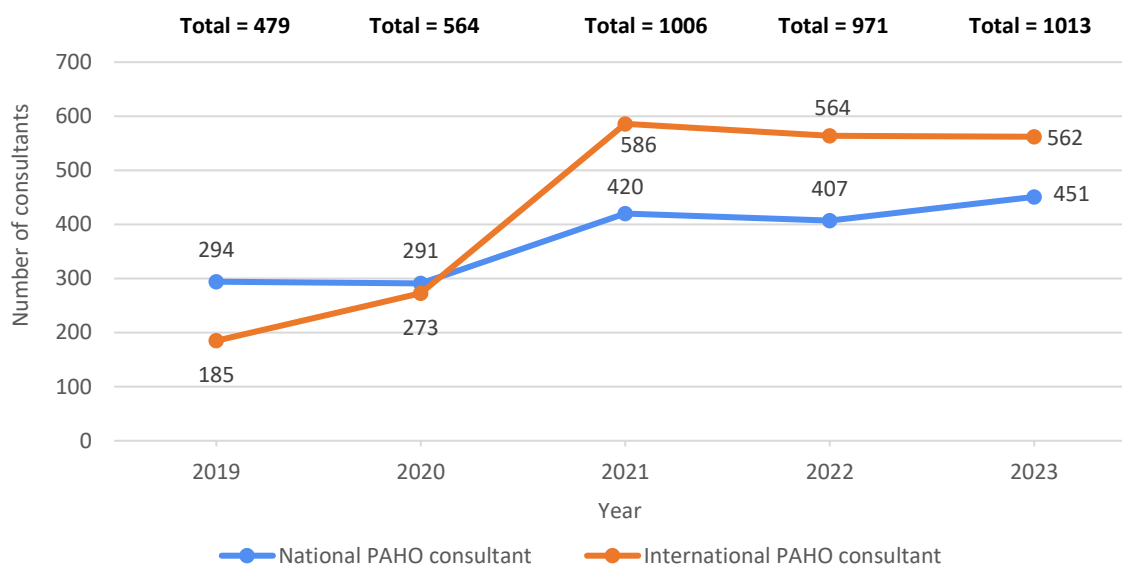
11. However, based on the corporate strategic human resources planning for 2024–2025, PASB will increase its recruitment activities to fill critical vacant fixed-term positions and new positions established as part of the WHO "core predictable country presence" initiative. In implementing the approved human resources plans, PASB will continue to make efforts to ensure the financial sustainability of fixed-term positions.

**Figure 5. Fixed-term Staff, Distribution by Category, 2019–2023**



12. Figure 6 shows that the number of consultants increased by 111%—from 479 in 2019 to 1013 in 2023. This trend demonstrates the increase in technical cooperation over that 5-year period.

**Figure 6. National and International PAHO Consultants, 2019–2023**



### Gender Parity

13. Although, as noted in Table 1, PASB has achieved overall gender parity in its professional fixed-term staff, it needs to continue focusing on grades P6 and above. Table 4 shows trends in achieving gender parity between 2019 and 2023. Significant gains were achieved in grades P6, D1 and D2, with an increase in the percentage of women from 34% to 38% from 2019 to 2023. The percentage of women in grades P4 and P5 remained relatively stable, ranging between 47% and 48% over the last 5 years. Similarly, the percentage of women as heads of PAHO/WHO country offices remained within the range of 52%.

**Table 4. Gender Parity Trends, 2019–2023**

Category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Women in grades P6, D1, and D2	34%	32%	31%	32%	38%
Women in grades P4 and P5	48%	47%	48%	47%	47%
Women as heads of country offices	52%	50%	52%	54%	52%