

Benchmarking Activity Report 2024



2024 What was new for BMU?

(Executive Summary)

For MSF's Intersectional Benchmarking Unit the year 2024 was decidedly under the spotlight of the implementation of the Rewards Review project.

The new policies not only caused an increase in the demand of our surveys, but also affected the way we conduct these, through careful and detailed adaptation of our methodology and tools.

Starting in 2024, we entered a biannual survey cycle to provide just-in-time market information to Operations and Compensation and Benefits Departments and thus helped them to fulfil the new salary revision policy introduced by IDRH decree in 2023.

Ensuring decent pay to our locally hired staff through a comprehensive Living Wage Policy was one of the top-priorities of the Rewards Policy and fully implemented in 2024. For the BMU, as one of the initiators of the concept in MSF as far back as 2017, this provided the kick-off to adapt our way of working. Initially the Monthly Household Expenditure Surveys (MHES) were an add-on to the regular benchmark survey. Under the close guidance of the respective Rewards Review Working Groups, the MHES was elevated to become a major component, including highly detailed and standardised data to collect. To do so within the same time frame and resources as in the past, highlighted the urgent need to improve our data infrastructure as our main priority for the coming period.

During 2024, the BMU seconded a significant share of the work of our Data Architect as well as our massive data repository to support data modelling of the financial impact of Rewards Review scenarios to the International Office.

To better meet the heightened demand of available, suitable and multilingual analysts in our specialist pool, our HR team worked on streamlining talent identification, recruitment processes, training, mentoring and retention activities. In cooperation with Tembo, an eLearning course was developed to support first-time analysts to become confident in their role faster and reduce errors.

New potential users and customers of our services, especially Partner Sections, Regional offices and Emergency Units, approached us for support and advice on compensation and benefits questions or macro-economic scanning. After OCBA in 2023, we conducted our second benchmark for an OC in 2024 for the Operational Centre in Amsterdam.

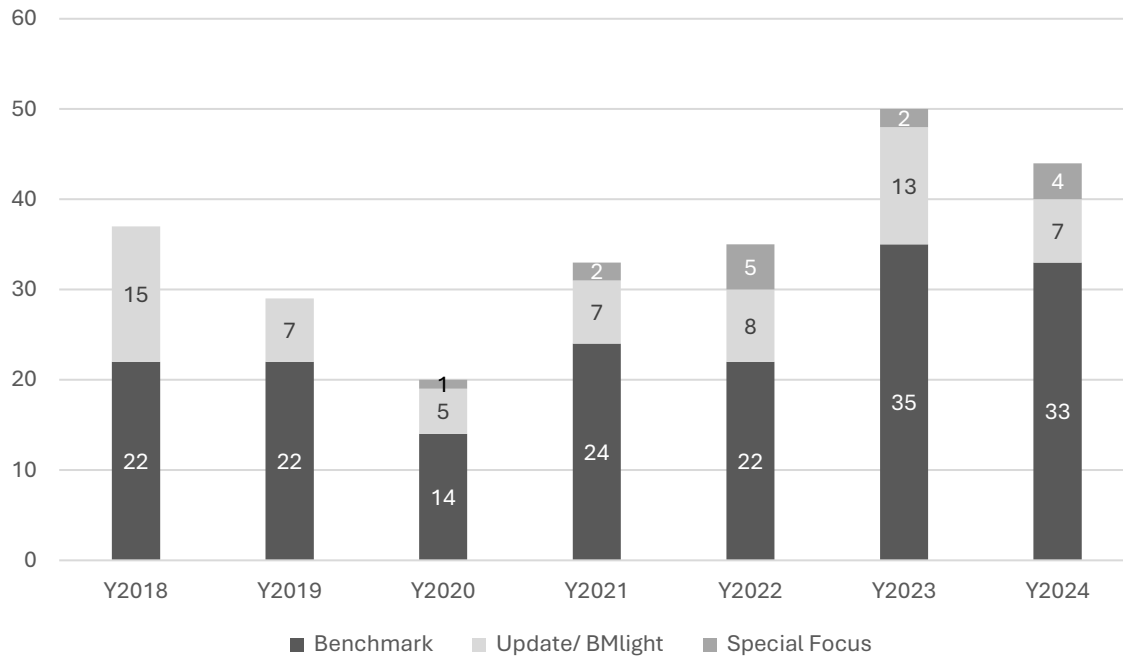
With the International Mobile Grid Survey, an entirely new product was developed and successfully launched by the Benchmarking Unit upon request by the International Office, and under evolving specifications and directions issued by International HR as well as several Rewards Review Working Groups.

At the same time, new recruitments and restructuring of our traditional stakeholders (i.e. the Compensation & Benefits departments of each Operational Centre) caused challenges in collaboration and communication, which necessitated resolution and change processes.

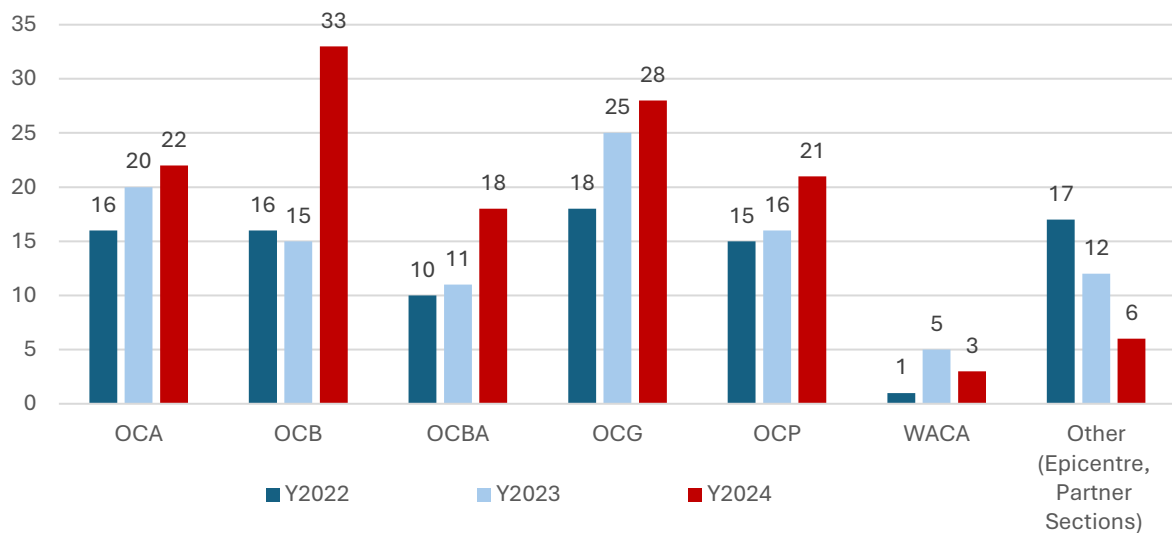
Finally, to remain up-to-date with industry developments the BMU intensified collaboration and exchange with a growing network of other INGOs and leading experts in our highly technical field, both bilateral and through professional forums. For example, during the first international conference of NGO compensation and benefits experts organised by the University of Edinburgh and Project Fair in July 2024 in which we presented our work and MSF. Or during meetings with leading providers of salary surveys and Living Wage researchers, such as the Africa People Advisory Group and the University of Cape Town.

Key indicators: Our work in numbers

Completed Surveys



Participation by section over the past 3 years¹



¹ The numbers comprise all types of survey: comprehensive benchmarks as well as updates and special focus studies

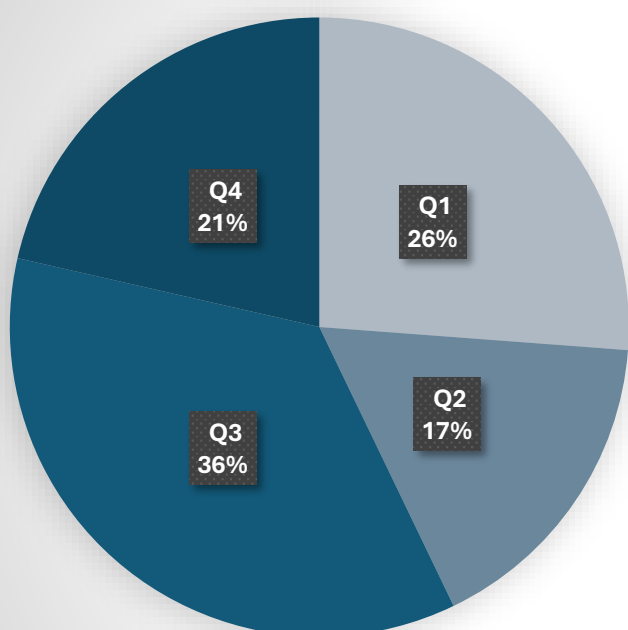
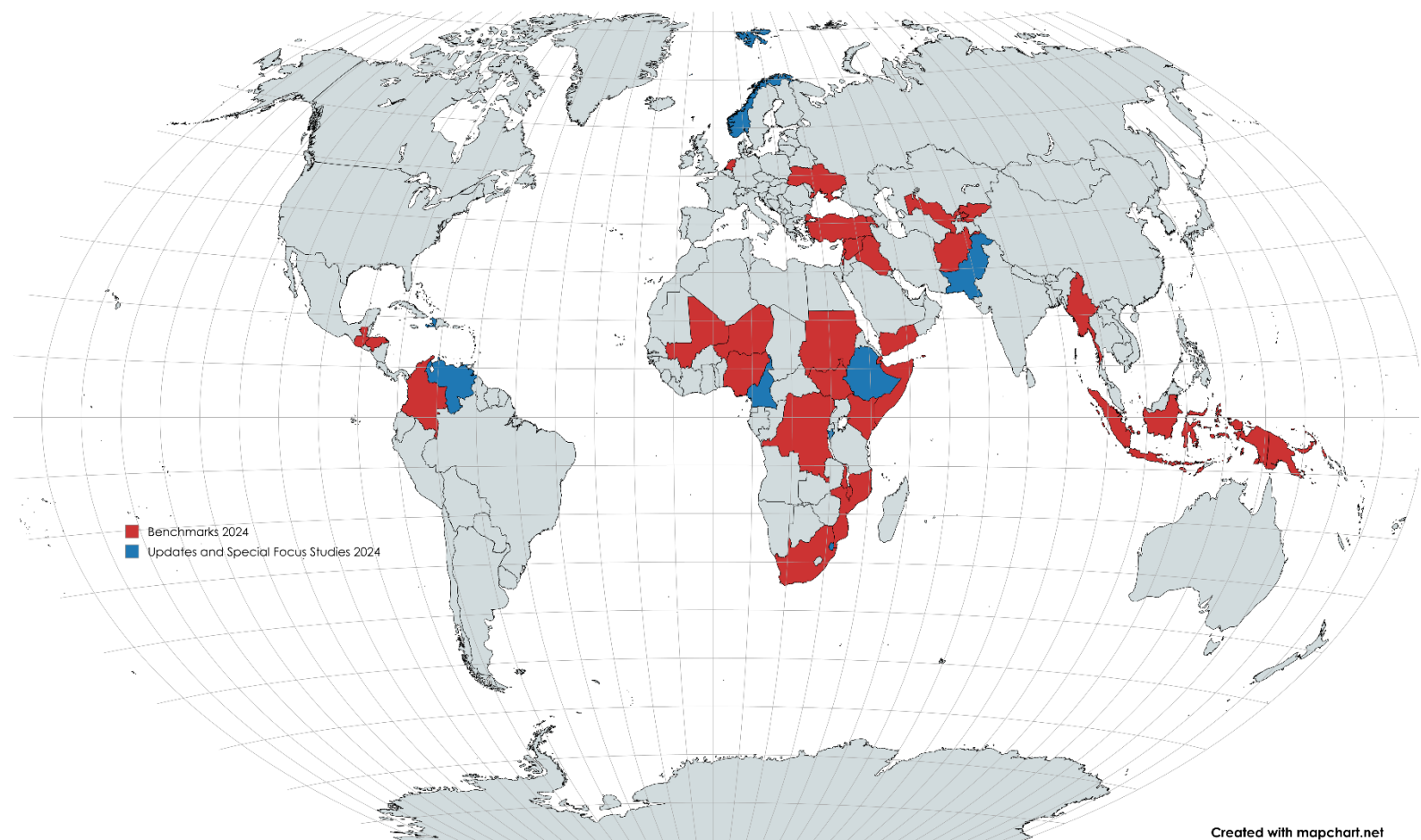


Figure 1 Distribution of surveys across the year

33 comprehensive benchmark studies

7 market monitoring updates

4 special focus studies

in **39** countries

7 640 number of International Mobile Staff 2023 that are potentially impacted by IMS Survey

28 568 Locally Hired Staff in MSF covered by our 2024 surveys

186 893 impacted Locally Hired Staff in total (MSF and participating organisations)

Country	Survey Type	Conducted for Section						Host	Quarter
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Afghanistan	Comprehensive	OCA	OCB	OCBA		OCP		OCB	Q3
Armenia	Comprehensive				OCG			OCG	Q2
Burundi	Update		OCB					OCB	Q3
Cameroon	Update				OCG			OCG	Q3
Colombia	Comprehensive			OCBA				OCBA	Q4
Djibouti	Comprehensive					OCP		OCP	Q4
DRC	Comprehensive	OCA	OCB	OCBA	OCG	OCP	WaCA	OCA	Q4
eSwatini	Update				OCG			OCG	Q2
Ethiopia	Update	OCA	OCB					OCB	Q1
Guatemala	Comprehensive				OCG			OCG	Q3
Haiti	Special Focus	OCA	OCB			OCP		OCP	Q2
Honduras	Comprehensive				OCG			OCG	Q3
IMS	Comprehensive							IO	Q4
Indonesia	Comprehensive		OCB	OCBA				OCB	Q1
Iraq	Comprehensive		OCB		OCG			OCG	Q3
Kenya	Comprehensive	OCA	OCB		OCG	OCP		MSF-EA	Q3
Kenya	Comprehensive						MSF-EA	MSF-EA	Q3
Kyrgyzstan	Comprehensive				OCG			OCG	Q1
Lebanon	Comprehensive		OCB		OCG			OCG	Q2
Malawi	Comprehensive					OCP		OCP	Q1
Mali	Comprehensive		OCB	OCBA		OCP		OCBA	Q3
Mozambique	Comprehensive		OCB	OCBA	OCG			OCB	Q3
Myanmar	Comprehensive	OCA			OCG			OCA	Q1
Netherlands	Comprehensive	OCA						OCA	Q2
Niger	Comprehensive			OCBA	OCG	OCP	WaCA	OCG	Q2
Nigeria	Comprehensive	OCA	OCB	OCBA	OCG	OCP	WaCA	OCP	Q1
Norway	Special Focus						MSF-No	MSF-No	Q1
OPT	Special Focus		OCB	OCBA		OCP		OCP	Q1
OPT	Comprehensive		OCB	OCBA		OCP		OCBA	Q4
Pakistan	Update	OCA	OCB			OCP		OCA	Q4
PNG	Comprehensive					OCP		OCP	Q3
Somalia	Comprehensive	OCA		OCBA				OCA	Q3
South Africa	Comprehensive		OCB				MSF-SnA	MSF-SA	Q3
South Sudan	Comprehensive	OCA	OCB	OCBA	OCG	OCP		OCP	Q1
Sudan	Comprehensive	OCA	OCB	OCBA	OCG	OCP		OCA	Q1
Sudan	Special Focus		OCB					OCB	Q3
Syria	Comprehensive	OCA	OCB	OCBA		OCP		OCA	Q4
Turkey	Comprehensive		OCB			OCP		OCP	Q1
Ukraine	Comprehensive		OCB		OCG			OCB	Q4
Uzbekistan	Comprehensive	OCA						OCA	Q2
Venezuela	Update		OCB					OCB	Q3
Yemen	Comprehensive	OCA	OCB	OCBA	OCG	OCP		OCBA	Q4



The Role of Benchmarking in the MSF Movement

MSF employs people for a broad range of jobs and skill levels who all contribute to ensure that MSF can deliver quality health care to those in need. Our workers are our greatest asset as an organisation. We want to recruit the best, most committed professionals. We often work in locations that lack publicly accessible information on common market practice, cost of living and decent living wage. MSF wants to ensure that our mandate can be carried out under the highest quality standards while at the same time ensure that our employees are treated fairly, money and funds are used in a sustainable way and local norms are respected.

BENCHMARKING IDENTIFIES CURRENT JOB RATES IN A GIVEN PAY MARKET BY COMPARING JOB DESCRIPTIONS AND PAY RANGES WITH SIMILAR ROLES IN OTHER ORGANISATIONS, VIA STATISTICALLY ANONYMISED SURVEYS.

BENCHMARKING IS A KEY COMPONENT IN THE CREATION OF FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PAY SYSTEMS.

BENCHMARKING PROVIDES INSIGHTS IN CURRENT LOCAL LABOUR MARKET POLICIES AND PRACTICES AND IS A MANAGEMENT HELPING TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS.

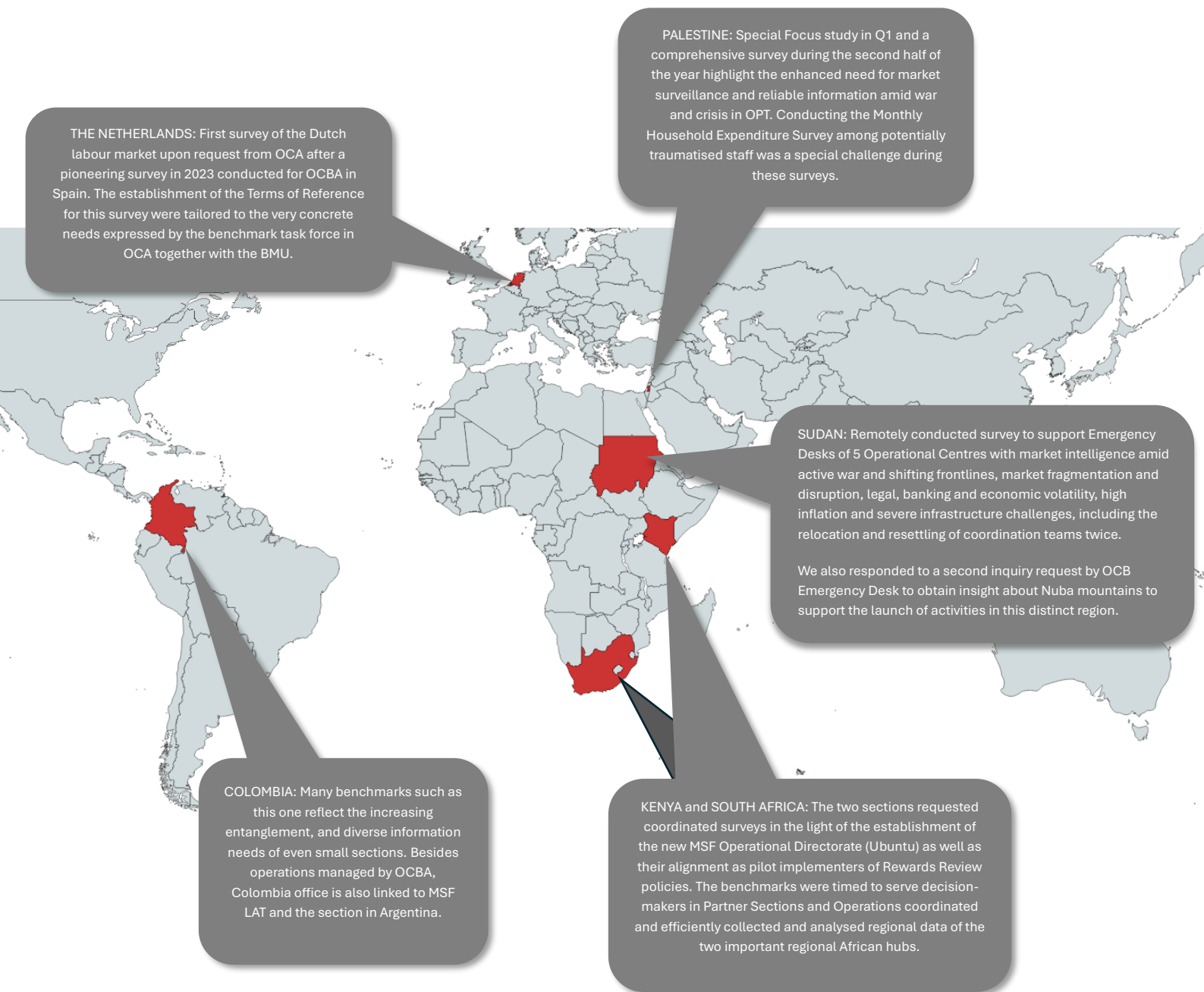
In many countries where MSF and other NGOs work, reliable information on the labour market and cost of living is scarce. This creates a challenge for the decision makers developing salary levels and benefits. The Benchmarking Unit collects, obtains and analyses information and data on local labour markets, including cost of living and household expenditure information.

There are numerous economic, social, and legal reasons why we consider benchmarking essential; that all our employees can provide for their families, and that the organisation can retain experienced staff, and reward the intrinsic motivation that we expect from our employees. As an employer in humanitarian contexts, we must ensure that we are not disruptive to the local labour market and comply with national and international labour regulations and norms.

During a benchmark survey the analyst works closely with the mission and thus tailors the study to the specific context and needs that are experienced in the field. The country management team, in particular HR, and the compensation & benefits referents at headquarters are the main stakeholders in any benchmarking.

Our analysis includes the competitiveness of salaries and benefits, as well as an estimate of the minimum household expenditure to assess the minimum income threshold that we, as a socially responsible employer, commit to meet. The studies also serve to confirm compliance in all missions with internal and external minimum standards and policies.

A glimpse of our work - Selected surveys



INTERNATIONAL SINGLE MOBILE GRID SURVEY:

In 2023, 69 179 people from 165 nationalities were employed by MSF worldwide, 37% of them women. Around 90% of MSF's global workforce were locally hired. These are covered by the Benchmarking Unit's local staff benchmarks.

With the design and launch of our first salary survey for internationally mobile staff we entered uncharted territory and faced the complexity of diverse staff compensation practices in INGOs across the globe. The information collected and analysed for this survey will impact an equally diverse workforce in MSF:

57% of international mobile staff in MSF were of African or Asian origin, compared to 37% European and North American.

The new staff groups proposed by the Rewards Review demand synchronised, unfragmented and inclusive information about the international aid sector. Data that form the basis of such crucial and costly decision-making as STAFF REWARDS must be obtained and handled with care and consideration.

(Source of statistics: MSF Staff Data and Trends Report 2023)

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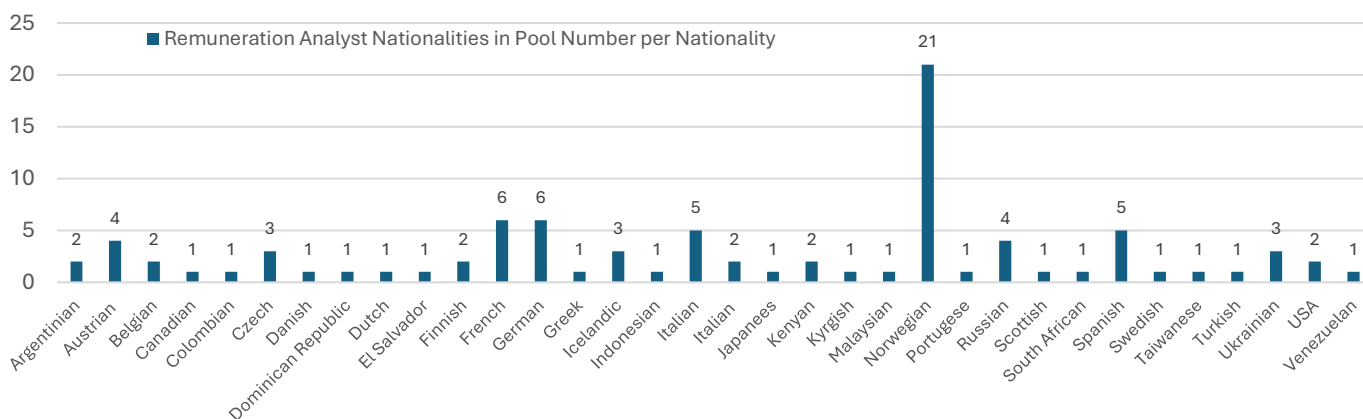


Meeting the locals: People are the best source of information. Talking to international and local employees and authorities is the daily work of Remuneration Analysts. Amazing encounters of local culture included.

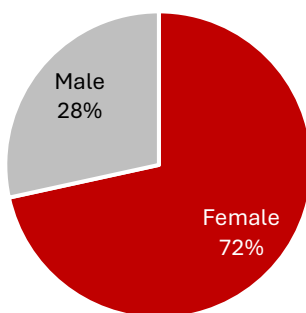
OUR ANALYSTS

91 number of analysts in our pool

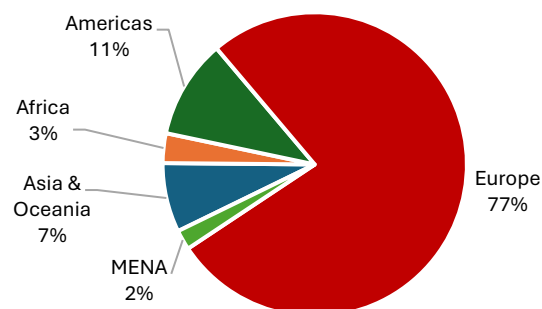
39 different nationalities



Gender of Remuneration Analysts



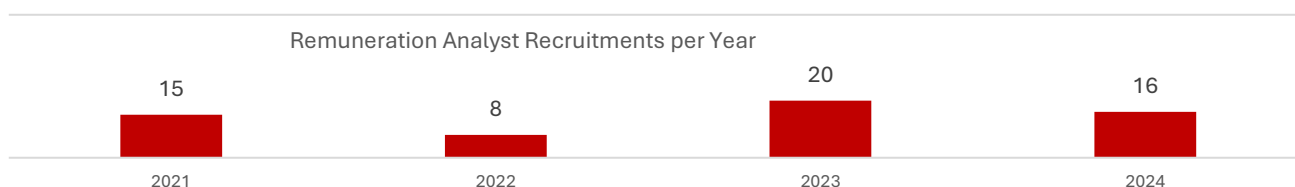
Remuneration Analyst Nationalities per Region



7 Remuneration Analysts departed for the first time with the BMU in 2024.

16 new analysts successfully passed recruitment in 2024

3.2 average number of deployments per analysts



Out and about: while on assignment, Analysts spend a significant amount of time on the road, or in the air, or even on water to collect the information and data for their study.



A comprehensive and intensive training on benchmarking tools, processes and methodology is mandatory before a new Remuneration Analyst can start an assignment. **Two** group training sessions for first departures were conducted in October and November 2024. **Twelve** analysts received the training.

To keep our field staff up to date between assignments, our HR team organised continued education webinars.

Two online sessions were organized for all Remuneration Analysts with a special focus on job matching in MSF benchmarking as well as a special session about the Rewards Review.

In collaboration with TEMBO, a self-learning course for new and old analysts was developed in 2024. The course will go online in 2025.

Coordination Team

Left to right:

Anja Drame (Deputy Head of the BMU, in charge of liaisons and general management)

Alyona Polovchenko Smith (Project Manager, Africa, Central Asia, Europe)

Finnbogi Rutur Finnbogason (Project Manager, francophone countries, MENA, Asia)

Mikkel Carlsen (HR and Analyst Pool Manager, Project Manager Latin America)

Teresa Kiemnec (Data Architect)

Frederic Penhard (Head of the BMU, in charge of quality and methodology)

Our Coordination Team takes care that all survey requests are fulfilled in time and high quality. We constantly improve our tools and processes, ensure we have the right, highly skilled and happy analyst for each job to do the important groundwork. And we keep abreast with the fast-changing environment.

We make sure to get our hands dirty occasionally ourselves. Only through direct experience and contact with our clients in operations we can be sure that what we do answers their needs.



Collaborations and Support

Networking and collaboration are a crucial part of our work. Not only to increase our reach but also to keep up to date with developments in the field of salary benchmarking. This included cooperation and exchange with industry leaders like:

University of Edinburgh Project Fair – Fairness in NGO

Remuneration (Member of the Steering Committee) and presented at first international conference and meeting of INGO compensation and benefits professionals in Edinburgh, July 2024.

Averile Ryder Global Reward Specialists,

<https://www.rewardspecialist.co.za/>), leading provider of salary survey for Southern Africa and beyond

Africa People Advisory Group,

<https://www.africapeopleadvisory.com/about-us/people/>), member of the South African Living Wage Coalition and specialising in African labour market research

South African Research Chair: Creation of Decent Work and Sustainable Livelihood, UCT,

<https://commerce.uct.ac.za/workfordecentlives/>): *Decent work, decent pay, research on Living Wage Methodology*

Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice and Dignity Group PMFLW, provider of Living Wage data for South Africa

Mercer: acquisition and analysis of substantial historical data to investigate non-profit vs private markets for insights benefiting the Rewards Review modelling.

Within the MSF movement, collaborations included:

MSF-East Africa: a collaboration agreement has been signed between MSF East Africa and the BMU concerning mutual support and the development of Compensation and Benefits capacity

International Office: support to the Rewards Review, most significantly for the Attractiveness for Country-Based Coordinators (ACBC), where local pay structures were adapted to increase attractiveness for locally hired staff. Analysis was performed on MSF salary grid revision times, classifying countries by economic factors, and shaping data for financial modelling.



Who provides data and information?

Benchmarking relies on openness, the willingness to share and a general belief in exchange and collaboration. It also relies on trust that the sensitive information that was shared is handled with care and confidentiality. If a benchmark is successful in collecting data also depends on the context and culture in which it takes place. We are constantly building our network of collaborating organisations and train our analysts in the art of reaching out, building trust and confidence, instigation and reassuring as well as guiding through the process. A growing number of regular participants and liaisons are willing to give in return to receiving our analysis – a high-quality and top-end report, which we provide without charge. We also regularly obtain their feedback for our internal quality assurance processes.

4.3 points is the overall satisfaction rate given to us by the participating organisations in 2024 according to our quality assurance survey. What our customers liked the most was the communication, reliability and trust in our processes and commitment. And the **4.5** is the likelihood of them participating again and recommending us to peers.

5 out of **5** points were awarded by 40 participating organisations.

What we aim to improve on in 2025: the user-experience of our questionnaire and report structure.

From 2020 to 2024 an average of 31.6 (median 31) organisations participated and fully shared their salary and benefits information with our analyst. This is an increase from earlier years and a sign that MSF surveys have become established, known and valued.

We regularly receive feedback from some INGOs that they use MSF surveys as their primary or secondary source of data to revise their rewards package.

Our network of organisations and liaisons is established and growing. Regular participants in surveys are among others the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Welthungerhilfe, Human Appeal, Concern, Solidarités International, Médecins du Monde/ Medicos del Mundo (MdM France and Spain), Humanity & Inclusion, FHI360, Partners in Need, and the United Nations (UN). We have been collaborating strategically with HR Forum Groups in countries like Myanmar, Palestine and Ethiopia.

Once again, I want to express my deep appreciation for your collaboration and for providing us with this valuable resource. Your efforts have significantly contributed to our understanding of the salary landscape in Indonesia.

(ASEAN Foundation)

Thank you very much for sharing these outcomes and big Bravo for your work!

Looking forward to our continuous and precious collaboration.

(ICRC)

Thank you for providing the salary benchmark report. It appears to be very comprehensive and detailed—impressive work. We will review it and reach out with any questions we might have.

(European Centre for Not-for-Profit Law Stichting)

As always this is an amazing piece of work.

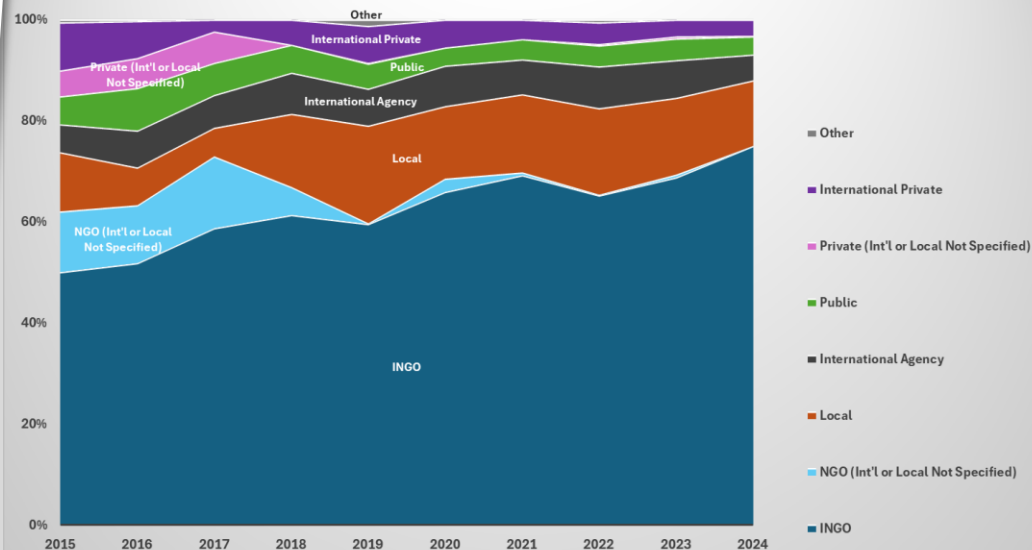
(Human Appeal)

We are grateful for the opportunity to participate in this survey and contribute to such a comprehensive analysis. The insights provided in the report, particularly the detailed breakdowns and comparisons, will undoubtedly be valuable to us as we navigate the current economic landscape.

I would like to extend our thanks to you and your entire team for the important work that went into this report. We appreciate the clarity with which the data is presented, and I am confident it will serve as a useful resource for our organization moving forward.

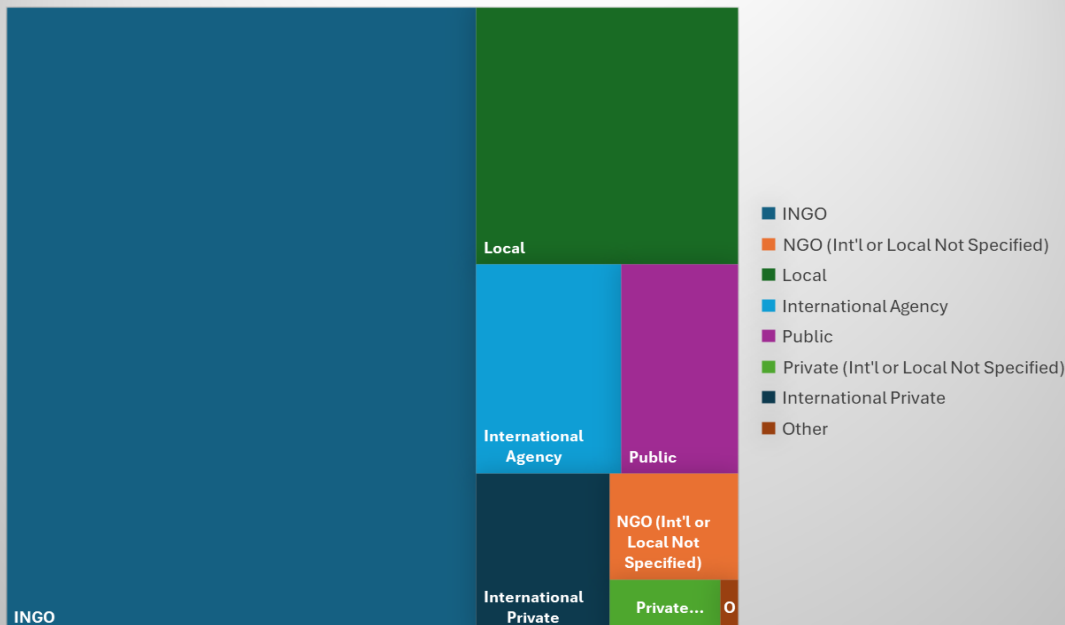
(SOS Children's Villages Armenia)

Evolution of Benchmark Participants from 2015 to 2024



Average Benchmark Participant Types

Based on 240 Benchmarks from 2015 - 2024



MSF's typical reference market are other INGOs – especially such with health activities and active in similar locations as MSF. We also look at data from local employers, the public health sector as well as big international companies and agencies.

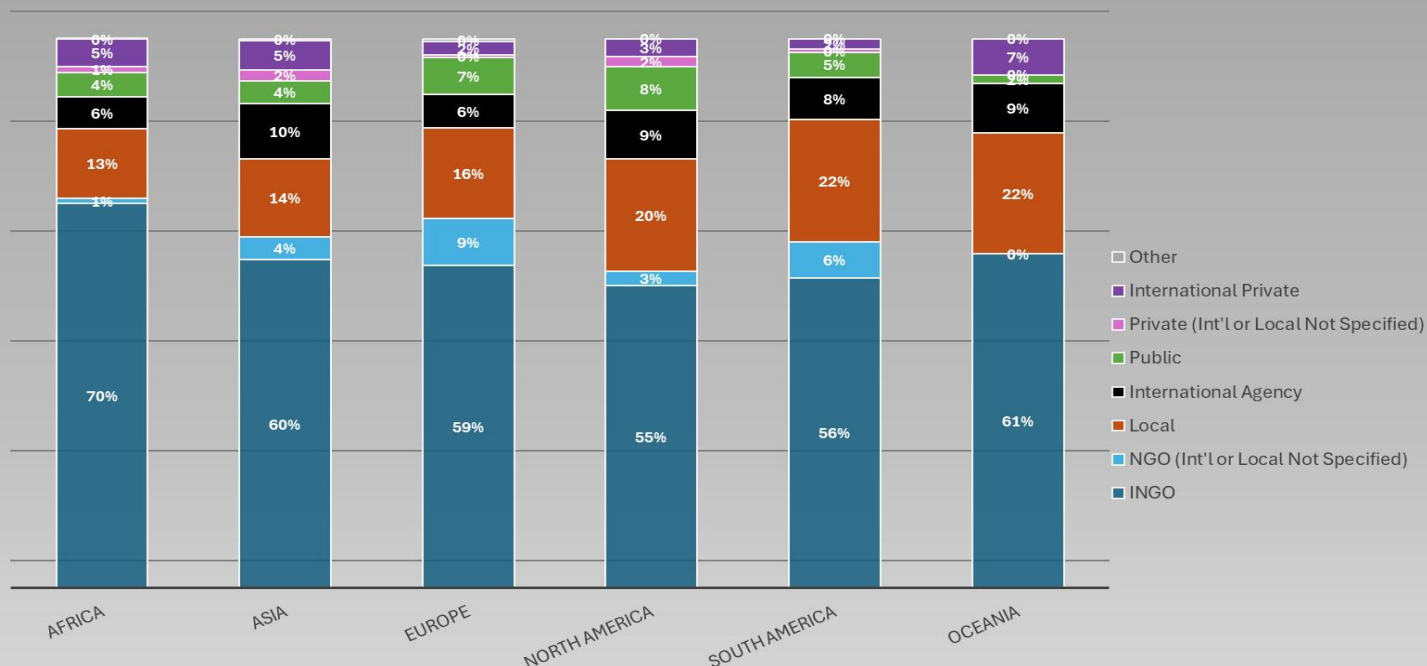
Not because MSF wants to compete with them or pay similar salaries. This is regulated by the MSF Global Pay Policy and MSF's International HR executives. But to understand where in this broader local context MSF is positioned at a given time.

It is only when we know where we are (= map as provided by the Benchmarking Unit) and where we want to go (= compass provided by the MSF Global Pay Policy), are we as an employer able to take informed and responsible decisions regarding our salaries.



We analyse the local context, too: More INGOs (70%) participate in Africa (except Southern Africa) than other continents. In the Americas and Oceania INGOs make about half of our samples (52% - 55%), but we see more local employers.

Average Participant Type by Continent





The Benchmarking Unit is a specialised centre of expertise with the purpose of supporting operations and HR in the MSF movement by providing impartial macroenvironment analysis, such as labour market intelligence, economic scanning and salary benchmark studies. We act as an internal service provider to all MSF sections and entities, both by mandate and on request.

Contact: benchmarking@oslo.msf.org