



## Reasons why Swiss professionals join, remain in, or exit multilateral organisations

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# Editorial



Welcome to cinfo.

As a part of cinfo's new strategic direction to expand our quantitative and qualitative research on trends in the labour market and careers in international cooperation, we would like to present you this study on careers in multilateral organisations.

What drives the careers of Swiss professionals who work for UN agencies or International Financial Institutions? Why do people decide to join, remain or discontinue working in multilateral organisations? And to what extent did their experience working for a multilateral organisation meet their expectations?

Switzerland has a keen interest in actively shaping the debate and policies of international cooperation in multilateral organisations and therefore proactively seeks to increase Swiss representation. As a close partner, cinfo is mandated to support the Swiss government in achieving this goal. To ensure that professionals with the right profiles and competencies join and progress in these organisations, it is crucial to be aware of the factors that influence decisions to join, remain and leave.

To our knowledge there are no comparable initiatives, making this a highly pertinent and fascinating study. We are pleased to present some surprising insights, which provide the food for thought required for debate and strategic decision-making on how the government and cinfo can effectively support Swiss professionals at various stages of their careers in multilateral organisations.

I wish you a good read.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa Isler".

Lisa Isler  
Director cinfo

# Executive summary

The objective of this study was to identify the factors that influence Swiss professionals to join, remain in, or leave a career in selected multilateral organisations (MOs). Through its support of Swiss professionals in international cooperation (IC), cinfo had made several assumptions, which had never been empirically validated. This study is a first of its kind and was undertaken for professionals in sixteen focus organisations of the Swiss government (eleven UN and five IFI agencies). The response rate was a remarkably high with 62 per cent (288 out of 468 contacted).

The study was grouped into six areas; job conditions, financial aspects, institutional framework conditions, quality of life, family, and personal reasons. Each area had five explaining factors providing further details about their importance at the time of joining, remaining or leaving.

We report several interesting findings about the respondents' decision-making:

- During all three phases we noticed that meaningful work, multifaceted and interesting job content, personal identification with the values of the institution, challenging job and professional development perspectives were the most important reasons driving decisions;
- Financial reasons were the least important drivers and only marginally increased in importance over time. A high percentage indicated that their financial expectations were met or even exceeded. One can therefore assume that Swiss professionals who are financially driven either do not apply for these jobs, or it is a myth that careers in MOs, and in IFIs in particular, are financially less interesting.

Significant differences could be found for specific variables:

- Only a few minor differences could be found between IFIs and UN agencies. This might be a result of the very small sample of IFIs, and the small group of 'inactive' professionals, which did not allow us to make conclusive statements based on statistical significance;
- The role of management responsibility, salary and children increased in importance with age and experience;
- Institutional framework conditions and career perspectives were more important for those with JPO contracts than for professionals with staff contracts. The fact that JPO contracts are limited to two to three years accounts for JPOs focusing on developing the next steps in their career may have led to this result;

- Women gave children less importance than men during all phases, but placed more importance on institutional framework and personal reasons. A possible interpretation is that women with a strong career focus opt for working in MOs and may decide against having children. Since the survey did not ask whether a participant had children or not, we could not compare between women with or without children. This requires further investigation.

Working in MOs has been a very enriching experience for most Swiss professionals. Nine out of ten believe their work with a MO has been very relevant or relevant for their career and would like to continue a career with a MO or join again. About 85 per cent felt that their expectations were met or exceeded when it comes to quality of life, job conditions, financial aspects and personal reasons. Close to 40 per cent felt that family related aspects and institutional framework conditions were only partially met or not met.

cinfo recommends that the government and cinfo discuss these findings with the MOs and other donor agencies to see how some of these challenges could be addressed. cinfo can further facilitate network, coaching and mentoring support through an online platform to foster interaction and maintain both an alumni and a pool of professionals currently working in MOs.

It is suggested to continue such studies as part of support efforts and to enable decision-making based on empirical evidence, resulting in more effective interventions by the government and cinfo.

# List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Long form
CO	Country / Field office
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
HQ	Headquarter
HSD	FDFA Human Security Division
IC	International cooperation
IFI	International Financial Institution
MOs	Multilateral organisations
RO	Regional office
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
UN	United Nations
UNIOD	FDFA United Nations and International Organisations Division

## Background and rationale

Over the last two decades, the Swiss government, with the support of cinfo, has proactively taken steps to increase the Swiss presence in multilateral organisations (MOs) by financing Junior Professional Programmes and undertaking leadership recruitment missions in priority MOs. (Table 1) cinfo noted several patterns that might influence a decision to join, remain in and leave a MO. With no empirical evidence to date to validate these observations, cinfo undertook a study to explore known and unknown decision-making factors for Swiss professionals to join, remain in and leave MOs. As a part of the study, we also wanted to test the following hypotheses, which were based on our observations:

- Due to high private sector salaries in Switzerland, a career in an IFI or a UN agency is a less attractive option for Swiss professionals than for candidates from other countries. Professionals rate financial aspects as important reasons when joining, remaining in or leaving MOs;
- Professionals working in IFIs rate financial aspects as more important reasons for joining, remaining or leaving than professionals in the UN;
- Family-related reasons (dual career, partner, taking care of aging parents) influence a decision to join, remain or leave;
- Factors like children, caring for parents gain in importance with age;

- Women plan their career differently from men, as they anticipate having a family and therefore place greater importance on family when joining, remaining in or leaving a MO than men;
- The type of duty station (headquarter (HQ), regional (RO) or country offices (CO)) influences a person's decision due to differences in career opportunities;
- Contract types influence a person's decision to join, remain or leave.

The results of this study serve as a base for discussions in the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA), Swiss Development and Cooperation Agency (SDC), and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) on how to better support Swiss professionals to remain in the MO system. The findings also guide career counsellors at cinfo to strengthen their selection, preparation and assistance processes for Swiss working for MOs.

A brief description of the survey design, methods used and the target group is followed by the findings of the survey and concluding recommendations. This study adds value by providing an empirical basis for detailed discussions and further actions.

**Table 1****Priority UN and IFI partner organisations of FDFA and SECO****5 International Financial Institutions (IFIs)**

1. World Bank Group – International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Development Association (IDA) & International Financial Corporation (IFC)



2. Asian Development Bank (ADB)



3. Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)



4. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)



5. African Development Bank (AfDB)

**11 United Nations Organisations (UN)**

1. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)



2. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS)



3. United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)



4. United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)



5. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)



6. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



7. United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)



8. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



9. United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)



10. World Food Programme (WFP)



11. World Health Organization (WHO)

# Methodology

## A. Design and target population

This study was designed to capture at one point in time the career choices made by Swiss professionals over three different time periods. Ideally, such data would be collected separately during each particular phase. The target population of this report included all currently 'active' and former, now 'inactive',<sup>1</sup> Swiss employees in the professional category<sup>2</sup> of 11 priority UN agencies and 5 IFIs. The sample population included all<sup>3</sup> 468 professionals who could be reached, namely 209 men and 259 women. (Table 2)

**Table 2**  
**Sample**

Sample	468
Active	242
Inactive	226
IFI	101
UN	363
Male	209
Female	259

**Table 3**  
**Framework of questionnaire and data analysis**

6 Areas	1. Job conditions	2. Financial aspects	3. Institutional framework	4. Quality of life	5. Family	6. Personal reasons
30 Factors						
A	Challenging job environment	Salary	Personal identification	Restrictions by organisations	Children	Non-conventional or adventurous task
	Multifaceted, interesting job content	Fringe benefits / allowances	Professional development perspectives	Social situation	Career aspects	Cultural environment
	Travelling for the job	Pension schemes	Networking	Security situation / freedom of movement	Social situation	Opportunity to live and work abroad
	Management responsibility	Tax exemptions	Prestige	Environmental situation	Travelling for the job	Personal career perspective
	Multicultural environment	Currency benefits	Contractual framework	Public services	Parents	Meaningful work

<sup>1</sup> Active is defined as 'A Swiss professional currently working for a MO'; Inactive is 'A Swiss professional who does not currently work for a MO, but has done so previously.'

<sup>2</sup> Part of the target population were Swiss professionals who:

- have previously been employed by a priority partner organisation;
- have been employed within the last seven years;
- have not only worked on a secondment;
- have worked under a staff or JPO contract during that time, not only as general service staff and/or consultant.

<sup>3</sup> Focal points in the focus organisations provided the lists.

## B. Conducting the survey

Table 3 illustrates the framework for the questionnaire and the analysis of the data. The questions were grouped into six thematic areas, each of which had five explanatory factors to be rated according to their importance in the three phases of joining, remaining and leaving.

Participants were asked: 'How important was [explanatory factor] for you to decide whether you want to join an organisation?' The respondents could answer in the range of very important, important, neither important nor unimportant, or unimportant.

The questions for joining/remaining were formulated the same, while the question for leaving was formulated differently. (Figure 1)

**Figure 1**  
**Example for questions formulated for joining / remaining and leaving: area of job conditions**

cinfo						cinfo					
10. How important were the following factors for your decision making to join the organisation?						12. How important are/were the following factors for your decision making to leave the organisation?					
10.1. Job conditions						12.1. Job conditions					
	Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	I do not know		Very important	Important	Neither important nor unimportant	Unimportant	I do not know
Challenging job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Too high / too little challenges on the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multifaceted and interesting job content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Too low variety in job and/or uninteresting work content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Prospect of travelling for the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Missing possibility of travelling for the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Management responsibility on the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Too high / too low management responsibility on the job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multicultural environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Missing multicultural environment / disadvantages of multicultural environment outnumber advantages	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other, please specify:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Other, please specify:	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### C. Presentation of the data in the report

For better readability:

- The data is displayed on a scale from 0 to 10; 10 having maximum value of importance and 0 no importance;
- The areas are coded from 1 to 6 and factors within them from A to E;
- „n“ is not mentioned in the graphs, since the sample size changes within a graph.

### D. Analytical framework and interpretation

The data analysis discussed in the findings focuses on the following aspects:

- Response rate
- Which are the most important factors influencing a professional's overall career choices?
- Which are the most important factors influencing a professional's career choice during a particular phase?
- Which factors are the most and least important drivers over time?
- Can we see differences when we test certain variables? (e.g. gender, nationality, age, experience, IFI-UN, duty station etc.)
- Have professionals' expectations of working in MOs been met?

## E. Limitations of the survey

Uneven distribution: The sample included every identifiable Swiss professional having worked or currently working for one of the sixteen MOs. The distribution of respondents was uneven amongst MOs. For example, individuals working for IFIs made up 29 per cent of the actives but only 11 per cent of inactives. Similarly, 14 per cent JPOs were active and 26 per cent inactive. Uneven distribution was taken into consideration during the data analysis. All data was tested for significance,<sup>4</sup> before being used for data analysis.<sup>5</sup>

Formulation of survey questions: During the survey design, it was discussed whether the results between the positively formulated question during the join and remain phases could be statistically compared with results from negatively formulated ones for the leaving phase. We therefore had to test the data for robustness and comparability. Statistical testing allowed us to compare the three, albeit with a degree of caution.

Reaching everyone in the target group: Whereas actives could be reached through their professional addresses, obtaining contacts of inactives was challenging. Some could be obtained through the internal databases at cinfo; most were acquired through a cold-call internet search on Google and LinkedIn. 147 names for which no contact information could be found may function as potential source in the future.

Another related limitation is that those with a nationality other than Swiss, might not be registered with their Swiss nationality at the organisation. Hence, they fell off our radar.

Topics that should be further explored: The survey included demographic information but omitted representation of Swiss language regions, marital status and whether a person has children. Such additional information would have further substantiated the results. We could have drawn more decisive conclusions about differences between women and men. Further, it will be critical to include the overall duration of work in a MO in the next survey to give us additional indications about retention rates.

<sup>4</sup> The Spearman Correlation test was run to determine significant differences between variables. The Friedman/Kendall/Wilcoxon signed-rank test for J/R.

<sup>5</sup> Statistical significance is the likelihood that a relationship between two or more variables is caused by something other than random chance.

# Findings

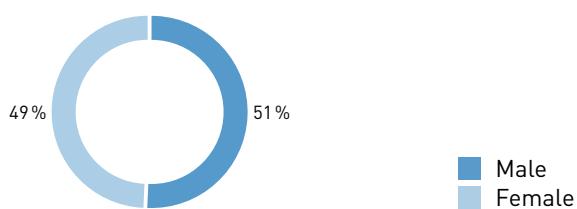
## A. Response rate

We had an unexpectedly high response rate of 62 per cent, with 288 persons out of 468 answering the questionnaire. Women and men answered the survey almost equally: a third for each experience group working in MOs [junior: 0-3 years; professional: 4-6 years; and senior: >7 years]. 75 per cent of the respondents were UN staff, one-fourth IFI; 66 per cent of the respondents had a nationality other than Swiss.

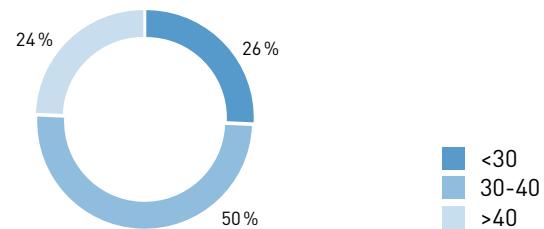
**Table 4**  
**Response rate**

Survey period	29 days
Response rate	288 (62 %)
Completion rate	262 (56 %)

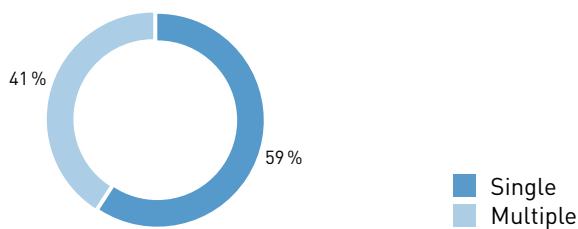
**Figure 2**  
**Response rate by gender**



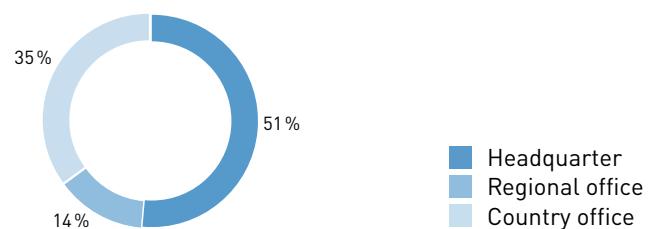
**Figure 5**  
**Response rate by age (in years)**



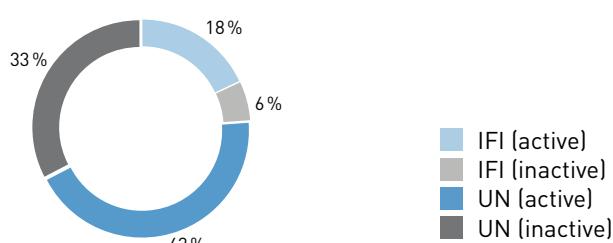
**Figure 3**  
**Response rate by nationality**



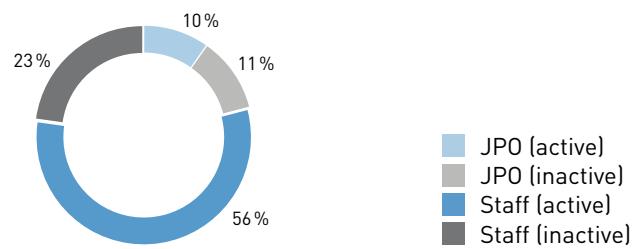
**Figure 6**  
**Response rate by type of duty station**



**Figure 4**  
**Response rate by type of organisation  
(Active & inactive IFI vs. UN)**



**Figure 7**  
**Response rate by type of contract  
(Active & inactive Staff vs. JPO)**



## B. Excusus: rationale for a separate analysis of actives and inactives

We found significant statistical differences between actives and inactives in the leaving phase, which reflects that questions were asked differently. As can be expected of responses as to why they left, actives answered hypothetically, while inactives answered factually. As a result, we discuss the findings for the leave phase individually for each group in two subchapters. (pp. 14/15)

## C. Comparison of areas and most important drivers across all phases

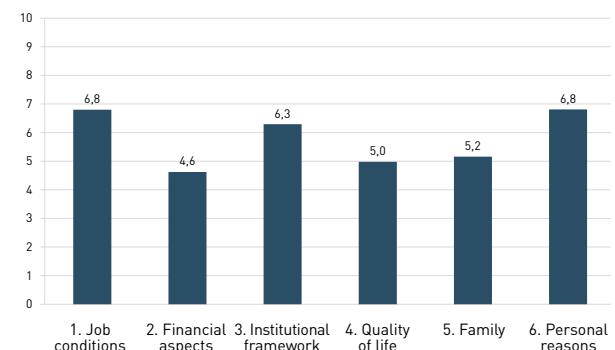
The level of importance of each area over the three phases combined is shown in Figure 8.

The main drivers for Swiss professionals to work in MOs were related to job conditions, personal reasons, and institutional framework.

Looking at the five most and five least important reasons over the three phases combined (Figure 9), job-related factors topped the list: meaningful work, interesting job content, personal identification with the values of the institution, professional development perspectives, and challenging job were most important to Swiss professionals.

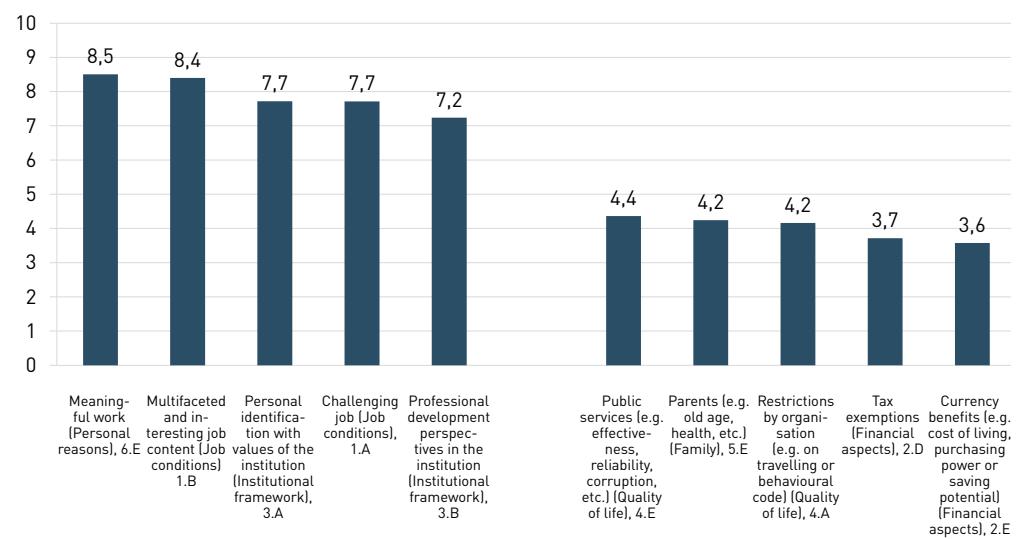
Financial aspects were of least importance (currency benefits or tax exemptions). Also of lesser importance were quality of life (restrictions by the organisation and public services) and parents.

**Figure 8**  
**Overall importance of areas**  
(combined: join, remain, leave)



Both graphs indicate that the main drivers for Swiss professionals to work in MOs were value based, non-financial reasons. Being able to identify with the organisation's mandate and personal fulfillment have far more influence than that of financial considerations or quality of life.

**Figure 9**  
**Most and least important factors (join, remain, leave)**



## D. Comparison of importance of drivers within a phase

The break-up by phases explains which drivers most and least influenced Swiss professionals' decision-making processes at a particular stage of their career.

### Phase 1: reasons for joining

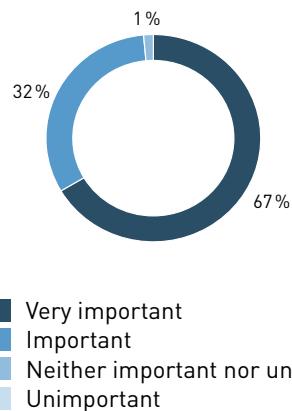
Meaningful work was the most important driver to join, with a 97 per cent rating. (Figure 10) Aspects related to job conviction were the top five reasons for joining: 99 per cent of the participants chose interesting job content as either important or very important (Figure 11); for 97 per cent, meaningful work was very important or important. (Figure 12)

Currency benefits and tax exemptions were least important at the time of joining, with 77 per cent and 70 per cent rating them as neither important nor unimportant and unimportant.

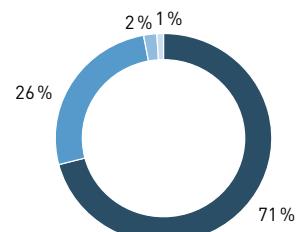
Quality of life was also among the bottom five: restrictions by the organisation and public services.

Overall, the dominant drivers for joining were value based (professional and personal). Many participants noted 'idealism', 'the contribution to the wellbeing of mankind' and 'inspiring mission' as their main driver to join. Others raised the necessity to go or stay in a particular country ('location') as a practical motivator to join.

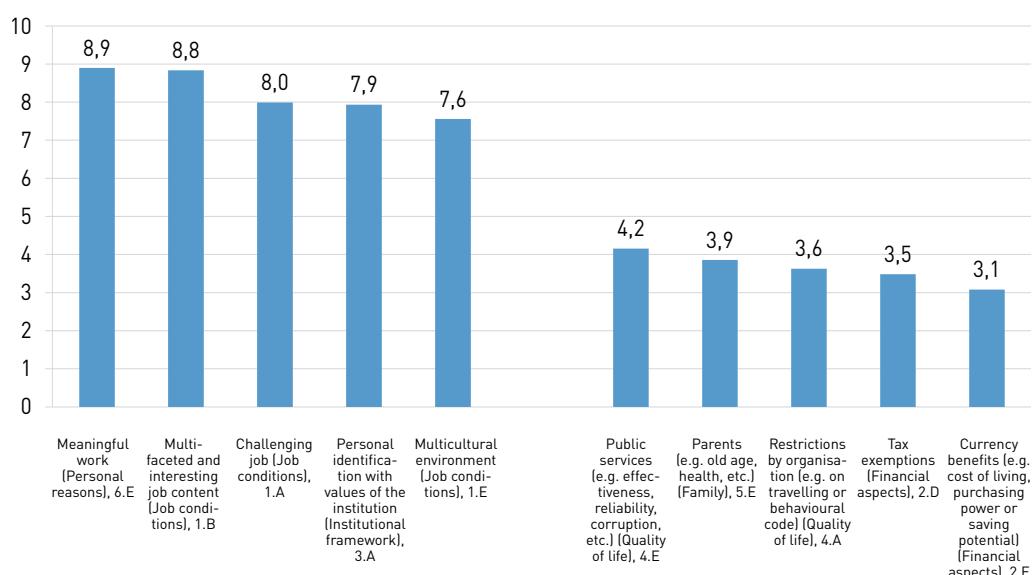
**Figure 11  
Interesting job content (join)**



**Figure 12  
Meaningful work (join)**



**Figure 10  
Most and least important factors (join)**



## Phase 2: reasons for remaining

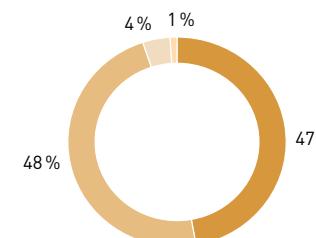
Professional development perspectives were among the top five most important reasons to remain in a MO.

Meaningful work remained most important, followed by interesting job content and challenging job. (Figure 13) 93 per cent valued the latter (Figure 14) and 99 per cent the former (Figure 15) to be very important or important.

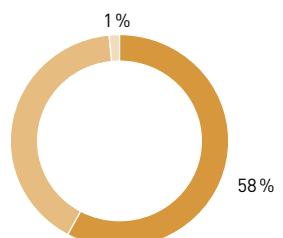
Job-related reasons for remaining were valued higher than others. Professional development perspectives in the institution replace multicultural environment. Financial aspects and quality of life reasons remained least important.

This shows that Swiss professionals remained in MOs due to job-related opportunities, rather than financial or quality of life related reasons. This was further verified by qualitative statements made in the survey, such as 'clarity of mission', 'a good team', 'a supervisor that respects your work and makes you grow' and 'development possibilities on the job'.

**Figure 14  
Challenging job  
(remain)**

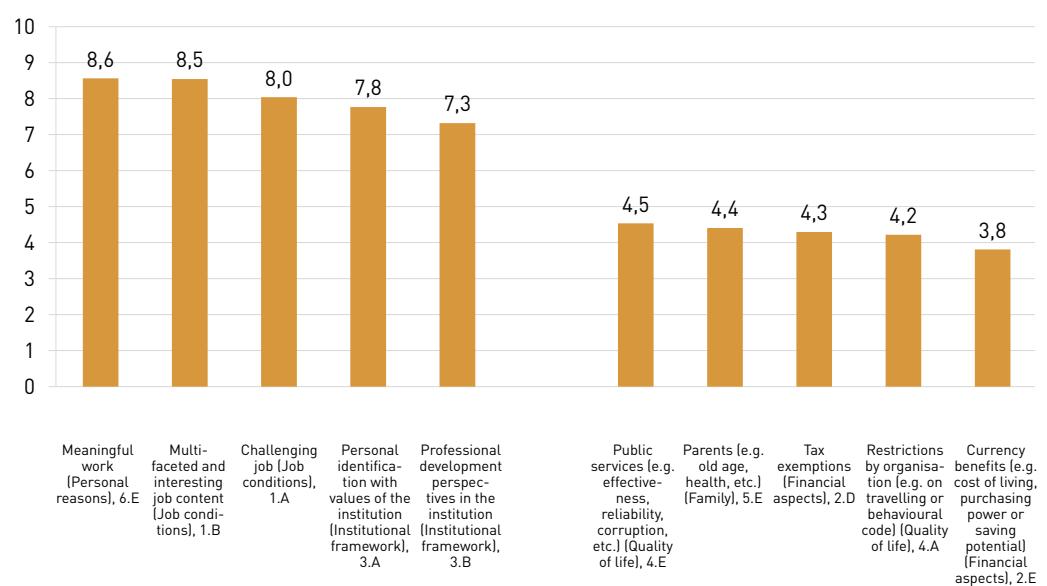


**Figure 15  
Interesting job  
content (remain)**



- Very important
- Important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Unimportant

**Figure 13  
Most and least important factors (remain)**



### Phase 3: reasons for leaving for actives (hypothetical answer)

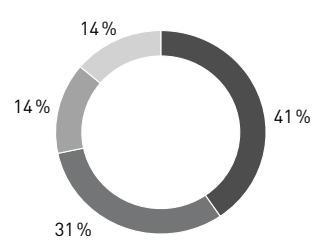
The main reasons why a professional who remained in a MO (active) might leave, could be a lack of job-related and personal development opportunities. (Figure 16)

Professional development perspectives in the institution was mentioned among the five most important potential reasons to leave. 79 per cent actives valued it as either very important or important. 71 per cent valued missing meaningful work, as either very important or important. (Figure 17) Other related issues, such as missing identification with values of the institution, and missing interesting job content remained the most important potential reasons to leave.

Three out of the five financial factors were still the least important reasons to potentially leave. 78 per cent valued tax exemptions as neither important nor unimportant or unimportant. (Figure 18)

Reasons, such as changes of duty stations and the multiplicity of contracts, which could lead to uncertainty for many working for MOs, did not seem to be reasons why Swiss professionals would potentially leave; the decision-making process would still predominantly be driven by personal career and professional development opportunities.

**Figure 17  
Meaningful work (leave)**

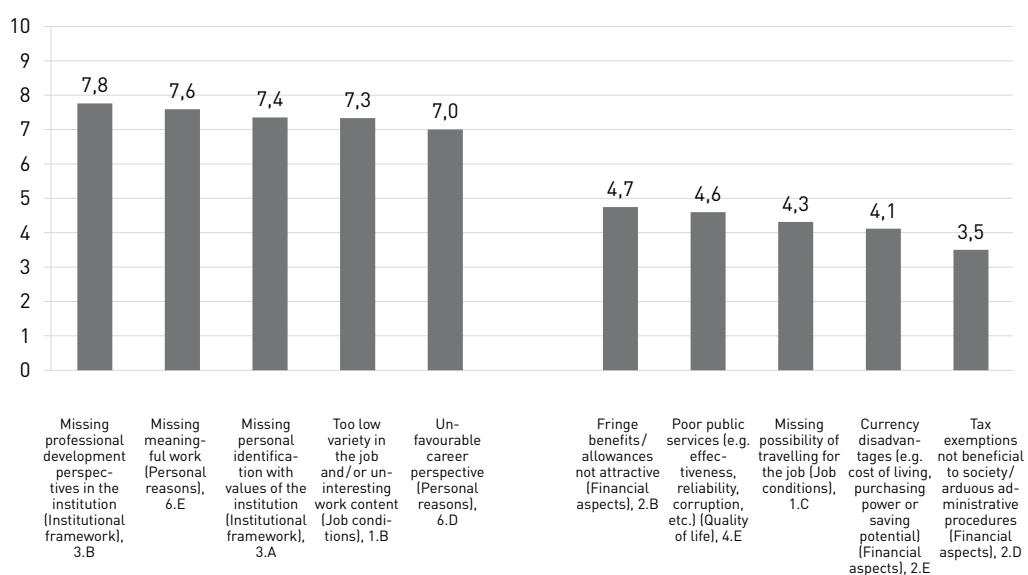


**Figure 18  
Tax exemptions (leave)**



- Very important
- Important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Unimportant

**Figure 16  
Most and least important factors (leave)**



### Phase 3: reasons for leaving for inactives (factual answer)

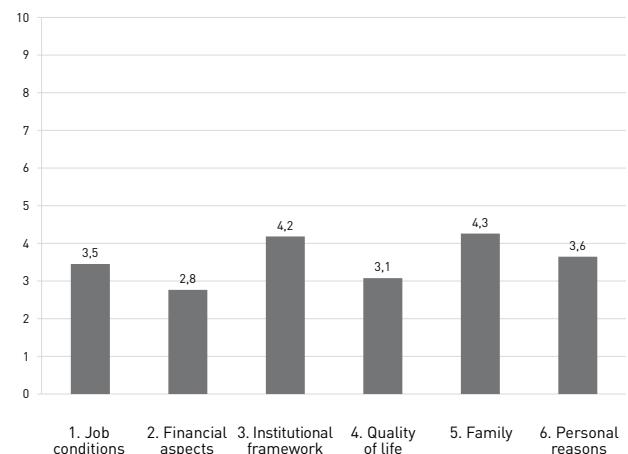
For inactives – Swiss professionals who effectively left a MO – family was the most important reason for leaving, even more important than institutional framework, personal reasons and job conditions. On an average, quality of life and financial aspects were the least important areas. (Figure 19)

Inactives also valued professional development perspectives and meaningful work as the five most important reasons for having left a MO. But factors related to family (career aspects e.g. dual career, situation with the partner, working part time) and institutional framework (contractual framework) were valued higher than in the case of actives. (Figure 20)

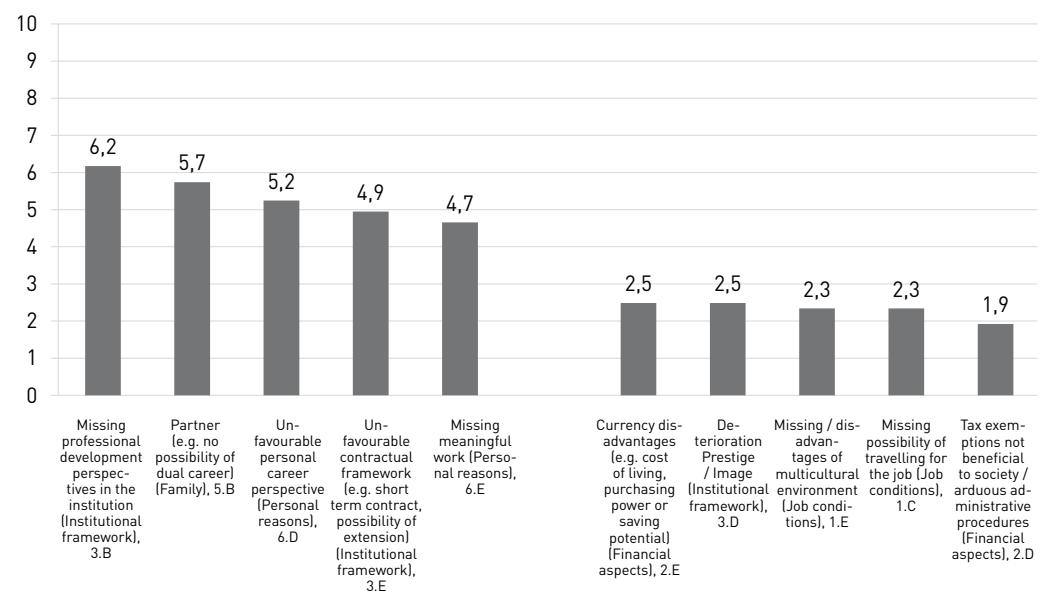
Among the five least important reasons were financial aspects (tax exemptions and currency benefits), and missing the possibility of travelling on the job. Interestingly, inactives valued disadvantages of multicultural environment and deterioration of prestige/image as less important than actives.

Overall, the main reasons for leaving were lack of career development perspectives. Qualitative comments added in the survey underlined the desire to 'explore other challenges' or that 'it was time for a change.' Institutional reasons, such as 'too much administration', 'low level of accountability at the directorate level' and 'lack of leadership' highlight some frustrations with MOs. Reasons such as 'lack of support for the partner' (dual career) and 'the sickness of parents' were also noted as important reasons to leave, unlike actives still working in the system.

**Figure 20  
Importance of areas (having left)**



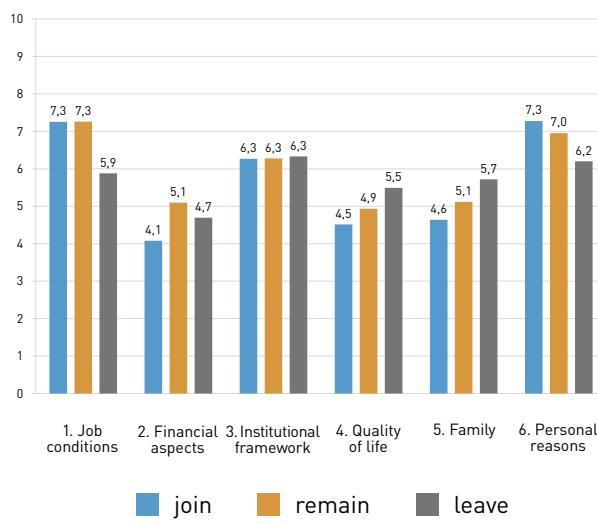
**Figure 19  
Most and least important factors (having left)**



## E. Change of importance of areas over three phases

Figure 21 indicates how the importance of areas changed for the participants from one phase to another. While job conditions and individual and personal reasons declined over the three phases, family and quality of life (such as partners, dependents and health) became more important over time. The increasing importance of financial aspects might be a result of increasing personal commitments with age. Being a breadwinner for dependents, having to pay for children's education, or planning for retirement, are valid reasons for increased importance over time.

**Figure 21**  
**Importance of areas**



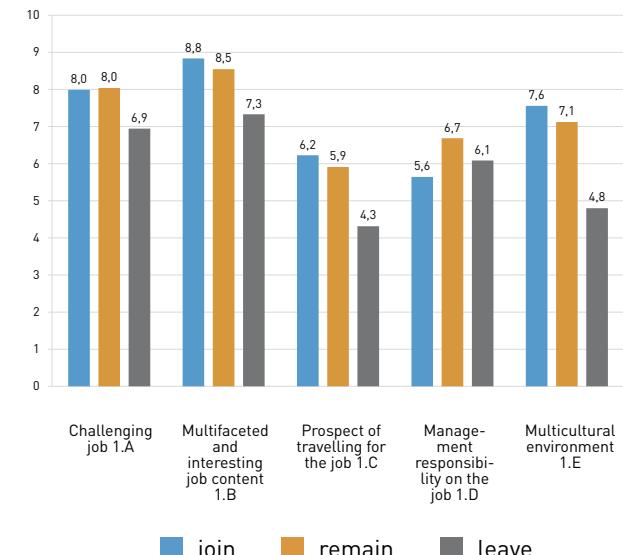
## F. Changes within an area over three phases

### Job conditions

As can be observed, job conditions overall reduced in importance from one phase to another. Only management responsibility on the job increased during the remain phase. (Figure 22)

The importance of advantages of multicultural environment to join and remain compared to disadvantages for leaving fell significantly. The same trend can be observed with multifaceted/interesting job content and prospect of travelling for the job.

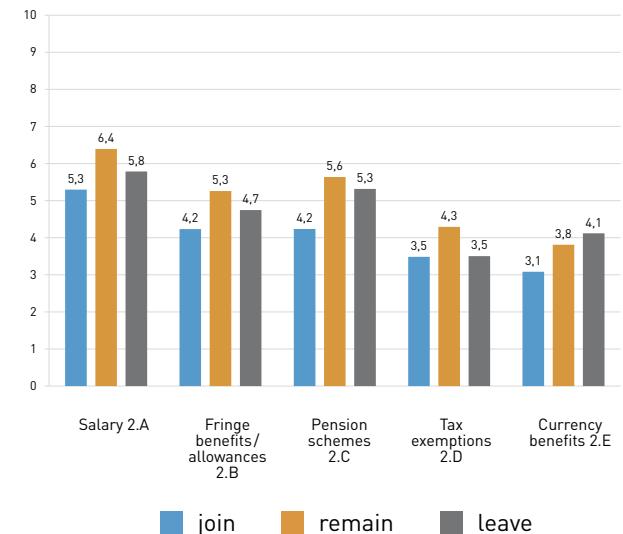
**Figure 22**  
**Job conditions**



### Financial factors

Most financial aspects were least important during all three phases, but became however more important during the remain and leave phase. (Figure 23) The role of fringe benefits/allowances and pension schemes increased in importance.

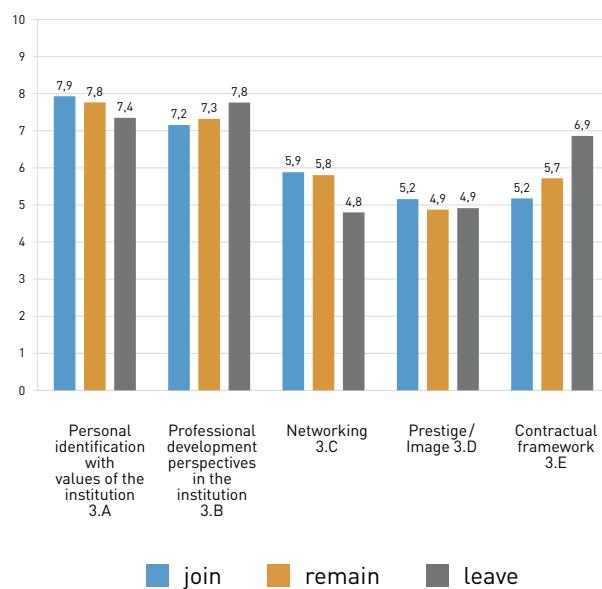
**Figure 23**  
**Financial aspects**



## Institutional framework

Personal identification with values of a MO was most important during the join phase and declined only slightly thereafter. Professional development perspectives became more important over time, as did contractual framework. (Figure 24)

**Figure 24**  
**Institutional framework**

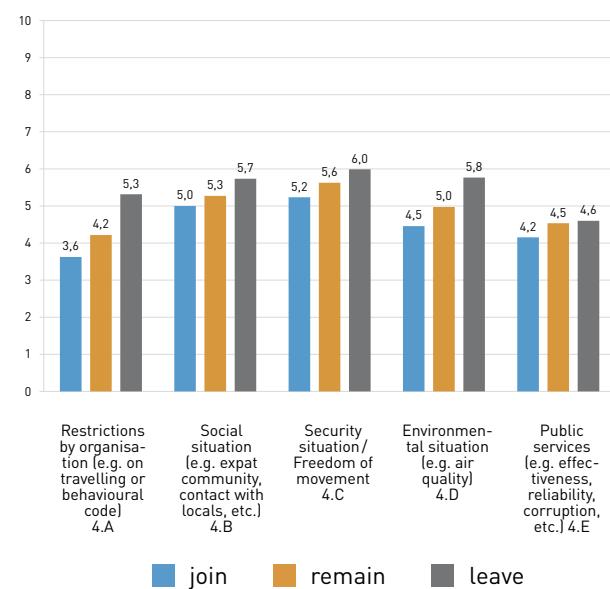


## Quality of life

Compared to other areas, quality of life was less important overall, although its importance increased over the phases. (Figure 25) Only the security situation/freedom of movement made it into the top twenty most important reasons to join and to remain.

Above all, restrictions by organisation gained in importance from one phase to another.

**Figure 25**  
**Quality of life**

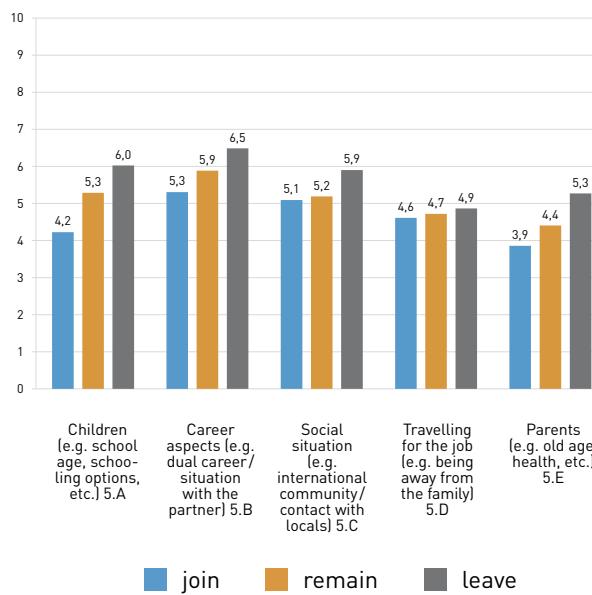


## Family

The importance of family increased over the three phases, in particular the role of children, parents, and career (e.g. dual career / situation with the partner). (Figure 26)

While children were less important at the point of joining, they gained in importance as a reason to remain and were the 9th most important reason to potentially leave. Career aspects (e.g. dual career / partner) and parents – although becoming more important – still ranked low (20th most important factor for possibly leaving).

**Figure 26**  
**Family**



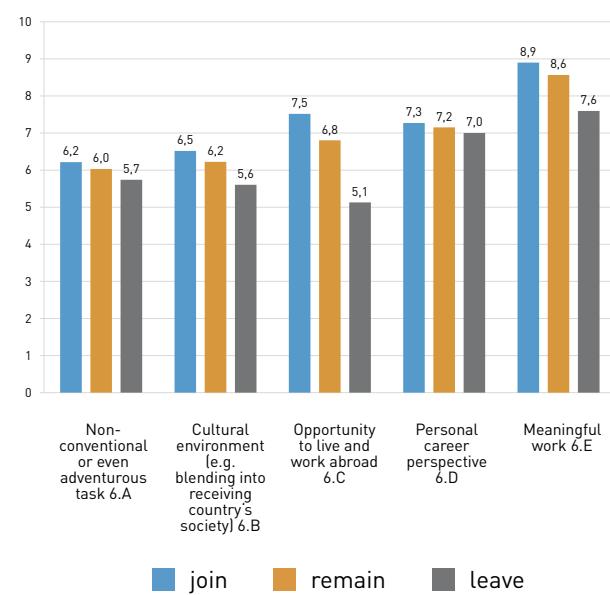
## Personal reasons

Personal reasons decreased in importance over the three phases. (Figure 27)

The opportunity to live and work abroad decreased in importance from joining to remaining, and dropped further for potentially leaving.

Meaningful work remained important across all phases. After being the most important during both previous phases, it was still the 2nd most important factor for possibly leaving.

**Figure 27**  
**Personal reasons**



## G. Differences by selected variables

This chapter highlights differences between several variables:

- **gender:** male, female;
- **type of duty station:** headquarter (HQ), regional office (RO), country office (CO);
- **age:** under 30, between 30 and 40, and over 40 years of age;
- **contract type:** JPO versus staff contract;
- **nationality:** single versus multiple;
- **type of organisation:** IFI versus UN.

### Gender

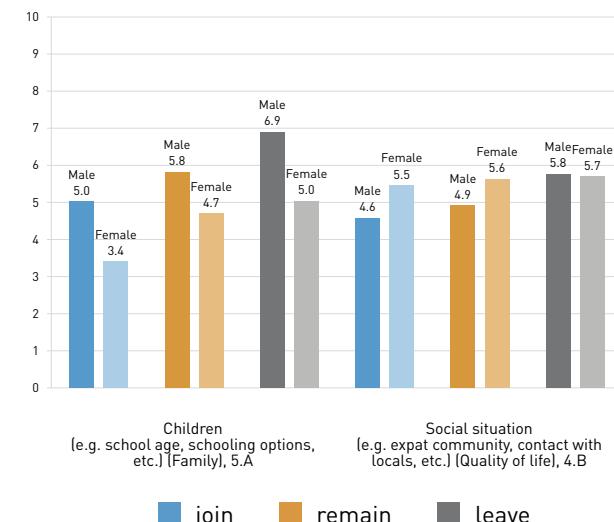
There are clear gender differences. Women valued job-related and personal development factors as significantly higher and family lower across all phases than men.

As shown in Figure 28, during the join phase, women valued institutional framework and personal reasons as significantly higher than men: personal identification with values of the institution, professional development perspective and networking. These reasons go hand-in-hand with personal career perspectives and meaningful work, which were valued as more important by women than by men.

Over all phases, women placed less importance on the role of children for their decision than men, but gave more importance to the social situation (e.g. expat community, contact with locals) when joining or remaining. There was no longer a significant difference between men and women for leaving. (Figure 29)

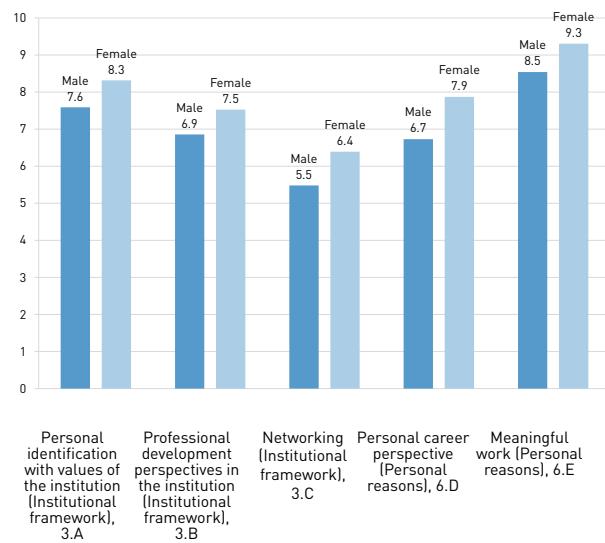
**Figure 29**

### Differences by gender – family and social situation (join, remain, leave)



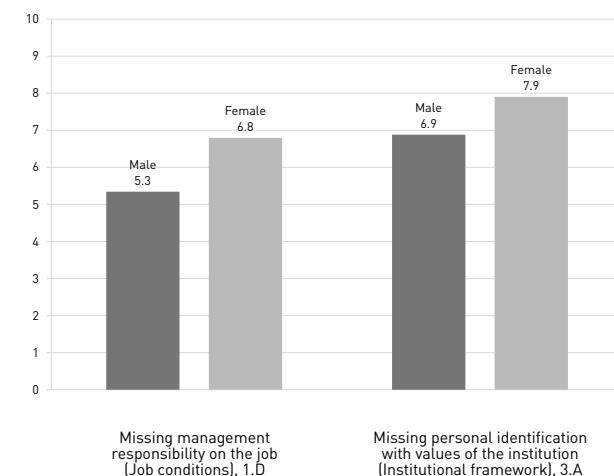
**Figure 28**

### Differences by gender (join)



**Figure 30**

### Differences by gender (leave)



There were also gender differences when it came to the importance of management responsibilities in the job and for personal identification with values of the institution for leaving. Women valued them as significantly more important. (Figure 30)

Combining a career and a family is usually more challenging for women than men, as a wide range of labour market research on gender equality suggests. We suspect that women who joined a MO and stayed in the system opted for a career that were less oriented towards having a family.

Women gave more importance to professional development when they joined and remained, saw the lack of it as an important reason to leave. This finding will have to be further investigated, when information about the participants' marital status and situation of children is collected as part of a future survey.

### Type of duty station

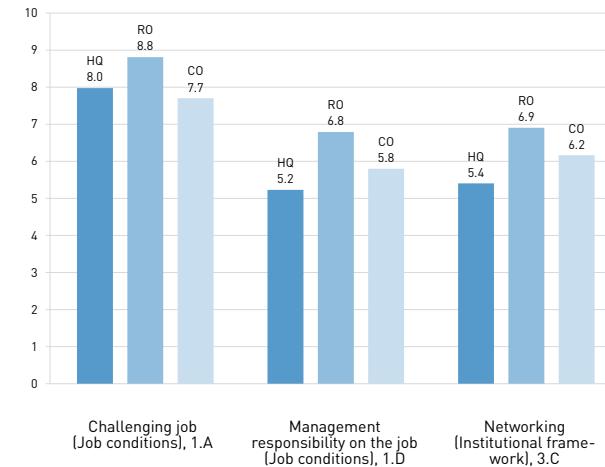
There are clear differences when we look at duty stations – headquarter (HQ), regional office (RO), and country/field office (CO).

Challenging job and management responsibilities on the job, as well as networking were more important in ROs than at HQs and COs. At HQs, management responsibility and networking was less important than for ROs. (Figure 31)

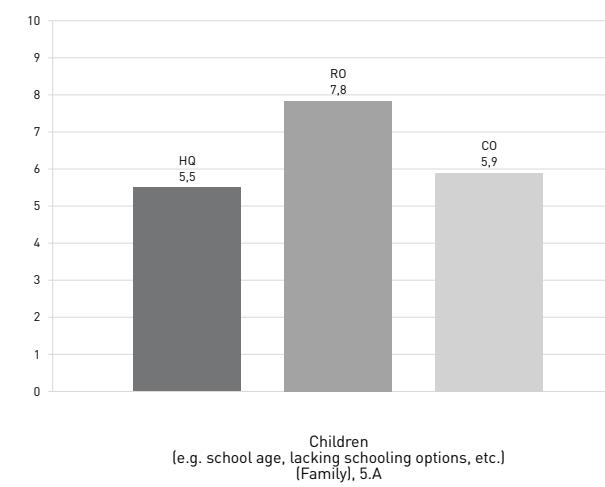
The main reason for leaving when comparing duty stations, was the importance of children (e.g. school age, schooling options, etc.). Swiss professionals in a RO valued this as significantly higher than their counterparts at HQs and COs. (Figure 32)

Reasons for this trend may be that good school facilities are more likely available at HQs and less in the field. At the UN, and to a lesser extent at IFIs, COs are likely non-family duty stations. Hence, when assessing differences between duty stations, children play a less important role in deciding to possibly leave in COs.

**Figure 31**  
**Differences by duty station: job conditions and institutional framework (join)**



**Figure 32**  
**Differences by duty station: family (leave)**



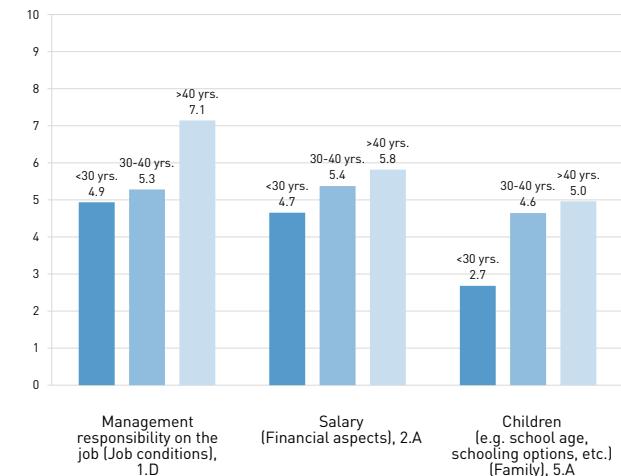
## Age

In the joining phase, we observed clear differences among professionals across age groups.

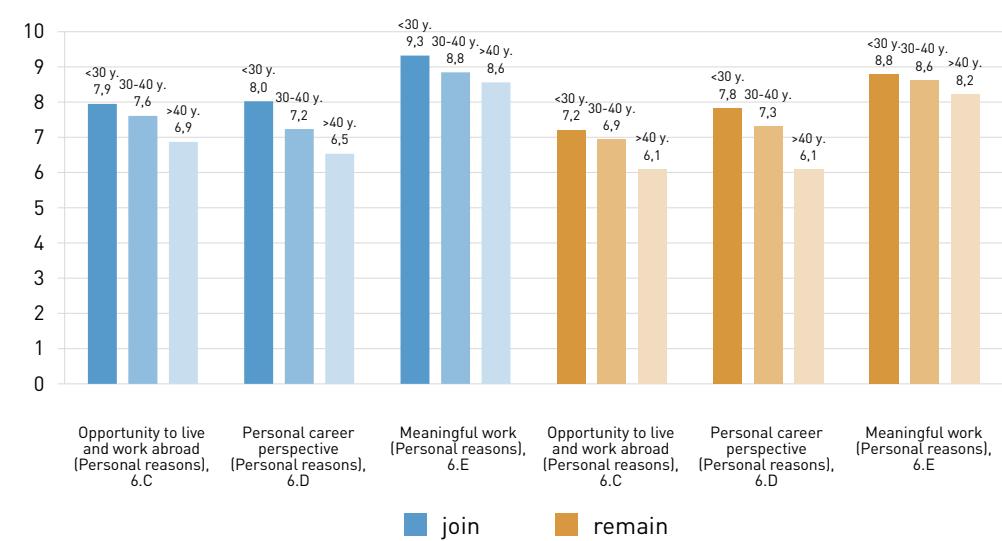
Management responsibility, salary and children, were more important for the 40+ year olds (Figure 33), whereas personal reasons, like the opportunity to live and work abroad, personal career perspectives, and meaningful work, decreased in importance with age. (Figure 34)

In the remain phase, the importance of career related aspects (dual career, situation with the partner, working part-time) differed significantly. Those aged below 30 years valued it more highly than those between 30 to 40 years old, and even more so than those over 40 years of age. (Figure 34)

**Figure 33**  
**Differences by age: management responsibility, salary and children (join)**



**Figure 34**  
**Differences by age: personal reasons (join, remain)**



## Contract type (JPO versus staff)

In all phases, we can clearly see differences in the importance of job conditions, when it comes to comparing contract types.

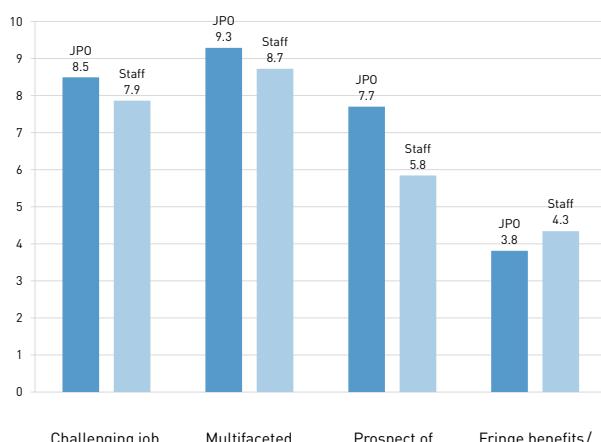
When joining, JPOs valued job conditions (challenging job, multifaceted and interesting job content, prospect of travelling for the job) as more important than staff. Staff gave higher importance to fringe benefits. (Figure 35)

During the remain phase, JPOs valued professional development perspectives in the institution and restrictions by the organisation (e.g. on travelling or behavioural code) higher than staff. (Figure 36)

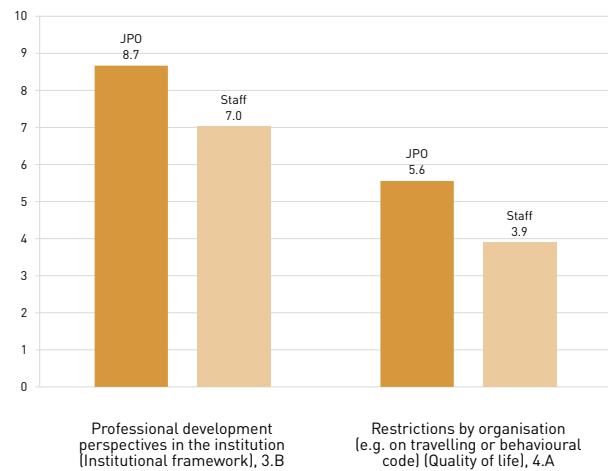
For potential reasons to leave, JPOs gave more importance to financial aspects and institutional framework (salary, fringe benefits, unfavourable contractual framework, career factors) and personal career perspectives than those with staff contracts. (Figure 37)

These tendencies may be due to the fact that the JPO programme is about gaining the necessary experience to enter the system of MOs. It is often unclear whether a JPO continues as a regular staff upon completion of a programme.

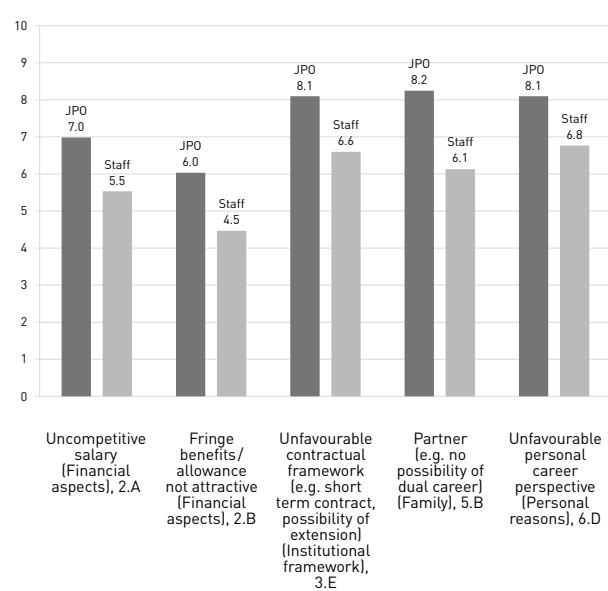
**Figure 35**  
**Differences by contract type – JPO vs staff (join)**



**Figure 36**  
**Differences by contract type – JPO vs staff (remain)**



**Figure 37**  
**Differences by contract type – JPO vs staff (leave)**



## Nationality

When it comes to single versus multiple nationalities, the survey found only one significant statistical difference in the reasons to join and remain. When joining, those with multiple nationalities valued currency benefits (e.g. cost of living, purchasing power or saving potential) as more important.

Actives with multiple nationalities valued missing multicultural environment, missing identification with the institution, and missing professional development perspectives within the institution as more important to potentially leave than those with only Swiss nationality.

However, all factors had a low level of importance. At this point it is difficult to make a conclusive statement. More research needs to be done.

## IFIs versus UN

No significant differences were found between Swiss professionals working in the UN and those in IFIs. Differences were only found when inactives of IFIs with inactives of the UN were compared.

UN inactives valued reasons like unfavourable security situation/limited freedom of movement and building social network every time duty station changes to leave MOs as higher; whereas inactives of IFIs gave more importance to missing the possibility of travelling on the job and unattractive fringe benefits/allowances as more important.

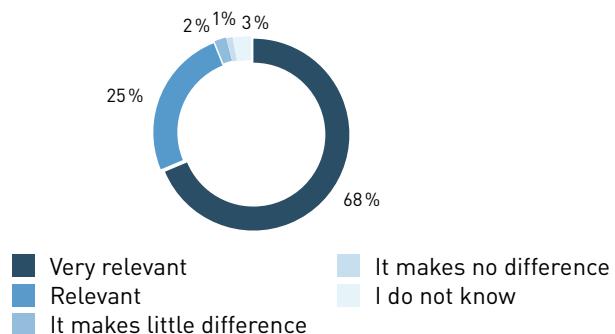
For both, missing professional development perspectives within the institution was the determining factor to actually leave.

## H. Were the overall objectives and expectations met?

Seven out of ten Swiss professionals working in MOs rated the overall experience as very relevant for their professional career. (Figure 38) Almost nine out of ten want to continue a career with a MO or join again. (Figure 39)

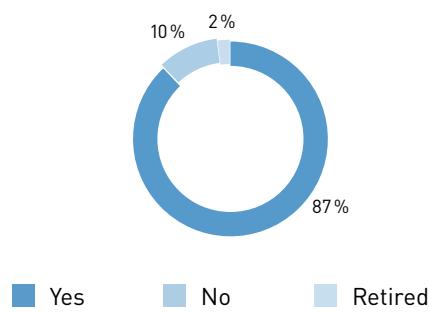
**Figure 38**

**Looking back, how relevant is/was the work with the MO for your professional career?**



**Figure 39**

**Can you see yourself continuing your career with a MO? Or, if exited, to join it again?**



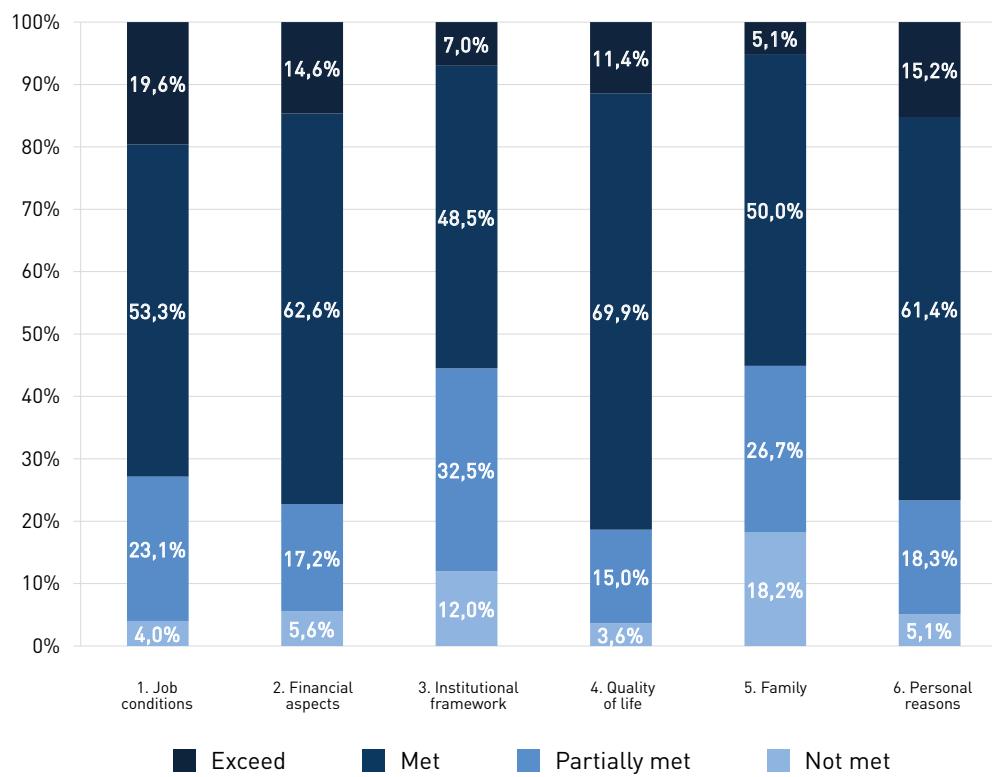
Close to four out of five participants answered that expectations with regard to quality of life were mostly met or even exceeded. (Figure 40)

Equally well met were the expectations for individual and personal reasons, financial expectations, and job conditions. Only fifteen per cent of the respondents felt that financial factors exceeded expectations.

A little less than half believed that expectations of the area of institutional framework conditions were only partially met or not met. As the main driving force to leave, this finding is crucial. The reasons that discourage Swiss professionals from staying in MOs were restrictive contractual framework (e.g. short term contracts, limited possibility for extensions) and limited professional development perspectives in the institution.

One out of five respondents mentioned that expectations for family-related aspects were not met. The study suggests that family-related aspects (dual career, parents, children, etc.) and institutional framework conditions are areas most in need of improvement. The recommendations on how to best proceed are discussed in the conclusion and recommendation section below.

**Figure 40**  
**Expectation levels met by area**



# Conclusion and recommendations

The study provided interesting findings. We observed that overall objectives and expectations of working in a MO were met or even exceeded, with a majority being highly satisfied and still interested in remaining or re-joining MOs.

Some of our hypotheses were confirmed, while others were rejected. The results indicate that in all phases Swiss professionals made career decisions based on their values and professional and personal development perspectives, and did not consider financial reasons as very important. Most respondents even indicated that their financial expectations were met or even exceeded and financial aspects increased only marginally in importance over time. Therefore, while we cannot say whether or not financial factors influence a person not to apply for a job in a MO, we can conclude that professionals remain or leave due to other factors, such as a lack of personal development or institutional factors.

For both, cinfo and the Swiss government, these findings present opportunities for further engagement with focal points at MOs and Swiss professionals in those organisations. The government should see Swiss professionals at MOs as an internal talent pool with significant potential, to be fostered and mentored throughout their career in IC, not just during the recruitment process or their JPO assignment. The government and cinfo should establish and cultivate a close relationship with Swiss professionals within the system and promote networking, mentoring, coaching and career planning to increase retention rates within the MO community.

The Swiss government could intervene in the area of institutional framework conditions and continue negotiating with UN agencies and IFIs so that promising JPO candidates are offered fixed-term contracts at the end of the assignments, or senior professionals can enter MOs. As a part of institutional partnership development, the Swiss government and cinfo could jointly promote increased retention rates in MOs.

cinfo sees a potential in systematic networking. Activating alumni could bring Swiss professionals working in MOs together. An online platform may facilitate exchange and create a dynamic support network. The benefit of sharing information has been discussed during the presentation of the preliminary findings of this study in New York. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the success of such an initiative ultimately depends on members' willingness to actively contribute and participate.

cinfo can further provide services required to address individual needs. Individuals should take advantage of these services currently offered by cinfo (coaching, career advice on subjects of dual career / accompanying persons, work-life balance in IC, security and stress management, and leaving and returning to IC). Depending on needs, individuals can be supported through a joint collaboration between the Swiss government and cinfo.

It is strongly suggested that such surveys are conducted on a regular basis so that decisions can be made based on informed discussions and actions.

# Annex

## Questionnaire

### Part A: General

Questions	Answers
1. For which type of organisation do you currently work?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ International Financial Institution (IFI) or UN organisation</li><li>▪ Swiss Federal Administration (SDC, SECO, etc.) (→ question 3)</li><li>▪ Otherwise active in international cooperation (→ question 3)</li><li>▪ Other (→ question 3)</li></ul>
2. Do you currently work under a staff / JPO contract for one of the following organisations? ADB, AfDB, EBRD, IDB, WBG (IBRD & IDA, IFC), IFAD, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, UN Women, WFP, WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Yes</li><li>▪ No (→ question 3)</li></ul>
2.1. Please indicate for which of the IFI or UN organisation you are currently working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ ADB, AfDB, EBRD, IDB, WBG (IBRD &amp; IDA, IFC), IFAD, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, UN Women, WFP, WHO (→ question 2.2)</li><li>▪ None of the above (→ question 3)</li></ul>
2.2. Please indicate the contract type you currently have with the respective IFI or UN organisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ JPO contract (→ question 5)</li><li>▪ Staff contract (→ question 5)</li><li>▪ Other (e.g. consultancy, secondment) (→ question 3)</li></ul>
3. Have you previously (since 2007) worked under a staff / JPO contract for one of these organisations? ADB, AfDB, EBRD, IDB, WBG (IBRD & IDA, IFC), IFAD, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, UN Women, WFP, WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Yes</li><li>▪ No (→ info Q19)</li></ul>
3.1. Please indicate for which organisation have you been working last under a staff / JPO contract?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ ADB, AfDB, EBRD, IDB, WBG (IBRD &amp; IDA, IFC), IFAD, OCHA, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNRWA, UN Women, WFP, WHO,</li><li>▪ None of the above (→ info Q19)</li></ul>
4. Please indicate the contract type you had with the respective IFI or UN organisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ JPO contract</li><li>▪ Staff contract</li><li>▪ Other (consultancy, secondment) (→ info Q19)</li></ul>
5. Please indicate your nationality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Swiss</li><li>▪ Not Swiss (→ info Q19)</li></ul>
5.1. Do you have double or multiple nationalities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Yes</li><li>▪ No</li></ul>
6. In which office type are you working / did you work during your last staff / JPO contract with the respective organisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ HQ</li><li>▪ Regional Office</li><li>▪ Country Office / Field Location</li></ul>
7. Please indicate how old you were at the beginning of your current respectively your last staff / JPO work contract with the respective IFI / UN organisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ &lt; 30 years</li><li>▪ 30-40 years</li><li>▪ &gt; 40 years</li></ul>
8. Please indicate how many years of work experience in international cooperation you had at the beginning of your current respectively last contract with the IFI / UN organisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ 0-3 years</li><li>▪ 3-7 years</li><li>▪ 7 or more years</li></ul>
9. Please indicate your gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Male</li><li>▪ Female</li><li>▪ Do not want to specify</li></ul>

## **Part B: Reasons to JOIN a multilateral organisation and expectations when joining**

In part B of the survey you are asked to assess the importance of 6 different factors for your decision making to join a multilateral organisation.

Please assess with regard to your current respectively last staff or JPO contract you had with the respective organisation.

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Answers</b>
10. How important were the following factors for your decision making to join the organisation? <b>10.1. Job conditions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Challenging job</li><li>▪ Multifaceted and interesting job content</li><li>▪ Prospect of travelling for the job</li><li>▪ Management responsibility in the job</li><li>▪ Multicultural environment</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul> <b>10.2. Financial aspects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Salary</li><li>▪ Fringe benefits/allowances</li><li>▪ Pension schemes</li><li>▪ Tax exemptions</li><li>▪ Currency benefits (e.g. cost of living, purchasing power, saving potential)</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul> <b>10.3. Institutional framework</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Personal identification with values of the institution</li><li>▪ Professional development perspectives in the institution</li><li>▪ Networking</li><li>▪ Prestige/image</li><li>▪ Contractual framework (e.g. short term contract, possibility of extension)</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul> <b>10.4. Quality of life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Restrictions by organisation (e.g. on travelling or behavioural code)</li><li>▪ Social situation (e.g. expat community, contact with locals)</li><li>▪ Security situation/freedom of movement</li><li>▪ Environmental situation (e.g. air quality)</li><li>▪ Public services (e.g. effectiveness, reliability, corruption)</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul> <b>10.5. Family</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Children (e.g. school age, schooling options)</li><li>▪ Career aspects (e.g. dual career/partner situation/working part-time)</li><li>▪ Social situation (e.g. international community, contact with locals)</li><li>▪ Travelling for the job (e.g. being away from the family)</li><li>▪ Parents (e.g. old age, health)</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul> <b>10.6. Individual and personal reasons</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Non-conventional, or even adventurous task</li><li>▪ Cultural environment (e.g. blending into receiving country's society)</li><li>▪ Opportunity to live and work abroad</li><li>▪ Personal career perspective</li><li>▪ Meaningful work</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Very important</li><li>▪ Important</li><li>▪ Neither important nor unimportant</li><li>▪ Unimportant</li><li>▪ I do not know</li></ul>

## **Part C: Reasons for STAYING in a multilateral organisation**

In part C of the survey you are asked to assess the importance of the 6 different factors for your decision making to stay in the organisation.

Please assess with regard to your current respectively last staff or JPO contract you had with one of the respective organisations.

### **Questions**

### **Answers**

11. How important are/were the following factors for your motivation to stay in the organisation?

#### **11.1. Job conditions**

- Challenging job
- Multifaceted and interesting job content
- Prospect of travelling for the job
- Management responsibility in the job
- Multicultural environment
- Others, please specify:

- Very important
- Important
- Neither important nor unimportant
- Unimportant
- I do not know

#### **11.2. Financial aspects**

- Salary
- Fringe benefits/allowances
- Pension schemes
- Tax exemptions
- Currency benefits (e.g. cost of living, purchasing power, saving potential)
- Others, please specify:

#### **11.3. Institutional framework**

- Personal identification with values of the institution
- Professional development perspectives in the institution
- Networking
- Prestige/image
- Contractual framework (e.g. short term contract, possibility of extension)
- Others, please specify:

#### **11.4. Quality of life**

- Restrictions by organisation (e.g. on travelling or behavioural code)
- Social situation (e.g. expat community, contact with locals)
- Security situation/freedom of movement
- Environmental situation (e.g. air quality)
- Public services (e.g. effectiveness, reliability, corruption)
- Others, please specify:

#### **11.5. Family**

- Children (e.g. school age, schooling options)
- Career aspects (e.g. dual career/situation with the partner/working part-time)
- Social situation (e.g. international community, contact with locals)
- Travelling for the job (e.g. being away from the family)
- Parents (e.g. old age, health)
- Others, please specify:

#### **11.6. Individual and personal reasons**

- Non-conventional, or even adventurous task
- Cultural environment (e.g. blending into receiving country's society)
- Opportunity to live and work abroad
- Personal career perspective
- Meaningful work
- Others, please specify:

## **Part D: Reasons for LEAVING a multilateral organisation**

If you have not yet quit your contract or if you left it due to a non-extension to an interagency change, please answer the following questions hypothetically; assuming what could be influencing factors for you to leave the organisation?

In part D of the survey you are asked to assess the importance of the 6 different factors for your decision making to leave the organisation.

Please assess with regard to your current respectively last staff or JPO contract you had with one of the respective organisations.

Questions	Answers
12. How important are/were the following factors for your decision making to leave the organisation?  <b>12.1. Job conditions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Too many/too few job challenges on the job</li><li>▪ Insufficient job variety and/or uninteresting work content</li><li>▪ Missing possibility of travelling for the job</li><li>▪ Too high/too low management responsibility in the job</li><li>▪ Missing multicultural environment/disadvantages of multicultural environment outnumber advantages</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul> <b>12.2. Financial aspects</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Uncompetitive salary</li><li>▪ Fringe benefits/allowances not attractive</li><li>▪ Pension schemes not sufficient/employer's contribution to social security non-existent</li><li>▪ Tax exemptions not beneficial to society/arduous administrative procedures</li><li>▪ Currency disadvantages (e.g. cost of living, purchasing power, saving potential)</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul> <b>12.3. Institutional framework</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Missing identification with institution</li><li>▪ Missing professional development perspectives within the institution</li><li>▪ Missing networking</li><li>▪ Deterioration of prestige</li><li>▪ Unfavourable contractual framework (e.g. short term contract, possibility of extension)</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul> <b>12.4. Quality of life</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Too restrictive (e.g. restrictions by organisation, travelling, behavioural code)</li><li>▪ Unfavourable social situation</li><li>▪ Unfavourable security situation/limited freedom of movement</li><li>▪ Unhealthy natural environment (e.g. air quality)</li><li>▪ Poor public services (e.g. effectiveness, reliability, corruption)</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul> <b>12.5. Family</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Children (e.g. school age, lacking schooling options)</li><li>▪ Partner (e.g. no possibility of dual career)</li><li>▪ Missing social interaction with relatives/friends/social network</li><li>▪ Too much travelling for the job (being away of the family)</li><li>▪ Parents (e.g. old age, health)</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul> <b>12.6. Individual and personal reasons</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Missing non-conventional or adventurous tasks</li><li>▪ Missing aspects of sustainable cultural environment (e.g. blending into receiving country's society)</li><li>▪ Building social network every time duty station changes</li><li>▪ Unfavourable personal career perspective</li><li>▪ Missing meaningful work</li><li>▪ Others, please specify:</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Very important</li><li>▪ Important</li><li>▪ Neither important nor unimportant</li><li>▪ Unimportant</li><li>▪ I do not know</li></ul>

## Part E: Concluding statements

Questions	Answers
13. Can you see yourself continuing your career with a multilateral organisation, or – if exited – to join it again?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes</li> <li>▪ No</li> <li>▪ Retired</li> </ul>
14. Looking back now, how relevant is/was the work under a staff / JPO contract with the respective organisation for your professional career?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ It is/was very relevant</li> <li>▪ It is/was relevant</li> <li>▪ It makes little difference</li> <li>▪ It makes no difference</li> <li>▪ I do not know</li> </ul>
15. Looking back now on your current/last staff / JPO contract with one of the respective organisation, have your objectives and expectations been met with regard to the following areas? ▪ Job conditions (quality of the job, possibility of part time work, etc.) ▪ Financial expectations (salary, fringe benefits, etc.) ▪ Institutional framework conditions (identification with institution, possibility of professional development, etc.) ▪ Quality of life (freedom of movement, social situation, etc.) ▪ Family (children, possibility dual career, etc.) ▪ Individual and personal factors (adventure, meaningful work, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Exceeded</li> <li>▪ Met</li> <li>▪ Partially met</li> <li>▪ Not met</li> <li>▪ I do not know</li> </ul>
16. Do you have any final comments or observations?	Open
17. Are you interested in receiving the results of this survey respectively a summary of the report when it will be finalised?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes, please send the summary to the following email address:</li> <li>▪ No</li> </ul>
18. Do you allow us to contact you for further questions and possibly a personal interview by phone/skype?  18.1. If yes, please indicate your email-address by which we may contact you to arrange an interview and the phone number and/or skype name.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Yes</li> <li>▪ No</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Email:</li> <li>▪ Skype name/Phone number:</li> </ul>

### Information to Q19

Thank you indeed for your interest and willingness to participate in the survey. We highly appreciate to have been able to take time out of your busy schedule.

You were directed to this point of the survey after answering question number 3, 4 or 5. We regret to inform you that you do not fall under the sample range for this survey.

We appreciate your interest to participate and thank you for your time.

Questions	Answers
19. Through what channels did you first come in contact with cinfo?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Referral by a personal contact</li> <li>▪ Referral by the Swiss government</li> <li>▪ Referral by an academic institution</li> <li>▪ Through an outreach mission</li> <li>▪ Print articles / reports</li> <li>▪ Internet search engine</li> <li>▪ LinkedIn</li> <li>▪ Facebook</li> <li>▪ Twitter</li> <li>▪ Other, please specify: ▪ I have never come in contact with cinfo</li> </ul>
20. Which services offered by cinfo have you made use of? (Multiple selection possible)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ cinfoPoste (Jobs portal)</li> <li>▪ Informational events</li> <li>▪ Career counselling and coaching</li> <li>▪ Courses / Trainings</li> <li>▪ Other → Please specify</li> <li>▪ I have never made use of services offered by cinfo</li> </ul>

**Part E: Concluding statements (continued)****Questions**

Your answers have been successfully submitted.  
Thank you very much for your valuable contribution!

**Answers**

I would like to get informed about (click on a hyperlink):

- What cinfo does
- Latest news: Sign up to cinfo's newsletter here
- The Forum cinfo 2016, a career and networking fair on the job market of international cooperation on 28 October.
- Follow cinfo on Facebook
- Follow cinfo on Twitter
- Follow cinfo on LinkedIn
- Become a member of cinfo's LinkedIn Group: Swiss with Multilaterals

cinfo is a specialised service provider and the network platform for professionals and organisations involved in the job market of international cooperation and for persons who want to become active in this field.



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