

IMF staff turnover

Concern with excessive turnover of staff has long been a concern at the IMF. One expression of that comes from Leslie Lipschitz, former Department Director at the IMF and a staff member there for some 3 decades, speaking in 2012:

"Mission assignments should last longer. IMF staff who are assigned to work on a particular country tend to be reassigned after two years and only a few missions. This does a disservice to member countries. Longer assignments facilitate an accumulation of knowledge, understanding, and wisdom within mission teams, and often a tremendous buildup of trust on the part of the authorities in the mission teams with whom they are having discussions over a period of years. The Fund would do better to lengthen assignments, to let a talented economist get promoted to senior economist and perhaps to mission chief as she continues to work on the same country or group of related countries and as she builds a reputation in the country and the region."

See page 204, Independent Evaluation at the IMF – The First Decade. Ruben Lamdany and Hali Edison, Editors. (2012). This document can be found [here](#).

Note that Mr. Lipschitz is not just calling for greater stability in mission assignments, but also for greater stability on assignments of "group of related countries as she builds a reputation in the country and the region." Thus, he also expresses concern with the excessive rate of staff turnover between departments.

Since Mr. Lipschitz spoke, new arrangements have been instituted in the Fund to increase the rate of staff turnover between Departments. Thus, however long staff may stay on an individual mission assignment within a Department, mandatory centralized procedures have been instituted to ensure that staff do not stay in a Department beyond 7 years. Staff (especially high quality staff) are incentivized to make their own arrangements to move internally ahead of that hard deadline as that gives them greater control over their next assignment (instead of that being

determined by a central mandatory process). And these incentives are reinforced by a formal procedures to advise individual staff in the strongest terms to move department once they have been there for 5 years.

Given these new practices and incentives, and given that at any point some staff have just joined the department and others are near the 7 year upper limit, for any department, the average time its staff have been there will fall to 3 years or perhaps even less.

The new mandatory 7 year limit practices now applicable to all staff are partially outlined in a fact sheet sent to staff in mid-2013, key points from which are listed below:

FACT SHEET

Mobility Support Programs (MSPs) for Fungible Economists, Summer 2013

1. What is the objective of the MSP for economists?

The objective of the MSP is to facilitate interdepartmental mobility for fungible economist staff. Movement of experienced staff across the Fund promotes sharing of ideas and knowledge across functions and departments, contributing to continuous development of staff, and better solutions for our clients.

2. How is this achieved?

The MSP achieves interdepartmental mobility through an exchange of the participants and assignments.

3. Are the moves temporary or permanent?

Moves are open-ended, and lateral.

4. Who will participate in this exercise?

MSP for fungible A14 economists: fungible economist staff members on open-ended appointments who are currently at grade A14 and have at least five years in their current department as of the cut-off date are eligible to participate. Fungible economists at grade A14 who have seven years or longer in their current department will be required to participate.

MSP for fungible A15 economists: fungible economist staff members on open-ended appointments who are: currently at grade A15; in titled managerial positions; and have at least seven years in their current department and three years at grade A15 (“7&3”) are eligible to participate. Participation is mandatory for staff who meet the above criteria and have five years or longer at grade A15 (“7&5”). Titled managerial positions at grade A15 include: Deputy Division Chief, Deputy Chief, Assistant to the Director, returning Resident Representative, etc. [footnote omitted]

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6. What constitutes “fungibility” in the context of the MSP?

Staff who have entered the economist stream through either the Economist Program or midcareer (MC) panels are presumed fungible, as are economists who joined the Fund before the MC panel process was in place and have worked in an area department. Economists who do not meet these requirements and wish to participate in the MSP are expected to pass the MC Panel before participating in an MSP. [footnote omitted]

7. How does the MSP work?

Assignments and participants are pooled (A14s with A14s; A15s with A15s)

SPMs confirm participants.

These staff develop/update their Talent Plus profile.

Departments receive Talent Plus profiles.

Staff receive assignment descriptions.

Staff discuss assignments and interests with participating departments.

Participants are matched based on their preferences

Staff rank-order all of the assignments in the pool.

Departments rank all of the staff.

A match to an assignment in the top half of a staff member's list is binding on the staff member and the departments.

When an assignment in the top half of the staff member's list is not available, the committee will propose another match.

Staff who refuse a committee recommendation and do not move of their own initiative before the next exercise will be bound by any match proposed by the committee in the next exercise. [footnote omitted]

This fact sheet and further material may be found on page 7 [here](#).

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