



CIPD

Report  
October 2023

# People Profession 2023

Middle East and North Africa  
survey report

The CIPD has been championing better work and working lives for over 100 years. It helps organisations thrive by focusing on their people, supporting our economies and societies. It's the professional body for HR, L&D, OD and all people professionals – experts in people, work and change. With over 160,000 members globally – and a growing community using its research, insights and learning – it gives trusted advice and offers independent thought leadership. It's a leading voice in the call for good work that creates value for everyone.

## Report

# People Profession 2023: Middle East and North Africa survey report

## Contents

<b>1</b>	Introduction	3
	Aims of this report	3
	Survey participants	4
<b>2</b>	Middle East and North Africa findings	5
	What are the key drivers of change for organisations?	5
	What are the top workforce priorities for organisations?	6
	How are people management tasks being delegated?	8
	How is digital transformation changing the way people teams operate?	10
	What is the impact of hybrid working on people practice?	11
	How does people professionals' work affect their wellbeing?	13
	How are practitioners developing their skills and capability?	14
	How do people professionals feel about their career prospects and progression?	16
	Sample demographics	18
<b>3</b>	Methodology	21
<b>4</b>	Endnotes	23

## Acknowledgements

The CIPD would like to thank the people professionals in Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates who participated in this survey, as well as those who shared their views and experiences through the CIPD's research panel, to inform this report.

A huge thank you to the CIPD colleagues who shared their expertise in the creation of this report, especially Amy Bosely, Hayfa Mohdzaini, Sofia Oumlaz and Lynne Davidson.

Finally, a thank you to our colleagues at YouGov, Jane Rowe and Conor Cotton, for their continued support throughout this research programme.

## Author profile

Rebecca Peters, CIPD Research Adviser, is the author of this report.

## Publication information

Peters, R. (2023) *People Profession 2023: Middle East and North Africa survey report*. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

# 1 Introduction

As we settle into the post-pandemic 'new normal', we see significant shifts in the behaviours of workers and workplaces, which have brought new challenges and opportunities for the people profession.

Macro trends, including advancing technology and digital transformation, economic instability, the transition to net zero and new models of working, are driving constant change. It is under these conditions that businesses need to adapt or risk being left behind. It's up to senior leaders and people teams to influence and shape current strategy and people practice to navigate this ever-changing landscape.

## **Aims of this report**

This report gives a snapshot of the current HR landscape in the Middle East and North Africa region, specifically in Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It provides insights into how external factors are impacting current HR practices, and the challenges and opportunities these bring. It also explores how people professionals perceive their careers and working lives amidst these changes.

We investigate the following questions and give recommendations on how people professionals can navigate the challenges they are facing:

- What are the key drivers of change for organisations?
- What are the top workforce priorities for organisations?
- How are people management tasks being delegated?
- How is digital transformation changing the way people teams operate?
- What is the impact of hybrid working on people practice?
- How does people professionals' work affect their wellbeing?
- How are practitioners developing their skills and capability?
- How do people professionals feel about their career prospects and progression?

Our accompanying [international survey report](#) explores how global issues are affecting regions differently by comparing findings in nine countries across Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and North Africa, the UK and Ireland. In addition to the questions above, it also looks at how people professionals across the world perceive:

- the impact and value of people teams
- how the role of people professionals is changing
- how people professionals are using evidence in practice
- the role of HR in the sustainability agenda.

As well as this Middle East and North Africa report, we also provide individual reports for the [Asia-Pacific](#) region, the [UK and Ireland](#), and [Canada](#).

## Survey participants



Full details of the research methodology are included in the [Methodology](#) section.

Sample demographics are included at the end of [Section 2](#).

### A note on the survey findings

- The findings are based on the perspectives of those who took part in the *People Profession* survey in April and May 2023.
- We refer to the 'people profession' throughout this report, which includes a range of people-related roles, such as human resources (HR), learning and development (L&D), organisational development (OD), employee relations and other HR specialisms. It does not include people managers.
- Our sample included those responsible for HR, both in-house and as independent consultants.
- The data collection, carried out by the CIPD and YouGov, was conducted across Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The sample is diverse, and each country will have different contextual factors influencing the findings.
- Reported percentage figures are rounded up and therefore the total may be above 100%.
- Further information on our sample can be found at the end of [Section 2](#) and in the [Methodology](#) section.

## 2 Middle East and North Africa findings

In certain instances, it is useful to see how the Middle East and North Africa region compares with the global sample surveyed (see our accompanying [international survey report](#)). Where there are significant similarities and contrasts, this may be referenced.

### **What are the key drivers of change for organisations?**

Across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) countries included in this survey, there is broad agreement on the trends that are impacting change within organisations.

Similarly to the whole global sample, digital change and flexible ways of working are key trends for businesses currently (Table 1). This finding reinforces the widespread impact of these factors upon modern workplaces, irrespective of geographical location.

The impact of social media also features in the top five trends that are driving change for businesses within Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). On average, this was much higher for this region (25%) than in the UK and Ireland (11%) and somewhat higher than the Asia-Pacific (APAC) countries surveyed (19%).

Another critical area that is influencing change is the diversification of employment relationships, with respondents in this region more likely to cite this compared with APAC countries and the UK and Ireland. This trend, which is a recognition that the typical employment relationship is shifting, was initially surfaced in the [People Profession 2030 future trends](#) report and is influenced by new ways of working, changing employee expectations and skills shortages. A survey of MENA employers found that 70% were planning to hire freelance workers in 2022.<sup>1</sup> Given that some MENA countries are in a state of economic growth, independent and gig workers can support the core workforce where subject-matter expertise or in-demand skills are needed.

Although economic change appears in the top five levers of change, respondents were significantly less likely to note this than those in the APAC region and in the UK and Ireland, suggesting that, comparatively, these countries are less impacted by the current economic instability. Other data shows that KSA was the fastest growing G20 economy in 2022<sup>2</sup> and that UAE's economy expanded by 7.6% in 2022.<sup>3</sup> However, the cost-of-living crisis and rising costs are also having an impact and stalling growth, particularly in Egypt.<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1: Social media is a more prominent driver of change for MENA respondents than for other regions**

*The top five drivers of change in MENA country organisations (ranked by number of cases)*

Rank	Egypt	KSA	UAE
1	Social media and content consumption	Digital transformation and advancing technology	Demands for flexible, hybrid and new ways of working
2	Digital transformation and advancing technology	Demands for flexible, hybrid and new ways of working	Economic change and rising costs
3	Changing employment relationships	Digital technology platforms	Digital transformation and advancing technology
4	Demands for flexible, hybrid and new ways of working	Changing employment relationships	Digital technology platforms
5	Economic change and rising costs	Social media and content consumption	Social media and content consumption

Base: Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213).

Question: Which of the following, if any, are drivers of change in your [client] organisation? (Please tick up to three responses.)

### What are the top workforce priorities for organisations?

Workforce planning and management is a top five workforce priority common to respondents across the three MENA countries surveyed, Egypt, KSA and UAE (Table 2). In Egypt and KSA, the number one workforce priority for respondents is to measure productivity and financial performance.

Upskilling, reskilling and building capability is the number one workforce priority in UAE, and top three for KSA. This can be explained by nationalisation policies and targets in place, which aim to attract more Saudis and Emiratis into work. To facilitate this, identifying and developing skills is crucial.

We note that championing equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is a key workforce priority for KSA businesses. KSA’s [Vision 2030](#) aims to improve female participation in the workforce, and [Deloitte’s Middle East point of view](#) considers the case for diversity and inclusion within the Middle East region. A key enabler to making workplaces more inclusive is developing flexible working practices. This will help employees balance work and home life commitments, so this may be an area we see prioritised in the near future.

We also found sustainability and responsible business to be a key priority for UAE respondents, which is likely to be driven by ambitious plans to reach net zero emissions by 2050.<sup>5</sup>

**Table 2: Measuring productivity and financial performance, and upskilling and reskilling the workforce are the top workforce priorities in MENA countries**

*The top five workforce priorities in MENA country organisations (ranked by number of cases)*

Rank	Egypt	KSA	UAE
1	Measuring productivity and financial performance	Measuring productivity and financial performance	Upskilling, reskilling and building capability
2	Workforce planning and management	Focusing on recruitment, mobility and turnover	Workforce planning and management
3	Managing industrial and employment relations	Upskilling, reskilling and building capability	Engaging with the workforce
4	Focusing on recruitment, mobility and turnover	Championing equality, diversity and inclusion	Developing leadership behaviours
5	Developing leadership behaviours	Workforce planning and management	Sustainability and responsible business

Base: Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213).

Question: Which, if any, of the following are your [client] organisation's workforce priorities? (Please tick up to three responses.)

## Recommendations

To champion building workforce capability, people professionals in this region should consider the following:

- Workforce planning, to better understand the organisation's current skills against its future needs, and what development is necessary to bridge any skills gaps.
- Building skills and capability. Ensure development opportunities are offered so that employees are equipped with the skills they need. This may include formal technical training or essential skills development (such as communication, numeracy and problem-solving skills), as well as job-shadowing and secondment opportunities.

To advance the EDI agenda, people teams need to think about the following:

- Offering flexible working arrangements to attract a more diverse pool of talent (read our latest [evidence review](#) on this topic). There are many different flexible working options, including part-time working, term-time working, job-sharing, flexi-time, compressed hours, annual hours, working remotely and hybrid working. For more information, see our [factsheet](#).
- Ensuring their recruitment process is inclusive to avoid missing out on good candidates. The CIPD's [inclusive recruitment guide](#) provides a step-by-step guide to ensure organisations use fair processes that attract a more diverse talent pool; for example, using inclusive language in job adverts. The CIPD's [evidence review](#) on fair selection provides evidence-based insight and practical recommendations.

- Benchmarking their organisation. People professionals should learn from each other, share inclusive work practices with peers in the region and celebrate progress. The CIPD's 2022 [Inclusion at work report](#) provides recommendations for improving inclusion and diversity within workforces.

For organisations that are considering their sustainability strategy, people professionals are well positioned to drive cultural change and people transformation. To support the sustainability agenda, people professionals can:

- Focus on upskilling and growing knowledge around sustainability across the workforce and people teams.
- Explore the available resources and support provided by local government to help businesses achieve net zero.
- Understand how net zero will impact their workforce; this will vary across industries and will have a bigger impact for businesses in energy, construction and transport.

The CIPD's [case studies on environmental sustainability initiatives](#) provide examples of how organisations are embedding this in practice. Additional recommendations can be found in the CIPD's [net zero report](#). While based on data collection in Scotland, this report gives guidance to people professionals everywhere on how to develop skills needed and put fair work principles at the heart of the transition.

## How are people management tasks being delegated?

### Delegation to line managers

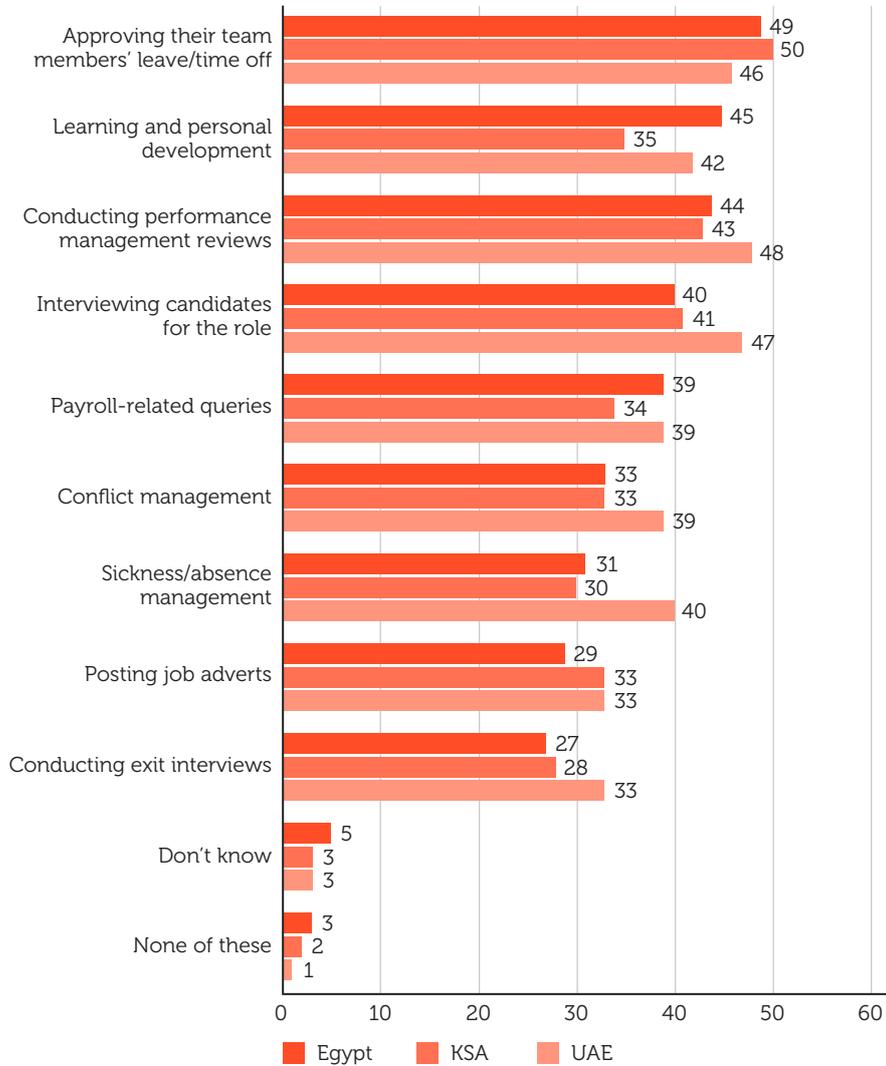
As discussed in our [international survey report](#), the devolvment of HR management tasks varied significantly across the global sample, with the MENA region less likely to delegate aspects of people management.

However, the MENA countries surveyed were more likely to delegate payroll-related queries and the posting of job adverts to line managers than the UK, where respondents delegate people management tasks more generally to line managers.

Figure 1 shows how Egypt, UAE and KSA compare in terms of delegating people responsibilities to line managers.

**Figure 1: The most common HR tasks delegated to line managers in MENA countries are absence approvals and conducting performance management reviews**

*Tasks delegated to line managers (% of respondents)*



Base: Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213).

Question: Are line managers in your [client] organisation responsible for any of the following? (Please select all that apply.)

### Outsourcing of HR functions

MENA countries were significantly more likely to outsource their HR functions compared with the majority of the sample, all the way through from basic administrative support to strategic support, business partnering support and complex case management. On average across the MENA sample, only 10% said they don't outsource any aspects of their HR function, compared with 28% of the global sample. The high levels of outsourcing are likely to be influenced by our sample's organisation size: the majority are SMEs (65% in Egypt, 54% in KSA and 62% in UAE, compared with the global average of 53%). The number of SMEs within the region is rising, for example in KSA,<sup>6</sup> and this data provides some insights on the outsourcing activity of HR functions and where external people professional support is most needed.

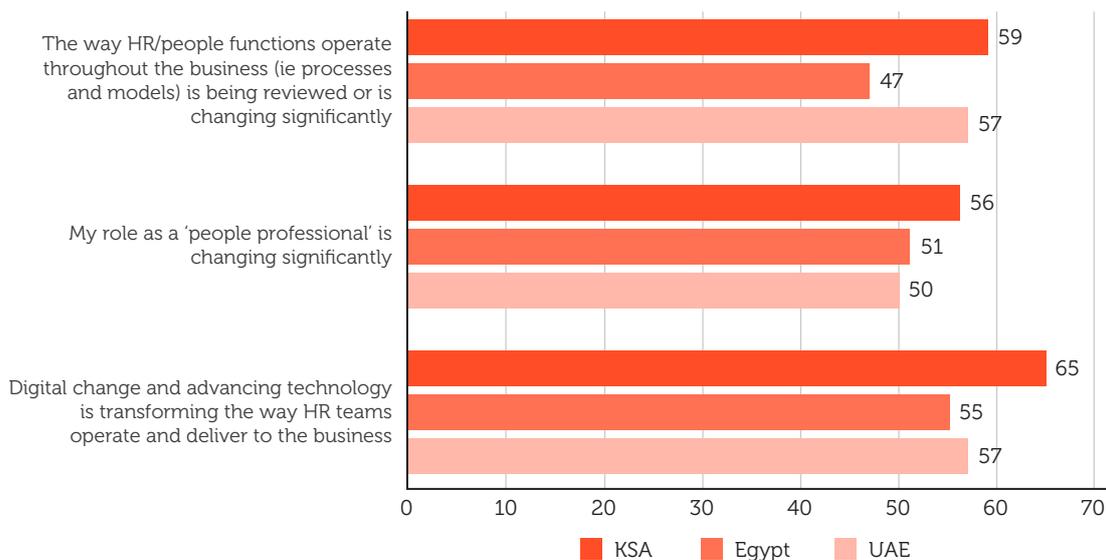
## How is digital transformation changing the way people teams operate?

Traditionally, HR functions in the MENA region are relatively transactional in their service to the wider business. However, according to a PwC report, there has been an appetite for the HR role to become more value-adding, strategic and focused on employee experience.<sup>7</sup> A key component of achieving this is digitalising HR, an agenda which accelerated rapidly as a result of COVID-19.

Our research suggests that across the MENA countries surveyed, KSA respondents were most likely to agree that people professionals' roles and people functions are significantly changing. They were also more likely to agree that digital transformation is shifting people operations, compared with Egypt and UAE (see Figure 2). Having said that, at least 55% of respondents believed digital change and technology is influencing practice and service delivery across MENA countries.

**Figure 2: KSA respondents are more likely to agree that digital change and technology is transforming people operations**

*How MENA HR teams and practitioners are evolving (% of net agree)*



Base: KSA (n=158); Egypt (n=154); UAE (n=213).

Question: To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements about your [client's] HR function? (Please select one option on each row.)

On the whole, Egyptian respondents were more likely to disagree that HR operations and people professionals' roles are changing significantly, suggesting that people functions within this market are slower to change and are perhaps operating under more traditional people models and practices.

When we account for business size, respondents from larger organisations were significantly more likely to say digital change is impacting HR teams.

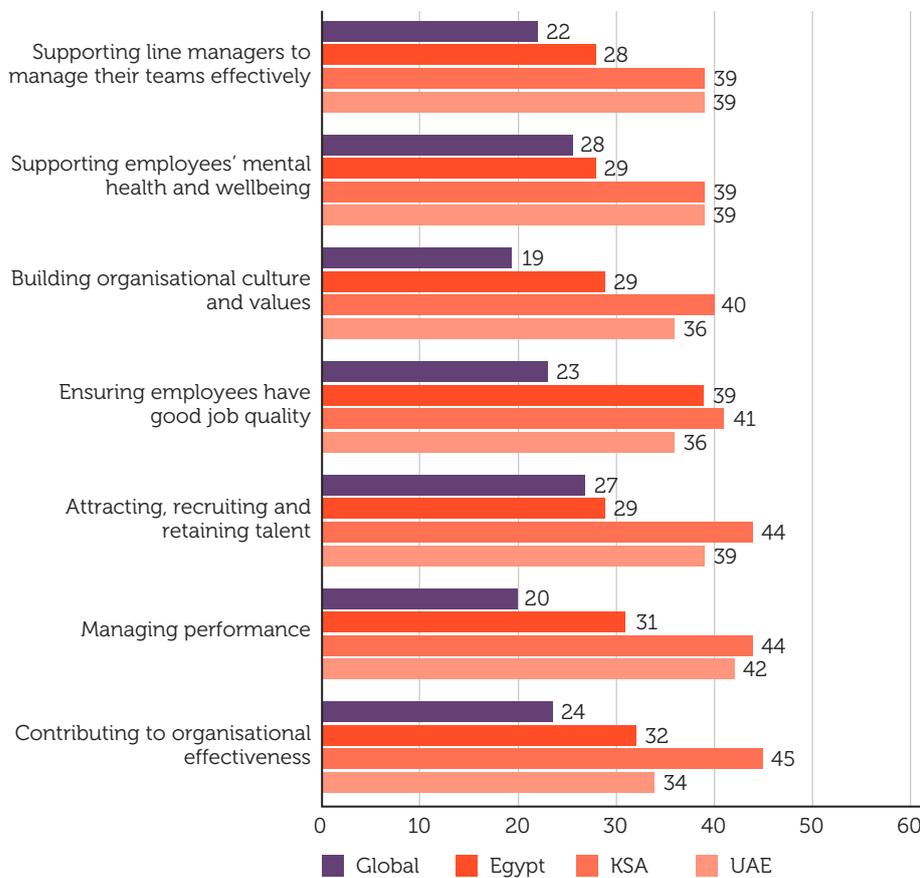
Overall, these findings suggest that people teams and practitioners within the MENA region are experiencing significant changes to the ways that they operate due to the impact of digital change.

### What is the impact of hybrid working on people practice?

According to our MENA respondents, hybrid working has had a profoundly positive impact on people outcomes. In comparison with the global sample, they were significantly more likely to say that various people management areas have become easier to manage in a hybrid context. Managing performance, attracting and retaining talent, and ensuring good job quality were perceived particularly positively.

**Figure 3: MENA people professionals perceive hybrid working to have a positive impact on ways of working and feel it has made people objectives easier to deliver**

*Respondents who said hybrid working has made people objectives easier to deliver (% who responded 'has become easier')*



Base: Global (n=2,957); Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213).

Question: We are now going to ask you about some aspects of working as an HR/people professional. Please indicate how, if at all, these have changed due to the shift towards, 'working from anywhere', and hybrid working.

MENA countries were overwhelmingly more positive about the impact of hybrid working, even when taking into account other factors such as sector, business size, age and experience within the profession. However, some common challenges were identified. While hybrid working offers the benefits of reduced commuter time and cost, a positive environmental impact and a more tailored employee experience, respondents recognised that it highlights equality and fairness issues, where certain industries (such as construction, for example) are less likely to be able to implement flexible options.

There were also mixed views on the impact of hybrid working on productivity. Some practitioners believed hybrid working increases communication, reduces geographical barriers and improves employee motivation. On the other hand, others felt that hybrid working reduces psychological safety, team cohesion and knowledge-sharing and learning, and raises some issues around time management and efficiency.

These findings emphasise the cultural nuance and variation across regions, which are particularly important when businesses are operating across different markets. Leaders will need to appreciate these cultural differences, by gathering insight locally and planning people solutions and strategy accordingly.

## Recommendations

Offering flexible arrangements is an attractive benefit that will make your business stand out as an employer of choice. Explore how flexible arrangements could be offered to roles that are traditionally viewed as less flexible.

To ensure hybrid working arrangements are inclusive, people professionals should do the following:

- Make a clear statement of intent regarding inclusion in hybrid work: this can help maintain focus and have an objective to aim for.
- Monitor and review the impact of hybrid working: explore the experiences of hybrid workers and their managers to identify what is going well and where improvements could be made. Look at how hybrid work is influencing applications for employment, internal movement, promotion and reward, as well as any performance management ratings.
- Train people managers not only in practical skills for hybrid team management, but also on potential biases and how to avoid them.
- Identify potential inclusion risks and how they could be overcome – for example, by undertaking an equality impact assessment, or by collaboration with internal network groups.

If making changes to the organisation's flexible working model, people professionals should ensure the following:

- Workflows are properly designed so that employees are clear on their role, responsibility and reporting line.
- People managers feel well supported to manage their team effectively under the new ways of working.
- Performance and productivity issues are addressed through regular one-to-ones between employees and line managers. Effective and fair feedback is key to improving performance.

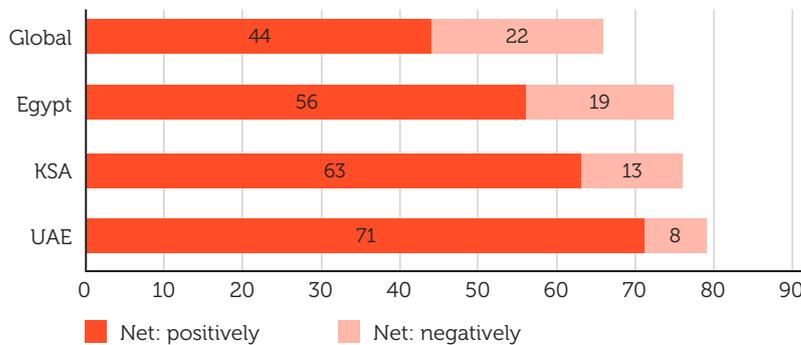
The CIPD's [flexible and hybrid working](#) resource hub can support practitioners to navigate this area and consider some of the challenges and benefits of hybrid working that were revealed in the survey.

### How does people professionals' work affect their wellbeing?

Respondents in the MENA region were significantly more likely to say that work impacts "very positively" on their mental health compared with the majority of the sample (38% in UAE, 37% in KSA and 28% in Egypt, compared with the global average of 16%). They were also more likely to say their physical health is very positively impacted by their work, although to a lesser degree than their mental health. Therefore, comparatively, people professionals in MENA countries tend to have a more positive outlook of how their work affects their wellbeing than their global counterparts (Figures 4 and 5).

**Figure 4: MENA respondents are more likely to say work positively impacts their mental health, compared with the global sample**

*Impact of work on mental health (% of respondents)*

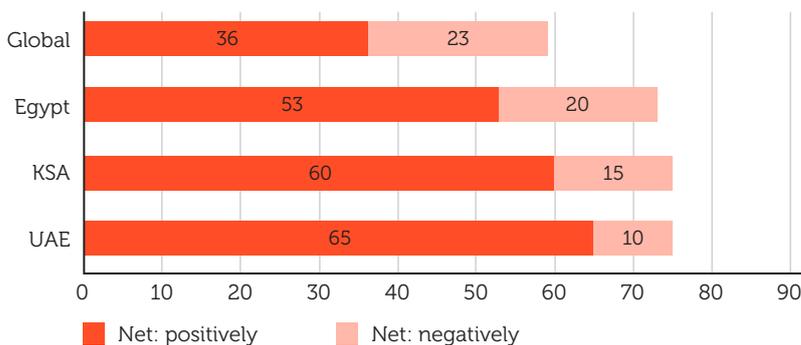


Base: Global (n=2,957); Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213) (excluding 'neither positive nor negative', 'prefer not to say' and 'don't know' responses).

Question: To what extent does your work positively or negatively affect the following? Your mental health.

**Figure 5: MENA respondents are far more likely to say their work has a positive impact on their physical health, compared with the global sample**

*Impact of work on physical health (% of respondents)*



Base: Global (n=2,957); Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213) (excluding 'neither positive nor negative', 'prefer not to say' and 'don't know' responses).

Question: To what extent does your work positively or negatively affect the following? Your physical health.

There were no significant differences in wellbeing perceptions for MENA respondents with or without line manager responsibility or across business size or sector.

### **How are practitioners developing their skills and capability?**

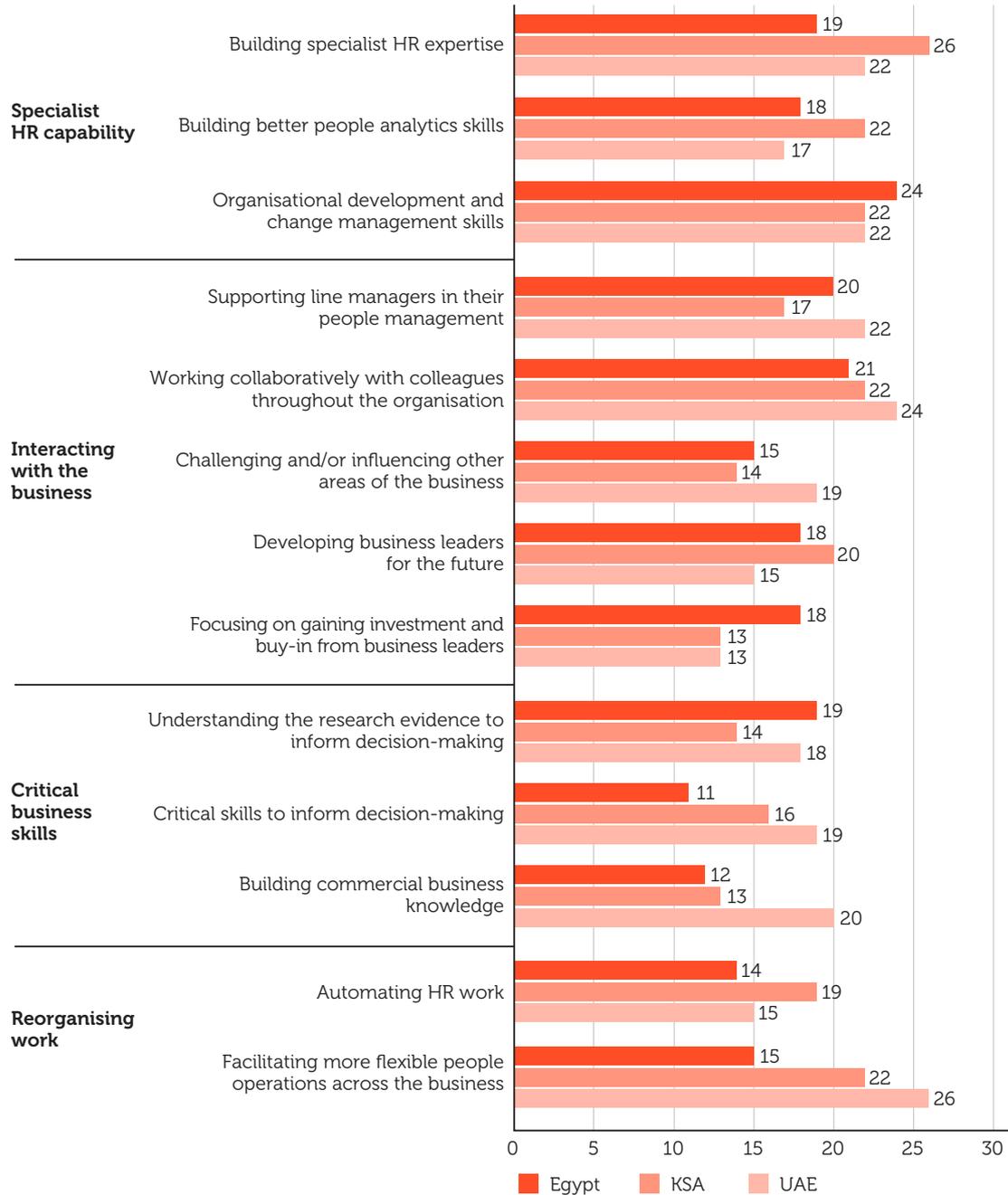
There was some variation across the MENA sample in terms of building HR skills and capability (see Figure 6). For KSA people professionals, building specialist knowledge and expertise is particularly important, while respondents in the UAE are dedicating their efforts to facilitating more flexible people operations. Although not a top capability focus, they were also more likely to cite building in commercial knowledge and critical thinking skills for better decision-making than practitioners in Egypt and KSA.

Generally, there was agreement that organisational development and change skills were essential development areas for HR capability, as well as working collaboratively across other business functions.

We also note that the vast majority of the MENA sample said they had upskilled within the last 12 months, significantly more than the global average (80%, versus a global average of 69%). This finding suggests that regular professional development is being prioritised in the region, and perhaps that upskilling across people teams is a necessity to fill skills gaps or specialist knowledge areas. Additionally, 18% of respondents from Egypt noted that they have reskilled within the last year, the highest proportion across the global sample. This suggests that there is demand for new skills that are a key focus for people teams in Egypt.

**Figure 6: Building specialist HR expertise and facilitating flexible working were cited as priorities for improvement**

**Priority areas for improvement in HR capability (% of respondents)**



Base: Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213). Excludes 'not applicable', 'don't know' and 'other' responses.  
 Question: In your opinion, which of the following, if any, are priority areas for improvement across HR capability in your [client] organisation? (Please tick up to three responses.)

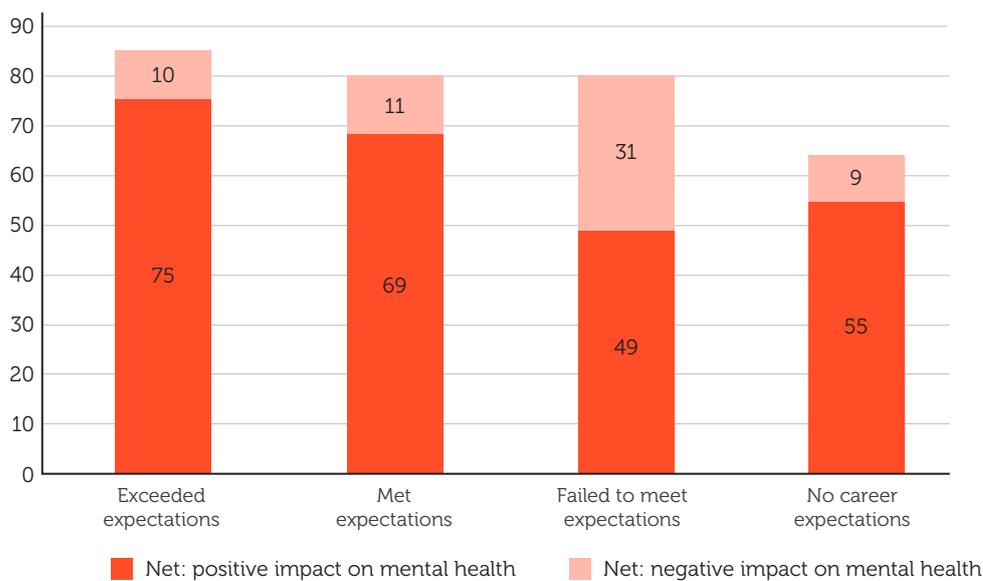
## How do people professionals feel about their career prospects and progression?

Well over a quarter of practitioners (28%) said their career progression has exceeded their expectations. This is a much higher percentage than the global sample overall (19%). On average, over half of the MENA sample believed their progression has met their expectations (53%), while a minority (15%) felt their career hasn't met their expectations.

Upon deeper analysis, we found that respondents who felt negatively about their career progression were also significantly more likely to report that their work negatively impacts their mental health (see Figure 7). The association between wellbeing and career perceptions was statistically significant.<sup>8</sup> These findings reflect the importance of professionals building in personal and professional development for themselves, but also for people managers to be supporting and regularly talking to their team about development and progression.

**Figure 7: People professionals whose career progression has exceeded their expectations largely perceive work as having a positive impact on their mental health**

*Impact of work on mental health, by career expectations (% of respondents)*



Base: MENA (n=505).

Question: Has your career progression to date met, exceeded or failed to meet your expectations? And, to what extent does your work positively or negatively affect the following? Mental health.

When identifying perceived barriers that have impacted their career advancement, MENA practitioners were most likely to note the lack of opportunities in the current labour market as an issue. Additionally, they were also most likely to say they expect to leave their current organisation within the next 12 months (with over half of the sample reporting this) and, on average, 64% will start looking for new opportunities outside of their current employer in the next year. We also found that MENA respondents were significantly more likely to view the profession as a stepping stone into other business areas (58% net agree, compared with a global average of 47% who net agree). Respondents from KSA were particularly more likely to agree with

this (63%), suggesting that perhaps the profession is seen as a shorter-term, transient career, leading into other professional roles.

Finally, MENA respondents were most likely to disagree that the profession offers good career prospects (14%) compared with those in APAC countries (5%) and the UK and Ireland (8%). This was especially the case for Egyptian respondents (18% cited this). However, this is in line with the previous finding on the proportion of professionals who are dissatisfied with their career progression, and is a small minority of the MENA sample.

## Recommendations

To ensure strong talent pipelines, people professionals should consider the following recommendations:

- Create clear career trajectories for themselves to build pathways into more senior roles, through:
  - continuous learning
  - professional qualifications
  - learning from peers, both within and outside the people profession.
- Build their professional network by joining professional communities and engaging in discussion forums.

The CIPD's [career page](#) includes guidance on progression and career options within the people profession, and the CIPD's [Learning hub](#) is a professional development and learning platform to support people professionals with their own personal learning.

As line managers are cited as a barrier to career progression, senior leaders with line management responsibility should:

- ensure that people managers have the time and skills they need to build trust and cohesion with their teams
- consistently instigate regular performance and development reviews with their teams
- provide effective feedback for individuals.

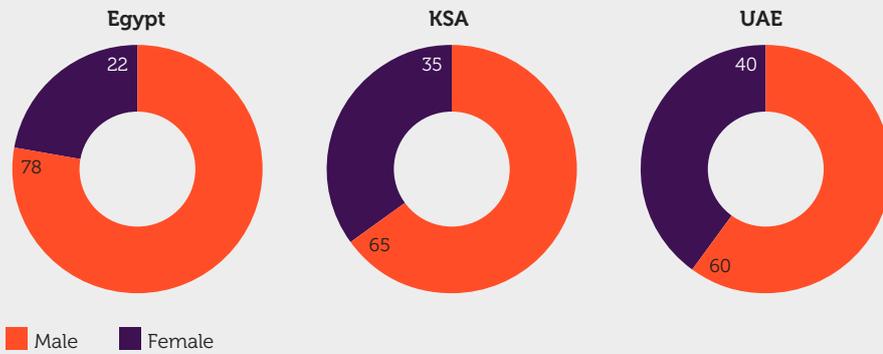
The CIPD's evidence review of [effective people managers](#) also explores how to develop people managers and leaders based on the best available academic evidence.

For more detailed analysis on how the Middle East and North Africa region compares with the overall global sample, see our accompanying [People Profession 2023: International survey report](#).

For analysis of trends in other regions, see our accompanying [Asia-Pacific](#), [UK and Ireland](#), and [Canada](#) reports.

### MENA countries: Sample demographics

#### How would you best describe your gender? (%)



Base: Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213).

#### What is your current age?



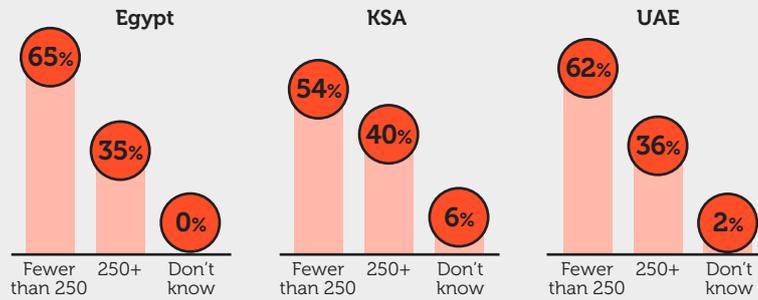
Base: Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213).

#### How many years of work experience do you have in the HR/people profession? (%)



Base: Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213).

**Approximately how many people are employed by your company/employer in the country you live in?**



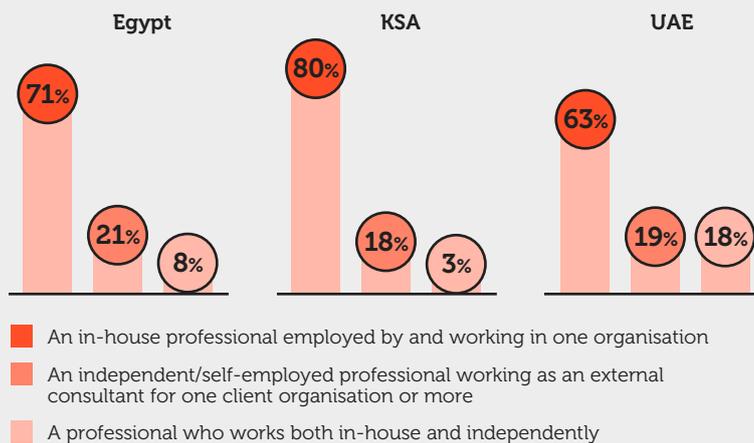
Base: Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213).

**What kind of organisation do you work for? (%)**



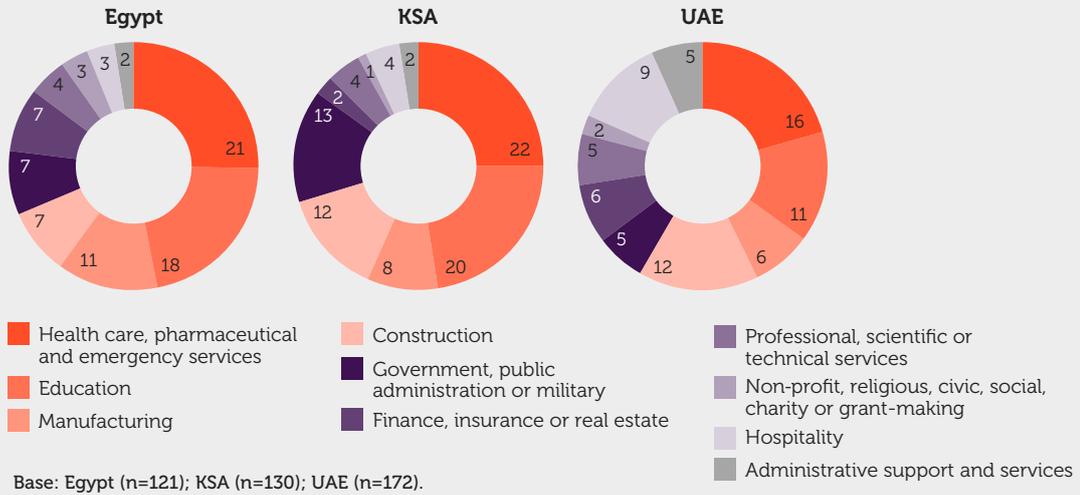
Base: Egypt (n=121); KSA (n=130); UAE (n=172). Excludes 'don't know', 'not applicable' and 'other' responses.

**Which, if any, of the following areas reflect your role, decision-making or the services you provide? (Please tick one option on each row.)**

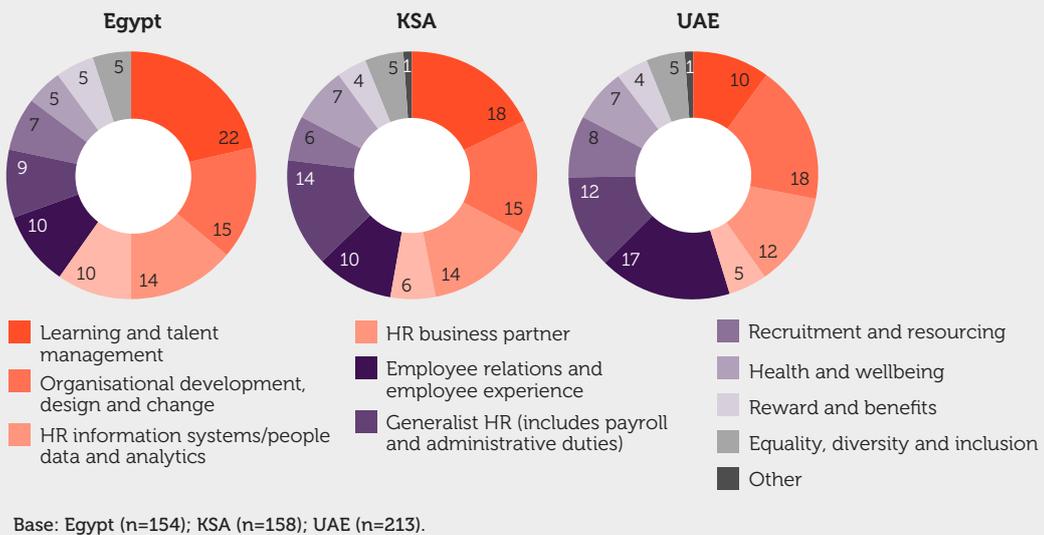


Base: Egypt (n=154); KSA (n=158); UAE (n=213).

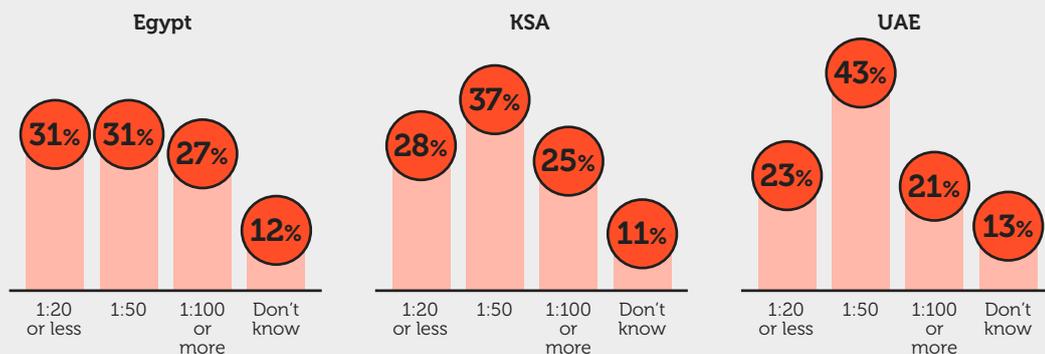
**In which of the following industries do you work? (%)  
(Top 10 industries represented in this survey.)**



**Please indicate which one of the HR/people profession areas listed most accurately reflects your decision-making responsibilities. (%)**



**What is the approximate ratio of HR/people department staff to employees in your organisation?**



# 3 Methodology

The *People Profession* survey is a long-standing research programme that showcases the current views of people professionals' working lives and careers. This survey has developed into an international snapshot of the profession and provides the latest insights on people practices across the globe. Our sample included CIPD members and non-members, and is a mix of in-house and independent professionals from a range of specialisms (including HR, learning and development (L&D), organisational development (OD) and others). Full demographic details of our Middle East and North Africa sample can be found at the end of [Section 2](#).

## Survey instrument and method

Since 2018, the survey has been tested and refined, and what was originally a UK-based survey has become an international survey instrument that has now been piloted in over 14 countries through CIPD-led research, and in 20 countries alongside our research partners: the [WFPMA](#), [SHRM](#) and [AHRI](#).

This year, our data collection spans nine countries: Australia, Egypt, Hong Kong, Ireland, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom, with additional data from Canada collected by the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Canada ([CPHR Canada](#)). The findings are presented in a series of reports, including:

- the [People Profession 2023: International survey report](#), which explores the collective sample and makes comparisons across regions
- this report, the *People Profession 2023: Middle East and North Africa survey report*, which details the findings in Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and draws on in-region comparisons
- the [People Profession 2023: Asia-Pacific survey report](#), which details the findings in Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, and draws on in-region comparisons
- the [People Profession 2023: UK and Ireland survey report](#), which details the findings in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland and draws on comparisons between the two
- the [People Profession 2023: A Canadian perspective](#), which draws on data and analysis from a separate survey conducted by the Chartered Professionals in Human Resources Canada ([CPHR Canada](#)), and gives a comparable view of the opportunities and challenges faced by people professionals in Canada.

Commissioned by the CIPD, the data was collected by YouGov between 18 April and 27 May 2023 via an online survey. The survey was translated into the official language of each country to ensure the questions were accessible and correctly interpreted within each region. The data analysis was conducted by the CIPD. We surveyed a total of 2,957 people professionals; the sample sizes for each region are shown in Table 3. The data is unweighted and therefore the sample of respondents is not representative of the total HR population within those regions. However, this data represents the perspectives of the 2,957 people professionals who participated in this survey.

**Table 3: Sample sizes of the countries surveyed in this report**

Country	Sample size
Australia	202
Egypt	154
Hong Kong	155
Ireland	164
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	158
Malaysia	251
Singapore	204
United Arab Emirates	213
United Kingdom	1,456

The details of the CPHR Canada survey are included in the [Canada](#) report. This data has been analysed and summarised by CPHR Canada.

### Survey questions

Each year, the survey instrument is reviewed and refined where changes are appropriate, or where there are new research questions to be explored. For the 2023 survey, we added new questions that explore attitudes and behaviours around applying evidence and research in practice and people teams' involvement in their organisation's sustainability agenda. The findings from these questions can be found in the [People Profession 2023: International survey report](#).

Where sample sizes are large enough, the data was cross-tabulated by business size and sector. We also explore other demographic variables such as age and experience within the profession throughout the reports, where significant differences are noted. Where we compare with the global sample, given the larger UK sample in comparison with other regions, the global average percentages will be skewed towards the UK findings.

### Supplementary data

We have included qualitative data collected throughout the survey and through the CIPD's research panel to provide some further context on the quantitative data. We would like to thank those participants who contributed their views and experience in relation to the key findings from the survey.

If you are interested in being part of the CIPD's research panel, please email [customerresearch@cipd.co.uk](mailto:customerresearch@cipd.co.uk)

# 4 Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Bayt.com (2022) Bayt.com survey: Freelancing in the MENA.
- <sup>2</sup> IMF. (2023) Saudi Arabia: Staff concluding statement of the 2023 Article IV mission. International Monetary Fund. 7 June.
- <sup>3</sup> Uppal, R. (2023) UAE's GDP grew 7.6% in 2022, econ minister says. Reuters. 2 March.
- <sup>4</sup> OECD. (2023) Egypt economic snapshot: Economic forecast summary (June 2023). OECD.
- <sup>5</sup> Janahi, M.A. (2022) How UAE businesses are leading the sustainability charge. The National News. 19 January.
- <sup>6</sup> Takla, R. and Walid, R. (2023) Number of SMEs in Saudi Arabia rises 4.8% in Q1, exceeds 1.2m. Arab News. 31 May.
- <sup>7</sup> PwC Middle East. (2020) Digital HR survey: Challenges and opportunities for Middle East companies. PwC Middle East.
- <sup>8</sup> Pearson chi square 29.861,  $p < .001$ .

# CIPD

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development  
151 The Broadway London SW19 1JQ United Kingdom

**T** +44 (0)20 8612 6200 **F** +44 (0)20 8612 6201

**E** [cipd@cipd.co.uk](mailto:cipd@cipd.co.uk) **W** [cipd.org](http://cipd.org)

Incorporated by Royal Charter  
Registered as a charity in England and Wales (1079797)  
and Scotland (SC045154).

Issued: October 2023 Reference: 8461 © CIPD 2023

