



# Middle East Salary Survey 2023



# Middle East Insight 2023

With a well-educated young population, companies are seeking talent throughout the region. Digital development, the fourth revolution, is being promoted across the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member countries.



This is a beacon standard that North Africa and surrounding territories are aspiring to and they are, as resources are allocated, fertile recruitment areas across Science, Technology, Environmental and Mathematics (STEM) subjects.

At the start of 2022, the total labour force across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) crossed 150 million for the first time. 2022 has been a rebound year across the Middle East following the pandemic and has seen an increase in hiring activity. A survey by the National newspaper found that across the MENA, 67% of employers had the intention to hire more workers.

With offices based in Dubai and India, SSR® Personnel incorporating Executive Profiles are well placed to provide a regional insight as to the digital skills being developed and increasingly required by countries.

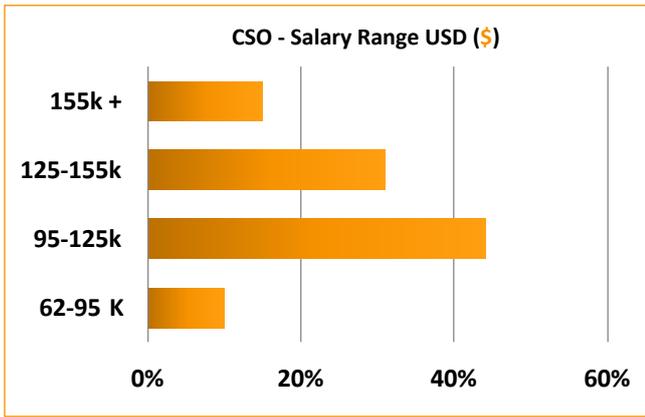
Whilst employment opportunities are increasing, so is the cost of living. Renting a property has always been a major expense cost for all expatriates. In Dubai, rentals have increased by 24%, in Saudi Arabia the increase is under 5%.

The volatility of the last few years has left many migrant workers in the Middle East uncertain about their future, over 30% have considered that their employment is at risk.

A regional You Gov survey of professionals had an alarmingly higher rate, finding that 71% of professionals are considering resigning from their jobs in 2023. The majority felt that their current role lacked challenge or lacked the opportunity to learn and develop. Only 18% cited wanting a higher salary as the reason to change their employment. We are recording management employee resignation rates of up to a third in the past eighteen months, which is in line with our surveys in Asia.

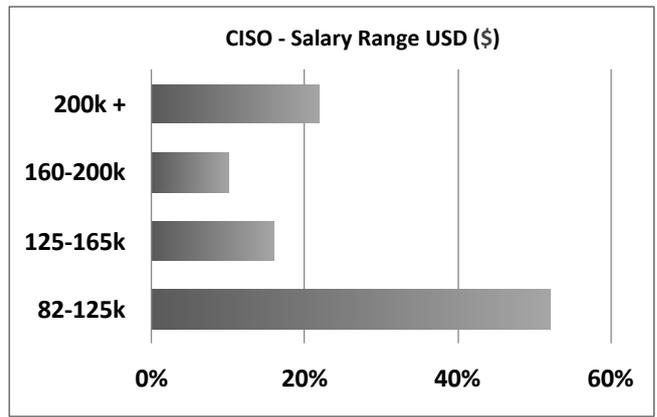


# Basic Salary Range



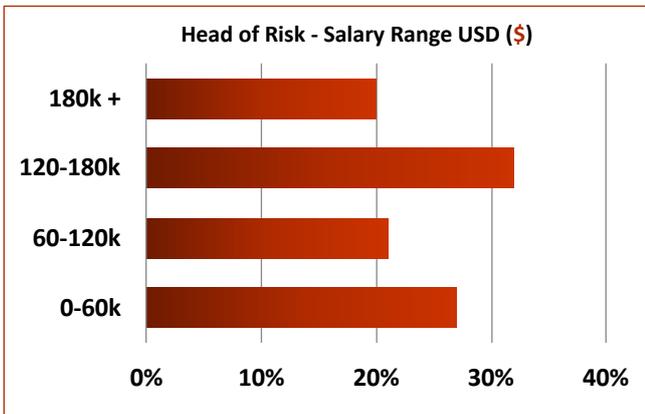
## CSO/ Global Resilience & Risk Director

Responsible for policy, executive board briefings. Dotted line or direct responsibility for subsidiary CSO / Head of Security position. Oversight budget responsibility of \$30m+. Revenues of \$2bn+. Responsibility for pandemic preparation, cyber incursion response & resilience, crisis management, included in LTIP: executive bonus range to 50%; share options; health care; travel allowance \$12K; Executive share purchase.



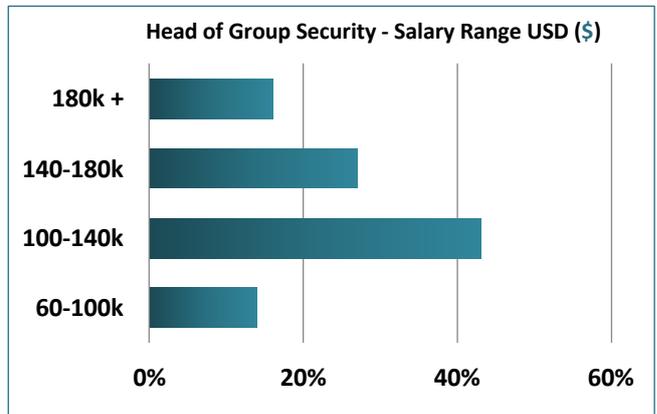
## CISO - Chief Information Security Officer

Responsible for delivering localised policy, executive board briefings. They are a driver for change and service expansion. Increasingly seen as a converged role managing cyber and pandemic response with a diverse located team. Budget responsibility of \$10m. Company revenues of \$1bn+. Included in the LTIP. Executive bonus medium 35%; share options; health care; Allowance \$12K; Executive share purchase.



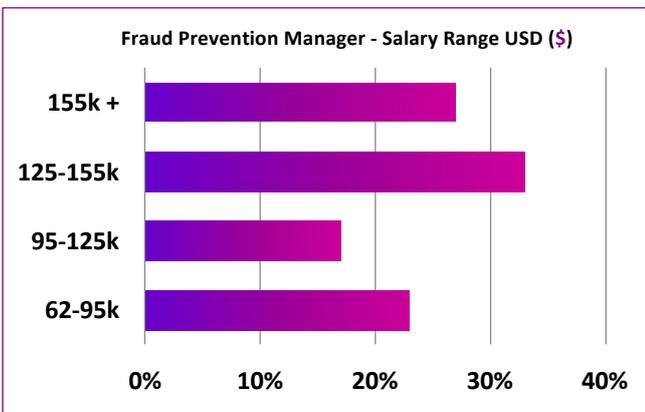
## Head of Risk (& Resilience/ VP of)

Regional policy development, executive reporting, promulgating corporate policy overview of physical and intellectual protection. Taking responsibility for pandemic response, business continuity, GDPR and crisis management. Medium bonus range 30%, share options; travel allowance up to \$10K



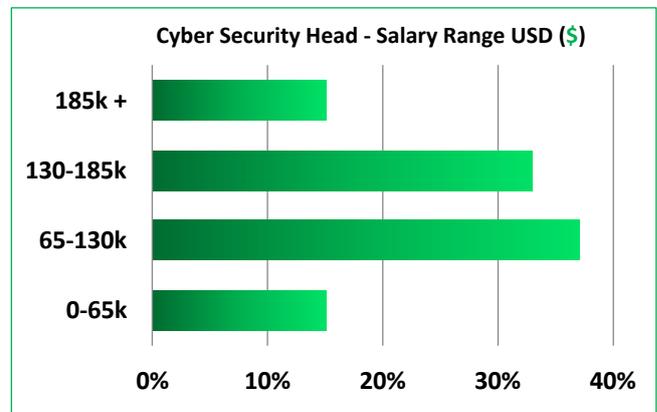
## Head of Group Security

Regional reporting, policy implementation, promulgates corporate policy. Develops crisis response increasingly managing preparedness programmes. Responsible for physical and information security. Budget responsibility \$5m - \$10m. Bonus medium 30%, health plan; Car or Allowance up to €9K, Share Purchase Scheme



## Fraud Prevention Manager

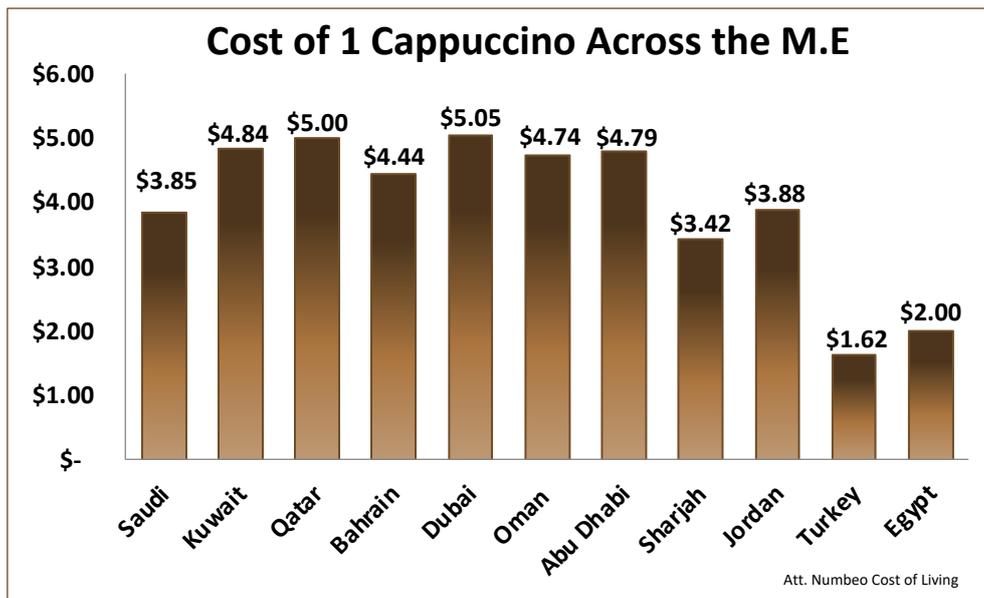
Responsible for loss through fraud, supply chain theft, e-commerce transactions. Develops loss prevention programme, asset tracking and procurement collusion. Increasingly audits digital processes. Bonus medium 20%, Travel allowance \$5k, Health care.



## Cyber Resilience Manager/ Head of Cyber

The internal case manager, you will be deciding on which events you can successfully pursue, provide proactive attack strategies, work with cyber agencies to encourage coordinated actions. Trawling newly created domains and URL allowing the business leadership to understand the threat actors, national or criminal groups. Experience drawn from a mixture of physical and digital backgrounds. Contributory pension. Bonus range 15-35%, company benefits.

With such a large geographical area SSR have attempted to highlight the geographical wage differences through the Numbeo cost of living index through the cost of a cappuccino graph that records the average price of a cappuccino in the Middle East region.



Anchoring the M.E Salary Survey through comparing the cost of a cappuccino provides more indicators as to the regional variances we find in salaries. In these indices we see that cost has risen in the high cost of living cities across the region highlighted by a 34c increase in Qatar and a 26c increase in Jordan, Turkey's economy reflects a 0.22 decrease. The difference between the lowest cost (1.62 in Turkey) and the highest cost (5.00 in Dubai) is 102.1% .

## Technology natives

The educational investment makes the GCC well-placed to capitalise on digitisation activity, whilst improving centralised services across their communities. Major IT projects won in Saudi Arabia and the UEA have a large element of local workforce involvement and training.

In the current year, the Gender Balance Council reported 54% of STEM graduates were female, and many will join the workforce from mid-2024. The untapped potential of graduate women coming into the GCC workforce will alter the gender dynamics of a youthful tech-native population over the next five years.

The UAE's Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) Strategy aims to strengthen its position as a global hub to increase its contribution to the national economy by means of advancing innovation and future technologies.

New technologies will be ROBO CARE, advanced defence manufacturing, intelligent consumer and Government services, 3D printed construction and high-value manufacturing.

One of the pillars of 4IR is Future Talent which is to prepare a national talent pool and entrepreneurs, to equip them with the required knowledge and skills in advanced science and technology through an applied educational system focused on innovation and entrepreneurship in the high-priority sectors.

Following the pandemic, an issue that has arisen is hybrid working. Most employers have returned to full-time office work, however many of the younger employees prefer working remotely or a blend of remote and in-person working. With more younger workers entering the workforce across the Middle East there is likely to be an increasing mismatch in employer and employee expectations on working preferences.



## Digital priorities

The UAE strategy focuses on several key fields, including innovative education, which will provide a smart and enhanced learning experience capable of providing the necessary expertise to develop advanced technologies such as science, nanotechnology, and artificial intelligence. Also transforming the health and medical industry through the introduction of intelligent genomic medicine.

Problem-solving, critical thinking and interpersonal skills like empathy and collaboration are the skills needed for the future workforce. Additional sectors to be prioritised include virtual reality, augmented reality, big data, alternative energy and waste management will shape the skills required in future.

The first Bachelor's Degree in Artificial Intelligence (AI) by the British University in Dubai was launched this year to educate the Centennials and Alpha generations to implement AI technologies across all sectors of life. The Green Jobs program's focus is to increase the number of jobs in waste

management, energy sectors, agriculture, and fisheries rising from 40,000 to 83,422 by 2030.

In 2017, Dubai launched the "One Million Arab Coders" initiative; an educational platform that offers exceptional free programs for individuals wanting to develop their digital skills, the largest of its kind in the Arab world. Unlike some nations that educate up to grade twelve and then create an underworld of unemployed disenfranchised young people, the GCC is pursuing employment as the political tool that will provide regional stability.

By 2021 1,200,000 young Arabs with the essential future skills required for the labour market had registered to become a generation of digital experts, equipping them with all the tools required to understand and lead the future through digital transformation. UNESCO reported 34% of the region's tech-focused start-ups were founded by women. 23,000 Emirati businesswomen are running companies worth over AED 50 billion, and in Saudi Arabia, the participation of women in the IT industry has jumped from 11% to 24% which is higher representation than in most other countries.

## Diversification

Saudi Arabia has the largest young population in the region. According to the General Authority for Statistics, 67% of the population is under the age of 35. Saudi Arabia continues to expand its non-oil economy as it seeks to create more employment opportunities for its nationals as well as invite foreign investment to create more opportunities and be seen as the regional business hub.

Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Tourism announced the country aims to attract 100 million visitors by the end of 2030 to become one of the top ten tourist destinations of the world. The first Minister of Tourism for the Kingdom, HE Ahmed AlKhateeb announced that 65 million domestic tourist visit visas were recorded in 2021, contributing to a record spending of USD 21.2 billion.

There are a number of tourism products in the workplace that will launch soon, including the Line. the 1,700 kilometre Red Sea Project, building a new training HQ in Riyadh to continue training Saudi Nationals for the tourism sector, more than 50,000 already having undergone training.

The fossil fuel sector continues to be an important part of the economy, with Saudi Aramco recording a record third quarter profit in 2022, announcing a USD 130 billion profit YTD. This accounted for a year-on-year increase of 90% and the biggest earnings for the world's largest energy exporter.



## Impact of Expo

The delayed World Expo concluded in Dubai at the end of March 2022. The world fair has had a positive effect across the Emirates. Expo is reported to have supported the equivalent of 902,500 full-time jobs. Whilst Expo was expected to give a boost to Tourism (24 million visitors), it has had a real positive impact on local small and medium enterprises (SME). According to the Dubai Government 3,245 suppliers were awarded Dubai Expo 2020 contracts of which over half were SME's.

Many people question whether the investment in such large events is worthwhile, do the Cities recoup that investment? Dubai invested USD 8 billion in Expo. The revenues from the event surpassed USD 16 billion and by the end of 2031, it is forecasted that it will have contributed more than USD 33 billion to the UAE economy.



## Growth & Projects

The UAE continues to announce new projects and ideas as it battles against Saudi Arabia to remain dominant as the business hub in the Middle East. Many ambitious projects and announcements are mentioned. One such project is the Dubai Moon resort which captured attention towards the end of 2022. An 18 billion AED Space Tourism project, possibly housed at the Dubai Pearl and set to be the largest tourist resort in the Middle East. The resort would be centred around a moon-shaped building and would contain luxury residences and event centres. It would also house a moon shuttle and training services for space agencies and astronauts from around the world. It hopes to attract over 2.5 million visitors a year.

global public flight of its X2 Flying car in the UAE. A historic moment for the future of public transport and travel was when the autonomous 2-seater flying car took off in the Dubai Marina, travelling up to 130 km per hour for 35 minutes of flight time. Further test flights are expected to be conducted and will work on a framework of Urban commercialised flying to be deployed in the next few years.

One of the biggest opportunities that Middle East countries have and can capitalise on, is their young population. To take advantage of this, countries need to create and make skills accessible, create new industries and create more employment opportunities.

In October 2022, Chinese Technology, and vehicle manufacturer Xpeng made the first successful





## Crypto Activity

Dubai aims to be a top ten city in the metaverse economy, creating 40,000 virtual jobs and adding USD 4 billion to its economy in five years. Dubai has attracted cryptocurrency exchanges with its favourable regulatory environment and faster approvals for licenses. The World Trade Centre is expected to play a critical role in realising Dubai's Web 3.0 ambitions by becoming a comprehensive zone and regulator for digital assets firms. One out of ten residents in the UAE has invested in cryptocurrencies, according to the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority (TDRA).

The UAE is set to become the global hub for cryptocurrencies and experts have lauded the country's role in promoting and adopting virtual currencies as several digital asset exchanges and crypto firms have launched their operations in the country, thanks to Abu Dhabi Global Markets and Dubai Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority.

Some of the major companies such as the world's largest digital asset exchange Kraken founded in the USA, global cryptocurrency platform crypto.com, Singapore-based cryptocurrency exchange business Bybit and others are now registered in the UAE.

The Dubai MultiCommodities Centre (DMCC) – a free zone dedicated to commodities trade and enterprise – launched the DMCC Crypto Centre, a comprehensive ecosystem for businesses operating in the cryptographic and blockchain sectors. The Centre has successfully registered thousands of digital asset exchanges and cryptocurrency firms.

The implosion of FTX, one of the biggest exchanges in the sector and previously regarded as one of the most stable has shaken the industry and sparked fears of contagion. Collapsed crypto exchange FTX expects to have more than one million creditors, they revealed in bankruptcy filings on 11th November 2022. Regulators and policymakers will intently scrutinise founder Sam Bankman-Fried with allegations that he and his family had used clients' money to prop up his firm and acquire personal assets. He had chosen Bermuda for its more relaxed attitude to cryptocurrency exchanges. This may be the most expensive lesson for investors. Nonetheless, UAE regulators will be mindful that their exchanges retain financial rigor.



## Non-Fungible Tokens

A newly founded Middle East-based project, Crypto Arabs, is making headlines with their Non Fungible Tokens (NFTs) the project had made it to the top spot trending on Twitter in the MENA region.

The fact that Crypto Arabs trended on Twitter demonstrates the increasing interest in NFTs and

digital assets in the Middle East. These digital assets are helping build large communities, both in the real world and Metaverse around ideas and creative content.



## The Future

Digital Skills will shape the upcoming talent demands across the region. The hurdle for those hiring will be finding the right talent with these digital skills. The Middle East cybersecurity spending by the end of this year will be USD16 billion, expecting it to grow to more than USD28 billion in 2025.

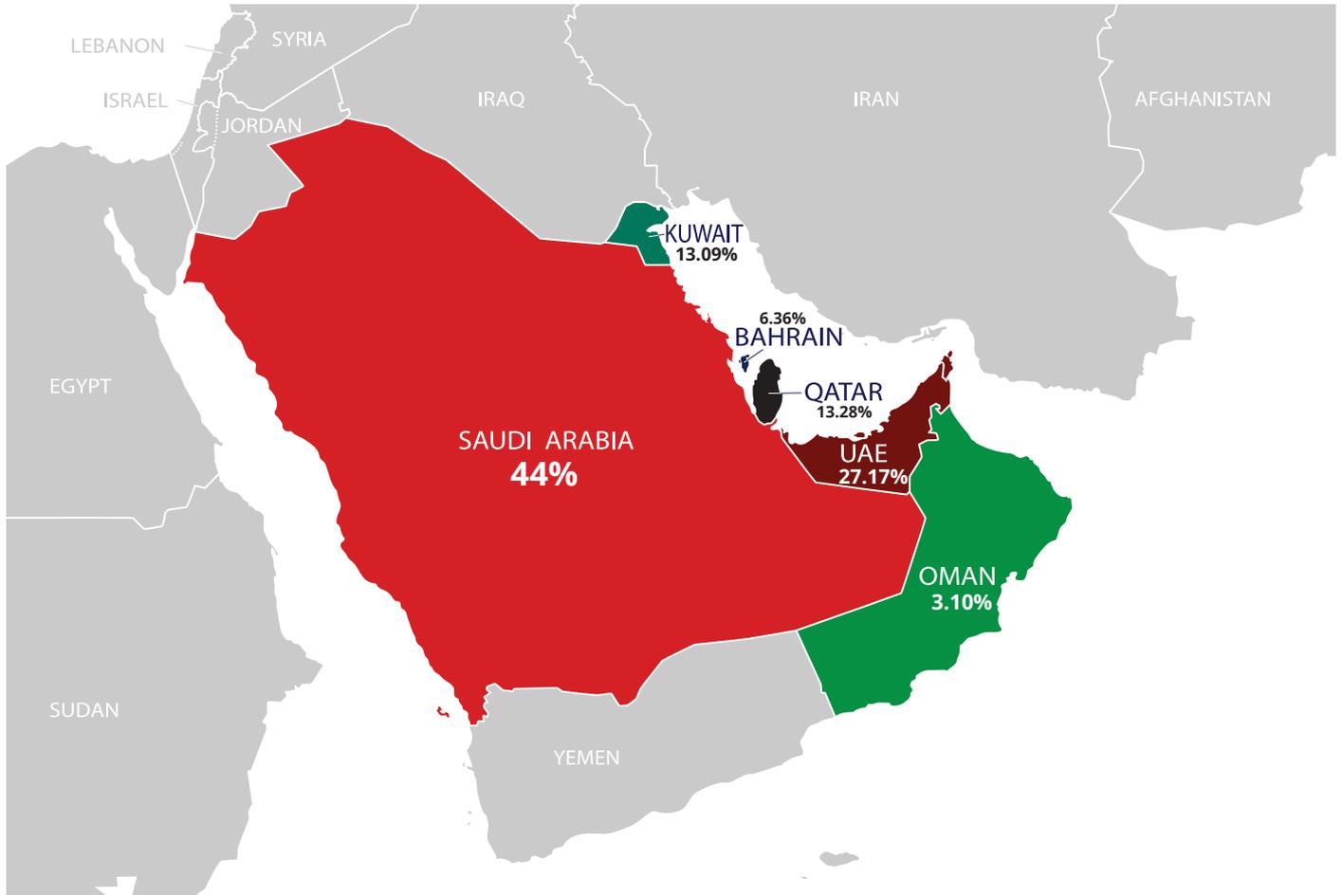
Kaspersky reported the number of women in senior IT or technology roles has increased over the past two years. The Saudi Ministry has developed an integrated program to empower women in the Communications and IT sectors. According to a Saudi Education Ministry survey conducted on social media, 80% of female Saudi students were interested in studying STEM subjects.

There was a 17 % increase in the number of cloud-related jobs across the Gulf region in the first part of 2022. The GCC also reported an increase in cyber security employment "due in part to the hosting of the football World Cup in Qatar and the rapid development of smart cities in Saudi Arabia", according to Cooper Fitch.

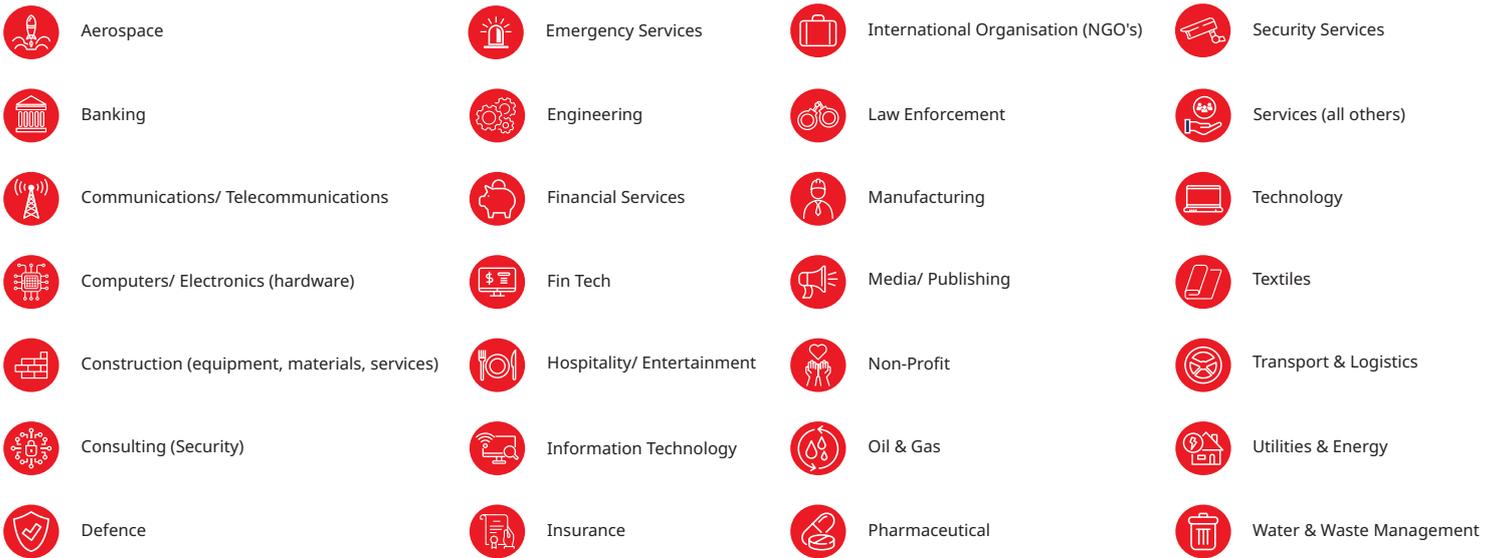
A PWC survey of CEOs based in the Middle East found that 70% see the unavailability of essential digital skills as a serious business threat. According to the survey, all GCC continue to prioritise skills shortages. In 2022 that has been upskilling workers, increasing wages for retention, supporting workers physical and mental well-being and automating/enhancing work via technology. Companies who participated in SSR® surveys expected to increase salaries in 2023 by 5% to offset regional rising costs of living and retain workers.



## Countries represented in the survey

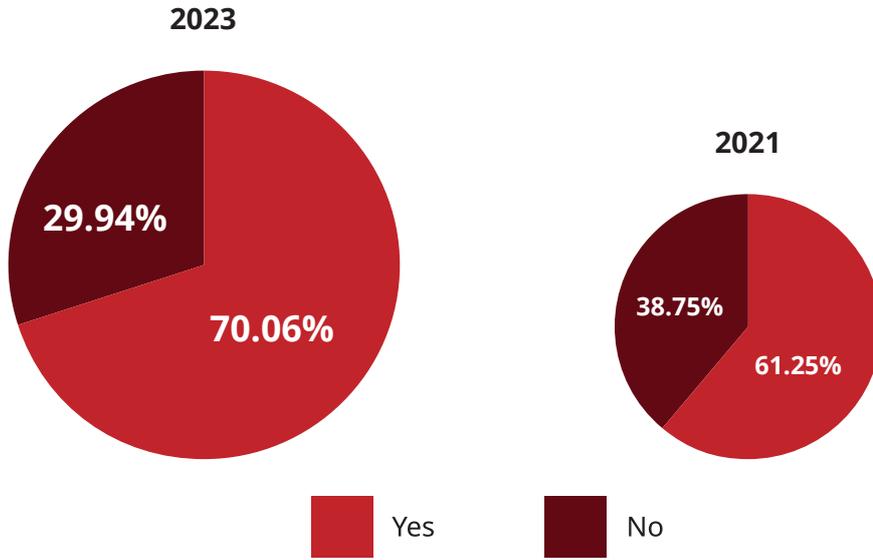


## Industries/ sectors respondents in the survey

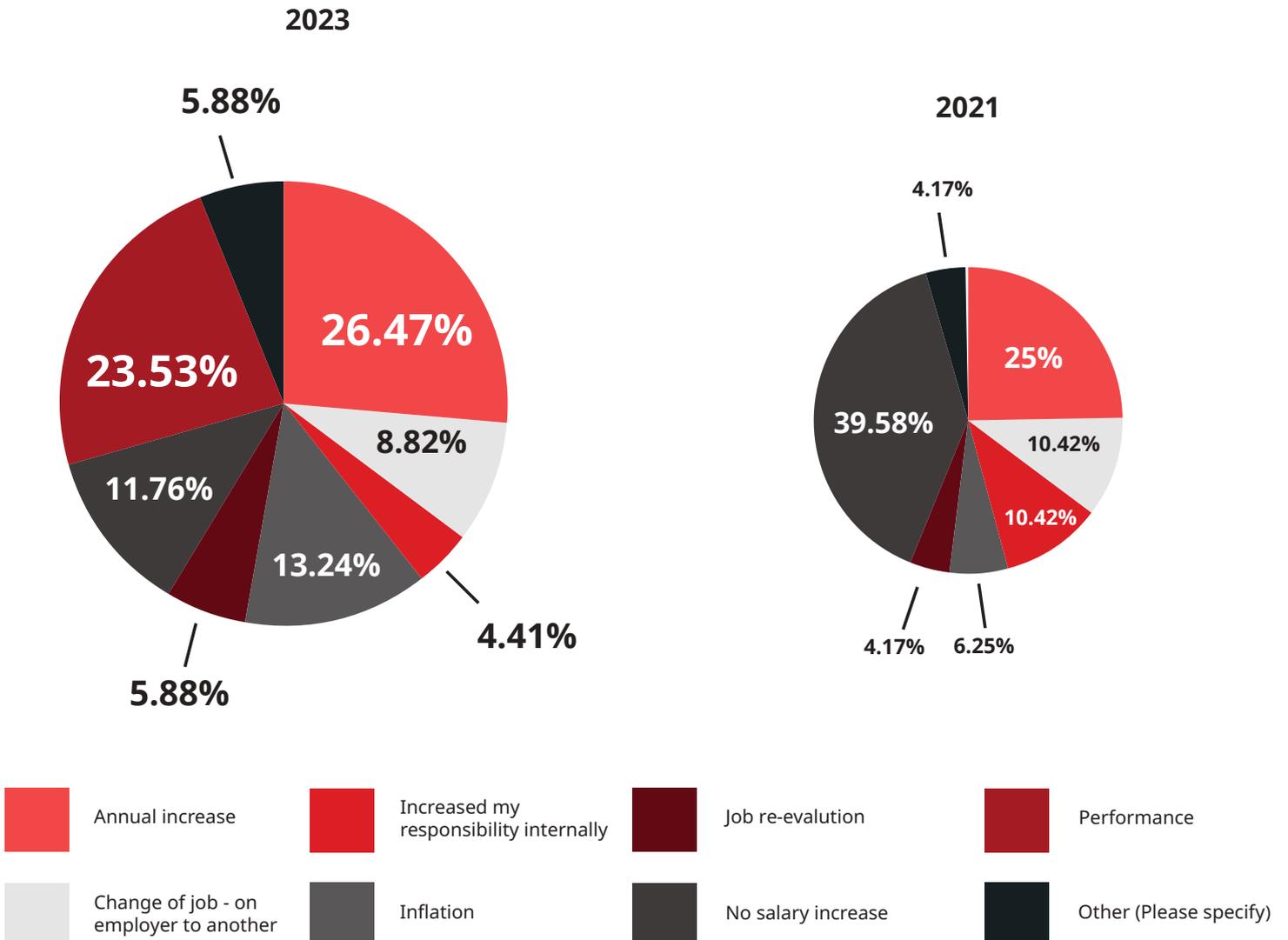


## The survey results

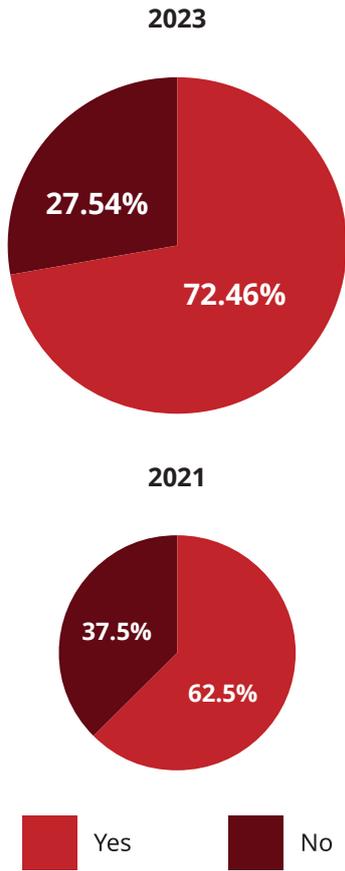
Does your role have regional responsibility?



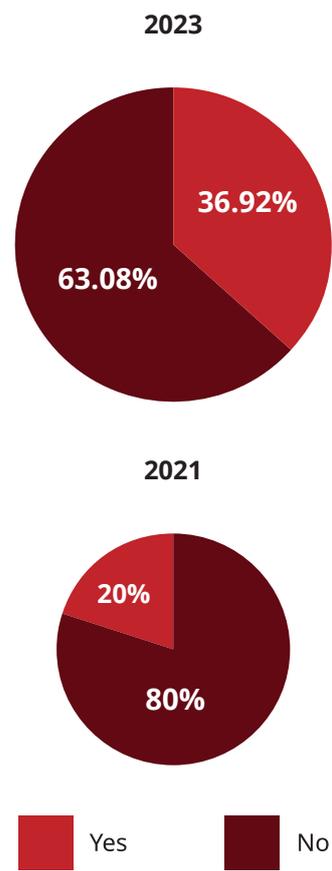
What factor influenced your salary increase the most?



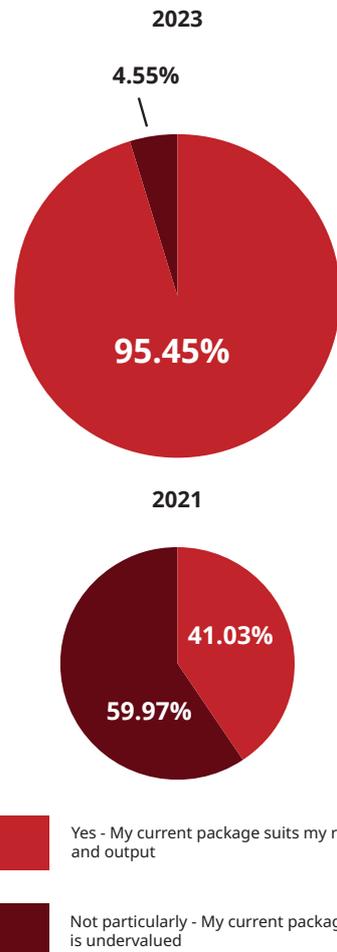
Do you benefit from a bonus scheme?



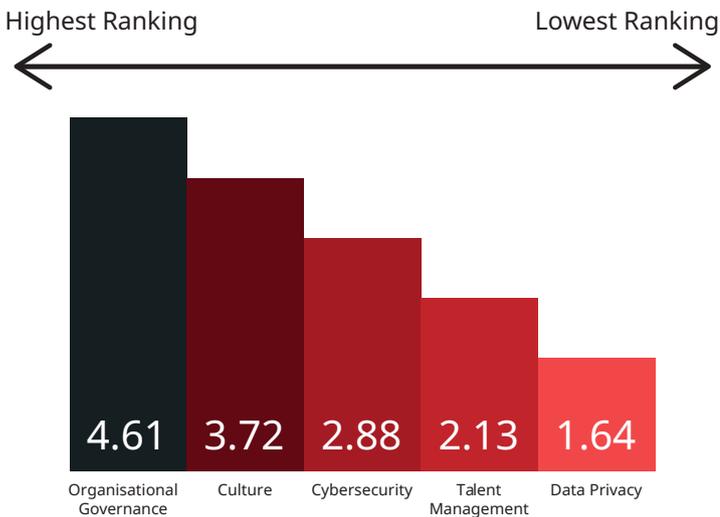
Do you benefit from a share scheme?



Overall, would you say you are adequately compensated in your current role?



Rank the following risks in order of impact to your organisation





**Editor**  
**Peter French MBE CPP**

Peter French MBE CPP FSyl is Managing Director of SSR® Personnel and Executive Profiles. He holds several non-executive posts advising on human resource planning, motivation and psychometrics. A Past Master and Trustee of the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals. He has with the Security Benevolent Fund undertaken to engage the security industry to look after many of their former employees, who through ill health and other circumstances, need assistance as their lives are disrupted through no fault of their own. With a dedicated team of Volunteers, he organises the WCoSP Spring Dance that had, by 2022, raised over £680,000 for good causes. In July 2019 he was honoured with the Root & Branch award by the City Liveries Club for his ongoing work with the Livery and Charities. Peter has been a member of the Chartered Security Professionals Register since its inception in 2011.



**Editor**  
**Andrew Hudson**  
**Director of SSR Middle East**

Andrew Hudson is an experienced recruitment manager, working from Dubai since 2004. He has enjoyed working as a senior manager of a multi-national security company, managing their 'in-house' recruitment service. Due to its success, this became a 'standalone' business with Andrew as its CEO. It soon expanded to cover a wide variety of sectors internationally – operating in North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. Andrew has been involved in international project recruitment, Executive Search, Employee outsourcing (with over 4,000 staff members on his payroll) and training services, amongst other things. Although Andrew has experience working within a wide range of sectors, his primary focus has always been on the Security Industry. At the Global Business Insight Awards SSR Middle East was awarded the prestigious "Best Security Recruitment Agency in the UAE for 2019". Andrew is a Fellow of the Chartered Management Institute. He has an MSc in Psychology and Criminology and holds level 'A' Accreditation for Psychometric testing.

## Methodology

The SSR® Personnel & Executive Profiles 2023 Annual salary surveys are supported by ASIS International, a global association representing security management professionals.

Data was collated from more than 12,000 security professionals from across 40 business sectors including finance & insurance, manufacturing, extractives, e-commerce, transport and logistics.

We overlaid data collected from our Dubai and India locations and our bespoke salary surveys which cover 1.3m employees and EURO 1.2T revenues.

SSR® Personnel are part of the specialised Pertemps Network Group, a privately owned €1 BN recruitment firm supporting international businesses.

Voted the leading security recruiting consultancy is the largest consultancy dedicated to the security, fire, health and safety sectors operating across 6 continents. SSR® have managed over 40,000 contract hire and permanent placements and work with clients that seek innovation and will invest in their workforce to deliver exceptional results.



**Contributors**  
**Matthew Goss and Saumiya Prasad**



## SSR® Personnel established in 1986, specialises in the selection of personnel across all major functional sectors.

 **40,000**  
Placements made

**17,000**  
Job alerts sent daily



 **£1bn**  
Annual group revenues

**6 continents**  
Successfully recruited in



 **100%**  
Diversity & Inclusion –  
Our focus on Equality

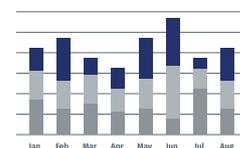
**99%**  
Management Hires -  
in post after 3 years



 **5m**  
Talent Pool

**97%**  
Interim hire exceeds contract  
term



 **up to 12**  
months free  
replacement

SSR® is a specialist provider of recruitment and selection services for the Security Risk, Fire, and Safety sectors. They work with a majority of the UK and Global Fortune 500 companies and have a strong reputation for providing diverse recruitment and staffing solutions across six continents.

SSR® has been recognised for its excellence in the industry. They were voted the global Security Recruitment Consultancy of the Year, an award presented to the consultancy that demonstrates the highest levels of professionalism in dealing with client organisations and potential appointees for security-specific roles across major business sectors. In 2019, SSR® Middle East was recognised as the Best Security Recruitment Company in the region.

The company prides itself on staff retention, which ensures continuity of knowledge and expertise. Many clients have trusted relationships and consistent engagement with the same consultant over the years, even across different employers and throughout their careers, receiving personalised service.

The SSR® management team is recognised as a source of information in the industry. They are frequently quoted in professional press articles covering various subjects such as talent attraction, generational trends, global salary surveys, recruitment strategy, and selection advice. The highly trained consultants at SSR® provide free and impartial advice on salary packages and strategies for career development, often being accredited members of the REC (Recruitment and Employment Confederation).

In the realm of Corporate Security, Cyber Resilience, Health & Life Safety, SSR® specialises in the placement of permanent, contract, and interim personnel in areas such as business resilience, cyber threats, intelligence, corporate security, risk management, and profit protection. They cover physical and protective security, crisis management and business continuity planning, fraud investigations, IT risk and information security, travel security, and executive protection. With a database of 5 million candidates, SSR® has the ability to search for talent in specific regions, countries, and zip codes, considering experience and academia.

In the realm of Security & Fire Engineering, Sales, and Health & Safety, SSR® specialises in the placement of contract, permanent, and interim personnel for the fire, security, and allied trades in the construction and built environment. They provide key personnel in sales, design, installation, service, and management up to the director level. SSR® has managed over 40,000 contract and permanent placements and has deployed teams of over 100 workers, including technical sales and contracted whole life cycle maintenance staff. Their fire safety engineers possess extensive knowledge and experience in fire safety, fire engineering, risk assessment, and fire compliance.

SSR® constantly evolves new talent attraction channels for their sectors. They have a "Bright Minds" program that manages the early careers of graduates, matching academic expertise with clients seeking unique skill sets in fields like research and intelligence. With a £1 billion annual turnover, SSR® utilizes strategic alliances worldwide to identify high-calibre individuals through their Executive Profiles search brand, which includes a diverse range of passive candidates who rely on their advice to find the right opportunities.

Over the past 10 years, SSR® has conducted bespoke remuneration surveys specific to the security industry. These surveys capture the breadth and depth of the security business partner, from physical security to cyber and technology, in a sector that spends over USD 100 billion annually. SSR® is responsive in building more diverse and inclusive shortlists to find the best leaders and specialists who can transform teams to achieve a greater level of performance.

# Jobs of Tomorrow

Privacy Theorists, Philosophers and Ethicists    Custom Organ Designer    Data/ Privacy Specialist  
Automated Traffic Architects and Engineers    Computer Personality Designers  
Brain Quants    Resilience Manager    Master of Edge Computing    Geoengineers  
Front end developer    "Heavy Air" Engineers    Bio-Hacking Inspectors and Security  
Corporate Reorganizer/Disorganizer    Cyber Calamity Forecaster  
Body Part & Limb Makers    Inflectionists    Food Engineer Trust Manager  
Internet of Things (IoT) Architect    Electrical Drone Engineer AR Journey Builder  
Crypto Currency Bankers, Regulators and Lawyers    Mass Energy Storage Developers  
Gravity Pullers    Drone Taxi Driver    Urban Agriculturalists    Automation Auditors  
Avatar Developer    Smart Contact App Developers    Tidewater Architect    Nano-Medics  
Clone Ranchers    Artificial intelligence consultant    Crypto Currency Theorists, Philosophers and Evangelists  
Earthquake Forecasters    Data Hostage Specialists    Architectural 3D Specialist    Extinction Revivalists  
Certified Ethical Hacker    Backlash Minimizers    Civilian Drone Controller    Time Hackers  
Global System Architect    Robotic Earthworm Drivers    Global System Architects  
Nano-Weapons Specialists    Memory Augmentation Therapists    Space-Based Power System Designers



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