HR Policy of STARS

1.1 HRM Guiding Principles in STARS's Perspective

The approach to the people who work for STARS is that they are the foundation for the achievement of our mission. STARS recognizes that the people who work for us merit respect and proper management, and that effectiveness and success of our operation depends on the contributions of all salaried and contracts staff.

Principle 1
STARS sees it central to promote inclusiveness and diversity in its workforce to obtain operational objectives. Employees' participation and contribution towards strategic and operational is thus given high priority. This also recognizes the need for necessary allocation of quantity and quality of Human Resources and giving them the right capacity building and tools to achieve STARS's goals.

Principle 2
STARS recognizes that its policies must enable all to achieve both effectiveness in work and good quality of working life for its staff. STARS does not aim to respond solely to minimum legal professional and other requirements.

Principle 3
STARS'sstaff has the right to expect management which prepares them to their job and that they jointly can achieve STARS's goals and missions. To accomplish this, Mangers might need relevant training and support; all staff need clear work objectives, performance standards and knows whom to report who.

Principle 4
STARS recognizes that open communication and dialogue regarding the development, implementation and monitoring of Human Resource Policy and practices with all staff is important.

Principle 5
STARS has written procedures outlined how staff are recruited and selected for different positions. The recruitment methods aim to attract the widest pool of suitable qualified candidates. Furthermore, the selection process is fair, transparent and consistent to ensure the most appropriate person is appointed.

Principle 6
STARS recognizes the importance of relevant training, development and learning opportunities, both personal and professional to help staff work effective and professionally. STARS aims to introduce a culture of learning in STARS so that STARS and the staff can share learning and development together.

Principle 7
STARS recognizes that work in Afghanistan can place great demands on staff in condition of complexity and risk. STARS has a duty of care to ensure the physical and emotional well being of the staff.

1.2 Job creation and Recruitment

For the purpose of this section, type of employment shall be classified into the following categories:

- Permanent Staff
- Project Staff
- Temporary staff

1.3.1 **Permanent staff** are the staff members whose job description does not relate to a specific Project and have been hired by STARS for regular and recurring activities of STARS.

1.3.2 **Project/Contract staff** shall be hired for a specific Project.

1.3.3 **Temporary/casual staff** Staff hired for short term but irregular in nature can be categorized as casual staff. Such staff can be hired for specific purpose and as per need, may be for a few days or few weeks. Daily labourers, artisans, driver, masons etc. can be hired under casual service category.

1.3.4 The hiring of permanent staff and project staff should follow the recruitment procedures outlined in this chapter. The HR Department will draw a contract covering conditions of employment in terms of specific agreements, payments and work conditions, these may be partially in agreement with the policies manual or completely exempted.

1.3.5 Temporary staff can be employed locally by a team from the Admin unit at the respective Regional Offices.

1.3 Recruitment policy

1.4.1 STARS shall employ most qualified persons within available resources.

1.4.2 STARS shall provide equal employment opportunity to all qualified individuals irrespective of race, colour, religion, national or tribal origin, veteran status, marital status or gender.

1.4.3 As a matter of policy, female and special (physically challenged) candidates shall be encouraged to apply for different positions within STARS.

1.4 Recruitment procedure

Vacancy Announcement

1.5.1 The need of recruiting staff members shall be requested by the concerned line manager to the HR Department along with the reason;

1.5.2 For any existing and budgeted position, if any, the **JobRequisition and Profile Form Appendix-23** should be filled in and signed by the Head of the respective department.

1.5.3 The above mentioned request along with the recommendations from HR Department and Manager of the concerned department shall be submitted to the Deputy Director or Director General for his final approval.

1.5.4 All vacant positions will be advertised simultaneously internally and externally in order to provide equal opportunities for all qualified candidates to compete. **Application Form Appendix-24** shall be used by the applicants applying for a position.

1.5.5 Internal candidates have to follow the same application procedure as external applicants.

1.5.6 For internal candidates, HR department will be required to attach a copy of latest staff appraisal form and ask for written recommendations from the head of the respective department.

1.5.7 HR department will through ACBAR and other coordinating bodies advertise positions. News papers and other methods may also be used for positions as requested in **Job Requisition and Profile Form Appendix-23**.

1.5.8 Any vacancy approval and announcement in the regions/field has to be sent immediately and without delay to the STARS Main Office for further necessary action.

Receiving and Processing of Applications

1.5.9 Applications for job with STARS are to be accepted at all Regional Offices and Head Office.

1.5.10 Whoever receives (reception or guards etc.) an application has no right to read, comment and certainly not to refuse any application on any grounds. Such acts will be treated as misconduct.

1.5.11 Before the end of each working day, all received applications must be handed over to the HR Officer for further processing.

1.5.12 Applications received after the dead line for submission will not be accepted and thus will be treated as if they have not been received.

1.5.13 HR Department should stamp each application and note the receiving date on application.

1.5.14 Once all the applications are received by the closure date and sent to HR Department together with the concerned department, will set a date for the Recruitment Committee to screen the application and select those to be invited for the test or interview.

1.5.15 The process will take place by selecting those candidates with the highest prospective according to the specified standards for the position.

1.5.16 Due to resource availability and communication difficulties, STARS does not promise information of the outcome for those not selected for a position.

1.5 Recruitment Committee (RC)

1.6.1 For any processing of job applications a Recruitment Committee should be selected. This committee has the responsibility to screen and short list candidates, prepare necessary tests, interviews and select a candidate.

1.6.2 In order to eliminate nepotism, no one in the committee can be a relative of a candidate.

1.6.3 If it is noticed that someone has a relative during screening process, he or she has to inform other members and give up his or her seat to another person.

1.6.4 Formation of the said committee shall be as follows:

- Director General or Deputy Director or any officer assigned by him for this purpose;
- One person from the concerned department/region;
- One person from HR Department.

1.6.5 Nothing contained in above paragraphs shall be construed for the hiring of Director General and Deputy Director of STARS who shall be hired by the Board of Trustees.

1.6 Duties of the Recruitment Committee (RC)

1.7.1 The RC should first screen all applicants and make a short list of the candidates deemed mostly suitable, based foremost on education, skills and experience.

1.7.2 These candidates will then be invited for test and interview on dates, the RC may decide upon.

1.7.3 The RC also has the right to decide the location for the test and interview taking into consideration the location of short listed candidates.

1.7.4 For most positions a written exam (technical, mathematical or specimen of writing, grammar and understanding) or practical exam will add fairness to the selection procedure.

1.7.5 Test should be prepared by concerned department and be:

- Clear and easy to understand,
- Free from questions that simply can be answered with a yes or no,
- Framed in such a way that there is no need of prior knowledge to specific rules, procedures or terminology.

1.7.6 For the purpose of elimination any form of nepotism, the result will be viewed by the RC for correctness and interpretation.

1.7.7 Question papers and copy of the result will be kept with HR Department for further reference for six months. Only the RC will see results. Disclosure of the contents to outside parties will be considered misconduct.

1.7.8 The number of people called for interview for any one position should ideally be two or three of the most qualified candidates provided that an adequate number is available. However, there may be situations where more or less candidates are deemed necessary by the RC for interview.

1.7.9 The selection should be done unanimously by all members. If however one member of the committee disagrees, a second interview by alternate members from the same departments will be recommended for the purpose of obtaining a consensus.

1.7.10 If there is an internal candidate that is perceived equally qualified with an external candidate, STARS's candidate should be given preference.

1.7.11 If the selected candidate is already a permanent employee of STARS, then he/she will carry any benefits from the previous position and will not necessarily have to be on trial period. However, would STARS decide on trial period the employee will have all the benefits as stipulated in the previous contract.

1.7.12 A first and a second choice should always be selected if, for some reason, the preferred candidate cannot take the job offer.

1.7.13 The decision of the RC is final and can only be revoked by the Director General. Members of the RC are not permitted to disclose or discuss why or why not a candidate was considered to be successful /unsuccessful to any outside individual.

1.7.14 It is desirable that references are checked at all times to verify a background check of the selected candidate. This is the responsibility of the HR Department.

Note: Recruitment for the position of Director General shall be done by the Board of STARS.

1.7 Qualification, Experience and Competency required for different positions

Based on market availability, STARS will always look forward to hiring qualified, experienced, and competent candidates as demanded by the job. Generally three types of competencies (knowledge, skills and capacity) will be required for different positions. The selection of staff members will be on the basis of one's mastery on these competencies.

- Academic degree and work experience.
- Functional competency: including knowledge, ability, and past performance.
- General competency: including language, hands-on skills, and personal traits.

Every staff member must have these competencies to the extent specified by the EC, which will be defined at the time of recruitment. The following table gives the general qualifications and competency standard for the staff in each category:

Competency areas	**Key requirements**
Executive (Deputy Director)	
Academic degree and work experience	Post graduate or higher degree; At least 10 years experience in NGOs' sector or in any senior management position. Experience of three years in the relevant sectors is desirable
Functional competency	Knowledge about NGOs' Sector and institutions development Proven performance in the field of experience (advisory services, research work on development etc.) Well-versed in the indicators pertaining to NGO's Operations Other relevant competencies specified by the RC
General competency	Required computer skills – MS Word, Excel, Power Point Fluent in written and spoken English Fluent in local languages.
Senior and Middle Management	
Academic degree and work experience	Preferably University degree in related field (for internal staff this will not be mandatory) Five years of experience in similar projects with preferably two years in NGO's sector
Functional competency	Knowledge of modern management practices Familiarity with relevant field of work Functional skills as specified by RC

Competency areas	Key requirements
	Other relevant competencies specified by the RC
General competency	Good command in English Fluent in local language(s). Familiarity with computer application at least MS Word, Excel Appropriate job support competencies as defined by RC
Officer	
Academic degree and work experience:	Graduate/Diploma degree Experience in relevant field has an advantage
Functional competency:	Knowledge of the sector, job concerned Familiarity about development concepts Functional skills as specified by RC Other relevant competencies specified by the RC
General competency	Good command in English will have an advantage Computer skills – MS Word, Excel Fluent in local language(s). Appropriate job support competencies as defined by RC
Assistant Officer/Supervisors	
Academic degree and work experience:	Graduate/Diploma in related subject Preference to experienced candidates
Functional competency:	Proven knowledge or suitable training appropriate for the position Familiarity about rural economy Other relevant competencies specified by RC
General competency	Appropriate job support competencies as defined by RC Computer skills will have an advantage
Support Staff	
Academic degree and work experience:	Preferably Literate Other aspects as specified by RC based on nature of job
Functional competency:	Appropriate experiences as per the job requirements as specified by RC Other relevant competencies specified by the RC
General competency	Appropriate job support competencies as defined by RC Minimum Personal effectiveness competencies.

1.8 Weightage of criteria for short listing of candidates

Applications will be shortlisted according to the criteria decided by the RC for the position in question. STARS will follow the given criteria with Weightage for different categories of staff to be appointed.

Criteria	Weightage
Management Level	
Academic qualification and experience	40%
Functional expertise and competency	50%
Preferential criteria	10%
Officer, Assistant officer and Support Staff	
Academic qualification and experience	60%
Functional expertise and competency	30%
Preferential criteria	10%

In general the ratio of short listed applications to the vacancy will not exceed 1:10. Only shortlisted candidates will be informed for written test. Similarly, for interview this ratio will not exceed 1:3.

1.9 Screening of Applicants

The candidates will have to undergo through any of the following screening processes for selection:

1.10.1 ***Written test:***The written test will be conducted for shortlisted candidates to assess one's knowledge in the related field. This test will be aimed at assessing the job support and functional competencies required for the job. Besides, analytical skills and communication styles could also be inferred from this test.

1.10.2 ***Individual interviews:***Successful candidates in the written test have to undergo through interview. Interview will be focused on candidates' general understandings of the job and also to gain additional information on his/her competency level in general.

1.10.3 ***Practical test:***This will be applied to test hands-on skill of candidates in selected areas such as like computer application, driving etc. All candidates selected for interview will have to go through practical test if demanded by the job.

1.10.4 ***Group dynamics test:*** For some selected positions, especially for management level, candidates may need to go through group dynamics test. Group discussions or other appropriate tool like presentation will be used for this purpose. This test will assess the candidates' personal effectiveness qualities and their compatibility with the values and principles of STARS.

1.10.5 ***Final selection****:* Based on the results of the candidates' on different tests, most suitable candidates will be offered the job.

1.10.6 Depending upon nature of job, type of tests to be taken for given position will be decided by the RC.

1.10.7 Some candidates who failed to be finally selected but are just below the finalists in total ranking will be considered for waitlist. Depending upon number of positions to be fulfilled, 1-3 waitlist candidates can be considered.

1.10.8 **Short Listing of Candidates Appendix-25** shall be used for short listing purposes.

1.10.9 The whole process of selection to be applied and followed shall be determined by the Recruitment Committee on case to case basis. This provision shall mostly be considered for short term recruitment of project employees.

1.10 Appointment

The name of the selected candidate(s) will be posted on the notice board at Head Office and Regional Offices of STARS. The selected candidate must join the service within 30 days of selection decision. Failure to doing so will automatically lead to appoint waitlisted candidate.

However, in some cases if the candidate cannot join within 30 days due to her/his obligation of meeting notice period to the employer the RC can consider for some extension. The service period of all staff will be counted from the date of appointment, but only upon successful completion of the probationary period.

The HR Department of the organization will prepare the contract for all staff signed by the Director General, or designated authority. Two originals will be made, one to be retained by the employee and the other to be kept by the HRM Department. Along with the contract employee will be given **Appointment letter Appendix-26** and job responsibility. The staff should however need to produce **Guarantee letter Appendix-27** as per the format given.

1.11 Staff Identity Card and Code

All staff working under permanent or contract basis will be given STARS identity card for use only while on official duty. Any misuse of the card detrimental to STARS may result in dismissal from the job. Loss of the card must be reported immediately to relevant line manager with the reason.

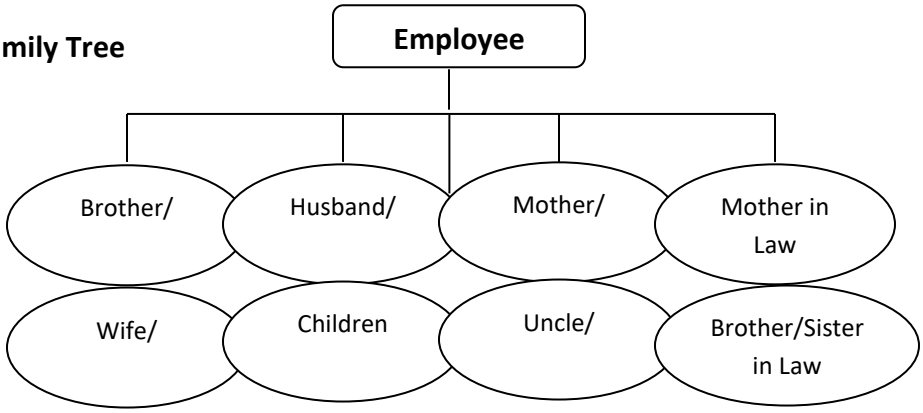
Cards will be renewed for permanent staff upon completion of probationary period. The renewed card will also possess staff code number. For staff under contract basis card will be renewed at the time of contract renewal, if applicable.

Staff identity card must be returned to STARS upon termination of employment or staff leaving the organization due to any reason. For the employee failing to do so, an amount of Af 1,000 (USD 20) will be deducted from his/her final payment.
STARS will assign organizational code to all staff upon successful completion of their probationary period. This code will be the main identity of a particular staff and should be used in all correspondence by/with STARS. For code number it can be given as 1, 2, 3, 4, etc. based on date of appointment or work start date with STARS, but irrespective of status (position).

1.12 Employment of Relatives

The number of closely related permanent or project employees in STARS will be limited to two. This rule is adopted to maximize the level of fair employment opportunity should be allowed and any exceptions should only be approved by Director General. In addition, this rule should also encourage transparent and just relationships between employees that are expected to result in professional loyalty. Therefore, related employees in key positions may neither supervise each other nor work in the same department.
To this end, all staff should mention in their job application of any close relation they know of in STARS. If employees cover-up this information and work against this rule, they will be subjected to disciplinary measures that may entail the termination of their own employment and that of their relatives.

1.13 Family Tree



1.14 Employment Age

STARS does not agree to employment of persons, no matter position or contractual form, below the age of 18. The retirement age in STARS is 65 years. Anyone intentionally giving false information on the date of birth can be terminated with immediate effect. This shall not be applicable to the age of Director General and Deputy Director.

Following minimum and maximum age bar will be applicable for different level of positions to be filled through open competition. However, for technical positions and for contract service this age limit will not be applicable, and will be as per decision of the RC. But in no case, person below 18 years and above 65 years can be employed even on contract basis unless and until the RC decides for a person to be employed on contact basis due to his/her sound mental and physical status.

1.15 Ineligibility for appointment

In the following cases the selected candidate will be ineligible for appointment in any national position of STARS. Reveal of fact even after the appointment will lead to dismissal from job with immediate effect.

- If s/he was terminated by other organizations with charges on corruption or misconduct.
- In case of attempt to influence the selection process by submitting false documents/statements in the application.

Chapter 2 Terms of Employment/Employment Contract

2.1 General

This chapter sets out main contents and rules of the signing of the employment contract. The employment contract is a signed agreement between the employer and the employee. Under the terms of contract, the employee agrees to provide services to the employer in return for remuneration and benefits according to the terms and conditions outlined in the contract.

2.2 Policy

2.2.1 Contract shall be signed with every staff member of STARS.
2.2.2 The contracts of permanent staff shall be for a period of one year.
2.2.3 Contract period for the Project staff shall depend upon the Project period.
2.2.4 No clause shall be added in the contract which is inconsistent with the provisions of this manual.

2.3 Signing of Contract

2.3.1 Contracts of all the Permanent staff shall be signed by the Director General and the employee.
2.3.2 Director General can expressly assign any other officer in Head Office to sign the contract on his behalf.
2.3.3 Director General shall by any general order or special memo assign Managers/ Regional Managers to sign contracts with Project staff.

2.4 The employment contract

Employment contract shall provide following minimum information:

- Name of the employee;
- Designation;
- Duty station;
- Contract period;
- Working hours;
- Rights and obligations of employees;
- Duration of probation period;
- Other staff benefits;
- Termination and other penal activities.

2.5 Probationary period

All new permanent staff hired will be under probationary period of one to three months. This will also include on the job training wherever applicable. The candidate will be considered as permanent staff of STARS only if overall performance of the candidate remains satisfactory during the probationary period. However, in case of failure to meet satisfactory level of performance STARS can dismiss him/her from the job at any time without giving any notice.

If any permanent staff is selected for another position in STARS either through internal promotion or open competition then s/he does not need to go again through probationary period.

2.6 Job Descriptions

All STARS's staff will be given a Job Description at the time of employment. This document specifies a detailed duties and responsibilities pertaining to the employment. A copy of staff Job Description shall be kept in the

personal file in the HR Department. The job description should be used as an active document and be reviewed by the line Managers regularly for performance appraisal.

2.7 Other employments

2.7.1 Permanent and project employees of STARS are not allowed to have employment contracts with any other entity. This would be considered as misconduct.

2.7.2 Permanent or project employees that obtained consultative/evaluative work with entity outside STARS must seek the written approval of the Director General before signing on such contracts.

2.7.3 Permanent or project employees that have an involvement/investment in any other entity must under all circumstances refrain from trying to obtain business contracts or hiring of equipment, tools and facilities with STARS. Doing so will be considered as misconduct.

2.8 Personal files and Records

2.8.1 Personal files for all employees will be set up by the HR Department. Such files will contain all relevant information related to job and employment history of the staff. Staff should submit his/her details in the job application form. Should any employ wishes to view his/her file, it can be done in the presence of the HR Officer.

2.8.2 The personnel file should contain, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- Application form;
- Appointment letter;
- Interview Notes;
- Copies of certificates,
- Copy of NIC (Tazkira);
- Copy of STARS's ID Card;
- Signed contract with job responsibility;
- Performance appraisal forms;
- Leave records – related to leave of absence, leave without pay, marriage leave, maternity leave, Hajj leave, and special leave etc.;
- Transfer letters;
- Warning letters, letter of appreciation, if any;
- Changes of address, contact details, if any;
- Details of higher studies, training, seminars etc., if attended officially;
- Any other changes that relate to position, complaint, or any other relevant personnel details.
- Clearance form/Exit Interview Notes if any;

2.9 Confidentiality of Information

Information contained in the personnel file should not be disclosed to any other staff or outsider until and unless required in connection with some official need. In such case, authority to disclose the information must be sought from the Director General.

Chapter 3 Remuneration and Benefits

3.1 General

STARS's will strive for providing competitive salary and allowance to its staff not only to attract them for job but also for long-term retention.

STARS has a policy for annual salary increment considering inflation and financial situation of the organization

3.2 Salary scale

3.1.1 The salary scale for staff working under permanent and contract basis will be as per decision of the senior management from time to time. For current year salary scale for each category is as per **Appendix-28**. Staff will receive his/her salary and allowance from the date of appointment.

3.1.2 Newly appointed staff will be on minimum salary scale of the level s/he is appointed to. However based on experience and skills and need of the organization, if the recruitment committee feels that the staff deserves higher step in salary scale then consideration can be made accordingly. But for new appointment the start salary should not go beyond step 3 for all categories. For support staff level, drivers will be hired at Step 3 while others at Step 1.

3.1.3 If the staff is promoted to higher level then s/he will get the minimum scale of promoted level from the day of promotion. However, if the current salary amount exceeds the minimum scale of promoted level then the staff will get current amount, i.e., no deduction will be made to the amount of current salary. If the staff gets Acting, s/he will receive current salary but not for the position given Acting for.

3.1.4 In case of death of staff while working with STARS, full salary and allowance for that particular month of event will be given to next of kin of the staff concerned. It is to be noted here that salary and allowance will not be provided for the period staff is absent from work. Salary will be paid to staff either in the form of cash or bank transfer on 25th of each month. No salary and allowance will be provided from the date of resignation/dismissal from the organization.

3.3 Salary payment on transfer

Salary will be paid to transfer staff from existing office if s/he is working in that office till 25th of that particular month. Otherwise s/he will be paid from new office where s/he is transferred to.

3.4 Annual Salary Increment

3.4.1 To cover part of inflation and also as recognition to staff's contribution to the organization, STARS will do its best to increase salary of permanent staff from to time based on market situation and its financial position.

3.4.2 A committee comprising Deputy Director, Finance Manager, Program Managers, Regional Managers and HRM Staff will assess the annual salary increment amounts or percentage to be provided and recommend to the Director General for final approval.

3.4.3 Staff performance Appraisal must be considered while giving increments to the employees. The performance appraisal shall be conducted on semi annual basis unless otherwise decided by the MC. During the month of September each year, the MC shall consider increments and shall decide the amount to be provided in this regard.

3.4.4 **Performance Appraisal for Managerial Staff Appendix-29** and **Performance Appraisal for other than Managerial Staff Appendix-30** shall be used for this purpose.

3.5 Bonus

3.5.1 As a matter of rule no bonus is payable to any employee of STARS.

3.5.2 Director General in exceptional circumstance can approve bonus for any employee with reasons to be recorded in writing and specifying the sources from where the said amount is to be paid.

3.6 Accommodation, DSA and Air fare

STARS will provide accommodation and DSA as per below details

Particular	Amount in USD
International Trips	60 USD to 150 USD
National	15 USD to 60 USD
Project Staff	As per approved budget in the relevant project

3.7 Meal/Food Allowance

STARS is not responsible to bear the food expenses of employees on routine, however if it is budgeted or management decides that food expenses incurred on lunch during routine official hours are to be bear by STARS then it should be decided by MC.

3.8 Hardship allowance

Employees posted in insecure/far flung areas for Project activities may be entitled to Hard ship Allowance. The admissibility of the said allowance and its amount shall be subject to the specific approval of the Director General or Deputy Director and budget availability.

3.9 Other duty allowance

Actual costs of transportation (normally shared taxi), telephone calls, and other work related expenses incurred during official trips will be reimbursed by STARS against receipts certified by head of the respective department.

3.10 Medical allowance

All staff will be entitled to amount on account of medical treatment against official-work related accidents. All accidents therefore must be reported to line manager at the earliest possible. In case of work-related injuries STARS will pay for expenses including doctor's fee, clinical tests, operations if required and medicines for the treatment in country. In case the treatment is not likely to happen in country, on approval from the Director General staff may go for treatment to either Pakistan, India or Iran where STARS will pay for only doctor's fee, clinical tests, operations (if required), but not travel and other expense.
The amount to be paid for all accidental causes, especially in case of death of an employee, shall be determined by the Management Committee of STARS with the final written approval of the Director General. This shall also be subject to funds availability and adequate provision made there against.

Number of days for paid leave will be based on nature of incident and duration of treatment required and strictly on recommendation of Deputy Director and line manager. If treatment requires more than 15 days, staff should use his/her balanced casual leave and annual leave. Any days exceeding use of leave balance will not be paid.

Chapter 4 Time and Holidays/Leave Management

4.1 General

4.1.1 STARS respects government's decision with regard to public holidays.

4.1.2 Leave facility provided by STARS will be in commensurate to similar organizations operating in the country.

4.1.3 This chapter sets out policy for the admissibility of leaves to the employees.

4.1.4 For the purpose of this chapter, leave shall be classified in the following:

- Annual Leave;
- Sick Leave;
- Casual Leave;

- Maternity leave;
- Paternity leave;
- Unpaid Leave;
- Hajj Leave, etc.

4.1.5 Any leave without taking permission from the respective line Manager shall be considered as absence and be deducted from the employees' salaries.

4.1.6 All STARS employees are required to fill out attendance book. For employees on annual leave or sick leave or any other types of leave, the attendance book has to be filled accordingly. On a monthly basis, staff follow up is to be completed (# of working days, # of days of leave/holidays, etc.) by Admin section of the respective Regional Offices based on the daily attendance record and forward to HR Department of Head Office.

4.2 Public Holidays

STARS will observe the following as public holidays. Since some of the holidays vary from year to year and also subject to appearance of moon, tentative holiday list for the year will be announced at the beginning of each year by the HR Department.

Holidays	No. of days
Arafa	1
Eid-ul-Azha	3
Ashora (Tenth of Mahram)	1
Naw Roz	1
Education Day	1
Eid Milad-ul-Nabi	1
Islamic Revolution Day	1
Independence Day	1
Great Ahmad Shah Masood	1
First day of Ramazan	1
Eid-ul-Fitr	3

4.3 Annual Leave

4.3.1 Permanent employees are entitled to 24 days for leave per year.

4.3.2 The respective line Manger will prepare a tentative leave schedule for their staff at the beginning of the year. This schedule will ensure that the annual work plan, without affecting the workload, allows the staff members to use their annual leave. A copy of the tentative annual leave plan must be given to the HR Department.

4.3.3 The timing of availing annual leave shall be coordinated between the employees and the line managers to ensure that employees get break at regular intervals.

4.3.4 The leave can only be obtained after the successful completion of probationary period.

4.3.5 Staff is required to fill out the **Leave Request Form Appendix-29** and obtain their Line Manager's prior approval. Before the leave is approved, the HR Department shall check and attest the available leaves to the staff.

4.3.6 Required advance notice for leave is as follows:

- 1-2 days One day in advance;
- 3-10 days One week in advance;
- 2-3 weeks Two weeks in advance.

4.3.7 Employees are not entitled for the payment of unutilized annual leave. Exception to this shall be approved by the MC.

4.3.8 Nothing contained in this section shall apply to Temporary or Project employees.

4.4 Sick Leave

4.4.1 If an employee fall sick, in common cold, stomach ache or migraine, and cannot attend work, the first three days of such sickness will be deducted from annual leave. The sickness has to be reported on the first or second day.

4.4.2 Would the sickness last for longer than 3 days, a medical certificate from a well known/licensed Medical Doctor/Hospital is required.

4.4.3 Sickness Leave for one week shall be approved by the Deputy Director while for more than one week, by the Director General.

4.4.4 Employees are not entitled for the payment of unutilized sick leave.

4.4.5 Sick leave exceeding the limit prescribed in section 4.4.3 shall be approved by Director General or Deputy Director and salary of the employee shall be paid in the following manner:

- From 01 day up to 15 days — full pay
- From 15 days to 1 month — half pay
- From 1 month up to two months — without pay

4.5 Casual Leave

4.5.1 Casual leave is any leave outside the ambit of annual leave, sick leave, Hajj, maternity/ paternity leave and leave without pay.

4.5.2 Employees shall be entitled for a 10 days casual leaves per annum.

4.5.3 A maximum of 3 days casual leave can be taken at a time.

4.5.4 Employees are not entitled for the payment of unutilized casual leave.

4.6 Maternity Leave

4.6.1 Female staff shall be entitled for a 60 days maternity leave. The leave can be taken before or after the delivery.

4.6.2 Application for maternity leave should be submitted in writing at least one month in advance.

4.6.3 Maternity leave shall be limited up to 3 children in total service period with STARS.

4.7 Paternity Leave

4.7.1 Male staff shall be entitled for a 3 days paternity leave.

4.7.2 In exceptional circumstances the leave can be extended to a maximum of 6 days with the approval of Director General.

4.7.3 This leave can be taken after the child has born. This leave cannot be added to the annual leave balance.

4.7.4 An application to the effect shall be submitted one day prior to taking leave.

4.7.5 Paternity leave shall be limited up to 3 children in total service period with STARS.

4.8 Bereavement Leave

In the case of death of immediate family member of staff, paid bereavement time will be given maximum of four calendar days at a time. 'Family member' for this purpose will cover only own father, mother, spouse, child, brother, sister, father in-law and mother in-law of the staff concerned. In case of death of other members in the family or of any other close relative, staff should use annual leave.

4.9 Hajj Leave

4.9.1 An employee shall be entitled for a 45 to 50 days Hajj leave.
4.9.2 An application to the effect shall be submitted two months prior to taking leave.
4.9.3 An employee shall be entitled for Hajj leave only once.
4.9.4 Hajj Leaves shall be approved by the Director General.
4.9.5 Nothing contained in this section shall apply to Temporary employees.

4.10 Marriage Leave

Any staff if to get married while working with STARS will be entitled for seven working days marriage leave. This leave will be granted only if it is his/her first marriage. If an employee getting married belongs to a remote outstation area, then s/he will be entitled for 10 working days marriage leave.

4.11 Unauthorized Leave

Unauthorized leave is defined as failing to report for work in five consecutive working days without a leave approval or sick leave notice. In this instance, a written warning will be given and salary be deducted for the number of days absent. If a staff member is absent from work for more than 20 consecutive working days without valid reason, his or her employment will be terminated.

4.12 Unpaid Leave

Staff has no automatic right to unpaid leave. However, in special circumstances, consideration may be give to a written request via the respective Line Manager. In instance where the employee does not have any balance of any of the above mentioned leaves, s/he can opt for leave without pay. Salary shall be deducted for every day of leave without pay.
Granting leave without pay shall be at the discretion of the Director General.

4.13 Counting public holidays during leave period

Unless and otherwise specified normally public holidays will not be counted while approving leave request. But if any public holiday suddenly announced by the government falls during the leave period which has already been approved or in use then such leaves will automatically be included within leave days taken. No extra leave day will be considered/granted as compensation to such holiday.

4.14 Leave should not be considered as 'right'

Staff should never consider any leave as their 'right', rather it is a facility given by the organization in recognition to their hard work and dedication to the organization. In case of urgency of work, staff on leave can also be called back to duty. Staff who is already on leave, should not join office during the leave period without consent of the authority who approved leave earlier.

4.15 Leave request and Approval

All leave requests need to be channelled through concerned authority for approval. Leave request of Director General will be approved by chairperson of the board. Similarly, for other staff it will be as per table given below.

Leave request of	To be approved by
Director General	Chairperson of the Board
Directors Finance/Program	Director General
Finance Manager, Program Managers, Regional Managers, Human Resource Officer, Admin Officer and other staff at Head	DG/Admin Manager

Office	
Staff working in the Regional/Field Offices	Regional Managers with intimation to Head Office

Chapter 5 Promotion, Transfer and Staff Development

5.1 General

5.1.1 STARS gives priority to filling vacant positions through internal promotion to the extent possible.

5.1.2 STARS has a policy of transferring staff to different offices as demanded by the projects.

5.1.3 STARS strives for promoting staff development opportunities to its staff.

5.2 Promotion

For the positions to be filled in through internal promotion, based on experience, qualification and performance of the staff s/he will be promoted to higher level. Promotion will however strictly take place to one level/grade higher position only. In no case, staff will be promoted directly to second level/grade higher than the current position.

5.3 Basis for Promotion

Following criteria will be used to promote staff on internal competition basis.

a) Performance assessment	50%
Self assessment	25%
Management appraisal	25%
b) Academic qualification	20%
c) Seniority	15%
d) Service based on geographical areas	15%

a) Performance Assessment

STARS will appraise performance of all permanent staff once a year. For this two types of assessments will be done, self-assessment and management appraisal. **Forms for self assessment and management appraisalAppendix-31** and **Appendix-32** are presented as standard. Total score of the two (out of total marks 50) will be used for 'performance assessment' indicator as mentioned above. Self assessment form for field staff is to be first filled in by the candidate based on the achievements against the target set, if any. It is to be endorsed by his/her immediate line manager.

Management appraisal is done to assess overall aspects including knowledge, attitude, behaviour, character, honesty level etc. of the staff. Such assessment is done by immediate line manager and higher authorities.

The HR Department at the Head Office will collect staff performance assessment reports and use for promotion. The performance appraisal will also be used to identify staff development measures, reward or to take punitive actions.

b) Academic qualification

For academic background, it will be as follow

University degree	20 points
Diploma	15 points
Baccaleuarate	10 points

If any candidate cannot produce certificate then it will be up to the RC's discretion for number of points to be considered.

c) Seniority

Based on number of years of permanent service with STARS, the candidate will get 4 points equivalent for each year served. While counting service period, if the period results into number of months in a particular year then that period will be counted accordingly. To clarify, if any staff worked for 3 years and 7 months then s/he will get 14.33 points {(3*4)+(7/12*4)}. Likewise, if for 2 years and 9 months then it will be 11 points. Seniority will however not be counted for the period while staff is on 'leave without pay' or for the period of absence without leave approval.

5.4 Restriction on Eligibility for promotion

Despite having met minimum criteria for promotion, the candidate will not be eligible for promotion in the following circumstances:

- During suspension period if s/he is under suspension.
- For the period in case s/he is barred from promotion due to disciplinary action.
- For the period if s/he has received warning letter or facing any other disciplinary action.
- During the period if staff is on 'leave without pay'.

5.5 Transfer

5.6.1 As demanded by the Projects, staff will be transferred from one Office/section to other. Transfer will be done to enrich the staff experience on different geographical areas, level of offices and nature of work. Also, with a view not to disturb the calendar of activities, transfer will be normally done during certain months in a year.

5.6.2 The Director General will have the authority to transfer all staff. However, authority to transfer a staff under assistant level and below can be delegated to Regional level. While making transfer, it will however be ensured that the transfer is done in close consultation with the immediate line manager of the concerned staff.

5.6.3 Upon transfer, it will be concerned staff's responsibility to handover duty and other official materials/documents to the staff (as designated by the line manager) in the office and join the new office at the earliest possible. Failing to join within stipulated time period may lead to disciplinary action.

5.6.4 Upon joining the new office, it should be reported to Head Office and other concerned offices like where s/he was transferred from and concerned regional Office(s) immediately. The transfer letter duly authorized shall be placed in the personnel file of the respective employees for future reference.

5.6 Staff Development

STARS will continuously put its effort to develop staff competencies. Job orientation training will be organized to all staff upon appointment. Besides, the organization will also conduct in-service training, workshops, seminars regularly for its staff as and when deemed necessary. Based on funding availability, STARS will organize exposure visits to other countries in the region to give opportunity to its staff to bring in new ideas and skills that would contribute to excel future performance. Such opportunities will also serve as incentive to better performing staff who will be given priority in the nomination.

5.7 Academic career development

STARS will extend financial support and study time to those staff wishing to pursue academic career on part time basis if the study field is relevant to the organization's work. However, STARS will not provide such opportunity if the official work is to be affected due to absence of staff from work. Also while granting such opportunity; STARS management will consider overall performance of the staff. Depending upon nature of facility provided by the organization, the staff concerned has to sign bond with STARS as commitment to the facility provided by the organization.

Chapter 6 Code of Conduct and Disciplinary action

6.1 General

6.1.1 STARS strives for creating conducive work environment by maintaining mutual relationships with all employees.

6.1.2 STARS also respects individual rights, and treat all employees with courtesy and consideration. Equally, it also expects from all employees to promote an atmosphere in keeping view with STARS's vision, mission and goals.

6.2 Code of Conduct

6.2.1 STARS work is guided fully by its vision and mission, and always strives best to meet its goals and objectives set forth. To attain this STARS may assign any task to concerned staff at any time deemed necessary. It is therefore staff's responsibility to complete the job at the specified time frame. In case of problem, staff is always encouraged to discuss with his/her line manager. Line Manager, within official means, will do best possible to sort out the issue. If the staff has some personal differences with line manager then s/he can also put his/her grievances to second level higher authority.

6.2.2 While serving with STARS all employees are required to observe standards of personal conduct and job performance at all times. Violation of STARS polices/rules or other illegal or improper acts or practices by any employee is strictly prohibited and may result to any action including immediate dismissal. STARS has set the following standard of conduct which all staff must follow. This list is not all inclusive, but is expected to illustrate the types of conduct, if failed to abide by, may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

- Show commitment towards the vision and mission of the organization.
- Feel duty as to safeguard organization's and donor's properties.
- Show due respect to her/his line manager and work under the authority and guidance of line manager.
- Meet the minimum performance standard acceptable to the organization
- Cooperate with all staff of the organization and stakeholders.
- Maintain full honesty with the organization and its stakeholders concerned.
- No influence in daily performance and decisions based on any political biases.
- Not abuse her/his authority in any circumstances.
- Not accept any gifts, gratuities or money or other favours from anyone STARS conducts activities with.
- Not criticize organization's rules and regulations in public.
- Not violate organizations and the stakeholder's confidentiality even after retirement.
- Not involve in any destructive or illegal activities.
- Not absent from work without prior approval.

6.3 Disciplinary actions

6.3.1 Disciplinary actions may include: written or verbal warning, probation, suspension, and/or dismissal from employment. STARS reserves the right to apply any or all of these disciplinary actions as deemed necessary. An employee may also be dismissed for serious infringement without prior warning.

6.3.2 All staff must remember that breach of any above-mentioned code of conduct is punishable under STARS's rules and regulations. Disciplinary action will depend upon official investigation done by STARS.

6.3.3 Following disciplinary actions can be taken against the staff if proven guilty.

- Issue written warning
- Collect financial loss caused by the staff fully or partially from his/her salary or other personal assets.

- Suspend promotion or salary increment.
- Suspend from job declared “eligible for future STARS’s jobs”
- Suspend from job declared “ineligible for future STARS’s jobs”

6.3.4 STARS can terminate contract for both permanent and contractual staff in the following situation. The Director General or his/her designated official will have the authority to terminate contract of the staff in question.

- Not able to perform assigned duty due to incapability;
- Absent for more than two weeks without prior approval;
- Frequent breach of institution’s code of conduct;
- Loss to STARS’s or client’s properties due to carelessness;
- Work against the prestige and future growth of the organization;
- Convicted by court in criminal or other moral ground;
- Corruption charges;

6.4 Procedure for disciplinary actions

If STARS deems necessary to take disciplinary action against any staff, the staff will be first oriented about the charges and the reasons of such charges in the written form (cautionary letter) by line manager. If the situation is not improved within a month a warning letter will be issued by higher authority. No improvement will further lead to issuance of second warning letter from the same authority after two weeks of first warning letter. Ultimately final termination letter will be issued by the Director General after a week of second warning letter if the management sees no possibility for improvement.

Chapter 7 Resignation, Retirements and Termination

7.1 General

7.1.1 Each employee of STARS is expected to behave in an honest, respectful and responsible manner towards colleagues, supervisors, visitors, customers, local authorities etc. Each employee is also expected to encourage an atmosphere of team spirit and cooperation within STARS.

7.1.2 The employee is further expected to respect and carry out instructions and decisions made by their line Managers.

7.2 Resignation

7.2.1 Any staff willing to resign from service should tender resignation in writing with one month notice to the Director General but through concerned line manager. Authority to accept, withhold or reject the resignation will however solely remain up to the Director General.

7.2.2 Failing to give one month prior notice, salary and allowance for one month will be deducted from benefit package or any other source the organization is liable to pay to the staff concerned.

7.2.3 Use of annual leave balance in general will not be entertained for such notice period as it may affect the work. Staff should therefore plan in advance to use annual leave if s/he is to resign.

7.3 Retirement

7.3.1 Maximum age limit to continue in service with STARS is 65 years or total service period of 35 years with STARS, which ever reaches early. Thus beyond the age of 65 or total service period of 35 years whichever comes early, the staff will be subject to forced retirement.

7.3.2 However, if STARS feels that service of the staff is direly needed for the organization, it may offer contract service for a maximum one year period over the retirement age or 25 years of his/her service with STARS.

7.4 Termination

7.4.1 If a staff member is absence from his/her duty station without any intimation to his/her line manager for 20 days, disciplinary action shall be taken.

7.4.2 If a Project employee is absence from his duty station for more than 25 days, s/he shall be considered as terminated from his job.

7.4.3 In case of Permanent staff, if the employee continues to be absent from the duty for 25 days s/he shall be terminated from the job.

7.4.4 For the purpose of this section, proper intimation/communication shall be considered as follows:

- Letter/ application to the effect;
- Email;
- Telephone to the line manager.

7.4.5 The committee shall after initial investigation, issue a show cause notice to the employee as to why the employee in question should not be penalized in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

7.4.6 The employee shall submit his/her reply within 3 days.

7.4.7 The committee formed under section in this regard shall review the reply and if they don't find it satisfactory they can take any of the following disciplinary actions:

- Reprimand (with or without name)
- Losses of up to 3 days pay;
- Losses between 4 to 7 days;
- Losses up to one month pay;
- Downgrading;

- Dismissal from STARS.

7.4.8 The above disciplinary actions shall be taken after giving fully opportunity of being heard to the employee.

7.4.9 The employee in question if aggrieved can file an appeal against the decision of the committee to the Board within 15 days of the decision.

7.4.10 Following are few instances that may attract penal actions under this section:

- Theft, misuse of STARS's funds or property;
- Wilful Negligence in the care of STARS's property;
- Physical fighting with any other employee:
- Wilful negligence/ disregard for safety of employee, programme beneficiaries or any party related to STARS;
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information;
- Discrimination among employees or any existing or intended programme beneficiaries for reason of sex, age, tribe, religion or any other factor not directly relevant to the purpose of the activities of STARS;
- Use of Alcohol or any intoxication with in duty hours;
- Wilful non compliance of rules and regulations set out by STARS;
- Soliciting and receipts of undue favours during the procurement process;
- Possession or use of fire arms during duty hours;
- General harassment verbal/ physical abuse and intimidation employee, present or intended beneficiary or any party related to STARS;

7.5 Departure feedback

All staff leaving STARS, either due to resignation or retirement should give their feedback to the management about his/her experience with STARS along with comments and suggestions for future improvement. STARS welcomes such inputs from its staff so that it could serve better in future. Line manager should ensure that departure interview of the staff is taken. In some cases (like due to personal difference with the line manager) second higher authority (Deputy Director) may take departure interview of staff before leaving. A letter of Recommendation shall be provided to staff leaving along with experience certificate.

7.6 Clearance of Account

The staff who leaves STARS should have his/her personal accounts cleared in all respects. Also it is the responsibility of the concerned staff to ensure that all advances are paid back to STARS. Any official asset (like calculator, laptop for example) should be returned to the office. Any staff member failing to comply with these will be liable to face action including informing new office of the staff, if applicable.