

DG's Report for Council 2026

by

Director-General - Dr Abdul Rahman Conteh

Tuesday, June 16, 2026

Proposal to Co-opt two Centre Leaders on a rotational basis

1. Dr Adam Sheka Kanu

Rokupr

2. Dr Dauda Sheku Yillah

Teko

ORDER OF PRESENTATION

1. FLASH BACK

2. PREVIOUS ACTION POINTS

3. ACTIVITIES IN 2026

- **ANNUAL WORK PROGRAM CONFERENCE**
- **COLLABORATION WITH IITA**
- **TRAINING OF LAB TECHNICIANS**

4. OVERVIEW OF STAFF SITUATION

FLASH BACK

Major Successes of SLARI

1. Reactivation of the Annual Work Program Conference
2. Compilation of Annual Reports
3. Scoring of Scientists for Promotion
4. Enhanced Visibility of SLARI
5. Strategic Plan
6. Website Completed <https://slari.gov.sl>



SIERRA LEONE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
ROKUPR AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTRE (RARC)
RESEARCH DEMONSTRATION & MULTIPLICATION SITE
DISTRICT: KARENE **CHIEFDOM: ROMENDE**
LOCATION: GBOMSAMBA

SLARI AND ITS CONSTITUENT CENTRES



ROKUPR AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH CENTRE (RARC)



KUREMA AGRICULTURAL
RESEARCH CENTRE (KATRC)



KUREMA FORESTRY & TREE CROP
RESEARCH CENTRE (KATRC)



TEBO LIVESTOCK
RESEARCH CENTRE (TLRC)



KARAMA HORTICULTURAL CROPS
RESEARCH CENTRE (KHCRC)



KARAMA LAND & WATER
RESEARCH CENTRE (KLWC)



ROKUPR FISHERY
RESEARCH CENTRE (RFC)

Enhanced Visibility of SLARI

Action Points from the 22nd SLARI Council meeting

Action Point	Status	Remarks
SLARI should plant the newly released varieties in their demonstration sites which should be visible and accessible to farmers and government officials so that farmers can adopt these varieties quickly.	New varieties currently under multiplication	Private sector involved
Council members agreed that scientists who fail to submit Technical and Financial reports on time should have their salaries withheld by management.	This was noted and will be implemented	Warnings sent to staff
Council members should approve the budget every year before it is submitted to the Ministry of Finance.	This was noted and will be implemented	Not yet time for budget submission



Smart Farms

48 Robert Street, Freetown

www.smartfarmssl.com



Action Points from the 21st SLARI Council meeting

Action Point	Status	Remarks
A Search Committee consisting of the following people to be set-up to initiate the recruitment process for the position of DG and Directors of Centres:	This was done.	This is on hold.
- CAO, MAFS - President, NaFFSL - Executive Secretary, SLeCAD - Prof. Abdul B. Karim – FBC, University of Sierra Leone - Dr. Alpha Yaya Kamara – IITA, Nigeria - DVC – Njala University		

Action Points from the 21st SLARI Council meeting

Action Point	Status	Remarks
It was agreed that the advertisement for the position of Director General and Centre Directors should be done following international standards and should be done early January 2026.	This was noted and will be implemented	This has been reversed
- The arrears for OIC allowances must be paid from the Other Charges or other funds received by SLARI. - The Acting DG to write a letter to the FSRP Project Manager on the status of SLARI's activities and then copy the CAO MAFS, SLARI Council Chairman and Minister of Agriculture on or before 19th December 2025.	This was noted and will be implemented Letter was written and sent as instructed.	

Action Points from the 21st SLARI Council meeting

Action Point	Status	Remarks
The Acting DG is expected to take serious action against scientists who are engaged on a second job and neglecting the work at SLARI.		This was noted and will be implemented

Ref: OP/EP 50/401/01



GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
STATE HOUSE
STATE AVENUE
TOWER HILL
FREETOWN

24th March, 2026

Dr. Abdul R. Conteh
C/o The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
Youyi Building
Brookfields
Freetown

Dear Dr. Conteh,

APPOINTMENT AS DIRECTOR GENERAL -
SIERRA LEONE AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE (SLARI)

I have the honour to inform you that in accordance with Section 21 (1) of the Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute Act, 2007, it has pleased His Excellency the President, Brig. (Rtd.) Julius Maada Bio to appoint you as Director General, Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI).

The Terms and Condition of Service in respect of your appointment will be communicated to you in due course.

I am to congratulate you on your appointment and to wish you success in this assignment.

Your appointment will take effect from the date you report for duty.

Please indicate in writing your acceptance or otherwise of the offer.

Yours sincerely,

BARBA B. FORTUNE
SECRETARY TO THE PRESIDENT

Copy: The Secretary to the Vice President
" The Financial Secretary, Ministry of Finance
" The Permanent Secretary, Office of the Chief Minister
" The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
" The Accountant-General
"

Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (SLARI) held its Annual Work Program Conference on March 10 – 11, 2026, at the Rokupr Agricultural Research Centre (RARC), Kambia District. The primary objective of the conference was to:

- Critically review research and development (R&D) activities implemented in 2025
- Document key achievements and lessons learned
- Identify major challenges encountered
- Examine, validate, and align proposed action plans and research priorities for 2026

Welcome Address – Dr. Adam Sheka Kanu (Officer-in-Charge, RARC)

Dr. Kanu warmly welcomed all participants and encouraged active participation from all delegates, noting that the outcomes of the deliberations would significantly shape SLARI's contribution to national food security.

Professor Roland Suluku (Chairman)

Professor Suluku highlighted that the Government's “**Feed Salone**” **initiative** aims to transform the food system, increase agricultural productivity, and reduce dependence on food imports.

He noted that the Annual Work Program Conference serves as a vital platform for reflection, knowledge sharing, and strategic planning.

He concluded by emphasizing the importance of collaboration among government institutions, universities, farmers, private sector actors, and development partners in driving agricultural transformation.

Eastern Technical University – Dr. Bernadette Lahai

Dr. Lahai emphasized the triple mandate of universities: **teaching, research, and outreach..**

She advocated for:

- Increased funding for SLARI
- Stronger engagement with Parliament for effective policy advocacy
- Enhanced research-extension linkages

Ernest Bai Koroma University – Prof. Edwin Momoh

Prof. Momoh stressed that research should remain the foundation of development interventions. He highlighted the importance of:

- Demand-driven and community-based research
- Institutional collaboration
- Student involvement in applied research





Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS)

The Ministry reaffirmed its commitment to supporting SLARI and strengthening its role as a center of excellence in agricultural research.

Parliamentary Engagement

A representative from Parliament emphasized the importance of strengthening collaboration between SLARI and legislators.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

The FAO representative highlighted ongoing and planned support to SLARI, stressed the importance of increased domestic investment in agriculture, noting that over-reliance on donor funding poses sustainability risks.

National Farmers Radio – Prof. Adolphus Johnson

Prof. Johnson emphasized the importance of communication and knowledge dissemination. Strengthening professional research networks



Dr. Abdul R. Conteh (SLARI Director General) delivered a comprehensive institutional overview, highlighting both achievements and constraints experienced during the 2025 implementation period.

Dr. Conteh further emphasized SLARI's growing international profile through the establishment and strengthening of strategic partnerships signed with prominent regional and international organizations such as IITA, CORAF, FSRP, and OCP Africa.

Technical session

Dr. Prince Norman (Deputy Director General, SLARI Headquarters) provided an in-depth overview of FSRP Adaptive Research Grants. He emphasized that the grants have played a catalytic role thereby strengthening the linkage between research outputs and field-level impact.

Technical Session 1: Research Highlights from 2025

Addressing critical challenges within the agricultural sector.

- **Dr. Nabieu Kamara (RARC)** presented on the collection and characterization of mangrove rice germplasm.
- **Dr. Patrick Maada Ngegba (NARC)** shared findings from a national assessment of dietary exposure and consumer awareness of mycotoxins.
- **Dr. Kemoh Bangura (RARC)** discussed interventions to promote improved rice parboiling technologies among mangrove rice processors.
- **Mr. Suffian Mansaray (NARC)** presented on the operationalization of a cassava flash dryer, highlighting its potential to revolutionize cassava processing.
- **Hindolo A. Bebeley (MLWERC)** shared research findings on the application of biochar for soil fertility improvement.
- **Mohamed Tejan Jalloh (TLRC)** presented an innovative project on biogas production from livestock waste.
- Collectively, these presentations demonstrated the breadth of SLARI's research portfolio and its alignment with national priorities on food security, climate resilience, and value chain development.

FSRP/IITA Technical Backstopping Session

Component leads presented progress across key thematic areas:

- **Component 1 (Dr. Patrick Maada Ngegba):** Focused on phytosanitary compliance, particularly aflatoxin mitigation in priority value chains, contributing to improved food safety and market access.
- **Component 2.1 (Dr. Jebbeh Samba Barka):** Highlighted progress in developing a commercially viable cassava seed system through private sector engagement and seed certification mechanisms.
- **Component 2.2 (Mr. Keiwoma Mark Yila & Dr. Martha S.E. Williams-Ngegba):** Covered soybean value chain development and the establishment of food consumption and micronutrient databases to inform nutrition-sensitive agriculture.
- **Component 3 (Dr. Frederick Kobba):** Focused on farmer empowerment through training, extension services, and capacity-building initiatives aimed at improving productivity and adoption of technologies.
- **Soils Research Team (Dr. Conteh):** Presented findings from fertilizer trials and liming studies, providing evidence-based recommendations for soil fertility management.

Key Outcomes

The conference achieved several significant outcomes:

1. Comprehensive Review of 2025 Activities:
2. Documentation of Successes and Lessons Learned:
3. Identification of Cross-Cutting Challenges:
4. Validation of 2026 R&D Proposals:
5. Prioritization of High-Impact Interventions:

Stakeholders identified high-potential initiatives for scaling and funding, including:

- Expansion of biogas technologies
- Strengthening mycotoxin mitigation efforts
- Commercialization of cassava seed systems

Dr. Adam Sheka Kanu delivered the closing remarks on behalf of SLARI management.

FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE PROGRAM (FSRP)

Annual Review and 3rd Year Work
Planning Meeting



World Bank Mission Expresses Satisfaction with SLARI/IITA/FSRP Project Implementation

On Saturday 17 January 2026, at Njala Agricultural Research Centre (**NARC**) conference hall, the World Bank team, headed by Dr Tunji Oredipe, expressed strong satisfaction with the progress and outcomes of the Food Systems Resilience Programme (**FSRP**) project implemented by Sierra Leone Agricultural Research Institute (**SLARI**) in collaboration with the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (**IITA**).



From the **Ministry of Finance, Mr. Samuel Yankuba** also expressed satisfaction with the overall implementation of the FSRP/IITA/SLARI projects, highlighting the transparency, coordination, and visible impact achieved within a relatively short period



Strengthening Soil Laboratory Capacity in Sierra Leone

SLARI, in partnership with Njala University, concluded a technical training at NARC from 16th to 20th February 2026,

The training aimed at strengthening soil laboratory capacity to support national agricultural transformation under the Feed Salone Strategy.

The training focused on basic laboratory operations, analytical efficiency principles, and the professional do's and don'ts of soil laboratory management.





Reliable soil analysis supports better fertilizer management, soil acidity correction, and sustainable land use practices —

With enhanced laboratory capacity, Sierra Leone's agricultural research system is better positioned to contribute meaningfully to improved soil fertility and sustainable food production for the nation.

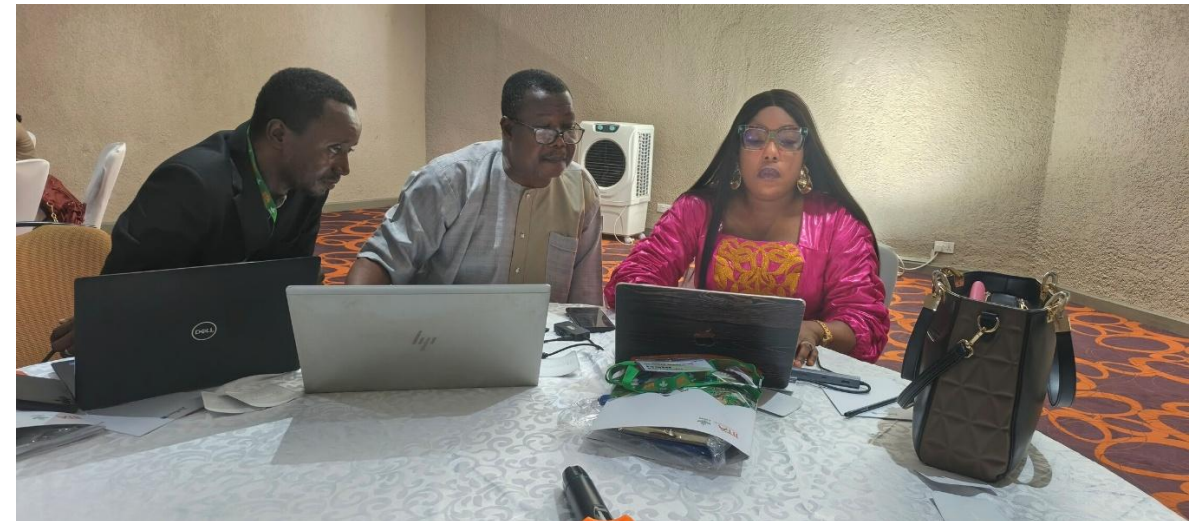


SLARI joined IITA Conclude a Three-Day WASH Retreat in Freetown

March 27, 2026. Freetown, Sierra Leone –SLARI joined the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture in successfully concluding its three-day West Africa and Sahel Hub (WASH) Retreat at the Radisson Blu Mammy Yoko Hotel, bringing together leading scientists, policymakers, and development partners under the theme “**Climate Change.**”



A major highlight of the opening ceremony was the keynote address delivered by Dr. Henry Musa Kpaka, Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food Security. In his statement, the Minister emphasized that the retreat reflects **His Excellency the President's strong desire to deepen collaboration with IITA** in the implementation of the Feed Salone Strategy.





West Africa & Sahel Hubs (WASH) Retreat

Theme:
**Climate
Change**



Radisson Blu Mammy Yoko Hotel,
17 Lumley Beach Road, Freetown,
Sierra Leone



23–27 March 2026



President is highly satisfied with progress made by IITA in partnership with SLARI and other key institutions within the agricultural sector.

Such collaborations are critical to transforming Sierra Leone's food systems.



Dr. Alfred Dixon underscored that the overarching goal of IITA is to **improve the livelihoods of people through agricultural innovation.**

Dr. Dixon noted that the retreat provides a unique opportunity to accelerate action and ensure that research outputs translate into tangible benefits for farmers



Dr. Abdul Rahman Conteh, Director General of SLARI, expressed profound appreciation to IITA for selecting Sierra Leone as the host of this year's **WASH Retreat**.

He described the event as a significant milestone under the IITA Technical Assistance to the Feed Salone Strategy and a testament to the country's growing role in regional agricultural research and development.

AN OVERVIEW OF SLARI STAFF ATTRITION BETWEEN 2020 AND 2026

SLARI has been losing staff without replacement since 2020.

Between 2020 and 2026, a total of 173 staff were separated from SLARI by retirement, resignation, death, and abandonment resulting in dismissal.

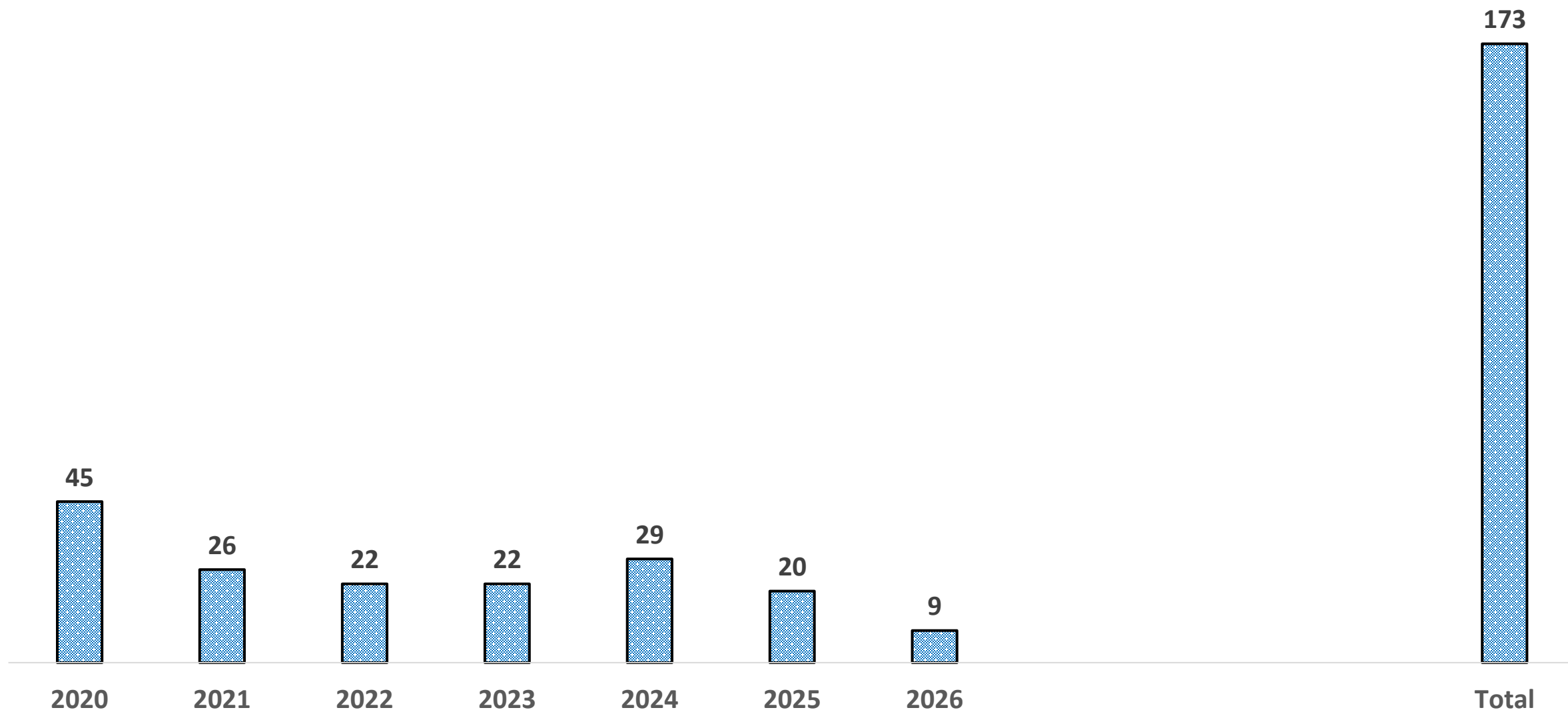
At least 20 staff have been lost by SLARI every year since 2020 without replacement.

The highest staff attrition occurred in 2020 when SLARI had the highest migration of staff to the universities.

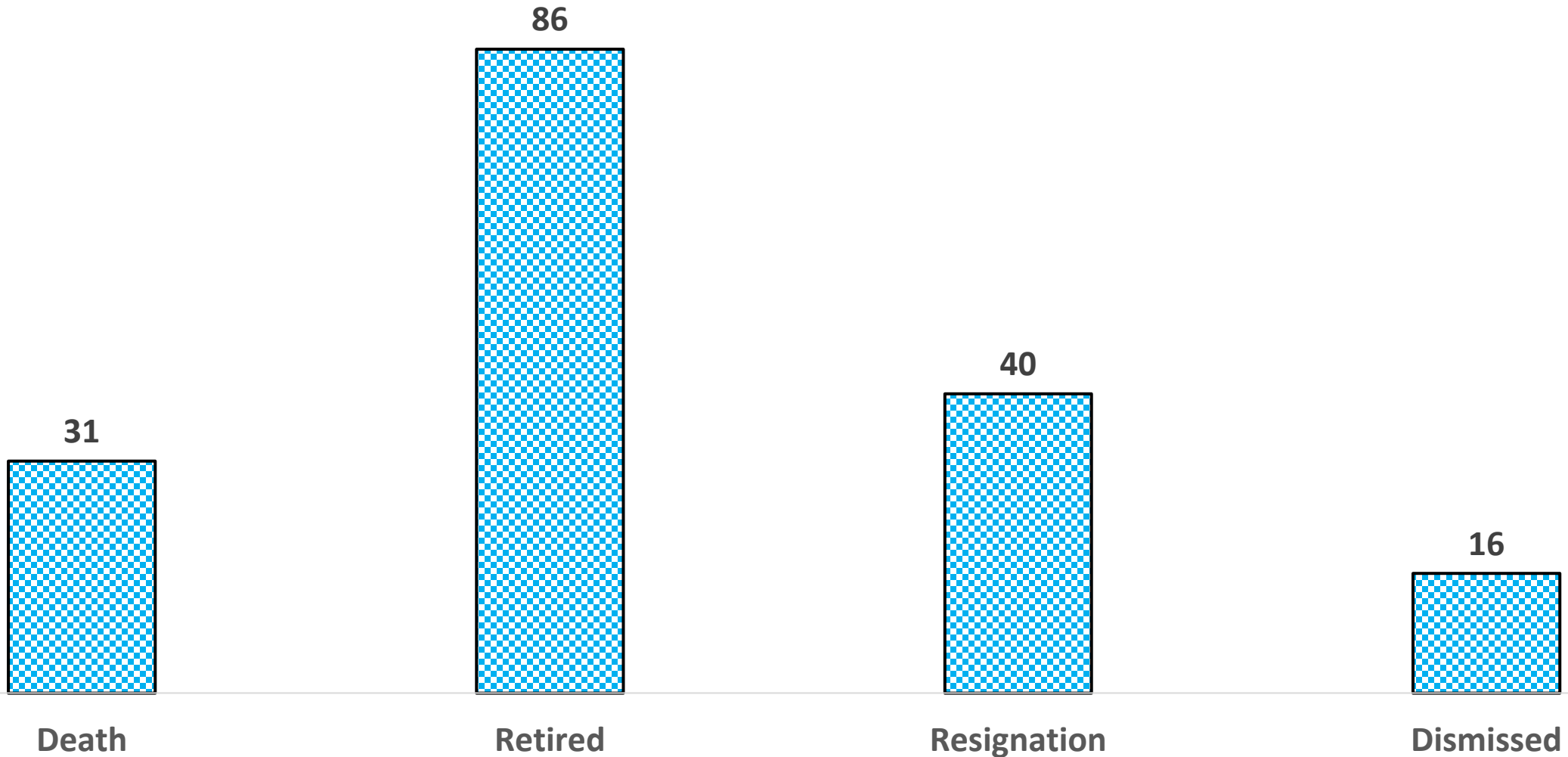
In the first two quarters of 2026, SLARI lost 9 staff, mostly due to retirement and death. These staff have still not been replaced.

For an institution whose total staff strength originally hovers around 500, a loss of 173 staff is highly significant.

This is creating a serious constraint to the institution in meeting its objectives.



SLARI staff Attrition by year between 2020 and 2026



Causes of Staff Attrition

Some staff simply abandoned their work and never reported. They are presented under dismissal.

The highest staff attrition between 2020 and 2026 occurred as a result of retirement.

The total number of staff separated from the institution due to retirement was more than the sum of those who separated as a result of resignation and those who separated as a result of death.

When these figures are examined on a yearly basis, it can be seen that retirement far outnumbers the other causes of staff attrition, with resignations making a distant second place.

The greatest attrition as a result of retirement occurred in 2020 and 2024. In 2020, as many as 15 staff resigned from SLARI.

That was a time when as many as 10 staff holding PhDs together with many of SLARI's skilled field technicians resigned from SLARI. Resignations and retirements continue up to 2026.

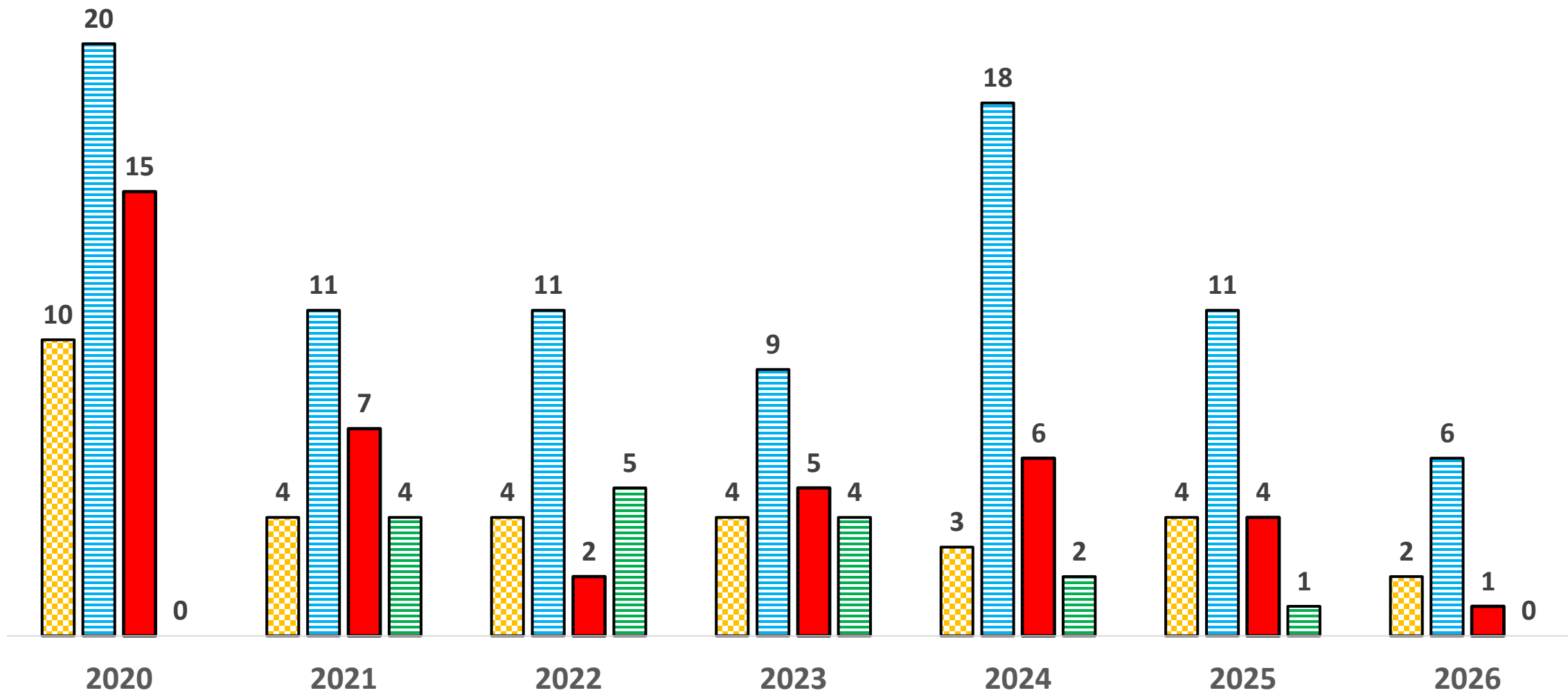
All these staff losses have not been replaced.

 **Death**

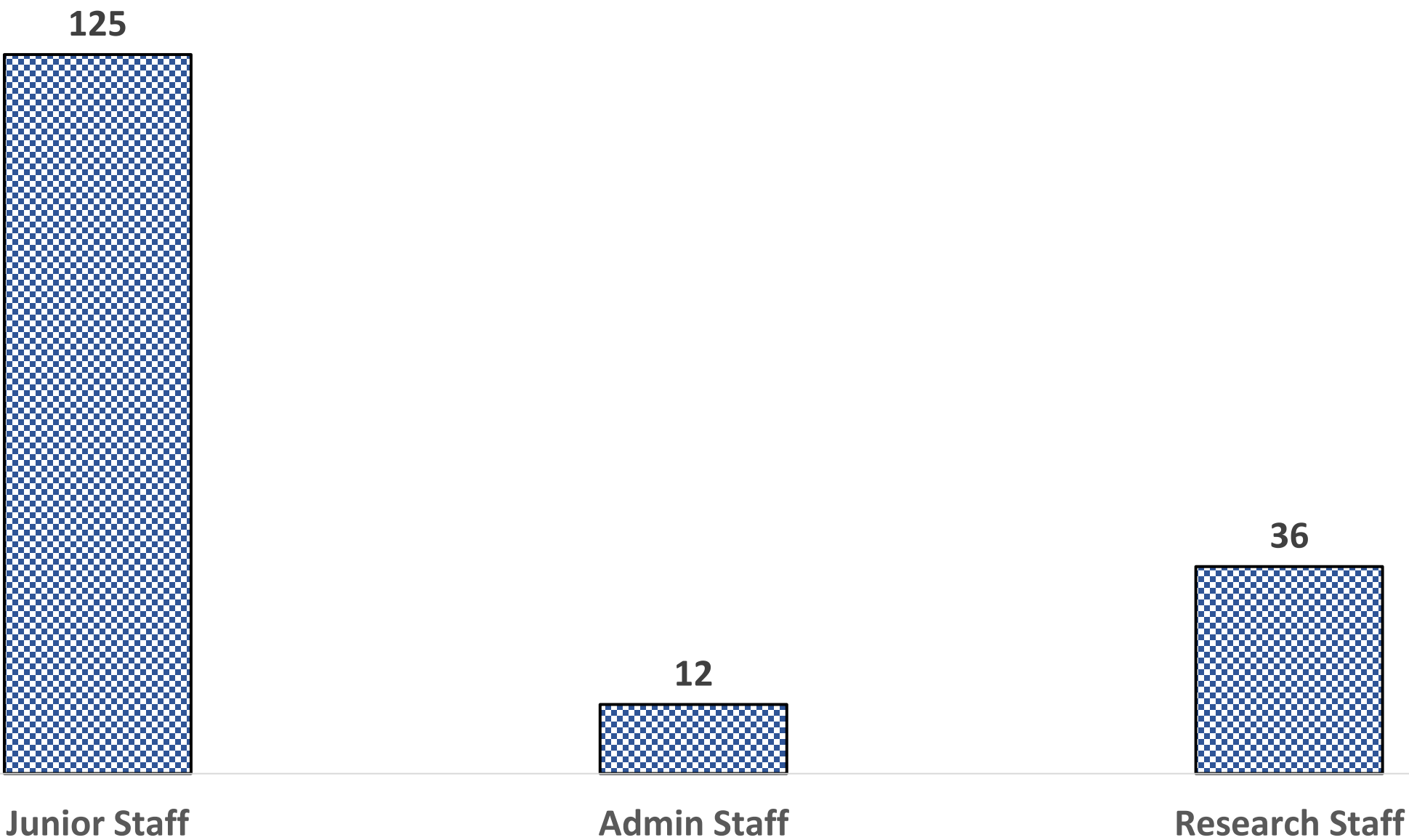
 **Retired**

 **Resignation**

 **Dismissed**



Causes of Staff Attrition by year



Staff attrition by categories

Looking closely at the categories of staff, it can be seen that the greatest staff attrition occurred with the junior staff category.

This category includes many of the staff who handle the manual and skilled field and laboratory work for the institution.

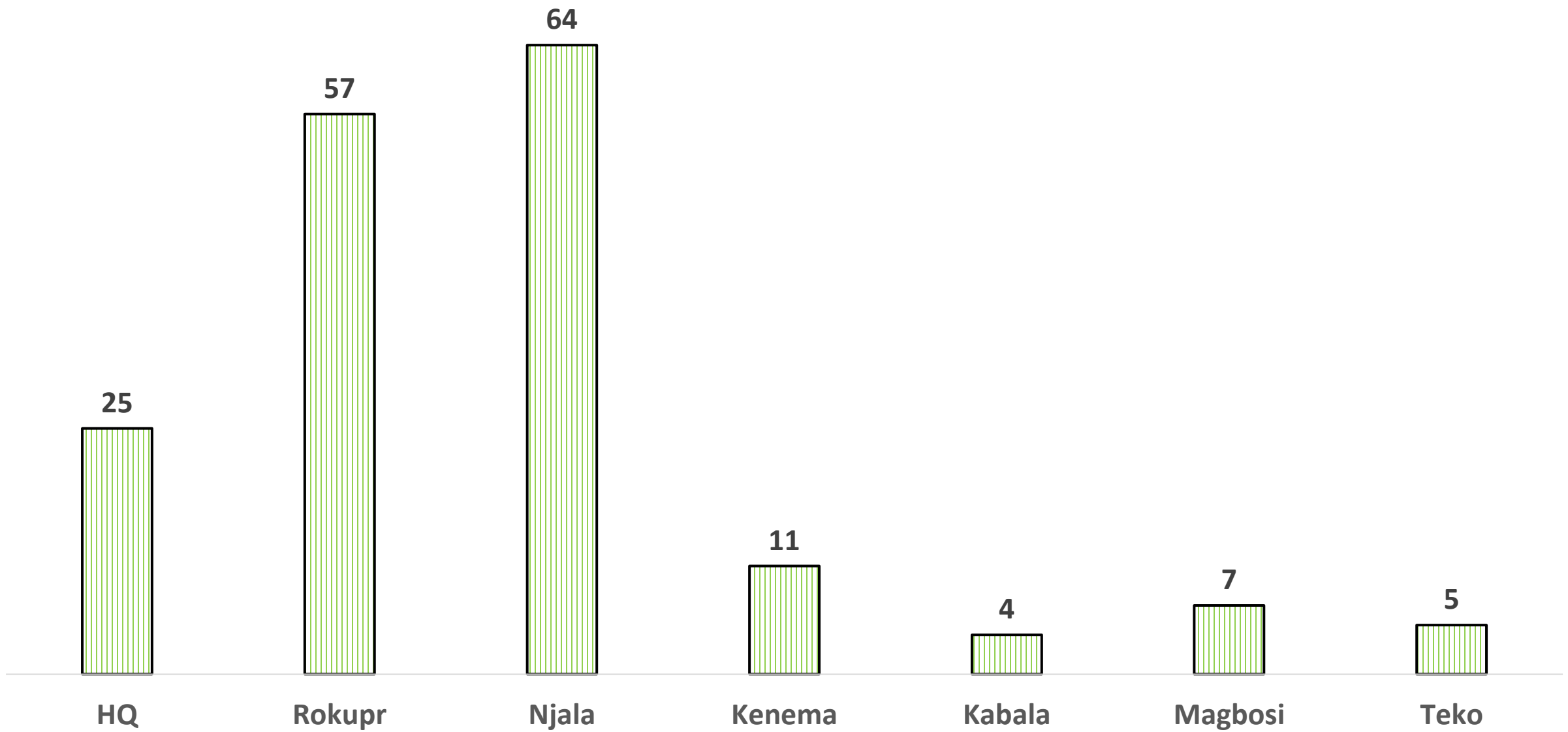
This has severely hampered SLARI's field and laboratory capacity.

Replacement of these staff is necessary for SLARI to improve in its capacity to deliver results of its mandates.

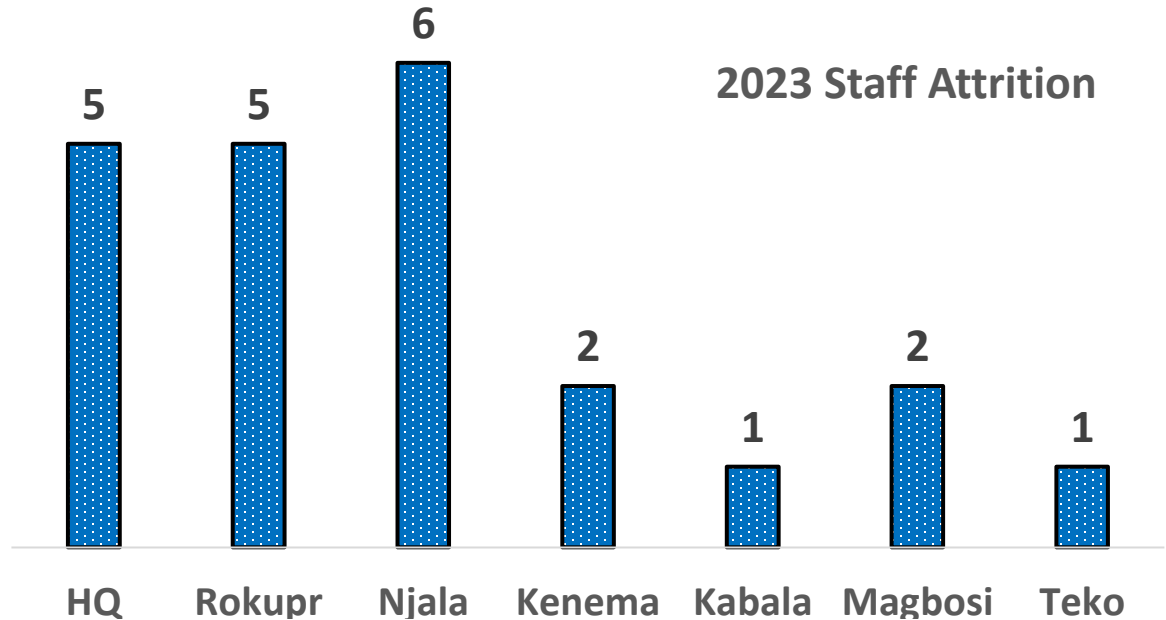
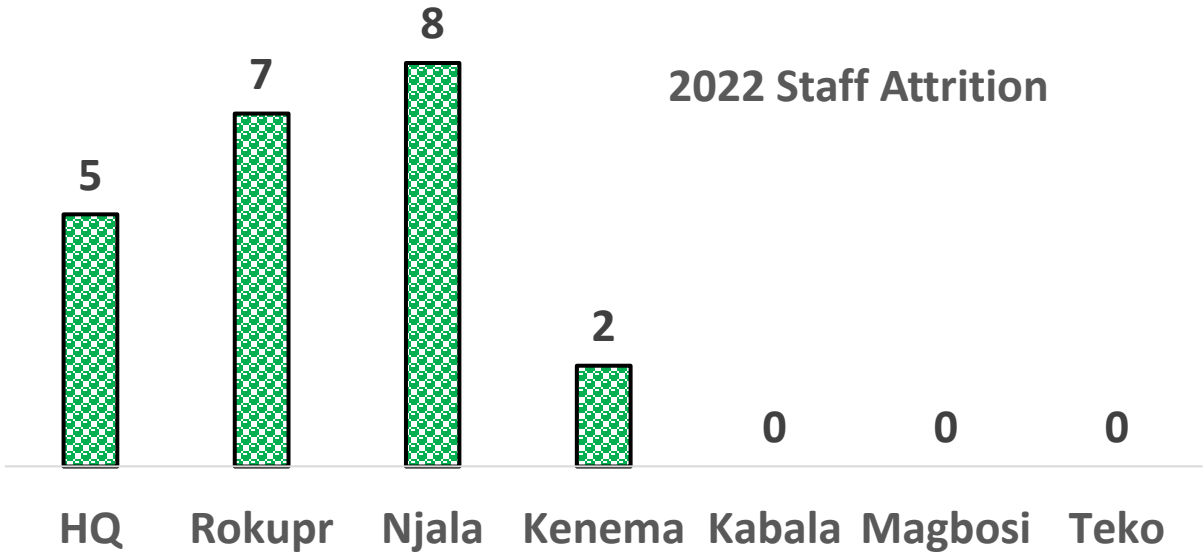
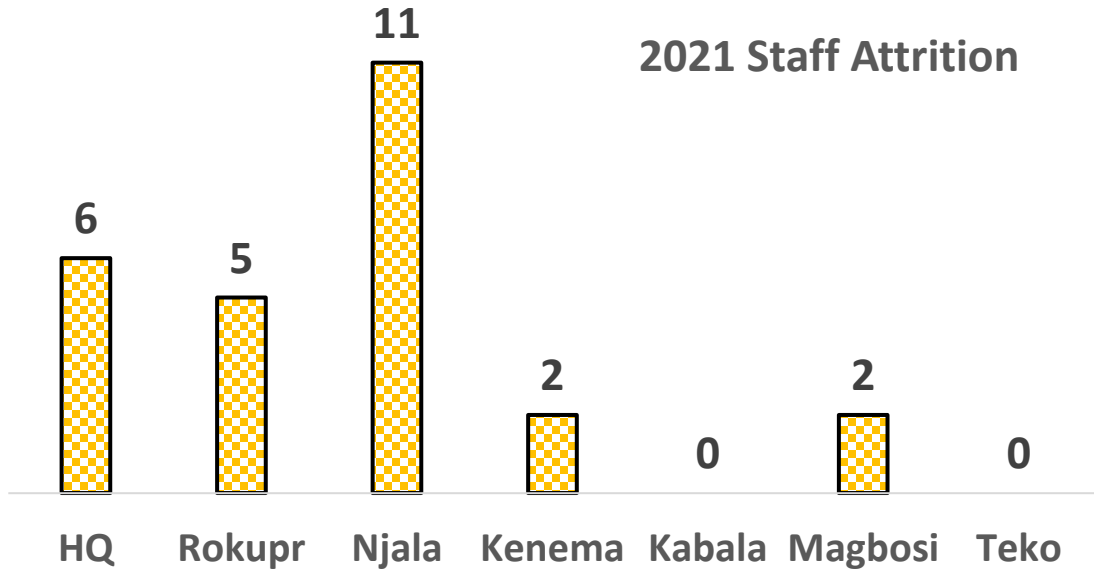
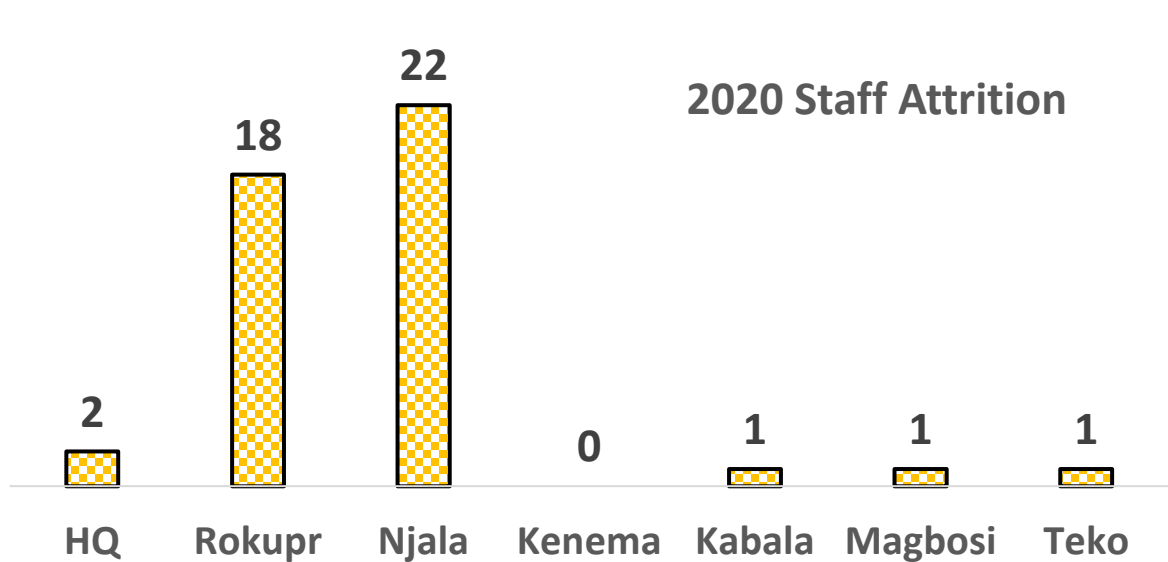
The research centres in Rokupr and Njala had suffered the greatest from staff attrition, together with the Headquarter in Freetown.

The losses of staff in these centres have created considerable constraint in the execution of their duties.

As many as 64 staff and 57 staff have been lost in Njala and Rokupr over the period 2020 to 2026. The other centres were already severely understaffed prior to 2020.

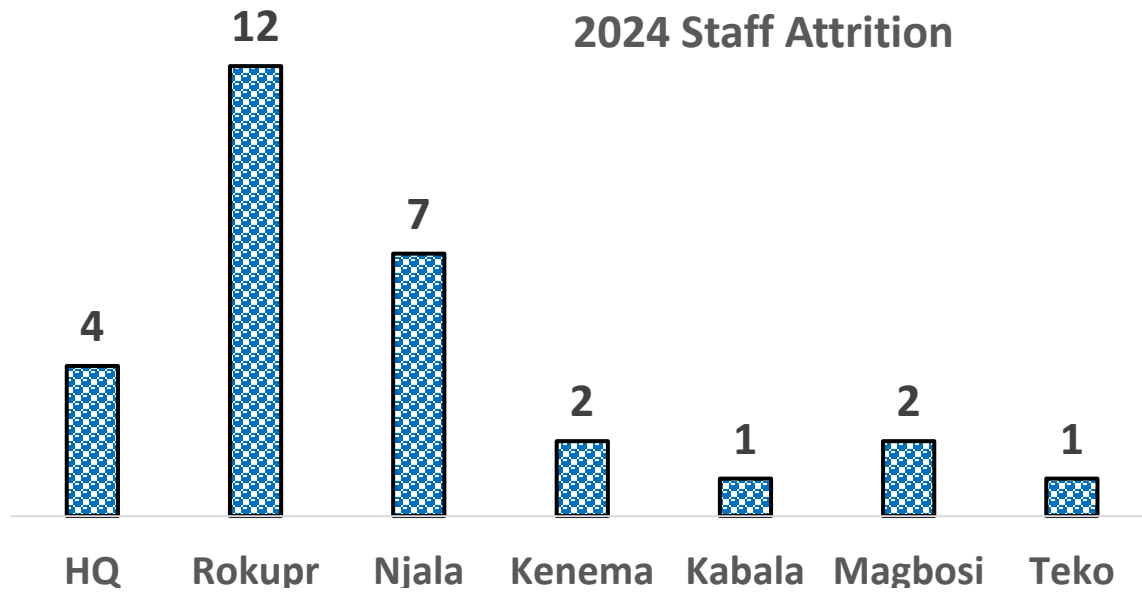


Total SLARI staff Attrition by center between 2020 and 2026

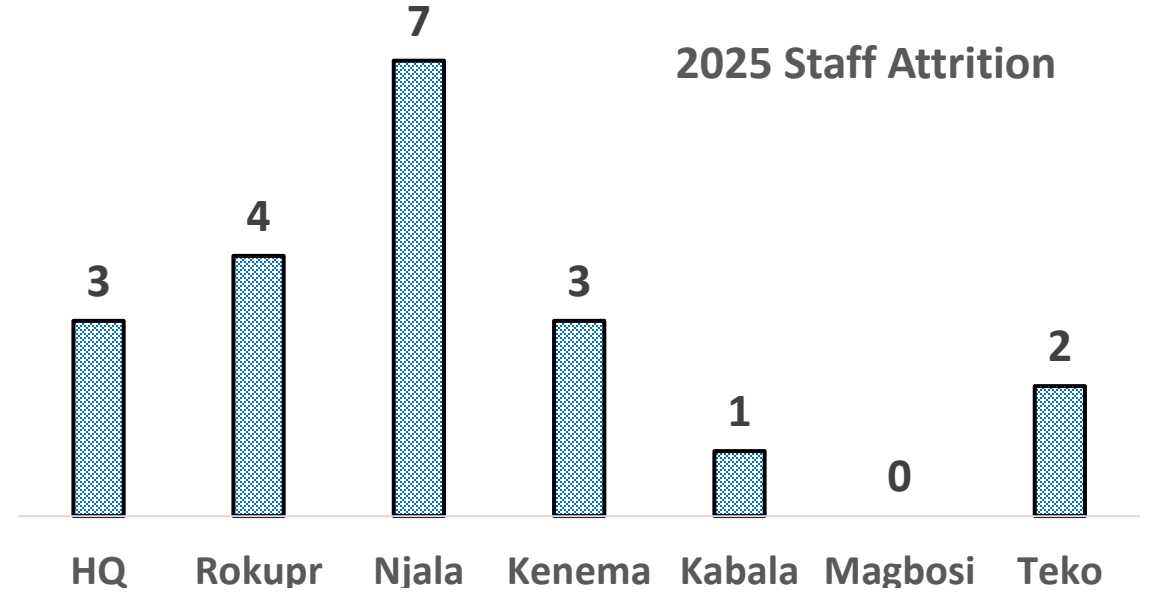


SLARI staff Attrition by center

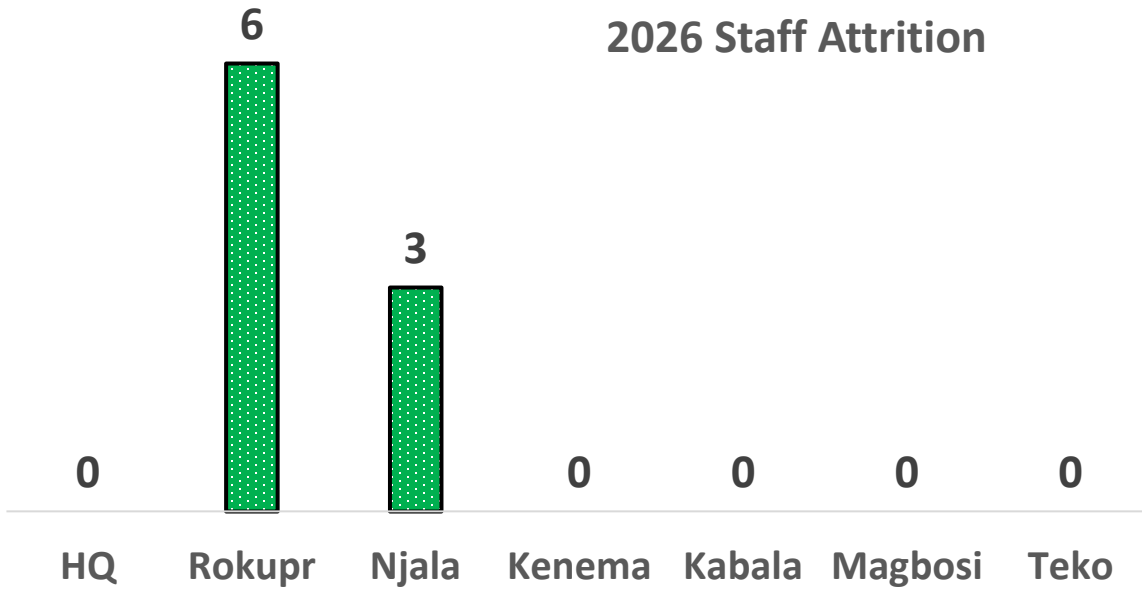
2024 Staff Attrition



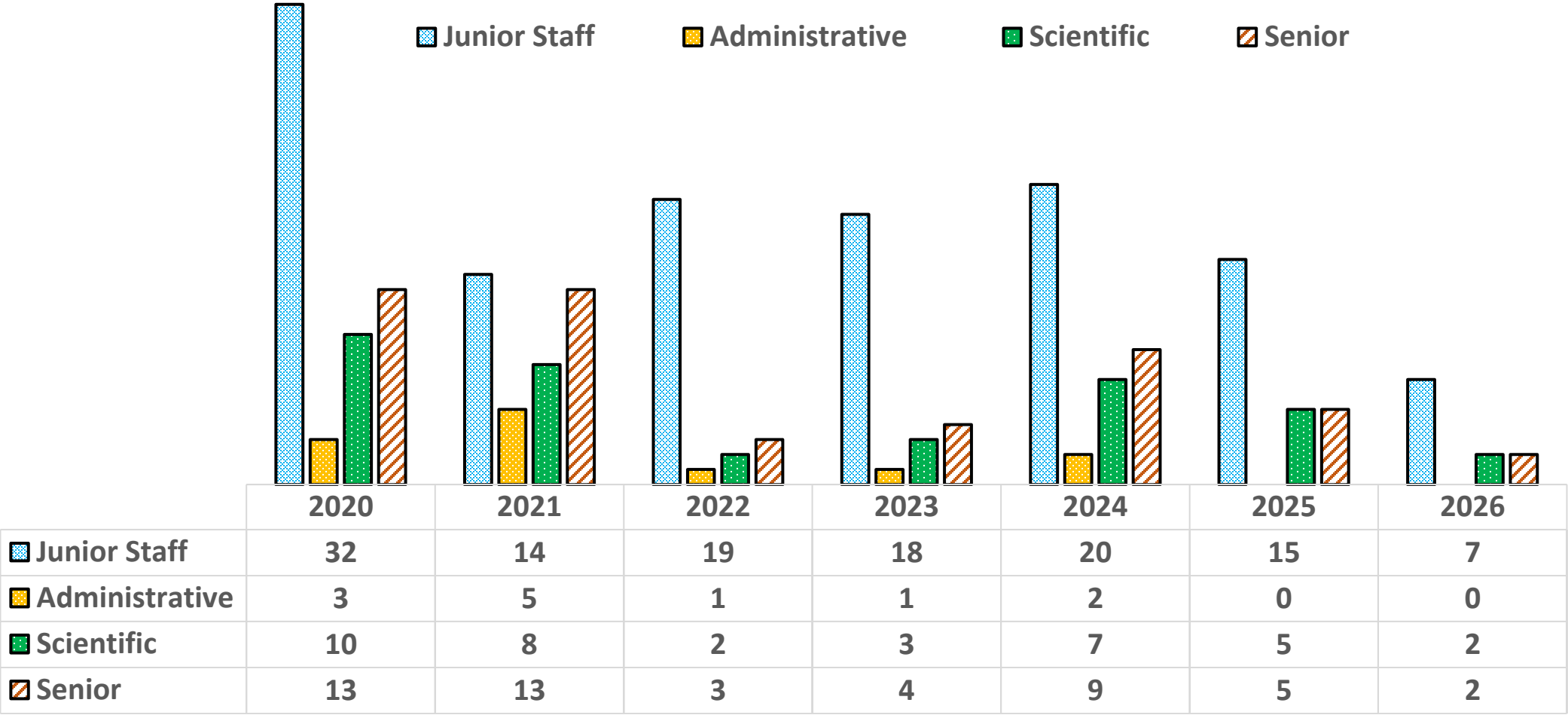
2025 Staff Attrition



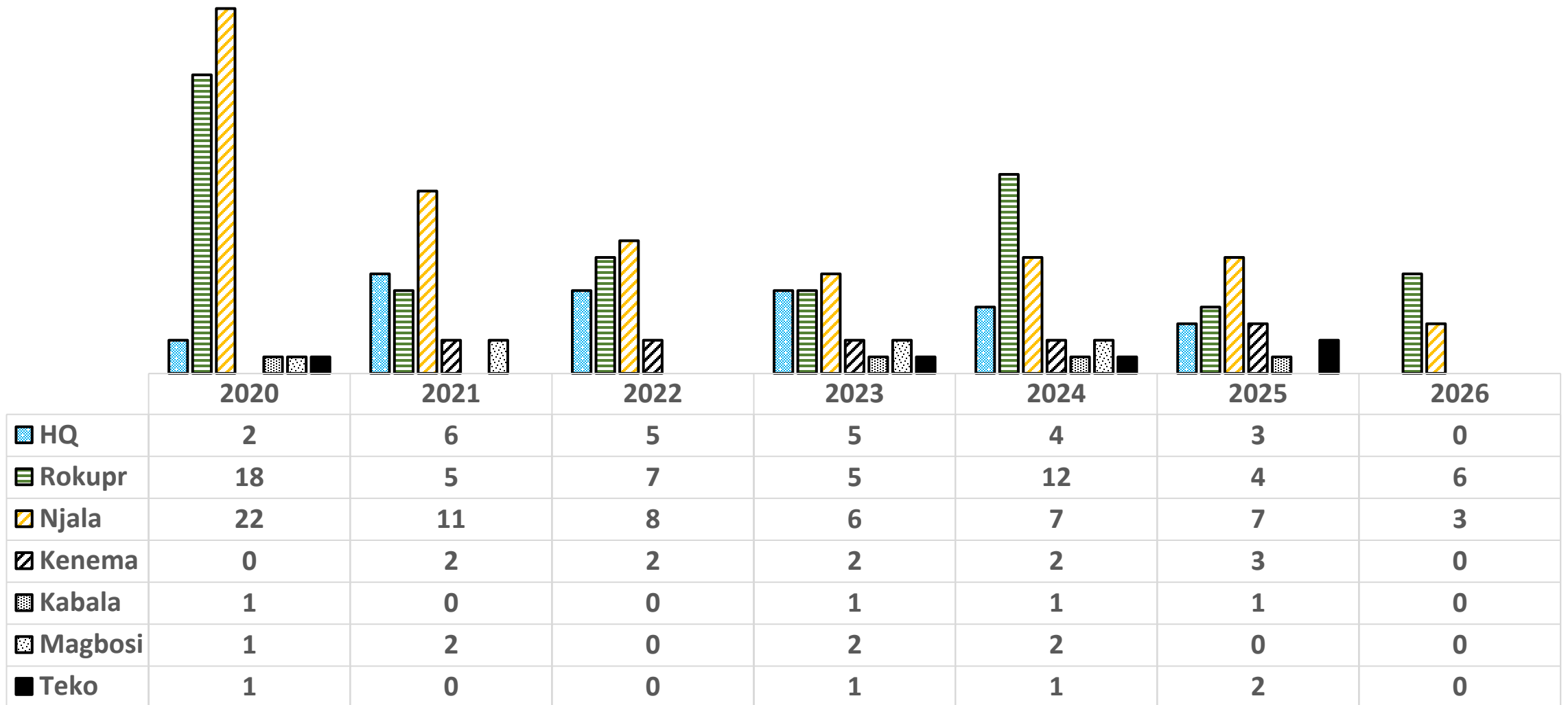
2026 Staff Attrition



SLARI Staff Attrition by center



SLARI staff Attrition by Categories in 2020 - 2026



Total SLARI staff Attrition by center by year

Current Staffing Situation

SLARI currently has a total of 335 staff, of whom 273 are male and 62 are female.

This 335 includes the junior staff and senior staff. There are 192 junior staff SLARI-wide and 138 senior staff all over SLARI.

The bulk of the existing junior staff are in Njala and Rokupr, with Kenema and Teko holding a handsome share.

In all centres, the female staff are far less than the male staff. A serious shortage of female staff can be seen, especially in the junior staff category.

Centres like those in Kabala and Magbosi are critically short of junior staff. There is no female among the junior staff in Kabala and Magbosi.

This will pose a severe challenge in getting activities carried out in these centres without casual workers.

Total Number of Staff in SLARI by Categories

Centre	Junior Staff		Senior Staff		Total		Grand Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
HQ	18	5	23	9	41	14	55
ROKUPR	46	6	25	4	71	10	81
NJALA	48	12	16	7	64	19	83
KENEMA	23	1	13	3	36	4	40
KABALA	8	0	4	4	12	4	16
MAGBOSI	4	0	9	2	13	2	15
TEKO	23	3	13	6	36	9	45
TOTAL	170	27	103	35	273	62	335

When the current number of staff in SLARI is compared to the optimum prescribed in SLARI staff assessment report prepared by the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA) in MARCH 2012, the current staff capacity is by far below the optimal (Figure 15).

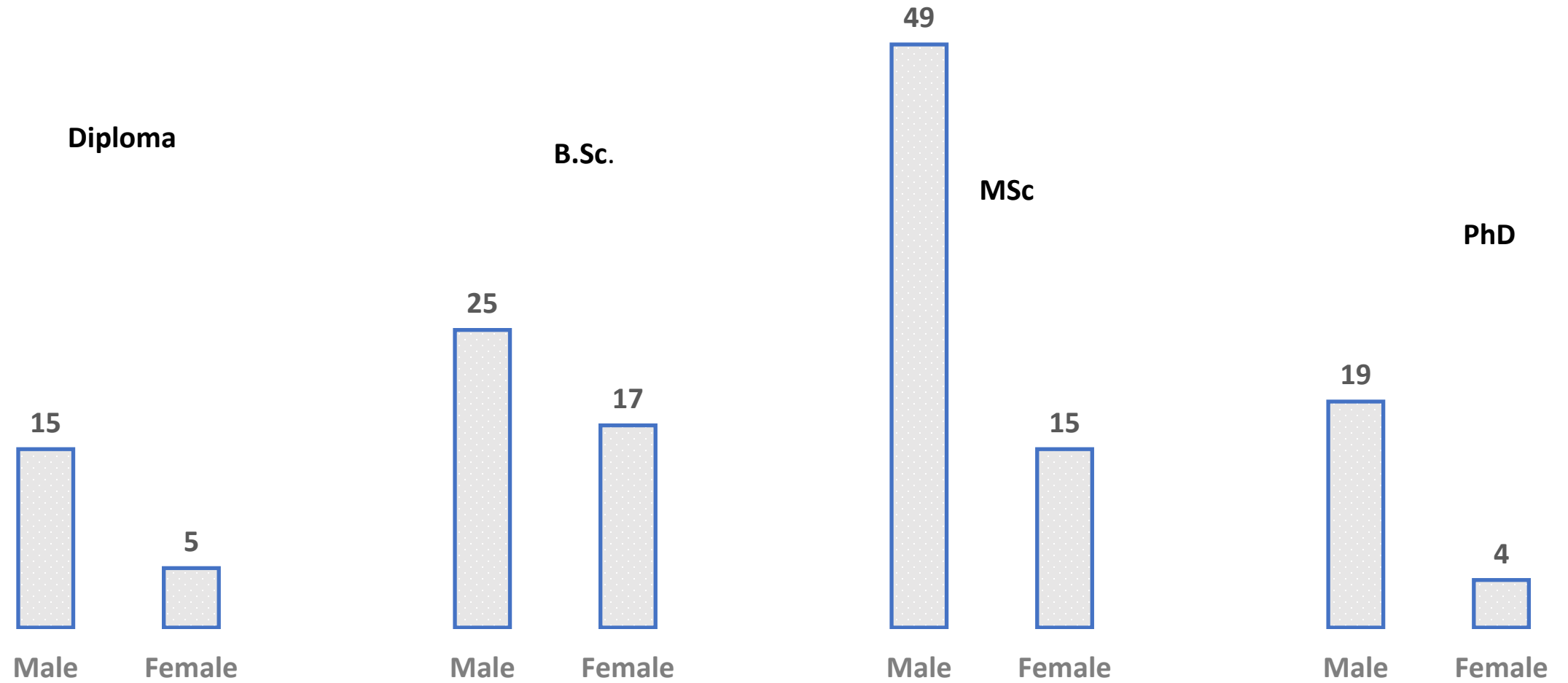
In the SLARI capacity assessment report of FARA, it was recommended that for optimum output of SLARI, a total staff strength of not less than 1400 is required.

The significant loss of staff described earlier in this report therefore occurred within the context of an already insufficient staff for optimum performance.

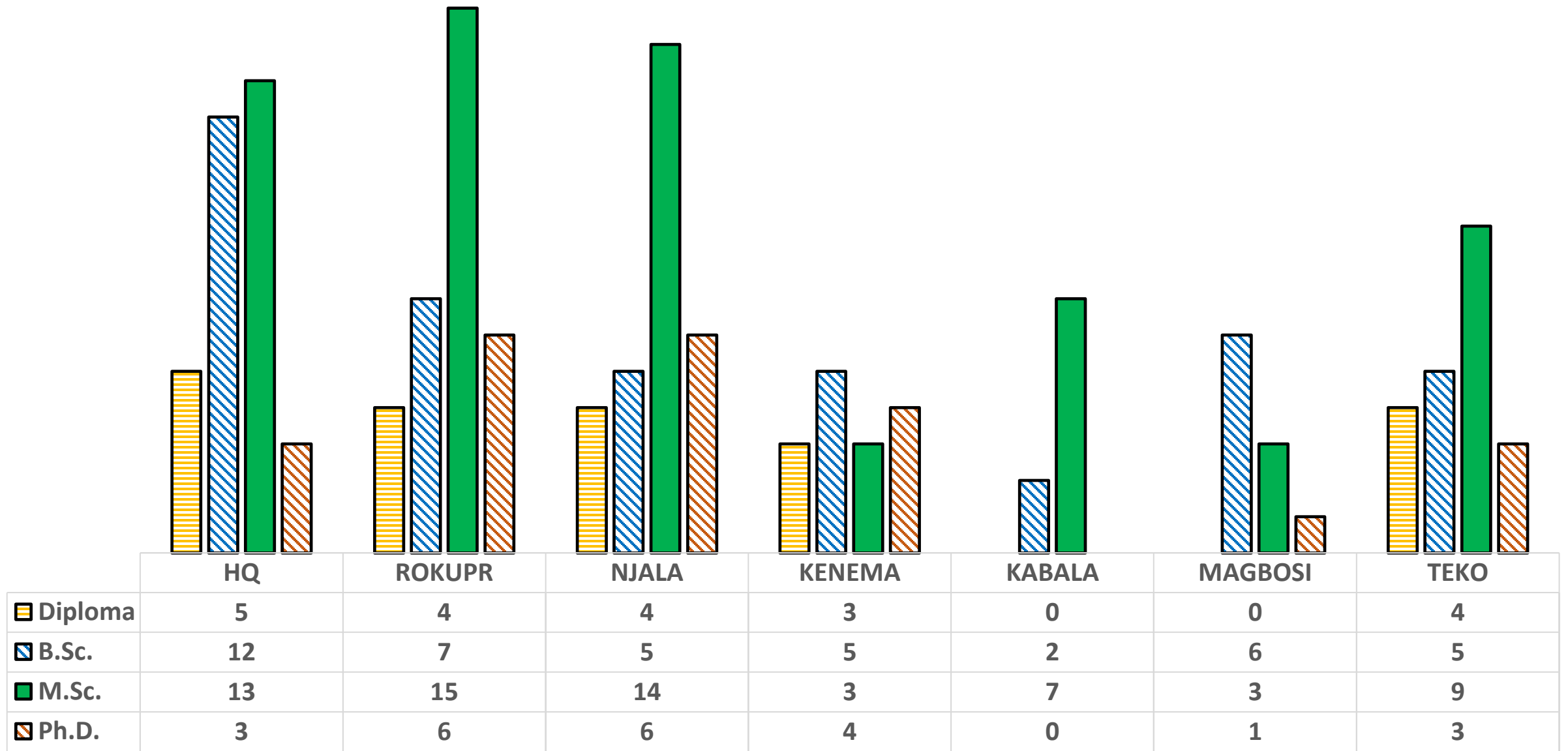
This situation definitely needs to be addressed.



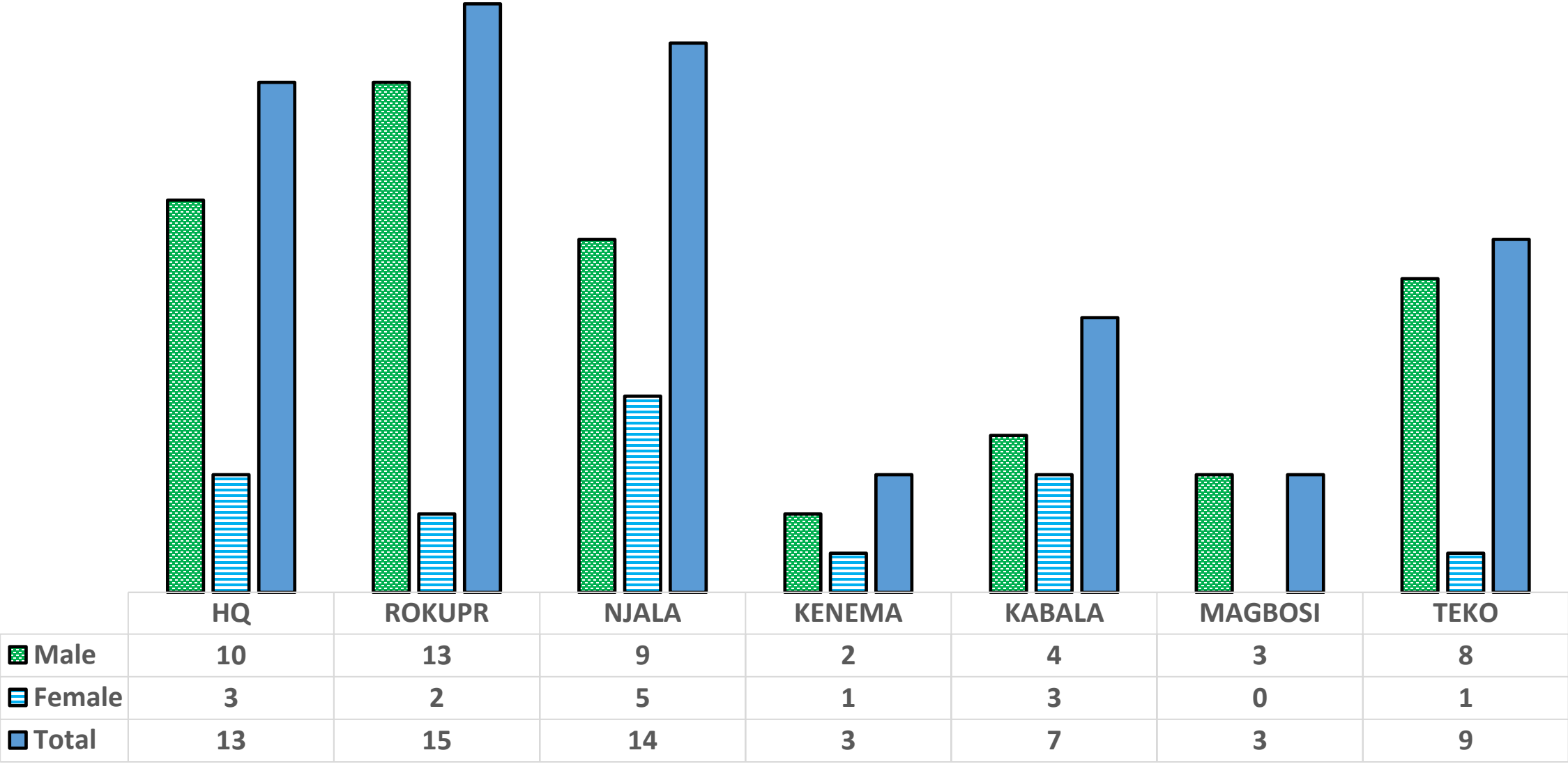
Current Staff of SLARI as a Whole and the Anticipated Optimum Number



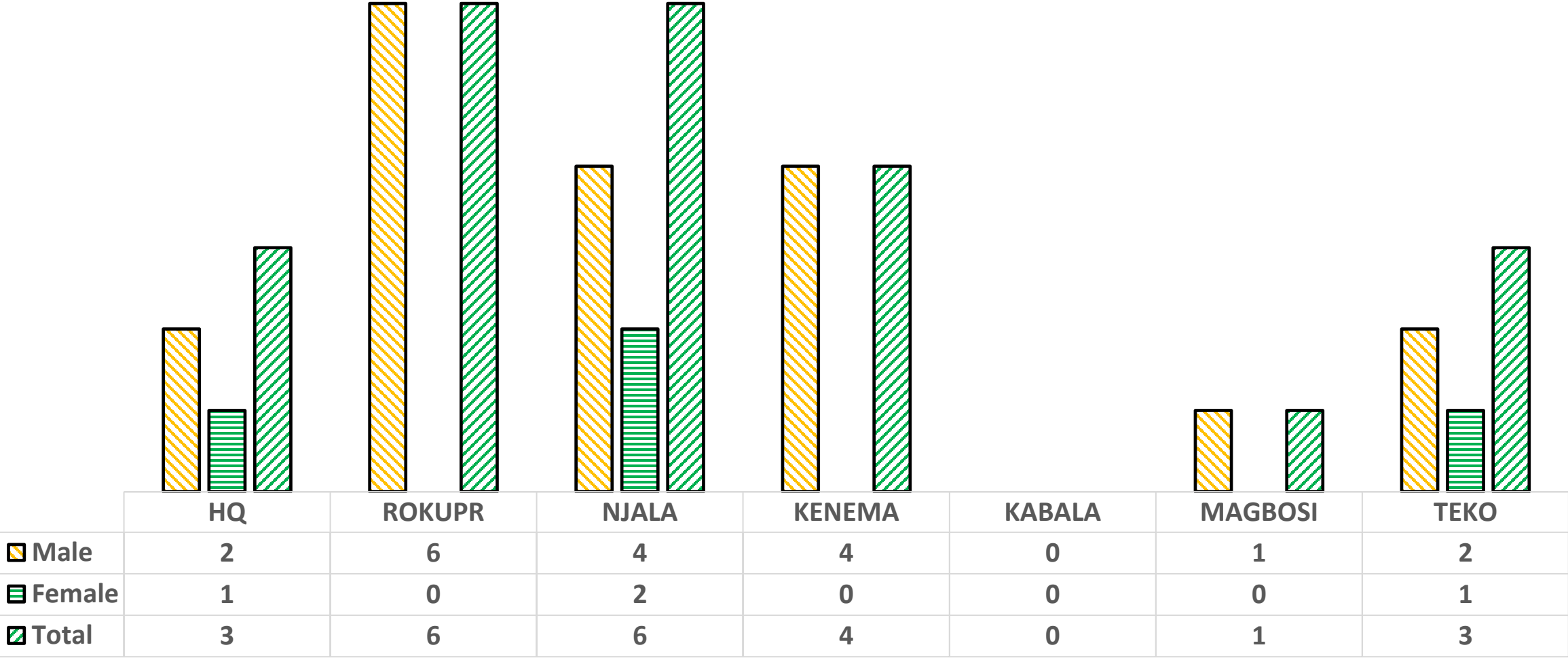
SLARI Staff with academic qualifications



SLARI staff with academic qualifications by centres



Staff with MSc



Staff with PhD

Age Ranges of Current SLARI Staff

Staff by Age											
Centre	< 30 yrs		30 - 40 yrs		40 - 55 yrs		> 55 yrs		Total		Grand Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
HQ	0	0	10	8	30	6	1	0	41	14	55
ROKUPR	0	0	11	0	44	6	16	4	71	10	81
NJALA	0	1	5	4	39	9	20	5	64	19	83
KENEMA	0	0	5	3	24	1	7	0	36	4	40
KABALA	0	0	3	2	8	2	1	0	12	4	16
MAGBOSI	0	0	5	2	7	0	1	0	13	2	15
TEKO	0	0	10	4	22	5	4	0	36	9	45
TOTAL	0	1	49	23	174	29	50	9	273	62	335

Discipline	HQ	NARC Njala	RARC Rokupr	TLRC Teko	MLWERC Magbosi	KFTCRC Kenema	KHCRC Kabala	TOTAL
Soil Science	1	1	2			1		5
Agronomist/Crop Physiologist			1	2			2	5
Nutrition/Health		1		3				4
Food Science/Food Technology			2	1			1	4
Breeding	2	1	7			2	1	13
Microbiology				1				1
Non-Ruminant Production				1				1
Ruminant Production				3				3
Agroforestry						1		1
Mechanization/Agric Engineering			1	1				2
Horticulture							1	1
Weed Science			1					1
Tissue Culture		1						1
Seed System		1						1
Plant Pathology		2	1			1		4
Entomology		1	1	1				3

Discipline	HQ	NARC Njala	RARC Rokupr	TLRC Teko	MLWERC Magbosi	KFTCRC Kenema	KHCRC Kabala	TOTAL
Environment & Hydrology					1			1
Agricultural Extension		4	1	1				6
Post-Harvest Technology		1	1			1		3
Farm Management			1		1	2	1	5
Forestry						1		1
Socio-Economics & Policy		2	1	1	1	1		6
Soil & Water Engineering					2			2
Agricultural Meteorology					1		1	2
Environmental Sciences					2			2
TOTAL	3	15	20	15	8	10	7	78

Current Research Support Staff in SLARI Headquarter

Centre	Junior Staff		Senior/Senior Supporting		Total		Grand Total
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Estate	11	0	2	0	13	0	13
Administration	6	5	1	2	7	7	14
Finance	0	0	2	4	2	4	6
Procurement	1	0	1	1	2	1	3
Communications	0	0	6	0	6	0	6
Logistics	0	0	2	0	2	0	2
M & E	0	0	2	0	2	0	2
Internal Audit	0	0	2	1	2	1	3
Asset Management	0	1	2	0	2	1	3
Researchers	0	0	3	1	3	1	4
Total	18	6	23	9	41	15	56

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION**