

# Staff and HR Issues

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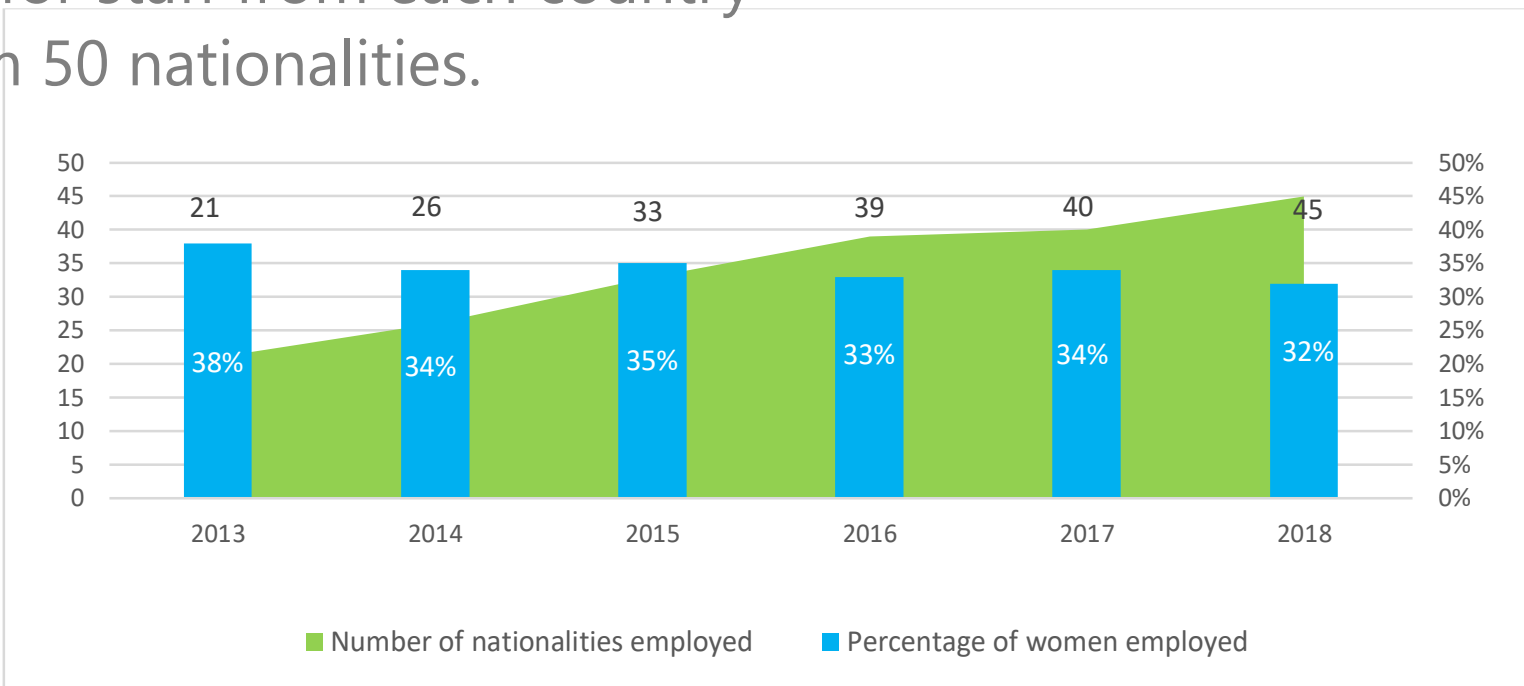
ESFRI Exchange of Experience Workshop

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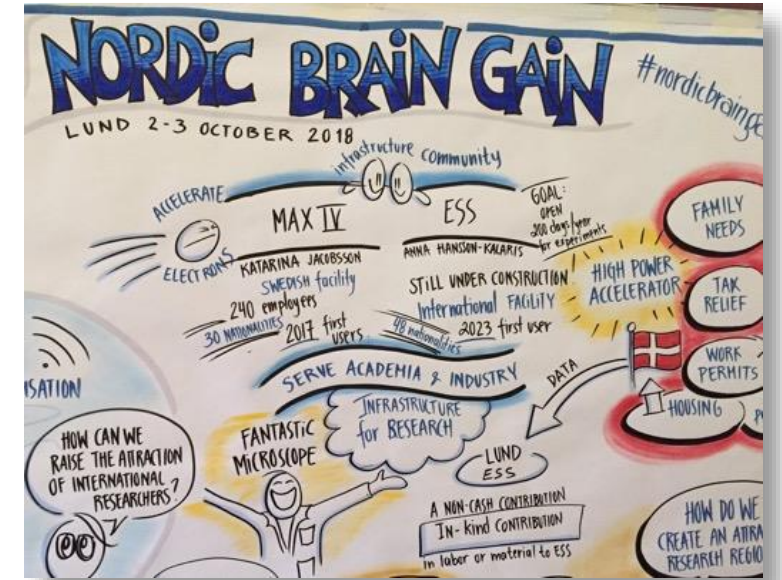
# Experience at ESS

- As a green field site ESS had a challenge in building up the necessary skills
- This was addressed by recruiting very widely
  - there were no quotas for staff from each country
  - ESS now has staff from 50 nationalities.
- ESS staff is roughly:
  - 40% Swedish
  - 40% from other European countries
  - 20% worldwide
- One-third female



# Experience at ESS

- About 60% of staff relocated to Lund to work at ESS
  - One of the original hopes when the project was proposed
- Generous relocation allowance and benefits
- Staff are in Swedish tax, pension and social security system and pay is indexed to Swedish levels through an employer survey.
  - neither seemed to be a major barrier to international recruitment
- Diversity policy to encourage female and underrepresented groups to apply



# Challenges and lessons for others

- Staff needed to operate the facility are not the same ones needed to build it, so a lot of construction staff are on limited term contracts, or recruited as consultants.
- Getting the unions to agree to temporary posts and to downsizing after construction is finished was a challenge - needs to be considered when hiring.
- At the start it was hard to persuade mid-career experts to come to a project that seemed uncertain. So ESS used a mixture of relatively junior people on permanent contracts, senior staff on time-limited secondments, and consultants.

# Challenges and lessons for others

- This was probably unavoidable as a solution but many of the permanent staff hadn't been through the process of building or commissioning a big facility and lacked experience.
- Can lead to risk-averse behaviour, increased costs, and may mean you need to later hire people with more experience
  - who may not be happy to work for people with less experience...
- At ESS, this also complicated the relations with some of the in-kind partners – who had a lot more experience than the ESS staff and didn't always think it made sense to follow ESS design decisions.

# Culture

- The organisation will need to build up its own culture and ways of working: how to run meetings, how to make decisions, how much technical risk to accept, etc.
- Seconded staff and consultants don't create this institutional memory or culture.
- Having staff from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences is great, but also a recipe for lots of disagreements.
- Academic staff are a special delight. Extremely creative but not straightforward to manage. Need to be influenced not ordered. Can come with expectations about academic freedom that may suit a university but not an RI.



**If handled well, staffing  
is an opportunity more  
than a challenge**

At any new RI, every staff member has (in principle) made a conscious choice to work on the project.

Hugely enthusiastic staff, which increases chance of success - and makes the project fun!