



Market Monitor - 15 December 2025

Emerging Conditions Which Indicate Potential Volatility

Birches Group conducts salary surveys and monitors labor market conditions in more than 150 countries. The salary survey program updates and publishes changes in employer compensation three times per year (April, July and October).

On a continuing basis, Birches Group monitors economic indicators that highlight potential volatility. These indicators are largely based on examination of exchange rate movement against the US Dollar.

Birches Group publishes the Market Monitor to keep our clients and collaborators informed about emerging conditions which may require closer monitoring. The Market Monitor is published twice a month and is available at no cost. [Sign up](#) to continue receiving updates.

Each organization needs to determine for itself the appropriate triggers within labor market conditions which will warrant a change/update of salaries and benefits and how these changes will be applied to individual staff. In the vast majority of locations a planned annual review of labor market movement is sufficient to sustain dynamic compensation.

Where economies begin to experience volatility, organizations should have policies and measures in place to respond to these conditions to sustain dynamic pay systems and provide for business/operational continuity to the extent possible. How aggressive these measures can and should be is dependent upon the volatility which is occurring. For the most part exchange rate movement/inflation which remains under ten percent per year will normally be captured in standard labor market movement. Where these indicators begin to exceed ten percent movement over a period of six months or less, additional monitoring becomes prudent with anticipation of the need for more rapid adjustment.



Why Exchange Rates?

Many clients are wondering why we are tracking exchange rates to monitor markets instead of inflation. Here's why:

Employers set salaries using cost of labor – how much other employers in the market pay for the same or similar roles. During normal economic times, cost of labor is the only indicator you need to ensure your compensation program is competitive. When volatility in the market occurs, currency devaluation and inflation increase. While we have found that devaluation, inflation and labor market movement are not correlated – i.e., they often move independently from one another – during periods of high volatility, employers often use devaluation or inflation as one of the considerations in reacting to the volatility in the labor market.

Exchange rates are a leading indicator of volatility. Rates are widely available and anchored in fact, not estimates. On the other hand, inflation is a lagging indicator of volatility. Accurate inflation rate data is difficult to obtain and is often estimated. For example, the latest global inflation data published by the OECD, effective April 2022, includes inflation rates for 156 countries around the world. 45% of the data is estimated after 2020. In other words, 70 of the 156 countries did not report actual inflation data for any period in 2021 or 2022! OECD data is useful, and is probably the best data that is publicly available, but the data is based on estimates and projections, not facts! In addition, inflation impacts employees differently depending on their standard of living and individual circumstances.

Birches Group uses currency exchange rates as the most reliable measure of volatility. Inflation often follows devaluation in the market, so devaluation is a decent indicator of the inflation impact. Employers who monitor devaluation and apply consistent and proactive actions in response will emerge as the leaders in the market and will be well equipped to maintain a competitive market position despite challenging economic conditions.



Having examined the impact of exchange rate movement on salaries, it has been observed that the impact can be profound but not entirely correlated to the full movement. Following the current data on volatility, a table of six levels of volatility is presented. These six levels provide guidance to organizations as to the degree of volatility and indicate that heightened levels of attention are required to plan for any additional measures to sustain competitiveness of the local pay system.

In this update, Ethiopia remains at Level One, while Argentina remains at Level Two. Seven countries stay at Level Five. Libya, Suriname, and Türkiye remain excluded from our volatility levels as their exchange rate movements remain below ten percent.






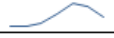



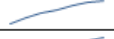



For those organizations subscribing to Birches Group labor market data, updated market data for October 2025 is available where organizations can possibly examine movement.


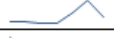




Mid December 2025 Conditions

For Market Monitor Report Vol. 4, No. 24 examination of exchange rate movement over the prior six months now identifies twelve countries which warrant heightened monitoring. The table of exchange rate movement for these twelve is presented below. An additional table tracking exchange rate movement against the US Dollar for the Euro, British Pound, CFA Franc, and Japanese Yen is also available (exchange rate values are in USD):

Birches Group Exchange rate alert, 15 December 2025

| Country | Currency | ISO Code | Jun-25 | Jul-25 | Aug-25 | Sep-25 | Oct-25 | Nov-25 | Dec-25 |  | 6 mo movement |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Argentina | Argentine Peso | ARS | 1181.117 | 1254.985 | 1322 | 1423.515 | 1347.648 | 1411.492 | 1437.493 |  | 21.7% |
| Ethiopia | Birr | ETB | 133.338 | 135.935 | 138.587 | 141.951 | 146.42 | 151.924 | 153.767 |  | 15.3% |
| Iran | Iranian Rial | IRR | 686291 | 689286 | 692816 | 693013 | 696640 | 891656 | 914902.7 |  | 33.3% |
| Lebanon | Lebanese Pound | LBP | 89500 | 89500 | 89500 | 89500 | 89500 | 89500 | 89500 |  | 0.0% |
| Libya | Libyan Dinar | LYD | 5.459 | 5.395 | 5.407 | 5.396 | 5.425 | 5.443 | 5.42 |  | -0.7% |
| South Sudan, Republic of | South Sudanese Pounds | SSP | 4529.775 | 4531.433 | 4540.354 | 4561.183 | 4592.54 | 4583.584 | 4555.528 |  | 0.6% |
| Sudan | Sudanese Pound | SDG | 2140 | 2140 | 2400 | 2400 | 2400 | 2400 | 2400 |  | 12.1% |
| Suriname | Surinamese Dollar | SRD | 36.836 | 37.49 | 37.76 | 39.455 | 39.063 | 38.814 | 38.538 |  | 4.6% |
| Syrian Arab Republic | Syrian Pound | SYP | 11110 | 11110 | 10680 | 11050 | 11055 | 11055 | 11055 |  | -0.5% |
| Türkiye | Türkiye Lira | TRY | 39.183 | 40.171 | 40.745 | 41.285 | 41.8 | 42.241 | 42.615 |  | 8.8% |
| Venezuela | Bolivar Digital | VES | 99.091 | 113.75 | 131.124 | 154.982 | 191.366 | 231.046 | 257.928 |  | 160.3% |
| Zimbabwe | Zimbabwe Gold | ZIG | 26.953 | 26.891 | 26.76 | 26.729 | 26.648 | 26.392 | 25.46 |  | -5.5% |

| | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|-----|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Euro | EUR | 0.872 | 0.856 | 0.855 | 0.853 | 0.865 | 0.865 | 0.852 |  | -2.3% |
| U.K. Pound | GBP | 0.74 | 0.74 | 0.737 | 0.738 | 0.75 | 0.764 | 0.745 |  | 0.7% |
| CFA Franc | XOF | 571.989 | 561.175 | 560.551 | 559.308 | 567.241 | 567.241 | 558.594 |  | -2.3% |
| Yen | JPY | 144.29 | 147.05 | 147.24 | 147.45 | 152.32 | 154.99 | 155.09 |  | 7.5% |

Legend

Movement greater than 10% in 6 months
 Movement greater than 20% in 6 months
 Movement greater than 30% in 6 months
 Movement greater than 40% in 6 months
 Movement greater than 50% in 6 months

Based upon UN official exchange rates

Mid December 2025 Conditions

Based on the above data, the recommended monitoring and response level is as follows:

| Level One | Level Two | Level Five |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Ethiopia | Argentina | Iran Lebanon South Sudan Sudan Syria Venezuela Zimbabwe |

Ethiopia remains at Level One, while Argentina stays at Level Two. Iran, Lebanon, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe remain at Level Five. Employers surveyed at Level Five countries predominantly pay salaries in US dollars or euros. We will continue to monitor these exceptional situations closely.

Libya, Suriname, and Türkiye continue to exhibit exchange rate movements below ten percent and thus remains excluded from our volatility levels.

Where organizations decide to proceed with a response to economic developments beyond Level One where standard pay management policies still typically remain in place, consideration should be given to close monitoring and a determination as to when the organization will revert pay management to Level One.

Birches Group has developed a range of response scenarios which organizations may consider to address the conditions found for each level of volatility. We are happy to work with individual organizations to examine the context of current pay approaches to help design an appropriate response.

Birches Group presents this information for the sole purpose of providing data on emerging conditions. The decision to proceed with any response to changing conditions is entirely within the purview of each organization. Having policies in place that identify possible volatile conditions, define possible “triggers” for supplemental action and provide guidance as to the steps an organization will pursue to sustain stability to a partial extent brings a great degree of transparency to compensation management.

The analysis and response level anticipates compensation established in local currency. Denomination of compensation in currencies other than the national currency should be highly exceptional. The conditions warranting the possible consideration of this response are detailed in Response Level Five.

Levels of Volatility

To guide an organization on appropriate measures against timeframes for managing the updating of salary scales, the table below has been prepared aligning the measure against the market condition.

| Level of Volatility | Market Condition |
|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Level One | Standard Market Conditions 0 to 20% exchange rate movement in six months |
| Level Two | Dynamic Market Conditions 20+% exchange rate movement in six months |
| Level Three | Rapid Evolving Market Conditions 40+% exchange rate movement in six months Multiple reviews and revisions typical amongst comparators |
| Level Four | Sudden, Unexpected Social/Economic Event Currency devaluation of 50% or more in six months or less Disjointed and unclear comparator response |
| Level Five | National currency aligned Dollars/Euros Wide prevailing practice to denominate national salaries in Dollars or Euros Legal for staff to have Dollar/Euro bank accounts |
| Level Six | Labor market collapse Departure of most comparators from the market Absence of reliable data on currency and inflation |

Country in Focus: Argentina

To demonstrate how organizations can identify its triggers and develop appropriate measures based on the above levels of volatility, we will focus on Argentina as our case study in this update. Below are step-by-step examples organizations could consider as they begin to develop their own Special Measures Policy.

IDENTIFYING ECONOMIC TRIGGERS

When currency devaluation is between 20% to 40%, this qualifies a country as Level Two in our Levels of Volatility shown above.

Based on the recent exchange rate alert on page four, Argentina's exchange rate movement for the past six months is now at 21.7% showing dynamic market conditions.

DEVELOPING A FOCUSED GROUP OF EMPLOYERS

Establishing a periodicity for salary reviews builds confidence and predictability in pay management. In volatile countries like Argentina, a review of the market data is necessary to avoid lag or lead issues. Using the employer sample from the most recent Argentina survey, organizations will need to create a smaller, focused group of comparators that:

- Are the stronger comparators in the market
- Have responsive pay policies in place
- As much as possible, denominate salaries in local currency

MONITORING AND UPDATING THE SCALE

Where devaluation is between 20% to 40%, organizations should implement salary reviews twice a year with the same criteria for implementing pay revisions as used for an annual cycle based on the focused group of comparators defined above.

Applying biannual adjustments to the pay scale will allow organizations to stay ahead of the market movement until normal market conditions can be observed.





Responding to Volatility

This table of categories of volatility should be discussed and agreed as a basis to develop aligned responses. Measures organizations choose to develop to sustain market competitiveness and business continuity in response to economic and social volatility should be widely disseminated so everyone in the organization knows the basis beyond the founding principles upon which pay will be reviewed and revised. Provisions need to be made in advance to ensure arrangements are in place to support the needed action as conditions evolve. There needs to be close coordination with the data provider. Again, Birches Group is prepared to work with organizations to develop responses and help communicate these policies with staff and management.

With appropriate organization and planning, the creation of a flexible framework for sustaining compensation during periods of volatility is quite possible. Most importantly, having a policy framework in place guided by market information ensures sustaining the goal and integrity of the salary system while remaining in the context of local market conditions.

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Is Your HR System Really Working?

Misaligned roles, unclear policies, and outdated tools in your HR system could be signs of deeper problems—ones that cost your organization time, trust, and resources.

Some issues are easy to spot. Others stay hidden without a proper check-up. That's where our HR Effectiveness Assessment comes in.

TAKE 10 MINUTES TO GET A CLEAR PICTURE

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Jobs, Pay, Skills, and Performance.

Once completed, you'll receive a free, personalized report that:

- Scores the overall health of your HR systems
- Flags risks that need attention
- Highlights what's working well
- Offers a roadmap for improvement

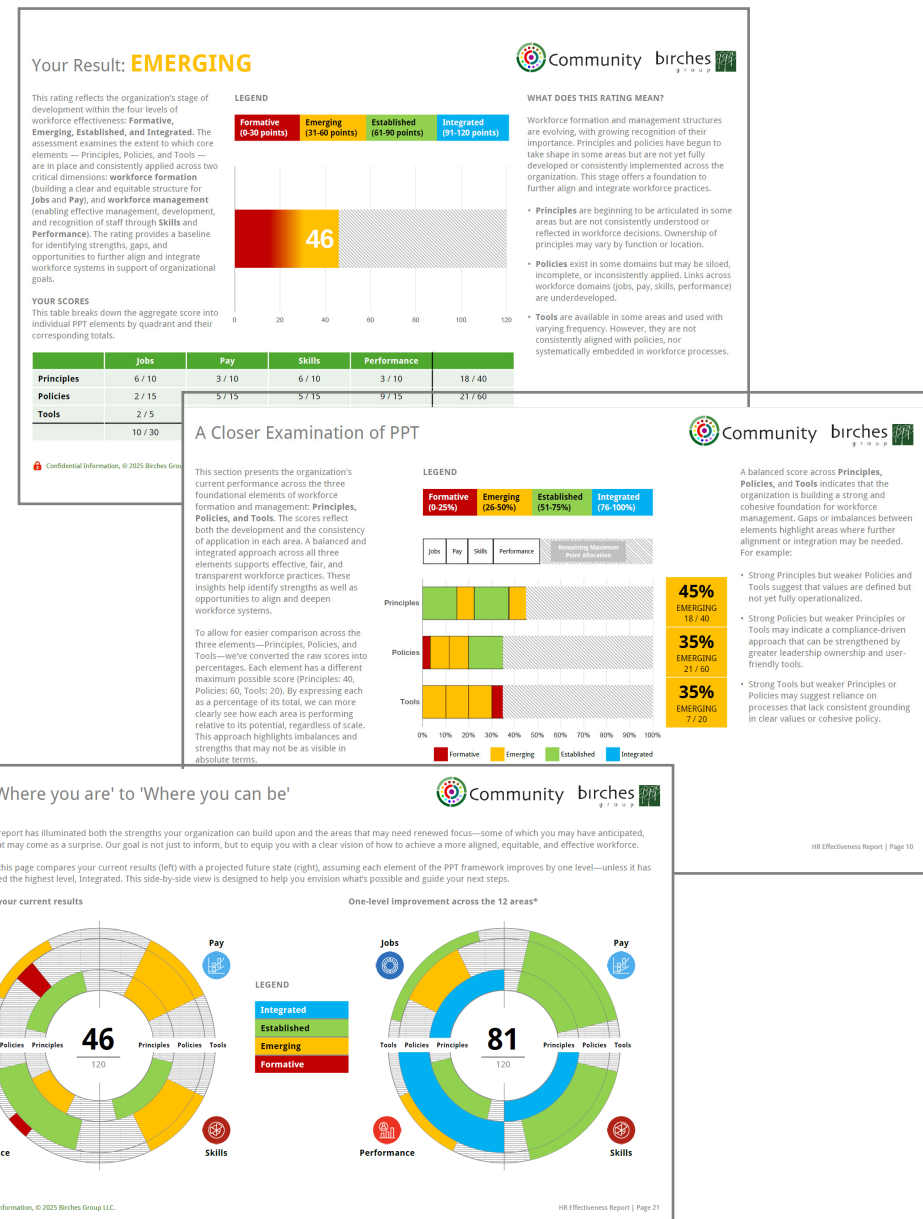
WHY IT MATTERS

A strong HR system builds:

- Trust with staff and leadership
- Confidence with stakeholders and funders
- A foundation for fairness, consistency, and impact

But weak systems? They create risk, waste, and abuse.

Our HR Effectiveness Framework reveals where your HR practices are aligned—and where they need work. It's a simple, powerful way to benchmark your progress and plan for what's next.



DISCOVER HOW EFFECTIVE YOUR HR SYSTEMS REALLY ARE! Take the free [HR Effectiveness Assessment](#)

Community: Birches Group's Publication on Issues of Workforce Management

Equity Starts Here: Insights, News, and Actions for Workforce Management

Birches Group has released its newest publication, **Community: Birches Group's Publication on Issues of Workforce Management**, a space dedicated to bringing you news, insights, and strategies on equity in workforce management within international development.

In our inaugural edition, we're excited to deliver the latest updates, practical strategies, and thought leadership designed to foster equitable workplaces. Don't miss our exclusive interviews with management experts, who share unique perspectives and actionable steps for advancing equity and fairness in HR within organizations around the world.

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Vol.1, No.1

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COMMUNITY

Birches Group's Inaugural Publication on Workforce Management



We're here to help you integrate your workforce management



COMMUNITY™ INTEGRATED WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT

At Birches Group, we believe in a holistic approach to managing your workforce, from the initial structure to the capacity of your people, through skills development and performance. The Community™ platform is Birches Group's methodology that integrates critical areas of human resources: job design and evaluation, compensation management, skills measurement, and performance management. Community™ uses a simple, clear, and consistent approach across all areas of HR, all built on the foundation of **Jobs**.



SIMPLE AND CONSISTENT JOB EVALUATION

Birches Group Community™ Jobs is a simple and transparent job evaluation approach easily understood by HR, managers and even staff. We believe that job evaluation forms the fundamental underpinning of everything HR does – from compensation and recruitment to development and performance. Every area of HR is impacted by job evaluation and job levels.



DESIGNING AND MAINTAINING YOUR SCALE

Our Scale Design Specialists have extensive experience in creating and maintaining salary scales for different types of organizations, as well as providing updated labor market data to help sustain your desired market position.



MANAGING INDIVIDUAL PAY USING COMMUNITY™ SKILLS

At Birches Group, we believe that pay movement should reflect one's experience. As an employee gains more experience in their job, they develop a deeper understanding of their role and accumulate the necessary skills that enable them to be more effective and produce higher quality results. Birches Group Community™ Skills provides a framework for measuring experience. Companies can link their compensation administration to the progression of Skills in any number of ways, and provide increases based on employee growth in their jobs rather than performance.



REWARDING ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH COMMUNITY™ PERFORMANCE

Birches Group believes that performance should be used for one-time recognition, not salary increases. Birches Group's Community™ approach to performance management centers the expectations on performance to the actual definition of the job level and celebration of the good. Using an approach that measures achievement by linking it back to the job evaluation factors, purpose, engagement, and delivery, Community™ provides organizations with a performance management system that is standardized, simplified, and can easily align with objectives across different grade levels and teams.

READY TO DEVELOP YOUR SPECIAL MEASURES POLICY?

[Contact us](#) to learn how Birches Group services can help your organization take the next steps toward developing your own special measures policy. You can also learn more about Community™ and how it can further align the foundations of your organization.