

Agenda Item 7.2

Administrative and Budgetary Issues

Financial and Administrative Matters
2021-2024

Document 7.2b

**Proposals for the Budget of the
Financial Period 2021-2024**

Action Requested

- Review the budget options
- Introduce changes as needed
- Decide on the budget option to be included in the related resolution (ASCOBANS/MOP9/Doc.7.2a)

Submitted by

Secretariat



Note:

Delegates are kindly reminded to bring their own document copies to the meeting, if needed.

PROPOSALS FOR THE BUDGET OF THE FINANCIAL PERIOD 2021-2024

1. The present document responds to Resolution 8.13 Financial and Administrative Matters 2017-2020, adopted by the 8th Meeting of the Parties (MOP8), whereby it was decided that a quadrennium budget proposal shall be provided by the Secretariat.
2. This document presents three budget options for the period 2021-2024: an option with updated salary costs and 3 % reduction in non-staff budget lines, a zero real growth option with updated standard salary costs, and a zero nominal growth option (see Annex). The first two budget options propose a 13.86 and 15.69 % increase over the current quadrennium. The majority of the increase in both options is due to revised standard UN salary costs and related entitlements that are applicable to international and local staff based on the Bonn duty station.
3. All options take as their basis a four-year budgetary period, in line with [Resolution 7.7](#) on Application of Article 6.1 of the Agreement. For all three options, tables 2, 4 and 6 were prepared to show estimated assessed contributions each Party would contribute to the 2021-2024 budget. The assessed contributions are based on the current United Nations Scale of Assessment for 2019-2021, which was adopted by the General Assembly by Resolution A/RES/73/271 of 4 January 2019.
4. The staffing in each option is based on the existing arrangements of time-sharing of posts with the CMS Secretariat, in line with the budget approved by CMS Parties in February 2020 (CMS Res.13.2) and continuing the arrangement in place since 2007. It provides for 3 % of the CMS Executive Secretary's time (D1), 15 % of the Senior Advisor's time (P4) and 75 % of the Associate Coordination Officer's time (P2). The 50% part-time Administrative Assistant (GS5) post is funded from the ASCOBANS core budget.

Salary Costs

5. The Secretariat applies revised standard UN salary costs, which are based on the unified salary scale developed by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) with 2 % inflation over the quadrennium.
6. The increase in salary costs result from UN system-wide standards, directives and calculations that are promulgated through the ICSC. They are designed to ensure that sufficient funds are available for paying salaries throughout the year, taking into account that staff may move and/or entitlements may vary, and that the euro-dollar exchange rate might move against ASCOBANS' favour. In the proposed budget options, the increase in the P2 staff line is particularly steep compared to the current budget for the P2 staff line, because the incumbent is internationally recruited and has dependents. In 2019, the actual salary costs exceeded the approved budget but were covered by a positive balance in the Trust Fund. This will be presented in ASCOBANS/MOP9/Doc.7.1a.

Option 1

6. Option 1 in Table 1 (see Annex) presents a scenario where the Secretariat has revised the non-staff budget lines, with the aim of reducing non-staff costs while trying to identify a level of funding required to stay operational. This option foresees an increase of 13.86 % (EUR 110,817) over the total 2017-2020 budget, with 3 % reduction in non-staff lines overall (excluding UN Project Support Cost, PSC). Because the sums in non-staff budget lines are so small, the total budget per non-staff line is averaged out over four years rather than some euros' increase/decrease calculated per year.
7. Consultants: Given the low levels, the allocations in the current budgetary period were mainly used to top-up voluntary contributions if necessary, in order to be able to carry out the agreed

activities. It is proposed that the total budget for consultancies is kept the same as in the current budget, but all of it allocated to the first year of the budget cycle. In this way, all of the funds would be available in 2021 and any unused funds would be kept in the same line for the following year, etc. However, making the budget available for the first year would reduce the pressure of securing voluntary contributions immediately in the start of a new budget period.

8. Staff Travel: This line covers travel of staff to all meetings and events except those of the Advisory Committee (AC) and Meeting of the Parties (MOP), such as ASCOBANS working group meetings, ASCOBANS workshops, other workshops and conferences such as the ECS, and outreach events. Accordingly, a reduction of the funding allocation would have a direct impact on the possibility to organize workshops and events, to support the operation of the ASCOBANS working groups, and to represent the Agreement at events organized by others, thus reducing opportunities for collaboration. This line is always used to the fullest, with at least one mission per year covered from the CMS budget noting cost-sharing of the P2 post. All travel is carefully planned in order to make cost-effective use of the funds, and there is little to no room for ad hoc travel. However, noting the already increased overall budget, the Secretariat did not feel that this budget line could be increased.
9. Expert Travel: This line is used to cover the travel expenses of invited experts and speakers for ASCOBANS working group meetings and workshops, for the meetings of the AC and MOP as well as expert meetings where ASCOBANS presence would be beneficial. There is never sufficient funds on this line, noting that the AC and at least two ASCOBANS working groups meet annually. However, noting the already increased overall budget, the Secretariat did not feel that this budget line could be increased.
10. Meeting of Parties: This line is used to cover some of the expenses related to the organization of the MOP, such as staff travel and report writing services. Current allocations do not normally cover all related expenses, and the shortfall is to be covered by the host. This line is proposed to be kept at the same level. A reduction of the allocation in this line would therefore mean a corresponding increase in costs for host countries. In the event of a MOP taking place at the Secretariat's premises in Bonn, the allocations in this line would cover room rent, report writing services and catering. Should a reduced amount no longer cover these expenses, voluntary contributions would be required to cover any shortfall.
11. Meetings of the Advisory Committee: see the explanation relating to the MOP above – the situation is identical.
12. Meetings of Working Groups: This amount is for costs related to working group meetings, i.e. participants travel, report writing services, and room rent and potential catering (if held in the Secretariat's premises).
13. Office Supplies: This line is proposed to be reduced by 22.4 % compared with current allocations, given that the Secretariat was able to reduce some costs thanks to sharing of supplies with the CMS Secretariat.
14. Office Equipment: This line covers mainly repairs or upgrades for existing or purchase of new computers.
15. Operation/Maintenance of Computers: This line is mainly used to purchase software not provided as part of the IT services provided by UNV. In recent years, this has only been software for the editing of PDF documents, a core functionality for meeting preparations, but for which the most popular software is unaffordable for ASCOBANS. Since there is usually no need to purchase software annually, the current budget is proposed to be kept, on the understanding that any unspent funds would be made available the following year. Reducing it further might severely hamper the Secretariat's ability to continue its services in case e.g. compatibility issues mean new software solutions need to be found.

16. IT Services: Costs related to server provision and maintenance, Helpdesk service, IT support and subscriptions to standard Office software. This line is proposed to be reduced by 4.9 % based on actual costs.
17. Operation/Maintenance of Printers: This line covers shared costs with CMS.
18. Information Material/Outreach and Education Work: In recent years, this line has been used to cover reprints of outreach and education material such as stickers, leaflets, cotton bags, pens, production of workshop proceedings and registration fees for the ECS conferences. While the majority of such costs are covered by voluntary contributions, flexibility to respond to needs throughout the year can be ensured only if there continues to be a modest allocation in the core budget. This line is proposed to be reduced by 15.9% based on estimated expenditure for the next quadrennium.
19. Reference Material: This line is used both for the purchase of publications (journal articles, books) if required, and for the annual membership fee for the ECS, which includes access to the proceedings of the conferences.
20. Website Maintenance and Development: This line is for costs related to webhosting, domain services, cost-sharing with CMS for maintenance contracts and development of new features on the website, backend database, workspace and online reporting system.
21. Telephone, Postage and Miscellaneous: Besides usual office operations, this line is used also for the sending of shipments to ASCOBANS meetings and the dissemination of information material for events such as the International Day of the Baltic Harbour Porpoise. For larger shipments, e.g. if the exhibition is required, our partners cover the costs themselves.
22. Out of above listed non-budget items, the following non-staff lines should be considered at their minimum i.e. any further reduction would render it impossible to maintain a functional office: office supplies, office equipment, IT services, operation/maintenance of printers, website maintenance and development, and tel and fax, postage and miscellaneous.

Option 2

23. In table 3 (see Annex), option 2 presents a zero real growth scenario accounting for 2 % inflation over the four-year period based on 2017-2020 budget, except for Consultants and Meeting of Working Groups where the increase is only for the first year (as in the current budget).
24. This option shows an increase of 15.69 % (EUR 125,443) over the total budget approved in the 2017-2020 budget, including 7 % increase in non-staff lines (excluding PSC). This option would allow the Secretariat to maintain the current level of servicing to the Agreement. Savings, which are already reflected in budget option 1, would be directed to Conservation Projects.

Option 3

25. In table 5 (see Annex), option 3 shows a zero nominal growth budget with updated staff salary costs. With the increase in staff costs, there would be EUR 24,200 (excluding PSC) left for non-staff lines, which means 81 % reduction in non-staff lines overall compared to the 2017-2020 budget. For comparison, the 2017-2020 budget approved EUR 63,143 for Operating Costs alone (excluding PSC). In a zero nominal growth budget the following budget lines would need to be nullified: all travel, all meetings, all expendable and non-expendable equipment, and all operating costs except for EUR 24,200 left for IT services (which is not enough to cover actual costs). The Secretariat therefore does not consider a zero nominal growth budget as a viable option.

Activities Not Covered in the Budget Options

26. Neither of the budgetary options presented contain provisions for funding Conservation Projects or coordination of the Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises in the North Sea, the Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises (Jastarnia Plan), and the Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat (WBBP Plan), as this would only be possible with significant increases in the overall budget.
27. Options on how to fund the coordination of the Harbour Porpoise action plans were presented at the 24th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2018. The need for a part-time coordinator for the Species Action plan for the North-East Atlantic Common Dolphin was also flagged at the 25th Meeting of the Advisory Committee in 2019.

Future Staffing Options

28. The Secretariat would like to remind Parties that, as presented at MOP8 in 2016 ([ASCOBANS/MOP8/Doc.7.2.b](#)), there is a need to update the ASCOBANS Coordinator's post from the P2 level to P3. This would much more accurately reflect the actual responsibilities of the position, which had previously been assessed by UNON as possibly qualifying for a P4 classification. The functions of this position exceed the parameters of P2 positions. It is therefore neither fair to any incumbent to require them permanently to work significantly above their level, nor necessarily always realistic to find suitable applicants to an entry-level job when the actual requirements are much higher.

ANNEX

Table 1: Option 1 – Budget Estimates for 2021-2024 – ASCOBANS Trust Fund (BA) in Euro. Standard salary costs updated for staff; non-staff lines adjusted in the view of maintaining a functional office. Increase to zero nominal growth budget: 13.86 %.

YEAR BUDGET ITEM	2021 EUR	2022 EUR	2023 EUR	2024 EUR	TOTAL BUDGET	Change %	Change EUR
STAFF PERSONNEL							
Executive Secretary (D1) - 3%	6,476	6,605	6,738	6,872	26,691	3.5%	894 €
CMS Senior Advisor (P4) - 15%	23,918	24,396	24,884	25,382	98,579	4.9%	4,573 €
Associate Coordination Officer (P2) - 75%	99,873	101,870	103,907	105,986	411,636	28%	90,170 €
Administrative Assistant (GS-5) - 50%	35,534	36,245	36,969	37,709	146,457	4.3%	6,103 €
Consultants	10,000	-	-	-	10,000	0%	0 €
STAFF PERSONNEL TOTAL	175,800	169,116	172,498	175,948	693,363	17.2%	101,741 €
TRAVEL							
Staff travel	5,150	5,150	5,150	5,150	20,600	0%	-8 €
Experts travel	1,850	1,850	1,850	1,850	7,400	-0.3%	-19 €
TRAVEL TOTAL	7,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	28,000	-0.1%	-27 €
GRANTS OUT							
Conservation projects	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GRANTS OUT TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MEETINGS							
Meeting of Parties	-	-	-	3,850	3,850	-0.7%	-27 €
Meeting of the Advisory Committee	3,725	3,725	3,725	-	11,175	-0.1%	-7 €
Meeting of Working Groups	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,000	0%	0 €
MEETINGS TOTAL	4,725	4,725	4,725	4,850	19,025	-0.2%	-34 €
EXPENDABLE & NON-EXPENDABLE EQUIPMENT							
Office supplies	400	400	400	400	1,600	-22.4%	-461 €
Office equipment	900	900	900	900	3,600	0%	0 €
EXPENDABLE & NON-EXPENDABLE EQUIPMENT TOTAL	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	5,200	-8.1%	-461 €

YEAR BUDGET ITEM	2021 EUR	2022 EUR	2023 EUR	2024 EUR	TOTAL BUDGET	Change %	Change EUR
OPERATING COSTS							
Operation / maintenance computers	206	206	206	206	824	0%	0 €
IT Services	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	40,000	-4.9%	-2,040 €
Operation / maintenance of printers	309	309	309	309	1,236	0%	0 €
Information material / outreach and education work	1,300	1,300	1,300	1,300	5,200	-15.9%	-982 €
Reference material	123	123	123	123	492	-0.6%	-3 €
Website maintenance and development	2,060	2,060	2,060	2,060	8,240	0%	-3 €
Tel and fax, postage and miscellaneous	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	4,000	-3%	-122 €
OPERATING COSTS TOTAL	14,998	14,998	14,998	14,998	59,992	-5%	-3,151 €
SUB-TOTAL	203,823	197,139	200,521	204,096	805,580	13.86%	98,069 €
UN-PSC - 13%	26,497	25,628	26,068	26,533	104,725		
GRAND TOTAL	230,320	222,767	226,589	230,629	910,305	13.86%	110,817 €

Table 2: Option 1 – Scale of Contributions by Parties to the ASCOBANS Trust Fund for 2021-2024 in Euro

Country	UN Scale of Assessment		2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
	(2019)	%					
Belgium	0.821	6.660	15,339	14,836	15,091	15,360	60,625
Denmark	0.554	4.494	10,351	10,011	10,183	10,365	40,909
Finland	0.421	3.415	7,866	7,608	7,738	7,876	31,088
France	4.427	20.000	46,064	44,553	45,318	46,126	182,061
Germany	6.090	20.000	46,064	44,553	45,318	46,126	182,061
Lithuania	0.071	0.576	1,327	1,283	1,305	1,328	5,243
Netherlands	1.356	11.000	25,335	24,504	24,924	25,369	100,132
Poland	0.802	6.506	14,984	14,493	14,741	15,004	59,222
Sweden	0.906	7.349	16,927	16,372	16,653	16,950	66,902
United Kingdom	4.567	20.000	46,064	44,553	45,318	46,126	182,061
Total	20.015	100.000	230,320	222,767	226,589	230,629	910,305

Table 3: Option 2 – Budget Estimates for 2021-2024 – ASCOBANS Trust Fund (BA) in Euro. Standard salary costs updated for staff and 2% inflation applied. Increase to zero nominal growth budget: 15.69 %.

YEAR BUDGET ITEM	2021 EUR	2022 EUR	2023 EUR	2024 EUR	TOTAL BUDGET	<i>Change %</i>	<i>Change EUR</i>
STAFF PERSONNEL							
Executive Secretary (D1) - 3%	6,476	6,605	6,738	6,872	26,691	3.5%	894 €
CMS Senior Advisor (P4) - 15%	23,918	24,396	24,884	25,382	98,579	4.9%	4,573 €
Associate Coordination Officer (P2) - 75%	99,873	101,870	103,907	105,986	411,636	28%	90,170 €
Administrative Assistant (GS-5) - 50%	35,534	36,245	36,969	37,709	146,457	4.3%	6,103 €
Consultants	2,040	2,040	2,040	4,080	10,200	2%	200 €
STAFF PERSONNEL TOTAL	167,840	171,156	174,538	180,028	693,563	17.2%	101,941 €
TRAVEL							
Staff travel	5,412	5,520	5,631	5,743	22,307	8.2%	1,699 €
Experts travel	1,948	1,987	2,027	2,067	8,030	8.2%	611 €
TRAVEL TOTAL	7,360	7,508	7,658	7,811	30,336	8.2%	2,309 €
GRANTS OUT							
Conservation projects	-	-	-	-	-		
GRANTS OUT TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-		
MEETINGS							
Meeting of Parties	-	-	-	4,197	4,197	8.2%	320 €
Meeting of the Advisory Committee	3,955	4,034	4,114	-	12,102	8.2%	920 €
Meeting of Working Groups	1,020	1,020	1,020	1,020	4,080	2%	80 €
MEETINGS TOTAL	4,975	5,054	5,134	5,217	20,379	6.9%	1,320 €
EXPENDABLE & NON-EXPENDABLE EQUIPMENT							
Office supplies	542	552	564	575	2,232	8.3%	171 €
Office equipment	918	918	918	918	3,672	2.0%	72 €
EXPENDABLE & NON-EXPENDABLE EQUIPMENT TOTAL	1,460	1,470	1,482	1,493	5,904	4.3%	243 €
OPERATING COSTS							
Operation / maintenance computers	216	221	225	229	891	8.2%	67 €
IT Services	11,040	11,261	11,487	11,716	45,505	8.2%	3,465 €

YEAR BUDGET ITEM	2021 EUR	2022 EUR	2023 EUR	2024 EUR	TOTAL BUDGET	<i>Change %</i>	<i>Change EUR</i>
Operation / maintenance of printers	324	331	337	344	1,337	8.2%	101 €
Information material / outreach and education work	1,624	1,656	1,689	1,723	6,693	8.3%	511 €
Reference material	130	132	135	137	534	7.9%	39 €
Website maintenance and development	2,164	2,208	2,252	2,297	8,921	8.2%	678 €
Tel and fax, postage and miscellaneous	1,082	1,104	1,126	1,148	4,460	8.2%	338 €
OPERATING COSTS TOTAL	16,581	16,913	17,251	17,596	68,341	8.2%	5,198 €
SUB-TOTAL	198,216	202,100	206,063	212,145	818,523	15.69%	111,012 €
UN-PSC 13%	25,768	26,273	26,788	27,579	106,408		
GRAND TOTAL	223,984	228,373	232,851	239,723	924,931	15.69%	125,443 €

Table 4: Option 2 – Scale of Contributions by Parties to the ASCOBANS Trust Fund for 2021-2024 in Euro

Country	UN Scale of Assessment		2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
	(2019)	%					
Belgium	0.821	6.660	14,917	15,209	15,508	15,965	61,600
Denmark	0.554	4.494	10,066	10,263	10,464	10,773	41,567
Finland	0.421	3.415	7,649	7,799	7,952	8,187	31,588
France	4.427	20.000	44,797	45,675	46,570	47,945	184,986
Germany	6.090	20.000	44,797	45,675	46,570	47,945	184,986
Lithuania	0.071	0.576	1,290	1,315	1,341	1,381	5,327
Netherlands	1.356	11.000	24,638	25,121	25,613	26,369	101,741
Poland	0.802	6.506	14,572	14,857	15,149	15,596	60,174
Sweden	0.906	7.349	16,462	16,784	17,113	17,618	67,977
United Kingdom	4.567	20.000	44,797	45,675	46,570	47,945	184,986
Total	20.015	100%	223,984	228,373	232,851	239,723	924,931

Table 5: Option 3 – Budget Estimates for 2021-2024 – ASCOBANS Trust Fund (BA) in Euro. A zero nominal growth scenario.

YEAR BUDGET ITEM	2021 EUR	2022 EUR	2023 EUR	2024 EUR	TOTAL BUDGET	<i>Change %</i>	<i>Change EUR</i>
STAFF PERSONNEL							
Executive Secretary (D1) - 3%	6,476	6,605	6,738	6,872	26,691	3.5%	894 €
CMS Senior Advisor (P4) - 15%	23,918	24,396	24,884	25,382	98,579	4.9%	4,573 €
Associate Coordination Officer (P2) - 75%	99,873	101,870	103,907	105,986	411,636	28%	90,170 €
Administrative Assistant (GS-5) - 50%	35,534	36,245	36,969	37,709	146,457	4.3%	6,103 €
Consultants	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-10,000 €
STAFF PERSONNEL TOTAL	165,800	169,116	172,498	175,948	683,363	15.5%	91,741 €
TRAVEL							
Staff travel	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-20,608 €
Experts travel	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-7,419 €
TRAVEL TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-28,027 €
GRANTS OUT							
Conservation projects	-	-	-	-	-		
GRANTS OUT TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-		
MEETINGS							
Meeting of Parties	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-3,877 €
Meeting of the Advisory Committee	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-11,182 €
Meeting of Working Groups	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-4,000 €
MEETINGS TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-19,059 €
EXPENDABLE & NON-EXPENDABLE EQUIPMENT							
Office supplies	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-2,061 €
Office equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-3,600 €
EXPENDABLE & NON-EXPENDABLE EQUIPMENT TOTAL	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-5,661 €
OPERATING COSTS							
Operation / maintenance computers	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-824 €
IT Services	6,050	6,050	6,050	6,050	24,200	-42.4%	-17,840 €

YEAR BUDGET ITEM	2021 EUR	2022 EUR	2023 EUR	2024 EUR	TOTAL BUDGET	Change %	Change EUR
Operation / maintenance of printers	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-1,236 €
Information material / outreach and education work	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-6,182 €
Reference material	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-495 €
Website maintenance and development	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-8,243 €
Tel and fax, postage and miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-100%	-4,122 €
OPERATING COSTS TOTAL	6,050	6,050	6,050	6,050	24,200	-61.7%	-38,943 €
SUB-TOTAL	171,850	175,166	178,548	181,998	707,563	0.01%	52 €
UN-PSC 13%	22,341	22,772	23,211	23,660	91,983		
GRAND TOTAL	194,191	197,938	201,760	205,658	799,546	0.01%	58 €

Table 6: Option 3 – Scale of Contributions by Parties to the ASCOBANS Trust Fund for 2021-2024 in Euro

Country	UN Scale of Assessment		2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
	(2019)	%					
Belgium	0.821	6.660	12,933	13,182	13,437	13,697	53,249
Denmark	0.554	4.494	8,727	8,895	9,067	9,242	35,932
Finland	0.421	3.415	6,632	6,760	6,890	7,023	27,306
France	4.427	20.000	38,838	39,588	40,352	41,132	159,909
Germany	6.090	20.000	38,838	39,588	40,352	41,132	159,909
Lithuania	0.071	0.576	1,118	1,140	1,162	1,184	4,605
Netherlands	1.356	11.000	21,361	21,773	22,193	22,622	87,948
Poland	0.802	6.506	12,634	12,877	13,126	13,380	52,017
Sweden	0.906	7.349	14,272	14,547	14,828	15,115	58,762
United Kingdom	4.567	20.000	38,838	39,588	40,352	41,132	159,909
Total	20.015	100%	194,191	197,938	201,760	205,658	799,546