

Agenda Item 18.1

Financial and Administrative Issues

Administrative Issues

Document 18.1

Report on Administrative Issues 2021-2022

Action Requested

- Take note
- Comment

Submitted by

Secretariat



REPORT ON ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES 2021-2022

1. This document provides an update to the report prepared for the 26th Meeting of the Advisory Committee ([ASCOBANS/AC26/Doc.16.1](#)).

Secretariat Arrangements

2. In line with [Resolution 9.6](#) of the 9th Meeting of the Parties (2020), the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) Secretariat continues to serve as the Secretariat pursuant to Article 4 of the ASCOBANS Agreement, and the Executive Secretary of CMS remains the Executive Secretary for ASCOBANS. CMS Parties have in [CMS Resolution 13.2](#) on Financial and Administrative Matters agreed to continue the arrangement.
3. The Secretariat continues to receive administrative support from the Administrative and Fund Management Unit (AFMU) of CMS, which works closely with the Corporate Services Division of the United Nations Environment Programme as well as United Nations Office in Nairobi (UNON). In addition, the Secretariat benefits from assistance from the Joint Communications Team of the CMS and AEWA Secretariats.

Staff Arrangements

4. There are no updates on the personnel in the reporting period. Amy Fraenkel (D1) continues as the CMS Executive Secretary, with 3% of her time allocated for the role of Executive Secretary to ASCOBANS. Melanie Virtue (P4), Head of the CMS Aquatic Species Team, dedicates 15% of her time to ASCOBANS as the Senior Advisor, serving as the First Reporting Officer for the Coordinator. Jenny Renell (P2) is the ASCOBANS Coordinator (75%), with 25% time dedicated to the CMS Secretariat. Bettina Reinartz (GS-5), Administrative Assistant, serves the ASCOBANS Secretariat on a 50% position. In addition, she intermittently supports the CMS Secretariat (50%) as well.
5. During the reporting period since AC26 in November 2021, the Secretariat has also received support from interns recruited by the CMS Aquatic Species Unit, namely Seren Irwin, Zeynep Karacaoglu, Viviane Komati, and Esteban Rodríguez Macías. They have mostly helped with the national reports, website content, drafting briefings, reviewing and drafting reports, conducting research, and supporting online meetings.

Projects and Initiatives

6. The tasks of the Secretariat include ensuring the smooth operation of administrative and staff related matters, and the administration of the ASCOBANS budget. This includes administration of projects. During the current reporting period, the Secretariat has administered the following projects:
 - Coordination of the ASCOBANS Conservation Plan for Harbour Porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena* L.) in the North Sea (Sea Watch Foundation);
 - Coordination of the ASCOBANS Recovery Plan for Baltic Harbour Porpoises and the Conservation Plan for the Harbour Porpoise Population in the Western Baltic, the Belt Sea and the Kattegat (Coalition Clean Baltic);
 - Using fishers' knowledge to understand the use of alternative gears to static gillnets in the ASCOBANS Region (Whale and Dolphin Conservation);
 - Prediction of the cochlear frequency maps of harbour porpoise (University of Veterinary Medicine Hannover, ITAW/TiHo); and
 - Status of the Iberian Harbour Porpoise (Fiona L. Read).

Other Administrative IssuesIncrease of Corporate Initiative Costs (Umoja Costs) for the CMS Family Secretariats

7. This issue was introduced to AC26 ([ASCOBANS/AC26/Doc.16.1](#), paragraphs 8-13). These costs are currently covered by the project support cost (PSC) income allocated to the CMS Family Secretariats. The ASCOBANS apportioned share shall be charged to the ASCOBANS budget by end of 2023. The Secretariat will seek further advice at AC28.

Potential usage of annual overall balance towards conservation projects

8. At AC26 a question was raised regarding carry-over funds, and whether the AC could re-apportion some funds to go to conservation projects annually. [Resolution 9.6](#) states: "14. Authorizes the Secretariat [...] to approve withdrawals from the fund balance to finance conservation projects approved by the Parties".
9. Accordingly, the Secretariat has identified EUR 10,000 from the operating costs budget balance that can be allocated to conservation projects for 2023. In future, and referring to paragraph 14 of Resolution 9.6, the Secretariat can perform such allocations without needing to notify the AC.