

Agenda Item 17.1.1

Budgetary Issues

Report of the Secretariat on Finance and  
Administrative Issues

Administrative Issues

Document 06

**Report on Administrative Issues 2008**

**Action Requested**

- Take note of the information submitted
- Comment

Submitted by

Secretariat



**NOTE:**  
**IN THE INTERESTS OF ECONOMY, DELEGATES ARE KINDLY REMINDED TO BRING THEIR OWN  
COPIES OF DOCUMENTS TO THE MEETING**



## **Report on Administrative Issues 2008** (submitted by the Secretariat)

1. A detailed report had been given to Parties in the 2008 Mid-Term Report on Budgetary and Administrative Issues, which has been sent out on 7 August 2008. This was done in accordance with the instructions given to the Acting Executive Secretary in Resolution 2d of MOP5. The document at hand is an update of the first Section in the mid-year report.

### **Complement of Staff and Staff Recruitment**

2. There had been a temporary change in staff, as was already announced in the 2008 Mid-Term Report on Budgetary and Administrative Issues. From 1 October 2008 onwards, Ms Tine Lindberg-Roncari took a break in her appointment for reasons of maternity. Ms Mona Ahmed, who had before already supported the ASCOBANS team as an intern, was selected for short-term replacement after a public announcement of the consultancy and careful consideration of all applications received. The budgetary implications of this arrangement stayed within the limits set by MOP 5 for budget line 1302. Ms Lindberg-Roncari joined the Secretariat team again on 16 February 2009.

3. The CMS Administrative and Fund Management Officer (P4) post, which had been vacant since mid-2007, was filled in October 2008 by Mr Sergey Kurdjukov. With his appointment, full service from the CMS Administrative and Fund Management Unit has been restored.

4. As of 1 June 2008, the position of CMS Scientific and Technical Support Officer (STSO), who also serves as Senior Advisor to ASCOBANS, became vacant, since Mr Marco Barbieri was appointed as CMS Agreement Development and Servicing Officer. The recruitment for the STSO is still ongoing. Until the new incumbent takes office, Mr Barbieri continues his services to the Agreement.

5. As soon as the CMS Conference of Parties had cleared the way for a continuation of the ASCOBANS Secretariat provisions until the end of 2011, should the ASCOBANS Parties wish to do so (CMS Resolution 9.14), steps were taken to have the GS5 position's classification confirmed and a vacancy announcement placed in the UN Recruitment System Galaxy. This is expected to be online soon.

6. A draft job description for the P2 position was already sent to the Human Resources Management Service (HRMS) of the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) for initial comments in October 2008, even though it was clear that the post could not be announced before the CMS Conference of Parties had decided whether a time-sharing between CMS and ASCOBANS would still be an option from 2009 onward. The draft job description was drawn up based on the Terms of Reference used for the recruitment of the Coordinator in January 2007, which had been approved by ASCOBANS Parties. It also faithfully reflected the responsibilities borne by the current incumbent. In response, the Chief of the Recruitment & Classification Section in Nairobi stated that these functions and responsibilities correspond to a P3/4 position and cannot be classified as P2 for the recruitment. A revised draft job description has been submitted in January 2009, which is still under consideration by HRMS at the time this document is being finalised.

7. The incumbents for the P2 and the GS5 posts are currently employed on the basis of temporary UN contracts.

8. The Secretariat team enjoyed the support of an intern, Ms Mona Ahmed, from mid-May until mid-August 2008. No other interns have joined the team since.

9. The ASCOBANS team has greatly benefited from an arrangement between CMS and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), who, based on a Memorandum of Cooperation, seconded a staff member to the CMS Secretariat for one year. Dr Kim Detloff was chosen for this secondment, starting in August 2008, and has focused his work mainly on marine issues. Since the CMS "Marine Unit" is made up of the same professional staff as the ASCOBANS team, Dr Detloff has been deeply involved in work wholly or partly relating to ASCOBANS, such as support in the preparation of information documents concerning threats facing cetaceans (bycatch, underwater noise, ship collisions); the coordination of ASCOBANS activities concerning bycatch of small cetaceans with ICES and the European Commission; the representation of the ASCOBANS Secretariat in intersessional working groups (Marine Noise); the scientific revision and assistance for ASCOBANS publications (leaflet, mobile exhibition, website) and the representation of ASCOBANS' work at public events.

## **Budget**

10. Following the decision of AC15 to make positive balances in 2005 and 2007 available for conservation projects, the Secretariat took steps, in collaboration with the CMS Administrative and Fund Management Unit, to establish a new budget line for this purpose and transfer the funds accordingly by means of prior-year adjustments and rephasals. When this seemed close to completion, and after the budgetary needs for both projects had been established, the Secretariat took steps towards concluding Small Scale Funding Agreements for projects 1 (Ship Strikes) and 5 (Contaminants) of Annex 10 of the Report of the 15<sup>th</sup> ASCOBANS Advisory Committee Meeting. These were signed in March 2009.

## **Secretariats' Merger**

11. In Resolution 2d of MOP5 (2006), the Parties had requested the Executive Director of UNEP to undertake an independent evaluation of the new Secretariat arrangements in mid-2008. The Netherlands had kindly provided the funds for this review. The Executive Director gave the responsibility for the study to the UNEP Evaluation and Oversight Unit, which agreed final Terms of Reference for the Evaluation of the "New Arrangements for the ASCOBANS Secretariat (2007-2009)" with the government of the Netherlands, based on a draft provided by AC15. The consultant, Mr Priyalal Kurukulasuriya, visited the Secretariat's offices in Bonn in September 2008, accompanied by Ms Jessica Kitakule-Mukungu of the UNEP Evaluation and Oversight Unit. The evaluator wished to see supporting material and requested explanations relating to all issues under scrutiny, which the Secretariat provided. Thus, supporting this study has taken considerable time for each member of the small team in preparation of, during, and following this visit to Bonn. The Final Draft Report was transmitted to the Secretariat by Mr Martin Lok of the Netherlands on 27 November 2008. It was forwarded to the ASCOBANS Parties on 30 November. The comments of the Secretariat are contained in AC16/Doc.16.

12. The CMS Standing Committee at its 33rd and 34th meetings in September and November 2008 discussed progress in implementing and reviewing the merger of the

Secretariats. After taking account the views expressed by the Executive Director of UNEP the Committee recommended to the CMS Conference of the Parties that ASCOBANS Parties should be given the first opportunity to consider the results of the independent evaluation during the next intersessional period (i.e. 2009-11) and report their findings to the CMS Standing Committee.

13. The merger was subsequently discussed at the 9<sup>th</sup> CMS COP (1-5 December 2008). The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) gave a progress report on the review: the report was now in the process of finalization. In the interim, the experimental merger was set to continue until the end of the trial period in December 2009, for which there were no budgetary implications in addition to those already accounted for when the merger was agreed.

14. The Financial and Administrative Resolution (CMS Resolution 9.14) passed by all CMS Parties present on 5 December 2009 states as follows :

*“The CoP ... confirms the willingness that the CMS Secretariat continues to provide Secretariat services to ASCOBANS in the next triennium, and:*

*(a) Invites the Meeting of the Parties of ASCOBANS to discuss the final draft review document in 2009, to decide on the best organizational solutions for ASCOBANS to be implemented from 1 January 2010, and to report their conclusions to the Standing Committee of CMS and to the Working Group for the Future Shape of CMS;*

*(b) Instructs the Standing Committee to finalize in 2009, in consultation with the ASCOBANS Parties, the organizational arrangements for 2010 and onwards, taking into account that CMS will not bear any additional costs arising in connection with a definitive organizational solution for ASCOBANS;”*