

Agenda Item 14.1

Report of the Secretariat on Financial and  
Administrative Issues

Administrative Issues

Document 14.1

**Report on Administrative Issues  
2013/2014**

**Action Requested**

- Take note
- Comment

Submitted by

Secretariat



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



## Report on Administrative Issues 2013/2014

1. This document provides an update of the report prepared for the 20<sup>th</sup> Advisory Committee Meeting (AC20/Doc.15.1).

### Secretariat Arrangements

2. In line with Resolution No. 6 of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties (2012), the UNEP/CMS Secretariat continues to serve as the Secretariat pursuant to Article 4 of the ASCOBANS Agreement and the Executive Secretary of UNEP/CMS remains the Acting Executive Secretary for ASCOBANS until the end of 2016. CMS Parties have through CMS Resolution 10.1 on Financial and Administrative Matters made it possible to continue the arrangement. The budget proposed for adoption at the 11<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to CMS in November 2014 ([COP11/Doc.14.3](#)) includes the same provision at the same percentages (see Staffing section below).
3. ASCOBANS Parties in Resolution No. 7.6 of the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Parties (2012) requested the Secretariat “to explore joint working arrangement within the CMS Family and further integration of the ASCOBANS and CMS Secretariats, taking note of the CMS Future Shape process, in order to enhance synergies and achieve a more cost-effective operation”. In line with this mandate, in June 2013 the CMS Secretariat and all the co-located Agreements held a three-day staff retreat in Bonn with the aim to improve and enhance the workflow and teamwork of all units. In addition the CMS Secretariat has proposed further synergies between the co-located Agreements in Bonn. Details are contained in [UNEP/CMS/COP11/Doc.16.2](#).
4. In November 2013, a new structure of the Secretariat was implemented by the CMS Executive Secretary. Designed to allow more even attention to be given to all parts of the CMS Family and mandates, one of the key changes was to abolish the former Science and Agreements Units. Instead, an overarching Implementation Support Team consisting of a Scientific Advisor, Marco Barbieri, and three species teams dealing with avian, terrestrial and aquatic species were created.
5. ASCOBANS is now part of the Aquatic Species team, headed by Melanie Virtue. Besides all of the CMS Secretariat’s work on cetaceans, this team also deals with other aquatic mammals, sharks, other fish, marine turtles and cross-cutting marine issues such as bycatch, underwater noise, marine debris and pollution. It is hoped that this new structure ensures that overlapping interests such as bycatch, ocean noise and marine debris are dealt with effectively.
6. Details of the new Secretariat structure and professional staff responsibilities can be found on the [CMS website](#).

### Staffing

7. Most of the staff complement for ASCOBANS remained the same in the reporting period:
  - a) Bradnee Chambers (D1) continues to serve as Executive Secretary of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS), which includes three percent of his time allocated for fulfilling the role of Acting Executive Secretary to ASCOBANS.
  - b) Heidrun Frisch (P2) continues on the shared post of ASCOBANS Coordinator (75 per cent) and CMS Marine Mammals Officer (25 per cent). Even though internal discussions were held in which it was again agreed that the functions performed are those of a P3 position (see e.g. AC16/Doc.6 and CMS/Conf.10.34), due to the budgetary constraints of Parties it was decided not to propose such an option to the

- upcoming CMS COP11 to open the way for an adjustment of the level within the next three years.
- c) Bettina Reinartz (GS-5), the Administrative Assistant, continues on a 50 per cent position, with overtime being approved as required.
8. Due to the restructuring of the Secretariat (see Secretariat Arrangements section above), the function of ASCOBANS Senior Advisor with 15 per cent of the time of a CMS officer allocated is now performed by Melanie Virtue. She joined CMS in 2009 as Interagency Liaison Officer and then took over the Agreements Unit portfolio in 2011 until becoming Head of the Aquatic Species Team in November 2013. Borja Heredia, who had served as ASCOBANS Senior Advisor since January 2010, is now heading the Avian Species Team.
  9. Until March 2013, the joint CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat again enjoyed the support of the consultant Ana Berta García, who worked on many matters related to the development of the ASCOBANS Kids website, meeting preparations, document translation and other CMS-related tasks. Costs for her time were shared between the CMS and ASCOBANS Secretariat according to the percentages used.
  10. The Secretariat team enjoyed the support of several interns in the reporting period.
    - a) Rebecca Owen, a M.Sc. student of Oceanography, supported the CMS/ASCOBANS Secretariat from July to September 2013. Besides helping with preparations for AC20, key tasks included support to the transition to the new web-based database and new website (see AC21/Doc.5.2) and to the implementation of CMS Resolution 10.4 on Marine Debris.
    - b) Retchie Pagliawan, as part of completing her M.Sc. in Environmental Science, supported the Secretariat from September 2013 to January 2014. Her work was largely focused on CMS-related tasks, but she also supported ASCOBANS outreach and education work as well as compiled information in support of the AC's working group on bycatch, the Jastarnia Group and the North Sea Group.
    - c) From October to December 2013 Marie-Thérèse Mruszczok, who holds a M.A. in European Studies, joined the CMS and ASCOBANS team to work on several outreach and education related tasks, such as the setting up of a Facebook page, the transition to the new web-based database and new website and preparations for the 10<sup>th</sup> Jastarnia Group meeting.
    - d) Chantal Pagel, a M.Sc. student in International Nature Conservation, provided assistance to the Secretariat from February to April 2014. As a joint project with CMS, she developed a flyer on marine debris for the general public, which was first distributed in March 2014 at the WhaleFest in Brighton (see AC21/Doc.5.2). She also helped with database and website-related tasks. For CMS, she mainly worked on the development of a draft resolution on boat-based wildlife watching.
  11. Interns are a great help to the Secretariat in the delivery of its work programme. Many time-intensive tasks could never be carried out without this extra support. For the interns, the experience in an MEA Secretariat provides valuable insights into international conservation efforts and important work experience.
  12. In order to comply with UN Rules and Regulations and to ensure a professionally managed selection process, all UN Secretariat interns are now being recruited through the UN Careers Portal. While this has definite advantages, other more urgent tasks have so far prevented the ASCOBANS team from being able to familiarize themselves with the processes and advertising a position. Since May 2014, the team has therefore been without the valuable support provided by interns.
  13. Information on internship opportunities can be accessed on the [CMS website](#).

### **Administrative Changes**

14. The Common Administration and Finance Services Team for CMS and the co-located Agreements is currently involved in an administrative reform initiative for the United Nations Secretariat that includes a thorough streamlining of UN business processes, Umoja. At its core, it is an implementation of SAP Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software. Umoja will provide a simplified and real-time approach to the Organization's management of finances, resources and assets. By 2016, the United Nations Secretariat will have transitioned to Umoja as its central administrative tool. Umoja is fully in line with the recent transition of the UN system to international accounting standards. For more information on Umoja, please refer to [www.unumoja.net](http://www.unumoja.net).