

Agenda Item 17.1

Financial and Administrative Issues

Administrative Issues

Document 17.1.b

**Report on Administrative Issues
2014-2015**

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 2014-2015

1. This document provides an update of the report prepared for the 21st Advisory Committee Meeting ([AC21/Doc.14.1](#)).

Secretariat Arrangements

2. In line with Resolution No. 6 of the 7th 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 in CMS Resolution 11.1 on Financial and Administrative Matters agreed to continue the arrangement.
3. ASCOBANS Parties in Resolution No. 7.6 of the 7th 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 2015 the CMS Secretariat and all the co-located Agreements held a three-day staff retreat with the aim to improve and enhance the workflow and teamwork between units and within the entire CMS Family. This included a section focussing on the aquatic species instruments, including ASCOBANS, ACCOBAMS, ACAP and the MOUs on Sharks, Turtles and Dugongs. In addition, the Secretariat considered various staffing scenarios for ASCOBANS in line with this mandate (see AC22/Doc.18.2.b).
4. The revised Secretariat structure introduced in November 2013, which created an overarching Implementation Support Team consisting of a Scientific Advisor and three species teams dealing with avian, terrestrial and aquatic species, has proved beneficial for the ASCOBANS team, which benefits from more coherence and collaboration as 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.
5. Details of the new Secretariat structure and staff responsibilities can be found on the [CMS website](#).

Staffing

6. Staffing arrangements have 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) Melanie Virtue (P4), the head of the CMS Aquatic Species Team, continues to dedicate 15 per cent of her time to ASCOBANS as Senior Advisor, serving as the first reporting officer for the Coordinator.
 - c) Heidrun Frisch (P2) continues on the shared post of ASCOBANS Coordinator (75 per cent) and CMS Marine Mammals Officer (25 per cent).
 - d) Bettina Reinartz (GS-5), the Administrative Assistant, continues on a 50 per cent position, with overtime being approved as required.
7. The 21st Meeting of the Advisory Committee (AC21/AP55) asked the Secretariat to bring the concerns of the Parties on actual as against funded staff-time percentages to the

attention of the Acting Executive Secretary, and to consider ways to provide greater transparency to Parties. After considering options to do so, the Acting Executive Secretary decided that the implementation of any time recording system would prove to be impractical due to the interwoven nature of many tasks that relate both to the Convention and the Agreement. He also felt that it would be an additional burden on staff that already dealt with a heavy workload. He therefore proposes that this matter continue to be dealt with internally by management, and has asked the Coordinator and the Senior Adviser to alert him when time use is in danger of becoming disproportionate.

8. Compared to previous years, the capacity of the Secretariat continues to be reduced due to the fact that no interns have been available since May 2014 to support it in the delivery of its work programme. Calls for internships through the UN Careers Portal with the CMS Implementation Support Team, of which the ASCOBANS team is a part, have successfully attracted candidates for other teams.
9. Following this meeting, the Secretariat is planning to launch a specific advertisement for internships with ASCOBANS, which will be circulated also through relevant listservers etc. National Coordinators and Partners are encouraged to circulate the information, too. More information on internship opportunities with the ASCOBANS Secretariat can be accessed on the [website](#).

Administrative Changes

10. As already mentioned in last year's report, the United Nations system is in the process of implementing a new enterprise resource (ERP) system which has become operational on 1 June 2015. The SAP-based system will provide a harmonized and streamlined approach to the following core organization functions: Finance and Budget Management, Human Resources Management, Workforce Management (Organizational Management, Travel Management, Payroll, Programme & Project Management) and Supply Chain/ Procurement/ Logistics Management. The new system is called Umoja; 'unity' in Swahili. For more information on Umoja, please refer to www.unumoja.net.
11. The implementation of Umoja is a major undertaking which had and still has a tremendous impact on the day-to-day work of all staff, and in particular those that are working for the Administration and Fund Management Unit (AFMU), which services CMS and the co-located Agreements, including ASCOBANS. Besides undertaking mandatory training in the use and functionality of the new system, staff needed to dedicate much time into preparing the data of the old system (IMIS) for migration into Umoja, and into verifying, completing and allocating data.
12. A black-out period during which no transactions were possible was scheduled for mid- to end-May 2015. However, in reality invoices received towards the end of April could already not be processed, and many remain unpaid due to omissions during the migration of the data. Staff members in Bonn have invested enormous amounts of time in attempts to get the data completed and payments made as soon as possible, but depend on their counterparts in UN offices around the world for any progress. As a result, major disruptions in normal functioning of the Secretariat were unavoidable and continue to affect operations. Parties were alerted to these issues in [CMS Notification 2015/11](#), which was forwarded to ASCOBANS Parties on 10 April 2015.
13. Further reducing the Secretariat's administrative capacity, the former Administrative and Fund Management Officer left the CMS Secretariat in May 2015 to take up a new assignment at the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Convention Secretariat in Geneva. His successor, Sandra Rucker, has entered on duty on 17 August 2015.