

Agenda Item 16.1

Financial and Administrative Issues

Administrative Issues

Document 16.1

Report on Administrative Issues 2020-2021

Action Requested

- Take note
- Comment
- Agree on the way forward regarding the increased Umoja costs

Submitted by

Secretariat

REPORT ON ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES 2020-2021

1. This document provides an update for the report prepared for the 9th Meeting of the Parties ([MOP9/Doc.7.1a/Rev.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 currently supports the CMS Secretariat (50%) from August to December 2021.
5. During the reporting period since MOP9 in 2020, the Secretariat has also received support from interns recruited by the CMS Aquatic Species Unit, namely Arc'hantael Labrière, Helene Tao, and Sara Kophamel. They have mostly helped with the national reports, website content, drafting briefings, reviewing reports, doing 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 ongoing 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); and
 - Web-accessed Database for Cetacean Strandings and Necropsy Data in the ASCOBANS Region (Zoological Society of London). Unfortunately the implementation of this project remains on hold owing to implications from the COVID-19 pandemic.
7. It is worth mentioning that UNEP is moving forward in terms of engagement with the implementing partners, using newly introduced implementing partner module in the enterprise

resource planning system (Umoja) in place. The ASCOBANS Secretariat will be able to inform more about this in due course.

Other Administrative Issues: Unexpected Increase of Corporate Initiative Costs (Umoja Costs) for the CMS Family Secretariats

8. In accordance with the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 35/217 of 17 December 1980, the CMS Family Trust Funds are charged by UNEP at the standard rate of 13 per cent of their annual expenditures as Programme Support costs (PSC). The UNEP Executive Director retains a portion of the PSC income to finance the part of the UNEP central administrative services that supports the CMS Family Secretariats, including ASCOBANS Secretariat, and allocates the remaining PSC income (up to 66.6 % of the total PSC income) to the CMS Secretariat for financing the CMS Administrative and Fund Management Unit (AFMU). The AFMU consists of one professional staff member and five General Service staff, who provide the services needed for the operation and administration of all CMS Family Secretariats, covering finance, human resources, procurement, travel, and other services.
9. Within the framework of an administrative reform initiative, the United Nations Secretariat deployed a new enterprise resource planning system 'Umoja' to streamline the business processes of the United Nations Organization. As part of the UN Secretariat, the CMS Family Secretariats enrolled on this system in June 2015. The costs associated with the deployment of Umoja were initially absorbed by a dedicated budget adopted by the UN General Assembly, but later passed on to the user entities in 2017. Since no allocation was included in the CMS Family Trust Funds budget to cover Umoja Costs in the year 2017, the cost attributable to the CMS Family – as well as for all other Multilateral Environmental Agreement (MEA) Secretariats administered by UNEP – was exceptionally absorbed by UNEP.
10. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/262, the guiding principle indicates that Umoja costs be charged to the PSC income. Therefore, from 2018 onwards, apportioned Umoja costs of the CMS Family were charged to the PSC income allocated to the CMS Family Secretariats. The apportioned costs of Umoja for CMS Family Secretariats were relatively low (see Table 1 below.)

Table 1. Apportioned costs of Umoja for CMS Family Secretariats (in USD).

Year	Umoja cost	Apportionment methodology
2018	\$28,821	Expenditure level basis
2019	\$29,256	PSC income basis
2020	\$32,100	PSC income basis
2021	\$88,770	Staff head-count basis

11. In February 2021, the UNHQ Office of the Controller introduced a new methodology of apportioning Umoja costs, which is based on a staff head count rather than programme support income. As a result, the apportioned Umoja costs of the CMS Family Secretariats for the year 2021 were increased to \$89,000 (see table above), which results to approximately \$2,100 per head. Of the total of \$89,000, the Umoja costs related to the CMS Secretariat amount to \$33,000 while the remaining amount of \$56,000 is related to all other Secretariats of the CMS Family, including the ASCOBANS Secretariat. Unfortunately, although a number of staff members are on half-time positions, the new methodology does not differentiate the half-time staff members in the cost apportionment.
12. In order to address the unexpected increase in Umoja costs in this intersessional period, the CMS Secretariat undertook a review of the projected PSC income to be generated from the entire CMS Family Secretariats through 2023, and the staffing and other costs charged to PSC income. As a result, the CMS Family Secretariat will be able to continue to charge most of the Umoja costs against PSC income through 2023. However, there is a projected shortfall of at

least \$29,000 across the entire CMS Family Secretariats, of which the ASCOBANS share is \$1,349 (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. ASCOBANS' portion of the Umoja costs (in USD).

Secretariat	Number of staff	Umoja costs in 2021	Pro-rated share of estimated shortfall by end of 2023
ASCOBANS	2	\$4,200	\$1,349

13. There are some variations across the UNEP-administered MEAs regarding how to cover Umoja costs. The governing bodies of some MEAs have agreed to use core funds to cover Umoja costs, while other MEAs charge their PSC income for Umoja costs. The ASCOBANS Parties may wish to consider including Umoja costs as part of the core budget at the 10th Meeting of the Parties in 2024. However, until then the Advisory Committee would need to decide on the funding of an estimated shortfall of \$1,349 and annual cost of \$4,200 in 2024.