

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

Report to Finance and Budget Subcommittee

Administrative and financial matters as at 30 September 2020

As per the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Budget Subcommittee (FBSC) of the CITES Standing Committee, please find below report on administrative and financial report as at 30 September 2020.

Members of Finance and Budget Subcommittee during 2020-2022

Further revisions have been received during the last quarter, please find the updated list of members in annex 1.

Administrative matters

Delegation of Authority

Since the reporting in the report as at 30 June 2020, no further feedback has been received from UNEP on provided inputs on the new delegation policy and framework proposed.

The delegation policy and framework for the management and administration of Multilateral Environmental Agreement Secretariat issued by UNEP on 1 November 2016 is still in place.

Staffing situation

The temporary hiring freeze is still in place for UNEP on its regular and Environmental funded positions while no such freeze is in place for CITES vacant positions.

The Secretariat is continuing to closely monitor the expenditure and collected contribution rates to ensure that we are within the available resources so planned recruitment can proceed. This may delay the process as the Secretariat will proceed up to selection of the new staff while the on-boarding may take longer time.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Secretariat has so far only been allowed to hire on local level due to ongoing on-boarding suspension for international staff.

The Secretariat has completed two of the recruitment cases by temporary appointment of staff for the Research/Programme Assistant and Meeting Services Assistant.

In addition, the recruitment of two project positions for the MIKE team have been completed during this reporting period.

Further details are included in below table on vacant positions under recruitment.

Summary of vacant position under recruitment:

Functional title	Funding source	Status
Research / Programme Assistant	Core	Temporary Job Opening (JO)-130789; closed on 6 February 2020 and temporary hiring has been completed while the long-term position is being finalized. Selected candidate was on-boarded on 1 June 2020.
Meeting Service Assistant	Core	JO-130531; closed on 25 March 2020 and temporary hiring has been completed while the long-term position is being finalized. Selected candidate was on-boarded on 1 July 2020.
Programme Management Officer, P-3 (MIKE)	External	JO-133481; launched and will be closing on 15 May 2020. Selection has been completed and on-boarding procedures is ongoing.
Finance and Budget Assistant (MIKE)	External	JO-141620; selection has been completed and staff member will be on-board as at 1 November 2020
Associate Programme Management Officer, P-2	Core	JO-128027; closed on 21 February 2020. Interviews have been completed and the case is with UN Office at Nairobi for review before selection will be done.
Associate Information Systems Officer, P-2	Core	JO-133944; closed on 2 July and testing of applicants is ongoing.
Documents Assistant	Core	Request from staff member on separation for early retirement has been withdrawn. The job opening has been cancelled.

Please note that the all vacancy announcements for staff or consultancy positions are published on CITES website with direct link to the UN recruitment system *Inspira* to allow for wider information sharing and coming applications.

Financial matters

CITES Trust Fund (CTL)

Financial data for the year 2020 as at 30 September 2020

As at 30 September 2020, the Secretariat has spent around 64% of the total budget for 2020 on mainly staff salaries and the assessed contributions collection rate was 71% as shown in below table.

Description	Budget 2020 (USD)	Expenditure (USD)	Assessed contribution collected (USD)	Cash & funds balance (USD)
Post & salary items	4,170,423	3,122,167	-	-
Consultants	475,000	179,037	-	3,039,341
Non-post & salary items	1,536,620	473,291	-	2,713,924
Total:	6,182,043	3,774,495 (64%)	4,399,735 (71%)	5,753,265

As noted, the collection rate for the assessed contribution for 2020 is on track and even at higher rate than in previous years as shown in below table.

The Secretariat is very grateful to Parties that has paid its contribution early in the calendar year and we will continue to closely monitor the payments for 2020 and prior years and consult with Parties on regular basis.

Assessed contributions collection rate per year	%
Year 2020 as at 30 September 2020	71
Year 2019 as at 30 September 2019	55.9
Year 2018 as at 30 September 2018	47.7
Year 2017 as at 30 September 2017	57.0

At the time of this report, we have received two official communication from Parties (Portugal for 2020only and Vanuatu for 2020-2021) informing that they will pay their 2020 assessed contribution late during the calendar year.

Audit of CITES

Further to the information provided in earlier reports, the Secretariat has been in contact with the OIOS office who confirm that the audit is included in their work programme and is tentative planned for in early 2021.

No details have been received on the actual time for the coming OIOS audit.

Online meetings and possible financial impact

In addition to information provided in the earlier reports for 2020, we have received positive information from UNEP regarding the possibility for compensation and remuneration for sponsored members and delegates that would participate in online meeting and incurred additional costs related to data connection charges.

On 30 September 2020, UNEP issued guidelines on “Reimbursement of communication cost for virtual meetings for meeting participants” including hourly rates per 1 GB per each UN region.

The average hourly rate in USD for 1 GB range per region, as per below table, and can be reimbursed to eligible meeting participants without receipt for reimbursements up to USD 200 per meeting. Any reimbursement above USD 200 will have to be accompanied by receipts to support the expense.

Table on average standard hourly rates for 1 GB per regions

Regions	Standard hourly rate for 1 GB (USD)
Africa	8
Asia / Pacific	9
CEE	6
GRULAC	8
WEOG / OECD	6

As no core funding is included in the triennium budget for 2020-2022, the above additional costs for data connection could be financed through the existing registration fees collected during 2019-2020 period.

The Secretariat is proposing to follow the procedures set out in Resolution Conf. 17.3 on Sponsored Delegates Project for nomination of eligible members and delegates, if decision is taken to hold any online meetings/sessions for the scientific and governing bodies committees.

Projections for full year 2020 and possible savings for the period

The Secretariat has prepared the projections for the full year 2020 based on the expenditures as at 30 September and available information for the coming months.

The following assumptions and calculations have been made per component:

1. Personnel component (Professional and General Support staff)
 - a. Recruitment will continue on vacant positions (further details will be included in the quarterly report as at 30 September 2020);
 - b. On-boarding of international staff might be delayed due to the Covid-19 situation while local staff can continue;
 - c. Temporary hiring will be undertaken, where possible, while the process for long-term hiring is ongoing; and
 - d. **Savings expected on this component: around USD 21,500**

2. Consultants
 - a. Consultants hired for translations of working documents to Animals, Plants and Standing Committee meetings will continue during the year; and
 - b. Savings expected on this heading: USD 109,300**

3. Conference staff to meetings
 - a. 2 online sessions of 2 hours each for Standing Committee members to discuss the work programme with interpretation are foreseen at a cost of USD 10,000 each;
 - b. 1 intersessional meeting on item(s) on the work programme via online session of 2 hours for AC members with interpretation is foreseen at a cost of USD 10,000;
 - c. 1 intersessional meeting on item(s) on the work programme via online session of 2 hours for PC members with interpretation is foreseen at a cost of USD 10,000; and
 - d. Savings expected on this heading: USD 61,600**

4. Official travel
 - a. With the assumption that current UN official travel bans will be lifted; and
 - b. Savings expected on this heading: USD 30,000**

5. Sub-contract component
 - a. Full utilization of activities on this component is expected as legal agreements are signed or in the final stages of negotiation; and
 - b. Savings expected on this component: USD 0**

6. Meeting component (travel of eligible members and experts to committee meetings)
 - a. No travel of eligible Animals, Plants and Standing Committee or experts are foreseen during the year; and
 - b. Savings expected on this component: USD 105,000**

7. Equipment, premises, operational and maintenance components
 - a. Full utilization of the items for the operation of the Secretariat is expected on these components during the year; and
 - b. Savings expected on these components: USD 0**

8. Miscellaneous component
 - a. Logistic support including security for Animals, Plants and Standing Committee meetings will not be used; and
 - b. Savings expected on this component: USD 87,800**

9. Further details on the projections by budget lines level is attached in the annex 1; and
 - a. Overall savings expected on the direct costs' items (excluding programme support cost): USD 415,800**

The above expected savings for 2020 will be added to the existing fund balance at the end of the calendar year unless a decision is taken to transfer the amount into 2021 for possible face to face committee meetings which will require prior approval by the Standing Committee.

In line with the resolution 18.1 on *Financing and the costed programme of work for the Secretariat for the triennium 2020-2022*, Annex 6 – Terms of Reference for the Administration of the Trust Fund (CTL) for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, transfer of resources between financial years is possible as per paragraph 8 b):

“8. The Secretary-General of the Convention is authorized, to the extent consistent with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, to:

b) transfer resources between financial years within the same activity line. Any such transfers may be made only after they have been agreed by the Standing Committee.”

The Secretariat is working with UN Office at Geneva (UNOG) and its procurement section on identifying options for conference venues in Geneva and Switzerland during the two first quarters of 2021 for possible face-to-face meetings of the scientific and governing bodies committees and will share costing details, when available.

An online meeting will be held on 15 October to discuss the above matter.

Support of the CITES Activities Trust Fund (QTL)

As at 30 September 2020, the following contributions have been collected on the external trust fund for ongoing and new activities:

- 30 September 2020: USD 6.98 millions

The Secretariat is posting on monthly basis on its website detailed information on contributions collected on both the core and external trust funds and the detailed data per Party and donor can be found on the below links:

- Core trust fund (CTL):

https://www.cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/disc/funds/ct_en.pdf

- External trust fund (QTL):

https://cites.org/sites/default/files/eng/disc/funds/status_of_external_contributions_to_the_CITES_External_Trust_Fund_20July2020.pdf

Attachments:

1. Members of FBSC during 2020-2022 – revised list
2. Projections for full year 2020 as at 30 September 2020