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Item 10 of the provisional agenda*

Administrative and budgetary matters: functional review of the Secretariat

Functional review of the Secretariat

Note by the Secretariat

I. Background

1. Pursuant to requests by the Conference of the Parties in paragraph 35 of decision [15/34](#) and paragraph 11 of decision [16/28](#), the Secretariat organized the conduct of an external in-depth functional review of its structure, in consultation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme, taking into consideration the scoping report contained in document [CBD/COP/16/4/Add.2-CBD/CP/MOP/11/5/Add.2-CBD/NP/MOP/5/5/Add.2](#).

2. The functional review was undertaken by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Management Consulting Team,¹ with a focus on assessing whether the Secretariat is properly structured and well resourced to undertake its functions effectively,² in particular for servicing meetings held under the Convention and its Protocols and supporting the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, and, if not, what changes are needed to do so. The Bureau of the Conference of the Parties was kept informed of progress made during the review, including through the provision of updates and an online survey for the Bureau members by the UNDP Management Consulting Team.

3. The executive summary of the report of the functional review prepared by the UNDP Management Consulting Team is appended as annex I to the present note in the form in which it was received by the Secretariat, for review by the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, while the full report will be made available as document [CBD/SBI/6/INF/12](#).³

* [CBD/SBI/6/1](#).

¹ The Management Consulting Team is a group of internal UNDP management practitioners based in New York that is specialized in improving strategic and operational performance by providing advisory services and analytics for business transformation and change management.

² As provided in Article 24 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

³ In view of the deadline for issuance of working documents for the present meeting, the staff of the Secretariat, who was fully engaged in the analysis of functions and business processes of the Secretariat, had only limited opportunities to provide inputs to finalize the full report in December 2025. An internal review by the Secretariat will therefore continue in January 2026 to review and reflect on the recommendations contained in the final report submitted by the Management Consulting Team.

II. Way forward

4. The Executive Secretary welcomes the analysis provided by the UNDP Management Consulting Team and expresses her appreciation to the Parties for enabling the undertaking of the functional review, which provides an important basis for achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness in the operation of the Secretariat, as a fit-for-purpose entity, in line with Article 24 of the Convention, Article 31 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety and Article 28 of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization, in particular for servicing meetings held under the Convention and its Protocols and supporting the implementation of the Framework.

5. The Secretariat will initiate the implementation of short- and medium-term actions that are feasible and essential to improve the way it services meetings held under the Convention and its Protocols and supports the implementation of the Framework. As an initial step, the Executive Secretary will launch a consultation of all staff on the proposed updates to the organizational structure of the Secretariat in line with the recommendations of the functional review.

6. On the basis of the updated organizational structure, and further to paragraph 35 of decision [15/34](#) and paragraph 11 of decision [16/28](#), the Executive Secretary will update or develop, as relevant, job descriptions, including classification, of existing and additional posts, respectively, to implement the structural and strategic alignment with the core functions and strategic priorities of the Secretariat proposed in the recommendations of the functional review.

7. Where relevant, and on the basis of the updated functions and job descriptions, an analysis of the associated staffing and cost implications of the long-term structural and strategic alignment proposed in the recommendations of the functional review will be carried out, in full compliance with applicable staff regulations and staff rules of the United Nations, for consideration by the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth meeting.

8. At the seventeenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, the Secretariat will submit for consideration a progress report on its initial implementation and associated analyses, as described in paragraphs 6 and 7 above, together with a proposal for adjustments, as relevant, to the description and classification of existing posts, as well as of additional posts required.

III. Recommendation

9. The Subsidiary Body on Implementation may wish to adopt a recommendation⁴ along the following lines:

The Subsidiary Body on Implementation

1. *Takes note* of the executive summary report of the functional review of the Secretariat prepared by an external consulting team, as contained in annex I to document [CBD/SBI/6/10](#), including the recommendations for short-, medium- and long-term actions by the Secretariat;

2. *Notes* the ongoing consultations on those recommendations within the Secretariat;

3. *Notes* with appreciation the follow-up activities being undertaken or to be undertaken by the Executive Secretary, as proposed in the recommendations of the functional review, namely:

(a) Initiating the implementation of short- and medium-term actions, including an updated organizational structure;

(b) Undertaking the updating or development of job descriptions, including classification, of existing and additional posts, respectively, required to implement a structural and strategic alignment with the core functions and strategic priorities of the Secretariat;

⁴ The estimated extrabudgetary resource requirements for the activities outlined in the draft recommendation are shown in annex II to the present document.

(c) Undertaking, on the basis of the updated functions and job descriptions, an analysis of the associated staffing and cost implications of the long-term structural and strategic alignment;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary to transmit the executive summary report of the external in-depth functional review of the Secretariat to the Conference of the Parties at its seventeenth meeting and to submit a progress report on the activities listed above, together with proposals for adjustments in post classification, as well as additional posts, as relevant, to the Conference of the Parties for consideration at its seventeenth meeting.

5. *Recommends* that, at its seventeenth meeting, the Conference of the Parties adopt a decision along the following lines:

The Conference of the Parties

1. *Take notes* of the executive summary of the report on the external in-depth functional review of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity,⁵ as contained in annex I to document CBD/SBI/6/10;

2. *Notes* the outcome of the functional review, and welcomes the updated structure of the Secretariat, which should lead to enhanced synergies and efficiencies within the Secretariat;

3. *Notes with appreciation* the follow-up actions undertaken by the Executive Secretary,⁶ namely:

(a) The initiation of the implementation of short- and medium-term actions proposed in the recommendations of the functional review, including an updated organizational structure;

(b) The updating or development of job descriptions, including classification, of existing and additional posts, respectively, required to implement a structural and strategic alignment with the core functions and strategic priorities of the Secretariat;

(c) The analysis of the associated staffing and cost implications of the long-term structural and strategic alignment;

4. *Requests* the Executive Secretary, subject to the availability of resources:

(a) To continue to implement the remaining short- and medium-term actions, as well as long-term actions, recommended in the functional review, in line with the approved Secretariat staffing requirements from the core budgets of the Convention and its Protocols for the period 2027–2028;

(b) To ensure that the main functions of the Secretariat, as established in Article 24 of the Convention, Article 31 of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety⁷ and Article 28 of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization,⁸ remain firmly at the core of the Secretariat's activities when implementing the recommendations of the functional review;

(c) To keep the Bureau of the Conference of the Parties informed of progress in implementing the remaining actions recommended in the functional review.

10. The Subsidiary Body on Implementation may also wish to recommend that the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol at its twelfth meeting and the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Nagoya Protocol at its sixth

⁵ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1760, No. 30619.

⁶ See CBD/COP/17/xx.

⁷ United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2226, No. 30619.

⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. 3008, No. 30619.

meeting take note of the decision on the present matter adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the Convention.

Annex I

Executive summary of the report on the external in-depth functional review of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity

1. This report presents the external Functional Review of the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD), conducted by the UNDP Management Consulting Team in response to COP decisions 15/34 and 16/28. The review assessed whether the Secretariat's structure, functions, and resources are fit to support the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and service the Convention and its Protocols effectively
2. Conducted over six months, the review combined quantitative and qualitative analysis of structure, staffing, budgets, and business processes, benchmarking with peer MEA secretariats, and extensive engagement through surveys, focus groups, workshops, and consultations with senior management and the COP Bureau. Two workstreams guided the process: Strategic Direction (clarifying mandate and priorities) and Operating Model Design (assessing structure and efficiency).
3. The review confirmed strong delivery, deep technical expertise, and a high level of staff commitment. It also identified several opportunities to strengthen the Secretariat's ability to support to KMGBF and service the Convention and its Protocols effectively. Enhancing the linkage between planning and resources, full implementation and operationalization of the Results-Based Budgeting framework and improving coordination across units would contribute to more coherent and efficient operations. Optimizing workload distribution and strengthening delegation of authority would further support timely decision-making and reduce pressure on units. As staffing levels have stagnated despite an expanded mandate, addressing capacity needs will be important to alleviate operational pressures and enable sustainable delivery.
4. To address these opportunities and issues, the review proposes an operating model in which functions are consolidated into three divisions reporting to the Office of the Executive Secretary, namely the Policy, Capacity and Monitoring Division, the Strategic Partnerships, Financing and Economy Division, and the Protocols Division. The review also proposes the establishment of three units, specifically the Intergovernmental Meeting Support Cluster, the Administrative and Operational Support Section and the IT and Digital Transformation Unit. In addition, the Office of the Executive Secretary will comprise the following units: Secretariat Support Unit, the Documentation and Language Unit, Legal and Intergovernmental Affairs Unit, and the Programme Management Unit.
5. Recommendations are presented under seven opportunity areas: (1) Structural and Strategic Alignment, (2) Cross-Cutting Coherence, (3) Empowerment and Accountability, (4) Human Resource Capacity and Resourcing, (5) Transformation of Ways of Working, (6) Performance and Data Management, and (7) Digital Transformation.
6. It is recommended that implementation be phased. Short-term actions (0-3 months) should focus on preparatory steps for implementing structural changes, establishing governance, identifying and securing resources and capacities required to implement recommendations, instituting business process ownership, and implementing results-based budgeting. Medium-term actions (3-6 months) involve initiation of structural alignment, but also focus on strengthening coordination, integrating results-based management, and enhancing staff development. Long-term actions (6+ months) will complete structural realignment, institutionalize accountability, modernize processes and systems.
7. It is recommended that a dedicated change-management mechanism under the Executive Secretary oversee implementation, monitor progress, and ensure transparency. Collectively, these reforms would chart a clear path toward a fit-for-purpose, agile, and results-oriented Secretariat, better equipped to deliver on COP mandates and support Parties in achieving the goals and targets of the KMGBF.

A. Purpose and scope of the review

8. In its decision 15/34 (paragraph 35), the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) requested the Executive Secretary, in consultation with the Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), to undertake an external, in-depth functional review of the Secretariat's structure and the implementation of its programme of work. The review was intended to update the Secretariat's organizational structure and grading of posts in light of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) and to strengthen its capacity to support implementation by Parties.

9. In its subsequent decision 16/28 (paragraph 11), the COP urged the Executive Secretary to finalize the functional review, taking into account the scoping report referenced in decision 16/4. The COP emphasized that the review should determine whether the Secretariat is appropriately structured and adequately resourced to perform its functions effectively, particularly in servicing meetings under the Convention and its Protocols and in supporting implementation of the KMGBF, and, where gaps exist, identify the adjustments required to address them.

10. In response to these mandates, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (SCBD) engaged the Management Consulting Team (MCT) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to facilitate the external functional review. The engagement, formalized through a Letter of Understanding signed in April 2025, defined the objectives, scope, methodology, and deliverables of the review. The functional review was designed to assess the Secretariat's structure, business processes, and resource allocation with a view to ensuring alignment with its core functions and strategic priorities as established by the COP. The scope of work focused on analysis and recommendations related to the Secretariat's structure and functions of teams. This did not include a review of individual positions or the grading/classification of posts as this is proposed to be undertaken as part of the implementation phase following decisions on the overall direction of change.

B. Methodology and approach

11. The functional review was conducted over a six-month period, following a structured and participatory process designed to generate evidence-based findings and co-created recommendations. The process was divided into two main phases, namely analysis and design, implemented through two concurrent workstreams on Strategic Direction and Operating Model Design. Throughout the process, the team remained mindful of data limitations, including gaps in available metrics.

12. The Analysis phase focused on developing a comprehensive understanding of the Secretariat's current structure, functions, and resource allocation ("as-is" state). This included a review of mandates, organizational charts, staff composition, funding sources, and key intergovernmental business processes, such as governing and subsidiary bodies data gaps or quality issues existed, the review drew on all available information while remaining aware of these limitations.

13. The Design phase built on the findings of the analysis to develop future-oriented recommendations for a fit-for-purpose structure and operating model ("to-be" state). This phase emphasized functional alignment, clarity of roles, integration across divisions, and coherence with the Secretariat's strategic vision and COP decisions.

14. The two workstreams were implemented as follows: (a) Strategic Direction: examined the Secretariat's mandate, priorities, and positioning to ensure alignment with the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and evolving expectations from Parties. This stream included internal consultations, workshops, and visioning sessions to articulate the Secretariat's desired future state; and (b) Operating Model Design: assessed key business processes, functions, and resource allocation to identify areas for improvement. The team analyzed workflows, reporting lines, interdependencies across divisions, and facilitated staff workshops to identify bottlenecks and propose solutions for improved coherence and effectiveness.

15. The review employed mixed analytical methods, combining quantitative data analysis (performance indicators, staffing tables, budgets, work plans, resource allocation) with qualitative insights (staff interviews, focus groups, and document review). Comparative benchmarking was undertaken against selected multilateral environmental agreement (MEA) secretariats to identify practices in structure, governance, and resource management in similar organizations.

16. Staff engagement was central to the review. Over the course of the engagement, the UNDP Management Consulting Team conducted consultations with senior leadership, unit-level focus groups with all staff, facilitated Secretariat-wide workshops, and launched an all-staff survey to collect views on structure, functions, and ways of working. These activities ensured that the review reflected staff perspectives and fostered ownership of the process.

17. Continuous consultation and validation were ensured through the Functional Review Internal Task Team and the Engagement Team, which provided technical and subject matter support throughout the process, fostering informed decision-making. Emerging findings were reviewed with the SCBD Senior Management Team and presented to the COP Bureau at key milestones for feedback and strategic guidance. This iterative validation helped mitigate the impact of data limitations by grounding findings in collective insights and expert judgment.

18. Key outputs of the process include: (a) Diagnostic analysis of the Secretariat's structure, functions, and resources; (b) Results of the staff survey and synthesis of focus group inputs; (c) A conference management business process map, draft standard operating procedure and improvement recommendations; (d) Workshop reports on strategic alignment, visioning, and operating model design; (e) A performance indicator analysis; (f) An analysis of work undertaken by units by KMGBF targets; and (g) A draft proposal for a fit-for-purpose structure and operating model with accompanying implementation and change management considerations.

19. Together, these outputs form the analytical foundation for the functional review's recommendations, which aim to strengthen the Secretariat's ability to service the governing bodies effectively, deliver on its mandates, and support Parties in implementing the KMGBF.

C. Overview of key findings

20. The functional review identified a range of institutional strengths and challenges across the Secretariat's structure, resourcing, business processes, and coordination mechanisms. The functional review confirmed that the Secretariat has maintained a strong record of delivery despite significant operational and resource pressures. It benefits from dedicated and technically skilled staff, a collaborative culture, and a consistent ability to meet Party expectations under demanding conditions. At the same time, the analysis identified several institutional areas where greater coherence, clarity, and integration would further strengthen the Secretariat's performance and sustainability.

21. The functional review's key findings are as follows:

Structural and strategic alignment

22. The Secretariat has made meaningful progress in supporting the goals and targets of the KMGBF, particularly through strong contributions to implementation, mainstreaming, and capacity-building. Mapping of Secretariat workstreams shows clear alignment with KMGBF priorities. At the same time, the current structure presents opportunities to strengthen coherence and better balance functions across the breadth of KMGBF targets. Enhancing coordination, clarifying institutional accountabilities and reinforcing strategic planning would help ensure that decisions, budgeting and resource mobilization are more closely aligned with strategic priorities.

23. More specifically, the review resulted in the following observations:

- a. There is strong potential to further integrate thematic work streams within capacity-building, knowledge management, and monitoring, reporting and review;

- b. Resource mobilization and stakeholder engagement functions would benefit from a more unified and strategic focus;
- c. Conference services could be strengthened to ensure sustainable and efficient support in view of resource constraints and a growth in servicing requirements over the past years;
- d. IT services, currently distributed over several units, present opportunities for more integrated digital support;
- e. The Results-Based Budget (RBB) framework, while in place, could be more fully leveraged to support integrated planning, budgeting, prioritization and reporting.

Cross-cutting coherence

24. While collaboration within teams is strong, coordination across divisions and units can be further improved. Current mechanisms for cross-Secretariat planning and information-sharing can be improved to enhance coordination and collaboration, supporting more integrated work across functional areas and enabling more efficient use of resources. Furthermore, enhancing internal communication and embedding consistent change management practices would help reinforce collective ownership and institutional coherence.

Empowerment and accountability

25. At the executive level, delegated authority for procurement is limited and has not kept up with price inflation over the past decade, thereby limiting executive authority and leading to cumbersome administrative processes. More generally, the level of dependence on the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON) for administrative and operational functions can lengthen processing times and reduce Secretariat flexibility and agility when it comes to administrative transactions.

Human resource capacity and resourcing

26. As noted above, over the past decade, Secretariat staffing levels have stagnated, while the scope and volume of work have expanded substantially. This development has led to ad-hoc arrangements with staff taking on extra duties, the use of short-term contractors to fill gaps and work overload in some areas, particularly at peak times. The lack of staff resources has, in part, been aggravated by delays in recruitment. Ensuring adequate staffing and HR capacity is necessary to improve recruitment and onboarding thus supporting a more sustainable distribution of workload, and the ability for the Secretariat to meet its mandated functions while safeguarding staff wellbeing.

Performance Metrics

27. While the Secretariat has established comprehensive planning and reporting mechanisms for intergovernmental processes linked to the COP and its subsidiary bodies, internal performance tracking across the Secretariat could be strengthened. The absence of a Secretariat-wide performance measurement framework and performance metrics and quality data proved to be a challenge for the Functional Review, but also creates ongoing challenges for the SCBD, namely in strategic planning, prioritization, accountability, and, importantly, in providing evidence to support budget requests, staffing adjustments and process improvements. At the same time, several units—such as Editorial and Language Unit, DevOps, HR, IT, Travel and Procurement have developed team-level performance metrics that provide a strong foundation and useful starting point for building a more coherent Secretariat-wide performance measurement framework.

Ways of working

28. The COP determines the core budget on a two-year cycle, and many activities depend on voluntary contributions which creates uncertainties and challenges in planning and executing work. Currently, the Secretariat lacks a comprehensive approach to strategic planning that effectively integrates long-term budgetary considerations with programmatic priorities. This disconnect hinders alignment of divisional and unit-level work with the Secretariat's overarching goals and priorities.

D. Key recommendations and proposed functional model

29. The functional review produced several recommendations grouped under seven interrelated opportunity areas. Together, these recommendations aim to strengthen the Secretariat's structure, systems, and working methods to enhance coherence, accountability, and alignment with the KMGBF.

a. Structural and strategic alignment

30. The review recommends realigning the Secretariat's functions and structures to better reflect the four goals and 23 targets of the KMGBF and ensure improved coherence in servicing the Convention and its Protocols. This includes clarifying linkages between programmatic and cross-cutting functions and ensuring that related activities are organized under consistent reporting lines. Strengthening functional alignment will improve coordination, clarify accountability, and enable the Secretariat to deliver more cohesive support to Parties under the KMGBF. The specific structural changes underpinning these recommendations, including the reorganization and reallocation of units, are set out in **the annex**.

31. More specifically, it is recommended to make structural adjustments guided by the following six functional groupings in addition to the overall executive management and executive management support functions:

- 1) Policy, Capacity and Monitoring, an integrated division focused on delivering on the KMGBF goals and targets, encompassing thematic Support, including all work related to programmatic, scientific, technical and policy support, and work related to capacity-building, National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), Technical and Scientific Cooperation (TSC) and Clearing-House (CH) mechanisms, and monitoring, review and reporting
- 2) Strategic Partnerships, Financing & Economy, an integrated division focused on work related to resource mobilization and economic integration of biodiversity targets, engagement with non-Party actors
- 3) Protocols, dedicated to servicing COP-MOPs and compliance committees for both Biosafety and ABS
- 4) Intergovernmental Meetings Support, supporting the formal and informal meetings of the intergovernmental process
- 5) Administrative and Operational Support, including all administrative support to Secretariat operations
- 6) IT and Digital Transformation, including Digital Solutions, IT infrastructure management, and IT support for clearing houses, and corporate knowledge management
- 7) Japan Biodiversity Fund,

32. The review recommends the following specific changes to the current Secretariat structure:

Office of Executive Secretary

33. Strengthen budgetary planning and monitoring by moving and strengthening the Programme Management Unit currently housed in the Administration Division to the Office of the Executive Secretary to support the effective use of the Results-Based Budgeting and Planning (RBBP) framework as the Secretariat's central strategic management tool for implementing the KMGBF and aligning resources with COP and Protocol decisions.

Policy, Capacity and Monitoring Division

34. Provide a clearer focus on Secretariat programmatic, scientific, technical and policy support in areas central to the KMGBF, including work on biome-based Programmes of Work, reducing threats to biodiversity, and promoting sustainable use and traditional knowledge, by bundling related staff resources in one division with expertise in the current Biodiversity, Science, Policy and Governance (BSPG) Unit forming the core capability.

35. Make better use of synergies in support of key cross-cutting implementation functions such as capacity-building, NBSAPs, TSC and CH mechanisms, and monitoring, review and reporting by bundling related staff resources in one division, with expertise in the current Capacity Building (CB) and Knowledge Management (KM) Units, and the Monitoring Review and National Reporting Unit (MRNR).

Strategic Partnerships, Financing, and Economy Division

36. Provide a stronger strategic focus on engaging a broad range of actors, mainstreaming biodiversity across economic sectors and levels of governance, and supporting resource mobilization, by combining Secretariat support related to the following areas in one division:

- (a) Support to the engagement of major groups and stakeholder
- (b) Cooperation with other UN actors
- (c) Support related to Article 8(j)
- (d) Support to Resource Mobilization (including Cali Fund and Financial Mechanism)
- (e) Communications and Awareness-Raising
- (f) Corporate Knowledge Management

37. This would require bundling resources currently distributed across various units with expertise in the Biodiversity, Economy Transformation and Innovation (BETI) Unit, the Stakeholder Engagement and Cooperation (SEC) and the People and Biodiversity (PBU) Unit forming its core capability into three units within this division.

Protocols Division

38. Cluster work related to Access and Benefit Sharing, Digital Sequence Information (DSI) on Genetic Resources and Biosafety in one division. Consolidating the two Protocol units into a single division would strengthen coherence across Protocol implementation, streamline support to Parties, and enable shared planning and expertise. This integration would enhance collaboration and operational efficiency, and position the Secretariat to deliver more consistent, coordinated, and technically robust services across both Protocols.

Intergovernmental Meetings Support

39. Strengthen support to intergovernmental meetings by creating a self-standing unit under direct oversight of the Deputy Executive Secretary and establishing a senior manager position to oversee and guide conference logistics and meetings management, participant registration, and travel for participants. By establishing a direct link to, and oversight by, Executive Management, these services should be more closely integrated with functions undertaken by the Documentation and Language Unit currently proposed to be part of the Executive Management function.

Administrative and Operational Support Section

40. Strengthen the administrative backbone of the Secretariat by focusing the Division's work on the following core services:

- (a) Human Resources
- (b) Finance and Budget
- (c) General Administration (including facility management and procurement)

IT and Digital Transformation Unit

41. Enhance strategic focus in the planning and execution of IT services by consolidating resources currently distributed across the Administration Division IT Unit and the CBKM, IT/DevOps sub-unit under a unified IT and Digital Transformation Unit to enhance efficiency, coordination and support for digital innovation. This unit would focus on three areas of work: i) providing tools and solutions for use by Parties and other external stakeholders (e.g. knowledge products, CHM, website), ii) leading on internal digital transformation to improve internal processes and workflows, coordination, knowledge management, and

performance and data management, iii) support the administration of IT equipment, infrastructure, and systems.

Japan Biodiversity Fund

42. The Fund is aligned with its mandate and continues to provide substantive support to the Secretariat on delivering targeted capacity-building and implementation support. The review highlights an opportunity to strengthen coordination between the JBF and the Secretariat's broader financial-mechanism functions to ensure a more comprehensive and strategically integrated approach to financing. Enhanced coordination would support greater coherence in resource mobilization efforts and improve alignment with Parties' priority implementation needs.

b. Cross-cutting coherence

43. The review highlighted opportunities to strengthen integration and coordination across Secretariat-wide processes and frameworks. More coherent governance arrangements and streamlined workflows would enhance efficiency, consistency, and institutional learning. To support this, the review recommends establishing designated business process owners for key cross-cutting functions. Consultations with Secretariat units underscored that clearer functional ownership and defined points of accountability would facilitate stronger collaboration, reduce overlap and enable more consistent and coordinated delivery across divisions.

44. Business process owners would provide technical guidance and services in their respective areas of expertise, ensure consistent application of Secretariat-wide standards, and be accountable for integrating lessons learned into internal policies and procedures. This approach would strengthen cross-functional coherence, promote institutional learning, and help embed shared standards and practices across the Secretariat. Based on the review and consultations, the proposed business process owners are:

- Communications: Communications and Awareness Unit
- Resource Mobilization: Resource Mobilization & Strategic Financing Unit
- Stakeholder Engagement: Stakeholder Engagement and Cooperation Unit
- Capacity Building: Capacity Building, Monitoring and Reporting Unit
- Knowledge Management: Capacity Building, Monitoring and Reporting Unit
- Conference Management: Conference Services Unit

c. Empowerment and accountability

45. Strengthening empowerment and accountability within the Secretariat is essential to ensure timely and effective decision-making. The review recommends that, where feasible, authority be delegated to division heads for areas such as budget management and procurement, in line with United Nations rules and regulations. In particular, increasing delegation of authority limits from UNEP for low-value procurement would help reduce delays and improve operational efficiency, considering the value for low value procurement has been US\$10,000 for over 10 years.

46. Greater delegation of authority must be complemented by clear accountability frameworks and performance monitoring mechanisms. Enhancing managerial empowerment would improve leadership responsibility for results, encourage initiative at the mid-management level, and contribute to a more agile and responsive Secretariat.

d. Human resource capacity and staff resourcing

47. The review found that staffing shortages and high and uneven workloads constrain the Secretariat's performance and staff well-being. In addition, team organigrams and job descriptions are outdated. To address these challenges, the review recommends strengthening the HR team and undertaking an internal review of recruitment processes to ensure the timeliness of backfilling vacant positions in coordination with

UNEP and UNON and updating and publishing individual job descriptions and team structures to reflect current functions.

48. Additional actions should include: establishing a regular process to review and keep up to date the Secretariat's job descriptions and staffing data, improving coordination with UNEP and UNON on recruitment, and exploring opportunities for administrative efficiency through economies of scale in contracting and shared services. Enhanced workforce planning, including better use of temporary capacity, will help ensure that the Secretariat is better staffed to meet operational needs.

49. Given the Secretariat's expanding workload and persistent capacity gaps identified across several technical and operational areas, strengthened workforce planning must also be accompanied by increased staffing capacity, particularly in units facing increased demands. More deliberate use of temporary capacity can help address short-term pressures, but sustainable delivery of core functions will require bolstering permanent staffing levels.

e. Transforming ways of working

50. The review recommends that the Secretariat adopt a more structured, Secretariat-wide approach to planning and coordination of work, building on the RBB framework to better align activities with functional roles and strategic priorities. Strengthened work planning would help reduce overlapping efforts, particularly as it relates to stakeholder engagement, resource mobilization and implementation support, improve coordination across units and support a more balanced distribution of workload. A more formalized internal process for change management, communication, and accountability would further enhance transparency and staff engagement. Several of these improvements have already been recognized by senior management and are in the early stages of implementation, providing a foundation for more integrated and coherent organizational practices going forward.

51. In addition, the review proposes the strengthening of the resource mobilization function to ensure adequate resources are available to support priority activities. The development of biannual resource mobilization plans following each COP to monitor implementation of funding strategies and strengthen the link between decisions, resource allocation, and delivery. Reinforcement of the Secretariat's long-term budgetary planning processes would also be beneficial. The development of multi-year financial projections informed by historical funding patterns and anticipated mandates will help the Secretariat in achieving greater predictability and alignment of divisional activities with overall organizational priorities.

52. Collectively, these recommendations are intended to ensure that the Secretariat operates in a more coherent, coordinated, and forward-looking manner. These recommendations will necessitate the strengthening of the Programme Management Unit to support these functions and its elevation to the Office of the Executive Secretary. Their implementation will enable the Secretariat to better align its structure and resources with its strategic objectives, improve coordination efficiency, and strengthen its capacity to support Parties in achieving the goals and targets of the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

f. Management of the Secretariat's Functional Performance Delivery

53. To address the lack of comprehensive and reliable internal performance metrics and data to inform the management of the Secretariat's function, the Secretariat should develop and apply a Secretariat-wide set of high-level performance metrics aligned with supporting the implementation of KMGBF and COP decisions. These metrics are intended to capture Secretariat-wide functional delivery of teams, rather than individual staff performance. Developing and maintaining such performance data would require additional capacity and specialized expertise for data collection, analysis and management. Once established, the performance data could be used to prepare a centralized performance dashboard, and to support planning, budgeting, request for resources and resource allocation. The Programme Management Unit would be well placed to assume ownership of the framework and ensure its ongoing relevance and application.

g. Digital Transformation

54. Develop a Secretariat-Wide Digital Transformation Strategy that articulates a unifying vision for digital services supporting KMGBF implementation, priorities for modernizing key processes and platforms, strengthening data governance, quality and analytics. This strategy will guide digital/AI initiatives across units with the goal of ensuring a more efficient secretariat and enhanced service delivery to Parties. This recommendation would require additional resources, both to develop and implement the strategy.

E. Next steps and expected outcomes

55. The successful implementation of the Functional Review's recommendations will require a phased and well-coordinated approach led by the Executive Secretary and ideally managed by an appointed implementation lead. In the immediate term, the Secretariat will need to establish a dedicated implementation and change-management mechanism responsible for translating the recommendations into concrete actions, sequencing reforms, and monitoring progress. Implementing these reforms will also require additional resources for staffing and specialized expertise to ensure that changes are adequately supported and sustained. This mechanism will ensure that reform efforts remain transparent and inclusive.

56. Short-term priorities should include:

- (a) finalization of the proposed operating model and structure;
- (b) identification for additional posts and resources to implement recommendations;
- (c) detailed plan for adjustments to positions and levels in alignment with endorsed structure;
- (d) the development of updated or new job descriptions;
- (e) the launch of Secretariat-wide communication on the reform process;
- (f) the designation of business process owners; and
- (g) the integration of results-based budgeting as a standard management practice.

57. Medium-term actions should focus on:

- (a) initiation of structural alignment process in line with SCBD and UNEP policies and procedures
- (b) strengthening coordination and coherence across the new functional clusters,
- (c) embedding accountability mechanisms, and
- (d) enhancing staff capacities through targeted development initiatives.
- (e) development and implementation of performance and data management framework
- (f) development of a digital transformation strategy

58. Furthermore, the implementation of integrated planning, budgeting, and monitoring systems should be prioritized to improve decision-making, transparency, and alignment between strategic priorities and resource allocation.

59. In the long term, the Secretariat will need to institutionalize the new operating model, ensuring that organizational structures, processes, and systems are fully aligned. Sustained leadership engagement, proactive communication, and continued consultation with staff and governing bodies will be essential to consolidating these reforms.

60. It is also recognized that any budgetary implications arising from the implementation of the functional review, including those related to additional staffing capacity and funding of activities, will require approval by the Parties. The Secretariat will therefore need to ensure that all proposed adjustments with financial impact are transparently costed, justified, and presented for consideration through the appropriate intergovernmental processes.

61. The expected outcomes of this process include a more coherent and strategically aligned Secretariat with clear accountability, optimized resource utilization, and an enhanced ability to deliver on COP mandates. The restructured organization will be better positioned to support Parties in achieving the goals and targets of the KMGBF through improved coordination, strengthened partnerships, and more efficient servicing of intergovernmental processes, including governing and subsidiary bodies. Ultimately, the implementation of the review's recommendations will enable the Secretariat to function as a more agile,

results-oriented, and future-ready institution capable of responding effectively to the evolving global biodiversity agenda.

Annex II

Estimated extrabudgetary resource requirements

The table below has been prepared to show the estimated extrabudgetary resource requirements for the activities requested of the Secretariat, as outlined in the draft recommendation, in support of its consideration. The present annex is not part of the draft recommendation submitted for consideration by the Subsidiary Body.

Extrabudgetary resource requirements

(United States dollars)

<i>OP</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Meeting costs</i>	<i>Staff travel</i>	<i>Staff costs^a</i>	<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>PSC (13 per cent)</i>	<i>Total</i>
4 (a)	Support for the implementation of some of the recommendations in the functional review related to enhancing business processes, in case regular posts are not provided	–	–	288 000	288 000	37 440	325 440
4 (a)	Development of information technology solutions for the implementation of recommendations in the functional review related to enhancing business processes	–	–	50 000	50 000	6 500	56 500
Total					338 000	43 940	381 940

Abbreviations: PSC, programme support costs; OP, operative paragraph of the recommendation or draft decision.

^a Consultants, partners and additional staff.

Note: the full implementation of the recommendations from the functional review would require additional posts, but those details will be provided to the Conference of the Parties as part of the budget proposal for consideration at its seventeenth meeting.