



Convention on Biological Diversity

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**Conference of the Parties to the
Convention on Biological Diversity
Seventeenth meeting**
Yerevan, 19–30 October 2026
Item 7 of the provisional agenda*
**Administration of the Convention
on Biological Diversity, budget for
the trust funds and functional review
of the Secretariat**

Additional information on the functional review of the Secretariat**

Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. In decision 14/37, the Conference of the Parties requested the Executive Secretary to analyse the structure and staffing to ensure streamlined reporting arrangements, optimal functionality and effectiveness in the implementation of the approved work programme for the biennium 2019-2020 and in view of the expected post-2020 orientation of activities under the Convention, and to report the results of this analysis to the Conference of the Parties at its fifteenth meeting. A preliminary analysis of the structure and staffing was conducted and shared with the Conference of Parties at its fifteenth meeting in its consideration of administration and budgetary matters. The preliminary analysis was produced on the basis of three audits of the Secretariat, the work undertaken to develop the Secretariat's results-based framework, an internal enterprise risk assessment done in accordance with the United Nations' Enterprise Risk Assessment (ERM) Policy and the draft post-2020 global biodiversity framework.
2. The enterprise analysis, presented in annex IV of document [CBD/COP/15/7/Add.1](#), identified operational risks including risks due to human resources, strategic risks and emerging issues in a changing environment. The enterprise risk assessment concluded "that there is a lack of core programmatic staff and an overreliance on short-term project staff, consultants and interns to support core functions related to the existing programme of work of the Convention and its Protocols".
3. Drawing on this enterprise risk analysis, a list of new posts and post upgrades required was presented in annex V to the document [CBD/COP/15/7/Add.1](#), which included 29 new posts, including 10 general service staff, and three post upgrades. The Conference of the Parties, in its decision [15/34](#), approved four new posts, including a Programme Management Officer - Results-based budgeting (P-4), a Programme Management Officer – Monitoring (P-3), a Programme Officer Biosafety Clearing-House (P-3), and an Associate Finance Officer (P-2). Likewise, the Conference of Parties at its decision [16/28](#), approved five new posts, including a Programme Management Officer – Digital Sequence Information (P 4); a Programme Management Officer – Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities and Traditional Knowledge (P-4); an Editor (P-3); and two Meetings Assistants

* [CBD/COP/17/1/Rev.1](#).

** The present document is being issued without formal editing.

(G-6). All together, seven P-level staff and two G-level staff were provided since the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, to address the gap identified above (19 P-level staff, 10 G-level staff, and 3 post upgrades).

4. This leaves a gap of 12 P-level staff, 8 G-level staff and 3 post upgrades in the Secretariat based on the analysis done in the lead up to fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. In addition, during the fifteenth and sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties, a number of decisions were adopted, including decision [15/4](#) on the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which have implications on the core work of the Secretariat. Thus in addition to the persistent staffing gap due to shortages which were identified in CBD/COP/15/7/Add.1, there is an additional and different types of staffing gap in response to the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

5. The existence of a staffing gap was also noted in the external in-depth functional review, which is described in [CBD/SBI/6/10](#) and was undertaken in response to decisions [15/34](#) and [16/28](#). The external in-depth functional review noted that “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.”

6. During the seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation, the Secretariat presented a budget based on an assessment of the staffing needs and taking into account the previous analysis of enterprise risks and the findings of the external in-depth functional review. The Secretariat also held an informal consultation on administrative and budget matters during the seventh meeting of the Subsidiary Body on Implementation. During that consultation, Parties asked questions related to the risks associated with not receiving the ten additional posts requested by the Secretariat. This document provides further information on the human resource related risks.

II. Assessment of human resource related enterprise risks

7. The enterprise risk analysis, in CBD/COP/15/7/Add.1, and the external in-depth functional review describe the staffing gaps in the Secretariat. The findings of the external in-depth functional review as well as the Secretariat’s assessment of these findings provided a basis for identifying additional post requirements and for prioritizing the most urgent needs, taking also into account the draft decisions to be considered by the Conference of the Parties at the present meeting, including the findings from the Global Report.

8. The Secretariat identified that there are 10 additional posts which are urgently required for the Secretariat to effectively support the work under the Convention and its Protocols, including supporting Parties in their implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. If these posts are not granted, then there are two primary types of issues, relating to:

(a) *Work continuity: avoid a discontinuation of the delivery of work.* A number of core functions are currently being carried out by project funded staff or consultants or through extensive overtime, with staff also contributing to areas of work that fall outside the scope of their terms of reference. Without additional staffing, it will not be possible to continue delivering these areas of work at the scope, quality and speed required by the decisions of the Conference of the Parties. In the case of these posts, the issue is not that the Secretariat would be unable to initiate new areas of work. Rather, these posts are needed to sustain existing work for which the Secretariat would otherwise lack the necessary resources. Consequently, all or some of this work may need to be reduced, delayed or discontinued. Particular concern was also noted by Parties on the continuing delivery of conference services. The other areas concerned include capacity-building and development, including the support for operationalization of the technical and scientific cooperation centres; mainstreaming, in particular into business and finance operations. Additionally, some RBB and IT related functions, such as digital transformation, would be at risk;

(b) *New areas of work: supporting the evolving work of the Convention to support the implementation of decisions by the Conference of the Parties, adopted in response to changes in the biodiversity landscape and an evolving understanding of what is required to achieve the objectives of the Convention is changing.* These are areas in which the Secretariat currently has limited or no capacity and would need to expand its work in order to deliver work on mandates arising from decisions at the fifteenth and sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties. They also include areas in which additional capacity would be required to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Secretariat's work delivery. These areas include the work to address drivers of biodiversity loss, such as land-use change, pollution and overconsumption, as well as cross-sectoral approaches and tools to address these drivers, such as biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning, including restoration. Moreover, the Secretariat does not have capacity to meet the increasing requests by the Conference of the Parties on facilitating the education for biodiversity.

9. Additional information on the specific risks and likelihood of risk associated with each proposed post are described in the table below.

Assessment of risks of not receiving the proposed additional posts

<i>Unit/ Additional posts proposed</i>	<i>Risks and likelihood of risk</i>
Capacity Development and National Implementation Support Unit: Programme management officer (P-4) on technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer and innovation Programme management officer (P-4) on support to national implementation	Work topics: Capacity-building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, technology transfer and innovation in support of Parties in their national implementation Type of risk: work continuity Risk level: High – cannot deliver without additional resources Context: The Capacity Development and National Implementation Support Unit promotes and facilitates capacity-building and development, technical and scientific cooperation, access to and transfer of technology and innovation support activities to enable Parties and relevant stakeholders to accelerate implementation of the Convention, the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and national biodiversity strategies and action plans. In addition, this Unit hosts the Global Coordination Entity of the Technical and Scientific Cooperation Mechanism of the Convention. Relevant Key Targets: All Targets, in particular Target 20 Current situation: Currently, there is one Professional staff, P-5 and one General Service staff working on all issues related to capacity building and development and technical and scientific cooperation. There are two P-4s which have been contributing to core work which are on project funded posts. The current project funding for these extrabudgetary posts is limited and is not sufficient to cover staffing costs for the next biennium. Risks: Given the volume of work, without the two project posts, this Unit, with the current capacity, would not be able to continue to deliver at its current scope, quality and speed and it would need to scale back its work, particularly the work related to supporting the technical and scientific cooperation centres, without additional staffing resources as proposed.

Drivers and Cross-sectoral Work Unit: Programme management officer (P-3) on the impacts of pollution on biodiversity; Programme management officer (P-3) on biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning, land-use change and restoration	Work topics: Drivers of biodiversity loss, such as land-use change, pollution and overconsumption, as well as the cross-sectoral approaches and tools to address these drivers, such as biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning, including restoration Type of Risk: new areas of work Risk level: High – cannot deliver without additional resources Context: The Drivers and Cross-sectoral Work Unit provides scientific, technical, and policy information, together with analyses, tools, and guidance to address the drivers of biodiversity loss and to advance cross-sectoral work in line with Articles 8 (f), 8(h), 8 (i), 8 (l), 10 to support implementation of the Convention and various targets of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Relevant Key Targets: Targets 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 16, Current situation: The Secretariat current does not have staff dedicated to work related to pollution and biodiversity or biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and land-use change. Any requests from the Conference of the Parties on these issues have been address in an ad-hoc manner. Risks: This Unit currently does not have any staff dedicated to work on pollution or on spatial planning or land-use change. The Unit will not be able to cover these areas of work without these additional posts.
Mainstreaming, Economy and Finance Unit: Associate programme management officer (P-2) for mainstreaming, in particular financial sectors Senior programme assistant (G-7) to support the work of the Unit, in particular mainstreaming of sectors and subnational governments	Work topics: Mainstreaming, in particular financial sectors Type of risk: work continuity Risk level: High – cannot deliver without additional resources Context: Currently, there is one Professional staff, P-4 working on all issues related to mainstreaming. Relevant Key Targets: Targets 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 Current situation: There is currently one P-4 working on the issues related to mainstreaming and subnational governments. The work on mainstreaming of financial sectors is currently being supported by a JPO and was previously supported by a project post. The term of the contract will end shortly. The volume of work on mainstreaming has been expanding and the overall Unit function has expanded to include DSI and Cali Fund, and the financial mechanism, which requires enhanced support from the programmatic and general service staff. Risks: It should be noted that this Unit, with the current capacity, would not be able to continue to deliver some of the work related to mainstreaming across business and finance, and additional functions of the Unit, including DSI and Cali Fund.
Meeting Planning and Coordination Unit: Conference services officer (P-3) to strengthen the planning, logistics	Work topics: Conference services Type of risk: work continuity Risk level: Medium

organization and coordination of all meetings	Context: The Meetings Planning and Coordination Unit is responsible for overall conference logistical planning, organization and support for meetings of the Convention and its Protocols and provides all-in-one logistical support to facilitate the planning, execution, and management of the meetings. The Unit coordinates the overall management of the meetings by initiating the conferencing processes in a timely manner and executing the logistical work related to meetings. Current situation: Currently the Unit is composed of 2.5 general service staff. 1.5 core funded and 1 funded by programme support cost funds. The Unit has a high level of overtime with many of the staff in the Unit working well above 40 hours a week and borrowing support from other Units in the Secretariat. The staff in the Unit has extensive experience in conference services and delivered the work well beyond his terms of reference, which is exceptional case, but is near retirement age. The Secretariat has reassigned a P-5 post originally housed in the Cooperation Unit, following the retirement of the incumbent, to the Head of Conference Services Section to address the increasing demand for strengthened conference servicing and its long-term sustainability. Risks: It should be noted that this Unit, within the current capacity, would not be able to deliver their intended support and services as expected by the Conference of the Parties, without additional staffing resources at least at the P-3 level as proposed. Continuing to heavily rely on General service staff, regardless of their capacity, would impose high level of risks in terms of work continuity and accountability – if this decision waits until after the retirement of the staff in the Unit then there is a high risk of a gap in meeting delivery.
Programme Management Unit: Associate programme management officer (P-2) to support the maintenance of the RBB framework, costing of decisions and the Secretariat-wide strategic planning and monitoring process	Work topics: RBB framework, costing of decisions and the Secretariat-wide strategic planning and monitoring process Type of risk: work continuity Risk level: Medium Context: The Programme Management Unit (PMU) supports senior management and the wider Secretariat in strategic results-based planning, the mobilization of funding, the matching of donor funds with priority activities, and effective planning, monitoring, and reporting on delivery of programmes, projects, and other voluntary-funded activities. It supports the maintenance of the Secretariat's Results-Based Budgeting and Planning Framework, coordinates the costing of COP decisions and subsidiary body recommendations, and provides inputs for the preparation of budget documents for COP. It also supports all SCBD staff in the use of UN-Secretariat-wide and other tools for project and programme management. Current situation: Currently, this Unit is supported by one Professional staff, at P-4 level and two General Service staff working on programme management. The workload for the Unit is too high for the existing staff. Risks: It should be noted that this Unit, with the current capacity, would not be able to deliver its intended support and services at an adequate level of scope, speed and quality, as it has to cover all the

	programmatic work activities of the Secretariat that keep increasing, as expected by the Conference of the Parties, without additional staffing resource at the P-2 level as proposed. Specifically updating and maintaining the Results-Based Management framework and Budget in a timely manner, and the monitoring of key performance indicators (KPIs), would be constrained.
IT and Digital Transformation Unit: Associate information systems officer (P-2) to strengthen and support the maintenance of the information technology and digital transformation infrastructure	Work topics: Maintenance of the information technology and digital transformation infrastructure Type of risk: work continuity Risk level: Medium Context: The IT and Digital Transformation Unit provides reliable and secure digital services that support the implementation of the Convention and its Protocols and enable the Secretariat's work. The Unit operates with a strategic focus, working closely by supporting and leading digital transformation internally to the Secretariat, other Conventions, and UN partners to improve collaboration, share solutions, promotes interoperability, and align with UN-wide standards. Through the efficient use of digital tools and systems, the Unit provides IT strategy and strengthens business efficiency and supports informed decision-making. Specifically, the Unit focuses 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. Current situation: One P-3 post originally housed under IT team was redeployed after the retirement of incumbent, to the Unit on Drivers and Cross-Sectoral Unit. This person was primarily handling the administration of IT equipment, infrastructure and systems, which would lead the additional work load to the other members of the team and may not give enough capacity to deliver its work on digital transformation. Risks It should be noted that this Unit, with the current capacity (after releasing P-3 post), would not be able to deliver its intended support and services at an adequate level of scope, speed and quality, to support the digital transformation for the Secretariat operation as well as intergovernmental meetings, as expected by the Conference of the Parties, in particular through its consideration on the effectiveness of processes under the Convention and its Protocols.
Communication, Education and Public Awareness Unit: Associate communication officer (P-2) to support activities of the Unit and facilitate the implementation of the	Work topics: Communication / Global plan of action for education on biodiversity Type of risk: new work Risk level: Medium Context: The Communication, Education and Public Awareness Unit leads the work on raising public awareness and mainstreaming and highlighting biodiversity into formal and informal education; leads on

global plan of action for education on biodiversity`	communication efforts, including the website, to achieve the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity and its Protocols and to advance the implementation of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework. Relevant Key Targets: Targets 21, 22 Current situation: The Head of the Communications Unit, P-4, is fully dedicated to communications related to the Convention and its meetings and activities, along with the other members of the Communications Unit. The Unit has been supporting the negotiation of the global plan of action for education on biodiversity and needs to urgently advance the release of the new website; however, there are no staff in the Unit who can be dedicated, with necessary expertise and capacity, to the further development and implementation of the global plan of action for education on biodiversity. Risks: It should be noted that this Unit, with the current capacity, would not be able to deliver its intended support and services at an adequate level of scope, quality and speed, as expected by the Parties, in particular through its consideration on the global plan of action for education on biodiversity, without additional staffing resource at least one P-2 level, as proposed.
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