

Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2016–2017

Questions and Answers, 12 May 2017

Q1. Can the Secretariat provide an estimate of the projected unspent balance from the previous biennium which can be applied against the core budget for the 2018 -19 biennium to offset the proposed 7.4% increase in the Executive Secretary's proposal as well as the Zero nominal growth scenario? Cost premise used in calculations.

Please refer to question 4 and the answer provided as published on the UNFCCC website at: http://unfccc.int/files/secretariat/budget/funding_at_the_unfccc/application/pdf/questions_and_answers_20170705.pdf

Q2. The Bahamas notes that in Annex II of FCCC/SBI/2017/4 the UNOG standard cost figures were used in the cost estimate for conference services contingency. Has the secretariat considered using another UN office as a cost comparison, and if not, why? Please provide for consideration the potential savings which would result from estimating the cost for conferences services from any other UN Office

Reference is made to UN General Assembly document # A/AC.237/79/Add.1, para financial support "... Conference servicing costs arising from sessions of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies could be absorbed in the United Nations regular budget, by decision of the General Assembly".

Since the first UNFCCC session, conference services costs related for up to two conferences a year, are fully covered by the United Nations at no cost to UNFCCC.

The UN DGCM generally assigns conference support to a UN duty station based on proximity, capacity and the familiarity with the given process.

Q3. We note that increasingly a paperless process is employed which should result in significant savings in conference services as its is becoming more difficult to obtain hard copies. The electronic systems and document delivery systems seems, not to keep pace with transition and the website makes it difficult to follow, particularly closing plea rises where documents are being adopted in a shotgun approach. Has the secretariat costed the savings to a paperless system presently employed?

The secretariat employs a 'paper-light' approach to document distribution to save costs and to enhance the sustainability of the sessions.

Paper copies of pre-session and in-session documents are made available on the UNOG-run Documents Counter on demand, and copies of documents are occasionally distributed in plenary in the final hours of the session.

Regarding the electronic distribution of in-session documents, as soon as a document is finalized, an advance English version is posted to the body-specific in-session document page on the secretariat's website, followed by the official versions in all six UN languages once ready. The documents are organized by agenda item on the in-session pages.

These web pages are linked to on the main meetings web page and in the Daily Programme. The availability of documents is also announced through Twitter, the Negotiator app and the RSS feed on the website home page.

The secretariat therefore invests significant effort into facilitating timely online access to in-session documents, and will continue to strive to improve that access.

Q4. What measures are being taken to provide a more responsive process of access to documents in closing plenaries?

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Q5. Staff Costs. It is our understanding that the UN system wide service has reviewed the post adjustment formula employed UN wide, to effect a -7.5% decrease across the UN system. Has this adjustment in one component of staff cost, been provided for in the staff estimates for the new biennium?

This adjustment has been considered when calculating the standard salary costs. The costs are based on the actual costs. Many savings envisioned in the UN system wide service review were achieved through adjusting various staff costs which do not apply to Bonn as duty station such as hardship allowance, danger pay .

Q6. Mandated activities. The budget proposal makes references to "non-Parties", "private sector engagement", "local communities and indigenous peoples" and, "targeted support of national efforts" as part of new mandates and building on existing mandates, to be supported from core resources. Costing of these "new" elements are not clearly identified in the budget and as such the savings from their elimination or reduction is not easily identified. It is our view that these activities do not form part of core mandates. An example would be under paragraph 42 where "a professional level liaison" will be stationed at UNHQ "to support "strategic integration" into the work of UN agencies". It is not clear if this and similar efforts across the budget comes from from "core" or supplementary activities?

On the Indigenous Peoples Platform: The secretariat has so far only estimated a minimum standard cost for an IT engagement agreement in the core budget (10K). Labour has been absorbed by existing staff. Any future needs depend on mandated activities that the secretariat may receive.

GLOBAL CLIMATE ACTION

Budget Proposal

Mandate

Decision 1/CP.21*

Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action

Nature of work

Coordination activities

Recognition activities – NAZCA, High level events, Climate action yearbook

Engagement activities – Policy briefs, political outreach, Regional carbon forums, Policy dialogues at COP, TEM

Consultancy services and operations – Content production, connecting, aligning, recognizing, NAZCA technical development, data partnerships and data analysis

Biennium budget

Core: USD 322 000

Supplementary: USD 950 000 (Supplementary budget for GCA is 3.8 million, of which, 75% will be sought through non-traditional funding sources not Party contributions)

Delivery

Enhanced high-level engagement (decision 1/CP.21, para 120, 121)

Operationalization and extension of the Leaders Network

High-Level Event on Climate Action and high-level engagement at the COP

Successful execution of existing initiatives and introduction of new or strengthened initiatives (decision 1/CP.21, para 121, chapeau and (b))

Operationalization and extension of the Collaboration Forum

Establishment of Communities of Climate Action Practice

Technical and high level engagement on various thematic areas at Regional Carbon Forums

Trusted recognition of the outcomes of implementation of voluntary commitments (decision 1/CP.21 para 120, decision 1/CP.22 para 19)

Engagement with coalitions, initiatives and related data providers to track and record progress

Summary for Policymakers providing policy options, priorities and recommendations to accelerate action

Yearbook of Climate Action on achievements, new commitments and initiatives

Further developed NAZCA with regular updates on progress and commitments

Q7. Support for the work of the IPCC. Having considered the budget and the responses to questions raised by Parties the proposal to eliminate the support provided to the IPCC is not one that The Bahamas supports. Can the Secretariat provide an alternate approach that would preserve the support by indicating costs savings?

This matter was discussed in great length at the 3rd Contact group meeting. Parties are yet to decide on the modalities for reinstating.

Q8. We note as an example, that in FCCC/SBI/2017/Add.1 under objective 2 Communication and outreach "non Party stakeholders" are references, and paragraph 195 indicates that some 1.13 M Euros (does this include or not, staff time and non staff costs?) is used by Core funding to facilitate "outreach and communication" using social media. Objective 3 in Para 198 has a similar provision amounting to some 1.27 M Euros.

Yes, the costs include staff and non-staff costs.

The EUR 1.13 million under para 195 are for communications and outreach work, such as media outreach, Newsroom articles, communications support at conferences and social media

The EUR 1.27 million in para 198 covers work in the area of Knowledge Management, such as internal communications, official documents management and records management. These services are critical for documenting, preserving, archiving the climate intergovernmental process. Knowledge management also develops and maintains tools such as taxonomy, which enable documents to not only be uploaded but also improve search ability of documents, which is an important request from Parties to engage with the process.

Q9. Support for Developing countries. The Bahamas finds itself in a unique position where support for capacity building is constrained as an "eligibility" criteria is being applied. We noted with concern this process in previous COP, where capacity building funding to support the Bahamas, a small island developing state, to report under the Convention is through voluntary sources under with "eligibility" has been determined outside a COP process. It is our view that the secretariat's mandate to support developing country Parties should be provided from core funding allocation. Has the secretariat made provision for support to parties disadvantaged by the use of "eligibility" criteria being applied?

The budget for UNFCCC does not have a provision to support Parties disadvantaged by the use of the "eligibility criteria". The core budget only includes staff cost related to the management of the trust fund.

Contributions from Parties to support the participation of eligible Parties in the sessions of the convention are all directed to the Trust Fund for Participation.

However, in an effort to accommodate Parties an exception was made for representatives from developing country Parties designated by their respective regional groups to participate in meetings of the constituted bodies established under the Convention, and elected by parent bodies, to be eligible for funding under the Trust Fund for the UNFCCC Core Budget and the Trust Fund for Supplementary

This exception is reflected in paragraph 145 of the report FCCC/CP/2013/10, "Report of the Conference of the Parties on its nineteenth session, held in Warsaw from 11 to 23 November 2013".

Q10. Performance indicators Communication and Programme. The point about non-Party and non-state actors was made in earlier discussions. The prominence of the outreach are more clearly indicated in the Communications programme, and the costs more transparent. The communications programme indicators overlap with the ICT programme particular as they relate to the use of the website and documents retrieval process. Removing these links in our view, result in the Communications programme focus being more clearer.

The Communications and ICT programmes are jointly working and collaborating on the website and document retrieval process. CO provides the needed resources and expertise in defining requirements, content and outreach whilst ICT provides the resources and expertise in the development of the required technology platform and systems.
