

**Secretariat responses to questions received on 8 June 2021, 1 a.m. - 9 June 2021, 7:30 p.m.**

**1. Question:** Please clarify the balance between Mitigation and Adaptation in the proposed budget.

➤ **Response:** Detailed information on the balance of funding for the Mitigation and Adaptation divisions is included in the [secretariat responses to questions received on 7 June 2021](#) (responses to questions 9 and 10). The methodology for developing the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2022-2023 as described in chapter III.C of [FCCC/SBI/2021/4](#) is applied consistently for all divisions and thematic areas, including Mitigation and Adaptation.

**2. Question:** Submit and make publicly available the following information:

- a. information on outstanding contributions, especially outstanding contributions from other countries than LDCs or SIDs for more than two years;
- b. information about measures undertaken by the UNFCCC secretariat to address arrears;
- c. information about measures undertaken by other UN conventions to address arrears

➤ **Response:**

- a. A detailed status of contributions as at 14 May 2021 and as at 31 December 2020 is published under agenda item 20a ([FCCC/SBI/2021/INF.3](#) and [FCCC/SBI/2021/INF.1](#), see table 1 in both documents). There are two columns which indicate for how many years contributions have been outstanding.
- b+c On the margins of SBI 47 a technical workshop was held with representatives of Parties on ways to increase the efficiency and transparency of the budget process including ways to address outstanding contributions to the core budget. The secretariat had prepared a [background paper](#) containing information on potential measures to address outstanding contributions to the core budget including the measures the secretariat continues to undertake as well as an overview of measures other international organizations are taking. The results of this technical workshop were reported in [FCCC/SBI/2018/2](#) for SBI 48-1. Furthermore, the secretariat provided a report [FCCC/SBI/2018/INF.18](#) at SBI 49 with information on the use of payment plans to address the high level of outstanding contributions to the core budget.

**3. Question:** Information on future costs for the IT tool to support virtual negotiations, including analysis of the costs / potential cost savings of using the same tool as used by other UN entities such as the CBD.

➤ **Response:**

The objectives of the Digital Platform for Climate Change Events are as follows:

- To optimally conduct and service events of any size – meetings, conferences, workshops, reviews, etc. – and with any ratio of virtual to physical attendance;
- To enable UNFCCC stakeholders to collaborate and conduct work in a virtual environment during events and throughout the year;
- To deliver a scalable, seamlessly integrated and user-friendly virtual platform with appropriate cyber security;
- To provide effective support for participants from beginning to end of virtual meetings including the ability to connect to the meetings reliably and securely.

The secretariat has reached out to various UN meeting organizers on their current virtual meeting tools, with the hope of identifying a tool which supports all secretariat's virtual meeting requirements and especially those of UN style meetings. Unfortunately, such a tool does not yet exist. Various UN organizations are resorting to different tools in the market and adapting them to their needs with various levels of success. Therefore, a comparison of costs of tools used by other UN entities is not possible. In partnering with UNICC, the secretariat hopes to develop a solution for UN style meetings that while serving secretariat events, could also serve as model for other UN organizations, saving cost and effort across the UN.

The platform is currently being developed and partially already in use for the May-June 2021 SB sessions. The initial estimated budget for this project over three years is EUR 5.8 million. The costs include project management, change management and training, support to participants, ICT professional services and vendor technology platform and support.

While the platform is currently under development, future costs of operating the platform and using it for future meetings can only be estimated at this stage. The development of the platform includes, as deliverable, the possibility to adjust the costs for future meetings depending on the meeting requirements, size and format.

4. **Question:** According to the paragraph 32 of the programme budget for the biennium 2022-2023 (FCCC/SBI/2021/4), staff travel in the proposed budget has been reduced by 25 % in comparison with the 2020-2021 budget to reflect participation in virtual meetings. Are there any possibility to reduce the travel cost for other participants such as experts in comparison with the current biennium?

➤ **Response:** Constituted body meetings, expert group meetings and meetings that go beyond information sharing continue to be planned as in-person meetings. However, the secretariat will manage the implementation of the budget in a flexible manner and make any adjustments in the biennium 2022–2023 in response to evolving requirements and requests by the relevant bodies, including any arrangements for a higher share of virtual meetings, if appropriate. Any core funding budgeted for travel related costs would then be used to cover the costs of virtual meetings or to provide other mandated services.

5. **Question:** Could you show us the cost saving effect by the introduction of the standard cost compared to the 2020-2021 budget?

➤ **Response:** The use of standard costs was already introduced for the 2020–2021 budget and then further expanded for the 2022–2023 budget. The purpose of using standard costs is to simplify and standardize the calculation of the budget requirements for activities and not to realize cost savings for these activities. Using standard costs does not mean that activities cost less compared to estimating the costs without standard costs. There also are no cost savings for the budget process itself from the use of standard costs.