

Secretariat responses to requests from Parties for information and clarification received at the budget contact group meeting on 7 June 2023 and in writing after the meeting¹

- 1. Request:** We are wondering why the staff number has increased significantly for ongoing activities. This could include:
- (i) Transparency: a significant increase in budget and staffing is proposed with the full implementation of the ETF under the Paris Agreement, particularly (i) the review of each report and (ii) the management of reports and data (FCCC/SBI/2023/2/Add.1, p.51 and p.62)
 - (ii) Conference affairs related to organizing, logistics, and documentation for meetings (FCCC/SBI/2023/2/Add.1, p.81): a significant increase

➤ **Response:**

The new posts are to support increased workload as mandated activities expand, new mandated activities approved in the current biennium and not in the current biennium budget and in the case of the cybersecurity officer, to ensure full-time dedicated capacity for a high-risk critical function in the secretariat.

Please find below the explanation for the ones requested.

Justification for the Transparency work and mandate:

The ETF adopted by Parties in Katowice and Glasgow requires an increase in the number of reports/coverage (all 195 Parties), scope (GHG inventory, NDC tracking progress, FTC info, adaptation, etc.) and frequency (every 2 years) of reviews compared with the MRV process under the Convention and Kyoto Protocol. Currently, the secretariat depends on supplementary funded staff for review activities, who have been partly moved to core funding in the proposed budget to have sustainable human resources for reviewing the BTRs.

Justification for the Conference Affairs (CA) Division

Based on the review of significant rise in complexity and work, resources are outlined in the biennium budget for 2024-2025 and beyond to guarantee the division can cover its operating costs and continue to deliver the high-quality services required by Parties in line with organizational mandates and the evolution of UNFCCC events.

¹ Responses to other requests received by the secretariat will be provided as soon as they become available.

The Conference Services division provides optimal conference services for the sessions of the governing and subsidiary bodies, as well as for a wide range of workshops and other events. The division plans and coordinates conference and provides high-quality services, including managing the trust fund for Participation, formal and informal documents for meetings and the registration and accreditation of participants.

The volume and complexity of work that the CA division performs has grown significantly in the past 3 years and the ability of the team to perform has been severely impacted including impacts on the staff health, and wellbeing deteriorating as additional demands are placed on the small team.

As an example, the CA division supported more mandated events of approximately 200 workshops, capacity-building sessions and meetings in and outside Bonn, including new constituted bodies. Other examples, are growing participation and complexity of the SB and COP sessions with hybrids components, increases participation, more complex agenda and mandated events.

With 50,000 participants and a customized venue as large as 270,000 sqm, over double the amount since COP 25, COPs have become the largest meetings convened by the United Nations, placing unprecedented demand on the division. In addition to facilitating the participation of Parties and observers, CA division also facilitated the participation of 113 world leaders and a record 69,252 registrants, of whom 49,716 representatives of government, civil society, academia, business and youth as well as support personnel were badged (29 per cent increase from COP 26). The division also facilitated accommodation arrangements for participants, including funded delegates (the number increased by 77 per cent compared with COP 26).

In addition to growing meetings, workshops, and complexity of the SBs/COPs, the CA team works on multiple engagements - in the first half of the year the team has to work on wrapping up the previous COP, plan for the next SB session and next COP as well as field questions from potential future host countries. In the second half of the year work with potential future COPs intensifies despite the ongoing preparations for the current COP, workshops and meetings in and outside of Bonn.

Other areas where demand has grown include:

- a) The volume of official and nonofficial documents it processes and edits has reached a record level. The continuous growth in demand for its services without an increase in resources has meant that CA has been struggling to sustainably respond to these demands. In 2022, 571 documents were supported by the document unit with more than 4 million words which represents a growth of 33% in the number of documents since 2019 and a growth of 21% in the word count (2019 being the last year before COVID).
- b) The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the transition to virtual and hybrid meetings, necessitating Conference Affairs to manage virtual and in-person participation for mandated events for greater transparency and inclusion

- c) Growth in demand for support of mandated events, including workshops and meetings of constituted bodies.
- d) Growth in scope and complexity of SB sessions in Bonn.
- e) The increasing complexity of COPs and SBs and the ever-busier intersessional calendar have required increased coordination and follow-up with host governments and more coordination with other secretariat divisions, UN entities, consultants and contractors.

Justification for Intergovernmental Support and Collective Progress: for administrative support to the Presidency and bureau meetings (FCCC/SBI/2023/2/Add.1, p.97)

The division is facing an exponential growth of its workload and increasing complexities of the intergovernmental process due to an augmented number of agenda items and mandated events. This increase requires a coherent approach for more complex and larger responsibilities. The push of accelerating the negotiations requires a streamlined support to the Presiding Officers and the capacity of crosscutting coordination among different divisions with the aim to optimize the negotiations across multiple agenda items, teams and mandated events.

With the shift towards implementation, the division now requires a growth in its capacity to meet the increasing demands from negotiating groups. These demands urge for developing Parties capacity and increasing the substantive and procedural support provided to them. Furthermore, the need to engage Presidencies through a multiyear approach entails that the division supports and serves at the same time multiple Presidencies and their negotiators. The support to multiple presidencies is very demanding and requires additional capacity in terms of coordination and assistance provided.

Supporting 198 parties necessitates attention to the relationship with them in their different constellations such as negotiations, constituted bodies, etc. The growing complexity of the relationships with them has brought a sharp increase in communicating to them via official notifications, messages, note verbals and publications.

Another area of increased workload and responsibility is in the delivery of much larger Leaders Summits and High-Level Events than in the past with more complex agendas and content which are making these events a key feature of the negotiating process. The planning of these events and the COP itself is now starting much earlier than in the past due to the growing scale and scope of the COPs themselves.

- 2. Request:** Why the secretariat is asking for more posts, if many of currently approved posts are not filled?

➤ **Response:**

Several factors contribute to delays in recruitment including insufficient resources to fund positions adequately, a low number of viable applications received, and candidates who have declined offers.

The new posts are to support increased workload as mandated activities expand, new mandated activities approved in the current biennium and not in the current biennium budget and in the case of the cybersecurity officer, to ensure full-time dedicated capacity for a high-risk critical function in the secretariat.

This year five key P5 positions have been filled: two in Mitigation; two in Intergovernmental Support and Collective Progress (ISCP); and one in ICT.

3. Request: Provide the following information structured in this format in an excel sheet:

- Non-Party elements need to be split from Party elements
- Non-mandated activities need to be split from mandated activities
- All relevant COP/CMA/CMP decisions cited

Category	Activity	Cat.	Proposal		Zero nominal growth		Zero real growth		Mandate
			Value EUR	Source	Value EUR	Source	Value EUR	Source	
E.g., Mitigation	Delivery of the MWP	Cat. 1		E.g., supplementary					4/CMA.4
E.g., executive division	Salaries	Cat. 1		Core					

➤ **Response:**

The programme budget proposal for the biennium 2024–2025 has been prepared in line with the principles of results-based budgeting and provides a great level of detail as requested by the subsidiary and governing bodies, including posts per output and funding source as requested by decision 22/CP.26. The secretariat has prepared and published five documents in support of the SBI's consideration of the programme budget, each containing detailed information as mandated, including:

- Programme budget for the biennium 2024–2025. Proposal by the Executive Secretary (FCCC/SBI/2023/2)
- Programme budget for the biennium 2024–2025. Proposal by the Executive Secretary. Addendum. Work programme of the secretariat for the biennium 2024–2025 (FCCC/SBI/2023/2/Add.1)
- Programme budget for the biennium 2024–2025. Proposal by the Executive Secretary. Addendum. Trust Fund for the International Transaction Log (FCCC/SBI/2023/2/Add.2)

- Update on the implementation of the approved core budget for the biennium 2022-2023
- Draft financial statements of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change for the year ended 31 December 2022 (under audit).

In addition, the secretariat prepared and published four documents on other budgetary matters for consideration by SBI 58.

All documents went through a rigorous process ensuring accuracy, consistency and clarity. Downloading detailed activity data from the internal budget tool and publishing it without undertaking the robust review and editing process required for official documents could lead to misunderstanding or misinterpretation of data. In the past, Parties have negotiated the UNFCCC programme budget from the official documents and responses to overarching questions from the Parties.

4. Request: We are concerned about mingling ETF with non-party transparency issues

➤ **Response:**

The proposed budget (core and supplementary) for ETF related activities for 2024-2025 does not include any activity related to non-party transparency issues. All funding related to the transparency of voluntary non-Party climate action is reflected in project SB300-006 (category 4).

5. Request: How do you decide which category 2 activities should be included under core budget?

➤ **Response:**

Typically, all category 1 and category 2 activities are included in the core budget. However, with the current mandates/activities, if we included all category 1 and category 2 activities, which is the actual needs scenarios, the budget would be over double than that of the current biennium.

In developing the proposed core budget scenarios, the secretariat has sought to ensure balance, to the extent possible, among category 2 activities to be funded from supplementary rather than core resources by:

- Ensuring balanced resource allocation across thematic areas (adaptation, mitigation, means of implementation, transparency, etc.);
- Keeping key staff assigned to critical workstreams;

- (c) Maintaining the ratio between staff and non-staff costs, thereby ensuring that at least a minimum level of non-staff costs is maintained for the provision of basic support for all workstreams;
- (d) Giving due consideration to all mandated work regardless of the date of adoption of the respective mandate and the overarching instrument to ensure consistency in budgeting for similar activities.

6. Request: Provide a list of all activities within the core and supplementary budgets that require future partnerships.

➤ **Response:**

Core and supplementary activities are listed in the budget document. Many activities require additional inputs such as additional expertise, knowledge, data and analytics, technology solutions or funding and are delivered through informal collaboration or formal partnerships with a wide range of public and private actors, such as governments, foundations, academia, think tanks, universities, the private sector, other UN entities or regional organizations. Many of the partnerships are outlined in the 2022 Annual Report of the secretariat (pages 45-46), which is available on our website. Moreover, the secretariat has mapped all its existing formal partnerships with various entities and updates this mapping regularly.

7. Request: Provide clearer explanation of the powers allotted to the executive secretary in making administrative decisions and how that compares to regular UN organizations (in layman's terms)

➤ **Response:**

For the UN Secretariat, the UN Secretary General promulgated a bulletin (SGB) on the delegation of authority in the administration of the Staff Regulations and Rules and Financial Regulations and Rules as contained in ST/SGB/2019/2. Through the SGB, the UN Secretary General delegates authority to managers of UN Secretariat departments, offices, missions and other bodies. This bulletin delegates certain authorities to the heads of departments, offices, missions and other bodies such as human resources, finance, procurement and property management within the rules and regulations and limits set by the UN secretary general.

ST/SGB/2019/2 does not apply to executive heads of separately administered and funded subsidiary organs, institutions, funds and programmes of the UN. Consequently, it does not apply to UNFCCC.

For specialized and related organizations, the delegation of authority is regulated in their founding instruments. Typically, the head of the organization is tasked by member states/parties to discharge the administrative and executive functions of the organization.

The UNFCCC secretariat has a specific legal status and is institutionally linked to the United Nations. However, it's an independent organization.

The Institutional Arrangements Paper (FCCC/CP/1995/5/Add.4 of 6 April 1995), which was endorsed by the COP through decision 14/CP.1 and by the UN General Assembly through resolution 50/115 of 20 December 1995, sets forth the agreed framework for the authority of the UNFCCC Executive Secretary over the administration of the resources of the secretariat of the UNFCCC. The Office of Legal Affairs of the UN Secretariat has confirmed the broad authority of the UNFCCC Executive Secretary to promulgate administrative issuances, provided they are consistent with the UN Staff Regulations and Rules and the Financial Regulations and Rules.

As such, the UNFCCC secretariat needs to follow the UN Staff and financial rules and regulations, but the UNFCCC Executive Secretary has broad authority to issue UNFCCC specific administrative issuances over matters covering human resources, finance, procurement and property management