

Economic Commission for Europe

Executive Body for the Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution

Forty-third session

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Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Financial requirements for the implementation of the Convention

Informal document no. 5

Resource requirements to support intergovernmental activities under the Convention

Summary

The present document has been prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Executive Body Bureau. It accompanies the document entitled “Financial requirements for the implementation of the Convention” (ECE/EB.AIR/2023/2, part IV) and compiles information on the secretariat resource prioritization in 2024 and the resource requirements for 2025 to support the intergovernmental process under the Convention.

I. Introduction

1. For the forty-first session of the Executive Body (Geneva, 6–8 December 2021), its Bureau presented a note¹ to support discussions on the overall financing of the Convention, and in particular the situation regarding available secretariat support. The note explained the different sources of funding for the Convention, the overall financial situation, and the need to strengthen the financing on a long-term and stable basis for the secretariat support to the core functioning of the Convention. The core secretariat support referred to throughout the present document includes: a) organization and follow-up to the annual sessions of the Executive Body and the main subsidiary bodies; b) financial management related to funding of scientific centres under the Convention; c) support to compliance review under the protocols to the Convention; and d) provision of legal and procedural advice to Parties. At its forty-first session, the Executive Body requested its Bureau, in cooperation with the secretariat, to assess the financial situation of the Convention in further detail and to present its assessment, in particular on the funding of the secretariat on a stable basis, for discussion at the forty-second session of the Executive Body (Geneva, 12-16 December 2022).

2. At its forty-second session, the Executive Body considered the information presented by its Bureau and the secretariat (the document entitled “Resources for the secretariat to support the core functioning of the Convention” (ECE/EB.AIR/2022/9) and its cover note)². It decided to streamline some core secretariat activities in 2023, as proposed by the Executive Body Bureau. In the cover note it prepared, the Executive Body Bureau noted that it would continue to assess the financial situation and develop a proposal for a long-term and stable solution, including for the secretariat, and regularly report its progress to Parties.

3. At the sixty-first session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review (Geneva, 4-6 September 2023), the secretariat presented information on the resource requirements to support the implementation of intergovernmental activities under the Convention in 2024-2025. The Working Group suggested that the Executive Body Bureau, with support from the secretariat, investigate the matter further and prepare a proposal for a long-term solution for consideration by the Executive Body as soon as possible.

4. The present document has been prepared by the secretariat in consultation with the Executive Body Bureau. It accompanies the document entitled “Financial requirements for the implementation of the Convention” (ECE/EB.AIR/2023/2, part IV on intergovernmental activities) and compiles information on the secretariat resources situation in 2024 and the resource requirements for 2025 and beyond to support the intergovernmental process under the Convention.

II. Resource situation in 2024

5. Multilateral environmental agreements enjoy legal autonomy and decision-making is under the purview of their Parties. Consequently, almost all multilateral environmental agreements are fully funded by their Parties. Conventions and protocols serviced by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) are exceptions to this rule, with funding coming from both the United Nations regular budget (targeted to secretariat support and conference services) and from contributions (cash and in-kind) by Parties, in particular financing a large number of activities under the unique and extensive network of Party-driven science and policy groups.

6. In terms of core secretariat support, the Convention has largely relied on the United Nations regular budget.³ Over the years, due to successive cuts in the ECE budget, the support

¹ Available at https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2021-11/Financing%20of%20the%20Air%20Convention%20Note%20for%20the%20Executive%20Body_final.pdf.

² Both documents are available at <https://unece.org/info/Environmental-Policy/Air-Pollution/events/367824>

³ Only 1 Party (Norway) out of 51 has provided regular contributions to the secretariat’s core activities and for travel and consultancies.

provided by the United Nations regular budget for different ECE programmes has decreased. At the same time, the Convention's activities have steadily increased, reflecting the growing importance of the topic and the achievements under the Convention. In parallel, new administrative procedures adopted by the United Nations, whilst improving quality, transparency and accountability, have added considerable administrative burden.

7. Since the 2000s, other ECE conventions and protocols have tackled the same challenges by strengthening secretariat services through extrabudgetary contributions. To date, limited additional resources have been mobilized to support the core functioning of the Air Convention's secretariat (support has been provided by Germany through the Junior Professional Officers programme, by the United States of America and Norway). The current situation requires action by the Executive Body to reduce the workload and prioritize activities of the secretariat in order to align them with the existing resources.

A. Prioritization of the secretariat activities in 2024

8. The secretariat and the Executive Body Bureau, following consultations in 2023, have developed a proposal for prioritization of the secretariat activities supporting the intergovernmental process in 2024. The Executive Body is invited to consider the proposal, as presented in table 1 below. Any addition of activities not currently proposed for implementation in 2024 will require a proportionate reduction in other activities.

Table 1
Prioritization of the secretariat activities in support of the intergovernmental process in 2024 with existing resources

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Implementation in 2024</i>
Decision-making and the forty-fourth session of the Executive Body	
Follow up to the forty-third session of the Executive Body: finalization and publication of the session report	Yes
Preparations for and servicing of the forty-fourth session of the Executive Body (9-12 December 2024, 3.5 meeting days)	Yes
Meetings of the Bureau of the Executive Body: organization of 2 meetings focused on intersessional coordination and preparations for the forty-fourth session	Yes
Organization of thematic sessions on the margins of the EB44	No
Additional requests by the EB Bureau having resource implications	No
Policy work and the sixty-third session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review	
Preparations for and servicing of the sixty-third session of the Working Group on Strategies and Review (27-31 May 2024, 4 meeting days)	Yes
Follow-up to the sixty-second session of the Working Group: finalization and publication of the session report.	Yes
<i>Meetings of the Bureau of WGSR</i>	
Organization of meetings focused on intersessional coordination and preparation of the plenary session (number of meetings per year)	No
Additional requests by the WGSR Bureau having resource implications	No

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Implementation in 2024</i>
<i>Task Forces reporting to WGSR</i>	
Publication of annual reports of the task forces as informal documents as provided by the Task Force Co-Chairs	Yes
Participation of secretariat staff in the meetings of task forces on case-by-case basis	Yes
<i>Support to the work of ad hoc groups</i>	
Ad hoc group on the rules of procedure	Yes
Other ad hoc group(s)	No
<i>Other tasks</i>	
Reporting on strategies and policies (tracking the status of reporting, sending out a call for reporting, contacting Parties that haven't reported for more than 4 years, collecting the submitted reports and posting them on a dedicated webpage, contacting potential presenters and posting delivered presentations on the website)	No
Thematic sessions/workshops	No
Collection of comments and organization of an intersessional event (online, spring 2024) to discuss WGSR-62 pre-session documents ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2024/1 and ECE/EB.AIR/WG.5/2024/2	Yes
Scientific activities and the tenth joint session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects	
Preparations for and servicing of the tenth joint session of the EMEP SB and WGE (9-13 September 2024, 4 meeting days) to be held in a hybrid mode	Yes
Follow-up to the tenth joint session of the EMEP SB and WGE: finalization and publication of the session report	Yes
Support to the organization of the Extended Bureaux meeting	Yes
<i>Task Forces reporting to EMEP SB and WGE</i>	
Publication of annual reports of the task forces and ICPs as informal documents as provided by the Task Force Co-Chairs	Yes
Participation of secretariat staff in the meetings of task forces on case-by-case basis	Yes
<i>Financial management</i>	
Financial and budgetary matters: collection of mandatory and voluntary contributions in accordance with EMEP Protocol and decision 2002/1; scales of assessments, information on in-kind contributions; tracking of arrears, in-kind contributions; information on use of budgeted resource, and other financial information for presentation to EMEP/WGE and EB	Yes
Funding of 12 centres: Supporting 12 centres in process of submitting their applications for funding through Umoja Implementing Partner Module and UNPP; Manage process of reviewing and approval of applications: Establish MoUs and annual appendices; Request, review and summarize expense reports; Arrange for timely approval and disbursement of payments (21); Provide guidance and advice to centres on financial and administrative matters, including reporting	Yes
Trust fund management: preparation of unreleased and released annual budgets and revisions thereto as necessary, reporting and inputs to budgetary preparations in accordance with ECE internal processes; liaise with Executive Office and UNOG Finance	Yes

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Implemen tation in 2024</i>
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Compliance review under the protocols to the Convention and the fifty-first session of the Implementation Committee

Preparations for and servicing of the fifty-first session of the Implementation Committee (dates TBD)

Logistical arrangements, including for participation of representatives of Parties concerned	Yes
Preparation of the agenda	Yes
Preparation of supporting documentation	Yes
Liaison with CEIP	Yes
Maintenance and updated information of password-protected website	Yes
Drafting inputs for and compilation of the Committee's report to the Executive Body, its editorial review and formatting.	Yes

Other tasks

Support to elaboration of operating rules for the Committee for submission to EB 44	Yes
Identification of potential cases of non-compliance, correspondence with Parties concerned, preparation and follow up to referrals ⁴	No
Cases under review: continuous follow up with Parties concerned at the request of the Committee	Yes

Provision of legal and procedural advice and support

Timely reply to general inquires, legal consultations, liaison with OLA/Treaty Office, circulation of notifications, compiling texts of protocols as amended and their annexes, support to drafting or reviewing procedures, review draft recommendations and decisions with a view to promoting coherence and consistency, including with established procedures and any existing guidelines, as well as complementarity with previous decisions, information and advice on procedural issues, information on existing practices in other MEAs/forums, etc.	Yes
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B. Extension of the Junior Professional Officer's post in the secretariat

9. The Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) Programme recruits JPOs for the United Nations Secretariat. JPOs are recruited under bilateral agreements between the United Nations and donor countries. The main objective of the JPO Programme is to provide young professionals with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in the field of multilateral international cooperation through a learning experience under the supervision of specialists, and to contribute to the advancement and furtherance of their organization's mandate. Initially JPOs are granted a one-year appointment, which may be extended, with the agreement of the donor country, and on the basis of good performance. The appointment can be extended to a maximum of four years, provided that for the third and fourth year the organization and the donor country split the costs evenly. This means that the organization has to pay its share from other extrabudgetary sources.

10. A JPO joined the Convention's secretariat in October 2022 through the programme funded by Germany. The post incumbent supports the intergovernmental process, including

⁴ This does not affect submissions by Parties, which will be transmitted to the Committee.

compliance review under the Convention, supports the provision of legal advice to Parties and preparation of publications. The two-year appointment will expire in October 2024. To be able to extend the JPO contract beyond that date, the secretariat needs to secure the funds for a one-year extension, so that the donor country (Germany) would also fund another year.

11. The standard yearly salary cost for P1/P2⁵ is USD 192,400, which includes rental charges⁶, IT infrastructure and programme support costs of 13 per cent. Parties are encouraged to provide their contributions before 30 June 2024 to enable the contract's extension beyond October 2024.

C. Contributions made by Parties in 2023 to support the intergovernmental process in 2024

12. The discussions held by the Executive Body and the Working Group on Strategies and Review on the need to strengthen the secretariat resources with regard to intergovernmental activities encouraged some Parties to provide voluntary contributions. In 2023, contributions were received from Norway (\$26,497) and the United States of America (\$50,000)⁷. Part of the latter contribution is aimed to cover additional conference costs enabling hybrid participation in the tenth joint session of the EMEP Steering Body and the Working Group on Effects.

III. Resource requirements in 2025

13. Following consultations with the Bureau of the Executive Body, the secretariat assessed the resource requirements to support its essential functions and the activities to be implemented in 2025 in accordance with the draft 2024-2025 workplan for the implementation of the Convention (ECE/EB.AIR/2023/1), in addition to resources provided by the ECE under the United Nations regular budget. The resource requirements for 2025 are presented in table 16 of document entitled "Financial requirements for the implementation of the Convention".

14. The Executive Body might wish to consider an option of deciding on a budget for the secretariat resources on annual basis and introducing an indicative scale of contributions, similarly to the approach under decision 2002/1. An example of such scale, based on the calculated 2025 resource requirements, is presented in table 2 below. It is suggested that a single contribution be not less than \$1,000 considering the administrative transaction costs of each payment.

Table 2

Indicative annual contributions by Parties to support the intergovernmental process in 2025 and beyond

<i>Parties to Convention</i>	<i>United Nations 2023 assessment rate (percentage)</i>	<i>Adjusted scale (percentage) with the ceiling of 22 per cent</i>	<i>Recommended contribution (US dollars)</i>	
			<i>Calculated amounts</i>	<i>Calculated amounts with a minimum contribution of 1 000 USD</i>
Non-European Union countries				
Albania	0.008	0.017	141	1 000
Armenia	0.007	0.015	123	1 000

⁵ According to the 2023 rates.

⁶ Introduced by the United Nations Office at Geneva as of 1 January 2023.

⁷ These contributions are not mentioned in document ECE/EB.AIR/2023/2, as they were received after the document was prepared.

<i>Parties to Convention</i>	<i>United Nations 2023 assessment rate (percentage)</i>	<i>Adjusted scale (percentage) with the ceiling of 22 per cent</i>	<i>Recommended contribution (US dollars)</i>	
			<i>Calculated amounts</i>	<i>Calculated amounts with a minimum contribution of 1 000 USD</i>
Azerbaijan	0.030	0.062	529	1 000
Belarus	0.041	0.085	723	1 000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.012	0.025	212	1 000
Canada	2.628	5.464	46 340	45 477
Georgia	0.008	0.017	141	1 000
Iceland	0.036	0.075	635	1 000
Kazakhstan	0.133	0.277	2 345	2 301
Kyrgyzstan	0.002	0.004	35	1 000
Liechtenstein	0.010	0.021	176	1 000
Monaco	0.011	0.023	194	1 000
Montenegro	0.004	0.008	71	1 000
North Macedonia	0.007	0.015	123	1 000
Norway	0.679	1.412	11 973	11 750
Rep. of Moldova	0.005	0.010	88	1 000
Russian Federation	1.866	3.880	32 904	32 291
Serbia	0.032	0.067	564	1 000
Switzerland	1.134	2.358	19 996	19 623
Türkiye	0.845	1.757	14 900	14 622
Ukraine	0.056	0.116	987	1 000
United Kingdom	4.375	9.096	77 146	75 709
United States	22.000	22.000	186 589	186 589
European Union member States + European Union				
Austria	0.679	1.412	11 973	11 750
Belgium	0.828	1.721	14 600	14 328
Bulgaria	0.056	0.116	987	1 000
Croatia	0.091	0.189	1 605	1 575
Cyprus	0.036	0.075	635	1 000
Czechia	0.340	0.707	5 995	5 883
Denmark	0.553	1.150	9 751	9 569
Estonia	0.044	0.091	776	1 000
Finland	0.417	0.867	7 353	7 216

<i>Parties to Convention</i>	<i>United Nations 2023 assessment rate (percentage)</i>	<i>Adjusted scale (percentage) with the ceiling of 22 per cent</i>	<i>Recommended contribution (US dollars)</i>	
			<i>Calculated amounts</i>	<i>Calculated amounts with a minimum contribution of 1 000 USD</i>
France	4.318	8.977	76 141	74 723
Germany	6.111	12.705	107 757	105 750
Greece	0.325	0.676	5 731	5 624
Hungary	0.228	0.474	4 020	3 945
Ireland	0.439	0.913	7 741	7 597
Italy	3.189	6.630	56 233	55 185
Latvia	0.050	0.104	882	1 000
Lithuania	0.077	0.160	1 358	1 333
Luxembourg	0.068	0.141	1 199	1 177
Malta	0.019	0.040	335	1 000
Netherlands	1.377	2.863	24 281	23 829
Poland	0.837	1.740	14 759	14 484
Portugal	0.353	0.734	6 225	6 109
Romania	0.312	0.649	5 502	5 400
Slovakia	0.155	0.322	2 733	2 682
Slovenia	0.079	0.164	1 393	1 367
Spain	2.134	4.437	37 630	36 929
Sweden	0.871	1.811	15 359	15 073
European Union	—	3.330	28 243	28 243
Total	35.915	100.000	848 133	848 133