

**7th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the
CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC7)**

Bonn, Germany, 17 – 20 September 2024

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SUBJECT AREAS OF COP-APPOINTED COUNCILLORS

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

Decision 14.5 requests the Scientific Council, with support from the Secretariat, to review the existing COP-Appointed Councillor subject areas and propose to COP15 any changes for the subsequent period between COP15 and COP17. Paragraph 10 of Resolution 12.4 (Rev.COP14), encourages participation of Party appointed Councillors who are not currently a member of the Sessional Committee in the work of the Scientific Council.

This document proposes a way forward to implement this Decision and Resolution.

Rev. 1 provides correction of paragraph 8 with respect to the changes adopted by COP13.

SUBJECT AREAS OF COP-APPOINTED COUNCILLORS

Background

1. Article VIII, paragraph 2 of the Convention states that:

“...the Scientific Council shall include as members qualified experts selected and appointed by the Conference of the Parties; the number of these experts, the criteria for their selection and the terms of their appointments shall be as determined by the Conference of the Parties”.

2. These experts are termed COP-appointed Councillors. The first COP-appointed Councillors were appointed at the 1st meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP1) in 1985 when eight experts were appointed. The number of COP-appointed Councillors is currently nine.

A/ Review of subject areas of COP-appointed Councillors

3. COP14 adopted the following Decision 14.5:

The Scientific Council is requested, with support from the Secretariat, to review the existing COP-Appointed Councillor subject areas and propose to COP15 any changes for the subsequent period between COP15 and COP17, as appropriate.

4. The COP-appointed Councillor subject areas had been significantly amended at each COP up until COP6 in 1999, after which subject areas became fairly static, with only minor recasting of some subject areas at each COP. Four new subject areas were identified between COP6 and COP10: African Fauna, fish and by-catch at COP8 in 2005; and climate change at COP10 in 2011 (an overview of all subject areas since COP1 until COP10 has been provided in document [UNEP/CMS/COP13/Doc.15.1](#), Annex 2).
5. COP11 in 2014 implemented significant institutional and organizational changes to the Scientific Council. COP11 decided that, for each intersessional period between two consecutive meetings of the Conference of the Parties, a representative selection of the membership of the Scientific Council, the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (ScC-SC), should be identified. The COP-appointed Councillors are members of the Sessional Committee, together with fifteen Party-appointed Councillors selected on a regional basis.
6. The Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council at its third Meeting (Bonn, 2018) decided to undertake a review of the areas of expertise of COP-Appointed Councillors and established an intersessional working group that reported to the fourth meeting of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council (Bonn, 2019). The Scientific Council agreed to present its recommendation to COP13 in 2020. On that basis, COP13 reviewed the matter and decided on the following subject areas for COP-appointed Councillors: Aquatic Mammals, Birds, Bycatch, Climate Change, Connectivity/Networks, Fish, Invasive Species (including disease, feral animals, insects and marine pests and weeds), Marine Pollution and Terrestrial Mammals. The responsibility for the subject areas of Birds and Fish have been shared by two Councillors since COP13.

B/ Enhancing involvement of the Party-appointed Councillors

7. Through paragraph 10 of **Resolution 12.4 (Rev.COP14)**, COP14 encouraged participation of Party appointed Councillors who are currently not a member of the Sessional Committee in the work of the Scientific Council:

Encourages the Secretariat to enhance communication with the Party- and COP- appointed Councillors not included in the Sessional Committee, and encourages Party- and COP-appointed Councillors not included in the Sessional Committee to contribute to the work of the Scientific Council, coordinate with Sessional Committee members and participate in working groups and task forces, including through meetings and the interactive tools available to the Scientific Council, as well as to pursue activities at the national level;

Discussion

A/ Review of subject areas of COP-appointed Councillors

8. There are currently nine COP-appointed Councillors positions, of which two positions are shared by two experts. The following table shows how the subject areas evolved over time:

COP1	1985	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquatic reptiles • Reptiles, birds, marine mammals • Bird migration • Bird migration, waterfowl management • Migration of mammals in Africa • Ornithology • Birds, marine mammals
COP2	1988	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine species • Waterfowl • Environmental law • Toxicology related to wild animals
COP3	1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sahelo-Saharan mammals • Waterfowl • Small cetaceans • Neotropical fauna
COP4	1994	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COP3 experts reappointed Addition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine turtles
COP5	1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marine turtles • Waterbirds • Cetaceans • Large mammals • Neotropical fauna
COP6	1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COP5 experts reappointed, with recasting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waterbirds = Waterbirds/wetlands - Cetaceans = Cetaceans and fishes - Large mammals = Large terrestrial mammals Addition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asiatic fauna
COP7	2002	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COP6 experts reappointed
COP8	2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COP7 experts reappointed, with recasting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Waterbirds/wetlands = birds - Cetaceans and fishes = marine mammals and large fishes - Large terrestrial mammals = African fauna Addition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fish • By-catch

COP9	2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COP8 experts reappointed, with recasting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marine mammals and large fishes = aquatic mammals
COP10	2011	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COP9 experts reappointed Addition of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change
COP11	2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change introduced
COP12	2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No change introduced
COP13	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject area for Marine turtles replaced by Marine Pollution; subject areas of Asiatic fauna, Neotropical fauna and African fauna were merged in a single subject area for Terrestrial mammals; two new subject areas were established for Connectivity/Networks, and for Invasive species, disease, feral animals, insects, and marine pests and weeds.
COP 14	2024	No change introduced, the areas remain as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aquatic Mammals • Birds • Bycatch • Climate Change • Connectivity/Network • Fish • Invasive species, disease, feral animals, insects, and marine pests and weeds • Marine Pollution • Terrestrial Mammals

- Feedback from the COP-appointed Councillors suggests that the extent of work allocated under the specific subject areas as they were defined until COP14 is appropriate for most subject areas, except for the subject area of “Invasive species, disease, feral animals, insects, and marine pests and weeds” which was found too broad for one expert to cover. The Scientific Council may consider recommending a limit to the scope of this COP-appointed Councillor position to animal health issues (including Avian Influenza and poisoning) and consider how to ensure the remaining areas are also addressed, if they are still viewed as priorities.
- The Scientific Council may wish to reflect on how best to balance the need for species-specific subject areas and for subject areas focusing on crosscutting issues that have recently become more prominent, while considering goals and targets of the Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024-2032 adopted by COP14 and the threats to migratory species identified in the State of the World’s Migratory Species report.
- Given the limited number of COP-Appointed Councillor positions and the highest ever number of Decisions adopted by COP14, it may be challenging to cover all tasks necessary to fulfill COP14 Decisions, without adding disproportionate burden on the current COP-appointed Councillors.
- Areas that are currently not covered by any of the COP-appointed Councillors positions include: taxonomy and nomenclature, critical habitat, human-wildlife conflict and co-existence, indigenous knowledge, pollution beyond marine pollution, deep sea bed mineral exploitation and stand-alone subject areas for invasive species and insects.

13. The Scientific Council is recommended to form an opinion on subject areas for the period from COP15 until COP17 and provide its recommendation to COP15.

B/ Enhancing involvement of Party-appointed Councillors

14. The Scientific Council may wish to consider ways to support work on areas additional to the subject areas which are assigned to COP-appointed Councillors. As recognised by paragraph 10 of Resolution 12.4 (Rev.COP14), there is significant expertise among the Party-appointed Councillors, both those who are, but also those who are not members of the Sessional Committee, who could contribute to accelerating the work of the Convention. Improved coverage of relevant subject areas could be achieved through their involvement in the Scientific Council work. For example, they could contribute to the work on certain areas as leads of working groups, authors of or contributors to documents, etc.
15. The Secretariat could support involvement of Scientific Council members who are not members of the Sessional Committee by reaching out to all Party-appointed Scientific Council members, identifying areas where additional engagement might be especially needed, collecting information on which areas they are willing to get involved in, and encouraging them to take on tasks.

Recommended actions

16. The Scientific Council is recommended to:
 - a) Determine whether there are any new COP-Appointed Councillor subject areas required for the period COP15 – COP17, to replace any existing subject areas that are no longer required, or if any of the current subject areas should be refocused;
 - b) Consider how to encourage greater involvement of Party-appointed Councillors in the work of the Scientific Council.