

**56<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Standing Committee**

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**DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL  
PERIOD BETWEEN COP15 AND COP16 (2026-2028)**

*(Prepared by the Secretariat)*

Summary:

The present document provides an overview of items of relevance for preparation of a draft programme of work for the intersessional period between COP15 and COP16 (2026-2028) for consideration by the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15).

In the Annex, it includes a template for an integrated programme of work and budget as a basis for the draft programme of work and budget for 2026-2028.

The Standing Committee is invited to provide its views and guidance to the Secretariat.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD BETWEEN COP15 AND COP16 (2026-2028)

### Background

1. Over the last several meetings of the CMS Conference of the Parties (COP), it has been the Secretariat's practice to submit a draft programme of work (POW) to the COP for its consideration as an annex to the budget document for the following intersessional period. The draft POW would be updated in the course of the COP for final adoption to reflect changes made to draft decisions and resolutions, as well as other changes agreed by the COP.
2. In preparing for COP14 (February 2024, Samarkand), due to capacity constraints, the Secretariat proposed to develop the POW immediately following the meeting, and to allow the Secretariat to accurately reflect any changes in the various mandates adopted at COP14.
3. COP14, through [Resolution 14.2 Financial and Administrative Matters](#), endorsed, on an exceptional basis, a provisional POW for the intersessional period between COP14 and COP15. It further requested the Secretariat to finalize the POW and to submit it to the Standing Committee for its consideration, and instructed the Standing Committee to adopt a final POW.
4. COP14 had called for the POW to be adopted by the StC at an online meeting, but this was deemed unfeasible in the timeframe allocated by the COP, and no budget had been provided by the COP for the cost of such a meeting. After several rounds of comments and revisions of the draft POW and consultations, including an informal online meeting of Standing Committee members, the final [Programme of Work for the intersessional period between COP14 and COP15](#) was adopted on 5 October 2024 by the Standing Committee through a written procedure.
5. Resolution 14.2 also included a request to present a draft POW for the intersessional period between COP15 and COP16 as part of the budget proposals.
6. In the course of the process of finalization of the current POW, several members of the Standing Committee requested that the approach for developing the POW for the consideration of COP15 be included as an agenda item for the 56th Meeting of the Standing Committee (StC56) to allow for further discussion.

### History of the approach of the CMS Programme of Work

7. In 2008, COP9 called for greater clarity on the work of the Secretariat and related resource requirements and requested the Secretariat to develop a costed POW. After considering various formats, the model of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was used as a basis, and a POW, which estimated the resources needed to implement the Secretariat's activities, was developed and eventually adopted by COP11 in 2014.
8. In the decade or so prior to COP9, the Secretariat would report to Parties at meetings of the COP and the Standing Committee on its contributions to the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2006-2011 and on other activities deriving from Resolutions and Recommendations.

9. Since COP11, the format of the POW was refined and improved to the version prepared by the Secretariat for the past three intersessional periods, with some variation on different elements. This format contained mandates falling under the responsibility of the Secretariat as well as those that fall under the Standing Committee and Scientific Council and their Working Groups that require the Secretariat's support. The POW format also reflected mandates related to all instruments supported by the CMS Secretariat, namely the Gorilla Agreement, all CMS Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs); Action Plans; Initiatives and Concerted Actions even while funding for some of these instruments was provided by their respective Parties and Signatories, in order to show the whole picture of work undertaken by the CMS Secretariat. References to all mandates were included, and a correlation made for each POW activity to the Targets of the Strategic Plan for Migratory Species (SPMS) with a view to determining and monitoring the contributions of the Secretariat to the SPMS.
10. The POW of CMS has been used to track all mandates, reflect available funding and identify funding needs, and help guide the Secretariat in terms of priorities for its work. Progress on the status of implementation of the POW has been reported to the Standing Committee and to the COP both as comprehensive narratives highlighting achievements, challenges and next steps, and in tabular form.

#### Examples of other MEAs

11. The Secretariat has reviewed mandates and practices for the development of the POW and budget by other Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). Below are summaries of examples from three global conventions, which show significantly different approaches.

#### Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)

12. At each session, the COP to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) requests the Secretariat to prepare a costed POW of the Secretariat and budget proposals for the next triennium in the format in use for consideration of the following meeting of the COP.
13. The [costed programme of work](#) contains staffing and activities grouped under seven functional budget headings to be funded by the general Trust Fund (CTL) and/or the External Funds (QTL, subject to available funding). Both headings and groups of activities normally do not change from COP to COP unless new significant mandates are introduced. A substantial number of essential activities are covered by funding from the core trust fund (CTL). Activities to be undertaken subject to the availability of resources were formally prioritized within the POW but that practice is no longer followed.
14. In addition, both the [operational budget under the general CITES Trust Fund \(CTL\)](#) and the [indicative budget under the External Funds \(QTL\)](#) are presented in separate documents showing the cost components of the POW activities.
15. To complement the description of activities of the costed POW, the Secretariat compiles all draft Decisions and Resolutions proposed in the working COP documents. These and the cost estimates and budgetary implications on the external trust fund (QTL) are presented in a separate [information document](#).

#### Minamata Convention on Mercury

16. At each session, the COP to the Minamata Convention requests the Executive Secretary to prepare a budget for the following biennium for consideration by its next session, explaining the key principles, assumptions and programmatic strategy on which the budget was based and presenting expenditures for that biennium in a programmatic format and broken down by budget activities, with each activity supported by a fact sheet.
17. The [programme of work](#) of the Minamata Convention Secretariat is prepared with its activities serving as the basis for budgeting. Activities are described at high level with resources for their implementation allocated either in the general trust fund (core budget) or in the special trust fund (subject to voluntary contributions).
18. In addition, an [information document](#) sets out budget activity fact sheets and provides additional information on each of the activities of the programme of work including on mandates, background information and rationales, activities and outputs, and costs associated with specific activities. Following the COP, this document is updated ([Programme of work budget for 2024-2025.pdf](#)) by the Secretariat based on COP decisions to guide the work during the intersessional period.

#### Convention on Biological Diversity

19. COP15 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) requested the Executive Secretary, through [Decision 15/1](#), to prepare budget proposals for the period 2023-2024, and an updated, detailed and integrated programme of work for the period 2023-2024, which sets out the objectives, tasks to be completed by the Secretariat, and results expected with regard to each budget item for the Convention and its Protocols, for the consideration of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention and its Protocols at their next meetings, and a corresponding programme budget following the format of the proposed programme budget for the United Nations Environment Programme, including the supplementary information statement, for the biennium, with three alternatives.
20. The [budget 2025-2026](#) approved by COP16 is presented under four distinct components: (a) governing and subsidiary bodies; (b) executive direction and management; (c) delivery of work programme, which covers the substantive work of the Secretariat, and (d) administrative support.
21. The pre-session [document](#) outlined that component c) “delivery of work programme”, was developed following a results-based budgeting framework with four substantive outcomes of the Secretariat, related outputs and sub outputs and linkages to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.
22. Resource requirements for the Special Voluntary Trust Fund for additional voluntary contributions in support of approved activities under the Convention and its Protocols, 2025 -2026 are to be developed.

Aspects of the POW raised in the course of the development of the version for the intersessional period between COP14 and COP15

23. During the development of the current CMS POW by the Standing Committee, a number of topics for further discussion were raised. The Standing Committee may wish to consider these and others in giving guidance to the Secretariat on the development of its POW for COP15.

*Level of detail*

24. In developing the POW for 2024-2026, the Secretariat followed the same approach used for the POW adopted by COP13 in 2020 including in terms of structure and degree of detail.
25. As the POW reflects all CMS mandates, the level of detail may vary. For instance, some refer to one-off activities e.g. analysis of national reports, whereas others refer to long-term initiatives or processes e.g. support to Task Forces. For the latter, the Secretariat has strived to group activities under certain categories e.g. coordination, organization of meetings and implementation of priorities actions for a specific Task Force.

*Prioritization*

26. As is the case of the other MEAs examined, the COP has included some priorities for the Secretariat's functions in the CMS core budget. The current approved budget includes some of the costs associated with the organization of the meetings of the COP, the Standing Committee and the Scientific Council, and some funding for information materials and website development and maintenance. Historically, the CMS core budget covered some programmatic activities. Core activities, such as the responsibility of the Secretariat to provide an up-to-date database of the species listed under its two Appendices, preparing updated templates for National Reports and providing an analysis of National Reports could be included in the core budget, among other activities.
27. In the past three draft POWs, the Secretariat has proposed a ranking of activities of the POW, which is mostly aimed at those activities that are subject to voluntary funding. In doing so, the Secretariat based its judgement on past experiences in relation to a number of considerations including time sensitivity, relevance to a specific CMS meeting or product, and availability and/or prospect of voluntary contributions in the near term. This ranking of priorities has been reviewed by Parties at the COP and modified to some extent prior to finalization.
28. The Secretariat considers having a prioritization of the POW to be helpful in its efforts to secure funding for implementation. The Secretariat aims to implement as much of the POW as it can, with available funding and human resources. However, it is important to acknowledge that the POW typically far exceeds what is achievable in a single intersessional period, and this makes prioritization all the more important. The conservation status of species, and the priorities set by the current SPMS could provide helpful grounding for future prioritization.

*Costing*

29. The estimates made by the Secretariat in the POW have been based on its budgeting experience. In most cases, the proposed costing is approximate but helps provide an indication of the level of effort needed for implementation. As the Secretariat turns to implementation of each activity, it can better assess costs and funding needs. For

instance, for the organization of a technical meeting, the Secretariat seeks potential hosts and when the location is decided, only then can it make precise budget estimates, especially in terms of travel costs. The Secretariat also seeks cost efficiencies including by combining activities where possible, or finding other cost-saving approaches. As reported to COP14, numerous activities of the POW 2020-2023 have been implemented with less funding than estimated while others required more resources than expected.

#### *Savings from previous years*

30. The POW included programmatic activities to be covered by both core budget and voluntary resources with an indication of the source of funding. As noted above, programmatic activities funded by the core budget have been limited in recent cycles.
31. The POW also indicated the funding from voluntary contributions that has been already secured and the donors that provided them.
32. The status of the implementation of the CMS core budget, including its balance, has been reported on by the Secretariat at each COP.

#### Integrated Planning, Monitoring, and Reporting (IPMR)

33. The Integrated Planning, Management and Reporting (IPMR) is a solution of the new extension of "Umoja", which is the enterprise resource planning system of the United Nations Secretariat. IMPR integrates several of Umoja modules such as Strategic Management, Budget Formulation and Project System to enable programme managers to plan and monitor substantive work and resources. IPMR utilizes the results-based management methodology, facilitating clear linkages between resources and results frameworks, and improved management of day-to-day operations, including management of substantive and programmatic activities in addition to administrative processes.
34. The use of IPMR is mandatory to capture all expenditures under the United Nations Secretariat.
35. Since 2021, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) has focused on system transitions in the UNEP Divisions and Regional Offices, including the decommissioning of the legacy systems. This transition was completed in June 2023. In February 2024, the roll-out of IPMR for the MEA Secretariats was launched for their transition in the course of 2024 and 2025. Only few MEA Secretariats have adopted this approach for the development of their programme of work and budget.

#### Way Forward

36. Based on the above considerations, the Secretariat has developed a draft template in the Annex for an integrated POW and budget focused on the framework of the newly adopted Samarkand Strategic Plan for Migratory Species 2024-2032 as a basis for the proposed POW and budget for 2026-2028, for consideration by the Standing Committee.
37. This template aims to present the overall programmatic strategy broken down by activities with information on expected deliverables and mandates and with each activity supported by a budget itemized by objects of expenditure. All information would be provided in one table, as opposed to have multiple complementary documents, for Parties' convenience and to avoid cross referencing to the various mandates.

*Level of detail*

38. The content of each activity would be reflected in a clear manner with an appropriate level of detail which would clarify its purpose and would be complemented with the references to the respective mandate. With estimates itemized by objects of expenditure for each activity, in line with the Terms of Reference for the Administration of the Trust Fund for CMS, additional details of the envisioned activities would be provided.

*Prioritization*

39. As is the case with the CITES POW, the draft template provided in the Annex does not provide for any ranking of the activities by the Secretariat. Priorities would be set by Parties.

*Costing*

40. The template proposes to include a range of estimates associated with of each activity, showing the likely range of costs for a particular activity. More precise costing could also be achieved by the level of specificity of the mandates adopted by the COP under each decision which has implications for the work of the Secretariat.

*Savings from previous years*

41. As before, available funding from voluntary contributions would be included in the POW. Any balance of the core budget would continue to be provided to the COP, in the documentation on the implementation of the budget.

Recommended actions

42. The Standing Committee is recommended to take note of the document and to provide the Secretariat with comments and guidance as necessary.

PROPOSED TEMPLATE FOR CMS INTEGRATED PROGRAMME OF WORK AND BUDGET

Delivery Framework	Mandate	MSL Funds approved (€)				MVL Funds needed (€)				MVL Funds Secured		Object of expenditure	
		2026	2027	2028	TOTAL	2026	2027	2028	TOTAL	(€)	Donor		
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>MIGRATORY SPECIES THRIVE AND LIVE IN FULLY RESTORED AND CONNECTED HABITATS (SPMS VISION)</b>												
<b>Outcome 1</b>	<b>The conservation status of migratory species is improved (SPMS Goal 1) and their habitats and ranges are maintained and restored, supporting their connectivity (SPMS Goal 2)</b>												
<b>Output 1.1</b>	<b>CMS instruments and initiatives (SPMS Target 1.1)</b> – The implementation of instruments (MOUs, Action Plans and Concerted Actions) and initiatives for the conservation of CMS species is strengthened												
	<b>Aquatic Species</b>												
Activity 1.1.1	Pacific Islands Cetaceans MOU - Coordinate, convene meeting of decision-making body and implement priority actions	Convention Text Article IV											· Travel
													· Personnel
Activity 1.1.2													
	<b>Avian Species</b>												
Activity x.x.x	Aquatic Warbler MOU - Coordinate, convene meeting of decision-making body and implement priority actions	Convention Text Article IV											·
													·
Activity x.x.x												·	
	<b>Terrestrial Species</b>												
Activity x.x.x.	Gorilla Agreement - Coordinate, convene meeting of decision-making body and implement priority actions	Convention Text Article IV											·
Activity x.x.x													·
<b>Outcome 2</b>	<b>Threats affecting migratory species are eliminated or significantly reduced (SPMS Goal 3)</b>												
<b>Output 2.1</b>	<b>Climate Change (SPMS Target 3.4.)</b> - the impact of climate change on migratory species and their habitats is reduced through mitigation and adaptation, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches and disaster risk reduction actions, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts on biodiversity												
Activity 2.1.1	Convene workshop, promote knowledge and engage in relevant processes	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											· Travel
													· Personnel

Delivery Framework	Mandate	MSL Funds approved (€)				MVL Funds needed (€)				MVL Funds Secured		Object of expenditure
		2026	2027	2028	TOTAL	2026	2027	2028	TOTAL	(€)	Donor	
<b>Output 2.2</b>	<b>By-catch (SPMS Target 3.1)</b> - any take, use and trade of migratory species listed in CMS Appendices is sustainable, safe and legal, overexploitation is prevented, risk of pathogen spillover is reduced and negative impacts on non-target species and their ecosystems are minimized											
Activity 2.2.1	Identify priority fisheries, areas and effective mitigation measures for marine mammals, marine turtles and sharks and rays	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx										
<b>Outcome 2</b>	<b>Implementation of CMS is supported by adequate knowledge, capacity and resources (SPMS Goal 4)</b>											
<b>Output 2.1</b>	<b>Information and evidence-based guidance (SPMS Target 4.1.)</b> - the science base to support species conservation worldwide is improved											
Activity 2.1.1	Global Atlas on Animal Migration - Promote use of existing modules including through webinars and explore options for improving it	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx										
Activity 2.1.2	Conservation Status of Migratory Species - Develop interim update and framework for second edition	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx										
Activity 2.1.3												
<b>Output 2.2</b>	<b>Resource Mobilization (SPMS Target 4.3.)</b> – financial and in-kind resources are mobilized from various sources to support the implementation of the programme of work											
Activity 2.2.1	Identify funding opportunities, develop project documents, maintain donor relations and promote the Migratory Species Champion Programme	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx										
Activity 2.2.2	Engage in GEF activities and meetings	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx										
Activity 2.2.3		Dec. xx.xx Res. xx										
<b>Outcome 3</b>	<b>Implementation of CMS is supported by effective governance, including use of best available science and information, and collaborative working (SPMS Goal 5)</b>											
<b>Output 3.1</b>	<b>Governing and advisory bodies (SPMS Target 5.3.)</b> – the CMS governing and advisory bodies are supported and arrangements for their meetings are made and documents are prepared; representatives from eligible countries are supported to participate in these meetings.											
Activity 3.1.1	Organize COP16 and associated events	Convention Text Articles VII and IX										· Travel - Staff
												· Contractual Services - translations, interpretations, etc

Delivery Framework		Mandate	MSL Funds approved (€)				MVL Funds needed (€)				MVL Funds Secured		Object of expenditure
			2026	2027	2028	TOTAL	2026	2027	2028	TOTAL	(€)	Donor	
Activity 3.1.2	Organize regional workshops in preparation of COP16 (online)												.
Activity 3.1.3	Organize Standing Committee Meetings and maintain regular contact with its members	Res. 1.1 and 9.15											· Travel – Delegates
													· Contractual Services (translations and report writing)
Activity 3.1.4	Organize Meetings of the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council and support its functioning	Convention Text Articles VIII and IX Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											· Travel – Delegates
													· Contractual Services (translations and report writing)
<b>Output 3.2</b>	<b>National legislation Programme and Review Mechanism (SPMS Target 5.1.)</b> – the implementation of the Convention is strengthened at national level												
Activity 3.2.1	Continue the implementation of National Legislation Programme through collecting information, supporting Parties and developing legislative guidance materials and model laws.	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											.
Activity 3.2.2	Promote and implement the Review Mechanism through screening and handling implementation matters raised and establishing an online registry	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											.
<b>Output 3.3</b>	<b>National Reporting (SPMS Target 5.2.)</b> – Progress in the implementation of the Convention is monitored effectively												
Activity 3.3.1	Revise Format for the national reports in three languages	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											.
Activity 3.3.2	Provide support to Parties in submitting their national reports	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											.
Activity 3.3.3	Undertake Analysis of National Reports	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											.
<b>Outcome 4</b>	<b>The profile of CMS and synergies with other relevant international frameworks are enhanced. (SPMS Goal 6)</b>												
<b>Output 4.1</b>	<b>Party recruitment (SPMS Target 6.3.)</b> – Number of Parties is increased												
Activity 4.1.1	Organize workshops, webinars and other activities for promoting country accession	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											.
Activity 4.1.2	Prepare outreach tools for promoting country accession	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											.
Activity 4.1.3		Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											.
<b>Output 4.2</b>	<b>Synergies and Partnership (SPMS Targets 6.2. and 6.4.)</b> - CMS issues are promoted in the UN system and strategic collaborations are established and strengthened with MEAs, regional bodies and various groups												
Activity 4.2.1	Participate in UN Environment processes including UNEA meetings	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											.

Delivery Framework		Mandate	MSL Funds approved (€)				MVL Funds needed (€)				MVL Funds Secured		Object of expenditure
			2026	2027	2028	TOTAL	2026	2027	2028	TOTAL	(€)	Donor	
Activity 4.2.2	Engage in IPBES processes	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											
Activity 4.3.3	Engage in Biodiversity Liaison Group (BLG) and develop Joint Work Programme with CBD, Ramsar and CITES	Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											
Activity 4.3.4		Dec. xx.xx Res. xx											
<b>Outcome 5</b>	<b>The functions of the Secretariat are delivered effectively and efficiently, ensuring coherence of the mandated procedures and processes under the Convention and overseeing the implementation of the approved programme of work.</b>												
<b>Output 5.1</b>	<b>Executive direction and management</b> – The coherent management, coordination, administration of the Secretariat's staff and financial resources are ensured												
Activity 5.1.1	Provide overall the administrative and financial management of the Secretariat	Convention Text Article IX											<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Operating costs - Staff Development (training, retreats etc.)</li> <li>· Staff costs (Professional and General Support Staff)</li> <li>· Travel</li> </ul>
<b>Outcome 6</b>	<b>The Secretariat is able to operate in an efficient and effective manner for the delivery of the approved programme of work with the support of adequate facilities and services</b>												
<b>Output 6.1</b>	<b>Equipment maintenance and services</b> – The office equipment is maintained and the necessary supplies and services including basic information technology (IT) are in place.												
Activity 6.1.1	Non-expendable equipment, VC equipment and office automation services, including leasing of printers												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Operating costs - Non-expendable equipment</li> <li>· Operating costs - Office Automation Services (printer leases)</li> </ul>
Activity 6.1.2	Office supplies												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Operating costs - Office Supplies</li> </ul>
Activity 6.1.3	Website maintenance and IT services												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Operating costs - ICT Tools, Website Maintenance</li> <li>· Operating costs - Information Technology Services</li> <li>· Operating costs – IT services</li> </ul>
Activity 6.1.4	Communications, including telephones, postage, fax, video conferencing, etc.												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Operating costs - Communications and courier services</li> </ul>
Activity 6.1.5	Miscellaneous expenses, including bank charges and Umoja licences												<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Operating costs - Miscellaneous</li> <li>· Operating costs – UMOJA</li> </ul>
	<b>Programme Support Cost 13%</b>												