



Informal consultation on the UNCCD budget

In its meeting of 13 November 2023, the Bureau of the COP 15 considered, among other matters, the status of the UNCCD core budget. As background, the UNCCD secretariat provided information showing the following:

- Although the Convention process has significantly evolved during the last decade, the core budget has remained practically unchanged, at a zero nominal growth level with minor adjustments. In 2013, the approved UNCCD core budget amounted to 8,268,236 euros, while in 2023 it was 8,215,451 euros. The secretariat and the Global Mechanism have continuously covered large part of their mandated activities through extra-budgetary contributions. Currently several core areas of UNCCD work are entirely (staff and activities) covered from these contributions. While praising the generosity of those donors, the Secretariat wishes to underline that this has led to a serious dependency of core activities on extra-budgetary contributions subjecting mandated global activities to the good will and ability of a few.
- In the last years, high inflation rates have translated into revised UN salary scales and increases in the cost of products and services, with a drastic effect to the real value of the UNCCD budget. Were the secretariat and the Global Mechanism to function until the end of the 2022-2024 triennium in “business as usual”, with all approved posts filled, the UNCCD core budget would be overspent by close to two million euros by the end of 2024. To remain within the approved budget, the secretariat and the Global Mechanism are exercising strict discipline, including on freezing or delaying the recruitment of key staff positions. These measures may affect the quality and the efficiency of the UNCCD in a demanding COP year.

The COP Bureau recognized the severity of the budget issues and noted that the situation should be reviewed in the next biennium budget, to be decided at COP 16. As any consideration of a UNCCD budget increase will require internal consultations, the Bureau proposed that the secretariat organises an informal meeting for information-sharing and discussion toward the next UNCCD COP. This informal consultation meeting will be held online on 13 March.

Purpose of the informal budget consultation meeting in March

The informal consultation will provide interested Parties with information of the status of the UNCCD core budget and an overview of the main needs of the secretariat and the Global Mechanism in the coming years. By the end of February, the secretariat will circulate a document presenting this information, so that Parties may consider it in advance to the meeting. If Parties so wish, they may ask questions and provide feedback at the consultation meeting, or they may send written points after the meeting.

The secretariat considers that the informal consultation in March will launch a pre-COP process of informal information-sharing and exchanges around the next budget, including further online meetings as well as written exchanges. In this context, the first meeting will also discuss how best to organize the next steps in the informal consultative process. Following the first consultation, and if the participating countries so wish, this process could benefit from a smaller, dedicated team of country representatives from all regions, which would actively participate in the consultative process and keep each region informed of the developments.

Participation in the informal budget consultations

All Parties are invited to participate in the online meeting of 13 March, and a meeting link will be sent by email to all national focal points shortly before the meeting. To ensure that all Parties can easily access the information on the budget, the document to be sent by the secretariat will be provided in all six UN languages.