

CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES
OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA



Seventy-eighth meeting of the Standing Committee
Geneva (Switzerland), 3-8 February 2025

Administrative and financial matters

Administrative matters

REPORT OF THE SECRETARIAT

1. This document has been prepared by the Secretariat.
2. This report highlights the administrative performance of the Secretariat since the last meeting of the Standing Committee (SC77; Geneva, November 2023) and the document should be read in conjunction with the report on financial matters (SC78 Doc. 7) and the report of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on administrative matters (document SC78 Doc. 9.2).

Staffing situation

3. As per the indicative staffing table for the Secretariat as presented in Resolution Conf. 19.1 on *Financing and costed programme of work for the Secretariat for the triennium 2023-2025*, a total of 23 posts funded from the core Trust Fund (CTL), 3.25 posts funded from the Programme Support Cost (PCA/OTA), and 10 project posts from the external Trust Fund (QTL) are included. Based on the above number of posts, and whilst remaining within the overall staffing budget envelope, the Secretary-General has used her delegated authority to make staffing decisions as required.
4. Since SC77, seventeen (17) staff changes including recruitment, separations and transfers have taken place within the Secretariat which are reported upon in Notification to Parties on *Staff Changes* No. 2024/137 of 12 December 2024.
5. There is currently one vacant position funded from the core Trust Fund (CTL, in the Professional and higher category for which recruitment is in progress and is expected to be filled shortly.
6. In addition, the below list is showing ongoing recruitments against vacant or new positions as of 31 October 2024:

Functional title	CITES unit	Funding source
Chief, Outreach & Projects, P-5	Outreach & Projects Unit	Core Trust Fund (CTL) TJO-242485 is pending approval by UNEP Executive Director in accordance with the CITES Secretary-General's Delegation of Authority. Selection on posts at the P-5 level and above are recommended by the CITES Secretary-General, cleared by the UNEP/Corporate Services Division, and approved by the UNEP Executive Director. The temporary job opening will be encumbered while the long-term recruitment will be processed.
Chief, Legal Officer, P5	Legal Unit	Core Trust Fund (CTL) JO-249377 is pending approval & posting in Inspira.

		The position is filled with staff on temporary assignment during the recruitment process.
Programme Management Officer, P-3 (Project post)	Outreach & Projects Unit (CITES Tree Species Programme)	External Trust Fund (QTL) JO-246963 is pending approval & posting in Inspira

7. The Secretariat continues its work on gender parity at all levels in line with the UN Secretary-General's UN-wide strategy as well as improving on the geographic diversity in its recruitment of staff and engagement of consultants and individual contractors. The below overview tables are showing the gender and geographic data for CITES core Trust Fund funded staff positions in comparison with the overall UNEP data.

Gender data as of 31 October 2024 (core Trust Fund funded positions)

UN entity	Female (%)	Male (%)
UNEP	62	38
CITES	64	36

8. During the period, the Secretariat has adhered to the UN Secretary General's policy on geographic diversity in its recruitment of professional staff positions by identifying possible candidates from un- or underrepresented countries when reviewing external candidate's applications.

Geographic data as of 31 October 2024 (core Trust Fund funded positions)

UN entity	Africa	Asia-Pacific	Central & Eastern Europe	Latin America & the Caribbean	Western Europe & Other Groups
UNEP	463	246	55	131	479
CITES	4	5	-	3	13

The Secretary-General wishes to bring to the attention of the Standing Committee the latest UNEP approach to recruitment and addressing overrepresentation of certain regions, as reported by the UNEP Chief of Human Resources in December 2024:

Geographical Diversity: The top five countries with the largest number of staff in the P+ categories are Kenya (59), France (41), Germany (41), USA (38), and UK (37). There are currently 60 countries not represented at UNEP across all staff categories. The distribution of staff in the P+ categories by region is as follows: WEOG: 357; APG: 189; AFG: 164; GRULAC: 89; EEG: 46.

Geographical Diversity in Professional Categories: From December 2023 to December 2024, UNEP has made significant strides in enhancing geographical diversity within our Professional and higher (P+) staff categories. Notably, we have observed increases in representation from AFG (+6%), APG (+7%), EEG (+28%), and GRULAC (+10%). While WEOG representation experienced a decrease of 7, this shift reflects our strategic commitment to fostering inclusivity and equitable opportunities for candidates from less represented regions. It is important to emphasize that our efforts are not aimed at limiting representation from WEOG countries; rather, we are actively widening our recruitment net to ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce. It is worth noting that 36% of internal selections in the P+ categories have been from WEOG, the largest proportion among all regional groups, demonstrating our commitment to the professional development of our staff members regardless of geographical considerations.

The UNEP Executive Director has communicated to all UNEP Senior Managers that she will continue to pay a watchful eye on external recruitment of overrepresented nationalities, from P2 to D2.

9. The below table is showing the age group analysis for CITES core Trust Fund funded positions which will have an impact on future recruitments and staffing costs relating to separation and settling-in-benefits for staff in line with UN policies.

Ageing data as of 31 October 2024 (core Trust Fund funded positions)

UN entity	26 – 30 years	31 – 35 years	36 - 40 years	41 – 45 years	46 - 50 years	51 - 55 years	56 – 60 years	61 – 64 years	65 – above years
UNEP	14	130	172	237	248	158	182	137	4
CITES	-	1	5	2	2	5	7	3	-

10. As of 31 October 2024, the Secretariat had used the service of a total of 56 consultants and individual contractors since the start of the triennium, 1 January 2023, mainly funded from voluntary contributions, as additional resources to implement the programme of work and manage short-term staffing requirements.
11. In addition, the Secretariat has also been supported by highly qualified interns through the UNEP Internship Programme. Since the start of the triennium 2023-2025, the Secretariat has been supported by three (3) interns in 2023, seven (7) in 2024 and is expecting two (2) to be on-boarded in early January 2025.
12. Furthermore, during the reporting period, the Secretariat has submitted five (5) proposals for Junior Professional Officers (JPOs) related to enforcement, compliance, project management and communication areas through the UNEP JPO Programme in both duty stations of Geneva and Nairobi. As of today, all remain unsponsored.
13. The Secretariat expresses its deep gratitude to Parties for their contributions to the core Trust Fund and to those donors that have enabled it to employ much needed additional staff resources through the external Trust Fund.

Administrative changes introduced by UNEP

14. The Secretariat continues to work with the UNEP's dedicated MEA unit on administrative matters and procedures introduced or planned as well as specific administrative, financial, human resources and legal cases processed through the UNEP Corporate Services Division (CSD), the UN Office at Nairobi (UNON) and the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG).
15. During the period, new portal and platforms have been introduced by UNEP related to the official travel planning process, processing of consultant and individual contractor contracts, partnerships, invoicing and procurement planning as described below:
- 1 February 2024 – introduction of a **Travel Portal** for the submission of travel requests electronically to go through an approval system within UNEP prior to submission in UMOJA.
 - 11 September 2024 – change in processing of consultant contracts by UNEP by introducing a new layer in addition to Inspira and Umoja.
 - 29 September 2024 – new **Partnership Policy** for all partner categories and partnership modalities was introduced which will be showing all the stages of the partnership management process.
 - 15 November 2024 – introduction of a new **Invoicing Platform** for all issued invoices for contributions including workflow and dispatch functions.
 - 30 October 2024 – introduction of **ETIMA** which is a supply chain planning and management tool to be used for the year 2025 which is intended to enhance management of requests in addition to the UMOJA submission.
16. The Secretariat has raised concerns about the added administrative burden and extended workflows given the limited administrative and programmatic human resources in the Secretariat. While these measures were created with the intention to ensure more effective processes and added oversight, they have also introduced

additional administrative work that are impacting effective and efficient programme of work delivery and resources allocated to the Secretariat.

Update on audit recommendations by Office of Internal Oversight (OIOS)

17. The Secretariat is pleased to report that eight out of nine recommendations from the OIOS audit conducted during 2021 for the audit period 1 January 2018 to 31 December 2020 have been successfully implemented and closed by OIOS.
18. The recommendation (item 3) related to the *development of a resource mobilization strategy to raise and facilitate effective implementation of the Convention's activities* remains pending due to the need of additional resources. The Secretariat has now secured funding from Switzerland and is grateful in this regard. The development of a CITES Secretariat-wide resource mobilization strategy will proceed and it is expected to be presented at the 20th meeting of the Conference of the Parties in November 2025.

Recommendations

19. The Standing Committee is invited to take note of this report on administrative matters.