

**Update on the United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 2/18 on the relationship between United Nations Environment Programme and the multilateral environmental agreements for which it provides the secretariat**

This note provides an update on progress made on matters related to institutional framework, accountability, administrative and financial matters with respect to the multilateral environmental agreements, for which United Nations Environment Programme provides the secretariat or performs secretariat functions.

As further background information, an overview of administrative services provided to the Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other entities by the UN Environment Programme is attached to the note.

The Secretariat is pleased to invite member States to provide feedback to this note in writing. Comments should be submitted to the Secretariat: [unep.sgb@unep.org](mailto:unep.sgb@unep.org), copied to Ms. Sandeep Bhambra ([sandeep.bhambra@un.org](mailto:sandeep.bhambra@un.org)) and Mr. Andreas Obrecht ([andreas.obrecht@un.org](mailto:andreas.obrecht@un.org)). Based on feedback received from Member States, the note will be reviewed and tabled for consideration by the Subcommittee at a later stage.

## **1. Institutional framework and accountability**

The Multilateral Environmental Agreement Management Team, revitalized in June 2015, met on a quarterly basis to discuss issues of strategic/programmatic cooperation as well as administrative matters. It was chaired by the Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme. The members of the Multilateral Environmental Agreement Management Team included the Deputy Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme and Heads of the Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements for which United Nations Environment Programme provides secretariat services and support, namely: Executive Secretaries of the Convention of Biological Diversity, Convention on Migratory Species, Ozone Secretariat – Vienna Convention for the Protection of the Ozone Layer and Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, Basel Convention, Rotterdam Convention and Stockholm convention, Secretary-General of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Coordinator of the Barcelona Convention on behalf of the six regional seas conventions coordinating units and Chief Officer of the Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol. The Law Division of United Nations Environment Programme served as the secretariat. The last meeting was held on 16 February 2017 and effective March 2017 the Heads of the Secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements became full members of the Leadership Group which was composed of the Divisional Directors and Directors of Regional Offices of United Nations Environment Programme. The Leadership Group provides the platform for strategic and thematic discussions and through its monthly meetings allows programmatic and administrative cooperation between United Nations Environment Programme's Divisions, Regional, Sub-regional and Country offices and the Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements.

On 29th March 2018, United Nations Environment Programme finalized a framework of administrative services it provides to the Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other entities. The document benefitted from the invaluable comments provided by the Secretariats which are already in receipt of such services. The framework has already been distributed to the Secretariats and a copy is attached herewith for your reference. In response to the decision adopted by the respective conferences of the Parties to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions during their 2017 meetings on the related matter, United Nations Environment Programme has already expressed its commitment to the Executive Secretaries to support the finalization of the draft Memorandums of Understanding or exchanges of letters, for consideration by the Parties in their next meetings in 2019.

## **2. Administrative and financial framework**

The Executive Director continues to receive requests for waiver of program support costs on voluntary contributions for participations costs. Such requests are reviewed on case by case basis and approved where the programme support income is able to cover the existing cost structure of the Secretariat. Pursuant to United Nations Environment Assembly Resolution 2/18, waiver requests received from the Conventions of Biological Diversity, Migratory Species and Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm were approved. The Executive Director will continue to consider such requests in line with the United Nations rules and regulations and taking into account their implications on the funding situation of the Organisation.

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Annex: Overview of administrative services provided to the Secretariats of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other entities by the UN Environment Programme.



UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME

Programme des Nations Unies pour l'environnement Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente

Программа Организации Объединенных Наций по окружающей среде برنامج الأمم المتحدة للبيئة

联合国环境规划署



# Secretariat Services to Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other Entities

March 2018

# Provision of secretariat services to Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other Entities

## BACKGROUND:

Upon request by the governing bodies of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements or other entities (which may include Panels, Platforms, Action Plans, Scientific Bodies, or Financial Mechanisms) and after approval by its own governing body, formerly the Governing Council now the United Nations Environment Assembly, the United Nations Environment Programme, through its Executive Director, may provide the secretariat or perform secretariat functions for Multilateral Environmental Agreements or other entities. The secretariat is established by each of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements or other entities, and its functions are defined by the relevant provisions of the respective convention or arrangement, and further determined by the conventions' parties or the entities' participants through decisions of the governing bodies or through decisions of established subsidiary bodies of the convention or entity. The funds for the operation of the convention or entity, including financial resources for the functioning of the secretariat, are fully borne by the parties to the convention or participants of the entities.

As a programme of the United Nations and as a major organizational unit of the UN Secretariat<sup>1</sup>, United Nations Environment Programme is subject to the applicable regulations, rules and policies of the United Nations. In providing the secretariat or performing secretariat functions, United Nations Environment Programme provides administrative and support services. When requesting such services from United Nations Environment Programme, the Multilateral Environmental Agreements or other entity's governing bodies accept that the secretariats (hereinafter, "the Secretariats") will become subject to the administrative and financial regulations, rules and policies of the United Nations as applied to United Nations Environment Programme and as may be supplemented by the multilateral environmental agreements' or entities' financial procedures or rules<sup>2</sup>, either spelled out in the Convention or established through decisions of the governing body<sup>3</sup>. In the very unlikely case of conflict, the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations shall prevail. The ultimate authority for implementation of the United Nations Regulations and Rules rests with the Secretary-General. The Secretary-General has delegated the authority to the Executive Director of United Nations

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<sup>1</sup> ST/SGB/2006/13

<sup>2</sup> UNEA resolution 2/18

<sup>3</sup> Such financial procedures or rules are to be consistent with the relevant regulations, rules and policies of the United Nations, as accepted by the relevant governing bodies when requesting United Nations Environment Programme to provide the secretariat or secretariat services.

Environment Programme for strategic management of its programme and resources as per the applicable administrative issuances and the Secretary-General's Senior Managers' Compact. United Nations Environment Programme has implemented a policy and framework for further delegation of the authority to the relevant designated heads of secretariats of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and other entities.

#### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this framework is to document the administrative and support services that United Nations Environment Programme provides to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements or other entities in its role as a Secretariat. While United Nations Environment Programme collaborates with the Secretariats on substantive and programmatic aspects as well, such cooperation is outside the purview of this framework.

In providing the administrative and support services, United Nations Environment Programme may and does engage, under appropriate arrangements, other United Nations Secretariat entities such as the United Nations Office at Nairobi, United Nations Office at Geneva, United Nations Office at Vienna or United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific for specific, local administrative and support services. The Corporate Services Division of United Nations Environment Programme works with the Secretariats to determine the appropriate service provider and based on the authority delegated to the head of the secretariat or other entity, the appropriate legal instruments with service providers are negotiated and signed.

#### **COST RECOVERY:**

UNEA resolutions 1/16 and 2/18 clarify that the provision of secretariat services must be based on the principle of cost recovery in line with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations<sup>4</sup>. With respect to cost recovery, the United Nations apply a defined rate to direct costs (commitments and actual expenses) as Programme Support Costs. The recovery and use of Programme Support income is important to the financing and provision of efficient and effective support services and is addressed under the Standard Management Procedure on Programme Support Costs adopted by United Nations Environment Programme in May 2017. In summary, the Programme Support income generated by the Multilateral Environmental Agreements or entity is partially retroceded to

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<sup>4</sup> ST/SGB/188 and ST/AI/286

the Multilateral Environmental Agreements or entity and an agreed portion contributes to the pool that funds central administrative functions and any unforeseen financial liability.

Parameters such as location of the Secretariat, choice of the service provider, budgeting process of the Multilateral Environmental Agreements or entity may affect the cost and funding of services and have therefore been excluded from the framework and shall be agreed upon on a bilateral basis between the Executive Director and the Head of the Secretariat. The framework however indicates the services available to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements or entities under the central administrative functions.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE AND SUPPORT SERVICES:

The table below provides an indicative, non-exhaustive and non-prescriptive list of administrative and support services provided by United Nations Environment Programme and does not affect the existing institutional arrangements through which United Nations Environment Programme is requested to provide secretariat services to support the various Multilateral Environmental Agreements and entities.

As a standard practice, United Nations Environment Programme shall continue to report to the governing bodies of respective Multilateral Environmental Agreements and entities on administrative matters, participate and support the proceedings of the governance mechanisms and provide high level monitoring of compliance to prevailing rules and regulations. Such obligations are excluded from the list of services below.

Service Category	Description
Policy, guidelines and procedures <sup>i</sup>	<p>All policies concerning administrative arrangements are governed by the United Nations General Assembly resolutions and those of United Nations Environment Programme’s governing body. United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules supplemented by Multilateral Environmental Agreements’ and entities’ financial procedures or rules ensure effective and efficient use of resources in accordance with the purposes for which funds are provided, within authorized limits and available income. The United Nations Financial Regulations and Rules also regulate the organization’s procurement activities.</p> <p>United Nations Staff Regulations and Rules set the framework within which United Nations Environment Programme’s personnel, including different categories of staff members, consultants and independent contractors, are recruited and administered.</p>

Service Category	Description
	<p><b>United Nations Secretariat policies supplement and provide details on the implementation of the resolutions and regulations. They are embodied in United Nations administrative issuances i.e. Secretary-General's Bulletins, Administrative Instructions and Information Circulars which may be further interpreted and translated into guidelines and procedures for day to day operations.</b></p>
<p><b>Human Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Recruitment, staff administration, training, performance management and medical and counselling services.</b></p>
<p><b>Talent Acquisition and Management<sup>i</sup></b></p>	<p><i>Developing staffing plans and implementing related recruitment activities namely classification, vacancy announcement, assessments, evaluation, review and selection.</i></p>
<p><b>Staff Administration<sup>i</sup></b></p>	<p><i>On-boarding staff, administering contracts, processing entitlements and benefits, review and update of dependency status, leave records, lateral move, separation from service etc. Administering end-of-service and post-retirement benefits including pension fund deductions and After Service Health Insurance scheme.</i></p>
<p><b>Staff development and training</b></p>	<p><i>Mandatory training of personnel on issues such as security, ethics and integrity, competency based interviewing skills, management development programme etc.</i></p> <p><i>Identify capacity building needs and provide opportunities for continuous learning with a view to build a multi-skilled workforce promoting career development for staff. These include in-house developed training modules on Results Based Management and Gender Mainstreaming, among others.</i></p>
<p><b>Performance Management<sup>i</sup></b></p>	<p><i>Implementing and monitoring compliance with performance management policies, process and tools (INSPIRA) to reward/recognize/retain staff and address underperformance. Supporting rebuttal process guidance and conducting training on writing workplans and performance assessments. Managing the Financial Disclosure programme.</i></p>
<p><b>Medical and Counselling Services</b></p>	<p><i>Providing occupational health services with emphasis on preventive health care and emergency response. Also includes professional counselling service to address issues such as stress, burnout, depression etc.</i></p> <p><i>UN Cares, the UN system-wide program on HIV, is designed to reduce the impact of HIV in the UN workplace.</i></p>
<p><b>Budget and Finance</b></p>	<p><b>Preparation, management, oversight and reporting of budgets and financial resources of the governing bodies and donors.</b></p>
<p><b>Budgeting / Fund Management</b></p>	<p><i>Preparation, presentation and justification of budgets to the governing bodies. Processing budgetary authorizations and financial transactions. Advising staff, management and governing bodies on the use of financial resources.</i></p> <p><i>Creating, maintaining and closing Trust Funds<sup>i</sup>.</i></p>
<p><b>General Accounting / Financial Statements<sup>i</sup></b></p>	<p><i>Authority to sign the consolidated financial statements rests with the Executive Director. Extracts from the consolidated statements are signed by UNON.</i></p> <p><i>Maintenance of accounts and preparation of Financial Statements including the Programme Support account. Processing accounting entries/adjustments including donor refunds; year-end accruals; statutory reporting and support to the annual external audit.</i></p>
<p><b>Payments / Expenditure</b></p>	<p><i>Processing payments to Implementing Partners, consultants, vendors and meeting participants<sup>i</sup>. Monitoring advances and recording expenditures from financial reports received from Implementing Partners.</i></p>
<p><b>Payroll<sup>i</sup></b></p>	<p><i>Processing payment of salaries, entitlements and related advances and maintenance of payroll accounts.</i></p>

<b>Service Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Contributions /Cash Management<sup>i</sup></b>	<p>Authority to accept contributions from the Parties rests with the United Nations Environment Programme Executive Director.</p> <p>Issuing invoices to Parties, recording and monitoring contribution receivables, processing contributions upon receipt of payments; reconciling applied deposit accounts.</p>
<b>Treasury/Banking/ Investment<sup>i</sup></b>	<p>Receipt and disbursement of funds, House Bank management, bank reconciliations. Maintenance of banking details for staff, vendors, implementing partners and consultants. Investment of United Nations Environment Programme funds in the right products is managed by UNHQ Treasury.</p>
<b>Oversight<sup>i</sup></b>	<p>Coordinate internal audit, investigation, inspection and external audit.</p>
<b>Legal<sup>i</sup></b>	<b>Legal advice, opinions and representation in the Internal Justice System.</b>
<b>Advisory and Representation</b>	<p>Provision of corporate legal advice and institutional support.</p> <p>Representing the organisation before the Management Evaluation Unit with regards to requests filed by staff members. Representing the organisation at the United Nations Dispute Tribunal (UNDT) and provision of support to the Office of Legal Affairs with regards to appeals filed at the United Nations Appeals Tribunal.</p> <p>Negotiating settlements of claims; provision of legal support and advice in mediation, conciliation and arbitration.</p> <p>Legal and institutional support in disciplinary procedures; provision of legal advice in cases of alleged misconduct and relevant investigations.</p> <p>Reviewing and clearing Host Country Agreements and legal instruments in accordance with the Delegation of Authority Policy and Framework for the Management and Administration of Multilateral Environmental Agreements.</p> <p>Provision of legal advice on human resources issues e.g., interpretation of the Staff Regulations and Rules, advise on outside activities, separation from employment, settlements.</p> <p>Coordinating audits, inspections and evaluations undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight Services.</p> <p>Providing advice on engaging with implementing partners, provision of templates for this purpose.</p>
<b>Support Services</b>	<b>Services to support operations including office space, premises, host country arrangements and protocols.</b>
<b>Contracts and Procurement<sup>i</sup></b>	<p>Supervising procurement related functions and providing advice on procurement proposals of significant financial or operational impact; reviewing the proposed strategy/approach to best serve office's interests. Providing oversight over the service providers. Representation at the High Level Committee on Management Procurement Network on development of policies and procedures of interest to the office. Liaising with the contracts committee for the preparation and presentation of cases for approval and addressing to follow-up queries. Provision of general contract administration services including amendment, extension or closure.</p>
<b>Inventory / Asset Management<sup>i</sup></b>	<p>Provision of services to manage inventory of equipment items and assets including bar coding, maintain records and track movement of items; conduct physical inventories; process the disposal of obsolete and unserviceable items.</p>
<b>Travel, Shipping and Visa</b>	<p>Providing advice on developments in Secretariat travel policies and procedures'. Processing travel for staff members, consultants and meeting participants for official purposes and staff entitlement related travel; management of travel agent contract and airline negotiations. Shipping services, handled through external vendors under contracts include all aspects of incoming and outgoing official shipments of organizational goods and property as well as staff members' personal effects during recruitment, transfer and separation.</p>
<b>Host Country Relations</b>	<p>In addition to administering the hosting agreement with the country of duty station, the services include issuance and renewal of United Nations Laissez Passer; re-entry</p>



<b>Service Category</b>	<b>Description</b>
	<i>passes of staff and dependents, consultants and interns; duty free import of goods and fuel; tax exemptions; registration of vehicles, issuance/renewal of driving licenses and transfer of ownership; processing special visa request in emergency situations and for VIPs.</i>
<b>Facilities Management</b>	<i>Provision of comfortable and efficient working environment for the staff well as for the visitors by maintaining office premises including gardening and parking areas; utilities' supply and maintenance of security systems.</i>
<b>Mail Pouch</b>	<i>Providing mail, diplomatic pouch and international courier services; dispatching outbound mail; sorting and delivering all incoming mail; advising on different mail services i.e postal, international express courier and diplomatic pouch, including but not limited to cost, transit days, document preparation, etc.</i>
<b>Archives/Document Management</b>	<i>Advising on and overseeing the implementation of policies for the management of archives in accordance with established archival standards and practices<sup>1</sup>.  Maintaining and managing archives.</i>
<b>Security and Safety</b>	<i>Protection of UN personnel and property by providing a safe and secure work environment and regular security advisories; issuance of IDs for staff and visitors to the UN offices.</i>
<b>Enterprise Resource Programme (ERP) – Umoja</b>	<i>Advising on all aspects of workflow analysis, business process reengineering and organizational transformation<sup>1</sup>.  Managing core transformational activities connected to the Umoja implementation and system life cycle. Providing training and guidance on Umoja functionality, access and modality for the execution of administrative processes.</i>
<b>Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) and Internal Controls</b>	<i>Implementation of the United Nations Secretariat ERM policy and framework, its monitoring and development. Advise on developments and activities related to the life cycle of ERM. Liaison directly with the UN Secretariat's Department of Management for all issues relating to ERM and IC implementation and update of the ERM treatment plan.</i>
<b>Information and Communications Technology</b>	<b>Computing, telecommunications, office automation, infrastructure support including electronic mail as well as consulting, advisory and help desk services.</b>
<b>ICT Infrastructure and services</b>	<i>Provision of secure infrastructure services such as internet connectivity and WiFi access; local area network and systems directory services; office computer, standard software productivity tools and security software; email, file storage and sharing, print, IP telephony; computer and video conference services. Provision of cloud and on-premise hosting services for websites, software applications, and databases.  Access to corporate internet/intranet and mail systems<sup>1</sup>.</i>
<b>Software development and maintenance</b>	<i>Providing advice from tactical, operational and strategic aspects with consideration to the specific needs of the office. Making recommendations on cost effective options e.g. outsourcing or in-house IT services<sup>1</sup>. Provision of customised / off the shelf software applications to support the specific needs of office.</i>
<b>Help desk services</b>	<i>Provision of local and global services to staff in resolving various IT related issues.</i>

<sup>1</sup> Central Administrative Function