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PROGRESS REPORTS

Secretariat Staffing, roles and requirements

(Submitted by the Secretary of the IPCC)

¹ The revised version is an update to reflect the discussion at the 60th Session of the IPCC Bureau on this agenda item.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Secretariat Staffing, roles and requirements

Staffing and options for enhancing the work of the Secretariat

1. Introduction

At its 52nd Session in Paris in February 2020, the Panel requested² the Secretariat to prepare a report to the 58th Session of the IPCC Bureau on staffing, roles and requirements. The IPCC-LII Decision highlighted the areas of travel, procurement and continuity within and between cycles.

The Panel also requested³ the Bureau at its next Session to prepare proposals for consideration by the 53rd Session of the IPCC in the areas mentioned above in the light of the Secretariat's analysis.

Because of disruption to work from the COVID-19 pandemic, this topic was considered by the Bureau at its 59th Session on 13-14 October 2020, when the Secretary of the IPCC gave an oral presentation (see Annex 1) on Secretariat Staffing.

The Chair of the IPCC recalled that the results of the consideration by the Bureau would be presented to the Panel at the next Session where business would be discussed. The Bureau took note of this oral report without discussion, and the Secretariat recorded written comments received in the 24 hours following the end of the meeting.

These comments included clarifications to Technical Support Unit staff numbers included in the oral presentation, a request to the Secretariat to identify priorities for this cycle and next, a suggestion to ask the Panel for guidance on core and supplementary activities, a proposal to map Secretariat staffing and tasks for the Panel, and a request to the Secretariat to review staffing to ensure that it can handle necessary tasks when circumstances return to normal in the context of increased demands on staff.

The report was presented to the Bureau at its 60th Session. The Bureau took note of the report.

2. Analysis of staffing, roles and requirements

This document presents a report on staffing, roles and requirements of the Secretariat, summarizing the oral presentation made to the 59th Session of the IPCC Bureau, and sets out options to enhance staffing in the light of current and future needs.

In preparing this document the Secretariat mapped its activities against the Secretariat's Terms of Reference, known as "Functions"⁴, which provide a legal basis for its work. It conducted a functional analysis of the work it is expected to carry out, and how this could be optimally organized. It considered possible adjustments, given the current job descriptions of staff, checked current roles and requirements, and identified areas and opportunities to enhance its activities.

² Decision IPCC-LII-9, paragraph 21, page 19

https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2019/12/IPCC-52_decisions-adopted-by-the-Panel.pdf

³ Decision IPCC-LII-9, paragraph 22, page 19

https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2019/12/IPCC-52_decisions-adopted-by-the-Panel.pdf

⁴ The "Functions of the IPCC Secretariat" are set out in a [Decision](#) on Governance and Management at the 35th Session of the Panel in June 2012. This [Decision](#) states that the Functions describe the implementation of activities identified in the 1989 Memorandum of Understanding and the [Annex to the Memorandum of Agreement](#) between the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the WMO, related to the establishment of the IPCC.

The analysis of staffing, roles and requirements reflects the fact that the current assessment cycle, for the Sixth Assessment Report (AR6), is the most ambitious in the IPCC's history. These pressures have been intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic. This has all resulted in a significant increase in the workload of the IPCC Secretariat, while the number of staff has remained the same or at times been even smaller. This could pose challenges to the Secretariat's ability to deliver the work programme effectively, exacerbated at times when some positions were vacant.

As part of its work to support the Panel, Bureau, ExCom and the Chair, the IPCC Secretariat is organizing and servicing a growing number of meetings in this assessment cycle, including virtual meetings. It also supports an increasing number of Task Groups and similar bodies. The work of the IPCC has attracted increased attention from the public, and the work of the Secretariat – the only permanent body to provide continuity between assessment cycles – in particular has come under increased scrutiny from national focal points and other internal stakeholders.

For instance, in 2019 the Secretariat organized approximately 1,500 trips to, among others, 2 Sessions of the Panel, 3 Sessions of the Bureau and Task Force Bureau, 21 Lead Author Meetings, Expert Meetings and Scoping Meetings, and around 100 outreach events of which 10 were largely organized by the Secretariat. Facilitating outreach events involves finance, legal and travel staff as well as the communications team. Among other activities the Secretariat managed the administrative and Information Technology (IT) infrastructure in 2019 for 1 Scoping Meeting, 2 First-Order Draft reviews, 1 Second-Order Draft review and 3 Final Government Distribution reviews. The year closed with activities at the 25th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP25) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) coordinated by the Secretariat including the funding and construction of a pavilion, around 20 events in the COP pavilion, 4 side events and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) events, 70 other interview or speaking engagements and more than 350 social media posts.

Besides supporting the Chair and the 34 members of the Bureau, it prepares and supports Sessions of the Panel and Bureau and Meetings of the Executive Committee, supports Focal Points from 195 Member countries and 166 Observer Organizations, supports the Task Groups and other bodies such as the Communications Action Team, Gender Action Team, Conflict of Interest Committee, Informal Group on Publications (IGP) and Scholarship Board, and provides a point of contact for the UN system, governments, the media and the public.

The IPCC Secretariat is one of the smallest such teams in the United Nations (UN) system but with one of the most high-profile outputs. It has shouldered these growing tasks and is facilitating the work of the Panel and Working Groups effectively. Its current staffing of 13 compares with 14 in the Working Group I Technical Support Unit (TSU), 12.7 full-time equivalent (FTE) in the Working Group II TSU and 10.1 FTE in the Working Group III TSU.

With the appointment of a new Deputy Secretary of the IPCC and Legal Officer this year, the Secretariat currently numbers 13 staff, including one vacancy for an office assistant, travel and meetings, one short-term position as well as a travel clerk working for the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) travel unit at 80% time and funded by the Trust Fund. The WMO is now working on the upgrade of the IT Officer's post and establishment of a new junior IT P1 level post, agreed at the 52nd Session of the IPCC on the basis of Terms of Reference agreed at the 58th Session of the IPCC Bureau.

3. Options for adjustments to staffing

Among the areas highlighted by the Panel in its IPCC-LXII Decision, **travel and procurement** are being addressed in cooperation with the WMO, under the enhancements to support for the IPCC presented by the WMO at the 58th Session of the IPCC Bureau.

The IPCC is benefiting from this, e.g. in the dispatching of the stock of publication materials to Focal Points and institutions.

Following the restructuring of the WMO Secretariat as part of the WMO Reform agreed by its 18th Congress, the WMO is managing travel through a Central Services Platform. The IPCC Secretariat can explore the option of handling travel through this platform to complement existing staff resources.

Once the health and sanitary situation allows travel to resume, and provided that there are no adverse implications in terms of budget and the level of service to IPCC users, it may be possible to reallocate the current open staff position for an office assistant, travel and meetings, to other purposes. WMO Human Resources department has indicated it could be reclassified as a professional position to address other needs.

It should be noted that the work of the previous incumbent sitting in the post of travel included support at IPCC meetings, and this element, as well as travel booking and management, would need to be covered by the WMO or an alternative contractor.

Continuity within and between cycles and knowledge management in general are being addressed internally in the IPCC Secretariat.

Besides the vacancies that are open or in the process of being filled, the Secretariat has identified a need to expand capacity in the general professional area (policy, strategic planning, document preparation) to support the Panel, Bureau and other subsidiary bodies and task teams as well as and other processes, and to strengthen the communications team further to meet growing demands and interest. A dedicated fund-raising resource would also be useful, possibly on a part-time basis. There are opportunities to strengthen the organizational structure of the Secretariat to put some of these new and emerging tasks on a more sustainable footing.

Given the time required between post approval by the Panel and filling the post by the Secretariat / WMO, to address the current staffing needs in short to medium term, the Secretariat has identified two options besides requesting Panel approval for additional staff positions, for which standard costs in 2020 for P3 staff were 186,400 CHF each.

- [Junior Professional Officer \(JPO\) programme](#)

Many donor country governments participate in the JPO programme.

The JPO Programme recruits Junior Professional Officers for the UN Secretariat. JPOs are recruited under bilateral agreements between the UN and donor countries. JPOs are generally nationals of donor countries, however some donors also finance nationals of developing countries. Candidates are young professionals, usually with an advanced university degree and minimum two years of professional experience. JPO positions are generally on the P1 or P2 level.

Such staff could be particularly useful for the core policy functions such as supporting Task Groups and subsidiary bodies and preparing documents.

Note that requests for JPOs would need to be submitted through the sponsoring organizations WMO and UNEP. A request via the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is already in progress.

- Consultancy services / secondment.

Some specialized tasks such as fund-raising or document preparation for specific meetings can be handled by contractors or consultants. For tasks arising periodically it may be possible to handle this on a part-time basis. The help of the parent organizations and Governments will be sought to support the growing need for help on an ad-hoc basis if necessary.

Unless funding is re-allocated from an existing budget line, resources would need to be approved by the Panel on the recommendation of the Financial Task Team.

4. Draft proposal in response to IPCC-LII Decision

The Panel is invited to:

- Take note of this report;
- Request the Secretariat to explore the possibility of using the WMO Common Services Platform to manage IPCC travel, and report back to the Bureau six months after travel resumes on how this has worked;
- Invite the donor member countries to provide support to the Secretariat through the Junior Professional Officers (JPO) programme as a short- to mid -term solution;
- Request the Secretariat to seek funding from the Panel at its next Session considering budgetary matters for contractors or consultants to handle tasks identified in this document or otherwise needed to complete the cycle, or to approve the necessary staff positions, if necessary.