



**15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties
to the Convention on Wetlands**

**“Protecting wetlands for our common future”
Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe, 23-31 July 2025**

COP15 Doc.18

**Financial report for 2023-2025 of the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance
of the Standing Committee, and proposed budget
for the 2026-2028 triennium**

1. The present report has been prepared by the Secretariat for the Chair of the Subgroup on Finance to present to the 15th meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties (COP15). It provides a summary of financial reporting during the 2023-2025 triennium, and highlights the key implications of the budget proposals for the 2026-2028 triennium. The report focuses on core funds, while discussions on non-core voluntary contributions will take place within the context of the non-core fundraising priorities at COP15.
2. In general, the Secretariat maintains a strong financial position, with a healthy cash flow and a significant surplus, as validated by the auditors and reflected in the audited financial statements. No issues have been raised by the auditors since 2019, when all previously outstanding matters were resolved.
3. Regarding the implementation of the core budget for the 2023-2025 triennium, the Secretariat presented annual budget reviews to the Standing Committee which it approved during its meetings in 2023, 2024 and 2025. The Committee also approved the partial use of surpluses from the 2019-2021 triennium and 2022, along with carry-forwards for planned activities and uncommitted savings.
4. The reported balance of savings at the end of 2024¹ reflects the accumulated unspent funds carried forward due to reduced implementation of budgeted activities during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly those involving travel, such as meetings of governing and subsidiary bodies and Secretariat travel, as well as savings due to vacancies caused by delays in staff recruitment. The allocation of the core-budget surplus will be considered by the Finance Committee and recommended for approval at COP15.
5. Annex 1 provides an overview of budget implementation during the 2023-2025 triennium. Detailed information on annual financial reporting can be found in reports to the meetings of the Standing Committee from 2023 to 2025, specifically documents SC62 Doc.8.1, SC63 Doc.9.1, SC64 Doc.9.1 and SC65 Doc 8.1, along with the corresponding meeting reports and finance-

¹ See document SC65 Doc.8.1, paragraph 15 at <https://www.ramsar.org/document/sc65-doc81-financial-budgetary-matters-update-financial-matters-2024-2025>.

related Decisions of the Standing Committee, based on the recommendations of the Subgroup on Finance.

6. The proposed core budget for the 2026-2028 triennium is included in document COP15 Doc.23.1 as Annex 1, which presents the budget scenarios recommended by the the Standing Committee at its 64th meeting (SC64).
7. Details of the estimated core budget contributions by Contracting Parties and staffing of the Secretariat for the 2026-2028 triennium can be found in Annexes 2 and 3 of the same document.
8. Priorities for non-core funding will be discussed and decided under other agenda items at COP15, and will be recorded in Annex 4 of the final Resolution on financial and budgetary matters.
9. The Standing Committee at SC64 approved the following 2026-2028 budget scenarios to be presented to COP15 for consideration. These scenarios have been developed following extensive discussions on the costs, benefits and strategic implications of each proposal:
 - a. 0% nominal increase compared to the 2023-2025 triennium budget (Scenario 0%);
 - b. 4.1% increase compared to the 2023-2025 triennium (Scenario 4.1%);
 - c. 9.6% increase compared to the 2023-2025 triennium (Scenario 9.6%); and
 - d. 11.3% increase compared to 2023-2025 budget (Scenario 11.3%).
10. A summary of the budget scenarios and their implications is presented in Table 1 below. More detailed information can be found in document COP15 Doc.23.1 and information document COP15 Inf.1, which provide narrative and quantitative analyses outlining the respective costs, benefits, and policy implications of each scenario.

Table 1: Summary of implications of 2026-2028 budget scenarios presented to COP15

Scenario	New staff positions compared to prior triennia	Existing staff equity adjustments as per IUCN HR recommendation	Cost of labour adjustment	Performance and promotion adjustments	Capacity building for staff	COP16 operational services (not hosting)
0%	0	Partial	No	No	No	No
4.1%	1	Partial	Yes	Yes	No	No
9.6%	2	Full	Yes	Yes	No	No
11.3%	2	Full	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

11. The core budget details for each department or category have been retained to help Contracting Parties understand in detail how their contributions will be utilized. These details will be removed in the final resolution to be adopted at COP15, following the practice in previous COPs.

Annex 1

Summary of 2023-2024 financial core budget results and 2025 approved budget

(CHF '000s, includes possible rounding differences)

Triennium Core Budget 2023-2025 in CHF 000's	Core Actuals 2023	Core Actuals 2024	Core Budget 2025	Total Actuals 2023-2025	COP14 approved budget 2023-2025	Variance - surplus / (deficit) 2023-2025
INCOME						
Parties' Contributions	3,779	3,779	3,779	11,334	11,334	0
Voluntary Contributions	1,066	1,065	1,065	3,198	3,198	0
Income Tax	189	194	225	608	675	67
Other Income (including Interest Income)	19	52	12	83	36	(47)
TOTAL INCOME	5,053	5,090	5,081	15,224	15,243	20
EXPENDITURE						
A. Secretariat Senior Management and Governance	1,122	1,281	1,062	3,466	3,169	(297)
B. Resource Mobilization and Outreach	494	668	508	1,670	1,524	(146)
C. Regional Advice and Support	1,109	1,109	1,316	3,534	3,943	409
D. Support to Regional Initiatives	4	46	100	150	300	150
E. Science and Policy	752	939	817	2,508	2,477	(31)
F. Administration	409	448	478	1,335	1,430	95
G. Standing Committee Services	172	238	150	560	450	(110)
H. IUCN Administrative Service Charges (maximum)	540	534	541	1,615	1,623	8
I. Miscellaneous - Reserve Fund	457	106	109	672	327	(345)
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	5,059	5,370	5,081	15,510	15,243	(267)
SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	(6)	(282)	0	(288)		