



Strasbourg, 14 February 2023

T-PVS/Inf(2023)05

CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

43rd meeting
Strasbourg, 27 November - 1 December 2023

CORE VERSUS PROGRAMMATIC BUDGET
BASIC CRITERIA

*Document prepared by
the Secretariat of the Bern Convention*

I. Introduction

The draft protocol amending the Bern Convention and setting up a mechanism of compulsory financial contributions complementing the resources provided by the ordinary budget states in its annex that:

the financial scale of contributions provides resources for the core activities of the Bern Convention, as defined by its Standing Committee.

In the absence of a clear and agreed definition of “core” and “programmatic” costs, and considering that this differentiation does not exist in the budgets of the Council of Europe, the distinction requires, as a first step, the agreement on some distinction criteria.

Core funding is usually defined as financial support that covers basic “core” organisational and administrative costs, including salaries of non-project staff, rent, equipment, utilities, and communications.

In the case of the Bern Convention, core activities should in addition stem directly from the provisions of the Convention or from the Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the Standing Committee. Core activities should also benefit all or at least a large number of Contracting Parties.

II. How is the question dealt with in the UN organisations ?

Within the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, activities are categorised according to the **type of mandates** they support, as follows:

- Category 1: essential activities (statutory meetings, monitoring activities, case-file, strategic development...);
- Category 2: recurring or long-term activities (groups of experts, activities related to the Emerald Network, development of new standards...);
- Category 3: temporary or short-term activities (technical and scientific assistance to Contracting Parties, communication campaigns...);
- Category 4: complementary activities beneficial to achieving the objectives and goals of the Convention (new initiatives, requests for support from stakeholders, contribution / participation in activities of other MEAS....).

Activities categorised as essential or as recurring or long term (categories 1 and 2) are considered core activities, for which sufficient, predictable and timely resources are of utmost importance, and hence should ideally be included in the proposed core budget. Activities categorised as temporary or short term or as complementary that are project-specific or timebound (categories 3 and 4) are proposed to be funded from voluntary contributions.

Determining resources requirements			
Category 1 Essential activities	Category 2 Recurring or long-term activities	Category 3 Temporary or short-term activities	Category 4 Complementary activities
Core budget (ordinary budget + compulsory contributions)		Programmatic budget (voluntary contributions)	

III. How could we build on what exists in the Council of Europe?

Another approach would be to base the core and programmatic activities on the **categories of activities** existing within the Council of Europe. The asset would be to maintain the coherence with the ordinary budget of the Organisation and ensure the Committee of Ministers has a common understanding of what is meant by complementary budget aimed to fund core activities.

There are three categories of activities: monitoring, standard setting and cooperation activities.

In the case of the Bern Convention:

Monitoring activities would include the statutory meetings, the biennial reporting, the reporting under Resolution No. 8 (2012) on the conservation status of species and habitats, the case-file system and some activities of the Groups of Experts when they take stock of the implementation of recommendations of the Standing Committee.

Standard setting activities would encompass the strategic development of the convention, most of the work of Groups of Experts, the Emerald Network.

Whereas the **cooperation activities** would consist of technical and scientific assistance activities, bilateral or regional projects, new initiatives at the request of Contracting Parties, ...

IV. Conclusions

While some flexibility is needed for Contracting Parties for differentiating core and programmatic activities, some basic principles would ensure a coherence in the approach.

There are different angles for defining the “core” character of activities but not a harmonised definition.

The Secretariat would recommend aligning the criteria with the categories of activities already existing within the Council of Europe.