



Strasbourg, 6 December 2024

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CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF EUROPEAN WILDLIFE
AND NATURAL HABITATS

Standing Committee

44th meeting
Strasbourg, 2 - 6 December 2024

**Terms of reference of the Working
Group on exploring sustainable
financing options for the Bern
Convention**

I. BACKGROUND

In 2019, the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention adopted [Resolution No. 9 \(2019\)](#) on the financing of the Bern Convention and on initiating the establishment of a new system for obligatory financial contributions by Parties setting up an Intersessional Working Group on Finances entrusted with the drafting of proposals for amending the Convention and for a Partial Agreement, in order to ensure viable and predictable financial support to the Convention work and activities

After three years of operation, the Intersessional Working Group on Finances assessed the feasibility of establishing an Enlarged Partial Agreement, prepared several financial scenarios in relation to the Enlarged Partial Agreement, drafted an amendment to the Bern Convention in view of Article 16 of the Convention, prepared a financial simulation tool in relation to the draft amendment and reviewed other institutional, legal options.

On 19 October 2022, the Committee of Ministers ([CM/Del/Dec\(2022\)1446/9.1](#)) entrusted the Standing Committee to the Bern Convention to elaborate a protocol amending the Bern Convention as it appeared to be the best available option to secure long-term funding of the Convention. To achieve this task, the Standing Committee decided to set up an *Ad-hoc* Drafting Group of the Amending Protocol which replaced the Intersessional Working Group on Finances.

At its session in May 2024, following the Reykjavík Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (2023), the Committee of Ministers launched the elaboration of a Council of Europe Strategy on the Environment. As part of the exploration of sustainable financing options for related activities and conventions, particularly the Bern Convention, the upcoming session of the Committee of Ministers in May 2025 will consider the establishment of a dedicated Council of Europe Environment Trust Fund (CETF).

II. SCOPE

The Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention is entrusted with the finalisation of the draft protocol amending the Bern Convention and creating a mechanism of compulsory financial contributions and its explanatory report. Under its mandate, the Working Group is also tasked to consider any decisions that may be taken at the May 2025 session of the Committee of Ministers on the establishment of a dedicated Council of Europe Environment Trust Fund (CETF), and in particular how the Trust Fund could respond to the financial needs of the Bern Convention and to propose the most appropriate solutions regarding financing options for the Bern Convention for consideration by the September meeting of the Bureau of the Convention and the Standing Committee at its 45th meeting. The Working Group will replace the *Ad-hoc* Drafting Group of the Amending Protocol.

III. COMPOSITION

The Working Group on exploring sustainable financing options for the Bern Convention will comprise relevant representatives of Contracting Parties to the Bern Convention and may invite relevant third parties as deemed necessary.

The Working Group will select one Chair from amongst its members.

IV. WORKING METHODS

The working language will be English.

The Working Group will meet at least once, before the meeting of the Bureau in September 2025.

The working group shall operate by online means.

The Bureau of the Standing Committee will review and evaluate the work of the Working Group at the Bureau's meetings.

The Working Group will report to the 45th Standing Committee to the Bern Committee.

In co-operation with the Chair, the Secretariat will coordinate and assist with the organisation and preparation of the agenda for the meetings of the Working Group and any other support activities deemed necessary.