

**5th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the
CMS Scientific Council (ScC-SC5)**

Online, 28 June – 9 July 2021

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**PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL FOR
THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD BETWEEN COP13 AND COP14**

(Prepared by the Secretariat)

Summary:

The main objective of the 5th meeting of the Sessional Committee of the CMS Scientific Council is for the Sessional Committee to develop its Programme of Work for the intersessional period to COP14, and discuss and agree on the modalities for its delivery.

The present document provides a draft Programme of Work for review, further development and adoption by the Sessional Committee.

PROGRAMME OF WORK FOR THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE SCIENTIFIC COUNCIL FOR THE INTERSESSIONAL PERIOD BETWEEN COP13 AND COP14

Background

1. The 5th Meeting of the Sessional Committee is the first meeting of the Sessional Committee following the appointment by COP13 of the Sessional Committee for the intersessional period between COP13 and COP14. One of the main objectives of the meeting is for the Committee to finalize its Programme of Work (POW) for the intersessional period, and discuss and agree on the modalities for its delivery.
2. The general functions of the Scientific Council are defined by Art. VIII of the Convention, and are further detailed by the Terms of Reference for the CMS Scientific Council annexed to [Resolution 12.4 Scientific Council](#). The Terms of Reference also define responsibilities of the members of the Sessional Committee and of Scientific Councillors that are not Sessional Committee members.
3. COP13 directed numerous requests to the Scientific Council through its resolutions and decisions. In addition, a number of developments have occurred since COP13 that are of relevance to its mandate and which the Sessional Committee may wish to consider, including the global COVID-19 pandemic which has been identified as a zoonotic disease that likely originated with a wild species of animal, and numerous scientific assessments that have a bearing on CMS-listed species.

Draft Programme of Work of the Sessional Committee

4. The Annex to this document includes a draft of the POW, prepared by the Secretariat in consultation with members of the Sessional Committee, as a basis for Sessional Committee work during the meeting.
5. The proposed tabular format of the POW is largely based on the one developed by the Sessional Committee for its POW for the intersessional periods between COP11 and COP12 and between COP12 and COP13. The POW is divided in five Thematic Work Areas, as follows:
Part A: Strategic, institutional and legal matters
Part B: Aquatic species conservation issues
Part C: Terrestrial species conservation issues
Part D: Avian species conservation issues
Part E: Cross-cutting conservation issues
6. The first two columns of the table include the requests addressed to the Scientific Council as contained in resolutions or decisions adopted by COP13. Other columns of the table have been filled by the Secretariat to the extent possible, with a view to provide a basis for discussion for the Sessional Committee. Where possible, this has been done in consultation with individual members of the Sessional Committee, in particular with relevant COP-appointed Councillors. Gaps still exist in the table particularly for the columns "Activity", "Lead" and "Contributors," that discussions at the meeting are expected to fill.

7. In addition to responding to the requests addressed to the Scientific Council by meetings of the COP, the Scientific Council has traditionally undertaken its own additional initiatives, and formulated proposals and recommendations to the COP and other entities of the Conventions, within its broad mandate. The Sessional Committee may wish to consider, in particular, areas of work within its mandate that relate to developments following COP13, including a renewed focus on wildlife diseases. In addition, since COP13, the IUCN updated its assessment of the African Elephant, concluding that there are two distinct elephant species in Africa (Forest and Savannah) with a conservation status of critically endangered and endangered, respectively. The Sessional Committee may wish to consider additional work related to the conservation of these two species.
8. In developing its PoW, the Sessional Committee may also wish to consider the modalities for its work, to consider any particular contributions that it or individual members would like to undertake in support of the implementation of the Convention, and to discuss and clarify the responsibilities of its individual members as appropriate.

Recommended actions

9. The Sessional Committee is recommended to
 - a) review, further develop and adopt its Programme of Work for the intersessional period between COP13 and COP14;
 - b) discuss and clarify the modalities for its work including possible contributions and responsibilities of its individual members as appropriate.