

## **Terms of Reference of the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States**

Adopted by the CBSS Ministers' Deputies at their meeting  
in Laulasmaa, Estonia on 21 June 2004.

Revised by the Council through written procedure in April 2009.

Revised by the CBSS Ministers at their meeting on 19 May 2020.

Revised by the CBSS Ministers at their meeting on 14 June 2024.

1. The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) established a permanent international secretariat (Secretariat) in 1998 and refers to this Secretariat in the organisation's Terms of Reference.

2. Under the supervision of the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), the mandate of the Secretariat is to:

- Provide technical, organisational and analytical support to the CBSS Presidency, the CSO and the CBSS expert groups and other structures, as decided by the CSO;
- Ensure continuity and coordination of CBSS work, to act as a focal point of information on regional cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region, and to implement the CBSS communication strategy;
- Promote enhanced dialogue, cooperation and alignment with other regional actors through a regular structured dialogue in the context of existing cooperation formats in the region;
- Make proposals and present initiatives to the CSO, in order to promote the objectives and implement the priorities decided by the Council;
- Contribute to reinforcing the effects of regional policies and strategies adopted by CBSS Members in other fora by creating and making best use of regional synergies and cohesion;
- Assist, in accordance with CSO decisions, relevant structures, such as expert groups, in initiating, developing and implementing regionally important, strategic projects in line with the agreed CBSS long- term priorities and involving as many CBSS Members as possible, and to explore the financing of these projects, taking into consideration possibilities for external funding.

3. The division of tasks and responsibilities between each Presidency and the Secretariat can be detailed in an agreement between them.

4. The Secretariat is headed by a Director General, who is appointed by the Members of the Council by consensus. The Director General is responsible for fulfilling the mandate of the Secretariat, as defined in these Terms of Reference. The Director General is the chief of staff, responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Secretariat and ensuring that the Secretariat has a staff substructure and a composition of competencies appropriate to the priorities of the CBSS, while providing adequate efficiency, flexibility and financial control. The Director General reports to the CSO through the Presidency.

5. The Secretariat may include Special Units as decided by the CSO. The Director General supervises the work of the units to ensure accordance with the Secretariat rules and to monitor consistency with the agreed CBSS long-term priorities, whereas the substantive work of these bodies is decided by their respective governing bodies.

6. The Director General is assisted by a Deputy Director General. The Deputy Director General, the Senior Advisers and other professional staff shall be nominated, appointed and prolonged by the Director General - in the case of the Deputy Director General upon consultation with the CSO - on the basis of merits, while taking account of the criteria of geographical and gender balance and of the principle of rotation. Special emphasis shall be put on relevant competencies as regards political dialogue, project cycle management and financial control.

7. Acceptance of seconded personnel is subject to the approval of the Director General.

8. In order to ensure an adequate balance between continuity and flexibility, the duration of contracts offered to internationally recruited staff shall vary depending on the operational needs of the Secretariat. As a general rule, the maximum duration of such contracts shall be four years, with the possibility of prolongation for up to two years. Contracts for locally recruited staff shall be offered in conformity with the labour regulations of the Host Country. All employment contracts for the CBSS Secretariat and the Special Units shall observe the terms of the Host Country Agreement.

9. The initial six months of employment for all staff under the Director General are to be considered as a period of probation, at the expiry of which the contract may be terminated by the Director General in case of unsatisfactory performance.

10. Detailed staff rules and regulations are set out in the Personnel Handbook of the Secretariat, which is approved by the Director General and available upon request to CSO members.

11. The system of classification and salaries shall be established on an internationally competitive level on the proposal of the Director General, according to established practice in international organisations and subject to approval of the CSO.

12. The working language of the Secretariat is English.

13. The Director General is responsible to the CSO in financial matters. The Director General may delegate certain duties within the Secretariat, as he/she deems necessary to secure proper and effective administration.

14. Detailed regulations on financial matters are set out in the Financial Rules of the Secretariat, as approved by the CSO.

15. Contributions from the Member States are paid according to the following scale:

Denmark	13.7 %
Estonia	4.5 %
Finland	13.7 %
Germany	13.7 %
Iceland	4.5 %
Latvia	4.5 %
Lithuania	4.5 %
Norway	13.7 %
Poland	13.7 %
Sweden	13.7 %

16. The financial year of the Secretariat is the calendar year.

17. The Director General is responsible for preparing a draft budget for the Secretariat. The draft budget is submitted by the Director General to the CSO for approval.

18. The Host Government provides the premises of the Secretariat free of charge under the Agreement on the Privileges and Immunities of the Secretariat (Host Country Agreement). The privileges and immunities of the Secretariat and its staff members are set out in this Agreement.

19. The Secretariat is subject to auditing by the State Auditor of the Host Country.

20. The Secretariat shall have such legal capacity as is necessary for the exercise of its functions. In particular it shall possess the capacity to contract, to acquire and dispose of movable and immovable property, and to institute and participate in legal proceedings.

21. The mechanism for settling disputes between the Secretariat and the Host Government is set out in the Host Country Agreement.

22. These Terms of Reference enter into force as of 14 June 2024 and supersede previous versions.