
Economic Commission for Europe

Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

Working Group of the Parties

Seventeenth meeting

Geneva, 26-28 February 2014

Item 6 of the provisional agenda

Implementation of the work programme for 2012–2014, including financial matters

Note by the secretariat¹

At its 16th meeting (19-21 June 2013) the Working Group of the Parties requested the secretariat to prepare for its next meeting a note comparing the ratio of extrabudgetary (XB) contributions vis-à-vis support to the Aarhus Convention's secretariat received from the United Nations regular budget (RB) with the corresponding ratios for other environmental activities in UNECE (ECE/MP.PP/WG.1/2013/2).

Conclusion of the analysis is that most MEAs rely more on the XB staff to implement their work programmes than other sub-units in the UNECE Environment Division. In particular, the Aarhus Convention and the Water Convention, together with their protocols, are the two instruments whose funding of staff, as well as of other expenditure, is greatly dependent on the XB contributions vis-à-vis support from the United Nations RB.

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¹ This document was not formally edited.

Explanatory remarks on data used and level of analysis

1. A report on the ratio of XB contributions vis-à-vis support to the environmental activities of the UNECE from the United Nations RB was not readily available.
2. Since financial data on contributions, especially from RB, could not be easily obtained on desired level of detail, the present note focuses on the expenditure side.

Staff costs as a proxy

3. Furthermore, in this analysis staff costs financed by XB and RB were considered as a proxy for the calculation of the XB to RB ratio². Staff category consists of Professional staff and General staff. Staff costs represented the most substantial cost category in XB expenditures of the Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on PRTRs in 2010-2013.

Unit of analysis

4. Unit of analysis were staff in terms of full time equivalent (FTE), meaning that contract duration was considered in the calculation³. This is especially relevant for the XB staff.

Period

5. Periods considered in this analysis were the last two bienniums, i.e. 2010-2011 and 2012-2013.

Level of analysis – Environment Division sub-units

6. Professional and General staff from RB and XB funding source working under the Environment Division sub-units were considered.

Table 1: List of Environment Division sub-units as considered for this overview

Environment Division sub-units
Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus Convention) and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers (PRTRs)
Convention on Long-range Transboundary Air Pollution (Air Convention)
Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment
Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes (Water Convention) and its Protocol on Water and Health

² Other XB cost categories are: consultancy costs; travel of experts and meeting participants; travel of staff and grants. Except staff costs, these cost categories are negligible or non-existent in the Environment Division RB expenditures. For example, in four years – between 2010-2013 - consultancy fees and travels were in total 44,068 USD, while staff travel expenditure was 101,606 USD. There was no RB expenditure for travel of meeting participants and for grants in this period.

³ Overview shows distribution of human resources in the UNECE Environment Division. Calculations consider months of contract durations of XB staff. Staff costs from the Director's office are reflected through allocations to Environment Division sub-units. Data, which used as a basis for calculation for this note, was also presented at the Committee on Environmental Policy 18th and 19th sessions (Document Overview of resources for the environmental activities; Information paper no. 6, page2, <http://www.unece.org/env/cep/2012sessionapril.html>; and Information paper no. 8, p2, <http://www.unece.org/env/cep/2013sessionoctober.html>; respectively).

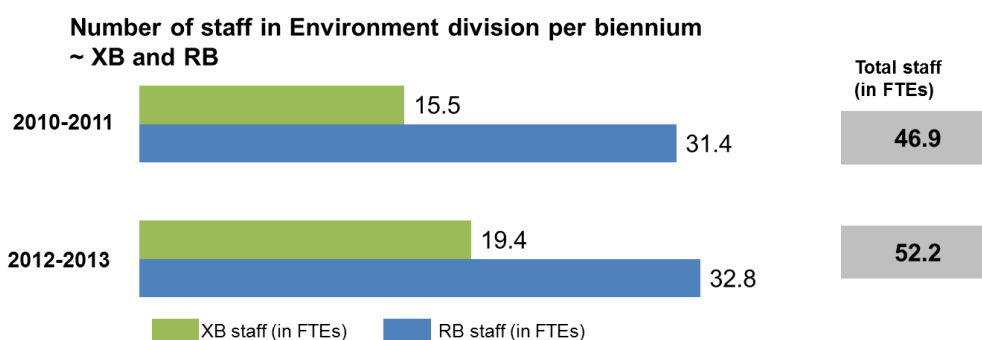
Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents (Industrial Accidents Convention)
Committee on Environmental Policy/ “Environment for Europe” process (CEP/EfE)
Environmental Monitoring and Assessment
Environmental Performance Reviews (EPR)
Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)
Transport, Health and Environment/ Environment and Health (Transport & Health)
Other smaller sub-units in the Environment Division ⁴

Overview of number of staff in the Environment Division per biennium

7. There were in total 46.9 FTEs in the Environment Division in the biennium 2010-2011. Out of which 31.4 FTEs were RB and 15.5 FTEs were XB. There were 35.2 FTEs Professional staff and 11.7 FTEs General staff.

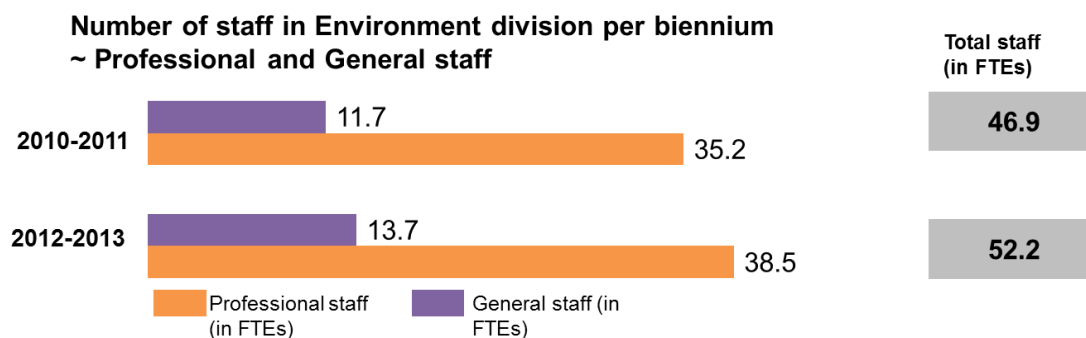
8. In the biennium 2012-2013 there were in total 52.2 FTEs in the Environment Division. Out of which 32.8 FTEs were RB and 19.4 FTEs were XB. There were 38.5 FTEs Professional staff and 13.7 FTEs General staff.

Figure 1: Number of staff (in FTEs) in Environment Division per biennium (XB and RB staff)



⁴ Such as: National Policy Dialogue on Integrated Water Resource Management, Regional dialogue and cooperation on water resource management (GIZ project), Regional Adviser, Joint ESCAP/ECE SPECA Office, Almaty (Kazakhstan).

Figure 2: Number of staff (in FTEs) in Environment Division per biennium (Professional and General staff)



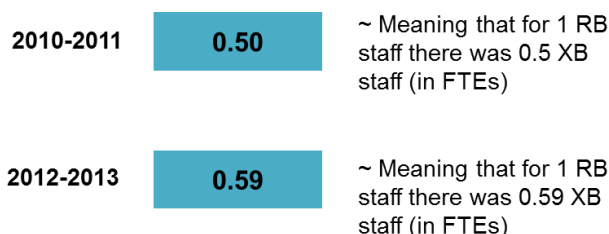
Ratio of XB staff to RB staff in the Environment Division

9. The XB to RB ratio for the Environment Division was 0.50 in 2010-2011. In other words, for each 1 RB staff there was 0.50 XB staff in FTEs.

10. Similarly, in 2012-2013 the XB to RB ratio was 0.59, meaning that for each 1 RB staff there was 0.59 XB staff in FTEs.

Figure 3: Overview of XB:RB staff ratio for Environment Division per biennium

XB:RB staff ratio – total for Environment Division



11. There are, however, significant differences between sub-units. In both bienniums, MEAs overall had a higher XB to RB ratio (0.73 and 1.03), especially Aarhus Convention (1.61 and 1.63) and Water Convention (1.24 and 2.01), as well as Espoo Convention (0.70 and 1.32) and Industrial Accidents (0.50 and 0.78), compared to the rest of the Division (on average 0.50 and 0.59). On the other hand, certain sub-units – EPR, Environmental Monitoring and Assessment, Transport & Health – did not have XB staff at all, the ratio hence was 0.

Figure 4: Overview of XB and RB FTEs and their ratios for the Environment Division staff for 2010-2011

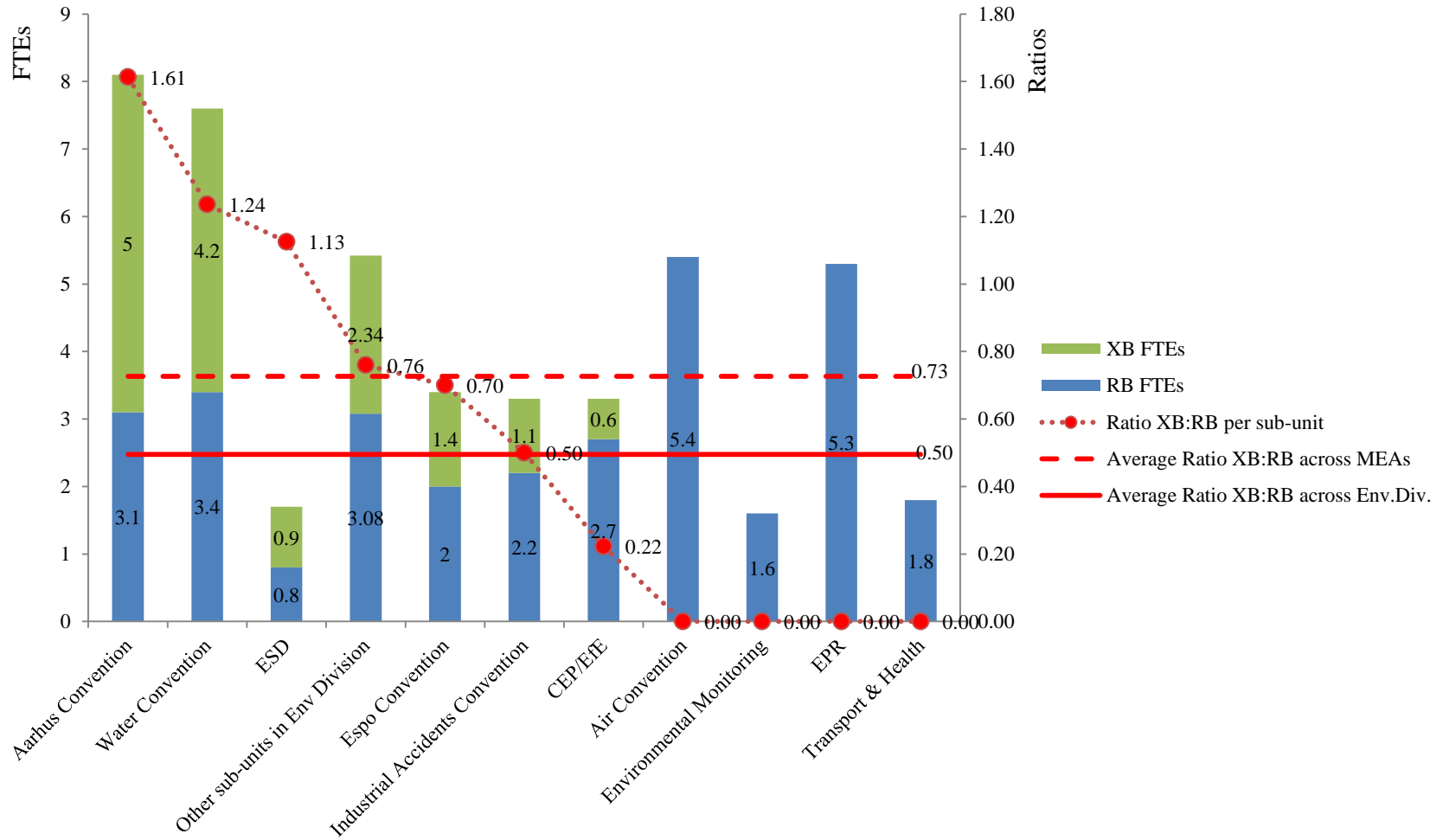
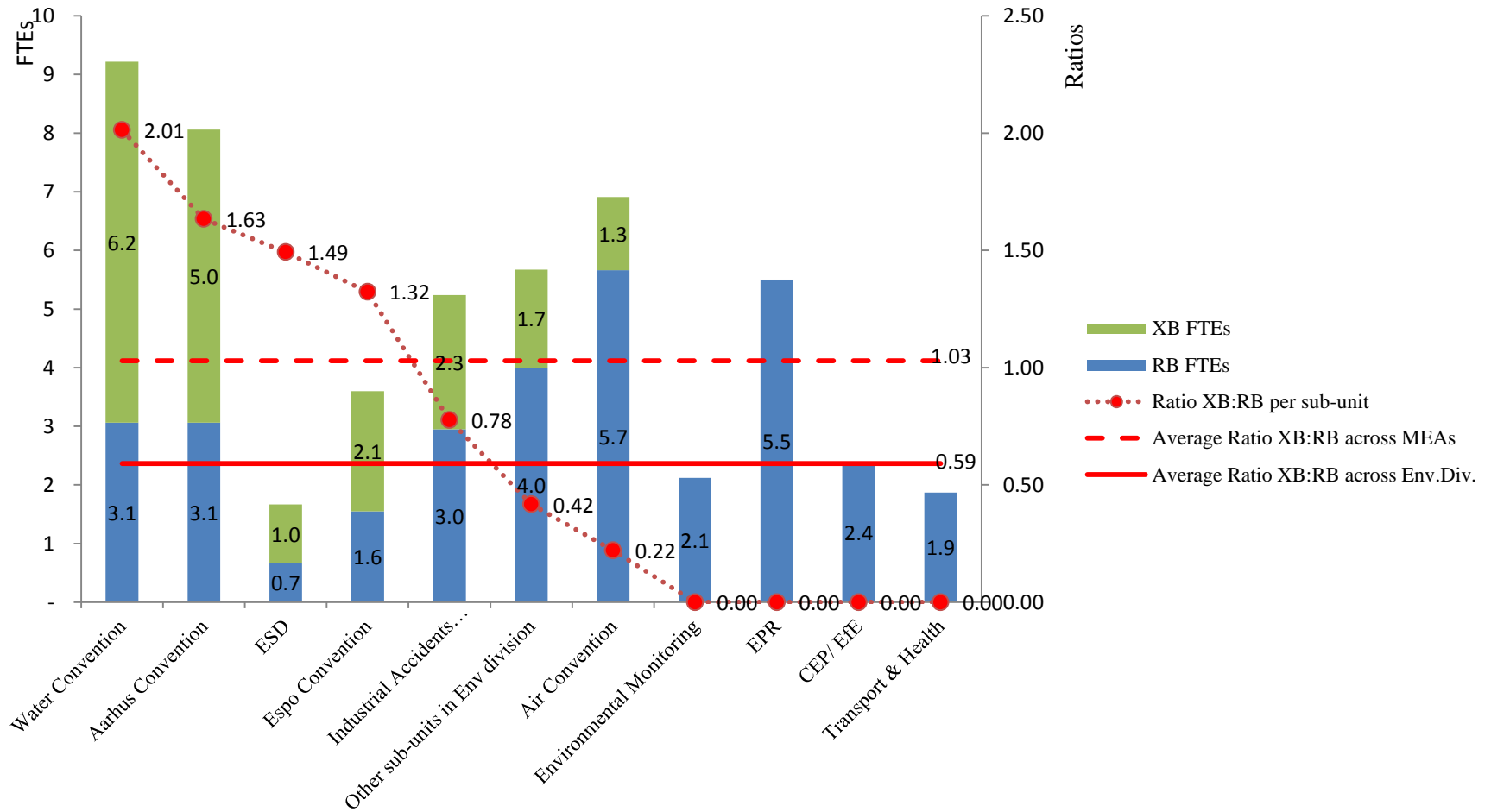


Figure 5: Overview of XB and RB FTEs and their ratios for the Environment Division staff for 2012-2013



12. Brief analysis shows that most MEAs rely more on the XB staff to implement their work programmes than other sub-units in the UNECE Environment Division. In particular, the Aarhus Convention and the Water Convention, together with their protocols, are the two instruments whose funding of staff, as well as of other expenditure, is greatly dependent on the XB contributions vis-à-vis support from the United Nations RB.
