BIPM

# Impact of a flat dotation for the BIPM: Consequences of a real-terms Reduction

**28th meeting of the General Conference on Weights and Measures (2026)**

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**The BIPM and the increased demand for reliable measurement**

The International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) is the international organization through which Member States work together to establish and maintain trust in the international measurement system. The demand for reliable and meaningful measurement is rapidly increasing globally as new technologies are developed, digital transformation is rolling out at pace, national security and innovation systems are under pressure, and regulatory responses to health and environmental concerns are implemented.

**The investment requirement to respond to challenges**

The BIPM has a track record of delivering high value for its Member States and is a trusted partner to coordinate their response to these challenges. It has developed a detailed Work Programme to maintain ongoing critical services and evolve to support the new needs of its Members over the period 2028 – 2031. By continuing to make its operation more efficient through automation, outsourcing, and partnership models for delivery, the full Work Programme can be delivered with a 1.5 % increase in the dotation per annum over that period, despite being less than the projected 2.0 % inflation in France. **This is a constrained efficiency-based proposal that sits well below projected inflation.**

**Direct impact of a flat dotation**

If there is not unanimous support[1] from Member States to increase the dotation at the 28th General Conference on Weights and Measures in October 2026, and instead the dotation is fixed at the 2027 level, this will amount to a real-terms reduction of 2 % year on year over the four years of the period 2028 – 2031. The BIPM will have to take proactive action to decrease its activity and services in several areas to meet its budget envelope, with the following impacts:

- *Modernization and Digitalization of Time Services*: Delay will limit new services and support for multi-source time synchronisation underpinning global finance, energy distribution, telecom and positioning.
- *Comparison of Optical Clocks with a Transportable Instrument:* Reducing support for this project will delay the redefinition of the second and the validation of national standards and infrastructures underpinning fundamental physics and quantum applications including secure quantum communications, sensing, and relativistic geodesy.
- *Coordination of Lunar Time:* Discontinuation of BIPM support will mean that interoperability of lunar technology must rely on bilateral agreements, undermining security and multilateralism in Moon and space missions.

[1] Approval of the annual dotation requires the absence of any negative votes (Article 6.5 of the Annexed Regulations to the Metre Convention)

- *qNMR reference method development*: Without $^{19}F$ and $^{31}P$ qNMR reference methods, manufacturers and regulators will lack a traceable, internationally consistent means to verify the purity and potency of both fluorinated drugs and mRNA/DNA-based therapeutics, undermining quality assurance across two of the fastest-growing areas of modern medicine.
- *International Liaison and Communication:* Reduced activity will limit the recognition of the contribution of Member State investments in metrology to addressing national and global challenges.
- *Co-60 irradiator*: Deferring the replacement of this item will risk continuity of the primary dosimetry reference underpinning worldwide consistency of radiation measurements for safe cancer treatment and radiation protection.
- *BIPM Compact Kibble balance:* Delayed development will limit the support for weighing industries in countries not possessing a Kibble balance.

**Systemic long-term implications of a flat dotation**

Beyond the immediate impacts described above, the loss of ongoing investment in laboratory expertise, the reduced engagement and capacity building coordinated internationally, and the delay in developing critical services for the long term will:

- Erode the trust in and reputation of the SI and UTC as authoritative references
- Risk the pace of innovation and interoperability for digital, space and quantum technologies
- Weaken international equivalence and raise trade barriers
- Reduce the capability of the BIPM to respond to unanticipated Member State needs
- Increase the resources required by individual national laboratories for activities currently undertaken on a common basis by the BIPM
- Reduce availability of international benchmarking and evidence for strategic national investment

**Conclusion**

The BIPM is the central element of the global measurement infrastructure. It enables international cooperation underpinning comparability of measurements for innovation, public policy, trade and security, and reduces costs for national laboratories. It is also a critical pillar of the international quality infrastructure, ensuring trust and confidence.

A flat dotation is a real-terms reduction that would force prioritisation away from services that Member States increasingly rely on. Over the longer term, any loss in continuity, credibility, and depth of scientific expertise at the BIPM would be difficult to rebuild and could weaken the foundations of the international measurement system. It will also lead to increased costs in the regions, as services now provided by BIPM will need to be provided by individual institutes in Member States.

The BIPM remains firmly committed to maintaining global trust in measurement and to adapting, in partnership with its Member States, to the demands of a rapidly changing world. Through sustained collaboration and shared commitment, it will continue to deliver a resilient, forward-looking system that supports collective success.

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