

Agenda Item 1.3

Opening of the Meeting

Rules of Procedure

Document 1.3

**Rules of Procedure for the ASCOBANS
Advisory Committee**

Action Requested

Take note

Submitted by

Secretariat



Secretariat's Note

The Rules of Procedure adopted at the 8th Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS (2016), including the Annex adopted at the 26th Meeting of the Advisory Committee (2021), remain in force until and unless an amendment is called for and adopted.

RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PART I

DELEGATES, OBSERVERS, SECRETARIAT

Rule 1: Delegates

- (1) A Party to the Agreement (hereafter referred to as a "Party")¹ shall be entitled to be represented at the meeting by a delegation consisting of a Committee Member and Alternate, when appropriate and such Advisers as the Party may deem necessary.
- (2) The Committee Member shall exercise the voting rights of that Party. In the absence of the Committee Member, the Alternate or an Adviser may be appointed by the Committee Member to act as a substitute over the full range of the Committee Member's functions.
- (3) The appointed Committee Member or alternate shall be available for consultation intersessionally.
- (4) Seating limitations may require that no more than four delegates of any Party be present at a session of the Advisory Committee or any working group established by it in accordance with Rule 18.

Rule 2: Observers

- (1) All non-Party Range States, Regional Economic Integration Organizations bordering on the waters concerned, and other bodies referred to in Article 6.2.1 of the Agreement may be represented at the meeting by observers.
- (2) Any other body or individual qualified in cetacean conservation and management referred to in Article 6.2.2 of the Agreement desiring to be represented at the meeting by observers shall inform the Secretariat at least 60 days prior to the opening of the meeting, unless previously approved for participation.² The Secretariat shall inform the Parties of the new requests received within five days of receipt. The observers shall be entitled to be present unless at least one-third of the Parties have opposed their application in writing at least 30 days before the meeting.
- (3) Observers shall have the right to participate but not to vote.
- (4) Seating limitations may require that no more than two observers from any non-Party Range State or body be present at a session of the Advisory Committee or of any working group established by it in accordance with Rule 18.

¹ See Agreement, paragraph 1.2, sub-paragraph (e), and paragraphs 8.4 and 8.5. A Party is a Range State or a Regional Economic Integration Organization which has deposited with the United Nations Headquarters its consent to be bound by the Agreement

² The Secretariat shall maintain a list of approved bodies, available at <http://www.ascobans.org/en/page/approved-observer-organizations-mop-and-ac-meetings>.

This list shall include bodies referred to in Article 6.2.1 of the Agreement, as well as any that have been admitted as observers to at least three meetings of the Advisory Committee or Meeting of the Parties. The list of approved observers can be amended at the written request of at least one-third of the Parties up to 60 days before the meeting.

Rule 3: Secretariat

Unless otherwise instructed by the Parties, the Secretariat shall service and act as secretariat for the meeting. Secretariat services are provided through the UNEP/CMS Secretariat.

PART II**OFFICERS****Rule 4: Chairpersons**

- (1) The Chairperson of the Advisory Committee shall hold office until the end of the first meeting of the Advisory Committee following each Meeting of Parties.
- (2) The Chairperson and Vice-chairperson may be nominated for re-election at the end of a term of office. In the event of the election of a new Chairperson or Vice-chairperson, the Advisory Committee shall elect these persons from among the Committee Members or their advisers.

Rule 5: Presiding Officer

- (1) The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the Advisory Committee.
- (2) If the Chairperson is absent or is unable to discharge the duties of Presiding Officer, the Vice-Chairperson shall deputize.
- (3) In the event that both the Chairperson and the Vice-Chairperson are absent or unable to discharge the duties of Presiding Officer, the appointed Committee Member of the Party hosting the Meeting shall assume these duties.
- (4) The Presiding Officer may vote.

PART III**RULES OF ORDER OF DEBATE****Rule 6: Powers of Presiding Officer**

- (1) In addition to exercising powers conferred elsewhere in these Rules, the Presiding Officer shall at Advisory Committee meetings:
 - (a) open and close the sessions;
 - (b) direct the discussions;
 - (c) ensure the observance of these Rules;
 - (d) accord the right to speak;
 - (e) put questions to the vote and announce decisions;
 - (f) rule on points of order; and

- (g) subject to these Rules, have complete control of the proceedings of the Meeting and the maintenance of order.
- (2) The Presiding Officer may, in the course of discussion at a meeting, propose:
- (a) time limits for speakers;
 - (b) limitation of the number of times the members of a delegation or observers from a State which is not a Party or a Regional Economic Integration Organization, or from any other body, may speak on any subject matter;
 - (c) the closure of the list of speakers;
 - (d) the adjournment or the closure of the debate on the particular subject under discussion;
 - (e) the suspension or adjournment of any session; and
 - (f) the establishment of drafting groups on specific issues.

Rule 7: Right to Speak

- (1) The Presiding Officer shall call upon speakers in the order in which they signify their desire to speak, with precedence given to the Committee Members.
- (2) A Committee Member, adviser or observer may speak only if called upon by the Presiding Officer, who may call a speaker to order if the remarks are not relevant to the subject under discussion.
- (3) A speaker shall not be interrupted, except on a point of order. The speaker may, however, with the permission of the Presiding Officer, give way during his speech to allow any Committee Member, adviser or observer to request elucidation on a particular point in that speech.

Rule 8: Procedural Motions

- (1) During the discussion of any matter, a Committee Member may raise a point of order, and the point of order shall be immediately, where possible, decided by the Presiding Officer in accordance with these Rules. A delegate may appeal against any ruling of the Presiding Officer. The appeal shall immediately be put to the vote, and the Presiding Officer's ruling shall stand unless a majority of the Parties present and voting decide otherwise. A delegate raising a point of order may not speak on the substance of the matter under discussion, but only on the point of order.
- (2) The following motions shall have precedence in the following order over all other proposals or motions before the Meeting:
 - (a) to suspend the session;
 - (b) to adjourn the session;
 - (c) to adjourn the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion;
 - (d) to close the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion.

Rule 9: Arrangements for Debate

- (1) The Meeting may, on a proposal by the Presiding Officer or by a Committee Member, limit the time to be allowed to each speaker and the number of times Committee Members, advisers or observers may speak on any subject matter. When the debate is subject to such limits, and a speaker has spoken for the allotted time, the Presiding Officer shall call the speaker to order without delay.
- (2) During the course of a debate the Presiding Officer may announce the list of speakers and, with the consent of the Committee, declare the list closed. The Presiding Officer may, however, accord the right of reply to any individual if a speech delivered after the list has been declared closed makes this desirable.
- (3) During the discussion of any matter, a Committee Member may move the adjournment of the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion. In addition to the proposer of the motion, a Committee Member may speak in favour of, and a Committee Member of each of two Parties may speak against the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this Rule.
- (4) A Committee Member may at any time move the closure of the debate on the particular subject or question under discussion, whether or not any other individual has signified the wish to speak. Permission to speak on the motion for closure of the debate shall be accorded only to a Committee Member from each of two Parties wishing to speak against the motion, after which the motion shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time to be allowed to speakers under this Rule.
- (5) During the discussion of any matter a Committee Member may move the suspension or the adjournment of the session. Such motions shall not be debated but shall immediately be put to the vote. The Presiding Officer may limit the time allowed to the speaker moving the suspension or adjournment of the session.

Rule 10: Submission of Documents

As a general rule, documents intended for discussion at the meeting shall be submitted to the Secretariat at least 35 days before the meeting, who shall circulate them to all Parties at least 30 days before the meeting.

PART IV**VOTING****Rule 11: Methods of Voting**

- (1) Without prejudice to the provisions of Rule 1, Paragraph 2, each Committee Member shall have one vote.
- (2) The Committee shall normally vote by show of hands, but any Committee Member may request a roll-call vote. In the event of a vote during an inter-sessional period, there will be a postal ballot, which may include ballot by email or fax.
- (3) At the election of officers, any Committee Member may request a secret ballot. If seconded, the question of whether a secret ballot should be held shall immediately be voted upon. The motion for a secret ballot may not be conducted by secret ballot.

- (4) Voting by roll-call or by secret ballot shall be expressed by "Yes", "No" or "Abstain". Only affirmative and negative votes shall be counted in calculating the number of votes cast by Committee Members present and voting.
- (5) If votes are equal, the motion or amendment shall not be carried.
- (6) The Presiding Officer shall be responsible for the counting of the votes and shall announce the result. The Presiding Officer may be assisted by the Secretariat. Inter-sessional voting by postal ballot, email or fax will be co-ordinated by the Secretariat.
- (7) After the Presiding Officer has announced the beginning of the vote, it shall not be interrupted except by a Committee Member on point of order in connection with the actual conduct of the voting. The Presiding Officer may permit Committee Members to explain their votes either before or after the voting, and may limit the time to be allowed for such explanations.

Rule 12: Majority and Voting Procedures on Motions and Amendments

- (1) Except where otherwise provided for under the provisions of the Agreement or these Rules, all votes on procedural matters relating to the forwarding of the business of the meeting shall be decided by a simple majority of Parties.
- (2) Financial decisions within the limit of the power available to the Advisory Committee shall be decided by three-quarter majority among those Parties present and voting.
- (3) Amendments to the Rules of Procedure require a three-quarter majority among those present and voting.
- (4) All other decisions shall be taken by simple majority among Parties present and voting.
- (5) When an amendment is moved to a proposal, the amendment shall be voted on first. If the amendment is adopted, the amended proposal shall then be voted upon.

PART V

LANGUAGES AND RECORDS

Rule 13: Working Language

English shall be the working language of the Committee meeting and working groups.

Rule 14: Other Languages

- (1) An individual may speak in a language other than English, provided he/she furnishes interpretation into English.
- (2) Any document submitted to a meeting shall be in English.

Rule 15: Summary Records

Summary records of Committee meetings shall be kept by the Secretariat and shall be circulated to all Parties in English.

PART VI

OPENNESS OF DEBATES

Rule 16: Committee Meetings

All sessions of meetings shall be open to the public, except that in exceptional circumstances the Meeting may decide, by a two-thirds majority of Parties present and voting, that any single session be closed to the public.

Rule 17: Sessions of the Working Groups

As a general rule, sessions of working groups shall be limited to the Committee Members, their advisers and to observers invited by the Chairs of working groups.

PART VII

WORKING GROUPS

Rule 18: Establishment of Working Groups

- (1) The Advisory Committee may establish such working groups as may be necessary to enable it to carry out its functions. It shall define their terms of reference. The Advisory Committee as well as the working groups may nominate members of each working group, the size of which may be limited according to the number of places available in assembly rooms.
- (2) The working group can appoint committee members, advisers as well as observers as its Chair and Vice-Chair.

Rule 19: Procedure

Insofar as they are applicable, these Rules shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the proceedings of working groups.

PART VIII

FINAL PROVISIONS

Rule 20: Omissions

In matters not covered by the present Rules, the Rules of Procedure as adopted by the last regular Meeting of the Parties shall be applied *mutatis mutandis*.

Rule 21: Amendments to the Rules of Procedure

- (1) The Committee shall, by three-quarter majority, establish its own Rules of Procedure.
- (2) These rules may be amended by the Committee as required. They will remain in force until and unless an amendment is called for and adopted.

ANNEX:**OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR VIRTUAL MEETINGS****With reference to Rule 1: Delegates**

- There will be no limitations on how many delegates of any Party may be present. However, in the interest of efficiency it is recommended that the size of each delegation not exceed 10 connections.

With reference to Rule 2: Observers

- There will be no limitations on how many delegates of non-Party Range States, Regional Economic Integration Organizations, or observer organizations admitted in accordance with Rule 2 (1) and (2), may be present. However, in the interest of efficiency it is recommended that the size of each delegation not exceed 10 connections.

With reference to Rule 10: Submission of Documents

- If, after the formal announcement of the meeting dates, a change to online format necessitates a change in start or end dates of up to five days, the document deadline will not change.

With reference to Rule 11: Methods of Voting

- If voting is called for, the Secretariat will advise Parties on how it will be handled online, taking into account the functionality of the online platform being used, and the nature of the voting method decided upon.
- For the purpose of determining 'presence' under the Rules, it includes remote presence via a video link or telephone.

With reference to of Rule 14: Other Languages

- Any Party that wishes to provide interpretation into a language other than English, shall inform the Secretariat at least 30 days in advance of the meeting, so that the Secretariat can determine if such a request can be accommodated technically, and if so, make the necessary arrangements.