

Agenda Item 1.2

Opening of the Meeting

Rules of Procedure

Document 1.2b/Rev.1

**Annex to Rules of Procedure for the
Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS:
Operating Procedures for Virtual Meetings**

Action Requested

- Review the draft annex
- Introduce amendments as desired
- Adopt the annex

Submitted by

Secretariat



Note:

Delegates are kindly reminded to bring their own document copies to the meeting, if needed.

Secretariat's Note

The COVID-19 pandemic has rendered physical gatherings impossible, and so has presented UNEP and multilateral environmental agreements with the challenge of devising solutions, that may apply not only during but also beyond the pandemic.

UNEP conducted an internal study on options, opportunities and barriers for accelerating a transition to multilateralism in a virtual setting. The study looked at Rules of Procedure highlighted that virtual meetings should seek to follow the applicable Rules of the body in question. Thus, the intention should not be to revise Rules but rather to ensure that they can be applied in the context of a virtual meeting, with supplementary Rules, as appropriate. Operating procedures for virtual meetings should not deviate from but rather elaborate and/or interpret the Rules.

The ASCOBANS Rules of Procedure were adopted on the implicit understanding that meetings would be conducted in person. However, they do not preclude meeting through a virtual format. Annex 1 to this document, which, once adopted, will be annexed to the existing Rules of Procedure, elaborates certain adjustments or additions to the Rules that may be necessary with such a change in format.

The Parties are requested to adopt the annex as an addendum to the Rules of Procedure presented in [ASCOBANS/MOP9/Doc.1.2](#).

Revision 1 corrects a typo in the annex title.

Annex 1:**ANNEX TO RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE MEETING OF THE PARTIES TO ASCOBANS:
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 people.

With reference to Rule 2: Observers

- There will be no limitations on how many delegates of observer organization, 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 people.

With reference to of Rule 3: Credentials

- Duly signed credentials shall be submitted to the Secretariat in an electronic format via email as soon as available, and before start of the Meeting at the latest. The hard copy shall be mailed to the Secretariat, for its records, but it does not need to arrive before start of the Meeting.
- If, after the formal announcement of the meeting, the venue is changed or moved to an online format, the credentials do not need to be amended to reflect the change in venue. The same applies for the dates of the meeting, if any changes are within 30 days of the original published dates.

With reference to Rule 8: Seating, Quorum

- For the purpose of determining quorum and decision-making under the Rules, 'presence' includes remote presence via a video link or telephone.

With reference to Rule 11: Submission of Documents and Resolutions

- 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 14: 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.

With reference to of Rule 19: 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.