

Agenda Item 1.3

Opening of the Meeting

Rules of Procedure

Document 1.3b

**Annex to the Rules of Procedure for the
ASCOBANS Advisory Committee:**

Operating Procedures for Virtual Meetings

Action Requested

- Review
- Introduce amendments as needed
- Adopt the Annex

Submitted by

Secretariat

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. In addition, Parties at their 9th Meeting (September 2020) decided that the Advisory Committee meeting following and preceding the Meeting of the Parties would take place virtually.

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 for the Advisory Committee, elaborates certain adjustments or additions to the Rules that may be necessary with such a change in format. This document follows the operating procedures adopted by the 9th Meeting of the Parties to ASCOBANS (September 2020).

The Advisory Committee is requested to adopt the operating procedures as an annex to the Rules of Procedure presented in ASCOBANS/AC26/Doc.1.3a.

**ANNEX TO THE RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE ASCOBANS ADVISORY COMMITTEE:
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.