



United Nations Environment Programme

Distr.: General
8 October 2012

Original: English

Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

First session

Bonn, Germany, 21-26 January 2013

Item 4 (b) of the provisional agenda*

Rules and procedures for the operations of the Plenary of the Platform: policy and procedures for the admission of observers

Draft policy and procedures for the admission of observers

I. Policy for admission of observers to the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

The following policy for admitting observers to sessions of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) will apply:

1. “Observer” means any State not a member of the Platform and any body, organization or agency, whether national or international, governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental, or [organization of] [accredited representative of] indigenous peoples and local communities, which is qualified in matters covered by the Platform, and which has informed the secretariat of the Platform of its wish to be represented at sessions of the Plenary, subject to the provisions set out in the rules of procedure.¹
2. Any State not a member of the Platform that is interested in participating in the Platform as an observer will be considered as admitted by the Plenary as an observer and need not submit an application or other documentation.

* IPBES/1/1.

¹ In the rules of procedure for the Plenary of the Platform (see UNEP/IPBES.MI/2/9, annex I, appendix II), it is noted that issues of membership and/or participation of regional economic organizations remain under discussion with a view to resolution as soon as possible. It is further noted that participation is open to regional economic integration organizations as observers ad interim.



3. United Nations bodies and secretariats of multilateral environment agreements are considered observers of the Platform and need not submit an application or other documentation.
4. The decision as to whether a body, organization or agency is qualified in matters covered by the Platform should be guided by the documents submitted by the respective organization, as listed in paragraph 10 of the present document, as well as by the functions and operating principles of IPBES.
5. Bodies, organizations and agencies that already have observer status with or are accredited to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) are considered observers of the Platform if they so request, except as the Plenary may otherwise decide.
6. Only observers who have been admitted by the Plenary and have registered for specific sessions may designate representatives to attend sessions of the Plenary. Observers must register their representatives in advance of each session.
7. Observers are not admitted to sessions of the Bureau or of the Multidisciplinary Expert Panel of IPBES, unless invited to participate by the chair of the relevant body.
8. The secretariat will extend invitations to sessions of the Plenary to observers. IPBES will not provide financial assistance to the observers for participating in the Platform process.
9. United Nations organizations and other international and intergovernmental organizations, as well as other observers, will be provided with designation plates, where such facilities exist at the meeting venue.

II. Procedures for admission of observers

The following admission process applies:

10. Bodies, organizations and agencies interested in being admitted as observers to sessions of the Plenary will be asked to send an original letter of application to the secretariat, with copies of:
 - (a) Documents describing the mandate, scope and governing structure of the organization, such as the charter/statutes/constitution/by-laws or articles of association;
 - (b) Evidence of the legal status of the organization, as appropriate;
 - (c) Any other information that supports the competence and interest of the organization in matters related to IPBES;
 - (d) Completed form with contact information and website address (if any) of the organization and of a designated focal point (to be updated when necessary).
11. New requests for admission as an observer to sessions of the Plenary should be submitted to the secretariat, at least three months before a session of

the Plenary. The secretariat of IPBES will maintain the information submitted by such observers.

12. The secretariat will analyse the requests according to the documents submitted, as detailed in paragraph 10, and to the functions and operating principles of the Platform, and make such analysis available to be considered by the Bureau.

13. The list of observers as reviewed by the Bureau, including any rejected applications, will be presented for approval at the next session of the Plenary, in accordance with the rules of procedure.

14. The Plenary of the Platform will decide on the admission and participation of all observers in accordance with its rules of procedure, and observers accepted by the Bureau as detailed in paragraph 13 may be admitted to a meeting of the Plenary and participate in it, unless at least one third of the Members present at the meeting object.

15. Admission of observers should be included as a regular agenda item of the Bureau and Plenary, consistent with any applicable rules of procedure.

16. If observer status has to be withdrawn for any reason, the chair may suspend the observer status of that observer subject to ratification by the Bureau.

17. Any body, organization or agency admitted as observer may retain that observer status only as long as it satisfies the conditions set out for observers in the present document and any other relevant rule of procedure for IPBES.
