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

Medellin, Colombia, 18–24 March 2018

Item 3 of the provisional agenda*

**Admission of observers to the sixth session of the
Plenary of the Platform****Draft policy and procedures for the admission of observers****Note by the secretariat**

The annex to the present note sets out the draft policy and procedures for the admission of observers, as considered by the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) at its first five sessions. There being no consensus at the fifth session, the Plenary decided that the interim procedure for the admission of observers to sessions of the Plenary, as described in paragraph 22 of the report of the first session of the Plenary (IPBES/1/12) and applied at its second, third, fourth and fifth sessions, would also be applied at its sixth session. The Plenary also decided that, at its sixth session, it would again consider the draft policy and procedures for the admission of observers. The draft text is therefore set out in the annex to the present note for consideration by the Plenary at its sixth session. In addition, the list of observers proposed by the Chair of IPBES for admission to the sixth session of the Plenary will be made available in document IPBES/6/INF/23.

* IPBES/6/1.

Annex

[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, including organizations of and representatives 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 Member State of the United Nations or Observer State to the United Nations not a member of the Platform will be considered as admitted by the Plenary as an Observer and need not submit an application or other documentation.
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 an applicant for Observer status 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 otherwise decides.
6. Observers to IPBES-1 will be considered admitted by the Plenary as Observers in subsequent meetings of the Plenary and need not submit an application or other documentation except if the Plenary decides otherwise.
7. 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.
8. The secretariat will notify Observers of sessions of the Plenary.
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.

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.

II. Procedures for admission of observers

10. The following admission process applies:
 11. Applicants for Observer status to sessions of the Plenary will, as appropriate, be asked to provide the secretariat with copies of, among other things:
 - (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) Any other information that supports the competence and interest of the organization in matters related to IPBES;
 - (c) Completed form with contact information and website address (if any) of the organization and of a designated focal point (to be updated when necessary).
 12. 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.
 13. 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.
 14. The list of applicant Observers as reviewed by the Bureau, including any applications not approved, will be presented at the next session of the Plenary, in accordance with the rules of procedure.
 - [14. The Plenary of the Platform will decide [on the admittance of Observers recommended on the list] 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 [as long as no Member of the Platform objects][unless at least one third of the Members present at the meeting object.]
 15. Admission of new applicants as 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][Plenary].]
 17. Any Observer may retain its 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.]
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