

## ICES policy on observer status

This document contains a codification and clarification of the existing ICES policies on observer status, which are found in:

- CM 2009 Del-2.3 (ICES Policy on Observers of Advisory Services adopted by Council Resolution);
- ACOM December 2009 (Guidelines for Observers in the Advisory Process);
- CM 2010 Del-02.7 (Observers to the Advisory Services); and
- CM 2011 Del-06.5 (Participants and Observers in ICES).

This document supersedes the above-mentioned documents.

Guidelines on participation can be found in the [Delegates Handbook](#) and [Guidelines for Expert groups](#).

## Observer Status

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1. Governmental organizations, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, and individuals are eligible to be observers.

### **Observers should support the objectives of ICES:**

2. Organizations that want to obtain observer status should support the general objectives of ICES and have competence in the areas of ICES work.

3. Individuals that want to obtain observer status should as a personal matter endorse the objectives of ICES and also have an expressed interest in the work of ICES.

### **Access of observers to ICES activities:**

4. Organizations with whom ICES has signed an agreement specifying delivery of advice (including costs), as well as member countries shall be invited to observe all ICES meetings.

5. All observers may attend meetings of the Science Committee (SCICOM), or SCICOM Expert Groups (advance notice required).

6. Organizations/individuals who have observer status to advisory services may attend meetings of the Advisory Committee (ACOM), advice drafting groups, and technical review meetings, (with advance notice required, in all cases). Observers to Advisory expert groups are restricted to (1) employees of intergovernmental Commissions that have a MoU with ICES for either scientific information or advice, and (2) employees of government agencies that formally use ICES advice to manage fisheries or other marine ecosystem activities.

7. Government bodies from ICES member countries, and intergovernmental organizations with collaboration agreements (MoU, LoA, etc.) may send observers to SCICOM/SCICOM expert groups and/or Council meetings. Other observers will be accepted on a case-by-case basis, based on an application.

**Rights and obligations of observers:**

8. Any observer admitted to a meeting may:

8.1. Attend meetings (in person or when possible, by electronic connection), but may not vote in formal decision-making procedures as described in the Rules of Procedure.

8.2. make oral statements during the meeting upon the invitation of the Chair;

8.3. distribute documents at meetings through the Chair;

8.4. Engage in other activities as appropriate and as approved by the Chair.

9. The General Secretary can determine the maximum number of observers to be admitted to any meeting based on conference room capacity or limits on electronic connectivity. Should a restriction on the number of observers be required, a decision will be made based on the need for a balanced participation preserving the scientific nature and integrity of the work. The General Secretary will transmit any such determinations in the conditions of participation.

10. All observers to a meeting shall receive the same documentation generally available to Member Countries and their delegations, except those documents deemed confidential by a Member Country, the Chair of the meeting, or the General Secretary.

11. All observers admitted to a meeting shall comply with all rules and procedures applicable to other participants in the meeting. Closed meetings, as decided by the presiding officer in case of deliberations of *inter alia* financial and personnel matters, are not open to observers.

12. Observers may not insist on alterations or edits being made to the meeting report. Observers may not make minority statements in the report.

**Application for observer status:**

13. Governmental organizations from ICES member countries or intergovernmental commissions with whom ICES has a collaboration agreement (MoU, LoA, or similar) are granted observer status to Council and SCICOM without specific prior application. Other organizations and individuals must apply. Organizations may be granted observer status, while individuals need to be registered as observers at specific meetings.

14. The ICES website shall contain an invitation to apply for observer status with a link to this policy, a description of the application procedure, and other relevant information.

15. Applications for observer status shall include:

- name, address, telephone, and e-mail address of the organization or individual seeking observer status;

- for organizations, a description of the organization including aims and purposes, activities, history, current membership, membership eligibility and whether the organization intends to observe advisory services and/or science activities, and/or Council meetings;
- for individuals, the reasons an individual wishes to obtain observer status, a description of the activities or accomplishments of the individual that might make observer status beneficial, and a statement of the meeting(s) at which the individual desires to be an observer;

16. The procedures for processing applications depend on the nature of the observer application:

**If the application is for Science Activities only:**

16. The decision to accept an observer at science activity meetings is made by the Chair of SCICOM/the specific SCICOM Expert Group (in consultation with the Secretariat) at which observer status is requested.

**If the application includes Advisory Services:**

17. All applications to be an observer to Advisory Services will be circulated to both ACOM and the Council for comment. The application will be deemed accepted 10 business days after it is circulated, unless an ACOM member or a Council member objects.

18. If an ACOM member or Council member objects to an application to observe Advisory Services, the ACOM Chair will conduct an ACOM web conference to resolve the matter.

Council member(s) objecting to an application will be invited to participate in the web conference.

However, ACOM will be empowered to resolve the matter.

19. Under unusual circumstances, the ACOM chair may authorize an organization or individual to observe a specific Advisory Services event. In such cases, ACOM and the Council will be notified at the time the authorization is granted, and if there is an objection, the authorization will be revoked immediately, until the matter can be addressed according to paragraph 18.

**Reconfirmation and cancellation of observer status**

20. Observers admitted to a meeting shall comply with all rules and procedures applicable to other participants in the meeting. Failure to conform to these rules or any other rules that ICES may adopt for the conduct of observers may result in removal from the meeting by the presiding officer and revocation of observer status.

21. The ICES Secretariat may periodically ask organizations with observer status to confirm their continued wish for observer status (with a regular interval/every five years). Observer status may be cancelled if the conduct of an observer is inconsistent with the criteria adopted for granting observer status.

22. These rules shall be subject to review and revision, as appropriate. If any Member State so requests, the adequacy of these rules shall be reviewed and assessed and, if necessary amendments shall be considered and adopted.