

 <p>Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Eighth Meeting of the Parties <i>Dunedin, New Zealand, 19 - 23 May 2025</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Amendment to Rule 4 of the Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of the Parties</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Secretariat</p>
---	--

SUMMARY

Rule 4 of the Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of the Parties provides rules for the participation of observers in Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties. Rule 4.3 sets out a procedure to be followed by international bodies for requesting admittance as observers to MoP Sessions, while Rule 4.5 sets out a procedure for non-international bodies. The timelines for the two procedures are different. This is not efficient, requiring duplication of effort on the part of the Secretariat and Parties, and allowing very little time for the non-international bodies to finalise their arrangements for attendance. This paper proposes that the timeline in Rule 4.5 be adjusted to equal that in Rule 4.3. A similar change to Rule 3 of the Advisory Committee Rules of Procedure was agreed by AC14 in August 2024.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Meeting of the Parties agrees to amend Rule 4 of the Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of the Parties, adjusting the timeline in Rule 4.5 to equal that in Rule 4.3.

1. CONTEXT

The Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of the Parties were initially adopted by MoP1. The Rules of Procedure may be amended by the Meeting of the Parties from time to time, pursuant to Article VIII(13)(a). They were subsequently amended by MoP2, MoP3, MoP6 and MoP7. The current Rules of Procedure are those amended by MoP7. (See [MoP7 Report](#), Paragraph 2.2.3 and [Resolution 7.1](#)).

Rule 4 of the Rules of Procedure sets out rules for the participation of observers in Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties. Rules 4.2 and 4.3 relate to observers from international organisations, while Rules 4.4 and 4.5 relate to observers from non-international organisations. Rules 4.3 and 4.5 contain the procedures for the two types of organisation to submit requests for observer status at Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties. The deadlines

for the applications from the two groups differ from each other. International organisations are instructed to send their applications for attendance to the Secretariat 90 days in advance of the relevant Session, the Secretariat then circulates the requests to the Parties, and Parties are given a deadline of 60 days before the Session for informing the Secretariat of their acceptance or rejection of the applications. For non-international bodies the applications should be received by the Secretariat 60 days before the relevant Session and the Parties should provide their responses by 30 days before the Session.

These different deadlines mean that the Secretariat and the Parties must undertake a similar process twice. This creates inefficiencies in the operation of the Secretariat and provides an unnecessary burden for the Parties. Furthermore, the deadlines for the application process for non-international bodies allow very little time for such organisations to prepare for their participation in the meetings, should their application be successful.

2. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO RULE 4

This document proposes that the timelines for the application process for international and non-international bodies be the same, and that they follow the procedure set out in Rule 4.3, meaning that, for both types of organisation, applications for observer status would be submitted at least 90 days before the relevant Session and Parties' responses would be provided at least 60 days before the Session.

Amendments would be required to Rule 4.5 (only) as follows:

- 4.5. Written applications for attendance from such other bodies (described in para 4) should be received by the Secretariat at least ~~60~~**90** days before the relevant Session, and circulated forthwith by the Secretariat to Parties. Parties shall inform the Secretariat of their acceptance or rejection of all applications no less than ~~30~~**60** days before the Session. An applicant shall be permitted to attend as a non-voting observer provided no objection is received.

A similar amendment (to the Advisory Committee Rules of Procedure) was agreed by AC14 in August 2024 (see [AC14 Report](#), paragraph .3.1 and ANNEX 4).

A draft proposed resolution to amend the Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of the Parties is provided in **ANNEX 1**.

ANNEX 1. Proposed resolution to amend the Rules of Procedure for the Meeting of the Parties

AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES AND PETRELS

Resolution 8.x

Rules of Procedure

Adopted by Eighth Session of the Meeting of the Parties, Dunedin, New Zealand
19 - 23 May 2025

Recalling that, in accordance with Article VIII(11)(a) of the Agreement, the first Session of the Meeting of the Parties adopted its rules of procedure, contained in Annex 4 of the report of that Session;

Further recalling that Article VIII(13)(a) provides that the Meeting of the Parties may amend the Rules of Procedure at any session;

Aware that the Rules of Procedure were amended at the Seventh Session of the Meeting of the Parties, contained in Annex 1 of the report of that Session;

Recognising the benefit of harmonising timelines for the application process for the participation of observers in Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties for international and non-international bodies in Rule 4(3) and 4(5);

The Meeting of the Parties to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Agrees:

1. to adopt the attached Rules of Procedure in Appendix A.

RESOLUTION 8.x APPENDIX A

**RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR THE MEETING OF THE
PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT ON THE CONSERVATION OF ALBATROSSES
AND PETRELS**

...

Rule 4 – Observers

- (1) All signatories to the Agreement, other States which are not Parties, any member economy of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation Forum in respect of Article VIII, paragraph 15 of the Agreement, the United Nations, any specialised agency of the United Nations, any regional economic integration organisation, any Secretariat of a relevant international convention, particularly regional fisheries management organisations, may send observers to the Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties, who shall have the right to participate but not vote.
- (2) Any international scientific, environmental, cultural or technical body concerned with the conservation and management of marine living resources or the conservation of albatrosses and petrels may request admittance to Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies. Such participation may include submitting documents to the Secretariat for distribution to the Parties as information documents and addressing the Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties.
- (3) Written applications for attendance from such international bodies (described in paragraph 2) should be received by the Secretariat at least 90 days before the relevant Session, and circulated forthwith by the Secretariat to Parties. Parties shall inform the Secretariat of their acceptance or rejection of all applications no less than 60 days before the Session. An applicant shall be permitted to attend as a non-voting observer unless one third of the Parties object to their application.
- (4) Any other scientific, environmental, cultural or technical body concerned with the conservation and management of marine living resources or the conservation of albatrosses and petrels may request admittance to Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies. Such participation may include submitting documents to the Secretariat for distribution to the Parties as information documents and addressing the Sessions of the Meeting of the Parties.
- (5) Written applications for attendance from such other bodies (described in para 4) should be received by the Secretariat at least 90 days before the relevant Session, and circulated forthwith by the Secretariat to Parties. Parties shall inform the Secretariat of their acceptance or rejection of all applications no less than 60 days before the Session. An applicant shall be permitted to attend as a non-voting observer provided no objection is received.
- (6) Prior to the Session, the names of Representatives of observers shall be submitted to the Secretariat by the State, agency, organisation or body invited to attend.
- (7) In relation to Article XI of the Agreement, the Secretariat shall be bound by the above procedures.

...