

UN Observer Status

The meeting will be updated on the application procedure for UN observer status. In order to apply for UN observer status a Member State or group of Member States needs to request that an appropriate agenda item is added to a meeting of the UN General Assembly.

The meeting is invited to consider support from an ICES member country for ICES to acquire UN observer status.

ICES Application for UN observer status

At the June Bureau meeting it was recommended that the Secretariat pursue observer status for ICES in the United Nations.

The Secretariat has been in contact with the UN office of the legal counsel to receive information on the procedure for applying for UN Observer Status. The process was outlined as noted below:

- The first step is for a Member State or Member States to request the inclusion of an appropriate item on the agenda of the General Assembly. The request must be accompanied by an explanatory memorandum on the organization and, if possible by a draft resolution, which should be sent to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. See Rule 20 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly (A/520/Rev.17).
- These documents are formally issued as a document of the General Assembly.
- The General Committee of the General Assembly then reviews the request and recommends to the General Assembly whether or not to include the item on the agenda. This is pursuant to Rules 38 through 44 of the Rules of Procedure.
- If such a decision is made the General Assembly usually decides to allocate the item to the Sixth Committee (Legal) for consideration.
- In the Sixth Committee a Member State or Member States sponsor a draft resolution by which the General Assembly would decide that the entity concerned, be invited to participate in the sessions and work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer.
- It is then for the Sixth Committee to decide whether to recommend the draft resolution to the General Assembly for adoption.
- The item is then taken up in the General Assembly and it is up to the Assembly to approve the recommendation.

Attached is a draft based on an example provided to the Secretariat.

Request for the inclusion of an item in the provisional agenda of the Seventieth session.

Observer status for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES).

Draft letter from a permanent representative to the United Nations.

Pursuant to rule 13 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I have the honour to request the inclusion in the provisional agenda of the ## session of the Assembly of an item entitled "Observer status for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, I attach an explanatory memorandum (see annex I) and a draft resolution (see annex II). I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annexes circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed)

Permanent Representative of (Member Country) to the United Nations

Annex I

Explanatory memorandum

1. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea fulfils the legal criteria for observer status in the General Assembly.

In its decision 49/426 of 9 December 1994, the General Assembly, adopted without a vote, on the recommendation of the Sixth Committee, and taking note of the oral report presented to the Sixth Committee on 25 November 1994 by the Chair of the Working Group on the question of criteria for the granting of observer status in the Assembly, decided that the granting of observer status in the Assembly should in future be confined to States and to those intergovernmental organizations whose activities cover matters of interest to the Assembly.

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea is an intergovernmental organization with headquarters in Copenhagen. ICES coordinates and promotes marine research on oceanography, the marine environment, marine ecosystems, and on living marine resources in the North Atlantic. Members of the ICES community include all coastal states bordering the North Atlantic and the Baltic Sea, with affiliate members in the Mediterranean Sea and southern hemisphere.

ICES is a network of more than 4000 scientists from almost 300 institutes linked by the ICES Convention to add value to national research efforts.

Scientists working through ICES gather information about the marine ecosystem. Besides filling gaps in existing knowledge, this information is developed into unbiased, non-political advice.

It is ICES vision to be an international scientific community that is relevant, responsive, sound, and credible concerning marine ecosystems and their relation to humanity. ICES mission is to advance the scientific capacity to give advice on human activities affecting, and affected by, marine ecosystems.

ICES was established on 22 July 1902 in Copenhagen, Denmark, by eight founding nations, as the result of a concern growing during the late 19th century over the well-being of fish stocks in the North Sea coupled with efforts by different groups of scientists in neighbouring countries to promote and encourage international scientific marine cooperation. In 1964, through an agreed Convention, ICES received a legal foundation and full international status.

The ICES Strategic Plan (2014 – 2018). The ICES Strategic Plan commits to building a foundation of science around one key challenge; integrated ecosystem understanding. ICES will produce integrated ecosystem assessments in regional seas as a fundamental link between ecosystem science and the advice required in applying the ecosystem approach. The Strategic plan also identifies the Arctic and aquaculture as areas for strategic development. This places a high demand on the complexity and the amount of data and knowledge needed to conduct informed science and make decisions.

ICES recognizes the changing marine landscape, through this plan ICES offers a strong, competent, and open scientific community that can support the sustainable management of the seas. Implementation of the plan will confront the challenges of protecting and restoring the health and productivity of the oceans for the benefit of present and future generations.

2. Membership

ICES has 20 member countries: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States of America. ICES is funded by annual contributions from Member Countries, as well as through advisory and project work.

ICES also collaborates with affiliate institutes in Australia, Chile, New Zealand, Peru, and South Africa.

ICES science and advisory processes are open to observers from a diverse range of stakeholders and interest groups.

3. Institutions and structure

ICES Council is the principal decision- and policy-making body of ICES, consisting of a President and two Delegates from each of ICES twenty Member Countries. Delegates elect the President, First Vice-President, and five additional Vice-Presidents to form the Bureau, which is the Council's executive committee. The Bureau is responsible for carrying out the Council's decisions, preparing and convening Council meetings, formulating Council budgets, appointing key Secretariat staff, and performing other tasks as assigned by the Council. A Finance Committee consisting of five Delegates from Council provides oversight to the Council's fiscal matters.

Delegates also appoint a General Secretary, who serves as the Council's chief executive officer and is charged with managing the ICES Secretariat facilities and staff, finances, meetings, reports, publications, and communications.

ICES work is accomplished by various committees, expert groups, and workshops. The Advisory Committee (ACOM) provides advice to clients on fisheries and marine ecosystem issues and the Science Committee (SCICOM) oversees all aspects of the scientific work.

The Data and Information group (DIG) provides ICES with advice on all aspects of data management including data policy, data strategy, data quality, technical issues and user-oriented guidance.

ICES Training group (ITG) oversees the ICES Training programme that was established in 2009 in response to the need for enhanced scientific capacity to give advice on human activities affecting, and affected by marine ecosystems.

The Publications and Communications Group (PUBCOM) oversees the publication and communication of ICES science.

4. Advantages for ICES being granted observer status in the General Assembly

ICES shares and supports the goals of UN initiatives on Sustainable development. ICES seeks observer status in the General Assembly to access and follow the important global policy developments in the UN Agencies and programmes working on ocean sustainability.

Notably the Division for Oceans and Law of the Sea, United Nations Environment Programme, International Maritime Organisation (IMO), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

ICES has already established formal cooperation agreements with Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC/UNESCO), and the Food and Agriculture Organization of United Nations (FAO).

5. Advantages for the United Nations of granting observer status to ICES

The General Assembly would benefit from granting ICES observer status through access to ICES wealth of expertise and experience in scientific advice for policy making and sustainable resource management.

ICES can offer capacity building through our flexible training programme. ICES is also able to offer input or contribute to major UN ocean sustainability programmes or projects. Through Observer Status ICES will be generally capable of sharing our experience with the United Nations.

ICES Strategic Plan 2014–2018 identifies integrated ecosystem understanding as a central challenge. This challenge has been taken up by ICES in recognition of the need to develop the scientific basis for the ecosystem approach to management of the ocean. The Ecosystem Approach is a vital component required to achieve sustainable development goals as set out in 1992 at the Earth Summit, at the World Summit on Sustainable development in 2002, and reaffirmed in 2012 at the UN Conference on Sustainable Development. The work of ICES is able to support the goals of sustainable development through scientifically informed decisions; advancing the science understanding of natural and anthropogenic changes needed for sustainable management; and sharing of “best practices” and/or “lessons learned”.

Annex II

Draft Resolution

Observer Status for the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea in the General Assembly

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea,

1. *Decides* to invite the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity as observer;
2. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the necessary action to implement the present resolution.