
Rules of procedure of the Space for Climate Observatory (SCO)

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FOREWORD

Following the adoption of the Joint Declaration of Interest for a Space for Climate Observatory, opened for signature on June 17th, 2019, to address the need to step up international coordination to enable accurate assessment and monitoring of the consequences of climate change based on space and in-situ observations as well as numerical models,

Following the adoption of the Terms of Reference by the Steering Committee of the Space for Climate Observatory, on January 30th, 2020,

Following the entry into force of the Charter on the establishment of the Space for Climate Observatory on September 1st, 2022,

At its eleventh ordinary meeting on May 24th, 2023, the Steering Committee adopted by consensus the following first version of Rules of Procedure (*SCO/RP/2023/01*) (hereinafter “Rules of Procedure”), in application of Article 8 of the Charter on the establishment of the Space for Climate Observatory for the organization of the subsidiary international bodies of the Space for Climate Observatory and their meetings.

Part 1. MEANING OF TERMS AND EXPRESSIONS

- 1.1. **“Charter”** refers to the Charter on the establishment of the Space for Climate Observatory that entered into force on September 1st, 2022.
- 1.2. **“SCO”** refers to the Space for Climate Observatory, as established by the Charter on the establishment of the Space for Climate Observatory.
- 1.3. **“Focal Point(s)”** refers to the intermediaries for the implementation of SCO activities as defined by Article 5.2 of the Charter.
- 1.4. **“Steering Committee”** refers to the SCO Steering Committee, as defined by Article 6.1 of the Charter.
- 1.5. **“Programme Committee”** refers to the SCO Programme Committee, as defined by Article 6.2 of the Charter.
- 1.6. **“Secretariat”** refers to the SCO Secretariat, as defined by Article 6.3 of the Charter.
- 1.7. **“Work Programme”** refers to the SCO Work Programme, as defined by Article 7.1 of the Charter.
- 1.8. **“Working Groups”** refers to the SCO Working Groups, as defined by Article 7.3. of the Charter.

Part 2. STEERING COMMITTEE

- 2.1. **Composition.** The Steering Committee is composed of all Focal Points.
- 2.2. **Designation of Focal Points.** Focal Points share with the Secretariat the title, name, e-mail address and position of individuals that are responsible for coordinating with the SCO and attending Steering Committee meetings within their organization. In case of unavailability or change of the appointed Focal Point(s), an alternate representative (hereinafter the “Alternate Representative”) can be temporarily designated with prior notice to the Secretariat.
- 2.3. **Decision-making.** The Steering Committee adopts all necessary decisions to conduct the activities of the SCO.
- 2.4. **Steering Committee Chair mandate.** Steering Committee meetings are moderated by a Steering Committee Chair (hereinafter the “Steering Committee Chair”) in charge of welcoming the participants, and conducting and leading meetings. Preferably, the Steering Committee Chair will have already participated in the SCO’s governance activities.
 - 2.4.a. **Moderation procedure.** The Steering Committee Chair declares the opening and closing of each meeting of the Steering Committee and ensures observance of the Rules of Procedure, decides who speaks and when, rules on points of order, organizes voting and announces decisions. The Steering Committee Chair calls upon speakers in the order in which they have asked to speak. The Steering Committee Chair may call to order a speaker whose remarks have no bearing on the subject under discussion.
 - 2.4.b. **Voting procedure.** The Steering Committee Chair ascertains before each vote that a quorum, equal to two-thirds of the total number of Focal Points, is present.
- 2.5. **Steering Committee Chair Appointment.** At each Steering Committee meeting, the Chair is elected for the next Steering Committee meeting with a two-thirds majority vote by Focal Points, on the basis of broad geographical representation to the greatest extent feasible.
- 2.6. **Steering Committee Vice-Chair appointment.** If the Steering Committee Chair is absent, a Vice-Chair (hereinafter the “Steering Committee Vice-Chair”) shall be appointed by Focal Points to take their place, with a two-thirds majority vote by Focal Points.
- 2.7. **Steering Committee Vice-Chair mandate.** A Steering Committee Vice-Chair acting as the Steering Committee Chair is subject to the same regime as that applicable to the Chair.
- 2.8. **Meetings.**

2.8.a. Agenda of the Steering Committee. The Secretariat draws up the agenda for each session of the Steering Committee under the prior supervision of the Programme Committee followed by the Chair's approval prior to disclosure. The Secretariat sends the agenda to all Focal Points at least two weeks before the meeting. The agenda includes the items on which the Steering Committee will have to vote, if any. All Focal Points can submit an item for inclusion in the agenda for the meeting with prior notice to the Secretariat at least three weeks before the meeting, to the greatest extent feasible. Materials for Steering Committee meetings should be provided one week before the meeting.

The agenda of the Steering Committee is discussed and adopted by the Steering Committee, after any necessary modifications, immediately after the opening of the meeting.

2.8.b. Ordinary meetings. The Steering Committee meets twice a year. The Secretariat suggests the date of the next Steering Committee meeting during each session.

2.8.c. Extraordinary meetings. A Focal Point can ask for a meeting of the Steering Committee to be organized in addition to the two annual meetings.

To do so, the Focal Point should contact the Secretariat, detail the reasons for holding an additional meeting and, where applicable, share when and where the meeting would be held. Then, the Secretariat will submit the proposal to the vote of all other Focal Points. The extraordinary meeting will be organized if two-thirds of the Focal Points agree.

2.8.d. Venue. Steering Committee meetings can take place in relevant international fora as well as independently from any external event when needed.

2.8.e. Minutes. The Secretariat drafts the minutes of the Steering Committee meetings and circulates them to all Signatories within a reasonable lapse of time following the meeting to guarantee that Signatories are duly informed of SCO governance activities.

2.8.f. Amendments to Minutes. Proposals for amendments to the draft minutes will be sent to the Secretariat by Focal Points in writing within three weeks of the date of their communication. Proposed amendments shall be circulated to Focal Points before the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

2.8.g. Attendance. Meetings of the Steering Committee are exclusively held with Focal Points, unless otherwise decided by the Steering Committee itself by a consensus vote.

2.8.h. Remote access. Meetings may be conducted remotely. Remote participation will be treated as presence in person. If the meeting is organized in person, the Secretariat shall use its best efforts to provide remote access to the meeting.

2.8.i. List of participants. At the beginning of a meeting, the Chair circulates a list of participants based on information received from Focal Points in accordance with Rule 2.2 above.

2.9. Voting.

2.9.a. One vote per Focal Point represented. Each Focal Point holds one vote in the Steering Committee, regardless of the actual number of individuals designated to represent this Focal Point.

2.9.b. Voting procedure. Voting can be carried out physically as well as using an electronic voting system under the management of the Secretariat.

2.9.c. Votes held during Steering Committee meetings. Focal Points are notified in the agenda of the meeting that a vote will be held during the session of the Steering Committee. A vote can only be held if a two-thirds majority is present, whether in person or remotely. In the absence of a quorum, voting is postponed until the next meeting of the Steering Committee.

2.10. Adoption.

2.10.a. Majority. For each solicitation of a vote, during a Steering Committee, all decisions are adopted by a two-thirds majority of the Focal Points attending the meeting, whether physically or remotely. The Charter and the Rules of Procedure explicitly mention four exceptions:

- (i) requests for international Signatories to become Focal Points, which require a simple majority.
- (ii) acceptance of new members, which requires a simple majority.
- (iii) the decision to hold public Steering Committee meetings which requires a consensus.
- (iv) adoption of the Rules of Procedure, which requires a consensus, i.e. no objections, of all Focal Points.

2.10.b. Result of the vote. The results of the vote are not anonymized by the Secretariat and are available and recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Part 3. PROGRAMME COMMITTEE

3.1. Composition.

3.1.a. Number of members. The Programme Committee is composed of a restricted number of Focal Points or their Alternate Representatives representing a maximum of one quarter of the total number of Focal Points. A maximum of four (4) individuals per Focal Point can be appointed to the Programme Committee.

3.1.b. Geographical representation based on United Nations geoscheme. Focal Points sitting on the Programme Committee should, to the greatest extent feasible, represent the geographical areas covered by SCO activities: Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Northern America, and Oceania.

3.1.c. Designation of Focal Points. Focal Points that are willing to be part of the Programme Committee inform the Secretariat with prior notice and share the title, name, e-mail address and position of the individuals concerned. The Secretariat shares this information with all Focal Points and includes a vote, with a two-thirds majority, on the appointment of a member or members to the Programme Committee in the agenda of the following Steering Committee meeting.

3.1.d. Renewal. Focal Points are appointed to the Programme Committee, on a rotating basis, for two (2) years. Focal Points can renew their mandate on the Programme Committee twice, except when the maximum allowed number of Focal Points within the Programme Committee is not reached.

3.2. Meetings.

3.2.a. Agenda. The Secretariat, with the Programme Committee, draws up the agenda for each session of the Programme Committee and sends it to members at least two weeks before the meeting. All members of the Programme Committee can submit an item for inclusion in the agenda at least three weeks before the meeting.

3.2.b. Ordinary meetings. The Programme Committee meets at least four (4) times a year. The Secretariat suggests the dates of the four meetings of the Programme Committee at the first meeting, which takes place during the first quarter of the year. The date of the first ordinary meeting of the year is set by the Secretariat and ideally announced during the last meeting of the year or at least two (2) months before, to the greatest extent feasible.

Extraordinary meetings. Additional meetings can be held upon prior written notice to the Secretariat from Focal Points on the Programme Committee.

3.2.c. Minutes. The Secretariat drafts the minutes of Programme Committee meetings and shares them with all Signatories within a reasonable lapse of time after the meeting.

3.2.d. Remote access. If the meeting is organized in person, the Secretariat does its best to provide remote access to the meeting.

3.3. Reporting. The Programme Committee reports on its activities at each meeting of the Steering Committee, through presentations.

Part 4. SECRETARIAT

4.1. Assignment of the Secretariat. The Secretariat's responsibility is assigned to a Focal Point by decision of the Steering Committee for a limited period of time fixed at three (3) years until another focal point is appointed to take over the Secretariat, upon prior express written request only from interested Focal Points. The aim is to assign the Secretariat's responsibility on a rotating basis, to the greatest extent feasible.

4.2. Costs and funding. Costs incurred by the functioning of the Secretariat include, but are not limited to, human resources costs related to (i) technical secretariat services for the meetings of all subsidiary bodies, (ii) coordination of activities aimed at facilitating the implementation of Steering Committee decisions, (iii) support of the Programme Committee and Working Groups and their meetings as much as possible, (iv) management of the SCO's global communication and its website (<https://www.spaceclimateobservatory.org/>), (v) SCO-related inquiries management as the point of contact (vi) international network management services, (vii) and management and archiving of SCO legal documentation.

These costs are paid by the responsible Focal Point.

4.3. In-kind contributions. Other Signatories can provide in-kind contributions to the Secretariat and its activities.

4.4. Personal data protection. Signatories are bound by their own data protection regulations. The Secretariat is responsible for the protection of collected data and archives in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of April 27th on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation) or the internal rules, policies and procedures on data protection of each responsible Focal Point, as applicable.

4.5. Current Secretariat. Since September 1st, 2022, the Secretariat has been provided by CNES to ensure an effective launch of SCO activities under the Charter, and given its role as initiator of the Joint Declaration of Interest for a Space for Climate Observatory.

Part 5. WORK PROGRAMME

5.1. Preparation, Approval and Duration. The Work Programme is prepared by the Secretariat and reviewed by the Programme Committee. It is approved by the Steering Committee upon recommendation of the Programme Committee. It covers a period of two (2) years, and is updated on a yearly basis.

5.2. Content. The Work Programme includes at least three sections:

- A summary of previous activities and priorities (if any);
- The main objectives of the Work Programme;
- The activities that are expected to fulfil these objectives with the corresponding schedule.

5.3. Scope. The Work Programme covers all activities carried out within the SCO: SCO Projects activities, Working Groups activities, Secretariat activities, and, whenever possible, national activities of the Signatories.

5.4. Publication. Work Programmes are made publicly available by the Secretariat.

5.5. Progress Assessment. The Programme Committee and the Secretariat are responsible for drafting and publishing reports to assess the progress of Work Programmes activities and their

results as they reach conclusion. These reports are presented to the Steering Committee and made publicly available immediately after.

Part 6. WORKING GROUPS

- 6.1. Submitting Working Group proposals.** All Focal Points, and Signatories through their Focal Points, can submit a proposal to create a specific Working Group. Proposals are sent to the Secretariat with prior written notice detailing the name of the group, the expected scope of activities, a concise explanation of its utility within the SCO and its activities, and the support of at least two other Signatories or Focal Points. The Secretariat arranges the review of the proposals to be conducted by the Programme Committee for submission to the Steering Committee for approval.
- 6.2. Approval.** Working Groups are approved by decision of the Steering Committee upon recommendation of the Programme Committee with a two-thirds majority.
- 6.3. Duration.** Working Groups are approved for a duration determined by the Working Group members according to operational needs, from the date of approval, and can be renewed as many times as necessary, upon the Programme Committee's recommendation.
- 6.4. Meetings and organization.** Working Groups meet as many times as they deem necessary and are free to organize according to their own rules. The Secretariat supports Working Groups and their meetings as far as possible.
- 6.5. Members.** All Signatories can take part in the activities of Working Group by notifying in advance the Working Group members and the Secretariat. They strive to contribute to the activities of the Working Group on a voluntary basis.
- 6.6. Withdrawal.** All Signatories can withdraw from a Working Group at any time by notifying in advance the Working Group members and the Secretariat.
- 6.7. Invitation of third parties.** Third parties, as defined in Article 1 of the Charter, can be invited to take part in the activities of a Working Group when relevant. The Working Group lets the Secretariat know in advance in writing the identity of third parties invited and their relevance to the Working Group's activities.
- 6.8. Reporting.** Working Groups are invited to present their activities and recommendations to address specific themes relevant to the SCO's objectives once a year at a Steering Committee meeting.
- 6.9. Termination.** A Working Group can be terminated at any time by decision of the Steering Committee, or if the Working Group has not met for more than eighteen (18) months.

Part 7. ADOPTION AND REVISION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

- 7.1.** The present Rules of Procedure are adopted by consensus by all Focal Points.
- 7.2.** The present Rules of Procedure can be revised by a two-thirds majority decision of the Steering Committee.
- 7.3.** Revision(s) to the Rules of Procedure should be submitted to the Secretariat at least one month prior to the Steering Committee meeting during which the revision(s) will be discussed.