

REPORT FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING OF EXPERT GROUP CHAIRS (WGCHAIRS)

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ICES BUSINESS REPORTS



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i Executive summary

The Annual Meeting of ICES Expert Group Chairs (WGCHAIRS) provides an opportunity for chairs of all ICES working groups to share experiences and ideas, co-ordinate work, meet with their Steering Group, Advisory Committee and Science Committee chairs, and highlight any support they need from the ICES network. The group also provides participants with updates on developments in the network and their implications, as well as opportunities to identify future science priorities and plans for advisory products.

This 2021 meeting report contains advice-related, science-related and cross-cutting issues. The meeting in 2021 included an extra day for incoming chairs, covering an introduction on the responsibilities for chairs, an introduction to the guidelines for ICES groups and a forum to express expectations and ask questions for the chairs. Advice topics that are addressed include the benchmark system, reference points, the impact of COVID-19 on the advice delivery, an update on Viewpoints and the advisory work plan for 2021. Science topics that are addressed included an overview on hybrid and online meetings, open sessions and an update of the ASC 2021, an overview on the new resolution forms and the database, an update on reporting needs, an introduction to the new library system that will be launched later in 2021 and an update on science highlights, dissemination and communications. Cross-cutting topics included an update on executive summaries, an introduction to the guide to ICES advice, an update on Ecosystem Overviews, gender and inclusivity in ICES – reflection on “Picture a Scientist” and relevance for Expert Group work, and an introduction to Meeting Etiquette and Code of Conduct. A group of Expert Group chairs organised the second half of the joint day with a presentation by Kenneth Rose on challenges of communicating science in today's social and political climate and discussion on the topic in breakout groups. The day concluded with a social activity, an escape room game.

Key actions resulting from chairs' insights are to establish an easy access to the items relevant for Expert Group chairs from the guidelines for ICES groups, e.g. as a FAQ webpage, adding the example of an executive summary for stock assessment groups to the guidelines for ICES groups, provide social media guidelines for ICES community in order to avoid any violation of copyrights, GDPR matters, or privacy.

1 Welcome and introductions

The ACOM Chair, Mark Dickey-Collas, and SCICOM Chair, Jörn Schmidt, welcomed participants to the meeting primarily designed for new and incoming chairs. After the welcome, the new working group chairs, the Steering Group chairs and ACOM vice-chairs were asked to briefly introduce themselves. The WGCHAIRS agenda was introduced.

2 Responsibilities of chairs

The SCICOM Chair, with reference to the [Guidelines for ICES groups](#), gave a presentation on the responsibilities and the role of working group chairs.

The chairs play a central role for ICES. When there is more than one chair per group it is important to establish a clear division of responsibilities to ensure that all the tasks required for the efficient operation of the expert group are completed. An important responsibility of the chair is to be the delegator of the group; assigning leads to ToR to split the workload.

Support for working groups is provided by the Steering Group Chair, SCICOM Chair, ACOM leadership and ICES Secretariat. Each group has a dedicated Supporting Officer and Professional Officer as the main points of contact. If chairs run into issues, they should reach out to their Steering Group Chair or Supporting Officer.

One of the central elements in ICES is the Code of Conduct in relation to Conflicts of Interest, ensuring that decisions are made by impartial and independent experts.

Q: Can you provide examples of how science groups can contribute to advice – or produce unsolicited advice? A: One route would be to propose an ICES viewpoint. So far, two viewpoints have been produced: one on [ship scrubbers](#) and one on [biofouling](#). In these cases, the groups were aware of an international discussion, which would benefit from science input. Another opportunity to feed into advice, are the ecosystem, fisheries and (soon) aquaculture overviews; however, it was emphasised that the overviews are now requested ICES advice.

Q: Is there guidance in relation to the format of the Scientific Report series with regard to the length and format? A: There is a template, but there is no specific guidance on the length of reports. The beginning and end of the report are standardised, but there is flexibility as to the content and length of the report. For fixed-term groups that choose not to publish a report in an interim year, drafting a short report for internal use, will make it easier to write the final report.

Q: Please explain how resolutions and recommendations are intended to work within ICES. A: Resolutions are used to form working groups and workshops and define their work plans, including Terms of Reference (ToR). The resolutions also provide information on how the group is linked to the ICES structure. Recommendations are requests from expert groups to other entities within ICES (other expert groups, Steering Group chairs, ICES Secretariat, ICES Data Centre, ACOM, and SCICOM) and should be uploaded online using the recommendations database. Before drafting a set of recommendations, chairs are strongly encouraged to read the specific rules for recommendations in [Guidelines for ICES Groups](#), Section 3.8.

Q: What happens if the Conflict of Interest is with the chair? How many chairs are consultants and do not have a link to an institution? Is it an issue to have commercial companies participating in the working group; who might have a commercial interest? A: The overarching principle is that you and your members are part of the group because of your expertise, not because of who employs you. The CoI is mostly about being open about possible perceived conflict of interest. The group through consensus should agree that they are acting without bias, not pushing a certain agenda, and thus interacting without any actual conflicts of interest. It is all about transparency – it is important to communicate any perceived Conflict of Interest openly. If the CoI involves a chair, the members (with the chairs agreement or not) should reach out to their Steering Group chairs and chairs of ACOM/SCICOM to ask for assistance.

Comment: The ICES definition of CoI seems to be different from the general definition, where you would have a CoI if you are receiving money from an organisation. A: the ICES definition is actually not that

much different. The work within ICES groups is mainly scientific, without a direct financial benefit and individuals act as independent experts.

3 Guidelines for ICES Groups

The SCICOM Chair gave a brief introduction to the [Guidelines for ICES Groups](#). ICES is continuously striving to make the guidelines more accessible and readable. The document is updated twice a year to include new information or if an ICES procedure is found to be unclear. The part of the guidelines on expert groups provides a lot of useful information on how to manage the expert groups, including membership and participation, meetings, reporting as well as the role of expert group chairs. There are recent additions to the guidelines, which now include recommendations for ICES online expert group meetings, these are just guiding principles to help the expert group chairs with the increasing demand for online meetings.

ICES Guidelines are constantly under revision and we are very keen on people pointing out our inconsistencies. Moreover, if chairs have any doubt they should always contact their Steering Group Chair or their Supporting Officer.

Action: Suggestion to include a “Frequently Asked Questions” section for new chairs, this will be very helpful because most new chairs do not know the ICES structure and how they fit in this structure.

4 Expectations of new chairs

Expert Group chairs were asked to share their experiences on setting expectations and goals for their tenure as ICES chairs. Several chairs shared their expectations and goals and these ranged from short-term operational objectives that are directly related to the Expert Group (e.g. answering all of the ToR), to longer-term, aspirational goals to influence their field or ICES through the conduct and work of the Expert Group. Many chairs shared their experiences, and touched on how they see chairing an ICES Expert Group as an opportunity to:

1. collaborate across multiple disciplines,
2. make data and data products more accessible,
3. apply their tools (e.g. genetics) to solve issues for multiple ICES Expert Groups (e.g. benchmarks),
4. facilitate networking, personal relationships between countries and disciplines,
5. lay the foundation for new strategic initiatives,
6. collaborate with “new” types of knowledge from indigenous communities, industry, fields of science,
7. further grant proposals and improve science impacts beyond the individual to the community,
8. demonstrate how long-term datasets can benefit interdisciplinary sciences,
9. highlight the benefits of interdisciplinary science to ICES,
10. to make ICES less of an ivory tower and more of a hub for knowledge exchange with Industry, academics, national scientists.

Challenges raised included the need to reduce the ICES publishing bureaucracy, resolve the lack of funding to attend Expert Group meetings, and effectively engaging a diverse group of experts.

Questions raised by WGCHAIRS included: How ICES EGs can contribute to UNDOS? Is there guidance on gender balance, national representation in a group and if not, can Chairs set the expectation for their group? Can chairs come to ICES for a letter of support for a project proposal related to ICES work? How does ICES work to involve young scientists in Expert Groups? How do we make ICES more accessible? The latter is an area of focus for the SCICOM Chair.

5 Open for questions

The SCICOM Chair opened the floor for questions from participants.

Q: What is the policy and attitude of ICES for involving early career scientists (ECS) in expert groups?

A: At the moment ICES does not have any targeted work on ECS outside the funding for the ECS for the Annual Science Conference and ICES co-sponsored symposia. However, it is one of the items that the SCICOM Chair is addressing and will be looking into the accessibility of ICES to ECS, including tracking of how many ECS are currently in ICES. Many groups have good examples of bringing in PhD students and postdocs that both the group and students can benefit from.

Q: How does ICES see contributions to the UN Decade of Ocean Science (UNDOS) and how can expert groups contribute to this?

A: ICES has had an internal process starting from early last year to identify how ICES can contribute to the UNDOS. ICES and the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) have collaborated to develop a joint UNDOS programme proposal with a framework for activities for the next 10 years. Once this has been reviewed, the programme will be communicated to the wider ICES community. A joint ICES Council Strategic Initiative and PICES study group is organising this work, including how expert groups can contribute to the decade.

Q: What are the rules about gender and country balance for members? Is it possible to have an associate membership?

A: There are affiliate institutes that ICES collaborates with, which can be found on the [ICES webpage](#). With regards to membership, there are two ways that members can be added to groups: 1) Nominated members through national delegates; and 2) Chair-invited members are open for any experts from any countries. There is no upper limit for how many chair-invited members can participate. The participants to the more advice-oriented group (see Annex 10 in [Guidelines for ICES Groups](#)) must be nominated by ICES national Council member (delegate).

Q: Are there any rules for members of expert groups who are involved in national projects to have support or endorsement of these projects from ICES?

A: If you host workshops, you can apply for national funding to invite experts to workshops in the given country. There is an [ICES policy for participation in projects](#). ICES supports project initiatives from its members states and from the wider ICES community so please do get in contact with the ICES Secretariat if you need support or endorsement of a project. The only exception for this rule is that if you as a non-ICES member country consortium apply for the same funding as another consortium from the ICES member states, then the ICES Secretariat will have to support the consortium from the ICES member states. ICES also supports participation for non-ICES member country participation of early career scientists for ICES co-sponsored symposia and for the Early Career Scientist Congress.

Q: What would help in communicating the importance of joining ICES expert groups and work to employers?

- Letter of support for projects and project proposals will be helpful.
- National delegates tend to nominate people from national institutes, but it would also be helpful to nominate members from outside national institutes. Chairs are encouraged to ask national delegates to nominate members beyond government institutes and contact the ICES supporting officers for how to do this.
- Facilitating more knowledge exchange with industry, through training and collaboration will be helpful to demonstrate how academics can bring value.

Q: How do we as chairs deal with updating membership lists?

A: Chair-invited members need to be officially nominated by chairs every three years, so chairs should check the chair-invited membership thoroughly every 3 years and are encouraged to do a membership check on an annual basis. Nominated members can only be removed by national delegates. However, if

you do notice dormant nominated members, contact your ICES Supporting Officer to help remove them. ACOM legacy groups need chair-invited members to be approved by national delegates. People from other organisations or other groups can be invited as chair-invited members.

The SCICOM Chair and ACOM Chair thanked the participants for their input, expectations and feedback during the first day of WGCHAIRS.

Tuesday 26 January (Day 1) - ACOM

6 Welcome

The participants were welcomed to the advice-oriented day by ACOM Chair and ACOM Leadership. New EG chairs introduced themselves to the group.

7 Benchmark system

An overview of the benchmark system within ICES was presented, and the role explained of the Benchmark Oversight Group (BOG) in ensuring the proper functioning of the benchmark system. Adequate peer review is a cornerstone of ICES advice, which is where the benchmarking process fits in. In short, benchmarking is the process to review, establish, and update data and methods used for the fish stock assessments, which form the basis of ICES advice.

First, the background and historical development of the benchmarking system within ICES were introduced, highlighting how data compilation and benchmark workshops were incorporated into the advisory programme through the 2007 reform of the ICES advisory structure. The predecessor of the current Benchmark Oversight Group (BOG), the Benchmark Steering Group (BSG), was set up in 2013 to improve benchmarks and facilitate the transfer of science to advice. The BSG operated through the end of 2017 when it was decided there was a need to re-examine and clarify the benchmarking process. An ACOM subgroup was tasked with this review, and by 2020 ACOM adopted the current revamped benchmark system and established the BOG.

Both ICES recurrent advice and non-recurrent advice requests rely on a peer review of data and methods, the results of which can be expected to be valid for some period of time. These benchmarks require that prior development, analyses, and adequate documentation are available. Meetings that are part of a benchmark process are open to all experts and stakeholders, and timelines and/or frequency are determined on a case-by-case basis due to the complexity of the process. The main factors of success tend to be: early identification, adequate scoping, good planning and communication, availability of expertise and capacity.

The benchmark oversight group considers:

1. Monitoring and identification of benchmark needs by expert groups (but also ACOM)
2. Prioritization process to consider whether data/methods are fit for purpose, availability of new data/methods, management importance, perceived stock status, time since last benchmark, etc. which results in a prioritization score and accompanying issue list
3. Identification of the appropriate benchmark processes
 - a. **Benchmark:** full review of data, methods, approaches with appropriate scoping
 - b. **Inter-benchmark:** review to resolve a few issues with data or analysis using the existing methods in order to be able to provide advice
 - c. **Review:** check more minor technical issue (e.g. recalculation of reference points)
4. Coordination and support by BOG
5. Identification of needs for flexibility in assessment procedure for specific benchmark

There was a discussion of the processes to be followed in case of benchmark failures, and the floor was opened for a preliminary discussion on general clarifications of the benchmark system. The role of the Benchmark Oversight Group (BOG) was then introduced, which is tasked with:

- Exploring and proposing solutions to address generic issues with benchmarks
- Reviewing completed benchmarks and recommend remedial actions as required
- Preparing proposals of the benchmarks to be conducted

The presentation concluded with an outline of the current topics that the BOG is working on i.e.:

- Developing a guidance document on diagnostics for validation of cat. 1 & 2 assessment models
- Standardizing checkpoints and deadlines for benchmark processes through developing a benchmark planning checklist, a reviewer's checklist for benchmarks, and ICES benchmark system documentation, etc.
- Developing ICES benchmarks beyond fish stock assessment and exploring possible ensemble model approaches for fish stock assessment benchmarks

During the discussion, some of the questions asked by chairs included:

- *What is role of different participants? Stakeholders, scientists, observers etc.*
 - Open meetings, so all participants welcome, but it needs to be ensured there are people with specific expertise in data etc. Stakeholders can bring observations (that may or may not be data-based) to validate conclusions made (i.e. sense-checking). Ultimately benchmarks require data-based approach/evidence, an examination of diagnostics etc. so scientific expertise is essential. Benchmark group has responsibility to decide on best method, though ACOM can review.
- *Where does TAF fit in to benchmark process?*
 - TAF has been used by a number of expert groups already, and will be used in benchmarking for validating and storing agreed final code etc. TAF is still becoming fully operational (TAFGOV is developing a timeline for rollout).
- *If there are issues with bio properties or stock ID etc. are these issues addressed to other WGs/WKs, and can they be invited?*
 - There should always be an issue list (and potential solutions) and an indication of who could contribute. Secretariat should assist in getting contacts with other groups. BOG has also agreed with WGBIOP to let them know which benchmarks are going ahead as soon as they are agreed by ACOM.
- *Can benchmarks lead to recommendations for new data or new ways of collecting data?*
 - Yes.
- *How can data submission and data uses from electronic technologies (i.e. new data sources) be incentivized to participate in benchmark process?*
 - This is best done through direct contact with groups dealing with relevant stocks. Best to find expert groups which could use it (could potentially present at EG), and then try get involved in relevant benchmarks where that data may be useful. Discussion should happen in advance of DEWK to see if data would be useful.
- *Are there any non-fisheries examples you can give of the benchmarking process?*
 - Yes, there are will be efforts in benchmark work on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) (2022) and bycatch of endangered and threatened species (recurrent).

Some of the general comments and concerns about the benchmarking process included:

- *The prioritization scoring system can be quite a struggle and also seems like it would result in quite some inconsistencies between different groups.*
 - Yes, naturally it is done (with some subjectivity) within each WG. But those scores are not the final decision. It is up to the BOG to also look at

capacity, state of readiness and other issues (e.g. when next advice needed, similar stocks etc.). The BOG also evaluates to check that scores given seem appropriate.

- *There have been difficulties with timing being very tight which does not allow for adequate space to develop methods.*
 - There is room for modifying existing methods somewhat, but approaches should have been developed before. It is primarily a peer-review process.

8 Reference points

The latest developments regarding reference points used in ICES fishing opportunity advice were presented. An updated guidance document with some modifications to certain points will be published shortly e.g. new basis for the Fpa precautionary reference point (now defined as Fp05), the need to document the stock-recruit type considered relevant for the stock, and Fcap no longer being considered a reference point. Some issues regarding Blim were highlighted. The Workshop on guidelines and methods for the evaluation of rebuilding plans (WKREBUILD) has noted that in many cases MSY Btrigger was too close to Blim and that the estimation of Blim using Stock-recruit relationships was subjective and at times difficult to implement. ACOM is considering the basis for Blim (alternative approaches may be needed e.g. fraction of B0) and is also recommending EGs to consider forecast sensitivity for stocks below Blim. Ongoing developments include a follow up to WKREBUILD, an ACOM Productivity subgroup building on work from the Workshop of Fisheries Management Reference Points in a Changing Environment (WKRCHANGE) and some guidance from the third Workshop on guidelines for management strategy evaluations (WKG MSE3) on when and how reference points should be extracted from an MSE when one is conducted. The Chairs were invited to ask questions and give comments.

There were questions about how the transition to the new definition of Fpa would happen. For stocks going through a benchmark, the new definition will be applied when determining reference points. For other stocks, the value of Fp05 from the analyses used to estimate the current reference points (same data) can be used to replace the existing Fpa value.

Concerns regarding data poor stocks were raised. For Category 3 stocks, which are important for the whole ecosystem, some proxies exist but there have been few further developments. It was noted that there is a workshop on the way to further develop SPiCT guidance (including reference points and how to give advice in future). Length based proxies are often used in advice rule for the application of the PA buffer. However, data limited approaches often need to be taken stock by stock to see how they can be moved forward to ensure that they are delivering the management objectives of maximising yield etc. It was further noted that Category 4-5 methods are often highly dependent on stock definition, which is very difficult to define for some stocks (e.g. Deep-water stocks). Stock ID is a tricky issue, especially for data limited stocks (such stocks may be more management based than biology/genetic based). EGs should discuss these issues first, and bring them forward to a benchmark (and the SIMWG) if new information on stock boundaries is found.

The question was raised why the gap between MSY Btrigger and Blim is often small in the ICES stocks. In the US and Canada, the trigger point used is far away from Blim (both are often proportions of Bmsy or B0), which allows reductions in F earlier as stock declines. In the ICES framework, Bpa is often 40% above Blim (if default methods are used). This can leave little time to reduce F as stock size declines. The current ICES reference point framework is still in a transitional phase for many stocks. MSY Btrigger should be re-estimated as the 95th percentile of SSB when fishing at Fmsy after a stock has been fished at Fmsy for 5 years, but this has only been done for a few stocks so far (e.g. NS plaice). Once more stocks have moved over to this definition of MSY Btrigger, there should be larger gaps to Blim.

9 Covid-19 pandemic and advice

The planning and prioritization that had taken place around COVID-19 in relation to providing advice was presented. A big thank you was given to all members of the community. ICES had been one of the only international organizations that had successfully delivered on all advice commitments in 2020.

In spring 2020, ICES investigated how the COVID-19 pandemic was affecting fisheries sampling and [guidance](#) had been developed by ACOM on how to deal with missing survey data in stock assessments. Also, recommendations for online meetings, that are now included in Guidelines for ICES Groups (Annex 11) had been assembled.

Due to the pandemic situation, ACOM had decided to adapt the single stock advice sheets to an “abbreviated” format in 2020. The advice will in 2021 no longer be abbreviated but other changes will happen to the content of the advice sheet. An extra meeting on 11 February will cover in more detail the changes to advice sheets for 2021, and the guidance and template to report solutions used by expert groups to deal with COVID related data issues.

9.1 9a Update on Audit of Productivity in assessment and forecasts

Number of stocks entered into the audit was presented based on information on the SharePoint, getting closer to a completion of this audit (see MDC slide). The completion level may be less for stocks in category 3–6 stocks, but there are options for estimating the productivity for those stocks as well. This was clarified to WGCHAIRS.

9.2 9b Update on WKREPTAF

Script based reports will save considerable time and limit the number of errors. Opens an opportunity to directly link to the available data bases. A markdown based on templates need to be developed. Training is essential – and ambassadorship is equally important. The transition to this way of reporting may not be as smooth and easy for everybody and the ambassadors should pave the way/ease this transition.

10 Viewpoints

The ICES Viewpoints is an ICES advisory product to provide impartial evidence-based analyses of marine science topics, but on topics not currently being asked for by the advice requestors. The process and criteria for implementing a Viewpoint were explained, along with the Viewpoints that had already been published, and those set to be prepared in 2021 and 2022. The Vice-Chair explained what would be needed to consider a topic for a viewpoint. ACOM Vice-Chair Henn Ojaveer is the person to contact with proposals for viewpoints.

11 Impacts of fishing – seabed and bycatch

The developing advice area of seabed impact and recent development of the bycatch roadmap was presented. WGCHAIRS was asked for their views and how ICES should increase the link between this advice and the fishing opportunities advice.

Seabed

Recent advice on seabed impact (neafc-vme, eu-vme and trade-offs) was presented, policy and legislative framework (UNGA; Deep sea regulation, FAO guidelines for management of deep-sea fisheries, MSFD) and upcoming developments (WKPHM in Feb 2021, Benchmark of the VME advice process in 2022)

With regards to the trade-offs request it was explained that the request will study impacts of fishing from recent years with a projection for future using swept area ratio on mobile bottom contacting gears (MBTG) with a distinction from core fishing areas vs non-core fishing areas. Static gears will not be used because there is no data not available

Bycatch

It was highlighted that bycatch issues are becoming a priority for requesters of advice and the roadmap for ICES bycatch advice, recent ICES advice on bycatch, the bycatch species list developed at WKCOFIBYC, work on assessment units for PETS at ICES ecoregion level, were presented

Regarding data needs the objectives will be to collect information and determine methods to assess the resilience of protected species to bycatch and to identify and describe potential new data sources and propose options for improving the data availability and quality.

Strategic developments for the area:

- development of new (bycatch) **indicators**
- methodological work towards setting **threshold values**
- development of new **metrics to measure fishing effort**
- assessing **cumulative effects** of human activities
- evaluate if **improved resolution** bycatch data will improve advice
- interactions of PETS in capture fisheries to **minimize** and **mitigate bycatch impacts**
- **trade-offs** when reconciling objectives in legislation on bycatch of PETS

It was suggested to include the drivers leading to bycatch of species in the framework for bycatch work.

Also, it was noted that the quality of VMS data is improving since it will be soon compulsory for vessels of less than 10 m and the potential to use AIS. The ACOM Vice-Chair acknowledged these developments and responded that the data available however has not improved much yet.

12 Workplan for 2021

The 2021 advisory processes and the overall 2021 workplan was presented.

- ICSE meeting calendar – all meetings of workshops and working groups are presented on the ICES website (www.ices.dk) in the meeting calendar. This always has the latest information on dates and venues.
- The workplan calendar view can be accessed through the [ICES SharePoint](#) on the right-hand side under “WGCHAIRS Links”. This view shows all meetings, sorted by meeting room (or ‘Out’ if online) and colour coded for meeting type.
- Also found under WGCHAIRS links is the Process view. All advisory processes in a given year including all information on meeting dates, venue, chairs etc. can be found by searching the Advisory process view.
- Advice release dates: the ICES website provides an easy overview of all upcoming advice release dates. Go to the Advice tab on the front page and on to “Latest advice” to find the release dates.

Both the Meeting calendar and “Latest advice” can be easily accessed through the “Quick links” at the bottom of the front page of the ICES website.

Wednesday 27 January (Day 2) – JOINT ACOM/SCICOM**13 Welcome**

The ACOM and SCICOM Chairs welcomed the participants to the joint day.

14 Executive summaries

Julie Kellner, Science Professional Officer, presented the guidance on how to write executive summaries in ICES reports. Executive summaries should provide a clear, succinct, and factual summary of the key scientific contents addressed in the report. These summaries should be readable as standalone text, similar to a scientific abstract in a journal paper, and should be written for a non-specialist scientific reader.

Executive summaries and report DOI are disseminated broadly to the ICES network (incl. ACOM, SCICOM, Council, the Steering Group Chair, and the Expert Group) and will be included in the ICES library upgrade, where they will become searchable and part of a database.

A specific structure is requested to make the executive summaries more consistent and reader-friendly. In general, the executive summaries should be short (max. 350 words), unless the report is very complicated and long (such as reports focusing on multiple stocks), then up to 500 words is acceptable. The executive summaries should be divided into four sections:

1. a description of the overall remit and objectives;
2. overview of the questions addressed;
3. key results, conclusions, and their implications, and the main uncertainties;
4. priorities for future work.

Further helpful details and an example are provided in the [Guidelines for ICES Groups](#).

It is important that the executive summaries focus on the scientific content, leaving out jargon and administrative details (i.e. times, dates, location, chairs, membership, rapporteurs, and attendance at meetings). Full terms of reference, requests for funding, self-congratulation and recommendations for other expert groups should also be omitted from the executive summaries. Descriptions of methods should not be lengthy and should only focus on the methods' highlights. Acronyms must be spelled out at first use. The full list of what executive summaries should not include can be found in the Guidelines for ICES Groups.

The executive summaries are becoming more visible and it is therefore imperative that they are understandable to a broad and general scientific audience.

Action: It was suggested to rephrase “recommendations for other expert groups” to “specific recommendations to individual expert groups” in the Guidelines for ICES Groups, under “Executive summaries should not include”, to clarify that general overarching recommendations to expert groups can be included in the executive summaries and only specific recommendations to individual expert groups should be left out.

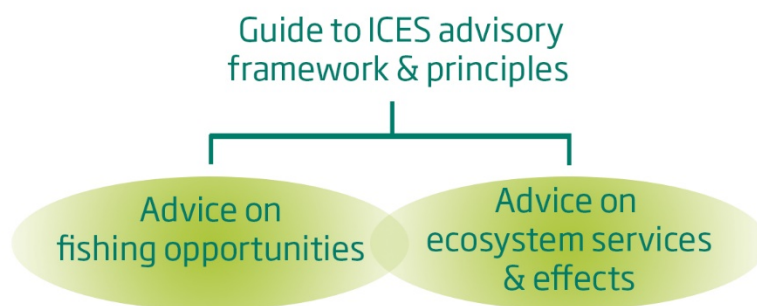
The Secretariat will also provide an example that will be included in the Guidelines for ICES Groups, of an executive summary from a report focusing on stock assessment, as it can be difficult and challenging to keep such a summary short, especially if all stocks are outlined.

15 Introduce Guide to ICES advice

The [Guide to ICES advice](#) was introduced. ICES receives requests for advice on a growing number of issues, so quality control is central. This advisory framework that incorporates EBM in all sectors has been developed over the past four years.

In order to keep advice resilient to quality demands and complexities of EBM, advice must be credible, legitimate, and relevant, with integrated fisheries and ecosystem advice, and must be kept consistent across broad set of requestors.

Underneath the overarching 'Guide to ICES framework and principles', there are two interlinked subsections: advice on fishing opportunities and advice on ecosystem services and effects.



The four main steps in the advisory process, relevant to both recurrent advice and special requests were introduced, highlighting the groups that are involved at each stage, culminating in ADGs and eventually the published advice. Adaption of knowledge synthesis stage is one of the roles of ACOM.

Simplified framework of ICES advisory process



The ten principles of ICES advice were outlined. It is hoped that these fit into four steps previously mentioned in order to maintain robustness through quality control requirements and challenges of ecosystem-based management.

10 Principles of ICES advice

Overall

1. Document openly

Request formulation

2. Formulate request iteratively
3. Clarify objectives & risks

For regular & *ad hoc* advice,
overviews & viewpoints

Knowledge synthesis

4. Deliver knowledge timely
5. Use best available science
6. Apply data FAIR principles



Peer review

7. Undergo peer review

Advice production

8. Create clear & consistent advice
9. Agree by consensus
10. Explain without advocacy

Three principles were outlined: 1) deliberations of expert groups are published by time advice is published, 2) ICES selects and applies best methods for any analysis, and 3) data are findable, attributable, researchable, reusable, and confirm to policy. On point 2), it is crucial because we often get requestors say to us that they want us to use a certain method. However, it was stressed that the independent nature of ICES means experts as scientists choose the most appropriate methods. These methods are reviewed by independent experts. On point 3), when ICES data centre fulfils the needs as accredited centre – hoped by end of 2021 – data will become even stronger element of advice.

To ensure best available, credible science has been used that provides sound basis for advice, all methods and analysis should be reviewed by at least two independent reviewers. The guidelines for the review process have just been published and are available online.

All ICES advice is adopted by ACOM through consensus, prior to being published.

It is interesting and important to note that ICES provides an impartial response to a request and does not lobby requestors. ICES has a commitment to publish everything openly. This is one of our key principles that maintains our integral relationship with requestors and keeps them coming back.

All principles and how they are laid down in all advisory products are outlined in the guide.

The SCICOM Chair opened the floor to questions:

Q: Referencing slide number 5, a question was raised on the timing of the peer-review; it often comes at end of workshop or afterwards at which time there is no point in experts saying something is wrong since there is no or very little time to put things right. A: The process will stop if the review says a process is not good enough. In the last two years there have been situations where reviewers have stopped the process and have had to readjust timelines and go back and redevelop.

Q: One point of discomfort from experts is in the transition from knowledge to advice. In some ADGs there has been only one expert, normally the chair of the science paper, and they can feel uncomfortable speaking for all experts in the group as they may not have the broad technical knowledge of whole group. Is there space for knowledge contributors to review the advice to flag any major factual issues after it has been drafted and before it is finalized and released?

A: There is no step like that in system at the moment, but that it is an interesting suggestion.

Henn Ojaveer (ACOM Vice-Chair) commented that in some ADGs it has been agreed that the invited expert could consult with other experts to ensure further issues brought up during the ADG were solved in the right manner, thus avoiding factual issues in the advice. Also in a few cases, it has been necessary to check original publications for facts and consult the original sources. The ADGs check factual correctness however need to keep a balance because ADGs should be kept separate from the expert groups.

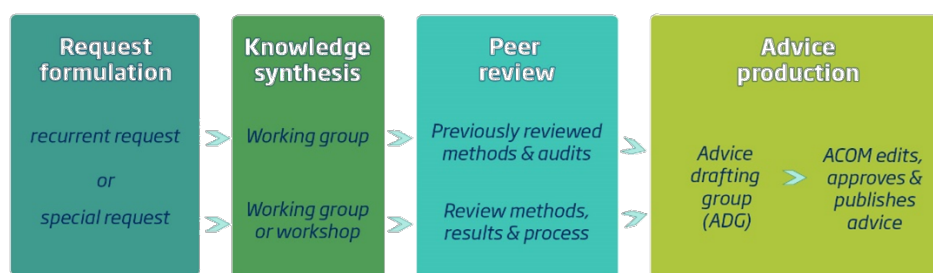
Two additional comments were made in support of a formalised procedure for this extra step. When issues come up there is often very little time from ADG stage to publication stage to revert back to experts, which adds pressure. Ensuring that there is another group member present in the ADG has helped. Bringing in experts to the ADG has been welcomed when there have been complex issues to solve. In other situations, it has been possible to take contact with relevant experts during the ADG, and this has worked quite well. It was concluded that the discussion should be continued subsequent to WGCHAIRS and a process should be outlined, allowing a step between ADG and Web Conference if operational.

A comment was made that working in ADGs can get 'hot under the collar' and that issues with meeting etiquette have come up in recent years. ACOM Chair recognised the issue and stressed that meeting etiquette is there for a reason and that pressure/bullying/inappropriate behaviour must be dealt with.

16 Ecosystem overviews

The Ecosystem Overviews were presented, outlining the purpose of the Ecosystem Overviews, and displayed a standard table of contents to show the scope of information in this Advice product.

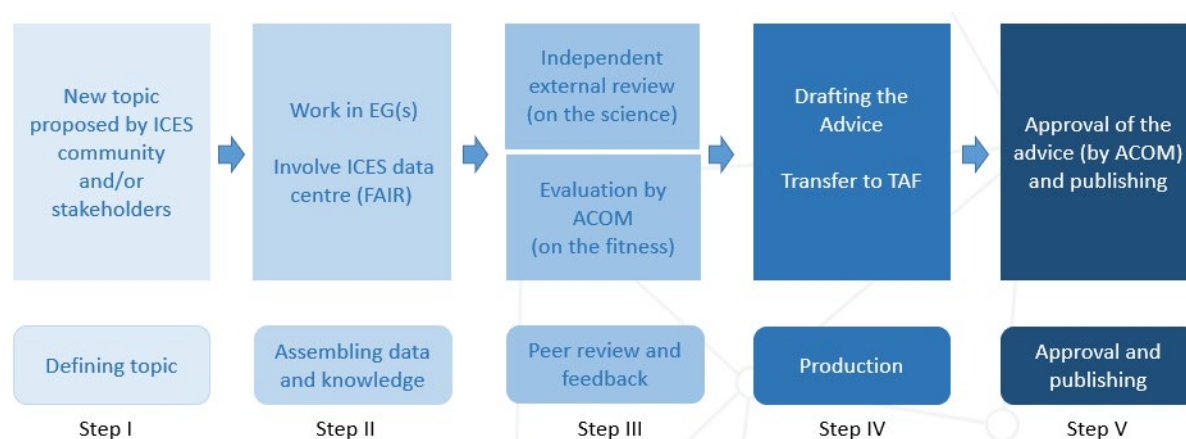
The production process from request to final advice was briefly explained with the following model:



Currently ICES has published 10 different ecosystem overviews: Oceanic Northeast Atlantic, Azores, Baltic Sea, Barents Sea, Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Coast, Celtic Seas, Greater North Sea, Icelandic Waters, Norwegian Sea and Greenland Sea. A new Ecosystem Overview for the Arctic Ocean will be finalized in 2021. A future Ecosystem Overview is planned for the Faroe Islands.

The pipeline process was described with a focus on how expert groups can contribute new products to the Ecosystem Overviews. Looking ahead, we aim to engage more expert groups in the process and encourage further relevant input.

The five steps in the pipeline process:



Eight priority topics were identified in the Workshop on the design and scope of the 3rd generation of ICES ecosystem overviews (WKEO3). Currently, we are focusing on how to incorporate and advance these priority topics for the Ecosystem Overviews and several expert groups are already engaged in the development (see table below):

No	Topic	ICES EGs contributing
1	management objectives	WGBESEO
2	fisheries impact on the seabed	WGFBIT
3	climate predictions and projections	WGS2D, <i>planned WK</i>
4	productivity changes	WGOOFE, WGIPEM
5	mapping vulnerable areas	WKEUVME
6	linking pressures to ecosystem functions and processes	WGRMES, WKTRANSPARENT, <i>proposed WK</i>
7	general overview of ecosystem structure	
8	food web modelling to quantify links and impacts	WGECO, WKFOOWI, WKEWIEA

Expert groups are strongly encouraged to participate in the development of the Ecosystem Overviews and to contribute with relevant input. The best way is to get in touch with Debbi Pedreschi and Henn Ojaveer, collaborate with the relevant IEA groups leading the production of the Ecosystem Overviews, and include actions to contribute to the overviews as ToR in your working group resolutions.

Feedback/comments

Q: Is there a plan for producing an Ecosystem Overview for the Mediterranean? A: WGCOMEDA already focuses on the area, but are looking into comparative analysis for the region and not focusing on ecosystem overviews.

17 Gender and inclusivity in ICES – reflection on “Picture a Scientist” and relevance for Expert Group work

Ellen Johannesen, Coordinating Officer, introduced the theme of gender equality, diversity, and inclusion, with reference to her ongoing PhD research that uses ICES as a case study, with focus on gender in the conduct of international marine science. ICES is contributing as a partner to the World Maritime University program (sponsored by DFO) looking at the empowerment of women in ocean science and governance in intergovernmental bodies.

In the latest ICES Strategic plan (2019), Gender equality, diversity, and inclusion are mentioned for the first time. ICES does not currently collect gender-disaggregated data for all activities, however, there are plans for systematic collection of this information. Initial analysis of one year of data show gender ratios in ICES structures similar to other organizations, with women under-represented in decision-making roles.

In order to start the discussions within the ICES community on how to make our organization more diverse and inclusive, an online viewing of the documentary ‘Picture a Scientist’ was hosted. 419 people watched the film as part of the ICES event. The documentary takes an evidence-based approach to explore the challenges faced by women working in science today, exploring the role of implicit bias and gender-based harassment as a cause for under-representation.

A survey was sent after the film to gather more information from the ICES community. The analysis of the results continues, however, the initial results shared experiences of harassment and unconscious bias also present in the ICES Community.

During the discussion, appreciation for the evidence of the under-representation of women and support for the collection of gender-disaggregated data were noted. A range of suggestions were provided by Chairs including:

- Chairs are empowered to improve the diversity in their own work through the “Chair-invited member” mechanism.
- Specific training could be explored. For Chairs, this would also be helpful in the current context of remote meetings and the need to ensure everyone is heard during discussions.
- Continuing to include gender equality, diversity, and inclusion to agendas of ICES committee meetings.
- Formal communication with Member Countries, highlighting gaps in diversity.

18 Meeting Etiquette and Code of Conduct

The SCICOM Chair gave a presentation on Meeting Etiquette and [Code of Conduct](#). Good cooperation and treating each other with respect are at the heart of ICES; the [main principles of meeting etiquette](#) should be observed by anyone taking part in ICES activities. The expert group chairs should be especially alert to any bias or discrimination exhibited against others and take action to prevent it.

It is essential that experts contributing to ICES science and advice maintain scientific independence, integrity and impartiality, and to this end the ICES Code of Conduct is laying out how we should behave in the ICES network and how Conflicts of Interest (CoI) are handled within ICES.

Anyone experiencing or witnessing behaviour that violates these principles should report it immediately, in the first instance by notifying the meeting chair or convener who will seek to resolve the dispute and, if necessary, involve appropriate ICES leadership. All reports will be treated seriously and responded to promptly.

2 hours from and for EG Chairs

The ACOM and SCICOM Chair want to thank Paulina Ramirez-Monsalve, Jan-Dag Pohlmann and Brett Alger for having taken on the organization of this part of the meeting. Introducing this self-organized part of the WGCHAIRS meeting is a first step for higher engagement and ownership of the meeting by chairs.

19 Challenges of communicating science in today's social and political climate

Dr. Kenneth Rose France-Merrick, Professor in Sustainable Ecosystem Restoration University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, kicked off the session with a presentation on the challenges of communicating science in today's social and political climate, and how to build and maintain trust in science. Attendees were distributed in breakout groups to discuss the general question of "How can we support and develop scientists so that their communications and advice is trusted by diverse audiences?". Three sub-questions were given as conversation starters: (i) What are we (scientists) communicating / advising?; (ii) To whom are we communicating? (who is our audience?); and (iii) How could we develop trust? How could we maintain it? All of the breakout groups reported back their discussions and recommendations, either in plenary or by written (e-mail) communication.

WG Chairs discussed the importance of explaining the details of science advice, especially in complex fisheries situations (e.g. North Sea), and/or where there are differences between local conditions (e.g. high abundance) vs overall stock status (e.g. declining). A balance needs to be reached when communicating publicly: simplifying complex science, while ensuring that uncertainties and limitations are properly communicated. Uncertainty was presented by the Chairs as one of the points that could be discussed to increase trust: "be honest about uncertainty" and "communicate uncertainties clearly without diminishing the message" The question raised by the Chairs themselves was on how to communicate uncertainties, especially if there are limitations in space or time to do so. As one of the breakout groups reported: "If uncertainty is under-communicated, we may appear to contradict ourselves at a later stage when for example new evidence or new methods give conclusions that are opposite to what we communicated earlier; at the same time, people may lose confidence if it is perceived that uncertainty is large". Language issues (i.e. misinterpretation after translations) were also identified as barriers when communicating with an international audience.

WG Chairs identified four primary audiences: the clients of ICES, the scientific community, the stakeholders (those who are impacted by the decision), and the broader public. It is fundamental to identify the target audience in order to identify the style of the communication. WG Chairs also discussed the responsibility of scientists and what is deemed to be successful communications and engagement with audiences: "At what point do you start to leave people behind? At some point in the dissemination/engagement/communication process you will lose the trust/interest/understanding of a section of your audience. How much loss is acceptable, and what responsibility do we have as scientists to minimize this percentage of loss?"

WG Chairs provided a number of recommendations and examples for increasing trust and processes for developing better communications, including: conducting communication trials with a subset of the anticipated audience to evaluate effectiveness of the communication; be transparent (e.g. on who is paying for research, and what has been done to ensure independence and transparency); asking for assistance (e.g. possibilities for a formal training in effective science

communication); awareness of an advocacy role (e.g. knowing your own personal investment in the issue being communicated).

A quote extracted from one of the emailed responses brings very nicely together the three points of trust, message and audience: “In order to build trust, we as scientists have to adapt the message and method of communication based on our target audience. It is essential that there is a collective effort to increase societies trust in science so that when faced with challenges such as COVID we can respond effectively. It is important that we consider how to achieve that as part of the ICES mission.”

20 Breakout sessions: Challenges of communicating science in today's social and political climate

In this breakout session 10 groups consisting of 6–7 expert group chairs were asked to address the following questions:

General question to discuss:

“How can we support and develop scientists so that their communications and advice is trusted by diverse audiences?”

You can use the following as conversation starters:

- *What are we (scientists) communicating / advising?*
- *To whom are we communicating? (who is our audience?)*
- *How could we develop trust? How could we maintain it?*

21 Team building exercise: Escape room challenge

WGCHAIRS participants were invited to participate in a team building exercise where they, after being randomly organized in groups of four people, had to complete as a group a series of puzzles in a virtual “escape room”. Plenary opened an hour later and gave the possibility to those who escaped -and also those who did not managed to escape on time, to share feedback and experiences. Positive feedback was received. It was manifested that the exercise allowed Chairs to informally interact with others and put their minds away from every-day routines. Even though there was not much time for formal presentations, it is hoped that names and faces will be remembered and facilitate interaction for when we hold the next in person WGCHAIRS meeting.

22 Hybrid and online meetings, open sessions and the ASC

Currently groups will continue to operate through online meetings until 30 April 2021, but this is currently under evaluation and will most likely be extended. We can also expect changes to how we will work in the coming years.

ICES science, advice and data services, expert groups and delivering advice have continued in a COVID-19 world. The SCICOM Chair thanked the chairs of the expert groups for adapting and finding mitigation measures throughout the disruption. Throughout the pandemic, opportunities for online work have been identified. This includes greater participation in online meetings, with almost 3000 experts participating in meetings in 2020, which is 500 more people than in 2019. Having online meetings enables the group to have greater public participation and we have seen groups attach a smaller open session of scientific talks to the group meetings. If this is something that you plan on doing, please notify and get in touch with the ICES secretariat.

Guidelines for online meetings has been added to the expert group guidelines and the Secretariat is currently developing requirements for hybrid meetings. Feedback on experiences, lessons learned and comments from the community is welcomed.

The Annual Science Conference 2021 is currently planned as a hybrid meeting in Copenhagen in September with the full programme remained so far. This will be evaluated in May 2021. It comes with challenges and ICES aspires to accommodate the same spirit of the ASC, emphasising communicating science and networking experience in the same extend that we would have had in a fully physical ASC.

Comments and discussion from meeting and chat:

- Many chairs have experienced greater participation in online meetings and find that digital meetings work well when you know each other already, and have already made good progress on ToR. This has not necessarily been true for new working groups or groups in the first year of their cycle.
- Despite increased participation, chairs have experienced less engagement from people in online meetings. This resulted in more work for chairs, less side conversations, more distractions and less opportunity for more difficult discussions on strategic and innovative issues. It is also difficult to chair meetings, where people do not have their cameras on and silence taken as agreement. There is agreement that online meetings resulted in workload issues for chairs.
- Online meetings are useful for technical work and for catching up intersessionally. Perhaps, the way forward is combining remote and physical meetings for different needs.
- There are benefits from new technologies in online meetings, such as Mentimeter and other polling software, which allows for more egalitarian contributions than you would find in physical meetings.
- Regarding the ASC, the biggest challenge for online participation is the issue of time zones. How will ICES deal with good participation from various time zones? ICES is aware of these challenges and the physical part of the conference will be bound with one time zone, while if the ASC was fully online this would be less of an issue.
- Several participants agreed that including social opportunities in online meetings or in the ASC are beneficial for fostering engagement and networking across expert groups. One suggestion for the ASC is to have a few social events before and to put people in teams to provide opportunities for online social interaction. Some participants find it hard to justify online social activities during work hours and from family commitments.
- Has ICES planned to run a survey to anticipate the trends with regards to remote work and participation, attitudes to physical vs. remote attendance at hybrid meetings such as the ASC and perspectives from institutes? The SCICOM chair will take this suggestion and plan to release a survey to gather feedback.

- It is important to get feedback from the institutes as these will play a big role in whether experts can attend physical meetings if there is an online meeting participation available. Institutes will try to minimise costs with regards to travel, physical meetings, etc.
- Has ICES considered CO₂ emissions and its responsibility in minimising environmental impacts with regards to meeting in person? There is an ICES Council working group considering the wider impacts of online/physical meetings.
- With regards to the issue of inclusion, it can be challenging for early career scientists to join online meetings and for carers to balance online meetings and family during lockdowns. The issue of time zones also results in very long working days for some people. Need to consider these issues when thinking about the opportunities and advantages of online meetings.
- Need to differentiate between online meetings in the pandemic and online meetings without a pandemic. In normal circumstances, online meetings can be very inclusive for people with less travel budgets (early career scientists) and family commitments.
- It is important to consider the term hybrid meeting, as this suggests the best part of both online meetings and physical meetings – this is not the case. We are running a physical meeting with an option to dial in – totally dominated by the time zone of the people meeting in that location. If we are running a fully digital meeting, it requires more instructions for how to engage (need to have camera on), etc.
- With hybrid meetings there are views that online participation can be at the periphery of discussions, but also that online participants can dominate the meeting with technology issues and interruptions of face-to-face discussions.

SCICOM Chair thanked for the feedback on online meetings, hybrid meetings and the way forward.

23 Resolutions

Julie Kellner, Science Professional Officer, introduced the plans for the resolution database. This will include new tools that will allow the community to conduct full searches and sorting across the group information (chairs, ToR, steering groups, meeting times, etc.) and to drill down into details such as science and advice plan codes to identify groups conducting similar work, etc.

In order to build this resolution database, all resolution forms will be updated. The new symposium and publication forms are currently available, and the expert group new resolution forms will be available mid-year. The new form will be the same for all expert groups, including working groups that are open and fixed-term as well as workshops. It is important to remember to fill out the new resolution forms using Microsoft Word version 2010 or newer, to allow for the dropdown and track change options to work. Please do not use Google documents, as this platform conflicts with the form settings.

WGCHAIRS was reminded that we are currently asking for symposium co-sponsorship requests for 2022 and 2023 by 1 February 2020; these requests should be submitted on the new resolution form.

Regarding the transition to using the new expert group resolution forms:

- Until the new forms are available, please continue to use the old forms.
- Once the new forms are available, new expert groups will use the new forms. Current expert groups will move their information to the new resolution forms as they renew their resolution terms.

Additionally, we have had some questions about Resolution term extensions. We are asking that you plan to renew your resolutions at the end of your term and not to submit requests for an extension. If chairs and ToR need to carry over in order to ensure continuity of the work, this is ok. For further questions on this topic, please reach out to your supporting officers, professional officers, and/or the SCICOM and ACOM Chairs.

A few questions were asked by WGCHAIRS participants to explain how the transition will work (as explained above) and the SCICOM Chair thanked the team at the Secretariat for developing this new database.

24 Reporting

The SCICOM Chair gave a short overview of expert group reporting. For a detailed description of the reporting requirements, chairs were referred to the Guidelines for ICES Groups.

All groups on annual resolutions (many advice groups and a lot of workshops) should submit a yearly report, but are not required to submit an e-evaluation.

All groups on three-year terms should submit an interim e-evaluation in year 1 and 2, and a final e-evaluation at the end of their term. When groups meet several times during the year, the e-evaluation should reflect all meetings held that year and be submitted after the last meeting of the year; there is no need to submit an e-evaluation after each meeting. The e-evaluation helps to give structured feedback into the ICES system on what worked well, challenges, key points, and how the group is working.

In interim years, the three-year groups are given the choice of producing an ICES Scientific Report (considering there is enough scientific content). An exception is made if a group has an advice-related Term of Reference (ToR) in an interim year; in this case the group needs to produce a report, as this is the way of communicating content for the ToR and into the advisory process. The baseline is an ICES Scientific Report at the end of a group's term. Contents from interim reports do not need to be repeated in the final report.

Where a group coordinates the work of other groups in the ICES system or proposes changes and developments for ICES working procedures and structures, it can produce a Business Report. Business reports do not contain science, but are still available in the ICES Library and are searchable with a DOI number.

With the new resolution forms introduced later this year, the report type and whether the group is planning to submit an interim report should be indicated on the group's resolution. If there is doubt about the appropriate choice of the report, then contact should be made with the relevant supporting officer, as well as the Steering Group chair.

Questions/comments

Q: Can we agree that reports should not include half-cooked information that is not final? A: Yes, the idea for the baseline of one report is exactly this. Reporting interim results is unnecessary, although it can be done if the group sees a benefit in it (e.g. stimulation discussion and seeking input). It is also an option for groups to draft a report internally for documentation purposes, which will help pick up the material for the full and final report.

For some groups annual reports are needed, for instance when the group is communicating relevant material for another groups. WGITMO Chair explained that their national reports for invasive species are produced every year and many people would need the information sooner than the three-year report would provide. WGITMO dealt with the immediacy of these reports by making them available on the group's community page on the ICES website. These were then appended to the final report.

Q: A question was raised on whether it is appropriate to acknowledge ICES, if the members are not in agreement? A: Officially all scientific reports should be consensus statements by a group, but if needed separate minority statements can appear in the back of the report, although the preference is for these not to appear. Occasionally a report can be submitted as a statement by the chair.

ICES Editor clarified that CRRs and TIMES are different to the scientific reports. For CRRs and TIMES, ICES is not the author, the authors are the author, and with the new template, it is possible to assign different authors to different chapters.

25 ICES publications and library

Ruth Anderson, ICES Editor, presented the various in-house and out-of-house publications and recent changes in the editorial team. The update of the ICES Publications website was presented to chairs; it was finished at the end of November 2020. As announced previously, a new library is being developed and should be finalised by September 2021. Among others, it will offer a better search function, easily exportable citations, and key words which the user can click on and it will be guide the user to related publications based on the keyword. It was brought to the attention of WG Chairs that if members of an expert group publish outside of ICES Publications, an external publication database is maintained by ICES that is intended for public access in the future. Such publications should be signalled to ICES Publications team (Ffion Bell; Associate Editor), so the database is up-to-date. WG Charis should also remember to encourage members of their group to acknowledge ICES whenever it is relevant.

Relevant issues of the discussion:

Q: *ICES JMS is behind a paywall, is there a consideration for making it open access?* **A:** The issue is very complex and has many layers to it, but the content of the journal should become increasingly open access over the coming years and these issues are always on the agenda with the publisher. **A:** TIMES and CRR are considered as peer-reviewed scientific literature that have their own DOI.

Q: *Where could a phytoplankton taxonomic guide be published?* **A:** In ID Leaflets for Plankton. if it is intended as a big guide/knowledge synthesis, it could be considered as a CRR. External authors can also contribute to such publications as well as external companies/organisations as part of the publication process. **A:** The new library is planned to be launched by ICES Publications team in September 2021.

26 Science highlights, dissemination and communications

Celine Byrne, Communications Officer, focused on science highlights. Science highlights are submitted by expert groups in their annual evaluation forms and can be used to promote the groups work as articles and social media posts. The Science Highlights series was also presented, where Communications contact groups to submit to articles that are theme based. These are excellent platforms for communicating the work of expert groups. All groups were encouraged to continue submitting science highlights on an annual basis.

Terhi Minkkinen, Communications Officer, presented the social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn) that ICES uses. It was brought to the attention of chairs that [all expert groups have their own page on ICES website](#). Chairs were asked to link to these pages while promoting their group's work on social media or other platforms.

Comments and questions

Q: Can pre-recorded presentations at group meetings be made public in the near future? **A:** This is currently being investigated by ICES Secretariat. To avoid GDPR issues, it was advised to have as few presenters as possible and to refrain from mentioning or referring to personal data of others in such recorded material. If EG chairs or members have a request to make pre-recorded presentations public, please contact the Supporting Officer of the group.

Q: Can ICES post such pre-recorded videos or can another website be used if permission is given from ICES? **A:** ICES has a [YouTube channel](#) that could be used for this purpose.

Q: Do people also work with pre-early career scientists in the community, e.g. Bachelor's students or similar? **A:** Some people have a lot of summer students as interns, while others mostly mentioned PhD students and post-docs.

Q: Regarding social media guidelines, what can be posted and what cannot by ICES community when considering privacy, copyright, and GDPR matters? **A:** Currently there are no separate social media guidelines. The current policy for group meetings is for Chairs to agree with meeting participants their expectations about what may or may not be shared externally during the meeting via social media ([Guidelines for ICES Groups, section 3.6.2](#)). It was suggested that social media guidelines should be created.

Action: Social media guidelines should be created and used by ICES community in order to avoid any violation of copyrights, GDPR matters, or privacy.

27 Steering Group Chair interaction

The chairs of the Aquaculture Steering Group (ASG), Data Science and Technology Steering Group (DSTSG), Ecosystem Observation Steering Group (EOSG), Ecosystem Processes and Dynamics Steering Group (EPDSG), Fisheries Resources Steering Group (FRSG), Human Activities, Pressures and Impacts Steering Group (HAPISG), and Integrated Ecosystem Assessments Steering Group (IEASG) led breakout meetings of their steering groups. Steering Group sessions. Summaries from these meetings are provided in Annex 2.

Annex 1: List of participants

First name	Last name	Email	Country	WG	SG
Brett	Alger	brett.alger@noaa.gov	United States	WGTIFD	DSTSG
Per	Arneberg	perab@hi.no	Norway	WGINOR	IEASG
Sarah	Bailey	sarah.bailey@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Canada	HAPISG	SG Chair, HAPISG
Valerio	Bartolino	valerio.bartolino@slu.se	Sweden	WGSAM	HAPISG
Jurgen	Batsleer	jurgen.batsleer@wur.nl	Netherlands	WGEF	FRSG
Alan	Baudron	alan.baudron@gov.scot	United Kingdom	WGGRAFY	EPDSG
Juan	Bellas	juan.bellas@ieo.es	Spain	WGBEC	HAPISG
Maria J.	Belzunce Segarra	jbelzunce@azti.es	Spain	WGMS	HAPISG
Mikaela	Bergenius Nord	mikaela.bergenius@slu.se	Sweden	WGBFAS	FRSG
Lynda	Blackadder	Lynda.Blackadder@gov.scot	United Kingdom	WGScallop	EPDSG
Lisa	Borges	info@fishfix.eu	Portugal	WGTIFD	DSTSG
Bela	Buck	Bela.H.Buck@awi.de	Germany	WGOOA	ASG
Julian Mariano	Burgos	julian.burgos@hafog-vatn.is	Iceland	WGMHM	HAPISG
Andrew	Campbell	andrew.campbell@marine.ie	Ireland	WGWIDE	FRSG
Neil	Campbell	neil.campbell@gov.scot	United Kingdom	WGSFD	HAPISG
Ryan	Carnegie	carnegie@vims.edu	United States	WGPDMO	ASG
Bryony	Caswell	b.a.caswell@hull.ac.uk	United Kingdom	WGHIST	HAPISG
Ghislain	Chouinard	ghislain@ices.dk	Other	ACOM	ACOM Vice-Chair
Donald	Clark	clarkd@dfo-mpo.gc.ca	Canada	WGNAEO	EOSG
Liz	Clarke	liz.clarke@gov.scot	United Kingdom	WGCATCH	DSTSG
Dave	Clarke	dave.clarke@marine.ie	Ireland	WG HABD	EPDSG

First name	Last name	Email	Country	WG	SG
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Annex 2: Steering Group breakout sessions

Aquaculture Steering Group (ASG) Breakout Session

Chair: Mike Rust

6 chairs attended the session from WGECCA, WGOOA, WGSEDA, WGAGFA, WGREIA, and WGPDMO.

Chairs introduced themselves and provided a status on the expert groups, as well as challenges faced and suggestions for working during COVID-19. A few key points from the discussion are listed below.

- Discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of online meetings and working in a pandemic.
 - Short monthly check-in meetings have been beneficial for WGECCA to keep track of ToR and maintain momentum in the group. This model has worked well for bringing in new members, who otherwise would not be involved in physical meetings.
 - Including social interactions in virtual meetings also helps to get to know each other and to engage more casually in spite of current circumstances. WGSEDA has had good experience with this, hosting a cooking challenge in 2020 and a possible lyric/song contest at the next meeting.
 - When engaging people during the pandemic, need to be realistic about goals and ToR.
 - WGREIA faces the challenge of engaging people in a new working group this year. The group needs to have important discussions on risk assessment, which will be difficult in an online meeting.
 - Chairs are also missing the ability to leave the day job and deadlines behind, and to focus on the expert group work for a weeklong physical meeting. Also missing the ability to get to know people and spend time with fellow members over a meal or beer.
 - Lots of participation in online meetings, but people are engaging less or in specific topics rather than on several ToRs.
- Discussion on cross-collaboration with other groups who are built around specific tools or reviewing techniques, which can be applied to both aquaculture and fisheries. This is the case for WGAGFA, WGECCA and WGPDMO. How to do we interact with other groups doing this?
- Desire of chairs to work on societal issues, provide reviews and to contribute to meaningful advice.
 - There is an opportunity to contribute to the EU4 Oceans platform: <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/en/frontpage/1483>
 - Opportunity to contribute to the FAO aquaculture conference and suggestion to host an ICES aquaculture session. WGOOA chair will follow up on this.
 - Agree to have quarterly ASG business meetings to exchange ideas between chairs, discuss future priorities, emerging trends, etc. Chairs will come up with 3-4 guiding questions to stimulate the discussion.

Data Science and Technology Steering Group (DSTSG) Breakout Session

Chair: Jens Rasmussen

Meeting participants: Brett Alger, Christian von Dorrien, David Currie, Estanis Mugerza, Jane Aanestad Godiksen, Jens Rasmussen, Jean-Olivier Irisson, Julie Olivia Davies, Kieran Hyder, Liz Clarke, Michael Jech, Ciaran O'Donnell, Karolina Reducha Andersen, Lisa Borges, Patrícia Gonçalves, Patrick Polte

Reflections about online meetings, how they have worked for the chairs and groups and how it has affected their work

The DSTSG chair, Jens Rasmussen, started the meeting by asking the working group (WG) chairs to share their reflections about online meetings, how this new meeting format had worked for the chairs and groups and how the Covid-19 pandemic has affected their work. This resulted in many fruitful discussions, sharing of experiences and reflections for the future. The chairs' experiences varied and depended considerably on the group's life span, meeting participation, participant's involvement and commitment, meeting format etc.:

- It was obvious that smaller groups with participants who had worked together before the pandemic and knew each other well, had generally a better experience with the online meetings, where everyone was familiar with the group's dynamic and had the chance to take part in the discussions and get heard. Many groups have also worked intersessionally in a virtual format prior to the pandemic, which means that they are familiar and experienced with running meetings this way.
- On the other hand, if the group was new and the participants haven't had the chance to work together before, then it was challenging to kick off the first meeting in a remote setup, as the discussions didn't flow as smoothly and many might have felt intimidated to speak up, especially young participants.
- On the contrary, there was also a general agreement among the chairs that a positive side of the virtual setup was a higher participation in terms of numbers. One chair also mentioned that there was a significantly higher attendance of young scientists, compared to previous physical meetings, who would not necessarily have attended otherwise.
- However, the disadvantage of more participants was that there seemed to have been more listeners than active participants engaging in the meeting and discussions, meaning that some great discussions, that would have happened in physical meetings, were lost. The social aspects of meetings during coffee-breaks or social events, where trust and relations are built, ideas exchanged, difficult conversations about sensitive topics are occurring, are also missing in a virtual format, which many chairs see as a great disadvantage.
- A common observation from numerous chairs was also that the commitment from the participants was not the same after an online meeting compared to a physical one and a lot of the work that goes into writing the report went primarily to the chairs. During a physical meeting, it is generally easier to involve everyone, for instance by splitting the group up into subgroups that are responsible for doing particular tasks and writing the report on those tasks. Whereas it can be challenging to fulfill most of the report directly on site in a virtual setup.
- The chairs also noticed that the Covid-19 pandemic has obviously affected many people's abilities to commit to their work as meeting participants or chairs (due to home schooling of children, mental health issues etc.). It was also mentioned that the working conditions are not always optimal when working from home (e.g. poor internet connection), which can affect people's involvement in a meeting.

- Several chairs decided to assemble small subgroups to focus on specific questions with the condensed time they had for the virtual meeting. This setup work well for some groups that were able to gather a lot of information through the assignment of group leaders and rapporteurs. However, other groups had more difficulties to have interactions in the small subgroups, even though they had good experiences with this setup in previous physical meetings.
- To meet all the deliverables in an online format, some chairs decided to partition the effort within the group by having intersessional meetings, before the main meeting. However, this was a challenging setup, especially for the chairs who had to put a lot of effort into assigning meeting chairs, following up on all those meetings etc. Not everyone was able to commit to the same extent and it was difficult to find chairs who could drive the work.
- From a chair's perspective, there was also a general consensus about the challenges associated with running and managing online meetings (e.g. chat monitoring, chairing discussions, minute-taking, making sure that everyone is connected properly, answering technical questions from participants via email, communicating with co-chair etc.). It was suggested that Microsoft Teams might be a better platform to use compared to, for instance, WebEx, as there is not a host who has the sole power and it's therefore easier to assign helpers. It was also suggested that recording the chat might be very beneficial in terms of rapporteuring as there usually is a lot interaction in the chat that can help summarize the discussions and important points.
- If the meetings consisted of many presentations, some chairs decided to ask the presenters to pre-record their presentations upfront the meeting to make more room for discussions during the condensed virtual meeting. They anticipated that all participants would prepare for the meeting by recording and uploading their presentation and then watching the other presentations, however not all participants committed to this task, which made it challenging to have all the planned discussions.
- One group also hoped that the online format would have allowed them to record the presentations and share them with the members that could not attend, however, this was challenging due to the editing part, which is time consuming, as well as the uploading part, as they were met with platform and privacy issues.
- Many chairs experienced difficulties dealing with time differences and some had to exclude participation from specific parts of the world, as it was impossible to accommodate all the different time zones.
- A couple of groups are planning to hold joint/overlapping meetings this year, which will undoubtedly add a layer of planning complexity for an online meeting and for chairs of both groups.
- Lastly, it was stressed that some groups' work and deliverables depend largely on practical workshops that are a significant part of the groups' meetings, it is therefore impossible to completely replace the physical meetings or workshops with a virtual setup. However, some chairs have been creative and will try to incorporate the practical part into their virtual workshops by, for instance, live streaming the microscopes, as participants usually miss seeing live samples.

It was clear that the online format has both some advantages and disadvantages and some aspects of this format work well while others present challenges. It is however worth noting that this sudden change to online meetings and online work was unexpected for everyone who had to adapt to new ways of working very quickly. It is therefore valuable to share experiences, to improve future online work.

Action: The DSTSG chair suggested that all WG chairs should, in 2021, be realistic and try to plan for digital meetings and hope for physical meetings, as it is important to be well-prepared for a virtual meeting to avoid having to face too many challenges and difficulties with this meeting setup. The likelihood that participants from all countries are going to be able to participate in-person effortlessly this year is improbable. Even if some might be able to participate physically, there will invariably be a bigger digital component to the meetings this year. It is also important to consider the rising discussion about travel activity in relation to a carbon footprint.

Specific challenges and follow-ups by the DSTSG chair

The DSTSG chair mentioned two specific challenges that he would like to follow up on with some of the chairs. One is regarding new groups that are at the end of their cycle, and might experience difficulties in finalizing their work. If those groups experience any element of delay to the deliverables, Jens Rasmussen is available to help the group and discuss this issue further with SCICOM, if needed. The other point is about new groups starting out, especially if the participants didn't have the chance to meet and collaborate before. Here the members will have to find a way where they are going to work together around a new set of topics. This can be challenging and undoubtedly require a push from the WG chair to recruit some active members within the group to help drive some parallel strands fairly early on because it can flounder really quickly, if the group doesn't get off to a good start. Jens is also offering his support here.

Communications

The ICES Communications Team is creating an article series to promote DSTSG work with 'Innovation' as the general topic. This topic was chosen, as all the DSTSG chairs are innovators within their field by securing data, developing quality methods, technology, maintaining systems etc. It's a good opportunity to engage with a wider audience by writing something in a more general language about the group.

Action: The SG chair is encouraging the WG chairs to contribute to the article by sending a short text about their group to the ICES Communications Officer, Celine Byrne.

Proposal to have recurrent DSTSG meetings throughout the year

The SG chair emphasized that DSTSG is a steering group chaired by him, but it consists of all the chairs, members and participants that are under this SG. He proposed to have recurrent meetings throughout the year to encourage dialogue and knowledge exchange between the groups. The frequencies of the meetings would mostly depend on the chairs' availability, however, there is a need to have the meetings at least twice a year ahead of the SCICOM meetings, to discuss the practical matters of expert groups. This would help the SG chair bring up any particular challenges/issues that need to be raised during the SCICOM meetings, or celebrate highlights, present what the groups have produced during the year, any new initiatives coming up, if the group needs members, etc. This proposal resulted in many positive feedbacks from the chairs who found the value in communicating with the SG, understanding the other groups and locating synergies. The DSTSG chair proposed to have one meeting in between those two practical meetings (resulting in four meetings in total). The two latter would cover knowledge synthesis, collaboration and interesting topics.

Action: Jens Rasmussen will send out a poll to a first meeting that will focus on knowledge synthesis. For the upcoming SCICOM meeting, Jens will get in touch with the chairs to hear if they have any updates that will be relevant to take up during the SCICOM meeting.

The DSTSG chair ended the meeting by thanking the WG chairs for their work during these awkward and difficult times, but he feels that there is a good commonality within the group, even though there still is some work that needs to be done, as the groups have come from different SGs.

Ecosystem Observation Steering Group (EOSG) Breakout Session

Chair: Joel Vigneau

Joel Vigneau introduced himself as the new SG chair for EOSG and gave a brief presentation on his background in data collection and fisheries advice and its relevance on the role. The meeting consisted of a tour de table introducing the chairs of each groups as well as sharing the objectives, ideas, achievements and main difficulties faced by the working groups. Ruth Anderson (ICES Editor) presented the details on the transition of the ICES survey protocols (SISP) into the TIMES publication system.

Brendan O' Hea (WGMEGS Chair) worked as survey coordinator for the Mackerel and Horse Mackerel Egg survey for the past 6 years, and is new chair of WGMEGS presented a status of the group. One of the main challenges of the group is the shift on Mackerel spawning distribution for the past 10-15 years, it is especially difficult considering the surveys are conducted every 3 years. For the last 4 survey series things have been evolving, fish distribution has moved back and forward between Northern West and Western Ireland. To tackle this problem the group does a lot of intersessional work and for the past 5-6 years has organized additional surveys to try and cover the areas the fish are spreading to. Additionally, the group produces advice for WGWIDE.

Michael Pol (WGSSSE chair) introduced WGSSSE as a new group to EOSG. The WGSSSE is a gear technology group with a special interest on the function and behavior of commercial fishing gear as well as survey gear. The main task of the group is to expand the 1996 ICES publication "Methods to measure the selectivity of mobile gears" to include static gear and create an update considering the advances on analytical methods. The group would like that the guidelines reflect the relevance of gear selectivity and how that contributes to fish selectivity. So far, the group has identified the chapters that will be added to the guidelines and assigned chapter leads.

Don Clark (WGNAEO and WGISUR Chair) introduced both groups. The objective of WGNAEO is to try and get more work done by joining two survey series (Canadian and U.S) into a single coordinated survey since both surveys have a geographical overlap in Nova Scotia and Georgia's Bank. By doing this WGNAEO aims to collect information that can be used in an integrated fashion throughout a broad area. The survey series is conducted in winter and for this reason there are challenges covering the total survey area due to difficult weather.

WGISUR is a group that is struggling to find its role. Initially the group's objective was to provide guidance on how to make use of research platforms to collect as much integrated ecosystem data as possible and to hold workshops to further those goals. The difficulty has been providing guidance that is needed by survey groups, this becomes easier when there are groups asking for specific advice. The group needs to put more effort on coming up with workshops that will help to provide direction in terms of ecosystem monitoring. Another difficulty is that the group consist mostly of bottom and beam trawl survey members and is lacking ecosystem assessment members. The chair would like feedback from ICES to try and come up with useful workshop ideas and do the networking to bring others in.

Joel Vigneau reiterated that groups such as WGISURs and WGISDAA are important groups since there is a need for strategic working groups that can steer the information and give guidance and guidelines to all the groups.

Elor Sepp and Olavi Kaljuste (WGBIFS Chairs) presented a status of the group. WGBIFS is dealing with all international surveys in the Baltic Sea, their main product is the abundance indices which are used by different assessment groups. Last year the group switched their traditional recalculation methods to a more transparent way of calculating indices using StoX software. The biggest challenge is to get data upload to ICES acoustic database, especially historic data.

Hannes Hoffle (WGIDEEPS Chair) WGIDEEPS is an international survey that treats with different stocks of the same species using very similar survey methods. Unfortunately, the surveys have not been international since the first survey, which has a negative effect on much of the stock the group can cover and how much ecosystem surveying they can do on the side. The surveys are hydro acoustic and trawl surveys. The surveys face challenges with equipment capacity and technical limitations.

Jennifer Doyle (WGNEPS Chair) presented a status of the group. WGNEPS main objective is to provide abundance indices on *Nephrops* stocks for stock assessment, each institute conducts individual surveys on stock areas using camera systems in the summer surveys. WGNEPS has a lot of achievements such as publishing a CRR, starting the transition into TIMES and taking steps into getting an international database started. The biggest challenges are getting the *Nephrops* data standardized and upload to the database and to create a user-friendly software that could be used by various institutes. The group is under a lot of pressure with the timing of the whole process. The chair has expressed the need to develop training sets for machine learning algorithms. One of the chair goals of the year is to standardize shapefiles.

Maria Manuel Angelico (WGACEGG Chair) presented a status of the group. WGACEGG reports surveys in the south and west Atlantic area. Every year the group reports between 12 and 15 surveys (acoustic and egg surveys), WGACEGG has surveys in all 4 seasons. 2 years ago, the group published a CRR that shows maps on what the group is doing and gives a good perspective of the data collected every year. The group produces indices for ecosystem variables and contributing to the MSFD, the main indices are provided to assessment working groups such as WGHANSA, WGWIDE and WGOG, the target species for assessment are: sardine, anchovy, sprat, blue whiting, herring but all pelagic species are reported. The group has proposed a team session: "Progress in pelagic surveys from estimating biomasses of small pelagic fish to monitor ecosystems" for the upcoming ICES/PICES small pelagic fish symposia in Lisbon. The idea is to evaluate what has been done in this type of surveys. Last year the group changed its name to: "Working Group on Acoustic and Egg Surveys for small pelagic fish in NE Atlantic" but kept their acronym.

Ruth Anderson (ICES Editor) presented the latest updates on the transition from SISP to TIMES. 2020 was the last year were ICES published the series of ICES survey protocols (SISP) and now the surveys protocols become part of the ICES Techniques in Marine Environmental Science (TIMES). One of the main changes is that the first time the series passes into TIMES there will be a need to submit a publication resolution for approval by SCICOM. This will be a multi annual resolution, which means once the group has asked for approval of the first resolution the subsequent updates will be approved. An important requisite is this publication has a strict hand-in schedule, updates need to be delivered at a 3-year interval and will be timed to the group's ToR. This means the hand-in of the latest update needs to be delivered on the 3rd year, otherwise the group needs to communicate with the ICES editorial office if the it needs to submit earlier or there is no update needed. The authorship will change as well, the authors of the survey protocols is no longer going to be ICES, instead it will be the actual authors or editors of the survey. It is possible to give authorship to individual chapters. With the change to TIMES the publication will get more advertising and visibility.

The meeting concluded with an agreement on a new communication channel that would allow the SG chairs to keep up to date on the steering group's activities as well as reaching out to other groups to optimize the cooperation.

Ecosystem Processes and Dynamics Steering Group (EPDSG) Breakout Session

Chair: Steven Degraer

The breakout session was attended by 16 chairs, representing 13 EPDSG Expert Groups.

EG Chairs presented their groups, goals, challenges, expectations.

SG Chair opened up brainstorming/ scoping exercise to identify objectives for the next three years. This exercise will lead to the development of an operational plan for EPDSG 2021-2023 (the aim is to have the plan ready by mid-2021).

The outlined objectives include:

- Facilitating
 - Assist improving EG impact and influence
 - Facilitate interaction among EGs (including creation of a *Mind map* to link EGs)
 - Feed-back on research priorities
- Steering and planning
 - Contribute to science and advisory objectives
 - Identify missing skills and knowledge (promote inclusiveness, maximize visibility of EG work)
 - Identify gaps and rationalize overlaps in EGs (*Business-to-Business* fair; shared membership/ products)
- Communicating
 - Identify EG science highlights and impact

It was emphasized that most these objectives are relevant to all ICES Steering Groups.

EPDSG EG Chairs are planning to hold online sessions twice a year.

Fisheries Resources Steering Group (FRSG) Breakout Session

Chair: Patrick Lynch

Meeting participants: Alan Walker (WGTRUTTA), Claire Moore (WGMIXFISH), Colm Lordan (ACOM Vice-Chair), Cristina Silva (WGBIE), Daniel Howell (AFWG), David Miller (ICES Secretariat), Ghislain Chouinard (ACOM Vice-Chair), Ivone Figueiredo (WGDEEP), Jan de Haes (ICES Secretariat), Jan-Dag Pohlman (WGEEL), Jette Fredslund (ICES Secretariat), Jurgen Batsleer (WGEF), Leire Ibaibarriaga (WGHANSA), Lise Cronne-Grigorov (ICES Secretariat), Lotte Worsøe Clausen (ICES Secretariat), Mark Dickey-Collas (ACOM Chair), Mathieu Lundy (WGCSE), Michala Ovens (ICES Secretariat), Mikaela Bergenius (WGBFAS), Pascal Lorange (WGEF), Raphaël Girardin (WGNSSK), Tanja Miethe (WGNSSK)

Diversity among FRSG and EGs

The discussion on Gender and inclusivity in ICES that had started in WGCHAIRS continued in the FRSG meeting concentrating on diversity in FRSG and the FRSG expert groups

The concept of using Chair-invited members was discussed as a way for EG Chairs to increase diversity and inclusion in their groups.

Last year had shown an increased female participation in the online meetings, which had also made it possible to share work tasks to a larger extent. The online meetings had provided the forum for experts that previously had not been able to travel to attend the meeting.

It was emphasized though that the online platform had not led to more participation in all groups. And that virtual meetings also made it more difficult to integrate new experts in group.

Online meetings had provided greater flexibility but there was no control of what is going on in the background. It was important not to treat online meetings as a physical meeting. The Chair would have to take more the role as school teacher and give jobs to people that did not have any. That would make it easier for new people to get active and interact.

It was suggested that diversity should be a repeated agenda item at WGCHAIRS meetings as a reminder and that FRSG Chair should suggest to ICES Training Group to provide diversity training.

It was felt that ICES should take a leading role in diversity matters and set goals. It would be helpful for Experts to have such goals they could present to their own institute. It was suggested that Mathieu Lundy should approach the ICES Secretariat about this.

Recommendations from last year's meeting

Most recommendations from last year had been related to capacity: EG participation, expertise, issues with data limited stocks.

It was discussed to which extent meeting online had helped with bringing in more expertise and provided better quality.

The experience had been that there was no big difference between physical and online meeting in relation to participation as there is still also lack of experts in the national institutes. And it was expected that the real test of working online would be this year; the Chair will have a greater job to motivate people, and it will be more important to give all participants tasks to make people feel included.

More training was seen to be important, stock assessment science continues to advance and it is essential that more people understand the models. Could stock assessment teams be helpful for addressing issues related to expertise?

Online training is cheaper for the institutes; hope was therefore expressed that it will continue as it is an option for more to attend. Also, workshops like WKTADSA are highly effective and more workshops like these are needed.

Recommendation from FRSG meeting was to get the methods group involved.

The meeting closed with a charge to one-day focus on identifying strategic directions for ICES related to stock assessments.

Ongoing sense of advice process under COVID pressures, and concerns heading into the 2021 season

There was an appreciation for last year's abbreviated advice sheets; this had been even more beneficial in the ADGs but as it was explained in WGCHAIRS the advice will in 2021 no longer be abbreviated but other changes will happen to the content of the advice sheet and ACOM will ensure that guidelines are adhered to. An extra meeting on 11 February for assessment working groups will cover in more detail the changes to advice sheets for 2021, and the guidance and template to report solutions used by expert groups to deal with COVID related data issues.

The future of mixed fisheries and the difficulties faced by the experts were discussed, there was a wish that the methods used in the future will be brought into TAF and the process be more automated. There was concern about the mixed fisheries process in 2021 and a feeling in

WGMIXFISH of lack of control. It was agreed that the ACOM Leadership will be in close contact with the experts during the year.

What is your appetite for taking on a more strategic role?

Due to Covid-19 this had been put on hold. The goal is to have an open communication with ACOM, SCICOM, Secretariat. The key output from the FRSG meetings is knowledge exchange.

It was underlined that it is important to find a way to look forward, to find a mechanism to discuss future needs.

The meeting did not leave time for the three last agenda items, which will be postponed for the next FRSG meeting:

- Can FRSG work more effectively to better meet EG needs?
- What is an optimum level of communication and what communication processes and ongoing topics are most helpful?
- What are our highest priority strategic directions and how should we promote and advance these priorities? Some initial thoughts (supporting EBFM; forecasting improvements; modelling advancements - multispp, spatially explicit, model ensembles; software development process)...(ASC sessions, workshops, joint projects, co-ordination with more SCICOM-oriented groups, etc.)

Human Activities, Pressures and Impacts Steering Group (HAPISG) Breakout Session

Chair: Sarah Bailey

Participants: Roland Cormier WGCEAM, Claire Mason WGMS, Bryony Caswell WGHIST, Julian Burgos WGMHM, Keith Cooper WGEXT, Koen Parmentier MCWG, Cynthia McKenzie WGITMO, Olivier Thebaud WGECON, Gudjon Sigurdsson WGBYC, Ida-Maja Hassellöv WGSHP, Jan Vanaverbeke WGMRED, Juan Bellas WGBEC, Antje Gimpel WGOWDF, Camilla Sguotti WGHIST, Gert Van Hoey WGFBIT, Mark Dickey-Collas (ACOM Chair), Julie Kellner (Science PO), Roi Martinez WGSFD

Agenda

- Contributions to Ecosystem Overviews (EOs)
- Inclusivity and equity, including early career scientists (ECS)
- Open forum – questions and sharing tips between chairs
- Feedback – what do you want to see at future meetings (WGCHAIRS / SG)
- SG meeting schedule and seminar series

Opening of meeting:

Steering group chair explained her role as steering group (SG) chair: support expert group (EG) chairs, facilitate communication and interaction across EGs within the Steering Group (SG) and across SGs, and to promote the science of the steering group.

Ecosystem overviews (EOs):

HAPISG Chair explained the EOs and their content, and that generally there is an IEA EG that leads the drafting of the EOs as one of their ToR, but that many other EGs contribute information to these. She relayed that there is opportunity for the HAPISG working groups to contribute to parts of the EOs, and that additional support for production of EOs would be welcomed (sharing the workload). Would like to hear if HAPISG EGs would like to be involved.

WGITMO – has contributed quite a bit, ITMO chair delegates working group participants (regional experts) to work on the section and contribute to the IEA coordinating group. Overall has had sufficient interaction and advanced notice. Noted that WGHABD would like to contribute as well.

WGBEC – EG is aware of the ecosystem overviews, there is a Term of Reference in their working group resolution, their group is waiting for initiative from outside WGBEC to be in contact, this group is ready to support the IEA groups.

WGBRED – thinks EG expertise is relevant, but needs outside initiative

WGMS – hasn't heard of the EOs before WGCHAIRS 2021 – will discuss with the EG, likely could contribute, needs some direction, etc.

WGFBIT – fisheries impact on the benthic ecosystem, asked to put the maps towards the EOs, but EG is concerned about the maturity of the data for inclusion in advice sheets, can be difficult to provide contributions where the results are still preliminary

WGECON – has been contacted through the resolution process (as well as WGSOCIAL) but this was not a great way to make contact, would be good to have more advance notice and more direction on how to contribute, have been working on how these EGs could contribute and to include in ToRs for their groups, participated in WKCONSERVE and plan to have some contribution to EOs at the end of their current term

WGHIST – has heard about the EOs from Henn Ojaveer, some regions have more historic content than others, they want more information on how they can contribute

WGMHM – mapping group, they would like to see how can they contribute directly

Julie Kellner, PO, and Sarah Bailey, SG chair, talked about the process of contributing by updating existing sections and briefly also on how new products can be proposed by groups to be included. It was noted that data needs to be available to support the development of new sections for all/most regions.

The ACOM chair noted that the advice requestors also outline their interests to ICES on what they would like to see in these ecosystem overviews and that the decision on new sections is not completely science (bottom-up) driven.

Action: HAPISG Chair to meet with IEASG Chair to make a plan for facilitating contributions to EOs by HAPI EGs. This will include a plan for better communication on timelines and regions being updated as well as more specific direction about how to make contributions (updates and proposing new sections)

Inclusivity:

HAPISG Chair: Being inclusive is making sure to include people, to be consider, to be active, think about participant lists and representation by not only region, but by gender, age group, etc. Would like feedback on tips/challenges associated with inclusivity:

- Advantage of holding meetings in different locations is one can include local ECS in EG meeting and networking, and can encourage their participation and membership in future years
- Travel funding, especially for international meetings, is an issue for all, reinforces value of having mix of physical meetings and virtual meetings, and rotation of location
- Need to figure out how to take advantage of virtual meetings: broadening participation by ECS and facilitating diversity/inclusivity by inviting people from different locations to virtual meetings where travel is not an issue

- Letting/inviting ECS to present something at EG meetings is a good way to enable participation (especially if their research is relevant to ToR)
- Always aiming to produce peer-reviewed papers as deliverables for EG ToR – opportunity for ECS to get involved/lead collaborative or review papers (publications are generally a good way to improve active participation within EGs)
- Harder to develop interaction with new participants when there is an existing group
- Through rotations of EG meeting location, can ask local EG members to encourage their colleagues and students to give a talk at the meeting
- Invite experts to help with ToR where expertise is lacking, especially students
- EGs also benefit from more diverse participation through fresh ideas, new membership, guest speakers, etc.

Challenge to EG Chairs:

- Actively consider ways that you can work at making your meetings more inclusive (review participation for equity by different regions, genders, ages, etc.)
- Think about assignment of roles equitably (rapporteurs, ToR leads, etc.)
- Think about developing leaders and succession planning within your EG
- Distribute opportunities in a strategic way (e.g. the Chair does not always have to be the one to represent / give presentations outside the EG)
- Use your influence as chair to improve equity and inclusion, through chair-invited members

Open forum discussion (Challenges/Tips for Online Meetings):

- Meeting online is difficult with different time zones and meetings with more than one EG
- Agreement that fully online works better than blended
- Timing is important – sessions should not be too long, take sufficient breaks, lots of breakout groups
- WGECON found online quite successful, with lots of small group interaction, but it took a lot of planning (see agenda as example)
- Online can be effective but not as nice as physical meeting
- helpful to have several people running the meeting and relaying what is expected of the participants during the week
- Specific objectives and planned outputs for each of the sessions
- Have 'working time' not only 'lecture time' (subgroups)
- There is capability within ICES to prerecord lectures and post them in advance so that the time spent together can be for interactive discussion
- Have 'open' slots for emerging topics / coffee talk – enables more social bonding
- Time zone challenges – rotate the times each day so that the challenging times are distributed more evenly
- working in afternoon European time works well if you have North American contributors
- 3 hours is a comfortable max per session/day, especially for Chairs
- Limit presentations to those that are clearly aligned with ToR and objectives
- Make use of ICES technical support re: WebEx, SharePoint – avoid problems with using many different (institutional) software and permissions
- Short sessions, tight agenda, clear objectives

- Schedule a pub night for social discussions and team building
- Divide into small groups for specific tasks – have plenary sessions at beginning and end
- Have all the links for different meeting 'rooms' in the agenda
- ask ICES for help setting up WebEx and/or Teams – Maria will happily set up sessions but please be specific with needs and ask well in advance
- Document sharing and chatting is very easy through Teams (easier than SharePoint), but retention time may be limiting
- reminder that SharePoint should be used as the official storage location for files – establish a process to copy relevant material from chats to SharePoint/meeting notes after each session (assign someone to do this)
- WebEx can export chat

Feedback on WGCHAIRS / SG meetings:

- More breakout rooms / small group discussion for interaction
- Less top-down operational content - guest talk on Wed was very interesting
- breakout sessions to facilitate more interactions and collaborations between EGs, for example, regarding contributions to EOs

Planning next steering group meeting

- Support to continue meeting twice per year (generally associated with ASC and WGCHAIRS in fall/winter)
- Agenda items to be solicited prior to next meeting
- HAPISG seminar series (not discussed - postponed for next meeting)

Proposal from the SO: HAPISG Theme Session proposal for ASC 2022?

- To foster connections that we don't see currently across EGs
- Provides a relevant session for any HAPI EGs within the program
- Broad support to submit proposal
- Proposed Chairs: Jan Vanaverbeke, Julian Burgos, Bryony Caswell
- Role of Session Chairs: submit session proposal, evaluate abstracts, plan order of speakers and Chair the session itself during ASC
- [Week Sept 12, 2022 to be held Dublin]

Action: HAPISG Chair to coordinate theme session proposal submission in summer 2021

General announcement

From Science PO: Decadal symposium will include an ecosystem and human dimensions theme session, we encourage HAPI groups to participate and contribute abstracts. Note that the date of the symposium is moving into 2022, to be announced in the next few weeks.

<https://www.ices.dk/events/symposia/Pages/4thdecadalvariability.aspx>

Integrated Ecosystem Assessments Steering Group (IEASG) Breakout Session

Chair: Debbi Pedreschi

Welcome from Debbi and welcome to 2 new Chairs in the Steering Group with short presentation.

Steering group Communication

Regular quarterly meetings during the year will be planned – WGCHAIRS, May, ASC and Nov/Dec. Timing of Nov/Dec meeting should try to tie in with Henn Ojaveer for report back from ADGECO in October. Set May meeting data ASAP, avoiding WG clashes.

ASC meeting should have remote option, this year and into future, to at least enable listening.

It was requested if the Chairs could get an overview of the meetings for 2021 for IEASG.

Action: (Completed) Julie KH will post an overview of the IEASG groups meetings planned for 2021 in the “IEASG SharePoint page”

Action: It was requested to get a better overview of ADGs and advisory work related to EO updates (ADGECO dates, deadlines for EO submissions (September), etc.). IEASG Chair, Henn Ojaveer and Inigo Martinez should discuss this further.

IEASG SharePoint could be utilised more for communication within the Steering Group. If anyone has suggestions please contact Debbi, Julie KH and Julie K.

Steering group knowledge exchange

The group was asked what they would like to hear about and if this would be interesting to do so moving forward.

Options discussed included showing off our work to other groups, a mutual exchange, or hearing from other groups. All options are desirable at different times.

- Show and tell of IEA groups to ourselves to ‘catch up’ especially as we have a number of new groups recently. The presentations could be shown more widely, and a more detailed within IEASG discussion session could be held as a follow up.
- Hearing from SIHD and related groups (e.g. WGSOCIAL, WGECON, WGBESEO, WGMARS)
- Hearing from other SGs such as HAPI and EOSG – both of which have expressed an interest in collaborating further

Deadline for specific suggestions given as Feb 5th, after which a doodle will be circulated to choose an option, and set dates

Knowledge sharing on what the IEA groups are doing would also be improved by sharing this on the SharePoint. This can take the form of a Spreadsheet detailing what elements each group is doing (e.g. Risk assessment, conceptual modelling, ITA, foodweb modelling, status assessments, indicator/warning signal development, etc.), and/or single page outlines of methods/approaches with links to the full report to know more. This will help to identify where future harmonisation can occur, or where methods workshops may be useful/necessary.

Integration of human dimensions still needs a clear pathway forward. A show and tell may facilitate a better assessment of where we are at in each of the IEAs. A WKCONSERVE follow-up workshop may also be considered. Social scientists are willing to engage, but a clear pathway on how to contribute would greatly aid progress.

Action: Send doodle after Feb 5th.

Action: A folder has been set up on SharePoint for groups to contribute. Develop spreadsheet template and send out email about contributing.

Ecosystem Overviews

The guidelines for EOs have been updated for all sections and awaiting final approval from ACOM.

For new methods to be adopted we need method training. IEASG Chair and Gerjan Piet (TBC) will be in charge of setting this up and running the training. It will be set up as a web meeting which will be recorded and shared with the IEASG community following. This will happen as soon as the methods are accepted – hopefully in March 2021. A doodle will be sent out after guidelines are approved.

ACOM/SCICOM EBM Strategy subgroup

We have an ACOM/SCICOM EBM strategy subgroup working on 3 ToR which are quite broad:

5. Progresses the implementation of EBM evidence into ICES advice
6. Prioritises the development of the evidence basis for EBM within ICES
7. Facilitates and improve the integration of EBM across ICES

We are hoping to develop an EBM forum that could reach further than our steering group.

This requires a lot of resources and active engagement from a community, which find this relevant and useful. Is there a need and a want to have this?

They set out to develop a strategy. Trying to setup a common understanding of what EBM is – moving from a focus on fisheries to including other sectors, start looking at interacting pressures and cumulative effects.

It could help to share knowledge on what is being done already and in progress. A one-stop-shop/platform for all EBM related knowledge and discussion?

There is support for a centralised EO/EBM platform, but not for an interactive forum which would be more resource intensive and possibly not overly useful. Instead, we intend to continue to working with the static system we have and improve it e.g. better use of EO and IEASG SharePoint, quarterly meetings, emailing. A forum may be a consideration for the future.

There was general support and no objections to the overall indicator approach.

Suggestion to involve WGBESEO in the Strategy Subgroup – Paulina Ramirez-Monsalve offered direct support.

Action: IEASG Chair to revert to EBM subgroup with feedback.

AOB

WGQUALITY is a new working group, which is looking for members from the IEA side.

Common Conceptual Mapping is a coming workshop in the fall – to be approved.

WGBESEO awareness. We are trying to make a useful method for IEA groups to use in the future to identify e.g. management objectives.

Participants

Alan Haynie; Anatoly Filin; Andrew Kenny; David Goldsborough; Debbi Pedreschi; Henn Oja-veer; Martine van der Heuvel-Greve; Leyre Goti; Elizabeth Logerwell; Marcos Llope; Maria Cristina Mangano; Mark Dickey-Collas (partly); Erik Olsen; Paulina Ramirez Monsalve; Benjamin Planque; Sean Lucey; Patricia Clay; Per Arneberg; and from ICES Secretariat: Inigo Martinez; Julie Krogh Hallin; Eirini Glyki

Annex 3: Action items

Section	Action	Deadline	Responsible
Section 3 Guidelines for ICES Groups	Suggestion to include a “Frequently Asked Questions” section for new chairs, this will be very helpful because most new chairs do not know the ICES structure and how they fit in this structure.	September 2021	SCICOM Chair, Secretariat
Section 14 Executive summaries	It was suggested to rephrase “recommendations for other expert groups” to “specific recommendations to individual expert groups” in the Guidelines for ICES Groups, under “Executive summaries should not include”, to clarify that general overarching recommendations to expert groups can be included in the executive summaries and only specific recommendations to individual expert groups should be left out. The Secretariat will also provide an example that will be included in the Guidelines for ICES Groups, of an executive summary from a report focusing on stock assessment, as it can be difficult and challenging to keep such a summary short, especially if all stocks are outlined.	September 2021	SCICOM and ACOM Chairs, Secretariat
Section 26 Science highlights, dissemination and communications	Action: Social media guidelines should be created and used by ICES community in order to avoid any violation of copyrights, GDPR matters, or privacy.	September	ICES Communications