

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

28–30 January 2020
ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen, Denmark



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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 2020 meeting report described advice-related, science-related and cross-cutting issues. Advice topics that are addressed include the perspectives of expert group chairs, the Advisory Committee leadership and ICES Secretariat on the future and presentation of ICES advice, progress with embedding quality assurance in the advisory process, and expertise needed in expert groups supporting advice. Science topics that are addressed included highlighting and disseminating science outputs from expert groups, development of web texts for expert groups, developing theme and network sessions for ICES Annual Science Conference and opportunities for science input to the development of ecosystem and fisheries overviews through a pipeline process. Cross-cutting topics included chairs' perspectives on what was working well and not so well in the ICES system, implementation of ICES Science and Advisory Plans and the roles of expert groups, the future development of the "Guidelines for ICES groups", appropriate publication channels for ICES science and revitalising the resolutions process. In breakout groups, expert group chairs addressed mentoring and training for chairs of expert groups and recruiting new participants, as well as recognising and rewarding the role of expert group chairs. Key actions resulting from chairs' insights are to establish a formal training day for expert group chairs, likely alongside future WGCHAIRS meetings. All existing and incoming expert group chairs will be invited to participate in training activities.

1 Opening and welcome for chairs of expert groups contributing to advice

The ACOM and SCICOM Chairs welcomed participants. The ACOM Chair went through the agenda pointing out the first day of WGCHAIRS would be an advice-oriented day. He encouraged openness, frankness but to the point discussion.

2 Review of expert group activities in 2019

2.1 Review

A summary of key aspects of the ICES advisory process and progress in 2019 was presented.

Drafting of the advice request with clients is an important activity of which few people are aware. The Secretariat works with clients to translate management questions into relevant scientific questions that can be answered by the ICES community and on a timeline that is reasonable for experts and relevant for clients. The Secretariat will contact relevant chairs while formulating a request and we will work together throughout the process.

Quality assurance is an area for which ICES is often criticized. While some criticism is warranted (errors are rare, but they do happen; two percent of ICES advice had substantial errors that changed the headline advice in 2019), ICES is actually a global leader in quality assurance. It is important to note that many requirements that may feel burdensome to experts and chairs are actually vital components of ICES quality assurance. ICES works under the framework of several international agreements that uphold the principles of using the best available science and quality assurance. ICES works in several ways to uphold these principles in our work: peer review in the advice production via review groups, through the ADGs and ACOM review; uploading assessments in the ICES Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF); provision of data via the ICES data calls; uploading assessment outputs in SAG and stock information in SiD. These activities and tools are vital to ICES quality assurance.

Various tools are improving the consistency and transparency of advice work:

- **Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF)** is a new tool that a lot of people are reluctant to use; it is important and it is world-leading. The Secretariat is supporting TAF and working with expert groups (see agenda item 3).
- **Stock Assessment Graphs (SAG) and the Stock Information Database (SiD)** are popular tools and available for and used by the global community.
- **VME portal** is world-leading as well as our data policy. Many of these tools may seem like a hindrance in the moment, but the quality of our network and the ICES quality control will benefit us.

ICES is also advancing on new activities. The Regional Database & Estimation System (RDBES) is coming online soon. There is some activity starting on Arctic advice. Going forward, the application of MSY advice to category 3 and 4 stocks is being explored.

2.2 Round table

Chairs were invited to introduce themselves and share comments on their experiences with the meeting. Several common themes emerged, including:

- (1) challenges continue with quality assurance of data and retrospective bias in the assessments, but strides have been made with the new ICES quality assurance tools of TAF, SiD and SAG;
- (2) the dynamic nature of the advice and the challenges this poses in terms of conducting assessments, managing benchmarks, and communicating the advice;
- (3) new science and advisory activities in the North-western Atlantic, social sciences, off-shore energy development, and fisheries, Integrated Ecosystem Assessments, mixed fisheries, ecosystem overviews, climate impacts, and
- (4) resourcing remains a challenge for stock assessments and advice.

- (5) It was acknowledged that ICES is making progress in that the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment groups see a role for themselves in drafting advice. The next challenge is to extend the IEA's advice drafting role to the Fisheries Overviews.

3 Quality control and TAF

Quality of the advice is a high priority for ICES, as well as for recipients and stakeholders. Quality assurance encompasses the entire process from data collection to publication of advice. There is an ongoing effort to enhance existing quality control and assurance processes to form an end-to-end quality assurance framework (QAF) to encompass best practice in data management, data integration, and translation into advice. Quality assurance should meet international standards, adhere to FAIR principles, and include independent peer review for all areas of advice.

Tasks related to this include:

- Map out QAF process flows, critical control points, feedback loops in the advisory system, and begin to address identified critical control points.
- Seek international quality accreditation for the ICES advisory system.
- Develop a comprehensive quality management system for advice, including implementing RDBES, TAF, etc.
- Where possible, ensure that all advice products are based on data that adhere to the FAIR principles.
- Application and ongoing development of the benchmark system, to ensure the advice is fit for the evolving advisory demands.

Governance groups have been formed to cover the planning, oversight and control of data management, data flows, and use of data. These governance groups oversee VMS, DATRAS, RDBES, SmartDots, Acoustic, TAF, and all have ties to the Data and Information Group (DIG).

TAF serves as an open resource to fully document ICES stock assessments. It was initiated in 2016, launched end of 2018, with significant progress in 2019. Two training workshops were held in 2019, covering the Celtic Sea and North Sea areas, and further training workshops are scheduled in the first quarter of 2020 for the Bay of Biscay and Baltic areas. TAF currently has 50 stocks fully entered and 41 partially entered, with the goal of all stocks in TAF by 2021/2022. TAF is useful for the quality control/assurance of both data (survey indices) and assessment code.

The Workshop on catch forecasts from biased assessments (WKFORBIAS) was held in Woods Hole to examine retrospective bias in assessments. The focus was to document the extent and magnitude of bias in ICES assessments, categorize the potential causes, develop criteria, investigate the performance of Mohn's rho, and to describe methods to correct population metrics. The draft conclusion of the workshop is that over 20% of category 1-2 stocks suffer from retrospective patterns, and that Mohn's rho is useful to identify those stocks, along with other diagnostics and analyses. No clear breakthrough was made on a general solution to retrospective patterns, but progress was made towards developing a check list and decision tree approach. Much work remains to be done.

Actions for 2020 related to retrospective bias:

Action: Continue to calculate Mohn's rho in category 1 and 2 assessments as a measure of quality.

Action: EG reports should contain a figure of the confidence bounds of SSB for the current assessment and the retrospective peels.

Action: The WKFORBIAS decision tree should be used to ensure more consistency in how advice is provided.

Action: Devise an approach to follow up on other WKFORBIAS recommendations, potentially an expert group.

In summary, there is a demand for increased focus on QC and QA for improving the quality of ICES advice, and a need to complete end-to-end QA framework for advice covering all steps in the process. Important developments have been made in recent years, particularly on QC of data. The challenge is to bring all the relevant pieces into a cohesive QA framework.

4 What is the future for ICES advice?

ACOM leadership introduced the session looking at the future of ICES advice. It was explained that whilst ICES advises on fish and fisheries in the classic sense, it is also giving advice now on species and habitat biodiversity. ICES is increasingly being asked by requesters of advice that is consistent across these fields, and in a changing world, fisheries and conservation objectives are beginning to converge.

ICES now has a commitment to work with stakeholders, and to inform requesters about stakeholder workshops. Whilst there is a drive to make advice such as the Ecosystem Overviews more quantitative, other types of knowledge must be included as well, such as fishers perceptions and indigenous people's knowledge. The Working Group on SOCIAL indicators (WGSOCIAL) was put forward as an example of different knowledge bases working together, in this case anthropologists working with stories and sociologists working with data.

WGCHAIRS went into sub-groups to discuss how ICES can evolve in the coming years, and if it will be necessary to leave the standard PDF format advice sheet behind. The subgroups reported back:

Group 1 felt that the advice sheets had been pared down too much in recent years, with information moved to different places, such as the overviews. They were concerned that since the mixed fisheries advice had been removed from the single stock advice sheets there was nothing in these sheets referring to mixed fisheries, and asked that in future there was a short summary of the information and a link to the overviews in the single stock advice.

The group wanted more stakeholder input outside of the benchmarks, feeling that the anecdotal information they supplied could be very useful as a "sanity check" to the assessment model when things were behaving differently to expectations. For instance, this information can help with making intermediate year assumptions.

The group wanted to include all sources of mortality in assessments, such as recreational mortality. They highlighted the work of the Workshop on an Ecosystem-based Approach to Fishery Management for the Irish Sea (WKIRISH) and their attempt to include an ecosystem based indicator in the advice sheets that would work within the F_{MSY} ranges. They also asked to see bycatch reported in the advice sheets, even if it was more fully described elsewhere. They also wanted to see the Issues for Advice section used to give a bigger- picture description of the fishery.

The group did not feel that leaving the current PDF advice behind altogether was sensible as the stakeholders now know how to interpret the advice sheets, and it also serves as record of previous advice. However, they encouraged the development of interactive presentations to accompany the advice.

Group 2 commented that while the requesters of advice did not want social and economic advice, this did not seem to be in-line with the integrated approach on providing fisheries advice. ADGs often removed this sort of integrated information from the advice sheets. The group highlighted the lack of expertise in this area and a need to interact more with the relevant experts. The group had discussed the idea of trade-offs in the case of the North Sea mixed fisheries, for example, and highlighted the work on trade-offs already being undertaken in other areas such as ballast water treatment or mitigation management.

The group felt that the advice should cover more spatial aspects if there was going to be a move towards integrated ecosystem advice, but accepted this would need explicit spatial models. As such the "toolbox" used in traditional assessment working groups would need to be increased,

but the group acknowledged that these groups were already overstretched. The importance of spatial models in relation to understanding the effects of climate change were also highlighted.

The group stressed the role of the special requests and viewpoints to cover areas of work not being addressed in the current advice.

Regarding the issue of engagement in the advice process, the group thought that this would increase in coming years, with more information coming from the fishing industry, especially for data-limited stocks. Higher resolution catch-data was also expected to be coming online from industry, and data from recreational fisheries. The need to be able to bring these into the assessment process was emphasized.

The group were happy to leave the traditional advice sheet behind, feeling that an online version would allow more interaction and easier sharing, as well as being easier to version control.

Group 3 focused on the issue of moving from the standard PDF advice to something more interactive. They supported the move, provided the traditional sheets were not abandoned altogether. They discussed ways to link it with TAF as a way to further quality assure the process. The group thought becoming more transparent regarding the transition between data and assessment outputs would be beneficial. They also discussed the possibility of linking directly to working documents from the advice sheet.

The group then discussed how to convey uncertainty in the advice sheets, and crucial types of evidence that should be in there such as total removals and recreational fisheries data.

Group 4 highlighted the current differences between ecoregions in the way we provide advice, and stressed the need to provide information from new emerging fields in the advice, such as genomics. The group felt there was a need to start providing information at difference scales, and to consider better the current work on long-term projections of climate change, and how we would use this to make short term predictions on fish populations. Like group 2, they discussed the need to consider trade-offs, for example between fuel prices and fishing time.

The group pointed to the current lack of stakeholder engagement in many of ICES processes, and hoped that in future there would be more formalized participation from industry in working groups, with the incorporation of fisher's data such as acoustics, catch, and environmental information.

Regarding the PDF, the group thought that in the short-term it should stay as the traditional advice sheet, but that there should be a plan to start thinking about the move to something new, that would include dialogue with the advice requesters concerning what they want to see. They also considered what the fishing industry might like to see in a more interactive advice sheet, such as a weeklong projection of temperature that might allow them to avoid bycatch.

Group 5 considered whether fisheries and conservation aims were beginning to converge, and if they were, how this would be best presented, for instance in the overviews. The group felt that there should be an agreement over what types of environmental data to include in the advice, and that this should be something that is discussed at the benchmark where there should be more time, than at the assessment working group.

In plenary, the ACOM leadership welcomed the comments and insights and addressed some of the issues. The chair commented that when talking about fisheries and conservation objectives, it was important to discuss the workload issue. The benchmark process should take time for these issues, using the case of WKIRISH as a good example. This work is now being continued in the Benchmark Workshop on Celtic Sea Stocks (WK Celtic) and the Benchmark Workshop for Flatfish stocks in the North Sea and Celtic Sea (WK FlatNSCS).

Moving to a more dynamic advice was not an easy task. There was going to need to be a lot of thought on how to structure a web-based advice so that there is not too much information, but nor is it too coarse. Ideally it will allow the user to peel back the levels of the advice as they wish.

ACOM were still struggling on how best to address stakeholder engagement, but pointed to the many upcoming workshops that would include industry participation. The chair stated that if there was an issue with stakeholders at a meeting, the chairs should come to the secretariat or ACOM leadership to discuss the issue.

5 Technical guidelines, and working with ACOM

The ICES Technical Guidelines were presented and WGCHAIRS were shown where to find the guidelines on the website, and informed about guidelines which are still being developed. A full list was presented in Doc 5.

Technical Guidelines are developed by experts within the ICES community (often through workshops), often in collaboration with ACOM. ACOM has the final verdict and conducts the peer review. The Secretariat assists in the use and uptake of the guidelines and knows which guidelines to use when and how to locate them.

The Technical Guidelines should be perceived as guidelines, not rules. Many may feel very prescriptive, but what is important is that any deviations from guidelines are well explained and reviewers concur with them. The ICES advisory process is under pressure to become a quality assured process, but the system is a dynamic one. As such, many of the guidelines are living documents constantly being developed to meet the needs of the groups, ADGs etc.

Chairs were urged to provide feedback whenever something is unclear in the guidelines. The aim is to keep improving and developing the guidelines.

ACOM leadership pointed out that updated guidelines for the application of the PA buffer and the advice rule will be presented to chairs after the ACOM meeting in March. The aim is more consistency across stocks and ecoregions.

The discussion that followed brought up various topics:

- Rounding rules as well as the SAG template should be automated. At the moment, it can still be a very manual task to do these two steps.
- Guidance on the use of BMS landings is lacking and needed.
- A general presentation of the ICES advisory process, the role of ACOM etc. should perhaps be presented at the beginning of an expert group meeting. It was highlighted that The Introduction to Advice is a great document to present to newcomers. It could perhaps be uploaded to each expert group's SharePoint site.
- Frustration about the difficulty of finding the technical guidelines on the ICES website. It can also cause confusion when two versions of a guideline is available (for instance, the ecoregion overviews guidelines from 2016 and from 2018).
- The format of the guidelines was touched upon, mentioning that pdf-format may not be the best way to present guidelines and do not advocate brevity.
- The Guidance for preparing single-stock advice could be improved. It would perhaps help to have the document split into 3 separate guidance documents – one for each set of data categories (cat 1-2, cat 3-4 and cat 5-6).

Action: 3 slides of Advice process for expert groups to be rolled out

Action: ACOM to consider reviewing the introduction to the advice

6 Have we made progress on issues raised last year?

ACOM leadership explored whether ICES had made progress on the issues raised by WGCHAIRS last year. The list of issues from 2019 was: participation, contribution and engagement, preparation in advance, finding and training new chairs, data issues, lack of expertise, unclear results of a benchmark, workload, uneven language capabilities, unfinished work carried into the ADG and difficult linkage between science groups and assessment groups.

Some of these issues have been grouped in general topics and are in the agenda for this meeting of WGCHAIRS 2020.

The WGCHAIRS were asked to provide suggestions, comments and/or previous experiences. This was the feedback received:

- There is ambiguity in the role of Chair and more guidance on the chair's role would be needed.
- It can be very useful to learn from the old traditions in the EG.
- The formation of subgroups have been very useful to improve participation and contribution by EG members.
- Assigning a "hero" for every ToR has ensured good subgroup work and helped with publication.

Further feedback included:

Participants who do not contribute to an expert group can hinder the attendance of other experts and affect the quality of the work. However, other chairs were on the opinion that participation without contribution is not necessarily a bad thing. Participation ensures that the national institutes are updated with the outcomes of the EG work.

SCICOM chair noted that there is some degree of mentorship in the EG and some training is needed before a participant can fully contribute.

7 Audit of incorporating variability of productivity in advice

Following positive feedback from four assessment working groups that trialled a survey of productivity changes into fishing opportunities advice in 2019, ACOM decided to roll out the survey to all ICES stock assessment expert groups in 2020. This agenda item was to present information about this survey to the chairs and to respond to any questions they had.

The aim of the survey, which follows the [Marshall et al. \(2019\)](#) approach, is to see how ICES is currently accounting for changes in ecosystem productivity in its fisheries advice and to identify where improvements are needed or could be implemented. Stock assessment EGs will be provided with a template scoresheet to fill in for all the stocks in their group. The template considers various parts of the assessment and advice process (e.g. data, assessment model, forecast, MSE etc.). General information is important, rather than full details for all elements included.

WGCHAIRS were asked for any comments about the task and template. Questions asked included who would present it and when (depends on the location of the meeting, but Secretariat POs will assist), what information to consider (everything in the whole report and advice) and whether it should be applied for Category 3-6 stocks (yes, may take more time to consider).

This process will ultimately become part of the benchmark process since when methods change, the audit would (potentially) change too. This information could also be used in the context of EOs when these are discussed.

Note added June 2020: Unfortunately due to the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, this initiative was de-prioritised and only some expert groups carried out the audit in 2020.

8 How has the ICES Code of Conduct been working?

ACOM leadership introduced ICES Code of Conduct (CoC) and the “ICES meeting etiquette”. The CoC, which has been in place for 14 months, applies to all ICES EGs except for workshops aiming at engaging stakeholders. The EGs should decide whether they can operate even if someone raises a conflict of interest but if the group can’t agree on that they should contact the ICES Secretariat or ACOM leadership. The WG chair should also indicate instances when the etiquette not being followed.

WGCHAIRS raised the following issues:

In some EGs the Code of Conduct had not been introduced properly and it would be helpful to include it in the SharePoint site of all EGs and to send it to EG members in advance of their meeting so they are aware before the meeting starts. One Chair asked whether the ICES Secretariat can present this Code of Conduct along with their usual introductory talk. It was explained to WGCHAIRS, that it was the Chairs responsibility to introduce the Code of Conduct and that the document has been already included in SharePoint sites for all EGs.

In some countries there are documents that need to be signed before starting any work. Can something similar be done for ICES EGs? It was explained that ICES Council wanted a “soft touch approach” and to evaluate it after 3 years. If after this test period the implementation is not successful then a stronger touch could be adopted.

The scientists that work for industry have to abide by the Code of Conduct. However, there have been cases when it is not the actual expert that self-declares conflict of interest but others in the EG perceive that someone else has a potential conflict of interest (e.g. someone employed by industry). It was also noted that some NGOs want to see a stricter Code of Conduct in ICES. ACOM leadership clarified that individuals take part in ICES EGs because of their expertise and not because of their employers.

One chair pointed out that he aims at getting funds from industry to support a Workshop and whether this would be viewed as a Conflict of Interest. ACOM leadership clarified that since it will be advertised that funds come from industry then it will all be transparent.

It was noted that new EG members can be intimidated sometimes by very opinionated members of the group and the EG chair should be able to help these new participants. It was stressed that the ICES meeting etiquette should always be observed.

9 Challenges for the fisheries advice framework

Some projects have challenged the ICES MSY framework including the precautionary approach in terms of being overly precautionary and not taking density dependence into account. As indicated in the new Advisory Plan, ICES welcomes all new developments and looks to increase innovation in our advice and the MSY outcomes have been thoroughly reviewed and discussed by ACOM Leadership. To allow full consideration by ICES, such projects should provide clear documentation of methods and robust peer review of the methods and the results. As ICES sees quality control and clarity of methods as key to advancing its advice, the descriptions of methods and the peer review of projects needs strengthening before the results can be considered by ICES. An ICES workshop on fisheries management reference points in a changing environment (climate, density, productivity shifts) is being planned for the end of 2020. ACOM is working on providing transparency around capping F_{MSY} and how this can be reflected in the reference point table.

WKFORBIAS met to address and develop general guidelines for dealing with the issue of retrospective patterns in stock assessments. WKFORBIAS reaffirmed previous recommendations that retrospective analysis should always be conducted as a diagnostic to examine the internal consistency of an analytical stock assessment. The Mohn's rho statistic that compares estimates from assessments with recent years of data removed to estimates from the current assessment is the standard tool for retrospective analysis. A number of general recommendations from WKFORBIAS include: 1) when evaluating a retrospective pattern, the consistency of the pattern is of primary importance; 2) a large Mohn's rho statistic driven by one outlier should not be treated in the same manner as a consistent directional retrospective pattern; 3) retrospective patterns should be viewed as one of many diagnostics to be used in determining whether to use an assessment for management advice or not; 4) a strong consistent retrospective pattern can be the basis for adjusting catch advice or downgrading the level of an assessment; 5) Management Strategy Evaluation can potentially be a useful tool for examining the robustness of harvest control rules to different magnitudes of retrospective pattern and could be useful for situations exhibiting strong retrospective patterns over multiple assessments.

The re-opening of advice in the North Sea is maintained by the EU whilst other advice requesters prefer to have only one advice during the year. ICES regularly states that the reopening is difficult. It is not an efficient use of resources and a workshop in August will scrutinize the reopening process. Potentially the outcomes could be brought up for discussion internally in DGMARE. In terms of workload the re-opening is an issue for the experts; making the data available from the IBTS so fast is a risk to the quality of the data and in presenting/discussing the advice with advice requesters and stakeholders.

Mixed fisheries are a big challenge for ICES advice. There are evident issues around the resources available for mixed fisheries advice. A workshop in March will bring all stakeholders and scientists together to address mixed fisheries advice and how to make it operational. The mixed fisheries process is not quite mature yet and experts are needed to make this process work. The current situation is not viable also with respect to having an external review/proper benchmark of the mixed fisheries advice production.

In the case of catch scenarios for Zero TAC stocks, a mixed fisheries analysis would be needed for most/many stocks. However, a more simple approach would be needed to provide information for managers when we release zero TAC advice. The catch scenario table needs to be populated with appropriate scenarios and expert groups need to seek guidance from ACOM on a case-by-case basis. Monitoring TACs need to be included in the advice sheets.

The Workshop on guidelines and methods for the evaluation of rebuilding plans (WKREBUILD) will come up with some guidelines regarding rebuilding plans and some of the recommendations from this workshop may be good guidance regarding the zero TAC issues.

The non-target MAP stocks will have MSY advice in 2020 differing to last year. ICES Secretariat will produce a table of stocks where ICES is not able to provide MSY advice for stocks in the MAPs.

ACOM discussions which could be relevant for WGCHAIRS:

- Benchmarking where prioritization of the suggested benchmarks are being discussed. This subgroup is also looking at how to update the system to make it more effective and efficient. The prioritization is not a deterministic type of process, benchmarks are reviewed in terms of the scores applied by the expert groups. In terms of transparency, ACOM is working towards a prioritization process that makes it clear to the expert groups which decisions have been made and on what basis.
- Reference points in terms of the F_{pa} and F_{p05} as well as how to estimate reference points as part of an MSE process (Workshop on Guidelines for Management Strategy Evaluations 3, WKG MSE3) and ultimately guidelines for reference points will be discussed in terms of clarity.

10 Expertise in the expert groups; our strengths and weaknesses

A presentation was given by the Fisheries Resources Steering Group (FRSG) chair to provide background on the strong and weak areas of expertise in ICES expert groups.

FRSG expert groups cover a wide range of elements such as single fish stock and multi-species assessments/forecasts; coastal, recreational, mixed, and emerging fisheries; MSEs, uncertainty, and risk; operationalisation of EBFM and MSY concepts; transparency, robustness, efficiency, and repeatability; and development of evidence and standards to advise on management objectives for commercial fisheries (e.g. EU MSFD D3, UN SG14)

It was explained that the steering groups serves at both tactical and strategic levels.

- Tactical in the way that FRSG EGs provide science advice and the SG serves as liaison between EGs and ACOM/SCICOM and is the clearinghouse for FRSG EG resolutions.
- Strategic as EGs communicate operational issues, research recommendations and strategic directions, and the SG represents the EGs and communicates needs and priorities.

FRSG EGs had reported on tactical issues and research needs on the FRSG SharePoint site, an extract of the issues and needs is presented below.

Tactical issues	Research needs
Logistics (facility size/availability, timing of data needs vs. availability & formatting/QA-QC requirements, resources for participants)	Age data for Greenland halibut (AFWG)
Workload (number of stocks, timing for advice, number of active participants)	Herring/sprat monitoring across regions & stock boundaries/mixing (HAWG)
Relationships/Roles between EGs and ADGs	N. shrimp natural mortality (NIPAG)
	Herring retrospective pattern/cod aging (WGBFAS)
	Elasmobranch discard data & analytical methods (WGEF)
	Spatial/temporal mixed fisheries interactions (WGMIXFISH)

In relation to research needs it was suggested that Working Group on Mixed Fisheries Advice (WGMIXFISH) methods be transferred to an open annual Workshop. All FRSG groups do not need to be closed to experts that are not appointed by Delegates.

It was highlighted that the topic regarding communication between EG and ADG is sensitive. Assessors can get quite concerned when an assessment is not being approved by the ADG, and it is not always clear why an assessment is not accepted. A participant asked if communication could be improved with a formal explanation? If communication was improved it would also improve the working relationship between EG and ADG. On this matter the ACOM Leadership reported that a template for ADG minutes was developed in the middle of 2019, and the hope is that this will improve the documentation of all changes made.

It was suggested that communication with assessors could already take place during the ADG through the EG Chair. If big changes are made then clarification with the assessor is

needed. Some EG Chairs had asked assessors in advance to be available for consultation when the ADG took place.

As an end to the discussion regarding communication it was stated that we never communicate well enough, and must always strive to improve the communication mechanisms.

11 What would be your key tweet about ICES? Wrap up discussion in groups

Participants were asked to tweet their 'best tweet about ICES'. A number of quite good tweets were sent out, some the categories were the following:

- Cat-related tweet: 8 out of 10 cats prefer sustainable fish
- Fake news tweet: Greta Thunberg coming to ICES ASC? Come and find out!
- Home alone tweet: 264 fish stocks to assess and no resources to do it, how do ICES pull it off? #numerous tags
- Bonnie Tyler hero tweet: All the heroes doing ICES advice are here this week



12 Opening and welcome- day 2.

The SCICOM Chair warmly welcomed participants on the second day of WGCHAIRS. The purpose is to gauge and serve EG needs. Plenary sessions on this second day would also be broadcast through WebEx.

Fritz Köster, ICES President, also welcomed WGCHAIRS. He stressed that ICES needs increasingly integrated and interdisciplinary approach. This is reflected in new Strategic Plan and the supporting Science and Advisory Plans. He emphasized that EGs are the most vital part in ICES Community.

13 From science to advice, introducing the ICES Advisory Plan

The ICES Advisory Plan that was published late in 2019, was distributed to participants. This is a plan for all of ICES. We are all working to enhance the credibility and transparency of ICES advice, and we are moving towards ecosystem advice. The Advisory Plan is a partner to the Science and Strategic plans. The plan has 6 priority areas for development. We are at the breaking point with workload in our network so we are looking to implement this plan with no extra burden on the network.

The advice framework has four stages: request, knowledge synthesis, peer review, and advice production.

Framework of ICES advisory process



ICES adds value by maintaining credibility, relevancy and legitimacy. The Plan has six priority areas for development:

- **Assuring quality:** Assure that quality encompasses the entire process from data collection to the publication of objective and independent advice.
- **Incorporating innovation:** Incorporate new knowledge into the advisory process to contribute effectively to the creation of advice on meeting conservation, management and sustainability goals.
- **Highlighting benefits:** Highlight and communicate to existing and potential new users the relevance and benefits of ICES approach to providing advice.
- **Sharing evidence:** Effectively share evidence and advice with requesters and society, and develop a responsive dialogue with partners to maintain relevance.
- **Evolving advice:** Evolve the advice to remain relevant to policy developments and management challenges while horizon scanning likely future evidence needs.
- **Identifying needs:** Identify and communicate the expertise, monitoring, data, and process needs to maintain and develop the provision of relevant advice.

WGCHAIRS were asked which of these priorities were relevant for their work? This is a real challenge for us—to provide the best available science in the context of assured quality. Incorporating innovation is a challenge for our network as we need to work together as 180 expert groups

to allow the best ideas to move forward. We need to evolve as well to bring in industry and citizen science. Evolving advice is about looking forward to see what clients are going to ask us.

Currently, there is much scope for growth in ICES ability to address gaps in surveys, circulating recommendations, and informing project funders what ICES needs.

Plenary responded: communicating and showcasing ICES work is essential if we want to remain relevant; expanding ICES scientific capacity to the social sciences will build knowledge and help to implement such things as the ecosystem approach; making time for innovation in data preparation (e.g. *Nephrops* surveys and AI learning), fish stock assessment (e.g. moving beyond F), and advice is vital to secure ICES future. ICES is tradition-bound and conservative, but chairs need to be brave enough to stretch the limits where possible. This feedback provided real analytical insight and further depth to the Advisory Plan's six priority areas.

ICES ADVISORY PLAN

Priority areas

■ Assuring quality

Assure that quality encompasses the entire process from data collection to the publication of objective and independent advice.

■ Incorporating innovation

Incorporate new knowledge into the advisory process to contribute effectively to the creation of advice on meeting conservation, management, and sustainability goals.

■ Highlighting benefits

Highlight and communicate to existing and potential new users the relevance and benefits of ICES approach to providing advice.

■ Sharing evidence

Effectively share evidence and advice with requesters and society, and develop a responsive dialogue with partners to maintain relevance.

■ Evolving advice

Evolve the advice to remain relevant to policy developments and management challenges while horizon scanning likely future evidence needs.

■ Identifying needs

Identify and communicate the expertise, monitoring, data, and process needs to maintain and develop the provision of relevant advice.



14 Recruiting new participants in expert groups

SCICOM leadership lead a discussion on the recurring issue of recruiting new participants to workshops and working groups. Many expert groups experience difficulty in getting the right type of members. We have a dedicated focus on this challenge and strive to highlight the benefits of joining an ICES expert group. New people are the future of ICES, and ICES is the future of marine science and the future of solutions. This has never been more relevant than today when the classical role of science is being challenged. It will be important to keep raising awareness about ICES and about the new opportunities that we offer. Publishing the science coming out of the ICES expert groups and workshops is also an area we are continuously focusing on.

The pamphlet *“What are the benefits of getting involved with ICES expert groups?”* coins the value of being part of the ICES community and presents the various steering groups and the expert groups and workshops residing under these.

Two areas worth examining are aquaculture and the groups on social indicators and economics. They are bringing in new people to the ICES community and makes it possible for ICES to move the limit of the areas we cover. Also Early Career Scientists are joining expert groups and learning new skills. In the last three years, more than 200 new people have joined the ICES community.

WGCHAIRS was asked for suggestion on how to recruit new people.

- the value of the social aspect of expert group meetings. It is often here links are made and collaborations are fostered – especially with “new” scientists.
- about the ICES website and the use of this when advertising workshops and expert group meetings. The SCICOM chair stressed that structural changes are underway on the website and the new features will include more visibility of how to get involved in the ICES community.
- the issue of getting more resources into the area (mobilising both money and expertise). No fast solutions should be expected, but the issue is being dealt with; MoUs with the member countries are being looked at as well as the resource allocations within the institutes.

15 What is working well and not so well for the expert group chairs

Breakout groups considered what is working well and poorly for expert group chairs.

The plenary discussions were catalysed by the following feedback from the breakout groups:

Positive:	Negative
Learning/insight/opportunities for chairs	Preparation prior to the meeting needs much work/time, more help to the chairs is needed from the group members
SharePoint facilities	Needed: one master document that will put all the guidelines and information for chairs together
Secretariat support	Naming/suggestion of the chair. Giving incentives for people to nominate themselves as chairs
Personal growth, leadership & communication skills for chairs	The work (advice & working group) is extended through the year, so the expectations of increased workload are not always clear to chairs
Build a network of colleagues, teamwork/networking	No training for chairs that have to face difficult situations sometimes, need training on management skills
New knowledge, creative discussions	Recommendations, not enough time spent into considering how these can become effective, seems like the recommendations are just passed around and looked at only. Not dynamic enough, not used enough
Data call and other needs are covered well by the secretariat	Hand over to chair needs a bit more thought, to pass on knowledge
Chairs have the freedom to run the process as they believe fit, control over process and advice	Website structure is not user friendly
Visibility/profile of chairs rising to the community also outside of ICES and within different fields	Missing experts in some fields (e.g. data poor stocks), special requests
Learning about advice and how ICES works	Need new expertise, difficult to recruit experts from different disciplines, from outside of the ICES community
New structure of WGs gives more opportunities and freedom for outputs (e-valuation, interim reports, scientific papers)	Non responsive experts, lack of sharing roles and responsibilities, lack for incentives for people to actively participate
Knowledge, skills transfer, benefit from other institutes contributions	Recruitment for assessment groups due to workload
WGCHAIRS meetings	Challenge to keep expertize
	Difficulty in innovation and accepting new technology by long term members
	Funding does not balance workload (also special request workload)

Positive:	Negative
	Some experts that are needed in assessment WG are removed to participate in ADGs
	Challenge of collaboration with other groups, social groups etc. it is difficult to establish and continue collaboration
	Carbon footprint of meetings
	Data call issues. This can be solved with more use of SiD and allocation of time for this during the WG meeting, considering whether this data is necessary
	Workload, balance workload and the reviews. There is a review of the stocks but not the actual work on the WGs. Getting the consensus and critical review needed during the WG
	WebEx doesn't work that well, it seems like a second class meeting
	Need to have pre-meetings to plan the WG/WK work

In the discussion it was pointed out that the list of issues mentioned is a mix of chairs' issues and EG issues. The positive side of these is connected to personal development, while the negative side is connected to the identity of ICES and resourcing.

There was a discussion on the carbon footprint the ICES meetings create and there were some suggestions on how to improve this: meetings can be designed better, allowing for successful remote participation, shorter presentations and split discussions.

The chairs were challenged as to whether they feel empowered and in control of their work. Some chairs declared they do not feel in control, the level of control was discussed and what it means in terms of the ICES environment and advisory process. The Planning Group on Data Needs for Assessment and Advice (PGDATA) felt they have control over their work and products. There were comments that the degree of control depends on whether you are looking at EG that generate the basis of advice or science. This affects how the chairing takes place. The goal of the process is important in chairing the group.

It was pointed out that discussions between chairs are very valuable because they share knowledge, training and mentoring. For the data call issues, it was suggested that these can be solved with more use of SID and allocation of time for this during the WG meeting.

There was widespread support for a call for greater training for chairs and the creation of a toolbox. Guidance on chairing online meetings and training for difficult and challenging situations.

Action: ACOM and SCICOM will create a subgroup to work on tackling these issues. The subgroup will report to WGCHAIRS 2021.

16 Data best practice: support and guidance for data handling by expert groups

A presentation was given by the Chair of DIG. It covered the quality assurance approach, accreditation, governance groups, and findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability (FAIR) principles for data.

We need to improve the approach to data in ICES:

- Data feeding in to ICES processes needs to be of a known quality, we need to know the quality, it does not necessarily need to be of high quality.
- Quality control is about maintaining consistency, timeliness etc.
- All of us need to be able to access the same version of the “true” data – not multiple version of the same data, with different column names, for example etc.
- Processes should be documented and understood
- Need to be able to see and understand the process, but not necessarily fully open access (i.e. there are data that need to be kept private)

The scope of best practice is fully focused on data in the ICES managed systems, as part of a quality assured framework. Data on a personal laptop and taken home, for example, is not in the scope.

Expert groups need to consider existing data flows and assessing them against the FAIR principles.

WGCHAIRS was reminded about the data handbook. Chairs should consider the pipeline of data in their expert groups:

- Acquisition – is the data documented, do you use the vocabularies?
- What user roles are there – who owns it, at what stage does data ownership change?
- Request and delivery – agreement on format, realistic content, inventory (metadata) – these things do take time!
- Data quality – we need known quality – what is the strengths, weaknesses, gaps, is it complete, is it the best we can do right now?

Questions were raised for clarification about accreditation. ICES links to EMODNET were explained as ICES submits data to EMODNET e.g. marine litter and hosts vocabularies etc.

17 ICES Science Plan implementation

SCICOM Chair, Simon Jennings, with reference to Doc 17.1 and 17.2, gave an update on the Science Plan and progress of the Science Plan implementation. With the completion of Advisory Plan all activities of the organisation are guided by plans and you can fit everything we are doing in ICES into the plans. In the Science Plan we are tackling seven interrelated science priorities. The major changes from the last plan are the greater emphasis on aquaculture (under Seafood Production) and social and economic sciences (under Sea and Society), and in response to these changes we have established several new working groups.

In relation to the mapping of science priorities against the remits of the Steering Groups, SCICOM Chair noted that there is a strength in having Steering Groups with remits that are different from the Science Priorities; as this has encouraged people to talk across the groups and disciplines and has led to a great deal of exchange of ideas.

SCICOM Chair thanked the six Steering Group chairs for a large amount of important work and informed WGCHAIRS that this year there will be an opportunity to join the team via the call for three new Steering Group chairs. This will come out in the next few weeks, and new chairs will be sought for the Ecosystem Processes and Dynamics, Ecosystem Observation and Integrated Ecosystem Assessments Steering Groups.

SCICOM Chair presented the broad objectives of the Science Implementation Plan and noted that it is a very detailed document allowing us to track the progress towards the objectives of the Science Plan based on the actions taken in the network. The linking of Expert Group ToR to the Science Plan codes allows us to brigade the Science activity right across ICES, and will be more accessible and searchable with advances in the development of the resolutions forms and database.

Action: ICES is keen to develop and broaden its training programme. If you as expert group chairs see opportunities for new courses to be established and/or identify areas where training might be useful for the new generation of scientists, you are invited to propose new training courses to the ICES Training Group. Please contact Anna Davies (ICES Training Coordinator) or Jan Jaap Poos (Chair of ICES Training Group).

A question was raised on whether ICES has held courses in the past or would consider establishing training course on being an Expert Group Chair. There used to be a training course run by Adi Kellermann.

Action: SCICOM Chair suggested setting up a poll to see if there is a demand for establishing training courses on being an Expert Group Chair. He would then assess whether there would be people committed to running a stimulating course?

18 Finding the right publication channels for our science- an interactive guide to publishing and communicating science through ICES

Ruth Anderson, ICES Editor, and Celine Byrne, ICES Communications Officer, opened their presentation with an overview of considerations for publishing and communicating science, with an emphasis on the range of approaches ICES can use to publicize expert group work.

- Audience – ICES has options from those targeted at specialists in the field using specific publications through to broad information disseminated for informed general audiences.
- Application – what is the purpose of the publication?
- Length – Products range from 10 lines to 200 pages or more.
- Peer review – Publications include possibilities for both peer review or no peer review.
- Budget considerations – it is free to publish in all ICES in-house formats. For the ICES Journal of Marine Science, which is an out-of-house publication, article fees may apply (see journal website for details).

The leads of the session ran a live poll using slido, www.sli.do, poll code: #Q862. The questions focused on assessing existing chairs' knowledge of current ways to publicize expert group work with ICES. Overall, the chairs had a good overview of the different publication outlets, but tended to know the outlets standard to their work (e.g. ICES Scientific Reports) more than some of the other outlets where a contribution is optional but encouraged (e.g. TIMES). Some publication outlets, such as ID Leaflets, were missing.

The presenters gave an overview of the variety of ICES publications:

- In house publications (CRR, TIMES, ID Leaflets for Diseases and Plankton)
- Science/advice programmes (ICES Scientific Reports, ICES Business Reports, Advice)
- Out of house publications (ICES Journal of Marine Science)
- Communications (ICES News, social media, outreach material (ICES annual report, factsheets, infographics))

The presenters then focused on differences between Co-operative Research Reports (CRR) and Techniques in Marine Environmental Science (TIMES) publication types:

- CRR (reference publications, on average 50-150 pages)
- TIMES (practical guidelines, on average 10-30 pages). TIMES currently covers primarily guidelines for chemical and biological measurements, but the scope is being broadened and will be announced after the next SCICOM meeting. Potential fields for expansion are guidelines for data and specific computer programs.
- Commonalities: open access, peer-reviewed, broad scope, approved by SCICOM/ACOM via resolution, two-year period to draft.
- CRR and TIMES are peer reviewed by at least two reviewers; they are also reviewed by the series editor and the editorial team. After extensive revision and quality checks, copy editing is also provided. The Series of ICES Survey Protocols (SISP) also have peer review, but currently don't go through the same level of copy editing and quality control.
- The templates for CRR and TIMES will also be changed this year to be consistent with the look of other ICES publications.

The presentation then shifted to a discussion about ICES Communications, which helps promote publications, but also provides a variety of other ways to share expert group science. Topics the communications team can help to support include: requests for members (especially for new groups), announcements of meetings, reports on the science conducted and shared at meetings, announcements of new journal articles by groups, requests for scientific and data inputs, and feature articles on expert groups.

The chairs were then polled to identify when they thought about communicating their work. Chairs responded that they most frequently thought about communications during their expert group meeting. It was recommended that it would be more beneficial to start think about communications earlier in their work cycle, ideally well before their meetings begin.

Questions and discussion points by expert group chairs:

- Suggestion - A communications package would help to make it easier to communicate work
- Suggestion - Provide a template to fill in (templates are provided currently, but this chair wanted a more prescriptive template)
- Suggestion – Offer communications training for chairs
- Q&A – WGSCALLOP are interested in leading a TIMES on scallop aging methodologies and asked about the timing of a resolution for this. It was explained that the normal process is to go through the SCICOM meeting, but the approval can be easily fast tracked (2-3 weeks between submission and approval). When in doubt, it was suggested that folks reach out to the ICES Editor.
- Q&A - What is the advantage to publish in CRR/TIMES versus a journal. CRR tend to be much longer than journal articles, and are more equivalent to publishing a book or book chapter. TIMES provides an open and flexible format, and it can include tips, a variety of structures and updates can be published. There is also no push to focus on 'trendy' topics, rather what is useful and meaningful for the ICES community.
- Q&A – How many TIMES and CRR are published each year? CRR about 4-8. TIMES about 1-2, the future aim is for TIMES to be around 3-4 per year.

The discussion concluded with a test your knowledge quiz where two examples of science stories were provided and expert chairs were asked to identify all the ways that they could publicize using ICES publications and communications outlets. Some chairs also mentioned ASC presentations, which are also a good option and were not mentioned in the presentations.

19 Revitalising the resolutions process, an interactive guide to the new resolutions forms

Julie Kellner, Science Professional Officer, gave an update on the ongoing work towards improving the resolutions process. Currently the resolutions are only available in paper form and it is difficult to locate information across groups and terms of reference. The lack of a search feature that works across all resolutions means that it is difficult to identify relationships between groups, including those with similar ToRs.

The new resolution form will be streamlined and simplified. Different types of expert groups (open-term, fixed-term and workshops) will be using the same form. The description has been unified by merging the priority and scientific justification into one box that will be the same information for both the resolution and the group's community web page. There will be boxes to link ICES expert groups, steering groups, and strategic initiatives, which will aid with identifying common links across groups.

At the same time, we are trying to improve the consistency across web pages, to avoid having to ask the chairs for the similar information multiple times. Therefore, the expert groups will prepare web texts as part of the resolutions process.

The new form will have sections on Science and Advisory Plan Priorities, Geographic focus, Expertise needed, Close links to other organizations (check list) and Deliverables (other than reports), many of which have been categorised to be chosen from a dropdown. All of these resolution sections, as well as resolution ToRs, groups, and meetings information will be displayed in a searchable interface.

Julie Kellner invited feedback from the WGCHAIRS participants on what they would like to see in the new ICES resolutions database.

It was suggested that searching EGs by keywords would be useful for new chairs. Julie Kellner explained that this had been discussed and there had been a preference to have a full word search on the description. DIG Chair mentioned that the ICES Data Centre has done some exploratory work on this.

DIG Chair asked if the current recommendations database would combined with the resolution database. The two databases will not be related in the short term, but in the longer run all our databases can be integrated.

20 “Guidelines for ICES groups” introducing volume 2019-2

SCICOM Chair presented the Guidelines for ICES Groups as a source of essential information for all those chairing and involved in Expert Groups, ACOM, SCICOM, Steering Groups and Operational Groups. The document is updated twice each year, in response to feedback and new policies.

The current (2019-2) version was updated in the autumn to include new guidance on drafting web texts for Expert Groups, the correct use of e-evaluation (for fixed term groups), updated guidance on drafting executive summaries, use of the recommendations database and removal of material related to ASC (which can now be found in separate guidelines for ASC, available in the background documents for this meeting).

In relation to recommendations passed from one expert group to another, SCICOM Chair highlighted the importance of communicating the recommendation to the recipient chair and assessing feasibility of conducting the proposed work before submitting the recommendation. Recommendations that have not been discussed with the receiving chair will no longer be processed by the secretariat.

The new forthcoming version (2020-1) of the Guidelines for ICES Groups will include the following changes:

- Improvements to the resolutions process
- New guidance on writings terms of reference
- Incorporation of links and references to the Advisory Plan
- Additional guidance on drafting Executive Summaries
- Highlighting importance and application of Code of Conduct.

Expert group chairs were encouraged to provide feedback to the secretariat (via science@ices.dk) on material they would like to be included (deadline: 8 February 2020).

21 Drafting Executive Summaries for the “ICES Scientific Reports” series, seeking input from chairs on draft guidance

SCICOM Chair presented the new guidance on how to write the executive summary in the ICES Scientific Reports. This guidance was created to help improve consistency and to focus on outputs rather than the meetings and processes of the groups. With this approach, process information is moved to a new information page, with a table including the essential meeting information.

The following points were mentioned as key elements when drafting the executive summary:

- Audience: broad and generalist
- Content: accessible
- Style: first and third person
- Length: 350 words, few exceptions
- Structure: more consistency

This guidance will be included in the “Guidelines for ICES groups”.

Action: Request for feedback. Chairs were encouraged to submit any comments about the guidance for writing executive summaries (Item 21 in the meeting documents) to the ICES secretariat by 10 February 2020.

22 Breakouts for the Steering Groups

The chairs of the Ecosystem Observation Steering Group (EOSG), Fisheries Resources Steering Group (FRSG), Ecosystem Processes and Dynamics Steering Group (EPDSG) and the Human Activities, Pressures and Impacts Steering Groups (HAPISG) led breakout meetings of their steering groups. Per Arneberg led the meeting of the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment Steering Group (IEASG) in place of Mette Skern-Mauritzen who could not attend. Short summaries from these meetings are provided in Annex 3.

23 Opening and welcome for expert group chairs focusing on science terms of reference

SCICOM Chair gave a warm welcome to the science day of WGCHAIRS and introduced the agenda for the day.

Review of ICES Science in 2019

SCICOM Chair gave some highlights from the ICES Science community news in 2019:

- Within the community, there has been a focus on moving into the new areas of science agreed in the Science Plan. In the last 2 years, some 70 people new to ICES have joined newly created expert groups in Aquaculture and Social and Economic Sciences.
- We had a great ASC in Gothenburg, and the hosts helped set up an innovative programme which attracted over 750 participants from 38 countries. There were 175 early career scientists (ECS) present and there were many ECS events for them to take part in.
- Closer links between Science and Advice.
- Seven open training courses were held. SCICOM Chair also noted that the ICES Training Group would be delighted to receive offers for training courses, particularly on topics that are not well covered.
- Five co-sponsored symposia were held in 2019. SCICOM Chair also noted that we would like to be co-sponsors on symposia on new technologies and issues related to handling and processing marine data. If people in the network are interested in drafting a proposal, we would be very interested to discuss. SCICOM Chair informed WGCHAIRS that the process for approving ICES cosponsored symposia has changed and going forward there will be an annual call for proposals. The next call will be for 2022 symposia, and they will be reviewed by SCICOM in March 2021.
- Published outputs: 94 “ICES Scientific Reports” and eight CRR.
- A number of new EGs were established in 2019, some in collaboration with PICES. These new groups are broadening the spectrum of groups in ICES. Examples of the breadth of new groups, some of which were represented at the WGCHAIRS meeting, were:
 - Small Pelagic Fish (WGSPF) ICES-PICES. Myron Peck, Germany; Ignacio Catalan, Spain; Ryan Rykaczewski, USA; Akinori Takasuka, Japan
 - Impacts of Warming on Growth Rates and Fisheries Yields (WGGRAFY) ICES-PICES. C. Tara Marshall, UK; Paul Spencer, USA; Alan Baudron, UK; John Morrongiello, Australia
 - Shipping Impacts in the Marine Environment (WGSHIP). Cathryn Murray, Canada and Ida-Maja Hassellöv, Sweden
 - Offshore Wind Development and Fisheries (WGOWDF). Andy Lipsky, USA and Andrew Gill, UK
 - Integrated Ecosystem Assessment of the Greenland Sea (WGIEAGS). Jesper Boje, Denmark/Greenland; Colin Stedmon, Denmark
 - Working Group on Northwest Atlantic Ecosystem Observations (WGNAEO). Philip Politis, USA and Donald Clark, Canada

Looking forward to 2020 and beyond, in terms of outward projection, the goals include providing clear and accessible paths for engagement with ICES, and we also want to keep strengthening the links between science, data and advice, and keep innovating!

24 Update on implementation of the ICES Science Plan: the role of expert groups

SCICOM Chair presented ICES seven interrelated science priorities and recent progress and issues in relation to each priority.

- In relation to ecosystem science the connection between oceanographic processes and the ecosystem is high on the agenda, and SCICOM is looking at ways to further engage oceanographers in ICES community.
- Impacts of human activities. Here we have seen a growing focus on a wider range of human activities, as evidenced by the establishment of WGSHP and WGOWDF.
- Observation and exploration. Here the main challenge is about the information flow from the observations through to application and use in science and advice.
- Emerging techniques and technologies. A vitally important area for ICES to be sighted on and to engage in. Part of the challenge is that we do not have a steering group for this area, and it is therefore not getting the same level of projection as other areas.
- Seafood production. The aquaculture area has been strengthened in ICES, and now includes seven expert groups. Mike Rust, as chair of the Aquaculture Steering Group has brought in a new community of scientists to ICES.
- Conservation and management science. The breadth of requests that are received from recipients of ICES advice that will drive the application of work being done in the expert groups.
- Sea and society. Good developments in this area with the formation of active expert groups on economics and social indicators.

The Science Plan is delivered by the expert groups with the support of the SG Chairs. SCICOM Chair was pleased to see that the system is working well, and that the matrix interaction between science priorities and the remits of our steering groups is creating good transdisciplinary interaction.

In terms of links to Science Plan, most expert groups are now coding terms of reference to the activities listed in the Science Plan. With further development of the resolutions database we will be able to track activities more efficiently. Self-evaluations from expert groups that are archived on the Science Committee SharePoint site provide a good insight into progress on ICES expert group work.

Four tasks were included in the Science Plan implementation plan in response to feedback from WGCHAIRS 2019, where expert group chairs requested that their own responsibilities were made as clear as possible:

A3. Develop and prepare resolutions and web text for expert groups with all fields completed and ToR linked to Science Plan codes

A4. Conduct final and/ or interim evaluations of your expert group's activity using the evaluation forms provided

A5. Complete work in support of ToR to timescales specified in the approved expert group resolution

A6. Submit timely reports for final formatting and publication and provide follow up responses to Secretariat requests for support

SCICOM Chair emphasized the importance of submitting reports to the ICES Secretariat within six weeks of the expert group meeting. It is important for the outward projection of ICES science that the science is accessible and fresh.

25 The advisory process and the production of science in support of advice

Mark Dickey-Collas, ACOM Chair, gave a presentation on the advisory process in relation to the production of science and the use of science in advice. ACOM Chair explained the four stages of advice: Request formulation, Knowledge synthesis (interaction with Science Groups at this stage), Peer review, and Advice Production. During the last stage of the process (advice drafting and ACOM agreement), the advice may be changed and this may lead to potential tension. Thus, it is important for expert groups to understand that the advice is actually produced during final stages of the advice process. In no way is this meant to say that we know better than you, what we say is that in terms of drafting advice, it needs to be formulated this way and in terms of QA it needs to be expressed in this way.

ACOM Chair emphasised that the term advice can only be used when the advice has been formulated through ICES advisory processes and has been through quality assurance; only ACOM speaks for ICES on advice. EGs are speaking for the individual groups, the content of the expert group report represents the view of the group, whereas when groups are contributing to ICES Advice that represents the view of ICES. Expert Group chairs cannot make commitments regarding advice on behalf of ICES.

Some organisations may approach expert groups and ask them to do work for them; if this happens, please refer them to ICES Secretariat or ACOM leadership. Expert Group chairs cannot make direct commitments to provide advice on behalf of ICES.

ACOM is likely to approach expert groups to request their assistance with advice production. ToRs may be added with the agreement of your group, SCICOM and ACOM support. Contributing to advice is an opportunity for expert groups.

Questions/Comments:

How are experts appointed to review groups and Advice Drafting Groups (ADGs)? For the peer review individuals are chosen by ACOM Leadership in cooperation with ICES Secretariat. For the Advice Production (ADG) experts are nationally nominated by the ACOM members, one per country, plus the chairs of the groups, plus representatives of the peer review process, plus all registered stakeholders. ADGs are also open to the people who pay for the request.

26 Highlighting and disseminating science outputs from expert groups

Celine Byrne, Communications Officer, and Julie Kellner, Science Professional Officer, with reference to Doc 25-1, 25-2, and 25-3, gave an update on science highlights.

Science highlights are used to promote ICES science on [our website](#), and in printed, and spoken communication targeted to the network and beyond. With around 180 expert groups, this system also allows ICES Communications to pick up on all the good work done, and show the breadth of the work in ICES groups.

A number of examples were presented to give expert group chairs a better idea of material that can be developed into Science Highlights. Suitable material for development as Science Highlights would be:

- Forthcoming papers, books, or other scientific output
- Emerging technology being developed and advanced by ICES expert groups
- Trends and shifts in ocean conditions and marine populations that have been identified by ICES expert groups
- Current and future challenges to marine management that are being addressed by ICES expert groups
- Upcoming or recent research cruises and expeditions relevant to advancements in ICES science and advice
- Upcoming keynote talks on projects and science related to your ICES work
- Activities that broaden participation in ICES science and advice
- Anniversary dates (e.g., 5 or 10 years) of long-term data sets

How to submit? Submissions of science highlights are welcomed from any scientist in our network and you are encouraged to use the short template available on [ICES Science Highlights SharePoint page](#). Furthermore the e-evaluation forms include a dedicated highlights section. You are also welcome to email the Communications team at ICES Secretariat directly (email: communications@ices.dk).

In addition to the individual science highlights from expert Groups, the Secretariat has developed several topical science highlights series. These are collective stories with contributions from 5+ groups. Upcoming series under development this year are:

- The changing Arctic - In preparation for April 2020
- The future of aquaculture - In preparation for mid-2020

There are also two broader themed series starting in 2020 that should be relevant to most groups. One series focuses on biodiversity and the other explains important terms and phrases used in the ICES community and is called "In other words". We encourage all groups to participate in these and have provided detailed information on these series in the documents.

Action: Communications also welcome suggestions from WGCHAIRS for new series themes!

We would like chairs to think about developing themes for 2021, interest in emerging technologies would be a possibility.

27 Mentoring for chairs of expert groups and recruiting new participants, what is needed and how can we better support it

In this breakout session 5 groups consisting of 6–7 expert group chairs were asked to address one or more of the following questions:

Question 1. Has it been straightforward to identify chairs for your group? What are the reasons for this? Do you have members interested in chairing and already fulfilling leadership roles at meetings?

Question 2. Before you took on the role of chair, did your experiences in your expert group adequately prepare you for the task? If not, what types of support and information would improve awareness of expectations for the role?

Question 3. Did the set of materials currently made available to the expert group chairs meet your needs after you took on the role of chair (welcome letter with links, guidelines, PowerPoint presentation, etc.)? If not, what other materials, information or contact points are needed?

Question 4. What are the approaches you use to recruit participants to your expert group? Which of these have been most successful, and why?

Each group was asked to identify a rapporteur and submit a short (one-page) summary. A summary of feedback from breakout groups is provided in Annex 4.

Reflecting on feedback from the breakout groups (Annex 4), the meeting chairs agreed to take the following action before the next WGCHAIRS meeting:

Action: ACOM and SCICOM chairs to work with Steering Group chairs, ACOM leadership and Secretariat to establish an Expert Group Chairs Training Course to first be run alongside the 2021 WGCHAIRS meeting. All existing and incoming expert group chairs will be invited to participate.

A plan will be developed and consider ways to include at least the following content:

- Roles of expert group chairs
- Introduction to ICES structures and processes
- Interacting with a steering groups
- Role of secretariat and supporting officers
- Chairing techniques: planning and leading meetings, assessing strengths of participants, giving voice, resolving debate, summarising, reporting, online meeting tools and interaction, meeting etiquette
- What is a conflict of interest?
- Modules/ breakouts: Fixed-term expert groups, Annual expert groups

Existing expert group chairs will be further consulted on content as the course develops.

28 Developing and updating web texts for ICES expert groups and introducing the ICES website restructuring

Terhi Minkkinen, ICES Communications Officer, presented the new website structure to chairs and highlighted the importance of ICES expert group web texts in communicating the breadth of ICES work and attracting new participants. Terhi presented the objectives and process for restructuring the website (based upon a small survey conducted in 2019). The objectives are 1) to make it easier for users to find information, 2) to provide more direct links to popular sections on the website, and 3) to clean up content and structure. At the moment, ICES secretariat are working towards finalising the website by March 2020.

New features include:

- New top menus and menu organisation based around an ICES overview, Science, Data, Advice, and Join Us
- New upper menu with popular sites
- New front page
- Added latest news and upcoming events on front page
- Providing direct links to latest advice and scientific reports
- New section Join Us is more detailed
- New home for group pages under science
 - All expert groups are encouraged to keep pages up to date and to include a link to the webpage when using social media to promote the expert group

This restructuring has not included changes to:

- Library section, but this is being taken up in the Science Impact and Publications Group under SCICOM
- Search function

Expert group chairs are encouraged to get in touch with Terhi Minkkinen (terhi@ices.dk) and ICES communications (communications@ices.dk) with general feedback on the website, issues with links or any other ideas.

SCICOM Chair emphasised the importance of the ICES web texts for ICES groups and highlighted [section 3.1.1 in the guidelines](#) for expert groups that provides detailed information on what to include and structure of the web text. Please be aware of making the text as accessible as possible to external visitors and with up-to-date information.

General comments:

Questions revealed there was some confusion on where to find an overview of meetings for all expert groups. This overview is currently provided via the ICES website meeting calendar, and Expert Group Chairs were informed that the excel overview of all meetings on the [WGCHAIRS SharePoint](#) site is a living document and updated routinely. There is also the possibility to download the meeting calendar to Outlook, but this needs to be updated monthly. The ICES secretariat is discussing a better solution in the form of an online subscription to the calendar.

29 Developing theme and network sessions for the ASC

Silvana Birchenough, Chair of Ecosystem, Pressures and Dynamics Steering Group, gave a presentation on developing theme and network sessions for the ASC (see docs 28-1 and 28-2 under “Working Documents”). The aim of the ASC is to present relevant scientific developments, new challenges, multidisciplinary aspects and methods which could be relevant to support ICES science and advisory requirements. Theme and Network sessions, as well as side events at the ASC, provide a great opportunity for groups to showcase their work and foster collaborations across working groups and steering groups. A successful Theme Session proposal should fit within the ‘Science priority’ areas in the Science Plan.

The list of 2020 ASC Theme & Network sessions is available on the ICES website. Deadline for abstract submission is 11 March 2020. Conveners will have 1 month to review submissions and take a decision. Feedback to the authors will be provided by the beginning of June. In response to participants’ questions, SCICOM chair clarified that the duration of each session is based on the number of submitted abstracts vs. available time (in proportion).

30 Introducing the ecosystem and fisheries overviews, and opportunities for further science input through the pipeline process

Henn Ojaveer, ACOM Vice-Chair, provided background information on the Ecosystem Overviews, Fisheries Overviews, and Aquaculture Overviews, including information on progress and their strategic development and new regions for this coming year.

For the Ecosystem Overviews, Henn discussed outcomes from recent workshops, including priority topics from the Workshop on the design and scope of the 3rd generation of ICES Ecosystem Overviews (WKEO3) and objectives and the pipeline process to contribute new products to the Ecosystem Overviews to be approved by ACOM. He also discussed ToRs for the upcoming workshop April 21-23, Workshop on methods and guidelines to link human activities, pressures and state of the ecosystem in Ecosystem Overviews (WKTRANSPARENT), that will examine (1) the potential for adding a diagram on ecosystem structure, (2) the potential to link pressures to ecosystem functions and pressures, (2) improving the wire diagram which links human activities, pressures, and states, and (3) improving transparency and documentation.

Henn discussed the structure of the Fisheries Overviews, the overviews for seven ecoregions that have been published, and the upcoming plans for 2020, which include four new ecoregions (Faroes, Greenland Sea, Azores, and the Northeast Atlantic). A number of existing Fisheries Overviews will also be updated in 2020 for mixed fisheries advice.

Aquaculture Overviews are being planned and a core group is being formed to discuss the focal points for these overviews. Stakeholders will also be surveyed to solicit feedback on content. Potential aquaculture viewpoint is also under discussion.

Q&A: Questions from chairs and replies from Henn

- Is the Mediterranean part of the Overviews? There are no concrete plans for Overviews beyond ICES areas
- Are the upcoming workshops open, can the expert group and steering group chairs inform people about them? Yes, please inform people and we also hope to have participants from each ecoregion
- Some of these meetings overlap with the marine spatial planning meeting, is there another way to participate? Yes, it is possible to WebEx and have some pre-workshop conversation.

31 Recognising and rewarding the role of expert group chairs

In this breakout session 3 groups (Atlantic Room and Biscay merged) consisting of 6-7 expert group chairs were asked to address the following questions:

Question 1. Is your role as expert group chair recognised as important and influential? If so, by whom and why? If not, why do you think this is the case?

Question 2. How can the role of expert group chairs be better recognised and rewarded? What actions should be taken and by whom?

The objective of this session is to provide the necessary insights to help us to help people, in the ICES community and beyond, to effectively recognise and reward the role of expert group chairs.

Reflecting on feedback from the breakout groups (Annex 5), the meeting chairs agreed to take the following action before the next WGCHAIRS meeting:

Action: ICES to provide a booth at the ASC 2020 poster sessions on the Tuesday and Wednesday nights, with general advertising banners, screens and materials to promote joining an expert group- and to say something about the benefits that can result. Requests for expert group chairs to contribute and promote their groups, and expert groups more widely, will be posted on the WGCHAIRS forum and the contributors will work with ICES Conference Co-ordinator to establish a booth and rota [actioned via WGCHAIRS Forum 31/1/2020 and 14/2/2020].

Action: At WGCHAIRS 2021 review the content and recipients of the letter of recognition for expert group chairs, as sent by ICES secretariat at the end of chair terms, and recommend improvements to the letter and process, with the aim of providing more effective recognition for expert group chairs.

Action: As part of the ongoing reformulation of ICES website, ACOM and SCICOM chairs to work with ICES secretariat to develop and propose an approach (on WGCHAIRS Forum) for linking expert group chair names to institutional and local bios.

Closing

The ACOM and SCICOM Chairs thanked the participants, in person and on WebEx, for their participation. SCICOM chair announced the introductory WebEx for new expert group chairs scheduled for 10 February.

Annex 1: List of participants

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Annex 2: WGCHAIRS Agenda

Chairs: Mark Dickey-Collas and Simon Jennings

Tuesday 28 January 2020 9:00 – Thursday 30 January 2020 16:00

ICES, Copenhagen

Tue 28 January (plenary sessions unless otherwise stated)

1. Opening and welcome for chairs of expert groups contributing to advice (09:00) (Mark Dickey-Collas)
2. Review of expert group activities in 2019 (09:15).
Round table of comments from Chairs (Mark Dickey-Collas)
3. Quality control and TAF (10:00)
Presentation & discussion (Ghislain Chouinard)

Break (10:30-11:00)

4. What is the future for ICES advice? (11:00)
Small groups interacting with ACOM leadership.
5. Technical guidelines, and working with ACOM (12:30)
Presentation & discussion (Lotte Worsøe Clausen)

Lunch (13:00-14:00)

6. Have we made progress on issues raised last year? (14:00)
Exploration (Eugene Nixon)
7. Audit of incorporating variability of productivity in advice (14:45)
Presentation & discussion (Henn Ojaveer)
8. How has the ICES code of conduct been working? (15:20)
Discussion (Mark Dickey-Collas)

Break (15:30-16:00)

9. Challenges for the fisheries advice framework (16:00).
Presentation & discussion (Colm Lordan)
10. Expertise in the expert groups; our strengths and weaknesses (16:45)
Presentation & discussion (Patrick Lynch)
11. What would be your key tweet about ICES? (17:20)
Wrap up discussion in groups

Close for day (18:00)

Evening reception for all expert group chairs (from 18:00)

Wed 29 January (plenary sessions unless otherwise stated)

12. Opening and welcome (09:00) (Mark Dickey-Collas, Simon Jennings)
13. From science to advice, introducing the ICES Advisory Plan (09:30) (Mark Dickey-Collas)
14. Recruiting new participants in expert groups (10:15) (Simon Jennings)

Break (10:30)

15. Breakout in groups of 3 or 4, what is working well and not so well for the expert group chairs (including 30 minutes report back as group activity to 'good' and 'bad' white boards) (11:00) (Mark Dickey-Collas)
16. Data best practice: support and guidance for data handling by expert groups (12:30) (Jens Rasmussen, Data and Information Group chair)

Lunch (13:00-14:00)

17. ICES Science Plan implementation (14:00) (Simon Jennings)
18. Finding the right publication channels for our science- an interactive guide to publishing and communicating science through ICES (14:15) (Celine Byrne, Ruth Anderson)
19. Revitalising the resolutions process, an interactive guide to the new resolutions forms (14:45) (Julie Kellner)
20. "Guidelines for ICES groups" introducing volume 2019-2 (15:15) (Simon Jennings)

Break (15:30-16:00)

21. Drafting Executive Summaries for the "ICES Scientific Reports" series, seeking input from chairs on draft guidance (16:00) (Simon Jennings)
22. Breakouts for the Steering Groups (16:20) (led by Steering Group chairs and/or representatives of the Steering Groups)

Close for day (18:00)**Thu 30 January (plenary sessions unless otherwise stated)**

23. Opening and welcome for expert group chairs focusing on science terms of reference (09:00) (Simon Jennings)
24. Update on implementation of the ICES Science Plan: the role of expert groups (09:15) (Simon Jennings)
25. Highlighting and disseminating science outputs from expert groups (09:45) (Celine Byrne, Julie Kellner)

Break (10:30-11:00)

26. Mentoring for chairs of expert groups and recruiting new participants, what is needed and how can we better support it (11:00) Breakout groups, including 30 minutes reporting back to plenary

Lunch (12:30-13:30)

27. Developing and updating web texts for ICES expert groups and introducing the ICES website restructure (13:30) (Terhi Minkkinen, Simon Jennings)
28. Developing theme and network sessions for the ASC (14:00) (Silvana Birchenough)
29. Introducing the ecosystem and fisheries overviews, and opportunities for further science input through the pipeline process (14:15) (Henn Ojaveer)

30. Recognising and rewarding the role of expert group chairs (14:45) Breakout groups, including 15 minutes reporting back to plenary

Close (16:00)

Annex 3: Steering Group breakout sessions

(unedited texts as submitted)

Joint Fisheries Resources Steering Group (FRSG) and Ecosystem Observation Steering Group (EOSG)

Chair: Patrick Lynch

Chair: Sven Kupschus

FRSG initially met with EOSG, as Sven Kupschus presented on WKREO – a workshop initiated by WGISDAA to bring together people from stock assessment and the survey communities and coordinate data collection better. Sven explained that a subgroup had looked at data from a survey perspective and from the point of view of a stock assessment scientist. The discussion followed on the recommendations of WKREO about reform of ecosystem observations in ICES and regionalisation of approaches, thus linking to stock assessments and IEA groups. Any reform should focus on improving communication, streamlining the process and implementing the ecosystem approach in a more holistic way.

A concrete suggestion to add one “monitoring” group for each ecoregion was given by the EOSG chair. To compensate for the additional regional efforts, the current gear-based coordination groups would only need to meet irregularly in person as much of the annual work could be done over WebEx. He finished by saying that they needed buy-in from the expert community and that this needed to be clear at the ACOM level. In general, the room seemed to react positively to the suggestion and was actively supported by a number of EG chairs from both groups. Following the presentation EOSG and FRSG separated and both groups initiated SG focused general discussions.

A general discussion was initiated in FRSG. The chair of WGEF commented that in his group they had very good biology people but lacked quantitative modelling expertise. He stated that the group wanted to move to more analytical stocks but they had struggled to engage people. He asked if there could be a better link between where expertise was needed and getting it there. His experience within the group right now was that a proper review was not being undertaken of the work because the people were not there who could do it. One proposal was to bring external reviewers into the WG. The possibility of moving some of the elasmobranchs into the regional WGs was discussed, but there was concern that the experts in these groups would not have time to spend on the new stocks so this would not help.

The option of forcing plenary sessions at WGs to be with closed laptops was discussed. Some chairs thought it would work and had tried it. There was some concern expressed over the little time spent on the data-limited stocks compared to the time taken over the data-rich stocks. Data was identified as still the limiting factor in moving stocks up the categories (for instance between category 3 and 1), but lack of expertise was also highlighted.

The new chair of WGWIDE described the issues he had encountered with the mackerel process over the past year. These included having a model that the group largely didn't understand, time-constraints, too much responsibility on one person (the stock assessor) and the need to produce an advice when there was a general feeling that no advice could be given. There was concern expressed that most of our models have a single-point of failure.

The chair of WGNSSK pointed to similar issues with the interbenchmark on sole in 7d that took place in 2019, and the chair of WGDEEP also admitted that models can become a black box.

Collectively the chairs asked what they could do in these situations. The current situation where a stock assessment is tied to one person, and advice is provided annually were highlighted as critical problems. The idea of a stock assessment team was proposed and the provision of multi-year advice.

ACOM leadership agreed that we will have to start saying we cannot provide an advice for some stocks if there are problems with the assessment models that cannot be found, or if found, cannot be fixed. There would be a discussion on this at the next ACOM meeting in March, where Irish ACOM member Ciaran Kelly would present on the lessons learnt from mackerel.

There was agreement that when a problem arises the first step should be to see if there are stocks that have had similar problems in the past. It was agreed that it would be very hard to go back to an old advice if it was not possible to make a new advice.

Patrick Lynch reported back to the full WGCHAIRS meeting at the next plenary. He highlighted that this had been a good opportunity to share ideas and that the next step was to try and address the issues raised at the ACOM/SCICOM level.

Ecosystem Processes and Dynamics Steering Group (EPDSG)

Chair: Silvana Birchenough

ICES Science Highlights are focusing on EPDSG by highlighting the breadth of organisms in ICES working groups in a new biodiversity series.

EPDSG will be going forward with collaborating with Celine and have agreed on contributing to monthly science highlights from different groups. There is a strong encouragement to get non-chair participants involved. EPDSG Chair explained that there is already a lot of knowledge to draw on from the groups, such as the number of libraries/databases they already have and can extract information, pictures, etc from to build up the science highlight series. The chairs agreed to focus on different aspects of biodiversity, Such as functionality, habitat, methods, etc. This will enable highest possible involvement from all EGs.

EG chairs presented challenges from working groups, as well as sharing experiences that benefit all working groups and EPDSG Chair.

Discussion on publications within and external to ICES and agreed on the importance of knowing your audience when choosing your publication.

EPDSG Chair is up for election and current EPDSG chair explained that there is a lot of work in EPD that is complementary. There is a budget allowing you to travel to WG meetings and have to attend to SCICOM meetings and WGCHAIRS meeting.

Discussion on how to best deal with technology in ICES and to encourage new ideas. How can EPDSG contribute in the best way and what does EPDSG want to achieve? This could be in the form of a coordinating role, synthesis aspect or looking into how to better support future science. The bottom up approach could include hands-on applied technology, while the top level could assess how different technologies are developing.

Human Activities, Pressures and Impacts Steering Group (HAPISG)

Chair: Sarah Bailey

- HAPISG chair: Sarah Bailey is available to help making connections, facilitate interaction across groups, identify gaps and needs, assist with drafting new ToRs.

- Communications: Celine Byrne presented a new communication strategy for science highlights as a way to find groups and raise the group's profile. "In other words" series.
- Scientific Report Series:
 - report should include only scientific substance, latest developments, results and outcomes, no process description
 - scientific papers as deliverables: ICES reports can refer to upcoming scientific papers without revealing full content
 - response to advice request (if accepted by the group) is to be published in a report in full detail within a set deadline
 - some chairs felt the recommended citation format (ICES 2019) was not giving enough recognition for the work done
- Interaction between groups:

HAPISG is going to organize an informal networking meeting of the HAPISG EG Chairs in attendance at the ASC

- Webex sessions on specific topics or issues as required
- WGChairs Forum

Integrated Ecosystem Assessments Steering Group (IEASG)

Meeting participants: Julie Krogh Hallin, Inigo Martinez, Marcos Llope, Andrew Kenny, Eirini Glyki, Marie Marr, Wojciech Wawrzynski, Henn Ojaveer, Sonja van Leuve, Erik Olsen, Per Arneberg, Olivier Thebaud

Suggestions for improvements on information/communication from/with IEASG Chair and other in the ICES system

It was suggested that Expert Groups gives feedback to the ADGs since some has expressed that it is unclear how the working procedure is and how the product delivered by Expert Groups is actually used by the ADG.

Since not all groups deliver results to ADG there was discussion on how this affect and still may apply to all Expert Group in IEASG. It was clarified that the IEA groups are the main drivers of the Ecosystem Overview (EO) process. However, the process needs to be formalized for how the EG results feed into the EO and how/why what is used in relation to the special requirements there can be when publishing advice.

The communication between the EOSG and the IEASG EGs should be strengthened.

Action: it was agreed that ICES Secretariat will formalize the process of how the IEA group's results feed into the EO. This should include the different steps, point of contact for each step, clarify the Chairs role in giving the feedback required and clarify which IEAs feed directly into the EO. A draft of this will be circulated before WTRANSPARENT (21–23 April).

This formalization will help the EGs to build and develop their ToRs more long-term to support EO in the best possible way.

It was expressed that there is a need for finding out how to better establish links between EGs to share experience, challenges and cooperate more. The IEASG EG have had some meetings back.to back with joint sessions which has worked out well in this sharing process. The EGs plan to have more of these back to back meetings for 2021. There is a need to facilitate this at the SG level.

It was mentioned that all IEASG EGs need to communicate more with WKINTRA (this year WKINTRA3) since it is producing valuable work for all the EGs. Several Chairs are however already participating.

Key topics that need to be addressed in the coming year(s)

Several Chairs expressed a need for describing IEAs from ICES perspective – currently most follow a US focused approach. It was supported by the SCICOM Chair to do this and recapture the intellectual leadership from ICES side. It was suggested to produce a paper on this.

There will be a special session at the ASC and an issue on human pressures in the ICES Journal of Marine Science to highlight social science importance also in IEA and EO. It was mentioned as key to highlight how this knowledge can be used in advice as it otherwise might fade as a priority.

Experiences from WKCONSERVE, on bringing in socioeconomics into IEAs

The Workshop on Challenges, Opportunities, Needs and Successes for including human dimensions in IEAs (WKCONSERVE) was a successful workshop focused on moving towards a more ecosystem-based approach. It managed to summarise the socioeconomic data available at the moment and to set goals for how it should develop further through roadmaps for each EG.

There will be a follow up to WKCONSERVE to get a better view on the individual regions.

One point was made that instead of duplicating assessments the EGs should build upon what is already happening in the jurisdictions for example through work with the MFSD. It was pointed to WGEAWESS and the Celtic Sea as an example of the most advanced inclusion of socioeconomic indicators and aspects in the ICES IEA work so far.

Input to WKBESIO regarding policies and management objective is needed to align work to the current policies

There is still a big gap between social and natural scientist at scale level, language level, etc that needs to be addressed.

Most IEA groups are identifying groups (i.e. WGECON, WGSOCIAL, WGBIOP, WGIPEM, etc) and process that can contribute.

It was an issue during the workshop to decide on what impacts to include and how many should be included – when is it enough? An example was oil spills which can have a large-scale effect across regions and have a domino-effect of activities economically.

Annex 4: Summary of Breakout Groups: Mentoring for chairs of expert groups and recruiting new participants

(unedited texts as submitted)

Group 1

Rapporteur Andrea Morf

Group 1: Ching (Fish stocks, A&SCICOM), Marcos (IEA SCICOM), Antonello (FGFB SCICOM), Andy L (Fisheries and OSW SCICOM), Andy K (IEA, SCICOM), Hannes (Red fish/WGIDIPS A&SCICOM), Andrea M (WGMPCZM, SCICOM notes)

There is quite a big difference between ACOM and SCICOM types of groups. Group tried to cover both, because there was experience from both contexts.

Mentoring for chairs (ACOM/SCICOM)

Challenges and issues to deal with:

- Complex issues to address (e.g. stocks combined, social-ecological impacts) => complicated knowledge production and highly diverse expert groups to manage.
- Chairs Meeting and share point and guiding documents and handbooks helps a lot, but is not enough or almost too much paper and complexity to grasp in the beginning.
- Procedures complicated, especially ACOM.
- Need for better guidance for chairs – difference between types of groups!
- ICES has a special language/jargon that we need to learn.
- Requirements higher for ACOM: Stress, last minute, persuasion, strict procedure, conflicts more likely, more “diplomacy” needed.
- A chair has a complex role: Being an interface, project manager, leading a team is an important skill to train. Chair needs to fill the gaps and think ahead.

Proposals:

0. **Actual mentoring** would be great – but is not sufficient... - More suggestions below!
 - ⇒ Transition/overlap (e.g. co-chairing for one year) with other chair who knows the ropes or having an outgoing chair in the group. Mentoring by externals if not possible. Knowledge who will take over a bit in advance to prepare new chairs (rolling?).
1. **Walk through chair documents practically** – too many documents, overwhelming.
 - ⇒ Make *WG Chairs forum* more effective as a learning occasion (less power points, more interactive).
 - ⇒ *Special chair training*: Be pedagogical and practical introducing the many (partially complicated) documents through concrete, meaningful tasks (and minimise power points)!
 - ⇒ *Easy access or way into the document library* (not just via google): Shorter and more easy to find crucial information (chairs are busy people and do not have much time to spend on searching, sometimes reading through 50 p first may be too much). Good overview.
2. **Navigating ICES - special training**. Important to know what your roles are in different types of groups, especially in the advisory process. Know the jargon related to different processes and functions.

- ⇒ Important to know how the whole of ICES works - both ACOM and SCICOM processes.
- ⇒ Introduction by/at secretariat by supporting officers (encourage first meeting with new chairs in Copenhagen!)
- ⇒ Role play leading meetings and testing all the tools
- ⇒ Hints and tricks when leading web ex meetings (could be done by web ex)
- 3. Facilitation training - face to face:** Learn the ICES way of working – how to be diplomatic and how to negotiate. Cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural communication!
- ⇒ Cross-cultural/cross-disciplinary/negotiating conflict, practicing diversity and inclusion.
- ⇒ More need now to have chair training. Set up earlier trainings again?
- 4. Special recognition/award for chairing & participating in chair trainings!**
- ⇒ Added value – on your CV and for your organisation. See chair motivation discussion!
- ⇒ Database with people with chair training (to refer to or to recruit from)

Recruiting new participants (SCICOM members are recruited and more voluntary, ACOM members are appointed by country/institute)

Challenges to address

- Many inactive nationally appointed members.
- Loosing chairs after 3 years.
- Different stocks combined – complicated group – important with coordinator (difficult assessments – several people)
- Motivating people to get involved
- ACOM – often just pointed out if expertise is right
- Vulnerability if coordinator/assessor has unique competence

Promoting chair recruitment

- Good examples – and see above.
- Make people confident to chair a group.
- Support the chairs in their leadership and facilitation (see above)!
- Awarding chair activity in terms of competence & skills and to the organisation

Member recruitment (generally easier to recruit to SCICOM groups, but resource issues)

- Chair invited members – are there any criteria (proposal: competence, ask them to refer to ToRs, country, gender,...)?
- Changing the location of the meeting – to recruit new ones (especially Mediterranean – travel expenses)
- Copenhagen nice to connect to ICES and have support from secretariate (a point to have a meeting in CPH!)
- Reports with editor/authorship is a good thing (SCICOM)
- Planning papers – planning the ToRs with papers (SCICOM)
- Training of new/prospective members in the special skills/data/models they will need (thinking ahead what will be needed at institute - especially ACOM)
- More recognition balanced with remaining anonymous (ACOM)

Group 2

Rapporteur Patrick Polte

Question 1

Of the eight participants of the group, two reported that it was easy to find a chair. In one case the initiator of a group readily took over becoming the chair. Another easy process included a group that with very proactive members actively creating the ToRs together from the very beginning. However, most participants reported difficulties in finding chairs. Reasons include:

limited worktime and funding and limited confidence that their expertise etc. can cover the entire scope of the WG.

Question 2

Of the eight participants of the group, two reported that they felt adequately prepared for becoming chair: One participant again reported that the group is on such a high level of collaboration that most group member could potentially become chair. The other example included a transition phase of the former chair staying in position for a period (until after the next meeting). However, the majority did not feel well prepared. Suggested improvements include: More ICES guidance for new chairs, especially for chairs starting new groups (and have never chaired before) need more guidance. A particular training for new chairs and directed mentorship could be solutions.

Questions 3

Guidance on how ICES is working and personal contact among ICES secretariat and chairs is provided by WGCHAIRS. However, a particular session for new chairs within WGCHAIRS would be appreciated. Maybe some (condensed) introduction to ICES structure etc. can be provided (e.g. by a video clip or web seminar). Communication with the secretariat (steering group chair) prior to WG meetings would be an advantage to make coordination and reporting more straightforward. Online guidelines and important forms, templates etc. should be easy to find and readily accessible.

Question 4

Ways to recruit new WG members include: advertising within the network of the WG, contacting other WGs with linked subjects, sessions at ASC, advertisement to scientists on conferences, attract scientists by offering cooperation and data sharing, actively approaching national representatives (which might be currently underrepresented). As most successful was considered to: use the own scientific network, active advertisement (e.g. at conferences or project meetings) and offers to collaborate.

Group 3

Rapporteur Lynda Blackadder

Introductions

A mix of very new WG chairs and some that have spent several years. No one volunteered, all have been nominated/tasked

Question 1. Has it been straightforward to identify chairs for your group? What are the reasons for this? Do you have members interested in chairing and already fulfilling leadership roles at meetings?

- No
- The more vocal members seem to get tasked with chairing.
- Interested to know the process of older chairs handing off to new chairs

Question 2: Before you took on the role of chair, did your experiences in your expert group adequately prepare you for the task? If not, what types of support and information would improve awareness of expectations for the role?

- Secretariat could invite new chairs (especially of new WGs) to shadow another meeting, listen/watch
- Being a WG member can also help prepare for a new chair
- Critical in WGs with two or more chairs to have a very good relationship, share workload.
- WGCHAIRS meeting is very effective
- Have previous chairs stay involved in the WG?

Question 3: Did the set of materials currently made available to the expert group chairs meet your needs after you took on the role of chair (welcome letter with links, guidelines, PowerPoint presentation etc)? If not, what other materials, information or contact points are needed?

- The materials are available, but still hard to understand and appreciate the nuance of chairing a WG
- Supporting officers are tremendously helpful
- Are there guidelines for ensuring diversity across WG chairs?
- Helpful to have techniques on chairing meetings, identifying personalities, summarizing discussion
- Website is not helpful to navigate
- Hard to understand the Steering Group/WG relationships
- Need clarity on the the role of the Secretariat (e.g., formatting the report)

Question 4: What are the approaches you use to recruit participants to your expert group? Which of these have been most successful, and why?

- English-speaking members tend to speak more, more comfortable speaking, and may get tasked more
- Developing a staggered approach may attract more apprehensive people
- Would be helpful to have Secretariat have a process for reviewing active/passive membership, to then approach nominating countries to request new/additive membership
- Session at the International Pectinid Conference

Group 4

Rapporteur Per Arneberg

1. It is not straightforward to recruit new chairs. Constraints are personal (not comfortable with the role, no time) and organizational (some organizations do not allow people to take on this). One must be inventive (prepare candidates for several years etc). Great advantage to have chairs that are not in the same term, i.e. an experienced chair always available.
2. Support is needed
 - a. WGCHAIRS is good for this. Some changes suggested for the meeting:
 - i. Less time on science plan etc and more time on concrete training:
 1. How to prepare a meeting
 2. How to lead a meeting
 3. Training on leading webex meetings (a lot of tricks on how to do this well is necessary to learn)
 - ii. More practical information on changes in organization of the work, e.g. on the new reporting (report not needed in interim years, but not clear always how results should be documented)
 - b. Outgoing chair provide a document with advice/information to incoming chair, good if the outgoing chair is still in the group
 - c. An active steering group chair can be a great advantage
 - d. Should be made clearer how the supporting officer can help (which they really can!), so that new chairs get familiar with this quickly.
 - e. Guidelines are not easy to find and are not read– they should be made shorter (2-3 pages with reference to a longer document)
 - Must be easier to find documents on the website (we learned from Mark they should be found through google searches)
3. Covered above
4. Recruitment.
 - a. The path of chair invited member is the easier one and should be used rather than through national delegates (which can be confusing and cause people to give up joining).
 - b. Students, people from industries and members of other groups are possible candidates.

Group 5

Rapporteur Sarah Bailey

Q1:

- Advance planning of next Chair (e.g. rotate by member state) – at start of 3 year ToR, identify who will have to put someone forward at the end
- Current Chair can help to identify next Chair, encourage them to put name forwards
- “Elections” can be held (but usually only one candidate) – one vote per country

Q2:

- Being in the EG is good experience to know what will be expected but underestimated the amount of work needed to prepare data in advance of the meeting (for assessment groups)
- For groups with multiple Chairs, should stagger the start dates so there is always a Chair with experience

Q3:

- Document from ICES to explain the benefits of being Chair to the organization – why they should support it
- The letter that comes now after acceptance, needs more of a recognition at the start – role that EG play and workload acknowledgement; should be sent to Managers directly
- Should emphasize the WGCHAIRS meeting – advance notice of meeting dates
- More feedback on interim e-evaluation form from ‘ICES’ – confirmation that it has been read and the content is acceptable; follow-up if there is an issue

Q4:

What works?

- Networking through international organizations, other projects – takes quite a lot of effort to participate at other conferences
- Personal invitation to relevant experts by Chair or ToR lead
- Identifying needed experts when ToRs are developed and inviting/encouraging attendance
- Allow/invite early career researchers to present at the meeting
- existing members can invite their own students to make presentations on relevant projects
- assessment groups can have a one-day ‘science’ day with presentations on relevant projects

Things to Try:

- Work with ICES communications officers to advertise new groups or groups needing new members
- Funding is often the limiting factor; would be nice if ICES could find ways to support travel for filling gaps in expertise, and for early career researchers
- ASC awards could be travel support to attend one open EG meeting of their choice
- ICES training group can link students to relevant EGs
- EGs could provide an online training event relevant to their group

Annex 5: Summary of Breakout Groups: Recognising and rewarding the role of expert group chairs

Group 1 and 5

Rapporteur Sonja van Leeuwen

Question 1. Is your role as expert group chair recognised as important and influential? If so, by whom and why? If not, why do you think this is the case?

Question 2. How can the role of expert group chairs be better recognised and rewarded? What actions should be taken and by whom?

In general, it seemed that chairing roles in advisory groups were recognised and supported, whereas those in science groups were not or less so. Advisory groups benefit from top-down endorsement, usually through governmental bodies that oversee the research institutes. Research group members struggle to show benefit to their employers who are usually driven by monetary and publication targets. The influence of science group chairs lies in the setting of the ToR's and the papers the group writes, but generally only the latter are seen as beneficial by employers.

ICES could help with creating more recognition for chairs at home by 1. Clearly outlining the benefits of chair positions and 2. Providing this list to national delegates and put some pressure on them to get top-down support back home for both advisory and science chairs. Some institutes have written guidelines that support ICES work (generally fisheries institutes owned by governments), and this could be brought to the attention of university and such as well. We think the national delegates can play an important role here, as experiences taught us that top-down endorsement works better than bottom-up. Another way to increase recognition back home for chairs would be the inclusion of courses and personal development, which could be used as a lever back home to justify being a chair. Currently Canada actually provides training for ICES chairs, which could serve as an example for ICES.

In terms of rewarding this group thought that receiving training would be a good reward (rather than learning on the go). But a parallel was also drawn between group chairs and institute technicians: the latter do all the hard work but generally do not get the glory of the scientific results they helped generate/collect. For technicians to feel valued they like to see how their work contributes to the overall scientific results, and be kept in the loop. ICES could do the same for chairs, particularly advisory group chairs, to show how their work is picked up and used to manage our marine environment better.

Group 2

Rapporteur Ketil Malde

1. The job as WG chair is not extremely glorious, but it doesn't need to be for individual motivation, as chairs are motivated mainly by networking and working on the scientific subject matter. Recognition by employers are important, to motivate them to accept cost in time and expenses, and also recognition within ICES.

2. We have identified the following ways to improve recognition of the role as chairs. A list of important measures (some already in place) follows below:

- Meetings like WGCHAIRS are good, and help to develop knowledge about other WGs and their chairs, and between chairs and the ICES secretariat.
- Feedback and support from the SG chair is important, especially for new chairs. Support officers are good at answering questions, but SG chairs should take a proactive role.
- Letter of recognition are great, and helps to make the work visible to employers. The secretariat should ensure that these are also sent directly to employers.
- Twitter and social media mentions are rewarding, so keep doing it, and perhaps seek out material from WGs that don't have a Twitter or other social media presence of their own.
- Opportunities for professional development, for instance courses in scientific leadership. The benefit would be both better WG management and a reward for chairs.
- Encouraging funding programmes for travel and other activities from national funding agencies, governments, and from industry.
- The WGs are almost invisible at the ICES ASG.

Group 3

Rapporteur Kiersten Curti

Question 1 – Has your role been recognised?

- Getting a certificate in the mail on printed paper is a treat
- Some said they are supported by home institutions some are not. If the home institute is supporting WGCHAIRS attendance, it is a recognition in itself.
- The role of chair is part of some people's performance plans. The group discussed having short bios of current WG Chairs on the ICES website, like there are for the current SG chairs. These could be displayed at the ASC and participants could see them.
- Many are not able to attend the ASC unless they are presenting.

Question 2 – How could they be better recognised and rewarded?

- For some the role of chair is part of their performance plan, and there was a suggestion that the text could be shared for others to see
- Short bios of the current WG chairs on ICES website (similar to the committee members)
- Providing travel support to chairs for attending the ASC, or eliminating the registration fee for EG chairs.
- Raise the profile of WG products, how the outputs are working documents (grey literature). Would there be a chance to present a section in the ICES JMS or online for WGCHAIRS.
- WGCHAIRS should have a gold chain for their name badges at ASC.

Annex 6: WGCHAIRS action list

Section	Action	Deadline	Responsible
Section 3 Quality control and TAF	Continue to calculate Mohn's rho in category 1 and 2 assessments as a measure of quality.	Ongoing	FRSG expert groups
Section 3 Quality control and TAF	EG reports should contain a figure of the confidence bounds of SSB for the current assessment and the retrospective peels.	Ongoing	FRSG expert groups
Section 3 Quality control and TAF	The WKFORBIAS decision tree should be used to ensure more consistency in how advice is provided.	Ongoing	FRSG expert groups
Section 3 Quality control and TAF	Devise an approach to follow up on other WKFORBIAS recommendations, potentially an expert group.	Ongoing	ACOM
Section 5 Technical guidelines, and working with ACOM	3 slides of advice process for expert groups to be rolled out	By beginning 2021	Advice support
Section 5 Technical guidelines, and working with ACOM	ACOM to consider reviewing the introduction to the advice	By end 2020	ACOM
Section 15 What is working well and not so well for the expert group chairs	ACOM and SCICOM will create a subgroup to work on tackling these issues. The subgroup will report to WGCHAIRS 2021.	By end 2020	ACOM and SCICOM Chairs
Section 17 ICES Science Plan implementation	ICES is keen to develop and broaden its training programme. If you as expert group chairs see opportunities for new courses to be established and/or identify areas where training might be useful for the new generation of scientists, you are invited to propose new training courses to the ICES Training Group. Please contact Anna Davies (ICES Training Coordinator) or Jan Jaap Poos (Chair of ICES Training Group).	Ongoing	EG Chairs
Section 17 ICES Science Plan implementation	SCICOM Chair suggested setting up a poll to see if there is a demand for establishing training courses on being an Expert Group Chair. He would then assess whether there would be people committed to running a stimulating course?	Super-seeded by action in Section 27	SCICOM Chair
Section 21 Drafting Executive Summaries for the "ICES Scientific Reports" series, seeking input from chairs on draft guidance	Request for feedback. Chairs were encouraged to submit any comments about the guidance for writing executive summaries (Item 21 in the meeting documents) to the ICES secretariat.	10 Feb 2020	EG Chairs

Section 26 Highlighting and disseminating science outputs from expert groups	Communications also welcome suggestions from WGCHAIRS for new series themes!	Ongoing	EG Chairs
Section 27 Mentoring for chairs of expert groups and recruiting new participants, what is needed and how can we better support it	<p>ACOM and SCICOM chairs to work with Steering Group chairs, ACOM leadership and Secretariat to establish an Expert Group Chairs Training Course to first be run alongside the 2021 WGCHAIRS meeting. All existing and incoming expert group chairs will be invited to participate.</p> <p>A plan will be developed and consider ways to include at least the following content:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Roles of expert group chairs - Introduction to ICES structures and processes - Interacting with a steering groups - Role of secretariat and supporting officers - Chairing techniques: planning and leading meetings, assessing strengths of participants, giving voice, resolving debate, summarising, reporting, online meeting tools and interaction, meeting etiquette - What is a conflict of interest? - Modules/ breakouts: Fixed-term expert groups, Annual expert groups <p>Existing expert group chairs will be further consulted on content as the course develops.</p>		
Section 31 Recognising and rewarding the role of expert group chairs	ICES to provide a booth at the ASC 2020 poster sessions on the Tuesday and Wednesday nights, with general advertising banners, screens and materials to promote joining an expert group- and to say something about the benefits that can result. Requests for expert group chairs to contribute and promote their groups, and expert groups more widely, will be posted on the WGCHAIRS forum and the contributors will work with ICES Conference Co-ordinator to establish a booth and rota	29 Feb 2020	SCICOM Chair (actioned via WGCHAIRS Forum 31/1/2020 and 14/2/2020 but postponed until 2021 owing to subsequent postponement of 2020 ASC)
Section 31 Recognising and rewarding the role of expert group chairs	At WGCHAIRS 2021 review the content and recipients of the letter of recognition for expert group chairs, as sent by ICES secretariat at the end of chair terms, and recommend improvements to the letter and process, with	28 Jan 2021	ACOM and SCICOM Chairs

the aim of providing more effective recognition for expert group chairs.

Section 31
Recognising and rewarding
the role of expert group
chairs

As part of the ongoing reformulation of ICES website, ACOM and SCICOM chairs to work with ICES secretariat to develop and propose an approach (on WGCHAIRS Forum) for linking expert group chair names to institutional and local bios.

ACOM and
SCICOM
Chairs
