

ICES CO₂ Footprint Characterization and Reduction Initiative

Status Report to Council Regarding the Development of a Strategy for Characterizing and Reducing ICES CO₂ Footprint

During the June, 2019 Bureau Meeting, participants discussed recent communications from Bill Turrell (UK: Scotland) regarding challenges and opportunities for ICES related to the climate crisis and the need to reduce our CO₂ footprint. Since then, we have sketched out the following initial steps:

1. Setting up an informal discussion with interested individuals during the 2019 ASC
2. Drafting TORs for a potential strategic initiative
3. Working with SCICOM on ways we could highlight the climate change agenda at next year's ASC
4. Looking for ways to bring innovative ideas forward through broader engagement
5. Proposing a Network Session to enable community discussions at the 2020 ASC (which has been accepted)

Discussions held during the 2019 ASC (through the informal discussion mentioned above and during the Bureau meeting) highlighted the following:

- There are three distinct but overlapping sets of challenges we face as an organization. The first concerns the global climate crisis and the importance of ICES taking a leadership role in reducing our own carbon footprint and working with other organizations in a collaborative manner. The second involves the need to understand and mitigate the risk to ICES relative to our own business model which is highly dependent on travel and in-person participation in conferences, meetings and workshops. The third involves our leadership role in delivering the science to support emission reductions.
- As an organization we have already made a substantial investment in technology to facilitate remote meetings and will continue to develop this capacity. Progress to date and future plans should be recognized.
- As we analyze current activities and plan for change, we must recognize and take into account activities which are directly within ICES purview and those that are carried out nationally in support of ICES work. Our initial focus should be activities within ICES purview.
- Even though a medium- and long-term strategy is required, there is a need for immediate (or short-term) action which should include:
 - o Improving remote access capacity for networking, meetings and workshops

- Improving remote access and participation for oral and poster presentations
- Seeking opportunities to consolidate meetings and otherwise reduce need for participants to travel
- Consider multi-hub meetings to reduce international travel
- Be mindful of inclusivity challenges – if travel budgets are reduced this could make it harder for early career scientists to become established. On the other hand, improved remote participation should enable a broader range of individuals to become involved in ICES activities
- For in-person meetings which involve catering, favor vegetarian choices
- Recognize that institutional and individual actions will be necessary
- ICES should be taking a leadership role and should be visible, but we must avoid lobbying. It might be helpful to develop and state an overarching ICES Philosophy for Carbon Footprint Reduction.
- Ensure participation in this process from the entire ICES organization, including staff, early career scientists, etc.
- Costs associated with actions taken under this initiative should be tracked and reported

We have drafted the following TORs for consideration by Council:

1. Develop a strategy for estimating and publishing the ICES community CO2 footprint at an appropriate level of resolution
 - a) Investigate the possibility of using an existing guide/framework such as the one available from the Carbon Trust
 - b) Focus first on defining the “ICES Community”, i.e. activities that are organized directly by ICES
2. Survey member countries and other organizations to determine if they have:
 - a) Conducted CO2 footprint audits
 - b) Developed targets and strategies for short- and long-term reduction of their CO2 footprints
3. Draft a CO2 footprint reduction strategy for ICES which:
 - a) Sets short-and long-term targets
 - b) Establishes overall CO2 budget reduction trajectories for Science, Advice, Secretariat, and Leadership
 - c) Seeks input from throughout the organization (top-down and bottom-up)
 - d) Encourages and resources innovations that reduce ICES related travel, improve remote meeting capabilities, develop remote networking, etc

- e) Considers and consolidates accomplishments under TORs 4,5,6 and 7 below
- 4. Consider and evaluate the potential for developing the capacity to advise member countries and others on CO2 footprint reduction strategies
- 5. Together with other relevant organizations, consider approaches for auditing and reducing the CO2 footprint of research vessels and develop guidance as appropriate (recognizing that ICES cannot do this alone)
- 6. Together with other relevant organizations, consider approaches for auditing and reducing the CO2 footprint of fishing and aquaculture operations and develop guidance as appropriate (recognizing that ICES cannot do this alone)
- 7. Work with partner organizations such as PICES and OSPAR, to develop joint policies and procedures and take a leadership role in CO2 reduction strategy development and implementation