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Minutes from the ICES Council Meeting

17-18 October 2017

Copenhagen, Denmark



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ICES 105th Statutory Meeting Minutes
Copenhagen, Denmark
Chair: Cornelius Hammer
18-19 October 2017

1 Opening

The President welcomed meeting participants, new Council delegates, as well as first time participants at the meeting. A full participants list is available in section 11.4 of this report. Meeting participants adopted the agenda with no additions.

1.1 President's review

Council delegates reviewed the follow-up, in relation to actions decided at the 2016 Council meeting as described in the document **CM 2017 Del-1.1**.

2 ICES Strategic Plan and Implementation plans

2.1 ICES Strategic Plan and implementation plans

The General Secretary presented the development of a rolling strategic plan based on four to five year outlook, with an annual review of progress to identify needs for adjustments or resources in relation to goals (as described in **CM_2017_Del-2.1**). The new strategic plan will be a 3 component plan, and will comprise a top-level plan aimed at communicating the ICES vision and mission externally, a second level of objectives and sub-objectives common to all pillars of the organization, and a third level that will link operational tasks to the upper level goals and objectives.

The strategic planning process will be run as an iterative process with feedback from member countries. The process aims to be aspirational but also to use a bottom-up approach trying to link activities to the resources available and to anchor the process in the organization to ensure buy-in at all levels. This coordinated approach aims to facilitate monitoring of progress and reporting on results in a common way among the ICES pillars.

Council Delegates were requested to submit a shortlist of national science priorities (3-5) for discussion and to ensure that these are considered in the preparation of the objectives and implementation plan starting in 2019. Given the short response time, some Delegates were unable to provide a response in advance of the meeting. Feedback from Delegates not only about national science priorities, but also member country expectations for ICES could also be solicited as input to the process. Further synthesis of the priorities submitted is needed. The process being run at the Council level is complimentary and coordinated with the SCICOM process (through the Coordination group).

Tammo Bult led a special session to get further input from Council members on priorities using interactive software from mmeet.net. Participants were able to add additional priorities and then rank them. A wordle generated by the software based on participants input showed ecosystem as an important component. There were a lot of commonalities in the responses provided. International and North Atlantic priorities will also be identified and considered as part of the strategic planning process.

3 Finance

3.1 Finance Committee Report

The Chair of Finance Committee, Piotr Margonski presented the annual report of the group as provided in **CM_2017_Del-3.1**. Council **approved** the report from the Finance Committee, as well as:

- the final accounts 2016, including Audit Book; and
- the proposed budget for 2018, noting that the national contributions have already been decided.

Given the expected deficit in coming years, Finance Committee recommended, and Bureau supported a new strategy for securing regular increases in national contributions by requesting Member Countries commit to an automatic annual increase equivalent to the Danish inflation rate. This proposal was not approved by Council.

For some countries an automatic increase could not be accepted and could jeopardize their continuing participation in the organization.

It was agreed that Council should agree on the national contributions for 2019 by electronic voting by the end of 2017.

Action: The Secretariat will, with contribution from the Chair of the Finance Committee, prepare a letter to be sent to member countries requesting an increase in contributions for 2019 by 1.3%, derived from the Danish inflation rate.

3.2 New Clients and MoUs

The General Secretary informed Council about the status of negotiations with Member Countries wishing to also be recognized as “Advice requesters” as described in the document **CM 2017 Del-Doc 3.2**.

ICES and Norway have now established an MoU for providing advice that recognizes Norway as an advice requester and helps ICES to move towards full cost recovery of the advisory system. Negotiations with other member countries that receive advice have started or are under development.

3.3 Project update

Wojciech Wawrzynski, Head of Science Support, provided an update of projects as described in **CM 2017 Del-Doc-3.3**. ICES Secretariat continues to facilitate engagement on relevant project calls according to ICES project policy. Projects that include or allow for participation of all ICES Member Countries (i.e. North American participation in EU projects) are preferred.

4 Report from the Council Strategic Initiative on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and Ecosystem Approach (CSIMSFDEA)

The General Secretary provided an update on the CSIMSFDEA as outlined in **CM_2017_Del-4** as well as highlighting the ecosystem approach work on-going in ICES.



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Council supported the continuation of the group, recognizing that the ecosystem approach work is broader than the EU's MSFD and should be reflected with an appropriate group name, that integrated monitoring should be a focus of the work, and that a new Chair with revised Terms of Reference are needed.

Tammo Bult expressed conditional interest to Chair the initiative. He would like to explore if he can create a situation where explicit ecosystem advice be requested from ICES.

The United Kingdom, France, and the US all supported continuation of the group and expressed interest to engage on taking the initiative forward.

Action: Tammo Bult conditionally agreed to Chair the group pending discussions with the Dutch Ministry, if the appropriate conditions are met, revised terms of reference will be circulated for Council approval early in 2018.

5 Reports from the Council Strategic Initiative on Maritime Trans-Atlantic Cooperation (CSIMTC)

Fritz Köster, First Vice-President and Co-Chair of CSIMTC reported on the 2017 activities of the group as described in **CM 2017 Del-5**.

Transatlantic Cooperation through the Atlantic Ocean Research Alliance (AORA) continues to develop. ICES and the Ocean Frontier Institute (OFI) are continuing to discuss ways to work together to promote trans-Atlantic cooperation. The EU has also expanded its research and innovation cooperation in the South Atlantic through an agreement with Brazil and South Africa. This provides an opportunity for ICES to contribute to the Coordination and Support Action for this new agreement.

There is a potential opportunity for ICES (members) to contribute to the ocean mapping component of [AORA](#) and member states are encouraged to flag their interest.

Further opportunities and strategies for facilitating Canadian and US engagement in EU projects continues to be explored, and are expected to improve in specific funding instruments in future, both in H2020 and in FP9.

ICES participation in Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs) is a good fit for the organization and positions ICES to ensure trans-Atlantic cooperation through greater involvement of CA and US, by providing feedback on how the EU framework can be implemented for greatest impact and engagement with all Atlantic partners.

CSIMTC also supported the idea to create a list of trans-Atlantic reviewers, to be used as a trans-Atlantic service, to facilitate independent review. The ICES Resource Coordination Tool could be helpful and used in this regard.

Action: CSIMTC will continue to work on its Terms of Reference during 2018 and will support ICES engagement and response on appropriate CSA project calls, specifically referring to BG1 and BG 8A in the H2020, 2018-2020 programme.

Member Countries, interested in participating in seabed mapping activities in the Northern part of the North Atlantic should contact the two co-chairs, Fritz Köster or Alain Vezina.

6 Elections and Appointments

Vice-Presidents Tammo Bult (NL), Pierre Petitgas (FR), and Kai Myrberg (FI) completed their 3-year terms (Terms ending 31 October 2017).

In accordance with the relevant rules of procedure, following a nomination procedure on the first day of Council, and an electronic voting procedure on the second day, three new Vice-Presidents were elected: Manuela Azevedo (PT), Per Sandberg (NO), and Carl O'Brien (UK) will serve on Bureau from 1 November 2017 – 31 October 2020.

Council thanked the three outgoing Vice-presidents for their valuable contributions and dedication to ICES work.

7 ICES Science

7.1 Report from the SCICOM Chair

7.1.1 Annual Progress Report

The Chair of the Science Committee (SCICOM), Simon Jennings, provided a summary report on the 2017 activities of SCICOM as outlined in **CM 2017 Del-7.1.1**.

The presentation highlighted SCICOM and network news in 2017:

- New Steering Group Chairs bedding successfully into roles
- Collective and urgent focus on identifying future science priorities
- EG linked to SCICOM attended by 1035 scientists in 2017 (to date)
- Outputs including books and papers from Expert Groups
- Filling remaining small gaps in delivery of Science Plan
- Four co-sponsored symposia: 2 to come
- ASC 556 attendees from 33 countries, 264 presentations
- ASC 18 Theme Sessions, 14 Open Sessions and 30 business meetings
- ICES published six CRR, two TIMES and three ID leaflets
- Five training courses: 2 to come
- Growing focus on identifying and highlighting strong science in the network
- More active links are being supported between science, advice and data

SCICOM and ACOM are also discussing a plan to bring ACOM expert groups under a new steering group to promote integration between committees. The implementation of a full-time SCICOM Chair is helping to move initiatives forward to embed integration and cooperation with ACOM.

ICES Viewpoints are being developed in three areas: Fish production in the arctic; Consequences of large fish stocks; and vectors and management of invasive species.

Council commended the report from SCICOM, noting the importance of the science priorities work and ensuring coordination between on-going processes at the Council level. The importance of including regional as well as national priorities was also highlighted.



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7.1.2 Aquaculture

Wojciech Wawrzynski, Head of Science Support provided Council an update on latest developments within Aquaculture as described in **CM 2017 Del-7.1.2**. The Terms of reference for the Aquaculture Steering Group have been approved by SCICOM and Mike Rust (US) was elected Chair. Council was requested to nominate potential Chairs and members to contribute to the Aquaculture working groups. The UK, Norway, and Ireland all committed to nominating experts to relevant aquaculture working groups.

7.1.3 Arctic

The General Secretary provided Council with an update on the latest developments within the Arctic as outlined in **CM 2017 Del-7.1.3.2**, including ICES participation in various meetings under the Arctic Council and the Scientific Experts on Fish Stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean.

Council was requested to help ensure ICES receives an invitation to participate in the 2nd Arctic Science Ministerial meeting, scheduled to take place in Berlin, 25-26 October 2018.

A proposal was developed (**CM 2017 Del-7.1.3.1**) in order to provide Eskild Kirkegaard, ACOM Chair, with a basis to offer the ICES platform for supporting any future joint programme of scientific research and monitoring that may result from the Fifth meeting of the Scientific Fisheries Experts on Fish Stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean (FiSCAO), 24-26 October, Ottawa, Canada. Council supported the revised version of the proposal.

Council agreed with the approach of working within existing structures for supporting science in the Arctic, building on existing cooperation with PICES to include Asian countries to ICES work. The suggestion to investigate the potential of arranging an ICES–PICES meeting with representatives from Asian countries responsible for Arctic issues was also supported. Such a meeting could be planned back to back with the 4th ICES/PICES/IOC/FAO Symposium on Climate Change and Impacts on the World's Oceans, 4–8 June 2018, Washington D.C., USA.

Action: Council endorsed the proposal to support Arctic research and/or monitoring programme with an offer of the ICES platform for presentation by Eskild Kirkegaard, ACOM Chair at the 5th FiSCAO meeting, 24-26 October 2017.

The General Secretary will investigate the potential to organize a joint ICES–PICES Arctic meeting inviting representatives from Asian countries.

7.2 2017 and forthcoming Annual Science Conferences

The Annual Science Conference in Fort Lauderdale attracted 556 attendees from 33 countries. There was wide engagement of attendees in the meeting with 264 platform presentations in 18 Theme Sessions, as well as 14 open sessions and 30 ICES business and related meetings.

The 2018 Annual Science Conference will be hosted by Germany in Hamburg. The 2019 Annual Science Conference will be hosted by Sweden.

Council discussed the potential to accept invitations to host future ASCs from non-member countries, concluding this could be possible provided it would not limit the potential for scientists and technical staff from member countries to attend.

Potential hosts of future ASCs from non-member countries should be encouraged to participate in ICES activities including the ASC to establish links to the network.

Action: Council welcomed:

- The invitation from United Kingdom to host the 2021 Annual Science Conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland.
- The indication by Portugal of its intention to host the ASC in 2020 in Lisbon. This initial indication will be confirmed in advance of the 2018 Council meeting.

8 ICES Advisory Services

8.1 Report from the ACOM Chair

8.1.1 Annual Progress Report

The Chair of the Advisory Committee, Eskild Kirkegaard, provided a report on the activities of ACOM, with a specific focus on challenges and work plan of the committee as described in **CM 2017 Del-8.1.1**.

Advice issued during 2017 (until September):

Recurrent Advice:

- Advice on fishing opportunities for 207 stocks;
- 3 advice on ecosystem impacts of fishing activities;
- 2 ecosystem and 2 fisheries overviews

Special Requests:

- 22 special requests on impact of fisheries, in-year advice of fishing opportunities, Fmsy ranges, MSFD guidance, pressures and impact on seafloor, evaluation of fisheries management strategies, impacts of climate change on salmon;

Advisory Services:

- 2 technical services.

In order to ensure better support from the community for ecosystem advice, as well as the developing ecosystem and fisheries overviews, the Advisory Committee is looking to make changes to working procedures within the current structure.

Council discussed how they could help support and strengthen the work of the Advisory Committee, the following points were noted:

- ICES is already responding to requests for ecosystem advice, it should build on its reputation for providing ecosystem advice, this will also help to attract the necessary experts to participate in ICES work.
- The source of the problem of lack of engagement within ACOM from alternates/non-fisheries experts is unclear, if related to communication this should be investigated and resolved.
- Professionalization of ACOM leadership may be part of the problem contributing to lack of engagement and buy-in from national representatives on ACOM.
- The role of ACOM member may not be fully understood when they are appointed. A part of the solution will be to try to develop a task list and describe the role and expectations.

- Strengthening the fisheries advice is also important.
- For some countries, the relevant expertise needed is not available/present.
- Support for the approach of avoiding creating additional organizational structures.
- Should consider if the model used for fisheries advice is equally appropriate for non-fisheries advice.
- Special requests provide important financial resources to the organization and cannot simply be refused.
- The business model for the environmental advice should be strengthened by linking to prioritized projects (also as alternative to special requests); consequences of structural changes or changes in work procedure would have influence on the outcomes.

Action: The ACOM Chair will work with ACOM, and engage Council Delegates as necessary to develop job descriptions for Advisory Committee members. Following the meeting the ACOM and SCICOM chairs agreed to provide these position descriptions for review by Bureau at the February 2018 meeting.

Delegates are to help nominate and orient the necessary expertise to support the advisory process for fisheries and ecosystem requests.

Delegates should discuss with national ACOM members about how to ensure ACOM is capable to address fisheries and non-fisheries requests.

8.1.2 Progress on the pilot project on update assessments

Neil Holdsworth, Head of Data and Information reported on the progress of the Transparent Assessment Framework project as described in **CM 2017 Del-9**. The system will make all ICES stock assessment input data, analyses, and results available online. TAF will pipeline the data flow, starting from the ICES fisheries and survey databases and ending by submitting the results to the ICES stock assessment graphs database. By making the analysis open and reproducible, TAF will also make it easier to prepare and run update assessments with a new year of data.

8.1.3 Quality assurance in the Advisory Process

Eskild Kirkegaard, ACOM Chair provided a presentation about the advisory process and how it supports the quality of the advice produced. Several initiatives have been undertaken recently to help support all parts of the advisory process that are within ICES influence.

Model methods sometimes do not reflect the stock status, however ICES continues to make improvements to the system through initiatives like TAF, training, benchmarks, and method groups. The change to a transparent framework for advice has changed the system making it more rigid.

Tammo Bult chaired another interactive session using the mmeet.net software to get feedback from Council on how to improve advice quality.

A majority of participants indicated they were in position that could help steer the quality of the data delivered to ICES as well as the participation in ICES expert groups.

The main concern identified during the session was with problem identification, finding out where/why things went wrong. Errors are increasingly acceptable to discuss, they present an opportunity to improve, ICES should foster this culture to help ensure the advice continues to improve.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

- Errors help us to identify ways to improve. But we should also be able to define when things are going to plan.
- Greater attention to communication is need. ICES should make a release about the improvements in the system, it would be helpful for Member Countries dealing with specific issues related to errors in the advice.
- Sometimes there is a change in the perception without a change in the biology, further consideration about how to communicate when there is a change in the advice when there is no change in the system is needed.
- The external perception of the Advice is very important and linked to effective communication. The role of an independent external review of advice could be helpful.
- The ICES Cooperative Research Report ([CRR 327](#)) on MSP Quality Management may have relevant reflections.
- Ecosystem issues are not covered by the responses. Model developers should be included in the benchmark process.
- ICES could use the EU Data Collection Framework to influence data quality through the regional coordination groups.

Conclusion of the session:

- Council comprises members able to steer some of the issues of quality within the ICES system
- The potential for a more formalized quality check should be investigated (ISO or similar standard)
- Direction is needed on how to make impact and to communicate with the Delegates on quality improvements.

Action: ACOM will further discuss advice quality and ways to improve at their meeting in November. Bureau will consider the Council discussion and ACOM deliberations and outline specific actions at the June 2018 Bureau meeting.

ACOM, and the Secretariat will issue a communication on improvements in the ICES system in order to ensure quality controlled advice, and the role of the member countries herein by 30 November.

8.1.4 Industry and NGO Expert Participation

At the request of Norway, Council engaged in a discussion regarding the existing ICES observer rules, industry expert participation in the advisory process, and the code of conduct and conflict of interest policy. A background document including a summary of current procedures and issues was submitted in **CM 2017 Del-8.1.4**.

Council discussed the issues and the following points were noted:

- Participation should not be based on “knowing” specific experts or due to a lack of resources.
- The definition of an expert and roles are important in this discussion.



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- ICES reputation is paramount. The issues should be addressed noting the strength in the responsibility of Delegates for nominating experts.
- If ICES aims to include the best possible experts, a system is needed that outlines the associated affiliation (who is getting paid by who).
- The current code of conduct should be reviewed and amended as necessary to outline the expectations of behaviour for experts participating in ICES work.
- The existing guidelines have been very helpful when situations have arisen, but it is important for these guidelines to be known to the community and to the Chairs.
- Allowing NGO and industry expert participation makes it harder for them to criticize the outcomes/advice if they have been part of the process.
- The present system was decided by informed decisions. Participation in their capability as scientist should be possible, but should be supported by a transparent process and appropriate handling of CoI. The burden is then on the Chair. Inappropriate behaviour can originate from any scientist.
- The Canadian science advisory process allows industry experts based on that all relevant experts should be included, through a transparent process.
- Chairs need to be informed of the rules.

Action: Council established a Working Group on ICES Code of Conduct (CWGCODE) to engage primarily by correspondence during 2017/2018 to review and evaluate ICES procedures related to experts in the advisory process, code of conduct, and conflict of interest. The group will use the existing code of conduct as a starting point.

CWGCODE will provide an update on progress to the February and June Bureau meetings, with the aim to present a proposal for Council decision at the 2018 meeting.

Tammo Bult (NL) will Chair the group with participants: Per Sandberg, Olafur Astthorsson, Pierre Petitgas, Alain Vezina, Chris Zimmermann, Carl O'Brien and/or Matt Gubbins, Eskild Kirkegaard, Simon Jennings, Anne Christine Brusendorff.

8.2 Modernization of ICES work processes

The meeting document **CM 2017 Del-8.2** outlines initiatives and investments taken to help modernize working procedures and reduce manual work. The document provided part of the background information for the discussion under AI 8.1.

9 Data and Information Services

The Head of Data and Information, Neil Holdsworth provided a 2017 status report on the activities and deliverables by the Data and Information Group and the Data and Information Centre as described in **CM 2017 Del-9**. Reporting that ICES has progressed a significant way along the path to a fully connected and transparent framework for data coming into, and going out of ICES. We are still carrying risk in whether we will be able to deliver all that has been anticipated in the strategic plan, and with Council investment. However, based on the progress outlined in the report, things are currently on track.

Council commended the work conducted, requested clarification on the governance of data and how the quality is assessed and managed. ICES has a continual feedback on the use of the data through the working groups. With feedback received from both formal and informal channels.

The importance of disaggregated data and the need to ensure the data is fit for purpose for assessments and advice was highlighted.

The time consuming data preparation process for the VME database is a work in progress, and the Data and Information Centre together with WGDEC will look into how to improve the process.

10 Secretariat

The General Secretary, Anne Christine Brusendorff provided Council with a 2017 status report on the activities and deliverables by the Secretariat as outlined in **CM 2017 Del-10**.

Council was requested to provide feedback on information/report needs related to national participation in ICES activities (to assist with the design of reports to be generated from the Resource Coordination Tool (RCT)).

Volunteers are needed to participate in a pilot project testing a new portal for the nomination of experts in the RCT during 2018.

Council commended the work of the Secretariat towards automation of routine tasks. A report was requested on the development of the staff at the Secretariat over the past 5-10 years to see how the departments and profiles have developed.

Action:

The Secretariat will present information to Council at the next meeting on the development of the staff at the Secretariat over the past 5-10 years to show the development of the departments and profiles over time.

Delegates from Ireland, Poland, Portugal, UK, and US volunteered to provide feedback on reports from the Resource coordination tool, and the nominations portal, during 2018.

11 Any other Business

11.1 Rules of Procedure

Council delegates discussed a proposal to update the Rules of Procedure, as outlined in **CM 2017 Del-11.1** following the establishment of full-time positions for the SCICOM and ACOM chairs, and their recruitment procedures.

One member country objected to the change citing that the proposed removal of the step in the recruitment process may not provide sufficient “buy-in” from the committees to the process.

Given feedback from candidates in the recruitment process, further consideration of the protection of applicants’ privacy must also be considered.

Action: Bureau will discuss this again at its February meeting, and report back to Council in 2018.



11.2 Conflict of Interest

A new Council working Group on the ICES code of conduct was established (See section 8.1.4 of this report).

11.3 Date of the next meeting

The next statutory meeting will take place 17–18 October 2018.

11.4 Participants list

Alain Vezina	Canada
Fritz W. Köster	Denmark
Robert Aps	Estonia
Kai Myrberg	Finland
Ari Leskelä	Finland
Pierre Petitgas	France
Christopher Zimmermann	Germany
Gerd Kraus	Germany
Olafur S. Astthorsson	Iceland
Sigurdur Gudjonsson	Iceland
Jeffrey Fisher	Ireland
Michael Gillooly	Ireland
Didzis Ustups	Latvia
Joost Backx	Netherlands
Tammo Bult	Netherlands
Sissel Rogne	Norway
Per Sandberg	Norway
Piotr Margonski	Poland
Maria Ana Martins	Portugal
Manuela Azevedo	Portugal
Cornelius Hammer	President
Oleg Bulatov	Russia
Konstantin Drevetnyak	Russia
Karin Victorin	Sweden
Staffan Danielsson	Sweden
Matthew J. Gubbins	United Kingdom

Carl O'Brien	United Kingdom
William Karp	United States
Jonathan A. Hare	United States
Eskild Kirkegaard	ACOM Chair
Simon Jennings	SCICOM Chair
Anne Christine Brusendorff	ICES Secretariat
Lotte Worsøe Clausen	ICES Secretariat
Neil Holdsworth	ICES Secretariat
Wojciech Wawrzynski	ICES Secretariat
Ellen Johannesen	ICES Secretariat

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