

Integrated Ecosystem Assessments

The meeting will be updated on the progress of integrated ecosystem assessments.

Integrated Ecosystem Assessments – update

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IEA Expert Groups

ICES has 6 Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) Expert Groups: the Baltic Sea (WGIAB), the North Sea (WGINOSE), the North Atlantic Regional Sea (WGNARS), the Western European Shelf Seas (WGEAWESS), the Norwegian Sea (WGINOR), and the Barents Sea (WGIBAR).

For the Baltic Sea there are currently two processes having very similar goals; the WGIAB and the DEMO project under the Baltic Sea Centre, Stockholm University. The DEMO project includes four workshops chaired by Maciej T. Tomczak (Stockholm University, Sweden) and Christian Möllmann (University of Hamburg, Germany).

The two processes are relaying on the same group of experts and it will in practice be very difficult to distinguish between the two processes. ICES and the Baltic Sea Centre are, therefore, in dialogue on how to coordinate the two initiatives.

A strategic DEMO and ICES joint process would provide a strong case study for publication in high impact journals showing a worked example of how incorporating new insights can have a transformative impact on operational advice. Through the cooperation ICES will enrich the science base for IEAs and related advice.

A discussion has been initiated with the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME) and Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), to cooperate on IEAs performed in Arctic waters (see more information in Arctic Document provided by SCICOM Chair)

Ecosystem overviews

The ecosystem overviews (EO) are part of the IEA process to provide a concise and informative introduction to ecoregions considered in the ICES advice. The EOs are deliberately projected to inform the advice and management process. The overviews are intended to promote progress towards the delivery of integrated advice by ICES; where integration refers to (a) taking account of the effects of multiple human pressures on the environment when developing management advice, (b) accounting for the effects of the most influential environmental and ecosystem processes on advice, and (c) considering multiple objectives.

The target audience for the ecosystem overviews is ICES (and other) advisors who develop advice on marine or fisheries management and the broader audience of policy developers across Europe. The focus of the overviews is therefore to explain processes linking status to pressures and drivers of the ecosystem. The Overviews are not classic "status" reports which are static and do not describe the dynamics of the system. The Ecosystem Overviews are progressing structurally. So far EOs have been developed for the Greater North Sea, the Bay of Biscay, the Iberian coast, and the Celtic Seas.

We have sent out requests to the chairs of various SCICOM and ACOM working groups, to begin a dialogue about getting the groups to provide input into the state description sections of the ecosystem overviews.

Operational Oceanographic Products (OOPS)

The Ecosystem Overviews will be supported by Oceanographic data. Therefore, ICES launched a call for Operational Oceanographic Products and the response was quite successful with 8 submissions. These ranged from physical oceanography to zooplankton time series. Most of ICES ecoregions were covered. The objective of the OOPS initiative is to develop relationships with oceanographic product suppliers and create mechanisms to feed these products through to the ICES Data Centre for use by our community and in the ecosystem overviews.