

Revised October 21, 2014

Contribution by Advisory Programme staff members to the Council discussion of the Bureau's Proposal to Strengthen the Advisory Leadership.**Purpose:** Advisory staff¹ input on the Bureau's overall proposal to strengthen the Advisory Leadership.

As Advice staff, we are thoroughly invested in the quality of ICES advisory products and the successful functioning of the entire advisory system. We are not only "staff"; we are members of the *ICES Advisory Team* invested in creating a successful advisory system that can sustain itself while building the institutional capacity of ICES for the future. As Secretariat staff we are satisfied with the current Advisory Leadership and we are not aware of problems in relation to the provision of scientifically qualified advice. In case the Bureau proposal goes forward we identify a range of issues as commented below. We certainly have a keen interest in the successful functioning of the Advisory Leadership and we offer this input for Bureau and Council's consideration. The input is provided from the collective history of the current staff, having worked with several ACOM Leadership teams and Advisory Department heads, not only the status quo.

The proposal could better ensure the success of achieving the goals of the ICES Strategic Plan (ISP) through clear and concise articulation of: (1) objectives, roles and responsibilities, (2) resourcing, and (3) recruitment.

1. Clear definition of objectives, roles and responsibilities

- a) Advice staff and Bureau both value clearly defined roles and responsibilities of ACOM and the Secretariat. The ISP clearly states that, "The ICES Secretariat is important to ensuring an efficient, effective organization that adds value. The Secretariat is committed to facilitating and supporting the work conducted under the ICES Convention and the Copenhagen Declaration by parties and stakeholders, using the highest standards of professionalism and competence." That said, there is uncertainty in what "facilitating and supporting" actually means in an operational sense, and these uncertainties increase with this proposal as its goals are not measurable. Should the proposal go ahead, better articulating the job descriptions of the ACOM Chair and Head of ACOM Support, will reduce these uncertainties from the top down, enabling us all to effectively support the implementation of the ISP and the ICES community writ large using objective measures of success.

2. Resourcing an overburdened system

- a) Working to ensure that the capacity and resources required are available to successfully implement the associated plans of science, advice, and data is a central tenet of the ISP. The entire advisory system is extremely overburdened at every level—from experts to staff to the ACOM Leadership. It is laudable to reward people appropriately for their working hours, however, it should be taken into consideration that this will not solve the resource problem if these assets are already working at full capacity.
- b) In recent memory, those who have held the position of Head of Advisory Program have served the advisory system via their substantial intellectual capacity and institutional memory. The proposed position of Head of ACOM Support does not allocate such resources to this position. We ask that the value of these resources not be underestimated, as this could further contribute to the overburdening of the ICES advisory system, and that these resources will need to be sourced elsewhere.
- c) The implementation of the proposal will result in a discrepancy in ICES Head of Program positions and committee structure among the departments and committees within ICES.

3. Sourcing the right resources to accomplish the goals of the ICES Strategic Plan

- a) Due to the nature of the positions, there is a limited pool of applicants for the position of ACOM Chair while there is a global pool of qualified applicants for the Head of ACOM Support. ICES is perceived as providing unbiased advice on the sustainable use of marine resources. This perception is achieved through transparency and the maintenance of scientific integrity among clients, and advisory leadership (ACOM and Dept. Head). Successful implementation of the ISP requires key human resources and reconfiguring the hiring process by announcing the position for the future ACOM Chair, in combination with the proposed ACOM support position, may better serve the long-term goals of the ICES community. The current proposal runs the risk of creating an unbalanced structure within advisory leadership.
- b) Securing the needed resources to support ICES advisory services by recruiting and retaining highly qualified staff into an organization, which will have no scope for professional growth, may alter the applicant pool for the majority of positions and compromise the quality of Secretarial support to the ICES community.

¹ Not all advisory staff participated in the the development of this document.