

Definitions, components, and administrative structures of white, discussion, position, and policy papers

At its October 2012 meeting (meeting 230), the Bureau discussed a recommendation from PUBCOM¹ requesting the Bureau to define the need for, components of, and administrative structures for position, white, discussion, and policy papers. PUBCOM requested this guidance as a consequence of the unclear process in developing CRR 310 ICES Status Report on Climate Change in the North Atlantic, which initially was to be a position paper.

Based on the deliberations at the October 2012 Bureau meeting, the below was defined for each type of paper: definition; components; and administrative structure, and was distributed within ICES. This was done with the aim to give guidance on the harmonized use of the terms (white, position, and policy papers), to facilitate ICES work, and to ensure quality control of ICES documents. Thus it should be, in each case evaluated, on the basis of the guidance given in the document, which kind of paper is being developed and what administrative procedure is implied.

Following the distribution within ICES, one delegate requested this matter to be forwarded to Council for discussion and decision.

1 Definitions

a) Position Paper

- A position paper represents an organization's official view on a particular topic.
- A position paper is internally generated and may not respond to a specific request.
- Development and issuance of an ICES position paper requires approval from the appropriate body, *i.e.* Science Committee (for science matters), Advisory Committee (for advisory matters), and/or Bureau/ Council (for institutional issues).

Requisite components and administrative structure

1 PUBCOM Recommendation

The Bureau should address the following issues and the outcome of considerations should be made available to PUBCOM, SCICOM, and ACOM:

- i) Define and clearly distinguish between a white paper, position paper, and policy document.
- ii) Identify and clearly distinguish the need for ICES white, position, and policy papers and how such papers might advance the work and stature of ICES.
- iii) Describe the requisite components of ICES white, position, and policy papers, and how these components are to be prepared, reviewed, and completed.
- iv) Develop a general administrative structure to ensure the timely production, review, and publication of ICES white, position, and policy papers.

A position paper should include a description of the issue, a statement of the official view of ICES on the issue that is supported by evidence, and reference to the ICES approval procedure that gives authority for the paper to be labelled “ICES Position Paper”.

Examples: the two documents “[ICES and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive \(MSFD\)](#)” and “[ICES and RIO+20](#)”.

b) White Paper

- A white paper is a consultation document used to acquire ideas, comments, and views from external and internal constituencies on particular issues; and/or
- A transitional step before implementing organizational strategies, policies, or processes leading to policy recommendations.

Example: the document “[Integration of fisheries surveys and environmental monitoring](#)”.

c) Discussion Paper

- A discussion paper is an internal document that facilitates discussion on specific issues.
- A discussion paper is not communicated externally, but may be used to seek agreement in developing an official position.

Examples: The Arctic and aquaculture documents prepared by SCICOM for the October 2012 Council meeting.

d) Policy Paper (Internal)

- A policy paper is an internal document that highlights urgent policy issues, and outlines actions to address or resolve these issues.
- A policy paper is usually prepared in response to a policy request, or in response to an official consultation.
- In most cases, a policy paper requires national approval.

Examples: [ICES Data Policy](#)

2 Requisite components and administrative structure

a) Requisite components

The requisite elements of the four different types of papers often depend on the specific issue at hand, whether the paper is a response to another document, and the recipients of the paper (e.g., a scientific audience, a management audience, a mixed audience, etc.).

The following components are likely to be included in all four types of papers:

- Main facts about ICES including a description of how ICES contributes to excellence in science and develops best possible advice for managers and decision makers.
- A concise description of the issue and a summary of the main points.

- A description of past, present, and future activities relevant to the issue, topic, or policy.

b) Administrative structure

During the development of any of the papers, consideration should be given to:

- Ensuring that the time frame for completion of the paper is realistic;
- Ensuring that the individuals responsible for writing/editing the paper actively contribute to its development, and are aware of all schedules and deadlines;
- Ensuring that one individual is responsible for finalization of the paper; and
- Ensuring that appropriate communication and consideration is given to the publication production process by maintaining regular contact with the ICES Secretariat (for documents to be used externally).
