

STRATEGIC PLAN



ICES
CIEM

International Council for
the Exploration of the Sea
Conseil International pour
l'Exploration de la Mer

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VISION

To be a world-leading marine science organization, meeting societal needs for impartial evidence on the state and sustainable use of our seas and oceans.



MISSION

To advance and share scientific understanding of marine ecosystems and the services they provide and to use this knowledge to generate state-of-the-art advice for meeting conservation, management, and sustainability goals.

ICES at a glance

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea is a global organization that develops science and advice to support the sustainable use of the seas and oceans. ICES is a network of 5000 experts from 700 institutes and organizations in 20 member countries and beyond. 1500 experts participate in our activities annually.

WHERE WE WORK



ICES is an intergovernmental organization with 20 member countries:

Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom, and United States of America.



Through strategic partnerships our work in the Atlantic Ocean, and specifically the North Atlantic, extends into the Arctic, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the North Pacific.



WHO WE WORK WITH

Stakeholders

Recipients of advice

HOW WE WORK



Science networks

**Regional and international
intergovernmental organizations**

Science for sustainable seas

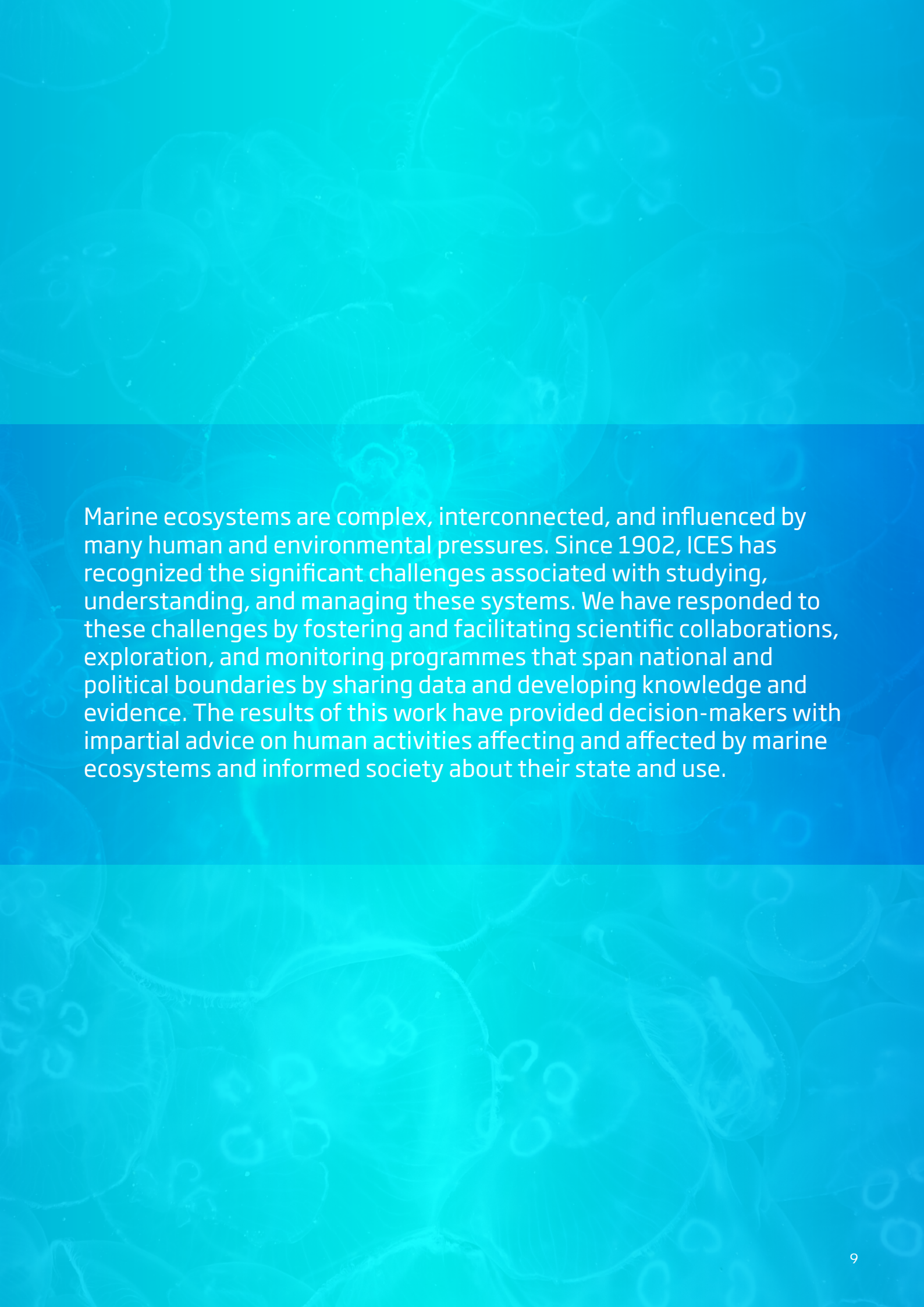
Our seas and oceans are essential to the lives and livelihoods of billions of people. They regulate climate and provide many other services and resources, as well as economic benefits and opportunities. Societal expectations that the marine environment will meet future needs have never been so high; but neither has the range and intensity of human pressures affecting it been so great.

With this strategic plan, ICES renews its commitment to better understanding marine ecosystems and securing the benefits that people derive from them. The purpose of this plan is to define our direction and priorities relating to science, data, and advice, and to develop the capacity needed to fulfil this commitment.

Implementing this plan will directly address the challenge of protecting and restoring the structure and

function of the seas and oceans, thus improving food security and otherwise benefitting people's lives and livelihoods.

To fulfil this plan, we will work collaboratively, using our broad international network to generate and share the data, knowledge, and advice needed to meet current and emerging conservation, management, and sustainability goals.



Marine ecosystems are complex, interconnected, and influenced by many human and environmental pressures. Since 1902, ICES has recognized the significant challenges associated with studying, understanding, and managing these systems. We have responded to these challenges by fostering and facilitating scientific collaborations, exploration, and monitoring programmes that span national and political boundaries by sharing data and developing knowledge and evidence. The results of this work have provided decision-makers with impartial advice on human activities affecting and affected by marine ecosystems and informed society about their state and use.





Advancing ecosystem understanding

Through our scientific work we will continue to advance understanding of marine ecosystems, their uses, and their connections with society. The resulting knowledge is essential to develop solutions to the sustainability challenges posed by natural variability and climate change as well as increasing human populations and their demands for food, energy, and other resources.

We will seek to increase the scope, impact, and efficiency of our science through innovation, integration, and increased interdisciplinary collaboration. We will facilitate the incorporation of a wider range of scientific knowledge into advice to inform decision-makers and society about the state of our seas and oceans, the consequences of human use, and options for conservation and management.

Broad multidisciplinary collaboration provides us with the expertise to approach problems from many perspectives. For example, we can better understand local environmental impacts on coastal aquaculture and fisheries from insights into large-scale climatic, oceanographic, and ecosystem processes; and we can better understand the collective ecosystem effects of diffuse pressures such as pollutants, plastics, and noise from knowledge of their local sources.

Essential data for science and advice

Monitoring is essential for assessing the state of our seas and oceans and human uses and impacts, as well as for providing feedback on the effects of conservation and management measures. We will continue to develop and coordinate integrated, quality assured, and cost-effective monitoring programmes and to explore the oceans to improve our understanding of the distribution and function of marine life and habitats. We will evaluate and optimize survey design and advance and implement innovative technologies to collect, process, and analyse data. This will be accomplished with a focus on supporting fisheries assessment, integrated ecosystem assessment and ecosystem-based management.

Since monitoring now provides more detailed and interlinked data, we will continue to develop services and tools to enable visualization and easy access to these data for a broad range of users. We will build on our demonstrated capacity and expertise in managing, analysing, and interpreting data to provide data services.





Evidence for decision-making

Impartial evidence is essential for responsible decision-making. We strive to continuously improve the quality and transparency of our advice and the processes through which it is developed. We use the data we collect and manage, and our scientific understanding of marine ecosystems to meet current and future demands for advice on the state and sustainable use of our seas and oceans. Future approaches for delivering advice will build on our longstanding experience as a leading provider of fisheries and environmental advice.

We will regularly publish, update, and disseminate overviews on the state of fisheries, aquaculture, and ecosystems in the ICES region, drawing as appropriate on analyses of human activities, pressures, and impacts, and incorporating social, cultural, and economic information.

This strategic plan will guide us as we seek to become a more comprehensive and influential network, sharing information and expertise to help sustain healthy oceans and the lives and livelihoods of the people who depend on them.

Working together

Our successes have been achieved by people from diverse national and disciplinary backgrounds working together to accomplish shared goals. Through our community of scientists and our wider network of experts, we will strengthen these collaborations, continuing to work with our member country institutions, partners, clients, and stakeholders to advance cooperation and introduce new disciplines and perspectives to our science and advice.

We provide resources and infrastructure to develop and share knowledge and expertise: in expert groups, at international conferences, and through communications and publications. We will ensure that the skills needed to advance science, data gathering and processing, and to generate state-of-the-art advice are nurtured and retained in ICES community. For the new and emerging generation of scientists, we will continue to provide effective training and networking opportunities.

All these activities are facilitated by ICES Secretariat, which provides a wide range of capabilities in support of our network. In addition, the Secretariat acts as a liaison between our member countries, stakeholders, clients, our network of experts, and international partner organizations.

We will strengthen the capacity of the Secretariat, foster employee development, and optimize recruitment, conscious of the essential role of each individual in the implementation of this plan. Across the entire ICES community we will also continue to cultivate a welcoming, resourceful, diverse, inclusive, and gender balanced, as well as a respectful working environment.





Our science priorities

In support of this strategic plan, we have developed a science plan: “Marine ecosystem and sustainability science for the 2020s and beyond”. This highlights our seven interrelated scientific priorities and how our network will address them.



Ecosystem science

Advance and shape understanding of the structure, function, and dynamics of marine ecosystems – to develop and vitalize marine science and underpin its applications



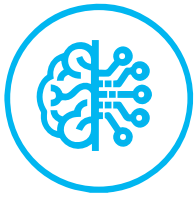
Impacts of human activities

Measure and project the effects of human activities on ecosystems and ecosystem services – to elucidate present and future states of natural and social systems



Observation and exploration

Monitor and explore the seas and oceans – to track changes in the environment and ecosystems and to identify resources for sustainable use and protection



Emerging techniques and technologies

Develop, evaluate, and harness new techniques and technologies – to advance knowledge of marine systems, inform management and increase the scope and efficiency of monitoring



Seafood production

Generate evidence and advice for management of wild-capture fisheries and aquaculture – to help sustain safe and sufficient seafood supplies



Conservation and management science

Develop tools, knowledge, and evidence for conservation and management – to provide more and better options to help managers set and meet objectives



Sea and society

Evaluate contributions of the sea to livelihoods, cultural identities, and recreation – to inform ecosystem status assessments, policy development, and management



Image: nielshintzen.nl



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