Secretariat Status Report

The meeting is invited to review the status report on the activities and deliverables being developed by the Secretariat.

A "gut feeling" review of the status of implementation of the Secretariat component of the ICES Strategic Plan has been carried out, and is contained in the attachment. The review is based on the examples below of activities and deliverables referring to the Secretariat actions outlined in the Implementation Plan (Implementing the ICES Strategic Plan, 2014-2018 Linking Science, Advice, Data and Information, and Secretariat).

ICES Strategic Plan, 2014–2018

Supporting the organization through the work of the Secretariat:

Goal 6 Foster the science, the advisory and the data information services through the work of the Secretariat

Goal 7 Ensure an efficient and effective organization

Supporting activities for Goals 6 and 7:

1. Securing the needed resources for the ICES Secretariat to support ICES science, advisory services, data processes and products and for publications and communications;
2. Implement effective tools and efficient process flows to streamline work processes and enhance the delivery of products;
3. Organizing and supporting the resource planning and coordination of network activities; and
4. Fostering cooperation and communication with Member Countries and partner organizations, stakeholders, and society.

Implementation Plan, Annex 5

Goal 6:

Strategic support to the Council, Bureau, and the Committees by provision of inputs regarding foresight of needs and options for development of science, scientific advice, and data

Interact with external networks and communicate scientific priorities

Various deliverables are contributed under this activity, both relating to streamlining of working practices (development of Stock Assessment Database and the Standard Graph outputs that these feed, and Resource Coordination Tool), development of assessment strategies (data-limited approach), inputs to integrated advice (ecosystem overviews, review of descriptors under the EU

Marine Strategy Framework Directive, input to integrated monitoring work, data handling and streamlining, including operationalization of data reference sets and scenarios of options for establishing programmes of measures).

With many undertakings under various policy instruments, and supported by several different organizations/initiatives, the Secretariat would at times benefit from stronger priority setting and support from the Member Countries, and contacts with national representatives who are participating in these other organizations/initiatives. This would also enhance the possibility to represent ICES in other fora.

Increase the level of professional support across the ICES work plan to provide data compilation, and initial analysis for consideration to ensure best use of expert resources, inter alia, by strengthening the ecosystem profile in the Secretariat to support priority working areas identified in the ICES Strategic Plan.

This is being achieved through a two-part approach; 1) Freeing resources through efficient processes and with products fit for purpose; and 2) Ensuring a secretariat profile which can deliver the necessary support.

Re 1) Further development of efficient support involves; streamlining the processes focusing on deliverables with a quality fit for purpose, and the introduction of tools (Resource Coordination Tool, Stock Assessment Database, as part of the wider Content Administration for Reports and Advice - CARA) which will reduce the time spent by experts and the Secretariat to manage the process and deliver the products. The Secretariat is reviewing working procedures, which is necessary because of a heavy workload to support our network, and specifically:

- Advisory Groups spend considerable time and depend on assistance from the Secretariat to comply with the specification details in the advisory report template format; they are requesting easy access to stock data, and requesting that it is easy to update information products based on these data.
- Science Groups are challenged by the move to a new reporting style since the adoption of multiannual Terms of Reference. The current preparation of new streamlining tools/working procedures includes the development of the Resource Coordination Tool; RCT, and the Content Administration for Reports and Advice; CARA (see further below).

In the Secretariat this is reflected in considerable use of resources:

- Professional Officers are burdened with administrating procedural tasks in the Expert Working Groups, taking away the focus from their ability to provide substantive and scientific support, especially on the advisory side.
- Assisting Secretaries have their time focused on labor intensive report formatting and ensuring that the same information is inserted in several different places.

Re 2) A strategic approach has been followed and implemented in recent recruitments, whereby new profiles of Professional Officers and some Supporting Secretaries has been sought. The Professional Officer profiles demand strong analytical skills to assist with the strengthening of technical and scientific input to ICES work, including the development of new products and deliverables. The recently recruited Professional Officers possess competences related to ecosystem and environmental issues, including fisheries as well as an understanding of underlying data needs. While Assisting Secretaries will still support the work with

logistic and traditional secretary assistance a new recruitment profile has been implemented for some positions where technical support to the processes is also expected.

Projects - interface with scientific groups and organizations and identify and facilitate participation in strategic work that supports the aims of the ICES Strategic Plan. Seek to link project work with participants from academia.

A more strategic and proactive approach is being sought, for both 1) ICES participation in projects, and 2) for incorporation of project outcomes in further ICES work. To address 1) a SCICOM sub-group was established to look into ICES participation in projects to consider how to better match project calls (more specifically the Horizon 2020 calls) to core competencies of the ICES community, to exploit opportunities to bring ICES institutes together through science development.

The development of ICES Standard Packages, as one way to universally flag the ICES competence, and ensure that all potential consortia are treated alike, is one way to deal with this. But further work is still needed to consider more strategic approaches.

As regards 2) meetings have been arranged with the Directorate General for Research and Innovation, to discuss the role of ICES:

- contributing to the development of a data management plan for projects funded by DG R&I under the EU Research Framework Programmes, thereby ensuring a sustained public access to data;
- identifying marine and maritime research priorities;
- making available, through our website project depository, outcomes of projects.

While these topics have been touched upon during various occasions, their overall implementation is still to be pursued.

<u>Goal 7:</u> *Ensure an efficient and effective organization*

The Secretariat – foster a modern and fulfilling workplace.

As described above new profiles, for both the Professionals and a group of the Assisting Secretaries have been sought, in an attempt to enhance the Secretariat's ability to provide support for the new competences demanded by the ICES Strategic Plan. This has been done in connection with the expiration of existing contracts. A new role for the Secretariat is an opportunity for Professional Officers and Assisting Secretaries to improve job satisfaction and build their careers by having opportunities to develop the technical and scientific substance of their work and spend a larger part of their time on such work.

Finance – monitor the budget and ensure resources are used as directed by Council. Prepare the draft and forecast budget for Council approval.

The ICES budget has become more and more stretched, as a consequence of the continued stable (without regulation increase) national contributions and increasing dependence on external financing. With a forecast budget elaborated two years in advance of the actual budget year, it is likely that estimated incomes and expenditures have to be updated more frequently, and priorities have to be made for which activities to carry out.

Tools to streamline processes (Resource Coordination Tool; RCT, and Content Administration for Reports and Advice; CARA)

The Resource Coordination Tool is a component of a larger ICES workplan tool covering both advice and science which is the platform for process planning starting from the advice requests (or for science – scientific issues), ToRs for groups or processes, workflow calendar and the affiliations of experts to various groups and processes in ICES.

The RCT is intended to serve as an information base for planning and prioritization of overall human-resource use. This is to ease the planning and budgeting for the institutes, help experts get a better overview of their commitments, and also to help ICES (and other advisory bodies including STECF and others outside of EU) get a better overview of commitments and identification of experts to handle incoming requests for advice. The process is initially being set up to respond to the need to match available scientific expert resources to the proposed work plan of the advisory process, and will eventually be expanded to include the science process.

Deliverables and next steps for RCT are:

Soft launch in 2015, for the advisory process, based on information provided by Resources Mangers in the Member Countries on 1) experts in their institutes and 2) matching experts with (categories) Skills of Expertise; Ecoregions; and Functional Groups. This will allow a search for experts with specific skills, as well as inform on their availability;
- other key processes/functionalities incorporated to the system, such as process registration/work plan, ToRs handling, and nomination system;
- during 2015 to be expanded to include the science processes as well.

ACOM has started to make the advice format it better fit for purpose in relation to integration within ecoregions and simplifying it. *CARA* is a tool which in conjunction with and in support to ACOM work in this direction will streamline report and advice production by linking data and analysis to reports and text, by hardwiring guidance to experts and advice drafters into their working tools and to make reports and advice products easily available in many formats and for further analysis. The development of CARA will also be used as an opportunity to deliberately match the scope and quality of the reports and advice products with what is required for the specific purpose, which in most cases means a simplification and tuning.

Deliverables and next steps for CARA are:
- last quarter 2014: expanded stock assessment data base and graphs, dealing with 70+ data poor stocks. Available for graph generation and utilization of the data in EG reports and advice. The stocks data base will be developed to incorporate data as required for all parts of standard fisheries advice both regarding stocks which are analytically assessed and stocks with less data available.
- Autumn 2014/with culmination by ACOM meeting in December: Making advice fit for purpose - Simplification and clarification of advice reporting, led by the ACOM leadership, and supported by an ACOM sub-group, with participation of the Secretariat.

- Mid-2015: testing of an enhanced system, giving the users in the ICES Expert Working Groups, and Advice drafting groups the added benefits of the dynamic

data linkage, an integrated ICES advice template reflecting the new format of advice, and enabling cross-linkage between science and advice groups.

Training programme – Develop and improve the Training Programme and facilitate and test the online accessibility; reach out and engage with academia to widen target audiences of the ICES Training Programme

A discussion on the possibility for online course, or e-learning courses has been initiated with the training group, based on a simplified approach. Strategic partners with experience in this field, such as the World Maritime University in Malmø, have been approached. The foreseen start-up of the UNDP/GEF financed project, "Strengthening global governance of Large Marine Ecosystems and their coasts through enhanced sharing and application of LME/ICM/MPA knowledge and information tools" project, will likely offer a possibility for ICES to kick-start the on-line work, in our foreseen role as training programme coordinator. Likewise the possible involvement of academia in preparing for courses is being investigated. This includes the possible establishment of a post-doc programme in the secretariat, financed through external funding. Such a Post-Doc programme would include the arrangement of courses, coupling the teaching obligation to the ICES Training programme. It likewise includes linkages with universities, and potentially through an online facility, testing out ways of cooperation. The development of the training programme is also being sought through possible project participation.

Publications and communications

Publications – f*acilitating the electronic dissemination, availability and visibility of the products of ICES processes including technical reports, scientific publications, and advice*

During 2014 a move towards exclusive electronic dissemination has been made, also due to budgetary restrictions. Use of iPaper for electronic publishing has proven an effective and appealing way of presenting various reports and brochures.

A strategy for implementing permanent strategic traceable identities for all ICES documents and datasets are under development, including financial implications.

Communications – *promote ocean literacy by making ICES work easily understandable to decision-makers, stakeholders, and the informed public*

A variety of channels have been used and further developed in an attempt to promote the work of ICES to a wider community, and the public at large. This includes: 1) New features on the ICES website; ICES blogs and interactive map displaying ICES popular advice, 2) The e-newsletter published six times a year to over 900 subscribers, 3) Press releases , 4) Social media LinkedIn group, (4736 members), Facebook, (1311 "likes"), and Twitter (991 followers) – figures as of 1 September. Social media brings a lot of traffic to the website – over 21,000 redirects over the past 12 months, 5) Promotional material, including a general brochure on ICES **,** a revised brochure *Fish stocks: counting the uncountable?* , Postcards, to promote ICES training courses, ICES data centre, and ICES ASC 2015, 6) short promotional videos, 7) Public outreach: participation in the Science in the City, a free science festival taking place in Copenhagen 21-26 June in connection with ESOF 2014, and 8) Early career scientists activities at ASC.

Maintain and develop high quality meeting facilities at ICES headquarters, embracing new technologies

Meeting rooms are continuously being updated, also to facilitate online meeting participation. In 2014 new screens have been installed in all meeting rooms some with touch screen capabilities. New monitors and webcams have been installed in

some meeting rooms. Improved connections and wired solutions have been installed to optimize picture and sound quality. All improvements will also support the new web conferencing tool that will be implemented during 2015.

The ICES Strategic Plan (2014 2018) - Implementation - Linking Science, Advice, Data and Information and Secretariat

The Secretariat Picture after 9 months - A first look at Performance - A Qualitative Approach

OVERVIEW - % in each Score Category

	Goal 6 *Foster the science, advisory* *Data and Information Services*	*Goal 7* *Efficient and Effective* *Organisation*
1		1
2		1
3	2	2
4	2	4
5		1
	N = 4 Actions	*N = 9 Actions*

SCORE		
1	Not Started	
2	Just Started	
3	Some Progress	
4	Good Progress	
5	Doing Well	

The ICES Strategic Plan (2014 2018) - Implementation - Linking Science, Advice, Data and Information and Secretariat
The Secretariat Picture after 9 months - A first look at Performance - A Qualitative Approach   *(Version 1 @ 29/09/14)*

Secretariat	Secretariat Plan - Action	Supporting Activity	Gut Feeling	PI
Foster the science , the advice and the data information services through the work of the Secretariat (Goal 6)	Strategic support to the Council, Bureau, and the Committees by provision of inputs regarding foresight of needs and options for development of science, scientific advice and data	**1, 2, 3, 4**	4	
	Interact with external networks and communicate scientific priorities	**1, 2, 3, 4**	3	
	Increase the level of professional support across the ICES work plan to provide data compilation, and initial analysis for consideration to ensure best use of expert resources, inter alia, by strengthening the ecosystem profile in the Secretariat to support priority working areas identified in the ICES Strategic Plan.	**1,2,3**	4	
	Projects - interface with scientific groups and organisations and identify and facilitate participation in strategic work that supports the aims of the ICES Strategic Plan. Seek to link project work with participants from academia	**1, 4**	3	

SCORE		
1	Not Started	
2	Just Started	
3	Some Progress	
4	Good Progress	
5	Doing Well	
	%	
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

N = 4 Actions

Supporting Activity for Secretartiat to achieve Goals 6 and 7

1 . Securing the needed resources for the ICES Secretariat to support ICES science, advisory services, data processes and products and for publications and communications;

2. Implement effective tools and efficient process flow to streamine work processes and enhance the delivery of products;

3. Organising and supporting the resource planning and coordination of network activities;

4. Fostering cooperation and communications with Member Countries, partner organisations, stakeholders and society.

The ICES Strategic Plan (2014 2018) - Implementation - Linking Science, Advice, Data and Information and Secretariat

The Secretariat Picture after 9 months - A first look at Performance - A Qualitative Approach *(Version 1 @ 29/09/14)*

Secretariat	Secretariat Plan - Action	Supporting Activity	Gut Feeling	PI
Ensure an efficient and effective organisation (Goal 7)	Facilitate effective and focused use of expert and infrastructure resources by making ongoing resource requirements transparent to national institute rersource managers using the Resource Co-ordination Tool (RCT)	**3**	4	
	Facilitate common access to ICES processes by developing work that draw on external resources readily available including the tasks, processes and meetings	**2**	3	
	Develop and Improve the Training Programme and facilitate and test the online accessibility of the ICES Training Programme	**1, 2**	1 or 2?	
	Develop and improve the Training Programme: reach out and engage with academia to widen target audience.	**1, 4**	1 or 2?	
	Publications - facilitate the electronic dissemination, availability and visibility of the products of ICES processes including technical reports, scientific publications and advice	**2, 4**	5	
	Further develop and implement the Content Administration for Reports and Advice (CARA)	**2**	3	
	Maintain and develop high quality meeting facilities at ICES headquarters, embracing new technologies	**1,2**	4	
	Create communications that focus on prioritised areas as defined by the Strategic Plan - promote the work of the ICES community and its relevance to society - make available various tools (ICES website, social media) for the community to communicate their work	**1, 2, 3**	4	
	Ensure that the Secretariat is able to respond to emerging science, advisory and data needs with relevant professional competence, reviewed by Secretariat management	**1**	4	

SCORE

1	Not Started
2	Just Started
3	Some Progress
4	Good Progress
5	Doing Well

%

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

N = 9 Actions

Supporting Activity for Secretartiat to achieve Goals 6 and 7

1 . Securing the needed resources for the ICES Secretariat to support ICES science, advisory services, data processes and products and for publications and communications;

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