

SCICOM and ACOM Strategic Initiative on Biodiversity Science and Advice (SIBAS)

2012/2/ACOMSCICOM02 A joint SCICOM and ACOM Strategic Initiative on Biodiversity Science and Advice (SIBAS) will be chaired jointly by Henn Ojaveer (SCICOM) and Mark Tasker (ACOM) and will seek to:

- a) Ensure that ICES develops and promotes the linkage of marine biodiversity science and advice
- b) Position ICES to ensure that it is regarded as an effective and reliable source of biodiversity advice in the ICES Area

SIBAS will report by March 2014 (SCICOM midterm) and September 2014 (during ASC) and for the attention of SCICOM and ACOM.

Supporting information

Priority	ICES Council has requested that a joint initiative between the Science and Advisory sides of ICES be developed to address biodiversity issues. The initiative has been discussed and endorsed by SCICOM and ACOM.
Scientific justification	<p>The development of biodiversity policy in the last two decades has largely focused on the conservation (and in some cases preservation) of marine biodiversity rather than sustainable use. ICES is in an outstanding position to inform the debate about the tradeoffs between conservation and sustainable use, by recognising differences in the demands from customers: supporting conservation and sustainable use agendas and by making tradeoffs explicit in science and advice, in a consistent way, to both groups of customers.</p> <p>The ICES model for advice (collaborative, consensual, international, evidence-based) provides suitable scientific support for national and international decision-making. ICES has responded to some questions related to non-harvested biodiversity, but such requests are infrequent. This is due partly to a general lack of experts with in-depth knowledge of both conservation and sustainable use norms and practices and a lack of broad engagement of biodiversity specialists within the ICES community and other organizations that focus on sustainable use issues.</p> <p>The aim of SIBAS is to address this lack of capacity by</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a) increasing the 'pool' of scientists working within the ICES context by 'recruiting' more scientists working on biodiversity issuesb) widening the understanding of the differing rules and norms surrounding advice on conservation and sustainable use among those already working within the ICES frameworkc) developing understanding of the consequences of sustainable use on biodiversity within the conservation community (in other words, some biodiversity changes will occur with exploitation)d) developing understanding of the need to consider biodiversity broadly in the sustainable use communitye) demonstrating to customers of ICES advice that it is possible to explicitly recognise the tradeoffs between conservation and sustainable use objectives using scientific principles.

Scientific justification (continued)	The objectives of the initiative are therefore to <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that ICES develops and promotes a niche that links marine biodiversity science and advice Position ICES to ensure that it is regarded as an effective and reliable source of biodiversity advice in the ICES Area, with relevance to wider seas Ensure that ICES understands its customer's needs and can link effectively with partners and others holding biodiversity information Catalyse new research on marine biodiversity that increases profile and relevance of ICES Improve capacity of ICES to provide rigorous, consistent and legitimate advice relating to biodiversity <p>Ensure that ICES is proactive in identifying science and advisory needs relating to biodiversity through monitoring policy development and co-ordinating its expert groups</p>
Resource requirements	None
Participants	2 Chairs plus 10 core members to be agreed by Chairs/ SCICOM / ACOM.
Secretariat facilities	None
Financial	None
Linkages to advisory committees	ACOM
Linkages to other committees or groups	SIASM, WGDEC, WGEF, WGFE, WGMHM, SGVMS, BEWG, WGSE, WGMME, WGECO, WGBIODIV and WGITMO
Linkages to other organizations	EC, EEA, Regional Seas Conventions, IUCN, nation states delivering MSFD, CBD and FAO commitments

Annex 1: Scientific Initiative on Biodiversity Advice and Science (SIBAS)

Chaired jointly by Henn Ojaveer (SCICOM) and Mark Tasker (ACOM)

Introduction

In order to ensure that ICES work remains current and correctly focussed in a changing policy environment, ICES established a Strategic Initiative on Biodiversity Advice and Science (SIBAS) in 2010. As a major response to this initiative, an ICES Workshop on Marine Biodiversity was arranged in February 2011. The follow-up actions of SIBAS have largely been based on the suggestions and recommendations of this workshop. The current document defines the long-term vision and outlines some key short-term operational objectives and priorities of SIBAS.

Long-term goals

- ✓ Advance biodiversity science and advice through effective utilisation of internal resources by steering of the work of various ICES expert groups, and communication with external research communities and stakeholder groups;
- ✓ Position ICES to ensure that it is regarded as an effective and reliable source of biodiversity advice in the ICES area;
- ✓ Ensure development and promotion of the linkage of marine biodiversity science and advice.

Processes

- ✓ Tactical: to respond to immediate political drivers and promote ICES capacity;
- ✓ Strategic: to co-ordinate, and to provide a forum for, scientific research to address biodiversity issues.

Short-term targets

I Validating and testing of biodiversity indicators

- ✓ Identify reference/target/limit levels of various biodiversity indicators and quantify natural temporal variation under reference conditions;
- ✓ Test different methods for indicator aggregations and identify management implications of these aggregate indicators;
- ✓ Test robustness of biodiversity indicators in relation to data availability/limitation.

II Quantification and spatio-temporal mapping of pressures acting on biodiversity

- ✓ Consider manageable and non-manageable pressures;
- ✓ Identify needs of potential customers and develop common format for the underlying database.

III Identify activity-pressure-state links and consider those in relation to management

- ✓ Identify, define and test activity-pressure-state links of indicators now and in future;
- ✓ Study single/cumulative/synergistic effects of pressures on biodiversity state indicators;
- ✓ Investigate options on how pressure-state interactions could be accounted for in management;
- ✓ Develop metrics to quantify changes in ecosystem functioning in relation to biodiversity change;
- ✓ Improve understanding of links between biodiversity, ecosystem functioning and ecosystem services and facilitate the consideration of ecosystem services in policy and management.

Short-term priorities and actions

- ✓ Focus on biodiversity pressures (e.g., spatial mapping and temporal development);
- ✓ Identify and quantify pressure-state relationship of biodiversity indicators;
- ✓ Start working towards inclusion of biodiversity component into the regional ecosystem overviews (link with upcoming ACOM/SCICOM workshop on Ecosystem Overviews, to be held in January 2013, to construct a concise and informative biodiversity format for ICES);
- ✓ Link activities with the upcoming EC biodiversity workshop early November 2012 with SIBAS representative participation at the meeting.

External linkages

- ✓ Secure effective links with the EC and Member States in relation to implementation of relevant aspects of MSFD to be ready for provision of advice if requested and to ensure consistent advice;
- ✓ Continue discussions with regional management bodies (incl. OSPAR, HELCOM, NEAFC) to ensure operational incorporation of their needs into the SIBAS agenda;
- ✓ Establish contacts with Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and identify potential niche for ICES in the platform;
- ✓ Continue identification of specific areas of mutual interest with CBD and FAO, specifically, promote ICES as the best source of scientific advice on the issues related to vulnerable marine ecosystems (VME) and ecologically and biologically significant marine areas (EBSA);

- ✓ Ensure cooperation and exchange of information with international networks like EuroMarine, Life in a Changing Ocean, Indicator of the Seas, History of Marine Animal Populations and Ecopath Consortium.

Relation to ICES expert groups

WGBIODIV (Working Group on Biodiversity Science) and WGECO (Working Group on Ecosystem Effects of Fishing Activities) are considered to be the primary expert groups assisting to achieve SIBAS aims, through allocated multi-annual and annual ToR's.

Visibility

To consider holding/applying for:

- ✓ Theme session(s) at the World Conference on Marine Biodiversity
- ✓ Special ICES Symposium targeting biodiversity science and advice related issues.