

2023 Intersessional Governing Council Decisions

(The following decision was taken by correspondence during January 2023)

Decision 2023/A/1: External Review of PICES Terms of Reference. Council approved the terms of reference for an External Review as drafted by the Study Group on External Review of PICES. Council instructs the Study Group to prepare a short-list of potential Panel members to conduct the review, and to prepare a draft budget for Council to consider. Council further instructs that an invitation to Panel members include a preamble that provides additional context and active language to engage Panel members.

Terms of Reference for an External Review of the North Pacific Marine Science Organization

1. The External Review Panel shall review the documents of the organization (Convention, Rules of Procedure, Strategic Plan and other such policies, procedures and outputs that are deemed relevant) and assess whether they are comprehensive, adequate, or require revision and updating.
2. The Panel shall conduct interviews with key personnel from the Organization including members of the Secretariat, Executive Committees and national representatives. The Panel could also consider a survey of the wider PICES membership.
3. The Panel should also reach out to, or survey, Agencies and Departments of contracting parties beyond the national representatives, and to the other international organizations and RFMOs that PICES has significant relationships with, to determine whether PICES is responsive to their needs and how this could be improved.
4. The Panel should address the following criteria in their assessment, indicating where changes could be made:
 - a. Organizational Structure.
 - i. Is the structure of the organization effective at achieving its Purpose according to the Convention, and to the Vision of the organization as laid out in the 2016 Strategic Plan? What changes could be made going forward that take into account evolving global science priorities and ways of working?
 - ii. Is the Governance structure (comprising Governing Council, the Executive Committees for Finance and Administration and Science Board) an effective and efficient way meet the spirit of the Convention
 - iii. Does the structure of discipline-focused Standing Committees, thematic Expert Groups and a longer-lived Science Program still work to foster collaboration and advance scientific knowledge of the North Pacific?
 - iv. A review of the financial structure should be done, including the Secretariat, capacity development, other work of the organization.
 - b. Secretariat
 - i. Is the Secretariat adequately staffed (number of personnel and their skills) and funded? If the recommendations of the Panel are implemented would staffing changes in the Secretariat be required?
 - ii. Is the Intern program a good vehicle for early career individuals from PICES member countries to gain experience in operations of an intergovernmental scientific organization? Is it of net benefit to the Secretariat?
 - c. Provision of knowledge and informal advice to member states
 - i. Do Contracting Parties feel that PICES provides useful information and that it is generated in a timely and accessible manner?
 - ii. Are the products (NPESR, scientific reports, primary peer-reviewed publications, PICES website) of high quality and an effective way to provide this knowledge?
 - iii. Does the organization adequately promote data collection and exchange?

- iv. Is communication by the organization with contracting parties, the membership, and the community at large effective? Is it timely? How can it be improved?
- d. Cooperation with other international organizations.
- i. Does PICES interact sufficiently well with other organizations with which it shares its convention area and/or scientific objectives? Are the current methods the most effective?
 - ii. Some interactions are relatively formal, through MoUs or cooperative science frameworks, and these are mostly with RFMOs that have an overlapping area of jurisdiction. Does PICES provide adequate science to help RFMOs with their management needs?
 - iii. Informal, ad-hoc, relationships exist with other regional or international organizations which may involve invitations to attend and present at PICES Expert Group meetings, co-sponsorship of events or scientific sessions. Are there more effective ways of cooperating?
- e. Capacity Development.
- i. The Capacity development strategy was developed in 2003 [PICES Strategy on Capacity Development - PICES - North Pacific Marine Science Organization](#). Do the current practices successfully address this strategy?
 - ii. Does the strategy need revising? If so, where especially?
 - iii. Is capacity development adequately funded? (consider the various mechanisms; voluntary contributions, travel support from the Annual Budget and PICES work with other organizations) and if not what is a better model and what should be the goal?
 - iv. PICES recently established an Advisory Panel on ECOP to better integrate younger scientists into the PICES structure. It may be too early to assess its effectiveness but direction would be useful. Is the organizational structure conducive to participation by new-to-PICES ECOP?