

2026 May Intersessional Governing Council Meeting Report and Decisions

Governing Council (hereafter GC or Council) met online from 16:00-18:45 on May 13, 2026 (PDT) under the Chairmanship of Tetsuo Fujii.

All member countries were represented at the meeting (IGC Endnote 1).

The agenda was adopted (IGC Endnote 2). Decisions taken by Council are in **bold text** below. Actions are underlined.

IGC AGENDA ITEM 3. UPDATE FROM EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

- a. Receipt of annual fees. The Executive Secretary noted that five countries had paid annual fees for 2026 and thanked Council for the prompt payments. The Russian Federation had also recently paid fees for 2024 in full, therefore is no longer in a default position. Payment of 2025 fees, at least, would need to happen before PICES-2026 to maintain this position and for Russia to be able to participate in Council voting there.
- b. PICES-2026 plans. The Executive Secretary provided an update, noting that registration and abstract submission is now open and that the format this year is for a slightly shorter meeting.
- c. Preliminary report to address GC Decision 2025/A/12 - Uptake/Impact of PICES science. The Executive Secretary gave a presentation on progress so far, highlighting the challenges of going back in time to determine the uses of PICES science in policy. Recommendations for a process going forward will be one part of the final report which should be available for PICES-2026.

Discussion considered the role of PICES grey literature summaries and guidance documents as a tool for stakeholders to use and whether we should be doing more in this arena to make it easy for decision makers to find the information without having to go to published journal articles? If properly defined then it could be an interesting masters' student project to go back in time to research the past policy use of PICES products. There was also a recommendation that PICES works with it's management partners (e.g. those PICES has [agreements](#) with) to indicate when PICES products are used in their management decisions/actions.

IGC AGENDA ITEM 4. REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SCIENCE BOARD.

The PICES Science Board Chair presented the report and recommendations from the recent Intersessional Science Board meeting. Council took the following Decisions:

GC Decision 2026/S/1. In person business meetings at PICES-2026. Council approved the following expert groups to hold in-person business meetings at PICES-2026:

EG	Duration (day)
<u>FUTURE</u>	1.0
<u>SG-NPESR4</u> (4 th North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report)	1.0
<u>AP-ARC</u> (Arctic Ocean and the Pacific Gateways)	0.5

AP-CREAMS (Circulation Research in East Asian Marginal Seas)	1.0
AP-ECOP (Early Career Ocean Professionals)	0.5
AP-NPCOOS (North Pacific Coastal Ocean Observing Systems)	0.5
AP-SciCom (Science Communications)	0.5
AP-UNDOS (United Nations Decade of Ocean Science)	0.5
AP-NIS (Marine Non-Indigenous Species)	1.0
S-MPP (Marine Plastic Pollution)	0.5
S-MBM (Marine Birds and Mammals)	0.5
S-HAB (Ecology of Harmful Algal Blooms in the North Pacific)	0.5
WG-49 (Climate Extremes and Coastal Impacts in the Pacific)	1.0
WG-51 (Exploring Human Networks to Power Sustainability)	0.5
WG-53 (Joint PICES/ICES WG on Sustainable Pelagic Forage Communities)	1.0 *split, 2 evenings
WG54 (Joint PICES/ICES WG on Best Practices for Using Deep Learning in	0.5
WG55 (Comprehensive Understanding of Ocean Acidification in the North Pacific)	0.5
WG56 (Deep Sea Connectivity with Focus on Seamount Ecosystems)	0.5
WG57 (Oceanic Fine scale Processes: Impacts and Parameterizations)	0.5
Total	12.5

GC Decision 2026/S/2. Council approved the following activities with financial support requests, and requested the Executive Secretary to consider the Science Board rankings and available budget.

i. Expert group requests

EG: HD, AP-UNDOS			
Conference title / Date / Location	Recipient name / contact	Amount and description of fund request	SB Score
ICES/PICES Workshop on Indigenous Knowledge engagement (WKIK) East coast Canada Late 2026 or Early 2027 (TBC)	1-2 Scientists to co-convene the workshop, potentially from HD and/or AP-UNDOS (but not limited to these).	Up to CA\$ 5000 for two co-convenors (not exclude ECOPs to be a convenor) IK is one of the recent common priority areas for both ICES and PICES. ICES requests PICES co-sponsor the workshop.	1.7 (Mid-Low)
EG: WG49: Climate Extremes and Coastal Impacts (FUTURE)			
Conference title / Date / Location	Recipient name / contact	Amount and description of fund request	SB Score

ICES/PICES Joint Session at DITTO Summit 2026 .	1-2 Scientists including ECOP(s) from WG49	Up to CA\$ 5000 for two convenors and/or speakers.	1.6 (Mid-Low)
Yokohama, Japan Nov 11-13, 2026		ICES and PICES WG49 plans to hold a Joint Session on integrating socio-ecological data in the context of the ocean's digital twins at DITTO Summit.	

ii. Support for ECOP side events at PICES-2026

EG: AP-ECOP (FUTURE)			
Date/Location	Event summary	Amount and rationale of fund requested	SB score
Visiting a Science Institute in Vancouver Island Deep Bay Marine Field Station (Deep Bay)(0.5 day) Date (TBD, before or after the PICES-2026)	Similar to the JAMSTEC visit at PICES-2025. Expect up to 25 ECOP participants.	c.a. CA\$1500 for a half-day bus charter transporting 20-25 participants between Nanaimo - Deep Bay. CA\$125 quoted for a one-hour tour of the marine station.	2.5 (High)
Beach clean-up or alternative activities in local Nanaimo (0.5 day) Date (TBD)	Similar to the events at PICES-2024 and 2025. AP is discussing the options.	No or very moderate support, e.g. for trash collecting bags.	2.7 (High)

GC Decision 2026/S/3. Changes to expert groups Chairs. Council approved the appointment of the following:

- i. **Talen Rimmer (Canada) was appointed as Co-Chair of AP-ECOP, replacing Raphaël Roman (Canada).**
- ii. **Samantha Siedlecki (USA) was appointed as Co-Chair of S-CC, replacing Alexander Kozyr (USA).**

GC Decision 2026/S/4. Extension to expert group terms. Council approved the following extensions.

- i. **WG49 is granted a one-year extension to PICES-2027 to complete the synthesis, but with no opportunity for an additional extension.**

- ii. **SG-NPESR4 is granted a half-year extension to ISB-2027.**

GC Decision 2026/S/5. Changes to expert group Terms of Reference/Implementation or Action Plans.

- i. **Council approved the proposed changes for SG-NPESR4 ToR as indicated below:**

From (original ToR)	To
TOR 1 Review “lessons learned” from NPESR 3 process and ecosystem status reports of other organizations.	TOR 1 Review “lessons learned” from NPESR 3 process TOR 2 Review ecosystem status reports of other organizations.
TOR 3.1 Select natural and social science variables and/or indices, taking into account the availability of qualified data and user needs, and previous PICES expert group final reports on this subject (e.g., WG28 and WG36).	TOR 4.1 Select natural and social science variables and/or indices, taking into account the availability of qualified data and user needs, and previous PICES expert group final reports on this subject (e.g., WG28 and WG36) in collaboration with MONITOR.
TOR 4 Report on progress to SB-2025 (PICES-2025) and ISB-2026 to receive feedback from PICES community	TOR 5 Report on progress to ISB/IGC-2026 and PICES-2026.
TOR 5 Develop the NPESR4 implementation plan and establish WG-NPESR4 at SB-2026 (PICES-2026)	TOR 6 Develop the NPESR4 implementation plan and establish WG-NPESR4 at ISB-2027.

- ii. **Council approved the revised S-CCME Implementation Plan as provided, which now includes language related to supporting the delivery of actionable advice, to better reflect PICES new Mission Statement.**

Council also noted that because MONITOR could not reach a consensus on the revisions to AP-CREAMS Action Plan, Science Board has requested that MONITOR hold an on-line meeting with AP-CREAMS co-Chairs to resolve the issues and provide the revision to Council at the proposed IGC meeting in September.

GC Decision 2026/S/6. New Expert Groups. Council approved the creation of PICES WG59 on Physical and Biogeochemical Connectivity in the North Pacific (WG-Connect) with Terms of Reference as provided.

The proposed data reporting protocol developed by WG52 under TCODE was reviewed. The Zenodo data repository hub now contains all PICES data previously stored on a server at TINRO and should be a

secure way to ensure PICES expert group data remain discoverable and accessible. A manual will be finalized to guide Chairs in using the protocol and posted on the PICES website.

GC Decision 2026/S/6. Data reporting protocol. Council instructs the Secretariat, in conjunction with TCODE, to prepare a guide for all PICES expert groups in the use of the data reporting protocol to report their data products.

GC Decision 2026/S/7. PICES publications. Council approved the following peer-reviewed publications to be added to the PICES website.

EG (Rep. CMT)	Citation	Comment
S-HAB: Harmful Algal Blooms (MEQ)	Anderson et al., 2025. Controlling harmful algal blooms (HABs) in marine waters: Review of current status and future prospects, <i>Harmful Algae</i> , Volume 150, 2025,102989,ISSN 1568-9883, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.hal.2025.102989 .	
WG53: Sustainable Pelagic Forage Communities (FIS)	<p>Quezada-Escalona, F.J., Tommasi, D., Kaplan, I.C. et al. Socio-economic impacts and responses of the fishing industry and fishery managers to changes in small pelagic fish distribution and abundance. <i>Rev Fish Biol Fisheries</i> 35, 1063–1093 (2025). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11160-025-09949-4</p> <p>Wildermuth RP, Tommasi D, Kaplan IC, Bograd SJ, Hinchliffe C, Hunsicker ME, Jacox MG, Koenigstein S, Kuriyama P, Muhling B, Pozo Buil M, Thompson A (in press) Revealing climate impacts on recruitment drivers of small pelagic fish through Dynamic Factor Analysis. <i>Mar Ecol Prog Ser</i> :https://doi.org/10.3354/meps15152</p> <p>Lin Y., Z. Yu, S. I. Ahmed, X. Wang, T. Higuchi, I. Yabe, M. K. Wong, S. Itoh, E. Tsutsumi, H. Saito, K. Komatsu, A. Tsuda, Y. Kawaguchi, E. Oka, H. Obata, Y. Minegishi, H. Fukuda, J. Inoue, S. Hyodo, S. Ito*, 2026, Opposite latitudinal biodiversity gradient in the open ocean generated by transition zones: Insights from fish distribution in the Northwest Pacific. <i>Progress in Oceanography</i>, 243, 103685. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pocean.2026.103685</p> <p>Yu Z., M. K. Wong, J. Inoue, Y. Lin, I. Yabe, T. Higuchi, S. Hyodo, S. Itoh, Y. Nishibe, H. Obata, S. Ito, 2026, Environmental DNA of small pelagic fish in the deep ocean. <i>Progress in Oceanography</i>, 241, 103625. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pocean.2025.103625</p> <p>Ahmed S. I.*, Z. Yu, T. Higuchi, J. Inoue, M. K. Wong, X. Wang, Y. Lin, S. Itoh, K. Komatsu, E. Tsutsumi, H. Fukuda, S. Hyodo, J. Morrongiello, E. M. Bendif, S. Ito*, 2026, Patterns in marine surface fish biodiversity and community composition detected by different eDNA metabarcoding sampling methods. <i>Journal of Oceanography</i>, 82, 35-57. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10872-025-00771-x</p>	

	<p>Yoshikawa C., N. O. Ogawa, R. N. F. Ishikawa, M. Yoneda, R. Yukami, S. Ito, N. Ohkouchi, 2025, Nitrogen and carbon isotopic relationships in the diet and eye lenses of chub mackerel revealed in a laboratory rearing experiment. <i>Progress in Earth and Planetary Science</i>, 12, 57. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40645-025-00731-5</p> <p>Iguchi, N., Kitajima, S., Takahashi, M., Takahashi, T. 2026. Spatial variation in the diet of larval sardine <i>Sardinops melanostictus</i> in the Sea of Japan. <i>Fisheries Science</i> 92: 385-401.</p> <p>Peck M, Catalan I, Rykaczewski R, Takasuka A, Garrido S, Asch R, Baker M, Bowlin N, Boldt J, Brodeur R, Hansen C, Lluch-Cota S, Huret M, Juanes F, Kaplan I, Koenigstein S, Moyano M, Sanchez R, Rooper C, Sohn D, Takahashi M, Tommasi D; Wildermuth R, 2026. Advancing ecological understanding and sustainable management of small pelagic fish . <i>Fish and Fisheries</i> https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.70086</p> <p>Kaplan IC, Hazen EL, Koenigstein S Lezama-Ochoa N Hill M, Hernvann P-Y, Liu OR, Gomes DGE, Vásquez SI, Luján C, Green S, Baker MR, Oliveros-Ramos R, Rovellini A, Asch RG, Muhling B. 2026. The devil's in the details when using correlative and mechanistic species distribution models to inform multispecies and ecosystem models. <i>Can. J. Fish. Aquat. Sci.</i></p> <p>Fu C, Boldt JL, Rooper CN, Cleary JS, Doniol-Valcroze T, Hourston, RAS, McMillan CJ, Sastri AR, Tucker S. 2026. A Comprehensive Analysis of Physical, Biological, and Fishery-related Drivers Shaping Pacific Herring Population Dynamics. <i>Mar. Ecol. Prog. Ser.</i></p>	
WG55: Ocean Acidification (POC)	<p>Fujii, M., T. Ono, M. Yamada, M. Ooue, T. Ito, J.-H. Yang, Y. Horiuchi, H. Oiwane, M. Wakita, and S. Wada (2025), Seawater carbonate chemistry and biodiversity of shallow-water CO₂ seeps on Himeshima Island and Showa Iwojima Island, Japan [dataset]. PANGAEA, doi: 10.1594/PANGAEA.988343.</p>	Data product. Data Doi registered in Jan 2026.
WG57: Oceanic Fine Scale (POC)	<p>Feng, Z., Zhang, Z., Zhang, J., Zhang, W., Yuan, M., Jing, Z., et al. (2026). Implementation and evaluation of a new parameterization of submesoscale vertical flux in a mesoscale-resolving model in the North Pacific. <i>Ocean Modelling</i>, 102655. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocemod.2025.102655</p>	
WG43: Small Pelagic Fish (disbanded) (FIS)	<p>Peck, M.A., Catalán, I.A., Rykaczewski, R.R., Takasuka, A., Garrido, S., Asch, R.G., Baker, M.R., Bowlin, N.M., Boldt, J., Brodeur, R.D. and Hansen, C., 2025. Advancing Ecological Understanding and Sustainable Management of Small Pelagic Fish. <i>Fish and Fisheries</i>. https://doi.org/10.1111/faf.70086</p>	Synthesis paper on SPF2022, Lisbon.
S-CCME: Climate Change Effects on Ecosystems (FIS)	<p>Lin Z., S. Ito, A. Baudron, C. Stawitz, T. Tomiyama, K. Fujiwara, P. D. Spencer, J. Mor-rongiello, in press, A state-space approach reveals that competition drives variation in fish body weight, with influences from environmental conditions and fishing pressure, <i>Progress Oceanography</i>, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pocean.2025.103582</p>	Addressing ToR1: Coordinate & integrate research

	<p>Ahmed S. I., Z. Yu, T. Higuchi, J. Inoue, M. K. Wong, X. Wang, Y. Lin, S. Itoh, K. Komatsu, E. Tsutsumi, H. Fukuda, Susumu Hyodo, J. Morrongiello, E. M. Bendif, S. Ito, 2025, Patterns in marine surface fish biodiversity and community composition detected by different eDNA metabarcoding sampling methods. Journal of Oceanography, in press. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10872-025-00771-x</p>	<p>activities & ToR3: Identifying vulnerability and sustainability of marine ecosystem</p>
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IGC AGENDA ITEM 5. REPORT OF THE SG-ERRR.

The SG Chair presented an overview of the group's activities since PICES-2025.

Action - GC members were urged to complete nominations of members to WG-58 (WG-SPLAN) as soon as possible so that progress can be made on the strategic plan revision.

There was discussion regarding the need to communicate progress and direction on the external review response to the PICES community in the plenary at PICES-2026. The SG-ERRR had initially suggested a more modest presentation than previous years, perhaps a poster, so as not to take up the limited plenary time, but Science Board had emphasised that they would like the community to be kept up to date via a plenary presentation.

Action – At the IGC meeting in September, Council will review the program of the opening session, progress made by WG-SPLAN and SG-ERRR and consider the duration, format and contents of the presentation.

Options for speeding up the expert group nomination process were presented by the Secretariat. Council preferred the approach that required a liaison to be nominated. However, they also liked some aspects of the other approaches where guidelines/criteria were provided to session proposers regarding a limit on how many members to propose, and to ensure if possible that those people were interested before putting them forward. The PICES Chair emphasized that the delay is causing issues for the organization. The Secretariat noted that the nominated liaison could be a GC member if that was preferred by the member country.

Action – the Secretariat to prepare a fuller description of the process for the preferred option, with the addition of criteria and guidelines, for potential adoption at the September IGC meeting.

Action – the Chair requested that in the interim the Secretariat continue to send out reminders of member nominations to encourage appointments.

IGC AGENDA ITEM 6. OTHER BUSINESS.

The next Intersessional GC meeting will be held in September.

GC Endnote 1**Delegation list of participants for the May 2026 Intersessional Governing Council meeting**

<u>Canada</u> Andrew Thomson (PICES Vice-Chair) Bernard Vigneault	<u>Russian Federation</u> Oleg Katugin (Alternate)
<u>Japan</u> Fumie Maruyama Nobuaki Suzuki Koichi Hidaka (Advisor, F&A member) Sayaka Minamikawa (Advisor)	<u>USA</u> Jack Barth Evan Howell Kristen Koch (F&A Chair, Advisor) Hannah Lachance (Advisor)
<u>People's Republic of China</u> Chengjun Sun (Alternate) Yafeng Yang (Advisor, F&A member)	<u>Other</u> Tetsuo Fujii (PICES Chair) Enrique Curchitser (PICES Past-Chair) Jennifer Boldt (Science Board Chair) Sonia Batten (Executive Secretary) Sanae Chiba (Deputy Executive Secretary)
<u>Republic of Korea</u> Se-Jong Ju Eunyeong Nam (Alternate) Tai Lee (Advisor, F&A member) Joongho Moon (Advisor)	

GC Endnote 2**Adopted Agenda**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Adoption of agenda and meeting procedures
3. Update from the Executive Secretary on:
 - a. Receipt of annual fees
 - b. PICES-2026 plans
 - c. Preliminary report to address GC Decision 2025/A/12. Uptake/Impact of PICES science.
4. Report and recommendations of the Science Board
5. Report from the SG-ERRR
6. Any other business