

2026 September Intersessional Governing Council Meeting Report and Decisions

Governing Council (hereafter GC or Council) met online from 17:00-18:55 on September 02, 2026 (PDT) under the Chairmanship of Tetsuo Fujii.

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

The agenda (IGC Endnote 2) was adopted after the addition, under Other Business, of a discussion on the developing super El Niño proposed by Canada. Decisions taken by Council are in **bold text** below.

Actions are underlined.

IGC AGENDA ITEM 3. UPDATE ON PICES-2026 FROM THE SECRETARIAT

The Executive Secretary (ES) provided an update on PICES-2026, reporting that 550-560 people are currently registered for the meeting in Nanaimo. It is shorter this year, with a compressed schedule including workshops and business meetings on Saturday and Sunday, the opening plenary session on Monday morning, and parallel sessions Monday afternoon and Tuesday through Thursday before official closing on Thursday afternoon. GC will meet on Friday and Saturday October 30/31. Andrew Thomson (Canada) raised a question about whether PICES invites past Wooster award winners to attend annual meetings, similar to NPAFC's practice. The ES responded that we currently do not, but Council could introduce this practice for the year following the Award if desired.

There was a recommendation that participants be notified in advance about potential weather disruptions and travel options, based on difficulties experienced at the 2013 meeting in Nanaimo. It was noted that transportation information, including multiple ferry options, is posted on the website, and that the Nanaimo airport has since upgraded its equipment to reduce fog-related cancellations. However, the Secretariat will monitor the situation and can provide advice on options.

IGC AGENDA ITEM 4. ACTIVITIES PROPOSED BY SG-ERRR

a. PICES-2026 Opening session Communication.

It was agreed that a presentation should be included in the opening session to update the PICES community on activities over the past year that address the evolution of PICES, following the external review. The Chair suggested coordinating on this via email given busy schedules. There is a time slot of ~25 minutes in the current opening session schedule, allowing for a short presentation and some time for audience questions.

Action: The ES to send out to the SG-ERRR an update on the status of the roadmap components, which may form the basis of a presentation at PICES-2026.

Action: The SG-ERRR Chair (Andrew Thomson) to email the SG members to discuss and prepare the presentation.

b. Process to speed-up member nominations.

The ES presented the draft procedure for nominating expert group members and updated template (with guidance) for new group proposals. The process for replacing existing members was also clarified.

Proposers should include experts from all PICES member countries, if possible, with Science Board and Committees potentially able to offer suggestions, and Governing Council free to add or change members as needed. It was suggested that while a new strategic plan is expected within a year, the template (referring to the 2016 Strategic Plan) could remain relevant in the interim with reference to PICES' updated Mission Statement. The Chair noted that the new format may be used for expert group proposals received at PICES-2026. A vote was postponed until the annual meeting in Nanaimo, however, where all member countries will be present.

IGC AGENDA ITEM 5. DECISION ON REVISIONS TO AP-CREAMS ACTION PLAN.

The Science Board (SB) Chair described the background and SB actions regarding the Action Plan revision. MONITOR was not unanimous in its support, one member opposing had wanted a more comprehensive map including all monitoring and research programs, while another preferred a stepwise approach to expansion, but SB was unanimous in recommending the new Plan. It was also clarified that the term "PICES region" rather than "ecoregion" should be used in the document. The SB Chair explained that while there might be new collaborative research and monitoring programs due to increased Arctic marine traffic, AP-CREAMS itself does not start new research but provides advice to committees on needed studies. Advisory panels like AP CREAMS and AP NP-COOS can recommend research activities and provide broader perspective to committees.

Council discussed voting on the new action plan, with Russia being absent. Russian scientists are very active in AP-CREAMS and so Russia's perspective is important. On the other hand, delaying a vote until PICES-2026 GC meeting might adversely impact AP-CREAMS business meeting which will occur before that. The Chair proposed, and Council agreed, to record votes from the present countries and request Russia's vote via email before making a final decision. All present member countries voted in favour of accepting the revised AP-CREAMS Action Plan and Russia voted in favour via correspondence received on September 10.

Action (Completed): Executive Secretary to communicate with the Russian GC members regarding their vote on the revised AP Creams Action Plan, and request their vote by correspondence within a short timeframe (e.g., 1 week or 10 days).

GC Decision 2026/S/7. Council approved the revisions to AP-CREAMS Action Plan as provided.

IGC AGENDA ITEM 6. OTHER BUSINESS.

a. Discussion on PICES activities regarding the super El Niño

Council discussed how PICES can address extreme weather and climate events, particularly the developing El Niño condition, and the manner in which PICES can respond to provide information to member countries. There were suggestions to make a brief presentation in the Chair's remarks during the opening or closing sessions at PICES-2026, or create a summary document of relevant research presented during sessions. Working Group 49 (WG on extreme events) and S-CCME are the relevant

expert groups who would be involved in addressing this issue. PICES Communications Officer could prepare a briefing on PICES activities in this area that are presented at the meeting.

Action: Fangli Qiao to work with the ES to prepare a one-page slide or document summarizing PICES role in activities related to extreme events (e.g., El Niño). This will be circulated among GC members for agreement and can be part of the opening/closing session.

Action: Secretariat to reach out to WG-49 and S-CCME Chairs to inquire about their activities related to the El Niño event at PICES-2026, for potential inclusion in a summary or briefing.

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

<u>Canada</u> Andrew Thomson (PICES Vice-Chair) Bernard Vigneault	<u>Russian Federation</u>
<u>Japan</u> Fumie Maruyama Nobuaki Suzuki Koichi Hidaki (F&A Member, Advisor) Yutaro Fukuda (Advisor)	<u>USA</u> Jack Barth Evan Howell Kristen Koch (F&A Chair, Advisor) Amanda Williams (F&A Member, Advisor) Hannah Lachance (Advisor)
<u>People's Republic of China</u> Fangli Qiao Cai Biling (Advisor)	<u>Other</u> Tetsuo Fujii (PICES 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) Tei Lee (Advisor, F&A member) Dahong Mun (Advisor, F&A member) Joongho Moon (Advisor) Jiyoung Kim (Advisor)	

GC Endnote 2**Adopted Agenda**

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Adoption of agenda and meeting procedures
3. Update on PICES-2026 from the Secretariat
4. Activities proposed by SG-ERRR
 - a. PICES-2026 Opening session Communication.
 - b. Process to speed-up member nominations.
5. Decision on Revisions to AP-CREAMS Action Plan
6. Any other business
 - a. Discussion on PICES activities regarding the super El Niño