

PICES Press



Newsletter of the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (Published semi-annually)



Major Outcomes from the 2009 Inter-sessional Governing Council Meeting: A Note from the Chairman

The 2009 inter-sessional PICES Governing Council meeting (IGC-2009) was held on April 29, in Qingdao, People's Republic of China, following a 2-day workshop (April 26–27) to finalize the development of an Implementation Plan for a new PICES scientific program on “*Forecasting and Understanding Trends, Uncertainty and Responses of North Pacific Ecosystems*” (FUTURE) and the inter-sessional Science Board meeting (April 28) to review the scientific activities of the Organization since last year's Annual Meeting (PICES-2008) in Dalian, and to discuss the Implementation Plan and steering structure for FUTURE. Many Council members attended the FUTURE workshop and Science Board meeting and provided valuable comments and suggestions. All three events were kindly hosted by the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) of the People's Republic of China.

Implementation Plan for FUTURE

The Science Plan for FUTURE was approved in principle at PICES-2007 in Victoria, Canada, and finalized in February 2008. While the CCCC (Climate Change and Carrying Capacity) Program, the first integrative scientific program of PICES, focused mainly on the understanding of responses of North Pacific marine ecosystems to

climate change/variability, FUTURE aims to contribute to actual ecosystem-based management in the Contracting Parties. Thus, FUTURE really integrates all scientific disciplines of PICES, including socio-economical aspects of marine ecosystem changes, and has tight linkages with the existing Scientific and Technical Committees and their expert groups. Having Science Board as the Scientific Steering Committee will ensure that all of the scientific capabilities within the Organization are engaged.

The FUTURE Implementation Plan was almost finalized through discussions at the workshop and Science Board meeting, and was approved in principle at the Council meeting. It is expected that the Implementation Plan will be completed and circulated for final approval of Council by the end of June (the Plan was formally approved on June 30 and posted on the PICES website). Inheriting the achievements from the CCCC Program, as well as tackling challenging new questions, will be a key point for the success in implementing FUTURE. Under the CCCC Program, remarkable progress was achieved in linking plankton and fish to climate through the development of ecosystem dynamic models such as NEMURO and NEMURO.FISH, and we should keep our modeling abilities under the framework of FUTURE.



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Cooperation with non-member countries and other international organizations

Many of the scientific issues addressed by PICES (e.g., global warming and harmful algal blooms) are not unique to the North Pacific and concern the entire world. Recruitment of young talents to marine science and building their capacity is also a common issue beyond the Contracting Parties of PICES. Therefore, PICES has been expanding relationships with non-member countries around the Pacific Rim and other international organizations. To facilitate this collaboration, a formal framework to recruit external experts to PICES activities has been discussed by Council since 2006. At this meeting, Council finally approved the amendments of the PICES Rules of Procedures in order to accommodate experts from outside of PICES, as *ex-officio* members, to subsidiary bodies of our Scientific Committees and to Technical Committees.

In Qingdao, Council endorsed the concept of developing a proposal for a joint PICES/ICES Steering Group on *Strategic Planning for Cooperation in Marine Science in the Northern Hemisphere*, and directed Science Board and the Secretariat to initiate discussion with ICES on this issue.

Council also discussed future collaboration with a new Regional Fisheries Management Organization (RFMO) for the North Pacific, currently under consideration following the adoption of the Resolution 61/105 on *Sustainable Fisheries* by the General Assembly of the United Nations. Council agreed that PICES could contribute to sustainable and wise use of the North Pacific marine ecosystems and bio-resources by giving broad scientific advice to the new RFMO, and this would also meet the expectations by the Contracting Parties for scientific products of PICES to be useful for the national policy making. Council confirmed that PICES should pay attention to the future progress of inter-governmental negotiations on the new RFOM.

Restructuring of the Annual Meetings

Since the establishment of PICES, its activities have been growing year by year. This is evidence that PICES has become an internationally renowned scientific organization, and we should be pleased with this recognition. However, the appropriate balance must be found in the near future between the increasing activities of PICES and limitations of the human and financial resources in the Contracting Parties and the Organization. An Annual Meeting, the most important event for PICES, is not an exception. At PICES-2008, a Study Group was established to review the present structure of the Annual Meeting and to consider options for its restructuring. At IGC-2009, a preliminary report of the Study Group was presented, including some recommendations on changing the time allocation and order among various events in the Annual Meeting and shortening its duration. After extensive discussion,

Council agreed with Science Board that structural changes to be implemented should not compromise the scientific quality and attractiveness of the Annual Meeting, and decided to extend the deadline for the final Study Group report until PICES-2009. Council also approved changing, effective PICES-2009, the format of the Opening Session by abolishing remarks by the Contracting Parties, except for the host country. Instead, the opportunity will be provided to national delegates to make their statements at the beginning of the first session of the Council meeting.

Schedules of future Annual Meetings

The plans for future Annual Meetings were confirmed. PICES-2009 will be held October 23–November 1 at the International Convention Center in Jeju, Korea. The overall theme of the meeting, “*Understanding Ecosystem Dynamics and Pursuing Ecosystem Approaches to Management*”, is quite appropriate for the initiation of FUTURE. The poster and announcement for the meeting were distributed to the Contracting Parties, and details on the program and logistics can be found on the PICES website. PICES-2010 will be held October 22–31 at the Oregon Convention Center in Portland, Oregon, U.S.A., under the theme of “*North Pacific Ecosystems Today, and Challenges in Understanding and Forecasting Change*”. A detailed program will be discussed and decided at the Jeju meeting. Russia kindly agreed to host the Annual Meeting in 2011. The venue and dates will be announced in Jeju.

We had fine weather during these four days, and discussed all issues in a very comfortable atmosphere. In the breaks from the discussion, we much enjoyed the Qingdao scenic beauties and traditional Shangdong dishes. Some of us even tried to swim at the beach in front of the venue, which is becoming a custom of PICES meetings.

Inter-sessional Science Board and Governing Council meetings are not only indispensable for reviewing the activities of the Organization and making decisions in timely manner, but also for providing a good opportunity for communication between the two executive groups. As mentioned above, this year's meetings were very productive, and to a great degree it was due to the support from our Chinese colleagues. On behalf of all participants, I express our deepest thanks to SOA and the staff of the First Institute of Oceanography for their hospitality.



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