

## The FUTURE is Here

We recently held a 2-day FUTURE (*Forecasting and Understanding Trends, Uncertainty and Responses of North Pacific Marine Ecosystems*) Implementation Plan Workshop (April 26–27) and a 1-day inter-sessional Science Board meeting (April 28) in Qingdao, China. The venue was outstanding, so on behalf of all the participants I want to thank our Chinese hosts, and especially Mr. Gongke Tan, for great hospitality and making sure we had everything needed for an effective and successful set of meetings.

These were very important events in the history of the Organization because the main objective was to conduct a final review of the Implementation Plan for FUTURE, make any necessary changes, have Science Board review and approve the final draft, and then present the results of the review and changes to the Governing Council for their consideration. As with all new ventures, there were times in developing FUTURE when we wondered if we would ever arrive at a completed plan, and there were times throughout the process when we would take one step forward and two steps back, and then have to scratch our heads and wonder – what do we need to do now to get this back on track? But we always did and now we are ready to implement FUTURE as the next-generation PICES integrative science program following on our successful Climate Change and Carrying Capacity Science (CCCC) Program.

So it is with great pleasure to inform you that at the Governing Council meeting on April 29, the Implementation Plan was provisionally approved (the final approval was given on June 30), and we now have both a Science Plan and an Implementation Plan in place. Many of our colleagues in PICES deserve to be thanked for their contributions throughout this multi-year effort to develop these two Plans. But here, I want to express our appreciation to the members of the Implementation Plan Writing Team [Michael Foreman and Jake Rice (Canada), Xianshi Jin, Fangli Qiao and Sun Song (China), Masahide Kaeriyama, Hiroaki Saito,

Orio Yamamura and Ichiro Yasuda (Japan), Jung Hwa Choi, Se-Jong Ju, Joon-Yong Yang and Sinjae Yoo (Korea), Oleg Katugin and Vyacheslav Lobanov (Russia), David Fluharty, Anne Hollowed, Nathan Mantua and James Overland (U.S.A.)], and in particular give a special thanks to Drs. Hiroaki Saito and James Overland who very ably served as Co-Chairmen of the Team. Their dedicated efforts resulted in the Implementation Plan that addressed well the objectives of the Science Plan and comments from scientists in the Organization, using as guidance the attributes Governing Council considered necessary in a structure for implementing the science activities. In the process of developing the Implementation Plan, many insightful and useful comments on drafts were provided and, as always, this type of peer review greatly improved the quality of the Plan. In this regard, I think it is appropriate to acknowledge one individual in particular. Dr. Jake Rice's reviews at key stages in the development of the Plan raised centrally important questions and points of consideration, which led to discussions and decisions that improved the focus and sharpened the text of the document to convey clearly the science activities for FUTURE that will achieve the vision we developed.

The main highlight from our review of the Implementation Plan was the final decision that the Scientific Steering Committee for FUTURE will be the PICES Science Board, with the addition of Chairmen of three new Advisory Panels of FUTURE: COVE – *Climate, Ocean Variability and Ecosystems*, AICE – *Anthropogenic Influences on Coastal Ecosystems*, and SOFE – *Status, Outlooks, Forecasts and Engagement*. This means that Science Board will be responsible for initiating the activities of FUTURE by working with our Science and Technical Committees and their expert groups, and will also have the responsibility of evaluating the progress of FUTURE's scientific activities. This is a substantive change from the structure of the CCCC Program, and we are confident that the structure for



Participants of the FUTURE workshop held on April 26–27, 2009, in Qingdao, People's Republic of China.

FUTURE will be effective and lead to greater integration of all our Committees into the activities of FUTURE.

I encourage you to visit the PICES website and get a copy of the Plan ([www.pices.int/members/scientific\\_programs/FUTURE/FUTURE\\_IP\\_final\\_2009.pdf](http://www.pices.int/members/scientific_programs/FUTURE/FUTURE_IP_final_2009.pdf)), read it and become very familiar with it, because it is now time to stop planning and start executing the Plan. To get started, interim Chairmen to the FUTURE Advisory Panels, Drs. Hiroya Sugisaki for COVE, Glen Jamieson for AICE and Harold Batchelder for SOFE, were appointed at our meeting in Qingdao. Their tasks are to assist with soliciting nominations for each of the Advisory Panels and then develop an agenda for, and chair, the first meetings of the Panels at PICES-2009 in Jeju, Korea. At these meetings permanent Chairmen will be elected.

It has been a long process to get to this important point of having the approval to move forward and implement what I consider, and I hope you do to, a scientifically sound and highly relevant 10-year science program. If conducted well, and with strong and enthusiastic support from all of you, we, as PICES, will contribute significantly to improved understanding of the natural and anthropogenic forces affecting North Pacific ecosystems, and will produce relevant and useful products for our member country governments and societies as they develop policies and actions for the mitigation and adaptation to climate change. We have our strategic vision and our plan to begin to reach that vision, and it is now up to all of us to make it so.

Now I would like to turn to the inter-sessional Science Board meeting. One major agenda item was the review and approval for submission of the FUTURE Implementation Plan to the Governing Council, which has been discussed above. The other key items were: to review the status of the planning for our next Annual Meeting in Jeju, Korea, to evaluate progress on the development of the second edition of the North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report, and to examine a draft report of the Study Group on *Restructuring of the PICES Annual Meeting*. I can report that our Korean hosts and the Local Organizing Committee have arranged for an excellent venue and have made very good progress in developing an outstanding meeting agenda and associated activities. After considering the status of topic sessions and workshops, including invited speakers and co-sponsoring organizations/programs, we are confident that we have the foundation for some very substantive events that will be of broad interest to PICES scientists and to others outside of the community. I hope you are making plans now to be in Jeju, and if you have not, be sure to register for the meeting on the PICES website.

The development of the second edition of the North Pacific Ecosystem Status Report is a high priority for PICES, and I am pleased to inform you that the editors of the report,

Drs. Skip McKinnell and Michael Dagg, are doing an excellent job in keeping the Regional Writing Teams on track for completion of initial drafts so that we will be ready for the synthesis workshop in early December, in Honolulu, Hawaii.

It is always good for an organization to periodically review practices and procedures, and in that vein a Study Group on *Restructuring the PICES Annual Meeting* was established. The draft report of this Study Group was reviewed prior to, and discussed at, the inter-sessional meeting. Participation of several Council members in the discussion greatly helped to sharpen our comments. It is premature to talk about the outcomes, but briefly, a number of constructive comments were made that could lead to increased efficiencies in structuring our Annual Meeting while not affecting its effectiveness in fostering scientific exchanges and new international collaborations.

Finally, I would like to let you know that our relationship and interactions with ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) are still growing, and will continue to do so. Recently, we proposed to work with ICES on strategic issues of mutual interest and to establish a joint Steering Group on *Strategic Planning for Cooperation in Marine Science in the Northern Hemisphere*. Soon after our inter-sessional meeting, we heard that the ICES Science Committee (SCICOM) agreed that this effort would be a unique opportunity to work together, and accepted the proposed Terms of Reference for the Steering Group. As a step towards this opportunity and other interactions we have with ICES, I will be attending the ICES Annual Science Conference in September and will participate in their SCICOM meeting. Subsequently, Mr. Serge Labonté (SCICOM Chairman) and Dr. Adolf Kellermann (Head of ICES Science Programme) will attend PICES-2009 and participate in our Science Board meeting.

I close with a personal note to take some time this summer to be with family and friends and be ready this fall to begin the exciting and important job of implementing our next integrative science program – *Forecasting and Understanding Trends, Uncertainty and Responses of North Pacific Marine Ecosystems*. We have given ourselves an ambitious and challenging task, but one that is critically important as we, as PICES, do our part to improve the scientific foundation for understanding and projecting the effects of climate change on the ecosystem goods and services from the North Pacific that are vital to our well-being as Pacific Rim societies.



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