

The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES):

Introduction for SCOR

Carl O'Brien, ICES President

31 October 2025



Science for sustainable seas



International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

Intergovernmental organization leading marine science cooperation since 1902



VISION

To be a world-leading marine science organization, meeting societal needs for impartial evidence on the state and sustainable use of our seas and oceans.



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Through strategic partnerships our work in the Atlantic Ocean, and specifically the North Atlantic, extends into the Arctic, the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the North Pacific.

Science Cooperation

ICES Affiliate Institutes

Ministry for Primary Industries,
New Zealand

IFOP Instituto de Fomento Pesquero,
Chile

IMARPE Instituto de Mar del **Peru**

CMAR CSIRO Marine and
Atmospheric Research, **Australia**

Department of Agriculture, Forestry
and Fisheries, **South Africa**



SCOR-ICES Collaboration

- Letter of Agreement 2022 – 2027
- UN Decade SmartNet partners
- Specifically identified areas of collaboration
 - Physical, Chemical, and Biological Oceanography; Harmful Algal Blooms; Contaminants; Marine Litter; and Observing Systems
- ICES is interested in strengthening our collaboration with SCOR groups

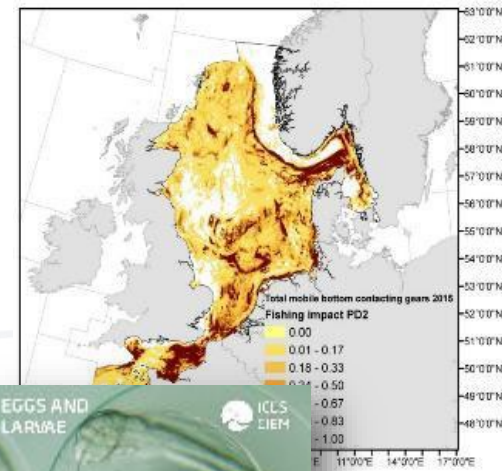


ICES Three pillars



ICES commitment to delivering high-quality, internationally recognized data that underpins our science and advice (CTS renewed until 2028)

ICES Data



DOME: BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITY

ICES CIEM

Plankton, Benthos

Stations: 23 500
Years with data: 37
First year: 1979
Latest year: Present

dome.ices.dk

VULNERABLE MARINE ECOSYSTEMS

ICES CIEM

Distribution, abundance, VME habitats, VME indicators

Records: 14 195
Years with data: 38
First year: 1958
Latest year: 2014

vme.ices.dk

DATRAS: FISH TRAWL SURVEYS

ICES CIEM

ICES CIEM

Stations: 70 000
Years with data: 51
First year: 1965
Latest year: Present

datras.ices.dk

EGGS AND LARVAE

ICES CIEM

ICES CIEM

Stations: 75 000
Years with data: 53
First year: 1862
Latest year: Present

eggsandlarvae.ices.dk

ICES Science Plan priorities and ecosystem challenges:

- **Climate change** – impacts on marine ecosystems and human activities; adaptation and mitigation responses
- **Biodiversity** – conservation and restoration
- **Sustainable food from the sea** – fisheries and aquaculture, large- and small-scale
- **Pollution** – including contaminants, plastics, and eutrophication
- **A more crowded marine space** – multiple use marine spatial planning (MSP)
- **The human dimension** – human impacts on marine ecosystems and the benefits provided by such ecosystems



Key requesters of advice

Advice & underpinning
evidence 2024:

- Fishing opportunities advice for 192 stocks
- 15 special requests
- 251 advisory documents published
- 100 expert group reports
- 23 new stock annexes
- 13 data calls
- 5 new technical guidelines documents



ICES 125th Anniversary – 2027

ICES Strategy – to be released in 2027

Numerous ICES activities will be coordinated to highlight our work and make ICES as effective as possible in the coming years.

Through 2026, ICES will gather input from stakeholders to the ICES Strategy. We will reach out to SCOR as part of this process.




DRAFT Figure


ICES Strategy
Strategic
framework

 Science plan

 Advisory plan

 Data plan

 Communications plan

 Secretariat and
Network plan

 Roadmaps

 AI plan

Take-home Messages

- ICES Network is well-equipped to evolve with a changing world.
- ICES partnerships with our Member Countries, partners like SCOR, and scientists from around the world are essential for addressing our common marine scientific and management challenges.
- Great opportunities ahead to improve the scientific basis for Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) to address the many challenges that we face.

Save the date

ICES ANNUAL SCIENCE CONFERENCE 2026

Tuesday 15 - Friday 18 September
Brest, France

