

# Instructions for Observers subject to review

## Introduction

This document provides the reporting template and accompanying instructions for Observers to be reviewed during the **Icelandic Chairmanship (2019-2021)**.

The deadline for submission is **1 June 2020**.

According to the "[Arctic Council Rules of Procedure](#)" (Annex 2), every **two years** Observers are requested to submit to the Chairmanship up-to-date information about relevant activities and their contributions to the work of the Arctic Council. Every four years, from the date of being granted Observer status, Observers will be reviewed at the Ministerial meeting. The following **20 Observers** will be reviewed at the next Ministerial meeting, and are requested to submit their review report by **1 June 2020**:<sup>1</sup>

- Germany;
- The Netherlands;
- Poland;
- Switzerland;
- United Kingdom;
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
- Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM);
- OSPAR Commission (OSPAR);
- Standing Committee of the Parliamentarians of the Arctic Regions (SCPAR);
- United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UN-ECE);
- United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment);
- West Nordic Council (WNC);
- World Meteorological Organization (WMO);
- Advisory Committee on the Protection of the Seas (ACOPS);
- International Arctic Science Committee (IASC);
- International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES);
- International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH);
- Northern Forum (NF);
- Oceana; and,
- World Wildlife Fund for Nature – Global Arctic Program (WWF).

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<sup>1</sup> These include the Observers reviewed before the Fairbanks Ministerial meeting in 2017 as well as Observers admitted that year.

## Role of Observers

The role and responsibilities of Observers, as well as criteria for admission to the Arctic Council, can be found in the “Arctic Council Rules of Procedure” (Annex 2) and the “[Observer Manual for Subsidiary Bodies](#).”

The primary role of Observers is to observe the work of the Arctic Council. Observers contribute to the Arctic Council primarily through engagement at the level of Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. Observers are invited to the meetings and other activities of the Arctic Council unless the Senior Arctic Officials decide otherwise. Observers may also propose projects through an Arctic State or a Permanent Participant.

## Report submission

Observer review reports should include the relevant information described below and in the template.

- (a) A description of the Observer’s contributions to the work of the Arctic Council since the time of the Observer’s most recent submission, or in the previous two years, with special focus on contributions to the subsidiary bodies through project participation and support, as well as collaboration with Permanent Participants;
- (b) If applicable, a description of the Observer’s future plans to contribute to the work of the Arctic Council, with special focus on contributions to the subsidiary bodies through project participation and support, as well as collaboration with Permanent Participants; and,
- (c) If applicable, a description of the Observer’s contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered in the previous sections since the time of the Observer’s most recent submission, or in the previous two years.

Observer review reports should be submitted electronically to the **Arctic Council Secretariat** via email: [acs@arctic-council.org](mailto:acs@arctic-council.org) not later than **1 June 2020**. Please bear in mind while preparing your report that all Observer reports will be published online in the *Observer* section of the [Arctic Council online Library](#).

If an Observer fails to submit a report during the review process, the Arctic Council will consider this to mean that the Observer **is no longer interested in maintaining its status** as an accredited Observer to the Arctic Council.

## Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES)

Date of submission:

29 May 2020

Observer's website, if appropriate:

<http://www.ices.dk/Pages/default.aspx>

### Information for appropriate contact person

Full name:

Anne Christine Brusendorff

Email:

[Anne.christine@ices.dk](mailto:Anne.christine@ices.dk)

Telephone:

+45 3135 6701

Organization or department:

ICES

Job Title:

General Secretary

Full  
mailing  
address:

H. C. Andersens Boulevard 44-46, DK 1553 Copenhagen V, Denmark

**Is your state or organization interested in continuing as an Observer of the Arctic Council?**

**Yes**  **No**

## Observer Review Report

Please describe in no more than two pages your state's or organization's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years. Please highlight contributions to specific projects, such as through proposals, concept development, in-kind and financial support, and hosting of meetings. Please detail any collaboration with Permanent Participants, such as project proposal endorsement and support.

ICES is an intergovernmental organization whose main objective is to increase the scientific knowledge of the marine environment and its living resources and to use this knowledge to provide unbiased, non-political advice. ICES supports its [Member Countries](#) and international governmental institutions like the EU Commission, NEAFC, NASCO, NAFO, NAMMCO, OSPAR and HELCOM by providing scientific data, knowledge, and advice.

Recognizing the important global contribution of ICES to the UN ocean agenda, ICES was in 2018 awarded observer status in UN General Assembly.

ICES has prioritized Arctic research to help improve understanding of ecological processes and human impact. A number of ICES expert groups focus on subarctic fish stocks in the Barents Sea, Iceland and East Greenland, as well as widely distributed and straddling stocks.

ICES has a network of Integrated Ecosystem Assessment (IEA) Groups, providing opportunity to share methods and guidance between ecoregions.

Of specific Arctic relevance are four IEA groups:

- Working Group on the Integrated Assessments of the Norwegian Sea ([WGINOR](#))
- Working Group on the Integrated Assessments of the Barents Sea ([WGIBAR](#))

Both of these groups provide knowledge about the state of ecosystems, overviews of available data, monitoring strategies, and adaptive management.

- the Working Group on Integrated Ecosystem Assessment for the Central Arctic Ocean ([WGICA](#); joint group with the North Pacific Marine Science Organization (PICES) and the Arctic Council Working Group Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME)) works on IEA for the Central Arctic Ocean, with a specific focus on a description of the current status of this ecosystem. A joint peer reviewed report based on the work of WGICA will be published, planned 2020.
- the Working Group on Integrated Ecosystem Assessment of the Greenland Sea, working towards providing an ecosystem overview for the region in 2020, and also identifying trends, knowledge gaps, and research priorities.
- a joint ICES/PICES Working Group on Integrated Ecosystem Assessment of the Northern Bering Sea and the Chukchi Sea is under preparation.

In early planning stages is the development of ecosystem overviews in West Greenland waters, in collaboration with NAFO. In addition, following the great amount of scientific evidence presented at the first scientific researcher's conference in Arkhangelsk, under the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean, it has been suggested that the Russian Federation considers developing ecosystem overviews for Russian waters adjacent to the Central Arctic Ocean. This would deliver an almost complete overview of the adjacent sea areas to the Central Arctic Ocean from the North Atlantic gateway. This approach also offers a potential template for further development of overviews of adjacent sea areas linked to the North Pacific gateway.

A joint ICES and PAME workshop *Ecosystem Approach guidelines and Integrated Ecosystem Assessment in the Arctic* dealt with the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in IEAs in the changing Arctic region. This is crucial not only to avoid risks to human life and to secure resources important for indigenous peoples and their cultures, but also to support the scientific basis for management in rapidly changing Arctic ecosystems. More effort is needed to provide opportunities for meaningful participation of Arctic communities, including

Arctic indigenous people, and ensure indigenous knowledge is included to the overviews.

ICES IEA Groups have compiled Ecosystem overviews for the [Barents Sea](#), [Icelandic waters](#), and [Norwegian Sea](#), providing a description of the ecosystems, identifying the main human pressures, and explaining how these affect key ecosystem components. Ecosystem Overviews are under preparation for the Greenland Sea and the Central Arctic Ocean, aimed for release during 2020.

ICES serves as the AMAP (marine) Thematic Data Centre in relation to data collected in the Arctic area for its thematic assessments – and in support of this an agreement has been concluded to ensure the inclusion of time-series data from Greenlandic monitoring to the ICES data portal and to keep this updated, for use in the AMAP assessments. In 2020 an agreement was concluded for ICES to deliver a contaminants assessment tool for use by AMAP.

For more than a decade ICES has produced an annual report of the North Atlantic and Nordic seas describing the state and trends in ocean climate. The report is available as an operational data tool; <https://ocean.ices.dk/iroc/>

ICES has been participating in the *Meetings of Scientific Experts on Fish Stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean (FiSCAO)*, supporting the December 2017 concluded Agreement to prevent unregulated high seas fisheries in the central Arctic Ocean (CAO Agreement). [A joint ICES/PICES document](#) presents a description of the potential contribution by ICES and PICES specifically to the CAO Agreement, as well as generally in the Arctic area.

Of the more than 160 expert groups and workshops that address many diverse marine ecosystem issues, more than one fifth of ICES groups address issues that overlap with Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (ABNJ). In PICES, 26 out of 28 expert groups address issues that overlap with ABNJ. We draw upon our network of scientists to provide advice on biodiversity and sustainable exploitation in ABNJ to both the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and the OSPAR Commission.

ICES follows, and has been actively contributing to the planning phase of the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development. Including the Arctic Regional Workshops, January 2020, and proposed Workshop third Quarter 2020.

*Examples of events, scientific symposia, and themes sessions with Arctic focus*

- 2017 ICES Scientific advice on distributional changes in fish stocks linked to environmental conditions (mostly through sea temperature) and fishing
- Joint ICES/PICES working group on climate change and biologically driven ocean carbon sequestration
- 2017 Symposium: Ecosystem Studies of Subarctic and Arctic Seas Program International Open Science Meeting
- 2017 Workshop on global ecological and economic connections in Arctic and sub-Arctic crab fisheries
- 2017 Joint ICES/PICES strategic initiative on climate change impacts on marine ecosystem, covering among other issues vulnerability assessments on fish and shellfish and on the human communities depending on them
- 2018 joint ICES/PICES Workshop on Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental scenarios to be used in climate projection
- [2018 symposium: Fourth International ICES/PICES/IOC/FAO Symposium](#), The effects of climate change on the world's oceans, Washington D.C., USA – addressing both consequences and impacts of climate change in the world oceans, gaps and insufficiencies in the evidence-base as the basis for proposals for priorities for future research, as well as to derive appropriate climate-ready policies that can help society adapt and protect the marine environment and living resources in the future
- ICES Annual Science Conference, 24-27 September 2018, Theme Session: [The Nordic seas and the Arctic – climatic variability and its impact on marine ecosystems, fisheries and policymaking](#)
- Second joint Arctic Council/PAME Ecosystem Approach Expert group, ICES and PICES
- International conference on implementation of EA in the Arctic, 25–27 June 2019, Bergen, Norway
- Joint AMAP/ICES/PICES International Symposium on Plastics in the Arctic and Sub-Arctic Region, Reykjavik, Iceland, 28-30 September 2020

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your state's or organization's future plans for contributing to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces, and/or Expert Groups. Please highlight intentions to contribute to specific projects and to collaborate with Permanent Participants.

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your state's or organization's contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered by the previous sections since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years.