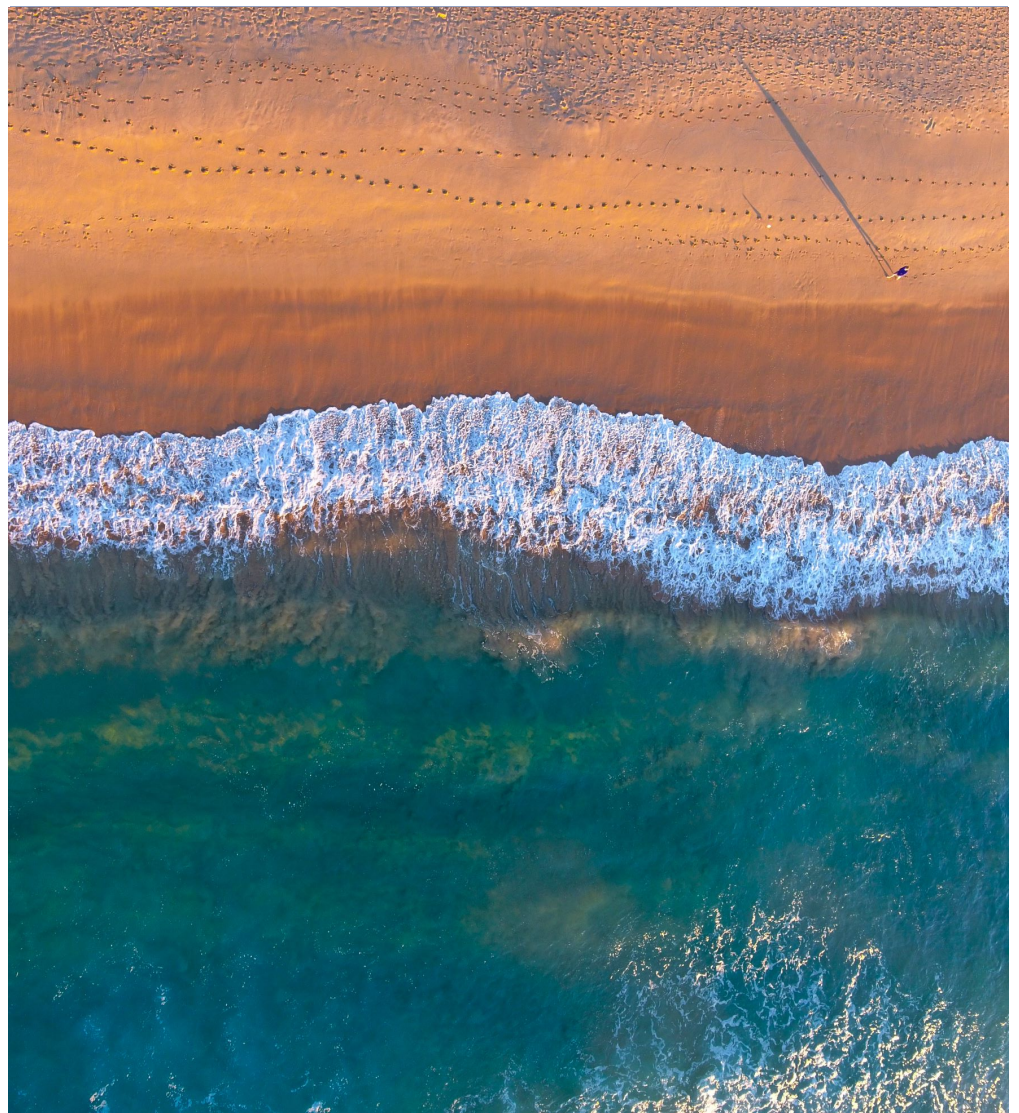


# ICES Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Version 01 | January 2023

**ICES GUIDELINES  
AND POLICIES**



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# ICES Guidelines and Policies

## ICES Stakeholder Engagement Strategy

Version 01 | January 2023

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## i Background

### **Strategy scope**

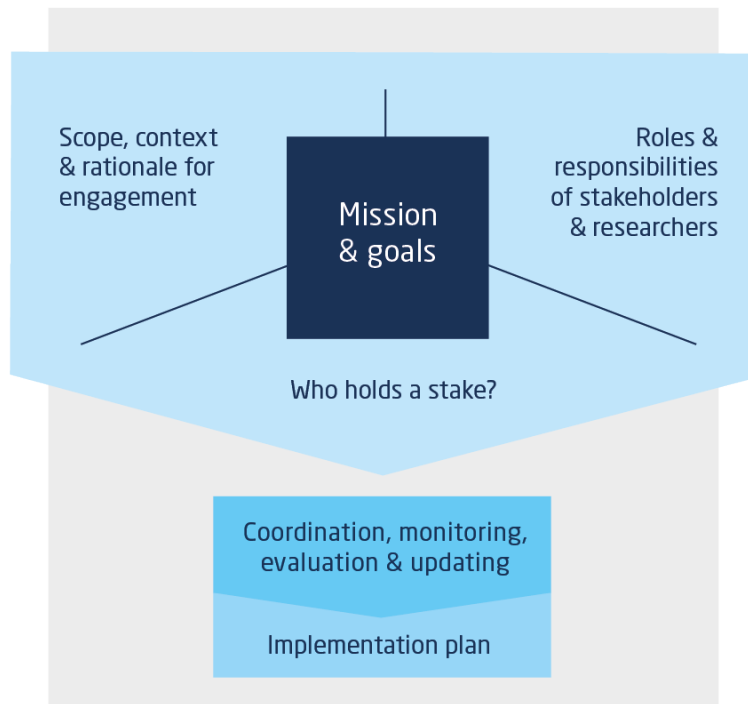
The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy of International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) outlines the key principles of stakeholder engagement and defines the roles of both stakeholders and scientists in the engagement. The strategy gives general guidance and mission for ICES community on how to organize stakeholder engagement, with concrete details and guidance being developed in the implementation plan. It lists the scope, context and rationale for engagement, and describes the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and researchers.

### **Other relevant information**

The strategy is that of the Council of ICES. It is jointly curated on behalf of ICES Council by ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM) and ICES Science Committee (SCICOM). It will be reviewed every 5 years. It is supported by an implementation plan.

## ii Key points

### ICES Stakeholder Engagement Strategy



The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy outlines the key principles of stakeholder engagement and defines the roles of both stakeholders and scientists in the engagement. It specifically takes a broad definition of stakeholder as “those who affect or are affected by a decision, process, or action of ICES” and focuses on the roles and responsibilities in concrete engagement situations.

The strategy gives general guidance and mission for ICES community on how to organize stakeholder engagement, with concrete details and guidance being developed in the implementation plan. It lists the scope, context, and rationale for engagement, and describes the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and researchers.

It is required because stakeholder engagement is increasingly important in the work of ICES. Workshops and meetings are organized to consult stakeholders on knowledge needs, methods, data, and, more broadly, their expert knowledge, and incorporate this knowledge into the science and the evidence base for advice. Engagement occurs with experts in the network as well as with the Secretariat and the committees. Fora for engagement on a high level are the meetings with the requesters of ICES advice (MIRIA) and the Advisory Councils and observers to our advisory process (MIACO).

The observer policy <sup>1</sup> covers part of ICES interactions with organizations and individuals. However, for wider engagement, a strategy and subsequent implementation plan is required to harmonize and coordinate a transparent engagement and to ensure the credibility of the science and advice being produced by ICES.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.8517>

# 1 Mission and strategy

ICES strives to ensure the effective and balanced participation of stakeholders, as they play a central role in contributing to the scientific basis and societal context of advice.

This stakeholder strategy supports ICES mission and vision to be an independent, world-leading marine science organization which is responsive to a changing society and its challenges. It provides a framework through which stakeholder engagement can continue to evolve, ensuring the credibility, legitimacy, and relevance of ICES science and scientific advice.

ICES defines stakeholders as those who affect or are affected by a decision, process, or action of ICES, including scientists and knowledge providers operating within ICES network. Because of the central role that scientists in the network play in framing and conducting the work of ICES, scientists have a unique role as “internal stakeholders” from within the organization, and this strategy generally reserves the word “stakeholders” to denote all other stakeholders.

When engaging with ICES, both ICES scientists and stakeholders are provided with specific paths and roles for that engagement. As there are few rigid boundaries to the organization, it is expected that this strategy will continue to evolve to better define the responsibilities of both groups.

This document outlines the strategy to support the engagement of stakeholders throughout ICES network. The intended audience is those that actively engage in ICES activities, the informed and interested public, and anyone enquiring about ICES approach to stakeholder engagement.

# 2 Goals of engagement

The goals of stakeholder engagement for ICES are to:

- ensure input from various communities of knowledge so that essential knowledge from relevant disciplines and actor groups is incorporated into ICES science and advice;
- engage stakeholders and advice requesters to develop and deliver current and future advice products for the changing priorities of managing marine activities;
- increase legitimacy, ownership, and accountability for the creation of knowledge; and
- facilitate knowledge exchange and collaboration when addressing operational, tactical, and strategic challenges, thus enhancing innovation and social learning.

## 3 Scope of engagement

### 3.1 Context and audience of the strategy

Stakeholder engagement has taken an increasingly important role at ICES and is fundamental to ICES work, as has been captured by the most recent strategic, science, and advisory plans. ICES recognizes the essential nature of stakeholder engagement for addressing environmental challenges and understanding human impacts and values. Nonetheless, there are valid concerns that if stakeholder engagement is done incorrectly, it could compromise the actual or perceived objectivity of ICES science and its independence. Furthermore, when providing advice, trade-offs have to be identified that are informed by the different priorities that stakeholders place on management objectives.

A central challenge is recognizing that stakeholders that engage directly with ICES are a subset of the people impacted by ICES science and advice. The Stakeholder Engagement Strategy is primarily focused on ensuring that people who are involved in any participatory process at ICES have clear roles and responsibilities and that ICES performs its work fairly and transparently. Increased opportunities for diverse resource users and citizens require clear avenues to engage with the different aspects of ICES network. Considering and promoting diversity and inclusion and reducing and avoiding implicit bias are crucial in this process.

ICES acknowledges that governing systems are diversifying. The influence of non-state actors and the potential benefits of more participatory forms of governance challenge traditional decision-making structures and governance mechanisms. In this context, stakeholders have been and will continue to advocate for a wider and/or deeper involvement in governance and management systems. While ICES can be the arena to explore and host dialogues on alternative governance mechanisms, stakeholders should use the proper channels within the policy and legal system to express their demands for inclusion and change.

### 3.2 Rationale for engagement

Based on the institutional setting within which ICES operates, engagement is considered valuable for:

- **Knowledge production:** data gathering and exchange, information, narratives, communication, and consultation,
- **Knowledge co-production:** participatory and transdisciplinary research; development of innovative knowledge frameworks,
- **Knowledge sharing:** dissemination, mutual and intuitional learning, “soft transfer” and application, broader influence of scientific developments,
- **Science for policy:** scoping, dialogue, development of advice products and services, bridging and brokering activities, exploring objectives and organizational performance and future developments,
- **Scientific advice:** observation and input; insights for improving performance; developing, expanding, and improving advice products.



### 3.3 Principles of stakeholder engagement

Five principles guide ICES engagement with stakeholders. These principles provide the overarching context in which engagement occurs.

1. Opportunities for stakeholder involvement are inclusive and proportional to the issue.
2. Active stakeholder participation is consistent with the impartiality, independence and integrity of ICES.
3. The roles, responsibilities, and expectations of participation are transparent, and participants understand and respect their roles and the roles of others.
4. ICES communication strategy is aligned with the engagement strategy, and meaningful feedback is provided when appropriate.
5. Stakeholder participation is assessed, the engagement process is monitored, and constant organizational learning occurs.

Transparency is a core tenet of the strategy. However, there are exceptions to this principle to preserve the confidentiality of personal and sensitive information. Confidential conditions are indicated in ICES procedures.



**ICES principles of stakeholder engagement**

## 4 Roles and responsibilities of stakeholder and scientists

### 4.1 Who holds a stake?

Stakeholders are defined as those who affect or are affected by a decision, process, or action of ICES. Individuals and organizations will be registered to be eligible to participate as a stakeholder. They must adhere to ICES Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct <sup>2</sup>. In specific cases (e.g. indigenous communities), ICES recognizes and respects that other rules and regulations may also apply jointly with the principles of the stakeholder engagement strategy.

### 4.2 Framing stakeholder participation

Whenever an individual or organization engages with ICES, it plays one of the following four roles: expert, observer, contributor, or partner. An individual/organization may interact in multiple processes and perform different roles. The specific role is determined by the type of engagement activity. The roles cannot be held simultaneously in the same process.

**Expert:** a formal role that is part of a process that integrates experience-based and scientific knowledge to produce robust evidence. The process has clear rules for experts <sup>3</sup>, who are selected on an individual basis according to their know-how and expertise, done at the discretion of the chair of the working group that they are part of or ICES Member Country.

**Observer:** a formal role allowing stakeholders to gain access to the advice process before it is delivered to decision-makers. It is designed to provide the best understanding of the facts and the associated uncertainty, giving stakeholders the chance to provide input and to observe how the advice is produced. Observers can be organizations or individuals that are invited based on democratic and transparency principles.

It should be noted that ICES has other mechanisms of observing: a) ICES members, and requesters of advice that are allowed to observe a given process; and b) scientists that are allowed to observe and/or apply participatory observation methods to a given process.

**Contributor:** a flexible role where stakeholder involvement is designed to address a given research question or policy issue. Contributors may be invited on an individual or representative basis. This process is inherently and intentionally flexible: it can be process and/or content based, used to gather insights, set preferences, explore communication tools or data formats, facilitate dialogue, or raise awareness, build consensus, or exchange knowledge. The operational rules for contributors entail open access and rather limited stakeholder accountability.

**Partner:** a formal role designed to engage in committed and continued relationships with ICES system, namely advice requesters and recipients. The interaction is recurrent and integrated into ICES planning. Engagement with partners facilitates deliberative dialogue for contested science and policy issues, ranging from quality control and quality assurance to understanding and

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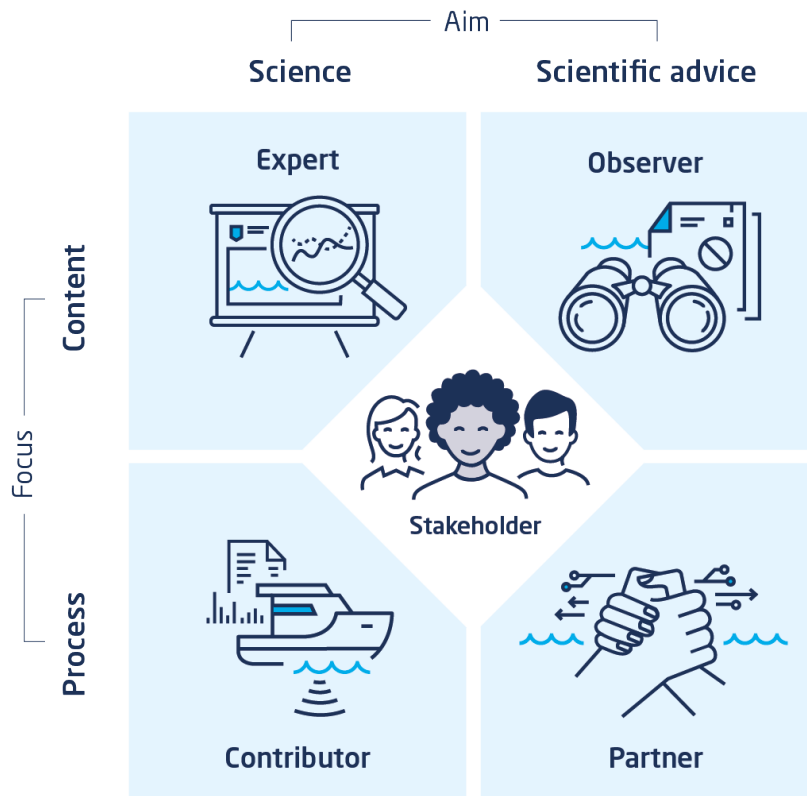
<sup>2</sup> <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.21647825>

<sup>3</sup> <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.21630092>

informing stakeholder strategies or policy objectives and forecasting science and scientific advice needs to address future challenges.

Examples of stakeholder roles within ICES include:

- **Expert** – a stakeholder participating in an expert group (working group or workshop)
- **Observer** – a stakeholder participating in an advice drafting group
- **Contributor** – a stakeholder participating in an *ad hoc* meeting: scoping exercise, scenario analysis, trade-off analysis, feedback, consultations, etc. The meeting can be linked to an expert group or research project.
- **Partner** – a stakeholder participating in MIACO or MIRIA



Mechanism by which roles are characterised based on the aim and focus of the engagement

### 4.3 Maintaining and encouraging engagement

Successful stakeholder engagement maintains and encourages participation by identifying relevant issues, managing expectations, setting clear purposes for each interaction, and providing feedback to stakeholders about the process and outcomes of engagement. Sound engagement is enabled by flexibility, openness, training and the building and nurturing of trust between ICES and its stakeholders. In practice, successful engagement requires effective communication and continuous learning, particularly among those initiating the processes within the organization.

Effective stakeholder engagement by ICES benefits from the organization's network of scientists. Experts explore the ways knowledge is produced and shared and discuss and develop effective methods for stakeholder interactions. Organizational and social learning are also supported by following up and assessing engagement performance.

Establishing and maintaining stakeholder engagement requires proactive and targeted external communication with the key actor groups. Communication activities will be directed to each specific audience group, their incentives and language, and will align closely with ICES communication strategy.

Details on how to maintain and encourage engagement can be found in the Stakeholder Engagement Implementation Plan, due to be published in 2023.

The monitoring and assessment of engagement allows for identifying underrepresented groups. Underrepresented groups are individuals/ organizations that have specific attributes (sectorial, geographical, organizational, cultural, etc.) and are systematically poorly represented or absent from participatory processes at ICES. For these groups, ICES will assess how their absence impacts the broader objectives of engagement and the reasons for the lack of engagement (from lack of interest to existing barriers that prevent participation). The implementation plan details follow-up actions to address barriers and increase the equity of access and participation.

#### **4.4 Duties and responsibilities of stakeholders**

Stakeholders engaging with ICES are committed to:

1. abiding by ICES Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, which defines the standard of behaviour of stakeholders contributing to ICES science and advice, provides guidance on identifying and handling actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest, and sets the responsibilities of those contributing to ICES work;
2. respecting the formal processes and rules associated with the roles within which they engage with ICES (i.e. expert, observer, contributor, and partner).
3. contributing to ensuring the transparency of the process, namely by sharing the outputs with their constituencies (if applicable); likewise, fully respecting the confidentiality conditions that ICES applies, particularly in the advisory process;
4. being mindful of the plurality of views and values of the stakeholders engaging with ICES; and
5. understanding ICES mission and vision, accepting that participatory processes operate within the remit of the science organization, and restraining from opportunistic behaviour.

#### **4.5 Duties and responsibilities of ICES scientists (engagers)**

Researchers, scientists, and ICES bodies (e.g. a committee or secretariat) initiating a participatory process are committed to:

1. abiding by the principles of stakeholder engagement set in this strategy and ensuring ICES Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct is effectively implemented;

2. setting a “rationale for stakeholder engagement” for those in the role of participants before initiating the process. This includes a written definition of objectives, expected outcomes, stakeholder profiles, roles, and potential risks. The statement will be reported to ICES Secretariat for each engagement process.
3. considering communication as an integral part of the process, in particular regarding goals, timeline, documentation, feedback, and the use and sharing of data and information by the stakeholders, in accordance with ICES data policy <sup>4</sup>;
4. being mindful about communication in relation to jargon and power dynamics; and
5. performing a self-assessment of the participatory process once it is completed and providing feedback to and receiving feedback from stakeholders in relation to outcomes and experiences.

The Implementation Plan provides templates for facilitating and standardizing the reporting, supporting the monitoring and evaluation.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.8883>

## 5 Coordination, monitoring, and evaluation

Coordination, monitoring, and evaluation of stakeholder engagement at ICES *and* of the related engagement strategy are ongoing processes. Integral components are thorough documentation of occurring engagement processes, reporting, and regular feedback to all involved parties (internal and external).

**Coordination** is the facilitation of activities before, during, and after participatory processes with the aim of optimizing resource use and improving synergies.

**Monitoring** is the systematic collection and documentation of predefined indicators of the achievement of the objectives and progress of engaging with stakeholders at ICES.

**Evaluation** is the assessment of activities, goals, and results of stakeholder engagement to determine the fulfilment of objectives, efficiency, effectiveness, and the impact and sustainability of engagement and the engagement strategy.

ACOM and SCICOM will be responsible for coordination.

Monitoring and evaluation should be linked to the improved monitoring of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the network.

### 5.1 Monitoring criteria

Monitoring will focus on:

- **Engagement process** (activities, participation, stakeholder affiliation, attendance, methods used)
- **Outputs** (short-term monitoring of tangible outputs such as publications, documents, and agreements)
- **Outcomes** (longer-term monitoring of effectiveness of the engagement process as a fostering change)
- **Unintended consequences** (with the purpose of organizational learning and accommodating change).

ICES conducts engagement monitoring using the SMART approach.

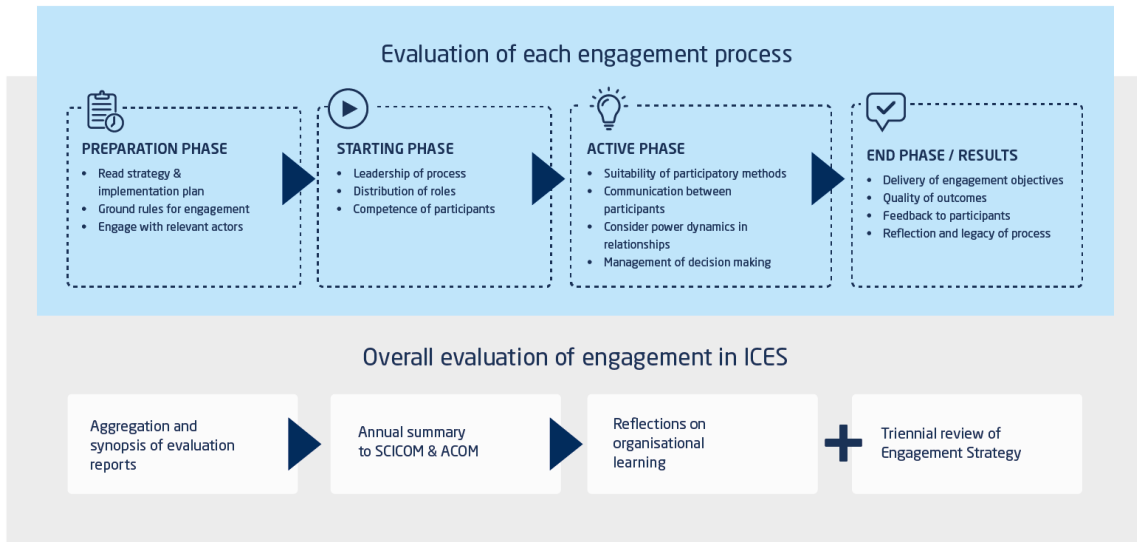
### 5.2 Evaluation of engagement

An evaluation of stakeholder engagement not only assesses its quantity but also analyses its quality against a predefined set of evaluation indicators.

The evaluation is an evidence-based judgement of the extent to which a stakeholder engagement activity has been:

- **Effective:** measuring progress towards achieving the objectives of the strategy

- Efficient: tracking costs and benefits
- Relevant to current and potential needs of ICES
- Coherent both internally and with other ICES actions



**Evaluation of the engagement strategy and each engagement**

### 5.3 Annual reporting

Annual reports of stakeholder engagement (using a template) will be made to SCICOM and ACOM and compiled by the Secretariat or a governance group.

### 5.4 Updating the strategy

This strategy will be assessed and updated at a minimum every three years.

## 6 Glossary of terms

Disclaimer: the concepts provided in this glossary are defined to ease the reading and understanding of the strategy. Readers are warned that these descriptions neither capture nor are intended to deny the complexities and nuances associated with each of them.

<b>Accountability</b>	Responsibility for personal decisions and actions and expectation that they can be explained when asked
<b>ACOM</b>	ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM) translates ICES science into advice on the sustainable use and protection of marine ecosystems
<b>Advice drafting group (ADG)</b>	The formalized structure in ICES advice process that drafts the advice for ACOM consideration
<b>Advice products</b>	Any output published by ICES as advice. Since 2008, all published advice has been produced by ACOM.
<b>Advice requesters</b>	Organizations with agreements with ICES that pay for advice – and ICES Member Countries
<b>Bias</b>	A strong feeling in favour of or against one group of people, or for side in an argument
<b>Bridging and brokering</b>	<i>Bridging</i> : to reduce or get rid of the differences that exist between two viewpoints or groups of people; <i>brokering</i> : to arrange the details of an agreement between different parties
<b>Engagement</b>	Being involved with somebody/something in an attempt to understand them/it or the process of encouraging people to be interested in the work of an organization, etc.
<b>Engagement performance</b>	The measure of how well an engagement activity has done in relation to pre-formulated evaluation indicators (after Oxford Dictionary)
<b>Experience-based knowledge</b>	Knowledge gained on practical experience, often over a prolonged period of time
<b>Expert group</b>	Expert groups generate scientific knowledge and conduct the analyses that underpin ICES advice
<b>Forecasting science</b>	A scientific branch developing assumptions about the future based on current data and information
<b>ICES network</b>	The collective of independent researchers coming together in the context of ICES activities to jointly perform science and formulate advice (own definition)
<b>ICES scientists</b>	Independent researchers, usually members of universities and selected by ICES, who work together to advance scientific understanding and management of marine systems



<b>Knowledge exchange</b>	A process which brings together academic staff, users of research, and wider groups and communities to increase the impact of research by exchanging data and information
<b>Legitimacy</b>	The quality of being based on a fair or acceptable reason
<b>MIACO</b>	Annual meeting between ICES and industry stakeholders
<b>MIRIA</b>	Annual meeting between ICES and requesters of ICES advice
<b>Organizational learning</b>	Intra-organizational process of creating, using, and distributing knowledge based on past experiences
<b>Power dynamics</b>	The difference in relationships and roles and how they influence behaviour, usually associated with a disparity in power where a more powerful side can have leverage upon the weaker
<b>SCICOM</b>	ICES Science Committee (SCICOM) is the main scientific body at ICES
<b>Scientific knowledge</b>	Knowledge created through scientific methods and processes
<b>SMART approach</b>	Mnemonic acronym meaning to guide goals and objectives: specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-bound
<b>Social learning</b>	Learning that takes place at a societal scale through social interaction between peers.
<b>Transdisciplinary research</b>	Research that includes non-academic stakeholders

## Annex 1: Detailed version history

Version	Date	Major changes
1	Jan/2023	Strategy published