

Open session

A sea change for ICES

Conveners: Alan Haynie (SIHD) and Jörn Schmidt (SIHD)

The SIHD Open Session, “A sea change for ICES”, allowed participants to discuss the future direction of the SIHD. The session had 40-50 attendees, about a dozen who actively engaged in the conversation. Participants were relatively equally balanced between social and natural sciences.

The agenda proposed a discussion of three topics, but was more wide-ranging.

- Does the term ‘human dimension’ best describe our mission?
- Social and economic indicators
- Integration of social, ecological, economic and governance objectives.

When participants were asked if the term ‘human dimension’ best describes the SIHD mission, one person said “no” while the remainder were split between “yes” and “indifferent.” We discussed how “human dimensions” is commonly recognized and used by a number of other organizations (e.g., PICES, IMBER, NOAA) but we are still discussing revising it or trying to improve the acronym.

One participant commented that “the challenge is about what we are. There are many different aspects of human dimensions that could be covered, so the SIHD could make clearer what we mean.” There was general agreement that we need to do this, but also discussion that there may not be a single consensus about what SIHD priorities are.

A range of topics were discussed, including the following “roadmap” of central themes. These topics are discussed further below.

- Create More Tangible Products
- Examine the match between objectives, methods, data
- Improve integration
- Communicate with ICES leaders and others about how to keep improving the outputs of the SIHD.

Examine the match between objectives, methods, data

Topics discussed included:

- What information should go into advice?
- The need to document the effects of specific management measures (other consequences than ecological ones)
- It can take a long time before information can be incorporated into advice
- The unintended consequences of a policy decision could be demonstrated in a specific case.

Integration of social, ecological, economic and governance objectives

The SIHD plans for achieving this goal include:

- The coming workshop addressing this integration specifically: WKSIHD-BESIO (Workshop on Balancing Economic, Social, and institutional objectives in Integrated Assessments) November 29 – December 1, 2017.
- Building on this workshop
- Describing opportunities and challenges of matching and integration
- Acting on these findings.

Create more tangible products

Everyone in the SIHD agrees that it is important that we continue to produce tangible outputs. We discussed what might be the most valuable thing that we can do this year and in coming years. Some of the planned and recommended outputs include:

- Specific social and economic data collection and indices
- Papers
- Identification of human dimensions challenges and opportunities
- WKSIHD-BESIO
- Several upcoming meetings and sessions organized by SIHD co-chairs
- Fleet modeling and other methods workshops are under discussion.

Improve integration

The session included a discussion about how we most effectively improve the integration of human dimensions with other marine science research. How do we best engage people? What information should be included in integrated research?

Other topics discussed were that within the advice on the stocks there could be a section on the institutional factors (e.g. describing the governance structure).

One comment noted that there was a mismatch between stocks and management areas. We also discussed the need to achieve specific/narrow analytical goals in the context of Ecosystem Based Management (EBM).

SIHD Session participants discussed how we need to maintain ongoing communication with ICES Leadership about how our work best contributes to broad ICES objectives. SIHD needs ongoing input on our roadmap. In assessing how socioeconomic information can be reconciled with management objectives, it is important to have ongoing feedback from ICES leaders as we make progress. **We also discussed the need to create an on-going interactive process with managers.**

There was discussion about the policy boundaries of our analyses. Some meeting participants expressed concerns that policy analysis may step on the toes of managers, but other participants encouraged this type of analysis. One participant said that we need to “make biological advice more readable.” One participant noted that ignoring social and economic impacts is not best available science and can produce very misleading results.

In sum, it was a productive and successful Open Session.