

2023 Annual Report of SG-GREEN

The Study Group Generating Recommendations to Encourage Environmentally-friendly Networking (GREEN), held under the auspices of the PICES Science Board has met 3 times virtually (12 June 2023, 10 July 2023, 23 August 2023) and once in person on 26 October 2023. The in-person agenda and meeting are described below. This meeting focused on the distribution of a survey to all PICES members and a discussion of which elements of future PICES meetings could be held virtually versus in person. We stated the importance of climate scientists coming together in person with the need to meet responsibly. Together, the group feels that this is part of the integrity of the organization.

Dr. Vera Trainer (co-chair, USA) and Hiro Sugisaki (co-chair, Japan, remote participation) called the meeting to order and welcomed members and observers (*Endnote 1*).

AGENDA ITEM 1 **Introductions; Review of Agenda**

Vera Trainer, chair of the SG, introduced the ToR and reviewed the current progress on their completion. The agenda was presented (*Endnote 2*) and approved by all members.

AGENDA ITEM 2 **Discussion of Sonia Batten’s impressions of hybrid meetings**

First, Vera Trainer read Sonia Batten’s document (*Endnote 3*) to the group. In the following discussion, Joern Schmidt (ICES) stated that ICES has a goal of becoming net zero. They have been focused on meetings and have had many discussions about what works and doesn’t work. In 2022, participation of all member countries in different time zones at the Dublin meeting did not allow for everyone to participate. Presentation of remote talks worked but it’s difficult to ask questions of these speakers. During ECCWO 2023, there were remote speakers and pre-recorded presentations. The speakers did not log in. Questions were asked on the Whova app which didn’t work well. There was an extra cost and effort related to streaming (high quality) and recording. Joern will share with SG-GREEN the outcome of the search for additional cost and quality of streaming. Hybrid meetings are demanding for those who are moderating. Full online meetings were not viable. If people know one another already, online meetings are ok, but there are always new members coming in. ICES is also considering an alternating option, with one year virtual, the next year in-person during a trial-and-error period. ICES talks are 8 min; initially there was criticism about how short the talks were. Now people are used to it and like it. Talks are at a high level and the quality of talks has increased. People are improving skills in producing small videos with more effort into visualizations. There is increased Q&A time, with a short Q&A after the presentation and a longer Q&A at the end.

The ICES Consultant has stated that online meetings are much more demanding and tiring. The consultant for ICES said that it is energy demanding and we can’t read people as well. It is overwhelming to have so many virtual meetings. We are less able to switch back and forth to different topics. People who are moderating meetings must spend more time in preparation. The Chairs are not clear how to do this more efficiently as people are generally less prepared for online meetings (can’t use time on plane to prepare). There is generally less focus with online meetings (e.g., people doing laundry at the same time).

A recommendation for hybrid meetings is to use raise hand function (mandatory) for online and in-person participants. This can be done when everyone is logged in to the meeting on their computers.

SungYong commented that he is in favor of 15 min talks. He was in favor of increasing ECOP and new member attendance which provide a sense of belonging and good memories. Ryoyu stated that posters are very difficult to present virtually. The group overall is positive of virtual options when it increases inclusivity, especially for those who can’t get travel funding or otherwise can’t attend.

Robin Brown asked whether recording is a problem. It needs to be clearly stated in advance that you accept that your presentation will be shared (agreement) through a recording. ICES only has recordings available on the app and only for 3 months.

Jeanette recently attended virtual poster sessions. Several were horrible. Whova worked out well. You go into a poster room, click on the poster and get a virtual meeting with the poster presenter. Technology is getting

better. Pengbin stated that virtual meetings are still being held but there are so many that it's difficult to fit them all in. However, China is only allowed a certain number of days for travel internationally due to budgetary constraints.

Recommendations from our discussion:

1. Meetings should be as compact as possible because countries are allowing only a certain number of days for travel. Potentially move to shorter talks with brief questions, then open for longer discussion after all speakers in that session. Have fewer talks in each session to allow for fewer parallel sessions.
2. Provide lunch for workshops—hold them during lunch or afternoon.
3. Compress the meeting. Hold business meetings online to allow for no business meetings in person or at least shortened business meetings.
4. Have 2 people leading online meetings—one who is chairing and the other making sure that everyone is seen and heard.
5. Use raise hand function (mandatory) for both online and in person. Everyone is logged in to the meeting on their computers.
6. It was proposed to have a new SG as a collaboration with other international organizations. How do we get to net zero?
7. Brilliant to partner with other organizations...OECD (Organization to Economic Cooperation and Development) – Int'l group, ICES, Ocean Solutions, Professional Societies (ASLO, AGU, ISSHA), APN, ECOP, (ONCE part of ISO, International Standards Organization) – organize a workshop to discuss future meetings.
8. Reuse plastic name tags and announce that they are reusable on Whova.
9. PICES coffee cup as a swag item (cleanable). Reusable utensil set was very popular. Sensible souvenir.
10. Presentations are available online on PICES website. Please make this widely known!
11. Gathertown—could be used for posters.
12. Continue to review technology for virtual meetings (e.g., Whova for poster sessions—Jeanette Gann will review and talk to us).
13. Hybrid should be used for all business meetings, when possible, with possible short business meetings (1-2 h) during the annual meeting. Or consider (when technology has improved) completely virtual meetings every 2nd year.
14. Online is better for non-native English speakers. Using raise hand function gave opportunity for all to participate.
15. Internet can be a problem in some countries.

AGENDA ITEM 3 **The survey activity**

The QR code of the survey was prepared before the meeting by the great effort of Dr. Jae-Hyoung Kim (Korea) The distribution situation at the PICES 2023 meeting was reported and discussed. We have 109 responses so far. China can't use Google forms but uses WJX.cn. Pengbin will distribute the survey to Chinese participants.

AGENDA ITEM 4 **Review of terms of reference**

We briefly discussed the other ToR and decided that we will meet in early 2024 to discuss the final survey results and the remaining ToR. Carbon credits activity led to the interest in a possible SG to follow GREEN to research possibilities around carbon credits. PICES may not have expertise on carbon credits. Could PICES identify expert sources to get this information? What about other organizations? Can we team up with others? We are using energy to get to the meetings but how can we teach sustainability during the event? Should PICES sponsor a beach cleanup event?

OECD (Organization to Economic Cooperation and Development, Yanli Lei representing) – this international group, together with ICES, could organize a workshop.

Fuji-san feels that the hardcopy meeting book was useful, but there is no longer a need as much is done on computer. Pengbin stated that Alibaba sponsors great tree planting efforts. He mentioned a small game on an app.

AGENDA ITEM 5 **Final discussion items**

Vera Trainer thanked all participants and the meeting was adjourned. All virtual SG-GREEN meeting notes can be found in Endnote 4.

Endnote 1

SG-GREEN Participation List

Members

Vera Trainer (USA, Co-Chair)
Hiro Sugisaki (Japan, Co-Chair)
Ruoyu Guo (China)
Jae-Hyoung Park (Korea)
Sung Yong Kim (Korea)
Erin Satterthwaite (USA)

Members unable to attend

Russia: No members
USA: Mark Wells

Observers

Tetsuo Fujii (Japan, Vice Chair of GC)
Tatsuki Oshima (Japan)
Yotaka Hiroe (Japan)
Jeanette Gann (USA)
Raphael Roman (UNESCO, ECOP)
Joern Schmide (ICES)
Pengbin Wang (China)
Yanli Lei (China, Ocean Negative Carbon Emissions & Carbon Neutrality)

PICES

Robin Brown

Endnote 2

SG-GREEN Meeting Agenda

Agenda

SG-GREEN in-person meeting

Thursday, October 26, 2023

Vashon (3F), Westin Hotel Seattle, WA

Study Group: Generating Recommendations to Encourage Environmentally- Responsible Networking (SG-GREEN)

9:00 – 9:30 Introductions & Review of Agenda
9:30 - 10:00 Discussion of Sonia Batten’s impressions of hybrid meetings
10:30 - 10:45 Discussion of Survey (led by Jae-Hyoung)
10:45 - 11:30 Discuss Other Terms of Reference
11:30 – 12:00 Final discussion

Endnote 3

Thoughts on virtual versus in-person versus hybrid meetings and resources required.

Sonia Batten

PICES Secretariat now has experience of what is involved in organizing fully virtual (PICES 2020 and 2021), fully in-person (meetings prior to 2020) and hybrid meetings (limited hybrid capability at PICES 2022 and more extensive capability at ECCWO5).

Virtual

Owing to the COVID pandemic PICES Secretariat managed the 2020 and 2021 annual meetings as wholly virtual events. Business meetings were conducted beforehand and then there was a two-week period with science sessions (workshops first and then topic sessions). We were able to have two parallel sessions.

Pros

- attendance was good, with no costs and no travel required for members.
- Under the pandemic circumstances it allowed the work of the organization to proceed.

Cons

- because of the time zones within PICES countries, there are effectively only 3-4 hours per day, for 4 days each week, that have an overlap that works at a reasonable worktime for all member countries. It took nearly two months to get through all of the Business meetings, with secretariat staff having to host many of them.
- Coordination to make sure that meetings happened in the right order (WGs then Sections/AP then Committees then SB) and that there were no timing conflicts for members was very challenging and not entirely successful.
- New expert groups struggled to get going because they did not have an opportunity to meet in person (there have been requests for extensions for many groups convened just before or during the pandemic) and a 2-3 hour virtual meeting is not really long enough. We encourage them to meet several times through the year, but it is still difficult to make progress as quickly as with a full day together in-person.

In-person

The traditional model for PICES meetings before 2020

Pros

- Encourages a sense of PICES community and wider appreciation of national cultures.
- Provides effective networking and mentoring for ECOP
- Collaboration is promoted, ideas emerge organically
- Being away from other demands means attendees are less distracted by other tasks.

Cons

- Significant resources required to travel from opposite side of the Pacific
- More challenging for those with mobility issues or dependents to attend.

Hybrid

At PICES 2022 we utilized Meeting Owls for some workshops and business meetings. We played recorded talks for those that couldn't travel (but there was no virtual interaction or Q&A possible in topic sessions). This is a "hybrid-light" format.

At ECCWO5 the local host organized live streaming of all sessions, and Q&A was possible in the meeting app (via text), a more fully hybrid experience.

Pros

- Allows all to participate
- Reduces resources expended for some

Cons

- More organization required (even for hybrid-light)
- Entirely dependent on technology working for remote participants to have a good experience– its significantly impacted if technology issues arise and this can be on either end.
- Streaming requires the venue to have the good internet capability and not all venues are suitable.
- Expensive – more people needed for streaming (dedicated 2 people per session) plus equipment and broadband costs so cannot be done by Secretariat alone.
- Time zones still an issue – sessions need to run on venue time zone which may not be optimal for remote participants.

My personal thoughts

I think that we will always offer a hybrid capability now for business meetings at the permanent expert group level (Committees, SB, F&A, GC). Although this is more work for the Secretariat, “hybrid-light” is manageable, and making sure that as many members as possible can participate is worth the extra effort. Also, the members of these permanent groups tend to know each other, and have more PICES experience, so these meetings are productive.

To host a virtual-only meeting using a commercial company would cost CAD\$40-70k for 3 parallel sessions occurring for one week (I obtained a quote) for about 3 hours a day (includes hosting videos/posters for viewing outside this time). This would only cover science sessions so business meetings would still have to be organized outside of this but it would be easier on the Secretariat than repeating the 2020/2021 effort. Also, people’s expectations of virtual conferences are higher now and a commercial company is really the only option.

PICES host countries provide the resources for the annual meeting and so they would need to cover the additional costs of streaming if we were to go fully hybrid. This would include additional personnel to manage this side of the meeting (Secretariat staff are fully occupied in managing the schedules and other aspects) so it is likely that a commercial company would need to be used, raising costs. If recommended, then GC need to prepare their government agencies so that it can be done in future.

Registration fees need to be charged for virtual participation in a hybrid format too. Would this deter some people?

Registration fees may be considerable if they need to cover the hybrid costs for the Symposia that PICES organizes, outside of the annual meeting. They could potentially be higher than in-person registration or in-person costs would also go up to help cover the costs. At ECCWO5 one third of participants were virtual. Without sponsorship of the hybrid component the registration fees would probably have had to be 3-4 times the in-person fee to cover those costs. I doubt people would have paid that.

A novel format may be needed if we are to go fully hybrid – attending 8-hour sessions over 5-6 days is not practical for remote attendees, especially outside of their working day. A new format would also need to consider effective use of the venue for in-person attendees though, otherwise the host is paying for a venue that is only used for part of the time.

Endnote 4**The running notes from SG-GREEN virtual meetings**

August 23/24, 2023

Notes:

In attendance: Vera Trainer, Jae-Hyoung Park, Hiro Sugisajki, Robin Brown, Dr. Mitsutaku Makino (Japan), Dr. Ruoyu Guo (China)

Makino-san helped us develop our survey. The test version will be developed with QR code by Jae-Hyoung. We had online discussions about the need for a gender question which was added. We ensured that the survey could be answered by Chinese participants at PICES.

Makino-san can attend the first part of our next meeting to help us test and finalize our survey.

A survey will be distributed to PICES members who were not able to attend the annual meeting and the survey mechanism needs to be usable in China. This will be discussed during our in-person meeting at PICES 2023.

Vera discussed the plan for distribution of the SG-GREEN survey at PICES 2023. AP-ECOP and ECOP Korea (Jae-Hyoung Park is a member) will help encourage the meeting attendees to fill out the survey. We discussed giving attendees a green star on their name badges to encourage participation.

Agenda:

1. Introductions
2. Testing survey questions with comments by Makino-san
3. Plan for distribution of survey at PICES 2023
4. Review the achievement of your EG against TOR items
5. Requests/proposals to your parent committee(s) and then SB
6. Travel support fund, change in members/chairs/TOR, an extension of the term (only WG), planning of capacity development event, new EG idea, etc. (see the EG Report/Requests Form for SB about the instruction of each item)
7. Option: Session/WS proposal for PICES-2024: the call for proposals will open from mid-August to mid-September.
8. Finalize the agenda for our in-person meeting on Thursday October 26 from 9:00-12:30 (see below)
9. Any other items

The major goal at that next meeting is to test our survey, to be distributed at PICES 2023, with the help of ECOP!

July 10/11, 2023

In attendance: Vera Trainer, Jeannette Gann, Jae-Hyoung Park, Hiro Sugisaki

Missing: Waters, Kim

Notes thanks to Jeannette Gann

- Discussed pros-cons of virtual meetings and Sonia's comments on hybrid vs in-person, vs all virtual.
 - o All-Virtual: Pros allows everyone to participate, Cons took almost 2 months to get through business meetings because of very short time window appropriate for all member

countries. New expert groups struggled to get going when not meeting in person, hard to make progress.

- o In person: greater sense of community, appreciation for different member country cultures.
- o Hybrid: Hybrid-light more manageable, but still more work to do both sides also more costly. Would need a commercial organization to help with setting up/overseeing technical issues, etc. costly.

All above pros/cons of each type of meeting discussed in detail here: _

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vHlCmaWCUDWOWgkVzHOALCT7wXQVE5in/edit>

With the above in mind we agree that the survey questions should be directed towards hybrid option, and a section for green/carbon offset inquiries.

Hiroya-san suggested adding a question about member organizations (government vs academic, etc.) in addition to country and other information to record for the survey.

Some organizations may eventually use a hybrid meeting option to limit payments for participation in person to save on funding. A question was added about this as well.

Jae-Hyoung suggested asking a question about a potential new activity at PICES meetings that involves an environmental group service, like a beach cleanup.

Vera suggested we could use stickers as incentives to get PICES members to take the survey (maybe we could get a company to add some sort of virtual sticker to online participant profiles if they take the survey online?) Could get ECOPs to help out at registration and encourage PICES members to take the survey.

Hiroya-san will be contacting Makino-san and HD members to get their input/suggestions on the survey questions, and Vera will send out the new questions to the wider SG-GREEN group in addition to PICES Secretariat.

Next SG-GREEN meeting on August 14/15.

June 12/13, 2023

In attendance: Vera Trainer, Robin Brown, Jeannette Gann, Jae-Hyoung Park, Hiro Sugisaki, Sung Yong Kim.

Missing: Waters

Notes thanks to Robin Brown and Vera Trainer.

- Hiro mentioned that each country is unique in its approaches to virtual or hybrid conferences, so we should make sure we hear the voices/opinions of all countries.
- Jeannette mentioned that the hybrid option for meetings is great and feels that it is reasonable to ask for a small fee. It's important to use an online platform that everyone can access.
- Robin mentioned that virtual meetings may be better for non-English speakers because there is the ability to use the chat functions and speakers tend to speak more slowly. Best practices should be used.
- Holding expert group business meetings virtually before the annual meetings helps with progress and helps reduce annual meeting length. Most respondents of the survey provided by the Secretariat after the virtual meeting in 2020 want to keep the Annual Meetings to 1 week in length.

- Canada/DFO is on the warpath regarding conference travel. They sent very few people to PICES 2022 and at a recent NPAFC meeting in Korea they sent precisely 0 people. This is causing all sorts of problems in DFO. They have done nothing to help organizations who have traditionally relied on conference travel as their mode of operation. This outbreak of organizational stupidity is causing big problems inside DFO because in recent contract settlements the union representing research scientists managed to get a clause inserted into the collective agreement that provided for conference travel. I have also heard (but not confirmed) that DFO is also refusing to pay these for online conferences because after all, your conference travel wasn't approved. It all seems very Orwellian. I will try to confirm the business about fees for online conferences.
- The SG discussed the possibility of distributing a survey to PICES members, ideally at the PICES2023 Annual Meeting. We would like to engage ECOP to help with the survey. Robin likes the idea of getting some survey expertise from the Human Dimensions (HD) group. He thinks he understands that low participation rates like the 12% are not uncommon in social science research but HD will know better than us. He thinks it's a very good idea to stratify the responses by country to make sure that we aren't missing input from one or more countries. We may not choose to show the country-stratified data to everybody but it's important that we know this stuff.
- Hiro mentioned that it is important to find a file sharing platform that everyone can use. Microsoft SharePoint accounts directory set up by the PICES secretariat works for our collaboration tool. It worked pretty well for me personally - I seem to be able to make SharePoint work better than Google Docs but I think the functionality is very similar.
- Robin will undertake to find the analysis of the ISB-2020 virtual meeting. I don't think I have it directly because I no longer have access to the Robin.Brown@pices.int e-mail account.
- Robin will do some checking to see if there is an ICES effort on greener meeting that we can connect with.
- Because PICES expert group meetings are open to all Robin suggests that we are free to recruit some people from countries that are not currently represented to participate in our meetings even if they have not been officially named by their country.
- The SG finished with a discussion about who this SG is reporting to and how the information will be used. We report to the Science Board. Our recommendations should be concrete, directed, and specific at the end of our term, which is scheduled to end in June 2024.