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### **Rapportage voorzitterschap ICES Human Dimension Steering Group 2024 (BO-43-119.01-069)**

Via het Beleidsondersteunend Onderzoek (BO), thema 'Duurzame voedselvoorziening en -productieketens & Natuur' financiert het ministerie van Landbouw, Visserij, Voedselzekerheid en Natuur het 4-jarige voorzitterschap van Nathalie Steins (Wageningen Marine Research) van de *Human Dimension Steering Group* (HUDISG) van de *International Council for the Exploration of the Sea* (ICES).

HUDISG is gestart in 2024 en is verantwoordelijk voor het begeleiden en ondersteunen van expert groepen die zich binnen ICES bezighouden met sociale en menswetenschappen in het mariene onderzoek. Werkgroepen onder HUDISG houden zich onder andere bezig met:

- ontwikkeling van inter- en transdisciplinaire benaderingen die zijn afgestemd op de structuur en werkmethoden van ICES;
- ontwikkeling en verbetering van sociale en economische indicatoren;
- beschrijving van alternatieve toekomsten en beheeropties voor mariene sociaalecologische systemen;
- beoordelen van de kwetsbaarheid en veerkracht van maritieme sectoren, gemeenschappen en samenleving ten aanzien van klimaatverandering; en
- onderzoek naar de sociale en economische gevolgen van beheermaatregelen gericht op visserij en andere maritieme sectoren.

De rapportage van de werkzaamheden t/m september 2024 is opgenomen in hoofdstuk 2.8 van het jaarrapport van de wetenschappelijke comité van ICES (SCICOM). Vanaf pagina 2 in deze memo is dit hoofdstuk integraal opgenomen, als onderdeel van de BO-rapportageverlichtingen.

## **Memo**

Wageningen  
Marine  
Research

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ONDERWERP

Rapportage ICES Human  
Dimension Steering Group BO-  
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**Report Human Dimensions Steering Group by Nathalie Steins. Chapter 2.8 in: ICES (2024). Report of the Science Committee (SCICOM), September 2024. ICES Business Reports. Report.**  
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***Introduction***

The Human Dimension Steering Group is responsible for guiding and supporting expert groups that are working on social sciences and humanities in ICES, from evaluating contributions of the sea to livelihoods, cultural identities, and recreation — to informing ecosystem status assessments, policy development, and management. Topics include:

- Development of inter- and transdisciplinary approaches tailored to the structure and working methods of ICES
- Developing and improving social and economic indicators
- Describing alternative futures and management options for marine social-ecological systems
- Assessing the vulnerability and resilience of marine industries and society to climate change
- Investigating the social and economic consequences of management actions

***Summary of progress in relation to Terms of Reference***

Terms of Reference	Progress
<p>a) Ensure the work of the EGs support the implementation of the Strategic Plan, as well as address science objectives and advisory needs of ICES by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Facilitating active horizontal and vertical communication, collaboration and coordination between EG and all other parts of ICES;</li><li>b. Identifying opportunities for internal and external collaboration;</li></ul>	<p>On track:</p> <p>Review and discussion on Resolutions and e-evaluations.</p> <p>Five joint meetings of all HUDISG EGs chairs and attendance of HUDISG chair at annual meetings of most HUDISG EGs, WKAFPA, WKWIND and WKCHAIRS.</p> <p>Regular ad hoc emails with relevant updates. Meetings with other SG chairs to identify areas for collaboration.</p> <p>Open-door policy enabling open communication with EG chairs.</p> <p>Work with HAPISG, EIASG and EOSG on incorporation of social and economic dimensions in science and advice in progress, e.g. OMRE Roadmap (WKWIND), two special requests (trade-offs offshore wind and fisheries, uptake of innovative gears), and upcoming 4<sup>th</sup> generation Ecosystem Overviews (WKEO4).</p> <p>EU: Meetings with EC DGMARE, STECF and RCG ECON on social data collection. Provided input to DGMARE consultation on social data collection.</p> <p>Exploring possibility for MoU between ICES and IIFET (International Institute of Fisheries Economics &amp; Trade), to help</p>

Terms of Reference	Progress
	<p>with strengthening the collaborations with the IIFET network (through WGECON).</p> <p>Meeting with Greater North Sea Basin Initiative. Provided input on the ICES network and how we could support the Initiative.</p>
<p>b) Assure emerging science topics from within the science network are being identified and support the establishment of new groups as needed;</p>	<p>On track:</p> <p>Attended SCICOM meetings, Annual Science Conference and Marine Social-Ecological Systems (MSEAS) Conference.</p> <p>Provided human dimension related input to Science Plan update.</p> <p>WKParticipatoryModelling to be held in October.</p> <p>Establishment of WGENGAGE (stakeholder engagement) and WGING (recurrent advice innovative fishing gears) as part of October resolutions package.</p> <p>Working on organising a workshop on indigenous knowledge.</p>
<p>c) Report on the science implementation and provide feedback on emerging science topics, gaps in expert availability, skills and knowledge to SCICOM;</p>	<p>On track:</p> <p>Attendance, reporting and engagement at SCICOM meetings and steering group chairs meeting.</p> <p>New EGs will be established to deal with emerging topics (see above).</p> <p>Social science capacity (people and funding) is subject of internal discussion and with the European Commission.</p>
<p>d) Work with ACOM Leadership, SCICOM Chair and Secretariat to support groups in addressing advisory ToR and to identify science needs for advisory services;</p>	<p>On track:</p> <p>HUDISG chair and group members have been actively involved in supporting advisory requests and identifying needs for new groups.</p> <p>HUDISG chair contributed as instructor to the ICES Training on Social Science for Natural Scientists. Training was fully booked, with a waiting list and will be given again in 2025.</p>
<p>e) Enhance the visibility of the EGs' work inside and outside the ICES network.</p>	<p>On track:</p> <p>HUDISG chair had meetings about ICES human dimensions work with STECF, European Commission (DGMARE), RCG ECON and Greater North Sea Basin Initiative. WGECON in close communication with IIFET.</p>

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Terms of Reference	Progress
	<p>Contribution of human dimension work to ICES advice on innovative fishing gears was highlighted in ICES communications (Newsletter, social media).</p> <p>Theme session 'Incorporating human dimensions to improve fishing opportunities advice' (co-convened by HUDISG chair) at the 2024 ICES Annual Science Conference.</p> <p>Training Social Science for Natural Scientists (see d above)</p>
Specific ToR	
<p>f) Represent and provide leadership of social sciences and humanities in ICES;</p>	<p>On track:</p> <p>Established connections with all other SG Chairs. Assisted EGs not under HUDISG with social science expertise (e.g., WKVMEOUT). Actively worked with SCICOM Chair, ACOM Chairs and other SG Chairs (HAPISG, EIASG, EOSG) on ToR for new EGs (workshops and working groups). In regular contact with WGSEDA which leads social and economic work in the ASG.</p>
<p>g) Expand and consolidate inter- and transdisciplinary approaches in support of Ecosystem-Based Management (EBM).</p>	<p>On track:</p> <p>First part of term used to focus on: (a) 'social cohesion' between the HUDISG EGs and identifying topics for collaboration; (b) continue work on human dimensions in Ecosystem Overviews started by EAISG, (c) start working with other SG chairs on collaborations, with priority for trade-offs between offshore wind and fisheries, and (d) utilising fishers' knowledge contributions in ICES science in support of advice. This is part of an evolutionary approach of integrating human dimensions in ICES science and advice.</p>

### Science highlights

- WGHOST has developed a Historical Plankton Index (HPI) to overcome the lack of long-term ocean productivity proxies that could be used to understand past fisheries dynamics. The work was funded by Norfish ERC Advanced Grant and 4Oceans ERC Synergy Grant). Paper published: Scherer, C., Ludlow, F., Matthews, A., Hayes, P., Klais, R., & Holm, P. (2024). A Historical Plankton Index: Zooplankton abundance in the North Sea since 800 CE. *The Holocene*, 34(7), 843-859. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09596836241236332>
- WGMARS conducted Social Network Analysis as a tool to assess ICES network connectivity and preparedness to address IEAs and the ICES Science Plan. Paper published: Fuller, J.L., Strehow, H.V., Schmidt, J.O., Bodin, Ö. & Dankel, D.J. (2023). Tracking integrated ecosystem assessments in the ICES network: a

- social network analysis of the ICES expert groups. ICES Journal of Marine Science. 80: 282-294. <https://doi.org/10.1093/icesjms/fsac242>
- WGRMES developed an assessment framework of marine ecosystem services indicators to quantify the socio-ecological effectiveness of nature-based solutions and nature-inclusive harvesting under climate-driven changes. A set of 155 multidisciplinary indicators were identified. Paper published: Murillas-Maza, A. Broszeit, S., Pouso, S., Bueno-Pardo, J., Ruiz-Frau, A. Terrados, J. Jernberg, S., Iriondo, A., Dolbeth, M., Katsanevakis, S., Somerfield, P.J. & Fernandes-Salvador, J.A. (2023). Ecosystem indicators to measure the effectiveness of marine nature-based solutions on society and biodiversity under climate change, Nature-Based Solutions, Volume 4 (December): 100085. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nbsj.2023.100085>
  - Members from WGSOCIAL and WGECON developed a framework to assess reasons for voluntary uptake (or lack thereof) of innovative fishing gears. This was part of an advice request by the European Commission, and was the first time social science advice from ICES was explicitly sought. <https://www.ices.dk/news-and-events/news-archive/news/Pages/InnovativeGear.aspx>
  - The 2nd PICES-ICES [Marine Social-Ecological Systems Conference](#) was held in Yokohama, Japan, 3-7 June. Convenors included members of HUDISG groups (WGSOCIAL, WGECON, WGMPCZM, WGRMES). Several presentations included work from HUDISG groups.
  - The 10th [Oceans Past Conference](#) was held in Exeter, UK, 25-28 June. This conference is supported by ICES and has strong involvement of WGHIST.
  - The [21st IIFET Conference](#) was held in Penang, 15-19 July. WGECON and WGSOCIAL members hosted a policy session on how economic research can help shape fisheries and aquaculture policy.
  - The ICES [Training on Social Science for Natural Scientists](#) in January (The Hague, Netherlands) was very well-attended and had a waiting list, as this training, due to its highly interactive nature, has a maximum of 20 participants (Instructors: Marloes Kraan, WGSOCIAL; Nathalie Steins, HUDISG chair). The training will be given again in 2025.
  - WGSOCIAL findings informed the STECF Expert Working Group on Social Data ([EWG24-05](#)) discussion and definition of fisheries communities. The definition sets the baseline to developing fisheries community profiles across the EU.
  - WGSOCIAL members contributed their work on mobilising and integrating fishers' knowledge to WKAFPA and presented this work at the [UN Ocean Decade Conference](#) in Barcelona, Spain, 10-12 April, and the [16<sup>th</sup> Nordic Environmental Social Science Conference](#), 4-6 June, Turku, Finland.
  - The 2024 ICES ASC [Theme session K](#) 'Incorporating human dimensions to improve fishing opportunities advice' (co-convened by members of WGECON, WGSOCIAL and HUDISG chair) was well-attended and resulted in the identification of steps forward.

### **Science to Advice activities**

#### *Advice provided:*

- ICES (2023). EU request on review of innovative gears for potential use in EU waters and their impacts. ICES Advice: Special Requests. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.24212694.v1> (joint work with EOSG).
- ICES (2024). Greater North Sea ecoregion - Ecosystem Overview. ICES Advice: Ecosystem Overviews. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.25714239.v1> (joint work with EAISG).

*Upcoming advice requests (2025):*

- European Commission request on social, economic and ecological trade-offs between fisheries and offshore wind (joint work with HAPISG).

*Other:*

- HUDISG chair had a meeting with the European Commission on social and economic data collection. The meeting was attended by 7 policy officers from different DGMARE units. The Commission wants to strengthen social and economic considerations in policies and the associated scientific support by STECF and ICES. It was agreed that coordination between STECF, ICES, RDGECON and the Commission on social and economic data collection is wise, to avoid duplication and create synergies. The special request to ICES on social, economic and ecological trade-offs between fisheries and offshore energy provides a linking pin. Follow-up meeting will be planned. In the meantime, HUDISG chair has regular updates with STECF members involved in HUDISG groups.
- HUDISG EGs (through the ACOM chair) jointly provided input to the European Commission DGMARE consultation on social data collection, which was much appreciated. Input was transferred to STECF, which has reviewed all consultation input in their expert group meeting (EWG 2024-05) on social data. Expert group findings were accepted in the STECF plenary meeting ([report, chapter 5.3](#)).
- HUDISG chair participated in the Intersessional Group of the RCG ECON on 'Exploring options for data collection for new social variables' as part of the implementation of social data collection within the European Union.
- HUDISG chair had a meeting with the Greater North Sea Basin Initiative secretariat (based in The Netherlands). Provided information on the ICES network and how ICES could support the Initiative's work. They are currently considering submitting a special request to ICES. HUDISG advised them on the special request process and whom to contact.

***Communication with Expert Groups***

The HUDISG chair has an open-door policy in relation to groups and a number of EG chairs have been in touch about issues or questions, including from groups situated under other SGs. EG resolutions and e-evaluation are reviewed in a timely manner and with direct feedback. The majority of the groups are up-to-date, but there are delays with one specific group, on which the HUDISG chair and secretariat is working together with the chairs.

The HUDISG groups have met five times as of September 2024, including an in-person meeting at the Annual Science Conference. These two-hour meetings focused on getting to know each other and each other's work using a speed-date approach, identifying common areas of interest to further collaboration between the groups, ICES science and advice updates. These meetings are also open for a human dimensions group that chose to remain under the Aquaculture SG. Meeting reports are available upon request. Some tangible results from these meetings include a HUDISG EG topics interactions table (see Table 1) to identify opportunities and priorities for collaboration (ongoing work), presentations from the majority of the HUDISG EG to the annual meeting of WGMARS (also under HUDISG), and two joint session proposals for the 2025 Annual Science Conference. Ad hoc emails with relevant updates are circulated when appropriate. Furthermore, the HUDISG Forum on the SharePoint serves as a communication outlet to a wider ICES community.

**Table 1: HUDISG EGs interactions table (work in progress)**

ACR	SPEC	WGBESEO	WGECON	WGENGAGE	WGHIST	WGMARS	WGMPCZM	WGRMES	WGSOCIAL	WGSEDA
ALT	Alternative data/knowledge			X	X				X	
AQUA	Aquaculture							X		X
BH	Behaviour		X			X			X	
CB&T	Capacity Building & Training		X	X			X		X	
CC	Climate change						X	X		
CONS	Conservation incl MPA						X	X		
CS	Case studies		X	X	X			X	X	
CULT	Culture				X			X	X	
CZM	Coastal Zone Management						X	X		
DEI	Diversity, equality, inclusion			X		X		X		
DM&T	Data collection methods & tools	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
EBM	Ecosystem-based management	X	X		X	X		X	X	
ENG	Engagement Stake/rightsholders	X		X			X			
ES	Ecosystem services (incl valuation)				X			X		
FI	Fisheries		X		X			X	X	
GOV	(marine) Governance (systems)	X		X	X	X	X	X		X
HI	History				X				X	
IA	Integrated Assessment	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
IND	Indicators (social, economic)		X	X				X	X	X
MSP	Marine Spatial Planning					X	X			
OE	Ocean equity							X		
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy		X				X	X	X	
RS	Regime shifts				X			X		
TO	Tradeoffs	X	X				X	X	X	X
	Existing collaboration									
	Aspired collaboration									
	Purple text = science plan prio									

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The HUDISG chair attended (part of) the meetings of WKAFPA (10-12 October 2023, online), WGCHAIRS (22-25 January 2024, in person) WKWIND (29 April – 2 May 2024, in person), WGMPCZM (11 June 2024, online). Attendance at other EG group annual meetings later this year is anticipated. The HUDISG also provided feedback on the design of questionnaires for fishers and other stakeholders for identifying deep sea fisheries location and VMEs in EU outermost regions (WKOUTVME). She also attended the EIASG meeting during the Annual Science Conference. As part of her own induction programme, the HUDISG chair also held online meetings with all other SG chairs, which included identifying potential areas for collaboration. Joint work with HAPISG is already being undertaken in relation to the implementation of the Road Map on Offshore Marine Renewable Energy and the aforementioned special request from the European Commission on social, economic and ecological trade-offs in relation to offshore energy development. Similarly, the HUDISG and EOSG are working on a new EGS on uptake of innovative fishing gear (see below). Work with the EIASG in relation to including or improving socioeconomic information in the Ecosystem is foreseen as part of a workshop on fourth generation Ecosystem Overviews (WKEO4), for which ToRs are currently being drafted.

**Summary of new EG proposals and EG closing**

Resolutions for WKParticipatoryModelling (7-10 October) have been approved. Three new expert groups have been proposed. The anticipated chairs for the Working Group on Stakeholder Engagement (WGENGAGE) are currently drafting their ToRs. The ToRs for the proposed Working Group on Innovative Gears (WGING), which will work on the recurrent triannual advice request from the European Commission on uptake of innovative fishing gears, are in an advanced stage and two experts from a human dimension and a gear technology (EOSG) are willing to co-chair this new group. The Resolutions for both groups will be available in the Resolutions Package for review in October. Discussions on a workshop on using indigenous knowledge in ICES science and advice are ongoing.

### ***Forward look (including actions for SG and SCICOM/ACOM)***

HUDISG plans to continue building on progress to date and strengthen active engagement with the ICES community. We want to focus on supporting the more natural science oriented groups in ICES with methods, frameworks and tools, whilst also developing ideas and proposals through the policy pipeline.

#### *Planned / upcoming:*

- WKParticipatoryModelling (7-10 October).
- Preparation of special request advice on social, economic and ecological trade-offs between fisheries and offshore wind (HAPISG-HUDISG collaboration, with multiple disciplines working together on ToRs).
- Establishment of WGENGAGE (stakeholder engagement) and WGING (innovative fishing gears) under HUDISG as part of the resolutions package in October.
- WKEO4 on the 4th generation ecosystems overviews (IEASG-HUDISG collaboration).
- Workshop on use of indigenous knowledge.
- Training on Social Science for Natural Scientists (Q1 2025).
- Discussions with FRSG on integration of social and economic aspects in Fisheries Overviews (building on the work in the Aquaculture and the Ecosystem Overviews).
- Involvement in the future Diversity, Equity and Inclusion +Accessibility (DEI+A) expert group (agreed in SCICOM March 2024 meeting); with particular links to WGMARS and (upcoming) WGENGAGE.
- Continue discussions (through WGECON and ICES General Secretary) with IIFET on an MoU between ICES and IIFET to help with strengthening the collaborations with the IIFET network.
- Submit symposium resolution in support of the next IIFET and the MARE People & The Sea conferences.
- Continue strengthening collaborations around science priorities between HUDISG groups as well as with other EGs.

#### *Specific questions and issues of note:*

- Capacity is an issue. This concern increases with the growing interest within the community and amongst clients in human dimensions related science support and advice. Many marine social scientists who are or would like to be involved in HUDISG have limited or no funding, as institutional funding is strongly oriented toward natural sciences. Also, social scientists tend to be employed in academia rather than the applied marine institutes that are specifically involved in supporting ICES advice, which means they are sometimes 'out of sight'. These issues need to be addressed in a collective effort between ICES leadership, Council and clients (funding) to assist ongoing embedding of human dimensions in ICES science and advice.



- ICES data systems are understandably set up to accommodate quantitative data from the natural sciences. With the development of the human dimension, social and economic data will also become part of ICES science and advice. Some of these data will be quantitative whilst others will be qualitative. Several issues need consideration: (1) Do we need an ICES-specific database for economic data, considering these are available through existing databases in different ICES regions and countries (albeit in different formats, for different indicators, and not for all ICES member states)?; (2) How do we deal with qualitative social science data, which often are limited to use for specific research projects and are subject to strict privacy law regulations. Depending on the study, interviewees may or may not agree to signing a consent form to make them widely / publicly available. Do we need special arrangements for this as part of our data policy? Do we need a database for such data when they are part of ICES science in support of advice? These questions should be considered and we suggest starting discussions with the DSTSG, DIG, the Data Centre and SCICOM chair.

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