

ICCN Plenary – 31st March 2026

Meeting Agenda, Briefing Note and Minutes

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Agenda

Time (UK)	Item	Speaker(s)	Item Type (papers)
08:00	1) ICCN co-Chair opening remarks	➤ Dumisani Nxumalo, Co-Chair, ICCN	For info
08:05	2) ICCN Strategy and Workplan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Dumisani Nxumalo ➤ Jeppe Wohlert, SC Member ➤ Ben Rhodes, ➤ Head of Secretariat 	For approval
08:35	3) Updates from ICCN Working Groups	➤ Working Group co-chairs	For info
09:00	4) Steering Committee Renewal	➤ Ben Rhodes	For discussion
09:10	5) Head of Secretariat update	➤ Ben Rhodes	For info
09:25	6) Next steps & close	➤ Dumisani Nxumalo	For info

ACTIONS – progress will be reported back at September Plenary

Item	Action	Lead	Due Date
ICCN Strategy and Workplan	ICCN develop a short, separate narrative for ICCN which members/ICCN Secretariat can use externally.	Izzy	End May
	at mid-year point review resources/priorities and check with Steering Committee whether to continue with all activity in the workplan.	Ben	September
Working Groups	All councils to nominate up to 2 colleagues for each working group.	All Members	End April
	ICCN Secretariat to review where international issues can be covered across existing workstreams.	Secretariat	End June
Steering Committee	ICCN Secretariat creates a simple RACI grid (Responsible/Accountable/Consulted/Informed) so it is clear where decisions are taken between Plenary, the Steering Committee and the Secretariat.	Ben	End May
London Climate Action Week – June 2026	Members to fill out form to indicate their attendance: https://e3gorg-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/isabella_page_climatecouncils_org/IQCdkBzpWQYYRlu0aDJR RQeTAZCA3PjcWddCZSvjBaasszc?e=lxTaeb	All Members	End April

Minutes

Attendees: South Africa (Phindile and Dumisani), Denmark (Jeppe), Iceland (Anna & Halldor), Australia (Weilin and George), New Zealand (Grant), Ireland (Stephen, Claire & George), European Union (Francois), France, Ukraine (Mykola), UK (Sophie), Sweden (Therese), Sweden (Stina & Ola), Republic of Korea (Youn), Finland (Marianne).

Apologies: South Africa (Dorah – has given the green light for the strategy), Malta (Abigail and Margaret – national holiday). Latin American and North American colleagues can't join due to the timezone.

Item 2 – ICCN Strategy and Workplan

- Ben provided an overview of Strategy & Work Plan process
- Jeppe provided an overview of how ICCN adds value to members: *'most of us are working on the same questions although we look at it from different national perspectives'*.
- Dumisani recommended both the Strategy and Workplan to be approved by the Plenary

Comments on Strategy and Work Plan

- Francois (EU): happy to approve both documents. Requests ICCN remains member-driven with continued consultation on key decisions and communications.
 - o ACTION - Dumisani (RSA): proposes ICCN develop a short, separate narrative for ICCN which members/ICCN Secretariat can use externally.
- Halldor (Iceland): supportive of strategy, states it is up to us as members because it can be very comfortable to have an effective Secretariat and step back; success depends on us as member councils being active.
- Weilin (Aus): supportive but comment on vision of 12 FTE by 2029 – as we grow, we need to maintain that any new roles and use of funding needs to align with existing members and strategy. Also want to reiterate support for the ICCN annual report.
- Francois: Prioritisation is important – what do members find most useful? Stress prioritisation by the Steering Committee and if needed, certain activities could be deprioritised over time.
 - o ACTION – Ben (Sec) at mid-year point review resources/priorities and check with Plenary whether to continue with all activity in the workplan.
- Youn (RoK): ambitious and important work plan and strategy – Korean Commission fully supports. Councils have different priorities; focus is very important but perhaps too ambitious. There should be mutual understanding around prioritisation. How much is realistic to implement? We welcome the just transition working group and in terms of their work plan – in due course want to see what kind of activities we can collaborate with other stakeholders such as IPCC.
 - o Ben clarified no plans for Just Transition working group, but “the economics/affordability/fairness” of climate policy will be considered in other workstreams.
- Grant (NZ): New Zealand is very supportive of the strategy and workplan, and support the comments around prioritisation and focus made by colleagues
- Therese (Sweden Adaptation): I agree with Francois that the network should not grow too fast and too much but keep the focus on its current members and respect our respective recourses. Otherwise ok.

Dumisani concluded that both the Work Plan and Strategy are approved, noting comments above.

Item 3 - Working Groups update

Communications – Sophie (UK)

- Shared tactics and knowledge-exchange rather than creation of content. Looking back, appreciated New Zealand’s approach to misinformation.
- Intersection of AI – Climate – Comms: learn together and support each other.

Food, Land and Natural Capital – James (New Zealand)

- Covered a range of topics last year: how ag features in NDCs, financing climate smart ag and COP30 product

- This year: Sir David King presented to us on methane deep-dive

Adaptation – Stephen (Ireland)

- Deep dive on adaptation finance
- Want to connect opportunities and link adaptation meaningfully with adaptation for COP30

Governance – Anna (Iceland)

- Overview of presentations to date and Toolkit
- Ben provides forward-look and opportunities for engagement

Finance – Raisa (South Africa)

- Raisa provides overview on linking climate finance to economic developments in country

Comments on working groups

- Jean-Francois (France) – it is difficult to transfer policy insights from one a country to another due to each country having different needs/challenges. On the other hand, we have activities dedicated to international activities e.g., annual report on how France could do better in international negotiations. This is an area where collaboration could be useful.
 - o Tessa (Sec) clarified that we will have knowledge exchanges on trade and aviation/shipping to help collaborate on international issues.
- Netherlands has been encouraged to address international aviation and shipping.
- Ola (Sweden): keen to still keep governance workstream as this is important and where councils have most in common.
 - o Ben clarified the Governance curriculum is intended to strengthen the ICCN offer in this area.
- ACTION – all councils to nominate up to 2 colleagues for each working group.
- ACTION – Secretariat to review where international issues can be covered across existing workstreams.

Item 4: - Steering Committee Terms of Reference and renewal

- Francois (EU) – happy with Terms of Reference but requests further clarification on the role of the steering committee to have a clear understanding on how its strategic and governance functions. In relation to funding and external engagement – we want to see the network grow. We want to make sure it is accountable to the members and not blurred by other considerations.
 - o ACTION – Dumisani proposes ICCN Secretariat creates a simple RACI grid (Responsible/Accountable/Consulted/Informed) so it is clear where decisions are taken between Plenary, the Steering Committee and the Secretariat.

Item 5 – Head of Secretariat update

- Ben gives overview of ICCN activities to date and resources to use going forward.
- No substantive comments from members.

AOB

- At some stage, we could also think about publication in a scientific journal. There are windows of opportunity e.g., *Nature*. This would flag our network to the scientific community and may help in creating future connections.
 - o The Secretariat will seek to engage scientific community via the research community of practice and via the ICCN annual report, but is unlikely to have resources for a publication in scientific journal this reporting year.
- London Climate Action Week 2026 –
 - o ACTION - Members to fill out form to indicate their attendance: https://e3gorg-my.sharepoint.com/:x/g/personal/isabella_page_climatecouncils_org/IQcdkBz-pWQYYRlu0aDJRRQeTAZCA3PjcWddCZSvjBaasszc?e=IxTaeb
 - o Global South councils to get in touch with Secretariat by 7 April to request travel support.

Briefing on Agenda Items

1) ICCN Co-Chair Opening Remarks

ICCN Co-Chair, Dumisani Nxumalo, will provide opening remarks and welcome new members.

2) ICCN Strategy and Workplan

The Steering Committee recommends to the Plenary adopting the proposed ICCN Three-Year Strategy and 26/27 Workplan. Please refer to separate the attached two documents (there are marked up and clean versions of both documents).

3) Updates from ICCN Working Groups

The working groups are a core part of the network's capacity building offer to members. The co-chairs of each group have been invited to Plenary to present their reflections 25/26, as well as provide a forward look of plans for 26/27.

Working groups create spaces for climate councils to share knowledge and collaborate on shared priorities in a semi-structured setting on specific topics. To ensure the groups remain member-led, the specific topics within each group are agreed in consultation with all members of the group. Each group also has two co-chairs who have volunteered to lead the meetings and oversee delivery of activity, working closely with the ICCN Secretariat.

Each full national member can nominate up to two individuals per working group (either secretariat staff or council members), and associate (i.e. sub-national) members can nominate one individual. There is no commitment to attend every meeting, nor participate in working group projects, but members are encouraged to actively participate to get the full value from the groups. This year, groups met once a month, but - based on feedback from members - the intention is to meet every 6-8 weeks from now on.

In 25/26 the ICCN had four working groups:

- adaptation;
- mitigation (focused on “food, land-use and agriculture”. In 26/27 the focus has been reframed as “food, land and natural capital”);
- communications and engagement.
- climate governance; (note, in 26/27 this group may decide to merge with the planned “Governance best practice curriculum”). At Plenary, we will explain the curriculum proposal and invite comments from members.
- In 26/27 the ICCN plans to have an additional group focused on Climate Finance.

Beyond working groups, the ICCN has numerous other more flexible capacity building tools for members, including: one-off knowledge exchange webinars; workstreams (which are a mix of webinars and research by the Secretariat, for example on “NDC implementation” and “Institutional Resilience”); and the mentoring scheme (which are twelve-month 1:1 relationships between new and existing members).

4) Steering Committee - Revised Terms of Reference and Membership Renewal

Overview (taken from the ICCN Terms of Reference)¹

The strategic direction and work of the Network shall be led by a Steering Committee following consultation among Network members. This includes delivery of the 3-year high-level strategic plan that will be signed off by the Plenary. The Steering Committee provides strategic and governance oversight on the Secretariat operations on behalf of members.

The Steering Committee is composed of at least three participating Councils (and no more than seven) – including the two co-chairs. Committee members offer their time on a voluntary basis and should be representative; meaning they should include Councils from different world regions and perspectives. The Committee should be rotated every two years² with Co-Chair appointments rotating in the year between to provide continuity. The next appointments will begin in June 2026 (two years after the Secretariat began), with the selection procedure agreed with all members in early 2026.

The Steering Committee shall:

- Provide oversight and direction to the Secretariat on behalf of the Network, ensuring focus on the member-led strategy.
- Support fundraising and sign off Secretariat work as laid out in the grant agreements with donors and MOUs with member contributions.
- Assist the Secretariat in outreach to new Council members.

Steering Committee members should act in the interests of all members during their appointment. While they can bring their own climate council context to conversations, they should seek primarily to represent the whole network.

Format of Steering Committee Meetings

From 26/27 onwards, Steering Committees shall take place every two months, with each meeting scheduled for 1.5 hours. The Secretariat will provide papers at least five (5) working days in advance. The standard agenda for the Committee meetings shall be:

1. Chair's remarks and reflections from SC Members
2. Items for approval. This could include new member applications, new grant agreements, endorsing plenary papers.
3. Items for discussion. This could include guest speakers, new strategic opportunities or risks, planning for upcoming events.
4. Head of Secretariat update. This will include delivery update, in-year financial position, fundraising outlook.
5. A.O.B. This will include forward look to next SC agenda.

¹ Out-of-date information has been updated

² This was increased from every year to every two years in order to allow Steering Committee members enough time to effectively contribute and provide long-term strategic direction to the ICCN.

Renewal of Steering Committee Membership

The current Steering Committee has been in place since 2024. It is therefore proposed to renew the Committee Membership with new members selected by June 2026 (with co-chair elections taking place in mid-2027 to provide continuity given they were elected in mid-2025).

The following principles are proposed for selecting new Committee Members:

- The Steering Committee should reflect the diversity of ICCN membership in terms of geography, gender, suitable expertise and the type of councils on the network. The Committee should ideally be composed of a mix of more established and newer members of the network.
- Applications for this two-year term should be limited to Full members, although consideration should be given to Associate members (e.g. subnational councils and councils that nearly meet all of ICCN’s full membership criteria) in the next 1-2 years.
- Only one application is permitted from each ICCN member organisation.
- Individuals wishing to apply can either be council members or part of a council secretariat, but they must be endorsed by their organisation as able to take a strategic view of ICCN business.
- Existing Steering Committee members are welcome to reapply should they wish to continue on the Committee.
- Whether existing members apply or not, they are requested to attend the first two meetings in 2026 (July and September) to provide handover to new members.
- Appointments to the Steering Committee will need to be endorsed by all Plenary Members.
 - If there are fewer than five applications this will be on a “no objections” basis (given there are five spaces on the Committee).
 - If there are more than five applications, then Plenary Members will be asked to vote for their top three candidates in priority order. To ensure votes best reflect the diversity and expertise of ICCN membership, members will be requested to vote for at least one Global South candidate and one Global North candidate within their three votes. The candidates with the highest votes will then be appointed to the Committee.
- Once appointed, if a Steering Committee member decides to leave, they are welcome to recommend a replacement either from their own organisation or from another ICCN member. All Plenary members will be informed to ensure there are no objections to the replacement.
- Where votes are equal, and there are not enough spaces, the ICCN co-chairs will make the final decision on appointments.

Review for ToRs

These ToR’s will be reviewed periodically every two (2) years or as informed by the steering committee in consultation with the Secretariat.

Annex A sets out the timetable for selecting new members in 2026.

Annex A – Process for selecting new Steering Committee members in 2026

The following process is proposed:

- 31st March – Plenary endorses these terms of reference
- April – Secretariat launch application window, requesting:
 - A short personal statement, including commitment to attend bi-monthly meetings. (100 words)
 - A short summary CV (100 words)
 - Two very short endorsements (50 words) from
 - Your Head of Secretariat or a Council Member.
 - An ICCN member from a different council
- May – Application window closes
- June – No objections/voting by Plenary Members.
- July – New members attend their first Steering Committee.

5) Head of Secretariat update

1.1 Summary of achievements and lessons learned

25/26 was the first full financial year that the ICCN had a secretariat. This allowed the level of activity to significantly increase and deliver much more value to its members. Particular highlights included:

- ✓ Creating a long-term strategy that serves the needs of members
- ✓ Launching an online toolkit on “how to create a climate council”.
- ✓ Welcoming Brazil, Malta, Vanuatu as national members and Quebec, Maryland and New South Wales as sub-national (associate) members.
- ✓ Recruiting regional roles in Africa and Latin America.
- ✓ Providing a range of knowledge exchange opportunities on a range of topics, particularly via working groups and regional groups.

The Secretariat have also learned some valuable lessons as we seek to continually improve the offer to members. For example:

- ✓ ICCN communications need to be more streamlined. We have tried to limit comms to all members to just “Head of Sec” fortnightly emails and monthly newsletters. And we have created a members’ portal so members can access key information easily, as well as a LinkedIn Member Group for more organic sharing of information.
- ✓ In-depth engagement takes effort from ICCN and Members (and Members often have little or no resources dedicated to international work). We have sought to keep member engagement light-touch whilst also using working groups and regional groups to cover topics that directly support members’ national-level work.
- ✓ ICCN needs to ensure its external communications do not compromise the position of individual councils. We have developed clear communication principles and example products as part of ICCN’s strategy.

The following sections go into more detail on delivery against the workplan and the financial position of ICCN. After the end of ICCN’s financial year on 31st March 2026, the Secretariat will convert this into a formal narrative and financial report, which will be shared with all members no later than 1st May.

1.2 Actions from last Plenary

Action	Owner	Status
Secretariat to proceed with member consultation on the ICCN Strategy	Ben / Izzy	Complete – member consultation sessions delivered October 2025. Further written consultation in February 2026.

1.3 Delivery against 25/26 workplan

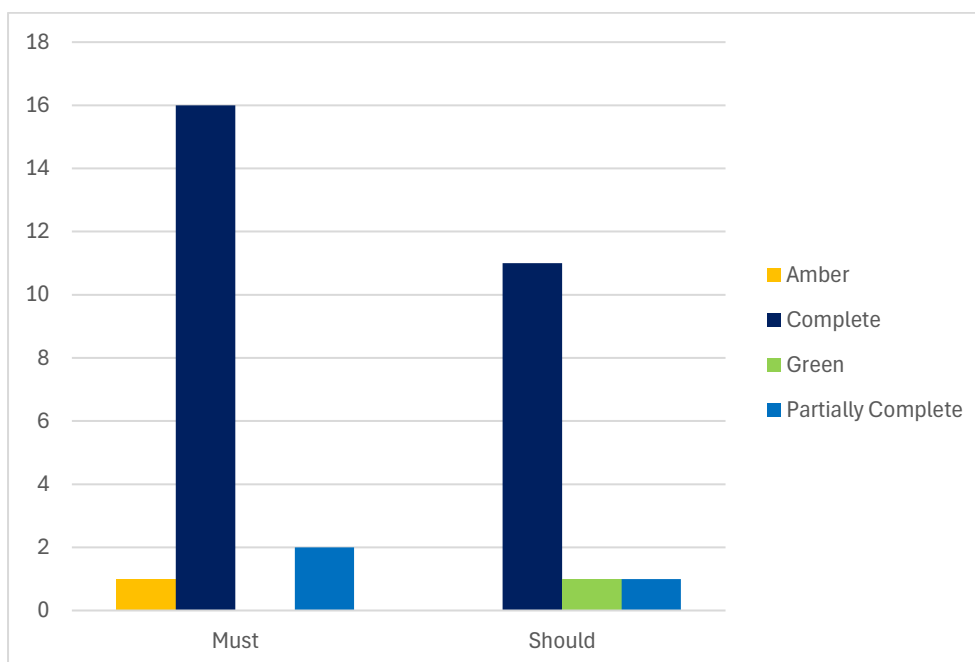
The 25/26 workplan was agreed at the Plenary in April 2025. The workplan set out an ambitious set of 60 activities across four thematic areas:

1. capacity building and partnerships;
2. raising the profile of councils;
3. strengthening the network;
4. governance and resourcing.

Each activity was categorized as either “must do” or “should do” so that the Secretariat could effectively prioritise resources in-year. This section provides a short update for each thematic area, with a traffic-light rating employed as follows:

- **Green** – on track to complete either by end of year or soon after.
- **Amber/green** – deprioritized due to other pressures but will be completed in 26/27.
- **Amber** – moderate issues, which need addressing before completing the task.
- **Partially complete** – core aspects of activity complete but not exactly as described.

A - Capacity Building and Partnerships



Capacity-building and partnerships formed the core activity of the ICCN in 2025 with over half of all actions under this theme. The primary delivery of this aim was via **the working groups**, with over 80 representatives from nearly all ICCN members participating. Across three of these groups (communications, adaptation and food, land and agriculture) the average score given for this participation was 8.6/10. Members of these groups expressed how much they gained from sharing knowledge and being part of a global community:

“I come away from every meeting having learnt something new. It’s the benefit of hearing from people from around the world”.

Working groups ran regular meetings on critical climate policy topics - including tackling misinformation, national risk assessments or financing climate-smart agriculture - and two issued reports for COP30: *The Climate Council Case for Investing in Adaptation Now* and *Harvesting Solutions: Real-World Policy to Transform Food, Land and Agriculture*. In addition the Climate Governance Working Group oversaw the creation of the online toolkit on “[How to Create a Climate Council](#)”, as well as projects to improve data-sharing across ICCN.

In addition to working groups, there were various other capacity building initiatives:

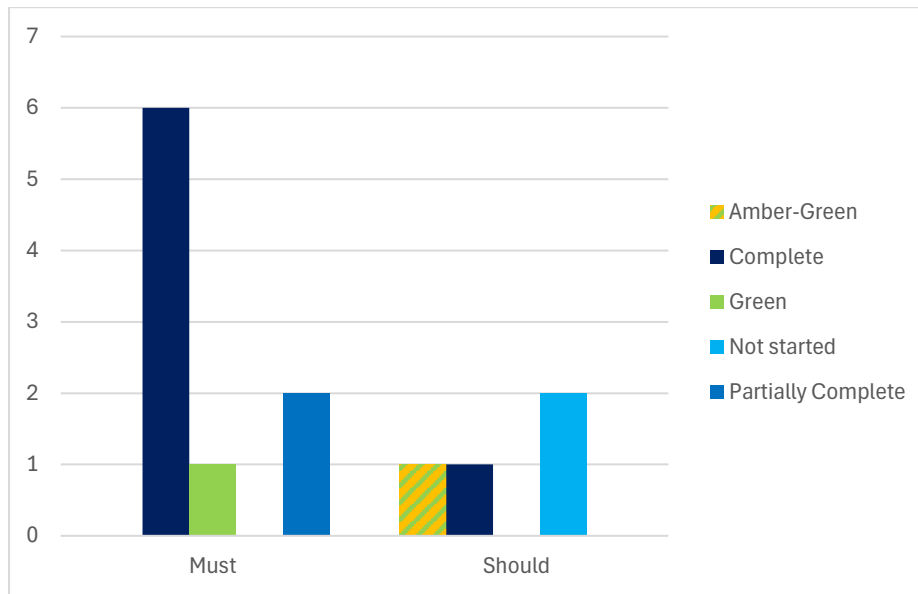
- ✓ ICCN ran seven one-off **knowledge-exchange webinars** on topics ranging from sectoral pathways to economic analysis of climate policies - reaching 150+ people.
- ✓ **the ICCN piloted a mentoring programme** for new members. These took place for Ukraine (with UK and Sweden), Nigeria (with South Africa) and Malta (with Ireland).
- ✓ **External climate training courses were secured cost-free**. This was provided via the public sector training provider Apolitical (although uptake was limited to a few individuals).
- ✓ **The Member Forum in London** helped members learn from each other in person, and led to the creation of “[top 10 tips for effective annual progress reporting](#)”.

On the partnerships side of this theme:

- ✓ ICCN hosted two **research roundtables** with around 40 participants to prioritise research topics and share global research on climate councils with the academic community. [This led to an enhanced research section of the ICCN website](#).
- ✓ Various expert partners have participated in events and working groups with members (e.g. OECD, IPCC, NAP global network, global methane hub, NDC partnership).
- ✓ ICCN also kicked off research projects on: climate and health (with ESSA consulting); adaptation governance (with LSE Grantham); councils in Latin America (with WRI). These will conclude in the first half of 26/27.

The one action that remains “amber” and incomplete is to “deepen partnership with IPCC”. This is due to extremely limited central resources within IPCC and their complex delivery model. However, we met with ICCN members who are also IPCC expert reviewers/authors to help address these issues and this will allow ICCN to better focus efforts with IPCC in 26/27. Another action “engage the UN to build the case for climate councils” is rated as “green”, as – following a positive conversation with UN climate envoy Selwin Hart at COP30 – we hope the UN will champion climate councils in 2026 at London Climate Action Week and/or COP31.

B – Strengthen the network



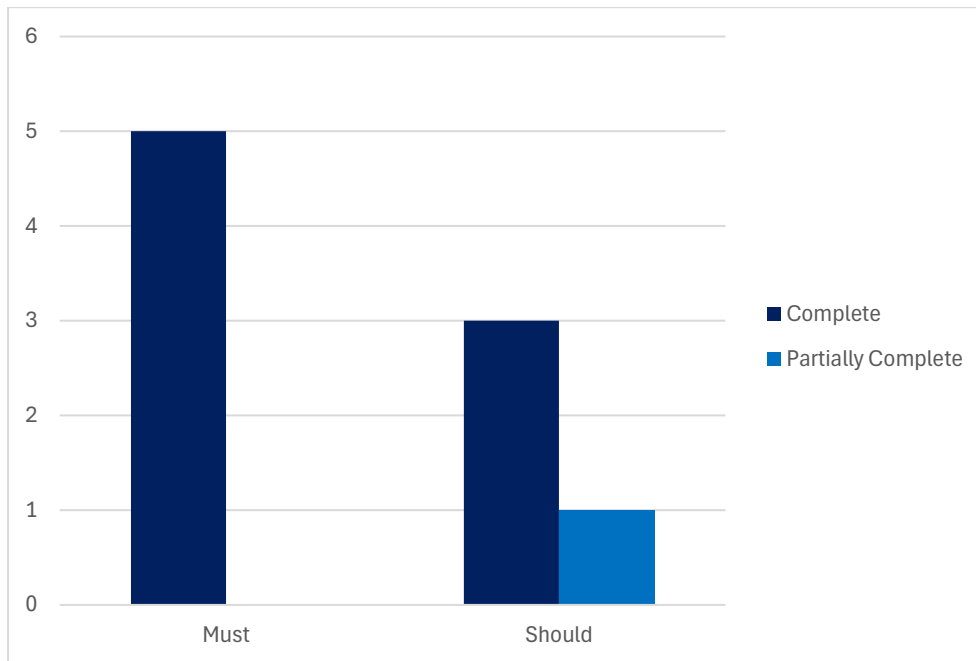
The main way the network was strengthened was through welcoming new members. 25/26 has seen Brazil, Vanuatu and Malta join as national members of ICCN. In addition, at a sub-national level, Quebec, Maryland and New South Wales have joined as associate members. There are also ~8 observer members from around the world. The other positive development for the network was that no existing members faced immediate threats to losing their mandates. We expect as political turmoil continues around the world that this could change, and therefore the ICCN will refine its to support members facing challenging circumstances via the Chair/CEO institutional resilience group.

At a regional level, through recruiting regional leads in Africa and Latin America, the ICCN now has resources to deliver more in-depth support in these regions. In the Asia-Pacific, the regional lead (Tessa) visited Australia and New Zealand to strengthen relations, with a view to hiring a lead in 2027. In Europe, most members attended the in-person forum in London, with the virtual quarterly meetings providing a useful way of sharing knowledge on technical European policy issues.

In terms of incomplete actions

- The previously disbanded Costa Rica climate council has not yet been re-established, but we have had positive signals from the Costa Rican government. The ICCN will support the council and hope to welcome them back in 26/27.
- The three year-strategy and workplan are due for approval by Plenary on 31st March.
- Two “should do” actions have not been started:
 - “[subject to funding and growth in associate members] Recruit a sub-national network manager.” This will roll forward into the 26/27 workplan.
 - “Pilot a roster of climate council experts who can be deployed on missions to set up/ strengthen new climate councils.” The Secretariat did not have capacity to scope this. This will be added for consideration in the 27/28 workplan.

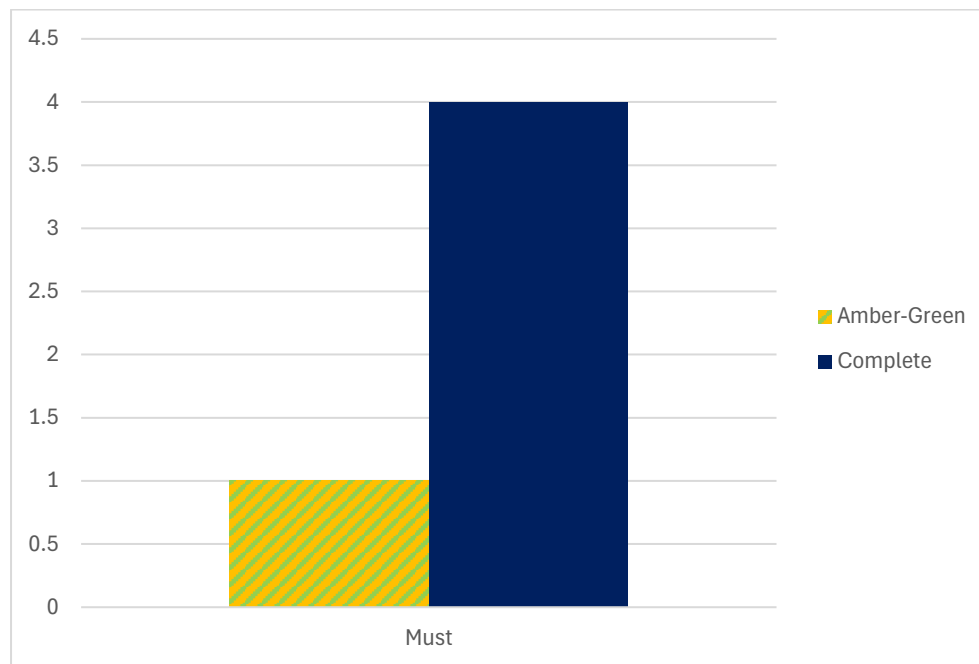
C – Showcase / raise the profile of climate councils



In 2025-2026, the ICCN Secretariat helped to showcase climate councils on the international stage through various projects, initiatives and communications outputs:

- ✓ Launched the **‘How to Create a Climate Council’ Toolkit** at the first ever **Climate Governance Forum**, held in partnership with E3G during London Climate Action Week. The Governance Forum attracted 340+ attendees i.e., 240+ in-person and 100+ online. The Forum served as the largest global gathering of councils to date, including 30 representatives from 16 councils.
- ✓ **Published a joint statement** focused on the role of councils in accelerating the implementation of climate commitments at COP30 in Brazil, featuring endorsements from Christiana Figueres and climate leaders from around the world.
- ✓ **Delivered at least seven side events**, reaching 250+ people and featuring climate council leaders at international convenings, including COP30, the Africa Climate Summit 2, the Global NDC Conference, and the Bonn intersessionals.
- ✓ Grew the **ICCN’s LinkedIn following by 7.7x** (from 362 followers in March 2025 to 3,150 in March 2026) and external newsletter list to more than 640 subscribers.
- ✓ **Upgraded the ICCN’s website** by adding new pages (e.g. ‘Research’ and ‘Why Climate Councils’), drawing 2,400+ new users in the last year.

D – Governance and Resourcing of ICCN



The ICCN continued to evolve its governance as the network activity/membership increases. The main development was the election of two ICCN co-chairs who lead core network meetings and support fundraising in line with the member-led strategy. In 25/26, the ICCN launched a portal for members to easily access information about the network and its sub-groups. In addition, a comprehensive survey of members provided insights into the different climate council models around the world.

The only outstanding “amber-green” rated action under this theme is agreeing “*an MOU between ICCN and E3G to formalise roles and responsibilities*”. The Steering Committee agreed to prioritise the ICCN Strategy in 25/26, with the MOU reprioritised to be signed off at the September 2026 Plenary.

1.4 Financial position

The ICCN is on track to fully utilise all of its budget for 25/26, including Member Contributions. The budget breakdown is as follows:

	Member Contributions	ECF 2025	Wellcome (25/26 proportion only)	CECG	Full year-budget
Budget in USD\$	131,008	160,000	189,583	50,000	530,591

Two grants (ECF 2025 and CECG) have already been fully spent. Member Contributions are forecast to be fully used by March 2026, primarily for non-pay activity (travel, comms products, events) as well as a small proportion of staff time. The Secretariat forecast using ~\$189k of Wellcome’s \$400k grant during 25/26, with the remaining \$211k on track to be spent during 26/27.

Looking ahead, the ICCN has two new grants beginning in March 2026: an ECF grant renewal for \$117k and a new grant with the Swedish philanthropic organisation Global Challenges Foundation for \$94k. This will provide some flexibility if needed in the final month of 25/26. The Secretariat has also been working with the ICCN co-chairs to secure more funding for 26/27 line with the principles laid out in the ICCN draft Strategy. However, more work is needed to secure these new opportunities. A more detailed finance report will be provided by 1st May.

1.5 Member contributions for 26/27

International Climate Councils Network (ICCN) members who can afford to do so are encouraged to provide membership contributions. These were introduced in 2024 and formalised in 2025 through our Terms of Reference.

Member contributions are crucial to the effective functioning of the network as funds enable delivery of core activity by the Secretariat on a year-on-year basis. Any terms are set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Secretariat and paying member. Councils unable to contribute financially have the option of contributing in-kind (e.g., time on specific project or hosting a regional gathering). Not paying a fee does not affect the status of a member – and ODA-eligible countries are recognised as not needing to pay.

The ICCN Terms of Reference state that *‘The Steering Committee will review the membership fee process each year to ensure it remains fit for purpose for the following financial year (April – March). In January 2026, the ICCN Steering Committee reviewed member contributions and concluded that suggested amounts should remain unchanged for 26/27.* The table below therefore outlines the suggested amounts in \$USD for 26/27 (unchanged from 25/26). The Secretariat will request these contributions in April 2026.

Size of secretariat	Member	Associate
Member in ODA-eligible country	\$ 0	\$ 0
Small (1 - 9)	\$ 6,000	\$ 3,000
Medium (10-29)	\$ 9,000	\$ 4,500
Large (30+)	\$ 12,000	\$ 6,000