



ICES
CIEM

International Council for
the Exploration of the Sea
Conseil International pour
l'Exploration de la Mer

Council Meeting 2017
October 2017
CM 2017 Del-Doc 8.1.3
Agenda item 8.1.3

Quality Assurance in the Advisory Process

Meeting participants will be invited to discuss quality assurance in the advisory process. Letters have been received from contracting parties and provided here for background information to the discussion.



Ms Anne Christine Brusendorff,
General Secretary,
International Council for the Exploration of the Sea,
H. C. Andersens Boulevard 44-46
Copenhagen V,
Denmark.

8th June 2017

REFERENCE: ICES Scientific Advice and the Need for Quality Assurance

Dear Ms Brusendorff,

Ireland has a long tradition of association with ICES, having been a member since 1926, as a user of its independent scientific advice, as a contributor of annual share payments and in the provision of scientists to serve on scientific expert groups. We greatly value the independent scientific advice from ICES on marine matters and recognise that this advice is essential for the management of fisheries resources.

It is in that context that I now write to express concern about recent revisions to ICES fisheries advice following the discovery of errors in the assessments on which the advice is based (e.g. Year 2016, Haddock in Area 6; Years 2016 and 2017 in North East Atlantic Mackerel). Our primary concern is that, unfortunately, these errors and resultant revisions to the advice run the risk of undermining the credibility of ICES advice in general.

The errors that were discovered in the NEA mackerel advice for 2016 and 2017 are a particular cause of concern given the economic importance of this stock, the amount of resources put into data collection (e.g. mackerel egg surveys) and assessments (i.e. provision of scientists to ICES) by Ireland and other ICES Member Countries.

There is a responsibility on Member Countries of ICES to collect the appropriate data on the exploited fisheries resources and to ensure these data are quality checked and analysed correctly before they are submitted to ICES scientific meetings. Equally, it is the responsibility of ICES to ensure that data quality is maintained within the ICES advisory process and that data inputs are subject to rigorous checks.

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Ireland would like to request that ICES review quality assurance in the advisory process, with a view to seeing how the current quality system could be improved (or an alternative system put in place). We are also of the view that this matter could usefully be discussed at the ICES Council meeting in October 2017 by all the Member Countries.

Our purpose here is not to be critical but to explore what we can collectively do to improve quality assurance of the advisory product. You have my assurance that Ireland will continue to be a strong supporter of ICES and on the absolute necessity for robust independent scientific advice to inform management decisions.



Cecil Beamish
Cecil Beamish
Director Fisheries
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Our reference: 17/2482

Your reference:

Date: 21.02.2017

Att: Anne Christine Brusendorff

Errors in advice

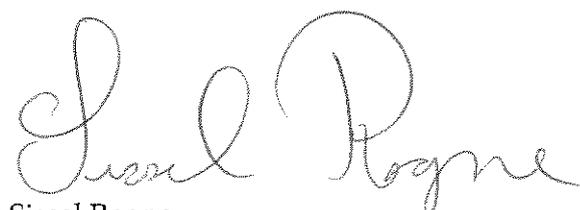
Dear Anne-Christine

Reference is made to our last MIRIA held at ICES HQ 17-18 January this year. During agenda point 4 (Errors in advice) we were informed about the errors/mistakes in advice in 2015 (7 times) and in 2016 (18 times). We were further informed about what ICES does to reduce the number of mistakes in the future, of which one central element was the finalization of the Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF). Our impression was however, that one of the challenges was related to data, or more specifically – that survey indices are provided from the national institutes to ICES in the form of calculated indices and not as data that can readily be entered into the ICES Datras or Acoustic database.

We fully agree with the objective of reducing the number of errors in advice as much as possible, and would like to underline the importance of ICES secretariat to achieve this. Clear, unbiased and correct stock assessment and advice on fishing opportunities is the most important feature of ICES, and need to be constantly guarded. We do however also see that there is a need to standardize the input of survey data to enter them into ICES Datras and Acoustic database. Concerning the latter, we would request the secretariat to start/restart a dialogue with the member states and their national institutes to identify which problems exists, as well as to find a solution to ensure the correct format and transfer of survey data to ICES databases.

Yours sincerely


Per Sandberg
Head of Department


Sissel Rogne
Director of the Institute of Marine Research