

ACOM Chair – 2016 Annual Progress Report

1 Summary

1. The advisory plan for 2016 involves advice on fishing opportunities for approximately 222 stocks, release of 6 ecosystem overviews, responses to 3 recurring requests for advice on ecosystem impacts of fishing activities and 24 special requests.
2. The process involves 24 advice drafting groups and the number of ACOM Web-Conferences planned to approve the advice was 21. 7 of the Web-Conferences were by mid-October canceled because no substantial comments on the draft advice were received and the advices were adopted without a Web-Conference.
3. ICES has officially presented the advice at 21 meetings.
4. In general data has been delivered within the deadlines in 2016 and no major failures has been observed with the exception of VMS data where a couple of countries still have difficulties in delivering.
5. Expert Groups have in general been addressing their ToRs of relevance for the advisory process with the exception of the fisheries overviews related ToRs.
6. The Secretariat has used substantial resources in implementing the review system. It has in recent years been increasingly difficult to find experts willing to act as reviewer and ICES may not be able to maintain the current review system unless the job as reviewer is made more attractive. Annually around 50 reviewers are involved in the reviews.
7. While ACOMs involvement in drafting and approving advice on fishing opportunities has been acceptable it has been very low for many of the non-fisheries advice.

The low involvement of ACOM in non-fisheries advice give rise to concern and the issue was the main item on the agenda for the ACOM consultations at the Annual Science Conference.

The ACOM Leadership had tabled a discussion document on possible restructuring of ACOM to ensure an appropriate committee support to all types of advice. ACOM recognised the problem and the skewed involvement in the advisory process. However, ACOM could not support changes to the current structure and wanted to continue with the present set up. To solve the problem it was agreed that ACOM will work harder at improving the composition of ACOM to better respond to non-fisheries advice. How this will be accomplished was left to the member countries.

The approach taken by ACOM to ensure an active involvement by ACOM in all types of advice will require support at national level. It is crucial that ICES member countries actively support their ACOM member and ensure that there is a system in place that allows the ACOM member to nominate experts as appropriate to Advice Drafting Groups.

8. ACOM agreed at the December 2015 meeting on a workplan for 2016 with the following points:

- 1) Frequency of assessments.
- 2) The role of Expert Groups and the link with Benchmarks.
- 3) Reopening of advice.
- 4) Transparency of the advisory process.
- 5) Technical guidelines.
- 6) Introduction to advice.
- 7) Framework for advice on ecosystem impacts of fisheries.
- 8) Data – link between data collectors and data users.
- 9) Fisheries overviews.
- 10) Ecosystem overviews.

Work is progression on all points with the exception of point 7 Framework for advice on ecosystem impacts of fisheries and point 9 Fisheries overviews.

Priorities have been given to developing the fisheries and ecosystem overviews and further work on a consistent framework for ICES advice on ecosystem impacts of fisheries has been postponed.

The finalisation of the fisheries overviews have been delayed. The Secretariat has, based on data and inputs from expert groups, prepare first drafts of fisheries overviews by ecoregion. However, there is still a number of outstanding issues to be addressed before the drafts are ready for review and approval by ACOM. ACOM has therefore postponed the release of the overviews to 2017 and instructed the ACOM leadership in cooperation with the Secretariat to develop a revised plan for finalising the overviews. The revised plan will include dedicated workshops to address outstanding issues.

2 Overview of the advisory process and advice provided in 2016

2.1 Recurring requests for advice

ICES has or will in 2016 provide advice on fishing opportunities for approximately 222 stocks. This is at the same level as in 2015.

Area	Number of stocks for which advice has been or will be provided in 2016
Iceland and East Greenland	14
Barents Sea	7
Faroe Plateau	4
Celtic Sea and West of Scotland	56
North Sea, Eastern Channel, Skagerrak and Kattegat	36
Bay of Biscay and Atlantic Iberian Waters	32
Baltic Sea	19
Widely distributed and migratory stocks	24

Table 1. Number of recurring advice on fishing opportunities in 2016.

In addition to the recurring advice on fishing opportunities ICES has issued four Ecosystem Overviews and plans to release two more and has provided advice in response to recurring requests on ecosystem impacts of fisheries to:

EU Commission:

- Bycatch of small cetaceans and other marine animals;
- Impact of fisheries on other components of the ecosystem;

NEAFC:

- Vulnerable deep-water habitats in the NEAFC Regulatory Area

The advisory workplan for 2016 included the release of fisheries overviews for most ecoregions. However, the resources required to finalise the overviews have not been available and ACOM has decided to postpone the release of the overviews until the first half of 2017.

2.2 Special requests

ICES has by mid-October accepted 24 special requests that have or will be addressed in 2016:

Denmark

- Real-time monitoring for sandeel in Divisions 4.b and 4.c, SA 1 (Central and South North Sea, Dogger Bank).

The European Commission:

- Potential management measures for salmon in the Gulf of Finland (ICES Subdivision 32);
- Data gaps in recreational fisheries of cod in the Baltic sea region;
- F_{MSY} ranges for selected stocks in ICES subareas 5 to 10 (EU fisheries in western waters); Framework for the classification of stock status relative to MSY proxies for selected category 3 and category 4 stocks in ICES subareas 5 to 10 (EU fisheries in western waters);
- Scientific monitoring fisheries for herring in ICES divisions 6.a and 7.b;
- Guidance on how pressure maps of fishing intensity contribute to an assessment of the state of seabed habitats;
- Guidance on the most appropriate method to aggregate species within species groups for the assessment of good environmental status for MSFD Descriptor 1;
- Guidance on the practical methodology for delivering an MSFD GES assessment on D3 for an MSFD region/sub-region;
- Guidance on operational methods for the evaluation of the MSFD Criterion D3C3;
- Evaluation of the Trans-border management plan for European eel in the Polish–Russian zone of the Pregola drainage basin and Vistula Lagoon;
- Stochastic medium-term projections for western Baltic cod stock;
- Request for ICES advice on an increase of the 2016 anchovy TAC.

France:

- Updated advice on the ecosystem effects of pulse trawl.

NASCO:

- Possible effects of salmonid aquaculture on wild Atlantic salmon populations, focusing on the effects of sea lice, genetic interactions, and the impact on wild salmon production.

NEAFC:

- Categorization of stocks requiring different character and level of NEAFC regulations;
- Evaluation of management strategy for blue whiting;

Norway:

- Review of the MAREANO project;
- Evaluation of management strategy for northern shrimp;
- Harp and hooded seals;
- Advice basis for deep-sea pelagic redfish in the Irminger Sea.

Norway and Russia:

- Evaluation of harvest control rules for Northeast Arctic cod and haddock and for Barents Sea capelin.

OSPAR:

- Common indicator assessments of seals;
- Indicator assessment of coastal bottlenose dolphins;
- Further development of fishing intensity and pressure mapping.

2.3 Technical services**EU**

- Additional catch options for the western Baltic cod stock.

HELCOM

- Review of a HELCOM tool to assess the impact of fisheries on seabed habitats.

Belgium

- Review of a procedure to give users authorisation to enter conservation zones with mobile fishing gear.

3 Review of advisory process in 2016

3.1 Data

In general data has been delivered within the deadlines in 2016 and no major failures has been observed with the exception of VMS data where a couple of countries still have difficulties in delivering.

3.2 Stock Assessment Expert Groups

The attendance of stock assessment Expert Groups seems in general to have been satisfactory and the groups have addressed most of their ToRs with the exception of the generic ToR b, on information to be used in the fisheries overviews.

3.3 Other Expert Groups

In general Expert Groups have been supportive to the advisory process and have provided the knowledge basis required to respond to the requests for advice. Some difficulties were experienced with the response to the NASCO request on effects of salmon farming where WGAQUA questioned the current advisory structure and did not provide comments to the report of the workshop set up to provide the basis for the advice drafting.

3.4 Reviews

The advisory process involves peer review of responses to special requests, benchmark results and substantial changes to methods and data used in an advice. It has in recent years becoming increasingly difficult to find experts willing to act as reviewer and ICES may not be able to maintain the current review system unless the job as reviewer is made more attractive. Annually around 50 reviewers are involved in the reviews.

At WGWISE 2015 an error was made in how the recruitment index was used in the mackerel assessment. The error had a significant impact on the advice for 2016 and ICES issued a correction of the 2016 advice by 30th September 2016, revising it upwards by 16%. The error was not discovered in the internal audit process in 2015 but first realized during the 2016 assessment meeting.

3.5 Advice Drafting Groups.

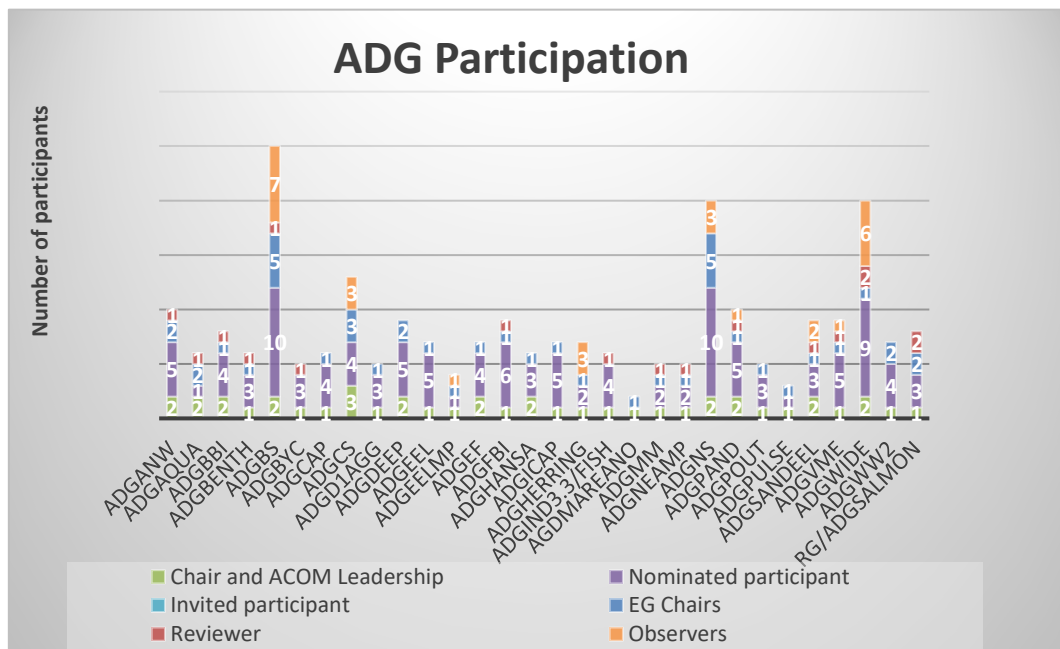


Figure 1. Until 20 October 2016 30 Advice Drafting Groups have met, 14 of which by correspondence.

The number of participants in the ADGs varies between 2 and 25. Attendance by participants nominated by ACOM national members/alternates varied from 0 to 10. The attendance by national nominated members was less than 3 in 6 of the 30 ADGs.

The participation has in general been satisfactory in ADGs dealing with advice on fishing opportunities but has been very low in a number of ADGs addressing non-fisheries requests (see section 3.7).

3.6 ACOM Advice Web-Conferences.

The participation in advice Web-Conferences in 2016 until mid-October is shown in Figure 2. A total of 27 Web-Conferences were planned for the period. 9 out of them were canceled because no substantial comments on the draft advice were received and the advices were adopted without a Web-Conference being held.

On average 46% of ICES Member Countries were represented at a Web-Conferences, 27% did not attend but approved the advice beforehand and 27% did not respond to the Web-Conferences invitation.

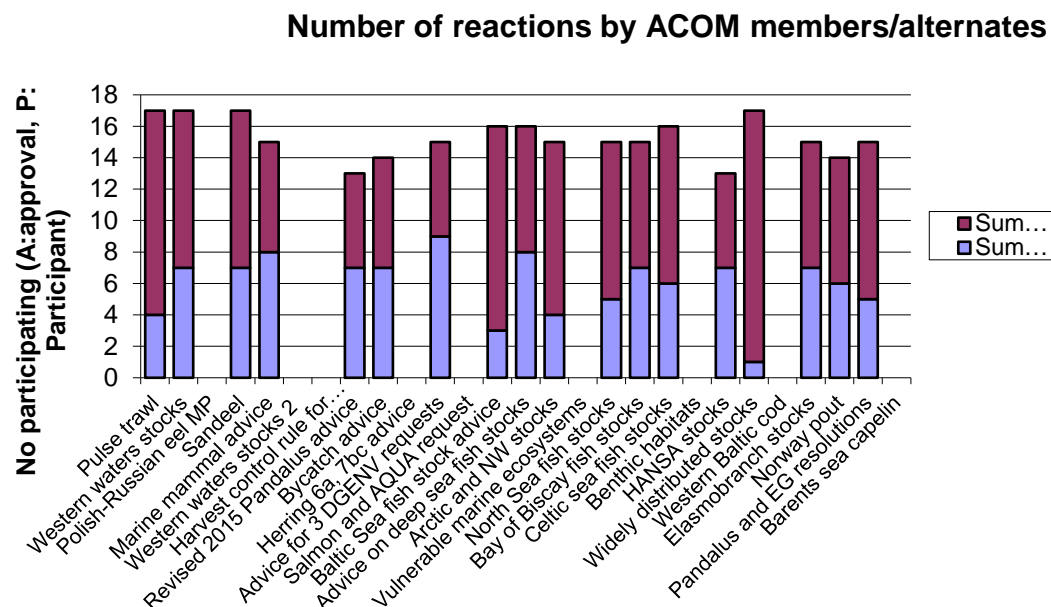


Figure 2 Number of ACOM members participating in advice Web-Conferences or approved the advice before the Web-Conference by mid-October 2016. In cases where no participation is reported the Web-Conference was canceled because no substantial comments to the advice were received

3.7 ACOM involvement in non-fisheries advice

The expertise within ACOM (ACOM members and alternates) covers, as shown in table 3 below, a wide range of topics. Despite this, the experiences are that it is very difficult to attract the relevant ACOM expertise to non-fisheries advice processes.

The advice process on the NASCO requests on impacts of salmon farming on wild salmon illustrate the tendency of low ACOM involvement in non-classic fisheries requests. The salmon advisory process involved a workshop, independent review of the report of the workshop, an advice drafting group and final approval by ACOM.

The workshop were attended by 25 experts from five ICES member countries and produced a very good basis for the advice.

The three reviewers provided a detailed and very useful review of the workshop report.

The Advice Drafting Groups was attended by the two workshop chairs, the chair of the review group, two members of the ACOM leadership, one member nominated by ACOM (attended by web) and the secretariat.

No ACOM members commented the draft advice and the advice approval Web-conference was cancelled.

The ACOM leadership considers the advice of being of high quality and it was very well received when presented at the NASCO annual meeting. However, the low involvement of ACOM give rise to concern. While the ownership of advice on fishing opportunities clearly is with ACOM, you could argue that the ownership

of many of the non-fisheries advice are with the ACOM leadership and the Secretariat.

The issue of low ACOM involvement was discussed at the ACOM Consultations at the ASC in Riga (see this report chapter 7).

3.8 Presentation of advice

The MoUs with EU, NEAFC and NASCO ICES include commitments for ICES to present the advice at meetings organized by the commissions. In addition the leadership has been requested to give presentations at Coastal State meetings, regional meetings and conferences. Table 2 provides an overview of presentations in 2016.

Organisation/meeting	Venue	Date	Presenter
EU Parliament. Advice on Fmsy ranges for Baltic stocks.	Brussels	11 February	Eskild Kirkegaard
Coastal States meeting. State of mackerel, blue whiting and Norwegian spring spawning herring	Copenhagen	8 April	Eskild Kirkegaard
LDAC. ICES advisory approach.	Brussels	19 April	Eskild Kirkegaard
EU – Norway. Advice on Pandalus in 3 and 4a	Copenhagen	3 May	Eskild Kirkegaard
BalticAC. Advice on Baltic stocks	Copenhagen	13-14 June	Carmen Fernandez
Azores Conference. ICES advisory approach.	Azores	5 June	Cristina Morgado
NASCO, Annual meeting Special session 8 June. Advice on impacts of salmon farming.	Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler,	7 and 9 June 8 June	Jonathan White (Chair of WGNAS) Eskild Kirkegaard
DG MARE and Baltic EU Member States. Advice on Baltic cod stocks.	Brussels	11 July	Eskild Kirkegaard
PelAC. Advice on herring stocks.	Peterhead	12 July	Ghislain Chouinard
Advice on other pelagic stocks	Den Haag	5 October	Carmen Fernandez
NSAC. Advice on North Sea stocks.	Aberdeen	14 July	Ghislain Chouinard

NWWAC. Advice on North Western Waters stocks.	Edinburgh	5 July	Ghislain Chouinard
EU Council. Advice for 2017.	Brussels	14 July	Eskild Kirkegaard
DG MARE. State of stocks in EU Waters.	Brussels	15 July	Eskild Kirkegaard
BaltFish. Advice on Baltic stocks	Frankfurt	30 August	Eskild Kirkegaard
NEAFC, PECMAS. Advice to NEAFC.	London	4-5 Oct.	Mark Tasker; David Miller
Annual Meeting, Advice to NEAFC	London	14 – 15 Nov.	Eskild Kirkegaard
Coastal State meeting on mackerel	Clonakilty	18 October	Carmen Fernandez
Coastal State meeting on blue whiting	London	24 October	Eskild Kirkegaard
Coastal State meeting on Norwegian spring spawning herring	London	26 October	Eskild Kirkegaard

Table 2. Presentations of advice by ICES in 2016.

4 Meeting between ICES and Recipients of ICES Advice (MIRIA)

The MIRIA meeting (12 -13 January) was attended by representatives from Denmark, EU-DGMARE, Faroe Islands, France, Iceland, NEAFC, Norway, OSPAR, ACOM Leadership and ICES Secretariat.

The recipients' feedback on the performance of the advisory system in 2015 was very positive and no critical problems were raised.

Main issues discussed:

- Changes to basis for advice. The importance of ICES advisory process being transparent was highlighted. It was pointed to that this includes a commitment for ICES to actively inform on changes made to the basis of assessments. The change in stock area for haddock in the North Sea and 6a was mentioned as examples.
- OSPAR informed that the change agreed at the bilateral meeting in 2015 to the format for requests for advice have been helpful for both formulating and discussing how requests will be implemented and also to follow up the processes.

- It was mentioned that when ICES provide advice on management actions like minimization of bycatch of a certain species it would be useful if ICES could provide information on which are the fisheries where bycatch occurs and how the advice could be implemented.
- Dialogue on requests. To ensure that ICES makes optimal use of the scientific expertise available to the advisory process and that ICES' responses to the special requests are relevant and meet the expectations, ICES raised the issue of the need to improve the dialogue on requests especially in cases where more than one client is involved. NEAFC informed that this is already a discussion subject within NEAFC and will be discussed at NEAFC meetings in the autumn.
- Fisheries and ecosystem overviews. MIRIA welcomed the overview and expressed that they found them very useful. The traffic light system used in presenting the state of stocks/environment was questioned and ICES was requested to ensure that the message conveyed by the traffic light system is consistent with the assessed state. The importance of ensuring that the overviews are up to data was highlighted by MIRIA.
- MIRIA took notes of the new MSY approach for category 3 and 4 stocks and the process to ensure the reference points are estimated consistent with the definitions.

5 Meeting between ICES, Advisory Councils and other Observers (MIACO)

The annual meeting with observers MIACO took place 14 -15 January and was attended by 32 observers representing the Pelagic, Baltic Sea, North Sea, North Western Waters, South Western Waters and Long Distance ACs, the Dutch Pelagic Freezer-Trawler Association, Seas at Risk, DGMARE, Coalition Clean Baltic, Norwegian Fishermen's Association, Oceana, European Fisheries Control Agency, Danish Pelagic Producer Organisation, and MSC.

On request from the Advisory Councils a separate 2 hours meeting between ICES and the ACs were held prior the MIACO. The AC's would like to maintain this setup in future years.

Generally, the observers expressed a high degree of satisfaction with ICES and the advisory system. The ACs all expressed appreciation of ICES attending their meetings to present the advice.

ICES was criticized for the assessment and advice on blue whiting and for not being able to respond to a special request from the coastal States.

Main issues discussed:

- ICES MSY approach. Several ACs found it difficult to understand the approach and when and for what reasons reference points were changed. ICES was requested to make sure that the advice contains the rationale for possible changes to the assessments and the reference points.

In relation to this ICES was requested to ensure that the assumptions used by ICES when assessing stocks and giving advice, be clearly explained together with information about uncertainties.

- Several ACs requested the possibilities to draw on ICES in developing proposal for management plans and in finding solutions to management problems. ICES informed that requests to ICES from ACs would have to come via the EU Commission.
- It was agreed that pre-meetings (Web-conferences) between Expert Groups and observers to ensure that relevant information from observers are taken into account in the work of expert groups could be organized on an ad hoc basis if requested by an AC and it should be warned by the AC to ICES as early as possible.
- Benchmarks. The ACs complained that it was not easy to get a clear overview of benchmark processes especially to pick up changes to meeting dates. A document explaining where and how to get the information was presented.
It was discussed how observers best can contribute to benchmarks. ICES explained the importance of observers attending the entire benchmark process including the scoping and data evaluation workshops to ensure that relevant information from observers are taking into account.
- The issue of mismatch between fish stock management areas and ICES stock assessment areas was discussed. ICES informed that in accordance with the MoUs with clients ICES provide stock advice and not area advice. To provide advice by management area ICES would need policy guidelines on the relative allocation of by stock of the advised fishing opportunities to management areas.
- Fisheries and ecosystem overviews. While MIACO expressed a general support to the development of the overviews concerns were expressed that the production of the overviews present would divert effort from the core business of ICES in producing advice.
- Landing obligation. The implementation of the EU landing obligation was discussed with focus on possible effects of the quality of data and thereby advice. ICES policy of not making assumptions on the impact of the landing obligation but awaiting data to assess the impacts was accepted and supported.

6 Meeting of Expert Group Chairs (WGCHAIRS)

ACOM normally arrange two meetings for chairs of expert groups directly supporting the advisory process, an official WGCHAIRS meeting in January and a consultation meeting during the Annual Science Conference. This year the leaderships of ACOM and SCICOM decided to open the consultation meeting to all chairs of ICES groups.

6.1 Chairs consultation at the ASC in Riga.

46 chairs attended the consultations.

The main aims of the meeting were to share experiences and discuss issues of relevance for the job as chair and to discuss the current support to chairs and possible needs for additional support.

The main conclusions were:

- Communication among groups and between groups and the SSG Chairs is lacking and needed;
- Overview of who is doing what is lacking;
- New chairs need training on the practical side of the ICES system;
- Attendance to especially SCICOM groups is low. Funding is a problem;
- Low attendance makes it difficult to address all ToRs;
- Support from the Secretariat was in general considered to be good. Expert Groups with advisory ToRs are usually getting more support than groups without advisory tasks;
- Good idea with a chairs meeting during the ASC open to all chairs.

6.2 WGCHAIRS meeting January 2016.

The WGCHAIRS meeting (25 – 27 January) was attended by 27 chairs.

The agenda contained a mixture of information to the chairs on developments in ICES advisory process and strategic discussions on i) advisory process with focus on the link between benchmarks, expert groups and review requirements, and on the support from the secretariat to the Expert Groups and ii) data with focus on data needs and data flow.

6.3 Advisory process

6.3.1 Benchmarks – Expert Groups – Review

WGCHAIRS agreed with ACOM that the current benchmark – Expert Groups system is not functioning optimal and that there is room for improvements and the ACOM – Benchmark Steering Group initiative was welcomed. It was underlined that it is important that there is a science incentive to attend Expert Group meetings.

6.3.2 Support from Secretariat

WGCHAIRS identified a number of tasks where more help from the Secretariat would be appreciated and could free resources in the assessment Expert Groups:

- Software developments and code sharing can be handled by staff at the ICES Secretariat. Programmers from the Secretariat needed.
- ICES Secretariat should help in writing and editing the advice.
- Take responsibility of the updated assessments of Categories 5 and 6.
- Communicating the advice.
- First day of the WG, it would help to have an overview of the history of the benchmarks for all stocks. The WG would be aware of when was the stock last looked at in detail.

On the issue of having the Secretariat to do the update assessments the majority of the chairs feared that it could result in loss of ownership. Concerns were expressed that it could be difficult for experts to justify attendance of assessment meetings if they were not supposed to do an assessment of “their” stocks any more.

Several chairs mentioned that changes to procedures and formats created extra work and the feeling was often that Expert Groups were asked to apply new procedures and tools when these were still in a developing phase.

6.4 Data

There was general agreement that Expert Groups have a clear and important role in defining data needs but it is equally unclear who to pass on the data needs to. There is missing a feedback mechanisms from Expert Groups to data collectors.

The feedback process should include a prioritisation process to ensure that the need and nice to have issue is addressed. Currently prioritisation of data collection is taken at national or institutional level with very limited coordination between countries and no clear user consultancy mechanisms.

It was mentioned that to define the data needs ICES should have a clear strategy for what to do with category 3 to 6 stocks.

7 ACOM consultations at the ASC in Riga

The main items on the agenda for the ACOM consultation were the advisory workplan for 2017 and ACOMs involvement in non-fisheries advice.

ACOM adopted on 7th October the advisory workplan for 2017 including resolutions on expert group meetings and benchmark processes.

The ACOM Leadership considers the low involvement of ACOM in non-fisheries advice as a serious threat to the agreed strategy to expand ICES advisory services on non-fisheries issues and had requested ACOM to discuss the issue.

The ACOM Leadership had tabled a discussion document on possible restructuring of ACOM to ensure an appropriate committee support to all types of advice. ACOM recognised the problem and the skewed involvement in the advisory process. However, ACOM could not support changes to the current structure and wanted to continue with the present set up. To solve the problem it was agreed that ACOM will work harder at improving the composition of ACOM (including members, alternates and nominees) to better respond to non-fisheries advice. How this will be accomplished was left to the member countries.

The approach taken by ACOM to ensure an active involvement by ACOM in all types of advice will require support at national level. It is crucial that ICES member countries actively support their ACOM member and ensure that there is a system in place that allows the ACOM member to nominate experts as appropriate to Advice Drafting Groups.

8 ICES-EFARO initiative on surveys

At the joint EFARO – ICES meeting on 21st January 2016 on developing joint data collection plans using vessel surveys plans for three pilot studies (North Sea, Celtic Sea and Bay of Biscay) were agreed. I was furthermore agreed to seek EU funding.

On July 4, ICES and EFARO had a meeting at DG-MARE on possible EU funding. DG-MARE expressed interest in the matter and the proposed three pilot studies. However, DG MARE could not promise funding or other support to the initiative.

Following the meeting with DG MARE it was agreed to seek other means of funding the pilots.

9 ACOM Workplan 2016 – short progress report

9.1 Frequency of assessments.

The process to identify candidate stocks for less frequent assessment agreed at the December 2015 ACOM meeting is running as planned. ACOM will, at the November 2016 meeting, be requested to review the list of candidate stocks and select those to be discussed with clients.

9.2 Reopening of advice.

It was at the December 2015 ACOM meeting agreed to ask the WGNSSK to evaluate the added value of the reopening process. The group will report on this in conjunction with the reopening process in the autumn 2016. The report will be on the agenda for the November 2016 ACOM meeting with the aim of deciding if the report can form basis for a discussion with clients on the need for the reopening process.

9.3 The role of Expert Groups and the link with Benchmarks.

ACOM and the Benchmark Steering Group established in December 2015 a joint Group to develop a proposal for a new benchmark system (ACOM - Benchmark Steering Group). The report of the joint group was presented at an Open Session at the ASC.

The Open Session was quite critical with the suggested framework. Main criticism was on the complexity of the proposed process.

The input from the open session was discussed in a meeting of the ACOM-BSG subgroup and it was agreed to move forward on testing the use of an open scoping process to define key issues to be addressed in the advisory work within an ecoregion. The plan is to arrange a scoping workshop back to back with WGNSSK in 2017.

9.4 Transparency of the advisory process.

Is linked to the previous point (Expert Group – Benchmark). The joint ACOM - BSG Group addressed in their work the involvement of stakeholders in the advisory process.

9.5 Technical guidelines.

In December 2014 the contents of the guidelines were identified. The Secretariat and the ACOM leadership have been working on the guidelines and finalised chapters will be released in 2016.

9.6 Introduction to ICES advice.

ACOM agreed at the December 2015 meeting that the draft revised introduction although not ideal should be published. It was furthermore agreed to simplify the introduction and include links to the technical document.

The draft introduction has been published. The ACOM leadership will work on a simplified version to be published in 2017.

9.7 Framework for ecosystem impacts of fisheries.

Priorities have been given to developing the fisheries and ecosystem overviews and further work on a consistent framework for ICES advice on ecosystem impacts of fisheries has been postponed.

9.8 Data – link between data collectors and data users.

The issue was discussed at WGCHAIRS (see section 6.4 above). The key issue discussed was the lack of a mechanisms/process that allows the expert groups as data users to feedback to the data collectors with information on their needs. This was discussed again at the February 2016 Bureau meeting. The ACOM leadership, Data Centre, SSGIEOM and the Secretariat is working close together to establish a process to prioritise data needs and provide feedback to data collectors.

9.9 Fisheries overview/advice.

The Secretariat has, based on data and inputs from expert groups, prepare first drafts of fisheries overviews by ecoregion. However, there is still a number of outstanding issues to be addressed before the drafts are ready for review and approval by ACOM. ACOM has therefore postponed the release of the overviews to 2017 and instructed the ACOM leadership in cooperation with the Secretariat to develop a revised plan for finalising the overviews. The revised plan will include dedicated workshops to address outstanding issues.

9.10 Ecosystem overviews.

In addition to the four fisheries overviews issued early this year the plan is to release in 2016 overviews for two further ecoregions: Iceland Sea and Norwegian Sea.

Table 3. Area of expertise of ACOM members and alternates as reported to ICES.

Topic	ACOM Members and Alternates	
	Number	% (total = 114)
Ecosystems processes	18	16%
Management Strategies Evaluations	9	8%
Fish stock assessment	40	35%
Fisheries interactions	4	4%
Species interactions	14	12%
Marine mammals	3	3%
By-catch, PETs	11	10%
MSFD, D1	7	6%
MSFD, D3	15	13%
MSFD, D6	4	4%
Maritime spatial planning	9	8%
Stock Identity	9	8%
Fish diseases	1	1%
Impact of aquaculture in the ecosystem	6	5%
Data collection	20	18%
Recreational fisheries	6	5%
Environment impact	9	8%
Contaminants	9	8%