

## ACOM Chair – 2015 Annual Progress Report

### 1 Overview of the advisory process and advice provided in 2015

ICES will in 2015 provide advice on fishing opportunities for approximately 225 stocks, address 3 recurring requests for advice on ecosystem impacts of fishing activities, 25 special requests, and deliver 4 technical services.

Around 40 expert groups and workshops have been or will be directly involved in the advisory process providing the scientific basis for the advice.

The process has/will involve 34 advice drafting groups and the number of ACOM Web-Conferences planned to approve the advice is 34. Until mid-October 12 of the Web-Conferences were canceled because no substantial comments on the draft advice were received and the advices were adopted without a Web-Conference.

13 benchmark processes addressing methods and data used in the advisory process have been running in 2015.

Many of the expert groups under the Steering Group on Integrated Ecosystem Observation and Monitoring have indirectly contributed to the advisory process by delivering data and information to expert groups addressing advisory requests. This includes survey planning groups, age reading and maturity staging workshops and fisheries monitoring and data management expert groups.

#### 1.1 Recurring requests for advice

ICES will in 2015 provide advice on fishing opportunities for approximately 225 stocks. This is a little less than in 2014. The change does not represent a reduction in the number of stocks for which ICES is requested to provide advice but the high number of biennial advice produced in 2014.

Area	Number of stocks for which advice has been or will be provided in 2015
Iceland and East Greenland	14
Barents Sea	7
Faroe Plateau	4
Celtic Sea and West of Scotland	69

North Sea, Eastern Channel, Skagerrak and Kattegat	50
Bay of Biscay and Atlantic Iberian Waters	22
Baltic Sea	19
Widely distributed and migratory stocks	40

Table 1. Number of recurring advice on fishing opportunities in 2015 by area.

Approximately one third of the stocks are category 1 stocks (stocks for which the advice is based on analytical assessments) and the advice is provided in accordance with an agreed management plan or applying ICES MSY approach. For the remaining two thirds the advice has been based on ICES precautionary approach, which includes all those under the index based methods developed for category 3-4 stocks.

In addition to the recurring advice on fishing opportunities ICES is also providing 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

## 1.2 Special requests

ICES has by mid-October accepted 25 special requests that have or will be addressed in 2015. Most of the special requests are on impact of fisheries and on fisheries management strategies. The number of requests addressing non-fisheries subjects has, as in previous years, been very limited.

The special requests are received throughout the year and often with very short deadlines for the response. This poses challenges in terms of planning and ensuring participation of the required expertise including reviewers. ICES has until now accepted all the special requests and has, with one exception, been able to respond to them within the agreed timeframe.

Although the issue that resulted in the failure to answer (a request on blue whiting for NEAFC) was related to an unexpected breakdown in the assessment, the underlying cause is really the shortage of resources. Answering many of the unforeseen special requests often relies on one or a few experts being able with short notice to allocate their time to prepare the scientific basis for the response. As such the current approach with expectations for quick replies is not going to be robust.

Since 2007 ICES has in total answered eight special requests on mackerel issues of which two have been in 2015. The two latest responses have not added much new

information which had not already been provided in previous responses. With the aim of avoiding unnecessary work and to ensure that there is a better match of expectation a letter has been sent to the relevant coastal States with an invitation to discuss a process that can ensure that ICES responses to special requests are relevant and meets the expectations.

ICES has or will in 2015 address the following special requests:

**The European Commission:**

- Criteria and conditions for a Non-Detriment Finding regarding European eel;
- Fmsy ranges for the Baltic Sea (work started in 2014);
- Sole in Division IIIa and Subdivisions 22-24 - SELTRA trawl;
- Fmsy ranges for North Sea stocks (work started in 2014);
- Fmsy ranges for Western waters;
- Fmsy proxies for data poor stocks Western waters;
- Data collection on recreational fisheries;
- Celtic Sea herring catch advice;
- Catch advice for sole in IIIa;
- Revisions to Marine Strategy Framework Directive manuals for Descriptors 3, 4, and 6, and publication of manual for Descriptor 11;
- Boarfish evaluation of management strategy.

**The European Commission and Norway:**

- Herring in IIIa evaluation of management strategy (work started in 2014);
- Herring in the North Sea evaluation of management plan (work started in 2014).

**The European Commission, Faroe Islands and Norway:**

- Evaluation of multi-annual management strategy for mackerel in the Northeast Atlantic;
- Management of mackerel in the Northeast Atlantic (work started in 2014).

**France:**

- Review of SGELECTRA and IMARES work and update of advice on ecosystem effects of pulse trawl, particularly in relation to Natura habitats and species.

**HELCOM:**

- Pressure from fishing activity (based on VMS/logbook data) in the HELCOM area relating to both seafloor integrity and management of HELCOM MPAs.

**NEAFC**

- Evaluation of long-term management strategy for blue whiting (not adequately answered see above).

**Norway and Russia:**

- Evaluation of North-East Arctic cod and haddock harvest control rule;
- Update of North-East Arctic haddock advice for 2016.

**OSPAR:**

- Review of draft OSPAR JAMP eutrophication guidelines on phytoplankton species composition;
- Plastic particles in fish stomachs
- Development of common and candidate OSPAR biodiversity indicators for benthic habitats.

#### UK:

- Review of management proposals for Scottish MPAs.

### 1.3 Technical services

ICES has in 2015 until mid-October addressed the following technical services:

#### The European Commission:

- Evaluation of effect of increased quota flexibility for 2015-2016 on pelagic stocks;
- Evaluation of effect of increased quota flexibility for 2015-2016 on certain Baltic stocks;
- Deep-sea status of certain species.

#### The Netherlands

- Review of the added value of investments of fish passages to the ecological quality of the Wadden Sea.

#### OSPAR:

- Handling of data and statistics stemming from monitoring devices generating large amounts of data.
- With ICES Data Centre: Advice on construction of underwater noise register (may include Helcom also in future).

## 2 Review of advisory process in 2015

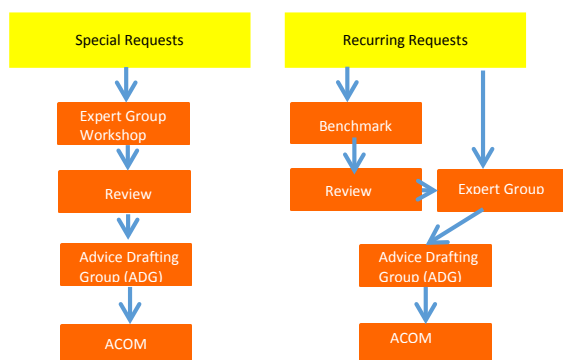


Figure 1. The advisory processes applied in 2015.

The advisory processes applied in 2015 are illustrated in the figure 1. The processes are very thorough and resource demanding both for the national institutes and for the ICES Secretariat and the workload and availability of expertise remain central issues for ACOM.

A preliminary review of the advisory process in 2015 is given below. A detailed review of the advisory process will be conducted in conjunction with ACOMs plenary meeting in December 2015 and the meeting of expert group chairs (WGCHAIRS) in January 2016.

## **2.1 Stock Assessment Expert Groups**

The attendance of stock assessment Expert Groups seems in general to have been satisfactory and the groups have been able to address most of the ToRs of relevance for providing advice on fishing opportunities. The effort used on other ToRs (e.g. on preparation of benchmarks, fisheries advice, update of description of assessment methods applied (stock annexes)) have been very variably pending on workload and number of experts actively attending the meetings.

The current process for providing recurrent fisheries advice is based on the assessments forming the basis for the advice being ready before the expert group meetings. While a number of assessments are being prepared in advance a large proportion of the assessments are not ready before the meetings and some of the expert groups are using a substantial part of their meeting doing the assessments.

The data calls introduced in 2012 have contributed to ensuring a more consistent and systematic approach to data and more data being ready in time. The data call issued in 2015 was for the first time covering all the assessment expert groups.

## **2.2 Other Expert Groups**

While the basis for most of the single stock fisheries advice is prepared by the assessment Expert Groups set up specifically to address the requests for advice on fishing opportunities, the development of environmental and ecosystem advice is to a larger extent dependent on contributions from Expert Groups not having the support of the advisory process as their main task. In general these Expert Groups have been supportive to the advisory process and have provided the knowledge basis required to respond to the requests for advice.

It is important that the advisory system can draw on the expertise throughout the ICES community. The distinguishing between ACOM and SCICOM Expert Groups and the different management systems set up by the two Committees are not facilitating this.

## **2.3 Benchmarking workshops and independent review**

Because of difficulties in getting independent reviewers and recognising that the added value of the review of update assessments were limited ACOM decided in 2012 to amend the review system. Assuming that Expert Groups dealing with recurring advice on fishing opportunities will only conduct update assessments, and changes to methods or data series are only introduced during a benchmark process, the independent review was replaced by an internal audit process for these groups. The new review approach means in practice that a full review process is planned for non-recurring advice and for benchmarks, and not for update assessments.

However, the experiences have been that Expert Groups and Advice Drafting Groups often deviate from the methods and approaches agreed at benchmarks.

This may result in assessments based on methods or data series that have not been reviewed.

Examples from assessments carried out this year where substantial changes to the method and/or data have taken place outside benchmarks are: Herring in SD 30, North Sea cod, Nephrops FU7 (Fladen Ground), Sole in VIIe, Plaice in VIIe, Plaice in VIIId, and VIIIabd and Kattegat cod.

The ACOM Leadership considers it very important that changes to assessment methods or data are reviewed before being accepted and that this should be done as part of a benchmark process. However, it is also important that we can justify that the advice provided by ICES is based on the best available information and methods. There are therefore situations where revisions to the benchmarked approach done outside the benchmark system are justified and a review process has to be conducted with short notice and outside the planned benchmarks.

Regarding the stocks listed above the ACOM Leadership postponed, for some of the stocks, the release of the advice to the autumn and initiated an inter-benchmark processes. For others review processes were conducted with short notice and the advice released as originally planned. This created additional workload for the Secretariat, ACOM, the experts involved and the ACOM leadership with additional advice drafting group and Web-conference activities.

Several of the stocks listed above have been benchmarked within the latest year with the expectation that substantial changes would not be needed for a couple of years. However, the current benchmarking system for stock assessments seems not to deliver as anticipated. Part of the reason for this may be a mismatch between the adopted benchmark plans and the resources available to do the planned work.

There is also some concern that the current review process for benchmarks does not carry sufficient ACOM oversight, and benchmark outcomes accepted by the reviewers may have advisory implications outside the remit/ or knowledge of the review.

The benchmark and peer reviews system will be discussed in ACOM in December.

## 2.4 Advice Drafting Groups.

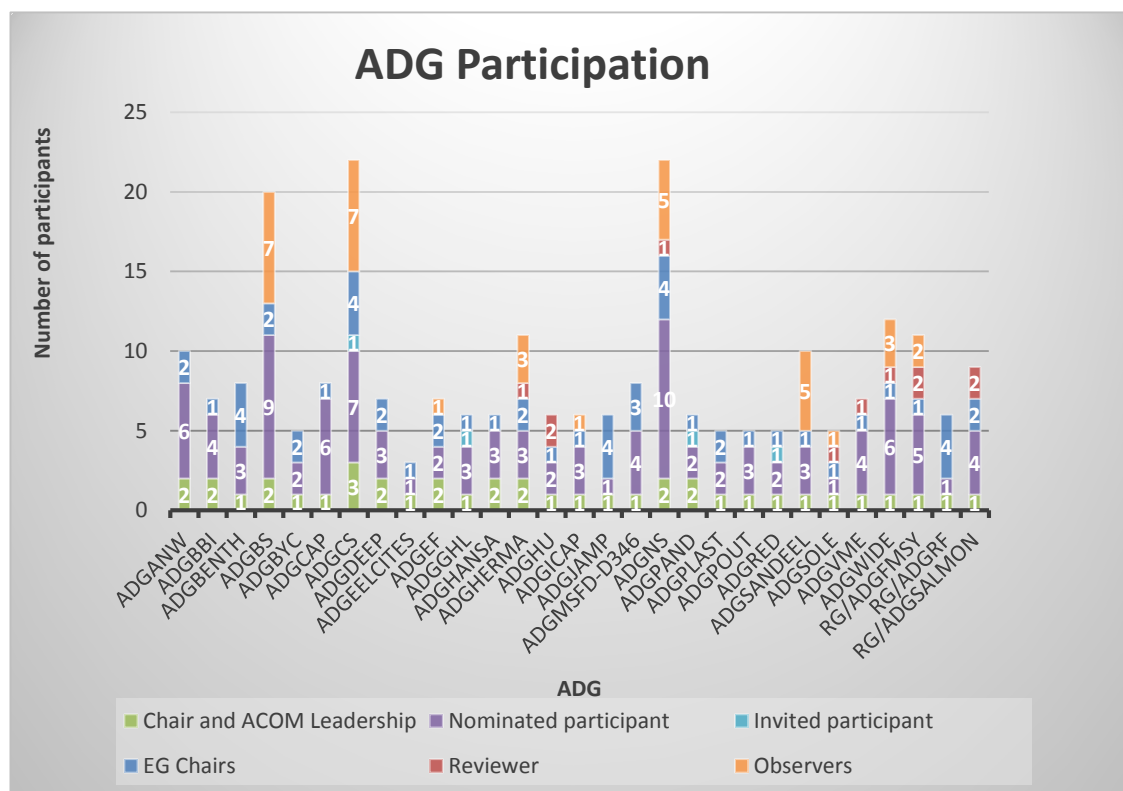


Figure 2. Until mid-October 34 Advice Drafting Groups have met or are planned to meet in 2015, 7 of which by correspondence.

The advice drafted by the Advice Drafting Groups were with very few exceptions accepted by ACOM while changes to the supporting text were made in many cases.

The number of participants in the ADGs varies between 3 and 22. Attendance by ACOM national members (excluding ACOM chair and vice-chairs) varied from 1 to 10. The attendance by ACOM national members was less than 4 in 17 of the 34 ADGs. The total number of expert meeting days (excluding travel time) used in physical attendance in advice drafting groups is estimated to be close to 450 in 2015.

The participation has in general been satisfactory in 2015 and much better than in 2014. In particular attendance for the recurrent advice ADGs with small numbers of stocks has improved.

## 2.5 ACOM Advice Web-Conferences.

The final approval of the advice by ACOM is done at Web-conference. The draft advice is made available on the ACOM Forum and ACOM members are invited to provide comments in advance of the Web-Conference.

The participation in advice Web-Conferences planned for 2015 until mid-October is shown in Figure 3. A total of 26 Web-Conferences were planned until mid-

October. 12 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 54% of ICES Member Countries were represented at a Web-Conferences, 28% did not attend but approved the advice beforehand and 18% did not respond to the Web-Conferences invitation.

The comments and discussions of advice on ACOM Forum and at the Web-Conferences have mainly addressed editorial issues or changes to the supporting text. ACOM made changes to the draft advice in very few cases.

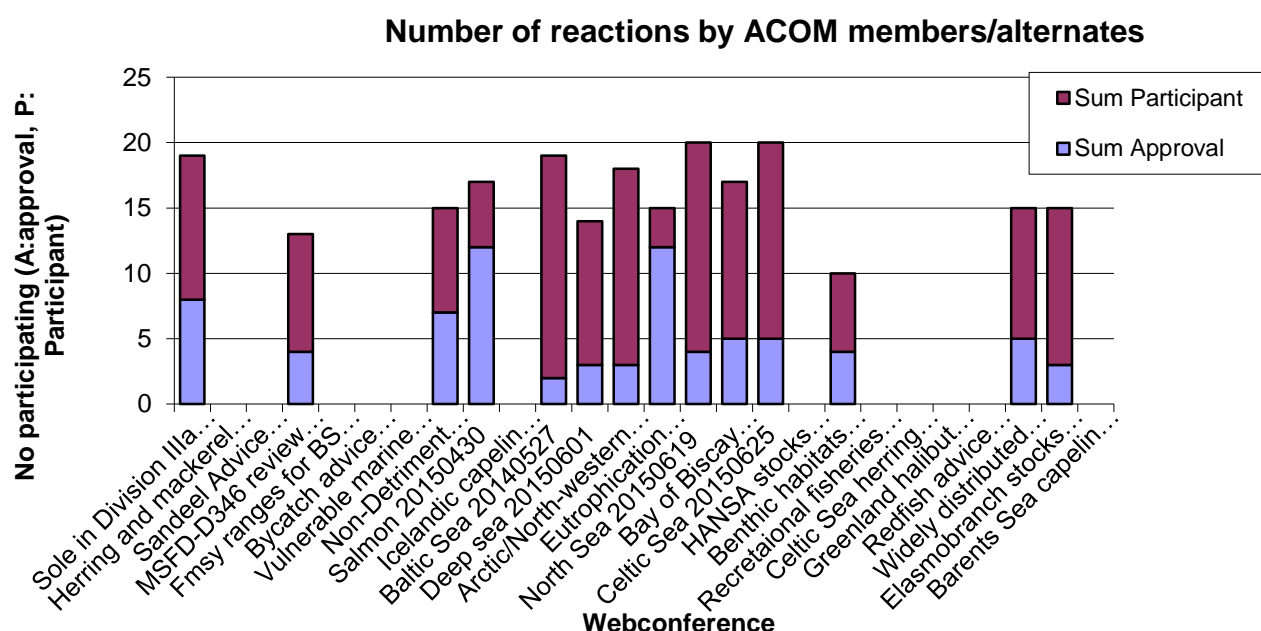


Figure 3. Number of ACOM members participating in advice Web-Conferences or approved the advice before the Web-Conference by mid-October 2015. In cases where no participation is reported the Web-Conference was canceled because no substantial comments to the advice were received

## 2.6 Baltic cod

A benchmarking process for Baltic cod stocks was initiated in 2014 including a scoping workshop in October 2014 and a more traditional benchmark workshop in March 2015.

Although the workshop was very successful the knowledge base remained insufficient for the benchmark workshop to propose an analytical assessment of the Eastern Baltic cod stock and the advice on fishing opportunities for 2016 for the stock had to be based on the precautionary approach as last year.

The benchmark workshop succeeded in developing an assessment method for the Western Baltic cod which for the first time takes account for the presence of eastern cod in the western part of the Baltic Sea.

The Baltic Fisheries Assessment Working Group has been requested to develop and coordinate a plan for the work needed to improve the assessment and advice



of the Baltic cod stocks and a Workshop on Developing Integrated Advice for Baltic Sea ecosystem-based fisheries management is planned under the Steering Group on Integrated Ecosystem Assessments.

It is expected that these initiatives will provide new information of importance for the assessment of the cod stocks. However, it is unlikely that a new assessment approach will be in place in time for next year's advisory work.

### **3 Workload**

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The workload issue is still high on the agenda for the ACOM leadership and ACOM, and a number of initiatives (listed below) have been taken to address it. These initiatives are expected to contribute to a reducing in the workload for the expert groups but will not be sufficient to ensure a balance between the advisory tasks and the expert resources available. This will require that ICES Member Countries give higher priority to ICES advisory work including data management and make the expert resources required to conduct the work available.

#### **3.1 Data calls**

ICES started to launch official calls for fisheries dependent data in 2012 to support the single stock and mixed-fisheries advice of demersal stocks in the North Sea ecoregion. Since then, data calls have been an integrated element in the process of addressing recurring requests as well as special requests.

In general data calls have contributed to ensure a more consistent and systematic approach to data and more data being ready on time.

#### **3.2 Data management**

A number of activities within the Data Centre are targeted at streamlining data flow. Central for the advisory work is the regional database. It is currently a key tool in planning of collection of fisheries dependent data but further development is required before the data base can be used routinely in quality assurance of data and preparation of data for use in assessments.

#### **3.3 Frequency of assessments**

For most of the stocks ICES is requested to provide annual advice. This does not necessarily means that the assessments forming the basis for the advice have to be redone on an annual basis. ACOM agreed the following process at the 2014 December meeting:

1. Relevant expert groups have been requested to apply a set of criteria to list stocks that are to be considered candidates for less frequent assessment applying a set of criteria;
2. Based on the output from the expert groups the ACOM Leadership prepares a list proposing when stocks should be assessed and a proposal for how the advice for stocks not subject to annual assessments should be presented;
3. ACOM agrees on the frequency of assessments as part of the adoption of the ToR for expert groups for 2016.

### 3.4 Enhance substantive support by the ICES Secretariat to the advisory process

**Reporting:** The ICES secretariat is preparing a proposal for the structure and content of future assessment expert group reports. Focus is on ensuring that the stock annex sections are up to date and contain complete descriptions of the methods applied in the assessments. With complete stock annexes the requirements for information to be included in the main body of the report can be reduced substantially.

**Category 3-6 stocks:** The ICES secretariat could assist in stock category 3 - 6 advice by doing the first draft of the advice for consideration of the EG. This was discussed at the June 2015 Bureau meeting and the Bureau supported the idea of running a pilot process to test this.

### 3.5 Format of advice

The format of recurring advice on fishing opportunities implemented by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015 has been well received by the expert groups and has reduced the time spent on preparing the advice both in the expert groups and in the advice drafting groups.

## 4 Workplan 2016

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The draft workplan for 2016 was adopted by ACOM on 19 October. It includes the meeting resolutions for 2016, an overview of meetings planned for 2016 and an overview of the processes by advice product.

The workplan is a “living plan” as changes and updates will occur throughout the year resulting from new or changed requests or need for new activities to support the advisory process.

## 5 Participation in Expert Groups and how to incorporate stakeholder information

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The current rules for participation in Advisory Expert Groups is laid down in the Guidelines for Expert Groups. The guidelines allow for three ways of getting attendance: i) ICES Member Countries may appoint “experts and advisers”; ii) The chair can appoint experts in consultation with the national Delegates; and iii) Employees of government agencies that apply ICES advice will be allowed to observe ICES expert groups. No other observers are allowed in Advisory Expert Groups.

There have in 2015 been a number of cases where experts from organisations having observer status to the advisory process have attended Expert Group meetings being nominated by national Delegates. These experts have attended as members and not as observers. The experiences have in general been very positive.

Related to this the ACOM leadership has been discussing with the Advisory Councils how best to bring relevant stakeholder information into the advisory work before the Expert Group meetings. As a test case a Web-Conference between the Pelagic Advisory Council and WGWIDE was held just prior to the WGWIDE

meeting. The meeting did not bring much additional information into the Expert Group and it may be necessary to formalise the dialogue to ensure that it adds value to the advisory process. The issue will be on the agenda for the meeting with observers (MIACO) in January next year.

## **6 Facilitate transition from single stock benchmarks to regional benchmarks**

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The Irish Sea has been identified as a good test case for ICES to develop an integrated ecosystem benchmark. The information base for the area is very good. The fisheries components to the ecosystem are relatively well understood. There have been several recent projects looking at ecosystem models and reviewing the Irish Sea ecosystem in general. There have been major changes to fishing pressures. What has been missing thus far is how to integrate these new types of information and data into and improve the current stock assessments and management advice. A benchmarking process has been adopted and anticipated to last for 1.5 to 2 years.

## **7 Format of advice**

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A new format of recurring advice was adopted by ACOM in December 2014 and implemented 1. January 2015. The new format is designed to separately address the three requested recurring advice deliverables (stock, fisheries and ecosystem advice).

All 2015 advice on fishing opportunities has been provided in the new format. The new format represent a simplification and thereby made it easier to develop the CARA system.

It was planned to have the fisheries advice sections developed during 2015 and issued at the end of 2015. A workshop (WKFAS) was set up to prepare by ecoregion a first draft of the fisheries advice. The participation in the workshop was very limited and although the participants did a very good job the workshop was not able to develop draft fisheries advice proposals as intended and further work is required.

ACOM agreed at the Consultations at the ASC to give priority to finalize the fisheries advice for the Celtic Sea and use that as template for the other ecoregions. An ACOM subgroup has been formed to develop in cooperation with the secretariat a draft for the Celtic Sea to be discussed at the ACOM December meeting. Pending on the discussion at the ACOM meeting a number of workshops will be planned early 2016 to prepare draft fisheries advice sections for the remaining ecoregions. The draft sections will be evaluated by the expert groups and finalized by ACOM during the first half of 2016.

The ecosystem advice or overviews are planned to be released in 2016 for some Ecoregions.

## **8 Introduction to Advice**

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ACOM agreed at the 2014 December meeting to split the current introduction to the advice in two new documents: a short introduction and a technical

document/guidelines. The Introduction will provide the context and approach to the advice in a non-technical language in less than four pages. The Guidelines will serve as documentation of the technical basis for ICES advice. The aim is to have both documents adopted at the December 2015 ACOM meeting.

## 9 MSFD

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In 2015, DG-ENV special requests have focused on the Common Implementation Strategy review of the 2010 MSFD decision. The science behind the decision text on the science descriptors D3 (commercial fish and shellfish), D4 (foodwebs) and D6 (seafloor integrity) were reviewed by ICES through an iterative process of workshops, consultation and advice drafting. ICES also published the D11 (noise) review. The final ICES advice was well received by the EU Commission, and also by the EU Member States.

ICES MSFD advisory work has also led to a strengthening of the operational and advisory partnership of ICES with OSPAR and HELCOM. ICES advice is leading to the development of indicators and monitoring products, and an improved knowledge base for the OSPAR interim assessment and HELCOM HOLAS II.

For the immediate future, ICES is working with DGENV, OSPAR and HELCOM on the development of biodiversity indicators (including how to aggregate biodiversity metrics), on practical implications of the metric of benthic impact of fishing, and the development and testing of approaches for assessing the state of fish population condition (age, length, maturity etc.).

## 10 Update of advice

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ICES has a protocol for reopening fisheries advice for stocks where new information from fisheries independent surveys becomes available after the advice has been issued. The protocol includes criteria for identifying candidate stocks for reopening the advice based on analysis of whether including the new survey information will significantly change the assessment of recruiting year classes.

The protocol does, however, not include criteria for when the advice should be updated. Although the new survey information may have a significant impact on the assessment of the recruitment, the impact of these changes on the advised fishing opportunities may not necessarily be significant.

In addition to the reopening procedure ICES also receive requests to update advice based on the results of benchmark processes. Most benchmark workshops takes place early in the year and the results are used in the process leading to the advice for the subsequent year. ICES procedure is not to update the in-year advice but only to use the outcome of the benchmark process in the advice for the coming year. ICES, however, receives requests to redo assessments and update advice based on results from benchmarks (2 requests in 2015). The requests received are only for stocks where it can be expected that applying the results from the benchmarks will result in an increase in the advised catch.

The ACOM leadership has discussed the update issue with the EU Commission with the aim of developing criteria for when advice should be updated. While the Commission acknowledge that update requests are biased and together with the reopening process increase the pressure on the advisory system it informed that it

is not in the position to provide guidelines on criteria for updating advice and indicated that it will continue to request updates when considered necessary.

The issue will be discussed at the December 2015 ACOM meeting.

## **11 MSY approach**

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ACOM agreed at the December 2014 meeting to request WKLIFE to make further tests of the potential software to be applied in providing MSY advice for category 3 and 4 stocks. WKLIFE will report to ACOM at the December 2015 meeting. If adopted by ACOM the MSY approach for category 3 and 4 stocks will be implemented by 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016.

## **12 New clients**

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Currently ICES is providing advice on requests to inter-governmental organizations having a MoU with ICES and to ICES Member Countries. Observers to ICES advisory process have expressed interest in requesting advice from ICES. ACOM has, with reference to ICES advisory policy, refused the requests from observers. However, the Council may consider the possibility of widening the clients of ICES advice to include stakeholders recognized as observer to the advisory process.

## **13 ICES Strategic Plan – progress on implementation of the Advice Plan**

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The activities described above are part of the implementation of the advice plan of the ICES Strategic Plan. The advice plan and its implementation were the main items on the agenda for the ACOM Consultations during the ASC. Breakout groups of ACOM evaluated progress in the implementation of the advice plan and discussed the actions and associated indicators with focus on whether they are still relevant, should be updated and whether there are new actions that should be included.

The findings of the breakout groups are summarised in annex 1 to this report using the “gut feeling” scoring approach adopted by the Bureau in 2014.

As indicated in the evaluation progress on the implementation of the Strategic Plan progress is made on most actions listed in the advice plan. For a few actions progress was evaluated to have been very limited.

## **14 ACOM Leadership**

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The three year term as Vice-Chair expires for John Simmons and Mark Tasker by the end of 2015. Carmen Fernandez term was prolonged by one year last year and her term expires also by the end of 2015.

ACOM's nomination of Vice-chairs is awaiting the final Council decision on the ACOM leadership structure and the conditions under which the Vice-chairs will operate.

## Annex 1. Evaluation of progress on implementation of the Advice Plan.

The advice plan and its implementation were the main items on the agenda for the ACOM Consultations during the ASC. ACOM evaluated in breakout groups progress in the implementation of the advice plan and discussed the actions and associated indicators with focus on whether they are still relevant, should be updated and whether there are new actions that should be included.

The findings of the breakout groups are summarised in table below using the “gut feeling” scoring approach adopted by the Bureau in 2014.

ACOM Category	ACOM - Actions	Supporting Activity	Breakout group score				Comments by breakout groups
			A	B	C	D	
1. Deliver relevant, timely and credible advice	Implement MOU's with advice recipient	1, 2	5	5			<p>MoUs are discussed and agreed with advice recipients and ICES recurrent advice adheres to the agreed MoUs and solutions are found if and when problems arise.</p> <p>We are meeting the objectives of the EU MOU (used as an example). The measures are rather general, which is fine.</p> <p>We need to be thoughtful on how many requests can be done well and on what time line.</p> <p>Proactive actions on ecosystem-based approach areas of advice can be beneficial.</p> <p>We need a better process outlined in the MoUs to implement a process for more productive and timely discussion to clarify aspects throughout the process of answering non-recurrent requests with clients.</p> <p>What requests are not accepted and why—this is important information for the ICES Community that should be communicated.</p>
2. Foster efficient use of	Implement RCT and priorities resource use	1	3				Progress but still needs to be tested

resources and quality assurance	Further explore and implement, where appropriate multiannual evaluations of management measures (the state of the stock) for the provision of annual advice	1	3				Progress but details are yet to be explored
	Enhance substantive support by ICES Secretariat to the advisory process	1, 2, 3, 4	4	3	3	3	<p>Support considered good but will be good to get another round of feedback from WGCHAIRS. There has been good development also from the data center to support the ICES system. Continue to find ways to support the system as it is dynamic.</p> <p>The RCT is moving this issue forward, on organizing the expertise and their associated availabilities in order to respond to non-recurrent requests in a more effective manner.</p> <p>The RCT would benefit from a “project” orientation rather than a “meeting” orientation.</p> <p>Organizing the process and responding to non-recurrent requests as a “technical service” rather than involving a full ACOM process, this is where the Secretariat can have a real impact. ACOM should be (and is) informed of all Advice products. If the request is a simple update/is straightforward, a technical service solution should be used.</p> <p>As an illustration, blue whiting. Resources at every level are lacking. One or two experts are relied on, lack of clear understanding of the stock that results in uncertainties, reports are not readily available, lax review processes/standards, etc.</p> <p>More Secretariat staff in post/available, progress good on classic strong areas of ICES (descriptors of state), new area of seabed interactions. Missing social/economics - STECF database not good enough. Easier to achieve when an advisory request has been received.</p> <p>High priority</p>

	Implement the CARA system ; Automate the process of transferring assessment results from the assessment software to the advisory sheets, including standard graphs	1, 4	2		2	Some debate in the subgroup whether it should be 2 or 3. There has been good progress with the standard graphs but nothing else is automated yet. No stocks have used CARA for production of advice.  High priority
	Conduct internal audits of data. Input and assessment results for all advice providing expert groups	4			3	Very variable. Should be given high priority.
3. Improve data collection and use	Coordinate and integrate surveys	1, 2	3	2		Need to redefine the Indicator; effectively linking operational advice needs and survey groups in real-time.  To achieve: all survey data of sufficient quality to answer all requests going forward. Long- term strategic planning is needed for requests to make sure the necessary data are available to answer a special request, and that synergies are identified in order to optimize survey time and resources.
	Develop guidelines for best practice in design and implementation of statistically sound catch sampling schemes	1, 2	4	4		WGCATCH is to take place in November. The impression is that work is on track.  Not directly related to non-recurrent requests because it is a standard process. That said, for its primary purpose, the group sees no issues.
	Identify the data required to provide advice on fisheries and environmental issues and communicate the requirements to those responsible for the collection of data	1, 2, 3, 4	3	4 Mixed fisheries 2 Multi- species	4	3  The communication on data needs occurs via data calls and direct communication of needs to institutes. Secretariat attendance to RCMs and other means. But no definitive list of data requirements exists. An earlier proposal to develop a management strategy evaluation for data needs (such as impact of missing data on assessments and advice) seems useful and could allow the development of better guidelines concerning data needs.



							<p>MIXED-fisheries, i.e. technical interactions, data requirement definitions have made good progress.</p> <p>Multispecies advice has many data requirements that are not currently met. In order to define data requirements, ICES needs to first define what ecosystem type advice we will provide in the future. This will require an iterative dialogue with clients to better determine what clients will ask for and what ICES can deliver.</p> <p>Most data needed has been identified. Greatest need is for knowledge of how to use data rather than just collecting more data. Better use of data by a wider group of experts is needed. Some concern by fisheries scientists that wider data collection may lead to reduction in collection of fisheries data</p> <p>High priority. The data calls for the fisheries dependent data is a good progress. Further work is needed on environmental issues and fisheries independent data.</p>
	Promote efficient and effective data storage through integration of data in regional databases, including making data available for experts through intercatch	1, 2, 3, 4	4	3	2	4	<p>Good progress with promoting the development and use of this database. The subgroup considers this can help improve the quality of the advice as it allows among other things quality checking the data and assessing data gaps at a regional level.</p> <p>The system would benefit from increased focus on data processing.</p> <p>Data availability not restricted to Intercatch but is much wider. Data needs to be made available in a form that is more informative to users. Some issues in relation to data policy and actual data ownership.</p>
4. Develop scope of advice	Provide advice in relation to the changing policy environment. Facilitate transition of a new regime, new data, and ecosystem impacts and fisheries opportunities.	1, 2	4	4			<p>ICES works hard to aware of policy developments and to incorporate into the advice. There is some perception that the ICES system is sometimes not flexible enough to incorporate recent changes not formally requested.</p> <p>This defines much of ICES non-recurrent requests.</p> <p>The Indicator may not be appropriate, but we’re not sure what to use as an indicator.</p>

						ICES should be proactive in anticipating requests, in relation to policy changes, and preparing to respond to such requests.
Further develop/implement methodologies, which entails establishment of indicators and targets for all stocks, including data limited stocks (DLS)	1, 2	4	5			<p>A lot of development in the last two-three years and in autumn 2015 the actual success of this will be known in December.</p> <p>A lot of good work has been done.</p>
Provide advice taking into account technical interactions in each mixed fishery, as well as biological interactions between stocks, such as predation and competition in each ecoregion, per an established schedule, including a link with social and economic aspects when possible.	1, 2	3	4 Mixed fisheries 2 Multi-species			<p>Mixed fisheries advice available for NS and Celtic Sea gadoids, good progress in Iberian waters but there are some problems in making this advice operational.</p> <p>MIXED-fisheries, i.e. technical interactions, have made good progress.</p> <p>Multispecies advice has many data requirements that are not currently met. In order to define data requirements, ICES needs to first define what ecosystem type advice we will provide in the future. This will require an iterative dialogue with clients to better determine what clients will ask for and what ICES can deliver.</p> <p>Social and economic aspects have great scope for growth.</p>
Further develop capacity for provision of advice for emerging human activities in the Arctic - taking into account ecosystem considerations; monitor stock distributions into the Arctic region; data requirements and monitoring needs in the Arctic	2		3			<p>AFWG is the longest-running ICES expert group, and they have recommended expanding the area associated with their work.</p> <p>The Arctic Council is considering how to obtain scientific advice. ICES may play a role in this capacity going forward. All Arctic Council member states are ICES countries.</p> <p>ICES is working with the Arctic Council with regards to data holding.</p> <p>ICES held an IEA workshop on the Arctic together with three of the Arctic Council working groups.</p>

Advisory needs for aquaculture and its environmental aspects	2		5			In the context of the current metrics, success has been achieved. Goals and activities should be outlined going forward.
Integrate considerations of by catch in the advice for fisheries(including elasmobranchs, mammals and seabirds)	2, 3		3	2		<p>Fisheries advice, by ecoregion, was to be published with single stock advice in 2015. It may be published for the Celtic Seas this year, but it remains an ongoing process for the other ICES ecoregions. The ideas are there, but tools are needed to draw the data and information available and into the advice.</p> <p>Some bycatch of fish species (e.g. in industrial fisheries) has been considered, but progress for the PET species not good yet. Note good advice is needed in relation to certification (as well as more statutory requirements). If efforts to integrate at expert group level fail, then ACOM should consider adding directly at the advisory level.</p>
Integrate considerations of impacts of sensitive habitats in the advice for fisheries	2, 3		3	2		<p>ICES provides advice on several of these items (e.g. VMEs), however:</p> <p>Fisheries advice, by ecoregion, was to be published with single stock advice in 2015. It may be published for the Celtic Seas this year, but it remains an ongoing process for the other ICES ecoregions. The ideas are there, but tools are needed to draw the data and information available and into the advice.</p> <p>Offshore (high seas, NEAFC) is better than within fishing limits. May have gone backwards as old format had a paragraph whereas new format does not (so far).</p>
Prepare methodologies and examples of impact assessments of management measures that account for environmental variability and social and economic trade offs	2, 3			1		Some ToRs appear to be being prepared on environmental variability, but social and economic tradeoffs do not seem yet to have been addressed (note the data issues here also)
Include discussion on social and economic analysis needs of	2, 4		1		1	Still relevant to consult clients and stakeholders but should be linked with the SCICOM initiative

users of advice in an ICES Dialogue meeting						
Facilitate transition from single stock benchmarks to regional benchmarks	3			2		Attempting to ensure that Irish Sea benchmark is conducted on regional not single stock basis. Missed opportunities include FLEXIBEST (Barents Sea) and SMS (Baltic Sea). Baltic has reverted to single species MSY ranges
Further develop ecosystem overviews on a regional scale	3			3		ADG scheduled for November. Good progress in Celtic Sea, Bay of Biscay/Iberian peninsula, North Sea. Baltic has stalled. Initial movement in Iceland, Norwegian Sea and Faroes.
Provide advice on Marine Spatial Planning	3			2		Some advice provided in past on management of protected areas, request received from UK (Scotland). Evaluations of activities have occurred for HELCOM sites. Science has been carried out in some areas.
Develop mechanisms for promoting IEU as a basis for ICES advice	3, 4			1	3	Benchmark steering group has considered.  High priority.
In cooperation with Member Countries and regional seas organisations, develop IEA for the Baltic, North Sea and Barents Sea for use in advice provide examples of how IEA can be used in advice	3, 4			2	?	Some work in MSFD area (e.g MSFD demo), but much further work required. Input into HOLAS 2 in Baltic through joint IEA with HELCOM, data provision and commercial fish input in particular. Worked with OSPAR on ecosystem overviews. Co-operation with OSPAR interim assessment (not fully an IEA)  To be integrated with ICES MSFD work.
Further develop the capacity of the ICES community and the stakeholders/policy developers	4				4	

5. Develop process and communication	to facilitate their interaction and dialogue as well as involvement in the advisory process						
	Communicate advisory products to the public	4				4	
	Communicate the advice through meetings with competent authorities and stakeholders	4				4	
	Support existing expert Groups chairs and potential future chairs to ensure they have the necessary skills (e.g. Training etc.)	4				3	Try to do it in connection with the WGCHAIRS