

# MEETING BETWEEN ICES AND RECIPIENTS OF ICES ADVICE (MIRIA)

14–15 January 2020  
ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen, Denmark





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<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.8322>

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# 1 Welcome and opening of the meeting

Participants were welcomed by ACOM Chair, Mark Dickey-Collas. The meeting was attended by representatives from Denmark, Faroe Islands, EU DG ENV, EU DG MARE, France, Iceland, NASCO, NEAFC, Norway, OSPAR, Spain, UK (see Annex 1).

The ICES code of conduct was mentioned but not considered as all participants were expected to represent specific professional interests.

# 2 Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without further amendments (see Annex 2).

# 3 Review

## 3.1 Review of ICES Advisory services in 2019

*An overview of the advice process and the advice provided in 2019 was given (Doc. 03). MIRIA was invited to review the advisory process in 2019 and to discuss any issues and concerns arose since the 2019 MIRIA meeting.*

Recipients were generally pleased with ICES advice in 2019. Several recipients welcomed agreements of MoUs. Concerns were raised about the workload of the ICES Community and Secretariat when reopening advice on fishing opportunities. Some welcomed the decision to hold a Workshop on stakeholder explorations of risk (WKSHEAR). ICES was encouraged to keep considering more mixed fisheries and ecosystem approach issues. After comments made by ICES at the NEAFC annual meeting 2019, it was reaffirmed that ICES is a science organisation whose remit does not cover management decisions.

A review of the advice given in 2019 by ICES included a presentation of the Special Requests process and explained that advice updates happen when the perception of stock changes or when errors are spotted. Only the updates where the headline advice changes are communicated to the recipient(s). Data transmission failures have decreased due to better communication between ICES and data users and data providers. However, issues are still present with VMS and mix fisheries data. Most Expert Groups addressed the Terms of Reference relevant to the 2019 advisory process. The lack of expertise in mix fisheries and MSEs was emphasized as it makes the entire process vulnerable.

### MIRIA response

Concerns were expressed about the lack of recruitment of new experts. ICES replied that a joint effort was required and ICES Council is working on highlighting the importance of training for applied marine science in Europe in order to fill this gap.

The navigability of the ICES web site was criticised. ICES informed MIRIA that the ICES new website is currently being re-designed and will be launched during 2020.

The issue of the reopening of some fishing opportunities advice was raised again as it was viewed by some as a waste of resources and additional burden on experts. ICES commented that it was in ongoing discussions with requesters of advice to find a solution.

## 3.2 Advisory plan

The [ICES advisory plan](#) was presented and MIRIA was invited to comment on the Plan and asked which they perceive as the top priority area for development.



The priorities were perceived by MIRIA as being external (4) or internally oriented (2- highlighting benefits, identifying needs). Unanimously MIRIA agreed that assuring quality was not just a priority but a key foundation, a necessity, for all ICES advice. MIRIA then also highlighted evolving advice and incorporating innovation as their additional priorities. On incorporating innovation integration of outcomes from research projects or further knowledge was suggested, such as the results from the DG MARE annual science seminar. The translation of research into management objectives need attention and this should be a collaborative process between ICES and managers (cross-over to identifying needs). The links between the priority areas was highlighted and encouraged to be further strengthened.

## 4 Advisory plan priority area 1. Assuring Quality

### 4.1 Quality control and assurance of data

*The plans for quality control of ICES housed data was explained to MIRIA. This included progress towards accreditation, TAF, RDBES, quality control of aging and biological sampling, improvement to survey databases. MIRIA was invited to comment.*

The presentation included the development of the Quality Assurance Framework and the application of the FAIR principles across the ICES network. It was explained that current quality assurance works through a number of processes such as: auditing of stock assessments, independent reviewers, ACOM guidelines and data checking within expert groups. The key factors identified going forward were developing a culture and desire within the ICES science community of accountability, responsibility, transparency and reproducibility. The importance of communication was stressed, particularly regarding the weak points in the system. Examples of these quality control points were data validation at point of entry to an ICES database, and national quality control prior to data submission.

In terms of data governance, the importance of maintaining an oversight in the governance of databases and systems across ICES was stressed. There are currently a number of data governance groups within ICES, taking care of the VMS, DATRAS, acoustic, TAF (Transparent Assessment Framework) and SmartDots. The importance of maintaining consistency across the organisation was stressed. PGDATA are currently mapping out a full quality assurance framework. The group has reviewed quality assurance in other domains and identified areas of relevance to ICES. It was announced that the ICES Data Centre was looking for accreditation through core trust seal.

The document repository (maintained by PGDATA) was discussed and it holds a number of workshop reports related to age data, maturity data, and calibration methods, as well as protocol docs for surveys and tools for aging such as SmartDots - a tool to compare age reading across institutes which also allows the production of statistics on bias and precision of aging data.

The Regional DataBase (RDB) and the Regional Data Base Estimation System (RDBES) was presented. The future plan for these would require a major effort by the ICES community to make them operational. The RDBES will be tested on 7 stocks in 2020 and then all stocks in 2021. It was stressed that this will be a big learning curve for the ICES community. ICES was aiming for a unified and streamlined data call.

Finally, the resources within the ICES data centre for the quality assurance work were discussed. It was confirmed that these were in place for TAF, RDBES, DATRAS, the acoustic database and new ways to disseminate advice in the future. These would include further development of the VISA tool, and moving towards interactive publications of the advice, in addition to the current PDF.

### 4.2 Quality assurance of advice

*The plans for quality assurance of the advice process and the associated challenges were explained to MIRIA. MIRIA was invited to comment.*

The presentation was exploratory and partly aspirational. Five key tasks were presented, representing challenges for the advice process. ICES is innovating and at the forefront of quality assurance across the global RFMOs in its use of TAF and the RDBES but there were still challenges, for instance issues surrounding retrospective bias and the provision of mackerel advice.

ICES advice must be based on “best available science” - as globally described in international treaties. The phrase could be found in the MSFD and CFP, similar ideas existed in Norwegian and Icelandic legislation.

The ACOM chair then presented the performance of ICES advice over the last year.

- The number of special requests have been stable over the last three years.
- ICES currently gives MSY or MP advice on 93% of category 1 and 2 stocks.
- Methods have been developed over the last few years for giving MSY advice on the data-limited stocks in category 3-6 stocks.
- In 2019 ICES had to change the headline advice in 2% of stocks (2 issues in 2018 and 2 issues in 2019).
- 28% of category 1 stocks have large retrospective inconsistency.
- 50 stocks are now fully integrated into TAF and 41 partially integrated.

MIRIA was challenged by ICES on how to assure the quality of advice with the need to use best available science, which may well be innovative. A partnership was proposed between ICES, managers and stakeholders, to address this challenge.

#### **MIRIA response to 4.1 and 4.2**

Questions were raised about the two tasks relating to DATRAS (Table 4a). ICES advised that the details of these would be best discussed with the ICES Data Centre. There was support for re-examine the veracity of the data in DATRAS to ensure that it was fit for purpose. ICES commented that the database was fit for purpose when it was being used for stock assessment but now that it is being used for environment and ecosystem work more work is required, with the aim that this time next year there will be some real deliverables.

There was broad discussion about the partnership on quality assurance and best available science. No conclusions were made but discussions will be ongoing, MIRIA stated diverse views.

The issue of retrospective inconsistencies was raised. The workshop on catch forecasts from biased assessments (WKFORBIAS) was discussed. There are options to provide advice making it clear there is a retrospective issue, or alternately the experts would try and resolve the problem through a benchmark or some other process. There are no final decisions on this.

It was mentioned that it was very useful to see the percentage of stocks under MSY or MP and welcomed the decision to look at the data-limited stocks in this context. It was also highlighted that certain parties did not appreciate when precautionary advice replaced MSY advice.

**Action point:** The ACOM chair will begin a dialogue with MIRIA (and MIACO) to develop the partnership on quality assurance and best available science.



## 5 Evolving Advice. Advisory plan priority area 5

### 5.1 Ensuring that advice remains consistent across management objectives

*As fisheries and conservation objectives begin to converge, MIRIA was asked to comment on the growing interaction between management objectives for exploitation of natural resources and biodiversity conservation (species and habitats). MIRIA was asked how ICES could maintain robust and credible advice that is consistent across different management objectives?*

A priority for ICES when providing advice is to remain consistent across different management objectives, different frameworks for advice and different requesters of advice. Using examples from a recent FAO symposium ICES highlighted that there is a recent trend for the convergence between management objectives related to the exploitation of natural resources (food) and biodiversity conservation (species and habitats). Evidence based fisheries management is having a positive effect on fish stocks. Managing under the expectation of variability (not stability) is key to adapting to, for example, climate change induced changes in productivity and/or range shifts of fish stocks. An increase in our understanding of the ecosystem has also allowed us to be aware of the option to keep exploitation at a level that would ensure the functioning of the ecosystem. Given the suite of global initiatives that will impact fisheries from a global (e.g. CBD biodiversity targets, UN BBNJ, climate change and ocean acidification, etc), as well as from a regional perspective (e.g. NEAFC/OSPAR collective arrangement, EU-green deal, EU-CFP MSFD) it is recognized that there may be multiple management objectives and solutions. How to prioritize and choose between ecosystem management and fisheries management options, that have knock-on consequences on other societal objectives, is the job of managers. ICES as a scientific organization can provide as advice the evidence base and/or the likely consequences of the management options. This is increasingly being requested from ICES (e.g. Eastern Baltic cod, and or reviewing multispectral human activities across the EU causing physical disturbance to the seafloor and loss of habitats).

MIRIA was asked to provide their insights to the following questions:

- 1) How do we ensure that advice remains consistent across management objectives?
- 2) How do we embed science on fisheries conservation in the broader biodiversity needs/agendas?
- 3) How do we ensure cooperation with a broader set of players with less sectoral independence/self-determination?

#### MIRIA response

##### 1) How do we ensure that advice remains consistent across management objectives?

It was noted that different requesters of advice will have their own set of management objectives that may thus differ. It may therefore be difficult to be consistent between requesters. A commonality is however that advice to different requesters builds, and can consistently draw from, the same foundation of science that ICES represents.

It was noted by one participant that they are already drafting a request to ICES to reconcile differing management objectives. ICES could provide different scenarios based on different objectives, but this could risk diffusing the message of required advice. Key for ICES is to ensure

transparency as to how they reach a certain advice message, and how ICES integrates across different criteria. A corner stone to this is the underlying data used which needs to be top quality.

Providing advice across a suite of different management objectives may require too many resources. It may be possible to include certain key ecosystem considerations and/or phrases for inclusion in the advice and ensure that the ICES working groups provide evidence behind these required headlines. It was noted that the evolving framework for ecosystem advice was a promising avenue that could help pave the way on how to look at a variety of different pressures at the same time.

It was mentioned that managers are already required to balance many objectives, when making single sectoral (MSY) requests to ICES. There is thus already a degree of optimization/prioritisation between different objectives going on. The relative priority of varying management objectives may be difficult, if for example bycatch is set at a too ambitious level it would require all fishing to be stopped.

There needs to be a balance between what the role and responsibility of managers are, in relation to what ICES can provide as a scientific organization. Managers may require information on what science (ICES) can provide, to ensure that managers can ask the right questions to assist them balancing objectives.

## **2) How do we embed science on fisheries conservation in the broader biodiversity needs/agendas?**

It was noted that some fisheries organizations are taking measures to reduce bycatch and environmental impact.

If UN's CBD process was to increase its MPA targets, a potential question to ICES could be to evaluate what the already existing fisheries conservation measures are doing to meet those targets. It is often overlooked that NEAFC, as a fisheries organization, has implemented for a long while bottom fisheries closures to protect VMEs.

## **3) How do we ensure cooperation with a broader set of players with less sectoral independence/self-determination?**

Multi-use questions should be driven by the requesters asking ICES for advice. Such as, knock-on effects on other users with the increase of offshore energy may displace fishing activity, and also displace bottom fishing to areas that have vulnerable seafloors.

In addition to marine spatial planning, it was recognized that external market forcing such as MSC labelling is also affecting fisheries.

It was noted that on the east coast of Canada the snow crab fishery was taking steps to ensure conservation of the right whale. Management measures that would decrease the risk of whale entanglement were being taken to ensure that the snow crab fishery is not suspended. Similar initiatives are being taken on east coast of the US with the lobster fishery.

It was mentioned that ICES could facilitate the bringing together of different advice requesters with differing objectives to ensure streamlining of scientific advice work.

**It was concluded** that the discussion had been centred on getting advice recipients to open up as to how they as managers prioritize and reconcile between different management objectives. MIRIA participants had noted that ICES's forte in this context is to provide robust quality advice and that one of the important roles of ICES is to listen to the diversity of advice requested and their different management objectives. An important driver of fisheries is the external market forces and that this would challenge ICES's scientists to meet this demand in future advice work.

## 5.2 Engaging with managers and stakeholders through special workshops

*ICES is increasingly using stakeholder workshops to explore knowledge gaps and appropriateness of methods for management, examples include WKIRISH (Workshop on an Ecosystem-based Approach to Fishery Management for the Irish Sea), WKBALT (Benchmark Workshop on Baltic Cod), WKRRMAC (Workshop on a Research Roadmap for Mackerel), deep sea access regulation, WKBALTIC (Workshop on the Ecosystem Based Management of the Baltic Sea) Baltic salmon management plan. MIRIA was asked to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken to engaging with managers and stakeholders through these workshops.*

At the end of a short presentation MIRIA was asked to discuss the two questions (in subgroups):

- How best to balance manager and stakeholder involvement with the potential loss of independence and credibility, real or perceived, in the advisory product?
- How to ensure active and equitable participation / representation from all parties given their different access to resources and expertise – power imbalances?

### MIRIA response

MIRIA mostly suggested how to improve planning and conduct of meetings to ensure maximum engagement and that the initial goals were met.

These included:

- ICES should identify, proactively contact and prioritize key people to attend the meeting and ensure that the attendees have enough experience and expertise to achieve the planned goals for the meeting.
- Prioritisation above should take into account the necessary balance between stakeholders involved taking into consideration all the different views. When this balance cannot be achieved in the plenary, the balance should be attempted when holding sub-group meetings.
- It is of common knowledge that there are discrepancies in resourcing and funding between different stakeholders. To ensure balanced participation independently of these difficulties, video links should be presented as an option whenever possible.
- A key point made by several sub-groups is regarding the role of the Chair in any meeting but with special incidence on multi-stakeholders' meetings. Chairs should ensure that enough discussion time is given to all sides and that no side dominates others regarding time i.e. time should be allocated by factions not by numbers. Acknowledging that this can be a difficult task, experienced Chairs should be sought for more sensitive meetings.
- Some groups pointed out that procedures are already in place and are robust enough and it's just the case of ensuring all parties adhere to it and the chair enforces the procedures when necessary.
- There was some scepticism regarding too much participation from both managers and industry stakeholders and that their participation could be minimized. However, to ensure meaningful participation from stakeholders and managers, forward planning is important and standardizing the meetings is key to ensure that the stakeholders know what to expect and more likely feel they make real contributions.
- Perhaps have a workshop including managers and stakeholders for broad discussion and then this can feed into the Working Group with independent experts. This would allow managers and stakeholders to feed in whilst ensuring the main process and output is scientifically independent.

- There were voices showing concerns about having stakeholders as authors in reports which can raise questions of independence of ICES work. To work around this issue, it was suggested that for certain meeting types, stakeholders should send in written statements in advance so their opinion is not biased by the outcome of the meeting/advice.
- The use of excessive technical language was mentioned several times. In these sorts of meetings, this should be minimized to the essential as it can put people off and make them feel diminished.
- Finally the most consensual suggestion was the importance of the use of external reviewers. This is seen as a must have to ensure credibility and impartiality from ICES meetings and products.

**Action point:** ICES will reflect on all of the above comments and attempt to improve the stakeholder engagement processes. ICES acknowledges that the role of the Expert Group Chair is important and ICES will try to maintain the Chair training course.

## 6 Changes to advice framework in 2020

### 6.1 Bycatch roadmap

*Requesters of advice are expecting greater progress from ICES on the reporting and advising of bycatch in fisheries. ICES is developing a bycatch roadmap to make tangible progress. The draft roadmap, not yet commented/agreed on by ACOM, was presented.*

The draft is currently EU-oriented and it is acknowledged that its scope should be broadened to involve others such as Norway or Iceland.

#### MIRIA response

It was noted that the references to some of the EU Regulations within the roadmap should be further clarified. For example, EU MAP is part of the DCF and thus it is not the replacement for Regulation 812/2004. It may be more accurate to refer to the Technical Measures Regulation (EU 2019/1241) as replacement for the 812/2004. Edits to the draft roadmap document should be made. For example in the following sentence "... Data will be provided through the ICES Regional Database and Estimation System (RDBES) as a result of EU MAP.", should be edited and "as a result of EU MAP" removed since it implies that RDBES is a result of EU MAP and this is not the case.

Questions were asked about any incentives for reporting of bycatch of protected species. For example, in Iceland the fishermen are entitled to keep part of the value of the bycaught specimen. The ICES bycatch roadmap should be made broader and involve non-EU parties.

The roadmap does not mention bycatch of deep-sea sharks.

It was asked whether any mitigation measures were going to be included in the roadmap. MIRIA was informed that ICES-FAO Working Group on Fishing Technology and Fish Behaviour (WGFTFB, one of the WG involved in the ICES bycatch roadmap) had a ToR on this issue.

Participants of MIRIA expressed that they would like to be involved and informed in developments regarding bycatch indicators and thresholds. ICES commented that Maurice Clarke, Ireland, is the person that could act as link.

MIRIA commented the decisions regarding trade-offs between exploitation of resources and bycatch of protected species need to be established. It was also noted that animal health issues are relevant for the bycatch agenda. Bycatch is also of interest for pro-animal welfare groups and that EU legislation required the use of mitigation measures such as pingers that have proved to be successful. Also, routine dialogue between managers and scientists is required, in order to keep bycatch issues in the research agenda to secure delivery of management advice, if requested.

The date of the next data call was requested.

Conclusion was that ICES will develop the roadmap in 2020 with requesters and stakeholders to improve the science to achieve sustainability for protected species.

**Action point:** Once a final draft of the ICES bycatch roadmap is ready it will be passed on to EC representatives who will review the legislation quoted.

## 6.2 Ecosystem advice framework

*The credibility of ICES advice on fisheries is helped by the use of a framework for that advice. This framework also aids transparency of decision making. For a number of years, ICES has been developing a framework for ecosystem advice. Progress on developing this ecosystem advice framework was presented to MIRIA.*

### MIRIA response

MIRIA acknowledged that the process presented reflects the cycle on science-policy-response, that follows a similar path to other organizations (i.e. FAO).. However, there is not a common economic and social objective because all MS and organizations have different objectives and different understanding of environmental issues; it is unlikely that we will have common objectives in the near future. It is necessary to be aware that the ICES advice may be understood and applied according to the different national objectives.

The resources to achieve progress do not rely only on ICES as an organization but on the member countries to bring scientists and knowledge; in the dialogue between those requesting advice, ICES..

The group concluded that ICES is already giving advice to different organizations with different objectives and/or criteria e.g. IUCN for the red list, the OSPAR threatened and declining species list, EU Member States, etc. In addition, ICES did review the criteria for EBSAs; in this revision, ICES commented on the 7 criteria provided although it was thought that only 4 criteria would be needed. The process of creating an ICES Ecosystem framework is vague but iterative.

## 6.3 Ecosystem Overviews

*The current coverage and the future direction for ecosystem overviews was presented to MIRIA and MIRIA was invited to comment.*

The current status, strategic work, and future aims of the ICES Ecosystem, Fisheries and Aquaculture Overviews was presented. The future strategic work for the ecosystem overviews will take place during WKTRASPARENT (Workshop on methods and guidelines to link human activities, pressures and state of the ecosystem in Ecosystem Overviews) in April 2020. The status of both the fisheries and aquaculture overviews were presented.

### **MIRIA response**

It was expressed that the ecosystem overviews should not be stand-alone products but should inform/affect the advice given to requesters. The challenge is to take these products from the overview level to the practical advice level.

There was a question on how the benefits of aquaculture will be quantified in the aquaculture overviews. The ICES expert groups under the Aquaculture Steering Group are looking into “benefits” as the potential socio-economic impacts of aquaculture operations as well as potential benefits of cultured organisms and pollution and water clarity, etc.; trade-offs will also be analyzed.

The inclusion of more information on climate change and cumulative effects was welcomed, as was the move from pdf and into a web-based form with more features.

There was a question regarding the end users of the ecosystem overviews. It was explained that at the moment the secretariat does not have a way of tracking the use of the ecosystem overviews but we know these are used in a broad way, from citations in research papers to use in advisory boards.

The ecosystem overviews and plans for future development were welcomed. It was acknowledged that the real challenge is how to make them more concrete in a way that fits into the practical advice and is useful directly for management. There was a question on how to incorporate the fishing opportunities within the rest of the ecosystem overview framework and ICES replied that this is under discussion with ACOM for future development. Regarding the format for publication, it was expressed that a web-based, interactive product is more desirable over a simple pdf for the aquaculture overviews.

## **6.4 MSY advice**

*The basis of advice for non-target stocks in the EU MAPs will change in 2020, moving from precautionary considerations to MSY targets. This item was for information.*

## **6.5 Working with commercially collected data & stakeholder information**

*ICES has begun developing methods with industry to ensure the quality and consistency of commercially derived data. This links the outputs of WKRRMAC and WKSCINDI (Workshop on Science with Industry Initiatives). It also has clarified how in the short term information from the industry can be brought into assessments and forecasts. MIRIA was invited to comment.*

Recommendations from the two stakeholder workshops were presented. WKSCINDI was interested in improving the flow from industry collection of data to quality assured data provided for use in ICES analyses for advice, and WKRRMAC developed plans for improving the quality and relevance of the advice for mackerel, focussing on improving the advice basis in collaboration with stakeholders.

In addition, changes to the way ICES will handle the 'Stakeholder Information' section of the advice sheets were presented. ICES will request that earlier input is provided to the expert group chairs so that the information can be properly utilised by the expert groups (e.g. in assumptions for forecasts, identify issues/contradictions with the assessment etc.). Statements of position or preference will not be included in advice sheets.

There were no major comments from MIRIA.

## 6.6 Mixed fisheries

*A number of issues relating to mixed fisheries advice arose in 2019. These were presented and MIRIA was invited to comment.*

ICES presented an update on the ICES mixed fisheries advice. The problems were explained of integrating mixed fisheries advice and single stock advice in previous years, and so in 2019 mixed fisheries advice was integrated into the Fisheries Overviews. As the majority of figures in the Fisheries Overviews are produced using the most recent published advice, the overviews cannot be published before the end of November, after the mixed fisheries data come together. This allows time to incorporate the Celtic Seas Nephrops advice and the North Sea reopened stocks. This means that the advice is published late in terms of management decisions. Progress was made last year in streamlining processes and using TAF at the mixed fisheries Working Group. The advice production for the North Sea was very smooth and efficient as a result. However, there were data issues for the Celtic Seas, particularly concerning the format of submitted data from some member states, and little preparatory work was carried out in advance of the meeting in October. In the longer term it is hoped that many of these issues will be solved using data from RDBES. There is a still need to improve the current data call and increase the consistency between the mixed fisheries and single stock advice.

A scoping workshop will be held at the beginning of March that will include stakeholders, managers and experts, and will both present the work that is currently being undertaken by the mixed fisheries community, as well as looking at the timing of current advice and the ways in which we can provide mixed fisheries advice outside of the current Fcube analysis.

### MIRIA response

Some in MIRIA felt that the current timing of the advice was a real difficulty. They felt that mixed fisheries advice was the best way forward to recover some of the stocks, so were happy with the work being undertaken, but were still looking at how to best use this advice. Feedback from policy was that they had had no time to look at the advice properly and use it in 2019. UK and DG MARE confirmed their attendance to the WKMIXFISH workshop.

## 7 Providing advice in 2020

### 7.1 Management plans

*A table of management plans known to ICES was presented and MIRIA was invited to comment and provide their wishes regarding specific management plans being the basis for ICES advice in 2020. Advice requesters were also asked to provide information on any agreed management plans which may not be included in the list.*

The table will also be distributed to advice recipients by email and the receivers will be given a deadline to comment.

### 7.2 ICES Advisory Work-plan 2020

*The meeting was updated with information on the Work-plan for ICES advice and relevant science initiatives in 2020 and was invited to comment on the plan including the timing for release of recurrent advice.*

The performance and functionality of the meeting calendar was discussed.

## 7.3 Benchmark procedure

*MIRIA was reminded of the current procedure for prioritising benchmarks and the ACOM review of benchmarks. MIRIA was invited to comment.*

The current ICES benchmark process was explained and MIRIA were given a status update of the ongoing work to reform ICES benchmarks. It was explained that benchmarks are workshops and as such are open to stakeholders and others who would like to participate. Scheduling of benchmarks is an ICES decision and it is based on scientific need and readiness. In 2019 ICES began using a prioritization scheme as a tool to assist in scheduling. ACOM is currently reviewing the ICES benchmark process, and this work should be concluded in March 2020.

### MIRIA response

It was noted that requesters of advice are not asked to provide input on the prioritization criterion “management importance”. This is not a question put to requesters as ICES is concerned with the scientific quality of their advice in this context. There is no “controversy” criterion in the prioritization scheme. ICES does not accept requests for benchmarks. It will accept requests for MSEs, which may require a benchmark, but this is a science-driven process.

## 8 Any other business

There was no other business communicated prior to MIRIA. The chair asked round the table for issues detected during MIRIA instead. All recipients of advice were satisfied with the meeting, the topics covered and the group work was highlighted as useful.

The following suggestions were made:

- Some of the presentations had too much text and was difficult to follow. Documents should be made available earlier than the week before the meeting to allow attendees time to prepare.
- ICES to include more explorative and innovation items in the meeting agenda.
- To identify stocks for which advice could be given every 2-years or more instead of annually and consider giving advice on that basis. Possible benefits of such approach would be more stability in the advice and a reduced workload for national experts.
- The need to include the management angle on the usefulness of the advice. A comparative analysis of the use of the advice (for example single stock advice vs mixed fisheries advice or Fisheries Overviews) would be a good tool for ICES to identify what works best and how ICES advice is perceived in the wider community.

### NEXT MIRIA meeting

The dates for the 2021 Meeting between ICES and Recipients of ICES Advice (MIRIA) are 12–13 January.



**List of Action points:**

- 4.2 The ACOM chair will begin a dialogue with MIRIA and MIACO to develop the partnership on quality assurance and best available science.
- 5.2 ICES will reflect on all of the above comments and attempt to improve the stakeholder engagement processes. ICES acknowledges that the role of the Expert Group Chair is important and ICES will try to maintain the Chair training course.
- 6.1 Once a final draft of the ICES bycatch roadmap is ready it will be passed on to EC representatives that will review the legislation quoted.

## Annex 1: List of participants

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## Annex 2: Draft agenda

### 1) Welcome and opening of the meeting.

### 2) Adoption of agenda (Doc 02).

Suggested dates for MIRIA 2021 – 12-13 January 2021. *Minutes of MIRIA 2019 in Doc 2b*

### 3) Review

#### a) Review of ICES Advisory services in 2019 (Doc 03a).

*An overview of the advice process and the advice provided in 2019 is given in document 03. A round table will take place.*

*MIRIA is invited to review the advisory process in 2019 and to discuss any issues and concerns arose since the 2019 MIRIA meeting.*

#### b) Advisory plan (Doc 3b)

*The ICES advisory plan will be presented to MIRIA.*

[https://issuu.com/icesdk/docs/ices\\_advisory\\_plan](https://issuu.com/icesdk/docs/ices_advisory_plan)

*MIRIA is invited to comment on the ICES Advisory Plan and asked which they perceive as the top priority area for development.*

### 4) Advisory plan priority area 1. Assuring Quality

#### a) Quality control of data (Doc 4a)

*The plans for quality control of ICES housed data will be explained to MIRIA. This will include progress towards accreditation, TAF, RDBES, quality control of aging and biological sampling, improvement to survey databases.*

*MIRIA is invited to comment.*

#### b) Quality Assurance of advice (Doc 4b)

*The plans for quality assurance of the advice process and the associated challenges will be explained to MIRIA. This will involve presentation of suggested key performance indicators.*

*MIRIA is invited to comment.*

### 5) Evolving Advice. Advisory plan priority area 5

#### a) Ensuring that advice remains consistent across management objectives (presentation only)

*As fisheries and conservation objectives begin to converge, MIRIA will be asked to comment on the growing interaction between management objectives for exploitation of natural resources and biodiversity conservation (species and habitats).*

*MIRIA is asked how ICES could maintain robust and credible advice that is consistent across different management objectives?*

#### b) Engaging with managers and stakeholders through special workshops. (Doc 5b)

*ICES is increasingly using stakeholder workshops to explore knowledge gaps and appropriateness of methods for management, examples include WKIRISH, Baltic cod, WKRRMAC, deep sea access regulation, Baltic mixfish, Baltic salmon management plan.*

*MIRIA is asked to comment on the strengths and weaknesses of the approach taken to engaging with managers and stakeholders through these workshops.*

## **6) Changes to advice framework in 2020**

*A number of operational issues and processes will be presented to MIRIA.*

### **a) Bycatch roadmap (Doc 6a)**

*The regional seas conventions and a number of advice requesters are expecting greater progress from ICES on the reporting and advising of bycatch in fisheries. ICES is developing a bycatch roadmap to make tangible progress. This roadmap will be explained to MIRIA.*

*MIRIA is invited to comment.*

### **b) Ecosystem advice framework (Doc 6b)**

*The credibility of ICES advice on fisheries is helped by the use of a framework for that advice. This framework also aids transparency of decision making. For a number of years, ICES has been developing a framework for ecosystem advice. Progress on developing this ecosystem advice framework will be reported to MIRIA.*

*MIRIA is invited to comment.*

### **c) Ecosystem Overviews (Doc 6c)**

*The current coverage and the future direction for ecosystem overviews will be presented to MIRIA.*

*MIRIA is invited to comment.*

### **d) MSY advice (Doc 6d)**

*The basis of advice for non-target stocks in the EU MAPs will change in 2020, moving from precautionary considerations to MSY targets. This item is for information.*

### **e) Working with commercially collected data & stakeholder information (Doc 6e)**

*ICES has begun developing methods with industry to ensure the quality and consistency of commercially derived data. This links the outputs of WKRRMAC and WKSCINDI. It also has clarified how in the short term information from the industry can be brought into assessments and forecasts.*

*MIRIA is invited to comment.*

### **f) Mixed fisheries (Doc 6f)**

*A number of issues relating to mixed fisheries advice arose in 2019. These will be presented.*

*MIRIA is invited to comment.*

## **7) Providing advice in 2020**

### **a) Management plans. (Doc 7a)**

*A table of management plans known to ICES is presented and MIRIA is invited to provide their wishes regarding specific management plans being the basis for ICES advice in 2019. Advice recipients are also asked to provide information on any agreed management plans which may not be included in the list.*

*MIRIA is invited to comment on agreement.*



**b) ICES Advisory Work-plan 2020 (Doc 7b)**

*The meeting will be updated with information on the Work-plan for ICES advice and relevant science initiatives in 2020.*

*MIRIA is invited to comment on the plan including the timing for release of recurrent advice.*

**c) Benchmark procedure (Doc 7c)**

*The meeting will be reminded of the current procedure for prioritising benchmarks and the ACOM review of benchmarks.*

*MIRIA is invited to comment.*

**8) Any other business.**

*ICES was not notified of any other issues.*

**Proposed timings for MIRIA.****14 January**

13:00	Welcome, agenda, review (1-3)
14:00	Quality Assurance (4)
15:30	Coffee
16:00	Evolving advice (5)
18:00	Reception

**15 January**

09:30	Changes to advice framework in 2020 (6)
10:45	Coffee
11:15	Changes to advice framework in 2020 (6)
11:45	Providing advice (7)
12:55	AOB
13:00	Close