

# ICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPORT 2015

ICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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## Report of the Advisory Committee Consultations (ACOM)

20 September 2015

ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark



ICES

International Council for  
the Exploration of the Sea

CIEM

Conseil International pour  
l'Exploration de la Mer

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## Welcome

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The ACOM Chair, Eskild Kirkegaard, opened the meeting by welcoming all participants, a special welcome was made to Alexandra Silva, Portugal, and Nick Bailey, UK, who both attended an ACOM meeting for the first time. All participants presented themselves in a Tour de Table. The meeting was attended by 17 member countries (see list of participants in Annex 1).

It was emphasized that the ACOM Consultation meeting is not an official meeting and therefore no decisions can be taken at the meeting. Those will be taken afterwards at the ACOM Forum and at the ACOM meeting in December.

The meeting was updated on election of ACOM Vice-Chairs and Chairs that is usually an item for the Consultation meeting. The situation this year is that the contracts for all 3 Vice-Chairs are running out by the end of the year. According to current rules the term can be prolonged for one year. As Council is going to decide on a proposal to change the conditions and length of terms for Vice-Chairs in October there will be no election until Council had made a final decision. Currently John Simmonds has informed the Chair that he wish to end his term, so at least one new chair will be needed. Carmen Fernandez has not yet decided. Mark Tasker would like to stay on as Vice-Chair at least for one more year.

## 1 Adoption of agenda

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The agenda was approved without any modifications.

## 2 Implementation of Advice plan

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ACOM agreed at the December 2014 meeting that the Consultations should be structured around the implementation of the advice plan. To achieve the advice goal of the strategic plan four supporting activities have been defined. ACOM was at this meeting invited to discuss in subgroups the actions and associated performance measures identified in the implementation plan.

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 Annex 3 using the “gut feeling” scoring approach adopted by the Bureau in 2014.

## 3 Review of 2015

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ACOM had a brief discussion of the advisory process in 2015 and noted that advice, with few exceptions, had been delivered in accordance with the workplan and with high quality.

The workload issue was as at previous ACOM meetings identified as the main risk to the advisory work of ICES and should be high on the agenda for the December meeting.

No new issues to be addressed by ACOM at the December meeting were identified.

## 4 Fisheries advice

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ACOM set up a process for creating fisheries advice to respond to our MoUs with clients. WKFAS 2015 did a good job with the resources available. However, participation was poor, with some ecoregions not represented, and not well prepared. The group did develop a template for Fisheries advice and prepared a few examples. General description of the fisheries, catches, gear types, proportion of stocks fished above or below reference points, etc.

A subgroup of ACOM was requested to review the template proposed by WKFAS and to propose possible amendments. The subgroup suggested to move ecosystem impacts of fisheries from the ecosystem advice to fisheries advice.

ACOM agreed on the change proposed by the subgroup and adopted a process to follow up.

Action:

(1) The template proposed by WKFAS including the ecosystem impacts of fisheries should be followed when developing an example of fisheries advice for the Celtic Seas, (2) Secretariat will compile work on existing information for the Celtic Seas ecoregion (3) The draft fisheries advice for the Celtic Sea will be discussed at the December ACOM meeting (4) ACOM will at the December meeting agree on the process for developing the fisheries advice for all eco-regions.

It was suggested that a data call might be needed. Also, preparing the Fisheries Advice beginning of 2016 (before the assessment groups in spring) is not a good timing and it was suggested that a more iterative advice drafting process would be better

## 5 Technical guidelines – Methods and procedures for estimating reference point used in advice on fishing opportunities

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The draft guidelines for fisheries management reference points for category 1 stock (Doc 5) was presented in plenum and an ACOM sub-group was formed to discuss the draft in details was formed to provide comments to the draft. It was agreed to return to the technical guidelines at the December 2015 meeting.

## 6 Advisory workplan for the remainder of 2015

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ACOM was invited to comment on the workplan for the advisory work for the remaining of 2015. Doc 6 was presented by the head of ACOM Support. There were no comments other than the request for an update of the IIIa sole advice needs to be added.

## 7 Advisory workplan for 2016

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ACOM was invited to comment on the draft workplan for 2016. The final workplan will be adopted at the December ACOM meeting.

Document 7a2 (excel file) was presented by the Head of ACOM Support. Dates were still preliminary and no 2016 special requests have been included, so it showed only recurrent advice (and some meetings were still missing). The document will be revised and should be considered as a living document. It was agreed to table the resolutions

on the ACOM forum and to schedule a web conference for approval of the resolutions for 14 October.

### **7.1 Workplan for Advice requested for delivery in 2016 – Expert Groups, Review, Advice drafting and Adoption of Advice**

Doc 7a1 presented an overview of new chairs for approval. All proposed chairs were approved.

### **7.2 Benchmarks 2016**

Document 7b with proposals for benchmarks in 2016 was presented. The proposals were already endorsed by ACOM in December. No news.

A few corrections were identified on the benchmark for 2016 and 2017, because a few stock were wrongly included in the plan for 2016 and 2017.

### **7.3 Benchmarks 2017**

Document 7c with new proposals from WGs for benchmarks was presented. The Benchmark Steering Group was to have a meeting after ASC to look at all proposals and “issue lists” and will try to make sure that right people/resources are available for the different benchmarks. A proposal will then be presented to ACOM in December.

## **8 ACOM workplan**

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The draft ACOM Workplan was presented. The plan list strategic issues to be addressed by ACOM. ACOM found the workplan very useful and it was agreed to use the workplan as a tool in the planning of ACOM’s work on issues in addition to providing advice.

ACOM agreed that all the items listed in the workplan, with the exception on the item on persistent errors in the advice should be addressed at the ACOM December meeting.

## **9 CAWGSAL (Council-ACOM Working Group on Strengthening the Advisory Leadership)**

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First Vice President Cornelius Hammer presented how the CAWGSAL process had progressed since the discussions at the 2014 Annual Science Conference.

The meeting was reminded that the process was initiated to:

- enable the ACOM Chair to fully occupy a strategic leadership role
- be able to task him/her to advance the integration according to the ISP
- enable better communication and cooperation with the Secretariat
- compensate the ACOM Chair better
- compensate the ACOM Vice-Chairs better
- react on the External Review of the Advisory Services and to bring more update assessments into the Secretariat

To accommodate this the ACOM Chair-position was in 2014 upgraded from 50% to 100% with a new job description and located in the ICES Secretariat, the ACOM Chair

would continue to be selected by ACOM and remain fully responsible to ACOM. The Head of Advice changed from a P5 to a P3 position with the new job description to "Head of ACOM Support" (to be renamed as "Head of Advisory Support"), and Vice-Chairs were upgraded from 30% to 38% P5.

CAWGSAL met in January 2015 to make job descriptions for ACOM Chair and Vice-Chairs and Head of ACOM Support and to develop a proposal for the recruitment procedure for the ACOM Chair. The CAWGSAL report was endorsed by Bureau, in June.

ACOM asked for the criteria for the prolongation of the ACOM chair's position. The First Vice-President clarified that the criteria was not established.

It was underlined that one task of the HAS is to negotiate the special request with the clients. ACOM would like to have an overview of all the request.

**ACTION:** all special request will be posted in the ACOM forum, as soon as ICES receives the request.

## 10 ICES – EFARO initiative on data collection

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EFARO is the association of national fisheries and aquaculture research institutes involved in scientific policy support, related to the EC Common Fisheries Policy, the EC Strategy for Aquaculture and the EC Bird and Habitats Directive.

At the EFARO meeting in July the revision of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) was discussed and it was agreed that there is a place for ICES and EFARO to cooperation to streamline surveys and data collection and not wait for the EU to initiate the review of the DCF.

It was proposed to hold a meet in November 2015 at ICES headquarters to develop two regional pilot studies for developing joint data collection plans using vessel surveys. In advance of the meeting a short paper would be drafted as a basis for discussion.

ACOM supported the initiative.

## 11 Provision of automatic data products and services

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Mark Dickey-Collas presented progress on made in the provision of automatic data products and services including

- Automated indices for the MSFD
- Standard graphs and popular advice
- OOPS products
- Ecosystem Overviews
- VMS data products
- Vulnerable marine ecosystem

Activities or products will feed into ICES spatial facility that will serve as bedrock for future integration activities.

Cristina Morgado presented the new Resource Coordination Tool (RCT). The products were well received by ACOM. This system needs to be populated with the expert's

skills to help the secretariat to identify experts and reviewers for various advisory processes. It was highlighted that countries might be reluctant to provide information because of a wrong impression that this will mean availability and commitment.

The ICES General Secretariat explain to ACOM the background on why this system was initiated. In the first phase ICES Delegates asked to coordinate national input to RCT, second phase to be initiated will be to ask individual experts to populate the RCT.

## **12 Conflict of interest. Bureau Statement**

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The statement from the Bureau (Doc 12) was noted.

## **13 AOB**

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The deadline for finalizing expert group reports was brought up. A deadline set for one week after the last meeting day was by some seen as too short. To overcome this it was mentioned that assessments should be prepared ahead of the meeting and that reports should be short.

## **14 Closing**

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The Chair thanked everyone for a good and productive meeting.

## Annex 1 – List of participants

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## Annex 2 – Draft agenda

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### Welcome

- 1) Adoption of agenda (Doc 01).
- 2) Implementation of Advice plan (Doc 2)
 

*ACOM agreed at the December 2014 meeting that the Consultations should be structured around the implementation of the advice plan. To achieve the advice goal of the strategic plan four supporting activities have been defined. ACOM is invited to discuss in sub-groups the actions and associated performance measures identified in the implementation plan.*

*Background information and detailed agenda for the discussion are given in Doc. 2.*
- 3) Review of 2015 (Doc 3).
 

*Doc 3 contains some preliminary observations on the advisory process in 2015. ACOM is invited to discuss the observations with the aim of identifying issues which will require follow up.*
- 4) Fisheries advice (Doc 4).
 

*ACOM is invited to discuss and decide on how we move forward on developing the fisheries advice sections.*
- 5) Technical guidelines - Methods and procedures for estimating reference point used in advice on fishing opportunities (DOC 5).
 

*ACOM established at the December 2014 meeting a subgroup to prepare technical guidelines to be approved by ACOM. The group has not been able to prepare a complete draft and discussions and adoption of the technical guidelines will take place at the December ACOM meeting. However, following discussions earlier this year decisions on how to estimate reference points to be used in advice on fishing opportunities are needed and ACOM is invited to adopt such guidelines.*
- 6) Advisory workplan for the remainder of 2015 (link).
 

*ACOM is invited to comment on the workplan for the advisory work for the remaining of 2015*
- 7) Advisory workplan for 2016
  - a) Workplan for Advice requested for delivery in 2016 – Expert Groups, Review, Advice drafting and Adoption of Advice. (link)
  - b) Benchmarks 2016 (Docs 7b Benchmark overview doc)
  - c) Benchmarks 2017 (Doc 7c)

*The secretariat has prepared a draft wokplan for 2016. ACOM is invited to comment on the draft. The final workplan will be adopted at the December ACOM meeting.*
- 8) ACOM workplan (Doc 8)
 

*Doc 8 contains a draft proposal for a workplan for ACOM. The advisory workplan under item 6 covers work related to producing the requested advice in 2016. The proposed ACOM workplan is an attempt to give an overview of ACOM tasks other than producing advice and includes a short description and timeline for these tasks.*
- 9) CAWGSAL (Council–ACOM Working Group on Strengthening the Advisory Leadership) (Doc 9)
 

*Presentation of CAWGSAL report.*

10) ICES – EFARO initiative on data collection.

*Information on the initiative and the planned meeting in November*

11) Provision of automatic data products and services.

*Mark Dickey-Collas will present progress made in the provision of automatic data products and services including*

- *Automated indices for the MSFD*
- *Standard graphs and popular advice*
- *OOPS products*
- *Ecosystem Overviews*
- *VMS data products*
- *Vulnerable marine ecosystem*

*Cristina Morgado will give a short presentation of RCT*

12) Conflict of interest. Bureau Statement (Doc 12).

13) AOB

14) Closing

## Draft Workplan for ACOM Consultations

### Sunday 20/9

Agenda Item	Hour	Comments
1. Welcome and adoption of agenda	09:00 – 09:15	
11. Provision of automatic data products and services	09:15 – 09:45	Presentations by Mark Dickey-Collas and Cristina Morgado
2. Implementation of advice plan	09:45 – 13:00 14:00 – 15:30	Background information and detailed agenda for the discussion are given in Doc. 2. Plenary
Coffee	11:00 – 11:30	
Lunch	13:00 – 14:00	
3. Review of 2015	15:30 – 16:00	Short presentation of Doc. 03
Coffee	16:00 – 16:30	
4. Fisheries advice	16:30 – 16:45	Presentation, discussion and agreement on next steps.

5. Technical guidelines	16:45 – 17:10	Presentation, discussion and agreement on guidelines for estimating single stock reference points.
6 and 7 Advisory workplans for 2015 and 2016	17:10 – 17:25	Presentation and short discussion.
8. ACOM workplan	17:30 – 18:15	Presentation, discussion and agreement on workplan
9. CAWGSAL	18:15 – 18:35	Presentation of report
10. ICES – EFARO initiative on data collection	18:35 – 18:50	Short presentation
9. AOB		

### Annex 3 – Evaluation of progress on implementation of the Advice Plan.

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 resources and quality assurance	Implement RCT and priorities resource use	1	3				Progress but still needs to be tested
	Further explore and implement, where appropriate multiannual evaluations of management measures (the state of the stock)	1	3				Progress but details are yet to be explored

for the provision of annual advice						
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>

						High priority
	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			<p>WGCATCH is to take place in November. The impression is that work is on track.</p> <p>Not directly related to non-recurrent requests because it is a standard process. That said, for its primary purpose, the group sees no issues.</p>
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	<p>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> <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> <p>ICES should be proactive in anticipating requests, in relation to policy changes, and preparing to respond to such requests.</p>
	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 ac-	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)

count for environmental variability and social and economic trade offs						
Include discussion on social and economic analysis needs of users of advice in an ICES Dialogue meeting	2, 4		1		1	Still relevant to consult clients and stakeholders but should be linked with the SCICOM initiative
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	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)

	Sea for use in advice provide examples of how IEA can be used in advice						To be integrated with ICES MSFD work.
5. Develop process and communication	Further develop the capacity of the ICES community and the stakeholders/policy developers to facilitate their interaction and dialogue as well as involvement in the advisory process	4				4	
	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