

ICES MIRIA REPORT 2016

ICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Report of the Meeting between ICES and Recipients of ICES Advice

12–13 January 2016

ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark



ICES

International Council for
the Exploration of the Sea

CIEM

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l'Exploration de la Mer

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1 Opening of meeting

Participants were welcomed by Eskild Kirkegaard, Chair of ACOM. The importance of the meeting was stressed. New ACOM Vice-Chair Ghislain Chouinard was presented. Ghislain replaces John Simmonds who ended his term by the end of 2015.

A warm welcome was also made by ICES General Secretary Anne Christine Brusen-dorff.

The meeting was attended by representatives from EU, NEAFC, OSPAR, Denmark, the Faroe Islands, France, Iceland and Norway. Apologies were received from NASCO.

See list of participants in Annex 1

2 Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted, see Annex 2.

3 ICES Advisory process 2015 – review

An overview of the advice process and the advice provided in 2015 was given in document 03.

Meeting participants were invited to review the advisory process in 2015 and to discuss any issues and concerns arising since the 2015 MIRIA meeting (see Minutes of the 2015 MIRIA meeting).

Feedback from recipients of the advice:

EU: No comment besides that the received advice was good and satisfactory.

Iceland: Remarks that the advice should be not provided later in time than in 2015. In 2015 it was given already later than in previous years.

Norway: Highlighted that fish stock advice needs to be given according to Management Plans. The evaluation of Barents Sea Fish stocks that is currently being undertaken is of key importance for Norway. It was helpful to have a list of management plans in which ICES bases its advice. Norway underlined that when ICES changes stock definitions it is important that ICES informs the recipients of the changes since these may have implications and add complexity to how the MP are implemented.

OSPAR: Advice and technical services provided by ICES are important for OSPAR as well as the services provided by the Data Centre (particular thanks to the Data Centre). New request formats implemented in 2015 have been helpful for both formulating and discussing how requests will be implemented and also to follow up the processes. Timing is a continuous challenge. One is the need for rapid response from ICES to requests, and a second one is a shift in the time where some of the WGs meet. The OSPAR meeting is in July and if special requests arise during this meeting, it would help if the WG that may need to provide advice to OSPAR on a particular request takes place during the autumn. In 2015 there was increased participation from OSPAR experts in ICES workshops and advice drafting groups. OSPAR stressed that it is important to be copied in into email correspondence between ICES and OSPAR experts. An open dialogue is encouraged, a good example is one error spotted in the 2015 advice and the action taken. Duplicative or overlapping work between ICES and OSPAR needs to be avoided.

NEAFC: ICES provides the basis of the work that NEAFC does as management body. Comments 1) For Deep Sea species it would be helpful to have clear indications of where the actual fisheries take place so NEAFC is able to take action. 2) It is helpful to mention when lack of data is an issue. For example, when ICES advises to minimize bycatch of a certain species it would be important to know which are the fisheries where bycatch occurs and other existing information ICES may hold. In many cases this information is not mentioned because this is unknown but to state that it is unknown is helpful for NEAFC. 3) NEAFC is very happy with the way the advice was presented in the last NEAFC meeting (ACOM chair presented the advice) and wish it will continue in the same way.

France: Pleased. Highlighted the importance of ICES work regarding special requests that are put forward jointly by several countries.

Denmark: Pleased. No further comments.

Faroe: Pleased. No further comments.

Comments from ICES: Regarding the issue raised by Norway on the need for being informed about changes made to stock definitions and distributions ICES will ensure that the recipients are informed.

Regarding the error spotted in the 2015 advice highlighted by OSPAR, the advice needs to be corrected and ICES Secretariat is working on it.

ICES does its best to fit the process to the timeline needed by clients. However, to keep up with the standards in ICES there is a minimum amount of time needed to address requests

4 Dialogue on requests

To ensure that ICES makes optimal use of the scientific expertise available to the advisory process and that ICES' responses to the special requests are relevant and meet the expectations, ICES considers that a dialogue is crucial between the requesters and ICES.

The dialogue is in general good and adequate when the request comes from a single client. However, the dialogue has proven more difficult in situations where more than one client is involved.

ICES therefore asked for input on how to develop a dialogue that can ensure that ICES' responses to special requests are relevant and meet the expectations.

Norway and Iceland: Coastal states' negotiations in pelagic stocks have been difficult and a system to achieve better coastal states' negotiations is needed. This issue will be discussed in a working group in NEAFC. Among other things it will be discussed which country will chair the negotiations or which responsibilities will the chairing country have.

NEAFC: This is already a discussion subject within NEAFC. The Permanent Committee on Management and Science (PECMAS) chairs are the ones that currently request the advice that comes from NEAFC. Requests are afterwards submitted to ICES through NEAFC. NEAFC needs to appoint a clear contact person for each request since the PECMAS chairs may not be the best contact person in all cases. 2015 evaluation report highlighted that it was important to maintain the independence between ICES

and NEAFC and that NEAFC will respond a management body only and will not undertake additional scientific advice. Regular bilateral meetings between NEAFC and ICES are encouraged.

ICES: ICES Secretariat has a template that is used when a request is formulated. A contact person is listed but this does not mean that a good dialogue is established with this contact person..

OSPAR raised the possibility of having the ICES advice presented by the ACOM Leadership on OSPAR committee meetings. OSPAR agreed to provide a list of meetings that would be the most appropriate for advice presentations.

5 Ecosystem overviews

ICES outlined the contents of the ecosystem overviews and the timeline for their finalisation.

The recipients were overall positive to the ecosystem overviews and considered that they would be useful for managers and policy makers. The issue of ensuring a regular update of the overviews was raised.

ICES informed that the aim was to develop a process for automatic annual update of figures and tables containing time series data combined with a review and update process every 3 to 5 years

It was noted that cumulative effects are not addressed in the overviews and ICES was suggested to look into how this could be done.

6 Fisheries overviews

ICES presented the plans for developing fisheries overviews for each of ICES ecoregions.

The initiative was welcomed by the recipients. The EU and Norway questioned the traffic light system as an appropriate way of representing the state of the stocks and levels of exploitation. Norway highlighted that the state of stocks for which management plans have been adopted should be assessed against the management plan reference points and not against ICES MSY reference points.

7 Advice on fishing opportunities

EU comments: There are very old plans that may not be compatible with the MSY approach. If the EU makes an assessment that the plan is not compatible with MSY, the EU disregards the plan(s) and uses an MSY or PA advice from ICES. Regarding a transition to MSY, ICES can provide this upon request from clients.

7.1 Format

ICES implemented in 2015 a new format for the single stock advice sheets. The meeting was invited to provide comments to the format.

It was generally acknowledged that the advice is easier to read with the new format. However, concerns were expressed that information was lost with the change in format. North Sea cod was used as example. In the old format there was information on the sub-stocks in the advice sheet which is not included in the new format.

The traffic lights system to represent state of stock and exploitation was questioned again. The Quality of the Assessment was highlighted as an important section facilitating discussions with scientists on what needs to be done to improve the quality of the advice and to explain the decisions to fishermen.

ICES explained that the change in format was done primarily to reduce workload within the ICES community, to ensure consistency in the advice, to make the advice more readable and to reduce overlap with the fisheries and ecosystem overviews. It is planned that information on the fisheries and ecosystem impacts which was previously provided in the single stock advice sheets will be provided in the fisheries overviews.

7.2 ICES MSY approach

7.2.1 MSY approach for category 3 and 4 stocks

ICES presented the recent developments in assessing the state of category 3 and 4 stocks (stocks without analytical assessments and advice based on trends in stock size indices). ICES is working to develop indices of stock status relative to reference points in response to the EU's request on proxies for stocks in the Western Waters.

The new methods will allow will make it possible to determine stock status relative to proxy MSY reference points.

ICES advice will still be based on the current advice rule for categories 3 and 4, and the new methods will alone be used to determine stock status relative to MSY objectives.

The recipients welcomed the work by ICES to improve the basis for advice for categories 3 and 4 stock and expressed the importance of ICES communicating the uncertainty in the results coming out of applying these new methods. Several of the recipients underlined the importance of using the information on state of stocks active in the advice on fishing opportunities for these stocks.

7.2.2 MSY reference points

In the ICES MSY framework, $MSY B_{trigger}$ corresponds to the lower range of stock size associated with fishing at F_{MSY} . For most stocks, in the absence of data with fishing at F_{MSY} , $MSY B_{trigger}$ has been set at B_{pa} . However, B_{pa} corresponds to a biomass reference point with a low probability of having impaired recruitment. This is generally lower than the lower range of stock size associated with fishing at F_{MSY} .

To make the ICES MSY framework consistent to keep with the objective of achieving maximum sustainable yield ICES will revise the $MSY B_{trigger}$ values to be equal to the 5th percentile of the distribution of SSB when fishing at MSY (F_{MSY}). ICES presented two options for this revision to clients: Option 1: Revise all $MSY B_{trigger}$ values as soon as possible, Option 2: use a transition approach involving progressively move towards a consistent approach to determining $MSY B_{trigger}$ as stocks have been fished at F_{MSY} For a number of years.

The meeting discussed the ICES MSY approach and the use of $MSY B_{trigger}$. It was underlined that ICES will only apply its MSY approach for stocks for which there was no agreed management plan. It was agreed on the need to have $MSY B_{trigger}$ values that are consistent with the MSY objectives. However, the recipients wished more time to consider the issue before expressing preference between the two options. It was therefore agreed that ICES will update $MSY B_{trigger}$ values following option 2 until the clients express wishes for another option.

8 Management plans as basis for ICES advice

A table of management plans known to ICES was presented and recipients were invited to provide their wishes regarding specific management plans being the basis for ICES advice in 2016. Advice recipients were also asked to provide information on any agreed management plans which may not be included in the list.

The recipients welcomed the list and agreed to provide inform ICES on changes to the list.

9 ICES Advisory Work-plan 2016

ICES presented the advisory work-plan for 2016 and showed where the recipients can find the information on ICES website.

10 Any other business

The meeting discussed the timing of MIRIA and agreed to have the next meeting in mid-January 2017.

11 Closing

The chair closed the meeting 12:00 on 13 January.

Annex 1 List of participants

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Annex 2 Draft agenda

Meeting between ICES and Recipients of ICES Advice (MIRIA)

12 January (1 pm) – 13 January (1 pm) 2016

Chair: Eskild Kirkegaard

Draft Agenda

- 1) Opening of meeting
- 2) Adoption of agenda (Doc 02).
- 3) ICES Advisory process 2015 – review (Doc 03).

An overview of the advice process and the advice provided in 2015 is given in document 03.

Meeting participants are invited to review the advisory process in 2015 and to discuss any issues and concerns arising since the 2015 MIRIA meeting (see Minutes of the 2015 MIRIA meeting).

- 4) Dialogue on requests

ICES addressed in 2015 25 special requests and the advisory workplan for 2016 includes by January 2016 already more than 20 special requests.

The special requests are received throughout the year and often with very short deadlines for the response. This poses challenges for ICES in terms of planning and ensuring participation of the required expertise including reviewers.

To ensure that ICES makes optimal use of the scientific expertise available to the advisory process and that ICES' responses to the special requests are relevant and meet the expectations, ICES considers that a dialogue is crucial between the requesters and ICES.

The dialogue is in general good and adequate when the request comes from a single client. However, the dialogue has proven more difficult in situations where more than one client is involved.

ICES would therefore be happy to discuss the issue on how to develop a dialogue that can ensure that ICES' responses to special requests are relevant and meet the expectations.

- 5) Ecosystem overviews.
ICES issued ecosystem overviews for the Barents Sea, Bay of Biscay, Celtic Sea and the North Sea ecoregions earlier in January. ICES will give a short presentation of the overviews and invite the meeting to discuss the overviews, with focus on their intelligibility and level of detail.
- 6) Fisheries overviews.

ICES is in the process of developing fisheries overviews by ecoregion. A draft example for the Celtic Sea will be presented and the meeting is invited to discuss the draft with focus on the information included in the overview and the level of detail.

7) Advice on fishing opportunities

a) Format

ICES implemented in 2015 a new format for the single stock advice sheets. The meeting is invited to provide comments to the format.

b) ICES MSY approach,

i) MSY approach for category 3 and 4 stocks.

ICES is in the process of developing a MSY approach for category 3 and 4 stocks and the approval of the approach is on the agenda for an ACOM Web-conference planned for 2 February. ICES will present the draft approach to MIRIA and the meeting is invited to comment on the draft approach.

ii) MSY reference points.

For long-lived category 1 and 2 stocks, ICES bases its MSY approach on attaining a fishing mortality rate of no more than F_{MSY} while maintaining the stock above B_{lim} with at least 95% probability.

In this approach, ICES uses the fishing mortality and biomass reference points F_{MSY} and MSY $B_{trigger}$.

F_{MSY} is estimated as the fishing mortality with a given fishing pattern and current environmental conditions that gives the long-term maximum yield. To ensure that fishing at F_{MSY} is sustainable, F_{MSY} is not allowed to be above F_{pa} . This is appropriate since a precautionary approach is a necessary boundary to ensure sustainability, even though it is in itself not a sufficient condition for achieving the maximum sustainable yield implied by the MSY framework.

MSY $B_{trigger}$ is considered the lower bound of the stock biomass fluctuation when the stock is exploited with a fishing mortality of F_{MSY} . If the stock gets below MSY $B_{trigger}$ a cautious response is triggered. The cautious response, in cases where the spawning stock falls below MSY $B_{trigger}$, is to reduce fishing mortality to allow a stock to rebuild to levels above MSY $B_{trigger}$.

Determination of MSY $B_{trigger}$ requires contemporary data with fishing at F_{MSY} to identify the normal range of fluctuations in biomass when stocks are fished at this fishing mortality rate. If the observation on fluctuation in biomass is insufficient to estimate MSY $B_{trigger}$, the reference point is normally set at B_{pa} . When sufficient observations of SSB fluctuations associated with fishing around F_{MSY} are available, the MSY $B_{trigger}$ will be estimated to correspond to the lower bound of the range of stock sizes associated with MSY.

A transition process may be desirable when shifting from MSY $B_{trigger}$ being equal to B_{pa} to being estimated as the lower bound of stock biomass associated with MSY.

ICES will present the reference points and a proposal for a transition process. The meeting is invited to discuss the ICES definition of MSY Btrigger and the proposed transition process.

8) Management plans as basis for ICES advice.

A table of management plans known to ICES is presented and advice recipients are invited to provide their wishes regarding specific management plans being the basis for ICES advice in 2016. Advice recipients are also asked to provide information on any agreed management plans which may not be included in the list.

9) ICES Advisory Work-plan 2016.

The meeting will be updated with information on the Work-plan for ICES advice in 2016, and invited to discuss issues of timing, transparency, and quality assurance.

10) Any other business.

The meeting will be invited to discuss any other issues as raised by the Advice Recipients.
