MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE (ACOM)

8–10 September 2020
Online meeting

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Structure of the meeting

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic the 2020 ICES Annual Science Conference was cancelled and the September ACOM consultations took place through remote means (WebEx). The Chair informed at the beginning of the meeting that this meeting of ACOM would count as a full ACOM meeting with the ability to make decisions.

Two plenary sessions occurred (8 and 10 September) and ACOM met in breakout groups on 9 September. The first plenary session was comprised of points of information and setting the objectives for the breakout groups. The second plenary was focused on decision and actions coming from the breakout groups. Core members of the breakout groups were be briefed before the meeting.

1 Welcome, code of conduct, review of action points from March 2020 and review of membership

The agenda was adopted via the ACOM forum beforehand. ACOM was invited to review and update the ACOM membership list and changes reported to the Secretariat.

ACOM reflected on the code of conduct. The list of action points from ACOM March 2020 was reviewed.

The meeting was attended by 19 member countries, the Greenland observer, FRSG and SCICOM Chairs (see List of participants in Annex 1). A special welcome was given to new ACOM members Marie-Julie Roux, Canada, and Jonathan White, Ireland, and they were both asked to present themselves.

After a presentation of all participants the structure and the agenda (see Annex 2), which had been adopted at the ACOM Forum prior to the meetings, were presented by the Chair. Decisions made in March and actions from the March meeting were presented. All actions had been taken.

Decisions

1.1 ACOM confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest.

1.2 The time table for the meeting was approved.

2 Experience of producing advice during the COVID-19 pandemic

The ACOM leadership presented a document on experiences from the network and the provision of advice in 2020.

ACOM was invited to comment and provide suggestions on the format to be used for the advice produced in 2021 in the event that there is resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic and agree on actions

Document 02 described the impact of the covid-19 pandemic on ICES advice. During the spring advice season operational problems were solved by dealing with day to day advice, and no strategic issues were encountered. Decision-making was enacted by a smaller pool of individuals, mostly ACOM leadership, making it difficult to sense the mood of ACOM. It was difficult to get new experts involved, making it harder to nurture talent/diversity, and to create a community of experts. Feedback on the spring advice from the requestors is expected. Observers and experts had in part negative feedback regarding the missing parts of the abbreviated sheets, such as the "stakeholder information". The totally remote Advice Drafting Groups (ADG) highlighted a number of issues, including non-active participation, changing membership, and a lack of in depth discussions. Fisheries advice ADG and non-fisheries advice ADG have different needs making a "one-fit-all" online ADG format challenging.

ACOM was invited to discuss and comment on the spring advice approach and the future of online ADGs. There was no final agreement on the efficiency of online ADGs with some ACOM members doubting the quality of the work, commenting on the difficulty to hold online meetings within different time zones, the challenges of holding demanding ADGs (such as the bycatch advice) online, and the decreasing community feeling due to the loss of social interactions. Other ACOM members expressed a preference to online or hybrid ADGs. It remains to be seen whether national institutes will support the online/hybrid format due to economic and environmental reasons. It was agreed that the success of online/hybrid meetings depends on the confidence of the chair to deliver the products and the technical support. The ACOM leadership informed ACOM that the ICES Council is directing funds toward training of hybrid meeting chairing.

ACOM was invited to comment on the format of the spring advice. It was agreed that for 2020 the abbreviated sheets were a good compromise and that feedback from advice requestors is needed in order to assess this advice format. ACOM noted that stakeholder information, management information and quality of the assessment were the most important omitted parts in the abbreviated sheets. It was agreed that a dialogue with the requestors is needed and different requestors might have varying needs.

The issue of stakeholder information was discussed and ACOM supported the creation of a template for the submission of stakeholder information. This should be developed iteratively with the stakeholders.

To date ACOM had not received feedback from requesters on the abbreviated advice sheets for fishing opportunities advice. There was agreement that scrutiny by ADGs was reduced by not included quality of the assessment considerations.

Summing up, it was noted that the feedback from the advice requestors on the spring advice is needed. A subgroup will be formed to look into the format of the advice sheets and report back to ACOM. ACOM will continue discussing the possibilities of online/hybrid meetings for ADGs in 2021.

Decisions

2.1 An ACOM subgroup will look into the format of the advice, based on a dialogue with the requestors (facilitated by advice support), and create a consensus proposal for the format of the advice sheets for fishing opportunities in 2021. Members of this subgroup are Alain Biseau, Bjarte Bogstad, Els Torreele, Jonathan White, Kiersten Curti, Massimiliano Cardinale, Morten Vinther. The group will report by 20 November.

2.2 Postpone decision on nature of ADGs in 2021, until subgroup reports to ACOM on format of advice.

Actions

2.1 Advice support will approach all requesters of fishing opportunities advice for feedback on the approach taken in 2020, with specific reference to abbreviated advice sheets, requesting a response by beginning November 2020.

2.2 ACOM leadership to create a draft template for stakeholder information, and develop it further after feedback from the stakeholders. This should be completed by beginning of December 2020.

3 Ecosystem framework and Introduction to the Advice

Progress made by the ACOM subgroup on both the ecosystem framework and its integration into the Introduction to the advice was reported to ACOM. This was supported by a second document on the lessons learnt from the bycatch emergency measures advice.

ACOM was invited to comment and asked to support further development of the framework, changing the Introduction of the Advice into a Guide to Advice.

A proposal to postpone the planned dialogue meeting was also made.

ACOM Leadership presented progress on the proposal for the ICES ecosystem framework within the overall structure of the 'Introduction to Advice' document. The ACOM leadership and subgroup proposal was to reform the introduction of the advice and create a "Guide to ICES advice" based on 10 principles to apply across the 4 stages of the advice process (request formulation, knowledge synthesis, peer review and advice production). The frameworks for specific advice would then follow this guide (e.g. fishing opportunities advice and ecosystem advice etc.).

ACOM was invited to comment. The overall response was positive and ACOM acknowledged the progress in the structure, clarity of the message and alignment with ICES advisory plan and advice process.

During the meeting the guide and the principles were further adapted to deal with concerns from ACOM:

- no mention in the document to the procedures when consensus is not reached.
- a lack of balance in the development of methods between fish and environment advice.
- further clarification of principle 3 on goals and objectives.
- Further clarification of principle 5 on the use of peer-reviewed methods.
- A clarification of the use of the term lobby in principle 10.

The principles were further discussed on the forum. The principles will be integrated into the guide to advice as described in document 03a. The final agreed principles are listed in Annex 3.

These principles are designed to ensure that advice from ICES remains relevant, credible and resilient to the complexities of ecosystem based management. Advice is provided in response to requests for advice from governments and intergovernmental organisations. The 10 principles will maintain ICES as the pre-eminent provider of independent evidence for societal decision-making to deliver marine conservation, management and sustainability goals in the Northeast Atlantic.

Decisions

3.1 The approach to the Guide to ICES advice described in document 3a and the 10 principles (Annex 3) were adopted by ACOM

3.2 The Guide to ICES advice will be updated every year and published in early January each year.

3.3 The planned dialogue meeting (February 2021 in Brussels) on the ecosystem advice framework will be postponed.

Action:

3.1 The Guide to ICES advice will be presented to ACOM on the forum for approval in December 2020, in readiness for publication in January 2021. This will be finalised by the ACOM leadership.

4 Report of the Benchmark Oversight Group, BOG

The BOG reported on initial activities, the status of benchmarks planned for 2021, and the BOG's proposed work plan for 2020/2021. ACOM was invited to comment and to agree on actions, including a discussion and decision on the recommendation from BOG on how to make the March 2020 decision operational:

ACOM leadership presented Doc 04a. ACOM was supportive of the BOG's proposal for work, however, ACOM requested that more focus is needed to prioritize key objectives that can be reasonably accomplished in 2020/2021.

ACOM highlighted the issue of stopping a substandard benchmark and the importance of planning. It discussed what was meant by "toolbox" in the documents – the authors meant toolbox in the context of guidance.

ACOM acknowledged while very ambitious, it approved all of the recommendations in the BOG report.

Decisions:

4.1 The BOG should focus on the following during the next 12 months:
Developing a benchmark planning checklist with key decision objectives set against a timeline that is general, yet stock-specific. This will assist stock assessors, benchmark leadership, and ACOM in taking decisions on whether benchmark work is sufficiently prepared and advanced to continue with the benchmark process.
Developing a category 1 assessment guidelines for benchmarks that includes such things as model diagnostics that should be checked or met for an assessment to be accepted. This should include work by the BOG to explore and develop a possible "ensemble model" approach for fish stock assessment benchmarks.
Developing a reviewer's checklist that clearly explains expectations for benchmarks. This checklist would also be used for the Benchmark Oversight Group in a summary of completed benchmarks for review by ACOM.
Expanding the scope of ICES benchmarks beyond fish stock assessment.

4.2	ACOM should review and approve completed benchmarks and recommend remedial actions at the March consultations.
4.3	Approve the list of benchmarks proposed by the BOG for 2021-2022 benchmark season.

5 Consistent approach to changing productivity in fisheries advice

ACOM was invited to comment, and an intersessional subgroup was set up to address a number of issues on reference points, and incorporation of changed perceptions of ecosystem productivity in advice:

- *The implementation of conclusions from WKIRISH*
- *A consistent ACOM approach to characterise changes in productivity regimes and the implications for advice (e.g. Iberian sardine, western Baltic SS herring). This could include analytical tools to identify changes.*
- *The sustainability of our approach to multispecies models and the incorporation of new key runs of multispecies models into advice (estimates of M)*

ACOM leadership presented Doc 05, detailing the points above. In addition to these, other relevant recent developments include the Workshop of Fisheries Management Reference Points in a Changing Environment (WKRPchange; to be held in Sep 2020), recommendations from WKREBUILD on biomass reference points, the ongoing MSY project (with a publication in prep), and also various new scientific papers calling for e.g. accounting of density dependence in reference point estimation. There are multi-dimensional issues with incorporating ecosystem productivity changes into our advice, and any changes need to fit in with the ICES advisory framework (particularly the Precautionary Approach).

An ACOM subgroup was established to review the above findings and provide potential mechanisms to either apply the approaches in the advice framework or to highlight the approach to requesters of advice. A number of volunteers registered interest in participating. The subgroup will report back to the ACOM meeting in March 2021. The subgroup could potentially also propose a TOR for the Methods Working Group (WGMG) to look at the regime shift analyses used in the Iberian sardine MSE (and other examples) and to make recommendations on how this could be handled consistently in future.

ACOM were invited to comment. This was considered important work, connected with benchmark process, advice framework, ensemble approach (e.g. some models in the ensemble could look at productivity factors) etc. Assessment and forecast assumptions that the environment is constant or randomly varying are becoming less and less appropriate. There is also a need to examine alternative scenarios for directional change in productivity (i.e. climate change).

Regarding the regime shifts, it was noted that diadromous species should be considered as well e.g. there is a lot of literature on regime shifts for salmon in the North Atlantic. It was also noted that when trying to find evidence of regime shifts for single stock management, broader ecosystem indicators (as used in WKIRISH) and stock indicators beyond observed changes in recruitment should also be examined. There was some concern from ACOM about trying to be too prescriptive in the guidelines for identifying regime shifts. Some felt the ICES system is often too rigid (e.g. reference point guidelines). Particularly for regime changes, it would be difficult to tie down strict guidelines (many around the globe have been trying for a while and have not yet come up with something solid that performs consistently across stocks and regions). Rigidity

could impede development, and could be removed as long as benchmark review processes are thorough enough to evaluate proposed (novel) methods. However, benchmarks would then need to include expertise beyond stock assessment modelling.

Regarding multispecies estimates of M, ACOM noted that updates in these need to be watched very closely, as the impacts of different stock assessments can be unexpected. The level of review is important, and it may be necessary to have another level of independent review from beyond WGSAM.

The terms of reference for the subgroup were adapted and approved during plenary on Thursday afternoon (see Annex 4).

Decision:

5.1 Intersessional subgroup was established (see Annex 4) with the following membership Colm Lordan, Marie-Julie Roux, Fatima Borges, Pieter-Jan Schön, Max Cardinale, Kiersten Curti. To report by 1 March 2021.

6 Stakeholder engagement

In 2019, progress was made in working with stakeholder (e.g. WKSCINDI and WKRRMAC) but a number of challenges still remain in how ICES works with stakeholders. An analysis of stakeholder engagement was prepared as a resource for a workshop.

ACOM was invited to comment, and approve a resolution for a workshop on ICES and stakeholder engagement. Potential ToRs are given in Annex 5.

A presentation to introduce the gaps and issues ICES is facing regarding its stakeholder engagement and provided a way forward and described associated risks. The main deficiencies pointed were:

- the unstructured manner stakeholder engagement as evolved,
- the lack of objectives for engagement and overarching strategy and,
- the stated aim for a deeper commitment and wider engagement by ICES.

A position paper (Doc 6) was made available with to stimulate discussion within ACOM and SCICOM. Also a draft list of principals of engagement was presented as well as the ToR for WKSHOES (Annex 5).

ACOM was invited to comment and comment on a resolution for Workshop on stakeholder engagement strategy (WKSHOES) as well as to comment on the proposed principles for engagement. ACOM widely recognized the importance of the work done so far on this subject and in preparation of the proposed workshop. ACOM has high expectations for the upcoming workshop and hopefully it will bring clarity to the term stakeholder and to all the different roles stakeholders have within ICES. The discussion that WKSHOES will bring is timely and hopefully will avoid the lengthy recurrent discussions about stakeholder involvement that tend to occur at different levels within ICES. Also noted, was the fact that that different approaches are needed when engaging at different levels of the hierarchical chain within stakeholders organizations as it is very different an interaction with the "people on the ground" and those at the top.

ACOM also raised questions regarding the nature of participation for WKSHOES; will the workshop be open to all? Some reservations were put forward regarding stakeholders presence while

developing a stakeholder's engagement strategy. These concerns were addressed by ACOM leadership, reassuring ACOM that the intention is to use the workshop to agree on general principles that later will be used in the development of the strategy itself. Furthermore, the strategy document is to be drafted outside the workshop and without the stakeholders participation ensuring ICES is in control of the strategy while taking into account stakeholders views and concerns.

The final approval of the resolution for WKSHOES is a joint ACOM and SCICOM decision, so the resolution will be posted for consideration on the joint forum.

Action:

6.1 The final resolution will be placed on the joint ACOM and SCICOM forum for formal approval.

7 Progress on and commitments to overviews and viewpoints

A synopsis of progress on delivery and proposals for further development of ecosystem, fisheries and aquaculture overviews, and viewpoints was presented. The allocation of leads for overviews was reviewed and re-confirmed by ACOM. ACOM was updated on WKTRANSPARENT.

ACOM was invited to comment, agree on actions, and take decisions as appropriate.

The plans for 2020/2021 Ecosystem Overviews, Fisheries Overviews and viewpoints were presented. There are two new Ecosystem Overviews and four new Fisheries Overviews in the pipeline. WKTRANSPARENT will be held in 2020 to further work on the methods and improve guidelines to link human activities, pressures and state of the ecosystem, and to include ecosystem processes and functions into Ecosystem Overviews. To further advance Fisheries Overviews, an ACOM subgroup on Fisheries Overviews is proposed to arrange a dedicated workshop in early 2021. The first Aquaculture Overview is planned to be published in 2021 for the Norwegian Sea ecoregion. Based on the stakeholder survey, the expected contents list of Aquaculture Overviews, composed of 10 topics, was presented and discussed.

The second ICES viewpoint, on ship scrubbers, will be published in 2020. Two further viewpoints are planned in 2021, on emerging diseases and pathogens, and biological effects of contaminants. The viewpoint on "future fish production in the Arctic" was cancelled due to lack of response by the lead expert.

ACOM members were asked to comment and discuss the following issues:

1) ACOM to reconfirm the allocation of leads for the different Fisheries and Ecosystems overviews. The leads were agreed, except for the Faroes (since the ACOM meeting, contact was taken up with the Faroes ACOM observer and it was agreed to postpone the production of both the Fisheries and Ecosystem Overviews until 2021). Mario Rui Pinho should be added as co-lead for the Azorean Fisheries Overviews.
2) ACOM to discuss and agree the proposed Workshop on Fisheries Overviews (WKFO) for subsequent agreement on the Resolutions Forum. There was generic agreement to arrange WKFO in 2021. Further details on the planning will be provided to ACOM via the forum.

3) ACOM to discuss and agree i) the expected contents of Aquaculture Overviews, and ii) a timeline proposal for the production of the Norwegian Sea Aquaculture Overview. Many issues were raised about the Aquaculture Overviews. ACOM asked whether the proposed content (10 different topics) applied to all overviews or only to the planned Norwegian Sea Aquaculture Overview. The 10 topics were planned for all overviews. These were derived from the stakeholder and requester survey. ACOM commented that the data sources for the current proposed "table of contents" were difficult to determine.

   Questions were raised regarding section 9 (Cross-sectorial interactions and trade-offs). Will this section relate to trade-offs in general in a given ecoregion or will the trade-offs and interactions be prioritized (similarly to what is done with the main 5 pressures in the EOs)? The leadership clarified that section 9 refers to the contents under section 6 (Ecosystem/environment interactions), 7 (Economic context, costs and benefits), and 8 (Social context, costs and benefits). The first aquaculture overview will be for the Norwegian Sea ecoregion where data and knowledge are most readily available.

   Concern was raised about subjects 7 (Economic context, costs and benefits), 8 (Social context, costs and benefits) and 9 (Cross-sectorial interactions and trade-offs). These subjects have national political implications (e.g. Norway, Iceland) and ICES may not want to be put in that position. On the other hand ICES has excellent competence in other suggested areas such as section 6 (Ecosystem/environment interactions) that may benefit from be structured in subsections.

The aquaculture core group will come back to ACOM in October, via the Forum, with an updated Aquaculture Overview outline based on the discussions with ACOM

The timeline to produce the first aquaculture overview by the end of 2021 was agreed.

Decision:

7.1 Agree time-line of the production of the first Aquaculture Overview, to be published in 2021, as described in document 07.

Action points:

7.1 Prepare draft resolution for WKFO and post to the Resolutions Forum for approval.

7.2 ACOM needs to engage further with the observers from the Faroes (Note: this has been done).

7.3 Add Mario Rui Pinho as a lead author for the Azorean Fisheries Overview.

7.4 Prepare a document on Aquaculture Overviews, which should include i) background and rationale, ii) objectives, iii) contents, and iv) the process of production, review and approval for posting to ACOM Forum. Lead by ACOM leadership

Agenda items 8, 9, 10 and 11 were addressed in break out groups and then discussed in plenary.

8 Moving to widespread use of TAF – benefits, challenges and next steps

At March 2020 ACOM frustration was voiced about the failure to reform the modus operandi and reporting of working groups. A number of expert groups are now using the Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF), and some are also using R markdown scripts (and GitHub) to compile their reporting but then transfer these reports into word documents. This is very ineffective and inefficient. Experts are becoming increasingly frustrated by the failure of our reporting system to adapt.

ACOM needs to encourage the expert groups to move to full usage of TAF. The working documents proposes that in 2021 at least two major stocks per expert group completely use TAF. This breakout group should also consider whether ACOM should enable innovations for reporting from expert groups, or for ACOM to impose expectations for reporting.

ACOM was invited to comment on Doc 08 and breakout group considerations, agree on actions, and take decisions as appropriate.

The challenge of getting TAF implemented can be that the more 'traditional experts' who do not want to change from current practise (e.g. using excel spreadsheets) are reluctant to change practices. Thus ACOM must guide people through so trust is built into the transfer to TAF.

A demonstration workshop of TAF for ACOM is suggested and further to this, the ADGs will be instructed to the location of TAF objects are and given access.

A combined approach applying a top-down (ACOM lead) and bottom-up process (expert group initiated) to increase the use of TAF by the ICES EGs. A short process is recommended, kept rather simple and able to be revisited in a year with a mid-term evaluation in March 2021 ACOM meeting. ACOM members are asked to 'recruit' national experts who have the R-knowledge to write R packages for reporting. Use the benchmark to get stocks into TAF and the training workshops combined with sharing experience workshops. These workshops could be a good kick-start, to get people with an opinion in the room, it would not aim straight into technicalities.

The subgroup suggests a 'UTAF (ultra-transparent assessment framework)' workshop; this is a 2nd workshop for end users on how to use TAF as a step later in the process.

Figure 8.1 Timeline for the process

Road map to wide spread the use of TAF – start short term

When	What	Who
ACOM September 2020	Proposal for scoping workshop	Breakout group
	Agree on scoping TAF WK	ACOM
7th October 2020 K	ToRs Scoping scoping TAF WK	Breakout group and approval by ACOM
December 2020 (exact date to determine)	Scoping TAF WK – draft ToR (not limited) - share experience and convince people to start using TAF and change to different report - develop a template (not technical) - create a list of requirements of procedures within expert groups that could be improved in order to save time (i.e. for the reporting) - define and describe what is required for an assessment, create project plan, get working examples.	ICES, TAF users, non-TAF users, ADG, ACOM, expert groups, planned BM stock coordinators, others?
End December 2020	Output of WK: review and approval of outcome	ACOM
15th January 2021	Call on Rexperts from institutes – use output of WK	ACOM
31st January 2021	Feedback from the institutes, formal start of an ISSG to start writing the R-scripts	ICES secretariat/ICES Data centre/ACOM?
ACOM March meeting	First evaluation of process started	ICES Secretariat & data centre/ACOM

In terms of the validation of data audits and model scripts/documentation of scripts it is the general impression and an over all process of validation and quality checks is in place, however, there is no process implemented on stock by stock basis. Thus there is a need to have that formalized (e.g. tick-off by reviewer and chair). This should be further elaborated by the BOG; in particular the following:

- Formal code audit
- Potential for automated process for style guide (linting (i.e. using a program to analyse code for potential errors)), checking results
- Github version control in the script, but also comparison option for both code and input/output data
- No change in model design allowed between years. And if so, need to be properly documented and motivated by the stock coordinator and/or EWG
- Standardized reports on quality, e.g. from the RDB/RDBES

- Training need for audit performance is needed for ICES experts in order for non-R-experts can use the scripts for auditing also.

ACOM thanked the breakout group for their considerations and recommendations.

Decision:

8.1 The suggested process for TAF development and reporting approaches (Figure 8.1) was approved by ACOM.

8.2 Approve the approach described above for validating data audits and model script in TAF

Actions:

8.1 ACOM Leadership, the Secretariat and the subgroup will take the lead initiate the process described in Figure 8.1 for the operational implementation and reporting of TAF stock assessments.

8.2 A training course for ACOM in basic TAF principles and its utility to be held before April 2021, ICES secretariat.

8.3 ADG members to been given access to TAF folders and objects, ICES secretariat

9 Fishing opportunities advice framework for 2021

ACOM agreed that the framework for fishing opportunities advice for 2021 would be available by end December 2020. [this should include elements from WKLIFE, WKREBUILD, WKFORBIAS, MSE guidelines, WKMSE3, reopening advice, catch-survivability-discards (including Nephrops, elasmobranches), Fp05, approach for salmon, and the precautionary buffer].

Also to address the following issues for the advice sheets:

1) *standard graphs and summary of the assessment:*
   a) *landings/discards in summary of assessment different than other tables because of reporting of SOPs*
   b) *recruitment estimates in summary and graphs vs geometric mean used in projections,*
2) *wide differences in level of details in description of inputs to projections (table 2)*
3) *stock status defined using proxy reference points that are not consistent (e.g. LBI) with the index used to provide advice.*
4) *stock status in relation to management plans (concerns of Norway and Iceland)*

ACOM was invited to comment, agree on actions, and take decisions as appropriate.

9.1 Fisheries advice framework

Fpa and Fp0.5

In March 2020, ACOM decided rebrand Fp.05 as Fpa. For stocks where Fp.05 cannot be estimated the current Fpa method can be used (decision 4.4.1).

It was concluded that Fpa should be replaced by Fp0.5 if it was available from the most recent benchmark from which the current FMSY value was derived. If unavailable, the EG will be en-

couraged to calculate new reference points and this would be reviewed by independent reviewers. If not possible, a benchmark or IBP will be required. Once a value of Fp.05 was agreed, this would replace the Fpa in the advice, and there should be a comment in the advice sheet explaining it had been replaced. An update to the stock annex would also be needed.

Decision:

9.1 Agree a process for replacing Fpa value with Fp.05 value as Fpa.

Action:

9.1 Guidance to be written by ACOM leadership as to its use by January 2021.

WKFORBIAS decision tree

A decision tree is ready to use from WKFORBIAS. It was not clear to the subgroup which stocks and expert groups followed the decision tree for the 2020 advice year. An ACOM member volunteered to go through the ADG minutes and report back to ACOM, who will make a recommendation about using the tree for the 2021 advice season.

Action:

9.2 ACOM member to report back to ACOM concerning use of the WKFORBIAS decision tree in 2020. (Alain Biseau to report by October 2020)

Baltic Salmon framework

The current framework on providing Baltic salmon was presented. It was felt that there was currently a mismatch between the stock specific targets and the objectives of the draft multiannual plan (which is MSY). There are also currently differences between the North Atlantic and Baltic salmon frameworks. PA advice for Baltic stocks was applied in 2020, and in the absence of an updated assessment, the same advice as last year was issued. There were specifically problems with different stocks in individual river systems, which might be in poor status while the overall stock complex meets the reference points.

There was agreement that any new proposals need dialogue with clients and a feeling for their priorities prior to the 2021 advice season. The secretariat were tasked to speak with DGMARE in October. It was agreed that it was unlikely a benchmark will happen before the advice is given in 2021. The possibility of giving individual stock advice by river rather than a stock complex advice was discussed.

It was agreed by ACOM that the dialogue must state that we could provide MSY advice for the rivers included in the model and PA advice for the others on the basis of a PFA index, on a river by river basis. An advice for the mixed stock fishery at sea would not be possible due to the unpredictable and uncontrollable nature of the mixture. An ACOM vice-chair stated that there would need to be a framework to provide advice next year. The new reference points being proposed suggest that most rivers can have a commercial fishery that could maintain the stock above Blim with a 50% probability but not 95% probability.

At the recent BALTFISH forum the EC had announced their withdrawal from the previous proposed management plan.

Action:

9.3 Communicate to DGMARE that MSY advice for rivers included in the current model can be provided, and PA advice for the others on a river by river basis. No advice for the mixed fishery stock at sea can be provided. A framework for providing consistent advice is needed. Secretariat to open a dialogue in October with requesters to discuss what is likely to be required in the new proposed management plan.

WKREBUILD

Regarding the implementation of WKREBUILD, it was felt that there was no room for it in the current framework unless we change the framework (that is, closing fisheries when biomass is less than Blim). The possibility of giving an additional advice on rebuilding plans was discussed. It was agreed managers seem to like this, as seen in the extra work on the zero advice stocks, but there would need to be some discussion on the format of this additional advice.

It was felt that there was a need to speed up the process of developing and implementing a recovery plan, but that this was not ready to be implemented fully yet. It was concluded that the whole topic needs more discussion and that progress in 2021 would be expected. WKREBUILD 2 could provide input to ACOM in March 2021, using 2-3 stocks as test cases where multiple options were explored.

It was discussed by ACOM that a proposed workshop from the WKREBUILD – WKREF - could be more generic than just considering rebuilding plans, although the format of this was questioned by an ACOM member. A workshop on the category 3-6 stocks was considered and felt appropriate to schedule for 2022.

It was discussed if it might be beneficial to give the second WKREBUILD guidance from ACOM, such as in defining the target of rebuild, time levels, and risk levels. The ACOM leadership agreed it would be good to bound the discussion, but without limiting their scientific exploration.

Decision:

9.4 Agreed to progress WKREBUILD 2 and WKREF in 2021.

Action:

9.4 ACOM to reconsider the framework after the 2021 follow-up meetings. ToRs for 2021 meetings need to be drawn up and approved on the forum.

9.2 Guidelines

Reporting in standard graphs and assessment summaries (Figure 1 plots)

The breakout group recommended that landings/catches should be the best estimate of catch, including misreported catch and discards and should not be SOPs. If there is a large discrepancy to modelled catch, in rare instances a second line/column in the table might be helpful. An additional line for discards and recreational catch could also be added if really substantial.

This was not accepted by ACOM, with questions about showing multiple lines of the plots, and concerns that the stakeholders would challenge this. ACOM leadership expressed concern that currently the North Sea advice sheets show BMS landings on the Figure 1 but other groups do not. Consistency was asked for so that all groups did display the BMS, or North Sea should remove it.

The breakout group recommendations for recruitment. For recruitment estimates there are differences between the output from the model and the input for the projection (which are often replaced by the geometric mean). The breakout group recommended that the input value to the forecast is always listed (in figure 1 and the summary table). If the model output was replaced by the geometric mean then this should be indicated by a footnote to the summary table.

ACOM could not find consensus on this recommendation.

Finally the breakout group recommended on the validity of amended reference points in the historical assessment plots. The breakout group felt that the horizontal lines for reference points should only be compared to the assessments for which reference points are valid. It was proposed a statement could be added such as: "the reference points were revised in 20xx and only the last x assessment results should be compared to the reference points indicated".

As consensus could not be found, ACOM agreed to postpone the decision and readdress the issue through an additional meeting.

Action:

9.5 Organize a web-conference with ACOM/ACOM subgroup to resolve outstanding issues with the standard graphs.

Level of input in description of basis of forecast

The breakout group recommendation was that more uniformity would be preferable in the description of the basis of the forecast. It was proposed that the heading would be changed to "input values used for the interim year and the forecast" and "from the short term forecast" and "based on assumptions in the forecast" would be used wherever appropriate.

ACOM agreed to the proposal.

Decision:

9.2 Change heading of the basis of the forecast table to "input values used for the interim year and the forecast" and use "from the short term forecast" and "based on assumptions in the forecast" wherever applicable.

Action:

9.6 Amend guidelines to reflect the decision to change the wording.

Displaying proxy reference points

The breakout group recommended how the reference points are currently shown in different places in the advice sheet (Figure 1 or Figure 2) depending on whether they are used to derive the advice, suggesting that there are two classes of proxy reference points, however, we call them the same thing. The subgroup recommended that if we are using the reference points directly for deriving MSY advice, then the term "proxy" should be dropped. For data-limited stocks where PA advice is provided, and the reference points are only used for deciding on whether to apply the PA buffer, the term "proxy" should be kept.

Decision:

9.3 Drop term "proxy" when the reference points are used directly for deriving MSY advice.

Action:

9.7 Update the guidelines to reflect the decision 9.3 on the use of proxy reference points.

Stock status in relation to management plans.

Norway and Iceland have questioned the use of the stocks status "traffic light" table in the ICES advice sheets, specifically the message it may convey in relation to management plans. Specifically, if managers followed approved management plans but due to retrospective changes in perception the get a historic red cross. The breakout group had discussed the matter at length. The possibility of moving the management line into another section such as "Issues relevant for the advice" was considered.

A suggestion from the subgroup to ACOM was to make sure the complex Harvest Control Rules were properly reflected in the tables; and to update the Management Plan line in the stock status table when the assessment changes stock perception retrospectively.

The impact these changes would have on the Fisheries Overviews was raised. It was decided that ACOM leadership should come up with another way to think about displaying the evaluation of stock status, not by providing set solutions, but my thinking about it in a different way.

Action:

9.8 ACOM leadership to further consider the issue and report back to ACOM.

10 Indicating confidence in ICES advice

A special request was answered using a suite of words to denote confidence in statement/fact, that was defined by the expert group and different from IPCC and IPBES. The expert group focused on the nature of the evidence not the amount of that evidence. Also one requester of advice has asked for a confidence tag for our fishing opportunities advice.

The subgroup considered how ACOM should address confidence across our advice, including special requests and the fisheries advice framework. It considered the scheme used by WGELECTRA and also those of other global science organisations as well as the naming and criteria for such categorisation of confidence.

The ultimate purpose and impact of indicating confidence in advice was unclear to ACOM. What would low confidence mean to ACOM? Would it still be appropriate to release the advice in which ACOM has low confidence? However, the breakout group felt ACOM should consider at least broadly detailing confidence in advice. This should be based on existing systems and terminology where possible, with simplicity preferred to complexity. It is likely that different approaches are required for quantitative (e.g. fishing opportunities) and qualitative advice (e.g. ecosystem advice), as comparing these on the same scale would be difficult.

The breakout group considered that this big issue would require a development group of some sort (WK, WG or ACOM subgroup) to consider the issue in more detail. However, they collated some initial thoughts on the fishing opportunity advice and other, potentially more qualitative, ecosystem advice. ACOM discussed this issue and decided that it needed more information on how requesters of advice would envisage using this information within operation of the MAPs.

Fishing opportunities: there are examples of how confidence is used. For stocks with analytical assessments (Cat 1-2), an approach similar to that of the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (MAFMC) was considered a good starting point. A series of criteria for various different components of assessments (from data inputs to model appropriateness to ecosystem considerations) are considered broadly as having either High/Medium/Low confidence. In addition to

this, probabilistic outcomes of assessment models (e.g. of probability being within safe biological limits) could be included in advice sheets (e.g. Quality of Assessment section). This combination of general confidence categorisation of assessment components and probabilistic results could hopefully capture both uncertainty in assessment model and the structural uncertainty in the broader assessment. For data-limited assessments (Cat 3-6), many of the basic components in the MAFMC system could still be categorised, but more thought would be needed on developing measure of precision in the advice and estimates of stock status.

Ecosystem advice: For more qualitative advice, the subgroup recommended the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) system. Given that the information available for ecosystems advice is not of the same format or structure as fisheries assessments, a more appropriate approach would incorporate reviews of the quantity/quality of evidence and level of agreement. Categories of 'Well established', 'Established but incomplete', 'Unresolved' and 'Inconclusive' are used in the IPBES assessments.

The main concerns for ACOM were over how these confidence ratings would be perceived, and how they would ultimately impact on the trust in, and application of, the advice. There was some concern that such a system could be seen as creating 'wriggle room' for managers (i.e. more flexibility to not follow low confidence, difficult advice). This could undermine the ICES advice, even though the advice framework has processes to account for uncertainty in the science to ensure the best use of the best available information. Any confidence indications should be carefully constructed so as to not allow the advice itself to be downgraded in terms of its (perceived) quality. ACOM drew the distinction between confidence in the underlying knowledge base (linked to uncertainty) and confidence in the advice (linked to the evaluation of advice in practice).

For fishing opportunity advice, some ACOM members were not in favour of going this route, feeling that ICES (ACOM) is constantly making calls about whether the data and results are fit for purpose ('best available science') and only produce advice we feel we can stand behind. ICES has in the past increased reporting of uncertainty in assessments, which to some extent lead to stakeholders and managers questioning what value our information presented in advice, potentially negatively impacting the trust in the system to produce credible advice.

It was also noted that ICES already has a tier system depending on data confidence. It was felt that an extra qualitative layer on top of this could be interpreted differently by different users of the advice. However, while lower data categories may have lower precision, it does necessarily mean that we have less confidence in the advice being precautionary and appropriate (e.g. because of PA buffer and other procedures followed, the lack of precision has been accounted for to some degree). Requesters have indicated that the presentation of advice is such that advices from all categories of assessment are considered equally valid.

Other ACOM members were in favour of pursuing this further. Advice sheets are full of confidence statements already (e.g. on input data or assessment quality), and it would be better to have a framework for consistency and greater objectivity. There could also be benefits to how ICES advice is received, by clearly indicating which advices were given with less confidence. If all advices are considered equal, then the poor advice for one stock that was known to have been issued with low confidence without clearly indicating this (e.g. NEA mackerel), may lead to users of advice having less trust in the advice from ICES in general. ICES may be better off making sure requesters know that we sometimes have low confidence in particular assessments. It could also be a useful way of helping experts focus on issues in the assessment that really need improvement.

If such a system was implemented, the introduction to advice may need to have some discussion about confidence and data categories etc., to help ensure a common understanding amongst

IECS and users of advice. It should be noted that a framework to evaluate robustness of advice stock assessments, is different from a framework indicating confidence in the advice.

Regarding the ecosystem advice, confidence indications are given on the elements within the advice rather than the overall advice product itself. The suggested approach for ecosystem should be done separately to the fishing opportunities developments, and ACOM was happy with the suggestion.

The sum up stated that number of useful options were presented, but there remains a lot more for ACOM to explore here. It was proposed to put the issue for fishing opportunities back on the agenda for the next time ACOM meets. At that meeting ACOM will seek to reach a consensus view. The Secretariat will also contact the advice requester that raised this issue, to inform them that ACOM is exploring it. It was agreed to move forward with the ecosystem advice confidence statements. This will be put on the forum for acceptance or rejection.

Decision:

10.1 The IPBES approach to qualify confidence is approved for ecosystem advice in ICES. This provides consistency in approach (see Doc 10).

Action:

10.1 The ICES Secretariat should contact advice requester and inform them about developments and request further insight.

10.2 Item to be revised in March 2021

11 Progress toward advice and EBM

ACOM was asked if the ICES EBM statement still hold true? With the progress being made with overviews, the bycatch roadmap, the productivity audit and viewpoints is ICES on the right track? What are the tangible next steps?

Document 11b provided an update of the audit of productivity change in ICES advice.

ACOM was be invited to comment, agree on actions, and take decisions as appropriate.

The breakout group recommended that the EBM statement was still appropriate, and whilst smaller refinements could be made, changing the statement should not be considered a priority. The group suggested a few changes like adapt the introduction, mention of renewables and aquaculture and to adapt the fisheries section to the productivity work.

ACOM accepted this recommendation.

The breakout group reported that the landscape of EBM activities (reported in document11) in ICES was the highly scattered with groups and actions. In relation to this point, better and more fluent communication between ACOM and SCICOM and between the groups is needed in the ICES community.

There is no objective way of measuring whether ICES has already reached the objectives of the EBM but the challenge is to show continuous progress. The breakout group recommended the formation of an overarching and representative EBM Oversight group. This group would provide strategic leadership, facilitate the interchange of relevant information and show progress

towards EBM in ICES. Some voiced caution on creating more complexity to the system but there was consensus that more joint ACOM-SCICOM activities were needed.

The summing up said that the recommendation to form an EBM oversight group should be considered, but ACOM did not have consensus as yet.

Action:

11.1 ACOM task the breakout group to further consider the role and operations of an EBM oversight group and to draft some potential ToRs for consideration. This to be completed by January 2021.

12 Election of ACOM Vice-Chair

Colm Lordan's first tenure as ACOM vice chair will come to the end in December 2020. The ACOM Chair has asked if he would be interested in taking another 3 year term as permitted in the ACOM rules of procedure. Colm had declared that he would like to take another term and the next stage was therefore for ACOM to support offering Colm another term.

On 8 September all ACOM members received an email to an online vote and were given 24 hours to vote. 20 votes were casted, all for Colm, and the recommendation for Colm Lordan to take another 3 year term as ACOM Vice-Chair will go to the ICES Council.

13 Closing

In closing the meeting the Chair summarised the meeting and the decisions taken. ACOM was asked to reflect about the remote meeting and how it had worked. The feeling was that the online meeting had worked well under the circumstances but it was agreed that critical things are easier to handle in a physical meeting. Based on this it was decided to postpone the decision about whether to meet online in March or to postpone the 2021 Annual March meeting until there was more insight into the 2021 Covid19 pandemic.

14 List of decisions

1.1 ACOM confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest.

1.2 The time table for the meeting was approved.

2.1 An ACOM subgroup will look into the format of the advice, based on a dialogue with the requestors (facilitated by advice support), and create a consensus proposal for the format of the advice sheets for fishing opportunities in 2021. Members of this subgroup are Alain Biseau, Bjarte Bogstad, Els Torreele, Jonathan White, Kiersten Curti, Massimiliano Cardinale, Morten Vinther. The group will report by 20 November.

2.2 Postpone decision on nature of ADGs in 2021, until subgroup reports to ACOM on format of advice.

3.1 The approach to the Guide to ICES advice described in document 3a and the 10 principles (Annex 3) were adopted by ACOM

3.2 The Guide to ICES advice will be updated every year and published in early January each year.

3.3 The planned dialogue meeting (February 2021 in Brussels) on the ecosystem advice framework will be postponed.

4.1 The BOG should focus on the following during the next 12 months:

a) Developing a benchmark planning checklist with key decision objectives set against a timeline that is general, yet stock-specific. This will assist stock assessors, benchmark leadership, and ACOM in taking decisions on whether benchmark work is sufficiently prepared and advanced to continue with the benchmark process.
b) Developing a category 1 assessment guidelines for benchmarks that includes such things as model diagnostics that should be checked or met for an assessment to be accepted. This should include work by the BOG to explore and develop a possible "ensemble model" approach for fish stock assessment benchmarks.
c) Developing a reviewer's checklist that clearly explains expectations for benchmarks. This checklist would also be used for the Benchmark Oversight Group in a summary of completed benchmarks for review by ACOM.
d) Expanding the scope of ICES benchmarks beyond fish stock assessment.

4.2 ACOM should review and approve completed benchmarks and recommend remedial actions at the March consultations.

4.3 Approve the list of benchmarks proposed by the BOG for 2021/2022 benchmark season.

5.1 Intersessional subgroup was established (see Annex 4) with the following membership Colm Lordan, Marie-Julie Roux, Fatima Borges, Pieter-Jan Schön, Max Cardinale, Kiersten Curti. To report by 1 March 2021.

7.1 Agree time-line of the production of the first Aquaculture Overview, to be published in 2021, as described in document 07.

8.1 The suggested process for TAF development and reporting approaches (Figure 8.1) was approved by ACOM.

8.2 Approve the approach described above for validating data audits and model script in TAF

9.1 Agree a process for replacing Fpa value with Fp.05 value as Fpa.

9.4 Agreed to progress WKREBUILD 2 and WKREF in 2021.

9.2 Change heading of the basis of the forecast table to "input values used for the interim year and the forecast" and use "from the short term forecast" and "based on assumptions in the forecast" wherever applicable.

9.3 Drop term "proxy" when the reference points are used directly for deriving MSY advice.

10.1 The IPBES approach to qualify confidence is approved for ecosystem advice in ICES. This provides consistency in approach (see Doc 10).

15 List of Actions

2.1 Advice support will approach all requesters of fishing opportunities advice for feedback on the approach taken in 2020, with specific reference to abbreviated advice sheets, requesting a response by beginning November 2020.

2.2 ACOM leadership to create a draft template for stakeholder information, and develop it further after feedback from the stakeholders. This should be completed by beginning of December 2020.

3.1 The Guide to ICES advice will be presented to ACOM on the forum for approval in December 2020, in readiness for publication in January 2021. This will be finalised by the ACOM leadership.

6.1 The final resolution for WKSHOES will be placed on the joint ACOM and SCICOM forum for formal approval.

Action points:

7.1 Prepare draft resolution for WKFO and post to the Resolutions Forum for approval.

7.2 ACOM needs to engage further with the observers from the Faroes (Note: this has been done).

7.3 Add Mario Rui Pinho as a lead author for the Azorean Fisheries Overview.

7.4 Prepare a document on Aquaculture Overviews, which should include i) background and rationale, ii) objectives, iii) contents, and iv) the process of production, review and approval for posting to ACOM Forum. Lead by ACOM leadership

8.1 ACOM Leadership, the Secretariat and the subgroup will take the lead initiate the process described in Figure 8.1 for the operational implementation and reporting of TAF stock assessments.

8.2 A training course for ACOM in basic TAF principles and its utility to be held before April 2021, ICES secretariat.

8.3 ADG members to been given access to TAF folders and objects, ICES secretariat

9.1 Guidance on Fpa and Fp05 to be written by ACOM leadership as to its use by January 2021.

9.2 ACOM member to report back to ACOM concerning use of the WKFORBIAS decision tree in 2020. (Alain Biseau to report by October 2020)

9.3 Communicate to DGMARE that MSY advice for rivers included in the current model can be provided, and PA advice for the others on a river by river basis. No advice for the mixed fishery stock at sea can be provided. A framework for providing consistent advice is needed. Secretariat to open a dialogue in October with requesters to discuss what is likely to be required in the new proposed management plan.

9.4 ACOM to reconsider the framework after the 2021 follow-up meetings. ToRs for 2021 meetings need to be drawn up and approved on the forum, .WKREBUILD2, WKREF and WKREFCHANGE.

9.5 Organize a web-conference with ACOM/ACOM subgroup to resolve outstanding issues with the standard graphs.

9.6 Amend guidelines to reflect the decision to change the wording.

9.7 Update the guidelines to reflect the decision 9.3 on the use of proxy reference points.

9.8 ACOM leadership to further consider the issue and report back to ACOM.

10.1 The ICES Secretariat should contact advice requester and inform them about developments and request further insight.

10.2 Issues of confidence in fishing opportunities advise to be revised in March 2021

11.1 ACOM task the breakout group to further consider the role and operations of an EBM oversight group and to draft some potential ToRs for consideration. This to be completed by January 2021.

Annex 1 List of participants

Name	G/C Role	Institute and country	Email
Mark Dickey-Collas	Chair	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea	mark.dickey-collas@ices.dk
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Christopher Zimmermann	Member	Thünen Institute Thünen-Institute of Baltic Sea Fisheries Germany	christopher.zimmermann@thuenen.de
Colm Lordan	Vice-Chair	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea	colm.lordan@ices.dk
Didzis Ustups (9 September)	Member	Institute of Food Safety Animal Health and Environment (BIOR) Fish Resources Research Department Latvia	Didzis.Ustups@bior.lv
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Annex 2 Annotated agenda

Structure of the meeting:

Two plenary sessions will occur (8 and 10 Sept.). ACOM will meet in breakout groups on 9th September. The first plenary session will comprise of points of information and setting the objectives for the breakout groups. The second plenary will be focus on decision and actions coming from the breakout groups. Members of the breakout groups will be briefed before the meeting. Each breakout group should nominate a lead and a rapporteur.

The consultations will also initiate an intersession subgroup to work between September 2020 and March 2021 on consistent approach to changing productivity in fisheries advice (agenda item 5) and also initiate a workshop on stakeholder engagement (agenda item 6). The format of the fishing opportunities advice in 2021 will also be addressed by a subgroup, that will report in early December 2020 (agenda item 2).

Due to time limitation and being a remote meeting the standard reflections and reviews of the working year will not occur.

1) Welcome, code of conduct, review of action points from March 2020 and review of membership (Docs 01a, 01b, 01c, 01d)

The agenda will be adopted via the ACOM forum beforehand. ACOM will be invited to review and update the ACOM membership list. Changes should be reported to the Secretariat.

ACOM will reflect on the code of conduct.

The list of action points from ACOM March 2020 will be reviewed.

Points of information and discussion

2) Experience of producing advice during the COVID-19 pandemic (Doc 02)

The ACOM leadership and Chair of FRSG will present a document on experiences from the network and the provision of advice in 2020.

ACOM will be invited to comment and provide suggestions on the format to be used for the advice produced in 2021 in the event that there is resurgence of the COVID-19 pandemic and agree on actions. A subgroup will be formed to consider the format of fishing opportunities advice in 2021.

3) Ecosystem framework and Introduction to the Advice (Doc 03a and 03b)

Progress made by the ACOM subgroup on both the ecosystem framework and its integration into the Introduction to the advice will be reported to ACOM. This will be supported by a second document on the lessons learnt from the bycatch emergency measures advice.

ACOM will be invited to comment and asked to support further development of the framework, changing the Introduction of the Advice into a Guide to Advice.

A proposal to postpone the planned dialogue meeting will also be made.

4) Report of the Benchmark Oversight Group, BOG (Doc 04a)

The Chair of BOG will report on initial activities, status of benchmarks planned for 2021, opportunities and challenges.

ACOM will be invited to comment, agree on actions. This will include a discussion and decision on the recommendation from BOG on how to make the March 2020 decision operational:

"Approval and endorsement of benchmark results:

- *ACOM reviews, then endorses / identifies issues to be resolved from benchmarks.*
- *The review is conducted rapidly following benchmarks using summaries prepared by ICES professional officers."*

5) Consistent approach to changing productivity in fisheries advice (Doc 05)

A number of issues need to be addressed on reference points, and incorporation of changed perceptions of ecosystem productivity in advice:

- *Implementation of conclusions from WKIRISH*
- *A consistent ACOM approach to characterise changes in productivity regimes and the implications for advice (e.g. Iberian sardine, western Baltic SS herring). This could include analytical tools to identify changes.*
- *Sustainability of our approach to multispecies models and the incorporation of new key runs of multispecies models into advice (estimates of M)*

ACOM will be invited to comment, and an intersessional subgroup will be set up to report in March 2021. Potential ToRs are given in Annex 1.

6) Stakeholder engagement (Doc 06)

In 2019, progress was made in working with stakeholder (e.g. WKSCINDI and WKRRMAC) but a number of challenges still remain in how ICES works with stakeholders. An analysis of stakeholder engagement has been prepared as a resource for a workshop.

ACOM will be invited to comment, and approve a resolution for a workshop on ICES and stakeholder engagement. Potential ToRs are given in Annex 2.

Advice work flow for 2021

7) Progress on and commitments to overviews and viewpoints (Doc 07)

A synopsis of progress on delivery and proposals for further development of ecosystem, fisheries and aquaculture overviews, and viewpoints will be presented. The allocation of leads for overviews will be reviewed and re-conformed by ACOM. ACOM will be updated on WKTRANSPARENT.

ACOM will be invited to comment, agree on actions, and take decisions as appropriate.

Breakout Groups

Briefed and prepare prior to ACOM consultations, intersessional meeting 9th September, reporting back 10th September to plenary.

The break out groups will address the challenges in the working documents and provide recommendations to ACOM for decisions.

8) Moving to widespread use of TAF – benefits, challenges and next steps (Doc 08)

(Team: Colm Lordan, Didzis Ustups, Els Torreele, Gudmundur Thordarson, Jesper Boje, Niels Hintzen, Pieter-Jan Schön)

At March 2020 ACOM frustration was voiced about the failure to reform the modus operandi and reporting of working groups. A number of expert groups are now using the Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF), and some are also using R markdown scripts (and GitHub) to compile their reporting but then transfer these reports into word documents. This is very ineffective and inefficient. Experts are becoming increasingly frustrated by the failure of our reporting system to adapt.

ACOM needs to encourage the expert groups to move to full usage of TAF. The working documents proposes that in 2021 at least two major stocks per expert group completely use TAF. This breakout group should also consider whether ACOM should enable innovations for reporting from expert groups, or for ACOM to impose expectations for reporting.

ACOM will be invited to comment, agree on actions, and take decisions as appropriate.

9) Fishing opportunities advice framework for 2021 (Doc 09)

(Team: Alain Biseau, Bjarte Bogstad, Christopher Zimmermann, Fatima Borges, Francisco Velasco, Ghislain Chouinard, Linas Lozys, Yury Kovalev)

ACOM agreed that the framework for fishing opportunities advice for 2021 would be available by end December 2020. [this needs to include elements from WKLIFE, WKREBUILD, WKFORBIAS, MSE guidelines, WKMSE3, reopening advice, catch-survivability-discards (including Nephrops, elasmobranches), Fp05, approach for salmon, and the precautionary buffer].

Also to address the following issues for the advice sheets:

1. *standard graphs and summary of the assessment:*
    a. *landings/discards in summary of assessment different than other tables because of reporting of SOPs*
    b. *recruitment estimates in summary and graphs vs geometric mean used in projections,*
2. *wide differences in level of details in description of inputs to projections (table 2)*
3. *stock status defined using proxy reference points that are not consistent (e.g. LBI) with the index used to provide advice.*
4. *stock status in relation to management plans (concerns of Norway and Iceland)*

ACOM will be invited to comment, agree on actions, and take decisions as appropriate.

10) Indicating confidence in ICES advice (Doc 10)

(Team: Eugene Nixon, Jan Horbowy, Jonathan White, Kiersten Curti, Massimiliano Cardinale, Morten Vinther, Petur Steingrund)

A special request was answered using a suite of words to denote confidence in statement/fact, that was defined by the expert group and different from IPCC and IPBES. The expert group focused on the nature of the evidence not the amount of that evidence. Also one requester of advice has asked for a confidence tag for our fishing opportunities advice.

This subgroup will consider and recommend how ACOM should address confidence across our advice, including special requests and the fisheries advice framework. It should consider the scheme used by WGELECTRA and also those of other global science organisations. The subgroup should also consider the naming and criteria for such categorisation of confidence. Should ACOM agree a standard approach to categorisation of confidence in a statement or advice? ACOM will be invited to comment, agree on actions, and take decisions as appropriate.

11) Progress toward advice and EBM (Docs 11 and 11b)

(Team: Henn Ojaveer, Lisette Enserink (NL alternate), Marcos Llope (SPA alternate) Marie-Julie Roux, Robert Aps)

Does the ICES EBM statement still hold true ? With the progress being made with overviews, the bycatch roadmap, the productivity audit and viewpoints is ICES on the right track? What are the tangible next steps?

Document 11b provides an update of the audit of productivity change in ICES advice.

Note that both the RCGs and the Baltic Fisheries assessment working group (WGBFAS) have asked ACOM to address how surveys should report ecosystem change, and account for ecosystem change (spatial and temporal) in time series incorporated into fishing opportunities advice.

ACOM will be invited to comment, agree on actions, and take decisions as appropriate.

12) Closing

Timeline.

	08-Sep	09-Sep	10-Sep
14:00	1. Introduction		Welcome 6. Stakeholders
14:15	2. Covid		
14:30			7. Overviews/Viewpoints
14:45			
15:00	3 Ecosystem framework/		9. Fish Opp Advice
15:15	Intro to advice		
15:30			
15:45	15 mins BREAK		15 mins BREAK
16:00	4. BOG		8. TAF EG Reporting
16:15			
16:30			
16:45	5. Productivity		10. Confidence
17:00	5 mins Break		
17:05	8-11 Prep Break Out Grps		
17:15			11. EBM Approach
17:30			
17:45			Wrap Up
18:00	Close		Close

Annex 3 The 10 principles for ICES advice

General

Principle 1. The guidelines and procedures to produce ICES advice are documented, openly accessible, and up to date.

Formulation of requests.

Principle 2. Final request formulation is agreed through dialogue to clarify the requester's needs and expectations, the ICES process, likely resource implications, timelines, format of advice and roles and responsibilities of the engaged parties.

Principle 3. Where possible, existing policy goals, objectives, and the level of acceptable risk relevant to the advice request are identified. Where these objectives and descriptions of risk are unclear, ICES will identify these in the advice, and, where possible, provide options for management action and the consequences of the options and their trade-offs.

Synthesis of knowledge to answer requests

Principle 4. The deliberations of all relevant expert groups are published by the time the associated advice is published.

Principle 5. The best available science and quality-assured data are used. ICES selects and applies relevant methods for any analysis, including the development of new methods. The methods are peer-reviewed by independent experts and clearly and openly documented.

Principle 6. Data are findable, attributable, researchable, reusable, and conform to ICES data policy. Data flows are documented.

Peer review

Principle 7. To ensure that the best available, credible science has been used and to confirm that the analysis provides a sound basis for advice, all analyses and methods are peer-reviewed by at least two independent reviewers. For recurrent advice, the review is conducted through a benchmark process. For special requests through one-off reviews.

Production of advice

Principle 8. Advice is comprehensive, unambiguous, and consistent with the synthesized knowledge, while taking the peer-review into account. All advice follows existing advice frameworks and any deviation from the frameworks or related, previous advice is identified and justified.

Principle 9. All ICES advice is adopted by the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM), through consensus, prior to being made available to the requester and simultaneously published on ICES website.

Principle 10. ICES provides advice as an impartial response to a request, and does not lobby the requester or any other party to implement its advice.

Annex 4 Potential terms of reference for intersessional subgroup on consistent approach to changing productivity in fisheries advice

To report by 1 March 2021

Suggested ToRs for the subgroup, to:

i) review the findings of WKIRISH and provide potential mechanisms to either apply the approach to current advice or highlight the approach to requesters.

ii) suggest whether ACOM should define a method and criteria to define a change in productivity, possibly approach an expert group for assistance?

iii) comment the overall approach to incorporating multispecies model derived estimates of M and provide guidance on how new estimates of M should be introduced into a stock assessment used for advice (assuming already that the model to estimate M has been reviewed by WGSAM and the method and rationale for incorporation already exists in the stock annex).

Annex 5 Potential terms of reference for workshop on stakeholder engagement in ICES

To report by March 2021

1. After consideration of the Ballesteros and Dickey-Collas framing document:
   a. Is the proposed list of principles for stakeholder engagement for ICES appropriate?
   b. Does the description of the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders as expert, observer, participant, partner reflect reality?
   c. What gaps and opportunities arise from the highlighted challenges?
   d. Does this analysis prove a useful basis to develop an ICES stakeholder engagement strategy?
2. What should be the key elements of an ICES stakeholder engagement strategy (e.g. objectives, roles, principles, boundaries, monitoring, evaluation etc.)?
3. Review and report on the approaches taken by other similar and relevant organisations.
4. Propose alternative approaches (with associated risks) to improve and secure further engagement by ICES with stakeholders.