

ICES WGCHAIRS REPORT 2010

ICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Chair's Summary of the Annual Meeting of Advisory Working Group Chairs (WGCHAIRS)

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ICES

International Council for
the Exploration of the Sea

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1 Introduction

WGChairs met under the chairmanship of M. Sissenwine and considered the planning of the advisory work in 2010. The list of participants is given in Annex 1. There were many discussions and decisions related to individual groups e.g. clarification of ToRs. These decisions are not summarized in this report but are documented as amendments to EG ToRs and Agendas. The Chair summarized the discussions at the end of the meeting and this summary is given as Section 2. A key message from the Chair was the need to enhance communication within the Advisory Services – He assured the meeting that the Secretariat and ACOM Leadership want the WGChairs' input, feedback, and guidance.

A key message concerns the need to use InterCatch the database holding fish stock assessment data. The implementation has been slow but the documentation is essential. Progress probably requires active engagement with National database managers/submitters, stock coordinators.

2 WGChairs Summary by the ACOM Chair

2.1 Overview of meeting content

- Feedback on recent ACOM decisions and Council guidance;
- Transition of Advice Framework to the MSY approach;
- Changes in the presentation of advice, formats, templates;
- Input data: coordination, quality assurance, statistical realities.

2.2 Recent decisions

- Portfolio of Advisory Services-more flexibility, faster response, options to manage workload;
- Inter-benchmark Process for approving assessment stock annexes-added flexibility;
- MSFD project-at a critical juncture. ACOM may offer advice in the form of a comment on the Report of the WG on GES.

2.3 User Satisfaction and Performances of Advisory Service

- Perceptions of scientists generally more positive than managers, which are generally better than stakeholders;
- Some frustration on the part of expert groups with the treatment of their work by RGs, ADGs, ACOM. Need better communication:
 - Expert groups chairs reporting back to members;
 - ADG notes need to highlight differences from EG reports;
 - Vice-chair tables documenting ACOM decision process should be made available to EGs;
 - Be proactive in matching expectations between EGs and ACOM (get ToRs, lists of updates, SALY, non Advice, ...).

2.4 Performance of Advisory Service: Open discussion

- ADG chairs: ACOM Vice-chairs or ACOM members? Will continue with the former out of necessity although some Expert Groups feel the latter is less efficient. Need to pay attention to potential problems of inconsistencies.
- Expert Groups: an annual meeting or continuous responsibility? Clearly the latter, but need to clarify expectations with potential chairs and Delegates.
- Impact on professional advancement: This is a problem in some countries where traditional academic standards rule. The issue is recognized by ICES Delegates and will be pursued at this level.

2.5 Joint initiatives with SCICOM: Under development

- Global Stock Assessment Review-Traditional ICES priority. Doable, initial planning for workshop underway;
- Marine Spatial Planning and coastal zones/science-Priority area now (the time is right), linked to MSFD. Good ideas, but initiative still evolving. It is time to get it started;
- Biodiversity-Fundamental in terms of science, and symbolic of the “distance” gap between fisheries science, nature conservation and conservation biology. Need to decide on ICES niche.

2.6 Joint initiatives with SCICOM: Early stages of discussion

- Design and coordination of Integrated Ecosystem Observing System-Fits with many of ICES advisory and science targets on achievement in the coming years. These include integration of fisheries and environmental advice, ACOM's Advice Plan, SCICOM's Science Plan, Regional Seas Programme, BSAP, future implementation of MSFD, improved design of DCR, efficient use of valuable assets; e.g. research vessels.
- Operational approaches to take account of climate change and regime shifts in fisheries management-Opportunity to demonstrate transition of research to applications, opportunity to build on decisions to set aside Biol. Ref. Pts..

2.7 Transition to the MSY framework for Fisheries Management Advice

- ACOM has agreed to MSY harvest control rule (hockey stick with F_{msy} above $B_{msy-trigger}$);
- Initial default- $B_{msy-trigger} = B_{pa}$;
- B_{msy} is notional, but not decisive in the HCR;
- There are scientific challenges when it comes to estimating F_{msy} , but the same challenges apply to F_{pa} .
- Need to work out transition plan (e.g. incrementally change from F_{pa} to F_{msy} from now to 2015) with managers.
- Workshop to give guidance on estimating F_{msy} . Expert groups with do the estimation.
- Workshop to give guidance on MSY strategy for stocks where one year ahead catch forecast not available.
- Complete concept paper-comments welcome.

2.8 Written presentation of Advice

- New formats (and templates) reviewed and changes generally accepted;
- Colour coding (“traffic light”) approach concerns some expert group chairs. ACOM leadership will give it further consideration. It should not affect the workload of expert groups (e.g. colour coding used, it can be added formulaically).
- Working paper (Agenda item 8d) on the quality of assessments and advice noted. Will be discussed with MIRAC.

2.9 Work plan including Benchmarks

- Detailed plan (schedule, requests, ToRs) available on SharePoint;
- Breakout groups discussed the details;
- Expectations (between expert groups, Vice-chairs, Secretariat) harmonized;
- Expert Groups chairs are urged to ask questions and seek clarification if they are unsure of what’s expected or if they do not think expectations are realistic.

2.10 Data issues for Assessments

- There is an extensive network of regional coordinators, data managers, quality assurance activities, statistical design activities, workshops ongoing;
- These activities receive a lot of support in order to improve the quality, quantity, and accessibility of data under the DCF;
- Expert groups need to “engage” with these activities as the data are their “bread and butter;”
- Benchmarks should apply WKACCU Score Card on data quality;
- SGBYC wants closer communications with data collection programme-hopeful improved support for, and integration of collection of bycatch data for mammals, birds, turtles.

2.11 Abundance surveys–ICES input to DCF

- Secretariat is helping EC (STECF subgroup) to review use of DCF surveys;
- Info is important as it may influence future priorities for the surveys after 2013 (next DCF);
- This activity is part of an exercise relevant to design of a survey system;
- Concern expressed that info might lead to EC requirement to continue surveys funded nationally that were not intended to continue as long-term tuning-series. This is a symptom of the lack of system design;
- It would be better for ICES to design a scientifically designed integrated ecosystem observing system.

2.12 InterCatch database

- Documentation system for all of the data submitted to ICES and “raising processes” (nuts and bolts behind numbers caught-at-age by fleet, time period, area, ...);

- Key element of quality assurance, making analyses transparency and repeatable;
- Transparency of raising procedure is still a problem;
- Software development mature, not yet full utilization;
- Barrier to full implementation-training (Workshop 10–11 February 2010, explanation on webpage). Better coordination with National datacenters (between database managers of each node of the distributed network)? User Friendly interface? Workload? Only recently able to include discard data thus limiting use of system. Inertia!!!
- Need complete list of stock coordinators on password protected SharePoint site. Action item for Secretariat;
- Need to consider more carefully concept of distributed database, modern communication between the nodes, governance arrangements;
- Secretariat should provide table by stocks by WG on status of IterCatch use;
- **Key message-need to use InterCatch. Probably requires active engagement with National database managers/submitters, stock coordinators, ICES.**

2.13 Reopening Advice based on summer surveys and the frequency of Assessments

- *Ad hoc* approach in 2007;
- Protocol developed in 2008, also applied in 2009;
- Expanded (*ad hoc*) application to some *Nephrops* stocks in 2009;
- Planning workshop to update and expand scope of protocol for 2010;
- Might same statistical framework be used to determine the frequency of assessments?
- Expert groups should consider the frequency of assessments. Is every other year frequent enough for some (many?) stocks?

2.14 Report from breakouts

- Concern about participation in working groups if people feel the task is too mechanical. Need to continue to make meetings stimulating;
- Concern about availability of mariculture expertise. Have important advice needs for OSPAR request;
- **In general successfully clarified ToR.**

2.15 Feed back on the meeting

- Useful and necessary meeting;
- Might separate out fishery and non-fisheries stuff. This would make it less painful for non-fisheries people;
- About two days if ok;
- Timing-ok as long as ToRs are communicated between Secretariat and EG chair.

Annex 1: List of participants

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