

Session N

Quality and precision of basic data underlying fish stock assessment and implications for fisheries management advice

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The systematic collection of reliable basic data on fisheries is a cornerstone for fish stock assessment and scientific advice supporting decision making in fisheries management. In this connection, the European Council adopted in 2000 a Community framework for the collection and management of data such as market sampling and survey data that underlie stock assessment (Council Regulation (EC) No 1543/2000). This framework was designed to consolidate and strengthen the existing data collection activities in the Member States.

Quality control and validation of the data collected under this framework is of particular importance. Also, there is an increasing need to address the issue of quality assurance of the biological advice. Linking these two items would draw out the methodologies and issues relating to the use of this type of information within the assessment process, and the impact on advice.

The implementation of this framework was supported by Workshops and projects aiming at estimating uncertainty in the catch-at-age, weight-at-age data and abundance estimates in the surveys and developing tools for this purpose. Evaluation of within survey variance, its applicability for use as weighting factors in assessment models have also been carried out.

Some projects also highlighted methods for storing, combining, and raising national data to international stock-related data-sets. Formalising current ad-hoc procedures and providing information on the range of procedures needed, which are necessary to provide structured database systems for routine data required in stock assessment.

Implications of the above issues for management advice will be addressed, notably the way in which uncertainty in the basic data propagates through the assessment model into the management advice.

Contributions are invited on:

- analysis of uncertainties in basic data underlying stock assessments;
- analysis of methods used for storing, combining and raising national data to international data;
- analysis of the implications of uncertainties in basic data for the stock assessment and advice.

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