

## ICES Request Form

Grey cells to be filled in by ICES

ICES Request Form Request from	Joint EU/Norway/UK request
Committee making the request	
Contact within organisation	
Content contact person	
Request announced	8 January 2024
Request received	8 January 2024
Outcome of request required by client	<p>The outcome of this request is to provide data that supports ICES in providing the area-specific catch advice of the Northern Shelf complex. This should include a comprehensive experimental design including a sampling protocol and methodological specifications for the genetic analysis of the Northern Shelf cod stock complex.</p> <p>Subject to the findings of the research, the outcome of this request should aim to provide data that supports ICES in providing advice for the three sub-stocks separately.</p>
Request code (client)	
Request code (ICES)	[completed by ICES]
Details of request	
<p>Request from Norway, UK and EU regarding genetic work on Northern Shelf Cod sub-stocks</p> <p>The Northern Shelf cod advice from ICES1 establishes a new stock definition merging West of Scotland cod with North Sea cod making a single assessment unit with three sub-stocks: northwestern, Viking and southern. The advice stated that ICES is not in a position to provide area-specific catch advice without additional genetic data sampled routinely from both commercial fisheries and scientific surveys.</p> <p>The Norwegian, UK and EU Delegations consequently agreed that the way forward in the management of these stocks would include additional sampling of genetic and other data sources and the exchange of information regarding ongoing relevant research on the topic. Moreover, the Delegations recommended that this workstream should be taken forward as a priority and agreed that they would approach ICES for guidance.</p> <p>Hence, ICES, as the coordinating body, is requested to provide guidance for the area-specific catch advice of the Northern Shelf complex. This should include a comprehensive experimental design aimed at enhancing understanding of sub-stock dynamics, especially stock-mixing throughout the year and including a sampling protocol and methodological specifications for the genetic analysis and related data for the Northern Shelf cod stock complex, which the Parties could implement as a priority.</p>	

Intended use of the request output	Subject to the findings of the research, the outcome of this request should aim to provide data that supports ICES in providing advice for the three sub-stocks separately.
Planning ICES	<p>This planning is towards an operational (area-based) advice for Northern shelf cod. A comprehensive genetic sampling methodology for northern shelf cod can not be delivered promptly. However, after consultation with the experts, ICES is in a position to propose the following process towards guiding the area-specific catch advice:</p> <p>ICES suggests a process consisting of two workshops:</p> <p><b>A broader/scoping workshop</b> focusing on the understanding of sub-stock dynamics, especially stock-mixing throughout the year and how this can be integrated into potential stock assessment models, enabling provision of advice which can guide area-specific management. This first workshop will outline which genetic data and other data sources would be needed to inform stock-assessment and the tempo-spatial resolution needed for Northern Shelf cod. The workshop will as well evaluate existing sampling data on genetics for the Northern Shelf cod stock complex and work on standardization and harmonization procedures.</p> <p>The results from the workshop will be shared with several ICES working groups focused on the application of genetics in fisheries management (WGAGFA, SIMWG, others) as well as the EOSG and WGNSSK oGto further specify the ToRs for the second workshop, combining the data needs with survey methodology. ICES will draft and execute the database infrastructure needed based on these discussions, by creating the format, exerting quality assurance and checks, providing data download, as well as linking the data to existing ICES databases. This will then be fed into the second workshop subsequent to an ACOM review of the workshop outcome.</p> <p>The second workshop will further establish the specific sampling protocols as well as the methodology recommended for working with genetic data. The output will be a report including a survey manual, providing an experimental design, including a detailed sampling protocol and methodological specifications, for genetic analysis of the Northern Shelf cod stock complex providing data applicable to the stock assessment of this stock complex.</p> <p>There is a need for having established a genetic baseline for the southern component that will inform whether northern and southern populations can be separated genetically and at what resolution prior to the workshop as this will have implications in sampling design due to uncertainty in the range of difference between the sub-stocks. This information will be available from the GenDC project by mid-2025 at the earliest. ICES is subcontracted for an EU- funded project (GenDC, EMFAF-2023-PIA-FisheriesScientificAdvice) to develop new standardized sampling protocols and procedures for integrating genetic data with stock assessment and existing databases to strengthen the implementation of the CFP.</p> <p>Timeline:  WKCODSCOPE 18-21 March 2025  WK2; June 2025</p>

ICES contact person	
WG(s) involved	WGNSSK, WGAGFA, SIMWG, EOSG groups
Preparation timing	
Review group	RGNSCOD
Advice drafting group	ADGNSCOD, 18-20 November 2025
ACOM Web-conference	WCNSCOD 4 December 2025
Release date	11 December 2025