

ICES ACOM REPORT 2010

ICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

ICES CM 2010/ACOM:01

Report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM)

16 – 19 November 2010

ICES Headquarters, 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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Recommended format for purposes of citation:

ICES. 2011. Report of the Advisory Committee (ACOM), 16 - 19 November 2010, ICES Headquarters, Copenhagen, Denmark. ICES CM 2010/ACOM:01. 26 pp.

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1 Introduction

The Advisory Committee (ACOM) met in ICES headquarters 16-19 November 2010. The participants are listed in Annex I and the agenda is in Annex II.

The ACOM Chair Michael Sissenwine opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

2 Review of membership (including alternates) and meeting attendance (including observers)

Doc 2.1 Membership List and Doc 2.1. List of Participants were brought to the attention of the meeting. The chair noted that more ACOM alternates could be added - having several alternates is desirable as it helps with the workload and provides diversity in expertise.

3 Review of Agenda

Doc 3 was introduced. Four additional items were added under AOB: the OCEANA observer application, the Dialogue Meeting, call under the 7th Framework programme, and a briefing on the FIMPAS project. The agenda was agreed with the 4 additional items

4 Minutes from September ACOM Consultations

ACOM members were asked to provide comments during the meeting. By the end of the meeting the minutes were approved.

5 Pending Advisory Services Doc 5.0 Overview of remaining 2010 advice

a) European eel advice (Erkki Ikonen, ADG chair)

Doc 5a was introduced to the meeting. The comments received in advance and during the meeting were addressed by the ADG chair and the ACOM Vice-Chair. The revised draft advice was considered at end of the meeting and approved by ACOM.

The eel advice was carefully discussed and finally agreed

b) Herring IIIa management plan

There will be a workshop on Western Baltic herring 23-25 November. The meeting was reminded that the ADG is 30 Nov-3 December by correspondence. So far, only two ACOM members have joined the group, along with the ADG Chair (ACOM Vice Chair).

c) Ecosystem Indicators

Ecosystem indicators have been adopted by the EC under the auspices of the CFP as part of the Data Collection Framework. The definitions of these indicators are based on ICES input and input from workshops involving scientists from the ICES community.

Now that data is becoming available, the ICES Secretariat has been requested to provide values/time series of these indicators as an advisory service. The request includes 9 indicators, and ICES cannot deliver the full sets of indicators from the outset, due to lack of data, especially for the indicators related with VMS data. Problems related with data are also related with DCF regulation. ICES can set up a data call on DCF data but, only for data from 2009 onwards when the new DCF came into force.

While the calculations to report on the indicators may be straight forward, there is a need to consider the indicators in a broader context.

- Are the indicators still valid?
- How should they be interpreted?
- For fishery dependent data, such as discard reporting, what are the implications of misreporting, and might indicators from discard reporting be inconsistent with estimates of discards used in stock assessments? Should ICES issue warnings about incomplete data or other data quality problems.
- How can the DCF indicators be harmonized with MSFD indicators?
- How do they relate to indicators reported by the European Environmental Agency.

The calculation of indicator values can be controversial in some cases, for instance relating to VMS or discards. For discards, WKEID could only derive values for western Baltic cod. It thus seems that there still is a problem in practice with data availability in spite of the fact that there now is a legal basis in the DCF which requires EU Member States to make data available for ICES.

Due to these issues, ACOM discussed if this was a technical issues only or if advisory and scientific issues were also important. Initially, indicators should be reviewed by ACOM, but subsequently these could be provided as an Advisory Service with ACOM periodically evaluating the indicators and advising on how they should be interpreted. Limitations to data should be clearly stated when technical service in this respect is delivered.

The delivery of indicators could be expanded to inclusion of an overview of the state of fisheries based on indicators in the ICES advice report.

A breakout group met during the ACOM meeting to discuss the topic in more detail. ACOM agreed with the option of convening a workshop on ecosystem indicators to consider harmonization of indicators for multiple reporting schemes and data quality issues and to develop ICES' own use of indicators. As a first step, this will be discussed in the context of the SIBAS workshop in February, any further initiatives will be decided on the basis of the discussion at SIBAS.

d) Evaluation of Management Plan for S. Hake, *Nephrops* and Anglerfish

Several conference calls have been held to prepare for the workshop. The outlook for a successful conclusion is good.

e) North Sea mixed fisheries advice in 2010

It was noted that the EC and other fishery managers would like ICES to advise on mixed fishery options even though they were not yet prepared to act on the advice. Managers see the advice as important to begin a dialogue among managers and with stakeholders, which means that what is required now is advice which is illustrative of what could be provided in terms of mixed fisheries. ACOM considered the possibility of using the analysis of a 2010 workshop (Doc 5c) as the basis of advice in 2010 (is-

sued as part of the advice publication to go to press in January 2011. It was decided that this option is not practical and it is not necessary given that managers are not prepared to act on the advice.

ACOM agreed that in the long term preparation of mixed fishery advice should be integrated into the normal cycle of expert groups, review groups, advice drafting groups, and ACOM web conferences. However, this is not practical now for a variety of reasons including the timing of data submissions and the need for mixed fishery analyses to be based on catch options from single species advice. It will take additional time and careful planning to implement an iterative process such that single stock and mixed stock advice could be agreed together.

For now, a sequential process is feasible which single stock advice approved in June, mix stock analyses performed in late summer or early autumn, and mix stock advice drafted and approved during the autumn (e.g., by mid October).

ACOM agreed that mix stock advice should be provided in 2011 according to the schedule outlined in the previous paragraph.

Data and modelling for mixed fisheries analysis have been settled for the North Sea but not for other regions. The main problem in 2010 was the lack of French catch statistics, so no advice could be given on the basis of the work by WGMIXFISH in August/September.

In the future, WGMIXFISH will be asked to prepare advice directly, preferably before ADGNS. This is not yet possible due to late availability of the specific data for the MIXFISH models. And the model depends on the single species advice result.

For 2011, mixed fisheries advice can only be assembled later than the ADGNS. An ADG on mixed stock outside the ASC with a mid-October target was agreed.

Action points for mixed fisheries advice: arrange peer review of WGMIXFISH 2010 and plan advisory process for MIXFISH 2011 (ACOM agreement by October 2011).

6 Review of Performance of Advisory Services

a) Secretariat analysis

The Secretariat's review analysis of the performance of advisory services was introduced (Doc 6a). The document and the discussion that followed indicated that:

- The heavy load on the advisory system is an underlying problem – in relation to the availability of expertise and in relation to managing the process. This needs to be addressed in the external review of advisory services.
- There are data problems—data are missing or arrive late at working group meetings. There are already rules about the timing of data submissions, but they are not always followed. The assessment groups should name those not delivering data in time instead of just saying “some data missing”. PGCCDBS could be invited to the WGCHAIRS meeting.
- Another problem is that reports are not completed on time. It was agreed that the WG chair's handbook should suggest that chairs set aside time (a day or two) following WG meetings to complete their reports. This should be brought to the attention of chairs.
- The compression of the advice schedule for fisheries advice to the first half of the year (most of the work in a few months) was exacerbating the over-

work problem. This issue needs to be discussed with policy makers and managers. Are the advantages from a management perspective of receiving advice earlier in the year being realized? Are they worth it relative to the burden placed on scientists, and the potential risk of a negative effect on quality?

- In the future, ACOM meetings at the ASC should not be used as an opportunity to review and agree a large amount of advice. This detracts from the ASC, and the ACOM consultations are intended to address policy issues and planning, not as place to review technical matters including approval of advice.
- The stock status table should be reconsidered. A related problem is that there are inconsistencies between the stock and status in the table (often given as unknown) and narrative references to stock status (referred to as overfished). This occurs because a quantitative basis for stock status is being applied in the table and a qualitative basis is applied in the narrative. This inconsistency needs to be resolved or explained. A breakout group was convened to address the stock status table.
 - i) The report of the breakout group is attached to the meeting report.
 - ii) ACOM agreed the breakout group approach was moving in the right direction, but ACOM members raised several concerns.
 - iii) It was agreed that Chris Zimmerman would work with interested ACOM members to refine the approach.
 - iv) The incoming ACOM chair will circulate the refined proposal to ACOM, and seek feedback from stakeholders.
 - v) The proposal should be discussed with WGCHAIRS and the MIRAC.
- Multiannual advice could be a solution. Nowadays the institutes have the same or fewer human resources and a more demanding tasks.
- It was suggested that Mike S. to evaluate after his 3 years what works and what does not.

b) Round table - Feedback from ACOM members

ACOM members raised several points including:

- Advisory services should have a broader portfolio of ecosystem oriented products,
- More needs to be done to achieve consistency in advice. For example, the advice on deepwater fish stocks and elasmobranchs needs to be brought into line with the MSY approach.
- Concern was expressed about the reduction in reviews, ADGs, and Web Conferences at the end of the year. This seems to reflect a system stressed to the limit, burnout.
- There was concern that the ACOM process was reverting to something which resembles ACFM.
- The system is much stretched and the number of requests is increasing. ACOM member participation in web-conferences is decreasing. Even if the country has no interest in the stock, participation is needed for consistency in advice.

- The chair concluded that there is a danger that the quality of the advice is reducing. The problems the first year were solved by working very hard, but this cannot be kept up too long.

c) Participation in RGs, ADGs, ACOM approval of advice

i) Recruitment of reviewers

The problem of getting enough reviewers was discussed. It was noted that the reviewing workload is being unevenly carried by member countries with very few reviewers from some countries. One conclusion was that there needed to be more active management of the process, for example:

- List of potential reviewers need to be updated and expanded.
- Preparation of a document indicating the number and type (e.g., expertise or discipline) of reviewers each country is expected to provide in order to share the workload in an equitable manner. It was noted that ACFM used a similar approach.
- Reviews might be prioritized with less intense reviews for annual assessment updates. In essence, a distinction should be made between audits and peer reviews that require scientific judgments.
- ACOM acknowledged that compensation (honoraria) may be needed on a case by case basis for external reviewers. However, if this is to become a common practice, it should be guided by an agreed policy.
- ICES might consider a less strict interpretation of independence of reviewers. Currently, this means scientists from outside of the ICES community. Such reviewers are valuable, but scientists from within the ICES community that are independent (not involved, not from the same organization, similar criteria as used for journal referees) from the work being reviewed might also be used as independent reviewers

The reviews of fisheries assessment and ecological issues are different (calculations correct? /scientific approach correct?). We have to invest in bringing in new people.

The added value of RGs should be evaluated. ACOM recommends an evaluation from the secretariat to assess the amount of errors that are picked up by review group.

ACOM agrees that combined RG and ADG should be avoided in order to get proper error checks and independence.

- The external review of the advisory services should look into the utility of review groups.
- The allocation of participants between member countries is very variable. Should ACOM implement an allocation table for providing reviewers on a country basis?
- An audit of adherence to methodology could be done outside the review, peer review may not be needed every year.

ii) Analysis by Secretariat of participation in ADGs—overlap with EG and/or RG participation, participation from “countries” without a stake in the advice?

It was noted that there is a lot of overlap between EGs, RGs, and ADGs. Some is desirable, but on average, 70% of the members of ADGs were members of the EG or the

RG. There is also a problem with too few signing up for ADGs and low interest if the country is not a major stakeholder in the issue. ACOM members need to become more active in ADGs, including ADGs for which their country is not an important stakeholder.

ACOM should consider agreeing to a core group of ACOM ADG members in addition to an ACOM member as ADG chair.

iii) Solutions (e.g., updated list of reviewers, "Cadrin" model of assessment reviews, reviews by Secretariat staff dedicated to reviews, more alternates, agree on reviewers and ADG core group in annual work plan, pre-schedule multi-topic ADGs [monthly?], ...

The options in this agenda item were discussed and ACOM agreed in general they have merit. It was agreed that one or two multipurpose ADGs should be planned during October - November. This ADG(s) would be assigned drafting responsibility for the advice due about that time. This should help to take pressure of the ASC and Annual ACOM meeting.

d) Benchmarks- General discussion of problems and options for improvement

Several problems with the benchmarking process were discussed as follows:

- Workload - Can they be frequently enough, is preparation adequate?
- Can we maintain a multiyear schedule for benchmarking all stocks, or are there too many "exceptions?" (North Sea cod)
- Do they find flaws and solutions, or only reject? Are we going backward?
- Can we get enough external participants for free?
- Is it realistic to use benchmarks to encourage integration with ecosystem interactions? If not, what's a better option?
- Are stakeholders participating? Have benchmarks generated new data (i.e., data compilation workshops are within benchmarks)? Are stakeholders satisfied that their participation is worthwhile?
- Have or will Benchmark stifle creativity in working groups? Where is the ICES methods playground?

These problems were discussed in a breakout group, but further discussion is needed. It was suggested that ACOM conduct a review of the benchmarking process as an input to the external review of advisory services that is planned for 2011.

e) ACOM working procedures

Does ACOM need a reduced agenda and leave details to Secretariat and ACOM Leadership? It was agreed that ACOM meetings should be more strategic and less detailed. The agenda should distinguish agenda items for action, strategic discussion, and information (to be introduced with minimal discussion).

Strategic planning with a 3-4 days meeting in Copenhagen to solve a bunch of problems could take the load of the ACOM meetings (at the ASC and November) as a new way forwards (all kind of unexpected matters). A meeting in mid October could be made as a trial. This meeting could involve a nucleus group of 4 ACOM members (physical meeting), that can be asked for general matters such as drafting of advice for special requests. Planned for a week after the ASC and a week before ACOM for instance (cancel if not needed).

7 Development of the 2011 work plan

a) Assignment of North Sea herring advice to an ADG

EC would like to have the advice earlier in the year. Scientists dealing with these stocks would like to keep these stocks under ADG-North Sea.

ACOM to decide that NSAS and WBSS will be reviewed by RGBALTIC (is now under RGNS) and under the ADGBS instead of ADGNS, in order to be in agreement with Clients requests. NSAS will be released with the Baltic advice.

b) Mixed fisheries advice in 2011

A time table for preparing 2011 advice as discussed under agenda item 5.e was agreed.

c) Meetings with Clients

It was agreed to maintain MICC in April 2011 with Environmental and Fisheries Commission. It was useful to pursue a meeting in Brussels with DG Environments (also RTD). The MICC is open to all delegates and all public authorities using ICES advice. The list of invitations should be expanded to include such additional advice users.

d) ToRs and agenda for MIRAC-

The draft ToRs were noted.

e) ToRs and agenda for WGChairs-

Draft ToRs were noted

f) Maintaining Ecosystem Overviews-

The chair of SCICOM offered that the SCICOM Regional Seas Program would work with ACOM to update and keep current ecosystem overviews. It was noted that one purpose of the overviews was to encourage assessment working groups to take account of ecosystem conditions in assessments, and for ACOM to take ecosystems into account in advice. Thus, the ecosystem overviews should be discussed with WGCHAIRS to encourage the use of overviews so ecosystems might be better reflected in advice.

ACOM needs to formalize specific ToRs for SCICOM-SG Regional Seas. This process will be applicable for 2012.

g) Benchmarks

ACOM was informed that only one reviewer had been found for two benchmark workshops scheduled for 2011. Additional reviewers were suggested by ACOM members. It was agreed that compensation might be necessary to get reviewers on short notice.

It was agreed that the benchmarks should not be held unless there were at least two independent reviewers.

i) Planning for 2011 Benchmarks

ACOM agreed to the two workshops

ii) North Sea cod, North Sea turbot, North Sea brill, spiny dogfish

It was agreed that there needs to be a process to address current issues with the North Sea cod assessment before the next WG meeting, but it was up to the WG to propose a process for ACOM approval.

NS turbot and brill assessments produced by WGNEW are very welcome, and independent peer reviews by correspondence should be arranged in time for the methods to be used by the NS WG. However it was noted that data may not be available in time (this year). Similarly, a draft spiny dogfish assessment should be independently peer reviewed by correspondence. ACOM decided that these two stocks will have a peer review by reviewers not involved with this work but from ICES community. The aim is to incorporate the two WGNEW assessments in the 2011 WGNSSK if data is available.

The potential need for a benchmarking the *Pandalus* shrimp assessment was discussed. The WG has indicated it wants such a review. However, ACOM members from the countries most involved expressed concern about the workload. It was agreed that ACOM would look favorably on a firm/specific proposal from the working group and the aforementioned ACOM members if they decided it was appropriate.

iii) Review of new approaches

There needs to be a time and place for reviewing new approaches. This had been the role of the methods working group. Maybe this focus needs to be re-emphasized.

iv) Others

List for 2012 benchmarks

There is a persistent issue in the definition and the estimation of the plaice stocks, since large-scale mixing occurs between the continuum of plaice stock units ranging from the English Channel (VIIe) to the Kattegat (IIIa). WKFLAT 2010 recommended that further investigations are done towards combined-areas assessment and management. WGNSSK endorses this recommendation and suggests additional consideration of this during the benchmark WKFLAT 2012, or as a dedicated Study Group similar to the SGHERWAY.

A breakout group on benchmarks agreed with the proposal of 4 benchmarks:

Celtic Sea, Irish and West of Scotland cod stocks complete. There is new studies on genetic on West of Scotland cod; progress on discards for Celtic Sea cod;

Pelagic: the subgroup notes that Pelagic RAC has already contacted experts to work in collaboration in blue whiting benchmark, the sub group has some concerns about Sardine in VIIa and VIIa,b. There is a new survey going on in Div. Vii but the time series in 2012 will be too short to be used in the assessment.

Redfish benchmark: possibility to use GADGET for some stocks and new information on stock structure.

Anglerfish and flatfish: preparation is OK

The breakout group considered that the proposal for a Deep Water Celtic stocks is treated as a interbenchamark. ICES secretariat will need to find reviewers to work based on DEEPFISHMAN report. ACOM shows some concern about the translation from a project report to advice.

The breakout group agrees with salmon and *Nephrops* interbenchmark.

h) Protocol for reopening advice (e.g., summer/autumn surveys, other contingencies)

It was agreed that the workshop cancelled in 2010 needs to be conducted in 2011.

i) Planning with EC and STECF on use of experts

Concern about the duplication of effort, competition, “shopping for the answer” was discussed. It was noted that these problems had been addressed in 2008 and 2009, but with changes in staffing in the EC, there seems to be some backsliding.

Coordination with STECF needs to be a priority in 2011 and beyond.

ACOM adopted the 2011 workplan as a living document. Changes are inevitable, and ACOM will be consulted about changes as necessary.

8 Review of the Council Meeting

The ACOM chair gave a powerpoint overview of the October 2010 Council meeting. The draft report of the Council meeting was brought to ACOM attention.

a) Procedure for selecting a Vice Chair to replace Mark Tasker

ACOM was informed that the Council had agreed to an e-mail procedure for approving ACOM’s nomination for a vice chair to replace Mark Tasker. This could occur whenever ACOM agreed on a nomination.

b) CWG on Review of Transition of Advisory Services

The CWG identified 4 follow-up Actions that are being addressed. Most of the follow-up will be left to the external review in 2011.

c) Independent Review of Advisory Services in 2011-2012?

The plan for an external review was noted. The review will be planned and overseen by a CWG including the ACOM chair and head of Advisory Services as ex-officio members.

The council considered that the review might be completed in 2012.

ACOM considered the timing of the review. It was noted that the EC budget plan for 2013 and beyond would be formulated in 2011 and early 2012. The outcomes of the independent review of ICES might need to be addressed in the EC’s budget formulation. Therefore, delaying the completion of the independent review might undermine its value and effectiveness.

d) CWG on Economics and Social Sciences

i) A protocol for request for advisory services involving economics and social sciences

ACOM took note of the report of the CWG, in particular a conclusion that opened the door for pilot projects on the feasibility of advisory services involving economic analyses. The chair presented a protocol for deciding if a request for an advisory service that involved economic analyses was feasible for a pilot project. ACOM agreed with the protocol.

e) Status of MoUs

ACOM took note of the draft.

f) Observers at Expert Groups

ACOM took note that the Council had agreed to allow observers from management organizations that use ICES advice to attend WG meetings. It was noted that there is increasing expectation by Commissions, most member countries, and stakeholders that advisory services will be transparent including allowing observers to attend WG meetings. However, this is an issue for the Council to consider in the future.

The recent application by Oceana for observer status was discussed. It was noted that two Council members had objected, and the objection needed to be resolved. According to the protocol agreed by the Council, it was up to the ACOM chair to hold a web conference to resolve the matter. However, it had been suggested that the matter be considered by the Bureau (presumably in February) first. An ACOM member questioned what Oceana could add to ICES activity and pointed out that Oceana's website indicates they advocate pristine ecosystem, which is not ICES objective. The Chair responded that admission of observers is primarily about transparency, not about helping ICES with its program of work. It is true that the policy on observers says they should share ICES's goals, but this might be interpreted as ICES goal for high quality, objective scientific information in support of management. ICES should be neutral on values and policy outcomes.

No ACOM member made a formal objection to the admission of Oceana as an observer. However, the objection of two Council members still needs to be resolved.

g) Review of the Advice Plan for Advisory Services

ACOM chair noted that he had reviewed performance of the plan in his report to the Council. Good progress was made on many of the 34 priority actions in the plan. However, there was little progress made on some of the actions. In particular, there has been no progress on developing operational protocols for taking account of environmental changes, regime shifts, and/or climate change in biological reference points for fishery management advice. It was agreed that a workshop on the topic should be held with SCICOM. The SCICOM chair agreed. Max Cardinale tentatively agreed to co-chair with someone from SCICOM.

9 Marine Strategy Framework Directive– Next Steps for ICES

Vice Chair Eugene Nixon reviewed a plan for a joint ACOM/SCICOM steering committee on the MSFD. The steering committee should coordinate ICES activities (e.g., working groups including their ToR) and prepare a description of ICES capabilities and assets relative to the scientific needs of the member countries, regional organizations, EC DG Mare and Environment for implementation of the MSFD.

ACOM supported the plan for a steering committee lead by Eugene Nixon on behalf of ACOM.

10 Procedures concerning Expert Groups

a) Archiving working papers that are necessary to support an expert group meeting report

Doc 10.a was introduced. It made provisions to archive information in working papers that is necessary to understand or reproduce WG reports or Advice. WG should incorporate portions of working papers as necessary to make their reports transparent. If they agree with the entire content of the working paper and it is important to the report, it can be included as an appendix. Other working papers will be published (included in the annual CD and on the website) annually as authored papers with the other documents that support advisory services. ACOM agreed to the approach in document 10.a.

Background: There have recently been various cases where documentation, which is not part of an expert group report, is used as the basis for advice or is cited in the advice. In the interest of transparency such documentation must be made publicly available.

There are two situations which may call for different approaches:

Work done in the context of the expert group but is not integrated in the main report. Examples are presentations of analytical approaches which are for various reasons are not integrated in the main report or work done after the EG meeting, but which has been agreed by the EG. There may be various reasons why an EG does not want a detailed analysis to be integrated in the main report including that the EG has not accepted it as the basis for its work while still referring to it, or that authors want to reserve authorship for later publication.

Work done entirely outside EGs to underpin answers to specific requests. This may happen when special requests arrive too late to be included in TORs for EGs where the analytic background work may be outsourced (example: the response regarding the EC policy paper rules) or it may happen when ICES is asked to evaluate work from another source such as an independent evaluation of a management plan (example: Netherlands request to review an evaluation of the EC flatfish management plan).

In the consultations in September ACOM discussed the first category (basically relating to Working Documents submitted to EGs), the second may not have been so obvious at the time. It was also decided to consult with EG chairs whether they would agree to the suggested approach – this could be a point for the WGCHAIRS meeting.

Regarding the first category ACOM in the September consultations suggested:

Working documents to Expert Groups will be published by the following means (in priority order):

- If material from a working paper, following a consensus view from the Expert Group or Workshop, forms a substantive part of the work of the Group or supports conclusions of the Expert Group or Workshop, then the relevant parts of the working paper should be incorporated into the main part of the meeting or workshop report;
- However, if the working paper merely adds contextual background, and if the participants of the meeting or workshop agree with the entire working paper, it may be attached to the report as an annex.

- If the author of a working paper does not want the paper as an annex because it is to be published separately, it may be cited as “in press,” or “submitted,” or “to be submitted,” and “available from the author”). In case in the future the authors do not succeed to publish the work, this should be incorporated in the report.

Regarding the second category, the ACOM chair has together with the Secretariat decided to publish such material as ‘Report in support of ICES advice’ in the ordinary ACOM series with an ACOM no. These reports will be authored. It remains to be decided whether it is necessary to rephrase the normal disclaimer.

b) Citation of expert group reports and joint sponsorship of expert groups

The ACOM Chair introduced Doc 10b-d which raised concern that ICES policy on the citing WG reports as ICES and its routine acceptance of co-sponsors of working groups undermines ICES efforts to restrict advice to ACOM approved documents. How are users to know that citing ICES means different things depending on the type of document? How can ICES restrict the use of reports of WG groups by other organizations when the other organizations cosponsored the working group? If ICES intends to restrict the use of such reports, it should specify conditions for co-sponsorship. However, this might result in other organization setting up their own groups in competition with ICES, instead of cooperating.

ACOM took note of the issue raised by the chair, and agreed it needed further consideration.

11 Toward a policy on Eco-Certification

ACOM chair reported that he had reported to the Council ACOM’s deliberations at the meeting at the ASC in 2010 (see doc 8.a.2). The Council referred the matter back to ACOM to recommend a policy.

There was a small breakout group on Eco-certification. It concluded that there was not an immediate need for a policy because there’s only been one request so far. In the short term ACOM can handle requests on a case by case basis. One issue with Eco-certification request are that they are either indirectly or possibly in the future directly requests from the private sector. Today, ICES has little or no history with private sector requests. Since these requests generate work, often on governmental resources in a manner that is not evenly shared among member countries, and because they are ultimately generated by the private sector, there is an issue of who should pay, and how much (full cost recovery to ICES, cost recovery for the time scientists from the ICES community)?

ACOM agreed that the policy on requests for eco-certification should be considered in the context of a business model for advisory services that includes a policy on private sector requests and all aspects of cost recovery.

12 Status report on SCICOM–ACOM Initiatives

a) Marine Spatial Planning

Eugene Nixon reported on the SIASM workshop in Lisbon.

b) Biodiversity

Planning of the initiative is progressing. A workshop is planned.

The Council has approved funding only for the February workshop. Additional members for the Steering group were invited.

c) Global Stock Assessment Review

The first workshop was held in Nantes. A group of 5 scientists were selected to the lead the initiative to completion.

The SCICOM chair requested that someone of the ACOM leadership join the steering committee. Either Vice Chair O'Brien or Azevedo will join the group.

Under this agenda item, an opportunity for another initiative was introduced, probably with SCICOM. EC RTD is soliciting proposals for up to one million Euros for projects to popularize marine science that is relevant to the CFP [FP 7 KBBE Call 2011-5].

Three themes or thrust might be proposed:

- 1) Making ICES advice more user friendly, understandable, visually attractive. This thrust would include modernization of the technology used to produce advice so that files and databases could be manipulated for multiple purposes. This effort would have to be coordinated with, and build on, ICES strategic investment in technology modernization, and the likelihood of new funding to popularize advice provided by the renewal of the MoU with EC.
- 2) Transitioning research to operations. EC RTD funded research project reports would be reviewed by the ICES community of scientists involved in advice to determine their potential utility in advice. Training programs and decision support tools (e.g., operational programs) would be developed to enhance the use of research results as a scientific basis of ICES advice (also useful for STECF).
- 3) Relating emerging conclusions of high profile scientific papers on marine ecosystem to European Fisheries and outcomes from EC RTD funded research. In recent years, several high profile scientific papers have raised concern about the state of global fisheries and marine ecosystem. Most notably, these papers have pointed toward fishing down the food chain, the disappearance of large fish, and commercial extinction of fisheries by 2048. These papers have received a great deal of media attention, which has probably had more influence on public perceptions about fisheries and marine ecosystems than any other science.

The ICES scientific community would address these high profile conclusion in light of European research and data collection, much of which is supported by the EC RTD and/or the CFP Data Collection Framework. To what degree are fisheries and marine ecosystems in Europe are experiencing the same fate as described in high profile papers? Are the conclusions in these papers supported by the scientific evidence?

What do these papers really mean about the state of marine ecosystems and fisheries? Based on deliberations of the ICES scientific community, which is open to all European scientist and scientist worldwide, authoritative white papers will be adopted by ICES (as a consensus view of the scientists of 20 member countries, most EU fishing nations, and several important non-EU fishing countries (e.g., Norway, Iceland, Russia, USA, Canada), and these will be popularized to better inform the public in a balanced and objective manner about the state of marine fisheries in Europe in the context of emerging high profile views about marine ecosystems.

- The ACOM Chair and the head of Advisory Services of the Secretariat informed ACOM that the Council and the Bureau were currently considering the circumstances under which ICES should submit proposals on behalf of the entire ICES scientific community. The primary issue is the possibility of ICES competing with its members, who might also plan to submit a proposal.
- ACOM supported submitting a proposal lead by ICES (or ACOM or ACOM and SCICOM) without prejudice to the issue of competition with labs in member countries. That is, ACOM was supportive if the President, Bureau or Council determined it was appropriate after consideration of the issue of potential competition with institutions in member countries. ICES could perform the tasks well, they are important to be performed in a balanced, objective and transparent manner, and the entire ICES community should have the opportunity to participate that would result from an ICES lead project.

13 Toward Integrated Observing Systems for Ecosystems [Including Fisheries]

a) **STECF review of surveys- Reaction to report of 14 September meeting ICES activity under the DCF**

A report was given of the 14 September STECF meeting on surveys. The general conclusion was that the meeting did not accomplish much because criteria for prioritizing surveys are not very useful, and information about the surveys is incomplete. ACOM reiterated that evaluating surveys funded by the DCF is very important in terms of the advice given by ICES and financial support in member countries. Thus, it is worthwhile for ICES to do the best job it can to support processes to prioritize and integrate surveys and other data collection activity under the DCF.

b) **Planning for an Integrated Ecosystem Observing System for the Baltic Sea**

ACOM was briefed on the activity concerning the design of an integrated ecosystem observing system for the Baltic Sea. At some stage there will need to be a kick off workshop open to all scientists, but currently ICES is engaged in diplomacy with the aim of partnering with HELCOM in this activity. Such a partnership should be mutually beneficial since HELCOM currently coordinates an observing program to support the Baltic Sea Action Plan, and ICES coordinates a program to support the CFP, largely substantial financial support from the CFP.

ACOM reaffirmed support for integrated ecosystem observing systems.

14 Evolution of Fisheries Advice in 2011

ACOM was informed that concerns about the implementation of the MSY approach had been expressed during the recent MICC meeting and the Council meeting. The main concern is that the table summarizing catch advice for fisheries undermines the value of managements. In some cases, managers intend to use these plans for several more years, presumably when they are satisfied that the plans are consistent with the precautionary approach.

While ICES in general favours management plans, using them as the sole basis of advice has been problematic because agreement to the plans by all competent management authorities is not always complete or clear. Also, some plans have not been evaluated relative to the precautionary approach, and few plans have been evaluated relative to MSY.

ACOM agreed that in the future more qualitative evaluations of plans was worthwhile when quantitative/simulation analysis is not feasible. Qualitative analyses might comment on the consistency of reference points in HCRs with precautionary and MSY reference points. It is probably necessary to also comment on the implications of TAC constraints in terms of performance of MP HCRs.

It was agreed that the Secretariat would prepare a list of candidate plans (on a stock by stock basis) with an evaluation of their performance (either qualitative or quantitative) relative to the precautionary approach. The list will be circulated to ACOM for comment, and to managers for confirmation. If there is no objection to a plan as a basis of catch advice, singular advice based on the MP will be given. If there is an objection, multiple catch options will be given in the summary of advice as in 2010.

Since the performance of the EC's HCR rules in the policy statement is not in general precautionary, they should not be considered as a candidate HCR MP.

15 Incorporating environmental information (e.g., climate change, regime shifts) into fisheries advice.

It was agreed that a workshop or study group should be set up with ACOM to make recommendations on incorporating environmental information into fisheries advice. Max Cardinale expressed interest in co-chairing on behalf of ACOM.

16 Expressing uncertainty in assessments and advice (recall the RAC's request)

The ACOM chair reminded ACOM that fishery stakeholders (e.g., RACs) were interested in ICES doing more to express the certainty or uncertainty of advice.

A presentation on the subject presented to the 2009 MIRAC was brought to ACOM's attention (Doc 16.1). It was well received by the 2009 MIRAC, and there would be an expectation that ICES was pursuing the approach or some alternative approach.

ACOM agreed that there needs to be an effort to express uncertainty in data, assessments and advice along the lines outlined in Doc 16.1 although it was not wed to this specific approach.

RACs traffic light issue. We should dig deeper into issue. We should probably distinguish between advice and assessment. It is important for running a sound business that the industry is informed about the quality of our advice.

ACOM to pursue this but there were no volunteers to take the lead in the process. The decision to look into this further is to be communicated at the next MIRAC meeting.

17 Quality assurance of advice

The ACOM chair pointed out that ICES had a strong focus on quality assurance in the mid 2000s including adoption of a quality policy, and funding of quality assurance projects.

One of the reasons for the reform of advisory services was to improve quality assurance, such as by having review groups. However, more needs to be done. There are unfortunate examples of recent mistakes and inconsistencies.

ACOM was informed that the Secretariat budget included funds for technology modernization with quality assurance as one of the major objectives.

ACOM reaffirmed the importance of quality assurance and welcomed the funded initiative by the Secretariat.

18 FIMPAS update

Paul Connolly presented an update on the FIMPAS project. This is a Dutch project to consider fishery management options within Dutch MPAs in the North Sea. The project involved data assembly, economic analyses, and workshops with stakeholders. The result will be recommendations from the workshops for fishery management measures in the MPAs.

Following the workshops, it will be up to ACOM to convene an ADG and to approve advice. The advice should not be in the form of recommendations what should or should not be done unless there are well defined objectives and criteria.

The advice might be in the form of answers to questions from the Dutch authorities. ICES should respond according to the available scientific information. The Advice given in the German IMPAS project was of this nature. Alternatively, ICES may want to give advice in relationship to the recommendations from the workshop. This type of advice would be on the reliability of the scientific information used by the workshops and the logical consistency of the recommendations with the science.

One product of FIMPAS will be an economic impact analysis of recommended regulations in the MPAs, such as exclusion of certain types of fishing. Thus it would be feasible for ACOM to provide an advisory service in the form of an economic analyses as a pilot project, in accordance with guidance from the Council and the protocol for deciding on a project given in Doc 08 ppt, slide 24. ICES would need to have the economic analyses peer reviewed.

ACOM agreed that the FIMPAS economic analysis was a feasible pilot project to demonstrate ICES openness to projects involving economic analyses according the agreed protocol.

19 ICES website redesign (Bill Turrell, ACOM rep on redesign WG)

Handled by correspondence. ACOM members are encouraged to respond to email that will be distributed by Bill Turrell on this matter.

20 Nomination and elections

a) Nomination a Vice-Chair to replace Mark Tasker

There was no nomination of a vice chair to replace Mark Tasker. ACOM members were encouraged to identify candidates. The process agreed by the Council is open ended for appointing a vice chair. When ACOM has a nomination (which will be agreed by e-mail), it will be submitted to the Council for e-mail approval.

b) Approval of Expert Group Chairs

The following expert group chairs were approved: [Secretariat- insert list]

A chair for the WGEEL needs to be identified. When this is done, a nominee will be circulated to ACOM for approval.

ACOM approved Joel Vigneau (France) as new Co-Chair for WGCSE and Jan Jaap Poos (The Netherlands) as new Chair for WGNEW

21 Any other business (AOB)

a) Scheduling ACOM meeting at ASC

It was agreed that future ACOM meetings at ASCs should have less advice for approval so that there's more time for scientific sessions.

b) Scheduling Annual ACOM meeting

ACOM indicated that 3.5 days was about the right length for an annual meeting, and meeting in November is a good time. ACOM indicated it would like more emphasis on strategic matters. Also, action items, items (strategic) for discussion, and information items should be distinguished.

It was agreed that 2011 meeting would be 15–18 November 2011.

22 Closing of the meeting

The ACOM chair thanked Mark Tasker for his dedication and outstanding service to ICES advice over many years, including a year as chair of ACE and 3 years as ACOM Vice Chair. As it was Fatima Cardador last meeting before her retirement, ACOM gave her a round of applause to thank her. The Chair also thanked his other vice chairs, the Secretariat and all of ACOM for their support and commitment. He noted:

- That ICES and ACOM face many challenges with a heavy workload being the most obvious. He noted that a heavy workload is a reality for scientists and people affiliated with government programs, such as resource management, everywhere, and to some degree we will have to live with it.
- He also identified two systemic problems that need to be addressed to make and keep advisory services healthy.

- One is the need for a realistic business model. At the moment, those who request advice do not pay the full cost, and ICES does not control the resources that are needed to fulfill commitments. Volunteerism has worked for many years when funding sources in member countries were simple (traditional fisheries labs had one source of funding, and it was mostly to support fishery management scientific needs) and when there was a sense that the advice workload and the benefits were being shared equitably. Neither is the case today.
- The problem is made worse by member countries that both drive the agenda of the EC, and complain about it, leaving ICES caught in the middle. For example, it is member country managers that wanted most advice in the first half of the year, but scientists from the same member countries now complain to ICES as if it was ICES idea, not the EC's idea. In some sense, both the EC and ICES are caught in the middle of disagreements in priorities at the national level.
- These are the sort of problems that a sensible business model needs to help address.
- Another challenge for the future is maintaining and gaining relevance with the community that needs scientific information in support of environmental and ecosystem concerns.
- For years, ICES has been modeling advisory processes for the environment and ecosystems after the processes that are demanded for fisheries management (such approval of advice by a committee with National representation). However, managers concerned with the environment and ecosystems do not seem to value this model. They are operating in a different culture, and often they have their own processes for developing advice from scientific information.
- If ICES tries to impose a fisheries model for producing scientific information that is useful to support non-fishery customers, it will probably lose.
- While ICES faces some serious challenges, there's a lot that's positive about the situation.
- ICES has a great mission, which is serviced by a great scientific community. It has good facilities, a lot of data (never enough, but a lot more than most marine ecosystem scientists can dream of), support staff in the Secretariat, a good journal and other publication opportunities, as well as symposia, and it is healthy financially.
- The fundamentals are sound. If ICES continues to be willing to evolve and try new ways of doing business, even take chances, be open minded about cultures, experiences and ways of doing things outside of the traditional ways of fisheries, ICES will be even more successful in the future.

Annex I List of Participants

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Annex II Agenda

Agenda

Third Annual Meeting of ICES Advisory Committee

16-19 November 2010

(1030 Tuesday-1300 Friday)

Tuesday 10.30-12.30

1. Opening of Meeting
2. Review of membership (including alternates) and meeting attendance (including observers)
3. Review of Agenda
4. Minutes from September ACOM Consultations
5. Pending Advisory Services Doc 5.0 Overview of remaining 2010 advice
 - a. European eel advice (Erkki Ikonen, ADG chair)
 - b. Herring IIIa management plan
 - c. Ecosystem Indicators
 - d. Evaluation of Management Plan for S. Hake, *Nephrops* and Anglerfish
 - e. North Sea mixed fisheries advice in 2010

Tuesday 13.30-15.30

6. Review of Performance of Advisory Services
 - a. Secretariat analysis
 - b. Round table- Feedback from ACOM members
 - c. Participation in RGs, ADGs, ACOM approval of advice
 - Recruitment of reviewers
 - Analysis by Secretariat of participation in ADGs—overlap with EG and/or RG participation, participation from “countries” without a stake in the advice?
 - Solutions (e.g., update list of reviewers, “Cadrin” model of assessment reviews, reviews by Secretariat staff dedicated to reviews, more alternates, agree on reviewers and ADG core group in annual work plan, pre-schedule multi-topic ADGs [monthly?], ...
 - d. Benchmarks- General discussion of problems and options for improvement
 - e. ACOM working procedures
 - f. Other issues (quality and consistency?)

Tuesday 16.00-17.30

7. Development of the 2011 work plan
 - a. Assignment of North Sea herring advice to an ADG
 - b. Mixed fisheries advice in 2011
 - c. Meetings with Clients
 - d. ToRs and agenda for MIRAC
 - e. ToRs and agenda for WGChairs
 - f. Maintaining Ecosystem Overviews
 - g. Benchmarks
 - Planning for WKBENCH2011
 - North Sea cod, North Sea turbot, North Sea brill, spiny dogfish
 - Review of new approaches
 - Others
 - h. Protocol for reopening advice (e.g., summer/autumn surveys, other contingencies)
 - i. Planning with EC and STECF on use of experts
 - j. Other issues
 - k. Adoption of the Workplan and resolutions

Wednesday 09.00-11.00

8. Review of the Council Meeting
 - a. Draft report of the Council Meeting if available
 - b. Procedure for selecting a Vice Chair to replace Mark Tasker
 - c. CWG on Review of Transition of Advisory Services
 - d. Independent Review of Advisory Services in 2011-2012
 - e. CWG on Economics and Social Sciences
 - A protocol for request for advisory services involving economics and social sciences
 - f. Status of MoUs
 - g. Observers at Expert Groups
 - h. Review of the Advice Plan for Advisory Services

Wednesday 11.30-12.30

9. Marine Strategy Framework Directive- Next Steps for ICES

Wednesday 13.30-15.00

10. Procedures concerning Expert Groups
 - a. Archiving working papers that are necessary to support an expert group meeting report
 - b. Citation of expert group reports
 - c. Joint sponsorship of expert groups- what does it mean?
 - d. Oversight of expert groups- keeping them scientific, not advisory
11. Toward a policy on Eco-Certification

Wednesday 15.30-17.30

12. Status report on SCICOM-ACOM Initiatives
 - a. Marine Spatial Planning
 - b. Biodiversity
 - c. Global Stock Assessment Review
13. Toward Integrated Observing Systems for Ecosystems [Including Fisheries]
 - a. STECF review of surveys- Reaction to report of 14 September meeting ICES activity under the DCF
 - b. Planning for an Integrated Ecosystem Observing System for the Baltic Sea

Thursday 09.00-11.00

14. **Evolution of Fisheries Advice in 2011**
 - a. **Estimating MSY reference points**
 - b. **Updating the formula for Transitional MSY catch option**
 - c. **Nature of advice (e.g., catch options, use of management plans)**
 - d. **WKFRAME2 and WKMSYREF**

Thursday 11.30-13.00

15. Incorporating environmental information (e.g., climate change, regime shifts) into fisheries advice
16. Expressing uncertainty in assessments and advice (recall the RAC's request)
17. Quality assurance of advice
18. Investments in the Secretariat capacity to support advisory services

Thursday 14.00-17.30

19. Breakout groups

Friday 09.00-11.00

20. Reports from Breakout Groups
21. Decisions on topics not yet decided

Friday 11.30-13.00

22. ICES website redesign (Bill Turrell, ACOM rep on redesign WG)
23. Nomination and elections
 - a. Nominating a Vice Chair to replace Mark Tasker
 - b. Approval of Expert Group Chairs
24. Any other business (AOB)
 - a. Scheduling ACOM meeting at ASC
 - b. Scheduling Annual ACOM meeting
25. Closing of the meeting