

Report from: Kenny Coull

Report date: 27 April 2012

Event: MYFISH (MSY variants and constraints)

Place: University of Vigo, Spain

Date: 23 – 26 April 2012

Organiser: Danish National Institute for Aquatic Research

Participants: Partners in FP7 MYFISH project, including industry stakeholders, Kenny Coull (NWWRAC)

Purpose: **Launch event for MYFISH (defining MSY variants and constraints)**

BACKGROUND

This event formed part of the launch of a European project (MYFISH) which is financed under the EU's 7th Framework Programme, managed by the Danish National Institute for Aquatic Research. It brings together people from 31 partner institutions, actively engaging relevant European stakeholders, policy-makers and researchers through joint workshops and events. The NWWRAC has only recently signed up to participate in this work with future engagement to be confirmed.

The project aim is described as "maximising yield of fisheries while balancing ecosystem, economics and social concerns". Further details of this project can be viewed at the following link; http://ec.europa.eu/research/bioeconomy/agriculture/projects/myfish_en.htm

AGENDA AND REPORT

The first day and a half related to the work of the General Assembly (full partners) with industry, NGO and other stakeholders engaging for next two and a half days for workshop type participation.

Introductions

The first part consisted of a series of presentations which were designed to provide participants with background and detail that were to be relevant to the workshops scheduled for the following two days.

Presentations included;

- What does MSY mean
- Realistic estimates of MSY
- MSY when the catch of one fish affects that of another
- MSY from an ecosystem perspective
- Good Environmental Status as we aim for MSY
- Maximising economic yield in fisheries
- MSY in a societal perspective
- Desirable targets & constraints from an industry perspective

Workshop 1 (Defining MSY variants and constraints)

For this workshop, participants were split into 4 different discipline groups;

- Ecosystem concerns
- Stock interaction concerns
- Economic concerns
- Social & implementation concerns

Each group set about developing a series of options which could be utilised in determining MSY variants and constraints as well as possible management measures and in doing so were asked to focus on three aspects of MSY management;

- Maximum yield
- Sustainability
- Management measures

A follow up common discussion forum then had an opportunity to comment on the ideas and suggestions brought forward from the discipline groups with a view to obtaining some sort of consensus as to which ones merited consideration at Wk2.

Workshop 2 (Regionally relevant MSY variants, constraints and management measures)

After reflection by the Steering Group, a list of potential variants and constraints, developed from WK1 were put to the regional groups for discussion and evaluation, using an assessment method developed by Imperial College, London.

The groups were initially asked to;

- Determine the relevance of each one to their area
- Consider how easy to use, data availability, and rate the uncertainty issue of data
- How responsive would each be to potential management measures.

The group then prioritised the variants and constraints put to them in relation to their suitability for their region. The final exercise was to evaluate a list of possible management measure (developed by Steering Group) but only the mediterranean region found time to complete this task.

OUTCOMES

Although initial details of the exercise were not presented, it was pointed out that "inclusive governance" shared priority in many regions while the relatively simple concept, "maximise yield", scored much lower. The outcomes of the regional reflections will now be studied in more detail by the Steering Group. They will draw on further analysis processes in the assessment method developed by Imperial College, London in order to provide a more realistic list of suitable options for further consideration as the project advances.

SUMMARY

While the regional group discussion seemed a perfectly sensible procedure, reality showed that lack of explanation and background detail for the listed MSY variants and constraints presented, resulted in differing interpretations on the proposal. During the early stages of these discussions it also appeared that individual preferences for priorities influenced the judgements on the relevance, data availability and descriptiveness. While acknowledging that organisers were very keen to stress the importance of industry involvement, it came as no surprise that in the summary stage of the event outcomes, two references were made, suggesting that Industries input had to be balanced against that of others.

Hopefully, the lessons learnt from this exercise will ensure that future assessment of the options that are selected for advancement will be conducted in a more considered way by all.

Given the composition and size of the group, industry needs to ensure future participation (through the RAC's) so that their views and interests are considered through the life of this project.