

To: NSRAC and NWWRAC

From: Barrie Deas

Subject: Brief Note on the Meeting between NSRAC/NWWRAC and ICES, held in Copenhagen on 26th/27th January, to discuss the establishment of Regional Data Task Forces

1. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of establishing regional task forces that would address the data deficiencies that are the principal reason why some 60% of ICES assessments do not have analytical status. It is envisaged that the regional task forces would involve fisheries scientists, RACs and fisheries managers from the relevant member states.
2. There was a high degree of agreement between ICES and the RACs on the way forward.
3. It was agreed that ICES, the two RACs and fisheries managers from the member states should now be invited to a coordination meeting to agree terms of reference. The date tentatively set for the meeting is 31st March/1st April beginning at lunchtime and finishing at lunchtime. A room may be available in ICES headquarters.
4. The meeting was attended, amongst others, by the Chair of ACOM, the head of ICES Advisory Services and the Chairs of the respective assessment groups, indicating the importance accorded by ICES to this initiative.

5. There was a high degree of agreement on the work required:

- Priority fisheries should be identified
- Single or mixed fishery assessments?
- Score data and assessments for quality on a matrix that has been developed through cooperation between ICES and the Baltic and pelagic RACs
- Choice of assessment method
- Decision on which data sets require improvement
- Identify additional useful data and industry knowledge
- Identify changing fleet behaviours and patterns
- The emphasis would be on a systematic approach
- In many regards this initiative is seen as resetting or rebooting the assessment system damaged by the cycle of poor data, low TACs leading to poorer and in some cases corrupted data, leading to poor assessments

6. All parties are committed to avoiding duplication with other initiatives, not least the Data Collection Framework Regulation

7. Colm Lordan's work on identifying specific data deficiencies stock by stock, in area VI and VII was considered a model of how to proceed.

8. During discussions it became apparent that the task forces could become the vehicle appended to the RACs that could allow the science/industry dialogue that has been to some degree been missing from the RACs to date.

9. It is envisaged that the task forces will dovetail and lead into the ICES benchmark process where individual stock assessments are periodically scrutinised in depth.

10. Moving forward:

- ICES will produce a note on the meeting. This will be circulated
- The next step is the meeting on 31st March/1st April (subject to confirmation from the RACs) which will launch the regional Task Forces, define terms of reference and begin the dialogue.
- It is of the utmost importance that fisheries managers from the member states are invited and participate
- ICES will provide the RACs with an ICES contact on this issue
- The Coordination meeting in March/April and then subsequently the individual regional task forces will determine how the initiative should move forward.
- We should think of linkages with STECF

Copenhagen, 27th January 2011