

REPORT
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
MARM – MADRID
9th of September 2010
10:00-17:00 h

Chairman: Sam Lambourn
Rapporteur: Alexandre Rodríguez

1. Welcome

The Chairman of the NWWRAC, Sam Lambourn, welcomed all attendees to the meeting and thanked the members for their high rate of attendance. The quorum was reached for the adoption of decisions.

Mr. Lambourn introduced Joanna McGrath to the members. Joanna is the newly appointed Executive Assistant on Administration and Finance to the NWWRAC Secretariat in replacement of Kristel Adriaenssens. Sam wished Joanna a smooth adaptation to the work of the RACs.

The following representatives acted as substitutes to the usual seat holders on behalf of their respective Organisations:

- Lloyd Austin replaced Kara Brydson (RSPB Scotland / BirdLife International)
- Bruno Dachicourt replaced Jacques Bigot (European Transport Federation - EU)

Arianna Broggiato introduced herself as the new representative of the European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD) to the NWWRAC, in substitution of Charline Gaudin.

The full list of participants and the Organisations they represent is detailed in Annex I.

- Apologies: The Chairman passed the floor to Alexandre Rodríguez, from the Secretariat, who relayed the following apologies for absence: Anton Dekker and Geert Meun (DFO), Eamon Mangan (DPEM - French Administration), Jacques Bigot (ETF), and Margaret Downey (Mna Na Mára).

- Adoption of agenda: The Chairman proposed the following agenda changes so that the order of topics to be discussed would appear in a more coherent way:

* To move point 4 after point 7 (Regional Task Force to address Data Deficiency) so all key areas could be dealt with before the main work priorities for the second half of the year were identified. Therefore, points 5, 6 and 7 would be brought forward.

* To remove item 10 since there was no scientific representation from IFREMER at the meeting and therefore, nobody to present the biological aspects of sea bass fishery in France. It was decided that this topic would be postponed for presentation at the next Working Group 3 meeting and a scientist from IFREMER would be invited to give the presentation.

The agenda was adopted with the above mentioned changes.

- Adoption of minutes of the last meeting (Paris, 7th of July): The meeting report from the previous meeting was signed off without changes and considered a fair record of discussions and agreed actions.

2. Report from the Secretariat on administrative and financial issues (P. Gordon)

Pádraig Gordon, BIM advisor on financial matters for the NWWRAC, made a brief summary of the state of the accounts in Year 5 (Oct 2009-Sep 2010) and presented the budget proposal for NWWRAC's financial Year 6 (Oct 2010-Sep 2011).

The complete presentation is available for consultation on the meeting site¹. Currently, the Secretariat is working on the budget amendment for Year 5 and the preparation of the budget for Year 6.

- Update on the budget for Year 5

Mr. Gordon explained how the level of expenditure incurred under different budget headings created a need to request from the Commission a formal amendment of the Year 5 grant agreement. The amendment, which followed instructions stated in the Financial Regulations as well as the Grant Agreement, involved the movement between budget headings of more than 20% of the original amounts. The total amount of the budget however, remained unchanged.

Previous work experience with the Commission Team and better mutual understanding of implementation of rules and work practices were highlighted as a positive factor which has greatly helped the Secretariat in its work of the present year.

¹ See: http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings_ENG/Navigation.php?id=411&language=English

In relation to the amount of income received, Mr. Gordon explained that the reason for the outstanding budget amount is because of unpaid membership fees.

- Proposed budget for Year 6

Mr. Gordon explained the conceptual differences between non-eligible (i.e. contributions in kind) and eligible (i.e. Commission's and members contributions) costs. He went on to explain that the increase in the amount of expenditure foreseen for Year 6 (mainly staff and translation costs) is largely due to the salaries of two Secretariat full-time staff members paid by the NWWRAC as well as a foreseen increase in translations orders.

In compliance with the RAC governing rules, Mr. Gordon asked the members to show their approval (in principle) for the proposed budget, in order for it to be submitted before the end of September 2010.

He also asked those members who have not yet done so, to send their membership subscriptions immediately.

- Questions from the floor:

Lorcan O'Cinnéide asked for a further explanation on the deficit from Year 3. Mr. Gordon explained that following a previous accord from the Executive Committee of September 2009, the deficit, whilst indicated separately as a non-eligible cost, is in fact part of the membership fee payments.

Mr. O'Cinnéide also posed a question asking when the membership fees would be increased. He praised the work of the Secretariat on seeking to ensure continuous funding but wondered if the current review involving the scope and nature of RAC activities could have implications on the budget and would a revisit be necessary in the near future.

Mr. Gordon replied that this is a proposal budget, based on a "photo shot" of the current structure as it is now and on the basis of no changes. Obviously a change in the structure of the RAC could make it necessary to amend the budget accordingly but it is too early to know if there will be substantial modifications to the current structure.

In relation to the increase in income for the NWWRAC, Mr. Gordon reminded the members that the NWWRAC Secretariat had been holding discussions during the first half of 2010 with the Commission and its appointed external consultants on identifying current financial constraints and budget needs for the RACs to operate. A strong message that the existing maximum amount of 250,000 euros is clearly insufficient has been passed on. However, this will require a change in the current legislative framework.

In relation to the timing of an implementation of increased membership fees, Mr. Gordon suggested that the most realistic approach in the short term would be a proposal for an increase of the membership fees in Year 7. This proposal would involve an increase on each membership category by 50 euros; and an increase of Member State contributions by 700 euros. Mr. Gordon also warned that if the Commission does not allocate more funding it is very likely that the fees would be raised again by the same amount in Year 8.

The NWWRAC Chairman and the Executive Committee members perceived that the proposed budget for Year 6 as presented by the Secretariat was clear and realistic and therefore, it was declared approved in principle by consensus.

The Chairman also found that all proposals made from the floor were very useful and said that they were all valid points that should be considered in the near future.

3. Review of Structure and Functioning of the NWWRAC

The Chairman set the scene and invited Lorcan O’Cinnéide to brief the members on his proposal launched at the Paris meetings to discuss this topic at the Executive Committee. He also encouraged all members and observers to participate in the discussions that would follow and give their preliminary views and thoughts on the matter.

Mr. O’Cinnéide expressed his concern of the last meetings held in Paris, during which the NWWRAC seemed to be stuck in the loop of routine, reacting to proposals of the Commission and producing advice neither substantial nor effective enough in many cases.

He made it clear that a re-think of Working Groups work and content was needed. He suggested that the geographical focus should be retained but proceedings should improve in order to get the maximum output from the discussions.

The following difficulties were highlighted as a matter of concern:

- Difficulties to gather or involve scientists on a permanent basis (to date, the NWWRAC has only been able to ensure attendance on an ad hoc “meeting per meeting” basis)
- Mandate that members have and bring to the RAC, which obstructs progress for open discussion of cross-border issues.
- Reactive chain of Commission’s proposal or query-NWWRAC response
- Current working system becoming obsolete: need to develop new ways of working

The Chairman supported Lorcan’s views making it clear that there is no intention to alter the regional structure and the aim is to keep our tenor as grassroots organisations.

Mr. Lambourn stressed that perhaps it would be a good idea to put more emphasis on a single-based topic Focus Group since they have been proved to work more efficiently. Mr. Lambourn opened the floor for comments.

- Open discussion from the floor:

Thierry Lepêtre suggested that we would first need to know the new system of functioning and structure intended by the Commission before taking a decision. He also showed dissatisfaction at the level of response from the Commission to NWWRAC advice. They do not seem to take into account many of the arguments and responses provided, which can prove to be a waste of time and resources.

Barrie Deas agreed that this topic was a real and substantial issue.

Regarding the functioning of the RAC in general, we spend too much time “fire fighting” in topics following the agenda set by the Commission rather than providing worthy and coherent advice on key topics. We should make an effort to think about how to provide evidence-based advice. Previous experience tells us that the best way to do that is to have discussion papers and formal proposals in writing, prepared and circulated before the meetings. The NWWRAC has generally worked well when good papers were put forward in advance, therefore, we need to prepare ourselves for this task and carry out preparatory work with ICES.

Regarding the review of the current structure, Mr. Deas acknowledged that the area-based working groups often do not seem to achieve their original objectives. He agreed with the Chairman that a shift towards single-topic based Focus Groups would allow us to make better use of our budget, without abandoning the regional dimension required given the size and diversity of stakeholders involved in our RAC.

Lloyd Austin agreed with Barrie and Lorcan in supporting the change to Focus Groups in order to provide opportunities and make better use of our resources. We are creating an opportunity to move towards areas where we can be more productive and make progress in the building of consensus.

Jacques Pichon agreed that our way of working as a RAC was becoming quite repetitive and that agendas of Working Group meetings showed almost the same content with slight variations. We are not necessarily relevant to real work priorities established by the Commission. He asked for more flexibility in the organisation of Working Group meetings (e.g. hold 4 WGs in one day) and stated that it was evident that there is more enthusiasm in single topic based Focus Groups (e.g. effort management in VIIfg), as all attendees are engaged with the topic discussed.

Brendan Price supported the need to focus on horizontal issues of common interest for both catching sector and other interest groups (such as biodiversity, etc.) and deal with them as a matter of priority. NWWRAC agendas are now very limited to fishing interests.

The representative of the DG MARE, Ken Patterson, reminded members that the Commission acts upon scientific advice and since changes in management measures need to be set in place, this results in members being often disappointed by legislative unpopular changes. The DG MARE appreciates the ambition of the NWWRAC to improve their working methods and offers to work together in an open and cooperative spirit. Mr. Patterson highlighted the positive example of proposal of management measures for Nephrops in Porcupine whereby a working dialogue was reflected in the fishing industry working in collaboration with scientific organisations and providing a good piece of advice supported by science. On the other side of the coin, as a negative example he mentioned the Irish Sea sole and whiting stocks whereby the Commission asked for advice in 2009 and did not receive a response until July 2010 and this response was more a holding than a conclusive response.

Sean O'Donoghue also expressed his disappointment that the NWWRAC has not delivered its full potential in terms of its functioning. Most EU actors have acknowledged that the setting up of the RACs was considered a good initiative and one of the major achievements of the current CFP. We need to have a frank dialogue and find out why the NWWRAC is not delivering outcomes as it should. Also, more flexibility was encouraged to interpret the procedural rules and focus more on content and advice issues.

A lack of cohesion not only with NGOs and scientists but also between the fishing industry representatives themselves was perceived as a fundamental problem for building trust and making progress within the NWWRAC. We all need to look at the common interest and not create minority blocks unless this is adequately justified. The case of the Pelagic RAC was mentioned as a RAC with a good level of commitment and trust between their members, not only the fishing industry but also with NGOs.

In relation to its structure, Mr. O'Donoghue agreed that we should try to enhance the focus on particular items but not totally remove the regional dimension of the working groups. We could decrease the number of meetings or alternatively, complement them with horizontal ones. We should also focus on long term issues such as management plans and ecosystem-based approaches in collaboration with scientists rather than on short-term stock-by stock arrangements.

Víctor Badiola stated that many human activities are built upon routine but that is not necessarily bad. There are issues concerning cultural and language barriers which give way to misunderstandings within this RAC but we produce a lot of papers and work hard with the common aim to achieve sustainability in fisheries. He stated that we need to follow the rules and compliance with statutes is essential. Mr. Badiola also defended the right to object to a proposal and adopt minority positions ensuring that all views are expressed.

Mr. Badiola said that not all RACs are the same, and that the homogeneity of some RACs in their objectives, business objectives and structure make them easier to work in the same direction and achieve broader consensus. He ended with an optimistic message believing that the work done by the NWWRAC has been very important so far and that the regional balance is essential for a balanced representation of interest in the Organisation. We need to be aware that building trust takes time due to the dysfunctional nature of the NWWRAC.

Daniel Lefèvre also showed his support for the regional structure and was optimistic about the role of the RACs within the new CFP. He noted the difficulties encountered when transmitting views to grassroots in order for them to understand our work.

Hugo González supported the views of Víctor Badiola and reminded members that this process of reviewing the structure began last year (ExCom Sep and GA Nov 2009). He is convinced that we are moving in the right direction even if it is by taking small steps. It is important to identify the current shortcomings and causes of the shortcomings, as well as finding a possible range of solutions and the best solutions for us. Mr. González also mentioned that increased funding and structural capacities (professional staff) is needed.

Bertie Armstrong encouraged dealing with horizontal issues, and stressed the necessity to overcome regional constraints for improving our work. Administration should be adjusted to raise successful Focus Groups such as the one held on CFP last year.

Barrie Deas appreciated the very useful points made around the table. He suggested looking at the following two aspects to strengthen our work:

a) Level of dialogue between the NWWRAC and the European Commission:

It often seems that both parties are not engaged in dialogues, but in bilateral monologues. There is a lack of understanding that needs to be addressed. Efforts are imperative in moving the process forward concerning EC responses, not just raising more debate.

b) Quality of NWWRAC advice:

We need to look at areas of agreement and work (such as LTMPs) and think about an adequate institutional framework in order to deliver that quality. There is a clear danger of producing bulk rather than scientific advice.

Iwan Ball echoed Barrie's proposals in engaging with horizontal issues. Mr. Ball also agreed with Víctor Badiola concerning the need to maintain a constructive spirit but, where this is not possible, to achieve consensus and to guarantee that the right to express minority views is respected.

Ken Patterson asked the members to reflect whether the NWWRAC has a problem concerning process (structure and organisation) or substance (producing evidence-based advice), and invited members to look at the functioning of other RACs in comparison. The Commission is not expected to follow the RAC advice simply because it is adopted by consensus.

Alexandre Rodríguez reminded the members that the NWWRAC rules and procedures allow for a change in the structure or format of Working Groups to single topic based issues without the need for further amendments. Also, there is no minimum or maximum number of Working Group meetings stated in the rules (in contrast to what happens with Executive Committee meetings).

Mr. Rodríguez also stated that there are a number of relevant background papers which review the functioning and governance of RACs that could be used to inform discussions and serve as a reference for defining new structures. These papers include: the EC Communication on mid-term review of the RACs; a WWF survey on structure and functioning of RACs; several EU-funded projects such as MEFEP0 and GAP; research articles from scholars on legal constraints for the future role of the RACs; etc.

In response to some members' comments, he said that the set of rules and procedures were adopted with the purpose of ensuring that the wide composition and diversity of views within the RAC were fully respected; and to guarantee a transparent communication and equal treatment and opportunities for members to participate in meetings and express their views.

Actions:

- *To produce a template or checklist that sets a quality standard for discussion papers and puts a structure in place to improve the quality of advice.*
- *To give more flexibility to the periodicity, content and duration of Working Groups, and ensure that there is time available to deal with horizontal issues through ad hoc Working Groups or single topic based Focus Groups.*
- *To work on ways to improve communication with the Commission and be more effective in the quality of exchanges and correspondence.*

4. Reports on actions arising from Working Groups

Working Group 1 - West of Scotland and Western Approaches (ICES VIa - EC Vb)

Bertie Armstrong (Chairman, WG1) provided a brief overview of progress made in relation to the actions arising from the Working Group on the following topics:

- NWWRAC Advice (and EC response) on Fishing Opportunities for 2011
- Consultation on Fishing Opportunities for Deep sea species for 2011-2012
- Consultation on incidental catches of seabirds in European waters
- Long term management plan for West of Scotland Haddock: next steps

The members discussed these items and agreed the following:

- Fishing Opportunities for Atlantic stocks for 2011:

The Chairman informed members that the NWWRAC presented its advice to the DG MARE on this subject on 29th of July and that a response was received from the Director General on 10th of August. Both documents are available for consultation on the NWWRAC website².

- Fishing Opportunities for Deep sea species 2011-2012

The Chairman and the Secretariat explained that the Commission had launched a public consultation on this matter in July, and that a letter had been addressed on the 22nd of July to ACFA and three RACs (North Sea, North Western Waters and South Western Waters) asking for their advice. Due to the short deadline given (end of August) and the fact that this is a topic of common interest, the North Sea and the North Western Waters RAC agreed to prepare a joint response to the Commission's consultation paper. This response should be endorsed by the Executive Committees of both RACs. The South Western Waters RAC decided to submit their own advice due to the specificities of their fisheries.

After the deadline for comments had expired, it became clear that the views of the fishing industry and the NGOs representatives were diametrically opposed in this subject. After consulting the NGOs, it was agreed that the RACs would only submit a position from the fishing industry. The NGOs decided to send their own advice directly to the Commission.

Regarding specific comments to the RAC draft paper as presented, Víctor Badiola expressed his concern on the appropriateness of the RAC proposal in relation to TAC area changes for blue ling management, as this might have potential implications on relative stability.

² http://www.nwwrac.org/Publications/Publications_ENG/Navigation.php?cats=0&language=English

Despite this remark, Mr. Badiola expressly accepted the amended version of the paper presented as it had incorporated his comments made in relation to orange roughy, area XIIIb and the review of the effectiveness of the seasonal closures for blue ling in areas VI and VII.

No further comments were made by other members, and the draft paper put forward to the Executive Committee was deemed adopted.

Action: *To send a Joint NSRAC-NWWRAC Opinion to the Commission including Mr. Badiola's comments to the text immediately.*

- Seabirds

The audience was informed that a NWWRAC Opinion had been agreed and sent to the DG MARE services of the European Commission on the 3rd of September.

- LTMP for Vla Haddock:

The Chairman reported that no progress has been made to date and the NWWRAC is waiting to receive the formal proposal of the European Commission for this stock.

Working Group 2 - West of Ireland and Celtic Sea (ICES VII b-k except d & e)

Hugo González (Chairman, WG2) provided a brief overview of progress made in relation to the actions arising from the Working Group on the following topics:

- Management and technical measures for Spur dog, Porbeagle and Sharks
- LTMP for Northern Hake: state of play and future prospects
- Clarification of geographical scope of high-grading ban
- Interpretation of Art 11 of TAC and Quota Regulation 2010: Transit rights and requirements of fishing vessels through Porcupine

- Spur dog, Porbeagle and sharks:

The Chairman and the Secretariat clarified that two letters drafted by Paul Trebilcock had been circulated in July. Due to the significant number of comments received from several representatives of the Other Groups of interest, it was decided that this topic merits further reflection and discussion at Working Group level in order to achieve consensus.

- LTMP for Northern Hake:

The Chairman reminded members that the decision to set up a Focus Group meeting on this matter was adopted earlier in the year by the Executive Committee. However, taking into account the current uncertainties in relation to growth rates and the state of the stock, it was decided this meeting would be postponed until there is a proper ICES and STECF assessment and the Commission produces a consultation paper.

Action: *It was agreed that the DG MARE would keep the NWWRAC informed on any progress on this matter.*

- High-grading ban:

The Secretariat informed members that following discussions held at the previous July Executive Committee and Working Group 2 meetings, a letter had been sent to the DG MARE asking for clarification on implementation of geographical scope of the high grading ban in European waters. The NWWRAC received a response from the Commission on the 27th of August but it was not clear as to the extent of the meaning of “*all ICES zones of the North Atlantic including the North Sea, Skarregak and Kattegat*”³. The Commission’s representative explained that the high-grading ban applies to all Community North Atlantic waters, including the North Western Waters (ICES areas VI and VII).

- Transit rights through Porcupine area:

The Chairman informed the attendees that PESCAGALICIA-ARPEGA-OBARCO had addressed a formal request to DG MARE in June asking for clarification of Art 11 of TAC and Quota Regulation, about the transit conditions for vessels through Porcupine Bank during summer closures for Nephrops fishery.

The Commission submitted a clear response, dated 8th of July, setting a prohibition on fishing or carrying onboard any marine living organism except those listed in the Regulation 53/2010 (e.g. some pelagic species) during the period of the seasonal closure (1 May-31 July 2010). The letter also stated that this requirement would be likely to be reinstated in the Regulation on Fishing Opportunities for 2011.

In relation to the validity of the interim TCM regulation currently in force, Sean O’Donoghue asked if there was a legal basis for the extension of the regulation, and if so which legal procedure should be applied to this subject.

³ Part A of Annex III to Regulation (EC) No 43/2009. Letter available in NWWRAC website/publications.

The Commission's representative affirmed that ordinary co-decision procedures apply here; however, Mr. O'Donoghue noted that this statement appeared to be in contradiction with the opinion expressed during the course of the last NWWRAC Working Group 2 meeting in Paris.

Working Group 3 – English Channel (VIId)

Daniel Lefèvre (Chairman, WG3) provided a brief overview of the progress on actions arising from the Working Group on the following topics:

- Channel plaice management in VIId and VIle
- Review of VIle Sole
- Better science on stock status and discard survival rates for VIId Cod and Plaice stocks; and Rays in area VII.

The items regarding the update on management measures for Channel plaice and the state of play of the review of LTMP for VIle sole were postponed for discussion until the next Working Group 3 meeting due to the absence of Jim Portus, rapporteur and NWWRAC representative at recent STECF and ICES meetings on these subjects.

In relation to Plaice, the Chairman of WG3 noted that a NWWRAC Opinion - in response to Commission non-paper on proposing to separate TAC areas in VIId and VIle - was submitted the 29th of July and a reply was received from the Commission on the 8th of August.

Marc Ghiglia proposed to ask to the STECF Working Group to consider the NWWRAC Opinion for their assessment of the effects of separating Plaice in VIId and VIle for management purposes. The Commission's representative clarified that STECF had already proposed two scenarios: either adjust the calculation of both TACs or close the directed fishery for this stock. The Chairman of WG3 said that the second option would have catastrophic consequences for the industry similar to those resulting from closure of direct fishing for rays.

- Better science on stock status and discard survival rates for VIId Cod and Plaice; VII Rays

Regarding better science on stock status supporting management measures for Cod VIId, the Chairman repeated the concerns expressed in the previous meetings in relation to uncertainties in F and recruitment surrounding this stock. He also briefed members on the current difficulties experienced with the application of the Cod Recovery Plan in force in VIId, namely the perverse effects of the fishing effort (days at sea) regime, as well as closed areas for fishing and the inclusion of gears neither targeting nor catching cod (longlines...)

Caroline Gamblin informed the members that, following up on an action agreed under item 9 at last Working Group 3 meeting held in Paris, the CNPMEM had submitted a draft letter to the NWWRAC Secretariat explaining the practical difficulties of the implementation of Regulation (EC) 1342/2008.

Action: *Secretariat to circulate among all members and agree to a final version of the letter proposed by CNPMEM re: practical difficulties encountered by the implementation of the current Cod Recovery Plan in western waters.*

Regarding discard survival rates, the Secretariat asked the Commission to provide the STECF report on this topic as a result of a request from the NWWRAC forwarded by the Commission earlier this year.

Finally, Mr. Patterson confirmed that the Commission will stick to scientific advice in recommending the maintenance of closure of a directed fishery for certain types of rays.

Working Group 4 – Irish Sea (VIIa)

Lorcan O’Cinnéide (Chairman, WG4) provided the meeting with a brief overview of progress on the following topics:

- Management measures for Irish Sea stocks (cod, sole and whiting)
- Management measures for Nephrops stocks
- DEFRA letter regarding the consultation procedure of Marine Protected Areas in UK

- Review of management measures for Irish Sea stocks:

The Chairman of WG4 recalled that the Commission has asked the NWWRAC to come up with a proposal of measures for the management of sole and whiting stocks in the Irish Sea. The NWWRAC submitted an Opinion on 29th of July but the Commission seemed displeased with the content.

Brendan Price advocated that the Irish Sea presents the perfect study case for a horizontal approach and that the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach is essential for a sustainable future of the fisheries in this area. Mr. Price suggested drafting a letter of appeal to the Member States or European Commission asking to allocate resources for this issue.

Action: *Lorcan to develop an alternative strategy plan for demersal fisheries management in the Irish Sea. This strategy must contain a clear set of objectives, as well as an estimation of resources needed and a specific work programme.*

The strategy plan must be validated and have feedback from the members of Working Group 4, the Commission and the Member States in order to be effective.

- Nephrops management:

The Chairman of WG4 recalled that Colm Lordan had produced a discussion paper as a scientific contribution for the debate. The Nephrops management plan is closely linked to the Cod Recovery Plan (as cod and whiting are substantially by-catches of the nephrops fishery) and management measures for sole and whiting stocks. The timeframe given for a response established by the Commission to its non-paper on consultation of management for Nephrops by FU was considered too short.

Action: *It was decided that preparatory work should be carried out both before and during the Working Group 4 meeting to reflect on a global approach focusing mainly on nephrops but dealing with linked issues such as by-catches of whiting and cod.*

- Marine Protected Areas in UK waters:

The Chairman of WG4 reported that the NWWRAC sent a letter to the UK Fisheries Minister, Mr. Benyon, on the 29th of July requesting an extension of the consultation period for stakeholders in relation to the MPAs in UK waters. DEFRA submitted a reply on the 16th of August ratifying the fixed timetable as established. Both documents are available for consultation in the publications section of the NWWRAC Website.

The Chairman of WG4 concluded that it will be up to individual organisations to engage as best they can, as the timeframe is insufficient for the RAC to provide evidence-based advice.

Marc Ghiglia, ACFA observer at the meeting, stated that this topic affects not only the UK but also the Commission as there are non-UK fleets involved and offshore sites. It seems to be a grey area in the jurisdiction or definition of governance, as it is not clear who decides what and at which scale. It seems that there are an overlapping number of decision-making processes.

Barrie Deas clarified that the letter was not aimed against the principle of setting MPAs for conservation issues but simply against the short timeframe for consultation awarded and the lack of socio-economic assessment. There was also an evident risk of displacement of effort that had not been considered here. He finally reminded the members that all EU fleets in those areas would be affected by the sites closed, in compliance with the principle of non-discrimination inserted in the Treaties.

Lunch break from 13:15 to 14:00 h

5. Outcomes of Celtic Sea Fisheries Focus Group

The Focus Group Chairman, Jacques Pichon, briefed the Executive Committee on the progress made since the inaugural meeting in Paris in July, where discussions were held based on the presentation made by Colm Lordan (Marine Institute). Mr. Pichon highlighted the fact that an overall reduction of about 40% of the fishing effort had been achieved in the area in the last 10 years.

During the Paris meeting, it was agreed to produce a response to the proposal launched by the Commission on introducing a fishing effort regime in VIIIfg based on 2007 levels. A draft Opinion by Paul Trebilcock was circulated and agreed by e-mail among the Focus Group and ExCom members of the NWWRAC. It was then submitted to the Commission within the agreed deadline (end of July).

The follow-up meeting in Madrid served to discuss the reactions of the Commission in its response and propose a way forward. The Commission reply was not very positive towards the state of stocks and not very receptive to our proposal.

There was also a presentation from Colm Lordan on what an “Integrated Fisheries Management Plan for mixed demersal fisheries in the Celtic Sea” might look like. It was decided that Colm’s paper was a good starting point for conceptualising the possibility of elaborating a LTMP for this area.

Finally, the Focus Group Chairman said that a date for a follow-up meeting had not yet been decided and was pending the outcomes to be provided by the steering group.

Actions:

- A small steering group from the NWWRAC will have a scoping meeting with relevant scientists from the Celtic Sea Ecoregion in order to define a set of objectives, and means to achieve them, for a LTMP for Celtic Sea mixed demersal fisheries. This group will be composed of Barrie Deas, Jacques Pichon, Sean O’Donogue, Emiel Brouckaert, Hugo González and Paul Trebilcock. Due to the existing problems of capacity and resources, the Secretariat will look for alternative sources of funding and potential collaborations with other institutions/projects (e.g. JAKFISH). It was also agreed that this steering group should be composed of at least one Spanish member. The steering group will be entrusted with drafting a first set of objectives for a LTMP.

- Paul Trebilcock will draft a note for addressing queries from the Commission and reinforce the main ideas expressed in the original paper (i.e. lack of coordination between fishing effort and F).

6. Regional Task force to address data deficiencies

Following a request made by the NWWRAC Chairman, Barrie Deas started briefing the members on the main outcomes of the International Conference on Fisheries Dependent Information held in Galway (Ireland) on the 23-26 of August 2010. There was a wide ranging number of issues discussed and papers that covered different technological, economic and cultural aspects. International experiences in other fisheries (e.g. Australia, US) were also presented.

Barrie summarised that there were two main reasons that the NWWRAC had worked on the idea of setting up a regional task force to address data deficiencies:

- Frustration on the quality of ICES assessments.
- Increasing number of stocks with a lack of analytical assessment.

The NWWRAC wrote to the Commission in April suggesting the setup of a Regional Task Force (RTF) to address data deficiency in north western waters. A brief definition of its composition, main functions and duties were also included. The Commission sent a response in June welcoming the initiative in principle but pointed out a number of other existing initiatives already in place (e.g. data collection framework, EU projects...). The scientific community supported the NWWRAC proposal, and welcomed in particular the proposal made in the letter to identify data gaps for those stocks under risk of depletion.

As a result of the Commission's response, Mr. Deas received a mandate to advance the work and prepare a comprehensive Terms of Reference for the establishment of a RTF, highlighting those areas where the RAC may have a distinctive role to play. The first draft of the ToRs was circulated in late July and it requires endorsement by all members at today's meeting. Some fishing industry and NGO representatives submitted slight changes to the text and the ToRs will be adapted accordingly.

Mr. Deas explained that the next steps are to think about the format and how this group will fit within the current RAC structure as well as investigating possible sources of funding.

Alexandre Rodríguez clarified that a small scoping meeting between a delegation of NWWRAC representatives and scientists from ICES could be set up to advance the work in the meantime.

Mr. Rodríguez also made two comments recalling the discussions held the previous day:

- **Benchmark Meetings:** A certain number of stocks will be benchmarked by ICES in 2011 (Celtic Sea Cod; Irish Sea whiting; Anglerfish) and 2012 (Megrim?). This is a good opportunity to engage with scientists and discuss which data are needed beforehand so they can feed into the benchmarking process and the assessments.
- **ICES spreadsheets:** The Commission has recently provided the NWWRAC Secretariat with several Excel spreadsheets containing the annual data on catches, landings, etc. for the stocks that are relevant for North Western Waters. These data are submitted by the Member States to ICES on a yearly basis. They are public information and therefore the NWWRAC has been encouraged by DG MARE to upload the data into its website for the consultation of members and interested parties. This could be a useful source of information to begin identifying where data deficiencies are and how NWWRAC members can help to provide useful data to mitigate these deficiencies.

Actions:

- *The Secretariat will liaise with Barrie Deas, Sean O'Donoghue, Paul Trebilcock, Jacques Pichon and a Spanish representative to initiate arrangements in setting up a scoping meeting between RAC representatives and scientists in order to identify key stocks and priority data gaps.*
- *The Secretariat will create a new forum on data quality in the members' area of the website which will include all relevant information, including the ICES spreadsheets that might be useful for informing the discussions.*

7. Report on work progress from the Community Fisheries Control Agency

Jacques Pichon, NWWRAC first representative before the CFCA, gave a brief overview on recent meetings and commented on the CFCA draft work programme for 2011-2015.

Mr. Pichon regretted the fact that, of the total budget foreseen for control inspections for 2011-2015, barely 10% is devoted to North Western Waters. Mr. Pichon advocated submitting a letter to the CFCA asking for a review of their work priorities and the setting of Joint Deployment Plans in North Western Waters within the shortest timeframe.

Hugo González, NWWRAC second representative before the CFCA, asked if there had been discussions or an accord adopted at a previous Executive Committee meeting concerning Mr. Pichon's proposal. If so, this should have been duly reflected in the minutes.

The Secretariat clarified that this proposal was formulated in an oral intervention by Mr. Pichon in a previous Executive Committee in September 2009 in Madrid⁴, but no formal agreement had been reached, hence it was not clearly minuted.

The Secretariat also encouraged the members to comment on the Draft multiannual Work Programme proposed by the CFCA for 2011-2015, since it is due to be adopted during the Administration Board that will take place in Vigo in October 2010.

The NWWRAC Chairman asked the ExCom members if they agreed with the proposal of Mr. Pichon in asking the CFCA to organise JDPs in western waters. No further comments were noted and this action was agreed for completion.

Action:

- *Jacques Pichon to draft a letter to the CFCA requesting the setting up of JDPs in north western waters. The Secretariat to circulate the letter among Executive Committee members and send it to the CFCA by the end of September.*

8. Priorities for the NWWRAC to the end of 2010

The members were required to identify priority areas of work to be included in the work programme of the first quarter of the NWWRAC financial year 6 (October-December 2010), taking into account budgetary constraints. The Secretariat informed the members that they have booked a meeting room in Dublin Castle for the 27th and 28th of October. As the General Assembly would take place on the 27th in the morning, there are one and a half days available for additional meetings if required.

The following horizontal areas were identified as priority:

- Development of Long Term Management Plans (with Celtic Sea as first area of study)
- Improvement of data quality
- Regionalisation and governance within the CFP Reform
- Socio-economic aspects of fisheries management
- TCMs and Discards

Sean O'Donoghue proposed to fill one half day slot offered by the Secretariat on the 27th of October by studying the proposed models of regionalisation and discussing technicalities concerning the role of the RACs in a reformed CFP. This would also suit the timetable established by the Commission, as a Conference has been scheduled for the 16th of November and the EC legislative proposal of Regulation is planned for April 2011.

⁴ Meeting report (Madrid, 8/9/2009) available in NWWRAC website:
http://www.nwwrac.org/Meetings/Meetings_ENG/Navigation.php?id=348&language=English

The Chairman and the members agreed with Sean's proposal.

Lorcan O'Cinnéide asked that we leave aside other priority issues which can be dealt with later on in the year (e.g. nephrops, northern hake, west of Scotland haddock...)

Bertie Armstrong stated that it would be essential for the West of Scotland to develop areas of LTMPs to overcome emergency measures currently in force. This would be done in a similar way to Celtic Sea, so the template could be adapted or exported to area VI. The Chairman agreed with Lorcan and Bertie concerning the need to retain a certain degree of flexibility to allow for the introduction of new topics in the work agenda as and when they become relevant.

Brendan Price requested that the initiative of setting up a Workshop on Socio-economic aspects of fisheries management be reconsidered. Special emphasis should be placed on cross-cutting measures (including biodiversity) and social impact and human dimension. It would be necessary to investigate available funding and any existing successful EU projects.

The Chairman and the Secretariat proposed to adopt a pragmatic approach and organise a half-day workshop on the 28th of October inviting some relevant speakers, including representatives from different DGs of the Commission as well as economists. Emiel Brouckaert encouraged the members to submit their experiences from other RACs to the Secretariat and deal with this at interRAC level in the near future. Mr. Brouckaert also suggested to do include as priority topic the ongoing consultations on marine spatial planning.

Action:

- *Secretariat to include proposed priority areas in the NWWRAC work programme for Year 6 and organise the round of meetings in Dublin Castle for the 27th and 28th of October as follows:*

- *Wed 27th of October: General Assembly (morning session) and Horizontal Working Group on CFP reform (afternoon session)*
- *Thu 28th of October: Workshop on Socio-economics of fisheries management*

9. Presentation on the results of the MEFEO Project

A presentation was given by Kristen Ounanian on the results of a survey carried out among stakeholders. The survey sought stakeholders' views on the capacities and functioning of the RACs as well as perspectives, options and challenges for regionalisation in the context of the CFP. This action is included under Working Package 4 of the MEFEO Project.

Miss Ounanian summarised the main findings of the survey and highlighted the fact that it provides consistent results given that a 40% response rate was obtained. A copy of the presentation is available on the NWWRAC website.

Some members expressed concerns that, although they were in favour of going to a model which devolves management to stakeholders, they did not agree with the range of options or models provided for regionalisation. It was also emphasised that a definition of regionalisation should not only be geographical but also species-based; and political interpretation of this concept might vary depending on the cultural background and nationality.

Action: *Secretariat to compile and circulate background papers in relation to regionalisation and governance (role of the RACs and participation of stakeholders in the decision-making process) and include them for discussion at the forthcoming Working Group on this subject.*

10. Presentation on the GEPETO II Project

Víctor Badiola, in his capacity as Chairman of the South Western Waters RAC, briefed the attendees on the main objectives of this project:

- To draw an “Atlas” or “photograph” of the Fisheries (dynamics, fleets, gears...)
- To elaborate LTMPs for certain pilot fisheries
- Highlight the socio-economic dependence of fisheries-dependent communities in Europe

Mr. Badiola said that so far they have received financial commitment from many French and Spanish regions forming part of the Atlantic Arc Commission. Their main challenge is to engage and commit English and Irish partners to this project. Mr. Badiola asked Barrie Deas for help in seeking an English partner for this project. Barrie Deas said that resources of English organisations are limited and they would expect GEPETO to define areas of work with more precision before justifying their involvement.

Meeting was adjourned at 17:10 h.

ANNEX I. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS TO THE MEETING

NWWRAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING – MADRID, 9 SEPTEMBER 2010			
<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Status</u>
Bertie	Armstrong	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)	Ex.Com. Member
Lloyd	Austin	RSPB Scotland – Birdlife International	Ex Com. Member <i>(replacing K. Brydson)</i>
Víctor	Badiola	OPPAO	Ex.Com. Member
Iwan	Ball	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	Ex.Com. Member
Arianna	Broggiato	European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD)	Ex.Com. Member
Emiel	Brouckaert	Rederscentrale	Ex.Com. Member
Luc	Corbisier	Stichting voor Duurzame Visserij Ontwikkeling SDVO	Ex.Com. Member
John	Crudden	European Anglers Association	Ex.Com. Member
Bruno	Dachicourt	European Transport Federation	Ex Com. Member <i>(replacing J. Bigot)</i>
Barrie	Deas	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisation	Ex.Com. Member
Thomas	Diaz	CAPSUD - PMA	Observer
Caroline	Gamblin	CNPMEM	Observer
Marc	Ghiglia	UAPF	ACFA Observer
Hugo C.	González García	ARVI-ANASOL	Ex.Com. Member - WG2 Chairman
Pádraig	Gordon	BIM-NWWRAC Secretariat	NWWRAC Secretariat
André	Gueguen	CNPMEM	Ex. Com. Member
Sam	Lambourn	Skipper	Ex. Com Member - NWWRAC Chairman

NWWRAC Executive Committee
Madrid, 9th of September 2010

NWWRAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING – MADRID, 9 SEPTEMBER 2010

<u>First Name</u>	<u>Last Name</u>	<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Status</u>
Daniel	Lefèvre	CRPMEM Basse Normandie	Observer - WG3 Chairman
Thierry	Lepretre	CRPMEM Nord Pas de Calais / Picardie	Observer
Joseph	Maddock	Irish Fishermen's Organisation	Observer
Joanna	McGrath	NWWRAC Secretariat	NWWRAC Secretariat
Eduardo	Míguez López	European Association of Fishing Ports and Auctions	Ex.Com. Member
Conor	Nolan	NWWRAC Secretariat	NWWRAC Secretariat
Lorcan	O'Cinnéide	IFPO	Observer - WG4 Chairman
Sean	O'Donoghue	Kyllibegs Fishermen's Organisation (KFO)	Ex.Com. Member
Eibhlin	O'Sullivan	Irish South & West FPO	Ex.Com. Member
Kristen	Ounanian	MEFEPO Project – IFM Aalborg University	Presentor
Kenneth	Patterson	DG MARE	European Commission
Jacques	Pichon	ANOP	Ex.Com. Member
Brendan	Price	Irish Seal Sanctuary	Ex. Com. Member
Alexandre	Rodríguez	NWWRAC Secretariat	NWWRAC Secretariat
Paul	Trebilcock	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisation	Observer