



ANNEX 1

North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council

Work Programme

Year 7

October 2011 to September 2012



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1. Introduction

The North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council (NWWWRAC) was established in accordance with Commission Decision 2005/668/EC on the 22nd of September 2005 as one of the seven Regional Advisory Councils, proposed under Council Decision 2004/585/EC, establishing Regional Advisory Councils under the Common Fisheries Policy.

In its seventh year of operation, which runs from October 2011 to September 2012, the NWWWRAC wishes to apply for grant-aid from the EU Commission, in accordance with stipulations set out in Council Decision 2004/585/EC, as amended by Council Decision of 2007/409/EC.

2. Objectives of the North Western Waters RAC

The principal aim of the RACs is to bring together European stakeholders, including fishermen, the representatives of producer organisations, environmentalists, recreational anglers, processors, consumers and women's networks, amongst others, to provide evidence-based advice to the EU Commission, Member States and the European Parliament on matters of fisheries management within the geographical limits of its remit (i.e. the community waters of areas Vb, VI and VII).

The proposal, presented by the NWWWRAC, aims to achieve the sustainable, biological and economic management of fish stocks, within the geographical remit of the north western waters RAC (ICES sub-areas VI and VII), in compliance with the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy.

It is also within the scope of the proposal to address the sustainable, biological and economic management of fish stocks in the wider context of an integrated maritime policy.

Given the mixed nature of the fisheries within the geographical remit of the NWWWRAC, an ecosystem-based approach will provide the foundation for advice, which will contribute to the achievement of good environmental status of the marine environment, as articulated in the Marine Strategy Framework Directive.



3. General Work Programme: Main Areas of Work

The work programme of the NWWWRAC (2011/2012) will address the following issues:

3.1. Reform of the CFP

The NWWWRAC will continue working, both individually and through cooperation with other RACs, on analysing the core aspects (e.g. fishing capacity, allocation of fishing rights, technical measures, definition of fleets, socio-economics, etc.) of the first Regulatory package of proposals launched by the Commission on 13 July 2011. A special focus will be given to governance and regionalisation aspects of the reform process, with a specific insight on the role of the RACs and its interaction with other bodies and institutions under a reformed CFP.

Taking into account all the above aspects, it is intended that a comprehensive review will be undertaken and that a NWWWRAC position paper on CFP reform will be produced and submitted for consideration in the discussions of the European Commission, the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament.

3.2. Development and implementation of long-term management plans for fish stocks in North Western Waters

After one year of intense preparatory work held at both Geographical Working Group and technical group meetings, the development and implementation of long-term management plans for fish stocks in North Western Waters has become the main focus of NWWWRAC's work and will remain as the main work priority for the NWWWRAC in Year 7.

3.2.1. Celtic Sea demersal stocks

The NWWWRAC has successfully established an operational framework to develop a management plan for the mixed demersal fisheries within the Celtic Sea (VIIIfg). This includes the approval of the terms of reference, definition of areas of application and the agreement of an extensive set of short and long term biological, economic and social objectives.



The establishment of this group has involved stakeholders from the fishing industry and other interest groups, national authorities and relevant members of the scientific community. The Group is currently being directed by a steering committee to ensure continuity with their work. This committee is composed of a small group of members of the NWWRAC and invited scientific experts, so exchange of knowledge might take place on the fisheries exploitation patterns and populations' dynamics and biology, including interactions between species.

3.2.2. Evaluation of Cod recovery plans (West of Scotland, Irish Sea and Eastern Channel)

In Year 6, the NWWRAC worked closely with ICES and STECF and represented the views of stakeholders on the efficiency and implementation of the current Cod Recovery Plans for: the West of Scotland (Via), the Eastern Channel (VIId) and the Irish Sea (VIIa), in several meetings. In this respect, a NWWRAC Focus Group took place in Dublin, on the 30th May, 2011 to produce an evidence-based position paper in time for ICES/STECF Expert working group on the evaluation of the cod management plan (Hamburg, 20-24 June), for inclusion as an Annex of the STECF meeting report.

The NWWRAC will continue to contribute to the ongoing discussions on the review and evaluation process lead by the Commission on the efficacy of the Cod LTMP, as contained in Council Regulation 1342/2008, and will provide input to future conferences and meetings organised by STECF, ICES and the Commission (e.g. Workshop of 7th of October). The NWWRAC will arrange technical preparatory meetings, discuss this topic both at Working Group and Focus Group level and submit formal advice in due course.

3.2.3. Northern hake

The NWWRAC will continue to work in line with ICES and STECF recommendations to produce evidence-based advice, in response to future discussion papers and regulatory proposals from the Commission, in order to develop a Management Plan that ensures a sustainable exploitation of northern hake stock in the long term.



Given their common interest in this stock, the South Western Waters RAC will be invited, as observers, to any technical/focus group meeting that might be established. Likewise, the NWWRAC will observe meetings and follow progress in discussions for the methodology and procedure for the adoption of management measures in relation to southern hake stock.

3.2.4. Haddock (West of Scotland)

The NWWRAC will continue to work closely with ICES to develop a proposal for the implementation of a long-term management plan for VIa haddock, as requested by the Commission. Further work will be carried out, subject to the results of the socio-economic impact assessment and a formal proposal from the Commission to the RAC requesting comments.

In the meantime, the NWWRAC will work on identifying interim management measures, to protect strong, incoming year classes and recruitment in order to allow stock to rebuild towards MSY levels.

3.2.5. Other stocks

The NWWRAC will also carry out extensive discussions and undertake some exploratory work, either at the request of the Commission or under its own initiative, on management measures for the following stocks:

- Whiting in the West of Scotland (VIa);
- Sole in the Western Channel (VIIe);
- Nephrops in area VII;
- Irish Sea Stocks;
- Rays and Skates in Area VII;
- Sharks (porbeagle and spurdog) in Areas VI and VII;
- Non-quota species: seabass; scallops;



3.3. Fishing Opportunities and the improvement of the quality of scientific and economic data for 2011 and 2012

The NWWWRAC will continue its successful collaboration with ICES scientists and Member States to identify useful data to improve assessments for key stocks. A milestone was the two data deficiency coordination workshops between ICES and the North Sea, the North Western Waters RAC and national authorities from Member States that took place in Copenhagen on January and March 2011, respectively. The objective of these meeting were to look at the broad principles and to agree the terms of reference and a common framework for a collaborative approach in tackling weak assessments caused by data deficiencies and to suggest remedial measures. Regional Task Forces for data deficient stocks were formally established to work within each RAC and maintain a permanent dialogue and collaboration with ICES Working Groups and Data Coordinators.

3.3.1. Regional Task Force for data deficient stocks

In conjunction with specific, professional support, the NWWWRAC has established a regional task force whose remit will be to improve the quality of data and to mitigate uncertainty in the knowledge of stocks in the medium term. This task force is working within each of the geographical (sub-regional) Working Groups.

During the NWWWRAC Working Group meetings in July 2011, a number of stocks were identified as priority data deficient stocks within North Western waters and one or more NWWWRAC members were appointed as data coordinators for each of these stocks.

The main tasks of these co-ordinators will be to:

- Assess the quality of existing national and European data ;
- Provide reliable and valid data from the fishing industry that can be input into scientific assessment.

Some of the new data could be available and presented in time for the benchmark workshops that will take place in 2012 for some of these stocks (e.g. West of Scotland, Irish Sea and Celtic Seas Cod, Anglerfish and Megrin VI-VII, Sole VIIe)



The Task Force will avoid duplication of effort with existing EU projects with similar objectives (e.g. Pilot Project on Fisheries-Science Partnerships in Western Waters, JAKFISH, GAP2...) and will work on building linkages with these projects and disseminating the information generated by them, while respecting the legal framework (data collection regulation) currently in place.

3.3.2. Fishing Opportunities – TACs and quotas and related measures for EU stocks

As in previous years, it is envisaged that a large part of the first quarter of Year 7 will be dedicated to the production of professional advice for the Commission, Member States and European Parliament in response to the proposal of Regulation on Fishing Opportunities for demersal species in Atlantic waters in 2012, including annual allocation of resources (TAC and quotas) and related management measures (e.g. effort regime). The advice will be submitted in due time to inform the discussions before the formal adoption of the Regulation on Fishing Opportunities by the Council in November/December.

During the third quarter of Year 7, the NWWRAC will provide the Commission with its opinion on the Communication on Fishing Opportunities for 2013 ("EC Policy Statement"), with special emphasis placed on the principles, upon which the Fishing Opportunities are structured, the timeframe and range of transitional values for achieving MSY and the rules referring to stock status categories used to determine the TACs.

Following a specific request from the Commission, the NWWRAC will provide advice on any new proposal on access regimes and fishing opportunities for deep sea species for the biannual period of 2012-2014.



4. Marine Protected Areas and Marine Spatial Planning

The NWWRAC will continue to be involved in the consultation process for the designation and management of Natura 2000, OSPAR and national (MCZ, etc.) marine offshore sites where fishing activity by EU vessels takes place in Western Waters. The NWWRAC will also assist, where required, in the development of management measures for different marine sites in North Western waters that are to be adopted under both national and Community legislation.

Particular attention will be given to the several ongoing consultations being carried out by JNCC and Natural England in the United Kingdom and by the Agence pour les Aires Marines Protégées in France, as well as the Irish Sea MCZ Project.

In this respect, the NWWRAC will re-convene the Horizontal Working Group on Marine Spatial Planning, which was successfully led by eNGO representatives of the NWWRAC and included a wide representation of experts, including those from appropriate, EU projects (e.g. MEFEPO, MAIA, PISCES, CHARM III in 2009/2010).

The NWWRAC has worked, and will continue to work to overcome difficulties concerning the exchange of information with national institutes. The NWWRAC will work with appointed officers, from designated agencies of Member States and the Commission, in the following manner:

- Participate in national debates and occasional stakeholders' forums;
- Organise follow-up meetings and invite relevant experts to communicate current status reports and present timetables for consultations, where relevant;
- Circulate newsletters, maps and questionnaires provided by consultants to stakeholders and provide feedback.

5. Technical Conservation Measures and Discards Policy

Since its creation, the NWWRAC has dedicated a considerable amount of time and effort addressing the critical areas of Technical Conservation Measures and the development of policy regarding the escapement of juvenile fish and the reduction of discards.



Given the importance of these issues, the NWW Rac will continue to prioritise work in these areas and provide advice and opinion to the Commission on these matters.

5.1. Technical Conservation Measures (TCMs)

The NWWRAC is committed to addressing TCMs within the scope of long-term management plans. The NWWRAC will provide the Commission with timely, professional opinion, should there be development of legislative proposals on this subject relating to North Western Waters.

The NWW Rac has recently submitted a letter containing a number of important questions regarding the decision-making, timescale and procedure involved in the new Commission approach on TCMs in 2012. The NWW Rac will continue to contribute on this subject by providing formal opinion on Commission proposals on TCMs. Clarification will also be sought regarding the development and implementation of interim rules prior to the adoption of a new technical measures framework regulation, and similarly should Regulation 850/98 be amended.

Given the complexity of the issues involved as well as the regional specificities of each fishery, the NWWRAC will require a reasonable period for consultation (i.e. at least three months) from the Commission. It is also essential that proposed measures for consultation are made available, by the Commission, in all the working languages of the RAC, in order that the membership may adequately prepare their professional opinion.

5.2. Discards Policy

The NWWRAC plans to hold Working Group discussions to comment on the Proposal Framework Regulation launched on the 13th of July, 2011, containing a proposal to ban discards in all fisheries over a period of three years.



6. Control and compliance

The NWWWRAC has established contacts in Year 6 with CFCA officials and the Secretariats of the Pelagic and the South Western Waters RAC with the view of organising a joint seminar on control and compliance aspects in western waters. This high profile event would take place in Dublin sometime in 2012 and would involve stakeholders, scientists and national administrations of all concerned Member States with fishing interests in the area, as well as CFCA and European Commission officials and members of the Fisheries Committee of the European Parliament.

Regarding the objectives of this meeting, it is likely that a debate on the development of regional joint deployment plans might be one of the topics of concern, as this is one of the mid-term objectives from the CFCA multiannual work programme 2011-2015.

A steering group of the NWWWRAC will work with the Secretariat on defining the scope and the objectives of this seminar from a NWWWRAC perspective before meeting again the CFCA. Additional funding or sponsorship will be sought from national administrations, should organizational arrangements required so.

7. Other topics of interest

The Executive Committee of the NWWWRAC will instruct working groups to address specific topics for discussion, as considered necessary and appropriate, throughout the course of the year and dependent on the availability of existing resources and work priorities.

8. Working procedures

The NWWWRAC will continue to refine its working procedures to ensure efficient and effective work practices.

The NWWWRAC will work closely with the industry, NGO representatives, the Commission, scientists and other RACs to develop appropriate work programmes to progress issues of common and specific concern.



8.1. Timetable

- Addendum I details the timetable for discussion of key issues within the NWWWRAC.

8.2. Operational Structure: meeting types and frequency

The largest budgetary expenditure incurred by the NWWWRAC is associated with meetings. The NWWWRAC is liable for costs associated with meeting room hire, interpretation services and technical equipment, in addition to the travel and accommodation costs of members and experts attending NWWWRAC meetings.

In order to achieve the objectives of the work programme, the operational hierarchy of the NWWWRAC is currently organised in the following three-tier structure:

8.2.1. Executive Committee (ExCom)

All decisions relating to the NWWWRAC are made by an Executive Committee (ExCom) up to 24 members. Currently, there are 20 members on the Executive Committee and four vacant seats (1 under the 2/3 of the fishing industry in “other fishing groups”; and 3 under the 1/3 of “other interest groups”).

Executive Committee meetings are held at least three times a year and normally address high level policy issues, debating the recommendations of Working Groups and reaching consensus in the form of RAC advice and opinion.

Each member of the Executive Committee (plus the Chairman of each Working Group presenting WG recommendations to the ExCom) is reimbursed for attending the meeting, and full interpretation is provided in the three working languages of the NWWWRAC (i.e. English, French and Spanish).



Representatives of the European Commission, the European Parliament and ACFA are also formally invited to attend ExCom meetings.

8.2.2. Working Groups (WGs)

Working Group meetings are held 2 to 3 times a year and are the main drivers of the NWWRAC. All issues necessary for debate are tabled at these meetings. A number of experts, as well as Commission members, are often invited to attend and make presentations at these meetings. There are currently 4 Working Groups in the NWWRAC, which are geographically based.

Additional Horizontal, Working Groups are also convened, as required, to discuss issues, which are of common interest to all NWWRAC members (e.g. Marine Spatial Planning, CFP Reform). Working Group meetings are normally held over 1-2 days.

Membership of Working Groups varies from 25 to 40 participants depending on the subject matter and full interpretation is provided (i.e. English, French and Spanish).

8.2.3. Focus Groups and Workshops

Focus Group meetings and Workshops are specialist meetings, which are convened as required when issues of urgent concern require an immediate response from the NWWRAC.

The focus groups are formed from within the general membership and generally consist of a small group of members with specific professional experience and expertise.

Such meetings have a specific function and require a particular outcome, such as the drafting of response papers (e.g. Review of Cod Recovery Plans); the development of a draft opinion with relevant experts (e.g. Celtic Sea Demersal Fisheries) or to form a NWWRAC opinion, by consensus where there are diverging positions within a working group (e.g. Deep water species, Rays and Sharks).

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In order to incorporate the flexibility required to accommodate these meetings, the NWWRAC has budgeted for 3 Focus Group or Workshop meetings, with a maximum of 8 participants in Year 7. Depending on budgetary availability, additional meetings may be held, if required. Interpretation services for these meetings are provided if required and contributions-in-kind are sought from Member States to minimise costs and maximise efficiency.

9. Improved Communications and Transparency

The NWWRAC Communications Strategy aims to promote the work of the NWWRAC and improve public and professional awareness of RAC outputs and opinions. In Year 7, this will be achieved by improving transparency and the level of communication with all stakeholders by producing regular e-newsletters as well as press releases posted on the Press section of the NWWRAC website (i.e. www.nwwrac.org).

In addition, the Secretariat will maximize the functionality of the website so that members can continue to work between meetings using the interactive, website forum and meeting space options.

Recognising the important role of NGOs and other interest groups within the functioning of the NWWRAC, the Secretariat will also continue to encourage new members to join this group and fill the vacant seats available.

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Addendum I. NWWRAC Meetings Timetable for Year 7

The Proposed Work Programme for the NWWRAC for the period from the 1st of October 2011 to the 30th of September 2012.

Please note that this work programme is subject to formal adoption at the General Assembly meeting of the NWWRAC, to be held in Dublin on the 27th October 2011.

Focus Groups, as listed below, are based on current knowledge. All dates and issues for discussion are subject to change, and will be directed by the requirements of the Commission and proposals coming from NWWRAC members.

The information presented below is therefore indicative of the NWWRAC operation in Year 7.



NWWRAC MEETINGS TIMETABLE FOR YEAR 7

North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council					
Indicative WORK PROGRAMME Year 7 (01 October 2011 – 30 September 2012)					
Meeting Type	Actual Proposed dates	Venue	Work Priorities		
General Assembly / AGM and Executive Committee	27 th October 2011	Dublin	Agree Proposed Work Programme for Year 7	Ratify Accounts for Year 5 and Budget for Y6	Elections for NWWRAC positions for the period 2011-2014
Focus Group on Review of Cod Recovery Plans	27 th October 2011	Dublin / Madrid	Outcomes of Commission's workshop (7 October)	NWWRAC advice to STECF Report / EC consultation paper	Proposed way forward / next steps
Working Groups	28 th October 2011	Dublin	<i>Relevant topics based on outstanding actions</i>	Regional Task Forces on Data Deficient Stocks	CFP Reform / Fishing Opportunities for 2012
Focus Group on Celtic Sea Mixed Demersal Fisheries	November 2011	Dublin	Implementing measures to biological, economic and social objectives agreed for future MPs	Develop indicators / template for an integrated LTMP for VIIIfg	Other related technical and accompanying measures
Working Groups & Executive Committee	February / March 2012	Paris / Spain	<i>Relevant topics based on outstanding actions.</i>	Regional Task Forces on Data Deficient Stocks.	CFP Reform

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North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council					
Indicative WORK PROGRAMME Year 7 (01 October 2011 – 30 September 2012)					
Meeting Type	Actual Proposed dates	Venue	Work Priorities		
Focus Group on Northern Hake	1 st half of 2012?	TBC	Response to EC Non-Paper on Hake management	ICES/STECF Considerations	Lessons learned from the Southern Hake LTMP
Focus Group on Technical Conservation Measures and Discards	Q4 2011 / Q1 2012	TBA	Alternative measures to Commission's proposal on a discards ban	Proposals of TCMs in a regional fishery-by-fishery basis	Whitefish catch composition rules in VIa; emergency measures for the Celtic Sea
Working Groups & Executive Committee	July 2012	Dublin	Presentation and overview of ICES advice	Prepare advice for Commission on TACs and quotas for 2013	Review the Work Programme to date
Executive Committee	September 2012	Madrid	Agree advice from working Groups on TACs and quotas	Prepare for the General Assembly and present Year 7 accounts as well as the proposed budget for Y8	Discussions on priority actions and work programme Y8
General Assembly / AGM	September 2012	Dublin	Report from the Chairman on Year 7 actions carried out.	Ratify Year 7 accounts and budget for Y8	Adopt work programme Y8 work for