

RAC CONSULTATION: A TROUBLED PROCESS

**PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT FOR THE
SOUTHERN REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL**

(SWW RAC)

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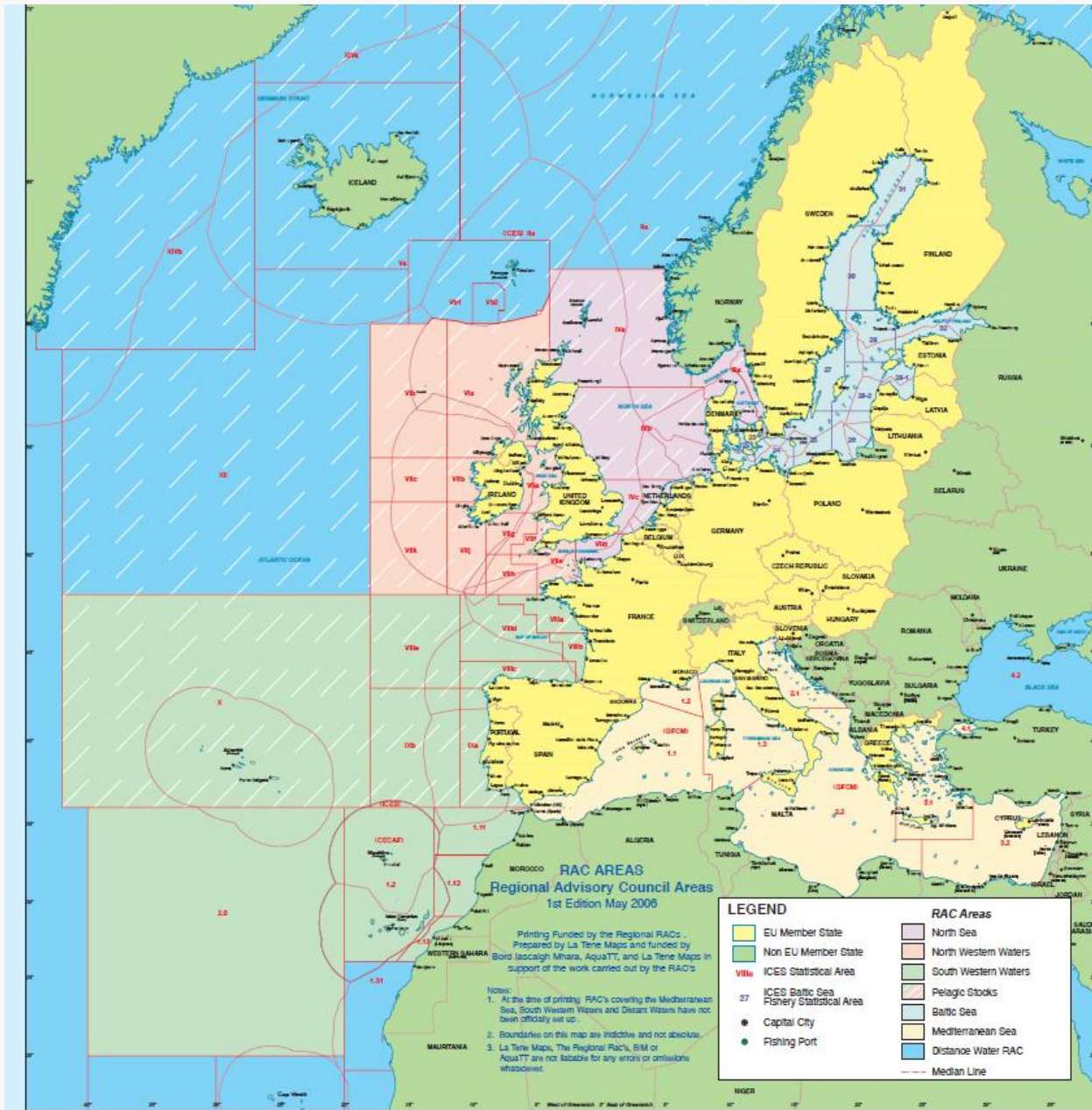
(NWW RAC COMEX - 29 February 2012)

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To assess the performance of the *work in consultation* and make recommendations to improve it

METHOD

- Face to face interviews with RAC members, the commission and national institutions
- Participation in various meetings as an observer
- Documentary analysis



RESULTS

Most people, including the commission, agree that :

- The consultation has helped improve relationships between stakeholders (industry, NGO, commission, national institutions)
- Has helped better understand each other's interests and constraints (increasing everyone's legitimacy)
- The work done by the RAC has markedly improved over the first 4 years, with tangible results

But problems remain which limit the benefits that can be gained from consultation

Both RAC members and the Commission have responsibilities in improving the situation

On the RAC's side

- **Lack of strategic vision and clear objectives**

The RAC tends to work in a reactive manner, in the short term, in response to actualities of the moment

- **Need for a common understanding of what is at stake with fisheries management today**

- Sustainable? What does it mean? How to do it?
- ‘Reversal of the burden of the proof’? Consultation, co-management?
- What about markets?

- **RAC members need to validate their knowledge and expertise with data**
- **The conduct of working group meetings must be improved**
 - Members are not sufficiently prepared
 - Role of the working groups chairmen
- **Administrative and logistic burden**
- **Increase the RAC visibility and promote its role within the region**

Now, on the Commission's responsibilities....

But before, I need to describe the consultation model put in place by the commission for the RACs

RAC CONSULTATION MODEL

1. At the intersection of two concepts which are complex and for which there is no consensus:
 - a. The sustainable management of marine resources
with underlying principles, objectives, tools, etc.
 - b. The participation of stakeholders in this management
with underlying principles, objectives, tools, etc.

2. Stakeholder participation model:

From the least to the most participative, depending on the management model

Management model

Centralised

Advisory

Collaborative

Delegated

Participation model

→ Information

→ Consultation

→ Cooperation

→ Co-decision

(delegation of power)

Public authorities' responsibilities decrease while stakeholders' responsibilities increase

CONFUSION BETWEEN ADVISORY AND COLLABORATIVE MODELS

- The RAC ‘advisory’ model demands that RAC members collaborate between themselves (reaching consensus requires collaboration)
 - But a ‘collaborative’ model requires a greater implication from the authority that initiates the participation process
- = Co-construction: an exchange of ideas between stakeholders and the managing authority until an agreement is reached**

EXPECTATIONS FROM THE RAC CONSULTATION MODEL

RACs are typically advisory. The commission has no obligations to take their advices into account.

But expectations are high on both sides for this fairly low level participation model!

- RACs : to influence the commission and the management of their fisheries (through their advices).
- Commission: to obtain expert knowledge from the industry and other stakeholders and secure compliance with regulations.

SETTING UP THE RIGHT CONDITIONS FOR CONSULTATION

- Provide a clear consultation framework and procedures (objectives, roadmaps, timetables)
- Requests for advices must be precise: the commission must explain what it needs and expects from the RAC
- For each advice produced, explain clearly how it was taken into account or, otherwise, why it was not taken into account

« It is harder to crack a prejudice than an atom » (Einstein)

“To fight prejudices, our own and those of others, is not an option, it is a professional responsibility”

Thank you for your attention