



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

MINUTES

Focus Group CFP package

Virtual meeting

Monday 19 May 2023, 10:00 – 12:00 CET

1. Welcome and introductions

The Vicechair Manu Kelberine welcomed all participants to the meeting. The Chair Alexandra Philippe could not attend the meeting and sent her apologies. Other apologies were received by Olivier Lepretre and Gerald Hussenot before the meeting.

The agenda was adopted as drafted.

Action points from the last meeting (22 May 2023) include:

1	The Secretariat will draft a letter to the Commission regarding the special group on implementing the action plan, including a request to share the template to be used by MS for developing roadmaps.
	The letter was sent on 6 June.
2	The Secretariat will circulate the table summarising the items and actions from the action plan and ask members for their input on which of those should be addressed by the NWWAC.
	Table shared on 8 June, comments received via email from John Lynch and Gerald Hussenot.
3	The Secretariat will share an updated version of the ToR with members who will have two days for review. Then the ToR will be sent to the Horizontal Working Group and will be approved by the Executive Committee via fast track procedure, to ensure the FG can start its work swiftly.
	ToRs have been approved by ExCom on 16 June.

2. Drafting of advice on the Marine Action Plan

Before discussing the contents of the table including all actions shared by the Secretariat, Kelberine opened the floor for members to express their general point of view on the Action Plan.

He started by saying that according to him bottom trawling is the most relevant item. In the past years, professionals and scientists have tried to identify the various challenges, environmental and socio-economic, around MPAs management and bottom trawling. This work doesn't seem to be



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taken into account in the Action Plan, which uses a top down approach with no consideration of what happened on the field. He felt like all the work done on bottom trawling has been set aside.

Jerome Jourdain pointed out that the action plan is very ambiguous from the legal point of view. It also undermines all the expectations that we could have in terms of food sovereignty and stakeholders involvement. *“Our objective is to strike a balance between activities and habitat and species preservation. On that note the action plan does not go in the right direction.”* He reported that several protests were made in France, as stakeholders had the impression that they hadn't been listened to in the way MPAs are managed.

According to Jourdain, there are some items for which more explanation is needed, such as provisions on setting up new MPAs following strict rules or proposals aiming at strengthening selectivity to minimise incidental catches. However, the Action Plan does not define the expected goals of those actions. *“We are in favour of reducing incidental catches, but looking at the definition of acceptable threshold we need to agree on the expected goal first”*, he explained. There is also legal confusion about the definition of MPAs in the EU. When referring to the 30% objective in the Biodiversity Strategy, preservation is not intended through MPAs only, but also with other provisions in favour of biodiversity conservation such as OECMs. Regarding protection of the seabed, there are certain specific objectives according to Descriptor 6, but ICES has indicated that it is not possible for them to assess if the habitat is affected by human activities or not. As a consequence, DG ENVI made a proposal last month and said that they will close 10% of these habitats to any activities. The Action Plan reports that there are threshold values that the Commission would like to discuss, but areas have been closed anyway, which is unacceptable.

Jourdain finally referred to the link with decarbonisation and to the event organised the week before by DG MARE on how to decarbonise the fishing sector and there is a debate ongoing on the suspension of sediment and the contribution of the fishing sector to the worsening of climate change. However, many studies have been conducted on the topic without reaching to these conclusions. According to him, the AC needs to adopt a position on that too.

Franck Le Barzic agreed with Jourdain. Regarding the ban on bottom trawling gears, he felt that it is important to focus on food independence in EU. The Commission has never imposed anything on imports. Seeing this obligation imposed on European fishers would be terrible as it would increase the import of seafood that is not complying with EU rules. *“In this global market, we have to try to be on an equal footing when it comes to complying with EU rules”*. Regarding selectivity, he pointed out that the EU has never mentioned the efforts made over the last ten years, while there are many options and strategies available that producers use and that do have a positive impact. However, the impact of such measures has not been evaluated yet and more data is needed. He felt that the definitions of restored nature, healthy populations and healthy ecosystems are very unclear. The situation around MPAs is also very blurred as Commission's guidelines are bringing confusion and insecurity.



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John Lynch intervened and advised to go through the table with the actions overview, as all topics are addressed there. According to him, it was the best way to produce advice and address each issue.

Mo Mathies felt that the clash between the EU food security policy and nature policies needs to be highlighted in the advice. It is also important to emphasise that regional aspects and specificities need to be taken into account by the Action Plan.

Participants then agreed to work on the table. All comments were reported directly in that document.

3. Action points & closing of the meeting

ACTION: Members will have until Thursday 22 June 12:00 CET to send more comments to the table. Then, the Secretariat together with the Chair and Vicechair will prepare a draft advice based on these contributions.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and closed the meeting.

4. Participants

Name	Organisation
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Manu Kelberine	CRPMEM de Bretagne
Franck Le Bazic	Cobrenord
John Lynch	ISEFPO
Mo Mathies	NWWAC Secretariat
Anais Mourtada	CNPMEM
Aodh O'Donnell	IFPO
Jacopo Pasquero	EBCD
Irene Prieto	ARVI
Dominique Thomas	OPCMEMMN
Matilde Vallerani	NWWAC Secretariat
Arthur Yon	FROM Nord