

ICES MIRAC REPORT 2008

ICES ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Report of the Meeting between ICES and the Regional Advisory Councils 2008 (MIRAC 2008) as prepared by the Chair

29–30 January 2008

Vigo, Spain



ICES

International Council for
the Exploration of the Sea

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Executive summary

The 3rd meeting between ICES and the European Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) was held in the Museo do Mar de Galicia in Vigo, Spain on 29–30 January 2008. The objective of the meeting is to coordinate work between ICES and RACs and to provide a forum for exchange of ideas about future collaborations.

The meeting was well attended by all the RACs that have been established so far (North Sea RAC, North Western Waters RAC, South Western Waters RAC, Pelagic RAC, Baltic RAC and Long Distance RAC) and by several members of the ICES Advisory Services and the ICES General Secretary (Gerd Hubold). The meeting was chaired by Martin Pastoors.

In an open and frank way, the participants discussed issues of common interests to ICES and the RACs, like the collaboration on improving data and assessment quality, the scientific needs of the RACs and the advisory services of ICES, joint workshops between RACs and ICES and the participation of young fishermen at the ICES ASC.

The meeting was successful in aligning the work plans of ICES and the RACs, and in provided ample opportunities to explore future collaborations.

1 Background

For the third time a meeting between ICES and the Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) was held. There was no specific ICES resolution about the meeting this time due to the closing down of MCAP and implementing a new advisory structure in ICES, but the meeting was decided and organised by MCAP in 2007. Like in the previous meetings the aim was to explore how the cooperation between ICES and the RACs shall be further developed.

2 Participants

A participants list is given in Annex 1.

The meeting had 31 participants. Both ICES and all RACs of relevance for ICES (BSRAC, SWWRAC, NWWRAC, NSRAC, PRAC, LDRAC) were well represented. Two observers from the EC were present.

The meeting was chaired by Martin Pastoors, ACFM Chair in 2006 and 2007, and ACOM Vice Chair in 2008.

3 Agenda

The Agenda is shown in Annex 2.

4 Minutes of the meeting

4.1 Opening and welcome

The meeting was opened by the Director of the Instituto Espanol de Oceanografia (IEO), Eduardo Balguerias, the General Secretary of the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), Gerd Hubbold, and the Minister of Fisheries of Galicia, Mrs Carmen Gallego.

This was followed by a round table presentation of participants.

The Chair went through the agenda, and a.o.b. (any other business) was added to agenda. No further comments to agenda were made.

Simultaneous translation in English, French and Spanish were done during the meeting.

4.2 Update of the status of each RAC

All 6 RACs relevant for ICES are now well established. Each RAC gave a status report. This showed that the RACs have been very active in 2007 and set up a large number of meetings to address the key issues in formulating advice to the European Commission about fisheries management in the short and longer term. The SWWRAC and LDRAC have been fully established now and are expected to work in similar ways as the "older" RACs in 2008. Thus, even more RAC meetings can be expected in 2008. Specific emphasis has in 2007 been placed on cod recovery, MSY approaches, and closed areas. Many RACs noted as an issue that ICES for many stocks states that there are insufficient or unreliable data for given biological advice. They especially noted the large number of stocks for which ICES is not able to provide analytical type assessments.

4.3 Progress on follow up action points from the previous MIRAC meeting in January 2007

Most of the action points from MIRAC 2007 have been addressed during 2007. An outstanding issue is the reply from EFARO on a letter from the RACs. The chair suggested that the RACs could propose to EFARO to make a presentation at an EFARO meeting, about the RACs general approach and needs. This should be arranged directly between the RACs and EFARO.

4.4 The RACs' experience with working with ICES during 2007 (round the table)

The RACs were generally content with the presentations of the ICES advice in 2007. The SWWRAC indicated that they would have liked a better explanation of the precautionary approach used by ICES and how ICES applies that in situations where the data or analyses are very uncertain. The SWWRAC also highlighted the importance of the language of communication and that the use of English is a drawback for some stakeholders, despite the translation services being available.

4.5 ICES' experience of participating in RAC meetings in 2007 (Doc 3)

ICES has participated in 21 RAC meetings in 2007 of the 30 meetings where scientific input was requested by the RACs. Most of the meetings were attended by Martin Pastoors in his role as chair of ACFM explaining the ICES advice. When ICES is represented in RAC meetings, it is generally in the role of observer who can provide

information to the RACs, but who is not directly interfering with the advice that is formulated by the RACs.

Each RAC has its own way of organising its work and meetings. There is a need for better coordination between ICES and RACs on what type of presentation they expect in what type of meeting arrangement.

Action point: coordination between secretariats of RACs and ICES on the required ICES input in the different RAC meetings.

The experience with “older” RACs and “newer” RACs show that there is a need for better explanation of the advisory principles that are used by ICES in the provision of advice. This is especially relevant when the assessments are considered to be weak and uncertain.

Action point: ICES to organize general presentations to the “newer” RACs (SWWRAC, LDRAC) on the advisory principles used by ICES.

4.6 Scarce data for assessment and how can the RACs and ICES work together to improve it?

- a) Fishers Surveys (ICES Evaluation, Doc 4) have been conducted by questionnaires to fishers in the North Sea. It was discussed whether it is useful and whether it should be extended to other areas than the North Sea.

Action point: Ann Bell (NSRAC) to set up a dedicated group consisting of RACs and ICES to evaluate how a continuation or extension of the North Sea fishers survey could make a contribution to dissemination the knowledge of fishermen in the advisory process.

- b) Link between ICES and RAC Focus groups (Docs 11 and 12).

Several RACs have taken the initiatives to set up focus groups or data workshops with the aim of improving the data that is available for scientific assessments of the state of the stocks and the fisheries and to making sure that the link between data and models is appropriate. RACs are asking for a dialogue between scientists and fishers on how data can be collected.

It appears that there may be a scope for more coordination between the different RACs on the activities with improving data in order to avoid duplication of efforts. This should be taken up in the RAC coordination meetings.

The chair of the meeting suggested that there could be an efficient division of responsibilities between the RACs and ICES. The RACs could take primary responsibility for **focus-groups** which are aimed at improving the available data and for exploring alternative data sources that could be used for scientific assessments. These focus-groups could consist of stakeholders (fishers) and scientists from different national backgrounds. ICES could then be responsible for organizing **data compilation workshops** which aim to evaluate all available data (including time-series of non-traditional data sources) for the purpose of providing the best assessments of the state of the stocks. The data-compilation workshops should be attached to the ICES benchmark workshops which have been planned for the winter 2008/2009 and is expected to be an annual event each year dealing with a new set of stocks.

There was no final consensus on the appropriateness of the approach suggested by the chair.

Action point: ICES and RAC coordination groups to explore whether coordination of focus-groups and data compilation workshops can be achieved in 2008.

A number of representatives highlighted the suggestion that ICES should develop a “traffic light approach” to indicate the quality of the ICES assessments.

Action point: ICES to explore the possibilities develop a “traffic light approach” for the quality of the ICES assessments.

During the meeting, the RACs and ICES engaged in a discussion about the scientific resources that are available to support the fisheries management in Europe (Northeast Atlantic), but did not reach a conclusion on this matter. It was suggested that the national members of RACs should try to engage in a dialog with their ministries (fisheries, agriculture, and science) to increase awareness on the demand for more scientific capacity in the field of applied marine research.

c) Feedback to fishers about how their data have been used.

The workshop on Using Fishers to Sample Catches (WKUFS) will meet in June 2008. This workshop is expected to consider the requirements for feedback to fishers on the information they have provided for scientific purposes.

d) Relation to Data Collection Regulation (DCR).

Representatives of the EC explained the setup of the new Data Collection Regulation (DCR) that will enter into force on January 1st 2009. Important features of the new DCR are that all interested parties can get access to the data that is collected, that VMS and logbook data will be available for scientific analyses, and that scientific observers will have mandatory access to fishing vessels. The data that is collected under the DCR will be fully specified in the implementation regulation which is foreseen for mid 2008. There is no link between the DCR and the control agencies and therefore issues regarding misreporting or underreporting will not be an explicit part of the data that is collected.

Several participants highlighted the need to get better data on the actual removals by the fishing fleets. This could entail more observer coverage and/or more science-industry partnerships to develop this type of data.

The chair concluded that the participants share a common interest to get estimates of actual removals by the fishing fleets in addition to the officially reported landings.

The chair also concluded that any new sources of information that will be explored by RACs are not part of the current DCR, but could be addressed in specific studies.

The conclusions from the chair were not formally endorsed by the participants.

4.7 Reform of the ICES advisory structure and new timing of advice (Doc 5)

The presentation of the ICES advisory changes highlighted that the changes have not been formally approved yet by the ICES Council. The final decision will be taken in

the second half of February. An important issue to be decided on is the role of observers in the advisory process.

Several representatives highlighted the need to keep the advisory process open to observers and to make sure that the ICES expert groups effectively contribute to the formulation of the advice.

4.8 Development of Management Plans—how can ICES and the RACs work together on this?

When ICES is participating in a process of developing or evaluating management plans, it is essential that the process is open to all interested stakeholder groups and scientists.

National scientists can play an important role in developing different options for management plans.

Action point: Barry Deas will setup a RAC-lead workshop between RACs and ICES on how to further the development of management plans.

4.9 Young fishermen's participation in ICES ASC

Generally, RACs are positive on the issue of young fishermen participating in the ICES ASC.

Action point: The ICES-RAC meeting recommends a continuation of the young-fishermen participation at the ICES ASC. Guidance of young fishermen by young scientist(s) could be a useful alternative to using ICES staff for the guidance. The details of a proposal to the ICES Council (mid February 2008) need to be worked out by correspondence in line with the arrangements for 2007. Part of such a proposal would be:

- that the RACs and ICES both contribute to covering the costs of the participating young fishers.
- that an approach is included for spreading the experience of the participating fishers within the RACs and among fishers communities.
- that literature should be sent to the participating fishers in advance of the ASC to inform them on what on the organizational matters in ICES.

4.10 ICES Expert Group meetings in 2008 of potential interest to the RACs (Doc 7 and Doc 7b)

The ICES homepage contains a full list of meetings with details about the tasks of each meeting. Most ICES Workshops are open for the RACs and the RACs should inform the ICES Secretariat if they intend to participate.

The ICES Secretariat will inform the relevant RACs about the potential most important ICES Expert Group meetings, like the Benchmark Assessment WKs to be held towards the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009 (dates and stocks to be dealt with not yet determined).

4.11 RAC requests which have been dealt with by ICES via EC- in 2007 (Doc 8)

Three requests were sent by the RACs via the EC to ICES in 2007.

Two of them were dealt with in an appropriate way, but the third one, the requests of the additional forecast calculations for North Sea herring on behalf of the PRAC, was

problematic. This was because the appropriate expert group could not handle the request that came in too late.

Action point: requests from RACs through the EC should preferably be handled by the appropriate expert groups and should therefore be announced in due time for those groups to handle those requests.

4.12 Presentation from RACs on their research and advisory needs, including issues on which the RACs might request ICES advice, via the EC

Main issues:

- improving data and assessments
- support for long-term management

RACs articulated needs for general scientific support without being specific on whether they required that support from ICES or from national scientists.

Action point: RACs need to coordinate the requirements for scientific support in 2008 and specifically the requirements for ICES scientific support. The latter needs to be coordinated with the EC.

4.13 Discussion of practical arrangements for cooperation between RACs and ICES, including procedures for delivering and discussion of the ICES advice (Doc 9)

In 2007 the ICES Secretariat and the TACs developed a list of RAC meetings where ICES scientific input was required. This list has been a central working tool in the coordination of the work of ICES and the RACs in 2007. It was agreed to continue with this task.

Action point: RAC secretariats and ICES secretariat will draw up list of meetings where scientific support is required. The list will also specify if ICES scientific support is required and in what form.

4.14 Closing

The meeting was closed at 13:00 Wednesday 30 January 2008. The Chair thanked the participants for a very constructive and fruitful meeting.

He thanks the IOE and especially Carmela Porteiro for hosting the meeting and gave a special thank to the translators for a very well done job during the meeting.

5 Action points

ICES to organize general presentations to the “newer” RACs (SWWRAC, LDRAC) on the advisory principles used by ICES.

Ann Bell (NSRAC) to set up a dedicated group consisting of RACs and ICES to evaluate how a continuation or extension of the North Sea fishers survey could make a contribution to dissemination the knowledge of fishermen in the advisory process.

ICES and RAC coordination groups to explore whether coordination of focus-groups and data compilation workshops can be achieved in 2008.

ICES to explore the possibilities develop a “traffic light approach” for the quality of the ICES assessments.

Barry Deas will setup a RAC-lead workshop between RACs and ICES on how to further the development of management plans.

requests from RACs through the EC should preferably be handled by the appropriate expert groups and should therefore be **announced in due time** for those groups to handle those requests.

RACs need to coordinate the requirements for scientific support in 2008 and specifically the requirements for ICES scientific support. The latter needs to be coordinated with the EC.

RACs secretariat and **ICES secretariat** will draw up list of meetings where scientific support is required. The list will also specify if ICES scientific support is required and in what form.

coordination between secretariats of **RACs** and **ICES** on the required ICES input in the different RAC meetings.

The ICES-RAC meeting recommends a **continuation of the young-fishermen participation** at the ICES ASC.

ICES to organize general presentations to the “newer” RACs (SWWRAC, LDRAC) on the advisory principles used by ICES.

Annex 1: Participants at MIRAC 2008

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Annex 2: Agenda

MIRAC (Meeting between ICES and the RACs)

29 January, 14:00–30 January, 13:00, 2008

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Chair: Martin Pastoors

Agenda

29 January, 14.00

- 1) Opening and welcome.
- 2) Update on the Status of each RAC (Tour de table status)
- 3) Progress on following up of action points from the previous MIRAC meeting in January 2007.

Coffee break

- 4) The RACs experience of working with ICES during 2007 (round the table).
- 5) ICES' experience of participating in RAC meetings in 2007 (Doc 3).
- 6) Scarce data for assessment and how can the RACs and ICES work together to improve it?
 - 6.1) Fishers Surveys (ICES Evaluation, Doc 4) is it useful and should it be extended to other areas than the North Sea?
 - 6.2) Link between ICES and RAC Focus groups (briefing by Alexandre Rodriguez, NWWRAC, Docs 11 and 12).
 - 6.3) Feedback to fishers about how their data have been used.
 - 6.4) Relation to Data Collection Regulation (DCR).
- 7) Reform of the ICES advisory structure and new timing of advice (Doc 5)
 - 7.1) General.
 - 7.2) Data compilation workshops where stakeholders' input is possible.

Close of first day (18:00)

Social event

30 January, 09.00

- 9) Young fishermen's participation in ICES ASC. How was it in Helsinki 2007, and should it be repeated in Halifax 2008 (DOC 6). Recommendation that it should be continued or not.
- 10) ICES Expert Group meetings in 2008 of potential interest to the RACs (Doc 7).
- 11) RAC requests which have been dealt with by ICES via EC in 2007 (Doc 8).

- 12) Presentation from RACs on their research and advisory needs, including issues on which the RACs might request ICES advice, via the EC (Presented by Ann Bell, InterRAC and NSRAC).
- 13) Discussion of practical arrangements for cooperation between RACs and ICES, including procedures for delivering and discussion of the ICES advice (Doc 9, the current 2008 list of RAC meetings where ICES will be represented). (List of RAC meetings to be agreed by secretariats; InterRAC meeting?).
- 14) Scarce data for assessment and how can the RACs and ICES work together to improve it?
 - d. Relation to Data Collection Regulation (DCR).
- 8) Development of Management Plans. How can ICES and the RACs work together on this?
- 14) Conclusion and action points.

Closure (13.00)

A small lunch will be provided by IEO.

Annex 3: List of documents

No.	Title	Agenda Pt.
1.	Document List	
2.	Agenda	
3.	List of RAC Meetings 2007	5
4.	Fishers' Surveys-ICES Evaluation	6.a
5.	Reform of ICES Advisory Structure	7
6.	Young Fishermen's at ASC	9
7.	ICES EG Meetings 2008	10
8.	RAC Requests to ICES via EC	11
9	List of RAC Meetings 2008	13
10	Annotated action list of MIRAC 2007	3
11	NWWRAC Letter to ICES on Fishing Industry Data–17 December 2007	6.b
12	ICES Reply to NWWRAC on Fishing Industry Data–19 December 2007	6.b