



MEMO NOTE

InterRAC Phone Conference on Data Deficiencies in Stock Assessments Preparation of ICES WKDDRAC3 Friday 14 December 2012 3-4 pm

Participants	Role	Organisation
Barrie Deas	Moderator – WKDDRAC3 Co-Chair – Data Deficiency Coordinator	North Sea RAC North Western Waters RAC
Julien Lamothe	Data Deficiency Coordinator	South Western Waters RAC
Benoit Guerin	Secretariat	South Western Waters RAC
Yohan Weiller	Secretariat	South Western Waters RAC
Alexandre Rodríguez	Secretariat	North Western Waters RAC

Apologies received from Lorna Duguid (North Sea RAC Secretariat).

a. Main recommendations

The three RACs (NSRAC-NWWRAC-SWWRAC) involved in this initiative have reflected about the work done to date and its collaboration with scientists to improve stock assessment.

Based on the exchange of views held at this meeting, the RACs propose to pursue further collaboration with ICES in two main strategic areas of work:

1. RACs and ICES will act as “*vectors*” or facilitators for dialogue with the aim to channel all requests coming from and going to both the scientific community and the fishermen. In this sense, a formal protocol or “*memorandum of understanding*” between ICES and the RACs might be agreed through a joint declaration of mutual cooperation to increase confidence and trust in the system and exchange of data between fishermen and scientists.
2. RACs and ICES will jointly look at how to balance financially available scientific resources with priorities in stock assessments – a proposal to limit the annual advice to a number of species that act as main economic drivers in a fishery might be an innovative solution (that would not mean necessarily to limit the number of species subject to annual TAC) for consideration in light of the forthcoming implementation of the discards ban in EU waters.

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b. Implementing actions

A number of actions have been identified in connection with the areas of work referred above:

Area 1

1.1. RACs might be able to provide a shared and coordinated approach (reporting, methodology) to the collection, presentation and dissemination of data from individual RAC stock coordinators. The “pro forma questionnaire” used by the NWWRAC could serve as initial template.

Area 2

2.1. RACs and ICES will identify and select a list of priority data limited stocks for improving knowledge.

2.2. RACs and ICES will investigate ways to optimise resources in relation to both the frequency and the quality of the scientific assessments, bearing in mind that this might entail to political ramifications. ICES will be encouraged to provide an introductory presentation at WKDDRAC3 on the work progress and outcomes reached at WKLIFE/WKFRAME/WKNEW before dealing with this issue.

2.3. RACs and ICES will contribute to achieve a better understanding of the mechanics of data provision and validation/integration into assessments – e.g. reference fleets, self-sampling schemes...

2.4. RACs will assist and give feedback to ICES whenever required to fine tune its approach to categorisation and management options for Data Limited Stocks. One of the actions identified during WKLIFE II was that RACs could help identifying which data is available for each DLS stock from an industry that could help ICES to run a productivity and susceptibility analysis (PSA).

2.5. RACs will help in pointing out all existing legal (“*de iure*”) or practical (“*de facto*”) constraints to access by scientists to relevant data (VMS, landings, etc.) and asking to policy makers to put remedial measures in place to remove/overcome any obstacles.

2.6. ICES and RACs will provide a perspective on the dynamics and problems of migratory stocks that are object of study of different RACs and explore ways of collaboration between EU and non EU fleets.



c. Proposed way forward

It is crucial to maintain momentum and consolidate existing collaboration between fishermen, RACs and scientists to mitigate and improve data deficiencies that currently hamper the realisation of analytical assessments.

A stepwise approach in four stages is suggested here:

1. Improve mutual communication and understanding between scientists and stakeholders;
2. Set actions to remove obstacles to the provision of data (both within the RACs and at European level);
3. Integrate/incorporate industry data into assessments and acquire an understanding of the spatial dimension of the fishing activity (e.g. plotter data...);
4. Implement an Ecosystem Based Approach to the context of mixed fisheries management → different information sources.