



MINUTES

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM) AND GENERAL ASSEMBLY (GA)

NORTH WESTERN WATERS REGIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

**The Coach House,
Dublin Castle, Dublin**

Wednesday 18th September 2013

10.00 - 12.00

Chairman: Marc Ghiglia

Directors: Bertie Armstrong, Conor Nolan

Rapporteurs: Alexandre Rodríguez and Joanna McGrath

1. Welcome and introductions

1.1. Opening address by the Honorary President of the NWWWRAC, Marc Ghiglia

Marc Ghiglia, Honorary President of the NWWWRAC and Chairman of the General Assembly, welcomed all participants to the 9th Annual General Meeting and General Assembly of the NWWWRAC.

The complete list of participants is provided in Annex I.



1.2. Apologies

The following apologies were noted:

- Michael Keatinge (NWWRAC Director, Ireland);
- Víctor Badiola (OPPAO-CEPESCA, Spain);
- Anton Dekker (DFO, The Netherlands);
- Caroline Gamblin (CNPMM, France)
- Antón González (Wales and West Coast FPO);
- Hugo González (ANASOL-ARVI is represented by Purificación Fernández)
- John Hermse (Scallop Association, UK);
- Alan McCulla (ANIFPO, Northern Ireland)
- Francis O'Donnell (IFPO, Ireland)
- Sean O'Donoghue (KFO, Ireland)

1.3. Adoption of the Agenda and Minutes of the last Meeting

The agenda for the meeting was adopted without change or comment.

Similarly, the report of the 8th AGM/GA meeting, held in Dublin on the 26th of September 2012, was accepted as a true record of the meeting and was approved without comment.

The President and GA Chair of the NWWRAC gave the floor to the Chairman of the Executive Committee (ExCom) of the NWWRAC (Bertie Armstrong) to continue the business of the meeting.

2. Annual report from the Chairperson of the NWWRAC, Bertie Armstrong

The NWWRAC and Executive Committee Chairman, presented the annual report for Year 8 (01 October 2012 – 30 September 2013) and the annual strategic plan (i.e. work programme) for Year 9 (01 October 2013 – 30 September 2014), in accordance with articles 19 and 38 of the NWWRAC Rules of Procedure as amended in January 2013. The full content of the presentation from the Chairman is available on the NWWRAC website¹.

¹ Link:

http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/2_Annual_Report_NWWRAC_Chairman_Work_Progress_GA_Dublin_180913_EN.pdf



2.1. Overview of the Year 8 work programme (1 October 2012 to 30 September 2013)

The NWWRAC Chairman provided a review of the meetings in Year 8 which were either held by the NWWRAC or involved NWWRAC participation. The review also included a list of the actions carried out in accordance with the work programme, as well as a summary description of the letters, opinions and advice, submitted by the NWWRAC, during Year 8.

The Chairman recognised the amount of time and dedication invested by both the Secretariat and several members on the review of the access regime and management measures for deep-sea species. He also highlighted the progress made by the NWWRAC coordinators for data limited stocks as well as the work at the Focus Groups in relation to the development of management plans for mixed demersal fisheries in the West of Scotland, Celtic Sea and Irish Sea.

2.2. Presentation of the work priorities for Year 9 (1 October 2013 to 30 September 2014)

The NWWRAC and Executive Committee Chairman stated that the main body of work for the NWWRAC, in the forthcoming year, will be in seven key areas:

1. CFP reform: The main focus will be on regionalisation, decision-making and governance;
2. Mixed Fisheries multi-annual management plans (MAMPs) for areas VI-VII;
3. Quality of scientific and economic data (data limited stocks): collaboration between science and industry to provide scientific and economic data for improving stocks assessments;
4. Technical Conservation Measures;
5. Implementation of landing obligation;
6. Marine Spatial Planning (main focus on MPA);
7. Effort regime/ access to western waters;
8. Deep-water habitats and species.

The NWWRAC Chairman encouraged all members to come forward with proposals to set up issue-based focus groups in Year 9 and to bring these ideas to the Executive Committee through the Chairpersons of their respective Working Groups.



The NWWRAC Chairman also encouraged members to do the necessary preparatory work with regard to their ideas in order to make optimal use of NWWRAC finances and expertise.

2.3. Proposed calendar of meetings for Year 9

The NWWRAC and Executive Committee Chairman informed the AGM and GA members of a preliminary calendar of meetings for the remainder of 2013 and the first half of 2014. This calendar is available on the NWWRAC website and in the NWWRAC work programme². The AGM and GA members approved the provisional calendar as a part of the annual strategic plan for Year 9, on condition that sufficient prior notice is given to allow members to plan their travel arrangements at minimum cost. It was a decision of the AGM and GA members that Focus Group meetings will be established, according to work priorities and budget availability, based on proposals coming directly from Working Groups. Where funding is not available, the Secretariat will seek sponsorship or financial support from public, national, regional and local authorities and/or private organisations.

Decision: Both the annual report of Year 8 and the annual strategic report for Year 9 (i.e. Work Programme including the calendar of meetings) were approved by consensus by the AGM and members of the General Assembly.

3. Report from Secretariat on membership and budget

The Secretariat (Joanna McGrath; Executive Assistant - Finance and Administration), in accordance with articles 38 and 47 of the NWWRAC Rules of Procedure, presented an overview of the membership and an overall budget update on behalf of the Chairman and the Secretariat. She also informed the members that in May 2013 the NWWRAC's Year 5 and Year 6 accounts were audited by Moore Stephens, a company appointed by the Commission. The Secretariat has received the audit report and is in the process of addressing the minor comments and recommendations made.

² The meetings calendar is available in the Chairman's presentation (see footnote 1)



3.1. Report on membership

The Secretariat (Ms. McGrath) provided members with a brief overview of the current status of NWWWRAC membership. Two organisations have just left the NWWWRAC. One of these is WWF-UK whose membership for Year 9 is uncertain pending an internal review. There are also two Organisations who have just joined the NWWWRAC, ClientEarth (UK-based NGO) and CEPESCA (Spanish fishing industry confederation).

There are two seats remaining vacant in the 1/3 (Other Interest Groups) of the Executive Committee. The seat currently held by WWF-UK could also become vacant should they confirm withdrawal from the NWWWRAC.

Ms. McGrath also provided graphics on the variations in membership trends during the 9 years of the NWWWRAC's existence. The graphic overview included a breakdown, by category, of membership (i.e. GA, Ex.Com, WGs) since Year 1, as well as the current (Year 9) distribution of members from the fishing industry and the other interest groups.

The presentation is available for consultation on the NWWWRAC website³

3.2. Review of the income and expenditure for Year 8

The Secretariat (Ms McGrath) provided an overview of the current position regarding the income and expenditure of the NWWWRAC in Financial Year 8 (1 October 2012 - 30 September 2013).

The main points made were as follows:

❖ Year 8 Income

- The NWWWRAC received total subscriptions of €25,700 from the six Member States within the present financial year.
- The final instalment of the EU grant (i.e. €50,000) will be paid after January 2014 and is dependent on the audit and approval of the company accounts as well as receipt by the Commission of the final Year 8 report.

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http://www.nwwrac.org/admin/publication/upload/Update_NWWWRAC_Membership_Y8_Y9_September2013_EN_v2.pdf



❖ Year 8 Expenditure

- The NWWRAC is on target to spend as close as possible to 100% of the Year 8 budget.
- An Amendment to the Specific Grant Agreement S12.635234 for Year 8 was approved by the Commission in September 2013.
- The main differences between the revised budget and expenditure to date are due to costs associated with the AGM (GA) meeting (e.g. Interpretation, catering, etc.).

The Secretariat (Ms. McGrath) advised the General Assembly of the next steps involved in completion of the financial procedures relating to Year 8. These include the submission of the company accounts for audit and thereafter the submission of a final financial and substantive report to the Commission by 31 January 2014.

3.3. Proposed budget for Year 9: ratification

The Secretariat (Ms. McGrath) provided an overview of the estimated income and expenditure for the forthcoming financial year of the NWWRAC (Year 9; 1 October 2013 – 30 September 2014). The AGM and General Assembly were informed that the provisional budget, as presented, had already been adopted in principle by the Executive Committee through email procedure and was expected to be submitted to the Commission, along with the grant application, on 27 September 2013.

The following points were made by the Secretariat (Ms. McGrath):

❖ Year 9 Income

- The non-eligible amount of €95,875 from Member States includes the cost of various meeting facilities provided by the Member States as well as the financial contribution from BIM towards overheads and rental costs, and also the time of the Executive Secretary and other supporting BIM staff.
- As well as the Commission grant of €250,000, membership fees will contribute €50,550 to the eligible budget of Year 9. Member State contributions will contribute €25,830. This latter amount will consist of 5 contributions of €4,400 and 1 contribution of €3,830 from Spain who, due to a national budget reduction in 2014, have had to reduce their contribution by €570. However, the Spanish administration has shown its commitment to pay the outstanding amount in 2015 (NWWRAC Year 10).



- The amount of €2,552 shown as non-eligible income from the Commission refers to reimbursement payments by the Commission for RAC staff attendance at Commission meetings. It is a requirement of the Commission that this income is detailed in this manner.

❖ Year 9 Expenditure

- The eligible expenditure has been estimated as being similar to that of Year 8.
- Non-eligible expenditure has been estimated according to the non-eligible income.
- The Year 9 financial timeline runs to October 2013 when the Secretariat expects to receive the Specific Grant Agreement from the Commission.

Decision: The presentation ended with a request from the Chairman of the NWWWRAC (Mr. Ghiglia) to the AGM and members of the General Assembly to ratify the Year 9 budget. The AGM and members of the General Assembly fully endorsed the proposed budget for Year 9 of NWWWRAC operations.

4. Discussions on improving the functioning of the RAC

4.1. Critical review of the functioning of the Working Groups

The President of the General Assembly gave the floor to the Chairman of the Executive Committee (Bertie Armstrong), to introduce this topic and moderate the subsequent exchange of views among the GA/AGM members.

Mr. Armstrong reminded the members that, at the last Executive Committee meeting on 24 July 2013, substantial discussions took place on how to improve effectiveness and performance of the Working Groups. It is expected that the upcoming CFP Basic Regulation will bring enhanced duties and tasks for the Advisory Councils. This is a good opportunity to reflect internally on the functioning of the Working Groups at present so improvements can be made beforehand.

It is important to keep the regional focus of the area based (geographical) Working Groups but consider changes regarding the frequency of the meetings, content of agendas, time of duration, functional shift to Issue Based Focus Groups, etc. These aspects are all open for revision and a decision will be taken depending on the outcomes.

The Working Groups are a useful forum to receive presentations and exchange views but this is not sufficient; they should be producing evidence-based advice in a regular and consistent manner.



Decision: It was agreed that changes were needed in the functioning of the Working Groups to become more effective and capable of delivering high quality evidence-based advice on a regular basis. The GA members agreed that these adjustments should not alter the regional dimension of the Working Groups.

4.2. Development of a new operational working structure

Based on the conclusions under item 4.1., the Chairman opened the floor for specific ideas and comments amongst the membership to improve the functioning of the Working Groups. The following areas of improvement were identified:

1. Priority should be given for discussions, removing reporting or follow up of completed actions from previous meetings (that can be done by email)
2. Frequency of the meetings might be reviewed and the content of the agendas should be streamlined to 2-4 items for discussion (+ relevant external presentations) to maximize time for debate focusing on topics;
3. Duplication and overlapping of horizontal issues across different Working Groups should be avoided where possible;
4. If required, set up a Focus Group and/or a Horizontal Working Group on a subject matter (e.g. Discards, MPAs, Data Deficiencies...);
5. Preparatory work by the members is not only encouraged but essential for the success of the working groups. Discussion papers and proposals should be submitted in writing in due advance to the meeting.

Decision: The members agreed with the points above made. The Chairs, Vice-Chairs, Rapporteurs will liaise with the Secretariat to ensure that more dynamic Working Groups are set with only relevant items for discussions included in the agendas. A first test will be made at the next round of meetings.

4.3. Future role of the Advisory Councils in the CFP

Summary by the Chair:

It is a common understanding by the NWWRAC members that:

- Future Advisory Councils should have an enhanced advisory role in a regional context.



- EU micromanagement of fisheries management measures (“*top-bottom*” approach) needs to be phased out: a “*bottom up*” approach with stakeholders’ participation from the outset is desirable.
- A new regional structure that clearly sets a framework for interactions between ACs, Member States and EU institutions for the development of multiannual management plans and related measures needs to be defined.

The Chairman noted that the regionalisation process is facing two legal barriers for progress:

1. The CFP is exclusive competence of the EU, therefore subsidiarity principle does not apply and it might be a lack of desire by legislators / policy-makers to let go responsibility.
2. The Commission has the right of initiative.

The Chairman also highlighted the problem of funding for the ACs and any new future regional structure depending on few Member States: resources are scarce and EU funding will have to adapt now to discards ban. Collaboration between RACs and Member States might vary from one fishery/region to another. “Ad hoc” individual contacts will need to be made.

Exchange of views from the floor

Barrie Deas (NFFO) agreed with the description of the current limitations to a regional approach made by the Chairman. The co-decision procedure has now become the ordinary procedure and time for adaptation is still needed. The European Commission has been very determined to centralise control in previous CFP regulations. However, there is a more permissive structure coming up. Member States are strongly encouraged to cooperate at regional level and existing initiatives are already in progress such as BALTFISH for the Baltic Sea countries or the Scheveningen Group for the North Sea. The North Western Waters, however, is a more difficult area as it does not have any formally established body facilitating exchanges and cooperation between concerned Member States.

The NWWRAC could help in bringing together the key parties (scientists, policy-makers and stakeholders) through the Topic based technical Focus Groups through the development of multiannual mixed fisheries management plans.

Alexandre Rodríguez (Secretariat) reminded the Assembly that the Commission will hold a workshop in Brussels on 25 October 2013 that will look into regionalisation aspects of the CFP. The relevant stakeholders (including RACs), Member States, Members of the European Parliament and staff from the DG MARE of the European Commission will attend this workshop.



Due to legal constraints, any future regional management bodies can only be set on voluntary goodwill cooperation between Member States.

Furthermore, the tasks will be to develop or elaborate fishery discards plans and technical measures to improve selectivity, firstly, and ultimately joint recommendations on multiannual multispecies/mixed fisheries management plans. The NWWRAC should be prepared to present its preliminary views at this relevant forum as Commission expects to receive input and feedback from stakeholders' organisations.

Mike Park (SWPA) reported on feedback received from the Scottish Government in relation to Scheveningen Group – the Member States are seeking to define a level of interaction. In his opinion, more responsibility is required for the RAC to submit robust and well founded proposals to MS on how to operate with them. There will be inevitable points of friction between regional Member States and the RACs in parallel to the existing ones between the European Parliament and the Council.

The NWWRAC Chairman affirmed that we need to agree a plan and put in place a clear procedure to approach the Member States. A discussion paper would be a good starting point, with the possibility of allocating responsibilities to one individual and/or steering group.

In response to questions formulated by some members, the Secretariat explained that, as a result of a direct mandate from the Director General of Fisheries, Ms Lowri Evans, at the last coordination meeting between the RACs and the Commission on 1 March 2013, the Chairman and the Secretariat of the NWWRAC submitted a letter addressed to Member States and MEPs on 15 March 2013.

This letter offered the collaboration in the discussions held under the auspices of the Irish Presidency of the EU on this subject matter. The letter also referred and included links to all relevant position papers produced by the NWWRAC in 2012.

Barrie Deas suggested the following elements to be included in a discussion paper:

- The NWWRAC will advocate to retain consensus for adoption of papers rather than get to voting procedures;
- The issue of the specificity of each region and the diversity of fisheries within the NWW must be highlighted;



- Collaborative work between NWWRAC and MS will focus on:
 - Multiannual management plans (MAMP)
 - Technical Conservation Measures regulations
 - Implementation of landing obligations for North Western Waters
 - Need to be involved with MS from the outset and engaged in drafting the ToR
- A forum or Focus Group would be useful but participants should proof their commitment by submitting beforehand their views in advance in a 1-2 pages position paper each with their own Member States.

Actions: **The members supported the idea of sending a letter to Member States reiterating the willingness of the NWWRAC to work with them in defining regional structures and providing ideas about what the future Advisory Councils will look like.**

Barrie Deas will draft a discussion paper, with bullet points, including general considerations about how the NWWRAC would like to see regionalization taking shape. All members who wish so will submit comments in writing to the Secretariat on this paper and will also submit a 1-2 page position paper on their respective organisations' views.

A Technical Horizontal Working Group on Regionalisation and Role of the ACs could be set up to organise the work plan and coordinate strategies and agendas.

5. Summary of actions arising from decisions and closure of the meeting

The Chairman of the NWWRAC summarised the actions generated at the AGM and General Assembly, as follows:

The Secretariat will proceed to:

- Confirm those dates and venues that have been tentatively indicated for the first quarter (October-December 2013) and second quarter (January-March 2014) of Year 9 in the NWWRAC calendar of meetings approved by the General Assembly together with the Work Programme for Year 9;



- Finalise all administrative and financial arrangements and paperwork related to the closing of accounts for the Year 8 budget and advance the work relating to the budget for Year 9 (as ratified by the General Assembly);
- Liaise with Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Rapporteurs to make the necessary changes for a more effective, results-based functioning of the Working Groups without altering its regional scope (shorter agendas, identification of priority topics for discussion, etc.).
- Draft a position paper summarising the main ideas of the (1-2 page) contributions received by the members on the views of the role of the Advisory Councils in a regionalised CFP. The draft document will be distributed to all members of the NWWRAC for comments and feedback, with the view of agreeing a preliminary position that can become a NWWRAC advice and is submitted to the Commission and Member States.

The members will proceed to:

- A NWWRAC delegation will participate at the EC Workshop on CFP reform on regionalisation and landing obligation on 25 October 2013 in Brussels.
- Barrie Deas will prepare a discussion paper with general considerations in relation of the NWWRAC views on regional cooperation with Member States. Individual members will submit comments to this paper and, depending on the feedback received; a forum (e.g. horizontal working group, workshop...) could be established.
- Steering Group to prepare a letter to Member States reiterating the willingness of the NWWRAC to work with them in defining regional cooperation and providing guidance about future role, composition and functioning of the Advisory Councils.

The President of the General Assembly/AGM, Mr Ghiglia, thanked the attendees, the Secretariat for their work in preparing the meetings and presentations, the Irish Government and Dublin Castle authorities for hosting this event, and the interpreters for their professionalism and contribution to the success of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 12:00



Annex I

List of members and participating observers

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS			
Member State	Organisation	Representative	Status
France	Union des armateurs de la pêche en France (UAPF)	Marc Ghiglia	NWWRAC President
UK	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)	Bertie Armstrong	NWWRAC Chairman
Belgium	Rederscentrale	Emiel Brouckaert	GA Member
Belgium	Stichting voor Duurzame Visserij Ontwikkeling (SDVO)	Luc Corbisier	GA Member
EU	European Anglers' Alliance (EAA)	John Crudden	GA Member
EU	European Association of Fishing Ports and Auctions (EAFPA)	Eduardo Míguez López	GA Member
EU	European Bureau for Conservation and Development (EBCD)	Despina Symons	GA Member
EU	European Transport Federation (ETF)	Bruno Dachicourt	GA Member
EU	Seas at Risk Organisation	Debbie Crockard	GA Member
France	Association Nationale des Organisations de Producteurs (ANOP)	Jacques Pichon	GA Member
France	Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins du Finistère	René-Pierre Chever	GA Member
France	Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins de Basse Normandie	Daniel Lefèvre	WG3 Chairman

GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS			
Member State	Organisation	Representative	Status
France	Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Élevages Marins du Nord / Pas de Calais / Picardie	Delphine Roncin	GA Member
France	Coopératives Maritimes Etaploises et Armement Coopératif Artisanal Nord (CMEOP)	Dominique Thomas	GA Member
France	Copeport Maree OPBN	Richard Brouzes	GA Member
France	FROM Nord	Francois Hennuyer	GA Member
France	Organisation des Pêcheries de l'Ouest Bretagne (OPOB)	André Gueguen	GA Member
France	Pêcheurs de la Manche et d'Atlantique	Jacques Pichon	GA Member
Ireland	Irish Fishermen's Organisation (IFO)	John Lynch	GA Member
Ireland	Irish Fish Producers' Organisation (IFPO)	John Ward	GA Member
Ireland	Irish Seal Sanctuary (ISS)	John Woodlock	GA Member
Ireland	Irish South and East Fish Producer's Organisation (IS&E FPO)	Caitlín Uí Aodha	GA Member
Ireland	Irish South and West Fish Producer's Organisation (IS&W FPO)	Eibhlin O'Sullivan	GA Member
Netherlands	Stichting van de Nederlandse Visserij / Dutch Fisheries Organisation (SVNV)	Geert Meun	GA Member



GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS			
Member State	Organisation	Representative	Status
Spain	Asociación Nacional de Armadores de Pesca de Gran Sol (ANASOL-ARVI)	Purificación Fernández	GA Member
Spain	Lonja de La Coruña S.A.	José Luis Otero Gonzalez	GA Member
Spain	Organización de Productores Pesqueros de Lugo (OPP-7)	Mercedes Rodríguez Moreda	GA Member
Spain	Pescagalicia-Arpega-Obarco	Juan Carlos Corrás Arias	GA Member
Spain	Puerto de Celeiro S.A.	Jesús Angel Lourido García	WG2 Chairman
UK	Cornish Fish Producer's Organisation Ltd. (CFPO)	Paul Trebilcock	GA Member
UK	Manx Fish Producers' Organisation	Thomas Bryan-Brown	GA Member
UK	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisation (NFFO)	Barrie Deas	GA Member
UK	New Under Ten Fishermen's Association (NUTFA)	Dave Cuthbert	GA Member
UK	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), representing Birdlife International	Kara Brydson	GA Member
UK	Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF)	Alan Coghill	GA Member
UK	Scottish Fishermen's Organisation (SFO)	Jane Sandell	WG1 Chairwoman
UK	Scottish White Fish Producers' Association Ltd. (SWFPO)	Jennifer Mouat	GA Member
UK	Scottish White Fish Producers' Association Ltd. (SWFPO)	Mike Park	GA Member
UK	World Wildlife Fund (WWF)	Lyndsey Dodds	GA Member



GENERAL ASSEMBLY OBSERVERS			
First Name	Last Name	Organisation	Status
John	Daly	Irish Seal Sanctuary	Observer
Evangelia	Georgitsi	DG MARE	European Commission
Béatrice	Harmel	CRPMEM Basse Normandie	Observer
Rémi	Méjeczaze	Ministère de l'écologie, du développement durable et de l'énergie	Member State - France
Liane	Veitch	ClientEarth	Observer

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Dr Conor Nolan	Joanna McGrath