



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

FINAL MINUTES

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Nuevos Ministerios – Paseo de la Castellana, 63. Madrid
Thursday 8th of March 2018
11:00 – 16:30

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chairman, Emiel Brouckaert, welcomed members, representatives of the European Commission and Member States to the meeting. A special thanks was extended to the Spanish authority for providing the meeting venue and accommodating the NWWAC. The full list of participants is included as an annex to these minutes. The quorum of members required to make decisions was present at all stages of the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Julien Lamothe, who was replaced by Jean-Marie Robert.

The agenda¹ was adopted with the addition of the action points from the preceding Horizontal Working Group meeting on the Technical Conservation Measures Framework and Multi-annual Plan under agenda item 5.

Rachel Maher and Deirdre Hoare who joined the NWWAC Secretariat on the 9th January and 1st February respectively, presented themselves.

2. Action Points from previous meetings

The meeting was informed that the following action points from previous meetings of the Executive Committee in Edinburgh (6th July 2017) and Dublin (15th September 2017) had been completed:

1. The Secretariat had organised a seminar on the Functioning of the Advisory Councils on the 15th September;
2. The Secretariat had sent a letter to M. Cadec to express the view of the NWWAC regarding the public hearing on the functioning of the Advisory Councils (12th July 2017) link – lien - enlace;
3. An update on the governance of the NWWAC had been provided (Agenda item 7);
4. The NWWAC had responded to the EC policy paper link – lien - enlace;

¹ All relevant documents to the meeting can be found on the NWWAC website: [link](#)

5. The EC had been asked to update the NWWAC on the NWW Management Plans² (Agenda item 5a);
6. A Focus Group on Brown crab had been organised on 14th September³;
7. The vacancies within the Secretariat had been advertised and the positions filled following a comprehensive recruitment process.

As the minutes from the previous September meeting had not yet been approved, an overview was presented of the agreed decisions from the last meeting:

1. The Chair and Vice-chairs of the Executive Committee were elected for a 3-year term;
2. The workplan for Year 13 was adopted;
3. Actions from the Working Groups were approved;
4. Individual submissions from AC members regarding the consultation on eel have been provided to the Commission with a cover letter from the AC;
5. A meeting of the Chair and the Vice-Chairs will be arranged to inform and co-ordinate the actions of the AC (Agenda item 7);
6. ETF had informed the Secretariat of their intention to provide input on social aspects at a future AC meeting, if agreed by the Executive Committee.

3. Feedback from meetings

- Inter-AC Meeting (Brussels, 14th November 2017)

A meeting of the ACs and the Commission took place on 14th November 2017. Emiel Brouckaert, Debbie Crockard and Conor Nolan, attended on behalf of the NWWAC. Following a brief introduction by Director General Machado the meeting was chaired by Mrs Veronika Veits (Director – Fisheries Policy, Mediterranean and Black Sea).

An overview was provided by the Commission on:

- 1) State of play of Multi-Annual Plans: The ACs were informed there would only be one plan for Western Waters. A proposal should be published in early 2018;
- 2) State of play of Discard Plans for 2018: Plans follow the proposals from the Joint Recommendations from the regional Member State Groups. The EC informed the meeting about the amendment of Art. 15 of CFP regulation 1380/2013, which enables the Commission to adopt discard plans in the absence of multi-annual plans or management plans⁴;
- 3) State of play of Technical Measures: the meeting was informed about the process, the Council General Approach and European Parliament. Currently the proposal is in triologue negotiation;
- 4) Measures to ensure the recovery of the eel stock;
- 5) Revision of the Fisheries Control System;

² EC updated the NWWAC on the Multiannual Plans at the Horizontal Working Group: [link](#) – lien- enlace

³ All relevant documents to the meeting of the Focus Group on Brown crab can be found on the NWWAC website [link](#) – lien- enlace

⁴ Regulation 2017/2092 amending Art. 15 of CFP Regulation 1380/2013, which was adopted on 15/11/2017 and published on 17/11/2017 (OJ L 302, p.1). [link](#) – [lien](#) - [enlace](#)

- 6) AC participation in external projects: The ACs were informed that there was no problem with them engaging in external projects, as long as the accounts relating to such external funding sources were kept separate to the operational funding of the AC.

Finally, under the item “Review of the Functioning of the ACs and exchange of best Practices”, the ACs were updated on administrative matters and instructed on how to contact the Commission

- MIACO meeting between ACs and ICES (MIACO, Copenhagen, 18th January)

The meeting of ICES, the ACs and Other observers (MIACO) took place on the 18th January. This meeting was preceded by a specific meeting of the ACs with ICES, which was chaired by the Baltic AC. Both the pre-MIACO and MIACO meeting were attended by the Chair (Emiel Brouckaert), Vice-Chair (Heather Hamilton) and Executive Secretary (Conor Nolan).

A comprehensive agenda had been developed in advance by the ACs, which addressed;

- 1) Science-stakeholder collaboration on data, communication and quality control;
- 2) Experience and needs of Multi-annual plans, particularly for mixed fisheries; and
- 3) Experience with the landing obligation.

Furthermore, there was an extensive discussion about ICES procedures for fisheries advice and the involvement of stakeholders at key meetings on fishing opportunities, management plans and the ecosystem. The ICES work plan 2018 was also presented.

There was positive engagement of all participants in the pre-meeting and overall a high level of satisfaction with the discussions.

Following this meeting, ICES informed the Secretariat about the establishment of an information forum where ICES would post information on upcoming workshops and other activities likely to be of interest to AC members. ICES requested feedback on what sort of information members would like to receive and other functions that members would like to see included on the platform.

ACTION: Secretariat to distribute the request from ICES on ideas for the information forum, in order to inform the AC on relevant meetings / information.

- EFCA meetings

- i. Advisory Board (20th September)

Hugo Gonzales (ANASOL) attended the meeting on behalf of the NWWAC.

The ACs were briefed on the following topics:

- The main facts and figures on the EFCA’s Annual work plan of 2017;
- The outcome of the Five-Year Independent External Evaluation of EFCA (2012-2016);
- Draft Programming document on the Multiannual work programme 2018-2020 and Annual work programme 2018.
- EFCA asking Member States for a better effort under the Joint Deployment Plans.
- A new EFCA Flow Chart was presented.

Each Advisory Council representative was given the opportunity to raise issues from their respective region.

The NWWAC referred to the difficulties in complying with the Landing Obligation and choke species. The possible displacement of fishing effort as a consequence of Brexit, was highlighted. The NWWAC also sought clarification on the strategy to achieve a Results Based Management, particularly from 1st January, 2019.

Finally the annual rotation system for the representation of the Advisory Councils at the Administrative Board was discussed. From 2nd March 2018 the SWWAC will take over from the NWWAC. Considering the recent establishment of the new Advisory Councils, the meeting was asked if the Advisory Councils had any proposals regarding the current system for appointing representatives. This would be discussed at the next Advisory Board on 23rd February 2018.

ii. Administrative Board (18th and 19th October)

Hugo Gonzales (ANASOL) attended the meeting on behalf of the NWWAC.

The ACs were informed on the following topics:

- Annual rotation of the ACs and the number of the ACs representatives attending the EFCA Administrative Board meetings.

Each AC representatives was given the opportunity to raise issues in their respective regions.

The NWWAC referred to the Choke Mitigation Tool and the workshops that were held in June and September of 2017. A Choke analysis report will be made publicly available on the NWWAC website. Current advice and upcoming meetings were mentioned

iii. Advisory Board (23th February)

Due to an unexpected air strike, the AC representative, Julien Lamothe, could not attend this meeting. The Secretariat tried to find an alternate, but no member was available. The Secretariat contacted EFCA to request a facility to submit the AC input, however no response had been received to date.

ACTION: Secretariat to follow up with EFCA and review the meeting report to determine if further action by the NWWAC is needed.

4. Update on the advice process for the Landing Obligation

Following two joint workshops (NWWAC/NWW Member States Group) on mechanisms to mitigate the risks of species choking the fisheries in North Western Waters, the NWWAC finalised their advice on the choke analysis for NWW in collaboration with the MS Group last October⁵.

The NWW MS High Level Group (18th October, Madrid) drafted a letter to the European Commission to outline these results and to recommend that discussions take place at the highest political level to find solutions for high-risk choke scenarios ([link](#) – lien - enlace).

⁵ The NWW Choke analysis and Choke Mitigation Tool are available on the website [link](#) – lien -enlace

The results of the NWW Choke Analysis were presented at the EC seminar⁶ (15th November, Brussels) by Dominic Rihan and Emiel Brouckaert. The aim of the meeting was to continue the discussion on solutions for the high-risk, choke species and problems like zero quota or zero TAC stocks, however a real discussion on these topics did not take place. The Commission repeated that not all possibilities to implement available management/derogation/exemption possibilities had been studied.

Subsequently, the Executive Committee was asked to approve the organisation of an Advice Drafting Group to develop advice on what should be done to tackle the NWW choke risks, starting with the high-risk stocks identified by the Choke Mitigation Tool (CMT).

At the NWW Member States Group meeting (31st January & 13th February), the AC gave an update on the work that was completed or planned:

- The Choke Mitigation Tool was updated with data for 2016 ([link](#), available in English only);
- Next AC advice will focus on solutions for high-risk choke stocks;
- Discussions have started to address specific problems such as: zero national quota, restricted TAC, deep sea species and pelagic by-catch in demersal fisheries / demersal bycatch in pelagic fisheries;
- The NWWAC meetings in Madrid (7-8th March) and the STECF Expert meetings 18-02 on technical measures (5-9th March).

The Member States Group has expressed their appreciation for the work that had been done by the NWWAC Secretariat to update the CMT with more recent data and the efforts of the NWWAC to find solutions for choke risks.

They informed the AC of their focus two-phase approach on how to deal with the landing obligation:

- 1) Joint recommendation – Consideration of possible *de minimis* and high survivability exemptions and possible technical measures;
- 2) Focus on residual choke issues.

Two Advice Drafting Groups (ADG)⁷ on the Landing Obligation have taken place. As no consensus was reached within the group on solutions to mitigate the risk of category 3 stocks stocking multiple fisheries, the Chair and vice-chair, Emiel Brouckaert and Heather Hamilton developed a draft advice in preparation for the Joint Recommendation for 2019. This draft will be distributed to the members of the ADG for finalisation and the text will be forwarded to the Executive Committee by the end of next week. The new deadline for advice is the next NWW Technical Group meeting on the 27th March.

⁶ The summary of the EC seminar on the Landing Obligation (15th November, Brussels) can be found in English only [here](#)

⁷ NWWAC Advice Drafting Groups on the Landing Obligation have taken place on 10th and 29th January. More information can be found on the NWWAC [website](#)

ACTION: Secretariat to first distribute the draft advice on the landing obligation to the member of the ADG LO. In a second phase the agreed draft text will be sent to the Executive Committee for finalisation.

Following the suggestion of the chair, Executive Committee approved that another ADG LO should be organised to provide further advice on the landing obligation in preparation of the EC proposal for the fishing opportunities.

Regarding solutions related to pelagic fisheries, the NWW Member States Group advised that the Pelagic AC would also be invited to the meetings. The Secretariat had contacted the PelAC and was invited to attend the Pelagic AC webex meeting on the Landing Obligation on Monday 5th March.

Sean O'Donoghue informed the meetings that he will be attending the next NWW Member States Group on behalf of the Pelagic AC. After some reflections, the Executive Committee agreed that the NWWAC representatives at the meeting should reflect on the outcome of the CMT (both 2015 and 2016) and highlight the high risk choke stocks.

Sean O'Donoghue informed the meeting that the PelAC identified in their choke analysis seven high risk stocks as bycatches of demersal fisheries. The issue is therefore important for consideration in the NWWAC and he will raise this at the NWW MS meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat to distribute the results of the Choke Mitigation Tool from the Pelagic AC.

5. Actions arising from the Working Groups

The following action points from the Working Group meetings that took place on the 7th of March were presented for the decision of Executive Committee:

WG 3 – Channel (Pascal Coquet and Jim Portus)

- 1) The meeting did not reach consensus on regional management measures for king scallops. It was recommended that the meeting is updated with the recent scientific information from France at the next WG3 session. In the meantime discussion will continue between UK and French administration;
- 2) The ICES benchmark meeting on seabass did not provide sufficient new information. Once the ICES advice is published, the need for a Focus Group on Seabass would be evaluated;
- 3) A draft letter, provided by the French industry, will be distributed to support the EC request to ICES to provide earlier advice on undulate ray.

WG 1 – West of Scotland (Mike Park and Irene Kingma)

Mike Park presented an overview of the problem with accidental bycatches of cod in area 6.a⁸ and informed the Executive Committee of the work that had been done in a smaller subgroup after the WG meeting from the previous day.

- 1) Working Group members are invited to inform the Secretariat if they wish to join a Focus Group to further develop the draft cod management plan;
- 2) A workshop will be organised later in the year to develop a Regional Management Plan for cod;

WG 2 – Celtic Sea (Jesús Angel Lourido García and Paul Trebilcock)

- 1) Jesús Angel Lourido García and Paul Trebilcock have been elected as the chair and vice-chair of the working group for another term of three years;
- 2) The effect of seismic surveys was considered to have an effect on fish stocks and their distribution. The Secretariat should contact ICES to investigate these effects;
- 3) Within the next NWWAC advice on solutions for choke situations, a request will be included to the EC to provide further information on the NWWAC advice to remove plaice in area 7.hjk from the TAC regime⁹;
- 4) Mr. Kelly will forward a scientific study by Calderwood *et al.* on impact assessment of the landing obligation for Irish Vessels to the Secretariat for distribution
- 5) Following the results on haddock in the NWW Choke analysis, a request should be sent to ICES to organise a benchmark meeting on haddock 7b-k;
- 6) EC to send a copy of the economic impact assessment of the landing obligation;
- 7) The EC will be requested to send information on quota utilisation in the past years per Member States to investigate the level of under-quota utilisation by MS and hence develop a new approach to resolve choke species.

HWG 4 – Technical Conservation Measures and Multiannual Plan (Francis O’Donnell)

Francis O’Donnell proposed that a letter should be drafted to the EC and Council proposing to:

- 1) Withdraw the current TCM proposal, as it is too prescriptive;
- 2) Remove the annexes and let the specifics be determined at Regional level;
- 3) If option 1 and 2 were not possible, that the AC proposes that the catch compositions rules are removed.

Members of the OIG referred to the letter that was sent by some OIG organisations to the EC to withdraw the TCM proposal, and suggested that perhaps some issues raised in that letter could be included in the NWWAC letter.

The EC clarified that if the NWWAC asked the EC to withdraw the proposal (option 1), the current 850/98 legislation would remain in place.

Francis O’Donnell commented that this would not be an option.

⁸ All relevant documents to the Working Group meetings can be found on the NWWAC website [link](#) – lien- enlace

⁹ NWWAC request for scientific evaluation of alternative management strategies for marginal bycatch quota species under the landing obligation [link](#) lien enlace

Sean O'Donoghue commented that there may be some confusion and clarified that the EC was correct in saying that if they withdrew their proposal, that the current 850/98 legislation would remain in place and that this would not be compatible with the Landing Obligation. It would, therefore, be up to the Council and Parliament to go back to the original proposal and to amend the annexes so that the Regional Groups could decide on the specifics.

The Executive Committee decided that:

- 1) The NWWAC would write a letter reflecting the concerns of the AC with the current negotiations on the Technical Conservation Measures regulation and ask the Council and Parliament to go back to the original proposal;
- 2) Members who wished to participate in the development of the advice should contact the Secretariat;
- 3) Considering the restricted deadline for the advice, the Executive Committee approved a fast track procedure for approval of the letter.

The Executive Committee agreed on the proposed action points from the Focus Group and Working Groups.

6. Year 13 Workplan: Update and Actions

- Focus Group progress

i. Sole

Emiel Brouckaert reported that after the Focus Group on sole by webex on 6th November¹⁰ NWWAC advice on a management strategy for sole in the Eastern Channel (7.d) was sent to the EC on 22nd November 2017 ([link](#) lien enlance).

The EC replied to the NWWAC advice ([link](#) lien enlance) specifying that for the proposal on the fishing opportunities they had followed the previous NWWAC advice to restrict the variation of the TAC to 15% as this management strategy had been evaluated by STECF in 2016. Ultimately, the December council decided the TAC for 2018 sole 7.d would be increased by 20% TAC. This leads to the conclusion that no further action is required from the NWWAC.

Stéphane Pinto expressed his disappointment that there is still no long term management strategy.

ii. Control and Compliance

Sean O'Donoghue started by extending his gratitude to all the members of the Focus Group for the productive meetings and producing advice in a timely manner, and to the Executive Committee for approving the document in a fast-track procedure.

The NWWAC attended the EC stakeholder consultation to gather stakeholders' views on the policy options proposed in the EC inception impact assessment¹¹, in order to tackle the shortcomings identified by the evaluation of the EU fisheries control system (16th November, Brussels). At the meeting, the

¹⁰ All relevant information on the Focus Group meeting can be found on the website [link](#) lien enlance

¹¹ The inception impact assessment on the EU Fisheries Control System (Link in English only)

NWWAC stressed that there had been insufficient time in advance of the consultation meeting to produce an NWWAC opinion but highlighted the importance of the topic, as it had serious implications for fishermen. The NWWAC presented the written comments that were produced earlier in April 2017¹².

On 11th January 2018, the NWWAC discussed the EC proposals in great detail at a meeting of the NWWAC Focus Group on Control and Compliance. The NWWAC advice was sent to the EC on 29th January and we received a response from the EC on 27th February to thank us for our time and work and we were informed that the EC still intend to adopt their proposal on a revised Fisheries Control System by April 2018.

Following a question from the chair on the next phase for this advice, Sean O'Donoghue replied that if the EC aims to submit their proposal in April, the Focus Group should meet again to evaluate the full proposal for the revision of the Fisheries Control System in detail. The EC representative mentioned that he will provide further clarification on the timeline after consulting with his colleagues.

ACTION: The EC to inform the NWWAC on the timeline for submission of their proposal on the revised Fisheries Control System to the Council and Parliament.

iii. Brown Crab

Norah Parke gave a presentation on the progress of the Focus Group ([Link](#), in English only). Following the last FG meeting in September, a project proposal was submitted to the Executive Committee for approval. In November the Executive Committee has rejected the proposal for just reasons, however Norah would like to resubmit a revised proposal following the suggestions of the Executive Committee. Before going ahead, she requested clarification from the Executive Committee whether:

1. The NWWAC should be directly involved in this type of proposal
2. If so, the funding possibility would be the BIM fishing scheme or the Transnational Fisheries Local Action Group.

After some debate, the Executive Committee agreed that the funding proposal should be resubmitted as it was an important part of the work progress of the Focus Group.

ACTION: The Secretariat to distribute the revised funding proposal on Brown crab for the approval of Executive Committee

iv. Nephrops

Sean O'Donoghue informed the group that following the decision at the meeting in Edinburgh on the 6th July, a request was sent to the EC to ask the STECF plenary to re-evaluate the consensus advice submitted by the NWWAC on Management measures for the Nephrops stock in the Porcupine Bank on the 26th October.

¹² The NWWAC opinion on specific issues relating to the implementation of the Control Regulation (EU 1224/2009)
Link Lien Enlace

EC replied on the 12th January¹³ that the council decided that there should be no change in the management of FU 16 in 2018. The NWWAC was encouraged to bring forward any new information relevant for the stock assessment to the ICES process. Should this process provide any new information relevant for the current management measures for FU16, the EC would be happy to receive this information, in order for STECF to assess it.

Executive Committee approved the suggestion of the chair to write back to the EC requesting that the NWWAC proposal is sent to ICES for evaluation to ascertain whether or not our proposals are precautionary. The progress of this Focus Group has been frustrating. The NWWAC has been crucial in the rebuilding of this stock as we have advised to put in place the closures during spawning areas, but an evaluation of our proposal now seems to be ignored.

ACTION: Sean O'Donoghue to assist the Secretariat to draft a new letter to the EC requesting an ICES evaluation of the AC advice on management measures for Nephrops in the Porcupine bank.

v. Skates and Rays

John Lynch had attended the STECF expert meeting on Skates and Rays (16th to 20th October, Brussels). The advice produced by the NWWAC on alternative skate and ray management measures was used as a basis ([link](#) lien enlance). The expert meeting assessed the different options and considered High survival as the most promising tool to implement in light of the implementation of the landing obligation. The full report of the STECF meeting is available on the [website](#) (in English only).

Irene Kingma informed the meeting that the NWWAC advice was presented to the Dutch government and the Scheveningen Group. The Dutch government might send an invitation to the next workshop on the 21th March.

The EC informed the meeting that they will write a request to the Regional Groups for further input on regional management proposals.

The meeting agreed that if further input from the AC was required, the Focus Group can reconvene.

Manon Joguet (From Nord) presented an overview of the Summaris project⁶ which aims to collate data on ray and skate fishery management.

- Focus Group progress

vi. ICES Working Group on Application of Genetics in Fisheries and Aquaculture

The Secretariat has received a request to provide input for the ICES working group. This WG is developing new Terms of References for the next three years and one of the subjects is "Assessing the value of genetic and genomic tools in support of the implementation of the EU landing obligation".

Under this ToR they would like to identify:

¹³ The EC reply on the NWWAC advice on management measures for the Nephrops stock in the Porcupine Bank (FU16) for 2017 along with the original proposal are available on the NWWAC website [Link](#)

- What is the EU LO and how does it work? (Who is obliged to comply and how is compliance controlled?)
- What are the implementation problems and issues?
- Who are the stakeholders and how are they affected and relate to each other?
- Which genetic and genomic tools could help with LO issues of species identification and catch composition in freshly landed catch or products?

The next meeting of the ICES WG will convene in: Ifremer, Brest, 15th – 17th May 2018. The Secretariat needs Executive Committee approval to engage with this WG.

The merit of genetics will increase in for example to improve stock assessments and Sean O'Donoghue encourages the NWWAC to be more proactive. He referred to the Pelagic AC who are involved in several projects. Currently the problem is that there is no legal requirement to collect genetic samples under the Data Collection Framework and perhaps this could be a mandatory requirement though the delegated act. The work initiated by WG1 on cod and whiting could be a starting point. The downside of the ICES working groups is that they do not have the resources to do actual scientific research.

The EC agreed with Sean O'Donoghue on the future role of genetics and added that although ICES does not perform any research themselves, guidance on priorities from the ACs would be most welcome.

The chair reiterated that there is no objection from the Executive Committee to engage with the ICES Working Group and that together with WG1 options could be investigated to include genetics data in the Data Collection Framework.

ACTION: The Secretariat with the assistance of WG1, will draft a letter to the EC requesting to introduce genetics in the Data Collection Framework.

vii. Functioning of the Advisory Councils

The Pelagic AC is organising the follow-up event from the NWWAC first session on 14th September. This meeting will take place on 13th April in Den Haag. There are three seats per AC, the NWWAC representatives are Emiel Brouckaert and Heather Hamilton as chair and vice-chair of the AC and the Secretariat.

Conor Nolan encouraged the EC to be more engaged in these meetings.

viii. Reform of the Common Fisheries Policy

The Secretariat informed the meeting that this is on the work plan for the AC and we have received an invitation from EFARO, the European organisation of the Directors of Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Organisations, for their event on 24th May in Brussels on: The reformed CFP: An analyses of what went wrong what went well and how should the next CFP look like.

The NWWAC will reimburse 2 representatives and the Secretariat may also attend. Members were invited to inform the Secretariat if you wish to attend this meeting.

ACTION: Members are invited to inform the Secretariat if you wish to attend the EFARO meeting on the reformed CFP (24th May, Brussels).

ix. Advice request from the EC on Post 2020 Funding mechanisms

The Secretariat received a request from the EC to provide advice on post-2020 EU funding for fisheries and maritime sectors. As the original deadline only provided two weeks to produce advice, the AC Secretariats collectively asked for a new deadline. The EC informed us that they want a reply before the end of March. An email was sent to the General Assembly to collate input, so far the Secretariat received two comments (ClientEarth and ANASOL). The Executive Committee was asked how they wanted to finalise this advice.

Sean O'Donoghue referred to advice drafting in the other ACs who specifically focus on Art. 85 and 86 which provide funding for the ACs. The current framework only allows ACs to apply for administrative purposes and not to support scientific projects. He advised that the NWWAC should draft a cover letter on this specific issue and the other submissions of members could be attached.

Heather Hamilton agreed with this suggestion.

In response to a comment from Mathieu Vimard on the disappearance of storage aid and to look into the possibilities foreseen in agriculture, Sean O'Donoghue suggested that those comments are within the remit of another AC.

ACTION: The Secretariat to draft a cover letter to accompany individual members' input in response to the advice request on post 2020 funding mechanisms.

7. Procedures

a) *Policy on endorsement*

The chair informed the meeting on a new procedure that might be needed in relation to endorsement of letters.

The NWW MS High Level Group (18th October, Madrid) had drafted a letter to the European Commission to outline the results of the two joint workshops (NWWAC/NWW Member States Group) on mechanisms to mitigate the risks of species choking the fisheries in North Western Waters and to recommend that discussions take place at the highest political level to find solutions for high-risk choke scenarios. The Secretariat had received the letter, which was drafted by the Spanish presidency, along with a request for the NWWAC to endorse the letter.

Although the NWWAC endorsed the letter (10th November), the Secretariat received comments in relation to the content of the letter and the procedure.

This was a new procedure; and the AC was not in the position to provide any comments (editorial or content). The Executive Committee was asked to decide what procedure should be adopted for such circumstances.

Heather Hamilton referred to the function of the ACs which constitutes that we draft advice while allowing every member to contribute and comment. Endorsing a letter while not being allowed to contribute does not fall within our remit, hence setting specific procedures for this may set a dangerous precedent. Sean O'Donoghue agrees with this position however reminds the meeting that this letter was in relation to the Choke Mitigation Tool outcome. It remains unclear who owns the tool, if it is a joint effort then a joint letter should be written and we might need a policy for future reference.

The chair clarified that the tool was indeed a joint effort, but suggested that we need to assess the process on a case –by – case basis as this will be a rare occasion.

The Secretariat added that next time further clarification will be requested on the definition of endorsement and if there is an option to provide input.

Vera Coelho agreed with the proposal and suggested that if no input can be provided by the AC, we should not endorse the letter.

b) *Project proposals*

The Secretariat requires a clear mandate from the Executive Committee regarding external funding and engagement in external projects. The Executive Committee was requested to provide their decision on the following:

- Does the AC actively pursue external funding sources?
- Does the AC take the project lead?
- Does the AC decide to be partner on a case-by-case basis?
- Does the AC not participate in any project and contact individual scientists whenever required?

The chair suggested that based on the discussion in the FG on Brown Crab and Working Group 1, this should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Patrick Murphy added that when any funding request brought forward from a FG should endure and be followed through. Both Norah Parke and Debbie Crockard agreed with this, however it should still be looked at on a case-by-case basis.

c) *Update Board of Directors*

Conor Nolan advises that the necessary information regarding the responsibilities of Directors under Irish law is scheduled for translation and circulation to the Chair and Vice-Chairs for their attention. The formal appointment of the chair and vice-chairs of the Executive Committee will take place once the nominated individuals understand their responsibilities under Irish Law and agree to their appointment. This process will be completed before the summer meeting in Ghent.

d) *Reimbursement*

The Secretariat informed the meeting that the changes to the reimbursement rates agreed in September are now being applied by the NWWAC, which are in agreement with the Commission rates for the reimbursement of Experts.

The daily allowance has been increased to €192, where overnight accommodation is required. A reimbursement of €92 will be made where no accommodation is required and where the distance travelled to the meeting is over 100km. Where the distance travelled is under 100km, a subsistence rate of €46 will apply.

Members are reminded that original documentation is required for all claims, this includes boarding cards, travel tickets, proof of stay (not reservation confirmation) and clearly detail the class of travel (first class travel and taxi fares will not be reimbursed). Where the original is required by the organisation, a copy, marked "True Copy", signed by the financial officer and stamped with the stamp of the organisation, must be provided.

Emailed claims for reimbursement will be acknowledged but will wait for the originals to arrive before processing the claim, as these are electronic copies of the originals.

The Secretariat recognises the difficulties that these requirements have for some members and will review the requirements on the basis of feedback from the ACs currently under external audit and advice from the Commission.

e) *Approval and publication of the annual workplan*

The Secretariat informed that currently the workplan is drafted by the Secretariat, and presented by the Chair at the General Assembly meeting for approval before being submitted to the EC. In order to improve the governance and transparency of the AC, it is proposed that the Chairs and vice-chairs be asked to develop the NWWAC workplan before it is presented to the General Assembly for approval. Following the question from the Secretariat, the Executive Committee agreed that the workplan is uploaded on the AC website.

f) *Registration for AC meetings*

Due to increased security at many governmental buildings, the AC is asked to inform the authorities at meeting venues with the exact number of participants (sometimes names). Therefore, the Secretariat will require this information in the future and will look at options for registration (e.g. online). Once in place, members will be required to register if they wish to attend meetings.

g) *Meeting of the Chair and Vice-chairs*

A meeting of the Chair and Vice-chairs will be organised to take place by Webex before the summer meeting in Ghent. The intended purpose of this meeting will be to review the progress of the AC regarding the workplan and report back to the Executive Committee.

8. Application process for the Executive Committee and General Assembly

The Secretariat had received two applications for the General Assembly by

- International Forum for Sustainable Underwater Activities (Ifsua); and
- Comité Départemental des Pêches Maritimes et des Elevages Marins du Morbihan (CDPMEM 56).

The French Administration confirmed CDPMEM 56 is a legitimate organisation that can become a member of the NWWAC. The Executive Committee have been informed by email and requested to approve that the correct procedure has taken place. Should no problems be raised by Executive Committee CDPMEM can be welcomed as a new member of the AC.

The Executive Committee have approved that the Secretariat has conducted the membership process in accordance with procedure. CDPMEM will be notified that their application has been approved, after this meeting.

ACTION: The Secretariat to inform CDPMEM that their application for the General Assembly has been approved.

The application from IFSUA has been submitted to the Spanish Administration and we are awaiting their response.

There have been requests for nomination to join the Executive Committee by the

- Dutch Elasmobranch Society (NEV): a confirmation is required that the Dutch Elasmobranch Society still wish to be nominated to the Executive Committee;
- Bluefish: They have provided information for circulation to the General Assembly but in French only. Bluefish were requested to provide the required supporting information in the three working languages of the AC, as agreed at the General Assembly in September;
- IIMRO: have expressed their wish to join the Executive Committee.

The Secretariat informed that the Executive Committee composes of 22 members (68/32 balance Industry and Other Interest Groups), all seats for industry members are taken but there are 3 vacant seats for the OIG. Although it is the General Assembly that decides on Executive Committee membership and the General Assembly will need to approve consultation with the Commission to increase the size of the Executive Committee (as stipulated in the Commission Delegated Regulation 2015/242). The opinion of Executive Committee would be useful as it could inform the General Assembly. The Executive Committee would have to be increased to 30 to allow for the 60:40 balance to be maintained if these three organisation would join the Executive Committee.

9. Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted by the Chair

1	Secretariat to distribute the request from ICES on ideas for the information forum, in order to inform the AC on relevant meetings / information.
2	Secretariat to follow up with EFCA and review the meeting report to determine if further action by the NWWAC is needed.
3	Secretariat to first distribute the draft advice on the landing obligation to the member of the ADG LO. In a second phase the agreed draft text will be send to the Executive Committee for finalisation.
4	Secretariat to distribute the results of the Choke Mitigation Tool from the Pelagic AC.
5	The Executive Committee agreed on the proposed action points from the Focus Group and Working Groups.
6	The EC to inform the NWWAC on the timeline for submission of their proposal on the revised Fisheries Control System to the Council and Parliament.
7	The Secretariat to distribute the revised funding proposal on Brown crab for the approval of Executive Committee.
8	Sean O'Donoghue to assist the Secretariat to draft a new letter to the EC requesting an ICES evaluation of the AC advice on management measures for Nephrops in the Porcupine bank.
9	The Secretariat with the assistance of WG1, will draft a letter to the EC requesting to introduce genetics in the Data Collection Framework.
10	The Secretariat to draft a cover letter to accompany individual members' input in response to the advice request on post 2020 funding mechanisms
11	Members are invited to inform the Secretariat if you wish to attend the EFARO meeting on the reformed CFP (24th May, Brussels).
12	The Secretariat to draft a cover letter to accompany individual members' input in response to the advice request on post 2020 funding mechanisms.
13	The Secretariat to inform CDPMEM that their application for the General Assembly has been approved.

Annex 1 – List of Participants

NWWAC members		
Emiel	Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Alex	Kinninmonth	Stichting BirdLife Europe, represented by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
Anna	Szczodrowska	European Anglers Alliance
Jesús	Lourido García	Puerto de Celeiro S.A. OPP-77
Bruno	Dachicourt	European Transport Federation
Debbie	Crockard	Seas at Risk
Maué	Air	European Bureau for Conservation and Development
Javier	López	Oceana
Heather	Hamilton	ClientEarth
Jean-Marie	Robert	Association Nationale des Organisations de Producteurs
John	Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Sean	O'Donoghue	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
Patrick	Murphy	Irish South and West Fish Producers Organisation
Geert	Meun	Stichting van de Nederlandse Visserij / Dutch Fisheries Organisation (2)
Purificación	Fernández Alvarez	Asociación Nacional de Armadores de Buques de Pesca de Gran Sol
Pascal	Coquet	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
Caroline	Gamblin	CNPMEM
Paul	Trebilcock	National Federation of Fishermen's Organisations
Observers		
Jonathan	Shrives	European Commission
Stéphane	Pinto	CRPMWM Hauts-de-France
Manon	Joguet	FROM Nord
Lionel	Bottin	CDPM
Mike	Park	SWFPA
Vera	Coelho	PEW
Jean Christophe	Vandevelde	PEW
Francis	O'Donnell	IFPO
Enda	Conneely	IIMRO
Dominique	Thomas	CMEOP
Nicolas	LeBlanc	CRPMEM de Normandie
Irene	Kingma	Dutch Elasmobranch Society
Guy	Le Moigne	Comité départemental des pêches du Finistère
Emmanuel	Kilberine	CRPMEM de Bretagne
Paul	MacDonald	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
José Manuel	Beltrán	OPP-LUGO
Luís Francisco	Marin	OPPAO Ondarroa
John	Lynch	IFO
Hugo	Boyle	ISEFPO
Jim	Portus	SWFPO
Lydia Chaparro	Fundació ENT	Lydia Chaparro
Mathieu	Vimard	OPN
Fintan	Kelly	Birdwatch Ireland
Gerald	Hussenot	Bluefish

	Desenonges	
Francis	O'Donnell	Irish Fish Producers Organisation
Peter	Lovie	SWFPA
Norah	Park	KFO
Juana	Posa Posa	Spanish administration
NWWAC Secretariat		
Conor	Nolan	Executive Secretary
Sara	Vandamme	Deputy Executive Secretary
Deirdre	Hoare	Executive Assistant
Rachel	Maher	Finance and administration Executive Assistant

NWWAC Document
 Chairman: Emiel Brouckaert
 Rapporteur: Sara Vandamme
 Review and editing: Deirdre Hoare
 Final Review: Conor P. Nolan