



Draft Minutes

EXTRAORDINARY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Virtual meeting – 01 July 2021

1 Welcome and introductions

The President Olivier LeNezet welcomed all participants. The agenda was adopted.

2 NWWAC Statutes – discussion and approval (Emiel Brouckaert – ExCom chairman)

As agreed in the March meetings, a task force was set up consisting of the Working Group Chairs and the ExCom Chair and Vice-Chairs to review and update the 2013 Rules of Procedure. The task force held five meetings and discussed and agreed the new draft statutes and the updated draft Rules of Procedure with one item left open. After ExCom approval these were circulated for review and discussion to all NWWAC members on 22 June and were also made available online in the Members Area. The Executive Committee has unanimously approved these new Rules of Procedure and statutes with exception of the one item: the Working Groups Structure. The Chairman of the ExCom presents the following to the members.

i. Update area of competence

This is an information point only based on a letter the NWWAC received from the Commission on 25 May, partly in response to a request on how to consider the remit area of the NWWAC after Brexit. The NWWAC is the only AC whose area was changed in respect of the ICES areas. The waters in 5b have now been removed and our area covers ICES zones 6 and 7 only.

ii. Restructuring of the Working Groups

The Task Force and the Executive Committee could not find a unanimous proposal on the working Groups restructuring to put before this extraordinary GA, so members will have to vote on two options which will be presented by members of the task force.

Sean O'Donoghue: I present option one which is combining WG2 Celtic Sea with WG4 Irish Sea. There is a very good rationale behind this due to Brexit first of all, which created a huge anomaly, particularly in WG4 Irish Sea. This was composed mainly of Irish and UK stakeholders with Belgium also involved. With the UK leaving, this left behind the Irish industry to basically talk amongst themselves. Therefore, the members of WG4 were of the unanimous view that in the post Brexit era, it no longer makes sense to have a standalone WG dealing with the Irish Sea stocks. In terms of the Irish Sea stocks, there are six stocks that WG4 deals with. These are cod, haddock, whiting,



plaice, sole and *Nephrops*, of which four have an interaction with the Celtic Sea, particularly with 7f and g. Looking at the management of this at the level the stocks, combining area 7a (WG 4) with the Celtic Sea (WG 2) makes sense. The other combination would lead to an imbalance creating a very large WG when combining Celtic Sea with West of Scotland. By combining WG4 with WG2, the overall number of members in the new WG will remain at 25 as all current members of WG4 are also members of WG2. While the Secretariat included the loss in membership fees in their analysis, this was not the main driver behind what we were looking at. We want to establish a more efficient and effective WG. WG2 deals with 17 stocks and WG4 deals with 6 stocks bringing the total number 23 when combining both WGs. We feel this makes sense, and it was certainly the unanimous view of WG4 to present this to the General Assembly.

Emiel Brouckaert: More options were examined by the FG Brexit, but as there was no unanimity in the task force, it was agreed to present to the ExCom the one that was just explained by Sean, as well as a second option, which will now be presented.

Puri Fernandez: The second option is to merge WG1 and 2, keeping a separate and specific WG for the Irish Sea. This AC has always been based on very well-defined geographical areas to allow for efficient work on the stocks in each specific zone. I am aware that WG4 is the one with less members and I actually believe this is beneficial to the functioning of the group. The efficiency and efficacy of a working group are not determined by the number of members, but by the quality of the advice it produces. I also think that a WG with a reduced number of members is going to be more productive, as it would be more specific and expert on the stocks in the area. The Irish Sea has always been a very specific area, with its peculiarities in relation to the stocks which are not connected to other WGs, while this is the case for the stocks in areas 6 and 7 where there is a more intense interconnection. This is also about the number of members that are being affected by one option or the other. If we merge WG2 with WG4, 5 members would be benefitting, but by merging WG1 and 2 we would favour 18 members. I am also thinking of a possible WG2 and 4 meeting, which would not be completely participatory for all the members, as the agenda would have to include topics from the two groups that would not be of shared interest. I think we would end up in creating many different Focus Groups to address the Irish Sea specific issues, thus it seems smarter to me to keep WG4 separate. The economic aspect is also very important. I think that the overview presented by the Secretariat is missing some costs that we would not have to incur, beyond membership fees (for example, travel reimbursement costs). For this reason, I do not think we should base our decision on the economic aspects as we need a more complete and general expenses forecast.

President: I now give the floor to the Secretariat to explain the voting procedure.

Secretariat: With Zoom we have the possibility to hold an anonymous vote on these two options. The voter will be anonymous when the results are displayed, however, as the Secretariat, we will be able to see who has voted to ensure that there is no double voting, which the zoom system in itself does not allow anyway. Prior to this meeting we have been made aware of proxies to cast votes on behalf of other member organisations which were unable to attend in person today. This is a slight technical difficulty as Zoom will only allow each participant to vote once. So where a member organisation has been given a proxy which we have in writing, we ask that member to forward the vote that they are giving on behalf of the organisation that nominated them as proxy via email please. There are enough participants here today to have a quorum so the poll can proceed.



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Juan Carlos Corrás Arias: I represent several organisations, including Pescagalicia-Arpega-Obarco, Lonja de la Coruna and FREMSS. How can I cast my votes for all three?

Secretariat: You can now vote electronically as part of the Zoom poll for one of the organisations you represent and then send us by email the votes for the additional organisations you represent. If there are no further questions, we will proceed with the poll.

Poll results: The preliminary results show a majority vote for option 2 presented today, meaning that most of the members are in favour of combining WG1 with WG2. The Secretariat will publish the final results following analysis of the electronic vote and the additional proxy votes received via email.

Emiel Brouckaert: One point of clarification, there is no intention to change the membership fee structure. The General Assembly will remain at €300 per organisation, Executive Committee €350, and per regional working group €250. Membership of the Horizontal Working Group is free on the condition that the member is also contributing to one or more of the regional Working Groups, or to the Executive Committee, or both.

ACTION: Secretariat to circulate the results from the voting following final analysis.

iii. Office holders

Another important item to note in the new Statutes relates to the changes regarding the office holders. The proposal by the task force and by the ExCom is to make things easier and to have one person as Chair of the organisation. So, the ExCom and the General Assembly Chair become one and the same person. The ExCom will continue with three Vice-chairs with two coming from industry and one from the Other Interest Group. In relation to the Chairs of the regional WGs, we will now have only three instead of four. There was the suggestion to have one industry and one OIG representative for the Chair and Vice-chair positions, and the same applies for the new Horizontal WG. This is included in the new statutes that we put forward to the GA.

iv. Collaboration with other ACs

Just a comment on collaboration with the other ACs bringing us back to the letter from the Commission from 25 May 2021 stating that all ACs are invited to stay in the remit of their area of competence. This applies to the NWWAC, NSAC and the PelAC according to Annex III of the CFP. The Commission will be sending requests to all ACs independently of the area of competence, and it is left to the initiative of each AC to intervene or not, on a particular matter. In this letter from 25 May, the Commission strongly encourages ACs having interest in joint matters to try and see if it could be a coordinated advice on a case-by-case basis. This could be either one AC taking over a specific topic, or if it is agreed between the two parties, joint advice can be produced. This does not affect the statutes.

The General Assembly approves the statutes to be completed with the outcome of the vote.

ACTION: Secretariat to update and circulate the statutes based on the poll results.

3 NWWAC Rules of Procedure – discussion and approval (Emiel Brouckaert)

The Rules of Procedure were also distributed to the members of the GA by the Secretariat. There is a unanimous proposal by the ExCom to the GA to maintain the number of ExCom members at 25, with 15 industry and 10 Other Interest Group members. The vacant UK industry seats need to be considered and the ExCom has introduced in the Rules of Procedure to be approved by the General Assembly to assign one former UK seat to other industry representative organisation, meaning groups such as the ETF, APICE-AGEP or Women in Fisheries. The other former UK seat is proposed by ExCom to go to Ireland based on the fact that only Ireland and France have actual coastlines within the NWWAC area of competence, and that Ireland is also the only Member State to be represented in our current four and future three Working Groups, whichever choice is confirmed by the final ballot. This again was unanimously agreed by ExCom and is proposed to the General Assembly for approval.

As an additional comment, the ExCom election procedure has been included in the draft RoP which have been circulated and are also available on the website.

Jean-Marie Robert: Regarding the allocation of Chair and Vice-Chair positions in the working groups and that one of each is supposed to be filled from either the industry or the OIG college, as we have so few OIG member organisations I feel this is not possible to achieve and that we should not make this compulsory. Concerning the seats repartition in the ExCom for the sector representatives, I am not sure this is included in the Rules of Procedure? Has this been discussed and decided in parallel in a different context? Is this provision following the 2013 Rules of Procedure or is this a new introduction?

Secretariat: Regarding the rule of distribution of Chair and Vice-Chair of the working groups, this is not intended to be a compulsory requirement. While we would like to see this split, if it is not possible, and the members of the WG agree, this is not a condition. The wording of the relevant article will be checked to ensure it reflects correctly what is meant.

Emiel Brouckaert: Regarding the 15 and 10 split between industry and OIG, the task force and ExCom decided that it was not an option to reduce the amount of members based on the delegated act. The ExCom agreed to unanimously put forward the proposal that Ireland would get an additional industry seat, with France already having three, to the General Assembly for approval.

Jean-Marie Robert: I am checking the 2013 RoP which are stating that there shall be two representatives per MS for the industry representatives. At the moment, France has two industry representatives. A third seat could be allocated to a French industry representative, but not of a national organisation. I will not oppose to the proposal from the task for to reassign the UK seats, but I do not want this to be perceived as a rebalancing desire from France and Ireland. France at the



moment has two seats, as the third is an organisation with European scope and not with national interests.

Emiel Brouckaert: The Shipowners Union, represented by Marc Ghiglia, is a French organisation and the third French ExCom member. It could be that originally it was two representatives per MS, however, we were not reaching the quorum of 15 members with this rule. This is why the ExCom decided to give a third seat to France when the AC was established.

Secretariat: The decision on who of the industry representatives actually will be nominated and put forward to the General Assembly to be approved for a seat on the ExCom is within and among the industry organisations of the AC as voting happens within each college. This was decided after the change to the delegated act. The industry organisations can send their nomination for an ExCom seat to the Secretariat. If we have too many, we will give this back to the industry college themselves, and you will need to work this out amongst yourselves. The same goes for the OIGs, if there are too many nominations, we will go back to the OIG college to work out who will actually be nominated and put forward to the General Assembly for a seat, and the General Assembly finally approves this.

Sean O Donoghue: I think we need to be clear that if it transpires that there are three representatives nominated for two places in a particular Member States, the vote will be done within the relevant Member State and college, be it industry or OIG. Nobody can lose a seat because someone else from a different MS has put in an extra nomination.

President: If there are no further questions, I think we can validate this clarifying points discussion. No one seems to be opposing to the proposal as it was presented.

Secretariat: One small comment, we received a comment on the statutes, where we still refer to the two thirds and one third split. This will be changed to the 60/40 split. Also, in the statutes a reference is still included to the Commission approving the statutes and RoP. I have a consulted the Commission on this particular paragraph, and the Commission has informed me that no such approval is needed. This is left directly to the ACs to deal with themselves, so this article will be removed from the final version.

The General Assembly approves the Rules of Procedure with the amendments to the draft as discussed.

ACTION: Secretariat to update and circulate the Rules of Procedure based on the discussion.

4 Designation of new Chairperson of the NWWAC (Secretariat)

Regarding designation of the new chairperson for the NWWAC members will recall that the Secretariat asked for nominations in March with a three-month timeline until June. We sent another email at the end of June to explain that we have not received any nominations. The only correspondence we did receive was a proposal from the Spanish members who put forward the current ExCom Chair Emiel for re-election and renomination for another period of three years. We circulated this proposal to all the members in our recent email and received more support for this proposal in return. This rollover is new and included in the new Rules of Procedure. It is now put



forward here to the extraordinary General Assembly that Emiel will be appointed for another period of three years, if he agrees to take this on. I believe we have until the General Assembly in September to approve this fully and so would look to the President of the GA as well as Emiel for comment.

Emiel Brouckaert: I did not put myself forward for obvious national reasons and other responsibilities that I have but I did say that I would not leave the NWWAC without an ExCom Chairperson, if no other candidates are appearing. Procedure wise, I think that I have to make a presentation at the upcoming ExCom meeting in July and then the General Assembly in September needs to accept the nomination.

Secretariat: The Rules of Procedure were changed so that a simple roll-over is possible without you having to give a presentation at the July meeting. Presentations were only required if there were several candidates for this position.

Sean O Donoghue: I am pleased that you have taken on the mantle of chairing the ExCom again. I think quite a lot of us supported the Spanish proposal. I just want to check procedurally now that we have agreed the new Rules of Procedures and the Statutes when do they actually come into effect? Because we basically agreed that both the Chair of the General Assembly and the Chair of ExCom are one and the same person now?

Olivier LeNezet: I am happily leaving the presidency to Emiel, I also wanted to congratulate him for renewing his position.

Puri Fernandez: Thank you Emiel for accepting the roll-over. I think he did a very good job in the last years as ExCom Chair and he is the ideal candidate. Another important comment is that our statutes were integrated with a provision for the maximum mandate period for a Chair and also for the procedure to follow in case no nominations are received. Moreover, is Olivier ending his mandate as honorary GA President as of tomorrow or starting from September at the end of the financial year?

Olivier LeNezet: I think we should not be based on the financial year for these decisions. Since the GA has voted to adopt the new Rules of Procedure and Statutes, these will come into effect now, also for what concerns the NWWAC Chair.

Jean-Marie Robert: I wanted to thank Emiel for accepting this position and the responsibilities and efforts it entails, but also thank Olivier for the work done as President of the GA.

Olivier LeNezet: Thank you Jean Marie. And indeed, thank you Emiel, I know I am leaving the GA in very good hands.

Secretariat: Just to clarify, the final articles that were agreed in the task force including the 10-year tenure for the Chairperson of the AC are all included in the new document.

Olivier LeNezet: I think we reached the end of the agenda for today and we need to briefly summarize the action points. Since I am officially not the GA president anymore, I will leave this to Emiel.

Emiel Brouckaert: Thank you Olivier for handing over, you have been the honorary GA president for seven years now and this also deserves recognition. Also, thanks to all of you for the kind words.



5 Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted by the President

Emiel Brouckaert: In summary from me now as both Chairman of ExCom and newly appointed President of the GA, we have approved the statutes and voted on the WG structure, for which we are awaiting the final written confirmation from the Secretariat that everything was in order, and that basically each Member provided only one vote, and that the proxy votes were received properly. For the time being, the majority appears to be in favour of the combination of WG1 and WG2. The statutes were distributed and approved barring the finalisation of those WG structures. The Rules of Procedures were more straightforward with some relevant questions and explanations that were put forward. Thank you to the General Assembly for confirming the Rules of Procedure as presented by the ExCom. The process for the new Chairperson for the NWWAC includes the vote in September, but by agreement I have already taking over the presidency of the GA from Olivier.

Sean O Donoghue: Thank you Chair and also thanks to Olivier for his presidency of the GA over the past years. Given that the General Assembly now has voted on reducing our regional WGs from four to three, should the same apply as for the chairperson, i.e., regarding the meetings tomorrow and Monday. Are they taking place in this new structure already?

Emiel Brouckaert: The General Assembly has voted, but obviously all the working groups meetings have been organised already and confirmed with ICES regarding the split up of presentations according to the current WG structure. I would suggest for the General Assembly to accept the phasing out and run the meetings tomorrow and on Monday as planned, with a re-organisation for the September meetings where the voting for WG Chairs will also take place. If there are no objections from the floor, then I take this proposal as accepted. Again, thank you very much to Olivier as outgoing GA President for all the work you have done and your involvement with the AC. I trust you will be very active and present in the different WGs of which you are a member for your organisation, and that you will continue to enjoy your involvement.

Action points

1	Secretariat to circulate the results from the voting following final analysis.
2	Secretariat to update and circulate the statutes based on the poll results.
3	Secretariat to update and circulate the Rules of Procedure based on the discussion.

Participants

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