



# Draft Minutes

## GENERAL ASSEMBLY / AGM

### Virtual Meeting

Friday 24 September 2021

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair of the NWWAC, Emiel Brouckaert welcomed all participants and thanked Olivier LeNezet for his presidency until the restructuring in July 2021. He also welcomed suggestions on how to optimise the chairing of this AC. He explained that when covering the ExCom's annual report under point 2 of the agenda, confirmation will be seen of a challenging period with Brexit, external impacts on fisheries policy and management, and the structure and work process of the NWWAC itself. Many of these challenges remain for the years to come, and the Chair looks forward to participation by all the members to achieve the NWWAC objectives to provide stakeholder advice on sustainable (three pillars) fisheries in the NWW.

Apologies were received ahead of the meeting from Llibori Martinez Latorre (IFSUA).

The agenda was adopted.

#### 2. Annual report from the NWWAC Chair (Emiel Brouckaert)

##### Work completed in Year 16

The Chair presented the Annual Report for Year 16. The presentation can be found [here](#).

##### Communications update

The Secretariat was looking for feedback on the Members Area online and carried out a live poll using Zoom.

Jean-Marie Robert pointed out that an AC should work in a transparent way and that members are used to having access easily and quickly to what is available on the website. He does not see the added value of the Members Area and prefers receiving documents by email.

The Secretariat recalled that the Members Area was set up in close consultation with all members in order to cut down on the number of documents sent via email. All the documents that are approved by the AC are available publicly and fully transparent on the website under meetings. However, certain documents cannot be made publicly available, as they are produced by the Secretariat as a service to the members, for example the monthly report or meeting reports such as from the meetings with the Member States Group. In addition, drafts of certain documents are not shared publicly, for example the draft work programme or the restructuring proposals earlier this year. Draft advice is not shared in the Members Area to ensure confidentiality and due to cyber-security. The Members Area acts as an additional depository for information that cannot be included on the public part of our website to assist members in locating information more easily than searching through their inboxes.

##### Homepage videos & You Tube Channel



Currently the Spanish and French websites are without access to the videos as issues were experienced with the links to a YouTube channel that was created in previous years prior to the current Secretariat. The Secretariat felt that it may be useful to update the content and possibly some imagery in the videos in the future depending on budget availability. The Secretariat asked that members ensure that their inboxes are set to receive all emails from the Secretariat, for example ensure that they are not identified as spam.

### **Launch of the NWWAC Fisheries Management Chart 2021**

The Secretariat informed members that the chart is available in all three languages under “Publications” on the website and will be added to the landing page once technical difficulties are resolved. Printed copies will be posted out to all members. The Secretariat thanked Julien Lamothe and Puri Fernández for their help regarding the translations, as well as John Coleman, La Tene Maps, for his support throughout the project.

### **Work priorities for Year 17**

The Chair presented the proposed Work Programme for Year 17. The presentation can be found [here](#).

Patrick Murphy enquired if there is no review of the CFP and just a report, if this has been decided in the Commission and in Parliament and that the NWWAC might seek written clarification on this/

Sean O’Donoghue identified that there is no ambiguity on this, and that the legal requirement is the production of a report on the CFP by 2022.

The Chair felt that it would be useful to review the minutes of the Horizontal Working Group as a Commission Representative gave an update on this topic.

### **3. Report on the budget**

The Secretariat presented the review of the income and expenditure for Year 16 and the proposed budget for Year 17. The presentation can be found [here](#).

The General Assembly ratified the Year 17 Work Programme and budget.

### **4. Report on membership**

The Secretariat presented an overview of changes in membership. The presentation can be found [here](#).

The Secretariat is planning to organise a membership drive to attract both industry and OIG organisations to the NWWAC in order to increase membership numbers. Members are asked to contact the Secretariat if they are aware of any organisation they believe would be interested and a good fit for this AC.

Robert proposed that following from the discussions on NGOs during the ExCom meeting this morning, the NWWAC should send an official notice to the Commission regarding the efforts made to attract NGOs into the AC. He felt that this might be important regarding the AC’s funding.

The Secretariat identified that the annual report to the Commission contains an overview on the involvement of the OIGs and the efforts made regarding their participation. Informal communications are also taking place between the Secretariat and the Commission throughout the year. The previously mentioned membership drive will target the CEOs/Directors of the NGOs/OIGs which the AC wishes to attract and will include information on the changes that have been instituted as part of this year’s restructuring ensuring a better functioning of this AC.



## 5. Approval of the NWWAC Executive Committee Years 17 –19

The Secretariat presented the nominations for the Executive Committee 2021 – 2024 as approved by the outgoing Executive Committee members and identified the new members as well as the rejection by the OIG college of the Bluefish application.

Gérald Hussenot via written submission: “The lack of microphone did not allow me to contribute orally. I wanted to bring to the attention of the GA of the NWWAC the following elements: Above all, this message does not concern either the Chair or the Secretariat, whom I congratulate for the consistency and the work accomplished over the years for the benefit of the community. This message is addressed to the Commission; and I want you to pass it on. I remind you that at the GA in Dublin in 2018, BLUE FISH was classified as an OIG in front of 40 or 50 participants, after a long and complete presentation which has - to my knowledge - never been asked of other OIGs. Thereafter, our participation in the ExCom was refused twice, the last of which was in July 2021, based on a refusal by the OIG college. We are well aware that, after their interventions with the Commission, the rules of procedure of the AC and the 2017 Delegated Regulations led to it being specified that it was the OIGs which nominated their candidates to the ExCom. Nevertheless, the basis of these refusals is not known to us and has not been specified. In the absence of any obvious transparency, I note today that these NGOs have disappeared from the AC's field of vision, and if the 60/40% was adhered to, that there would be 7 seats to be filled for the OIGs within the ExCom. We take note of this decision once again, but we reserve the right to appeal, even the right to consider steps for discriminatory attitude with the competent bodies of the EU.”

There was no quorum for approval of the Executive Committee, and a written procedure has to be carried out.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to carry out a written procedure for the approval of the new Executive Committee.

## 6. NWWAC Company update

The Secretariat presented an update on the requirements from the Commission and under Irish company law. The presentation can be found [here](#).

Over the past year the Secretariat realised that there is some confusion internally regarding the Commission requirements and Irish company law requirements in relation to the approvals process from the membership.

The EC delegated act states that the General Assembly should meet at least once a year to approve the annual report, the annual strategic plan and the annual budget. The annual report is what was presented earlier for Year 16, i.e., for the running financial year. The strategic plan is the work programme for the next financial year, and the budget refers to both the current and the next financial year. There are various requirements regarding these approvals time wise. The annual report and the annual budget for the running financial year can only be approved by the General Assembly at the end of the year when the Chair reports on what has been achieved. The strategic plan that must be prepared in advance for submission to the Commission in time for consideration and for the sharing of the specific agreement before the end of the running financial year. The Commission's financial guidelines identify that the AC should launch this at least two months before the end of the current specific agreement, which in the NWWAC's case means July, meaning that the General Assembly has to approve the strategic plan and the proposed budget before the annual meeting in September.



Therefore, for the NWWAC to satisfy these requirements there should be two meetings of the General Assembly, one to approve the work programme and budget for the next financial year, and one to approve the annual report on the work programme and budget at the end of the running financial year.

Under Irish company law one of the things that needed to be clarified is who the members of the company are: all of the members of the AC are also stakeholders of the company.

The Irish Companies Act 2014 specifies that one annual general meeting must be held in order to address three very specific things:

- approve the review of the company's affairs, i.e., the Directors report (work programme and budget)
- the appointment or reappointment of the auditors
- approve the financial statement

The Secretariat only receives the financial statement after the audit is finished, which is usually the end of November, beginning of December. This adds an additional layer on top of the Commission requirements.

Under Irish company law there are provisions on how the annual general meeting must be held. These provisions have changed since the inception of this AC. Previously, the AGM had to be held in the country where the company is set up. Now it may be held inside or outside of the State, and it may be held in two or more venues. Most importantly, for the requirements of the AGM under Irish law, a quorum is considered present if two members of the company attend. In addition, the law is currently being updated to allow for virtual AGMs following the COVID crisis.

In order to satisfy both Commission and Irish company law requirements and to avoid increasing the work load of the GA, the Secretariat proposes the following:

	Current financial year	New financial year
March (Madrid)	Secretariat update to ExCom on work programme and budget	
June		Secretariat to circulate proposed work programme to ExCom members
July (Ghent)	Secretariat update to ExCom on work programme and budget	ExCom confirmation of work programme and budget
		GA approval of work programme and budget
August		Submission of grant application to Commission



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September (Dublin)	Secretariat update to ExCom on work programme and budget
	GA approval of annual report and budget
November	Company audit & issuing of financial statement
Nov/Dec	Virtual AGM with MT and approval, submission to COM

**Proposal for the GA to appoint the Management Team to**

**represent the GA's interests for the purpose of the AGM**

**ACTION:** Secretariat to initiate written procedure for approval of delegation of power from the GA to the management team for the purpose of the AGM under Irish company law.

#### **7. NWWAC Fisheries Management Chart scoping study** (Katrina Ryan, Mindfully Wired Communications)

The Chair recalled that following from the work of the FG Brexit on the printed chart, the ExCom approved the development of an online fisheries management chart similar to the Irish and Belgian ones. To clearly identify members' needs and develop a site of most value to members, it was decided that a scoping study would be carried out to avoid pitfalls later on in the project. Mindfully Wired Communications in cooperation with Howell Marine Consulting were the successful applicant for this study. Katrina Ryan and Edward Willsteed presented the plans.

The presentation can be found [here](#). As part of the presentation a live poll was carried out. In order to receive as many responses as possible, this should be shared with all members.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to send out poll via email.

#### **8. Women in the Seafood Industry: achieving gender equality** (Camille Cherques, Head of Programs, WSI)

The Chair identified that the topic of social aspects is part of the NWWAC work programme since Year 15. He pointed out that the Secretariat felt that WSI would be a good fit for the NWWAC to provide expertise and input to the work of this AC and especially in the newly established Focus Group Social Aspects. Camille Cherques presented an introduction to the work of the WSI.

The presentation can be found [here](#). Additional information is available [here](#).

Murphy stated that as a father he is always trying to entice his daughters to join the industry. In his own experience, local recruitment into his aquaculture operation has shown a gender equality. However, he felt that recruitment into the seafood industry overall is sadly lacking incentives and agrees that the AC should focus on how this can be promoted better instead of gender equality. He stated that "on board a vessel it is only important that a job is done or not, not by whom."

Cherques reiterated that fishing is quite a male dominated industry and that one way of making it more attractive to women and girls is for example by showcasing women who are working in the industry via videos, testimonials or events.



Murphy felt that is important to avoid reinforcing the gender bias. There is a volume of work to entice capable people to come into the industry. “We have to educate people and stop the stereotyping.”

The Chair pointed out that for this AC to move forward on this topic a Focus Group needs to be established to analyse the topic in detail and to prepare advice. He asked if WSI would consider membership of the NWWAC to participate in this Focus Group an contribute to the work of this AC.

Cherques stated that WSI is not yet able to become an official member of the AC, but that they are more than happy to contribute to the FG as experts.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to initiate the setting up of a Focus Group on Social Aspects.

## 9. Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted

The Year 16 annual report and budget were approved. The Year 17 work programme and budget were ratified. Members are reminded that their participation in the scoping study is vital for the success of the project.

### Action points

1	Secretariat to circulate the poll on the Members Area to all members
2	Secretariat to inform the Commission on the efforts made specifically in relation to OIG membership
3	Secretariat to carry out a written procedure for the approval of the new Executive Committee.
4	Secretariat to initiate written procedure for approval of delegation of power from the GA to the management team for the purpose of the AGM under Irish company law.
5	Secretariat to initiate the setting up of a focus Group on Social Aspects.



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## Participants

<b>NWWAC members</b>	
José Beltran	OPP LUGO
Emiel Brouckaert (Chair)	Rederscentrale
Enda Conneely	IIMRO
Juan Carlos Corras Arias	PESCAGALICIA-ARPEGA-OBARCO, Lonja de la Coruna, FREMSS
Hugo Gonzáles	Anasol
Gérald Hussenot Desenonges	Blue Fish
Manu Kelberine	CRPMEM Bretagne
Julien Lamothe	ANOP
John Lynch	IS&EFPO
Luis Francisco Marin	OPPAO
Geert Meun	VisNed
Anais Mourtada	CNPMEM
Patrick Murphy	IS&WFPO
Sean O'Donoghue	KFO
Jacopo Pasquero	EBCD
Erwan Quéméneur	CDPMEM 22
Jean-Marie Robert	Les Pêcheurs de Bretagne
Delphine Roncin	From Nord
Despina Symons	EBCD
Dominique Thomas	CMEOP
John Ward	IFPO
<b>Observers and Experts</b>	
Jacob Ashton	Mindfully Wired Communications
Camille Cherques	Women in Seafood International
Pascale Coquet	DG MARE
Kathryn Collins	Howell Marine Consulting
Conor Nolan	Consultant to the NWWAC
Katrina Ryan	Mindfully Wired Communications
Tamara Talevska	NSAC
Ed Willstead	Howell Marine Consulting
<b>NWWAC Secretariat</b>	
Mo Mathies	Executive Secretary
Matilde Vallerani	Deputy Executive Secretary