



DRAFT MINUTES

HORIZONTAL WORKING GROUP

Virtual

Monday 13 September 2021

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair Emiel Brouckaert welcomed all participants. No apologies were received prior to the meeting. The agenda was adopted.

Action points from last meeting (01 July 2021, virtual)

1	Preparation of a written request to the Commission asking about the procedure when different TMRs are in place in UK and EU waters, and vessels are crossing the line in between. Submitted on 27 August 2021
2	Members to inform the Secretariat of any other questions on today's presentation from the COM to eventually include in the above written request. Included in AP above
3	Question (and reply) on article 12 of the North Sea MAP, to be followed up in WG 3. This was discussed by the WG3 members in their meeting last week Thursday and will be addressed by the Member States Group possibly later today or at the next meeting of the Technical Group on 16 September
4	Set up Focus Group Landing Obligation to prepare advice on Fishing Opportunities 2022. Submitted 27 August 2021
5	The Focus Group Brexit has completed its tasks and is handing over the fisheries management chart follow-up to the Secretariat, while the other Focus Groups continue as presented. Translations of the chart have been finalized and the Secretariat would like to thank Puri and Julien for their assistance. Once printing is completed, the maps will be mailed out to all members.
6	The Secretariat to circulate information on opportunities for collaboration with other ACs (deep sea mining, MSFD and use of blockchain in fisheries supply chains) The LDAC, NSAC, MedAC and MAC Executive Secretaries kindly accepted our invitation to participate in today's meeting and will give an overview of their work for discussion and consideration by the NWWAC members under Agenda item 8.
7	Members to send questions/comments on the presentation on the social dimension of the CFP to the Secretariat, as a basis for follow-up and eventual preparation of advice.



	No queries received. This will also be addressed and discussed in the GA following the presentation of the Women in Seafood presentation.
8	PGECON workshop 30-31 August, registry by 20 July, chairs of WS looking for experts – Secretariat to follow up and circulate information to members
	The Secretariat followed this up but received no information and thus could not provide anything to the members.
9	The Secretariat to schedule more time for the next meeting of the Horizontal Working Group in September.
	Done

2 Dialogue with DG MARE: overview on ongoing dossiers and upcoming advice requests

EU-UK negotiations

The Chair identified that originally four topics had been put forward here for discussion. Unfortunately, DG MARE informed the Secretariat that there would be no representation addressing point 1 EU-UK negotiations state of play, update on SCF, and point 2 Fishing Opportunities 2023 – timeline and planning. The AC is aware that under the TCA the aim is to have an agreement on 10 December to put the Fishing Opportunities 2022 to the Council and was looking for more information relating to this. It is hoped to have representation from DG MARE on 24 September at the ExCom meeting for an update on this very important topic. Regarding the Fishing Opportunities 2023 the AC was looking for information to plan future work which will also be addressed with the Member States Group when talking about the planning for the Discard Plan preparation. Regarding the next item, it has been repeatedly stated that there would be no new CFP after eight years of the current one being in place, but that in 2022 a report on the current state of play and results would be published. The Chair welcomed Fleur Breuillin to elaborate on this topic.

CFP reporting and state of Play (Fleur Breuillin, DG MARE)

Apologies for the colleagues who could not attend today but hopefully they will be able to join the ExCom meeting.

By the end of next year, the Commission is expected to report on the functioning of the CFP to the Council and the Parliament. This is not about an evaluation for any further reform. The Commission is in the process of brainstorming and going through the different items of the CFP Regulation. In his mission letter, the Commissioner mentioned to look at all the aspects of the CFP. In terms of timeline, the Commission foresees that in parallel to the ongoing work, for example in relation to studies that were launched by the Commission on the CFP and its implementation, consultations should be started later this autumn with the ACS, possibly in the form of an online targeted consultation and followed by further discussions in late 2021 early 2022, including potential attendance at AC meetings to discuss individual topics.



Another deliverable that is in preparation is the Action Plan to conserve ecosystems and resources. This will build on the report on the Technical Measures Regulation which will be published in the coming weeks.

There are a lot of expectations for this Action Plan, and a decision was taken to postpone the adoption to March 2022 to ensure sufficient time for in depth consultations with all stakeholders. So shortly after the adoption of the Technical Measures Report the Commission will launch a consultation based on an online questionnaire to assist the Commission in preparing for the Action Plan. DG MARE, possibly with the assistance of colleagues in DG ENV, could also attend another meeting of this AC to have a detailed discussion on this in future. The Commission received the advice on the Fishing Opportunities 2022 which brought first ideas in the run up to building the report and all further exchanges are welcome.

The Chair thanked Breuillin for this update and identified that the work on the Action Plan will be an important point to put forward to the members of the NWWAC for follow up.

EU Code of Conduct on Responsible Food Business and Marketing Practices (Isabelle Rollier, DG SANTE)

The Farm to Fork Strategy was adopted last year with 27 actions one of which is the establishment of the EU Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct was adopted on 5 July targeting first and foremost the middle actors of the food chain. The main aim of the Code is for the EU food system to become more sustainable. It is important to get farmers and fishers on board.

The Code asks for commitments in the supply chain intra EU and internationally and looks at internal processes of the following:

- Consumables
- Waste
- Climate
- Circularity
- Social aspect
- Value
- Sourcing

Signatories to the Code include EU associations and individual companies. EU associations should commit to help their members to reach the seven objectives. Signing the Code means committing to act. So far there are 845 signatories in total, with approx. 50 individual companies, and the rest being associations. The different signatories meet regularly to discuss the sustainability issues they are concerned with.

Detailed information on the code can be found [here](#) in English, French and Spanish.

The Chair stated that many of the NWWAC members are also members in EAPO, AIPCE and Europeche who signed the Code and enquired if there are any NGO signatories or representatives.



Rollier explained that the Commission aims to have NGOs on board as signatories as civil society organisations have been part of the discussion on setting the Code. For now, there are no NGOs as signatories because they may not be aware what their interest can be in signing the code. The Commission believes that they could be a collaborative support, so they would not be expected to implement the Code, but they could bring in various aspects that might otherwise be overlooked in discussions. Europeche has not signed the Code yet though an expression of interest has been received.

The Chair felt that while it is very important to pass the information on the Code to the NWWAC members, there does not seem to be any relevance for an AC to be a signatory to the Code.

Rollier pointed out that there is an EU Code of Conduct website where interested parties can find two email addresses to which queries can be sent. https://ec.europa.eu/food/horizontal-topics/farm-fork-strategy/sustainable-food-processing/code-conduct_en

ACTION: Members to consult the Code of Conduct website as reference to follow up individually.

Sean O'Donoghue felt that this topic was more relevant to the Market AC and enquired if a similar presentation could be given to its members and what the specifics of the Code are in relation to marketing practices.

Rollier recalled that a first presentation was given to the MAC at a time that the Code was not signed and that the Commission is open to requests from other ACs regarding presentations on this subject. O'Donoghue proposed to follow this topic up with the MAC colleagues.

The Chair concluded that apart from informing members, there is no action for the NWWAC around this topic. He thanked Rollier for this clear presentation which will allow NWWAC members to sign up to the Code should they wish to do so.

3 Dialogue with the NWW MSG: overview on work Programme

The Chair welcomed the representatives of the NWW MSG.

Pauline Joyeux thanked the AC for the invitation and identified that the upcoming meetings under the French presidency are scheduled once per month for September, October and November, thus leaving December available to focus on negotiations with the Council. A meeting of the High Level Group is scheduled in November.

The Commission has shared the draft Delegated Act on the Landing Obligation including measures for the Celtic Sea with the European Parliament and the Council for consultation. The Member



States group is planning to continue work on the UK Technical Measures by updating the table that was prepared in July, which was also circulated to the AC. Input on this from the NWWAC is welcome.

Regarding the implementation of Article 12 of the North Sea MAP as mentioned previously, the NWW MSG determined that it is better that the Scheveningen Group handles this.

The Chair thanked Joyeux for the introduction and also for confirming the upcoming meetings, and for sharing the table on the UK Technical Measures which he felt was very useful. He enquired from the Secretariat if there were any issues put forward by the regional Working Groups last week in relation to this, and also noted the update on Article 12 which was a topic in Working Group 3.

Jean-Marie Robert enquired regarding the legal uncertainty on the measures on hake, as well as the implementation of new measures in the UK zone in the Celtic Sea. He identified that there are different technical measures in different parts of the Celtic Sea and stated that “the catch composition being put forward is discriminatory for French vessels.”

Joyeux confirmed that these two points are scheduled for discussion in the MSG meeting this week. It is hoped that clarification from the Commission on the hake box is provided next Thursday. She agreed that there are too many and disparate measures in the Celtic Sea and that the MSG will address this with urgency.

The Secretariat recalled that the issue of article 12 of the North Sea multiannual plan was discussed in WG3, and the Hake issue in WG2. Information is expected from the Commission and the MS on the legal interpretation. Regarding the TM, the list of UK technical measures which were sent to the Commission and the MS, were circulated after the July meeting. There was not enough time for the AC reply on this as the deadline was the end of July. Members were invited to contact their own MS to provide comments on these individually.

The Chair proposed that an action point from this group should be to establish a clear view on the topics that are being looked into by the MSG and identify a clear plan on how the NWWAC is addressing these:

- Delegated Act LO: no further work, looking ahead at next year
- Overview of Technical Measures UK: this will be on the agenda for the next TG and the AC needs to see how this could be addressed as the deadline did not enable the AC to be active on this
- Art 12 has been referred to the Scheveningen Group and the NSAC.
- Hake and Celtic Sea Technical Measures are items that could be reflected on in the regional WG but ExCom needs to be aware of these as well.

ACTION: Identify in which NWWAC WG or FG each topic on the agenda of the MSG is followed up.

The Chair enquired if there was already a timeline or any planning regarding the joint



recommendations for 2023.

Joyeux explained that there was not but that the AC would be informed should new initiatives arise. She identified that the MSG had to rush the Technical Measures table for it to be sent in time for the first meeting of the SCF. This is a working and a living document, and contributions are welcome. While the MS enjoy quite a good understanding with the Commission, at this point in time no Working Groups have been set up within the SCF.

The Chair thanked Joyeux for the clear update and expressed his regret that no update from DG MARE was available on this today.

4 LIFE CIBBRiNA project ‘Coordinated Development and Implementation of Best Practice in Bycatch Reduction in the North Atlantic Region’ (Marije Siemensma, Marine Science & Communication on behalf of the Netherlands Ministry of Nature & Food Quality)

You can find the presentation [here](#).

The Chair recalled that the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality submitted an EU LIFE proposal in July 2021 for an international project on unwanted bycatch reduction. For this project to be successful, fishers’ involvement is fundamental. He identified that the presentation of the project on 9 September clashed with the NWWAC regional working groups and thanked Marije Siemensma for accepting the NWWAC’s invitation for a specific presentation.

Marije Siemensma thanked the AC for the invitation to present the project’s goals regarding achieving cross border cooperation with the fishing industry and among countries and its aims to implementing robust regional monitoring and successful bycatch reduction strategy.

Guiding principles:

- CIBBRiNA will work jointly with fishers, scientists, policymakers and NGOs
- Prerequisite is an open mind towards possible solutions
- Solutions need to be suitable for use by fishers and applicable for multiple gears, regions and species
- Cooperation and co-creation with the fisheries industry from early on (RRI principles)
- Mutual trust, respect and understanding of different perspectives essential
- Build upon existing work to avoid repetition, while remaining sensitive to possible limitations of earlier approaches
- It is considered acceptable and valuable to report on what does not work, as much as what is successful

Overarching objectives:

- Minimise and where possible eliminate bycatch in the NEA/Baltic regions



- Achieve successful cross-border cooperation with fishers and among countries
- Implement successful monitoring programmes in cooperation with the RCGs
- Implement successful/proven mitigation measures
- Develop Joint Recommendations (CFP art.11), starting with high-risk species and fisheries
- Determine high risk species and fisheries and develop a long-term strategy to minimise bycatch

Scope

- Focus on high risk fisheries (static gears, e.g. gillnets, pots and creels, but also pelagic fisheries)
- Multi species level (all PETS)
- Regional scope NEA/Baltic, however, linkages with Mediterranean and Black Sea projects are recommended

The project management structure includes a Stakeholder Advisory Board which is linked to the Steering Committee and the daily project management team, and also to the General Assembly. The Stakeholder Advisory Board may be the best place for the ACs to participate in the project provide feedback to the consortium about the relevance of the results.

The project includes 11 work packages in total which are currently being developed. Some of the case studies which are considered for the project include:

Fisheries focused:

- Gillnets
 - All PETS
 - Lump sucker fishery
- Pelagic trawls
 - Marine mammals and sharks and rays
 - 'Stop grids' in the North Sea
- Longline fisheries
 - Sharks and rays
- Beamtrawls
 - Sharks and rays

Species focused:

- Common dolphin, Bay of Biscay
- Harbour porpoise, Baltic proper
- Harbour porpoise, Iberian coast
- Baleen whale entanglement (UK and elsewhere)
- Deepsea sharks
- Seabirds

Queries should be directed to:



Marije Siemensma: m.siemensma@msandc.nl

Anne-Marie Svoboda: a.m.svoboda@minlnv.nl

O'Donoghue commented that the project was well thought through with a very comprehensive approach. In his opinion results of other EU projects are frequently not followed up on and he enquired if the consortium had made provisions for this as he felt that the results "will have very significant impacts on bycatch strategies assuming you can achieve what has been set out in the objectives".

Siemensma stated that the project timeline is envisaged for 6 years and includes plans for developing joint recommendations to avoid lack of follow up. This will also be addressed as part of the Communications work package.

The Chair thanked Siemensma for the presentation and enquired if there was any link with the Data Collection Framework in addition to the different scientific institutes that are involved in the data collection.

Siemensma referred to the work package on suitability, which will identify what research is available and what can be built upon. Participation of research institutes, technical experts and social scientists also depends on available funding, and a lot of interest has already been expressed.

Action: Members to review the CIBBRiNA work programme and presentation and inform the Secretariat about their view whether or not the NWWAC should sign up for the Advisory Board of this project.

5 NWWAC advice on 'Addressing Choke Risk in NWW after exemptions'

The Chair recalled that this draft advice will be prepared by the Landing Obligation Focus Group. The date for the next meeting has yet to be identified. The Secretariat is currently processing the outcome of the discussions from the Working Groups' meetings on Thursday 09 September. The Secretariat also updated the "traffic light" choke tool according to the comments received and presented at the regional WGs the previously developed choke tool and potential updates to make this tool relevant following Brexit.

The Secretariat explained that the initial choke tool was developed within this AC in 2014/2015. The layout has so far stayed the same, though updates were made following discussions within the Secretariat as well as with Dominic Rihan, BIM and with Michael Keatinge, who also joined this meeting. Updates relating to one specific species were presented in each of the WGs. Previously this tool provided a retrospective analysis of the choke situations by taking data from a year or two years



previous in relation to quota shares and swaps that had taken place, as well as regarding the landings and discards, and analysed all this data providing an overview of what the difficulties were. It is felt that that the data currently available does not reflect well enough on the changed landscape under Brexit and the TCA. Further information from the Commission and updates will be discussed and included over the next few weeks in order to establish a new template.

The following comments were made in the regional working groups on the “traffic light” choke tool:

Celtic Sea

- Haddock in 7 b-k: choke risk to change from high to medium, as the TAC advice this year better reflects the reality at sea of the stock as well as continued improvements due to developments in selectivity.
- Skates & Rays: choke risk to change from low to moderate due to uncertainty regarding EU-UK negotiations
- Cod 7b-k: in addition to selectivity measures or spatial temporal actions, additional advice should include a focus on the trends characterizing the stocks as there is uncertainty around the environmental conditions and their influence on the trends of the stock, which should be taken into particular consideration.
- Sole 7h,j,k: choke risk to change from medium to high as the TAC is lower than the recorded landings
- Pollack in area 7: science is poor in terms of data collection for this stock, additional data is needed for the management stock in this area.
- Boarfish areas 6-8: While the continuation of the de minimis exemption for bottom trawls in ICES divisions 7b-c and 7f-k would also help reducing the risk of choke in certain cases, it doesn't help to avoid damage caused by this species to rest of catch on board demersal fishing vessels due to unavoidable big shoals and the shape of the fish. Proposal to make this a species prohibited for bottom trawls to force improvements in selectivity for this species

West of Scotland

- Haddock: important to investigate if TAC constraints for haddock in the North Sea are also related to area six, and depending on the trilateral with Norway, the choke risk for the species might increase from low to medium.

Channel

- Skates and rays: same comment as for the Celtic Sea, choke risk left as “uncertain” as the ICES advice is not yet available and depends on outcomes of negotiations with UK
- Whiting in 7d: need to address this stock separately as this may have a moderate choke risk for the area



An overarching comment was made regarding the fact that this analysis is based on exemptions to the landing obligation that are being implemented in the EU, but the situation in the UK is still unclear and this will also have an impact on the choke situation for EU waters.

The Chair felt that a lot of work scheduled for the FG Landing Obligation has already been done by the regional Working Groups. The FG will now go over these comments and then make the final presentation to this Working Group in a written procedure.

O'Donoghue expressed concern regarding the practicalities of boarfish as a prohibited species specifically for whitefish or shellfish fisheries

The Secretariat recalled that all discussions are minuted, and that the discussion will be continued in the FG LO with a view of reaching an agreement.

Robert emphasised that this proposal needs to be discussed further by the stakeholders as little is known about boarfish. He identified that Art 15 of the CFP must be taken into consideration when discussing this proposal, "but it is clear that the de-minimis option will not be sufficient."

O'Donoghue reminded participants of the need to ensure that the proposal needs to be practical for the fishers who have to adhere to this prohibition.

Luis Francisco Marin identified that the boarfish issue reflects one of the contradictions within the LO, and that the obligation for boarfish to become a prohibited species would allow fishers to discard it, as some of the MS have 0 quota for this species.

Johnny Woodlock pointed out that these situations could possibly be encountered more often in the future as stocks move northwards due to climate change impacts. He suggested that that AC keep an eye on other stocks moving into different areas as "even with the prohibited species that are already in place and the work that is being carried out on avoidance techniques, it is very difficult."

ACTION: Set date for FG LO to address the preparation of the annual advice

6 Participation in H2020 project SEAwisE on Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (Anna Rindorf, DTU Aqua; David Reid, Marine Institute; Jochen Depestele, ILVO)

You can find the presentation [here](#).

SEAwisE is a project to operationalise ecosystem-based fisheries management with the aim of enhancing the benefits to fisheries while minimising adverse ecosystem effects. The members of the NWWAC are asked to pinpoint the priorities for the Western Waters and knowledge gaps that the project could address. The scientists will then try to develop operational tools and user models to make accurate predictions. These models should lead to a tool that will help to create improved



advice accounting for the ecosystem changes.

Included in the four case studies in SEAwise are the Mediterranean, the Baltic, the North Sea and the Western Waters, which are split into North and South with NWWAC, SWWAC and PelAC involved.

- **NWWAC focus**

- Irish Sea + Celtic Sea
- Otter and beam trawlers
- Small and large-scale fisheries
- Mostly mixed demersal fish: Nephrops, sole
 - hake, haddock, cod, whiting, anglerfish
 - seabass, megrim...

NWWAC participation is envisaged as follows:

- Autumn 2021: Stakeholder scoping of key ecosystem priorities and measures
- Spring 2023: 1st presentation of management strategy evaluation results
- Autumn 2024: 2nd presentation of management strategy evaluation results
- Spring 2025: Synthesis and advice demonstration in Brussels
- Attendance at the SEAwise/ICES/GFCM workshops to determine best approaches to EBFM in autumn 2023 and winter 2025.

Between these meetings, “expert advice users” are invited to comment on key priorities and formats for advice, welcome us to your meetings, attend online meetings, or participate in specific interviews.

For questions on this project, please contact:

Anna Rindorf (SEAwise coordinator, DTU DK): ar@aqua.dtu.dk

Jochen Depestele (WW lead, ILVO BE): jochen.depestele@ilvo.vlaanderen.be

David Reid (WP4 lead, MI IRL): David.Reid@Marine.ie

The Chair pointed out that NWWAC participation has yet to be confirmed by the members and asked the participants for opinions.

Patrick Murphy recalled his active participation in WKIRISH and felt that due to the importance of climate change the NWWAC should take this on board and participate as proposed.

The Chair enquired from the presenters about the link between the AC and the project, and if there were any specific structure anticipated.

Jochen Depestele explained that four workshops would be organised together with the AC to conduct systematic reviews across the different work packages. Other opportunities for cooperation can also be discussed.



Dave Reid commented that based on the experience gained during the WKIRISH process, the scoping workshop is probably most important as it will set the tone of the project.

Murphy identified that the IS&WPO is looking for more genetic studies to be carried out on fish and their movements as this will be relevant to future quota setting and felt that this made participation in this project very important.

The Chair pointed out that WKIRISH was an ICES workshop, and the NWWAC was not considered part of the project. He asked if participation in SEAwisdom would be formalised.

Reid explained that formal involvement would look good, but that the work under WKIRISH did not need a formal arrangement.

The Chair agreed that the NWWAC is also more in favour of an informal involvement.

Anna Rindorf explained that the project has set aside money to invite two people from each AC to all of the regional meetings. The project does not need formalisation unless the AC needs this for its own system.

The Chair thanked the presenters and stated that the topic will be included in the discussions with ExCom.

ACTION: Propose NWWAC participation in the SEAwisdom project

7 State of Play regarding the influence of global environmental policy on EU fisheries (Despina Symons, EBCD)

The Chair recalled that following Despina's presentation at the HWG meeting last year, members agreed to include this topic as a standing item on the September agenda. Much has happened over the past year, including the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Marseille which took place just last week.

You can find the presentation [here](#).

For the past two years the setting of the new targets for the next 10 years under the CBD have been discussed.

The Aichi targets 2010 - 2020 included two fisheries targets, targets 6 Sustainable Fisheries and 11 MPAs and [Other Effective Conservation Measures](#) (OECMs).

The new Framework contains 5 long term goals (2050), 20 short term targets (2030) and no sector specific targets as before. Fisheries related targets include:



- Reducing threats to biodiversity: 30% MPAs & OECMs, MSP, sustainable harvest, trade and use of wild species, IUU
- Sustainable use: Sustainable use of marine resources (MSY), resilience of marine ecosystems, food security, livelihoods
- Implementation and mainstreaming: Fisheries subsidies, economic incentives, biodiversity mainstreaming in fisheries

One of the highly discussed items relating fisheries is the target regarding MPAs and OECMs. OECMs are part of the “30 by 30” target related to the MPAs for which general political support is visible now.

OECMs are important for fisheries as they are a significant step in formally recognising fisheries’ contribution to conservation, as well as an opportunity for the fisheries sector to maintain ownership of Area Based Management Tools and have a voice in the conservation discussion. They also improve the sector’s environmental performance and image.

At the last COFI meeting earlier this year, the FAO recognised the relevance of OECMs in achieving SDGs and biodiversity targets. The FAO is now mandated to:

1. to develop guidelines for the identification and implementation of OECMs in fisheries, and
2. to conduct regional workshops to build capacity

The IUCN Fisheries Expert Group (FEG) organised several workshops over the last two years one of which resulted in the publication of the Joint ICES/IUCN-CEM-FEG Workshop on Testing OECM Practices and Strategies ([link](#)). This will be presented at the European Parliament PECH Committee in October.

Over the past 11 days the IUCN 2021 World Conservation Congress took place as a hybrid event in Marseille and online with more than 5000 people attending in person.

The main resolutions adopted at this congress include:

- Planning of maritime areas and biodiversity and geodiversity conservation
- Restoring a peaceful and quiet ocean
- Protection of deep ocean ecosystems and biodiversity through a moratorium on seabed mining
- Setting area based conservation targets based on evidence of what nature and people need to thrive
- Reinforcing the protection of marine mammals through regional cooperation
- Acting for the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity in the ocean beyond national jurisdiction

More than 30 fisheries related resolutions passed before the Congress through electronic vote ([link](#)), and also:

- Reducing impacts of incidental capture on threatened marine species
- For an improved management of drifting fish aggregating devices (FADs) in purse seine fisheries
- Guidance to identify industrial fishing incompatible with protected areas
- Reducing the impact of fisheries on marine biodiversity



Biodiversity and climate change are interlinked and the UN Climate Change COP26 is scheduled for November 2021 at which the link between oceans and climate will also be discussed.

The Chair thanked the speaker. He referred to the mention that the IUCN World Congress is mainly attended by environmental NGOs and National Environment Departments who accordingly have most of the input into the resolutions. He enquired if there was any involvement of the FAO in this? Symons explained that FAO attend and are invited as a partner, but that they do not participate in the voting which is only for the members of IUCN.

8 Information and discussion points

Focus Groups progress

i. Landing Obligation (Emiel Brouckaert, Chair)

It was already mentioned that the FG prepared the advice on Fishing Opportunities 2022 which was submitted to the Commission on 27 August. We need to find a date quickly now to follow up on the choke mitigation which was presented earlier.

ii. Climate & Environment (Jacopo Pasquero, Chair)

The Focus Group produced advice in response to the consultation on CO2 emissions from fishing vessels which was submitted to the Commission on 06 August. This was supported by the SWWAC, the NSAC, the MedAC and the CCRUP. The second piece of advice developed by this FG on the consultation on MPAs in Ireland was submitted to the DHLGH on 29 July. The FG is planning to produce a joint advice with the NSAC on the review of the MSFD which has a deadline of 18 October, and the FG plans to meet ahead of this.

This Focus Group needs more members so please contact the Secretariat if you would like to join!

iii. Brown Crab (Norah Parke)

This has been a joint effort with support gratefully received from the NSAC, MAC and NWWAC. The advice has been circulated for review and comments to the members of this Working Group. One comment was received from the Irish Seal Sanctuary and is proposed for inclusion as a footnote under Recommendation b) – fisheries management: “here, importantly, sharing of best practices to ensure brown crab pot gear is identifiable to reduce “ghost” fishing and plastic pollution”.

The advice was unanimously approved.

ACTION: Secretariat to submit the joint NWWAC/NSAC/MAC advice on brown crab to the ExCom for approval

iv. Skates & Rays (Paddy Walker)

This Focus Group has not had a meeting since July. The next meeting is scheduled for the end of September where the following items will be discussed:



- The Thornback Ray Fisheries Improvement Project in the Channel
- Other ongoing research projects
- Joint NWWAC/NSAC request to the Commission and answer regarding updated scientific information

The last item is influenced by the work of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries, however, improvements on the management and knowledge regarding these species is urgently needed, and this FG has sufficient expertise to develop additional advice regarding this.

v. Control and Compliance (Secretariat)

This Focus Group has not had a meeting since July. The main tasks ahead for this group include:

- Review of the Commission's reply on the list of questions regarding control arrangements following Brexit
- Review of the Commission's reply to the NWWAC letter regarding the explanatory note from March this year

The Secretariat managed to agree a date for the virtual meeting between the NWWAC, EFCA, the Commission and the NWW Control Expert Group on Art. 27 of the Technical Measures Regulation as against the requirements of Art. 15 of the CFP. This will be held on the morning of 29 September. Invitations will be sent out shortly.

Potential collaboration with other ACs

- LDAC – deep sea mining (Alexandre Rodriguez, Executive Secretary)

The Chair recalled that the NWWAC Secretariat attended the first meeting of the LDAC FG Deepsea mining as observer. Alexandre Rodriguez will provide a brief update of the current state of play of this FG.

Rodriguez explained that the topic of deep-sea mining has been ongoing for the last four years within the LDAC which published its first advice on this in 2018 strongly recommending a moratorium in relation to granting of licences for deep sea mining in the high seas in the absence of robust scientific evidence. Momentum on this is building including motion 69 adopted at last week's IUCN Congress, which also asks for a moratorium on this activity. The LDAC is working with NGOs and concerned fishers to build momentum and held a Focus Group meeting at the end of May which the NWWAC Secretariat attended as an observer. Work has not progressed as quickly as anticipated. However, the group is still on time as the next plenary meeting of the ISA is only scheduled for February/March 2022. The NWWAC will be invited to participate in the next FG meeting before the end of this month. The first draft of the advice will be shared with all participants hopefully this week or at the beginning of next week.

The Chair expressed his anticipation in receiving the draft advice and establishing how the NWWAC can support this.



- NSAC – MSFD consultation (Tamara Talevska, Executive Secretary)

The Chair explained that the NSAC is setting up a FG to address the review of the MSF Directive which is open for collaboration with other ACs. Tamara Talevska will provide a brief overview.

Talevska pointed out that a guest speaker from DG ENV presented the review of the MSFD and the Commission's timetable at a recent NSAC FG. He informed that in November a stakeholder conference is planned and therefore the deadline for reply to the consultation is set for 20 October. Due to difficulties in finding a Chair for the MSFD Focus Group and the summer holidays it was not possible to finalise the Terms of Reference or hold a meeting yet. However, the NSAC hopes the Commission will accept late submission of AC advice.

An MSFD FG meeting is now scheduled for 18 October.

The Chair agreed that this is an important topic, and that the proposal will be put forward to ExCom to make this a joint NSAC / NWWAC FG. This is proposed to the NSAC as well.

ACTION: Proposal to establish a joint MSFD FG with the NSAC.

- MEDAC – social aspects (Rosa Caggiano, Executive Secretary)

The Chair recalled that social aspects are part of the NWWAC work programme since Year 15. Work was initially anticipated to start following the ETF's presentation in July 2020. NWWAC members had a presentation in July on the two recent STECF reports, and a presentation is scheduled for the GA by the International Organisation for Women in the Seafood Industry. Rosa Caggiano is going to provide us with an overview of how the integration of social aspects into the MedAC's advice preparation works.

Caggiano established that in 2011 the members of the MedAC GA decided to create a permanent WG on the socio-economic impacts of the CFP. The socio-economic aspects are one of the most important topics that the MedAC continuously analyse and discuss thanks also to the members of the ETF who are also chairing this WG. In 2021 a letter was created on the CFP reform and the socio-economic context, and it was decided that it was necessary and important to discuss this topic deeper within each country of the MedAC. A questionnaire was sent to all members of the MedAC. In 2017 the MedAC advised on the socio-economic situation of the fisheries in the Mediterranean using the annual data from STECF.

In 2017 the MedAC developed advice related to the MAP on the fish stocks in the western Med. It underlined that before the implementation of management measures a socio-economic analysis must be carried out in order to evaluate the impact both for commercial and recreational fisheries. The MedAC takes this aspect into account on each topic and aspect and most importantly in all management measures. Last year members decided to create a Focus Group on equal opportunities. This is quite a new topic which allowed a lot of female fisheries representative organisations to apply for membership in the MedAC. The MedAC looks at working with DG ENV but also contacted DG MARE as we would like to start having a constructive dialogue also with DG Employment. We are trying to launch a long-term programme placing social and economic sustainability at the heart of



our work.

ACTION: Proposal to the ExCom to set up a Focus Group on Social Aspects

- NSAC / MAC – blockchain (Pedro Reis Santos, Executive Secretary)

The chair welcomed Pedro Reis Santos and gave him the floor.

Reis Santos described that the aim of the NSAC, MAC and NWWAC is to hold a joint webinar on blockchain and other emerging technologies for the transmission of traceability information and other data in the seafood supply chain. This idea originated in the NSAC Secretariat but is very much relevant to the entire supply chain. The webinar will cover traceability information in relation to general food law and the Fisheries Control Regulation as well as food safety, product labelling, voluntary sustainability claims and more. This event is envisaged as a virtual half-day meeting in November/December this year with main costs related to interpretation for the working languages of the MAC and NWWAC. The main outcome is to raise awareness among operators and other stakeholders regarding these new technologies, to publish a report and to potentially provide advice to the Commission that could cover the development and implementation of these new tools, challenges and added value and policy recommendations. The MAC has included this webinar in next year's work programme.

ACTION: Secretariat to distribute the Terms of Reference for the blockchain webinar for members to comment on prior to submission to ExCom

- MAC – EU green claims initiatives (Pedro Reis Santos, Executive Secretary)

Reis Santos recalled that last year as part of the EU Green deal and the Farm to Fork Strategy, DG ENV launched a public consultation on potential legislative proposals on green claims. These refer to any environmental claims on products or by companies, for example on labels, logos, brochures, websites, commercials, shelves etc. The Commission's Joint Research Centre started developing these rules for various product categories, including one on marine fish. The first draft of these rules has been published for consultation open until 04 October. The MAC submitted advice to the Commission as part of last year's consultation ([link](#)). It is not clear if the MAC will submit advice on this. This topic is very much a market related issue and thus is included in the MAC's work programme as requested by the Commission. The AAC is also working on this currently.

The Secretariat informed members that minutes and presentation from the information exchange meeting with the Commission on the PEF CR, held on 26 August, are available online in the Members Area. The timeline regarding the development of the technical rules on the Product Environmental Footprint for marine fish identifies a second public consultation scheduled for early 2022. This Secretariat has been in touch with the projects Technical Secretariat to identify the best timing for this AC to provide advice on this highly technical and scientific subject and feels that participation in the second public consultation next year might be a better option in order to use the time until then



to prepare and review the large amount of background material should members be interested. The NWWAC member AIPCE is also a member of the Technical Secretariat, so the NWWAC may already have a form of representation in this work.

Chair: The question to the members is if there are any views on how the NWWAC should or could be involved in this? Through the joint membership with the MAC, we will keep an eye of what is developing in the MAC. This is a topic for the Climate and Environment FG.

ACTION: Proposal for the NWWAC to monitor this work in the FG and potentially develop advice

9 Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted (Chair)

Action points

1	Follow up on the DG MARE Action Plan to Conserve ecosystem and Fisheries Resources and the TM report putting forward actions around this. Check NWWAC involvement in DG MARE / DG ENVI cooperation around this
2	Secretariat to list all topics on NWW MSG agenda and clearly identify which NWWAC WG / FG is addressing which topic to prepare advice and the work plans around this
3	Members to review the CIBBRiNA work program and presentation to respond to the potential for the NWWAC to be present at the Advisory Board of this project
4	Set date for FG LO to address the preparation of the choke risk advice
5	HWG suggests to approve NWWAC participation in the SEAwisE project
6	Secretariat to submit the joint NWWAC/NSAC/MAC advice on brown crab to the ExCom for approval
7	Proposal to establish a joint FG with the NSAC on the review of the MSFD consultation
8	Proposal to the ExCom to set up a Focus Group on Social Aspects
9	Secretariat to distribute the Terms of Reference for the blockchain webinar for members to comment on prior to submission to ExCom
10	Proposal for the NWWAC to monitor the work on green claims initiatives and potentially develop advice on the PEFCR (Product Environmental Footprint Categorisation Rules), specifically in the FG Climate & Environment

Participants

NWWAC members	
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Enda Conneely	IIMRO
Juan Carlos Corras Arias	PESCAGALICIA-AREPGA-OBARCO/ Lonja de la Coruña/ FREMSS
Purificación Fernández	ANASOL
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SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
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Isabelle Rollier	DG SANTE
Tamara Talevska	North Sea Advisory Council
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