



NWWAC online fisheries management chart development: Presentation of the results of the scoping study & next steps

20 January 2022

1. Introduction

Mo Mathies welcomed all the participants to the meeting and presented the apologies from Emiel Brouckaert, Chair of the NWWAC. She then introduced Katrina Ryan and Jacob Ashton from Mindfully Wired Communications and Kathryn Collins from Howell Marine Consulting.

2. Presentation of scoping study results

Ryan introduced the scoping study commissioned by the NWWAC to explore NWWAC members' needs for a potential Web GIS application, identifying data availability and accessibility and potential specialist services to support data translation as necessary.

Collins provided an overview on the methodology used. The first step of the study was to run a survey designed to look at how information is currently being used by NWWAC members, examine the level of interest in potentially available layers, then consider how information is currently accessed and finally look at information on respondents. The survey was translated into Spanish and French and was circulated to NWWAC members via the Secretariat. Members were given a month to respond.

Collins then reported on the findings of the survey:

- All data layers were seen as critical or very important by most respondents.
- The majority of respondents accessed data online ashore.
- Variation was observed in how regularly data was accessed.
- Most respondents found data “neither easy or difficult” to access, or at least “a little difficult” to access
- Of the options available (6 categories, 26 layers), most people were interested in everything.
- Clear patterns regarding interest based on whether respondents were from industry or OIG.
- Data at sea are mostly accessed by laptop, however many do not have internet access at sea.

Collins explained that more details were needed to complete the picture provided by the survey results. Therefore, 5 semi-structured interviews were organised with members selected from a pool of volunteers including the NWWAC Chair. The interviews reflected the survey format and topics.



As Collins presented, the interviews established that regulatory information and technical measures were seen as the most important information layers, but they are complex and difficult to access. According to interviewees, any developed GIS tool needs to be easy to use by those working at sea. Interviews also looked at how the NWWAC paper chart is used and at its limitations (including absence of certain information and lack of customisability). Collins reported that members would use the GIS tool in different ways depending on their background so it will need to be flexible.

The information obtained helped in defining 11 high-priority data layers to take forward to the desk-based research. Collins explained that 4 layers were easily accessible and suitable for inclusion in Web GIS tool. The remaining 7 layers would require transformation in order for the information to be displayed spatially. Overall, challenges include keeping regulatory information and technical measures up-to-date. Moreover, the WebGIS tool would need to consider liability (regarding data accuracy) and hosting (who owns the data and who updates it).

Ashton presented on the key conclusions, which included the need to:

- Include a variety of high-quality information layers, especially those highlighted by participants, dependent on data availability.
- Prioritise the inclusion of information layers outlining technical measures and regulations.
- Clarify that it is intended for reference purposes only and does not provide any legal foundations.
- Have meaningful offline functionality, possibly through enabling prior downloads and/or printouts of maps or layers.
- Be made available in all NWWAC languages.
- Be constructed and designed with ease of use in mind, incorporating a user-friendly interface. Additionally, the tool should be presented to NWWAC members via training workshops and/or integrated tutorials.
- Direct users to external information sites for information that is not fully integrated into the map.
- Consider members-only features, to be determined following further consultation.
- Avoid unnecessary duplication of data already provided through other accessible sources to minimise the refresh resource needed to keep data up-to-date.
- Provide information in a clear and user-friendly way, for example the inclusion of marine areas' commonly used names on online charts.

Ashton added that Mindfully Wired is currently building a detailed project plan based on study outcomes, member priorities, and wider fisheries management knowledge, and will liaise with web developers to create a tool prototype, including user-friendly interface and offline functionality. This prototype should be available for trial and feedback by NWWAC members in May 2022. The launch of the complete tool is forecasted in November 2022. Updates should be scheduled annually, with flexibility for interim refinement.



3. Questions and answers

The Secretariat opened the floor for questions.

Alexandre Rodriguez congratulated Mathies for the great work done and added that this could be an interesting project for the Long Distance Advisory Council as well. He then asked about who is going to compile and validate the information on regulations and technical measures into the system.

Ashton replied that the web developer had worked on similar projects before, and that Howell Marine Consulting explained how the data can be sourced. It is likely that for some layers the web developer will have to translate data manually and decisions will have to be made on how often updates are needed based on budget. Collins added that collaboration with NWWAC members and their help in identifying missing data is much appreciated as it benefits the development of the tool.

In this regard, Patrick Murphy suggested that EFCA or national control bodies such as the Irish Sea Fisheries Protection Authority could be useful sources for accurate data. Ryan agreed that extra layers of validation with extra bodies can be include in the project plan.

John Lynch appreciated the prioritisation of information layers. According to him, the tool will be very useful to fishers providing “ready-to-go” information, especially when vessels change from one area to another. However, it is important to consider that not all fishers have internet access on board. He also agreed on annual updates, as regulations do not usually change mid-year. Lynch asked for clarification on whether the quota layer is national level quota, otherwise that would be very difficult to keep up to date. Collins confirmed this assumption. Finally, Lynch recommended that the technical measures layer should be displayed in an easy-to-read format. Testing this layer with users could be very useful to understand how to do this best.

4. Conclusions

Mathies offered her availability to attend other ACs' meetings to present on the project and Rodriguez invited her to join the forthcoming LDAC Executive Committee on 16 February.

Mathies thanked the presenters and all the participants and closed the meeting.



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Participants

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