

DRAFT MINUTES EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Zoom meeting

Wednesday 28 September 2022, 09:00 – 12:00 CET

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair Emiel Brouckaert welcomed all participants to the meeting, including DG MARE representatives.

Apologies were received from Geert Meun (VisNED) in advance of the meeting. Mo Mathies added that Meun had agreed to nominate Brouckaert as proxy for his vote. Brouckaert is also acting as proxy for Sander Meyns. John Lynch nominated Maura Power as his proxy and Norah Parke had been nominated to represent KFO instead of Sean O'Donoghue. The Secretariat confirmed that two thirds of ExCom members were thus represented at the meeting allowing the ExCom to fulfil its responsibilities.

The agenda was approved as drafted.

Action points from the last meeting (6 July 2022) included:

1	Following dialogue with Director Donatella, members are invited to send further questions to the Secretariat which will then forward them to Donatella.
	None received, but dialogue with Director Donatella under item 2.
2	Brexit implications on the functioning of the CFP will be debated separately from the CFP reporting exercise by DG MARE. The topic could be considered in the ToR of the soon to be established ADG on CFP. The listing of topics from the CFP report consultation provided by Director Donatella in his address will be the basis for the ADG ToR.
	In progress, ADG scheduled to meet on 30 September.
3	Once the STECF report on NQS is available, it should be reviewed by the NWWAC and the Inter-AC Brexit Forum to decide on advice on single AC or multi-AC issues.
	Not yet released.
4	The ExCom approved the joint-ACs letter on stakeholder engagement in SCF prepared by the Inter-AC Brexit Forum.
	The letter was submitted on 20 July, no response received yet.
5	The ExCom approved the Secretariat proposal to allocate Y17 budget to website update.
	The move to a new service provider was postponed to next year due to lack of interest following the call for tender launched by the Secretariat. Instead, budget has been allocated to update website video snippets to reflect changes following Brexit. The task is in progress.
6	Secretariat to ask for members' opinions on future organisation of meetings – fully virtual/hybrid/fully live. The NWWAC will continue liaising with ICES on their live participation at meetings.
	In progress. The proposed meeting policy has been shared with members on 8 September and is scheduled for discussion at ExCom and GA September meetings.

Action points from the Working Group meetings held on 13 and 14 September were presented for approval by the ExCom:

WG1

1	Keep the topic of Irish Sea cod closure for the next meeting of WG1 in March 2023.
2	Secretariat to raise the topic of bycatch measures for whiting with the presidency of the NWW MSG for further discussion
3	Secretariat to raise the issue of the cod closure with the NWW MSG
4	Keep the topic of offshore wind energy developments on the agenda for the next meeting in March 2023.
5	Members will keep an eye on the Department's announcement of which applicants have been selected to ensure the AC has opportunity to provide advice.
6	Secretariat to share link for La Tene maps on ORE distribution.

WG2

1	Secretariat to update and finalise the choke traffic light tool based on today's discussions taking into account previous NWWAC advice.
2	Secretariat to circulate link to benchmark report on hake
3	Secretariat to organise ad-hoc meeting on hake with members of ADG Technical Measures and including invitation to other observers
4	The Secretariat to contact the other relevant ACs to initiate a joint submission on the VME topic
5	The Secretariat to circulate additional information on North sea cod workshop if and when available
6	The Secretariat to circulate additional information on developments and stakeholder consultation of the offshore wind in the CS by Crown Estate if and when available

Matilde Vallerani added on action point 5, as the workshop was confirmed to be held on 1-2 November in Edinburgh in a hybrid setting. The workshop will include cod stock in Celtic Seas as well. Participation of NWWAC representatives will need to be clarified with ICES, who is organising the workshop.

Jean Marie Robert commented on action points 2 and 3, mentioning that a timeline for the implementation of these tasks still had to be agreed. He suggested that the ad hoc meeting be organised in January 2023, as the final period of 2022 will be very busy with TAC & quota consultations. He also mentioned that, under action point 4, it would be important to get access to the ICES work on this topic. Vallerani replied that ICES had already been asked about this but no response has been received yet. Also referring to action point 4, José Beltran added that the matter needs to be addressed urgently and suggested that a letter be drafted requesting to postpone the VME measures Implementing Act.

WG3

1	Secretariat to update and finalise the choke traffic light tool based on today's discussions taking into account previous NWWAC advice.
2	The Secretariat will organise meetings for both FG Whelk and Scallop in October to follow up on previous recommendations.
3	The Secretariat to share link to DEFRA Focus Group on Dolphin Head HPMA and attend for reporting purposes only.



4	Secretariat to enquire the NWW MSG about information on flyshoot fishing activities in EU waters. If data is available, an ad-hoc group could be established to respond to the UK consultation on the matter.
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Vallerani explained that actions 3 and 4 were already in progress, as the DEFRA meeting was held on 22 September and the NWW MS Technical Group meeting happened on 26 September. In particular, the Member States Group has informed the AC that they are still discussing how they will reply to the UK consultation, if individually or with a joint approach. The NWWAC will be informed and thus decide on the best way forward.

HWG

1	Secretariat to get in touch with ORE to organise presentation on Irish Maritime Planning Act 2021 in collaboration with the PelAC.
2	Secretariat to monitor registry for participation at stakeholder workshop on MSFD on 15 November organised by the Commission.
3	Secretariat to contact NSAC to restart FG MSFD.
4	Secretariat to collect topics to be suggested for the agenda of the upcoming NWW MSG meeting on 26 September.
5	Secretariat to consider if a specific forum is needed for further follow-up of developments in global environmental policies
6	The Focus LO to discuss and propose contracting Michael Keating to work on Choke Mitigation Tool.
7	The Focus Group Climate & Environment will start working on bottom trawling in VMEs in preparation to the Commission's public consultation.
8	The Focus Group on Control will be restarted with new membership and Terms of Reference to be agreed.
9	The NSAC will take over from the NWWAC on the leading of the joint FG on Social Aspects.

All action points from the WGs were approved.

2. Keynote address – Fabrizio Donatella (Director, MAREC5)

The Chair introduced Director Donatella, conveying members' appreciation for his participation at the meeting for the second time in a row after the ExCom in Ghent. He invited Donatella to take the floor to continue the dialogue which began in July.

Donatella thanked the NWWAC for the invitation and expressed his appreciation for the opportunity to interact with this AC again, explaining that he attended on behalf of DG MARE Director-General Charlina Vitcheva, who unfortunately was unable to join this meeting adding that the Director-General is always eager to engage with stakeholders. He also introduced the new colleague Anabel Andujar-Vazquez, who supported him in the preparation for this meeting. Finally, he thanked the NWWAC Secretariat for the organisation of the meeting, acknowledging the importance of their work allowing the AC to function effectively.

Donatella highlighted that the interaction with the NWWAC is of great importance for the

Commission. The NWWAC has been one of the most dynamic and active ACs and the quality of its work is very appreciated by DG MARE, who has seen the AC actively participating in many tasks, including the preparation of the Common Fisheries Policy report. He assured members that all inputs from the NWWAC have been of particular importance to the process and in preparing this report.

Focusing on the CFP report, Donatella explained that it is not intended as an evaluation of the policy and that it is not meant to trigger a legislative proposal. Implementation has not sufficiently evolved. Now stability of management is needed. Member States have expressed support for this approach. The Commission is focusing on efficiency and effectiveness of the policy and the status of implementation. All provisions are considered in the report, which will identify issues in need of addressing, including the social dimension of the CFP, climate change and clean oceans. The report will address emerging trends and challenges, namely post-Brexit, COVID and climate change. Donatella recalled that it is essential to understand how to address these issues with existing tools and solutions from the existing legislative framework. *“We will need to apply this approach in the context of the externalities we are facing and based on the scientific advice. There is no one-size-fits-all solution of course, and the report will highlight how the CFP is a flexible policy that can drive the future of fisheries management.”* Referring to the governance in this respect, Donatella mentioned regionalization and the cooperation between the Commission, the Member State Groups, Member States, POs, fishers and ACs. He also mentioned the social dimension of the CFP as a key area and being proud of his meetings with fishers and about their views for the future. He concluded this point by adding that a publication date for the report still needs to be established but proposed to discuss the context at a next meeting.

Regarding preparation of consultations with the UK and the implementation of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA), Donatella explained that 2022 has been a particularly busy year, with six meetings of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries (SCF) and its working groups. The topic Roundnose Grenadier remains open, and Lemon Sole & Sea Bass are closed. Non-Quota Species TOR are looked into for the 21 October meeting. Diverging measures will be addressed, with a listing of processes required for an aligning exercise and aiming at a joint strategy. The Council’s interventions of 26 Sep on this have been noted and are to be included in the upcoming mandate. Donatella foresees the consultations to start in November. Consultations will be organized in a manner which allows time and opportunity for interaction with MS and stakeholders. The final agreement deadline in the TCA is 10 December. *“The tight deadline will require enormous efforts from all of us to get to conclusions as fast as possible. The worst possible scenario is to enter instability in case no agreement can be achieved with the UK”*, he explained.

He then mentioned stakeholder involvement. The TCA does not foresee direct stakeholder participation in the SCF, but the Commission is committed to ensuring engagement with stakeholders. The existence of the Inter-AC Brexit Forum provides the opportunity to have a dedicated platform for engagement for systematic interaction.

Donatella also reported on the progress on the Action Plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems which will help improve cooperation between existing environmental and

fisheries policies. Work on this Action Plan is still in progress and no issue date has been decided yet. However, the intention is to ensure a close link with the report on the evaluation of the CFP.

He explained that he was not going to mention VMEs in his speech but was willing to take questions on the topic if members felt the need.

In relation to MSFD review and Maritime Spatial Planning, Donatella stated that in the NWWAC remit area no offshore wind park of note was present though France and Ireland have announced large scale deployments. The Commission is aware of the comments made in this respect and that displacement issues need to be addressed. He referred to a May 2022 meeting and DG MARE's Céline Franck presentation on this topic.

Finally, regarding the UK wastewater spills, Donatella mentioned that in the TCA there is only a non-regression clause for environmental status. France monitors the impacts and reports to DG ENV.

The Chair thanked Donatella for the detailed presentation and opened the floor for questions.

In relation to effects of the sewage discharges, Johnny Woodlock pointed out that the Irish Sea is particularly vulnerable to eutrophication as a semi-closed basin. The Commission should continue keeping an eye on discharges in it.

Alexandra Philippe thanked Donatella for his intervention and the details provided. Regarding the untreated wastewater discharges, she was grateful that the Commission is looking at it as it is impacting marine ecosystems and fisheries products. She proposed that the topic continues to be followed by the AC.

ACTION: Secretariat to follow up on UK waste waters topic and consider preparation of advice if needed.

Philippe then raised the issue of stakeholder consultation and in particular how recommendations are taken into account. Finally, she asked why the Action Plan, which was originally scheduled to be released in 2021, will now be published simultaneously with the CFP report.

Regarding the CFP report, the Chair asked, if a legislative proposal is excluded, how will the Commission address the issues the report identifies. On stakeholder involvement in the SCF, he added that the AC values the Inter-AC Brexit Forum, but it is difficult to align this interaction with the ACs objective to produce advice. However, it is a valuable opportunity to engage with DG MARE on TCA topics and the outputs have been satisfactory. Regarding the Action Plan, he asked whether there were further possibilities for stakeholder inputs on the draft. In the context of the MSFD review and Maritime Spatial Planning work being carried out by ICES, he commented that impact of fishing gears is under scrutiny but it should be considered negligible in comparison with the impacts of construction, activity and lifetime ending of wind energy developments.

José Beltran mentioned the VMEs issue and asked for Donatella's opinion on the lack of consultation: *"How does the Commission plan to act on this point and ensure that dialogue with stakeholders is improved?"*

Donatella replied to Woodlock's point saying that there is certainly a whole range of elements the Commission feels could be subject to more scrutiny. For instance, the impact of increasing water temperatures, invasive species, etc. *"We need to be aware of these issues and if they become particularly relevant to fisheries management, we would appreciate you bringing them to our attention, since you are the experts on the ground"*. The COM relationship with ICES is not limited to stock assessments.

Replying to Philippe, Donatella said it is difficult to give a general answer on the point of feedback to stakeholder input. DG MARE is happy to find a practical approach for follow-up to ACs' recommendations, but it could be complicated to address every single advice in the same way. He encouraged members to inform the Commission in case there is a particular area where feedback is needed, both in terms of oral and written interaction. He also pointed out that DG MARE is limited in terms of capacity.

Regarding the Action Plan, DG MARE wants to ensure that the legal obligation of the CFP report is fulfilled first. The Action Plan will bring further discussions as it combines elements from environmental and fisheries policies. The two documents are linked to each other. There will be no draft available for stakeholders to comment on again, as this is not a legislative proposal, rather a way to push for further actions and to make sure that the view of the Commission is clear on those topics.

Regarding the Inter-AC Brexit Forum, Donatella explained that DG MARE is happy to discuss other options for interacting with stakeholders and appreciates suggestions on how to improve the process, which so far has been very useful.

On VMEs and the consultation process, he highlighted that the Commission has acted in full consultation with stakeholders and taken a decision which will enter into force. The next step will be the release of the new ICES advice in November (*now January 2023*) that will trigger the revision of the Delegated Act adopted in September. Consultations with MS are foreseen in early spring next year. He pointed out that DG MARE is very concerned regarding the statements about lack of consultation with stakeholders. *"We have repeatedly consulted the whole sector since 2019. If the consultation has not produced the desired results or has not been effective, that is a different issue"*, he said. The Commission is always ready to improve consultations but also acknowledges that the results are not accepted by several stakeholders. He also referred to Director-General Vitcheva's letter to ACs and stakeholders on this issue.

ACTION: Secretariat to review the Director-General's letter and suggest whether or not commenting by the NWWAC is required.

The Chair clarified that the Inter-AC Brexit Forum has great value for ACs, but it is sometimes difficult

to collect all the topics to arrive at AC advice on the SCF topics. “We need to reflect as individual ACs on how to produce advice”, he explained. He then thanked Donatella for his participation and engagement with the AC and conveyed the appreciation of the collaboration between the NWWAC and DG MARE.

3. TCA & SCF State of play

The Chair provided an update from the Inter-AC Brexit Forum meeting held on 15 September 2022 hosted by the LDAC, with participation from DG MARE C.5. He also mentioned that the report on the 20 July SCF meeting is available and will be shared with members by the Secretariat. Topics addressed during the last Forum meeting included:

- Celtic Sea TM
- Grenadier & Sea Bream
- Notification procedures
- Guidelines on special stocks
- Requests to ICES
- Non quota species
- Preparation of the Annual Consultation
- Scottish Technical Measures enforcement

Finally, he mentioned that an EU WG was held last week to prepare for the next SCF meeting on 21 October and that the next Inter-AC Brexit Forum is scheduled for 20 October to be hosted by the PelAC.

ACTION: Secretariat to ask members for topics to be addressed by NWWAC on 20 Oct.

4. ExCom Nominations (Secretariat)

Mathies explained that a potential re-classification of France Peche Durable & Responsable is currently being evaluated and will be discussed at a meeting with the OIG college members on 04 October. This meeting will also discuss the ExCom nomination of Blue Fish. The Secretariat will report on the results of this meeting at a later stage.

5. NWWAC Work Programme and Budget overview Year 17 (Secretariat)

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

Mathies explained that approval is needed for changes proposed to the noise & wind energy development advice prepared with the PelAC. She shared the advice on screen and went through the comments to be solved asking for approval by ExCom members.

ACTION: The ExCom approved the changes proposed in the text to be shared with the PelAC ExCom for approval.

Mathies added that a final approval round in this ExCom might be needed in case the PelAC ExCom has further comments.

Mathies gave an overview of the activities undertaken by the NWWAC in Year 17, starting with the amount of meetings organised by the NWWAC. All details can be found online on the NWWAC website as well as reported in the presentation Mathies shared on screen during the meeting.

She asked members to agree on the meeting policy. The Secretariat developed three proposals with different combinations of in person, virtual and hybrid settings. These proposals were distributed to members on 08 September.

Mathies added that the practice in other ACs has been that when an in-person meeting is organised, AC members are required to attend in person, while other observers, including Commission's representatives, may attend remotely.

The Chair expressed his preference for option A, taking into account the Commission's request to cut down travel expenses and reduce CO2 emissions.

Robert agreed that option A would be the best solution. The hybrid format has been promoted by the Commission, but he noted that at the first hybrid NWWAC meeting in July 2022 there were less members accepting to travel and only a few participants attended in person. Physical attendance should indeed be required. He proposed that members who do not travel will only be participating as observers and will not be able to intervene. The Chair supported Robert's proposal.

Patrick Murphy, Norah Parke, and Philippe agreed with Brouckaert and Robert on favouring option A. Bruno Dachicourt and Irene Prieto also approved this via the chat. Woodlock explained that option A would suit him, but meetings should be open to observers that cannot travel.

Mathies explained that if the ExCom agrees to go ahead with option A, including Robert's proposed addition, ExCom members will be required to travel more as a quorum is needed for the ExCom's proper functioning. She also recalled the possibility of budgeting resources for in-person Focus Group meetings if needed.

ACTION: Chair to take option A from the meeting policy proposal and Robert's addition to the General Assembly for approval.

Mathies then gave an overview of Year 17 income and expenditure. All details are included in the slides she shared on screen. She pointed out that since the Commission income is dependent on the total, audited, eligible expenditure, eligible costs will be reimbursed by 85,67%.

Regarding the income, the Chair asked if the Commission is going to fully reimburse the expenditure. Mathies explained that from this coming year, the AC will get € 330.000 budget from the Commission based on achieving its work programme targets. For this year, the AC will get reimbursement based on actual expenditure. All eligible costs are expected to be accepted by the Commission so that the AC's own resources are not going to be used to make up any shortfall.

ACTION: ExCom approved the overview on year 17 accounts to be presented to the General Assembly.

6. NWWAC Work Programme and Budget overview Year 18

Mathies gave an overview of the Work Programme for Year 18. She mentioned that members need to be fully aware of the fact that the AC needs to be very precise on the submissions to make in Year 18 as it relates to the grant agreement with the Commission. The AC will receive the balance payment based on the achievement of the Work Programme. She encouraged members to engage fully to ensure the objectives of the Work Programme are met. The Work Programme can be found online [here](#).

Regarding meetings, it is difficult for the Secretariat to predict when meetings will be organised, but an approximate number of meetings had to be forecasted. The AC needs to deliver around 30 meetings next year.

Considering the amount of submissions prepared and meetings organised by the NWWAC in Year 17, the Secretariat is very confident that the AC will have no issues in meeting the objectives of its Work Programme in Year 18.

All details on the Work Programme and budget overview for Year 18 are available on the slides presented by Mathies during the meeting.

ACTION: ExCom approves the Meeting Planning and asks for members to be reminded to follow up and contribute to achieving the Planned Recommendations.

Woodlock congratulated the Secretariat recalling that Donatella had expressed his appreciation of the NWWAC's work. He also felt confident that all requirements in the Work Programme will be met.

7. Upcoming meetings

Mathies mentioned several upcoming meetings which will need preparation and input from NWWAC members:

- Inter-AC Brexit Forum on 20 October
- EFCA Advisory Board on 24 October 2022
- ICES MIAC/MIACO in January 2023

ACTION: Secretariat to launch written consultation of NWWAC members for input to MIAC and MIACO agendas.

Regarding the EFCA meeting, Mathies mentioned that this is being organised as an in-person meeting,

but the usual NWWAC representatives are not able to attend. This is also an issue for other ACs and the Secretariat is waiting for confirmation from EFCA that remote participation can be organised.

ACTION: Information on the EFCA Advisory Board should be shared with all ExCom members to trigger expressions of interest to attend on behalf of the AC.

8. AOB

Woodlock mentioned the upcoming retirement of Barrie Deas and proposed that the Secretariat sends him a note on behalf of the AC thanking him for being a key contributor to the work of the NWWAC before Brexit.

Robert expressed his agreement to this proposal, recalling Deas' key role as one of the founders of the AC. The acknowledgement of his role should be done officially by the ExCom at a closer stage to his retirement. The gesture would be much welcomed.

ACTION: Secretariat to get information on Barrie Deas retirement date and prepare an official message from the ExCom thanking him for the contribution to the work of the AC.

9. List of actions agreed by the Chair

1	Secretariat to follow up on UK waste waters topic and consider preparation of advice if needed.
2	Secretariat to review the Director-General's letter and suggest whether or not commenting by the NWWAC is required.
3	The ExCom approved the changes proposed in the text to be shared with the PeIAC ExCom for approval.
4	Secretariat to ask members for topics to be addressed by NWWAC on 20 Oct.
5	The ExCom approved the changes proposed in the text to be shared with the PeIAC ExCom for approval.
6	Chair to take option A from the meeting policy proposal and Robert's addition to the General Assembly for approval.
7	ExCom approved the overview on year 17 accounts to be presented to the General Assembly.
8	ExCom approves the Meeting Planning and asks for members to be reminded to follow up and contribute to achieving the Planned Recommendations.
9	Secretariat to launch written consultation of NWWAC members for input to MIAC and MIACO agendas.
10	Information on the EFCA Advisory Board should be shared with all ExCom members to trigger expressions of interest to attend on behalf of the AC.
11	Secretariat to get information on Barrie Deas retirement date and prepare an official message from the ExCom thanking him for the contribution to the work of the AC.

The Chair thanked all participants, the Secretariat and interpreters for their collaboration and closed the meeting.



10. Participants

NWWAC members	
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Bruno Dachicourt	ETF
Jan Kappel	EAA
Julien Lamothe	ANOP
Suso Lourido Garcia	Puerto de Celeiro
John Lynch	ISEFPO
Anais Mourtada	CNPMEM
Patrick Murphy	ISWPO
Norah Parke	KFO
Alexandra Philippe	EBCD
Maura Power	ISEFPO
Irene Prieto	ARVI
Jean-Marie Robert	Pecheurs de Bretagne
Johnny Woodlock	ISS
Experts and observers	
Anabel Andujar	DG MARE
José Beltran	OPP Lugo
Fabrizio Donatella	DG MARE
Gérald Hussenot	Blue Fish
Manu Kelberine	CRPMEM de Bretagne
Franck Le Barzic	Cobrenord
Corentine Piton	FPDR
Arthur Yon	FROM Nord
NWWAC Secretariat	
Mo Mathies	Executive Secretary
Matilde Vallerani	Deputy Executive Secretary