



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

Draft Minutes

HORIZONTAL WORKING GROUP

Virtual meeting (Zoom)

Tuesday 13 September 2022 | 10:00 – 15:00

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair Emiel Brouckaert welcomed all participants to the meeting, including DG ENV representative, Anna Bobo Remijn, and North Western Waters Member States Group representative, Juan Antonio Espejo Lena.

Apologies were received by Bruno Dachicourt in advance of the meeting. The agenda was adopted as drafted.

The Chair gave the word to the Secretariat to review the progress on the action points from the last meeting (05 July 2022, Ghent):

1	Proposal from the HWG to the ExCom to subcontract Michael Keatinge to work on Choke ID Tool with continuous update
	In progress. Michael Keatinge is joining the HWG for an update under agenda item 5 as part of the update from the FG LO.
2	Secretariat to request MAC Chair/ PelAC Secretariat to set up next date of Inter-AC Brexit forum
	The next Inter-AC meeting is taking place on 15 September.
3	Issue regarding Scottish interpretation of technical regulation to be kept on the NWWAC agenda
	To be followed by Working Group 2.
4	Secretariat to write to the ORE advisory group with request to be considered for participation and explaining the NWWAC's role and interest
	Request turned down by the Irish Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications. The NWWAC will be briefed as a non-member by Captain McCabe when required.
5	Secretariat to schedule meeting of the Focus Group Landing Obligation to work on advice for the COM consultation on Fishing Opportunities 2023 and ICES advice
	The meeting was held on 25 July and advice was submitted on 24 August.



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

6	Proposal for the Secretariat to initiate the organisation of a workshop on skates & rays management similar to the EC Focus Group in 2017
	Update under agenda item 5.
7	Secretariat to contact the members of the Focus Group Control regarding expressions of interest for taking over Chair position
	Update under agenda item 5.
8	Secretariat to organise next meeting of the Focus Group Social Aspects for September with specific focus on finalising the ToR and the intended questionnaire
	The meeting was held on 05 September. Update will be provided under agenda item 5.
9	Secretariat to contact the NSAC with a view of establishing a joint Focus Group Brown Crab to review existing work and advice on potential management measures
	Update will be provided under agenda item 5.
10	Secretariat to circulate link and survey from Mindfully Wired Communications on the online fisheries tool
	The Secretariat circulated link and survey on 6 July.
11	Secretariat to initiate the setting up of a Focus Group Online Chart Tool to assist with the fine tuning of the prototype
	Meeting scheduled for 20 September.

Referring to action point 4, Sean O'Donoghue commented that the feedback from ORE advisory group was not satisfactory. *"Since the NWWAC cannot be a member of the ORE group, it is incumbent on us to get the relevant Department in Ireland to make a presentation of the new arrangements in Ireland, which will affect all fishing fleets having activity in the 200 mile limit"*. He reported that the first stage of the process will be licensing with a related announcement expected at the end of September, followed by planning applications. The AC needs to be kept informed of changes in the maritime zone.

The Chair suggested to address this in an extra meeting before the end of the year and O'Donoghue agreed.

Patrick Murphy supported O'Donoghue's proposal stating that fishers should be informed of the areas that are going to be designated, as they are going to include fishing grounds. He suggested to set up the meeting in a small Focus Group format to be organized at the earliest convenience.

Johnny Woodlock agreed and confirmed that the Irish industry in particular is going to be affected directly. Many of the planned windfarms are within the 12 miles.

Aodh O'Donnell agreed on the importance of this issue, as fisheries should prepare for the impacts of these decisions.



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

Mo Mathies suggested that the NWWAC joins forces with the PelAC and organize a joint meeting on this. Alternatively, a presentation could be organized during the PelAC plenary meetings in the beginning of October.

O'Donoghue confirmed that the PelAC is meeting on 5 and 6 October and that a joint approach would carry more weight. He highlighted the importance of ACs being involved in discussions at the early stages of any planned developments.

Murphy added that this is a complicated area from a legislative point of view. *“There will be a lot of displacement affecting not only Irish boats. We must make sure that sites of critical importance for fishers are not included in this planning”*.

John Lynch supported these positions and mentioned that the next ORE seafood group will be held on 28 September, clashing with the NWWAC Executive Committee meeting.

ACTION: Secretariat to get in touch with the PelAC Secretariat to organize a joint meeting.

ACTION: Sean O'Donoghue will get in touch with the Secretariat with indications on who should be invited from the Irish administration.

2. Review of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) – Anna Bobo Remijn (DG ENV C.2)

The Chair explained that the NSAC and NWWAC collaborated in a joint Focus Group on the review of the MSFD and submitted a joint advice in May this year. He then introduced Anna Bobo Remijn from DG ENV who was invited to provide an overview of the state of play regarding the review to understand how this work is progressing and if there is a need for the ACs to continue their work on this.

Bobo Remijn started by thanking the AC for the good and comprehensive advice and confirmed that reply for both DG ENVI and DG MARE is forthcoming.

The slides of this presentation are available [here](#).

She explained that the Commission has a legal mandate to review the MSFD, as per Article 23 of the Directive, and has been working on this since 2020. Following an implementation report, an external evaluation study has been concluded earlier this year, and COM is currently drafting its Evaluation report, which is due by July 2023. Meanwhile, work on the impact assessment has been undertaken, looking at different options for a possible future revision.

The Directive has a 6-year cycle. The Commission has been reviewing the MS assessments submitted since 2012, the definition of Good Environmental Status (GES) by MS for their marine waters, as well as the monitoring programs, and the programs of measures submitted by the MS. The maritime



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

spatial plans are also being taken into account in this process. After the Article 20 report in 2020, the Commission is currently working on a Report on the Evaluation of the Directive, which will be presented as the review that is due by July 2023. The next step in the review process, is the undertaking of an impact assessment for a possible future revision of the Directive. Bobo Remijn mentioned recent policy initiatives and actions that are highly relevant to the whole MSFD review process, such as the Nature Restoration Law, the Zero Pollution Action Plan and the Action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems. Moreover, nature restoration plans, protected area pledges and fisheries management measures are also taken into account. Finally, Maritime Spatial Planning and Common Fisheries Policy reports will be considered. *“As you can see, the MSFD is a complicated directive, because it aims to set in place an integrated policy framework linking different policy areas which are not directly under the responsibility of DG ENVI. This also makes the review particularly challenging”*, she explained.

The evaluation phase of the MSFD review will help identifying the areas where the Directive has been successful and the obstacles to its implementation. The external evaluation study was finalised in March, and should be published soon. Bobo Remijn outlined the main outcomes:

- Effectiveness: overall GES has not been achieved. Ecosystems continue to decline, and pressures have not been eliminated; at descriptor level progress/achievements were made but only for certain areas and descriptors. Marine strategies have been developed, significant improvements in reporting between the 1st and 2nd cycle, CIS coordination, and large quantity on data generated on state of the marine environment; important gaps persist in GES determination and quantification, environmental target setting and monitoring; regional cooperation/coordination has increased, but still disparities across marine regions.
- Efficiency: costs of implementing the Directive outweighed by the (potential) benefits from implementing marine strategies/achieving GES.
- Coherence: gaps and overlaps with related env legislation; insufficient integration of MSFD principles and objectives in sectoral legislation (maritime, agriculture, energy); insufficient integration of climate change impacts.
- Relevance and EU added value were confirmed (need for EU action in the area of marine protection), but shortcomings identified, such as insufficient integration of climate change impacts. Adherence of the proportionality and subsidiarity principles, but high degree of flexibility leads to low ambition.
- Regulatory / governance / information failures, falling in five main categories: 1. regulatory framework, 2. implementation & enforcement, 3. regional cooperation, 4. coherence, 5. data management.



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

Bobo Remijn then explained that the impact assessment should address the main obstacles identified in the evaluation and assess options to overcome them, keeping the main objectives in mind. The overall objective of the revision is to contribute to a better protection of the marine environment by setting in place a robust EU integrated framework. Policy measures and sub-options aimed at achieving the specific/operational objectives have been identified and combinations of preferred sub-options are grouped into 'option packages'. For each preferred option that has been agreed, impacts, outputs and results should be identified and assessed.

The specific objectives of the revision are: (1) to improve the regulatory framework, (2) improve implementation & enforcement of the Directive, (3) boost regional cooperation and coordination, (4) improve policy coherence and (5) improve data management.

Preliminary option packages being considered include:

- A baseline scenario: continuation of the current policy (no change);
- A repeal option;
- Strengthen implementation and enforcement through guidance and recommendations;
- Strengthen governance of the regulatory framework at MS level, by further defining GES; improving harmonisation at regional level through regional cooperation and coordination; improving harmonisation at EU level by reconsidering the concept of GES by including thresholds value in the directive, by setting targets and deadlines, etc.

Next steps in the timeline, in the third and fourth quarter of 2022, foresee work with the Joint Research Center and the European Environmental Agency, the organisation of a stakeholder workshop on 15/11 (where the ACs will be invited to attend), and drafting of the COM Evaluation report.

Alexandra Philippe asked about the MSFD coherence with other EU policies, such as the upcoming Nature Restoration Law. *"How do you foreseen to have coherence in the impact assessment and add descriptors about nature restoration in the MSFD? And is the Commission foreseeing scenarios to target quantitative objectives?"*, she asked.

O'Donoghue pointed out that, looking at the 5 process-based objectives, one of those was the ecosystem-based approach. He asked which definition the Commission is using, whether FAO guidelines were being used and how is human wellbeing incorporated. Murphy supported O'Donoghue's question, adding that the continued evaluation of the environmental status will also require changes in definitions.

Regarding coherence, Bobo Remijn explained that the policy landscape related to the MSFD is constantly evolving. *"Negotiations on the Nature Restoration Law are still ongoing and but we are in discussion with our colleagues working on it to see how the two elements may interplay"*, she replied. Overall, the Nature Restoration Law only looks at specific habitats and species which are



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

also covered by the MSFD. Ideally, when achieving ‘good condition’ through nature restoration measures, compliance with GES should also be achieved. However, the interplay between ‘good condition’ and GES is a complicated matter, which will require further input and discussion. Referring to the definition of Ecosystem-based Approach (EBA), the MSFD provides a general definition, and requires taking a holistic approach to managing pressures from human activities at sea, while considering the cumulative impacts from such activities. This is reflected in the general approach the Directive takes. It also means that where other sectoral policies require an EBA, the MSFD requirement on achieving GES should be adhered to.

Finally, replying to Murphy’s point, she explained that the MSFD is based on a six-year implementation cycle, which requires revisions of the MS assessments, as well as the programmes of measures in each and every cycle. *“This is an ongoing process. MS will be required to renew their assessments in 2024, as well as their definitions of environmental status, and monitoring programmes and measures. In this process, they can then take into account new activities being deployed, or new pressures and improvements or deteriorations in the marine environment”*.

ACTION: Contact NSAC to organise FG MSFD follow up of joint recommendations and participation at workshop on 15 November.

3. Dialogue with the NWW Member States Group – Juan Antonio Espejo Leña, Ministerio de Agricultura, Pesca Y Alimentación, Spain

The Chair welcomed Juan Antonio Espejo Leña, representing the Spanish administration, which took over the presidency of the NWW MSG for the latter half of 2022.

Espejo Leña explained that the first meeting of the NWW MS technical group is scheduled for 26 September and provided an overview of the work programme of the MSG until the end of 2022, welcoming feedbacks from the AC.

During the first half of the year, under the Belgian presidency, the NWW MSG has approached four main items: Discard Plan, technical measures, eel conservation and future of the CFP.

The Discard Plan needs to be renewed annually to maintain exemptions to the landing obligation. The Joint Recommendation was delivered by the Belgian presidency. STECF produced its feedback report in the summer and the Commission have assessed the main conclusions. Overall, the STECF report is very positive but proposed to delete two exemptions on haddock and whiting. The MSG replied by proposing to reduce the de minimis for whiting to 3% and agreed to remove the haddock exemption, which was only used by UK vessels. The Commission has accepted this and is in the process of approving the delegated regulation.

Regarding the Technical Measures, a Joint Recommendation was drafted by the Belgian presidency with the intention to maintain all technical measures in the Celtic and Irish Seas with the exception of those adopted in the West of Scotland. Following the STECF report, the Commission considered it



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

necessary to bring back the measures for the West of Scotland area, especially in relation to whiting. Therefore, technical measures in 2023 will be a rollover of those in 2022.

The MSG had also received a request for advice on eel management from DG MARE. It was agreed during the Belgian presidency that a harmonised EU approach should be adopted and that there are also activities other than fisheries that impact eel populations. The Commission replied that MS will receive information on how to progress on the matter.

Finally, on the future of the CFP, Espejo Leña reported that the MSG are waiting for further instructions from the Commission to progress this topic and are ready to address any consultation on the regionalisation process that the Commission may have.

Matilde Vallerani raised several points on which the AC would appreciate collaboration with the MSG. These include the definition of directed fishing, progress on the draft Joint Recommendation developed in 2021 on directed fishing for squid and the review of technical measures in the Irish Sea. She encouraged Espejo Leña and the other representatives of the NWW MSG to attend the meetings of the geographical working groups scheduled for the following day, as more items may arise.

ACTION: Secretariat to collect topics to be suggested for the agenda of the upcoming NWW MSG meeting on 26 September.

4. State of play regarding the influence of global environmental policy on EU fisheries (Despina Symons, EBCD)

The Chair introduced Despina Symons, expressing the NWWAC gratefulness for her availability to provide an update on the global developments in environmental policy that are impacting on fisheries in the EU.

The slides of this presentation are available [here](#).

Symons explained that 2022 has been the super year of oceans, with an extensive number of conferences and meetings which are leading to important decisions at international level. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) has been the key process, as decisions taken in this forum influence the other UN ocean processes and lay down the biodiversity framework for all global, regional and national policies.

The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is run by the CBD and it involves all other UN ocean processes (BBNJ, SDG 14, UNFCCC, IPBES, CITES). There had been several thematic consultations on oceans and fisheries, and there was a specific Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) to negotiate the Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework that met virtually four times and worked on the draft over the Covid-19 period. The first physical meeting was held in Geneva in March 2022 but the OEWG was unable to conclude negotiations. The OEWG met again in Nairobi in June 2022 and discussions led to expansion of targets and goals, with many different elements included, which made it difficult again to find agreement on implementation. Financial aspects were also on the table, as developing



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

countries demand resources before accepting any of these targets. This was particularly true for the 30by30 target. There have been lengthy discussions on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and Other Effective Conservation Measures (OECMs) and some parties suggested the possibility to include a third category of sustainable use.

The CBD COP, which is to adopt the new Biodiversity Framework, originally scheduled to take place in China in October has now moved to December in Montreal. Given that the negotiations in Nairobi did not conclude the OEWG on the Framework will be meeting again a couple of days prior to the COP in December.

The Post 2020 Biodiversity Framework contains five long term goals (2050) and twenty-two short term targets (2030). There are no sector-specific targets as before. Fisheries are touched in different targets:

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

According to Symons, one of the most interesting aspects for the AC is the issue of MPAs and OECMs. *“This is going to be the key issue in coming years when we deal with Maritime Spatial Planning”* and the implementation of the 30x30 agenda. OECMs can play an important role for the fisheries sector, as they would represent a significant step in formally recognizing fisheries contribution to conservation and would allow them to strengthen their voice in the conservation discussion. Fisheries OECMs already exist in fisheries management for years. The Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs) for example have been adopting conservation measures for Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems, but now they need to be tested against the CBD criteria in order to qualify as OECM and therefore be counted as part of the MPA target.

Symons explained that the FAO plays an important role in this. Its Committee on Fisheries (COFI) 2021 recognized the relevance of OECMs in achieving Sustainable Development Goals and biodiversity targets. COFI 2021 gave the mandate to FAO to develop guidelines for the identification and implementation of OECMs in fisheries and to conduct regional workshops to assist countries in this regard.

Regional workshops were held on the Baltic and on the Mediterranean, as well as a joint CBD-FAO workshop for Central American and the Caribbean. COFI 35 mandated FAO to continue its work on OECMs.

The IUCN Fisheries Experts Group is leading on OECMs implementation in fisheries together and



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

have organized three workshops since 2018 together with FAO and CBD. The third workshop in 2021 was co-organised with ICES and saw participation of NEAFC, NAFO, GFCM, the European Commission and OSPAR as well.

Other relevant CBD-led processes include the Sustainable Ocean Initiative (SOI) Global Dialogue between the Fisheries Bodies (RFMOs) and the Regional Seas Organizations (RSOs) and the EBSA Process, i.e. the identification of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas.

Finally, Symons gave details on important international conferences in 2022 such as:

- 1) The UN Ocean Conference, in June 2022, which launched the 2022 FAO SOFIA Report and the Blue Food Coalition. A highlight was the increasing support for a deep-sea mining moratorium.
- 2) The BBNJ IGC5 negotiating session aiming at adopting the new Ocean Treaty held in New York in August. Parties were not able to conclude and the meeting was suspended to resume at a later date, possibly early next year. A key feature for fisheries will be the powers given to the new BBNJ COP as well as interactions with RFMOs on the establishment of Area Based Management Tools including MPAs.
- 3) The FAO 35th Committee on Fisheries was held in September in Rome. There is an increasing attention of the Committee on environmental issues including biodiversity and climate change, mainstreaming in fisheries, the role of OECMs, FAO engagement in global processes and assistance to fishery managers in the implementation of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.
- 4) The CITES COP19 will be held in Panama in November 2022. CITES is increasingly being seen as a forum to influence fisheries policies and there are several proposals to list marine species in CITES Appendices especially sharks and rays. An FAO Expert Advisory Panel has produced assessment of these proposals.
- 5) The UNFCCC Climate COP27 will be held in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, in November 2022. The Nexus Fisheries and Climate is becoming a dominating one and several events are organized around the issue of fisheries in mitigation and adaptation, decarbonization, the role of MPAs and Nature-Based Solutions, and the impacts of bottom trawling.
- 6) The CBD COP15 will be held in December in Montréal, Canada. The Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework is expected to be adopted in this forum.
- 7) The International Marine Protected Area Congress will be held in Vancouver, Canada in



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

February 2023. This is a major conference on MPAs organized by IUCN which is held every 4 years.

The Chair thanked Despina for her presentation and highlighted the complexity and fast-paced development of the global environmental policies, which are indeed also influencing fisheries management.

ACTION: Secretariat to consider if a specific forum is needed for further follow-up of developments in global environmental policies

5. Update from Focus Groups (slides available [here](#))

Inter-AC Brexit Forum

Brouckaert explained that this Forum, established between PelAC, NWWAC, NSAC, MAC and LDAC, has had 4 meetings so far. DG MARE appreciates this initiative and has regularly participated in meetings. He recalled that, as explained during the HWG meeting in July, matters discussed in the Forum are to be treated confidentially. Recently, the Forum sent a letter on bringing fisheries matters through to Specialized Committee for Fisheries via existing advisory bodies (ACs), still awaiting response. The next meeting will be held on 15 September and chaired by the LDAC.

Landing Obligation

Brouckaert mentioned that the Focus Group (FG) met on 25 July and prepared the NWWAC advice Fishing Opportunities 2023 submitted on 25 August. The next meeting is scheduled for 23 September to work on the choke advice. A presentation on the update of the Choke Mitigation Tool by Michael Keatinge is also planned for that meeting. The Chair explained that, following decision of the Executive Committee in July, Keatinge has been contracted by the NWWAC to work on the update of the Choke Mitigation Tool.

Keatinge took the floor and shared the tool on screen. He explained that the idea is to update the tool so it reflects the post Brexit landscape and to make it more interactive. The tool will show where choke problems may occur and indicate solutions for mitigation (such as quota swaps and technical measures).

The datasets used include quotas and uptakes by MS for all species, catches by MS in UK zone and how UK shares will change in time. The STECF annual economic report dataset is also included to track vessels sizes, gear types and area combinations. Finally, information on catches from the Data Collection Framework is also taken into account.

Keatinge gave a practical demonstration of how the tool can be used and explained that not only will the tool identify the choke, but it will also tell how the choke can be solved. Discussion in the FG Landing Obligation will focus on what members would like to see implemented in the tool and



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

consider how the tool can be used in combination with the traffic light spreadsheet for this year's advice.

O' Donoghue enquired about the amount of work and time required to update the tool every year. Lynch asked how many species are covered.

Regarding the update of the tool, Keatinge replied that it is semi-automatic. For example, quota will have to be put in manually, but many of the datasets used update the tool automatically once linked.

He then confirmed that all NWW relevant species and areas are included. The tool will also analyse a combination of species with an integrated approach. Furthermore, the STECF data allows to break up the data by vessel size and gears.

Mathies recalled that in July the Executive Committee agreed to subcontract Keatinge to update the tool until the end of this year. More detailed discussions will be had to agree how to deal with updates. The FG LO will have to discuss what is desirable to achieve and if this can be implemented. Moreover, the FG will have to address how the bottom part of the tool will be populated and how to link and combine this tool with the traffic light spreadsheet.

Skates & Rays

Lynch stated that the work of this joint NWWAC/NSAC Focus Group has been positively noted by the Commission as it informed the EU-UK negotiations. The FG has been working on a draft joint request to the Commission on the harmonisation of skates and rays identification guides on an EU wide basis. This advice is awaiting approval by both Executive Committees before submission to the Commission. Moreover, he added that 5 members of the FG will join the STECF EWG 22-08 skates & rays scheduled for 26 – 30 September 2022 as observers. The FG will review STECF working documents prior to the EWG meeting to identify need for agreed positions. Finally, the outcomes of the EWG will help defining the Terms of Reference for a workshop to be held in person in the first months of 2023.

Climate & Environment

Pasquero reported that no meetings of this FG were held since the last HWG in July 2022. However, the FG is considering working on bottom trawling in VMEs, as the Commission is planning a public consultation on the matter. He asked for the HWG members' opinion on this proposal. Brouckaert replied that as long as this topic is included in the FG Terms of Reference there should be no opposition to Pasquero's proposal.

ACTION: The Focus Group Climate & Environment will start working on bottom trawling in VMEs in preparation to the Commission's public consultation.



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

Control & Compliance

O'Donoghue explained that, after discussions with the Secretariat, it appears clear that the existing FG has fulfilled its task as it mainly had to follow the revision of the Control Regulation. Therefore, the FG should be restarted with new Terms of Reference.

ACTION: The Focus Group will be restarted with new membership and Terms of Reference to be agreed.

Social Aspects

Mathies explained that this Focus Group has been established jointly with the NSAC. The last meeting was held on 5 September and advice is being developed. She also put forward a proposal that the NSAC takes the lead of this FG from the NWWAC. This will help to better balance the workload of the Secretariats, since the NWWAC is currently leading all joint FGs with the NSAC. The NSAC Secretariat has already been approached and agrees to the proposal.

ACTION: The NSAC will take over from the NWWAC on the leading of the joint FG on Social Aspects.

Underwater Noise & Offshore Wind Energy

This NWWAC/PelAC joint Advice Drafting Group is preparing advice following the virtual workshop on the impacts of seismic and offshore wind energy developments held on 10 May 2022. A first draft advice was sent on 23 June to the HWG for approval, but a large number of comments were received. Therefore, another meeting was held on 9 September to review and finalise the document. The final version should be ready for approval by the Executive Committee shortly.

Brown Crab

Norah Parke explained that this would be a joint Focus Group with NSAC and MAC. The NWWAC has developed draft Terms of Reference, which have been shared with MAC and NSAC. The purpose of this FG would be to provide an overview of previous work by NWWAC, NSAC and MAC on brown crab, as well as of outcomes from the ACRUNET project, to prepare advice on brown crab fisheries management and supply chain matters. In particular, the FG would review the impact of emerging environmental issues such as the possible threat to brown crab populations due to rising sea temperatures, invasive species, new infections. It will also consider the role of MPAs, which may limit fishing opportunities but also improve crab survival.

The FG will also review the role of EU (DG SANTE & TRADE) regarding brown crab and the route to market(s), identifying obstacles and solutions, to develop guidelines for industry regarding exports to Asian countries.

Parke added that the first FG meeting is expected to be organized in October 2022 and the possibility of holding an international workshop in December/January is also being considered, possibly in Brussels with support from the Commission. Final advice is planned for September 2023.



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

ACTION: Secretariat to progress on establishment of a Focus Group Crab with MAC and NSAC.

6. Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted by the Chair

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 Group 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.

7. Participants list

NWWAC members	
Juan Arias	FREMSS
Jose Beltran	OPP-7
Emiel Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Aodh Domhnaill	IFPO
Gerald Hussenot Desenonges	BLUE FISH
Manu Kelberine	CRPMEM de Bretagne
Franck Le Barzic	OP COBRENORD
Olivier Lepretre	CRPMEM Hauts-de-France
Suso Lourido Garcia	Puerto de Celeiro
John Lynch	ISEFPO
Luis Francisco Marin	O.P.P.A.O
Llibori Martinez Latorre	IFSUA
Geert Meun	VisNed
Patrick Murphy	ISWFPO



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

Sean O'Donoghue	KFO LTD
Mikel Ortiz	O.P.P.A.O
Norah Parke	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation
Jacopo Pasquero	EBCD
Alexandra Philippe	EBCD
Irene Prieto	ANASOL
Jean-Marie Robert	Pecheurs De Bretagne PO
Despina Symons	EBCD
Dominique Thomas	OP CME MMN
David Vertegaal	EAA
John Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Arthur Yon	FROM Nord
Experts and observers	
Anna Bobo Remijn	DG ENVI
Marta Del Avellanal	Ministerio de Agricultura Pesca y Alimentación
Juan Antonio Espejo Leña	Ministerio de Agricultura Pesca y Alimentación
Caroline Gamblin	MSC
Pauline Joyeux	FR Administration
Michael Keatinge	Independent consultant
Oisín O'Kelly	IE Administration
NWWAC Secretariat	
Mo Mathies	Executive Secretary
Matilde Vallerani	Deputy Executive Secretary