



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES  
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN  
WATERS  
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
LAS AGUAS  
NOROCCIDENTALES

## DRAFT MINUTES

### HORIZONTAL WORKING GROUP

Tuesday 04 July 2023 | Ghent & Zoom

#### 1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair Emiel Brouckaert welcomed all participants to the meeting. He thanked the Belgian administration for hosting the NWWAC in their premises and supporting the organisation of the meeting.

No apologies were received in advance of the meeting and the agenda was adopted as drafted.

**Action points from of the last meeting** (Santiago de Compostela 14 March 2023):

1	Add review of Porcupine Bk fisheries management to list of topics to follow-up with NWW MSG. <a href="#">Update presented in WG2 meeting yesterday by John Lynch</a>
2	Focus Group Landing Obligation to include an analysis of potential effect should the exemptions be lost. <a href="#">Addressed by FG LO during meeting 28/03, choke workshop</a>
3	Members to email queries in relation to Richard Cronin's presentation to the Secretariat for written follow up. <a href="#">Email sent to members requesting input sent 23/03, deadline 31/03, reply circulated on 06 April</a>
4	Topics raised by Richard Cronin to be addressed in relevant Focus Groups (Climate & Environment, potential new CFP package, potential new ORE/spatial squeeze) <a href="#">In progress</a>
5	Members to send questions for the Commission on the topic of protected areas to the Secretariat for written follow up. <a href="#">Email sent to members requesting input sent 23/03, deadline 31/03, nothing received</a>
6	Secretariat to follow up with Commission to send written response on process of EU involvement in UK MPA consultations <a href="#">25 May: "No discussions on MPA designation have been had in the SCF of late, nor are they planned for the coming months. So at least for the time being, members should continue engaging with their relevant authorities."</a> <a href="#">Addressed in Inter-AC Brexit Forum meeting 30 June</a>
7	Secretariat to follow up with Henn Ojaveer to send information on scientific data query to Secretariat. <a href="#">Response circulated and published on website</a>
8	Members to submit questions on Celtic Sea overview to Secretariat for written follow up. <a href="#">Email sent to members requesting input sent 23/03, deadline 31/03, Response circulated and published on website</a>
9	Secretariat to put forward Ecosystem Overview topic for next MIAC/MIACO meeting

	<a href="#">In progress</a>
10	Secretariat to contact the Pelagic AC regarding the proposed new joint Focus Group to identify focus.
	<a href="#">Meeting 27/03, discussion end of April, drafting of ToR circulated for approval</a>
11	Secretariat to contact other AC Secretariats regarding joint work on CFP package.
	<a href="#">Email sent 22/03, no concrete suggestions made</a>

## 2. ICES Advisory Process – Joanne Morgan, ICES ACOM Vice-Chair

The presentation can be found [here](#).

The Chair welcomed Joanne Morgan who is one of the ACOM Vice-Chairs overseeing advisory processes focusing on fishing opportunities advice.

Morgan explained that the ICES advisory process is guided by 10 principles, from the request to the release of advice, to ensure that the process is open, unbiased and uses the best peer review available. The basis of advice has changed with the development of the new category 3 data limited methods which have been developed in order to provide MSY advice. If there is a management plan from the requesters, ICES will provide advice on the basis of that plan if it was agreed by management bodies and ICES, and if it is aligned with the precautionary approach. If no management plan is available, the advice is based on ICES MSY approach. The categories of the assessment depend on the data available. Morgan stated that the F ranges in the MAPS are consistent with the ranges provided by ICES in 2015 so as to be sustainable. She pointed out that conservation status advice is added to some advice sheets recognising that some stocks are more affected by other anthropogenic pressures than fishing.

### List of acronyms

DLS	data limited stocks
CHR	constant harvest rate
Rfb	Equation: r = biomass ratio (survey trend), f = fishing proxy (length data, target), b = biomass safeguard
CAA	catch at age
SAA	survey at age
SR	Stock recruit
B	biomass
BMSY	biomass at maximum sustainable yield
XSA	Extended survivor analysis
SAM	Stock assessment model
SCAA	statistical catch at age

SS	stock synthesis
SSB	spawning stock biomass
Blim	Limit reference point for spawning stock biomass (SSB)
Btrigger	Value of spawning stock biomass (SSB) that triggers a specific management action
F	Instantaneous Rate of Fishing Mortality

- Guide to ICES advisory framework and principles ([link](#))
- List of ICES acronyms and terminology ([link](#))
- ICES fisheries management reference points for category 1 and 2 stocks ([link](#))
- ICES technical guidance for harvest control rules and stock assessments for stocks in categories 2 and 3 ([link](#))
- ICES reference points for stocks in categories 3 and 4 ([link](#))

Links to all ICES technical guidelines can be found [here](#).

Upcoming workshops:

- [Survivability roadmap](#) – include discard survival
  - Plaice 7d; 7e; 7fg
  - Sole 7d
- 10 – 12 October 2023: WKAFPA -workshop on accounting for fishers and other stakeholders' perceptions of the dynamics of fish stocks in ICES advice ([link](#))
- 06 – 11 November 2023: WKREBUILD2 – develop framework and evaluation guidelines for rebuilding plans ([link](#))
- WKNEWREF – estimate reference points suggested by WKREF2 and identify strengths and weaknesses<sup>1</sup>
- WKSTIMP – implementation of stakeholder engagement strategy (met in May 2023, [link](#))

**Commented [MM1]:** Request for info sent to ICES 15/08

The Chair thanked Morgan for her presentations and stated that the information from this presentation and the following discussion will be included in the drafting of the Fishing Opportunities advice by the FG Landing Obligation FG on 13 July.

Patrick Murphy asked about the process error and referred to the retrospective bias wondering if the precautionary approach when applied to past assessments could be one of the potential reasons for retrospectives. He felt that the inclusion of conservation measures was very interesting, especially regarding the seabed and the spawning grounds stating that the precautionary approach should also be applied especially in reference to ORE developments. Finally, he asked if pollution coming from land is also considered in these conservation measures.

<sup>1</sup> Scheduled for February 2024 ([link](#))

Morgan explained that the revision downwards is mostly in Cat 5 and 6 stocks where data is only available for landings. If the stock index goes up for Cat 3 stocks, then the advice will go up as well. The precautionary approach is the reason why this is going down because no information is available for Cat 5 and 6, meaning the amount of removals has to be reduced. The planned [WKLIFE](#) meeting in October on data limited stocks will be looking at advice for Cat 4, 5, and 6 stocks, with a view to developing a different approach that is hopefully better than decreasing all the time. She added that cables and pollution would be included under conservation status, and that other aspects should be included if the relevant information is available.

Sean O'Donoghue referred to the suggestion made in the previous day's WG meetings reiterating that his comment on conservation measures would be picked up in the recommendations on Fishing Opportunities to be developed by the FG Landing Obligation. He commented on his concerns regarding the models, specifically that some of these are written in R. He felt that while it is an efficient procedure, it is difficult to find errors in the programming language as there are very few experts on R. This raises concerns regarding quality assurance, and he asked if ICES is going to address this. He added that at this year's MIACO meeting in January, ICES presented its methodology regarding benchmarks and was wondering if ICES had adopted this approach and how it is going to operate in practice.

Morgan felt that R is a very good programming language used by a large group of users in the world, so that feedback and problem solving is easy. She felt that the issue related more to the number of people familiar with some of the more complex models that are being introduced. However, ICES models have been tested very rigorously and advice cannot be produced with a model that has not been tested. She added that the new benchmark procedure has been adopted.

O'Donoghue asked if the outcome of ACOM in terms of this new benchmark arrangement could be made available to members and was wondering who decides what requires a benchmark.

Morgan stated that the ADG and ACOM decide whether a benchmark can be carried out or not. The outcome of the ACOM decision would be included in the report from the ACOM meeting in March.

ICES Benchmark Procedure 2023 ([link](#))

Summary of key changes to benchmark procedure:

- Same benchmark process for all types of advice
- More flexibility and responsibility to Expert Groups (Expert group and review processes)
- No more Inter-benchmarks
- The documentation requirement is stronger and this means that timings may also change – process and documentation completed in enough time for approval even if this means not ready for next EG meeting
- Emphasis on preparedness – benchmark workshop is place to review and improve not the place to do the work



- There is an annex with diagnostics to help assess if models are appropriate – a ToR added to methods working group

### 3. EU Nature Restoration Law – Alice Belin DG ENV

The presentation can be found [here](#).

The Chair welcomed Alice Belin, DG ENV policy officer and Chair of the European Technical Group on seabed habitats and seafloor integrity (TG Seabed) and thanked her for joining the members in person to provide insight into the Nature Restoration Law as well as an update on the MSFD under the following agenda point.

Belin recalled that on 20 June the Council reached an agreement on a proposal for a Nature Restoration Law. The proposal aims to put in place recovery measures that will cover at least 20% of the EU's land and 20% sea areas by 2030, and all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050. It sets specific legally binding targets and obligations for nature restoration in each of the listed ecosystems - from agricultural land and forest to marine, freshwater and urban ecosystems. She added that this legislation is key under the Green Deal, recognising that the climate and biodiversity crisis are interlinked. A more resilient nature needs to be created to face impacts from climate change. A lot of previously set targets for protection were voluntary, so the protection of certain habitats needed to be strengthened. The concept of restoration contributes to accelerating the process with the Nature Restoration Law filling the gap between existing regulatory framework and promote the restoration of carbon rich ecosystems.

The Nature Restoration Law is proposed as a regulation meaning it applies directly which provides for more consistency and coherence in the EU and addressed the urgency. It is developed in such a way that leaves a lot of flexibility for Member States to achieve their targets.

Considering the state of EU seas, a substantial marine area needs to be restored with specific habitats having different restoration potential and requiring different measures. Member States are asked to demonstrate efforts towards improvement rather than deadlines for specific conditions by a certain date. Proof is needed to show improvement towards a good condition and measures taken by the Member States.

Huge data gaps still exist in terms of habitat presence and their status. This law should create conditions for Member States to have better knowledge on this. Quantification of areas to be restored will be very important in the national plans. Monitoring progress is also important, continuous improvement of habitat types towards good conditions.

There are strong links with existing policy targets which are meant to strengthen each another. This law has elements of obliging Member States to put in place concrete measures to reach these goals.



Murphy referred to the 90% by 2050 target and felt that this was very difficult to achieve due to complex challenges ahead with climate change. He was wondering if actual individual impacts on local coastal realities had been taken into account and commented that this seemed like another law on top of many existing ones. Maybe the focus should be more on implementing what is already there.

Belin responded that when looking at the targets for 2050, they seem feasible for groups 1 to 6. She felt that the targets for Group 7 could be quite challenging as for some Member States these habitats cover their entire marine area. For that reason, alignment of the targets with the MSFD threshold values for good environmental was sought in the negotiations with the Council. She was unsure about local assessment and offered to respond in writing.

Alexandra Philippe queried why the existing framework had not been amended instead of introducing a new regulation as there seemed to be little extra value specifically when looking at the MSFD. Though the Nature Restoration Law is a Regulation and does not include deadlines for the achievement of a certain state of the ecosystems and focuses on progress, Member States are still obliged to build plans similarly to implementing a directive. She also wondered what the difference would be between restoration and protection measures, MPAs for example.

Belin explained that there is no equivalent on land for MSFD and that there have been continual issues with the implementation of the Habitats Directive in the marine environment. The Nature Restoration Law is complementary to the Habitats and Birds Directives, as well as to the MSFD, and incentivises Member States to take measures by certain deadlines. It focuses on progress whereas the MSFD's objective is about achieving good environmental status, which can take decades to achieve in certain cases. She stated that passive restoration will be the norm in marine habitats, but active restoration could also take place, such as reforming of reefs or replanting habitats and recolonising with different species.

Jean-Marie Robert felt that consistency is key when implementing the various initiatives and legislative requirements and that more support was needed here. He referred to the Montreal agreements and queried where the consistency was with the Nature Restoration Law. He commented that the EU still has marine habitats that remain pristine and untouched which should be taken into account but seem to have been overlooked. He felt it was important to understand what the current proportion of these untouched habitats is.

On the connection between different existing legal frameworks, Belin mentioned that the coherence between environmental objectives and Maritime Spatial Planning is important to map out where ecosystems to be restored are located, what their status is and understand where human activities susceptible of impacting these ecosystems and their restoration are taking place. Regarding the Nature Restoration Law, targets are for those habitats that are not in a good condition and need to be restored. If habitats are in good conditions, then no measures are needed. She felt that the EU is already in alignment with the Montreal Agreement through its commitment to protect 30% of the EU's marine area in the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.



**ACTION:** Alice Belin to forward to the Secretariat information regarding impact assessments as part of the development of the Nature Restoration Law

#### 4. MSFD – the work of TG Seabed – Alice Belin, DG ENV

The presentation can be found [here](#).

Belin stated that TG Seabed is a Technical Sub Group within the EU’s Marine Strategic Coordination Group which supports the implementation of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive. The NWWAC has recently started following the work of the MSCG and has requested to become an official observer to both TG Seabed and the MSCG.

The recommendations for threshold values for the good environmental status of the seabed, according to Descriptor 6 of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, were developed and agreed in TG Seabed and were adopted by the Marine Strategy Framework Directive on 03 of March 2023.

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive defines good environmental status for seafloor integrity as being ‘at a level that ensures that the structure and functions of the ecosystems are safeguarded and benthic ecosystems, in particular, are not adversely affected’ (Descriptor 6 of Annex 1 of the MSFD). Threshold values should be set through an EU process, taking into account regional and subregional specificities, for two criteria: D6C4 (habitat loss) and D6C5 (adverse effects on habitats).

In relation to D6C4, loss is defined as a permanent change to the seabed substrate, where change is considered permanent if reversal is only possible by active human intervention, or if natural recovery rates exceed 12 years.

Based on their expert judgement, TG Seabed recommends a maximum allowable extent of 2% of loss of each benthic broad habitat type to achieve GES. The extent of habitat loss should be set in relation to the natural extent of the habitat. In order to help Member States make this assessment, in the absence of clear data on natural extent of habitat types before the pre-industrial era, TG Seabed has agreed on a baseline for the assessment: “The total extent of habitat loss should be determined by taking into account the documented changes to the habitat type as far back as possible and at least since 1992.”

In relation to D6C5, anthropogenic pressures can affect seabed habitats in different ways:

- Chemical pressures (e.g. from hazardous substances)
- Nutrient enrichment
- Physical pressures

Avoiding adverse effects on seabed habitats is equivalent to achieving ‘good quality’ or ‘good condition’ of seabed habitats. Achieving ‘good’ quality/condition of seabed habitats means safeguarding benthic community structure and function.



Currently, no single indicator – and associated threshold value – can capture all the elements needed to assess ‘quality’ or ‘level of adverse effects’ under D6C5, therefore, TG Seabed has adopted a qualitative threshold to determine when a seabed habitat is under adverse effect. This threshold is accompanied by a detailed qualitative description of the characteristics of seabed habitats in different states (reference, good, not good).

The previous recommendation determines when a seabed habitat can be considered to be under adverse effects at a specific location. This next recommendation complements this by determining over which extent of a seabed habitat can such adverse effects take place to be in GES.

In light of the ecological context described before, the threshold for maximum allowable extent of adverse effects must combine the need to ensure the prevention of biodiversity loss, and the conservation of biodiversity and full functioning of healthy marine ecosystems with the need to allow for the sustainable use of marine resources by present and future generations.

A number of elements have informed the decision on the extent threshold value for D6C5:

- The precautionary principle, as required by Article 4 of the Commission Decision
- Existing legislation, in particular the Habitats Directive
- Scientific analyses showing that an ecosystem can support areas in ‘poor’ status (i.e. adversely impacted) if it also has large areas in ‘good’ or ‘high’ status.
- Socio-economic analyses showing the trade-off between the protection and restoration needed of seabed habitat types and the extent to which certain human activities that are known to cause adverse effects on the seabed, in particular mobile bottom fishing, take place on the EU seabed.

TG Seabed acknowledges that there is, at present, a lack of targeted scientific advice on the acceptable extent of adverse effects on broad habitat types to be in good environmental status, in particular linked to a specific quality level. The group has decided to put forward a recommendation based on their expert judgment and building on the implementation of the Habitats Directive (Directive 92/43/EEC). The recommendation therefore is: “The maximum proportion of a benthic broad habitat type in an assessment area that can be adversely affected is 25% of its natural extent ( $\leq 25\%$ ). This includes the proportion of the benthic broad habitat type that has been lost (D6C5).”

These threshold values are understood to be based on an obligation of effort, rather than results.

The Chair thanked Belin for her presentation and suggested that the NWWAC view could be forward once observer status in TG Seabed was confirmed.

Belin stated that the group meets 4-5 times per year with observers able to intervene on the technical, scientific as well as socio-economic aspects discussed. The next meeting is scheduled for 12-13 October and will address the issue of good condition and what it means for the seabed. She expressed her confidence that the NWWAC would have received observer status by then.





O'Donoghue lamented the fact that Commission presentation do not include OECMs in terms of MPAs and asked if there was a reason for this. He emphasised that the EU is party to UN biodiversity agreement but that this is never included in any presentations by the Commission.

Belin first recalled that the MSFD seabed threshold values are meant to cover the whole of the EU's seabed, and not only ecosystems protected in MPAs or OECMs, therefore there is no particular reason for MPAs/OECMs to feature in her presentation. Belin however also mentioned that the guidelines of the Biodiversity Strategy implementation are clear that OECMs are accounted for in the 30% target by 2030.

The Chair suggested that further discussion and preparation of advice could be looked at in the FG Climate & Environment.

The Secretariat added that discussions are ongoing with the NSAC regarding revisiting the FG MSFD.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to follow up on MSFD/indicator aspects in FG Climate & Environment and review work with NSAC regarding MSFD follow-up

**ACTION:** Secretariat to identify who will attend MSCG and TG Seabed as NWWAC representative

## 5. Evaluation of seafloor impact in the Belgian bottom trawl fishery - Hans Polet, ILVO

The presentation can be found [here](#).

The Chair welcomed Hans Polet who is the Scientific director of the research domain Fisheries and Aquatic Production in ILVO.

Polet stated that the estimation of seafloor impact is not simple, and that there are a lot of indicators to estimate benthic impact and state. He commented that none of the approaches is wrong, and that they all have their advantages and disadvantages using specific characteristics of the benthic community: abundance/biomass, diversity (n of species), species composition or amount of sensitive species or tolerant species. He identified two major types of indicators:

- Benthic state (quality)
- Risk of decreasing benthic state

The aim of ILVO's work is to find an appropriate approach to evaluate and manage seabed impact for Belgian bottom fisheries. He identified 4 families of indicators for describing benthic state which can be used for correlation. However, it is important to clearly identify what each indicator means. In addition, he presented information on multiple indicator approaches to estimate risk of disturbance, including the OSPAR approach (BH3), the ICES WGFBIT approach and a new indicator for "Visserij verduurzaamt".



In the Belgian Fisheries Improvement Programme, the OSPAR indicator is used to actually improve the sustainability of the fleet in terms of seafloor disturbance. A lot of information is needed for this assessment, including fishing effort, gear dimensions and gear type, seafloor habitat characteristics etc., as well as information regarding the disturbance level. From this, a map is produced showing the pressure of the Belgian fishing fleet in this case for 2 years indicating the sensitivity of all these different habitats.

Some of the results have been surprising, for example that the impact from beam trawling on habitats is only low to medium despite this fishing method having such a bad reputation. Full results of this study will be available at the end of 2025.

ILVO is fortunate to have an excellent relationship with the Belgian fleet so that confidential data from the vessel is made available for this research including towing force, fuel consumption etc. In return, we are able to advise the fleet on how to improve its sustainability. This study currently relies on data collected from one vessel only, and it will take some time to collect data from all the vessels.

It is important to bear in mind that in order to make recommendation, data needs to be available at high resolution, and while current indicators are based on best available knowledge, this may not be good enough.

The Chair thanked Polet for the presentation and commented that the Belgian fisheries made a commitment and that by following ILVO's recommendations are aiming to have their increased sustainability recognised.

Murphy asked if the study had evaluated the transects of vessels further back in time than just five years. He also referred to the fact that in mixed fisheries various species are being caught together, and if a vessel was to be moved on from what is considered a sensitive area with many fish to an area with less fish, this would increase the fishing pressure on said new area in order for the vessel to catch his share. This could increase time at sea, fuel consumption and likely impact on the seafloor in the new area for example, and it would be important to evaluate these consequences in the ILVO model as well.

Polet explained that while ILVO has some historical data, this is not very detailed, so only indications may be possible. Regarding displacement he felt that while fleets and vessels certainly have traditional fishing grounds, productivity can change over the years, an example would be the Dogger Bank. With the effects of climate change, this may become more variable and fixed fishing grounds might not be the solution for fisheries profitability.

John Lynch asked when during this work the vessel was requested to move away from a sensitive area, did that make a change to their earning capacity and their effort in time spent at sea.

Polet responded that in this case the vessel had an option to move away voluntarily which would be a best-case scenario.

Franck Le Barzic asked if hydrodynamics were considered in the study.



Polet commented that natural disturbance of the seabed is taken into account in the method and is very important as shallow areas, which are naturally more exposed to wave action and impacts from storms tend to be less sensitive than deep areas.

Philippe referred to the drafting of advice by this AC on the marine action plan and identified bottom trawling as a big topic within this. She asked if the AC could incorporate the results from this study into the advice.

This request was supported by Manu Kelberine.

Polet agreed that this was possible.

**ACTION:** FG CFP to refer to Hans Polet's presentation in advice on Action Plan

## 6. Focus Groups update

All information is included in the HWG presentation [here](#).

**ACTION:** Proposal to the Executive Committee to approve the Terms of Reference for the joint NWWAC/PelAC Focus Group Spatial Dimension

## 7. Follow up on NWWAC work on control – Discussion led by Patrick Murphy, HWG Vice-Chair

It had been planned to continue the dialogue with EFCA representatives following from its presentation at the NWWAC meeting in Santiago de Compostela in March. Unfortunately, EFCA were unavailable to join this time. Therefore, the HWG Vice-Chair Patrick Murphy initiated a discussion on the questions the NWWAC had hoped to put forward to EFCA and to identify the best way to take this work forward.

The Secretariat explained that following EFCA's cancellation, participation was invited to the September meetings. However, EFCA are unavailable on 26 September and could not provide definitive confirmation of participation for 13 September.

O'Donoghue expressed his disappointment at EFCA's unavailability. He commented that at the previous day's MAC meeting, EFCA informed participants that their tender proposal on evaluating control plans and procedures in all MS had been successful and that a test study has been initiated. He suggested that a full update on this work should be included in the next bilateral meeting stating that in this context the NWWAC should be consulted. The study is to be completed by beginning of 2024.

Murphy commented that the application of different technical measures and catch compositions and whether these are applied when the boats reach the pier or out on the water could not be clarified by



the Commission. He felt it was important to have full clarification on this from those who are meant to enforce the regulations.

The Chair wondered if this was part of the national control authorities' competency.

Murphy responded that the national authorities liaise with EFCA on this but that currently the level playing field seems to be lacking regarding the application of the rules. As part of their governance rules, EFCA are required to establish this across all MS in the application of the regulations.

Brendan O'Beirne supported O'Donoghue's statement and reiterated the importance of having a bilateral meeting with EFCA following what seemed to have been a positive start at the meeting in Santiago de Compostela.

The Secretariat informed participants that in their communication with EFCA a miscommunication seems to have arisen where EFCA feel that all questions were addressed at the March meeting already.

Irene Prieto stated that ANASOL have also experienced issues with EFCA inspectors in relation mesh size, with EFCA stating that this falls into the remit of the MS but the MS stating the opposite. She agreed that the AC could consider going to Vigo for possibly its July 2024 meetings stating that ARVI would welcome hosting the AC in their facilities and adding that this might incentivise EFCA participation.

Philippe stated that at the last EFCA advisory board meeting the issue of improved liaison between EFCA and stakeholders had been addressed which might present an opportunity for communication.

Aodh O'Donnell agreed with Prieto's intervention regarding the lack of clarity in the application of control procedures and suggested the AC should consider arranging an in person meeting in Vigo before October

Murphy stated that if the NWWAC was experiencing budget constraints, those who wished to participate in such a meeting could cover their own cost.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to draft a letter to EFCA conveying the AC's disappointment regarding lack of EFCA availability for meetings, about involvement in weighing procedure study and to progress organisation of workshop

**ACTION:** Following response to invitation for October workshop, follow up regarding in person meeting with delegation from the FG Control

## 8. CIBBRiNA update – Lotte Kindt-Larsen, DTU Aqua

The presentation can be found [here](#).



The Chair welcomed Lotte Kindt-Larssen who proceeded to provide an update on the current state of play of the CiBBRiNA project. Its proposal was developed in 2021, and in September of that year NWWAC members agreed to join the project in an advisory role. Unfortunately, in 2022 the LIFE office turned down the application following which the team revised and resubmitted the proposal. This proposal received the stage of Grant Agreement preparation in March of this year.

The aim of the project from the beginning was to work together with fishers, authorities and other relevant stakeholders to minimize, and, where possible, eliminate incidental bycatch of priority Endangered, Threatened and Protected (ETP) marine species. This will be done by optimising, developing and evaluating proven and promising mitigation methods as well as support tools and processes, such as monitoring and assessment, and working to ensure their long-term implementation. The project has a multi species level scope with a focus on high-risk fisheries in the North East Atlantic, Baltic and Mediterranean. Following the rejection of the first proposal, a modified proposal was resubmitted in October 2022.

#### Main changes:

- Main focus on mitigation of bycatch
  - Promising/proven methods
  - Less on general bycatch monitoring/assessment or species behaviour
- Separate WP for case studies
  - Case studies bundled by gear-type
  - Most Work Packages relate to the case studies
  - Case studies focus on high priority species
- Reduction in overall budget (24M -> 12.5M)

#### Consortium:

- 35 beneficiary partners / 10 Associated partners
- Partnerships fisheries/ govt/ science/ NGO's from:
  - BE, DE, DK, ES, FR, IS, IR, NL, NO, POL, POR, SW, UK
- ICES, IWC
- Stakeholder Advisory Board: 26 organisations
- Among which 5 AC's, OSPAR, HELCOM, ASCOBANS, EAPO, EFCA, Low Impact Fishers of Europe (LIFE), NOAA, several NGO's/ one government

This modified proposal was approved in March 2023, and the grant agreement is now in preparation. A kick-off meeting with participating organisations is planned for October 2023.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to follow up with CIBBRiNA organisers on kick off meeting and placement of work within the NWWAC work programme



## 9. CABFishMan update – Arantza Murillas, AZTI

CABFishMan is an international project aimed at improving the protection of the marine environment and marine resources in the Northeast Atlantic. Work over eight areas of activity was carried out since 2019 and presented at the final symposium in March 2023.

The Chair welcomed back Arantza Murillas from AZTI who presented on the work of this project last year, who will now provide insight into the project's analytical tool which was developed to assist with the calculation of fishing effort in the Northeast Atlantic.

Murillas presented the online geo tool and its practical application developed by the project on the screen ([link](#)). In addition, a power point presentation is prepared to share the website link and other links to the methodologies that have been used to produce the data available at the geotool. These methods are available online for all interested users who want to replicate the process by producing the same information for other fleets and/or marine areas. AZTI can help final interested users to find, apply and in general, use these online methods.

The project focuses on the Atlantic components related to the small-scale fisheries (SSF) activity (ES, PT, IE, UK, FR). Information can be downloaded as well as the map and raw data. Variables that can be applied include:

- Fisheries: Fishing, e.g., landings or effort, gears, species, length of vessels and more (online tool available)
- Environment: Conservation measures including Natura 2000 sites, governance issues, carbon footprint – different indicators
- Perception of SSF impacts: coastal habitats, sea bottom, environment, biodiversity and use of marine space (online tool available)
- Blue indicators: financial and social indicators to understand the socio-economic dimension of SSF activity
- Ecosystem services (ES): food provisioning ES, regulating ES and also, cultural ES (online tool available)
- Case studies, for which high spatial resolution data is used as examples across the Atlantic Area.

This information is available in several languages (the language is detected automatically). Additionally, collaborative tools are available to work in real time with the geotool at different locations.

The Chair thanked Murillas for providing this detailed insight into the workings of the geo tool.

**ACTION:** Secretariat to contact Arantza Murillas with any questions following the HWG

## 10. AOB

No additional items were raised.

## 11. Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted by the Chair

- 1 FG Landing Obligation to include conservation measures topic and others identified in discussion in advice on Fishing Opportunities
- 2 Secretariat to send any questions arising from discussions to Joanne Morgan following the HWG meeting
- 3 Secretariat to contact ICES regarding the update to benchmark procedures as agreed in ACOM
- 4 Alice Belin to forward to the Secretariat information regarding impact assessments as part of the development of the Nature Restoration Law
- 5 AC to address absence of OECMs, SPAs, MPAs and other management measures in the Commissions presentations on the NRL
- 6 Identify FG to pick up this topic for potential development of advice on the NRL
- 7 Secretariat to follow up on MSFD/indicator aspects in FG Climate & Environment and review work with NSAC regarding MSFD follow-up
- 8 Secretariat to identify who will attend MSCG and TG Seabed as NWWAC representative
- 9 FG CFP to refer to Hans Polet's presentation in advice on Action Plan
- 10 Proposal to the Executive Committee to approve the Terms of Reference for the joint NWWAC/PelAC Focus Group Spatial Dimension
- 11 Secretariat to draft a letter to EFCA conveying the AC's disappointment regarding lack of EFCA availability for meetings, about involvement in weighing procedure study and to progress organisation of workshop
- 12 Following response to invitation for October workshop, follow up regarding in person meeting with delegation from the FG Control
- 13 Secretariat to follow up with CIBBRINA organisers on kick off meeting and placement of work within the NWWAC work programme
- 14 Secretariat to circulate the CABFishMan presentation once received
- 15 Secretariat to contact Arantza Murillas with any questions following the HWG meeting



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR  
**LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES**  
 SEPTENTRIONALES

**NORTH WESTERN**  
**WATERS**  
 ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA  
**LAS AGUAS**  
 NOROCCIDENTALES

## Participants

<b>NWWAC members</b>	
José Beltran	OPP-7 Burela
Emiel Brouckaert (Chair)	Rederscentrale
Kenatea Chavez-Hey	ANOP
Manu Kelberine	CRPM de Bretagne
Franck Le Barzick	OP COBRENORD
Suso Lourido Garcia	Puerto de Celeiro
John Lynch	IS&EFPO
Anaïs Mourtada	CNPMEM
Patrick Murphy	IS&WFPO
Brendan Byrne	AIPCE
Aodh O'Donnell	IFPO
Sean O'Donoghue	KFO
Norah Parke	KFO
Alexandra Philippe	EBCD
Corentine Piton	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
Irene Prieto	ANASOL
Erwan Quemeneur	CDPMEM29
Jean-Marie Robert	Pecheurs de Bretagne
Dominique Thomas	OP CME MMN
Johnny Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Arthur Yon	FROM Nord
<b>Experts &amp; Observers</b>	
Alice Belin	DG ENV
Jochen Depestele	ILVO
Paulien Depickere	Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
Micheal Keatinge	Seaview Marine Economic Consultancy
Lotte Kindt-Larsen	DTU Aqua
Marie Lecomte	MSC France
Joanne Morgan	ICES
Arantza Murillas	AZTI
Hans Polet	ILVO
Dirk van Guyze	Departement LV ABCO dienst zeevisserij
<b>NWWAC Secretariat</b>	
Mo Mathies	Executive Secretary
Matilde Vallerani	Deputy Executive Secretary