



+DRAFT MINUTES

HORIZONTAL WORKING GROUP

Zoom

Tuesday 26 September 2023

1. Welcome and introductions

The Chair Emiel Brouckaert welcomed all participants to the meeting. Apologies were received in advance from Aodh O'Donnell (IFPO). The agenda item proposing presentation on the recently released paper "Evaluating the sustainability and environmental impacts of bottom trawling compared to other food production systems" had to be cancelled due to speakers' unavailability.

Action points from the last meeting in July 2023 included:

1	FG Landing Obligation to include conservation measures topic and others identified in discussion in advice on Fishing Opportunities Advice on fishing opportunities submitted on 9 August with such comments included in the text
2	Secretariat to send any questions arising from discussions to Joanne Morgan following the HWG meeting No further questions received from members
3	Secretariat to contact ICES regarding the update to benchmark procedures as agreed in ACOM ICES response included in the minutes from the July HWG meeting
4	Alice Belin to forward to the Secretariat information regarding impact assessments as part of the development of the Nature Restoration Law Belin's response was circulated on 10 July
5	AC to address absence of OECMs in the Commissions presentations on the Nature Restoration Law Included in advice on Action Plan submitted on 31 August
6	Identify FG to pick up this topic for potential development of advice on the Nature Restoration Law To be included in the work of the newly established Joint NWWAC-PelAC Focus Group on Spatial Dimension
7	Follow up on MSFD/indicator aspects in FG Climate & Environment and review work with NSAC regarding MSFD follow-up Contact was made with the NSAC Secretariat with a meeting to be organised after the summer.
8	Identify who will attend MSCG and TG Seabed as NWWAC representative



	The Secretariat and EBCD representatives
9	FG CFP to refer to Hans Polet's presentation in advice on Action Plan
	Included in advice on Action Plan submitted on 31 August
10	Proposal to the Executive Committee to approve the Terms of Reference for the joint NWWAC/PelAC Focus Group Spatial Dimension
	Approved at ExCom meeting on 05 July 2023
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
	Submitted on 31 July, reply received 03 August.
12	Following response to invitation for October workshop, follow up regarding in person meeting with delegation from the FG Control
	Tentative date for meeting in November. The possibility to have an in-person meeting is also being considered.
13	Secretariat to follow up with CIBBRiNA organisers on kick off meeting and placement of work within the NWWAC work programme
	Matilde Vallerani attended the kick-off meeting 06-08 September. A report will be made available soon. The CIBBRiNA work would fall under the remit of the Horizontal Working Group, under the theme "Environmental aspects relating to fisheries in the NWW" as identified by the NWWAC Work Programme.
14	Secretariat to circulate the CABfishMAN presentation once received
	The presentation is available online. Arantza Murillas will circulate an overview of all documents, videos and tools by the end of September which the Secretariat will circulate to members.
15	Secretariat to contact Arantza Murillas with any questions following the HWG meeting
	No further questions were received from members.

2. Irish Sea Ecological Sensitivity Analysis – Tasman Crowe, UCD Earth Institute

Slides are available [here](#).

The Chair welcomed Professor Tasman Crowe from the Earth Institute of University College Dublin. Professor Crowe chaired the Marine Protected Area Advisory Group and represents the project team which carried out the ecological sensitivity analysis in the Irish Sea between December 2022 and April 2023 on behalf of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Ireland. The project was undertaken to assist the Irish Government in its ongoing MPA legislative process, and in order to safeguard areas of environmental sensitivity to the potential effects of ORE development in the near term.



Crowe thanked the NWWAC for the invitation to this meeting and mentioned the recording of a webinar available on YouTube where a longer, more detailed version of his presentation is available¹.

Crowe started his presentation by giving an overview of the context where the project was developed. The main objectives of the projects were:

- Comprehensive scientific screening exercise for possible future MPAs in a defined marine region off the east and south-east of Ireland.
- Open and constructive engagement with key Government and non-Government stakeholders that have extensive maritime interests in the Irish Sea
- Facilitate possible future identification by the Government of viable “go-to-areas” for offshore energy projects in the Irish Sea, in view of any biodiversity/ environmental/ cultural constraints that are concluded via the project.

Crowe clarified that this was not a process of MPA selection. It would inform MPA selection that will be undertaken under the new legislation, properly applying the processes that will be established in law. Species or habitats already listed in the EU Birds and Habitats Directives or individually managed under the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) were not included in the defined scope of the project, since legal provisions for their conservation and sustainability are already in place. Stakeholder engagement was a key element of the project, to inform the process and enable information exchange.

40 biological and environmental features were identified that could be recommended for spatial protection in the western Irish Sea under the forthcoming MPA legislation, based on criteria aligned with international approaches and the provisions of the General Scheme of the MPA Bill.

Data was analysed to assess the sensitivity of each feature to the sectoral activities most relevant to the project objectives, i.e., fishing, ORE and shipping. Available evidence was used to categorise resistance and resilience for each feature to each pressure, which then led to a conservation prioritisation analysis carried out to identify areas of high and low priority for protection, considering current and proposed future sectoral activities. The model applied for this analysis used distribution data to model possible configurations of MPAs to meet network criteria and could focus just on ecological considerations or include consideration of sectoral interests and/or take account of sensitivity.

Crowe pointed out that a main challenge for the analysis in this study was the limited availability of data for the selected features.

Key outcomes of the project:

¹ The full webinar is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8BX0KskNHY> and the full report and Appendices are available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e00ec-marine-protected-areas/>



- Suitable areas have been identified from within which an effective network of MPAs could be selected for the species, habitats and other features included in these analyses.
- Note that the full extent of these suitable areas would not be required for an effective network of MPAs in the western Irish Sea, and that not all activities would need to be restricted within them.
- In identifying these suitable areas, the extent of overlap is limited with areas proposed for Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) development and areas that are of importance for existing fishing effort.
- Further work under the forthcoming MPA legislation will enable potential MPA network solutions to be refined on the basis of national policy, analyses involving new additional evidence and the participation and input of stakeholders.
- It is envisaged that sectoral overlaps would be further reduced during this process, while establishing a coherent effective network for the conservation of the selected species, habitats and other features.

Sean O'Donoghue commented that the KFO and ISEFPO submitted a document after the release of the report expressing serious concerns regarding the limitations and misuse of the report. He pointed out that the report was not intended to be the basis for MPA and ORE designations, despite being used as such. He also noted that stakeholders were not consulted on the data used in the report and were only made aware of the outcomes after the report was produced. He emphasised that while the report could serve as a starting point, it was not sufficient for determining MPA, ORE or other protected site designations. O'Donoghue will circulate the KFO & ISEFPO document to the Secretariat for the HWG to be aware.

Llibori Martinez asked for clarification if recreative activities were integrated in the methodology.

Patrick Murphy agreed with O'Donoghue. Engagement of primary stakeholders who have been using these areas for generations should be a key element in the process.

John Lynch raised concerns about the selection process for protected marine areas, noting that fisheries data was the main source for analysis and that nursery grounds for fish species were not protected. He also expressed concern about the potential for fisheries to be driven into these areas, instead of targeting marketable species.

Johnny Woodlock supported the comments of the Irish sector representatives.

Crowe recognised some of the limitations in the report and explained that it was not intended to directly drive MPA designations. He also noted the report was not intended to be the final say on the matter, emphasising the need for more detailed consultation and engagement, as well as the collection of additional data. He added that recreational footprint was not considered impactful enough to be considered in the current process though it is likely to be considered in the actual selection and designation process.



The Chair also expressed concern regarding the comparison of beam trawling and dredging and questioned the source of the fisheries data used. He asked for views on how the AC could get involved in the process and if this could be a topic for the new Focus Group on Spatial Dimension together with the PelAC.

O'Donoghue pointed out that there is a certain urgency about this task, since the Irish MPA legislation will come into force in late 2023, and that the setting up of the joint Focus Group might take too long. In his view, the NWWAC should start working on a response as soon as possible, taking into account the KFO and ISEFPO's feedback which he had circulated to the Secretariat.

ACTION: Secretariat to draft advice on Irish Sea MPA/ORE/SPA plan, based on KFO / ISEFPO document provided and HWG members' response to input request.

3. Mission Atlantic– Dave Reid, Debbie Pedreschi, Marine Institute

Slides are available [here](#).

The Chair explained that on 23-24 August the Mission Atlantic Team held an update meeting which unfortunately could not be attended by many NWWAC members. He thanked Dave Reid and Debbie Pedreschi for their availability to join the AC meeting and provide a separate update on the work that is going on in the project.

Pedreschi explained that Mission Atlantic is a large EU project focusing on integrated ecosystem assessment across 14 countries, including the Celtic Sea region. The project involves 13 partners and aims to map and assess the present and future status of Atlantic marine ecosystems under the influence of climate change and exploitation.

Stakeholders are involved in identifying issues and ground-truthing the analysis. The process considers messages from stakeholders and trends observed in the ecosystem trying to identify early warning signals or breakpoints. The risk analysis then looks at all the linkages between sectors, pressures and components and prioritize them to understand what are the top sectors and pressures that the project needs to focus on. The final part is working with stakeholders identifying scenarios that are then build into or tested with the models available.

When Mission Atlantic stakeholders were asked about the potential issues within the region, they identified conflict between ORE, MPAs and fisheries as the priority to focus on. In particular, stakeholders identified three scenarios to analyse:

- Scenario 1: what are the potential ecosystem impacts of an increase of ORE
- Scenario 2: fisheries impacts of increase in ORE; various displacement scenarios
- Scenario 3: addition of conservation measures: MPAs vs. OECM

All should be considered in a climate change context, with increasing temperature in line with selected IPCC scenarios.



However, the model that was built into the project when it was planned, called StrathE2E, despite being a comprehensive ecosystem model, is not designed for spatial questions. Therefore, the Mission Atlantic team had to identify alternative, more appropriate models through other projects. The stakeholder group requested the team do what they can in the meantime, and those results were presented.

Scenario 1 looked at the potential ecosystem and fisheries impacts of an increase in ORE in the Celtic Sea. StrathE2E and a conceptual model built with stakeholders were used for this scenario.

While the two models used on this scenario are not directly comparable in scale or in detail, they picked out some common messages, such as impacts on fish, seabirds and cetaceans. A slight reduction in fishing, specifically pelagic fishing was also detected, and possible changes in bycatch.

Pedreschi then moved to Scenario 2, investigating the displacement effects of the ORE on fisheries and ecosystems. Ultimately, the model gives the indication that displacement would have a negligible effect on the ecosystem, as the same impacts occur in the new areas., that is not the case according to stakeholders' experience or when we look at the socio-economic impacts. A socioeconomic analysis of the impacts on fishing of the ORE expansion is needed. This could be provided by expanding the conceptual model that was already built with stakeholders. Pedreschi added that they are hoping to carry out a workshop early next year to get a better understanding of the socioeconomic impacts.

Finally, Pedreschi referred to Scenario 3, adding MPAs to the equation. When applying the conceptual model to this Scenario, it foresees a decrease in fishing in the ORE area (displacement), an increase in artificial reefs and an increase in associated ORE impacts (e.g. noise, electromagnetic fields, collisions with seabirds).

Pedreschi concluded her presentation by outlining the future plans of the Mission Atlantic project, including proposed workshops and a participatory mapping exercise.

The Chair thanked Pedreschi for her presentation and asked if she sees any specific involvement from the AC in this project.

Pedreschi replied that the NWWAC already has a very good representation at meetings and that everybody is always welcome to join. The project still has another 2 years to go, the project team is currently refining the models and will be diving deeper into the questions raised by stakeholders. The aim is to several stakeholder meetings in the coming year with specific purposes hoping that what is being developed in this project can be integrated in ICES work as well.

O'Donoghue felt that this is a very pertinent project especially in relation to ORE issues. He asked whether the project will take into account the new plan led approach being adopted by the Department in relation to ORE development and made specific reference to the South Coast



Designated Marine Area Plan (DMAP) in progress. He queried if it would require many changes for the model to take in this new concept, since all the old ORE developments will need to be replaced with the South Coast SMAP, and since the Department is meant to be carrying out an assessment, would this project be included as part of this assessment, or remain totally separate.

Murphy raised the importance of setting baselines and being able to make future predictions or evaluations of what the socio-economic impacts will be. He felt that the model should also take into account the current under-fishing for many species, rather than just showing overfishing. In his view, the model developed will have a huge bearing on the ICES advice. He wondered if ICES has been taking this into consideration. Finally, he thanked Pedreschi and Reid for showing how proper stakeholder engagement is done.

Regarding ORE, Pedreschi replied that the analysis was as up to date as possible. The ORE case study area is the Celtic Sea and the Western shelf of Ireland and does not include the Irish Sea, only the Helvic Head site which (at that time) came under the South Coast DMAP.

However, as more information is made available, the analysis can be updated relatively easily, though there might be concerns regarding the spatial work (not as easily updated). Regarding the assessment to be carried out by the Department, they have not been contacted but other colleagues in the Marine Institute are involved and it would be useful to feed into that process.

Replying to Murphy's questions, Pedreschi added that project meetings for next year are currently being planned and AC members are welcome to let them know any suggestions of times of year that could work best for their participation. Regarding baselines and socioeconomic aspects, it is a very complex task which Mission Atlantic wants to work on with stakeholders, as their knowledge could help improve baseline information where data is lacking. On the ICES side, she explained that this work feeds into the ecosystem overviews which provide contextual advice.

Dave Reid reminded participants of the WKIrish process, which is where ecosystem understandings was initiated by stakeholders from which single species stock advice was developed. He then added that the main gap in Mission Atlantic abilities is spatial resolution. The project is currently focusing on building up a spatially structured ecosystem model for the Celtic Sea. In addition, a PhD student in the Marine Institute starting this year will be looking at fisheries preference sites.

ACTION: HWG members to propose dates for Mission Atlantic stakeholder meetings in 2024 upon receipt of topics for discussion.

4. Celtic Sea Offshore Project – Cathal Boyle, Galettech Energy Developments

Slides are available [here](#).

Galettech Energy Developments is at the early stages of development with plans, if successful and subject to Irish policy currently under consultation by the Irish government, to propose an offshore wind farm off the South Coast of Ireland. As part of their engagement with stakeholders, they



contacted the Secretariat and several of their representatives joined the meeting, including Cathal Boyle, the project's Fisheries Liaison Officer, and Paul Carney, Offshore Development Manager and Deirdre Keegan, Community Liaison Officer.

Galetech Group was founded in 2000 and focuses on renewables, including wind, solar and energy storage. The company has intentions to develop the Manannan offshore wind farm in the Celtic Sea of south of Ireland.

It is envisaged that the electricity produced by the wind farm will be used to produce green hydrogen. The turbine area would be located at about 25 to 50 km from the coastline with a potential for two phases of 1GW each.

"It is important to say that we are at the early stages of development, and as you will know, the system is moving to a plan-led approach now, so policy is evolving and we will have to adapt to fit in and meet the new requirements", he explained.

It is estimated that their operational project could be successful around the mid-2030s.

Carney reiterated that they are grateful for the opportunity to introduce themselves and their projects and support interaction between the fishing industry and the offshore renewables industry.

O'Donoghue explained that the Department is working on the South Coast DMAP. Following that consultation, the final outline for ORE structure placement in the area will be made by the Department and not by individual organisations. He thanked the presenter but felt that the contact was premature as neither the site nor the contract for development has been identified.

Murphy agreed that it is good communication practice but indeed plans have changed, and the new process needs to be taken into account.

Carney appreciated that it is quite soon, but the goal of this presentation was to open communication and start a relationship with the sector and that this initial contact is following the summary guide agreed between the offshore renewable energy and seafood industries ([Seafood/ORE Engagement in Ireland - A Summary Guide](#)).

The Chair expressed appreciation that communication lines are now open with the NWWAC, which will continue to follow the process and consider where AC collaboration and intervention will be appropriate.

5. Improving environmental sustainability of deep sea fisheries - James Clark, MRAG

Slides are available [here](#).



The Chair welcomed James Clark from MRAG who presented on the report “*Improving environmental sustainability of deep sea fisheries with emphasis on the conservation of Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs)*”. This work was carried out as part of the AZTI led consortium (AZTI, CEFAS, CSIC, IEO, IPMA, IRD, MRAG-EU and WMR) commissioned by EASME/CINEA for the Framework Contract EASME/EMFF/2019/014 for the “*Provision of scientific advice for fisheries beyond EU waters*”.

Clark explained that this is a three year project that started in 2020. There were eight different tasks in the project.

1. Expand the comparative analysis of previous review

The objective here was to review of the work developed in five selected countries, in support of the VME protection and identification of mitigation measures from the impacts of bottom fishing (and activities other than fishing if relevant). All countries reviewed have implemented some form of governance and data collection frameworks for DSF/VMEs, and most have described sensitive species and habitats in some way. The assessment of bottom fishing impacts has in general a good degree of implementation for almost all countries. There is room for improvement in the impact mitigation and protection measures, but overall progress is being made in this area. Most countries have implemented or planned some kind of monitoring of VME impacts.

2. Review of 2008 DSF FAO Guidelines and compiling best practices

The goals were to identify the possible implementation issues arising from the interpretation of the Guidelines and the gaps in scientific knowledge affecting the operationalization of the Guidelines, proposing mitigation measures for those issues/gaps identified. Conclusions highlighted that many aspects related to the protection of VMEs need to be improved, such as creating operational definitions of key concepts and determining acceptable thresholds of protection level for VMEs. Lack of biological and distribution information of VME indicator taxa is a major issue. A precautionary approach must be applied to protect VMEs despite uncertainties. Understanding VME functioning and climate change impact is essential for long-term viability of the protected VMEs.

3. By-catch mitigation: critical analysis and recommendations

Under this task, an assessment of the existing bycatch management approaches was carried out. Results from this analysis pointed out that RFMOs are advancing at different paces in bycatch mitigation efforts, but lack of data is a major issue hindering bycatch mitigation efforts and the ability to manage and apply rules on fishing vessel activities. Monitoring programmes and frameworks are required.

4. Criteria for establishment of footprints and historical fishing; framework for exploratory fisheries and scientific surveys

The objective was to review of the existing criteria/methods for characterisation of fishing footprint in DSF in relevant RFMOs, as well as in FAO Area 41. RFMOs generally follow similar specific procedures and preliminary assessments and most have implemented specific conservation and management



measures to prevent SAIs on VMEs including monitoring of exploratory fisheries (through observers).

5. Critical review of the effectiveness of existing management tools for VMEs conservation and identification of best practices

The goal was to provide a critical review of the effectiveness of existing management tools, including the move-on rule, and measures to assess impacts and/or combinations thereof (including spatial management tools) for the conservation of VMEs and identify best practices in RFMOs. Conclusions highlighted that for measures to be effective, the distribution and connectivity of VMEs must be better understood. Details about species interactions (including population connectivity, energy flow that mediates growth and reproduction, and interactions mediated by the local oceanographic regime) will be needed to understand and predict the extent to which fishing and other human activities produce significant adverse impacts. A key issue is that move-on rules were not originally intended as stand-alone measures to protect VMEs from SAI. They should only be considered as temporary measures until spatial protection measures are implemented.

6. Identify gaps in research and priority scientific topics (by region)

After gaps and priority research topics have been identified, the goal was to design a framework for future RFMO observer schemes to identify, record and report on VME associated taxa and hence the potential for VMEs. The main data gaps related to the life history of VME species (longevity, fragility, larval dispersion and mobility). Although fishing vessels are not an effective sampling tool, observer programmes provide a valuable source of data a relatively low cost.

7. Identify areas, topics and policy options for which there could be scope and added value in promoting consistency among relevant organizations (RFMOs) as well as for any possible revision of Council Regulation (EC) No 734/2008

The objective of this task was to identify areas, topics and policy options with potential scope and added-value in promoting consistency among RFMOs and with relevance to any possible revision of Council Regulation (EC) No 734/2008. A summary of the main management measures regarding mitigation of potential impacts (SAIs) and conservation of VMEs implemented in the different RFMOs was provided along with topics of interest in the context of the promotion of consistency of concepts among RFMOs. Some of these are relevant with respect to any possible revision of Council Regulation (EC) No 734/2008.

8. Support the evaluation of Council Regulation (EC) No 734/2008

Specifically, this task focused on analysing the extent to which the regulation is effective, efficient, still relevant given the current needs, coherent both internally and with other EU rules (CFP, MSFD), and has achieved EU added value. It also identified where the Regulation needs to be updated to bring it inline with more recent developments.

The Chair thanked Clarke for his presentation and asked how he saw this research feeding into the current developments and discussions within the Commission in terms of VMEs.



Clarke replied that the idea behind this project was to inform the EU on whether the current resolution needs to be updated. He was hopeful that the report would inform fisheries negotiations.

6. Focus Groups update

Slides are available [here](#).

- **Inter-AC Brexit Forum (Chair)**

The Chair reported that the last meeting was held on 30 June, chaired by the LDAC. The next meeting is scheduled for 09 October and will be chaired by the PelAC. He updated participants on the work of the Specialised Committee on Fisheries and mentioned several recently published documents on improved fisheries management in shared sea areas, regarding the transfer procedure for fishing opportunities, notifications guidelines, a framework for TAC alignment species and a pilot strategy for management of scallop.

- **CFP (Alexandra Philippe)**

Alexandra Philippe reported on advice provided on the Marine Action Plan, which was delivered to the Commission on 31 August. She thanked members and the Secretariat for their contribution and explained that the FG will now work on another piece of advice related to the Commission's Communication on the CFP.

Finally, she referred to the first meeting of the special group that is responsible to monitor the implementation of the of the Marine Action Plan. The meeting is scheduled for 06 October and will be attended by herself on behalf of the NWWAC, together with the Secretariat, the NWWAC Chair and other members.

- **Landing Obligation (Chair) – Defra consultation response FMP discards**

The Chair explained that the FG met on 13 July to prepare advice on Commission's Communication and ICES advice on Fishing Opportunities 2024, which was submitted on 09 August.

Next tasks include the development of advice on choke risks in the NWW and the preparation of a response to the UK consultation on discards management. The latter has already been started, with the Secretariat having shared a draft to the HWG the day before this meeting.

A question was raised whether the AC is entitled to reply to the consultation directly or should submit its input to the Commission. The Chair pointed out that this is a public consultation and in his view the AC would be a relevant entity. He proposed to discuss this at ExCom.

ACTION: Propose discussion at ExCom whether or not NWWAC to reply directly to UK consultations on FMPs, REM & Discards plans.

- **Climate & Environment (Alexandra Philippe)**



Philippe will take over from the previous Chair Jacopo Pasquero who has left EBCD. It will be important to review the Terms of Reference taking into account the content of the CFP Package. The next task for this FG will be to provide advice on the EU Communication on the energy transition for the fisheries sector.

The next meeting is planned for 13 October.

Mathies added that this FG is currently only running in English. The Secretariat will need to examine the budget for next year to see if it will be possible to have additional FG meetings arranged bilingually.

- **Skates & Rays (Secretariat)**

Mathies explained that there was a recent meeting of this Focus Group on 14 September, with attendance from the Commission, which was very good to discuss a way forward and also discuss the responses that were received to the letters submitted. The work of the group will continue but the way forward has not been fully identified yet, as the FG work also relies on what is coming back from the Commission when they are in discussions with the UK. Unfortunately, the FG will be losing its Vicechair, Johnny Woodlock, because the Irish Seal Sanctuary has ceased operations.

- **Control and Compliance (Patrick Murphy)**

Murphy explained that the last meeting of this FG was held on 20 July, when members discussed how to organise work especially in relation to the new control regulation. The FG is also pursuing the organisation of a meeting with EFCA in November, but so far no details regarding EFCA's availability are available. The Secretariat will send a reminder.

Finally, Arthur Yon, member of this FG, has been working on a response to the UK public consultation on REM, which has already been shared with the HWG for comments by 29 September.

- **Social Aspects (Tamara Talevska)**

Tamara Talevska explained that this joint FG has been facilitated by the NSAC since 01 October 2022. Since then, the FG had 5 virtual meetings which resulted in 2 submitted papers. The first one was the framework advice on social aspects which basically identified and covered the topics that the FG will address in the course of its work. The second was the advice on the evaluation of the Vessel Safety Directive. The FG is currently working on 2 subsequent advice papers simultaneously, the first one on recreational fisheries in the CFP and the second one on generational renewal of the sector. The next meeting is planned for 03 October online.

- **Brown Crab (Norah Parke)**

The Chair pointed out that this is Norah's last participation in a NWWAC HWG, as she is retiring from her job with KFO soon. For many years Norah not only contributed to the several NWWAC FGs related to



brown crab, but equally on many other topics that led to quality NWWAC advice. She already retired from her vice-chair position in WG 1 and the Chair looked forward to hear her final update on the brown crab FG, unfortunately virtual. He also looked forward to an opportunity for a live meeting to wish Norah all the best in retirement.

Norah Parke explained that this joint FG with the MAC and the NSAC met 5 times since its inception in October 2022. The work of this FG culminated in a workshop organised on 16 May in Paris which gathered 41 participants from 6 Member States and representatives from the UK and Norway. Following this workshop, a report was published on 06 July and advice was submitted to the Commission on 22 September. This advice completed the Terms of Reference of the Focus Group.

As Parke is retiring, she passed on her best wishes to those who will carry on this work in the future. The Chair thanked her for her good work.

ACTION: Renew Focus Group Brown Crab with new terms of reference to follow up on issues raised in advice submitted in September 2023 once COM response has been received

- **Spatial Dimension (Secretariat)**

Mathies recalled that the draft Terms of Reference of this joint FG with the PelAC were approved in July by ExCom and that a request for expression of interest for participation was shared with members. The first meeting is now being organised by the PelAC in December, depending on the availability of the proposed chair, Gonçalo Carvalho.

Mathies referred to the DMAP proposal and the draft advice document that is currently with members of this Horizontal WG for review, to be followed by fast-track approval by ExCom.

She also gave an update on the liaison with the Irish Seafood/ORE group, which the AC still has to be officially recognized as a member. She proposed, as an action point, to write another letter to the chair of the Seafood/ORE group.

ACTION: The NWWAC will send another letter to the Irish Seafood/ORE group asking for update regarding request for membership.

7. AOB

None raised.

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

1	Secretariat to draft advice on Irish Sea MPA/ORE/SPA plan, based on KFO / ISEFPO document provided and HWG members' response to input request.
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2	HWG members to propose dates for Mission Atlantic stakeholder meetings in 2024 upon receipt of topics for discussion.
3	Propose discussion at ExCom whether or not NWWAC to reply directly to UK consultations on FMPs, REM & Discards plans.
4	Renew Focus Group Brown Crab with new terms of reference to follow up on issues raised in advice submitted in September 2023 once COM response has been received
5	The NWWAC will send another letter to the Irish Seafood/ORE group asking for update regarding request for membership.

9. Participants

NWWAC members	
José Beltran	OPP-7 Burela
Emiel Brouckaert (Chair)	Rederscentrale
Kenatea Chavez-Hey	ANOP
Enda Conneely	IIMRO
Gérald Hussenot Desenonges	Blue Fish
Manu Kelberine	CRPM de Bretagne
Franck Le Barzick	OP COBRENORD
John Lynch	IS&EFPO
Anaïs Mourtada	CNPMEM
Patrick Murphy	IS&WFPO
Aodh O'Donnell	IFPO
Sean O'Donoghue	KFO
Norah Parke	KFO
Alexandra Philippe	EBCD
Corentine Piton	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
Irene Prieto	ANASOL
Jean-Marie Robert	Pecheurs de Bretagne
Dominique Thomas	OP CME MMN
Johnny Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary
Arthur Yon	FROM Nord
Experts & Observers	
Cathal Boyle	Galetech
Paul Carney	Galetech
James Clark	MRAG
Tasman Crowe	UCD
Michael Keatinge	Seaview Marine Economics Consulting
Stephen Mangi Chai	MRAG



CONSEIL CONSULTATIF POUR
LES EAUX OCCIDENTALES
SEPTENTRIONALES

NORTH WESTERN
WATERS
ADVISORY COUNCIL

CONSEJO CONSULTIVO PARA
LAS AGUAS
NOROCCIDENTALES

Debbie Pedreschi	Marine Institute
David Reid	Marine Institute
Tamara Talevska	NSAC Secretariat
NWWAC Secretariat	
Mo Mathies	Executive Secretary
Matilde Vallerani	Deputy Executive Secretary

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