



DRAFT Minutes

HORIZONTAL WORKING GROUP

The Printworks, Dublin Castle
Wednesday 13 March 2024

1 Welcome and introductions

The Chair Emiel Brouckaert welcomed all participants. Apologies were received from John Lynch, Franck Le Barzic, Bruno Dachicourt, Geert Meun, Kenatea Chavez-Hey in advance of the meeting. The agenda was adopted.

Action points from the last meeting (26 September 2023, virtual)

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. Submitted 09/11, email response received 04/12, results fed into drafting of MPA Bill which will be presented during the Joint NWWAC/PelACH WG tomorrow
2	HWG members to propose dates for Mission Atlantic stakeholder meetings in 2024 upon receipt of topics for discussion. Virtual meeting scheduled for 27 March
3	Propose discussion at ExCom whether or not NWWAC to reply directly to UK consultations on FMPs, REM & Discards plans. Done, NWWAC responded to consultation on a discards reform, on REM, and FMP for scallop
4	Renew Focus Group Brown Crab with new terms of reference to follow up on issues raised in advice submitted in September 2023. This is ongoing, an update will be provided under agenda item 2
5	The NWWAC will send another letter to the Irish Seafood/ORE group asking for update regarding request for membership. Email request sent 05/10, negative reply received in December. Secretariat will join meeting on 16 April and present on Acs and reasoning why observer status should be granted.

Patrick Murphy commented that the ISWFPO welcomes the intervention and opportunity for the AC to present at the ORE group.

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



2 Updates

Focus Groups

- Inter-AC Brexit Forum (Chair)

Since the start of the financial year 2 meetings have been held, one virtually in October chaired by the PelAC, and one in-person meeting in February in Brussels chaired by the NWWAC.

Included in the most recent updates from the Commission was the list of topics for the Scientific Committee of Fisheries (SCF): Technical measures, NQS and King Scallops, skates & rays, pollack (commercial, recreational), spurdog, benchmarks, seabass, red Seabream, discards.

19 – 21 March	SCF Working Group 7
April tbc	Technical meetings with MS; technical meetings with UK
21 – 23 May	SCF Plenary 8
June tbc	Technical meetings with MS; technical meetings with UK
09 – 11 July	SCF Working Group 8
24 – 26 September	SCF Plenary 9

Patrick Murphy enquired regarding the benchmark for horse mackerel and the work on VMEs. The Chair commented that these issues are currently being discussed at EU level and not yet scheduled for the SCF.

- CFP (Alexandra Philippe)

Philippe provided an overview of the work of this Focus Group up to now including the next steps. She concluded that a meeting to go through the replies would be possible as well as possibly to prepare for the meeting on 18 June by the special group on implementing the Marine Action Plan.

The Chair asked if the Focus Group could possibly look at what the Member States were asked regarding the presentation of their roadmaps by the end of March. Philippe was not aware of the state of play at MS level but assured that something could be prepared for the June meeting. The Chair added that the CMO evaluation was left to the MAC and also referred to the Energy Transition Communication which the AC had also followed up on as part of the work of the FG Climate & Environment.

- Landing Obligation (Chair)

The Chair reviewed the work of this Focus Group over the past months and outlined the next steps:

- Commission evaluation of the landing obligation
- Follow-up on UK approach to discards
- Follow-up on EFCA report on evaluation of compliance with the landing obligation

- Climate & Environment (Alexandra Philippe)

NWWAC advice on the Communication from the Commission “On the Energy Transition of the EU Fisheries and Aquaculture sector” COM(2023) 100 final submitted 28 November 2023, and a response



was received on 19 March 2024. Several meetings of the Energy Transition Partnership have been held in the past months which were attended by NWWAC representatives, including the launch on 15 June 2023, and workshops on financing as well as research and invitation. She felt that some important players were missing at these events, for example bans when talking about the financing. Reports are available in the Members Area on the NWWAC website.

- Skates & Rays (Secretariat)

Following the update on past work, the Secretariat explained that a joint letter is currently for approval with the members of this Horizontal Working Group and due for submission to the European Commission in early April should full approval be received from both NWWAC and NSAC Executive Committees.

- Control and Compliance (Patrick Murphy)

Murphy thanked the Secretariat for the preparation of this meeting. He recounted that at the meeting in Copenhagen the AC representatives put forward the prepared questions and some of these were followed up then at the Inter-AC meeting on 06 February. He felt that opinions of control officers were influencing the discussions rather than actual data. This topic will be picked up during the joint HWG on March 14 with the Pelagic AC.

Aodh O'Donnell commented that the meeting in Copenhagen was very qualitative, and opinion based which was rather alarming.

The Chair added that the follow-up on the workshop with EFCA should also be taken into account in the work of the FG Landing Obligation as this will come up as part of the upcoming evaluation of the Landing Obligation. The FG Landing Obligation will also consider REM in consideration of the UK approach, as it seems to be more directly related to avoidance and minimization of discarding rather than the landing obligation overall.

- Social Aspects (Secretariat)

The Secretariat outlined that this joint Focus Group is now trilateral with interpretation costs shared between both ACs. Discussions were held on DG MARE's consultation on the development of social data as well as the Fishers of the Future project. Advice is being drafted on harmonization and EU-wide recognition of fishermen's training to ease the burden of intra-EU crew recruitment.

- Spatial Dimension (Secretariat)

A review was provided of work carried out to date and members were informed that the next update on this topic will come as part of the joint NWWAC/PelAC Horizontal Working Group on 14 March in Dublin Castle.

- Brown Crab (Secretariat)

The Secretariat recalled that the last FG Brown Crab was dissolved following the submission of advice in September 2022. An ad-hoc meeting to discuss the Commission's response was held in January 2024 and the follow-up agreed. The Secretariat discussed the work in the bilateral meeting with DG Mare on 01 February following which the NWW Member States Group was informed of the Commission's suggestion to proceed via a Joint Recommendation.



ACTION: Reported FG proposed work and planning approved. FG Chairs to plan actions.

- Inter-AC with DG MARE 06 February 2024 (Chair)

The Chair recalled the proceedings from the meeting adding that a report would be circulated in due course. All presentations are available online.

Robert commented that he felt that recommendations of ACs were not being taken into account by DG MARE. Director-General Vitcheva stated that the Commission was understaffed which is why they were not following up on recommendations and stated that she was not in charge of Brown Crab or hake but that this was the Member States job. He pointed out that the Commission was reaching the end of its mandate and that maybe that the situation might improve with the next mandate.

Olivier Lepretre agreed with the previous speaker and added that in his opinion the Commission was not listening to the ACs or the fishers. This seems unrelated to mandate as this problem was being experienced with the previous Commission as well and is likely to continue with the next mandate. He was wondering what other countries are doing as France is losing all of its fishers. He felt that though EU is talking about food sovereignty, but on the ground this cannot be seen.

Philippe commented that during the meeting the ACs only had 3 minutes to talk and had not been asked to do so in advance. The Director-General's speech was highly political, and several ACs mentioned towards the end of the Inter-AC that these meetings are a bit disappointing. She felt that the connection was broken, and that the ACS have continually asked for more detailed replies as currently it seems to be reliant on who is preparing the response.

The Chair referred to the Commission's recent response to the joint AC letter. He asked members if any actions should come out of these important comments.

Philippe asked if it had already been put to DG MARE that preparations should be more focussed for the Inter-AC meetings and that Secretariats should be informed in detail to allow sufficient time for AC representatives to be fully prepared?

The Secretariat commented that these issues will be taken up in the proposed meeting between the AC Secretariats and the Commission.

José Beltran added that he had similar impressions as the previous speakers and that the Commission must have noticed participants disappointment regarding the preparation and the lack of time for interventions. He commented that other ACs seem to be dissatisfied with Commission participation and responses similar to the comments made within the NWWAC. He commented that the Commission should have a list of points that need to be changed and that any Fishers of the Future outcomes will likely only be seen in 2050, not in 2030. He was afraid that the EU fisheries sector would be dominated by foreign fishers at that stage as EU fisheries are losing their crew.

The Chair stated that other topics raised previously in relation to control could also be raised by the Secretariat.

Lepretre commented that the AC needs to contribute to changing things as things the way they are currently operated are not working. He proposed that the AC should write jointly with the MS expressing its discontent and to change the Commission's way of working.



Robert felt that these are complex issues and that while it is true that in the past the AC had fruitful dialogue with the Commission, it makes it more difficult to accept how things are now. He was unsure what the future might hold for the AC and that within the AC and the Secretariat. He added that it is important to take into account that recommendations are sent to the Commission and the Member States Group only. Those who receive the recommendations are either understaffed or do not want to listen to the AC which leads to a lack of dialogue. Working exclusively towards the Commission and not the Parliament he felt was not fruitful. While this HWG can tackle political issue he felt that the group needs to convey to the ExCom the lack of Communication and that the AC could relay this to other EU institutions.

Phillipe added that at some point there might be a reform of the CFP and felt that a solution of what the ACs would like to see in the future could be put forward possibly jointly with other AC, instead of simply complaining about how things are working.

The Chair felt that another letter could possibly be written, however, looking at all the other FGs and aspects covered by the AC these topics can be added and covered. Secondly, he felt that the meeting between the Secretariats and the Commission could move these items further as well and that previous advice by this AC did put forward a reform of the CFP and link it to food security. He proposed that with the next Commission mandate this should be taken forward.

ACTION: Comments made based on the Inter-AC presentation to be taken forward to DG MARE at AC Secretariats' meeting once scheduled

Beltran commented that the CFP reform should start with a reform of the Commission which should perhaps listen to the primary sector and have a Commissioner for fisheries and agriculture to really value the primary sector and leave out other DGs.

Brouckaert referred to the FG CFP. This suggestion regarding the functionalities of the Commission could possibly be put forward and this political aspect could be included in the ToR of this group.

Beltran added that the NWWAC could put this forward jointly with the PelAC on the following day. The Chair felt that the following day was a celebration but that this can be put forward to the ExCom.

ACTION: Address topic of 'CFP Reform after COM reform' (Food Commissioner?) in FG CFP and prepare advice, including ACs direct contact with EP and Council.

Kelberine stressed that if the AC only communicated with the Commission and not any other institution it would not be heard well.

The Chair reminded participants that under current rules the ACs are communicating with the Commission only so this would the need to be part of a reform.

- Scallop Workshop (Secretariat)

The Secretariat outlined that the Commission had originally approached both NWWAC and NSAC regarding the organisation of a workshop on non-quota species. This was then refined to a workshop on King Scallop based on the framework of the 2023 joint NWWAC/NSAC workshop on skates & rays. Following in-person discussions at the beginning of February, the Commission postponed the envisaged



date of this workshop to Q3/4 of 2024 or Q1 of 2025. The Secretariat is continuing communications with DG MARE on this topic.

The Chair agreed that the AC was working continually on arriving at an agreed position. He stated that the pilot project has taken much longer than expected. He added that the Member States needed to come up with Joint Recommendations and one single view so that this can be taken forward to the SCF.

- European Maritime Day (Secretariat)
 - 30 May 2024, Svendborg, Denmark
 - Joint AC workshop (AAC, BISAC, BSAC, CC RUP, LDAC, NSAC, NWWAC, MAC, MEDAC, SWWAC)
 - Title: EU Advisory Councils: Stakeholder engagement in policymaking for healthy and productive fisheries and aquatic ecosystems.
 - Target audience: Fisheries and aquaculture stakeholders, civil society, Member States and related administrations, EU institutions, other interested participants
 - Moderator: Mark Dickey-Collas
 - Aim: To highlight the importance of participatory governance/stakeholder engagement through Advisory Councils for effective fisheries and aquaculture management, socio-economic, and conservation aspects.
 - Interactive with participation from audience

Alexandre Rodriguez, LDAC Executive Secretary, provided the update on the speaker line up:

- Mark Dickey-Collas (moderator)
 - Antonia Leroy, WWF Europe
 - Jesper Rakjeer
 - Marta Ballesteros, IEO-CSIC
- EMFAF study

The Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) has commissioned Tetra Tech to conduct a study to support the mid-term evaluation of the EMFAF. Given the early stage of implementation of the fund, the study focuses on the design and procedural aspects of the EMFAF, as well as continuing relevance and any preliminary results. Deadline for responses is 15 April. The Secretariat contacted members with the request to provide individual replies.

The Chair suggested that if members had any suggestions regarding an overall AC response to this questionnaire, they should contact the Secretariat.

3 AOB

Non raised



4 Summary of actions agreed and decisions adopted by the Chair

Actions

1	Reported FG proposed work and planning approved. FG Chairs to plan actions.
2	Comments made based on the Inter-AC presentation to be taken forward to DG MARE at AC Secretariats' meeting once scheduled
3	Address topic of 'CFP Reform after COM reform' (Food Commissioner?) in FG CFP and prepare advice, including ACs direct contact with EP and Council

Lepretre asked if the letter was going to be drafted quickly and sent now, and then again to the new Commission. The Chair clarified that no letter was going to be prepared at this point in time and that the issue raised would be addressed in the FG CFP.

The Chair thanked all participants and closed the meeting.

Participants

NWWAC members		
José	Beltran	OPP-7 Burela
Emiel	Brouckaert	Rederscentrale
Enda	Conneely	IIMRO
Gérald	Hussenot-Desenonges	BLUEFISH
Manu	Kelberine	CRPMEM de Bretagne
Olivier	Lepretre	Comité des Pêches des Hauts de France
John	Lynch	Irish South & East Fish Producers Organisation Ltd
Llibori	Martinez	IFSUA
Anaïs	Mourtada	CNPMEM
Patrick	Murphy	Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation
Aodh	O'Donnell	Irish Fish Producers Organisation (IFPO)
Alexandra	Philippe	EBCD
Corentine	Piton	France Pêche Durable et Responsable
Irene	Prieto	ANASOL
Erwan	Quemeneur	CRPMEM 29
Jean-Marie	Robert	Pêcheurs de Bretagne
Dominique	Thomas	OP CME MMN
Arthur	Yon	FROM Nord
Experts and Observers		
Alexandre	Rodriguez	Executive Secretary LDAC
NWWAC Secretariat		
Mo	Mathies	Executive Secretary