



## ▶ Pelagic AC

MIAC meeting  
17 January 2019  
09:00-12:00 hrs  
ICES Headquarters  
Copenhagen  
Denmark

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### Participants

Sean O'Donoghue	Pelagic AC and Killybegs Fishermen's organisation (chairman)
Anne-Marie Kats	Pelagic AC
Ian Gatt	Pelagic AC & Scottish Pelagic PO
Gerard van Balsfoort	Pelagic AC & Pelagic Freezer Trawler association
Esben Sverdrup-Jensen	Baltic AC & Danish Pelagic PO
Michael Andersen	Baltic AC & Danish Fishermen's organisation
Nils Höglund	Baltic AC & Coalition Clean Baltic
Sally Clink	Baltic AC
Alexandre Rodriguez	Long Distance AC
Jane Sandell	Long Distance AC
Johnny Hughes	North Sea AC
Kenn Skau Fischer	North Sea AC & Danish Fishermen's organisation
Noor Visser	North Sea AC
Emiel Brouckaert	North Western Waters AC & Rederscentrale
Micheal Keatinge	North Western Waters AC
Ashley Olsen	Pew Charitable Trusts
Ana Matias	South Western Waters AC & Sciaena
Chloe Pocheau	South Western Waters AC
Miren Garmendia	South Western Waters AC and OPEGUI
Colm Lordan	ICES
David Miller	ICES
Eugene Nixon	ICES
Ghislain Chouinard	ICES
Helle Gjeding Jørgensen	ICES
Henn Ojaveer	ICES
Lotte Worsøe	ICES
Mark Dickey-Collas	ICES
Rui Catarino	ICES



## 1. Opening and adoption of the agenda

The chairman opened the meeting by recalling the rationale for its existence. The MIRAC/pre-MIACO meeting is a meeting between Advisory Councils and ICES, and is separate from MIACO. Two years ago it was agreed to hold this AC led meeting in conjunction with MIACO and that the AC's would take on the chairmanship through a rotation system. The Baltic AC organized the meeting last year, now it is the turn of the Pelagic AC. The chairman explained the agenda was set up based on input received from the individual AC's and the PELAC has worked closely with ICES to avoid duplication with MIACO. One item, regarding quality assurance, is in fact duplicated in both meetings but because of its importance it was consciously decided to keep it on both agenda's. The chairman asked if everybody was happy with the agenda and assured that any missing items could be dealt with under 'any other business'.

The agenda was adopted. He then asked for thoughts from participants with regard to the acronym for this pre-meeting. The MIRAC acronym which has been used until now does not quite work since the 'R' of the 'Regional' Advisory Councils has been removed in the new CFP.

It was decided to name the meeting while not one of the ICES formal resolution based meetings, was to be known as 'MIAC' from now on (**action 1**).

## 2. Specific Issues

Most AC's have put their issues forward in written fashion. The chairman asked each individual AC to present their points briefly before hearing comments from ICES.

### a. Collaboration with ICES Brown Crab WG (NWWAC)

Emiel Brouckaert asked for an update regarding the work of the ICES Brown Crab working group. The brown crab is an important fishery in North Western Waters and members would like to know what the best approach would be to develop an advice for this fishery.

ICES explained the Brown Crab working group is a SICOM group which mainly looks at the life history of fisheries but has also started to develop assessments in several areas such as the West of Scotland and the Irish Coast. The assessment work can be used as a basis for advice. On the advisory side, the working group could work on special requests from the clients. In order to develop an advice on brown crab, the best way forward would be to ask recipients of the advice to submit a special request for advice on brown crab stocks. In other words, if the NWWAC wants to receive advice on brown crab, they should submit a special request from AC's to the European Commission (**action 2**).



## b. Collaboration with ICES on Deep-water species (LDAC)

Alexandre Rodriguez explained that the Long Distance AC is dealing with a number of deep-water species stocks that overlap with some EU areas in their distribution and are subjected to catch limits within the EU waters while they are included under Annex 1a and 1b of NEAFC rules. The EU has just adopted in November 2018 its new bi-annual Regulation on fishing opportunities for deep-water species based on ICES advice.

In 2017, the LDAC submitted a request for advice to ICES via the Commission to clarify to what extent the Landing Obligation would apply to some of these species, and a comprehensive reply was provided by the Commission reassuring on the non-application of the landing obligation due to poor science. Both documents are available on the LDAC website and were appended as background documents at MIAC site.

In terms of the way forward, the LDAC is considering improving the knowledge base for these species and would like to reflect on a way to collaborate more closely with the ICES Deep Sea working group (WGDEEP). Mr. Rodriguez recalled that, under the control regulation fishermen are obligated to report discards and what the LDAC would like to explore is how the concerned fishing industry could contribute to improve the fisheries dependent catch and discards data that can be made available from operators to scientists. Some examples of useful data could also refer to changes in fishing patterns, and catchability. Alexandre Rodriguez specified that this point is brought in more as a reflection than an actual request, but that it would be interesting from an LDAC point of view to help ICES get a more robust framework on this in light of their work on fisheries and ecosystem overviews.

The chairman asked whether the LDAC participates in the ICES ADG for these stocks. Alexandre Rodriguez replied that this has not been the case so far but they could consider it in the future.

As a general rule from the ICES Council, Expert Working Groups that prepare the advice cannot be attended by stakeholders or external observers. In the case of the Pelagic AC, some industry stakeholders have employed scientists that may get involved in this process. They are nominated by ICES national delegates. Discussions regarding uptake of commercial data into science have only just started between ICES and these scientists, and there is some skepticism within the scientific community about the quality of the fisheries dependent data and how this can be incorporated into the ICES advisory process. The flow of information is important, but it must be ensured the flow remains consistent and doesn't stop once industry doesn't like the result. Note: there is a workshop in May 2019 on the provision of commercially derived data for fisheries management advice.

The LDAC has written to the European Commission about this issue. ICES has received a special request which has been developed by OSPAR and NEAFC about the fisheries biology of elasmobranchs. ICES encourages all involved to improve the provision and application of data from the commercial fleet.

The chairman proposes the LDAC attends the next ICES ADG since it has access to it. This may result in clear outcomes in terms of what can be done (**action 3**).



c. Western Baltic herring: 0 TAC advice (BSAC and PELAC)

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen introduced this point on behalf of the Baltic AC and Pelagic AC. Last year an advice came out for a 0 TAC for Western Baltic herring which in turn affected a number of other fisheries, such as western Baltic spring spawning herring. The adoption of such a closure would have considerable consequences. Members of the AC's attended the ADG for this stock where there was a lot of discussion regarding the scientific basis for the TAC and the process. Stakeholders were surprised by the final decision taken by ICES to not follow the management plan that is in place for this stock. This stock is shared with a third party (Norway). In a previous situation concerning Baltic sprat where third party Russia is part of the equation, ICES followed the management plan. Why not here?

A separate issue has to do with transparency: The AC's were surprised by the final decision taken by ACOM, resulting in the final TAC advice, because it didn't reflect the decision taken at the ADG. How is this discussion reflected in the advice?

Finally, the 0 TAC advice is related to the fact that the reference points for this stock have changed, which altered the outcome of the advice. Esben Sverdrup-Jensen asked what can be done to introduce such changes more gradually so that the impacts are not so dramatic from one year to the next. He recognized the discussion about what to do when a stock is below Blim will be held this afternoon but appreciated any first reflections on this issue.

ICES answered that with regard to transparency it is important to oversee the whole process. In early 2018 WKPELA recommended changing the reference points. The reference points were defined after the meeting and the reviewers involved concluded the ICES procedures were correct and agreed to the changes. Subsequently, HAWG looked at the work and also agreed to change the reference points. There currently isn't a system to phase in the changes, ICES advice is based on best available science at the time. It is still not clear how to handle changes after benchmarks on the scientific side or on management level, so it's important to have that dialogue. ICES is happy to help with that dialogue when there are big changes (**action 4**).

At the ADG, there was a lack of clarity about the ICES rule when stocks are below Blim which was an important discussion. The discussion was further taken up by ACOM via WebEx which is open to observers, and therefore transparent. The final advice is also transparent. Decisions taken at ADG's and ACOM are not public, but communicated internally within ICES and available through minutes should they be requested. The final decision taken during the WebEx is reached by consensus.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen asked for the reason for not following the management plan. ICES answered that in order to do so there must be an agreement to the plan by all parties involved. In this case, Norway did not agree to the plan. If there's no agreement, ICES gives advice based on the ICES MSY approach. In this case the precautionary approach took precedence over the MSY approach, because the stock was found to be below Blim, so a 0 TAC advice followed.



It was clarified that ICES cannot give advice based on a management plan if not all parties agree to the plan. ICES cannot say it's a legitimate plan if there isn't full buy-in. All clients are asked in advance what the advice should be based on. In this case Norway clearly opposed the plan. In the case with sprat, Russia had no problem following the management plan.

Michael Andersen intervened that it's good to have procedures and rules in place, but ICES should appreciate the difference between a serious stock decline for biological reasons as opposed to revisions of reference points. This should not be an automatic exercise. It may be very relevant to change reference points, but ICES should be able to differentiate between these two distinct situations. This comment highlights the tension between requesting a quality assured process with formalized decision trees and the request by stakeholders to allow specific interpretations of the evidence. An accredited quality assured process would not enable such responsiveness to occur.

When a stock is below Blim it is a strong signal that recruitment is impaired and quick rebuilding is needed. ICES may need to explain better how management interfaces with advice, but in the end it is up to managers to interpret the advice and take a management decision, which may not be a 0 catch. The reference points in the Baltic Sea management plan were evaluated against risk to being below Blim, but the plan was not evaluated in terms of the success of rebuilding above Blim within a short period of time (UN agreement).

ICES provides advice based on requests from the clients. The clients are the ones that determine the objectives. If ICES decides that for itself, that undermines its credibility. ICES needs to conform to the international and national agreements declared by the recipients of advice.

The chairman suggested to move on to the next agenda item.

d. Benchmark processes cod 6a and Irish sea (NWWAC)

Emiel Brouckaert explained that the inter-benchmark for cod in 6a is scheduled for 2019 to evaluate the stock assessment models. The NWWAC asked if sufficient transparency can be given in relation to this. A separate issue regards a genetic study on cod stock identification. There is an issue in relation to stock differentiation between cod 6a in the North Sea and Irish Sea, highlighting the need for a genetic study. The NWWAC is looking for funding for genetic analysis of cod in North Western Waters to support this assessment process. The NWWAC asked if support from ICES can be given.

ICES mentioned there will be an inter-benchmark this in year scheduled in February 2019. Last year, an independent analysis was carried out which showed a slightly different trend. An expert had a look at that and a benchmark is scheduled to provide advice, taking into account additions of another survey and seasonal weight into the assessment. The inter-benchmark should be on the calendar and WebEx meetings will take place to carry out this inter-benchmark. Workshop number 6 (WKIRISH 6) is being planned to look at productivity changes in the Irish sea which can change the output in the fisheries. As for supporting genetic research, ICES is happy to produce letters in support of genetics. ICES does not support the work financially and will provide letters of support as appropriate (**action 5**).



The chairman said he was at the NWWAC focus group on this issue a few weeks ago. He admitted to having been slightly taken aback about the data and the modelling work. This raises the issue of transparency. It seemed to the chairman the scientists in question were more interested in getting the data to fit the model. Depending on the model, you get a different answer. The chairman regrets the benchmark is by correspondence, which makes it difficult to participate. Emiel Brouckaert asked how we can learn more about the model and how AC's can contribute.

An ICES representative said that WebEx's are being organized where stock assessors will present their work and results, which will be reviewed giving stakeholders a chance to ask questions. Documents for this will be made available through Sharepoint. More WebEx's will be held if more work needs to be done. It's still the best place for AC's to participate and ask questions (**action 6**).

e. ICES guidelines for rebuilding plans (PELAC)

Ian Gatt referred to the explanatory document sent in by the Pelagic AC on rebuilding plans, and said to have been involved in the development of several plans: herring in 6a and Western horse mackerel. He explained that ICES provided separate advice for the 6a herring and 7bc stocks in 1982. In 2015, a routine benchmark was scheduled which concluded that it was not possible to separate the stocks due to lack of data. The result was a combined stock assessment which was well below MSY Btrigger, and the stock was fished well below Fmsy. As a result ICES advised a 0 TAC and that a rebuilding plan be developed for the stock. More data was needed in order to split the stock again.

Subsequently, the PELAC set up a working group to cover this stock specifically. The work focused on two parts: one part aimed at establishing a data collection roadmap in order to split the stock, the other focused on the rebuilding of the stock. The first part of the work was quite successful. Industry surveys were carried out in both areas in 2016, 2017 and 2018 as part of significant projects run between industry and scientific labs in Scotland and Ireland, largely lead by industry scientists. The information collected is used in part for a genetic research, which looks very promising so far. The industry believed in the genetic research so much that it has funded the work for the last 2-3 years. This funding has not been replaced through an EAMSE funded project.

On the other hand, the work on the rebuilding plan was a disappointment. In 2016, The PELAC started to formulate a rebuilding plan upon advice given by ICES. It was submitted to the Commission for revision by ICES in 2017, which in turn concluded it was not precautionary. The PELAC revised the plan accordingly and submitted a revised rebuilding plan to the Commission in March 2018, addressing the issues pointed out by ICES in the first plan. HAWG looked at it and concluded the issues were correctly addressed and that the plan was now precautionary. ACOM however, overruled this decision by HAWG by concluding that there was a lack of resources so the plan could not be evaluated.

It would be useful for the PELAC to know what criteria ICES defines in order to conclude if a plan is precautionary or not, and what this is based on. There is work ongoing at the moment for the development of another rebuilding plan for Western horse mackerel, so understanding these criteria would be appreciated to avoid a similar disappointment.



ICES has guidelines for MSEs, although there are no guidelines yet for rebuilding plans. These should be developed further. ICES was able to conclude the first submitted plan was not precautionary. The revised rebuilding plan had fishing mortalities below the descending fishing mortality line. At the same time there was discussion ongoing within ICES about what to do when a stock is below Blim. Although ICES evaluated the plan following the ICES msy rule, when the stock is above Blim the plan is considered precautionary. When stocks are in the area below Blim, you need a management strategy to rebuild the stock to above Blim in the short term. An MSE is needed for this. An inter-benchmark was being planned for this stock, so there wasn't enough time to conduct an MSE. In February there will be a second MSE workshop, the outcomes of which might bring elements that will help in establishing guidelines for rebuilding plans. After this it would be good to have a workshop that specifically addresses rebuilding plans and which elements to analyze for an MSE (**action 7**).

The chairman regrets the PELAC was supposed to submit a contribution for the MSE workshop, but it turns out this will not be feasible in the end. He asks whether this specific case for the herring rebuilding plan will come up as a case study. ICES answered that related issues will certainly be dealt with but couldn't say for sure whether this specific topic would come up. Ian Gatt and the chairman said they would organize themselves to ensure industry scientists would participate in this meeting (**action 8**).

f. ICES work on RMFO's (NAFO/NEAFC)

Alexandre Rodriguez raised a specific request in relation to advice from ICES in NAFO Regulatory Area, specifically regarding the species *Pandalus* (shrimp). The LDAC notes that Blim in 2018 is just above levels of 1994, when catches were reported to be around 24 000t.

The Long Distance AC has a specific working group on North Atlantic fisheries dedicated mainly to dealing with advice on NAFO and NEAFC demersal and deep-water stocks. Regarding shrimp in NAFO, there are two pending issues. One issue has to do with the timing of the presentation of the scientific advice. The Joint ICES/NAFO *Pandalus* working group meeting takes place in October/November every year but the NAFO annual meeting where the decisions are taken, takes place on the third week of September. He wonders whether ICES could in any way adjust its timing so that the advice is frontloaded and the WG meeting is moved to late August/early September, so that the advice is ready and can be taken into account by the EU and other CPCs to make a timely and informed decision during NAFO annual meeting. The second issue has to do with a lack of data, resulting in an inability to have an analytical assessment for the species since 2010. The LDAC is concerned about the state of the stock and wonders how more data could be generated for it.

ICES answered that there are currently three joint sub working groups on *Pandalus* with NAFO, the last one held at the secretariat. Advice is given on three discrete stocks, two of which are only released in October. The reason for this timing has to do with the timing for the surveys. For some NAFO stocks advice is needed earlier, this year the reason for the October advice had to do with a survey needed for the Barents Sea stock.





Alex Rodriguez replied that while he understood this situation it does cause a problem for some of the concerned fleet which are LDAC members, and he urges to look for some kind of compromise or solution maybe in separating advice for the NAFO stocks specifically.

ICES has been paying attention to NAFO and how they are incorporating ecosystem approach to fisheries management into their decision making.

g. EU request to ICES for advice on revision of contribution of TACs to fisheries management and stock conservation (NSAC)

Kenn Skau Fischer referred to the landing obligation that has entered into full force a few weeks ago for all species under quota. The NSAC has had long discussions on the avoidance of choke species. The Commission has requested ICES to look into a number of stocks and analyze the risks for removing the TAC, similarly to previous work done on dab in the North Sea. ICES was requested to analyze the role of TAC's as a potential instrument for implementing the landing obligation. Fischer admitted normally having much respect for the work from ICES but upon receiving ICES response, he felt this time the choke issues weren't well considered. The advice is based on the precautionary principle, but not based on the removal of the TAC for these stocks. It seems to him the advice is based on a political rather than on a scientific approach. This advice is counterproductive for the work of the NSAC on the landing obligation. Fischer wonders why the advice from ICES is so different now than in other years and asked whether the landing obligation was taken into account in developing the advice.

The advice on the TAC setting process, in the special request can be followed, and the methods are described and independent reviewers have looked at the outcomes from a QA point of view. In this case the stock status is largely unknown so ICES advised to maintain the current TAC's. ICES is not going to make predictions about the implementation of the landing obligation and what changes this might bring along. Another request from the Commission stated what the likely catches would be under the landing obligation, and a technical service was done for NWW stocks as well. Mixed fisheries need to be taken into account and that mixed fisheries analysis has not been fully implemented yet.

Kenn Skau Fischer said some items may have influenced the process in the case of whiting in the Kattegat/Skagerrak area. In a mixed TAC, it is very difficult to see the influence of the TAC. ICES said that for dab and flounder 6 questions were developed, and the stock status was known in a quantitative sense. The six questions were used in the recent special request.

The chairman concluded this would be a good discussion to take up further during MIACO (**action 9**). ICES confirmed it was happy to take the dialogue further offline.

h. ICES Ecosystem overviews and Ecosystem based management related work (BSAC)

The chairman admitted this is one of the items where there is a duplication with MIACO. He invited the BSAC to present this point for a brief response by ICES, but suggested to take this item up more fully during the MIACO meeting.





Nils Höglund complimented the ICES work on ecosystem overviews, asked where this work is going and how ICES sees ecosystem effects created by fisheries becoming more and more integrated into the assessments in the future.

ICES had produced a specific document for this topic for MIACO. Including the Baltic overview there are now ecosystem overviews published for 7 ecoregions and this year there are plans for two more (Oceanic Northeast Atlantic and the Azores). ICES has also initiated a process of developing the next generation of EOs. There is a workshop planned for April to help develop this, details of which will be given during MIACO. As regards ecosystem management based work, ICES will proceed with discussions held during the last year (such as the Baltic plan) and take it from there.

i. Integration of underwater noise effects in ICES assessments (NWWAC and PELAC)

Emiel Brouckaert said the NWWAC organized a workshop some time ago with presentations from scientists on underwater noise and its impact on marine life. The NWWAC concluded there's a need to increase the knowledge base for this topic and to improve the uptake of the research. He asked whether this can be included in environmental stock assessments. The chairman added this item was also discussed within the Pelagic AC and presentations were held on the effects of seismic surveys. He said the only scientific information flow on this subject is coming from industry, which isn't independent advice. The chairman asks whether this is something ICES could take on.

ICES answered that noise is coming up more and more nowadays, driven in part by the Management Strategy Framework Directive. OSPAR and HELCOM are also looking more into this. ICES stores and hosts data for regional seas conventions and projects ongoing in the Mediterranean. A new ICES working group is being created with a TOR on shipping noise. ICES has not done any work on the effects of seismic surveys on fishing. Perhaps this is something ICES can elaborate on this afternoon, and based on the discussion we can determine to what extent we can include this into the assessment.

The chairman added that the international mackerel egg survey is conducted every three years and that during the last one in 2016 seismic activities were going on at the same time. There is a need to know if that has an effect on the surveys or not, so asks what the best way is to progress. ICES suggested to take this discussion further in the afternoon when the Chair of SCICOM is present (**action 10**).

### **3. Possible future collaboration on data, communication and quality control**

a. ICES communication when re-opening advice (BSAC)

Michael Andersen made a plea to ICES to make changes in ICES advice sheets more transparent. When an advice has already previously been released it is extremely difficult to see what has been changed and why. He insisted this isn't a complaint about ICES re-issuing advice as such, but he would appreciate an announcement and an indication of the changes.



ICES took note of the request and explained ICES has a distinction between ‘announced revision’ and ‘silent corrections’ (missing labels on graphs etc.). Noisy revisions are in fact announced and sent out to clients, though not to AC’s. ICES suggested the use of the ICES Observer’s Forum as an option to explore. It was clarified that the footnote on the advice indicates all the changes made (ex. changes in SSB...), so changes are always traceable. The reason for the change is not mentioned, because it is supposed to be brief. It was proposed to announce noisy corrections on the Observer’s Forum, including explanations for the changes. If things are still not clear ICES asked people to contact and offered to help.

The chairman asked if major revisions in the advice sheets could be inserted in colour/with an asterisk so it becomes more obvious. ICES answered it will look into what can be done (**action 11**).

b. Follow up on quality control processes within ICES

The Pelagic AC has put forward an issue on quality assurance, and while the chairman recognizes this is a major agenda item planned for MIACO, he would like the PELAC to present a paper they have prepared and to follow up the discussion during MIACO.

Gerard van Balsfoort underlined the pelagic industry’s involvement in science and the extent to which its importance is respected across the industry. However, quality assurance has increasingly become a point of attention and he is pleased to see it has been given such importance on the MIACO agenda. The discussion on the progress can be saved for the afternoon, but this morning he would like to explain the unrest the PELAC is feeling with regard to the assessments of its major pelagic stocks, which are becoming a source of genuine concern.

According to Gerard van Balsfoort, the advice is becoming more and more ‘jumpy’ each year, as can be seen in the document presented. The advice is becoming increasingly unpredictable and revisions are seen every year. Perceptions of the stocks seem more disperse compared with previous years. This is partly related to nature, partly to QA but the PELAC also feels this is partly related to the way ICES works. The document shows changes made in the six major pelagic stocks over the last years in terms of F reference points, biomass and advice. Apparently, this shows ICES is having trouble grasping these stocks, which is a concern for the PELAC. The latest mackerel advice has led to a huge discussion internally but also among the Coastal States, and ended up with a decision for an inter-benchmark for mackerel. But an advice was given for a quota cut of -68%, while an increase was proposed for Western horse mackerel. This is something both scientists and industry cannot believe to be true.

Changes in reference points can happen, but there are rules for this. Some of these rules come from ACOM but they are not always transparent. The economic implications are huge and the industry is fighting to hold on to its MSC certification. What the industry is asking for is to look at these stocks together to get a better grasp on them. The industry asks how it can help.

The chairman re-emphasized what Gerard van Balsfoort had said. It is not just a matter of the data of the model, it’s the entire process that needs to be quality assured. He asked for a quick response from ICES before continuing this discussion during MIACO.



ICES said that quite a mix of issues was brought forward. Later today presentations will be held dealing with consistency in the advice, the benchmarks are linked to that. There will not be a presentation on benchmarks but ICES is developing schemes to determine benchmark prioritisation and spread them evenly and transparently. These schemes should be made available.

The 'jumpiness' van Balsfoort is referring to has to do with benchmarks, so it doesn't help when calls are made for more of them. Each benchmark results in new reference points. A balance is needed between analysis vs. stability in the advice. ICES acts upon requests and is partly responsible for the disparity by being too responsive. A discussion has been had with the recipients of the advice, as ICES may need some adjustment in the way it works in order to get more stability. This afternoon ICES will also highlight the QA framework. There is a special workshop on mackerel planned for May where ICES will try to build a roadmap and look at revision problems from each year.

#### **4. AC's experience with the landing obligation, discards and interaction with ICES**

The landing obligation has entered into full force this year, having important implications for the fisheries. A number of issues have been brought forward and the chairman invited the AC's to present them.

##### **a. Integration of selectivity trials in stock assessments (NWWAC)**

Michael Keatinge explained that significant work has been carried out by the fishing industry in relation to gear selectivity, and wonders if there is any way to include this work into the stock assessments so that feedback can be provided in terms of how selectivity trials affect the stock system. If there's a change in selectivity, this will probably lead to changes in reference points. He wants to know how this can be taken into account, and how effects of gear shifting can become visible in the stock assessment.

ICES said that under relative stability and the CFP framework, ICES was told not to focus on selectivity. However, with the increasing interest in the landing obligation and issues in mixed fisheries, selectivity is creeping up the agenda again. At the moment ICES remains in status quo. Selectivity will affect the productivity ICES measures and reference points. The issue of selectivity is of interest in the scientific community but more information is needed. ICES added that when looking at selectivity, a more long term view is needed and short/long term economic dimensions need to be considered. ICES needs to look at how it can optimize selectivity across a range of different species and determine the impact it has on fishing mortality in a longer term horizon.

Michael Keatinge is interested in how to collaborate on this in the future. He appreciates the technical difficulties but selectivity has long term benefits, even if it takes a long time. ICES confirmed that it is heading in that direction, but it is a challenge and currently there is no mechanism for it. There are other reasons to look into selectivity, NGO's are taking an interest in light of MSFD, DG ENV is interested, L opt is also being looked at... ICES hopes to write a new roadmap at the end of this year for mixed fisheries issues.



In the context of a wider consideration of stock assessment and advice, Ashley Olson asks what ICES' thinking is on discard data, discard assumptions in relation to de minimis and survivability. The chairman added there's a linkage between STECF data on survivability, and asks whether ICES has such a link as well.

ICES answered many scientists operate in many of the same groups so ICES tries to keep the roles clear and distinct. In terms of STECF data on operational discards, there are potential issues about the quality of the data and differences from ICES estimates, so this is something ICES keeps a close watch on. In terms of feeding selectivity trials into stock assessments: for any stock assessment ICES needs 5 years of information before it can start commenting on selectivity. ICES monitors changes and assessment models can take changes into account. As more information becomes available patterns can be adjusted to take changes into account. But for some other models have fixed selection patterns. ICES tries to adapt within the limitations of the assessment models. No changes in selectivity are projected for 2020, so selectivity will not be fed into the assessment until 2020.

Michael Keatinge insisted this point needs to be pushed up the agenda. Industry is being asked to implement changes to improve selectivity, but if the models don't accommodate this, it creates a sense of uncertainty.

ICES added that even though the model cannot take selectivity into account, changes could still be visible. However, there is still a major concern over the quality of the discard sampling information ICES works with. Industry should be encouraged to cooperate as much as they can by collecting data and characterizing the catch compositions as much as they can.

Gerard van Balsfoort asked ICES to clarify its role with regard to L opt. ICES answered it is a concept being looked at to determine if the fish size is the optimum. ICES advice on this is that it is a management decision, so it is up to DG Mare and DG ENV to explore this further.

b. Improving science and discard data for deep-water stocks (LDAC)

Alexandre Rodriguez referred to the point made earlier on about collaborating with ICES in order to improve the knowledge base for discard data for deep-sea fisheries in NEAFC regulated areas. The LDAC understands the point made by ICES about safeguarding the quality of the data and data collection methods.

## 5. Listing of action points

The chairman asked what the AC's think of the new format for this meeting and if it is worthwhile going forward with it. Gerard van Balsfoort was not convinced a pre-meeting is needed on all the subjects. There is some duplication and many issues are also dealt with at MIACO.

The chairman clarified MIACO was originally an ICES-AC's meeting, but became broader to include other observers. Notably the PELAC wants a more focussed meeting with ICES that allows more in-depth discussion about certain specific topics that are relevant to the AC's. He added that in fairness,



the only duplicated items were on the ecosystem issues and on quality assurance, which was agreed to be important. The specific issues from the AC's discussed this morning will no longer have to be discussed during MIACO.

ICES appreciated the preparation by the chairman and the PELAC secretariat to formulate specific points and providing necessary background to the topics so ICES could adequately prepare itself for this meeting.

The chairman concluded there was consensus to move forward with this format, and assured the meeting that draft action items from the meeting would be circulated within two weeks (**action 12**). He asks MIACO to do the same. He added the draft minutes will be circulated within a few weeks and a deadline set for any amendments (**action 13**). Next year it will be important to revisit the outcomes of this meeting to see what we have achieved.

Everyone agreed with the way forward.

## 6. AOB

### a. Chairmanship

Last year the Baltic AC chaired the meeting, this year it was the Pelagic AC. The chairman asked for a volunteer from one of the other AC's. In absence of other AC's volunteering, the LDAC confirms their willingness to organize next years' meeting (**action 14**).

Kenn Skau Fischer wanted to go back to the discussion on multi-annual plans that all parties must agree to. He wondered how the ICES response to the request from the EU management plan relates to the management strategy for the Baltic sea. Also the North sea cod advice follows the multi-annual plan, but it isn't agreed with Norway.

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen expressed his appreciation of the directness of the meeting and for the quality of ICES presentations during advice periods, especially when advice is complicated and negative. The work is appreciated as is the presence of ICES to answer technical questions.

The chairman closed the meeting and thanked everybody for their participation and contributions.

#### List of Outcomes:

Action #	What	Who
1	Adoption of the name 'MIAC' for this meeting in association with MIACO.	Everyone
2	Submit special request to COM for advice on brown crab	NWWAC



3	Further reflection on how to strengthen industry-science collaboration and data collection on deep sea species, including attendance of ADGs or involving industry scientists	LDAC
4	ICES will raise with recipients of advice the issue of sudden changes caused by revisions of reference points	ICES
5	To respond positively to request for letters supporting genetic analysis projects for the cod stock in North Western Waters	ICES
6	Participate in WebExes and benchmarks for cod 6a and Irish sea	NWWAC
7	To start a process, based on the results of the February MSE workshop, to define better the guidelines for evaluating rebuilding plans	ICES
8	Ensure attendance of industry scientists to MSE workshop	PELAC
9	Take up discussion on contribution of TAC's to fisheries management at MIACO	NSAC
10	Continue discussion on underwater noise with the Chair of SCICOM during MIACO	NWWAC and PELAC
11	Use ICES Observer Forum to communicate changes in advice sheets and look into further mechanisms to highlight changes	ICES
12 & 13	Draft a list of action items and detailed minutes to be shared with AC's and ICES with deadline for comments	PELAC Secretariat
14	Organisation of next MIAC meeting 2020	LDAC

