

MCAP February 2005

MCAP:01

**Management Committee on the
Advisory Process**

ICES Headquarters

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International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

Conseil International pour l'Exploration de la Mer

**International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
Conseil International pour l'Exploration de la Mer**

H.C. Andersens Boulevard 44-46
DK-1553 Copenhagen V
Denmark
Telephone (+45) 33 38 67 00
Telefax (+45) 33 93 42 15
www.ices.dk
info@ices.dk

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1 Welcome and practical arrangements

Paul Connolly (MCAP chair) opened the meeting at 10.00 and welcomed the participants. The Secretariat informed the participants about practical arrangements during the meeting.

2 Adoption of Agenda

The draft agenda was adopted. Under AOB, Paul Connolly would like to agree on MCAP priorities for 2005. Furthermore, Paul Connolly would also like to discuss how we can invite Commissioner Borg to ICES in the spring to discuss advice and science with him.

Ben van de Wetering (DG Env) was invited to brief the meeting on progress with the European Marine Strategy as this may have major implications for the ICES advisory process. .

3 Review of Action Points from MCAP September 2004 (Doc. 20)

All action points have been followed up or are in the process of being actioned. There is nothing further to review since the paper in September. Three action points from September (Auditing the ICES Integrated work plan, Integrating the advisory functions and Quality Assurance of the advisory function) are separate agenda items at this meeting

4 Progress Report

a. Sonar Request (DG Env) (Doc 21/Hans Lassen/Simon Jennings)

Hans Lassen explained that there was great political sensitivity surrounding this request and that the topic has proven equally sensitive scientifically. After much debate within the ad-hoc group assigned to develop the draft advice, ICES is now ready, and has decided, to release a text that only deals with sonar impact on cetaceans. The cetacean text will be sent to the Commission on 9th February. We have promised the Commission a text on sonar impacts on fish later; however, this text can only be written after the conclusion of a review of the physiology of fish hearing. This review (to be written by Dr Arthur Popper, USA) is in the pipeline and will hopefully become available before the end of 2005, but this is outside ICES control. DG Env. has been so informed.

Simon Jennings added that the process was interesting as we have relied on people outside ICES, and therefore it is difficult for us to judge the accuracy of the report. If we get similar sensitive requests in the future, there are some lessons to remember.

- When we have a controversial issue, meeting by correspondence is extremely difficult. An early meeting of the *ad-hoc* group would have been a big help;
- Communication problems: make sure that the chair is dynamic and will commit to the job. It took 6 months to make any progress on the sonar request. The request was eventually dealt with through the energy and commitment of Mark Tasker.
- We have implemented a tracking system for the *ad-hoc* requests.

Simon Jennings asked whether it might be worth the expenditure to hire Arthur Popper as a consultant to write the advice on fish and satisfy DG Environment. MCAP concluded that this would be premature – ICES should wait to consider this option until his review is written and we have seen his paper.

Action Points: Ensure lessons learned from sonar request are actioned by ICES when similar sensitive requests are received.

b. Management Strategies (Poul Degnbol)

Poul Degnbol reported from the SGMAS meeting held 31 January-4 February. He presented a working paper. SGMAS was tasked to develop a framework for harvest control rules and management strategies. It is not a new area for ICES, but one that has not been touched upon very much. Poul Degnbol noted that the current approach to evaluation of harvest control rules was limited to the behaviour within the biological system. He found that we have to look also at how management is reacting to advice and how the industry reacts to management measures. While the present approach is highly quantitative involving a large number of simulations, it is increasingly necessary to look at conceptual issues. The report will be presented at AMAGWC (14-18 February). Poul Degnbol explained that the result of SGMAS would alter the advice already from this year.

Action Point: Poul Degnbol to update MCAP following meeting of AMAGWC on how SGMAS will impact advice in 2005.

c. European Marine Strategy (Rotterdam stakeholder meeting, EMMA, etc.) (Doc. 5)

Ben van de Wetering (DG Environment) joined the MCAP meeting for this agenda item. He presented document no. 5. He informed the meeting that the Marine Strategy shall be published in July 2005. The text package will consist of five different documents:

- Background document (build mainly on the background documents presented for Rotterdam conference)
- “Guidance on the Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach” (developed by an ICES group in cooperation with DG Env. and DG Fish; will be published in CRR series)
- Official communication containing “The Strategy”. (This is limited to 22, 500 characters, for translation reasons)
- Legal framework Directive for the EU. Assist countries to implement the EMS
- An extended impact assessment, e.g. including an economic assessment of the consequences of the strategy

A concrete action that started after Rotterdam (November 2004) is a consultation process to define eco-regions in the European seas in continuation of the ICES study presented in Rotterdam. DG Env. will organise a meeting on 1 April (in Brussels) with the marine conventions and fisheries organisations, and others. ICES will be invited. The latest documents will be provided at this meeting – similar to the stakeholder meeting. This consultation process was launched at the beginning of December by DG Env., the deadline for comments is before the end of February 2005.

The legal framework will be general, e.g. as regards assessment and monitoring. The intention with this framework is to allow EU member states to implement the strategy. DG Env. is at the moment analysing the EMMA work with an aim of including these principles in the legal framework. After the presentation and adoption of the European strategy there will be a long process during which the Strategy will be made more specific and gaps will be filled. Another big challenge is to get the non-EU countries on-board in a political process. The follow-up of the strategy document will be an invitation from the European Council to the Marine Conventions to follow the same approach.

The Marine Strategy has work implications for ICES. But ICES is well into meeting these new challenges, e.g. ICES is already changing its advice to a more ecosystem based approach. DG Env. emphasised that the EU covers not only waters in the Northeast Atlantic but also waters in the Mediterranean and (in the future) in the Black Sea. DG Env. invited ICES to assist with the development of scientific networks in these areas. The General Secretary said that he would expect that ICES would be willing to do so, but that ICES would have to be invited by the Regional Marine Conventions and regulatory bodies.

Finally, Ben van de Wetering mentioned that one particular issue for EMMA is to bridge between science and policy. He noted that ICES, together with JRC (EC), had already developed a paper for

EMMA laying down some principles and he found that ICES can, and should, play a role when deciding how funding can be used to assist policy in obtaining the relevant scientific information.

Action Point: MCAP will assess any implications of Marine Strategy for ICES advice following DG Environment meeting on 1st April where draft Marine Strategy documents will be discussed.

Regional Advisory Councils (RACs) (Doc 4 Henrik Sparholt)

Henrik Sparholt (ICES Secretariat) joined the meeting for this agenda item and presented Document 4. The RACs are groups of fishing industry and NGOs, and RACs are invited to advise the European Commission on fisheries management issues. ICES will work with these RACs and establishment of these links is to be a key area for ICES in 2005. In November 2004, it was clarified that RACs are obliged to relate to the scientific advice on fisheries management and that ICES has an advisory role, but also that ICES cannot be a RAC member or observer. At the time of speaking only the North Sea and (very recently) the Pelagic RACs have been established. As a first step, ICES must identify the RAC Secretariats.

Because the RACs shall relate to the scientific advice provided by ICES, implications for the amount of presentation work that ICES shall deliver could be significant. This work shall be covered by the Chair of ACFM, Chair of ACE (for ecosystem issues) and Chairs of Assessment groups supported by the Secretariat.

The RACs are independent units and can ask advice from anywhere; almost 1/3 of their budget is allocated to financing scientists to do additional studies. ICES will not turn such requests down on principle, but will evaluate each case on its own merits. ICES obviously cannot engage in any project that could be potentially contradictory to our advice.

Action point: The Secretariat should develop contacts with the Secretariats of the RACs. The relationships among RACs, Fisheries Regulatory Commissions and ICES shall be on the agenda of MCAP-MICC in April 2005. As the RAC's become established during 2005 and the organisational structure becomes clear, MCAP should develop a position paper that will deal with how ICES will interact with the RAC's. This is a major priority for MCAP in 2005.

d. Observers for the ACFM/ACE/ACME meetings (Doc 6)

i. Experiences with the October ACFM meeting

MCAP requested an evaluation of the impact by having industry and NGO observers at the ACFM meetings. This impact could be on the meeting process itself, the participants' attitude to the meeting but also on the subsequent political process leading up to the management decisions. Doug Wilson (IFM) has promised to provide this evaluation when we have had a full season i.e., after the May 2005 ACE/ACFM meeting. His basic approach is to interview key individuals. Those present at the October ACFM meeting (PD, HAL) found that there was no intrusion to the members. The observer from the industry wrote a small insert in Fishing News suggesting that he has received a better understanding of the strain the assessment system is under.

Action Point: The Secretariat shall develop a paper evaluating the impact of industry observers on the October 2004 ACFM meeting for presentation to the MCAP-MICC April 2005 meeting (HAL).

A full evaluation of the October 2004 and May 2005 ACFM meetings will be prepared and made available for the ASC MCAP meeting.

ii. Invited stakeholder for the ACE/ACFM/ACME May/June 2005 meetings

ACE and ACFM will meet in parallel in May 2005. MCAP agreed that it would be difficult to invite stakeholders to one Committee and not the other, especially as ACE and ACFM will have joint plenary sessions.

MCAP therefore decided that all industry and NGO's noted on the list in Doc. 6 should be invited to all three advisory committee meetings. The list should be supplemented with AMAP.

Action Point: The three ACOM chairs should provide the Secretariat with a short description of the essential elements on their agendas for inclusion in the invitation letter. These highlights of the agendas should allow the invitees to judge whether they are interested in being observers at these meetings. HAL will write one common letter to all Clients to all ACOMs by mid-February. The list of proposed stakeholders is given in Annex 3. Poul Degnbol and Simon Jennings will discuss the plenary agenda for ACE and ACFM.

e. Sandwich Approach

There has been one more meeting (WGNSSK and NSC FP) since this sandwich approach was reviewed in September 2004 by MCAP. This meeting, as in former years, was open to NGOs and industry representatives. NSC FP had (as in earlier years) invited two external scientific expert reviewers. The chair of WGNSSK presented assessments of North Sea Cod, sole and whiting to the group. The reviewers found that the assessments were fundamentally sound.

MCAP discussed this matter and considered that with observers invited to ACOMs and with the establishment of the RACs, the sandwich approach may no longer be necessary. Therefore, MCAP concluded that ICES should not arrange any further sandwich meetings for the fish stock assessment groups but will revisit the issue when the arrangements with the RAC becomes more clear.

Action Point: MCAP will review the future of the Sandwich Approach in September 2005 when ICES' interactions with the RAC's becomes clearer.

Participants at Expert groups

MCAP briefly reviewed the status on recruiting members for the expert groups. The Delegates at ASC 2004 decided that Chairs for Expert Groups under Science Committees can nominate members (Delegates can also nominate members of course). Expert Groups under Advisory Committees do not have this "open" membership; it is only the Delegates that can nominate members.

It was noted that while this is a positive step we still have not solved the financial constraints for scientists to participate in ICES expert groups. When travel funds are not available, it is uncertain whether this opening up of science expert groups will attract more people.

5 Progress on the ICES advisory process

MCAP reviewed the development of the integrated advisory report. Customers have found the format too complicated and as a result it appears that these customers have missed a number of points. ICES will review the format in the light of these comments. The issue is a communication problem including unfamiliarity with new format of the documentation. Hopefully this will be at least partly resolved with time. However, the ACOMs chairs and the ICES Secretariat should review the format of the advisory report and simplify it, clarifying the text wherever possible. Also, the group should consider writing a better introduction explaining the format of the advice. However, MCAP decided to wait with further actions until the MCAP-MICC meeting to include feedback from this meeting before we start changing and perhaps causing even more confusion.

The ICES website presenting the advice has not been adapted to the revised format. The Secretariat informed that it is aware of the inconsistency and plans to review the website during the spring of 2005.

Action point: MCAP will review the format of the ICES Advice following feedback from client Commissions at MCAP-MICC meeting in April.

The Database on Fish Stock Assessment on the ICES website must be changed to reflect the new and developing form of ICES advice (it should move from a stock based to an area based format).

a. Unification of the advisory process (SGAWWP)

MCAP revisited the diagram from the SGAWWP report 2003 showing the assessment and advisory process and the groups involved. MCAP discussed the plan laid down in the diagram and found that with experience the plan should be revisited. While MCAP maintains the overall goals defined by the plan, e.g. unification of the advisory process and advice based on an ecosystem approach it was found desirable to bring the diagram more in line with the present situation. MCAP therefore invited MCAP members to submit proposals for revisions and to split the diagram into two: 1) a presentation of the actual (2005) situation and 2) the desired system.

Action point: MCAP members to submit proposals for revised diagrams 1) a presentation of the actual (2005) situation and 2) the desired system. These proposals should be sent to the Secretariat before 1 March 2005. The Secretariat will consolidate these proposals into a single draft to be discussed by MCAP by correspondence in spring 2005. The revised diagram will be used at the MCAP-MICC meeting in April 2005.

b. Introduction of the Ecosystem Approach (Integrating Assessment Groups)

The new step on the development of the advisory process in 2005 is the introduction of an integrated assessment group. This group WGRED (Chair: Jake Rice) will produce texts for Chapter 3 (Ecosystem overviews) in the ICES Advice. Furthermore, WGRED will identify significant environmental events and their possible consequences for fish stock productivity with a view to asking the fish stock assessment groups to consider how best to reflect these environmental events in their assessments and projections. WGRED might also look at the general structure of the overview.

Basing the advice on ecosystem requires that an agreed set of bio-regions be established and used consistently in the advice. Based on a request from DG Env. ICES provided in November 2004 some considerations and a proposal for such a bio-region system, see further under point 4c (European Marine Strategy). The discussions on harmonizing the areas used in ICES advice are however not concluded. It was decided not to change the areas in 2005, but there should be a watching brief on the status of the eco-regions and also on the RAC regions.

Action Point: HAL and SJ shall for MCAP-MICC April 2005, provide a paper showing maps of the different areas, the present areas used in the advice, the proposal by the bio-regions (November 2004) group and the RACs area definitions.

c. Fisheries advice: Management Strategies

Hans Lassen presented document 17 which includes a proposal for a theme session for ASC 2006. MCAP supported the proposal.

Action point: HAL and PD (on behalf of MCAP) would prepare a proposal for a Theme Session "Science Advice Policy Interaction" in 2006.

d. Quality of advice (Doc. 14/Henrik S/SJ) (SGQUA in 2005 Meeting by Correspondence)

Simon Jennings presented the report which includes an approach to quality procedures for ICES advisory work based on ISO procedures. SGQUA raised three questions:

- Does ICES want to adhere to prescriptive manuals - or does it just want guidance documents?
- Who shall be responsible for the audit function?
- What is the future of SGQUA?

SGQUA cannot go any further until ICES provides answers to the first question. The Assessment working groups have, for some time, been asked to develop manuals and handbooks and have re-

sponded positively. The Secretariat has compiled this material and SGQUA has reviewed all the documents as they are now presented. SGQUA consider them sufficient to provide a high level of quality assurance within ICES. SGQUA therefore considers that it is possible for ICES to continue with establishing prescriptive manuals.

Should ICES decide to implement descriptive manuals and the corresponding audit function this is a significant addition to the Secretariat workload and usually a Quality Manager oversees the procedure. Therefore, SGQUA raises the question whether the Secretariat should reallocate staff to provide this additional work or whether the Secretariat should employ a Quality Manager. Hans Lassen informed MCAP that for 2005-2007 there is no provision in the ICES budget for such a position. It has not been analysed whether reallocation within the Secretariat and giving up other tasks might be possible.

MCAP decided to continue the quality assurance work i.e., updating handbooks and guidelines, assuming that a Quality Manager will be identified and that SGQUA should complete its report for 2005 paying particular attention to finalising an ICES quality policy statement.

Action Point: SGQUA to write a final report, and to revise the quality policy statement. The MCAP Chair will bring this issue to the February Bureau meeting under AOB. The 3 documents that are presented here (Docs 14a, 14b and 14c) will be discussed. .

e. Auditing the ICES advisory process (Doc 19/Jake Rice's paper for CONC)

MCAP continued the discussion of auditing the ICES Integrated Action plan 2003-2007 that took place in Vigo during the ASC 2004. Since that discussion the then chair of CONC Jake Rice had produced a clarifying paper for CONC on the intention with the audit and this paper was tabled for MCAP. The CONC Chair reported that simply providing a list of ToRs and seeing how they relate to the Action Plan will provide statistics, but does not properly reflect the work that has been done. An additional review needs to be done.

Poul Degnbol referred to how ACFM update their own ACFM Action Plan after every ACFM meeting (i.e., twice a year). He felt that this was far more relevant than a list of ToRs from Expert groups. Harald Loeng said that he would like to discuss this at CONC and present them with our discussion.

Hans Lassen pointed out that for the Advisory groups the critical point is having the feedback from the Clients, and whether we are answering their requests. PC noted that we need a review of whether we are meeting the requirements laid down in the MoUs.

Action point: The Secretariat was asked to provide a paper for MCAP-MICC providing a "Progress Review of the Action Plan" and to include a review of whether we meet the requirements laid down in the MoUs. This review should be available and discussed at the MCAP-MICC in April 2005.

a. NEWIFAP (Fish stock assessment software) (Doc 12/Hans Lassen) For information

The Secretariat has developed a draft User Specification Requirements (URS) with the assistance of a number of experts recruited among stock coordinators and assessment WG chairs. Furthermore, the Secretariat has discussed a contract with the Danish Institute on the joint development of the system. The system should be up and running for demonstration at the ASC 2005. The first trials will probably be with WGMHSA in September.

Chris Zimmermann (SGMID Co-Chair and a special advisor for the specification of NEWIFAP) noted last week that the current URS which is WINDOWS-based therefore excludes a number of ICES users of the system, users that have MACs or have UNIX, LINUX or other systems installed on their PC's. Chris Zimmermann also pointed out that the proposed system demanded the most up-to-date version of Windows, and that in his view this would put extra constraints on the potential range of users. He advocated for a more open system and to develop the system as being platform independent. A platform independent system would take longer to develop and would – because it would be impossible to reuse modules from the FishFrame system as planned – be more costly. Platform independence cannot be

achieved and at the same time have the system up and running by the autumn. The Secretariat has initiated a survey among the potential users – through ACFM – on how many would be seriously hampered in their use of the system if we maintain the MICROSOFT approach. Also, currently DIFRES and the Secretariat are analysing the possibilities for providing various degrees of platform independence and the costs associated.

This is not within the remits of MCAP but should be considered by the Bureau. MCAP would like the Bureau to note that platform independence is a concern and that all users should be able to use the system; the exclusion of users must be avoided.

b. Review groups – recruiting of external reviewers (Doc. 9/Louise Scharff)

Louise Scharff informed MCAP on lessons learnt from the 2004 round of assessments. The key lesson is that the advisory programme must achieve more clarification of where the review process stops and ACFM takes over. The specific issues are:

- There has to be clear distinction between tasks assigned to the review group and those dealt with at the ACFM meeting.
- There has to be better interaction between the review group and the Chair of the WG;
- The Clients see the introduction of independent review groups as a major change in the way ICES do things. ICES needs to pay attention to explanation of the process and the responsibilities of the various groups involved (assessment working groups, review groups, integrating assessment groups, ACFM/ACE/ACME and MCAP).

While there were some problems in 2004, the process widened the experts involved in the review process thereby freeing up time at the ACFM meeting, i.e. there are clear advantages to the review system. The involvement of external experts is also a big advantage. A particular problem is to clarify the responsibilities when a review group/ACFM disagrees with the working group; who can overrule whom? In principle, ACFM should take the review group as a second consideration and perhaps not accept a revised assessment but rather interpret this as uncertainty in the assessment. In 2005 a number of corrections have been introduced but the basic principles remain unchanged. MCAP agreed with these corrective measures and that ACFM should go ahead as planned.

c. Think tank on mixed fisheries advice (Doc. 10/Henrik Sparholt)

MCAP briefly reviewed the development with mixed fisheries models. ICES is being criticised by DG FISH for not being sufficiently active in this area. The consensus opinion within assessment scientists now seem to be that the approach chosen (MTAC) is too complex and nothing is gained by such a level of complexity. In 2005, ICES needs to revisit this issue and search for a new approach to advising on this issue. This is one of the key areas where our Clients are asking for results.

The Commission wants mixed fisheries advice for two reasons: 1) to allow management by fisheries, not by fish stocks; but also 2) to be made aware of where the links among TACs are and a qualitative indication of the strength of these links. The latter will be useful even if management is still restricted to simple species/area TACs. ICES should identify something feasible and simple which at the conceptual level would provide if not the full answer, then an indication of where problems exist.

Action Point: The Secretariat, in cooperation with the ACFM chair, should establish a small think-tank involving say three ICES scientists (Poul Degnbol as leader) and the Commission (Ken Patterson) (for 1-2 days?). The task of this think tank would be to find out exactly the direction we should take in 2005. The AMAGWC meeting 14-18 February 2005 will also discuss this approach and perhaps assist in finding experts and sound out the work to be done. It would be ideal if the “think tank” meeting take place before the MCAP-MICC meeting.

6 Policy on data issues (misreporting, non-reporting). EU Regional data sampling groups

The Chair informed MCAP that under the Data Collection Regulation EC DG Fish has set up Regional data sampling co-ordination groups. Until now there has been little or no coordination; the chairs of the six groups will meet in Brussels on 10th March 2005 to discuss steps that will make sampling fisheries more efficient, and avoid duplication in the sampling process. The chair will keep MCAP informed on progress. There are clear implications for the quality of ICES 'raw material' (data) and ICES coordination role in data collection (e.g. co-ordination of mackerel egg surveys).

7 Policy on Fast Track Requests (Doc. 11/Mette Bertelsen)

As Mette Bertelsen was ill, Hans Lassen presented Document 11 and reported that there have been no changes in the fast track policy since MCAP has previously discussed this document. The fast track procedure was set up in answer to requests from Clients. The MCAP Chair has authority to accept a request on behalf of an Advisory Committee/Working Group. We have promised the Clients that we will provide an answer within two weeks whether we will respond to such a fast track request or not. ICES is not obliged to accept all requests; also, some requests involve extra costs to be covered by the client. Poul Degnbol noted that there is a difference between "out of sequence" and fast track requests. ICES has an annual cycle, but should be able to handle any requests that come out of the cycle; fast track requests as opposed to "out of sequence" advice may not allow sufficient time to assure the scientific quality of the advice.

MCAP should have an electronic conference on whether to accept a request in cases when there is doubt about whether a request is "bona fide". This would help to eliminate doubt among the Delegates on the proper function of the fast track system and doubts if this procedure might impair ICES integrity.

MCAP stressed that the quality assurance of the advice based on Fast Track must remain in place.

Fast track advice is vulnerable if the advisory committees are not active in reviewing the draft advice and unfortunately the Advisory Committees are generally poor to react on drafts. The ACOM chairs promised to discuss this with their committees, in particular with ACFM. On the other hand the drafts are usually of good quality because the requests are typically narrow in their scope and it is therefore possible to gather (physically or by correspondence) a small group of highly skilled experts with intimate knowledge on the specific issue.

MCAP finds that ICES must accept that while the system is potentially vulnerable Fast Track Advice is a system that is needed. Therefore, MCAP must keep a close watch on how this system performs and be keenly aware of problems to avoid the pitfalls. The "out of sequence" advice is subject to similar concerns but in these cases there is less time pressure and MCAP has better opportunity to consider the implications of the requests.

In 2004, 12 requests additional to the MoUs were answered and two were declined. ICES has met deadlines, with the exception of the sonar request.

Action Point: At each meeting MCAP should review the fast track requests and how these have been dealt with. While MCAP endorses the fast track policy, MCAP should have the fast track policy as an agenda item at each MCAP meeting to allow ICES to react swiftly if problems arise.

8 EU Advisory Process

a. New Funding Mechanism - Update

Paul Connolly informed MCAP on the development within EC DG Fish. There had been no reply to an application for money for projects that will service the Advisory Process. The Chair reported that over 40 applications were submitted. However, so far no project has been funded. Laboratories are all waiting for the money, but there has been a delay due to administrative problems.

b. STECF - ICES and JRC – Relationship

The Chair requested this point as John Farnell (DG Fish) in addressing the Delegates in September 2004 had wanted to make a clear distinction between tasks assigned to STECF, ICES and JRC. The point here is that there seems to be a lot of duplication in certain areas between ICES and STECF. Both draw on the same limited pool of scientists and there needs to be a clearer distinction in roles.

David Griffith joined MCAP at this point and explained that JRC is a place that ICES can work with; they have resources and expertise that ICES does not have and vice versa. JRC recognises this also, and recently there have been a few examples of good cooperation. Unfortunately, DG Fish does not appear to recognise the benefits of this.

Poul Degnbol explained that increasingly STECF is used as a mechanism for fast track issues. Many issues that we are discussing as fast track would increasingly be sent to STECF e.g., harvest control rules. JRC was used as the Secretariat support for STECF and its subgroups. This will develop if they continue seeing STECF as providing tactical advice. Another aspect is while ICES is concerned with the scientific integrity of the advice; STECF seems to accept approaches that ICES does not find valid, e.g. on the mixed fisheries issues.

Action: MCAP should, on behalf of ICES, take this problem up with DG Fish

c. Possible need for a customer opinion survey (Doc 22/David Griffith)

David Griffith presented Doc 22. At the Delegates meeting in Vigo there was a series of interventions from DG Fish saying they were not happy with the ICES advisory product and that they would like a greater role in the decision-making within ICES.

MCAP asked the General Secretary to investigate with the author of the letters to ICES in order to provide more details on the complaints. This could be a basis for a meeting with DG Fish discussing the specific point of criticisms.

Paul Connolly found that in line with John Farnell's (DG FISH) intervention to the Delegates that ICES needs individual meetings with clients in addition to the annual MCAP-MICC meeting.

MCAP discussed the issue of the need for a customer survey and concluded that such a survey should not be conducted at this time. Paul Connolly to take MCAP comments forward to the Bureau.

Action Point: HAL will contact Brussels and arrange a meeting with DG Fish in the near future – definitely before MCAP-MICC. The matter will be further discussed by the Bureau.

9 Ad Hoc Contacts with Commissions – Improved Communications

Covered above under 8c.

10 HELCOM and OSPAR long-term strategies (Doc. 7a, 7b/Jørgen Nørrevang)

MCAP welcomed the initiatives taken by HELCOM and OSPAR to produce long-term plans. This will help ICES in revising its Action Plans and in better understanding the advisory needs. However, for 2005 the advisory requests are agreed and the long-term strategies will not have any implications for that year. Requested advice is feeding into particular points on the OSPAR and HELCOM agendas. With the long term plans, we might be able to widen the debate.

Action Point: The ACOMs (in particular ACE and ACME) should consider these long-term plans at their 2005 meetings.

11 MCAP-MICC meeting 4-5 April 2005 (Doc. 8)

MCAP briefly reviewed Doc. 8 and noted that during this meeting MCAP had suggested additional agenda points.

Action Point: The Secretariat should develop a draft agenda based on Doc. 8 comments from the Clients and comments made by MCAP during this meeting.

12 EFARO May 2005 (Paul Connolly)

EFARO is an organisation of the Directors of Fisheries and Aquaculture laboratories who meet annually. In 2005 the meeting will take place in Holland in May. This is a valuable forum for ICES to air advisory and fisheries assessment problems. One particular issue that MCAP asked the ICES representative to bring forward is the required wider expertise within the ICES Expert Groups. These groups are getting more ToRs but there are fewer resources available to get the work done.

ICES has decided to adopt an ecosystem approach as the basis for its advice. However, the present system is dominated by fisheries assessment scientists and this group must be enlarged by ecologists; these experts must be brought into the assessment groups and fisheries scientists should be reoriented towards the ecosystem approach. However, this can only be successful if time is freed within the assessment groups to address the ecological and environmental issues. Freeing up time can only be achieved if some assessments are dropped (or only conducted every 2-5 years) or if some assessments are moved out of the assessment working groups and conducted elsewhere, e.g. in laboratories or at the secretariat.

MCAP noted that the assessment groups have been given a tool – the benchmark/update – that will allow groups to put a lower priority on some assessments in a particular year; now the groups shall find out how to use it. This discussion is on the agenda for AMAGWC.

Improved efficiency might be achieved through better and more training of the assessment experts. MCAP is pleased with the current WKAFAT activity but finds that this might be expanded, e.g. two courses a year would be optimal. One course would be at a lower level, and one at a higher level to cater for the scientists that are recruited. ICES could take on the role of training these young scientists.

Action: The Chairs of the ACOMs and CONC to discuss expansion of the training activities within ICES.

13 Any Other Business

Invitation to Joe Borg to ICES: 6 April

Action: MCAP supported this initiative and asked the Secretariat to issue an invitation

Report from the Bureau Working Group Data Development Project (BWGDDP) meeting (2-4 February)

Julie Gillin (ICES Secretariat) presented a brief report of the meeting and its conclusions. Julie noted that ICES role is to ensure data availability to the scientific and advisory communities; ICES should only hold data when bringing data together will improve data accessibility, integrity and/or quality.

The main conclusions from BWGDDP were:

- There must be fast access to data. However, data need to be supplemented with indicators of the data quality;
- The preferred option is to hold data in a combination of centralised and distributed databases. This speeds up access to the data and makes it easier to submit data. The disadvantage is that data quality can be more variable and data merging can be a complex exercise. Distributed databases present a challenge on security – data should only be changed by authorized personnel – and open systems are vulnerable to misuse (unauthorized access to data, spam, virus);
- There is a lot of good valuable data that are going extinct. ICES is an international data centre and a good place to archive these data;
- BWGDDP recognised the need to revisit the ICES data policy. Based on MCAP feedback, a Data Policy proposal from SGMID, advice on processing and prioritization of ICES-DC oceanographic data activities the ICES Secretariat will develop a proposal for an IT strategy.
- BWGDDP will develop an ICES IT strategy for discussion by the Bureau in June 2005.
- BWGDDP will hold a 1 day meeting presumably in May back-to-back with CONC (i.e. 12 May 2005)

The BWGDDP recommendations will form the basis of a draft Strategic Plan and a Business Plan to be considered by the Bureau.

Crystal ball – what do we want MCAP to achieve in 2005?

Paul Connolly reviewed the main priority activities for MCAP in 2005. These activities are discussed above under the specific agenda items above.

The key priorities for MCAP in 2005 are;

- 1) **Improved Communications with Client Commissions (MCAP-MICC but also through ad-hoc meetings)**
- 2) **Develop a strategy for ICES interaction with RAC's**
- 3) **Further progress on the developments in integrated advice**
- 4) **Track progress on the various MOU's with Client Commissions**

A particular element is to continue the push on the integration of advice. Paul Connolly noted that in 2005, one issue would be to better integrate ACME into the advisory system and if required modify the framework. This should be a hot topic for 2005. PC asked that the three ACOM chairs make a joint and deliberate effort to clarify the problems and come back in September with a clear analysis of how, and to which degree, integration is achievable.

ICES has been asked to do integrated advice by the Clients. However, at the moment most requests are still very much discipline-oriented and only seldom integrated. MCAP-MICC should review this state of affairs and come to a clearer understanding of the required degree of integration and the extent to which the integrated advice is required.

The ICES advisory report for 2005 will include the ACME contribution. Furthermore, the structure of the report will be reviewed before publication of the next volume.

The CONC chair finds that there is a need for a 'serious overhaul' for the parentage of some groups. This review of the expert group structure will be discussed on the mid-term meeting of CONC. MCAP concurs with this view and assured CONC that MCAP will support such a review and overhaul. Per-

haps Working Groups should have a finite life. They should be given a mandate related to the Action Plan, and this should be reviewed when the work has been done.

Closing of the meeting

The Chair closed the meeting at 13.00 on Tuesday afternoon and thanked everyone for their hard work during the meeting.

Annex 1: Members Present:

Paul Connolly (Chair MCAP) (PC)

Poul Degnbol (Chair ACFM) (PD)

Simon Jennings (Chair ACE) (SJ)

Paul Keizer (chair ACME) (PK)

Harald Loeng (chair CONC) (HL)

ICES Secretariat: Hans Lassen (HAL), Louise Scharff (rapporteur)

Part-time:

ICES Secretariat: David Griffith, Henrik Sparholt, Julie Gillin, Jørgen Nørrevang-Jensen

EC DG Env.: Ben van de Wetering

Annex 2: Document List

Doc. No.	Document
1	Draft Agenda
2	Document List
3	Progress Report
4	RAC status
5	Progress report on DG Env. of European Marine Strategy
6	Invited Observers for the ACE/ACFM/ACME meetings May/June 2005
7	OSPAR and HELCOM Long-term Strategies
8	Draft Agenda for the MCAP-MICC meeting 4-5 April 2005
9	Review groups for fisheries advice Progress report
10	Proposal for Task group on Mixed fisheries issues
11	Fast Track Request: Policy
12	User Specification Requirements for NEWIFAP
13	ICES courses [in Fish Stock Assessment]
14	SGQUA report
15	Guidance on Implementation of the Ecosystem Approach
16	Themes for the 2005 ASC
17	A stronger Profile for Fisheries Research at the ASC: A Discussion
18	The Update-Benchmark system
19	Auditing the Advisory Process
20	Summary of Actions points from 2004 MCAP meetings

21	Response to DG Env. on the effects of sonar on Cetaceans
22	Proposal for a Customer Opinion Survey

Annex 3: List of proposed stakeholders to ACOM meetings 2005

	Contact	e-mail
AMAP		
DG Env.	Ben van de Wetering Francois Wakenhut	Ben.VAN-DE-WETERING@cec.eu.int Francois.WAKENHUT@cec.eu.int
DG Fish	Ken Patterson	kenneth.patterson@cec.int
HELCOM	Juha-Markku Leppanen	juha-markku.leppanen@helcom.fi
IBSFC	Walter Ranke	ibsfc@polbox.pl
NASCO	Malcolm Windsor	hq@nasco.int
NEAFC	Kjartan Hoydal	kjartan@neafc.org
OSPAR	Richard Emmerson	Richard@ospar.org
Baltic Fishermen's Association	Michael Andersen	ma@fiskeriforening.dk
The Northern Pelagic Working Group of the European Association of Producers Organisations	Rob Banning	
Europeche/COSEGA	Niels Wichmann	europeche@skynet.be
Faeroese Fishermen Association		fo-fisk@post.olivant.fo
Icelandic Fishermen Association		

Norges Fiskarlag	Reidar Nielsen	fiskarlaget@fiskarlaget.no
North Sea Commission Fisheries Partnership	Ann Bell	nscfp@aberdeenshire.gov.uk
Russian Fishermen		
Birdlife International	Euan Dunn	birdlife@birdlife.org
WWF International	Espen Nordberg	e.nordberg@wwf.dk
