

MCAP–MICC 2005

ICES CM 2005/MCAP:03

REF. ACE, ACFM, ACME, BUREAU

Report of the Management Committee
on the Advisory Process Meeting with
ICES Client Commissions

4–5 April 2005

ICES HQ, Copenhagen



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Conseil International pour l'Exploration de la Mer

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Recommended format for purposes of citation:

ICES. 2005. Report of the Management Committee on the Advisory Process Meeting with ICES Client Commissions, 4-5 April 2005, ICES HQ, Copenhagen. ICES CM 2005/MCAP:03. 23 pp.

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Contents

1	Welcome and practical information.....	1
2	Adoption of agenda.....	1
3	MCAP-MICC’s role in the ICES decision-making process (Doc 15).....	1
4	Review of action points from MCAP-MICC 2004 and issues with the fisheries advice 1	
5	ICES Restructuring (Advice, Science, Data) and the new Headquarters.....	4
6	Partner Commissions Work Programmes for 2005 (Environment Commissions Doc 7a and 7b).....	5
7	Update on Marine Strategy from DG Environment, and its implications for marine science in Europe and ICES.....	6
8	Review of progress with the introduction of the Ecosystem Approach in the ICES Advisory function (Doc 5).....	6
9	Fishing Industry and NGO observers to ICES advisory groups (Doc 6).....	7
10	Regional Advisory Councils (RAC).....	7
11	On the Development of an ICES Data Strategy -Development of the ICES Data Centre (Doc 8).....	8
12	Data availability for Assessments, data withholding and misleading data, e.g. misreporting of catches and false environmental data.....	10
13	Long term advisory needs of Partner Commissions with a view for their incorporation into the ICES Action plan. (Docs 7 – 8).....	10
14	Costing of the advisory process for 2004 and expected payments for fisheries advice for 2006 (Doc 14).....	10
15	Final comments.....	10
16	Closing the meeting	11
	Annex 1: List of participants	12
	Annex 2: Agenda for MCAP-MICC meeting.....	14
	Annex 3: List of Documents.....	16

1 Welcome and practical information

The Chair Paul Connolly (ICES) opened the meeting and welcomed all participants. ICES had received apologies from EC DG Environment that they were unable to attend. The Chair regretted that HELCOM was not represented at this meeting. The list of participants is found in Annex I. The participants presented themselves at a quick *tour de table*. John Farnell (JF, EC) commented that the papers were only available on the Friday before the meeting and that this limited the possibility for participants to prepare themselves for this meeting. Hans Lassen (HL, ICES) apologised for the late distribution of the papers and added that Doc. 14 (Cost for the fisheries advice 2004 and payments 2006) could not be finalized and distributed because of computer problems.

Action Point: ICES will circulate MCAP-MICC documents to participants well in advance of next meeting.
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2 Adoption of agenda

The draft agenda was adopted, see Annex II. The list of documents is available as Annex III.

3 MCAP-MICC's role in the ICES decision-making process (Doc 15)

HL presented Doc 15 describing the responsibilities of MCAP and the establishment of MCAP-MICC.

All agreed that MCAP-MICC is a forum for exchange of views on advisory issues between ICES and Partner Commissions. Relevant topics include both environmental and fisheries issues. The meeting participants (ICES Secretariat and each organization) are free to make contributions on any issues at the MCAP-MICC. It is not possible for the ICES Secretariat represented at a MCAP-MICC meeting to make decisions. However, it can bring the views of the client Commissions into the ICES decision making process. The MCAP work priorities for 2005 are shown in Figure 2.

Paul Connolly (PC, ICES) found that it is very valuable to have an open and free discussion. From ICES perspective the discussion provides an important feed back into the ICES advisory machinery. Also, ICES saw this group providing important background information to the discussion on which science will be needed to satisfy Partner Commission future advisory needs.

4 Review of action points from MCAP-MICC 2004 and issues with the fisheries advice

a) Report action points (Doc 3)

HL made a short powerpoint presentation of the action points from the MCAP-MICC meeting from 2004. All issues had been addressed and ongoing issues are addressed at specific agenda points later at this meeting.

PC asked the Commissions to briefly outline their experiences since last year, in particular in relation to the restructuring of the Secretariat.

There was general agreement that had been no adverse impact on the service provided to the Partner Commissions as a result of the reorganisation of the ICES Secretariat. Some Partners noted that the reorganization of the Secretariat is an improvement. There have been quicker responses and more efficient responses. The system with one "go-to person" has proved to be very efficient. In general, IBSFC has always been satisfied with the advice received by ICES, in particular with mid-term requests.

PC reiterated that one of the priorities of MCAP is to improve the communication with Client Commissions and asked the Clients whether they were satisfied with an annual meeting. NASCO and NEAFC agreed that this was sufficient. DG Fish noted that experience has shown that one annual meeting is not enough; there is so much going on with the changing needs of scientific advice that the needs to talk to each other are more necessary. Bilateral meetings several times a year are definitely the way forward for relations between ICES and the Commission.

Concerning the restructured advisory report there was general agreement that the present format was not very manager-friendly. However, the structure of the report is an improvement –it helps to integrate fisheries and environmental issues. ICES informed the meeting that the format would be reviewed during 2005 and hopefully a more user-friendly format would result.

JF said that that there is a growing attention to regional management. This is an area that will increase in importance and will influence the way ICES should organize its work to be responsive to Partners needs.

ICES had changed terminology with respect to classifying the status of fish stocks and abandoned the phrase “safe biological limits”. Kjartan Hoydal (KH, NEAFC) considered that the terms used now are more informative than before. Walter Ranke (WH, IBSFC) noted that IBSFC has always had a problem with the term “safe biological limits” as it confused people who understood it as meaning extinction. EC has not seen a need to use the new terminology, and given that there is a direct mapping from the new terminology to the old one, EC continues to use the old terminology for its purposes. EC regrets the confusion brought about by the change.

Data collection is a major issue for the European Commission that is looking for help from ICES. OSPAR has a number of concerns about data and how they are presented and considers that more work bilaterally is needed on improving how data summaries are presented.

JF welcomed the recognised need to look for other management tools, e.g., effort regulations and MPA’s, and how these could serve CFP. He noted that this would require a different form of advice and DG Fish would like to discuss bilaterally whether the new forms of advice accompanies or replaces the existing form of advice. Poul Degnbol (PD, ICES) answered that ICES understands the needs for changes and said that if nothing is decided before the new report comes out, the old form will remain and the new forms of advice will supplement the advice.

Malcolm Windsor (MW, NASCO) referred to the need for clear and concise presentation of the advice. He noted that the format of the catch advice for Atlantic salmon had been changed so that ICES now provides catch options with an assessment of the risks relative to the objective of exceeding stock conservation limits. This change had been welcomed by the Council of NASCO which believes that it is the responsibility of managers, not scientists, to adopt an appropriate strategy for managing risk in accordance under the Precautionary Approach. He noted that other Commissions may have different needs to those of NASCO.

Stakeholder observers and their role in the system remains an issue; this is discussed later.

Action Points: Improved communications with Client Commissions, particularly DG Fish will be a key priority for MCAP in 2005. The structure of the ICES advisory report will be reviewed in 2005 to make it more user friendly.

b) Review of topics raised by DG Fish (Doc 4)

Poul Degnbol (PD, ICES) introduced document 4 which presented background information on issues that had been raised by DG Fish prior to the meeting.

David Griffith (DG, ICES) suggested that specifics are left to bilateral meetings and noted that all participants agree on the need for a two-way open dialogue. Many of the points mentioned in Doc 4 have been noted before and ICES has tried to be flexible in the form of advice. Also, the points include criticism for doing what ICES has specifically been asked to do. From ICES perspective bilateral meetings are critical to clarify possible misunderstandings.

JF agreed that we are in the process of an open and frank dialogue. He underlined the urgency of making progress on several issues on objectives and methodologies mentioned in the Doc 4– from DG Fish’s perspective time is pressing.

KH noted the ‘authoritative position’ of ICES vis-à-vis the media, NGOs and the general public and found that ICES statements are very influential and can block managers’ possibilities for reaching ‘sensible solutions’. He commented on two specific problems with the 2004 advice. Firstly, he drew attention to the NEA mackerel assessment; the results of the egg survey – only conducted every third year – had caused a radical change in the level of the advised TACs and

this had created a lot of problems for the managers. He was not questioning the assessment but considered that managers need a warning when such large changes occur in the advice. PD agreed that a warning to managers is a good idea but noted that timing is difficult.

Secondly, KH drew attention to the redfish on the Reykjanes Ridge. Here, the advice was developed through a process with a study group followed by the assessment group. Based on findings by the Study Group, managers had prepared themselves for finding a solution to the redfish problems. The subsequent peer review and the conclusions that ACFM drew came as a surprise. KH found that ICES should revisit its policy on how to handle peer reviews; he considered that it would be inappropriate that a small group of reviewers have the final say. He found that ACFM should not accept this, as the reviewers are just another group of experts.

PD agreed that this process was not satisfactory and that ICES will revisit its policy. However, ACFM on the technical side must rely on a peer review. It will be increasingly difficult as the ecosystem approach develops to assure that an advisory committee has in-depth expertise available for each and every question. On the other hand PD accepted that a review group does not necessarily possess expertise superior to that of a study or working group. Where there is difference of opinions there should be a dialogue among the experts but it is often difficult to reconcile views because of lack of time.

JF turned his attention to the need for long-term advice. He noted that EU in Johannesburg (WSSD 2003) undertook a political commitment for achieving sustainable fisheries by 2015, which now is a key goal for the CFP. DG Fish is considering a road plan towards this goal and finds that developing this plan must involve intensive discussions between DG Fish and ICES and other responsible parties. The development of this plan must include discussion of a range of management approaches and in this perspective EU fisheries management is in a transitional stage. If the management approach require changes this shall be accompanied by considerations as to whether there is a need for a new form of scientific advice. As such changes would be reflected in the MoU when this is up for renewal in 2006. He noted that ICES/AMAWGC had made some interesting comments that DG Fish would like to discuss further with ICES. He commented that the MoU should be used positively as a vehicle for progress and this may require that we might deviate from details in the MoU.

DG agreed with this viewpoint – both parties are looking for progress and if the parties agree then it is better to move away from the MoU.

KH noted that there seems to be agreement to move away from annual to multi-annual advice. He found that this would be the best way forward. Also, he noted that this would be the best way to integrate environmental issues in the fisheries advice.

JF wanted to discuss problems with management of mixed fisheries. He noted that the qualitative approach taken by ICES is not fully meeting management needs, there is a definite need to provide more quantitative estimate of the interactions. DG Fish will pursue solutions with ICES and with STECF. PD noted that a small technical group would be convened later during the meeting to discuss possible approaches..

JF informed the meeting that EC is considering more wide use of Effort-based management. He understood that there were problems on the scientific side to deliver relevant advice and he was confused as to whether this is seen to be realizable in the immediate term.

PD answered that the scientific problem is relating fishing mortalities to effort. It is a longer-term task to develop this relationship beyond very simple models.

JF concluded that management need feedback/dialogue from/with the scientific community.

With respect to the points raised in Doc. 4, the following conclusions were drawn:

Move to harvest-rule based advice: During 2005, assessment working groups are expected progressively to introduce harvest-rule *options*, accompanied by the traditional form of advice. EC stressed that the provision of point-estimate

catch-option tables is not a scientific priority, and that normative advice from ICES will be more welcome than it has been in the past.

Move to ecosystem-based advice: Scientific work on developing such an integrated advisory approach is continuing but will not become operational within 2005. A "test case" based on the North Sea is being developed.

Effort based advice: ICES recognises a need to provide advice based on effort but is not able to do so in the near future.

Data shortfalls: ICES can provide information on shortfalls in biological sampling and survey data, beginning with the 2005 cycle of assessment working groups. ICES will not provide information on missing or unreliable catch information by country. ICES was encouraged by EC to move to methodologies that do not rely on official statistics where these cannot be validated (e.g. harvest rules based on surveys, and sample-based approaches to catch estimation). EC invited ICES to participate in the review of the data collection regulation.

Advice based on expert opinion: EC supports ICES' approach in providing advice based on expert opinion, the precautionary principle, general principles, and experience in comparable situations in cases where data do not support an analytic assessment and forecast procedure.

Action Points: Managers need an 'early warning system' to alert them to any 'major changes' in the upcoming advice – ICES will look into such a mechanism. On the question of mixed fisheries advice, ICES will 'pursue solutions' in 2005 with DG Fish and STECF. ICES will review and clarify the position in relation to Review Group decisions. There should be a dialogue among the experts to reach a consensus. However this can often be difficult because of time pressure.

c) Fast Track request (Doc 10)

HL presented document 10, the policy of fast track requests.

JF commented that the Commission was interested to ensure that this route is prudently used. Requests should reflect needs for international evaluations and advice. PC pointed out that ICES carefully screens the requests and he noted that some requests were rejected as no new data had been submitted or were available. He also commented that ICES have to make sure that they do not reach saturation point, where resources are overstretched and timely responses cannot be made.

There was some discussion about the sonar request. Olle Hagström (OH, DG Fish) explained that DG Environment had not intended to create so much work for ICES by asking for this advice.

HL explained that this sensitive request had opened a large debate among ICES scientists.

5 ICES Restructuring (Advice, Science, Data) and the new Headquarters

DG made a PowerPoint presentation outlining the new ICES Secretariat and described the new premises.

a) ICES workplan and MCAP priorities for 2005 (Powerpoint presentation)

HL showed a PowerPoint presentation concerning the ICES Workplan.

JF asked about the review groups.

HL explained that review groups had only been established for the stock assessment groups so far. Thus, all fisheries advice has been through that process. Each review group consists of one member of ACFM, two independent experts (recruited from the ICES framework) with the Chair of the relevant assessment group as secretary. Due to the cost considerations, the majority of the independent experts have only been independent in that they come from a different part

of the ICES community. ICES has added and paid for four external experts to come from afar that do not usually have contact with the particular stocks.

KH expressed concern that the review process was not “external”.

HL explained that ICES likes external reviewers, but that they are rather expensive. PD added that the review process has proved very valuable. It has been extremely valuable when we have been able to take in people from outside the ICES Community (New Zealand, Pacific Canada etc).

JF commented that the Commission would be interested in discussing the present situation to find out what the cost precisely are. ICES must offer quality assurance in some form otherwise there will be problems where the quality of advice is questioned.

MW agreed that ensuring the quality of the scientific advice is important and that this might lead to increases in the cost of providing the advice. DG outlined the current situation in ICES. Quality of the advice has a high profile and the decision-making bodies within ICES are committed to making a paper for consideration by the Delegates when they meet in September. Client Commissions will be involved early on, and we would welcome their comments.

Action Point: Client Commissions emphasised the importance of quality assurance within ICES. ICES will consider the issue of quality assurance at the June Bureau meeting. Client Commissions will be kept informed of developments.

b) ICES performances on MoU (Doc 13)

HL presented document 13 which was a progress review of the performance of ICES in relation to the MoUs. HL explained that this is intended as a first draft that only included the EC MoU; ICES would welcome any response. ICES will consider this analysis in detail in September.

JF was very pleased with this approach to the issue, and this method will indicate where the focus lies for improving things – i.e., either DG Fish or ICES. A second draft could be articulated more clearly after bilateral discussion.

Action Point: ICES will continue to review and update progress in terms of the MoU's with Client Commissions. This is a priority for MCAP in 2005.

6 Partner Commissions Work Programmes for 2005 (Environment Commissions Doc 7a and 7b)

Richard Emmerson (RE, OSPAR) presented the 2005 ICES Work Programme for OSPAR. ICES had presented the advice on one-off surveys on time and this will be looked at during the ASMO meeting. Advice on seamounts will be provided by ACE. Bilateral discussions on WKIMON were necessary but OSPAR would like to see this work continuing.

KH noted that NEAFC also requests information from ICES on seamounts. ICES noted that it has to provide consistent advice to different Client Commissions. This is precisely why we are trying to provide only one advisory report. DG added that this is why we are issuing invitations to all our Partner Commissions to attend the Advisory Committee meetings.

PC commented that there are a lot of issues emerging from the OSPAR work programme which are environment/fisheries related for ACE, and this is very encouraging in terms of the move towards integrated advice.

NASCO 2005 Work Programme

MW presented briefly the NASCO Work programme with ICES. In the past few years, the timing of the advice has improved enormously, and the work by ICES is appreciated immensely. NASCO is holding a symposium together with ICES “Interactions between aquaculture and wild stocks of Atlantic salmon and other diadromous fish species: Science and Management, Challenges and Solutions” in Bergen, Norway from 18-21 October 2005 on this topic which is of great concern.

Recently NASCO asked all stakeholders to give feedback on its work. One item raised was that the ICES advice has not changed for about five years and this raised the question of whether NASCO needed to ask ICES for advice every year. As a last note, MW explained that many Delegates and stakeholders find it difficult to understand the ICES Advice report, so any move to make the report more understandable would be appreciated.

PD commented that advising NASCO only every second year might be a good idea. Regarding the report, the salmon report has been very complex in the past. It has been re-structured entirely and ICES will look for further improvements.

NEAFC 2005 Work Programme

The ACFM chair presents the ICES fisheries advice every year and this does not provoke much discussion. Perhaps a better approach would be that all Clients came together for hearing and discussing the ICES advice.

NEAFC is introducing closed areas to protect vulnerable habitats and ICES had been requested to give advice on the appropriateness of these five areas. NEAFC appreciated ICES cooperation in changing the statistical ICES areas.

IBSFC 2005 Work Programme

Walter Ranke (WR, IBSFC) said that IBSFC always has had good cooperation with ICES. IBSFC will most probably terminate its work by 31 December 2005 after 32 years of existence.

Action Points: ICES Advice Report should be reviewed with a view to making it more user friendly. The need for annual advice for certain stocks (e.g. salmon) should be examined by ICES.

7 Update on Marine Strategy from DG Environment, and its implications for marine science in Europe and ICES

Olle Hagström (OH, DG Fish) presented this update as a PowerPoint presentation that had been prepared by DG Environment (Francois Wakenhut) after a Working Group meeting in Brussels on 1 April.

OH informed that the EU Marine Strategy identifies climate as one of the main drivers on the ecosystem and on the fish stock productivity in particular – perhaps this is a major task for science and ICES?

8 Review of progress with the introduction of the Ecosystem Approach in the ICES Advisory function (Doc 5)

HL presented document 5 and explained that is meant as an update of where ICES is with the ecosystem approach. At present the focus is on integrating ACE and ACFM, but ACME has not been forgotten and this integration process will come a little later. The Working Group on Regional Ecosystem Description (WGRED) met for the first time in February essentially to draft the ‘ecosystem overview’ chapters of the ICES Advice. ICES will continue to develop an integrated approach to advice, where environment and fisheries issues will continue to merge.

In answer to a question on whether the advice will be different than in the past. HL explained that in the long-run there will be a big difference in the advice provided by ICES as the impact of environment on fish stocks is better understood. However, no changes will be introduced in the short-term.

MW noted that NASCO has developed its own ecosystem approach and expects ICES to discuss the North Atlantic salmon issues bi-laterally with NASCO before any change in the advisory framework is introduced.

9 Fishing Industry and NGO observers to ICES advisory groups (Doc 6)

HL presented document 6 for information. Concerning Experiences with the ACFM October 2004 meeting PD gave a brief feedback and expressed surprise how little the attendance of observers had influenced the discussions. After the meeting, observers had communicated they had seen the problems and realized the hard work involved for ACFM members.

Doc 6 informed participants on who will be invited as observers to the May/June 2005 round of advisory committees.

MCAP has decided to evaluate the process of having observers at ACFM and have obtained commitment from Dr. Doug Wilson, sociologist, to make an evaluation which will become available when it is presented. HL explained we will have a preliminary report for the September meeting.

In answer to a question, HL explained that a set of rules had been established for the observers which included the "Chatham House Rules" (no disclosure of who said what).

When the RACs are in place, there is a definite need for a re-evaluation of the needs for having invited observers to Advisory Committee meetings. It is quite possible that the process will be abandoned and replaced with stakeholder involvement through the RACs.

KH noted that he still has grave concerns about the process of inviting observers to ACOMs.

Action Points: MCAP have noted the concerns of some Clients Commissions regarding observers at ACOMs and stressed the 'strict rules' that were put in place to ensure the integrity of the advice. This 'pilot process' will be evaluated in the light of the establishment of RAC's.

10 Regional Advisory Councils (RAC)

JF made a brief overview of the current status of the five RACs that concern ICES work (North Sea, Baltic Sea, North Western Waters, South Western Waters, RAC for Pelagic Stocks). He will issue a document on return to Brussels.

RACs are coming into existence rather slower than wished for. In approximately one year's time, there will be five RACs which will place a heavy demand on the system in terms of wanting to enter into discussions of various aspects of scientific advice. This will have an impact on the Chair of ACFM, the Chairs of WGs and the ICES Secretariat. There are resource implications and the European Commission is ready to discuss this in the light of the MoU.

RACs are intended to be managed by stakeholders. Therefore, it is up to interested parties to initiate the creation and submit a request for the establishment of a RAC to the Commission. Only the North Sea RAC has been fully established at this point in time.

North Sea RAC held its first meeting early November 2004. Its Executive Committee met at the end of January 2005, and has requested advice on the implementation of management plans for the North Sea plaice and North Sea sole. There has been an initial response to which the Commission has responded and now they are waiting for the definitive advice. The North Sea RAC has also been consulted on the Commission's management proposals for 2005. For the North Sea RAC it is likely to be important that ICES participates in its executive meetings. The North Sea RAC will meet 3 times a year. In addition to these meetings, there are Working Groups that plan to meet twice a year. The Secretariat is in the Aberdeen, Scotland, UK.

Pelagic Fisheries RAC. There have been pre-RAC meetings with all interested stakeholders; the latest being in January 2005 and a proposal for the organisation of this RAC has been drafted. This proposal is being re-drafted, giving an opportunity for all interested parties to comment before being sent further. This RAC was supposed to

become operational in June 2005 but this is unlikely to be met due to the time needed to process a formal submission. The Secretariat will be in the Netherlands.

Northern Western Waters RAC (ICES areas V, VI, VII). There have been six pre-RAC meetings with the interested parties; the most recent in February 2005 involved all relevant stakeholders. This submission should be ready by June, which would allow recognition of the RAC and its first general assembly in September or October. The Irish Fisheries Board will host this RAC.

South Western Waters RAC (ICES areas VIII, IX, X). There have been two pre-RAC meetings, and a third meeting is planned in April 2005, but this meeting needs the participation of non-fisheries representatives. Therefore, it is still uncertain whether this RAC will be ready for submission for recognition by EC sufficiently early in 2005 to allow it to be in place before the end of the year. France and Spain would be interested in hosting this RAC.

Baltic RAC. There are discussions between Fishermen's Associations. A meeting is planned soon, but no date is yet known. The Secretariat will be based in Denmark, but it is not yet clear where.

Concerning the workload that these arrangements may place on ICES JF commented that RACs are stakeholder-led bodies, so it is up to them to decide which demands they will put to scientists. Considering the workplan for the North Sea RAC, it suggests a large number of meetings. (i.e., 7 meetings a year \times 5). The European Commission sees a great deal of interest in hearing the same kind of discussions that have been heard at MCAP-MICC take place also with the RACs, i.e., reliability of data, quality assurance.

PD noted that the extra role for ACFM chair and WG Chairs would require even more communication, but sees the meetings as being positive, but noted it must be dialogue.

JF said that DG Fish is committed to giving financial support to the RACs for the first five years of their existence. The Commission is however not the only contributor; national governments are also interested in contributing financial support.

RE saw two potential areas of cooperation between OSPAR and the North Sea RAC. There had been a proposal for a joint OSPAR/RAC Workshop on the WWSO 2003 commitments, to which ICES had also been asked to participate as a joint sponsor. Another proposal would be a one day meeting on MPAs.

When asked if STECF would have a role similar to ICES vis-à-vis the RACs, JF explained that in some cases it could be STECF, or any of the other scientific bodies. We will be seeing a process of direct communication/dialogue between stakeholders and whichever group of scientists have a bearing on their future.

PC asked if RACs could commission their own science, to which JF replied that the Commission's priority is that the advice they get from them should relate to aspects that are not covered elsewhere, i.e. social and economic, however the RACs are free to commission their own science. In such cases, the Commission might then have to ask other bodies for advice.

Action Point: The Establishment of RAC's will have major implications for ICES, mainly for the ACFM Chair, but also the other ACOM Chairs. In terms of resources (travel expenses and staff time), this will have implications for the new MoU's.

11 On the Development of an ICES Data Strategy –Development of the ICES Data Centre (Doc 8)

Niels Axel Nielsen (NAN, ICES) presented document 8 on the development of an ICES Data Strategy, and Iain Shepherd (IS, EC JRC) presented the results of the Commission's first attempt to obtain data from Member States collected through the Data Collection Regulation. This included regulatory and biological data on fishing activities in 2002 and 2003.

NAN explained that the background to the Bureau Working Group on Data Development Policy (BWGDDP) is that ICES needs more data, more reliable data, and needs existing data types on a finer resolution. ICES also needs more new tools and software, e.g. in response to the fast track policy and *ad-hoc* requests. The overall aim is place ICES in a better position to document what it has done with its data in parallel to similar work done at the national institutes.

The BWGDDP report contains details about the data that ICES needs for providing advice. A vision of how ICES could organize the data is presented. There is also a more detailed overview of the data architecture and the software to support it, and how ICES involves the Client Commissions. Finally, it includes a plan for the progress of the work. Currently, ICES is developing a data system for handling fish stock assessment data (INTERCATCH) and a system for handling environmental and oceanographic data (DOME). The next meeting of the WG will be 12 May. The report will become final after the group meets in May, and then will be sent to the Bureau in June.

JF found that the timing of this work was very appropriate; he indicated that further bilateral discussion was necessary urgently. He had two concerns:

1. ICES and DG Fish should think carefully about who does what and who has plans to do other things in the future, e.g. with economic data. He noted that STECF has a clear mandate for handling economic data;
2. All parties should aim to adopt common standards for methodology, codification, and transmission systems. It is very important to get a clear map of which group is addressing which issues and how they fit together.

Julie Gillin (JG, ICES) assured that ICES is focused on following standards and developing generic programmes. ICES is looking at ISO standards, and has three generic systems developed in-house dealing with coding, data validation and submissions of data.

RE welcomed the thinking in this report, and emphasized that OSPAR would want to look critically at what to do with environmental data, and would want to be assured that what is done at the moment is not compromised. There are a number of items where ICES and OSPAR need to work better together, but the emphasis should still be on the work we do at the moment.

KH referred to the development for VMS data as NEAFC has a 5 year VMS database and noted that NEAFC has established an advisory group on VMS data communication standards which makes sure that common formats are used for VMS data.

HL explained that the VMS data gives indication of the amount of effort and the distribution of effort. Within ICES most interest is with deep water and pelagic fisheries. This is linked to the need for effort assessment – science needs effort data to provide effort advice.

OH noted that DG Fish is not sitting on lots of data – the Commission is not allowed to keep data - only get access to data.

JF commented that ICES is one of the most important users of the data and it would be very useful to meet as early as possible (within the next month) to better understand what ICES goals are.

PC stressed the importance of the process of turning data into information and into knowledge. In a new 'EU knowledge based economy' we need to add value to our marine data sets to strengthen and improve our advice.

Action Point: The issue of data is critical to the development of integrated advice. The Commission (OH and NAN) will set up a meeting in Brussels to further discuss and progress the data base issue (EU, ICES, JRC and STECF). ICES and DG Fish should think carefully about 'who is doing what' and 'what are our future plans'. We must avoid duplication in methodology, codification, or transmission systems. It is very important to get a clear map of which group is addressing which issues and how they 'fit together'.

12 Data availability for Assessments, data withholding and misleading data, e.g. misreporting of catches and false environmental data

OH briefly explained that DG Fish had started the process to revise the Data Collection Regulation in consultation with ICES, STECF and other stakeholders. DG Fish is looking at the quality of the data, the collecting of data, and reporting of the data. Furthermore, DG Fish needs to look at environmental data in relation to the CFP. It is hoped that by the end of April a discussion document will be ready, and the new proposal should be ready by early 2006.

HL introduced the problem of missing data and errors in data. All parties need reasonably hard information which enables the management bodies to go back to the Member States and explain that the situation is not acceptable. This year, ICES has to ask WG's to provide an overview of the data they have available in detail. ICES is committed to provide a summary of this information twice a year after the ACFM meetings.

JF noted that there is urgency to this issue as we need to make a clear case concerning the degree to which data that should be available is not available. He asked if it was possible for each assessment group to make a simple chart (with anonymous columns if necessary) showing the situation as it is so that we have a clear view of the situation, assessment by assessment.

KP noted that we use the same information for control as we use for monitoring which immediately causes contamination of the management system and instability. It is positive that ICES bases assessment on survey data. ICES assessments should be, as far as possible, detached from the official fisheries statistics unless these can be independently validated. It was pointed out that survey data is much more expensive, and there are also several stocks for which we do not have survey data. KP replied that survey-based methods could be used within a harvest rule that dampens variability in advice.

KP recommended that, where official statistics cannot be validated as accurate measures of catch there should instead be used sample-based estimators of catches such as samples of CPUE data and reliable measures of effort. It is not necessarily a major change in the presentation of advice.

Action point: This year, ICES has asked WG's to provide an overview of the data they have available for assessments. ICES is committed to providing the Client Commissions with a summary of this information twice a year after the ACFM meetings.

13 Long term advisory needs of Partner Commissions with a view for their incorporation into the ICES Action plan. (Docs 7 - 8)

RE briefly outlined the salient points from the Long-Term Work Programme for ICES (document 7a). ASMO and OSPAR welcomed a more strategic plan for the work for ICES. RE explained that this list is not complete. Between ASMO in April and the OSPAR meeting in June, OSPAR should be able to clarify more. At this stage it does not imply a firm commitment with ICES.

14 Costing of the advisory process for 2004 and expected payments for fisheries advice for 2006 (Doc 14)

This will be postponed due to a technical breakdown, and this will be dealt with by e mail.

15 Final comments

Feedback from a sub-group meeting of Mixed Fisheries group (Kenneth Patterson, Iain Shepherd, Poul Degnbol, Henrik Sparholt, Mette Bertelsen)

PD reported that he found the meeting extremely useful, and showed that bilateral meetings on specific technical issues are very valuable. Lack of discard data still hinders progress in respect of mixed fisheries forecasts, and this is problematic either in a model-based approach or an "expert knowledge" approach. No direct solution to this problem was identified other than improving discard sampling. ICES should instead consider moving towards providing advice on effort deployed by specific fleets, which will be a more productive approach than calculating compatible TACs in mixed fisheries. This, however, is a longer-term process.

16 Closing the meeting

All Client Commissions agreed that it would have been better to have the documentation for the meeting much earlier to get a proper chance to prepare. This point was accepted by the ICES Secretariat.

It was regretted that DG Environment and HELCOM had not been present at the meeting. The more we can get all Commissions involved in such a valuable forum for open discussion, exchange of information, and follow up action.

All Client Commissions agreed there has been much progress this year as compared to previous meetings between ICES and the Client Commissions, and it had been possible to get into the substance of matters at this meeting. Congratulations to the Chair for his leadership, and to David Griffith and Hans Lassen of ICES for their work.

The Chair closed the meeting at 15.00, making the final point that the annual MCAP-MICC meeting is an important forum to discuss areas of mutual interest. In a time of change, communication was more important than ever. The priority of MCAP is to keep everyone informed and ensure 'no surprises'. He thanked everyone for a highly valuable meeting, wishing them all a safe trip home.

Annex 1: List of participants

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Annex 2: Agenda for MCAP-MICC meeting

Monday 4 April 2005. 14-18

1. Welcome and practical information
2. Adoption of agenda
3. MCAP-MICC's role in the ICES decision-making process (Doc 15)

Annotation: Within the ICES advisory system MCAP is responsible for managing the advisory process. Furthermore, MCAP is responsible for contact with the Partner Commissions. The MCAP-MICC group does not have a formal place in the ICES structure and is a development of the WGCOOP group that was established in connection with discussing the MoUs with the Fisheries Commissions in 1997.

4. Review of action points from MCAP-MICC 2004 and issues with the fisheries advice
 - a. Report action points (Doc 3)
 - b. Review of topics raised by DG Fish (Doc 4)
 - c. Fast Track request, in particularly the sonar request (Doc 10)
5. ICES Restructuring (Advice, Science, Data) and the new Headquarters
 - d. ICES workplan and MCAP priorities for 2005 (Powerpoint presentation).
 - e. ICES performances on MoU (Doc 13).

Annotation: A brief review of the ICES work plan for 2005 in the main areas of Advice, Science and Data . We will also look at ICES performances on MOU (Doc 13).

6. Partner Commissions Work Programmes for 2005 (Environment Commissions Doc 7a and 7b)

Annotation: It is expected that each of the Partner Commissions will make a brief presentation of their Work Programme with ICES for 2005.

7. Update on Marine Strategy from DG Environment, and its implications for marine science in Europe and ICES

18-20 Meeting of Mixed fisheries group (Kenneth Patterson, Iain Shepherd?, Poul Degnbol, Henrik Sparholt, Mette Bertelsen).

Tuesday 5 April 2005. 9-18

8. Review of progress with the introduction of the Ecosystem Approach in the ICES Advisory function (Doc 5)

Annotation: The meeting is invited to discuss and comment on progress. Also, the meeting is invited to advice ICES on the directions of the introductions of the Ecosystem Approach.

9. Fishing Industry and NGO observers to ICES advisory groups (Doc 6);
 - f. Experiences with the ACFM October 2004 invitation;
 - g. Invitations to the June 2005 round of advisory committees;

- h. Plan for evaluation of the experience;

Annotation: ICES will report on the experiences with observers at ACFM in October 2004 and present the plans for June 2005 (Doc 6). The meeting is invited to comment on these plans and to comments on how the pilot experiment is to be evaluated.

10. Regional Advisory Councils (RAC)

- i. Review of the establishment of RACs and progress with their work (To be led by DG Fish)
- j. ICES advisory function to RACs;

Annotation: This discussion will be led by DG Fish who will inform on the progress with establishment of RACs. NSRAC has been functioning since November 2004. The Pelagic RAC was established in January 2005. The meeting will be informed on progress and is invited to discuss how best ICES be involved with the RAC work in 2005. The Environment Commission may want to consider what role they have to play in the RACs in the light of the ecosystem approach being the basis for ocean management in the future.

11. On the Development of an ICES Data Strategy –Development of the ICES Data Centre (Doc 8)

Annotation: Niels Axel Nielsen (BWGDDP Chair) will give a presentation followed by a discussion on how the Commissions might provide input to this process.

12. Data availability for Assessments, data withholding and misleading data, e.g. misreporting of catches and false environmental data

Annotation: The EU Data Collection Regulation is to be revised in 2006 and DG Fish has indicated that they need better and more detailed overviews of data available for the ICES advisory process. In the short term this is restricted to fish stock assessments but it is expected that the revised regulation will include environmental data as well. JRC is providing the EC Secretariat for overseeing the Data Collection Regulation on behalf of DG Fish and is invited to present their plans in this respect. Data sampling programmes and their design has been a major issue for the environmental commissions and improper design can lead to misleading data.

13. Long term advisory needs of Partner Commissions with a view for their incorporation into the ICES Action plan. (Docs 7 – 8);

Annotation: Both HELCOM and OSPAR have presented long term plans (Doc 7) for their research needs. ICES has analysed the needs both on the specific advisory needs and taking a broader perspective. ICES will present an analysis of data needs in response to the wishes (Chapter 2 of Doc 8). Furthermore, DG Fish has presented a number of more short-term needs and ICES will present the plans for responding on this list (Doc 4). The meeting is invited to discuss these plans and comment on whether the ICES approach is sufficient to meet the needs of the Commissions.

14. Costing of the advisory process for 2004 and expected payments for fisheries advice for 2006 (Doc 14)

15. AOB

16. Closing the meeting

Annex 3: List of Documents

Doc no	Document
1	Agenda
2	Document list
3	Action points from MCAP-MICC report April 2004
4	Background information to issues raised by DG FISH
5	Progress on the introduction of the ecosystem Approach within the ICES advisory system
6	Fishing Industry and NGO observers at the Advisory Committees – Experiences in 2004, Plan for June 2005 and plan for evaluation of the pilot experiment
7	Long-term plans on Research Needs for OSPAR and HELCOM
8	Data needs: Extract from the report of the BWGDDP, February 2005
9	STECF Work Programme
10	Status on fast track
11	The ICES Advisory Structure 2005
12	Maps used for integrating assessment groups
13	Progress review of the Action Plan: review of MoUs
14	Costings 2004 and Payment for Fisheries Advice 2006
15	Rules and procedure for MCAP
16	2005 AMAWGC report
17	Extract from 2005 SGMAS report

Figure 1. ICES Advisory Structure at the beginning of 2005

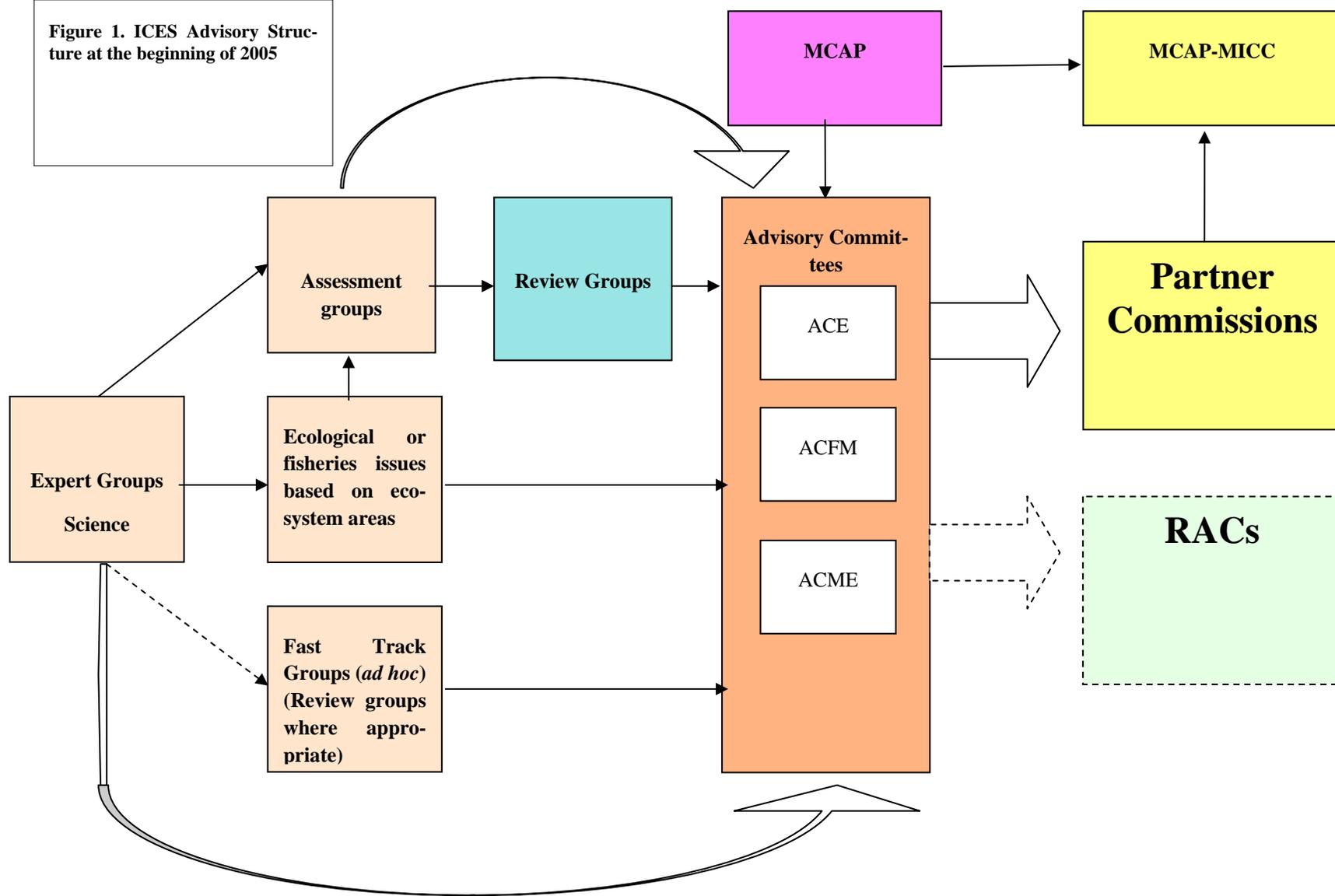


Figure 2 MCAP Priorities for 2005

