

**MINUTES OF THE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT**

**Oslo, Norway
ASC, September 2001**

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International Council for the Exploration of the Sea

Conseil International pour l'Exploration de la Mer

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1	OPENING OF THE MEETING.....	1
2	ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA.....	1
3	STATUS OF REPORT FROM JUNE 2001 MEETING.....	1
4	ADOPTION OF THE ACME MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 2001 MEETING	1
5	REQUESTS FOR ADVICE.....	1
6	REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ACME AND RELEVANT WORKING/STUDY GROUPS AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2002	2
7	COORDINATION OF ACME/ACE/ACFM JOINT WORKING ITEMS DURING 2001/2002.....	2
8	ACME WORKING PROCEDURES FOR 2001/2002 INCLUDING ASSIGNMENTS OF WORKING GROUPS TO ACME MEMBERS	2
9	OUTCOME OF THE MCAP MEETINGS.....	3
10	OUTCOME OF THE ACE MEETING	4
11	PROPOSAL FOR A SECOND ENVIRONMENTAL DIALOGUE MEETING	4
12	PUBLICATION NEEDS FOR ACME	4
13	ANY OTHER BUSINESS	5
14	CLOSING OF THE MEETING.....	5
	ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS.....	6
	ANNEX 2: AGENDA	8

1 OPENING OF THE MEETING

The Chair opened the meeting at 8.30 hrs and welcomed the participants.

2 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

The ACME reviewed the agenda and adopted it without change. It was pointed out that the issue of observers in the advisory process will be covered under agenda item 9 on the outcome of the MCAP meeting.

3 STATUS OF REPORT FROM JUNE 2001 MEETING

The Environment Adviser stated that the 2001 ACME report has been prepared for publication and is undergoing the final checking. Only a few comments were received, but there was one major outstanding issue, which relates to the change in the limit value for the weekly intake of dioxins that took place around the time of the ACME meeting and which may have an impact on the text in the section and annex concerning dioxins.

The Chair and several ACME members reviewed relevant material on this topic after the meeting and prepared a small amendment to the relevant section and annex of the 2001 ACME report to cover this change.

4 ADOPTION OF THE ACME MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 2001 MEETING

There were no comments on the minutes during the meeting, but members were given two days to provide comments and amendments. With these potential changes, the ACME adopted the minutes from the June meeting.

5 REQUESTS FOR ADVICE

a) OSPAR Work Programme

F. Colijn mentioned that the Netherlands is preparing material on indicators of eutrophication and he queried whether this work was related to the request under item 5 of the OSPAR request. A draft has been prepared concerning EcoQOs for eutrophication.

H.R. Skjoldal stated that the role of ICES in the development of indicators should be carefully defined. At the June ACME meeting, it was agreed that a small group of experts should work with the Oceanographer on the development of data products in relation to eutrophication.

The use of indicators must be considered very carefully, as there is a danger that the use of too highly aggregated indicators leads to an over-simplification of the scientific issues.

It was felt that there is no clear strategy for the development of indicators. These indicators need to be developed in response to clear requirements, and these requirements have not been specified by either OSPAR or the European Environment Agency, who is stimulating the development of indicators.

The conceptual issues are very important, and some group should consider the conceptual issues and determine the ICES position in relation to indicators and their use. It was felt that SGEAM would be the best group to consider this topic. However, there is a question as to whether SGEAM would be merged with WGECO. On the more detailed level, other Working Groups should be involved in review of the concepts and their application. P. Keizer will develop a TOR for SGEAM on the conceptual issues.

It was noted that ICES has not been requested to comment on the scientific basis for the OSPAR Common Procedure for the determination of eutrophication. There is a mix of science and policy in the Common Procedure at present. It was noted that ICES has not responded effectively on issues concerning eutrophication, but ICES could set up a review of the procedure presently in effect.

It was proposed that several ICES Working Groups be tasked to review the document on eutrophication EcoQOs and provide comments and advice. This could also be considered a review of the scientific basis for the Common Procedure, and could feed into the ultimate implementation of the Common Procedure.

Tasks should be developed for the eutrophication issues for the WGPE, MCWG, and BEWG; these will be prepared by H. Dooley, F. Colijn, and H.R. Skjoldal. For the contaminants indicators, tasks should be developed for the MCWG, WGMS, and WGSAM; these will be prepared by Keizer, Cooreman, Andrulewicz, and Nørrevang Jensen.

b) HELCOM Requests

The ACME reviewed the draft requests from HELCOM. The first request, concerning QA of chemical and biological measurements, has been covered by the TORs for SGQAC and SGQAB.

A new request for advice concerning the number of samples needed with regard to calculations in relation to background concentrations of certain contaminants in biota. J. Nørrevang Jensen and P. Keizer will prepare a TOR for WGSDEM to cover this request.

6 REVIEW OF TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR ACME AND RELEVANT WORKING/STUDY GROUPS AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR 2002

The ACME reviewed the terms of reference for its Working Groups for 2002. Most of these recommendations had already been reviewed at the June meeting. The ACME Chair had communicated with the Chairs of the Working Groups and agreed the final changes to the recommendations. One new recommendation arose after the June ACME meeting, for the establishment of an ICES/AMAP Study Group for the Assessment of AMAP POPs and Heavy Metals Data to meet in late November 2001. This new recommendation was accepted. Finally, the ACME reviewed and accepted a recommendation for its June 2002 meeting.

The ACME then reviewed the recommendations for meetings of Working Groups under ACE, beginning with the recommendation for the establishment of a Working Group on Integrated Data Management. This was considered to be a very useful beginning of this work. The requests from HELCOM concerning marine mammals will be incorporated in the TORs for WGMMPH.

The recommendations from the Oceanography Committee were reviewed and it was agreed that a new TOR covering work on eutrophication indicators will be prepared for WGPE.

The recommendations from the Marine Habitat Committee were reviewed and it was noted that new TORs will be prepared for indicators for contaminants, sampling guidelines in relation to determining background concentrations of contaminants, and for the work on the joint assessment of inputs and concentrations of contaminants in the marine environment. Regarding the TORs for WGEXT, it was felt that some adjustments need to be made to the tasks and that greater emphasis should be given to completion of the guidelines for marine extraction activities; this is particularly needed for work that is being conducted in OSPAR.

The comment was made that two of the TORs for SGEAM overlap with TORs for WGECO and that it is difficult for ICES to have two groups dealing with very similar issues. This issue will be considered by ACE and MHC in their discussions of the TORs of these Working Groups.

The recommendations of the Mariculture Committee were reviewed. It was noted that a new TOR concerning GMOs in relation to the Code of Practice on Introductions and Transfers will be added to the WGAGFM tasks for 2002. T. Calabrese stated that there were problems with finding a Chair for WGEIM, so no TORs have yet been finalized for this group.

The ACME recalled the discussion of the proposed GESAMP and noted that this issue will need to be taken further, based on advice from the General Secretary concerning the best way forward.

7 COORDINATION OF ACME/ACE/ACFM JOINT WORKING ITEMS DURING 2001/2002

There were no issues that required specific coordination in 2001/2002.

8 ACME WORKING PROCEDURES FOR 2001/2002 INCLUDING ASSIGNMENTS OF WORKING GROUPS TO ACME MEMBERS

The ACME reviewed the assignments for members to shadow Working Groups during late 2001 and 2002 and accepted the assignments decided at the June meeting.

The shadows for external organizations were noted; no members were available to shadow several of these organizations.

The lack of explanatory cover sheets for Working Group reports considered during the June 2001 meeting was mentioned and the ACME encouraged the Environment Adviser to prepare such cover sheets in the future, as they have been very helpful in reviewing the Working Group reports and preparing text for the ACME meeting.

9 OUTCOME OF THE MCAP MEETINGS

The Chair reported on the outcome of the MCAP meeting in August. One issue concerned whether topics related to genetics and biodiversity should be handled by ACME or ACE; MCAP decided that individual requests should be reviewed to decide which was the most relevant Advisory Committee for that topic.

The issue of observers in Advisory Committee meetings was raised in MCAP. The EC has observer status in ACFM under its MoU with ICES, but the need for more transparency in the work of ICES as well as more participation by stakeholders has resulted in the request that all Advisory Committees consider and provide comments regarding the granting of observer status.

It was noted that this should involve the issue of communication with stakeholders as well as potential relevant information from stakeholders.

The further discussion of the terms and conditions that should be put on the selecting of observers that could participate and the rules for their participation took place in a joint ACME/ACE meeting held on Tuesday evening.

It was noted that the types of observers considered here included client commissions, NGOs, stakeholder organizations, or other relevant organizations. At present, only two NGOs have been given observer status in ICES: Worldwide Fund for Nature and BirdLife International.

E. Jagtman pointed out that the admission of observers is being discussed in the EC in the context of observers in relation to the development of more detailed implementation plans for the Water Framework Directive.

J. Rice felt that this discussion should consider the rules that should be established to cover the participation of persons who could provide relevant information to the meeting and explanations that can improve the formulation of the advice. This can apply to the Working Group level as well as the Advisory Committee level. In particular, observers who have practical experience in relevant industries, such as the fishing industry, can provide useful information that can have an influence on the advice in terms of e.g., how easily different types of advice would be to apply in practical situations.

F. Borges stated that it could be confusing as to whether the observers are providing a personal interpretation in the discussions or an institutional opinion of the organization that he or she represents. This could give an undue influence on the advice ultimately developed.

The Chair of ACE stated that a contribution to the meeting is one issue. The Observers at OSPAR are covered by rules stating that they may submit written material, but the amount of time that they can use to present their material is restricted. He felt that it is important to have a balance of stakeholders and noted that they will also take back information to their organizations concerning the basis for the advice developed at the meeting and explaining the advice on a broader basis. This transparency could make the advice more acceptable to the stakeholders.

The presence of NGOs will undoubtedly strengthen certain aspects of the advice. However, the clients want impartial advice based on objective science and the more political influences can be added in later steps when the management bodies are utilizing the advice to determine management measures. The danger of influencing the advice at the scientific level was noted; if ICES Advisory Committees are to be considered scientific advisory bodies, they should provide this advice without the influence of "lobbying" organizations. The considerations of these other organizations should be funnelled in later in the process during the application of the advice.

The Chair of ACME pointed out that the aim is to begin the discussion here without coming to a conclusion now. The discussion should continue by e-mail and other communications until the MCAP meeting in January, with the e-mails copied to the Chairs of ACME and ACE and the Environment Adviser.

Although no conclusions can be made now, it appears that there is no objection in principle to the presence of observers, but precautions should be taken so that their participation provides a useful contribution to the work of the Committee.

10 OUTCOME OF THE ACE MEETING

The Chair of ACE reported on the outcome of the first meeting of ACE. He stated that this showed clearly the two cultures in ICES. On the fisheries side, direct management advice is provided to the regulatory commission on the basis of quantitative models. On the environmental side, evaluations of the information are made, but generally without the use of models.

ACE finalized responses to requests from OSPAR for advice on EcoQOs for marine mammals and seabirds in the North Sea, as well as a request from the EC concerning whether precautionary reference points can be considered EcoQOs. ACE also responded to a request from EC DG Fish on by-catches of small cetaceans in fisheries. The fourth request was from the North Sea Secretariat for an overview report on the status of fisheries in the North Sea and ecosystem effects of fishing in this area.

In addition, ACE began consideration of the development of an ecosystem approach to management, starting with some work of ACME from last year. Further work will be conducted to obtain agreement on this subject. One important issue is the terminology used, as the same term often means different things to different groups. There is a need to develop an overall ICES glossary of terms so that there will be consistent use of these terms within ICES. Another topic relates to the underlying theories and concepts for the development of the ecosystem approach; a mechanism will need to be established to develop these concepts within ICES. There is also the issue of modelling. A challenge for ACE is how to merge the different approaches and levels of modelling. Finally, there is the issue of integrated assessments, for which methods will need to be developed.

11 PROPOSAL FOR A SECOND ENVIRONMENTAL DIALOGUE MEETING

The Chair reported that, at the request of the Consultative Committee, ACE has developed a proposal for a Second Environmental Dialogue Meeting to be held in 2003. This proposal will be brought forward in the ICES system, with the formation of a Steering Group that will include representatives of the other organizations that will be involved in this dialogue. Suggestions will need to be received from these other organizations concerning the content and format of this meeting.

It was pointed out that it is very important to have representation of the organizations that receive ICES advice on this topic, both from the OSPAR and HELCOM Secretariats as well as from the EC DG Environment, which has not had any association with ICES despite repeated attempts by ICES to establish such an association.

12 PUBLICATION NEEDS FOR ACME

This item was discussed in a joint meeting between ACME and ACE. The Chair reported on the outcome of proposals for changes in the remit and membership of the Publications Committee that have been proposed by the Consultative Committee (CONC). Under this new remit, the Publications Committee (PUBCOM) will now report to CONC rather than the Council. The membership of the Publications Committee has been proposed to include one representative from the Advisory Committees and the Chair of ACME was nominated by MCAP to serve on PUBCOM.

The Chairs of ACE and ACME have agreed that their needs for publication are similar and should permit the use of material from Science Committee Working Groups to the extent needed to formulate ICES official information and advice.

M. Tasker stated that the Oceanography Committee has discussed this issue and stated that the Advisory Committees should not use material from Science Committee Working Groups that has not been peer reviewed.

It was noted that the timing of the peer review has created a problem in that it often occurs after the Advisory Committee meetings have occurred.

The Chair of ACE stated that many requests require the use of scientific material from Working Groups and the requirement for timeliness of advice means that scientific material may need to be used before the peer review has been completed.

It was acknowledged that peer review is needed and that this should be conducted in as timely a manner as possible. The practical arrangements for this need to be developed through a dialogue between Science and Advisory Committees.

It was pointed out that there can be a random use of scientific material from Working Groups, with the WGSE reports as the case in point. However, all material considered for inclusion in the Advisory Committee report must be agreed by the Committee as a whole, which conducts a certain level of peer review on its own.

J. Rice stated that in his experience from WGECO, he and his predecessors have tried to obtain a clear consensus from the extremely wide expertise on the Working Group on the issues that were reported. When Working Groups are doing their job, it should be difficult for peers reviewing the material to find fault with the material. The Working Group report should be of good quality in the first instance.

The Chair of ACME noted that, in the ideal situation, members of the Committee compile the material and send it to the Secretariat in advance of the ACME meeting, so that it can be made available for all members to review these draft sections, preferably conferring with knowledgeable colleagues in their countries.

It was concluded that the Advisory Committees should continue to use scientific information from Working Groups, taking advantage to the fullest extent possible of the use of peer review by the Science Committees. It was noted that working group products are also being published, e.g., in the *ICES Cooperative Research Report* series. This could result in a double publication with the Advisory Committee reports. However, these are two different kinds of readership and the overlap has so far been small and has not caused any problems.

13 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no other items of business.

14 CLOSING OF THE MEETING

The Chair thanked the participants for their work and closed the meeting.

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ANNEX 2: AGENDA

ACME Consultations at the 2001 Annual Science Conference

Monday, 24 September, and Tuesday, 25 September 2001

08.30–14.00 hrs and 18.00–20.00 hrs, respectively

Oslo, Norway

- 1) Opening of the meeting (Chair).
- 2) Adoption of the agenda.
- 3) Status of report from June 2001 meeting.
- 4) Adoption of the ACME Minutes from the June 2001 meeting (ICES Environment Adviser).
- 5) Requests for advice.
 - a) OSPAR Work Programme.
 - b) HELCOM Requests.
- 6) Review of terms of reference for ACME and relevant Working/Study Groups and other recommendations for 2002.
- 7) Coordination of ACME/ACE/ACFM joint working items during 2001/2002.
- 8) ACME working procedures for 2001/2002 including assignments of working groups to ACME members (*see the 2001 ACME Minutes for a list of current study/working group shadowing assignments*).
- 9) Outcome of the MCAP meetings.
- 10) Outcome of the ACE meeting.
- 11) Proposal for a Second Environmental Dialogue Meeting.
- 12) Publication needs for ACME.
- 13) Any other business.
- 14) Closing of the meeting.