



Interface science and management

ICES meetings - Form and Format of Advice - 1-5 December 2009 Lisbon

Nordic Council of Ministers Meeting - Decision Processes and Advice – Faroe Islands case 15 June, Faroe Islands

A note by the NEAFC Secretariat

1. Introduction

There has been an internal debate for some time in ICES about the form and format of the advice to clients. This has also been discussed at meetings between ICES and client commissions.

This has led to changes in the way the advice is presented and delivered. Over the last decade ICES advice has developed further towards a regional based ecosystem approach, with individual reports on an ecosystem/region. Another change is the creation of ACOM in 2008, the sole competent body for ICES for scientific advice in support of the management of coastal and ocean resources and ecosystems. From 1 January 2008 ACOM took over the responsibility for providing advice from the previous committees ACE, ACFM and ACME.

The context¹ for ICES advice is set by several international agreements and policies:

- United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS, 1982) which includes a call for a maximum sustainable yield (MSY) approach for managing fisheries;
- United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED, 1992) including chapter 17 of Agenda 21 which highlights the precautionary principle;
- United Nations Straddling Fish Stocks agreement of 1995 (known as the UN Fish Stocks Agreement or UNFSA) and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (FAO, 1995) which call for the precautionary approach;
- Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, UN 1992) which calls for conservation of biological diversity through an ecosystem approach;
- Johannesburg Declaration of the World Summit of Sustainable Development (known as WSSD, 2002) which calls for an Ecosystem Approach and rebuilding fisheries to maximum sustainable yield.

In addition, ICES advice responds to the policy and legal needs of ICES member countries and multinational and intergovernmental organizations that use the advice as the scientific basis to manage human activities that affect, and are affected by, marine ecosystems. Some applicable policy and legal instruments are:

- The Common Fisheries Policy of the European Commission Council Regulation (EEC) OJ L 358, 31.12.2002 and Council Regulation (EC) No 2371/2002 of 20 December 2002
- Communication on Implementing Sustainable Fisheries EU Through Maximum Sustainable Yield (COM (2006) 360 final)
- The Marine Strategy Framework Directive 2008/56/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 June 2008
- Norwegian Marine Resources Act (Lov om forvaltning av villlevande marine ressursar: LOV 2008-06-06-37)

¹ From ICES Advice 2010, Book 1



- Russian Federal Law on Fisheries and conservation of biological resources in the waters. N 166-P3 20/12/2004
- Icelandic Fisheries Management Act (No. 38, 15 May 1990)
- Faroe Islands Fisheries management act (Løgtingslóg nr. 28 um vinnuligan fiskiskap frá 10. mars 1994)

The ecosystem approach, precautionary approach and MSY are prominent themes of the agreements and policies that set the context for ICES advice.

To this can be added Memoranda of Understanding with client commissions EC, NASCO, NEAFC and OSPAR. This year's meeting between ICES and client commissions took place at NEAFC HQ on 13 October. The Report from the meeting has not yet been released, but will be circulated when it appears.

2. ICES meetings - Form and Format of Advice - 1-5 December 2009 Lisbon.

The two meetings responded to two issues. The format meeting dealt with the problem of giving advice that is readable, but still has so much detail so that managers have a chance to assess the accuracy of the advice and the risks involved. The ICES Expert Group Reports have all the necessary detail making it possible for experts to repeat all the calculations and understand the assumptions underpinning the assessments, but they are very difficult reading for people with no scientific background. It has been pointed out at several client commission meetings that the standardised advice from the Advisory Committee does not give enough detail for managers to be able assess quality and risk.

Following the meeting in Lisbon ACOM has changed the format and now gives more detail than earlier in its 2010 advice for 2011. It remains to be seen if clients find this more satisfactory.

With respect to the form of the advice ICES has, as a response to requests from users of ICES advice, since 2004 included information about management options which would lead to long term high yield within a precautionary approach. The advice has however not pointed to transitions which would help clients and member states to fulfil their obligations in relation to international agreements or to implement their MSY policy.

ICES has therefore taken the initiative to enter a dialogue with advice users and member states to develop advice which informs on options for transition to MSY within a precautionary approach. This initiative was in direct response to a conclusion of the 2009 meeting of ICES and Client Commissions (MICC)

A workshop with advice users and stakeholders was organised to this effect (Workshop on the Form of Advice (WKFORM), Lisbon 1–3 December 2009). The report from this workshop took onboard inputs from member states, clients and stakeholders including participants from authorities in Norway, France, Denmark and NEAFC, EC, the Pelagic RAC, WWF, Sea Fish (UK), French industry. This workshop concluded that ICES should move to an MSY approach and some options for a framework were identified. The conclusions of the workshop were adopted by the ICES Advisory Committee (ACOM) at its 2009 annual meeting.



An ICES workshop, WKFRAME (Copenhagen, 22–26 March 2010), was organised to develop the approach further and especially to look at approaches for stocks lacking age-structured assessments or forecasts.

On basis of the outcomes of this work, ICES discussed timing and possible transition schemes at a meeting with the European Commission and Norway on 24 March 2010. The meeting provided very useful input into the design of a process for the evolution of ICES advice, although it was unable to reach consensus conclusions on precisely how managers want to proceed.

After this meeting ICES has received letters regarding the MSY approach from Norway (21/4 2010) and the European Commission (D4740 24/4 2010).

Norway states that long term management plans, which have been evaluated and found precautionary by ICES, have been agreed regarding most stocks of Norwegian interest. ICES should continue to give advice according to these existing management plans while Norway together with its partners evaluates which revisions of management plans are necessary to incorporate the MSY criterion. Norway welcomes any information ICES may have to guide in the right direction but such new information should be given as information or catch options.

The European Commission states that it would like the current practice of separate advice based on the precautionary approach and high long term yield to continue at least in a transitional period and welcomes any scientific improvements in advice based on MSY. The EC specifically requested a catch option corresponding to a transition in equal steps to the fishing mortality rate associated with MSY (F_{msy}) by 2015.

ICES' advisory committee (ACOM) considered all of the above sources of information. It concluded that the advice for 2011 is to provide options designed to fulfil both the short and long term objectives of users of ICES fish stock advice relation to (1) existing management plans, (2) according to a transition to F_{msy} by 2015 consistent with the precautionary approach, and (3) based on the precautionary approach framework ICES has used as the basis for advice over the most recent decade. In this way ICES provides information of all options considered relevant by the users of ICES advice and it is transparent that the choice between these options, which all are consistent with the precautionary approach, is not a scientific choice but a policy choice which is left to the advice users. ICES will provide additional catch options in response to requests.

This approach and the rationale behind it is reflected in a revised introduction to ICES advice, which is enclosed and will be public at the same².

² Information in a letter from ICES 28 May 2010.



3. Nordic Council of Ministers Meeting - Decision Processes and Advice - Case Study - 15 June, Faroe Islands

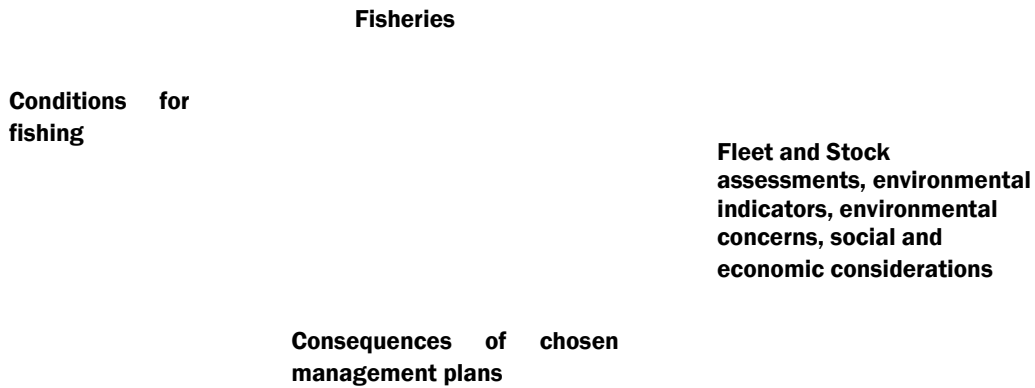
This was one of the regular meetings for senior Nordic fisheries managers arranged by the Nordic Council of Ministers. The topic at this meeting was ICES advice and decision processes. The Faroe Islands demersal fisheries management system - Total Allowable Effort, TAEs, not TACs - was used as the case study. Experts, managers, politicians and the fishing industry participated in the meeting. Participation from outside the Faroes was hampered by the flight problems caused by the Iceland volcanic ash. A report in Danish is available.

The meeting dealt specifically with the interface between science and management. Globally scientific advice is delivered under three general models.

- Autonomous, “ex cathedra”, independent scientific institutions deliver the advice and that is it.
- Managed, a board of directors manages the scientific process and delivery/
- Embedded

In an embedded system assessments and evaluation of the consequences of different management strategies are undertaken by technical, scientific advisory bodies.

The management cycle:



The scientific advisory body shall be embedded into the management process.

Management

Industry

Fisheries management plans and regulations

Other stakeholders

Fishery Managers



Embedded Science

Embedded science means that its role is to act as a technical – scientific secretariat for management and to investigate scenarios selected by management. The technical, scientific advisory body must cover biological, economic and social considerations. Scientific independence will be secured by splitting the scientific process from the advisory process.