MEETING BETWEEN ICES AND RECIPIENTS OF ICES ADVICE (MIRIA)

ICES HQ, COPENHAGEN, DENMARK
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1 Welcome and opening of the meeting.

Participants were welcomed by the new ACOM Chair, Mark Dickey-Collas, who also introduced himself. The meeting was attended by representatives from Denmark, EU, HELCOM, Iceland, NEAFC, Norway, OSPAR, Spain, UK. Apologies were received from NASCO.

For list of participants see Annex 1.

2 Adoption of agenda

The agenda was adopted without further amendments (see Annex 2).

3 Review

3.1 Review of ICES Advisory services in 2018

An overview of the advice process and the advice provided in 2018 was given in Doc 03.

MIRIA was invited to review the advisory process in 2018 and to discuss any issues and concerns arose since the 2018 MIRIA meeting.

Generally the recipients of advice were appreciative of ICES advice over the last 12 months, and that ICES was now also engaging more with recipients to build requests and explain the advice. Concerns were raised about volatility in the advice between years. ICES was encouraged to consider more mixed fisheries and ecosystem approach issues. Some were concerned about quality assurance and the checking for errors.

3.2 Skills shortages

ICES has highlighted that the research and advice community lack expertise in some key areas, including mixed fisheries, management strategy evaluation, stakeholder engagement and combining qualitative and quantitative information. In addition, expertise is sometimes lacking to address certain special requests. ICES is exploring mechanisms to resolve these shortages.

A role of ICES is to summarise and elucidate the needs for data, methods and expertise for credible management advice.

MIRIA was invited to comment on this list of skills shortages, and provide their experience of skills shortages as well as their views on the key areas where expertise will be required in the coming years.

The Chair asked those in the right position to encourage development of these skills and asked recipients if they have noticed particular shortages/expertise gaps. From a management perspective the need for experts in MSE was considered important since more and more stocks are using harvest control rules (HCRs).

There were suggestions ICES should considered if it is getting expertise from the right sources (institutes, universities) or if it would be worth examining other areas for the appropriate skills.
4 Quality assurance and consistency.

4.1 Quality assurance

Errors in ICES advice were discussed at previous MIRIA meeting. All Clients acknowledged that errors might appear but expect that they would be minimized. Quality check of data was also discussed previously and Clients expressed willingness to cooperate with ICES to ensure that ICES has access to all relevant data.

A role of ICES is to continually assess and improve the quality and transparency of processes behind the science and the advice.

ICES presented initiatives taken within ICES to quality assure ICES advisory products. MIRIA was invited to comment on the initiatives taken by ICES and to discuss possible needs for further initiatives and how Clients and ICES can cooperate to quality assure ICES advice.

MIRIA emphasised that while quality assurance framework emphasizes data, ICES should cover entire process from data to final product. There was some confusion over what kinds of data get quality assured (e.g., mackerel tagging data). It was clarified that all data are reviewed at some level, not just data that are direct inputs to assessments. Quality checking the assessment methodologies was a concern for some, which pre-empted discussion about TAF and how its transparency and reproducibility will improve quality assurance. There was general agreement that implementation of RDBES and TAF will improve the quality of data and assessments.

4.2 Greater consistency in outcome

ICES has developed a comprehensive framework for assessing the state of fish stocks and their exploitation and for providing advice on fishing opportunities, that conforms to international best practice (FAO guidelines).

The advantage of these frameworks is consistency in process maybe not consistency in outcome. This is particularly true in the case of large biases or uncertainties in the assessment. Stability in advice has been highlighted as a major concern by clients and stakeholders.

MIRIA was briefed about a workshop on forecasts from biased assessments (WKFORBIAS). In the interim period, ICES has suggested that the category 3 rules to provide advice be explored and potentially used for stocks which are consistently biased a substantial amount in one direction. Pre-2010 at assessment working groups the settings of the assessment models could be changed to improve model diagnostics. Post-2010 changes to model settings were only performed at benchmarks (i.e. peer-reviewed) and were maintained until the next benchmark. This sometimes derives in assessment bias that is only obvious in the years following benchmarks and that can’t be fixed until the following benchmark. ICES is in the process of addressing this issue at the moment. Management plans should be developed to account for these issues (i.e. bias). Degrading stock categories potentially reduces the number of stocks for which it can be claimed MSY advice is being used. To move to a category 3 for one year as interim solution will be difficult to explain to industry and clients. This measure may change quite a lot the catch advice for just one year and then, after a benchmark, the category 1 assessment could be accepted again deriving in a new change in catch advice the following year. A short term solution may not be appropriate if we are looking for a long term solution. This links to communications issues; if a stock is “downgraded” it needs to be clearly explained in the advice.

There is a lot of pressure to ‘upgrade’ stocks rather than take categories down. Solutions for biased assessments would be useful. The recipients of advice were asked for their thoughts on the
process ICES is carrying out (carry on getting info for another year, meet end of 2019). It was perceived as potentially causing issues with the advice for those stocks affected. There was a request for a list of stocks that were affected, however the analysis is still preliminary and the list could change following WKFORBIAS. The recipients asked for more time to consider the approach and ICES said that it would consult further.

4.3 ICES interpretation of consensus

In 2018, issues arose in some advice that required ICES to reaffirm its interpretation on consensus. The concept was highlighted to MIRIA and comments welcomed.

Minority statements are in WG reports. The ADG need to draft the advice by consensus and disagreements are put in the ADG minutes. The Web Conference decision on the advice need to be made by consensus.

MIRIA acknowledged the outlined approach to consensus of provision of advice.

4.4 ICES Code of Conduct

ICES Council approved a Code of Conduct for experts contributing to ICES science and advice to maintain scientific independence, integrity and impartiality. The ICES Code of Conduct provides guidance on identifying and handling actual, potential or perceived Conflicts of Interest and is presented for information. This protocol will have an interim implementation for a period of 3 years with a record of incidents followed up by Bureau.

It is acknowledged that scientist do not work only with ICES but also with other organizations and/or for national governments or the industry. However, in ICES work, we are only considering the approach relating to scientific understanding. If in spite of the CoI document misbehaviour occurs, there are not prescriptive actions to be taken, and the chair can contact Secretariat, and the committee’s and steering groups chairs if the issue cannot be resolved in the EG.

Working group and advice drafting group participants should keep deliberation internal, however, workshops are open to clients and stakeholders that can gain quite a lot of information. ACOM cannot currently resolve this issue but will follow it closely.

5 Layers of advice

As recently highlighted by Ernesto Penas-Lado (EU), the complexity and layering of the evidence based required to inform fisheries and marine environmental management is continuing to increase. ICES needs to adapt to this layering and ensure that its advice is credible throughout the layers, is broad enough to remain relevant and legitimate across multiple management objectives. A role of ICES is to maintain a legitimate advisory service that is fit for purpose in a changing policy and management arena. Another role of ICES is to ensure that the advice is based on best available science, thus it must assess and take up suitable new methods, techniques and innovations.

5.1 Mixed fisheries advice

As in other regions of the world, there are increasing requests for decision makers to compare the consequences of choices catches on one stock across other fish stocks and bycatch in mixed
fisheries. ICES is incrementally developing tools and approaches to provide this information but perhaps not rapidly enough to consider the management challenges of spatial closures, temporal shifts and changes in selectivity. The Celtic Seas Fisheries Overview was provided to show the current approach to mixed fisheries advice.

Issues such as what is “advice” in mixed fisheries were discussed and this was linked to analysis of scenarios. There was a discussion on optimum selectivity patterns in fisheries. There were concerns raised about the capacity of the system to do the work if we move ahead with a special workshop on scoping mixed fisheries. Looking internationally across mixed and multi-species fisheries, there is a large community. There might be a need to step-back from the tactical work to find strategic solutions.

5.2 Fisheries and Ecosystem Overviews

To encompass the need to layer ICES advice, fisheries and ecosystem overviews have been developed. This also always movement towards providing advice within the context of the ecosystem approach to be documented. Fisheries overviews have been published for the Baltic Sea, Celtic Seas and the Greater North Sea ecoregions.

http://www.ices.dk/community/advisory-process/Pages/fisheries-overviews.aspx

Ecosystem overviews have been published for Barents Sea, Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast, Celtic Seas, Greater North Sea, Baltic Sea, Icelandic waters, Norwegian Sea.

http://www.ices.dk/community/advisory-process/Pages/Ecosystem-overviews.aspx

ICES is now aiming at publishing in 2019 fisheries overviews for the Norwegian and Barents Seas and the Bay of Biscay and Iberian waters and ecosystem overviews for the Azores.

Questions were raised about tracking the use of the overviews. There is no specific recording of when/where the EOs are used. There is a consistent interest within the community to make the Overviews more operational. The ecosystem overviews should also contain information on productivity changes.

5.3 Frameworks for ecosystem advice

ICES has developed a comprehensive framework for assessing the state of fish but does not have a similar framework for providing ecosystem advice.

To ensure that ICES ecosystem advice is consistent with international agreed objectives and developed in a transparent process ICES is currently developing a set of frameworks for ecosystem advice. As part of this work ICES is planning a dialogue meeting for late 2020.

ACOM Chair presented the outcomes of two workshops (WKECOFRAME in 2017 and WKECOFRAME2 in 2018) and the ACOM proposal for ICES to facilitate a higher level dialogue meeting in 2020 between fisheries and environment representatives to discuss and agree on higher level management objectives to guide ICES in its work in providing ecosystem and environment advice.

It was noted that the process to run the dialogue meeting would need to carefully manage the roles and respective influence of meeting attendees.
5.4 Multidisciplinary nature of special requests

Many of the special requests answered in recent years have required an increased diversity of expertise; e.g. ecology, valuation, spatial mapping, stakeholder facilitation. Examples were presented to MIRIA.

6 Operational advice

6.1 ICES MSY approach for category 1 and 2 stocks below Blim

In 2018, ICES advised zero catch for a number of stocks that were estimated to be below Blim. ICES has considered this issue further in line with international practice and is updating its approach to provide catch advice for these stocks. ICES gave a short presentation of the approach and MIRIA was invited to discuss the approach applied by ICES.

Some management plans have explicitly tested for whether a very low F is acceptable when the stock is below Blim. Several management plans actually include a “rebuilding” component. However this has not been done for all plans and MSY approaches. It was suggested that ICES should evaluate whether a low F, bycatch F, or fixed low catch when the stock is below Blim is still precautionary or not before accepting it.

In the cases where the stocks are not managed under a management plans and stock size is below Blim, the advice rule adopted by ICES will be followed. The upcoming MSE workshop was highlighted to MIRIA. Implementation of the rule is very difficult in mixed fisheries.

6.2 Formulation of and process for requests for advice

In 2018, ICES received a continuous flow of special requests (over 35). This flow was difficult to manage and ensure full quality assurance. ICES proposes that special requests can be initiated with ICES at four times of the year. These “request windows” are designed to improve the management and quality of the advice process.

To ensure that there is a common understanding of a request for advice there is, in most cases, an informal dialogue between ICES and the recipients before the request is formally agreed. For special requests (non-recurrent requests), the dialogue also includes agreement on the ICES costs of providing the requested advice and confirming availability of expertise.

ICES considers that this request dialogue generally results in a better request, and improves clarity about the management challenge. However with the increasing flow of special requests, this request dialogue, associated with the liaison with experts, is difficult to manage in an ad hoc manner.

It was apparent that all members of MIRIA were worried by, or forthrightly against the suggested approach. Especially if windows did not occur prior to important negotiations or decision making schedules in an organisation.
6.3 Management plans

A table of management plans known to ICES was presented and MIRIA was invited to provide their wishes regarding specific management plans being the basis for ICES advice in 2019. Advice recipients were also asked to provide information on any agreed management plans which may not be included in the list.

Certain countries requested that all parties look at the management plan table. ICES will send the list (Doc 6c) to all clients, including specific questions. Clients asked to check if the information in the list is correct, highlight any outdated management plans/strategies no longer in use, and indicate if a precautionary management plan is to be used as basis for advice (if agreed by all parties), as a catch scenario or neither.

6.4 Special workshops in 2019

There have been challenges with the provision of fishing opportunities advice for mackerel in the Atlantic and for mixed fisheries advice in the Baltic Sea. ICES has agreed to hold two scoping workshops on the science and advice needs for these two issues in 2019.

- Workshop on the Ecosystem Based Management of the Baltic Sea (WKBALTIC), location and date to be determined
- Workshop on a Research Roadmap for Mackerel (WKRRMAC), Bremerhaven, 7–9 May 2019

MIRIA was invited to review and comment on the workshops. MIRIA is also asked to publicise and send representatives to the workshops.

6.5 Risk and the precautionary approach

Since the incorporation of the precautionary approach into the ICES advice framework in the 1990s, ICES has indicated that it suggests a level of risk in the absence of direction by fisheries managers or policy developers. One of the recipients of advice would now like to explore the appropriate level of risk used to provide fisheries advice and to evaluate management plans.

Currently ICES uses the 5% probability to ensure that Fmsy or another harvest strategy are precautionary (see the ICES Introduction to the advice). To be considered precautionary, these harvest rates/strategies should be consistent with the texts of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UN, 1992a (UNCED), the United Nations Straddling Fish Stocks Agreement of 1995 (UN, 1995) and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (FAO, 1995). FAO code of conduct states in Article 30 indicates that:

“The operational constraints explicitly define the undesirable outcomes that are to be avoided. For example, to avoid the risk of declining recruitment, a minimum spawning stock biomass, range of ages, or geographic range could be set to define safe limits within which the stock should be maintained with a specified high probability. Specific limits may also be required to deal with ecosystem effects, with bycatches and with other side effects of the fishery.”

The text of the guidelines does not specify what corresponds to high probability and in the absence of specification ICES chose to associate ‘high probability’ with 95%. Another level of probability could be chosen but it would need to fit with the word high.

The 95% Confidence interval (CI) ICES has used for many years has not been challenged by experts and managers fill confident using it has they understand what it means. However, managers need more information on what are the different types of risks and probability technicalities
in order to fully understand the advice. A suggestion for a way forward would be a broader discussion between scientists and managers on the risk level but without getting into very technical details. In general it was accepted that stakeholders and managers need a better understanding of risk.

NEAFC, through PECMAS has agreed to maintain the 5% risk being built in into the advice. Also it was flagged that parties outside ICES usual clients may not be aware of the 5% built in. ICES FMSY is more precautionary than the traditional FMSY used globally.

ICES proposed to hold a half day workshop after next year’s meeting to discuss risk. Request from clients for the focus should be on how models use risk and not so much on the different values of risk i.e. 95% or 99%. Understanding its usefulness is more important

7 Looking to the future

To remain fit for purpose, the advice and evidence for decision making from ICES needs to adapt to the changing needs of managers and policy developers across its client governments and commissions. ICES has released the new strategic plan, which incorporates a new science plan. These will be described to MIRIA.

A role of ICES is to ensure that the advice remains relevant and that the use of independent peer-reviewed knowledge, strengthens evidence based decision making. Another role of ICES is to maintain the quality of communication and delivery advice in an appropriate manner to society. In 2019, ICES will also develop a new advice plan, which will be in line with the two other plans.

7.1 ICES strategic plan

The strategic plan was launched during the MIRIA evening reception and it was circulated at the reception.

7.2 ICES science plan

The science plan was presented by the Chair of SCICOM and circulated during MIRIA.

Several of the clients questioned to explicitly take into account the economy into the TAC advice and warned against it. The Commission do not wish to have economic issues inside the biological type of advice. ICES has no intention to include economic aspects into the fishing opportunities advice at least until the science is mature. In addition the H2020 developed decision support tools and ICES has been criticised for not using them.

Introducing the social and economic themes in ICES, allow us to increase the reach out to other institutes, academia and scientific disciplines. The ICES intention in to build capacity and to start looking at the economic consequences of different management actions but not to link TACs with Economics.

A question was raised about the application of environmental DNA for sampling techniques, ICES replied that they are still in the very early stages and there will be challenges to export them (from specie translocation in great lakes), to the complexity on the transport on the sea.
7.3  **Survey of delivery of advice to recipients**

During 2018, recipients of advice were interviewed by the ICES communication team. The findings of the survey will be shared with MIRIA.

The need to improve advice search and presentation was appreciated. Several people insist in having of a map entry as the most desirable interface. Search function on ICES web is not satisfactory at all. ICES would like to develop the interactive approach to advice further, but as resources are not available at the moment, there is no timeline for this.

7.4  **Single stock advice**

The current format of the single stock advice sheets was introduced in 2015. ICES has initiated a work to create an interactive web-based platform for presenting advice.

https://ices-tools-dev.github.io/VISA_tool/hke.27.3a46-8abd.html
https://ices-tools-dev.github.io/VISA_tool/bli.27.5b67.html
https://ices-tools-dev.github.io/VISA_tool/her.27.25-2932.html
https://ices-tools-dev.github.io/VISA_tool/nep.fu.11.html

These sites are prototypes developed as a technical service for the Commission. ICES would very much like to develop this further and in the long term let this type of interactive, online presentation of the advice be the main outcome of advice, and will be available from the ICES webpage. However, resources are not available at the moment, but ICES is looking into possibilities for developing this further. There are no plans to change the amount of information. Everything that is in the ordinary pdf-advice is in these htmls, only simpler.

8  **ICES Advisory Work-plan 2019**

The meeting was updated with information on the Work Plan for ICES advice and relevant science initiatives in 2019 and Clients were invited to comment on the plan including the timing for release of recurrent advice. It was highlighted that release dates are set together with clients and it was explained to the meeting where to find important information regarding the advisory processes.

The search ability function of the ICES website through google was illustrated. The website has been designed with google in mind, and it was demonstrated how to define searches in Google to find ICES documents.

9  **Any other business**

It was suggested by the meeting that the dates for the next MIRIA meeting will be 14–15 January 2020.
10 Closing

Before closing the meeting the Chair asked the participants for feedback on the content and the form of the meeting.

All participants supported the format of the meeting, it was found very informative, instructive and useful and at the same time a good place for dialogue and discussions with both ICES and other Recipients.

It was mentioned that it was difficult for attendees to prepare for the meeting when it is scheduled early in the year as many are very busy in December and that it is difficult for NASCO to attend the meeting at that time.

The Chair thanked the participants for attending the meeting.
Annex 1: List of participants

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Agenda Item 3.1

PECMAS 2019-01-09
Annex 2: Draft Agenda

1) Welcome and opening of the meeting.

2) Adoption of agenda (Doc 02).

3) Review

   a) Review of ICES Advisory services in 2018 (Doc 03).

   An overview of the advice process and the advice provided in 2018 is given in document 03.

   MIRIA is invited to review the advisory process in 2018 and to discuss any issues and concerns arose since the 2018 MIRIA meeting.

   b) Skills shortages.

   ICES has highlighted that the research and advice community lack expertise in some key areas, including mixed fisheries, management strategy evaluation, stakeholder engagement and combining qualitative and quantitative information. In addition, expertise is sometimes lacking to address certain special requests. ICES is exploring mechanisms to resolve these shortages.

   A role of ICES is to summarise and elucidate the needs for data, methods and expertise for credible management advice.

   MIRIA will be invited to comment on this list and provide their experience of skills shortages as well as their views on the key areas where expertise will be required in the coming years.

4) Quality assurance and consistency.

   a) Quality assurance (Doc 4a)

   Errors in ICES advice were discussed at previous MIRIA meeting. All Clients acknowledged that errors might appear but expect that they would be minimized. Quality check of data was also discussed previously and Clients expressed willingness to cooperate with ICES to ensure that ICES has access to all relevant data.

   A role of ICES is to continually assess and improve the quality and transparency of processes behind the science and the advice.

   ICES will present initiatives taken within ICES to quality assure ICES advisory products. MIRIA is invited to comment on the initiatives taken by ICES and to discuss possible needs for further initiatives and how Clients and ICES can cooperate to quality assure ICES advice.

   b) Greater consistency in outcome (Doc 4d)

   ICES has developed a comprehensive framework for assessing the state of fish stocks and their exploitation and for providing advice on fishing opportunities, that conforms to international best practice (FAO guidelines).

   The advantage of these frameworks is consistency in process maybe not consistency in outcome. This is particularly true in the case of large biases or uncertainties in the assessment. Stability in advice has been highlighted as a major concern by clients and stakeholders.

   MIRIA will be briefed about a workshop on forecasts from biased assessments (WKFORBIAS). In the interim period, ICES has suggested that the category 3 rules to provide advice be explored and potentially used for stocks which are consistently biased a substantial amount in one direction.

   MIRIA is invited to discuss future approaches to improving the stability in the advice.
c) ICES interpretation of consensus (Doc 4b)

In 2018, issues arose in some advice that required ICES to reaffirm its interpretation on consensus. The concept will be highlighted to MIRIA and comment is welcomed.

d) ICES Code of Conduct (Doc 4c)

ICES Council approved a Code of Conduct for experts contributing to ICES science and advice to maintain scientific independence, integrity and impartiality. The ICES Code of Conduct provides guidance on identifying and handling actual, potential or perceived Conflicts of Interest and is presented for information. The role of independent review of stock assessment methods and special requests will also be highlighted.

MIRIA is invited to comment.

5) Layers of advice

As recently highlighted by Ernesto Penas-Lado, the complexity and layering of the evidence based required to inform fisheries and marine environmental management is continuing to increase. ICES needs to adapt to this layering and ensure that its advice is credible throughout the layers, is broad enough to remain relevant and legitimate across multiple management objectives.

A role of ICES is to maintain a legitimate advisory service that is fit for purpose in a changing policy and management arena.

Another role of ICES is to ensure that the advice is based on best available science, thus it must assess and take up suitable new methods, techniques and innovations.

There are a number of initiatives:

a) Mixed fisheries advice (Doc 5a)

As in other regions of the world, there are increasing requests for decision makers to compare the consequences of choices catches on one stock across other fish stocks and bycatch in mixed fisheries. ICES is incrementally developing tools and approaches to provide this information but perhaps not rapidly enough to consider the management challenges of spatial closures, temporal shifts and changes in selectivity.

The Celtic Seas Fisheries Overview is provided to show the current approach to mixed fisheries advice (see page 22).

Meeting participants will be asked to share with ICES any experiences or concerns with mixed fisheries advice.

b) Fisheries and Ecosystem Overviews (Doc 5b)

To encompass the need to layer ICES advice, fisheries and ecosystem overviews have been developed. This also always movement towards providing advice within the context of the ecosystem approach to be documented.

Fisheries overviews have been published for the Baltic Sea, Celtic Seas and the Greater North Sea ecoregions.

http://www.ices.dk/community/advisory-process/Pages/fisheries-overviews.aspx

Ecosystem overviews have been published for Barents Sea, Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast, Celtic Seas, Greater North Sea, Baltic Sea, Icelandic waters, Norwegian Sea.

http://www.ices.dk/community/advisory-process/Pages/Ecosystem-overviews.aspx

ICES is now aiming at publishing in 2019 fisheries overviews for the Norwegian & Barents Seas and the Bay of Biscay and Iberian waters and ecosystem overviews for the Azores.
ICES is interested in feedback on the overviews and MIRIA is invited to review the overviews and comment on possible improvements.

c) Frameworks for ecosystem advice (Doc 5c)

ICES has developed a comprehensive framework for assessing the state of fish but does not have a similar framework for providing ecosystem advice.

To ensure that ICES ecosystem advice is consistent with international agreed objectives and developed in a transparent process ICES is currently developing a set of frameworks for ecosystem advice. As part of this work ICES is planning a dialogue meeting for late 2020.

ICES will give a short presentation of the work to develop the frameworks.

d) Multidisciplinary nature of special requests

Many of the special requests answered in recent years have required an increased diversity of expertise; e.g. ecology, valuation, spatial mapping, stakeholder facilitation. Examples of this type of advice will be presented to MIRIA.

6) Operational advice

a) ICES MSY approach for category 1 and 2 stocks below Blim. (Doc 6a)

In 2018, ICES advised zero catch for a number of stocks that were estimated to be below Blim. ICES has considered this issue further in line with international practice and is updating its approach to provide catch advice for these stocks.

ICES will give a short presentation of the approach and invite MIRIA to discuss the approach applied by ICES.

b) Formulation of and process for requests for advice (Doc 6b)

In 2018, ICES received a continuous flow of special requests (over 35). This flow was difficult to manage and ensure full quality assurance. ICES proposes that special requests can be initiated with ICES at four times of the year. These “request windows” are designed to improve the management and quality of the advice process.

To ensure that there is a common understanding of a request for advice there is, in most cases, an informal dialogue between ICES and the recipients before the request is formally agreed. For special requests (non-recurrent requests), the dialogue also includes agreement on the ICES costs of providing the requested advice and confirming availability of expertise.

ICES considers that this request dialogue generally results in a better request, and improves clarity about the management challenge. However with the increasing flow of special requests, this request dialogue, associated with the liaison with experts, is difficult to manage in an ad hoc manner.

MIRIA is invited to comment on the current process and the proposal of creating request windows.

c) Management plans. (Doc 6c)

A table of management plans known to ICES is presented and MIRIA is invited to provide their wishes regarding specific management plans being the basis for ICES advice in 2019. Advice recipients are also asked to provide information on any agreed management plans which may not be included in the list.

d) Special workshops in 2019. (Doc 6d)

There have been challenges with the provision of fishing opportunities advice for mackerel in the Atlantic and for mixed fisheries advice in the Baltic Sea. ICES has agreed to hold two scoping workshops on the science and advice needs for these two issues in 2019.
MIRIA is invited to review and comment on the workshops. MIRIA is also asked to publicise and send representatives to the workshops.

e) Risk and the precautionary approach.

Since the incorporation of the precautionary approach into the ICES advice framework in the 1990s, ICES has indicated that it suggests a level of risk in the absence of direction by fisheries managers or policy developers. One of the recipients of advice would now like to explore the appropriate level of risk used to provide fisheries advice and to evaluate management plans.

Currently ICES uses the 5% probability to ensure that Fmsy or another harvest strategy are precautionary (see the ICES Introduction to the advice). To be considered precautionary, these harvest rates/strategies should be consistent with the texts of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UN, 1992a (UNCED), the United Nations Straddling Fish Stocks Agreement of 1995 (UN, 1995) and the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries (FAO, 1995). FAO code of conduct states in Article 30 indicates that:

“The operational constraints explicitly define the undesirable outcomes that are to be avoided. For example, to avoid the risk of declining recruitment, a minimum spawning stock biomass, range of ages, or geographic range could be set to define safe limits within which the stock should be maintained with a specified high probability. Specific limits may also be required to deal with ecosystem effects, with bycatches and with other side effects of the fishery.”

The text of the guidelines does not specify what corresponds to high probability and in the absence of specification ICES chose to associate ‘high probability’ with 95%. Another level of probability could be chosen but it would need to fit with the word high.

MIRIA is asked for their opinion about ICES initiating a process to explore the concept of “high probability” and the consequences of an alternative level of risk.

7) Looking to the future

To remain fit for purpose, the advice and evidence for decision making from ICES needs to adapt to the changing needs of managers and policy developers across its client governments and commissions. ICES has released the new strategic plan, which incorporates a new science plan. These will be described to MIRIA.

A role of ICES is to ensure that the advice remains relevant and that the use of independent peer-reviewed knowledge, strengthens evidence based decision making.

Another role of ICES is to maintain the quality of communication and delivery advice in an appropriate manner to society.

In 2019, ICES will also develop a new advice plan, which will be in line with the two other plans.

a) ICES strategic plan

The strategic plan will be launched during the MIRIA evening reception. It will be circulated at the reception.

MIRIA will be asked for informal comment during the evening reception and also invited to formally comment in writing after MIRIA.

b) ICES science plan
The science plan will be presented by the Chair of SCICOM and circulated during MIRIA.
MIRIA will ask for comment.

c) Survey of delivery of advice to recipients (Doc 7a)

During 2018, recipients of advice were interviewed by the ICES communication team. The findings of
the survey will be shared with MIRIA.
MIRIA will ask for comment.

d) Single stock advice

The current format of the single stock advice sheets was introduced in 2015. ICES has initiated a work
to create an interactive web-based platform for presenting advice.

https://ices-tools-dev.github.io/VISA_tool/hke.27.3a46-8abd.html
https://ices-tools-dev.github.io/VISA_tool/bli.27.5b67.html
https://ices-tools-dev.github.io/VISA_tool/her.27.25-2932.html
https://ices-tools-dev.github.io/VISA_tool/nep.fu.11.html

MIRIA is invited to review the initial web pages and comment.


The meeting will be updated with information on the Work-plan for ICES advice and relevant science
initiatives in 2019. Clients are invited to comment on the plan including the timing for release of
recurrent advice.

9) Any other business.

ICES was not notified of any other issues.