

ICES
CIEM



International Council for the
Exploration of the Sea

Conseil International pour
l'Exploration de la Mer

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Subject: ICES input to 38th session of the GFCM

Dear Abdellah,

Unfortunately, due to many conflicting engagements ICES will be unable to attend the 38th session of GFCM. However, we have prepared a short summary of work for information and consideration by the meeting.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne Christine Brusendorff'.

Anne Christine Brusendorff
General Secretary



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GFCM

May 2014

ICES input to the 38th Session of the GFCM

The ICES Strategic Plan (2014–2018)¹ commits to building a foundation of science around one key challenge; integrated ecosystem understanding. The plan makes strategic choices to further develop ICES work on the Arctic, aquaculture, and to enhance the training programme. This work will be done by addressing information gaps and needs, ensuring strategic partnerships, and using limited resources efficiently.

In 2012, the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) entered into a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) to enhance collaboration on areas of mutual interest. Initially, 6 areas were identified for further work. The areas are listed below with a short description of on-going ICES work.

1. Stock assessment and management plans of European eel

The joint EIFAAC/ICES/GFCM Working Group on Eel (WGEEL) will meet in Tunisia in November. Specific dates and venue are still to be decided. More information and the terms of reference for the group are available online: <http://www.ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/WGEEL.aspx>

2. Implementation process of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive

A workshop on GES Descriptor 3+ (Commercial Fish and shellfish) was held on 3–4 April 2014 at DGMARE in Brussels. ICES presented the report of the D3+ workshop in January and the D3 regional assessment advice to workshop participants: (http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2014/Special%20Requests/EU_Draft_recommendations_for_the_assessment_of_MSFD_Descriptor3.pdf)

The first day of the workshop was mainly dedicated to overarching issues such as the new CFP, EMFF, and biodiversity and nature policy. On the second day ICES arranged two parallel sessions:

- D3 assessment under MSFD
- Fisheries and other MSFD descriptors: what happens once you reach fishing at MSY?

The overall purpose of the first session was to explore a common approach for the assessment of Descriptor 3 in the four MSFD marine regions and consider gaps and recommendations and plan for preparation of the Guidance document.

¹ <http://www.ices.dk/explore-us/what-we-do/Pages/Our-strategy.aspx>

The second session considered possible scenarios of fishing at MSY. Achieving MSY across most European fisheries will likely result in a reduction of the pressures on biodiversity, foodwebs, and sea-floor integrity which are caused by fishing through a reduction of the current fishing mortality. In theory, fishing at MSY should result in more fish, which would allow a bigger catch even with a reduced fishing activity throughout Europe. Although it is difficult to predict the consequences of fishing at MSY on predator fish for the abundance of prey fish (forage fish). MSY is assessed and managed at a regional (or sub-regional) scale whereas habitats, sensitive species, and foodwebs are often impacted by fisheries at a local scale. This difference in operational spatial scales results in a likely requirement for member states to adopt additional measures to address local (sub-regional) challenges to achieving GES under the MSFD. In addition, considerations of MSY on single fish stocks cannot account for specific pressures on sensitive species or habitats. As well as member state action, the CFP allows for the adoption of technical measures and the workshop provided many examples of how technical measures can be used as tools to achieve management objectives for habitats, species, and foodwebs. Under the new CFP, it is hoped that fleet-based management approaches will be developed that will enable specific actions to be taken on specific pressures that pose a specific risk to achieving or maintaining Good Environmental Status.

3. Training

The following ICES Training programmes are being offered in 2014. More information can be found on our website: <http://www.ices.dk/news-and-events/Training/Pages/default.aspx>

Course name	Instructors	Date	Location	Application Deadline
Design and analysis of statistically sound catch sampling programmes	Jon Helge Volstad and Mary Christman	Monday 23 rd – Friday 27 th June	ICES HQ Copenhagen	18 th May
Stock assessment (introduction)	Steven Cadrin and Iago Mosqueira	Monday 14 th – Friday 18 th July	ICES HQ Copenhagen	19 th May
Stock assessment (advanced)	Jan Jaap Poos and Richard Hillary	Monday 3 rd – Friday 7 th November	ICES HQ Copenhagen	29 th October
Marine Spatial Planning: processes and tools	Andreas Kannen and Roland Cormier	27 th – 31 st October	ICES HQ Copenhagen	18 th September
Social Science Methods for	Marloes	13 th – 16 th	ICES HQ	1 st September

Course name	Instructors	Date	Location	Application Deadline
Natural Scientists	Kraan et al	October	Copenhagen	
Application of Geostatistics to analyse spatially explicit Survey data in an Ecosystem Approach	Pierre Petitgas et al	Monday 8 th – Friday 12 th December	Fontainebleau, ParisTech, France	27th October

4. Indicators for ecosystem impacts for fisheries

ICES has a standing request from the European Commission to advise and inform on the impacts of fisheries on the marine environment. Currently it provides advice on the impact of fishing on birds, mammals and on cold water corals and sponges. It is required to expand this advice to the impact on benthic habitats in general. The DCF makes it a requirement to report on spatial fishing activities in relation to habitat (indicators 5, 6, and 7 of Annex XIII to Commission Decision (2010/93/EU)) and ICES is requested by the Commission to provide these indicators. VMS data from vessels is currently the most practical and cost-effective way to describe the spatial dynamics of fishing activities. ICES is thus mandated to request VMS information, at high resolution (spatial and temporal) to provide this advice. This mandate is supported by the current EU data collection framework (DCF) and the Aarhus Convention (2001).

5. Development of frameworks for Data collection and planning

The ICES Data Centre is a key marine partner in the European Topic Centre on inland, Marine and Coastal waters, which works closely with the EEA and the Commission on supplying marine data streams, and advising on the practical means in which services for the WFD/MSFD can be built upon existing national and regional infrastructures.

There are essentially 2 strands of activity:

The first relates to providing access to data and data products that ICES manages on behalf of the Regional Seas Conventions (RSCs). By having this agreement with the European system (EIONET) it means member countries do not have to duplicate reporting for WFD (and potentially MSFD) as well as their existing commitments to the RSCs. This also means the reference datasets used in the European context are closely related to the regional datasets (both in quality and content) and therefore the basis of information for assessment is common between the scales.

The second strand is relating to ongoing and future work on datastreams specifically for the MSFD (art 19.3) but also relating infrastructure developments such as the INSPIRE directive, and distributed data reporting to the shaping of how data will be made available to the MSFD in the next reporting cycle and beyond.

6. Development of databases and data access – ICES databases in development (Bycatch; marine litter; underwater noise)

In addition to the established datastreams that already feed MSFD descriptors (D3, D5, D8) ICES is developing approaches to the other datasets that are either not yet covered or where the management has been on a less formal basis.

Bycatch working with the ICES group on bycatch (WGBYC), the ICES data centre held a workshop in 2013. This resulted in the elaboration of a format, and a process for compiling the bycatch data stemming from Council regulation 812. The main principle was to establish an electronic process and facilitate calculation of bycatch estimates by Metier, which will eventually lead to a common indicator for Europe (MSFD) bycatch rate per unit of population.

Marine litter (derived from bottom trawling). The data are already collected by some of the contributing parties to the ICES coordinated bottom trawl surveys. The challenge is to facilitate the reporting of marine litter without adding to the burden of trawl surveys which are carried out largely in relation to the Data Collection Framework. ICES have looked at adapting existing formats and vocabularies to minimize the impact on the trawl survey groups and from these transfer the data to a separate collection for end users. Currently discussions on the draft changes to the trawl survey data collection format is under discussion with the trawl survey groups and testing of the format is planned for later in 2014.

Underwater noise. The 2015 OSPAR>ICES workplan has a scoping exercise for the options for setting up/running a database based on events exceeding a defined limit. The details of this are yet to be worked out. In cooperation with the science steering group on survey science and technology we will be working on an 'acoustics' database related to fisheries. While this is strictly separate from the underwater noise issue, it is hoped that some of the understanding we gain in this activity will be relevant for the noise work.

7. Additional ICES work of relevance

SOLEMON survey data

The ICES Working Group on Beam Trawl Surveys (WGBEAM; <http://www.ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/WGBEAM.aspx>) co-ordinates the Italian SOLEMON survey, a beam trawl survey in the Northern Adriatic. ICES Data Centre has recently been requested to host the survey data in the DATRAS database. This will allow for more efficient access for WGBEAM to enable data analysis and helps to co-ordinate data access for wider scientific use.

WGCOMEDA

Working Group on Comparative Analyses between European Atlantic and Mediterranean marine ecosystems to move towards an Ecosystem-based Approach to Fisheries (WGCOMEDA; <http://www.ices.dk/community/groups/Pages/WGCOMEDA.aspx>) the priority of this working group is to investigate both cross-system and system specific key-scientific questions to guide research and improve the ecosystem approach to management of marine living resources of the European Seas using existing data and analysis from regional systems at the East Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea.