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Minutes of the Meeting of the Advisory Committee (ACOM)

28 November – 1 December 2017

ICES HQ, Copenhagen, Denmark



ICES
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the Exploration of the Sea

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Welcome

Participants were welcomed by the Chair. Special welcome was addressed to Simon Jennings, SCICOM Chair, Phil Boulcott, UK ACOM alternate, Zsuzsanna Koenig, EU DGMARE representative, Sven Kupschus, EOSG Chair, and Petur Steingrund, observer from the Faroe Islands. They all attended an ACOM meeting for the first time.

The meeting was attended by representatives from 19 ICES member countries, only Lithuania had sent apologizes (see list of participants in Annex 1).

Anne Christine Brusendorff, ICES General Secretary, also warmly welcomed participants to the 2017 ACOM meeting. In doing so she highlighted the main agenda items of the meeting being: (1) How are we using our resources, (2) New things ACOM would like to do, and (3) Existing work, guidelines and new ways to deal with the recurrent work. She wished the participants a good week with good discussions.

The ACOM Chair emphasized as well that the objective of the ACOM meeting would be to discuss ACOM structure and the 2018 work-plan for both advisory work and ACOM strategic work. It should be a week with forward looking discussions and actions to be taken.

Before starting the meeting the Chair also re-informed that Colm Lordan had been appointed as new ACOM Vice-Chair and that he would be replacing Carmen Fernandez from 1st January 2018.

1 Adoption of agenda

The agenda and timetable for the ACOM meeting was adopted (see Annex 2).

2 Review of membership

ACOM was invited to review and update the ACOM membership list. Changes should be reported to the Secretariat.

3 Minutes from ACOM Consultations

Minutes from the September ACOM Consultations were approved.

4 Review of 2017

4.1 Chair's report to ACOM

The ACOM Chair gave a summary of the advisory work in 2017

- Advice has in 2017 been delivered in accordance with the agreed work-plan and been well received by stakeholders.
- The annual number of fisheries opportunity advice has decreased from 250 in 2014 to 210 in 2017, special requests increased from around 20 to more than 30 in the same period. Clients do not see the difference between a technical service and an advice, and technical services has been reduced and limited to data issues (and number declined from 9 to 2).

- Workload has been very heavy in 2017 with a large number of advisory related Expert Groups, Reviews, ADGs, and ACOM web-conferences.
- Data were in 2017, with a few exceptions, delivered as requested in the data calls.
- On invitation 23 presentations of advice were given by ACOM Leadership and Secretariat. It would be nice to know how many presentations ACOM members give in their home countries.

The ACOM Chair concluded his presentation by thanking ACOM and the Secretariat for their good work this year.

4.2 Head of Advisory Support report;

The head of ICES Advisory Support gave feedback from the Secretariat, a presentation of lessons learnt from her first 11 months. Key issues addressed in her presentation were:

- Mistakes/errors. Working on classifying these and setting up procedures, making guidelines easily available etc.
- Time is a limiting factor, so finding steps to save time at various levels in the ICES advice process will be useful.
- Clear, simple communication needed. E-mail is number one method at the moment, but can be overwhelming.
- Important to remember that we are all ICES and ACOM members have an ambassador role.
- Felt the Secretariat is receiving support from ACOM for the difficult job it does.

4.3 ACOM members review.

All ACOM members were asked to provide their review of 2017. There were a general perception of a good working relationship with the ICES Secretariat and ACOM Leadership, who both received appreciation from the ACOM members. The impression of the 2017 advice year was that in general ICES is successful in providing salient advice although there remain some important points to continue discussion of and progress solutions further:

Quality assurance: At present there are good initiatives within ICES in terms of quality assurance and transparent processes from data-to-assessment output. However the quality assurance is much wider than this; it relates to availability of expertise, a thorough and prioritized audit process in the working groups, and a transparent process from assessment to final advice with the appropriate buy-in from ACOM and experts. As examples a couple of cases were mentioned where the advice on fishing opportunities relative to previous year's advice had changes driven by changes in methods and not by changes in the stock.

Benchmark process: The current benchmark process need a thorough review; too many benchmarks have been inconclusive; reviews have been contradicting the experts, reports have not been available to the ADGs and far too many ad-hoc decisions have been taken. The implementation of the new benchmark system agreed by ACOM in 2016 should be initiated in 2018.

ADG portfolio, mandate and communication: Clear description of the tasks for the ADG was asked for; it should be specified in the guidelines what the ADG can decide and also how the communication to the EG can be transparent, documented and traceable.

Workload: The number of Special Requests and associated ADGs and Web-Conferences have been a problem for the ACOM members in terms of workload. Often the requests have been announced with very short notice and it is not feasible to have such a high frequency of Web-Conferences if a proper participation from ACOM including preparation is expected. Planning should be better and the issue should be discussed with Clients.

Alternates: Engaging with alternates and finding participants for the more non-fisheries ADGs and advice is a challenge for most ACOM members given tight planning for all. Despite this, ACOM was pleased to see ecosystem advice is getting more on the agenda and ICES is improving at it.

Reference points: It was raised that ICES may have rushed into the MSY approach for Category 3; the EGs have done a good job in trying to apply the approach, but there are still some generic issues which need to be addressed.

The ACOM Leadership also provided a review of 2017. A common message was that the efforts by the ACOM members and the ICES Secretariat was appreciated; workload and time-pressure have been key frustrations and causes of minor mistakes throughout the advisory process. Transparency in communication and decision making was pointed to. The participation in non-fisheries ADGs have been improving, but there is still a way to go.

The representative from DGMARE who attended the meeting as observer stated that there was a very good relationship with the ICES Secretariat and ACOM Leadership, which was appreciated. The advice was perceived as salient and even errors were dealt with in a transparent and timely manner. The Ecosystem and Fisheries Overviews were highlighted as being very useful and something which potentially should be explored further.

The ACOM chair concluded the session by appreciating the issues raised, most of which would be dealt with during the meeting.

5 SCICOM

Simon Jennings, Chair of SCICOM, provided an update on the objectives of SCICOM and their work during 2017.

SCICOM continues to work to increase the scope, scale and impact of ICES science. The general objectives of SCICOM are: (1) To keep the science programme dynamic, internationally relevant, and impactful, (2) To ensure seamless links between science, data and advice and (3) To engage with scientists in ICES member countries and beyond by planning an annual cycle of meetings and workshops as well as the Annual Science Conference. The current priorities for SCICOM are to: (1) Identify and promote science priorities within a science programme that is dynamic, internationally relevant and impactful, while fully taking account of national needs and providing added value to national programmes; (2) Collate information on ICES science outputs in accessible and interrogatable formats and develop and publicise metrics of impact. Ensure Expert Group (EG) outputs acknowledge ICES contributions; (3) Develop and regularly update website text relating to Science, SCICOM, Steering Groups (SG) and personnel to

increase awareness, visibility and impact of our people and work; (4) Develop and run an engaging training programme that achieves cost recovery and enables participants to develop their careers, broaden their knowledge base, widen their professional network and add value nationally; (5) Promote and support frequent and effective communication between EG, SG, SCICOM and SCICOM Chair to increase network engagement and efficiency in all activities relevant to SCICOM; (6) Promote science activity and collaboration within and beyond the ICES network in ICES Action Areas; (7) Ensure effective communication and seamless links between science, data collection, storage and processing, and advice, and (8) Lead development of ICES viewpoints to highlight ICES capacity to advise on new and emerging issues and to capitalize on the science done in ICES. Currently three viewpoints are in progress: Consequences of large fish stocks, Future fish production in the Arctic, and Vectors and management of invasive species.

2017 has been a successful year for SCICOM and for ICES science. A new Aquaculture Steering Group has been established, bringing to five the number of SCICOM Steering Groups which address broad and enduring areas of science and advice and currently 'parent' 98 Expert Groups. Four of these Steering Groups, including Aquaculture, gained new Chairs in 2017. These Chairs are working successfully in their new roles and there has been a growing focus on highlighting strong science in the network. Strategic Initiatives on Climate Change effects on Marine Ecosystems and the Human Dimension have also been actively running and supporting workshops and symposia. Five ICES training courses were run in 2017, with two more to be completed. ICES has published six Cooperative Research Reports (CRR), two ICES Techniques in Marine Environmental Science (TIMES) and three Identification Leaflets in 2017.

In 2018, in addition to recurrent delivery of science and the annual programme of work, SCICOM will focus on setting clear science priorities to inform the development of the next ICES Strategic Plan. The science prioritisation process, as described in detail in the 2017 SCICOM Progress Report, is currently being informed by three elements: (1) An ongoing review of emerging marine 'opportunities' for ICES, (2) A review of marine science priorities in member countries and an assessment of where ICES can 'add value', and (3) An existing draft list of SCICOM science priorities, along with further bottom-up input from ASC Sessions and discussions. SCICOM would value ACOM input to this process wherever possible, and will run sessions on this topic at the WGCHAIRS meeting in January 2018.

6 Steering Groups and Strategic Initiatives

Steering Groups and Strategic Initiatives were addressed under agenda item 5.

7 Council meeting October 2017

Document 7 included a summary of the actions of direct relevance to ACOM agreed by the Council at the October meeting.

Quality assurance and control was one of the major points discussed by the Council. ACOM took note of the decision to issue a joint statement from ACOM and Secretariat on ICES initiatives to quality assure advisory products. ACOM agreed that the implication and involvement of the ICES Member Countries need to be underlined in such a statement. It was furthermore concluded that the statement cannot be done by the 30/11 as requested by the Council.

Another point of discussion was related to Stakeholders and their involvement in meetings. There will be no changes in the way that stakeholders are participating in terms of meetings in the advice season 2018, but a Council subgroup will present a suggestion for a Code of Conduct for Council 2018 October meeting.

8 Frequency of assessment

ACOM identified at the 2016 November meeting category 1 stocks that could be candidates for less frequent assessments and requested the ACOM Leadership to discuss the list with Clients with the aim of getting agreements on reducing the frequency of relevant stock assessments.

ACOM discussed the absence of clear feedback from Clients on initiative and requested the ACOM Leadership to continue the dialogue with the Clients.

9 Advice reopening procedure

Following the agreement at the 2016 ACOM meeting, it was suggested to the clients that the assessment and advice for the stocks currently subject to the reopening procedure be moved to the autumn. ICES also suggested moving the release of the mixed fisheries advice to October.

Although the EC has expressed understanding of the need to reduce the workload it has so far not accepted to change the reopening process. ACOM approved and agreed for ACOM Leadership to continue the dialogue with Clients with the aim of getting rid of the reopening process.

10 Technical guidelines

In total 13 Technical Guidelines out of the 25 guidelines agreed by ACOM in 2014 have now been published. There has been little progress in finalizing the remaining guidelines. ACOM was invited to discuss and agree on a plan to finalize the guidelines. Annex 4 provides the list of guidelines agreed by ACOM and the status and decisions made by ACOM on the priority in publicizing the remaining guidelines and who from ACOM has volunteered to finalize the individual guidelines.

11 Introduction to ICES advice

ACOM requested in November 2016 the ACOM leadership to prepare a simplified version of the introduction to ICES advice to be released in 2017. However, the leadership has not had time to work on the introduction.

ACOM agreed that the ACOM Leadership should do a small update of the current introduction in advance for 2018 advice season and present a revised version for ACOM approval in 2018.
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12 Frameworks for ecosystem advice

The report of the Workshop to scope the ICES framework for ecosystem advice (WKECOFRAME) was presented to ACOM at the Consultations in Fort Lauderdale. ACOM found that WKECOFRAME had made good progress in developing a system

of ICES frameworks and decided that WKECOFRAME should hold a second workshop with the same chairs.

Lisette Enserink, co-chair of WKECOFRAME, presented the draft resolutions for WKECOFRAME2 to ACOM.

ACOM stated that the drafted resolutions reflect well what was decided at ASC consultations and the Resolution was approved by ACOM with minor modifications.

13 Fisheries and ecosystem overviews

Fisheries and Ecosystem Overviews are advisory products seen as a key and innovative way to deliver ICES advice, both in fixed and in dynamic interactive on-line formats. The Overviews have been developing in parallel but different ways with the fisheries overviews emphasising more of the online side and the ecosystem overviews gaining greater geographical coverage. Both types of overview have required a great deal (excessive) input from the ACOM leadership and from the ICES Secretariat. While it is likely that the “workload per overview” will decrease with experience, the current way of working is not sustainable.

Future way of working

ACOM agreed that leads from among ACOM Members/Alternates would be required for each overview still to be created. The lead would be expected to be responsible for ensuring that sufficient human resources are made available to produce each overview. Each lead would need to work closely with the Secretariat and ACOM agreed that all countries would endeavour to support the lead. A timetable for future production was also agreed. It was agreed that a drafting workshop would be needed for all ecoregions with multiple jurisdictions, while for single jurisdiction ecoregions, local processes would apply. It is expected that most overviews will take 2 years from start to completion; in other words, work for those overviews scheduled for 2019, considerable compilation work, including adding Terms of Reference to relevant expert groups for their 2018 meetings, will be required.

New ecosystem overviews (it would be possible to move some overviews to earlier years and overview production will be delayed should insufficient human resources be available)

Planned Year	Ecoregion	Lead	Notes
2018	Baltic	Matti Salminen	Laura U to chair workshop
	Azores	Mario Pinho	
2019	Oceanic North-east Atlantic	Harald Gjørseter	Odd Aksel Bergstad to chair workshop
2020	Faroese	Volunteer needed	
	Greenland Sea	Jesper Boje	
	Arctic	Volunteer needed	Could be ICES/PICES/PAME

New fisheries overviews (it would be possible to move some overviews to earlier years and overview production will be delayed should insufficient human resources be available)

Planned Year	Ecoregion	Lead	Notes
2018	Norwegian and Barents Seas (combined)	Harald Gjørseter with Yuri Efimov	Aim for workshop after April 2018. Note that material already exists
	Celtic Seas	Volunteer needed	Aim for workshop in June-July. Note that much material already exists
2019	Icelandic	Gudmundur Thordarson	
	Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Coast	Francisco Velasco with Michel Bertignac and Fatima Borges	
2020	Faroes	Volunteer needed	
	Greenland Sea	Jesper Boje	
	Arctic	Volunteer needed	Could be ICES/PICES/PAME
	Oceanic North-east Atlantic	Volunteer needed	
	Azores	Fatima Borges with Mario Pinho	

Maintenance and additions to existing ecosystem overviews

ACOM has already agreed that a section on climate change effects in each ecoregion should be added. A template for this addition has been created. This needs to be completed by each of the Integrated Ecosystem Assessment expert groups. The Secretariat will add a term of reference to each relevant group for their 2018 meeting. ACOM will consider the inclusion of further issues into the ecosystem overviews (e.g. Harmful Algal Blooms and Socio-economic issues). Automation of the background datasets to produce standard graphics will continue in the Secretariat. In 2019, the intention is to fully review a third of the existing overviews; this being the start of a three-year updating cycle.

Ecosystem overview ADG (ADGECO) November/December 2018 will consider the two new overviews, add climate change sections to the existing overviews and correct known errors.

Maintenance and additions to existing fisheries overviews

Much is automated. ACOM agreed that automatic updated figures would not be included in existing overviews, but would be temporarily kept in a separate (well-flagged) area online. This was to avoid the issue of associated text saying something different from each figure. The automatic updates would be available shortly after the publication of relevant advice. No decision was taken on the inclusion of technical interaction / multispecies advice in the overviews.

Fishery overview ADG (ADGFO) November/December 2018 will consider the two new overviews, and check the texts in relation to updated graphs to update and then incorporate that new information. Known errors will be corrected.

Next generation of overviews

ACOM agreed to maintain the current format and content, and not to include new topics (except for the climate change already agreed) in the first generation of the overviews.

Parallel to the finalisation of the overviews a discussion of the next generation of overviews should be initiated. This discussion should cover not only the content of the overviews but also the format and dissemination.

14 Non-fisheries advice – ACOM structure

A list of job descriptions for ACOM Members and ACOM (Annex 3) prepared by a Subgroup was discussed. Each ACOM Member/Alternate attending the meeting was asked to review the list by indicating for each task if it was viewed as relevant or not, if he/she, as ACOM Member, was doing this task already and to identify missing tasks.

The results of the review is summarised in annex 3.

In addition to serve as member of ACOM and participate active in the advisory work it was highlighted that ACOM Members have an important role as bridge builder between ICES and all relevant national marine science institutes and as ICES ambassador to their country.

It was noted that the task list was very long and that it should be condensed and that this was best done by correspondence by a Subgroup.

A subgroup with the following members: Christopher Zimmermann, Eskild Kirkegaard, Joanne Morgan, Larry Alade, Mark Tasker and Morten Vinther was established, to work by correspondence to draft a job description for ACOM Members and Alternates based on the list in Annex 3 to this report .

15 Steering Group structure

A proposal from the SCICOM and ACOM Chairs on allocation of all EG in ICES to a Steering Group was discussed at the Consultations in Fort Lauderdale. ACOM was in principle supportive to the proposal but would like to see a clearer description of the

benefits to ICES advisory services of the proposed changes. The ACOM Chair had prepared a revised document describing the rationale for the proposed changes and possible effects on the advisory services.

The main concern was if ACOM would lose the link to the expert groups and that adding an extra layer to an already challenging system would just add additional bureaucracy. It was found that the purpose was fine but that it was unclear if the proposal was operational. It was on the other hand also argued that it would make sense to have all expert groups operating under the same structure and with the increasing number of special requests in a wider range of topics ACOM cannot draw only on advisory group unless we establish a lot of new groups. If the ACOM tasks were not changing there would be no need to change the system, but there is a need to establish a way to draw on all EG's. Also mentioned was that the current structure has a negative impact on the science discussions and the advisory side need for science.

After the first round of discussions the Chair concluded that for the time being there would be no change to the system as ACOM had not been convinced about the added value and ACOM and SCICOM Chairs would work on the development of job descriptions and working procedures for steering groups, but on request of some ACOM members the item was brought on the table again as it was felt that the Committee should take ownership of the process and not leave it to the ACOM and SCICOM Chairs.

A Subgroup was established to work by correspondence to draft a job description for steering group chairs. The group will be co-chaired by Els Torreele and Nathalie Steins, other members of the group are Carl O'Brien, Fatima Borges, Mark Dickey-Collas, and Mark Tasker. The Subgroup will report before the SCICOM meeting in the end of February.

16 Framework for advice on fishing opportunities

16.1 Framework for advice on fishing opportunities for category 3 and 4 stocks

The Chair of the Seventh Workshop on the Development of Quantitative Assessment Methodologies based on LIFE-history traits, exploitation characteristics, and other relevant parameters for data-limited stocks (WKLIFE VII) presented a detailed and technical overview of the work that had been undertaken before and during the WKLIFE 7. ACOM was invited to review the report.

The simulations conducted prior to, and during, WKLIFE 7 indicate that the rules proposed by the Workshop on the Development of the ICES approach to providing MSY advice for category 3 and 4 stocks (WKMSYCat34), if used in their basic configuration, generally do not perform well, but can be tuned to improve performance. Further generic simulation tested is needed to understand the circumstances under which the rules proposed by WKMSYCAT34 can work.

ACOM agreed on the proposal from the Steering Group:

- The generic simulation testing that is still needed should be done in advance of and reviewed during WKLIFE 8 (in early October 2018). The aim of this generic simulation-testing work would be to find out which rules work under different circumstances (data availability, biological parameters, fishery characteristics).
- An implementation workshop to apply the methods to specific stocks would take place in early November 2018. North Sea stocks would be included in this workshop, but possibly other stocks would also be included (such as Celtic Seas or Biscay and Iberian stocks).
- The idea would be to implement these methods widely in the advice provided in 2019.
- In addition to funding (or partially funding) workshop participation, part of the Special Request budget may be spent on institutes or particular scientists doing the technical simulation work. The Steering Group considers that the most efficient approach is that the Steering Group itself together with the ACOM Leadership decides on how best to use the budget available for this work. It was furthermore agreed to post technical guidelines 12.4.3.2 on Reference points for category 3 and 4 stocks on the ACOM forum before end of the year for approval and subsequent publication in early 2018.

16.2 Stocks of short-lived species – advice approach (report of WKMSYREF5)

The Workshop to review the ICES advisory framework for short lived species, including detailed exploration of the use of escapement strategies and forecast methods (WKMSYREF5) was presented by Mikael van Deurs, WKMSYREF5 Co-Chair, with focus on the recommendations from the Workshop. The Workshop recommended the use of Fcap for both deterministic and stochastic forecasts unless simulation testing in a full MSE demonstrates that it is not needed to ensure precautionarity. The Workshop also made recommendations with regard to defining Blim for short-lived spasmodic stocks, the formulation of Bpa based on Blim, and requirements for conducting “shortcut” MSEs following best practice. It was noted that work of WKMSYREF5 was not sufficiently advanced to provide definitive guidelines on the statistical merits of the various forecasting methods, which would, inter alia, include testing these methods in a full Management Strategy Evaluation framework.

ACOM concluded that it was premature to agree on changes to the guidelines and agreed to establish a subgroup to review the report of WKMSYREF5 and to revise the guidelines.

A subgroup with the following members: Morten Vinther, Harald Gjørseter and Fatima Borges was established to work by correspondence to review the report of WKMSYREF5 and revise the guidelines.

16.3 Issues raised at ADGs and ACOM web-conferences or by ACOM members

16.3.1 Inconclusive benchmarks and reviews

In 2017, there has been a number of cases, where the benchmark process was not finalized or could not reach a conclusion in time for the expert group to use the results of

the benchmark. In some of the cases, the finalization of the benchmark process was hampered by inconclusive reviews or disagreement between reviewers.

Time pressure made it difficult to address these cases in a consistent and transparent way.

The joint Benchmark Steering Group-ACOM Subgroup develop in 2016 a proposal for a new benchmark system (Doc 16ci). The proposal was discussed at an open session at the ASC in 2016. The open session was sceptic to the proposal and the issue was discussed again at the 2016 November meeting. ACOM confirmed the proposal but agreed it was premature to implement it in 2017.

ACOM discussed the current benchmark process and specified specific parts, which need attention in the benchmark oversight process description:

Inconclusive benchmarks: ACOM agreed that if a stock assessment benchmark report is not ready for the Expert Group to base the advice process on, then the old assessment model must be reverted back to. In cases where the old assessment is considered inappropriate, the Expert Group should use the precautionary approach for the stock.

Triggering of a benchmark: ACOM decided that both Expert Groups and ADGs can recommend a benchmark if it is evident that such a process is needed.

Halt of a benchmark: a benchmark process can be terminated by ACOM for validated reasons after consultations with the chair(s) of the benchmark.

Scoping workshops: The benchmark proposal from 2015 have scoping workshops at the beginning and the benchmark workshop should only be triggered when the required preparatory work is done. Evidently this part of the process need a clearer description and appear as implicit in the 2015 proposal. Scoping workshops should be where the survey groups, catch statistic groups, biological parameter experts, etc. are showing up and communicating their issues with the stock under benchmark.

ACOM agreed to move forward on implementing the ACOM benchmark proposal from 2015 with focus on the scoping process. ACOM also agreed that the 2015 document needs some tweaking. ACOM Leadership and ICES Secretariat were requested to take the lead on this work and keep ACOM informed via the ACOM Forum.

16.3.2 Changes to assessments/forecasts at Advice Drafting Groups

Advice Drafting Groups have in a small number of cases agreed on substantial changes to assessments/forecasts conducted by Expert Groups. Although the changes have been made in accordance with the Guidelines for ADGs, complains have been made that the process' were not transparent and the expert groups not informed appropriately.

ACOM was invited to discuss and agree on actions as appropriate.

ACOM agreed that when errors are being picked up in the ADG (e.g. mistakenly not following the annex) and corrected, the minutes should clearly state whether or not it was an issue of substance leading to changes to the advice assessment/forecast prepared by the Expert Group. The ADG should not change the report of the Expert Group. However, if the corrections are estimated to be of substance, then these should be included as an annex to the Expert Group report.

ACOM furthermore discussed how to ensure that Expert Groups are appropriately informed about ADG decisions and agreed that the minutes from the ADG would be the

appropriate communication. This makes a need to ensure the minutes contain understandable information (with appropriate detail to allow outsiders to understand them) and that they are distributed in a standard consistent way.

ACOM agreed to add the minutes to the EG SharePoint site using a new directory for this on the sites. ICES Secretariat was asked to facilitate creation of such a directory for each Expert Group. The ADG needs to ensure that generic issues are passed on to ACOM.

16.3.3 Deviation from agreed procedures/technical guidelines;

In a number of cases, Expert Groups/ADGs have deliberately deviated from agreed procedures. An example is deviation from rounding rules which makes in very difficult to standardize the advisory products.

ACOM agreed that the agreed procedures should be adhered to.

16.3.4 Rules for estimating MSY Btrigger;

ACOM adopted in 2016 the Technical Guidelines “ICES fisheries management reference points for category 1 and 2 stocks”. The Guidelines include, on page 15, a description of how to estimate MSY B_{trigger}. Applying the estimation rule for plaice in the North Sea and the Skagerrak resulted in a substantial increase in MSY B_{trigger}, and it was agreed to review the MSY B_{trigger} rules at the 2017 ACOM meeting.

ACOM discussed the matter and the biggest concern was related to stocks that have increased very rapidly in recent years. Many stocks have been fished well above F_{msy}, so increases in SSB are expected once stocks are fished at F_{msy} for a number of years.

No changes needed at this point. For stocks that have experienced very strong increases in recent years, ICES should monitor biological parameters, because e.g. density-dependent effects may be expected. If there is evidence of this, recalculation of biological reference points should be considered.

16.3.5 MSE – consistency between assessment and starting point for MSE

The management strategy evaluation forming the basis for ICES advice on a long-term management strategy for mackerel did for several reasons not use the results of the 2017 assessment as the starting point for the simulations. This made it difficult to use the advice to explore short-term consequences of different harvest rules. Norway, the EU and Faroe Islands commended on this in a response to ICES (Doc 16c.v).

ACOM agreed that a workshop should be held to review recent developments in Management Strategy Evaluation. The ICES MSE guidelines (produced in 2013) should be reviewed and updated as needed to reflect best practice. Attention should be paid to the issue of short-term versus long-term evaluations, how to deal with the broad range of stock assessment models currently used in ICES in the context of MSE, and “short-cut” approaches versus those that include the assessment model in the MSE loop.

Similar initiatives on the science side with model developments, etc. would be considered very useful. Also the presentation of the MSE’s should be considered; sometimes they are read/interpreted as forecasts which certainly isn’t the case.

16.3.6 Landing obligation – need for consistent approach (Doc 16c.vi);

The issue was raised as part of the *Nephrops* Advice Drafting Group (ADGNEPH) discussions and in discussions in the ACOM web-conference to finalize advice on *Nephrops* (WCNEPH).

ACOM agreed to have only 1 catch options table for *Nephrops*, based on recent discard rates. The columns of the table should look like this:

Basis	Total catch	Dead removals	Landings	Dead discards	Surviving discards	Harvest rate*
	L+DD+SD	L+DD	L	DD	SD	for L+DD
ICES advice basis						
MSY approach	1178	1159	1052	107	19	6.6%
Other options						
F ₂₀₁₄₋₂₀₁₆	2260	2224	2019	205	36	12.7%

* Calculated for dead removals and applied to total catch.

Advice line for *Nephrops*: keep it as at present, i.e.

ICES advises that when the MSY approach is applied, and assuming that discard rates and fishery selection patterns do not change from the average of 2014–2016, catches in 2018 should be no more than 1178 tonnes.

The same advice line should be used for fish stocks that include survival rates of discards in the assessment (plaice in 7a).

ACOM also noted that plaice in 7a now considers discard survival in the assessment, and agreed with the presentation of the catch options table that has been used this year (see below). This could be used as a template for other stocks in the future.

Table 3 Plaice in Division 7.a. Annual catch options. All weights are in tonnes.

Basis	Total catch (2018)	Landings (2018)	Total discards * (2018)	F _{total} (2018)	F _{Landings} (2018)	F _{discards} ^ (2018)	SSB (2019)	% SSB change **	% TAC change ***
ICES advice basis									
MSY approach: F _{MSY}	3336	1793	1542	0.169	0.038	0.13	22941	-2.8	63
Other options									
F = 0	0	0	0	0	0	0	25859	9.6	-100
F _{pa}	6466	3496	2970	0.35	0.078	0.27	20209	-14	218
F _{lim}	8467	4597	3870	0.48	0.107	0.37	18466	-22	319
SSB(2019) = B _{lim}	25113	14215	10897	2.8	0.61	2.1	4250	-82	1195
SSB(2019) = B _{pa}	23198	13060	10138	2.2	0.50	1.74	5825	-75	1089
SSB(2019) = MSY B _{trigger}	17801	9875	7926	1.33	0.30	1.04	10392	-56	799
F = F ₂₀₁₇	1311	702	609	0.064	0.0142	0.050	24711	4.8	-36

* Dead + surviving discards.

** SSB 2019 relative to SSB 2018.

*** Landings in 2018 relative to TAC in 2017 (1098 t).

^F_{discards} concerns dead discards only.

ACOM furthermore discussed catch categories and agreed to split landings in landings above minimum reference/catching size (AMS), below minimum reference /catching size (BMS) and discards. Discards may, when relevant, be split in live and dead discards.

16.3.7 Requests – process and criteria for accepting/rejecting a request;

Currently, a request is accepted if it comes from a client or an ICES member country, relevant experts (normally the chairs of relevant Expert Groups) have indicated that it is possible to prepare the scientific basis for the response within the given time frame, and the client/member country is prepared to pay the ICES costs of producing the advice. The Secretariat prepare a proposal for a process, which is tabled on the ACOM forum for comments and approval.

ACOM discussed the current procedure for accepting/rejecting request and concluded that there was no need for changes. ICES Secretariat was asked to cc relevant ACOM members, when experts are approached in relation to Special Requests in order to have a transparent and optimal procedure within the individual institutes in terms of allocation of work, time, etc.

ACOM decided that no changes in the process and criteria for accepting/rejecting a request should be made.

16.3.8 Catch forecast for stocks with biased assessments

The assessment of southern hake shows a retrospective pattern in F. To avoid future upwards revision of estimates of F because of the retrospective pattern, the WG used a higher F for 2017 accepting that it would give unrealistic assumptions about catches in 2017. The issue was discussed during the ACOM consultations held in the margins of the ASC and it was agreed to form an ACOM subgroup to work intersessionally to prepare a decision document for November ACOM regarding how ICES could approach bias in the assessments and advice.

ACOM considered that to do the quality check, formal quality criteria are needed and agreed that:

- The Mohn's Rho index as basis to estimate bias both for F and SSB.
- A ToR will be added to relevant Expert Groups asking to include the Mohn's Rho index. Guidelines should be developed on how to do the Mohn's Rho index including how many years to consider in the calculation. The ToR should also ask for comments (in a structured way-questions to be asked; if possible develop an online template to answer those questions) from the Expert Groups on why the retro patters are encountered and potential solutions.
- A technical Workshop will be established (probably including Expert Group chairs and ACOM members and perhaps stock assessors of "problematic" stocks) in 2018 to look at the results of the work done in the Expert Groups.
- ACOM will assess the Workshop findings in November 2018 and a recommendation will be put forward to 2019. Decision scheme to be implemented in 2019.

ICES Secretariat will produce a first draft of the guidelines to Expert Groups on how to do the requested analysis using an example from a stock with retro patterns.

16.3.9 Offshore wind farms and surveys.

The Netherlands has experienced difficulties in conducting standard monitoring surveys in wind farm areas and expect the problem to increase.

ACOM discussed the issue of marine spatial planning and consequences for the monitoring activities. ACOM decided to ask the Ecosystem Observation Steering Group (EOSG) Chair to take the issue up with the relevant survey groups. ICES could potentially make the Member Countries aware of the consequences when decisions are made in relation to marine spatial planning, however, no concrete action in this relation was decided.

17 Quality assurance in the advisory process

The ACOM Chair introduced the discussion around ICES Quality Assurance by highlighting quality issues in the process from data collection to advice publication and initiatives taken by ICES to address the issues.

Neil Holdsworth, Head of Data and Information, gave a presentation on ICES initiatives and other developments on the data side to ensure quality assurance.

Colin Millar and Arni Magnusson from the ICES Secretariat presented the progress made in the development of the Transparent Assessment Framework showing the current status and some of the challenges for its implementation.

The question on how to convince experts to use TAF was raised. It was widely accepted that forcing experts to use it would be a bad approach. It was suggested that ICES should make use of opportunities such as benchmarks to incentivise and guide experts on how to use and make the best out of this system.

ACOM agreed that the system is a step forward for ICES in terms of transparency and traceability of the assessment. At the same time it was also recognised that not everyone has the skills to migrate their long time scripts or spreadsheets to such system without some kind of support from either the Secretariat or other experts in the working groups. There was a suggestion for the Secretariat to become more familiarized with the system so they can provide the support needed to make the use of TAF as easy and friendly as possible.

ACOM acknowledged that migrating all stocks into this system will not happen at once and that a two to three year period is seen as a more reasonable time frame and will allow the TAF to adapt and/or correct unforeseen problems.

Based on discussions in a Subgroup ACOM addressed six points:

1-Biased assessments

The item is addressed in Section 16.3.8 above.

2-Quality of input data

ACOM did not recommend any further action as it is thought that there are sufficient initiatives already taking place at the moment to ensure that the quality of the input data is sufficient.

It was also recognised that the main responsibility in quality assurance of input data lays within each member country and is difficult for ICES to address. However, ICES has taken on a few initiatives like the Tools for ICES Control of Technical and Assessment Quality (TIC-TAQ) that aims to help stock assessors to increase and improve

quality assurance on their input data by sharing scripts and other tools that make that task more efficient. Another ICES initiative was promoting the Workshop WKSEATECH which was aimed at different countries to share and promote their own developments on data collection facilitation with improved the quality of data.

3–Poor link between data collectors/surveys and data users/assessment

It was thought that the use of survey data should be taken up at the benchmarks were the appropriateness of the data to specific stocks should be evaluated and reviewed.

4–Data processing

ACOM did not feel the need for new actions to be taken at this point.

5–Problems with expertise available and model performance (MSE, assessment models)

The possibilities of creation of a pool of experts in the Secretariat to run update assessments and free time from the EG were discussed. There were several concerns raised on this potential approach. One of the consequences could be the further diminish of the expertise within the stock assessment study area within national laboratories. This would also certainly feed fears of job losses and losing touch with the assessments methods leaving national laboratories too dependent on ICES. However, a pool of experts on the floor to help during the EG meetings were generally welcomed.

Another point raised was that running an update assessment is not difficult. However, local knowledge about the fisheries, surveys and fleet dynamics is essential in order to provide the best advice possible.

It was also suggested that the Secretariat could be more involved in the audits of the assessments. However, it was mentioned that ICES Secretariat already has in place tools and procedures that help the audit process.

6–Other issues

The only issue raised was more of a generic question. How ICES could create pool of expertise in other areas (non-fisheries) which is thought to be more of a problem. This was a question that had no immediate answer but it was something to be intended to be addressed in the near future.

ACOM confirmed that quality assurance of ICES advice is of highest priority. In recognising the initiatives already taken to address quality aspects at all levels from data collection to advice publication ACOM concluded that new initiatives are not required at this stage and that focus should be on implementing and supporting agreed initiatives.

18 Recommendations to ACOM

The recommendations not addressed during the meeting will be reviewed by ACOM Leadership. ICES Secretariat will update the Recommendation Database with the replies.

19 Advisory Work-plan 2018

19.1 Requests for advice (Doc 19a);

The status of special requests for 2018 was presented by the Head of Advisory Support. At the time of the ACOM meeting 21 requests had been received.

Special requests add to the workload of ACOM and the Advisory Programme. One of the difficult tasks for the Secretariat is going back to experts again and again as it is often the same experts that is drawn on, identifying reviewers for the special request processes is very time-consuming. Requests with a short deadline makes it even more difficult to find available experts and for ACOM to identify members for ADGs and the ACOM web-conference meetings. The Secretariat explained that the clients are aware that the short deadlines are not helpful. It is also being communicated that if advice is needed for the December Council meeting ICES would need to receive the requests before a specific date.

For ACOM to be aware of the resources needed for special requests it was decided that the ACOM members should be cc'd when experts are contacted by the Secretariat in relation special requests.

19.2 ToRs for ACOM and joint ACOM/SCICOM expert groups. New TORs and follow up on decisions taken at Web-Conference 5 October 2016

This item was not handled in the ACOM meeting, the individual expert group resolutions will be posted on the resolution forum for approval.

19.3 Stock assessors and coordinators

An overview of stock assessor and stock coordinators was presented. It was highlighted that the coordinator job for the northern hake stock is very demanding and the coordinator needs help, and that a stock coordinator for whiting in 89a is missing..

ACOM members were asked to nominate assessment coordinators for northern hake stock and the whiting in 89a.

19.4 ADGs (Doc 19d);

ACOM members were asked to nominate ADG members before 8 January 2018. ACOM members were reminded to remember when nominating experts to inform them that they have been nominated. ACOM members were asked to volunteer to chair ADGs.

A proposal for establishing an ADG week in June was presented. This had been discussed at the consultations where the Secretariat was asked to look into the possibility of creating such an ADG week. The intention would be to have four of the big fisheries advice drafting groups to meet in parallel, ADGANW, ADGBBI, ADCCS and ADGNS. The work would be intense but also give the option to cross fertilize as these groups match each other and it could save money on the travel budget as well. One implication would be though that the release date of the Arctic and North-Western advice would need to be postponed.

Some ACOM members could see the benefit of having more experts meeting in ADGs at the same time as mutual discussions on how advice is phrased take place and decisions are made. But the majority of ACOM members did not speak in favour of the

proposal and thought it would need too much coordination by the individual ACOM member for a country to be represented in several ADGs at the same time, it would need huge preparation prior to the meetings if cross coordination should work and also delaying the Arctic and North-Western advice was not an option for Iceland.

ACOM decided that the 2018 ADG meetings should be scheduled similar to previous years.

19.5 Meetings with Recipients, ToR and agenda for MIRIA

ToRs for the 2018 MIRIA meeting were presented. Participants in this meeting are ICES clients, ACOM leadership, SCICOM Chair and Secretariat.

19.6 Meetings with stakeholders, ToRs and agenda for MIACO

ToRs for the 2018 MIACO meeting were presented. Prior to this meeting there is a meeting with Advisory Councils alone. ToRs for the AC meeting are still being discussed. It is a useful meeting and will feed into the MIACO meeting as well.

19.7 Meeting with chairs (WGCHAIRS)

ACOM was informed that for the first time all ICES Expert Group Chairs have been invited for the WGCHAIRS meeting that will take place 23–25 January. The agenda and ToRs for the meeting were still being drafted.

19.8 Scheduling ACOM meeting at ASC and annual meeting in 2018.

ACOM was invited to discuss if in addition to the annual ACOM meeting also the ACOM Consultation meeting in connection with the Annual Science Conference is needed

ACOM members indicated that the Consultation meeting is useful even though decisions cannot be made. The meeting gives the ACOM members an opportunity to attend the ASC.

An ACOM Consultation meeting will be scheduled in connection with the 2018 ASC in Hamburg on 23 September. The 2018 ACOM meeting will take place in ICES HQ from 27 to 30 November.

19.9 Benchmark proposal for 2019

An overview of benchmark planned for 2018 and 2019 was presented. All 2018 benchmarks are already progressing with data workshops.

The Secretariat is planning to make the issue list more accessible.

The seabass benchmark from 2017 will continue as the process. Work has been allocated, dates are still to be scheduled, but the meeting will need to be end of March for results to be available for the Working Group for the Celtic Seas Ecoregion (WGCSE).

20 ACOM Workplan 2018

ACOM identified nine main items for the strategic work of ACOM in 2018:

- ACOM working procedure/job description: ACOM structure and role of ACOM members will be discussed in a set sub-group, which will be reporting

to ACOM with suggestions for developments. ACOM Leadership will steer the process.

- Quality assurance. ACOM did not identify new initiatives to be taken in 2018 but agreed that follow up on existing initiatives should be given high priority.
- Framework for Ecosystem advice: Focus in 2018 will be on the planned dialogue meeting with WKECOFRAME2 as a key element in the process.
- Fisheries Overviews and Ecosystem Overviews: Implementation of the agreed workplan.
- SG structure: SG structure will be further discussed in a subgroup, which the aim of developing recommendations. and the subgroup will report to ACOM and SCICOM before the SCICOM meeting in February 2018.
- Frequency of assessments and reopening will be maintained as a point of discussion with Clients.
- Technical Guidelines: A prioritized workplan was agreed for the main outstanding technical guidelines (Annex 4). Guidelines for provision of advice on Stocks of short-lived species is still unresolved and a Subgroup was established to develop recommendation for revision of the guidelines on Cat 1–2 stocks of short-lived species.
- Introduction to the advice will be further developed in 2018 based on the progress on the Technical Guidelines.
- Benchmarks. ACOM will in 2018 initiate the implementation of the benchmark system agreed in 2015. The description from 2015 revised.

21 AOB

No issues were discussed under this item.

22 Closing

The Chair closed the meeting at 13.00 on the 1st December by thanking for a constructive and productive meeting.

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Annex 2 Draft annotated agenda

Advisory Committee Meeting

Chair: Eskild Kirkegaard

28th November (09:00) – 1st December (13:00) 2017

ICES Headquarters

Draft Annotated Agenda

Welcome

1. Adoption of agenda (Doc 1a).

ACOM is invited to adopt the agenda and timetable.

2. Review of membership (Doc 2).

ACOM is invited to review and update the ACOM membership list. Changes should be reported to the Secretariat.

3. Minutes from ACOM Consultations (Doc 3).

ACOM is invited to approve the minutes.

4. Review of 2017.

a. Chair's report to ACOM (Doc 4a);

The Chair's report (Doc 4a) contains an overview of the advice delivered in 2017 and observations on the advisory process.

b. Head of Advisory Support report;

The head of ICES Advisory Support will present her review of the advisory process in 2017.

c. ACOM members review.

ACOM is invited to review the advisory process and the performance of ACOM in 2017 based on the report from the Chair, the head of the Advisory Support and input from ACOM members.

5. SCICOM

The SCICOM Chair will provide a short report of SCICOM activities of relevance to ACOM.

6. Steering Groups and Strategic Initiatives.

a. Report of Steering Groups;

b. Report of Strategic Initiatives;

7. Council meeting October 2017 (Doc 7);

Doc 7 includes a summary of the actions of direct relevance to ACOM agreed by the Council at the October meeting.

8. Frequency of assessment;

ACOM, with inputs from expert group, identified at the 2016 November meeting category 1 stocks that could be candidates for less frequent assessments.

The list was presented to MIRIA with the aim of having a general discussion of the need for annual assessments and to MIACO and WGCHAIRS for information.

Observers were positive to prioritize the assessment work and focus the work on the important stocks and where assessment issues have been identified.

The clients were not prepared to provide feedback on the list at the meeting and it was agreed to follow up bilateral.

As a follow up the issue was on the agendas of meetings between ICES and DGMARE on 7th February and 22nd June. DGMARE did not provide direct feedback on the list prepared by ACOM but explained that their needs for advice may change with the introduction of multi annual plans (MAP). Currently the EU needs advice on fishing opportunities for all stocks for which TAC and quotas are set. If no TAC is set, only advice on the state of the stock (MSY and safe biological limits) is needed. State of stock advice may not be needed every year and DGMARE also indicated that they were prepared to discuss the frequency of advice for "TAC" stocks.

The ACOM Leadership suggests to continue the dialogue with the Clients with the aim of reducing the frequency of assessments in accordance with the ACOM decision from 2016.

9. Advice reopening procedure;

Following the agreement at the 2016 ACOM meeting, it was suggested to the clients that the assessment and advice for the stocks currently subject to the reopening procedure be moved to the autumn. ICES also suggested moving the release of the mixed fisheries advice to October.

EU and Norway, the recipients of possible reopened advice, agreed at MIRIA to discuss the issue at their next bilateral consultations. Norway indicated that it could accept to move the advice release for the stocks concerned to October.

DGMARE informed at the meeting with ICES on the 22 June that, for the time being, changes to the current process could not be accepted. EU needs the advice for most stocks by early July.

When discussed at MIACO observers underlined that it is important that the advice is based on as updated information as possible.

The ACOM Leadership suggests to continue the dialogue with the clients with the aim of avoiding update advices.

10. Technical guidelines (Doc 10)

Two technical guidelines were published in early 2017 (ICES fisheries management reference points for category 1 and 2 stocks and Rounding rules to be applied in ICES advice). In total 13 technical guidelines out of the 25 guidelines agreed by ACOM in 2014 have now been published. There has been little progress in finalizing the remaining guidelines. Doc 10 includes a plan for finalizing the guidelines.

ACOM is invited to discuss and agree on a plan to finalize the guidelines.

11. Introduction to ICES advice

ACOM requested in November 2016 the ACOM leadership to prepare a simplified version of the introduction to ICES advice to be released in 2017. However, the leadership has not had time to work on the introduction. The revision of the introduction is linked to the release of the technical

guidelines and the ACOM Leadership suggests not to release a simplified introduction until the most central guidelines have been published including the guidelines for category 3 to 6 stocks.

12. Frameworks for ecosystem advice (Doc 12)

ACOM agreed at the 2016 November meeting to move forward to develop frameworks for ecosystem advice and established WKECOFRAME. The report of the workshop was presented to ACOM at the Consultations in Fort Lauderdale.

ACOM found that WKECOFRAME had made good progress in developing an ICES framework system and decided that WKECOFRAME should hold a second workshop with the same chairs, and the ToRs for this workshop should include a request to prepare a proposal for a dialogue meeting on the topic.

ACOM is invited to discuss and adopt the resolution on WKECOFRAME2.

13. Fisheries and ecosystem overviews (Doc 13)

Fisheries overviews have been published for the Baltic Sea and the Greater North Sea ecoregions. ACOM agreed in November 2016 to aim at releasing four overviews (Baltic Sea, Celtic Seas, North Sea and Norwegian and Barents Seas).

ICES has until September 2017 published six ecosystem overviews (Barents Sea, Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast, Celtic Seas, Greater North Sea, Icelandic waters, Norwegian Sea).

The resources allocated to the overviews by ICES Member Countries have, with a few exceptions, been relatively limited and the production of the overviews has largely relied on the Secretariat and the ACOM leadership.

ACOM discussed the overviews at the Consultations in Fort Lauderdale and concluded to continue with the overviews.

Doc 13 provides a status on the work on the overviews and a plan for 2018 work. The document will be presented to ACOM and a subgroup will be established to discuss the future work with the aim of presenting a plan for 2018 work to be discussed and agreed by ACOM.

14. Non-fisheries advice – ACOM structure (Doc 14)

Doc 14 contains a short summary of the discussions at the ACOM Web-meeting 10 October on the future ACOM structure and inputs to a discussion on ACOM's working procedures and the role of ACOM members. ACOM is invited to review its working procedures and the role of ACOM members and to agree on future procedures and a description of the role of ACOM members.

15. Steering Group structure (Doc 15)

A proposal from the SCICOM and ACOM Chairs on allocation of all EG in ICES to a Steering Group was discussed at the Consultations in Fort Lauderdale. ACOM was in principle supportive to the proposal but would like to see a clearer description of the benefits to ICES advisory services of the proposed changes. The ACOM Leadership has prepared a revised document describing the rationale for the proposed changes and possible effects on the advisory services.

ACOM is invited to discuss and support the proposal.

16. Framework for advice on fishing opportunities

- a) Framework for advice on fishing opportunities for category 3 and 4 stocks (WKLIFE7 and DOC 16a)**

WKLIFE7 will be presented by Carl O'Brian. ACOM is invited to review the report.

Doc 16a is a report of a web meeting of the Steering Group on the ICES Approach to Providing MSY Advice for Category 3 and 4 Stocks. The report includes a proposal from the Steering Group on how to complete the required work and to implement MSY Advice Rules in the provision of ICES advice for stocks in categories 3 and 4.

ACOM is invited to review agree on the proposal from the Steering Group.

A draft of technical guidelines "12.4.3.2 Reference points for category 3 and 4 stocks" is available for ACOM's review ([Technical guidelines reference points cat 3 and 4](#)).

b) Stocks of short-lived species – advice approach (report of WKMSYREF5)

WKMSYREF5 will be presented by Mikael van Deurs. ACOM is invited to review the report and discuss possible updates of the framework for category 1 and 2 stocks.

c) Issues raised at ADGs and ACOM web-conferences or by ACOM members.

i) Inconclusive benchmarks and reviews (Doc 16c.i);

In 2017, there has been a number of cases, where the benchmark process was not finalized or could not reach a conclusion in time for the expert group to use the results of the benchmark. In some of the cases, the finalization of the benchmark process was hampered by inconclusive reviews or disagreement between reviewers.

Time pressure made it difficult to address these cases in a consistent and transparent way.

The joint Benchmark Steering Group-ACOM Subgroup develop in 2016 a proposal for a new benchmark system (Doc 16ci). The proposal was discussed at an open session at the ASC in 2016. The open session was sceptic to the proposal and issue was discussed again at the 2016 November meeting. ACOM confirmed the proposal but agreed it was premature to implement it in 2017.

ACOM is invited to discuss the report of Subgroup 2 and agree on actions as appropriate.

ii) Changes to assessments/forecasts at ADG;

Advice Drafting Groups have in a small number of cases agreed on substantial changes to assessments/forecasts conducted by expert groups. Although the changes have been made in accordance with the Guidelines for ADGs ([Guidelines for ADG](#)), complaints have been made that the process' were not transparent and the expert groups not informed appropriately.

Russia expressed its dissatisfaction with the advisory process for Norwegian spring spawning herring in a letter sent to ICES ([Russian letter](#)).

ACOM is invited to discuss the report of Subgroup 6 and agree on actions as appropriate.

iii) Deviation from agreed procedures/technical guidelines;

In a number of cases, expert groups/ADGs have deliberately deviated from agreed procedures. An example is deviation from rounding rules ([Rounding technical guidelines](#)), which makes in very difficult to standardize the advisory products.

ACOM is invited to discuss the report of Subgroup 2 and agree on actions as appropriate.

iv) Rules for estimating MSY $B_{trigger}$;

ACOM adopted in 2016 the technical guidelines "ICES fisheries management reference points for category 1 and 2 stocks" ([Reference point technical guidelines](#)). The guidelines include, on page 15, a description of how to estimate MSY $B_{trigger}$. Applying the estimation rule for plaice in the North Sea and the Skagerrak resulted in a substantial increase in MSY $B_{trigger}$, and it was agreed to review the MSY $B_{trigger}$ rules at the 2017 ACOM meeting.

ACOM is invited to discuss the report of Subgroup 3 and agree on actions as appropriate.

v) MSE – consistency between assessment and starting point for MSE (Doc 16c.v);

The management strategy evaluation forming the basis for ICES advice on a long-term management strategy for mackerel did for several reasons not use the results of the 2017 assessment as the starting point for the simulations. This made it difficult to use the advice to explore short-term consequences of different harvest rules. Norway, the EU and Faroe Islands commended on this in a response to ICES (Doc 16c.v).

ACOM is invited to discuss the report of Subgroup 3 and agree on actions as appropriate.

vi) Landing obligation - need for consistent approach (Doc 16c.vi);

The issue was raised as part of the ADGNEPH and WCNEPH discussions. ACOM is invited to discuss the report of Subgroup 3 and agree on actions as appropriate.

vii) Requests – process and criteria for accepting/rejecting a request;

ACOM has no agreed criteria for accepting a request for advice. Currently, a request is accepted if it comes from a client or an ICES member country, relevant experts (normally the chairs of relevant expert groups) have indicated that it is possible to prepare the scientific basis for the response within the given time frame, and the client/member country is prepared to pay the ICES costs of producing the advice. The Secretariat prepare a proposal for a process, which is tabled on the ACOM forum for comments and approval.

ICES every year receives requests for in year revision of catch advice. These requests are only for cases where there the revised advice is likely to be higher than the original leading to a biased revision approach. Several of the requests are for stocks where a benchmark has altered the perception of stock status. One way to avoid the biased approach would be to systematically updating advice in cases where ICES has accepted a significant change in perception of stock status.

ACOM is invited to discuss the report of Subgroup 2 and agree on actions as appropriate.

viii) Catch forecast for stocks with biased assessments (Doc 16c.viii);

The assessment of southern hake shows a retrospective pattern in F. To avoid future upwards revision of estimates of F because of the retrospective pattern, the WG used a higher F for 2017 accepting that it would give unrealistic assumptions about catches in 2017. The issue was discussed during the ACOM consultations held in the margins of the ASC and it was agreed to form an ACOM subgroup to work intersessionally to prepare a decision document for November ACOM regarding how ICES could approach bias in the assessments and advice.

ACOM is invited to discuss the report of Subgroup 4 and agree on actions as appropriate.

ix) Offshore wind farms and surveys.

The Netherlands has experienced difficulties in conducting standard monitoring surveys in wind farm areas and expect the problem to increase.

ACOM is invited to discuss the issue and agree on possible actions.

17. Quality assurance in the advisory process (Doc 17)

Concerns have been expressed about ICES quality assurance of its advice (see Doc 17).

Introduction by ACOM Chair followed by presentation by Neil Holdsworth on data issues, and Arni Magnusson and Colin Millar on Transparent Assessment Framework.

ACOM is invited to discuss the report of Subgroup 4 and agree on actions as appropriate

18. Recommendations to ACOM (Doc 18).

ACOM is invited to review the recommendations and to agree on actions as appropriate.

19. Advisory Workplan 2018

- d) Requests for advice (Doc 19a);
 - e) ToRs for ACOM and joint ACOM/SCICOM expert groups. New TORs and follow up on decisions taken at Web-Conference 5 October 2016. (Doc 19b);
 - f) Stock assessors and coordinators (Doc 19c);
 - g) ADGs (Doc 19d);
 - h) Meetings with Recipients, ToR and agenda for MIRIA (Doc 19e);
 - i) Meetings with stakeholders, ToRs and agenda for MIACO (Doc 19f);
 - j) Meeting with chairs (WGCHAIRS) (Doc 19g);
 - k) Scheduling ACOM meeting at ASC and annual meeting in 2018.
ACOM is invited to discuss the setup of ACOM meetings (number of meetings, timing, and duration).
 - l) [Benchmark proposal for 2019](#)
20. ACOM Workplan 2018 (Doc 20 – to be available during the meeting).
ACOM is invited to discuss and approve the ACOM Workplan for 2018
21. AOB
22. Closing

	Tuesday 28 th November	Wednesday 29 th November	Thursday 30 th November	Friday 1 st December
09:00	1) Opening and Adoption of agenda. 2) Review of membership. 3) Minutes from ACOM Consultations. 4) Review of 2017	Subgroup work	Subgroup work on ACOM structure	19) Advisory workplan 20) ACOM workplan
10:00	7) Council October meeting			
11:00	Coffee	Coffee. Photo	Coffee	Coffee
11:30	16a) Framework for advice on fishing opportunities for category 3 and 4 stocks. 16 b) Stocks of short-lived species – advice approach.	Subgroup work	14) ACOM structure- plenum discussion and conclusion	
13:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Closure
14:00	16c) Issues raised at ADGs, ACOM web-conferences or by ACOM members.	Follow up on subgroup work - plenum	5) SCICOM 6) Steering Groups and Strategic Initiatives	
15:00	13) Fisheries and ecosystem overviews		15) Steering Group Structure 8) Frequency of assessment 9) Advice reopening procedure 10) Technical guidelines 11) Introduction to advice	
16:00	Coffee	Coffee	Coffee	
16:30	17) Quality assurance Forming of subgroups addressing issues identified under items 7, 16, 17 and 18.	14) Non-fisheries advice – ACOM structure Subgroup work on ACOM structure	12) Frameworks for ecosystem advice 18) Recommendations to ACOM	
18:00	Reception			
19:00			Party	

Annex 3 ACOM role questionnaire

1. Being a Member of ACOM to collectively:
 - a) ensuring that the advice programme responds to current needs of ICES clients
 - b) ensuring that the advice programme develops to meet strategic needs of both ICES and its clients
 - c) ensuring that mutually agreed frameworks (between ICES and its clients) are in place for the delivery of advice
 - d) planning an annual cycle of meetings and workshops
 - e) helping to develop Terms of Reference and scientific ideas for ICES Expert Groups
 - f) ensuring procedures /best practices are in place
 - g) helping SCICOM to define and to develop a science programme to underpin current and emerging needs for advice
 - h) identifying shortfalls in skills and knowledge needed to achieve ICES objectives and to work within or through ACOM, SCICOM, Steering Groups, Expert Groups and Strategic Initiatives to develop the required skills and knowledge
2. Individually
 - a) actively participating in ACOM activities
 - b) participating in/chairing of ADGs
 - c) developing/approving/rejecting/modifying advice
 - d) taking a strategic view of direction of ICES advice, providing oversight of ICES advisory process, agreeing /modifying guidelines, providing input to strategic and immediate planning of advisory process
 - e) promoting and supporting effective communication between ACOM and the ICES clients and national administrations/ bodies, including speaking on behalf of ICES on our advice and ensuring that ACOM understands national positions
 - f) communicating frequently and actively with national Delegates and Science Committee members on advisory matters relevant to their work with ICES
 - g) participating in meetings or calls to discuss/approve their Resolutions
 - h) maintaining and further strengthening links between ICES Secretariat, science, data and advice
 - i) encouraging experts to take part in ICES activities, particularly advisory work and highlighting the benefits
 - j) ensuring “network” of experts is working (drawing from all countries / relevant disciplines)
 - k) ensuring procedures and guidelines are adhered to
 - l) reviewing outputs from the Expert Groups and other structures in the network, identifying gaps in scope and impact of work, or shortfalls in skills and knowledge, and advising on ways to fill these gaps and improve our advice
 - m) providing feedback to ACOM on science work needed for advice and the development of methods
3. Individual activities at “home”

- a) co-ordination of Member Country advisory role,
 - b) managing alternates as a team, ensuring range of science/knowledge covered by alternates (consulting outside if expertise not available),
 - c) managing budget (if it exists),
 - d) ensuring relevant expertise supplied to ADGs allocated to country (and to those of national interest),
 - e) ensuring that ADG members understand role,
 - f) managing aspects of data calls,
 - g) finding participants (alongside delegates) for (advisory) expert groups using both targeted and broad dissemination with the aim of making the expert groups as effective as possible (role often shared with SCICOM member)
 - h) liaison with national expert group members to understand process undertaken/ guide process
 - i) ensuring that ICES advice is perceived as being excellent value for money
 - j) being an ambassador of ICES for instance by responding to media interest
4. "Optional" by frequently requested role for Member Countries
- a) internal reports on state of stocks, presentation/ explanation/ interpretation of advice for governments and stakeholders

Annex 4 Technical Guidelines to be produced

ACOM, at their annual meeting in 2014, agreed to develop a compilation of Technical Guidelines related with the advisory products and identified the contents of the Technical Guidelines to be produced.

The table below provides the status of the planned Technical Guidelines; two technical guidelines were published in early 2017 and in total 13 Technical Guidelines out of the planned 25 agreed by ACOM in 2014 have been published to date.

Item	Sub Item	Draft document name (with link)	Others documents that needs to be checked / Comments	Status
1 ICES advisory process	NA	12.01 advisory process.docx	EG Guidelines Audit Guidelines RG Guidelines ADG Guidelines Benchmark Guidelines Guidelines for Observers	Published
1 ICES advisory process	Technical Services	12.06 Other advisory products.docx		Published
12.2 Ecosystem advice	12.2 Ecosystem Overviews	12.02 Ecosystem Overviews guidelines	Description of the information in the Ecosystem overviews.	Published
12.3 Fisheries advice and Overviews	12.3.1 Description of the fisheries			Document NOT available
	12.3.2 Mixed fisheries		Stock annex developed by WGMIXFISH-Methods	Document NOT available
	12.3.3.1 MSFD D3, D4		Text from ICES advice in 2014/2015 bring basis from these advice sheets.	Document NOT available
	12.3.3.2 Bycatch (MSFD D1)		Brief description of current basis of bycatch advice	Document NOT available
	12.3.3.3 Seabed gear pressure and VMS (MSFD D6)		Brief description of current basis of VMS advice. A technical description of how the abrasion maps are created, etc. are needed.	Document NOT available
	12.3.3.4 VMEs		Brief description of current basis of VME advice	Document NOT available
12.4 Advice on Fishing Opportunities	12.4.1 Stock categories	12.4.1 Stock categories		Published
	12.4.2.1 Stock assessment for category 1 and 2 stocks	12.4.2.1 Stock assessment for category 1 and 2	This document has not been edited since December 2016.	Being prepared – NOT ready

Item	Sub Item	Draft document name (with link)	Others documents that needs to be checked / Comments	Status
	12.4.2.2 Stock assessment for category 3 to 6 stocks New doc-name: ICES Technical guidelines Category 3-6_Assessment and Advice	ICES Technical guidelines Category 3-6_Assessment and Advice	Updated version of ICES 2012 (DLS guidance document), to removed non-used methodologies and include new methods from WKLIFEV	Being prepared – NOT ready
	12.4.3.1 Reference points for category 1 and 2 stocks	12.04.03.01.Reference points for category 1 and 2 ADGTECH.doc		Published
	12.4.3.2 Reference points for category 3 and 4 stocks	2017 ICES Technical Guidelines Category 3-6 Reference Points	May need input from WKLIFE VII	Ready for approval and subsequent publication
	12.4.3.3 Reference points for category 5 and 6 stocks		Brief paragraph explaining that there is no ref. points	Document NOT available
	12.4.4 Timeline of advice	12.04.04 Timeline of Advice.docx		Published
	12.4.5 Basis of advice (MP, MSY or PA) and Advice rule	12.04.05 Hierarchy of the basis of advice and advice rule.docx	This document has not been edited since December 2016.	Being prepared – NOT ready
	12.4.6 Catch and landings advice	12.04.06 Advice on catches and landings.docx		Published
	12.4.7 Frequency of assessment		Based on the criteria developed by ACOM. Document to be prepared after conclusion at ACOM meeting 2016	Document NOT available
	12.4.8 reopening of advice (within year)	12.04.08 Reopening of the advice.docx	Reopen protocol for stocks with Q3 surveys only (autumn reopening)	Published
	12.4.9 Definition of stock and exploitation status (pictograms)	12.04.09 Definition of stock status.docx		Published
	12.2.10 ICES criteria for defining multi-annual plans as precautionary	12.04.10 Criteria for defining multi-annual plans as precautionary.docx	Guidelines from the WKG MSE	Published
12.5 Working procedures	12.5.1 Guidelines for late data submission	12.05.1 Guidelines on late data submission.docx		Published
	12.5.2 Documentation of basis for the advice	12.05.2 Reports in support of advice.docx	Agreed procedure to include WDs used as the basis of the advice	Published
	12.5.3 Criteria for use of data in ICES advisory work	12.05.3 Criteria for use of data in ICES advisory work	Based on the document approved by ACOM in 2013 (original available here)	Published

Item	Sub Item	Draft document name (with link)	Others documents that needs to be checked / Comments	Status
	12.5.4 Rounding rules in ICES Advice	16.5.3 Rounding rules to be applied in ICES advice		Published

There has been little progress in finalising the remaining guidelines for various reasons, mainly being an unclear partitioning of responsibility for each guideline and the necessary allocation of time to produce the guideline. There has been a non-verbalised perception that the lead authorship for the Technical guidelines lies within the ACOM Leadership and the ICES Secretariat. If this is indeed the decision from ACOM and there is no interest in taking lead authorship for the remaining Technical Guidelines, then a clear prioritisation is needed. In order to have a realistic publication plan scheduled for 2018, ACOM is invited to discuss the plan for finalizing the guidelines and fill in the table below in terms of priority, author leadership, relevant groups to involve (create ToRs) and milestones.

Item	Sub Item	Others documents that needs to be checked / Comments	Priority (1 to 11)	Lead Authorship	Groups to include	Milestone (entity and date)
12.3 Fisheries advice and Overviews	12.3.1 Description of the fisheries					
	12.3.2 Mixed fisheries	Stock annex developed by WGMIXFISH-Methods			WGMIXFISH-Meth	
	12.3.3.1 MSFD D3, D4	Text from ICES advice in 2014/2015 from these advice sheets.				
	12.3.3.2 By-catch (MSFD D1)	Brief description of current of bycatch advice	4	ACOM LS, Secretariat		
	12.3.3.3 Seabed gear pressure and VMS (MSFD D6)	Brief description of current basis of VMS advice. A technical description of how the abrasion maps are created, etc. are needed.	1	Chris, Nathalie	WGSFD	
	12.3.3.4 VMEs	Brief description of current basis of VME advice	3	ACOM LS, Secretariat		
12.4 Advice on Fishing Opportunities	12.4.2.1 Stock assessment for category 1 and 2 stocks		5	ACOM LS, Lotte		
	12.4.2.2 Stock assessment for category 3 to 6 stocks	Updated version of ICES 2012 (DLS guidance document), to removed non-used methodologies and include new methods from WKLIFEV	5	Alain, Morten, Harald, Fatima, Sarah		

Item	Sub Item	Others documents that needs to be checked / Comments	Priority (1 to 11)	Lead Authorship	Groups to include	Milestone (entity and date)
	12.4.3.3 Reference points for category 5 and 6 stocks	Brief paragraph explaining that there is no ref. points				
	12.4.5 Basis of advice (MP, MSY or PA) and Advice rule					
	12.4.7 Frequency of assessment	Based on the criteria developed by ACOM. Document to be prepared after conclusion at ACOM meeting 2016	2	Larry, Joanne and David Miller		
		Guidelines for assessing bias in assessment (Mohn's rho)	2	Morten, Larry supported by Colin		