



MIAC – Annual coordination meeting ICES-ACs

DRAFT Agenda (v11.01.2023)

Date: 12 January 2023

Time: 09:30 – 12:00 CET

Location: ICES Headquarters (hybrid meeting) with interpretation in PT, ESP, FR and ENG

Chair: Gualberto Rita

Rapporteur: CCRUP Secretariat

Time	Description
09:30-09:35	<p>1. Welcome by the chair and introductions</p> <p><i>Mr. Gualberto Rita</i></p> <p>1.1 Adoption of the Agenda</p>
09:35-09:45	<p>2. Actions of previous meeting</p>
09:45-10:20	<p>3. ACs c general issues</p> <p><i>Mr. Gualberto Rita and AC representatives</i></p> <p>3.1 <u>NWWAC/LDAC (former 3.6)</u>: Inclusion of socio-economic dimension in ICES advice on VMEs underpinning the Regulation (EU) 2022/1614 determining list of VMEs in implementation of the Deep Sea Access Regulation (EU) 2016/2336;</p> <p>3.2 <u>PELAC</u>: Guidelines for evaluation rebuilding plans;</p> <p>3.3 <u>PELAC</u> : Implementation ICES quality assurance plan;</p> <p>3.4 <u>PELAC</u>: Notification of corrected ICES advice documents;</p> <p>3.5 <u>PELAC/NWWAC</u>: In-person participation of ICES to ACs meetings;</p>



10:20 - 10:30	COFFEE BREAK
10:30-11:40	<p>4. ACs specific issues</p> <p>4.1 <u>PELAC</u>¹: Mackerel fecundity;</p> <p>4.2 <u>PELAC</u>²: Pelac workshop on LTMSs.</p> <p>4.3 <u>MEDAC</u>: Studies of ICES relevant for the Mediterranean Sea</p> <p>4.4 <u>BSAC</u>¹: Question of ecosystem considerations in stocks advice of the Baltic;</p> <p>4.5 <u>BSAC</u>²: Headline advice use for Western Baltic spring spawning herring;</p> <p>4.6 <u>CCRUP</u>¹: Quota of <i>Beryx sp.</i> in area X – Azores;</p> <p>4.7 <u>CCRUP</u>²: How is the progress of the VMEs study in all the ORs?</p> <p>4.8 <u>PELAC</u>³: Herring and Sprat in ICES areas 6 and 7;</p> <p>4.9 <u>BSAC</u>³: Herring stocks in the Baltic;</p> <p>4.10 <u>CCRUP</u>³: Knowledge and assessment of stocks in the Outermost Regions, namely in Mayotte?</p> <p>4.11 <u>BSAC</u>⁴: Cod spawning depths of 20-30 meters and 30-40 meters;</p> <p>4.12 <u>LDAC</u>: Joint ICES-NAFO Pandalus Working Group and Ecosystem-multispecies approach for NAFO Flemish Cap (3M) for cod, redfish and shrimp fisheries</p>
11:40 –11:50	5. Action points
11:50-11:55	6. MIAC 2023
11:55-12:00	7. Close session



3) ACs General Issues

3.1) NWWAC/LDAC: Inclusion of socio-economic dimension in ICES advice on VMEs underpinning the Regulation (EU) 2022/1614 determining list of VMEs in implementation of the Deep Sea Access

(NWWAC)

On 26 July 2022, DG MARE organized a stakeholder meeting on implementation of the Deep-Sea Access Regulation in view of the preparation of the ICES advice on the topic. Inputs from stakeholders highlighted a number of items to be considered in the implementation of this Delegated Act. These particularly included analysis of the socio-economic impacts of VMEs and of possible conflicts with specific fishing gears. The NWWAC also highlights that an exhaustive survey should be carried out regarding how VMEs could affect each fishing gear, since only bottom trawling's fishing footprint has been considered. Is ICES considering these elements as well and how do they envisage to include this information in their advice? In this regard, the NWWAC believes that ACs could provide useful input and should be invited to participate in future ICES Advice Drafting Groups on VMEs.

interaction between ICES and stakeholders, as well as the quality of the discussion. Furthermore, the NWWAC would like to highlight the importance of including explanations on stock assessment and on the main points of the advice drafting process in the presentation of each stock advice.

(LDAC)

At MIAC 2022, Mr Rodriguez asked ICES for suggestions on how to improve collaboration and address the topic of VMEs and its impact on fishing activities. He asked whether ACs could participate in the benchmark and support data compilation work. The EASME project on VMEs conservation and deep-sea fisheries management was also mentioned, where the LDAC participated in a stakeholders and scientists workshop.

Mr. Dickey-Collas replied that ICES had in 2022 a VME benchmark and is now working with the Commission in providing scientific evidence for identifying VME sites in light of the review of the EU Deepsea Access Regulation, looking at fishing footprint on VMEs. ICES is also liaising with NEAFC on regular information on distribution of VMEs in the NEAFC area as well as impact of fisheries activities. how to interpret advice approach to VMEs. He added that it would be interesting to explore the link between the EASME project and the work carried out by ICES. ICES is also in partnership with a data limited stocks project from FAO on ABNJ (Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction).

Both parties agreed to continue having discussions on this topic bilaterally on the topic and, if relevant, share the information available with the other ACs as well.



LDAC committed to share the report from the EASME project once available and public. ICES will consider exploring possible links between their work on VMEs and the EASME project.

In addition, on 15 September 2022, the Commission adopted Regulation (EU) 2022/1614 determining the existing deep-sea fishing areas and establishing a list of areas where vulnerable marine ecosystems are known to occur or are likely to occur. An annual review of the list is foreseen in article 9(6) of the framework Regulation, the Deep-sea Access Regulation (EU) 2016/2336. First on the process, Article 9(6) provides that “the Commission shall review the list annually on the basis of advice received from the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries and, where appropriate, amend the list by means of implementing acts. The Commission may remove an area from the list provided that it determines, on the basis of an impact assessment and after consulting the competent scientific advisory body, that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that VMEs are not present, or that appropriate conservation and management measures have been adopted which ensure that significant adverse impacts on VMEs in that area are prevented.”

Accordingly, the Commission has requested STECF to deliver an opinion on socioeconomic aspects and ICES to deliver an updated scientific advice on the list of areas, respectively.

It would be good to know what ICES is planning to do regarding timing and content of this updated scientific advice for DG MARE, if there are new scientific evidence received from national scientific institutes (and in particular from Spain). The ACs envisage to be involved in the forthcoming consultations with DG MARE on this topic in the coming months as indicated in the letter received from DG MARE on 14 December 2022 (attached).

EC Consultation Road map:

- (Jan-Feb): Stakeholder meeting on the ICES advice
- (Feb): Bilateral discussions with most concerned Member States
- (March-April): Stakeholder meeting on STECF opinion
- (April): Bilateral discussions with most concerned Member States

3.2) PELAC: **Guidelines for evaluating rebuilding plans**

In February 2020, ICES organized a workshop (WKREBUILD) to develop guidelines and define criteria which would be considered acceptable for ICES to evaluate rebuilding plans. The workshop generated a guidance table summarizing the best practices for evaluation of rebuilding plans against the potential criteria of acceptability. The workshop recommended that a second workshop be organized for testing the guidelines with actual test cases, with the aim of defining more specific criteria and guidelines. This follow-up workshop was originally planned for Autumn 2021. Instead, two other relevant workshops on the estimation of reference points



(WKREF and WKREF2) were held in 2021-2022.

The PelAC has continuously raised the need for ICES to develop clear guidelines for the evaluation of rebuilding plans in recent years. This is particularly key for stocks such as Western horse mackerel and Western Baltic spring spawning herring. The PelAC would welcome an update from ICES on its plans to follow-up on the development of criteria for evaluating rebuilding plans.

3.3) PELAC: **Implementation ICES quality assurance plan**

The PelAC recognizes the progress made by ICES on improving quality assurance considerations in the ICES advice process, in accordance with its 2019 Advisory Plan. Nevertheless, the PelAC believes the implementation of a robust quality assurance system throughout the entire advice process, from data collection to the publication of advice, requires continued focus. Part of the quality assurance process is the implementation of the Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF) for all assessed stocks. The PelAC has continuously raised that all future advice issued by ICES should clearly state in the top-line advice whether the advice has gone through the TAF process. The PelAC would appreciate further updates on this from ICES as well as what other initiatives are ongoing to ensure quality assurance.

3.4) PELAC: **Notification of corrected ICES advice documents**

The PelAC was made aware by chance that the 2023 ICES advice for the blue whiting stock released in September 2022, was corrected in its headline advice in November 2022 and published on the ICES website. Initially, there was no notification that the advice was changed. Moreover, the fact that the advice was replaced only becomes apparent whilst accessing/opening the advice document.

Recognising that the corrected advice (including a clarification on the reasons leading to the change) was later notified through the regular ICES advice activities posts, in general the PelAC believes that the replacement of any stock advice should be better visible on the ICES website, and not solely rely on individuals accessing the document in question in order to discern it has been replaced.

3.5) PELAC/NWWAC: **In-person participation ICES to meetings ACs**

The PelAC refers to its letter to ICES (reference 2223PAC12) sent on October 25 2022, where it expressed its difficulties with the ICES travel policy in place that restricts the ability of ACOM representatives to physically attend PelAC meetings in the Netherlands. The PelAC organizes two meetings a year (in July and October) to which



ICES is invited to present the advice for the stocks under the PelAC remit.

While sensitive to arguments in relation to reducing CO2 emissions, the PelAC feels that the lack of in-person participation by ICES at these key PelAC meetings, negatively affects the quality of the exchanges and the discussion. We therefore request ICES to consider allowing ACOM members to travel to both key PelAC meetings, or to at least one.

Alternatively, the PelAC is open to explore other practical solutions for ICES to present its annual advice on relevant stocks, such as limiting physical attendance by ACOM to one single meeting where the presentation covers the advice of all PelAC stocks combined (during the annual October meeting), or having the locally-based ACOM representative in the Netherlands (from Wageningen University and Research) attend the PelAC meetings to present the advice, thus avoiding travel abroad.

As far as the PelAC is concerned, maintaining the status quo where the designated ACOM representative delivers the presentations virtually to PelAC meetings, is no longer a way forward we would support.

4) ACs Specific Issues

4.1) PELAC: Mackerel fecundity

Upon being made aware of the publication by [T. Janssen et al. \(2021\)](#) regarding mackerel fecundity, the PelAC invited Teunis Janssen for a presentation on these main findings to its meetings in July and October 2021.

In this study, the results of an analysis on the amount of proteins and lipids contained in fish later in the year, did not match the current ICES perception of the mackerel fecundity cycle and the current measurements from the egg survey. These results stand in contrast to the stable F measured by ICES under the current accepted notion that mackerel is considered a ‘determinate spawner’, where fecundity is fixed prior to the spawning period. Instead, the findings indicate that mackerel can produce more eggs throughout the spawning cycle depending on food availability, suggesting consistency with an ‘indeterminate’ fecundity type. Fecundity type misclassification can influence SSB estimations based on Annual Egg Production Methods (AEPM). The study therefore recommends to look closely at how to move forward with this data, such as by correcting the AEPM to improve the time series of realized fecundity, which could be done historically with the approach done in the study.

The PelAC considers it important that fecundity, a key parameter of the mackerel assessment, is treated correctly. Based on the discussion with Teunis Janssen following his presentation, the PelAC believes these findings can play a key role in addressing the discrepancies that exist between the mackerel IENSSN survey and the



egg survey (even though this was not an issue for 2022). The PelAC has continuously asked the Commission to address these differences with ICES, and there now seems to be a path to examine this.

During the last PelAC meeting held in October 2022, ICES explained that the only formal process to address this issue would be through a benchmark. The PelAC believes that a mechanism should be considered by ICES that enables the incorporation of new ‘breakthrough’ data (of urgent nature) such as these new insights regarding fecundity, to stock assessments as it becomes available outside of the benchmark process. The PelAC would appreciate ICES’ thoughts on this as well as clarifications into what would be required to progress the uptake of these new fecundity findings into the ICES stock assessment process and the time frame involved.

4.2) PELAC: **PelAC workshop on LTMSs (March 2022)**

In March 2022, the PelAC organised a workshop on Long-Term Management Strategies (LTMSs) in the Hague, the Netherlands, to which ICES contributed significantly, both in terms of a presentation as in participation in the discussion. This was much appreciated by the members of the PelAC.

LTMSs are an important focus area for PelAC work and discussions. The PelAC has a history in contributing to the development of LTMSs, as well as providing advice on plans towards the European Commission and Member States. Therefore, there is a general interest at the PelAC to expand its knowledge on how LTMSs are applied around the world, and which tools can be used when working with Long-Term Management Strategies. That was the main rationale for holding this workshop.

During the plenary session, a number of discussion elements emerged such as balancing complexity vs. simplicity of LTMSs and evaluations, and ICES’ tendency to focus on numerical values when estimating risk. Different case studies from around the world were presented in the workshop (from Iceland, the South Pacific and ICCAT) which offered examples of how such processes could be simplified. It was also remarked that recently, the ICES system introduces frequent changes related to small changes in the assessment process leading to changes in reference points, since they are written into long-term management plans. There was an exchange on how this could be addressed. The full report of the workshop can be accessed [here](#).

The PelAC would welcome thoughts and reflections from ICES on the discussions held during the workshop, and whether there are any elements that ICES plans on addressing more concretely. In any case, the PelAC would welcome a follow-up discussion or workshop on this key item with ICES in the future.



4.3) MEDAC: **Studies of ICES relevant for the Mediterranean Sea**

In the last years the MEDAC has been contacted by various ICES scientists dealing with the MSP, selectivity in mixed fishery, recreational fishery, European eel etc. So, the MEDAC should be informed about results relevant for the Mediterranean Sea to be updated to the best current scientific information in the provision of members' advice.

4.4) BSAC: **Question of ecosystem considerations in stocks advices of the Baltic** (seals, parasites, food competition, prey-predator)

Last year, BSAC asked several questions pertaining to of the inclusion of ecosystem factors in the single stock assessments of cod, sprat and herring. It was unclear how seal predation was taken into account in the advice. ICES was also asked to come back to the BSAC on the sprat predation on cod eggs in the eastern Baltic. Furthermore, ICES ADG member Jan Horbowny's analysis shows that reducing natural mortality is the key driver needed to restore the eastern Baltic cod stock. What recommendations does ICES have for implementing this? How can managers reduce natural mortality of the cod stock?

4.5) BSAC: **Headline advice use for Western Baltic spring spawning herring** (see letter being prepared following Pelagic WG)

The BSAC has been preoccupied by this stock for some time. It has advised the Commission to ask ICES to change its headline advice and use the Baltic MAP as headline advice. Was this request received by ICES? Will this be the case this year? Is there any useful information for the future elaboration of a rebuilding plan for this stock coming from the workshop on guidelines and methods for the evaluation of rebuilding plans (WKREBUILD)?

4.6) CCRUP: **Quota of *beryx*. in area X - Azores**

What is the position of the ICES on the delivery of an elaborate derogation by the Azores, with the objective of maintaining the same quotas, in the next biennium?

The Azores are one of the largest economic zones in the European Union with 1M. km², but only 1% is explored. It is a region without a platform, poor in nutrients and with few species with commercial value. The fishing sector in the Azores is one of



the main sources of activity, representing an important source of income with great social and economic impact, creating employment and community fixation. In the Azores, the sector differs from other communities fishing by the distance, From seamounts of Islands and From main markets. Also, the adverse weather conditions in the archipelago from Azores conditioned the fishing activity.

The fishing practiced at Azores, is - in fact - well known for providing some of the best fish in the world and should also be down positively per exercise one fishing with methods handcrafted, It is considered one fishing sustainable and responsible. Its sustainability results essentially from the continuous use of lines and hooks as a method of fishing and also the absence of industrial fishing. We are witnessing a reduction in the fishing fleet over these years.

· Beryx

The *beryx*s. (*Beryx decadactylus* and *Beryx splendens*) are harvested exclusively by hook's fishing gears and are one of the 8 most important species for The Azores Autonomous Region, representing approximately 71% of total allocation of demersal and deep-sea species.

At the Azores we have been implementing internal management measurements such as: maximum capture limit per vessel, per tide and annual quota, increase of the hook size and minimum catch size of beryx species. This denotes a concern for careful effort management in fishing, to insecure the sustainability of the resources and the fishing activity. The Beryx quota allocated to Portugal (145 tonnes) is shared with the Azores by 85% (123 tons). Normally, this quota tends to end in between the months of September and October.

In 2015, it was established a minimum size capture for *Beryx splendens* (*Alfonsin*) and *Beryx Decadactylus* (*Imperador*), of 250g, and currently 350mm. And by virtue of a fishery that contributed to the conservation of units population of these species, from 2017 what is implemented is a maximum catch limit for the stock, by tide and by year.

This year we ended up carrying out even more careful and restrictive management, closing the capture of Alfonsin on 30 June. Year after year, the closing of quota precociously, did not allow fishing for Beryx species throughout the year, due to few share what is attributed to Member States and consequently to the Azores.

· Black spot Seabream

The blackspot seabream species maintains the quota management plan in the Azores and has good stock management, with limits per vessel, with quota allocation per island of the archipelago. There exists a list of vessels that can fish this species, and the catches may not exceed 3% of the annual fishing opportunity. Since 2010, the seabream has had a minimum capture size of 300 mm, currently 330 mm.

We inform you that besides these implemented measures for the species previously mentioned, in 2003 longline fishing became prohibited within 3 miles on the islands of São Miguel and Terceira, and 6 miles on the rest of the archipelago. In addition, in the same year, fishing demersal species was prohibited at the *Condor's*



Seamount.

We reinforce that fishermen are available to cooperate in obtaining scientific data and share information about the stocks. According to them, there is a progressive increase in the stock of these species in the waters of the Azores. However, the absence of stock for *Beryx spp.*, through investigation, compromised a new quota limit. Considering the trends of captures (positives) and the valorization of these species in the Azores, reducing the fish opportunities will have negative socio-economic implications and, in this regard, the realization of a study about the socioeconomic impact shall not be discarded in these situations.

4.7) CCRUP: How is the progress of the VMEs study in all the ORs?

Considering the response from the European Commission to our recommendation n° 30 about «*Possible studies on Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in all the Outermost Regions*», we would like to know if ICES did deliver an advice in October or in the current month (November) with an identification of areas where vulnerable marine ecosystems (VMEs)?

4.8) PELAC: Herring and Sprat in ICES areas 6 and 7

The PelAC was pleased with the main outcome of the benchmark meeting in February 2022 covering the herring stocks in 6a and 7bc, which was that the split of the stocks had been successful. However, it was only possible to do so for category 3 assessments.

The PelAC considers it important that both stocks transition towards category 1 assessments as soon as possible. The issues raised in the benchmark (low catches from the monitoring fisheries, the aging and maturity issues and the split survey cohort tracking in the 6aS assessment model) are currently being addressed within the PelAC 6a 7bc.

Herring Focus Group, with the aim to bring this work forward to HAWG 2023.

The PelAC would appreciate ICES' feedback on what is necessary to progress the stocks from category 3 to category 1 assessments.

Currently, there is no ICES advice for TACs and quotas for sprat in subarea VI and divisions VII a–c and VII f–k. The PelAC would appreciate feedback from ICES on what can be done to resolve stock-ID issues and improve data generation for sprat in these areas. In this regard, the recent ICES workshop on a research roadmap for Channel and Celtic Seas sprat is worth considering.



4.9) BSAC: **Herring stocks in the Baltic**

Following the Council TAC and Quota decision, a number of remarks were made by the Council on the need to better assess size and age composition of the stocks. This is necessary data to implement the Baltic management plan which makes specific reference to take this into account when setting quotas. Did ICES launch any particular work on those topics? How will these questions be addressed? and what are the first results envisaged?

4.10) CCRUP: **Knowledge and assessment of stocks in the Outermost Regions namely in Mayotte?**

Mayotte member would like to inform about the need to protect the ZEE of the Outermost Regions within 100 miles from the third countries' vessels, namely in their territory.

Can ICES study their stocks in order to reinforce their will to protect their resources?

4.11) BSAC: **Cod spawning at depths of 20-30 meters and 30-40 meters**

Passive gear fishermen have an exemption for fishing flatfish up to depths of 20 meters. Some fishers representatives observe an increase in sea temperatures meaning that plaice and flounder are found in deeper water where it is colder. This raises questions on an increased depth of cod spawning. Does ICES have any more recent evidence regarding cod spawning in SD 25 and 26 at depths greater than 20 meters? Are any investigations of the impact of extending this exemption to depths of 30 and/or 40 meters foreseen?

4.12) LDAC: **Joint ICES-NAFO Pandalus Working Group and Ecosystem-multispecies approach for NAFO Flemish Cap (3M) for cod, redfish and shrimp fisheries**

LDAC would like to request ICES to continue working with NAFO in ensuring that timing of meetings and stock assessment is handed over and delivered in time for decision at the NAFO Annual Meeting in the third week of September. ICES noted a strong progress on ecosystem modelling for the Flemish Cap and the inter-relationships between redfish, cod and shrimp, including on multi-species MSE. It was noted that a 'number of pandalus benchmarks' took place in 2022 with some interesting results but still there is work to do in terms of data quality and ecosystem modelling for Flemish



Cap. The LDAC would be interested in knowing more about this process and agree how best we could provide input to this (benchmark workshops, WKPRAWN).

This item has been addressed in previous MIAC meetings and is still relevant as the fishery remains closed by decision at the last NAFO annual meeting in September 2021. This is causing a serious economic impact in certain EU fleets which are members of the LDAC. The LDAC is planning to assist the DG MARE in negotiating a proposal for allocation keys and management of this fishery and would appreciate discussing with scientists from ICES the status of scientific advice for this stock. An update on the work on ecosystem modelling for the Flemish Cap and a calendar for future benchmark workshops would also be useful to ensure active participation from the AC.