



An ecosystem approach to fisheries

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Ecosystem Approach



Questions:
**To what extent can
the needed EA
advice be provided?
How prepared is the
management
system to integrate
EA?**



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Pulling mechanisms and pushing strategies: How to improve Ecosystem Approach Fisheries Management advice within the European Union's Common Fisheries Policy

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...

EU continues advancing towards the goal of managing fisheries under ecosystem approach but its fragmented

HOWEVER

Limited attention have been paid to the implications for advisory system in support to EA to fisheries management (EAFM)

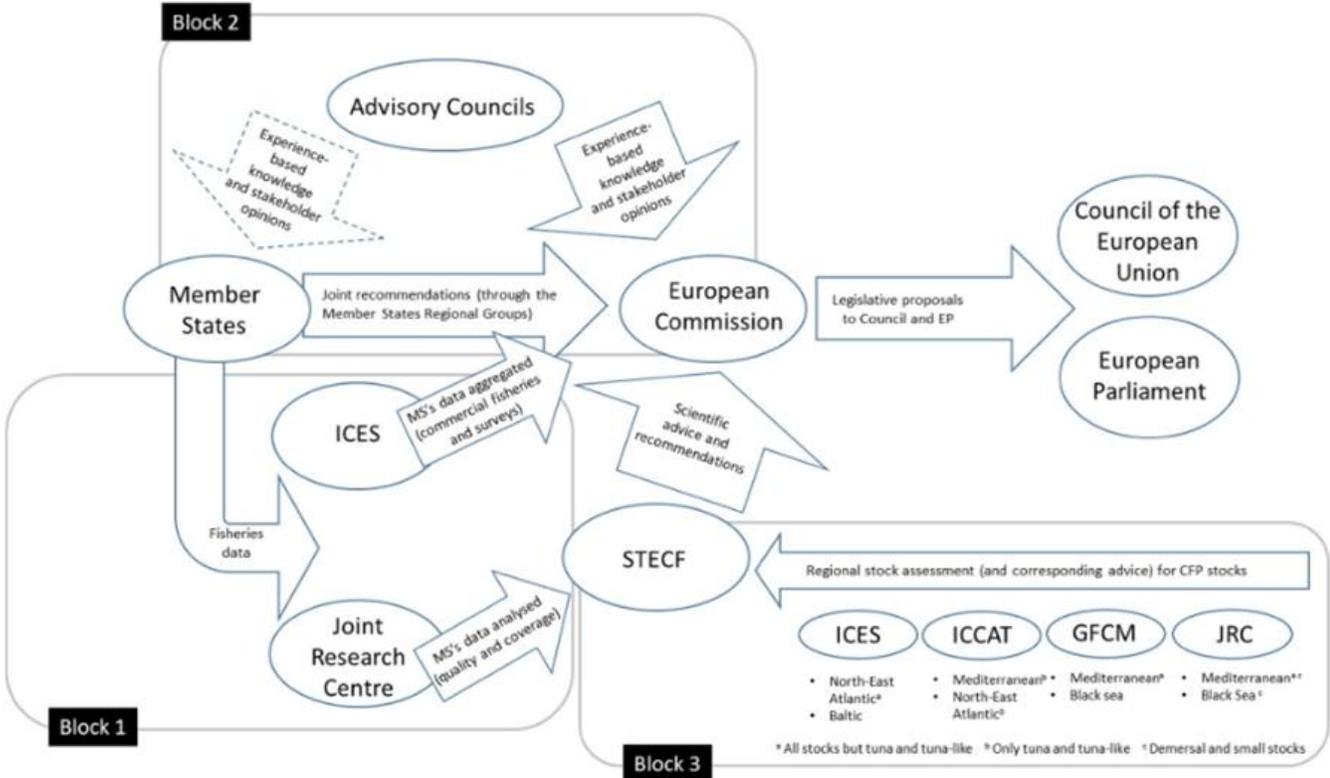
- The CFP and MSFD provided the legal setting that triggered requests for EAFM advice (pulling mechanisms).
 - the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach in fisheries management is defined in Article 2 of the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) as an “integrated approach [...] [taken] within ecologically meaningful boundaries which seeks to manage the use of natural resources, taking account of fishing and other human activities, while preserving both the biological wealth and the biological processes necessary to safeguard the composition, structure and functioning of the habitats of the ecosystem affected, by taking into account the knowledge and uncertainties regarding biotic, abiotic and human components of ecosystems”.
- **Environmental but also socio-economic and governance dimensions**

The Framework in which EA could be embedded



EU Context

Fig. 1. Elements which form the basis of EAFM advice (text outside the box). Text within the box is the definition of EAFM as provided in the 2013 CFP.



Advisory Councils
Scientific bodies
Regional bodies

- ❑ Weak data collection framework (JRC, ICES, STECF)
 - ❑ Regional stock assessment and corresponding advice formulated by different scientific bodies for the different regional seas (two sources of technical scientific information and state of exploitation of resources)

- ❑ Limited capacity to provide advices beyond what the “clients” are looking for?
 - ❑ (primary ask to assess targeted stocks = single species, distribution of quotas)

“The findings confirm earlier observations of lack of a formalized process to provide and integrate advice in support of an ecosystem approach into EU fisheries management. Instead of enabling existing capacities to embed ecosystem components (e.g. investments and initiatives made by stakeholders (and authorities) to move to EAFM -pushing strategies), the system relies heavily on mandatory requests from policy makers (pulling mechanisms). Furthermore, social and economic dimensions are the weakest aspects in the advisory process, which hampers the balancing of objectives that represent one of the hallmarks of EAFM. The policy framework has adopted EAFM for European fisheries, but the advisory processes have not yet been adapted to substantially support EAFM.”

❑ Legal rush

- ❑ Rush for answering legal requirements and keeping with the short deadlines restrained advisory bodies from identifying other opportunities.
 - ❑ some actors have been proactive and follow a strategic plan beyond the policy requests of their clients (e. g. ICES), whereas others seem to be responding more on an ad-hoc basis (e.g. STECF), or appear uncertain about what EAFM advice is (e.g. ACs, RFMOs).

❑ Weak social and economic dimensions

- ❑ Despite progress these dimensions are still considered the weakest e.g. ACs mostly provide advice on TAC setting and MAPs focussing on science and economics, and social aspects are rarely discussed

Focus remains mainly on natural resource exploitation, conservation and ecosystem objectives than on the social, and economic objectives which are also part of an EA, and which are described in the 2013 CFP.

RSC & RFMOs remaining issues to EAFM?

RSB/RFMOs: Dichotomy between fisheries and ENV (hope to be improved as the EC is calling for coherence of approaches under the marine strategy framework directives (MSFD))

Efforts has been made at regional levle (GFCM, ICCAT) to include EA by creating working group (GFCM SAC Subcommittee on marine environment and ecosystem; ICCAT subcommittee on ecosystem 2005, but a bit patchy without long term vision

“In addition, the status and trends of selected ecosystem indicators have been described (ICCAT, 2017), and a review of five tuna RFMOs in terms of their application of EAFM took place (SCRS, 2017). However, challenges are perceived that could hamper a more thorough implementation of EAFM in the ICCAT. These relate to understanding the EAFM concept and the requirements for its implementation. Further, the application of EAFM is in ICCATs own words considered to be “patchy” and without a long-term vision”

The EU is in transition

1. Advise should give recipients clear path to use it when having an EA/ capacity to operationalise EAFM
2. Formalise process to integrate EAFM into EU policies
3. Consider Socio and economic EA
4. Gradual adjustment and iterative processes such knowledge and experience (other countries USA, Canada, NZ...) could help to adjust to the UE contextual conditions
5. Development on how the advice is requested and what decision-makers may gain from redefining those requests would be a significant step forward
6. Implementation of EAFM requires transitional periods and innovation within the current setting rather than new decision-making frameworks aiming for accountability and better integration.
7. EAFM need to be facilitated through the implementation of initiatives for the main players (pushing strategies), and by creating flexibility in the system and alignment of expectations.
8. As EAFM increases the complexity of management, transparency about the trade-off between different management choices need to be provided and re-sources need to be allocated to this purpose

“the conventional fisheries decisions concerning healthy commercial fish stocks are expanded to include maintaining biodiversity, ensuring long-term abundance and reproduction of food webs, and ensure sea floor integrity from a science perspective, but this needs to be balanced with consideration of economic and social impacts. For a truly EAFM, as well as fully implemented CFP, social aspects/indicators should be strengthened in fisheries management processes. Several players within the advisory system may produce this kind of advice (e.g. JRC, STECF) but presently there is no EU policy decision to be supported by it”



Thank you