

## **STECF EWG 15-11 Scoping meeting for Impact Assessments for Baltic Multi-species plan and cod plans in the Kattegat, North Sea, West of Scotland and Irish Sea.**

### **Terms of reference (Draft 2.2)**

Hold a meeting 28 November to 2 December in Edinburgh, for scoping and preparation of Impact Assessments for new management plans. The meeting should involve observers (Commission staff, managers, stakeholders) and scientists dealing with (socio-)economics and biology and should prepare for work on the following groups of stocks:

- a) Impact Assessments for a new plan for cod, herring and sprat in the Baltic Sea.
- b) Impact Assessments for new plans for cod and, where appropriate, other demersal stocks in the Kattegat, North Sea, West of Scotland and the Irish Sea.

For each area (Eastern/Western Baltic, Kattegat, North Sea, West of Scotland, Irish Sea):

- Describe and, where possible, quantify the biological and technical linkages between stocks in the area.
- Identify and discuss approaches to incorporating the main linkages into multi-annual management plans, and into MSY objectives for those plans.
- Consider how other objectives, relating to ecological and economic sustainability could be addressed within a management plan, and how progress towards these objectives might be evaluated.
- Identify candidate management measures that could contribute to the delivery of the objectives of the plan
- Identify the data, research and scientific advice needed to support the implementation of multi-stock management plans, according to the existing and future set-up of plans and identify major gaps in the availability of the relevant science.
- Based on the above, and taking into account STECF's existing evaluations of the long-term management plans for cod in each area:
  - Identify a number of options for revised management plans to be taken forward into the impact assessments
  - Provide a work plan for the work necessary to evaluate the potential impacts of these options.

### **Supporting information**

The reform of the CFP foresees several changes to the political framework for fisheries management that will have a direct or indirect impact on the scope and concept of long-term management plans and thus the respective needs for scientific advice.

Under the future policy a multiannual plan shall include:

- (a) the scope, in terms of stocks, fishery and the marine ecosystem to which the multiannual plan shall be applied;
- (b) objectives consistent with:

- the application of the precautionary approach to fisheries management ensuring exploitation that restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce the maximum sustainable yield by 2015
- the implementation of the ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management to ensure that the impacts of fishing activities on the marine ecosystem are limited

(c) quantifiable targets expressed in terms of:

- i) fishing mortality rates, and/or
- ii) spawning stock biomass, and
- ii) stability of catches.

(d) clear time frames to reach the quantifiable targets;

(e) technical measures including measures concerning the elimination of unwanted catches;

(f) quantifiable indicators for periodic monitoring and assessment of the progress related to achieving the targets of the multiannual plan;

(g) specific measures and objectives for the freshwater part of the life cycle of anadromous and catadromous species;

(h) measures to minimise impacts of fishing on the eco-system;

(i) safeguards and criteria activating those safeguards;

(j) any other measures suitable to achieve the objectives of multiannual plans.

. Three quotes from the reform proposal are particularly relevant here:

- “The Commission proposes decentralization that may authorize Member States to adopt the conservation and technical measures necessary to achieve the objectives and targets using a toolbox of measures under the conservation policy”
- "Multi-annual plans should where possible cover multiple stocks where those stocks are jointly exploited. The multiannual plans should establish the basis for fixing fishing opportunities and quantifiable targets for the sustainable exploitation of stocks and marine ecosystems concerned, defining clear timeframes and safeguard mechanisms for unforeseen developments."
- "Measures are needed to reduce and eliminate the current high levels of unwanted catches and discards. Indeed, unwanted catches and discards constitute a substantial waste and affect negatively the sustainable exploitation of marine biological resources and marine ecosystems as well as the financial viability of fisheries. An obligation to land all catches of managed stocks caught during fishing activities in Union waters or by Union fishing vessels should be established and gradually implemented."

In short, under a reformed CFP, management plans will be multi-stock where possible, with substantial scope for member states to implement their own management measures to achieve the objectives of the plan. It is also likely that restrictions on yields from a given stock will be

specified as catches rather than landings, given the likely implementation of a discard ban. For herring a discard ban shall be in place from 01 January 2014, for cod it is anticipated from 1 January 2015.

The Commission envisages that the new plan for the Baltic stocks will be a multi-species plan which accounts for the biological interactions between the three species, particularly predator-prey interactions. Similarly, it is envisaged that the new plans in the other areas will be, where possible, mixed-fishery plans, which account for the extent to which different species are caught together by different fleets in different fisheries.

In the case of the Baltic, it is anticipated that the new plan will account for biological interaction while the plans in the other areas will address technical interactions. While the issues are different in the two cases, there is common ground in the approach needed to incorporate multiple species within a single long-term management plan. In both cases, there is a need to extend simple single-stock harvest rules to account for multiple stocks, so that the fishing opportunities for that stock are determined not only by the status of that stock, but also by the status of linked stocks, whether those linkages are biological or technical. The explicit linking of different stocks also has implications for management objectives, particularly the definition of MSY in such cases.

At present the Commission understands that the scientific basis is relatively well developed for providing advice on multi-species interactions in the Baltic and mixed-fishery interactions in the North Sea. In the other cases, where the science is less well developed, it may not be practical to implement multi-stock plans at this stage. In these cases it will nonetheless be useful to identify where significant interactions occur, and to identify significant gaps in the understanding of these interactions.

The work plans to be prepared should, *inter alia*, identify the contributions to the work that can be made by STECF and ICES, and ensure co-ordination between the two. Scientists/economists should identify existing modelling frameworks which will be used to analyse multi-species/mixed-fishery interactions.