**Agenda No.8 Paper No. 8.1**

**General Assembly Paper for Approval**

**28th September 2016**

**NSAC Work Plan 2016-18**

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| **NSAC PRIORITIES 2016 - 17** |

The key priorities of the NSAC for next 12 months and the expected results (recommendations, meeting, projects etc.)

**Landing Obligation:** As the Landing Obligation is implemented and additional species are added there is an urgent need to develop a system to predict when and where chokes may occur, to assess the effectiveness of current mitigation options and develop effective contingency measures should the current toolbox be inadequate. To achieve this we will have to work closely with scientists, fisheries managers and other experts. We will hold a “Chokes Symposium” in early November 2016 and continue to build on the work completed to date within the NSAC and develop new advice alongside Member States via the Scheveningen Group though out the year. Within the context of the Landing Obligation we will examine how to align the provision of appropriate total allowable catches alongside the timetable for achieving maximum sustainable yield (MSY).

**Technical Measures:** The NSAC will complete its advice on the Commission’s Proposal for a Regulation on the Conservation of Fisheries Resources and the Protection of Marine Ecosystems through Technical measures.

**Multi Annual Management Plan:** Work commenced in 2015-16 to provide a response to the proposal for a Multiannual Management Plan for demersal fisheries in the North Sea will continue into 2016-17. We will work closely with the European Commission to ensure that the plan is based on the most up to date scientific information on stocks, mixed fisheries and other aspects of the ecosystem and environment. We will finalise our advice on Sea bass and Brown Shrimp management.

**Monitoring Control and Enforcement:** Implementation of the landing obligation will require new monitoring, control and enforcement measures to reflect the change from monitoring landings to monitoring catch at sea. We will consider how compliance within the new Technical Measures Regulation should be measured and monitored. We will work closely with the EFCA to develop advice on MCE. An MCE Focus Group will be established and commence its work early in 2017.

**Data Collection Framework Regulation:** The European Commission has proposed a revision of the Regulation. The NSAC will work to provide advice that reflects the need to collect additional environmental data whilst maintaining viable fishing businesses.

**Protecting the Environment:** We will continue tocontribute to the development and monitoring of fisheries management measures for Natura 2000 sites and other Marine Protected Areas. We will work closely with Member States, contributing to consultations on the implementation and monitoring of the Marine Strategy Framework Directive and will work with the Scheveningen Group to develop a clear process for AC consultation under Article 11 of the CFP.

**Brexit:** The UK’s decision to leave the EU will have a significant impact on the work of the NSAC. In terms of fisheries policy many of the areas we are working on will continue to apply to the UK until the point at which the UK leaves the EU and in some cases continue to apply after the exit has been completed. However there will be areas that will not apply to the UK post Brexit and in these cases it will be inappropriate for the UK to contribute to policy development. The NSAC will establish a Brexit Focus Group that will be responsible for examining all aspects of the UK exit in terms of the UK’s contribution to policy development. The focus group will also consider options for the long term structure, management, membership and location of the NSAC. They will also look at options for ongoing consultation and development of advice between the remaining EU countries, Norway and the EU post Brexit.

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| **OTHER ISSUES OF INTEREST** |

**Continue to develop closer links with the Scheveningen Group.** We will continue to work proactively with the Scheveningen Group providing them with NSAC advice, anticipating the needs of their work plan to develop, implement and monitor the landing obligation and other aspects of the CFP. We will make regular representations to the High Level Group and participate in technical group and control group meetings.

**Working closely with scientists.** It is important that NSAC advice is informed by the most up to date scientific advice available. NSAC regularly contributes to ICES and STECF meetings and this will continue. Scientists will be invited to attend all relevant NSAC meetings and we will continue to identify which specialists can add most value and work closely with them or on targeted areas of work. During 2016-17 we will host 2 workshops with scientists; one focussing on the Skagerrak and Kattegat and a second for the North Sea. The purpose of these workshops will be to bring together fisheries scientists, managers and stakeholders to identify areas where the science needs to be improved, and where cooperation between scientists and fishermen may yield useful information.

**Continue to develop closer links with Member States.** Whilst our links with the Scheveningen Group have strengthened over the last 2 years there has been a decline in the number of member state representatives attending NSAC meetings. We will encourage a higher level of member state participation at NSAC meetings aiming to have at least one MS at each NSAC meeting.

**Developing closer links with the European Parliament.** We will seek to build on the current level of NSAC awareness by MEPs by inviting them to attend meetings held in the area they represent. NSAC will continue to provide members of the PECH Committee with copies of all NSAC advice approved. We will develop closer links with rapporteurs encouraging participating at relevant NSAC meetings and provide 3 written updates informing PECH Committee members of NSAC activities and meetings.

**Developing relationships with Norway and other third countries.** Representatives of the Norwegian fishing industry will be invited to attend a Demersal Working Group meeting to give the opportunity to exchange information and current thinking with NSAC members.