

NSAC
WORK PROGRAMME 2021-2022
Priorities

[Landing Obligation](#)

The NSAC will work on proposing possible choke mitigation tools available within the regional Joint Recommendation mechanism. Avoiding choke situations and improving selectivity in order to reduce unwanted bycatch will be at the core of NSAC endeavours. With a thorough review of inter-related policies on control, monitoring and enforcement, technical measures and quota allocation, the NSAC will work to identify the cumulative impact of these on selectivity and avoidance of choke situations. We will strive to improve the management of Prohibited Species.

Where improvements regarding gear-selectivity and unwanted catches' survivability will have been exhausted, the NSAC will work on examining methods for disposal/utilisation of excess and undersized fish. Other methods for use and / or disposal will be considered for ports and regions not having an easy access to fishmeal processing.

We will liaise with scientists, fisheries managers and other experts in order to help us identify and develop best practices regarding the implementation of the landing obligation.

[Revision of the Control Regulation](#)

The NSAC has given a couple of recommendations in respect of the Commission's proposal for a revision of the control regulation. One advice on general aspects of the Commission's proposal and one more specific on the matters of the control of the landing obligation. We will now follow the negotiations in the triologue between the Commission, the Council and the Parliament closely.

We will keep monitoring the enforceability of the Control Regulation and at the same time the Control Regulation's effectiveness in ensuring fisheries compliance with the Common Fisheries Policy and continue our work on identifying possible gaps and drawbacks in implementation while engaging with the stakeholders to discuss its coherence with the current legislative framework.

[European Maritime and Fisheries Fund \(EMFF\) 2021-2027](#)

Under the new EMFAF for 2021-2027 period, we will engage in discussions on how to optimize the use of EMFAF funds regarding sustainability of fisheries in the North Sea area and achieve

environmental, social and employment objectives of the CFP. We will contribute to the overall sustainability of the fishing sector by exploring possible ways in which Member States could use the EMFAF financing for collection, management and use of data for fisheries management and scientific analyses with regards to implementation of the CFP.

ICES Advice

The NSAC will maintain collaborative relationship with ICES. Not only at the annual meeting between ICES and the ACs, but also in connection to the advice on fishing opportunities for the North Sea by participating as observers in ICES workshops and advice drafting groups etc. We will be working towards bridging the gap between science and management by communicating management issues and striving for better understanding of the underlying assumptions. In order to ensure a valuable feedback to ICES and better-informed management decisions, a more detailed response to ICES advice will be considered in a form of a response to specific stock advice.

Technical Measures

Conservation of fishery resources and protection of marine ecosystems through technical measures will stay in NSAC's focus. Together with the Scheveningen Group of North Sea Members States we will monitor the technical measures in line with CFP objectives. The NSAC will closely follow the implementation of the recently revised regulation on technical measures, i.e. consider work on the definition of directed fisheries. We will continue contributing to Joint Recommendations in the Scheveningen Group and work towards regionalized approach taking into account different fleet specificities.

Multi-annual Management Plans / Recovery Plans

We will continue contributing to the continuing improving of the cod stock, among other things through a reduction of unwanted catches and discards.

The implementation of European Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management (EBFM) will be monitored and fed into through inputs from its end users (operators and decision-makers). We will continue hosting project managers and provide them with a forum where challenges and shortcomings are exposed through a dialogue and with an aim to develop a robust and useful ecosystem-based fisheries advice in line with practical management of fisheries resources.

TAC Setting Arrangements in the North Sea

Implementation of the EU North Sea Multiannual Plan will be systematically reviewed, and TAC setting arrangements assessed. Collaboration with Norwegian and UK stakeholders will help us find adequate solutions for all parties involved. Some stocks will need further examination in order to be able to provide advice on their management.

Brexit and its implications for the NSAC

We will further examine ways in which best to involve former UK members in the work of the NSAC while respecting the rules of the Union and the UK, as well as the possible agreement between both parties. We will engage with the Commission and the Member States to discuss and produce advice on post-Brexit arrangements in the North Sea, particularly on shared quota management. We will follow the developments and negotiations in the Specialised Fisheries Committee, and promote and ensure stakeholder engagement where relevant. As information and details become available, we will advise on post-Brexit arrangements with the UK and Norway.

Environmental sustainability

The NSAC will endeavor to engage with the Commission and follow up on the EU Biodiversity Strategy, specifically on its action plan to conserve fisheries resources and protect marine ecosystems planned for end of 2021. We will continue to participate in discussions related to management measures in Natura 2000 and other Marine Protected Areas. Considering the nature of these topics it has proven challenging to provide consensus advice on these issues, but where possible this will be provided.

We will follow and, where appropriate, feed into the Farm to Fork strategy, setting the vision for sustainable food systems in Europe, including fisheries. We will monitor announced initiatives relevant for North Sea fisheries and engage in their respective consultation processes. Together with our colleagues at the Market AC and the North Western Waters AC, we will follow the developments in sustainable, efficient and digitalised fisheries supply chains and investigate technological tools such as blockchain to improve traceability of fisheries products. A workshop on traceability tools, particularly blockchain, in fisheries supply chain will be organized to raise awareness among stakeholders, exchange views, recognize benefits and shortcomings, and explore legal framework, resulting in potential advice to Commission on technology's implementation and regulation.

The construction of major offshore wind parks and their cumulative impact on fishing and the environment will be scrutinized. We will continue to work closely with the North Sea Member States on their legislative proposals in spatial planning. We will endeavor to increase our engagement with wind park developers in order to stay abreast with their plans and provide stakeholder input to their proposals. We will also consider the noise impact of such developments on spawning and migratory patterns of fish.

We will continue our discussions on reduction and disposal of marine litter (including abandoned, lost and otherwise discarded fishing gear) and noise in the marine environment, and prepare advice where common objectives are identified. We will fuel and enrich our discussions by attending informative events and workshops and partner up with other relevant international organizations and/or projects, such as OSPAR. In 2021, the NSAC has been granted observership status at OSPAR Commission. We will exercise our right to observe,

and where relevant, feed into OSPAR outputs through delegated NSAC representatives. The conclusions and outcomes of each representation will be regularly reported to the NSAC membership.

Social sustainability

The Commission is placing increased attention on the social dimension of the CFP. The NSAC will work towards identifying relevant social issues and improving social (alongside environmental and economic) sustainability of the fishing industry. We will explore the ways to promote the industry to younger generations and to facilitate entry in the industry in order to help mitigate the problem of aging workforce. Vessel safety, certifications and training standards will be investigated, as well as ways to improve general working conditions of fishing crews. We will advocate for appropriate impact assessment of proposed measures on social, financial and working conditions of fishers. Socio-economic viability of coastal communities and reducing conflicts between stakeholders will be considered in our advice.

Gender equality in North Sea fisheries will be given increased attention. We will feed into Commission's call to support women in the blue economy in 2022 under EMFAF and promote gender balance in our internal and external communications. In collaboration with organization already advancing this objective in fisheries sector, we will review our internal procedures and discourse, and call to attention the role of women in fisheries in order to help improve their visibility, opportunity, and economic and working conditions.

Other areas of interest

Continue to develop closer links with the Scheveningen Group

The NSAC will continue to work closely with the Scheveningen Group of Member States. We will seek early engagement with the 2022 presidency (France) with the aim of establishing greater interaction and improved communication channels and to understand their priorities in advance of January 2022. We will also seek feedback from all NSAC advice submitted to the group. We will participate regularly at the Scheveningen Technical and High-Level Group meetings to share the knowledge and experience of the NSAC members on relevant regional topics.

Working closely with scientists

We will stay engaged with the members of ICES and will aim at facilitating their engagement in NSAC meetings. NSAC members will stay encouraged to participate in relevant ICES working groups and STECF meetings. Together with ICES, the NSAC stakeholders will

examine how to best contribute to improving stock assessment procedures and data collection. On social issues we will engage with our network of institutes and scientists exploring the socio-economic pillar of fisheries management.

Develop closer links with Member States

The NSAC will work on consolidation of contacts and collaboration with representatives of fisheries management of each North Sea Member State. We will provide them with copies of all NSAC advice and meeting invitations first-hand. To keep them informed about NSAC work, we will share with them the NSAC monthly newsletter. When state specific proposals are in question, we will engage with the representatives and organise presentations at our meetings.

Developing closer links with the European Parliament Fisheries Committee

NSAC will continue to provide the PECH Committee with copies of all NSAC approved advice. We will develop closer links with advisors and rapporteurs of relevant legislative files encouraging participation at relevant NSAC meetings. PECH Committee members will be continuously informed about NSAC activities and meetings via permanent contact established with the PECH Committee Secretariat and our designated MEPMEP Mr Peter van Dalen who will continuously be invited to follow our activities. Further means will be sought to improve our communication and contact with the Members of the Parliament, such as invitation to subscribe to our newsletter and bilateral meetings, when relevant, to inform the members about the NSAC position.

Relationships with Norway, UK and other third countries

The NSAC will continue to liaise with representatives of the fishing industry of third countries. For example, Norwegian and UK stakeholders will continue to be invited to Working and Focus Group meetings, in order to exchange relevant information and ideas with the NSAC members. They will be invited to participate in other meetings should there be a need for their expert opinion or experience.

Links to the European Commission

We welcome strengthened collaboration with colleagues at DG MARE through regular and improved Inter-AC meetings and Commission's representation at NSAC meetings, enhancing our ability to contribute to the development of fisheries policy proactively, instead of feeding into consultations alone. The NSAC remains open to a bilateral meeting with the Director-General in order to strategically determine future collaboration. Additionally, the NSAC would

like discuss with DG MARE how the NSAC can structure its meetings and discussions to facilitate its involvement in and support of the NSAC work

Provisional planning

Title of the meeting	Date	Place	Issues to be discussed
Demersal Working Group	November 2021	tbc	TAC and quotas 2022 NS Cod Landing Obligation Technical Measures Regulation ICES Advice
Board meeting	January 2022	tbc	Preparations for Executive Committee
Executive Committee	January 2022	tbc	Advice for Approval Updates from WGs and forward plan Budget monitoring Emerging and strategic issues Brexit and implications for the NSAC
Ecosystem Working Group	January 2022	tbc	Wind farm developments Management measures for MPAs Biodiversity Strategy, Ecosystem-based fisheries management Marine Litter
Demersal Working Group	February 2022	tbc	Implementation the Landing Obligation ICES stock assessments
Skagerrak and Kattegat Working Group	February 2022	tbc	Landing Obligation EU-Norway Offshore Wind Control regulation Technical measures Fully Documented Fisheries
Demersal Working Group	April 2022	tbc	Implementation of the Landing Obligation TAC setting

Ecosystem Working Group	April 2022	tbc	Wind farm developments Management of MPAs Ecosystem-based fisheries management Marine Litter
Skagerrak and Kattegat Working Group	May 2022	tbc	Landing Obligation EU-Norway Offshore Wind Control regulation Technical measures Fully Documented Fisheries
Board Meeting	May 2022	tbc	tba
Executive Committee	May 2022	tbc	Updates from Working Groups Advice for Approval Budget monitoring Presentation and approval of 2022-23 Work Programme and Budget
Demersal Working Group	July 2022	tbc	Presentation of ICES advice
Board meeting	September 2022	tbc	Preparations for Executive Committee
Executive Committee	September 2022	tbc	Approval of Advice Approval of contracted services Budget monitoring
General Assembly	September 2022	tbc	Annual Review Presentation of work plan and budget 2022-2023 Approval of 2019-20 accounts Approval of internal policies and documents
Ecosystem Working Group	October 2022	tbc	Wind farm developments Management measures for MPAs Ecosystem-based fisheries management Marine Litter

Skagerrak and Kattegat Working Group	October 2022	tbc	Landing Obligation EU-Norway Offshore Wind Control regulation Technical measures Fully Documented Fisheries
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