

NSAC Climate Change Focus Group Terms of Reference

Chair: Alexandra Philippe

Framework: This FG will function within NSAC Executive Committee which is also the forum for approval of the advice.

Purpose (aims and objectives):

The effects of climate change on the oceans and the seas such as rise of temperature, acidification, sea level rise and migration of species are becoming increasingly noticeable. There is a clear necessity to adapt to the unavoidable consequences of climate change while taking measures to mitigate its effects. For this purpose, knowledge on the consequences of climate change on the marine ecosystems and the resources needs to be improved. By adopting the EU Green Deal in December 2019, the European Commission is putting climate and environmental action as one of its key priorities. In this context, several EU initiatives fostering climate change mitigation and adaptation and environmental protection will be implemented and need attention and involvement from the NSAC.

The aim of the Focus group will be to acquire expertise on the effects of climate change on the North Sea ecosystem and resources in order to enable the NSAC to provide relevant advice and positions on this cross-cutting matter. Within this framework, the Climate FG aims to provide the Commission with informed, fisheries-focused advice to adopt climate mitigation and adaptation measures that are both relevant and feasible in the North Sea context.

In that perspective, the Focus Group will identify the main concerns and challenges relating to climate change effects in the North Sea, potential new opportunities for fisheries and the implications it has for the management of fish stocks. The following specific issues and actions have been identified:

1. Investigate the effect of climate change on productivity of the North Sea ecosystem and reference points/target values for fish stock management – state of knowledge, possible scenarios, and identification of management responses applicable to North Sea.
2. Consider fish in planetary health diet – target 50% increase in fish production and consumption before 2050 (Lancet report on planetary health diet) – investigate potential in the North Sea and flag the need for increased scientific understanding and consumer awareness of the climate impact of aquatic food.
3. Climate-neutral fishing vessels – identify opportunities, needs and enabling factors

4. Broader ocean-climate issues: provide a regionalized, fisheries perspectives on measures being discussed at international and EU level on the ocean climate-nexus with implications for North-Sea fisheries.

Additional issues will be added during the Focus group work.

Recipients of Advice (target audience):

European Commission: the key target is DG MARE. In addition, a copy of each advice to be sent to DG CLIMA to encourage inter-directorate communication of fisheries stakeholder views on climate change-related matters.

End result (main headings):

The Focus group will begin by conducting a series of hearings on climate change with scientists, stakeholders, European Commission, etc. These hearings are intended to improve knowledge on the subject, to facilitate the exchange of views between stakeholders and institutions, and to gather information in order to possibly establish a consensus position paper of the NSAC. The Focus Group will invite both DG MARE and DG CLIMA to contribute to NSAC work as appropriate. The Focus Group will also consider holding these hearings in collaboration with other Advisory Councils.

The Focus Group will aim to propose a position paper to be adopted by the Executive Committee. Climate change being a cross-cutting subject relevant in different topics studied by the NSAC, the position paper would provide a basis for other NSAC contributions related to the matter.

In the long-term and subject to the interest of NSAC members, the Focus group could serve as a group that offers expertise on advice where climate change is relevant and/or would provide advice on climate change issues.

As the knowledge and understanding of climate-fisheries issues is continuously evolving, the Focus Group will share relevant outcomes with other institutions and bodies with view of making available valuable consensus-led opinions.

As a consensus-led forum, the Focus Group understands the Commission will give appropriate priority consideration to its advice and opinions, compared to individual submissions and contributions. The Focus Group welcomes joint DG MARE – DG CLIMA replies to and participation in its advice and hearings.

Timeline:

Timeline for individual pieces of advice to be decided upon.

Energy transition and implications for fishing industry will be addressed as a matter of priority following DG MARE request at Inter-AC on 29 April 2022.

Measures of success (Key Performance Indicators):

- Consensus Advice, when possible
- Recognition of the paper by the EU Commission and NS MS;
- Response to Advice;
- Reference to Advice by decision-makers and managers.

Members

Alexandra Philippe	EBCD	NSAC	OIG
Linda Planthof	North Sea Foundation	NSAC	OIG
Peter Breckling	Deutscher Fischerei-Verband	NSAC	IND
Pim Visser	Stichting Nederlandse Visserij	NSAC	IND
Salomé Khatib	CNPMEM	NSAC	IND
Sofie Smedegaard Mathiesen	DFPO	NSAC	IND
Solène Prevalet	From NORD	NSAC	IND
Jacopo Pasquero	EBCD	NSAC	OIG