

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Title:

Joint NWWAC/NSAC Focus Group Social Aspects

Chair:

Bruno Dachicourt, ETF

Vice-Chair:

Jasmine Vlietinck, Rederscentrale

Rapporteur:

NWWAC Secretariat

Working languages:

English, French

Time frame and deadline:

A 10-month period (November 2021 – September 2022) to develop advice to the European Commission on social aspects of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) in relation to fisheries in the North Western Waters and the North Sea

Due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and related restrictions regarding travel, the group will commence its work via virtual meetings. The Secretariats will monitor the situation and organise a face-to-face meeting for all group members should this be required and once travel restrictions have been lifted.

Advice produced by this Focus Group may take the form of one or more advice documents.

The FG Social Aspects will function within the NWWAC Horizontal Working Group. Advice produced will either be presented to the HWG members at the July / September meetings or undergo a written procedure at the NWWAC HWG and ExCom for revision and adoption.

The FG will function under the NSAC ExCom. Advice produced will undergo the procedure at the NSAC ExCom for revision and adoption.

Background:

In these Terms of Reference we use the terms “the catching sector”, “the sector”, “the fishing sector” and “the seafood sector” to refer to both commercial and recreational fishing.

It is an explicit requirement of the CFP fishing and aquaculture activities contribute to long-term social sustainability as well as environmental and economic sustainability.

Social sustainability involves not only employment in the sector, but also education, occupational health, physical health, mental health, well-being, access, and diversity.

This may include considerations on ageing workforce and promotion of the sector to younger generations as well as facilitation of entry in the sector. Furthermore, vessel safety, certifications and training standards can be reviewed, including ways to improve general working conditions, including of fishing crews. Important is also the advocacy for appropriate impact assessment of proposed measures on social, financial and working conditions. Wider perspective on socio-economic viability of coastal communities and increase in cooperation/collaboration between stakeholders should be considered. Commission's call to support women in the blue economy in 2022 under EMFAF offers Advisory Councils the opportunity to advocate for gender parity within the sector and within own organisations.

Over the past years there has been an increasing difficulty to fill vacancies in the seafood sector with qualified employees, particularly in the catching sector. One of the key issues is a relatively low attractiveness of the sector, particularly for new generations of fishers. This lack of attractiveness can in some cases be linked with the balance between remuneration and hard-working conditions. Contributing to the lack of attractiveness is also the lack of visibility of the work carried out and the related shore-based activities. With the number of jobs depending on the catching sector declining in the majority of coastal areas, some coastal communities are at risk of not being viable in the future. The NWWAC and NSAC recognise that social sustainability is intrinsically linked with environmental and economic sustainability.

In the STECF - Social dimension of the CFP ([STECF-20-14](#)) publication the Commission states that "Fisheries throughout Europe have undergone major structural changes, leading to important social consequences for both individual fishers as for fishing communities. In several fishing communities and regions of the EU, the social importance of the fisheries sector outweighs its direct economic contribution. There is an increasing awareness that more attention should be paid to the social dimension of fisheries, emphasised by the mission letter of Commissioner Sinkevičius explicitly mentioning the need to address the social dimension". Latest figures on economic performance of the EU fleet can be found in the 2021 Annual Economic Report on the EU Fishing Fleet ([STECF 21-08](#)).

In addition to numerous voluntary instruments relevant to the fishing sector, e.g., the FAO Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries, national safety codes and recommendations, and voluntary standards, there are five international binding fisheries instruments:

1. The IMO (2012) Cape Town Agreement (CTA) ([link](#)),
2. The IMO (1995) International Convention on Training, Certification and for Fishing Vessels Personnel (STCW-F) ([link](#)),
3. The ILO (2007) Work in Fishing Convention (C188) ([link](#)),
4. Council Directive (EU) 2017/159 implementing the Agreement concerning the implementation of the Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 of the International Labour Organisation, concluded on 21 May 2012 between the General Confederation of Agricultural Cooperatives in the European Union (Cogeca), the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and the Association of National Organisations of Fishing Enterprises in the European Union (Europêche) ([link](#)),
4. The (2009) FAO Agreement on Port States Measures to Prevent Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (PSMA) ([link](#)).

Also worth noting is the European Parliament resolution of 16 September 2021 on Fishers for the future: Attracting a new generation of workers to the fishing industry and generating employment in coastal communities (2019/2161(INI)) ([link](#)).

Objective:

1 Develop advice to the European Commission and Members States on social aspects relating to fisheries in the NWW/ North Sea, including:

a) reviewing insights and identifying opportunities to increase the attractiveness of the sector to all new entrants

b) reviewing information regarding socio-economic consequences of management-decisions in the North Western Waters and the North Sea and identifying potential improvements

c) identify good practices and bring forward potential solutions for implementation in the fisheries sector across all Member States in relation to

- physical and mental health
- well-being
- access
- diversity
- employment
- education
- safety, and others.

d) explore synergies between UN SDG 14 Life Under Water, SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, and SDG 5 Gender Equality

e) and any other objectives that may emerge as a result of the work of the Focus Group

2 Develop advice on gender equality in the wider seafood sector following the Commission's call envisaged in Q1 2022

3 Develop advice on the socio-economic viability of communities and promotion of cooperation/collaboration between stakeholders

4 Identify ways of addressing all three sustainability pillars in future NWWAC/NSAC advice in an effort to achieve economic, environmental and social objectives

5 Develop advice on related issues should an urgent crisis arise which creates socio-economic impacts on the commercial and/or recreational fishing sector (for example caused by a pandemic or war)

Members:

Peter Breckling	Deutscher Fischerei Verband	IND	NSAC
David Curtis	European Anglers Alliance	OIG	NWWAC/NSAC
Bruno Dachicourt	European Transport Federation	IND	NWWAC
Gérald Hussenot	Blue Fish	OIG	NWWAC
Patrick Murphy	Irish South & West Fish Producers Organisation	IND	NWWAC
Norah Parke	Killybegs Fishermen's Organisation	IND	NWWAC
Jasmine Vlietinck	Rederscentrale	IND	NWWAC/NSAC
Sander Meyns	Rederscentrale	IND	NWWAC/NSAC
Kenn Skau Fischer	Danmarks Fiskeriforening	IND	NSAC
Johnny Woodlock	Irish Seal Sanctuary	OIG	NWWAC
Mo Mathies	NWWAC Secretariat		
Tamara Talevska	NSAC Secretariat		