

The North Sea Advisory Council



NSAC PRIORITIES Nov 2018 - Oct 19

The key priorities of the NSAC for November 2018 to October 2019 and the expected results (recommendations, meeting, projects etc.)

Landing Obligation

The Landing Obligation will be fully implemented for demersal stocks in the North Sea in January 2019. The NSAC will consider progress and the effectiveness of the mitigation tools available within the Joint Recommendation. The NSAC will continue to seek new ideas and develop advice on how best to avoid choke situations occurring, including methods to increase selectivity in order to reduce unwanted catch. We will monitor the levels of international quota swapping between Member States to alleviate potential choke issues. It will be important to take an overall view of all the inter-related policies including: control, monitoring and enforcement, technical measures and distribution of quota to identify the cumulative impact of these on selectivity improvements and any potential choke situations.

For the cases where gear-selectivity and unwanted catches' survivability cannot be further improved, we will examine methods used for disposal of excess and undersized fish. This may become an issue for ports and regions that do not have easy access to fishmeal processing facilities. Alternative methods for use and / or disposal will be considered.

We will continue to work closely with scientists, fisheries managers and other experts to identify ways to apply best practice.

Technical Measures

The NSAC will continue to provide advice at a regional level on the Conservation of Fishery Resources and the Protection of Marine Ecosystems through Technical Measures. We will monitor the implementation of technical measures to ensure that it is not counterproductive to the landing obligation and the achievement of the CFP's objectives.

TAC Setting Arrangements in the North Sea

We will monitor the implementation of the North Sea Multi Annual Plan and within this we will assess TAC setting arrangements within the North Sea. We will work closely with Norwegian colleagues to find an approach that is acceptable to all. There are some species that will need

to be examined in greater detail with a view to providing advice. We will also continue to monitor the situation of cod management in the Kattegat and provide advice if required.

Brexit, implications for the NSAC

At the beginning of the NSAC operational year in November 2018 it is expected that the framework withdrawal agreement will be available and its implications better understood by the NSAC. We will engage with the Commission and the Member States to discuss the future of the NSAC and produce advice on transition and post Brexit arrangements for membership, structure, location and funding of the organisation. As information and details become available we will make recommendations on post-Brexit arrangements with the UK and Norway.

Environmental Issues

The construction of major offshore wind parks and their cumulative impact on fishing and the environment will be considered. We will continue to work closely with wind park developers such as TenneT to fully understand their plans and provide stakeholder opinion to their proposals. We will also consider the noise impact of such developments on spawning and migratory patterns of fish.

We will continue to participate in discussions related to management measures in Natura 2000 and other Marine Protected Areas. It is difficult for an AC to provide consensus advice on these issues but where possible this will be provided.

We will continue our discussions on reduction and disposal of marine litter (including micro-plastics) and noise in the marine environment and prepare advice where common objectives are identified.

We will seek expert advice on seabird populations in the North Sea, to identify possible causes for the decline in numbers, links with - and impacts from - fisheries.

OTHER ISSUES 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 2019 presidency (Belgium) with the aim of establishing communication channels and sharing their priorities in advance of January 2019. We will also seek feedback from all NSAC advice submitted to the group. We will continue to work with the Scheveningen Technical and Control Groups to share the knowledge and experience of the NSAC members.

Working closely with scientists

We will continue to work closely with members of ICES and will have at least one meeting of the NSAC in Denmark which will give senior members of ICES the opportunity to participate fully in our discussions. We will consider data collection and encourage NSAC members to

participate in relevant ICES working groups and STECF meetings. We will discuss with ICES how NSAC stakeholders can best contribute to improving stock assessment procedures.

Develop closer links with Member States

As the work of the Scheveningen Group has increased, particularly related to the landing obligation, we have seen a reduction in the number of Member State representatives attending NSAC meetings and there is a need to improve contact. We will seek to identify the individuals responsible for fisheries management within each Member State. We will ensure that they receive all NSAC advice directly and they will be invited to participate in all relevant meetings. This will be increasingly important for issues such as quota distribution, where the Member States have a direct influence.

Developing closer links with the European Parliament

NSAC will continue to provide members of the PECH Committee with copies of all NSAC approved advice. We will develop closer links with advisors and rapporteurs of relevant legislative files encouraging participating at relevant NSAC meetings and provide three written updates during the year informing PECH Committee members of NSAC activities and meetings. We will seek to engage with the PECH secretariat to identify how the NSAC could best communicate with its members.

Relationships with Norway and other third countries

Representatives of the Norwegian fishing industry will continue to be invited to attend Demersal Working Group and the Skagerrak & Kattegat Working Group meetings to give the opportunity to exchange information and current thinking with NSAC members. They will be invited to participate in other meetings should they be able to provide expert opinions.

Links to the European Commission

The NSAC would like to achieve a better interaction with senior members of DG Mare. Our aim is to be involved in the development of policy rather than to contribute to consultations. We will discuss with DG Mare how this can be addressed and how the NSAC can structure its meetings and discussions to facilitate greater DG Mare involvement.

