



International Council for the
Exploration of the Sea

Conseil International pour
l'Exploration de la Mer

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Ian Gatt
Verena Ohms
Pelagic Advisory Council

Our Ref: G.81

11 March 2015

Subject: Your letter of 16th October 2013 on Pelagic AC comments to ICES strategic plan and your letter of 9th March 2015 regarding meeting with stakeholders before/after ICES working groups

Dear Verena Ohms and Ian Gatt,

The comments to ICES strategic plan submitted by the Pelagic Advisory Council in your letter of 16th October 2013 were very welcomed. The comments were considered at the 2013 meeting of ICES Council where the ICES Strategic Plan was unanimously approved by ICES Member Countries.

The goals, actions, and supporting activities for our Advisory pillar are detailed in the Implementation Plan¹ that was launched in 2014.

The three issues you raised in your letter (landing obligation, secretary role to ensure consistency in advice, and stakeholder involvement) are being given high priority by ICES and were all addressed at the meeting between ICES and observers to the advisory process (MIACO) in January this year.

The ICES Strategic and Implementation plans refer to “developing the scope of the advice”. ICES has committed to “Provide advice in relation to the changing policy environment. Facilitate transition to a new regime, new data, ecosystem impacts, and fisheries opportunities.”

As discussed at MIACO, ICES has (pending data availability) since 2013 provided advice on total catch and not only landings. ICES will not be in the position to evaluate the implications of the new EU policy on the stock assessments until data and information on landings and discards becomes available.

We, furthermore, discussed at the MIACO meeting the establishment of a forum for exchange of experiences with the landing obligation. We have discussed this informally with the DG MARE and it is my understanding that initiatives will be taken to establish the forum and that ICES will be invited to take active part in it.

Goal 6 of the ICES Strategic Plan is to Foster the science, the advisory, and the data and information services through the work of the Secretariat. The Secretariat is committed and continually working to ensure consistency in the

¹ <http://ipaper.ipapercms.dk/ICESPublications/StrategicPlan/Implementationplans/>

advice and I believe the secretariat is doing a good job in this respect both in terms of ensuring that the agreed procedures and methods are followed and the advice is presented in a consistent way.

On the issue of stakeholder involvement you especially requested a general opening of the special request experts groups for observers. The current rules of observer involvement in the advisory process as agreed by ICES Council allow for observer participation in workshops and advice drafting groups while advisory expert group meetings are not open to observers. The process addressing special requests involves in most cases a workshop, a peer review (normally conducted as part of the workshop), an advice drafting group, and final approval by ACOM. All the steps in this process are open to observers. In the few cases where a special request is added to the terms of reference for one of the advisory expert groups and not dealt with at a workshop, this part of the process is not open to observers. However, it is possible for observers to participate in the advice drafting process and final ACOM approval of the response to the request.

Related to the above question of stakeholder involvement you suggest in your letter of 9th March to have brief stakeholder consultations preceding and following ICES advisory working group meetings. While we must be careful when adding more work to the expert groups, especially when we are finding expert groups stretched to capacity with their current workload, it is also very important that expert groups have access to all relevant information and data. I will, therefore, in ACOM raise the issue of introducing stakeholder consultations preceding expert group meetings. Regarding consultations following expert group meetings, the current system, where observers may attend the advice drafting groups, allows for this.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Eskild Kirkegaard', written in a cursive style.

Eskild Kirkegaard
Advisory Committee Chair