

Minutes NWWAC-PELAC Seismic Focus Group

29/09/2020

Participants: Mo Mathies, Guillaume Carruel

Mo Mathies opened the meeting, welcomed the participants, and presented the apologies (Gerard van Balsfoort, Claus Reedtz Sparrevohn, Sean O'Donoghue, Stella Nemecky would be late and so would be Martin Patoors). The agenda was approved by participants. The chair, Goncalo Carvalho joined the meeting and apologised for being late due to connection issues.

A collaboration request had been received from the NSAC and the SWWAC. Dale Rodmell was joining from NSAC at that occasion. Because of the non-recurrent nature of the focus group, the SWWAC finally only requested to see the output document of the meeting (they were interested more in the seismic aspect than the windfarm aspect). The SWW was looking for a longer-term FG on seismic issues). The chair said that the lesser interest of SWWAC was explained by the lack of windfarms in the Southwestern waters at the moment. The FG participants were then asked if they were willing to welcome the NSAC in the group. No remarks were made, and this was approved.

Mo reminded the group that any advice request to ICES must be very specific, widening the focus might make it difficult to get any answer. She highlighted that the Commission didn't answered the previous request of this group. Without any answer from the Commission it was difficult to know if the first request was specific enough. It was proposed that the secretariat would follow up on this, asking the Commission when they would be able to answer. The Chair was confident that this first advice already "hit the spot" and looked forward to the Commission's answer.

Dale Rodmell pointed out at the ICES WG on Offshore Wind Development and Fisheries that might be important to know about. The Chair thanked Dale and explained that the group knew about it and the advice was ultimately aimed to reach that ICES WG. Mo proposed that a reference to the ICES WG would be made in the document and it was agreed.

The second point on the agenda was the review and discussion of draft non-recurrent request to ICES on the impact of marine wind energy developments on commercial fish stocks. Mo presented the document with all collated comments. The background section had no comments from participants. The addition of the mention of the NSAC was needed. The document was now 5 pages long and Mo explained that this might be slightly ambitious for such request. Patrick Murphy proposed to suppress some of his comments, and to go through all the document and see where it was possible to suppress some text. The Chair agreed with this suggestion.

All comments were looked at. Patrick Murphy was asked to provide some reference for some comments on Seismic blast research, effects on spawning and nursery stocks. Following a request by Stella Nemecky, some text (related to previous research) was moved this to the "background" section of the document. In addition, some questions and remarks more geared to the Commission were also moved to the "background" section. Work was done on the questions for the ICES request: splitting up of questions in order to have smaller, more focused questions. To shorten the document, Mo

proposed to reference the ICES WG ToR directly and this was agreed. Mo would tidy-up the text and will send it around for the final consultation for the last comments after the meeting.

In the AOB section of the agenda, Martin Pastoors raised the question of extraction activities (sand and gravel extraction), asking if this could be addressed by this FG too? He explained that it is something that has been on the agenda of the PELAC for a number of years. Martin was raising this after talking with skippers explaining that they see spawning grounds changes after extraction activities. The Chair agreed that this was important and that ICES might have information on this since it is mentioned every year on the Herring ICES advice. Mo explained that this was outside the ToR of this group but could form the basis of a new FG with 4 ACs. A more long-term joint FG could be launched to look at that.

Patrick Murphy explained that the Ecosystem FG of the PELAC could address this. The Chair thought that these suggestions were interesting and should be considered. It could be an inter-AC FG on ecosystem issues, looking at Climate change, sand extraction etc. Mo explained that NWWAC had a FG on climate change and the environment. Any focus group would need to respect the maximum number of participants and the 40-60 balance (following the ACs rules of procedures). The current FG could propose a first draft of ToR for another FG and this would serve as a suggestion for the ACs to be validated. Goncalo agreed to this proposition to smooth the transition when this non-recurrent request would be sent. Dale Rodmell explained that the NSAC also had environment related FGs. It would be interesting to have a FG that wouldn't have a too wide focus either, and to focus on the good communication between ACs. Mo proposed to introduce this idea to the other AC secretariats in a meeting between secretariats on the 1st of October. She would report back to this group. In the meantime, she thought that this group could develop a draft ToR. "The environment" was way too broad and strategic choices of topics to be addressed would be needed.

Another meeting to finalise the draft advice document would be needed. Mo would circulate the updated document and would look for comments from the group participants. Goncalo agreed to all and thanked Mo.

Action Items

- 1. Joining of the NSAC to the Seismic FG: Change the ToR of the FG to include NSAC, and in the draft of the non-recurrent request (NWWAC secretariat)**
- 2. Secretariat to remind the Commission about the first advice of this FG and ask when the answer might be available. (NWWAC secretariat)**
- 3. Work on the draft document: Move research references, and questions and remarks more geared to the Commission to the "background" section of the document. Split up questions in order to have smaller, more focused questions for the ICES request. Include a reference to ICES WG on Offshore Wind Development and Fisheries and reference the ICES WG ToR directly. (NWWAC secretariat)**
- 4. Introduce the idea of a multi-AC FG on environmental matters to the other ACs secretariats during the Inter-AC of October 1st. (PELAC NWWAC secretariats)**
- 5. Set up another meeting of the joint Seismic FG to finalise the document after another round of comments. (Chair, PELAC NWWAC secretariats)**