



The Director-General

Brussels,  
MARE/JA

Mr E. Brouckaert  
NWWAC Chairman  
c/o Bord Iascaigh Mhara  
Crofton Road  
Dun Laoghaire  
Ireland  
nwwac@bim.ie

**Subject: Request for setup ICES working group to investigate impacts of seismic activities on fish stocks in the North Western Waters**

Dear Mr Brouckaert,

Thank you very much for your recommendation dated 16 September 2019.

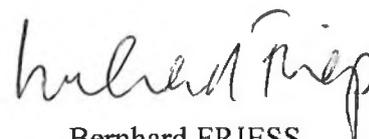
Let me inform you that the grant agreement the Commission has signed with ICES for 2019 has three main recurrent advisory deliverables: provision of single stock advice on fishing opportunities for commercial fisheries and where relevant for recreational fisheries, delivery of mixed-fishery catch scenarios and delivery of fisheries and ecosystem overviews for the North East Atlantic regions. In addition to these advisory deliverables, ICES can be consulted, on a non-recurrent basis, on certain requests for advice or information coming from the Commission. Such non-recurrent requests are evaluated financially by ICES and paid from a specific associated budget, based on ICES own calculations.

Your request regarding the setup of a working group on seismic activities can only be treated as a non-recurrent request, within the scope of the current grant agreement referenced above. ICES would evaluate resources internally and decide independently whether a specific workshop would be necessary to reply to the Commission's request. Customarily, ICES organises working groups as such for the delivery of single stock advice only.

In this context, the NWWAC's request to set-up an ICES working group on seismic activities is not sufficiently specific and should include deliverables to be obtained from the setting up of this group. This would make it possible for the Commission to follow-up with a non-recurrent request to ICES. Additionally, it would be ICES' choice to organise specific workshops, based on the type of information requested and its complexity, if they are required for the provision of the reply to the Commission's request. In any case, such workshops would be organised for the specific purpose of answering one request and not with the aim of carrying out long-term analysis.

Let me thank the NWWAC for its cooperation and constructive input. Should you have any further questions on this reply, I invite you to contact Ms Pascale Colson, coordinator of the Advisory Councils ([pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu](mailto:pascale.colson@ec.europa.eu); +32 2 29 56273).

Yours Sincerely,



Bernhard FRIESS  
Acting Director-General