

P-RAC delegation meeting with socio-economic experts from the Seafish authority, 3 February 2009, Edinburgh.

Participants: Sébastien Metz (Seafish), Hazel Curtis (Seafish), Sean O'Donoghue, Aukje Coers

Jesper Levring Andersen (Institute of Food and Resource Economics, University of Copenhagen) had also been invited to the meeting, but was unable to attend in the end, because of flight cancelations, due to bad weather in the UK.

The meeting was opened at 9:30 am. Sean O'Donoghue gave an introduction on the work and structure of the Pelagic RAC and explained about the RAC's intention of addressing socio-economics. The questions drawn up by the P-RAC in preparation to the WG meeting in April 2008 were tabled to provide a starting point for discussion. A short, broad discussion followed, resulting in the identification of the most important points for the current meeting:

1. Identify which are the relevant questions to address when speaking about socio-economics. And what approach should the P-RAC best take?
2. Identify one or two concrete actions with which the P-RAC can take forward in the short term.
3. Could the process of developing a LTM plan for Celtic sea herring provide a useful case study?
4. Where does the data for the analyses come from?

1. Different approaches and questions

Hazel Curtis explained something about the work of STECF, which was usually on a rather general level. For one concrete example she mentioned the impact analysis that STECF had conducted for a draft long-term management plan that was to be implemented for sole and plaice in the North Sea. The report of that analysis was finalised in November 2006, and although the management plan had been implemented as an urgent recovery measure in the end, she felt that the report gave a useful overview of parameters that could be considered for social analysis. (see annex attached). This report also includes analysis of the price elasticity of demand for sole and plaice. The Seafish institute had more experience with more in-depth studies, such as input-output analyses for the UK and constituent country seafood industries, broken down by fish type, e.g. demersal, pelagic, shellfish.

The meeting discussed the discrepancy between the two main possible approaches one could take when dealing with fisheries management: the stock-based approach or the fleet-based approach. From a biological point of view it made sense to choose the former. Economists, however, deal with businesses and business owners, which naturally indicates the latter approach. It was identified that there is a lack of a truly integrated biological and as socio-economic analyses into fisheries management.

2. Integrated dynamic bio-economic simulation models

If integration of economic and stock assessment analysis would be the ultimate goal, then we are far from realising it. So far, biological sciences have provided the basis for almost all fisheries management decisions, and socio-economics *may* come into the picture at the very end of the implementation process. Therefore, the approach has mostly been stock-based. It was felt by all at the meeting that ideally, since a major compromise was already made by taking the stock-

based approach, that at least both socio-economics as well as biologics analyses should start simultaneously and should have comparable levels of detail and should both be taken seriously.

3. Concrete steps for the P-RAC to be taken

Sean O'Donoghue proposed that it would be useful to identify a case study to start with, in order to slowly familiarise ourselves with this approach. The development of a management plan for Celtic sea herring could provide a useful case study. Amongst other reasons, because the timing was conveniently right; the Commission being at the very earliest stage of the process. Advocating the creation of an integrated dynamic bio-economic simulation model for investigating different management options seemed unlikely in practice at first, but considering that this stock is very small, and is exploited by a small and homogeneous fleet, this may not be unfeasible. The P-RAC could start with bringing together scientists from both disciplines (stock assessment and economics) to discuss the possibilities.

The collaboration could then take two forms:

- The experts, together, decide that it is worthwhile and feasible to create an integrated dynamic bio-economic simulation model for this case study specifically. On condition that funds would be available, they would make the model, together, and use it for supporting the development and impact analysis of management plan options.
- Alternatively, ICES would develop several options for different HCRs (in dialogue with the P-RAC), and STECF would be requested by the Commission to analyse the socio-economic consequences for these different HCRs (in dialogue with the P-RAC). Ultimately, the P-RAC could then express its preference for a certain option, not by intuitively weighing economics in the decision, but supported by some actual scientific data.

In order to make sure that STECF gets the opportunity to respond to the questions put forward to them in a robust way¹, sufficient resources should be made available and the RAC should bring this need to the attention of the Commission. It would be difficult for STECF experts to answer these questions if the economists and biologists meet for the first time at the start of a five day working group, without any prior preparation or model building. The task could perhaps be taken on by another party, and STECF would then evaluate the outcome.

4. The Celtic sea mp request in more detail

The meeting took the time to have a more detailed look at the draft request that the Commission had put forward on the development of a management plan. It felt that it was very positive that the Commission stimulated ICES in the request, to liaise with STECF and vice versa. In concrete and practical terms, however, the requests were quite unclear on what form that liaison should take. Particularly on the side of the parameters that were identified for STECF to address, there was confusion. The meeting wondered whether these bullet points had been drawn up by the economic unit of DG Mare. In particular, no one around the table had a good idea what was meant by the two last bullet points (or how these should be addressed). In any case, it was decided that it would be useful to invite a representative of the economic unit of DG Mare to a RAC meeting again, in order to get a better understanding of their methods and these procedures.

¹ The recent impact assessment requested from STECF on the proposed discard measures was not conducted with an appropriate process or appropriate level of resources and was not accepted by the Commission. It is hoped that the EC will improve the process for STECF experts in order to make these assessments more meaningful exercises.

5. Where does the data for analyses come from?

The meeting discussed what data would be needed and where it would be available. Through the Data Collection Regulation? Hazel Curtis explained that DCR data is currently aggregated at quite a high level. It was usually in not enough detail to provide a solid base for useful analysis. Plus there were significant differences in the quality of the data collected by different member states. What is more useful was the members states' descriptive data of the fleet, e.g. on the number of vessels, their size and horse power etc. along with the financial data relating to vessels, broken down into smaller more homogenous fleet segments. In the case of collecting these on a regional fleet scale, the RAC would obviously be a suitable forum to facilitate this. Seafish could help with drawing up questionnaires in order to make this a comprehensible and feasible task. (The report on the review of the management plan for sole again formed a good reference for this.)