

Meeting of the PEL AC – MareFrame group

25th February 2016, 9.00 - 13.00, Park Hotel, The Hague

Present PELAC: Søren Anker Pedersen, Stella Nemecky, Verena Ohms, Gerard van Balsfoort, Martin Pastoors, Ian Gatt, Claus von Sparrevohn and Jesper Raakjær

Present MareFrame: Marta Ballesteros, Mika Rahikainen, John G. Pope, Jesper Raakjær and Troels J. Hegland

Introduction (Marta Ballesteros)

Marta Ballesteros presented in brief the MareFrame project and the process with the PEL AC, which is part of the North Sea case study. In short, the MareFrame project is designed to support the shift towards eco-system based management solutions, and this particular process with the PEL AC is intended to support the development of tools that can assist decision-making in relation to the possible development of multi-species management plans.

The MareFrame Models (John G. Pope)

Multi-Criteria Analysis and Decision Support Tool (Mika Rahikainen)

John G. Pope presented the 'Green' Model, as well as the more preliminary work on the 'Amber Model' (with a spatial component), and the 'Red Model' (including socio-economics). The idea of the discussion of the model(s) was to comment on the 'usability' of the model(s) with further optimization as the ultimate goal.

Mika Rahikainen presented the idea of the multi-criteria analysis and exemplified with work done in the Baltic Sea case study. A key element in a multi-criteria analysis is agreeing on a goal (for management in the North Sea), and it was the idea that the discussion should give input to this as well as to what relevant alternatives should be weighed against each other in the analysis towards how the goal could be achieved.

(The discussion of the two elements above unfolded in a joint manner)

It was discussed whether the current single species Fmax levels used in the policy-system should be reflected in the Green Model or not. It was decided that this would go somewhat against the idea of multi-species eco-system thinking, where species interaction is taken into consideration - and where it is necessary to think in terms of compromises: which fish do you want the most of. When moving towards a whole new approach it would consequently be most appropriate to take a flexible approach towards Fmax.

Martin Pastoors encouraged that the data behind the Green Model output was made visible so that it was more transparent what the outputs was based on. Similarly, it would allow other people to help 'co-create' the model, as they could get access to the input data. In this way the model would appear less as a 'black box'.

It was discussed, if the Amber Model was of interest to the PEL AC and it was concluded that it was of marginal interest and it was therefore not discussed in detail.

It was discussed how much emphasis should be put on the Red Model. It was the general opinion that it was doubtful if the model could be developed to a stage where it would be really useful for decision-making. Gerard van Balsfoort emphasized that from an industry perspective this is not relevant as industry by definition is about profitability and not social concerns per se.

According to John G. Pope, the green model was essentially a broad brush model of long-term effects; however, the model should be able to show intermediate-term effects (eg. 2020 and 2030 if required). It was agreed that from the perspective of the PEL AC priority should be on further development of the Green Model.

In relation to alternatives in the multi-criteria analysis, it was emphasized that the alternatives should be realistic in the sense that some technically feasible alternatives might not be politically feasible. This was acknowledged by the MareFrame team, but it was also highlighted that what is politically feasible might change when a new style of management is introduced; in particular if a positive outcome of the - so far 'politically unfeasible' alternatives – can be documented. Consequently, what is feasible must not be interpreted too narrowly – the abovementioned issue on whether or not to include single-species F_{max} in the Green Model was mentioned as an example.

On the issue of the goal of the multi-criteria analysis, it was mentioned that MSY in one way or the other should be the goal. However, it was acknowledged that the discussion of MSY as target is not straightforward and, in particular, not in a multi-species context. Here, Stella Nemecky and Martin Pastoors articulated different and perhaps conflicting perceptions on the implication for the implementation of the CFP. Clearly, there will be political implications of choices favoring one species at the expense of another (say for instance that one country has a high TAC on herring and another country a high TAC on cod and that the two species have a predator-prey relationship; if you then decide to fish hard on the cod to allow the herring stock to flourish in the longer term, the country with the high cod TAC will eventually lose out), which could actually challenge 'relative stability' in the CFP. It was also mentioned that maintaining MSC certification was a part of the goal. Particular in Europe, this is a key to market access; in other areas, access to markets is most often more based on reputation.

There was a discussion on the differences in perspectives between the catching and processing industries, where ship-owners are more interested in total yields of the pelagic stock portfolio

while the processing industry has a more interested in stable supplies (not necessarily the same species all the time though); something which of course changes if the two industries are integrated. Similarly, when catching and processing industries are not integrated, value of the catch is income for one industry and cost for the other.

A stable, relative high yield is nonetheless something that should be part of the goal. A precise trade-off was stated between volume and price. The fishing industry works with a portfolio of species; maintaining the total volume of catches is more important than getting higher quotas on one highly valuable specie; i.e. there is a preference for the maximization of volume even if the price is lower, but not at any price.

It was agreed that John G. Pope would continue work on – in particular – the Green Model and it was agreed that Mika Rahikainen would proceed to develop a value-tree for the North Sea case based on the input from the meeting (as well as a meeting scheduled with the NS AC on 11th April). Similarly, he would develop a draft text on the goal of the multi-criteria analysis, in other words a goal for management in the North Sea).

Next steps and timetable (John G. Pope and Troels J. Hegland)

It was agreed to explore the option of having the next PEL AC – MareFrame meeting as a joint meeting with the NS AC on 13th July 2016 in either Peterhead or Aberdeen.

NB: It has later been decide that the joint meeting will take place from 15.30 to 18.30 in Aberdeen on 13th July 2016 (Cruden Suite at Hilton Doubletree Hotel). The PEL AC will arrange transportation for PEL AC members from Peterhead to the venue in Aberdeen. The meeting in Aberdeen will be concluded with a joint dinner, including participants from the PEL AC, the NS AC and MareFrame.

It was furthermore decided to move forward with scheduling the joint technical meeting with the JRC, STEFC, ICES, RACs, DG-MARE and DG-ENVIROMENT. The objective of the meeting is to provide and analysis of the current fisheries advisory process, demands from the EAF, opportunities for improvement, etc.

NB: The meeting is confirmed to take place at the ICES HQ 4th October 2016.

AOB

None