

Mr Colm Lordan

Advisory Committee Chair
International Council for the Exploration of the Seas
H. C. Andersens Boulevard 44-46
1553 Copenhagen V
Denmark

Date: 26 May 2025

PelAC reference: 2425PAC70

Subject: ICES's Framework for Ecosystem Informed Science and Advice

Dear Mr. Lordan,

On the 2nd of April 2025, ICES ACOM Vice-Chair Marie-Julie Roux presented the results of ICES's Framework for Ecosystem Informed Science and Advice. She presented the main components of the framework as well as the differences with the conventional science and advice process. Her presentation concluded with listing the five implementation principles to make FEISA, feasible. PelAC members welcomed the high-quality work done by ICES to operationalise EBFM.

The Pelagic Advisory Council (PelAC) has been working on the implementation of Ecosystem Based Fisheries Management publishing in 2023 its first advice¹ on the topic underlining the importance of including all ecosystem components in stock assessments and pushing for the use of F_{eco} as developed by WKIRISH. As such, the WKREF2's recommendation "that ICES guidelines include the possibility to use an F_{eco} approach to adjust the F based on ecosystem model information" was welcomed by PelAC members. Moreover, in its 2025 fishing opportunities recommendation², the PelAC recommended the inclusion of ecosystem and climate-driven changes in advice, on top of pelagic fish's critical role as a prey for many predatory fish and marine mammals.

In line with its previous engagement on the implementation of EBFM, the PelAC would like to push for the upgrade of category 1 and 2 stock fishing opportunities through the use of FEISA. In the case of pelagic stocks, this could take the form of operationalising relevant ecological objectives such as the inclusion of pelagic species role in the marine food web, or quantifying risk associated with climate change. Additional operationalisation could include bycatch risk, CO2 emission, interactions with Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems, overlap with MPAs/Offshore energy, gear loss, vulnerable spawning

¹ <https://www.pelagic-ac.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2223PAC02-PelAC-recommendation-on-the-ecosystem-based-approach-to-fisheries-management.pdf>

² <https://www.pelagic-ac.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2425PAC01-PelAC-Recommendations-TACs-2025.pdf>



habitat and gravel extraction, shifting distribution of fish (i.e. climate change), changes in predation, and changes in productivity.

Following the presentation of FEISA, PelAC members agreed to suggest specific stocks as case studies for the use of FEISA. The stock that seemed the most appropriate data wise was North Sea herring. We would be interested in meeting with you to discuss concrete steps to apply FEISA to these stocks, including an agreement on a timeline and the tasks that are needed for this to be implemented.

We hope that you take the content of this letter into consideration,

Best regards,

Esben Sverdrup-Jensen
Chair of the Pelagic Advisory Council

