	<p>Council</p> <p><i>2024 Update on the Streamlining of the ICES Advice</i></p>	<p>CNL(24)07</p> <p>Agenda item: 4c) (ii)</p>
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2024 Update on the Streamlining of the ICES Advice

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide an update on the streamlining of the ICES Advice and some general background on the ICES Advice process and ICES' benchmark assessments.

Decisions

- no decisions are required.

Background

At its 2022 Annual Meeting, [CNL\(22\)53rev](#), the Council of NASCO discussed various elements of the advice provided to NASCO by ICES. The discussion included noting that the ICES advice for other stocks was much more focused and that the advice to NASCO from ICES might also be shorter and more focused in future, with delegates consulting the Report of the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS) if more information on a specific decision was required.

Council agreed to ask the Secretary to approach ICES to investigate a more streamlined approach / presentation of the ICES Advice.

In 2023, an update on the timing and background to the process was provided to Council, CNL(23)09. Annex 1 provides a further update from ICES on the work carried out on this to date, provides an updated timetable on the planned work and process to be taken to enable a streamlined set of advice from ICES to NASCO to be produced, noting the membership of the subgroup carrying out the work, which mostly comprises current and former members of the WGNAS and included the NASCO Secretary. Given that a benchmark assessment of Atlantic salmon has been carried out in the intervening period, information has also been provided on the ICES Advice process and its benchmark assessments.

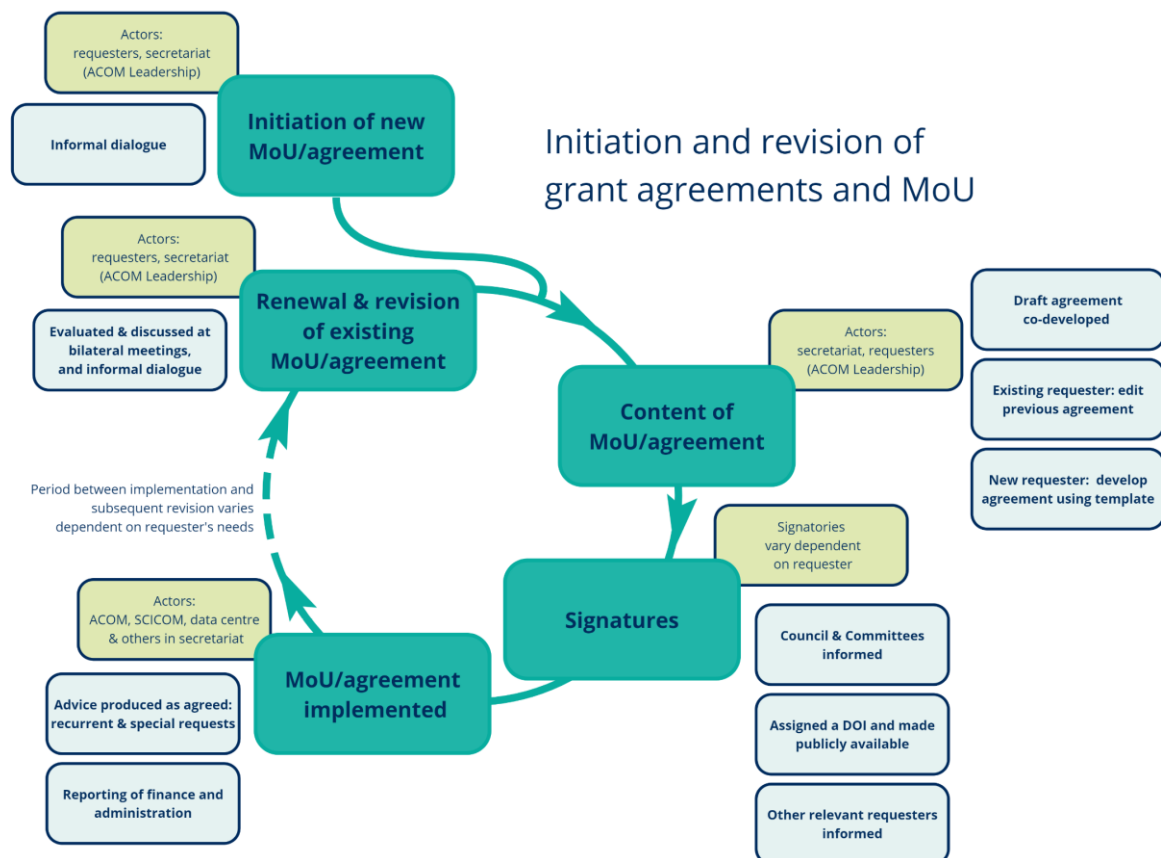
Under its current timetable, the intention is for the new advice format to be ready to be used in the provision of the ICES Advice in 2025.

Secretariat
Edinburgh
3 May 2024

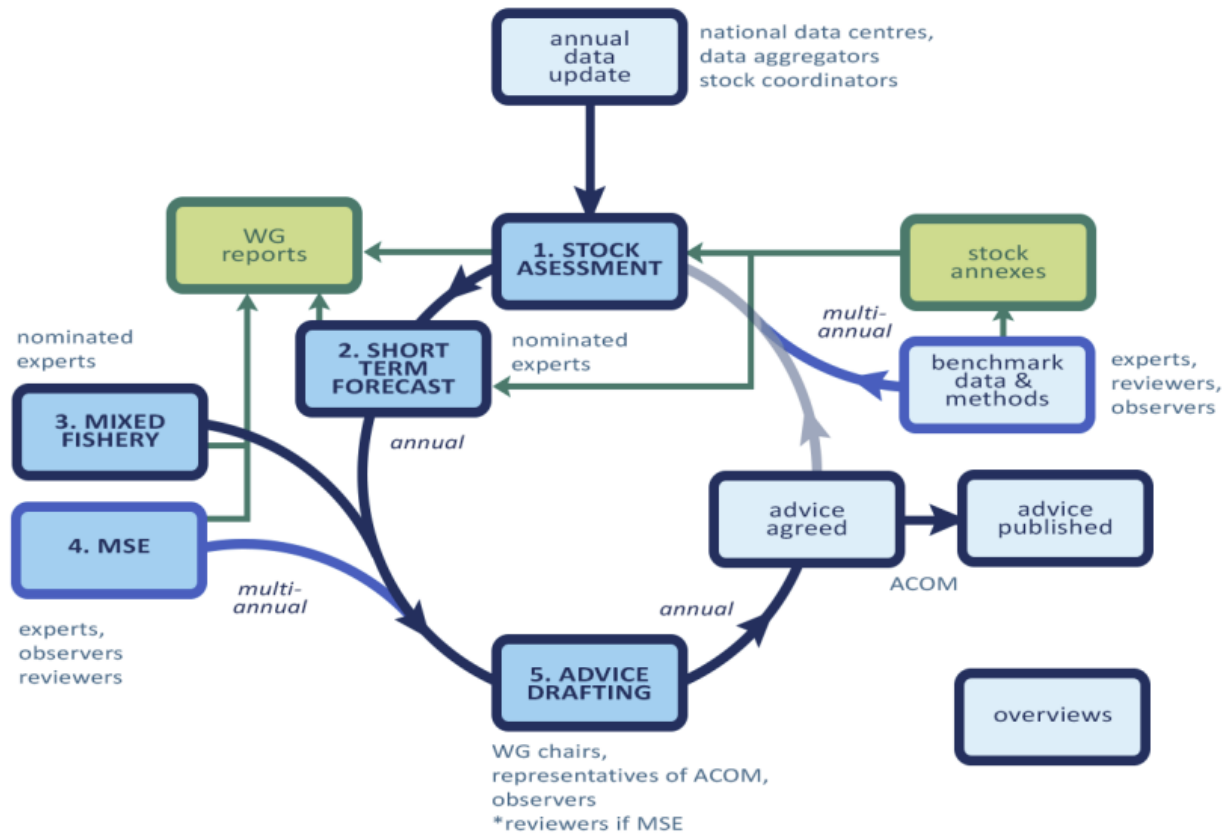
ICES Advice Process

ICES advice is provided in response to requests from Member Countries or intergovernmental organizations (ICES 2023a). Advice is provided as either recurrent advice or as responses to special requests. Recurrent advice is only given to organizations or countries with a MoU or agreements with ICES; advice through special requests, however, can be asked for by Member Countries without an MoU. The current processes have been designed to ensure the independence and objectivity of the advice and adherence to the 10 principles (ICES, 2023b).

ICES works with the requesters to ensure the requests for advice within the agreement are understood by both parties and that they are formulated in such a way that the advice can be delivered by ICES and that it meets the needs of the requester. These agreements are reviewed on a regular basis (usually annually) and updated as necessary.



The production of advice involves all facets of the ICES network. In summary the process is that the basis for recurrent advice is produced by an expert group, in this case the Working Group on North Atlantic Salmon (WGNAS). They also produce the first draft of the advice. This draft goes to an advice drafting group who finalize the draft advice. This is then reviewed by the Advisory Committee of ICES (ACOM) who are responsible for all advice produced by the organization. ACOM makes any further necessary changes and then the advice is released.



From time to time issues arise with the assessment method and / or new science becomes available or new recurrent advice is needed. The methods and data used in recurrent advice are reviewed through a benchmark process (ICES 2023c). The benchmark process is a critical element in ICES advice to assure a sound scientific basis. The results of the North Atlantic salmon benchmark (ICES 2023d) were approved by ACOM in early 2024 and form the basis of advice provided this year.

Another important part of the ICES advisory process is the production of guidelines to ensure that advice is given in a consistent manner. There have been new guidelines published this year and there has been work on the new advice format. These are both relevant to NASCO.

Technical guidelines on advice for mixed catch of stocks of the same species

In some cases, ICES advice is for reproductively isolated populations that mix spatially for part of the year and are caught in the same fisheries during that time. Hence, these fisheries impact multiple stocks of the same species at the same time. This is the case for marine fisheries for Atlantic salmon. In such cases:

- Advice should be consistent with ICES advisory framework
- Advice should be precautionary for all stocks in the fishery; that is, advice for a stock below B_{lim} should be for zero catch where there is no F that will recover the stock to above B_{lim} with > 50% probability in the year after the year for which the advice applies
- Information on the existence of a concurrent fishery on stocks should be included in the headline advice
- Information on concurrent fisheries should be included in the advised catch levels in the headline advice to the extent possible.

The advice for Atlantic salmon is consistent with these guidelines. All catches are included in the advice and the advice addresses the status of all of the areas.

New advice format

The NASCO Council agreed ‘to ask the NASCO Secretary to approach ICES to investigate a more streamlined approach / presentation of the ICES Advice’ which would put the format of the advice to NASCO more in line with other ICES advice.

To accomplish this a subgroup has been formed.

Members:

Gerald Chaput (Canada)

Phil McGinnity (Ireland)

Michael Millane (Ireland)

Etienne Rivot (France)

Timothy Sheehan (USA)

Alan Walker (WGNAS chair, UK)

Jonathan White (FRSG chair and salmon benchmark chair, Ireland),

Emma Hatfield (NASCO)

Anne Cooper (ICES)

Note that others may attend as required and the process will be assisted by ACOM vice-chair Joanne Morgan.

The subgroup met on 16 February 2024 where they:

- Reviewed the history of ICES work in streamlining the ICES single stock advice sheets, the future of online advice and data resources, and the need to strengthen the presentation and alignment of salmon advice.
- Discussed NASCO’s desire to communicate their mission and the desire to develop tools to simplify the language used when expressing that mission (plight of salmon and state of the environment were examples given)
- Emphasized (1) NASCO’s goal of having their questions answered in a manner that is relevant for managers and policy makers, (2) ICES activities and requirements with respect to increased accessibility of data and advice, and (3) called for salmon experts to drive this initiative alongside ICES staff, ACOM Leadership, and with the council of NASCO (as members of the subgroup) to develop salmon advice that is fit for purpose and future-ready.

The subgroup also discussed specific aspects of the task, the first of which was to incorporate advice produced by the new assessment model into the existing advice sheets. This has been accomplished.

The subgroup also developed a timeline which aims to conclude work by the end of February 2025 for consideration of ACOM (who must approve any format change) in advance of March 2025 ACOM annual meeting.

References

ICES. 2023a. ICES Guidelines on the formulation of advice requests. Version 1. ICES Guidelines and Policies - ICES Advice Technical Guidelines. 9 pp.

<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.24338032>

ICES. 2023b. Guide to ICES advisory framework and principles. General ICES Advice guidelines. Report. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.advice.22116890.v1>

ICES. 2023c. ICES Guidelines for Benchmarks. Version 1. ICES Guidelines and Policies - Advice Technical Guidelines. 26 pp. <https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.22316743>

ICES. 2023d. Benchmark Workshop on Atlantic salmon in the North Atlantic (WKBSALMON). ICES Scientific Reports. 5:112. 85 pp.

<https://doi.org/10.17895/ices.pub.24752079>