

PROFET POLICY WORKSHOP REPORT 2008

North Sea Fisheries Research Workshop — Maintaining dialogue

23–24 June 2008

Copenhagen, Denmark



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the Exploration of the Sea

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PROFET Policy - Disseminating EU Research Framework Research Programme Results

1 General – participation and topics

The workshop was held in Copenhagen on 23 and 24 June 2008, starting 13:00 on day one, and closing at 15:00 on day two. It was attended by 55 participants from 14 European countries and the US. The audience covered scientists, fishery managers, science directors, science and fishery international organizations, government representatives, NGO's and other stakeholders.

The workshop was arranged in four sessions:

- North Sea Fisheries - An introduction to the issues.
- North Sea Fisheries - its role today and in the future.
- North Sea fisheries – how can research programmes help advancing fisheries management.
- Communication of Research Results.

In all, 20 presentations were given covering a broad range of disciplines including biology, socio-economics and modelling.

2 Recommendations

Climate change and related changes in ecosystems, especially living resources, increasing operational costs and implications from spatial planning, especially Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) were identified as the most challenging issues in the future for fisheries and for fishery management, not only in the North Sea. Socio-economy tackling the economic performance of fisheries, capacity issues and incentives will need to be more closely linked with ecosystem sciences. The knowledge base, for instance to implement the ecosystem approach needs to be consolidated instead of sometimes launching new initiatives for collecting new data. However, there is also a need for a long-term perspective in fisheries and environmental sciences. Currently, the research funding is geared towards a project-oriented system which produces consultancy for ephemeral, reactive policy issues. For a robust and sustainable science policy, more proactive long-term perspectives need to be developed.

The research agendas presented by the fishery and fishery science directors were remarkably similar and revealed a very detailed level of knowledge requirements. The direct advice-related science is largely left with ICES, basing on a long tradition of trust and interactive processes. Environmental impacts of human use affect not only the ecosystem but also other users such as fisheries. When speaking about fisheries, it is always important to address the two different communities differently: capture fisheries and aquaculture. The economical performance is driven by different factors whereas mariculture is more flexible to react to market demands and other mechanisms. Capture fisheries are more vulnerable to climate impacts whereas domestication and disease issues are more important for mariculture. Research demands in both communities may differ significantly.

There is a need for more interaction between socio-economy and ecosystem and life sciences. On the operational level, SMEs and recipients of research products should be better integrated. Important first steps are to find a common language and to define the scale of cooperation and joint analyses of data. Regional scales are well suited

to allow for topic focus and cooperation. Communication is an issue for future research programmes. It matters not only after the project has come or is close to conclusion. Care should be taken to foresee and plan on communication during the lifetime of projects. Requests from users to be answered during the project by response-mode tools should be part of the plan. It should cover more than just dissemination of results because it should facilitate interactivity between scientists, stakeholders and users and the public. It is also about breaking down walls and building bridges between disciplines and between the key players. Hiring professional aid for communication issues was mentioned as an option, similar to earlier practice for data handling and dissemination.

New technologies and methodologies were presented. Uncertainty needs to be dealt with more appropriately and it needs to be accepted as a core part of the debate rather than be treated as a leftover of objectivity. The precautionary approach as the usual solution to it does not always carry very far. Risk management could be the answer in the future if a better quantification of uncertainty is possible. Modelling fisher's behaviour in the socio-economical context as well as newly introduced techniques for surveillance offer new perspectives and new science challenges.

3 Summary

The workshop has seen excellent science and stakeholder presentations and discussions were inspiring and fruitful. The workshop was seen by all participants as a big step forward in communication and more interaction, and especially the representatives of the fishery expressed their open view about maintaining the dialogue with science.

Presentations and some impressions from the workshop can be viewed at the ICES and FEAP web pages.