



|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| What?        | <b>Summary of the Round Table Discussion on the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) in the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) 27<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Brussels</b>  |
| What for     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To provide operational options for the implementation of EAFM</li> <li>- To analyse challenges for the EAFM in the Common Fisheries Policy</li> <li>- To explore operational options on how to set-up the EAF Advice process</li> </ul> |
| Participants | - <a href="#">DG-MARE</a> , <a href="#">ICES</a> , <a href="#">STECF</a> , <a href="#">EFARO</a>   |

**1. General framework**

- The institutional interplay of fisheries management in the EU (*sensu who decides what* within the EU institutions based on the CFP 2013) will remain unchanged in the coming time. Any advances on implementing the EAFM should not rely on establishing new decision-making processes but on innovations in the provision of advice and in the engagement of stakeholders.
- The well-known problems related to the [principle of “relative stability”](#) are aggravated when important interactions between fisheries and the wider ecosystem are taken into consideration. Although no changes will take place in the formula for resource allocation, several drivers may in practice contribute to adaptations in this principle in the long-term(10-15 years):
  - a) Objectives of the new CFP<sup>1</sup>. For instance, the landing obligation makes associations within species in mixed fisheries visible and evidences that relative stability can therefore not be maintained at a stock-by-stock level; this request accommodating political action, such as enhancing the flexibility of quota exchange across countries or shifting orientation towards different objectives such as achievement of mixed fisheries MSYs.
  - b) Evidence that relative stability may hamper the maximization of utilisation of quotas.
  - c) Negotiations on shared stocks with third countries that seek to include non-shared species due to the predator-prey relations (e.g. cod and sprat) that are not taken into account in existing sharing arrangements
- The following tensions should be made explicit:
  - Science may be focussing on providing a form of advice that policy-makers are not prepared to utilize fully. EAFM advice pushes policymakers to confront with very difficult policy processes by making explicit the trade-offs and the consequences of their objectives.
  - Science builds on the assumption that policy-makers have decided what is societally desirable. But this implies acknowledging that policy-makers aggregate social preferences that may or may not be addressing the critical issues from an ecosystem perspective (e.g. protection of iconic species).
  - The clarification of roles should avoid policy choices to be hidden to science questions.
  - To become useful, the EAFM advice should match the incremental approach adopted in the Common Fisheries Policy agenda. The multispecies approach has been identified in the EU as a kind of a proxy for EAFM.
- A sudden reorientation to a holistic approach to ecosystem marine management can be nearly politically unmanageable; a gradual increase in the level of integration is more feasible, e.g. once a move towards multispecies fisheries management has been taken, one can proceed with advancements towards integration with related policies and cross-sectors.
- A marine ecosystem approach across EU policies ([CFP](#), [MSFD](#), [WFD](#), [HD](#), [BD](#), etc.) seems unfeasible. However, [Marine Spatial Planning](#) contributes to the EBFM<sup>2</sup> by specializing territory in the ocean<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> [Article 2 of the Regulation \(EU\) No 1380/2013](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ecosystem-based fisheries management.

<sup>3</sup> As far as spatially located issues are concerned (spatial planning does for instance not address eutrophication impacts from agriculture, acidification, etc.).





## 2. The EAFM advice

- EAFM advice should respond to relevant “what if” questions. The obstacle at the moment is the endless number of options/type of questions, which indicates a need for a more focussed dialogue.
- Such a focussed process could be supported by developing risk assessments to define the potentially most significant disturbance for a given ecosystem, as well as testing social objectives and acceptability.
- There are some challenges to the current advisory process, using national scientist and regional groups to generate informal advice that may jeopardize the system.
- Decision makers should be aware that some of the objectives for a given fisheries (e.g. MSY) will change if using EAFM advice instead of stock advice.
- The [Advisory Councils](#) (ACs) were originally designed to provide the “reality check” to the Commission proposals for fisheries management; however the reformed CFP adds an additional role for proactive advice through the proposal of technical measures. This new role rises three questions: 1) how are we going to provide the advice?; 2) how to operationalize a scientific validation (quality control) of this advice while avoiding work overlap (e.g. such as may in the context of current advisory flows with ICES/STECF?; 3) how to ensure quality control within a feasible timeline?
- There is a need to clarify the difference between advice and recommendation. Nowadays in the European Union EBFM is more descriptive, i.e. it is more about conveying information than guiding practice.
- There are areas for complementarity but also overlaps between ICES and STECF with regard to providing EAFM advice. Beyond determining “who is in charge of” coordination should ensure the optimization of resources.
- Research efforts should link economic parameters to policy, making advancements on how we inform economic scenarios. STECF’s initiative on fleet-based management may be a starting point.

## 3. Stakeholders engagement

- Engagement should be built on basic requirements: legitimacy of the constituencies, capacity to influence and dialogue based on equal footing.
- ACs are the stakeholders’ forum for fisheries management, but they become an actor among stakeholders and stakeholders’ bodies when contributing to identify problems and solutions to Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) issues.
- The MSFD should make explicit that it is an environmental instrument inevitably linked to economic sectors. The MSFD relates to such a diverse range of interests that no single stakeholder groups can be seen to represent. Presently, environmental conventions have been used as a limited form of consultation. Environmental conventions ([HELCOM](#), [OSPAR](#)) are also actors within the ecosystem approach. But legitimate stakeholders engagement require smaller geographical settings and broader constituencies beyond environmental and fisheries sectors.
- Particularly the fisheries sector has been reluctant to get involved in the EBFM initiatives; a fear of further restrictions for fishing activities appear to have restrained them from identifying opportunities. For instance, fisheries interest may see EAFM as an opportunity for asking other economic activities to improve their management due to their impacts on the marine ecosystem.

## 4. Next steps

- Neither the constant demand for more research and development of new methods, nor the identification of knowledge gaps should restrain us from “doing EAFM now”. A questionable form of EAFM advice is preferable to no advice of this form and will be needed in order to move forward.



- The priorities (“big problems”) to be addressed include: trade-offs for mixed fisheries, impact of fisheries on the seafloor, biodiversity and food web, climate change and its impact on ecosystem resilience. It is worth noting that such ecosystem drivers affect the viability of fishing activities (e.g. stock variability is influenced by climate change).
- Demands for more research should never be used as a way to postpone giving the best possible advice here and now and engaging on basis of existing knowledge.
- Policy-makers could make a selective use of advice typologies: single-stock advice (to set the baseline), fisheries advice (to integrate at metier level), and ecosystem advice (to assess the impact). These approaches are not contradictory, one should not replace another down the line – but ecosystem advice may provide the broader framework and limits within which fisheries and single stock advice is necessary for day-to-day policy within those limits
- MSFD indicators need to be available at ecosystem level (ICES is expected to contribute to this outcome).

5. Would you like to know more?

• About the Round Table Discussion

This meeting is part of an on-going dialogue with the key players of the EU fisheries advice process. The overarching goal is to identify shortcomings of the current approach, discuss ideas on how to set-up the EAFM advice and explore how the stakeholders can formally become part of the process. Three milestones guide the debate: the Workshop with the Advisory Councils held in Brussels in June 2014, the Round Table Discussion and the forthcoming Workshop on EAFM advice to be held in November 2015. Save the date!

• About the project



MareFrame Video



[www.mareframe-fp7.org](http://www.mareframe-fp7.org)

• Contact us:

- Coordinator: Dr. Anna Kristin Danielsdottir, Matís, Iceland [annak@matis.is](mailto:annak@matis.is)
- Scientific Manager: Dr. Gunnar Stefansson University of Iceland [gunnar@hi.is](mailto:gunnar@hi.is)

