Socio-economic effects of management measures of the future CFP

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Minutes from the second meeting with the RAB

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Summary

During the initial phase of the project (including the proposal phase) established researchers, organizations and NGOs were asked to take part in an advisory board. The basic idea was to get advice on deliverables and on future work including what must be assessed due to the development in the reform process of the CFP.

After the Final Symposium of the SOCIOEC project the project partners met with members of the Advisory Board for a meeting in Brussels (19\textsuperscript{th} of February). The group discussed lessons learnt from the SOCIOEC project and what should be done in the future to further disseminate the results from the project and to improve the impact assessment procedures.

The RAB advised the project partners to use the results from SOCIOEC to strengthen the role of social and economic impact assessments in the policy developing process within the EU.
Introduction

The Reference User and Advisory Board (RAB) of the SOCIOEC project was formed to advice the project consortium on the research activities to achieve the project objectives, the transdisciplinary research (cooperative research with the stakeholders) and the dissemination of project results in the scientific and broader stakeholder community. In the drafting phase of the proposal already three established researchers and a representative from a fishermen’s organisation agreed to take part in the Advisory Board. The project coordinator contacted further researchers and organisations to be represented in the RAB.

The following researchers/organizations were members of the RAB:

Nils Arne Ekershovd (University of Bergen, Norway)

GFCM (General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean, represented by Federico De Rossi, GFCM Secretariat)

WWF Europe (represented by Tony Long, Director European Policy Office)

Barrie Deas (UK National Federation of Fishermen’s Organizations)

Christian Tritten (DG Mare)

Sean Pascoe (CSIRO, Australia)

For the second reporting period it was decided to arrange a meeting with the members of the Advisory Board. This was combined with the Final Symposium of the project in Brussels and took place on the 19th of February 2015. The members of the RAB, which participated in the meeting, were, therefore, able to get the most updated information on the most important results of the project.

Unfortunately, due to other commitments, Sean Pascoe, Tony Long, and Barry Deas were not able to attend the meeting. GFCM was also not able to send a representative and notified the coordinator about this a week before the Symposium. The WWF was also not able to send a replacement of Tony Long but Elizabeth Bourke stepped in for Barrie Deas and attended the symposium and RAB meeting.

Conclusions from the symposium

In a first round the members of the RAB expressed their impressions from the Symposium. One conclusion is that we need to put our results/work more into the context of the whole management system. In many cases we simply analyse a specific management measure without considering that it is only part of the overall management framework.

This is also visible with all the work regarding the landing obligation (Art 15 of the new CFP). A whole session of the Symposium was dedicated to the LO. In other countries like Norway and Iceland the LO are in place for some time and it is by far not the main issue when discussing developments in fisheries management. Comparing the EU experiences with other
parts of the world shows that the LO was introduced too fast and the quota system in the EU (relative stability) creates huge problems.

Another important point in the discussion was the general process of issuing impact assessments by the European Commission. Several participants argued that impacts are assessed when the decisions are already made. However, impact assessments are especially useful to design policy and to find the best option to reach a certain objective.

The experience with IAs for Long-term management plans is also rather negative as time is too limited for e.g. the STECF working groups. In most cases a few simulations of bio-economic models are possible but many effects, including those for which data have to be collected, are simply not assessable. Many participants expressed their view that we need a more realistic approach when integrating social and economic issues with biological considerations. This could be done partly by a further improvement of bio-economic models but much more by integrating stakeholder further into the process, beyond being able to improve the assumptions in the models. This would allow a much better ex-ante assessment than at the moment.

An important conclusion from the project overall is that management must be on a regional basis. This would be useful as it allows e.g. for a more adaptive management, the better integration of stakeholders (more experienced in certain fisheries) and, therefore, would improve among others the design, the enforcement and evaluation of decided management measures.. Therefore, the Art 18 of the CFP regarding regionalization is a first step in the right direction. It will have to be seen how this will work in the next years. If management only changes in the sense from a top-down approach from Brussels to a top-down approach in a region not much will be gained.

**Look ahead**

The main outcome of the discussion on the look ahead was the expression that economics should play a larger role in the Common Fisheries Policy. In the discussion on the CFP reform the debate was centred on biological considerations like MSY-policy or the discard ban. The questions of the right incentives, further options for management or context specific management were never really discussed.

As conclusion of this discussion participants argued that we would need to bring in the broader social and economic context into the next reform debate. Therefore, we have to start now with background work for the next reform. How would the process of policy design look like? The tools are available and we should now work on changing the process to allow us to really use the tools in the future. There is also an example in more recent policies as the Marine Strategy Framework Directive that already consists of a continuous, adaptive process including impact assessment steps. Nevertheless, there are great worries that nothing will happen now and then the same will happen again with the next reform.

The question was also raised if we should not get more into contact with ICES. There are in the meantime a lot of relations (including the ICES backing of the symposium or a special
working group on integrated modelling (WGIMM)) but social and economic considerations are not part of the ICES assessment work. Therefore, we should find a way to involve economists more in the process. For that ICES needs to set up a structure but so far there is a lot of reluctance to integrate economics in ICES. There will be a theme session at the next ICES Annual Science Conference in Copenhagen on integrated modelling and we should consider participating in this session.

The advantages of a stronger integration of economic analysis could also help for an improved policy design process in the European Commission. Economists analyse human behaviour and fishers behaviour influence the stock status in the future very much. A very good example for this are the effects of the new discard ban: a change in fishing patterns to avoid e.g. cod bycatches in the saithe fishery to stay within the quota limits for cod leads to losses for the saithe fishermen. Discard plans can be probably formulated now in a way, that allows fishers to avoid some of the negative effects.

In order to be able to design appropriate incentives etc., enough social sciences expertise (economics and beyond) would be needed at all level of policy making. This development of social sciences expertise should involve the scientific and fisheries organisations across the EU, including the European Institutions and supporting bodies (e.g. from the STECF to DG Mare or the European Parliament). As we have seen from other non EU experiences analysed during the project a critical mass of social scientists is needed (see NOAA), as well as a push from both below and above (e.g. Australia)

At the EAFE conference in Salerno in April 2015, where many SOCIOEC presentations will take place, there will be representatives from many European research organisations as well as from the EU Commission. The SOCIOEC coordinator will aim at creating the opportunities for dialogue among different disciplines and tiers, giving a talk explaining the actual advisory work of economists in STECF. There will be hopefully a possibility for discussions, how the SOCIOEC results can better be used to contribute to the improvement of the impact assessment work in DG Mare

Another question was if STECF can play a different role. There will be hopefully a debate within STECF on how to deal with impact assessments in the future. So far the main experience is that we have to do it, developed a procedure to do it but it is somewhat unclear if the results of the IAs are really used to inform policymaking.

Increasing project funding from the EC or EMFF could be a possibility to allow more social scientists and economists to regularly work on impact assessment related work. A stronger integration of economists in the national research institutes was also discussed as a possibility to improve integrated assessments. However, as many former independent research institutes are now part of a university it is more and more complicated to find common platforms inside a large organization (Department of Resource Economics or Fisheries Sciences in big Departments for Economics or Natural Sciences) to work together besides concrete projects.

The SOCIOEC project worked with existing models and developed them further if necessary but it did not developed totally new tools. The applied models were already promoted in the
past (like FISHRENT, FLR, FLBEIA) but this has not automatically led to a more integrated look at fisheries management issues.

Several participants expressed their concern that we need to really make our work more visible for the Advisory Councils and/or the Parliament as these institutions do not have the same access to information and expertise as has been gathered and developed in the project. For that purpose it was suggested by the RAB members that the project team should produce a short piece of text (1-2 pages) with the main messages, especially on the need for socio-economic assessment and integrated advice. To optimise the chances of uptake by those strategic organisations the text should avoid generic presentation style and be set up in a specific way to meet the information needs of both ACs and European Parliament