

NWWRAC
Technical Conservation Measures Focus Group

2/11/2006

The Chairman Jason Whooley opened the meeting by thanking members for attending. He informed the meeting that the NWWRAC had been asked to produce its first comments on the commissions Non-paper on Technical Conservation Measures by the end of November 2006. With this in mind he proposed that due to lack of time the follow agenda items be taken together for general discussion:

- General Discussion on Commission Non-paper on TCMs
- Timetable for response
- Delivery of Response

The floor was opened for comments

Members pointed out that there was limited time to discuss this very important issue and were unhappy that the non-paper was still only available in English. In general it was felt that if an opinion had to be given by the end of November it would need to be very general and could not be made on the detail of the report as the detail was difficult for the French and Spanish members to comprehend.

Some members believed that the Member States would not be giving any real response for this proposal until the second half of 2007 and queried why the RACs had been given should a tight deadline to respond on this matter.

It was noted that the NWWRAC produced a paper on simplification and particularly on having the right kind of evaluations for putting in place technical measures, it was proposed that a preamble which refers to this paper and suggested process should be included with any submission made.

It was also recommended that some form of seminar or conference should be proposed to the Commission so that fishermen and scientists with expertise in gear technology could come together on this matter.

There was general support in the room for the points made above however it was believed that the NWWRAC would need to be careful on the point regarding simplification as it was important to ensure that these regulations were being simplified for the correct people- ie the fishermen – not the Commission

Some members felt that the only way to simplify these regulations would be to produce one general document on how to draft technical conservation measures and then for each fishing gear a document be produced which would include all restrictions on this piece of gear so that a fisherman using this type of gear or a control officer monitoring it would know straight away what had to be complied with. This idea was strongly supported and though it was necessary to implement TCMs at a devolved level, it was not agreed how low the level should be ie gear by gear, fishery by fishery or region by region. A Spanish delegate informed the meeting that that the Galician's assist the fishermen by providing information based on gear type used and could be provided to the NWWRAC as a model.

On the timing of the response it was generally believed that it even though the member States had not commenced work and the papers were not available it was important for the NWWRAC to commence preparation work now to influence the Commission's future proposals and to be proactive rather than reactive.

Some members felt that it was unacceptable that the Commission had not yet evaluated current measures. It was also felt that any new measures to be implemented must be appropriately evaluated.

It was raised that it is important that the NWWRAC ensures that proposals put forward on TCMs should not negate the work in other areas such as long-term management objectives or any future work we may do on discards. It is that important that the NWWRAC ensures that our proposals for all of these policies complement rather than contradict each other.

It was understood that many in the Commission believe that TCMs are routinely circumvented and as a result do not support them it was felt that there is a real need by the NWWRAC to overcome this and help to reinvent the TCMs. It was further agreed that TCMs are very important to the industry and want to demonstrate to the Commission that they can play a very important part.

Conclusions:

The Chairman felt that many of the inputs were most useful and even though the meeting did not get the chance to consider the questionnaires, he stated that one of the main points stated was that there should be better involvement of stakeholders in developing and assessing technical conservation measures. He agreed that a novel approach was needed and that simplification held the key and listed the following as actions that could be taken as a result of this meeting:

The NWWRAC should make a short written submission to the Commission by the end of November detailing the following:

- The support for this review but the need to ensure the simplification of these regulations for the benefit of the fishermen
- The disappointment of the NWWRAC on the delay in production of these papers in languages other than English
- The proposal for a workshop to bring together scientists and fishermen to discuss in detail technical measures; how they should be evaluated and implemented
- The recommendation that this workshop be organised by a Steering Committee which includes at least one NWWRAC member from each member state and which should be based on the principles of the steering committee for the Cod symposium.

It was agreed that this submission should be prepared and presented to the Executive Committee for discussion on November 22nd. It was also agreed that based on the results of the Executive Committee the secretariat should issue a call for members of the proposed TCM committee.

The Chairman thanked the interpreters and members for attending the meeting.