**The West coast of Scotland case study in MareFrame: suggestions for the next steps**

We suggest that we proceed as follows:

1. Skype meeting (e.g. 1 hour between 02-07 June) to address:

* Status and update of the case study
* Discuss role and purpose of the case study
* Outline a 3rd management alternative/scenario

1. Decision support workshop. Purpose: use multi criteria analysis to compare management alternatives and select the preferred one. We suggest a physical meeting (e.g. 3 hours) in Aberdeen, potentially with options to join the meeting online (e.g. Skype). This could be before (4-8 July[[1]](#footnote-1)) or after (e.g. 8-12 August) summer holidays, depending on participants’ availability.
2. Refine selected alternatives by way of discussion and elaboration (process to be detailed later; but the MareFrame case study should be concluded in spring 2017)

**Notes on management alternatives and the potential role of the case study**

We acknowledge the difficulty of defining management alternatives. The case study seeks to address strategic and long-term ecosystem aspects of fisheries management as opposed to planning in higher detail within a shorter timeframe (i.e. addressing issues relating to landings obligation, choke species etc.; which the ecosystem model we currently rely on at this stage is not well suited for). This makes the planning exercise quite abstract, and shifts it from concrete planning towards an exploration of possible directions for future fisheries management and the ecosystem they are part of.

So far we have worked with three alternatives:

1. “Current path”: What if the current approach to management is pursued in the long term?
2. “Gadoid recovery”: what if management actions focus on facilitating recovery of cod and whiting over a long period (including by way of culling seals)? How would this affect the ecosystem, and the sustainability and economics of the fisheries in the long term?
3. “Mixed MEY”: what if management actions focus on maximizing economic yield (including by way of relaxing MSY constraints for individual stocks)? How would this affect the ecosystem, and the sustainability and economics of the fisheries in the long term?

Stakeholders at the NWWAC / WG1 meeting (03.02.16) warned against the “Gadoid recovery” alternative because seal culling is controversial in the UK. Some options:

1. Keep the scenario as it is for exploratory purposes, implying that it would be rejected as an alternative even in the case that the multi-criteria analysis indicates that it performs better than other alternatives.
2. Modify the scenario (seek recovery of cod and whiting; no seal culling)
3. Replace the alternatives with another one

**Other alternatives?**

Earlier, we suggested that an alternative scenario could be developed based on “balanced harvesting”: what if management aims for a fisheries mortality of each species that is proportional to the growth of that species? How would this affect the ecosystem, and the sustainability and economics of the fisheries? As mentioned, such an alternative could be used exploratively: it would widen the scope of options we compare, but it could still be dropped as a preferred or feasible alternative for other reasons.

Sincerely,

Alan Baudron and Kåre Nielsen, MareFrame

1. Kåre will most likely not be able to join the meeting physically in June. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)