

The North Sea Regional Advisory Council



NSRAC

Socio Economic Development Group Report of a meeting held in the Seafish Offices, Edinburgh on 15th April 2008

Welcome was given by the chair, Nicki Holmyard (NH) who explained that this was the first meeting to be held in 1.5 years. Given that socio economic factors are currently being given a higher priority by national governments and the EU, it was timely to find a new focus for the group and to seek a mandate to move forward on a direction to be agreed during the meeting.

1. Apologies were received from:
Eric Lindebo, EU Commission
Alberto Spagnole, EU Commission
Karsten Kristensen, European Association of Transport Workers
Konstantinos Kalamantis, European Bureau for Conservation & Development
Gus Pastoor, European Processors & Traders
Ann Bell, NSRAC
2. NH gave a presentation on the DEFRA funded research project carried out by the North Sea Women's Network (NSWN) that had received approval from both from DEFRA and NSRAC.
(Presentation on website)

The project set out to construct, test and refine a framework for the collection and management of socio-economic fisheries data, and to make recommendations on how it could be operationalised – especially when making policy.

An international team looked at the industry, community and institutional factors that any assessment of the socio-economic implications of policy needs to consider. The work included a literature search to review the collection, management and use of socio-economic fisheries data around the world; field research in Amble, Peterhead and Shetland to test a draft dataframe; and project workshops to develop and refine its structure.

The literature review found that the institutionalisation of socio-economic analysis requires prioritisation in terms of time and resources at policy level. While local participation can play an important role in data collection and management, socio-economic expertise is also necessary to ensure correct interpretation of data that has been collected. Such data including industrial, community and institutional information is already being used in fisheries management decision-making and can be organised, accessed and understood via systems of databases, indicators and profiles. The community profile system in the US is a good example of this.

Field research in the three ports sought to gain an understanding of how accessible and how well documented socio-economic data is within fisheries and fishing communities, and to assess the utility of the dataframe concept in practice. It found data at a range of scales and at diverse locations, and with a high degree of incompatibility and discrepancy. Data sources included government statistics on the catching sector and general population, public websites containing institutional information, eg local authorities, plus local knowledge on the non-fleet fishery sector and social network data.

The data was inserted into a draft dataframe, then analysed and refined during two project workshops. It was finalised with two main components:

1. Community and sectoral socio-economic profiles, underpinned by a full-scale baseline study of fishing communities and sectors
2. Seven socio-economic indicators related to industry, community and institutional spheres, underpinned by annual quantitative and qualitative data-gathering processes, such as the EU Data Collection Regulation. The indicators are:
 - Industry: Profitability, Employment, Economic value
 - Community: Population, Social well-being
 - Institutional Arrangements: Social policy, Fisheries governance

Its operationalisation was foreseen as a public webpage containing four layers of information:

1. North Sea region map with hyperlinks to different communities, sectors, regions and countries
2. A profile for each community, sector, sub-national region or country acting as a gateway to the data and presenting an overview of the status of indicators
3. Aggregated data for each of the seven indicators and baseline information
4. Disaggregated raw datasets to underpin the aggregated data

Conclusions of the study were that a multi-layer dataframe combined with a systematic data-gathering process, would ensure both the utility and durability of the dataframe for its intended uses of strategic policy development and socio-economic impact assessment, and improve the capacity of managers and communities to maintain the information held within it. Data would need to be collected at the community scale as without this, the analysis of socio-economic impacts of policy on fishing communities would not be possible.

The project group finally made three recommendations:

1. **Request amendments to the Data Collection Regulation for inclusion of qualitative socio-economic data**
2. **Establish data-gathering (both quantitative and qualitative) mechanisms for those data aspects that are not currently included under the Data Collection Regulation**
3. **Develop the technical structure of the dataframe and its user-interface**

3. A discussion ensued to identify next steps for research, collaboration and action in the EU. The group was asked what type of data was currently being gathered in other Member States (MS) and it emerged that very little was being done.

NH mentioned that the Scottish Government was keen to raise the profile of fishing communities and the NSWN was to apply for funds to undertake some work. NSWN had hoped to undertake a major study throughout Europe and to further develop the dataframe, but this task appeared to be Herculean and one better suited to a major research institute. However, smaller pieces of work that could be locally funded appeared more likely to be useful in the short term, rather than a long-term project that could end up with out-of-date information.

Delphine Roncin (DR), Comité Régional des Pêches Maritimes et des Elevages Marins Nord, Pas de Calais, Picardie, told the meeting that the French government was seeking socio-economic fisheries projects under Axis 4 funding and that the French delegation was keen to learn how and where to start. They hoped to gain information from this meeting.

Pim Visser (PV), Dutch Ports & Auctions stated that the Axis 4 projects are usually very practical and require co-funding. He also pointed out that there is very little EFF money available and that the majority of EFF funds were going toward NGOs in his country.

DR said that if her organisation was successful in bidding for a project, they are likely to receive 1 million Euros over 6 years. Projects are 100% funded with 50% from government and 50% from EFF. Under Axis 4 they also require a transnational element which offers good opportunities for collaboration.

ACTION: DR and NH – investigate collaborative action

PV believed that the EU parliament would be interested in the collection of socio-economic information. He also said that DG Mare are primarily concerned with the fishing sector and gave the

example that moneys were been given to fishermen through decommissioning whilst none of the other affected parties received any compensation.

A discussion took place about the change in fishing fleets from comprising many small boats to a few large boats, and the effects that this has had on communities that have traditionally relied on fishing.

Jan Kappel (JK), European Anglers Alliance, gave his view from the angling perspective and said he would like recreational fishing to be included as part of any survey work, as more data needs to be gathered on the socio economic impacts of recreational fishing. He would like to see a pan European study and felt it would be more cost efficient if the two studies were carried out in conjunction with one another.

PV pointed out that the group needed to define the purpose of the study and to decide how to deal with complicated factors such as ports, which have multiple sector landings. He felt it might be worth linking up with other RACs on some points.

DR said that awareness needs to be raised of issues which affect fishing communities, particularly with Natura 2000 designations about to be put in place. These issues had been underestimated and good socio economic data was needed to give support to future projects. She said that in France there is currently no expertise in this field.

Sten Sverdrup(SS), Innovative Fisheries Management pointed out that new fisheries management regimes under consideration using ITQs, would need impact assessments, including data on the likely socio-economic impacts.

Diversification opportunities for fishermen were discussed, including the possibilities of moving into sport fishing. DR pointed out that although sports fishing was popular in the south of France and Brittany, it wasn't popular or possible everywhere.

PV stated that only 3% of fishermen had changed to sports fishing to make a living after decommissioning, and that most ex-fishermen moved to jobs in the oil industry or operating tug boats.

JK told the group that the fleet is likely to shrink further to decrease effort and that there is still more capacity in the sports fishing sector. 50% of charter fishing boat skippers are currently ex-fishermen.

JS stated that the socio economic impacts of decommissioning were not taken into account during the last round of decommissioning.

Carl O'Brien said that DEFRA was funding new CEFAS studies focusing on biology and fish behaviour, and did not currently place great importance on socio economic factors. However, for this aspect to be taken more seriously there needs to be more data and more feedback. He believed the EU needs to decide what its goals are in terms of the fleet and fishing communities.

Sebastien Metz, Seafish, gave his view that if the EU wants stocks at MSY, then fishing communities will suffer – the two cannot both be at their optimum at the same time.

PV said there needs to be a change of mindset, as at the moment only the economic problems of the fleet are taken into consideration, rather than the socio-economic problems of the communities.

4. SM gave a presentation on the changes in the DCR. (Presentation on website) This showed that whilst new guidelines for the collection of data are being issued, the DCR still does not include any qualitative socio-economic data.

A discussion took place on how this might be redressed when the DCR is next reviewed in 6 years time.

SM pointed out that there were no social scientists involved – only biologists or economists.

NH told the group that if new data was to be requested for inclusion, it was important to have as many Member States on board as possible, to ensure that the questions were pertinent in all countries. The

collection of qualitative data would involve additional time and resources and this would need to be agreed with the Commission and Member States.

In the UK, UK Seafish collects the economic data and CEFAS, FRS and AFBE collect the biological data, with the MFA collating it. IFREMER is the data collection body for France and currently undertakes a fishers' survey every three months.

In the Netherlands there is a voluntary scheme for data collection where 50% of the fleet give their information to the data collection body IVY. PV believed there was a need for constant low level surveying to take place, in order to keep the information up to date.

NH pointed out the problems with different methods used for data collection and analysis in each country. This needs to be simplified.

CO believed that the 7 indicators established in the NSWN study would be good guidelines for setting potential questions to add to the DCR.

PV believed it would be a good idea to have 4 or 5 indicator communities in each RAC Member Country and to undertake a 2 year pilot scheme.

JS pointed out that there would be different factors to consider in each country, such as the large amount of immigrant labour in Scottish fishing communities. This point was agreed by the group.

ACTION: NH - discuss DCR revisions with EU

5. Sten Sverdrup gave a presentation on the two EU studies he is currently involved with. (Presentation on website) This led to discussions on how IFM might collaborate more closely with the S-E Development Group and the wider NSRAC.

SS offered help to apply the dataframe and thought that a statement from the commission expressing their interest in socio economic aspects of fisheries would be useful.

NH said the commission had stated they would like more socio economic feedback. However, if the focus on socio economic policy was to be strengthened, then a more organised approach from NSRAC and Member States needs to be taken.

CO believed that if community profiling was carried out, then the communities would be able to identify more with the data. He also said that EU policy was moving more toward management of the general marine environment and that attention should be paid more widely to coastal communities, rather than concentrating on fishing dependent communities.

NH thought that RAC members could be asked to identify communities to survey and monitor for a pilot community profiling and data collection scheme, although JS pointed out that there is a certain amount of apathy within communities to filling out surveys. NH agreed that the data needs to focus on practical aspects.

SS recommended that the Baltic RAC be approached as they carried out a survey in a tight time frame with short notice, so their knowledge could be useful in terms of what has been done and how to apply the data. CO concurred that a small project would be best to start with.

NH agreed to look at possibilities for funding of a pilot community profiling project. She gave brief details of work carried out by Alyne Delaney of IFM who has been undertaking community profiling work for the EU. General findings were that decommissioning had left huge gaps in employment potential as fishermen were not educated or trained to do anything else. The wider community had also been affected by a crumbling infrastructure and an inability to plan for an uncertain future.

ACTION: NH - seek funding for pilot community profiling project

PV pointed out that many reports focus on the negatives of the fishing industry and that profiling would hopefully throw up some positive aspects.

JS said that Scottish fishing communities were currently being regenerated, with vessels undertaking repairs and fishermen ordering new boats. She also felt that public perception was changing and that the Scottish industry was no longer being seen as one in a hopeless and helpless situation. PV agreed and said this was partly due to the Trawlermen TV series and the work that Seafood Scotland was undertaking. NH also agreed and pointed out that the SNP government is more positive about the industry.

DR said that the industry in France was not so strong, nor was the perception of its fishing communities.

6. A short presentation on the current role of DG Mare Structural Policy and Economic Analysis Unit was given by NH, from information supplied by Erik Lindebo. (Presentation attached) Alberto Spagnoli, head of the unit, has asked for greater collaboration with NSRAC S-E Development Group and NH agreed to action this.

ACTION: NH - seek greater collaboration with EU

7. A workshop session followed to discuss the future direction and actions of the Group.

It was agreed that the Socio-Economic Protocol devised for NSRAC needed to be revisited to make it easier to understand and use. Its use could then be promoted to other RACs.

ACTION: NH – revise protocol

A discussion ensued about which groups is was important for the SEDG to attend and the consensus was for representation at the Demersal Working Group, as the NGOs representing the one third minority on NSRAC were not necessarily focussed on s-e issues.

ACTION: NH – attend DWG meetings

Discussion also took place about connections with other RACs and other organisations, and it was agreed to offer a presentation to NWWRAC on the importance of socio-economic representation tied in with the cod recovery plan, as this is likely to be extended to include the Celtic Sea.

ACTION: NH – contact NWWRAC

CO pointed out that the State of the Seas report was due in 2010 and NH agreed that NSRAC socio economic survey work could be complementary.

JK said that local authorities and councils should be included in any data gathering exercise and it was agreed that RDAs in England and Wales would also be useful contacts.

NH asked the group to set goals and objectives on a timeline. It was agreed that within 1 year, community profiling guidelines should be drawn up based on the 7 indicators, and at least one study carried out in each Member Country of NSRAC, with others underway.

SS pointed out that if the profiles were linked with the cod recovery plan then this could be a shortcut to funding and awareness-raising.

NH said that the objectives of undertaking the studies first needed to be defined and that the Scottish government had expressed an interest in funding one short study which could act as a pilot.

NH said that funding for her work on NSRAC had been identified, which would provide a new impetus to drive this project forward.

ACTION: NH - secure funding

JS said that in all cases, it was important to have funding committed rather than agreed to.

Antoine Legarrec asked if the group planned to advise NSRAC on the socio economic impacts of stock plans. NH replied that to provide such advice might require large studies depending on the species, that were beyond the scope of the group, but that this area was one to bear in mind.

SM said that economic input-output models needed to be used and advised that Seafish had recently prepared one for the UK. It was possible that other countries prepared similar models.

ACTION: SM – seek models in EU countries

CO said that once the current revisions of the DCR have taken place, then assessment of the data should become easier.

NH said the DCR was still confused and the goals needed to be clearly defined. She asked if there was a need for a seminar to look at the collection and use of s-e data.

CO felt that there was already enough information with the dataframe. SM agreed and said that it would be best to wait for the first profile to be completed before a decision on a seminar was taken.

In a discussion on long-term goals for the SEDG, NH pointed out that the 3 RAC ex-com meetings per year would provide natural milestones for reporting achievements and would thus push progress on projects. She agreed with JS that any data collected had to be useful and meaningful for communities and provide a practical tool for RAC members and industry representatives to use. She agreed to discuss the results of this meeting at the next ex-com in Vigo.

She believed that a pilot community profile could be used to define the objectives for further study, which the SEDG would need to agree and give a mandate to take forward for funding.

8. Any Other Business – there was no other business.
9. Date of next meeting – To be confirmed

ATTENDEES:

Nicki Holmyard NH	North Sea Women's Network and Chair of meeting
Jan Kapel	European Anglers Association
Sebastien Metz	Seafish
Pim Visser	Dutch Ports and Auctions
Sten Svedrup	Innovative Fisheries Management, Denmark
Dr Carl O'Brien	CEFAS
Bruno Dachicourt	CME
Delphine Roncin	CRPM
Caroline Gamblin	CNPMEM
Antoine Legarrec	UAPF Euronor
Gert Koehler	Aberdeen University
Jane Sandell	Scottish Fishermen's Federation
Sarah Boyle	Rapporteur
Sylvie Ludwig	Translator
Cyrille Guiat	Translator