



JRC SCIENCE FOR POLICY REPORT

# Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)

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## Evaluation of work plans for data collection and data transmission issues (STECF-22-18)

Edited by Christoph Stransky & Zeynep Hekim

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## **Abstract**

Commission Decision of 25 February 2016 setting up a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, C (2016) 1084, OJ C 74, 26.2.2016, p. 4–10. The Commission may consult the group on any matter relating to marine and fisheries biology, fishing gear technology, fisheries economics, fisheries governance, ecosystem effects of fisheries, aquaculture or similar disciplines. This report deals with the evaluation of DCF Work Plan updates for 2022-2024(2027), the evaluation of Data Transmission issues, the finalisation of the Annual Report assessment grid and guidance and the DCF platform concept. The report was reviewed by the STECF at its 71st plenary meeting held in Brussels, Belgium, from 14-18 November 2022.

## **SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR FISHERIES (STECF) - Evaluation of work plans for data collection and data transmission issues (STECF-22-18)**

### **Request to the STECF**

STECF is requested to review the report of the STECF Expert Working Group meeting, evaluate the findings and make any appropriate comments and recommendations.

### **STECF comments**

EWG 22-18 met virtually from 24 to 28 October 2022. The work was conducted by 29 independent experts. Two observers participated in the plenary discussions of the EWG.

STECF notes that EWG 22-18 was requested to:

- evaluate updates to the Member States' (MS) national Work Plan (WP) under the Data Collection Framework (DCF) for the years 2023 and beyond
- evaluate the Regional Work Plan (RWP) submitted by the Regional Coordination Group for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Med&BS) region, in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004
- evaluate Data Transmission issues (DTi) from the 2022 Fleet Economics data call (EWG 22-02) and from the quality checking of MED&BS data and reference points (EWG 22-03)
- finalise the Annual Report assessment grid and guidelines for evaluators comments on the concept document provided by the Commission on setting up a platform for submitting and evaluating the Work Plans and Annual Reports.

#### Evaluation of Member States' Work Plan updates

STECF notes that 20 MS submitted WP updates for 2023 and beyond (within the multi-annual period 2022-2024(2027)). Austria originally did not submit a WP in 2021 but did so for 2023-2025 in October 2022. EWG 22-18 provided the first opportunity to evaluate that WP.

STECF notes that the evaluation sheets (assessment grids) and guidance for evaluators developed by STECF during 2020-2021 were used. STECF observes that the EWG experts also developed and used R scripts to assess the consistencies of table entries. STECF notes that further development and documentation of these scripts, as well as making them available to STECF and MS would improve the quality of the WPs and Annual Reports because they would assist MS in entering consistent information to the WP and AR tables.

STECF notes that MS were requested to reply to the issues identified by the EWG experts during the meeting and this information exchange ("ping-pong") closed out most cases by the end of the meeting, leaving only a few issues that had to be dealt with bilaterally between the Commission and MS.

STECF agrees with the EWG that clearer guidance to the MS on the presentation of updates is needed in order to track future revised versions and to allow easier version control.

STECF observes that the EWG has reported clearly on the MS amendments in the WPs that have been evaluated for each section of the WP. The detailed outcomes of the evaluations are then reported in the evaluation sheets (assessment grid) by each MS allowing clear visibility of the outcome of the evaluations.

#### Evaluation of the Regional Work Plan

STECF notes that EWG 22-18 was requested to comment on the Regional Work Plan (RWP) for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Med&BS) region. This was drafted for the first time by the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) for the Med&BS with the technical support of the

STREAMLINE<sup>1</sup> and Fishn'Co<sup>2</sup> projects funded under MARE/2020/08. This plan is a non-binding RWP for the year 2023, as a test run for the introduction of a binding RWP planned for 2025-2027.

STECF observes that the EWG identified the sections that are close to being ready for the binding version (e.g. section on fish stomach contents collection and section on recreational fisheries). The EWG also identified sections that need further development (e.g., general section of the text box and generic tables, section on sampling plans for collection of biological data, section on the monitoring of the incidental catches of sensitive species) before being in a format suitable for the RWP.

#### Evaluation of Data Transmission issues

STECF observes that the EWG evaluated Data Transmission issues (DTi) from the 2022 Fleet Economics data call (EWG 22-02) and from the Quality checking of MED&BS data and reference points (EWG 22-03). EWG 22-02 reported 48 DTi's that were not pre-screened, while EWG 22-03 reported 179 issues that were pre-screened by an independent expert contracted by DG MARE prior to EWG 22-18.

STECF notes that the guidance document for the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT) was used in combination with a supporting document (decision tree) proposed by EWG 22-07. This decision tree focused on enhancing data quality, on the data resubmission process and on the ability of MS to provide data for the next data calls. According to this process, the most recurring type of assessment was "follow-up needed". This means that the majority of the issues were not solved during the first round of the evaluation process and need further attention and action by the parties as specified in the STECF comments.

#### Annual Report (AR) assessment grid and guidance

STECF observes that the 2022 AR will be the first to be delivered by MS according to the revised EU-MAP and to the updated formats. Therefore, the assessment grid and the evaluation criteria need to be revised to be adapted to the updated Annual Report format. STECF notes that EWG 22-18 reviewed the work started by EWG 22-07 on drafting the assessment grid for evaluation of the 2022 ARs and guidance for the evaluators.

STECF notes that these documents are for internal use by STECF, but they also represent a supporting document to MS for the preparation of their ARs.

STECF notes that the revised assessment grid is provided in the electronic annex 2 and the revised guidance is given in the electronic annex 3 of EWG 22-18 report. Final checking and editing are needed before their application in the evaluation process of the ARs by STECF in June 2023.

#### DCF platform concept

STECF observes that the EWG looked at the "concept document and data checking rules" provided by DGMARE. This document is part of the internal project to develop a web platform for the management of the processes related with the submission, evaluation, approval and revisions of WPs and ARs.

STECF notes that the EWG very much appreciated the concept document, as it clearly outlines the needs and the specifications for setting up a DCF platform for submitting and evaluating the work plans and annual reports. STECF notes that EWG provided comments on possible improvements and suggestions.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.streamlineproject.eu/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/fishnco/>

## Revision of the assessment of the Annual Report 2021 of The Netherlands

STECF notes that EWG 22-18 re-assessed a small part of the 2021 AR of The Netherlands, regarding sections 5A and 5B (on Data Quality) and section 6A (Data availability). This was because EWG 22-07 on AR evaluation apparently did not take the MS response and revised AR files into account during the EWG ('ping-pong') in the final EWG comments.

STECF notes that EWG 22-18 provided an updated assessment of the Dutch AR 2021.

### **STECF conclusions**

STECF endorses the outcomes of EWG 22-18 presented during STECF PLEN 22-03. STECF concludes that the EWG has fully addressed its Terms of Reference.

STECF concludes that clearer guidance by the Commission to MS is needed for future multi-annual WP submissions to have a common approach and to better track WP versions. STECF considers that a summary table, clearly identifying sections that have been amended, would simplify the STECF evaluation.

STECF acknowledges that the R scripts developed by EWG experts to assess the consistencies among the table entries are useful tools for both STECF experts and MS when compiling their WPs and ARs. STECF concludes that there is a need for further development of these types of automatic screening. Ideally, these scripts would be made available to STECF experts and to MS together with corresponding guidelines placed on the **DCF website**. Such scripts could also be integrated in the planned online reporting platform.

STECF concludes that the present non-binding version of the Mediterranean and Black Sea RWP is well prepared and is an important step for the completion of the binding RWP to be proposed by the RCG Med&BS. The present version of the RWP MED&BS should be finalized within the pan-regional ISSG on setting up RWPs which will take over from both Fishn'Co and Streamline projects (grants under MARE/2020/08).

STECF concludes that the DTMT guidance document should be amended by STECF to integrate the supporting document (decision tree) proposed by EWG 22-07. This will avoid overlap with the assessment criteria. The revised guidance document could be prepared and endorsed by the next STECF plenary (March 2023).

STECF further concludes that an additional column 'Follow-Up Responsibility' should be inserted in the DTMT to address the responsibility for the follow-up issues. This responsibility of the follow-up actions may be addressed to MS, DG MARE or the data end-users. STECF concludes that the complete cycle for the assessment of the Data Transmission issues should be scrutinized with the final objective to possibly close the issues for which there is a clear final assessment.

STECF concludes that the revised assessment grid and the revised guidance for evaluators to be used by STECF for the evaluation of ARs for 2022 and beyond should be finalized. STECF suggests that the outstanding work to complete the assessment grid and the guidance document be completed and finally assessed by the next spring STECF plenary in 2023.

STECF concludes that further guidance should be provided for the assessment of quantitative achievements (response and coverage rates) of the economic sections in the ARs. The STECF 17-11 report (esp. Chapter 2.6) would be a good basis for this work.

STECF acknowledges the work initiated by the Commission for the development of an online reporting platform, in connection with a database, for the planning and implementation of WPs, on both Member States' and regional level.

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## **REPORT TO THE STECF**

### **EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON Evaluation of work plans for data collection and data transmission issues (EWG-22-18)**

**Virtual meeting, 24-28 October 2022**

This report does not necessarily reflect the view of the STECF and the European Commission and in no way anticipates the Commission's future policy in this area

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

The STECF Expert Working Group (EWG) 22-18 met virtually from 24 to 28 October 2022 to (i) evaluate Member States' (MS) national Work Plan (WP) updates under the Data Collection Framework (DCF) for the years 2023 and beyond (within the multi-annual period 2022-2024(2027)), (ii) evaluate Data Transmission issues (DTi), (iii) finalise the Annual Report (AR) assessment grid and guidance and (iv) comment on the DCF platform concept.

The work was conducted by 29 independent experts (see the list of participants in section 8). Two observers participated in the plenary discussions of the EWG. The Terms of Reference are presented below.

### **1.1 Terms of Reference for EWG-22-18**

#### **Background**

Article 6 of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017<sup>3</sup> requires Member States to submit to the Commission a national work plan (WP) for approval. It requires the Commission to request STECF to evaluate the WPs prior to their approval.

Article 11 of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017 requires Member States to submit to the Commission an annual report (AR) on the implementation of their national work plans (WPs); and requires STECF to evaluate the quality of the data collected by the Member States.

In preparation for the STECF assessment, STECF EWG 22-18 will be convened on 24-28 October 2022. EWG 22-18 will evaluate revised WPs 2023-2024(2027) and data transmission issues from two data calls: 2022 Fleet Economics data call (EWG 22-06) and 2021 Med and BS data call (EWG 22-03). All issues have been reported in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT). Prior to the EWG 22-18 meeting, a pre-screening of the data transmission issues from EWG 22-03 commented by the Member States will be undertaken through an ad-hoc contract.

The number of submitted WPs will be confirmed on 17 October, as some MS will submit revised WPs 2023-2024(2027) by 15 October 2022. No substantial revisions are expected. One MS will submit its first WP. A draft non-binding regional work plan (RWP) for the Mediterranean and Black Seas will be submitted for the STECF evaluation.

In the first half of 2022, two STECF expert groups reported data transmission issues: EWG 22-06 on data from the 2022 Fleet Economics data call and EWG 22-03 from the 2021 data call for quality checking of MED&BS data.

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<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008. ([consolidated version of 14.07.2021](#))

In addition, two MS will request a revision of the assessment of their 2021 Annual Reports, done by STECF EWG 22-07 in June 2022. Allegedly, the experts had not taken into account the last revisions submitted on time during EWG 22-07.

### **Request to EWG 22-18**

EWG 22-18 is requested to:

#### **ToR 1: Evaluate the revised WPs 2022-2024(2027) and draft RWPs**

Experts are requested to evaluate the WPs submitted by MS and the RWP submitted by the Regional Coordination Group, in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004, considering:

- the conformity of the WPs with the contents of Articles 6 and 9 of the DCF Regulation, and with the EU MAP from 2022 onwards,
- the scientific relevance of the data covered by the WPs for the purposes laid down in Article 1(1) of the DCF Regulation, and the quality of the proposed methods and procedures,
- the conformity with the format and guidelines on the WP template.

Experts should pay particular attention if the MS considered the comments provided by STECF EWG 21-17 and the Commission during the WP 2022-2024(2027) assessment.

During the EWG 22-18, the experts will communicate to the MS (via the Commission) outstanding issues that require clarification and/or resubmission. The MS will provide explanations and resubmit the WPs if necessary. The following rules will apply to the communication:

- The identified issues will be reviewed by at least two experts before collating them by the Commission
- The Commission will relay the issues to the MS
- The issues can relate to inconsistencies, formatting issues, missing tables, missing explanations in the text boxes, misplaced information, wrong references etc.

The experts will use the evaluation grid (background document 2). They should make sure that the language used in the evaluation is neutral, subject-related and that the comments are self-explanatory and clear. The comments are to be based on factual data. More guidance is included in the stand-alone document of assessment criteria (background document 3), and in the guidelines on the WP/AR templates (background document 4).

In addition, EWG 22-18 is requested to examine the request for revision of the assessment of two 2021 Annual Reports, done by STECF EWG 22-07 in June 2022, based on submitted evidence (background document 6, folder 03). If applicable, the corrigendum will be published as an annex to EWG 22-18 report.

#### **ToR 2: Evaluate DTi from the 2022 Fleet Economics data call (EWG 22-02) and from the Quality checking of MED&BS data and reference points (EWG 22-03)**

Regarding data transmission issues (DTi), EWG 22-18 is requested to focus on the issues from the:

- 1) 2022 Fleet Economics data call (EWG 22-02) recorded in the DTMT (50 issues reported)
- 2) 2021 Med and BS data call (EWG 22-03) recorded in the DTMT (total of 179 issues reported).

The experts are requested to use [the DTMT guidance \(version July 2021\)](#) for the evaluation, and to provide feedback to the guidance if needed.

The experts should also consider the draft guidelines document produced by the EWG 22-07 (background document 8). It is intended as an internal STECF document, for pre-screening and evaluation of the DTi. It should be cleaned of comments and transmitted to the following AR assessment expert group.

### **ToR 3: Finalise the Annual Report assessment grid and guidelines for evaluators (EWG 22-07)**

The experts are requested to finalise the new assessment grid and guidelines for the evaluators of annual reports that will be used by STECF experts in June 2023 to evaluate the 2022 annual reports. EWG 22-18 will finalise the work initiated by EWG 22-07 in June 2022 (background documents 13 and 14).

### **Tor 4: Input on the DCF platform concept (to be confirmed depending on the project progress)**

In 2021, the Commission initiated an IT project to build a DCF platform for submitting and evaluating the work plans and annual reports. In the coming months, the project should enter the implementation phase. As the STECF experts and the MS will be main users of the platform, the Commission intends to request feedback from EWG 22-18 on some elements of the project (background document 15).

### **EWG 22-18 report**

The EWG should produce a Word document with general explanations and an Excel file with the assessment and comments of each WP. The document should include an overview of the assessment and overall evaluation of the Work Plans (horizontal issues, spanning many MS/ sea basins).

- Per Member State:
  - a) an evaluation of the WP content (compliance with DCF Regulation and EU MAP) and format (compliance with the template guidelines) in general and per WP section
  - b) MS-specific issues relating to data collection as described in the WP
  - c) With regard to Data Transmission issues (DTi):
    - i. An overall evaluation of Member State performance, of main DTi per end user/data call and of recurring issues by Member State.
    - ii. An evaluation of Member States' responses via the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool online platform to issues raised by end users of scientific advice. The EWG is requested to evaluate DTi in terms of content by closing issues which have been clarified and highlighting outstanding issues. The data sets affected shall be underlined.

- iii. Identify in the evaluation per Member State the comments which require a reaction from Member State (draft a summary list) and those points which are for information only.
- Per region:
  - a) an evaluation of the coverage for the region/fishery for the specific section submitted and
  - b) an evaluation of the planned regional coordination in research surveys and other data collection activities.
- At EU level:
  - a) a corrigendum to Annex 1 of EWG 22-07 report on the AR 2021 assessment for MSs concerned, if EWG 22-18 considers it necessary
  - b) finalised Annual Report assessment grid and guidelines for evaluators, as annexes to the report
  - c) feedback on the DCF platform business analysis.

In their report, EWG 22-18 should identify the comments that require a reaction by the MS(s) (resubmission of the WP or further clarification to the Commission), and those that are for potential future amendments or for information only.

The evaluation will be based on the evaluation criteria drafted by EWG 20-18 and finalised by EWG 21-09 (background documents 2 and 3). The EWG should pay particular attention that the submitted work plans:

- address the issues raised in the assessment grids during past evaluations
- address the issues raised in COM assessment grids
- consider RCG and STECF recommendations, in particular the recommendation concerning the future RCG secretariat.

## **Background documents**

### **For WP assessment ToR 1:**

1. WP 2022-2024(2027) submitted by the MS (folder 01)
2. WP evaluation grid (approved by EWG 21-17)
3. Stand-alone document for WP evaluation (approved by EWG 21-17)
4. Guidance on WP/AR templates (Com Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39)
5. 2021 COM assessment grids (folder 02)
6. Documents related to AR assessment revision (transmitted by COM from concerned MS) (folder 03)

### **For DTMT assessment Tor 2:**

7. DTMT guidance (July 2021): <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guidelines/dtmt>
8. Draft guidelines for STECF DT issues evaluators (EWG 22-07 document 06b 'DTMT-guidance renewed'; transmitted by the COM, not in the official report)

9. DT issues recorded in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool:  
<https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/dcf/dtmt>
10. Prefilled assessment of data transmission issues from the pre-screener (Excel file)
11. STECF EWG 22-02 and EWG 22-06 reports (Annual Economic Report)
12. STECF [EWG 22-03 report](#) (Quality checking of MED & BS data and reference points)

#### **For AR assessment grid ToR 3:**

13. Draft evaluation guidance for annual report under revised EU MAP (EWG 22-07 document 10; transmitted by the COM, not in the official report)
14. Current Annual Report assessment grid

#### **For DCF platform ToR 4:**

15. DCF Requirements v1.1\_FINAL\_2022.09.15 (transmitted by the COM)

#### **Additional background documents:**

The experts should take into account relevant assessment files from previous STECF EWGs, including STECF EWG 21-17 (WP).

In addition, the experts may consult:

- previous WPs and ARs:
  - <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/wps>
  - <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ars>

other relevant documents (e.g. ICES reports for meetings relating to the relevant data calls, Liaison Meeting and RCG recommendations etc.)

## **2 EVALUATION OF MEMBER STATES' WORK PLAN UPDATES**

### **2.1 Background information**

To carry out the evaluation, the EWG was provided with the Work Plan (WP) tables and WP text (boxes) of the 20 MS which submitted WP updates for 2023 and beyond (within the multi-annual period 2022-2024(2027)). Austria originally did not submit a WP for 2022pp in 2021 but provided a WP for 2023-2025 in October 2022, so the EWG 22-18 was the first instance on evaluating the WP. The Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Lithuania, The Netherlands and Slovakia did not submit WP updates. The EWG used various supporting information such as relevant EWG reports (mainly from EWG 21-17), see ToRs above.

### **2.2 Evaluation criteria, assessment grid and procedures**

The EWG used the evaluation sheets (assessment grids) and guidance for evaluators developed by STECF during 2020-2021 (mainly within the EWG 20-18).

### 2.3 Sub-groups and task allocation

The evaluation of WPs was split by sub-groups and experts were allocated to each sub-group according to their expertise. Each sub-group was tasked with the assessment of particular sections of the WP according to the table below.

**Table 1 – Allocation of sections by sub-group and expertise**

| Sub-group | Sections                                                                                                                                                                 | Expertise  |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 1         | Biological data (sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5), corresponding parts of Annex 1.1                                                                                            | Biologists |
| 2         | Diadromous species (section 2.3), Recreational fisheries (2.4), corresponding parts of Annex 1.1                                                                         | Biologists |
| 3         | General information (section 1), Research surveys at sea (section 2.6), Impact of fisheries on marine biological resources (section 4), corresponding parts of Annex 1.1 | Biologists |
| 4         | Fishing activity data (section 3), economic & social data (sections 5, 6 and 7), corresponding parts of Annex 1.2                                                        | Economists |

### 2.4 Evaluation process

In contrast to EWG 21-17, when the full-period 2022-2024(2027) WPs were evaluated for the first time, the WP updates were not pre-screened.

During the EWG, issues to be solved were identified by the EWG experts and transmitted to the MS. The MS then replied within a short deadline and submitted revised WP tables and text, when requested. This 'ping-pong' information exchange was completed to closely final stages of the WPs in almost all cases at the end of the meeting, leaving only a few issues that have to be dealt with bilaterally between Commission and MS.

The summaries of changes in MS WPs in a table format with comments on the changes by section were beneficial in undertaking the assessment. It would aid the process if this format could be used by the MS to provide information in future submissions. It was noted that some of the explanations provided should have been included by the MS in the WP submission (e.g. the reasoning for changes to sampling for Portugal in the Madeira Region).

| Text Box/Table                        | Changes         | Justification |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <b>Section 1: General information</b> |                 |               |
| -Table 1.1                            | No Changes or - | -             |
| -Table 1.2                            | Changed xxx     | As per xxx    |
| -Table 1.3                            | -               | -             |
| -Text Box 1A                          | -               | -             |
| -Text Box 1B                          | -               | -             |

|      |  |  |
|------|--|--|
| etc. |  |  |
|------|--|--|

R scripts were developed to ensure the consistencies between some tables (Table 2.1 vs. Table 2.2) and between all tables and the Master Code List. There is a need for further development of these types of automatic screening for both STECF experts and MS when compiling their WPs and Annual Reports (AR). The availability of such scripts on a public github would greatly improve the editing and quality check burden of populating the set of tables.

#### *2.4.1 General information*

The EWG noted that naming, version numbering, date of submission of the Word files and corresponding Excel tables of the WPs are often inconsistent. Word files and Excel tables can have a different naming and version numbers and the date of submission differs. The EWG emphasized that the naming must be consistent in order to avoid confusion in future submissions and the identification of the latest valid versions.

It was discussed during the EWG whether the layout of Table 0 could be amended, so that all sections with changes will be trackable in future (a possible future layout for Table 0 is given below). It is recommended that only a new multi-annual WP should be given a new version number. Updated versions from one year to the other should be given a position after the decimal point e.g. 1.2. Changes in the Word file of the WP always make it necessary to also update Table 0 in the Excel file, even if there is no update to the tables.

As several MSs changed the time period of their amended WPs (in both Word and Excel files), clear guidance is needed for future multi-annual WP submissions on how to deal with this. It is suggested that in future submissions of new multi-annual WPs, all references to years should be kept within all tables in the WP. If amendments occur throughout the WP period, no adjustments should be made in the years in order to track changes in the execution of the WPs throughout the WP period.

## MS x National Work Plan tables for data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors

|                                                               |                   |                                                                            |                |             |              | Updates |  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|---------|--|
|                                                               |                   | WP                                                                         | 2022 - 2024    |             |              |         |  |
|                                                               |                   | WP date of submission                                                      | 15 Oct 2021    | 15 Oct 2022 | 20 July 2023 |         |  |
|                                                               |                   | Version                                                                    | 1              | 1.1         | 1.2          |         |  |
| Table of contents                                             |                   |                                                                            |                |             |              |         |  |
| MasterCodeList                                                |                   | Reference table with predefined codes for other tables' fields             |                | Changes     |              |         |  |
| Section 1. General information                                |                   |                                                                            | Included (Y/N) | (Y/N)       | (Y/N)        | (Y/N)   |  |
|                                                               | Text box DCF      | Data collection framework at national level                                | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Table 1.1                                                     |                   | Data Availability                                                          | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Table 1.2                                                     |                   | International coordination                                                 | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Table 1.3                                                     |                   | Bi and Multilateral agreements                                             | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Table 1.4 (AR)                                                |                   | Recommendations                                                            |                |             |              |         |  |
|                                                               | Text box 1a       | Test studies                                                               | Y              | Y           | N            | N       |  |
|                                                               | Text box 1b       | Other data collection activities                                           | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Section 2. Biological data                                    |                   |                                                                            |                |             |              |         |  |
| Table 2.1                                                     | Text box 2.1 (AR) | List of required stocks                                                    |                |             |              |         |  |
| Table 2.2                                                     | Text box 2.2 (AR) | Planning of sampling for biological variables                              |                |             |              |         |  |
| Table 2.3                                                     | Text box 2.3      | Diadromous species data collection in freshwater                           | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Table 2.4                                                     | Text box 2.4      | Recreational fisheries                                                     | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Table 2.5                                                     | Text box 2.5      | Sampling plan description for biological data                              | Y              | N           | Y            | Y       |  |
| Table 2.6                                                     | Text box 2.6      | Research surveys at sea                                                    | Y              | N           | Y            | Y       |  |
| Section 3. Fishing activity                                   |                   |                                                                            |                |             |              |         |  |
| Table 3.1                                                     | Text box 3.1      | Fishing activity variables sampling strategy                               | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
|                                                               | Text box 3.2      | Fishing activity variables sampling strategy (inland eel commercial)       | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Section 4. Impact of fisheries on marine biological resources |                   |                                                                            |                |             |              |         |  |
| Table 4.1                                                     |                   | Stomach sampling and analysis                                              | Y              | N           | Y            | Y       |  |
|                                                               | Text box 4.2      | Incidental catches of sensitive species                                    | Y              | N           | Y            | Y       |  |
|                                                               | Text box 4.3      | Impact on marine habitats                                                  | Y              | N           | Y            | Y       |  |
| Section 5-7. Economic and social data                         |                   |                                                                            |                |             |              |         |  |
| Table 5.1                                                     |                   | Fleet total population and clustering                                      | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Table 5.2                                                     | Text box 5.2      | Economic and social variables for fisheries data collection strategy       | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Table 6.1                                                     | Text box 6.1      | Economic and social variables for aquaculture data collection strategy     | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |
| Table 7.1                                                     | Text box 7.1      | Economic and social variables for fish processing data collection strategy | Y              | N           | N            | N       |  |

During the RCG Decision Meeting 19th September 2022, a decision on the long-term implementation of the RCG's Secretariat was presented. DCF National Correspondents agreed that each MS who does not have yet the text in the WP 2022-2024(2027) (under Text Box 1.b), to insert the text on regional contribution for the secretariat in their revision of the WP 2022-2024(2027). The text was provided by the Secweb project. At the end of the EWG, only two MSs did not have the text on the RCG secretariat included in Text Box 1.b.

Regarding Annex 1.1, it would help MS if good examples (for each type of survey/sampling etc.) would be identified as a reference for MS to follow.

Concerning the guidelines for the WP and AR submission, these were open for modification up until November 2021 and published as final in the beginning of 2022 (COM Decision 2022/39). Proposals for changes since this date are still outstanding for consideration and inclusion the next revision proposal for 2025 onwards.

The following table provides a summary of the MS amendments in Work Plans evaluated, regarding the General Information:

| <b>MS</b> | <b>EWG 22-18 comments</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Actions needed</b>                                                                    |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AUT       | Austria did not submit a WP 2022-2024(7) in 2021. MS submitted 2023-2025 WP in 2022 (including WP Table 1.2 and Text Box 1b). MS is applying a threshold according to Chapter II Para 7 a) of the Commission's Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168 for aquaculture data collection (section 6.1). MS is planning to carry out four data collection activities under Section 1b of Work Plan.              | No actions needed.                                                                       |
| BEL       | Belgium submitted an amended WP including the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39), Secweb text and an updated Table 1.2. However, as Table 1.2 was updated incorrectly and some editorial issues from the previous STECF evaluation regarding Table 1.1 were still outstanding, Belgium was asked during the EWG to adjust accordingly. All issues were solved.                        | No actions needed.                                                                       |
| BGR       | Bulgaria submitted an amended WP including the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39), and the Secweb text. However, the naming of the amended WP cover was not consistent with the years in the Tables. This issue was solved during the EWG.                                                                                                                                            | No actions needed.                                                                       |
| CYP       | Cyprus updated the legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39), the Secweb text. However, in the amended WP the version numbering between the word document and table 0 were not consistent. This issue was solved during the EWG.                                                                                                                                                                     | No actions needed.                                                                       |
| DEU       | Germany updated the legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39) and included the Secweb text.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | No actions needed.                                                                       |
| DNK       | Denmark included the Secweb text in the amended WP. However, the date of submission and version number of the amended WP text and the legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39) were not updated. This was solved during the EWG.                                                                                                                                                                    | No actions needed.                                                                       |
| ESP       | Spain included the Secweb text and IBERAS survey in the updated WP. During the EWG, Spain was asked to include the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39). This was solved during the EWG.                                                                                                                                                                                                | No action needed.                                                                        |
| FIN       | Finland updated the legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39) and included the Secweb text in their amended WP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No actions needed.                                                                       |
| GRC       | Greece updated the Secweb text and added stomach sampling activities within the MEDITS survey in their amended WP. During the EWG, Greece was asked to include the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39). This was solved during the EWG. A minor editorial issue remained, namely the version numbering and date of submission between the word document and Table 0 were inconsistent. | MS to correct minor editorial issue regarding Table 0 and WP cover in future submission. |
| HRV       | Croatia submitted an amended WP including the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39), and the Secweb text. However, the naming of the amended WP cover was not                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | No actions needed.                                                                       |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | consistent with the years in the Tables. This issue was solved during the EWG.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                   |
| HUN | Hungary submitted an amended WP including the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39), and the Secweb text. However, the version number and date in Table 0 were not updated and therefore not consistent with the word document. This issue was solved during the EWG.                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No actions needed.                                                                                                                                                |
| IRL | Ireland submitted an amended WP including the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39), minor editorial adjustments in Table 1.3, the Secweb text, and the inclusion of two surveys (Irish Coastal Ecosystem Survey and Scallop survey included). Some editorial issues regarding the two surveys in Table 2.6 were raised during the EWG and solved. A minor issue regarding the consistency in version numbering in Table and Text documents was also solved during the EWG. | No actions needed.                                                                                                                                                |
| ITA | During the EWG, Italy was asked to include the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39), and to include the text on the Secweb project as agreed during the DM 19th September 2022. Both issues were solved. Furthermore, Italy was asked to include the contact details of all institutes that contributed to the data collection activities. During the EWG Italy added the contact details of one institute.                                                                | MS to provide contact details of all institutes that contribute to the data collection activities, and briefly describe their role in the WP in future submission |
| LVA | Latvia submitted an amended WP including the Secweb text. During the EWG, Latvia was asked to include the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39). This was solved during the EWG.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | No actions needed.                                                                                                                                                |
| MLT | Malta included the Secweb text and added MEDIAS survey in their amended WP. However, the date of submission in Table 0 was not updated and the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39) was not included. Both were solved during the EWG. A minor editorial issue in consistency in the years named on WP cover and in the WP tables remained.                                                                                                                                | Naming of the WP cover with regards to the years should be consistent with the years in the tables. MS to change the cover to the years 2022-2024.                |
| POL | Poland submitted an amended WP including the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39), and the Secweb text. However, the naming of the amended WP cover was not consistent with the years in the Tables. This issue was solved during the EWG.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No actions needed.                                                                                                                                                |
| PRT | The amended Portuguese WP is applicable for 2023 and 2024, resulting in deletion of implementation year 2022 and change of implementation year 2022-2024 to 2023-2024 in all Tables and Text. This also resulted in removal of the triennial MEGS survey from Table 2.6, Textbox 2.6 and Annex 1.1, as it is only executed in 2022.                                                                                                                                                           | No actions needed.                                                                                                                                                |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                 |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------|
|     | Furthermore, in Textbox 1.b the sampling coverage was changed and the Secweb text was updated                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                 |
| ROU | Romania included the Secweb text in their amended WP. However, the date of submission in Table 0 was not updated and the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39) was not included. Both were solved during the EWG.                                                                                                                                                            | No actions needed.                                              |
| SVN | Slovenia included the Secweb text added in their amended WP. However, the updated legal reference to the WP/AR template (2022/39) was not included. This was solved during the EWG.                                                                                                                                                                                                            | No actions needed.                                              |
| SWE | MS extended existing sampling programme with scientific observers at sea with new stratum covering all nets fisheries for PETS in their amended WP. Some outstanding editorial issues from EWG 21-17 regarding Table 1.3 and the inconsistency in naming of WP cover with the years in the Tables were solved during the EWG. Version numbering for text and tables still needs to be updated. | MS to solve minor editorial issues regarding version numbering. |

#### 2.4.2 Biological data

Of the 20 WPs that were resubmitted, 10 included declared amendments to the sections covered under biological data. These were assessed in a sub-group plenary which allowed for an in depth look at all aspects.

The submissions by MS that did not indicate changes relating to these sections were also checked against the evaluation from last year to see if there were any outstanding items.

In the case of Italy, the EWG 21-17 comments on the WP 2022-2024 referred to a version of the WP which was due to a resubmission after the EWG 21-17. The comments in EWG 22-18 relate to v6 (submitted in Nov 2021) including changes requested by the Commission.

Responses regarding requests for clarification or for a resubmission from all of the relevant MS were received during the meeting. These were checked to see if the response received was sufficient and the evaluation grid was updated accordingly. Only two MS have outstanding issues.

The following table provides a summary of the MS amendments in the WPs evaluated, regarding the Biological Sampling section:

| MS  | EWG 22-18 comments                                                              | Actions needed            |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| AUT | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                             | No actions needed.        |
| BEL | Inconsistencies in sampling frame identifiers naming concerning "out of frame". | Issue resolved during EWG |
| BGR | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                             | No actions needed.        |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                           |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| CYP | Some inconsistencies are spotted between the PSU type and the description of the sampling design in annex 1.1. For example, PSU type is given as Vessel*trip when MS randomly select vessels in a list of vessels in the fleet. As a general principle, the elements in the list to be drawn upon is the PSU type (in this case vessel). | Issue resolved during EWG |
| DEU | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No actions needed.        |
| DNK | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No actions needed.        |
| ESP | Inconsistencies in sampling frame identifiers naming were not updated, change 'unsampled' to 'Out-of-Frame'                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Issue resolved during EWG |
| FIN | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No actions needed.        |
| GRC | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No actions needed.        |
| HRV | Changes appear to be due to RWP – column U needs to be updated to indicate a plan is in place (test based on STREAMLINE task 2.1)                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Issue resolved during EWG |
| HUN | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No actions needed.        |
| IRL | Ambiguity in Thresholds used regarding the recreational stocks caused by guidelines                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Issue resolved during EWG |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ITA | <p>Table 2.1, 2.2 Master code list not followed in numerous tables 1.</p> <p>Table 2.5 No sampling scheme identifier for PETS (as detailed in Annex 1.1) separate scheme may not be needed</p> <p>2. Text regarding the fisheries in IOTC area relating to the one Italian Vessel should be explained in more detail in AR 3. Only some Out of frame sampling schemes identified in comments only, out of frames should be added as per the guidelines for all strata</p> <p>Only some Out of frame sampling schemes identified in comments only, out of frames should be added as per the guidelines for all strata</p> <p>Annex 1.1 1. Annex 1.1 Was not provided in the WP assessed by EWG 21-17 these were provided (Commission assessment Nov 2021)</p> <p>2. MS to pick the relevant elements of the annex 1.1 on PETS and merge these with the on-shore and at-sea sampling schemes respectively and also use the textbox 4.2 section 'Additional information on sampling schemes' for elements giving supplementary information to those in annexes 1.1. The spread of information to both annexes 1.1 and textbox 4.2 is left at the discretion of MS.</p> | <p>Outstanding Issues</p> <p>1. No out of frame row inserted for the sampling scheme 'Sci Obs Sea Commerc Sel Stock', MS to resubmit table with a row for Out of Frame inserted as per the guidelines.</p> <p>2. MS to include relevant parts of the standalone PETS scheme description in the existing at sea and on shores schemes in Annex 1.1. The PETS specific scheme should then be deleted from Annex 1.1</p> |
| LVA | MS to check the numbers provided in column Q "Average number of PSUs during the reference period" and correct them according to the guidelines-                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Issue resolved during EWG                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| MLT | Table 2.2 Research survey at sea and Stock-based sampling are used only for age sampling while different source is used for other biological variable. This means different sources used for <i>Mullus barbatus</i> , <i>Merluccius merluccius</i> , <i>Boops boops</i> , <i>Mullus surmuletus</i> , <i>Scomber colias</i> .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Issue resolved during EWG                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| POL | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No actions needed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| PRT | Table 2.1 Outermost region RFMO to be updated                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | RFMO entry is correct according to EU MAP table 1 –No action needed                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| ROU | No out of frame sampling schemes in WP Tables and Tables Sampling scheme identifiers now match across text and tables, however Annex 1.1 has an additional annex on the sampling scheme for PETS. MS to clarify as there is no information in table 2.5                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | MS to resubmit                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| SLO | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No actions needed.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |

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|-----|-------------------------------------|--------------------|
| SWE | No issues from COM assessment grid. | No actions needed. |
|-----|-------------------------------------|--------------------|

#### 2.4.3 Diadromous species and recreational fisheries

The following table provides a summary of the MS amendments in the WPs evaluated, regarding diadromous species data collection in freshwater and recreational fisheries. All issues were resolved during the meeting. Moreover, in the text of the table, we recommend what should be included in future submissions.

| MS  | EWG 22-18 comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Actions needed                                                                                                                                 |
|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AUT | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | No actions needed.                                                                                                                             |
| BEL | <p>Table 2.3:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MS to provide 2024 work plans. Species should be listed separately and not unified under the term "diadromous species", as for fykenet fishing in 2022.</li> <li>In a 3-yr NWP, MS should not choose 6-yr sampling frequencies without scientific explanation on why the MS deferred from yearly sampling as asked for in EU-MAP guidelines. MS to explain why planned yearly samplings from original NWP were deleted.</li> <li>The necessary information &amp; descriptions on electrofishing and fykefishing sampling to estimate silver eel escapement are entirely missing in Annex 1.1.</li> <li>MS stated in the past that it follows the commission implementing decision, underlining that it needs to avoid duplication of data collection. However, MS still is asked to collect the necessary data under EU-MAP and report according to the guidelines. If another Institution (e.g. INBO) collects the necessary data, report of collected data under dcf is still mandatory for the member state - MS is asked to provide at least the necessary details of mandatory data collection within the NWP</li> </ol> <p>Table 2.4:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eel (<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>) and sea trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i>) recreational fisheries data are missing in Table 2.4. Both species are mandatory for rec fish data collection in North sea and North sea draining rivers under EU-MAP. If no data is collected, MS still needs to list species in table and give reasons for not sampling.</li> <li>Fresh water eel catches are sampled by INBO under the eel management plan, so no information on sampling design is given for this species. Yet, data recorded under Article 10 of Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007 are to be made available in primary form to the national institutions implementing national work plans and thus reported in line</li> </ol> | Issues resolved during EWG. In future submissions, MS needs to update WP with missing Annex 1.1 for electrofishing and fykenet-fishing survey. |

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|     | with DCF/EU-MAP . MS to follow guidelines and keep separate annexes for each sampling scheme identifier                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                            |
| BGR | Table 2.4:<br>MS to elaborate more on outcomes and shortcomings of first pilot study                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Issue resolved during EWG. |
| CYP | Table 2.4:<br>1. MS to change statement on agreement at RCG level for all species to "No" if no formal RCG agreements exist<br>2. Column "Is there a regional threshold for the collection of stock related biological variables" shall be filled only when 'Y' is indicated in the previous column ("Is the collection of biological variables planned?"). Leave blank if it is "N" there. Column 'Area' will change to 'Area(s) covered'. MS should change to this approach and fill in the renamed column with the Area covered by the Cypriot marine recreational fisheries | Issue resolved during EWG  |
| DEU | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | No actions needed.         |
| DNK | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | No actions needed.         |
| ESP | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | No actions needed.         |
| FIN | Table 2.4: Years between actual (biannual) sampling years are not listed in table. Following guidelines, every year in one WP period needs to be listed, even if no planned sampling takes place and give respective information in comments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Issue resolved during EWG. |
| GRC | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | No actions needed.         |
| HRV | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | No actions needed.         |
| HUN | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | No actions needed.         |
| IRL | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | No actions needed.         |

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| ITA | <p>Table 2.3:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Biological sampling of eels (Sampling scheme identifier: diadromous (commercial)) is now entirely missing in table 2.3</li> <li>2. MS to provide more specific (national) information / links on quality documentation regarding sampling design.</li> <li>3. MS to indicate the planned unit of data reporting for each method (number, sites, number of individuals, etc.). (Example1: Method: fyke net, unit: number of fyke nets, planned minimum number:1); Example2 for recreational: Method: Offsite Questionnaire; Unit; number of questionnaires; planned minimum numbers: 1000)</li> </ol> <p>Table 2.4:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MS to include all mandatory species of Table 4, including diadromous species, and list each species individually. If not sampled, reasons must be given in table 2.4.</li> <li>2. MS to cover all species in multi species survey in log and telephone surveys</li> <li>3. MS to correct and provide identifiers with consistent wording throughout all submitted documents. MS to provide separate annexes for separate surveys</li> </ol> | <p>MS to provide correct numbers of units &amp; planned numbers according to guidelines in Table 2.3 for fisheries-dependent biological variables (provide number of planned individual samples as described in Text box 2.3 and Annex 1.1)</p> |
| LVA | <p>Table 2.3: Some quality documentation documents provided by hyperlinks (e.g. Salmon and sea trout, as well as eel data collection methodology) in Annex 1.1 are provided in Latvian language and cannot easily be checked for external experts.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p>MS to provide externally linked quality documents in English language in Annex 1.1 in future submissions.</p>                                                                                                                                |
| MLT | <p>Table 2.2: Research survey at sea and Stock-based sampling are used only for age sampling while different source is used for other biological variable. This means different sources used for <i>Mullus barbatus</i>, <i>Merluccius merluccius</i>, <i>Boops boops</i>, <i>Mullus surmuletus</i>, <i>Scomber colias</i>.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>Issue resolved during EWG</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| POL | <p>No issues from COM assessment grid.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>No actions needed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| PRT | <p>No issues from COM assessment grid.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <p>No actions needed.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| ROU | <p>Table 2.4:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MS does not plan sampling of certain species (e.g. <i>Squalus acanthias</i>, <i>Raja clavata</i>...) but indicate presence of sampling ("yes") in the column K ("Is an annual estimate of the total catch planned?"). Annexes are missing in table of contents</li> <li>2. There is a mismatch of sampling scheme identifier / sampling scheme type for rec fish survey in table 2.4 and</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <p>In future submissions, MS to be consistent in naming of their surveys throughout all submitted documents. MS to provide Annex 1.1 on annual catch estimates.</p>                                                                             |

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|     | Annex 1.1. Identifiers for the same survey must be specific, unique and consistent throughout all submitted documents.<br><br>3. No appropriate documentation for the required estimations and methodology for estimating annual catch data for the quality report available. The GFCM handbook for rec fish data collection is not an appropriate source as a quality reference for national biological data collection - MS to provide annex 1.1 for rec fish off site survey catch estimation                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| SLO | Table 2.4:<br><br>1. Elasmobranchs and highly migratory ICCAT species not listed individually, which is required by the guideline. <i>Salmo trutta</i> is also missing and needs to be listed.<br><br>2. MS to correct sampling scheme identifier / sampling scheme type (don't use the name for identifier and sampling scheme type)) and stay consistent in the naming of the same surveys throughout all submitted documents.<br><br>3. Annex 1.1 is not provided, not all necessary species are listed in T 2.4. (Unclear if coastal shore fishermen are covered by survey since only boat & speargun licenses are registered). Annexes are not listed in table of contents | In future submissions, MS to list all required species individually, provide reasons if not sampled. Member state to submit Quality Reports Annex 1.1 for each sampling scheme identifier |
| SWE | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | No actions needed.                                                                                                                                                                        |

#### 2.4.4 Surveys

A few MSs amended parts of their survey section. Minor issues were raised and solved during the EWG.

The following table provides a summary of the MS amendments in the WPs evaluated, regarding research surveys-at-sea:

| MS  | EWG 22-18 comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Actions needed     |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| CYP | It was noted in the amended WP that a non-binding RWP for 2023 has been submitted by RCG Med&BS, including regional coordination for the Medits survey.                                                                                                                    | No actions needed. |
| DEU | Germany updated the timing for the Greenland Groundfish Survey from autumn to summer due to missing coverage caused by poor weather conditions in autumn. This amendment is in agreement with the Greenland Institute of Natural Resources and was discussed in ICES NWWG. | No actions needed. |
| ESP | Spain included the IBERAS survey in the updated WP.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | No action needed.  |

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|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| GRC | Greece added stomach sampling activities within the MEDITS survey in their amended WP.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | No actions needed. |
| IRL | Ireland submitted an amended WP including the inclusion of two surveys (Irish Coastal Ecosystem Survey and Scallop survey included). Some editorial issues regarding the two surveys in Table 2.6 were raised during the EWG and solved.                                                                                            | No actions needed. |
| MLT | Malta included the MEDIAS survey in their amended WP.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | No actions needed. |
| PRT | The amended Portuguese WP is applicable for 2023 and 2024, resulting in deletion of implementation year 2022 and change of implementation year 2022-2024 to 2023-2024 in all Tables and Text. This also resulted in removal of the triennial MEGS survey from Table 2.6, Textbox 2.6 and Annex 1.1, as it is only executed in 2022. | No actions needed. |

#### 2.4.5 Impact of fisheries on marine biological resources

A few MSs amended section 4. No issues were raised during the EWG.

#### 2.4.6 Fishing activity, economic and social data

##### 2.4.6.1 Methodology

The EWG subgroup of economists agreed on a unified approach and methodology for evaluating MS resubmitted WPs and identified the main three steps to cover any amendments:

1. Check if amendments have been submitted by 15 of October 2022 in the WP Text Boxes 3.1, 5.2, 6.1, 7.1; Tables 3.1, 5.1, 5.2, 6.1, 7.1 and Quality Annex 1.2.
2. Check if 'actions needed' from last year's EWG 21-17 evaluation grid was considered by MS in new versions of the WP.
3. Check if comments from COM STECF assessment grid were considered by MS.

##### 2.4.6.2 Member States' Work Plan edits

It should be noted that some MS use track changes or red coloured text to highlight revisions in the WP, but not all MS use a similar approach. In some cases, a table with WP sections, changes and justification was provided. The provision of such a table could be useful and simplify the evaluation of EWG. The EWG suggests a common approach for all MS when resubmitting Work Plans and for future resubmissions by providing a table with a summary of the sections that have been amended (see section 2.4). The red colour/track changes for the amended WP text should also be used.

In addition, it was considered that the COM assessment grids for some MS include editorial changes that have been addressed by MS soon after the last year's EWG 21-17 and before the resubmission for this year. In these cases, it is difficult to verify what actions need to be evaluated and what actions were already addressed.

The following table provides a summary of the MS amendments in the WPs evaluated, regarding fishing activity, economic and social data:

| <b>MS</b> | <b>EWG 22-18 comments</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Actions needed</b>                                                                                        |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| AUT       | Austria did not submit a WP 2022-2024(7) in 2021. MS submitted 2023-2025 WP in 2022 (including WP Table 1.2 and Text Box 1b). MS is applying a threshold according to Chapter II Para 7 of the Commission's Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168 for aquaculture data collection (section 6.1). | No actions needed.                                                                                           |
| BEL       | MS resolved issues during EWG 22-18 concerning Tables 5.1, 5.2, 6.1 and 7.1. and improved Annex 1.2.<br>MS is invited to continue improving on information provided in the quality report. in the future.                                                                                       | MS resubmitted Tables 5.1, 5.2, 6.1 and 7.1 and Annex 1.2 (5.2; 6.1; 7.1). No action needed.                 |
| BGR       | No issues remaining from previous STECF evaluation and no amendments.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | No actions needed.                                                                                           |
| CYP       | No issues from COM assessment grid.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | No actions needed.                                                                                           |
| DEU       | Amendments in Text Box 6.1; Table 6.1; Annex 1.2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | No actions needed.                                                                                           |
| DNK       | Amendments in Table 3.1                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | No actions needed.                                                                                           |
| ESP       | Amendments in Table 7.1. No issues from COM assessment grid; issues from previous WP evaluation were not resolved for table 6.1 and Annex 1.2 (6.1 and 7.1).                                                                                                                                    | WP resubmission requested for 6.1 and Annex 1.2 (6.1; 7.1). Issues were solved during EWG. No action needed. |
| FIN       | Amendments in Text Box 5.2; Tables 3.1, 5.1, 5.2. No issues from COM assessment grid; issues from previous WP evaluation for segments clustering in 5.1 and 5.2.                                                                                                                                | No actions needed.                                                                                           |
| GRC       | No issues from COM assessment grid; no issues from previous WP evaluation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | No actions needed.                                                                                           |
| HRV       | Text Box 5.2, 6.1; Table 6.1; Annex 1.2; some fleet segments were erased which are no longer active.                                                                                                                                                                                            | No actions needed.                                                                                           |
| HUN       | No changes and no actions needed from COM assessment grid                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | No actions needed.                                                                                           |
| IRL       | Some aquaculture segments have been added, all in line with legislation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | No actions needed.                                                                                           |
| ITA       | Annex 1.2 on fishing activity has been included.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | No actions needed.                                                                                           |

|     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                         |
|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| LVA | No changes and no actions needed from COM assessment grid                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | No actions needed.                                                                                                      |
| MLT | No changes and no actions needed from COM assessment grid                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | No actions needed.                                                                                                      |
| POL | Poland presents only carp and trout in Table 6.1, both selected for data collection, but with threshold 'B - species accounting for less than 5% of the MS's production'. Both species account for more than 5% of MS production (but less than 5% of EU production). Other species with less than 5% national share should be at least mentioned in Text Box 6.1, if not included in Table 6.1 with threshold 'B'. Carp and trout should have 'NA' – no threshold applied. MS is requested to resubmit corrected Table 6.1 before WP approval. No changes | Resolved in resubmission                                                                                                |
| PRT | Table 5.2 - Text Box 5.2 - Annex 1.2: Quality report for socioeconomic data sampling scheme. MS addressed the issues in the revised WP                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | No action needed. Resolved in resubmission                                                                              |
| ROU | Table 5.1 [COM assessment grid Invited to harmonize Text Box 5.2, in line with changes requested above for Table 5.2, and highlighted inconsistencies between Table 3.1 and Text Box 3.1].                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | No action needed. Not resolved in resubmission but resolved during EWG 22-18                                            |
| SVN | COM assessment grid reported that MS did not correct Tables 5.1 and 5.2. MS is requested to resubmit Tables 5.1 and 5.2.<br><br>MS is also requested to specify if PIM is used for estimation of "consumption of fixed capita" or to justify if not used                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Both issues not resolved in the resubmission nor during EWG 22-18                                                       |
| SWE | No changes [COM assessment grid Sweden requested to submit a clean version with modified tables 5.1 and 5.2]. No revised tables (excel file in the background documents)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Major updates requested, almost all refer to EWG 21-17 issues which had not been resolved by MS: Not solved during EWG. |

### 3 REGIONAL WORK PLAN FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN AND BLACK SEA

#### 3.1 Background information

The EWG 22-18 was provided with the Regional Work Plan (RWP) for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (Med&BS) region by the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) for the Med&BS. This is the first time STECF comments on a RWP for this region.

#### 3.2 EWG comments on the RWP Med&BS

The RCG Med&BS, with the technical support of STREAMLINE regional grant (MARE/2020/08), submitted a test run non-binding Regional Work Plan (RWP) for the year 2023 for comments to STECF. This RWP contained the following points:

1. Regional coordination for sampling marine recreational fisheries (Text Box 2.4);
2. Regional coordination for sampling plan for biological data (Text Box 2.5);
3. Regional coordination for Research surveys at sea (Text Box 2.6 and Table 2.6);
4. Regional coordination for the monitoring of the incidental catches of sensitive species (Text Box 4.2);
5. Demersal fish stomach contents collection and analysis (Text Box 4.3 and Table 4.1).

The EWG 22-18 appreciated the well-designed proposed RWP and acknowledged all the work done to propose such an advanced version.

On the **section on recreational fisheries**, the proposed Text Box 2.4 is close to being ready for a more official binding version. One important information was found to be the availability of an agreed list of species to monitor in the region from GFCM. Indeed, during its twenty-third session, the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) endorsed a revised list of species of importance for recreational fisheries (Appendix 7 of the SAC 2022 Report) that takes into account national and subregional specificities and is based on the criteria endorsed by the SAC in 2021, i.e. dealing with priority species for DCRF, commercial species, NIS, species of social interest, species of conservation concern, etc. The Committee highlighted that this list should be flexible and adaptive to potentially include other species according to changes in fishing activities and behaviours and should guide the collection and analysis of data to support the provision of advice on the management of this sector. For more details, see the report "Twenty-third session of the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) FAO headquarters, Rome, Italy, 21–24 June 2022." <https://www.fao.org/gfcm/statutory-meetings/detail/en/c/1605980/>

The **section on sampling plan for biological data** displays work in progress and is not in the form of an agreed RWP at the moment. The EWG acknowledged the work done and is of the opinion that all elements are almost ready to be part of a RWP, provided that one of the three scenarios proposed can be agreed. Then the relevant information from the candidates Regional Sampling Plans can be included into Table and Text Box 2.5 and Annex 1.1. The attached Word file contains elements which would be appropriate for inclusion in Annex 1.1, but if a full Annex 1.1 is not ready, the table and textbox could form a first stage in a binding RWP and agreed elements of protocols can be detailed in Text Box 2.5. Similarly, if for a proposed scenario it is difficult to arrive at a consensus, there is the possibility to set up a first RWP with a minimal baseline scenario with the option given to MS to allocate more samples than in the RWP.

The **section on Research surveys at sea** is almost ready to be included in an official RWP. All internationally coordinated surveys have been included in Table 2.6 and is filled by each participating MS accordingly. The Text Box 2.6 should contain regional maps of survey coverage by MS and include links on handbooks, external reports and RCG recommendations (all cited in the proposal without links, this recommendation is valid for all textboxes).

Distribution maps on regional level are accessible through protocol links. If distribution maps are presented by MS, it should also be included in the National AR evaluation. At present MSs are not obliged to present maps in their NWP or National AR.

If possible, the development of Annex 1.1 for each coordinated survey would be an added value, which would release each participating MS to draft a national version of these Annexes 1.1. The EWG recommended that such a Regional Annex 1.1 should be part of a RWP only on its final form; as long as all elements are not available then the survey annexes should remain national which would avoid having overlapping versions in both NWP and RWP.

The **section on the monitoring of the incidental catches of sensitive species** needs further development. At present, it is difficult to make a distinction between the text originating from the WP template and filled by the RCG. We suggest to organise Text Box 4.2 better, so it is easier to read. The monitoring of incidental bycatch of sensitive species is highly related to the biological sampling. The RSP of PETS be included in Table 2.5 as a link to the RWP and codes in relation to PETS are given in the Table.

The section **on fish stomach contents collection and analysis** is almost ready to be included in an official RWP. The link proposed in Table 4.1 should be updated to be more precise in pointing on the relevant information.

The **general section of the textbox and generic tables** (Tables 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 2.1) need further development in order to form part of an official RWP. More detailed descriptions of the elements included in the RWP would be welcome, e.g. a list of all MSs involved in the RWP, a clear indication of MS involved in each section, who to contact and contact details (RCG chairs or RCG secretariat) for any questions. The generic tables and information for the general textbox are known to exist as part of RCG Med&BS annual work and are deemed to be easy parts to include in the RWP.

In light of the advanced stage of the proposed non-binding RWP 2023, the EWG recommends to the RCG Med&BS to align with RCG NANS&EA, Baltic, ECON and Large Pelagics on the objective of presenting an official RWP 2025-2027 to the RCG Technical meeting 2023. These official RWP 2025-2027 will be the first of their kind and will allow for a learning experience on how it works together with NWP and prepare the ground for improvements in future versions. For this to happen, a first version will need to be circulated to all relevant MS as early as possible in 2023. The EWG welcomes the resumption of the pan-regional ISSG on setting up Regional Work Plans which will take over from both Fishn'Co and Streamline projects in helping produce the final draft of RWP to be proposed in RCG 2023.

## **4 EVALUATION OF DATA TRANSMISSION ISSUES**

The EWG evaluated Data Transmission issues (DTi) from the 2022 Fleet Economics data call (EWG 22-02) and from the Quality checking of MED&BS data and reference points (EWG 22-03).

### **4.1 Pre-screening**

The DTi from EWG 22-02 were 48 and they were not pre-screened, while from the EWG 22-03 the reported issues were 179, but they were pre-screened prior to EWG 22-18 by an independent expert who was contracted by DG MARE.

The outcome from the pre-screening of the issues from the Quality checking of MED&BS data and reference points (EWG 22-03) was made available to the EWG in an Excel sheet extracted from the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT) platform. The EWG assessed the already pre-screened issues considering the MS comments and the bilateral correspondence that took place by email between the MS and the COM, where MS were requesting permission for resubmission of the historical data.

The EWG 22-18 considered that the work done by the pre-screener was of crucial importance for an efficient evaluation by the EWG. During the EWG, experts were divided into two subgroups – for assessing the biological issues and the economic issues.

### **4.2 Evaluation of DT issues**

To highlight positive examples, the EWG discussed cases where Member States managed to provide clear and detailed comments to the different issues, which helped the group to assess "FOLLOW-UP NEEDED" if there is a need to follow or the issue is closed by marking "SATISFACTORY".

Examples of such messages are: "We have checked this value and it is correct."

"It is true that the length frequency distributions are available only for the last 4 years, because before this period the data collection for the biological monitoring of landings of ANE was not planned in the national programme/WP."

"The VB units should be in cm, so they will be corrected in the next data call."

Whenever possible, MS should try to ensure that their comments in the DTMT are done after the issue is checked, rather than including generic comments that are not issue specific.

The supporting document (decision tree) for the DTMT Guidelines proposed by EWG 22-07 focuses on enhancing data quality, on the data resubmission process and on the ability to provide data for the next data calls (economic, Med&BS, FDI etc.). In this case, multiple types of assessment are possible depending on the issue flagged by the end user, but the most relevant was "FOLLOW-UP NEEDED". After such an assessment, the MS is given the opportunity to collect missing data or correct inconsistencies in data sets already provided and to submit such data in the future. The EWG notes that the supporting document (decision tree) has in some cases a different approach to the DTMT Guidance document (07.2021).

The EWG notes that when the issue has been assessed as "FOLLOW-UP NEEDED", there should be clarification provided in the STECF EWG DTi Comment column indicating the responsibility for follow-up. This responsibility of the Follow-up actions may be addressed to MS, DG MARE or the end user. The additional column 'Follow-Up Responsibility' is suggested to be inserted in the DTMT to address the responsibility for the follow-up. If the follow-up actions are addressed to the MS, it would be useful to clarify with MS the time frame for when the data transmission issue can be resolved. If the MS has promised to provide data in the next data call, the relevant EWG should be informed of the need to verify the DT issues with an assessment of "FOLLOW-UP NEEDED". The updated assessment should be given by the EWG as either "SATISFACTORY" or "UNSATISFACTORY".

Concerning the Fleet Economic Data Call, the Guidelines from 07.2021 have focused on the impact of data with errors or missing data on the quality of the Annual Economic Report (i.e. on the impact

on fulfilling the terms of reference of the STECF EWG using the data). Thus, even if the data found to be "missing" or "incorrect" for the last data call and could be provided in the future, the assessment was "UNSATISFACTORY".

The EWG notes that DTMT issues from the 2022 Fleet Economics data call often refer to the social variables. In some cases, it was not a failure of data submission by the MS but only for some variables for which there is a need for more precise definition (e.g., employment status). The EWG suggests that the RCG ECON should address the clarification of the definitions for the social variables which should improve data provision. The fleet economic data call templates for the social variables should be corrected for the variable group 'Employment by status' where following variables are included: Owner, Employee, Full time, Part time, Unknown. Possible solution that could ensure the consistency between the data which is collected and reported by each MS is separating the employment status in: Owner full time, Owner part time, Employee full time, Employee part time. The variables Full time and Part time employment should be requested separately for each of these groups so that it would include both the owner and employee. A common error for some MS was a mismatch between the total employment numbers reported under the economic data call and the social data call. RGC Econ could also look at providing more advice and clarification with this issue. The totals for employment (and their reporting sub-categories) should match between the data submitted for the economic and social data calls.

The EWG proposes for the point 7 (b) to be revised in the supporting document (decision tree) EWG 22-07 and the assessment "NOT ASSESSED" to be changed to "FOLLOW-UP NEEDED".

Overall, for the AER (fleet economic) data, 10 issues were assessed "satisfactory", 7 "unsatisfactory", 31 "follow-up needed". For the Med&BS data, 97 issues were "satisfactory", 0 "unsatisfactory", 78 "follow-up needed" and 4 "not assessed".

The EWG recommends strengthening the linkage between data available through data calls and AR tables. PGECON 2015 reports on a successful implementation of this approach using input from the 2015 fleet economics data call. When applying this procedure, it indicates not only the MS data collected, but also shows that the respective data were ready for submission. Ensuring of a linkage between the data calls, data transmission issues and the Annual report will not only add extra value to the AR but could also affect the detection of recurring issues. Detailed description of the concept for linkage between DTMT and AR is available in the EVALUATION GUIDANCE FOR ANNUAL REPORTS UNDER REVISED EU-MAP (Electronic Annex 3).

### **4.3 Recommendations for Member States**

The assessment of the DTMT issues during EWG 22-18 was conducted considering the recent request from MS to resubmit data following the results from the quality and coverage checks of Med&BS datasets performed under the EWG 22-03. As most MS that were affected had more than one issue to be resolved, the EWG found it useful for MS to list the ID number of the issues that were going to be resubmitted and finally solved. In cases when MS ask for a general permission to resubmit data by just referring to the Data Call, it is difficult to identify which of the issues ones have been addressed.

Therefore, the EWG recommends that MS to identify specific issues by the related "ID" in their communications and petitions to resubmit historical data.

## **5 ANNUAL REPORT ASSESSMENT GRID AND GUIDANCE**

The EWG 22-18 reviewed the work started by the EWG 22-07 on drafting the assessment grid for evaluation of the Annual Reports 2022pp and guidance for the evaluators.

For the evaluation grid, the EWG addressed the issue of assessment of quantitative achievements, mainly response rates and coverage rates. Thus far, no guidance is available for this task. Hence, these figures have never been evaluated in a standardised manner. The EWG 22-18 strongly recommends to establish a working group to develop such guidance on the assessment of quantitative achievements. This guidance could refer not only to response and coverage rates, but also to the implications of these issues. The STECF 17-11 report (esp. Chapter 2.6) would be a good basis for this work.

The revised assessment grid is provided in the electronic annex 2 and the revised guidance is given in the electronic annex 3.

## **6 DCF PLATFORM CONCEPT**

### **6.1 General comments**

The EWG acknowledges the work initiated by the Commission to build a DCF platform for submitting and evaluating the work plans and annual reports.

The EWG went through the background document with the description of the functional, non-functional and global requirements for the future DCF platform. The EWG observes that the document clearly describes the context and the business needs. However, the document is quite complex and specific and would require more in-depth analysis. Here are some preliminary comments:

The complexity of the platform is due to several factors and in particular to the different users that may use the platform for different needs. The platform should then be flexible enough to manage different needs (drafting/submitting/assessing WP and AR, reporting for EC and other users, etc.)

In the evaluation of AR and WP, it would be important to link the information reported in the WP and AR with external information sources, in particular the DTMT, the fleet register and even some structural statistics for the aquaculture and processing sectors (for instance to check the correct application of the threshold for aquaculture data collection activities). In particular, a link to data submitted under the DCF should be provided, thus allowing to compare AR information with data that have been delivered, e.g. through data calls. Data calls, on the other hand, should be designed in a way that the data can be fully linked to the WP and AR. In addition, the platform could be used to link recommendations by RCGs/LM and the respective WP and AR.

The solution design is crucial as it will define the actual functionality of the platform. Also, it is important to consider the need for an adaptive platform able to follow potential changes in EU MAPs.

Concerning the process of submission of WPs, it needs to be considered that on national level, MS may have in place national rules for submission and adoption of official documents.

The access/user policy of the platform needs to be specified along with the requirements. For instance, among the User groups, a User Without Roles (UWR) is identified. But it should be specified to what kind of users the platform will allow downloading the information or extracting data. Input from NCs and RCGs on potential User roles is beneficial and important.

It is planned that the platform provides a review of previous WP/AR submissions as well.

### **6.2 Comments by sections**

#### 3.2. WP and AR cycle

After the third paragraph, information on actions specific to MS while compiling the WP/AR should be added. It needs to be considered that these actions may vary depending on the MS.

Example:

- NC prefills document with available information
- NC informs national experts on the need to input information in relevant document (including legal references and deadlines)
- NC validates input by national experts and inputs additional information
- NC sends the draft WP for comments to other national authorities
- Prior to final submission to EC, NC sends the WP/AR for comments for internal approval.
- Some MS may have governmental approval of WP.

Specific to the AR:

- It needs to be considered which procedures are in place in MS after the submission of AR and if financing of activities and management is connected (payments to involved institutes etc.), e.g. which information is needed by MS from the DCF platform (final STECF evaluation, evaluation of overall MS performance by COM etc.).

### 3.3. Regional Work Plans

While not all DCF thematic areas listed in 3.1 are relevant for RWP 2025-2027 submission, and the structure specified in the third paragraph is currently sufficient, the platform needs to consider evolution of RWPs in the future. In general, the structure of the RWP should follow the WP structure.

It is relevant that there are several RWPs submitted to the COM in each planning period (the periods may or may not overlap). Each RWP is submitted by the relevant RCG and is specific to MS participating in that RCG, however, not all RWP sections are relevant/applicable for all of the participating MS.

It needs to be considered what are the procedures for compiling and submitting the RWP and which users should have access. In this regard, there may be a need to specify a user "RCG chair" (authorized by MS to formally submit the RWP to the EC).

### 3.4 High-level needs for tools

No comments.

### 3.5 High-level information contained in WP and AR

The level of detail provided for the data measure 'biological data' and 'impacts of fisheries on the environment' is too high in comparison to other categories of data and at the same time it is not complete. Data measures should be defined by relevant experts – this information should be deduced for each DCF thematic area listed in 3.1.

The platform could take into account information from other sources allowing MS to upload additional documents (bilateral agreements etc.) or provide relevant links.

RCG/LM recommendations could have a separate subpage on the platform, allowing to the RCG to input recommendations and change their status (recommendations valid for each planning period). MS could choose and report on implementation of relevant recommendations in the WP/AR.

The same principle applies for the list of meetings.

### 3.6 DTMT

A link could be established between WP/AR and DTMT, allowing to link specific issue with data collected. This would mean that each data measure (metier, stock, fleet segment etc. specified in WP/AR) for which the issues are reported by the end-user should be available to select in the DTMT. The reported issue for that data measure is then evaluated by STECF and COM during AR and DTi evaluation.

### 3.7 Data collected

This section is connected to the current WP/AR Table 1.1 (Data availability) where MS reports on dates of availability of each dataset to end-users. Information on data availability by data measure is also important from the aspect of end-users in terms of planning of data calls and to COM (related to timeliness of data submissions as opposed to availability of data indicated by MS in their WPs).

## 4 Actors, 6.1 Main Success Scenario, 7 Use cases

While the list is extensive, the EWG considers that MS and RCGs should agree on relevant actors and their roles (important in defining roles at national and RCG level).

It can be considered that the NC user may have rights to grant access to NE users. Access may be granted to view/edit all WP/AR sections or only to some (on the level of MS, there may be institutes and experts appointed only to certain sections).

In addition, it needs to be noted that process of revising the RWP prior to submission involves extensive procedures and that during the EWG assessment, there may not be enough time to submit a revised RWP version. Pre-screening may be needed allowing to the RCG enough time to revise and agree on new version of RWP.

*Alternative scenario: web interface with predefined fields in line with WP/AR templates:*

It could be considered that the WP/AR is filled in by national experts/NCs directly in predefined fields on the web interface (as opposed of uploading prefilled Excel/Word files to populate the database). In case the current scenario is kept (uploading files), an input validation tool should be available to national experts to check files prior to upload by the NC (similar tool is available to experts for data submission (DVT – data validation tool), which allows validation of data without populating the database).

## 5 Business Needs

The EWG considers that business needs could be grouped in time stages, as some can be introduced in later stages. Business needs related to drafting and submission of WP/AR (1-8, 16) and evaluation (9-10) should take priority over business needs for analytical purposes (11-15).

## 7 REVISION OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE ANNUAL REPORT 2021 OF THE NETHERLANDS

The EWG 22-18 was asked by the Commission to re-assess a small part of the Annual Report (AR) 2021 of The Netherlands, regarding sections 5A and 5B (on Data Quality) and section 6A (Data availability), as the EWG 22-07 on AR evaluation apparently did not take the MS response and revised AR files during the EWG ('ping-pong') into account in the final EWG comments. Consequently, the EWG 22-07 evaluation finished with the corresponding issues still open and applied the judgement 'Mostly' to the affected sections.

The EWG 22-18 reviewed the AR assessment files and MS submissions and came to the conclusion that the MS reply already took the experts' comments during the EWG 22-07 into account in the revised versions (v. 3) of the AR 2021 sent during the EWG 22-07, so the EWG 22-18 now provides an updated assessment of the Dutch AR 2021 in the electronic annex 4, which changed the assessment of the affected modules from 'Mostly' to 'Yes' and accordingly the overall assessment as well from 'Mostly' to 'Yes', see updated 'traffic light table' below.

|                | AUT* | BEL | BGR | CYP | CZE* | DEU | DNK | ESP | EST | FIN | FRA | GRC | HRV | HUN* | IRL | ITA | LTU | LVA | MLT | NLD | POL | PRT | ROU | SVK* | SVN | SWE |
|----------------|------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|
| Overall Perfor | M    | Y   | M   | Y   | M    | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | M   | M   | Y   | M    | Y   | P   | Y   | Y   | M   | M   | Y   | M   | Y   | NA   | NA  | Y   |
| 1A-1C          | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | NA  | Y   |
| 1D             | NA   | Y   | NA  | NA  | NA   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | NA  | Y   |
| 1E             | NA   | Y   | NA  | NA  | NA   | Y   | M   | M   | Y   | Y   | M   | P   | NA  | NA   | Y   | NA  | Y   | Y   | NA  | Y   | Y   | M   | NA  | NA   | NA  | Y   |
| 1F             | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 1G-1H          | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | M   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | M   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 2A             | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | M   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 3A             | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 3B             | M    | NA  | Y   | NA  | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA  | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | M    | Y   | Y   | NA  | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | M   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 3C             | NA   | Y   | Y   | NA  | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA  | Y   | NA  | Y   | Y   | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA  | Y   | NA  | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 4A-4C          | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 5A             | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | M   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | MY  | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | M   | Y   |
| 5B             | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | MY  | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 6A             | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | MY  | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 7A             | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 7B             | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y    | Y   | M   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |
| 7C             | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y    | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | Y   | NA   | Y   | Y   |

  

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|------|----------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| ment | Classification |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|      | NO             |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|      | PARTLY         |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|      | MOSTLY         |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|      | YES            |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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## 9 LIST OF ANNEXES

Electronic annexes are published on the meeting's web site on:  
<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg2218>

List of electronic annexes documents:

EWG-22-18 – Annex 1 – WP update assessment by MS (Excel workbook)  
EWG-22-18 – Annex 2 – Revised AR assessment grid (Excel workbook)  
EWG-22-18 – Annex 3 – Revised AR assessment guidance (Word file)  
EWG-22-18 – Annex 4 – Re-assessment of the AR 2021 of The Netherlands (Excel sheet)

## 10 LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background documents are published on the meeting's web site on:  
<http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/stecf/ewg2218>

List of background documents:

EWG-22-18 – Doc 1 - Declarations of invited and JRC experts (see also section XX of this report – List of participants)

- WP 2022-2024(2027) submitted by the MS
- WP evaluation grid (approved by EWG 21-17)
- Stand-alone document for WP evaluation (approved by EWG 21-17)
- Guidance on WP/AR templates (Com Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39)
- 2021 COM assessment grids
- Documents related to AR assessment revision (transmitted by COM from concerned MS)
- DTMT guidance (July 2021): <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guidelines/dtmt>
- Draft guidelines for STECF DT issues evaluators (EWG 22-07 document 06b 'DTMT-guidance renewed'; transmitted by the COM, not in the official report)
- DT issues recorded in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool:  
<https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/dcf/dtmt>
- Prefilled assessment of data transmission issues from the pre-screener (Excel file)
- STECF EWG 22-02 and EWG 22-06 reports (Annual Economic Report)
- STECF EWG 22-03 report (Quality checking of MED & BS data and reference points)
- Draft evaluation guidance for annual report under revised EU MAP (EWG 22-07 document 10; transmitted by the COM, not in the official report)
- Current Annual Report assessment grid
- DCF Requirements v1.1\_FINAL\_2022.09.15 (transmitted by the COM)
- Assessment files from previous STECF EWGs, including STECF EWG 21-17 (WP)

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The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) has been established by the European Commission. The STECF is being consulted at regular intervals on matters pertaining to the conservation and management of living aquatic resources, including biological, economic, environmental, social and technical considerations.

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