



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Fisheries Policy Mediterranean and Black Sea
Fisheries Management Mediterranean and Black Sea

Brussels,
MARE/D1/CO (2021)

**TO THE ATTENTION OF THE NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS OF BULGARIA,
CROATIA, CYPRUS, FRANCE, GREECE, ITALY, MALTA, ROMANIA,
SLOVENIA, AND SPAIN**

Subject: 2021 Official call for data on landings, discards, length and age compositions, biological parameters, trawl and hydro acoustic surveys in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea.

Dear National Correspondents,

The European Union has established and is expected to establish additional multi-annual plans for relevant Mediterranean fisheries catching demersal and small pelagic species, specifically in areas totally or partially beyond the territorial waters of Member States (Council Regulation (EC) N° 1380/2013¹). Moreover, the promotion of improved scientific advice on the status of the main stocks in the Black Sea and on the fisheries exploiting these stocks is of outmost importance for the implementation of the Common Fisheries Policy in this particular region. The scientific basis of these plans and the status of the different stocks shall come from an analysis carried out in coordination with scientists of EU Member States both at EU and national level as well as within the Scientific Advisory Committee of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM-SAC).

With a view to further support the scientific community in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea, the European Commission has given mandate to the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) to adopt an operational work-programme, in order to improve the knowledge on the status of the exploited demersal and small pelagic stocks. One of the main tasks within this work-programme is to evaluate the exploitation levels with respect to their biological and economic productivity and the sustainability of the exploited stocks. This task can be achieved by using both trawl and echo surveys as well as commercial landings/discards and fishing effort data, as collected through the EU

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC ([OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22](#)).

Data Collection Framework programmes and adopted Work Plans (Regulation (EU) N° 2017/1004², Commission Decisions 2019/909 and 2019/210³, Commission Decision 1701/2016⁴ and previous legal framework, where applicable), other suitable scientific information collected through national and community funded studies and research projects, as well as FAO regional projects, such as CopeMed, MedSudMed, Adriamed and EastMed.

Since the launching of the STECF activities in 2008, more than thirty Expert Working Groups (EWGs)⁵ have already taken place. They have contributed, through the analysis of the available information, to the better understanding of the biological state of the main Mediterranean and Black Sea stocks. Since 2016 STECF stock assessment have been presented in GFCM WGSAD and WGSASP on a yearly basis to ensure an additional EU contribution to the SAC advisory process to maximize the coverage of key stocks.

Data request for STECF EWG 21-11 and EWG 21-15

In 2021, the planned STECF-EWGs (and its scientists from all EU Mediterranean and Black Sea countries) are expected to continue carrying out joint assessments, using different methods and data sources, on several stocks of important demersal and small pelagic species. The full list of species, for which STECF is tasked to carry out assessments and whose data must be uploaded, is provided in ANNEX 1, Appendix 1.7.

Following a similar approach as in previous years, the European Commission herewith asks Member States to provide, from the date of opening (see below for details) and **not later than 25th June 2021 (midday)**, fisheries and surveys data in support of the forthcoming STECF EWG 21-11⁶ and EWG 21-15⁷ on Mediterranean stock assessments (parts I and II). This request shall apply to all Member States. The requested data are listed below in detail:

- **Fisheries data** (catches, landings, discards) shall be submitted in accordance to Appendix 1 and 2 of ANNEX 1 for the **year 2020**;
- **Biological data** (Maturity ogives at Length, Maturity ogives at Age, Growth parameters, Sex ratio at length, Sex ratio at age, Age length

² REGULATION (EU) 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 (Recast).

³ COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 of 18 February 2019 establishing the list of mandatory research surveys and thresholds for the purposes of the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

COMMISSION DELEGATED DECISION (EU) 2019/910 of 13 March 2019 establishing the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of biological, environmental, technical and socioeconomic data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors

⁴ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1701 of 19 August 2016 laying down rules on the format for the submission of work plans for data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors (notified under document C(2016) 5304).

⁵ <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg2111>

⁶ <http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/medbs>

⁶ <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg2111>

⁷ <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg2115>

key) shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 3 of ANNEX 1 for the **full time series**;

- **Scientific survey raw data** (e.g. **MEDITS, SOLEMON, Black Sea surveys** or other survey data if format is in compliance with the MEDITS ones (TA, TB and TC) shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.1 of ANNEX 1 for the **year 2020**;
- **Scientific survey aggregated data** collected under different surveys (e.g. **MEDIAS**) shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.2 of ANNEX 1 for the **year 2020**.

The European Commission reminds Member States that according to Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004, Member States must make detailed and aggregated data available to end-users to support scientific analysis as a basis for fisheries management.

The time-series stemming from the DCF Work Plans shall be as consistent as possible with those submitted to GFCM under the DCRF Stock Assessment input data⁸. Since discrepancies in stock assessment input data could be a source of advice duplication, maximum alignment and consistency are strongly encouraged. With the aim of producing the best scientific advice, DCRF Stock Assessment input data could be made available for STECF EWGs.

Besides the submission of data collected under the EU Data Collection Framework, we invite Member States to authorize the scientists attending the EWGs to make use of all the necessary data as collected in research projects funded at national level only. In this context, we remind Member states of their obligations under Article 4(3) of the Treaty of the European Union.

We expect that scientists attending the EWGs, in order to complement what is collected under the EU Data Collection Framework, will make use of all data collected through the research projects and studies funded by the European Commission.

Deadlines for data submission

The JRC Data Upload portlet (<https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/dcf/dc/medbs>) will officially open for submissions on the **24th of May 2021** until the legal deadline on the **25th of June 2021 (midday)**.

According to data-handling procedure for STECF EWGs, the **operational deadline will be set on the 14th of July 2021 (open from the 12th to the 14th midday)**.

Detailed information on the working procedures in respect to the deadlines can be found in ANNEX 2 (*Data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups*). **Please note that the upload system will be closed just after the legal deadline and will be re-opened for the operational deadline.**

⁸ DCRF Task VII.1, VII.2, VII.3.1 and VII.3.2

Additional information on codes and formats

To comply with the outcomes of the EWG 18-11⁹, the codes reported in ANNEX 1 (Appendix 1-9) were revised, namely the country codes for Romania and Bulgaria, the fisheries codes, the gear code and the area code.

Moreover, the MEDITS files format have been **updated according to MEDITS Handbook Version 9 2017**. This will give the opportunity to the Member State to upload salinity information in the columns added to the TA file. Furthermore, another column was added in all the three files, to allow for the reporting of the survey name. The latter provides for the upload of survey information other than MEDITS (e.g SOLEMON or Black Sea demersal survey), if these data can follow the MEDITS format.

We would like to remind Member States that, according to ANNEX 1 – Appendix 1.9, they must provide landings and discards (if available) in weight by species (listed in Appendix 1.7) both for métiers selected and for métiers not selected by the ranking system.

In 2016, the JRC portlet was changed along with the digital format of the files and the implementation of a file naming convention, to improve data submission and quality checking. Files are requested as Comma Separated Values (.csv) and only one file for each table can be accepted at upload. Full details of the data transmission procedures are detailed in ANNEX 3.

Member States shall take note of the **Data Validation Tool** (provided by DG JRC and available at <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/dcf/dc/medbs>) and are encouraged to use it, in order to avoid errors at upload time to the JRC portlet, to support the data submissions and enhance the data quality.

Requests for resubmission

If Member States decide to revise and resubmit the data time series, a justification must be sent to DGMARE Unit C3 (contact venetia.kostopoulou@ec.europa.eu) requesting overwrite/append rights.

DG MARE may also contact the National Correspondents, whenever considered necessary, particularly *during* the relevant STECF EWGs for additional data sets, by GFCM-GSA. Any use of data different from those uploaded by Member States, as part of this data call, will be duly justified and recorded in the STECF EWG report.

For further clarifications and guidance, you may contact:

Data submission team (jrc-datasubmission@ec.europa.eu)

⁹ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Evaluation of Work Plans & Data Transmission failures (STECF-18-18). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2018, ISBN 978-92-79-79401-8, doi:10.2760/031311, JRC114724

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We look forward to your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

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Director

Enclosures: Annex 1: Data Call - Specifications;
 Annex 2: Data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups;
 Annex 3: Data Call Transmission Instructions

c.c.: *Fisheries Directors and Permanent Representations of Spain, France, Italy, Slovenia, Malta, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia.*

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