

EU Council Regulation 1543/2000

Establishing a Community Framework for the Collection
and Management of Data Needed to Conduct the CFP

Report of the 4th Liaison Meeting between the Chairs of the RCMs, the chair of ICES PGCCDBS, the chair of PGMED, the ICES representative, the Chair of SGRN and the European Commission

Brussels, 20-22 February 2008

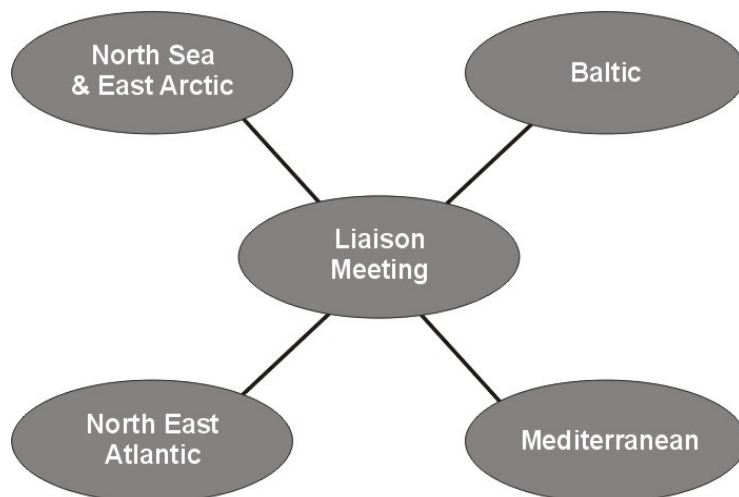


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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background

The Liaison meeting was held in the premises of the DG Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Brussels from 20-22 February 2008. The EU Data Collection Regulation (EC 1543/2000 and the implementing Regulations 1639/2001 and 1581/2004) established a framework for the collection of fishing capacity, effort, landings and discards, biological and economic data by Member States (MS). It was intended that this programme would provide the basic data needed to evaluate the state of fishery resources and the fisheries sector. Although the Regulations set out the detailed requirements of the programme, and specifically require MS to demonstrate cooperation and task sharing (Article 3 (d)), no mechanism was specified to achieve this.

The implementation of regional co-ordination of the Data Collection Regulation (DCR) was discussed at the meeting of the Committee for Fisheries and Aquaculture (CFA) held in Brussels on 21st October 2003. The need to co-ordinate the DCR on a more regional basis was agreed as the problems and issues in the Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic, Mediterranean waters and Overseas are very different. There was agreement that regional co-ordination would greatly increase the efficiency, effectiveness and integration of the various DCR. National Programmes. The key objectives of the Regional Coordination Meetings (RCM) are to identify areas for standardisation, collaboration and cooperation between MS.

As soon as the first year of implementation of the RCM, it was recommended to set up a liaison meeting, in order to maintain communication between the areas and to ensure that recommendations requiring wider participation are effectively dealt with.

To make sure that communication between RCMs, LM, SGRN and the Commission is most effective, the 2nd LM proposed the following timing for the relevant meetings from 2006 onwards:

- All RCMs to take place in late summer or autumn, i.e. after the submission of the National Programme (NP) proposals for the upcoming year but before the end of October. RCM reports to be finalised before the LM of mid-November.
- LM to take place mid-November. LM report to be finalised before the December meeting of SGRN.
- Discussion of the LM report at the December meeting of SGRN. Submission of SGRN's final conclusions and recommendations on RCM-related issues that impact the MSs' data collection programmes "in the field", to the STECF, the Commission and the MSs.

In doing so, the decision making process can be sped up considerably and MSs can be informed sufficiently well in time on the changes they can / should make to their NPs in response to the RCM recommendations, while at the same time, the role of the different advisory bodies on data collection issues (SGRN and STECF) is fully respected

1.2. RCM Reports discussed at 2008 4th Liaison Meeting

During its meeting in February 2008, the LM discussed the following RCM Reports:

- RCM Baltic Sea (RCM Baltic): Report of the 4th Regional Co-ordination Meeting for Baltic sea, Riga, Latvia, 15 - 19 October 2007.
- RCM North Sea & East Arctic, (RCM NS&EA): Report of the 4th Regional Co-ordination Meeting for the North Sea & East Arctic, Uddevalla, Sweden, 25-28 September 2007.
- RCM North East Atlantic (RCM NEA): Report of the 4th Regional Co-ordination Meeting for North East Atlantic area, Brest, France, 27 – 30 November 2007.
- RCM Mediterranean Sea (RCM Med): Report of the 4th Regional Co-ordination Meeting for the Mediterranean Area, Nicosia, Cyprus, 23 –27 April 2007

1.3. Participants

Name	Country	Function
Mette Bertelsen	ICES	ICES Secretariat
Paolo Carpentieri	Italy	Chair of PGMED and representing the Chair of the RCM Med
Antonio Cervantes	EU Commission	EU Commission
Fabienne Daures	France	Representing the Chair of the RCM NEA
Ernesto Jardim	Portugal	Chair of the ICES PGCCDBS
Ilona Jepsena (*)	EU Commission	EU Commission
Philippe Moguedet	EU Commission	EU Commission
Katja Ringdahl	Sweden	Chair of the RCM Baltic
Christoph Stransky	Germany	Chair of the RCM NS&EA
Joel Vigneau (chair)	France	Chair of the STECF-SGRN

(*) Part time

1.4. Terms of reference

1. Overview of the main recommendations and outputs of the different RCM held in 2007, with a particular attention to the following aspects:
 - Fleet based approach: regional design and regional protocols for the collection of biological and economic data in the view of the new DCR for the fleet based approach.
 - Cooperation and coordination between countries at RCM scale with regards to data access and use of biological data, including
 - a. Regional databases development: status and prospects for further development
 - b. Quality issues: ongoing process and tools (COST)
2. Data Quality assurance. Role defined for each parties (RFMOs, PGCCDBS/PGMED, SGRN, JRC) and current developments. Reflection on the elaboration of a common exchange format for the information that is vital to the quality evaluation system

3. New DCR: State of Play of the different elements pertaining to the implementing regulation (fleet based approach, ecosystem approach, surveys, economic indicators)
4. Role of RCMs in the framework of the new DCR
5. Stock taking of cooperation with JRC
6. Future workshops
7. Studies in support of the CFP : Balance and prospects (2006-2008)

2. PROPOSE A REGIONAL DESIGN AND REGIONAL PROTOCOLS FOR THE COLLECTION OF BIOLOGICAL DATA IN THE VIEW OF THE NEW DCR FOR THE FLEET BASED APPROACH

2.1. Discussion

The obligation for MS to coordinate their national programmes with other Member States in the same marine region and the role for the RCMs to assist MS in doing so are clearly stated in the recently adopted new Framework Regulation for Data Collection (Document 16806/07 PECHE 397). The complexity added to the data collection process by the movement to a fleet based approach and inclusion of new MoU species in the DCR are also strong incentives for MS to increase regional cooperation and task sharing. This is of course reflected in the discussions within the RCMs. All RCMs have initiated different case studies in order to level the ground for future task sharing.

All RCMs realise that they need to base their work on submitted data (in the Mediterranean the analytical work will be done in PGMED instead of RCM Mediterranean). The RCMs stresses that they need data well in advance of the meetings to avoid compilation of data at the meeting resulting in inefficient use of data and meeting time. The LM agrees with the approach taken by the RCMs but realise that this request comes on top of several other calls for data with another specific format. The problem with a wide range of data requests using different formats need to be solved concurrently for all the data requests (see section 2.5).

All RCMs have further discussed different issues of standardisation. A particular important one is internationally agreed rules on how to allocate fishing trips/fishing operations to the fleet metier matrix, based on scientific evidence. LM is aware that the FISH/2007/03 Lot 5: Development of tools for logbook data analysis failed to be financed and that it needs to be resubmitted. In the meantime the RCMs may need to set up temporarily rules as suggested by some of the RCMs.

LM recalls its 2006 recommendation and re-emphasizes the importance of revision of the log-book regulation in order to meet the requirements for data collection. The movement towards a fleet based approach in the data collection framework requires more detailed information on the population level than presently mandatory in the log-book regulation. All the necessary modifications with regards to log-book regulation can be found in the SGRN 06-03 report.

The sampling level of the fleet metier matrix is suggested to be level 6 (SGECA-SGRN 08-01) resulting in numerous cells to sample. The LM realised last year (ref) that it is virtually impossible to fulfil the obligations for sampling all fishing activities in the matrix. It was therefore suggested that the future DCR should include guidelines/rules on how to deal with general problems concerning merging different fishing activities in a certain area. The LM is of the opinion that the merging of any cells of the fleet metier matrix will be a critical issue in the near future, and

recommends the Commission to finance a pan-European scientific project to develop appropriate and sound statistical methodologies.

The LM stresses the need for National Correspondents to participate in the RCMs since decisions with economical implications for the MS may need to be taken in the case of adaptations of the National Programmes with regard to regional co-ordination.

Topic : General issue		
RCM Mediterranean	It was agreed that the use of scientific names instead of the common ones would ease the communication within the scientific community.	Follow-up responsibilities
LM comment	<p>LM agrees with this statement, and suggests the reference to be the FAO ASFIS database (ftp://ftp.fao.org/FI/stat/data/ASFIS_sp.zip).</p> <p>Difficulties are anticipated in (i) linking declarative data referring to commercial names and biological data referring to scientific names and (ii) linking scientific names and the names used for TAC management. The encountered conflicts should be discussed within the RCMs.</p>	

2.2. Transversal variables : Landings and effort including recreational fisheries

Topic : Data preparation for DCR related meetings		
RCM Baltic	The RCM Baltic recommends that all MS submit data in the agreed format when requested. The compiled regional data should be distributed to the members of RCM Baltic well before the meeting.	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>Chair of RCMs for requesting the data in due time (3 months)</p> <p>Member States for providing the data (at the latest one month before the meeting)</p> <p>EU-Commission to ease the uniformisation of data calls.</p>
RCM NS&EA	The RCM NS&EA recommends that all MS submit data in the agreed format when requested. The regional data should be compiled well before the meeting and be distributed to the RCM participants	
RCM NEA	RCM recommends that processing the data should be made in advance of the meeting so that no processing of data should be made during the RCM. The template done this year should be used (see annex of RCM NEA 2007)	
RCM Mediterranean	For the purpose of exchanging landings data, as a reference for the selection of species to be included in the biological sampling of the National Programmes, the RCM Med recommends that MS should provide the landings data of the previous 3 years required by the DCR during the PGMed meeting, on a common template.	

LM comment	<p>LM stresses the need for RCM to base their work on uniformised datasets and agrees that no data processing should be made during the meeting.</p> <p>LM understands that this request comes on top of several other calls for data with another specific format. This problem has to be solved concurrently for all the data requests (see section on Regional database).</p>	
RCM NEA	<p>RCM NEA recommends the Chair of WKISCON to consider what is to be done at the meeting and advise participants well in advance of the required format in which data should be made available for the meeting and the work to be undertaken.</p>	<p>Follow-up responsibilities Chair of WKISCON</p>
LM comment	<p>Already addressed by WKISCON meeting.</p>	
<p>Topic : Allocation of trips to the matrix</p>		
RCM Baltic	<p>The RCM is aware of FISH/2007/03 Lot 5: Development of tools for logbook data analysis, but will draw the attention to that some temporary solutions are needed until more permanent solutions are established based on the results of the outcome of this study.</p> <p>Until robust international guidelines for analysis of logbook data is available RCM Baltic recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ at a trip level, or at a fishing operation level when possible, the retained part of the catch should be classified by target assemblage (demersal, freshwater, anadromous) and sorted by weight. The target assemblage that comes up at the first position should be considered as the target assemblage to report in the matrix. ▪ when logbook data is incomplete regarding the number of rigs for demersal trawls the fishing trips/fishing operations should be allocated to OTB. ▪ the selectivity devices Bacoma and T90 should be treated as one strata until it is possible to distinguish between them in the logbooks. ▪ midwater otter trawls (OTM) are allocated to the OTM fishing activity even if they sometimes are operated very close to the bottom 	<p>Follow-up responsibilities Member States</p>

RCM NS&EA	<p>The RCM NS&EA recommends that, at a trip level, or at a fishing operation level when possible, the retained part of the catch should be classified by target assemblage (crustaceans, cephalopods, demersal,...) and sorted by weight (by total value in the case of valuable crustacean species, e.g. <i>Nephrops</i>). The target assemblage that comes up at the first position should be considered as the target assemblage to report in the matrix. The RCM NS&EA understands that this way of doing does not allocate any information to the métiers targeting mixed target assemblages.</p>	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>Member States</p>
LM comment	<p>LM notices that the lot 5 on logbook analysis failed to be financed and needs to be resubmitted (see section 2.1). LM stresses the need to find internationally agreed rules to allocate trip/fishing operation to the fleet metier matrix, based on scientific evidence.</p> <p>Waiting for the internationally agreed rules, LM agrees with the approach taken by RCMs and suggests RCM NEA and RCM Mediterranean to also reflect on standard rules.</p>	
RCM NEA (follow-up of 2006 rec.)	RCM NEA recommends that the collection of haul based data in the EU logbook is extended to all metiers.	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>EU – Commission</p>
LM comment	<p>LM recalls its 2006 recommendation and re-emphasizes the importance of revision of the log-book regulation in order to meet the requirements for data collection.</p> <p>In addition, all the necessary modifications with regards to log-book regulation can be found in the SGRN 06-03 report.</p> <p>(summary of presentation made by Maris ???)</p>	
RCM NEA (follow-up of 2006 recommendation)	<p>RCM NEA agrees with comments of LM, the project on evaluation and standardisation of sampling schemes to estimate the landings of rays and skates should be extended to all cases dealing with mixed species landings. The project should aim to find common methods for sampling mixed species landings in general. To be readdressed to RCM NEA 2008.</p>	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>PGCCSBS/PGMED.</p>
LM comment	<p>LM stresses the need to address this issue for all mixtures of species in the landings and all regions. This issue is even emphasised by the need of biodiversity indicators for the ecosystem approach.</p> <p>LM recommends PGs to elaborate implementation studies as soon as 2008 and subsequent workshop.</p>	

RCM Mediterranean	<p>The RCM Med recommends the following modifications to the fishing activity matrix at the Mediterranean regional level (level 5):</p> <p>The target species of Bottom otter trawl [OTB] “deep water species” should be replaced by “red shrimps”</p> <p>The target species of Bottom otter trawl [OTB] “mixed demersal and deep water species” should be replaced by “mixed demersal species and red shrimps”.</p>	Follow-up responsibilities
RCM Mediterranean	<p>The RCM Med recommends the following modifications to the fishing activity matrix at the Mediterranean regional level (level 5):</p> <p>The target species of Bottom otter trawl [OTB] “deep water species” should be replaced by “red shrimps”</p> <p>The target species of Bottom otter trawl [OTB] “mixed demersal and deep water species” should be replaced by “mixed demersal species and red shrimps”.</p>	Follow-up responsibilities
LM comment	Already addressed by SGECA-SGRN 08-01 meeting.	
Topic : recreational fisheries		
RCM Baltic	<p>The Baltic RCM recommends to further investigate the amount and variability of recreational fisher’s catch of Baltic cod, with the aim to include these catches as soon as possible in the assessment and management advice.</p> <p>The Baltic RCM reiterate its 2006 recommendation to PGCCDBS to facilitate a regional workshop for the Baltic cod, possibly scheduled immediately after the Annual Science Conference 2008 for which a theme session with this topic is planned.</p> <p>A Workshop on Sampling Recreational Fisheries in the Baltic (WKSFRFB) with the following ToR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) thoroughly review the results of the EU pilot study of cod catches in the recreational fisheries 2004-2006, b) provide a detailed description of the structure of the national or regional recreational fishery, c) identify weaknesses and strengths of the sampling systems used, and essential elements of future studies (or a regular data collection) d) harmonise the sampling strategies and adapt them to national/local peculiarities if needed e) develop a detailed work plan and a timeline for 	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>PGCCDBS/PGMed</p>

	<p>the data collection in the future, with the aim to facilitate the use of the sampled data in scientific stock assessments as soon as possible.</p> <p>WKSFRFB will report to PGCCDBS and the Baltic RCM by February 2009.</p>	
RCM NEA	RCM NEA supports Baltic RCM recommendation; recreational fisheries must be incorporated into the matrix, mainly cod, bluefin tuna, albacore, salmon, and maybe pollock. There will be a Theme Session on small-scale fisheries at the 2008 ICES Annual Science Conference, followed by a methodological workshop on recreational fisheries. The incorporation of the recreational fisheries into the metier matrix must be carried out taking into account the results of the Theme Session and the workshop. The new recreational fisheries metiers should be included in the Data Collection Regulation in 2009.	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>SGECA-SGRN 08-01</p>
RCM NEA (follow-up of 2006 recommendation)	RCM NEA recommends that the priorities for monitoring the recreational fisheries are the estimation of catches of all species and associated effort and that all methodological issues be discussed in a dedicated workshop.	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>PGCCDBS/PGMed</p>
LM comment	LM considers that the methodological aspects should be addressed by forthcoming PGCCDBS.	
Topic : On-board sampling		
RCM NS&EA	<p>The RCM NS&EA recommends that <u>in general</u> if an area is covered by one dedicated trip per year only, the effort put into this single trip could better be allocated to other fleet segments ensuring better coverage of these segments.</p> <p>The RCM further recommends updating the list of onboard observer trips by fishing activity on level 6 before the next meeting</p>	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>Member States</p> <p>Chair of RCM NS&EA</p>
LM comment	LM agrees with this recommendation, at the exception sometimes of very long trips. LM recalls that any sampling design should ensure a good coverage of the population sampled and target a predefined target precision.	
RCM NS&EA	The RCM further recommends updating the list of on-board observer trips by fishing activity on level 6 before the next meeting	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>Member States</p> <p>Chairs of RCMs</p>

LM comment	LM agrees with the rationale and suggests other RCMs to consider such approach.	
RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends a case study for analyzing jointly the spatial distribution of Portuguese and Spanish discard sampling in IXa and its presentation for discussion in the 2008 RCM NEA.	Follow-up responsibilities I. González Herraiz (Spain) and O. Moura (Portugal)
RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends a case study for gathering all information on discards data of cod, haddock and whiting in Area VI.	Follow-up responsibilities K. Coull (UK) and H McCormick (Ireland)
RCM Baltic	The RCM Baltic recommends that all MS upload data (effort, landings-all species, sea-sampling, sampling of landings) for the trawl fisheries targeting cod in the Baltic in order to allow analysis of the fisheries facilitating future task sharing of discard sampling	Follow-up responsibilities Member States H. Degel (Denmark)
RCM NS&EA	The RCM recommends that Belgium, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Germany will act together in compiling the mentioned working document for the demersal beam trawl métier targeting flatfish in the North Sea.	Follow-up responsibilities B. Maertens (Belgium, S. Verver (The Netherlands), S. Warnes (UK) & C. Stransky (Germany).
LM comment	LM agrees with the idea of case studies for levelling the ground of international coordination and suggests other RCMs to consider such approach.	

Topic : Surveys		
RCM Mediterranean	The RCM Med approves the proposed Steering Committee and, in addition, it commits to request from GFCM – SAC to consider the possibility of providing the facilitator of the small pelagic group to the Steering Committee.	Follow-up responsibilities
RCM Mediterranean	The following workshops and exercise are proposed by the RCM Med: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop for the coordination and harmonization of the 5 on going acoustic surveys in the Mediterranean (Iberian Coast-ECOMED; Gulf of Lions – PELMED; Adriatic Sea; Sicilian channel & Malta ANCHOVY; Aegean Sea – ANCHOVY). The RCM Med considers that this workshop should be eligible for funding under the 2008 National Programmes. 	
LM comment	LM notices that the coordination process is ongoing through an acoustic coordination meeting (MEDIAS)	
RCM NEA (follow-up of 2006 recommendation)	Dates of the blue whiting surveys must be announced by the Dutch and Irish national correspondents to the other respective national correspondents and the correspondent laboratories. This information should also be made available on the website	Follow-up responsibilities Dutch and Irish national correspondents
LM comment	This recommendation has been immediately followed through by the responsible of the surveys.	
Topic : Length structure		
RCM NS&EA	The RCM NS&EA recommends setting up a series of simple rules for merging fishing activity matrix cells for sampling purposes. Denmark and France volunteered to prepare a working document on these rules well before the next RCM NS&EA.	Follow-up responsibilities H. Degel (Denmark) & J. Vigneau (France) EU-Commission
LM comment	LM supports this initiative and suggests referring to SGRN 06-03 report for the basic rationale. LM is of the opinion that the merging of any cells of the fleet metier matrix will be a critical issue in the near future, and recommends the Commission to	

	finance a pan-European scientific project to develop appropriate and sound statistical methodologies.	
Topic : Population-based variables : Age		
RCM	RCM NEA recommends a case study for elaborating a spatial ALK for sole in VIIa and reflection on task sharing for discussion in the 2008 RCM NEA	Follow-up responsibilities S, Warnes (UK) B Martens (Belgium) H McCormick (Ireland)
RCM NS&EA	The RCM NS&EA recommends considering the possibility of undertaking a combined sampling programme for sole in VIId. This should be taken up by Belgium, France and the UK	Follow-up responsibilities Bart Maertens (Belgium), Joël Vigneau (France), Steve Warnes (UK)
RCM NS&EA	The RCM NS&EA recommends that all MS take part in the case study on spatial aspects on growth patterns for North Sea cod by submitting data to France using the template in Annex 6.	Follow-up responsibilities Member States J. Vigneau (France) for the analysis.
LM comment	LM agrees with the idea of case studies for levelling the ground of international coordination and suggests other RCMs to consider such approach.	
RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends that a letter should be written to all ICES stock coordinators operating in the North-East Atlantic to request an explanation on how they process their age data at an international level and suggestions for improvement with the help of the RCM	Follow-up responsibilities Chair of RCM NEA
LM comment	LM recommends to check first if this information already exists in the WG reports.	
RCM Mediterranean	The following workshops and exercise are proposed by the RCM Med: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshop on <i>Mullus barbatus</i> and <i>Mullus surmuletus</i> ageing (Greece, 2008) ● Otoliths exchange exercise for <i>Pagellus erythrinus</i> (to be organised by Greece in 2007), to be followed by a workshop (2008, Greece) 	Follow-up responsibilities PGCCDBS/PGMED
LM comment	To be discussed in PGCCDBS/PGMED	

Topic : Sex and Maturity		
RCM NEA	The RCM NEA recommends that the table proposed by WKMAT, is completed by the stock coordinators, and then be provided to the RCM to be used as a guideline to set up the most suitable maturity data sampling regime	Follow-up responsibilities ICES AMAWGC
LM comment	LM notes that all recommendations from PGCCDBS 2007, including the WKMAT table, has already been distributed to the relevant experts. To be further discussed in forthcoming ICES AMAWGC	
RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends convening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ a Maturity Workshop for Flatfish as the maturity issues raised previously for roundfish also apply to these species. ▪ a Maturity Workshop for Crustaceans as the maturity issues raised previously also apply to these species 	Follow-up responsibilities PGCCDBS/PGMED
RCM NS&EA	The RCM NS&EA recommends that dedicated workshops identify the data sources that suit assessment requirements on which the RCM can build to co-ordinate the sampling. The RCM NS&EA recommends that a dedicated workshop for flatfish species should also be set up by PGCCDBS as the outstanding issues apply to these species as well	
RCM Baltic	The RCM Baltic support the RCM NS&EA recommendation to the PGCCDBS to set up a dedicated workshop on maturity for flatfish species	
LM comment	To be discussed in the forthcoming PGCCDBS/PGMED. In addition, LM stresses that only a full proposal including the ToRs, chair and venue should be presented to the PGs.	
RCM Mediterranean	The following workshops and exercise are proposed by the RCM Med: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Workshop on small pelagics (<i>Engraulis encrasicolus</i>, <i>Sardina pilchardus</i>, <i>Trachurus mediterraneus</i>) maturity stages (Italy, 2008) ● Workshop on crustaceans (<i>Aristeus antennatus</i>, <i>Aristaeomorpha foliacea</i>, <i>Parapenaeus longirostris</i>, <i>Nephrops norvegicus</i>) maturity stages (Italy, 2008) 	Follow-up responsibilities PGCCDBS/PGMED
LM comment	LM notes that the workshop on small pelagics is planned for 2008 and the workshop on crustaceans is to be forwarded by PGCCDBS/PGMED	

RCM Baltic	The RCM Baltic recommends detailed description of the requirements concerning maturity data is provided from stock assessment WG. The RCM further recommend the dedicated workshops to identify and harmonize the data sources that suit these requirements on which the RCM can build sampling coordination.	Follow-up responsibilities ICES AMAWGC
LM comment	LM notes that this issue should be dealt with at the PGCCDBS within the AWG data section (See section 2)	

2.3. Economic variables

RCM NS&EA	<p>The RCM NS&EA recommends setting up a workshop to clarify all outstanding issues concerning the fleet-based approach with regard to economic data collection.</p> <p>Workshop on economic data collection with the following ToRs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) At what level should economic data be provided – clarification. 2) If a vessel uses different gears how should the cost per gear type/metier be calculated? Use of correction factors/coefficients? 3) Other methodological issues concerning the fleet based approach. 	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission STECF/SGECA
RCM Baltic	<p>In compliance with the RCM NS-EA, the RCM Baltic recommends that the Commission arranges a workshop to clarify all issues concerning the fleet based approach.</p> <p>Terms of reference:</p> <p>At what level should economic data be provided – clarification.</p> <p>If a vessel uses different gears how should the cost per gear type/metier be calculated? Use of correction factors/coefficients?</p> <p>Are collected data sufficient to calculate cost with respect to gear type/metier? If not, which amendments have to be done?</p> <p>Other methodological issues concerning the fleet based approach.</p>	
LM comment	LM recommends these issues to be discussed during the SGCEA 08-03 meeting. LM notices that the schedule of this meeting during the 4 th quarter of 2008 will prevent MS to refer to it when submitting their NP proposals.	

2.4. Review of outcomes of the Ad-hoc experts meeting on the Ecosystem approach

The purpose of the ad-hoc experts meeting on the ecosystem approach was to suggest operational ecosystem indicators in support of the environmental integration in the CFP (Council Regulation 2371/2002). Specifically, these indicators shall be used to guide management actions that limit the impact of fishing on the environment. The ad-hoc experts meeting was based on previous evaluations made by two recent research projects (INDENT and INDECO) and two STECF SGRN meetings (SGRN-05-03, SGRN-06-01).

Two types of indicators were recognized: indicators of the state of the marine environment and indicators of pressure that affects state. The state indicators shall reflect ecological changes in the ecosystems while pressure indicators shall be used to assess the relation between fishing and observed changes in the ecosystem. The chosen indicators shall be operational, i.e. use existing or slightly altered sampling from existing research surveys and/or national data collections. Ten different indicators were suggested by the Ad-hoc meeting:

Indicators of state:

1. Conservation status of fish species.
2. Proportion of large fish.
3. Mean maximum length of fishes.
4. Maturation of exploited fish species.

Indicators of pressure:

5. Distribution of fishing activity,
6. Aggregation of fishing activity and
7. Areas not impacted by mobile gears.
8. Discarding rates of commercially exploited species.
9. Discarding rates in relation to landed value.
10. Fuel efficiency of fish capture.

Topic : Research surveys adaptation		
RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends that all fishing operations sampled on-board research vessels be flagged when the sorting process does not operate on the complete catch (sub-sampling from total catch for species distinction).	Follow-up responsibilities Member States
LM comment	LM supports this recommendation.	

Topic : demand for ICES support		
RCM Baltic	RCM Baltic recommends that the ICES/HELCOM Working Group on Integrated Assessments of the Baltic Sea (WGIAB) as well as the HELCOM FISH project should be asked to evaluate the proposed state indicator (mean maximum size) in relation to fishing and other available ecosystem time series data	Follow-up responsibilities ICES/HELCOM
LM comment	LM supports this recommendation.	
RCM Baltic	The RCM Baltic recommends that the selection of species in the Baltic Sea that may be used to estimate trends in the probabilistic reaction norms shall be further investigated by the ICES WGBFAS or other relevant ICES working group.	Follow-up responsibilities ICES AMAWGC
LM comment	LM agrees with this recommendation and suggests that all WG should consider the list of species for which a probabilistic reaction norm should be computed.	
Topic : Impact on national programmes		
RCM Baltic	RCM Baltic therefore recommends that cost implications for the required extended analyses relating to the indicator fuel efficiency of fish capture need to be assessed.	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission STECF/SGECA
LM comment	LM notes that the fuel consumption is one of the economic variable defined in the SGECA 08-01 report to be included in the new DCR.	

2.5. Regional databases development: status and prospects for further development

Topic : Regional database		
RCM Baltic	The RCM Baltic therefore recommends the Commission to financially support the development of a suitable regional warehouse and give the national institutes the possibility to create interfaces between their national databases and this regional warehouse.	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission
RCM NS&EA	The RCM NS&EA recommends the further development and maintenance of a Regional Database for the North Sea & East Arctic region	
RCM Mediterranean	RCM Med. Recommends a feasibility study for a regional database in the Mediterranean.	
LM comment	<p>LM supports these recommendations. LM recommends that the features required by the catalogue of data (see section 3.2) is taken into account when developing such data portal and warehouse.</p> <p>LM stresses that such a data portal and warehouse should be generic enough to allow the inclusion of all variables included in the DCR.</p> <p>LM notices that DG Fish has included the development of such a regional data portal and warehouse in the work programme for studies in 2008.</p>	
RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends that all the issues related to the setting up of a regional database be discussed in a forum gathering data managers and IT experts who have authority to agree provision of MS data	Follow-up responsibilities
LM comment	LM notices that such a forum is not needed anymore (see above).	

3. CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

LM discussed the quality assurance framework under development by ICES/PGCCDBS (ICES CM 2007/ACFM:09) and how the tasks suggested could be coordinated with the ongoing work under SGRN.

3.1. Quality assurance at the level of the end-user – example from ICES

Issues about quality assurance are included in the current MoU between EC and ICES committing ICES to communicate any problems regarding data collected under the DCR and be responsible about the quality control of the aggregated data used for assessment.

The main objectives of the quality assurance framework suggested by PGCCDBS are: (i) to guarantee the quality of the raw data used for assessment, (ii) promote transparency of the process of compiling parameters at the stock level and (iii) give feedback about the usage of the data available.

The approach proposed by PGCCDBS is based on a set of quality indicators computed for each parameter available for stock assessment. Such indicators can be qualitative or quantitative. At the moment three indicators are proposed (ICES CM 2007/ACFM:09): compliance with protocols, coverage of the sampling achieved and precision of the estimates. These quality indicators are under development in ICES within two dedicated workshops, WKACCU in 2008 that will deal with the first two indicators and WKPRECISE in 2009 that will deal with the last one.

The indicators can be computed at the national level or stock level. Regarding DCR requirements quality indicators should exist at the national level, although regarding stock assessment they are more important at the stock level.

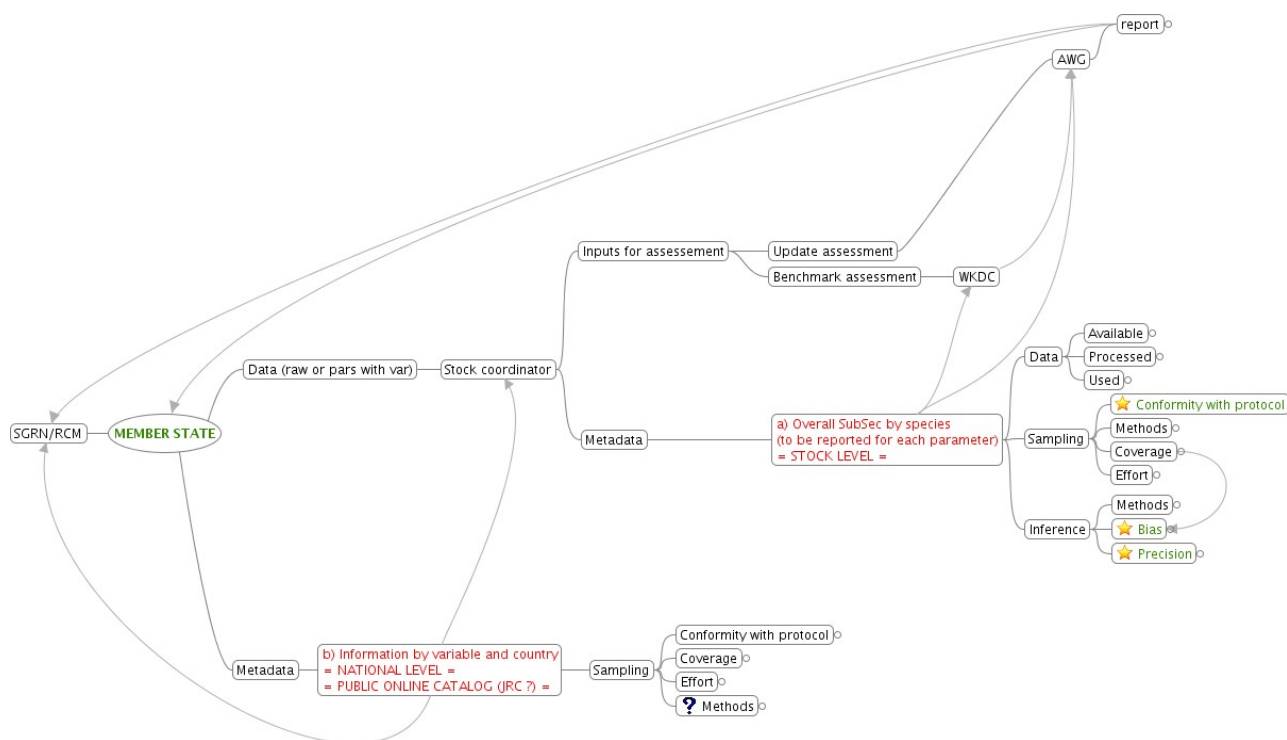


Figure 1: Flowchart of the data from the collection to its use in stock assessment and its related quality indicators.

An overview of the system is shown in Figure1. Data collectors provide meta data about the sampling carried out for each parameter to the data catalogue (Section XX), and provide data aggregated at the required level to stock coordinators (Intercatch ?). Based on this information stock coordinators compile input parameters for stock assessment and compute quality indicators. The meta information about sampling and the quality indicators must be included in a specific section in the AWG report (see example in tables 1 and 2) to: (i) provide additional info to advice process; (ii) report back to data collectors; (iii) report to SGRN to evaluate conformity with NPs; (iv) report to PGs to evaluate possible problems.

Table 1: Stock summary. Example on one variable of the information requested for the AWG data section.

Length distribution of landings or retained part			Country 1	Country 2	Responsibility
Conformity with protocol						
Coverage	Time (Q)	1				Automatic from catalog
		2				
		3				
		4				
	Space (ICES Div.)	Via				
		Vib				
		VIIa				
		VIIb				
		VIIc				
	Tech/metier	Trawl 50mm				
		Trawl 90mm				
		Nets 120mm				
		Pots				
Sampling effort	No. of sampled trips					
	No. fish measured					
	No. different vessels					
Methods	Sampling strategy					
Data	Available					Stock coord.
	Processed					
	Used					

Table 2: Working group summary. Example on one variable of the information requested for the AWG data section.

Length distribution of landings or retained part			Stock 1	Stock 2	Responsibility
Conformity with protocol						
Coverage	Time (Q)	1				Automatic from catalog
		2				
		3				
		4				
	Space (ICES Div.)	Via				
		Vib				
		VIIa				
		VIIb				
		VIIc				
	Tech/metier	Trawl 50mm				
		Trawl 90mm				
		Nets 120mm				
		Pots				
Sampling effort	No. of sampled trips					
	No. fish measured					
	No. different vessels					
Methods	Sampling strategy					
Inference	Methods					Stock coord.
	Bias quality indicator (WKACCU)					
	Precision quality indicator (WKPRECISE)					

LM recommends that tasks regarding the compilation of data at the national level and the upload of meta data to the data catalogue to be under the remit of each Member State. Tasks regarding the analysis of the meta data at the international level to be under the remit of SGRN. Tasks regarding the stock coordinators' procedures are to fall under the remit of ICES or other relevant scientific bodies.

LM was informed that this proposal will be discussed with ICES AWG chairs at AMAWGC and a final proposal will be presented at the next PGCCDBS meeting. The quality indicators suggested will be defined at two ICES workshops, WKACCU in 2008 and WKPRECISE in 2009.

LM recommends that the approach suggested be extended to other scientific bodies.

RCM NEA	RCM NEA approves ICES initiative to elaborate a standalone section in every assessment Working Group report to summarise the data deficiencies and data needs.	Follow-up responsibilities ICES AMAWGC/ PGCCDBS
LM comment	See general discussion.	
RCM NS&EA	The RCM NS&EA recommends that PGCCDBS promotes improved communication between the data providers and users, e.g. through the participation of a PGCCDBS representative in the AMAWGC meetings and the ICES Annual Science Conference and the interaction of the PGCCDBS contact persons with the Assessment WGs	Follow-up responsibilities PGCCDBS
LM comment	LM acknowledges the need to improve the communication between data providers and data users in general. This statement has been already voiced by PGCCDBS and SGRN (see general discussion) and the actions that are ongoing within ICES world could be generalised to all RFMOs.	

3.2. Quality assurance at the level of the collection of the data

In the continuity of the work initiated by ICES/PGCCDBS, the quality assurance has been discussed during the STECF/SGRN July meeting (SGRN 07-02). Concerning the transmission from data providers to data users, SGRN stated that there was an urgent need for a system which allows (i) the data collectors to inform the data users on the data sets that are available, and (ii) the data users to find out which data sets are available and where.

SGRN proposed that the JRC sets up a dedicated webpage with metadata on the data series that are available in the different MS. This system could have the shape of a two-way matrix, where the data collectors (read, the EU MS) can post information on the types of data they collect for each fishery and stock, and where the end-users can spot which MS are holding data that are potentially useful to them and who they should address to obtain the data. This system is known in the internet world as a **catalogue website**.

In order to progress on this issue and ensure the overall consistency of the system, LM recommends that the next SGRN-SGECA meeting planned on elaborating the guidelines for the submission of technical Reports and NP proposals should consider the tables to be agreed during the next PGCCDBS/PGMED as mandatory information to report. LM also recommends that the catalog website implements the exact transposition of the information requested by the guideline tables, together with the related availability and link to the sampling protocols (see the example in table 3).

Table 3: Adaptation of the example given in table 1 to a catalogue-like system

Length distribution of landings or retained part	
Country	Country 1
Year	yyyy
Stock	Stock 1
Time stratification	Quarter
Space stratification	ICES subdivision
Technical stratification	Metier
Sampling strategy	Market + on-board sampling
Availability of a sampling protocol	Y <--- HTML link

Time unit	Space unit	Technical unit	No. of sampled trips	No. fish measured	No. different vessels
1	Vla	Trawl 50mm	3	232	3
1	Vla	Trawl 90mm	2	120	2
1	Vla	Pots	4	245	4
1	Vlb	Trawl 50mm	5	276	4
1	Vlb	Trawl 90mm	12	750	9
1	Vlb	Nets 120mm	4	210	4

RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends that JRC provides a comprehensive data overview from the information provided in the tables of MS technical reports as a annual working tool.	Follow-up responsibilities JRC, EU-Commission and chair of STECF/SGRN
LM comment	The development of the catalogue website (see above) should ease the data processing to answer such demand.	

3.3. Quality issues: ongoing process and tools (COST)

The COST project officially started in July 2007 and is expected to end in December 2008. During the first months of the project, the COST experts focused on elaborating a Data exchange Format and the CORE package.

The Data Exchange Format originated from the one developed by FishFrame and evolved in such a way to fit both needs. The final agreement, named Data Exchange Format Specification FishFrame 5.0 / COST 1.0, will be used for setting up datasets and developing each package.

The CORE package version 1.0 has been released. All methods allowing the importation and management of the datasets have been adjusted to the latest version of the Data Exchange Format

The Exploratory Data Analysis package has started its development and a beta version will soon be released. Exploratory graphs have been developed to geographically map the information and to scrutinise the datasets on at-sea observations, market sampling and individual variables such as age, length, weight, sex and maturity.

The precision calculation packages (design-based and model-based) have just started their development by discussion on the algorithms to implement. The first releases of these two packages are expected for the second COST expert meeting scheduled early June 2008.

All information on the development of the project, the package releases and the user manuals are available on the COST public website <http://www.ifremer.fr/cost>

RCM NEA	<p>RCM NEA recommends that COST includes an exportation data structure usable by the RCM. This structure would provide the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effort in number of vessels and number of days at sea ▪ Landings of the stocks formally assessed in international advisory bodies ▪ Number of observer trips, days at sea and number of hauls ▪ Number of individuals sampled for length and/or age ▪ Number of individuals sampled for other biological parameters <p>The aggregation level should be by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Metier and fleet as specified in the new DCR implementation Regulation ▪ ICES Rectangles where possible (ICES division if not) ▪ Quarter 	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>Coordinator of COST project</p>
LM comment	<p>LM notes that COST may work with subset of data, thus not necessarily provide the whole picture of the data available. LM is of the opinion that these information should be best provided by a catalogue website (see section 3.2).</p>	

3.4. Quality aspects in the collection of economic data: responsibilities, calculation of precision level of indicators

Topic : Sampling optimisation		
RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends that the outcome of the study on threshold values of economic activity be considered carefully in order to establish once and for all the possibility to include the concepts of “non active” and “less active” vessels in the new DCR. If these concepts were to be included, then RCM NEA would recommend a workshop or a research study to establish a common method applicable to all Member States.	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission
RCM NS&EA	The RCM NS&EA recommends a dedicated workshop by those countries that have economic fleet data available for several years to examine if the data on the less active and inactive sector are stable,	
LM comment	LM notes that this issue has been discussed during the Lisbon meeting (SGECA 08-01). The SGECA recommendation to address this issue through a study should be considered for inclusion in the 2009 Work programme	
Topic : Methodological aspects		
RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends that the data quality be further discussed in the data quality workshop scheduled in 2008.	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission

RCM Baltic	<p>RCM Baltic recommends a workshop on optimizing sampling strategy for economic data with the following ToR:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presentation of methods used by MS (for the separation of vessel activity level) and the stability of the cost structure for the active and less active vessels 2. Examine the distribution of activity, catches and the cost structure for the different segments and activity levels in the MS 3. Evaluate different methods and parameters characterising vessel activity for separating activity levels for different MS <p><u>Data requirements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Catches per vessel ● Effort data ● Value of catches ● Cost indicators in accordance to the DCR ● List of official statistical thresholds for MS 	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>EU-Commission</p> <p>STECF/SGECA</p>
LM comment	<p>LM notes that the proposed ToRs are already planned to be included in the SGECA meeting (SGECA 08-03) on quality aspects of economic data.</p>	
RCM NEA	<p>RCM NEA recommends that the effects of the non-randomness of data collected for economics be further discussed in the data quality workshop scheduled in 2008.</p>	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p>
RCM Baltic	<p>The RCM Baltic recommends to not use the precision level as an indicator of heterogeneity but to rather use the mean value and standard deviation.</p>	<p>EU-Commission</p>
LM comment	<p>LM suggests that these issues be discussed within the SGECA meeting (SGECA 08-03) on quality aspects of economic data.</p>	
RCM NEA	<p>RCM NEA endorses the SGRST proposal for a pilot study to look at the problems encountered when linking catch and effort data at ‘metier’ level with fleet economic data, in order to produce a framework for the estimation of economic data at “metier” level. However the group is waiting for the discussions and conclusions of the “SGECA-SGRN workshop” planned in January to define clearly the complete objectives and deliverable of this study</p>	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>EU-Commission</p> <p>ICES AMAWG</p>

LM comment	LM notes that the SGECA-SGRN workshop has linked the catch and effort data between the métier stratification and the fleet segmentation. In accordance with the SGECA 08-01 recommendation, the linkage of all other variables still has to be explored and should be the subject of a study or a research project. In order to progress on this issue, LM agrees with the SGECA 08-01 suggestion to draw the contour of such a project in a dedicated workshop including both economists and biologists.	
Topic : Description of sampling procedures and methods		
RCM Baltic	The RCM Baltic recommends the description of the source of the information and when applying a sampling procedure a description of method and strategy has to be clearly described in the national programme to give useful information on quality of the obtained data. In the technical report there should then be a qualitative quality report containing a thorough description of the methods and strategies used and the characteristics of the gathered data.	Follow-up responsibilities SGRN-SGECA meeting
LM comment	LM notes that the catalogue website will include all DCR related data (see section 3.2).	
RCM NS&EA	The RCM NS&EA recommends that clear instructions are issued to the MS as to how the economic indicators should be calculated, based on the reports already produced.	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission STECF/SGECA
LM comment	SGECA 08-03 should consider these recommendations, in the frame of the overall quality assurance currently in development within the new DCR framework (see section 3).	
RCM Mediterranean	The RCM Med endorses the recommendation of the STECF – SGECA Salerno meeting that “the legal system for collecting economic data for the fisheries sector should be similar to the FADN system, in the way that the Commission Regulation for the Programme for the Collection of Data in Fisheries should be followed by a Technical Regulation, which covers the definitions and technical specifications”	Follow-up responsibilities
LM comment	LM notes that this point was not addressed by the Lisbon meeting (SGECA 08-01). Moreover, LM understands that the new DCR implementation regulation will be opened to revision on more frequent basis.	

Topic : training workshop		
RCM Mediterranean	The RCM Med endorses the STECF - SGECA Salerno recommendation (January, 2007) on organizing a training workshop on capital values.	Follow-up responsibilities STECF/SGECA RCMs
LM comment	LM notes that this issue has been discussed during the Lisbon meeting (SGECA 08-01). A methodology has been agreed for the new DCR. SGECA and RCMs will further consider if a training workshop is necessary.	

4. DEFINE THE ROLE AND THE FUTURE TASKS OF THE RCMs AND OTHER BODIES IN THE SCOPE OF THE NEW DCR

Topic : Agenda of all DCR-related meetings		
RCM Baltic	RCM Baltic recommends that MS and the Commission consider possibilities for optimising timing in the entire DCR process.	Follow-up responsibilities LM / EU – Commission / Member States
LM comment	LM agrees with this recommendation and considers this as a crucial issue, in particular for the new DCR, emphasising the regional coordination. This issue had already been discussed at the 2 nd LM, and this LM endorses the agreement reached at the 2 nd LM (see section 1.1). This schedule should be respected in 2008, even if the 4 th LM was held in February.	
Topic : Participation of national correspondents to RCMs		
RCM Mediterranean	<p>The RCM Med recommends the participation of the National Correspondents of the MS in the future RCMs,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ for achieving better internal organisation. ▪ For ensuring the link between the two forums, it is recommended that the chairman of the PGMed participates to the RCM Med. ▪ The RCM Med encourages the participation of one economist from each MS to the future RCMs. 	Follow-up responsibilities All Member States

LM comment	<p>LM recalls that the participation of National correspondents was stressed right at the creation of the RCMs. In the light of the new DCR, with emphasis put on regional coordination and implications on national budgets & commitments, the presence of national correspondents is even more important.</p> <p>LM stresses the need of the presence of the chair of PGMED in the RCM Med because PGMED is currently under the umbrella of RCM Med.</p>	
Topic : Participation of economists to RCMs and role of STECF/SGECA		
RCM NS&EA	<p>The RCM NS&EA recommends setting up a meeting of economists within the STECF-SGECA to discuss economic issues overarching all regions. One economist per RCM should be designated by SGECA participating in the RCMs to ensure the link between SGECA and the RCMs.</p>	<p>Follow-up responsibilities STECF-SGECA EU-Commission</p>
RCM Mediterranean	<p>The RCM Med endorses the recommendation made by the North Sea and the Baltic Sea RCMs, supported by the STECF-SGECA Salerno meeting (2007), about the creation of an economic forum among European countries.</p>	
RCM Mediterranean	<p>The RCM Med encourages the participation of one economist from each MS to the future RCMs.</p>	
RCM NEA	<p>RCM NEA recommends that the Commission reinforces the role of SGECA as a stable structure and makes sure that there is a clear linkage to the RCMs and the DCR. This linkage should be established by arranging annual meetings in which economists who are directly involved in the data collection can further discuss methodology problems, harmonization and analysis of economic data. These annual meetings will then nominate one representative per RCM region to participate in the RCMs</p>	
LM comment	<p>LM encourages the participation of economists in RCMs. However, LM realises that it is difficult to ensure such broad participation and in order to optimise the situation, LM recommends to STECF/SGECA to appoint economists to RCMs as suggested by RCM NS&EA.</p> <p>LM does not agree with the creation of a new forum for addressing the methodological aspects of economic variables. LM recommends reinforcing the role of STECF/SGECA as a stable forum and that the methodological issues are included as a specific term of reference for the STECF/SGECA meeting.</p>	

Topic : Bulgaria and Romania		
RCM Mediterranean	The RCM Med encourages the participation of Bulgaria and Romania to the RCM Med and also the GFCM meetings	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission Member States
LM comment	LM already agreed with this statement during the 3 rd LM.	
Topic : Chairmanship		
RCM Mediterranean	The RCM Med supports the idea of the one year duration of the chairmanship of the RCMs, with the possibility of the participation of the future RCM chair in the LM meeting.	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission
LM comment	At the light of the system adopted by other RCMs, LM recommends the chairmanship duration to be two years. In addition, LM recommends the chair to participate in the RCM the third year to ensure the continuity.	

5. SMALL-SCALE PROJECTS

LM is the place where small-scale projects proposed by each RCM are discussed for further consideration by the EU Commission. One of the 2006 proposals supported by LM was proposed to financing in 2007 but the elaborated project failed to qualify. This project was seen as a crucial analysis for helping MS in shifting toward the forthcoming fleet-based approach. The RCM NEA which was the last to stand in 2007 just learnt during the meeting about the project qualification failure, and thus made a recommendation due allowance being made of the importance given to the expected outcome of the project.

RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends the Commission to consider a merge of the Exploratory analysis of VMS data and the Development of tools for logbook and data analysis, which for different reasons were not financed in 2007. This new proposal would then focus on allocating effort and catches from all declarative sources to the metier matrix.	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission
LM comment	LM agrees with this proposal.	

The following proposals for studies were discussed by all RCMs in 2007 for consideration in the 2008 Work programme by the EU Commission.

5.1. Acoustic survey database

A total of three projects were proposed concerning acoustic survey databases by both RCM NS&EA and RCM NEA. The RCM NEA noted that a proposal from the RCM NS&EA (relating to Acoustic Survey Global Estimation) and two proposals submitted to RCM NEA (Echogram Archive Database and Acoustic Survey Database) were closely linked.

The details of the four proposals are as follows:

1) Acoustic survey global estimation database

There are several acoustic surveys which are internationally co-ordinated through ICES and provide abundance indices for the assessment of numerous pelagic species. These include: the North Sea herring acoustic survey (henceforth to be known as the North Sea Pelagic Survey); the Baltic International Acoustic Survey; the International Blue whiting survey; the International Ecosystem survey in the Norwegian Sea; the International trawl/acoustic survey on redfish in the Irminger Sea; Acoustic surveys for sardine and anchovy in Areas VIII and IX; the PELGAS surveys for small pelagics in the Bay of Biscay; the JUVENA surveys for juvenile anchovy in the Bay of Biscay; and acoustic surveys for herring in the Irish and Celtic Seas.

It would be desirable to have a consistent, user-friendly, web-based, centrally managed database to store the data from these surveys. It may be unnecessarily arduous to store the raw acoustic data, but storage at an intermediate step, that of scrutinised data at the resolution of the Equivalent Distance Sampling Unit (EDSU), and summarised biological information, is entirely feasible. The database should also include a facility to determine global (international) estimates of indices at age from the component (national) surveys. Such a model exists, for example, as a component of the FishFrame database (Degel and Jansen 2006), and is currently in development to provide indices for the North Sea herring and sprat assessments.

At the recent Living Resources Committee (LRC) meeting of the 2007 ICES Annual Science Conference, several participants expressed a desire for such a database to be made available, so there is some consensus for this need.

Budget estimation: EUR 150,000

Duration: 12 months

2) Proposal to the EU to fund the development of regional acoustic databases with a generic structure

Contact person : Jacques Massé and Pierre Petitgas, IFREMER

Objective : Develop a database for acoustic surveys with a generic structure that allows to store the choices made when interpreting the echogram to species in order to achieve multi-species assessments. The database would also allow for the standardisation of methods for scrutinising the echogram.

Deliverable : A database for acoustic surveys with a generic structure that contains echo-integrated data, trawl haul catches, coding of the allocation of echo-traces to species, ad procedures for biomass estimation by species, length classes and ages.

Rationale : Internationally coordinated fisheries acoustic surveys are currently co-funded under the EU DCR and coordinated by international groups, e.g., ICES WGBIFS in the Baltic, PGHERS in the North Sea, WGACEGG in ICES sub-areas IXa and VIII, and MEDIAS for the Mediterranean. At the recent Living Resources Committee (LRC) meeting of the 2007 ICES Annual Science Conference, a discussion on regional databases with a generic structure clearly formulated both the need for such databases but also the difficulties in developing them. The difficulties lie in the nature of the acoustic data and what kind of information to share in common databases.

Three levels of information should be distinguished. (1) The raw acoustic data are the numerical digital 3D acoustic data (echogram). A common international format of exchange has been developed by ICES FAST, which is the HAC format. Such data should stay in the national institutes with the capacity to be delivered as HAC for the purpose of collaborative international work. The EU project SIMFAMI developed a database of acoustic images : chosen portions of echograms. (2) The biological data are the echo-integrated acoustic data (vertically and along Equivalent Sampling Distance Units ESDU) relevant to fish (without interpretation to species) together with the trawl haul data (species, length, age, ...). (3) Last is the Biomass data (acoustic interpreted data), which result from the interpretation of the echo-integrated acoustic data (allocation to species) using at various degrees, expert knowledge, automated procedures and the trawl haul data. The fish concentration (biomass) is esitimated for each acoustic ESDU by species, lengh class and ages.

A proposal has been made to the RCM for the North Sea to develop acoustic databases, building from past work. That proposal focuses on (i) sharing in a database the interpreted acoustic data for target commercial species and the associated trawl haul catches and (ii) developing procedures to estimate abundance at age using these data. We would like both to support that proposal as well as show that it is not satisfactory because the interpretation of acoustic data (echogram scrutiny) needs to be quality controlled. The step of interpretation is by far the one leading to the most error in acoustically derived abundance estimation by species. Building on the structure of the acoustic database developed at IFREMER (Baracouda) and the experience gained in its use within WGACEGG, we suggest to construct a database in which the interpretation of echo-traces to species is stored. The database would contain non-interpreted echo-integrated values, trawl haul catches and tables storing the interpretation of echo-traces to species.

Surveys are anticipated to become essential monitoring tools in the Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries management. Therefore, it is essential that acoustic survey data are interpreted fully for all species present in the water and not just for a few commercial target species leaving the rest of

the echo-trace information lost for future analyses. The difficulty of allocating echo-traces to species is often presented as applying to southern areas only that host a wider range of mixed species. This is not the case. The North Sea has become highly multi-species (anchovy, sardine, sprat, herring, mackerel, norway pout, amongst others) and echogram interpretation has no reason to be more simpler than in other regions. Experience has shown that when echo-traces have been allocated to species more or less manually or visually and choices not stored, it is impossible to come back to the interpretation. Biomass data are literally uncheckable and information on species not interpreted is lost. This is why it is so important to store in a database the choices made in the allocation of the echo-traces to species.

Echogram scrutiny exercises have been already undertaken within the activity of PHERS, WGBIFS and recently WGACEGG. These exercises were technically difficult to undertake, they needed HAC data, software for replaying the digitally stored echograms and often stayed qualitative in the comparisons. The proposed tool would make that exercise simpler and more quantitative: one would only have to change interpretation scenarios in the relevant database tables and perform the estimation procedure to measure sensitivity to such changes.

Built-in modules in the national databases for abundance estimation using interpreted acoustic data already exist (e.g., FishFrame at DIFRES, Baracouda at IFREMER, Pema at IEO). The real development would be that of a tool allowing quality control and standardisation at the stage of the echogram scrutiny. We suggest to develop a tool for echogram scrutiny based on the BARACOUDA structure that can be used in international workshops on echogram scrutiny in order to quality control and agree internationally at regional scale on the interpretation to species of the acoustic data. Also helpful in that context is the metadatabase of echogram images developed by the SIMFAMI project.

The workplan could have 3 modules: the definition of the level of information to be stored and shared in an acoustic database, the development of that base with procedures for biomass evaluation at regional scale, the development of procedures for echogram scrutiny to quality control and standardise the interpretation of echograms at regional scale across national institutes for a full range of species.

Budget estimation : 1 000 000 Euros

Duration : 24 months

References

- Anon. 2005. Species identification methods from acoustic multi-frequency information (SIMFAMI). Final report to the European Commission, contract number Q5RS-2001-02054.
- Degel, H. and Jansen, T. 2006. FishFrame Fisheries and stock assessment data framework. ICES CM 2006/M:02.
- Petitgas, P., Massé, J. et al. 2006. Proposition for a common data base structure for acoustic surveys. Working Document to ICES WGACEGG. Lisbon, 11 Nov. – 01 Dec. 2006.

3) Echogram archive database (SIMFAMI database)

Contact Person: Paul Fernandes, FRS, Marine Laboratory, PO Box 101, Victoria Road, Aberdeen, UK, AB11 9DB.

Objective : At the recent Living Resource Committee (LRC) meeting of the 2007 ICES Annual Science Conference, several participants expressed a wish to store and access ground-truthed images of echotraces (representations of fish schools from acoustic data) from around Europe. These images could then be accessed by the scientific and fishing communities to build on the experience gained in the different areas so that, for example, movements of species into unfamiliar territory can be monitored (e.g. sardine and anchovy moving into the North Sea as a result of climate change). Such a tool may even be of assistance to the fishing community to reduce bycatch (e.g. of herring in the mackerel fishery). A web based database for these purposes was built for the EC funded SIMFAMI project (Fernandes *et al.* 2006). The SIMFAMI database (Gajate *et al.* 2004) is currently housed in the Spanish SIRENO database, and this should now be made more widely available (SIRENO access is IP address protected). Given the sensitivities of international access to SIRENO, the database should be housed elsewhere. This will require some development, but the database model and a considerable amount of data already exist, so it should merely be an exercise in recoding and then finding a suitable venue to house the database. Our Spanish colleagues have indicated that they would be willing to cooperate with the transfer.

Budget estimation: No proposal

Duration: No proposal

Action: RCM should consider making a request to the EU to fund redeployment of the SIMFAMI database, making it available to the scientific and fishing communities.

References

Fernandes, P.G., Korneliussen, R.J., Lebourges-Dhaussy, A., Masse, J., Iglesias, M., Diner, N., Ona, E., Knutsen, T., Gajate, J. and Ponce, R. (2006). The SIMFAMI project: Species Identification Methods from Acoustic Multifrequency Information. Final report to the EC. No. Q5RS-2001-02054.

Gajate, J., Ponce, R., Peña, M., Iglesias, M., Fernandes, P.G. and Alvarez, F. (2004). The SIMFAMI database: a library of ground truthed acoustic survey data. *ICES CM 2004/R:27*. pp.

RCM NEA	RCM NEA recommends that the proposers of the different acoustic survey databases liaise closely over the next few weeks and submit a revised common proposal directly to the forthcoming Liaison Meeting.	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission
LM comment	LM notes that no proposals were available during the meeting. LM supports the idea of developing only one database.	

5.2. North Sea regional data warehouse

The further development of the existing data warehouse through this study shall include the following tasks:

1. The platform should contain relevant data concerning landings, effort, biological information from catches (incl. discards) and scientific surveys.
2. The database should be able to provide biological input for stock assessment models and easy access to basic analysis of this information.
3. Establish the possibility to describe the historical details of the raising procedure.
4. Provide the data background for additional analysis and post-stratification based on disaggregated biological data.
5. Provide an easy overview of the sampling status on national and international level.
6. Provide easy access to data by the Commission and other end-users
7. Provide quality assured consistently calculated total stock estimates from the acoustic surveys.
8. Develop the possibility for the integration of relevant statistical tools as those developed in the COST project.
9. Provide detailed descriptions and user manuals.

Budget estimation: EUR 450,000

Duration: 12 months

LM notices that this proposal is already included in the 2008 work programme.

5.3. Proposal to the EU to fund the implementation of a survey-based monitoring system for fisheries management with an ecosystem approach.

Contact person : Pierre Petitgas, IFREMER, FISBOAT coordinator

Objective : Implementation of a tool to apply statistical monitoring procedures to a wide range of agreed indicators in an Ecosystemic Approach to Fisheries perspective and test the performance of the procedures to alert on the health of fish stocks and their ecosystems.

Deliverable : An open source tool, together with example applications and guide lines for its use for the indicators retained for the EAF.

Rationale : A likely direction for reforming the CFP is towards management of whole ecosystems, the so-called Ecosystem Approach to Fisheries Management (EAF). The need for an EAF is now accepted by scientists, non-governmental and governmental organisations. The European Commission has already started discussions to define indicators to monitor the status of the ecosystems as well as the corresponding data that would need to be collected within the European Commission's Data Collection Regulation. In that context, at sea monitoring surveys and survey-based assessment methods are expected to be the back-bone of an EAF. Surveys can provide time-series for numerous and varied indicators of the health of commercial fish stocks, non-target species of fish, as well as other ecological components.

The UE project FISBOAT (Fishery Independent Survey Based Operational Assessment Tools, STREP no. 502572) was aimed at developing fish stock assessment tools that are based on fishery independent research survey data only. The project has now ended and is delivering methods and software code for an indicator-based assessment of fish stocks using indicators in their vital traits, abundance and spatial distributions. These methods are appropriate in the case of new species for which little knowledge is available and that are sampled by the surveys. Also, the methods are appropriate for any stock for *a posteriori* monitoring the effect of management actions independently from the fishery.

Because surveys are becoming more and more a platform to collect indicators for the ecosystem approach, the procedures developed in the FISBOAT project would be extended to deal with more ecosystemic indicators, such as those already listed by the EC in its discussions for reforming the DCR (STECF, 2006). Statistical monitoring procedures applied to a wide range of indicators are known as one of the ways to effectively implement an EAF and these would be made operational for a list of indicators relevant to the EAF and the DCR.

Further, a procedure is needed to effectively implement the methodology in operational mode in the advisory bodies. Benchmark workshops could be organised to conclude on the reliability of the diagnostic procedures as well as set quality control criteria for alerting on ecosystem and fish stock status. These workshops could be jointly mastered by PGCCDBS for ICES waters and GFCM for the Mediterranean. In that way a procedure would be effectively implemented within the advisory bodies in order to use methodology relevant to the EAF.

Budget estimation : 700 000 Euros

Duration : 24 months

References

- Anon. 2007. Report of the Ad Hoc Meeting of independent experts on Indicators and associated data requirements to measure the impacts of fisheries on the marine ecosystem. EC DG-Fish, Brussels 25-27 June 2007.
- Cotter et al. 2007. Manual of indicators and methods for assessing fish stocks using only fishery-independent survey-based information. ICES CM 2007/O:27.
- Petitgas et al. 2007. Comprehensive indicator-based diagnostics of fish stocks using fishery-independent survey data: the FISBOAT report on case studies. ICES CM 2007/O:16.
- STECF 2006. Second meeting on ecosystem approach. SGRN-06-01. Brussels, 19-23 June 2006. 88 pp.

RCM NEA	RCM NEA supports the proposal.	Follow-up responsibilities
LM comment	LM is currently unable to assess the needs for the processing of data related to the ecosystem approach. These indicators will be clearly defined in the new DCR and Member States must first gain experience before the need for such a project can be evaluated.	

5.4. Maturity Photodatabase for the Mediterranean

It was recalled that a Workshop for the Mediterranean Maturity Photo Database was proposed during the 2006 RCM, though this would have fit in the proposed studies line. From the LM report, it is known that a similar initiative has been taken by another region and a small scale project has been proposed (Web services for support of Growth and Reproduction Studies -WebGR). Therefore, it can be expected that such a topic may be included to be published in the call for tenders in 2007. If this will be the case, the RCM Med will try to present a tender together with other regions, in line with the LM recommendation on “extending this WebServices project to all the Regions”. Otherwise, the RCM Med proposes a specific study on Maturity Photo Database for the Mediterranean, for 2008 (see Annex XVII).

LM notes that the WebGR study has been already published under call for tenders FISH/2007/07.

5.5. A study investigating the feasibility of routine sampling of bluefin tuna calcified structures from the European fisheries for routine estimation of age structure of the catch (to exo)

Contact person: Enrique Rodríguez-Marín (rodriguez.marin@st.ieo.es)

Objectives: To develop and establish a coordinated and standardized sampling program for collection of bluefin tuna calcified structures throughout the European fisheries, in order to optimise the sampling effort under the European Data Collection Program.

To collect an adequate number of calcified structures from a representative sample of the population to develop a length key. This would be used to construct an updated growth curve for use in stock assessments.

To seek consensus among organizations or institutes involved with bluefin tuna age determinations on a standardized and normalized reading technique.

To establish a coordinated archiving system that would provide secure storage for calcified structures collected by the sampling program, aiming the creating of a reference collection that could be exchanged among participating scientists.

Duration: 18 months

Estimated cost: 225 000 euros

Geographic area covered: North East Atlantic and Mediterranean

LM agrees with this proposal.

5.6. Delimitation of swordfish stocks in the Mediterranean

Contact persons: George Tserpes (gtserpes@her.hcmr.gr)
Jaime Mejuto (jaime.mejuto@co.ieo.es)

Background: In the Atlantic-Mediterranean region, ICCAT considers the existence of three stocks: two in the Atlantic (North, South) and one in the Mediterranean. Although past studies (genetic, tagging etc) have clearly demonstrated that the Atlantic stocks are separated from the Mediterranean, the optimum stock boundaries have not been identified due to the unknown degree of stock mixing in the Gibraltar area. In addition, recent scientific work has provided evidence suggesting the existence of more than one stock units within the Mediterranean.

As aspects related to stock structure have important management implications, ICCAT organized in March 2006 an international workshop on swordfish stock structure and recommended further research to clarify the aforementioned stock structure questions.

Objectives : The objectives of the study will be to: (a) clarify the swordfish stock structure within the Mediterranean basin and (b) identify optimum boundaries between Atlantic and Mediterranean stocks.

Duration: 24 months

Estimated cost: 300 000 euros

Geographic area covered: North East Atlantic – Mediterranean region

LM suggests that this proposal should be addressed in a research project.

5.7. Harmonization of the past acoustic data in the Mediterranean (2002-2006)

Contact person : Athanassios Machias (amachias@her.hcmr.gr)
Magdalena Iglesias (magdalena.iglesias@ba.ieo.es)
Bernard Liorzou (Bernard.Liorzou@ifremer.fr)
Iole Leonori (i.leonori@ismar.cnr.it)
Angelo Bonanno (angelo.bonanno@irma.pa.cnr.it)

Background: Acoustic surveys are important for the assessment of small pelagic fish stocks. Besides biomass estimates, these data can be used to delimit stock boundaries and analyze the distribution of adult and nursery grounds within the context of changing climatic oceanographic and fishing regimes.

Acoustic surveys have been conducted on a regular basis in several Mediterranean GSAs during the last decades. Three of them (Spanish, French and Greek surveys) have been included in the DCR as extended programs, while others (Italian surveys) were funded from other resources. However, they have not been internationally coordinated and data have been analyzed and presented in diversified ways. Furthermore, the implementation of a common protocol for Mediterranean acoustic surveys in the future would result in changes in the methodology of analysis, the estimated parameters, data formats and presentation of old and new data for the same GSA. These are impediments to the use and meta-analysis of past acoustic data at large spatial and temporal scales.

Objectives: The objectives of the study will be to harmonize analysis sets of estimated parameters, formats and presentation of past acoustic surveys held within the time period of the DCR (2002 – 2006) in order to be comparable at Mediterranean scale and compatible with future data.

Duration: 24 months

Estimated cost: 400.000 Euros

Geographic area covered: Mediterranean Sea

LM notes that this study is included in the work programme 2008.
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5.8. Harmonization of the collected series of catch and effort data towards a fishery based approach to fishery management in the Mediterranean (2002-2006)

Contact person: Mary Labropoulou, e-mail: mlabro@ath.hcmr.gr

Background : During the last decade the Mediterranean countries collect data under different schemes, regarding fishing fleet, fishing effort and landings. The setting up of the new DCR in 2009 will integrate the fleet-based approach in the future collection of bio-economic data.

Although fishing activity matrix has been adopted by the MS for the new DCR, it has been acknowledged by the MS that there are inconsistencies in the data already collected for fully completed the matrix. Therefore the need of evaluation and harmonization of the available effort and landing data is essential for compatibility in order to be incorporated in the data series.

Objectives : The objectives of the study will be to harmonize methodologies and analysis for the compatibility of the effort and landing data collected within the time period of the DCR (2002 – 2006) to be compatible with the requirements imposed by the fleet based approach to fishery management in the new DCR.

Duration: 24 months

Estimated cost: 300.000 Euros

Geographic area covered: Mediterranean Sea

LM agrees with this proposal as it is complementary to the log-book analysis and together would complete the needs.

5.9. Feasibility study for a regional fishery database in the Mediterranean

Contact persons:.....

Objectives

The objectives of the study will be:

- To evaluate the feasibility of a Mediterranean regional database. Requirements of end users will be analysed in order to define the parameters to be included in the database. Level of desegregations will be identified according to the fleet based approach and the FAO/GSA geographical subdivisions.
- To review the available landings and effort data series and evaluate the feasibility to integrate other existing Mediterranean databases (as for instance the MEDITs data base), and
- To define quality control checks to automatically identify inconsistencies and missing information.

Duration: 18 months

Estimated cost:

Geographic area covered: Mediterranean Sea

LM notes that a data portal and warehouse study is included in the 2008 work programme. (see proposal 5.2)

5.10. Recreational fishery: current status of knowledge and future common approach for data collection

contact persons:

Background: In view of the presentation of the new DCR, methodologies for collection of relevant data for the recreational fisheries will be proposed and tested.

Objectives The objective of the proposed study will be to review the existing methodologies and to suggest the best approaches for homogenous data collection of recreational fisheries.

Duration:

Estimated cost:

Geographic area covered:

LM agrees with the need and suggests waiting for further progress on this issue planned during forthcoming PGCCDBS/PGMED

5.11. Recommendations related to small-scale projects

Topic : Project for analysis VMS data		
RCM Baltic	<p>The RCM recommends that a call for a project in support of the CFP should be issued with the task to further investigate the use and required resolution of VMS data for the estimation of fishing activity and distribution. Small scale project should include tools for scientific analysis of VMS data</p> <p>The RCM reiterates the 2006 recommendation that the competent national authorities shall be approached by national scientists in order to ensure an open access of VMS data for scientific purposes. RCM recall access to VMS data is included in proposed framework regulation to support the ecosystem approach.</p>	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>EU-Commission</p> <p>Member States</p>
LM comment	<p>LM stresses the importance of this issue and notes that it is included in the 2008 work programme.</p> <p>LM notes that the availability of VMS data for scientific purpose is clearly specified in the DCR general framework.</p>	
Topic : Addition to the call for log-book analysis		
RCM NS&EA	<p>In case a study under the call “FISH/2007/03 Lot 5: Development of tools for logbook data analysis” will be funded, the RCM NS&EA recommends to the Commission that the consortium awarded is made aware to take into account in their analysis the circumstances under which the fishing activities occur (local and regional regulations, ...).</p>	<p>Follow-up responsibilities</p> <p>EU-Commission</p>
LM comment	<p>LM agrees with this suggestion.</p>	

Topic : Joint study with the industry in the Mediterranean		
RCM Mediterranean	With the anticipation that in 2008 the Mediterranean RAC will become operational, the RCM Med considers it would be useful to have a joint DCR study with the industry, in line with the previous studies - exercises between RCMs and RACs taken in 2006	Follow-up responsibilities
LM comment	LM agrees with the rationale, and considers it is up to RCM Med to elaborate upon and propose the study.	
Topic : small-scale fisheries		
RCM NEA (Follow-up of 2006 recommendation)	There will be a Theme Session regarding small scales fisheries in the 2008 ICES ASC. A project dealing with this issue should be considered after this theme session (see first recommendation). To be readdressed to RCM NEA 2008.	Follow-up responsibilities Proposer of the original project.
LM comment	LM agrees with RCM recommendation.	
Topic : Increase number of projects		
LM is concerned about the inflation in the number of recommendations and advises the RCMs to carefully select those which are important for further considerations. In this view, LM recommends the RCMs to set up the priorities when proposing studies and workshops, considering the relevance and the added-value for the DCR spelled out in a specific section attached to the proposal.		

6. OTHER ISSUES

Topic : DCR funding for GFCM workshops		
RCM Mediterranean	The RCM Med suggests to the Commission to consider for funding the [attendance to] GFCM workshops and meetings that are more relevant to the DCR	Follow-up responsibilities EU-Commission GFCM
LM comment	LM was informed that the participation to any meetings regarding DCR are eligible, provided that the list of meetings is provided before the end of the year.	
Topic: Data calls		
RCM NEA (follow-up of 2006 recommendation)	<p>Calls for data should be clearly defined. This recommendation was not followed by the last 2007 call for discard data.</p> <p>RCM NEA notes that each data call has required data in a different format, this has increased the workload for member states and has decreased the speed of response to the data calls.</p> <p>RCM NEA recommends standardisation of data formats and where possible use of previous formats, the DCR web site should present previous data calls and formats so that authors of new data calls may consult them. End-users requesting different formats than those previously used should clearly justify the need for such format.</p>	Follow-up responsibilities EU – Commission and JRC
LM comment	<p>LM endorses the agreement reached during the RCM NEA. LM notes that the new DCR general framework includes the possibility to charge for processing the data, which should cover the extra manpower needed to process the data in new data formats.</p> <p>In addition, LM stresses that the calls for data resulting from a sampling process should respect the stratification used.</p>	

7. LM OWN RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to improve the dissemination of the information, **LM recommends the EU-Commission to send the LM report to National Correspondents and RFO secretariats** (ICES, GFCM, ICCAT, IOTC, CCAMLR, NAFO, CECAF, WECAF and NEAFC).

As already stated in the 3rd LM, the domain of competence of the RCMs includes economic issues and thus LM recommends that **the chair of STECF/SGECA should participate to the LM** in order to have a full scope of expertise.

8. 2008 RCM MEETINGS

RCM Mediterranean	The RCM Med agreed that the next meeting will take place in France. Christian Dintheer was proposed as the next Chair of the RCM Med
RCM NS&EA	The next meeting of the RCM NS&EA will take place in Aberdeen, Scotland, UK, from 30 Sep to 3 Oct 2008
RCM NEA & NAFO	The NAFO area will be included in the competences of the RCM NEA. The next meeting will take place in England (possibly York), UK, in October 2008
RCM Baltic	The next meeting of RCM Baltic will take place in Hamburg, Germany, in October 2008
RCM Long Distance fisheries	The first meeting is on the agenda, but not yet scheduled.