

# **Report of the 14<sup>th</sup> Liaison Meeting**

**Meeting between the chairs of RCGs (and sub-group on Large Pelagics), PGECON, STECF meetings on DCF, SCRDB, key end users (ICES, RFMOs), JRC and the Commission**

## **FINAL REPORT**

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## 1. Introduction

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### 1.1 Background

According to Article 8 of the Regulation (EC) No 2017/1004<sup>1</sup> (Data Collection Framework, DCF), Member States shall cooperate and coordinate their actions to further improve the quality, timeliness and coverage of data enabling the reliability of data collection methods with a view to improving their data collection activities. Furthermore, according to article 9 (1) of the same regulation, Member States shall coordinate their data collection activities with other Member States in the same marine region and shall make every effort to coordinate their actions with third countries having sovereignty or jurisdiction over waters in the same marine region.

In order to facilitate regional coordination, regional coordination groups shall be established by the relevant Member States for each marine region (Article 9(2) of the Regulation (EC) No 2017/1004). Five Regional Coordination Groups (RCG) have been established and are operational in the framework of the DCF: Baltic (RCG Baltic), North Sea & Eastern Arctic (RCG NS&EA), North Atlantic (RCG NA) and Mediterranean/Black Sea/Large Pelagics (RCG Med& Black Sea) and Long Distance Fisheries RCG LD). Most fishing fleets subject to DCF activities are covered by these RCGs. In addition to these RCGs and a Planning Group dealing with data collection of economic data issues has been established (PGECON)

The marine regions were defined at the 5<sup>th</sup> Liaison Meeting as follows:

1. the Baltic Sea (ICES areas III b-d);
2. the North Sea (ICES areas IIIa, IV and VIId), the Eastern Arctic (ICES areas I and II), the ICES divisions Va, XII & XIV and the NAFO areas;
3. the North Atlantic (ICES areas V-X, excluding Va and VIId);
4. the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea (complemented since 2013 with fisheries on Large Pelagics managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations on tuna fisheries – ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, IATTC);
5. regions where fisheries are operated by Community vessels and managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMO) other than tuna RFMOs to which the Community is contracting party or observer (Long-Distance Fisheries).

Regional co-ordination greatly increases the efficiency, effectiveness and integration of the various DCF National Work Plans (WPs). A RCG consist of experts appointed by Member States, including national correspondents, and the Commission and an annually meeting is held.

According to article 9(6) of the Regulation (EC) 2017/1004 Regional coordination groups shall coordinate with each other and with the Commission, where issues affect several marine regions. In order to create a forum where issues that affect several marine regions can be assessed and discussed a Liaison meeting is organised every year after the RCG meetings have taken place.

The participants of the Liaison Meeting (LM) are the chairs of STECF DCF EWGs, the chairs (incoming and outgoing) of the different RCGs, the chair(s) of the PGECON, the core DCF data end-users (e.g. ICES, ICCAT and GFCM), the chairs of the steering groups of Regional Databases and the Commission.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the 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)

The 14<sup>th</sup> Liaison Meeting (LM) was held at the DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE), Brussels, from 9<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Patrick Daniel, DG MARE, opened the meeting by welcoming participants and addressed the status of the DCF from the Commissions point of view.

## **1.2 Terms of Reference**

The 14<sup>th</sup> Liaison meeting was held in Brussels on 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> October 2017 to address the following Terms of Reference:

### **TOR 1. Discussion on possible follow-up to the main outputs/recommendations of:**

- a) The 2017 RCGs - specific recommendations addressed to the Liaison Meeting
- b) PGECON, PGMed – outcomes and recommendations from their 2017 meeting
- c) PGDATA, WGCATCH, WGBIOP – key outcomes and recommendations from their 2017 meetings
- d) STECF EWG and STECF Plenary - outcomes and recommendations from their 2017 meetings
- e) Data end users (ICES, STECF, RFMOs – GFCM, IATTC, ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, NAFO, SPRFMO, CECAF, WECAFC)

### **TOR2. Rules of Procedures**

- a) Present RoP as agreed in each of the RCGs
- b) Discuss parallelisms
- c) Future steps

### **TOR 3. Data handling**

- a) RCM data calls – overview of how MS responded
- b) Overview of use of the Regional Databases for RCGs in 2017 and problems identified
- c) Future developments for Regional Databases
- d) Data calls – main changes in data calls anticipated next year

### **TOR 4. Governance structure**

- a) RCG groups: tentative changes in structure/number of RCGs
- b) Cooperation of RCGs with other DCF 'groups': cooperation between RCGs; communication with PGECON; role of RCGs in evaluation of National/Regional Reports and establishment of cooperation with STECF
- c) Cooperation with end users
- d) Vision of future RCG role(s): discussion on short- and medium-term objectives
- e) Future role of the Liaison Meeting

### **TOR 5. AOB**

- a) Agree on a list of recommendations relating to DCF (that MS will need to report on in their AR2017)
- b) Review and prioritize DCF-related study proposals from RCGs, PGECON, EGs etc.
- c) Potential list of recommended meetings for 2018 as guidance for MS
- d) Requested outcomes of RCGs: list of scientific surveys; Table 1A of Work Plan
- e) Landing obligation (Discuss main issues that came out of the RCGs)

- f) Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues
- g) Format of report

### 1.3 Participants

The 13<sup>th</sup> Liaison Meeting met with the following participants:

Name	Role	E-mail
Christoph Stransky	Chair of STECF EWGs (on DCF issues)	christoph.stransky@thuenen.de
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Maria Hansson	Chair of RCG Baltic	maria.hansson@slu.se
Katja Ringdahl	Co-Chair of RCG North Sea & Eastern Arctic (RCG NS&EA)	Katja.Ringdahl@slu.se
Marie Storr-Paulsen	Co-Chair of RCG North Sea & Eastern Arctic (RCG NS&EA)	msp@aqua.dtu.dk
Leonie O'Dowd	Co-Chair of RCG North Atlantic (RCG NA)	leonie.odowd@marine.ie
Els Torreele*	Co-Chair of RCG North Sea & Eastern Arctic (RCG NS&EA)	Els.Torreele@ilvo.vlaanderen.be
Jernej Švab	Chair of the RCG Med&BS	Jernej.Svab@gov.si
Jon Ruiz Gondra	Chair of the RCG Med&BS Sub-Group on Large Pelagics	jruiz@azti.es
Apostolos Karagiannakos	Chair of the RCG Med&BS	akaragiannakos@minagric.gr
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\*part-time

## 2 Future role of the Liaison meeting (ToR 4 e)

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With the adoption of the DCF (recast) the role of the Liaison meeting has changed compared to the previous DCF period 2009-2016 as the legislation has changes from being an official forum where recommendations from the Regional Coordination Meetings (RCM) were reviewed and if endorsed MS should take these recommendations into account when conducting their national programmes.

According to the DCF article 9 (6) *“Regional coordination groups shall coordinate with each other and with the Commission, where issues affect several marine regions”*.

In addition to the provision mentioned above the Commission has established an Expert Group on Fisheries Data collection (E02750). The mission of this expert group is to assist the Commission in the implementation of the (DCF) concerning the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy. Some of the tasks of the expert group or sub-groups are to:

Coordinate and share information with Member State representatives in the implementation of DCF:

- with experts on social and economic data for fisheries, aquaculture and the processing industry;
- with experts on regional coordination of biological data collection, management and use under the DCF;

Therefore, as confirmed by the Commission the Liaison meeting is an expert group to assist the Commission on data collection issues.

## 3 Main outcomes of DCF related meetings in 2017 (ToR 1)

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### 3.1 Main outcomes of 2017 RCGs and specific recommendations addressed to the Liaison meeting

#### 3.1.1 RCG Baltic

The annual Regional Coordination Group (RCG) of the Baltic Sea region met in Turku (Finland) between September 04 and 08, 2017. Overall, 39 participants from all Baltic countries (except Russia), ICES, the COM joined the meeting. For the first time, a pan-regional subgroup of diadromous fish experts, including participation from UK, participated in this RCG.

Issues and concerns about the compliance and control of the **landing obligation** (LO) and possible bias in observer sampling coverage on Baltic cod were raised. Despite non-compliance with the LO being obvious in the cod fisheries since the introduction of the LO in 2015 (especially in eastern Baltic cod), the present approach of the control authorities is apparently unable to prosecute misconduct. Possible solutions were discussed, such as (i) obligatory observer coverage (with reference to the Swedish approach), (ii) obligatory CCTV coverage (equipping a random subset of the fleet with random analysis of CCTV recordings) and/or (iii) reserve discard-top up or any proportion of TAC which can only be fished with onboard observer or CCTV installed. Information is not yet available on the amounts of BMS (below minimum conservation reference size) landed for plaice (under LO in the Baltic Sea since January 1, 2017).

The **Rules of Procedures** (RoP) of the RCG Baltic, drafted by an intersessional group since the last RCM, were adopted and now determine how the RCG Baltic will work together. The RoP will be reviewed after the first year.

Moreover, significant progress on a **cost-sharing model of research surveys**, developed by another intersessional group since the last RCM, was presented. A simple and transparent approach was identified (national TAC share according to principle of relative stability and survey days) and MS are requested to discuss this approach nationally, prepare their point of view prior to the next RCG and maybe already consider bilateral agreements in case of unequal survey contribution (involving national correspondents).

R-scripts and analysis tools were available for **RDB data analysis**; especially the descriptive overview graphics were further improved during the meeting. While the convenient and rapid way of visualizing RDB data was appreciated, visual inspection of graphs often immediately identified errors and shortcomings in the R code or in the raw data that need to be fixed before the results can be used for the different purposes, e.g. description of the fisheries, planning of regional sampling or benchmarks. Examples of **descriptive graphs** based on RDB data are given in the report, e.g. spatial patterns in landings, values and effort by stock and gear type, landings by stock and top ten harbours, comparisons of age readings by stock and country. It was suggested that the R scripts are stored at the SharePoint and ensure that all RCGs can have easy access to the original codes.

The complex of the sampling of **marine recreational fisheries** was presented by Harry Strehlow (via skype) and data collection and other issues were discussed, e.g. related to the national work plans.

The **Diadromous species subgroup** (DSG) met as a pan-regional group within the RCG Baltic. These are the findings of the subgroup against the seven diadromous ToRs that structured their activities:

1. The proposal for a pan-regional sub group for diadromous species was supported, and Aims and Objectives in the form of ToRs were drafted for consideration at the Liaison Meeting 2017.
2. WGBAST and WGEEL have recently reported on data collection programmes, management or assessment units, and WGNAS through a workshop in 2012. These WGs will be asked to advise on data collection requirements and benefits of regional coordination through their roles as end users. WGEEL has initiated an official data call in 2017.
3. The DSG examined the recent STECF reports from 2016 and 2017 for recommendations to ease the reporting and evaluation of national work plans and technical reports. Time limits prevented further progress during the meeting.
4. Regional coordination in the Baltic is well established, though not fully implemented for all species and stocks. Outside the Baltic, regional coordination is less well established and the benefits less obvious, though some potential opportunities for eel were suggested. Advice should be sought from the ICES assessment working groups as end users.
5. Following the intent of the EU MAP, end user feedback is required from which to agree on designated rivers and management units, and so questions are posed to the ICES assessment Working Groups. However, in support of this work the DSG drafted proposals for criteria to identify 'index' rivers, using eel in the Baltic Sea as an example.
6. The RCG sub group on Quality compiled landings per harbour, including eels and salmon, as a way to check for data submission errors. However, the marine-focussed databases are not ideal for incorporating all the DCF Data for diadromous species because some data are unique, e.g. data from fresh waters instead of marine waters, and some biological data types. The WGEEL and ICES are developing eel-specific databases, and the ICES will continue to examine ways to adapt the Regional Database to suit diadromous species data. Data provision through databases should facilitate quality assurance processes.

7. This ToR was interpreted to refer to evaluation of national (and future regional) sampling programmes. To start, an overview of salmon, sea trout and eels data collected by Member States in the Baltic region was prepared, highlighting data collected within or outside the DCF, and those used in international, regional or national assessments. This will be expanded to all EU Member States in 2018.

RCG Baltic agreed on two **pan-regional subgroups**:

- (i) diadromous fish expert subgroup
- (ii) on development of the Regional Data Base (RDB), where the Steering Committee of the RDB (SCRDB) forms the core group

three **regional intersessional subgroups**:

- (iii) to suggest on a regional sampling program of small pelagics in the Baltic Sea
- (iv) cost-sharing of research surveys in the area SD2232
- (v) to develop R codes for standard analysis of RDB and DATRAS data.

*LM considerations:* The pan-regional diadromous group prefers to meet in parallel with another relevant RCG, for next year RCG NA or RCG NS&EA is to be considered. RCG NA seems a logic candidate based on the relevance for salmon, despite forbidden to fish for in marine waters. LM noted that the Mediterranean region should be connected to this pan-regional group as well, in line with the regulation to have all relevant MS involved. On the other hand, LM feels that we should limit the groups as, both in number of groups as well as number of participants. One method could be to focus on the region the diadromous group is hosted with. Also, LM advises the group to focus on developing national sampling, based on a regional approach. LM felt that this pan-regional group needs a plan to organise and prioritise its work, while the group may have other views themselves. LM requests the subgroup to initiate this plan and to find a way forward more in line with other subgroups to avoid losing contact with other groups as well as to align work with e.g. WGEEL. **The 2017 LM chair Jørgen Dalskov (CC to ICES) will contact Alan Walker (chair subgroup) on this.**

### 3.1.2 RCG NS&EA

The Regional Coordination meeting NS&EA met in Port-en-Bessin from 11th to 15th September 2017. Thirty participants from 12 members' states and representatives from Commission and ICES were participating. The meeting was largely devoted to subgroup work relating to A) Data quality and sampling plans, B) cost sharing of surveys and Rules of Procedures and C) end-user interaction

Having regard Article 9.2 of REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004, stipulating that regional coordination groups shall be established by the relevant Member States for each marine region, the Regional Coordination Group for the North Sea and Eastern Arctic was established upon opening of the meeting on September 11, 2017. However, guidance, and possibly decision-making, on the geographical scope for each RCG is further needed.

In the RCM NS&EA 2016, several sub groups were established and the intersessional work conducted was presented during this year's meeting.

The first pan-regional sub group on end-users needs had an intersessional meeting with ICES in March 2017 where a road map on future work was developed. It was further suggested to focus on two presently used processes to increase the communication between the end users and data providers; the benchmark process and the data calls. During this meeting the end-user sub-group continued the work conducted at the Atlantic and Baltic RCG 2017 on providing input in preparation for updating the EU-MAP table 10. The sub group used the information from the annual work programs in combination with the mandatory table 10 survey list and ICES information on surveys used in advice to combine two tables including all the relevant information. It was decided that these tables should be quality assured by MS and ICES. The pan-regional end-user group was decided to continue in 2018.

Data needs were examined in relation to ICES as the main end-user, with an emphasis being on the process by which end-users communicate needs and the extent of the existing dialogue with RCMs. The outcome of the subgroup's deliberations was a generic code building on the variables from the RDB and which could be used by ICES to get a stock overview in relation to benchmark process. As an example the RCG populated the data for a group of North Sea species which are due to be benchmarked in 2018, flounder, witch, whiting and lemon sole. Further, a data overview was conducted for one of these stocks: the whiting.

The sub group on Diadromous species participated in this year's Baltic RCG and it was concluded that the interaction with the RCG were beneficial for the further development of a common understanding of the data need and that this sub-group should be invited in next year's NS&EA RCG in Copenhagen.

The RCM NS&EA further agreed in 2016 that intersessional work on the Rules of Procedure should be carried out in preparation to transform the RCM to RCG in 2017, which was further supported by the Liaison meeting. Such work took place in a written procedure towards the end of 2016 and 2017 ending to a draft Rules of Procedure circulated among Member States in July 2017. However, no agreement on the Rules of Procedure was reached during this RCG NS&EA meeting. After further drafting, taking into account the adopted Rules of Procedures from the RCG Baltic Sea and the draft Rules of Procedure from the RCG North Atlantic, a new draft was produced. The RCG considered that the new draft was near final form and a workplan to have the updated RoP was agreed upon. The same sub group was working on the generic criteria for a cost sharing model on surveys and here progress were made with an agreement for the blue whiting and Atlanto-Scandinavian herring survey from being achieved for NESAs participants;

Updating of the annual workplan were discussed and further work on automation process for compiling the data required for table 1A was conducted and the RCG was in agreement that this approach was of general benefit.

The 2017 data call was generally well met with all countries uploading landings and effort data to the RDB, Upload logs were completed by most countries and were in the process of being summarised.

The RCM also received presentations of the follow up of LM 2016 recommendations and of the work of expert groups and end-users from 2016-17: PGDATA, WGCATCH, WGBIOP, SCRDB, WKRDB, WGRFS, WKBIOPTIM, WKDECC, STECF, ICES, COMMISSION, and the RCM BALTIC.

The next meeting is planned to be held in Lyngby, Denmark, with co-chair Els Torreele and Marie Storr-Paulsen; the suggested date is 3rd to 7th of September 2018.

### **3.1.3 RCG NA**

The 1<sup>st</sup> annual meeting of the Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic was held at the Marine Institute in County Galway (Ireland) 04-08 September 2017 with 25 participants from six member states, the European Commission and ICES. Two member states as well as experts from the diadromous subgroup and with recreational fisheries expertise contributed via WebEx.

With the recast of the Data Collection Framework published in 2017, this meeting marked the transition from an Annual Meeting to the establishment of a Regional Coordination Group from the North Atlantic. The role is still to coordinate the National Work Programmes (NWP) of the Member States with fisheries in the North Atlantic region but with further scope of developing, implementing and maintaining Regional Work Plans. Establishing a governance model and developing a road map to meet the aims of the RCG was started through reviewing the progress made over the year and planning the Regional and Supra regional work required for 2018 to meet the aims of the new RCG. Agreeing rules and procedures for the RCGNA, progressing the development of regional sampling plans and establishing criteria to test designs; improving communication with end-users and experts and cost sharing agreements, and the tools required to ultimately satisfy end user needs all formed the core of the discussions. Some analysis of the data uploaded to RDB demonstrated the limits of the RDB data but also how it could be used to review achievements, the quality, coverage and impact of current sampling levels relative to commercial landings and effort with a focus on potential quality indicators. The impact of the landing obligation on scientific sampling schemes was also reviewed. The

participation of experts, National Correspondents, the commission and ICES as an end-user made it possible to consider these aspects at all levels.

**Governance for Regional Coordination Groups (RCG): rules and procedures; task sharing agreements; developing regional sampling plans; communication with end users:**

The terms of reference were the same across all RCGs so rather than work independently in 2017, RCGs actively collaborated on pan regional issues using intersessional sub-groups through correspondence, skype meetings and (physical) intersessional meetings. Pan-regional rules and procedures were drafted and agreed among the subgroup and NCs; survey cost sharing models were agreed; improved procedures for communications and data quality was agreed with ICES; a data group was established and an ICES SharePoint was setup allowing the development and sharing of R-Tools for analysing and exploring the RDB data.

The outputs of the pan-regional intersessional subgroup work formed the basis for consideration in the North Atlantic context. The pan-regional rules and procedures were reviewed by the RCGNA and considered too complex. A subgroup consisting of NCs redrafted a simplified version and consensus was reached for most of the document in plenary. The RCGNA research survey subgroup drafted a cost sharing agreement for blue whiting based on a model agreed intersessionally. The subgroup also considered how the RCGs, Member States and ICES can input into the preparation for the STECF survey evaluation and review of table 10 in EU (2016/1251) and developed a table to compile the necessary information. The Regional Sampling Subgroup thoroughly reviewed intersessional and ongoing work looking at optimising sampling and cost benefit analysis and regional sampling design.

The group identified a further need to develop and agree on quantitative objectives and the metrics required to measure the performance of different designs before schemes are designed. The need to develop statistical tests that can properly evaluate schemes with data made available through the data exchange format of the RDB was identified and formed the basis of a recommendation. The RDB continues to be the key tool for any progress in evaluating national work plans and implementing and monitoring regional sampling plans and the End-User and Data subgroup provided examples of the current R-tools developed to review the data. A demonstration of how the RDB might be used as a tool to help with MS reporting and STECF evaluation of national and ultimately regional sampling plans was also presented. The automation of some of the tables in the NWP were considered in relation to the R code already developed to populate table 1A. A review of the AWP submissions and the R code results revealed most of the issues relate to species and stock nomenclature and their not being a consistent reference list available. The recent and proposed development strategy for the RDB submitted by the SC-RDB was reviewed in plenary and concerns about communication failure raised. The need for continuing RCG NA representation on the steering committee was strongly highlighted. The End-User and Data subgroup included ICES as an end user and the group reviewed enduser interactions and considered encouraging the involvement of other bodies/RFMOs and EGs defined as end-users by the regulation. A thorough review of 2017 data calls relating to the RCGNA was conducted and issues identified. The diadromous subgroup met as part the RCG Baltic and reported via WebEx on the identification of end-user needs, coordination of data collection and working procedures for diadromous species. Data collection issues on recreational fisheries were discussed with the chair of WGRF via WebEx and the difficulty in evaluating recreational fisheries pilot studies in the national work plans due to lack of details was highlighted.

**Landing obligation, RCG Data call; Upload logs and data analysis; proposal for intersessional work:**

RCMNA continued with their annual review of the impact of the phased introduction of the landing obligation on sampling and data quality, reviewing any changes in sampling procedures and landing practices. A joint data call was launched by the chairs of the RCM NA, RCM Baltic and RCM NS&EA. MS were requested to upload data for 2016 in the regional database (RDB Fishframe) hosted by ICES. For the first time, all MS complied with this request for the landings and effort data for the North Atlantic. For the sample data, all MS except France uploaded data for 2016. The evaluation of the data on the RDB revealed consistency for most MS in their annual number of species in landings; species in sample data and catch and effort data. Upload logs were not reviewed in 2017, but it is accepted that based on previous analyses and the pace of development of the RDB that not all data collected is uploaded for technical reasons.

RCGNA recommends the continued maintenance of sub-groups addressing End-User and Data needs; Landing obligation; and sub-groups on Regional Sampling and RDB Data analysis.

### **3.1.4 RCG Med & Black Sea, LP subgroup and PGMED**

First Regional Coordination Group for the Mediterranean and Black Sea 2017 was held in Larnaka, Cyprus from 18 to 22 September 2017. There were representatives from 9 MS (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Romania, Slovenia and Spain) France joined the meeting via teleconference. There were also the representatives of the European Commission and FAO-GFCM.

During the RCG Med&BS 2017 also a teleconference for the presentation of the outputs of the RCG LP was done and a teleconference for the presentation of the Marine Recreational Fisheries Data collection and the roll of the RCG.

RCG Med&BS 2017 summarized its work in 11 recommendations:

- Rules of procedure from the RCG Med&BS;
- Proposed Changes to FDI data call and new data calls;
- Implementation of the MEDIT and other research surveys at sea;
- Merging of length classes;
- Pilot studies on incidental catch of vulnerable species;
- Data transmission failures and involvement of the MS/RCG in the process;
- Data availability and official data calls;
- Shorten the data -handling procedures;
- Procedures for cost sharing under the EMFF;
- Introduction of new research surveys at sea in the Mediterranean and Black Sea area;
- Biological parameters – ageing protocols.

Recommendations are listed in annex 1 and they summarize the work and discussions and decisions of the RCG Med&BS 2017.

During 2017 a Data Call was launched by the chair of the RCM Med&BS, requesting data on landings, effort, value and biological data for the period 2014-2016, for addressing the following:

- Review and update the landing template for the Mediterranean and for the Black Sea;
- Ranking system for the Mediterranean and Black Sea;
- Sampling stratification and optimization based on scripts delivered under MARE/2014/19 Med&BS project – data analysis and presentation of case studies

The relevant Data Call was announced in June to all National Correspondents, with deadline the 31st of July 2017. The data were required to be submitted in three different data files prepared by the RCM Med&BS-LP and PGMED chairs.

Data were submitted by all Member States in the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea. Following the deadline of the data call, and in advance of the scheduled 2017 RCG Med&BS-LP, available data were reviewed, and clarifications on data values and coding were received whenever requested.

During the meeting, participants were split in two subgroups for addressing specific issues of the agenda. Subgroup 1 was responsible for analysing the data received under the data call, and for investigating sampling optimisation for certain case studies.

A ranking system of metiers at level 6 was performed at regional level (Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea - GSA29). 26 metiers were identified for the whole Mediterranean Sea and 8 were identified for the Black Sea.

In overall, 11 metiers were selected through the ranking procedure in the Mediterranean and 3 in the Black Sea (see Annex 1). The results from the ranking system of metiers at level 6 that was performed at regional level were reviewed by the RCG Med&BS during plenary. It was agreed that this procedure will be performed again the following year, through data that will be provided under the RCG's data call.

Next RCG MED&BS 2017 will be in Kavala Greece from 17 to 21 September. For the period of 2 years it will be chaired by the Apostolos Karagiannakos, NC of Greece.

On the other hand, the RCG Large Pelagic Subgroup (RCG LP) met in Olhão (Portugal) between 27-29 June 2017. RCM LP appreciated the facilities offered by IPMA (Instituto Português do Mar e da Atmosfera).

As decided by Liaison Meeting in 2013, a coordination group for Large Pelagics covering areas of competence of RCM LDF, NA, Med&BS and dealing with all large pelagic species and fisheries was created. This group has been associated with RCM MED&BS in order to limit the number of meetings and allow Mediterranean experts to participate in RCM LP subgroup while also participating in RCM MED&BS. Since 2014 the RCM MED&BS-LP is therefore a joint RCM with two co-chairs, one for MED&BS and one for LP.

However, from the RCM LP perspective, common topics between both groups are very limited. In addition, it is particularly unfortunate that the annual meeting of this group takes place always in September very close to unavoidable ICCAT scientific activities. Therefore, RCM LP subgroup decided to meet separately this year.

Ten people participated in the RCG LP subgroup meeting: 7 scientists from 6 scientific institutes and representing five Member States (Portugal, Spain, Italy, France and Greece), one National Correspondent (Portugal) and two Commission representatives. In addition, the UK National Correspondent, prior to the meeting, contacted by email with the RCM LP chair. In this last case, the UK tuna fishing activity is scarce, with a single longline in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, UK representative's participation by email was considered sufficient.

The missing countries were as follows: Cyprus, Malta, Croatia and Ireland. Participants considered essential to take all the necessary actions to promote the participation of all the Member States that have included any LP fishery within their National Work Plan.

The meeting dealt with topics such as; data transmission failures to tuna RFMOs, regional data base, priorities in terms of data needs, feasibility for the collection of biological variables or evolution of RCM LP toward RCG LP.

The main outcomes of the meeting are summarized in the recommendations. The Group agreed on that the RCM LP has enough entity to be a RCM independent from Med/BS. In that sense, involvement

of MS that include LP in their work plans should be promoted by MARE. Pending a review of the EU MAP, major shark species subject to assessment in tuna RFMOs and that are in Table 1D of the EU MAP should be subject to appropriate sampling even if they are not included in Table 1C of the official text. The group proposed a workshop for exploring the possibility to launch a permanent group for coordination temperate tuna (or just for LL) sampling.

In addition, the RCG LP group listed some questions related to the RDB which should be raised and discussed with RDB Steering Committee. The group discussed the pros/cons of using RDB hosted by ICES, or another specific LP data base. Of course, the most advantageous would be the one implying fewer burdens for MS. To this end, two main aspects require further clarification: the adaptability of RDB to host the (highly diversified) data regarding LP fisheries and the new fields or tables specific to LP fisheries that are not currently included. Moreover, if RDB is used to answer tuna RFMO data calls, a fundamental question is how long it would take (if is the case) the preparation of the protocols and how long would be the phasing out of the current reporting system.

### **3.1.5 RCG LD**

The 2017 RCM LDF meeting was held from June 6 to 8 at the Thünen Institute in Hamburg, Germany.

The group reviewed the progress in regional coordination since 2016, the outcomes of the 13<sup>th</sup> Liaison Meeting and feedback from the end-users. Also, the group reviewed the Long Distance Fisheries activity by MS in CECAF and SPRMFO areas with the use of updated 2016 data provided by MS. There were relatively limited EU fishing activities in the SPRMFO area in 2016, as was in previous years. As last year, all EU non-landlocked countries were addressed through a data call. The response provided improved insight in the coverage of the data the RCM LDF is using. To streamline future data provision, as well as to address the expressed interest and need stemming from the DG MARE International Directorate to support the development of a database holding the data for fisheries in non-EU waters, the RCM LDF will be included in the Regional Database as currently in use by the RCMs dealing with EU waters. The RCM LDF provided data to fill the RDB reference tables ensuring the capacity to upload the data.

In order to check whether there were any substantial changes in the fishing pattern in the CECAF area in 2016 which would highlight required amendments to the procedures and programmes as they currently stand (and will be continued under the new DCF, starting from 2018) the group updated last year's ranking and compared the updated version to the 2016 version. Based on that comparison, the RCM LDF concluded that there is no direct need for amendments to the NPs for 2018 in respect of the long distance fisheries in the CECAF area. However, as the current agreement for sampling small pelagics in the fishing ground Morocco-Guinea Bissau terminates at the end of this year, future setups were discussed by the group. As the current end-user of the data is not providing responses nor providing data requirements, the RCM LDF proposes to suspend sampling of small pelagics in the region until clear guidance has been provided by the end-user. If needed, the EU MS involved aim to set up a similar sampling agreement as has been in place until 2017.

RCM LDF also discussed the current outstanding call for proposals on 'Strengthening regional cooperation' (MARE/2016/22) and while some subjects were considered of high relevance to the group, no actions were taken to address this call other than to highlight items for discussion at the 2018 RCM LDF.

Based on draft requirements, RCM LDF also discussed the observer requirements for sampling in SPRFMO waters. RCM LDF commented on this draft, the overall feeling was that the requirements are over-ambitious, ambiguous and unnecessarily complex while also including obvious requirements. Moreover, serious doubts were raised on the feasibility of these rules as well as the capacity to judge accreditation of the observers.

RCM LDF 2017 made 2 recommendations:

1. to seek clarification regarding the end-user needs for future scientific advice in the CECAF area for small pelagic species.
2. To suspend EU sampling of small pelagics in CECAF area (From Morocco to Guinea-Bissau) until end-user needs have been defined.

However, for the latter recommendation, follow up is scheduled in autumn before settling this recommendation in the work plans for 2018.

### **3.2 Main outcomes from PGECON**

The ‘Planning Group on Economic Issues’ (PGECON) was held in Lithuania (Vilnius) from the 15<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> of May 2017. The meeting had six main terms of reference that are summarised below with the main outcomes and recommendations.

#### **ToR 1: Development of quality assurance framework for DCF data.**

1. PGECON recommends that the reporting on the economic data collection and data quality could be best organized by the following documentation:
  - A methodological document, including a detailed description of methods of surveys, structured in accordance with the ESS guidelines with references to selected ESS QAF Principles listed in optimized Work Programme (WP) Table 5B. This document can be either incorporated in the WP or used as a standalone document of the WP.
  - Annual Quality report, with tables specifying quality indicators and taking into account the checklist for quality reporting and structured according to the ESS guidelines.
2. PGECON recommends that during the EWG on quality assurance, the developed checklist and outline should be used as a basis for further development of the methodological report and the quality report.

#### **ToR 2: Development of guidelines for social variables data collection in fisheries.**

In the EU MAP, data collection of socio-economic data was extended with new requirement to include social variables for fishing fleet, aquaculture and fish processing industry. These new variables were vague in their definition and scope so it was the aim of the group to develop guidelines for their collection. These can be summarised as follows.

- In terms of employment stratification it was decided that this would be done by supra region and major groups of fleets. It is suggested to follow three main AER group definitions as close as possible, namely small scale fisheries, large scale fisheries and distant water fisheries. However in cases where the link to fishing activity is missing groups based on the size of vessels, e.g. <12m for small scale fleet (SSF), and fishing operation (distant water fleet) might be used.
- PGECON recommends following EUROSTAT practice and separate social variable “Employment by gender” to the following groups: Males, Female and Unknown (if needed).
- Taking into account national needs and EU requirements it is recommended to separate social variable “Employment by nationality” to at least the following groups; National; EU; EEA (non EU); and Other (Non-EU/EEA).
- Taking into account needs of EMMF for monitoring of employment by age classes PGECON recommends to separate social variable “Employment by age” at least into the following age classes: <15; 15-24; 25-39; 40-64; 65+. This was the agreed minimum age aggregation and MS are welcome to collect data at any higher level of disaggregation.
- It was recommended that “Employment by employment status” should, at least, be categorised into two groups: “Owner/employer” (vessel owner involved in vessel activity/operation) and “Employee” (all engaged workers on-board, excluding owners).

- For ‘Education Level’ PGECON recommends to use the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2011), defining social variable “Employment by education level”. Data collected under EUMAP by MS should provide data at least for the following groups at EU level: “Low education”; “Medium education and “High education”.

In order to keep time series data as consistent as possible it was recommended to organise national surveys around the same time of the year to avoid duplication (the same employee working at different boats during the year) and keep stability and comparability of the time series.

For more details and specifics of the PGECON recommendations please refer to the 2017 report.

**ToR 3: Structure, governance and mandate of PGECON.**

Chairs of PGECON should be appointed for at least two consecutive years. PGECON meetings are structured to separate sessions representing particular term of reference and are led by appointed moderators. In the case of presentation of outcomes from specialized PGECON Subgroups, the moderator has to be the chair of that particular specialized PGECON Subgroup.

PGECON recommends compiling a list of end-users in order to involve them with the coordination and development of the data collection framework and expand data applicability. It will follow the example of the RCMs who invite the main end-users to their meeting so they can inform the group about their data needs.

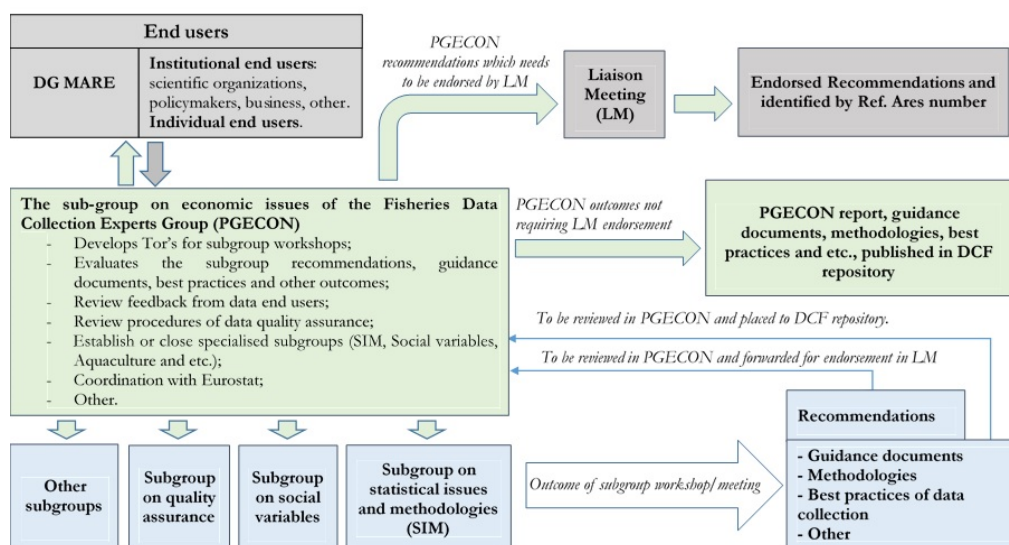


Figure 1. Proposed work flow of PGECON

**ToR 4: Concept of integrated dissemination of DCF data.**

A presentation was made by Pavel Salz (Framian, Netherlands) on the concept of integrated dissemination of DCF data. This outlined the development of a pilot interface (FishHub - Study on Availability and Dissemination of DCF Data) for integrated dissemination of DCF economic, transversal and biological data, it benefits, feasibility and solutions concerning implementation and usages. The major discussions in PGECON 2017 meeting concerning the FishHub platform was related with the

availability of primary data taking into consideration assurances of confidentiality. Some MS expressed concern that some data would never be shared at particular levels of detailed data.

#### **ToR 5: Presentation of results from Subgroup workshop on Statistical Issues and Methodologies.**

PGECON reviewed the work conducted by the PGECON Subgroup on Statistical Issues and Methodologies (SIM) which was established in PGECON 2016. The subgroup had a meeting from the 12-14 December 2016, Rome, Italy chaired by Evelina Sabatella and Heidi Pokki. The aim of the SIM subgroup was to assist MS with the collection of economic and social data for the fleet, aquaculture and processing sectors.

Following discussion on the SIM report. PGECON made the following points.

- Variables “Engaged crew”, “Personnel costs” and “Value of unpaid labour” from Table 5A of EU MAP, in the guidance, should be amended with clarification as follows: “People working only onshore and paid from vessels could be included if their activity has a direct link with the fishing operations”.
- PGECON recommends that variable “Long/short” debt from Table 5A of EU MAP should not necessary to specify and should be amended to “Gross debt”.
- In the guidance of Methodologies for estimation of economic variables for the fleet, concerning the method for estimation “Value of unpaid labour” PGECON recommend to remove the Size Method as it was not appropriate and more specific country orientated.
- In the guidance of Methodologies for estimation of economic variables for the fleet, concerning Value of quota and other fishing rights it was recognized that there were problems raised in estimation of fishing rights because it is a marginal market price, with fishers being able to buy expensive fishing rights on certain circumstances. Therefore estimation methods are hard to generate. PGECON concluded that additional expertise is needed on calculating value of quota and other fishing rights and suggested that the guidance text should be amended as follows: “tradable intangibles could be valued at current market price (or a multi-year average), independently of the question whether they have or have not been acquired or whether they are or not linked to specific tangible (e.g. vessel)”.
- SIM considered that the rules for assigning a vessel to a fleet segment explained in EU Decision n. 93/2010 should continue to be applied to ensure consistency among MS and continuity in time series.
- In segments where assumption concerning the annual working hours per crew member exceed the reference level (the FTE equals 1 per crew member) is not valid, an additional adjustment of the calculation may be required, if it can be expected that the result will be significantly affected (Study No FISH/2005/14).

#### **ToR 6: Planning and development of ToR’s for upcoming Subgroup workshops.**

In relation to ToR 6 it was agreed that PGECON did not have the expertise within the group to address the issue of aquaculture sustainability. A specific workshop will be required on this issue.. PGECON recommends that a Commission Expert group establishes a separate sub-group on the same level as PGECON to deal with aquaculture sustainability data collection.

#### **Other meetings and future meetings**

A joint workshop on the Small Scale Fleet and on fishing activity levels in economic data collection was held in Den Haag, The Netherlands, on 25<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

PGECON 2018 meeting will take place in Gent, Belgium from the 14<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

### **3.3 Main outcomes from PGDATA, WGCATCH and WGBIOP**

#### **PGDATA**

The Planning Group on Data Needs for Assessments and Advice (PGDATA), meeting was hosted in Nantes in France from the 7-10 of February 2017 and had 18 participants from 11 countries and was chaired by Joel Vigneau, France, and Marie Storr-Paulsen, Denmark.

The main output of the meeting was a an evaluation of the 2017 ICES EG data call, were the PROXY data call on length data from data limited stocks was included. The audit included redefinition of some variables, mainly concerning the landing obligation and clarification of the text. The process was thought to be very useful as the data provider has not earlier been involved in the process of committing on the data call but merely been trying to compile with the data call text. It was however thought, that involvement of PGDATA earlier in the process starts January, could even further improve the process as the data call deadline prevented the wanted thoroughness.

Further, the meting focused on finalize the ToRs for the workshop on BIOPTIM and establish the work process and preparation for the workshop. The BIOPTIM aims to look at ways in which biological parameters obtained from sampling commercial catches can be optimized so that the time and money spent on sampling can be effectively justified in terms of providing quality information to end users. The aim is to develop an R tool-box which can be used by national labs to quantify the effects of different sampling intensities and sampling designs, and support discussions on the advantages and disadvantages of different sampling strategies in terms of time and cost savings involved. As part of the improvement of the data quality on biological parameters (mainly otoliths) PGDATA and WGBIOP developed a roadmap for implementing the SmartDots software developed by ILVO to replace WebGR as the regional/European system for otolith age reading and possible maturity classification. Further development of SmartDot in spring 2017 will make it possible for SmartDots to be integrated in a web platform provided by ICES.

PGDATA 2017 also finalised the guideline for the data preparation workshops which included taking the feedback from the 2016 benchmark data evaluation meeting for the Irish Sea (WKIRISH2) and Kattegat cod (WKBALT) into account and to streamline the benchmark process even further by updating the issue list template that are normally populate by the assessment working groups. To increase the data quality and the communication between the expert groups and the data providers PGDATA suggested a further development and maintenance of the Data Quality Assurance Repository. The idea is to structure all the work done on data quality and best practices in the different technical workshops and thereby avoid that scientist from national institutes or from other working groups has to read all the reports to find the relevant guidelines.

#### **WGCATCH 2016**

The Working Group on Commercial Catches (WGCATCH), chaired by Hans Gerritsen, Ireland, and Nuno Prista, Sweden, met in Oostende, Belgium, 7–11 November 2016. The meeting was attended by 35 members from 21 institutes and 19 countries.

One of the main responsibilities of WGCATCH is to ensure the quality of commercial catch data, which underpins stock assessments and advice. In order to achieve this, the group documents sampling schemes, establishes best practice guidelines and provides advice on the uses of commercial fishery data. The group also evaluates how new data collection regulations, or management measures, may alter the way data needs to be collected and provides guidelines about biases and disruptions induced in time-series of commercial data.

This year the group addressed a broad range of subjects:

**Commercial catch or landings per unit effort indices (CPUE/LPUE):** The derivation of commercial CPUE/LPUE data series in the ICES community generally does not follow best practice. In many cases the data series are used as relative abundance indices to inform stock assessment and advice without standardisation to remove, as far as possible, temporal and spatial variation due to factors other than fish abundance. Additionally, procedures used to derive CPUE/LPUE indices are often poorly documented in ICES stock annexes and working documents. WGCATCH developed guidelines on what should be documented and considered when commercial fishery CPUE/LPUE indices are developed and used in stock assessment. A workshop on standardisation of CPUE/LPUE is proposed.

**WGCATCH's documentation of national sampling designs:** WGCATCH reviewed the new tables for completion by EU Member States to document their work programmes under the EU Multiannual Programme (EU-MAUP) for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors. The tables on sampling of commercial catches were reviewed to examine if they provide statistical indicators and descriptions that would allow WGCATCH to assess the statistical merits of the sampling programme and provide routine documentation of sampling schemes. WGCATCH found that while significant progress has been made towards documenting the sampling designs, some modifications will be necessary for them to be useful for routine documentation of sampling designs for WGCATCH purposes.

**STECF FDI data call:** The participation of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) at the WGCATCH meeting provided an opportunity to communicate some concerns of the group over the use of the data held by JRC as a result of the 'Fishery Dependent Information' (FDI) data calls (formerly 'effort' data calls) issued by the Commission's Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee on Fisheries (STECF). The outcome of this discussion was a new data format for the data call which accounts for the limited resolution of sampling data.

**Landing obligation:** The group reviewed the impact of the landing obligation (LO) on sampling and on the quality of stock assessment data. The overall impression is that there is only partial compliance with the requirements. Data collection and estimation under the landing obligation could potentially be very problematic in terms of high refusals (biased estimates), observer effects on sampled trips and missing sampling some components of the landings (under MCRS). WGCATCH (2014) issued several recommendations of best practice in data logging and reporting under the landing obligation and proposed analyses to examine how the implementation of the

LO is affecting the sampling programmes and data collection. MS are advised to adopt them so that losses in data quality provided for assessment during the transition period are minimised.

**Participation in the ICES advisory process:** WGCATCH does not provide advice for fishery management but has the goal of actively contributing to the ICES stock assessment benchmark process and ensuring that the quality of commercial catch data is more widely considered in the assessment process. WGCATCH discussed the historical difficulties that expert groups dealing with catch sampling (WGCATCH and other related groups such as the Planning Group on Commercial Catches, Discards and Bio-logical Sampling and the Planning Group on Data Needs for Assessments and Advice) have had when engaging with assessment EGs. WGCATCH concluded that preparing specific working documents on fishery data quality for assessment and/or benchmark meetings could be the most efficient way of increasing participation in the advisory process. A workshop to develop and test this approach is proposed by WGCATCH.

**Small-Scale Fisheries data:** WGCATCH drafted best practice guidelines for collection of transversal variables and biological data in small scale fleets. The usefulness of some new technologies such as remote electronic monitoring by CCTV and vessel position recording by AIS/GPS in monitoring SSF was also evaluated.

**Protected Endangered and Threatened Species (PETS):** WGCATCH concluded that there is need for joint work with the ICES Working Group on Bycatch of Protected Species (WGBYC) on the design of pilot studies to monitor incidental bycatch which are being planned under the EU MAUP and on estimation of incidental by-catches. Two joint WGCATCH/WGBYC workshops are proposed: one in 2018 on the design of dedicated sampling schemes on the monitoring of protected species and a second one in 2019 on the estimation of incidental bycatch rates and raising from sampled vessels to fleet level.

**Regional Data Base (RDB):** The ICES council has allocated 135.000 EUR on a two-year project to develop a new RDB which will hold national fishery sampling data and the information on sampling design and achievement needed to implement statistically-sound estimation methods. WGCATCH was requested to provide advice for this development by documenting and approving the estimation methods for incorporation in the RDB. WGCATCH decided on an intersessional workshop that will test the documentation of sampling designs and estimation methods and attempt to produce InterCatch-type estimates using the RDB format as a starting point.

**Intersessional workshops for 2017:** WGCATCH has identified intersessional WKS and training courses as the best means to ensure intersessional progress in areas of relevance for ACOM. The outcomes of these will be reviewed annually during the WGCATCH meeting. The following workshops and training courses are proposed for 2017: 1) Workshop on Sampling Design and Estimation of Commercial Catches (WKSDECC I), 2) Workshop on Optimization of Biological Sampling at Catch-Sample Level (WKBIOPTIM), 3) Workshop on methods for developing fishery-dependent in-dices of abundance for use in stock assessments (WKCPUE).

#### **Links with PGDATA**

The remit of WGCATCH is closely linked to that of PGDATA. One of the relevant outcomes from PGDATA is the proposed workshop on cost benefit analysis of data collection in support of stock assessment and fishery management (WKCOSTBEN). WGCATCH endorses the need for such a workshop. WGCATCH also supports the PGDATA recommendation that funding be made available for further development of the RDB including estimation and diagnostic routines.

#### **Publication on statistically sound sampling schemes**

WGCATCH drafted detailed plans to produce a peer-reviewed paper in 2016. The paper will provide a synthesis of the evolution of sampling design towards best practice, illustrated with a number of concise case studies.

#### **Estimation procedures in the Regional DataBase (RDB)**

The work of WKRDB 2015 presented alongside existing and planned estimation procedures in the RDB. Current work by Norway on a software package that will allow design-based estimation and optimization for stock assessment purposes was also presented. The advantages of ensuring compatibility of this new software with the developments currently planned for RDB-FishFrame are underscored.

#### **Repository of resources relevant to catch sampling**

WGCATCH initiated a repository with key resources; putting them into context with brief descriptions or review of each report, paper, book, website, software package etc. The intention is for this repository to be made available online by ICES.

#### **Sampling of incidental bycatches**

WGCATCH agreed to start routine documentation of sampling practices for bycatches of protected, endangered and threatened species (PETS) and rare fish species as well as routine evaluation of the limitations of current methods for collection and analysis.

### **Training course on Design and Analysis of Statistical Sound catch sampling programmes**

WGCATCH considered continuous training and expertise on sampling design, estimation and simulation to be the basis for successful implementation of statistical sound catch sampling programs. A new ICES Training Course in Design and Analysis of Statistical Sound will take place at ICES HQ in Copenhagen, from 12 to 16 September 2016. WGCATCH recommends that RCMs promote the attendance of these meetings among all MS involved.

### **WGBIOP 2016**

This was the third year for the multi-annual Terms of References (ToRs) for the Working Group on Biological Parameters (WGBIOP). The group met in Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy, 2–6 October 2017. The overall aim for WGBIOP this year was to review the status of current issues, achievements and developments that falls under the remit of WGBIOP, identify future needs in line with the ICES objectives and Science Plan and the wider marine environmental monitoring and management within Europe and pro-posed a future/alternative work plan.

ToR a) continued in the task of identifying broad sets of new and existing biological parameters that are emerging as critical components of modern assessment. This work is based on a literature review, input from experts, and collaboration with other ICES Working Groups.

ToR b) further dealt with the issue lists for upcoming benchmark species from 2018 and beyond and formulated the Quality indicators for biological parameters. Guide-lines for qualitative evaluation of biological parameters and a flow scheme from data collection to stock assessment were also produced.

ToR c) was a generic ToR for the group handling the reviewing of calibration exercises on biological parameters, their outcomes and recommendations for such actions. All the tables containing detailed information about national experts' contacts, stocks handled and techniques used in age reading, were updated and greatly improved. In addition, the guidelines for age reading and maturity exchanges/workshops were updated following the learned experienced from occurred inter-calibration exercises. The WGBIOP Data Quality Assurance Repository (<http://ices.dk/community/Pages/PGCCDBS-doc-repository.aspx>) is an open source containing all this kind of information and related reports traced back in time.

Under Tor d) a web meeting was held between ICES Secretariat and WGBIOP in order to endorse the implementation of a new template for categorizing the nature of the recommendations and facilitate an operational recommendation-system. This tem-plate, integrated into the already existing fields of the ICES database, clarifies the struc-ture of recommendations and the tasks of each participant in the recommendation system facilitating swift and effective replies.

The major focus within ToR e) was on SmartDots, a new software developed by ILVO (Belgium) and taken on board by ICES. A proof of concept of the SmartDots age reading platform was presented during the meeting and received with great enthusiasm. Following the presentations, demonstrations and hands-on time the group officially adopted the SmartDots platform as the tool for age reading exchanges and workshops from 2018 onwards. This tool will facilitate the carrying out and reporting of events related to age reading, making it an easier process with an improved management sys-tem for otoliths metadata.

Given that this is the third year of WGBIOP, future needs in line with the ICES objectives and Science plan were identified and a future/alternative work plan was pro-posed

### 3.4 Main outcomes from the STECF EWG and STECF plenary

The STECF **EWG 16-16 on Evaluation of DCF National Work Plans 2017-2019** took place in Ispra, Italy, from 7-11 November 2016. The Work Plans of 27 Member States (23 coastal + 4 land-locked MS), submitted by 31 October 2016, were pre-screened the week before the EWG meeting by ad-hoc experts, using evaluation criteria agreed by STECF in the autumn plenary the week before the pre-screening. As the Commission had to adopt MS's Work Plans (WPs) by the end of 2016, the overall schedule was very tight. Nevertheless, STECF has carefully considered all WPs and provided a summarised evaluation based on the pre-screening and EWG work. The vast majority of WPs were fully or mostly compliant with the EU Multiannual Programme for Data Collection (EU-MAP, COM Impl. Dec. 2016/1251) and the WP template (COM Impl. Dec. 2016/1701), while only few were partly compliant. Moreover, the EWG suggested several improvements of the evaluation procedure and WP template. The EWG report, available on the [STECF website](#), is accompanied by the WP evaluation sheets by MS.

One important aspect of the WPs that could not be evaluated by the EWG 16-16 (see above) - due to missing information and time constraints - was the data quality assurance. The STECF **EWG 17-04 on Quality Assurance for DCF data** (Copenhagen, Denmark, 3-7 July 2017), inter alia, has taken up suggestions from EWG 16-16 regarding improvements in WP evaluation. The EWG discussed principles and criteria for evaluating data quality in WPs and Annual Reports (ARs), quality indicators for end-user needs, minimum requirements for DCF data quality, guidelines for MS to fill in WPs and ARs, and the role of various bodies in this process. The EWG summarised relevant existing work and references, suggested improvements in the WP tables, highlighted the importance of the Regional Database (RDB) for data quality assessment and clarified the roles of RCGs, end-users and STECF in this process. In the STECF view, *"RCGs have a central role to implement the standards to be followed and coordinate the national sampling programs within a region. This is where the deepest knowledge on data collection is found. RCGs are also the ones most legitimate to coordinate and formalise what is needed for common tools such as RDBs, R packages etc., and could be tasked with producing standard and automatised data quality reports at regional level."* The EWG recommended that the forthcoming RCGs consider modifications of Table 1A of the WP template (section 3.2.2.1 in the EWG report). The EWG report is available on the STECF website contains a summary of the most important points discussed and conclusions in its section 6.

The STECF **EWG 17-07 on Evaluation of DCF 2016 Annual Reports & Data Transmission** was held in Gavirate, Italy, 26-30 June 2017. Apart from evaluating Member States' Annual Reports (ARs) and Data Transmission (DT) issues by end-users, the EWG discussed improvements in the evaluation of ARs and DT failures. Overall, the level of achievement of the ARs 2016 shows an improvement compared with previous years, both in terms of compliance and reporting procedures. The ARs of 16 MS showed 'full' (>90%) overall compliance and 7 MSs' reports were 'mostly' (50-90%) compliant. As in previous years, a pre-screening of ARs and DT issues was conducted, which proved to be very useful for the EWG evaluation.

The evaluation of 184 DT issues concluded that 102 issues were justified as satisfactory, 39 unsatisfactory and 43 'unknown' (The EWG was not able to make an assessment). Most DT issues originated from the data calls on Mediterranean & Black Sea assessment, fleet economics and fisheries-dependent information (FDI, formerly effort data call). From ICES, only 8 DT issues were reported for 2016 (while 170 issues were reported for 2015 and 512 issues for 2014!). From RCMs, 12 DT issues were reported. Regarding the DT issues identified by the Tuna RFMOs - IOTC, ICCAT and IATTC - in 2016 and in a total of 8 issues, the RCM Large Pelagics has supported the EWG in its assessment. This happened following a DG MARE request to the chair of the RCM LP and due to the potential lack

of expertise at the EWG to correctly assess the data issues raised by these particular RFMOs. This problem had happened in the past already.

With regard to improvements in the AR evaluation, several suggestions have been made by the EWG. Amongst these, the following ones can be of key relevance to the RCGs:

1. An additional step that allows feedback by MS after the pre-screening before the EWG. As this will require more time within the overall process, the STECF proposed to set the legal AR submission deadline (none defined in the DCF 're-cast' Reg. 2017/1004) to mid-May;
2. To organize the results of the evaluation, summarised currently through the 'traffic light table' (compliance level by module) on a MS basis, on a regional basis i.e. by fishing regions. The results shown in this way would allow the EWG and other expert groups such as the RCGs to identify issues in the ARs that are common to several MS in the same region, and in doing so, will promote cooperation and coordination at a regional level to solve common problems; and
3. In the future, to increase/improve the collaboration of the EWG with other expert groups, such as the RCGs, not only to ensure that the results of the assessments are properly conveyed to these groups, but also to receive inputs from RCGs that may inform the assessments.

In conjunction with the EWG report, the detailed evaluation sheets for the ARs and DT issues are available on the STECF website.

### **3.5 End-users feedback**

#### **3.5.1 ICES**

ICES provided a brief presentation of the visions for communicating data needs to the RCGs and LM. ICES' groups identify data needs through expert groups, benchmarks and workshops; these are peer-reviewed and consolidated within the ICES system before communicated. ICES is currently amending the Stock Information Database (SID), which will be used to report what data is needed, received and potentially wanted. It was agreed that the RCGs should be involved in the layout of the parameters put into SID in terms of data series (e.g. constant maturity ogives vs annually updated, etc.); this potentially could take place during the annual meeting of ICES and the RCG chairs. In terms of which data that are not needed, ICES will refrain from pointing out directly which data that currently are not used (or potentially never will be); however, ICES will be helpful in terms of prioritising the data needs in dialogue with the RCGs and the Expert groups/benchmarks. Data collection can only cover so much and just adding new needs without removing/downscale other needs is not feasible.

#### **3.5.2 GFCM**

The representative of the GFCM Secretariat (Mr Federico De Rossi, Data Compliance Officer), provided the LM with an update on the recent developments of GFCM, as EU data end user, in the field of fisheries data quality towards the improvement of compliance assessment. He explained that, following the decisions taken by the 2017 sessions of the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and Working Group of the Black Sea (WGBS) of the GFCM, conformity, stability and consistency indicators for fisheries data quality checks (with preliminary thresholds) were on the way to be implemented by the GFCM Secretariat during the transitional period of the Recommendation GFCM/40/2016/2 on the submission of data in line with the Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF). Such implementation will be ensured on the newly established DCRF online platform for the submission of fisheries data by Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-contracting Parties (CPCs) of the GFCM. On the basis of these data quality checks, preliminary feedback reports on the status of the submitted data by CPCs, including stock assessment for priority species as identified by GFCM

subregions in line with the mid-term strategy (2017-2020), will be released. Mr De Rossi underlined that the results of this significant experience are expected to facilitate the work of the SAC and the Compliance Committee (CoC) of the GFCM in defining quality indicators (possibly in 2018) to be proposed to the Commission of GFCM for its final decision. He concluded by stressing the importance of this process which will be instrumental for the improvement of compliance assessment at GFCM level and from which the feedback of GFCM, as data end user to EC, will benefit in the future.

### 3.5.3 JRC/STECF

#### Issues with data calls

##### Fisheries dependent information

1. An issue of major concern relates to the disconnect between the data aggregations required to address the requests of DG MARE and the aggregations at which the Member States are able to collect data or at which they consider is sensible to provide. Essentially, the amount and coverage of data does not correspond to the level of detail required. Such discrepancies have persisted since the start of the 'Effort' (old-FDI) data calls. It has become more of a problem with the development of the New-FDI data call.

##### *Fleet economic*

1. Clustering of fleet segments especially i) inconsistent clustering over time; ii) clustering of segments that deploy different fishing techniques; iii) Super- (unnecessary) clustering (i.e. clusters of important segments). Such clustering compromises the economic performance analyses, primarily because of i) varying cluster composition and ii) + iii) differing cost structures.
2. Missing data for some segments and Member States.
3. Differences between 'value of landings' and 'income from landings'. As the two variables are generally obtained from different sources, it is reasonable that they differ somewhat. However, significant differences (>10%) are still observed in many cases, in particular for, but not limited to, Spain.
4. Questionable 'official' survey data – for example, the over-reporting of cost items and under-reporting of income. Some data quality control is needed, i.e. information collected cross-validated with other information/sources and/or some form of error-adjustment is used. Problem MSs include Malta, Cyprus.
5. Logbook data issue in Italy. Why is this still an issue and can it not be resolved? Logbook data are mandatory under the control regulation.
6. There is concern regarding reporting data by vessel length overall (LOA ) groups. Such groupings need to match with LOA groups called under the new FDI so that the fleet economic and FDI databases can be linked.

##### *Mediterranean and Black Seas*

1. Sampling intensity seems to be less than optimal and in some cases is very low.
2. Discard reporting is highly variable from year to year and by metier.
3. Sample size for landings/discards and numbers of samples for age and/or length for some GSAs and species reported as zero or missing for all years. Estimation methods e.g. for landings and discards and for catch-at-age are not well explained or not explained at all.
4. Discrepancies between the landings reported under Med and BS data call and those in the fleet economic data call.
5. Timing of MEDITS survey is not consistent across Member States.

6. In many cases the time series of data is short – for some MS, the time series of data starts in 2007 even though they have been subject to the DCR and DCF since 2002.
7. AS for the fleet economic call, some member states do not supply data by vessel length categories.

## 4 Rules of Procedures (RoP) (TOR 2)

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### 4.1 Status of Rules of Procedures in each of the RCGs

A pan-regional subgroup was set up by the RCGs NA, NS&A and the Baltic to draft rules of procedures for the RCGS intersessionally following 2016 RCM recommendations. Several iterations were carried out by correspondence and a version agreed by the subgroup was presented to the DCF expert group in data collection in June 2017 with feedback requested from member states. A final draft of a generic RoP was produced for presentations at the RCGs 2017, following the incorporation of member states comments at the above mentioned meeting.

**The Baltic RCG** approved the Rules of Procedures at their annual meeting September 4th to 8th, 2017 based on the pan regional proposal. The **RCG North Atlantic** reviewed the generic draft and concluded, that simplification was required. It produced a simplified draft at its annual meeting and documented where agreement was reached. Four national correspondents were closely involved in the drafting (Belgium, Netherlands, Ireland and the UK), one national correspondent collaborated with comments by correspondence (France) and one National correspondent was represented by a delegate in the discussions (Spain). The final version was circulated to all national correspondents post meeting to request any issues to be highlighted. No mayor issues were highlighted by NCs. The **RCG of the North Sea and the Eastern Arctic** used the draft version of the North Atlantic RCG but had concerns on the legality of the text and therefore introduced some further details. The version was circulated post meeting with comments and suggested edits of principal nature to be received before the 20<sup>th</sup> of October for a second draft. The second draft is to be agreed by the 20<sup>th</sup> of November. **The RCG on Large Pelagics** reviewed the generic RoP and the general appraisal of the document by the RCM LP was that it was too detailed and should be simplified and shortened. Participants were to provide detailed comments back by September for further discussion at the liaison meeting. Following the outcome of the RCGNA meeting, the North Atlantic RoP version was circulated as the version closer reflected the RCGLP vision and the group was requested to provide feedback (on this last version) for final adoption before the end of the year. The **RCG Mediterranean and Black Sea** used the RCG NA draft as a starting point and it was agreed to circulate the draft to all NC in the RCG Med&BS and to collect minor amendments until the 20th of November and then have a final version adopted before the end of the year.

### 4.2 Parallelisms of the RoP

When the RoP for all the RCGs are finalised Jørgen Dalskov, Denmark has offered to draft a document on parallelisms between the different RoP. This document will be circulated to the RCG chair, the Liaison meeting participants and to the Commission.

### 4.3 Future steps

RCG chairs to review the synergies table and any legal concerns that might arise in their respective drafts and communicate back to their group if versions need further changes in the light of this. Adoptions of all RoPs to be achieved before the end of 2017.

## 5 Data handling (TOR 3)

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### 5.1 RCG data calls - overview

Conclusions from the data upload for the different regions.

#### **RCG Baltic**

All countries have uploaded landings, effort and sample data for 2016

From the number of species uploaded for the years it looks like all data have been uploaded for all countries. It is expected the drop in numbers of sampled species from Estonia will be permanent. A few countries have updated previous year's data

Since current data format in the RDB for eel, salmon and sea trout is not matching the specific formats that are needed for stock assessment, a recommendation has been put forward from RCG Baltic that in consultation with the respective WG and the RDB SC, develop data formats that meet the specific data needs of the eel (WGEEL) and salmon/sea trout (WGBAST) assessments and allows the upload of the respective data into the RDB.

LM decided that no data for eel, salmon and sea trout needs to be uploaded in the RDB until these adjustments are made.

#### **RCG NS&EA**

The response to the RCG NS&EA data call 2017 was good. As in 2016 did all countries uploaded landings and effort data. All countries, except France and Portugal uploaded length sample data for 2016. All countries, except Portugal did further upload age sample data for 2016, except Portugal. It should though be noted that Portugal is a minor contributor to the fisheries in this area. From the number of species uploaded for the years it looks like all data have been uploaded for all countries. A few countries have updated previous data from previous years.

#### **RCG NA**

All countries uploaded landings (CL) and effort (CE) data for 2016. Species no, no of records and no of metiers were broadly in line with previous years. No length sampling data or age sampling data was uploaded by France. All other countries have uploaded their sampling data. Sampling data from UK is now split in Northern Ireland and Wales. Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland have updated 2015 data and increased the numbers of records.

#### **RCH Med & BS**

Data Call for 2017 was launched by the chair of the RCG Med&BS, requesting data on landings, effort, value and biological data for the period 2014-2016, for addressing the following:

Review and update the landing template for the Mediterranean and for the Black Sea;

Ranking system for the Mediterranean and Black Sea;

Sampling stratification and optimisation based on scripts delivered under MARE/2014/19 Med&BS project – data analysis and presentation of case studies

The relevant Data Call was announced in June to all National Correspondents, with deadline the 31st of July 2017. The data were to be submitted in three different data files prepared by the RCMG Med&BS-LP and PGMed chairs.

Data were submitted by all EU Member States in the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, following the deadline of the data call, and in advance of the scheduled 2017 RCG Med&BS-LP meeting. The available data were reviewed, and clarifications on data values and coding were received whenever requested.

### **RCG LP**

The group decided not to launch any data call during 2017 due to different reasons; For LP species, metiers have to be reported to end users (tuna RFMOs) independently of their relative importance to a given MS or region, so under the EU Map, no threshold shall apply to LP species. Therefore, the ranking of metiers for LP does not have any direct incidence on the selection of the metiers to be sampled. Regarding sampling data, previous data calls showed that even if all countries answered to the data call, it was not possible to clean the complete data set and the group did not have capacity (enough time) to analyse the data.

### **RCG LDF**

RCG LDF launched a data call to all non-landlocked MS to request data for the respective long distance fisheries MS might have. All MS responded to the call, either by delivering data or by stating that no relevant fishery exists in the MS. The latter response was requested specifically to ensure complete coverage. Only minor issues relating to historic data were flagged by the RCG. The MS involved will be encouraged to update their figures for 2018, but these issues did not have an influence on the 2017 work by the RCG. RCG LDF was very satisfied with the response in 2017.

## **5.2 Overview of use of the Regional Databases for RCGs in 2016 and problems identified**

The regional database is populated through the data calls for RCG Baltic, RCG NS&EA and RCG NA. The data was used by these three RCGs to produce generic overviews on the fisheries in the region. These overviews include information on e.g. fleets, relative importance of landing site within the region and contribution of different MS to different fisheries. These overviews are of importance for potential future regional sampling plans. The RCGs did further look into example of stocks and contrasted landings by different MSS with effort in sampling (fig 2). The RCGs did also generate overviews of different aspects of sampling of different stocks. These overviews are, for example, including comparisons of length at age between MS, length frequencies in catches between MS and the spatial distribution of sampled trips (fig 3). Such overviews might in the future be of interest of end-users. The overviews are found in the different RCG reports. A common problem is that end-users not always are aware of all data collected through DCF. This can for example be of importance for the data compilation workshops preceding benchmarks of assessments within ICES. RCM NS&EA thereby created a suggestion for an inventory report of available data to bridge this gap. The analysis and overviews created during the RCG 2017 meetings show the substantial potential arising from having all regional data in one database.

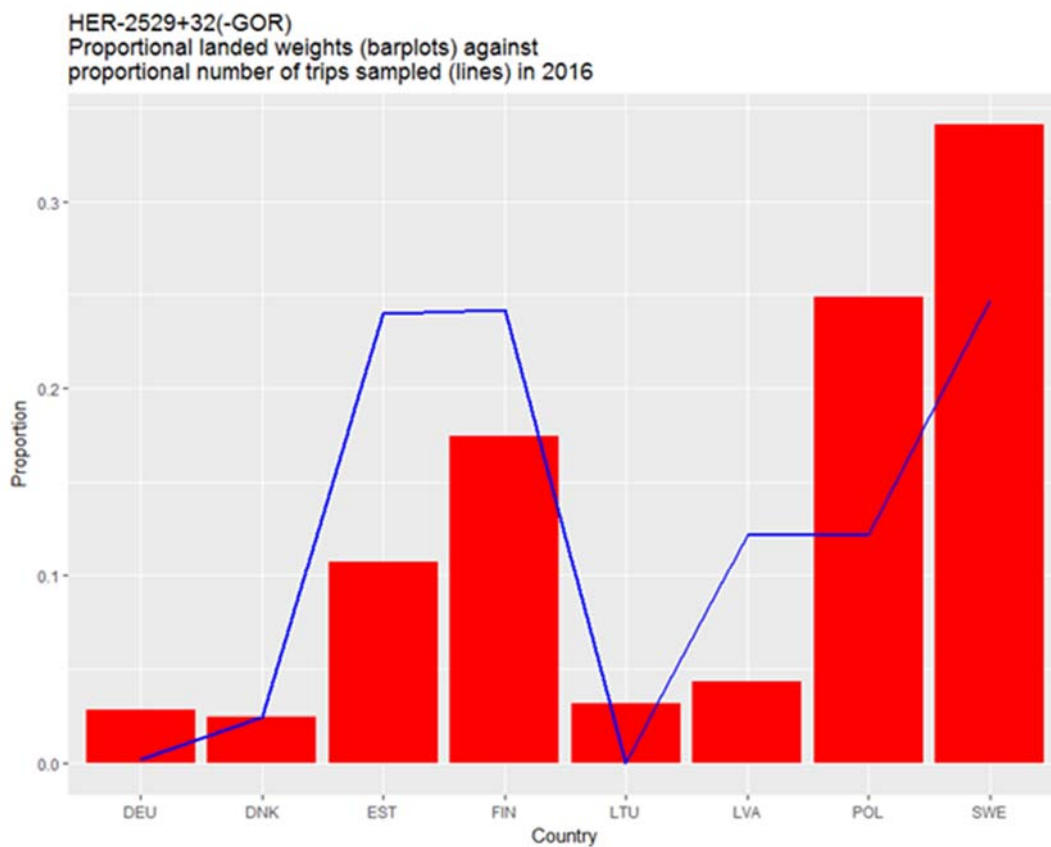


Fig 2. Landings and sampling of central Baltic herring 2016. From RCG Baltic report.

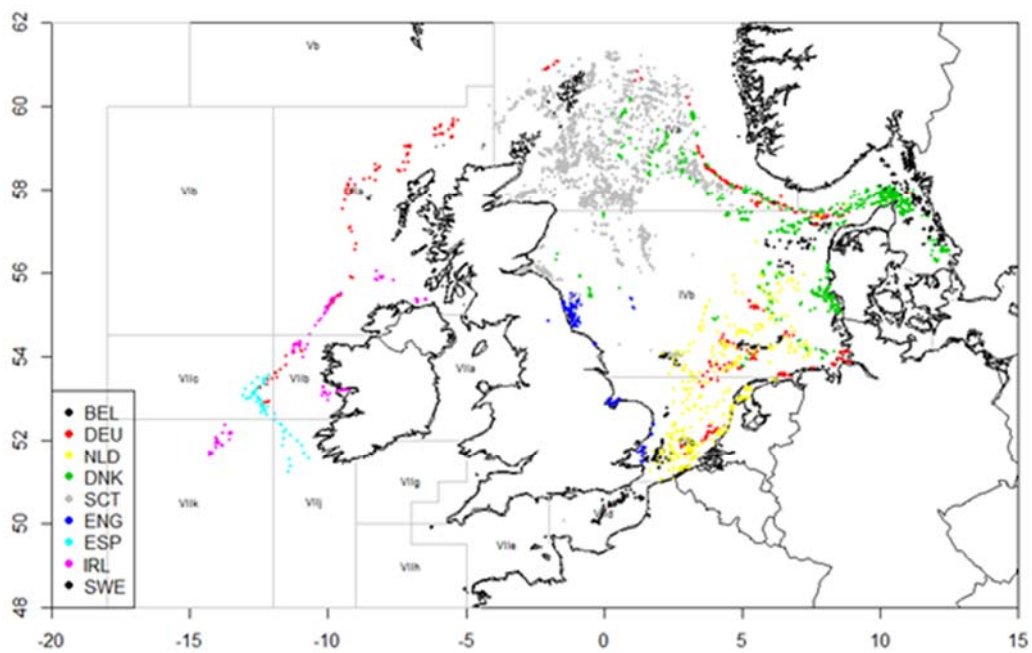


Fig 3. Spatial distribution of at sea samples where whiting has been recorded. From RCG NS&EA report.

Problems identified when MS upload data to the regional database are reported in the upload logs that are sent to the MS. The upload logs are compiled by the RCGs and forwarded to the SCRDB. The purpose of these logs is to continue to improve the regional database. The upload logs can be found in the RCG reports. A main problem identified by RCG Baltic 2017 is that the data model in the regional database and the data call format do not fully capture essential information on sampling data for eel and salmon.

### **5.3 Future developments for the Regional Data Base**

ICES has secured 1 Million DKK from ICES Council to run a 2 year development project for improving the regional database to a statistical sampling and estimation platform and to ensure the different end users/uses are better accounted for. The idea is to have a data model that is flexible enough to cater for different sampling designs so estimates can be produced in a transparent and quality assured way. This allow for much appreciated development of the new RDB which is something that the RCMs repeatedly have asked for. It is however important that the RCGs more clearly identify their present and future needs in relation to the database as it now is under development.

### **5.4 Data calls – main changes anticipated for next year**

No substantial changes are expected in next year's data calls. ICES data call will remain the same. Regarding RFMOs (tuna RFMOs and GFCM), different recommendations in place establish the rules for submitting data, which included fixed requirements and deadlines. Regarding JRC data calls, processing industry data call will be included this year, which was not included last year.

The group noted that data calls issued by ICES should remain the same in 2018 as in 2017 pending any decisions on benchmark assessments. It is expected that those data calls issued by DG MARE and handled by the JRC will include Fleet economic, Aquaculture, fish processing and Mediterranean and Black Seas. It is expected that a FDI data call will also be issued by DG MARE in 2018, but the precise format of such a call is likely to be determined by the outcome of the STECF EWG 17-12 (New FDI data call).

The GFCM data deadlines are already set through GFCM recommendations and ICCAT is expected to issues its routine data call for 31 July as usual although the details will depend on which stocks are to be assessed. CECAF has issued a data call 2017. For other end users, no major changes are anticipated.

## **6 Governance structure (TOR 4)**

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### **6.1 RCGs – tentative changes in structure / number of RCGs**

For years, the structure and number of RCGs (RCMs at that time) has been debated over in the light of improving efficiency and reduction of the number of meetings. This discussion mainly focussed on the three 'Northern' groups. At LM 2017, the other groups, RCG LDF, RCG MED and well as RCG LP expressed the wish to remain under the current scope.

For the 'Northern' groups, combining RCG NS&EA and NA seems most obvious, this merge could however not be decided upon at the LM without additional consultation of the groups. Recent pan-regional work in the subgroups clearly indicate that the RCGs are already moving into improved

regional cooperation, paving the way for further integration while keeping an eye on specific regional aspects. Restructuring the RCGs is part of the current MARE/2016/22 call. The RCGs will reconsider the composition of the meetings in the light of the outcomes of the call. Sieto Verver (chair RCG LDF) will ensure reporting specific ideas to the RCGs coming from the call.

Apart from merging groups, in the future consideration shall be given to other setups as well, e.g. like the earlier discussed construction to front-load work through a technical or data meeting, followed by an formal NC meeting to finish proposals and agreements. This option as well as other ideas shall be taken on board when discussing the future setup. The 2017 RCG however already highlighted the issue that some MS already stress that they will never be able to send a representative having sufficient mandate, despite stipulating this in the recast.

Regarding the current regional scope for each RCG: the current scope as defined since LM 2010 remains valid until updated (if needed) in the light of the above mentioned project. The current scope therefore remains:

- the Baltic Sea (ICES areas III b-d), RCG Baltic;
- the North Sea (ICES areas IIIa, IV and VIId), the Eastern Arctic (ICES areas I and II), the ICES divisions Va, XII & XIV and the NAFO areas. RCG NS&EA;
- the North Atlantic (ICES areas V-X, excluding Va and VIId), RCG NA;
- the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, RCG MED&BS;
- long distance fisheries : regions where fisheries are operated by Community vessels and managed by Regional Fisheries Management Organisation's (RFMO) to which the Community is contracting party or observer, RCG LDF.

Note that RCM LP needs to be added to this list. As the Regulation refers to coordination of activities in marine regions only (no reference to species or groups of species). RCG LP set its region as 'all regions'.

## **6.2 Cooperation of RCGs with other DCF 'groups': cooperation between RCGs; communication with PGECON; role of RCGs in evaluation of National/Regional Reports and establishment of cooperation with STECF**

The group discussed cooperation between RCGs and other groups associated with the DCF.

There were no suggestions for further cooperation between the RCGs and the STECF, although there was a strong desire that JRC personnel dealing with handling data calls on behalf of the STECF and the analysis of such data should participate in RCG meetings together with other end-users of DCF data. Recognising that the JRC personnel resources are limited and that attendance at all RCGs in any calendar year is likely to prove problematic, it was suggested that the JRC be encouraged to participate in the North Sea and Eastern Arctic RCG in 2018.

The group noted the good progress being made by the PGECON. The link between biological and economic data is currently on-going and should continue until a solution is found. The group also noted that there are issues related to the small-scale (under 10m) fisheries that still need to be addressed. The current situation of ad hoc communication between the RCGs and PGECON seems to work reasonably well and as issues arise, there may be a need to request that representatives from RCGs attend meetings of PGECON

With regard to other DCF-related groups convened by ICES (e.g. PG data PG catch etc), the persons involved are already involved in RCGs. In order to ensure appropriate dissemination, it would be useful

to inform all DCF-related personnel by email when reports from such groups become available. Similarly, there is a need to communicate RCG-specific output so that other users / data providers are informed.

The group also request that JRC initiates a news report whenever a DCF-related report is added to the DCF website. It is also desirable that relevant links to ICES and other RFMO web pages where relevant reports are located.

### **6.3 Cooperation with end-users**

The cooperation with ICES is continuously improving and the annual meeting between the RCG chairs and ICES secretariat in 2017 was successful and to be repeated in 2018 in order to keep the momentum. Data calls and the Regional Data Base (RDB) work is well established as a cooperative process with ICES; DGMARE and JRC will be invited to the next Steering Committee for the RDB meeting in order to bring all parties up to speed in terms of data access, user rights, etc.

### **6.4 Vision of future RCG role(s): discussion on short- and medium-term objectives**

All the RCGs were established in 2017. The challenges by the new role and the obligations put on the RCGs have to be dealt with and rules of procedures for the groups have to be implemented. Therefore, no discussion on short and medium term have been discussed.

### **6.5 Future role of the Liaison meeting**

A description is presented in section 2 of this report.

## **7 Any other business**

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### **7.1 Agree on a list of recommendations relating to DCF (that MS will need to report on in their AR2017)**

LM 2017 considered all recommendations from the RCGs. Recommendations are listed in annex 1.

### **7.2 Review and prioritize DCF-related study proposals from RCGs, PGECON, EGs etc.**

#### **Further development of the Regional Data Base (RDB).**

It has for the RCMs/RCGs for many years been recognised that there is a need to develop a new version of the RDB. This system should accommodate upload of statistical sampling information and include statistical estimations tools. There are many benefits of this new RDB:

- Support the Regional Coordination Groups with relevant sampling data for coordination
- Higher data quality by using common quality checks across all countries' data

- Ensure only approved standardised statistical methods are used for estimating data
- Reduces the workload for the countries in estimating data because the new RDB should contain all needed methods
- Document data to detailed data level and a transparent use of estimation methods

One data call for upload of data to the new RDB for the RCGs and the ICES stock assessment expert groups, because the estimated data will be used for the ICES stock assessment

Every single year since 2012 the RCM BS, NA and NS & EA have put forward a request to European Commission to support funding of development of a new RDB, but without success.

### **The strategy for the new RDB**

WGCATCH, WKRDB and the EU funded FishPi project recommend to collect and estimate data using statistical methods. The new RDB will therefore accommodate design based statistical data and statistical estimation methods. The raising/estimation of data should be based on approved statistical methods. Approved statistical methods are available in R, these methods will be encapsulated into the new RDB using version control. The encapsulation of the methods into the new RDB is important, because this will ensure the methods are approved and it is not possible to modify the encapsulated methods written in R inside the new RDB. Having the raising methods defined in R would make the raising more transparent and easier for the experts to update, if needed. It should be possible to download both the data and the methods from the new RDB, so the experts easily can reproduce the estimations in the new RDB and further develop the methods.

When a group of experts have developed a new statistical raising method or updated an existing method, the group should approach the WGCATCH or a group of statistical raising experts, which have the task to test and approve raising methods. When the method has been approved, the method will be encapsulated into the new RDB, using the new RDB's version control of methods. The method can now be used to raise uploaded data, but the method cannot be manipulated/edited, and the raised data will be transparent and fully documented, regarding the data, the method and the version that was used.

It is important that all the persons working towards a statistical raising of sampled data continue the good work and take an active part in the transition process to ensure the RDB fulfils their needs for uploading their design based sampling data and estimating data using statistical methods.

To be able to document both the uploaded and the estimated data, the new RDB should log all processes regarding the data. According to the Regional DataBase Data Policy the data are restricted, that is taken care of by the security in the RDB, where all users have to be known and given access to data and processing.

The figure 4 below gives an overview of the flow of data in the new RDB from data uploads and the interaction with the national experts to the two main end users RCGs and ICES, but data could also be downloaded for other relevant end users e.g. STECF.

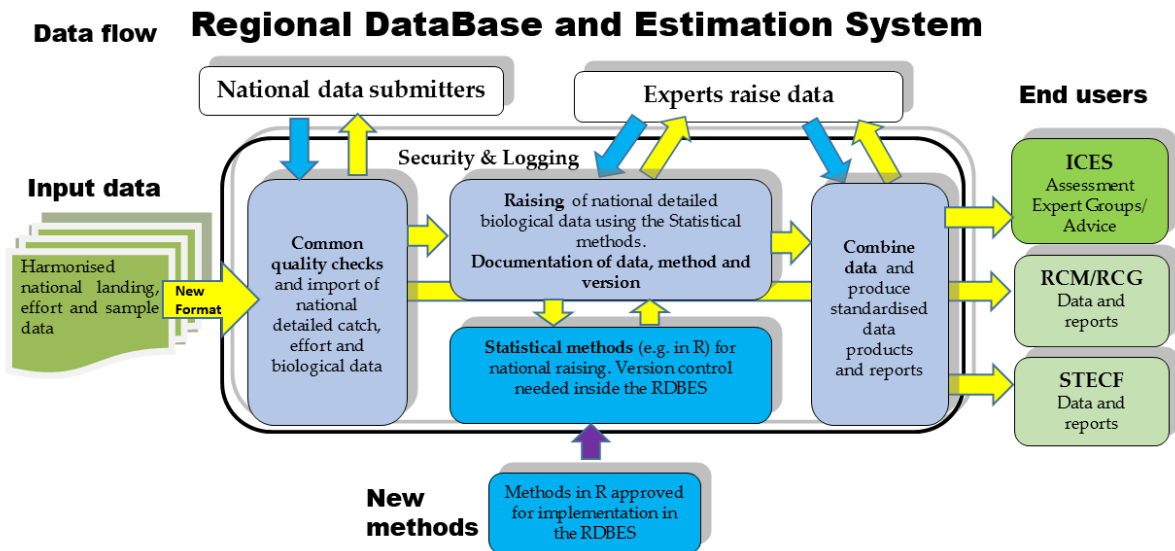


Figure 4. The RDB system structure

### The development of the new RDB

The Steering Committee of the Regional Data Base, SCRDB, established in December 2016 a RDB Project Expert Group, to specify the requirements and structure of the new RDB. So far it is only the core group of persons that have worked with ICES Secretariat to develop the data model. It was originally the aim to have the specification of the new RDB ready in mid-March 2017. But because of the complexity of the designed sampling and due to time constraints in the countries it is very difficult to specify the data model for the new RDB. The issue is that the new RDB potentially should be able to handle all the sampling in all countries for all fish species. There have been 7 internet meetings since March and a 2-day workshop in April and another 2-day workshop will be in October, where the data model will be frozen for use for development. Currently the data model is shown below, where the instead of the existing 5 data types in a 2 string hierarchy for the sampling data there so far will be 14 data types with the possibility of a lot more hierarchies.

### 7.3 Potential list of recommended meetings for 2018 as guidance for MS

The LM did not discuss potential meetings where it is expected MSs experts participate. It was regarded as obvious that MSs within the North East Atlantic area participate in the relevant ICES assessments working group meeting as well as meetings dealing with data collection topics. The Mediterranean and Black Sea MSs are participating in relevant GFCM and other meetings relevant for data collection.

### 7.4 Requested outcomes of the RCGs: list of scientific surveys. Table 1A of Work Plans

An overview of scientific surveys from RCG NS&EA, RCG Baltic and RCG NA was presented in two different tables (see annex 3 and annex 4).

The aim of the overview in annex XX1 was to streamline the naming of surveys since Table 10 (EU 2016/1251), Workplans and ICES WG are using different names, acronyms for the same survey. The table is suggesting names / acronyms for all surveys which are suggested to be used in all different fora.

The aim of the overview in annex 3 was to add information on which stocks that are sampled in the different surveys and if the data collected for the stocks are used or not in stock assessment. This overview is useful background information for the coming review of Table 10 (EU 2016/1251), will be taken place in a STECF meeting May 2018.

Step forward: MS and ICES to check the suggested names and content of the two tables. Chair from RCG NS&EA will send the tables and information on the overview to ICES and Commission. The Commission will send the tables to the relevant NC to check and confirm the content. NC to send back updated tables to the COM. A deadline will be communicated (Jan / Feb 2018). To make sure that the agreed naming and code for the surveys will be used it's important that ICES push for the use towards all WG. ICES to make sure that WGISDAA also will be included in the review of the tables.

### **7.5 SmartDots, a tool for age reading and maturity workshops & exchanges (replacement of WebGr).**

Following the presentations, demonstrations and hands-on time with SmartDots at WGBIOP 2017 the group officially adopted the SmartDots platform as the tool for age reading exchanges and workshops from 2018 onwards and expressed wishes that it will also be used for maturity exchanges and workshops in the future. Following WGBIOP 2017 all national age reader co-ordinators will return to their laboratories, present SmartDots to their age readers and provide internal training. They will be provided with user manuals and a feedback document with a table where they can enter their comments, both from an age reader and age co-ordinator point of view. They will be requested to deliver this feedback to the SmartDots steering group by December 2017 so that comments can be considered and incorporated into the work plan for 2018 in close collaboration with WGBIOP.

During WGBIOP 2017 a meeting was held to discuss the future plans for SmartDots, topics discussed included; development and deployment of the combined modules; planning for "going live" and project governance. The meeting was held by the core SmartDots team who have been working in close collaboration over the last year and the chairs of WGBIOP. Those attending proposed that in the future WGBIOP should look to expand this group to a formal steering group which could include additional expertise to ensure the effective project governance which will require both monetary input and manpower. To date the resources that have been spent developing this tool, which in the future will be available to the entire ICES community, have come from national funds.

To ensure the continuation of development, training, maintenance etc. it was proposed that as a first step support should be requested at a regional level and contact should be made with the chair of the RCG's Liaison Meeting (to be held the week following WGBIOP) suggesting that SmartDots governance and future prospects be discussed in plenary at the meeting.

The features which are currently available in the tool are valid for going 'live' with SmartDots from 2018 onwards. However, as the tool will be used, it is expected that new requests for the tool will come from the users in different workshops and exchanges (example: using SmartDots offline), for the maintenance of the tool, setting up a helpdesk, etc...

WGBIOP agreed that for this further development and needs, external funding will be needed for this.

#### **Background:**

The SmartDots was initially developed in 2014 by ILVO (Flanders research institute for Agriculture, Fisheries and Food) as an internal solution for managing the age reading data of the Data Collection Framework (DCF).

ILVO presented their internal SmartDots software at WGBIOP 2016 and PGDATA 2017. As a result of this presentation a project group was set up to analyse the possibilities of using SmartDots for ICES Workshops and Exchanges. The members of this project group were ICES, ILVO, DTU AQUA and IMR NORWAY.

Begin 2017 the project group decided to expand SmartDots software with some extra modules in order to fit international needs. ILVO turned the existing SmartDots fat client into a more generic client-server application. ICES developed the web application and Web API to be able to handle and store data at the ICES data centre. DTU AQUA analysed the different datasets and created a first version of a workshop / exchange output report.

At WGBIOP 2017 a proof of concept of the SmartDots age reading platform was presented. The proposed SmartDots age reading platform was received with great enthusiasm. At WGBIOP 2017 it was decided to use the SmartDots age reading platform on the ICES age reading workshops and exchanges from 2018 on and as such replace WebGr.

The SmartDots age reading platform is developed to facilitate age readings based on otolith images.

A set of software tools supports the user in managing all data of ICES age reading workshops and exchanges. On the one hand the workshop or exchange manager can manage the meta data related to workshops and exchanges and on the other hand, the age reader can carry out age readings by annotating otolith images. All registered data are available in the connected reporting environment.

The SmartDots age reading platform is an open source solution. All source code is publicly accessible. The SmartDots age reading platform consists of several modules. We distinguish data input, data storage and data output modules (see module scheme, figure 5).

The SmartDots age reading platform consists of two user interface modules:

- **Web application**
  - This module will be mainly used by workshop and exchange managers.
  - The functionalities of the web application are:
    - Manage age readers and their expertise
    - Manage workshop and exchange meta data
    - Manage sample data and upload the linked otolith images
    - Reporting
- **SmartDots user interface**
  - SmartDots is a Windows client-server application. This is the main module for the age readers.
  - The functionalities of SmartDots are:
    - Select the workshop or exchange
    - Create annotations on otolith images by drawing a line on the otolith and adding a dot for each age ring.

The **web API** (= webbased Application Programming Interface) is the interface between the SmartDots user interface and the database. All business logic<sup>2</sup> is integrated in the Web API.

The output or **reporting module** contains generic datasets and R-scripts for business intelligence purposes.

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<sup>2</sup> Business logic = the part of the program that encodes the real-world business rules that determine how data can be created, stored, and changed.

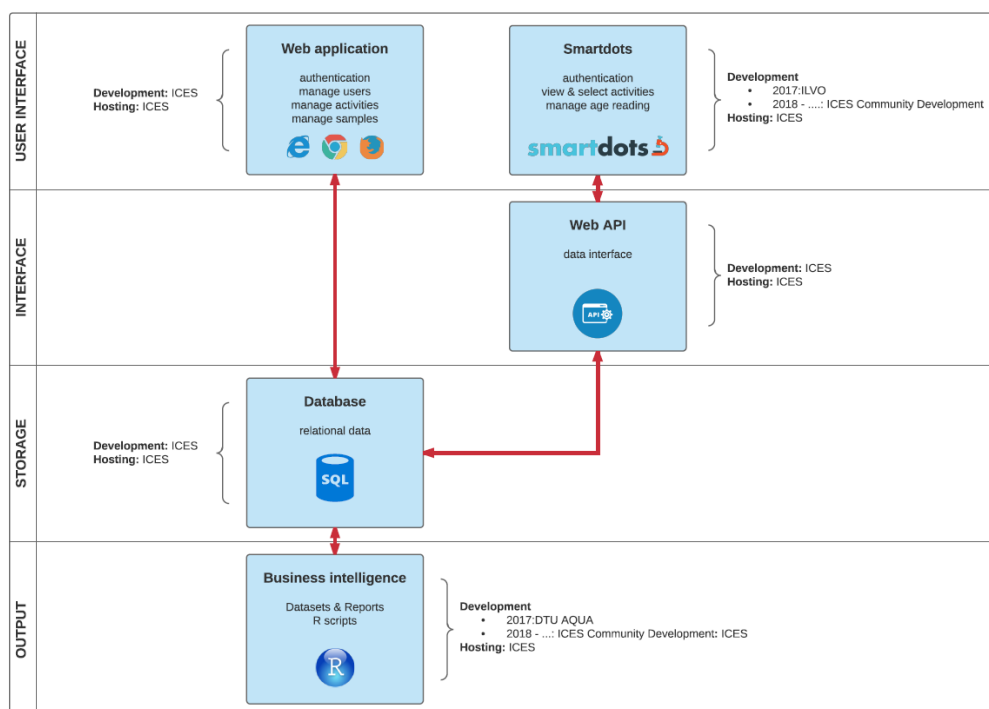


Figure 5: Module scheme of SmartDots platform

## 7.6 Landing obligation (Discuss main issues that came out of the RCGs)

The LM considered that no additional information to the information given in the various RCG report could be added. The implementation of the landing obligation is a challenge when running scientific observers programmes as fishers might refuse to carry observers onboard as they may see illegal discarding or may record information that might conflict with the recordings in the official logbook or landing declaration. At present, there is not yet sufficient information to be able evaluate whether observer data are biased.

## 7.7 Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues

### 2017 DCF meetings

- RCG LD has decided to have an ad-hoc meeting specifically addressing sampling of small pelagics in CECAF area. The meeting will be held in November 2017 in Copenhagen.

### 2018 DCF meetings

- PGECON; 14 - 18 May 2018, Genth
- RCG LP 26-28 June 2018, at Krete, Greece
- RCG LDF June 2018 in Riga, Latvia
- RCG NS&EA 3 - 7 September 2018 at DTU Aqua, Lyngby, Denmark
- RCG NA 10 - 14 September 2018 in Vigo, Spain
- RCG Baltic 17 - 21 September 2018 in Klaipeda, Lithuania
- RCG Med & Black Sea 17-21 September 2018, Kavala; Greece

- Meeting between end-users and RCGs 1 October 2018, Brussels; Belgium
- LM 2018 2 October 2018, Brussels, Belgium

### 2019 DCF meetings

- PGECON; May 2019, venue tbd
- RCG Baltic 3 - 7 June 2019 venue tbd
- RCG NS&EA 10 - 14 June 2019 venue tbd
- RCG NA 17 - 21 June 2019 venue tbd
  
- RCG LP June 2019, venue tbd
- RCG LDF June 2019 venue tbd
- RCG Med & Black Sea May - June 2019, venue tbd
- Meeting between end-users and RCGs 3 September 2019, Brussels; Belgium
- LM 2018 4 September 2019, Brussels, Belgium

### Elected new RCG chairs

**Maria Hansson** (Sweden) and **Ari Leskelä** (Finland) are the new elected RCG Baltic chairs for 2018-2019.

**Els Torreele** (Belgium) has been elected as co-chair for the RCG NS&EA and will chair the meeting in 2018 together with **Marie Storr-Paulsen** (Denmark)

RCG LDF has elected **Sieto Verver** (The Netherlands) for a second term as chair.

Regarding the Chair of the RCM LP, the actual chair **Jon Ruiz** (Spain) will finish in 2017 his two years period. **Pedro Lino** (Portugal) has been elected as chair for the period 2018-2019. **Jon Ruiz** (Spain) will be co-chair during 2018.

**Emmet Jackson** (Ireland) has been elected as chair for the PGECON.

### RCG chairs 2018

RCG Baltic: Ari Leskalä, Finland and Maria Hansson, Sweden

RCG NS&EA: Marie Storr-Paulsen, Denmark and Els Torreele, Belgium

RCG NA: Leonia O'Dowd, Ireland and Jon Else, UK

RCG Med&BS: Apostolos Karagiannakos, Greece and Jernej Svab, Slovenia

RCG LP: Pedro Nino, Portugal and Jon Ruiz, Spain

RCG LDF: Sieto Verver, Netherlands

PGECON: Emmet Jackson, Ireland

## 8 ANNEXES

### Annex 1. Recommendations from the RCGs and the PGECON

LM addressed all the recommendations from the RCGs and agreed that the chair of the Lm 2017 will forward the recommendations to the responsible persons for the follow-up actions. For the future LM agreed that the RCGs should use recommendations only if no other forms could be used like agreement, proposal, etc.

#### RCG Baltic 2017

<b><i>RCG Baltic 2017. Request to ICES to update the master stock database with the data presently used in the stock assessments</i></b>	
RCG Baltic 2017 Recommendation 1	The RCG Baltic recommends that the ICES secretary is updating the master stock database to include the information on the data presently used in the stock assessments (e.g. maturity, age, length, weight, landings, discard, surveys, etc.). An example is given in Annex XX.
<b>Justification</b>	One of the tasks in the RCG is to meet end-user needs and to get an overview of the data used in stock assessment. The RCG will need an updated overview list containing the data used. Presently the only way to get an overview is to go through all the assessment reports.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	The recommendation is forwarded to the LM and ICES.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	ICES
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Prior to the first RCG in 2018.

<b><i>RCG Baltic 2017. Request to ICES to improve the RDB towards the data needs of WGEEL/WGBAST</i></b>	
RCG Baltic 2017 Recommendation 2	The RCG Baltic recommends that ICES, in consultation with the respective WG and the RDB SC, develops data formats that meet the specific data needs of the eel (WGEEL) and salmon/sea trout (WGBAST) assessments and allows the upload of the respective data into the RDB (e.g. in the context of the annual data call of the WGs).
<b>Justification</b>	ICES data calls require the upload of data into the RDB to support end-users in their data needs (i.e. stock assessments). The current data format of the RDB is not matching the specific formats that are needed by WGEEL and WGBAST (see Annex XX and XX) and are hence not used for the assessment.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	The recommendation is forwarded to ICES/RDB SC to approach the chairs and stock assessors of WGEEL and WGBAST.

<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	ICES/RDB SC, chairs of WGEEL/WGBAST
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Prior to the first RCG in 2018.
<b><i>RCG Baltic 2017. Request to WGBIFS to provide data and to WGISDAA to assess efficiency of the surveys BIAS and BASS within a cost-benefit framework</i></b>	
RCG Baltic 2017 Recommendation 3	The RCG Baltic recommends that the ICES approach WGBIFS to provide data to WGISDAA. WGISDAAA could then review the two surveys BIAS and BASS with respect to coverage and numbers of stations. What is the CV around the estimate used for assessment with the present coverage and how would the CV be affected by increased coverage (same number of days at days but improved coverage) or decreasing coverage (less days at sea)? What other methodological modifications could be considered to increase survey efficiency and reduce the CV around the estimate?
<b>Justification</b>	As the RCGs have a survey cost sharing task, the proper coverage of a given survey is getting more important. It would therefore be very beneficial to know how many stations are required for a proper stock assessment in a cost benefit framework. As the central Baltic herring is suggested for benchmark, the surveys used for this stock is suggested for a review.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	The recommendation is forwarded to the LM and ICES to approach the chairs of WGBIFS and WGISDAA.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	ICES; contacts should be done at the RCG chair for the Baltic.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Prior to the RCG Baltic in 2018.

### From Diadromous Sum-group to ICES Working Groups

<b><i>WGBAST to consider and report any benefits to Atlantic salmon and sea trout assessment of regional coordination of data collection in the Baltic</i></b>	
DSG 2017 Recommendation 1	The Regional Database can be modified to better incorporate the data collected for salmon, sea trout and eels under the DCF. The WGBAST, WGNAS and WGEEL are asked to list the data types that should be incorporated in the RDB to achieve this.
<b>Justification</b>	

<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	WGBAST to work out the optimal approach for selecting the appropriate index rivers in the Baltic.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	WBAST
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	

***WGNAS to consider and report any benefits to Atlantic salmon assessment of regional coordination of data collection in the North Sea & Eastern Arctic, and North Atlantic RCG regions.***

RCG 2017 Recommendation 2	The Regional Database can be modified to better incorporate the data collected for salmon, sea trout and eels under the DCF. The WGBAST, WGNAS and WGEEL are asked to list the data types that should be incorporated in the RDB to achieve this.
<b>Justification</b>	
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	WGNAS
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	

**Questions for WGNAS to address:**

- What are the data needs for the individual EU member states in order to conduct an annual assessment for Atlantic salmon?
- Which are the appropriate management units for these assessments?
- Which are the appropriate rivers where data should be collected, and what is the rationale for selecting these particular rivers?

***Recommendations for WGEEL, North Sea & Eastern Arctic & North Atlantic RCG***

RCG 2017 Recommendation 3	WGEEL to consider and report any benefits to eel assessment of regional coordination of data collection in the North Sea & Eastern Arctic, and North Atlantic RCG regions.  WGEEL to advise on data quality indicators, the quality of data supplied by MS, the effect of these qualities on the assessments, and therefore identify any significant improvements in data quality required.
<b>Justification</b>	

<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	

<b><i>Recommendations for WGEEL, Mediterranean &amp; Black Sea RCG</i></b>	
RCG 2017 Recommendation 4	<p>Mediterranean &amp; Black sea RCG to consider and report any benefits to eel assessment of regional coordination of data collection in the Mediterranean.</p> <p>WGEEL to consider and report any benefits to eel assessment of regional coordination of data collection in the Mediterranean.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	

<b><i>Recommendations for WGEEL</i></b>	
DSG 2017 Recommendation 5	<p>WGEEL to work out the optimal approach for selecting the appropriate index rivers in the Baltic.</p> <p>The Regional Database can be modified to better incorporate the data collected for salmon, sea trout and eels under the DCF. The WGBAST, WGNAS and WGEEL are asked to list the data types that should be incorporated in the RDB to achieve this.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	

## RCG NS&amp;EA 2017

<b>Common naming of survey</b>	
RCG NS&EA 2017 Recommendation 1	The NS&EA RCG recommends the use of a single survey name and acronym for each survey for use in Regulation documents, workplans, assessments Working Group reports and advice sheets. These survey acronyms could/should take the form of '(Region_)Survey_(Quarter_)Member-state' e.g. NSEA_IBTS_Q1_NED.  This will help end users to easily identify the surveys.
<b>Justification</b>	Presently it is very difficult to get an overview of the survey used in assessment and thereby give an input to update the mandatory survey list in the regulation (EU) 2016/1251 do the many different acronyms used for the same survey.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	MS, ICES EWG, ICES secretary, STECF
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	ICES secretary, STECF
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	January 2018

<b>Review of survey tables</b>	
RCG NS&EA 2017 Recommendation 2	The RCG NS&EA recommends that member states review the information detailed in the AWP check table table xx of this report, in order to identify any errors or omissions with any found to be reported back to the RCG NS&EA by 1.11-2017.  a. All MS all regions to review acronyms and descriptions in columns A to C (member state, acronym and region).  b. MS to comment on proposed Survey IDs and amend where there are gaps and to choose and enter their preferred Survey ID in column AD. Altering columns A to C will affect the proposed IDs. MS need to be mindful that shared surveys will already be tied to some common acronym  c. The RCG NS&EA recommends that ICES check the stock table in this rapport table xx for socks used in assessment  d. MS to check stock table for MS participation in column G" Member state(s) responsible for survey(s)"
<b>Justification</b>	The RCG NSEA has tried to produce a table giving all information on surveys presently used in assessment and conducted by all MS in the

	region. This table needs to be confirmed by the MS and ICES as the data information is rather diverse.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	MS / ICES
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Marie Storr-Paulsen DTU Aqua
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	1/11 2017

<b>Update of advice sheet</b>	
RCG NS&EA 2017 Recommendation 3	<p>The RCG NS&amp;EA recommends that additional input data information is provided in table 5 (Basis of the assessment - Input data) on ICES advice sheets. Details of each survey used in the assessment should include the survey acronym (see Recommendation 1 above) and the current age-range and year-range included in the assessment.</p> <p>Ex. on a presently sufficient information from an advice sheet:</p> <p>Commercial catches (international landings, ages from catch sampling by métier), two survey indices (IBTS Q1 &amp; Q3; ages 1 to 5); maturity data assumed fixed through time; time-varying natural mortalities from the SMS multispecies model (ICES, 2015).</p>
<b>Justification</b>	Data used by stock can easily be found in the updated advice sheet is this is consistently done for all stocks
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	ICES secretary
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	ICES secretary
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	August 2018

<b>Quality evaluation tools based on IC</b>	
RCG NS&EA 2017 Recommendation 4	RCG NS&EA recommends that ICES/WGCATCH considers the development of quality evaluation tools based on InterCatch and other available outputs. Missing to provide the information on sample intensities requested in the data call should be considered a data transmission failure.
<b>Justification</b>	As long as Inter-Catch is the main tool to document data used for stock assessment it is crucial for the for the stock assessor to have information on the data quality and presently the only source of information that can be used in the IC format is sampling intensity and numbers of ages and

	lengths. However, not all MS provided this information in 2017 although it was made mandatory in the data call.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	ICES secretary, MS
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	ICES secretary (on the data transmission failure)
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	With the relies of the 2018 data call (January 2018 ?)

#### ***Quality evaluation tools based on IC***

RCG NS&EA 2017 Recommendation 5	<p>RCG NS&amp;EA recommends WGCATCH to set-up a process to develop summary reports from RDB data, together with the R code in support; PGDATA should be tasked to feed into the process with a list of analyses of interest to the benchmarks. Finally it would be important that the R functions developed for the analyses would be shared in open repositories so that they can be considered by the RCG NS&amp;EA Data group in the production of its own fishery overviews and reports.</p> <p>Such exploration should be carried out in full respect for the RDB data policy and involve a pool of data providers that is able to reflect main concerns on data quality and sampling design into the elaboration of these reports.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	The present RDB, is at an early stage of development and already demonstrates largely unexplored potential for both RCGs and ICES community. As a current storage place for all commercial sampling, landings and effort data from EU countries, the RDB has the capacity to feed routine summary reports of the data available that can be useful to both RCGs and Assessment Working Groups.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	WGCATCH, PGDATA
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Chairs of WGCATCH and PGDATA
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	2018 meetings of WGCATCH and PGDATA

#### **RCG NA 2017**

***Identifying means and processes for using the current structure and data uploaded to the RDB in simulations that can test regional sampling designs.***

RCG NA 2017 Recommendation 1	The RCG NA strongly recommends that: processes and methods are developed that can use the data currently available on the RDB in simulations and analysis to test regional sampling designs.
<b>Justification</b>	<p>The current structure of the RDB limits what simulations might be used to test sampling designs. The analysis carried out in the FishPi study was dependent on a separate data exchange and detailed disaggregated transversal data outside the limits of the RDB and the current data exchange agreement. This should not stop any further development of regional sampling plans and time and effort needs to be spent looking at developing alternative methods and simulations that can help optimise regional sampling but using the information, basic structure and data already supplied to the RDB.</p> <p>Work must be done to ensure RDB data exchange format contains the information needed. This may be limited by aggregated transversal data but additional fields or alternative aggregations might be more appropriate.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RCGs to identify or establish the subgroup to work on this.</li> <li>2. Subgroup to determine terms of reference and deliverables</li> <li>3. Subgroup to provide guidance to the SC-RDB on any additional data requirements within the structure of the RDB</li> <li>4. WGCATCH to provide guidance references on what alternative analyses could be considered.</li> </ol>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	<p>Subgroup regional sampling plan</p> <p>SC-RDB</p> <p>WGCATCH</p>
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	2018

***Collate survey information from MS for evaluation of EU-MAP Table 10***

RCG NA 2017 Recommendation 2	The RCG NA recommends that the Commission and STECF collate relevant survey information from all MS to facilitate the evaluation of the surveys listed in Table 10, as well as to collect information for inclusion in the revised version of Table 10.
<b>Justification</b>	<p>During RCG NA in collaboration with ICES, it became apparent that more as well as detailed information was required to facilitate the evaluation of the mandatory surveys listed in Table 10. The purpose of this evaluation is twofold:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First and foremost, to revise and update the list of mandatory surveys in Table 10. Inclusion of new surveys and exclusion of currently listed surveys is to be done on pre-defined criteria.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second, updating Table 10 allows for the inclusion of information facilitating future work of the RCG, e.g. in the light of cost-sharing.</li> </ul> <p>It is well known that Table 10 is out-dated, hence, updating Table 10 should be done on the most up-to-date information, only available to the MS involved. By collating the information through the MS, this up-to-date information on surveys can be gathered as well as additional information for future inclusion in Table 10.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Commission to consult with and take into account any response from ICES and other RCGs relating to this particular task</li> <li>2. Commission to send out the designated spreadsheet to all MS giving sufficient time for MS to respond.</li> <li>3. MS to respond to the request</li> <li>4. Commission to collect and process all information prior to the EWG</li> </ol>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Commission, NC
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	<p>31st November for the templates to be circulated.</p> <p>Deadline for a response 1 month prior to STECF EWG on Evaluation of surveys.</p>

<b><i>Utilisation of RDB for completion and evaluation of MS national plans</i></b>	
RCG NA 2017 Recommendation 3	<p>RCG NA recommends the investigation of methods for using RDB data and metadata and automated procedures for completing, screening and evaluating MS national work plans.</p> <p>RCG NA recommends that MS upload data to RDB so as to be readily identifiable with the sampling commitments outlined in table 4A of national work plans.</p> <p>RCG NA recommends that metadata derived from the RDB can form a part of the MS annual report for evaluation by STECF of the MS national plans.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>The RDB can be utilised to enable the generation of electronic metadata on the scope and quality of data collected under MS national work plans. A move to include automated meta data report(s) as part of a MS annual report would ease the workload of MS and has the potential to improve relevance of the data quality metrics used by STECF in the evaluation of MS national programmes.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. MS (can chose) to upload their samples labelled with stratum ID code specified in table 4A of national work plans using the project field of the CS data.</li> </ol>

	<p>2. RCG data subgroup to generate meta data reports that can be used to populate MS annual reports.</p> <p>3. RCG data subgroup to circulate prototype for the format of a meta data template/report to NC for consideration and agreement at RCGM 2018 needs to be generated and commonly agreed upon. are generated to form part of the MS annual report used by the</p> <p>4. STECF to use the reports in evaluating the execution and quality of data collected by member states.</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	MS, RCG data group, STECF
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	<p>MS should be able to tag their data in the RDB data call (~July 2018) related to data collected in 2017</p> <p>Meta data reports could form part of the STECF AR evaluation conducted in ~Jun 2019.</p>

<b><i>Cost-sharing agreement for the Blue Whiting Survey in 2018 and 2019</i></b>	
<p>RCG NA 2017 Recommendation 4</p>	<p>RCG NA 2017 recommends continuing cost-sharing of the Blue Whiting survey through an updated agreement and to have this cost-sharing agreement to incorporated into national work plans which will ultimately form part of the Regional Sampling plan for the North Atlantic.</p> <p>Following the DCF regulation and consensus on the Gothenburg-model for cost-sharing of surveys, the agreement applies to those MS having a EU-TAC share <math>\geq 3\%</math> for blue whiting.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>There is an end-user need for fishery independent survey data for carrying out stock assessment of the blue whiting stock.</p> <p>Based on the DCF regulation, MSs having a TAC share <math>\geq 3\%</math> are expected to agree on cost-sharing of surveys.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RCG subgroup to finalise the draft agreement</li> <li>2. MS involved (Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom) to sign the agreement</li> <li>3. MS to include this agreement in their national work plans</li> <li>4. MS to include the agreement in their respective National Workplans.</li> </ol>

	(5. RCG NA to include this agreement in the regional workplan.)
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCG subgroup (Leonie O’Dowd (Ireland), Sieto Verver (The Netherlands) to finalise the draft agreement), NC and MS.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	October 15, 2017 (in time for the resubmission of the National Workplans).

**Internal recommendations covering intersessional work by subgroups (regional and pan-regional) includes recommendations to other RCGs.**

<b><i>Establish and maintain a pan regional RCG data end user subgroup</i></b>	
RCG NA 2017 Recommendation 6	RCG NA recommends establishing a data end user subgroup. To work closely and intersessionally with ICES to improve communication; establishing common references for standard processes and information and identifying effective processes for meeting end-user needs.
<b>Justification</b>	Setting up this subgroup will facilitate the role of the RCG to support end users. The subgroup will act as a point of contact for data end users, a framework for feedback and allow the RCG to prioritise its activity relating to future data collection, storage and transmission functions.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RCG chairs to establish end-users subgroup (Initial members RCG chairs).</li> <li>2. RCG Chairs in consultation with end-users to draft ToRs and deliverables.</li> <li>3. RCG subgroup to report regularly to members.</li> </ol>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Chairs of RCGs, end-users (ICES, STECF, other RFMOs).
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Ongoing.

<b><i>Pan regional sub group on Regional Sampling Plans</i></b>	
RCG NA 2017 Recommendation 7	<p>Establish a pan-regional subgroup on regional sampling plans with the initial remit of compiling a list of the different metrics and criteria that can be used to determine the best sampling scenarios for regional samplings plans.</p> <p>Such a list should detail the metrics and criteria and include the benefits and lost of the different indicators.</p>

<b>Justification</b>	In order to allow an adequate selection between the multiple sampling scenarios presented as outputs from the simulations, RCGs need a clear and agreed list of metrics and criteria to inform any decision.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RCGNA to present the need to RCGNS and to establish a pan regional group to answer this recommendation.</li> <li>2. This subgroup will be in charge of dealing with the sampling simulations and sampling aspects of a sampling plan.</li> <li>3. This subgroup to work through the year to compile the list of metrics. In order not to duplicate the work, RCG NA sees that it would be easier for this subgroup to take advantage and support the developments of the FishPi2 project to provide these metrics (it's expected that that project will work on those metrics).</li> </ol>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCG chairs, RCGs subgroup regional sampling.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	RCGM NA 2018.

<b><i>RCG to re-establish representation at the SC-RDB</i></b>	
RCG NA 2017 Recommendation 8	RCG NA to re-establish formal representation at the SC-RDB and to improve feedback to RCG members.
<b>Justification</b>	Changes in membership of the RCG and limited development of the RDB meant the numbers of participants on the SC-RDB which represent the concerns of the North Atlantic Regions. With the recent investment of resources and time in the development of the RDB and the subsequent decisions required the RCG has failed to keep up with communications and provide proper feedback to the process.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. RCGNA to nominate additional representatives to participate on the SC-RDB</li> <li>2. RCG NA chairs to consult with SC-RDB for clarity on the number participants required from RCGNA at SC-RDB and how the membership would work in the proposed RCG-DBSG</li> <li>3. RCGs to ensure development of the RDB to meet RCG needs is maintained and that the functionality is not compromised by the RES development.</li> <li>4. RCGNA Chairs to feedback to members.</li> <li>5. RCGNA Chairs to nominate further participants if needed.</li> </ol>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCG NA Chairs, SC-RDB.

<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Ongoing.
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<b><i>Workshop to standardise methods of determining métiers from transversal data</i></b>	
RCG NA 2017 Recommendation 9	<p>The RCG NA strongly recommends a data compilation workshop to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Standardise the processes that use trip based transversal data to determine the métier.</li> <li>2. Consider criteria for aggregating data for different end-users (JRC, ICES and other RFMOs).</li> </ol> <p>Investigate a framework for managing métier and fleet descriptions when needed.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>All catch, effort and sample data is uploaded to the RDB by métier and limited to a reference list of RCG agreed métiers defined by ICES area.</p> <p>MS submit their data to ICES on Intercatch disaggregated by métier and the JRC for FDI data calls and other RFMOs also request the data by métier without reference to the RCG agreed list of métiers. MS have independently developed their own code and processes for calculating species assemblage and rules for merging métiers. This is initially based on the transversal data for a trip which may or may not cover more than one métier. These methods are not necessarily consistent between countries and even between agencies within countries and could be based on, for example, a foreshortened list of species assemblages; rules for particular gears; catch by weight and or value and relative ratios. The impact of the different methods is not known but as data is being compared more readily at a regional or international level, so as to improve on confidence in current assumptions simple rules and standards need to apply.</p> <p>Since 2009 RCGNA has regularly recommended MS provide, maintain and update fleet descriptions for all sampled métiers to better define and compare similar fleets and the sampling of them between nations. This has been only moderately successful with no clear repository for them. ICES Expert Working Groups are now also requesting fishery and métier descriptions as part of their data calls. A repository and better strategy is required for collating and maintaining MS descriptions.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<p>RCGs to establish a pan regional cooperative team of RCG members and end users; to consult with end users and data providers; establish a workshop; to provide terms of reference and identify a venue.</p> <p>Tors should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. to review current algorithms and processes for allocating a trip to a métier based on catch data.</li> <li>2. to provide standard guidelines for determining or allocating a trip to a métier or multiple métiers and how to aggregate the data.</li> </ol>

	3. to define a strategy for storing and maintaining national fishery descriptions relative to the defined métiers.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCGs to establish the team. NC, MS and end-users to provide contributors and to implement guidelines.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	2018

<b><i>Implication of the Landing obligation</i></b>	
RCG NA 2017 Recommendation 10	RCG NA recommends that MS continue to account for the additional catch fractions brought about as a consequence of the landing obligation. They need to account for them in their recording of transversal variables and biological data and adapt to the annual updates of the regional discard plans. MS should continue to review, monitor and advise on the impact of the implementation of the landing obligation on sampling catches for biological data, catch data and catch estimates.
<b>Justification</b>	<p>The landing obligation has introduced a new category of catch (Below Minimum Size, BMS) and this fraction of the catch will be reported, sampled and required in any catch estimation. This necessitates that national institutions and ICES through all stages of the recording, storage and estimation processes are able to accommodate this fraction.</p> <p>Apart from in the Baltic there is little data, to date, to be able to analyse the impact of the obligation on the quality of catch estimates and the scale of the issue in other regions can only be perceived. Annual updates of discard plans may change the nature of the fisheries currently being sampled and the data collectors and end-users will need to be live to these changes.</p> <p>As the landing obligation beds in, catch data and other metrics will become more available to assess the impact of the discard plans on catch estimates.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. All MS to complete draft monitoring template Annex x</li> <li>2. RCG Chairs to appoint pan regional contributors for intersessional work</li> <li>3. RCG Chairs to submit an early data call in 2018 to allow intersessional analysis of RDB data.</li> <li>4. Pan regional intersessional group to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. review 2017 BMS CS and CL data on the RDB and source and review other available metrics (e.g. refusal rates)</li> <li>b. contribute to and review ToRs &amp; outcomes of WGCATCH 2017</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCG Chairs, MS, Intersessional Group.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	RCGs 2018.

## RCG Med&BS 2017

<b>Rules of procedure for the RCG Med&amp;BS</b>	
<b>RCM MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 1</b>	RCG MED&BS recommend the follow up of the draft text of Rules of Procedure as attached to this report which was reviewed and discussed during the plenary. It was also agreed that all MS may need more time to commit with the text produced, acknowledging at the same time that further delays on this issue could jeopardize the functioning and the work carried out in the RCG.
<b>Justification</b>	Article 9(5) of EU Regulation 2017/1004 of the EP and of the Council, <i>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) 199/2008 (recast).</i>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Draft text attached to this draft report to be discussed at the LM and exchange point of view with RoPs from other regions. After LM, draft text with comments from LM to be circulated to NC with a deadline to send additional comments (20 November 2017). This should lead to the final adoption by written procedure of the ROPS for MED&BS by the end of 2017.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Chair of MED&BS 2017 to present the final draft to LM. Chair of MED MED&BS 2018 to circulate the draft by RoPs to all NC.  NC to review the draft, send comments if necessary and to finally adopt by the end of 2017.
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	LM, end of 2017. NC

<b>Proposed Changes to FDI data call and new data calls</b>	
<b>RCM MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 2</b>	The RCG recommends that:  - The data call for Fisheries Dependent Information (FDI) should be drafted according to the biological sampling plans implemented in the Mediterranean and Black Sea Region on the basis of WP and RCM recommendations;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To compile relevant tables only with information on volume and value of landings per species and according to the defined level of aggregation.</li> <li>- To clearly state in the official data call that some tables which request data that are not compulsory under the DCF are optional (e.g. provision of data at the GFCM square grid is not compulsory under the DCF).</li> <li>- To allow the use of aggregated codes (e.g. “Appendix 7 Domain definitions” of the field “ALL_GSA” for the Subregion codes, to adjust the data call format to large pelagics sampling protocol), to adjust the data call format to different sampling protocols.</li> <li>- The draft of the new data calls (requirements and format) should be circulated among National Correspondents and RCG chairs before its finalization;</li> <li>- The new data call should be launched at least two months before the deadline for submission of data;</li> <li>- The new data call should be launched in the second semester of the year</li> <li>- The Data calls should consider the timing for data availability agreed at regional level and listed in Table 6A of the MS WP.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Justification</b></p>	<p>Even if there is a clear need to streamline STECF data calls, this imply a greater effort for answering the additional data call.</p> <p>The FDI data call is not completely clear in terms of requirements and codification.</p> <p>For new data calls it would be useful to circulate a draft among MSs to assure that it can be answered according to the provisions of WP for data collection.</p> <p>The data call cannot be launched in the first semester because in this period MSs have to answer to a lot of other data calls (GFCM, ICCAT, STECF fleet economic, STECF med biological data, RCM MED&amp;BS-LP data call).</p> <p>RCG MED&amp;BS 2017 considered that several issues have been already discussed and agreed at regional levels in terms of: identification of métiers, standard coding for geographical areas, variables, etc. These can be found in RCM Med&amp;BS-LP, RCG Med&amp;BS 2017 and PGMED reports. In addition, a specific deliverable of MARE/2014/19 Med&amp;BS project provides a complete proposal for data format and codification (deliverable 2.4, 2.2-2.7).</p> <p>Position letter with explanations and requests regarding the FDI data call was agreed and send to the COM by the NC present on the RCG Med&amp;BS 2017.</p> <p>For the purpose of future planning of the database adaptations at national level, it is necessary to plan data-call format designs well in advance of the announcement of the data-call, in order to allow Member States the time needed to ensure the necessary resources and successfully manage adaptations of national databases.</p>

<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Circulation of new and FDI data call among NCs and RCG chairs. Deadlines to be set according to RCG recommendations.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	DG MARE, JRC, Member States
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Before the official lunch of any new data call and FDI data call in 2018.

<b>Implementation of the MEDIT and other research surveys at sea</b>	
<b>RCG MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 3</b>	<p>RCG recommends Mediterranean MS to carry out the MEDIT survey according to EUMAP provisions. In case of delays due to the MS administrative and bureaucratic procedures implementation, RCG recommends MS to take any actions to perform the MEDIT survey even with a delay with respect to EUMAP provisions.</p> <p>RCG recommends that this also applies to other research surveys at sea.</p> <p>RCG consider that from the scientific point of view it is better to perform the delayed surveys rather to not perform it at all, even if this involves a delay.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>According to EUMAP the period for MEDIT survey is spring-summer (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter). However, some MSs, namely Italy and Greece, started the 2017 survey only in September due to administrative delays under the EMFF procedures. The MEDIT will therefore be finalized with some delays with respect to the prescribed timing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- RCG MED&amp;BS agreed on the need to perform the survey, even if with some delays, because:</li> <li>- In the Mediterranean only one survey is covering the demersal species and if no survey is carried out no fisheries independent information will be available</li> <li>- Survey is aimed at collecting biological parameters as well as additional ecosystem indicators that are essential in the assessment of the impact of fisheries on the stocks and ecosystems (the latter also in line with the Marine Strategy Directive Framework)</li> <li>- Surveys data are essential to perform stock assessment and this data can be used even in the case of timing splitting provided that end users are aware of this issue and apply appropriate methodologies for the standardization of the population indices.</li> </ul>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<p>MS to perform the MEDIT and other research surveys at sea within a delay with respect to EUMAP provisions.</p> <p>End users to apply appropriate scientific approaches to mitigate the impact on the reliability and consistency of the data.</p>

<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	MS, COM, LM, STECF, End users
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Every year

<b><i>Merging of length classes</i></b>	
<b>RCG MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 4</b>	The Mediterranean and Black Sea data call issued by the JRC should allow MS to merge the length classes for different métier and should allow the upload of data with merged length classes. For example, for the small-scale fisheries the vessel length classes VL0006 and VL0612 should be accepted to be aggregated into a single vessel length class (VL0012), vessel length classes for trawlers or other fleet segments should be accepted to be recorded as below 24 m and above 24 m, and the code “-1” should be also accepted for allowing MS to submit data aggregated in other ways, in accordance with their national biological sampling designs.
<b>Justification</b>	<p>The RCG Med&amp;BS 2017 group recalled the EU Commission Decision 2016/1251 Chapter III paragraph 2(a) that requests commercial fisheries data to be reported at the aggregation level 6 (corresponding to mesh size).</p> <p>The RCG Med&amp;BS 2017 group, in order to fulfil the requirement of Chapter II (Data Collection Methods) of the EU Decision 2016/1251, reiterated that sampling for the collection of biological data should be statistically planned and designed, so as to avoid problems of under-sampled and non-sampled strata or domains requiring imputation of missing data.</p> <p>The RCG Med&amp;BS 2017 group also took into consideration the requests made by STECF and by the GFCM DCRF in order to merge the different vessel length classes of the LOA for sampling purpose.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<p>MS to merge vessel length classes.</p> <p>JRC to adapt data call in order to accept merged vessel length classes.</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	LM, JRC, DGMare, MS
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Before data calls in 2018.

<b><i>Pilot studies on incidental catch of vulnerable species</i></b>	
<b>RCG MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 5</b>	Following the 2016 Recommendation of the RCM Med&BS-LP on pilot studies for the assessment of incidental catches of birds, mammals, reptiles and fish, the RCG Med&BS recommends MS to follow the

	<p>planned monitoring programme of the GFCM on the incidental catch of vulnerable species, and carry out the following pilot studies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2018: Pilot study for assessing incidental catches of vulnerable species from bottom trawlers</li> <li>- 2019: Pilot study for assessing incidental catches of vulnerable species from longlines</li> <li>- 2020: Pilot study for assessing incidental catches of vulnerable species from set nets (gillnets).</li> </ul> <p>The guidelines for monitoring incidental catch of vulnerable species and processing the collected data, will be based both on the outputs of the EU MARE/2014/19 project for the Med&amp;BS, and the GFCM guidelines on incidental catch (under preparation). Data to be collected will include: identification of species, number and weight (when possible) of individuals, gear specifications, location and timing of catches.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	It is very important that the implementation of pilot studies on incidental catch is coordinated, in terms of methodology and timing, among Med&BS MS and also the third countries in the region that will perform pilot studies based on the GFCM incidental catch programme.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<p>LM is expected to provide advice on possible need to update WPs for including information on the implementation of the pilot studies.</p> <p>COM should provide clear guidance on necessity of resubmission of the WPs.</p> <p>COM should inform MS on the LM opinion in due time and in advance of the deadline for resubmitting WPs.</p> <p>Accordingly, MS may have to resubmit their WPs.</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	LM, RCG Med&BS chair, DGMARE, MS
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	After the LM 2017 and before the 31 October 2017

<b><i>Data transmission (DT) failures and involvement of the MS/RCG in the process</i></b>	
<b>RCG MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 6</b>	<p>RCG Med&amp;BS recommends all end users (STECF, JRC and other end-users) that before reporting the DT failures to the COM, to contact the concerned MS to try to clarify the issues and avoid DT failures.</p> <p>RCG recommends to include the analysis and discussion of DT failures in RCG Terms of Reference.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	STECF-17-10, evaluation of DCF 2016 Annual Reports & Data Transmission to end users in 2016, considered that the number of data transmission issues for the Mediterranean data call is very high and considered that the

	<p>overall process to detect and evaluate DT failures should be streamlined. The dialogue between MS and end users should be improved.</p> <p>STECF suggested to establish an ad-hoc working group within the Mediterranean&amp;BS RCG to deal with data transmission issues.</p> <p>However, RCG considered that the procedure to identify and to assess DT failures should follow a step by step process to ensure consistency among end-users and to guarantee a systematic consultation among end users and MSs. RCG considers that it is up to the end user to communicate to MS the issues raised during the use of data and to build a dialogue to detect actual data collection failures excluding all data collection issues that relate to file consistency and/or format/coding requirements.</p> <p>RCGs consider useful to analysis the DT failures in order to identify drawbacks in data collection activities at regional level.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<p>STECF, JRC and other end-users to communicate DT issues to MS before their submission to the COM and possibly soon after the data validity check.</p> <p>MS should cooperate with end-users to clarify the issues and to give adequate justifications to avoid DT failures.</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	STECF, JRC, other end-users, MS, RCG
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Soon after the data validity check by an end-user.

<b>Data availability and official data calls.</b>	
<b>RCG MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 7</b>	<p>RCG Med&amp;BS 2017 on the basis of the STECF (2016 evaluation of the WPs) comments, modified and agreed on changed dates in Table 6A. RCG Med&amp;BS 2017 agreed on common dates after which the data sets will be made available to the end users, and requests the relevant MS to refer to these when completing Table 6A – Data availability in their Work Plans. MS and end users are recommended to respect the relevant dates of availability, especially when official data calls are issued by DGMARE and deadlines are set.</p> <p>The agreed and modified Table 6A following the request by the STECF (2016 evaluation of the WPs) on data availability is part of the RCG Med&amp;BS 2017 report.</p> <p>RCG Med&amp;BS 2017 requested many times the JRC/DGMARE on maintaining the stable format of the official data calls, and requests that regional agreements on codes are respected.</p>

	<p>With regards to the JRC/DGMARE proposal on setting the deadlines of official data calls for the Mediterranean and Black Sea at earlier dates than the current ones, for allowing the associated STECF EWG meetings to convene earlier in the year, the group expressed its concern on the ability of the MS to respect more strict deadlines and on the implications this would have to the quality of the data provided. As an alternative solution, RCG Med&amp;BS recommends DGMARE to shorten the data-handling procedure after the legal deadline of the data calls, for allowing the STECF EWG meetings associated with the data calls to convene no later than one calendar month after the deadline. Specifically, and in line with the data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups circulated by DGMARE, a two weeks period after the deadline (instead of two months in some cases) should be spent for data checks by JRC, followed by two weeks of operational deadline.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>The regionally agreed availability dates of the different data-sets are based:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i.) on the time required for finalizing other related data (e.g. fishing activity data required for finalizing biological data),</li> <li>ii.) the available resources (limited for some MS) for data handling, considering also the timing of DCF reporting obligations,</li> <li>iii.) the required work for processing the data and ensuring their quality for their scientific use.</li> </ul> <p>Fixed deadlines of the various official DGMARE data calls should be specified according to the agreed availability dates, for allowing MS to plan in advance the work required for meeting their obligations.</p> <p>The existence of different formats and codes for reporting DCF data through various Data Calls increases the workload of Member States to prepare and provide data according to each data requirement. It increases the risk of not complying with each requested coding and threatens the quality of information provided. Formats and valid codes of a data call may differ from year to year, obliging MS to resubmit the same data provided in previous years in accordance with the updated format and code requirements.</p> <p>By shortening the data-handling procedure after the legal deadline of official DGMARE data calls, STECF EWG meetings associated with the data calls may convene earlier in the year than they currently do, for providing management advice on due time, without setting the deadlines of official data calls for the Mediterranean and Black Sea at earlier dates.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<p>Follow agreed availability dates by MS and end users.</p> <p>Respect recommendations on the format of data calls</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	MS, JRC/DGMARE, end users
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Before launch of 2018 data calls.

<b>Shorten the data-handling procedures</b>	
<b>RCG MED&amp;BS - 2017 Recommendation 8</b>	<p>RCG Med&amp;BS 2017 decided to repeat last year recommendation regarding the maintenance of the stable format of the official data calls, and requests that regional agreements on codes are respected.</p> <p>With regards to the JRC/DGMARE proposal on setting the deadlines of official data calls for the Mediterranean and Black Sea at earlier dates than the current ones, for allowing the associated STECF EWG meetings to convene earlier in the year, the group expressed its concern on the ability of the MS to respect more strict deadlines and on the implications this would have to the quality of the data provided. As an alternative solution, RCG Med&amp;BS recommends DGMARE to shorten the data-handling procedure after the legal deadline of the data calls, for allowing the STECF EWG meetings associated with the data calls to convene no later than one calendar month after the deadline. Specifically, and in line with the data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups circulated by DGMARE, a two weeks period after the deadline (instead of two months in some cases) should be spent for data checks by JRC, followed by two weeks of operational deadline.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>The existence of different formats and codes for reporting DCF data through various Data Calls increases the workload of Member States to prepare and provide data according to each data requirement. It increases the risk of not complying with each requested coding and threatens the quality of information provided. Formats and valid codes of a data call may differ from year to year, obliging MS to resubmit the same data provided in previous years in accordance with the updated format and code requirements.</p> <p>By shortening the data-handling procedure after the legal deadline of official DGMARE data calls, STECF EWG meetings associated with the data calls may convene earlier in the year than they currently do, for providing management advice on due time, without setting the deadlines of official data calls for the Mediterranean and Black Sea at earlier dates.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Respect recommendations on the format of data calls and regarding the shorten data – handling procedures.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	JRC/DGMARE, end users
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Before launch of 2018 data calls, especially Mediterranean and Black Sea data call.

***Procedures for cost sharing under the EMFF***

<b>RCG MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 9</b>	RCG Med&BS 2017 recommends to introduce cost and task sharing opportunities or/and exploring other ways of co-funding the activities of the data collection under the EMFF OPs 2014-2020.
<b>Justification</b>	<p>Under the EMFF an envelope for funding the data collection activities was assigned to the data collection measure under the respective MS's EMFF OPs 2014-2020. On the other hand the scope of data collection has expanded in the recent period and the group discussed that funding possibilities in many Member States are not sufficient in order to cover all the data collection requirements from the allocated EMFF funds.</p> <p>On the other hand also the administrative burden for small administrations in handling all the data collection and EMFF requirements is very heavy and represent an important financial, people and time consuming obligation.</p> <p>In addition, demanding administrative procedures necessary for the implementation of the EMFF measures hamper the implementation of data collection, particularly where small administrations are concerned.</p> <p>These circumstances may be alleviated by introducing cost and task sharing opportunities or/and exploring other ways of co-funding.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<p>Explore different possibilities and develop cost and task sharing procedures and possibilities of joint financing.</p> <p>Intersessional work for identifying the need and work on possible solutions.</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCG Med&BS 2018, COM, MS, NC
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	September 2018.

***Introduction of new research surveys at sea in the Mediterranean and Black Sea area***

<b>RCM MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 10</b>	<p>RCG MED&amp;BS recommend to introduce new surveys at sea in EU MAP Table 10 Research surveys at sea.</p> <p>Proposed new surveys are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- SOLEMON survey for the GSA 17 and</li> <li>- extension of the MEDIAS survey in GSA 11 and 19</li> </ul> <p>Proposed surveys should not affect in any way the implementation of the existing surveys in terms of available resources for surveys at sea (MEDITS and MEDIAS).</p> <p>STECF EWG 17-14 should take in the consideration this recommendation.</p>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>SOLEMON research survey is filling the gap left behind other surveys. Beam trawl used as sampling gear enable appropriate sampling of benthic fish, crustaceans and cephalopods. SOLEMON research survey is the only</p>

	<p>fishery independent data source for stock assessment of <i>Solea solea</i> and other benthic species in Adriatic Sea. The SOLEMON data are used for stock assessment purposes.</p> <p>Acoustic survey for the evaluation of the biomass and spatial distribution of small pelagic fish in the Mediterranean Sea started since the '70s and several research projects of this kind were undertaken at national level. Since 2009 the acoustic surveys of the UE area in the Mediterranean are coordinated by means of a common protocol under the umbrella of pan-Mediterranean Acoustic Surveys (MEDIAS). Recently, GFCM has approved and started the Mid Term Strategy aimed at improving already existent surveys in non EU countries or develop new ones where they does not yet exist, possibly with the support of MEDIAS group for what concerns acoustic surveys. The general aim is to expand research surveys at sea in the Mediterranean as much as possible in order to gather the most complete picture that is possible. Anyway, even at UE countries level some gaps in GSAs coverage exist by now. With the aim to try to strengthen coverage in UE area, scientists of CNR-ISMAR of Ancona and scientists from CNR-IAMC of Capo Granitola decided to give their availability to cover by acoustic survey respectively GSA 19 (western Ionian Sea) and GSA 11 (Sardinia), given an adequate financial support, possibly to be added to DCRF in the MEDIAS framework in the future.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Amendment of the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1251, of 12 July 2016, adopting a multiannual Union programme for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors for the period 2017-2019, (notified under document C(2016) 4329).
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	COM, MS, LM, STECF EWG 17-14
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Report of the STECF EWG 17-14 (1 <sup>st</sup> trimester of the 2018)

<b><i>Biological parameters – ageing protocols</i></b>	
<b>RCM MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 11</b>	RCG Med&BS 2017 recommends to follow the agreed protocols of European workshops for age reading
<b>Justification</b>	<p>Considering the fact that different scientists/experts use different age-reading protocols for the same species within the same stock unit and at a regional level that may result in different age estimates, with aim to minimize uncertainties in age data, it is recommended to harmonize age readings among experts by developing and adopting common age reading protocols for target species that belong to the same stock unit* and also same species at regional level.</p> <p>Different biological parameters are calculated from age data, and most of stock assessment models used are age-structured. Uncertainties in input</p>

	<p>data (i.e. age data) may consequently result in uncertainties of stock assessment outcomes.</p> <p>*for stock units in the Med see Report of STECF EWG-17-02</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	To harmonize and adopt common age reading protocols (specific for species/stock unit) - since the same issue has been included in GFCM SAC work plan for 2017-2019** (** in SAC work plan 2017-2019 (SAC, Ljubljana 2017): Define an approach for the harmonization of otolith reading for selected priority species (anchovy, sardine, European hake, red mullet) between national institutions.), a synergy of efforts from PGMED and SAC would be welcomed (i.e. joint meetings on age reading harmonisations)
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCG, PGMED
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	2018

<b>Rules of procedure for the RCG Med&amp;BS</b>	
<b>RCM MED&amp;BS 2017 Recommendation 1</b>	RCG MED&BS recommend the follow up of the draft text of Rules of Procedure as attached to this report which was reviewed and discussed during the plenary. It was also agreed that all MS may need more time to commit with the text produced, acknowledging at the same time that further delays on this issue could jeopardize the functioning and the work carried out in the RCG.
<b>Justification</b>	Article 9(5) of EU Regulation 2017/1004 of the EP and of the Council, <i>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) 199/2008</i> (recast).
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Draft text attached to this draft report to be discussed at the LM and exchange point of view with RoPs from other regions. After LM, draft text with comments from LM to be circulated to NC with a deadline to send additional comments (20 November 2017). This should lead to the final adoption by written procedure of the ROPS for MED&BS by the end of 2017.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	<p>Chair of MED&amp;BS 2017 to present the final draft to LM. Chair of MED MED&amp;BS 2018 to circulate the draft by RoPs to all NC.</p> <p>NC to review the draft, send comments if necessary and to finally adopt by the end of 2017.</p>
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	LM, end of 2017. NC

<b>Proposed Changes to FDI data call and new data calls</b>	
<p><b>RCM MED&amp;BS 2017</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p>	<p>The RCG recommends that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The data call for Fisheries Dependent Information (FDI) should be drafted according to the biological sampling plans implemented in the Mediterranean and Black Sea Region on the basis of WP and RCM recommendations;</li> <li>- To compile relevant tables only with information on volume and value of landings per species and according to the defined level of aggregation.</li> <li>- To clearly state in the official data call that some tables which request data that are not compulsory under the DCF are optional (e.g. provision of data at the GFCM square grid is not compulsory under the DCF).</li> <li>- To allow the use of aggregated codes (e.g. “Appendix 7 Domain definitions” of the field “ALL_GSA” for the Subregion codes, to adjust the data call format to large pelagics sampling protocol), to adjust the data call format to different sampling protocols.</li> <li>- The draft of the new data calls (requirements and format) should be circulated among National Correspondents and RCG chairs before its finalization;</li> <li>- The new data call should be launched at least two months before the deadline for submission of data;</li> <li>- The new data call should be launched in the second semester of the year</li> <li>- The Data calls should consider the timing for data availability agreed at regional level and listed in Table 6A of the MS WP.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Justification</b></p>	<p>Even if there is a clear need to streamline STECF data calls, this imply a greater effort for answering the additional data call.</p> <p>The FDI data call is not completely clear in terms of requirements and codification.</p> <p>For new data calls it would be useful to circulate a draft among MSs to assure that it can be answered according to the provisions of WP for data collection.</p> <p>The data call cannot be launched in the first semester because in this period MSs have to answer to a lot of other data calls (GFCM, ICCAT, STECF fleet economic, STECF med biological data, RCM MED&amp;BS-LP data call).</p> <p>RCG MED&amp;BS 2017 considered that several issues have been already discussed and agreed at regional levels in terms of: identification of métiers, standard coding for geographical areas, variables, etc. These can be found in RCM Med&amp;BS-LP, RCG Med&amp;BS 2017 and PGMED reports. In addition, a specific deliverable of MARE/2014/19 Med&amp;BS project</p>

	<p>provides a complete proposal for data format and codification (deliverable 2.4, 2.2-2.7).</p> <p>Position letter with explanations and requests regarding the FDI data call was agreed and send to the COM by the NC present on the RCG Med&amp;BS 2017.</p> <p>For the purpose of future planning of the database adaptations at national level, it is necessary to plan data-call format designs well in advance of the announcement of the data-call, in order to allow Member States the time needed to ensure the necessary resources and successfully manage adaptations of national databases.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	<p>Circulation of new and FDI data call among NCs and RCG chairs.</p> <p>Deadlines to be set according to RCG recommendations.</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	DG MARE, JRC, Member States
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Before the official lunch of any new data call and FDI data call in 2018.

### Selected métiers in the Mediterranean

9Metiers lvl 6 selected in the Med	Selected based on landings	Selected based on value	Selected based on effort
DRB_MOL_0_0_0	x	x	x
FPO_DEF_0_0_0		x	x
GNS_DEF_>=16_0_0	x	x	x
GTR_DEF_>=16_0_0	x	x	x
LLD_LPF_0_0_0	x	x	x
LLS_DEF_0_0_0	x	x	x
OTB_DEF_>=40_0_0	x	x	x
OTB_DWS_>=40_0_0		x	
OTB_MDD_>=40_0_0	x	x	x
PS_SPF_>=14_0_0	x	x	x
PTM_SPF_>=20_0_0	x	x	

## Selected métiers in the Black Sea

Metiers lvl 6 selected	Selected based on landings	Selected based on value	Selected based on effort
FPO_DEF_0_0_0			X
GNS_DEF_360-400_0_0			X
OTM_MPD_>=13_19_0_0	x	x	x

## RCG LP 2017

<i>Future Status of the RCG LP</i>	
RCG LP 2017 Recommendation 1	The RCG LP should be a RCG independent from RCG Med/BS and ideally should hold its meetings in the second quarter every year in order to avoid periods of heavy workload.
<b>Justification</b>	This group has been associated with RCG MED&BS in order to limit the number of meetings. However, from the RCG LP perspective, common topics between both groups are very limited. In addition, it is particularly unfortunate that the annual meeting of this group takes place always in September very close to unavoidable ICCAT scientific activities. Thus, considering the specificities of these fisheries it seems logic to have a specific group; it will not be regional, but global, based in species and end users more than in a geographic region; it is therefore needed that all MS involved on large pelagic fisheries participate, CYP, ESP, FRA, UK, GRC, HRV, IRL, ITA, MLT and PRT.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCG LP, COM
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Before next RCG meeting.

<i>RCG LP shark sampling</i>	
RCG LP 2017 Recommendation 2	Pending a review of the EU MAP, major shark species subject to assessment in tRFMOs, and that are in Table 1D of the EU MAP, should be subject to appropriate sampling even if they are not included in table 1C.

	<p>This supposes sampling of <i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i> and <i>Lamna nasus</i> in tuna RFMO areas *.</p> <p>*Except for the Mediterranean where landing of these shark species is prohibited by Recommendation GFCM/36/2012/3 (species listed in Annex II of the SPA/BD Protocol of the Barcelona Convention).</p>
<b>Justification</b>	<p>Both species are priority shark species subject to stock assessment in tRFMOs.</p> <p>Some EU fleets are ranked as the fleets that most contribute to the landings of <i>Isurus oxyrinchus</i> in the Indian and Atlantic Oceans (excluding Mediterranean where landing of these shark species is prohibited). On the other hand, ICCAT shark assessment group encouraged MS to implement research and monitoring projects at regional (stock) level in order to close gaps on key biological data for <i>Lamna nasus</i>.</p> <p>Thus, as revision of the official EU MAP text is not foreseen in the short term, RCG LP 2017 recommends that major shark species subject to assessment in tRFMOs that are in Table 1D of the EU MAP (Shortfin mako and Porbeagle shark) should be subject to appropriate sampling even if they are not included in table 1C.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	Check if any MS should make any amendment to the NWP.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	MS
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Before 31 October 2017.

<b>LL workshop for 2018</b>	
RCG LP 2017 Recommendation 3	Establish in 2018 a workshop for exploring the possibility to launch a permanent group for temperate tuna (or just for LL) as a complement of the existing tropical tuna coordination group.
<b>Justification</b>	<p>This proposal is based on the methodological Working Group (T3-tropical Tuna Treatment) already in place for purse seiners targeting tropical tuna. The group discussed if a similar initiative for the longline fishery would complement T3 meeting and would improve the data collection, harmonization and task sharing regarding longline fisheries. Both would prepare the work for the RCG LP. Given that it does not seem to be a clear view on the utility of this group as there are differences between oceans and fleets involved in longline, it was recommended to hold a Workshop to explore whether this group is feasible.</p>
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	

<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	LL scientists, COM, RCG LP
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	1st Q 2018

<b><i>Compatibility of shark sampling activities with CITES</i></b>	
RCG LP 2017 Recommendation 4	Clarify the compatibility of shark sampling activities with CITES provisions.
<b>Justification</b>	For sharks listed in CITES, now it is not possible to transport samples even of dead fish. Thus, it is not possible to collect biological samples (vertebrates, etc.) of this species. In terms of the EU legislation it is possible to take samples from porbeagle shark (if they are collected by observers and the specimens are already dead when captured). However, now that they are in CITES, it is not possible to transport them between international waters and EU waters. So, EU can actually collect samples for specimens that are accidentally captured (and already dead) inside the EU EEZ. But this is very little, as EU cannot sample in international waters where we need to get those samples as well.
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	COM, RCG LP
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	

## RCG LDF 2017

<b><i>Data requirements small pelagics CECAF area (From Morocco to Guinea-Bissau)</i></b>	
RCG LDF 2017 Recommendation 1	<p>RCG LDF recommends again to seek clarification regarding the end-user needs for future scientific advice in the CECAF area for small pelagic species.</p> <p>Currently, no data requirements, neither qualitative, nor quantitative, are specified by CECAF as an end-user. Given the need to address end-user needs, these requirements are a prerequisite for designing an adequate sampling programme at a regional level.</p> <p>The specification of data needs, need to be based upon short/medium term needs and expectations in the light of short/medium term developments and use of assessment models applied as basis for advice. The specification should reflect on data as collected under the previous</p>

	DCF, especially when requesting new parameters or when setting quality indicators. Also, the requirements should be seen in the regional context and not only apply to the EU fisheries.
<b>Justification</b>	
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	DG MARE to liaise with CECAF to seek clarification on data requirements for small pelagics from an end user perspective.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	DG MARE Unit
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	Given the complex nature of this subject, the follow-up action should start as soon as possible.  Data requirements have to be defined prior to the 2018 RCG LDF to ensure the requirements are considered for inclusion in sampling programmes from 2019 onward

<b><i>Suspension of EU sampling of small pelagics in CECAF area (From Morocco to Guinea-Bissau)</i></b>	
RCG LDF 2017 Recommendation 2	Pending the provision of data requirements, RCG LDF concludes that data collection of small pelagics is to be suspended from 2018 onwards until further notice. Pilot studies are not deemed necessary given the successful demonstration of the capabilities to execute a joint EU sampling programme for small pelagics in CECAF area.
<b>Justification</b>	
<b>Follow-up actions needed</b>	MS to suspend activities in the region from 2018 onwards and highlight this in National Workplans.
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	LM
<b>Time frame (Deadline)</b>	1st January 2018

## PGECON 2017

Reference Number	Recommendation
<b><i>ToR 1 Development of quality assurance framework for DCF data.</i></b>	
1	<p>PGECON recommends that the reporting on the economic data collection and its resultant quality could be best organized by the following documentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Methodological document, including a detailed description of methods of surveys, structured in accordance with the ESS guidelines</li> </ul>

	<p>(<a href="#">Annex 7</a>) and has references to selected ESS QAF Principles (<a href="#">Annex 6</a>) listed in optimized WP Table 5B. This document can be either incorporated in the WP or used as a standalone document of the WP (<a href="#">Annex 8</a>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual Quality report, with tables and specified quality indicators, taking into account the checklist for quality reporting and structured according to the ESS guidelines (<a href="#">Annex 6</a>).</li> </ul>
2	<p>PGECON recommends that during the STECF EWG on quality assurance, the collected documentation and developed checklist and outline should be used as a basis for further development of the methodological report and the quality report.</p>
<p><b><i>ToR 2 Development of guidelines for social variables data collection in fisheries.</i></b></p>	
3	<p>To avoid duplication when fishers are moving from one vessel to another during the year it is recommended that social data should refer to a certain point in time. In cases of use of administrative sources when data is available for all fishers MS should follow Eurostat practice. In case of surveys it is recommended to organise national surveys around the same time of the year to avoid duplication (the same employee working at different boats during the year) and keep stability and comparability of the time series.</p>
4	<p>PGECON recommends to stratify employment data by supra region and major groups of fleets. It is suggested to follow three main AER group definitions as close as possible. However in cases where the link to fishing activity is missing groups based on the size of vessels, e.g. &lt;12m for small scale fleet (SSF), and fishing operation (distant water fleet) might be used.</p>
5	<p>PGECON recommends to follow Eurostat practice and separate social variable "<a href="#">Employment by gender</a>" to the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "M – male";</li> <li>- "F – female";</li> <li>- "Unknown" (only if needed).</li> </ul>
6	<p>Taking into account national needs and EU requirements it is recommended to separate social variable "<a href="#">Employment by nationality</a>" to at least the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "National";</li> <li>- "EU";</li> <li>- "EEA (non EU)";</li> <li>- "Other" (Non-EU/EEA).</li> </ul>
7	<p>Taking into account needs of EMMF for monitoring of employment by age classes and Eurostat practice, PGECON recommends to separate social variable "<a href="#">Employment by age</a>" at least into the following age classes:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- &lt;15;</li> <li>- 15-24;</li> <li>- 25-39;</li> <li>- 40-64;</li> <li>- 65+.</li> </ul>
8	<p>PGECON recommends for data collection of social variable "<a href="#">Employment by employment status</a>" to do separation at least between two categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Owner/employer" (vessel owner involved in vessel activity/operation);</li> <li>- "Employee" (all engaged workers on-board, excluding owners).</li> </ul>
9	<p>PGECON recommends to use the International Standard Classification of Education (<a href="#">ISCED 2011</a>), defining social variable "<a href="#">Employment by education level</a>". Data collected under EUMAP by MS should allow to provide data at least for the following groups at EU level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "Low education" levels 0-2 (ISCED2011 and ISCED1997);</li> <li>- "Medium education: levels 3-4 (ISCED2011 and ISCED1997);</li> <li>- "High education" levels 5-8 (ISCED2011), levels 5-6 (ISCED1997).</li> </ul>
<b><i>ToR 3 Structure, governance and mandate of PGECON</i></b>	
10	<p>It is recommended that defined structure and governance of the PGECON meeting should be kept consistent over time to ensure the steady distribution of responsibilities and share of tasks. PGECON meeting is structured to separate sessions representing particular term of reference and lead by appointed moderators. In case of presentation of outcomes from specialized PGECON Subgroups, the moderator should be the chair of particular specialized PGECON Subgroup. Chairs of PGECON should be appointed for at least two consecutive years.</p>
11	<p>PGECON recommends compiling a list of end-users in order to involve them in the coordination and development of data collection framework and expand data applicability. It would follow the example of the RCGs who invite the main end-users to their meeting so they can inform the group about their data needs.</p>
<b><i>ToR 5 Presentation of results from Subgroup workshop on Statistical Issues and Methodologies</i></b>	
12	<p>PGECON recommends that variables "Engaged crew", "Personnel costs" and "Value of unpaid labour" from Table 5A of EU MAP, in the guidance should be amended with clarification as follows: "People working only onshore and paid from vessels could be included if their activity has a direct link with the fishing operations".</p>

13	PGECON recommends that variable “Long/short” debt from Table 5A of EU MAP should not necessary to specify and should be amended to “Gross debt”.
14	In the guidance of Methodologies for estimation of economic variables for the fleet, concerning the method for estimation “Value of unpaid labour” PGECON recommend to remove the Size Method as it was not appropriate and more specific country orientated.
15	In the guidance of Methodologies for estimation of economic variables for the fleet, concerning value of quota and other fishing rights it was recognized that there were problems raised with the estimation of fishing rights because it is a marginal market price, fishers can buy expensive fishing rights on certain circumstances. Therefore estimation methods are hard to generate. PGECON concluded that additional expertise is needed on calculating value of quota and other fishing rights and suggested that the guidance text should be amended as follows: “tradable intangibles could be valued at current market price (or a multi-year average), independently of the question whether they have or have not been acquired or whether they are or not linked to specific tangible (e.g. vessel)”.
16	SIM considered that the rules for assigning a vessel to a fleet segment applied so far and explained in EU Decision n. 93/2010 should continue to be applied to ensure consistency among MS and continuity in time series.
17	In segments where assumption concerning the annual working hours per crew member exceed the reference level (the FTE equals 1 per crew member) is not valid, an additional adjustment of the calculation may be required, if it can be expected that the result will be significantly affected (Study No FISH/2005/14).
<b><i>ToR 6 Planning and development of ToR's for upcoming Subgroup workshops</i></b>	
18	PGECON do not have the competence at this meeting to establish a specific PGECON Subgroup on aquaculture sustainability data collection, but recognizes the need for a workshop on these issues. PGECON recommends to Commission Expert group to establish a separate subgroup on the same level as PGECON to deal with aquaculture sustainability data collection.

## Annex 2 Intersessional RCG work:

The following subgroups are proposed to initiate/continue work intersessionally and at pan-regional level. Proposed ToRs/workplan are detailed below.

- Pan Regional Subgroup on Implication of the Landing obligation
- Pan Regional subgroup on end user needs
- Pan Regional subgroup on RDB data analysis
- Pan Regional subgroup on Diadromous species (get ToRs from Alan)

- Pan Regional steering group on the development of the Regional Data Base (SCRDB)

**In addition, the following subgroups are proposed to initiate/continue work intersessionally at regional level:**

- Atlantic Regional Subgroup on regional sampling plans
- North Sea Eastern Arctic Regional Subgroup on cost-sharing of research surveys
- Baltic Regional Subgroup on sampling plans of small pelagics in the Baltic
- Baltic Regional Subgroup on cost-sharing of research surveys
- **Baltic** Regional Subgroup on to develop R codes for standard analysis of RDB and DATRAS data

**Proposed ToRs and/or workplans for 2018, for intersessional subgroups based on RCG recommendations. Further details will be developed intersessionally in subgroup work:**

<b>Pan Regional subgroup on end user needs</b>	
<b>Initial ToRs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To work closely and intersessionally with ICES to improve communication; establishing common references for standard processes and information and identifying effective processes for meeting end-user needs.</li> <li>• act as a point of contact for data end users, a framework for feedback and allow the RCG to prioritise its activity relating to future data collection, storage and transmission functions.</li> </ul>
<b>Workplan 2018/next steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RCG chairs to establish end-users subgroup (Initial members RCG chairs).</li> <li>• RCG Chairs in consultation with end-users to draft ToRs and deliverables.</li> <li>• RCG subgroup to report regularly to members.</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Chairs of RCGs, end users (ICES, STECF, other RFMOs)

<b>Pan Regional subgroup on <i>Implication of the Landing obligation</i></b>	
<b>Initial ToRs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate the implication of the landings obligation on national and regional catch sampling programmes</li> <li>• review and analyse 2017 BMS CS and CL data on the RDB and source and review other available metrics (e.g. refusal rates)</li> <li>• contribute to and review ToRs &amp; outcomes of WGCATCH 2017</li> <li>• Explore other data sources to evaluate implication of the landings obligation such as last haul data from control agencies.</li> </ul>
<b>Workplan 2018/next steps</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All MS to complete draft monitoring template Annex x</li> <li>• RCG Chairs to appoint pan regional contributors for intersessional work</li> <li>• RCG Chairs to submit an early data call in 2018 to allow intersessional analysis of RDB data.</li> <li>• Pan regional intersessional group to:</li> </ul>

	review 2017 BMS CS and CL data on the RDB and source and review other available metrics (e.g. refusal rates) contribute to and review ToRs & outcomes of WGCATCH 2017
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCG Chairs, MS, Intersessional Group

<b>Pan Regional subgroup on RDB data analysis</b>	
<b>Initial ToRs</b>	<p>ToR 1: Utilisation of RDB to demonstrate availability and biological information of sampling data for benchmark workshops.</p> <p>ToR 2: Utilisation of RDB for completion and evaluation of MS national plans- Investigate methods for using RDB data and metadata and automated procedures for completing, screening and evaluating MS national work plans.</p> <p>Further ToRs should be guided by the needs of the RCGs and their subgroups on regional sampling plans.</p>
<b>Workplan 2018/next steps</b>	<p>Relating to ToR 1: Agree on data analysis template for demonstrating availability and biological information of sampling data for benchmark workshops/data compilation workshops. Review benchmark workshop schedule and produce data summary outputs from RDB as working documents for workshops.</p> <p>Relating to ToR 2: MS (can chose) to upload their samples labelled with stratum ID code specified in table 4A of national work plans using the project field of the CS data.</p> <p>RCG data subgroup to generate meta data reports that can be used to populate MS annual reports.</p> <p>RCG data subgroup to circulate prototype for the format of a meta data template/report to NC for consideration and agreement at RCGM 2018 needs to be generated and commonly agreed upon. are generated to form part of the MS annual report used by the</p> <p>STECF to use the reports in evaluating the execution and quality of data collected by member states.</p> <p>MS should be able to tag their data in the RDB data call (~July 2018) related to data collected in 2017Meta data reports could form part of the STECF AR evaluation conducted in ~Jun 2019.</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	data subgroup, MS, Chairs of RCGs, STECF, ICES

<b>Pan Regional subgroup on Diadromous species (get ToRs from Alan)</b>
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<b>Initial ToRs</b>	<p>ToR 1: Review aims and objectives of the RCGs to clarify those most relevant to diadromous species, and use these to form a virtual RCG-Diadromous</p> <p>ToR 2: Review progress towards these aims and objectives since the 2016 Regional Coordination Meetings, and list the remaining tasks</p> <p>ToR 3. Ease the reporting of EU MAP National Work Plans and Technical Reports by clarifying what information goes where (i.e. how to report it correctly) and under what circumstances requests are not relevant.</p> <p>ToR 4. Consider the circumstances that make sense for Regionalisation (coordination) of data collection for each species.</p> <p>ToR 5. Following the request from Baltic RCM 2016 and where necessary, agree on designated rivers and management units to be sampled.</p> <p>ToR 6. Consider a Quality assurance framework</p> <p>ToR 7. Advise on the Evaluation of sampling</p>
<b>Workplan 2018/next steps</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCM Chairs, MS, Intersessional Group

<b>Atlantic Regional subgroup on regional sampling plans</b>	
<b>Initial ToRs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To compile a list of the different metrics and criteria that can be used to determine the best sampling scenarios for regional samplings plans. Such a list should detail the metrics and criteria and include the benefits and lost of the different indicators.</li> <li>• To observe/cross reference outcome from FishPi2 compile the list of metrics. In order not to duplicate the work, RCG NA sees that it would be easier for this subgroup to take advantage and support the developments of the FishPi2 project to provide these metrics (it's expected that that project will work on those metrics).</li> <li>• to provide guidance to the SC-RDB on any additional data requirements within the structure of the RDB to to support the further development of regional sampling plans, looking at developing alternative methods and simulations that can help optimise regional sampling but using the information, basic structure and data already supplied to the RDB</li> </ul>
<b>Workplan 2018/next steps</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	RCM Chairs, MS, Intersessional Group

<b>North Sea Eastern Arctic Regional Subgroup on cost-sharing of research surveys</b>	
<b>Initial ToRs</b>	RCG on survey cost sharing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- based on the target species and stocks by survey: define the appropriate TAC shares by MS</li> <li>- Collate current survey effort by MS by survey</li> <li>- cross check shares vs survey effort</li> <li>- propose possibilities for future arrangements on survey by survey basis as well as on the regional basis</li> <li>- communicate findings to the relevant NCs.</li> </ul>
<b>Workplan 2018/next steps</b>	<p>Preparatory work: Jan-Feb 2018</p> <p>Detailed work: April 2018</p> <p>Wrap up meeting: April 25-26</p>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	Participants: Els Torreele (BEL), Jorgen Dalskov (DEN), Sieto Verver (NED), Christoph Stransky (GER), Maria Hansson (SWE), XXX (UK), XXX (FR)

<b>Baltic Regional Subgroup on cost-sharing of research surveys</b>	
<b>Initial ToRs</b>	
<b>Workplan 2018/next steps</b>	<p>The RCG Baltic agreed to continue the Intersessional work on Cost sharing of surveys and agreed on following actions to be taken:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No changes in planning of surveys to be included in WP 2018</li> <li>2. Further exercises for the Baltic region (e.g elaborate on value of species for BIAS, SPRAS ?) to be made and sent to all NCs.</li> <li>3. a) Present, discuss and reflect on a national level upon the suggested share of survey days, presented in this report. b) Initiate collaboration with the relevant MS to find solutions for sharing.</li> <li>c) report on the progress / solutions in the RCG meeting in 2018.</li> <li>d) formalization of possible new arrangement in cost-share of surveys before end of September 2018, to be taken into consideration in the WP 2019,</li> <li>4. Relevant assessment working groups (WGBFAS) and survey planning group (WGBIFS) to be informed about the concept “cost share of surveys” and the outcome from the exercises done for the Baltic region. Feedback from the groups on potential consequences, positive and negative to be sent to the RCG chairs.</li> </ol>
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	<p>Responsible for action 2: Jörgen, Ari, Maria</p> <p>Deadline: December 2017</p> <p>Responsible for actions 3: All National Correspondents in the Baltic region</p> <p>Deadline for update on progress: RCG meeting 2018</p> <p>Responsible for action 4: RCG Baltic chairs</p> <p>Deadline for distribution of the information: February 2018</p>

<b>Baltic Regional Subgroup to promote the regional sampling of small pelagics in the Baltic</b>	
<b>Initial ToRs</b>	<p>Terms of reference for RCG Baltic subgroup “towards regional sampling programmes”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Generate regional and national overviews of fisheries. These should include spatial and temporal distribution of fishing effort and landings of relevant stocks, landing sites, gear types, information on fleets etc.</li> <li>b) Generate description of present national sampling programmes, including overviews of sampling protocol and sampling intensities</li> <li>c) Generate overview of data that is collected on the regional level</li> <li>d) Identify what commercial data ICES AWG need for these stocks. If relevant meet up with relevant stock coordinators and assessors at appropriate meeting.</li> <li>e) Compare data presently collected with data needed by the AWG. Identify gaps and data presently collected but not used</li> <li>f) Propose a regional sampling design. The design shall take end-user needs, statistical principles and logistical constrains into account</li> <li>g) Suggest sampling responsibilities for the different countries participating in the programme</li> <li>h) Suggest common sampling protocol</li> <li>i) Suggest sampling protocol</li> <li>j) Suggest proper sampling sizes for age, weight and length</li> <li>k) Suggest if and when maturity data need to be collected from commercial samples</li> <li>l) Suggest if other types of data (eg scales, genetics, parasites.....) shall be collected</li> <li>m) Suggest how data (samples and transversal data) shall be stored and exchanged</li> <li>n) Identify responsibilities between the countries on the generation of estimates and transmission of data to end-users</li> </ul>
<b>Workplan 2018/next steps</b>	
<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	

<b>Baltic Regional Subgroup on to develop R codes for standard analysis of RDB and DATRAS data</b>	
<b>Initial ToRs</b>	No TOR were set. The group will act as a support group and act upon request before the RCG meeting.
<b>Workplan 2018/next steps</b>	

<b>Responsible persons for follow-up actions</b>	
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### **RCG Data Group Pan regional**

The RCG data group is a loose grouping of individuals with skills in the statistical computing language R (R Core Team, 2015) which was assembled following initiatives in the RCMs in 2016. The aim of this grouping was to facilitating intersessional and pan regional work with regional data in the data formats used by the RDB (CS CL and CE data formats). Members of the group have been involved in RCM data work, the FishPi project and data uploads to the RDB, but not all are regular attendees of the RCM's. Such a group broadens the pool of skilled people able to develop the RDB and the provision key statistical advice.



Annex 3. Baltic Sea surveys. Surveys presently used in the Baltic stock assessment. Information on area used, agegroup included, years used and information on where data is stored.

STOCK	SURVEY	QUARTER	AREA/SD	YEARS	YEARS EXCLUDED	BASIS	Database	Maturity	In table 10	TAC stock
Cod SDs 22–24	BITS	1	22, 23, partly 24	2001-2017	-	Ages 1-4	DATRAS	Annual age 0-7 (age 0-3 from survey)	BITS Q1	cod.27.22-24
		4	22, 23, partly 24	2001-2016	-	Ages 0-4	DATRAS	Not used	BITS Q4	cod.27.22-24
Cod SD 21 (Kattegat)	IBTS	1	21	1997-2017	-	Ages 1-6	DATRAS		IBTS Q1	cod.27.21
		3	21	1997-2016	-	Ages 1-4	DATRAS		IBTS Q3	cod.27.21
	BITS	1	21	1997-2017	-	Ages 1-3	DATRAS		BITS Q1	cod.27.21
		4	21	1997-2016	-	Ages 1-3	DATRAS		BITS Q4	cod.27.21
	CODS	4	21	2008-2016	Not conducted in 2012	Ages 1-6	National database SLU Aqua, DTU Aqua		No	cod.27.21
Cod SDs 25-32	BITS	1	25-28	2001-2017	-	CPUE (kg/h), $\geq 30$ cm	DATRAS	Not used	BITS Q1	cod.27.24-32
		4	25-28	2001-2016	-	CPUE (kg/h), $\geq 30$ cm	DATRAS	Not used	BITS Q4	cod.27.24-32

<b>Sole 3a (SDs 20-21) &amp; SDs 22-24</b>	SOLES	4	20-21	2004-2016	2012-2013	Ages 1-9	National database DTU Aqua		No	sol.27.20-24	
<b>Plaice SDs 21-23</b>	combined	IBTS	1	21-23	1992-2017	-	Ages 1-5	DATRAS		IBTS Q1	ple.27.21-23
		BITS	1	21-23	1992-2017	-	Ages 1-5	DATRAS		BITS Q1	ple.27.21-23
	combined	IBTS	3	21-23	1998-2016	-	Ages 1-5	DATRAS		IBTS Q3	ple.27.21-23
		BITS	4	21-23	1998-2016	-	Ages 1-5	DATRAS		BITS Q4	ple.27.21-23
<b>Plaice SDs 24-32</b>	BITS	1	24-26	2002-2017	-	CPUE (N/h), $\geq$ 20 cm	DATRAS	Not used	BITS Q1	No	
		4	24-26	2002-2016	-	CPUE (N/h), $\geq$ 20 cm	DATRAS	Not used	BITS Q4	No	
<b>Herring SDs 25-27, 28.2, 29+32</b>	BIAS	4	25–27, 28.2, 29	1991-2016	1993, 1995, 1997	Age 0	Acoustic database		BIAS	her.27.25-2932	
		4	25–27, 28.2, 29	1991-2016	1993, 1995, 1997	Ages 1-8+	Acoustic database		BIAS	her.27.25-2932	
<b>Herring SD 28.1</b>	AS	3	28.1	1999-2016	-	Ages 1-8+			GRAHS	her.27.28	
<b>Herring SD 30</b>	BIAS	4	30	2007-2016	-	Ages 2-8			BIAS	her.27.3031	
<b>Herring SD 31</b>	TRAPNET	1-4?	31	1994-2016	-	Ages 3-8+ (incl. effort)			No	her.27.3031	

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	TRAWL	1-4?	31	200-2016	-	Ages 2-8+ (incl. effort)			No	her.27.3031	
Sprat SDs 22-32	BIAS	4 (3)	22-29	1991-2016	1993, 1995, 1997	Age 0			BIAS	spr.27.22-32	
		4 (3)	22-29	1991-2016	1993, 1995, 1997	Ages 1-8+			BIAS	spr.27.22-32	
	BASS	2	24-26, 28	2001-2016	-	Ages 1-8+			SPRAS	No	
Flounder SDs 22-23	combined	BITS	1	22-23	2001-2016	-	CPUE (kg/h), $\geq 20$ cm	DATRAS		BITS Q1	No
			4	22-23	2001-2016	-	CPUE (kg/h), $\geq 20$ cm	DATRAS		BITS Q4	No
Flounder SDs 24-25	combined	BITS	1	24-25	2001-2016	-	CPUE (kg/h), $\geq 20$ cm	DATRAS		BITS Q1	No
			4	24-25	2001-2016	-	CPUE (kg/h), $\geq 20$ cm	DATRAS		BITS Q4	No
Flounder SDs 26-28	combined	BITS	1	26, 28	2001-2016	-	CPUE (kg/h), $\geq 20$ cm	DATRAS		BITS Q1	No
			4	26, 28	2001-2016	-	CPUE (kg/h), $\geq 20$ cm	DATRAS		BITS Q4	No
Flounder SDs 27, 29-32	combined	Muuga	4	32	1993-2016		CPUE (kg/day)	National database SLU Aqua		No	No
		Küdem a	4	29	2000-2016		CPUE (kg/day)	National database SLU Aqua		No	No

		Muskö	4	27	1992-2016		CPUE (kg/day)	National database SLU Aqua		No	No
		Kvädö- fjärden	4	27	1989-2016		CPUE (kg/day)	National database SLU Aqua		No	No
<b>Turbot SDs 22-32</b>	combined	BITS	1	22-28	2001-2016	-	CPUE (N/h), $\geq$ 20 cm	DATRAS		BITS Q1	No
			4	22-28	2001-2016	-	CPUE (N/h), $\geq$ 20 cm	DATRAS		BITS Q4	No
<b>Dab SDs 22-32</b>	combined	BITS	1	22-28	2001-2016	-	CPUE (kg/h), $\geq$ 15 cm	DATRAS		BITS Q1	No
			4	22-28	2001-2016	-	CPUE (kg/h), $\geq$ 15 cm	DATRAS		BITS Q4	No
<b>Brill SDs 22-32</b>	combined	BITS	1	22-24	2001-2016	-	CPUE (N/h), $\geq$ 20 cm	DATRAS		BITS Q1	No
			4	22-24	2001-2016	-	CPUE (N/h), $\geq$ 20 cm	DATRAS		BITS Q4	No

Annex 4. NS&EA surveys. Surveys presently used in the ICES stock assessment. Information on area used, agegroup included, years used.

(EU) 2016/1251 Table 10 survey	Surveys used by WGNSSK (plus stocks covered by HAWG, WGDEEP, WGWIDE, WGCSE, WGBIE, WGNPEP)	Member state(s) responsible for survey(s)	International coordination group	Stocks where survey is used in assessment	Type of information used	TAC stock	Comments
IBTS Q1	IBTS-Q1	Denmark, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, UK (Scotland) and Norway	IBTSWG	Herring SD2024 (spring spawners)	ages 1-4	Y	Exc RFA 1 & 2 TAC comb with witch
				Herring 4 Div 3A and 7d	1-wr	Y	
				sprat 4	age 1-4+	Y	
				Cod 4 and 7d and SD20	ages 1-5+	Y	
				Cod SD 21	ages 1-6+	Y	
				Flounder 4 Div 3A	Biomass index	N	
				Haddock 4 Div 6a, SD 20	ages 1-5+	Y	
				Lemon sole 4 Div 3A and 7d	Biomass index	Y	
				Plaice 4 SD20	ages 1-7	Y	
				Turbot 3a	kg/hour	N	
				Whiting 4, 7d	ages 1-5	Y	
				Witch 4, 3a and 7d	No/hr	Y	
				Plaice SD21-23	ages 1-5	Y	
				sprat Div3a	ages 1-5+	Y	
IBTS Q3	EngGFS-IBTS-Q3, IBTS-Q3, Sco-IBTS-Q3trawl survey )	UK (England), Denmark, Sweden, Germany, UK (Scotland) and Norway	IBTSWG	Herring SD2024 (spring spawners)	ages 1-4	Y	
				Herring 4 Div 3A and 7d	0-wr	Y	
				sprat 4	ages 0-4+	Y	
				Cod 4 and 7d and SD20	ages 1-4+	Y	
				Cod SD 21	ages 1-4+	Y	
				Haddock 4 Div 6a, SD 20	age 0-5+	Y	
				Megrim (spp.) 4a and 6a	Biomass index	Y	
				Saithe 4,6 and Div 3A	ages 3-8	Y	
				sprat Div3a	ages 0-5+	Y	
				Turbot 3a	kg/hour	N	
				Whiting 4, 7d	ages 1-5	Y	
				Witch 4, 3a and 7d	No/hr	Y	
				Plaice 4 SD20	ages 1-9	Y	
				Plaice SD21-23	ages 1-5	Y	
BTS	BTS_ISI_Q3, BTS-Tridens, German BTS (Solea), UK-BTS [UK(E&W)-BTS	Netherlands, Germany, UK (England)	WGBEAM	Brill 4, Div 3a, 7d-e	No/hr	Y	Combined TAC with turbot
				Plaice 4 SD20	ages 1-9+	Y	
				Dab 4 and Div 3A	ages 1-6+	N	
				Sole 4	ages 1-9	Y	
				Sole Div7d	ages 1-6	Y	
				Plaice Div 7d	ages 1-6+	Y	
				DYFS	DFS0 - DFS-Q3 (DYFS-ISIS, DYFS-SCV, DYFS-STE, UK(E&W)-YFS) / YFS-FR [FR-YFS]	UK (England), France, Netherlands, Belgium, Germany	
Sole Div7d	age 1 (only)	Y					
SNS	SNS / SNS Q3, SNS2	Netherlands	?	Sole 4	ages 1-6	Y	
NSSS	Dredge survey	Denmark, UK (Scotland), (Norway)	?	Plaice 4 SD20	ages 1-6	Y	Sandeel area 1 Sandeel area 2 Sandeel area 3 Sandeel area 4
				Sandeel Div4bc, 1r	0-1 grp	Y	
				Sandeel Div4bc, SD20, 2r	0-1 grp	Y	
				Sandeel Div 4ab, SD20, 3r	0-1 grp	Y	
ASH	IESNS	Denmark, UK (England), Netherlands, Germany, Ireland, Sweden	?	Sandeel Div4ab, 4	0-1 grp	Y	Not used in the assessment
				Herring 1-2, 4a, 5, 14a	ages 1-5	Y	
REDNOR	REDNOR-Q3 (non-Annual survey)	(Norway)	?	Blue Whiting 1-9, 12 & 14	ages 1-2	Y	No EU country participation currently
NSMEGS	NSMEGS / MEGS (western-southern spawning grounds)	No member states conducting survey	?	Beaked redfish 1,2	biomass index - ages 12-19+	Y	
IHLS	IHLS-SCAI	German	WGEGBS	-	N/A	N/A	
NHAS	HERAS /Acoustic (+trawl)/North Sea acoustic survey	Denmark, UK (Scotland), Germany	WGIPS	Herring 4 Div 3A and 7d	Larvae survey (SSB)	Y	ICES has 2 entries (IHLS & HERAS) only IHLS appears in table 10
				Herring SD2024 (spring spawners)	ages 1-8+	Y	
				sprat Div3a	ages 0-3+	Y	
				Herring 4 Div 3A and 7d	ages 1-8+	Y	
NTV3&4	UWTV-FU3-4	Denmark, Sweden	WGNEPS	sprat 4	ages 0-3+	Y	
NTV6	UWTV-FU6	UK (England)	WGNEPS	Norway lobsters Div 3a FU3-4	Length based	Y	
NTV7	UWTV-FU7	UK (Scotland)	WGNEPS	Norway lobsters Div4b FU6	Length based	N	
NTV8	UWTV-FU8	UK (Scotland)	WGNEPS	Norway lobsters Div4a FU7	Length based	N	
NTV9	UWTV-FU9	UK (Scotland)	WGNEPS	Norway lobsters Div 4b FU8	Length based	N	
				Norway lobsters Div4b FU9	Length based	N	

Table 10 in region outside the North Sea & East Arctic							
(EU) 2016/1251 Table 10 survey	Surveys used by WGNSSK (plus stocks covered by HAWG, WGDEEP, WGWIDE, WGCSE, WGBIE, WGNPEP)	Member state(s) responsible for survey(s)	International coordination group	Stocks where survey is used in assessment	Type of information used	TAC stock	Comments
IBTS Q4 (North Atlantic)	WIBTS-Q4 (FR-EVHOE [EVHOE-WIBTS-Q4 & FR GFS, FGFS, CGFS] & IR-GFS7gj [IGFS-WIBTS-Q4], NIGFS-WIBTS-Q4, SpPGFS-WIBTS-Q4) -Spanish Porcupine Bank bottom trawl survey )	France, Ireland, N. Ireland, Spain	IBTSWG	Haddock Div 7b-k	ages 0-4+	Y	
				Hake 4,6, and 7, Div 3a, 8abd	Length based	Y	
				Megrim 7b-k, 8 abd	?	Y	
				Greater silver smelt 7-10, 12 and Div 6B	Biomass index	Y	
				Cod 7.e-k	ages 0-6+	Y	
				striped red mullet 4, 7d and 3A	ages 0-4	N	
				Whiting 7bc and ek	ages 0-5	Y	
				Four-spot megrim 7b-k, 8 abd	kg/hour	N	
				Plaice Div 7d	ages 1-6+	Y	
IBTS Q1 (North Atlantic)	NIGFS-WIBTS-Q1, Sco-IBTS-Q1	UK (Scotland), UK (N. Ireland)	IBTSWG	Haddock Div 7b-k	ages 0-5+	Y	
				Megrim ( spp.) 4a and 6a	Biomass index	Y	
BITS Q4 (Baltic)	BITS_HAF_Q1&4	Denmark	WEBIFS	Brill 4, Div 3a, 7d-e	No/hr	Y (comb with Turbot)	Non-NS & EA RCM
				Turbot 3a	kg/hour	N	
				Plaice SD21-23	ages 1-5	Y	
BITS Q1 (Baltic)	Havfisken-Q1	Denmark	WEBIFS	Brill 4, Div 3a, 7d-e	No/hr	Y (comb with Turbot)	Non-NS & EA RCM
				Turbot 3a	kg/hour	N	
				Plaice SD21-23	ages 1-5	Y	
				Cod SD 21	age 1-3+	Y	
BIAS (Baltic)	GERAS	German	?	Herring SD2024 (spring spawners)	ages 0-8+	Y	

Surveys used but not listed in table 10							
(EU) 2016/1251 Table 10 survey	Surveys used by WGNSSK (plus stocks covered by HAWG, WGDEEP, WGWIDE, WGCSE, WGBIE, WGNPEP)	Member state(s) responsible for survey(s)	International coordination group	Stocks where survey is used in assessment	Type of information used	TAC stock	Comments
N/A	CODS_Q4	Denmark, Sweden	N/A	Cod SD 21	ages 1-6+	Y	
N/A	Norwegian Acoustic survey	Norway	?	Greater silver smelt 1,2,4, and Div 3A	Acoustic survey	Y	Not annual survey
N/A	SAMISS-Q2	UK (Scotland)	?	Megrim ( spp.) 4a and 6a	Biomass index	Y	Fisheries Science Partnership survey
N/A	IAMISS-Q2	UK (Scotland)	?	Megrim ( spp.) 4a and 6a	Biomass index	Y	Fisheries Science Partnership survey
N/A	Norwegian shrimp survey	Norway	?	Northern Shrimp 4a east SD 20	Length based	Y	
N/A	UK-FSP (FSP 7e - survey)	UK (England)	N/A	Plaice Div 7e	ages 2-8	Y	
N/A	Q1SWECOS (Q1SWBEAM - survey)	UK (England)	WGBEAM	Plaice Div 7e	ages 2-9	Y	In UK national programme
N/A	Fishermen-DTU Aqua (soleS)	Denmark	N/A	Sole SD 2024	ages 1-9	Y	
N/A	UWTV-FU10	UK (Scotland)	WGNEPS	Norway lobsters Div 4a FU10	Length based	N	
N/A	UWTV-FU34	UK (Scotland)	WGNEPS	Norway lobsters Div4b FU34	Length based	N	Few years of survey
N/A	N20	German	N/A	Herring SD2024 (spring spawners)	age 0 (only)	Y	
N/A	PELTIC	UK (England)	?	sprat Div7de	Acoustic survey (SSB)	Y	In UK work programme (2017)
N/A	FSP	UK (England)	?	sprat Div7de	Acoustic survey (SSB)	Y	UK Fishery science partnership (acoustic survey)