

Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic,  
North Sea & Eastern Arctic

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Ghent, Belgium



**Regional Coordination Group**  
North Atlantic  
North Sea & Eastern Arctic



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## Executive summary

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This was the first interim year for the multi-annual Terms of References (ToRs) for the Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic and North Sea & Eastern Arctic. The group met 3-6 June in Ghent, Belgium. The overall aim for RCGNA NS&EA is to review the status of current issues, achievements and developments of regional coordination and identify future needs in line with DCF requirements and the wider European environmental monitoring and management.

Six ToRs were handled during the RCG NA NS&EA 2019, all of which were intersessional carried out by designated ISSG, starting December 2018. 14 ISSGs were suggested for 2018-2019, all active during this period and all delivering results before the RCG NA NS&EA 2019 technical meeting. The output of the ISSGs were extremely valuable for the work of the Technical meeting, and were the basis of the discussions at the meeting.

ToR 1 relating to the improvement of the alignment between data collection and end-user needs (by region) was progressed this year through the work of two sub-groups on feedback and interaction with the end user and the revision of the EUMAP 2020& beyond. The sub group on feedback with the end user had several skype meetings with selected members of the end-user group and one physical meeting hosted by ICES. Topics discussed were the ICES data calls, the upload logs, the surveys. For the future a further streamlining of the dialogue between end-users and data providers is scheduled in order to identify effective processes to meet end-user needs and allow the RCG to prioritise its activity relating to future data collection, storage and transmission functions.

The Intersessional Group for the Revision of the EU-MAP met 6 – 8 May, 2019 and was attended by 19 participants from 14 Member States and one participants from the DG MARE. The modification to the current EU-MAP should be minimal, aimed at simplifying the requirements and the reference tables. The intersessional group proposed modification in the regulation to affirm that EU-MAP was not aimed at compensating the gaps and weaknesses of the control regulation provisions, especially regarding small vessels. It was proposed that an evaluation of recreational fisheries pilot studies should be done by STECF to support the need for further inclusion of recreational caught fish in stock assessments. Further, that multispecies surveys on recreational fishery catches should only include volume in weight by species. RCG NA NS&EA suggests STECF to consider a workshop in September 2020 to review the impact of recreational fisheries based on the

ToR 2 relating to data quality in data quality collection, was progressed this year through the 3 intersessional subgroups working on fisheries overview, metier issues and data quality respectively, as well as through the steering group and core group activities of the RDB(ES), output from fishPi2 work package 6 and the ICES data quality related expert groups PGDATA and WGBIOP. RDB data was used to produce regional fisheries and sampling overviews and the output was reviewed by the RCG to prepare for final approval and publication. The regional coordination of metier quality issues was progressed by setting up a common repository for all metier related documentation; agreeing reference lists and templates for methodologies and metier descriptions; scripting standard procedures and testing the effects of different approaches. The ISSG on data quality proposed data quality indicators based on Table 5a from the DCF annual reports and demonstrated how these can be applied to track MS improvement on data quality procedures and to highlight common shortcomings on a regional scale or by data type. The time plan for the development of the

RDB ES, its priorities and resourcing issues were presented and decisions proposed on how to progress this critical work.

ToR 3 relating to impact on management measures on data collection, was progressed during this year through one intersessional sub-group on the implication on the landing obligation. The questionnaire *Monitoring the impact of the landing obligation on data collection* was amended and circulated in order to capture the practical issues and perceived concerns relating to the landing obligation in the North Atlantic, Baltic and North Sea. Overall, the findings were quite consistent across the three regions and relatively little change in comparison with 2017 was observed. RCG NANS & EA 2019 suggests the Pan-Regional Subgroup on the Landing obligation is suspended and will convene in a few years time to evaluate the implication of the landing obligation on national and regional catch sampling programmes and to make a full overview of methodologies in the estimation of refusal rates.

ToR 4 relating to the development and implementation of regional work plans was progressed this year through the work of three intersessional subgroups on the development of a draft regional work plan; a risk assessment for bycatch in the North Atlantic and working towards a regional sampling plan for the freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic. It was agreed to select a number of basic building blocks for a regional work plan and conduct a test run to validate the process before October 2020. A risk assessment of bycatch was conducted for the North Atlantic based on methodologies developed in FishPi using risk scores updated in collaboration with WGBYC and sampling data from the most recent RDB data call. Next steps are to finetune the assessment and develop several regional pilot studies based on the highest risk. The north atlantic freezer trawler fleet was profiled and a data call issued to develop a statistically robust sampling scheme for pelagics caught by this fleet. Several workpackages under FishPi2 relate to regional sampling plans (2,3,4 and 5). The workpackage outputs were presented and the RCG agreed on how to incorporate the results and recommendations into the RCG work and progress them intersessionally.

ToR 5 relating to ways to improve the regional coordination and feedback on regional issues was progressed this year through the work of five intersessional subgroups on FishPi2 project WP1 output; on the recreational fisheries; on diadromous fish; on survey task sharing and on Rules of procedures. The recent fishPi2 project (MARE/2016/22) identified the need for robust funding of central resources for RCG work to be effective and consistent. The project elaborated suggestions for a secretariat (to assure consistency and to reduce the burden on the chairs) and a webpage (to increase outreach) and suggested that the costs for such resources, as well as costs for development of the RDBES (regional database and estimation system) to meet future RCG needs, are something that need to be discussed between the NCs and the Commission. Depending on the decisions taken by NC in September 2020, it's the responsibility of the RCG chairs to set up a plan for how to make progress in the direction and ambition of the decision within the suggested ISSG 'Implementation of secretariat and webpage'.

The 2019 WGRFS meeting was held from the 10 – 14 June 2019, so was after the RCG NA NS&EA meeting. As a result, it was not possible to provide a summary or feedback from the WGRFS. Instead, the activities and progress with marine recreational fisheries (MRF) since the previous RCG meeting was summarised. In addition, an update on the outcomes from the 2019 WGRFS will be provided in advance of the National Correspondents meeting in September 2019. For the Diadromous ISSG there was looked at how to develop and improve the development of regional sampling/work plans for diadromous fish and quality assurance of data. There were no proposals for recommendations and decisions available yet, this because of the non-availability of the chair of the ISSG Diadromous Fish (clash of two meetings

during the same week) to present them. The ISSG on surveys is suspended until the publication of the revision of table 10. For the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic and the International Blue Whiting Survey, agreement were proposed.

Since 2017, both RCGs operated under their respective Rules of Procedures (ref both reports). The RoPs stem from a draft, pan-regional and uniform RoP, modified to the needs of each RCG. In case the merge of both RCGs is considered successful and to be continued, the RoPs of the merged group need to be (re-)established. The agreed RoP will be reviewed in 2020.

ToR 6 was to support the ToRs through the establishment and continuation of agreed intersessional subgroups with clear tasks mapped out for 2019 to 2021. The project FishPi<sup>2</sup> supported the ToRs through their outputs in 6 workpackages covering governance, regional sampling plans, ecosystem considerations, small scale and recreational fisheries and data quality. In order to ensure that the project outputs are incorporated into the RCG work, tasks relating to fishPi<sup>2</sup> are set for the RCG intersessional subgroups in their work programme.

## 1 Administrative details

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**Regional Coordination Group name**

Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic and North Sea & Eastern Arctic

**Year of Appointment within the current cycle**

1

**Reporting year within the current cycle (1, 2 or 3)**

1

**Chair(s)**

Leonie O Dowd, Ireland

Els Torrelee, Belgium

**Meeting venue**

Ghent, Belgium

**Meeting dates**

3-6 June 2019

## 2 Terms of Reference

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1. **Propose ways to improve the alignment between data collection and end-user needs (by region)**
  - Define end user needs and assess how they are met by current and future data collection.
  - Define and suggest mechanisms for communication and implementation of end user needs
  - Feedback from ICES end user groups and RCG feedback on their recommendation
  - Improve regional cooperation for small scale fisheries and assessing effects on the ecosystem
  - Formulate recommendation(s) for revision of EU-MAP to ensure that it is in line with end user needs
  
2. **Implement and maintain data quality in data collection**
  - Assess the documentation of data quality procedures
  - Update on fisheries overview and sampling overview
  - Update on development of RDB and RDBES
  - Review the outcome of regional orientated projects and other groups
  - Develop strategy for implementation of electronic data capture (REM).
  
3. **Review impact on management measures on data collection**
  - Assess Implication on the landing obligation.
  
4. **Development and implementation of Regional Workplans**
  - Identify and propose the building blocks of regional workplan
  - Review and evaluate the outcome of regional orientated projects to identify template, content, actions to be incorporated in regional workplan.
  - Optimizing the use of surveys: efficiency, multi-purpose & task sharing Decisions and actions to be taken.
  
5. **Propose ways to improve the regional coordination and feedback on regional issues**
  - Review and evaluate the outcome of regional orientated projects
  - Develop & adopt tools and working procedures for more effective regional cooperation and coordination.
  
6. **Support of ToRs**
  - Promote publication on findings, likely in the form of peer-reviewed publication (e.g. CRR) that documents the development of methodologies in the field of regional coordination & data collection

and the state of scientific knowledge on the topic at the end of the 3-year TOR period

- Identify pilot studies. Decisions and actions to be taken.

### 3 Summary of Work plan RCGs 2019-2021

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#### Year 1

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*End-user Needs: fine tune dialogue & assess additional needs*

Review & improve feedback mechanism (benchmark, data call, SID)

Cont. review end user needs

Propose recommendations for EUMAP revision to address end user needs

*Data Quality: procedures and documentation*

Review/Develop documentation on inventory and quality of DCF data

Coordinate automation of data flows

*Regional Sampling plans: review & progress*

Review outcome of regional oriented projects (Demersal, Pelagic, bycatch), agree on next steps to develop operational proposals for regional sampling plans

*Regional Work Plan: set up basic structure, test procedure*

Agree on basic building blocks, develop structure and content, agree on 1<sup>st</sup> proposal for testing

#### Year 2

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*End-user Needs: fine tune dialogue & assess additional needs (cont.)*

Cont. review end user feedback (Benchmark, SID, Data calls, Surveys)

Identify new and obsolete data parameters under new EUMAP

*Data Quality: Transition to RDBES, electronic data capture*

Finalise documentation on inventory and quality of DCF data and elements to be forwarded to regional work plan)

Agree on adoption of automated processes

First draft strategy on coordinated electronic data capture

*Regional Sampling plans: review & progress*

Finalise and agree on operational proposals for regional sampling plans to be forwarded to regional work plan

*Regional Work Plan: enhance structure, review procedure*

Add further content and documentation, review and refine process

#### Year 3

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*End-user Needs: fine tune dialogue (cont) & assess additional needs*

Cont. review end user feedback (Benchmark, SID, Data calls, Surveys)

Agree on additional/obsolete parameters

*Data Quality: Transition to RDBES, electronic data capture*

Complete transition to RDBES

Complete strategy for implementation of electronic data capture

*Regional Sampling plans: finalise*

Refine text and content for adoption

*Regional Work Plan: finalise*

Incorporate agreed sampling regional plans and data quality documentations, finalise STECF proposal

#### **4 List of Outcomes and Achievements of RCG NA NS&EA in this delivery period**

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During the first year of the new 3-year term of RCG NA NS&EA the work under each ToR has been carried out by designated subgroups. The deliverables of the RCG for this period were more clearly defined on the first day of the RCG meeting. Below is an overview of the work done by ToR at the 2019 meeting. Further progress, outcomes and deliverables achieved in all intersessional subgroups are described in Part II of this report “Reports on Intersessional SubGroup (ISSG) work 2018-2019”.

Further progress, outcomes and deliverables achieved in all intersessional subgroups are described in Part II of the RCG NA NS&EA 2019 report “Reports on Intersessional SubGroup (ISSG) work 2018-2019”( [RCG ISSG reports 2019](#))

## 5 Progress report on ToRs and workplan

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### 5.1 ToR 1 Propose ways to improve the alignment between data collection and end-user needs (by region)

During this year's meeting, progress was been made under ToR 1 as follows:

- Feedback from the Intersessional Sub-Group End user (ISSG End-User).
- Feedback from the Intersessional Sub-Group Revision EU-MAP 2020 & beyond (ISSG Revision EU-MAP)

#### 5.1.1 Feedback from ISSG End user

##### 5.1.1.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA2019

The sub group has had several skype meetings with selected members of the end-user group and one physical meeting hosted by ICES. The minutes from the meeting with ICES and a full report on the ISSG End-user is attached in Annex 1 of "given Part II: of the RCG NA NS&EA2019 report "Reports on Intersessional SubGroup (ISSG) work 2018-2019"."( [RCG ISSG reports 2019](#))

#### **Data call**

The RCG welcomes the improvements made to the general ICES data call in recent years, which at the moment covers most of the stocks where ICES provides advice for stock assessment. However, there are still some issues and potential improvements that data providers fed-back to the RCGs on. To improve this communication the RCG suggests that the updated ICES stock data base (SID) should be used as part of a feedback loop, as it now allows comments from data providers to be sent directly to stock coordinators. In addition, the SID could be developed to capture, in more detail, what data is used and therefore needed for stock assessment. Presently the RCGs has to assume that the data call is an overview of data needs. The main reason is that the data call has mainly focused in the commercial data and more detailed data provided by surveys is not explicit asked for. In the present data call there is a column where it is possible for stock coordinator/ assessor to ask for survey data, sexual maturity data or sex ration data, however as there is no further details in the data call it is for data providers not possible to see if the maturity data provided was used in an annual update, from survey or commercial samples or not used at all. It can therefore be difficult for the RCG to judge how relevant data is for the stock assessment and also difficult to judge on the quality of the provided data. The RCG encourages the stock coordinators in cooperation with the ICES secretary only to ask for data needed in the stock assessment, and ensure that if the data is not required, then the data call should not ask for the data, this could probably be improved if the data call gets more specified.

The provision of data takes time and the more data calls and greater diversity in those calls and tight deadlines puts pressure on a limited resource and leaves less time to quality assure the data that is going to be used. This should be a consideration when the calls are drafted - asking for data that is not needed and/ or data that has already been provided and not changed since the last submission is inefficient. The RCG suggests that the data call should only ask for updates if the historical data has changed.

A suggestion was made that ICES secretariat could provide support to WG in drafting more consistent and clearer data calls. The experience of the Baltic assessment working group (WGBFAS) in 2019 is an example of good practice. Here the ICES professional secretary, in cooperation with the stock coordinator/ assessor, went through all stocks and data needed

for the different assessments in plenary. For DLS stocks, if ages were only needed from surveys it was made clear that age data was not required for the commercial data.

Further, the RCG supports ICES data center's aim to launch the ICES assessment data call in December as the deadline dates have significant impact on work processes and resource planning in the national laboratories.

A word of caution – an earlier data call should not mean that data can be provided any earlier. Many institutes receive data from other agencies (e.g., sales data) that are pre-processed and QCA before carrying out the estimates delivered to end-users. The earlier in the year the deadline is set the less time institutes have to collate, process and QA the catch, effort, age and sample data, in particular from the tail end of the preceding year.

### *Upload logs*

Up until this meeting the Upload logs had not been considered in the drafting of the code and report templates for the regional, fishery and stock overviews. When the data is used the upload logs should be an important reference to the limitations of the data. It would be wrong to assume that all the data collected is available in the RDB. The RCG suggests that the upload reports should be considered by the SC for the RDBES and the ISSG Data quality:

- a) They should decide whether they are necessary and effective in capturing how complete and useable the Sample, Catch and Effort data might be.
- b) They should decide whether the upload procedure for the RDBES should provide the same facility to qualify each MSs uploads.

#### **5.1.1.2 Workplan 2020-2021**

Review and streamline dialogue between data providers (RCGs) and End-users (ICES) in order to identify effective processes to meet end-user needs and allow the RCG to prioritise its activity relating to future **data collection, storage and transmission functions**.

### *ToRs*

1 ) Review progress since last year

2) To see how best to improve on current interactions and communications with RCGs and ICES including using established mechanisms particularly in reference to:

- a) Surveys
  - Stations & otoliths. Can we use the outcome from the Workshops on Optimization of Biological Sampling (WKBIOPTIM) to optimize the age/length sampling. Have WGSDAA worked on optimization of station allocation.
  - SID. To work together with ICES in improving the variables used in SID and try to link the information to other databases.
  - Review of outcome of STECF 04 on mandatory surveys.

- Participation in WKREO - Workshop on the Realigning of the Ecosystem Observation Steering Group
- 

b) Data for the Benchmark process

- DATRAS. Inventory list. Cooperation with DIG on providing similar inventory list from survey data bases.
- RDB. Inventory list. It should be possible by species and area to get an overview of available data within the RDB. We need a list on landings by stock and MS to improve the regional coordination of DLS stocks.
- Stock overviews from RCG on all stocks on the benchmark list.
- Data collection. Issue list to comments and feed back on the issuelist provided by the EG on stocks to be benchmarked
- Documentation. Improve / create templates on how to document data collection. Presently MS have most national sampling procedures documented however this could be coordinated between MS.
- Best practice. Produce or referee to developed guidelines
- Quality framework
- Data calls – Timing of EGs limits data quality checks. Still need to improve on streamlining the calls to what is actually wanted and what is needed. Still need to capture what is used

### *Workplan*

Workplan until RCG meeting in 2020.

Date	Task	Responsible	Other Participants
September 2019	Skype meeting with Rui, Jon and Marie on the SID and to conduct a workplan	Jon and Marie	Rui, Lucia
NC meeting (September)	Finalice the ToRs for the subgroup on End-user needs	Jon and Marie	RCG chairs and whole sub group
Liason meeting	Other end-users than ICES ??	Jon and Marie	
October 2019	Skype meeting with sub group on fisheries and stock overviews (DLS stocks)	Jon and Marie	Nuno, Lucia, Sven
October 2019	Participating in WKRE (enhance communication within the steering group and create a more integrated information flow between data collection and advisory processes)	Marie ?	?
March 2020	Skype meeting to plan end-user meeting with ICES	Jon and Marie	Whole sub group
March 2020	End-user meeting with ICES	Jon and Marie	Whole sub group and participants from ICES
April 2020	Writing report to RCG	Jon and Marie	Whole sub group
June 2020	Presenting to RCG	Jon and Marie	

#### **5.1.1.3 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions**

In relation to the Survey Evaluation for the new drafting of EUMAP the RCGs have been working on mapping the use of surveys in the stock assessment. During this process it has become clear that, although many surveys are partly financed under the DCF and are used in stock assessments, not all surveys have their data uploaded and available on an international database, limiting access for the public and also other institutes and scientists. It also complicates the use of the data in any assessment. This is not necessarily a reluctance by MS to share the data, upload issues and data compatibility are often the main reasons. For example the data and survey indices from all the Nephrops Underwater TV surveys do not have a common international database available to upload them. To ensure transparent, well-doc-

umented, standardised, discoverable, and easily accessible data it should be the aim of Member States and ICES that all data presently used for stock assessment are stored in an international database and publicly available.

The RCG therefore recommends that it is the MS responsibility with ICES, to ensure that all the mandatory survey data is uploaded to existing international databases, or the correct storage is made available and the data then uploaded - especially if the surveys are coordinated by an Expert Group. Ultimately all survey data, if used for stock assessments whether mandatory or not need be made publically available.

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 and RCG Baltic 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA BAL R1 Data from mandatory surveys to be publicly available</b>	
Recommendation	All data from mandatory research vessel surveys (Table 10 EU 2016/1251) should be made publicly available through an international database
Justification	Mandatory surveys funded under EUMAP and used for stock assessment, should be made publicly available.
Follow-up actions needed	MS to start the process of making all surveys in table 10 public available through an ICES data base.
Responsible persons for follow up actions	RCGs and ICES to identify missing data and the appropriate international database. MS to start the process on providing survey data
Time frame (deadline)	Proces to start in 2020.

### Recommendations

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 R1 - Inventory list from the survey databases</b>	
Recommendation	Develop an inventory list from the survey databases
Justification	Presently, many assessment working groups do not have the overview of the sampling level and variables sampled from surveys As many biological variables such as maturity are derived from surveys it would be beneficial if ICES as a standard could provide the EG with an inventory list to be used for preparation of the ISSUE list and benchmarks
Follow-up actions needed	ICES data center to develop an inventory list (Datras) by species and area.

Responsible persons for follow up actions	RCG NA NS&EA and ICES data center, DIG
Time frame (deadline)	Before 2021.

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 R2 - Stock column in the RDB is completely filled according to a reference list based on area</b>	
Recommendation	ICES to ensure that the stock column in the RDB is completely filled according to a reference list based on area. Where there is spatial or temporal overlap between stocks of the same species ICES should contact the assessment group (by month / area ).
Justification	During this year's RCG it was not possible to use the stock variable in the RDB to investigate the importance of the threshold values and thereby improve the regional coordination of the stocks with a lower amount of landings as too many data mistakes were discovered in the stock variable.
Follow-up actions needed	ICES data center
Responsible persons for follow up actions	RCG NA NS&EA and ICES data center
Time frame (deadline)	Before Q1 2020.

### 5.1.2 Feedback from ISSG Revision EU-MAP

#### 5.1.2.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA 2019

The EU multiannual Union programme for data collection – EU-MAP (Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1251) expires at the end of 2019. The new Data Collection Framework Regulation 2017/1004 has been adopted after the entry into force of the 2017-2019 EU-MAP Decision and a new EU-MAP needs to take into account the new legal framework for data collection. In order to allow for proper consultations of all relevant parties, the current EU-MAP provisions has been prolonged unchanged for a period of one-two years.

Revision of the EU-MAP has been started and the aims are to integrate the results from consultations with Member States through RCGs, STECF, other relevant end users and stakeholders. The first step has been for the Regional Coordinating Groups (RCG's) to establish an intersessional RCG group to review any misunderstandings, errors or inappropriateness's of the present EU-MAP as well as suggestions for changes of the EU-MAP.

The RCG Intersessional Group for the Revision of the EU-MAP meet 6 – 8 May, 2019 in the VAC Virginie Lovelinggebouw, Gent, Belgium and the meeting was hosted by ILVO, Belgium. The meeting was attended by 19 participants from 14 Member States and one participants from the DG MARE. Unfortunately, the PGECON meeting 2019 has been scheduled to be held in the same week as the RCG Intersessional Group for the Revision of the EU-MAP. Therefore, no input on the part of the legislation the social and economic issues have been reviewed by the group ([RCG ISSG reports 2019](#)).

ToR for the meeting was:

- a) Consider and propose on the basis of input from the RCG's and the recommendations given in the document "Recommendations for the revision of the Multiannual Union Programme for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors (EU-MAP), priority issues and outstanding questions, October 2018" and the consequences any new data collection may have for the present data collection.
- b) Assess any new requests from end-users providing scientific advice for the management of the CFP and the consequences any new data collection may have for the present data collection.
- c) Assess any new additional data collection and consider any related cost implication and the consequences any new data collection may have for the present data collection.
- d) On the basis of evaluations in ToR a-c propose any changes to the present EU-MAP.

As a starting point for the review of the present EU-MAP each participant presented their general view on what is working and what is not working. Furthermore, their view on whether the revision of the EU-MAP should be of a more fundamental character or whether the revision just should be minor changes.

The general opinion was that the revision of the EU-MAP just should be minor changes and that the changes should aim to improve the process of transforming legislation text to setting up national data collection work plans. Moreover, the revision should also include correction of errors and improvement of the text for clarity reasons.

The subgroup addressed the biological questions as raised in the EU Consultation document on the potential revision of EU-MAP biological and socio-economic data. Prior to the subgroup meeting, input was requested from RCG chairs and participants. The input provided was summarized in a matrix, covering all questions and responses. The RCG subgroup reviewed the input and prepared a draft general RCG response to the document. This draft response is sent to all RCGs for consideration and to finalize the response. The RCGs will respond to the prepared draft response, whether they agree or not, if not, why. The subgroup prepared a response matrix for the respective RCGs. The subgroup chairs will follow-up on the responses by each RCG and send the final version to the Commission as input to the September 2019 EWG in preparation.

In addition to the review of the question provided by DG MARE to the end-users a review was made on EU-MAP legislation. The following documents were reviewed:

*Commission Delegated Decision on the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of biological, environmental, technical and socio-economic data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.*

*Commission Implementing Decision on the list of mandatory research surveys and thresholds for the purposes of the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.*

The outcome of the review and the suggestion for text changes of the legal text was made in the two above mentioned documents. The suggestions for text changes were made with track changes in Word versions of the documents.

Most of the suggested text changes relate to simplification and to reducing any ambiguity of the legal text. Unfortunately, the time did not allow changes of table 1A, 1B and 1C as well as minor changes to some of the other tables.

The following changes to the tables were:

- Table 1A: To be merged with table 1B and 1C. The table should be build on the basis om species, region, management area (TAC area).
- Table 1B and 1C: see above.
- Table 1D: To be deleted.
- Table 1E: Could be included in table 1A.
- Table 2: Length classes suggested to be deleted as it is only used when reporting, not for sampling.
- Table 3: To be deleted as species to be sampled by region is to be decided and coordinated at regional level based on end-users needs.
- Table 4: Variables to be included should only be variables that according to the Control Regulation are mandatory to record.
- Table 5A: Not assessed by the subgroup.
- Table 5B: Not assessed by the subgroup.
- Table 5C: Deleted and substituted by Appendix II (Geographical stratification by Region) of the COMMISSION DECISION of 18 December 2009 adopting a multiannual Community programme for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector for the period 2011-2013 (2010/93/EU).
- Table 6: Not assessed by the subgroup.
- Table 7: Not assessed by the subgroup.
- Table 8: Not assessed by the subgroup
- Table 9: Not assessed by the subgroup
- Table 10: Not assessed by the subgroup as the EWG 19 – 05 has made a review of the table.
- Table 11: Not assessed by the subgroup

#### **5.1.2.2 Workplan for 2020 – 2021**

The report from the ISSG 'Revision EU-MAP' will be sent to the Commission before the end of June 2019 as one input for the revision process. A STECF EWG meeting is planned for September 2019 were experts are encouraged to take part and contribute to the revision.

The Commission presented its approach on the development of the EU MAP. As a temporary solution, the EU MAP was renewed and already published on 4 June 2019. It will be applicable during 2020 and 2021.

The Commission will continue work on a more permanent solution, i.e. revision of the EU MAP, which is expected to come into force from 2021. During July 2019 an external contractor will compile information received from end users, RCG and EWG on surveys. During September 2019 MS input will be incorporated into the consultation process and a draft proposal for a legal act will be prepared. The Commission is aiming to adopt the EU MAP and Work Plan Template by early autumn 2020.

The revised EU MAP will aim at preserving the core requirements of the presently applicable EU MAP with necessary adjustments and additional data collection requirements if so required by the outcomes of the pilot studies.

RCGs are requested to:

- coordinate compilation of replies to future data needs at EU and regional level including needs from end users
- contribute to the consultation on the EU-MAP launched December 2018 (should not include needs which can be defined at regional level)
- be flexible and proactive (organise themselves and produce clear, concise, well-argued documents) to facilitate the EU-MAP revision, considering the tight adoption schedule

### **5.1.2.3 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions**

RCG NA NS&EA endorses the approach and outputs from the ISSG and found the suggested changes useful and that the suggested changes would improve the legal text.

The modification to the current EU-MAP should be minimal, aimed at simplifying the requirements and the reference tables.

RCG NA NS&EA raises concerns on the potential increase of requirements on data collection. At the moment, there is not a proper understanding of the end-user needs on many components of the EU-MAP (biological variables, by-catch and PETS, recreational sampling and stomach sampling). Eventually, it will be important to distinguish the real needs from the wishes (i.e. need to have vs nice to have).

The intersessional group proposed modification in the regulation to affirm that EU-MAP was not aimed at compensating the gaps and weaknesses of the control regulation provisions, especially regarding small vessels.

It was proposed that an evaluation of recreational fisheries pilot studies should be done by STECF to support the need for further inclusion of recreational caught fish in stock assessments. Further, that multispecies surveys on recreational fishery catches should only include volume in weight by species.

RCG NA NS&EA suggests STECF to consider a workshop in September 2020 to review the impact of recreational fisheries based on the outcomes from pilot studies. A data call would be needed in advance of this workshop.

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 R3 - Workshop to review the impact of recreational fisheries on stock assessments.</b>	
Recommendation	STECF to consider a workshop in September 2020 to review the impact of recreational fisheries based on the outcomes from pilot studies
Justification	It was proposed that an evaluation of recreational fisheries pilot studies should be done by STECF to support the need for further inclusion of recreational caught fish in stock assessments. Further, that multispecies surveys on recreational fishery catches should only include volume in weight by species.
Follow-up actions needed	STECF
Responsible persons for follow up actions	RCG
Time frame (deadline)	Before 2021.

## **5.2 ToR 2 Implement and maintain data quality in data collection**

During this year's meeting, progress has been made under ToR 2 as follows:

- Feedback from the ISSG 'Facilitate the production of regional overviews of fisheries and sampling'
- Feedback from ISSG 'Metier issues'
- Feedback from the ISSG on quality assurance of data and sampling programmes'
- Feedback from the ISSG SCRDB & RDBES Core group + use of data by the sub-groups
- Output from Work Package 6 of FishPi2 on Data quality
- Feedback from PGDATA relating to data quality of data quality and its regional coordination
- Main elements of criteria developed of data quality by respective WGs to be used by RCG – ICES WGBIOP

### **5.2.1 Feedback from the ISSG 'Facilitate the production of regional overviews of fisheries and sampling'**

#### **5.2.1.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA 2019 (intersessional)**

A summary of the progress made during the intersessional work is presented below. Further progress, outcomes and deliverables achieved during the intersessional work are described in Annex 3 of Part II of this report "Reports on Intersessional Sub-Group (ISSG) work 2018-2019" ([RCG ISSG reports 2019](#)).

The intra-sessional sub-group (ISSG) got together for the first time in december 2018 and since then had about 10 skype conferences. In a first step, the ISSG reviewed the work that had been done in the different RCGs regarding analysis of RDB data and fisheries and sampling overviews. Based on that review, the group agreed on a common structure for headings and graphical content of the overviews. It was agreed that structure would be used as a starting point for all RCGs, facilitating comparative analyses across regions. The group also decided on using [Github](#) (in the ICES EG section) as repository for the r-scripts developed. A restricted [sharepoint](#) was used to hold documents, protocols and RDB data sets. A common extraction and preparation format was defined so that input datasets are standardized both across regions and overviews.

During the review of previous work developed at RCM/RCG level, reports on annual fisheries statistics of landings and effort (CL and CE tables of RDB) were found to be comparatively more developed than sampling overviews and quality indicators. This is largely explained by the focus of the work carried on former RCM (and RCG) groups on fisheries overviews, with less emphasis on analysis and evaluations of sampling data. Still, the fisheries overviews largely differed across RCGs, with different sections and types of graphs involved. Obtaining a common and coherent annual fisheries overview across all RCGs was thus established as the first goal of subgroup work towards the 2019 RCGs. This option later proved to be the most efficient considering that with regards to CL and CE analysis many scripts and routines for several fisheries statistics and overviews already existed; while routines working on sampling quality indicators or other measurements (CS tables) were more sparse and would require a level of planning and development that would not allow meeting deadlines at this early stage of pan-regional collaborative work. Still, in total, four main types of fisheries and sampling overviews were planned; only development differed among them.

The documents on fisheries overviews are separated into two reports, providing an annual overview of the most recent data-year ([001 annual fisheries overview](#)) and an overview of data time series ([002 multiannual fisheries overview](#)). These two documents are presently in advanced stage of development with the former being considered finalized. The 001\_annual\_fisheries\_overview was issued for 3 RCGs (BA, NSEA and NA) and submitted for discussion during 2019 meetings.

The document on sampling statistics contains overviews on sampling intensity and -distribution of the most recent year ([003 sampling overviews](#)) and a document providing graphs and overviews for specific case studies or exemplary stocks/areas ([004 stock overview MAC NS](#)). Both documents are presently in early draft version with only the main structural aspects defined. RCG members are thus welcome to contribute ideas and help specifying, which sampling statistics they would like to see included in a later, more advanced version.

### **Main achievements**

- Common format for exchange
- Common format for data preparation
- Common private repository for RDB datasets
- Common public repository for code development
- Common set of functions (barplots, maps, river plots) and auxiliary datasets (e.g., colour coding, shapefiles, RCG specific graphical parameters)
- Agreement on common structure for annual fisheries overviews, multi-annual fisheries overviews, sampling overviews and stock overviews
- Common R-markdown script for annual fisheries overviews (in production)
- Production of 2018 fisheries overview document for all RCGs

### Progress during the RCG NA NS&EA 2019 (meeting)

- The documents of the 2018 annual fisheries overview of the NA and NS EA were presented and discussed during the RCG meeting. Drafts of the remaining types of fisheries and sampling overviews, using 2009 to 2017 data, were also briefly discussed and made available for participants to comment.
- RCG NA NS&EA welcomed the production of the 2018 Annual Fisheries Overview of NA and NS EA and generically agreed with their structure and graphs, considering them fit for purpose. The number of graphs and length of the document was considered appropriate and the catch groups displayed can be expanded as long as the index was clear and allowed for quick access to the different sections. Some comments and suggestions were issued with regards to specific sections (e.g., correct duplication of tables and explain the colour code used in fleet register analyses; need to correct stock data used in Appendix D). These comments and suggestions will be discussed during the next period of inter-sessional SG work and included in the analyses of 2019 data.
- In terms of future developments, opinions in RCG NA NS&EA were not unanimous: some participants expressed interest in prioritizing the development of the stock overviews considered priority given because they are of interest to some particular end-users, namely ICES benchmark groups; Others prefer to see priority given to developing sampling overviews first so that overviews of data collected under DC-MAP programmes are more readily available for RCG use. With regards to the stock overviews RCG NA NS&EA considered that a Shiny App could be relevant, allowing the reduction of the number of graphs and more flexibility on data handling by end-users.
- As a consequence of increasing interest in this type of overviews and its availability to end-users, RCG NA NS&EA spent some time debating guidelines for generation of new overviews and the process for publication and use of the present overviews.
- With regards to the generation of new reports and overviews, it was considered that, after a structure is defined for a new report, the SG should consult both SC-RDB (with regards to data policy issues) and end-users (with regards to specific suggestions they may have). An final outline of the process for development of new reports was developed during RCG NA NS&EA and discussed in its plenary (Figure 5.1).
- With regards to the process for quality checking, publication and use of the reports, RCG NA NS&EA proposed the adoption of a header format (to be used in development and discussion stage) and a citation format (to be used in final stage) and then focused its discussions on the need to secure a) the quality of the data and b) the compliance of reports with RDB data policy and confidentiality rules. A road-map for integrating both aspects was formulated during RCG NA NS&EA and discussed in plenary (Figure 5.2)
- With regards to quality of the data, RCG NA NS&EA suggested that the SG produces some R-tools to help data submitters checking their data ahead of submission (e.g., code for country-level fisheries overviews) and that drafts of reports are circulated to data submitters ahead of the issuing of the final reports to RCGs. That

objective was suggested for SG workplan 2019/2020 and guidelines issued with regards to the timing of quality checking stages (Figure 5.2). RCG NA NS&EA was bold in issuing the message that these additional quality checking stages do not by any means exempt MS from their obligation of supplying high-quality data at the time of initial submittal of national data to RDB (data call deadline).

- With regards to data policy and confidentiality issues RCG NA NS&EA considered that a consultation with the SC-RDB (Figure 5.1) and final approval by NCs (Figure 5.2) constitute appropriate safe-guards for publication of the material.

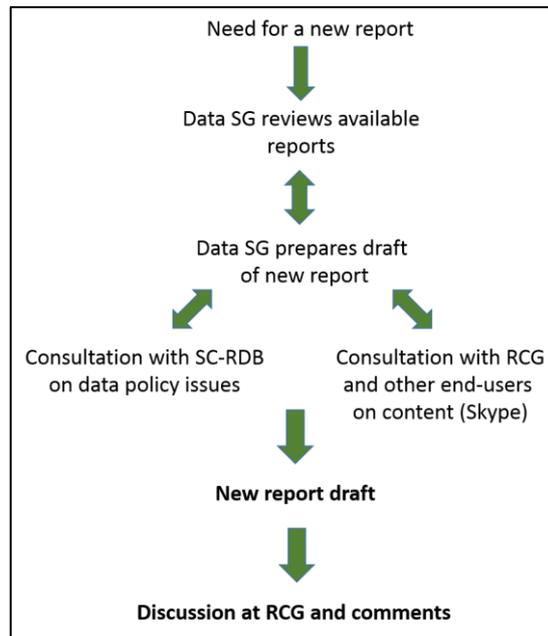


Figure 5.1 Fisheries Overviews: Process for the development of new reports

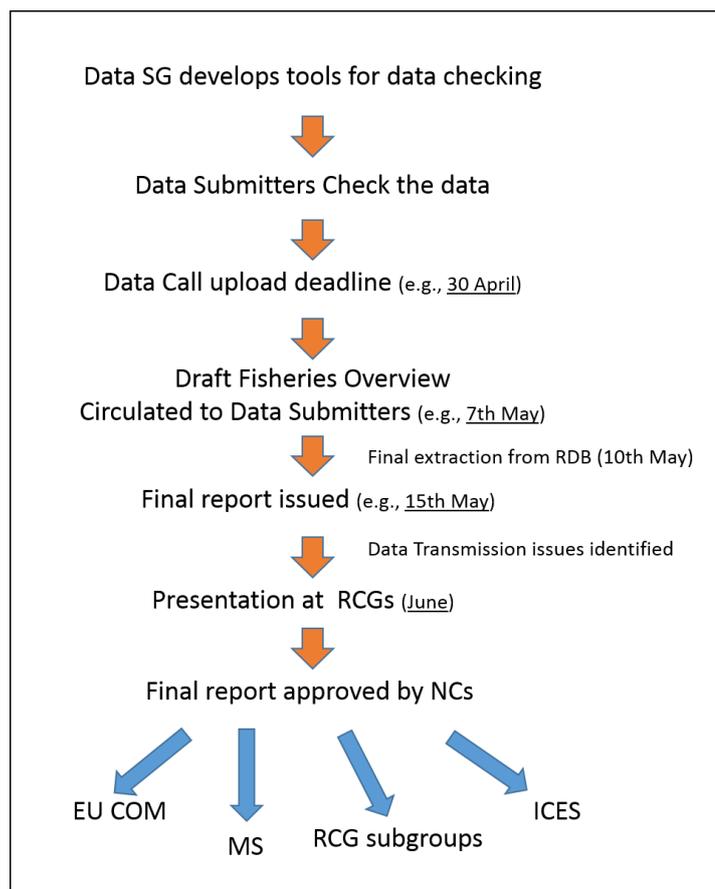


Figure 5.2 Fisheries Overviews: Agreed process on quality checking, publication and use of new reports

#### 5.2.1.2 5.2.1.2 Workplan for 2020 – 2021

After receiving the feedback from 2019 RCGs, the subgroup aims to continue to improve the existing scripts, extending them to the remainder of the documents and new analytics. Collaboration will also be established with WGBIOP whereby feedback will be obtained with regards to the content of the 004\_Stock Overviews.

It is also intended to produce an R-package and a Shiny app that will give more flexibility to the end users and make the data gathering more easily accessible.

The subgroup will continue their work on a regular basis throughout the year to improve their achievements and give feedback to the RCG-chairs in regular intervals.

In summary the next tasks are:

- Incorporate RCG feedback, produce final reports for NC approval
- Develop tools for quality checking of data by data submitters
- Develop the Sampling and Stock overviews, in consultation with SC-RDB with regards to data policy issues. Collaborate with ICES WGBIOP on the stock overview and other end-users interested in using the different products.
- Document functions, develop R-package and a Shiny app
- Decide on regional specifications in the documents
- Review and analyse 2019 BMS and logbook registered discards present in CS and CL data in the RDB, making these data visible as graphs in the different types of overviews

- Consider incorporating the information in RDB upload logs into the different reports

### 5.2.1.3 Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA BS D1 Annual fisheries overview – approve content</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of ISSG ‘Facilitate the production of regional overviews of fisheries and sampling’
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	<p>Approve routine use of 001_annual_fisheries_overview. Suggestions made during the RCGs in June 2019 will be included in the next version of this document.</p> <p>NCs to approve the idea, concept and content of the annual fisheries overview document and whether this is a document that will be beneficial to the work of RCG and the assessment working groups.</p>
<b>Implication</b>	The approval would finalize the first document of the ISSG and establish it as a standard document which will be produced before the RCGs (and preferably before the assessment working groups).
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs NA NS&EA and Baltic region
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	Section 5.2.1, Google Docs: <a href="#">001 annual fisheries overview</a>

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA BS D2 Annual fisheries overview – to be public available</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of ISSG ‘Facilitate the production of regional overviews of fisheries and sampling’
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	<p>NCs to approve whether the overviews can be made public as a stand-alone published document after RCG use</p> <p>The document will be reviewed before publication. Decide on who to review and approve (RCGs, SC-RDB, other ?)</p>
<b>Implication</b>	The report of the latest fisheries overview (one year back) would be made public after the RCGs

<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NC's NA NS&EA and Baltic region
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	Section 5.2.1, Google Docs: <a href="#">001 annual fisheries overview</a>

## 5.2.2 Feedback from the pan regional ISSG on "Metier issues"

### 5.2.2.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA 2019:

During the first year of the new 3-year term of RCG NA NS&EA the work under each ToR has been carried out by designated subgroups. The deliverables for this period were more clearly defined on the first day of the meeting. Below is a short summary of the work done by ToR at the 2019 meeting.

Further progress, outcomes and deliverables achieved during the intersessional work are described in Annex 4 of Part II of this report "Reports on Intersessional Sub-Group (ISSG) work 2018-2019".

The intersessional work built on the DCF Métier workshop which was held in 2018 as a subgroup of the NA and NSEA RCGs. The workshop documented the history of previous métier work; and highlighted the variety of methods that have been implemented by MS to assign metiers to transversal data and different data sources used. The workshop sought to demonstrate how designation of metiers could be standardised and to develop tools and procedures to support this objective. The intersessional sub-group continued a number of work-streams that the workshop had identified. The ISSG report is described in Part II of the RCG NA NS&EA 2019 report "Reports on Intersessional SubGroup (ISSG) work 2018-2019" ([RCG ISSG reports 2019](#)).

The key points from the ISSG work on Métier issues:

1. To set up a repository for storing reference lists, scripts and documentation of procedures.
  - A public GitHub repository has been set up and is available by the link: <https://github.com/ices-eg/RCGs/tree/master/Metiers>
  - Reference lists, scripts and documentations from some member states are available there.
2. Initiate and collect documentation of logic applied by MS to assign métiers.
  - Excel template is developed and is available at GitHub.
  - At the moment of RCG meeting filled documentation of 5 MS were available.
3. Make métier descriptions based on template.
  - R Markdown script was developed to output two types of reports as word documents:
    - Overview report listing metiers by region and MS.
    - Metier description report.
4. Agree on a reference list of species grouped into species groups.

- A common species reference list has been developed, based on FAO ASFIS species list.
  - Each species are assigned to one group (Grouping 2), which can be used by a script.
5. Clean up the métier lists. Remove overlapping métiers and standardize the codes.

The current list of approved métiers was split up by region and analysed.

- For standardisation of metier codes and to avoid overlapping metiers the following system was suggested:
    - `_>0_0_0` for unknown mesh size.
    - `_0_0_0` for no mesh size (e.g. longliners).
    - For traps (FYK, FPN, FPO, FIX), no mesh size ranges are proposed, “`_>0_0_0`” can always be applied.
6. Make a script for a standard procedure for assigning métiers based on a common data format, taking into account the recommendations made at the Metier workshop.
- An R script has been developed that assigns metiers to transversal data, using a specified input format. It is currently working for the Baltic Sea. It assigns the metier by fishing sequence defined as a combination of time, area and gear.
  - The script has been tested by Denmark in area 27.3. Over 95% of the lines in the tested data set were assigned to the same metier as when using national procedures. The remaining 5% were assigned to other metiers due to overlapping metiers.
  - The script can be used if a metier list without overlapping metiers is approved, and it could be further developed for national refinements and could be improved by including procedures that analyse the general patterns of fishing vessels and algorithms that can assign metiers when they are not currently assigned due to missing/erroneous data.
7. Test effort calculation method agreed in the WKTRANSVERSAL in Nicosia for the RDB CE table.
- Comparison between Effort Calculations – Regional Database (CE) and Transversal Data Workshop (fecR) methods was done. Comparison between UK FECR and RDB CE Days at Sea was performed.
  - Small overall differences in UK data was seen (mainly for passive gears and for small vessels), and in overall the fecR methodology is producing intended results.
8. Test impact of change of measure to determine target assemblage (to value of landings).
- Two case-studies were accomplished:
    - Demersal Celtic Sea fishery from ICES RDB data. The allocation of a fishing operation to a target assemblage was not effected by a change in metric.
    - Target group classification analysis of Swedish data from 2018 in area 3.a. The current method for classifying the MCD target group could be refined. Today for many hauls assigned to MCD, >80% of the catch value is due to Nephrops.

### 5.2.2.2 Workplan for 2020 – 2021

- If the new system for métier codes are approved: Make an operational métier list with all relevant métiers and test it.
- Ensure all relevant métiers are included?
- Agree on codes for selectivity devices between relevant countries.

### 5.2.2.3 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions

The decisions proposed by the ISSG on Metiers to be forwarded to the Decision meetings were considered by the RCG NA NS&EA to be of technical nature and not requiring formal agreement by the NCs. Therefore the RCG endorsed these decisions and will include them as part of the continuation of the ISSG work programme.

The decisions can be summarised as follows:

Decision in relation to ISSG on Metiers	Implication
Agree that the list of approved métiers should be changed to the standardised system suggested by the sub-group (without overlapping métier codes?)	The move to a standardised and cleaner code list will remove some of the anomalies seen between similar métiers across different sea areas and some logical inconsistencies. It will also simplify and facilitate the generation of R scripts. It is not suggested that historical data should be amended and it should be possible to map the new coding to previous datasets
Agree that the RCG métier GitHub repository should be used for reference lists, scripts and documentation and that this should be updated with documentation of methods.	The repository will serve to store and maintain metadata associated with métier, what will help to ensure consistency in the application of methodology and aid comparability between MS's submissions.
Agree that resources should be allocated for maintaining the repository - it is suggested that one or two technical staff should be responsible for this. It is further suggested that this should be one of the roles of an RCG Secretariat.	
Facilitate the provision of documentation of the procedures that are used by MS for assigning métiers to transversal data using the suggested excel template and uploading to the GitHub.	This will provide essential metadata for métiers to and will facilitate quality assurance and enable MSs data to be better understood and compared.
To agree that the suggested common species reference list should be used for assignment of target species assemblage.	This is essential for the development of standard scripts to produce métiers. The list should be capable of being updated,

This should be compiled with lists for other groups (eg. fishPi) where possible.	particularly in line with changes to the standard FAO ASFIS code list.
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### 5.2.3 Feedback from the pan regional ISSG on "Quality assurance of data and sampling programmes"

#### 5.2.3.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA 2019

The sub-group's aim is to facilitate quality assurance of data and sampling programmes and it has the following multi-annual ToRs:

- ToR (1) Compile table 5A in the national work plans for all the MS in the region and evaluate the overall documentation on quality of sampling programmes in the region using table 5A.
- ToR (2) Develop indicators to monitor overall progress (based on table 5A) on quality assurance in the region over time.
- ToR (4) Compile uploads logs retrieved through the RCG data call and prepare feedback to MS on data anomalies.

The following text summarises the work done - the full details of the work can be found in the sub-group report described in Part II of the RCG NA NS&EA 2019 report "Reports on Intersessional SubGroup (ISSG) work 2018-2019" ([RCG ISSG reports 2019](#)).

#### *Table 5A Summary and Data Quality Indicators Discussion*

Table 5A from the Annual Reports of each MS were collated (the original annual reports can be downloaded from <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/wp-np-ar>). Data quality indicators were then defined by considering the columns of the table - for each row of the table these indicators were assigned a score from 1 - 4 (with 1 being worst and 4 being the best). NAs can also be a valid value for some of these indicators. Sub-group members then evaluated each row in Table 5A for each MS which attends either the RCG BS, NA, or NS.

The aim of these indicators is not to rank the performance of MS against each other but to track how each MS is improving its data quality procedures. An added benefit will be to demonstrate to MS which information it is useful to provide when completing Table 5A.

The mean of these indicators for different groupings (e.g. for all MS) was then calculated. Results of the indicators are presented in the subgroup report and were discussed at the RCG technical meeting.

Recommendations to MS when completing Table 5A:

- Provide links to relevant documentations where possible,
- Ensure links provided are correct and work,
- Ensure documents referenced are reasonably recent (>2014),
- Provide the date that the documentation was written / updated,
- Provide explanations of why this is good/best practice e.g. give explicit references to any expert group reports that define the practices that are being followed,
- Double-check whether "NA" is a legitimate answer to the question.

It was seen that the indicators aggregated by RCG have very similar values for the RCG BS, NA, and NSEA – they all have a characteristic "shield" shape on the radar plots. The bottom

point of the shield is due to the fact that RCG MS upload their commercial fisheries data in to the Regional Database (RDB) which gives the highest indicator value. The weakest areas are the procedures around “Accuracy and Bias”, and “Data Capture”.

The Long Distance Fishery records had a similar shield shaped radar plot as the RCG BS, NA, and NSEA but had a lower value for the “Data Storage” indicator.

The Large Pelagic group had higher scores than the RCG BS, NA, and NSEA for the Sampling Design, Non-Responses, and Edit and Imputation indicators because they were able to refer to internationally coordinated manuals from organisations like ICCAT.

The Recreational data does not share the shield-shaped radar plot. Marine recreational data capture is still at the pilot stage in many MS which means many of the quality processes are not at the same stage as the established commercial fishery sampling schemes.

Although typically data has been collected for longer time-series, Diadromous data collection shares some characteristics with the Recreational programmes in that there is not a single international database.

The RCG felt the proposed indicators were useful and that the group should calculate them next year so that progress could be measured. It was felt that the group should also propose actions which would remedy the weaker areas that were identified.

#### *2019 Data Call RDB Upload Logs Discussion*

The upload logs from the Data Call were summarised and presented alongside the sub-group report. It should be noted that a large number of countries either provided their upload logs late or did not provide upload logs.

During the RCG meeting it was felt that the best place to present the upload logs is in an annex in the Fishery Overview reports. To this end the upload logs compilation should be removed as a ToR from this sub-group and added to the ToRs of the Fishery Overview sub-group.

#### **5.2.3.2 Workplan for 2020 – 2021**

##### **2019+: Facilitate quality assurance of data and sampling programmes**

This sub-group has multi-annual ToRs. The work remaining is:

- ToR (2) Develop indicators to monitor overall progress (based on table 5A) on quality assurance in the region over time.
- ToR (3) Collate relevant tools developed for quality control and quality assurance in data collection developed by other groups and projects (e.g. fishPi2 WP6, ICES WGCATCH, BIOPTIM) and make plans (including accessibility, storage and training) for how these can be integrated in regional work and how MS can be supported to integrate them in national work.
- ToR (5) Discuss data checks for the new RDBES.

## 5.2.4 Feedback from the ISSG SCRDB & RDBES Core group + use of data by the sub-groups

### 5.2.4.1 The need for the development of the RDBES

#### Summary

The Steering Committee for the RDB (SCRDB) noted in its 2018 report that “(the) RDBES is the main prerequisite for development of regional sampling programmes, for standardisation of data, and the tool for ensuring transparency and quality assurance of input data for stock assessment in the North Eastern Atlantic area.”<sup>1</sup> The RCG’s that make use of the current RDB have advocated for the longer term development of, and their commitment to, such a regional system.

While funding for the hosting and maintenance of the current RDB and RDBES are annually budgeted through the Grant Agreement with the European Commission, the funding of development work for the RDBES is more precarious and ad hoc. Until now, the development funding for the RDBES has come from i) a special request from the European Commission, ii) through a request made to ICES’s own equity, and iii) from ICES/EU member states via experts’ time, travel, and subsistence. In 2019 there is no additional request from the Commission, and the ICES equity funding will be used by the end of the year.

The phase that the RDBES is now in is the most demanding in terms of resources – both within the ICES Secretariat and for the wider RCG community. We are proposing a time limited contribution of funds (4 years at €75,000 per year = €300,000) from EU member states supporting the RDBES through the RCG’s – this will cover RDBES development until the system is live and has completely replaced the current RDB and InterCatch. The funding model for any further development will stabilise beyond the 4 year scope of this request for interim funding as the InterCatch and RDB systems will be shut down, thus freeing internal ICES resources, and the ICES clients will support development activity through their agreements with ICES. The figure is comprised of both development time (human resources at the ICES Secretariat) and dedicated Workshop travel (which will be necessary to support the roll-out of the RDBES).

The data model, database script and any associated source code will be made available under a General Public Open Licence<sup>2</sup> through the GitHub open platform. This does not apply to data held within the RDBES, rights to which are governed by the RDB Data Policy<sup>3</sup>.

#### Priorities

The priorities for RDBES development will be defined and reviewed by the SCRDB on an ongoing basis - this consists of members representing EU member states and ICES member countries, along with invited representatives from the ICES Secretariat and European Commission.

The two top priorities for development are:

1) To ensure that data can be made available for the coordination of regional fisheries data sampling plans for the North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic, and Baltic RCGs,

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<sup>1</sup> Report for the Steering Committee of the Regional Database, 2018; page 1 – executive summary <http://ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/acom/2018/SCRDB/01%20SCRDBES%202018%20Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> See SmartDots example <https://github.com/ices-eg/SmartDots/blob/master/LICENSE>

<sup>3</sup> [http://ices.dk/marine-data/Documents/Data\\_Policy\\_RDB.pdf](http://ices.dk/marine-data/Documents/Data_Policy_RDB.pdf)

2) To provide ICES with a regional estimation system such that statistical estimates for stock assessment can be produced from detailed sample data in a transparent manner.

There are also a number of other areas that the RDBES could be used for including:

- Bycatch and PETS data
- Large Pelagic RCG data,
- Recreational data for the RCGs and ICES,
- Diadromous data for the RCGs and ICES.

The development of these, and any further areas identified, will be reviewed and prioritised by the SCRDB taking into account the progress made on the two highest priorities and the resources available.

Further details of the development of the RDBES are found in Annex 12 of Part II of this report “Reports on Intersessional Sub-Group (ISSG) work 2018-2019”.

### **Resources required**

The total cost of annual development equates to ca. 145 000 EUR - the figures in the table are based on the RCG's contributing 41% of this total cost as well as the cost of dedicated workshops. This development figure is based on software developers time, data and code management, as well as project management time. This figure excludes maintenance and hosting, which are part of an existing agreement with the Commission. The overhead rate in the calculation is 7%, the same as the rate used for the Grant Agreement with the Commission.

In the case where the RCG's are not able to provide funding, development would continue at 59% capacity and progress, according to the outlined time-line or prioritization, would be significantly impacted. This would therefore have an impact on the overall plan of the RCGs to deal with catch sampling planning, design and efficiency.

	(EUR)	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total (EUR)
		<b>@41% of total cost of annual development</b>				
<b>Human Resources</b>	<b>Technical Development</b> Technical development, including software and database, Web Interface and Security, interface to GitHub including versioning, data exchange both ways, results check, quality checks, download of data, <b>Project and Data Management</b> Overseeing user requirements and use cases, Project tracking and resource deployment, data and reference code management	60 000	60 000	60 000	60 000	<b>240 000</b>
<b>Meetings, Travel, Training</b>	Dedicated RDBES workshops/support aimed at developing specific functionality, or building capacity/training in the data provider/data users of the RDBES	15 000	15 000	15 000	15 000	<b>60 000</b>
<b>Total RCG Contribution</b>		<b>75 000</b>	<b>75 000</b>	<b>75 000</b>	<b>75 000</b>	<b>300 000</b>

Table 5.1 Financial resource requirements to progress the technical development of the RDBES

For the Baltic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic and North Atlantic

<b>Annual cost 2020 -2023 75,000 €</b>			<b>Option 1</b>	<b>Option 2</b>	<b>Option 3 2,500 €</b>
	<b>EMFF sum 2014-2020</b>	<b>Distribution key</b>	<b>EMFF Distribution key</b>	<b>Flat rate</b>	<b>Flat rate of 2500€ + dis- tribution key</b>
<b>MS</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>	<b>€</b>
BE	41,746,051	1.01	757	5,000	2,879
DK	208,355,420	5.04	3,780	5,000	4,390
DE	219,596,276	5.31	3,984	5,000	4,492
IE	147,601,979	3.57	2,678	5,000	3,839
EE	100,970,418	2.44	1,832	5,000	3,416
ES	1,161,620,889	28.10	21,074	5,000	13,037
FR	587,980,173	14.22	10,667	5,000	7,834
LV	139,833,742	3.38	2,537	5,000	3,768
LT	63,432,222	1.53	1,151	5,000	3,075
NL	101,523,244	2.46	1,842	5,000	3,421
PL	531,219,456	12.85	9,637	5,000	7,319
PT	392,485,464	9.49	7,120	5,000	6,060
FI	74,393,168	1.80	1,350	5,000	3,175
SE	120,156,004	2.91	2,180	5,000	3,590
UK	243,139,437	5.88	4,411	5,000	4,706
	<b>4,134,053,943</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>75,000</b>	<b>75,000</b>

**Table 5.2 Financial allocation per member state, based on a flat rate or a pro rata rate, proportional to DCF funding allocation**

Del	Description	2020	2021	2022	2023
1	RDBES Population and Estimation workshops	X	X	X	X
2	Test data call and estimations for selected stocks	X			
3	Further development of upload and simple checks, interface to TAF for simple estimations of selected stocks, further development of downloads, testing and correcting source code	X			
4	Test data call and estimations for “all” stocks		X		
5	Development of advanced checks, interface to TAF for standard estimations of all stocks, further development of downloads, testing and correcting source code		X		
6	Data call for 2021 data			X	
7	Supporting countries, further development of downloads, adjustments of interface to TAF for all estimations of all stocks, testing and correcting source code			X	
9	Data call for 2022 data and previous years’ data				X
10	Supporting countries, adjustments of interface to TAF for all estimations of all stocks, testing and correcting source code				X
11	Commercial catch estimations running through TAF				X
12	RDBES data available for RCG use				X

**Table 5.3 Workplan 2020-2023 for the RDB development**

Further details of the development of the RDBES are found in Annex 12 of Part II of this report: Reports on Intersessional SubGroup (ISSG) work 2018-2019, supporting RCG North Atlantic, NorthSea & Eastern Artic RCG Baltic.

#### 5.2.4.2 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA BAL 2019 – D5 – Central resources to support work in the RCGs - a need for robust long term funding of the RDBES development</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of fishPi2 WP1 on governance of RCGs
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	a.) NCs to decide if MS will finance the technical development, project management and dedicated workshops of the RDBES at an annual cost of €75,000 between 2020 and 2023; b.) NCs to decide on which model to use for costsharing, flat rate or pro rata of EMFF DCF funding allocation as outlined in table 5.2 and further elaborated in section 5.5.1;
<b>Implication</b>	RDBES development will be completed and it will be available to support the RCGs and ICES stock assessment expert groups according to the development road-map.
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	RCG NA NS&EA and Baltic National Correspondents
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	Above and Section 5.5.1

#### 5.2.4.3 Recommendations to revise RDB/RDBES Data Policy – ICES EG access to detailed data

The RCG NA NS&EA recommend that the preapproved ICES fisheries expert groups (EG) to have access to detailed data, not as it is today only access to aggregated data. Currently every pre-approved EG has to request access to detailed data from all relevant countries' National Correspondents (or ACOM member for non-EU countries) – this is burdensome both to the EG and to the MS, and can cause delays in the availability of RDB data for those EG. The data in the RDB is collected for fisheries management, so it makes sense to give access to detailed data for ICES fisheries expert groups.

The SCRDB can revise the RDB/RDBES Data Policy during their 2019 meeting and then present it for discussion and agreement during 2020.

## 5.2.4.4 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA R5 – Revision of RDB/RDBES Data Policy to improve the process to give pre-approved ICES expert groups access to detailed data</b>	
Recommendation	SCRDB to review the RDB/RDBES Data Policy to improve the process to give pre-approved ICES expert groups access to detailed data
Justification	<p>The RCG NA NS&amp;EA recommends that the RDB/RDBES data policy is reviewed with respect to the access to detailed data by preapproved ICES fisheries expert groups (EG). Under the RDB/RDBES Data policy <a href="https://www.ices.dk/marine-data/Documents/Data_Policy_RDB.pdf">https://www.ices.dk/marine-data/Documents/Data_Policy_RDB.pdf</a> landings (CL) and effort data (CE) are considered aggregated data, whilst sample data (CS) are considered detailed data</p> <p>Currently every pre-approved EG has access to aggregated data but has to request access to detailed data from all relevant countries' National Correspondents (or ACOM member for non-EU countries). This is burdensome both to the EG and to the MS, and can cause delays in the availability of RDB data for those EG.</p> <p>In 2018 the National Correspondents at the RCG Baltic 2018 agreed to grant ICES expert groups and related benchmark groups providing advice to fisheries management access to detailed data for the sub-division 22-32 (Baltic Sea) stored in the RDBES (RCG Baltic 2018-A7 - RDB Data Policy #2).</p> <p>The SCRDB should draft a revision to the RDB/RDBES Data Policy which would improve the system for giving access to detailed data to pre-approved EGs during their 2019 meeting and then present it for discussion, review, and agreement during the 2020 RCG meetings.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	Draft a revision to the RDB/RDBES Data Policy.
Responsible persons for follow up actions	SCRDB
Time frame (deadline)	April 2020

#### **5.2.4.5 Ensuring data confidentiality**

It is recommended that the best way of ensuring the use of RDB data by EGs in line with the RDB/RDBES Data Policy is to have each member of the EG sign a standard “RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality document” which will remind people of the RDB/RDBES Data Policy and their obligations under it.

##### **=> For the existing RDB**

It is recommended that the Chair of the EG will have all participants with access to the RDB data sign a standard “RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality document”, which will be scanned and uploaded on the EG’s SharePoint site in the Data folder.

##### **=> For the forth-coming RDBES**

It is recommended that the Chair of the group will have all participants with access to the RDBES data sign a standard “RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality document”, which will be scanned and uploaded on EG’s SharePoint site in the Data folder.

It is recommended that if the data is downloaded via an RDBES web application then a pop-up window is shown where the user is required to tick a box to say they have read and understood the RDB/RDBES Data Policy.

It should be noted that security permissions for the new RDBES will be more granular than those of the existing RDB so that users can more easily just be given access to the data they actually require.

## 5.2.4.6 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions

RCG NA NS&EA 2019	
NA NS&EA R6 –Create an RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality agreement to be signed by detailed data users	
Recommendation	SCRDB and ICES Data Centre to create an RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality agreement to be signed by detailed data users
Justification	<p>It is recommended that the best way of ensuring the use of RDB/RDBES data by ICES Expert Groups (EGs) is in line with the RDB/RDBES Data Policy is to have each member of the EG sign a standard “RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality agreement” which will remind people of the RDB/RDBES Data Policy and their obligations under it.</p> <p><b>For the existing RDB</b></p> <p>It is recommended that the Chair of the EG will have all participants with access to the RDB data sign a standard “RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality agreement”, which will be scanned and uploaded on the EG’s SharePoint site in the Data folder.</p> <p><b>For the forth-coming RDBES</b></p> <p>It is recommended that the Chair of the group will have all participants with access to the RDBES data sign a standard “RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality document”, which will be scanned and uploaded on EG’s SharePoint site in the Data folder.</p> <p>It is recommended that if the data is downloaded via an RDBES web application then a pop- up window is shown where the user is required to tick a box to say they have read and understood the RDB/RDBES Data Policy.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>Create a RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality agreement.</p> <p>Create a procedure to ensure EG members who use detailed data sign the agreement.</p>
Responsible persons for follow up actions	SCRDB, ICES Data Centre
Time frame (deadline)	March 2020

#### 5.2.4.1 Update on RDB data submission

Upload Status of Data submissions by country to the RDB 2019 (for full detail see Annex 12 of ISSG report <sup>4</sup> (*status- May 2019*))

- All countries have uploaded landings and effort data. There is a drop in number of metiers uploaded for French effort data (182 to 70)
- All countries have uploaded age sample data
- All countries have uploaded length sample data, except United Kingdom/England
- Some countries need to upload data back in time

#### 5.2.5 Feedback from Work Package 6 of the FishPi2 Project on Data quality

##### 5.2.5.1 Output from Work Package 6

The workplan of fishPi2 WP6 on data quality has been totally modified during the course of the project, since the developments initiated during the first fishPi project had to be discontinued as not fit to be part of the RDBES solution. Adding the fact that the data format structure for the RDBES was not finalised yet by the end of 2018, the WP was amended to put all efforts into further development of quality checks in anticipation of the type of data format and processing which will be needed once the RDBES is fully functioning. Within this new context, significant progress has been made in developing a generic S4 R objects to handle fisheries data which will provide a more flexible system that could handle data in a wide variety of formats. The WP6 output has been called CLEFRBD and is available on the ICES github (<https://github.com/ices-tools-dev/FishPi2/tree/master/WP6>). It may now be tested on real datasets.

At the end of the project, a webinar was planned to take place on 17<sup>th</sup> June – “Follow-up on fishPi<sup>2</sup> WP6 - A proposal to use generic S4 R objects to handle commercial fisheries data”. The speaker was Laurent Dubroca, who prepared a 30 min presentation which was followed by a discussion. The recording of this webinar is available on the github referred her above.

##### 5.2.5.2 Workplan 2020 -2021

#### Next steps on how the output from fishPi2 Wkp 6 can be progressed

Discussion in fishPi2 team at the moment: data quality issues would be best developed in a ad hoc project tackling exploratory data analysis, validation and quality control, estimation and processing and reporting based on the needs and expectations on the RDBES. The CLEFRDB library developed in fishPi2 WP6 has this objective of being the first element of a dedicated library gathering data processing means and functions.

##### 5.2.5.3 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions

No proposals for decisions is of relevance for the Decision meeting.

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<sup>4</sup> [RCG ISSG reports 2019](#)

### 5.2.6 Feedback from PGDATA relating to the quality of fisheries data collection

In 2019, PGDATA is in its 2nd year of a 3-year programme of work where the focus was to design a Quality Assurance Framework on data quality for stock assessments, identify improvements in data quality that have the greatest impacts on the quality of advice, and improve or create communication routes between data collectors and end-users. The work on Quality Assurance Framework was completed in 2019 and used by ICES in its Road map towards a Quality Assurance Framework for ICES Advice. The other terms of references are under development with some progress made on e.g. proposals for SISP (Series of ICES Statistical Protocol) in the fishery-dependent data collection, accessibility to reports and workshops information on protocols and best practices, and improving communication routes between data collectors and end-users. The ICES/PGDATA suffers from a low number of participants (8-10) due probably to the strategic discussions more than the practical solutions to identified issues. Experts in charge of data collection in their institutes/countries (e.g. experts participating to RCG) would present the skills needed to PGDATA and would be welcome.

### 5.2.7 Main elements of criteria developed of data quality by respective WGs to be used by RCG – ICES WGBIOP

The ICES Working Group on Biological Parameters (WGBIOP) conducted intersessional work with the RCG sub-group on end-user needs: WGBIOP will receive an annual inventory report from the RDB with information on species, area, sampling platform, country, numbers of ages, numbers of maturity by month/quarter. This provides an overview of the number of fish aged/matured by country and area and can be included in a statistical analysis to indicate how biased an estimate is. It also indicates how important different MS are when age reading/maturity workshops are set up.

WGBIOP would like to be kept informed of results from RCG data (biological) quality sub-groups.

Age calibration events relevant to the RCG 'Diadromous Sub-Group' under the guidance of WGBIOP are: 1) Baltic and Atlantic Salmon Scale Exchange (planning in progress – results ready for 2021 Baltic salmon benchmark); 2) Workshop on Age Reading of European and American Eel (ICES WKAREA3, 17-18 June 2019) in collaboration with the INTERREG SUDOANG project. In both cases, the SmartDots platform will be used and inventory report from RDB would be helpful for these groups as background information.

Regarding further development of SmartDots, the ICES Working Group on SmartDots Governance (WGSMART) was established and is working efficiently on improvements with highest priority in close working relationship with WGBIOP and the ICES Data Centre. Maturity staging calibration on SmartDots is ready for testing. At its next meeting (7-10 Oct 2019), WGBIOP will prioritise further improvements and developments, estimate costs and identify available resources, including possible funding routes.

Finally, the ICES "Workshop on Better Coordinated Stomach Sampling" (WKBECOSS; Santander, Spain, 3-6 Sep 2019), recommended by the 2018 WGBIOP, was announced to the RCG.

## 5.3 ToR 3 Review impact on management measures on data collection

During this year's meeting, of progress has been made under ToR 3 as follows:

- Feedback on sub-group Implications of the Landing obligation" - identify & flag issues ([RCG ISSG reports 2019](#)).

### 5.3.1 Feedback on ISSG 'Implications of the LO'

#### 5.3.1.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA2019

It is clear that discards will continue under various forms of exemptions (high survivability, de minimis, prohibited species etc). This obliges continued observer programs under the DCF and adds to the complexity of interpreting official catch records and observer data collected onshore and offshore. STECF PLEN 17-01 stated that there would appear to be a “lack of reporting by vessel operators of fish discarded under exemptions, discards of fish currently not subject to the landing obligation and catches of fish below MCRS”. This statement is validated by the lack of data coming from the control agencies on both registered discards and BMS landings. STECF PLEN 17-01 also states that “if the data situation does not improve and the true quantities being caught as reported do not reflect the actual removals, they may have a significant impact on the quality of scientific advice”.

In 2016 the RCM NA proposed an intersessional task group to continue monitoring the impact of the Landing Obligation (LO) on data collection and catch estimates. This work was continued in 2017 and 2018 at a pan regional level for the Northern regions.

The questionnaire *Monitoring the impact of the landing obligation on data collection* was amended and circulated in order to capture the practical issues and perceived concerns relating to the landing obligation in the North Atlantic, Baltic and North Sea. The returned questionnaires were analysed and a full report presented in the report ISSG <sup>5</sup>**Fout! Verwijzingsbron niet gevonden.** along with a copy of the template. In addition, summaries from the RDB on BMS and logbook registered data were produced

*General summary on the findings:*

Overall, the findings were quite consistent across the three regions and relatively little change in comparison with 2017 was observed in the questionnaires relating to sampling, fishing behaviour, de-minimis monitoring, and recreational fisheries. Studies on the implication of the LO have continued in 2018. Some countries are experiencing high refusal rates, possibly related to the LO.

From the analysis of the RDB data it became clear that BMS landings and logbook registered discards are rare. This has led to additional concerns on the data quality of the discards and control data. SWE raised an issue around double-counting on observer trips which highlighted a greater concern around the quality of the discards and BMS data.

### 5.3.2 Workplan for 2020 – 2021

Based on the findings above and in Annex ISSG <sup>6</sup> it has been concluded that at this point in time there is no need for setting out the questionnaire *Monitoring the impact of the landing obligation on data collection* to all MS on an annual basis. This need could be reviewed in two years time to capture other and additional relevant information concerning the LO. Analysis on the RDB outputs should continue within the subgroup xxx. The subgroup has further concerns on the quality and estimation of the discard and BMS data in relation to (i) the lack of BMS in the fisheries and in the RDB database, (ii) double-counting of observer data, and (iii) increase and difficulties in analysing refusal rates.

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<sup>5</sup> [RCG ISSG reports 2019](#)

<sup>6</sup> [RCG ISSG reports 2019](#)

RCG NANS & EA 2019 suggests the Pan-Regional Subgroup on the Landing obligation is suspended and will convene in few years time with the following ToRs:

- Evaluate the implication of the landing obligation on national and regional catch sampling programmes [redesigned questionnaire]
- Overview of methodologies in the estimation of refusal rates

The following existing ToR should be taken up by the subgroup overview of fisheries:

- Review and analyse 2019 BMS and logbook registered discards to include CS and CL data in the RDB

### 5.3.3 Proposals for Decisions

As the RCG NA NS & EA 2019 agrees the Pan-Regional Subgroup on the Landing obligation to be suspended, there are no specific decisions needed from this sub-group to present to the NCs.

## 5.4 ToR 4 Development and implementation of Regional Workplans

During this year's meeting, progress has been made under ToR 4 as follows:

- Feedback from ISSG "Development of a Draft Regional work plan"
- Feedback from ISSG "Update of Risk Assessment for bycatch in the North Atlantic".
- Feedback from ISSG "Towards a regional sampling plan for the freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic".
- Feedback on review of mandatory surveys (EWG 19-05)
- Review of output from fishPi2 WKPG 2&3 and next steps
- Review of output from fishPi2 WKPG 4 and next steps
- Review of output from fishPi2 WKPG 5 and next steps

The results of the different ISSG are described in Part II of the RCG NA NS&EA 2019 report "Reports on Intersessional SubGroup (ISSG) work 2018-2019" ([RCG ISSG reports 2019](#)).

### 5.4.1 Feedback from ISSG "Development of Draft Regional work plan"

#### 5.4.1.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA2019

During the intersessional subgroup work the basic principles and constraints for the development of the regional work plan were agreed:

- A RWP should mirror NWP and aimed at providing data collection designed regionally rather than nationally.
  - The first constraint is then to modify *a minima* the shape of the tables in order to be able to display the requirements (and then realization for the Annual Report) by Member States in each of the table
  - The second constraint is to build a mechanism to work with both a RWP and a NWP at the national and regional level

- The proposal is to kick-start the setting of a RWP in each EU region, with the minimum set of information reaching agreement in a RCG, with the primary objective of learning how to work with both a RWP and all NWP in a region.
- A proposal of a set of tables to begin with has been developed.
- Once a core RWP is validated, it may thereafter, year after year, gain ground as and when new regional data collection will be agreed.

The RCG technical meeting, proposed to outline the following basic principles to be agreed by NC:

- Only actions which are regionally coordinated should be part of a RWP. Future regionally coordinated actions will be included in a RWP as and when they are agreed.
- A test-run for RWP with the elements listed above will be prepared for October 2020 and active in 2021 in parallel with the NWP (no need to resubmit a NWP 2021 and it won't overrule the NWP). The test-run RWP should follow the same validation process as the NWP for testing the feasibility at every stage.
- The objective is to officialise a RWP for 2022-2024 by October 2021.

#### **5.4.1.2 Workplan for 2020 – 2021**

ISSG RWP will continue its work after agreement by NCs on the overall approach. The group will specifically focus on the following:

- Consider the most recent proposals for the settings of NWP in the future (fishPi2, STECF, ...) to propose a RWP table setting;
- Finalise table 1A and propose a new table setting for RWP;
- Exchange with SG on RSP (freezer trawlers, Baltic RSP, ...) and propose to list the regional sampling plans in the RWP;
- Develop the content and settings of table 7A with only RCG ISSG and RCG meeting;
- Design the table 7C list of bi-lateral or multi-lateral agreements, including innovated actions for task sharing and capacity building;
- Propose contents and design of table 1G (and 1H) on International cost-sharing on surveys;
- Propose a test run RWP for the region which will work in parallel of each NWP in 2021.

#### **5.4.1.3 Proposals for Decisions**

The NCs are not yet required to decide on a draft regional work plan, but are requested to endorse the overall approach, the "test run" of a RWP with basic building blocks in 2020 and the roadmap to a draft regional work plan in 2021.

### **5.4.2 Feedback from ISSG "Update of Risk Assessment for bycatch in the North Atlantic"**

#### **5.4.2.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA2019**

A Risk assessment was completed for PET bycatch in the Northeast Atlantic to identify possible high risk métiers by fishing ground and their coverage by DCF/EU MAP sampling programmes.

The methodology to estimate the bycatch risk of different groups of species was developed by WKBYC (ICES 2013), based on the species abundance, métier, fishing effort in each different fishing region. The group combined this risk with the DCF sampling effort, to provide an index of which areas and fishing gears are most in need of sampling (ICES 2013b). This methodology was followed by fishPi (MARE/2014/19). To support the 2018-2019 risk assessment tasks of the ISSG, WGBYC 2019 reviewed the métier bycatch risk by PETS groups and species abundance tables by fishing ground and updated them during 2019 WGBYC meeting as and where required.

The risk assessment was updated with 2017-2018 data for the North Atlantic. The data used for this update was extracted from the RDB data base. Total fishing effort (number of trips) by fishing ground per métier and total sampling effort (number of trips) with observers onboard has been considered.

The first results of the outcome was presented at the RCG NA NS&EA 2019 technical meeting.

#### **5.4.2.2 Workplan for 2020 – 2021**

ISSG PET Risk assessment agreed to identify case studies for PETS bycatch monitoring based on 2019 risk assessment results with the following tasks:

Specific tasks 2019-2020:

- Identify several case studies covering different fisheries and regions with high risk bycatch rates based on the risk assessment update (2018)
- The case studies selected can consider high risk fisheries with important at sea observers coverage (i.e. trawlers) and fisheries with low coverage (i.e. longlines, netters), different fleet segments and PETS groups
- Suitability of the onboard sampling for sampling bycatch and other potential methodologies
- Feasibility of monitoring the selected case studies under a regional sampling

*Who:* RCG NA NS & EA, RCG BALTIC? and ICES WGBYC

*When:* Intersessional for 2020

Anticipated output: Draft about a detailed analysis of the case studies considering PETS bycatch monitoring

Data requirements: Transversal and sampling data uploaded to the RDB ES and bycatch data collected by ICES WGBYC.

#### **5.4.2.3 Proposals for Decisions**

The NCs are not yet required to decide on a draft regional sampling plan for bycatch in the Northeast Atlantic, but are requested to review and endorse the overall approach of the risk assessment and the proposed tasks for 2019/2020 including the development of more in depth case studies. This is with a view of including a regional sampling plan for bycatch in the proposed RWP.

### **5.4.3 Feedback from ISSG "Towards a regional sampling plan for the freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic "**

#### **5.4.3.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA2019**

A presentation detailing the progress of the subgroup towards the ToRs drafted in 2018 was given to the RCG. The primary aim of the subgroup is to propose a statistically robust regional sampling scheme for the European pelagic freezer trawler fleet to be considered for inclusion in the national workplans.

Utilising expert knowledge of national scientists, the freezer trawler fleet and the associated countries were identified as a first step for the proposal. Subsequently a data call was issued at the beginning of 2019 to France, Germany, the Netherlands and UK (England) for the provision of historical data in support of analysis. Two countries submitted on time, one delayed and one missed the data call, because the national authorities have indicated that they are not able to identify specifically the freezer trawlers within their national database. Therefore, only a preliminary analysis was completed by the time of the RCG. Analysis are detailed in the subgroup report which can be found on the RCG SharePoint with the following link ([RCG ISSG reports 2019](#)).

Some participating countries have expressed concerns with regard to confidentiality. As some countries have very small fleets (<5 vessels) this presents a challenge with regard to preserving vessel confidentiality as, even though vessel details are anonymized within the data call response, it may be possible to identify individual vessels. To date it is not clear which kind of information is acceptable to show within a report *e.g.* trip details with start and end dates and duration for an individual vessel. Furthermore, the progress of the subgroup has been hampered by the delayed and non-delivery of data. It is recommended that the confidentiality and data failure issues are discussed during the NC meeting in September and guidance provided for the RCG with respect to the issues raised.

#### **5.4.3.2 Workplan for 2020 – 2021**

The ISSG for Freezer trawlers in the NEA will renew its ToRs with adjusted timelines and work towards inclusion of its output in the proposed RWP. The subgroup will continue its work according to the following steps:

- Final analysis of freezer trawler fishing activity and historical catch sampling (dependent on the completion of the data call)
- Analysis of the national observer programmes / coverage / national resources for sampling
- Development of a simulation framework to test candidate sampling schemes
- Evaluation of the potential suitability for a regional sampling plan and drafting of a proposed sampling agreement. This will be done in form of a workshop involving all participants of the subgroup, with the format (*e.g.* online/physical) to be decided closer to the time.
- Proposal for a statistically robust regional sampling scheme which then can be forwarded to NCs/EU for evaluation (September 2019 dependent on the completion of the data call)
- Inclusion of the regional sampling plan for the freezer trawlers in the national work plans (October 2019 dependent on the completion of the data call).

### **5.4.3.3 Proposals for Decisions**

The NCs are not yet required to decide on a draft regional sampling plan for the freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic, but are requested to review and endorse the overall approach and the proposed tasks for 2019/2020. This is with a view of including a regional sampling plan in the proposed RWP.

### **5.4.4 Feedback on review of mandatory surveys (EWG 19-05)**

#### **5.4.4.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA2019**

The Commission presented the latest developments on the revision of the scientific surveys. STECF Experts met in May 2019 in Brussels to discuss the evaluation of the scientific surveys (EWG 19-05). Experts used the input of MS and end users to run the Decision Support Tool (DST) and produce a list of surveys for inclusion in the mandatory list of surveys, to be adopted with the revised future EU MAP. The EWG also tried to address more horizontal questions: during the analysis the experts were expected to highlight gaps and duplications.

The outcomes of the EWG meeting were the following:

1. a definite list of surveys proposed for inclusion as mandatory under the future EU MAP,
2. a list of surveys excluded from the proposed mandatory list,
3. a list of surveys that fulfil part of the criteria, but not all. These surveys are still considered useful, but cannot 'make it to the mandatory list'. The EWG will highlight what actions need to be taken to fulfil the rest of the criteria, so that they can be included,
4. gaps (stocks) not covered by surveys,
5. survey duplications (i.e. multiple surveys covering the same stock),
6. environmental variables collected by surveys (MSFD indicators)
7. Roadmap on next steps

#### **5.4.4.2 Workplan for 2020 – 2021**

The report of the EWG will be published in July 2019 following STECF plenary session and will be made available to RCGs, MS and end users afterwards. The report will also contain a roadmap on next steps.

### **5.4.5 Review of output from fishPi2 WP 2&3 and next steps**

#### **5.4.5.1 Output presented to RCG NA NS&EA2019**

The aims of WP2 and WP3 of fishPi<sup>2</sup> was as follows:

For WP2, to

- produce guidelines and criteria for determining fisheries suitable for regional sampling

- produce tools to create graphical outputs to explore logbook & sales note data to help identify fisheries suitable for regional sampling (R-package fishPiWP2)
- carry out example analyses

For WP3, to

- produce a repository of tools and guidelines to develop regional designs
- simulation test regional designs using logbook & sales note data
- draft regional work plan & adapt tables where necessary

The work focussed on two case studies, the Iberian demersal trawlers and North Sea demersal fisheries, considering an on-shore scheme only.

The main outcome of the work, using landed weight as a variable of interest, shows that some regionally stratified sampling designs with proportional effort allocation perform better than the status-quo national designs. However the effect on biological parameters needs to be clarified and pilot studies should be considered to test the feasibility of new designs, prior to implementation of a regional sampling design. Scripts and generic R-packages (fishPiCodes and fishPiSim) were developed. The annual work plan tables were adapted as follows:

- 4A, 4B, 4D combined, 4A, 4B, 4C combined
- Table of catch sampling designs introduced
- Table with sampling hierarchy introduced
- Table equivalent to 1C introduced
- Table of expected domain sample size introduced

The RCG was asked to consider the following:

- Accept the principles of the regional sampling schemes
- Consider carefully what evidence is required to reduce national sampling effort
- Consider the adaptations to the Annual Work Plan tables.

#### **5.4.5.2 Next Steps**

The RCG accepted the principles of the regional sampling schemes. The adaptations of the Annual Work Plan tables were not revised.

The RCG NA NS&EA2019 acknowledged the great effort done in different projects and workshops to develop tools and guidelines to design and optimize statistically sound sampling plans (FishPi 1 & 2, STREAM, RECOLAPE, WKBIOPTIM...). The group highlighted that the application of these tools requires sound statistical expertise and a deep knowledge of the biological sampling in place. It was discussed that if we want these tools to be generally used to design regional sampling plans in an effective way, we need to ensure that the appropriate support is available. The RCG NA NS&EA2019 recognised the need to maintain the expertise generated in these projects through an intersessional subgroup which reviews all the work done in the different projects; gives support in the application of existing tools and guidelines; and endorses further development where needed.

To progress the work developed in fishPi<sup>2</sup> WP2 &3, a ISSG is proposed on “Sampling Designs and sampling optimization methodologies” with the following ToRs

- Review the tools already available to develop a regional sampling plan based on simulations of commercial sampling designs of interest for the region/fisheries involved (e.g., fishPi, fishPi<sup>2</sup>, STREAM, etc). Identify strengths and shortcomings.
- Test the tools already available to optimize biological sampling of commercial catches (e.g., fishPi<sup>2</sup>, WKBIOPTIM, STREAM, etc) using North Sea and Iberian regional case studies developed in fishPi<sup>2</sup>. Identify strengths and shortcomings.
- Establish a plan for addressing the shortcomings through case studies. Regional sampling plans in progress (ie, those from fishPi) can be preferably used as case Studies. x
- Review generic statistical metrics derived from the simulations as well as the elements that have to be considered in the decision making process (costs, feasibility, suitability, etc). Identify strengths and shortcomings.
- Implement the framework developed in fishPi<sup>2</sup> to facilitate the selection within the scenarios simulated. This would allow RCGs to determine preferred sampling designs.
- Assist the RCGs in their needs related to the sampling design and sampling optimization such as the evaluation of potential regional plans.
- Establish the adequate connections between RCGs to work on these fields and with related expert groups (e.g. WGCATCH).
- Promote the use of all the tools reviewed within the context of the RCGs and Data Collection.

#### 5.4.5.3 Proposals for Decisions

As it is still premature to draft a regional plan, there is no proposal for decision for the NCs yet regarding a draft regional sampling plan for North Sea or Iberian demersal fisheries, but are requested to review and endorse the overall approach and the proposed tasks for 2019/2020. In this context, and to provide background NCs are encouraged to read report of fishpi<sup>2</sup> WP3. This is with a view to review the state of development of the Case Studies, and consider the future implementation of pilot studies to test the feasibility of new design in a regional sampling plan.

#### 5.4.6 Review of output from fishPi2 WP 4 and next steps

##### 5.4.6.1 Output presented to RCG NA NS&EA2019

WP 4 of fishPi2 “ Impact of Marine Ecosystems had the following objectives:

To provide a regional sampling plan **incidental by-catch of protected birds, mammals, reptiles and fish (PETS), predator-prey relationship and natural mortality of fish**, allowing an accurate, cost-efficient implementation of fisheries impacts on ecosystems by initiating new studies in a step-wise approach.

- a. Propose **specific areas of regional cooperation, additional requirements and possible trade-offs**,
- b. Develop or refine **methodologies/collection protocols**,
- c. **Allocating tasks to Member States** for the collection and analysis of these data,
- d. Solutions for **regional storage systems, data processing, management and raising of data**,

#### e. Evaluation of **cost implications**

The work package identified the important ecosystem components to evaluate natural mortality and predator prey relationships; reviewed the methodologies and protocols to estimate natural mortality and spatial distribution, examined related regional storage systems, data processing, management and raising of data and proposed how tasks can be allocated and what the estimated costs would be for a sampling programme. In addition, the work package identified ecosystem components and species for which information would be particularly important to obtain. In relation to bycatch, the work package also reviewed the methodologies and protocols and estimated costs for the proposed methods.

#### **5.4.6.2 Next Steps**

In terms of bycatch, the ISSG on “Update of Risk Assessment for bycatch in the North Atlantic” will consider the output and recommendations of FishPi2 WP4 in its work programme for 2019-2020 where specific case studies will be used to progress the risk assessment and development of bycatch sampling plans in the North Atlantic (see section 5.4.2).

In order to progress the regional coordination of stomach sampling, a new ISSG is proposed with the following ToRs and time lines.

Terms of Reference for an Intersessional subgroup on regionally coordinated stomach sampling:

- Define key biological parameters (e.g. natural mortality) that are needed for stock assessments (single- and multispecies) and can be deducted from coordinated stomach analysis studies.
- Compile and review available information on stomach sampling manuals and best practice from relevant previous studies.
- Identify international and national surveys that may be available for the stomach sampling (time of the year, duration, number of stations, spatial distribution)
- Develop (or adopt) an appropriate stomach sampling manual or guidelines for best practice. (Estimate expected expenditure of time and costs for analysis – per stomach, per haul, per species, per country involved)
- Suggest a regional stomach sampling plan for the North Sea: Period, timing, sample sizes, surveys to be sampled, and predator species to be sampled.
- Communicate and circulate this plan to relevant countries that are involved in the fishery on the sampled species and/or are participating in the scientific surveys. Ask for feedback.
- Incorporate the suggestions from the feedback into the sampling plan.
- Suggest a starting date and sampling period for the first sampling campaign.

#### **Timeline**

- September 2019: Define the biological parameters to be deducted from coordinated stomach content analyses in close cooperation with WGSAM.
- September 2019: Compile and review available information on stomach sampling manuals and best practice and sketch a draft for a coordinated stomach sampling program for the North Sea
- 3 – 6 September 2019 at WKBECOSS: Present the preliminary results of an ongoing pilot stomach sampling and analysis study (predator: *Merlangius merlangus*, area: German Bight) and present the draft of a coordinated stomach sampling program for

the North Sea. Receive feedback from international experts on stomach sampling programs.

- September-December 2019: Update the draft and circulate it within the subgroup. The result will be a finalized version of a regional sampling program for the North Sea.
- December 2019: Suggest a starting date for the first coordinated stomach sampling campaign in the North Sea.
- December 2019/January 2020: Await confirmation of participation or refusal.
- February 2020: Ask for confirmation or refusal.

#### **5.4.6.3 Proposals for Decisions**

Endorsement of 2019-2020 tasks for the ISSG on “Update of Risk Assessment for bycatch in the North Atlantic”;

Agreement to the new ISSG on regionally coordinated stomach sampling and endorsement of its ToRs and tasks for 2019-2020.

### **5.4.7 Review of output from fishPi2 WP 5 and next steps**

#### **5.4.7.1 Output presented to RCG NA NS&EA2019**

WP 5 of fishPi2 “Small Scale and Marine recreational fisheries” had the following objectives **for small scale fisheries**: to review and evaluate different methodologies used by Institutes/MS and to consider the fleet segmentations <10m, 10-12m and 12-15m for data collection purposes. The project outputs under WP5 highlighted:

- The need and importance to calculate good quality estimates of the SSF fishing activity variables (effort, catches etc.)
- The need of an Assessment of the coverage/completeness and the quality/reliability representativeness/precision of the data collected
- SSF have to be monitored differently by a census or a sampling approach adapted to their specific features.
- Transversal (logbook, sale notes) data coming from the current CR is not well adapted or insufficient to the SSF.
- Missing catches due to exceptions in the regulation
- Low quality effort information (under 10m fleet)
- Low quality on species composition of the catches (higher taxon codes use!!)
- Lack or scarce information of other biological variables data (length, discards, PETS bycatch...)
- Considerable differences between official and scientific estimates (i.e. 2-40% catch and effort depending on the species, region...)
- Difficulties in the implementation of surveys

The RCG was asked to discuss the following aspects in relation to SSFs:

-Given the high uncertainty of the quality of the data collected for the SSF, it is necessary to make a rigorous evaluation of this fleet data at EU level. RCGs could be the responsible for this evaluation by region through experts in this fleet (Regional sampling plans + Data Analysis and Quality “Pan regional subgroup”);

- Although the SSF is part of the commercial fleet, but due to their special characteristics consider a specific section in the reviewed EU MAP. The fleet segments to be considered: <10/10-12/12-15 fleet segments. (EU MAP revision subgroup “Governance Pan regional group”);
- Data collection on biological data (length frequencies, Discards, PETS bycatch etc.) and methodologies to collect these data needs to be evaluated based on end users needs. (End users and RCGs “Pan regional subgroup”);
- Catches made by SSF may present a different size structure than catches made by LSF;
- SSF can contribute significantly to the overall discard ( i.e. nursery areas in coastal areas) rate and amount depending on gear type;
- PETS bycatch could be relevant (i.e. gillnets and cetaceans, longlines and seabirds, turtles).

The main outputs of WP5 in relation to **marine recreational fisheries** was the following:

**Pilot studies:**

- Important differences in the expertise and objectives:
- Some MS objective is to improve their routinely surveys and analyse different methodologies
- First survey to collect MRF data
- Review of the existing pilot studies showed a large variety of objectives at a MS level (e.g. target population, target species, period, duration etc.).

**Sea bass case study:**

- MSE test different scenarios for precision & bias to see impact on assessment
- National surveys: uncertainty driven by countries with largest catch, so need to focus there (i.e. France & UK)
- MRF is a multispecies fishery (multispecies approach needed)

The RCG was asked to consider the following recommendations by WP5 in relation to marine recreational fisheries:

- A scientific evaluation of the outcomes of the pilot studies should be done (STECF, conducted by experts on MRF sampling programmes) to assess the potential impact on stocks and facilitate the design of the future routine data collection on MRF. Outputs evaluated by the RCGs (Regional sampling plans Pan regional subgroup).
- Multispecies surveys are needed to provide data on level of catches and releases of all species and allow the impact of MRF on stocks to be assessed (EU MAP revision subgroup “Governance Pan regional group”).
- Complete SSF and MRF data needs to be included in European databases (RDBES) to ensure that it is available and utilized by end users including stock assessors, RCGs, etc.
- There is a need for a regional data base adapted to the specificities of SSF and MRF.
- fishPi2 in parallel with WGRFS proposal to ICES (short and long-term)
- Proposal presented to the SC RDB.

#### **5.4.7.2 Next Steps**

In order to progress the regional coordination of SSF and to apply the outputs of FishPi2 WP5, a new ISSG is proposed with the ToRs and time lines.

Title: Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level.

Specific tasks 2019-2020:

1. Assessment of the coverage/completeness and the quality /reliability of the data collected
2. Sampling effort allocated to these fisheries at regional level under the EU MAP sampling programmes
3. Analysis of differences between transversal data (sale notes/logbook) and scientific estimates coming from specific sampling programmes
4. Data collection on biological data (length frequencies, discards etc.)

Who: RGN NANS & EA, RCG BAL TIC? RCG MED & BS

When: Intersessional for 2020

Anticipated output: Draft about the coverage and quality on the data collected for the SSF.

Data requirements: Transversal data uploaded to the RDB ES and data collected for the SSF under the EU MAP sampling programmes

#### **5.4.7.3 Proposals for Decisions and Recommendations**

Agreement to the new ISSG on “Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level” and endorsement of its ToRs and tasks for 2019-2020.

Recommendations in relation to MRF:

- A workshop should be held by the STECF to review the outcomes from the recreational fisheries pilot studies, compare impacts with commercial fisheries, and make proposals for future data collection.
- MRF data should be stored within the RDBES, but funding is limited, so the costs of integrating rec fish data need to be estimated by ICES, a funding source identified, and level of prioritisation agreed.
- MRF data should be included in the stock assessment as a matter of course, but this can be a challenge from a methodological perspective, so best practice for inclusion so recreational fisheries should be developed.
- Review of the outcomes of regional cooperation projects (FishPi2, STREAM, SECFISH) is needed to support the development regional sampling programme for recreational fisheries and should be done by an intersessional group.

## **5.5 ToR 5 Propose ways to improve the regional coordination and feedback on regional issues**

During this year's meeting, a lot of progress has been made under ToR 5 as follows:

- Governance of RCGs- FishPi<sup>2</sup> project WP 1 -Central resources to support work in the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs), a need for robust long term funding
- Feedback from ICES Working group on Recreational Fisheries (WGRFS)
- Feedback from ISSG on Diadromous Fish
- Feedback from governance discussions on Survey task sharing
- Feedback from Governance discussions on Rules of Procedures

### **5.5.1 Governance of RCGs – Outcome FishPi<sup>2</sup> project WP 1 - Central resources to support work in the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs), a need for robust long term funding**

#### **5.5.1.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA2019**

##### Background and rationale

The Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) are the main hub for regional coordination and cooperation within the different regions. The RCGs should in accordance with Council regulation (EU) 2017/1004 aim at developing and implementing procedures, methods, quality assurance and quality control for collecting and processing data with a view to enabling the reliability of scientific advice to be further improved. The RCGs may further prepare draft regional workplans, complementing or replacing the national workplans MS submit to the Commission on a regular basis. The RCGs have further a key role to interact with end-users of scientific data (EU) 2017/1004 and to, after end-user consultation, coordinate and agree on details in data to be collected and managed on the regional level ((EU) 2016/1251).

The RCGs have complex and extensive tasks but are presently not supported by central resources. The only exception is the maintenance of the regional database that is included in the MoU between ICES and the Commission. The meetings of the RCGs are presently prepared, run and reported by the elected chairs. This makes the system vulnerable as different chairs have different levels of ambition. The RCGs have further, in order to increase the effectiveness, agreed on working procedures where most analytical work is done between meetings. This requires that the chairs keep track of the work between meetings as well. The newly adopted Rules and Procedures do also put more responsibility on the chairs as there now, for example, are clearer rules for documents, participation in meetings and observers. All this requires administration.

The RCGs are expected to interact with a wide group of end-users. This is difficult since the work of RCGs are largely invisible resulting in end-users to be either unaware of RCGs or to have unrealistic expectations.

The recent fishPi<sup>2</sup> project (MARE/2016/22) identified the need for robust funding of central resources for RCG work to be effective and consistent. The project elaborated suggestions for a secretariat (to assure consistency and to reduce the burden on the chairs) and a webpage (to increase outreach) and suggested that the costs for such resources, as well as costs for development of the RDBES (regional database and estimation system) to meet future RCG needs, are something that need to be discussed between the NCs and the Commission. The suggestions were presented and discussed at the RCGs (NA NS&EA and Baltic) technical meetings in June 2019.

Need for decision

The NCs (in Baltic, NS&EA and NA) need to take a decision assuring medium-long term (> 3-5 years) funding for central resources necessary for effective RCG work. Identified central resources needed are

- Development of functionalities of the RDBES for RCG use (further elaborated in section 5.2.3)
- Secretariat for the RCG
- Website for the RCGs.

The central resources will support regional management of fishery dependent data necessary for regional workplans and regional sampling plans. They will further contribute to make end-users aware of ongoing work in the RCGs and support overall outreach. A secretariat will ease the burden for chairs and participants in the RCGs and assure consistency in outputs over time when chairs are changing.

**Estimated costs for essential central resources (areas covered by RCG Baltic, RCG NS&EA and RCG NA)**

	Maintenance	Development	Document
Regional Database and Estimation System (RCG part)	Presently included in MoU between ICES and COM	~ 75 000 euro/ year	ICES /SCRDB
Secretariat	~ 100 000 euro/ year		fishPi2 report
Webpage	Included in budget for secretariat	~ 30 000 euro	fishPi2 report

The estimated total cost for a secretariat and to establish a webpage would be 130 000 euro the first year and 100 000 euros the following.

**Models to finance**

The RCGs (and their predecessors the RCMs) have repeatedly tried to get funding for central resources (in particular development RDB, SmartDots) from the Commission. Lack of funding on the central level imply that resources on the local level (MS) might not be used in the most efficient way. It is thereby suggested that the MS share the costs of the central resources. This has advantages as RCGs and MS keep independency and control over how central resources are developed and utilized.

If MS agree to finance the central resources this can be done in different ways eg. as a flat rate across MS, dependent on MS share in EMFF or as combinations between the two. Below are tables (year 1 and year 2-5) showing examples of different MS contributions assuming different models. The example is including the 15 MS participating in RCG NE&EA, NA and Baltic.

<b>Regions</b>					
Baltic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic and North Atlantic					
			Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<b>YEAR 1, Total cost</b>	<b>130 000 €</b>				<b>2 500 €</b>
	EMFF sum 2014-2020	Distribution key	EMFF Distribution key	Flat rate	Flat rate of <b>Option 3</b> + distribution key
Member State	€	%	€	€	€
BE	41 746 051	1,01	1 313	8 667	3 434
DK	208 355 420	5,04	6 552	8 667	7 162
DE	219 596 276	5,31	6 905	8 667	7 413
IE	147 601 979	3,57	4 642	8 667	5 803
EE	100 970 418	2,44	3 175	8 667	4 759
ES	1 161 620 889	28,10	36 528	8 667	28 491
FR	587 980 173	14,22	18 490	8 667	15 656
LV	139 833 742	3,38	4 397	8 667	5 629
LT	63 432 222	1,53	1 995	8 667	3 919
NL	101 523 244	2,46	3 193	8 667	4 772
PL	531 219 456	12,85	16 705	8 667	14 386
PT	392 485 464	9,49	12 342	8 667	11 282
FI	74 393 168	1,80	2 339	8 667	4 165
SE	120 156 004	2,91	3 778	8 667	5 189
UK	243 139 437	5,88	7 646	8 667	7 940
	<b>4 134 053 943</b>	100,00	130 000	130 000	130 000
			Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
<b>YEAR 2 - 5, Total cost</b>	<b>100 000 €</b>				<b>2 000 €</b>
	EMFF sum 2014-2020	Distribution key	EMFF Distribution key	Flat rate	Flat rate of <b>Option 3</b> + distribution key
Member State	€	%	€	€	€
BE	41 746 051	1,01	1 010	6 667	2 707
DK	208 355 420	5,04	5 040	6 667	5 528
DE	219 596 276	5,31	5 312	6 667	5 718
IE	147 601 979	3,57	3 570	6 667	4 499
EE	100 970 418	2,44	2 442	6 667	3 710
ES	1 161 620 889	28,10	28 099	6 667	21 669
FR	587 980 173	14,22	14 223	6 667	11 956
LV	139 833 742	3,38	3 382	6 667	4 368
LT	63 432 222	1,53	1 534	6 667	3 074
NL	101 523 244	2,46	2 456	6 667	3 719
PL	531 219 456	12,85	12 850	6 667	10 995
PT	392 485 464	9,49	9 494	6 667	8 646
FI	74 393 168	1,80	1 800	6 667	3 260
SE	120 156 004	2,91	2 906	6 667	4 035
UK	243 139 437	5,88	5 881	6 667	6 117
	<b>4 134 053 943</b>	100,00	100 000	100 000	100 000

Table 5.4 Possible options for distribution of the costs between MS to fund central resources necessary for effective RCG work

### 5.5.1.2 Workplan 2020-2021

Depending on the decisions taken by NC in September 2020, it's the responsibility of the RCG chairs to set up a plan for how to make progress in the direction and ambition of the decision within the suggested ISSG 'Implementation of secretariat and webpage'.

### 5.5.1.3 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions

<b>RCG</b> <b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b> <b>NA NS&amp;EA BAL 2019 – D5 – Central resources to support work in the RCGs - a need for robust long term funding of the RDBES development</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	RDBES Development – support of RCGs and ICES stock assessment expert groups
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	a) NCs to decide if their MS will finance the technical development, project management and dedicated workshops of the RDBES at an annual cost of €75,000 between 2020 and 2023; b) NCs to decide on which model to use for costsharing, flat rate or pro rata of EMFF DCF funding allocation as outlined in table XX and further elaborated in;
<b>Implication</b>	RDBES development will be completed and it will be available to support the RCGs and ICES stock assessment expert groups according to the development road-map.
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	RCG NA NS&EA Baltic National Correspondents
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	Section 5.5 of the RCG Report

<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b> <b>RCG Baltic 2019 – D6 – Central resources to support work in the RCGs - a need for robust long term funding</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of FishPi2 WP1 on governance of RCGs
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019

<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	<p>a) NCs to decide if their MS will finance the central resources</p> <p>b) NCs to decide on which model to use for costsharing, either to use the models presented in 5.5.1 or another model.</p> <p>c) NC to decide on starting year, if 2020, include in WP 2020-2021.</p>
<b>Implication</b>	<p>The central resources will support regional management of fishery dependent data necessary for regional workplans and regional sampling plans. They will further contribute to make end-users aware of ongoing work in the RCGs and support overall outreach. A secretariat will ease the burden for chairs and participants in the RCGs and assure consistency in outputs over time when chairs are changing.</p>
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	<p>NCs of NA NS&amp;EA and Baltic</p>
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	<p>See text in chapter 5.5.1 and for details regarding funding for RDBES see chapter 5.2.3</p>

### 5.5.2 Feedback from ICES Working group on Recreational Fisheries (WGRFS)

The 2019 WGRFS meeting was held from the 10 – 14 June 2019, so was after the RCG NA NS&EA meeting. As a result, it was not possible to provide a summary or feedback from the WGRFS. Instead, the activities and progress with marine recreational fisheries (MRF) since the previous RCG meeting was summarised. In addition, an update on the outcomes from the 2019 WGRFS will be provided in advance of the National Correspondents meeting in September 2019.

The importance of MRF in Europe from a biological, social and economic perspective was illustrated and the need to embed MRF within the broader fisheries management process highlighted, but it is currently unclear what this means from a regional coordination perspective. At a European level, the PECH committee issued a report on the state of play in MRF in 2018 that recommended robust data were collected on all species and gears, inclusion in future regulation, rules for management and financial support under the EMFF. Since then, the proposed update to the control reg text included provision for licensing, reporting and enforcement of MRF, but this was not well received by individual member states. In addition, updates have been proposed to the EU-MAP related to recreational fisheries. MRF has also been excluded from the landing obligation.

The ToRs for the WGRFS were reiterated, and the RCG was reminded that the WGRFS will be setting up new 3-year ToRs starting in 2020, so it is important for the RCG NA NS&EA to identify specific tasks that it would like the WGRFS to undertake during this period. The challenges with understanding angler behaviour was highlighted and the ToRs for the ICES workshop on integrating human dimensions into the management of MRF (WKHDR) that will happen in November 2019 were discussed.

The RCG NA made four recommendations related to MRF in 2018:

- MRF surveys should collect data on all species caught rather than, solely, the species defined in the DCF (7)
- MRF data should be included in RDBES as soon as is practically possible (8).
- MRF removals is reviewed and included in assessments where catches are large (9)
- Potential for regional cooperation is reviewed by WGRFS based on outcomes of the regional cooperation projects (10).

Progress had been made against each of these recommendations and updates were provided as outlined below.

The need for multispecies surveys was discussed during the ISSG on revisions to the EU-MAP. Updates were made to both the delegated and implementing decision, but did not specify multispecies surveys nor the approach for MRF surveys after the pilots. This was mainly because it was felt that the outcomes from the pilot studies needed to be reviewed and an assessment of the impact of MRF was necessary to inform future approaches. A proposal was made for an STECF workshop to review pilot studies and assess the impact of MRF on fish stocks.

MRF data is no longer included in the economic data call, so a solution for storage is needed urgently to ensure that MRF data are accessible, transparent and coordinated. At the 2018 meeting, the proposal was to store raised estimates in the RDBES. A proposal has been made and discussed with the SCRDES, but is unlikely to be done until after the fisheries independent surveys are complete. In addition, it was unclear how much funding would be needed. It is important that these issues are resolved, so that the deadline for inclusion is known and funding sources identified.

There are still few stock assessments that include MRF catches, that are limited to sea bass (northern and Biscay stocks), western Baltic cod, and Baltic salmon. This was raised at WGCSE and WGNSSK in relation to pollock and cod. There are challenges for inclusion of MRF catches, so development of best-practice is needed.

The EC funded regional cooperation projects, FishPi2, STREAM and SECFISH, that all include aspects related to MRF. This includes: data collection, data management and storage, sampling, and economic data needs. In addition, FishPi2 included a case study on regional cooperation in collection of MRF data on sea bass. All three projects have worked closely together and are developing a common document on MRF for the EC

#### 5.5.2.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA2019

There was significant discussion at the RCG NA NS&EA about MRF, which is summarised below. It is important that these issues are addressed from a regional cooperation perspective. To achieve this, it was felt that there needed to be closer links between the RCG and WGRFS to advise on the EU MAP regulation, carry out scientific evaluation of National Work Plans for MRF, update the species list for each region, and define additional data collection needs. There was discussion about the potential for creation of an intersessional group for MRF. Clear ToRs would be needed for the intersessional work and a nominated chair for the group. However, there was likely to be overlap with the WGRFS, so it was not considered necessary as long as there is a strong link between the groups and RCG NA NS&EA contribute to the future WGRFS ToRs. This should be reviewed during the RCG NA NS&EA in 2020 to assess if specific RCG work on MRF is needed.

WGRFS should help with the identification of stocks to be include in the assessment working groups, where MRF is an important component. In addition, the data available (catch, effort, biological, post-release mortality) should be assessed for quality by MRF experts and support provided for the assessors on how best to include MRF catches. WGRFS should be responsible for providing expertise and tools to make this evaluation. This needs to be developed alongside other initiatives for commercial data (e.g. WGCATCH) and ICES EOSG approaches to regionalisation.

It was clear that a database is needed to store MRF catches now that they are not included in the economic data call. The RDBES was still felt to be the right solution, but a clear timeline is needed and estimation of the funding requirements, so that these issues can be addressed now. In addition, the potential to upload of raw MRF data should be considered in the longer term.

The MRF pilot studies are starting to deliver data, but it was not clear how to proceed with data collection in the revision of the EU-MAP. At present, this could range from inclusion as regular surveys to no further data collection required. As a result, a detailed evaluation of the pilot studies is needed to assess the impact of MRF and identify future data collection approaches. Hence, an evaluation of the MRF pilot studies was proposed that should be done within an STECF EWG, possibly by a specific subgroup alongside the evaluation of the 2020 Annual Reports. For this to occur, it is important to identify chairs, experts, objectives, and data requirements.

#### 5.5.2.2 Workplan 2020-2021

The workplan for 2020-21 should focus on:

- Development of regional workplans based on the outcomes from FishPi2, STREAM and SECFISH.
- Inclusion of MRF data in the RDBES.

- Assessment of the pilot studies in order to define the future requirements under the EU-MAP.
- Support assessment working groups in understanding key stocks for MRF, data quality and methods for inclusion of MRF data in stock assessments.
- Working closely with the WGRFS to ensure that RCG NA NS&EA future needs are satisfied.

#### 5.5.2.3 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions

There are two main recommendations on MRF:

- STECF should assess the outcomes of the pilot studies and define what is needed for future data collection.
- Timescales and funding requirements should be agreed for inclusion of MRF data in the RDBES.

### 5.5.3 Feedback from ISSG on Diadromous Fish

#### 5.5.3.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA 2019

Report from ISSG is found in RCG ISSG 2018-2019, Annex 8.

The report of Diadromous Fish group includes the issues presented below.

1. Development of regional sampling/work plans for diadromous fish and quality assurance of data
  - 1.1. What are the regional work/sampling plans intended to contain and achieve, and how they can be beneficial to the Member States in terms of eels, salmon and sea trout (ToRs developed by Baltic RCG 2017)
    - Completed: overviews fisheries, sampling programmes, data collection & data needs for ICES EWGs (see DSG report)
    - Issue: data collection not shared between MS, difficult to agree details for regional plans. But coordination is possible and being implemented. Quality assurance is where we can possibly do the most useful work.
    - In Baltic potential issues with cost sharing between countries with few, and countries with many rivers
    - Conclusion: DSG keeps working on regional sampling plans, dependent on FishPi2 (and Med equivalent) outcomes
  - 1.2. Recommendations on fisheries and fishery-independent data needs for regional work/sampling plans, considering the tables of data needs drafted by RCGs 2018 and then updated by ICES expert working groups
    - Some data requested in EU-MAP currently not used in ICES stock assessment and therefore not collected by some countries, other data is not requested by EU-MAP but is used in assessments (see DSG report): -> *A future data collection programme, as flexible as possible where data collection can be included or omitted (depending on end user needs) following discussions/decisions in the DSG/RCG, would be desirable*
    - Work plans should follow recommendations of the WKESDCF report 2012 and make use of index catchments and standardised sampling methods

- A pilot study is required to identify a standardised method for the collection of catch and biological data on recreational fishing for eel, both retained and released
- 1.3. Support to the ICES WGs in determining the effect of fisheries and fishery-independent data quality issues on their assessments, and recommendations for addressing issues via the regional work/sampling plans
- Data on recreational catches (in marine and freshwater) are typically uncertain and work to improve data collection and estimation procedures is needed
  - Levels of misreporting and unreporting are to a large extent unknown, especially in salmon and sea trout in the Baltic. Unclear how it affects assessment results and advice about fishing possibilities. -> *Proposed: i) Reliable data on species composition in catches from the offshore and coastal fisheries where substantial misreporting is suspected to take place should be made available to the EGs, ii) a more comprehensive control program of the sea fishery*
  - Evaluate and potentially increase electrofishing programs in some rivers due to spatially expanding populations
  - Collection of sea trout parr densities from typical trout streams all Baltic Sea riparian countries
  - Standardisation of reporting eel stock indicators in future to limit potential variability
  - Establishment of eel Data Quality Assurance System
  - Establish methods to quantify effect of data quality on the international eel and salmonid assessments
- 1.4. Work with the end-users and the RDBES steering group and developers to make best use of the RDBES for developing and implementing regional work/sampling plans
- Commercial landings and effort for Baltic salmon and sea trout (currently in InterCatch) should be possible to upload to RDBES
  - Biological sampling data from Baltic salmon and sea trout catches should be possible to upload to RDBES (currently in RDB FishFrame)
  - Not clear whether biological monitoring data from rivers and lagoons (electrofishing data, juvenile and adult counts, etc) will be possible to fit to RDBES structure in the future
  - Completing development of the specific Eel DB is a high priority and should be pursued within the next couple of WGEEL meetings, and WGNAS is examining salmon DB possibilities
- 1.5. The rivers to be monitored for eel and salmon at regional level.
- The seven selected Baltic Sea Index Rivers cover all salmon assessment units, and this selection is judged to be sufficient for the WGBAST to perform analyses and provide stock advice

- Salmon abundance data (mainly parr densities derived from electrofishing, but also smolt counting in a few cases) from non index rivers are also necessary for ICES stock assessment and advice
- Sea trout index rivers in the Baltic should be established to fulfil assessment requirements with respect to geographical coverage and data collection needs
- Member States should provide their list of eel index rivers or habitats and describe their selection process

## 2. Recommendations

### 2.1. How to address any fisheries and fishery-independent data transmission issues reported by the end-users

- Data calls are new to diadromous fish and ICES is still developing information on transmission issues
- The content of different data calls relevant to eels and salmon must be checked for inconsistencies and a method developed to standardise and optimise data calls in the future, including the eel stock coordinator made aware of all data calls that feature eels

### 2.2. The revision of the EU MAP based on end-user requirements.

- DSG made recommendations at the subgroup EU MAP reform meeting in Ghent in May 2019

#### **5.5.3.2 Workplan 2020-2021**

Issues to be touched upon:

- Work on regional sampling plans, dependent on FishPi2 outcomes
- Work towards a pilot study to identify a standardised method for the collection of catch and biological data on recreational fishing for eel, both retained and released
- Investigate levels and effects of mis- and unreporting of diadromous fish in
- Work with end-users on evaluation of electrofishing programmes for salmonids and establishment of Data Quality Assurance Systems for diadromous fish.
- Work with the end-users and the RDBES steering group and developers to make best use of the RDBES
- Continue work with end users on selection of index rivers for eel and sea trout in the Baltic Sea
- Keep abreast of Data Calls for diadromous fish
- Evaluate possibilities for sharing the survey costs between countries with few and countries with many migratory fish rivers in Baltic
- Consider the collection of economic data of migratory species in freshwater

#### **5.5.3.3 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions**

During the RCG NA NS&EA2019 there were no proposals for recommendations and decisions for the Decision available yet, this because of the non-availability of the chair of the ISSG (clash of two meetings during the same week) to present them.

#### 5.5.4 Feedback from Governance discussions on Survey task sharing

##### 5.5.4.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA 2019

MS's participation to surveys based on a MS's TAC share of a certain stock, subject of the survey, has been debated over for years now. Since the 2017 implementation of the DCF recast, this participation by MS has become mandatory. Currently, only two surveys are subject to cost sharing; the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic and the International Blue Whiting survey.

The discussion on participation mainly revolves around sharing of vessel costs in various forms. As stated during previous RCGS, the implementation of cost sharing is a multidisciplinary and time consuming exercise requiring thorough consideration as well as full commitment of the MS involved in a survey or presently not involved in the survey but holding a share of the TAC. These shares are then related to the target species of a given survey. Currently, target species are not defined through the legislation, thus hampering further exploration of cost-sharing options. This variable might be included in future updates of the so-called Table 10 of EU-MAP (ref STECF EWG 19-05).

Pending this update and having acknowledged the need to continue the current well-established cost-sharing agreements for the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic and the International Blue Whiting survey the RCG proposed 2 agreements for cost-sharing. These agreements build upon the previous agreements as these are due to terminate by the end of 2019. Both surveys fall under the remit of this RCG.

##### *International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic*

The EU part of the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic is carried out by Denmark (more specifically named as the Atlanto-Scandian Herring survey). The updated agreement is a 1:1 renewal of the 2018-2019 agreement, thus resulting in Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom to contribute to the survey as carried out by Denmark. The proposed decision and agreement can be found in Annex 2 and Annex 3 respectively.

##### *International Blue Whiting Survey*

For the Blue Whiting survey, cost-sharing goes back as far as 2005 (RCM NEA report 2005) when during a dedicated meeting in Brussels (prior to Management Committee) agreement was reached on the cost-sharing model for this survey by Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Ireland, Netherlands and United Kingdom. This agreement has continued ever since, despite not being acted upon by some MS involved. The EU part of the International Blue Whiting Survey has traditionally been carried out by Ireland and The Netherlands. Since 2019, Spain is contributing vessel time to the survey as well. This (exploratory) contribution was initiated after the settlement of the agreement 2018-2019.

Chapter II.7 of COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 stipulates that the threshold for participation to a survey is set at 3% while the same article also allows for setting an alternative threshold for participation to a survey at regional level. The 3% threshold was debated over when establishing the current EU-MAP as the initial threshold was set at 5%. The administrative burden is too high when applying a 3% threshold. Thus, the RCG proposes to decide to raise the threshold for contribution to this survey for 2020-2021 to 5%, pending the revision of EU-MAP. As a result, Sweden will no longer contribute to the survey as the Swedish share falls well below 5%. The proposed decision can be found in Annex 2.

Based on the inclusion of the above mentioned Spanish addition to the survey as well as the proposed 5% threshold a renewed agreement was set up for decision by the September meeting. The proposed decision and agreement can be found in Annex 2 and Annex 3 respectively.

#### 5.5.4.2 Workplan 2020-2021

The ISSG group on surveys is suspended until the publication of the revised Table 10

#### 5.5.4.3 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions

<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019</b> <b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019 – D1 – Cost-sharing agreement for participation to the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas 2020-2021</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of Subgroup Surveys
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	Agree on cost-sharing agreement for participation to the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas 2020-2021. The cost-sharing will follow a distribution key based on TAC shares, in line with the Gothenburg-model <sup>7</sup> .
<b>Implication</b>	Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom will cost-share the vessel costs of the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas in 2020 and 2021. The survey will be carried out by Denmark (carried out by R/V Dana).
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs of NA NS&EA
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	See text in Section 5.5.3 in RCG NANS&EA report

<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019</b> <b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019 – D2 – Cost-sharing agreement for participation to the International Blue Whiting survey 2020-2021</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of Subgroup Surveys
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019

<sup>7</sup> Report of the pan-regional RCG subgroup on cost sharing of research surveys at sea, Gothenburg 2016.

<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	Agree on cost-sharing agreement for participation to the International Blue Whiting survey 2020-2021.  2020-2021. The cost-sharing will follow a distribution key based on TAC shares, in line with the Gothenburg-model <sup>8</sup> .
<b>Implication</b>	Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, The Netherlands, United Kingdom will cost-share the vessel costs of the International Blue Whiting Survey in 2020 and 2021. The survey will be carried out by Ireland (R/V Celtic Explorer), The Netherlands (R/V Tridens ) and Spain (R/V Miguel Oliver).
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs of Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, The Netherlands, United Kingdom
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	See text in Section 5.5.3 in RCG NANS&EA report

<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019 – D3 – Cost-sharing agreement for participation to the International Blue Whiting survey 2020-2021</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of Subgroup Surveys
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	Chapter II.7 of COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 allows for setting an alternative threshold for participation to a survey at regional level. Under the same article, the threshold for participation is set at 3%. For the revision of EU-MAP, establishing the threshold at 5% has been proposed by various respondents in the consultation round, following this line and to reduce the administrative burden, this decision adapts the threshold for participation to the International Blue Whiting Survey 2020-2021 to 5%.
<b>Implication</b>	1 MS previously contributing to the survey costs will be excluded from 2020-2021 cost-sharing.
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	All NCs RCG NA NS&EA.
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	See text in Section 5.5.3 in RCG NA NS&EA report

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<sup>8</sup> Report of the pan-regional RCG subgroup on cost sharing of research surveys at sea, Gothenburg 2016.

## 5.5.5 Feedback from Governance discussions on Rules of Procedures

### 5.5.5.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA 2019

Since 2017, both RCGs operated under their respective Rules of Procedures (ref both reports). The RoPs stem from a draft, pan-regional and uniform RoP, modified to the needs of each RCG. In case the merge of both RCGs is considered successful and to be continued, the RoPs of the merged group need to be (re-)established. A comparison between the two RoPs was made (Annex 3) highlighting the differences between the RoPs. This comparison did not reveal any substantial difference between the RoPs. The main differences related to organisational aspects (e.g. approval of draft agenda at beginning of meeting, time-line for acceptance of observers), and are not considered as 'show-stoppers' preventing the adoption of the RoPs for the merged group.

Given that all MS involved the merged RCG have already previously endorsed the RCG NS&EA RoPs and that no major discrepancies are found between both relevant RoPs, RCG NANSEA proposes to establish the current RCG NS&EA as the RoPs for the merged RCG (Annex 2). As a standing task, each year the RoPs will be reviewed whether or not the RoPs are still fit for the setup of the RCG and its tasks. The only adaptation to the RCG NS&EA RoPs that needs to be made is the area of competence for the merged RCG. The updated RoP can be found in Annex 3.

#### 5.5.5.2 Workplan 2020-2021

The agreed RoP will be reviewed in 2020.

#### 5.5.5.3 Proposals for Recommendations and Decisions

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 – D4 – Establish the current RCG NS&amp;EA RoP as the RoP for the merged RCG NA and RCG NS&amp;EA group.</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	RCG governance
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	Accept the RCG NS&EA RoPs as the RoP for the merged RCG NA and RCG NS&EA group.  The area of competence of the RCG is updated to reflect the renewed area.
<b>Implication</b>	The RoP of the RCG NA are no longer applicable to this group. The RoP of RCG NS&EA are directly applicable to this group.
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs of Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	See text in Section 5.5.4 and Annex 3 in RCG NANS&EA report: RoP and RoP comparison table

## 5.6 ToR 6 Support of ToRs

During this year's meeting, a lot of progress has been made under ToR 5 as follows:

- FishPi<sup>2</sup> project (MARE/2016/22)
- ISSG Future work 2019-2020

### 5.6.1 ISSG FishPi<sup>2</sup> project (MARE/2016/22)

#### 5.6.1.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA2019

This project has brought together over 50 scientists from 14 institutes, from 10 Member States (13 countries and autonomous regions) in work package teams, to address Biological data collection in EU waters.

The project consortium spans the basins of the North Sea and Eastern Arctic and the North Atlantic. The project consortium reunited many of the participants of the fishPi project (MARE 2014/19) with additional participation from Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic (RCG NA) institutions.

The project has built on the work achieved in the fishPi project, further strengthening regional cooperation, and has provided some clear guidance on the implementation phase of regional sampling. Work packages have specifically addressed the operation of putative Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) (WP1); sets out scoping of regional fisheries (WP2); and proposes regional sampling plans for commercial fisheries (WP3). Other work packages have addressed stomach and incidental bycatch sampling (WP4); small scale and recreational fisheries sampling (WP5); and national and regional data quality (WP6). The project outcomes have been disseminated to the North Sea and Eastern Arctic, North Atlantic, and Baltic RCGs in 2018 (WP7).

The feedback from these interactions led to a dissemination workshop with National Correspondents and DG MARE representatives in February 2019 (WP8). The project team established close links with other successful consortia and the STREAM project in particular, thus building both within region expertise and facilitating pan-regional cooperation. This report which documents the work conducted under the fishPi<sup>2</sup> project is divided into a Summary Report and a series of related Annexes which contain more detailed material relevant to each Work Package.

The Summary Report and Annexes can be found at the following URLs:

- <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs/regional-grants>
- <https://www.masts.ac.uk/research/>

The Summary Report and Annexes together with ancillary R code can be found at:

<https://github.com/ices-tools-dev/FishPi2/tree/master/>

The specific project outputs of each work package were presented during the RCG NA NS&EA 2019 and are summarised in this report under the relevant ToRs.

#### 5.6.1.2 Work plan for 2020-2021

The outputs and recommendations from fishPi<sup>2</sup> will be progressed through specific tasks of the RCG intersessional subgroups in 2020. See section 5.6.2 and tables 5.6.2.2 and 5.6.2.3.

## 5.6.2 Proposal for ISSG work 2019-2020

### 5.6.2.1 Progress during RCG NA NS&EA2019

The setup of the intersessional work 2018-2019 has increased the overall achievement for the RCG work dramatically. The work done during the startup year in the ISSGs is impressive and the output is of very high quality. The RCG NA NS&EA are convinced that RCG work benefits from being divided in several ISSG and that the way of working should be developed further and to be continued. The suggested next steps for the ISSGs has been endorsed by the RCG NA NS&EA and is covered in this report. A few ISSG are suggested to be suspended over the next year and a few new ISSG are suggested to start 2019-2020. The overview of the suggested ISSG for 2019-2020 are presented below.

### 5.6.2.2 Work plan for 2020-2021

Overview on sub group work 2019-2020				
TOR	Topic	Intersessional Subgroups (ISSG)	Panregional/ regional	Comment
TOR 1	End-users and RCGs	RCGs and Endusers (ICES)	Panregional	ongoing
TOR 2	Regional Database	RDB-Steering Group	Panregional	ongoing
		RDB Core Group	Panregional	ongoing
	Data Analysis and Quality	Regional overviews of fisheries and sampling.	Panregional	ongoing
		Develop / continue to develop codes, tools	Panregional	ongoing
		Metier issues	Panregional	ongoing
	Data Quality and Confidentiality	Panregional	ongoing, new name	
TOR 3	Implication of management measures on	No subgroup suggested		suspended
TOR 4	Regional Workplan	Development of Draft Regional work plan	Panregional	ongoing
TOR 4	Regional Sampling Plans	Finalizing Regional Sampling plans, suggested in FishPi2	Panregional ?	
		Update of Risk Assessment for bycatch in the North Atlantic and the Baltic	Panregional	ongoing, Baltic to be included
		Towards a regional sampling plan for the freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic	Regional NA	ongoing
		Towards a regional sampling programme – Case study of fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic	Regional Baltic	ongoing
TOR 4	Surveys	Towards optimization of surveys in the Baltic	Regional Baltic	new ISSG
TOR 4	Diadromous Fishes	Development of the regional work/sampling plans for data collection and quality assurance.	Panregional	ongoing
TOR 4	Small scale fisheries	Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level	Panregional	new ISSG
TOR 4	Stomach sampling	sampling of stomachs	Panregional ?	new ISSG
TOR 5	Governance	Implementation of generic tools for RCGs (Web/ Secretariat) Chairs of RCGs	Panregional	new ISSG

Table 5.6.2.2 Overview of the ISSG groups suggested for the period 2019-2020.

FishPi2 WP	Name	Presented in RCGs	Incorporation in future RCG work. Suggestions / actions forward
WP 1	Governance	RCG Baltic, RCG NA NSEA	Needs for decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of functionalities of the RDBES for RCG use</li> <li>• Secretariat for the RCG</li> <li>• Website for the RCGs</li> </ul>
WP 2	Suitability for Regional Sampling	RCG NA NSEA	ISSG on finalization of regional sampling plans....
WP 3	Regional sampling plans for regional fisheries	RCG NA NSEA	ISSG on Towards a regional sampling plan for the freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic ISSG on Towards a regional sampling programme – Case study of fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic
WP 4	Impact on Marine ecosystems	RCG Baltic, RCG NA NSEA	ISSG on sampling of stomachs ISSG on Update of Risk Assessment for bycatch in the North Atlantic and the Baltic
WP 5	Small scale and recreational fisheries	RCG Baltic, RCG NA NSEA	ISSG on evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level a set of Recommendations in relation to MRF was done in RCGs to forward WGRF
WP 6	Data quality	RCG Baltic, RCG NA NSEA	the developed CLEFRDB library has the objective of being the first element of a dedicated library gathering data processing means and functions.... To be tested at RDBES workshops

Table 5.6.2.3 Overview of how fishPi<sup>2</sup> workpackages related to ISSG groups for the period 2019-2020.

### 5.6.2.3 Proposals for recommendation and decisions

RCG NA NS&EA 2019 & RCG Baltic 2019	
NA NS&EA BS D3 - Decision to be taken on ISSG 2019-2020	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of all ISSG work presented in the different TORS in the report
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	NC to agree on the list of ISSG that are suggested for 2019-2020.
<b>Implication</b>	Work in ISSG needs experts and manpower (1 week of work / ISSG and person).  The ISSG work force the MS to switch from working with a national focus to work with a more regional focus which is in line with idea of EU-MAP.
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs of NA NS&EA and Baltic
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	Table 5.6.2.2 overview of ISSG work 2019-2020.  Section 5.1 – 5.6 in this report  RCG ISSG 2018-2019, Annex 1-12

## 6 Conclusions

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Evaluation of new approach RCG : feedback on the merge of the two RCGS (NA and NSEA), the new approach and the meeting itself:

- The merging of the two RCGs was positive received, by members of both RCGs
- More discussion during the meeting would be good, the smaller groups need some more time – maybe add Friday morning for report writing in order to limit time afterwards
- It was clearly stated by the participants that with the new approach (with Inter sessional sub-groups), this was the 1st RCM/RCG where so much output was created, concrete output was achieved.
- Presentation and discussion: 2 hrs per group is needed in order to capture all , messages and actions to take
- Challenge for the future will be to continue the sub-groups flow and effort in the sub-groups.
- Inter sessional sub-groups are much more effective, and progress is effectively realised. The time during the RCG spent to discussion should be more effective.
- The setup of the intersessional work is very useful and contributes well to the overall achievements. The work done in the ISGs is impressive and the output is of very good quality.
- A better balance need to be achieved between the time allocated to the presentation and discussion
- Sub-groups need commitment from MS to maintain – 1 week is fine and realistic
- Re-structuring much more efficient than in the past.

### **In general:**

Suggestions for improvement:

- It's a risk that all the development and thinking of the RCG work is done within the ISSG and that countries that are not participating in all ISSG get lost.
- It's important to encourage the MS to take part in the ISSG, but it's also important to understand that not all MS can take part in all ISSG. The outcome from the ISSG therefore needs to be available before the meeting, presented for the RCGs and that time is set aside during the meeting for discussions and reflections on the outcome as well as thinking of the next steps.
- Avoid bringing in information from too many other groups, since the meeting gets too intense. If there are many ISSG running, the technical RCG meeting will be fully booked by discussing their outcome and way forward.
- It's maybe important that one of the RCG chair is participating in the ISSG Diadromous group and the WGRFS to make a strong link with the discussions taking place in the subgroup and the RCG.

## **7 Next meeting**

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RCG NA NS&EA2020 will meet June 2020 in place to be determined depending on the decision if a back to back meeting with RCG Baltic will happen. Suggestions were made i.e. Germany, Bremerhaven or Poland. The RCG NA NS&EA meeting will be followed up with a RCG decision taking one-day meeting for the NCs (5<sup>th</sup> of September 2020).

## Annex 1: List of Participants

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## Annex 2: Overview Proposal for Decisions & Recommendations

### Recommendations

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 and RCG Baltic 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA BAL R1 Data from mandatory surveys to be publicly available</b>	
Recommendation	All data from mandatory research vessel surveys (Table 10 EU 2016/1251) should be made publicly available through an international database
Justification	Mandatory surveys funded under EUMAP and used for stock assessment, should be made publicly available.
Follow-up actions needed	MS to start the process of making all surveys in table 10 public available through an ICES data base.
Responsible persons for follow up actions	RCGs and ICES to identify missing data and the appropriate international database. MS to work to provide these data
Time frame (deadline)	Proces to start in 2020.

<b>RCG NANS&amp;NA 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA R1 Inventory list from the survey databases</b>	
Recommendation	Develop an inventory list from the survey databases
Justification	Presently, many assessment working groups do not have the overview of the sampling level and variables sampled from surveys As many biological variables such as maturity are derived from surveys it would be beneficial if ICES as a standard could provide the EG with an inventory list to be used for preparation of the ISSUE list and benchmarks
Follow-up actions needed	ICES data center to develop an inventory list (Datras) by species and area.
Responsible persons for follow up actions	RCG and ICES data center
Time frame (deadline)	Before 2021.

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA R2 - Stock column in the RDB is completely filled according to a reference list based on area</b>	
Recommendation	ICES to ensure that the stock column in the RDB is completely filled according to a reference list based on area. Where there is spatial or temporal overlap between stocks of the same species ICES should contact the assessment group (by month / area ).
Justification	During this year's RCG it was not possible to use the stock variable in the RDB to investigate the importance of the threshold values and thereby improve the regional coordination of the stocks with a lower amount of landings as too many data mistakes were discovered in the stock variable.
Follow-up actions needed	ICES data center
Responsible persons for follow up actions	RCG and ICES data center
Time frame (deadline)	Before 2021.

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA R3 – Funding requirements and timescales for inclusion of recreational fisheries data in RDBES.</b>	
Recommendation	STECF to consider a workshop in September 2020 to review the impact of recreational fisheries based on the outcomes from pilot studies and make recommendations for future data collection.
Justification	It was proposed that an evaluation of recreational fisheries pilot studies should be done by STECF to support the need for further data collection and inclusion of recreational caught fish in stock assessments.
Follow-up actions needed	STECF
Responsible persons for follow up actions	RCG
Time frame (deadline)	Before 2021.

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA R4 - Workshop to review the impact of recreational fisheries and provide recommendations for future data collection.</b>	
Recommendation	ICES to consider funding requirements and timescales for inclusion of recreational fisheries data in the RDBES.
Justification	RecreationalRecreational fisheries data are no longer collated by the economic data call, so catch estimates should be included in the RDBES. A clear timescale and funding requirements need to be developed by ICES, so that it is clear how this can be achieved.
Follow-up actions needed	ICES
Responsible persons for follow up actions	RCG
Time frame (deadline)	October 2019

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 – R5 – Revision of RDB/RDBES Data Policy to improve the process to give pre-approved ICES expert groups access to detailed data</b>	
Recommendation	SCRDB to review the RDB/RDBES Data Policy to improve the process to give pre-approved ICES expert groups access to detailed data
Justification	<p>The RCG NA NS&amp;EA recommends that the RDB/RDBES data policy is reviewed with respect to the access to detailed data by preapproved ICES fisheries expert groups (EG). Under the RDB/RDBES Data policy <a href="https://www.ices.dk/marine-data/Documents/Data_Policy_RDB.pdf">https://www.ices.dk/marine-data/Documents/Data_Policy_RDB.pdf</a> landings (CL) and effort data (CE) are considered aggregated data, whilst sample data (CS) are considered detailed data</p> <p>Currently every pre-approved EG has access to aggregated data but has to request access to detailed data from all relevant countries' National Correspondents (or ACOM member for non-EU countries). This is burdensome both to the EG and to the MS, and can cause delays in the availability of RDB data for those EG.</p> <p>In 2018 the National Correspondents at the RCG Baltic 2018 agreed to grant ICES expert groups and related benchmark groups providing advice to fisheries management access to detailed data for the subdivision 22-32 (Baltic Sea) stored in the RDBES (RCG Baltic 2018-A7 - RDB Data Policy #2).</p> <p>The SCRDB should draft a revision to the RDB/RDBES Data Policy which would improve the system for giving access to detailed data to pre-approved EGs during their 2019 meeting and then present it</p>

	for discussion, review, and agreement during the 2020 RCG meetings.
Follow-up actions needed	Draft a revision to the RDB/RDBES Data Policy.
Responsible persons for follow up actions	SCRDB
Time frame (deadline)	April 2020

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 – R6 –Create an RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality agreement to be signed by detailed data users</b>	
Recommendation	SCRDB and ICES Data Centre to create an RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality agreement to be signed by detailed data users
Justification	<p>It is recommended that the best way of ensuring the use of RDB/RDBES data by ICES Expert Groups (EGs) is in line with the RDB/RDBES Data Policy is to have each member of the EG sign a standard “RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality agreement” which will remind people of the RDB/RDBES Data Policy and their obligations under it.</p> <p>For the existing RDB</p> <p>It is recommended that the Chair of the EG will have all participants with access to the RDB data sign a standard “RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality agreement”, which will be scanned and uploaded on the EG’s SharePoint site in the Data folder.</p> <p>For the forth-coming RDBES</p> <p>It is recommended that the Chair of the group will have all participants with access to the RDBES data sign a standard “RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality document”, which will be scanned and uploaded on EG’s SharePoint site in the Data folder.</p> <p>It is recommended that if the data is downloaded via an RDBES web application then a pop- up window is shown where the user is required to tick a box to say they have read and understood the RDB/RDBES Data Policy.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>Create a RDB/RDBES Data confidentiality agreement.</p> <p>Create a procedure to ensure EG members who use detailed data sign the agreement.</p>
Responsible persons for follow up actions	SCRDB, ICES Data Centre

Time frame (deadline)	March 2020
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## Decisions

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b> <b>NA NS&amp;EA BS D1 Annual fisheries overview – approve content</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of ISSG ‘Facilitate the production of regional overviews of fisheries and sampling’
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	<p>Approve routine use of 001_annual_fisheries_overview. Suggestions made during the RCGs in June 2019 will be included in the next version of this document.</p> <p>NCs to approve the idea, concept and content of the annual fisheries overview document and whether this is a document that will be beneficial to the work of RCG and the assessment working groups.</p>
<b>Implication</b>	The approval would finalize the first document of the ISSG and establish it as a standard document which will be produced before the RCGs (and preferably before the assessment working groups).
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NC’s NA NS&EA and Baltic
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	Section 5.2.1, Google Docs: <a href="#">001_annual_fisheries_overview</a>

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b> <b>NA NS&amp;EA BS D2 Annual fisheries overview – to be public available</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of ISSG ‘Facilitate the production of regional overviews of fisheries and sampling’
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	<p>NCs to approve whether the overviews can be made public as a stand-alone published document after RCG use</p> <p>The document will be reviewed before publication. Decide on who to review and approve (RCGs, SC-RDB or other ?)</p>
<b>Implication</b>	The report of the latest fisheries overview (one year back) would be made public after the RCGs
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NC’s NA NS&EA and Baltic
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	Section 5.2.1, Google Docs: <a href="#">001_annual_fisheries_overview</a>

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA BS D3 - Decision to be taken on ISSG 2019-2020</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of all ISSG work presented in the different TORS in the report
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	NCs to agree on the list of ISSG, their ToRs and tasks that are suggested for 2019-2020.
<b>Implication</b>	<p>Work in ISSG needs experts and manpower (1 week of work / ISSG and person).</p> <p>Working with the structure of the ISSG, motivates the MS to switch from working with a national focus to work with a more regional focus which is in line with idea of EU-MAP.</p>
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs of NA NS&EA and Baltic
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	<p>Table 5.6.2.2 overview of ISSG work 2019-2020.</p> <p>Section 5.1 – 5.6 in RCG NANS&amp;EA report</p> <p>RCG ISSG 2018-2019, Annex 1-12</p>

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA BAL D4: 'Back to back meeting' RCG Baltic and RCG NA NS&amp;EA</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome from RCG Baltic Plenary
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	RCG Baltic suggest to test that the RCG Baltic technical meeting in June 2020 will be held at the same time as RCG NA NS&EA with a joint venue with shared plenaries on pan regional issues. Since almost all intersessional work is panregional, outcome from fishPi2 to be included in new suggested pan regional ISSG, and that all MS in the Baltic also are participating in the RCG NA &NSEA, the joint meeting will save valuable time and money for all experts and seems to be an appropriate way to move forward.
<b>Implication</b>	<p>A joint meeting with RCG NA NS&amp;EA and RCG Baltic will increase the size of the group (In total 45-55 participants), having implications on venue. The venue needs to fit a large group of people, preferably easy to access for most MS.</p> <p>For the meeting 2020 Poland has offered to host the meeting and is suitable for a joint RCG Baltic and NA NS&amp;EA.</p> <p>Before a potential secretariat is established, RCG Baltic suggest that a joint RCG will still need in total 4 chairs (2 BS, 2 NA &amp;NSEA). Furthermore, the RCG Baltic suggest that part of the meeting will consist of feedback from panregional Intersessional work and other relevant topics fitting the TORS followed by discussions. Another part of the meeting to split in regions (Baltic and NA NS&amp;EA) to discuss regional aspects.</p>
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs of NA NS&EA and Baltic
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	None

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b>	
<b>NA NS&amp;EA BAL 2019 – D5 – Central resources to support work in the RCGs - a need for robust long term funding of the RDBES development</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	RDBES Development – support of RCGs and ICES stock assessment expert groups
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	a.) NCs to decide if MS will finance the technical development, project management and dedicated workshops of the RDBES at an annual cost of €75,000 between 2020 and 2023; b.) NCs to decide on which model to use for costsharing, flat rate or pro rata of EMFF DCF funding allocation as outlined in table XX and further elaborated in section 5.4
<b>Implication</b>	RDBES development will be completed and it will be available to support the RCGs and ICES stock assessment expert groups according to the development road-map.
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	RCG NA NS&EA and Baltic National Correspondents
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	See text in 5.5 and table 5.4

<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019 &amp; RCG Baltic 2019</b>	
<b>RCG Baltic 2019 – D6 – Central resources to support work in the RCGs - a need for robust long term funding</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of FishPi2 WP1 on governance of RCGs
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	a) NCs to decide if MS will finance the central resources b) NCs to decide on which model to use for costsharing, either to use the models presented in 5.5.1 or another model. c) NCs to decide on starting year, if 2020, include in WP 2020-2021.
<b>Implication</b>	The central resources will support regional management of fishery dependent data necessary for regional workplans and regional sampling plans. They will further contribute to make end-users aware of ongoing work in the RCGs and support overall out-

	reach. A secretariat will ease the burden for chairs and participants in the RCGs and assure consistency in outputs over time when chairs are changing.
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs of NA NS&EA and Baltic
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	See text in chapter 5.5.1 and for details regarding funding for RDBES see chapter 5.2.3

<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019 – D1 – Cost-sharing agreement for participation to the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas 2020-2021</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of Subgroup Surveys
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	Agree on cost-sharing agreement for participation to the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas 2020-2021. The cost-sharing will follow a distribution key based on TAC shares, in line with the Gothenburg-model <sup>9</sup> .
<b>Implication</b>	Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom will cost-share the vessel costs of the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas in 2020 and 2021. The survey will be carried out by Denmark (carried out by R/V Dana).
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs of NA NS&EA
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	See text in Section 5.5.3 in RCG NANS&EA report

<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019 – D2 – Cost-sharing agreement for participation to the International Blue Whiting survey 2020-2021</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of Subgroup Surveys
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	Agree on cost-sharing agreement for participation to the International Blue Whiting survey 2020-2021. 2020-2021. The cost-sharing will follow a distribution key based on TAC shares, in line with the Gothenburg-model <sup>10</sup> .
<b>Implication</b>	Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, The Netherlands, United Kingdom will cost-share the vessel costs of the International Blue Whiting Survey in 2020 and 2021. The survey will be carried out by Ireland (R/V Celtic Explorer), The Netherlands (R/V Tridens ) and Spain (R/V Miguel Oliver).

<sup>9</sup> Report of the pan-regional RCG subgroup on cost sharing of research surveys at sea, Gothenburg 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Report of the pan-regional RCG subgroup on cost sharing of research surveys at sea, Gothenburg 2016.

<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs of Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, The Netherlands, United Kingdom
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	See text in Section 5.5.3 in RCG NA NS&EA report

<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>RCG NANS&amp;EA 2019 – D3 – Adapt TAC threshold for participation to the International Blue Whiting Survey 2020-2021 to 5%.</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	Outcome of Subgroup Surveys
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	Chapter II.7 of COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 allows for setting an alternative threshold for participation to a survey at regional level. Under the same article, the threshold for participation is set at 3%. For the revision of EU-MAP, establishing the threshold at 5% has been proposed by various respondents in the consultation round, following this line and to reduce the administrative burden, this decision adapts the threshold for participation to the International Blue Whiting Survey 2020-2021 to 5%.
<b>Implication</b>	1 MS previously contributing to the survey costs will be excluded from 2020-2021 cost-sharing.
<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	All NCs RCG NA&NSEA.
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	See text in Section 5.5.3 in RCG NANS&EA report

<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019</b>	
<b>RCG NA NS&amp;EA 2019 – D4 – Establish the current RCG NS&amp;EA RoP as the RoP for the merged RCG NA and RCG NS&amp;EA group.</b>	
<b>Relates to</b>	RCG governance
<b>When</b>	Brussels, September 2019
<b>Details of Decision to be taken</b>	Accept the RCG NS&EA RoPs as the RoP for the merged RCG NA and RCG NS&EA group.  The area of competence of the RCG is updated to reflect the renewed area.
<b>Implication</b>	The RoP of the RCG NA are no longer applicable to this group. The RoP of RCG NS&EA are directly applicable to this group.

<b>Who needs to take decision/agree</b>	NCs of Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.
<b>Supporting Documentation</b>	See text in Section 5.5.4 and Annex 3 in RCG NA NS&EA report: RoP comparison table

## **Annex 3: RCG NA NS&EA Governance Documentation**

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### **Rules of Procedure for the Regional Coordination Group for the North Atlantic, North Sea and Eastern Arctic**

#### **1. Scope**

1.1. These Rules of Procedure are valid for the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) for the North Atlantic, North Sea and Eastern Arctic in the framework of the Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy and repealing Council regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (recast).

1.2. These Rules of Procedure are established based on the Article 9(5) of the above mentioned Regulation.

1.3. These Rules of Procedure are established on 4 September 2019 by the Member States of the Regional Coordination Group coordinating their data collection activities in the North Atlantic, North Sea and Eastern Arctic (including NAFO): Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

#### **2. Working language**

2.1. The working language of the RCG is English.

#### **3. Terms of Reference for the RCG**

3.1. The RCG shall agree the Terms of Reference for the RCG taking into account necessary contributions and information.

#### **4. Meetings of the RCG**

4.1. To perform its duties, the RCG shall hold one meeting annually unless agreed otherwise by the RCG. An annual meeting shall consist of plenary sessions and may include work in subgroups.

The RCG may hold additional meetings to the annual meeting. The duration, form, meeting venue, terms of reference and other relevant elements for such an additional meeting may be agreed at the RCG annual meeting, or by correspondence initiated by the RCG chairperson(s). The venue of the RCG annual meeting will rotate between Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the same marine region unless otherwise agreed by the RCG.

4.2. Based on a written invitation from a third country, the RCG may agree to hold its annual or additional meeting in a venue provided by the third country.

4.3. No later than two months before the annual or additional meeting, the Member State organizing the annual or additional meeting shall be responsible for providing details of accommodation, travel and other organizational information relevant for the meeting.

4.4. Each Member State coordinating the data collection activities in the same marine region and the European Commission shall nominate their participants to a RCG meeting and may choose the number of their participants to a RCG meetings with due regard of the items on the agenda at the relevant RCG meeting. The information of the nominations should be communicated to the chairperson(s) of the RCG.

4.5. Member States not listed in point 1.3., may nominate a national correspondent or an expert to participate in a RCG meeting.

4.6. Only nominated persons may participate in the RCG meetings.

## **5. The chairperson(s) responsibilities**

5.1. The chairperson(s) of the RCG shall promote effective and productive work and working methods of the RCG. The chairperson(s), an institution or a person indicated by the chairperson(s) shall be responsible for making the documents and information available in time and shall take all necessary action to that effect.

5.2. The RCG chairperson(s) is responsible for preparing the agendas for the RCG meetings.

## **6. Agenda and submission of documents**

6.1. A draft agenda for the annual or additional RCG meeting shall be made available no later than one month in advance to the meeting.

The draft agenda will indicate on which day(s) during the meeting the discussion or decision on the draft regional plan is to be taken.

6.2. Other documents than the draft regional work plans for the RCG meetings shall be made available no later than two weeks in advance to the RCG meetings. Documents made available later than two weeks in advance to the RCG meetings, may be dealt at the meeting in case of consent of all the national correspondents present at the RCG meeting.

## **7. RCG subgroups**

7.1. To carry out its duties as set out in the Article 9 of the Regulation 2017/1004, the RCG may agree to establish permanent or temporary bodies, task groups, subgroups or other arrangements (hereafter called *subgroups*). The RCG will appoint the lead(s) and any other role(s) or working practices necessary and provide terms of reference. The RCG may give this mandate to the subgroup(s).

7.2. These subgroups will carry out their duties during and between the RCG meetings, as appropriate and as agreed by the RCG. The subgroup lead or a person nominated by the lead shall keep the RCG informed of the progress of such work and any issues arising at intervals agreed at the RCG.

7.3. When a subgroup is mandated to prepare a draft regional work plan in the sense of Article 9 of Regulation 2017/1004, relevant Member States shall send expert(s) with the necessary expertise related to that draft regional work plan to participate in the group's work. National correspondents and European Commission may participate in the group's work at all stages.

## **8. Draft regional work plans and RCG endorsement**

8.1. Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the region will endeavour to agree by consensus on a draft regional work plan under Article 9 of Regulation 2017/1004.

8.2. A draft regional work plan, where a decision is expected to be taken in accordance with the draft agenda of the RCG annual meeting, shall be made available to the national correspondents one month in advance to the meeting where the decision is expected to be taken. A draft regional work plan for a decision in the RCG annual meeting made available later than one month before the RCG annual meeting, may be considered and decided upon at that meeting in case of consent of all the national correspondents.

8.3. When it is evident from the draft agenda of the RCG annual meeting that the draft regional work plan is not to be decided upon at that RCG annual meeting, the draft regional work plan can be made available to the national correspondents no later than two weeks in advance to the RCG annual meeting.

8.4. A decision on a draft regional work plan may be taken at exceptional situations by a written procedure. This exceptional situation may be, amongst others, when there is no consensus at the meeting. The chairperson(s) of the RCG may initiate such a written procedure after a mandate with the necessary details to organize and proceed with a written procedure has been given to the chairperson(s) at the RCG annual meeting by the national correspondents or their representatives present at the RCG meeting.

8.5. The chairperson(s) of the RCG shall notify the RCG of the decision within two weeks after the written procedure has ended.

## **9. RCG recommendations**

9.1. The RCG may give non-binding recommendations only. The aim of the recommendation is to orientate further work to be carried out on all issues related to the scope of the Regulation 2017/1004. The recommendations should provide, but are not limited to, clear and understandable stand-alone guidance, guidelines or best practices on the recommended work to be carried out, its justification and objectives, a foreseen time frame for fulfilment and to the extent possible, person(s) or institution(s) responsible for the follow up of such recommendation.

## **10. Cooperation between RCGs and other institutions/bodies**

10.1 RCG and subgroup chairperson(s) shall take into account the Terms of Reference of other relevant groups and subgroups from other marine regions and Expert Groups.

10.2. The chairperson(s) of the RCG and/or other person(s) mandated by the RCG may participate and represent the RCG in any coordination with other RCGs and the European Commission under Article 9(6) of Regulation 2017/1004 and shall keep the RCG informed within an agreed time frame.

10.3. The chairperson(s) of the RCG and/or other person(s) mandated by the RCG annual meeting may participate and represent the RCG in other relevant regional bodies, arrangements or meetings and shall keep the RCG informed within an agreed time frame.

## **11. Observers**

11.1. In accordance with the Article 9(7) of the Regulation 2017/1004, the RCG shall invite as observers relevant end users of scientific data, including appropriate scientific bodies as referred to in Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, regional fisheries management organizations, Advisory Councils and third countries, when necessary.

11.2 Observers referred to in article 9 of the Regulation 2017/1004 shall indicate interest to participate in the RCG by sending the following information to the chairperson(s) of the RCG at least one month in advance of the RCG meeting:

- The relevance of their participation from the Common Fisheries Policy and/or fisheries management point of view and

- Their data interest as accurately as possible relevant to that RCG and
- The scientific bodies/groups in their relevant institution or country conducting the scientific analyses based on the relevant data and
- The management body with a legal mandate for fisheries management within the CFP for which the scientific analysis based on the RCG data is conducted for and
- How, to whom and where the results of the scientific analysis referred above are intended to be made available and
- Organizational details and details of the representative to be nominated to participate and
- Commitment to comply with the rules and conditions set by the RCG and any other information considered relevant by the potential observer.

11.3. The RCG Chairperson(s) shall consider the information provided and may request additional information.

11.4. The RCG shall decide by consensus of the Member States present at the annual meeting or prior to the annual meeting which observers shall be invited to the RCG meetings.

11.5. After a written confirmation from the RCG chairperson(s), observers have the possibility to attend the RCG meetings. The conditions set for the attendance may include, but are not limited to, limitations on attendance of RCG meetings or subgroup work, limits on access to data or to be present when data is presented or available, possibility to provide written contributions or to give presentations.

11.6. Observers are bound with the conditions referred above. If there are justified reasons to consider, that one or more of the conditions set by the RCG in the written confirmation or otherwise, are violated repeatedly or seriously by the observer, the necessity of the observer to attend or the conditions for the attendance may be re-evaluated. The observer/organization shall be informed of this, including the results of the re-evaluation, by a letter from the RCG chairperson(s) after consulting and in consent with the national correspondents of the RCG responding to the chairperson's consultation.

11.7. The International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (*ICES*) has a standing invitation to participate in all RCG meetings and may be invited to participate in RCG subgroup work.

## **12. Election of the RCG chairperson(s)**

12.1. The chairperson may be agreed by the Member States present or elected by a simple majority at the RCG annual meeting.

12.2. One term for a chairperson covers the period of two years. A chairperson may serve no more than two consecutive terms without limiting the total number of terms for the same person to act as a chairperson of the RCG. The role will rotate between Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the same marine region unless otherwise agreed by the RCG.

12.3. RCG may decide to have co-chairperson(s). The same procedures and conditions as to the chairperson(s) elections apply.

### **13. Reporting from a RCG meeting**

13.1. The chairperson(s) of the RCG shall be responsible for drawing up a report from a RCG annual meeting. The final report should contain, but is not limited to, decisions and recommendations of the RCG, a summary of the RCG intersessional progress and of the RCG discussions, future work directions, the intended work to be carried out before the next meeting, the list of foreseeable RCG meetings and list of participants, their contact information, role and institution.

13.2. The final report from the annual meeting shall be made available to the participants of the meeting and publicly, as appropriate, within two months after the RCG annual meeting has ended. Other meeting reports shall be distributed within one month after the meeting has ended unless otherwise decided by the RCG.

### **14. Amending the Rules of Procedure**

14.1. These Rules of Procedure may be reviewed and amended at the RCG annual or additional meeting by consensus of all national correspondents or in a written procedure by all national correspondents replying within a set time limit of at least 1 month.

14.2. Any Member State of the RCG can request the review and amendment of the Rules of Procedure to be put on the agenda of the RCG meeting.

14.3. The list of Member States in point 1.3 may be amended in accordance with the paragraph 14.1. after a written request has been provided to the RCG chairperson(s) by a Member State not listed in the point 1.3.

## **Cost-sharing agreement for participation to the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas 2020-2021**

Having regard.;

- Article 5.1c of REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 stipulating the establishment of thresholds below which it is not mandatory for Member States to carry out surveys at sea;
- Article 5.6 REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 stipulating that these thresholds for stocks subject to catch limits shall be based upon the share of the relevant Members In the TAC that are available for the Union;
- Chapter II.7 of COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 stipulating that the threshold for participation to a survey is set at 3%;
- Article 5.5 of REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 stipulating that there Is a need to avoid disruption of time-series of data
- Chapter I of COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 stipulating Member States shall guarantee continuity with previous survey designs;
- Article 9.8 of REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 stipulating that regional work plans may contain cost-sharing arrangements for participation in research surveys at sea
- COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 lists the Blue Whiting survey as a mandatory survey

Having acknowledged;

- that the scientific responsibility as well as survey planning and reporting lies with the ICES Working Group on International Pelagic Surveys;
- that TAC shares by Member State for 2019 form the basis for cost-sharing In 2020 and 2021.
- to Include this agreement in full In every relevant National Workplan.

The following Member States have agreed to share the vessel costs for the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas: Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, The Netherlands, United Kingdom.

*Cost-sharing model*

Cost-sharing is based on a cost-sharing key following the Gothenburg-model (RCG subgroup 2017<sup>11</sup>).

This model will be applied to the vessel costs made by Denmark (carried out by R/V Dana) for the duration of the survey (total survey time, including calibration, vessel transfers, excluding mid-cruise-breaks) for years 2020 and 2021. The respective vessel costs are based on the vessel's tariff of the preceding year.

This tariff is based on the eligible costs as accepted by the EMFF Managing Authority of the MS conducting the survey.

Application of the model leads to the following key:

Species: Herring *Clupea harengus* (2019 shares)

<b>Member State</b>	<b>Quota (2019)</b> <b>(tonnes)</b>	<b>%</b> <b>Share</b>	<b>Cost Share MSs</b> <b>&gt;3%</b>
Belgium	13	0.03%	
Spain	43	0.11%	
Portugal	43	0.11%	
Finland	203	0.53%	
France	566	1.48%	
Poland	664	1.73%	
Germany	2299	6.00%	6.25%
Ireland	3399	8.87%	9.24%
The Netherlands	4698	12.26%	12.77%
Sweden	4865	12.70%	13.23%
United Kingdom	8393	21.91%	22.82%
Denmark	13129	34.27%	35.69%
<b>Union</b>	<b>38315</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

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<sup>11</sup> Report of the pan-regional RCG subgroup on cost sharing of research surveys at sea, Gothenburg 2016

*Duration and governance:*

This agreement covers cost-sharing for the 2020 and 2021 International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas. Substantial changes to survey design, survey participations or substantial legal and/or financial amendments automatically lead to a review of this agreement. Duly justified, participating Member States may request a review. This survey falls under the remit of RCG North Atlantic & North Sea as such this agreement will In the future form a part of the Regional Workplan for the North Atlantic & North Sea.

Invoices should be sent to the MS concerned before November 1 by the National Institute responsible for the survey as well as the accompanied administration.

[provision regarding budgets]

*Signatures*

Member State	Name	Date	Signature
Denmark			
Germany			
Ireland			
Sweden			
The Netherlands			
United Kingdom			

### **Cost-sharing agreement for participation to the Blue Whiting survey 2020-2021**

Having regard;

- Article 5.1c of REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 stipulating the establishment of thresholds below which it is not mandatory for Member States to carry out surveys at sea;
- Article 5.6 REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 stipulating that these thresholds for stocks subject to catch limits shall be based upon the share of the relevant Members in the TAC that are available for the Union;
- Chapter II.7 of COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 stipulating that the threshold for participation to a survey is set at 3%;
- Chapter II.7 of COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 allowing for setting an alternative threshold for participation to a survey at regional level;
- Article 5.5 of REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 stipulating that there is a need to avoid disruption of time-series of data
- Chapter I of COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 stipulating Member States shall guarantee continuity with previous survey designs;
- Article 9.8 of REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 stipulating that regional work plans may contain cost-sharing arrangements for participation in research surveys at sea
- COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2019/909 lists the Blue Whiting survey as a mandatory survey

Having acknowledged;

- that the scientific responsibility as well as survey planning and reporting lies with the ICES Working Group on International Pelagic Surveys;
- that TAC shares by Member State for 2019 form the basis for cost-sharing in 2020 and 2021.
- to include this agreement in full in every relevant National Workplan.
- that RCG North Atlantic and North Sea agreed to set the threshold for participation to this survey at 5%.

The following Member States have agreed to share the vessel costs for the Blue Whiting survey: Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain, The Netherlands, United Kingdom.

#### *Cost-sharing model*

Cost-sharing is based on a cost-sharing key following the Gothenburg-model (RCG subgroup 2017<sup>12</sup>). This model will be applied to the vessel costs made by Ireland (carried out by R/V Celtic Explorer), The Netherlands (carried out by R/V Tridens ) and Spain (carried out by R/V Miguel Oliver) for the duration of the survey (total survey time, including calibration, vessel transfers, excluding mid-cruise-breaks) for years 2020 and 2021. The respective vessel costs are based on the vessel's tariff of the preceding year. This tariff is based on on the eligible costs as accepted by the EMFF Managing Authority of the MS conducting the survey.

Application of the model leads to the following key:

blue whiting TAC	2019		Remarks	more than 5%	recalculated with 5% rule	percentage
	TAC 2017	TAC share				
Denmark	48,813	15.27%		48,813		16.07%
Germany	18,979	5.94%		18,979		6.25%
Spain	41,383	12.94%		41,383		13.62%
France	33,970	10.62%		33,970		11.18%
Ireland	37,800	11.82%		37,800		12.44%
The Netherlands	59,522	18.62%		59,522		19.59%
Portugal	3,844	1.20%	< 5%			
Sweden	12,075	3.78%	< 5%			
United Kingdom	63,341	19.81%		63,341		20.85%
Belgium	0	0.00%				
Estonia	0	0.00%				
Latvia	0	0.00%				
Lithuania	0	0.00%				
Poland	0	0.00%				
European Union	319,727	100%		303,808		100%

<sup>12</sup> Report of the pan-regional RCG subgroup on cost sharing of research surveys at sea, Gothenburg 2016.

*Duration and governance:*

This agreement covers cost-sharing for the 2020 and 2021 Blue Whiting survey. Substantial changes to survey design, survey participations or substantial legal and/or financial amendments automatically lead to a review of this agreement. Duly justified, participating Member States may request a review. This survey falls under the remit of RCG North Atlantic & North Sea as such this agreement will in the future form a part of the Regional Workplan for this region. Due to national regulations, complementary arrangements may be needed between the MS involved in this cost-sharing.

Invoices should be sent to the MS concerned by November 1 of the year the survey is carried out by the respective National Institutes responsible for the survey as well as the accompanied administration.

*Signatures*

<b>Member State</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Signature</b>
Denmark			
France			
Germany			
Ireland			
Spain			
The Netherlands			
United Kingdom			

**Comparison of Rules of Procedures RCG North Sea & Eastern Arctic and RCG North Atlantic**

1	RCG NSEA-EA	RCG NA	Difference
2 Scope	<p>1.1. These Rules of Procedure are valid for the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) for the North Sea and East Arctic in the framework of the Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy and repealing Council regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (recast).</p> <p>These Rules of Procedure are established based on the Article 9(5) of the above mentioned Regulation. These Rules of Procedure are established on XX November 2017 by the Member States of the Regional Coordination Group coordinating their data collection activities in the North Sea and East Arctic: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.</p>	<p>These Rules of Procedure are valid for the Regional Coordination Group (RCG) for the North Atlantic in the framework of the Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, a management and use of data in fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the Common Fisheries Policy and repealing Council regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (recast).</p> <p>These Rules of Procedure are established based on the Article 9(5) of the above mentioned Regulation. These Rules of Procedure are established XXth September 2017 by the Member States of the Regional Coordination Group coordinating their data collection activities in the North Atlantic for 2018/2019: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom.</p>	<p><i>Same, needs updated countries</i></p> <p><i>Same except list of countries</i></p>
3 Working language 4	The working language of the RCG is English.	The working language of the RCG is English.	<i>Same</i>
5 Terms of Reference for the RCG	The RCG shall agree the Terms of Reference for the RCG taking into account necessary contributions and information.	The RCG may agree the Terms of Reference for the RCG taking into account necessary contributions and information.	<i>Same</i>

<p>6 Meetings of the RCG</p>	<p>To perform its duties, the RCG shall hold one meeting annually unless agreed otherwise by the RCG. An annual meeting shall consist of plenary sessions and may include work in subgroups.</p> <p>The RCG may hold additional meetings to the annual meeting. The duration, form, meeting venue, terms of reference and other relevant elements for such an additional meeting may be agreed at the RCG annual meeting, or by correspondence initiated by the RCG chairperson(s). The venue of the RCG annual meeting will rotate between Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the same marine region unless otherwise agreed by the RCG.</p> <p>Based on a written invitation from a third country, the RCG may agree to hold its annual or additional meeting in a venue provided by the third country.</p> <p>No later than two months before the annual or additional meeting, the Member State organizing the annual or additional meeting shall be responsible for providing details of accommodation, travel and other organizational information relevant for the meeting.</p> <p>Each Member State coordinating the data collection activities in the same marine region and the European Commission shall nominate their participants to a RCG meeting and may choose the number of their participants to a RCG meetings with due regard of the items on the agenda at the relevant RCG meeting. The information of the nominations should be communicated to the chairperson(s) of the RCG.</p> <p>Member States not listed in point 1.3., may nominate a national correspondent or an expert to participate in a RCG meeting.</p> <p>Only nominated persons may participate in the RCG meetings.</p>	<p>To perform its duties, the RCG shall hold one meeting annually unless agreed otherwise by the RCG. An annual meeting shall consist of plenary sessions and may include work in subgroups.</p> <p>The RCG may hold additional meetings to the annual meeting. The duration, form, meeting venue, terms of reference and other relevant elements for such an additional meeting may be agreed at the RCG annual meeting, the Liaison meeting or by correspondence initiated by the RCG Chairperson(s). The venue of the RCG annual meeting will rotate between Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the same marine region unless otherwise agreed by the RCG.</p> <p>No later than two months before the annual or additional meeting, the Member State organizing the annual or additional meeting shall be responsible for providing details of accommodation, travel and other organizational information relevant for the meeting.</p> <p>In accordance with Article 7.2(c) of reg 2017/1004, the National Correspondent for each Member State coordinating the data collection activities in the same marine region and the European Commission shall coordinate the participation in a RCG meeting and shall inform the RCG chairs who will then inform the hosting country within an agreed deadline.</p> <p>The European Commission shall participate at all Annual Meetings and may attend any other meetings.</p> <p>Member States not listed in point 1.2., that are interested in coordinating their data collection activities in the North Atlantic may nominate a national correspondent or an expert to participate at an RCG meeting.</p>	<p>Same</p> <p>Same</p> <p>Extra- consider 3<sup>rd</sup> country involvement</p> <p>Same</p> <p>Nomination by Member State vs National correspondent. Reference to agenda</p> <p>Same, additional text referring to MS wanting to coordinate data collection Additional, consider if necessary</p>
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<p>7 the chairperson(s) responsibilities</p>	<p>The chairperson(s) of the RCG shall promote effective and productive work and working methods of the RCG. The chairperson(s), an institution or a person indicated by the chairperson(s) shall be responsible for making the documents and information available in time and shall take all necessary action to that effect.</p> <p>The RCG chairperson(s) is responsible for preparing the agendas for the RCG meetings.</p>	<p>The chairperson(s) of the RCG shall promote effective and productive work and working methods of the RCG. The chairperson(s), an institution or a person indicated by the chairperson shall be responsible for making the documents and information available in time and shall take all necessary action to that effect.</p> <p>The chairperson(s) is responsible for preparing agendas for the RCG meetings.</p> <p>The RCG chairperson(s) shall be responsible for uploading to a shared platform and disseminating all documents and other information related to the meeting. The RCG is currently assisted in this task by ICES.</p>	<p>Same</p> <p>Same</p> <p>Additional, consider if necessary</p>
<p>8 Agenda and submission of documents</p>	<p>A draft agenda for the annual or additional RCG meeting shall be made available no later than one month in advance to the meeting.</p> <p>The draft agenda will indicate on which day(s) during the meeting the discussion or decision on the draft regional plan is to be taken.</p> <p>Other documents than the draft regional work plans for the RCG meetings shall be made available no later than two weeks in advance to the RCG meetings. Documents made available later than two weeks in advance to the RCG meetings, may be dealt at the meeting in case of consent of all the national correspondents present at the RCG meeting.</p>	<p>A draft agenda for the annual RCG meeting shall be made available no later than one month in advance of the meeting. A draft agenda shall be approved at the beginning of the meeting. The approved agenda may be supplemented during the meeting.</p> <p>This draft agenda will indicate the day(s) of the meeting when the decisions are to be made.</p> <p>Other documents than the draft regional work plans for the RCG meetings shall be made available no later than two weeks in advance to the RCG meetings. Documents made available later than two weeks in advance to the RCG meetings, may be dealt at the meeting in case of consent of all the national correspondents present at the RCG NA annual meeting</p>	<p>Additional, consider if necessary</p> <p>Same, except for ref to draft regional plan vs decisions in general.</p> <p>Same except reference to RCG</p>

<p>9 RCG sub-groups</p>	<p>To carry out its duties as set out in the Article 9 of the Regulation 2017/1004, the RCG may agree to establish permanent or temporary bodies, task groups, subgroups or other arrangements (hereafter called <i>subgroups</i>). The RCG will appoint the lead(s) and any other role(s) or working practices necessary and provide terms of reference. The RCG may give this mandate to the subgroup(s).</p> <p>These subgroups will carry out their duties during and between the RCG meetings, as appropriate and as agreed by the RCG. The subgroup lead or a person nominated by the lead shall keep the RCG informed of the progress of such work and any issues arising at intervals agreed at the RCG.</p> <p>When a subgroup is mandated to prepare a draft regional work plan in the sense of Article 9 of Regulation 2017/1004, relevant Member States shall send expert(s) with the necessary expertise related to that draft regional work plan to participate in the group's work. National correspondents and European Commission may participate in the group's work at all stages.</p>	<p>To carry out its duties as set out in the Article 9 of the Regulation 2017/1004, the RCG may agree to establish permanent or temporary bodies, task groups, subgroups or other arrangements (hereafter called <i>subgroups</i>). The RCG will appoint the lead(s) and any other role(s) or working practices necessary and provide terms of references. The RCG may give this mandate to the subgroup(s).</p> <p>These subgroups will carry out their duties during and between the RCG meetings, as appropriate and as agreed by the RCG. The subgroup lead or a person nominated by the lead shall keep the RCG informed of the progress of such work and any issues arising at intervals agreed at the RCG.</p>	<p><i>Different sequence</i></p> <p><i>Same</i></p> <p><i>Same</i></p> <p><i>Additional, MS send expert if dealing with regional work plans</i></p>
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<p>10 Draft regional work plans and RCG endorsement</p>	<p>Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the region will endeavour to agree by consensus on a draft regional work plan under Article 9 of Regulation 2017/1004.</p> <p>A draft regional work plan, where a decision is expected to be taken in accordance with the draft agenda of the RCG annual meeting, shall be made available to the national correspondents one month in advance to the meeting where the decision is expected to be taken. A draft regional work plan for a decision in the RCG annual meeting made available later than one month before the RCG annual meeting, may be considered and decided upon at that meeting in case of consent of all the national correspondents.</p> <p>8.3. When it is evident from the draft agenda of the RCG annual meeting that the draft regional work plan is not to be decided upon at that RCG annual meeting, the draft regional work plan can be made available to the national correspondents no later than two weeks in advance to the RCG annual meeting.</p> <p>8.4. A decision on a draft regional work plan may be taken at exceptional situations by a written procedure. This exceptional situation may be, amongst others, when there is no consensus at the meeting. The chairperson(s) of the RCG may initiate such a written procedure after a mandate with the necessary details to organize and proceed with a written procedure has been given to the chairperson(s) at the RCG annual meeting by the national correspondents or their representatives present at the RCG meeting.</p> <p>8.5. The chairperson(s) of the RCG shall notify the RCG of the decision within two weeks after the written procedure has ended.</p>	<p>Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the region will endeavour to agree on a draft regional work plan under Article 9 of Regulation 2017/1004, by consensus at the RCG annual meeting.</p> <p>All relevant Member States shall ensure the participation of appropriate expert(s) in preparing draft regional work plans. The European Commission may participate at all stages.</p> <p>Member States shall take all necessary steps to ensure that they are represented by a person mandated to take a decision on the draft regional work plan.</p> <p>When the RCGNA endorses the draft regional plan by consensus, it will be submitted to the Commission for approval.</p> <p>A draft regional work plan, where a decision is expected to be made in accordance with the draft agenda of the RCG annual meeting, shall be circulated to the national correspondents two months in advance of the meeting.</p> <p>A decision on a draft regional work plan may, if necessary, be made by written procedure. The chairperson of the RCG will coordinate the written procedure through National Correspondents. The procedure should be completed within an agreed timeframe.</p> <p>In the event that a member states participant at the meeting does not have sufficient mandate to approve unscheduled changes to a regional work plan made at the meeting then the written procedure referred to in section 8.5 will be used.</p> <p>The chairperson of the RCG shall notify the RCG of the decision within two weeks after the written procedure has ended.</p>	<p><i>Same, except agree by consensus at annual meeting</i></p>
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<p>11 Procedure for recommendations</p>	<p>The RCG may give non-binding recommendations only. The aim of the recommendation is to orientate further work to be carried out on all issues related to the scope of the Regulation 2017/1004.</p> <p>The recommendations should provide, but are not limited to, clear and understandable stand-alone guidance, guidelines or best practices on the recommended work to be carried out, its justification and objectives, a foreseen time frame for fulfilment and to the extent possible, person(s) or institution(s) responsible for the follow up of such recommendation.</p>	<p>The RCG may give non-binding recommendations only. The aim of the recommendation is to orientate further work to be carried out on all issues related to the scope of the Regulation 2017/1004.</p> <p>If to progress, the RCG requires input by external bodies outside the participation at the RCG, the RCG shall use a process of recommendations to other RCGs, institutes, RFMOS, MS, end-users and/or other external bodies and shall agree a list of recommendations at the annual meeting to be forwarded to the Liaison Meeting.</p> <p>The recommendations should provide, but are not limited to, clear and understandable stand-alone guidance on the recommended work to be carried out, its justification, a foreseen time frame for fulfilment and to the extent possible, person(s) or institution(s) responsible for the follow up of such recommendation.</p>	<p><i>NSEA call this section RCG recommendations</i> <i>Same</i></p> <p><i>Additional- refers to giving recommendations to other bodies, consider if necessary</i></p> <p><i>Same</i></p>
<p>12 Cooperation between RCGs and the European Commission and other relevant bodies</p>	<p>RCG and subgroup chairperson(s) shall take into account the Terms of Reference of other relevant groups and subgroups from other marine regions and Expert Groups.</p> <p>The chairperson(s) of the RCG and/or other person(s) mandated by the RCG may participate and represent the RCG in any coordination with other RCGs and the European Commission under Article 9(6) of Regulation 2017/1004 and shall keep the RCG informed within an agreed time frame.</p> <p>The chairperson(s) of the RCG and/or other person(s) mandated by the RCG annual meeting may participate and represent the RCG in other relevant regional bodies, arrangements or meetings and shall keep the RCG informed within an agreed time frame.</p>	<p>RCGs and subgroup chairs shall endeavour to cross reference the ToRs of other RCGs and their subgroups and/or other relevant Expert Groups.</p> <p>The chairperson of the RCG and/or other person(s) mandated by the RCG may participate and represent the RCG in any coordination with other RCGs and the commission under Article 9(6) of Regulation 2017/1004 and will keep the RCG informed within an agreed time frame.</p> <p>The chairperson of the RCG and/or other person(s) mandated by the RCG annual meeting may participate and represent RCG in other relevant regional bodies, arrangements or meetings and will keep the RCG informed within an agreed time frame.</p>	<p><i>Difference- take into account vs endeavour to cross reference, expert groups vs relevant expert groups</i></p> <p><i>Same</i></p> <p><i>Same</i></p>

<p>13 Observers</p>	<p>In accordance with the Article 9(7) of the Regulation 2017/1004, the RCG shall invite as observers relevant end users of scientific data, including appropriate scientific bodies as referred to in Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, regional fisheries management organizations, Advisory Councils and third countries, when necessary.</p> <p>Observers referred to in article 9 of the Regulation 2017/1004 shall indicate interest to participate in the RCG by sending the following information to the chairperson(s) of the RCG at least one month in advance of the RCG meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The relevance of their participation from the Common Fisheries Policy and/or fisheries management point of view and</li> <li>• Their data interest as accurately as possible relevant to that RCG and</li> <li>• The scientific bodies/groups in their relevant institution or country conducting the scientific analyses based on the relevant data and</li> <li>• The management body with a legal mandate for fisheries management within the CFP for which the scientific analysis based on the RCG data is conducted for and</li> <li>• How, to whom and where the results of the scientific analysis referred above are intended to be made available and</li> <li>• Organizational details and details of the representative to be nominated to participate and</li> <li>• Commitment to comply with the rules and conditions set by the RCG and any other information considered relevant by the potential observer.</li> </ul> <p>The RCG Chairperson(s) shall consider the information provided and may request additional information.</p> <p>The RCG shall decide by consensus of the Member States present at the annual meeting or prior to the annual meeting which observers shall be invited to the RCG meetings.</p>	<p>In accordance with the Article 9(7) of the Regulation 2017/1004, RCG shall invite as observers relevant end users of scientific data, including appropriate scientific bodies as referred to in Article 26 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013, regional fisheries management organizations, Advisory Councils and third countries, when necessary.</p> <p>If an independent organisation or individual seeks to attend an RCG meeting as an observer, they must make a formal request to the RCG Chairperson(s) in two months in advance with justification. The RCG Chairperson(s) will consult members for a final decision.</p> <p>The RCG shall decide by consensus and <b>no later than four weeks</b> prior to the annual meeting which observers shall be invited to attend RCG and subgroup meetings.</p> <p>International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) has a standing invitation to participate in all annual RCGNA meetings and may be invited to participate in RCG subgroup work.</p>	<p><i>Same</i></p> <p><i>1 month vs 2 months</i></p> <p><i>Additional- specifies the information that should be provided to the RCG. Consider if and what is required.</i></p> <p><i>Specifies the timelines of decision prior to the meeting.</i></p> <p><i>Same but different sequence</i></p>
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<p>14 Election of the RCG chairperson(s)</p>	<p>The chairperson may be agreed by the Member States present or elected by a simple majority at the RCG annual meeting.</p> <p>One term for a chairperson covers the period of two years. A chairperson may serve no more than two consecutive terms without limiting the total number of terms for the same person to act as a chairperson of the RCG.</p> <p>The role will rotate between Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the same marine region unless otherwise agreed by the RCG.</p> <p>RCG may decide to have co-chairperson(s). The same procedures and conditions as to the chairperson(s) elections apply.</p>	<p>One term for a chairperson covers the period of two years. A chairperson may serve no more than two consecutive terms.</p> <p>The role will rotate between Member States coordinating their data collection activities in the same marine region unless otherwise agreed by the RCG.</p> <p>The Chairperson may be agreed by the MS present at the RCG annual meeting or elected by a simple majority.</p> <p>RCG may decide to have co-chairperson(s). The same procedures and conditions as to the chairperson(s) elections apply.</p>	<p><i>Same, but different sequence, small change in wording.</i></p> <p><i>Additional, consider if necessary.</i></p> <p><i>Same</i></p> <p><i>Same</i></p>
<p>15 Reporting from a RCG meeting</p>	<p>13.1. The chairperson(s) of the RCG shall be responsible for drawing up a report from a RCG annual meeting.</p> <p>The final report should contain, but is not limited to, decisions and recommendations of the RCG, a summary of the RCG intersessional progress and of the RCG discussions, future work directions, the intended work to be carried out before the next meeting, the list of foreseeable RCG meetings and list of participants, their contact information, role and institution.</p> <p>13.2. The final report from the annual meeting shall be made available to the participants of the meeting and publicly, as appropriate, within two months after the RCG annual meeting has ended.</p> <p>Other meeting reports shall be distributed within one month after the meeting has ended unless otherwise decided by the RCG.</p>	<p>The chairperson(s) of the RCG or a person appointed by the chairperson(s) shall be responsible for drawing up a report from a RCG meeting.</p> <p>The draft report shall contain, but is not limited to, recommendations from the RCG, the decisions taken, a summary of the RCG intersessional progress and RCG discussions, future work directions, the intended work to be carried out before the next meeting, the list of foreseeable RCG meetings and list of participants, their contact information, role and institution.</p> <p>The draft report shall be uploaded to the shared platform for dissemination to all participants within two months of the RCG annual meeting. The final report will be published on the JRC website as appropriate.</p>	<p><i>Additional, consider if necessary.</i></p> <p><i>Draft vs final, consider</i></p> <p><i>Time lines for draft vs final, consider; also consider different text on dissemination.</i></p> <p><i>Additional, consider if necessary</i></p>

<p>16 Amending rules of procedure</p>	<p>These Rules of Procedure may be reviewed and amended at the RCG annual or additional meeting by consensus of all national correspondents or in a written procedure by all national correspondents replying within a set time limit of at least 1 month.</p> <p>Any Member State of the RCG can request the review and amendment of the Rules of Procedure to be put on the agenda of the RCG meeting.</p> <p>The list of Member States in point 1.3 may be amended in accordance with the paragraph 14.1. after a written request has been provided to the RCG chairperson(s) by a Member State not listed in the point 1.3.</p>	<p>These Rules of procedure may be reviewed and amended at the RCG annual meeting by consensus of all member states present and endorsed by all National Correspondents of the RCG, or in a written procedure by all National Correspondents replying within one month after the RCG meeting in which the amendment had been agreed.</p>	<p><i>Slightly different wording, consider</i></p> <p><i>Additional, consider if necessary</i></p> <p><i>Additional, consider if necessary</i></p>
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