

The Data Collection Framework

Report of the 17th Liaison Meeting

Meeting between the Chairs of RCGs, PGECON, key end users, JRC and the Commission

FINAL REPORT

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

According to Article 8 of the Regulation (EC) No 2017/10041 (Data Collection Framework, DCF), Member States shall cooperate and coordinate their actions to further improve the quality, timeliness and coverage of data enabling the reliability of data collection methods to be further improved, with a view to improving their data collection activities. Further according to article 9 (1) of the same regulation, Member States shall coordinate their data collection activities with other Member States in the same marine region and shall make every effort to coordinate their actions with third countries having sovereignty or jurisdiction over waters in the same marine region.

In order to facilitate regional coordination, Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) shall be established by the relevant Member States for each marine region (Article 9(2) of the Regulation (EC) No 2017/1004). An RCG consists of experts appointed by Member States, including national correspondents, end users and the Commission and a meeting is held annually at a minimum while intersessional work continues throughout the year. In 2018 (LM report 2018), a decision was taken to test a merging of RCG North Sea and Eastern Arctic (RCG NS&EA) with RCG North Atlantic (RCG NA). As a result, five Regional Coordination Groups (RCG) were established in 2019, operating in the data collection framework. These are:

- RCG Baltic (Baltic),
- RCG North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic (NANS&EA),
- RCG Mediterranean and Black Sea (Med&BS),
- RCG Long Distance Fisheries (LDF)
- RCG Large Pelagics (LP)

Most fishing fleets subject to DCF activities are covered by these RCGs. In addition to these RCGs, a pan-regional planning Group deals with collection of economic data:

- Planning Group on Economic Issues (PGECON)

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

Formally, the Liaison Meeting is an expert group to assist the Commission on data collection issues. Its participants are the chairs of STECF EWGs, the chairs (incoming and outgoing) of all RCGs and of PGECON, representatives of DCF data end-users (e.g. ICES, ICCAT, GFCM, CECAF), the chairs of Regional Databases steering groups and the Commission.

The 17th Liaison Meeting (LM) was held, due to COVID-19 restrictions, by WebEx on September 24 & 25 2020. After opening of the meeting, Mrs Annette Hurrelmann, DG MARE Deputy Head of Unit C3, welcomed the vast group of participants and underlined the importance of this meeting by highlighting that this meeting provides a platform for

1 Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 of the Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (recast)

further improvement and underpinning of already well-established cooperation. She further briefly addressed the status of the revision of EU-MAP and the monitoring by DG MARE of current COVID-19 developments and the (potential) impact on the data collection programmes of the MS.

1.2 Adoption of the agenda

After opening of the meeting, the draft agenda was adopted by the participants. See Annex 3 for the agenda of the meeting.

1.3 Terms of Reference

The terms of references for the meeting were agreed as follows:

TOR 1 Discussion with end users

- A. Setting the scene (end user role and future legislative developments)
- B. End user needs and interaction: presentations from end users on:
 - data needs and data quality
 - ongoing developments
 - state of play of COVID-19 consequences for scientific advice and proposed remedial actions
 - main changes in data calls anticipated next year
 - current interaction between the end-user and RCGs/data collectors and proposals for improvement.

TOR 2 Data handling

- A. RCG data calls – overview of how MS responded and discussion on future use and further exploration by the RCGs (RCG chairs)
- B. End user data calls and RFMO reporting obligations – overview of how MS responded (COM)
- C. Progress achieved in the Regional Databases for RCGs in 2020 and problems identified (end users)
- D. Future developments for Regional Databases (RCG and PGECON chairs)

TOR 3 Discussion on possible follow-up to the main outputs/ recommendations

- A. The 2020 RCGs - specific recommendations to be discussed at the Liaison Meeting and proposal for future intersessional work. Follow-up of Decision-Making meeting (Liaison Meeting and RCG chairs) and streamlining work between RCGs/PGECON
- B. PGECON – update on activities
- C. Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues
- D. Future steps in RCG and PGECON pan-regional and intersessional work (i.e. regional work plans): exchange of ideas and discussion (Liaison Meeting, RCG & PGECON Chairs)

TOR 4 Governance

- A. Follow-up on RCG RoP developments in each of the RCGs, PGECON (Liaison Meeting, RCG & PGECON Chairs)
- B. Structure of RCGs and PGECON and cooperation. Lessons learned from combined 2020 RCGs. Tentative changes in structure i.e. PGECON and in RCG number (PGECON, RCG chairs)

1.4 Participants

The 17th Liaison Meeting was chaired by Sieto Verver (The Netherlands) and the group met with the following participants:

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2 Discussion with end-users (ToR 1A&1B)

2.1 Setting the scene (ToR 1A)

To set the scene for the meeting, the chair of the LM briefly presented the progress and achievements since the 2019 meeting.

The following RCG meetings were held during the year:

- RCG Baltic (Baltic),
 - Meeting held virtually, using via Zoom, 8-12 June 2020.
 - Chairs: Maria Hansson, Sweden and Elo Rasmann, Estonia.
 - The meeting was held jointly with RCG North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic.
- RCG North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic (NANS&EA),
 - Meeting held virtually, using Zoom, 8-12 June 2020.
 - Chairs: Els Torreele, Belgium and Lucia Zarauz, Spain.
 - The meeting was held jointly with RCG Baltic.
- RCG Mediterranean and Black Sea (Med&BS),
 - Meeting held virtually, 31 August- 2 September 2020
 - Chairs: Ivana Vukov, Croatia and Simona Nicheva, Bulgaria
- RCG Long Distance Fisheries (LDF)
 - Meeting held virtually, 14-16 July 2019
 - Chair: Irek Wójcik, Poland
- RCG Large Pelagics (LP)
 - Meeting held online via MS Teams, 25-25 June 2020
 - Co-Chairs: Pedro Lino, Portugal and Mathieu Depetris, France

PGECON will meet after the LM 2020, starting on October 5th. The outcomes of this meeting will be included in this report as post-meeting information to avoid losing momentum and the option to report the outcomes in 2020.

The 2019 end-user part of the LM discussed the lack of expertise on social data and lack of defined end-user needs. A follow-up meeting to address this issue is planned for the week after LM 2020 in the form of the STECF EWG 20-14 on social dimensions. Following the 2019 presentation on the development of Regional Databases, problems with funding the development were discussed but not solved. More specifically, the development of the RDB(ES) hosted by ICES was at risk as funds were limited. ICES itself now secured the development for the next four years. For the future, solid financial contributions need to be set to cater for development and maintenance of this, and other, RDBs in use.

Other issues such as renaming the RCGs fisheries overviews and introducing participants of all RCGs to the ICES RDB Steering Committee were covered during 2020. The RCGs contributed to the various consultation on the revision of EU-MAP, e.g. by double-checking the various inputs and proposed tables.

The separate status and the role of the diadromous subgroup in the LM was discussed in 2019 but not further addressed during the year. The group was invited to the 2020 meeting and the status of the group was discussed under ToR 4.

2.2 Future legislative developments (ToR 1A)

The EU fisheries data collection framework is set in Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 that requires an adoption of the Union multi-annual programme for data collection in fisheries sector (EU MAP). Since 2020 EU MAP is divided into two legal acts:

- Delegated Decision 2019/910 on biological, environmental and socio-economic data requirements (EP and Council scrutiny 2 months after adoption);
- Implementing Decision 2019/909 on thresholds for data collection and the list of surveys-at-sea (no scrutiny by EP and Council; comitology vote).

In line with the EU MAP the Member States submit multiannual national work plans that are approved by the EC through individual COM decisions, and report annually on the implementation. Formats and rules for submission of work plans and annual reports are set in dedicated COM decisions (EU) 2016/1701 and (EU) 2018/1283.

The revision of the EU-MAP for 2022 and beyond began in 2018 during STECF EWG 18-18. In 2019 wide stakeholder consultations took place with end users, RCGs, PGECON, the Liaison Meeting, and the national correspondents. The results fed into the STECF work on first drafts in dedicated groups: EWG 19-05 on the review of surveys-at-sea and the EWG 19-12 on the revision of the EU-MAP and Work Plan templates.

In 2020 the EC amended the first drafts and consulted them with the Expert Group of Fisheries Data Collection on 1 July and 22 September 2020. The draft implementing act has been finalized and will be submitted to vote in the Committee of Fisheries and Aquaculture, followed by the adoption and publication in the Official Journal. The draft delegated act will be finalized in coming weeks and submitted for the Commission inter-services consultation and a public consultation, followed by the adoption, the European Parliament and the Council scrutiny and the publication in the Official Journal.

The draft EU MAP doesn't introduce revolutionary changes, but further underlines regional coordination and end-user needs as overarching principles and:

- harmonizes names and regional classification of mandatory surveys at sea, indicating RCG responsible for coordination;
- updates the list of mandatory species and structures it according to RCG responsible;
- modifies the aquaculture data collection thresholds;
- introduces mandatory collection for freshwater aquaculture;
- integrates results of certain pilot studies to regular data collection activities (recreational fishing, sensitive species incidental catches);
- clarifies coordination framework for socioeconomic data collection;
- modifies scope of data collection for fish processing and on environmental variables in aquaculture.

In parallel, work on work plans and annual reports templates continues. In October 2020 ad-hoc contractors will prepare a first draft of the revised templates and guidelines, and early in 2021 STECF EWG 20-18 will finalize the document, to be adopted on time for October 2021 work plan submission.

2.3 End-user needs, present and future (ToR 1B)

2.3.1 ICCAT presentation

The International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) has participated for the second time in Liaison Group meetings. Its representative, Carlos Palma (ICCAT Biostatistician and responsible for data management) described shortly ICCAT in terms of mandate, functional structure, regulatory process and the associated data requirements. It was also described the ICCAT data collection process, and the importance of obtaining good quality and timely data from their Parties, noting that European Union (EU) is the most important ICCAT Party with nearly 40% of the total catches (from 18 EU Member States) of all ICCAT species every year.

ICCAT's mandate covers the sustainable management of about 30 species of tuna and tuna-like species (*Scombriformes* with the exception of the families *Trichiuridae* and *Gempylidae* and the genus *Scomber*), and the study of the impact of fishing activities on a large list of by-catch species (pelagic/coastal shark species, seabirds, sea turtles, etc.) exploited in the ICCAT convention area (Atlantic Ocean and adjacent Seas). The Article IX of the ICCAT Convention jointly with the ICCAT regulatory measures in place, have behind about 170 data reporting requirements for management and scientific purposes, that govern the ICCAT data collection workload every year.

A total of 53 Contracting Parties and 6 Parties with cooperating status (hereafter CPCs), are the major ICCAT data providers. There are two other important sources of scientific information managed by ICCAT. The first one is associated with the ICCAT Special Research Programs (detailed at: www.iccat.int/en/ResProgs.html), namely the GBYP programme on bluefin tuna, the AOTTP programme on tropical tunas, the EPBR programme on billfish species, the SMTYP on small tuna species, and, the SRDCP programme on shark species. The second one is linked with special ICCAT data recovery projects. The above-mentioned data provisions account for most scientific data used by ICCAT.

The ICCAT Scientific Committee (SCRS) identifies which scientific data is required for the best scientific advice, and establishes how (formats, structures, quality criteria, etc.) this information should be collected by all CPCs. To fulfil the scientific data reporting obligations, each CPCs must provide every year by July 31st any new or revised dataset, ranging from annual fishing fleet activity, annual catches by species/gear, monthly catch and effort, monthly biological data (observed size/weight frequencies, and extrapolated catch-at-size), port sampling data, tropical fisheries data on FAD-buoys activities, to domestic scientific observer data, and tagging (conventional and electronic) data. These datasets mostly used in stock assessments are compiled using 13 standard forms.

The SCRS and the Secretariat have also developed a set of instruments (filtering criteria, validation/integration and reporting tools) which allows faster data treatments and more efficient identification of datasets requiring revisions or missing. Reporting tools like the SCRS report cards (yearly and by dataset type), the SCRS catalogues (last 30 years by species/stock), and the SCRS scorecard (scores of each species/stock catalogue), have proved to be great tools to easily identify data completeness problems, and have a broader view of the data richness aspects of a given species/stock. The ICCAT integrated online management system (IOMS), currently under implementation, aims to put online on the long run the entire compliance and scientific data management system, with predicted dramatic improvements in all the data collection, validation and dissemination processes.

In terms of EU scientific data provision accomplishments with ICCAT, ICCAT it was observed a slight but sustained improvement over the last four years. In general terms, the 2019 data reported to ICCAT in 2020, had improved slightly when compared with the three previous reporting periods (2019 with 2018 data, 2017 with 2016 data, 2016 with 2015 data). The major issues identified were similar to the ones found in the previous years, and in its majority associated with incomplete forms, wrong codes used, and lower resolution of some datasets. When a given dataset doesn't arrive or doesn't meet the

minimum SCRS validation criteria, the ICCAT Secretariat informs the corresponding CPCs about that reporting situation. For EU, the request is generally made (complex cases can be treated differently) directly to DGMARE through email, with a copy to the corresponding EU Member State Statistical Correspondent (preferably a National scientist). The internal - "EU reporting status on statistics in ICCAT" annual report - prepared by the ICCAT Secretariat in October each year, detailing each EU Member State reporting status of each statistical dataset, has proved to be an important tool to solve and follow the data issues identified every year.

The ICCAT scientific data have a closer relation with the EU Data Collection Framework (DCF). Given the EU importance to ICCAT in terms of scientific data needs the DCF has the potential to be the major EU scientific data provider system, replacing the current submission process.

ICCAT-GBYP program coordinator stressed the importance of increasing the coordination between ICCAT special scientific programs biological sampling and that carried out under the DCF to take advantage of the potential synergies. It was remembered that first contacts, including submission of detailed information about biological sampling carried out within ICCAT special scientific programs as GBYP, has been already maintained between ICCAT and RCG LP representatives.

2.3.2 ICES presentation

ICES is an independent intergovernmental marine science organization, which provides advice to the European Commission as well as other recipients. Delivery of regular and new advice occurs throughout the year following agreements between ICES and recipients of advice. ICES advice is based on frameworks and agreed management objectives that are underpinned by national and multinational agreements. Data are collated by official data calls and internationally coordinated and nationally coordinated surveys.

ICES provided a brief presentation of the development in terms of communicating data needs to the RCGs and LM and collaboration in general between ICES and RCGs. Having the annual meeting between the RCG chairs and ICES Secretariat in spring was concluded useful, allowing for adjustment of data related issues early in the season as well as development and improvement of existing structures. With the development of the RDBES and the consolidated sampling of fisheries dependent data, it was seen useful if these meetings could be supplemented by regional meetings with a focus on the fisheries independent data collection, the FIRMOGs (Fisheries Independent Regional Monitoring Group). These FIRMOGS was suggested to include representatives from end users (ecosystem WGs and stock assessment WGs), statistical expertise, and survey expertise facilitating solutions for data collection that is based on end user needs. ICES will work with the RCGNANSEA & BAL to establish a pilot FIRMOG in 2021.

ICES' groups identify data needs through expert groups, benchmarks and workshops; these are peer-reviewed and consolidated within the ICES system before being communicated. Using the Stock Information Database (SID) as a repository for the data needs for each of the stocks was continued encouraged by the LM. The ability for data providers to access and download upcoming data needs immediately after the working group allows the data submitters to get advance access to what will be included in the coming data call and also provide the possibility to flag issues e.g. like requesting data that is not collected due to no fishery or quota.

ICES and the RCGs will continue the collaboration regarding the formulation of the data calls; stability is key in terms of format and what is asked and ICES has not planned any substantial changes to the data call on catch data; the data calls for ICES bycatch group, salmon and eel groups are being developed and thus may change. At the LM, clarification was sought whether the bycatch sampling data were fit for purpose. ICES would like to expand the collaboration with the RCGs on monitoring requirements and methods on

bycatch as the needs for the assessment of bycatch is still being developed. Concerning the sampling of Mediterranean data, ICES traditionally has not been collating such data, however, for bycatch and eel, such data would be very useful to get access to. RCG Med&BS offered to invite ICES to their RCG meeting to further explore a potential data exchange. ICES was notified that the Mediterranean data call includes VMS data which was positively responded to.

In terms of data transmission failures and their reporting, the pre-screening by data providers has greatly reduce the non-transmission failures, which currently are marked as failures; 21 issues were reported to the EC for 2019.

ICES has established a benchmark overview group (BOG) with members from ACOM, SCICOM and the Secretariat. This group will explore and propose solutions to address generic issues with benchmarks, review completed benchmarks and recommend remedial actions as required. It will also prepare a proposal of the list of benchmarks to be conducted based on the prioritised Issue Lists from the EGs. The EGs are requested to go through a detailed revision of data needs as part of formulation of the Issue Lists.

Though not directly under the ICES remit, following the presentation, questions were raised on the appropriate venue to discuss bycatch and effects of fisheries on marine habitats in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region, RCG Med&BS clarified that this topic will also be discussed next year during the RCG Med&BS annual meeting and End-users will be invited. During the 2020 RCG Med&BS meeting held at the beginning of September, each MS presented the results of pilot studies on bycatch which are included in the RCG Med&BS 2020 report and after it's finalization it will be sent to ICES.

In response to a question on this topic, the BOGs will also address the end-user needs towards RCGs and thus support further enhancement and refinement of data collection.

2.3.3 GFCM presentation

The GFCM, the FAO regional fisheries management organization for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (FAO area 37), federate efforts of countries towards both the conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources at all levels (biological, social, economic and environmental) and the sustainable development of aquaculture.

Comprehensive, reliable and timely fisheries data are fundamental in the GFCM decision making process, based on scientific advice as formulated by its relevant subsidiary bodies. The Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) comprises the main GFCM instrument in support of the identification and collection of fisheries-related data necessary to improve the formulation of sound scientific advice.

GFCM receives data from Mediterranean and Black Sea states (24 Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-contracting Parties, and 5 Cooperating non-Contracting Parties) through different channels: i) in reply to existing GFCM Recommendations (compulsory), ii) through national reports to the Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries (SAC) and the Working Group of the Black Sea (WGBS), iii) through Stock Assessment Forms - SAFs (input data for priority species being compulsory from 2018), iv) through ad-hoc data calls for those information not currently requested by existing GFCM recommendations.

GFCM fisheries data needs are regularly communicated to concerned CPCs through the GFCM Data submission calendar (GFCM website) and the GFCM deadline reminders (emails in English and French) sent to CPCs when a deadline for data submission is approaching. In 2020 GFCM has to date totalled more than 70 data calls. CPCs are constantly assisted in the data reporting duties by the GFCM Secretariat via a dedicate mailbox and through the provision of technical support (e.g. DCRF manual).

With reference to the data needed for stock assessment purposes, following the adoption of Recommendation GFCM/41/2017/6, in order to maintain the quality of advice, GFCM has moved towards the use of official data provided by countries on fishing activities (i.e. catch and effort data – number of vessels, number of days at sea, etc.). Nevertheless, GFCM has also made effort to maintain and preserve the independence of experts to decide on scientific data and assumptions used (e.g. biological data on life history traits). Thus, the use of the different data sources and analyses undertaken should be fully reported and full reproducibility should be ensured. In cases where official data were not available, expert groups should provide advice based on estimations or any other information available and the SAC or the WGBS should evaluate the possibility of proposing precautionary measures on the basis of that advice. Official data calls are issued by the DCRF team within the GFCM Secretariat both for both official data and scientist data in order to afford the maximum flexibility to countries operating in different ways.

As a crucial step to consolidate the use of data for scientific advice and to assess the compliance of CPCs with existing recommendations, GFCM continues progressing on the implementation of fisheries quality indicators [timeliness, completeness, conformity, with preliminary thresholds for different data variables, stability and consistency] to assess the data submitted by CPCs through the DCRF online platform. Thus, the data flow from data-entry by CPCs to finalization of the datasets now includes a series of steps dedicated to quality control and assurance and results in data quality reports being sent back to CPCs.

In terms of fisheries data submissions, GFCM notes a relatively small effect of the COVID-19 situation to 2020 data with a general improvement made by its CPCs; some impacts are however expected in 2021. The newly received data have fed the GFCM databases and advanced online data consultation facilities has been released for users' consultation through the GFCM website.

Following the presentation, RCG Med & BS responded by presenting their recommendation on the availability of DCRF templates on the GFCM DCRF online platform - RCG MED & BS 2020 recommends to GFCM that the DCRF templates for reporting fisheries data through the DCRF online platform are made available to MS earlier if possible. GFCM indicated that these DCRF templates are generated every year on the basis of both the GFCM fisheries data requirements and information duly provided by each single country at the beginning of the calendar year on the operating fleet segments and GSAs. Therefore, additional effort will be made by the GFCM Secretariat to anticipate the availability of such templates on the GFCM online platform and CPCs will be invited to submit the need national information timely. This issue will be discussed further between GFCM and RCG Med&BS in order to enhance synergy.

2.3.4 CECAF presentation

CECAF presented a brief overview of the Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic (CECAF²), describing the legal status of the Committee, as well as the key species and fisheries operating in CECAF area of competence. It also provided an overview of the current data used for stock assessment, the available databases, the main issues in relation to data resolution and gaps and the current work plan.

The presentation highlighted the purpose of CECAF and its role to promote the sustainable utilization of the living marine resources within its area of competence by the appropriate management and development of the fisheries and fishing operations. The Committee currently has an advisory role, operating under the framework of FAO that acts as the Secretariat of the Committee; it is not a Regional Fisheries Management Organization. CECAF currently has 34 Members including coastal and non-coastal countries, covering an

² <http://www.fao.org/cecaf/en/>

area of competence that extends from Cape Spartel down to the Congo River. The Sessions of the CECAF Committee are held every two years. A Scientific Sub-Committee (SSC) was established in 1998 to provide scientific advice to the Committee on fisheries management decisions. It also meets every two years. The SSC has several working groups on pelagic, demersal and artisanal fisheries that work intersessionally.

The presentation highlighted the key thematic areas of CECAF: stock assessment, fisheries management, coordination of fisheries-related research, and collection of fisheries information and statistics. The main outputs produced by the Committee consist of stock and fisheries status reports, as well as thematic studies (e.g. on small-scale fisheries, deep-sea fisheries, vulnerable marine ecosystems and illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing). The Committee also provides fisheries management recommendations and indications on research priorities.

Both artisanal and industrial, national and foreign fleets exploit multiple species in the CECAF area using a wide variety of gears (e.g. CECAF provides advice for over ten pelagic species and nearly twenty demersal species in its Northern area). The CECAF working groups commonly use production models or Length based methods such as LCA, and yield per recruit Y/R depending on the available data. Analytical models (e.g. VPA) are used for few species only. The assessment is heavily reliant on expert and general knowledge on species distribution and life cycle.

All available data are tabulated and are regularly updated by the members of the stock assessment working groups. These data include information on catches, effort and biological information. Countries have different statistical and sampling systems; therefore, data issues are contingent to local situations. Generally, catch data for the most recent years are commonly missing or cover only some fleets. Moreover, species identification is not always accurate, and species must be lumped together, especially demersal species. Regarding fishing effort, there is currently no compilation of data series for all fleets operating in the region. As far as biological data are concerned, even though surveys are carried out in the region, length and age data from the fisheries need to be improved; however, there are exceptions (e.g. sardine, mackerel regularly sampled by Morocco, Spain, Russia).

The scientists in the stock assessment working groups have issued a series of recommendations to be conveyed to the Member countries through the SSC and the Committee for a follow-up at national level in order to address these data issues. The recommendations relate mainly to the intensification of the biological sampling (including through on-board observer programmes), the improvement of species identification, enhancement of catch and effort data, as well as the production of appropriate age-length keys. Specific studies were also recommended, as for example on improving quantification of discards in the shrimp fisheries at the national level. In response to the presentation, the chair of RCG LDF express the wish to improve the involvement of CECAF in the RCG to discuss e.g. data collection and data needs and issues like species identification and studies on discards. CECAF will be invited to the next RCG LDF in 2021.

2.3.5 IOTC presentation

The IOTC (Indian Ocean Tuna Commission) manages 16 tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean area (corresponding to FAO areas F51 and F57) and is participating to the *liaison meeting* for the first time in 2020.

The EU is an IOTC *Cooperating and Contracting Party* (CPC) since October 1995: in recent years, catches from various EU-flagged vessels in the Indian Ocean (mostly belonging to industrial fisheries) contributed to 16% of total catches of tuna and tuna-like species within the IOTC area, positioning EU as the second CPC (behind Indonesia) in terms of total recorded catches.

Several data collection and reporting requirements exist in IOTC, dictating the information that has to be collected and reported on a regular basis to the Secretariat: these requirements are expressed through IOTC Conservation and Management Measures (IOTC Resolutions) and deal with the collection of several scientific indicators ranging from total captures by species and gears, time-area catches, biometric data (length and weight frequencies), FADs / buoys activities, buoy positions and scientific observers data.

The level of quality and accuracy of the information received by the Secretariat is strongly affected by the artisanal nature of several fisheries under the IOTC area of competence and varies widely with the CPCs involved. Furthermore, the lack of mandatory data reporting formats requires the Secretariat to perform additional data clean-up and sanitization tasks that increase the time-to-market of all received information.

Several initiatives are in place to ensure that the submission of statistical data is as accurate and regular as possible: the Secretariat is engaged in daily feedback cycles with its data providers, plus it delivers capacity building to its member states to ensure local capacity is adequate enough to independently produce the information required.

The e-MARIS initiative (to be rolled out in 2021) will aim at further increasing the CPCs' ability to autonomously provide data to the Secretariat, collect automated feedback as soon as the data is submitted and eventually see the information incorporated in the IOTC databases with little to no human intervention.

In terms of data submissions from the European Union fleets operating in the Indian Ocean, the situation for 2020 (with 2019 as reference year) is still under assessment, but looks comparable to previous years: some of the detected non-compliance issues are well known, and keep on repeating over the course of the last few years. These are related to artisanal and coastal fisheries from Mayotte and La Reunion, although several industrial fisheries do also continue reporting information in sub-optimal ways compared to the original requirements. It was also recalled, in particular, that data from the purse seine fishery operating under the flag of EU, Italy has not been reported at all in 2020 (reference data 2019) and only with very minimal details during previous years.

2.3.6 STECF presentation

The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) provides the European Commission with advice on fisheries issues and hosts several Expert Working Groups (EWGs) using data requested from EU Member States via official data calls issued by JRC/DG MARE:

- Fisheries-Dependent Information (FDI)
- Mediterranean & Black Sea stock assessment
- Fleet economics / Annual Economic Report (AER)
- Aquaculture
- Processing Industry
- Social Data

Fisheries-Dependent Information (FDI)

Based on EWG 20-10 (14-18 Sep 2020), data quality is improving annually with Member States gaining more experience in data submission and requirements. The huge amount of data (all species, all areas, all discards, etc.) leads to higher probability of errors in submissions by all Member States. The coverage of FDI data has been affected by removal of biological data for the Med & BS regions in 2020 FDI data call. This means that FDI biological data is not fully covering all EU fishing regions anymore. There should be a protocol defined how data from Med & BS data call is populated to FDI to keep full coverage of biological data available for end users in the future.

Ongoing developments: First publication of data after 2019 data call, with more work needed on defining confidentiality and dissemination of the data to the public. Discussions of methodologies (limited by resources, need for second meeting to address all issues including comparability with economic data call, national discards estimates, etc.)

COVID-19 consequences: Due to COVID-19, only basic ToRs could be addressed in 2020. Impact on data quality is expected in the next data call due to the COVID-19 effects on data collection and sampling.

Improvements: Two FDI meetings, with the first focused on data checks and correction and the second focused on development of methodology and answering additional data related requests would help to finalise data sets prior to publication and work on harmonization of methodologies across MS. The data call should be kept as stable as possible. Improved follow-up through the 'Data Transmission Monitoring Tool' (DTMT) could help.

Interaction between data users and collectors works via the PGECON the co-chair. Data collectors are part of EWG experts, including some National Correspondents.

In the LM, clarification was sought for treatment of exemptions from the Landing Obligation: Each year, there is a request by the different Regional Advisory Groups to implement certain exemptions regarding discard practices. That implies that fishermen are allowed to discard species in certain amounts and in certain regions. There are several exemptions types defined in the CFP and requested by MS a) high survivability, b) *de minimis* and c) technical measures. After an evaluation by STECF (<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/plenary> and <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/discards>), DG MARE puts these exemptions into EU regulations. The STECF EWG on Fisheries Dependent Information (FDI) calculates the estimated discards under proposed exemptions based on the most recent information provided to FDI data call (<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/fdi>). DG MARE then takes into the account these discard amounts in their proposals for the final TACs.

Mediterranean & Black Sea stock assessment

Based on EWG 20-09 (7-18 Sep 2020), most issues involve individual errors with diverse data and cannot be easily summarised. These occur right across data types (e.g. MEDITS, landings, etc.) and countries. An important issue with Italian landing data has been identified which is important for stock assessment: in some Italian GSAs, landings of métiers that are not sampled are not always reported in the Med&BS database. Actual landings were recovered from FDI database.

COVID-19 consequences: The MED group 'lost' an EWG meeting (cancelled March 2020 meeting), so failed to improve data flow, impacting on later meetings, extending them. Remote meetings are underway. The ToRs have been restricted, meetings are less efficient and rely heavily on existing relationships between people. Problems have been encountered supporting weaker members of the group. Remote meetings will not be a long-term solution.

Main changes in data calls: Data calls will be similar, except there is now a requirement to obtain recreational data for future analyses.

Suggestions for improvement: Improved follow-up through DTMT should help and is already helping. More effective methods to get feedback on data issues during meeting would help. Annual coordinated Med&BS data quality meeting to follow-up on data issues would help (the meeting lost this year). A way to bring recreational fisheries data into the Data Call should be developed.

In response to the presentation RCG Med&BS presented the recommendation on the establishment of a dedicated STECF EWG regarding data quality on the Mediterranean and

Black Sea data call, which will convene before the STECF EWG on stock assessment. Currently two STECF EWGs on stock assessment use the data submitted according to the Mediterranean and Black Sea data call. The Med&BS Member States receive the highest number of data transmission issues coming from this data call, which indicates that the data check done prior to the use of data is not adequate. The importance of data checks for data submitted according to the Mediterranean and Black Sea data call was acknowledged and explained as this issue also arose during the STECF EWG on the FDI. In addition, the data check is done only for stocks for which the stock assessment is being performed and not all data which is submitted. Support was found for the recommendation apart from the general additional statement by GFCM that there is always a data preparatory meeting before the use of data for stock assessment in the working groups. The aim of the data preparatory meeting is to check quality of input data for stock assessment purposes.

Fleet economics (AER)

The EWG 20-03, working on the Annual Economic Report (AER, 22-26 June 2020) part 1, would like to obtain the data at a much lower aggregation level. Including the ICES area will help on improving the regional analysis. The final aim is that the data would have the FDI resolution level.

Ongoing developments: The AER data call is asking for new dimensions on gear and fisheries. The objective is to identify some fisheries, specifically the RFMOs. Currently is not used except for Spain. We don't expect any changes. Internally at the JRC, there is a change in the interface to do the data checks.

COVID-19 consequences: The nowcasting procedure for 2020 has been adapted to consider the COVID-19 impact in EU fisheries (cf. STECF July 2020 Plenary report).

No changes in data calls are anticipated for next year.

Currently, there is fluent interaction between PGECON and data collectors. Workshop and meetings are held on a regular basis and changes are implemented. There is a need to improve the LDF data collection (identification of segments) for RFMOs (cf. STECF July 2020 Plenary report).

Processing industry

Based on EWG 19-15 (18-22 Nov 2019), the overall data quality is good, but some issues have to be improved by MS. Coverage has decreased from previous data calls, as under the EU-MAP, the fish processing sector data collection is done on a voluntary basis. There is a need for better clarification what is mandatory or not under the fish processing data collection (e.g. turnover and number of companies that do fish processing but not as main activity; frequency of their collection and reporting). MS should submit social data according to the age and educational categories recommended by PGECON (split age group 40-64 into smaller groups). Regarding the variable 'raw material', there was a lower coverage by MS, mainly due to large difficulties encountered in deriving information directly from industries (extra workload and costs). It should be investigated if the data stored at enterprise level according to the Control Regulation (traceability legislation) could be used (SECFISH project finding).

Ongoing developments: There are doubts on data collection under revised EU-MAP: European Business Statistics only provides some of the required variables, and there are mismatches between DCF and Eurostat.

COVID-19 consequences: Impact on STECF work: none, no meeting foreseen for the next 12 months, at least. Impact on data collection: no information by now. Aspects related to potential delays in data collection will be addressed during next PGECON (5-7 Oct 2020).

There are no changes in data calls anticipated for next year.

Currently, there is good interaction between data collectors and users, as the EWG chair and participants are in continuous contact with PGECON and most of them are active parts of PGECON. No improvements are needed.

Aquaculture

There was no data call in 2019; the next data call is planned for the end of 2020.

Social data

End-user feedback from STECF EWG 19-03 was provided in last year's LM report. The STECF EWG 20-14 on Social Dimension (28 Sep – 2 Oct 2020) will further investigate improvements in data collection, handling and use. The next data call is planned for 2021.

2.3.7 RCG NANSEA/BAL planned changes to ISSG on end-user needs

The subgroup on end-user need was established as a pan regional group in 2018. The aim of the subgroup was to 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.

During the RCG meeting 2020 it was decided that the ToRs for this ISSG should be changed to have a more generic focus and not to continue as is, having a technical as well as detailed focus. The reasoning is to avoid duplication of work between already ongoing ICES working groups or even worse if several people are working in different directions within the same topics. However, it was also realised that it was important to keep the close connection between the RCG and ICES. It was therefore decided to keep the annual information meetings between ICES and the RCG chairs to ensure the good cooperation and to be able to follow the progress over time.

Main tasks for 2020 – 2021 are:

1. communication channel between ICES and RCG chairs
2. communication channel between the COM and RCG chairs
3. Follow up on end-user needs on a general scale
4. Update commercial sampling overview caused by COVID-19
5. UK related issues

At the LM, the progress on the overview of the impact of COVID-19 in commercial sampling (task 4) was presented with heat maps by stock and region. The overview is comprehensive of all regions related to RCG Baltic and RCG NA NS&EA. However, only a couple of graphs were shown as an example.

The plots were prepared by averaging the responses from march and for quarter 2 for each question. The scoring for each response followed as; 3 for Extreme impacts (75-100%), 2 for Medium impacts (25-75%) and 1 for Low/Null impacts (0-25%). The answers; Not applicable, and No response were excluded from the analysis so that the supplied answers could be analysed numerically. The number of countries that responded to each question were included in brackets for each stock.

ICES feedback on the overview was very positive. They found the heat maps extremely useful and encouraged RCG Baltic and RCG NA NS&EA to carry on with the work. ICES also offered to consult with relevant people to be able to provide further information to the group.

2.4 State of play of COVID-19 consequences for scientific advice and proposed remedial actions (ToR 1B)

2.4.1 ICCAT situation

As in all the t-RFMOs, ICCAT has also suffered from the impact of COVID-19 in the normal workload. However, ICCAT reduced its impact by the early adoption (March 2020) of the “teleworking” at the Secretariat headquarters, and by rescheduling the 2020 meeting arrangements “in-person” to accommodate them “online” (TEAMS platform), with only a few meetings cancelled. The adoption of online meetings had a drawback in the increase of the number of days per meeting, in general enlarged by a factor of 1.5 (e.g.: 4 days “in-person” transformed in 6 days “online”). The meeting participation oscillated between 20 to 120 participants.

In addition, the COVID-19 impact obliged the ICCAT Secretariat to have slight delays in some important data related projects (new databases, new applications, automation processes, etc.), and, also delay some field work from ICCAT Special Programmes (AOTTP, GBYP).

Having the SCRS annual “online” obliged the Secretariat to advance in 1 month (Sept/Oct to Aug/Sept) the 2020 data preparation which included all the new 2019 data reported. Nevertheless, this task was fully accomplished without any impact in the SCRS annual meeting and the correspondent advice to the Commission.

2.4.2 ICES situation

Concerning the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, ICES reported that no advice or assessment groups had been cancelled or postponed; instead the following actions have been taken for 2020. ACOM reprioritised the terms of reference for the assessment expert groups, developed the concept of abbreviated advice sheets and worked with SCICOM and the SG chairs to ensure that the expert groups felt supported and were confident to shift to remote working. Deadlines (other than for advice on North Sea Nephrops stocks) were unchanged. Requesters of advice and the expert groups were consulted a few times to ensure that the process had support and buy-in.

There have been issues with the delivery of catch data, not all COVID 19 related but more related to national circumstances, e.g. change in personnel responsible for uploading data without a replacement or in-depth revision of national data processing procedures causing delay of data delivery. However, the issues related to COVID-19 caused difficulties to comply with the established deadlines for the data call for several assessment WGs. Due to the extensive delays caused by COVID-19 disruption in the VMS and logbook data submission and processing, ICES have decided not to use this year’s submission for ICES advice products.

A small ICES “survey task force” has been set up to keep ACOM aware of which monitoring, and surveys are occurring, and which are being dropped. At the time of the LM a total of 6 surveys had been cancelled in 2020. The task force is liaising with the RCGs in order not to replicate ongoing initiatives. The UK has been removed from decision-making mechanism of the RCG but still has legal obligations (delivery and reporting) in 2020. ACOM has prepared a guidance sheet to assist groups with analysis in the event of missing surveys, or partial surveys. Deviations from the stock annexes, and the reasons for those

deviations will be logged. Thus, all stock assessment groups fill in a section describing deviations from stock annex caused by missing information from COVID-19 disruption and mitigations. These chapters are included in EG reports.

The expert groups consider carefully the interim year assumptions about take up of catch in 2020. The advice requesters were consulted on this matter in terms of the approach. The uptake of quota or fishing mortality was observed not to match the assumptions made in the recent fishing opportunities advice (interim year assumptions of catch or fishing mortality). This could have consequences for the appropriateness of the advice for fishing opportunities in 2021.

The effect of the missing survey data for 2020 have potentially provided slightly more uncertain assessment results, however additional data years, including survey data, are necessary to fully realise the effect of the missing 2020 survey data.

2.4.3 GFCM situation

To assess the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region, the GFCM Secretariat analysed available information and produced two publications: 1) A first, preliminary analysis (published on 28 April 2020) which covered the period from 1 March 2020 to 15 April 2020, 2) and a second, updated analysis (published on 30 June 2020) which followed the same methodology used for the preliminary analysis.

In order to carry out a deeper reflection on select topics, the GFCM then held a series of three webinars, titled the “GFCM Online Forum: Building fisheries and aquaculture resilience post COVID-19” to examine the responses of organizations to the crisis, as well as to delve deeper into the effects of the crisis on the aquaculture and small-scale fisheries sectors. This webinar series was widely attended with over 800 participants from more than 65 different countries.

Taken together, these initiatives allowed the GFCM to capture and disseminate widely comprehensive information on the impacts of the crisis on the region’s fisheries and aquaculture sectors, providing an opportunity for countries, organizations and other relevant stakeholders to share and learn from the experiences of others.

The GFCM analysis on the impacts of COVID-19 highlighted that the actions that have facilitated the resilience of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors during this crisis are aligned with the strategic priorities the GFCM (even before the crisis). Therefore, to promote the sector’s future resilience, lessons learned, and best practices can be gleaned from the experience of implementing the GFCM’s mid-term strategy (2017-2020) and can inform future discussions towards post-2020 strategic initiatives.

Finally, the COVID-19 crisis has reinforced the importance of regional coordination and we look forward to strengthening our practical model for working together with our partners and sharing expertise, particularly in times of crisis.

2.4.4 CECAF situation

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the execution of the work plan and an updated calendar of working groups is under discussion, with first face-to-face meetings scheduled for second quarter of 2021. Options also include the organization of virtual working groups and preparatory meetings that are currently under discussion with the countries.

2.4.5 IOTC situation

The onset of the COVID pandemic has had a sensible impact on the collection of scientific data since March 2020, with a major reduction in the boarding of observers on large-scale purse seiners and associated support vessels, as well as the stopping of the sampling operations of the purse seiners unloading in Port Victoria, Seychelles.

It also negatively affected several ongoing research projects in the region, by preventing international travels, delivery of samples shipments and field operations (e.g. tagging experiments from vessels).

Similarly, all data Compliance and Capacity Building Missions that the IOTC Secretariat was expected to deliver during the year have to be put on forced halt, and delays in data entry and data curation have occurred, due to the reduced working activities from several stakeholders resulting in late data submissions and data incompleteness.

At this stage, it is difficult to accurately assess the effects the COVID-19 pandemic will have on the fisheries managed by IOTC: for sure, the IOTC Secretariat expects further time delays in the process of collection, collation and curation of all mandatory statistical data at national level, whose extent will only be clearer by end June 2021, due to the IOTC data submission cycle.

These issues will likely affect both the quality and quantity of data available in 2021 and will negatively impact activities such as bycatch monitoring and the assessment of several important stocks, because of the decrease in completeness and timeliness of all statistical data submissions from member countries.

Furthermore, due to the impossibility of conveying physical meetings during the year, the 24th Session of the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission – originally scheduled by end May 2020 – had to be shortened, postponed to November 2020 and turned into a remote meeting, therefore potentially reducing the time allocated to the discussion of key management measures (e.g. follow ups to Resolution 19/01 – *“On an interim plan for rebuilding the Indian Ocean Yellowfin tuna stock in the IOTC area of competence”*).

2.4.6 Commission: Inventory of COVID-19 impact on Data Collection

Since April 2020 the Commission has collected information on COVID-19 impact on the data collection in bimonthly surveys among MS – last update in August 2020. The results of the survey feed discussions on possible (coordinated) remedies. They have been shared with requesting end users.

The August survey shows that some commercial fisheries gradually return to regular levels, whereas quarantine measures, low market demand and travel restrictions hamper other fisheries. Some operate on demand (“fishing to order”).

Recreational fisheries have been resumed, but their levels vary due to social distancing measures on the one hand, and higher ratio of domestic holiday makers on the other hand.

Sampling on-board, suspended by mid-March, was resumed during summer in some MS, and self-sampling was applied in larger extent in some fisheries. Sampling at port has also been resumed to various extent with self-sampling and targeted sampling in some MS. In fisheries under IOTC, ICCAT, NEAFC, SPFRMO sampling activities halted.

Some research surveys at sea didn’t take place in spring or were delayed. Preparations for upcoming surveys are ongoing.

The socio-economic data collection continued uninterrupted, yet with lower rates of replies or some delays, and partial coverage. Most MS haven’t experienced difficulties in

preparation and submission data during 2020 data calls, although some faced difficulties in accessing their data bases remotely.

The remedy measures include social distancing and separation of tasks, and a switch to video conferencing. Some national laws were amended to allow for modified data collection methods. The measures applied to surveys at sea include rescheduling the timing of the survey, limiting crew and staff, quarantine/tests before embarkation, cancelling foreign ports for crew changes, and set up of remote footage processing.

3 Data handling (ToR 2A&2B)

3.1 RCG data calls (ToR 2A)

3.1.1 RCG Baltic & RCG NANS&EA

In 2020 one standard data call was sent to MS fishing in the Baltic, North Atlantic, North Sea and Eastern Arctic areas. All MS uploaded their data to the RDB, but some MS were very late. Issues related with the data uploads were reported in upload logs.

The data was used by the ISSG RDB catch and effort overviews, ISSG Small scale fisheries and ISSG Small pelagic fishery case study in the Baltic. The ISSG on data quality reviewed the upload logs. Issues relating to data availability and quality can be found in the RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 report Part III (ISSG Reports).

Data uploaded to the RDB are used more widely every year (e.g. the RDB catch and effort overviews by ICES WG), which results in a greater responsibility to provide high quality data. At the moment some information is missing from the RDB, either because of the database limitations (unable to upload some of the data) or MS unable to comply with all the data request needs (replying to the data call is not prioritized enough). So, the catch and effort overviews might yet not give the full picture of the fisheries. The issue should be solved when RDBES becomes the primary database to upload our data in few years' time.

3.1.2 RCG MED&BS

The RCG Med&BS data call was announced on 7th of July to all National Correspondents, with a deadline on the 10th of August 2020. The data was required to be submitted in two different data files similar to previous data calls:

- Data on landings for the period 2017-2019 of the stocks listed in Table 1A of EU-MAP, for reviewing and updating the landing template for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea.
- Data on landings, effort and value by metier for the period 2017-2019, where metiers are selected from the regionally agreed list of metiers with specified coding, for using a ranking system for the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

Data were submitted by all Member States in the Mediterranean Sea and the Black Sea, for the requested period. For one MS 2017 data were not available since the DCF was executed for a small period and only in a limited area; thus, 2018 & 2019 data were used in the analysis because there was full coverage of time and areas for both years.

Currently, data submitted according to the RCG Med&BS data call is being used to make a combined table of landings for stocks that should be included in the Annual Work Plans (2017-2019 for AWP 2021) in Table 1A. Data on landing, effort and value by metier is used to make a regional overview of ranking by Member State and to see if any new métiers should be included in the RCG Med&BS list of métiers.

During the RCG the future purpose of the RCG Med&BS data call was discussed and the use of data for the AWP 2022 and regional work plans. We also discussed the possible added value of publication of this data as separate document, which will contain more information and what will be the benefits for end-users.

3.1.3 RCG LDF

A data call has been issued to all non-landlocked MS in 2020, and the RDB was used by RCG LDF to produce catch and effort overviews for the second year already. No substantial changes in fishing patterns were observed.

What caused some concerns among some data providers is inconsistency between the unit for Official Landing Catch Weight in the RDB and the data call - the RDB exchange format expects kilograms, while in the data call the tonnes were required. That should be fixed in the next data call.

Because of some problems with metier assignment, the data from the Canaries were not uploaded to the RDB but delivered as an excel file. The main reason for this is the existence of highly polyvalent fleet where three metiers (small pelagics, demersal, tuna) can be used in the same trip. This cannot be easily uploaded to the RDB, because according to the RDB exchange format, only one of the metiers can be assigned by trip.

MS were requested to update their LDF data in the RDB to reflect the changes to the area/subpolygon codification. However, updating the data requires overwriting (and consequently deleting) previously uploaded data. The common workaround for this is to delete data of commercial landings, based on *e.g.* species or year. However, for species having an overlap with other regions, all data from a country for that species is being deleted. Thus, requiring a full upload from the MS again. This is problematic as this requires a lot of work. It seems that the data can only be deleted manually, also involving a lot of work and potentially 'dangerous' for the existing datasets. ICES is aware of the problem and will be asked again to look into the issue during the year.

The RCG has issued one recommendation related to the RDB (in Annex).

- RCG LDF 2019 R1: On the continuation by MS to update their historical data prior to 2020 data call

3.1.4 RCG LP

No data calls were issued by RCG LP in 2020 (the development of the RCG LP database is ongoing and not finalised yet).

3.1.5 PGECON

No data calls were issues by PGECON in 2020.

3.1.6 Diadromous SG

No data calls were issued by the Diadromous ISSG in 2020.

3.2 End user data calls and RFMO reporting (ToR 2B)

3.2.1 Data transmission and responses

Data collection obligations stem from the basic Regulation on the Common Fisheries Policy ((EU) 1380/2013). The data collection framework (DCF) is set in Regulation (EU) 2017/1004, and its corresponding multi-annual programme is currently specified in Decision 2019/910 on biological, environmental and socio-economic data requirements, and Decision 2019/909 on thresholds for data collection and the list of surveys-at-sea. The data collection is co-funded through the EMFF (Regulation (EU) 508/2014).

The EU Member States have reporting obligations under regional fisheries management organisations (transposed into EU regulations) and under other EU legislation (*e.g.* the deep-sea regulation, the VME regulation, the birds and habitats directive).

Data transmission issues from several end users are monitored through a dedicated tool – the data transmission monitoring tool (DTMT) that facilitates communication and follow-up on issues between the end users of data (such as STECF, ICES, ICCAT), the Member

States, experts³ evaluating the MS performance on data collection, and the European Commission (DG MARE). The DTMT helps identify gaps in relation to end users' needs and solve them, sometimes at regional level.

The DTMT contains description of the issue, MS comments and the assessment of the impact on the experts' work⁴, which indicates if the issue has been handled by the MS in a satisfactory way. The assessment of the issues feeds into annual assessment of data collection activities.

The 2019 issues assessed through the DTMT concern mainly data calls launched by DG MARE (fisheries dependent information, fleet economics, fish processing, and related to the Mediterranean and Black Sea). ICES also transmitted issues not already resolved within their structures. Information gathered from RFMOs and SFPAs was included, but needs further improvement due to complex governance. A better way for RFMOs and SFPAs to convey feedback on data transmission issues would be to liaise with RCG technical meetings or the Liaison meeting, as in the case of GFCM and ICCAT.

The fluctuating number of issues could be partly attributed to the DTMT guidance on reporting. To address this, clear guidance was introduced in 2019 to streamline the process. The frequency of the end user reporting is linked to their functioning: STECF reports issues after each EWG (such as the FDI or the fleet economics EWG), whereas other end users (such as ICES and RFMOs) report once a year. In general, STECF issues relate more often to the coverage whereas ICES reports mainly issues of timeliness.

3.2.2 Data submissions for FDI, fish processing, fleet economics and aquaculture data calls

For the Fishery Dependent Information (FDI) data call the EWG do not foresee relevant changes in next year data call. Data submission from Members States, compared to the previous year, showed improvement in both the timeliness and the quality of the data provided. The Mediterranean and Black Sea (MED&BS) data calls closed at the end of July, never reopened and the data were used during EWG 20-09. No changes are anticipated for next year.

For the Fish processing data call all went well except for the data from France which could not be used. No changes are anticipated for the 2021 data call. This data collection and calls may be discontinued in the future and Eurostat data will be used. However, the Eurostat data is much less complete in terms of coverage and variables provided. Eurostat data have been partly used under STECF reports, i.e. under the last one (report of EWG 19-15) but just to cover the lack of data, and only for some variables, for Member States not collecting data under EUMAP.

For the Fleet economic data call, all Member States provided most of the data requested within the deadlines. No major data issues were reported apart from older issues and some missing data for several small-scale fleet segments (data collection issues) and high sea fleets (confidentiality issues). The AER (regional analysis) and Balance/Capacity would benefit from effort and landings data at lower aggregation levels as in the FDI. New upload facility and interface for data checks were produced by JRC. JRC incorporated two new fleet segment dimensions (GEAR and FISHERY) into the data templates to allow MS to provide data by more homologous fleet segments, if needed. Currently, only GEAR is used by Spain. No major changes are anticipated in next year's data call. The Aquaculture data call did not open, the EWG was moved to February 2021 instead of autumn 2020.

3 STECF has two yearly expert working group to evaluate the MS performance on data collection through the analysis of the data transmission issues and either the work plans or the annual reports.

4 See note 2

4 Progress achieved in the Regional Databases for RCGs in 2020 and problems identified (ToR 2C)

4.1 Progress on the RDBES made by ICES Secretariat and the Core Group

Funding for development of the RDBES

Software development of the RDBES by ICES Secretariat Data Centre have been secured. ICES Delegates have secured funding for the software development of the RDBES database and web application. So, the software development is at the same speed as previously for the next 2 years with an evaluation and allowing for a potential extension of two more years. The evaluation after two years will focus on the delivered product:

- A fully operational RDBES such that statistical estimates for stock assessment can be produced from detailed sample data in a transparent manner by 2022

If approved, then the SCRDB can choose to incorporate detailed data on Bycatch and PETS data AND/OR Recreational data in the RDBES by 2023.

Reasons for developing RDBES

- Give RCGs access to detailed data in the way it was collected
- Support the collection of design-based data collections
- Provide a regional estimation system for ICES stock assessments
- To increase the data quality, documentation of data, and transparency of estimations
- To facilitate the production of fisheries management advice and reports
- To increase the awareness of fisheries data collected and the overall usage of these data.

Comparison between new RDBES and existing RDB

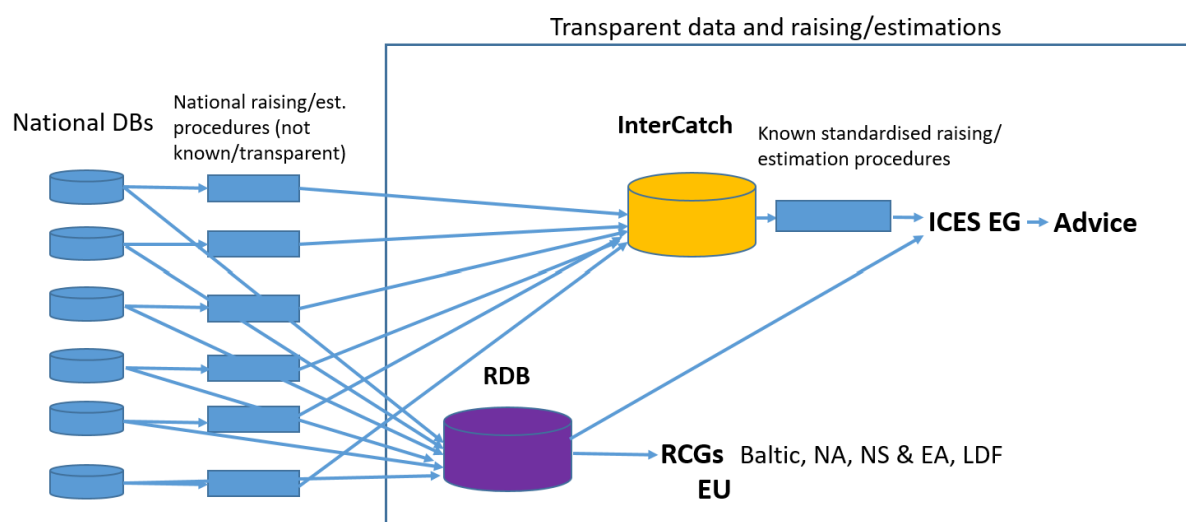
The existing RDB does not store data in the way the data was collected, the RDB consist of 5 tables for sampling data, where one table is under the previous in one straight line. The new RDBES consist of 15 tables for the sample data, and one table can be linked to different tables depending on how the sampling was done be. So, where the RDB has one way to combine the different data tables, the RDBES has 13 ways and more can be added if needed. The extra tables and fields made it possible to extend the functionality and fulfil the requirements of today.

Functionality	RDBES	RDB
Support statistical sound sampling schemes (4S)	Yes	No
Store statistically collected sample data with statistical information	Yes	No

Store collected data the way it was collected, which support some conclusions	Yes	No
Statistical estimations can be made from the data stored including uncertainties	Yes	No
Support regional sampling	Yes	No
Storing regional sampling data from different countries under the same sampling scheme	Yes	No
Fully support landing obligations categories	Yes	No

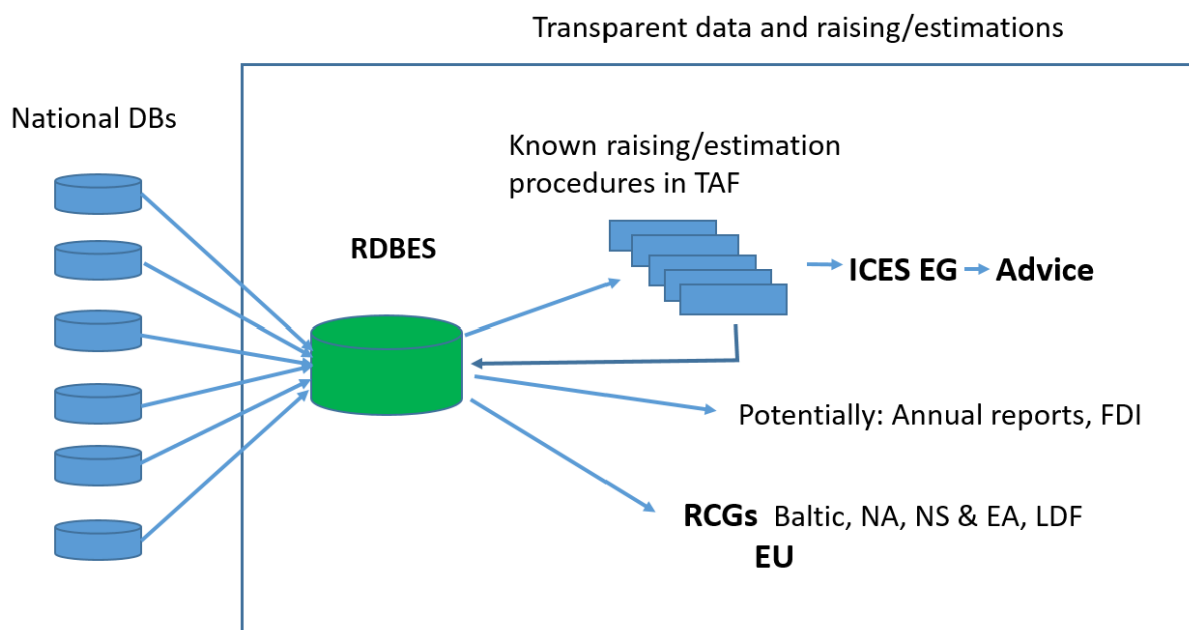
The systems used today for commercial fisheries

Below the current detailed data flow from national institutes to RCGs (NA NSEA, Baltic and LDF) and ICES Expert Groups are shown. The data is collected through two data calls to the countries. How the countries are raising/estimating the data for upload to InterCatch for ICES Expert Groups and advice is not known, and that will be improved in the new RDBES.



The RDBES used in the future for commercial fisheries

Below the future detailed data flow from national institutes to RCGs (NA NSEA, Baltic and LDF) and ICES Expert Groups are shown. The data is collected through one data call to the countries. It is documented and known how the raising/estimating of data for the ICES Expert Groups and advice is done.



ICES set up the RDB for Long distance Fisheries

For the second year the RCG Long Distance Fisheries have made a data call and used the RDB for their data.

- Last year's issue regarding splitting of area 34.1.2 'Canaries/Madeira Insular', and a new request regarding landing by country and not area, was solved by creating a list of countries referring to areas using the 'Sub polygon' field
- Created metiers according to RCG LDF needs
- Set up allowed metiers in areas
- A new field 'Jurisdiction area' is added in the new RDBES for the RCG LDF

The Core Group specifies the RDBES

The Core Group is specifying the RDBES or developing the specifications. The ICES Secretariat develop the software and the RDBES database and web system. The core group have discussed what information is needed, and how it should be structured until May 2020, through weekly online meetings. Then ICES Sec. sent out the first data call for the RDBES. After that the meeting shifted to answer issues posted on the public RDBES issues GitHub website. The Core Group is now entering a phase where there will be focused more on estimations in R scripts in TAF. But still many things to specify and develop further: roles, access, checks, output format, overviews, data inspections.

WGBYC

ICES Sec. had two meetings the 4 and 5 Feb. 2020 with the chair of WGBYC Sara Königson, where WGBYC's wishes and what is achievable was discussed and expectations adjusted. The WGBYC's wishes/requests were brought forward by ICES to the Core Group and discussed and the final fields and mandatory/optional status was finalised the 11th March, and the agreed information is in the current RDBES data format. The Core Group tried to include as many of the WGBYC requests as possible in the specifications for the RDBES.

RDBES first data call

ICES sent the first data call for data to the RDBES the 27th May 2020 with a deadline the 30th Sep. 2020. Before that ICES requested SCRDB (3-5 Dec. 2019) for stocks for the data call, which together would cover all countries, and giving the possibility to test different scenarios - 11 stocks was selected: spr.27.22-32, cod.27.21, whb.27.1-91214, yellowfin tuna, sol.27.7fg, mur.27.67a-ce-k89a, mac.27.nea, mon.27.78abd, mon.27.8c9a, ank.27.78abd, ank.27.8c9a. ICES drafted the Data Call, which was presented to PGDATA (21-24 Jan.) which reviewed it. A notification email was sent the 21st Feb. regarding the data call to prepare countries for the new RDBES data call. The data call can be found here:

[http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Data%20calls/data call.20202705.RDBES.pdf](http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Data%20calls/data%20call.20202705.RDBES.pdf)

RDBES web system

ICES have developed the RDBES web system. The RDBES web system can be accessed only by named users at:

<https://sboxrdbes.ices.dk/>

The RDBES entry web site looks like the following

The screenshot shows the homepage of the RDBES web system. At the top left is the ICES CIEM logo. To the right are links for News, Events, Calendar, Library, SharePoint Login, and Admin, along with a search bar. Below this is a dark blue navigation bar with 'RDB & Estimation System', 'Home', 'Contact Us', and 'Login' buttons. The main content area has a heading 'Welcome to Regional Database & Estimation System' and a sub-heading 'The data model behind this version of the RDBES is data model version 1.18. test'.

The data model and documentation for the RDBES can be found here:

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

The RDBES should be further developed, and the aim is that it should be in production in 2022.

Discussion

The RCG ISSG on Metier issues have worked on a common list of metiers, that list will be incorporated into the RDBES. Whether the metier list also will be used for other systems/data calls is up to the data requester. It was pointed out that the funding for the RDBES web system development in 2022 and 2023 depends on ICES funds. If the RDBES is a fully operational, statistical estimates for stock assessment can be produced from detailed sample data in a transparent manner by 2022. It was also pointed out that data from the current RDB will not be migrated into the RDBES, simply because more information on the data are needed before it could be migrated. Therefore, the historic data will be uploaded through data calls at a later point. The Commission pointed out that when data uploads shift from the RDB to the RDBES the agreement with ICES will be renegotiated.

4.2 Progress made by the ICES Regional Database Steering Committee and Workshops

The December 2019 SCRBD meeting was the second meeting with the new unified group structure. The meeting included representatives from RCG BS, RCG NANSEA, RCG Long Distance Fisheries, RCG Large Pelagic, RCG Med&BS (RDB Steering Committee), WGRFS, ICES secretariat, European Commission (DG MARE), EU ICES members, Non-EU ICES members (Norway and Canada).

The key outcomes were:

- The roadmap for RDBES development was revised
- ICES “2+2 years” funding for technical development confirmed. The required deliverables for this funding are:
 - A fully operational RDBES such that statistical estimates for stock assessment can be produced from detailed sample data in a transparent manner by 2022
 - Incorporate detailed data on Bycatch and PETS data AND/OR Recreational data (to be determined by SCRBD) in the RDBES by 2023.
- Whilst the focus remains on detailed commercial fisheries data the potential inclusion of different types of fisheries data in the RDBES was discussed: Long distance fisheries, Large pelagic, Diadromous, Recreational
- The RDBES Data Policy was discussed and some changes recommended. The most important was to explicitly allow RCGs to pre-approve access to detailed data for list of ICES EGs
- In 2019 the largest number of groups have requested data from the RDB (WGCATCH, WGBYC, RCG Subgroup, HAWG, WGMIXFISH-METH, WGCSE ICES Spec Req Seabass data bss47, MARE C3 Unit, ICES Spec Req Eastern Baltic Cod, WGSCALLOP). The RCG Catch and Effort Overviews also use RDB data
- Recommend changing the name of group to align with ICES guidelines: WGRDBESGOV

Key RDBES Activities in 2020

Date	Name	Chairs/responsible
27th May 2020	Release RDBES test data call for selected stocks	Henrik Kjems-Nielsen
2nd - 5th June 2020	Second Workshop on Populating the RDBES data model (WKRDB-POP2)	David Currie and Edvin Fuglebakk

14th - 18th Sept 2020	Second Workshop on Estimation with the RDBES data model (WKRDB-EST2)	Nuno Prista and Kirsten Birch Håkansson
30th Sept 2020	RDBES test data call deadline	Henrik Kjems-Nielsen
16th - 20th Nov 2020	Workshop on translating current procedures to the RDBES/TAF (WKRDB-RAISE&TAF)	Laurent Dubroca and TBC
1st - 3rd Dec 2020	ICES RDB/RDBES Steering Committee Meeting	David Currie and Katja Ringdahl

The **Second Workshop on Populating the RDBES data model (WKRDB-POP2)** co-chaired by David Currie and Edvin Fuglebakk met to:

- a) Describe and explain the RDBES data model to national data submitters using worked examples.
- b) Provide practical guidance and assistance to national data submitters to write working data extraction scripts to convert national data formats to the Regional Database and Estimation System data format and identify incompatibilities or issues with conversion.
- c) Encourage national data submitters to join the RDBES testing group.

Over 60 participants from ~20 MS / ICES member countries attended the workshop. The workshop format involved some plenary sessions, but the majority of the time was spent assisting data submitters via small group sessions – this was facilitated by being a remote meeting. Only minor issues were identified in the RDBES data model, none of which were expected to delay the development – a process was created to follow up problems before the deadline for the test data-call. 25 workshop participants volunteered to join a “Testing group”, which will receive frequent notifications of updates when corrections are made. This will be followed up by the ICES Data Centre. There is likely to be a need for a similar workshop next year

The **Second Workshop on Estimation with the RDBES data model (WKRDB-EST2)** chaired by Nuno Prista, Sweden and Kirsten Birch Håkansson, Denmark, met to:

- a) Develop and document R scripts for design-based estimation for each hierarchy in the RDBES data model;
- b) Identify and document issues/problems with RDBES data model relating to design-based estimation;
- c) Develop roadmap for future improvements to the estimation procedures within the RDBES;

The workshop was held remotely with the participants in small subgroups. Good progress was achieved with >20 experts combining programming, statistical and fisheries knowledge engaged.

It was identified that some guidelines are needed to increase data consistency across countries. During the workshop data preparation and estimation functions developed collaboratively in open-source code (GitHub). There was significant progress in variance estimation (will allow for confidence intervals around estimates delivered). During the workshop a collaborative process, involving all stages of development (from function scripting to package maintenance) was discussed and trialed. Development is expected to continue intersessionally (dependent on resources); WKRDB-EST3 to compile developments in 2021. In the pipeline of development are topics such as ratio estimation

of discards, handling of industry refusals. Long-term routine needs exist for package maintenance and statistical support to collaborative work

Workshop on translating current procedures to the RDBES/TAF - whilst a lot of effort in the ICES community has been put towards developing statistically sound sampling schemes (4S) and using design-based estimation it is recognised that not all data is collected using 4S designs, and design-based estimation is not currently in wide-spread use. There is therefore a need to help countries migrate their current raising procedures to data in the new RDBES format and using TAF. This will also help to preserve the data time-series since there will not be an immediate change in how the estimates have been produced. The aim of WKRDB-RAISE&TAF is to help countries take whatever they do at the moment and translate/transfer it to the RDBES/TAF system – there shouldn't be a change of methodology, just a translation of code to take into account the RDBES data structure.

Year	RDB	InterCatch	RDBES	Data calls	Core Group
2020	Production Data in/out	Production Data in/out	Development Test data in/out	Selected stocks and test bycatch	WKRDB-EST2 WKRDB-POP2 WKRDB-RAISE&TAF Continue specifying system
2021	Production Data in/out	Production Data in/out	Development Test in/out data	Test stocks and test bycatch	WKRDB-EST3 WKRDB-POP3 WKRDB-RAISE&TAF2 Continue specifying system
2022	Stay alive Read only	Stay alive Read only	Production Data in/out	All stocks 2021 data.	WKRDB-EST4 Specify any further changes required
2023	Stay alive Read only	Stay alive Read only	Production Data in/out	All stocks 2022 data, and historic data if possible.	Specify any further changes required

An ICES special request has also been submitted to specify tools to evaluate data accuracy relating to bias and precision at a national level – in particular this relates to Table 5a in the national workplans / annual reports. The output on evaluating data accuracy (precision and bias) for design-based estimation at a national level should be in the form of a report covering the following subjects:

- Definition of the prerequisites that a MS will need to meet to be able to use the tools

- Specification of the statistical functions to allow MS to evaluate bias and estimate precision for design-based estimation.
- Identification of further functions that would be required in the future to evaluate data accuracy for other type of estimation, and for regional data estimation
- Recommendations for further work and a roadmap of how to extend the advice to other types of bias and precision estimation.

Discussion points

The content of the proposed WKRDB-RAISE&TAF workshop was discussed briefly and it was said that it aims to take all current MS estimation procedures and translate them to the ICES RDBES/TAF format. The amount of work required to do this is unknown at the moment and will probably vary considerably between MS – it is likely that will need to be a follow-up workshop to continue this work.

It was pointed out that the population workshops are of more interest to the Large Pelagics group than the estimation workshops. It is possible for Large Pelagic group members to receive login credentials for the test RDBES system from the ICES Data Centre.

There was a short discussion on what will happen to the existing Regional Database (RDB) data once the RDBES is fully operational. Initially the RDB will still be available in a “read-only” state. The aim is to ask MS to upload as much historical data in the new RDBES format as possible – this would then make the current RDB data redundant. While it will not happen immediately it will be necessary to switch off the RDB at some point in the future because it will not be practical to maintain two separate similar systems (RDB and RDBES) indefinitely. It was pointed out the current agreement between the Commission and ICES includes the maintenance and hosting of the RDB – if this is planned to be switched off in the future then this topic will need to be included in future negotiations.

4.3 Future developments for regional databases

4.3.1 RCG Baltic & RCG NANS&EA

4.3.1.1 Recent and short-term development

The regional database has an increasingly prominent role in the RCG work, and a lot of developments have been made and are still in progress.

Since the introduction of ISSG, the data from the RDB have been intensively used in preparation of the RCG technical meetings in the last two years. The new timeline (data call in February, deadline early April and ISSG reports done by May) allows for sufficient time to work with the data in the ISSGs before the technical meeting and present results for decision-making during meetings.

The future development for the RDB in the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic foresees to strengthen the interaction and feedback not only with the ICES data centre but also the national data submitter. This development will be driven mostly by the ISSG "catch and effort overviews" which currently works on a small (R-)package to enable data submitter to test their exchange files before the RDB upload and thus decrease erroneous data that will have to be corrected and re-uploaded during the year.

Other developments concerning the RDB is an increased outreach of RCG by cooperating with ICES WGs and WGs and providing data products. This will hopefully develop closer interaction and exchange of expert knowledge between respective ISSG and ICES WGs

(e.g. between the “ISSG on bycatch” and the WGBYC, which both are dealing with bycatch and PETS issues).

4.3.1.2 Future development

The ISSGs that use RDB data are still in developmental phase and not yet full productive/ standardized. Further adaptation of the groups will be needed when the RDBES is functional and the structure and content of the regional database changes.

Future development in the data transfer between ICES and RCGs will require further automatization. Until now, the data products are provided manually by the ICES data centre as zip-files via the SharePoint. Certain changes are done beforehand (e.g. updating stock codes) and thus are time-consuming. The RCGs are also aiming in a better communication and cooperation between the ISSGs to exchange data products and support each other’s work in a timely manner. This might be achieved by e.g. an internal GUI of the data (like a shiny R interface) that will enable other ISSGs to easily compile and extract required data.

The RDBES shall include additional data in their future development, such as bycatch, PETS and recreational fisheries sampling. Additional and enhanced biological data sets (e.g. from pilot studies or national/regional sampling schemes that are not yet covered by mandatory DCF data calls) should be added to the RDBES. These data might include stomach content analyses, parasites, age reading error matrices and so on. Such additional data will enhance the ISSG and RCG work greatly, however, substantial and long-term funding of the RDBES will be required for the development. The RCG NANSEA Baltic agreed to include this topic in their 2021 technical meeting and elaborate funding possibilities to support the development and cooperation with the RDBES.

4.3.2 RCG MED&BS

After the 1st Steering Committee Meeting for the Med&BS-RDB which was held in 2012, in 2013 the RCG Med&BS agreed on a Data Policy Document (data confidentiality and data ownership policy), however there was no progress on the development of the RDB after that.

The 2nd Med&BS RDB Steering Committee (SC) met in January 2019 in Rome to discuss the development of the Regional Database (RDB) for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (MED&BS) Region and to investigate possible funding sources, structure of the future data base and hosting options.

In close cooperation with the RCG Med and BS, a MARE-funded study (regional grant ‘STREAM’), explored and analysed three options on hosting and provided a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of each option. Discussions within the RCG showed an initial preference for GFCM as the host. But in dialogue with the DCF Member State National Correspondents (NC) and the policy administrations this orientation was contested, and JRC was also considered as a serious option. The RCG Med & BS, at its meeting of 24-26 September 2019, was no longer able to reach agreement on the hosting (JRC or GFCM). However, and in absence of agreement on the hosting, the RCG made progress on the development plan for the RDB: the RCG Steering Committee on the RDB presented a draft proposal, and tasked a technical subgroup to start work on the RDB content, the data policy and the main functionalities. The next meeting of the technical group was foreseen for January 2020 (which was not done).

Due to the restrictions connected with the pandemic, it was not possible to hold a meeting at the beginning of 2020, but according to the presentation of the chair of the SC during RCG Med&BS 2020, the next SC meeting is planned by the end of 2020.

The expected tangible outcomes of building Med&BS RDB are:

- database structure, referential integrity;
- common codification system, common exchange format;
- upload procedures, advanced data mining subsystem;
- validation procedures;
- data processing tools to support specific data calls (including VMS analysis procedures, estimation of fishing pressure from small scale fisheries using a multi-criteria decision analysis);
- automatic reporting tools (linked to the DCF processes);
- a state-of-the-art web-based user interface to interact with all processes (upload data, validate data, report data, search, compare, compile, aggregate, plot, visualize data etc);
- catalogue of compatibility issues with RDBES data model.

RCG Med&BS stresses that the RCG Med&BS repeated the recommendation on the RDB: Recommendation 12: Continuation of Setting up of a Regional Database (RDB) for the RCG MED & BS - RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends continuation of the setting up of a Regional Database. RCG MED&BS 2020 considers the development of a regional database as an urgent priority to allow for the efficient use of the data received from the official RCG data calls and avoid duplication of work. In response to the presentation: GFCM highlighted that there was no official request by the RCG for the hosting of the RDB and they cannot provide the RCG with details about the conditions or the needs from GFCM side before this request is received. RCG Med&BS acknowledged the observation and informed the LM that the RCG planned to have a technical committee at the beginning of the year. This meeting was postponed due to the COVID-19 situation. The main task for this committee was to propose a financial structure and structure for the database, so GFCM at the end to be able to provide the conditions for the development.

4.3.3 RCG LDF

The RCG Long Distance Fisheries have made a data call and used the RDB for their data already for the second year. Based on the last year experience this RCG made a request to ICES to adjust the RDB to the RCG LDF needs and following issues were successfully addressed by ICES Secretariat:

- splitting of area 34.1.2 'Canaries/Madeira Insular', and a new request regarding landing by country and not area, was solved by creating a list of countries referring to areas using the 'Sub polygon' field
- a metiers list was adapted according to RCG LDF needs
- Also, a new field 'Jurisdiction area' was added in 2020 in the new RDBES for the RCG LDF

4.3.4 RCG LP

RCG-LP Annual meeting participants voted by consensus that the ICES hosted RDBES would be used as a common database. This decision was included in the Annual Report (currently under revision by the participants) as a Recommendation for the National Correspondents to approve the use of RDBES. In addition to this previous framework, the group recommend to involving in the RDBES core group at least one person of each RCG LP subgroups to represent all the specificities of the LP Fisheries.

4.3.5 PGECON

No RDB is currently in use by PGECON.

4.3.6 Diadromous SG

ISSG Diadromous currently does not make use of the RDB for their data.

5 Discussion on possible follow-up to the main outputs and recommendations (ToR 3A, B, C)

5.1 2020 RCGs - specific recommendations to be discussed at the Liaison Meeting and proposal for future intersessional work. (ToR 3A)

5.1.1 Introduction

The RCGs provided an overview of the recommendations stemming from their meetings. Although no formal approval needs to be given by the LM, the meeting acts as a platform for aligning, and if needed refining, of recommendations between RCGs. This LM report also provides a comprehensive overview of all recommendations for any recipient.

To enhance the (uniform) administration and follow-up, LM discussed the introduction of a recommendation database. Details on format and hosting were not concluded, the introduction of this database may be part of improved future working procedures of the RCGs.

5.1.2 RCG Baltic & RCG NANS&EA

Nine recommendations were made by the combined RCGs this year:

- R01: Data gaps because of COVID 19 restrictions [ICES]
- R02: Update RDB Data policy [ICES - WGRDBESGOV]
- R03: Implement Upload-logs as standard tool into RDBES [ICES - WGRDBESGOV]
- R04: Advice for completing Table 5A in the national workplans [MS]
- R05: ICES to setup a Workshop on a "pilot FIRMOG" in 2021 [ICES (and MS to participate)]
- R06: Revision of the survey effort and coverage of the IBWSS [ICES WGIPS]
- R07: Non-binding test run for test RWP [DGMARE & STECF]
- R08: PGECON to review NWP template tables 3a, 3b, 3c [PGECON]
- R09: Ensure administrative/technical and financial support for regionally coordinated stomach sampling [EC - DGMARE]

Detailed information on these recommendations, as well as on decisions as put forward to the RCG Decision meeting can be found in Annex 1.

As presented to the LM and described in the RCGDecision meeting report 2020, all decisions were voted unanimously 'yes' (overview table in Annex 1).

The RCG identified some difficulties to follow up the recommendations that the RCG address annually to ICES and to the Commission. In order to improve this drawback, two actions have been taken. Firstly, the tasks for the ISSG on end user needs, have been redefined and the group will be now in charge of following up these recommendations. Secondly, the RCG changed the way of presenting and managing the recommendations and decisions, which are the main outputs of the technical meeting. These are presented now in a form of a database (one table) which can be found in the RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 report Part III (ISSG Reports). This format has been found very convenient to manage the recommendations and decisions, address them to the recipient and follow up on the actions needed and feedback, and this on yearly basis.

During the LM, the creation of a recommendation database including all RCGs was proposed and the feedback from all RCG was very positive.

5.1.3 RCG MED&BS

During the 2020 RCGG &BS meeting 12 recommendations were made:

2 of the Recommendations could be considered horizontally important:

- **Establishment of RCG MED&BS data requirements registry (#2)** - The registry should be completed at RCG level for common data requirements and at MS level for data requirements on national level.
- **Notification procedure from DTMT (#5)** – We request for the possibility of establishment of a procedure for notifications to the relevant MS when a new data transmission issue is uploaded in the DTMT.

2 Recommendations where directed towards end-users:

- **Establishment of dedicated STECF EWG for data quality on the Mediterranean and Black Sea data call (directed to end-users) (#3)** – directed to DG MARE and STECF. RCG MED & BS 2020 recommends the establishment of a dedicated STECF EWG regarding data quality on the Mediterranean and Black Sea data call, which should convene before the STECF EWG on stock assessment and after the Med&BS data call legal deadline.
- **Availability of DCRF templates on the GFCM DCRF online platform (#4)** – directed to GFCM. RCG MED & BS 2020 recommends to GFCM that the DCRF templates for reporting on the DCRF online platform are made available to MS earlier, if possible.

Regional recommendations:

- **Agreement on sharing detailed information on data transmission issues (#1)** - RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends sharing of detailed information on data transmission issues on MS level for the purpose of RCG MED&BS Subgroup on data transmission issues and data requirements.
- **Recreational fisheries (#6)** - RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends continuation of the workshop for Recreational fisheries. The first meeting of this workshop was in 2019, but due to COVID-19 the 2020 meeting was postponed for 2021.
- **Speeding up the establishment of a scientific network for sampling optimization (#7)** - RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends speeding up the establishment of a scientific network for sampling optimization. Med&BS NCs should nominate national experts for participating in the network on sampling optimization; the nominations should be communicated to the current moderator of the scientific network for sampling optimization (Ms Isabella Bitetto) and RCG Med&BS chairs.
- **Training workshop on the use of the commercial sampling optimization tools developed under STREAM project (#8)*** - RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends the organization of a training workshop on the use of the sampling optimization tools developed under STREAM project.
- **Data quality. Application the data quality checks developed under the WP6 of the STREAM project (#9)*** - RCG Med&BS 2020 recommends applying the data quality checks developed under the WP6 of the STREAM project before submitting data to the relevant Data Calls
*It should be investigated is it possible to combine the 2 WS in one week. 2021 or ASAP when the COVID-19 restrictions allow a physical meeting.
- **Age reading workshop – Black Sea (#10)** - RCG MED&BS 2019 and 2020 recommend the organization of an Age Reading Workshop on turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*) and piked dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*).

- **Training workshop on PETS identification (#11)** - RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends the organization of a Training workshop on PETS identification for all categories of PETS (marine mammals, sea birds, sharks and rays, reptiles).
- **Continuation of Setting up of a Regional Database (RDB) for the RCG MED & BS (#12)** - RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends continuation of the setting up of a Regional Database.

Detailed descriptions of the recommendations can be found in Annex 1.

The recommendation on PETS was considered of mutual interest to various other groups, e.g. RCG LP. LM in general suggested that regarding RCG Med&BS workshops on recreational fisheries and PETS identifications RCG Med&BS should seek opportunities to expand the workshops to other RCGs.

5.1.4 RCG LDF

Two recommendations were made by the Group this year:

- Recommendation to MS to continue to update their historical data prior to the 2021 Data call. Addressed at all MS uploading data.
- recommendation to set-up intersessional subgroup to prepare for data collection in the SPRFMO area beyond 2024. Addressed at chair of the RCG LDF and MS involved in the SPRFMO pelagic fisheries.

In the context of the latter recommendation, the meeting between the MS involved in the SPRFMO pelagic fisheries and the fishing industry representatives is planned to discuss available options to address new requirements of the SPRFMO Observer Programme beyond 2024. Commission is aware of this issue and will be notified on planned intersessional meeting on that matter.

5.1.5 RCG LP

No recommendations for the Liaison Meeting were issued by RCG-LP in 2020.

Plans for future intersessional work include further investigation on how to adapt RDBES to Large Pelagic fisheries data, investigation and coordination between DCF sampling and End-user (e.g. ICCAT) sampling requirements, establishment of functional Subgroups.

5.1.6 Diadromous SG

No recommendations for the Liaison Meeting were issued by the Diadromous ISSG in 2020.

Future intersessional work include clarifications of data needs in assessment by end-user groups, a questionnaire survey on electrofishing methodology for better comparability, development of regional work plans and a more direct communication between ISSG DIAD and potential ICES end-users in the future for a more target-oriented and specific data collection for end-user needs.

5.2 PGECON – 2020 update of activities (ToR 3B)

PGECON 2020 met after the 2020 LM, thus the information provided in this report has been provided post-LM.

During the PGECON 2020 meeting 9 recommendations were made (Annex 1):

Recommendations of general concern:

- Adaptation of Rules of Procedure by other RCGs (#2) - RCGs should consider the possibility of adaptation of their RoPs in accordance with the finally adopted RoPs of RCG ECON during the next annual meetings.
- Regional coordination in the drafting of RWP (#7) – All stakeholders and relevant bodies, as well as all relevant MSs, should establish coordination regarding the drafting of the Regional Work Plan (RWP).

Recommendations towards end-users:

- Revision of EU Map delegated tables (#3) – directed to DG MARE. PGECON 2020 recommends accepting the revisions and comments in tables 6,7,8, 10,11 of the EU MAP delegated tables as attached to the PGECON 2020 report.
- Revision of EU Map delegated tables and delegated Annex - data on the fish processing sector (#4) – directed to DG MARE. PGECON 2020 recommends to revise the draft text of article 7 of the revised delegated Annex in order to allow MSs for the collection of data for the fish processing sector on an optional basis, as it is stated in the currently binding regulation. PGECON 2020 recommends, for the future collection of socio-economic data, to include in the revised text of EUMAP, the current binding Table 11 of the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1251 including the list of social and economic variables for the fish processing sector. PGECON 2020 recommends to keep the request for raw material, on an optional basis, as for the social and economic variables. PGECON 2020 recommends to include, in the revised text of the EUMAP, a new table including minimum requirements for the collection of data on raw material (species, volume, origin.).

Recommendations on regional aspect and future work of RCG ECON:

- Rules of procedure for the RCG ECON (#1) - PGECON 2020 recommends the follow-up of the draft text of Rules of Procedure as attached to PGECON 2020 report which was discussed during the plenary. It was also agreed that all MS may need more time to commit with the text produced, acknowledging at the same time that further delays on this issue could jeopardize the functioning and the work carried out in the RCG ECON. After providing to LM, the draft text of RoPs to be circulated to NC with a deadline to send additional comments (10 November 2020). This should lead to the final adoption by a written procedure of the ROPs for RCG ECON by the end of 2020.
- Revision of the RCG ECON guidance on definition and methodologies for the fleet (#5) - PGECON 2020 recommends revising the PGECON document on definition and methodologies for the EUMAP variables to include the results of the 2019 Capital WS and the discussion during the plenary PGECON meeting.
- Implementation of the guidelines for the valuation of the fishing rights (#6) - PGECON 2020 recommends accepting the conclusions from the WS on capital value regarding the implementation of the guidelines for the valuation of the fishing rights as well as a transition period in which MS explore the possibilities to apply the guidelines in their situation. During this transition period the obligation to gather information on the value of intangible assets should only include the transferable fishing rights. Also recommends that in the meantime possibilities are sought to facilitate the sharing of experiences with the application of the guidelines in the various MS and the further development of the methodology.
- RCG ECON workshop on social variables (#8) - PGECON 2020 recommends RCG ECON workshop on social variables, which could count with the presence of experts with different areas of scientific expertise (as social scientists) in order to

investigate the system of social indicators and their use for assessment in different economic sectors.

- Conducting of postponed workshops (#9) - PGECON 2020 recommends all postponed workshops to be held in 2021 with the possible timeframe before the annual RCG ECON meeting.

Apart from the recommendations as reported in Annex 1, PGECON provided a detailed report of the meeting to the LM (Annex 2).

After voting and fundamental and very significant discussion regarding concerns of landlocked countries (LLC) it was finally agreed that the status of PGECON will be changed to RCG and in the RoPs of the RCG will be mentioned the exact responsibilities of LLC as participants in the group. Also, based on a pool amongst the participants, the majority of the participants decided the name of the RCG to be "RCG ECON".

5.3 Announcement of new chairs, next meetings and venues (ToR 3C)

The sequence and timing of the RCGs and the Liaison meeting in 2021 should roughly follow the example of 2020, with agreements on the exact dates still to be decided.

- RCG ECON (formerly PGECON): 2021, before 2021 LM Venue Sofia
 - chairs: Irina Davidjuka, Monica Gambino
- RCG Baltic: 7-11 June 2021, Poland tbd. Same dates and venue as RCG NANS&EA.
 - chairs: Sven Stötera and Elo Rasmann
- RCG NA – NS&EA (+ Diadromous ISSG) 7-11 June 2021, Poland, tbd. Same dates and venue as RCG Baltic.
 - chairs: Harriet van Overzee and Lucia Zarauz
- RCG MED&BS: last week of April/ first week of May 2020, France or Cyprus
 - chairs: Jurgen Mifsud and Ivana Vukov
- RCG LDF: 5 –7 July 2021 (to be confirmed), Funchal (Madeira, Portugal).
 - chair: Irek Wójcik
- RCG LP: –? May 2021, Horta, Ilha do Faial (Acores, Portugal) or online in case of restrictive sanitary measures
 - Chair: Mathieu Depetris, Josip Males
- LM 2021: September 2021, Brussels.
 - chair: Sieto Verver

6 Future steps in RCG and PGECON pan-regional and intersessional work (ToR 3D)

6.1 Pan-regional cooperation

6.1.1 RCGs and PGECON

6.1.1.1 RCG NANSEA presentation

The full list of RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic ISSG was presented with highlighting subgroups which may be of interest for other RCGs. Some ISSG are already pan-regional, having participants from more than two RCGs, and some are discussing issues that are common for many marine regions and therefore sharing experiences and knowledge can benefit all.

- *ISSG Metier issues*: Group is looking into metier list on EUMAP level 5 and species assemblage groups. The group will reach out to RCGs Med&BS and LP.
- *ISSG Data Quality*: This group presented guidelines on what MS should take into account when filling in WP Table 5A. Guidelines can be found in RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 report Part III (ISSG Reports).
- *ISSG Diadromous species*: truly pan-regional group. Main tasks for next term are making a questionnaire on electrofishing programs to EGs, requesting MSs to name the eel index rivers, and the initiation of a dialogue between ISSG Diad and ICES EGs
- *ISSG Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level*: the group is looking into possibility to standardization of SSF effort estimates, metiers codification; comparing of catch estimates between RDBES and sampling estimates. Looks how sampling effort is allocated to this fleet. Plan is to increase the involvement with PGECON to discuss socio-economic data collection needs.
- *ISSG Regionally coordinated stomach sampling*: pan-regional group that looks into how to take forward ICES WGSAM recommendations. Plan is to develop a regionally coordinated sampling, using North Sea IBTS as a case study. Further goal is to compile an updated overview of historic and contemporary stomach samplings by area and species, incorporate existing approaches, guidelines and protocols to develop a regional sampling plan and protocols (by species) for each region.
- *ISSG Recreational fishery*: This is a new ISSG created this year. One big task for this group is to propose on regional level a species list where recreational fishery catches are relevant for management of the stock and need therefore to be taken into account during stock assessment. Another task is to work towards regional sampling plan for shared stocks. The need to work with RCG LP was highlighted.
- *ISSG Development of Draft Regional work plan*: All RCGs should streamline their work towards an RWP in order to have single/similar approach on how the RWP should look like and what information should it contain.
- *ISSG Implementation of generic tools for the RCGs: Web, secretariat*: This group is pan-regional and chairs of all RCG are members of the group.

6.1.1.2 General conclusions

In the discussion on plans for future pan-regional cooperation and planned activities and needs of various Intersessional Subgroups (ISSGs), chairs of RCGs highlighted following general comments and conclusions:

NANSEA/BALTIC

- ISSGs need a direct communication with end-users based on their own needs
- Need to establish communication channels:
 - ICES -> RCGs chairs
 - COM -> RCGs chairs

RCG LDF

- Closer working cooperation with CECAF – invitation to participate in RCG meetings to better explain needs/problems/data gaps
- Continuing to participate in the ISSG on Catch and Effort Overviews in order to continue work on standardisation and automation of Overviews

RCG MED&BS

- Need for closer cooperation with ICES on the structure of Med&BS RDB similar or like the ICES RDBES
- Need for closer cooperation with the host that will be agreed on hosting and maintaining RDB

6.1.2 End-users

General conclusions presented by various End-users on pan-regional cooperation are summarized below and will be taken up by the relevant RCGs in future cooperation:

STECF/FDI

- Strengthening the interactions between an end-user and RCGs/PGECON and data collectors
- Data collectors, including some NCs, are members of the FDI EWG which already helps a lot in mutual communication and cooperation

STECF/Fleet economics – in the context of AER

- Already fluent interactions with PGECON and data collectors
- Workshops and meeting already on a regular basis and proposed/required changes are implemented
- Aim to improve the LDF data collection for RFMOs (identification of segments)

STECF/Processing Industry

- Good interactions- EWG chair and participants in constant contact with PGECON as most of them are PGECON members.
- No need for improvement

IOTC

- Need for harmonisation on data submissions at EU MS level

ICES

- Need to continue the good dialogue with RCGs (meetings + chairs' meeting) – at higher level

- Need for structure for communication and coordination with RCGs
 - Concept of FIRMOG (Fisheries Independent Regional Monitoring Groups) may assist
- Need to find the best way to communicate to end-users the data gaps and data collection problems caused by SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19):
 - Outcome of COM questionnaires
 - Outcome of ISSG questionnaires

6.2 Regional workplans, status and plans

6.2.1 RCG Baltic & RCG NANS&EA

Given that the RWP will have the same binding force as an NWP, there is the need to have a learning phase by all involved (Member states, RCGs, DG-MARE and STECF) on the agreement, submission, review and formal approval of an RWP.

It has been decided that 2 RWPs will be developed for testing the whole process (NANSEA and Baltic) and to be sent in before 31 October 2020 by the chairs from respective RCGs.

This RWP 2021 will be a test and a not legally binding document to learn how to deal with this new process. The test RWP has been developed by the ISSG RWP with already agreed elements of regional coordination to submit to STECF in October 2020 for review, feedback and lessons learned.

At this initiation stage of RWP, the first actions considered will be:

- list of required stocks for sampling (table 1A)
- International cost-sharing on surveys (Table 1G and 1H)
- the list of eligible meetings and participation to Inter-sessional Sub-Groups (table 7A),
- the list of recommendations (Table 7B),
- the list of bi-lateral or multi-lateral agreements (Table 7C)

ISSG RWP will fill in draft new RWP tables and text using existing NWP 2020-2021 with the deadline of 15 October 2020

MS will check and amend/update the RWP content to ensure the information in their NWP and RWP 2021 are identical between 15 to 31 October 2020.

6.2.2 RCG MED&BS

In 2020 RCG Med&BS recalled on RCG Med&BS 2019 Recommendation 1 on the Establishment of regional sampling plan for small pelagic fish in the Adriatic Sea involving the relevant countries (ITA, HRV, and SVN) and presented the progress made in 2019 and 2020.

The first meeting of the working group for the coordination of data collection for small pelagic fish in the Adriatic Sea (WG SPF-AS) scheduled for the end of 2019 in Croatia, was postponed with no further progress. In order to successfully establish the working group that will develop the RSP and RWP it is necessary to strengthen official communication between Member States and to coordinate more with GFCM and FAO AdriaMed as well as to ensure the involvement of third countries relevant for GSAs 17 and 18 (Albania and Montenegro). Further activities will need to be coordinated with the Med&BS Regional project under the MARE/2020/08 grant.

6.2.3 RCG LDF

The RCG LDF has been conducting successful regional coordination and cooperation since several years and was in fact the first RCG establishing multilateral agreements, containing regional sampling plans.

The first *"Multi-lateral agreement between Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands and Poland for biological data collection of pelagic fisheries in CECAF waters"* was signed already in 2011 and implemented in 2012. At that time, MS concerned accepted also a Sampling Protocol (version 31-05-2011). With the renewal of this Multi-lateral agreement in 2018 an updated *"Manual for scientific observers on board EU pelagic trawlers in CECAF area"* (version 8-03-2018) was adopted.

Regarding the EU fishery in the SPRFMO area, the first *"Multi-lateral agreement between Germany, Lithuania, The Netherlands and Poland for biological data collection of pelagic fisheries in SPRFMO waters"* was signed in 2016 and implemented in 2017. Sampling and data collection requirements are described in the SPRFMO Conservation and Management Measure *"On Standards for the Collection, Reporting, Verification and Exchange of Data"* published on Organization's webpage.

6.2.4 RCG LP

The RCG LP subgroup dealing with the tropical tunas sampling has been conducting successfully since several years a regional coordination and cooperation. This process was describe under the MARE 2016-22 RECOLAPE project and precisely in the WP 2 (final report and annexes associated available on <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs/regional-grants>). The EU MS involved in this coordination are Spain and France. Next improvements of this process, like these highlighting under the RECOLAPE project or associated to the development of the new version of the Tropical Tuna Treatment, will be probably a part of the next MARE 2020 08 (regarding LP topic).

6.2.5 PGECON

PGECON planned to establish a communication process with other RCGs in order to be ensured future coordination with RCGs especially in drafting of Regional Work Plans

6.3 Planned intersessional sub-groups work 2020-2021

6.3.1 RCG Baltic & RCG NANS&EA

ISSG (chair)	Tasks
Review and streamline dialogue between data providers (RCGs) and End-users (ICES) (RCG chairs)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. communication channel between ICES and RCG chairs 2. communication channel between the COM and RCG chairs 3. Follow up on end-user needs on a general scale <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3.a Update commercial sampling overview caused by COVID -19 3.b UK related issues

ISSG (chair)	Tasks
RDB catch and effort overviews (Marta Suska)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. RDB catch and effort overviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Incorporate feedback of RCG 2020: Add an introduction on data source, how to read the data, etc. - Develop a markdown/package/small GitHub for national data submitter to enable them to check their own RDB data files before upload. - Include the CE/CL data in the shiny R. 2. Shiny App: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - add more functions, graphs and tables to examine RDB data. - add useful download functions. - Interactive maps - keeping in mind the upcoming RDBES format 3. multiannual overviews: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Add variable Year as option (facet) in the shiny R, restrict the number of years if file size is too large to be handled by the uploader.
Metier issues (Josefine Egekvist)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare the proposed metier list with EUMAP level 5 • Reformatting the new metier list to get an easier reference with the old metier codes • Following and assisting on implementation of the new métier codes and script • Write a manual for use of the script and code lists and document the script with a flow chart. • Update metier code list, clarify connection between old and suggested metiers, provide reference lists if needed. • Crosscheck EU MAP codes list with metier • Further development on script • When data are uploaded with the new métier codes to the RDB/RDBES, this year's ToR 2 will become relevant: Further develop métier descriptions based on new métier codes
Data Quality (David Currie)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-evaluate Table 5A indicators. Decide whether to perform a full evaluation every year. • Create sampling design document template for Regional and National Workplans • Look at creating templates/guidance for the other table 5A questions for Regional and National Workplans • Continue to catalogue software tools (not reports) • Compile the current RDB upload logs and work with the Overviews group to think about a new, machine-readable upload log format • Discuss data checks for the new RDBES. (Lower priority)
ICES WGRDBESGOV (David Currie and Katja Ringdahl)	details see ToRs for SCRDB
RDB Core group (Henrik Kjems-Nielsen)	details see ToRs for Core group
Implications of the Landing Obligation (NA)	No tasks, suspended for three years
Diadromous Fishes (Tapani Pakarinen and Marko Freese)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questionnaire on electrofishing programs to EGs • Request to MSs to name the eel index rivers • Initiation of dialogue between ISSG Diad and ICES EGs

ISSG (chair)	Tasks
Surveys (Sieto Verver and Christoph Stransky)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Renewal and finalisation of the multilateral agreements on cost-sharing of the two surveys: International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas (IESNS, also known as ASH under the EU-MAP) and International Blue Whiting Survey; 2. Monitor COVID-19 implications on surveys from a DCF perspective and react when appropriate and requested 3. Monitor the follow-up of WKREO proposals and act as focal point for RCG contact 4. Review survey aspects of the renewed EU-MAP in the light of cost-sharing and set up methods to identify candidate surveys for future cost-sharing
Optimized and Operational Regional Sampling Plans (Kirsten Håkansson, Rita Vasconcelos and Harriet van Overzee)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Act as a forum for discussing issues arising from the case studies 2. Develop guidance with the potential following steps (random order) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Identification of fleets relevant for regional coordination b) Simulation tools c) Permanent structure for data sharing d) Quality checks are made at the national and regional level e) End-users are involved in informing on data needs f) Feasibility and implementation are tested with pilot studies and/or consultations g) Mechanisms are in place to reach agreements across MS
Towards a regional sampling plan- Case Study of the trawl fishery in Iberian Waters (Rita Vasconcelos)	<p>Define and implement pilot study, which includes analysing in detail alternative scenarios of RSP and define needed adjustments to agree on a pilot for implementation/testing.</p> <p>Tasks to be developed if human resource is hired full-time by the project within the MARE/2020/08 annex 1 grant: Analyse effects of alternative RSPs on length composition and incorporate these results into the definition of the RSP.</p>
Identification of case studies for PETS bycatch monitoring (Estanis Mugerza)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fisheries monitoring effort comparison between WGBYC and RDBES (liaise with WGBYC and WGCATCH) • CS at sea observed trips by metiers (liaise ISSG fisheries overviews) • risk assessment update and improvement • RDBES (data model) importance for bycatch data collection: PETS species list • CS Bay of Biscay and Baltic Harbour porpoise + CS Baltic
Towards a regional sampling plan for the freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic (Andrew Campbell and Jens Ulleweit)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise dataset • Complete simulation analysis - to include sampling protocols (how many samples, numbers to age) • Identify candidate sampling schemes • Draft proposal for a statistically robust regional sampling scheme which then can be forwarded to NCs/EU
Towards a regional sampling programme – Case study of fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic (Katja Ringdahl and Marie Storr-Paulsen)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation WK in June – testing the output in the case study (Chaired by Nuno and Kirsten) • 10 years of Danish control data to compare species composition • Continuations of case study in the fall 2020

ISSG (chair)	Tasks
Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level (Estanis Mugerza)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Catch and effort data analysis in the RDB: standardization of SSF effort estimates, metiers codification based in ISSG metiers work (e.g. MIS_MIS trips), comparison of catch estimates between RDBES and sampling estimates • Sampling effort allocated by MS to this fleet (in collaboration with fisheries overviews ISSG): CS data, data gaps (discards, PETS) • PGECON involvement: Socioeconomic data collection needs • RDBES data model and SSF
Regionally coordinated stomach sampling (Pierre Cresson and Matthias Bernreuther)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. development of a regionally coordinated sampling, using North Sea IBTS as a case study, and based on the recommendations of WGSAM. 2. Discuss, including members of the IBTS WG to define specifically the repartition of sample collection and analyses among countries. Discuss with COM how to secure funding for the sampling. 3. Development of a specific case study to intercalibrate the IEO protocol with the WGSAM recommendation, as to guarantee the continuity of the stomach time series 4. For each region the group will compile an updated overview of historic and contemporary stomach samplings by area and species. Based on the work of fishPi2 and suggestions by the end-users of the stomach data (e.g. ICES WGSAM) the group will incorporate existing approaches, guidelines and protocols into the design of the sampling plan. A regional sampling plan and protocols (by species) will be developed for each region.
Recreational fishery (Dália Reis)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional species list • Regional sampling plans for shared stocks • MRF data incorporation in the RDBES but also MRF and the data model • Proposal of an RWP table 1d on recreational fisheries to be reviewed by ICES WGRFS and WGRFS to provide feedback on structure and content of table 1d as well as required changes to support the documentation of regional coordination of recreational fisheries towards an RWP.
Development of Draft Regional work plan (Joel Vigneau and Leonie O'Dowd)	<p>In order to prepare for the submission of a formal RWP 2022 the following steps were identified and presented at the RCG technical meeting 2020:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agree the set of existing agreements to put through the process (bilateral-multilateral agreements, common methodologies) and identify the low hanging fruit; 2. Test these in the work plan structure and propose adjustments where necessary (review and adjustment of work plan structure) 3. Review the output of each ISSG sub-group in relation to potential development of RWP and agree on the prioritized outputs and how they are represented in the RWP (text boxes and tables) 4. Present roadmap for the test RWP 2021 and the formal RWP 2022 to be presented in RCG 2021 (short-term to September 2020, and midterm to September 2021) with identified steps of decision making. 5. Agree on how the MARE call for project would be used to support the work and have roadmap for proposal.
Revision of EUMAP	No tasks

ISSG (chair)	Tasks
Implementation of generic tools for the RCGs: Web, secretariat (Els Torreele)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To identify how to move forward with the project call 2. To establish a consortium for the project call 3. To involve all RCGs and PGECON in the project proposal 4. To establish the fundament for long-term funding and establishing of supporting tools for RCG and PGECON.
National Correspondents (Anna Hasslow)	<p>For NCs to decide</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. amending RoPs for RCG NA NS&EA and RCG Baltic by e.g. removal of UK from the North Sea part.

6.3.2 RCG MED&BS

The planned activities by the RCG Med&BS are:

- RDB Med&BS Steering Committee by end of 2020
- Subgroup on data requirements and data transmission issues at the beginning of 2021:
 - Establish data requirements registry and analyse data transmission issues for 2020 (provide feedback to DG MARE and STECF before STECF evaluation of AR and DTI);
- Continuation of the meetings with end-users – the 1st meeting was 2019, the 2nd was on 31st of August 2020 and the next meeting is planned before the RCG Med&BS 2021;
- Continuation of the workshop for Recreational fisheries - beginning of 2021;
- Training workshop on PETS identification covering all categories of PETS (marine mammals, sea birds, sharks and rays) – 2021

6.3.3 RCG LDF

Following the 2020 recommendation, the Group plans to set-up intersessional subgroup, consisting of MS involved in the SPRFMO pelagic fisheries, to prepare for data collection in the SPRFMO area beyond 2024.

It is also planned to organize a meeting between the MS involved in the SPRFMO pelagic fisheries and the fishing industry representatives in order to discuss available options to address new requirements of the SPRFMO Observer Programme beyond 2024.

The Group is actively represented in the RCGs Intersessional Subgroup on RDB catch and effort overviews.

Members of the Group participate also in the work of several other ISSGs carrying the tasks assigned all RCGs, including ISSGs on:

- Review and streamline dialogue between data providers (RCGs) and End-users (ICES)
- Metier issues
- Surveys
- Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level
- Development of Draft Regional work plan
- Implementation of generic tools for the RCGs: Web, secretariat
- National Correspondents

- Working Group on Regional Data Base Estimation Governance (ICES WGRDBESGOV)
- RDB Core group

6.3.4 RCG LP

Concerning the working group focusing on the purse seiner data collection (under the umbrella of the RCG LP subgroup dealing on tropical tunas sampling), an annual technical workshop was planned current March and the annual restitution workshop current April. The major significant improvement for the next year will be the release of the new Tropical Tuna Treatment for the estimation of the tunas catches and effort associated. In addition, a specific point will be on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the sampling, with the aim to find solutions for data processes associated.

In addition, under tropical tunas sampling RCG LP subgroup, the observer working group planned to have annual meeting current March-April.

Regarding the other RCG LP subgroups identified in the current RCG LP structure, nothing is planned so far.

6.3.5 PGECON

No intersessional subgroups are scheduled for 2021.

6.4 Planned workshops 2020-2021

6.4.1 RCG Baltic & RCG NANS&EA

The work on setting up a regional sampling plan for small pelagic fishery in Baltic Sea is continuing and an ISSG workshop for all Baltic MS is planned to take place in Nov /Dec 2020.

The RCG recommended ICES to setup a Workshop on a "pilot FIRMOG" in 2021 to focus as a test case on proposed changes for the International Bottom Trawl Survey (IBTS), using the analyses already been conducted on the IBTS (WGISDAA, WKNSIMP...) and prepare a suggestion for changes that can be brought into the RCG for decisions. The Workshop will elaborate on the ideas from ICES WKREO.

6.4.2 RCG MED&BS

Three workshops connected specifically with the Med&BS region are planned:

- Workshop for application the data quality checks developed under the WP6 of the STREAM project;
- Workshop on the use of the commercial sampling optimization tools developed under STREAM project;
- Age reading workshop for Black Sea countries (on turbot (*Scophthalmus maximus*) and piked dogfish (*Squalus acanthias*))

6.4.3 RCG LDF

Currently, RCG LDF has no plans to organize workshops.

6.4.4 RCG LP

Currently, RCG LP has no plans to organize workshops.

6.4.5 PGECON

PGECON 2020 planned four workshops for the upcoming year:

- Workshop on social variables, which could count with the presence of experts with different areas of scientific expertise (as social scientists) in order to investigate the system of social indicators and their use for assessment in different economic sectors;
- Workshop on the fisheries-based approach of fleet segmentation;
- Workshop on aquaculture issues;
- Quality Assurance Framework Subgroup Workshop.

7 Governance (ToR 4)

7.1 Follow-up of RCG RoP adoption in each of the RCGs (ToR 4A)

All RCGs have now developed and agreed their RoP, which are made publicly available on the DCF website⁵, as displayed in the table below.

	Initiated	Drafted	Finalised	Adopted	Availability
RCG Baltic	2017	2017	2018	2018	RoP
RCG NANS&EA	2019	2019	2019	2019	RoP
RCG MED&BS	2017	2017	2018	2018	RoP
RCG LDF	2018	2018	2018	2020	RoP
RCG LP	2018	2018	2018	2018	RoP
PGECON	2018	2018	2019	2020	

RCG LDF

The Rules of Procedure for the RCG LDF were established on 9th of July 2018 by the following MS coordinating their data collection activities for Long Distance Fisheries in 2018: Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Spain and Poland. At its 2020 meeting in July, the Group discussed the appropriateness of the current RoP and concluded that there is no need to amend these. As Portugal joined RCG LDF as a permanent member, the RoP were formally approved by Portugal in September 2020 by written procedure.

RCG Baltic and RCG NA NS&EA

In 2017 the Rules of Procedure (RoP) for the RCG Baltic, RCG North Atlantic (NA) and RCG North Sea & Eastern Arctic (NS&EA) were established by the MSs coordinating their data collection activities in the respective areas. After the establishment of the RoPs the RCG NA and RCG NSEA merged into one RCG (i.e. RCG NANS&EA) and it became clear that the United Kingdom will leave the European Union. Therefore, an update is needed. During the technical meeting of the RCG Baltic and RCG NA NS&EA in June a first comparison was made between the RoP NA and RoP NS&EA. This work needs to continue by the ISSG of the NCs resulting in one RoP for the RCG NA NS&EA. Furthermore, the ISSG of the NCs should work towards streamlining the RoP Baltic and RoP NA NS&EA (figure 1).

⁵https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs/rcg/-/document_library_display/FMxyil88Aos3/view/1228330?_110_INSTANCE_FMxyil88Aos3_redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fdatacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu%2Fdocs%2Frcg%3Fp_p_id%3D110_INSTANCE_FMxyil88Aos3%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-2%26p_p_col_count%3D1

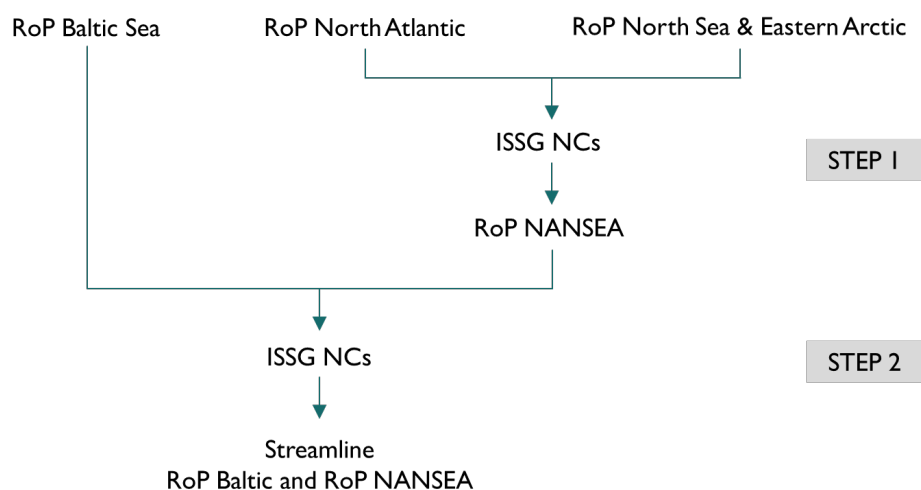


Figure 1: Process alignment RoP Baltic, NA and NSEA

RCG Med&BS

The Rules of procedures were agreed during the 2018 RCG meeting and there were no updates in 2019 and 2020 RCG meetings. The Rules of procedure are available at the DCF website.

PGECON (after 2020 RCG ECON)

After voting (during PGECON 2020 meeting, held after the LM) "in favour" by all NCs for changing of status of PGECON from subgroup to the COM Expert Working group to an RCG ECON the draft Rules of Procedure for RCG ECON were elaborated during PGECON 2020 and discussed during the plenary. It was also agreed that all MS may need more time to commit with the text produced, acknowledging while further delays on this issue could jeopardize the functioning and the work carried out in the RCG ECON. The draft text of RoPs should be circulated to NC with a deadline to send additional comments (10 November 2020). This should lead to the final adoption by a written procedure of the ROPs for RCG ECON by the end of 2020.

7.2 Structure of RCGs and PGECON and cooperation. Lessons learned from combined 2020 RCGs. Tentative changes in structure i.e. PGECON and in RCG number (ToR 4B)

7.2.1 Lessons learned from combined RCGs

7.2.1.1 RCG Baltic and RCG NANS&EA

A new process/structure for the setup of work started 2019 for a three-year test period (learning by doing) until 2021 (see figure 2). A full evaluation will be done after Decision Meeting 2021. Preferable no changes or extra's added to the current flow of RCG NA NSEA & RCG Baltic has been stated. The joint technical meeting RCG NANSEA and RCG BALTIC 2020 was efficient and successful since a lot of ISSG work is pan-regional, with regional aspects kept (feedback from participants to be found in the RCG report). It also becomes more and more obvious, that by working in ISSGs - RCGs are moving towards regional

focus instead of national focus in many topics, based on that many participants are joining and stay active during the year!

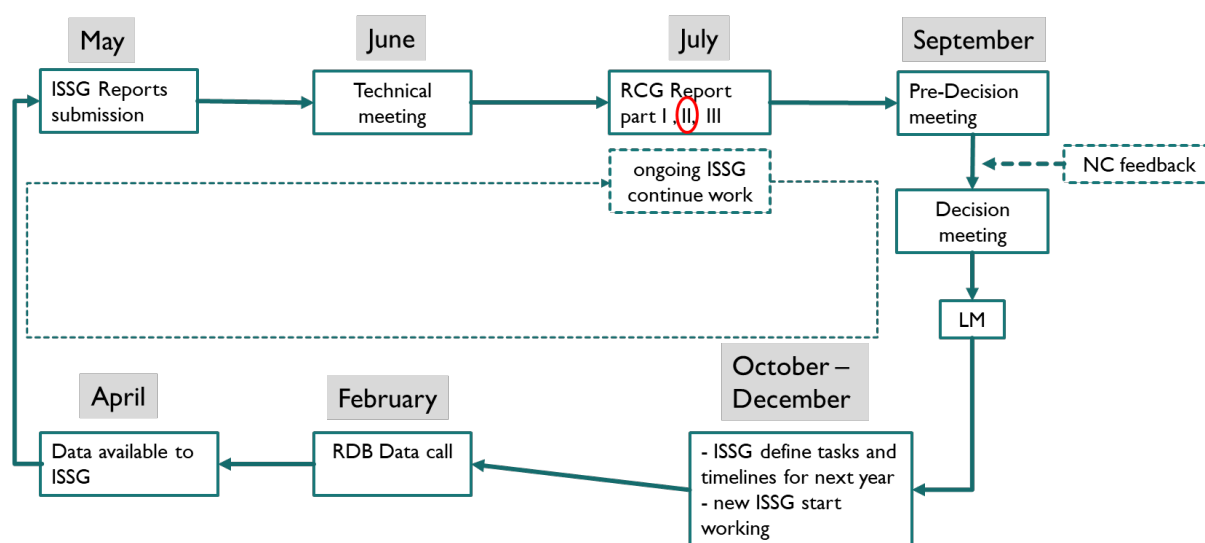


Figure 2: A new process/structure for the setup of work started 2019 for a three-year test period (learning by doing) until 2021

Also, having a team of chairs (2 by region) decrease the burden of workload and the sharing / learning from each other is both nice and fruitful!

The procedure of having incoming chairs in the last term is beneficial for both outgoing and incoming chairs. The pre decision meeting that was tested for the first time this year was valuable and will be kept for next year. There is a need to find ways and make sure UK can participate in future. We also found it beneficial that also other RCG chairs were attending parts of the Technical meeting / ISSG discussions this year. For next year and depending on the COVID-19 situation, virtual vs physical meeting has been discussed and the option of having hybrid meeting might be something for the future.

7.2.1.2 RCG Med&BS

In 2020, RCG Med&BS combined two meetings - the meeting with end-users and the RCG meeting and the plan is to continue this practice in future.

There was a proposal during the RCG meeting that should be investigated the possibility to combine 2 of the planned workshops because they both need to be physical meetings – this can be decided only after the lists of participants interested in both workshops are available.

The RCG Med&BS meeting this year was held in Zoom and in the beginning of each day all the participants were asked if they agree to be recorded during the meeting. The records helped us a lot in writing the report. After sending the draft report, the recordings will be deleted.

Since RCG Med&BS wanted to finalize the recommendations for the LM, the recommendations were provided on 3rd of September to all NCs and participants in the RCG Med&BS as live document. This also acted as a trial for the final report, which is planned to be send again as live document. Doing so will save editing time through combining the different comments.

The first virtual RCG MED&BS coordination meeting was held on June 30th where it was agreed to hold a virtual annual RCG MED&BS meeting from 31st August to 2nd September

2020. Due to the number of topics planned, the agenda was covered in 3 days – 1 day for meeting with end-users and 2 full days for RCG meeting.

The first day of the meeting was dedicated to the end-users, data reporting and data transmission issues (so-called End-users Meeting).

The second and the third days were dedicated to the regular RCG topics and COVID-19 pandemic.

7.2.2 Tentative changes in structure

Apart from the structural change to convert PGECON into RCG ECON, no major changes are foreseen. RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic plan to have a combined meeting in 2021, similar to 2020.

7.2.3 Future position of diadromous subgroup

In 2020, the ISSG diadromous had to appoint two new chairs, as the two British former chairs were forced to withdraw from their assignments due to restrictions in line with Brexit processes. For the time being, the diadromous subgroup will remain an intersessional subgroup in order to participate and contribute in any relevant RCG as needed. There is an identified need to have pan-regional overview of data collection, and, at the same time, pay attention to regional specificities. As diadromous species (e.g.: Eel, Salmon, Sea trout) are distributed pan-regionally and across different RCGs (e.g.: NANSEA, BALTIC, MEDITERRANEAN) with different ICES EGs (WGEEL, WGNAS, WGTRUTTA, WGBAST etc.) as end-users, more regionally -adapted data collection may be needed to comply with end-user needs and to be able to tackle regional issues/ comply with regional circumstances.

The status of this subgroup, in terms of representation at the LM, was rather unclear at the beginning of the meeting. After discussions, the LM decided that the subgroup should cooperate closer with all RCGs (especially those with less cooperation, like the RCG Med & BS) and should report back to LM next year. The status of the ISSG Diad and its representation in LM will then be re-assessed.

8 AOB: EUROSTAT

In close consultation with DG MARE, EUROSTAT is revising their regulations on fisheries statistics. The initiative is called **The European fishery statistics – simplified data collection** and has a public consultation open until 23 November. Stakeholders are invited to contribute to streamlining and simplification of data collection for statistical purposes (catches, landings of fishery products, fish farming/aquaculture). The revision aims also at aligning and updating the EUROSTAT fisheries statistics with the CFP data and information needs.

9 Glossary

AWG: Assessment Working Group

COM: European Commission (COM)

CFP: Common fishery Policy (CFP)

CPC: Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties, Entities or Fishing Entities

DCF: Data Collection Framework

DG MARE: Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE)

DTMT: Data Transmission Monitoring Tool

EU-MAP: European Union Multi Annual Plan

FDI: Fisheries Dependent Information, data call operated by JRC for STECF

GFCM: General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)

ICCAT: International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)

ICES: International Council for the exploration of the sea (ICES)

ISSG: InterSessional Sub-group (of the RCG)

JRC: Joint research Centre (JRC)

LM: Liaison Meeting (LM)

MS: Member States

NC: National Correspondents

NC-DM: National Correspondent decision-making meeting

NWP: National Work Plan

PETS: Protected, Endangered and Threatened species

PGECON: Planning Group on Economic Issues (PGECON)

RCG: Regional Coordination Group (RCG)

RDB: Regional Data Base (hosted by ICES)

RDBES: Regional Data Base and Estimation System (in development by ICES to replace the RDB)

RoP: Rules of Procedures

SCRF: ICCAT Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS)

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

STECF EWG: Expert Working Group of STECF (Meetings)

WG: Working Group

Annex 1 Recommendations and decisions from RCGs and PGECON

LM 20200 follows the same process as in previous years to provide STECF information and opinion on the recommendations stemming from RCG and PGECON 2020 work. PGECON did not present any recommendations to the LM due to their meeting being held after the LM, but their recommendations are included in this document since they were received before the release of the LM report. RCGs and PGECON will forward the recommendations to the responsible persons for the follow-up actions.

RCG Baltic & RCG NANS&EA

ISSG/SG	ID	Year	R or D	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Where to find more details	Decision by NC?	Table in WP
COVID 19 + Comm. sampling	NANSEA BALTIC_2020_R01	2020	R01	Data gaps because of COVID 19 restrictions	ICES to either provide explicitly guidelines on how to address data gaps OR underscore clearly in the 2021 data call that imputation should not be done	ICES	By end of 2020, in time for WG's	Due to COVID19, there may be gaps in sampling data and countries need advice on how to deal with this in the stock assessments	Section 5.1.4 of the report	NO	NO
Catch and Effort Overviews	NANSEA BALTIC_2020_D01	2020	D01	Annual RDB catch and effort overview – approve sharing and Data Policy exemptions	NC's to approve whether the overviews can be made available to WGs that have been pre-approved for access to aggregated RDB data and agree on the process	NC's (NA NS&EA and Baltic region)	30/09/2020	The RDB catch and effort overviews offer valuable information for ICES WGs and the ICES annual fisheries overview. Although all graphs are following the RDB data policy, the combination of some is violating the second rule (i.e. only the same aggregated variables should be used in the same document). Graphs can still be shared given an approval by NCs. For this approval, RCG proposes to set up a process where the overviews are sent to the respective NCs and ask for approval. That would give MS the possibility to object or re-upload data that were missing up to this point. Two ways are proposed for this. Further details can be found in section 5.2.1.1. of the report.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 report PART I Section 5.2.1, Annex 3 (SCRDB group list) and Annex 4 (review data policy) RDB Catch and Effort Overviews for Baltic, NA and NSEA regions are available in ICES SharePoint under RCG NA NS&EA -> 04.working documents -> SG - Overviews	YES	NO
Catch and Effort Overviews	NANSEA BALTIC_2020_R02	2020	R02	Update RDB Data policy	WGRDBESGOV to adjust and update the Data policy and data guidelines	WGRDBESGOV	Before 2021	The RDB Data policy is yet not covering all possible aggregation variables of the RDB data (census and sampling data). The RDB catch and effort overviews offer some new combinations that can be used to specify and update the policy to make it either more flexible or adding the missing parameter.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 report PART I Section 5.2.1 and Annex 4 (review data policy) RDB Catch and Effort Overviews for Baltic, NA and NSEA regions are available in ICES SharePoint under RCG NA NS&EA -> 04. working documents -> SG - Overviews	NO	NO
Catch and Effort Overviews	NANSEA BALTIC_2020_R03	2020	R03	Implement Upload-logs as standard tool into RDBES	WGRDBESGOV to set up a standardized way for the Upload logs as integral part of the Uploading process of the RDBES	WGRDBESGOV	Before 2021-22?	The Upload-logs are important documents that support the understanding and reading of the census and sampling data overviews. Yet they are stand-alone Excel sheets with only a few standardized fields. Integrating them in the upload process will improve their usage and	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 report PART I Section 5.2.1, Annex 5 (Citation suggestion)	NO	NO

ISSG/S G	ID	Year	R or D	Short Description	Action to be taken	Respon- sible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Where to find more details	Decisi- on by NC?	Tabl- e in WP
								make the content available during the analysis of the data.			
Metier Issues	NANSEA BAL TIC_ 2020_D 02	2020	D02	Codes for metiers and reference lists that shall be used by Member States	NC's to approve whether the new codes for metiers and reference lists will be used and implemented by MS	NC's (NA NS&EA and Baltic region)	30/09/20 20	The suggested métier list is standardized and harmonized codes (especially on mesh-size ranges) which will allow to avoid overlapping as well as apply similar methods and criteria on assigning metiers for fishing activities by Member States. A general workflow for assigning métiers was developed and set up a public repository on GitHub for storing reference lists, scripts, métier descriptions and documentation of procedures. R-script for assigning métiers to transversal data was developed and tested by ISSG.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 report PART I Section 5.2.2. Feedback from the ISSG on "Metier issues"	YES	7B
Data quality	NANSEA BAL TIC_ 2020_R 04	2020	R04	Advice for completing Table 5A in the national workplans	MS should take notice of the advice made for completing Table 5A: - Provide direct links to relevant documentations where possible, - Ensure any links provided are correct and work, - Ensure the documents referenced are reasonably recent (>2014), - Provide the date when the documentation was written or 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 a particular question.	MS	31/12/20 20	The Data Quality group has developed indicators based on Table 5A. When calculating these indicators, a number of common issues have been identified - if these were resolved then the information presented in Table 5A would be more useful.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 report PART III Section 4 ISSG Data Quality report	NO	7B

ISSG/SG	ID	Year	R or D	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Where to find more details	Decision by NC?	Table in WP
SCRDB	NANSEA BALTIC_ 2020_D 03	2020	D03	Approve changes to the RDB/RDBES Data Policy	Approve the proposed changes to the RDB/RDBES Data Policy. These changes are: i) minor changes to the text, ii) allow NCs to pre-approve access to detailed data for selected ICES expert groups, iii) minor change to the aggregation guidelines	NC's (NA NS&EA and Baltic region)	30/09/2020	ii) A recommendation was made by the RCGs to the RDB Steering Committee to create a process whereby countries could pre-approved access to detailed data for selected users. iii) During the 2020 RCG meeting it was noticed that the current aggregation rules do not cover all of the variables used in the RCG Effort & Catch Overview reports - these missing variables should be added to the guidelines.	Revised RDB Data Policy (with tracked changes) on the RCG SharePoint. -> 02. Background documents -> 20_Data_Policy_RDB_RDBES-DEC2019_revised.docx The SCRDB 2019 report can also be consulted: http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/EOSG/2020/SCRDB%20Report%202019.pdf	YES	NO
SCRDB	NANSEA BALTIC_ 2020_D 04	2020	D04	Approve the "Conditions for detailed RDBES data use" document	Approve the "Conditions for detailed RDBES data use" document	NC's (NA NS&EA and Baltic region)	30/09/2020	A recommendation was made by the RCGs to the SCRDB to produce a document that people within ICES expert groups who have been given access to detailed RDB/RDBES data could sign to say they have read and agree to abide by the conditions of using the data.	The "Conditions for detailed RDBES data use" document can be found on the RCG SharePoint. -> 02. Background documents -> 20_RDBES_DataAccess.docx The SCRDB 2019 report can also be consulted: http://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/EOSG/2020/SCRDB%20Report%202019.pdf	YES	NO
Surveys	NANSEA BALTIC_ 2020_D 05	2020	D05	Renewal cost-sharing agreements for surveys	To discuss, amend and conclude on renewal of the cost-sharing agreements for both the IESNS and WHB survey.	relevant NCs and MS.	30/09/2020	The current cost-sharing agreement for IESNS ends in 2020 while the agreement for the WHB survey needs revision to reflect the outcomes of the UK leaving the EU. Also, Spain is not included in the agreement, this should be reflected in the new agreement as well.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 report PART I Section 5.4.1 Feedback from the ISSG & SG 'Surveys' and Restructuring WGs survey'	YES	7C

ISSG/SG	ID	Year	R or D	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Where to find more details	Decision by NC?	Table in WP
Surveys	NANSEA BALTIC_2020_R05	2020	R05	ICES to setup a Workshop on a "pilot FIRMOG" in 2021	ICES to setup a Workshop on a "pilot FIRMOG" in 2021 to focus as a test case on proposed changes for the International Bottom Trawl Survey (IBTS), using the analyses already been conducted on the IBTS (WGISDAA, WKNSIMP...) and prepare a suggestion for changes that can be brought into the RCG for decisions. The Workshop will elaborate on the ideas from ICES WKREO. The outcome of the workshop to be put forward into the RCGs for making decision on proposed changes. The decided changes to be reflected in National or Regional workplans.	ICES	end of 2020	Multiple initiatives (e.g. EU project JMP and ICES WKPIMP, WGISUR, WKNSIMP...) have considered options for developing more holistic and integrated ecosystem surveys, developing guidance and recommendations on both scientific theory and practical implementation. However, largely due to a lack of a coherent international organisational mechanism, only a small portion of this work has found its way to routine survey implementation.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART I section 5.4.1.1 WKREO report (http://ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Expert%20Group%20Report/EOSG/2020/WKREO%20Report%202019.pdf)	NO	NO
Surveys	NANSEA 2020_R06	2020	R06	Revision of the survey effort and coverage of the IBWSS	RCG NA NS&EA recommends ICES WGIPS to review the survey effort and coverage of the IBWSS and evaluate the impact of a 10% and 20% reduction in survey effort by Ireland and The Netherlands on the data quality of the survey indices. ICES to add this request to the ToRs of WGIPS for their work programme 2021; WGIPS to review and to summarise the results of their evaluation for the RCG NA NS&EA technical meeting in June 2021.	ICES WGIPS	01/06/2021	Since the 2017 implementation of the DCF recast, the participation by MS to surveys based on TAC shares has become mandatory for surveys listed in the EU-MAP. Currently, two surveys are subject to cost-sharing; the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas (IESNS, also known as ASH) and the International Blue Whiting Spawning Stock survey (IBWSS). The EU part of the IBWSS is being carried out by Ireland and The Netherlands. As part of a multilateral agreement, Denmark, Germany, France and the United Kingdom contribute to the ship time cost with financial contributions proportional to their relative TAC share. Since 2019, Spain is also contributing ship time to the survey, however this is outside the multilateral agreement. The IBWSS will continue to be a mandatory survey under the new EU-MAP from 2022 onwards. In order to develop new task sharing agreements for the IBWSS including cost contributions under the next EMFAF programme, the RCG NA NS&EA recommends an evaluation of the current EU survey effort including the effect of the additional survey effort by Spain since 2019 and the impact of a potential reduction of survey effort by Ireland and Netherlands by 10% and 20%, respectively.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART I section 5.4.1.1 (cost sharing agreements)	NO	7C

ISSG/S G	ID	Year	R or D	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Where to find more details	Decision by NC?	Table in WP
RWP	NANSEA BALTIC_ 2020_D 06	2020	D06	Draft RWP - agree to non binding test run and endorse elements for test run	NC's to approve that a draft RWP is submitted to STECF in October 2020 for a non binding test run and to endorse the elements that were selected for the test run being table 1a on landing's overviews, 1g&1h on surveys, 7a on coordination, 7b on recommendations and 7c on existing bilateral agreements.	NC's (NA NS&EA and Baltic region)	30/09/2020	A RWP will have the same binding force as a NWP, so there is the need to have a learning phase by all involved (Member states, RCGs, DGMARE and STECF) on the agreement, submission, review and formal approval of an RWP. It is proposed to test a RWP in 2020 as a not legally binding document to learn how to deal with this new process. The ISSG RWP in collaboration with other relevant ISSGs has developed a test RWP with proposed elements of regional coordination to submit to STECF in October 2020 for review, feedback and lessons learned. This process will greatly support the subsequent preparation of the actual RWP in 2021. The elements included are table 1a on landing's overviews, 1g&1h on surveys, 7a on coordination, 7b on recommendations and 7c on existing bilateral agreements.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART I Section 5.4.2 ToR 4 Development and implementation of Regional Workplans; links to proposed tables of the RWP are embedded in the text. RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART III Section 11 on the ISSG on development of draft Regional Work Plan 2020-Answers to the questionnaire on the priorities for all NA NS&EA and Baltic ISSG	YES	NO
RWP	NANSEA BALTIC_ 2020_R 07	2020	R07	Draft RWP - RCG recommends a non binding test run to be reviewed at STECF for feedback and lessons learned on the process of RWP submission	RCG NA NS&EA and RCG Baltic recommend for the Commission to accept a test RWP at STECF 2020 as non legally binding for review, feedback and lessons learned on the process.	DGMARE/STECF	31/10/2020	A RWP will have the same binding force as a NWP, so there is the need to have a learning phase by all involved (Member states, RCGs, DGMARE and STECF) on the agreement, submission, review and formal approval of an RWP. It is proposed to test a RWP in 2020 as a not legally binding document to learn how to deal with this new process. The ISSG RWP in collaboration with other relevant ISSGs has developed a test RWP with proposed elements of regional coordination to submit to STECF in October 2020 for review, feedback and lessons learned. This process will greatly support the subsequent preparation of the actual RWP in 2021. The elements included are table 1a on landing's overviews, 1g&1h on surveys, 7a on coordination, 7b on recommendations and 7c on existing bilateral agreements.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART I Section 5.4.2 ToR 4 Development and implementation of Regional Workplans; links to proposed tables of the RWP are embedded in the text. RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART III Section 11 on the ISSG on development of draft Regional Work Plan 2020-Answers to the questionnaire on the priorities for all NA NS&EA and Baltic ISSG	NO	NO
RWP	NANSEA BALTIC_ 2020_R 08	2020	R08	Draft RWP-RCG recommends PGECON to review NWP template tables 3a, 3b, 3c (socioeconomic data collection) and 5b	PGECON to review NWP template tables 3a, 3b, 3c (socioeconomic data collection) and 5b (quality) for feedback on structure and content as well as required changes to support the documentation of regional coordination of socioeconomic data collection towards a RWP.	PGECON	end of 2020	The ISSG RWP reviewed each table of the NWP template and identified how the regional working elements/agreements fit into the structure. If there was information that couldn't be captured in the current format, it was considered whether it needed to be linked to other or additional tables. The agile document with the tables and a textbox word document is in Google Doc for review and adjustment. PGECON is invited to review the tables relevant to socioeconomic data collection (NWP template tables 3a, 3b, 3c (socioeconomic data collection) and 5b (quality)) for feedback on structure and	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART I Section 5.4.2 ToR 4 Development and implementation of Regional Workplans; links to proposed tables of the RWP are embedded in the text. RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART III Section 11 on the ISSG on development of draft	NO	NO

ISSG/SG	ID	Year	R or D	Short Description	Action to be taken	Responsible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Where to find more details	Decision by NC?	Table in WP
				(quality) for feedback				content as well as required changes to document regional coordination of socioeconomic data collection towards a RWP.	Regional Work Plan 2020-Answers to the questionnaire on the priorities for all NA NS&EA and Baltic ISSG		
Small pelagics in Baltic	NANSEA BALTIC_2020_D07	2020	D07	All MS in the Baltic area should take part of this ISSG	All RCG Baltic MS should take part of the ISSG work as all MS are exploiting the small pelagic fishery in the area.	NC's (Baltic region)	30/09/2020	The aim is to come up with the regional sampling plan for small pelagic fishery in Baltic sea. To agree on common sampling protocol(s), proper sampling sizes, sampling intensities etc that will fulfill the end-user needs.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART III Section 7 ISSG Case study of fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic	YES	NO
Stomach sampling	NANSEA BALTIC_2020_R09	2020	R09	Ensure administrative/technical and financial support for regionally coordinated stomach sampling	COM to start supporting regionally coordinated stomach samplings	EC	as soon as possible	Fundamental changes in natural versus fishing mortality are occurring in European waters, given e.g. reductions in fishing mortality, recovery of fish and non-fish populations, and complex environmental effects of global warming on our coastal-marine ecosystems. Stomach data presently used are often 20 years old (e.g. from the 1990s in the North Sea) or older and the lack of contemporary information on 'who eats who' and how the food webs have changed over time makes it increasingly difficult to provide adequate scientific advice. To ultimately improve the quality of natural mortality estimates and thus the ICES advice, regionally coordinated stomach samplings are urgently needed.	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART I Section 5.4.10 Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Regionally coordinated stomach sampling'.	NO	NO
	NANSEA BALTIC_2020_D08	2020	D08	ISSG proposed to work during season 2020-2021	The list of RCG ISSGs suggested by RCG NA NS&EA and RCG Baltic to be confirmed to take place during season 2020-2021.	NC's (NA NS&EA and Baltic region)	30/09/2020	During the second year of the new 3-year term of RCG NA NS&EA and of RCG Baltic the work under each ToR has been carried out by designated inter sessional subgroups (ISSG). The work done in ISSG have proved to be very productive and beneficial for the regional coordination. Work in ISSG needs experts and manpower (approximately 1 week of work / ISSG and person). The ISSG work force the MS to switch from working with	RCG NA NS&EA RCG Baltic 2020 Report PART I Section 5.5.1.	YES	7A

ISSG/S G	ID	Year	R or D	Short Description	Action to be taken	Respon- sible for the action	Deadline	Background for decision or recommendation	Where to find more details	Decisi- on by NC?	Tabl e in WP
								a national focus to work with a more regional focus which is in line with idea of EU-MAP.			

Detailed overview voting on proposed decisions

No	Decision	Countries	YES	NO
D01	Do NC's approve the usage of RDB catch and effort overviews for selected ICES groups (i.e. those WGs who already have access to aggregated RDB data, approved by the SCRDB, Annex 3) and allow defined exemptions from RDBES data policy?	14	14	0
D02	Do NC's agree to use proposed metier list and target species assemblage group list?	14	14	0
D03	Do NC's approve changes to the RDB/RDBES Data Policy?	14	14	0
D04	Do NC's approve the "Conditions for detailed RDBES data use" document and the procedure behind it?	14	14	0
D05a	Do NC's agree to renew multi-lateral agreement on ASH survey?	5	5	0
D05b	Do NC's agree to renew multi-lateral agreement on WHB (whiting) survey?	5	5	0
D06	Do NC's approve that a draft RWP will be submitted to STECF in October 2020 for a non binding test run and to endorse the elements that were selected for the test run?	14	14	0
D07	Will the MS involved take part in the work and workshop of ISSG "case study small pelagic in the Baltic"?	8	8	0
D08	Do NC's agree on the list of ISSG for season 2020/2021? Can they ensure that experts and manpower is assigned to ISSG work?	14	14	0

RCG MED&BS

Agreement on sharing detailed information on data transmission issues	
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 1	<p>RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends sharing of detailed information on data transmission issues on MS level for the purpose of RCG MED&BS Subgroup on data transmission issues and data requirements.</p> <p>Detailed information on DTI per MS will be treated as confidential ie. not to be distributed to third parties or included in RCG MED&BS reports which are publicly available.</p>
Justification	<p>Agreement to share detailed information on DTI per MS is needed to avoid asking additional permission each year from MS to access and use the information on DTI for the purpose of the RCG MED&BS Subgroup on data transmission issues and data requirements and End-users Meeting.</p> <p>The RCG MED&BS shall use detailed information on DTI for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaborate with end-users to identify common and recurrent issues and prioritize actions to improve the quality of transmitted data and avoid data transmission failures. - Propose ways to improve the communication and feedback on DTI. - Provide feedback and assessment of DTI on a regional level before STECF evaluation of Annual Reports and DTI.
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of RCG MED&BS Subgroup on data transmission issues and data requirements to request DG MARE on DTI per MS from the DTMT. • RCG MED&BS Subgroup on data transmission issues and data requirements shall analyze the DTI and provide the results to DG MARE before the STECF EWG on the evaluation of Annual Reports and DTI. • Chair of RCG MED&BS Subgroup on data transmission issues shall provide relevant information to MS and main end-users during the RCG MED&BS End-users Meeting.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of RCG MED&BS Subgroup on data transmission issues and data requirements • MS • DG MARE
Time frame (Deadline)	Yearly, starting from 2021.
Comments	-NONE-
Establishment of RCG MED&BS data requirements registry	

RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 2	<p>RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends the establishment of a data requirements registry for MED&BS MS.</p> <p>The registry shall be updated every year and shall contain the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data call / Requirement - End-user (DG MARE, GFCM, ICES, ICCAT (optional) national level, Other projects) - Deadline - Legal basis (optional) - Country - Man/days (optional) <p>The registry should be completed at RCG level for common data requirements and at MS level for data requirements on national level. The registry for MED&BS shall be provided to DG MARE if requested.</p>
Justification	<p>Currently, there is no complete list of data requirements either on EU or regional level. Data requirements registry is needed to avoid overlapping data-calls and deadlines for submission as much as possible taking into account data availability at MS and regional level and to try to avoid duplication of reporting of the same type of data.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chair of RCG MED&BS Subgroup on data transmission issues and data requirements shall request information on data requirements from DG MARE (for common data calls) and MS (for information on the national level) before each RCG MED&BS End-user meeting. • RCG MED&BS Subgroup on data transmission issues and data requirements shall analyze the information and communicate relevant information to MS and main end-users during the RCG MED&BS End-users Meeting.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<p>Chair of RCG MED&BS Subgroup on data transmission issues and data requirements / MS / DG MARE</p>
Time frame (Deadline)	<p>MS should provide information for 2020 at the beginning of 2021.</p>
Comments	<p>-NONE-</p>

Establishment of dedicated STECF EWG for data quality on the Mediterranean and Black Sea data call	
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 3	RCG MED & BS 2020 recommends the establishment of a dedicated STECF EWG regarding data quality on the Mediterranean and Black Sea data call, which should convene before the STECF EWG on stock assessment.
Justification	<p>Currently, the data quality checks done by JRC and by EWG on stock assessments only cover stocks to be assessed and not the whole set of data reported in the Mediterranean and Black Sea data call. During the EWG on stock assessment there is not enough time for interactions with the relevant MSs for resolving the detected issues, which results in high number of data transmission issues reported in the DTMT for the Mediterranean and Black Sea MS.</p> <p>Therefore, a dedicated EWG is needed to check the data quality of submitted data, validate data and interact with the relevant MS, as there is not enough time for this task during the EWG on stock assessment.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RCG MED&BS chairs to communicate with DG MARE on possibilities to establish dedicated EWG.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG MED&BS chairs, DG MARE
Time frame (Deadline)	End of 2020 for follow-up actions.
Comments	

Timeliness of the availability of DCRF templates on the GFCM DCRF online platform	
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 4	RCG MED & BS 2020 recommends to GFCM that the DCRF templates for reporting on the DCRF online platform are made available to MS earlier if possible.
Justification	<p>Each year the GFCM adapts the templates on the DCRF online platform according to the information transmitted to GFCM by the CPCs on the selection of fleet segments and stocks.</p> <p>RCG MED & BS recommends that all the DCRF templates for the reference year should be made available on the DCRF platform soon after the selection of fleet segments and stocks. This would facilitate the preparation of datasets and the timely delivery according to DCRF calendar submission.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	RCG MED&BS chairs to communicate with DG MARE.
Responsible persons for	RCG MED&BS chairs, DG MARE

follow-up actions	
Time frame (Deadline)	End of 2020 for follow-up actions.
Comments	-NONE-

Notification procedure from DTMT	
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 5	RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends the development of a notification procedure from the data transmission monitoring tool.
Justification	RCG MED&BS 2020 requests for the possibility of establishment of a procedure for notifications to the relevant MS when a new data transmission issue is uploaded in the DTMT. This will ensure the prompt reaction of the MS to provide justification or comment to the end-user on time. - The MS should be allowed to include/delete the email addresses of the people that will receive the notification.
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DTMT host should examine the possibility of establishment of such a channel for communication. • MS should ensure the administrative capacity for answering ASAP to the issues raised.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	DTMT host, DG MARE, MS
Time frame (Deadline)	2021
Comments	
Recreational fisheries	
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 6	RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends continuation of the workshop for RF.
Justification	MS should collect data on marine RF regularly, as official statistics are missing in most Med&BS countries. Moreover, there is a need to finalize the pilot studies, assess the outcomes and use them to generate plans for regular data collection as well as to identify survey methods and data to be collected and adapted to the specific situation of each MS, based on end user's needs. Finally, a common framework for sampling methodology is needed to assure that data collected is comparable among MS. Regional coordination for data collection is needed to ensure that data provided are at the required spatial resolution, temporal coverage and quality are provided to support scientific advice and management. On this basis, a workshop on RF for the Mediterranean basin is necessary, where all countries will participate, to finalize a list of species to be sampled, methodologies and type of data to be collected.

Follow-up actions needed	Workshop for RF with TORs: List of species; methodologies; type of data to be collected. A common list of species for all countries. If RCG chooses other species, request confirmation of the country. Propose review and update of the list periodically.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MSs, RCG chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	beginning of 2021 (If a physical meeting is not possible, a virtual meeting should be organized).
Comments	This recommendation is recalled from 2019. Due to the restrictions connected with travelling in 2020, the second workshop for RF was postponed to the beginning of 2021

Speeding up the establishment of a scientific network for sampling optimization.	
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 7	RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends speeding up the establishment of a scientific network for sampling optimization.
Justification	The 2018 RCG Med&BS agreed on the need to set up a network of experts to be trained and use the tool developed under MARE/2016/22 STREAM project on sampling stratification and optimization of biological data. It was further agreed that MS should nominate experts to be part of the network. However, the scientific network for sampling optimization has not been established so far, since most of the MS have not nominated experts to be part of the network.
Follow-up actions needed	Med&BS NCs should nominate national experts for participating in the network on sampling optimization; the nominations should be communicated to the current moderator of the scientific network for sampling optimization (Ms Isabella Bitetto) and RCG Med&BS chairs.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG Med&BS NCs, RCG Med&BS chairs, moderators of the scientific network for sampling optimization.
Time frame (Deadline)	31 October 2020
Comments	This recommendation is recalled from 2019.

Training workshop on the use of the commercial sampling optimization tools developed under STREAM project.	
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 8	RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends the organization of a training workshop on the use of the sampling optimization tools developed under MARE/2016/22 STREAM project.
Justification	Though training workshops have been organized under STREAM project on the use of the tools developed on sampling optimization, the RCG Med&BS 2020 identifies further training needs on the use of the developed tools, following feedback with the national experts involved in sampling optimization.
Follow-up actions needed	A training workshop should be organized on the use of the sampling optimization tools developed under STREAM project, addressing the needs of the national experts participating in the network for sampling optimization.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Moderators of the scientific network for sampling optimization, RCG chairs, MSs.
Time frame (Deadline)	2021 or ASAP when the COVID-19 restrictions allow a physical meeting*.
Comments	This recommendation is recalled from 2019.

Data quality	
	Application the data quality checks developed under the WP6 of the STREAM project
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 9	RCG Med&BS 2020 recommends applying the data quality checks developed under the WP6 of the STREAM project before submitting data to the relevant Data Calls
Justification	<p>Procedures for improving and enhancing quality checks to detect and flag potential outliers and sources of bias in biological data can streamline the process of data preparation and submission to respond to the different data calls.</p> <p>WP6 of the STREAM project developed a set of quality checks to detect errors in both raw data (a priori quality checks) and in the raised data required by the end-users (a posteriori quality checks), using R-scripts. The a priori data quality checks aim at detecting errors directly on sampling data in the Regional Coordination Group for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (RCG Med&BS) formats for commercial sampling (CS format) concerning the measurements of biological variables (length, weight, maturity, sex, age) and landings. The a posteriori data quality checks are applied to the EU Mediterranean and Black Sea Data Call formats and provide information on the spatial coverage among the strata (i.e. quarter, metier) and</p>

	on the assessment of the completeness of biological information. It also allows detecting records with discrepancies between the product of the number of raised individuals and individual weight at age in the landings/discards and the total landings/discards by metier, quarter, species
Follow-up actions needed	To support MSs experts to familiarize with the R tools developed to perform data quality checks, the network on the sampling strategy optimization will also use those scripts during their activity. This will also streamline the training workshop in view of the network. A calendar for the implementation of the quality checks was also provided by the STREAM project (see STREAM Final Report).
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG Med& BS chairs, RCG Med&BS NCs
Time frame (Deadline)	2021 or ASAP when the COVID-19 restrictions allow a physical meeting*.
Comments	This recommendation is recalled from 2019. The deadline was extended with 1 year.

***It should be investigated if is it possible to combine the 2 WS in one week.**

Age reading workshop – Black Sea	
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 10	RCG MED&BS 2019 recommends the organization of an Age Reading Workshop on turbot (<i>Scophthalmus maximus</i>) and piked dogfish (<i>Squalus acanthias</i>).
Justification	Under the work of MARE/2016/22 STREAM project (WP7), institutes involved in Data Collection in the Black Sea reported lack of age standardization on turbot and piked dogfish. Based on this finding, STREAM has proposed the organization of age reading workshops on turbot and piked dogfish. RCG Med&BS 2019 and RCG Med&BS 2020 reviewed this proposal and agreed on the need to organise age reading workshops on turbot and piked dogfish.
Follow-up actions needed	Organization of an age reading workshop on turbot and piked dogfish.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG Med&BS chairs, NCs.
Time frame (Deadline)	2021.
Comments	This recommendation is recalled from 2019.

Training workshop on PETS identification	
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 11	RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends the organization of a Training workshop on PETS identification for all categories of PETS (marine mammals, sea birds, sharks and rays, reptiles).

Justification	<p>Under the work of MARE/2016/22 STREAM project (WP7), training needs on PETS identification have been reported for all categories of PETS (marine mammals, sea birds, sharks and rays, reptiles). Institutes with expertise in PETS identification have also been reported (available in STREAM Deliverable.7.1).</p> <p>STREAM has proposed RCG Med&BS to consider two training workshops on PETS identification for the period 2020-2021, one dealing with the identification of sharks and rays, and the other with the identification of marine mammals, sea birds and reptiles.</p> <p>RCG Med&BS 2019 reviewed this proposal and agreed to organize one training workshop on PETS identification, which will cover all categories of PETS (marine mammals, sea birds, sharks and rays, reptiles).</p>
Follow-up actions needed	A training workshop on PETS identification should be organized covering all categories of PETS (marine mammals, sea birds, sharks and rays, reptiles).
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCG Med&BS chairs, NCs.
Time frame (Deadline)	2021.
Comments	This recommendation is recalled from 2019.

Continuation of Setting up of a Regional Database (RDB) for the RCG MED & BS	
RCG MED & BS 2020 Recommendation 12	RCG MED&BS 2020 recommends continuation of the setting up of a Regional Database.
Justification	RCG MED&BS 2020 considers the development of a regional database as an urgent priority to allow for the efficient use of the data received from the official RCG data calls and avoid duplication of work.
Follow-up actions needed	Confirmation of the members of the Steering committee, if needed, and the second meeting of the RDB SC.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	MSs, RCG chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	End of October/beginning of November 2020
Comments	

RCG LDF

Recommendation 2020-1 : Updating national data to the RDB	
RCG-LDF Recommendation 2020	RCG LDF recommends that MS continue to update historical data as well as most recent data prior to the 2021 RCG LDF data call.
Follow-up actions needed	MS to update their data and promote set up of routine procedures to provide data to the RDB.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	NCs of all RCG LDF MS.
Time frame (Deadline)	Prior to the RCG LDF 2021 data call.

Recommendation 2020-2 : Data collection in SPRFMO region beyond 2024	
RCG-LDF Recommendation 2020	RCG LDF to set-up intersessional subgroup to prepare for data collection in the SPRFMO area beyond 2024. This subgroup shall work on a solid solution to cater for data collection under the given SPRFMO observer requirements as well as taking DCF requirements into account. The subgroup shall explore different scenarios such as accreditation for EU observers, self-sampling, remote monitoring etc. First results are presented at the 2021 RCG LDF.
Follow-up actions needed	Setup of the subgroup, organize (virtual) meeting.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Chair of RCG LDF and MS involved in the SPRFMO pelagic fisheries.
Time frame (Deadline)	Prior to the RCG LDF 2021 meeting.
Recommendation 2020-2 : Data collection in SPRFMO region beyond 2024	

RCG LP

Recommendation 2020 n°1 RCG LP: Use RDBES as database	
RCG LP 2020 recommendation	Use the database hosted by ICES (RDBES) as a common regional database for RCG-LP
Justification	RCG LP has approved by consensus that a common database will be used
Follow-up actions needed	NC need to approve the use of RDBES
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	NCs
Time frame (deadline)	4Q 2020

Recommendation 2020 n°2 RCG LP: Appoint core group members	
RCG LP 2020 recommendation	Appoint core group members
Justification	RCG LP has approved by consensus that a common database will be used and has selected RDBES. If this recommendation is accepted and validated during the next Decision meeting in September 2020, the RCG LP will be proposing one person of each Subgroup to be a part of the RDBES Core group, to represent each specificity of LP fisheries.
Follow-up actions needed	RCG-LP propose one person of each Subgroup
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	This group will be a bridge between RFMOs and ICES (developers of the database)
Time frame (deadline)	RCG-LP, NC

PGECON

Rules of procedure for the RCG ECON	
PGECON 2020 Recommendation 1	PGECON 2020 recommends the follow-up of the draft text of Rules of Procedure as attached to this report which was discussed during the plenary. It was also agreed that all MS may need more time to commit with the text produced, acknowledging at the same time that further delays on this issue could jeopardize the functioning and the work carried out in the RCG ECON.
Justification	Article 9(5) of EU Regulation 2017/1004 of the EP and of the Council, on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management, and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) 199/2008 (recast).
Follow-up actions needed	Draft text attached to this draft report to be provided to the LM. After providing to LM, the draft text to be circulated to NC with a deadline to send additional comments (10 November 2020). This should lead to the final adoption by a written procedure of the ROPs for RCG ECON by the end of 2020.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Chair of PGECON 2020 to provide the final draft to LM. Chair of PGECON 2020 to circulate the draft by RoPs to all NC. NC to review the draft, send comments if necessary, and finally adopt RoPs by the end of 2020.
Time frame (Deadline)	2020
Comments	After voting "in favour" by all NCs for changing of status of PGECON from subgroup to the COM Expert Working group to an RCG ECON the draft Rules of Procedure for RCG ECON were discussed between the MS for comments and a final draft version of RoPs was produced by PGECON 2020. However, since for some points of RoPs, it was difficult to get the final version the written procedure should be conducted.

Adaptation of Rules of Procedure by other RCGs	
PGECON 2020 Recommendation 2	PGECON 2020 recommends adaptation of Rules of procedures of all Regional Coordination Groups.

Justification	The draft RoPs for RCG ECON were elaborated during PGECON 2020 meeting and included in the report as Annex III. According to the draft, RoPs for RCG ECON close cooperation between RCG ECON and other RCGs is needed in the drafting process of Regional Work Plans and the future workflow.
Follow-up actions needed	RCGs to consider the possibility of adaptation of their RoPs in accordance with the finally adopted RoPs of RCG ECON during the next annual meetings.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCGs chairs
Time frame (Deadline)	2021/2
Comments	

Revision of EU Map delegated tables	
PGECON 2020 Recommendation 3	PGECON recommends accepting the revisions and comments in tables 6, 7, 8, 10 and 11 of the EU MAP delegated tables as attached to this report.
Justification	<p>Clarify definitions of variables <i>Number of fishing operations; Number of nets/Length, Numbers of pots, traps</i> in Table 6 - Fishing activity variables.</p> <p>Clarify note (d) in Table 6.</p> <p>Delete the variable group and variables of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Production value per species</i> from Table 7 - Fleet economic variables; • Review Length classes (<i>0 - < 6/8/10 m; 6/8/10 - < 12 m</i>) in Table 8 - Fleet segmentation; <p>Ask on voluntary basis <i>Employment by education level</i> in Table 10 - Social variables for the fishing and aquaculture sectors.</p> <p>Review nomenclature of the variable groups <i>Personnel costs</i> and <i>Debts</i> in Table 11 - Economic variables for the aquaculture sector.</p> <p>Add variables <i>Total assets</i> in the new variable group <i>Financial position</i> of table 11.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	EC/DG MARE to revise tables 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 of the EU MAP delegated tables as attached to this report in Annex IV.

Responsible persons for follow-up actions	EC/DG MARE
Time frame (Deadline)	2020
Comments	

Revision of EU Map delegated tables and delegated Annex - data on the fish processing sector	
PGECON 2020 Recommendation 4	<p>PGECON recommends to revise the text of Draft Commission Delegated Decision (new EU MAP), Chapter II paragraph 7 and to include under that paragraph the reference to a revised current binding Table 11 COM 2016/1251) in order to allow MSs to collect the data for the fish processing sector on an optional basis, as fish processing data collection is established by the currently binding Regulation (EC) 2017/1004.</p> <p>Hence, PGECON recommends to include in the requirements for the optional provision of data on raw materials under the proposed Table (13) of the Commission Delegated Decision (Economic and social variables for the processing industry sector):</p> <p>Volume and value by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Species • Production environment (Capture based fishery and aquaculture sector) • Country of Origin (Domestic, other EU or non-EU) • Type of processed material (fresh, frozen and semi-processed materials) – where possible.
Justification	<p>In order to fulfill the objectives of the CFP, the Farm to Fork Strategy and the ongoing discussion on Methods for defining sustainable fisheries and aquaculture (next STECF EWG 20-05), PGECON has a serious concern that the EUROSTAT's Structural Business Statistics (SBS) data will not be appropriate for this task due to the following reasons:</p> <p>Eurostat data are collected for all the economic activities (but the primary sectors), and as such they are not detailed enough to capture the specificities of the fish processing sector as required for policy and analysis purposes. In particular:</p> <p>Eurostat data do not cover, in some countries, small enterprises (e.g. below 10 or 20 employees). For example, Eurostat data for Greece and Croatia and Ireland do not cover the overall population, contrary to the DCF that covers all the population. In Greece, enterprises below 10 employees represent around 70% of the overall population, in the case of Ireland 50%.</p>

	<p>Eurostat data are not published for all the size classes for confidentiality issues. For each reference year two size classes are obscured for all the variables: one for primary confidentiality, another one for secondary confidentiality (e.g. for Italy size class >250 for primary confidentiality, 50-249 in 2016 and 20-49 in 2017 for secondary confidentiality).</p> <p>Eurostat data are not collected at more geographical disaggregated levels (e.g. NUTS2) and/or segment level (e.g. canning/frozen), as it is planned in the data collection system of some MSs. For example, the Italian Work Plan foresees fish processing data collection at NUTS2 level while the Danish data provided under DCF divide the industry into species group segments for a more detailed understanding of industry dependence of different species.</p> <p>Eurostat data do not cover some relevant economic variables, e.g. Subsidies, important for IA analysis of the CFP (EMFF efficiency) as well as depreciation and value of assets, hence not allowing the estimation of important indicators as net profits, net value added, return on investments (RoI), etc.</p> <p>Eurostat data do not cover the social aspects, relevant for the profiling of the overall fisheries sector (fleet, processing and aquaculture).</p> <p>Eurostat data do not cover the raw material used by the fish processing companies, which is a key to understand the linkages with the wild-capture fisheries, aquaculture and external trade.</p> <p>PGECON has also serious concerns about the possibility to leave room for “additional” to Eurostat data collection. Combining different data sources (e.g. Eurostat for economic and DCF for social) would mean combining datasets with different coverage of population, and therefore the datasets will not be comparable. Overcoming this problem is hindered by the fact that Eurostat and DCF data collections are carried out, in many MSs, by different bodies.</p>
<p>Follow-up actions needed</p>	<p>EC/DG MARE to replace the text of the delegated decision annex, article 7. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector, CHAPTER II with the following text: <u><i>Socio-economic data on the fish processing industry may be collected on an optional basis, when data collected under the European business statistics regulation as published by Eurostat are not at the correct resolution or are not of sufficient quality or coverage for the intended scientific use. In the latter case, appropriate alternative data collections should be used.</i></u></p> <p><u><i>The optional data collection should cover variables indicated in former Table 11 (new 13).</i></u></p> <p><u><i>Economic data may be collected on an annual basis and social every three years, on the preceding year, counting from 2018.</i></u></p> <p>EC/DG MARE to include in the revised EU MAP delegated Tables the revised Table 11 (now table 13), presented below as Annex V, including the list of economic and social variables for the fish processing sector as attached to this report.</p>

	<p>MSs to provide appropriate justification in their Work Plan for extensive or complementary to Eurostat data collection.</p> <p>PGECON to revise the Guidance document for better definition of socio-economic variables for fish processing.</p> <p>PGECON to discuss on age categories for social variables during the planned workshop.</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	EC/DG MARE, MS
Time frame (Deadline)	2020-21
Comments	

Revision of the RCG ECON guidance on definition and methodologies for the fleet	
PGECON 2020 Recommendation 5	PGECON 2020 recommends revising the PGECON document on definition and methodologies for the EUMAP variables to include the results of the 2019 Capital WS and the discussion during the plenary PGECON meeting.
Justification	<p>WS Capital (Salerno, 2019) highlighted that standardized methodology for capital value and depreciation costs are important to ensure consistency. However, present version of the guidance document is misleading in the methodology section because it allows subjective estimations not consistent with the definition.</p> <p>According to European System of National Accounts and to international standards, the PIM method is the more appropriate methodology. PGECON concludes that PIM approach should be the preferable method, but a certain degree of flexibility is needed to allow a better compliance of MS to EUMAP requirements.</p> <p>PGECON concluded that the guidance document should be amended to reflect this conclusion.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>Text in the guidance document to be changed as follows:</p> <p>Consumption of fixed capital:</p> <p><i>The methodological framework for the estimation of consumption of fixed capital should be coherent with the one applied for the estimation on the value of physical capital.</i></p> <p>1. <i>Application of the perpetual inventory method (PIM, cross reference: https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=2055). The key parameters to be considered in order to estimate the consumption of fixed capital within the PIM methodological framework are: the asset service life (that determine the economic depreciation rates), the retirement distribution and the depreciation function. The depreciation functions that can be</i></p>

	<p><i>applied in a PIM are: arithmetic (straight-line method) or geometric (degressive method).</i></p> <p>2. <i>Alternative methods based on company surveys. These alternative methods may be used if the derived estimates reflect the actual definition of net capital stock (depreciated replacement value of the vessel including on-board equipment with a useful lifetime of more than one year).</i></p> <p><i>In case the PIM is not used, MS should explain and justify the application of alternative methods in the WP and in the AR.</i></p> <p>Value of physical capital:</p> <p>1. <i>Application of the perpetual inventory method (PIM, cross reference: https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=2055)</i></p> <p>2. <i>Alternative methods based on company surveys. These alternative methods may be used if the derived estimates reflect the actual definition of net capital stock (depreciated replacement value of the vessel including on-board equipment with a useful lifetime of more than one year).</i></p> <p><i>In case the PIM is not used, MS should explain and justify the application of alternative methods in the WP and in the AR.</i></p> <p>The updated guidance document to be published on the DCF Web page.</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Chairs of RCG ECON DG MARE
Time frame (Deadline)	By the end of 2020
Comments	

Implementation of the <i>guidelines for the valuation of the fishing rights</i>	
PGECON 2020 Recommendation 6	<p>PGECON recommends accepting the conclusions from the WS on capital value regarding the implementation of the <i>guidelines for the valuation of the fishing rights</i>.</p> <p>PGECON recommends a transition period in which MS explore the possibilities to apply the <i>guidelines</i> in their situation. During this transition period the obligation to gather information on the value of intangible assets should only include the transferable fishing rights.</p> <p>PGECON also recommends that in the meantime possibilities are sought to facilitate the sharing of experiences with the application of the guidelines in the various MS and the further development of the methodology.</p>

Justification	<p>Although the usefulness of the value of intangible assets in economic analysis, the evaluation of not transferable fishing rights is a data intensive exercise that is not easily implemented.</p> <p>In order to take this issue forward, the PGECON concluded that optimally the value of intangibles should include the value of all (transferable and not transferable) fishing rights, but that in the current situation this is not possible as valuation of all right need additional data collection and methodological development to be carried out.</p>
Follow-up actions needed	<p>MS should use the guidelines in the coming period, adapt them to the specific fisheries (in terms of the basic assumptions to be used) and provide estimation of fishing rights.</p> <p>Because some methods (like the hedonic model for the evaluation of the intangibles) require additional data collection, the MS WP should be adapted to include additional data collection for the implementation of the methods proposed by the guidelines.</p> <p>The <i>guidelines for the valuation of the fishing rights</i> to be included in the guidance document on definition and methodologies for the fleet and published on the DCF Web page.</p>
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	<p>Chairs of RCG ECON</p> <p>DG MARE</p> <p>MSs</p>
Time frame (Deadline)	2021-22
Comments	

Regional coordination in the drafting of RWP	
PGECON 2020 Recommendation 7	PGECON 2020 recommends establishment of coordination process between all RCGs in regards to the drafting of Regional Work Plan (RWP).
Justification	During PGECON 2020, the drafting of the Regional Work Plan process was presented as the main tool for achieving the ultimate goal was pointed out the consultations and communication process with all involved bodies and stakeholders.
Follow-up actions needed	All stakeholders and relevant bodies, as well as all relevant MSs, should interact between them to create good coordination and ensure the unobstructed drafting of RWP.

Responsible persons for follow-up actions	RCGs, MSs, DG MARE
Time frame (Deadline)	2020/2021
Comments	

RCG ECON workshop on social variables	
PGECON 2020 Recommendation 8	PGECON recommends RCG ECON workshop on social variables, which should include, where possible, the presence of experts with different areas of scientific expertise (specifically social scientists) in order to investigate the current and future social data collection, system of social indicators and their use for assessment in different economic sectors.
Justification	<p>A refinement of existing variables with reference to breakdown and definition (Employment status, Education level, Enterprise number; unpaid labour) and addition of new ones (Payment structure; retirement age and pensions; new economic and social indices).</p> <p>The EU MAP Guidelines, definition and methodologies on social variables should be separated by sectors (fishing fleet, aquaculture and processing) in order to take into account the specificities of social variables by sectors (fisheries, aquaculture and processing).</p>
Follow-up actions needed	A workshop on social data collection should be established.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Chairs of RCG ECON 2020
Time frame (Deadline)	2021
Comments	

Conducting of postponed workshops	
PGECON 2020 Recommendation 9	PGECON 2020 recommends all postponed workshops to be held in 2021 with the possible timeframe before the annual RCG ECON meeting.

Justification	Due to the situation with COVID-19 in 2020, a number of WSs were postponed. However, PGECON 2020 stressed the importance of work that should be done and the need for conducting of postponed WSs.
Follow-up actions needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop on the fisheries-based approach of fleet segmentation; • Workshop on aquaculture issues; • Quality Assurance Framework Subgroup Workshop.
Responsible persons for follow-up actions	Chairs of RCG ECON
Time frame (Deadline)	2020 and 2021
Comments	

Diadromous subgroup

No recommendations in 2020.

Annex 2 PGECON 2020 Summary

General information PGECON meeting 2020:

The first virtual meeting was held from 5th October to 7th October 2020. Due to the proposal for changing of status of PGECON from subgroup to the COM Expert Working group to an Pan Regional Coordination Group all NCs were invited to the first day of the meeting in order to express their concerns (if any) and take part in the voting procedure. After the presentation of the state of play document regarding the PGECON status was provided an opportunity to all MS to express their comments and concerns. A number of issues were discussed, as well as provided answers and justification. Due to the missing of some NCs DG MARE provide to the group explanation on the possibilities for the voting procedure with present NCs and participant with a mandate for voting or continuation with a written procedure. Another proposal was made in order to go ahead – to spend effort on urgent communication to missing NCs and getting their vote by e-mail or during the round table if they could join the meeting. This proposal turned out a very pragmatic approach for the transformation of PGECON to RCG and on a later stage, the voting procedure was conducted. After voting and fundamental and very significant discussion regarding concerns of landlocked countries (LLC) finally was agreed that the status of PGECON will be changed to RCG and in the RoPs of the RCG will be mentioned the exact responsibilities of LLC as participants in the group. Also, a doodle pool was established in order to be chosen the name of the RCG among all participants. The majority of the participants decided the name of the RCG to be “RCG ECON”.

The first day of the meeting continued with a presentation by DG MARE on the Identification of data needs in 2020/2021 and the use of data (TOR 2). Social and economic data play a fundamental role in supporting policy analysis in the CFP in particular in relation to IA for the evaluation of structural policies. For the end users prospective, collection of comparable, scientific, high quality and solid data are of paramount importance, and socio-economic data collection can be considered a well-established system, which made a lot of progress since the first DCR. However, there is still some room for improvement. With reference to economic data for the fishing fleet, DG MARE emphasized the need for further simplification (in terms of concepts and nomenclature) and the importance to keep stability in time series in order to facilitate trend analyses and the evaluation of structural policies. In this perspective, DG MARE also stressed the need to fine-tune some economic variables (e.g. capital value, intangible assets, production value per species).

For the social data, DG MARE expressed the intention to made compulsory data at the level of fleet category and to ask for data at fleet segment on a voluntary basis. Another aspect to be further explored in future data call for social variables refer to the community profiling which should be also differentiated by fleet, aquaculture, and processing taking in due account of characteristics and peculiarities of data collection for these three sectors.

For Processing data, DG MARE expressed the necessity to overcome inefficiencies concerning overlaps with EUROSTAT Structural Business Statistics and inconsistencies among data collections. DG MARE also stressed the usefulness of the collection of data on raw material although it revealed to be very challenging.

As regards Geographical Indicators Jordi Guillen, from the JRC, explained that in the 2020 data call, two extra fields were added: GEAR and FISHERY. These two new fields have a similar function than the Geographical Indicator field, in the sense that they can be used on a voluntary basis by the MS to differentiate the data submitted for their fleets.

The second day started with the presentation of the main outcomes of the Capital evaluation workshop (TOR 5). 2019 WS-Capital considered that Perpetual Inventory Method (PIM) is still not applied by several MS and in some cases PIM is used to estimate the Gross Capital Stock but fiscal depreciation rates and functions are then applied to derive the Net Capital, thus resulting in a “mixed” approach. This review also highlighted

that in most cases the PIM method is not used because the method is still not clear. Participants considered that the original study and the subsequent WS are not always consistent in the use of economic concepts and definitions. WS-Capital reformulated the entire conceptual framework in a more consistent structure and provided guidelines with a step-by-step approach. PGECON agreed that according to the European System of National Accounts and to international standards, the PIM method is the more appropriate methodology. However, several MS considered that the application of the PIM method is not always feasible and PIM assumptions require extra surveys. PGECON concluded that the PIM approach should be the preferable method, but a certain degree of flexibility is needed to allow better compliance of MS to EUMAP requirements. PGECON suggested revising the PGECON document on definition and methodologies for the EUMAP variables to include the results of the 2019 Capital WS and the discussion during the plenary PGECON meeting.

This was followed by a Round table on effects on DC of COVID 19 (TOR 4), where participants presented the effects of the pandemic crisis on national data collection. For most MSs no effects are expected in terms of data gaps and delay as economic and social data for the fishery, aquaculture and processing refer to the prior one calendar year or to two previous years. The main consequence on DC is that some surveys were delayed until after the easing of the lockdown in the summer period. Some countries added a special section on COVID 19 impact on fishing activity to the questionnaire survey.

The afternoon session of the second day was focused on the EU MAP Revision (TOR 3). PGECON provided new consolidated EU MAP tables 6,7,8, 10,11 including only common and agreed comments, which are relevant for PGECON. Review of NWP templates tables 2a. 3a. 3b. 3c. 5b were also presented which would provide a better link between EU-MAP requirements, National Work Plans (NWP), Annual Reports (AR), and Data Transmission (DT). The amendments concerned new columns/variables (Geo-Indicator, Activity indicator, Segment or Cluster name, Planned coverage: percentage, Reference year) in tables 2A, 3A_1 and 3A_2, and deleting table 5b on quality assurance.

Regarding data collection for the processing industry PGECON observed that it was established to give a more comprehensive picture of the importance of the fisheries and aquaculture sectors within the EU both nationally and regionally, especially focusing on employment and the value generated from this sector. This is done to support the goals of the CFP and foster sustainable development in regional/coastal areas. The data collection under the EMFF has been voluntary; however, if it has been a part of the individual MS national work program it has also been eligible for EMFF funding. It seems that this will no longer be the case under the new EMFAF, where this data collection is suggested to be replaced with a generalized approach using Eurostat data (as from the current draft text of art.7 of the delegated Annex). For MS that have used the opportunity to elaborate more extensive data collection than the existing (Eurostat) ones for the processing industry, this is expected to have significant consequences. Thus, PGECON suggested that the data collection for the processing industry remains optional and eligible for EMFAF funding if implemented in the MS national program.

PGECON also recommended a workshop on social variables, which should include, where possible, the presence of experts with different areas of scientific expertise (specifically social scientists) in order to investigate the current and future social data collection, a system of social indicators, and their use for assessment in different economic sectors. The objectives of the WS are a refinement of existing variables with reference to breakdown and definition (Employment status, Education level, Enterprise number; unpaid labour) and addition of new ones (Payment structure; retirement age and pensions; new economic and social indices). PGECON also recommended a revision of the EU MAP Guidelines, definition and methodologies on social variables, which should be separated by sectors (fishing fleet, aquaculture, and processing) in order to take into account the specificities of social variables by sectors.

The third and final day of the meeting was given to a final discussion and drafting of recommendations and to future work.

Annex 3 Liaison Meeting 2020 Agenda

17th Liaison Meeting between the Chairs of RCGs & PGECON, STECF meetings on DCF, RDB steering groups, key end users (ICES, STECF, GFCM, RFMOs), JRC and the Commission

24 - 25 September 2020

Webex meeting

MEETING AGENDA

Timetable: **24 September from 10:00 – 18:00**
 25 September from 09:00 – 16:00

Chair: **Sieto Verver**

24 September

Liaison Meeting – interaction with end users (end users, RCG & PGECON chairs, COM)

10:00

Welcome by the Commission

10:15

TOR 1 *Discussion with end users*

- A. Setting the scene (end user role and future legislative developments)
(Liaison Meeting Chair and COM)
- B. End user needs and interaction: presentations from end users on:
 - data needs and data quality

- ongoing developments
- state of play of COVID-19 consequences for scientific advice and proposed remedial actions
- main changes in data calls anticipated next year
- current interaction between the end-user and RCGs/data collectors and proposals for improvement.

12:30 - 13:30 lunch

13:30

TOR 2 Data handling

- A. RCG data calls – overview of how MS responded and discussion on future use and further exploration by the RCGs (RCG chairs)
- B. End user data calls and RFMO reporting obligations – overview of how MS responded (COM)
- C. Progress achieved in the Regional Databases for RCGs in 2020 and problems identified (end users)
- D. Future developments for Regional Databases (RCG and PGECON chairs)

15:30-16:00 coffee break

16:00

Discussion and agreements of end user meeting

25 September

Liaison meeting

(end users, RCG & PGECON chairs, COM)

9:00

Introduction from the Chair

**TOR 3 Discussion on possible follow-up to the main outputs/
recommendations**

- A. The 2020 RCGs - specific recommendations to be discussed at the Liaison Meeting and proposal for future intersessional work. Follow-up of Decision Making meeting (Liaison Meeting and RCG chairs) and stream lining work between RCGs/PGECON
- B. The 2019 PGECON – update on activities
- C. Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues

11:00 – 11:15 coffee break

TOR 3 *continued*

- D. Future steps in RCG and PGECON pan-regional and intersessional work (i.e. regional work plans): exchange of ideas and discussion (Liaison Meeting, RCG & PGECON Chairs)

TOR 4 *Governance*

- E. Follow-up on RCG RoP developments in each of the RCGs, PGECON (Liaison Meeting, RCG & PGECON Chairs)
- F. Structure of RCGs and PGECON and cooperation. Lessons learned from combined 2020 RCGs. Tentative changes in structure i.e. PGECON and in RCG number (PGECON, RCG chairs)

13:00 - 14:00 lunch

TOR 5 *AOB*