



# **Fisheries Data Collection**

## **22<sup>nd</sup> Liaison Meeting**

**Meeting between the Chairs of RCGs, key end-users,  
European Commission DG Mare and JRC**

**Report**

**5<sup>th</sup> November 2025**



**EUROPEAN COMMISSION**

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES  
Fisheries Policy Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic and Outermost Regions  
Unit C.3 – Scientific Advice and Data Collection

**REGIONAL COORDINATION GROUPS  
For Fisheries Data Collection**

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

Term	Description
AC	Advisory Council
AAC	Aquaculture Advisory Council
AER	Annual Economic Report (for the European fishing fleet)
BSAC	Black Sea Advisory Council
BFT	Bluefin Tuna
CECAF	Fishery Committee for the Eastern Central Atlantic
CFP	Common Fisheries Policy
CKMR	Close-Kin-Mark-Recapture
CMMs	Conservation Management Measures
CPCs	Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-contracting Parties
DCF	Data Collection Framework (follow up of DCR)
DCRF	Data Collection Reference Framework
DG MARE	Commission's Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
DTMT	Data Transmission Monitoring Tool
EC (or COM)	European Commission
EM	Electronic Monitoring
EMT	Electronic Monitoring Technologies
ERA	Economic Report of EU Aquaculture
ETP	Endangered, Threatened and Protected Species
EU	European Union
EU-MAP	Multi Annual Programme for Data Collection
EWG	Expert Working Group
FDI	Fisheries-dependent information
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
IOTC	Indian Ocean Tuna Commission
ISSG	Intersessional Subgroup
JRC	Joint Research Centre
LDAC	Long Distance Advisory Council
LDF	Long Distance Fisheries
LM	Liaison Meeting
LP	Large Pelagics
MAC	Market Advisory Council
MAP	Marine Action Plan
Med&BS	Mediterranean & Black Sea (region)
MRF	Marine Recreational Fisheries
MS	Member State(s)
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organization
NASCO	North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization
NC	National Correspondent (DCF)
NPFC	The North Pacific Fisheries Commission
NWP	National Work Plan
PGECON	Planning Group on Economic Issues
RCG	Regional Coordination Group
RCM	Regional Coordination Meeting
RDB	Regional Data Base (of the RCM/RCG)
RDBES	Regional Data Base and Estimation System

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Term	Description
RDBFIS	Integrated Fisheries Information System for the Mediterranean and Black Sea
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organization
RoP	Rules of Procedure
RWP	Regional Work Plan
SAC	Scientific Advisory Committee on Fisheries
SAF	Stock Assessment Form
SCRS	Standing Committee on Research and Statistics
SIOFA	Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement
SPRMFO	South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization
SSF	Small Scale Fisheries
STECF	Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TAF	Transparent Assessment Framework
TM	RCG Technical Meeting
VME	Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System
WG	Working Group
WGRDBESGOV	Working Group on Regional Data Base and Estimation System Governance

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 22nd Liaison Meeting (LM), bringing together the Chairs of the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs), key end-users (STECF, RMFOs, ICES), JRC, and the Commission, was held on September 23rd and 24th, 2025, in a hybrid format. The meeting was opened by the Commission and the LM chair who introduced the ToRs and the agenda, and highlighted the importance of high-quality data to inform policy. The LM was described as the forum where issues that affect several marine regions can be assessed and discussed, providing valuable input and insights to improve collaboration at both regional and pan-regional levels.

The first day of the meeting was dedicated to end-users and their interaction with RCGs. Contributions from SPRFMO, SIOFA, IOTC, ICCAT, GFCM, STECF/JRC and ICES were presented. End-users described the basics of their mandate and the main issues and difficulties encountered. They highlighted ongoing work on data platforms for uploading and storing data, improving quality-control tools, adjusting the timing of data calls and making data requirements clearer and simpler for Member States (MS). End-users acknowledged good cooperation with RCGs in different ways such as improving data quality, advancing research, revising reporting forms, improving métier coding or working on bycatch mitigation. The need to improve communication on MS data amendments to Data Calls was highlighted, and the use of standard templates was proposed. It was also noted that the changes in one data call variable may have a large effect on other databases, so changes must be done with caution and in collaboration with other end-users.

Regional databases are recognized as the cornerstone for storing and disseminating DCF data. Progress on the Regional Database for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (RDBFIS) and the Regional Database & Estimation System (RDBES) were presented. The importance of coordinating both databases was highlighted, especially in streamlining data calls and developing a common format for data on diadromous, large pelagic and bycatch species. The work done by RCGs on confidentiality and data sharing was presented, showing that MS concerns are mostly with publication of data (and not that much with sharing and using the data for scientific purposes), and that socio-economic data are the most sensitive. The current proposal, where MS decide on sensitivity levels for data publication, was presented and discussed.

The second day focused on the coordination among RCGs. RCGs presented a summary of their activities, including work on data quality, sampling optimization, incorporation of new types of data, métiers codification, regional databases, data calls and preparation of the next Regional Work Plan (RWP). Main decisions and recommendations were presented. No changes in the RoP were reported. A pan-regional joint meeting on bycatch data, with relevant RCGs and end-users, was proposed to strengthen coordination in the submission of bycatch data. The challenges for the collection of data on fuel use and carbon emissions were discussed and feedback was provided. Collaboration was suggested between the RCG ECON and the ICES Working Group on Economic issues, the ISSG on métiers and transversal variables and the ISSG on regional RWP. The group reflected on the difficulties in optimizing data collection and prioritizing the variables to be collected, discussed the different approaches used by the RCGs, and agreed that stronger interaction between RCGs and end-users is essential. Another point raised was that the DCF cannot support the collection of all types of data, and that a distinction needs to be done between core DCF requirements and opportunistic data collection. With regard to the RWPs, the Commission agreed on the request to maintain the current format of the RWP unchanged, the key dates for the RWP submission were defined, and options for setting the reference periods in table 2.1 were discussed.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

According to Article 8 of the Regulation (EC) No 2017/1004 (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 these 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. Regional coordination has been conducted through various constellations since 2004. In 2017, the following five Regional Coordination Groups (RCG) were operating under the DCF:

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

In 2020, an RCG ECON dealing with data collection of economic data issues was established:

- RCG Economic Issues (ECON)

Table 1.1.1: RCGs chairs for the season 2025 – 2026, including incoming and outgoing chairs

RCG	Chairs 2023/2024	email
NANSEA	Josefine Egekvist (outgoing)	<a href="mailto:jsv@aqua.dtu.dk">jsv@aqua.dtu.dk</a>
	Rita Vasconcelos	<a href="mailto:rita.vasconcelos@ipma.pt">rita.vasconcelos@ipma.pt</a>
	Laura Lemey (incoming)	<a href="mailto:laura.lemey@ilvo.vlaanderen.be">laura.lemey@ilvo.vlaanderen.be</a>
Baltic	Vilda Griuniene	<a href="mailto:vilda.griuniene@zum.lt">vilda.griuniene@zum.lt</a>
LP	Pedro Lino (outgoing)	<a href="mailto:plino@ipma.pt">plino@ipma.pt</a>
	Ioannis Thasitis	<a href="mailto:IThasitis@dfmr.moa.gov.cy">IThasitis@dfmr.moa.gov.cy</a>
	George Tserpes (incoming)	<a href="mailto:gtserpes@hcmr.gr">gtserpes@hcmr.gr</a>
LDF	Maksims Kovsars	<a href="mailto:maksims.kovsars@bior.lv">maksims.kovsars@bior.lv</a>
ECON	Eirini Tzouramani (outgoing)	<a href="mailto:tzouramani@agreri.gr">tzouramani@agreri.gr</a>
	Adelbert De Clercq	<a href="mailto:Adelbert.DeClercq@ilvo.vlaanderen.be">Adelbert.DeClercq@ilvo.vlaanderen.be</a>
	Sarah Perry (incoming)	<a href="mailto:Sarah.Perry@bim.ie">Sarah.Perry@bim.ie</a>
Med&BS	Charis Charilaou (outgoing)	<a href="mailto:ccharilaou@dfmr.moa.gov.cy">ccharilaou@dfmr.moa.gov.cy</a>
	Alexandru Gheorghe	<a href="mailto:Alexandru.gheorghe@anpa.ro">Alexandru.gheorghe@anpa.ro</a>
	Enrico Arneri (incoming)	<a href="mailto:enrico.arneri@cnr.it">enrico.arneri@cnr.it</a>

## *Introduction*

The RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA are holding their meeting together although they are still formally two separate groups. In addition to the regional RCGs, a pan-regional RCG deals with collection of economic data: The Regional Coordination Group on Economic Issues (RCG ECON). This RCG is the successor of the previous group PGECON although the status of PGECON was slightly different as a subgroup of the EU Expert <sup>(1)</sup> group on Fisheries Data collection.

Similarly, the Liaison Meeting is a subgroup of the EU Expert <sup>(1)</sup> group on Fisheries Data collection, established to assist the Commission on data collection issues. 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, with participation of the chairs (incoming and outgoing) of all RCGs, key end-users, and the Commission. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Liaison Meeting was held as a hybrid meeting in DG MARE, Brussels on September 23 & 24, 2025.

### **1. 2 Adoption of the agenda**

After opening of the meeting, the draft agenda was adopted by the participants. See Annex 2 for the agenda of the meeting.

### **1. 3 Terms of Reference**

#### **TOR 1 Discussion with end-users**

- A. Setting the scene: End-user role and new data demands (Liaison Meeting chair and COM)
- B. End-user needs and interaction: presentations from end-users (ICES, GFCM, STECF/JRC, IOTC) on:
  - current interaction between the end-user and RCGs/data collectors and proposals for improvement
  - data needs and data quality
  - ongoing developments
  - main changes in data calls anticipated next year

#### **TOR 2 Data management**

- A. Highlights in progress achieved in 2023-2024 in the Regional Databases for RCGs and problems identified.
- B. Highlights in actions related to the future developments for Regional Databases (RCG chairs, RDBFIS, RDBES)

*Introduction*

**TOR 3 RCG activities (follow-up)**

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

- A. Highlights in RCG activities
- B. The 2024 RCGs – recommendations and proposals for future intersessional work (Liaison Meeting and RCG chairs)
- C. RCG data calls – overview of how MS responded and discussion on future use (RCG chairs)
- D. Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues E. Future steps in RCG pan-regional and intersessional work (i.e., regional work plans, country profiles): exchange of ideas and discussion (COM, Liaison Meeting, RCG Chairs)

**TOR 4 Governance**

- A. Follow-up on RCG Rules of Procedures (RoP) developments in each of the RCGs (Liaison Meeting, RCG Chairs)
- B. Structure of RCGs and cooperation. Discuss needs for new pan-regional ISSGs (RCG chairs)
  - Status on Secretariat (current output available to RCGs)
  - Diadromous ISSG (position and future participation to LM)

**TOR 5 AOB**

**1. 4 Participants (list in annex)**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Liaison Meeting was chaired by Lucía Zarauz (Spain) and the meeting was attended by the Commission, key end-users of the Data Collection, representatives of regional databases and the chairs of the RCGs. Annex 1 provides an overview of the participants to the meeting and their respective affiliation.

## **2 DISCUSSION WITH END-USERS (TOR 1A&1B)**

### **2.1 Setting the scene (ToR 1A)**

*End-user role and new data demands (Liaison Meeting chair and COM)*

#### **2.1.1 Welcome by the Commission**

Welcome and first introductory words were given by DG MARE, welcoming all attendees, both in person and online, with special thanks to those joining from distant locations. The role of the Liaison meeting within the Common Fisheries Policy was highlighted as a crucial event for strengthening coordination between end-users and RCGs and among the different RCGs, thereby contributing to the development of sound scientific advice for fisheries management.

During the introduction to the meeting, the importance of the data collection work was reinforced. Fisheries data now have visibility at the highest political levels, and their relevance will continue to grow. Data must be meaningful, valuable, and fit for purpose. Quality data are essential for the Ocean Pact, showing the importance of science in informing policy. During the Ocean Decade event this summer, the president of the European Commission referenced this same idea.

A special mention was given to end-users, to whom the first day of the meeting is dedicated. End-users play a crucial role in fisheries data collection by providing direct input on data needs and helping to ensure the data collected is relevant and accurate. A remark was done on the need to safeguard data provision and accessibility, while maintaining their relevance and high quality.

DG MARE thanked the chair for accepting the role, as well as the chairs of the various RCGs and the Secretariat for their work. It was acknowledged that the work of RCGs has expanded in the recent years and participants were encouraged to see this meeting as an opportunity to present the output of their work, share best practices, and discuss ways to improve collaboration at both regional and pan-regional levels.

#### **2.1.2 Welcome and introduction (ToR 1A)**

The chair introduced the agenda and invited attendees to introduce themselves. Housekeeping rules were presented. Next, the Terms of Reference were outlined, and indications were given on where to find the relevant documents and the timelines for the report writing.

The chair referred the legal basis of the Liaison Meeting, its objectives and the actual structure of the meeting, where the first day is dedicated to end-users and its interaction with RCGs, while the second day focuses on the coordination among RCGs. Participants were informed about the RCGs website as the main source for further information.

To finalize, the chair reminded participants of the topics discussed last year and those expected to be addressed this year. Key topics included data quality and submission issues, data collection tailored to stock assessment needs, new data requirements (genetics tagging, social data, EMS, etc), harmonization of Data Calls, Confidentiality, Data Dissemination Tools, Regional Work Plans and Regional Databases.

### **2.2 End-user needs and interaction (ToR 1B)**

*Presentations from end-users*

### **2.2.1 SPRFMO presentation**

The representative for the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation (SPRFMO) explained that they have 17 members and some members experience challenges in reporting. Data is still submitted via emails/Excel sheets, which is challenging for data management and data quality. The Secretariat presented end-user needs and ongoing data modernisation initiatives, highlighting strengthened Member/CNCP engagement through standardised templates, improved validation rules, and shared RFMO platforms to reduce duplication and enhance transparency. Key priorities include adoption of latest FAO/CWP standards (ASFIS, ISSCFG, ISSCFV), API-first submissions with strict schema and semantic checks, and automation of cross-dataset quality controls (e.g. VMS, transshipment, catch). Current developments comprise CRAVT-enabled cross-RFMO vessel checks, Transshipment API testing with real-time validation, enhanced observer data pipelines, portal uploads, analytical dashboards.

#### *Discussion and feedback*

The participation of the SPRFMO was welcomed, especially considering the time zone differences. Efforts to move towards a harmonised approach through platforms, validation checks, and record of vessels were highlighted. The goal is to have timely, analysis-ready data to support stock assessments and compliance.

### **2.2.2 SIOFA presentation**

The Southern Indian Ocean Fisheries Agreement (SIOFA) is an Agreement that cover the Southern Indian Ocean and has a mandate to manage the fishery resources and protect the ecosystems in the high seas.



*Figure 2.2.2.1: The SIOFA area (highlighted in yellow)*

Its mandate does not include highly migratory species and tuna-like species which are managed by the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC).

The data requirements are defined in SIOFA Conservation and Management Measures (CMMs). CMM 02 (2025) on data standards is currently defining what data needs to be collected and submitted to

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

SIOFA and applies to all parties. The current requirements request to collect and submit two types of data: (i) operation level catch and effort data that come from the commercial operations and (ii) data collected by onboard scientific observers.

The data specifications and requirements are usually discussed by the Scientific Committee of SIOFA (SC) at its annual meeting where all parties participate, and the SC recommends the Meeting of Parties to endorse new or updated data needs.

The European Union (EU) is a Contracting Party to SIOFA and currently operates one fishing vessel. The data collected from that fishery is provided to SIOFA by DG MARE where the EU focal point oversees the annual submission of fishery data to the Secretariat. EU provides this data fully and timely.

The SIOFA Secretariat processes and stores this data in its databases. It is also in charge of processing data request for scientific studies and other purposes.

SIOFA website: <https://siofa.org>

### *Discussion and feedback*

No issues with data collection were reported. Only one EU vessel is operating in the area (Spanish flag). The procedure for data collection is semi-automatic, but if the number of members increases, there will be the need to improve it.

### **2.2.3 ICCAT presentation**

The ICCAT presentation focused on providing an overview of ICCAT's scientific data needs, the data provision and verification process, and the main issues observed. In the general introduction, the fundamental role of the European Union (EU) within ICCAT, whose mandate is to *maintain the populations of tuna and tuna-like species at levels which will permit the maximum sustainable catch for food and other purposes*, was highlighted. The Convention area was outlined, and it was recalled that each Contracting and Cooperating Parties (CPCs) to ICCAT is expected to comply with approximately 180 reporting requirements, covering both scientific and compliance matters.

The presentation described the role of the Standing Committee on Research and Statistics (SCRS) and its role within ICCAT. It also detailed the tasks of the CPCs, the responsibilities of the Secretariat, and the contribution of ICCAT science programmes to strengthen the scientific advice for the ICCAT conservation and fisheries management measures. The scientific process aiming the provision of advice by the SCRS to the Commission includes, among other aspects: recovery of historical catch and effort data; review and enhancement of the basic collection and provision of fisheries statistics (including size data); collection and analyses of samples related to ICCAT species biology, and stock assessments.

The relevant role of the European Union in the ICCAT context was noted, indicating that its share of ICCAT catches has declined over time - from about 50% in the 1980s-1990s to about 25-30% in recent years, highlighting that within the EU, the main contributors to current catches, in order of magnitude, are Spain, France, Portugal and Italy.

Regarding data needs and data quality, it was recalled that robust scientific advice requires complete and consistent time series, with spatial and temporal resolutions appropriate to each assessment objective. It was stressed that deficiencies in completeness or data granularity (i.e. the level of detail or specificity within a dataset) directly affect the robustness of results.

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

The importance of properly filling all the headings of ICCAT forms and using exclusively ICCAT codifications, was reiterated. Harmonizing definitions, sampling frequencies, and size/weight specifications were identified as a priority area to reduce heterogeneity and enable comparative analyses.

With respect to ICCAT data calls, it was reported that the annual statistics circular is issued in early February, fixing 15 July as deadline for data submission, and that additional intersessional calls are conducted in line with the Species Groups work plans and specific SCRS needs. The need of temporal separation between preparatory meetings (data-oriented) and assessment meetings (advice-oriented) was also recalled.

The evaluation and quality-control tools used by the SCRS, it is: built-in validation rules in electronic forms, annual report cards by CPC, 30-year catalogues, scorecards, and retrospective scores to track progress in completeness and quality, were also outlined.

Illustrative examples of report cards for EU Member States were presented, showing reporting status and their usefulness in identifying information gaps. The 2024 T1NC, detailed by species and gear, was also shown, underlining the need to complete key fields and ensure coherence across components.

The disaggregation of T1NC by fleet evidenced the value of these cards for guiding targeted corrections and prioritising efforts where gaps are most critical for assessments. The SCRS Catalogues tool was also presented, which contrasts Task 1 information with Task 2 datasets (Catch and Effort - T2CE - and Sizes - T2SZ/T2CS). This tool allows the detection of missing datasets through a colour-coding scheme.

Retrospective scores, used to monitor trends in the information quality and completeness at stock level over time, providing a synthetic indicator that helps SCRS Species Groups focus improvement actions prior to assessment milestones, were also shown.

Regarding reporting modes, the presentation focused on the set of 13 multilingual electronic forms used for statistics and tagging (noting that additional compliance-related forms exist but were outside the scope of the presentation). These forms share standardised structures - headers, codes, sub-forms and translation mechanisms - and are subject to annual revision. Participants were reminded to use the latest published versions to avoid inconsistencies. As for formats, the forms are provided in XLSX (ODF 1.2-compatible); special formats may be accepted by agreement, and work is ongoing on a unified CSV option to support automation and interoperability.

Finally, the main issues observed were summarised: incomplete headers (e.g., missing Statistical Correspondent), invalid ICCAT codes, omission of key fields, and overly aggregated resolution in some T2 submissions. By dataset, the following were noted: T1FC (active-fleet lists), T1NC (zeros in ST02B; discards), T2CE (effort and by-catch composition), T2SZ/T2CS (heterogeneity in specifications), and, in T2CS, weight-conversion mismatches relative to Task 1; for Task 3, uncertainties remained regarding maturity stages. Additional observations included structural instability in certain domestic observer datasets and slower-than-expected progress in closing historical gaps.

Looking ahead, the ICCAT Secretariat reported ongoing work to build a database consolidating sampling metadata and biological results from ICCAT science programmes and CPC national studies. This effort aims to enable broader joint analyses and reduce uncertainties in key parameters - for example, for bluefin tuna, swordfish, pelagic sharks and small tunas - thereby strengthening the empirical basis of future assessments.

### *Discussion and feedback*

ICCAT confirmed that they are incorporating the scoring card for Task 1 and task 2. Task 3 is in doubt, need to be confirmed. The scoring card is a tool used to provide a quantitative summary of data availability for a specific species or stock, based on the ICCAT fisheries database

ICCAT explained that the database consolidating sampling metadata and biological results that ICCAT is starting to develop, has the aim to integrate all the relevant information in a single database. This includes data from both ICCAT science programmes and CPC national studies; and different types of data such as sampling data, growth parameters, maturity etc. The aim is that all information is available to scientists to address joint studies and to enable better parameters for stock assessment. ICCAT also confirms that this will not become a reporting obligation for the moment.

ICCAT clarified that the nominal catches data are submitted by CPCs to MARE, and to MARE to ICCAT, using the official ICCAT forms. Therefore, this is official information submitted by CPCs. When there are gaps in the data, these are filled at data preparatory meetings, where scientists of the CPCs use statistical methods to solve the problems encountered. The data are considered official data.

### **2.2.4 IOTC presentation**

The Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) is an intergovernmental organisation responsible for the management of tuna and tuna-like species in the Indian Ocean. IOTC Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties are required to report information for the 16 species directly under the IOTC mandate as well another main shark species caught in IOTC Fisheries and ETP species.

European Union is a key contracting party (CPC) of the IOTC contributing with around 10% of the total IOTC catches in 2024. The main catches of the EU are for Industrials fisheries and for tropical tuna species (16% of the total catch of tropical tunas).

The main and persistent issues in European Union data provided to the IOTC were identified: (i) lack on information discard data and raising procedures, (ii) limited size data coverage for some fisheries, (iii) inconsistent reporting and/or low observer coverage in Portuguese and Spanish longline fisheries.

Important improvements done by the EU in comparison with the previous year were highlighted: (i) submission of main datasets Retained catches (RC), Georeferenced catch and effort (CA), and Georeferenced size frequencies (SF) according deadlines for all the fleets, (ii) submission of observer data from Spanish longline fishery, and (iii) the implementation of new statistical and ROS IOTC forms for reporting data in 2024.

The Secretariat also acknowledged the interaction with RCGs and data collectors in relation with the following activities:

- (i) Participation in the Data Reporting Workshop (Jakarta, Indonesia. May 2025).
- (ii) Intersessional revision of ROS reporting forms (WPDCS & WGEMS).
- (iii) Participation on the ObServe database discussions (EU, France - Seychelles), January 2025.
- (iv) Final phase EU-funded project (EC 1024) supporting data collection and reporting of IOTC artisanal fisheries data as well as management of data collected on bycatch species caught in IOTC fisheries.

### *Discussion and feedback*

The chair of ISSG métier and transversal issues explained that a new gear code is being adopted for traplines targeting swordfish. It was also noted the need to make an inventory of the use of this new gear in the different fishing areas.

### **2.2.5 GFCM presentation**

During the EU Liaison Meeting held on 23 September 2025, the Fisheries Resources Monitoring Officer at the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM/FAO) presented an overview of the Commission's mandate, ongoing work and recent achievements.

The presentation recalled the implementation of the GFCM 2030 Strategy for sustainable fisheries and aquaculture, structured around five main targets: sustainable fisheries and ecosystems, compliance and enforcement, aquaculture, livelihoods, and capacity development. It also provided an overview of the GFCM's key achievements in recent years, including the adoption of 11 multiannual management plans, the designation of 10 Fisheries Restricted Areas, the implementation of regional plans of action for small-scale fisheries (RPOA-SSF) and for vulnerable species (RPOA-VUL), as well as the expansion of data collection through scientific surveys at sea, the monitoring programmes on incidental catch of vulnerable species and discards, the implementation of several research programmes (on red coral, recreational fisheries, dolphinfish, blue crabs, eel), and socioeconomic surveys.

The GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF) remains the central instrument for fisheries data submission by Contracting Parties and Cooperating non-Contracting Parties: within 92 compulsory data topics requested by existing GFCM recommendations in 2025, 67 percent are DCRF-related.

The ongoing modernization of the DCRF online platform, supported by a set of quality indicators (timeliness, completeness, conformity, stability and consistency), is improving transparency and harmonization of reporting.

The recent WKDATA workshop (Florence, March 2025) adopted technical measures to streamline and harmonize GFCM data requests, potentially reducing DCRF reporting tools from 48 to 15 and simplifying the submission process for national administrations.

The presentation also outlined continued collaboration with the Regional Coordination Group for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (RCG Med&BS) on data quality, integration and capacity building, as well as ongoing efforts to strengthen stock assessment capacity, develop socioeconomic modelling, advance research on gear selectivity and bycatch mitigation and assess the impacts of marine litter.

Overall, the GFCM highlighted its progress towards a more efficient, harmonized and science-based regional fisheries management framework, in close cooperation with the European Union and regional partners.

### *Discussion and feedback*

No questions or comments

#### **2.2.6 STECF/JRC presentation**

Since the last LM, there have been the following STECF Expert Working Groups (EWGs) using DCF data calls:

- Aquaculture (EWG 24-14, Oct 2024)
- Fleet economics (Annual Economic Report, AER) (EWG 25-03 & 25-07, Apr/June 2025)
- Western Mediterranean stock assessment (EWG 25-09, Sep 2025)
- Fisheries-Dependent Information (FDI) methods (EWG 25-05 May 2025) and EWG 25-10, Sep 2025)

*Aquaculture* is part of RCG ECON and data collectors are present at these meetings. Workshops and meetings are held on a regular basis, and changes are implemented. The main outcomes of the Economic Report of EU Aquaculture (ERA) have been presented to the Market Advisory Council (MAC) and the Aquaculture Advisory Council (AAC) in June 2025. Data quality is improving with MS gaining more experience in data submission and requirements and data coverage is improving with MS now reporting data for freshwater aquaculture. Some difficulties, however, remain due to thresholds – resulting in missing data compared to FAO estimations. Data provided by MS under the data calls have been supplemented or replaced with FAO data. Because of this, the national chapters are different in terms of coverage and typology of indicators. There is still the need to be able to qualify and control data better before experts arrive at meetings. Thus, a two-meeting procedure (like for the AER) has been suggested several times (one meeting for data control and writing of national chapters and a second meeting for writing the EU overview and special chapters with deeper economic analysis). Regarding ongoing developments, the nowcast for 2024 requires engagement of stakeholders and MS to deliver estimations on production volume, value and employment. In order to provide comprehensive and in-depth analysis of the aquaculture sector in the EU, the data sets, submissions and templates for national analysis should be finalized prior to the meeting. The provision of social indicators needs to be better aligned to be able to compare between MS. This has been taken care of in the recent Social Data Call (July 2025).

As for *fleet economics*, there is fluent interaction between the AER EWGs, RCG ECON and data collectors. Workshops and meetings are held on a regular basis and changes are implemented. There is also a fluent interaction between AER and the ACs. LDAC, BSAC and MAC normally ask the EWG chairs to present the main outcomes of the AER. Some of them take part in AER meetings as observers or experts. The web dashboard developed by JRC is used by experts and end-users to directly visualise, analyse and download data (replacing data visualisations previously provided in Annex 2 of the report). Starting from the 2025 AER, a new activity level has been introduced (L12AG: Vessels under 12 metres using active gears). The definitions of small-scale coastal fishing (SSCF) across AER and EMFAF have to be aligned, however. The AER classifies certain fleet segments (e.g. PS <12m and MGO <12m) as less than 12 metres using active gears (L12AG), despite them potentially qualifying as SSCF under the EMFAF definition. Moreover, the definition of employment in the AER and economic guidelines have to be aligned: Total employment should be the sum of paid labour + unpaid labour, as also provided in the EU-MAP. The process of forecasting the year t+1 could be improved. MS should be able to provide data for the nowcast t+1 on a voluntary basis. A workshop facilitated by RCG ECON could be organised to develop a common methodology for this nowcast. STECF suggested to add in the data call text for next year that in the case of previously submitted data resubmission, MS should provide an explanation of scale of changes and reasoning. Additional focus will be on the quality indicators, which are already incorporated into the templates for the data call. Any missing information related to these indicators may be flagged in the DTMT to emphasize the importance of providing them to the Member States.

For *Western Mediterranean stock assessment* data, MEDITS data were incomplete due to omission of MSs to carry out the survey or number of necessary hauls. Missing length frequency distributions are still an issue, especially due to necessity to go to métier level in partial Fs. There is an urgent need to review the timing and setting of the EWG on the assessment of western Mediterranean stocks

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

(included in the western Med MAP). Data preparation and/or methodological work (EWGs) should be planned in advance to streamline the stock assessment work of the EWG. The timing between the end of the data call and the EWG are becoming more crucial as data preparation contracts are distributed during a time when many experts are on summer holidays. Data at quarterly level have been requested and provided since 2017 for the species driving the fisheries. In the near future, it is expected that data provision will be mandatory at least for these species, to avoid overloading MS. Historical data revisions need explanations as they impact stock assessments and it is necessary to explain the differences between yearly assessments beyond “the data have changed”.

*FDI data* collectors are part of the experts attending the EWG, including some National Correspondents. This year, in addition to the annual FDI EWG, the FDI methods EWG (EWG 25-05) took place. The high amount of data requested (all species, all areas, all discards, etc.) involves a higher probability of errors in MSs submissions. Data quality is improving annually with MSs gaining more experience in data submission and requirements. FDI biological data are not fully covering all EU fishing regions, as biological data for the Med&BS regions are not requested in the data call. Regarding ongoing developments, the EWG proposed not to call anymore for the refusal rate information (Table B). Comparing the fleet segments provided to the capacity table (Table J) and the other tables, it was noted that some fleet segments (for which landings and effort data are provided) are not present in Table J. The EWG suggested to add a check in the upload tool in order to avoid this inconsistency. During the EWG, FDI and AER datasets were compared and some inconsistencies in the values provided to the two data calls were found. JRC will provide a dashboard on the DCF website (in the page “Data for experts”) with the comparison between FDI and AER datasets. Next year’s data call will request data for 2025. For MSs who did not re-submit the whole time series in previous years, there will be the opportunity to send data for previous years to update métier codes. MS are encouraged to submit data earlier than 2013.

#### *Discussions and feedback:*

It was pointed out that for the Med&BS data, the communication between the West Med EWG and RCG could be improved in order to exchange information on MS data amendments (known to the RCG) and data needs for the EWG. Ideally, this procedure would be standardised by developing a template for MS reporting and explaining the amendments, which should then be available to the RCG and EWG. Similarly, the AER EWG would benefit from such a procedure.

### **2.2.7 ICES presentation**

**ICES** highlighted the importance of sustained engagement with end-users, particularly through ongoing dialogue between ICES and the RCGs. This interaction takes place via both formal channels, such as meetings and reports, and informal exchanges, including direct communication and ad hoc coordination. The focus remains on improving the clarity, timing, and mutual understanding of recommendations shared between ICES and RCGs. The data needs are identified through several mechanisms, including the advice approval process, expert group input, benchmark workshops, and calibration events. To ensure data quality, ICES applies a structured evaluation process involving assessment audits and benchmark data reviews. The benchmark process itself was presented alongside the newly launched benchmark website, which allows RCGs and National Correspondents to stay informed about resolved, current, and upcoming benchmarks. ICES also outlined the data call procedure, noting that all data calls must adhere to established guidelines and be accompanied by a licence. Member States are formally obligated to respond only to data calls issued by ICES, while those initiated by expert groups are non-mandatory. However, these expert group calls are limited in number and serve primarily to track data use. The new data call website was introduced as a central platform for submitting data (with certain exceptions), viewing open and closed calls, and monitoring submission status.

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

Regarding data access, ICES confirmed that most datasets are publicly available under the Creative Commons CC BY 4.0 licence. Exceptions include commercial catch data (InterCatch, RDB, and RDBES), Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) and Logbook data, protected species records, and sensitive biodiversity or Vulnerable Marine Ecosystem (VME) data. Access to these restricted datasets requires a signed data use agreement and, in some cases, approval from the relevant Member State. Nevertheless, all data products derived from restricted sources are, by default, made publicly accessible.

Confidentiality challenges were also addressed, particularly the inconsistent interpretation Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) Article 3(k) (transparency of data handling in accordance with existing legal requirements, with due respect for private life, the protection of personal data and confidentiality rules; availability of data to the appropriate scientific bodies, other bodies with a scientific or management interest, and other defined end-users) across Member States (MS). The current framework enables MS to apply the most restrictive interpretation of confidentiality rules, effectively setting a "lowest common denominator" standard. This practice can lead to fragmented data governance, increasing the administrative workload, and reducing transparency and efficiency. Such fragmentation thus has the possibility to impose disproportionate costs on scientific institutions and data infrastructure, diverting expert resources toward gatekeeping functions rather than scientific analysis and innovation. ICES therefore advocates for a reformed approach to data confidentiality under the CFP, which is essential to ensure that fisheries data serves its primary purpose: the sustainable management of marine ecosystems. Legislative clarity and harmonisation will reduce inefficiencies, lower costs, and empower scientific and technological innovation across the EU.

An update on the **Regional Database and Estimation System (RDBES)** revealed that most countries successfully uploaded all required data types in 2025. Twenty countries (out of twenty-four) submitted data to RDBES in 2025, where thirteen countries submitted all the requested data. There were thirteen requests for data, primarily concerning landing and effort data. Short-term developments include updates to the data model based on working group input, integration of recreational fisheries data, implementation of an API for direct data transfer to the TAF server, and the development of upload logs, access roles, validation tools, stock definition modules, and FDI export functionality. Despite these advancements, funding remains a significant challenge, and ICES is actively exploring alternative support options. Finally, ICES presented several ongoing initiatives. These include the integration of genetic data into existing databases such as DATRAS, RDBES, and SmartDots; submission of feedback on data access and confidentiality to the CFP evaluation process; prioritisation of data relevant to assessments; and the development of both the diadromous database and the Stock Identification Database (SID), which aims to serve as a centralised resource for fish stock and data information.

### *Discussions and feedback*

The discussion focused on challenges related to data access and confidentiality in fisheries data. Different interpretations of confidentiality rules among Member States (e. g. GDPR) can limit data access. It was noted that problems have not been encountered in the regular fisheries data, but in the preliminary catch statistics and in some other data for which there was a long time series and now they cannot be displayed anymore because some countries require additional reassurances on how the data will be used. Current practices include signing data access licenses, but there is room to simplify these processes. It was also highlighted that data access should be separated from data publication, as these are two different issues. Concerns are usually related to publication, but it shall be noted that access can be granted while protecting publication.

An additional point clarified that Creative Commons licenses are open-ended and are not limited to one year. The restricted licenses at ICES, by default, are valid for 12 months.

Finally, COM informed of a series of consultations related to the evaluation of the CFP regulation. This is the part of the process, based on Better Regulation. The evaluation of the CFP Regulation will form the basis for any future decision on the way forward.

### **3 DATA MANAGEMENT (TOR 2A&2B)**

- A. *Highlights in progress achieved in 2023-2024 in the Regional Databases for RCGs and problems identified.*
- B. *Highlights in actions related to the future developments for Regional Databases (RCG chairs, RDBFIS, RDBES)*

#### **3.1 Feedback on FDI data call**

The Fisheries Dependent Information (FDI) data call in 2025 requested data for 2024. Member States (MS) were also encouraged to submit data earlier than 2013. However, during the STECF EWG 22 10 the quality of data before 2013 was considered to be too low to have a reliable dataset and for some MS it was not possible to provide data at the level of aggregation required by the FDI data call. EWG 22 10 summarized this information with the Table 4.1. So far only two MS have submitted data for 2012. Resubmission of data from 2012-2023 was also possible during the 2025 FDI data call.

Biological tables are not requested in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions (GFCM GSAs). The process of transferring biological data from the Mediterranean and Black Sea data call was decided to be put on hold until the RDBFIS is fully developed.

The changes that were made in the 2025 FDI data call were that the entries allowed values greater than 1 in the DISCARD\_CV column in Tables C, D (Discards age and length) and K (Discards with no biological data). Secondly, the GEO\_INDICATOR 'NK' was no longer allowed. In case of no geo indicator 'NGI' was requested to be used.

The métier codes that are now requested by the FDI data call are consistent with level 6 of the Commission Decision 2010/93 and follow the recommendation of RCGs [RCGs/Metiers/Reference lists at master · ices-eg/RCGs · GitHub](#). The list of codes is provided on the data submission website. For METIER\_7 field (métier on DCF level7) should conform with the code list agreed by RCM MED&BS-LP 2014 (for the tuna fisheries Large Pelagic Fisheries and monitored by Tuna fisheries RFMOs). Almost all countries now have consistent métier codes with the exception of only 2 MS and only for some years.

The STECF EWG 25 10 is suggesting for 2026 FDI data call to no longer call for the Refusal Rate (Table B). The STECF EWG 25 05 and EWG 25 10 looked into the methodology required to populate Table B and agreed to discontinue the request of this table in future FDI data calls. Refusal rates are estimated based on the sampling frame, but most Member States cannot report them consistently due to non-probability-based designs and lack of non-participation records. STECF PLEN 25 02 supports not calling Table B in FDI any longer but agrees that refusal rates remain valuable and supports the EWG 25 05 suggestion to include them in Annual Reports (ARs) and Work Plans (WPs), where they can provide useful context on sampling quality and coverage. The suggestion for not calling the Refusal rate (Table B) will be finalized in the STECF PLEN 25 03 in November 2025. The STECF EWG 25 16 Evaluation of Work Plans will investigate the suggestion to include the information contained in the Refusal rate table B in the Annual Reports (ARs) and Work Plans (WPs).

The EWG 25 10 recommended to implement new data checks by JRC on the DCF website (in the page "Data for experts") a dashboard with the comparison between FDI and AER datasets (Capacity, Effort and Landings).

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## *Data management (ToR 2A&2B)*

Other data checks suggested to implement are for Fleet segments, comparing the fleet segments provided to the capacity table (Table J) and to the other tables. For Métiers, updating the cross-check procedure against the métier list, using sub-region and métier combinations. It was noticed the use of métier codes not defined in the regions where the fleets operated.

Visibility of the FDI data set has been discussed by the EWG 24 11 FDI, EWG 25 05 FDI Methodology and 25 10 FDI. The EWG 25 05 looked into the unique downloads from the FDI dissemination pages during December 2023 and December 2024 to understand how the data is used. There were suggestions to modify and add information on the data dissemination web site to highlight the important work the EWG is doing. Improvements in the text on the dissemination pages were suggested to make it more user-friendly. Interactive guidelines following the data call Annex were also proposed to be included in the dissemination pages. EWG 25 05 suggested adding a link to the National Work plans and Annual reports in the metadata file of the FDI data on the dissemination pages. The EWG 25 05 also suggested, with support by the PLEN 25 02 to use a DOI for the FDI data that would enable the data to be traced when used in scientific publications.

### *Discussions and feedback*

A remark was done that doing even a small change in the data provided to FDI may cause a big issue, such as submitting geo indicator 'NGI' for one year and then the system requesting an update of historical data, which is not feasible. FDI representative acknowledged the efforts but stated that this does not seem easy to be solved.

## **3.2 Confidentiality and data sharing**

For the Liaison meeting, an update was given on the work on data confidentiality that has been ongoing in 2024 and 2025. In the Liaison meeting in 2024, the recommendation from RCG NANSEA and Baltic to have a workshop on data confidentiality in relation to the RDBES data license was discussed, and it was highlighted that similar work on data publication was also ongoing in relation to the STECF FDI data and other places. Therefore, it was agreed to prepare a background document on confidentiality in relation to fisheries data. This background document describes the needs for publication of data by end-users (e.g., for ICES advice), the current situation, legislations and advice from Commission to the NCs and how confidentiality is dealt with in different data calls: RDBES, FDI, ICES VMS, RDBFIS and in Eurostat. In November 2024 during the ICES WGRDBESGOV meeting, a suggestion was made to issue an EU survey to understand the legislation and agreements in EU Member States.

In January 2025, the Commission launched the EU survey on data confidentiality rules in EU Member States. The questions on confidentiality restrictions broken down by data type and whether it related to sharing of detailed data, use of detailed data by end-users and/or publication of data/results. During the spring 2025, the results of the survey were compiled, and the ISSG NCs chairs discussed the process and ways forward. The FDI EWG methodology 2025 was tasked to suggest ways to publish more data on MS level and suggested aggregation levels. During the RCG NANSEA and Baltic Technical meeting all NCs were invited to a presentation on data flows and a suggested template for data requests from scientific projects. It was approved by the NCs that the results of the EU Survey can be shared to relevant end-user groups like FDI and WGRDBESGOV. At the 2025 pre-Decision Meeting, the suggested aggregation levels were presented where MS could indicate sensitivity of publishing weight of landings, value of landings, discards and effort parameters, and at the following FDI meeting the practical way to work with the sensitivity levels were suggested.

The results of the EU survey indicated that it is the publication of data that is most sensitive and that socio-economic data are most restrictive. The GDPR is the legislation that is most often referred to

### *Data management (ToR 2A&2B)*

as reason to keep data confidential. It was also clear that there are often national agreements between data owners (Ministries/Control agencies) and scientific institutes working with the data, with giving e.g., the rule that there must be at least 3 vessels to publish data. There are less restrictions if a request is part of a data call within a legal framework. There are concerns of losing access to data or trust by the industry and control agencies.

Flowcharts have been made to illustrate the data flows for the data submitted to RDBES and FDI, where the steps have been coloured according to data sharing (submitting data in response to data calls), data use (procedures in place for experts to work on the data to answer specific requests) and data publication (publishing of results/data dissemination).

#### *Discussions and feedback*

The work presented was highly valued by the participants, and the discussion centered around striking a balance between data disaggregation, transparency, and confidentiality.

For economic data, disaggregation is considered a strength because it allows more detailed and accurate analysis. In addition, it was noted that further aggregation may lead to a loss of transparency and create distrust in the sector, as if something was hidden in the data.

The group stressed the importance of distinguishing between sharing and publishing. And a reflexion was raised on how data on common resources can be confidential.

A clarification is provided, that the approach proposed by the RCG maintains the highest level of disaggregation level for sharing data to allow scientific work, while limiting the publication of data. In this process MS decide on sensitivity levels for data publication, and these must be respected. Participants emphasized that perceptions vary by country, and that enabling access in some countries could encourage others to join. In addition, the process promotes the dialog between control administration and scientific institutes on which level of data can be shared and published. This could lead to more open data, as the impression is that some data classified as confidential may not truly be sensitive. However, the risks of the opposite effect were acknowledged. The overarching goal remains to provide relevant data for scientific assessment, not for control or financial restrictions.

Additionally, a point was made about the “three vessel rule”, which is often misinterpreted. The rule is not about counting how many vessels have caught a particular species, but how many vessels were fishing in that area (and may not have caught anything). This is particularly important for rare species, where there is a risk of losing the limited data available because the rules are misinterpreted and therefore records are marked as confidential. Finally, it was noted that there is ongoing work at FAO regarding confidentiality, and that cooperation could be considered.

### **3.3 RDBFIS III**

The presentation provided an overview of the ongoing development of the Regional Database for the Mediterranean and Black Sea (RDBFIS), currently in its third phase. Initiated in 2021, RDBFIS aims to establish a unified, interoperable platform for the storage, management, and access of fisheries and ecosystem-related data submitted by Member States under various regional and EU data calls (e.g., Med&BS, FDI, AER, GFCM/DCRF, MEDITS, and MEDIAS).

RDBFIS III, launched in April 2025 for a duration of 13.5 months, focuses on the continued hosting, maintenance, fine-tuning, and enhancement of the system, as well as on completing its population with both historical and recent datasets. The work is structured into eight main tasks, encompassing technical maintenance, data integration, fine-tuning and further development, user support, training, and preparation for the eventual handover of the system to a permanent host.

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## *Data management (ToR 2A&2B)*

Significant progress has been achieved in improving backend and frontend performance, optimizing the database infrastructure, and advancing analytical and data-quality tools such as RoME, RDBqc, and BioIndex. Additional developments include spatial and decision-support tools (e.g., tools4MCDA), and the enhancement of biological data-processing functionalities. Ongoing activities focus on the integration of open-source R packages for MEDIAS and biological sampling optimization (e.g., SDTool, BioSim), the development of statistical modules (stat4RDBFIS) to support raising procedures, and continuous updates to validation schemes and spatial analysis components.

Active participation in regional meetings and workshops, together with the organization of training sessions, ensures that the tools developed under RDBFIS III effectively address regional requirements and support future reporting and data-quality obligations in a consistent and harmonized manner.

### *Discussions and feedback*

A question was raised about the coordination and cooperation between RDBFISH and RDBES. The two systems are not compatible because they are based on different philosophies and sampling designs. However, cooperation between them was established from the very beginning. In this regard, the relevant RDBES data model has been incorporated into RDBFIS, allowing RDBES data to be easily hosted within RDBFIS. There is also room for cooperation in data quality checks and validation procedures. Furthermore, it is particularly relevant to agree on a common format for diadromous, large pelagic and bycatch species.

The chair of RCG Med&BS highlighted that a recommendation has been issued to hold a joint meeting with all relevant actors involved in bycatch estimation. There is a need to streamline data collection, data processing and reporting in those data types that are used by different end-users.

## **3.4 RDBES**

The Working Group on Governance of the Regional Database & Estimation System (WGRDBESGOV) provides the governance function for the Regional Database & Estimation System (RDBES) and is composed of representatives from ICES member countries and EU Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs). Overall, the RDBES has an important role in increasing transparency and improving the quality of stock assessments. The RDBES is meant to provide support to the RCGs, ICES Assessment Working Groups (AWGs) and FDI. The deadline for the full implementation of the RDBES for the ICES AWGs is set for 2027. This is an ambitious goal, and it requires actions and developments at both national and ICES levels.

The RDBES holds commercial fisheries data (i.e. effort, landings and biological sampling data) and is populated by the national data submitters in response to an annual joint ICES/RCG data call. Once the RDBES is populated, data can be extracted and further processed. The ISSG RCG Overviews extracts RDBES data to create fisheries overviews in aid of regional coordination by the RCGs. At this point the ISSG can create effort and landings overviews, and also sampling overviews, using RDBES data. Regarding the ICES AWGs, work is in development. First, the national estimators need to process their national RDBES data to generate the national estimates. Based on the national estimates, the stock coordinators can then generate the stock estimates (based on the national estimates) after which stock assessments can take place. The entire chain (i.e. national estimates, stock estimates, stock assessment) needs to be done within the ICES Transparent Assessment Framework (TAF). To support this work, a series of WGs and WGs have been planned in 2025 (Table 3.4.1). It is planned that the RDBES will be used also to answer the FDI Data Call in the future, but the national estimates and FDI variables first need to be available before a FDI export can be generated.

## Fisheries Data Collection – 22<sup>nd</sup> Liaison Meeting – Report

### *Data management (ToR 2A&2B)*

In order to prepare for the full implementation of the RDBES in 2027, the WGRDBESGOV proposed a full trial for eight selected stocks (i.e. ple.27.43a20, tur.27.4, bli.27.3a47de, sol.27.7g, pil.27.8c9a, sol.27.8ab, mac.27.nea, her.27.25-2932) prior to that date. The trial shall include all steps of the workflow, from populating the database to the production of first the national and then the stock estimates for the stock coordination. In order to involve as many countries as possible, the eight selected stocks cover different WGs, areas and countries.

*Table 3.4.1: WGs and WGs planned in 2025 to give support to national data submitters, national estimators and stock coordinators on RDBES*

<b>WK/WGs</b>	<b>Chair(s)</b>	<b>Dates 2025</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Goal</b>	<b>Target Group</b>
<b>WKTNet</b>	A. Ribeiro Santos, C. Millar	27-31 Jan	Online	Create national estimation templates, TAF training.	National Estimators
<b>Training Quality Checking CL&amp;CE</b>	K. Molla Gazi	Mid-end March	Online	Run the Quality Report, identify potential errors, provide support	Data Submitters
<b>WKNatEst</b>	A. Ribeiro Santos, J. Graig	2-5 Jun	Online	Collaborate on reproduction of national estimations.	National Estimators
<b>WKTNet2</b>	A. Ribeiro Santos, C. Millar	16-20 Jun	Online	Create national estimation templates, TAF training.	National Estimators
<b>WKRDBES-INTRO</b>	H. Kjems-Nielsen	30 Sept-2 Oct	Online	Introduce RDBES to new participants and provide the time slots for advanced questions.	Data Submitters National Estimators
<b>WKRDBES-RaiseStock2</b>	S. Moran, M. Adamowicz	6-10 Oct	Online	Reproduce the national estimates for 8 stocks	National estimators
<b>WGRDBES-EST</b>	A. C. Fernandes, R. Meitern	13-17 Oct	IJmuiden, NLD	Develop a generic ratio estimation function and RDBES visualize	National Estimators
<b>WGRDBES-StockCoord</b>	S. Nimmegeers, K. B. Hakansson	31st January	Online	Test RCEF and develop stock coordination function	Stock Coordinators
		May/June		Test RCEF and develop stock coordination function	Stock Coordinators
		23-24 Sept		Present RCEF to national data submitters and national estimators. Ask for feedback	National Estimators Stock Coordinators
		21-23 Oct		Reproduce the national estimates for several stocks	Stock Coordinators

### **Communication**

For a successful implementation of the RDBES, WGRDBESGOV concluded that they need to reinforce the communication with data submitters, national estimators and stock coordinators and make them aware of their responsibility. This is work in progress with the RCGs Secretariat and ICES.

### **Training Quality Checking CL & CE**

A meeting with the data submitters was scheduled two weeks prior to the joint ICES/RCG data call deadline to run the script on the national CL and CE data. Even though many countries did not have their data uploaded to the RDBES yet, most of them were positive. The development of the quality checking script of CS data is currently on hold due to the lack of funding.

### **Future of data call deadlines (2027-onwards)**

The RCGs and ICES AWGs are the two main end-users of RDBES data. However, the dates and the scope of the data required by the two entities differs. WGRDBESGOV therefore proposed to issue a single Joint RCG & ICES Data Call, where different deadlines are set depending on the needs of the end-user:

- ICES AWG deadlines

These deadlines are specific for each AWG, and they will be set a number of weeks before the dates of the group, in a similar way as they are now. The deadline is the same for national data submitters and national estimators, meaning that for the specific stock both the (i) import to the RDBES, and (ii) national estimates provided in TAF need to be conducted before the set deadlines. The data uploaded for the AWG deadlines can be complete, for all stocks and variables, if national institutes have all data available by that time. But they can also be partial, if only data for the required stock are uploaded, or if some variables are not available at the time (i.e. those required for FDI). In the case of partial uploads, the overwriting rules of the RDBES need to be taken into account in future re-uploads.

- RCG deadline

The deadline for the RCG will remain the 1st of April. By this time RDBES data will need to be uploaded to the RDBES as complete as possible, taking into account all species and all areas covered for the RCGs, and also all mandatory variables. This deadline only applies to the European Member States.

- FDI deadline

The FDI deadline in August will incorporate FDI variables, in the case they have not been included in previous uploads. This deadline only applies to the European Member States.

### **Financing**

Development of the RDBES is also still needed regarding the development of FDI export, incidental bycatch, recreational fisheries, quality checking script CS etc. Unfortunately, the EU project DataWave addressing, amongst others, the development of the RDBES was rejected.

### *Discussions and feedback*

The RDBES started in 2019 as a Regional Database and Estimation System. Currently, the database population is fully operational and at an advanced stage, considering the number of countries uploading data and the diversity of data types included. The focus is now on the extraction and use of the data. The RCG are already using the data through Catch and Effort Overviews, which provide a general view of the information collected across all stocks and fleets. ICES is working on producing the estimates required for stock assessment from RDBES raw data, and the plan is to concentrate first on eight priority stocks to ensure the complete workflow is functional before expanding to all stocks.

Questions were raised regarding effort calculations in RDBES and FDI. In principle, the methodology should be consistent, although minor differences may exist. To document the approach used in RDBES, RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic have developed templates based on previous work carried out by FDI. It is also noted that in the RWP the MS agreed on using a common effort calculation for the SSF. This is also applicable to the RDBES.

A concern was raised about the increase of workload if data for large pelagic species needs to be submitted to the RDBES and to ICCAT. The RCG LP has largely discussed on which regional database to use. A test study is being conducted with selected countries. The objective is to verify whether LP data can be uploaded using the RDBES data format and whether all information required by ICCAT can be extracted from the RDBES data format. This would allow for the RDBES data format to be used in both regional databases.

## **4 RCG ACTIVITIES (TOR 3)**

- A. *Highlights in RCG activities*
- B. *The 2024 RCGs – recommendations and proposals for future intersessional work (Liaison Meeting and RCG chairs)*
- C. *RCG data calls – overview of how MS responded and discussion on future use (RCG chairs)*
- D. *Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues*
- E. *Future steps in RCG pan-regional and intersessional work (i.e., regional work plans, country profiles): exchange of ideas and discussion (COM, Liaison Meeting, RCG Chairs)*

### **4.1 Highlights in RCG activities**

#### **4.1.1 RCG Long Distance Fisheries**

The group reviewed progress on regional coordination since 2024, the outcomes of the 21<sup>st</sup> Liaison Meeting, and feedback from end-users. The group also reviewed the Long Distance Fisheries activities of MS in the CECAF, SPRFMO, NAFO and other regions, using the data uploaded by the MS to the RDBES, which is hosted by ICES and supports the RCG's work.

Regarding data collection in the CECAF area, data were routinely collected for Madeira and the Canary Islands under the PRT and ESP programs respectively. In the West African region, data from EU small pelagic fisheries could not be collected for another year due to the reluctance of vessel operators to take on scientific observers due to a lack of space. According to information from the vessel operators, the requirement for a Mauritanian crew of at least 60% is sometimes exceeded. However, replacing a Mauritanian crew member with an observer is not realistic, as someone still needs to sort and pack the catch. Furthermore, the control observer already participates in each trip and, from a practical perspective, cannot also work as a scientific observer.

Taking into account the impossibility of embarking observers on EU vessels fishing in the CECAF region in recent years due to reasons beyond the control of the relevant MS institutes responsible for data collection, the RCG LDF has decided to temporarily suspend the joint EU programme for the collection of fisheries data from the CECAF region until the organizational and administrative problems related to the deployment of EU observers on EU vessels are resolved.

The RCG LDF recommends that, during the renegotiation of the SFPA protocol between the EU and Mauritania, the Commission should state the following:

- The EU and IMROP should be able to embark one or two scientific observers on any selected sampling trip.
- The percentage of Mauritanian crew members should be significantly reduced to accommodate one or two scientific observers.
- The scientific observer should be counted as standard crew, and the RIM scientific observer can also count towards the required percentage of RIM crew.

In 2024, two EU vessels flying the flags of POL and LTU were active in the SPRFMO. Three out of nine fishing trips were observed, achieving an observer coverage rate of 38% - well above the minimum target of 10%. Of the two trips observed at the beginning of the year in April and May, no jack mackerel was caught. Biological data was successfully collected on 25 out of 30 fishing days at sea in November.

## *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

No significant changes in the types of fisheries or target species were observed in the NAFO region. Additionally, NAFO has not identified any major issues with EU data that require coordination, nor any gaps in the data necessary for stock assessment. As NAFO does not hold a database of all biological raw data, the RDBES could be used to store this information and, in the future, provide NAFO with access to it. The ISSG-NAFO-SP is currently working to harmonize the protocols for onboard sampling between EU MS's.

Despite the TAC for chub mackerel being set for the EU for 2024 and 2025, no activity was observed from EU fishing vessels in NPFC. In anticipation of any activity, a multilateral agreement is in force for the collection of biological data on pelagic fisheries in NPFC waters between Germany, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland for the period 2025–2027. To avoid blocking financial resources in the DCF budgets for 2025 that were set aside by the relevant MS to cover potential data collection costs in the NPFC area, the Group has decided to suspend coordination activities relating to fisheries data collection in the NPFC area in 2025.

During the RCG LDF, representatives from various DG MARE units shared information about the different negotiation processes with RFMOs. The Group expressed their dissatisfaction at the fact that most decisions had already been made without consultation, despite the Group being responsible for coordinating data collection within the different RFMOs. The Group emphasised that sharing information and consulting with the Group is crucial, given that the Commission is part of the group and direct communication is already possible. It was agreed that a standard feedback session involving different DG MARE units should be included in the ToR. The RCG should be contacted for advice and support in the event of urgent questions relating to the negotiation of data requirements.

Changes to the RWP were discussed at the technical meeting. It was agreed that the plan should align with the guidelines and take the STECF 24-15 EWG's comments into account. Regarding the inclusion of all species for sampling where catches exceed the 200-tonne threshold, the Group decided that new species should only be selected for sampling at technical meetings if requested by end-users. Following a suggestion from the Joint Scientific Committee, *Brama brama* was added to the list of species selected for sampling with effect from this year.

### *Discussions and feedback*

During the first day session, DG MARE asked about the implications of temporarily suspending the collection of fisheries data from the CECAF region. LDF RCG chair responded that data has not been collected for the past five years. RCG LDF chair highlights that countries are ready to collect data, current problems to deploy EU observers on EU vessels need to be resolved. It needs to be understood that data are important for CECAF and for us EU MS to negotiate and make decisions.

It was also highlighted that some MS use a very broad definition of the métier MIS-MIS, which has become a dominant category and creates significant difficulties. The RCG LDF decided to remove it, as coordination on MIS-MIS fisheries activities does not refer to a specific type of fishery—demersal, crustaceans, cephalopods are all included. Moreover, it does not indicate gear type or area. It was agreed that these details should be specified instead of using MIS-MIS. There is a need to avoid this métier code and provide geographical scope, as this information is also essential.

### **4.1.2 RCG Large Pelagics**

The 2025 Regional Coordination Group for Large Pelagics (RCG LP) held its annual technical meeting in Larnaca, Cyprus, from June 2nd to June 4th. The meeting brought together experts from eight Member States; Portugal, France, Spain, Ireland, Italy, Croatia, Cyprus, and Greece, alongside representatives from the European Commission. Hosted by the Department of Fisheries and Marine

### *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

Research (DFMR) of Cyprus, the hybrid meeting focused on aligning data collection systems, enhancing collaboration, and addressing key issues in the regional coordination of large pelagic species activities.

The meeting covered a comprehensive range of critical areas:

- Updates to the Regional Work Plan (RWP) were a central focus, with the group addressing STECF RWP evaluation findings and establishing a framework for the revised 2028-2030 RWP using official ICCAT and IOTC data. Progress was made as regards the investigation on the suitability of RDBES format in delivering ICCAT ST forms, with five Member States (Portugal, Ireland, Cyprus, France, and Italy) committing to participate in RDBES case studies workplan.
- Significant attention was given to the coordination of tropical tuna fisheries activities, including observer coordination for offshore operations and onshore data collection efforts. The group restructured its approach by merging the two sub-ISSGs for Tropical Tuna into a single coordinated group co-chaired to represent different aspects of the work. Emphasis was placed on increasing observer coverage and standardising bycatch data collection, especially in tropical tuna fisheries. Progress was also noted on the implementation of Electronic Monitoring Systems (EMS) and collaborative projects aimed at reducing the impact of fisheries on endangered species.
- The Intersessional Sub-Group (ISSG) for Bluefin Tuna reported on several initiatives, including advances in genetic sampling programs and the potential for Close-Kin-Mark-Recapture (CKMR) methodologies. Discussions emphasized the need for a feasibility study on the development of an epigenetic clock for bluefin tuna age determination, highlighting funding constraints and the importance of coordinated EU efforts.
- The bait boat and pole-and-line fisheries received dedicated attention, recognizing their importance in European waters, particularly for Portuguese and Spanish fleets. The group acknowledged the challenges facing these artisanal fisheries, including the cessation of Dakar operations, and changing catch patterns in the Canary Islands and Atlantic islands.
- Pan-regional coordination efforts were advanced through the ISSG Métiers and Transversal Issues, which updated métier reference lists to include school type/FAD information and proposed new gear codes for longline fishing with traplines. The meeting also featured updates on the RDBFIS III project for Mediterranean and Black Sea data management and the SECWEB 2.0 project to enhance online tools for the RCG community.
- Key policy updates were provided by the European Commission on the implementation of the revised Control Regulation, including new VMS requirements, recreational fisheries reporting obligations, and on the evaluation of the Common Fisheries Policy. The Commission also updated participants on Data Collection Framework developments and data transmission monitoring.

As a general recollection and key takeaway, participants emphasized the importance of fostering stronger cooperation and stressed the need for more active and sustained engagement from National Correspondents.

#### **4.1.3 RCG Med&BS**

During the Liaison Meeting, the RCG Med&BS activities for the 2024-2025 period were highlighted as follows:

### **Data Quality**

Following the 2024 RCG Med&BS recommendation requesting all Med&BS Member States (MS) to address priority 1 data issues identified by the QualiTrain project, several MS corrected and resubmitted their data during the 2025 Med&BS Data Call. At the 2025 RCG Med&BS Annual Meeting, MS agreed to resolve all QualiTrain-identified data issues before submitting data to the 2026 Med&BS Data Call.

The activities of the ISSG on Data Quality, established in 2024 and chaired by Kostas Touloumis (GRC), were highlighted. In 2025, national experts conducted quality checks for 37 national priority stocks using 2023 and 2024 data during two dedicated meetings. Experts confirmed their commitment to correcting identified errors and resubmitting data before the operational MED&BS Data Call deadline or, at a minimum, recommending and initiating necessary corrections. Looking ahead, the group recommended maintaining a flexible, adjustable list of priority stocks and expanding quality checks across the entire species time series, especially for recently resubmitted historical data.

### **Surveys at sea**

In line with a 2024 recommendation, DCF Med&BS survey data are now publicly accessible via the Joint Research Centre Data Catalogues, with most MS applying a 3-year restriction period. Non-DCF survey data are also publicly available based on MS agreements. The MEDIAS Steering Committee developed a standardized template to document protocol changes over time; completed templates are included in the 2025 MEDIAS Report and will be shared with end-users. Additionally, the MEDITS Steering Committee is preparing a document detailing the changes in the MEDITS survey design and implementation over time.

### **Med&BS Regional Database (RDBFIS)**

Throughout 2024-2025, MS continued to populate the RDBFIS with datasets submitted through Data Calls and detailed biological data. At the 2025 Annual Meeting, MS agreed to upload the 2023 and 2024 Med&BS datasets submitted to the JRC by the end of September 2025. National experts engaged in training sessions and workshops organized by the RDBFIS consortium. The Med&BS RDB Steering Committee (SC), reactivated after the 2024 RCG Med&BS meeting and chaired by Kolyo Zhelev (BGR), convened twice during 2024-2025. The SC focused on three Terms of Reference (ToRs): servicing data calls via RDBFIS, permanent hosting of the RDB, and further development of the platform. The main unresolved issue remains the hosting solution, which requires a consensus decision.

### **Work on Sampling Optimization**

The ISSG on Sampling Optimization, chaired by Isabella Bitetto (ITA), made progress applying sampling optimization across various Mediterranean and Black Sea areas. Case studies will be considered for inclusion in the 2028-2030 Med&BS Regional Work Plan (RWP), pending approval by relevant National Correspondents.

### **Data Calls**

Med&BS MS have repeatedly expressed concerns over the increasing number of data calls, overlapping submission requirements, and tight deadlines. In 2025, the Med&BS ISSG on End-users was reactivated, chaired by Ivana Vukov (HRV), to help manage the growing workload. A coordination meeting took place in March 2025 with representatives from MS, DGMARE, ICES, GFCM, JRC, and STECF. Progress was noted in platform development, governance, and transparency. However, participants emphasized the need for clearer prioritization of data needs, standardized templates and deadlines, and recognition of MS capacity constraints. A follow-up joint meeting with

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### *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

ICES in April 2025 addressed the ICES 2025 bycatch data call and data formats. During this meeting, the ICES Secretariat and WGBYC members offered support to data submitters and agreed to extend the WGBYC data call deadline to mid or late June. Opportunities for enhanced collaboration on bycatch issues were also discussed.

During the 2025 RCG Med&BS Annual meeting, several decisions and recommendations related to data calls were made, specifically:

- Decision 01. Review the list of stocks included in the Med&BS Data Call and propose amendments.
- Recommendation 01. Discussion among DGMARE and GFCM for solutions in streamlining the submission of biological data.
- Recommendation 02. Joint technical meeting between DG MARE, ICES, GFCM, ICCAT, RCG Med&BS, and RCG LP on the collection and reporting of incidental catch of protected species.

### *Discussions and feedback*

During the first session with end-users, DG MARE and GFCM highlighted the relevance of the ongoing work to improve data quality through the QualiTrain tools and reaffirmed their commitment to streamline and simplify the transmission of biological data to stock assessment groups. The proposed actions, such as simplifying the stock list, improving the reporting templates and revising reporting obligations (which don't always meet assessment needs), will be considered and further discussed with stock assessment groups. The next intersessional period is seen as an opportunity for advancing data transmission and data quality

During the second day, dedicated to RCGs interactions, the group discussed the submission and management of stomach content data. It was confirmed that the data will be incorporated into RDBFIS, which already has a finalized structure and data entry forms aligned with ICES formats and Med&BS requirements. Coordination among different RCGs on this topic is very valuable.

Regarding the submission of bycatch data, the need for strong coordination among RCGs, end-users, and ongoing projects (e.g., Marine Beacon, REDUCE) was emphasized. RCG Med&BS recommended holding a panregional joint meeting on bycatch, a proposal that was highly valued by all actors. The Commission suggested that this meeting should be initiated by the RCG Chairs and offered to facilitate interaction with end-users.

Additionally, greater participation of Med&BS experts in WGBYC was recommended, as some outputs are not being produced for this region due to a lack of expertise. This raised the question of whether bycatch data from Med&BS will be incorporated into RDBES. WGBYC is working to gather all existing bycatch data, but this is a critical issue requiring coordination and should be addressed in the panregional meeting. RDBFIS is also prepared to host bycatch data, and Mediterranean countries expressed concerns about double submissions to RDBFIS and RDBES, especially given the complexity of RDBES. It is also stressed that the RDBFIS is prepared to host all the information that WGBYC is currently asking for. Furthermore, the relevant RFMO for the Mediterranean, GFCM, must be fully integrated into these discussions.

ISSG groups were also reminded to fill in their views in the vision document which has been circulated in preparation of the RWP. The Secretariat will contact RCG Med&BS chairs to organize this communication. It is also suggested to share this document with the rest of RCGs and the LM.

### **4.1.4 RCG ECON**

The RCG ECON 2025 technical meeting was held from 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of May in Vigo, with the option to join online through the Teams virtual meeting platform. A total of 71 experts attended representing 23 Member States, Joint Research Centre, DG-MARE and ICES. Of those, 32 attended the meeting in person in Vigo, and an additional 39 joined via the Teams platform.

Specific topics discussed relevant for end-user interactions related to seven ToRs. Feedback from the European Commission (DG MARE) was received for stakeholder feedback and on social aspects. DG-MARE presented the results of the EU survey on data confidentiality, noting both legal and non-legal restrictions, and emphasised the need to balance GDPR compliance with data-sharing obligations. The ISSG on data confidentiality will prepare common guidance, with RCG ECON asking to contribute input on clustering versus withholding. Related to social aspects DG-MARE provided updates on upcoming RCG meetings, including the new social data call for 2025, and outlined the timeline for the next regional work plans (2028–2030). Feedback on the 2025–2027 plan highlighted inconsistent national commitment to agreed initiatives, with RCG ECON invited to consider including additional common content in the next cycle. Updates were also given on the DCF IT platform, the 2024 annual report timeline, and efforts to resolve DTMT data transmission backlogs.

JRC presented feedback from STECF meetings on recent fisheries economics and aquaculture data calls, including the annual economic reports. The focus was on the fleet economic data call and the use of voluntary variables (e.g. geo indicator, gear, fishing, activity level, maximum sea days), stressing their consistent and timely application. JRC raised two points: whether VUR should become mandatory if essential to balance exercise, and whether RCG ECON should recommend methods for estimating it. Updates were also given on enhanced analytical dashboards, improved data submission and quality, and proposed structural changes to EWG meetings—introducing a 2–3 day online preparatory phase before a focused 3-day in-person session to strengthen analysis at the EU level. Finally, JRC outlined planning for upcoming data calls in the processing industry and social data domains.

Collaboration between the ICES Working Group on Economic issues was discussed based on a presentation from the chair of the WGECON. The ICES WG and RCG ECON are enthusiastic about collaborating and building a more formal relationship, although realising this in a practical relationship may be challenging as both organs function on a different speed.

RCG ECON has several recommendations that ask for feedback from the end-user. These recommendations were first proposed in the ISSG on Methodological issues and agreed upon during the technical meeting for 2025.

The RCG ECON group recommended that the current definition and interpretation of the VUR is reassessed and tailored specifically for small-scale fleets by the STECF, as the group acknowledges that the current definition and interpretation does not work well for the small-scale fleet. The RCG ECON and ISSG ToR Chair proposes that the STECF Expert Working Groups on Annual Economic Report (AER), Fisheries Dependent Information (FDI) and Balance Capacity of the fleet assess the impact of the Maximum Days at Sea calculations in relation to fleet activity levels and Vessel Utilisation Ratio (VUR) calculations.

Regarding the ToR on data collection on social aspects, the RCG ECON group recommends that the new social indicator “Financial Position” should be renamed to avoid overlap with an existing AER economic indicator. Next year’s STECF EWG dedicated to social analysis should rename the social indicator and notify the RCG ECON when the new name is decided. The RCG ECON will notify MSs so that they can update their National WP, accordingly, if needed. Finally, the RCG ECON group recommends that the ToR for the STECF EWG on Social Data should include analyses of Aquaculture and Fish Processing social data.

### *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

Highlights of activities performed by the RCG ECON of key importance to MS and NC are the following:

Under the ToR related to the energy transition of fisheries and aquaculture, the main objective was to recommend ways to monitor this transition through the existing Data Collection Framework (DCF). RCG ECON recommended that the end-users (EC and STECF) are to provide feedback on i) whether the suggested activities to cover the end-users' data on energy consumption in fisheries and aquaculture align with their needs to monitor energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture and ii) if additional actions are needed to increase knowledge on energy consumption, and the link with energy consumption and emissions. This should be done before MSs take action. Depending on this feedback of the end-user, the MS are to start gathering fuel type use information from fisheries and energy type use of aquaculture enterprises. The latter only if possible, and on a voluntary basis. For the sake of completeness, it has to be stated that Regulation (EU) 2023/1805 itself excludes “fish-catching or fish-processing ships” from the obligation to collect data but is used here as a reference for the specification of fuel types. Regarding aquaculture under the same ToR on energy transition, and on the condition that feedback is provided from the EC, the MSs will start gathering data on the use of energy of various energy types as specified in Regulation (EU) 2023/1805 on using renewable and low-carbon fuels from data collection year 2026

The RCG ECON group recommended for the ToR on vessel activity, to explore the consequence of using the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile method for calculating maximum days at sea for fleet segments, compared to other methods used to calculate this value.

A broader type of activities performed by the RCG ECON that are essential for both MS and NC, as well as RCG ECON chairs, can be summarised as follows.

Under the ToR valuation of capital, given the lack of a standardised method in the EU for valuing intangible assets, it is recommended where possible, to collect and compare data from multiple sources regularly. It is also suggested to further investigate the use of the average economic results for the last five years when calculating the prices using the DCFM, to take into account variation in gross profit. Such investigations will test the validity of the assumptions that underly the statistical method to estimate capital value.

Concerning calculations of days at sea for small scale vessels, the RCG ECON group recommended for relevant MSs to assess the completeness of declared data (e.g. logbooks), gaps or biases should be identified and reported in the national work programs. Furthermore, the assumptions used in days at sea calculations when using data available “day-by-day” (and not “fishing trip by fishing trip”, e.g. coastal logbooks) should be assessed especially when only sales note data are considered. The assumptions should be evaluated against the EU-agreed definitions, and findings should be documented in the national data collection programs.

Finally, the RCG ECON group recommends that MSs which have included a test study on collection of new social data in their WP to provide results of their year-long test study or first year work at a dedicated RCG ECON ISSG workshop on social aspects. RCG ECON and ISSG chair decided to organize an ISSG workshop specifically where MS with case studies to collect social data share and discuss their experiences, data sources and data collection methodologies.

### *Discussions and feedback*

During the first session with end-users, and regarding the collection of new variables, it was reminded that the inclusion of new variables in the FDI DC or in the Annual Report affects RDBES. However, it was clarified that there is not a request for new mandatory variables.

### *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

During the second day, dedicated to RCGs interactions, a collaboration was suggested with the ISSG on métier and transversal variables, as they are also working on revising data from active and no active vessels, geolocation data, identifying gaps in the data etc.

Then, the discussion focused on the topic on data collection on fuel use and carbon emissions. Up to date, the requests received from the Commission have been too vague and there has been confusion about which data needed to be collected. In addition, some Member States have expressed resistance, arguing that the data call on economic data is not the right place to request this information. On top of all, legislative changes are needed, as the submission of these data is voluntary and MS prioritize mandatory data collection.

The Commission clarifies that data collected for fisheries up to date is fine; but that for aquaculture better data on feed consumption are needed.

A comment was made about the high amount of information which is generated by RCGs and the idea of developing an AI model/chatbox to help access the relevant information. The Secretariat answered that this possibility was proposed under SECWEB 2.0 project, but that participants prioritized other developments. However, it can be taken into account for the future

#### **4.1.5 RCG NANSEA & RCG Baltic**

The RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic Technical Meeting 2025 was held as a one-day online session on 3 June and a physical meeting in Lysekil, Sweden, on 10–13 June 2025, with the Decision Meeting taking place on 24 September 2025 in Brussels. ISSGs presented their progress and future work plans, and several key topics were discussed with ICES, the Commission, and other end-users.

The main highlights from 2024–2025 included:

- ISSG Stomach Sampling advanced its work by planning coordinated sampling across regions, preparing an intercalibration workshop, and ensuring that data are uploaded to the ICES stomach database. Sampling alone is insufficient, and resources must also be allocated to content analysis and proper data submission.
- ISSG Recreational Fisheries addressed the new control regulation requirements, particularly those concerning recreational fisheries, and began integrating these into reporting frameworks. Special attention was given to how data from Baltic plaice recreational fisheries could be better captured and included in stock assessments.
- ISSG Electronic Monitoring Technologies (EMT) mapped the current state of EMT use across fleets and considered confidentiality challenges. The group worked on strategies for overcoming barriers to data sharing and continued exploring the use of artificial intelligence to automate video review and analysis. Plan to make this group pan-regional was raised during the Liaison meeting.
- ISSG Regional Sampling Plans progressed several case studies, including small pelagics in the Baltic, freezer trawlers in the Northeast Atlantic, and trawl fisheries in Iberian waters. These pilots aim to refine approaches to regional sampling and to improve consistency across countries.
- ISSG Diadromous DIASPARA project is ongoing. Contributed to improving data collection for diadromous species, reducing information gaps and ensuring that new requirements are better reflected in regional work plans.

One additional item of note was the group exercise during the NANSEA Baltic technical meeting, in which participants split into six groups to focus on data collection optimization. Key ideas included replacing outdated methods with electronic monitoring, reducing the collection of unused data, and prioritizing surveys based on end-user needs. During these discussions, several important points

### *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

were raised. Participants questioned whether EM could replace existing methods and thus streamline sampling. Communication channels were identified as critical, especially with regard to how recommendations are formulated, followed up, and whether alternative mechanisms could be developed. Concerns were also expressed that some types of data currently collected are not used by end-users, underlining the need for feedback from assessment working groups (AWGs) and from systems such as SID or TAF in order to guide prioritization.

The group also discussed how to integrate new data requests into the Data Collection Framework (DCF) while assessing whether some existing requirements could be excluded. This reflects the broader challenge of balancing the introduction of new monitoring techniques with existing obligations. Prioritizing survey effort was emphasized as a key task, requiring the identification of which surveys are of higher or lower priority. Feedback from AWGs was considered essential to evaluate the usefulness of data collected under the DCF. Optimization of sampling was addressed. The importance of early consultation before implementing survey changes was stressed. Overall, participants agreed that stronger interaction between RCGs/ISSGs and end-users, COM, policy makers is necessary to ensure that data collection remains both relevant and efficient, while also exploring opportunities to reduce or remove lower-value elements of current sampling to make space for new requirements. In the Liaison meeting this “group discussion format” was highlighted as a good practice that could be shared and could be implemented across other RCGs.

### *Discussions and feedback*

During the first session with end-users, questions were raised regarding ongoing CINEA projects on genetic sampling, specifically GenDC (Atlantic cod) and Improfish (Baltic herring), and whether these initiatives were known by the RCG. The RCG chairs confirmed that some recommendations from GenDC have already been incorporated and that they will consider inviting Improfish to future meetings to provide feedback.

On the recommendations addressed to the Commission, the Commission noted the recommendation to maintain the current format of the Regional Work Plan (RWP) and agreed that no additional time should be spent on this matter. Regarding incorporating sampling optimization into the quality annexes, the Commission states that it will be brought to the STECF group working on work plans evaluation.

There are ongoing discussions in the Mediterranean and Black Sea on whether stomach data collection should include commercial fisheries (as is the NANSEA and Baltic) or remain based solely on scientific surveys. There are still open questions about whether these data are actually used and by whom. The RCG chairs clarified that, under the RWP, all stomach sampling data are derived from surveys. However, some countries include sampling from commercial fisheries in their National Work Plans (NWP), typically when survey data are unavailable. In general, survey-based data are considered more suitable due to the shorter time between capture and sample collection. Regarding data use, ICES confirmed that application is currently limited, with WGSAM being the only working group utilizing these datasets. Additionally, the SANOPA project is working to improve the existing database and address formatting issues.

During the second day, dedicated to RCGs interactions, a point was made on the inclusion of a new métier code upon request from STECF. The proposed Gear code level 4 is LLT, for longlines with trap lines, with specific gear details to be recorded. The code and reporting of gear was supported by the RCG LP. The ISSG on Métier and transversal variables will make an inventory of the use of this gear by EU MS.

## **4.2 Recommendations and decisions**

All the details regarding the 2025 RCGs recommendations and decisions can be found on [2025 RCGs Decision Meeting report](#).

### **4.2.1 RCG Long Distance Fisheries**

During the 2025 Technical Meeting, the RCG made the following decisions and recommendations.

#### *Decisions:*

**LDF\_2025\_D01.** To suspend coordination activities relating to the collection of fisheries data in the NPFC area in 2025. Follow-up actions needed: Approval by all relevant NCs and ensure that the programme will resume when EU vessels start fishing in the area. Time frame: Decision meeting 2025.

**LDF\_2025\_D02.** Temporarily suspend the joint EU programme for collecting fisheries data in the CECAF region. Follow-up actions needed: Approval by all relevant NCs. Time frame: Decision meeting 2025.

#### *Recommendations:*

**LDF\_2025\_R01.** Improvement of the quality of data provided. Follow-up actions needed: Approved by all RCG LDF NCs. Time frame: Decision meeting 2025.

**LDF\_2025\_R02.** Address the organizational and administrative issues relating to the deployment of EU observers on EU vessels targeting small pelagic fish within the CECAF area. Follow-up actions needed: Approved by all RCG LDF NCs. Time frame: Decision meeting 2025.

### **4.2.2 RCG Large Pelagics**

The following decisions and recommendations, involving future intersessional work, were taken for 2025:

#### *Decisions:*

**LP\_2025\_D01.** Adopt official ICCAT and IOTC latest nominal catches data submitted by DGMARE as compiled (as compiled from MSs) to be used for the formulation of RCG LP RWP. Follow-up actions needed: Use the current data available for nominal catches in Task. 1 data from ICCAT and IOTC and the data to be provided by DG MARE (in recommendation 01) for the previous years to fill Table 2.1 in the RWP. Time frame: To be prepared for the RWP 2028-2030 (submitted before Oct. 2026)

**LP\_2025\_D02.** For the ISSG BFT to run a data call for collecting biological data info to submit to ICCAT. Follow-up actions needed: ISSG BFT to first agree on a template with the end user, then send to the data call to all MSs. Time frame: Intersessionally, to launch the data call in the Q1 for 2026 (all to reach the TM 2026 for RCGLP).

**LP\_2025\_D03.** Merge sub-ISSGs Tropical Tuna Observers and Tropical Tuna Treatment into a single group at a joint single meeting (ISSG Tropical Tuna), led by two co-chairs. Follow-up actions needed: Update documentation and website. Time frame: Intersessionally.

*RCG activities (ToR 3)*

*Recommendations:*

**LP\_2025\_R01.** Transmission of the official data submitted to ICCAT and IOTC simultaneously to the RCG Chairs. DGMARE, in agreement with MSs to yearly (starting in 2025) send the official data submitted to ICCAT and IOTC simultaneously to the RCG Chairs for them to coordinate the work needed for formulating current updates of the RWP. Follow-up actions needed: DG MARE to send the Nominal Catches that are submitted to the RFMOs (ICCAT and IOTC) to the RCG LP Co-chairs. Time frame: Yearly, starting in 2025.

**LP\_2025\_R02.** MSs participation in the RDBES case study to attend the ICES WKRBES-INTRO. For the five MSs (Portugal, Ireland, Cyprus, France, Italy) that expressed their interest to participate in the RDBES case study to attend the ICES WKRBES-INTRO meeting in September. Follow-up actions needed: The 5 MSs will review the status of the Case Study Data to RDBES transformation and meet before the end of 2025 to discuss next steps to complete the transformation. Time frame: September for the ICES Workshop and end of 2025 for the MSs meeting.

**LP\_2025\_R03.** New code for the Longline gear using traplines. To the Métier code and transversal issues ISSG to add a new code for the Longline gear using traplines. Follow-up actions needed: ISSG Métiers and transversal issues to work intersessionally and propose codes (tentatively LLT) to STECF and ICCAT. RCG LP chairs in collaboration with ISSG metiers to consult MSs for fishery specific details to make the information available before RCG LP TM 2026. Time frame: Immediate reaction by ISSG Metier on the tentative code and Intersessionally before RCGLP TM 2026 for the MSs information.

**LP\_2025\_R04.** Coordination of feasibility study on BFT epigenetic clock. For the ISSG BFT to coordinate with MSs for a feasibility study on epigenetic clock for BFT based on samples from the keel. Follow-up actions needed: The ISSG BFT will draft the feasibility study in collaboration with MSs. Time frame: Intersessionally (draft before TM 2026).

### **4.2.3 RCG Med&BS**

The 2025 RCG Med&BS Meeting took place in Constanța, Romania, between 25-29 August 2025. All formulated Decisions and Recommendations were presented during the LM.

*Decisions:*

**Med&BS\_2025\_D01.** Review the list of stocks included in the Med&BS Data Call and propose amendments. Follow-up actions needed: The ISSG RWP should review the current list of species included in the Med&BS Data Call and make a proposal for its revision to the RCG Med&BS. The RCG Med&BS should agree on the final proposed list and communicate it to DGMARE for consideration of this proposal when preparing the next Med&BS data call. Time frame: Before the end of 2025 for the review, March 2026 (NCs meeting) for the agreement on the list.

**Med&BS\_2025\_D02.** MS to provide information on data resubmitted to Med&BS Data Call during the RCG Med&BS Annual Meeting. Follow-up actions needed: MSs should annually inform the RCG Med&BS and DG MARE whether data issues were identified concerning the Med&BS Data Call, and if so, on the actions taken. Time frame: RCG Med&BS Annual Meetings.

**Med&BS\_2025\_D03.** Establish a Med&BS sub-group in the ISSG Diadromous species. Follow-up actions needed: The relevant Med&BS MSs should appoint national experts for participating in the newly established Subgroup. Appointed members of the Subgroup will start working towards regional coordination on eel data collection within 2025. **Comment: This Decision was not adopted during the NCs meeting.**

## *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

**Med&BS\_2025\_D04.** On addressing all data issues on historical data identified by Qualitrain. Follow-up actions needed: MS should address all remaining data issues identified by Qualitrain. Time frame: Before submitting information to the Med&BS Data Call in 2026.

**Med&BS\_2025\_D05.** Med & BS Data submission to RDBFIS. Follow-up actions needed: MSs to upload to RDBFIS the data submitted to JRC under the 2025 and 2024 Med & BS data calls (i.e., 2024 and 2023 data sets). Time frame: Before the end of September 2025.

### *Recommendations:*

**Med&BS\_2025\_R01.** Discussion among DGMARE and GFCM for solutions in streamlining the submission of biological data. Follow-up actions needed: Closer collaboration between DGMARE, Med&BS MS and GFCM, and discussion on possible solutions for streamlining the submission of biological data by the Med&BS MSs. Initiation of discussions, preferably, during the NCs meeting among the Med&BS NCs, DGMARE, and GFCM. Time frame: Initiation of discussions, preferably, during the NCs meeting in September 2025.

**Med&BS\_2025\_R02.** Joint technical meeting between DG MARE, ICES, GFCM, ICCAT, RCG Med&BS and RCG LP on the collection and reporting of incidental catch of protected species. Follow-up actions needed and time frame: Initiation of discussions during the Liaison Meeting 2025 on the proposal of organising a joint technical meeting. Organisation of the joint technical meeting, preferably before the next RCVG Med&BS Annual Meeting.

**Med&BS\_2025\_R03.** Investigating the possibility of collecting acoustic data during the Pelagic Trawl Survey in the Black Sea (PTSBS): Follow-up actions needed: Investigate the possibility to ensure the use of equipment according to MEDIAS protocol (e.g. Simrad EK80). Investigate possible solutions on finding a suitable research vessel for performing acoustic surveys. Responsible persons for follow-up actions: Bulgaria and Romania (both NCs and experts), MEDIAS Coordination Group. Time frame: by the end of 2026.

## **4.2.4 RCG ECON**

### *Recommendations:*

**ECON\_2025\_R01.** Feedback from the ISSG Methodological Issues - Regional Work Plan (RWP) questionnaire. Concerning the RWP for socio-economic data, it is recommended that the RCG ECON group continues to discuss if new optional variables and their definitions can be added to the RWP to improve national data collection and analyses. This ToR can become a fixed ToR to be discussed yearly at the technical meeting. Follow-up actions needed: RCG ECON Chairs with ISSG Chairs will ask feedback and interact with the ISSG pan regional RWP for the inclusion of socio-economic data in the RWP. Time frame: Yearly before TM.

**ECON\_2025\_R02.** Feedback from ISSG Methodological Issues - Valuation of Capital. Given the lack of a standardised method in the EU for valuing intangible assets, it is recommended where possible to collect and compare data from multiple sources regularly. Combining market price methods with the discounted cash flow method (DCF) analysis can improve accuracy. Hedonic regression using second-hand vessel prices offers additional insights, particularly for non-tradable rights, by isolating the value of embedded licenses and/or quotas. It is also suggested to further investigate the use of the average economic results for the last 5 years when calculating the prices using the DCF, to take into account variation in gross profit. Follow-up actions needed: MS to continue testing the methodologies suggested by guidelines for estimating fishing rights and to regularly collect and

### *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

compare data from multiple sources. RCG ECON chairs and ISSG on Valuation of Capital will organise a meeting to compare MS experiences and try to further harmonise methodologies and assumptions behind them. In addition, investigating the use of the economic results of the vessels which are making the most considerable marginal profit to estimate quota or license price levels is needed. Time frame: Early 2027.

**ECON\_2025\_R03.** Feedback ISSG Methodological Issues - Energy transition of EU fisheries and aquaculture. The end-users (EC and STECF) are to provide feedback on Whether the suggested activities to cover the end-users' data on energy consumption in fisheries and aquaculture align with their needs to monitor energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture. If additional actions are needed to increase knowledge on energy consumption and the link with energy consumption and emissions, this should be done before MSs take action. Follow-up actions needed: The end users are to provide feedback on: whether the suggested activities to cover the end users' data on energy consumption in fisheries and aquaculture align with their needs to monitor energy transition in fisheries and aquaculture; If additional actions are needed to increase knowledge on energy consumption and the link with energy consumption and emissions, this should be done before MSs take action. Time frame: By TM 2026.

**ECON\_2025\_R04.** Feedback ISSG Methodological Issues - Energy transition of EU fisheries and aquaculture. MS will start gathering data on fuel use in fisheries of various fuel types as specified in Regulation (EU) 2023/1805 on using renewable and low-carbon fuels in maritime transport from 2026. A vessel's fuel consumption is by far the most critical energy source in fisheries as it is used as a proxy for energy consumption. As some MS need time to alter their data collection plans, this additional data collection is voluntary. Follow-up actions needed: RCG ECON recommends that MSs investigate the potential actions needed to collect the additional information on energy data for fisheries and include this data collection in their National Plan, as from 2026. Time frame: By TM 2026.

**ECON\_2025\_R05.** Feedback ISSG Methodological Issues - Energy transition of EU fisheries and aquaculture. On the condition that feedback is provided from the EC, the MS will start gathering data on the use of energy in aquaculture of various energy types as specified in Regulation (EU) 2023/1805 on using renewable and low-carbon fuels from data collection year 2026. Due to the complexity of the issues, MSs may implement this through adding a question into their standard questionnaire asking the operators to what extent they use renewable energy sources in their companies. As some MS need time to alter their data collection plans, this additional data collection is voluntary. Follow-up actions needed: RCG ECON recommends that MSs investigate the potential actions needed to collect additional information on the fisheries and aquaculture sector. Time frame: By TM 2026.

**ECON\_2025\_R06.** Feedback from the ISSG Methodological Issues – Low active and active vessels. The MS should consider the use of geolocation data for calculating DaS when this data is available. Cross-validation of data sources, especially between logbooks, sales notes, and geolocation data, should be promoted to ensure consistency, and enhance accuracy and reliability of DaS. This recommendation assumes that the 24-hours period for DaS calculations is applied according to the EU DCF methodology. Follow-up actions needed: The RCG ECON and ISSG ToR Chair proposes to have an in-depth ISSG workshop to review and revise best practices guidelines from previous workshops (e.g. RCG ISSG SSF and Metier & Transversal variables) to calculate "Total Days at Sea" especially in the context of the development of geolocation data (with the new EU Control Regulation) and the promotion of cross-validation methods to improve data quality and completeness especially for SSF. Time frame: Early 2027.

**ECON\_2025\_R07.** Feedback from the ISSG Methodological Issues – Low active and active vessels. Concerning calculations of DaS for small scale vessels, the RCG ECON group recommends for relevant MS to assess the completeness of declared data (e.g. logbooks), gaps or biases should be identified and reported in the national work programs. Furthermore, the assumptions used in DaS calculations

### *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

when using data available “day by day” (and not “fishing trip by fishing trip”, e.g. coastal logbooks) should be assessed especially when only sales note data are considered. The assumptions should be evaluated against the EU-agreed definitions, and findings should be documented in the national data collection programs. Follow-up actions needed: The RCG ECON and ISSG ToR Chair proposes to have an in-depth ISSG workshop to review and revise best practices guidelines from previous workshops (e.g. RCG ISSG SSF and Metier and Transversal variables) to calculate “Total DaS” especially in the context of the development of geolocation data (with the new EU Control Regulation) and the promotion of cross-validation methods to improve data quality and completeness especially for SSF. Time frame: Early 2027.

**ECON\_2025\_R08.** Feedback from the ISSG Methodological Issues – Low active and active vessels. The RCG ECON group recommends to explore what the consequences are of using the 90th percentile (90P) method for calculation of maximum sea days for fleet segments. This method offers a better balance between capturing the typical behaviour of the fleet and minimizing the impact of outliers when the size of the segment is small. Follow-up actions needed: The RCG ECON and ISSG ToR Chair recommend that MSs explore the implementation the 90th percentile (90P) method to calculate the maximum number of sea days across all fleet segments, in alignment with ISSG methodological recommendations. To ensure robust and transparent results, MSs are strongly encouraged to perform statistical analyses based on individual vessel-level data, enabling a more accurate and representative assessment. Time frame: By TM 2026.

**ECON\_2025\_R09.** Feedback from the ISSG Methodological Issues – Low active and active vessels. The RCG ECON group recommends that the current definition and interpretation of the VUR is reassessed and tailored specifically for small-scale fleets by the STECF, as the group acknowledges that these current definition and interpretation does not work well for the small-scale fleet. Guidelines for the analysis of the balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities should be amended. Follow-up actions needed: The RCG ECON and ISSG ToR Chair proposes that the STECF Expert Working Groups on Annual Economic Report (AER), Fisheries Dependent Information (FDI) and Balance capacity of the fleet assess the impact of the Maximum Days at Sea calculations in relation to fleet activity levels and VUR calculations. The RCG ECON group recommends that the current definition and interpretation of the VUR is reassessed and tailored specifically for small-scale fleets by the STECF, as the group acknowledges that these current definition and interpretation does not work well for the small-scale fleet. Time frame: EWG meetings in 2026.

**ECON\_2025\_R10.** Feedback from the ISSG Methodological Issues – Data collection of social aspects. The RCG ECON group recommends that the new social indicator “Financial Position” should be renamed to avoid overlap with an existing Annual Economic Report (AER) economic indicator. Follow-up actions needed: Next year’s STECF EWG dedicated to social analysis should rename the social indicator and notify the RCG ECON when the new name is decided. The RCG ECON will notify MS so that they can update their National Work Plan, accordingly, if needed. Time frame: EWG meeting in 2026.

**ECON\_2025\_R11.** Feedback from the ISSG Methodological Issues – Data collection of social aspects. The RCG ECON group recommends that MSs that have included a pilot study on collection of new social data in their WP should provide results of their year-long pilot study or first year work at a dedicated RCG ECON ISSG workshop on social aspects. Follow-up actions needed: Organising an ISSG workshop specifically where MSs with case studies to collect social data share and discuss their experiences, data sources and data collection methodologies. Feedback should happen between the ISSG and the STECF EWG on social aspects. Time frame: March-April 2026.

**ECON\_2025\_R12.** Feedback from the ISSG Methodological Issues – Data collection of social aspects. The RCG ECON group recommends that the ToR for the STECF EWG on Social Data include analyses of Aquaculture and Fish Processing social data. Follow-up actions needed: Including an additional ToR in the proposed RCG ECON ISSG social meeting regarding this recommendation. Time frame: Next EWG in 2026.

#### **4.2.5 RCG NANSEA & RCG Baltic**

##### *Decisions:*

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_D01.** NCs (DK, DE, ES, FR, IR, NL, SE) to decide on renewal of the costsharing agreement for the WHB survey. *Background:* The current cost-sharing agreement for the WHB survey will terminate at the end of 2025. Renewal of the agreement is foreseen. Follow-up actions needed: To decide on renewal of the cost-sharing agreement for the WHB survey. Time frame: Prior to the survey 2025.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_D02.** NCs (DK, DE, IR, NL, SE) To decide on renewal of the costsharing agreement for the ASH survey. *Background:* The current cost-sharing agreement for the ASH survey will terminate at the end of 2025. Renewal of the agreements is foreseen. Follow-up actions needed: To decide on renewal of the cost-sharing agreement for the ASH survey. Time frame: Prior to the survey 2025.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_D03.** NC to agree on proposed ISSGs to work during season 2025-2026 and ensure that experts and manpower are assigned to ISSG work. *Background:* Work in ISSG needs experts and manpower (approximately 1 week of work / ISSG and person). The ISSG work has a regional focus which is in line with EU-MAP. Follow-up actions needed: The list of RCG ISSGs suggested by RCG NANS&EA and RCG Baltic to be confirmed to take place during season 2025-2026. Time frame: DM 2025

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_D04.** NCs to ensure time allocation and funding for participation of ISSG chairs, RCG chairs and NCs to participate in a physical RWP 20282030 meeting in January or February 2026. *Background:* To enhance the input of the ISSG to the different topics of the RWPs 2028-2030, a physical meeting will be arranged in the beginning of 2026. Time frame: 2026.

##### *Recommendations*

At the Liaison Meeting, the recommendations were discussed and accepted without objection.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R01.** Recommendation to ICES (ACOM) in preparation of RWP 2028-2030 to request for all AWG in 2026 to make an overview of data used for stock assessment, similar to overview of already prepared by WGNSSK in 2024. A dialogue should be established in 2025 between ICES and RCG on the information needed. These overviews to be forwarded to RCG chairs. The ISSG end-user will bring it to the technical meeting in 2026-2027. *Background:* For RCG work on development of Regional Work Plans 20282030 and to be able to prioritize DCF work at national and regional level, information is needed on the data use, and ICES AWGs are main end-users. Follow-up actions needed: Recommendation for ICES Assessment Working Groups to make overviews of data used for stock assessment. A dialogue should be established in 2025 between ICES and RCG on the information needed. The overviews should be forwarded to the RCG chairs. Time frame: End of May 2026.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R02.** Recommendation to the COM to add to the NWP/RWP/AR Annex 1.1 the following questions: 'Was there an effort to optimize the sampling design and sampling protocols?' 'Documentation of efforts to optimize the sampling design and sampling protocols'. *Background:* During the RCG TM optimization of sampling was discussed, it this was identified as a suggestion to promote optimization. Follow-up actions needed: COM to add these questions to the NWP/RWP/AR Annex 1 templates. Time frame: Beginning of 2026.

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**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R03.** ICES WGRDBESGOV to request MS to document methodologies applied to calculate fishing activity estimates to inform RDBES CE and CL tables, using the suggested template in the RDBES data call 2026. MS to fill the template. *Background:* When MS submit effort and landings data for RDBES, methods are applied for processing data into this format. It is important that this is documented for understanding the data for users, and to highlight any differences. The RCG ISSG on Métier and transversal variables will evaluate the documentation of methodologies applied to inform RDBES CE & CL tables, i.e. collect and analyze the templates provided by countries (in answer to the RDBES 2026 data call), to document MS methods used to estimate fishing activity data for RDBES CE & CL tables. Follow-up actions needed: ICES WGRDBESGOV to mention this request in the RDBES data call 2026, and MS to fill the template and send it to RCG chairs. Time frame: January 2026.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R04.** ICES WGBYC to conduct in 2025 a preliminary analysis regarding the integration of ETP species data into the RDBES. The analysis should include a comparison between data submitted for the WGBYC data call and the RDBES data call. This is to clarify if all data that are currently requested in the WGBYC data call are also submitted to the RDBES. *Background:* This recommendation is following up on the ICES WGPETSAMP3 to RCG on sufficient sampling for better monitoring of high bycatch risk fisheries (ICES\_2024\_003), recommendation on coordination of sampling plans (ICES\_2024\_004) and recommendation on data quality procedures in sampling programmes ETP species (ICES\_2024\_005). In order for the RCG ISSGs to get an overview of sampling and evaluate the sampling level, it is necessary to make sure that all relevant sampling are uploaded to RDBES. Follow-up actions needed: ICES WGBYC to conduct in 2025 a preliminary analysis regarding the integration of ETP species data into the RDBES. The analysis should include a comparison between data submitted for the WGBYC data call and the RDBES data call. Time frame: End of 2025.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R05.** ICES Secretariat to add to the resolutions of WGNAS and WGBAST the ToR "Provide information on potential data needs for the EU regional workplans, in relation to DCF data collection", to ensure optimal and relevant data sampling. *Background:* For the RCG and ISSG Diadromous to optimize the regional sampling plans, feedback on end-user needs are necessary. Follow-up actions needed: Add to the resolutions of WGNAS and WGBAST the ToR "Provide information on potential data needs for the EU regional workplans, in relation to DCF data collection", to ensure optimal and relevant data sampling. Time frame: 2026.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R06.** Recommendation that catches of Baltic plaice from the recreational fisheries are included in the DCF data collection. Action: MS with recreational fisheries in the Baltic to deliver data on total catch of Baltic plaice. *Background:* Data have been sampled for landings of plaice from recreational fisheries in the Baltic Sea by Germany. It will be tested to include these data in the ICES stock assessment of Baltic plaice and reviewed in 2026. It is recommended that Denmark and Sweden deliver data on total catch of Baltic plaice caught in the recreational fishery. Follow-up actions needed: MS with recreational fisheries in the Baltic to deliver data on total catch of Baltic plaice. Time frame: 2026.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R07.** ICES WGBIFS to report to the RCG NANSEA & BALTIC on the result of the evaluation of the new sampling strategy. *Background:* An alternative stomach sampling strategy will be tested during Baltic International Trawl Survey (BITS) in quarter 4 2025 and in quarter 1 2026 and the results will be evaluated subsequently by ICES WGBIFS. Follow-up actions needed: Report to the RCG NANSEA & BALTIC on the result of the evaluation of the new sampling strategy. Time frame: RCG TM 2026.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R08.** MS participating in IBTS to incorporate not only stomach sampling but also stomach content analysis in the national work plans. *Background:* The stomachs are being sampled according to the regionally coordinated stomach sampling plan in the North Sea and the sampling of the stomachs has been included in the national work plans of the MS. However, collecting the stomachs is meaningless without analysing the contents, so MS should allocate financial

## *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

resources to the analysis and incorporate it into the national work plans. Follow-up actions needed: MS participating in IBTS to incorporate not only stomach sampling but also stomach content analysis in the national work plans. Time frame: RCG TM 2026.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R09.** MS participating in IBTS and sampling and analysing stomach contents to upload the resulting data to the ICES stomach database. *Background*: The stomachs are being sampled according to the regionally coordinated stomach sampling plan in the North Sea and the sampling of the stomachs has been included in the national work plans of the MS. However, collecting the stomachs is meaningless without analysing the contents, and uploading the data to the ICES stomach database would greatly facilitate end-user access. MS should allocate financial resources to the analysis as well as the data processing, and incorporate it into the national work plans. Follow-up actions needed: MS participating in IBTS and sampling and analysing stomach contents to upload the resulting data to the ICES stomach data base. Time frame: RCG TM 2026.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R10.** MS to upload historic stomach sampling data that has not previously been uploaded to the ICES stomach database. *Background*: Data from national and international sampling programmes and projects lie unused in the databases of the national institutes. To improve the various ecosystem models and improve the knowledge on predator-prey relationships, it would be beneficial if these were uploaded to the ICES stomach database. Follow-up actions needed: Request for MS to upload historic stomach sampling data that has not previously been uploaded to the ICES stomach database. Time frame: RCG TM 2026.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R11.** COM to keep the format used for RWP 2025-2027 for upcoming RWP 2028-2030. *Background*: During the RCG TM, it was agreed that it would be preferable to keep the format used for RWP 2025-2027. Follow-up actions needed: COM to keep the format used for RWP 2025-2027 for upcoming RWP 2028-2030. Time frame: October 2026.

**NANSEA BALTIC\_2025\_R12.** ICES to streamline all data calls through one channel, as ICES is the requester (not an individual). This will enhance follow-up actions, registration of data submission, data security, and allow for review under the DTMT procedures between ICES and the Commission. *Background*: ICES have formalized most data calls ensuring follow-up, data security and traceability of the request and data submission. However, still some data calls are sent out by working group chairs - this process is neither transparent nor considered binding, and data are sent to e.g., the working group chair email. RCG strongly encourages that all data calls are sent out officially through the ICES secretariat. Follow-up actions needed: ICES to streamline all data calls through one channel, as ICES is the requester (not an individual). This will enhance follow-up actions, registration of data submission, data security, and allow for review under the DTMT procedures between ICES and the Commission. Time frame: End of 2026.

## **4.3 RCG data calls**

### **4.3.1 RCG Long Distance Fisheries**

The RCG Secretariat sent the 2025 data call to all National Correspondents of all MS. The call requested that the data be uploaded to RDBES. It was launched on 15 May, with submissions required by 21 June. Upon request, the deadline was extended to 3 July to allow time to resolve technical issues.

All MSs responded to the data call on time. For the first time, France submitted data on its outermost regions, providing a more complete picture of EU fisheries activity. MSs are reminded that they can update their data throughout the year and are encouraged to do so where applicable. In particular, some MSs may still update historic data.

### **4.3.2 RCG Large Pelagics**

No data calls were requested for 2025.

### **4.3.3 RCG Med&BS**

In July 2025, the RCG Med&BS chairs issued an official data call requesting the following data for the period 2022-2024:

- Landings data, using the landings template provided with the data call, to begin preparation of Table 2.1 in the RCG Med&BS Regional Work Plan 2028–2030.
- Data on landings, effort, and value by métier, to perform a ranking of métiers for the Mediterranean and Black Sea, and to potentially update the regional list of métiers.

All Member States submitted data.

### **4.3.4 RCG ECON**

RCG ECON do not organise specific data calls, but sent out several questionnaires and requests for data in order to make analyses in preparation of ISSG meetings.

### **4.3.5 RCG NANSEA & RCG Baltic**

The ICES/RCG RDBES data call 2025 was launched on 5 February, requesting landings, effort, and sample data by 1 April, including resubmission of 2021–2024 data. All Member States uploaded their data, but several submissions were late, creating uncertainty and pressure on data users. Looking ahead to the 2026 data call, it was discussed that reminders sent by RCG Secretariat before the deadline could support more timely submissions along with providing more clarity on data requirements.

## **4.4 Announcement of new chairs, next meeting(s) and venues**

<b>RCG</b>	<b>Chairs</b>	<b>Dates 2026</b>	<b>Venue</b>
<b>Long Distance Fisheries</b>	Maksims Kovsars (LVA)	TBC 30 June – 3 of July or 7-10 July	Rome (Italy)
<b>Large Pelagics</b>	Ioannis Thasitis (CYP) George Tserpes (GRC)	TBC (June)	Heraklion, Crete (Greece)
<b>Med&amp;BS</b>	Alexandru Gheorghe (ROU) Enrico Arneri (ITA)	TBD (end of August – early September)	Varna (Bulgaria)
<b>NANSEA &amp; Baltic</b>	Rita Vasconcelos (PRT) Laura Lemey (BEL) Vilda Griuniene (LT)	2 June (virtual day), 9-12 June	Nantes (France)
<b>ECON</b>	Adelbert De Clercq (BEL) Sarah Perry (IRL)	TBC 19-21 May	Sofia (Bulgaria)

## **4.5 Future steps in RCG pan-regional and intersessional work (i.e., regional work plans, country profiles)**

### **4.5.1 RCG Long Distance Fisheries**

To ensure that the RCG LDF RWP is in line with the guidelines, the comments made by the STECF 24-15 EWG will be considered as part of the development of the RCG LDF RWP for 2028–2030.

Future intersessional work is planned within four different ISSGs, each covering a specific topic:

- ISSG SPRFMO Observer Programme (chairs: Irek Wójcik and Sieto Verver)
- ISSG NAFO Harmonization protocols for on-board sampling (chair: Liivika Näks)
- ISSG CECAF Observer Programme of small pelagics (chair: Maksims Kovsars)
- ISSG SMEFF fisheries in the high seas, in particular FAO area 41 (chair: José Luis del Río Iglesias)

### **4.5.2 RCG Large Pelagics**

The RCG LP agreed to continue the current ISSG structures into 2025–2026, except for the two sub-ISSGs for Tropical Tuna that will merge into a single coordinated group with co-chairs representing different aspects of the work.

A strong focus will be given to the preparation of the RWPs 2028–2030. Work will be supported by a series of online ISSG meetings. Draft RWPs will be prepared, presented and discussed at the Technical Meeting in June 2026, with the final submission deadline set for 15 October 2026.

### **4.5.3 RCG Med&BS**

Currently, there are ten intersessional subgroups (ISSGs) under the RCG Med&BS. The RCG Med&BS also participates in three Panregional ISSGs (ISSG RWP, ISSG on Métier and Transversal Variables, ISSG Diadromous Fishes). Important intersessional work is planned for the preparation of the 2028–2030 Med&BS RWP. During the LM, work on the development of the 2028–2030 Med&BS RWP was presented, including the provisional elements by section and topic, as discussed during the 2025 RCG Med&BS Annual Meeting.

The ongoing work on the vision for the future of RCG Med&BS was also presented, which aims to reflect the ideas of the Group towards improving its overall work and data collection in the region. The progress on this intersessional work will be further discussed during the RCG Med&BS 2026 Meeting.

### **4.5.4 RCG ECON**

2026

- ISSG Social Variables (March-April), Chairs: Angelos Lontakis
  - Feedback from MS on pilot studies for the collection of new social variables – what can we learn from the experience

2027

- ISSG Valuation of Capital Value (early 2027), Chairs: Monica Gambino, Loretta Malvarosa
  - Harmonisation of statistical methods, analyses of assumptions
- ISSG low active and active vessels - sea days of SSF in focus (Early 2027), Chair Olivier Guyader
  - Completeness of declared data, gaps and biases, and structure of data
  - The use of geolocation data for calculating total days at sea

### **4.5.5 RCG NANSEA & RCG Baltic**

The RCG NANSEA and Baltic agreed to continue the current ISSG structures into 2025–2026, with a strong focus on preparing the RWPs 2028–2030. Work will be supported by a series of physical and online ISSG meetings, including an ISSG RWP physical workshop with NCs and RCG chairs in January 2026. Draft RWPs will be prepared in May, presented and discussed at the Technical Meeting in June 2026, with the final submission deadline set for 15 October 2026.

## **4.6 Other topics of joint interest**

### **4.6.1 Calendar and guidelines for the next RWP submission**

These are the key dates for the RWP submission:

- RCG Submission: 15 October 2026. Reference period 2023-2025, to be updated by September 2027 with 2024-2026 period.
- STECF to evaluate: November 2026.
- RCG Resubmission following STECF comments: May 2027.
- MS to incorporate the RWP in NWP: Oct 2027
- NWP submission: October 2027

The group proposed that the resubmission of the RWP in May 2027 shall address only the comments raised by STECF, and that the reference period for table 2.1 shall not be changed. This change would reduce significantly the workload and minimize errors caused by last minute changes. It was also argued that nothing would be lost by this decision, as even if there are major changes in fisheries during the last year, there would not be enough time to adjust sampling allocations. All RCG supported the proposal to use the reference period 2023-2025 for the RWP 2028.

The Commission stated that it will review the RCGs proposal on using the n-2 reference period in view of the legal requirements. While there are no legal requirements for the most recent reference period to be used in the regional workplans, this obligation is set in the templates of the national workplans. As such, the NWPs which are drafted one year after the submission of the RWPs require N-1. Deviations from this requirement are only possible for exceptional circumstances ie, when external factors cause changes in the fisheries and a specific year(s) is not regarded as representative. An example would be the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, the templates and guidelines (including IT platform) are now designed in a way that RWPs are to be copied into the NWPs unless the RWPs state “to be completed by MS”.

Based on the legal constraints above, COM considers two options for setting the reference periods in table 2.1:

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## *RCG activities (ToR 3)*

- ⇒ **Option 1.)** to submit preliminary figures of N-2 in October 2026 and update to N-1 before October 2027. MS then to adopt these figures in their NWP in October 2027.
- ⇒ **Option 2.)** to submit preliminary figures of N-2 in October 2026 and only update the N-1 year range, leaving the actual figures to be completed by MS in their NWP in October 2027.

Another recommendation from the RCGs was to maintain unchanged the current format of the Regional Work Plan (RWP). This was agreed by the Commission.

Finally, in relation to the Regional Work Plan (RWP), the RCG ECON group recommended that a yearly interaction between the RCG ECON chairs and the chairs on the ISSG on pan regional RWP is upheld to assess the inclusion of socio-economic data in the RWP. This continued discussion is necessary because a tension exists between EUMAP variables and voluntary variables. Additionally, a continued discussion allows for the possibility of regional socio-economic studies to be included in the RWP, to which MS can subscribe on a voluntary basis.

### **4.6.2 Prioritization of data variables**

The group discussed the difficulties to optimize data collection and prioritize the variables to be collected, which is a complex issue affecting all RCGs. It involves multiple dimensions, such as identifying types of data currently collected but not used by end-users, integrating new data requests, assessing whether some existing requirements could be excluded, prioritizing surveys, and optimizing sampling programmes.

Currently, RCGs are addressing this issue in different ways. RCG NANSEA & RCG Baltic had a dedicated session during the TM to reflect on these challenges and possible solutions, and there are plans to include a ToR in some ICES AWG to assess the impact of different types of data on the assessment (sensitivity analysis). In the RCG Med&BS there is already a prioritization of stocks (Groups 1,2,3) which defines the data to be collected. This prioritization is made by the GFCM and is based on multiple criteria such as commercial relevance, sensitive species, non-indigenous species and frequency of the stock assessment, etc, stated in the manual of the GFCM Data Collection Reference Framework (DCRF). Additionally, the Med&BS ISSG on sampling optimization is using tools developed by regional projects and presented in WGBIOPTIM, for optimizing biological sampling. The RCG LP has further experience in Electronic Monitoring and has developed a scientific standard on how data shall be collected and used.

All participants agreed that stronger interaction between RCGs/ISSGs and end-users is essential. In addition, the contribution of the COM and policy makers is also necessary to ensure that data collection remains both relevant and efficient.

Another point raised is that the DCF cannot afford the collection of all types of data. It is important to differentiate which data are core requirements of the DCF and which are opportunistic. The Commission gave the example of the collection of bycatch data, which is sometimes questioned, but which is relevant to the DCF because it is data on the impact of the activity in the environment. However, it is also noted that the effort needed for monitoring bycatch is very high which creates problems to MS. Another debated topic is the collection of data for energy transition, which still needs clarification on whether it shall fall under the DCF.

## **5 GOVERNANCE (TOR 4)**

- A. *Follow-up on RCG Rules of Procedures (RoP) developments in each of the RCGs (Liaison Meeting, RCG Chairs)*
- B. *Structure of RCGs and cooperation. Discuss needs for new pan-regional ISSGs (RCG chairs)*
- *Status on Secretariat (current output available to RCGs)*
  - *Diadromous ISSG (position and future participation to LM)*

### **5.1 Follow-up on RCG Rules of Procedures (RoP) developments in each of the RCGs**

#### **5.1.1 RCG Long Distance Fisheries**

No changes were made in 2024/2025

#### **5.1.2 RCG Large Pelagics**

No changes were made to the RoP

#### **5.1.3 RCG Med&BS**

No changes were made in 2024-2025.

#### **5.1.4 RCG ECON**

No changes were made in 2024-2025.

#### **5.1.5 RCG NANSEA & RCG Baltic**

No changes were made in 2024-2025.

**6 AOB**

No new topics were raised during the meeting.

## 7 ANNEXES

### ANNEX 1: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Liaison Meeting was chaired by Lucía Zarauz (Spain) and the group met with the following participants:

Name	Country	Role / Affiliation	Email	Type presence
Lucía Zarauz	ES	Chair	lzarauz@azti.es	Physical
Federico De Rossi		End-user - GFCM	federico.derossi@fao.org	Online
Paolo Carpentieri		End-user - GFCM	Paolo.Carpentieri@fao.org	Physical
Francisco Alemany		End-user - ICCAT	francisco.alemany@iccat.int	Online
Cecilia Kvaavik		End-user – ICES	cecilia.kvaavik@ices.dk	Physical
Jan De Haes		End-user – ICES	jan.dehaes@ices.dk	Online
Cynthia Fernandez-Diaz		End-user - IOTC	Cynthia.FernandezDiaz@fao.org	Online
Emmanuel Chassot		End-user - IOTC	Emmanuel.Chassot@fao.org	Online
Andrea Perreault		End-user - NAFO	aperreault@nafo.int	Online
Pierre Peries		End-user - SIOFA	pierre.peries@siofa.org	Online
Bernard Vigga		End-user - SPRFMO	bvigga@sprfmo.int	Online
Christoph Stransky	DE	End-user - STECF	christoph.stransky@thuenen.de	Physical
Vilda Griūnienė	LT	RCG BAL chair	Vilda.Griuniene@zum.lt	Physical
Irene Tzouramani	GR	RCG ECON co-chair	tzouramani@elgo.gr	Online
Adelbert De Clercq	BE	RCG ECON co-chair	Adelbert.DeClercq@ilvo.vlaanderen.be	Physical
Sarah Perry	IE	RCG ECON incoming chair	Sarah.Perry@bim.ie	Physical
Maksims Kovsars	LV	RCG LDF chair	maksims.kovsars@bior.lv	Physical
Pedro Lino	PT	RCG LP co-chair	plino@ipma.pt	Online
Ioannis Thasitis	CY	RCG LP co-chair	IThasitis@dfmr.moa.gov.cy	Online
Charis Charilaou	CY	RCG MED&BS chair	ccharilaou@dfmr.moa.gov.cy	Online
Alexandru Gheorghe	RO	RCG MED&BS chair	Alexandru.gheorghe@anpa.ro	Online
Enrico Arneri	IT	RCG MED&BS incoming chair	enrico.arneri@cnr.it	Physical
Rita Vasconcelos	PT	RCG NANSEA co-chair	rita.vasconcelos@ipma.pt	Physical
Josefine Egekvist	DK	RCG NANSEA co-chair	jsv@aqua.dtu.dk	Physical
Laura Lemey	BE	RCG NANSEA incoming co-chair	laura.lemey@ilvo.vlaanderen.be	Physical
Raluca Ivanescu	EU	DG MARE, Unit C3	Raluca.IVANESCU@ec.europa.eu	Physical
Monika Sterczewska	EU	DG MARE, Unit C3	monika.sterczewska@ec.europa.eu	Physical
Leonie O´Dowd	EU	DG MARE, Unit C3	Leonie.O'DOWD@ec.europa.eu	Online
Venetia Kostopoulou	EU	DG MARE, Unit C3	Venetia.KOSTOPOULOU@ec.europa.eu	Physical

## Fisheries Data Collection – 22<sup>nd</sup> Liaison Meeting – Report

### Annexes

Name	Country	Role / Affiliation	Email	Type presence
Angel Calvo Santos	EU	DG MARE	Angel-Andres.CALVO-SANTOS@ec.europa.eu	Online
Pinelopi Beneku	EU	DG MARE	Pinelopi.BELEKOU@ec.europa.eu	Physical
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Stanislovas Jonusas	EU	DG MARE	Stanislovas.JONUSAS@ec.europa.eu	Physical
Ilaria Vielmini	EU	DG MARE	Ilaria.VIELMINI@ec.europa.eu	Online
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Zeynep Hekim	EU	JRC	Hekim.ZEYNEP@ec.europa.eu	Online
Frederico Cardigos	EU	DG EUROSTAT – Agriculture and Fisheries	frederico.cardigos@ec.europa.eu	Physical
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Martina Zilioli	IT	RDBFIS III communication	martina.zilioli@cnr.it	Online
Harriet van Overzee	NL	WGRDBESGOV chair	harriet.vanoverzee@wur.nl	Online
Lorenzo Magnolo	IT	National representative	lorenzo.magnolo@masaf.gov.it	Physical
Alessandro Manini	IT	National representative	alessandro.mannini@irbim.cnr.it	Online
Marta Cobas	ES	RCGs Secretariat	secretariat@fisheries-rcg.eu	Online
Rosa Maria Fernandez	ES	RCGs Secretariat	rfernandez@cetmar.org	Physical
Susana Rivero	ES	RCGs Secretariat	secretariat@fisheries-rcg.eu	Online

**ANNEX 2: LIAISON MEETING 2025 AGENDA****Venue:**

Borschette Conference Centre, Rue Froissart, 36, 1040 Brussels

**Timetable 1st day:**

Time (CET)	Duration	Topic	TOR	Presenter
<b>Tuesday, September 23</b>				
09:00	15 min	Meeting room open		
09:15	15 min	Walk-in & getting ready		
09:30	15 min	Welcome by the Commission	ToR 1A	COM opening speech: Raluca Ivanescu
09:45	15 min	Welcome and introduction by the Liaison Meeting Chair Welcome, house rules, tour de table, adoption of the agenda, format of the report, notification of AOB	ToR 1A	Liaison Meeting Chair (Lucia Zarauz)
10:00	25 min	End user needs and interaction: presentations from end users	ToR 1B	Long distance Endusers (SPRFMO, NAFO, CECAF, SIOFA)
	5 min	Discussion and feed back from plenary		
10:30	15 min	Highlights in RCG activities (relevant to end users and other RCGs)	ToR 3	RCG Long distance RCG chair (Maksims Kovsars)
	5 min	Questions and discussion in plenary		
10:50	10 min	End user needs and interaction: presentations from end users	ToR 1B	IOTC, ICCAT
	5 min	Discussion and feed back from plenary		
11:05	10 min	Highlights in RCG activities (relevant to end users and other RCGs)	ToR 3	RCG Large Pelagics RCG chair (Pedro Lino)
	5 min	Questions and discussion in plenary		
11:20	20 min	Health break		
11:40	15 min	Highlights in RCG activities (relevant to end users and other RCGs)	ToR 3	RCG MED&BS Chairs (CHARIS CHARILAOU, Alexandru Gheorghe)
	5 min	Questions and discussion in plenary		
12:00	15 min	End user needs and interaction: presentations from end users	ToR 1B	GFCM (Paolo Carpentieri)
	5 min	Discussion and feed back from plenary		
12:20	15 min	End user needs and interaction: presentations from end users	ToR 1B	STECF / JRC (Christoph Stransky) with JRC contribution
	5 min	Discussion and feed back from plenary		
12:40	15 min	Highlights in RCG activities (relevant to end users and other RCGs)	ToR 3	RCG ECON RCG chairs (Eirini Tzouramani, Adelbert De Clercq, Sarah Perry)
	5 min	Discussion and feed back from plenary		
13:00	1.20 Hour	LUNCH		
14:20	15 min	End user needs and interaction: presentations from end users & and update on RDBES	ToR 1B	ICES (Cecilia Kvaavik)
	5 min	Discussion and feed back from plenary		
14:40	15 min	Highlights in RCG activities (relevant to end users and other RCGs). Discuss the procedures for third countries and end-users (metier group).	ToR 3	RCG NANSEA/BAL RCG chairs (Josefine Egekvist, Rita Vasconcelos, Vilda Gruniene, Laura Lemey)
	5 min	Discussion and feed back from plenary		
15:00	10 min	Data confidentiality	ToR 1B	Josefine Egekvist
15:10	5 min	FDI data call	ToR 1B	Zeynep Hekim
	5 min	Discussion and feed back from plenary		
15:20	15 min	Update on RDB-ES (general)		Harriet Van Overzee WGRDBESGOV
15:35	15 min	Update on RDBFIS (general)	ToR 3	Stefanos Kavadas, HCMR, RDBFIS
	5 min	Questions and discussion in plenary		
15:40	20 min	Coffee break		
16:00	xx min	Summary of the day		Venetia Kostapoulou / plenary
16:50	15 min	Closure of the meeting		Chair

## Timetable 2nd day:

Time	Duration	Topic	TOR	Presenter
<b>Wednesday, September 24</b>				
08:30	30 min	Meeting room open		
09:00	10 min	Start of the day		Chair
09:10	15 min	The 2025 RCGs - recommendations, decisions and future intersessional work relevant to other RCGs, streamlining work between RCGs, RCG Data calls overview how MS responded. Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues.	ToR 3A	RCG Large Pelagics RCG chair
	5 min	Questions and discussion in plenary		
09:30	15 min	The 2025 RCGs - recommendations, decisions and future intersessional work relevant to other RCGs, streamlining work between RCGs, RCG Data calls overview how MS responded. Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues.	ToR 3A	RCG Long distance RCG chair (Maksims Kovsars)
	5 min	Questions and discussion in plenary		
09:50	15 min	The 2025 RCGs - recommendations, decisions and future intersessional work relevant to other RCGs, streamlining work between RCGs, RCG Data calls overview how MS responded. Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues.	ToR 3A	RCG MED&BS Chairs (Charis Charilaou, Alexandru Gheorghe)
	5 min	Questions and discussion in plenary		
10:10	15 min	The 2025 RCGs - recommendations, decisions and future intersessional work relevant to other RCGs, streamlining work between RCGs, RCG Data calls overview how MS responded. Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues.	ToR 3A	RCG NANSEA/BAL RCG chairs (Josefine Egekvist, Rita Vasconcelos, Vilda Griuniene, Laura Lemey)
	5 min	Questions and discussion in plenary		
10:30	15 min	The 2025 RCGs - recommendations, decisions and future intersessional work relevant to other RCGs, streamlining work between RCGs, RCG Data calls overview how MS responded. Announcement of new chairs (where relevant), next meeting(s) and venues.	ToR 3A	RCG ECON RCG chairs (Eirini Tzouramani, Adelbert De Clercq)
	5 min	Questions and discussion in plenary		
10:50	30 min	Health break		
11:20	15 min	Topics of joint interest: streamlining work between RCGs, panregional ISSG, RWP, other topics	ToR 3D	RCG chairs
	60 min	Discussion/General conclusions from this session		
12:35	15 min	Summary of the day		Venetia Kostapoulou / plenary
12:50	10 min	Closure of the meeting by COM and chair.		Chair, COM

### **ANNEX 3: OVERVIEW OF ALL RECOMMENDATIONS**

The overview of all recommendations from the different RCGs can be found on the 2025 Decision Meeting report available on the RCGs website:

[https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2025\\_RCGs\\_-Decision-Meeting\\_Report.pdf](https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/2025_RCGs_-Decision-Meeting_Report.pdf)



**Fisheries Data Collection  
22<sup>nd</sup> Liaison Meeting**

**Meeting between the Chairs of RCGs, key end-users, European  
Commission DG Mare and JRC**