



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND
FISHERIES

Directorate C: Fisheries Policy Atlantic, North Sea, Baltic and
Outermost Regions Unit C3: Scientific Advice and Data Collection

Call MARE/2020/08 – **FISHN’CO** – **SI2.839816**

Strengthening EU-MAP data collection by developing Regional Work Plans for the Regional Coordination Groups (RCG) NANS&EA, Baltic and Large Pelagics, and Economics Issues - FISHN’CO

European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

Interim Report

Progress Report Number: 2

Covered period: 1st Jan. 2021 – 31st Dec. 2021

Project duration: from 1st January 2021 to 31st December 2022

Date of submission: 30 March 2022

Version: 1

Beneficiary: Coordinator – Institut Français de Recherche pour l’Exploitation de la Mer,
IFREMER

Project coordinator name and title: Mr. Joël Vigneau

Tel.: (33)2 31515641

E-mail: Joel.Vigneau@ifremer.fr

DECLARATION BY THE PROJECT COORDINATOR¹

I, **Joël Vigneau**, coordinator of the “**Strengthening EU-MAP data collection by developing Regional Work Plans for NANS&EA, Baltic, Large Pelagics and Economic Issues Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) – FISHN’CO**”, hereby confirm that:

- This interim report represents an accurate description of the work carried out in this project for this reporting period;
- The project:
 - has fully achieved its objectives and technical goals for the period;
 - ~~has achieved most of its objectives and technical goals for the period with relatively minor deviations;~~
 - ~~has failed to achieve critical objectives and/or is not at all on schedule.~~
- To the best of my knowledge, the financial statements submitted as part of this report are in line with the actual work carried out and are consistent with the report on the resources used for the project and - if applicable - with the certificate on financial statement.
- To date, the project has used EUR 249.563,26, representing 107.81% of the amount of EU pre-financing received so far under the Grant Agreement.

Date and Signature

¹ By "project coordinator" shall be understood the person responsible for the work to be performed under this grant. If different from the person who signed the Grant Agreement representing "the beneficiary" (or "the coordinator" in case of multiple beneficiaries), a formal letter must accompany this report, in which the latter authorises the project coordinator to report on behalf of the beneficiary or beneficiaries.

1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES FOR THE PERIOD

Please provide an overview of the project objectives for the reporting period in question, as included in Annex I of the Grant Agreement. If applicable, please refer to any recommendations or guidance received from the European Commission in previous reports or meetings, and indicate how these have been taken into account (Max.1 page)

Strategic Objectives

- Providing added value to the RCG/ Inter Sessional Sub Groups (ISSGs) and work in complement to them with the specific goal of proposing a full structure/process and elements of Regional Work Plans (RWP) for each of their activities;
- Strengthen regional or EU-wide cooperation on data collection and enhance data quality, by developing the knowledge and support to accomplish further regional or EU-wide cooperation;
- Align with the 2021 RCG plenary sessions in order to be fully embedded in the mechanism of proposing Work Plans within the framework of EU-MAP

The participation of experts from three RCGs allows the project to address the full scope of thematic focus areas in line with EU-MAP and RCG intersessional work programmes.

The project is structured around five Work Packages, their objectives are summarised as follows:

Work Package 1: Compiling, identifying and filling information gaps

- a) Assess the current stages of regional coordination and define the level of ambitions for the content of their work for the defined RWP focus areas.
- b) Identify the elements that will go towards the development of the RWP and analyse the information and knowledge gaps.
- c) Agree on the core ISSG tasks to be carried out as part of the intersessional RCG work and the supporting tasks to be carried out as part of the Fishn'Co.
- d) Address these support tasks as distinctive pieces of work to be financed and completed within the Fishn'Co project.
- e) Communicate WP1 outputs of RWP content to WP3 for the development of the RWP structures.

Work Package 2: Establishing decision making structures/processes

- a) Develop a methodology for creating RWP and determine the decision-making process on the implementation of RWP in accordance with the Rules of Procedures (RoP) for the relevant RCGs and the Regulation 2017/1004 establishing Data Collection Framework (DCF).
- b) Develop and describe processes needed in discussions among MS and in the RCGs about sharing responsibilities, expected contributions, decision making and adoption processes, and how to implement and manage RWP in a harmonised, cooperative and transparent way.
- c) Consult with the RCGs as well as national correspondents on the processes needed for the implementation of the RWPs including processes for discussions and decision making.

Work Package 3: Drafting the Work Plan

- a) Develop a structure for RWP in coordination with WP1 and WP2
- b) Develop complements of RWP which are not planned in the WP1
- c) Integrate the outcomes of WP1 and WP2 in documents and presentations for RCG purposes
- d) Ensures communication and consultation with stakeholders on the concepts and implementation of RWP

Work Package 4: Communication and dissemination

- a) To integrate communication into the RCGs strategy and to elaborate and implement communication and dissemination actions around the RWP.
- b) To promote visibility and engagement towards the RWP stakeholders (EU, MS, RFMOs, ...)
- c) To set up a transparency system of communication through the development of collaborative tools

Work Package 5: Project co-ordination and management

- d) To coordinate closely with project partners and non-partners to achieve project objectives and manage project activities to ensure that they are carried out effectively and successfully.
- e) To keep the project running smoothly

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2. WORK PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS DURING THE PERIOD

Please provide a concise overview of the progress of the work in line with the structure of Annex I of the Grant

Agreement. Deliverables and dissemination activities can be mentioned, but should be described in detail in section 3. Similarly, details related to the management of the project shall be further reported in section 4 (Max. 5 pages)

- A summary of progress explicitly compared to the objectives specified in section 1 above providing, if applicable, details for each work package;
- Highlight clearly significant results and outputs;
- If applicable, explain the reasons for deviations from Annex I, and explain the potential impact on other objectives/tasks as well as on available resources and planning;
- If applicable, propose remedial actions.

WP1. Compiling, identifying and filling information gaps

WP1 covers 10 Thematic Focus Areas (TFA) (with an additional three case studies and an umbrella group in the Thematic Focus Area on commercial fisheries). An important aspect is the communication flow between WP1 and WP3 on the template and proposal for regional work plans. In advance of the 2021 technical sessions of the RCG NANS&EA, Baltic, Large Pelagics and Economic, Fishn'Co worked in close cooperation with RCG-ISSGs to map out their ambitions in terms of regional coordination and identify existing knowledge and gaps (Annex 1) to inform Regional Work Plans (RWP). The mapping of scientific end-user was important in particular for thematic areas where the end-user is less defined or the role has evolved over recent years. All details *In 2021_RCG NANSEA RCG Baltic TM_Part III Report*, section 6.1.2, pages 83-105

The ambition levels have been reorganized in identical tables for each TFA (Annex 2) in order to facilitate reading and these tables have been used to build an infographic (see WP4). In the area of commercial fisheries, progress on protocols and Regional Sampling Plans (RSP) to be further developed and decisions still need to be made on the format for Iberian trawl and freezer trawl case studies. Text on proposed pilot studies will be prepared for consideration by the relevant RCG. For the case study on commercial fisheries on Large Pelagics (LP), the aim has been modified since the original ambitions. Work will focus on the purse seiner (PS) tropical tuna fishery. This fishery benefits from a long-term cooperation between France and Spain. The objective is to use the PS fishery as an example for the other LP fisheries. Levels of ambitions will be validated before the end of February 2022, and, with the help of Fishn'Co project, the first draft of the RWP will be presented during the 2022 RCG LP annual meeting.

In the area of recreational fisheries, work is focussed on integration of data into RDBES. For diadromous species both the Baltic (Annex 6.2) and NANSEA (Annex 7.2) RWPs have been updated to include proposed Text box 2.3 for diadromous salmon and sea trout and also eels. For research surveys regional coordination is already at a high level, surveys with cost sharing agreements will be included in the draft RWP. Progress has also been made in the area of biological data quality. Data Capture checking documentation, outlining a standardised method for describing which data checks are being applied by participants in regional sampling programs, is substantially complete. Preparation of a standardised method for describing how editing and imputing are being applied by participants in regional sampling programs is also substantially complete. In both areas, surveys were written and circulated.

Regarding the socio-economic data for the fisheries and aquaculture sector the levels of ambition have been finalised. As the ambition is to come to a consistent and implemented set of guidelines, three methodological issues have been identified, where consistency implementation and guidelines are lacking. These issues are now being resolved and the potential solutions will be discussed in RCG-econ in May 2022. In addition, an inventory is being carried out to assess specific cases in which higher levels of international cooperation may lead to increased data quality.

Elements that are ready to be included in a regional work plan have been communicated to WP3 to further develop the structure and content for the RWP proposal.

WP2 - Establishing decision making structures/processes

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The main objectives of this Work Package was to develop and describe processes needed in discussions among MS and in the RCGs about sharing responsibilities, expected contributions, decision making and adoption processes, and to implement and manage RWP in a harmonised, cooperative and transparent way.

The work done during 2021 was

- i. to develop a first draft a proposal for decision-making structures for adoption of a regional work plans.
- ii. initiate consultations with RCGs and national correspondents on the process needed for the implementation of the RWPs including processes for discussions and decision making.

The tasks in the beginning of the project were to identify all topics to be taken into account when describing the decision making processes for adopting a RWP. It was found necessary first to identify the processes of discussions and decision making for adoption of a RWP. Later when this process is defined and described the RoP of the RCGs (further referred to as ‘RoP) can be revised (2022). Based on the present version of the RoP and in consultation with the other WP leaders the plan for 2022 is to:

- i. January – March 2022 draft a final proposal for decision-making structures for adoption of a regional work plans to be submitted to the NC for comments.
- ii. March – April 2022 based on feedback from the NCs draft a version to be submitted to the RCGs 2022 for feedback.
- iii. Autumn 2022 draft a final version of the decision-making structures for adoption of a regional work plans and revise the RCG RoPs.

Significant outputs

The output was the presentation of a first draft of decision-making structures for adoption of a regional work plans and presentation of the revised RoP in September 2021 for the WP leaders and at the stakeholder meetings. A tentative version of RoP ([2021 RCG NANSEA RCG Baltic TM Part III Report, pages.325-332](#)) was discussed during the RCG meetings. An additional significant output, being a draft timeline and procedure for adoption of a RWP (including proposed scenarios for consultation) was established. This will be further developed and finetuned during 2022 in consultation with the RCGs and the NCs.

Deviations from the plan

It was the plan to hold 2-3 WP physical meetings as it was found the optimal way to fulfill the tasks of WP2. Unfortunately, due to the Covid situation, this has not been possible and the work progress has therefore been prone to limited delays.

WP 3 – Drafting Regional Work Plans

The main objective of this Work Package was to develop the format and contents for a Regional Work Plan (RWP) and gather all elements arising from WP1 and WP2 to draft the RWP components to be presented to the relevant RCGs (NANS&EA, Baltic, Large Pelagics, Long Distance Fisheries and Economic Issues). The work done during 2021 was

- i. to ensure a draft RWP proposal was available for discussion during the RCGs technical session in June 2021 and September 2021 for RCGECON and
- ii. to follow-up on RCG recommendation for finalizing a RWP to be proposed to the National Correspondent Decision meeting in September 2021 and
- iii. to build upon the feedback from NCs to prepare the intersessional work and be in the position to propose a more elaborated second version to the RCG technical sessions of 2022

The initial work in the WP3 was to analyse the comments from RCG NANS&EA and Baltic¹ (2020) on ways forward after the setting up of the test run RWP 2021 and feedbacks from STECF (STECF-20-16²) on both the format and the contents of the test run in order to elaborate on the best way forward for the next steps. The summary of STECF comments and the details on the follow-up proposed by Fishn’Co are in the [RCG NANS&EA and Baltic report 2021](#) (section 6.3).

As reported in the [Liaison Meeting](#) (2021, section 4.5.1), after the RCG NANS&EA and Baltic technical meeting, Fishn’Co proposed a draft form of RWP (text and tables) and some contents for both RCGs and committed to work ahead of the Decision Meeting and Liaison Meeting to propose a RWP for both RCG for 2022. Fishn’Co also participated in the discussion of RWP in RCG Large Pelagics. As a result of fishn’Co work and proposals, a non-

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binding RWP test 2022 was agreed to be put forward during the NC Decision Meeting in September 2021. These RWP test 2022 contained

- A table 1.2 on planned regional and international coordination drafted by the ISSG on National Correspondents
- A table 2.1 on the list of regional species/stocks developed together with Fishn'Co engineers and ISSG on Catches, Effort and Sampling Overviews
- Examples of synthetic views of Regional coordination of sampling activities for small pelagics sampling in the Baltic (RCG Baltic) and Regional coordination of sampling for diadromous species and Sea trout (RCG NANS&EA and Baltic).

The plan then after was to build on the lessons learnt from this 2021 RCG technical and decision meetings and progress towards an agreed RWP mechanisms and decision process and a comprehensive proposal of regional coordination activities to be presented in the 2022 RCGs. Fishn'Co decided to divide the intersessional period into 3 sequences (see the minutes of plenary meeting #3):

1. November 2021 – January 2022: Continuation of the field work to complete the elements which are candidate to be part of a next stage of RWP and the legal aspects and consider the evaluation by STECF (STECF-21-17³) on the proposed test run RWP 2022;
2. February – March 2022: Large consultation with NC for feedback on the proposal;
3. April – May: Preparation of a new version of RWP to be presented to the RCG technical sessions of 2022.

Significant outputs

The most significant outputs were the presentation of RWP elements to the RCGs technical sessions only 5 months after the start of the project, then the work between June and September 2021 to finalize the test run RWP 2022 to be presented to the NC decision meeting. The unanimous acceptance by all NCs to go forward with the two RWP test run 2022 (one for RCG NANS&EA and one for RCG Baltic, see annexes 6 and 7) was considered a success for the project, especially in view of continuing the hard work during the intersession for preparing the next stage in 2022.

No RWP version was developed for both RCG Large Pelagics (LP) and for RCG on Economic issues (ECON) in 2021 but progress have been made. During their 2021 session RCG LP, one working day was dedicated to the exchange focus on the development of RWP for the large pelagics and the group agreed to define their focus areas according to the existing ISSGs structure and composition. More details can be found in section 7 of [RCG LP 2021](#) report. The newly set-up of RCG ECON in 2021, together with a later schedule of the meeting (early September) allowed only for focusing on the rules of procedures (RoP) and recommended (rec #10) one common RoP for all RCGs in accordance with the work done by the Fishn'Co project and RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA; In addition, RCG ECON agreed on the level of their ambitions for regional coordination for a further RWP. For more details see section 6.1.4 of the [RCG ECON 2021](#) report.

Deviations from the plan

The stakes were high for proposing a new version of RWP as soon as June 2021 and so were the ambitions. Fishn'Co succeeded in proposing and finalizing two RWP test run 2022 (D3.1 and D3.2) and limited the contents to the minimal requirements. By doing so, fishn'Co could gather feedbacks from NCs and from STECF to progress towards the next stage in 2022.

There was no such RWP for Large pelagics (D3.3) nor for RCGECON (D3.4) but discussion progressed during those 2 RCGs on the development of RWP (see section above).

WP4: Communication and dissemination

The main objective of this set of activities was to integrate communication into the RCGs' strategy and to elaborate and implement communication and dissemination actions around the Regional Work Plans and about the activities of the RCGs. An overview of the progress of communication and dissemination activities is described below:

Task 1. Design of a detailed dissemination and communication plan (DCP) for the RCGs

The Dissemination and Communication Plan (DCP) first draft was presented during Fishn'co's kick off meeting for discussion and to plan further completion. DCP includes i) the identification and classification of the relevant **stakeholders'** groups for receiving Fishn'co outcomes; ii) a preliminary selection of **communication contents**

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and materials, and of the **suitable channels** to convey the project messages; and iii) a preliminary plan of dissemination and communication **actions** within the project timeline. With the inputs received the DCP was consolidated in a living document with the aim of being updated periodically accordingly with the emerging needs. The DCP identifies the communication channels as well as target audiences, communication products and timing among other elements (Annex 8).

Task 2. Set-up and permanent update of the Stakeholders database for the RWP

Several meetings (at different scale) have been held to disseminate Fishn'co purpose and structure among the RCG participants and to engage them in the project activities, confirming specific interest to contribute by a total of 95 experts from partner and non-partner organisations. The identification of stakeholders and the setup of the database is been done in synergy with Secweb project. Additional stakeholders have been identified in cooperation with RCGs and ISSGs chairs. Secweb has developed a draft outline of the needs and the structure of the database. The work will continue in 2022.

Task 3. Specific communication and dissemination contents and materials

Several dissemination and communication contents and materials have been developed during the reporting period:

- Project leaflet
- Fishn'Co microsite at the RCG's website <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/fishnco/>
- Fishn'Co related News items to feed into RCG's newsletter
<https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/regional-work-plans-for-data-collection-in-the-fisheries-and-aquaculture-sectors-launched-for-testing/>
<https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/interview-with-joel-vigneau/>
- Infographics, infographics have been developed to give visibility mainly to the work carried out within WP1.

Task 4. Stakeholder events and networking

Fishn'Co partners have had a wide participation in RCGs Technical Meetings held in 2021, starting in early June with RCG NANSEA and Baltic, followed by RCG Large Pelagics Technical Meeting at the end of June, RCG LDF in July and RCG ECON Technical Meeting in September.

Additionally, Fishn'Co project held 3 assembly meetings in March, July and October 2021.

WP5. Project coordination and management

Coordination is aimed to a smooth management of the large project network and to allow a systematic monitoring of progress and achievements

Task 1. Running the project secretariat in support of fluent administrative procedures

From the start of the project, the secretariat was setup under the umbrella of CETMAR Foundation

Task 1.1. Administrative secretariat

CETMAR has led the process of gathering administrative documents and timely informed project partners about the administrative procedures. In active communication with project partners administrative staff to offer support when needed. In addition, the secretariat is coordinated with IFREMER, project leader to meet the deadlines and submit timely and in due form.

Task 1.2. Support for the organization of meetings

The secretariat is in charge of communication the date, agenda, link and any relevant information about meetings. Representatives from the secretariat are attending the meetings with the purpose of taking minutes support the reporting of the respective meeting. In person meetings were not possible during the reporting period. Of all meeting, minutes are available (Annex 12)

Task 1.3. Support the WP leaders RCG's and ISSG's chairs

The secretariat has supported WP leaders, RCGs and ISSGs chairs in the reporting process, not only sending reminders for contributions but also facilitating templates and detailed instructions. CETMAR has systematically gathered and compiled inputs for reports, also produced inputs to feed into reports. Always in coordination with IFREMER, project coordinator.

Task 1.4. Support the project to organize and monitor work progress

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Periodical project coordination meetings were held on monthly basis to monitor work progress, minutes from meetings record actions to be taken, deadline and responsible person/partner for its implementation. Thus, minutes allowed for a sound monitoring of work progress.

Task 1.5. Good practices for internal communication

At early stages of the project, the coordination team compiled a list of both partners and non-partners participants with their areas of interest in Fishn'Co, specifying the work packages in which they were interested. Additionally, IFREMER set up mailing lists for all project participants, work package leaders and Tasks leaders in WP1. All resources have been updated periodically and have been used by the coordination team and the secretariat to address administrative staff in relation to administrative issues, and to convene experts to the different meetings as well as sharing relevant information.

3. DELIVERABLES AND DISSEMINATION ACTIVITIES

Use this section to summarise all deliverables produced during the reporting period (e.g. reports -other than the interim and final reports contractually required to be submitted to the European Commission-, websites, software etc.), as well as all dissemination activities executed (publications, workshops, conferences, etc.). For each of them, please signal if they were a contractual obligation², and provide the title, description and date of production, organisation or publication. If relevant, please provide proof on how the provisions of Article II.7 of the Grant Agreement (Visibility of Union Funding) were implemented (Max. 2 pages)

Deliverables required in the Call for Proposals (Contractual obligation)

Deliverable 1. Overview of the state of play, data gaps and needs (covered by D 1.1)

Deliverable 2. Minutes or brief reports of any workshops, meetings or other (covered by D 1.2, D 4.4, D 5)

Deliverable 3. Short description of the agreed decision-making structure (covered under WP2 and WP4)

Deliverable 4. Draft workplan (covered under WP3)

Below, a summary of “partial” deliverables produced during the reporting period under different work packages:

WP1. Compiling, identifying and filling information gaps

D1.1. Gaps and needs to develop a RWP. **Data gaps and the level of ambition** have been identified for **10 thematic focus** areas (TFAs) and were presented at 2021 RCGs annual meeting sessions. Each TFA has identified the elements towards regional work plans and the level of ambition. This information has been summarised in tables where the actual situation/progress vs goal can be consulted (Annex 1 & Annex 2)

D1.2. Reports of workshops, meetings or other creative tools. Task leaders for each TFA had regular virtual meetings to update on progress, review example cases, explore synergies and share lessons learned, leading to closer cooperation and information exchange. A work template for D1.1 was developed in order to guaranty a consistent approach across TFA. Two infographics were developed (WP4): first, an infographic to stimulate debate around the elements towards regional work plans; second, an interactive infographic displaying gaps and level of ambition towards RWP for each TFA. All meeting minutes WP1 are available (Annex 3). For the socio-economic data dissemination of the results will be through the reports of workshops, which are still to be held. These reports will be presented to RCG-ECON in May 2022

WP2 - Establishing decision making structures/processes

D2.1. A short description of the processes that needs to be taken into account when developing RWP. Work ongoing and first draft presented at RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic Technical Meeting held in June 2021. The text is available *In*: 2021_RCG NANSEA RCG Baltic TM_Part III Report³, section 6.2.1, pages 107-108.

² Contractual obligation: this refers either to an activity/deliverable required in the Call for Proposals or provided for in Annex I.

³ https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/2021_RCG-NA-NSEA-and-RCG-Baltic_TM_partIII_ISSG.pdf

- D2.2.** Draft decision-making structures for developing the RWPs. Work ongoing and first draft done (Annex 4).
- D2.3.** Draft timeline and procedure for adoption of a RWP (including proposed scenarios for consultation). Work ongoing and first draft done (Annex 5).
- D2.4.** Draft revised RoP that accommodate for development and adoption of RWP. Revised RoP done. Updated version taking output from D2.1 and D2.2 will be drafted in autumn 2022. First draft done.
- D2.5.** Slideshow on the summary of the draft decision-making process. Will be carried out in 2022.

Milestones for 2022

- March 2022: Submission a questionnaire and the draft for decision-making structures for adoption of regional work plans to be submitted to the NC for comments.
- May 2022: Second version of a proposal for decision-making structures for adoption of a regional work plans to be submitted to the NC and the RCGs for comments.
- August 2022: Final version of a proposal for decision-making structures for adoption of a regional work plans to be submitted to the NC.
- October 2022: Draft version of a revised RoP taking into account the new decision-making structure to be submitted to the NCs.

WP 3 – Drafting Regional Work Plans

- D3.1.** Draft elements of Regional Work Plan for RCG NANS&EA (textboxes and tables). Done, see Annex 6
- D3.2.** Draft elements of Regional Work Plan for RCG Baltic (textboxes and tables). Done, see annex 7
- D3.3.** Draft elements of Regional Work Plan for RCG Large Pelagics (textboxes and tables). Prepared and discussed during RCG LP 2021 but not resulting in a RWP. [See section 7 in RCG LP report 2021.](#)
- D3.4.** Draft elements of Regional Work Plan related to economics and aquaculture for PGECON (textboxes and tables). Prepared and presented to RCG ECON which was held in September 2021, too late to be part of the test run 2022. [See section 6.1 in RCG ECON report 2021.](#)

Milestones for 2022

- May 2022: Second version of RWPs to be presented at RCG NANS&EA (D3.1), Baltic (D3.2), large Pelagics (D3.3) and PGECON (D3.4) for their 2022 sessions.
- October 2022: Document on the development of Regional Work Plans, main aspects and approach and strategy for their implementation (D3.5) and a slideshow on the summary of the draft regional work plan (D3.6) to be used for communication and dissemination and presented to the Commission at the final meeting.

WP4: Communication and dissemination

- D4.1.** Dissemination and Communication Plan for Fish'nCo. Achieved, see annex 8. The DCP will be updated regularly, M17, M22.
- D4.2.** Dissemination and Communication Materials for Fish'nCo: First project leaflet (Annex 9); infographic elements RWP/ambition levels; narrative for RCGs webpage <https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/fishnco/>; interactive infographic gaps & ambition levels table (Annex 10).
- D4.3.** Inputs to feed the RCGs stakeholders database in Annex II project. The identification and classification of relevant stakeholders groups receiving Fish'nCo outcomes have been accomplished (Annex 11); working closely with Secweb project to develop RCGs stakeholders database.
- D4.4.** Compilation of reports from Stakeholders' events/meetings. Achieved. The project has a **dedicated repository** on Teams where minutes from different meetings, presentations and reports are available for partners and non-partners. A total of 102 people has access to the repository.

Milestones for 2022

- December 2022: Accomplishment of final stakeholder event
- March 2022: Provision of inputs to Annex II project from the elaboration of a web-based stakeholders database for eh RCGs

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WP5. Project coordination and management

- D5.1.** Minutes from meetings (Annex 12)
- D5.2. a-c: Reports to the EU Commission** after the formal project meetings. No specific follow up formal project meetings have been held as project officer has actively participated in the different meetings and activities carried out within Fishn'Co project. Additionally, a **specific repository** has been created to grant access to project officer to partial deliverables that have been accomplished so far. The repository is directly linked to “Delivery and reporting obligations follow up” document, a live document used to facilitate further evidence of the achievements reported on a six-monthly basis.
- D5.3. a-d:** Six-monthly detailed meeting plans. Fishn'Co Project Steering Committee (PSC) meetings are held once a month, although there is no detailed calendar. PSC meetings are scheduled according to the project coordination needs.
- D5.4. a-d:** Six-monthly progress reports. First progress report has been submitted in July 2021 according to the specifications. Additionally, as a supplementary information to the first progress report there is the document “Delivery and reporting obligations follow up”. This document is kept as a live document and used to facilitate further evidence of the achievements reported on a six-monthly basis.

4. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Please use this section to summarise project management activities during the period (Max. 2 pages)

- Describe briefly the main tools put in place to ensure sound project management (internal controls, monitoring tools, performance indicators, etc.). If applicable, describe performance of the tasks in terms of selected indicators;
- If applicable, please describe any encountered or foreseen problems among the different beneficiaries or affiliated entities (distribution of tasks, coordination, communication, etc.);
- Report any other problems related to project management which have occurred and explain how they were solved or what solutions were envisaged;
- Indicate changes which have occurred to the legal status of any of the beneficiaries or their affiliated entities, if any.

Project coordination is aimed to a sound project management of the large project network and to allow a systematic monitoring of progress and completion of tasks on time. Below we summarised the management activities put in place during the reporting period:

1. Having a kick-off meeting and regular plenary/assembly meetings. To assure that all stakeholders share a common understanding of the project requirements and scope. During the reporting period there were the kick-off meeting in early February, and three assembly meetings in March, July and September, respectively.
2. Establishing the Project Steering Committee (PSC).
3. Setting up shared information and document repositories (for technical, administrative and financial documents). There are two separate repositories: FISHN'CO_TECH and FISHN'CO_ADMIN. FISHN'CO_TECH is structured in five main folders that correspond to each project WP and it is used to share technical information related to project deliverables. FISHN'CO_ADMIN is used to share information related to: contractual documents, consortium agreement, data sharing agreement, progress report and financial report forms tailored for each partner.
4. Establishing effective communication since the very beginning of the project implementation. The communication plan was presented during kick-off meeting. The team involvement was mapped with a matrix where partner and non-partners institutions listed their staff and marked their interest in different WPs and thematic focus areas. Different communications channels such as: website, newsletter and mailing have also been identified and put into place. The first issue of RCGs newsletter was released in December 2021 and included several news directly related to Fishn'Co project.
5. Additionally, there is a direct line of communication with DG-MARE project officers not only by email but also attending meetings regularly. Establishing a fluent dialogue with the DG-MARE Officers

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- facilitating accountability and a transparent implementation of the project. The early detection of deviations or hurdles and this dialog will enable to overcome them with due diligence and efficiency.
6. Initiating the project for all the WPs and tasks. Each WP were assigned WP leader/s and in the case of WP1 there were also assigned task leaders for each of the thematic focus areas.
 7. Besides of the plenary meetings, there are project coordination meetings where project partners meet to follow up on project progress and agree on actions. Coordination meetings are held on a monthly basis. Specific work package meetings are also held on demand according to the needs of the project at the time. Task and WP leaders report to the coordination team after meetings on regular basis.
 8. Developing templates for minutes, reports and presentations. Templates were developed according to EC guidance and all include the official project logo and European Commission logo (Annex 13).
 9. Organising, accomplishing and reporting meetings. Several tools are used on regular basis to coordinate meetings, such as: doodle poll, Teams and Zoom as meeting platforms. Physical meetings have not been scheduled due to restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In general terms, a doodle poll is circulated to arrange the date for the meeting, then a Save The Date together with the preliminary agenda and the link to the meeting are sent to participants. A reminder together with a detailed agenda are also sent in due time. Once the meeting is over, the coordination team uploads minutes on Teams which is also used as a review tool and informs everyone. This combination of tools has proven very efficient to streamline meetings.
 10. Promoting transparency. The coordination team provides regular work packages status and updates as well as general project updates in both WP and project meetings that can be followed through the minutes available in the repository under WP5. Additionally, periodical assembly meetings are organized as the main forum to discuss regional coordinated initiatives towards RWPs with project partners and non-partners organizations. There has also been established a fluent dialog with EC Officer, who takes part on regular and assembly meetings. The dialog between project partners and non-partners together with the DG-MARE team allows for early detection of deviations or hurdles and therefore taking pertinent actions to overcome them with due diligence and efficiency.
 11. A Consortium Agreement (CA) was put into place for a successful project implementation. The CA was approved on the 23rd June 2021 (Annex 14).
 12. Reporting process, there is a fluent communication with work package leaders and administrative staff to work collaborative towards the report drafting and meeting the deadlines.

In general, some of the project procedures have been slower than expected because of the large number of contributors and the impossibility to arrange for physical meetings. There was a need to dedicate time to clarify expectations and commitments to all the project participants. Also, the fact that different ISSGs are on a different stage towards the RWP has made it necessary an adaptive and flexible approach to the RWP design and to the WP implementation. Given the early tight timeline of the project, the first elements of RWPs were elaborated only a few days before the RCG NANS&EA (D3.1) and Baltic (D3.2). The added difficulty was the complexity and the variety of teams working in parallel within the RCG/ISSG. Despite the challenges, the objectives of contributing strongly to the ToR 4 of the RCG related to the development of RWP was clearly achieved given the importance given to Fishn'Co in almost all topics addressed during the RCG technical meetings and the success in putting forward two test run RWP for 2022.

Changes to the legal status of the beneficiaries or their affiliated entities

Applicant n° 9. Instituto Español de Oceanografía (in Annex 1) has changed its legal status. The aforementioned Instituto Español de Oceanografía has formally been integrated within Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (Real Decreto 20/2021, 30th March). This change has not affected project implementation on the technical side as people initially involved in the project remain in their positions. The administrative issues linked to this change have also been addressed in close collaboration with the project management team.

[The Planning Group on Economics Issues \(PGECON\)](#) established as a subgroup of the Commission Expert Working Group on Data Collection according to Commission Decision (2016) 3301 to assist the Commission in the implementation of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) has changed its status since the elaboration of project proposal. In 2020, an RCG ECON dealing with data collection of economic data issues was established, to continue the work of the Planning Group on economic issues. The change has not had any significant implications in project implementation since this change was acknowledged from the very beginning of the project.

5. SUBCONTRACTING

Describe whether any of the tasks has been subcontracted, provide justification, percentage of the volume subcontracted as compared to the total budget and explain how the subcontractor was selected (Max. 2 pages)

CETMAR

No subcontracting was undertaken during the reporting period due to the restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic situation. In person meeting were no possible, therefore no subcontracting for travelling and accommodation.

Marine Institute

During the application process it was identified that out-sourcing would be required for some tasks related to the biological data quality thematic work area of WP1. Whilst the level of expertise required to complete these tasks was present in the Marine Institute it was identified that further capacity was required to complete the work. During the first year of the project the following tasks were out-sourced: collate national examples of data checks and create a template to use when documenting data checks for a Regional Work-Plan; collate national examples of the types of editing and imputing that are being performed and create a template to use when documenting data editing and imputing for a Regional Work-Plan.

The cost of out-sourcing these tasks was estimated at €9,500 (inc VAT) – this was 17% of the Marine Institute's budget. The Marine Institute's procurement rules state that at this level of expenditure three written quotes for the work should be obtained – this was done. The cheapest quote was €4,315.01 (inc VAT) and an order was made with the company. The work was completed satisfactorily and within the agreed time-scale. The actual cost of the work (€4,315.01) is 8% of the of the Marine Institute's budget.

6. FORECAST FOR THE NEXT REPORTING PERIOD

Please use this section to give an outlook on planned activities and outputs for the following reporting period. If applicable, provide the details for each work package. Please signal any potential deviation from the initial planning and provide a justification and a description of remedial or mitigating measures planned (Max.1 page)

The forecast for next reporting period has been organized taking into account the RCGs work cycle and in particular the Annual Technical Meetings:

In preparation to the 2022 RCG Technical Meetings, 3 sequences of intersessional work have been agreed:

- Nov. 2021-February 2022: Finalization of all proposals to be included in a RWP 2023 + legal aspects;
- March-April 2022: Consultation with all MS. Questionnaire to be developed and sent to NCs;
- April- May 2022: Reporting and RWP proposal to RCGs. Finalization of RWP for RCGs.

RCGs 2022 technical sessions:

- Fishn'Co participation - RCG ECON (May), RCG NANSEA& RCG Baltic (June), RCG Large Pelagics (June), RCG LDF (July).

Fine tuning RWP after 2022 RCGs sessions:

- June- October 2022: Communication. Adaptation of the proposed RWP upon demands;
- September 2022: Finalisation of RWPs for the Decision meeting;
- October – November 2022: lessons learned from the 2 sessions of RCGs (2021 and 2022); Compilation of all the work done; Follow-up of RWP test runs;
- November -December 2022: Prospective; Final reporting; Take over Fishn'Co developments by ISSG/RWP

During the last plenary meeting (February 2022), Fishn'Co committed to follow-up on STECF (STECF-21-17) suggestions on timeline for proposing the first official RWP. If further agreed by National Correspondents and RCGs, the retro-planning would come as follows:

- Agreed RWP 2025-2027 to be available to MS by the start of 2024, when preparing to resubmit a 3-year plan for 2025-2027 linked with the RWP;

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- Proposal of RWP 2025-2027 to be presented during the RCGs 2023 and officially proposed in October for an evaluation by STECF in November 2023;
- Preparatory work for the RWP 2025-2027 to be conducted during the inter-session 2022 to 2023 RCGs (as soon as Autumn 2022) under the supervision of the revived ISSG/RWP which would then take over Fishn’Co;
- All Fishn’Co work until RCG 2022 will be dedicated to lay the ground for the future RWP 2025-2027. The more the 2022 proposal is close to the future RWP 2025-2027 the better.

7. BUDGET

- Please fill in the separate template for the Financial Report;
- In the section below, please provide your assessment of the budget implementation for the reporting period in question, as compared to the information included in Annex III of the Grant Agreement (Max. 2 pages)
 - Please explain any deviations from the planning, as well as their potential impact on the implementation of the project;
 - Signal any relevant problem concerning eligible costs, distribution of budget, financial constraints or others.

The table below shows a summary of direct eligible cost executed during the reporting period, for each partner:

Beneficiary	Direct eligible cost					Subtotal of direct eligible costs	Indirect eligible costs (7%)	Total eligible costs
	Staff Costs	Sub-contracting	Travel costs and Subsistence	Equipment	Other Specific Costs			
IFREMER	63.845,95 €	- €	- €	188,54 €	- €	64.034,49 €	4.482,41 €	68.516,90 €
CETMAR	33.809,76 €	- €	- €	1.920,68 €	- €	35.730,44 €	2.501,13 €	38.231,57 €
EV ILVO	24.003,19 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	24.003,19 €	1.680,22 €	25.683,41 €
MI	9.314,73 €	4.315,00 €	- €	- €	- €	13.629,73 €	954,08 €	14.583,81 €
WR	8.177,04 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	8.177,04 €	572,39 €	8.749,44 €
IRD	3.770,70 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	3.770,70 €	263,95 €	4.034,65 €
AZTI	8.506,60 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	8.506,60 €	595,46 €	9.102,06 €
IPMA	18.538,11 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	18.538,11 €	1.297,67 €	19.835,78 €
CSIC	3.685,30 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	3.685,30 €	257,97 €	3.943,27 €
EAFA	9.643,20 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	9.643,20 €	675,02 €	10.318,22 €
NISEA	11.289,60 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	11.289,60 €	790,27 €	12.079,87 €
DTU-Aqua	17.056,27 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	17.056,27 €	1.193,94 €	18.250,21 €
LUKE	15.172,03 €	- €	- €	- €	- €	15.172,03 €	1.062,04 €	16.234,07 €
TOTAL	226.812,48 €	4.315,00 €	- €	2.109,21 €	- €	233.236,70 €	16.326,57 €	249.563,26 €

The percentage of executed Budget varies across partners; ranging from 46% of executed budget (IPMA and EAFA) to 22% (CSIC). Overall, the percentage of executed budget is 36%.

Beneficiary	Total eligible costs	TOTAL BUDGET	% Executed
IFREMER	68.516,90 €	160.900,18 €	43%

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CETMAR	38.231,57 €	111.900,60 €	34%
EV ILVO	25.683,41 €	72.524,60 €	35%
MI	14.583,81 €	55.340,40 €	26%
WR	8.749,44 €	36.679,60 €	24%
IRD	4.034,65 €	15.479,69 €	26%
AZTI	9.102,06 €	34.154,40 €	27%
IPMA	19.835,78 €	42.832,10 €	46%
CSIC	3.943,27 €	18.270,25 €	22%
EAFA	10.318,22 €	22.256,00 €	46%
NISEA	12.079,87 €	42.586,00 €	28%
DTU-Aqua	18.250,21 €	43.780,12 €	42%
LUKE	16.234,07 €	43.559,70 €	37%
TOTAL	249.563,26 €	700.263,64 €	36%

The overview of the Budget line – Staff Costs is shown in table below. Some project partners are above 50% executed, these are: CETMAR, MI, IPMA and EAFA. Overall, the percentage of executed Staff Costs is at 47%.

Beneficiary	Staff Costs		
	Executed	BUDGET	% Executed
IFREMER	63.845,95 €	133.874,00 €	48%
CETMAR	33.809,76 €	52.600,00 €	64%
EV ILVO	24.003,19 €	66.780,00 €	36%
MI	9.314,73 €	12.720,00 €	73%
WR	8.177,04 €	31.280,00 €	26%
IRD	3.770,70 €	9.467,00 €	40%
AZTI	8.506,60 €	25.920,00 €	33%
IPMA	18.538,11 €	30.030,00 €	62%
CSIC	3.685,30 €	12.075,00 €	31%
EAFA	9.643,20 €	12.800,00 €	75%
NISEA	11.289,60 €	31.800,00 €	36%
DTU-Aqua	17.056,27 €	34.916,00 €	49%
LUKE	15.172,03 €	31.710,00 €	48%
TOTAL	226.812,48 €	485.972,00 €	47%

Two partners have budget assigned under Sub-contracting, CETMAR and MI. As mentioned above (5. SUBCONTRACTING) CETMAR has no executed any costs; MI is at 16% of execution.

Beneficiary	Sub-contracting		
	Executed	BUDGET	% Executed
IFREMER	0,00 €	0,00 €	
CETMAR	0,00 €	25.000,00 €	0%
EV ILVO	0,00 €	0,00 €	

MI	4.315,00 €	27.000,00 €	16%
WR	0,00 €	0,00 €	
IRD	0,00 €	0,00 €	
AZTI	0,00 €	0,00 €	
IPMA	0,00 €	0,00 €	
CSIC	0,00 €	0,00 €	
EAFA	0,00 €	0,00 €	
NISEA	0,00 €	0,00 €	
DTU-Aqua	0,00 €	0,00 €	
LUKE	0,00 €	0,00 €	
TOTAL	4.315,00 €	52.000,00 €	8%

The table below shows the percentage of execution of the budget line Equipment for both IFREMER and CETMAR, 13% and 96%, respectively.

Beneficiary	Equipment		
	Executed	BUDGET	% Executed
IFREMER	188,54 €	1.500,00 €	13%
CETMAR	1.920,68 €	2.000,00 €	96%
EV ILVO	0,00 €	0,00 €	
MI	0,00 €	0,00 €	
WR	0,00 €	0,00 €	
IRD	0,00 €	0,00 €	
AZTI	0,00 €	0,00 €	
IPMA	0,00 €	0,00 €	
CSIC	0,00 €	0,00 €	
EAFA	0,00 €	0,00 €	
NISEA	0,00 €	0,00 €	
DTU-Aqua	0,00 €	0,00 €	
LUKE	0,00 €	0,00 €	
TOTAL	2.109,21 €	3.500,00 €	60%

Other budget lines such as Travel costs and Subsistence and Other Specific Costs are at 0% execution as a consequence of travel restrictions because of COVID-19 pandemic.

8. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Please include any comment that you find relevant to convey to the European Commission. You may refer to issues such as policy implementation, contract management or budget execution (Max.1 page)

There were no face-to-face project meetings during the reporting period as a consequence of Covid-10 travel restrictions. Therefore, the budget line dedicated to travel expenditures has not been executed, this applies to all project partners.

Given the above, it is foreseen that some partners might ask for budget relocation during the next reporting period.

9. ATTACHMENTS

Please list all the attachments accompanying this report, if any. Please number the annexes and use the same reference number in the below list of attachments.

- [Annex 1.](#) Identification of gaps – TFAs (WP1)
- [Annex 2.](#) Ambition levels -TFAs (WP1)
- [Annex 3.](#) Meeting minutes - WP1 (WP1)
- [Annex 4.](#) [Description of the process needed to develop a RWP, and Decision making structure](#) (WP2)
- [Annex 5.](#) Draft timeline and procedure for adoption of a RWP (WP2)
- [Annex 6.1.](#) Draft elements of Regional Work Plan for RCG NANS&EA-Tables (WP3)
- [Annex 6.2.](#) Draft elements of Regional Work Plan for RCG NANS&EA-Textboxes (WP3)
- [Annex 7.1.](#) Draft elements of Regional Work Plan for RCG Baltic-Tables (WP3)
- [Annex 7.2.](#) Draft elements of Regional Work Plan for RCG Baltic-Textboxes (WP3)
- [Annex 8.](#) Dissemination and Communication Plan for Fishn´Co (WP4)
- [Annex 9.](#) Fishn´Co project leaflet (WP4)
- [Annex 10.](#) Infographic – Gap analysis and ambition levels towards a RWP (WP4)
- [Annex 11.](#) Inputs to RCGs stakeholder database- Fishn´Co Relevant stakeholder groups (WP4)
- [Annex 12.](#) Minutes from meetings (WP5)
- [Annex 13.](#) Fishn´Co Templates (WP5)
- [Annex 14.](#) Fishn´Co Consortium Agreement (WP5)