



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

Fisheries Policy Mediterranean and Black Sea
Fisheries Management Mediterranean and Black Sea

Brussels,
MARE/D1/CO (2023)

**TO THE ATTENTION OF THE NATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS OF BULGARIA,
CROATIA, CYPRUS, FRANCE, GREECE, ITALY, MALTA, ROMANIA,
SLOVENIA, AND SPAIN**

Subject: 2023 Official call for data on landings, discards, length and age compositions, biological parameters, trawl and hydro acoustic surveys in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea.

Dear National Correspondents,

In addition to the multi-annual plans already established for relevant Mediterranean fisheries catching demersal and small pelagic species, the European Union is expected to establish additional ones, specifically in areas totally or partially beyond the territorial waters of Member States (Council Regulation (EC) N° 1380/2013¹). The scientific basis of these plans and the status of the different stocks shall come from an analysis carried out in coordination with scientists of EU Member States both at EU and national level as well as within the Scientific Advisory Committee of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM-SAC).

With a view to further support the scientific community in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea, the European Commission has given mandate to the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) to adopt an operational work-programme, in order to improve the knowledge on the status of the exploited demersal and small pelagic stocks. One of the main tasks within this work-programme is to evaluate the exploitation levels with respect to their biological and economic productivity and the sustainability of the exploited stocks. This task can be achieved by using both trawl and acoustic surveys as well as commercial landings/discards and fishing effort data, as collected through the EU Data Collection Framework programmes and adopted Work Plans (Regulation (EU)

¹ Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on the Common Fisheries Policy, amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1954/2003 and (EC) No 1224/2009 and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2371/2002 and (EC) No 639/2004 and Council Decision 2004/585/EC ([OJ L 354, 28.12.2013, p. 22](#)).

2017/1004², Commission Decisions 2021/1167³ and 2021/1168³, Commission Decision 2022/39⁴ and previous legal framework, where applicable), and other suitable scientific information collected through national and community funded studies and research projects.

Since the launching of the STECF activities in 2008, more than thirty-two specific Expert Working Groups (EWGs)⁵ have already taken place. They have contributed, through the analysis of the available information, to the better understanding of the biological state of the main Mediterranean and Black Sea stocks. Since 2016 STECF stock assessment have been presented in GFCM WGSAD and WGSASP on a yearly basis to ensure an additional EU contribution to the SAC advisory process to maximize the coverage of key stocks.

Data request for STECF EWG 23-09 and EWG 23-12

In 2023, the planned STECF-EWGs (and its scientists from all EU Mediterranean and Black Sea countries) are expected to continue carrying out joint assessments, using different methods and data sources, on several stocks of important demersal species. The full list of species, for which STECF is tasked to carry out assessments and whose data must be uploaded, is provided in ANNEX 1, Appendix 1.7.

There are increasing scientific requests to improve the fisheries data temporal resolution for the development of better length-based models and for length to age slicing, particularly for crustacean fisheries or in the case of the common dolphin-fish assessment. We draw attention of the Member States to the fact that improved length based assessment models will require data at high temporal resolution and this would lead to potential revision/resubmissions of time series. On this basis in 2024 the Commission will request, for increasing numbers of stocks, to upload full-time series of fisheries dependent data at quarterly level (i.e. quarter =1, 2, 3, 4) and for these stock annual data (i.e. quarter = -1) will not be accepted at upload time. As a pilot study quarterly reporting is obligatory for fisheries dependent 2022 data of the two shrimp species, giant red shrimp (ARA) and deep water rose shrimp (DPS). Quarter = -1 & year= 2022 will fail the upload checks for these two species.

We draw the attention of Member States to ensure the reporting of landings by GSA of origin, for deep water shrimps (ARS and ARA) as well as Mediterranean hake (HKE) and

² REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (Recast).

³ Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167 of 27 April 2021 establishing the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of biological environmental, technical and socioeconomic data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors from 2022.

Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168 of 27 April 2021 establishing the list of mandatory surveys and thresholds as part of the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors from 2022

⁴ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39 of 12 January 2022 laying down rules on the format and timetables for the submission of national work plans and annual reports on data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors, and repealing Implementing Decisions (EU) 2016/1701 and (EU) 2018/1283

⁵ <http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/medbs>

deep water rose shrimp (DPS), caught by EU long distance fleets fishing in the geographical areas of the West and Central Mediterranean and Levant Sea. Member States shall ensure full consistency with reporting to GFCM DCRF (TASKs II3.3, II3.4, II3.5 and II3.6) and other reporting obligations stemming from GFCM Recommendations: GFCM/42/2018/3, GFCM/42/2018/4, GFCM/42/2018/5, GFCM/42/2019/6. Member States shall ensure the consistency of the landings time-series for these species in particular when the place of origin was not reported and the landings were associated to the GSA of landing.

STECF PLEN 22-01⁶ concluded that for *Venus* clams (SVE) in Italian waters, available knowledge on growth, maturity, spawning potential and selectivity should allow more advanced population modelling and scenarios analysis to support the management plan. STECF PLEN 22-03 endorsed preliminary evaluations for the *Venus* clams in the Adriatic. To further support a quantitative population modelling for this stock, Member States involved in this fishery should ensure the submission of all relevant information, including data from relevant scientific surveys, also including razor clams and smooth *Venus* clams.

Following a similar approach as in previous years, the European Commission herewith asks Member States to provide, from the date of opening (see below for details) and **not later than 29th June 2023 (midday)**, fisheries and surveys data in support of the forthcoming STECF EWG 23-09⁷ and EWG 23-12⁸ on Mediterranean stock assessments and for STECF ad hoc requests. This request shall apply to all Member States. The requested data are listed below in detail:

- **Fisheries data** (catches, landings, discards) shall be submitted in accordance to Appendix 1 and 2 of ANNEX 1 for the **year 2022**;
- **Biological data** (Maturity ogives at Length, Maturity ogives at Age, Growth parameters, Sex ratio at length, Sex ratio at age, Age length key) shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 3 of ANNEX 1 for the **full time series**;
- **Scientific survey raw data** (e.g. **MEDITS, SOLEMON, Black Sea surveys** or other survey data if format is in compliance with the MEDITS ones (TA, TB and TC)) shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.1 of ANNEX 1 for the **year 2022**;
- **Scientific survey aggregated data** collected under different surveys (e.g. **MEDIAS**) shall be submitted in accordance with Appendix 4.2 of ANNEX 1 for the **year 2022**;
- **Scientific survey data** for Venus clams (*Chamelea gallina*) in the waters of GSA 9, 10, 17, 18, for razor clam (*Ensis minor*) in the waters of GSA 9 and 10, and smooth Venus (*Callista chione*) the waters of GSA 17 for the longest available time series, collected under different

⁶ <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/22954277/STECF+PLEN+22-01.pdf/8a539543-5781-4bfa-b92f-239bb148f4c8>

⁷ <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg2309>

⁸ <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg2312>

surveys, shall be submitted **as excel or csv file format via email to JRC Data Submission** (jrc-datasubmission@ec.europa.eu).

The European Commission reminds Member States that according to Article 17 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004, Member States must make detailed and aggregated data available to end-users to support scientific analysis as a basis for fisheries management.

The time-series stemming from the DCF Work Plans shall be as consistent as possible with those submitted to GFCM under the DCRF Stock Assessment input data⁹. Since discrepancies in stock assessment input data could be a source of advice duplication, maximum alignment and consistency are strongly encouraged. With the aim of producing the best scientific advice, DCRF Stock Assessment input data could be made available for STECF EWGs.

Besides the submission of data collected under the EU Data Collection Framework, we invite Member States to authorize the scientists attending the EWGs to make use of all the necessary data as collected in research projects funded at national level only. In this context, we remind Member states of their obligations under Article 4(3) of the Treaty of the European Union.

We expect that scientists attending the EWGs, in order to complement what is collected under the EU Data Collection Framework, will make use of all data collected through the research projects and studies funded by the European Commission.

Deadlines for data submission

The JRC Data Upload portlet (<https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/dcf/dc/medbs>) will officially open for submissions of fisheries, biological, scientific survey raw data (e.g. MEDITS, SOLEMON, Black Sea surveys) and scientific survey aggregated data (e.g. MEDIAS) on the **26th of May 2023** until the legal deadline on the **29th of June 2023 (midday)**. The same deadline applies for the scientific survey data for *Venus* clams and associated bivalves, which have to be submitted as an Excel or csv file via email to JRC Data Submission (jrc-datasubmission@ec.europa.eu).

In accordance with the data handling procedures for STECF EWGs, **the operational deadline will be set for the 18th of July 2023 (open from 11th to the 13th midday)**.

Detailed information on the working procedures in respect to the deadlines can be found in ANNEX 2 (*Data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups*). **Please note that the Upload system will be closed just after the legal deadline and will be re-opened for the operational deadline (see above).**

Additional information on codes and formats

⁹ DCRF Task VII.1, VII.2, VII.3.1 and VII.3.2

To comply with the outcomes of the EWG 18-11¹⁰, the codes reported in ANNEX 1 (Appendix 1-9) were revised, namely the country codes for Romania and Bulgaria, the fisheries codes, the gear code and the area code.

Moreover, the MEDITS files format have been **updated according to MEDITS Handbook Version 9 2017**. This will give the opportunity to the Member State to upload salinity information in the columns added to the TA file. Furthermore, another column was added in all the three files, to allow for the reporting of the survey name. The latter provides for the upload of survey information other than MEDITS (e.g SOLEMON or Black Sea demersal survey), if these data can follow the MEDITS format.

We would like to remind Member States that, according to ANNEX 1 – Appendix 1.9 -, they must provide landings and discards (if available) in weight by species (listed in Appendix 1.7) both for métiers selected and for métiers not selected by the ranking system and/or for which biological samples have been not collected.

In 2016, the JRC portlet was changed along with the digital format of the files and the implementation of a file naming convention, to improve data submission and quality checking. Files are requested as Comma Separated Values (.csv) and only one file for each table can be accepted at upload. Full details of the data transmission procedures are detailed in ANNEX 3.

Member States shall take note of the **Data Validation Tool** (provided by DG JRC and available at <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/DCF/DC/MEDBS>) and are encouraged to use it, in order to avoid errors at upload time to the JRC portlet, to support the data submissions and enhance the data quality.

Requests for resubmission

If Member States decide to revise and resubmit the data time series, a justification must be sent to DGMARE Unit C3 (contact venetia.kostopoulou@ec.europa.eu) requesting overwrite/append rights at least one month before the legal deadline.

DG MARE may also contact the National Correspondents, whenever considered necessary, particularly *during* the relevant STECF EWGs for additional data sets, by GFCM-GSA. Any use of data different from those uploaded by Member States, as part of this data call, will be duly justified and recorded in the STECF EWG report.

For further clarifications and guidance, you may contact:

Data submission team (jrc-datasubmission@ec.europa.eu)

Sven Kupschus (sven.kupschus@ec.europa.eu)

¹⁰ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Evaluation of Work Plans & Data Transmission failures (STECF-18-18). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2018, ISBN 978-92-79-79401-8, doi:10.2760/031311, JRC114724

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We look forward to your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

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Director

Enclosures: Annex 1: Data Call - Specifications;
 Annex 2: Data-handling procedure for STECF Expert Working Groups;
 Annex 3: Data Call Transmission Instructions

c.c.: *Fisheries Directors and Permanent Representations of Spain, France,
Italy, Slovenia, Malta, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia.*

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