

**MINISTRY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THE
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

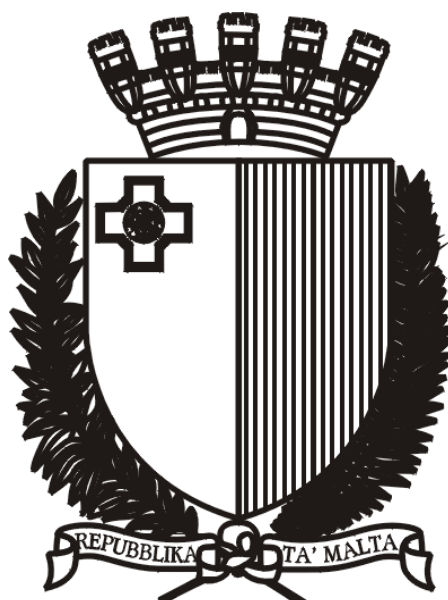
MALTA

National Data Collection Programme

Under Council Regulation (EC) 199/2008,
Commission Regulation (EC) 665/2008 and
Commission Decisions 2008/949/EC, 2010/93/EU

Malta

2013 – Annual Report



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I General Framework

Malta carried out its National Fisheries Data Collection Programme in 2013 and was compliant with the Data Collection Framework (DCF) (Council Regulation EC 199/2008, Commission Regulation EC 665/2008 and Commission Decisions 2008/949/EC and 2010/93/EU). The present document includes the annual report and compliance tables for the reference year 2013, following the guidelines for submission of annual reports on the current Data Collection Framework (DCF) (Guidelines for the submission of Annual Report on the National Data Collection Programmes under Council Regulation (EC) 199/2008, Commission Regulation (EC) 665/2008 and Commission Decision 2010/93/EU, Version 2013). It gives an overview of the required and achieved sampling together with deviations from the aim and actions undertaken.

In 2013, there were no major changes in the approach compared to the previous reference year, although a major deviation from the NP proposal was registered in that only a small percentage of onboard observations planned were carried out – although having said that, the majority of these deviations were compensated for by market samples.

Malta is actively involved in the Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs), namely the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) for large pelagic and tuna like species and the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM) for all the other stocks. All the data collected through the DCR and DCF is/will be made available to the respective RFMOs when requested. Malta also collaborates actively with Italian colleagues within the Sicily channel, with joint surveys, biological data collection, research projects and stock assessments. Furthermore, Malta is also working in close collaboration with regards to research projects and stock assessments with Sicily, Tunisia and Libya under the umbrella of the FAO MedSudMed regional project.

Table 1: List of derogations in 2013

Title of derogation	NP Proposal section	Type of data - Variables	Region	Derogation Approved or Rejected	Year of Approval or Rejection	Reason / Justification for derogation
Derogation for sampling of eel in the recreational fisheries	III.C.6	Quarterly weight of catches	GSA 15	Approved	2013	No eel fishery in Malta
Derogation for Metier sampling of trolling lines and hand & pole lines	III.C.6	Sampling of length at catch	GSA 15	Rejected	2013	These two gears compose a small percentage of landings in Malta
Length sampling derogation for selected species	III.C.6	Length sampling	GSA 15	N/A	N/A	N/A

II National data collection organisation

II.A National Correspondent and participating institutes

Presently Ms. Roberta Mifsud is the National Correspondent for the Maltese National Data Collection Programme. She is in charge of the overall coordination of the programme, and supervision of the economic, biological and transversal data collection variables. Her contact details are:

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In 2013, the Fisheries Resource Unit within the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate change (MSDEC) was responsible for the implementation of the DCF and for undertaking the modules of the programme. Since there is only one entity involved, no formal National Coordination meetings are set-up. Collaboration and consultancy with other national entities is sought. Other contact persons at the Fisheries Resource Management Unit who are responsible for the co-ordination of the programme are;

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II.B Regional and International coordination

II.B.1 Attendance of international meetings

Table II.B.1 shows the list of international meetings that were attended by Malta.

There are some meetings that were planned for 2013 but were not attended by Malta (refer to table II.B.1). There were different reasons for non-attendance to planned meetings, namely being that after reviewing the terms of reference of some of the workshops (which are issued after the time when the National Proposal is drawn up), working groups and study groups, it was noticed that they were related exclusively to the ICES areas and not to the Mediterranean. Furthermore some of the workshops did not take place in 2013.

GFCM - SAC - Sub-Committee on Stock Assessment (SCSA) - 14th Session

Malta did not attend due to a temporary shortage of staff

GFCM - SAC - Sub-Committee on Marine Environment and Ecosystems (SCMEE) - 13th Session

Malta did not attend due to a temporary shortage of staff

GFCM - SAC - Sub-Committee on Economic and Social Sciences (SCESS) - 13th Session

Malta did not attend due to a temporary shortage of staff

GFCM - SAC - Sub-Committee on Statistics and Information (SCSI) - 13th Session

Malta did not attend due to a temporary shortage of staff

ICCAT Working Group on Stock Assessment Methods

Malta did not attend due to a temporary shortage of staff

Working Group on Multispecies Assessment Methods (WGSAM)

Malta did not attend due to a temporary shortage of staff

GFCM - Workshop on IUU Fishing in the Mediterranean Sea

Malta did not attend due to a temporary shortage of staff

Regional database training workshop – 2013

This workshop was not held in 2013

Regional database steering group meeting – Mediterranean

This was not held in 2013

GFCM Working group on stock assessment of demersal species and elasmobranchs in the Mediterranean

This was not held in 2013

GFCM Working Group on Bio-economic Analysis-Models used in the GFCM

This was not held in 2013

GFCM Working Group on Selectivity and Fishing Technology

This was not held in 2013

GFCM Meeting of Permanent Working Group on Stock Assessment Methodology on: Time Series Analysis

This was not held in 2013

GFCM Working group for finalising the new TASK1 & 2 data submission framework

This was not held in 2013

ICCAT Stock Assessment - Mediterranean Swordfish

This was not held in 2013; a stock assessment session on Atlantic swordfish was held, however Malta did not attend as Maltese fishers only target the Mediterranean stock.

II.B.2 Follow-up of regional and international recommendations

Recommendation

RCM Med&BS 2012 Recommendation:

Considering the increased regional tasks and power of the RCMs under the EU MAP for data collection for 2014-2020, RCM Med& BS recommends that the current structure of the RCMs (i.e. the inclusion of national correspondents, economists and biologists) remains the same. The Group further recommends that PGMed continues functioning under the umbrella of the RCM Med& BS.

Follow-up by Malta

Malta makes note of this recommendation.

III Module of the evaluation of the fishing sector

III.A General description of the fishing sector

The Maltese fishery is a relatively small industry of a typically Mediterranean artisanal type, and is frequently described as multi-species and multi-gear fisheries, with the majority of the fishermen switching from one gear to another several times throughout the year. The fleet as at 31 December 2013 consisted of 1,023 professional vessels of which 38.9% were professional full-time and 61.1% were professional part-time vessels. Among those professional vessels 12 are registered as “non-operational”. The recreational category, made up of 1,970 vessels, operated recreational fishing gear only and fish caught by vessels in this category are not commercialised. The total gross tonnage and power (main engine) for the full-time professional vessels for 2013 were 6,147.6 GT and 43,558.2 kW respectively, while for the part-time professional vessels the values were 1,235.6 GT and 30,353.72kW. A total of 17 trawlers operated on a full-time basis, for a total power and tonnage of 6,996 kW and 2,659 GT respectively, resulting in 19.3 to 37.7 m in overall length.

Almost 93.25% of the professional vessels were less than 12 metres in length overall and more than half of them are of a traditional design, mainly ‘Luzzu’ and ‘Kajjik’ and these operated mainly in coastal waters. Larger vessels, those over 12 metres in length, amounted to 69 vessels and mainly consisted of trawlers, long-liners and netters operating mainly in off-shore waters all year round. The length of the registered vessels ranged between 3.0 and 37.70 metres.

The main landing sites are Marsaxlokk harbour and the wholesale fish-market in Valletta. Catches are generally sold by public auctions through middlemen and fish hawkers.

The main exploited species include swordfish, dolphinfish, blue fin tuna, demersal and small-pelagic species and a number of additional species some of which although caught in smaller quantities have a high commercial value such as the red shrimps. Other species such as bogue, horse mackerel, mackerel, dogfish, skate and similar species, which are less valuable commercially, are also caught in fairly large quantities.

Fishing patterns by the Maltese fishing fleet do not vary much between years and are seasonal for some fishing practices. This is due to the migratory patterns of the main target species namely the tuna and dolphin fishing season, whilst together with the swordfish which is targeted throughout the year (with the exception of March, October and November due to the closed season) are the three most important species for the economy of local fisheries.

Over the last decade the Maltese fishing industry has evolved from a virtually unrestricted activity into a highly regulated industry especially after Malta’s accession in the EU with quotas primarily following recommendations by international fisheries bodies like ICCAT and GFCM.

The aquaculture industry has become increasingly important throughout the years and employs full-time and part-time persons including technical/scientific experts, farm managers, farm operators, divers and maintenance staff.

The local consumption of capture fisheries products is heavily supplemented by locally farmed fish, imported chilled and frozen fish products, as well as processed imported fish products.

There were no major changes in the Maltese fishing sector in 2013, thus it had no significant impact on the implementation of the National Programme.

III.B Economic variables

Mediterranean and Black Sea

III.B.1 Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

The sampling frame for the collection of economic data was based on the fishing vessel register information. The sample used for the reference year 2012 was segmented according to the Community Framework for data collection (EC 949/08). The data was segmented by type of gear being mobile or passive and by fishing technique namely; drift and/or fixed netters, demersal trawlers and/or demersal seiners, pots and/or traps, hooks, polyvalent passive gears only, combination of active and passive gears, purse seiners and vessels using other active gears. The segment containing inactive vessels was included in the sample. The data was further segmented by the length of the vessel (0-6m, 6-12m, 12-18m, 18-24m and 24-40m).

The population was defined as the entire commercial Maltese fishing fleet which includes the entire full-time commercial (MFA) and part-time commercial (MFB) fishing vessels amounting to a total of 1041 vessels in 2012. Both inactive and active vessels were considered. The sample size amounted to 262 vessels. The survey was carried out using a stratified random sampling design. In most of the cases, for fleet segments with less than 50 vessels, a census approach was used. For the two fleet segments having between 50 and 200 vessels, 34% of the vessels were sampled and for the two large fleet segments having over 200 vessels 22% of the vessels were sampled. The sample was selected randomly from each fleet segment and direct interviews based on questionnaires were used to gather the data needed.

Malta does not cluster fleet segments therefore table III.B.2 is not applicable.

Estimation of capital value and capital costs

The reference values used for the estimation of the price per capacity unit (PPCU) are the prices of the recent constructed vessels in the sample. This provides the value of capital at current prices. The capital value was derived by means of direct interviews with fishers based on a questionnaire. The price per capacity unit was estimated by dividing the capital value of recent constructed vessels by the gross tonnage of the vessels constructed in the respective year.

The price index used as part of the calculation is 'the Retail Price Index' (RPI). The RPI takes into consideration the consumption expenditure of a fixed basket of goods and services that private households incur locally. This index is a good indicator of the impact of inflation on the cost of living. A 'heavy machinery index' is not available in the case of Malta. The only producer price index that is available is the 'Industrial Producer Price Index' which only dates back to 2005 while the oldest vessels in the Maltese fleet date back to the very early 1900's.

The depreciation rates and the service life times of assets which were used correspond to the ones provided in the general scheme excel spreadsheet provided as part of the capital valuation report of study No FISH/2005/03: 'IREPA Onlus Co-ordinator, 2006.

Capital value data derived from questionnaires is collected, segmented according to the different asset components that are the hull, engine, electronics and other equipment (including gear). An average of the share of each component as a fraction of the total value of the capital was estimated for the vessels making part of the sample. The share values of the hull, engine, electronics and other equipment (including gear) are equal to 46%, 25%, 2% and 27% respectively.

III.B.2 Data quality: Results and deviation from NP proposal

The planned sample had a substantive coverage of the population and of each segment of the fleet reflecting a positive indication of quality. Additionally, each completed questionnaire was checked by officers and if the questionnaire was partially incomplete or incorrect the fishers were re-contacted so as to correct or complete the questionnaire. The final estimates were estimated by attributing a weighting factor to each fleet segment. Data was raised to the total number of vessels within the segment.

On average the coefficient of variation is equal to 0.1 or precision level 3. This is the level making it possible to estimate a parameter either with a precision of plus or minus 25% for a 95% confidence level.

The following are the deviations from the NP proposal:

The sampling intensity proposed in the NP amounted to 389 vessels and the actual sample amounts to 262 vessels. This deviation was due to some of the fishers' reluctance to participate in such a survey.

The data source to estimate the gross value of landings was derived from log book and sales voucher data.

Calculation procedures of derived indicators:

Full-time equivalent: National and Harmonised- data with regards to the total number of hours worked per year per employee on board the vessel (excluding resting time) and the working hours on shore was collected for the purpose of the calculation of these two indicators. Based on the National reference level an employee is considered to be a full-timer when he/she works 40 hours per week. In this case and in accordance with the study FISH/2005/14 the national full-time equivalent is equal to 1. From this data the harmonised full-time equivalent was also calculated. The Harmonised full-time equivalent (FTE) is the FTE based on a threshold of 2000 hours. The calculation in the case of both indicators is the result of the ratio of the total working hours per year to the national and harmonised thresholds indicated above. The achieved sampling rate, the response rate and the coefficient of variation (CV) for the data with regards to the total number of hours worked is provided in table III.B.3.

Financial Position: Data with regards to debt as at the end of the reference year was collected for the purpose of the calculation of this indicator. The calculation is the ratio of debt to total capital. The achieved sampling rate, the response rate and the coefficient of variation (CV) for the data with regards to debt is provided in table III.B.3.

No deviations from the NP proposal were reported.

III.B.3 Follow-up of Regional and international recommendations

No recommendations relevant to this module were made by regional and international bodies.

III.B.4 Actions to avoid shortfalls

The following is a list of actions which have been taken to avoid shortfalls:

- Preparations in terms of understanding the questionnaire before the actual interviews start, through information meetings for the interviewers and the distribution of information leaflets to fishers.
- Interviews were carried out during the winter months so as to take advantage when fishers are more usually on shore due to the weather conditions.
- As from the 2012 reference year, data collected during an interview was entered directly onto a database which automatically performed checks while inputting.
- Through the database a customised questionnaire for each vessel was built and available information (eg. from logbooks) was used. Thus, data collected was not totally reliant on the questionnaire technique.
- Furthermore, a checking system was setup whereby officers, who then checked that the questionnaire was up to standard. If the questionnaires proved to be unsatisfactory, the interviewer was requested to revise the questionnaire.

III.C Metier-related variables

Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea

III.C.1 Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

The total number of sampling trips proposed in the NP for 2013 was achieved for surface longlines, gillnets and trammel nets, pots and traps, FAD's, lampara, and bottom otter trawl (demersal species). The total number of sampling trips proposed was not met for hand and pole lines, trolling lines, set gillnets, deep water trawlers and mixed deep and shallow water trawlers.

Only for the drifting longline fisheries, were some of the trips planned at sea carried out. For pots and traps all trips were sampled at port. This was mainly because of the inaccessibility / difficulty onboard observers found to carry out their work onboard.

Hand and Pole lines as well as Trammel nets are very small fisheries in Malta and the catches are only rarely landed at the fish market since most catches come from the fleet smaller than 10m LOA. Information about the catches and effort for these metiers were taken from questionnaires with no direct access to the fish.

Two metiers were over sampled. The sampling rate for the number of trips for pots and traps - demersal species (FPO_DEMSP) was 200 %, while that of dolphin fish FAD's (LA_SLPF) was 120 %. There were no extra costs incurred by this over-sampling from the Data Collection Framework planned budget for 2013, as sampling took place at the fish market without the need to purchase the samples.

More trips were sampled in the case of the Fish Aggregating Devices metier (LA_SLPF). Since stock-related variables for the target species *Coryphaena hippurus* are required, the number of trips was increased in order to achieve enough samples and the required precision targets,

Pots and traps are used in different fisheries to target different species (*Octopus vulgaris* and *Boops boops*). Sampling was carried out in order to be able to estimate the length frequency distribution of catches in both fisheries. For the pots and traps metier the oversampling was performed either at the market (12 trips) or at port (12 trips), without the need to purchase the catch and thus the extra costs incurred were not considerable.

CVs have been reported for species for which Malta's landings in the Mediterranean exceed 1% (by weight) as per commitments outlined in the NP. These species were as follows: *Hexanchus griseus*, *Mustelus asterias*, *Mustelus mustelus*, *Pagellus bogaraveo*, *Sarda sarda*, *Spicara flexuosa*, and *Squalus blainvillei*. In the case of large pelagics, the CV was not calculated at the national level, as the CVs should be calculated at the regional level during the annual Planning Group for Methodological Development (PGMED). Where Malta's contribution to discard volumes did not exceed 1%, the CV for discard volumes of a given species was not calculated, including for species whose CV's had been calculated for landings data.

A bilateral agreement (Annex I) was signed between Cyprus and Malta on 27 January 2009. Said agreement concerned sampling of bottom otter trawlers targeting mixed demersal and deep sea species in GSA 15. It was agreed that Cyprus trawlers involved in the shared metier landing their catch in Maltese ports would be included in the Maltese sampling scheme for collection of biological metier-related variables. The Maltese sampling scheme samples three types of bottom otter trawlers – demersal, mixed demersal and deep sea. For 2013, while the Cypriot vessels in question were indeed sampled alongside the Maltese fleet, during 2013 trips recorded from these vessels corresponded to demersal trawls and were categorised as such, i.e. OTB_DEF_>=40_0_0. Data on OTB_MDD_>=40_0_0 in general was not collected since trips performed by the Maltese fleet in this metier during 2013 were limited.

III.C.2 Data quality: Results and deviation from NP proposal

CV's were calculated successfully for retained catches and landings of species for which Malta's landings in the Mediterranean exceeded 1% (by weight) as per commitments outlined in the NP. The achieved precision values are outlined in table III_C_5. For the 7 species for which CV's were measured, the precision was relatively low. This is due to the fact that the number of individuals measured was low as this depends on the occurrence of the species in the sampled metiers.

In the case of large pelagic, as mentioned above, the CV was not calculated at the national level, as the CVs should be calculated at the regional level during the annual Planning Group for Methodological Development (PGMED).

With regard to the other species for which the estimation of precision targets is required, these are species that are mostly caught by trawlers and for which stocks are shared with GSA 16 (Sicilian channel). For this reason, Malta believes that CVs for these species should be calculated by combining data from the country/countries with whom the stocks are shared. In fact the CVs are quite high in most cases due to the limited amount of fish that are caught by the Maltese fleet which is comparatively quite small. This exercise, once again should be performed during the Planning Group for Methodological Development for the Mediterranean and Black Sea.

III.C.3 Follow-up of Regional and international recommendations

No recommendations relevant to this module were made by regional and international bodies.

III.C.4 Actions to avoid shortfalls

In the collection of metier-related variables, Malta has made several efforts to ensure that the data collection requirements are met, and was mostly successful in meeting the overall achieved number of trips for 2013, but through market sampling rather than from onboard observations as planned. An attempt towards fishers self-sampling for large pelagic was made to try and avoid this. This shortfall was partially mitigated through replacing onboard observations with market sampling. Malta will be making more efforts throughout 2014 to meet all of the trips scheduled at sea.

III.D Recreational fisheries

Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea

III.D.1 Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

The recreational fishery in Malta is conducted throughout the year, weather permitting with higher fishing intensities during the summer months. The total catches from recreational fisheries constitute a very low percentage of the total catches.

Malta is exempted from collecting data on the recreational fishery for eel. This is because in Malta, there is no recreational fishery for eel. For this reason, Malta had requested a derogation not to sample this fishery. The request was approved and Malta was exempted from the obligation to prepare an Eel Management Plan in accordance with Council Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007. With regard to recreational fisheries targeting sharks, Malta can confirm that recreational fisheries do not target sharks, although sharks are caught as by-catch. Malta refers to the report published by Gaudin, C. and De Young, C. (2007) GFCM Studies and Reviews - Recreational Fisheries in the Mediterranean Countries: A Review of Existing Legal Frameworks. Said study states that Maltese recreational fishers target: *"Albacore, Atlantic bonito, Atlantic little tuna, bluefin tuna and spear fish. Other common species landed: dolphinfish, combers, weevers, stone bass. Other species included: common squid, bogue fish, common seabream, Atlantic horse mackerel, chub mackerel and dentex. Others species caught by amateur fishermen: common pandora, painted comber, white bream, amberjack, saddled bream, rainbow wrass, Mediterranean morey, annular seabream, black and red scorpionfish and Common octopus."*

The study also mentions that: *"Bycatch or non-targeted species, terms often associated with commercial fisheries, also occur in RF. Non-targeted species in the Mediterranean comprised species such as sharks and rays, but also species resembling target species, such as Spanish bream and sharpsnout seabream, living in the same grounds as pandora and white seabream."*

Recreational fishers are only allowed to use minor gears such as set bottom longlines, traps, trolling lines and jigging, as stipulated in Article 17 of Council Regulation (EC) 1967/2006. Such gears are not appropriate to target sharks and the main target species are *Diplodus sargus, Octopus vulgaris, Boops boops, Coryphaena hippurus, Seriola dumerili, Loligo vulgaris, Illex spp. and Todarodes spp.*

Malta has the obligation to collect data exclusively on blue fin tuna caught by recreational fishery. Landing officers were present at landing sites to collect information on catches of blue fin tuna by recreational fishing for all landings. The necessary data was collected through a census approach.

III.D.2 Data quality: Results and deviation from NP proposal

There were no shortfalls in the data collection.

III.D.3 Follow-up of Regional and international recommendations

No applicable recommendations were made as regards to recreational fisheries.

III.D.4 Actions to avoid shortfalls

Not applicable.

III.E Stock-related variables

Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea

III.E.1 Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

Table III.E.1 was updated with the information collected during the sampling year.

Malta is obliged to collect stock-related variables only for three species (*Thunnus thynnus*, *Xiphias gladius* and *Coryphaena hippurus*) since Malta is exempted from sampling the other species as their landings by weight correspond to less than 10% of the total Community landings from the Mediterranean Sea or less than 200 tonnes. Malta however still collects some stock-related variables for the species mentioned in the NP, since it is sometimes possible to collect this data while carrying out metier-related sampling.

The sampling planned for stock-related variables in 2013 was for Group 1 and for some Group 2 species as specified in the NP. With regard to the sharks, following the recommendation of PGMED during 2010, stock-related data for these species was collected during the MEDITS scientific surveys and also when encountered and could be sampled when sampling for metier-related variables. The number of samples planned for all the species was achieved.

For some of the other species, over-sampling was observed, however this did not incur any extra costs and was mainly due to high number of samples collected during on-board sampling and scientific surveys, where many times all the catch was sampled.

III.E.2 Data quality: Results and deviation from NP proposal

The calculation of the precision levels of the large pelagic species will be done after the data collection of the three-year period is carried out and these shall be calculated at the regional level (as per PGMED 2010 recommendation). In the case of elasmobranchs, the catch was lower than 200t for 2013, and therefore any stock related data provided was done so on a voluntary basis. For the rest of the species, the precision levels were determined using the methodology described by Vigneau and Mahevas (Vigneau and Mahevas, 2007) using Microsoft Excel 2007.

The precision levels planned were achieved for some of the species and for some of the stock-related variables. In some cases, the required precision target was not achieved, even though these were over-sampled. The required precision target is difficult to achieve even with large data sets; the CV is a measure of dispersion of the data and since the dispersion of the lengths of fish caught is sometimes quite wide it would not be possible to achieve a better CV, irrelevant of the size of the sample.

III.E.3 Follow-up of Regional and international recommendations

No recommendations relevant to this module were made by regional and international bodies.

III.E.4 Actions to avoid shortfalls

There were no significant shortfalls for the stock-related data in 2013. Malta would like to point out that it provided stock related data on a voluntary basis for species that it was not obliged to provide data for (i.e. catches greater than 200 tonnes or 10% of the total Community landings on average over the previous 3 years).

III.F Transversal variables

III.F.1 Capacity

III.F.1.1 Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

All Maltese fishing vessels are registered in the Fishing Vessel Register of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture of the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate change (MSDEC). Apart from other information, the Fishing Vessel Register database includes the following information related to each vessel:

- Typology
- Registration number
- Age (age of the hull)
- Dimensions: GT, length, width, draught.
- Engine power, type and age;
- Ownership
- Health and safety equipment

The information in the Vessel Register is updated on a continuous basis. Malta obtained the capacity variables from the Fleet Vessel Register as a census. Table III.F.1 was updated on this data.

Malta is aware that the DCF has no provisions for the exclusion of any part of the vessel population from the data collection. No part of the Maltese fleet was excluded from data collection for Capacity in 2013.

III.F.1.2 Data quality: Results and deviation from NP proposal

The software used conducts standard automatic checking and validation. Moreover, quality checking of the data was carried out by the officers responsible of the Fleet Vessel Register.

Although no shortfalls were present in the results obtained, and the NP proposal was followed, Malta is aware of the following weaknesses in its Fleet Vessel Registry system:

- Licenses for fishing vessels are now issued every year on their different expiring date. Commission Decision 93/2010 requires to base economic variables on the fleet as at 1st January of the reference year. Thus, this issuing system will not give the best picture of the fleet register for a reference year.

No precision estimates were calculated as the data obtained covered all the vessels (census).

III.F.1.3 Actions to avoid shortfalls

Not applicable.

III.F.2 Effort

III.F.2.1 Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

Malta is aware that the DCF has no provisions for the exclusion of any part of the vessel population from the data collection. No part of the Maltese fleet was excluded from sampling. Table III.F.1 was updated with the information collected during the sampling year.

Malta gathered information on fishing effort by technique according to Appendix VIII (of the Commission Decision EC 949/2008), on a monthly basis.

The required data has been collected and includes all the information requested (Commission Decision EC 949/2008).

For vessels over 10 metres (LOA), data from logbooks compared with data from the sales vouchers were used. A census was conducted for the effort data obtained for the vessels > 10 metres.

For vessels less than 10 metres (LOA) the sampling scheme described in the National Programme (National Data Collection Programme Proposal, 2011-2013) was employed. This method ensures that all the required information on catches, landings and effort by fleet segment is obtained.

As in 2012, a census was performed when the number of vessels in a segment was low (this is to ensure that the data obtained is representative) and the sampling rates were increased for other segments as necessary. Moreover, data on discards by species started to be collected during 2012 and was continued in 2013.

Precision estimates were calculated for the data obtained from the Catch Assessment Scheme which was used to collect effort data for vessels with a length of < 10 m. For the remaining vessels, precision estimates were not calculated since data was collected through a census, and therefore all vessels larger than 10 m were covered.

Data on fishing effort, aggregated as required can be provided.

III.F.2.2 Data quality: Results and deviation from NP proposal

Table III.F.1 was updated with the values of the accuracy indicators (where applicable). The sampling rates, response rates and the precision levels achieved are very good. No shortfalls were present in the achieved accuracy.

III.F.2.3 Follow-up of Regional and international recommendations

No regional and international recommendations relevant to this section were made in 2013.

III.F.2.4 Actions to avoid shortfalls

Data was cross-checked with different sources such as checking logbooks data with sales vouchers and checking the Catch Assessment survey data with sales vouchers. Also, when

some data on effort was not made available, questionnaires to the vessels' captains were carried out so as to obtain the required data, when possible.

III.F.3 Landings

III.F.3.1 Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

The required data has been collected and includes all the information requested. Table III.F.1 was updated with the information collected during the sampling year.

Malta collected data on commercial landings mentioned in Appendix VIII (of the Commission Decision EC 949/2008, EC 93/2010). Landing figures were based on exhaustive data reported in logbooks (for vessels over 10 metre LOA), by sampling landings (for vessels under 10 metre LOA) and on sales notes/vouchers (>10m and <10m) from the official fish market.

Data on commercial landings are available by:

- Species
- Vessel
- Quarter
- Geographic area: Division (according to level 2 of geographical disaggregating defined in Appendix I of the Regulation) or for stocks mentioned in Appendix XII in the DCF, commercial landings can be disaggregated as in that Appendix
- Gear employed

Malta is aware that the DCF has no provisions for the exclusion of any part of the vessel population from the data collection. No part of the Maltese fleet was excluded from sampling.

III.F.3.2 Data quality: Results and deviation from NP proposal

Table III.F.1 was updated with the required information. No shortfalls were present in the results obtained.

III.F.3.3 Follow-up of Regional and international recommendations

No regional and international recommendations relevant to this section were made in 2013.

III.F.3.4 Actions to avoid shortfalls

Not applicable.

III.G Research surveys at sea

III.G.1 Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

Malta planned two scientific surveys for 2013, the MEDITS and the MEDIAS survey.

1. Mediterranean International Trawl Survey (MEDITS)

The aim of this survey is to produce basic information on the demersal resources in terms of population distribution as well as demographic structure, on the continental shelves and along the upper slopes at a global scale in the Mediterranean.

MEDITS 2013 was carried out following the MEDITS protocol (Version 7, 2013), in GSA 15 where 45 stations out of the 45 stations planned were sampled (Figure 1). The number of days achieved were one less than those planned, and 92% of the days at sea planned were achieved. This was due to a torn net which required repair on shore and to a situation where the number of stations sampled per day was increased so as to cover all stations. Therefore, overall, the number of stations sampled was exactly as planned, with 100% of the stations being covered. A major shortfall was that of the lack of age reading data readily available for the relevant data call. Although the samples required to obtain this data were collected, problems were encountered to subcontract the required work. A tender for this work was issued twice but no successful applicants resulted. The abundance and weight of all the species trawled were recorded. Furthermore, at least 50 specimens from each species in each haul were measured for length or length, weight, sex and age where applicable as per the revised MEDITS protocol (Version 7, 2013).

At the national level data is being stored using ATrIS (AdriaMed Trawl Information System) by which data can then transferred into TA, TB, TC files as specified by the MEDITS protocol in order to facilitate storage and exchange at the international level.

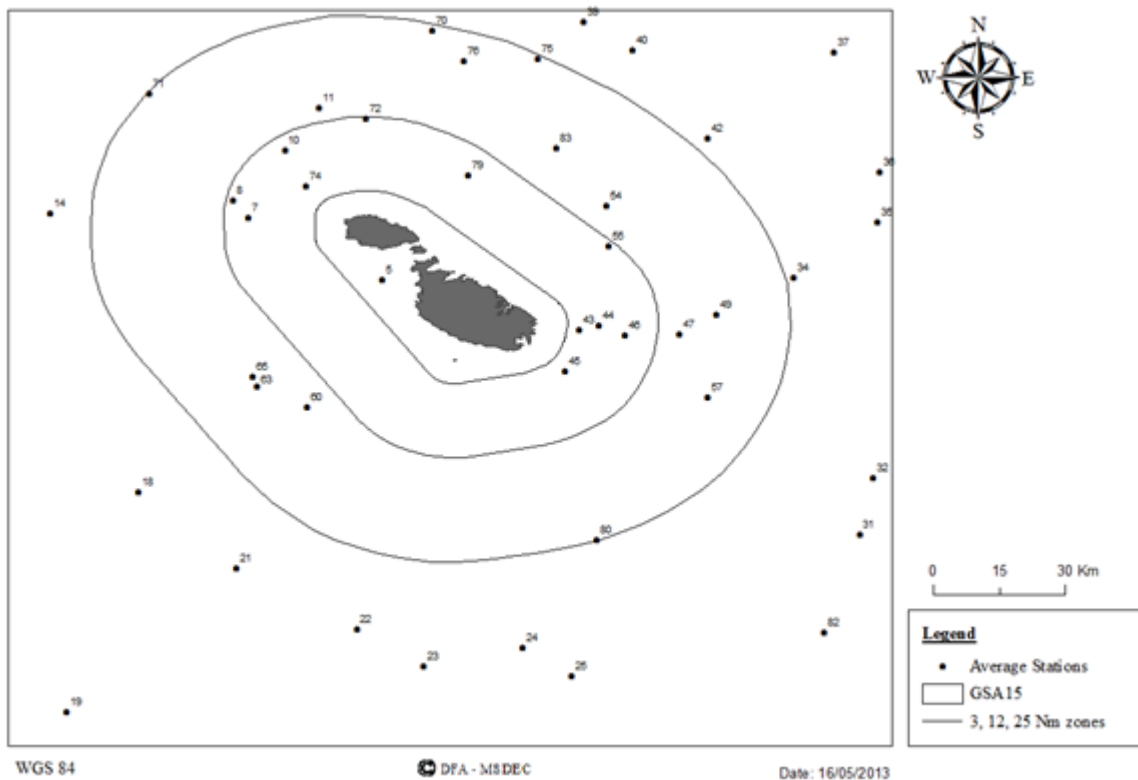


Figure 1. Position of the achieved MEDITS trawl survey stations for 2013

MEDiterranean Acoustic Survey (MEDIAS)

The survey MEDIAS was held on board RV “G. Dalla Porta”, with the aim of conducting an interdisciplinary research to estimate the spatial distribution and abundance of pelagic organisms on the southern continental platform of Sicily and Maltese waters, between Marsala and Capo Passero, on an area of about 2700 m². This survey was done in collaboration with the group of Oceanography of the IAMC-CNR section of Capo Granitola institute in Sicily.

Acoustic measurements of small pelagic fish stocks (*Engraulis encrasicolus* and *Sardina pilchardus*) were conducted with a multi-frequency scientific echo-sounder. Measurements of physical-chemical parameters of the water column were also collected. The positions of the transects sampled are shown in Figure 2 below.

For the MEDIAS survey, the achieved target was 70% of what was planned in NP proposal in terms of echo-sounding transects. These were carried out over 4 sampling – which was the number of days planned.

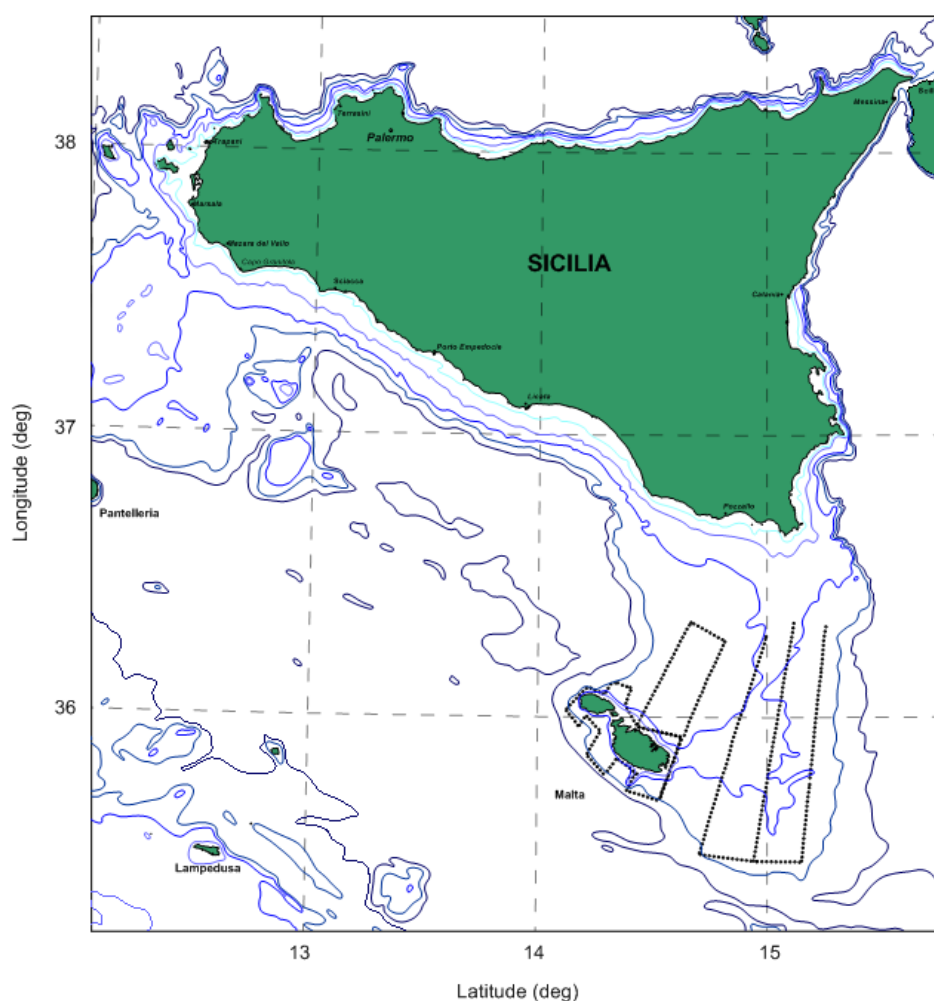


Figure 2. Position of transects for the MEDIAS survey in GSA 15

III.G.2 Data quality: Results and deviation from NP proposal

Data collected from MEDITS is suitable to analyse indicators 1 to 4 listed in Appendix XIII (Commission Decision EC 949/2008) since all the necessary data is collected. The survey covers the largest proportion of the marine region annually in the same area using the same gear.

The results obtained were satisfactory and barring the availability of age-reading data in time for the relevant data call, no shortfalls that may impair quality of indices occurred.

With regard to the MEDIAS survey, a good number of biological samples were collected for *Engraulis encrasicolus* but low for *Sardina pilchardus*. The small sample of the latter collected was due to a low amount of *S. pilchardus* present.

III.G.3 Follow-up of Regional and international recommendations

No relevant recommendations were applicable to the scientific surveys.

III.G.4 Actions to avoid shortfalls

A major shortfall to report was that of the lack of age reading data. Although the samples required to carry this out were collected, problems were encountered to subcontract the required work. A tender for this work was issued twice but no successful applicants resulted. Following this, quotations to specific service providers used by other MS were obtained, to proceed with the cheapest quotation being received.

IV Module of the evaluation of the economic situation of the aquaculture and processing industry

IV.A Collection of data concerning the aquaculture

IV.A.1 Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

Aquaculture farms were segmented according to the major species that the companies' farm based on the value of sales and 'cages' is the fish farming technique used for all the companies in the population. One company farms sea bream, sea bass, amberjack and blue fin tuna, another company farms sea bream, sea bass and meagre and another one farms blue fin tuna and sea bream. Additionally, another three companies farm blue fin tuna only. The target population and planned sample do not differ as a census was planned.

The frame for the collection of economic data was based on the aquaculture operations managed by the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture within the Ministry for Sustainable Development, the Environment and Climate change and includes all operative aquaculture farms during the reference year.

Data collection has been completed, by means of posted questionnaires and one to one meetings were used to gather the data requested. The data provided in the questionnaires by the aquaculture farms is based on company accounts. The data collected is currently being finalised in time for the relevant data call. The methods used for collecting the data and for estimating the parameters are the same as those proposed in the NP Proposal for the years 2011-2013.

IV.A.2 Data quality: Results and deviation from NP proposal

Four companies out of five falling within the other marine species segment provided the data requested, therefore the response rate is equal to 80%. Since the latter is greater than 70%, the coefficient of variation indicator is not necessary to be provided. Both companies comprising the sea bass and sea bream segment responded to the questionnaire and the response rate was therefore 100% for this segment making calculation of precision level unnecessary.

IV.A.3 Follow-up of Regional and international recommendations

No recommendations with regard to aquaculture were made.

IV.A.4 Actions to avoid shortfalls

One of the major problems is the lack of cooperation from the companies to provide the data requested in a timely manner. Postal questionnaires were followed by direct interviews when necessary so as to increase the accuracy of the data collection and most importantly make the process quicker. The companies were contacted by email and by phone several times however some companies still did not respond. So as to forestall this, the DFA has signed a memo of understanding with the National Statistics Organisation (NSO) to collect data together and to avoid duplication of work seeing as in previous years the NSO carried out its

own aquaculture surveys independently. As from 2014 (reference year 2013), aquaculture data will be collected through this method.

IV.B Collection of data concerning the processing industry

IV.B.1 Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

A census is planned for all the variables requested by Commission Decision 2010/93/EU in Appendix XII. The collection of economic data is based on the Maltese business directory and processed fisheries products for sale on the local market.

The planned sampling rate equals to 100%, and data collection is currently underway.

The methods used for collecting the data and for estimating the variables requested are the same as those proposed in the NP proposal for the years 2011-2013 and therefore no deviations are present.

As opposed to what was proposed in the latest version of the NP proposal 2011-2013, the data with regard to net financial costs does not take into account financial income and will be collected in accordance with the definition found in Article 23, item C.13 of the IVth Council Directive 78/660/EEC.

IV.B.2 Data quality: Results and deviation from NP proposal

For reference year 2012, four companies out of six falling within the processing sector provided the data requested, therefore the response rate is equal to 67%. Since the latter is less than 70%, the coefficient of variation indicator is provided.

IV.B.3 Follow-up of Regional and international recommendations

No recommendations with regard to the processing industry were made.

IV.B.4 Actions to avoid shortfalls

The major problem in collecting this data is the lack of cooperation from the companies to provide the data requested in a timely manner. Postal questionnaires are followed by direct interviews when deemed necessary so as to increase the accuracy of the data collection and most importantly quicken the process. Malta will continue contacting the companies to try to collect the data from the five fish processing companies which did not provide the data until the processing industry economic data call is published.

V Module of evaluation of the effects of the fishing sector on the marine ecosystem

V.A Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

The data requirements to calculate the ecosystem indicators 1-4 are available from the Mediterranean International Trawl Survey (MEDITS; see section III.G.1). The trawl survey data is available since 2002 for the GFCM GSA 15.

For the indicators 5-7 the VMS data required is available. This data is available for all the Maltese fishing fleet > 12 m in the Mediterranean and is recorded every 2 hours, and data is available at this resolution.

Indicator 8, rate of discarding can be estimated from the on-board observation data for the fleets Malta surveyed and the transversal data (see section IIIC and IIIF).

For indicator 9 data collected through the economic survey and transversal data (see section IIB and IIIF) are required, and these were successfully collected. Such data is collected at the fleet and length segment level as required by the current regulation. For the estimation of the indicator, however, this needs to be by gear.

There were no shortfalls in the achieved data collection. Table V.1 was updated accordingly.

V.B Actions to avoid shortfalls

Not applicable.

VI Module for management and use of the data

VI.A Achievements: Results and deviation from NP proposal

The data collected within the framework of the DCF has been used for scientific purposes both for national and international needs. The data has been submitted to international organisations for stock assessment purposes and scientific analysis. Malta has submitted/will be able to submit (for data calls that have not been issued yet) data collected within the framework of the Data collection to the following international bodies:

- i) Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission
 - Official call for capacity, landings, effort and economic data (Fleet Economic data call)
 - Official call for data on landings, catches, length and age compositions, effort and trawl surveys in the Mediterranean
 - Official call for data concerning the EU fish processing industry (Processing Industry data call)
 - Official call for data concerning the Aquaculture (Aquaculture data call)
- ii) International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT)
 - Form I fleet characterisation
 - Task I nominal catch estimates
 - Task II catch and effort statistics
 - Task II size sampling
 - Task II catch at size estimates
- iii) General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM)
 - Dolphinfish annual reporting form
 - Task I statistical matrix
- iv) MEDITS working group:
 - Trawl survey data
- v) Data for research projects:
 - Trawl survey data for MAREA project
 - Trawl survey data for MEDISEH
 - STECF Discards data for ICES

Presently, the national set-up for storing and managing the different categories of DCF data is via separate excel sheets. Checking and validation of data is carried out manually. Data for the Mediterranean International Trawl Survey (Medits), part of the Module A3 (Surveys at Sea), is stored in the AdriaMed Trawl Surveys Information Systems (ATrIS). The system is MS/Access based and was originally developed by the FAO AdriaMed project.

As of first quarter 2015, data will be stored in a single shared read-only folder. To ensure security and integrity of data, access shall be controlled via a username/password combination, with editing rights being reserved to two officers. Security will be provided as

part of a data backup periodic routine carried out by the Malta Information Technology Agency.

By the first quarter of the coming year, a comprehensive Fisheries Information System (FIS) will be up and running. The primary objective of the FIS has been to improve on the existing components that were operating independently in isolation, by creating a single integrated structure that caters for all the fisheries control operations. Apart from providing a central depository of all data collected by the various existing components, this modular database will provide accessibility to the real-time updates. With the relative algorithms in place, it will also provide an up-to-date and immediate analysis as against the present situation where it is purely historical.

This common platform facilitates built-in validation/cross-checks of data being fed into the system from the FIS which already brings together VMS tracking data, catch, effort and limited biological data from the logbooks, economic and market data from the sales system, and data related to the Community fishing fleet register which incorporates as well data regarding crew fishing licences and fishing authorisations.

As above, Medits is being tackled through ATrIS – however the possibility of using a new database – Fishtrawl is currently being evaluated. Fishtrawl is similar to ATrIS, in that it has the possibility for data analysis/presentation. One key difference is that the database is hosted on a server, as opposed to a local database. The JRC has been chosen as the database host, with Member States paying a maintenance fee. At present however, nothing has been signed and the database itself is still currently in trial mode. If adopted, data rights will belong to the MS.

A regional database is to be developed for EU MSs in the Mediterranean and Black Sea Region (Med&BS-RDB). Following discussions during the Regional Coordination Meeting for the Mediterranean and the Black Sea (RCM Med&BS) 2013, the said database will be hosted and maintained by the GFCM. Malta is aiming to form part of this database. Data for data calls will be uploaded there. Such a regional database should have the added benefits of the data being readily available to end users, including GFCM and ICCAT, upon request, as well as having fixed deadlines and fixed templates for data upload.

The choice of the development platform will be dependent on the infrastructure and established development tools that the GFCM is willing to put at the disposal of MSs. It is understood that specific portions of source code addressing sensitive statistical algorithms (T-SQL queries, R scripts or C# routines) might be made available to MS for iterative discussions and evolutions. During RCM Med&BS 2013 it was agreed that for the time being the Med&BS-RDB will include biological, economic and transversal data, although the format and what data should be incorporated will be discussed at the next meeting. With regard to the surveys at sea, both MEDITS and MEDIAS are developing a separate regional database.

VI.B Actions to avoid shortfalls

Not applicable.

VI.B.1 Follow-up of Regional and international recommendations

No recommendations relevant to this module were made by regional and international bodies.

VII Follow-up of STECF recommendations

Reference is being made to Chapter 7 (pg 119) of STECF PLEN-13-03, which states the following:

"No recommendations arose during discussions at the 44th plenary meeting of the STECF."

Recommendation

Follow-up by Malta

STECF endorses the SGRN-08-01 report and recommends that MS use the guidelines and templates provided in the report for their National Programme Proposals 2009-2010.

Malta used the templates and guidelines provided in the report for the NP proposal 2009 – 2010

STECF, sharing the opinion of SGRN-08-02, recommends that Member States and the Commission pay particular attention to all issues related to large pelagic species because of large discrepancies in data reported to Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) and in the DCF National Programme (NP) proposals, and particularly for the fishing activities carried out in distant waters. Granted derogations should be properly documented.

Malta paid particular attention to the issues related to large pelagic species and any derogations are documented appropriately

STECF notes that the working group recommended that all MS should collect economic and transversal data regarding the fishing fleet for all fishing vessels in the vessel register during the reference year, instead of only collecting data on vessels in the fleet register on the 1st of January in the relevant reference year. The working group also proposed these follow up activities: Member States to respect these recommendations.

Malta has taken into consideration this recommendation and is collecting economic and transversal data for all fishing vessels in the vessel register during the reference year.

Independent of the work done by SGRN Working Groups, in relation to data submission of Member States in response to calls for data through the DCF, STECF notes that:

Malta has taken into consideration the points made by STECF in relation to data submission of Member States in response to calls for data through the DCF

- Data submissions in response to DCF data calls represent an official national statement.*
- Official national statements need to be qualitatively and quantitatively accurate and the responsibility lies with the Member State.*
- Accuracy of the data should be confirmed by the Member State before the data are submitted.*
- Member States are advised to aggregate the data as defined in the data call within the specified time period. Any clarification on the requested aggregation can always be obtained from the Commission through the specified contact persons specified in the data call.*
- Member States are advised to develop data quality checking tools and to apply such tools before the data are submitted.*
- Only quality checked data should be submitted via the data uploading tools.*

STECF Plenary 09-02 recommends that MS indicate the data collection category that is to be applied for each fleet segment and for each economic variable as listed in Appendix VI of Council Decision 949/08. SGECA 09-02 identified three different categories of data collection scheme that covers all the possible typologies of data collection :

A. Census, which attempts to collect data from all members of a population.

B. Probability Sample Survey, in which data are collected from a sample of a population where members are randomly selected

C. Non-Probability Sample Survey, in which data are collected from a sample of population members not randomly selected.

STECF also recommends that MS; include in their NPs for the period 2011-2013, a methodological report to describe the sampling strategies. STECF also recommends that MS adhere to the guidelines for the preparation of the methodological report. include in their annual Technical Reports, the data quality indicators.

SGECA-09-02 recommends that MS should carefully assess the impact of non-response, especially in the case of census with low response rate.

SGECA 10-03 recommends use of replacement value in macroeconomic analysis (as in the case of AER).

SGECA 10-03 recommends that MS avoid duplication of sampling effort, according to statistical best practices. Therefore, in cases where official statistics on economic data on the processing sector cannot be used to meet the requirements of the DCF, MS should clearly explain the reason and justify the use of additional surveys.

SGECA 10-03 recommends that MS describe definitions and methods used to collect economic data regardless the source used in order to ensure transparency.

SGECA 10-03 recommends use of the IVth Council Directive 78/660/EEC as reference in order to standardise definition adopted by MS. In particular, net financial costs are defined in Article 23, item C.13 of the IVth Council Directive

Malta followed the recommendation and applied it to the standard tables as part of the 2010 technical report.

Malta has not prepared a methodological report according to the guidelines recommended by STECF, however has included a complete explanation of the sampling strategy to be used as part of the NP 2011-2013. Data quality indicators have been included in the technical report 2010 as recommended.

Malta has applied this recommendation with reference to the data collection of the year 2010 and has estimated the CV in the case that the response rate has been less than 70%. This is reported in the technical report for the year 2010.

Malta has applied this recommendation with reference to the data collection for the reference year 2010. At national level, this particularly applies to the calculation of the financial position indicator.

Malta has applied this recommendation in (this) the annual report for the year 2011. No official statistics on economic data for the processing sector are available and therefore a specific survey is used to collect the requested data. The name of the survey has been provided in standard table IV.B.1 and further explained in text as part of section IV.B.

Malta has applied this recommendation and has provided such explanations in the National Programme proposal for the year 2011-2013. In addition, as part of the annual report for the year 2011, Malta has followed the guidelines (version January 2012) and has provided a description of the methods and assumptions adopted with regards to capital value and capital costs data.

Malta took into consideration this recommendation with reference to the data collection of the year 2010.

78/660/EEC, (“Interest payable and similar charges, with a separate indication of those concerning affiliated undertakings”), while net extraordinary costs are defined in Article 23, item 17, (“Extraordinary charges”).

SGECA 10-03 recommends all MS submit data by the deadline and thoroughly check the data first. In particular, MS should compare the data with available EUROSTAT data, to ensure quality and homogeneity in official sources. In case of discrepancies, STECF recommends MS should explain in the National Annual Reports, the reasons for such discrepancies.

Malta takes note of this recommendation and states that it has submitted the required data by the set deadline.

VIII List of acronyms and abbreviations

AER	Annual Economic Report
ATrIS	AdriaMed Trawl Information System
BFT	Blue fin Tuna
CV	Coefficient of Variation
DCF	Data collection Framework
DCR	Data Collection Regulation
DES	Demersal species
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GFCM	General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean
GIS	Geographical Information System
GSA	Geographical Sub-Area
GT	Gross Tonnage
IAMC-CNR	Institute for Coastal Marine environment – Centre for National Research
ICCAT	International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tuna
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
JRC	Joint Research Centre
LOA	Length Over All
MAREA	Mediterranean hAlieutic Resources Evaluation and Advice
MEDIAS	Mediterranean International Acoustic Survey
MEDISEH	Mediterranean Sensitive Habitats
MEDITS	Mediterranean International Trawl Survey
MFA	Professional Fishing Vessels – Full-Time
MFB	Professional Fishing Vessels – Part-Time
MRRA	Ministry for Resources and Rural Affairs
MS	Member state
NP	National Programme
OTB	Bottom Otter Trawl
PGMed	Mediterranean Planning Group on Methodological Development
PPCU	Price Per Unit Capacity
RCM Med&BS	Regional Co-ordination Meeting for the Mediterranean and Black Seas
RCM-NA	Regional Coordination Meeting - North Atlantic
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
RPI	Retail Price Index
RV	Research Vessel
SGECA	Subgroup on Economic Assessment
SGRN	Sub group for Research Needs
STECF	Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries
TA	Type of MEDITS data file
TB	Type of MEDITS data file
TC	Type of MEDITS data file
VMS	Vessel Monitoring System

IX Comments, suggestions and reflections

Not applicable.

X References

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STECF-SGECA 10-03. Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) Report of the Working Group on review of economic data collected in relation to the DCF, harmonisation of sampling strategies, Salerno, Italy, 20 to 24 September 2010, 5pp.

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XI Annexes

Cyprus-Malta Bilateral agreement

ANNEX I



Department of Fisheries
and Marine Research



**Bilateral Agreement between Cyprus and Malta
for the sampling of a shared metier in GSA 15 within their National Programmes
under the Data Collection Framework
(EC Regulations 199/2008, 665/2008 and Decision 2008/949/EC)**

The following agreement has been made between Cyprus and Malta concerning the sampling of their shared metier *Bottom otter trawl targeting mixed demersal and deep sea species* in GSA 15, selected by both countries to be sampled as part of their National Data Collection Programmes:

The Cyprus trawlers involved in the shared métier and landing their catch in Maltese ports will be included in the sampling scheme organized by Malta for the collection of biological-métier-related variables. This agreement will apply until further notice.

Signed for Cyprus:

Date: January 27th, 2009

Myrto Ioannou
National Correspondent of Cyprus

Signed for Malta:

Date: January 27th 2009

Mark Dimech
National Correspondent of Malta