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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MARITIME AFFAIRS AND FISHERIES

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

Brussels,
MARE/D1 (2026)

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

Subject: 2026 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,

There are currently at least ten multi-annual plans established at EU or GFCM level for relevant Mediterranean fisheries catching demersal and small pelagic species. The European Union should ensure the annual implementation of these MAPs in line with Council Regulation (EC) N° 1380/2013[1] and on the basis of updated and best available scientific advice. 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 focus in 2026 on the scientific advice for the EU West Med MAP in order to improve the knowledge on the status of the exploited demersal stocks. One of the main tasks is to evaluate the exploitation levels with respect to MSY and to account for the effects of the last year in the provision of the scientific advice. This task can be achieved by using trawl surveys as well as commercial landings/discards and fishing effort data, as collected through the EU Data Collection Framework (DCF) programmes and adopted Work Plans (Regulation (EU) N°

[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).

2017/1004 ([2]), Commission Decisions 2021/1167and 2021/1168 ([3]), Commission Decision 2022/39 ([4]) 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 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, selected STECF stock assessments have been presented in GFCM WGSAD to ensure an additional EU contribution to the SAC advisory process to maximize the coverage of key stocks.

Data request for STECF EWG 26-09 addressed to all Member States

In 2026, 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 species. The EWGs for the West Med MAP will be supported by ad hoc contracts to be launched at least six weeks before the planned EWGs, to ensure that the necessary data preparation can be undertaken. In addition, this data call will support analysis of policy proposals under the CFP, and support ad-hoc requests related to STECF work, as the database provides a comprehensive overview of EU Mediterranean and Black Seas fisheries.

The full list of species, linked to STECF work and whose data must be uploaded, is provided in ANNEX 1, Appendix 1.7. and it has been simplified following Med & BS 2025 Decision 01 ([6]).

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. The European Commission has over the recent years asked for an increasing number of species for which the fisheries dependent data has to be provided at the quarterly level, and now all species must be provided at the quarterly resolution, so that "-1" is no longer a valid

(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) https://stecf.ec.europa.eu/reports

(6) Decision 01 'Review the list of stocks included in the Med & BS data call and to propose amendments.

entry for the variable 'quarter' in the catches, landings and discard table for all post 2023 data (year=2024 or greater).

The European Commission herewith asks Member States to provide, from the date of opening (see below for details) and **not later than 2nd July 2026 (midday CET)**, fisheries and surveys data in support of the forthcoming STECF EWG 26-09 ([7]) on Mediterranean stock assessments. 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 2025**;
- **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 2025**;
- **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 2025;**

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 data ([8]). 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 available scientific advice, DCRF Stock Assessment input data could be made available to 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.

([7]) https://stecf.ec.europa.eu/meetings-calendar

([7]) DCRF Task VII.1, VII.2, VII.3.1 and VII.3.2

Deadlines for data submission

The JRC Data Upload portal (https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/data-calls/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 **2nd of June 2026** until the legal deadline on the **2nd of July 2026 (midday CET)**. **Please note that the data validation tool is available all year round and the upload tool is fully functional between 2nd of June 2026 and the legal deadline. The European Commission draws the attention of Member States to the fact that in 2026 an operational deadline will not be put in place. This is to ensure a single submission of data under the West Med MAP before the STECF ad hoc contracts are launched on 10 July 2026.**

Finally, please also note that no resubmission after the legal deadline will be accepted as the data will be used by ad-hoc contracts to prepare for EWG 26-09.

Additional information on codes and formats

To comply with the outcomes of the EWG 18-11 ([9]), 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 follows the **MEDITS Handbook Version 9 2017.** This gives the opportunity to the Member State to upload salinity information in the columns added to the TA file. Furthermore, another column is added in all 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 this 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 not been collected.

In 2016, the JRC portal 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 2.

Member States shall take note of the **Data Validation Tool** (provided by DG JRC and available at https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/data-calls/medbs_en#validate-upload-and-check) and are encouraged to use it, in order to avoid errors at upload time to the JRC portal, to support the data submissions and enhance the data quality.

[9] 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

Requests for resubmission

If Member States decide to revise and resubmit the data time series, a justification specifying the data set, **must be sent to DGMARE Unit C3** (contact venetia.kostopoulou@ec.europa.eu, MARE-DATACOLLECTIONFRAMEWORK@ec.europa.eu) **requesting overwrite/append rights at the latest by the opening of the database on 2nd of June 2026.** Member States are reminded to address the remaining data issues identified by the Qualitrain project as per Med & BS 2025 Decision 04 ([10]), as well as relevant past data issues in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT).

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)
Michael Gras (michael.gras@ec.europa.eu)
Danai Mantopoulou Palouka (danai.mantopoulou-palouka@ec.europa.eu)
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We look forward to your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Stelios MITOLIDIS
Director

([10]) Decision 04: 'On addressing all data issues on historical data identified by Qualitrain'.

Enclosures: Annex 1: Data Call - Specifications;
Annex 2: Data Call Transmission Instructions

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

DG MARE: Mses Mihaylova M., Ivanescu R., Belekou P., Kostopoulou V., Vielmini I. Messrs, Van Poeke Y., B., Osio G.-C., Kafouris S., Peyronnet A.

JRC: Messrs Martinsohn J., Doerner H.,Gras, M., Mantopoulou Palouka D., Garbossa S.

Electronically signed on 30/04/2026 19:28 (UTC+02) in accordance with Article 11 of Commission Decision (EU) 2021/2121