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Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)

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Evaluation of work plans for data collection (STECF-21-17)

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Abstract

Commission Decision of 25 February 2016 setting up a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, C(2016) 1084, OJ C 74, 26.2.2016, p. 4–10. The Commission may consult the group on any matter relating to marine and fisheries biology, fishing gear technology, fisheries economics, fisheries governance, ecosystem effects of fisheries, aquaculture or similar disciplines. This report deals with the evaluation of DCF Work Plans 2022pp and the evaluation of Pilot Studies. The report was reviewed by the STECF at its 68th plenary meeting held virtually from 15-19 November 2021.

SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR FISHERIES (STECF) - Evaluation of work plans for data collection (STECF-21-17)

Request to the STECF

STECF is requested to review the report of the STECF Expert Working Group meeting, evaluate the findings and make any appropriate comments and recommendations.

STECF comments

The EWG 21-17 met virtually 1-5 November 2021. As the meeting took place one week before STECF PLEN 21-03, the final EWG report was not yet available to PLEN 21-03. No Data Transmission Issues (DT issues) had been reported in due time before the meeting, hence DT issues were not assessed by EWG 21-17.

STECF notes that EWG 21-17 was asked to:

- evaluate the national work plans (WP) submitted by Member States and the regional work plans (RWP) submitted by two regional coordination groups (RCGs) by 15 October 2021, in terms of conformity, scientific relevance of the data and quality of the methods and procedures;
- validate the outputs of the pilot studies run under the EU MAP 2017-2019 and their potential extension to 2020-2021. This task refers to the pilot studies: PS3 on social variables and PS4 on aquaculture variables. It also includes PS2 on impacts on the ecosystem, after some re-draft to accommodate suggestions proposed by STECF PLEN 21-02 in July.

Evaluation of national DCF Work Plans 2022 and beyond

To carry out the evaluation, STECF notes that EWG 21-17 was provided with 25 national WPs for the years 2022 – 2024 or beyond (Austria and Luxemburg did not submit a WP).

National WPs describe the planning of data collection in the Member State and should cover at least three years (2022-2024), but may include a longer period. STECF notes that four Member States submitted WPs referring to the period 2022-2027 (Estonia, Spain, the Netherlands, and Ireland) while the remaining 21 Member States submitted WPs for 2022-2024.

STECF notes that the WPs are based on the new multiannual program for data collection (EU-MAP) that will apply from 1 January 2022 and the format of the WPs follows a revised template explained in a new guidance on the WP/Annual Report (AR). Furthermore, compared to previous WPs, the tables of the WP have been restructured and reshuffled and some tables have been merged.

STECF notes that the quality assurance framework has been moved from tables (5A and 5B) to annexes (1.1 and 1.2) in the WPs. Some Member States submitted more than 50 documents referring to annex 1.1 and 1.2 which made it difficult for the EWG to assess the annexes in detail during the EWG. As the quality annexes deliver detailed information on the related procedures and methods of quality assurance by sampling scheme in the Member States an in-depth assessment of the annexes in a dedicated EWG or by ad-hoc contracts is required. The assessment is required to look beyond the scope of the EU and should be checked against international standards and best practice in international bodies, building also on the earlier review of international standards for data quality assurance performed by EWG 17-04, which provides useful reference to the assessment.

Referring to annex 1.2 (Economic data), STECF notes that with the aim of improving harmonisation in terms of reporting structure, content and details, an intersessional working group under RCG ECON governance should further elaborate on the details of the annex and develop examples for quality reports.

STECF notes that an appropriate procedure for further handling of the quality annexes would include:

- adoption of WPs;
- MS to address EWG 21-17 comments and send them to the Commission;
- Regional Coordination Groups to provide best-practice examples based on the revised quality annexes;
- separate in-depth assessment of the annexes, having the EWG 21-17 comments (and MS efforts to address those) and RCG outcome at hand, in either a separate dedicated EWG or a number of ad-hoc contracts;
- endorsement of the EWG/ad-hoc contract work at STECF Plenary;
- comments sent to MS to be considered for WP updates.

STECF notes that prior to the EWG, all WPs were pre-screened through a series of ad-hoc contracts and by the Commission services. Based on the advice of STECF (PLEN 21-01), the legal deadline for submission of the WPs was shifted from end to mid-October, and this early submission facilitated intensive pre-screening of WPs through ad-hoc contracts before the EWG. This enabled, for the first time, Member States to be provided with the pre-screener assessments of the WPs and to resubmit WPs before the start of the EWG. The resubmitted WPs were then evaluated by the EWG 21-17. Most Member States that resubmitted their WP addressed the comments and recommendations from the pre-screeners.

STECF notes that after the WP assessment by the EWG, several inconsistencies, e.g. between tables and with the Master Code List, still remain. However, subsequent to the EWG, only a few 'major' issues and some 'minor' issues were left for Member States to resolve before the WPs can be adopted. During the EWG, a lot of tedious manual checking was necessary, which further underlies the need for an online reporting platform, connected to a database containing information on fisheries and the planning and implementation of sampling, as previously advised (STECF PLEN 14-02, 14-03, 15-02, 16-02, 17-02, 17-03, 18-02, 19-03, 20-02, 20-03).

Evaluation of regional Work Plans

STECF notes that the EWG conducted a second test evaluation of two regional Work Plans. The plans were submitted by the Regional Coordination Groups for the Baltic Sea (RCG Baltic) and for the North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic (RCG NANSEA). The Regional Work Plans included sections on biological data collection of fisheries and international/regional coordination. The EWG provided comments on the approach and procedure but also detailed comments of the proposal by section.

Pilot studies

STECF notes that Member States were requested to provide summaries to the Commission on the Pilot Studies carried out under the EU-MAP 2017-2019. The summary reports were analysed & harmonised by ad-hoc contracts before submission for review to the EWG. EWG 21-17 reviewed the summary reports of pilot studies referring to social data (PS3) and environmental data (PS4) from aquaculture as well as the redrafted report of ecosystems effects of fishing (PS2) and highlighted that the prospects as well as limitations of data collection related to the pilot studies have been described well.

Additional STECF comments

The aim of the EU Data Collection Framework is primarily to provide data to support fisheries management. Within the DCF, Member States are able to prioritise certain activities such as sampling of discard data from the most important fleets/stocks. Hence, fleets of less importance might not be sampled. Many end-users request data from the DCF, including regional bodies as basis for exemptions from the landing obligation conservation measures under Union

environmental legislations, Brexit implications related to data disaggregation into EEZ zones (cf. ToRs 5.4 and 7.4 of this PLEN 21-03 report), etc. However, as these requests often consider minor fisheries or a high disaggregation level of data, they may be only partially covered by the DCF or be at a different scale as the one required by the end-user. STECF considers that specific data needs such as these may need to be supplemented by in targeted sampling schemes in the Member States or the region.

Fishing activity data is collected mainly through the EU Control Regulation (CR). In the WP, only additional data collection deemed necessary by the Member State is included, e.g. if the data from the CR is not considered sufficient. During the review of fishing activity data from the Member States' small-scale fisheries (SSF) at the EWG on fishery-dependent information (FDI, cf. ToR 5.4 of this plenary), it became clear that several Member States are collating fishing activity data from the SSF by additional sampling approaches. STECF notes that, in these cases, data end-users can consult the WP quality annexes in addition to the WP section 3.1 on fishing activity data to investigate the coverage and quality of data collection.

STECF conclusions

STECF endorses the outcomes of the EWG 21-17 presented by the chairperson during the STECF PLEN 21-03. The final EWG report was not yet available at the time of the PLEN 21-03 meeting.

Despite the numerous new elements in this year's evaluation, STECF concludes that the EWG has addressed its Terms of Reference completely. The preparatory work carried out by pre-screeners and the earlier deadline for submission of WPs, allowing Member States to resubmit WPs prior to the meeting, have been fundamental to ensuring a comprehensive assessment of WPs during EWG 21-17.

STECF would like to further stress the need of an online reporting platform, in connection with a database, for the planning and implementation of Work Plans, on both Member States' and regional level.

STECF concludes that the procedures and methods of quality assurance described in the quality annexes (1.1 and 1.2) in the national WPs should be further assessed in a dedicated EWG or by ad-hoc contracts. Furthermore, STECF suggests that EWGs that use the data collected under the DCF (e.g. the FDI, AER etc.) are made aware of the existence of the quality annexes. This would provide the EWGs with useful information on data quality issues as well as feedback to the Member States on the information provided in the quality annexes.

STECF also stresses the increasing emergence of new data needs in addition to the standard data needs for stock assessment, such as discards information for exemptions from the landing obligation, as basis for conservation measures under Union environmental legislations or for Brexit implications related to disaggregation into EEZ zones etc. STECF concludes that as this additional data collection may well go beyond the current DCF/EU-MAP requirements, additional targeted sampling may be required on the national or regional level. STECF notes that under the EU-MAP 2022pp and in the new WP format, MS have the option to include 'test studies' to further explore, develop and test data collection methods. On a regional scale, STECF considers that MS should collaborate and task-share within these additional data collection activities to achieve improved data availability for the needs outlined above.

Contact details of STECF members

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EXPERT WORKING GROUP EWG-21-17 REPORT

REPORT TO THE STECF

EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON Evaluation of work plans for data collection (EWG-21-17)

Virtual meeting, 1-5 November 2021

This report does not necessarily reflect the view of the STECF and the European Commission and in no way anticipates the Commission's future policy in this area

1 INTRODUCTION

The STECF Expert Working Group (EWG) 21-17 met virtually from 1 to 5 November 2021 to (i) evaluate Member States' (MS) national Work Plans (WPs) under the Data Collection Framework (DCF) for the years 2022 and beyond, (ii) comment on 'non-binding' Regional Work Plans and (iii) comment on ad-hoc contract reports on the DCF Pilot Studies 2, 3 and 4.

The work was conducted by 30 independent experts (see the list of participants in section 6). The Terms of Reference are presented below.

1.1 Terms of Reference for EWG-21-17

Background

Article 6 of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017^[2] requires Member States to submit to the Commission a national work plan (WP) for approval. It requires the Commission to request STECF to evaluate the WPs prior to their approval.

The WPs 2022-202(4) are based on the new multiannual program for data collection^[3] (EU-MAP) that will apply as of 1 January 2022. Their format follows a revised template explained in the guidance on WP/Annual Report (AR) template (background document 4), which comes from a draft Commission implementing decision^[4]. The draft decision request MS to submit their plans covering at least a period of three years, hence the WPs should cover at least the period 2022-2024, but may cover more years.

Compared to previous WPs, the tables have been restructured and reshuffled; some tables have been merged (1B and 1C into 2.2, 4A and 4C into 2.5, 1G and 1H into 2.6); the quality assurance framework has been moved from Tables 5A and 5B to quality annexes 1.1 and 1.2.

In preparation for the STECF assessment, STECF EWG 21-17 will be convened on 1-5 November 2021. Prior to the EWG 21-17 meeting, a pre-screening of Member States' WPs will be undertaken through a series of ad-hoc contracts. In parallel, the WPs will be pre-screened by the COM services.

To improve efficiency of the final STECF assessment, the pre-screener will signal issues that can be fixed by the MSs before EWG 21-17 starts. The MS will provide explanations and resubmit the WPs if necessary.

Request to EWG 21-17

EWG 21-17 is requested to:

ToR 1: Evaluate the WPs 2022-202(4)

Experts are requested to evaluate the WPs submitted by Member States, in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004, taking into account:

- the conformity of the WPs with the contents of Articles 6 and 9 of the DCF Regulation, and with the EU MAP from 2022 onwards,
- the scientific relevance of the data covered by the WPs for the purposes laid down in Article 1(1) of the DCF Regulation, and the quality of the proposed methods and procedures,
- the conformity with the format and guidelines on the WP template.

Experts should pay particular attention if the comments provided by STECF EWG 21-09 during the AR 2020 assessment have been taken into account.

During EWG 21-17, the experts will communicate to the MS (via the Commission) outstanding issues that require clarification and/or resubmission. The MS will provide explanations and resubmit the WPs if necessary. The following rules will apply to the communication:

- All identified issues will be reviewed by at least two experts before sending them to the Member States.
- The issues will be collated and relayed to the MS by the Commission.
- The issues can relate to inconsistencies, formatting issues, missing tables, missing explanations in the text boxes, misplaced information, wrong references etc.

The experts will use the evaluation grid (background document 2), prefilled with pre-screeners and COM findings.

The experts should make sure that the language used in the evaluation is neutral, subject-related and that the comments are self-explanatory and clear. The comments are to be based on factual data. More guidance is included in the stand-alone document of assessment criteria (background document 3), and in the guidelines on the WP/AR templates (background document 4).

ToR 2: Validate the outputs of pilot studies 3 and 4 (and 2)

Under the EU MAP 2017-2019, Member States (MS) conducted pilot studies on four different topics: (1) recreational fisheries, (2) impacts on marine ecosystem, (3) employment data and (4) aquaculture environment. The Commission asked MS to submit reports on these pilot studies on 15 March 2021, to analyse the results and draw conclusions that might be shared with interested stakeholders: regional coordination groups, other MS across different sea basins, beneficiaries of MARE/2020/08 grants, and interested end users.

Pilot study 3 and 4 reports have been analysed under ad-hoc contracts issued in August-September 2021.

Pilot study 2 reports were analysed under ad-hoc contracts and the final report by EWG 21-09. After comments from experts, the COM decided to redraft the final report on pilot study 2 to take into account the suggestions made by the EWG.

Based on these ad-hoc contract outcomes, EWG 21-17 is requested to check and harmonise the results of the ad-hoc contracts, and in particular verify if information included in the ad-hoc outcomes can be published.

EWG 21-17 report

The EWG should produce a Word document with general explanations and an Excel file with the assessment and comments of each WP. The document should include an overview of the assessment and overall evaluation of the Work Plans (horizontal issues, spanning many MS/ sea basins).

- Per Member State:
 - a) an evaluation of the WP content (DCF Regulation and EU MAP) and format (the template guidelines) in general and per WP section
 - b) MS-specific issues relating to data collection as described in the WP.
- Per region:
 - a) an evaluation of the coverage for the region/fishery for the specific section submitted and
 - b) an evaluation of the planned regional coordination in research surveys and other data collection activities.

In their feedback, EWG 21-17 should identify the comments that require a reaction by the MS(s) (resubmission of the WP or further clarification to the Commission), and those that are for possible future amendments or for information only.

The evaluation will be based on the evaluation criteria drafted by EWG 20-18 and finalised by EWG 21-09 (background documents 2 and 3). The EWG should pay particular attention that the submitted work plans:

- address the issues raised in the assessment grids during past evaluations.
- take into account RCG and STECF recommendations

The report will also include a section on the pilot studies 3 and 4, similar in form to the EWG 21-09 report^[5] on pilot studies 1 and 2 (point 4, validate outputs of pilot studies on recreational fisheries and impacts on marine ecosystem, pages 44 to 46).

Background documents:

1. WP 2022-202(4) submitted by the MS (folder 01)
2. Pre-screening results, in the evaluation grid (approved by EWG 21-09)
3. Stand-alone document for WP evaluation (approved by EWG 21-09)
4. Guidance on WP/AR templates (approved by EWG 21-09)
5. Outcomes of ad-hoc contracts on pilot studies 3 and 4 – will be uploaded shortly before EWG 21-17
6. Redrafted report on pilot studies 2.

Additional background documents:

The experts should take into account relevant assessment files from previous STECF EWGs, including:

- (WP): STECF EWG 16-16, STECF EWG 17-13; STECF EWG 18-18; STECF EWG 19-18; STECF EWG 20-16
- (AR): STECF EWG 17-07; STECF EWG 18-10; STECF EWG 19-09; STECF EWG 20-08; STECF EWG 21-09
- (quality Annex 1.1): STECF EWG 21-02 on methods for supporting stock assessment in the Mediterranean: ToR 2 related to quality assurance in Greek data collection^[6] (point 5, review of Greek technical report, pages 1259 to 1265).
- (quality Annex 1.2): Handbook on sampling design and estimation methods for economic data collection in fisheries statistics (SecFish grant Work Package 2)^[7]

In addition, the experts may consult:

- previous WPs and ARs:
 - o <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/wps>
 - o <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ars>
- other relevant documents (e.g. ICES reports for the meetings relating to the relevant data calls, Liaison Meeting and RCG recommendations etc.)

^[1] EWG 21-17 will focus on WP 2022-202(4); data transmission issues will be evaluated in June 2022 by EWG on Annual Report evaluation.

^[2] Regulation (EU) No 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. [\(consolidated version of 14.07.2021\)](#)

^[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, [OJ L 253, 16.7.2021](#), and Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168 of 27 April 2021 establishing the list of mandatory research surveys at sea and thresholds as part of the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors from 2022, [OJ L 253, 16.7.2021](#).

^[4] At the time of issuing the terms of reference (September 2021), the decision has not been adopted yet, but the Member States agreed to submit their WP on the revised template, communicated to them on 19 July 2021.

^[5] [STECF 21-09 - Evaluation of AR and DTi.pdf - Data Collection Framework - European Commission \(europa.eu\)](https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/2817637/STECF+21-02+-+Methods+supporting+MED+stock+assessment.pdf/2c6ed3f8-7119-47ec-be1f-29c63d3fd6f4)

^[6] <https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/43805/2817637/STECF+21-02+-+Methods+supporting+MED+stock+assessment.pdf/2c6ed3f8-7119-47ec-be1f-29c63d3fd6f4>

^[7] <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/guidelines/socioeco/handbook-on-methodology>

2 EVALUATION OF MEMBER STATES' WORK PLANS FOR 2022 AND BEYOND

2.1 Background information

To carry out the evaluation, the EWG was provided with the Work Plan (WP) tables and WP text (boxes) of 25 MS WPs for the period from 2022 and beyond. Estonia, Ireland, The Netherlands and Spain presented WPs for 2022-2027, while the other MS submitted WPs for 2022-2024. Austria and Luxemburg did not submit WPs, as these land-locked MS are not obliged to do so, based on the threshold rules in the EU-MAP. In addition, two Regional Work Plans (for the Baltic and for the North Atlantic, North Sea, Eastern Arctic region) were submitted. The EWG used various supporting information such as relevant EWG reports (mainly from EWGs 20-16, 20-18 and 21-09).

2.2 Evaluation criteria, assessment grid and procedures

The EWG used the evaluation sheets (assessment grids) and guidance for evaluators newly developed by STECF during 2020-2021 (inter alia within EWG 20-18).

2.3 Sub-groups and task allocation

The evaluation of WPs was split by sub-groups and experts were allocated to each sub-group according to their expertise. Each sub-group was tasked with the assessment of particular sections of the WP according to the table below.

Table 1 – Allocation of sections by sub-group and expertise

Sub-group	Sections	Expertise
1	Biological data (sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5), corresponding parts of Annex 1.1	Biologists
2	Diadromous species (section 2.3), Recreational fisheries (2.4), corresponding parts of Annex 1.1	Biologists
3	General information (section 1), Research surveys at sea (section 2.6), Impact of fisheries on marine biological resources (section 4), corresponding parts of Annex 1.1	Biologists
4	Fishing activity data (section 3), economic & social data (sections 5, 6 and 7), corresponding parts of Annex 1.2	Economists

2.4 Evaluation process

For the first time this year, MS were provided with the pre-screener assessments to enable, where possible, to update their WP prior to EWG 21-17. The pre-screener evaluations were to provide a full review of the WPs, highlighting any potential issues, but did not necessarily identify all issues and may not meet a consensus with the experts at the EWG. The preparatory work by the pre-screeners, however, was of enormous help to the EWG evaluation process and was highly appreciated.

In general, MS who resubmitted a WP tried to address the comments and recommendations from pre-screening. The resubmitted WPs were those evaluated by EWG 21-17. Some MS resubmitted their WP in a clean version, i.e. without track-changes, departing from the guidelines. A reminder was sent to these MS to use track-changes and some provided these new versions during the EWG. It is to be noted that track-changes in response to the pre-screeners review and a document explaining how MS responded or not is extremely useful to the EWG in order to finalise its own evaluation.

During the EWG, further issues to be solved were identified by the EWG experts and transmitted to the MS. The MS then replied within a short deadline and submitted revised WP tables and text, when requested. This 'ping-pong' information exchange was completed to closely final stages of the WPs in almost all cases at the end of the meeting, leaving only a few issues that have to be dealt with bilaterally between Commission and MS.

Some R scripts were developed to ensure the consistencies between some tables (Table 2.1 vs. Table 2.2) and between all tables and the Master Code List. These scripts were widely used during the EWG. There is a need for further development of these types of automatic screening for both STECF experts and MS when compiling their WPs and Annual Reports (AR). The availability of such scripts on a public github would greatly improve the editing and quality check burden of populating the set of tables.

2.4.1 General information

Only minor issues were encountered in the section of general principles. As the evaluation of this section occurred late during the EWG meeting, it was not possible to present any issues to the MSs in the EWG 'ping-pong'. Regarding Table 1.3, an overview of all agreements, including participating countries, would be useful for future evaluations.

2.4.2 Biological data

In order to ensure consistency when evaluating the WPs, the sub-group on biological data took Germany as the example to be assessed by the whole group, before dividing up into smaller groups of three experts to evaluate the remaining WPs. The results of these evaluations were then discussed in sub-group plenaries to resolve any remaining points that required further discussion.

MS responses to the pre-screening exercise aided the process and allowed more time to scrutinise the WPs.

Any issues identified for clarification or requiring resubmission by the MS were provided to the Commission, to pass to MS, for resolving these issues during the EWG. Where responses were received by the meeting deadline (set to ensure time for evaluation was available), these subsequent submissions were also evaluated.

At the end of the evaluation process, the outstanding issues were categorised as

- "major" requiring resubmission of tables or text where data were either missing or not in accordance with the guidelines.
- "minor": these were mostly editorial or caused by MS not following the guidelines but did not adversely affect the overall WP. The EWG suggested where it would be appropriate to

submit changes either in the AR (where permissible such as adding extra rows in some tables) or for corrections/ more information to be made either in the coming weeks before adoption by the Commission or in future submissions.

2.4.2.1 Reference to bi- and multi-lateral agreements

Bi- and multilateral agreements listed in Table 1.3 are various and may concern almost all of the EU-MAP scope. In essence, they are providing details regarding a type of data collection (fisheries monitoring, biological parameters, ...) mandated to a MS by one or several other MS in lieu of their own commitments. For this reason, it is important to refer to these agreements in the rows of the appropriate tables and quality documentation where this commitment is deferred to another country. In absence of a dedicated column in the different tables of the WP template, the **EWG suggested to use the comment column to inform on the 'Name of the agreement' as in Table 1.3 where appropriate.** Moreover, regarding the biological variable section, this information in the comment section is not sufficient. In case of a sampling scheme on foreign landings, the MS conducting the sampling has a plan for taking care of the agreement, so details of the dedicated sampling should be found in a relevant sampling scheme identifier and quality document (Annex 1.1). **The MS receiving the service of the agreement should have a row in its WP Table 2.5 referring to the other MS sampling scheme identifier** (e.g. POL - OTM targeting sardinellas, sardines, mackerel and jack mackerel in CECAF areas) in order to document the species/area covered for length in Table 2.1. As many details as possible can be given in all the cells of Table 2.5 in relation to the agreement.

In case of a data collection or sample analysis for biological parameters, the same process as above should exist with a sampling scheme identifier and quality document in the WP of the MS conducting the service and references in the relevant rows of Table 2.2 for the MS receiving the service.

MS should not refer in their WP to any agreement in progress in the WP tables template; if needed, these can be included in the WP textbox.

These proposals are meant to improve the transparency and completeness of the WP, modifications should be made in the guidelines to help MS in the cases of future resubmission of their WP.

2.4.2.2 Table 2.5 - Out-of-frame parts of the population

The EWG suggested the following definition for out-of-frame parts of the sampling plan: part of the population not covered by the sampling frames of a given sampling scheme, e.g. small vessels not authorised to embark an observer for safety reasons in at-sea observation programme, minor ports or landing sites in an on-shore observation programme.

The guidelines specify *'to provide an insight into the real coverage of the sampling design, enter at least one row per 'Region' * 'RFMO' * 'Sampling scheme identifier' combination for out-of-frame parts of the population. It is recommended for all combinations, but it should be provided at least for the ones where 'Sampling scheme type'='commercial fishing trip'.* The **EWG recommended to add this row for out-of-frame parts of the population** even in the situation where a sampling scheme covers all of the targeted population (in this case, the average PSUs in the population is 0). For the remaining information ('PSU type', 'Frequency', ...), the recommendation is to repeat the ones of the related sampling scheme. In exception, for this submission of WPs 2022-2024, it was possible to insert 'NA' in case the 'Average number of PSUs during the reference period' would take too much time to compute. The out-of-frame description should also appear in the related sampling scheme Quality Document under the section 'Description of the population'.

2.4.2.3 Sampling scheme identifier

It is essential that the sampling scheme identifier is consistent in its spelling across all tables and within the related Quality Document in Annex 1.1. When referring to a given sampling scheme, only a single identifier should be used and no supplementary information should be put in the related field of any table or Annex 1.1 header preventing the one-to-one relation to the same scheme reference in the different parts of the WP.

2.4.2.4 Merged cells

The new WP/AR templates were developed with, among others, the objective of enabling the compilation of all information in a database format. With this objective in mind, merged cells should not exist anymore in the proposed sets of tables. In those rare occasions when the EWG encountered such merged cells, it was requested that the MS resolved these occurrences. For example in Table 2.5, it could be difficult for a MS to provide a definitive sampling allocation when the same vessels are operating in more than one region (only one region per row is permitted) on the same trip / fishing operation. One solution is for MS to use a historic average per region or 'best estimate' based on the current situation and indicate the exceptionality of the case in the column "WP comments". A supporting explanation in Text Box 2.5 would be beneficial. It is to be noted that in these cases, merged cells would prevent the summarising of data in a regional overview.

2.4.2.5 Threshold rules

In the Master Code List, only 'None' is an acceptable entry when no threshold applies, as referring to the EU-MAP Implementing Decision 2021/1168 Annex chapter II. When evaluating the WPs, the EWG was of the opinion that 'NA' should be added to the agreeable entries of the field to inform on the fact that the MS is not operating in a region or does not land or catch the related species*area. Indeed, 'None' should be kept to inform that MS lands/catches the given species*area and does not wish to invoke any derogation for sampling it. The guidelines should be modified accordingly.

2.4.2.6 Planned or opportunistic sampling? Clarification for Table 2.2

When planned sampling in column L (use of the code 'P' for planned sampling), 'N/A' is not valid value in column 'Number of individuals to sample' as per the guidelines. 'N/A' (or 'NA') is to be used when it is not possible to plan precisely for a species the number of a specific variable to be collected (planned for age, sex, maturity etc. are dependent on the landing practice which may vary during the year / by port or are dependent on a research survey, etc.). In all these cases, the column L should be = 'O' (opportunistic), as the sampling will depend on the opportunity of the species of being sampled based on a sampling protocol attached to these sampling schemes.

MS should use a nominal value in column M in the case of a specific sampling scheme dedicated to sampling other biological variables different from length ('P' for planned sampling) being used as the basis to collect the samples (e.g. purchasing of fish).

2.4.3 *Diadromous species and recreational fisheries*

2.4.3.1 Data collection for diadromous species in freshwater

Experts during the EWG decided that it is beneficial to have all freshwater-related sampling, including data collection on recreational fisheries in freshwater, transferred from Table 2.4 into Table 2.3. One issue that arose was that one MS now also transferred diadromous-survey derived data from coastal regions to Table 2.3. However, in the guidelines it says "from every relevant habitat" but it should be made clear that marine recreational fisheries data for diadromous still belongs into Table 2.4 while only fresh-water derived recreational data collection is supposed to be entered in Table 2.3.

Proposal to change the description of Table 2.3 in the modified guidelines:

"Use this table to give an overview of the data to be collected from freshwater and inland commercial and recreational fisheries for salmon, sea trout and eel. Also include overview of data to be collected from research surveys on salmon, sea trout and eel in freshwater as well as any other relevant habitat including coastal waters. Use Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5 to describe the collection of diadromous species data from commercial fisheries at sea."

MS should provide all necessary information on sampling and quality specifics as described in guidelines, even if sampling is conducted not directly under DCF, but by third parties such as regional authorities.

MS that are not fully familiar with DCF data collection and/or diadromous data collection under the mandatory WPs should be motivated to join the respective Expert working groups (for example ICES EIFAAC WGEEL, WGNAS or WGBAST).

2.4.3.2 Recreational fisheries

In the column "Is the collection of biological variables planned?", MS should state whether collection of biological variables is planned for certain species and list the specific variables in Table 2.2. However, in recreational fisheries sampling, almost always "length" is collected, however not foreseen in Table 2.2 yet. As a result, "length" needs to be added into the Master Code List of Table 2.2 exclusively for recreational fisheries.

In the species field of Table 2.4, MS must indicate the scientific name of the species/stocks for recreational fisheries sampling. For recreational fisheries multi-species sampling schemes such as "telephone surveys" or "screening style surveys", "All species" should be an option for listing per one line, instead of listing all possible species in separate lines.

Currently, MS are asked to list elasmobranchs and highly migratory ICCAT species individually (one line per species). This is difficult to evaluate if MS list all species present in the area, when they could also list only those species relevant. EWG experts recommended that a minimum list of elasmobranchs and highly migratory species should be established and provided by relevant RCGs.

In the column "Agreed at RCG", the designation of agreed sampling of certain species and variables at regional level should be indicated. However, until now, there are no RCG recommendations or regional agreements that concern the respective sampling yet. MS were informed to change marks from "Y" to "N".

2.4.4 Surveys

A consistent method in evaluating the different sections was discussed among the subgroup members before starting the evaluation. The subgroup assessed Spain together in order to ensure consistency when evaluating the WPs. Thereafter, the remaining WPs were divided among the subgroup members. Any potential issues were raised and discussed in the subgroup and decided on whether they should be put forward to the MSs in the EWG 'ping-pong'.

2.4.4.1 Table 2.6 and Text Box 2.6

During the evaluation, the subgroup found that MSs have interpreted the guideline for the column 'Type of MS participation' in Table 2.6 differently for the internationally coordinated surveys in which more than one MS contributes. Some MS have filled the cells with 'NA' while others have filled the cells with 'Combination'. In general, when different MSs use the same survey acronym (of the mandatory surveys described in Table 1 of the EU-MAP Implementing Decision 2021/1168), internationally agreed protocols will be followed and MSs cannot fill 'NA' in the column 'Type of MS participation'. In such cases, MSs were requested to fill the column with 'Combination'. Most MS adjusted the cells accordingly during the EWG.

During the evaluation, the subgroup also checked whether relevant surveys were listed in Table 2.2. The EWG acknowledges that according to the guidelines distributed in July 2021 and further communications, it is not mandatory to report biological parameters collected from surveys in Table 2.2. However, in respect of having a full picture of all sampling being collected under the EU-MAP and taking into account the development of future Regional Work Plans (an overview of all data sources), it would be necessary to have all data available.

Indeed, the guidelines leave room for interpretation on whether Table 2.2 should include surveys as it states, "*For species listed in this table, biological variables (age, weight, sex ratio, maturity and fecundity) that are planned to be collected shall be shown and may include data collected under the surveys at sea.*". It is therefore suggested that the word may be replaced by shall in the guidelines.

At the end of the evaluation process, all remaining outstanding issues were categorised as minor, primarily editorial, or caused by MSs not following the guidelines.

An overview of all mandatory surveys by MS would be useful for future evaluations. A draft overview has been prepared by the EWG, see electronic Annex 2.

For the mandatory surveys column 'area covered' in Table 2.6, some MSs listed the same area as indicated in Table 1 of the EU-MAP Implementing Decision, while other MS only listed the area covered by the MS. An editorial change in the guidelines regarding column 'Area covered' in Table 2.6 could solve this inconsistency among MS in filling column 'area covered' in future.

2.4.5 Impact of fisheries on marine biological resources

As the evaluation of this section occurred later in the week, it was not possible to present any issues to the MS in the EWG 'ping-pong'.

Regarding section 4.2, most MSs are routinely recording incidental bycatch in the on-board monitoring programmes. Only a few MS have dedicated PETS bycatch monitoring programmes in place. Overall, a general comment was made to the MS that it is expected that MS are undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

2.4.6 Fishing activity data, economic and social data

2.4.6.1 Methodology

A common evaluation approach was proposed at the beginning of the economic sub-group work. In order to comply with a unified approach, one MS was selected for joint assessment in the sub-

group to have a shared methodology. It was agreed to validate the pre-screeners evaluations even in cases when a 'Yes' was indicated for the pre-screeners judgement. For the facilitation of the evaluation process, and due to a new structure of the WP based on linked tables and linked content in the columns, the WPs were separated between experts by MS and not by sections (fleet, aquaculture, fish processing). For the precise and objective evaluation, each WP was checked by at least two experts. Experts who were also pre-screeners did not get the same MS to evaluate.

The updated resubmitted versions of WPs after pre-screening were used for the evaluation and answers from MS also were considered. The EWG 21-17 agreed on very detailed WP checking and resubmission in case of necessity. Even positive evaluation by pre-screeners was double-checked by the EWG.

2.4.6.2 General comments on all tables

MS should copy the codes from the Master Code List (MCL) when completing the tables and should not enter values manually to reduce risk of errors. The other option might be to use the WP templates with the drop-down lists. The WP should not be accepted if the MCL is not followed. Even minor typing errors or additional blank spaces between symbols can create a new code and cause problems for future Annual Report submission and evaluation. Such discrepancies can also create difficulties if the 'database approach' will be applied in the future. The EWG has suggested edits to the MCL to adjust some inconsistencies and errors in comparison to the current WP template.

2.4.6.3 Table 3.1 and Text Box 3.1

Table 3.1 and Text Box 3.1 should be deleted from the WP if complementary data collection is not implemented. The WP guidelines, there is a clear statement which should be followed: *"Where a Member State does not conduct data collection in sectors covered by certain tables or text boxes, it is not obliged to submit the corresponding tables or text boxes in the work plan (WP) or annual report (AR). Member States shall indicate by (Y/N) in the summary table of the WP which tables and text boxes are included and which are not."*

Table 3.1 should only include segments which are reported in Table 5.1.

2.4.6.4 Table 5.1 and Table 5.2

The segments should correspond between Tables 5.1 and 5.2.

The 'Consumption of fixed capital' and 'Value of physical capital' should be provided for inactive vessels. The EWG suggests that the guidelines are updated to make them more specific in this matter.

Following the Guidelines, the length class should be provided also for inactive vessels (also for Table 3.1).

Inactive segments can be clustered in cases where economic data are presented and confidentiality needs to be protected (e.g., if there is one vessel in the segment 'Inactive VL40XX', it may need to be clustered). Justification for clustering should be provided in Text Box 5.2 as with all other segments. The EWG suggests that edits may be needed to include explanation in the guidance document.

The table provided below is an example of how clustered segments should be presented in Table 5.1.: 'Beam trawlers 18-< 24 m' and 'Demersal trawlers and/or demersal seiners 18-< 24 m' were clustered with the segment 'Beam trawlers 12-< 18 m' (clustering is applied for confidentiality reasons because only few vessels are in the segments).

Fishing technique	Length class	Segment or Cluster Name (either name of segment	Total population
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		or cluster, in case of clustering)	(WP)
Beam trawlers	12-< 18 m*	Beam trawlers 12-< 18 m *	9
Beam trawlers	18-< 24 m*	Beam trawlers 12-< 18 m *	1
Demersal trawlers and/or demersal seiners	18-< 24 m*	Beam trawlers 12-< 18 m *	2
Dredgers	18-< 24 m	Dredgers 18-< 24 m	21

The column 'Segment or Cluster Name' (either name of segment or cluster, in case of clustering) in Table 5.1 could include clustered segments (marked with asterisk) and/or unclustered segments (without asterisk). The segmentation in that column should correspond between Tables 5.1 and 5.2. Detailed description on the application of clustering is provided in Text Box 5.2.

If different data sources are provided in Table 5.2 for the same data collection scheme (i.e., on the same row separated by a ";") – e.g., Census – Questionnaires; Administrative source, and if the administrative source is used only for cross-checking purposes (and not for the collection of the data), only the main data source should be further described in the Quality Annex 1.2.

Cross-checking data sources used in conjunction with the main data source should be indicated in the comments column of Table 5.2.

In the WP Guidelines for Table 5.2, a part of the descriptions for Planned sample rate (%) is the following: "If the 'Data source' is related to the Control Regulation, the corresponding figures can be ignored (as it would have to be 100% in all cases)." The cells should be filled with NA, or 100%, and not left blank.

For improving the guidelines, the EWG suggests to switch 'Data collection scheme' and 'Data source', in bullet point 2 'For each 'Data collection scheme' with different 'Data source', enter values for 'Planned sample rate' in separate lines' to read 'For each 'Data source' with different 'Data collection scheme', enter values for 'Planned sample rate' in separate lines.

As with the guidelines for "Activity level", a segment should be either "NA" only or both "A" and "L" – as a distinction by activity level only makes sense for contrasting "A" and "L".

2.4.6.5 Text Box 5.2

In the context of the variables "consumption of physical capital" and "value of physical capital", the PGECON Guidance document for the fishing fleet states that PIM (Perpetual Inventory Method) is the preferred methodology. As secondary option, it is stated: "Alternative methods based on company surveys. These alternative methods may be used if the derived estimates reflect the actual definition of net capital stock (depreciated replacement value of the vessel including on-board equipment with a useful lifetime of more than one year).

In case the PIM is not used, MS should explain and justify the application of alternative methods in the WP and in the AR."

- When Capital Costs and Capital Value are not estimated by PIM but collected by survey, a justification should be provided under WP Text Box 5.2 paragraph "Deviation from the RCG ECON (ex-PGECON) definitions". Details of the survey and methodology should be provided in a separate Annex 1.2.
- If capital costs ('Consumption of fixed capital') and capital value ('Value of physical capital') are part of a survey carried out for other economic variables, a separate Annex 1.2 is not needed.

2.4.6.6 Table 6.1 Text Box 6.1

The table should include only the 'Aquaculture Technique' and 'Aquaculture species group' where data collection is planned, but not all possible combinations from the EU-MAP Delegated Decision Table 11.

MS do not need to complete Table 6.1 when applying thresholds (a) and (b) but do need to justify the application of a threshold in Text Box 6.1.

With respect to thresholds in aquaculture, the EU-MAP Implementing Decision states that "*Member States may use simplified methodologies to estimate such data*". Thus far, the meaning of "simplified methods" is not yet described. Moreover, it is unclear which impact this definition would have in the WP context. The EWG recommends this issue to be clarified, preferably in context with RCG Econ.

2.4.6.7 Table 7.1 Text Box 7.1

MS should follow the WP Guidelines and provide a clear description why complementary processing data collection is planned. The reasons why EUROSTAT data are insufficient should be given. The EWG suggests that this is made clearer in the guidelines.

In the WP evaluation the application of EUROSTAT segmentation, the compliance of the variables with the list recommended by Annex V of PGECON 2020, and the application of main and non-main activity were checked:

- Does MS follow segmentation from EUROSTAT?
- Does MS follow main and non-main activity?
- Does MS follow the name of variables listed in the MCL (for reference see Annex V of PGECON 2020)?

The EWG suggests adding these points to the guidelines for evaluators.

2.4.6.8 Master Code List (MCL)

In general, the utility of the MCL list was evident in the reduced issues with variable codes, spellings etc. in comparison with other years.

The code proposed for the Implementation year '2022-2024' includes a minimum period for the WP implementation. However, the option to include each separate year from 2022 until 2027 should be foreseen.

Moreover, the MCL for year should be more flexible to allow entries in any combination of years within the range of 2022-2027.

A clear definition for the type of data collection "Indirect Survey" is lacking. The EWG suggested a definition directly in the MCL description column ("Indirect survey - where the variable is not directly collected but estimated or derived."). The indirect survey may include different sources of information: administrative sources, additional survey data, companies account etc. The preliminary list of the data sources which can be attributed to Indirect sources as well as cases when such sources may be used should be given as example. The definition of "Indirect survey" should be included in the MCL. The Guidelines should also include a clarification under 'Data collection scheme'.

The MCL should include 'Fleet Register' and 'Administrative sources' in the "data source" codes. 'National statistic' should be replaced by 'Administrative sources'.

'NA' is suggested as an optional code for "Fish processing segment". This code should be added to the MCL.

In the MCL, variable names need to be edited to "total assets", "Value of quotas and other fishing rights" (fleet); and "Repair and maintenance" (aquaculture), as according to Table 7 and 10 of the EU-MAP Delegated Decision.

2.4.7 Annexes 1.1 and 1.2

The updated templates for WPs introduced the new concept of Quality Documentation (QD) for all sampling schemes referred to in the biological (Tables 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6), economic and social data (Tables 5.2, 6.1 and 7.1) sections. These QDs were aimed at replacing the former Tables 5a and 5B in order to provide a better description of the sampling schemes. As a result, a vast number of QDs were made available in the annexes of MS WPs 2022-2024/2027. As such, the EWG acknowledges the efforts undertaken by all MS in producing this structured information on their sampling schemes. Although the contents of these could not be fully evaluated during EWG due to time limitations, they are a promising format to progress collaboratively towards a consistent way of describing all EU-MAP sampling designs and methods. Follow-up initiatives should be planned in 2022 to allow for a thorough evaluation of the QDs. In the meantime, MS are invited to continue completing and improving these QDs based on either EWG feedback or other MSs' similar QD available on the STECF website. Indeed, the QDs are to be considered as 'living documents' which could be updated at any time.

Some MS provided more than 50 QDs. To assist when evaluating if those schemes referred to in the MS Tables and Text are present, the Sampling scheme identifier should be used as a header to be part of the table of contents. This simple formatting is meant to help all readers, including the MS in charge of the WP, when searching an information related to a given sampling scheme. The guidelines should be updated accordingly.

The large numbers of quality annexes made it impossible to completely evaluate all quality aspects of the documents in detail during the designated time frame. As a result, experts focused on existence of the documents and general aspects such as sampling design.

MS should make sure that names and descriptions between tables and annexes are consistent.

Some MS provided externally linked quality documents in their national language, sometimes password-protected. This makes it difficult or impossible to evaluate the quality documents. MS should provide freely accessible information (at least in a basic state) also in English.

Given that this is the first round of both submission and evaluation of Annex 1.2, some uncertainty and discrepancies were experienced and noted. The guidelines are still vague in some places and the provision of information can therefore vary by MS. Therefore, the EWG has evaluated Annex 1.2 in a more general manner, checking for overall completeness and meaningfulness. The EWG suggests having an intersessional working group under RCG ECON governance to further elaborate the details of Annex 1.2 and develop examples for quality reports, thus addressing different sampling and evaluation strategies which are applied in different MS. This should provide some clarifications and improve harmonisation in terms of reporting structure, content and detail.

3 REGIONAL WORK PLANS

3.1 Background information

The document "RWP and NWP feedback and roadmap 2021" (as presented to the STECF EWG 20-18) was used as a background to the evaluation of the RWPs provided to the EWG 21-17.

3.2 Regional Workplan (RWP) development timeline

To inform the evaluation of the proposed non-binding RWP 2022 NANS&EA and Baltic, a general discussion on the RWP development timeline took place and is summarised here.

The end date for the proposed timeline is October 2024 since this is when the RWPs would be used to inform the NWP submissions/re-submissions for 2025-2027. This requires:

- Revision of the existing non-binding and draft RWPs by RCGs needs to be decided during RCG 2022. RCGs should revive the Inter Sessional Sub-Group (ISSG) on RWP to prepare the handover of fishn'Co project outputs (project ends 31/12/2022) and MS to appoint an expert as participant for this ISSG.
- ISSG on RWP to prepare a fully operational RWP for the period 2025-2027 for presentation to RCG 2023.
- During the 2023 RCG meetings, the RWP 2025-2027 should be finalised and compiled taking into account fishn'Co and ISSG/RWP outputs.
- RWPs 2025-2027 should be presented by relevant RCGs to STECF during autumn 2023 for evaluation and approval.
- **The final RWPs 2025-2027 need to be approved by 31st December 2023** – MS will then include/integrate RWP aspects in their NWP during 2024. During the RCG meetings in 2024, there can be clarifications on how the RWPs should be incorporated into the NWPs but no modifications of the RWPs will be allowed.
- Comments and discussion points:
 - It is important that all RCGs progress within the same timeframe when constructing the RWPs in order to allow MS involved in different RCGs to plan their resourcing. Time will be needed for MS to respond to RCGs about problems in meeting all RWP requests given finite resources will be available and there might have a need to prioritise in relation to the respective RWPs. It is important that RCGs allocate time to discuss this in Autumn 2023.
 - The update period for the RWP should be the same as NWP
 - What should be the reference period of landings for RWP? Usually this will be the most recent 3 year period available i.e. 2020 - 2022. However the effects of COVID-19 might still be present in this data. This point to be addressed during RCG 2022 session.
 - MS who have already submitted NWPs covering the period 2025-27 will need to re-submit them to take into account new RWPs. It is unclear what is the legal situation – if the MS has already had their NWP approved for this period then can they be legally obliged to re-submit? Is an RCG recommendation sufficient to require a resubmission of the NWP?

	2022												2023												2024											
	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
FishNCo project	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█												
RCGs to compile RWPs													█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█												
STECF to evaluate and approve the RWPs																									█	█										
RWP to be fully evaluated and approved																																				
MS develop NWP incorporating the relevant elements from RWPs																									█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
RCGs can provide clarifications on how the RWP should be used to inform the NWPs																																				
MS submit / re-submit NWPs for 2025-27																																				█

The EWG 21-17 then discussed the document "RWP and NWP feedback and roadmap 2021" (points a – d) that had been compiled by RCG NANS&EA and Baltic chairs and previously presented during EWG 20-18.

- a. "MS full program is reflected in their NWP tables and information from these tables will not be duplicated in RWP tables. RWP might have tables, but MS should not have the obligation to report back on them in their (national)AR. For example tables 1A, 7AC..." (now Tables 1.3, 2.1.... In the new NWP templates)

Comments from EWG 21-17:

Each MS is required to hold one set of tables and one text document for the NWP which contains information on both national and regional aspects. The regional aspects should match those of each RWP relevant to the MS. The EWG suggested that MS should copy all relevant information from RWP tables directly into the corresponding table in the NWP to ensure consistency between NWPs and RWPs, and when reporting in the AR.

Having a stand-alone document (NWP Tables and Text) is a legal and financial obligation for many MS. Information in NWP tables should be complete - however it is possible that NWP text may summarise RWP text and provide a link to the RWP for more details.

When the evaluation of a MS NWP takes place, only the national parts need to be evaluated as the RWP part will have already been evaluated and accepted. (Scripts could be developed to check if the regional parts of the NWP are consistent with the relevant RWPs.)

- b. "Each row in the NWP table that is coordinated on regional level will have a reference to respective regional sampling/work plan explained in RWP text file."

Comments from EWG 21-17:

All possible types of regional coordination and planning should be able to be included/identified in both the NWP tables and text.

Does the current NWP template meet all the needs to identify MS involvement in the different RWPs?

- Table 2.2, 2.5, 2.6, 4.1 : Yes – there is a specific field
- Table 2.3 & 2.4: No - There is only reference to a regional agreement

- In all tables, the “comments” field is available and this could be used by MS to indicate any involvement in a RWP if there is no field specifically identified to hold this information.
- c. *“NWP texts contain only national info, and references to the RWP text file. RWPs will contain all the agreed details, descriptions and context in its text file, so that MS can make a reference to them in their NWP”*

Comments from EWG 21 17:

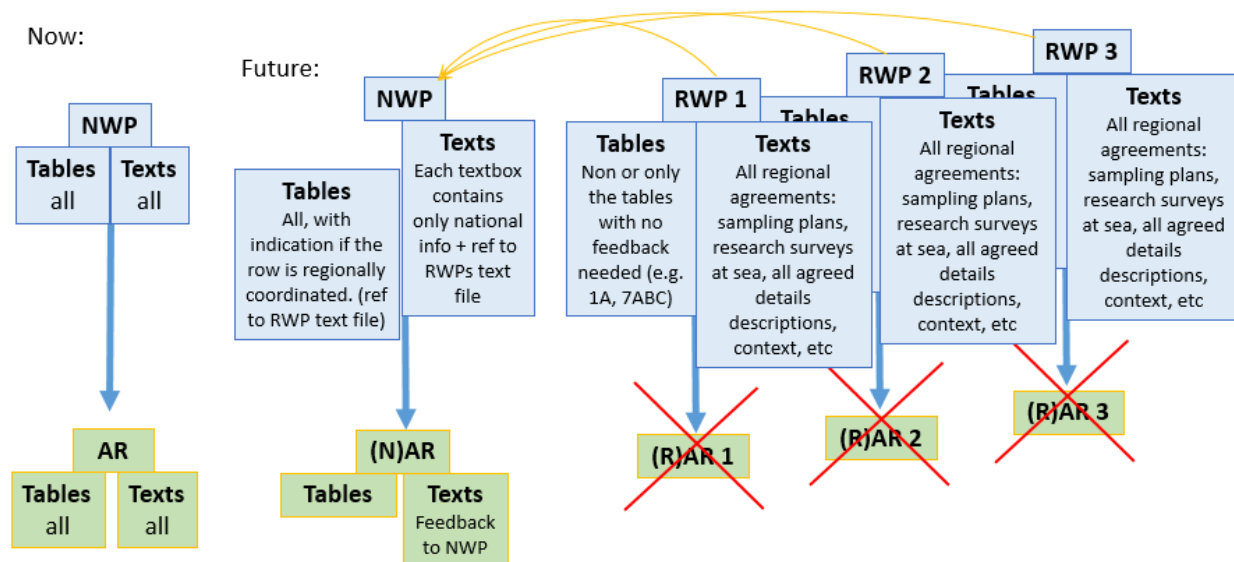
The EWG is of the opinion that NWP should contain both national information **and** the RWP information relevant to the MS (see note under point a). This could be through a summary or references to each RWP text file for regions relevant to the MS.

- d. *“RWP will contain information on a more general level so that there will not be a need to update it every year when some numbers in one MS NWP table will change. (How to specifically fill in the NWP tables on regionally coordinated issues, can be prepared in(or before) each year RCG Technical meeting in order to have the consistency in filling the tables in by MSs).”*

Comments from EWG 21 17:

We agree with this point.

In line with the EWG 21-17 comments, the diagram illustrating the relationship between the NWP and RWPs was updated:



- + no duplication in filling in the tables
- + no (R)AR needed
- + no need to update the RWP legally every year
- + overviews of the fisheries can be compiled from NWP and still used for RCG needs

3.3 Evaluation of non-binding RWP Baltic and RWP NANSEA

The RCG Baltic and the RCG NANSEA submitted a first version of a non-binding RWP. This is acknowledged as a positive step in the development of a full RWP.

Two tables in the RWP were completed: Table 1.2 and Table 2.1

- Table 1.2 was filled in a collaborative way and gave input to all individual NWPs. All NCs received the same information and could use the information with no need to modify. Table 1.2 shows exactly what can be achieved within the RWP approach.
- The process for filling Table 2.1 is highly appreciated. European and preferably National TAC and TAC shares need to be calculated in coordination - this cannot be done by individual MS, as this is also linked to the threshold. The only way to achieve this is through a collaborative approach on the regional level and is therefore part of the RWP.
- In both RWPs, the regional coordination ambitions are detailed. There is no timeline attached to any topics detailed in the table but this section will enable the monitoring of progress each year.
 - o It was noted that if a RWP is valid for 3 years then the phrase "current status" becomes ambiguous. A clearer way of describing the status of regional coordination when the RWP was written need to be agreed e.g. "status as at 2021". This should be further discussed by the RCGs and the Fish'nCo project.

General remarks:

- There is a need for guidance on how to evaluate a RWP. A guidance document is required, but who will write it?
- A pan-regional MasterCodeList should be developed within the FishNCo project to support the further development of RWPs. The pan-regional MasterCodeList should extend the existing MasterCodeList – having two different MasterCodeLists must be avoided.

4 PILOT STUDIES 2, 3 AND 4

Under the EU MAP 2017-2019, Member States (MS) have executed pilot studies on four different areas of data collection: (1) recreational fisheries, (2) impacts on marine ecosystem, (3) employment data and (4) aquaculture environment. The descriptions of these pilot studies are shortly included in the Work Plans and Annual Reports.

The Commission requested MS to submit a detailed but concise report in English (maximum 30 pages) with description of each pilot study (aim, methodology, available results, inclusion (or not) in regular sampling, difficulties encountered during the implementation, lessons learned and additional useful information). MS submitted their pilot studies reports by March 2021. However, some reports came later and/or did not follow the proposal format for the report.

The Commission then requested STECF to evaluate the pilot study reports, in first instance through specific ad-hoc contracts that have provided reports. EWG 21-09 reviewed the summary report on pilot study 1 related to marine recreational fisheries, and judged it ready for publication; while the summary report on pilot study 2 related to impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem was considered as needing some redrafting (more information in point 4 of the EWG 21-09 report).

The EWG 21-17 reviewed the summary reports on pilot studies 2, 3 and 4. After endorsement by STECF PLEN, all reports will be publicly available on the DCF website under the annual reports and work plans section.

4.1 Pilot Study 2

The Pilot Study 2 review report was evaluated during EWG 21-09, which proposed some improvements to be made before publication. The updated report refers to the analysis of 36 pilot studies (PS2 under the EU MAP 2017-2019 and extension to 2020-2021) from 17 MS and provides concise and valuable summaries of the reports of individual MS.

The updated report consists of two parts, a first part with general comments on the evaluation process (chapter 3 of the report) and the part summarizing separately all pilot studies 2 undertaken by MS (chapter 4).

The first part of the review report includes the main achievements, including best practices (chapter 3.1) separated in subchapters and sections organised as follows: overview of regional approaches (3.1.1), inclusion of incidental catch in standard sampling (3.1.2), increased understanding of species interactions (3.1.3) and analysing impact of fisheries on the seabed (3.1.4). This chapter includes best practices of different countries, indicating also the MS with methodologies that deserve attention in order to analyse possible approaches, helping replicability.

In the second part of the updated report, the overview is given by MS starting with a short summary for each country and each pilot study. Each pilot study was evaluated for their format and their contents with Yes/No/Partly and comments on the different parts of the pilot studies.

Finally, a chapter including published papers and/or publicly available documents related to the pilot studies.

In conclusion, all the comments made by EWG 21-09 were addressed and the updated report meets the ToR requirements. Experts concluded that the report provides valuable information and can be published without any confidentiality issue.

4.2 Pilot Study 3

The 'EU MAP social pilot studies evaluation report' ^[1] assessed the Member States pilot studies on the collection of social variables: employment by education level and nationality, as per Table 6 of the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1251 (EU-MAP 2017-2019). The report provides valuable overviews of the methodological strategies applied by MS to implement social pilot studies, the results achieved, as well as analysis of individual countries approaches, methodologies, issues and lessons learned during the implementation of the pilot studies. The utility of this report will be multiple and specifically can be used for future coordination of methodological development and harmonisation of the data collection approaches within the EU-MAP as well as informing the drafting of national and regional Work Plans.

The report is divided by MS and provides an overview of the social data collection strategy used by 19 MS. Pilot studies were implemented by 17 MS, while one MS reported that social data collection is implemented by National Statistical Office on a regular basis starting 2019 and another provided methodology used to report economic and social data during the data call in 2019. Other MS did not plan the pilot studies to collect social indicators and therefore did not report to the Commission.

The report concludes that the majority of MS have incorporated the social data collection into regular surveys. Fourteen MS mentioned incorporating results of the pilot studies to the regular data collection or integrating social data collection to the economic surveys and questionnaires. Among those MS that integrated social data collection to the regular surveys, five MS included social indicators to their annual economic survey. In some MS, the social indicators are planned to be collected each third year separately from economic data collection exercise. However, there are concerns that having an additional survey or adding social data to existing surveys may reduce return rates due to survey fatigue. Importantly the report concluded that the inclusion of new additional variables in the data collection should be done with caution as expanding the list of requested variables may reduce the quality of the data and response rate.

This report adds to a range of previous EWG and PGECON^[2] workshops on the matter of social data collection and adds to the discussion on the importance of these data. The EWG deems that the report has harmonised the MS pilot studies in a concise and detailed format. The information contained in the reports presented MS summaries and can be published without any confidentiality issues.

^[1] Irina Davidjuka & Arina Motova (2021)

^[2] Since 2021, the Planning Group on Economic issues (PGECON) has become a Regional Coordination Group for Economic issues (RCG ECON). Also note that the group should be understood as dealing with socio-economic topics.

4.3 Pilot Study 4

Pilot studies on the environmental data collection on aquaculture under the EU-MAP (PS4) were reviewed by Rasmus Nielsen (University of Copenhagen) and Ignacio Llorente (University of Cantabria). The ToR of the PS4 revision was to review supporting reports and documents on the pilot studies provided by the MS and draft a single and harmonized document containing an evaluation of pilot studies by MS and a comprehensive summary of the main features and outcomes of the pilot studies, including but not only: a) methodologies and why they succeeded (or not); b) difficulties encountered (and how to avoid and/or solve them); c) conclusions and d) propose a common format to provide data related to Table 8 (Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1251, EU-MAP 2017-2019).

The report of accomplished PS4 from 11 MS on environmental data for aquaculture perfectly summarises the outcomes from different MS' pilot studies and provides a synthesis of main achievements, difficulties encountered, the main concerns and challenges as well as provides recommendations and format in the case of data is collected. Results from 11 MS accomplished pilot studies concludes that data on mortality and medicine use can be collected in some form and

included into regular sampling. However, one of the main concerns is related to the methodological and legal aspects of possible data collection of environmental data of aquaculture. First of all, as was stressed in the recommendations from PS4 reviewers, an end-user driven approach has to be used to identify data collection needs.

Many methodological issues were identified by the reviewers regarding the definition of variables, measurement of survey units, disaggregation level, segmentation used and etc. (More details in chapter 2.2. "Main difficulties encountered" of the report). For the feasibility to collect environmental data, recommendations from the report propose to define a clear purpose of the environmental data collection in aquaculture, to use a clear label of the variables as mortality and medicine are not "environmental variables"; for the data collection, clear set of definitions and methodology shall be determined, data should be divided by species and production technique; tasks of data collection and analysis shall be allocated to the experts within a subject of aquaculture production mortality and medicine use (aquaculture producers, biologists, veterinarians and etc., but not for economists). Review of PS4 also included the elaboration of evaluation results, methodological proposals, overall considerations and common format for the reporting environmental variables of aquaculture. Experts concluded that the report provides valuable information and can be published without any confidentiality issues.

5 ANNEX – MEMBER STATE SPECIFIC ISSUES

Member State: BEL - Belgium

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. The WP complies with regulations and guidelines. Only minor editorial issues were identified, most of them were resolved during the EWG meeting.

2. Biological Data

Only minor issues that were mostly solved during pre-screening and EWG

3. Recreational fisheries

Only minor issues regarding Table 2.4. Some sampling scheme identifiers were merged under one quality annex, but need to be listed separately.

4. Diadromous species

Only minor issues in line with consistency and correct classifications of observation type * sampling scheme identifier naming. Also, MS has explained that some data collection is conducted by a third-party research institute (INBO) and thus will need to supply the respective Annex with later submissions.

5. Research surveys at sea

Just minor issues, mostly editorial issues. MS to adjust "Type of participation" for international surveys (in which several MSs participate) to 'combination'.

6. Fishing Activity Data

No issues, minor things solved during EWG

7. Impact on Marine Ecosystem

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

MS should resubmit the Table 5.1. and 5.2.

Some minor errors and formatting issues remaining. Need to edit name of social variable to 'Employment by level of education'. Supra Region is incorrect, refer to Master Code list for correct text.

Regarding deviations from RCG ECON / PGECON: MS should provide justification for not using PIM (under section 3. Deviation from the RCG ECON (ex. PGECON) definitions.) MS to resubmit Text Box 5.2.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

Some editorial issues regarding accordance with template and segmentation application under Table 6.1

For future WP updates, the MS should only report on the combination of species and techniques they have and not list all possible combination.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

Most minor issues resolved during EWG.

MS should resubmit the table, taking the following comments into account: Under data source, 'survey' is provided but this is not on the Master Code list, 'questionnaires' should be used. Segment codes are not correct, refer to Master Code list for correct spellings. Data source codes should match the master code list options.

Member State: BGR - Bulgaria

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Bulgaria provided a comprehensive and complete Work Plan in terms of conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines.

No major issues were found during the evaluation. Bulgaria managed to clarify or amend minor, mainly formal, issues during the meeting. A study on recreational fisheries had to be postponed as a consequence of Covid-19.

2. Biological data

No issues.

3. Diadromous species

No issues.

4. Recreational fisheries

The study to establish a list of caught species in recreational fisheries had to be postponed to 2022 as consequence of Covid-19. Bulgaria will have to update the WP, once the results of the pilot study are available.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

No issues.

6. Fishing activity data

No issues.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

No issues.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No issues.

Member State: CYP - Cyprus

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Overall, the MS WP is in conformity with regulations and guidelines. Only minor issues were identified, most of them were resolved during the EWG meeting.

2. Biological Data

Only minor issues regarding Table 2.5 editing identified, for which MS was asked to modify in future submission

3. Recreational fisheries

Only minor issues regarding Table 2.4 editing

4. Diadromous species

NA

5. Research surveys at sea

All issues resolved during EWG

6. Fishing Activity Data

No issues

7. Impact on Marine Ecosystem

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

All issues resolved during EWG

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

NA

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

NA

Member State: CZE - Czech Republic

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. The Czech Republic, as a land-locked country, is planning data collection of economic and social data for aquaculture and activities for diadromous species in freshwater. The overall conformity is improved compared to the previous WP, but further improvements with regard to the WP format and detailed description of the sampling design and methodologies are recommended.

2. Biological data

Not applicable.

3. Diadromous species

The Czech Republic plans new activities in order to investigate management for eel. However, the MS is encouraged to ensure that the sampling scheme design will allow for the estimation of yellow eel abundance and silver eel escapement. Also, the data collection of fishery related variables is required. The MS is requested to follow the guidelines for Annex 1.1 and provide precise and detailed descriptions of the sampling design.

4. Recreational fisheries

Not applicable.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

Not applicable.

6. Fishing activity data

Not applicable.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

Not applicable.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

Not applicable.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

The Czech Republic is planning data collection of economic and social data for aquaculture.
No issues.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

Not applicable.

Member State: DEU - Germany

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. WP complies with regulations and guidelines. Only minor issues were identified, most of them were resolved during the EWG meeting.

2. Biological Data

Only minor issues regarding Tables 2.1 and 2.2, for which MS is asked to pay attention in future submission.

3. Recreational fisheries

No issues.

4. Diadromous species

No issues.

5. Research surveys at sea

All issues resolved during EWG.

6. Fishing Activity Data

No issues.

7. Impact on Marine Ecosystem

MS is expected to undertake efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

All issues resolved during EWG.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

All issues resolved during EWG.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

All issues resolved during EWG.

Member State: DNK – Denmark

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Overall, the MS WP is in conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. Mainly editorial in nature. Some information is missing in different parts of the WP (Tables 2.3, 2.4 2.6, 3.1 and 7.1) and MS is encouraged to closely follow the Guidance in future WPs to avoid inconsistencies between tables.

2. Biological data

No actions needed, one minor issue on the bilateral agreements where MS should cross reference to the agreements in both text and tables.

3. Diadromous species

MS to include biological variables collected from commercial fisheries. The diadromous variables are not named following the Master Code List. In future submissions, MS should change the name of the sampling scheme identifier by the combination of 'Observation type' * 'Sampling scheme type, omitting the body of water, which will reduce the number of annexes. MS to follow options in the Master Code List for naming diadromous variables.

4. Recreational fisheries

In future submissions, MS to list all the elasmobranchs present in Danish waters according to guidelines. In future submissions, MS to provide a more detailed description of access point interviews.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

MS should list agreements in Table 1.3.

6. Fishing activity data

Segment or cluster name does not follow the Master Code list or guidance, vessel length needs to be added.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

In future submissions, check that the column 'Type of variables (E/S)' has the correct codes. There are still some errors.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

In future submissions, check that the column 'Type of variables (E/S)' has the correct codes. There are still some errors.

Member State: ESP – Spain

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2027. Spain provided a comprehensive and complete Work Plan in terms of conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. There are some pending minor issues which can be resolved in the future submission of WP. All sampling schemes, methods, segments and variables were covered by a Quality Document (Annex 1.1 and 1.2).

2. Biological data

Minor issues should be solved in next submissions related to referencing out-of-frame part of the population, and coding in Table 2.5. The MS should follow the guidelines for WP submission and MasterCodeList in future WPs in order to avoid inconsistencies.

3. Diadromous species

No issues.

4. Recreational fisheries

Minor issues related to description of data collection in Annex 1.1 need to be resolved in next submissions.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

No issues.

6. Fishing activity data

Not applicable. MS did not include complementary data collection.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

No action needed at present. Spain to include the scientific observer at sea program for PETS in the Iberian waters and the Bay of Biscay for different fishing gears in next year's amended WP. It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on vulnerable species.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

Minor issues related to fleet segments subdivision need to be resolved in next submissions.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No relevant issues.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No relevant issues.

Member State: EST – Estonia

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2027. Estonia provided a comprehensive and complete Work Plan in terms of conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. There are some minor issues to be addressed that could not be resolved during the EWG.

2. Biological data

MS should include lines for out-of-frame in their Annual Report as per the guidelines. Minor amendments needed for future submissions.

3. Diadromous species

Minor amendments needed for future submissions.

4. Recreational fisheries

Minor amendments needed for future submissions.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

Minor amendments needed for future submissions.

6. Fishing activity data

No issues

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

Awaiting results of pilot study. It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

More information is needed in Annex 1.2 for the fleet sector.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

Not applicable

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

Not applicable

Member State: FIN - Finland

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Finland provided a comprehensive and complete Work Plan in terms of conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. There are some pending editorial issues which can wait until resubmission of WP or better, if they can be resolved before adoption of the WP. All sampling schemes, methods, segments and variables were covered by a Quality Document (Annex 1.1 and 1.2).

2. Biological data

No issues.

3. Diadromous species

No issues.

4. Recreational fisheries

No major issues. Further information to be given on how biannual survey will provide yearly estimates of catches in future submission.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

No issues.

6. Fishing activity data

No major issues. Issue with Table 3.1 solved during EWG.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

No major issues. Explanation to be given about clustering in Text Box 5.2 in a future submission.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No major issues. In order to provide the link between all fish processing variables, it could be suggested for future WP submission to divide the variables 'Value of raw material by species' and 'Weight of raw material by species' by the segments.

Member State: FRA - France

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Overall, the MS WP is in conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. Some minor editorial issues in parts of the WP (Tables 2.4 and 4.1; section 2.6) and MS is encouraged to closely follow the Guidance in future WPs to avoid inconsistencies.

2. Biological data

No issues

3. Diadromous species

No issues

4. Recreational fisheries

Minor issues should be considered for future submissions: MS should provide 'No' in the Table 2.4 column of species agreed at level of RCG; to change column 'Area' to 'Area(s) covered'; MS should fill in the renamed column with the Area covered by the French marine recreational fisheries.

5. Research surveys at sea

In Annex 1.1 (related to section 2.6), the text for the IBWSS survey was not provided. Information for questions should be provided for the surveys in Annex 1.1 (e.g. for survey 'Langolf TV', information is missing for data capture, data storage, data processing).

6. Fishing activity data

No issues

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

Minor editorial issues for Table 4.1: 'N' should be provided if no stomach sampling protocol is available. The additional information related to RCG NANSEA ISSG should be moved to WP comment.

For the different regions (described in different textboxes), data on incidental by-catch of sensitive species is collected through observer programmes, fishermen reports and onshore sampling. Observer programmes are not specifically dedicated to PETS sampling. In addition, in Bay of Biscay there is non-funded DCF REM programme in place. It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

No issues

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

MS does not plan implement data collection for fish processing.

Member State: GRC - Greece

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Overall, the MS WP is in conformity with legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. Minor issues were identified, which were mostly resolved during the EWG meeting.

2. Biological data

MS is asked for a more detailed explanation for Annex 1.1 in future submission.

3. Diadromous species

No issues

4. Recreational fisheries

No issues

5. Research surveys-at-sea

No issues

6. Fishing activity data

No issues

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

Minor issue: In Table 4.1, the different GSAs covered by MEDITS are presented in separate rows, not in one line.

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

No issues

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No issues

Member State: HRV – Croatia

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Overall, the MS WP is in conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. Some minor issues were clarified and amended during the EWG.

2. Biological data

No major issues. Minor issues with Annex 1.1.

3. Diadromous species

No issues

4. Recreational fisheries

No issues

5. Research surveys-at-sea

No major issues. A minor issue that MS should adjust is the "Type of participation" for international surveys in Table 2.6.

6. Fishing activity data

No issues

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

MS to include stomach sampling in Annex 1.1 under the relevant Sampling scheme.

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

No issues

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No issues

Member State: HUN - Hungary

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. The WP complies with regulations and guidelines. Only minor editorial issues were identified, most of them were resolved during the EWG meeting.

2. Biological data

Not applicable.

3. Diadromous species

Not applicable.

4. Recreational fisheries

Not applicable.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

Not applicable.

6. Fishing activity data

Not applicable.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

Not applicable.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

Not applicable.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No major issues were found during the evaluation. Minor issue solved during EWG.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No major issues were found during the evaluation. Minor issue solved during EWG.

Member State: IRL - Ireland

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2027. The WP complies with regulations and guidelines. Minor issues were identified, most of them were resolved during the EWG meeting and some are to be addressed in the bilateral Commission-MS. A clarification about Table 4.1 is needed and Table 6.1 should be resubmitted with values presented in %. Also, minor editorial issues in the General Framework Text Box.

2. Biological Data

Minor issue in Table 2.1 regarding inconsistencies still present regarding the threshold used for stocks with low or no landings, but all stocks needed to be sampled are covered for length and/or for biological variables. In the same table, MS to cross-check the species in each bilateral agreement.

A few other minor issues have to be addressed in the bilateral Commission-MS.

3. Recreational fisheries

No issues

4. Diadromous species

No issues

5. Research surveys at sea

Minor issue: MS to change in column "Research survey acronym" IBWSS_IRL and MEGS_IRL back to IBWSS and MEGS.

6. Fishing Activity Data

No issues

7. Impact on Marine Ecosystem

Action needed: MS to clarify why Table 4.1 is missing.

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

Minor issue resolved during EWG and Table 5.2 was resubmitted during the meeting correctly.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

The Table 6.1 should be resubmitted, since values should be presented in %.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

Text Box 7.1 was resubmitted during the meeting correctly. No action needed.

Member State: ITA – Italy

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Major issues were detected especially for biological data and the guidelines were not followed by the MS in several cases. Quality documents (QD) in Annexes 1.1 and 1.2 were not provided in several cases. MS should resubmit the Tables pointed out by EWG 21-17 and provide the missing quality documents.

2. Biological data

Several inconsistencies were detected as well as information missing in Tables 2.1, 2.2, and 2.5.

MS to ensure the association between Tables 2.1 & 2.2 as well as between Tables 2.2 & 2.5. All the species selected for sampling of biological variables in Table 2.1 should have an entry in Table 2.2 and should be covered by a coherent combination of Observation type/sampling scheme type/Sampling scheme identifier. The sampling scheme identifiers should be identical between the relevant Tables. The out-of-frame sampling should be mentioned (for more details per section, see Evaluation grid). MS need to review and resubmit Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5.

Quality documents in Annex 1.1 were not provided for several Sampling scheme identifiers presented in Tables 2.2 and 2.5. MS to provide the missing Quality documents.

3. Diadromous species

No major issues. MS to transfer stock-related biological variables from eel commercial inland fisheries from Table 2.2 to Table 2.3. MS to use correct numbers and units in their submissions.

4. Recreational fisheries

Several inconsistencies and missing information were detected.

Eel and sea trout are missing. Elasmobranchs are referred all together and not in association with other species. Three Sampling scheme identifiers are missing and the relevant quality documents in Annex 1.1 (for more details see Evaluation grid). MS to provide all the missing information and all the quality documents in Annexes 1.1.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

Some minor issues were detected. MS to ensure the compatibility between Table 2.6 and Text Box 2.6 and provide links for all mandatory surveys. Also, MS to revise the sampling scheme identifiers for surveys that should be the survey acronyms (for more details, see evaluation grid).

6. Fishing activity data

Quality documents relating to Table 3.1 is missing in Annex 1.2, MS to submit the missing QD.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

Some minor issues were detected. MS to revise Table 4.1, Text Box 4.2 and the relevant part in QD in Annex 1.1 according to the guidelines. It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

Some minor issues that MS is invited to address in future submissions. The QD for the three of the four sampling schemes mentioned in Table 5.2 are missing. MS should provide the missing QD in Annex 1.2.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

Only some minor issues that MS is invited to address in future submissions.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No issues

Member State: LTU - Lithuania

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Overall, the MS WP is mostly in conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. There are some pending minor issues which can be resolved in the future submission of WP in different parts of the WP such as in Tables 1.0 and 1.1. However, there are some major issues that are addressed below.

2. Biological data

There are some minor issues that need to be corrected in future WP submissions.

Different names are used in Table 2.5 compared to Annex 1.1, e.g. the Annex 1.1 document has a Sampling scheme identifier of "SO-SHORE-COM", but the sampling scheme identifier is SO-SHORE-COM-SS according to Table 2.5. The names should be the same.

3. Diadromous specie

There is an issue that MS needs to resolve. It is required that the freshwater eel recreational fish data collection is moved from Table 2.4 to Table 2.3.

4. Recreational fisheries

There some important issues that need to be resolved and the relevant table needs to be resubmitted. The main issues that need to be addressed are the following:

- The freshwater recreational fish sampling should be moved from Table 2.4 to Table 2.3.
- There is a matter of inconsistencies between the variables in the Master Code List and the ones used by MS for completing the Table 2.4. MS needs to make the necessary corrections.
- Information was added to Annex as supplements I and II for Table 2.4. LTU needs to rename the supplements and to provide the relevant information as distinct annexes for the respective sampling scheme identifiers.
- One Annex 1.1 for recreational fish eel questionnaire is missing (in Table 2.3). MS needs to submit the relevant annex for recreational eel questionnaire.
- The code "Research survey at sea" is not an accepted code for 'Sampling scheme type' in Table 2.4 based on the Master Code List and "SciObs water body" is not an accepted code for 'Observation type' in Table 2.4 MS needs to change survey type according.
- MS should fill in the renamed column with the specific Area covered by the Lithuanian marine recreational fisheries.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

No major issues. Some minor issues that need to be corrected in future submissions are to fill in the missing information regarding MS and vessels under International coordination participating and MS to adjust "Type of participation" for international surveys to 'combination' and ensure that link to DRP SharePoint works.

6. Fishing activity data

No issues.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

Minor issues. It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

Also, MS presented a test study in Text Box 4.3 to analyse stomach sampling of predatory fishes to test the impact of fishing for predatory species. This test study should be moved to Text Box 1.a, following the guidelines of Text Box 1.a, and a link to this Text Box should be made in Table 4.1.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

No issues.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No issues.

Member State: LVA – Latvia

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. The WP complies with regulations and guidelines. Only minor issues were identified, most of them were resolved during the EWG meeting.

A new version was submitted during the EWG but only the date in the file name was updated. The MS did not update the date and/or version in first page of text file nor in table 0 of tables file.

2. Biological data

No major issues. The minor issues are related with:

- formatting and consistency between Tables 2.1 and 2.2. (5 remaining unmatched entries)
- incomplete information about "out-of-frame" part of the population in Table 2.5

These facts do not prevent data collection but need to be solved to be in line with the guidelines. They can be addressed in bilateral with the COM or in future submissions or Annual Report (knowing they can also add missing lines in their Annual Report as per the guidelines).

3. Diadromous species

No major issues. Some minor issues relating to the link to Quality documentation in Latvian language. This fact does not prevent data collection. However, in future submissions, MS is asked to provide externally linked quality documents in English language.

4. Recreational fisheries

No issues

5. Research surveys-at-sea

No major issues. The minor issue is the need of inclusion of the STS research survey in Text Box 2.6. Although the lack of Text Box 2.6 for the survey does not mean it is not be carried out, this needs to be solved to be in line with the guidelines and can be addressed in bilateral with the COM.

6. Fishing activity data

No issues.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

No issues. (A minor issue was resolved during EWG).

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues. (A minor issue was resolved during EWG)

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No issues.

Member State: MLT – Malta

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. The WP complies with regulations and guidelines. No major issues have been raised by the EWG.

2. Biological data

Some issues were identified by EWG as Research survey at sea and Stock-based sampling are used only for age sampling while different source is used for other biological variable. This means different sources used for *Mullus barbatus*, *Merluccius merluccius*, *Boops boops*, *Mullus surmuletus*. MS should consider to check the consistencies between PSU type or PSU selection method. Table 2.2 to be resubmitted.

3. Diadromous species

No issues have been raised by the EWG.

4. Recreational fisheries

No issues have been raised by the EWG.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

No issues have been raised by the EWG.

6. Fishing activity data

No issues have been raised by the EWG.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

Minor issues in the Tables 5.1 and 5.2 concerning the compliance to the guidelines were solved during the EWG.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

There is insufficient explanation in the WP whether MS is applying threshold "C" (which would imply a simplified methodology on estimating aquaculture data). It is clear from Annex 1.2 that MS is implementing standard data collection (and not a simplified methodology to estimate variables). In future WP submissions, MS is asked to clarify the application of threshold and provide more information in the simplified methodology if it is used.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

Justification for complementary data collection for fish processing was missing in the WP, however this issue was solved during EWG.

Member State: NLD – The Netherlands

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2027. Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and no major issues were identified. Minor issues are briefly stated below.

2. Biological Data

Minor issue: Based on the interpretation of the current guidelines, MS does not agree with the EWG comment about publishing the multi-lateral agreement on a national DCF website, although there is no alternative to locate the agreements (note from the EWG: MS has a DCF website).

Action needed/requested: The EWG acknowledges that according to the guidelines distributed in July 2021 and further communications, it is not mandatory to report biological parameters collected from surveys in Table 2.2. However, in respect of having a full picture of all sampling being collected under the EU-MAP and taking into account the development of future Regional Work Plans (an overview of all data sources), it would be necessary to have all data available. Therefore, it would be appreciated if MS would update Table 2.2 with the biological parameters collected on surveys and submit an amended WP next year.

3. Recreational fisheries

No issues

4. Diadromous species

Annexes 1.1 for "REC_EEL_NLD" and "REC_SALMON_NLD" are missing. MS to submit Annexes 1.1 for recreational fish sampling schemes in future submissions.

5. Research surveys at sea

No issues

6. Fishing Activity Data

No issues

7. Impact on Marine Ecosystem

Table 4.1: Links to manuals do not work (minor issue); MS to check.

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

No issues

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No issues

Member State: POL - Poland

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Poland provided a comprehensive and complete Work Plan in terms of conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines.

Some minor issues found during the evaluation were clarified or amended.

2. Biological Data

No issues

3. Recreational fisheries

No issues

4. Diadromous species

No issue

5. Research surveys at sea

No issues

6. Fishing Activity Data

No issues

7. Impact on Marine Ecosystem

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

No issues

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No issues

Member State: PRT – Portugal

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Overall, Portugal provided a comprehensive and complete Work Plan in terms of conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines.

No major issues were found during the evaluation. Portugal managed to clarify or amend minor issues during the meeting. There are only few suggestions from the EWG that could be considered in the future WP submissions.

2. Biological data

No major issue, but for the next WP submission, the MS must update the RFMO/RFO/IO for "Outermost Regions" in Section 2.2. and in Annex 1.1. Sampling scheme identifier should be used as a header to be part of the table of contents.

3. Diadromous species

No issues.

4. Recreational fisheries

No issues.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

No issues.

6. Fishing activity data

No issues.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

No major issue. PETS monitoring takes place in most regions with exception of outermost regions. The WP does not include sampling schemes dedicated to incidental bycatch of PETS. It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

No issues.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

Not applicable.

Member State: ROU – Romania

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Overall, the WP is in conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines.

Minor issues: The lines with the references to the Tables 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3 should be deleted from data availability table. All RCGs meetings should be mentioned in the Table 1.2. with explained non-attendance in the comments. MS to indicate in Table 0 the date and version number for traceability.

2. Biological data

Some minor issues are identified which can be addressed in future amendments.

3. Diadromous species

No issues.

4. Recreational fisheries

For five species (e.g. for *Trachinus draco*, *Raja clavata*, *Scorpaena porcus* ...), no sampling scheme identifier is provided, even though catch estimates are planned. MS to add the sampling scheme identifier or clarify if annual estimates of catch will be conducted (which must be done under some kind of sampling scheme). MS to submit Quality Reports Annex 1.1 for each sampling scheme identifier.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

Some minor issues: MS to update Text Box 2.6 according to the new template (i.e. use the correct questions) according to the guidelines. In Table 2.6, MS to adjust columns "Type of MS participation" to 'combination', instead of 'combined'. And "Threshold rules used" should be changed back to 'None'.

6. Fishing activity data

MS to resubmit Table 3.1 and adjust Table 5.2 accordingly. Table 3.1. should only be filled in for complementary data collection, i.e., data not collected through the Control Regulation. The Activity indicator should be 'NA' for segments that are not split into 'A' and 'L'; Clusters are not been correctly identified and named, e.g., the segments Beam trawlers 6-< 12 m, 12-< 18 m, 18-< 24 m, 24-< 40 m are clustered and should all contain an '*' in the length class and have the same 'Segment or cluster name', i.e., Beam trawlers 12-< 18 m*

The Quality report should be provided for the data in the Table 3.1 if complementary data collection is planned.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

Minor issue: MS to revise Text Box 4.2 and make editorial changes according to the guidelines.

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

MS need to resubmit Table 5.1, Table 5.2 and Text Box 5.2.

Clusters have not been correctly identified and named, e.g., the four segments Beam trawlers 6- < 12 m, 12- < 18 m, 18- < 24 m, 24- < 40 m are clustered and should all contain an '*' in the length class and have the same 'Segment or cluster name', i.e., Beam trawlers 12- < 18 m* . Table 5.2 should be updated accordingly, i.e., with the corrected segment or cluster names.

The segments 'Vessels using Pots and/or traps' listed in Tables 3.1 and 5.1 are missing in Table 5.2.

The codes used for Vessel Length are not all in line with the MasterCodeList (e.g. "6- < 12 m" - should be "6- < 12 m" etc.); moreover, they are inconsistent between corresponding tables (3.1, 5.1, 5.2).

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

No issues

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

No issues

Member State: SVK – Slovakia

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Slovakia, as a land-locked country, only has a test study in place. The (so-called) pilot study aims at environmental monitoring and creation of a database on the state of pond farming in Slovakia. Aquaculture production in Slovakia is less than 1% of the total EU production. Therefore, the threshold applies, according to Chapter II point 7 of the EU-MAP Implementing Decision annex.

The overall conformity was achieved and the only outstanding issue concerns Table 1.1, which is not fully completed. Detailed comments are provided in the assessment grid.

2. Biological data

Not applicable.

3. Diadromous species

Not applicable.

4. Recreational fisheries

Not applicable.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

Not applicable.

6. Fishing activity data

Not applicable.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

Not applicable.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

Not applicable.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

During the EWG, Slovakia was asked to provide more details on the production volumes and percentage of the MS aquaculture production. From the information provided, its production is less than 1% of the total EU production. Therefore, the threshold applies, according to Chapter II point 7 of the EU-MAP Implementing Decision annex.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

Not applicable.

Member State: SVN - Slovenia

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Overall, the WP is in conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. Minor issues occur in sections 1 (general information), 2.6 (surveys) and 4.3 (ecosystem effects). For recreational fisheries, the MS should provide quality documents in Annex 1.1. In the section of economic and social data of the fleet, Tables 5.1 and 5.2 to be resubmitted.

2. Biological data

No issues.

3. Diadromous specie

No issues.

4. Recreational fisheries

Elasmobranchs and highly migratory ICCAT species not listed individually, which is required by the guidelines for Table 2.4. MS should list required species individually in future submissions. Column 'Area' will change to 'Area(s) covered'. MS should change to this approach and fill in the renamed column with the Area covered by the Slovenian marine recreational fisheries.

MS to submit Quality Reports Annex 1.1 for each sampling scheme identifier.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

Minor issues remain to be addressed by the MS to adjust Table 2.6 and Text Box 2.6 to the EU-MAP and WP template & guidance requirement. Detailed comments are provided in the assessment grid.

6. Fishing activity data

No issues.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

MS is planning a study aimed to identify human activities, which affect seabed. Some brief text is provided, but MS should provide more details on methodology and expected outcomes. MS to provide more details on methodology and expected outcomes in Text Box 4.3.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

There are differences in the segments in Tables 5.1 and 5.2. Purse seiners are included in Table 5.2 but aren't in 5.1 and are indicated as inactive in Text Box 5.2. Under Length Class, put an asterisk if the segment that has been clustered with other segment(s) for data collection purposes as indicated in guidance document. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 to be resubmitted.

In Annex 1.2 for 'Are protocols to enforce confidentiality with external users in place and documented?' MS has answered 'Yes'. More detail is required here or a link to an external

document explaining this can be provided if available. This should be addressed in future submissions.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

In Annex 1.2 for 'Are protocols to enforce confidentiality with external users in place and documented?' MS has answered 'Yes'. More detail is required here or a link to an external document explaining this can be provided if available. This should be addressed in future submissions.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

In Annex 1.2 for 'Are protocols to enforce confidentiality with external users in place and documented?' MS has answered 'Yes'. More detail is required here or a link to an external document explaining this can be provided if available. This should be addressed in future submissions.

Member State: SWE – Sweden

1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines

The MS presented a Work Plan for 2022-2024. Overall, the WP is in conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. Some major issues have been observed during the EWG regarding conformity of socioeconomic data in Sections 5, 6 and 7 with the template. After the EWG, sections 6, 7 and Annex 1.2 were amended. However, Tables 5.1 and 5.2 have to be resubmitted.

2. Biological data

Some minor issues were observed regarding coding in Table 2.2 and some entries in Table 2.5.

3. Recreational fisheries

No issues.

4. Diadromous species

No issues.

5. Research surveys-at-sea

No issues.

6. Fishing activity data

All issues resolved during EWG.

7. Impact on marine ecosystem

It is expected that MS is undertaking efforts to improve monitoring on PETS.

8. Socioeconomic data on fisheries

MS should correct segmentation and resubmit Tables 5.1 and 5.2. For details, see WP Evaluation Grid.

9. Socioeconomic data on aquaculture

Issues have been raised by the EWG for Table 6.1, but MS solved it after WP resubmission.

10. Socioeconomic data on the fish processing sector

Issues have been raised by the EWG for Table 7.1 and Annex 1.2 related to the fish processing industry data collection, but MS solved it after WP resubmission.

6 CONTACT DETAILS OF EWG-21-17 PARTICIPANTS

¹ - Information on EWG participant's affiliations is displayed for information only. In any case, Members of the STECF, invited experts, and JRC experts shall act independently. In the context of the STECF work, the committee members and other experts do not represent the institutions/bodies they are affiliated to in their daily jobs. STECF members and experts also declare at each meeting of the STECF and of its Expert Working Groups any specific interest which might be considered prejudicial to their independence in relation to specific items on the agenda. These declarations are displayed on the public meeting's website if experts explicitly authorized the JRC to do so in accordance with EU legislation on the protection of personnel data. For more information: <http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/adm-declarations>

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7 LIST OF ANNEXES

Electronic annexes are published on the meeting's web site on:
<http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/stecf/ewg2117>

List of electronic annexes documents:

EWG-21-17 – Annex 1 - WP evaluation sheets (assessment grid) by MS

EWG-21-17 – Annex 2 - Overview of mandatory research surveys-at-sea by MS

8 LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background documents are published on the meeting's web site on:
<http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/stecf/ewg2117>

List of background documents:

EWG-21-17 – Doc 1 - Declarations of invited and JRC experts (see also section 6 of this report – List of participants)

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