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Evaluation of the 2022 Annual Reports for data collection and data transmission issues from 2022 (STECF-23-08)

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i

CONTENTS

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 presents the STECF findings based on the Report of the Expert Working Group (EWG 23-08) which was held in Brussels 19-23 June 2023, to evaluate MS Annual Reports on data collection for 2022 and the Member States' data transmission to the end users during 2022. The report of the EWG was reviewed by the STECF during its 73rd plenary meeting held in Brussels from 10-14 July 2023. This was the first submission of Annual Reports under the Data Collection Framework new EU MAP is coming into effect.

SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR FISHERIES (STECF) - Evaluation of the 2022 Annual Reports for data collection and data transmission issues from 2022 (STECF-23-08)

Request to the STECF

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

Summary of the information provided to STECF

EWG 23-08 met in Brussels 19-23 June 2023. A presentation of the outcomes was made by the chairs. The report includes 4 electronic annexes (Evaluation of Annual Reports per Member State); Amended Annual Report (AR) Evaluation Grid ITA; Comments on evaluation grid and guidelines for EWG 23-08; and AR Evaluation Grid template EWG 23-08).

STECF comments

TOR 1 Evaluation of Member States annual reports for 2022

STECF notes that the 2022 Annual Reports have been the first submitted and evaluated in accordance with Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167 and Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168.

STECF observes that the evaluation of the 2022 Annual Reports (ARs) was based on the outcome of the pre-screening exercise and supporting documents - the updated evaluation grid, the revised AR assessment guidance, and Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT).

STECF observes that a two-step pre-screening exercise was carried out, as conducted last year. Member States were asked to address the issues identified by the pre-screeners/EWG and resubmit the ARs before and during the EWG, as necessary.

STECF notes that rules concerning the communication with the Member States prior to the meeting were pre-defined, with all identified issues required to be reviewed by at least two pre-screeners before the issue was sent to the relevant Member States.

STECF observes that prior to the EWG, 26 Member States were contacted for clarification on various AR sections until the first day of the EWG. 22 Member States responded or confirmed receipt of the feedback. During the EWG, 23 Member States were contacted from which all Member States replied, which led to the improvement and finalisation of the assessments. The communication with Member States both prior to and during the EWG was documented for future reference.

STECF acknowledges that the two-step approach with early correspondence with Member States facilitated the efficient evaluation of the ARs.

STECF notes that the quality documents Annexes 1.1 and 1.2 (referenced as QD, Quality Documentation) were not evaluated when the WPs were evaluated and accepted. The EWG had difficulties evaluating the annexes since Member States had only to report if there were deviations or not without providing any detail.

STECF agrees that the current template for QD needs improvement to achieve a consistent evaluation. However, STECF acknowledges that the EWG provided several examples which can be used by Member States as guidance for the future submission of amended QDs.

STECF further notes that the EWG raised some concerns about the overall assessment grid. As no weighting of the sections is applied in the EU overview, the EWG agreed that the overall performance by Member States is only for illustrative purposes. DG MARE and Member States should primarily refer to the assessment of each section in the AR evaluation grid and the Member States feedback.

STECF notes that the EWG considered that the assessment needs to focus on the execution of the WPs rather than on the format of the ARs and that there is a need to enhance the evaluation process to put more emphasis on the quality of the reported data.

STECF notes that during the pre-screening and EWG meeting, experts were asked to provide comments on the evaluation grid, the guidance documents, the AR and WP tables. STECF notes that these comments are provided in electronic Annex 3 - Comments on evaluation grid and guidelines for EWG 23-08. Regarding the EWG suggestions on reporting achievements under bi-/multilateral agreements in the AR, STECF notes that only the Member States having conducted the sampling should report the achievements and the other Member State(s) participating in the agreement should refer to the AR of the Member State responsible for sampling. The AR submission guidance should be amended accordingly to clarify the reporting obligations.

STECF observes that the RCG website (Fisheries Regional Coordination Groups (fisheries-rcg.eu) and the EU DCF website (WP/AR assessment - European Commission (europa.eu)) potentially are two useful platforms to host the updated guidelines.

STECF observes that a revised evaluation grid was provided in electronic Annex 4 – AR Evaluation Grid Template EWG 23-08.

TOR 2: evaluation of Member States transmission of data to end users in 2022

STECF observes that as for the Annual Reports, the Data Transmission (DT) issues were subject to a pre-screening assessment prior to the EWG final assessment. The pre-screeners were requested to complete a first assessment of the issues and prepare draft comments.

STECF observes that there was a total of 278 DT issues, from 5 data calls in 2022 reported by 3 end users in the DTMT. A total of 113 DT issues were related to COVERAGE, 155 to QUALITY and 10 to TIMELINESS.

STECF further observes that out of the 278 DT issues, 48 issues were classified as being dealt with SATISFACTORY, and 47 as UNSATISFACTORY. In addition, 181 issues were assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED because the Member State and end-user comment was either contradictory or the Member State's comment was unclear. Issues that were acknowledged by the Member State to be corrected were also assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED where the Member State stated to submit the corrected data in the following data call.

STECF acknowledges that the EWG highlighted the need to have the DT Issues that are assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED to be properly closed at some point in the process. Currently, they are not checked to assess if the follow-up has been completed.

TOR 3: Examine and comment on the progress and initial products of the DCF IT project to develop the dedicated platform for work plans and annual reports.

STECF acknowledges that during EWG 22-18, the background document with the description of the functional, non-functional, and global requirements for the future DCF platform was thoroughly screened. STECF further acknowledges that majority of the comments given by EWG 22-18 were considered.

STECF considers that the development of the DCF Platform will provide a mechanism by which all the reporting issues will be checked automatically and already fixed by Member States prior to the evaluation. This will allow future EWGs on AR evaluation to focus on the execution of WPs in relation to data quality and data failures.

TOR 4: Examine the updated Italian AR 2021

STECF observes that EWG 23-08 reviewed the AR Table 1E 2021 for Italy. STECF notes that even though the data collection on the eel fisheries had taken place, Italy had failed to properly report it in the 2021 AR. STECF observes that the final EWG judgement was "YES" with no action needed for all the questions under "Anadromous, catadromous data collection in freshwater" (Table 1E, Text Box 1E) in the assessment grid.

STECF conclusions

STECF concludes that the EWG addressed all ToRs appropriately in the given time frame and endorses the report and the related annexes.

Regarding TOR1, STECF concludes that the overall process for the AR evaluation (AR pre-screening and communication with Member States prior to and during the EWG) is efficient as it allows for a significant number of issues being identified and addressed before the end of the meeting.

STECF concludes that there is a need to utilise the outcome from the EWG evaluating the ARs in EWG 23-16 evaluating the forthcoming WPs. This will help to improve the WPs and therefore the ARs. STECF concludes that the whole process needs to be iterative, and Member States should be requested to resubmit amended WPs on the basis of the evaluation of the ARs.

STECF concludes that the 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 aquaculture (Tables 5.2, 6.1 and 7.1) sections, introduced in the WPs provide a possible format to progress towards a consistent way of describing all EU-MAP sampling designs and methods. STECF concludes that QDs may be improved by Member States based on EWG feedbacks or other similar QDs of other Member States available on the STECF website.

STECF concludes that the revised evaluation grid should be applied in next year's AR evaluation. However, the AR guidelines should be clarified with respect to several tables, in particular those related to data availability, planned regional and international coordination, recommendations and agreements.

Regarding TOR 2, STECF concludes that the data issues already assessed as "FOLLOW-UP NEEDED" should be resolved on the basis of an ad-hoc contract that will be provided as background document to EWG 23-16

STECF concludes that the revised DTMT will allow for an efficient follow-up of data issues, as there will be new columns included in the DTMT from autumn 2023 onward to document the follow-up process (STECF PLEN 23-01).

Regarding TOR 3, STECF concludes that the DCF platform, that is currently under implementation, will facilitate a proper evaluation of the reporting as well as of the execution of the WPs. STECF suggests that the platform could additionally perform some cross-checks between tables and highlight low achievement levels in comparison with planned sampling intensities.

In this context, STECF concludes that it would be beneficial to establish communication with the relevant Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) to receive their input on how to evaluate achievements. STECF also concludes these topics should be included in the terms of reference for the forthcoming EWG 23-16 on the evaluation of Work Plans.

For TOR 4 STECF concludes that the updated assessment of the Italian AR 2021 changed the overall assessment of the affected modules from 'Partly' to 'Mostly'.

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REPORT TO THE STECF

EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON EVALUATION OF THE 2022 ANNUAL REPORTS FOR DATA COLLECTION AND DATA TRANSMISSION ISSUES FROM 2022 (EWG-23-08)

Brussels, 19-23 June 2023

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 assessment of Annual Reports (ARs) on data collection in 2022 and data transmission issues (DT issues) raised in relation to data calls in this year were carried out by the STECF Expert Working Group (STECF EWG 23-08) 19-23 of June 2022.

Under the process of evaluation and approval of the outcomes of the Work Plans (WP), the European Commission is legally bound to consult STECF on the execution of the WPs approved by the Commission and the quality of the data collected by the Member States (MS) in accordance with Article 11 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/10041. The 2021 Annual Reports are the last reports to be submitted and evaluated in accordance with the Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/910 and Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/909. Annual Reports referring to 2022 will instead be submitted and evaluated based on Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2021/1167 and Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2021/1168.

The EWG meeting was held in Brussels at the Centre Albert Borschette between the 19-23 June 2023. In total, 30 independent experts attended the meeting along with two observers. The list of participants is included in Section 8. The evaluation of ARs and Data Transmission (DT) issues was undertaken by subgroups to which experts were allocated according to their expertise. Prior to the EWG assessment, Member States' ARs for 2022 and the majority of DT issues raised in response to 2022 data calls underwent a pre-screening process. All pre-screening was undertaken by experts under contract to DG MARE.

1.1   Terms of Reference for EWG-23-08

Article 11 of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017 requires Member States to submit to the Commission an annual report (AR) on the implementation of their national work plans (WPs); and requires STECF to evaluate:

a. the execution of the WPs; and
b. the quality of the data collected by the Member States.

In preparation for the above, EWG 23-08 will be convened on 19-23 June 2023.

Following STECF request for IT tools to facilitate the AR evaluation, the Commission launched a project to develop a dedicated DCF platform for drafting, submitting, and assessing the work plans and annual reports. The progress and first products of the project will be presented for consultation to EWG 23-08.

EWG 23-08 will report the findings to the plenary meeting of the STECF, which will take place 10-14 July 2023, and indicate which sections of the report the STECF Plenary should focus on. EWG 2308 will work on the ARs submitted by Member States, the DTi uploaded on the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT), and the results of the pre-screening, following relevant guidance documents.

Following review and endorsement by the STECF plenary in July 2023, all resulting documentation (annual report evaluation and summary list of follow-up actions and evaluation of data transmission issues and summary list of points requiring reaction) will be communicated to Member States by DGMARE.

Request to EWG 23-08

EWG 23-08 is requested to:

1. Evaluate Member States' AR on the implementation of their WPs in 2022, submitted to the Commission by 31 May 2023. Failures to implement the plan have to be reflected in the overview table (the traffic lights), even if correctly justified.

   EWG 23-08 will approve the final grid, guidance, and assessment rules at the beginning of the working group meeting. EWG 23-08 must ensure that all AR modules are assessed in a consistent and comparable way, and that the MS performance and reporting are reflected in the STECF assessment.

   Prior to the EWG 23-08 meeting, a pre-screening of Member States' ARs will be undertaken through a series of ad-hoc contracts. The pre-screeners will use the new grid for the evaluation of ARs (background document 2), and the guidance for AR evaluators (background document 3). The pre-screeners may comment and propose amendments to the grid and guidance.

   Pre-screeners will signal issues that can be fixed by the MSs before EWG 23-08 starts. The MS will provide explanations and resubmit the ARs if necessary, at the latest on the first day of EWG 23-08. The following rules will apply to the prior communication:

   – All identified issues will be reviewed by another expert when flagged for sending to the Member States.
   – The issues will be collated and reviewed by the Commission before relaying them to the Member States at the end of the pre-screening exercise.

   The Commission may address additional requests to EWG 23-08 in relation to specific issues that arise from the pre-screening exercise.

2. Evaluate the data transmission issues (DTi) reported by end users for data calls launched during the year 2022.

   For data transmission issues, EWG 23-08 is requested to focus on the issues from 2022, recorded in the DTMT2:

   • DTi from the Med&BS (101 issues reported)
   • DTi from FDI (21 issues reported)
   • DTi from Aquaculture (22 issues reported)
   • DTi from ICCAT (6 issues reported)
   • DTi from ICES (20 issues reported) DTi from IOTC (59 issues reported).

   The experts are requested to use the DTMT guidance (version March 2023) for the evaluation.

3. Examine and comment on the progress and initial products of the DCF IT project to develop the dedicated platform for work plans and annual reports.

4. Examine the updated Italian AR 2021, submitted to the Commission in January 2023, against the EWG 22-07 evaluation. The updates concern Table and text box 1E; re-evaluation (based on the EWG 22-07 grid) is necessary prior to publishing the AR in the DCF website, and as a basis to AR 2022 evaluation.

EWG 23-08 report

The report of the EWG 23-08 should contain the following:

1. At the EU (and regional) level:

    An overall evaluation of the execution of data collection, including an estimate of the performance of Member States, major issues and recurring issues across Member States. The overall evaluation should also aim to highlight any deficiencies in data collection in relation to end-user needs at the regional level so that such deficiencies can be considered in planning future regional work programmes.

2. For each Member State:
    a. With regard to ARs:
     (i)   An overall evaluation of whether the Member State executed its data collection activities in accordance with its agreed WP for 2022.
     (ii) A detailed evaluation of the AR, based on the AR evaluation grid provided by the Commission, which will already include the result of the pre-screening exercise. The completed grid should highlight:
           –   any persistent or recurring issues regarding execution of data collection activities.
           –   any persistent or recurring issues regarding reporting of data collection activities.
           –   all issues that may require the Commission to take remedial action (request for resubmission of the AR or clarification of specific issues). The Commission will seek clarification from Member States on any issues raised during the EWG meeting and feedback from Member State should be evaluated by the EWG during the meeting. The EWG is not required to evaluate feedback from Member States received after 22 June (one day before the EWG meeting ends).
           –   any issues that are 'for information' only.
     (iii) A summary list of follow-up actions to be addressed by Member States at the end of the EWG.
    b. With regard to DT issues:
     (i)   An overall evaluation of Member State performance, of main DT issues per end user/data call and of recurring issues by Member State.
     (ii) An evaluation of Member States' responses via the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool online platform to issues raised by end users of scientific advice (i.e., the STECF, RCGs, ICES and RFMOs to which scientific data is provided by Member States) in relation to data calls issued in 2022. The EWG is requested to evaluate DTi in terms of content by closing issues which have been clarified and highlighting outstanding issues (recurrent and or having an important impact on the activity of a stock assessment working group and the quality of the assessment etc.). The data sets affected shall be underlined.
     (iii) Identify in the evaluation per Member State the comments which require a reaction from Member State (draft a summary list) and those points which are for information only.

3. Comments on the DCF IT platform project.

1.2   Structure of the Report

The different sections of the report correspond to the terms of references. Section 2 includes the evaluation of Member States Annual Reports (TOR 1) and section 3 the evaluation of DT issues

(TOR 2). Section 4 refers to a review on the progress and initial products of the DCF IT project to develop the dedicated platform for work plans and annual reports and an examination of the updated Italian AR 2021, submitted to the Commission in January 2023, against the EWG 22-07 evaluation.

The review of the AR 2022 template for completeness was carried out within the subgroups and is covered in Section 2.

To ease navigation and comprehension, an overview of the MSs AR is given in Table 1.

Table 1   Sections of Member States Annual Reports (ARs)

Section 1. General information		
	Text box DCF	Data collection framework at national level
	Text box 1a	Test studies
	Text box 1b	Other data collection activities
Table 1.1		Data Availability
Table 1.2		International coordination
Table 1.3		Bi and Multilateral agreements
Table 1.4		Recommendations
Section 2. Biological data		
Table 2.1	Text box 2.1	List of required stocks
Table 2.2	Text box 2.2	Planning of sampling for biological variables
Table 2.3	Text box 2.3	Diadromous species data collection in freshwater
Table 2.4	Text box 2.4	Recreational fisheries
Table 2.5	Text box 2.5	Sampling plan description for biological data
Table 2.6	Text box 2.6	Research surveys at sea
Section 3. Fishing activity		
Table 3.1	Text box 3.1	Fishing activity variables sampling strategy
	Text box 3.2	Fishing activity variables sampling strategy (inland eel commercial)
Section 4. Impact of fisheries on marine biological resources		
Table 4.1		Stomach sampling and analysis
	Text box 4.2	Incidental catches of sensitive species
	Text box 4.3	Impact on marine habitats

Section 5-7. Economic and social data		
Table 5.1		Fleet total population and clustering
Table 5.2	Text box 5.2	Economic and social variables for fisheries data collection strategy
Table 6.1	Text box 6.1	Economic and social variables for aquaculture data collection strategy
Table 7.1	Text box 7.1	Economic and social variables for fish processing data collection strategy
Quality reports		
	Annex 1.1	Quality report for biological data sampling scheme
	Annex 1.2	Quality report for socioeconomic data sampling scheme

1.3   Pre-screening prior to EWG

Prior to EWG 23-08, 15 independent experts were contracted by DG MARE to pre-screen Annual Reports and Data Transmission issues that were reported in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT) referring to data calls in 2022. Only DT issues commented by the MS in the DTMT were pre-screened.

To undertake the pre-screening exercise the pre-screeners were requested to use the updated evaluation grid for pre-screeners along with all relevant background documents such as the revised AR assessment guidance and DTMT guidance.

The outcome from the pre-screening of ARs and DT issues was made available to the EWG in the AR evaluation grid template and in an Excel sheet extract from the DTMT, respectively. As with previous years, MSs were contacted to address issues identified by the pre-screeners in the ARs prior to the start of the EWG 23-08 meeting.

2   ToR 1 Evaluation of Member States Annual Reports for 2022

2.1   Setting the scene

2.1.1 Formation of subgroups and pre-screening of Annual Reports

The assessment of Annual Reports was undertaken by subgroups to which experts were allocated according to their expertise. In each subgroup one expert was identified as a group facilitator. Each subgroup was tasked with the assessment of different sections of the AR.

Table 2   Allocation of AR sections by subgroup and expertise.

Subgroup	AR Sections	Subgroup Chair
1 – General Section	Table 0; 1.1; 1.2; 1.3; 1.4.; Text Box 1a; 1b	Joël Vigneau

2 - Biology	Table 2.1; 2.2; 2.5; Text Box 2.1; 2.2; 2.5, 4,2: 4.3; Annex 1.1	Jens Ulleweit
3 – Diadromous and Recreational	Table 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 4.1 Text Box 2.3; 2.4; 2.6; 3.2; Annex 1.1	Marko Freese
4 - Economic	Table 3.1; 5.1; 5.2; 6.1; 7.1. Text Box 3.1; Annex 1.2	Jörg Berkenhagen
5 – DCF IT Project		Els Torreele

The evaluation results are provided in the evaluation grids per MS (Electronic Annex 1 EWG-23-08 - Evaluation of ARs per MS) and in the EU overview table (section 2.2.1). An overview of the EWG findings by subgroups is provided in section 2.2.3.

To improve the efficiency of the assessment of AR, pre-screeners signalled issues to MS prior to the start of the EWG. This gave MS the opportunity to provide explanations and resubmit their AR, if necessary, during the EWG. The following rules applied to the pre-screening and the Member State feedback:

1. All identified issues were reviewed by at least two pre-screeners before being sent to the Member States.
2. The issues were collated and reviewed together with the Commission. Following this filtering exercise, the Commission relayed the issues with AR submissions to Member States at the end of the pre-screening exercise.
3. The issues related to inconsistencies, formatting issues, missing tables, missing explanations in the text boxes, misplaced information, wrong references etc., in line with the evaluation guidelines.

To facilitate communication between experts and the Commission, all comments were incorporated in an Excel file. The Excel file included pre-screeners comments to MS, feedback from MS, EWG experts' comments to MS, and MS feedback, allowing two rows of communication with the MS in a coordinated and structured way.

Table 3   Labelling of the Excel file for the ping pong process.

MS
Pre-screeners to EWG
MS reply
MS EWG
MS reply to EWG

The pre-screening comments to MS were sent immediately after the pre-screening exercise and prior to the EWG so that replies and resubmission of ARs from MS were possible before the meeting and during the first day of the EWG meeting. During the meeting the experts continued to work in the assessment grid filled out by the pre-screeners. In the case experts found remaining major issues in the AR submissions the Commission contacted the Member State on the second day of

the meeting and asked for clarifications and/or re-submission of AR files by the end of the fourth day (Feedback to the MS, previously called the "ping-pong" process). Only major issues which needed urgent actions for resubmission or clarification, and which were essential to evaluate the ARs, were sent to the Member States. As with last year the feedback steps worked well and the communication with the Member States prior to the EWG resulted in fewer issues to be addressed during the EWG.

Prior to the EWG, 26 Member States were contacted for clarification on various AR sections as of the first day of the EWG, 22 Member States had responded or confirmed receipt of the feedback. During the EWG 23 Member States were contacted from which all Member States replied, which led to the improvement and finalisation of the assessments. The questions for the MS and related responses by AR sections have been documented for future reference (COM internally, as in previous years).

2.1.2 Background Information

To carry out the evaluation of the ARs, the EWG was provided with access to supporting information such as the results from the pre-screening in the AR evaluation grid, the ARs and WPs for all Member States.

2.1.3 Tools and criteria for the assessment

As with previous years, the EWG agreed that the STECF assessment provided in the AR evaluation grid needs to be clear and self-explanatory. It is also necessary that the evaluation is carried out coherently across subgroups so that the results, as much as possible, are comparable and transparent.

As with previous evaluations the categories NO, PARTLY, MOSTLY and YES were used to judge AR achievements. Sections of the AR that are not relevant for the MS (i.e., the MS apply thresholds for data collection) are marked with NOT APPLICABLE (NA). In addition, following recommendations outlined in STECF-22-07 an extra category, UNASSESSABLE (UA), was introduced. This category should be used for sections of the AR where the information provided does not allow for an assessment in the given year, e.g., the reported study is not yet completed.

Table 4 – Performance levels for the assessment of Annual Reports.

% of achievement	Classification
NOT APPLICABLE	NA
UNASSESSABLE	UN
<10%	NO
10-50%	PARTLY
50-90%	MOSTLY
>90%	YES

Following the agreements in STECF-22-07 the overall performance by MS is based on expert judgement and no fixed assessment criteria can be set since the sections of the AR do not carry the same weight within the overall performance. However, as a general guide (in addition to table 4 above), in reference to the overall performance, the EWG agreed that two MOSTLY judgements can still generate an overall YES and if one section has been assessed as NO the overall performance can only be marked as MOSTLY, PARTLY or NO.

For land-locked countries the overall assessment can only be Non-Applicable (NA) if no regular data collection is undertaken or PARTLY/MOSTLY/YES if there is data collection. As no weighing of sections is applied in the EU overview the **EWG agreed that the overall performance by MS is**
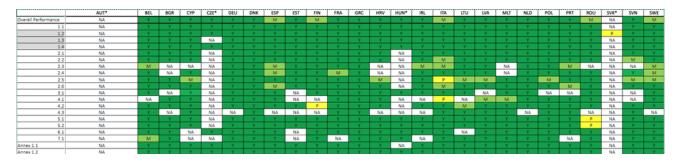
2.2 Results

2.2.1 EU Overview

The overall evaluation shown in Table 5 is the summary evaluation of each MS based on the traffic light system in Table 4 above. The overall evaluation by MS was agreed upon by consensus in the EWG plenary sessions.

*Table 5 – Summary of the assessment of Member States 2022 Annual Reports. ***

	AUT*	BEL	BGR	CYP	CZE*	DEU	DNK	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GRC	HRV	HUN*	IRL	ITA	LTU	LVA	MLT	NLD	POL	PRT	ROU	SVK*	SVN	SWE
Overall Performance	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	NA	Y	M
1.1	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
1.2	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y
1.3	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
1.4	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
2.1	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
2.2	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	M	Y
2.3	NA	M	NA	NA	NA	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	NA	M	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	NA	NA	NA	M
2.4	NA	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	M	Y	NA	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	NA	Y	Y	M
2.5	NA	Y	Y	M	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	NA	P	M	M	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	NA	M	M	M
2.6	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	NA	Y	Y
3.1	NA	NA	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	NA	NA	Y	NA	NA
4.1	NA	NA	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	NA	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	NA	P	NA	M	M	Y	Y	Y	NA	NA
4.2	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y
4.3	NA	Y	NA	Y	NA	NA	Y	NA	NA	NA	Y	NA	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y	NA
5.1	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	NA	Y	Y
5.2	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	NA	Y	Y
6.1	NA	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
7.1	NA	M	Y	NA	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y	Y
Annex 1.1	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
Annex 1.2	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y

As with the previous year's tables 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 were not included in the overall assessment by MS because there is no reference list of meetings, recommendation or bi-and multilateral agreements. The overall scores of the performance level by MSs was significantly higher compared to last year's performance. The number of AR sections that received a compliance level score of YES increased from 5 in 2020, to 14 in 2021 and finally 19 for the 2022 ARs. As this is the first year of the new WP and AR tables no direct comparison for compliance at the table level can be made[1].

2.2.2 Feedback on the assessment summary

The EWG discussed, at length, the utility of the assessment of MS's and the production of the overall assessment summary table. In short, the concerns about the overall assessment grid centred on the following points:
- As no weighting of the sections is applied in the EU overview the EWG agreed that the overall performance by MS is only for illustrative purposes and that Commission and Member States should primarily refer to the assessment of each section in the AR evaluation grid and the MS feedback. This point cannot be underestimated. Even where a YES, or MOSTLY has been indicated there may be comments from the EWG that point toward possible improvements to the MSs WP. As a deep dive review is completed during the pre – screening exercise and MSs react to these comments by correcting or clarifying issues, it may be useful to keep these comments in the final evaluation grid in future. The comments would remain even though all issues are resolved and the evaluation is a mostly or yes etc… as these comments provide a useful learning and reference tool for future AR submissions.

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[1] Overview tables on the MS DCF performance for the years 2010-2019 can be found in the following STECF reports; STECF12-01; STECF-OWP-12-05; STECF 13-14; STECF 14-13, STECF 1513; STECF 16-12; STECF 17-07, EWG STECF 18-10, EWG STECF 19-09, EWG STECF 20-08, EWG STECF 21-09, and EWG 22-07

- There were suggestions to redraft the evaluation grid splitting it into a reporting and execution components, but it was agreed that there was not enough time during this EWG and that this should be addressed prior to the next AR evaluation EWG.
- The overarching driving principle of the evaluation should be an iterative process of continual WP and AR improvements by MSs. As such, the EWG agreed that the assessment needed to focus more on the execution of the WPs and not on reporting (e.g., table formats, spelling, naming conventions, etc.). In fact, the new DCF Platform will provide a mechanism by which all these reporting issues will be checked and fixed by MSs prior to assessments. This will allow future AR EWG to focus on the delivery of WPs in relation to data quality and data failures.
- Considering the significance emphasised by the EWG regarding the continuous improvement of Member States' WPs, it is strongly recommended that key messages resulting from the evaluation of the ARs be effectively communicated to Member States. This will provide them with the opportunity to enhance their WP accordingly. Wherever feasible, MSs should consider resubmitting their revised WPs prior to the WP EWG meeting where further evaluation can track the continual improvements of MS programmes.
- Regarding the socio-economic tables, there is a need to enhance the evaluation process to place greater emphasis on the quality of the reported data. Next year's AR EWG should be prepared for this level of assessment. It is important to note that relying solely on response rate and coverage rate does not provide sufficient information to evaluate the adequacy of achievements.

Expanding on this point the Economic subgroup notes that the term "sufficient" requires further specification and contextualization—sufficient for what purpose? Most likely, it refers to a "sufficient" number of observations capable of generating reliable estimates, considering the data's variability. Therefore, variability should be a criterion for assessing coverage rates. However, both the WP and AR currently lack information on variability. Variability, alongside the significance of the segment at a national level, should be considered, among other measures, when evaluating achievements.

When assessing the response rate alone, it is crucial to recognize that a low response rate may introduce bias into the dataset. MS may need to address this issue. However, low response rates are not uncommon, and MS may have anticipated the expected response rate when planning the sample rate. The coverage rate can only be assessed in the context of the planned sample rate.

It is recommended to discuss the measure of variability and clarify the meaning of "sufficient" at the RCGs (Regional Coordination Groups). Furthermore, these topics should be included in the terms of reference for the WP EWG. Additionally, for the biological tables it would be beneficial to establish communication with the relevant RCGs to encourage their input and thoughts on how to evaluate these aspects of the AR. Overall, considerable work has been spent on the quality of DCF economic data in previous reports. The most comprehensive material can probably be found in the reports of the 2013 Helsinki DCF *Workshop on statistical issues and thresholds* and of *STECF 17-11 on Quality Assurance for DCF data. STECF 17-11* which stated that:

> "*In general, quality of data collection has been quantified through figures like sample rate, response rate, coverage rate and CV. These figures could also further be used as quality indicators. However, the evaluation of "acceptable data quality" should be performed with caution. Fleet segments are often small populations which cannot necessarily be regarded homogeneous. Therefore, CV can easily be high even though the coverage is high, too [...].*
>
> *For that purpose, quality requirement should be associated with the importance of fleet segments, i.e., the more important, the higher the requirements. Importance could be defined by value of landings (amongst others, e.g., importance for certain stocks, if applicable).*
> *Both CV and coverage should be taken into account. When the CV is high despite a high coverage, this could be acceptable as well. It would simply mean that the segment is highly variable. Moreover, it appears reasonable to request higher coverage rates for smaller segments than for larger segments. In the past there was consensus on not setting any minimum requirements as it might be unachievable. In most countries data collection is voluntary for fishermen and thus the coverage often cannot be increased simply by increased sampling. A quantitative evaluation of quality indicators should be introduced as a feedback loop with the aim of optimisation. An increase in data quality, where feasible, always coincides with an increase in costs.*"

Evaluating the Annual Report is connected to the assessment of noncompliance, which has financial implications for Member States. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritise the quality of the annual reports, especially considering the potential financial repercussions. The EWG should keep in mind that behind the WP and AR there is Article 25(7) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 which stipulates that failure by a MS to collect and/or provide data in a timely manner to end-users may result in a proportionate interruption or suspension of relevant Union financial assistance to that Member State.

Non-compliance is particularly relevant to Category 5: Failure to contribute to the objective of the CFP (Common Fisheries Policy) to collect scientific data, as stated in Article 2(4) of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013. This includes:
- 5.1 Failure to collect and manage biological, environmental, technical, and socioeconomic data.
- 5.2 Failure to coordinate data collection activities with other Member States in the same region.
- 5.3 Failure to ensure the proper implementation of national correspondents' tasks.
- 5.4 Failure to submit an annual report on the implementation of national work plans for data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.
- 5.5 Failure to comply with rules on the use of data.

More specifically on the evaluation of some of the part of the WP the EWG made the following observations.

- Evaluating Table 1.4, on the 'follow-up of recommendations and agreements', presents challenges. To address this, it is recommended that a centralised reference list of recommendations should be created and coordinated by the RCGs, with assistance from the RCG secretariat. This compilation would include both recent recommendations relevant to the Annual Report's Table 1.4 for the respective implementation year.
- The group reaffirmed the guidance document, which defines that MSs should include in Table 1.4 only those recommendations and agreements that are applicable to them. Furthermore, the list should be limited to recommendations that have been made the previous year and which were actioned in the current AR reference year e.g. recommendations made in 2022 to be actioned in 2023. To assess the follow-up of recommendations, the initial approach would be to rely on the list provided through collaborative efforts, if the information is available. Otherwise, compiling a regional list of recommendations should be undertaken.

2.2.3 Results by Subgroups

As in previous years each subgroup considered and provided answers to specific questions related to the AR assessment and supporting documentation. The questions provided to the subgroups were:

1. Overall performance of the Member State on your sections.
2. Overall, what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation? How would you resolve these?
3. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the execution of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?
4. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the reporting of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?
5. Any good examples from MS to highlight?
6. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

Subgroup 1 - General

1. Overall performance of the MS on your sections.

Of the MS in your sections how many were YES, Mostly, Partly, No based on the evaluation criteria below? Please list the country and indicate your evaluation:

Table 6 – Summary of the General sections assessment of Member States 2022 Annual Reports.

Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA
Table 0	24	0	0	0	2
Table 1.1	24	0	0	0	2
Table 1.2	24	0	1	0	1
Table 1.3	23	0	0	0	3
Table 1.4	24	0	0	0	2
Textbox 1A	17	1	0	0	8
Textbox 1B	23	0	0	0	3
Total	**159**	**1**	**1**	**0**	**21**

2. Overall, what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation? How would you resolve these? Make recommendations.

Difficulty to evaluate the DTIs.

The group appreciated the guidance provided by the decision tree but was troubled with the number of cases where the final EWG judgement was FOLLOW-UP NEEDED and the low number of SATISFACTORY. The group understands this situation is under discussion for improving the DTMT but would like to highlight the need to have DTIs properly closed off at some point in the process. Indeed, the follow-ups of the previous years have disappeared, so now it is not clear how useful this process is and what happens with the wealth of FOLLOW-UP NEEDED.

The EWG understood that 2022 was the first year IOTC raised data transmission issues in the DTMT, but these proved very difficult to evaluate by STECF as these are often written in a shorthand style with extensive use of acronyms. Moreover, the same issues arose from different meetings and led to duplicate DTIs. **EWG suggested that COM should write to IOTC** to request they express the issues in a common and understandable language for experts outside the IOTC sphere and express one issue per DTI and one DTI per issue.

In addition, certain issues raised by IOTC are related to control data, and not data collection, therefore these have not been assessed by the group.

The group discussed several issues where data were transmitted by the MS to the Commission and then forwarded to the relevant RFMO (ICCAT and IOTC). In some cases, there is contradictory information between MS and end-user related to data transmission, where MS states the date when the data was transmitted to the Commission. For these, the group cannot effectively assess the issue raised due to contradictory information provided by MS and end-user. Namely, MS does not receive a confirmation from the Commission when data have been forwarded to the RFMO, nor communicates directly with the RFMO regarding data quality/coverage.

In conclusion, more guidance should be provided to the relevant RFMOs on the input of issues in the DTMT. Given that data transmission related to RFMOs is discussed directly between DG MARE and relevant MS during technical meetings, the added value of STECF assessing these DTIs could be reconsidered.

Difficulty to evaluate the recommendations in Table 1.4

Regarding Table 1.4. Follow up of recommendations and agreements, the Group discussed the possibility for the MS participating in the relevant RCG to collaboratively work on the table to be shared among MS in the region.

The group reiterated the Guidance document where it is defined that MS should include in Table 1.4. only the recommendations and agreements applicable to them and restrict the list to those recommendations not already commented in previous AR.

EWG suggested that RCG chairs, with the help of the secretariat, **should be tasked to propose a compilation of recommendations** which are relevant to be included in AR Table 1.4 of the implementation year. RCG chairs should be asked to list recommendations released in 2023. These could be compiled by the RCG secretariat and forwarded to MSs in due time for next WPs.

Confusion in how to fill the data availability in Table 1.1

The group discussed the relevant information to be provided by MS on "Time when data were available" in Table 1.1. The guidelines of the WP referred to: '*Indicate when the data collected during the reference year is planned to be available. […] N is here the year the data are collected'.* So, the same reasoning should apply to the AR. As the AR is reporting on data collected during year N, with here N = 2022, the AR should report when the data collected in 2022 became available to use. For some cases this will be end of 2022 (certain surveys), most of them spring 2023, and some of them later in the year. For those data becoming available later in the year (after deadline 31st May of AR 2022), an indication can be given about the availability (as close as possible, e.g., September 2023) and a comment in the AR column. **The AR guidelines should be clarified** to reflect this conclusion. Failing to respect this approach led to a demand for modification during the Member State Feedback process.

The group agreed that for future submissions MSs should focus on when the data on a full reporting year was available for submission to end-users (not when each individual sampled trip is available). MS should provide a comment when the availability was later than planned and if there were consequences to the end-user of data.

Textboxes 1A and 1B

These 2 textboxes have a structure given by the guidance and template doc; these are.

- Brief description of the study
- Achievement of the study and justification if this was not the case.
- Incorporation of study results into regular sampling by the Member State.

Often, MSs provide free text describing the realisation, skipping the required structure; some pre-screeners highlighted this point, others not. The SG agreed to have a consistent approach to this and checked every country to confirm if the required structure was used and if the expected information was available (often when the structure is respected, the information is given). If not, MS were asked to conform to the required structure during the next Member State feedback phase.

For the SecWeb initiative in textbox 1B, all MSs received text from the RCG secretariat to be included in the AR 2022. When missing, MS were asked to add it during the Member State feedback process. Some MSs had not put reference to the RCG secretariat in their NWP 2022-2024, they have thus no possibility to insert any information in this section of their AR.

The group agreed to evaluate the achievement (column "EWG judgement" in the evaluation grid) of test studies in Text Boxes 1a and studies in Text Boxes 1b as "NA" - not applicable in the case when MS did not perform the activities in the implementation year and justified why this was not done. The group considered this as a specific approach, related only to the studies in Text Boxes 1a and 1b.

3. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the <u>execution</u> of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?

Not relevant for SG1.

4. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the <u>reporting</u> of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?

The issues described above regarding Table 1.1 and Table 1.4 are persistent and recurrent as far back as the start of the DCF.

5. Any good examples from MS to highlight?

The completion of Table 1.1 is a persistent and recurring issue, the EWG struggled to find examples to be highlighted from MS. Eventually, only FRA could be seen as an example to follow for of the related data sets.

6. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

- Some delays in conducting and/or initiating case studies due to COVID19, but in general very few mentions of external factors having had an impact on the data collection activities.

Subgroup 2 - Biology

1. Overall performance of the MS on your sections.

Of the MS in your sections how many were YES, Mostly, Partly, No based on the evaluation criteria below? Please list the country and indicate your evaluation:

Table 7 – Summary of the biology sections assessment of Member States 2022 Annual Reports.

Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA
2.1	22	0	0	0	4
2.2	20	2	0	0	4
2.5	14	7	1	0	4
4.2	20	1	1	0	4
4.3	12	0	0	0	14
Annex 1.1	26	0	0	0	0
Total	**114**	**10**	**2**	**0**	**30**

2. Overall, what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation? How would you resolve these? Make recommendations.

Deviations:

A short explanation for deviations (Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5) should always be given in the AR tables (AR comment column), and not only directly referenced to the text box. For proposed timeframes (Text boxes 2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 4.2) it is preferable if MSs give more precise indications (e.g., next year, next submission during Q1 etc.) and not general ones (e.g., in future). This level of detail is mandated in the Implementing Decision 2022/39 where it asks not just for actions to remedy shortfalls but also "when these actions are expected to produce an effect".

Bilateral/Multilateral Agreements:

Bi/multilateral agreements should not only be mentioned in MS ARs but should also contain details, describing what was achieved under the bi/multilateral agreement by all relevant MS involved in the agreement. Bi/multilateral agreements should also be correctly referenced in Table 2.1, using the agreement name as outlined in Table 1.3.

The selection of stocks for the WP is done independently and prior to the existence of any bi/multilateral agreements. MSs involved in bilateral or multilateral agreements should select the stocks for sampling following the same procedures used for other stocks. The transfer of sampling responsibility to another MS does not imply that the stock is not selected under the MS workplan, e.g., Latvia transferring to Poland.

MS should also report in their own AR the achievement (obtained through collaboration with the MS who performed the sampling), In table 2.1 and 2.2. numbers achieved should reflect execution of all samples, collected under agreements, and in table 2.5 data should be provided on the national fleet level if any sampling was carried out on MS vessels.

Text Boxes 2.1 and 2.2 in AR:

These two text boxes do not exist in the national WPs. Both are included and relevant for the AR to report deviations if they exist. MSs are requested to fill Text Boxes 2.1 and 2.2 (for every region reported in the AR tables 2.1 and 2.2 respectively) even when they have no deviations to report (e.g., "no deviation exists, no action needed").

Table and Text Box 2.5:

In relation to PETS observations in table 2.5 it is suggested that in cases of out-of-frame sampling schemes and where the sampling scheme is onshore, MSs use "NA"= not applicable" and not "0" specifically for column AF "Percentage of sampled fishing trips where the observer dedicated time to record the bycatch of PETS" and column AG "Number of fishing trips sampled with PETS mitigation device" as zeros in these columns for on shore sampling schemes caused some confusion in the evaluation of MS's ARs.

<u>The use of NA's should be facilitated in the new IT Platform.</u>

Text Box 2.5 is a mandatory component to be included in the DCF AR. It complements the data provided in Table 2.5 and offers additional context and details regarding the achieved sampling and any deviations found in this table. It is also the designated space to explain actions undertaken to prevent deviations related to 2.5. Furthermore, Annex 1.1 should contain supplementary information regarding the quality of sampling frames.

The EWG has observed that one Member State misinterpreted this requirement by omitting Text Box 2.5 and instead reporting relevant information on deviations regarding the planned number of PSU in Annex 1.1. While the provision of the information is appreciated, the EWG aims to avoid such interpretation and ensure that all deviations concerning the execution of sampling frames are included in Text Box 2.5.

Incidental catches of sensitive species (Text box 4.2):

Many MSs referred to deviations from planned sampling of sampling frames as detailed in table 2.5 instead of focusing on achievements or deviations from planned PETS observations.

In most cases, MS are fulfilling this with reduced or null information stating that they are collecting the bycatch information and providing it to the pertinent regional bycatch group following a data call but are not providing any numbers in section 4.2. Some reasons given by MSs are that they are uncomfortable with providing these data or that they still do not have the results.

However, some MS such as France, and Greece, amongst others, provide in this section very informative tables with results by metier/gear, bycatch species and number of sensitive species. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the bycatch situation and provides an initial insight into the effectiveness of data collection for sensitive species. This procedure is in line with Implementing Decision 2022/39 which requires for the Results section of this Text Box to "provide additional information", and specifies "For example, summary information on the number of individuals recorded as bycatch per species, gear group and monitoring method with information about the state of the animals".

Impact of fisheries on marine biological resources (Text Box 4.3).

In Text Box 4.3 MSs are asked to provide information on the implementation of additional studies to address the impact of fisheries on marine habitats. In many reports they refer to analytical activities based on VMS/Logbooks data, which are mandatory under the Control Regulation and are already collected by all MSs. Some MSs, for example, are wrongly referring to their contributions to the ICES VMS and Logbook data call and at groups such as the ICES WGSFD, or in other cases are reporting the analyses of VMS/Logbook data (e.g., some Mediterranean MS).

The EWG emphasizes that only new specific studies conducted by MSs (e.g., pilot studies, projects, etc.) should be included in this section in future WP. The intention is to focus on new research efforts carried out by MSs rather than reiterating existing data collection activities.

Changes in AR with respect to WP:

MSs are requested to respect the guidelines and not edit the part of the AR coming from the accepted WP. To prevent future instances of this misinterpretation, the EWG kindly reminds all Member States of the vital importance of providing and completing all text boxes and tables in the WP and AR templates.

If any errors have been identified in the accepted WP, the MS may refer to them in the 'AR comments' column.

Annex 1.1

Annex 1.1 is evaluated through 4 general questions, which do not really achieve an evaluation of the annexes 1.1. During EWG 23-08, it becomes clear that the current guidelines to evaluate annex 1.1 need improving to achieve a consistent evaluation and the implementation of the new database/data platform where WP and AR text and tables will be available, and screening will be (partly) automated.

A separate document is compiled with concrete examples to support the guidance for evaluation of the AR, but also when a WP (NWP and RWP) is re-submitted. This document should become part of the guidelines and be available on JRC/DCF website and RCG website.

3. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the <u>execution</u> of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?

Within the EWG it was very difficult to evaluate if there are persistent or recurring issues because of the new implementation of the WP. However, one MS keeps referring to administrative problems to explain deviations which is a recurring issue that needs to be clarified and should be avoided in future.

4. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the <u>reporting</u> of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?

Within the EWG it was not possible to evaluate if there are persistent or recurring issues on the reporting because of the new implementation of the WP and the first year of new AR template.

5. Any good examples from MS to highlight?

Greece, Estonia for 2.1,2.2,2.5 and Portugal for 4.2.

6. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

For some metiers within some MSs, fuel prices impacted fleet activities restricting sampling opportunities, especially in the 1st and 2nd quarter of 2022. There were some lingering Covid impacts in early 2022 for some MSs but overall Covid impacts on sampling activities diminished. Brexit impacts are still being felt across some member states particularly in Ireland because of quota reductions diminishing fishing opportunities and consequently sampling possibilities.

Subgroup 3 – Diadromous, recreational and surveys

1. Overall performance of the MS on your sections.

Of the MS in your sections how many were YES, Mostly, Partly, No based on the evaluation criteria below? Please list the country and indicate your evaluation:

Table 8 – Summary of the diadromous and recreational sections assessment of Member States 2022 Annual Reports.

Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA
2.3	11	6	0	0	9
2.4	16	3	0	0	7
2.6	19	3	0	0	4
4.1	13	2	1	0	10
Total	**59**	**14**	**1**	**0**	**30**

2. Overall, what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation? How would you resolve these? Make recommendations.

Diadromous Species (Sections 2.3 & 3.2) and Recreational Fisheries (Section 2.4)

In several cases, MS submitted empty cells or incorrect formatting (empty cells instead of zeros, NA, Y or N) in the reporting tables of sections 2.3 and 2.4. Multiple member states reported administrative issues with contracts or funding, that might have led to deviations in the performance of tasks following the workplan. Lack of cooperation between commercial or recreational fishers (acceptance of observers or sampling on tour boats, limited response to questionnaires and low mobile application usage were also mentioned repeatedly).

In few cases, freshwater recreational fisheries data for diadromous species was reported in 2.4 and not in 2.3, where it is supposed to be reported.

Generally, for future workplan submissions, MS are always encouraged to consider end-user needs and purposefulness in their data collection and sampling strategies, to deliver the best possible data to support the best possible assessment and policy advice. For better conformity (also for future automatic checks), EWG 23-08 recommends MS to strictly follow guidelines, especially regarding the formatting of submissions. For recreational fisheries, MSs are recommended to add on-site surveys and / or telephone questionnaires for improved data quality.

Surveys and stomachs (sections 2.6 & 4.1)

In Table 2.6 two columns (AB and AC) are so-called "support columns". These columns indicate if the achieved values for sampling activities and spatial and temporal coverage filled in by the MS require a comment in column AD (AR Comments) from MS. The function is included to support the MS completing the table as well as the STECF EWG when evaluating the achievements of the MS. Unfortunately, the formula in column AB was at first incorrect; it calculated achieved values for "number days at sea achieved" rather than "number of sampling activities achieved". The formula in column AB should be: =IF(OR(X4/R4<0.9;X4/R4>1.5);"X";""). Fortunately, for most of the MS the formula was corrected in their submitted AR. Nonetheless, during the evaluation the support column had to be checked to determine whether comments had to be added.

In Table 2.6 some MS filled non-numerical values in column R of the WP. As a result, the formula in "support column" AB could not be calculated. In future WP submission column R should contain a numerical value as the guidelines state: "Indicate the number of planned sampling activities".

3. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the execution of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?

Diadromous Species (Sections 2.3 & 3.2)

Unavoidable undersampling was a persistent/recurring issue for diadromous species (especially eels) and was often attributed to climatic effects / weather conditions or low catches /fish numbers

/ poor stocks. This can lead to lower performance rating in sampling execution, although the member states are not to blame.

Multiple MS reported administrative issues that lead to deviations in the execution of the work plans.

Recreational Fisheries (Sections 2.4)

The use of mobile applications for recreational fish data collection (as used in several countries) continue to often fail their purpose as the use and acceptance of this methodology by the anglers/recreational fishers is often limited and leads to low and unrepresentative data output.

Surveys and stomachs (section 2.6 & 4.1)

Technical issues (e.g., vessel breakdown, damaged equipment), COVID-19, bad weather conditions, wind farms, foreign authorities not allowing vessels or the use specific equipment in their territorial waters, administrative issues, strike of crew, procurement were the issues affecting data collection during surveys at sea in 2022. When deviations were considered justified, achievement was scored as "Yes".

In Table 4.1 several MS undersampled stomachs due to lack of individuals in catches. This deviation was considered to be acceptable. Furthermore, deviations in surveys resulted in undersampling for stomachs for several MS.

4. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the <u>reporting</u> of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?

Diadromous Species (Sections 2.3 & 3.2)

There were some recurring issues regarding the reporting format. For example, empty cells instead of zeros or NAs. Information of "Region", "Management Unit" "Body of water" were repeatedly provided differently (mixed, confused, combined – different examples) in some cases. The white part of the AR tables and textboxes were changed compared to the accepted NWPs multiple times in several countries, as was already the case in last AR evaluation.

Recreational Fisheries (Sections 2.4)

<u>France still needs to submit a full-scale pilot study report (time frame 2017-2020) on recreational fisheries pilot study as already requested by EWG AR 2021-09.</u>

Surveys and stomachs (sections 2.6 and 4.1)

Several MS did not submit the collected 2022 survey data to the respective databases.

For Annex 1.1 some MS reported deviations at the end of Annex 1.1, rather than by subheading (i.e., description of the population, sampling design and protocols, data capture, data storage, sample storage, data processing) as indicated in the guidelines. Furthermore, some MS did not include full Annex 1.1, only a section related to deviations.

5. Any good examples from MS to highlight?

Diadromous Species (Sections 2.3 & 3.2)

Assessment models for Salmon and Eel are currently being further developed with a more spatial approach. Electrofishing data will thus be of growing importance in the future. France for instance has a sophisticated and extensive electrofishing sampling and reporting strategy.

Recreational Fisheries (Sections 2.4)

A few countries (e.g., Greece, Germany, Poland) conduct on-site sampling for recreational fisheries, which seems to be very purposeful for the end-user needs.

6. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

Several 2022 events (i.e., COVID-19, windmill farms) affected data collection during surveys at sea in 2022 and consequently for some MS also stomach sampling.

Recreational Fisheries data collection and data collection for diadromous species seemed not to be influenced by the above-mentioned events in 2022, as there were no respective mentions.

Subgroup 4 – Social and Economic

1. Overall performance of the MS on your sections.

Minor issues could be observed for almost all MS ARs. The entire submission and evaluation procedure is intended to be processed through a database. In preparation for implementing that procedure, the evaluation of AR tables was performed in a more pedantic manner, thus requesting from MS to resubmit their AR even in case of minor formal errors. Consequently, almost all MS finally provided a version which was - to the best knowledge of the evaluators - free of formal errors. This means that almost all AR tables are ready to be used as test cases for the database tool under development.

However, during the evaluation several errors were detected in the WP part. A thorough scrutiny of the database procedure though also requires correct WP tables. Therefore, EWG compiled errors in the approved WPs to be forwarded to MS. As the WPs are already approved, MS can be requested to resubmit only on a voluntary basis.

Of the MS in the economics section almost all were evaluated YES or "NA". Only in three cases the judgment was "Mostly" or "Partly":

Table 9 – Summary of the economic sections assessment of Member States 2022 Annual Reports.

Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA
3.1	16	0	0	0	10
5.1	22	0	1	0	3
5.2	22	0	1	0	3
6.1	21	0	0	0	5
7.1	17	1	0	0	8
Annex 1.2	24	0	0	0	2
Total	**122**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**31**

2. Overall, what were the major issues that arose in your evaluation? How would you resolve these? Make recommendations.

Given the fact that there were new templates to be used for the AR, the overall compliance was already quite high for the first submitted versions. In several cases a discrepancy in reference years could be observed, mainly between tables 5.1 and 5.2. This was mainly the case when MSs included two reference years in table 5.2 (year N for capacity variables and N-1 for economic variables). Inconsistencies between these tables were also observed with respect to the segment names as well as to the total number of vessels within segments.

Another issue refers to incorrect AR entries, which are based upon erroneous entries in the WP part. In several cases MSs wrongly entered information in table 3.1 on data which are collected under the Control Regulation. MSs are reminded that table 3.1 'Fishing activity variables data collection strategy' should be filled only if complementary data collection is planned as outlined in the general comments for fishing activity data (table 3.1) in Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39. Control regulation data should not be included. MS should be requested to update

WP table 3.1 without Control Regulation information or erase it when there is no complementary data collection.

The evaluation question whether response and coverage rates were sufficient could not be properly assessed as no criteria are available. However, in several cases the coverage appeared low, e.g., one response for a segment with a population of ten.

The subgroup also observed some issues regarding the evaluation grid and its guidance, which have been reported in the "Comments on evaluation grid and guidelines for EWG 23-08" document.

Finally, the subgroup found it difficult to evaluate Annex 1.2, firstly because there were some late instructions on its structure and secondly because, for first time, the AR asks MSs to label each table of Annex 1.2with sample scheme identifiers. For this year's evaluation, the Subgroup decided not to consider these potential discrepancies regarding the above-mentioned issues.

3. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the <u>execution</u> of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?

Overall, MSs reported a reluctance in responding to surveys which hampers achieving a reasonable coverage for certain variables or segments, resulting in a coverage which seems to be quite low.

4. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the <u>reporting </u>of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?

In general, no issues regarding the reporting on the data collection itself were observed for the economic section, indicating that the templates are, in general, sufficiently clear, and suitable for reporting.

5. Any good examples from MS to highlight?

Almost all MSs provided good Annual Reports.

6. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

No impact on the execution of WP tasks has been reported for the economic sections.

3   TOR 2 EVALUATION OF MEMBER STATES TRANSMISSION OF DATA TO END USERS IN 2022

3.1   Setting the scene

End-users are requested to report data transmission issues that relate to MSs not having provided data, provided data late or provided data with quality issues in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT). In the DTMT end-users should indicate the type of data issues by selecting QUALITY, TIMELINESS, or COVERAGE and whether the issue has a LOW, MEDIUM, or HIGH impact on the work.

The DTMT is accessible at https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/dcf/dtmt.

The EWG experts and the pre-screeners worked on an Excel file, exported from the DTMT, and shared on the EWG 23-08 Teams Meeting Channel. After the meeting JRC and DGMARE entered the STECF EWG comments and assessment on the online DTMT.

The initial assessment of the DT issues was carried out by pre-screeners. During EWG the DT issues were assessed by the relevant subgroups. The assessment was carried out following the DTMT Guidance version 06043023 updated in spring 2023. After the sub-group assessments were finalised, the chairs revised all issues to ensure harmonization and consistency in the assessment of the DT Issues.

Table 10 shows that there was a total of 278 DT issues, from 5 data calls in 2022 reported by 3 end users in the DTMT. A total of 113 DT issues were related to COVERAGE, 155 to QUALITY and 10 to TIMELINESS. The number of DT issues were slightly more than in the previous year (257 DTi

last year). However, end-users are reporting issues in different levels of aggregation, but there are also different variables, levels of detail, time periods and/or issues that data calls focus on during the years. For these reasons, the numbers of DT issues are not comparable between years.

Table 10. DT issues in the DTMT by end-user and issue type (Coverage, Quality, Timeliness).

End User	Data Call	Coverage	Quality	Timeliness	Number of Issues
ICCAT	Task 1 & Task 2	6			6
ICES		9	4	7	20
IOTC		39	19	1	59
STECF EWG	FDI	8	13		21
	Fleet Economics	7	40	2	49
	Med and BS	33	68		101
	Aquaculture	11	11		22
Total		**113**	**155**	**10**	**278**

3.2   Tools and criteria for the assessment

The DTMT has been designed with the purpose of facilitating exchange of information among the end users of data, MSs and the Commission. The objective of this approach is to efficiently monitor and communicate data issues and in the long term improve the flow and quality of data. It is important that issues are properly reported and commented on at all levels in the DTMT, so that a follow-up of data issues can be ensured. To harmonise the process in which data issues are being reported and dealt with by the various involved parties (data end-users, Member States, STECF EWGs on assessment of DT issues and ultimately DG MARE) a guidance document has been developed in stages under the guidance of DGMARE, JRC and STECF at the STECF Plenary.

Following the guidance document, the experts made use of the assessment criteria and the decision tree in the guidance when assessing the DT Issues. The comments by the EWG were harmonized among similar issues and consistent responses were used.

3.3   Results

The evaluation concluded that out of the 278 DT issues that were reported in the DTMT referring to 5 data calls in 2022, 48 issues were justified as SATISFACTORY, and 47 as UNSATISFACTORY. In addition, 181 issues were assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED because the MS and end-user comment were either contradictory or the MSs comment was unclear. Issues that were acknowledged by the MS to be corrected were also assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED where the MS stated to submit the corrected data in the following data call. When the issue was concerning data collection and not data transmission, it was assessed as UNSATISFACTORY. A total of 2 issues were not assessed as the issues raised did not relate to EU-MAP provisions and STECF is not in a position to comment.

Table 11. DT issues in the DTMT by end-user, type (Coverage, Quality, Timeliness), severity (High, Low, Medium) and STECF Assessment (Follow-up needed (F), Satisfactory (S) and Unsatisfactory (U)).

Data Call	COVERAGE									QUALITY									TIMELINESS									Total
	HIGH			LOW			MEDIUM			HIGH			LOW			MEDIUM			HIGH			LOW			MEDIUM			
	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	F	S	U	
FDI				3			5						11			2												21
Fleet economics	5		1				1			2		1	17	2	1	8	5	4			2							49
Med and BS			3	13	11		2	2	2				50	15		2	1											101
Aquaculture	2	1		4	1		2		1	3			4			4												22
ICES			1	3	4	1							1			3						1	5		1			20
ICATT TASK I	2		1																									3
ICAT TASK II			3																									3
IOTC	8		16				9	1	5	2		1				12		4							1			59

For the FDI data call all 21 issues were assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED. In most of the cases the MS acknowledged the data issue and agreed to follow up on the commitments to upload the corrected data in the following data call. In one of the issues the information provided by end-users and MS were contradictory. For the majority of the FDI DT Issues the severity of the issues was LOW, and some were MEDIUM.

The Aquaculture data call had 22 issues. Of these, 2 were assessed as SATISFACTORY as STECF EWG accepted MS response. One was assessed as UNSATISFACTORY as it had to do with failure concerning the collection of data. The rest of the Aquaculture DT issues, totalling 19, were assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED. In most of these cases MS acknowledged the issue and decided to correct and resubmit the data. There were 6 Aquaculture DT issues with a severity of HIGH.

For the Fleet Economics data call there were less issues than last year (49 issues in total in 2022 compared to 60 issues in 2021). Most of the issues, totalling 29, are related to employment data and some of the common issues concerned the difference in employment between economic and social templates. In most cases MS acknowledged the issue and committed to correct and resubmit the data. These cases were assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED. Only in 4 cases MS did not commit for resubmission and it was assessed as UNSATISFACTORY.

Moreover, 9 of the Fleet Economics DT issues were on the Geo indicator and were mostly due to failures concerning data collection and not data transmission. In some other cases MS acknowledged the issue and showed willingness to resolve it.

Furthermore, 7 of the Fleet Economics DT issues refer to Effort and Landings data and all cases were assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED which usually referred to a difference between national totals and fleet segments totals. In most cases MS committed to correct and resubmit the data. It is also noted that differences were accepted when confidentiality is an issue.

For the Fleet Economics 11 of the issues had a severity of HIGH while 20 were LOW and 18 MEDIUM. The Mediterranean and Black Sea data call had in total 101 data issues. 5 of the issues were assessed as UNSATISFACTORY in which data was planned to be collected but was not due to administrative problems. The 29 of the data issues were assessed as SATISFACTORY. A total of 67 of the Med and BS issues was assessed as FOLLOW UP NEEDED, most of which were acknowledged by the EWG MS response as acceptable while expecting the MS to follow-up on its commitments to upload the corrected data during the next data call. For some of these issues the information provided by end-user and MS was contradictory with the need of additional clarification by the end-user. Few of the issues still needed to be checked because MS had not answered the question and further clarification was needed.

Mediterranean and Black Sea data call had 3 HIGH severity, 9 MEDIUM and 89 LOW severity issues. Of the 3 HIGH severity DT Issues all were assessed as UNSATISFACTORY.

3.4   Feedback on the DT Issue guidance

The EWG highlighted the need to have the DT Issues that are assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED to be properly closed off at some point in the process. Currently they are not checked to assess if the follow up has been done. The relevant EWG checks the FOLLOW-UP NEEDED in the following years meeting. However, there is no way to change the status of the DT Issue in the tool. These issues will be resolved with the new assessment cycle of the DT Issues which will be applied in 2024.

EWG suggests that more guidance to be provided to the relevant RFMOs when they are entering the issues in the DTMT. Given that data transmission related to RFMOs is discussed directly between DG MARE and relevant MS during technical meetings, the added value of STECF assessing these DTIs could be reconsidered. For more details, please see section *2.2.3 Results by subgroup, Results Subgroup 1 – General* of this report.

4 TOR 3 EXAMINE AND COMMENT ON THE PROGRESS AND INITIAL PRODUCTS OF THE DCF IT PROJECT TO DEVELOP THE DEDICATED PLATFORM FOR WORK PLANS AND ANNUAL REPORTS.

The EWG 23 08 acknowledges the work continued by the Commission to build a DCF platform for submitting and evaluating the work plans (WP) and annual reports (AR).

During the EWG 22 18, the background document with the description of the functional, non-functional and global requirements for the future DCF platform was thoroughly screened and based on the presentation on the platform, it was clear that the comments given by EWG 22 18 were as much as possible taken into account.

Although the platform is complex, it is flexible enough to manage different needs (drafting/submitting/assessing WP and AR, reporting for EC and other users, etc.) The design demonstrated during the EWG, shows that the platform is able to follow potential changes in EU MAPs.

The access/user policy of the platform needs is specified along with the requirements. For instance, among the User groups, a User Without Roles (UWR) is identified and clear. Also, the platform provides a historical overview of the previous versions of the WP and/or AR and can provide a review of previous WP/AR submissions as well. A WP and AR from a certain year, can be compared with WP or AR from a previous year. Also, in the whole process, it is possible to update/upload only specific sections of the WP or AR.

Instead of relying on communications via e-mails and Teams, the DCF platform allows exchange of information between experts during pre-screening and STECF reviews inside the platform. For each of the national WPs and AR, a single workplan/annual report dashboard is developed, where the notifications are also presented (ex when a WP status is changed).There are timely updates with high visibility and traceability through the mechanism of questions, comments and answers. National Experts will prepare files based on the latest templates as they did in the previous years, however DCF platform will allow collaborative efforts within the team and focus on each expert area of expertise.

 In the submission process data provided is validated by DCF system for

   a. Structural correctness and conformity to the provided templates
   b. Data types and range validations
   c. Internal data consistency and business rules
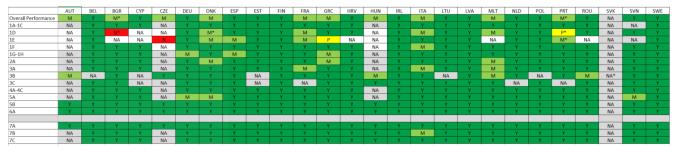   d. Cross-referencing rules

DCF platform will provide to the experts the feedback about detected inconsistencies and errors and it requests data to be updated, before allowing it to be accepted. A mandatory review, full consistently validation and approval from National Correspondent (NC) is required for considering WP ready to be submitted for Pre-Screening. In the review process, NC may provide feedback, ask questions and reassign task to other National Experts. The DCF platform provides a dashboard with the status of the WP/AR, e.g. draft, NCCheck, ECPrescreen, STECFCheck, Approved, ….

Once submitted to pre-screening, each national WP or AR is reviewed and processed in expert discussion groups. The mechanisms described will minimize manual validation efforts and will ensure that the Documents produced for STECF discussion groups have high quality.

5 TOR4 EXAMINE THE UPDATED ITALIAN AR 2021

The EWG 23-08 was asked by the Commission to examine the updated Italian AR 2021, submitted to the Commission in January 2023, against the EWG 22-07 evaluation. Even though the data collection on the eel fisheries had taken place, Italy had failed to properly report in the 2021 AR. Following the General Performance letters of the Italian Annual Report on Data Collections 2021, Italy realised the mistake and requested for the re-evaluation (based on the EWG 22-07 grid) taking into account the updates concerning Table and text box 1E.

The EWG 23-08 reviewed the AR Table 1E 2021 for ITA. The EWG judgement finally was evaluated as YES with no action needed for all the questions under Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water (Table 1E, Text Box 1E) in the assessment grid. In the previous evaluation the assessment due to the missing data, this section was evaluated as a NO. The EWG 23-08 now provides an updated assessment of the Italian AR 2021 in the electronic annex 2 (Electronic Annex 2 EWG 22-07 Amended AR Evaluation grid ITA), which changed the overall assessment of the affected modules from 'Partly' to 'Mostly', see updated 'traffic light table' below.

	AUT	BEL	BGR	CYP	CZE	DEU	DNK	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GRC	HRV	HUN	IRL	ITA	LTU	LVA	MLT	NLD	POL	PRT	ROU	SVK	SVN	SWE
Overall Performance	M	Y	M*	Y	M	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	M	M	Y	M	Y	M	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	M*	Y	NA	Y	Y
1A-1C	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	NA	Y
1D	NA	Y	N*	NA	NA	Y	M*	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	P*	Y	NA	Y	Y
1E	NA	Y	NA	NA	N	Y	M	M	Y	Y	M	P	NA	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	M*	NA	NA	NA	Y
1F	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
1G-1H	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	M	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
2A	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
3A	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
3B	M	NA	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	Y	NA	Y	M	NA*	Y	Y
3C	NA	Y	Y	NA	NA	Y	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y	Y
4A-4C	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
5A	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	M	Y
5B	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
6A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
7A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
7B	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
7C	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y

6 IMPROVEMENTS FOR FUTURE AR & WP

6.1 Feedback for Evaluation grid and WP improvements

Evaluation Grid

During the pre-screening and EWG meeting experts were asked to provide comments on the evaluation grid, the guidance documents and the AR and WP tables (Electronic Annex 3 - Comments on evaluation grid and guidelines for EWG 23-08).

For the evaluation grid there were some minor editorial issues regarding cell formats and the provision of possible answers (i.e., adding NA as on option where only Yes or No were allowed). The majority of these suggestions were adopted, and a revised evaluation grid was provided after the EWG for approval (Electronic Annex 4 – AR Evaluation Grid Template EWG 23-08). Some of the major changes include:

- During the assessment several subgroups questioned the utility of the columns 'Minor/ Major issue (for EWG 23-XX)' and 'If minor, please compile in this column the final comment from pre-screening. Otherwise leave blank'. These columns were legacy columns from the old assessment grid. Given the pre-screening and the MS feedback before and during the EWG it was agreed that these columns were no longer needed and were deleted from the assessment grid.

- The economic subgroup raised a concern about the evaluation question "Are the achieved response and coverage rates sufficient?". Refer to section 2.2.2 'Feedback on the assessment summary' above for more details.

- Revision of questions under Table 2.5 and the addition of questions to clarify sampling schemes, PSU, and deviations. Refer to the comments on evaluation electronic annex for full details.

- In the guidelines for Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 it could be specified that the AR reference year should correspond to each other.

- Under Table 3.1 in the AR assessment guidance SG 4 suggest revision of the AR assessment guidance and skip the comparison between segmentation of 3.1 and 5.1.

- In relation to tables 3.1, 5.2, 6.1. 7.1 and Annex 1.2 'deviations', the evaluation grid requests description of deviations in text boxes. However, deviations concerning data source, data collection scheme, and sample rate should be described in the related field of Annex 1.2.

- Remove reference to yellow cells in Table 5.1 AR assessment guidance.

- For 'Time when data was available' clarify in the guidelines or in the FAQ that MS should indicate the actual date when data are available in column "Time when data was available" while the timing of data uploading could eventually be reported in the column "AR comments".

Other comments were more extensive and focussed specifically on Annex 1.1 and 1.2. These are covered in the next section of the report.

Feedback on AR and WP tables

As this was the first year of assessing the ARs some issues with both the WP and AR templates were highlighted by the EWG. The main issues highlighted include:

- From an operational perspective there needs to be an effective feedback loop from the AR EWG back into the WP reports to address suggestions from this group which may improve MSs work plans and therefore the AR. The whole process needs to be iterative. While some MSs completed their AR correctly in relation to their approved WP, some of the original WPs were not correct or did not follow the guidance. The EWG encourages the MSs to resubmit improved amended WPs following the appropriate procedure.
- AR check for consistency should be based on the comparison of white and grey parts within one table. If any inconsistencies or mistakes are found in the WP, this information should be included in the evaluation comment, thus recommending an amendment of the WP part in the next round, but without any influence on the judgment of the specific AR question.
- MSs are reminded to respect the guidelines and not edit the sections of the AR coming from the accepted WP (white cells).
- MSs are reminded that table 3.1 'Fishing activity variables data collection strategy' should be filled only if complementary data collection is planned as outlined in the general comments for fishing activity data (table 3.1) in Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39. Control regulation data should not be included. MS should be requested to update WP table 3.1 without Control Regulation information or erase it when there is no complementary data collection.
- For the calculated yellow cells, it is recommended that an 'IFERROR' should be added to the cell formulas to avoid #DIV/0! or #VALUE! error reports.
- Additionally, MSs attention is drawn to the guidance for Table 5.2 for the planned sample rate (%) which states that "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)". This remark is not set at a prominent position within the document, and apparently most MSs overlooked it. It appears advisable to bring it to MSs attention so that any new WP version is completed accordingly. However, the statement is unclear both with its reference to

"figures" and the word "can". The basic idea of this specification was to exclude all data from the WP/AR template which are collected exhaustively under a different legislation (in this case the Control Regulation) already. As the statement is part of the legislation, it might be difficult to change it. However, WP guidelines might be updated accordingly, as the legal text is vague and leaves room for interpretation. Moreover, this adjustment in the guidelines would simplify the work on both filling and evaluating the WP/AR.

6.2   Annex 1.1 and 1.2

Annex 1.1 – Improvements future AR

In the EWG 21-17 (evaluation for NWP 2022-2027, doi:10.2760/744849), 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 aquaculture (tables 5.2, 6.1 and 7.1) sections were introduced. These QD replaced the former tables 5A and 5B 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 NWP 2022-2024/2027.

During the EWG 21-17, the contents of these could not be evaluated but were considered a promising format to progress collaboratively towards a consistent way of describing all EU-MAP sampling designs and methods. It was recommended to develop follow-up initiatives in 2022 to allow for a thorough evaluation of the QDs. In the meantime, MS were invited to continue completing and improving these QDs based on either EWG feedbacks or other MS similar QD available on the STECF website. Indeed, the QDs are to be considered as live documents which could be updated at any time. However, a further follow-up during 2022 was not possible.

During EWG 23-08, it became clear that the current template of annex 1.1 needs improvement to achieve a consistent evaluation and the implementation of the AR text and tables database.

Below a number of examples is given to illustrate the issues encountered during the AR2022 evaluation (EWG 23-08) which can be used by MSs as guidance with the submission of the next AR2023:

- 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, either external or the MS in charge of the NWP/AR, when searching for information related to a given sampling scheme.

A good example of table of contents details is as follows:

ANNEX 1.1 - QUALITY REPORT FOR BIOLOGICAL DATA SAMPLING SCHEME 48

SAMPLING SCHEME IDENTIFIER: BTS, DYFS 48

SAMPLING SCHEME IDENTIFIER: SciObsAtSea*Commercial fishing trip*Selected species/stocks 53

A good example of a header type is as follows:

Outermost regions/Azores: SciObsOnShore * Biological parameters specific

MS: PRT
Region: Outermost regions
Sampling scheme identifier: SciObsOnShore * Biological parameters specific
Sampling scheme type: Biological parameters specific
Observation type: Scientific observer on shore (either on-site or off-site)
Time period of validity: 2022 - 2024
Short description (max 100 words):

- 'Sampling scheme type' need to be specific: some MS refer to 'From Table 1 of EU MAP Implementation' instead of Research survey at sea. The latter way of formulation is clearer as well for an external reader as well as the (national) experts working with the AR. The same applies for commercial at sea, commercial at shore, recreational, diadromous, etc.

An example of filling to avoid is as follows:

SPRAS – QUALITY REPORT

MS: LVA
Region: Baltic Sea
Sampling scheme identifier: SPRAS
Sampling scheme type: From Table 1 of EU MAP Implementing Decision
Observation type: SciObsAtSea
Time period of validity: 01.01.2022 – 31.12.2024
The survey will be conducted in May on the rented research or fishing vessel. The primary purpose of the survey is to produce abundance estimates and indices of recruitment for sprat in the Eastern Baltic (Sub-

A good example is as follows:

MS: ESP
Region: Other Regions
Sampling scheme identifier: FCGS
Sampling scheme type: Research Survey at Sea
Observation type: SciObsAtSea
Time period of validity: from 2022 until 2027

- All annexes presented in the WP should be copied to the AR. In some MS, when there is no deviations or comments for a sampling scheme identifier, the annex is not presented in the AR. This could be confusing when a different annex appears in next year's AR. Also, this is contrary to the guidelines.

An example to avoid is as follows:

Sampling scheme identifier: PEL1: no changes

Sampling scheme identifier: PEL2: no changes

Sampling scheme identifier: DEMACT1: no changes

Sampling scheme identifier: DEMACT2: no changes

Sampling scheme identifier: DEMPAS: no changes

Sampling scheme identifier: AUCTION_DEM: no changes

Sampling scheme identifier: AUCTION_SHRIMP: no changes

- In the evaluation grid, the annex 1.1 is linked to the respective textboxes 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6. It would improve the process of the AR evaluation to write in the header of the annex also the reference to the correct textbox.

A good example is as follows:

Table 2.5 - Sampling plan description for biological data

Azores On Shore ICES

MS: PRT	
Region: North-East Atlantic	
Sampling scheme identifier: Azores On Shore ICES	
Sampling scheme type: Commercial fishing trip	
Observation type: Scientific observer on shore (either on-site or off-site)	
Time period of validity: 2022-2024	
Short description (max 100 words):	

Sampling schemes (Work Plan - Table 2.5) aiming at sampling length of species landed at ports by Azorean vessels operating in ICES 10.a.2. All landed species are sampled, including species listed in Table 1 of the EU-MAP Delegated Decision annex. Observation of PETS (Protected, Endangered, and Threatened Species) is also covered within the

- 'Loop reference' needs to be avoided. In the comments there needs to be a brief description of the deviation or change and not only referring to 'see text box 2.1', 'see text box 2.5'.
  When a reference is made to another document (protocol, WP, previous AR, etc.), a link needs to be inserted (and not just written 'see WP').

An example of how not to fill in text is as follows:

> **AR comment: Indicate any deviations or developments. Do not change the text already adopted in the work plan.**
>
> Annex 1.1 updated in amended 2023 – 2027 work plan resubmitted in October 2022. Sampling scheme implemented as designed, please see Tables 2.2 and 2.5 and Text Box 2.2 and 2.5 for details of achievements in 2022.

- MS should detail the deviation from the WP within the relevant text boxes and use the annex 1.1 deviation related to topics of the annex to give more detail (design, sampling implementation, data capture, data storage, sample storage and data processing).

- MS need to provide all annexes in the main document of the AR and not as a separate document, even when the report becomes a very long document. If annexes are provided in separate documents, the experts cannot evaluate the overall compliance with the guidelines.

Example to avoid:

📊	Spain_AR_2022_Tables_20230531.xlsx	Il y a 4 heures
📄	Spain_AR_2022_Text_20230531.docx	31 mai
📄	Spain_AR_2022-Annexes_2.6_Research_survey_Maps_20230531.docx	31 mai
📄	Spain_AR_2022-Annexes_20230531.docx	31 mai

Annex 1.2 - Improvement for future AR

All evaluation grid questions on Annex 1.2 refer to deviations, except for the last question ("*Has the Member State showed improvement in the quality assurance framework versus the WP?*"). However, there is no obligation for MS to improve the quality of their data collection. Moreover, no evaluation criteria are set thus far. Therefore, the EWG did not evaluate Annex 1.2. However, it should be a prerequisite to assess improvements in the quality annex.

The Sampling Scheme identifier in Annex 1.2 was included firstly in the AR, but was not part of the WP. Therefore, the EWG agreed that there was no obligation for the MS to provide this information. The Identifier should be defined. It could be based on the information on the Type of Data collection, Activity Level, variable or others. The EWG suggests that guidelines should be provided on a standardised approach on the coding of the sampling scheme identifier. The identifier is intended to create a link between the quality Annex 1.2 and the information provided in Tables 3.1 and 5.2. To generate that link, an unambiguous coding system is suggested which includes all potential

information needed. It appears advisable to add a column "Identifier" to the WP template, thus allowing to directly link both to the table rows and to the related annex.

Recommendation:

The EWG 23-08 recommends inserting the above as additional guidelines to the existing Guidelines (for AR and WP). All MS should be informed about the updated guidelines and to use them for the submission of the next AR, to update WP and Regional Workplans. The RCG website (Home - Fisheries Regional Coordination Groups (fisheries-rcg.eu) and the JRC DCF website (WP/AR assessment - European Commission (europa.eu) can be two useful platforms to hold the updated information.

7 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The overall evaluation of the AR 2022 scored a higher number of YES compared to past years. Even though the overall evaluation of the execution of the data collection in the WP seems to be of a high standard, there is still room for improvement in MS's data collection. The overarching driving principle of the evaluation should be an iterative process of continual WP and AR improvements by MS. As such, the EWG agreed that the AR assessment needed to focus more on the execution of the WPs and not on reporting issues. In its current format, there is limited time during the EWG meeting to review MS ARs and as a result the EWG relies heavily on the work of the pre – screeners, and reviews those comments only, unless a significant issue is observed during the EWG. This is mainly due to the MS feedback process, which requires the EWG subgroups to complete their reviews of MSs by the second day of the meeting to allow time for feedback to the MSs and time for them to reply during the EWG meeting. This further highlights the significance and importance of a thorough pre – screening evaluation completed by knowledgeable experts. It is hoped that the DCF Platform will provide a mechanism by which all the reporting issues will be checked and fixed by MSs prior to assessments. This will allow future AR EWG to focus on the execution of WPs in relation to data quality and data failures.

Currently the Data Issues assessed as FOLLOW-UP NEEDED are not checked to assess if the follow up has been done. The relevant EWG checks the FOLLOW-UP NEEDED in the following years meeting. However, there is no way to change the status of the DT Issue in the tool. These issues will be resolved with the new assessment cycle of the DT Issues which will be applied in 2024. EWG suggests that more guidance needs to be provided to the relevant RFMOs when they are entering the issues in the DTMT. Since DG MARE and the relevant MS discusses these issues during technical meetings, the added value of STECF assessing these DTIs could be reconsidered.

From an operational perspective there needs to be an effective feedback loop from the AR EWG back into the WP reports to address suggestions from this group which may improve MSs work plans and therefore the AR. The whole process needs to be iterative. While some MS completed their AR correctly in relation to their approved WP, some of the original WPs were not correct or did not follow the approved guidance. The EWG agrees that, where possible, MSs should be asked to resubmit improved WPs on a voluntary basis before the next WP EWG.

The quality documents Annexes 1.1 and 1.2 were not evaluated when the WP's were evaluated and accepted. The EWG had difficulties evaluating the annexes since MS had only reported if there were deviations or not.

8 CONTACT DETAILS OF EWG-23-08 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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9 AGENDA

AGENDA		
Monday, 19 June		
Start	10:00	1. Welcome and house-keeping: introduction of participants (Chairs)
		2. Introduction from JRC on STECF rules and FTP access (JRC)
		3. Introduction of the ToRs (Chairs and Commission)
		4. Subgroup formation
		5. Adoption of agenda and task allocation
Lunch	12:45-14:00	
	14:00-17.30	Subgroup work: TOR 1 AR assessments and TOR 2 DTi
	17.30-18.00	Daily wrap up in plenary
Tuesday, 20 June		
	09:00	Daily check-in
		Subgroup work: TOR 1 AR assessments and TOR 2 DTi
Lunch	12:45-14:00	
	14:00-17.30	Subgroup work: TOR 1 AR assessments and TOR 2 DTi
	17.00-18:00	Daily wrap up in plenary
Wednesday, 21 June		
	09:00	Daily check-in
		Subgroup work: TOR 1 AR assessments and TOR 2 and 3
Lunch	12:45-14:00	
	14:00-17.30	Subgroup work: Assessment of ARs finalised
	16:00	Assessment grid comments and DTi issues discussion
	17.00-18:00	Daily wrap up in plenary
Thursday, 22 June		
	09:00	IT Platform presentation by the developer
Lunch	12:45-14:00	
	14:00-17.30	Plenary session AR evaluation - EU overview agreed in plenary (traffic light)
	17.00-18:00	Daily wrap up in plenary
Friday, 23 June		
	09:00	
		Overall conlusions
Lunch	12:45-14:00	
	14:00	Finalisation of the report
End of meeting	15:00	

10.1   Austria [AUT]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The EWG was not able to evaluate the overall performance of Austria because it is a landlocked country, and all sections are not applicable for the MS. However, the overall performance for the reporting and execution of Austria was assessed as "NA".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
Not applicable.

3. Recreational Fisheries
Not applicable.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
Not applicable.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
Not applicable.

6. Surveys at sea
Not applicable.

7. Fishing activity variable
Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic
Not applicable.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
Not applicable.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
Not applicable.

11. Data transmission issues
No data transmission issues were reported for Austria.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

10.2   Belgium [BEL]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP

The Belgium Annual Report 2022 was very well executed and reported, and their overall performance and compliance was rated "Yes". Compliance for all sections were also evaluated as "Yes", meaning more that 90% of achievement for every section. The only exception was for diadromous data collection section (2.3), where MS performance and

compliance was rated as "Mostly". In relation to data availability, in future submission of AR, MS should consider tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5 as correct references and provide the date when the full set of these data for the reference year was made available.

In Table 1.2 an error occurred in the approved NWP 2022-2024 (column MS) which will remain an issue for AR reporting in 2023 and 2024, especially if the IT platform is implemented. MS is recommended to resubmit an amended NWP for the year 2024. EWG recommends maintaining the National coordination meeting even if some partners are not available.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No issues highlighted.

3. Recreational Fisheries

As highlighted in the EWG 22-18 assessment, several mandatory sampling species such as sharks and other elasmobranchs are still missing in table 2.4.

In future submissions, MS is requested to check table 4 in delegated decision 2021/1167. All mandatory species (such as elasmobranch species, including sharks) that occur in the area, must be added to table 2.4, even if no catches are recorded.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

It was found that Meuse and Scheldt were listed together as one EMU in one line in NWP but separately in AR. NWP and AR (white parts) are supposed to be identical. Numbers of sites were adjusted in AR with different planned numbers of sites as stated in NWP. Explanations were found acceptable by EWG, but there is a recommendation to MS to stay consistent between WP and AR in future submissions.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No issues highlighted.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues highlighted.

7. Fishing activity variable

In future submissions, MS should clearly state if complementary data collection is applied or not. In case of no complementary data collection MS should leave the table empty and provide comment in the table and text box. Also, the table could be deleted from WP and marked with N in table 0.

8. Fleet socio-economic

In the future MS should provide comments corresponding to the achieved coverage.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No issues highlighted.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

MS is encouraged to improve achievements in the future.

11. Data transmission issues

EWG evaluated that 2 out of the 6 Data Transmission issues were satisfactory answered. For 3 of the issues follow up was needed and the MS response was acceptable. STECF awaits the MS to follow-up on its commitments to upload the corrected data during the next data call.

For one issue, related to data for 2020 from the social (MS did not report unpaid labour by gender for 2020), the answer was considered unsatisfactory. The assessment is that this is a failure concerning data collection and not data transmission; and the MS should look for additional ways to improve the data collection.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

No issues highlighted.

10.3   Bulgaria [BGR]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP

The Bulgarian Annual Report 2022 was well executed and reported - overall performance and compliance was rated "Yes". Compliance for all AR sections was "Yes", with a few being highlighted as Not Applicable (2.3, 2.4, 3.1 and 4.3).

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
Not applicable

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

6. Surveys at sea
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

7. Fishing activity variable
Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No major issues have been raised by the EWG. There are a few remarks on the clustering of the Beam trawlers 12-18 m provided by EWG.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

11. Data transmission issues
No data transmission issues have been observed.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
No impacts concerning Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms were reported by MS.

10.4 Cyprus [CYP]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The EWG evaluated the overall Annual Report as 'Yes' as it received >90% of achievements from Work Plan. The overall performance and compliance for Cyprus was good without major issues, except for Section 2.5 evaluated as "Mostly" (achievements from WP between 50% and 90%). Responses by the MS to feedback requests by pre-screeners, and the resubmissions of the Annual Report resolved the issues highlighted during the evaluation process. Test study 1 was carried out in 2023 instead of 2022 as a result of COVID-19 as well as the participation of the MS to coordination meetings was affected by the COVID-19 restrictions.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
The main issue refers to the lack of Text Box 2.5 in WP and, consequently, in AR. This does not allow a proper comprehension and evaluation of potential deviations and related actions to avoid deviations. MS is requested to include all WP elements in its future submissions. EWG encourages the MS to improve data coverage and provide specific information on the sampling in the future.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No major issues. However, EWG encourages the MS to increase the efforts for motivating anglers to participate in the use of the mobile application for collecting data on recreational fisheries.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
Not applicable.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No major issues even though the planned number of stomachs was not achieved.

6. Surveys at sea
No major issues.

7. Fishing activity variable
No major issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic
Minor issues regarding the AR were solved by the MS by resubmitting the Annual Report. No additional issues were reported by the EWG.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
Not applicable.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
Not applicable.

11. Data transmission issues
No issues were assessed as unsatisfactory by the EWG. Five data transmission issues were reported for Cyprus: an issue referred to erroneous records in spatial data for the FDI data call, and four issues referred to the Fleet economic data call. The erroneous records in the spatial data will be corrected by the MS in the next FDI data call. Regarding the other issues, MS acknowledged the issues in two cases, did not acknowledge another case and requested to clarify the remaining issue.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
In text box 1a, the MS stated that COVID-19 affected the performing of the test study, resulting in postponement of the study from 2022 to 2023. This was due to the delay in finalising the planned reconstruction of the research vessel caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, due to Covid-19 pandemic, the MS did not participate in the RCG-LP meeting, and the national coordination meeting was not held.

10.5   Czech Republic [CZE]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The EWG evaluated the overall performance of the Czech Republic since MS started data collection of socio-economic data for aquaculture. MS show improvement in socio-economic data collection for aquaculture and provides comprehensive information on quality assurance in data collection.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
Not applicable.

3. Recreational Fisheries
Not applicable.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
Information regarding the eel population is collected on the basis of an ongoing project" Monitoring of European eel migration in the Czech Republic" which started in 2022.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
Not applicable.

6. Surveys at sea
Not applicable.

7. Fishing activity variable
Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic
Not applicable.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

The main production species in the MS is carp which is cultured in polyculture ponds. Since the share of Czech aquaculture production is 1.88% of the EU aquaculture production MS planned data collection of socio-economic variables. The economic variables according to Table 10 were collected during the reference year. In general, EWG noted an improvement in this part of the annual report and encourages the MS to store data in secure databases according to DCF.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Not applicable.

11. Data transmission issues

No data transmission issues were reported for the Czech Republic.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

No impact on the execution of WP tasks has been reported for the Czech Republic.

10.6   Germany [DEU]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP

The overall reporting and execution of the 2022 NWP of MS had no major issues. All tables and textboxes were completed properly. The overall performance and compliance were classified as "Yes" for all modules.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

The biological modules were well reported. No major issues have been raised by the EWG.

3. Recreational Fisheries

The module has been reported thoroughly. No major issues were identified. The EWG notes that sampling design of catch and release data in multi species off-site survey, which is conducted in a 5-year frame, does not fit the reporting format of the AR. MS comments that samplings for catch and release (multi-species off-site survey) is extrapolated from survey data for certain years if needed by end-users. EWG also notes that all surveys are evaluated by two external experts.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

MS successfully completed all activities planned for 2022. The overall performance and compliance were good without any major issue identified. EWG notes that sampling numbers of eel refer to the entire work plan period (100 ind. Per 3yr period) until the end of 2024 with two planned sampling events. However, assessing achievements in Annual Reports becomes challenging when the years are not reported separately for each year.

To facilitate evaluation in future submissions, MS is advised to provide separate rows for each of the two planned sampling events within their 3-year sampling periods. MS lists comments that established network or "dedicated inquiry" fulfils sampling plan of electrofishing survey of 20 units. Explanations do not fully account for deviations from the workplan. MS should explain how an established network, or "dedicated inquiry" fulfils sampling plan of electrofishing survey of 20 units.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No major issues were detected by EWG.

EWG notes that the MS planned to collect 100 stomachs of *Merlangius merlangus* from surveys in the Baltic Sea but zero were achieved and explanations given for deviations are not clear. The same applies to *Gadus morhua* stomachs planned from other national surveys. Due to bad weather and COVID-19 most planned numbers of stomachs were not achieved.

6. Surveys at sea

The module is well reported. No major issues have been raised by the EWG. EWG however notes that Greenland Groundfish Survey (GGS) was not conducted due to technical issues and COVID-19. Due to COVID-19 and severe weather conditions IBTS_Q1 and BTS caused problems for the execution of surveys. A total of 8 surveys have reduced number of sampling activities due to one, or a combination, of the following reasons: staff Covid-19 infections, storms and ice covers, technical issues with research vessels.
Temporal and spatial coverage, however, was achieved for all surveys, except for GGS.

7. Fishing activity variable
No major issues were detected by EWG.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No major issues were detected by EWG.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No major issues were identified by the EWG.
EWG notes that there are several fields with ""-"" in the AR part. MS should provide numbers in these fields (0 is acceptable). Regarding the reference year could provide 2021 since already provided comments that social data collection is not planned for this year.
Also, the formulas have been replaced by numbers. MS should use the exact formulas and not modify/edit the AR template. MS resolved this issue during the EWG.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
For most variables is achieved. For some variables, the achieved coverage is lower than the planned/updated planned sampling rate by more than 50% because of the low response rate. MS provided sufficient explanations.

11. Data transmission issues
4 DT issues were detected for DEU: 2 for Aquaculture data call and 2 for FDI data call. All issues are classified as low severity.
EWG acknowledges MS responses to the issues as acceptable and is awaiting MS to follow-up on its commitments and upload the corrected data during the next data call.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

Although MS was able to cover most of the stocks, the COVID-19 pandemic still interfered with the sampling programmes of commercial vessels but also on scientific surveys in 2022. EWG notes that GGS survey was not conducted due to technical issues and COVID-19. Due to COVID-19 and severe weather conditions IBTS_Q1 and BTS caused problems for the execution of surveys.

In addition, the Russian-Ukrainian war has an impact on the sampling activities, as some fisheries were restricted due to high fuel prices.

10.7 Denmark [DNK]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The overall performance and compliance for Denmark was classified as "Yes" for all modules. MS responses provided to feedback requests from pre-screening and during the EWG resolved most issues. For two data transmission issues concerning ICES and STECF data calls MS response was assessed as unsatisfactory.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No major issues.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No major issues.

MS is asked in future AR/WP submissions to follow guidelines and add potentially caught elasmobranch species (now added to textbox 2.4) to table 2.4 separately.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
No major issues.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No major issues.

6. Surveys at sea
No major issues.

EWG noted on the underachievement of International Bottom Trawl Survey (IBTS_Q1) due to extremely bad weather and oversampling in Mackerel Egg Survey (NSMEGS) during which additional stations to assist other MS which had technical problems.

7. Fishing activity variable
No major issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No major issues.

EWG comment is related to consistency of reporting with AR guidelines. Minor issue on differences between tables 5.1 and 5.2 related to number of vessels. MS is invited to consult the evaluation table to improve AR reporting in the future. MS showed improvement in the quality assurance framework regarding estimation procedures and error checks.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No major issues.

EWG comments are related to consistency of reporting with AR guidelines. MS is invited to consult the evaluation table to improve AR reporting in the future.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No major issues.

EWG comments are related to consistency of reporting with AR guidelines. MS is invited to consult the evaluation table in order to improve AR reporting in the future.

11. Data transmission issues
Seven data transmission issues were listed for Denmark. Three DT issues were related to the economic variables, one to raw materials data while three were related to biological variables. After the evaluation by the EWG, three issues were assessed as satisfactory, two as unsatisfactory and for two follow up is needed.

Unsatisfactory assessment was given by the EWG for a low severity coverage issue registered by ICES WGNSSK related to failure to collect catch and biological data for all quarters on Norway lobster; and a high severity timeliness issue registered by STECF EWG 22-06 (Fleet economics data call).

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
For biological variables MS reported on the impact of quota decreasing on many of the important stocks and an increased pressure on the sea due to Brexit, windmill farms etc. in relation to difficulties in cooperating with fisherman for observer trips in the North Sea and Eastern Artic.

10.8   Spain [ESP]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
Spain's overall performance and compliance was rated "MOSTLY". Compliance for most of the sections was "Yes", while "Mostly" was rated for achievement of planned number species of samples frames, for some aspects under survey and for diadromous data collection in fresh water. For annex 1.1 & 1.2: MS need to provide all annexes in the main document of the AR and not as a separate document, even when the report becomes a very long document. If annexes are provided in separate documents, the experts cannot evaluate the overall compliance with the guidelines.

MS is requested to pay attention to the topics above with future submissions and further improve these.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No major issues reported.

In future submissions, MS to follow guidelines and recommendations in "EWG action needed" comments of evaluation grid. MS is requested to be more specific on the proposed timeframes in future submissions.

For annex 1.1: MS need to provide all annexes in the main document of the AR and not as a separate document, even when the report becomes a very long document. If annexes are provided in separate documents, the experts cannot evaluate the overall compliance with the guidelines.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

For annex 1.1: MS need to provide all annexes in the main document of the AR and not as a separate document, even when the report becomes a very long document. If annexes are provided in separate documents, the experts cannot evaluate the overall compliance with the guidelines.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
In future submissions, MS to report yellow and silver eels separately in designated rows in table 2.3.

MS to solve contract issues for electrofishing for future submission. MS need to provide all annexes in the main document of the AR and not as a separate document, even when the report becomes a very long document. If annexes are provided in separate documents, the experts cannot evaluate the overall compliance with the guidelines.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No concerns have been raised by the EWG, neither for the impact on marine habitats, neither for Incidental catches of sensitive species.

6. Surveys at sea
MS to ensure that ECOCADIZ_ESP and PLATUXA_ESP (2nd part) are conducted in future. ANNEX 1.1: MS need to provide all annexes in the main document of the AR and not as a separate document, even when the report becomes a very long document. If annexes are provided in separate documents, the experts cannot evaluate the overall compliance with the guidelines.

7. Fishing activity variable
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

11. Data transmission issues
Fleet economics Data Call: only five issues on this data call were identified, all under Quality. Follow up is needed for two DTi and one was assessed as unsatisfactory. The other two were assessed as satisfactory.

Aquaculture data call: one issue on coverage identified where follow up is needed. MS acknowledged this issue, and a resubmission of data is planned.

FDI data call: two issues on quality identified where follow up is needed. MS will upload the corrected data during the next FDI data call.

Med and BS Data Call: 25 issues in total identified, of which 4 about coverage and 21 on quality issues. Two DTi on coverage were assessed satisfactory, the other two are assessed for follow-up. For all DTi issues on quality, follow up is needed.

IOTC data call: Three issues on coverage were identified. One issue is assessed unsatisfactory, and MS needs to clarify further the issue raised. Two issues on coverage are assessed for follow-up, the comment of MS is not clear and need to be further clarified.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
No impacts were mentioned in the AR.

10.9   Estonia [EST]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The Estonian Annual Report 2022 was very well executed and reported, and the MS's overall performance and compliance was rated "Yes". Compliance for all relevant sections was "Yes", with a number of sections being highlighted as Not Applicable (3.1,4.1,4.3,6.1, and 6.7).

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No issues highlighted.
3. Recreational Fisheries
Some issues raised: In Textbox 2.3.it is stated that one F-dependent survey (Lake Võrtsjärv) had deviations. This cannot be found in table 2.3 and should be added in the respective comment section. Also, MS reports tonnes annual catch for recreational catch reports in table 2.3, even though "number of catch reports" should be reported to make achievements assessable.

Estonia is asked to report achieved numbers of units as Number of catch reports/fisherman (see unit indicated in WP) and not total amount of annual catches in Table 2.3

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
One issue highlighted for this section: Estonia planned one survey regarding Anguilla, but in the AR, they report also for five other surveys that were planned for 2023 (implementation year). In future submissions, Estonia is asked to use implementation year for data collected for the referenced annual report (2022 for 2022 data, even if collated in 2023).

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No issues highlighted.

6. Surveys at sea
One action for the future in relation to BITS_Q1, GRAHS survey: MS to correct data submission to ICES Acoustic trawl Surveys Database for BIAS CTD in next NWP submission.

7. Fishing activity variable
No issues highlighted.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No issues highlighted.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No issues highlighted.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No issues highlighted.

11. Data transmission issues
Just two DT issues of medium severity were identified for Estonia. Both issues related to Fleet Economics. EWG 23-08 acknowledged MS responses to both as acceptable.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
No issues highlighted.

10.10   Finland [FIN]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The performance was good. However, some issues have been underlined on PETS. The overall performance of the AR 2022 was assessed as Mostly.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No issues highlighted.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No issues highlighted.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
No issues highlighted.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
Some issues on PETS. The issue was partly solved. MS provided explanations for FYK_ANA but there is still no information on the results of 2022 PETS sampling. MS should provide information even if no PET species was recorded.

6. Surveys at sea
No issues highlighted.

7. Fishing activity variable
No issues highlighted.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No issues highlighted.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No issues highlighted.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No issues highlighted.

11. Data transmission issues
Only two data transmission failures on Fleet Economics Data Call have been reported. Finland replies have been considered "Satisfactory" in one case and "Follow up needed" in the other case.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
No issues highlighted.

10.11   France [FRA]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The overall performance and compliance for France was classified as "YES".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

3. Recreational Fisheries
For the Northeast Atlantic catch (and release) data reported only for three species (Bluefin Tuna (no release data), Polachius and Sea Bass). For the North Sea & Eastern Arctic Catch (and release) data reported only for two species (Polachius and Sea Bass). For the Mediterranean and Black Sea catch data reported only for two species (Bluefin Tuna and Sea Bass), and release data only for one species (Sea Bass). For the North Sea & Eastern Arctic and the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions MS is asked to please consider on-site sampling to overcome shortcomings in catch estimates for listed species in 2.4.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
No major issues have been raised by the EWG. However, it was noted that 16 out of 73 Eel surveys were under sampled (22%).

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

6. Surveys at sea
No major issues have been raised by the EWG. Deviations were caused by bad weather, COVID-19, and the ban of trawling in 6nm of British waters. It is recommended to MS to conclude IT development regarding uploading acoustic data to designated ICES database.

7. Fishing activity variable
No major issues have been raised by the EWG. However, there were some concerns by the EWG in relation to the number of segments. MS provided number of fishing trips instead of number of vessels, which is not in line with the guidelines and did not provide a proper estimation of the coverage rates.

MS is strongly encouraged to modify the survey and find a procedure to estimate the number of vessels in order to be able to provide the number of vessels instead of the number of fishing trips in the next ARs.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No major issues have been raised by the EWG.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
NA.

11. Data transmission issues
There were 44 DT issues relating to France: two related to ICCAT, five related to ICES, 20 related to IOTC, and 17 related to different STECF EWGs (Med & Black Sea, fleet economics, FDI, aquaculture). The EWG assessment were as follows:
- Satisfactory: 9
- Unsatisfactory: 4
- Follow up needed: 30.
- Not assessed: 1

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
The COVID-19 pandemic had impact on surveys.

10.12 Greece [GRC]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The overall reporting and execution for Greece was good, with very minor formatting issues, and was rated "Yes". The formatting issues were resolved in the MS responses to the EWG feedback requests.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

6. Surveys at sea
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

7. Fishing activity variable
Some concerns have been raised by the EWG and MS is encouraged to improve coverage in the future.

It seems that the low response rate, especially for large scale fisheries, is a concern for the MS. They will try to overcome low response rates in the coming years by better explaining the purpose of the survey to the fishermen.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

11. Data transmission issues
No issues were assessed as unsatisfactory by the EWG.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
No references to special impacts of 2022.

10.13   Croatia [HRV]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The overall performance for AR 2022 was assessed to compliance class "YES".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No major issues were detected. A total of 14 out of 38 sampling frames planned, were under sampled.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No major issues were detected.

In Table 2.5 there are empty cells or NAs in several columns. MS should provide a number instead of NA or empty cells.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
No major issues were detected.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No major issues were detected.

For 4 out of 31 sampling frames, the observers did not dedicate time to record bycatch of PETS although it was planned.

6. Surveys at sea
No major issues were detected.

7. Fishing activity variable
No major issues were detected.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No major issues were detected.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No major issues were detected.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No major issues were detected.

11. Data transmission issues
One of the total two issues were observed for FDI data call ("TBB_GSA_17 Effort data are missing for period 2013-2021), assessed as 'Follow-up-needed'. Other issue (Med&BS data call) was assessed as 'Satisfactory'. None of the issues was marked as 'Unsatisfactory'.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
Reduced on-board samplings for LHP-LLD_BFT and LHP-LLD_SWO Catches (All fractions) because of inflation and rising fuel cost.

10.14 Hungary [HUN]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The overall performance for AR 2022 was assessed to compliance class "YES".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
Not applicable.

3. Recreational Fisheries
Not applicable.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
Not applicable.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
Not applicable.

6. Surveys at sea
Not applicable.

7. Fishing activity variable
Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic
Not applicable.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
MS to amend the information provided. MS should indicate 100% response rate for "Number of enterprises by size category" as the national database provides comprehensive information on these variables.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
MS to amend the information provided. MS should indicate 100% response rate for "Number of enterprises" and "Number of enterprises by size category" as the national database provides comprehensive information on these variables.

11. Data transmission issues
No data transmission issues were reported for Hungary.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

No impact on the execution of WP tasks has been reported for Hungary.

10.15 Ireland [IRL]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The EWG evaluated the overall Annual Report as "Yes" with >90% of achievements from Work Plan. The overall performance and compliance for Ireland was good without major issues. Just one module was classified as "Mostly". Follow-up is needed for two data transmission issues concerning social data for Aquaculture and employment for Fleets economics.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
Some issues have been raised regarding the execution. The number of samples of fisheries-dependent (F)/stock related variables and catch quantity by area/life stage not achieved - 60 out of 87 surveys were not sampled or under sampled, since no fishing in operation or low catches. EWG recommended in future submissions for surveys, MS to provide achieved number only in F and I. Sampling of recreational fisheries to be included in fisheries independent survey (I). The planned number of samples of fisheries-independent variables (FI) not achieved - 15 out of 89 surveys were not sampled or under sampled (17%). Moreover 12 surveys had oversampling as "that was caught by fishers".

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No major issues. MS has successfully implemented routine data collection on VME Indicator species through surveys, but no specific projects aimed at targeting high risk areas and metiers have been developed.

6. Surveys at sea
The execution of six surveys and achieving of planned number of sampling activities was affected by different reasons as COVID-19, weather conditions, ship unavailability, gear failure or accessibility of sampling sites.

7. Fishing activity variable
No major issues. MS indicates that some variables were not submitted during the data call as the collected data were regarded insufficient as basis for estimation.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No major issues. For some segments with low relevance the rates were lower (56%).

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No major issues. The planned sampling rate has been achieved in most of the cases. Explanation and measures for future provided in case of lower rates.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No data collection.

11. Data transmission issues

Concerning data transmissions by MS in 2022, end-users reported two issues related to coverage and data quality. Follow-up is needed on one low severity issue regarding social data under Aquaculture Data Call and for one issue with high severity regarding employment under Fleets economics Data Call.

12. The impact of Covid-19 on the deviations or issues
MS reports issues in data collection activities due to COVID-19 for surveys at sea.

10.16 ITALY (ITA)

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP

The EWG evaluated the overall Annual Report as 'Mostly' meaning ITA's AR is 50%-90% of achievements from Work Plan. Compliance for most of the modules was "Yes", while "Mostly" was rated for modules 2.2, 2.3 and 2.6. Modules 2.5 and 4.1 were rated as "Partly".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Significant under-sampling was reported in Table 2.2 and was not adequately explained by MS. The MS should provide further explanation for the under-sampling results and clarify that sampling will be conducted in 2023 as planned. In addition, MS should ensure that sampling will be conducted throughout the year under a new agreement signed by the respective parties. The issues recorded in Table 2.5 remain after the feedback is received. MS is asked to complete and resubmit this table according to the guidelines. In future submissions, MS must complete Annex 1.1 for Section 2.5 according to the guidelines. Some inconsistencies were noted in the completion of the relevant tables and MS must follow the guidelines to complete them correctly.

3. Recreational Fisheries

The Member State performed well on this module and no significant issues were reported. Some inconsistencies were noted in filling out the appropriate table. MS needs to follow the guidelines to fill it out correctly.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Significant underachievement has been recorded for this module due to the discontinuity of the contract caused by administrative and funding problems. MS should ensure that sampling is carried out under a new agreement signed by the respective parties in accordance with the work plan. MS is requested to report EMUs and planned/achieved numbers separately in future reports and to follow the work plan, otherwise performance cannot be properly assessed per EMU.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Significant under-sampling was reported in Table 4.1 due to national administrative issues. MS is asked to make every effort to avoid administrative issues in the future.

6. Surveys at sea

The conduct of scientific surveys has been severely impacted by administrative problems, resulting in the MEDITS survey not being conducted at all, and other surveys being severely hampered as well. MS is urged to avoid administrative and funding problems in the future, as the non-conduct or inadequate conduct of surveys will have a very negative impact on stock assessment processes.

7. Fishing activity variable

The Member State has performed well on this module, while minor issues have been resolved during this EWG meeting.

8. Fleet socio-economic

The Member State has performed well on this module and no significant issues have been reported.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

The Member State has performed well, and no significant issue has been reported. Some inconsistencies were noted in the completion of the relevant table and MS must follow the guidelines to complete them correctly.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

The Member State has performed well, and no issue has been reported.

11. Data transmission issues

In total, 67 data transmission issues were reported for MS including the following:
- Aquaculture Data Call: two issues were identified, one with medium and other with high severity. Both of them were assessed as follow up needed.
- Med and BS Data Call: 48 issues were identified ranged from low to medium severity. Follow up needed on 28 issues, 15 were assessed as satisfactory, and five issues were assessed as unsatisfactory.
- FDI Data Call: four issues were identified, three of them have low and one with medium severity. All of them were assessed as follow up needed.
- IOTC: 11 issues were identified with high severity. Four issues were assessed as follow up needed, and seven as unsatisfactory.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

CODIV -19 pandemic has some negative impact on data collection for MS. The SOLEMON survey was the most affected.

10.17   Lithuania [LTH]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The Lithuanian Annual Report 2022 was well executed and reported. Overall performance and compliance were rated "Yes".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No major issues were identified only a suggestion for the future reporting. MS is requested to have explanations to deviations (if any) in the text box 2.5 to be only related to the sampling scheme and not related to species/stocks.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No major issues were identified.
Concerning reporting of the recreational fisheries, MS is requested to stick with exact copy of the white part of AR as in the accepted NWP in future submissions. Amendments or changes need to be highlighted in grey part of AR. Concerning the execution, a deviation was pointed out for the sea trout sampling and MS is requested to take appropriate action to overcome sampling difficulties in the future and to describe this in the future AR.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
No major issues were identified. However, lower sampling of salmon and sea trout was achieved than planned for diadromous species collection.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No major issues were identified only a request to correct the next WP submission. The self-sampling schemes were not intended to have dedicated time to sample PETS as they are not carried out by observers. MS is requested to adjust the next WP accordingly.

6. Surveys at sea
No major issues were identified.
The Sprat Acoustic Survey (SPRAS) that was planned for 2022 could not be conducted due to technical issues. The achieved number of days at sea for the Survey of fishes in the Lithuanian coastal zone of the Baltic Sea (LT-CFS) were lower than the planned number due to a mistake in the total number of days at sea planned in the WP. MS is requested to adjust the planned total number of days at sea in the next WP submission. It was also recommended that MS checks with ICES if the LTU 2022 CTD data were uploaded in ocean.ices.dk as those data could not be extracted from the webpage.

7. Fishing activity variable
No major issues were identified.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No major issues were identified.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
Not applicable.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No major issues were identified.

11. Data transmission issues

There were two DT issues identified (one of low severity and one of medium severity) related to Fleet economics. They were both assessed as satisfactory by the EWG.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
COVID-19 restrictions did not allow the deployment observers on board of vessels traveling to foreign countries in the beginning of 2022.

10.18   Latvia [LTV]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The overall performance for Latvia is "Yes". Latvia performed well in most cases, however there are some issues that need to be improved mainly regards Sampling plan description for biological data (Table 2.5, Text Box 2.5) and Stomach sampling and analysis (Table 4.1). The remaining of the AR only has a few minor issues regarding the Surveys at Sea and Recreational Fisheries. Finally, regarding the Data Transmission issues, there were three issues, one marked as Satisfactory and the other two need follow-up.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
Regarding sampling plan description for biological data, actions not considered appropriate the MS is encouraged to provide further clarifications in this section, taking the correct measures to minimize deviations. For sections 2.1 and 2.2, very minor issues detected, flagged for future submissions.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No issues detected.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
No issues detected.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
There are issues regarding the execution of stomach sampling and analysis. Specifically, low sample achieved for some species and no Q4 data collection. In both cases, explanations were provided.

6. Surveys at sea
There are issues regarding the execution of some surveys, mainly justified due to the bad weather and vessel procurement/availability. Similar issues occurred last year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

7. Fishing activity variable
Not applicable, MS does not collect complementary data.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No issues detected.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No issues detected.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No issues detected.

11. Data transmission issues

Three data transmission issues were flagged. Two of them regard fleet economics data call, and the MS committed to upload the missing data to the next data call. The last one, that do not belong to any specific data call, was assessed as SATISFACTORY by the EWG.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

Latvia's Data Collection Program only impacted by the Covid–19 pandemic in sampling of herring and sprat (sampling for biological variables).

10.19   Malta [MLT]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP

The EWG evaluated the overall Annual Report as 'Yes' accounting for >90% of achievements from Work Plan.

In the new WP (2025-2027) MS should update the number of PSUs to correct the divergence between PSUs in implementation year and reference period.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Samples were collected, but wrongly stored; samples collected in 2022 from MEDITS were frozen as a whole fish sample. Later it was discovered that the samples were rendered inadequate for proper stomach content analysis; thus, their stomachs could not be analysed. In the future, MS should avoid sample loss.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

6. Surveys at sea

No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

7. Fishing activity variable

No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

8. Fleet socio-economic

For the future AR submission, reference year(s) should correspond between Table 5.1 and Table 5.2 for the economic and capacity variables.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

11. Data transmission issues

Failure concerning data for ICCAT. The severity of the issue reported by the end-user is high and the requested data was not transmitted (fleet / species / gear: MLT / SWO /LL). The EWG assessment was UNSUTYSFACTORY.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

10.20 The Netherlands [NDL]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
The overall performance and compliance for Netherland was classified as "YES".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

3. Recreational Fisheries
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

6. Surveys at sea
No major issues have been raised by the EWG.
There were deviations in the number of sampling activities for six surveys due to one or a combination, of the following reasons: severe weather conditions, number of transects had to be shortened due to wind farms (Moray Firth), zigzag transects have been partly transformed to east-west transects, in order to better align with the rest of the programme, internationally agreed (WGIPS 2022).

7. Fishing activity variable
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No issues have been raised by the EWG.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
NA

11. Data transmission issues
There were two DT issues relating to the Netherlands: one related to ICES and one related to the reporting of economic data for fleet.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
NA

10.21 Poland [POL]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP
Overall, reporting and execution of the 2022 NWP was assessed as a 'Yes'. No substantial concerns have been raised by the EWG.
EWG highlighted some issues in relation to 1) sampling plan for the biological data and as far as 2) the coverage rate for the socio-economic data collection. Details are reported below in the specific sections.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks
Overall, the biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks was assessed as Mostly executed. Some concerns have been raised by the EWG, in relation to deviations from the sampling scheme.

Regarding the numbers of sampled units/vessels/trips, nine of the 16 sampling frames with PSUs planned the achievement was under 90%. In four of those nine cases, no sampling at all could be performed (0 PSU achieved). EWG deemed explanations provided by MS acceptable, except for (BAL VL1824 and BAL VL2440) where no sampling (0 PSU) occurred and significant activity is reported (54 vessels and 43 vessels, with 2,514 trips and 2,350 trips respectively, according to Column AD "Number of trips in the sampling frame"). MS explained that deviations were due to a changed reporting system which now separated on shore and on-sea sampling as well as to high level of non-response, inactive vessels, lack of fishing quota and reluctance to cooperate. However, EWG recommends MS to ensure that in future AR these reporting issues will be solved.

3. Recreational Fisheries
Overall, the biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks was positively executed (final evaluation=YES) by the EWG as no substantial concerns have been raised.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
Overall, anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water was positively executed (final evaluation=YES) by the EWG as no substantial concerns have been raised.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
Overall, the "Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems" was assessed positively (final evaluation=YES) by the EWG as no substantial concerns have been raised.

6. Surveys at sea
Overall, the socio-economic data collection for the fleet has been positively assessed (final evaluation=YES) by the EWG no substantial concerns have been raised.

7. Fishing activity variable
NA (no complementary data collection in place).

8. Fleet socio-economic
Overall, the socio-economic data collection for the fleet has been positively assessed (final evaluation=YES) by the EWG as only small concerns have been raised. EWG highlighted that in several cases the coverage rate is much lower than the planned sampling rates, but no explanation was provided. The issue was solved by the MS providing comments in the tables of the resubmitted AR explaining that the CV test proves a sufficient quality of the estimates. However, EWG recommends MS to improve coverage in the future.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Overall, the socio-economic data collection for aquaculture has been positively assessed (final evaluation=YES) as no substantial concerns have been raised by the EWG.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Overall, the socio-economic data collection for the fish processing industry has been positively assessed (final evaluation=YES) as no substantial concerns have been raised by the EWG.

11. Data transmission issues

There are five DT issues, of which:
- four are related to the Fleet economics 22-06 data call, three relating to quality and one to coverage issues.
- one related to ICES WGNSSK, concerning timeliness.

Only the ICES WGNSSK data issue is a recurrent one and only one issue (missing data for employment in the fleet economics data call) was evaluated as being of high severity.

All five issues are evaluated by the EWG as needing a follow-up:
- for three of these the reply provided by the MS was unclear.
- for the remaining two issues a new release under the next data call is expected.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

No issues.

10.22   Portugal [PRT]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP

Overall, the Portugal report was very good, all tables were completed and detailed text was provided in the relevant text boxes to explain any deviations. A number of issues were raised but these were considered to be minor issues.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

The biological modules were well executed by Portugal although in some regions the sampling intensity was lower than planned. Where deviations occurred, very detailed explanations were provided in both tables and text boxes. However, Portugal is reminded in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 to provide the explanations for the deviations and the actions to avoid deviations by species and not by Sampling Scheme Identifier (SSI) because this makes it difficult to understand for each species the reason for non-sampling.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issue raised.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Lower sampling intensity was identified for diadromous data collection. MS is requested to take appropriate action to ensure the realisation of all the diadromous surveys in future.

Also, MS is invited in future submission MS to change "Units" and instead of "individuals" to use number of "fyke nets" or deployment in order to have a number in "Planned numbers of units".

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No major issues raised. However, for stomach sampling some under sampling was detected related to the appearance and limitations in implementation of sampling protocol. So, MS should take care of these issues.

6. Surveys at sea

One of the seven surveys (ARQDAÇO survey) was not executed due to a crew strike during the survey. As this is a recurrent issue (in 2021 half of the hauls were not realised for the same reason) MS is requested to take appropriate action to ensure the realisation of this survey in future.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issue since no complementary data collection for fishing activity implemented by the MS.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No issue raised.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No major issue raised, for some segments low coverage was achieved.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No activity planned.

11. Data transmission issues

A total of 32 data transmission issues were identified for Portugal with seven issues highlighted as recurring issues. A total of 11 of these were classified as being of high severity, 15 of medium and six of low severity. Overall, 21 issues were considered not to have been resolved and were highlighted as being unsatisfactory, one considered satisfactory and for 10 follow up is needed.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

No impact from Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms was reported.

10.23 Romania [ROU]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP

The MS performance was good. However, some issues were identified with inconsistencies between tables 5.1 and 5.2. There was no data transmission issue considered as unsatisfactory.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Length exists as biological variable in Table 2.2. The error comes from the accepted WP; therefore, MS is invited to delete the rows including variable "Length" in the next WP submission.

3. Recreational Fisheries

NA.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

NA.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

NA.

6. Surveys at sea

MS to present maps of the achieved research survey sampling stations in an annex as in point 6 of AR section for Table 2.6 in CID 2022/39 in future AR.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issue

8. Fleet socio-economic

MS should assign the vessels according to the delegated decision EU MAP Delegated Decision and not place the same vessel/s in the same segment. Moreover, the total population should be consistent between both tables. Even though MS provided numbers for all segments it is not clear which population (from Table 5.1 or Table 5.2) is the correct one. MS should revise table 5.1 and table 5.2 and resubmit with consistent total population in both tables.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No issue.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issue.

11. Data transmission issues

Ten data transmission issues were identified by the EWG. None of these were for the aquaculture sector (economic and social data); one for FDI and one for "other" (data by catch). Only the FDI DTi is considered as "Unsatisfactory" as MS does not clarify the issue raised.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

No issue.

10.24 Slovakia [SVK]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP

The EWG was not able to evaluate the overall performance of Slovakia because it is a landlocked country, and all sections are not applicable for the MS. However, the overall performance for the reporting and execution of Slovakia was assessed as "NA".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Not applicable.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Not applicable.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Not applicable.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Not applicable.

6. Surveys at sea

Not applicable.

7. Fishing activity variable

Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Not applicable.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Not applicable.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Not applicable.

11. Data transmission issues

No data transmission issues were reported for Slovakia.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

No particular impact on the execution of WP tasks has been reported for Slovakia.

10.25 Slovenia [SVN]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP

The overall performance and compliance for Slovenia was classified as "YES". MS has changed in many cases the white part (WP) of the AR. In future submissions, MS to follow guidelines (see AR guidance for 2.4), white part should be the same as WP, new information should be added in grey part of the AR. Moreover, in future submissions, MS to submit Annex 1.1. for section 2.4.

Furthermore, there are issues that were solved with resubmission during the EWG and others that must be solved in future submissions (see relevant column in "EWG action needed").

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No stock was selected for sampling by the MS in the accepted WP due to low landings (threshold <10%). There is no explanation on addition of the new species/stocks. The issue was not solved during EWG meeting. MS is kindly requested to add relevant explanation in AR in future submissions.

No sampling plan description for biological data (Table 2.5, Text Box 2.5) was planned in the accepted WP. However, no relevant explanation for added scheme was provided. Issue was not solved during the EWG meeting. MS to include the information in Table 2.5 in future submissions.

3. Recreational Fisheries

In the first submission no grey part was filled since there was no execution following the NWP Textbox 2.4 and Table 2.4.

MS resubmitted Table 2.4 and Textbox 2.4 during the EWG. More information was added in the white part (WP) of Textbox 2.4 and in Table 2.4 grey part. However, all elasmobranchs were deleted from the white part of AR. Moreover, MS provided annual catch quantities in kilograms per species instead of Yes/No. In future submissions, MS is to follow guidelines (see AR guidance for 2.4), white part should be the same as WP, new information should be added in grey part of the AR and all species of Table 4 should all listed in Table 2.4 even if no catches exist (should be explained in the comments).

In Annex 1.1 there is not a specific textbox for Recreational fishery. In future submissions, MS to submit Annex 1.1. for section 2.4.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Diadromous species are protected or not present in the MS, so no sampling is planned. Achieved numbers should thus be NA instead of 0. Moreover, grey part is missing in AR and WP white part in text box 2.3 was changed. The chapter "methods selected to collect data" was deleted (probably because no data are selected since there is no eel), thus in future submissions, MS to follow guidelines. White part of AR needs to be identical to NWP, grey part for annual report.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No stomach sampling planned in 2022. Regarding fisheries impact on marine habitats (Text Box 4.3) the information provided is consistent, but very scarce. MS is encouraged to provide some more information in future ARs.

6. Surveys at sea

For OTB_VOL the number of sampling activities have not been achieved due to "Lack of scientific observers and refusal to take scientific observers on board the fishing vessel." MS to ensure sufficient scientific observers in future and keep open dialogue with fishing vessels.

Regarding Annex 1.1 for section 2.6 Textboxes of WP (white part) have been updated. While it is positive that MS has evaluated Annex 1.1 MS is asked in future submission to present the textboxes of the WP (white part) as in the accepted in the NWP and report any deviations in the AR section (grey part).

7. Fishing activity variable

Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Minor issues identified were solved during EWG 23 08 resubmission.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Minor issues identified were solved during EWG 23 08 resubmission.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Minor issues identified were solved during EWG 23 08 resubmission.

11. Data transmission issues

Three recurring data transmission issues were identified for Slovenia. Two of these were classified as low and one as medium. For all of them follow up is need by the MS.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?

No issues identified.

10.26 Sweden [SWE]

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2022 WP

The overall performance and compliance for Sweden was classified as "Mostly". MS responses provided feedback requests from pre-screening and the EWG resolved most of the outstanding

issues which was appreciated. However, some issues are still unsolved. All details are available on MS evaluation grids.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major concerns have been raised by the EWG. Some issues were solved during the EWG meeting. However, in future MS should submit text boxes for each region separately. EWG noticed that for some cases there was reduction in execution rates.

3. Recreational Fisheries
A concern was raised by the EWG regarding sampling schemes for freshwater recreational fish sampling for salmon and sea trout which are entirely missing in 2.3 and 2.4. Some editing issues and clear explanation on deviations to be considered and added by MS for future submission.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water
A concern was raised by the EWG regarding sampling schemes for freshwater recreational fish sampling for salmon and sea trout which are entirely missing in 2.3 and 2.4. sections. Also, EWG noticed the low rate of sampled surveys.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems
No major concerns were raised by the EWG. MS shall adjust the number of samples and include IBTS_Q3 in the next WP submission. For the next AR submission MS should include information on the number of individuals/species/gear type etc. in text box 4.2 as per required guidelines. Some issues were solved during the EWG.

6. Surveys at sea
No major concerns have been raised by the EWG.

7. Fishing activity variable
No major concerns have been raised by the EWG. Issue solved by resubmission.

8. Fleet socio-economic
No major concerns have been raised by the EWG. Some issues were solved during the EWG. However, EWG encourages the MS to improve coverage in the future.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture
No major concerns have been raised by the EWG. However, EWG encourages the MS to improve coverage in the future.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry
No major concerns have been raised by the EWG.

11. Data transmission issues
Four records of data issues in DTMT platform were reported for Sweden. Issues reported with low or medium severities, where one of them is recurrent. All issues need to follow-up.

12. Any impacts of 2022 events e.g., Covid, war in Ukraine, fuel prices (inflation), ORE, windmill farms?
No deviations are explained by instabilities caused by 2022 events.

11 LIST OF ELECTRONIC ANNEXES

Electronic annexes are published on the meeting's web site on:
https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/stecf/ewg2308

List of electronic annexes documents:

EWG 23-08 - Electronic Annex 1 EWG 23-08 - Evaluation of ARs per MS
EWG 23-08 - Electronic Annex 2 STECF 22-07 Amended AR Evaluation Grid ITA
EWG 23-08 - Electronic Annex 3 - Comments on evaluation grid and guidelines for EWG 23-08
EWG 23-08 - Electronic Annex 4 - AR Evaluation Grid template EWG 23-08

12 LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background documents are published on the meeting's web site on:
https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/stecf/2308

List of background documents:

EWG-23-08 – Doc 1 - Declarations of invited and JRC experts (see also section 8 of this report – List of participants)

STECF

The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) has been established by the European Commission. The STECF is being consulted at regular intervals on matters pertaining to the conservation and management of living aquatic resources, including biological, economic, environmental, social, and technical considerations.

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