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Reports of the Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)
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Evaluation of DCF 2015 Annual Reports & Data Transmission to end users in 2015 Quality assurance procedures
(STECF–16–12)

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This report was reviewed by the STECF during its 52nd plenary meeting

held from 4 to 8 July 2016 in Brussels, Belgium

Joint Research Centre

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: The Expert Working Group meeting of the STECF EWG 16-12 was held from 20 –24 June 2016 in Lisbon to evaluate MS Annual Reports for 2015, the MS's data transmission to the end users over 2015 and to give input on the Quality Assurance Framework for the upcoming DCF. At the end 23 ARs were evaluated, the data transmissions issues from five end-users were assessed and general observations about the Quality Assurance Framework agreed. The EWG report was reviewed by the 52nd STECF Plenary.

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SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR FISHERIES (STECF)

Evaluation of DCF 2015 Annual Reports & Data Transmission to end users in 2015 Quality assurance procedures (STECF-16-12)

THIS REPORT WAS REVIEWED DURING THE PLENARY MEETING HELD IN Brussels, Belgium, 04-08 JULY 2016

Request to the STECF

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

Background

The STECF Expert Working Group (STECF EWG 16-08) met in Lisbon, Portugal, from the 20th to the 24th of June 2016 to assess Annual Reports (AR) for 2015 of the 23 non landlocked Member States, submitted as part of the Data Collection Framework.

Under the process of evaluation and approval of the outcomes of the National Programmes (NP), the European Commission is consulting STECF about the execution of the NP approved by the Commission and about the quality of the data collected by the Member States in accordance with articles 7.1 and 7.2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008.

In addition, the EWG 16-08 was requested to evaluate Member States (MS)' transmission of DCF data in 2015 based on information from end users and Member States' clarifications & explanations in response to the end user feedback.

Ten independent experts pre-screened the MS annual reports (AR) and the data compliance feedback from the end users before the EWG meeting. The pre-screeners were also requested to give feedback on the current exercise and how it has worked and also comments on how to improve in the future.

As an output of the evaluation of ARs and data transmission (DT) issues, the EWG was requested to produce for every MS: a) an evaluation of the AR in a table template provided by the Commission, which already included the pre-screening comments; b) an evaluation of the DT issues, commented by MS and pre-screeners, including an STECF judgment on whether the MS comments are acceptable. The evaluation process at the EWG was set up to focus on topics where the pre-screeners have raised a problem or where the pre-screeners' final assessment of a particular point has revealed to be contentious.

STECF observations

STECF acknowledges that despite the very tight deadline between the EWG 16-08 and the STECF plenary, the EWG report was finalized in time to be presented and reviewed.

STECF acknowledges that the EWG was able to thoroughly address the terms of reference with regard to Annual Reports (AR) and Data Transmission (DT) evaluation and analysis, resulting in comprehensive and detailed lists of follow-up actions to be addressed by MS. STECF notes that the AR and DT pre-screening, as in previous years, has proven to be an important and very helpful preparation for the evaluation process.

STECF notes that overall, the level of achievement of the 2015 Annual Reports shows a significant improvement compared with previous years.

STECF notes that the evaluation template used for the assessment was an improved version compared to the one used in previous assessments. This template was aligned to the updated version of guidelines for AR submission (version January 2016) and it took into account the previous suggestions made by STECF.

However, STECF notes that some questions in modules III.C/III.E and module VI were not considered during the assessment because of a lack of alignment between the evaluation template and the actual activity described in the Annual Reports of some MS. This lack of alignment was due to a shift in the methodological approach for the collection of biological data adopted by some MS (in particular the move to "statistically sound sampling schemes") that is not described in the MS National Programme. MS did not amend their National Programmes to describe the new methodological approaches and their Annual Reports did not always provide enough information on these changes to fully evaluate if the achievements ensure sufficient coverage of fisheries and stock sampling. STECF notes that this situation prevents experts to judge whether the Annual Report is in line with the National Programme. This issue will probably affect also next year's evaluation of Annual Reports.

STECF considers that the overall AR evaluation process has improved over the past years through the use of pre-screeners and the progressive evolution of the evaluation sheets. However, the process still requires various manual cross-checks between tables and checks on formatting and editorial issues. The EWG again (cf. EWG 14-17 and 15-10) identified the need for a database and online reporting tool for effective and efficient compilation and monitoring of ARs. This is further discussed in ToR 6.14

Regarding the assessment of data transmission issues, STECF notes that the way how end-users report data issues and define the level of severity in the DT assessment still need to be fine-tuned by the Commission. The EWG suggested that a dialogue between the data end-users and the MS should take place before

any issue enters into the portal. That would certainly allow for pre-filtering of issues that can still be rectified by MS.

STECF acknowledges the presence of two main end-users (ICES, JRC/STECF) at the EWG meeting, who were instrumental to clarify DT issues.

STECF notes that EWG was also asked to advise on guidelines for quality assurance procedures to be followed by the Member States when drafting their National Programmes (Work Plans). However, due to the time constrains, EWG only briefly discussed the main outputs of the background documents (Ad-hoc contract report on data quality assurance, FISHPI project report, MARE/2014/19 Mediterranean project report). Therefore, this issue is addressed in section 6.13 of this report.

STECF acknowledges that EWG 16-08 fully addressed the term of reference on the UK request for changes to the North Sea and West of Scotland Herring Acoustic Surveys

STECF conclusions

STECF concludes that the EWG 16-08 report adequately addresses almost all Terms of reference. Only the ToR on quality assurance was not fully addressed. STECF endorses the findings presented in the report.

In addition, the STECF concludes the following:

Evaluation of Annual Reports

- the present evaluation procedure (pre-screening exercise, evaluation sheets, guidance for evaluators) should continue to be used also for next year Annual Reports evaluation. STECF is aware that the evaluation procedure for the AR under the EU MAP 2017-2019 should be revised according to the proposal in section 6.14;

- online reporting tools connected to a database containing planned and conducted sampling figures, as well as other relevant information from the Work Plans and Annual Reports, should be set up as soon as possible to make the AR evaluation procedure more efficient (*cf*. STECF PLEN 15-02).

Evaluation of data transmission issues

- the evaluation of data transmission issues is very relevant and it represents a suitable indicator of the achievements in data collection activities. STECF suggests that the online platform for data transmission issues should continue to be used and if possible improved according to the proposals in the EWG 16-08 report (chapter 4, paragraph 2);

- a standard and homogenous approach for identification of data transmission failures should be defined by the Commission in dialogue with the end-users. In addition, the process of identification of the data

transmission issues should start right after the data calls and MS should be informed by end users in due time of any problems in data transmission allowing for the implementation of an adequate timeline for addressing and overcome the data failures.

REPORT TO THE STECF

EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON
Evaluation of DCF 2015 Annual Reports & Data Transmission to end users in 2015 Quality assurance procedures
(EWG-16-08)

Lisbon, Portugal, 20-24 June 2016

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

1   INTRODUCTION

The STECF Expert Working Group (STECF-EWG16-08) met in Lisbon, Portugal, from the 20th to the 24th of June 2016 to assess Annual Reports (AR) of the 23 non landlocked Member States. Under the process of evaluation and approval of the outcomes of the National Programmes (NP), the European Commission is legally bound to consult STECF about the execution of the NP approved by the Commission and about the quality of the data collected by the Member States (MS) in accordance Articles 7.1 and 7.2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008.

The work was developed by 30 independent experts; the list of participants is included in section 7. The agenda is included in Annex 1. The assessment of Annual Reports (AR) and Data Transmission Compliance (DT) was undertaken by subgroups to which experts were allocated according to their expertise. Prior to the EWG assessment, the AR and DT issues were evaluated by a group of pre-screeners that worked on an ad-hoc contract basis to DG MARE. These experts pre-screened the MS annual reports and the data compliance feedback from the end users.

1.1   Terms of Reference for EWG-16-08

Note that for items 1 and 2 below, a pre-screening exercise will take place to facilitate the work of the EWG.

1.1.1 Evaluate Member States Annual Reports for 2015 in accordance with Article 7.2 of Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008, taking into account:

- The execution of the National Programmes for 2015

- The quality of the data collected by the Member States

The STECF-EWG16-08 should produce for every Member State: (i) an evaluation of the annual report in the template provided by the Commission, which will already include the result of the pre-screening exercise (ii) Member State-specific issues relating to data collection.

The STECF-EWG16-08 should produce (i) a single file per Member State containing the detailed evaluation of the MSs Annual Report (see above) and (ii) a file identifying the recurring issues across many Member States, relating to data collection. In their feedback, the STECF-EWG16-08 should identify the comments that require a reaction by the MS (resubmission of the Annual Report or clarification to the Commission) and those that are 'for information' only. The STECF-EWG16-08 evaluation should be developed as a second level assessment, focusing on topics where the pre-screeners have raised a problem/or where the pre-screeners final assessment of a particular point has revealed to be contentious.

All files will be communicated to Member States in order to help them improve data collection and reporting for next year. The EWG should take into consideration the relevant files produced last year in STECF EWG 15-10 (Gdynia, Poland, 22-26 June 2015).

1.1.2 Evaluate Member States transmission of DCF data to end users in 2015 based on information from end users and Member States' clarifications & explanations in response to the end user feedback.

Particular attention will be paid to:

– Response by MS to calls for data launched by the Commission in order to feed into scientific advice provided by STECF:

- Call for fleet economic scientific data concerning 2008-2014 (Ref. Ares(2015)421690 - 03/02/2015);

- Call for data for STECF review of fishing effort management schemes related to recovery and management plans and other Regulations (Ref. Ares(2015)1506903 - 08/04/2015);

- Official call for data on landings, discards, length and age compositions, fishing effort, biological parameters, trawl and hydro acoustic surveys in the Mediterranean and in the Black Sea. (Ref. Ares(2015)1710784 - 22/04/2015).

- Data transmission to other end users in 2015 with a focus on feedback on data availability, quality, gaps and the data used in the scientific advisory process provided by RCMs, ICES, GFCM, ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, NAFO and other RFMO to which scientific fishery data is mandatorily submitted by MS.

The STECF-EWG16-08 should produce for every Member State: (i) an evaluation of the data transmission to end users, via the online platform for exchanges on data transmission. In their feedback, STECF-EWG16-08 should identify the comments that require a reaction by the MS (resubmission of the annual report or clarification to the Commission) and those that are 'for information' only. The STECF-EWG16-08 evaluation should be developed as a second level assessment, focusing on issues where the pre-screeners have raised a problem/or where the pre-screeners final assessment of a particular point has revealed to be contentious (ii) Member State-specific issues relating to data transmission.

STECF-EWG16-08 should produce a single file (i) containing the evaluation of data transmission by MS (ii) identifying the recurring issues across many Member States, relating to data transmission (iii) identifying the issues per end user, in order to improve the way in which they provide data transmission feedback to the Commission in future.

All files will be communicated to Member States and/or end users, where relevant, in order to improve the data transmission exercise for next year. STECF-EWG16-08 should take into consideration the relevant files produced last year in STECF EWG 15-10 (Gdynia, Poland, 22-26 June 2015) and the JRC report entitled 'The DCF Reporting and Implementation Cycles and the Data End-user Feedback'.

1.1.3 Quality assurance procedures for biological and economic variables

Background: Discussions on the revision of the EU Multiannual Programme and the Work Plan template are taking place in STECF expert working groups and other relevant fora (Expert Group on Fisheries Data Collection). One of the issues that needs to be addressed is the preparation of guidance documents that will assist Member States in producing their Work Plans, which are to be submitted by the 30th October 2016.

Under the EMFF, the MS Operational Programmes must be supplemented by a Work Plan for data collection (Reg. 508/2014, Article 21), replacing the current DCF National Programmes. The STECF EWG 15-15 (Hamburg, 23-27 November 2015) and STECF EWG 16-01 (Hamburg, 7-11 March 2016) gave advice about what should not be in the future EU MAP but still must be put into the Work Plans, namely guidance documents. This advice was reviewed by STECF by written procedure and in the STECF Plenary (PLEN 16-01, Brussels, 11-15 April 2016). Further guidance should be provided to support the preparation of the Work Plans vis-a-vis the guidelines, methodologies and quality indicators to be followed by the Member States, when drafting their Work Plans. In particular, the EWG is requested to critically assess a number of documents that were produced as part of expert meetings (PGECON) and reports of studies ('MARE/2014/19 - Strengthening regional cooperation in the area of fisheries data collection').The experts are requested to evaluate whether the abovementioned reports: can be used in the form of guidelines for quality indicators for DCF biological and socio-economic data or whether amendments are necessary before they are circulated to the Member States. The EWG assessment will be discussed as a separate point in the STECF summer plenary, as part of the general discussion on quality indicators for DCF data. The experts are requested to:

    a. evaluate the report of an ad-hoc contract on quality indicators for socio-economic DCF variables, thatwas reviewed by PGECON (Zagreb, Croatia, 30 May- 3 June), in

view of preparing input for the discussion and advice by the summer STECF plenary and how this can be incorporated and/or assist in the Work Plans.

b. evaluate the outcomes on quality assurance for biological DCF variables produced by the two grants under 'MARE/2014/19 - Strengthening regional cooperation in the area of fisheries data collection', in view of preparing input for the discussion and advice by the summer STECF plenary and how these can be incorporated and/or assist in the Work Plans.

1.1.4 UK request for changes to the North Sea and West of Scotland Herring Acoustic Surveys

UK is asking STECF approval to implement survey design changes, as deemed necessary by the ICES Working Group of International Pelagic Surveys (WGIPS) to the North Sea and west of Scotland herring acoustic surveys (HERAS) this year. The main driver of the change is an end user development, insofar as a new estimation procedure has been adopted by the ICES working group, which requires modification to the acoustic survey transects. The STECF-EWG16-08 is requested to review this request for changes by the UK, taking into consideration information needs for a sufficient coverage of stock areas, scientific relevance, end user needs, avoidance of disrupting the time series and avoidance of duplication between surveys.

1.2   Structure of the report

A description of the pre-screening exercise held beforehand is included in the report and presented in section 2 of this report. Section 3 to 6 present the results produced by the STECF-EWG16-08. For each assessment, AR and DT, a description is given on how the work has been organised "Setting the scene" and also an overview of the results. These are presented in section 3 and section 4 of this report. The outputs of the evaluation for each MS are included as electronic annexes (EWG-16-08 – Annex 1 and EWG-16-08 – Annex 2).

Outputs for Tor3 and ToR 4 are presented in sections 5 and 6 of this report, respectively.

2 PRE-SCREENING EXERCISE

Prior to the STECF-EWG16-08 assessment, the AR and DT issues have been evaluated by a pre-screening group who worked under an ad-hoc contract to DG MARE. 10Independent experts pre-screened the MS annual reports and the data compliance feedback from the end users. The task allocation among the independent experts was split by module as follows:

Final results were delivered on 16th of June. Therefore the documents from pre-screeners were available three days in advance to the meeting to all the experts through the web folder for the STECF-EWG16-08 meeting at the STECF FTP facilities.

The pre-screeners were also requested to give feedback on the current exercise and how it has worked and also comments on how to improve in the future.

The pre-screening output on the AR and DT were provided in the assessment template and in the IT tool Compliance Platform, respectively. Regarding the feedback on the production of an overview of the exercise and the compilation of MS comments this is presented in Annex 3. The same feedback was made available to the groups and thus used as input for STECF-EWG16-08 for the preparation of ToRs 1 and 2.

3 ToR 1 - Evaluation of Member States Annual Reports for 2015

3.1 Setting the scene

3.1.1 Formation of Subgroups and task allocation:

The assessment of Annual Reports (AR) and Data Transmission Compliance (DT) was undertaken by subgroups to which experts were allocated according to the expertise. In each sub-group one or two experts were identified as group facilitators. This role has been assumed by experts who participated in the pre-screening exercise. For that, the experts were split in four subgroups according to their expertise as presented in Table 1. Each sub-group was tasked with the assessment of part of the AR according with the table below.

Table 1 – Allocation of Modules by sub-group and expertise.

Module	Sub-group	Expertise	subroup facilitator
Modules IIIB and IV and VII – XI	Sub-group 1	Economist	Evelina Sabatella and Edvardas Kazlauskas
Modules I, II, IIIA, IIIF, VI	Sub-group 2	Economist and Biologists	Jörg Berkenhagen
Modules IIIC and IIIE	Sub-group 3	Biologists	Christoph Stransky
Modules IIID, IIIG and V	Sub-group 4	Biologist	Ingeborg de Boois

As adopted during the previous year, the STECF-EWG16-08 went through all parts of the annual reports, and a complete overview of this assessment is provided in the current report. However, and as in the past, the outcome of the evaluation of the modules VIII to XI is not considered for the final overall evaluation attributed to each MS.

Also in Modules IIIC/IIIE and Module VI, some questions were not considered during the assessment. This was due to a current lack of alignment between the assessment sheet and what can effectively be verified in this exercise.

For Modules IIIC and IIIE – the lack of alignment is due to a shift in the methodological approach for the collection of biological data adopted by some MS that is not described in the MS National programme. Some MS have described their new sampling plans, which aids assessment to some degree. This fact is well known to the European Commission that for practical reasons has decided not to request an update to the relevant MS NPs. This prevents experts to judge whether the Annual Report is in line with the descriptions in the National Program.

In the latter, Module VI, again some of the questions were not assessed since the procedure to assess the content of the newly integrated AR table – AR table VI.1 - that supports the information for that Module is not clear.

3.1.2 Background Information:

To carry out the evaluation, the group was provided with access to supporting information such as the AR evaluation templates from previous years (2015), a guidance document for the assessment of the AR (background document: EWG-16-08 – Doc 2).

3.1.3 Tools and Criteria for the Assessment:

The evaluation template used for the assessment is provided as background document (background document: EWG-16-08 – Doc 3). This is an improved version of the evaluation form used in previous assessments. Four main categories are used to judge AR achievements. These four categories are shown in table below and are the same that have been in use in the past.

Table 2 – Compliance levels for the assessment of Annual Reports.

Compliance class	Compliance level	Score
No	<10%	N
Partly	10-50%	P
Mostly	50-90%	M
Yes	>90%	Y

In order to ensure a comparable and coherent approach across sub-groups a first assessment of one Annual Report was done in plenary. During this joint exercise, the criteria to settle a common ground for the assessment were agreed by the group and then used to support the sub-groups assessment. The rules agreed upon are presented in Annex 2.

Additionally to the assessment of the AR through the template, each subgroup had to prepare the answer to questions that were raised at the beginning of the meeting. These questions aim at collecting an overview and reflexions from each sub-group about the assessment exercise. These inputs were also considered to answer ToR 1 and ToR 2.

The Questions are:

1. Overall comments on the pre-screening exercise. How does the new approach affect the process? Any relevant comments for future improvements?
2. Overall performance of Member States on your Modules. Overview - of the 23 MS, How many were YES, Mostly, Partly, NO?
3. Overall what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation across MS? How would you resolve these? – Provide recommendations.
4. Any specific issues (max. 4) that arose that you would like to highlight. How would you resolve these? Provide recommendations?
5. What MS would you cite as good examples of how to complete these modules?
6. What are the recurring issues across many Member States, relating to data transmission. Identifying the issues per end user, in order to improve the way in which they provide data transmission feedback to the Commission in future.

3.2   Results

The overall evaluation shown in Table 3 is the summary evaluation of each MS based on the traffic light system and on the scale provided in Table 2. Overall, the level of achievement of the 2015 Annual Reports shows an improvement compared with previous years; it shows a significant improvement in quality for both the achievements attained by MS and their reporting procedures. Similar overview tables on the MS DCF performance can be found at the following STECF reports

for years 2010 to 2015 (STECF12-01[1]; STECF-OWP-12-05[2]; STECF13-14[3]; STECF14-13[4], STECF15-13[5]).

Sections 4.2.1 to 4.2.5 present the replies provided by the subgroups to the six questions. The detailed spread sheet for each Member State is presented in the electronic annex of this report (EWG-16-08 – Annex 1 – Annual Report Assessment by MS – template sheet (.xls)) and organized in alphabetical order. Also the compilation from Section IX –"Comments, suggestions and reflections" provided by the MS in their Annual Reports is presented in this report under Annex 5.

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[1] Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries. Analysis of the DCF Annual Reports for 2010 (STECF-12-01). 2012. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, EUR 25250 EN, JRC 69389, 251 pp.

[2] Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries. Evaluation of MS Annual Reports for 2011 of the DCF (STECF-OWP-12-05). 2012. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, EUR 25450 EN, JRC 73248, 239 pp.

[3] Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Evaluation of 2012 MS Technical Reports under DCF (1) (STECF-13-07). 2013. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, EUR 26090 EN, JRC 83658, 183 pp.

[4] Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Evaluation of 2013 MS DCF Annual Reports & Data Transmission (STECF-14-13) 2014. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, EUR 26811 EN, JRC 91550, 257 pp.

[5] Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) Evaluation of 2014 MS DCF Annual Reports & Data Transmission (STECF-15-13). 2015. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, EUR 27410 EN, JRC 96975, 287 pp.

Module	BEL	BUL	CYP	DEN	ESP	EST	FIN	FRA	GBR	GER	GRE	HRV	IRL	ITA	LAT	LTU	MLT	NLD	POL	PRT	ROM	SVN	SWE
OVERALL COMPLIANCE	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y	M	Y	M	Y	M	Y	M	Y	Y	P	M	M	Y
Module I	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Module II	M	M	M	Y	Y	Y	M	M	Y	Y	M	Y	M	Y	M	M	M	Y	Y	M	P	Y	Y
Module III.A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Module III.B	M	P	M	Y	M	Y	M	P	M	Y	M	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	M	M	M	Y	M
IIIC	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	P	P	P	Y
IIID	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	M	N	M	Y
IIIE	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	*P*	M	M	Y
IIIF	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
IIIG	Y	P	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	M	Y	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y
Module IV.A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	M	Y	P	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	M
Module IV.B	Y	P	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Module V	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	M	Y
Module VI	Y	M	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y
Module VII	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

Module																							
Module VIII	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Module IX	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Module X	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Module XI	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	N	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y

3.2.1 Sub-group 1

Modules dealt with: *IIIB, IV and VII – XI*

3.2.1.1 Overall comments on the pre-screening exercise. How does the approach affect the process? Any relevant comment for future improvements?

Pre-screening exercise: evaluation of AR

Two pre-screeners evaluated the same economic modules and Member States. The Pre-screening exercise is helpful and it should be retained.

The quality and the consistency of evaluations amongst the two pre–screeners were in general good. In some cases, they highlighted different issues and this increased the completeness of the evaluation.

The subgroup considers that pre-screeners provided useful comments to help in the final evaluation (for instance: minor issue, repetitive issue, etc.).

Pre-screening exercise: evaluation of data transmission to end-users

The pre-screener exercise is considered useful for the evaluation of data transmission failures, because issues are very complex and they often require consulting several background documents (data calls, NP, AR, DCF, derogations, etc.)

EWG was requested to accept or modify the comments and to give a final assessment. EWG considers that the pre-screener exercise is fundamental to allow EWG to finalize all the required assessments.

The subgroup considers that pre-screener work has been facilitated by the use of the web platform.

3.2.1.2 Overall performance of Member States on your Modules. Overview - of the 23 MS, How many were YES, Mostly, Partly, NO?

Module	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	SUM
Module III.B	9	12	2	0	**23**
Module IV.A	17	5	1	0	**23**
Module IV.B	18	3	1	1	**23**
SUM	**44**	**20**	**4**	**1**	

The subgroup considers that there was an improvement in AR submission especially for the modules on aquaculture and processing.

3.2.1.3 Overall what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation across MS? How would you resolve these? – Provide recommendations.

Clustering

The reporting of clustered segments in tables III.B.1, III.B2, III.B.3 is still not homogenous among MS. According to the guidelines, Table III.B.1 and III.B.3 should contain information on segments, which are not clustered, or, in case of clustering, for clusters. Table III.B.2 should contain information on the clustering scheme.

However, some countries report unclustered segments in table III.B.1 and III.B.3, even if they are reported as clustered in table III.B.2. This happens when clustering is implemented only for data transmission purposes and not for data collection.

<u>Different surveys applied for the same segment</u>

According to the new version of guidelines, Table III.B.1 should be filled in separately for each individual data source/survey performed. Separate lines for each sampling scheme per segment should be inserted.

However, this change was not highlighted in the document: "changes_guidance_2016 for MS". In addition, EWG considers that this requirement should be applied only in case of different types of data collection and not in case of different data sources.

EWG suggests amending guidelines.

<u>Deviations from NP</u>

Deviations from NP are not always provided. Description of new methodologies or new sampling schemes is given without providing explanations and/or justifications of deviations from NP. In most cases, MS move from a sample approach to a census and EWG considers this as a general improvement in the data collection activities.

<u>Capital cost and capital value</u>

According to guidelines, a specific section should include a description of methods and assumptions made for estimation of capital value and capital costs. But this section is missing for several ARs or it is incomplete especially when a MS is not applying the PIM method. In these cases, alternative methodologies should be better explained and justified.

3.2.1.4 Any specific issues (max 4) that arose that you would like to highlight. How would you resolve these? Provide recommendations?

- Sample sizes and response rates appear to be low for several fleet segments. This could affect the quality of final estimates. In addition, MS describe the actions they will take to increase sample size and/or the response rates, but this seems to be a repetitive issue.

- Table on processing should be homogenous with tables on fleet and aquaculture economic data. In particular, table IV.B.1, fields on Total population no., Frame population no., and planned sample no. should be grey, which means that they should be updated compared to NP.

- Section on quality should also include methodologies applied to determine sample rates and should better describe the quality indicators reported in the relevant table.

- EWG evaluation could greatly benefit from implementing a database for AR tables

3.2.1.5 What MS would you cite as good examples of how to complete these modules?

Germany, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia be regarded as good examples for Modules III.B, IV.A and IV.B, considering the overall implementation of the AR guidelines.

3.2.2 Sub-group 2

Modules dealt with: *Modules I, II, IIIA, IIIF, and VI.*

3.2.2.1 Overall comments on the pre-screening exercise. How does the approach affect the process? Any relevant comment for future improvements?

Again, the pre-screening has proven to be an extremely helpful exercise. Without pre-screening the evaluation would have hardly been feasible given the resources available during the meeting. For some of the modules the workload for the pre-screener appeared to be disproportionally high given their very in-depth approach.

This applies in particular to tables I_A_1 – II_B_2 and is mainly due to the fact that there is no standardized information towards which the AR tables can be compared.

Sub-group considers if pre-screening comments is "no", "partly" or "mostly" it should be detailed to assist better evaluation.

3.2.2.2 Overall performance of Member States on your Modules. Overview - of the 23 MS, How many were YES, Mostly, Partly, NO?

Module	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	SUM
I	23	0	0	0	23
II	10	12	1	0	23
III.A	23	0	0	0	23
III.F	22	1	0	0	23
VI	19	4	0	0	23

The overall performance of the modules I-III.A is quite high. Most of MS achieved "Yes" or "Mostly" for all modules. Only one MS achieved "Partly" for Module II.

3.2.2.3 Overall what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation across MS? How would you resolve these? – Provide recommendations.

The major issues observed were missing minutes of the National Coordination Meeting, missing or incomplete DCF websites, incomplete or questionable lists on derogations, agreements and coordination. Moreover, in several cases these issues have been observed repeatedly. This indicates that the preceding request for amendment have not been properly addressed by MS.

However, there is also a lack of background information necessary for evaluation. There is no source of comprehensive compilation of derogations, agreements and coordination. Thus the evaluators are not in a position to decide whether the related tables in the AR are complete and appropriate. In order to perform a reasonable target-performance comparison this information has to be available. If complete lists are available, though, a provision in the AR might be redundant (esp. for derogations). It might be worth considering if the related tables are being used beyond the AR evaluation.

For the evaluation of international coordination (III_B_1) it would be necessary to know in which cases participation would be mandatory and which actions could be requested in case of non-compliance. Aside from this, the guidelines provide no information on how to fill in the "attendance" column.

Concerning the obligation to provide a web page it has to be stated that COM Reg. 665/2008 is rather unspecific with regard to the content ("information deposit… accessible to all participants involved"). A more specific description of a national data collection web site would be advisable.

The web page might offer limited access only to "participants involved". In principle that could also exclude evaluators from analysing the web content. This aspect might be worth some revision.

The guidelines for submission of the AR, regarding module VI - "Module for management and use of the data" should be revised. The text is referring to a table VI instead of VI.1. The content of the columns 'end user' and 'Expert group, data call or project' in the example are not in line with the description of the fields in table VI.1.

3.2.2.4 Any specific issues (max. 4) that arose that you would like to highlight. How would you resolve these? Provide recommendations?

- In the guidelines on transversal data (III_F_1) it is stated, "Transversal data which have been collected under the Control Regulation (1224/2009) should not be provided in Table III.F.1." This has been followed only by two MS. However, following this rule hampers the evaluation of the completeness of MS collection on transversal data. The original advice was to not request quality information on these variables collected under the CR, but not to skip them all over. In the future these variables should be requested again (without quality information).

- Several MSs applied for derogation concerning certain effort variables for vessels without logbook obligation. Apparently these derogations were approved. Other MS were unable to provide these data but did not apply for derogation.

- As these effort data have never been used and are apparently not needed it should be considered for the future if they can be skipped.

3.2.2.5 What MS would you cite as good examples of how to complete these modules?

As examples of 'good practice' in annual reporting, the subgroup proposes the following MS:
- Module I : Ireland, Croatia, Poland and France

- Module II : Slovenia, Germany

- Module III. A. : Cyprus, United Kingdom

3.2.3 Sub-group 3

Modules dealt with: Modules IIIC and IIIE

3.2.3.1 Overall comments on the pre-screening exercise. How does the approach affect the process? Any relevant comment for future improvements?

The pre-screening proved to be very helpful for the successful completion of the EWG tasks again. The double pre-screening for modules III.C and III.E should be kept.

There were a few instances where the two pre-screeners had conflicting comments, but in those cases, it was good to compare and eventually adapt the comments between the two pre-screeners.

3.2.3.2 Overall performance of Member States on your Modules. Overview - of the 23 MS. How many were YES, Mostly, Partly, NO?

Module	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	SUM
III.C	16	2	4	1	23
III.E	17	3	3	0	23

3.2.3.3 Overall what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation across MS? How would you resolve these? – Provide recommendations.

In general, further improvements in the quality of the ARs were observed, compared to previous years.

The move (or partial move) to 'statistically sound sampling schemes' (4S) required a different approach for evaluating MS performance on modules III.C and III.E. To date, there is no detailed objective evaluation procedure available for this purpose yet.

For one MS, the AR does not seem to be complete. This is a repetitive issue: The MS keeps the deadline for AR submission, but the AR appears to be incomplete.

3.2.3.4 Any specific issues (max. 4) that arose that you would like to highlight. How would you resolve these? Provide recommendations?

The Spanish AR was submitted in English for the first time.

3.2.3.5 What MS would you cite as good examples of how to complete these modules?

Spain (for an AR with a complex structure with many fisheries, regions, species etc.), Sweden (for a moderately/less complex AR)

3.2.4 Sub-group 4

Modules dealt with: Modules IIID, IIIG and V.

3.2.4.1 Overall comments on the pre-screening exercise. How does the approach affect the process? Any relevant comment for future improvements?

The pre-screening exercise helped the screening very much. In general, the pre-screeners agreed on Modules IIID, IIIG, V.

Suggestions for improvement of the screening exercise by STECF-EWG:

Alternative options for starting the screening work in plenary going through a whole country from beginning to end:

- Present a selection of "how to do", with examples from several countries. Then decide in plenary that this is how we do it and the rules are documented and possible to look into when you are underway with the evaluations. Examples may be provided based on previous year's AR evaluation if it is too complicated to compile an overview for the actual ARs to evaluate. Pre-screeners may provide input on good examples.

- Let subgroups start the screening exercise and ask all subgroups to start with the same MS with the whole subgroup together. When all subgroups have finished that particular MS, STECF-EWG can go through the MS in plenary. Some subgroups may need less time than others, but those subgroups can continue the work.

- Add Modules I, II to the subgroup reviewing IIID, IIIG and V to better balance the workload over the subgroups. 8 people in this subgroup worked very well, so please keep it like that.

3.2.4.2 Overall performance of Member States on your Modules. Overview - of the 23 MS, How many were YES, Mostly, Partly, NO?

Module	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	SUM
IIID (Recreational fisheries)	17	5	0	1	23
IIIG (Surveys)	17	4	2	0	23
V (Indicators)	20	3	0	0	23

3.2.4.3 Overall what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation across MS? How would you resolve these? – Provide recommendations.

The major issues are:

- The use of the Comments cells is unfortunately not widely implemented. When MSs used the option to fill in short explanations in the 'Comments' cells, this however helped screening, as it was easy to oversee the reasons for deviations.

- IIID: Derogations are not always arranged. Sometimes this is due to the MS's incorrect formulation for the reason of the derogation; sometimes the MS has not received a response from the Commission on the derogation request. It is recommended that good examples of derogation requests are supplied to Mss

- IIIG: Most deviations were caused by the technical, financial or weather constraints. MSs do not always report in detail on the effect of deviations on the quality of data (III.G.2) and that should be improved for some MSs. Where relevant this is highlighted in 'Actions needed'. Modification of the guideline text is suggested in 'Evaluation of AR guidelines'. MS do not always use the planned target from the NP proposal. Modification of the guideline text is suggested in 'Evaluation of AR guidelines'.

- V: no major issues

3.2.4.4 Any specific issues (max. 4) that arose that you would like to highlight. How would you resolve these? Provide recommendations?

- IIID: Some MSs did not report on mandatory species that are not part of recreational fisheries in the area at all. MSs should always report on all species defined by DCF, even if not caught in recreational fisheries. It is recommended that the table template lists all species, and that the guidelines are modified (see chapter on AR guidelines below)

Recurrent issues:

- The Commission has not agreed on amended tables and text for AR 2014 for 13 MSs so it was decided not to take into account recurrent issues. It appeared however frequently that 'MS reply' mentioned an updated table (based on feedback STECF-EWG 15-10). It is recommended that COM find a way to respond to MSs on amended tables and text within two months after the deadline for amendments, if needed by ad-hoc contracts for some experts (cf. pre-screening exercise) to review the amended tables in relation to the evaluation by the EWG. It is recommended that for the 2014 amended text and tables this be arranged as soon as possible.

- MSs do not always use the amended tables (after feedback by STECF-EWG/COM on previous year) for the new AR, leading to unnecessary repetitive issues, even though the Commission has not agreed upon the amended tables. It is recommended to draw Ms' attention to the fact and encouraged them to use those tables for the new AR.

3.2.4.5 What MS would you cite as good examples of how to complete these modules?

Mediterranean and Black Sea:

IIID, IIIG, V: Cyprus and Croatia

All regions except Baltic and North Sea: IIID, IIIG, V Spain: MS presents a lot of information in a comprehensive manner. Use of comment cells in AR tables is done effectively.

Baltic:

IIID Poland

IIIG Sweden (especially III.G.2)

North Sea and Eastern Arctic:

IIID Ireland, Portugal UK

IIIG UK

V Ireland, Portugal UK

4   ToR 2 - EVALUATE MEMBER STATES TRANSMISSION OF DCF DATA TO END USERS IN 2015

4.1   Setting the scene

Under ToR2, the EWG was requested to evaluate the compliance of the data transmission by Member States to the end users over 2015 based on information from end users and MSs' clarifications & explanations in response to the end user feedback.

There were issues from nine different end users addressed to the EWG for evaluation. The EWG was requested to evaluate on a scientifically ground if it consider satisfactory or unsatisfactory the explanation/feedback provided by the MS to the issue raised by the end users.

The assessment of the data transmission issues was done by sub-groups, related to the expertise in the group, and in relation to the time available in the subgroups.

4.1.1 Background Information:

For DT assessment the group was provided with some supporting information such as the AR evaluation templates from 2014), the evaluation guidance on AR and DT issues and a copy of the data calls launched in 2015.

4.1.2 Tools and criteria for the assessment

This year the IT platform host by JRC to support the Data Transmission Assessment was used during the current meeting. The criteria for the assessment were those set by the guidance for AR assessment, presented in the Guidance document (background document EWG-16-08 – Doc 2).

4.2   Results

In summary, the evaluation of the transmission issues concluded that 262 issues were justified as satisfactory by the MS, 107 unsatisfactory and for 5 the EWG was not able to make an assessment, therefore these were classified with Unknown.

The complete list of the issues for each MS, together with EWG comment and assessment, is included in the electronic annex to this report (EWG-16-08 – Annex 2 – Data Transmission Results.(xls)).

This task was fully accomplished by the group. Furthermore the EWG concluded that the exercise on the assessment of the data transmission must be seen as one of the main tasks of the EWG.

Severity	STECF Assessment	End User						Grand Total
		ICCAT	ICES	IOTC	JRC	NAFO	WCPFC	
HIGH	SATISFACTORY	-	25	-	9	-	-	34
	UNKNOWN	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
	UNSATISFACTORY	-	6	-	19	-	-	25
HIGH Total		-	31	-	29	-	-	60
IMPACT ON TH	SATISFACTORY	-	2	-	12	-	-	14
	UNSATISFACTORY	-	8	-	3	-	-	11
IMPACT ON THE WG Total		-	10	-	15	-	-	25
LOW	SATISFACTORY	-	45	-	29	-	-	74
	UNSATISFACTORY	-	7	-	8	-	-	15
LOW Total		-	92	-	37	-	-	89
MEDIUM	SATISFACTORY	-	53	-	27	-	-	80
	UNKNOWN	-	-	-	4	-	-	4
	UNSATISFACTORY	-	24	-	17	-	-	41
MEDIUM Total		-	117	-	48	-	-	125
UNKNOWN	SATISFACTORY	22	-	6	27	1	4	60
	UNSATISFACTORY	1	-	2	12	-	-	15
UNKNOWN Total		23	-	8	39	1	4	75
Grand Total		23	170	8	168	1	4	374

Table 4 – Summary table of the data transmission issues addressed to the STECF EWG1608 for assessment.

4.2.1 General comments

It was useful that two end users (ICES and JRC) were present at EWG16-08, to provide background information, and to discuss together on the best approach for identification of data transmission failures. It is recommended that the end users present their approach on identifying the data transmission failures ultimately at the end of the first full day of the EWG, in order to let it happen before any DT screening takes place.

EWG16-08 considers that the same level of severity should be fixed for the same data issue. End-users should ensure consistency among MSs and data issues when assessing the level of severity. On this regard, and with the view to make input from end users comparable it was concluded by the EWG that the Data Handling Protocol developed by STECF should be made available to other end users for further adoption.

Evaluation of end user feedback on data transmission issues could be facilitated by categorisation of judgement levels relating to the most recurring and specific cases and included in the guidelines. It is therefore recommended that some examples on what should be judged as satisfactory and as unsatisfactory be added to the DT guidelines to facilitate the screening process and to improve the internal consistency within pre-screeners and EWG.

In general it was agreed that a dialogue between the data end user and the MS should take place before any issue enters into the portal. That would certainly allow for a proper pre-filtering of issues that can still be sanitized by MS. However, for that to be possible, the process of identification of the Data Transmission Issues should start right after the data calls allowing for the implementation of a comfortable timeline for all interventions in the data transmission evaluation process.

It was helpful to work directly on the portal. It would be even better if it were possible to more easily filter/search the info in the different columns. It is recommended that ICES adds the EG name to the Data call for update assessments in the Data transmission database, so the EWG can filter more easily by data call (e.g. 2015 Update assessments HAWG).

The economists of EWG16-08 point out that the evaluation of DT issues is very relevant and important, and are often a better indicator of the achievements than the evaluation of the AR text and tables. Due to the order of the activities, there was not enough time to focus on these issues. It is recommended that specific time and capacity is allocated for future economic data transmission evaluations.

EWG16-08 concluded that it would be helpful to be able to discover recurrent issues in data transmission.

End users are requested to preferably only send data calls to MSs that have data to provide for the area (e.g.: ICCAT not to send Data Calls to MSs not active in the ICCAT regions)

4.2.2 Specific questions

1. What are the recurring issues across many MSs, relating to data transmission?

The most frequently recurring issue stated by end user of fleet economic data were substantial differences between MS and fleet segment level data which reflects incomplete data coverage as well as failure to provide a part of requested information for a list of variables. Issues arisen from confidentiality reasons were justified.

However, in many cases MSs were not able to ensure consistency because of mistakes in aggregating the economic data, excluding part of fleet from data submission due to low responses for small segments as well as errors in estimation procedures. This type of errors could be easily avoided if both MSs and end users develop additional validation tools in their own databases and in end user uploading facilities.

It is suggested that MSs are informed by end user of any data issue in due time and in any case before the data issue is uploaded in the web platform if possible. As a general rule, it is useful if MS could have the possibility to check and correct data in case of evident unintentional technical problems in delivering data sets. Because of the problems in communication between end user and MS, STECF-EWG was not able to final assess some of the economic data issues.

Some MSs referred to comments from previous years and incidentally to other Data Transmission line ids. STECF-EWG 15-10 agreed that this was not to be done by MSs.

MS specific recurring issues

France does not respond adequately to Data calls when no data have been delivered. MS comments often refer to different data sources or different requests and don't relate to the end user's comment.

France still refers to line ids in the DT portal. EWG16-08 agreed that this was not to be done by MSs.

2. Identifying the issues per end user, in order to improve the way in which they provide data transmission feedback to the Commission in future.

4.2.3 Feedback to end users

- JRC: most of the comments were valid. JRC was present at the EWG for clarification on end user issues.

- ICES: end user joined the EWG for clarification on end user issues, and provided more information on incorrect data transmission failures.

   The main issue for ICES is to find a way to separate submissions by MSs and modifications made in the databases by e.g. a stock coordinator.

- GFCM: has not provided any information to the data portal. It is unclear if there are no issues or that there is no response from the end user. In order to evaluate all DT similarly, EWG16-08 suggests that GFCM reports in the data portal, and that the Commission makes sure that the end user feedback is put into the data portal. It is recommended that GFCM and the Commission have a bilateral dialogue to solve this issue.

5 TOR 3 QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURES FOR BIOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC VARIABLES

The EWG 16-08 could not critically assess the documents (PGECON, FISHPI, Mare/2014/19) as requested by the TOR. Due to the time constrains it was only possible to briefly discuss the main outputs and the possible implementation for the future EU-Map. In general, EWG 16-08 considers the project documents can be considered a good starting point for the development of the necessary quality indicator guidelines for biological and socio-economic data. Furthermore, EWG 16-08 suggest that in the STECF plenary the point should be further discussed and that discussion should be informed by key persons from the regional grants that formed the basis of the discussion at EWG 16_08.

Given the tight deadlines for the preparation and submission of the work plans required for the first submission EWG16-08 suggests the COM considers postponing the introduction of the Quality Assurance Framework for one year to allow a more in-depth review of the outputs. This would ensure the preparation of comprehensive guidelines to support the MS implementation in relation to quality indicators that will hopefully not need major revision.

For this reason EWG16-08 suggests that the RCMs should be involved in the development of standard guidelines at the regional level and the RCMs should be represented in any body set up to address any future amendments deemed necessary. Given the possibility of differing require in the various RCMs they should be aware of the possible need for harmonization/standardization at both the regional level and across RCMs. This should be reflected in the MS work plans as foreseen in the draft EU-Map.

Nevertheless, the quality assurance framework, section 5 of the draft work plan, when initiated should contain only one common table for both biological and socio-economic data.

Furthermore, the MS and the RCMs should take into consideration the feed-back of the end users and consider to what extent the quality of the collected data fulfil the quality requirements needed by the end-users.

The group considers that subsequent proposed amendments, if any occur, should be addressed during regional working groups in the first instance.

6 TOR 4 AND ADDITIONAL REQUEST

6.1 ToR 4-UK request for changes to the North Sea and West of Scotland Herring Acoustic Surveys

UK is asking STECF approval to implement survey design changes, as deemed necessary by the ICES Working Group of International Pelagic Surveys (WGIPS) to the North Sea and west of Scotland herring acoustic surveys (HERAS) this year. The main driver of the change is an end user development, insofar as the ICES working group, which requires modification to the acoustic survey, have adopted a new estimation procedure transects. The EWG is requested to review this request for changes by the UK, taking into consideration information needs for a sufficient coverage of stock areas, scientific relevance, end user needs, avoidance of disrupting the time series and avoidance of duplication between surveys.

STECF-EWG16-08 evaluated the request and sees no problems in the change of design as this was an end user request and agreed upon by the coordinating ICES Expert Group WGIPS. The Herring Acoustic Survey is an internationally coordinated survey in which four other EU MSs and Norway takes part. As for UK the survey effort remains the same, no financial implications are to be expected and the new survey design will lead to improved data quality.

6.2 Evaluation of cost-shared surveys in 2015

STECF-EWG16-08 has reviewed the Annual Reports 2015 for the DCF and hereby confirms that both the International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas (IESNS) and the Blue Whiting Survey (IBWSS) met the requirements of the National Programmes of the MSs carrying them out. Several MSs jointly fund these surveys. The results are published in the annual reports of the Netherlands, Ireland and Denmark, whose vessels are used to conduct the surveys.

For both surveys a new agreement is being developed 'COST SHARING OF JOINT SURVEYS (INTERNATIONAL ECOSYSTEM SURVEY IN THE NORDIC SEAS/BLUE WHITING SURVEY) UNDER THE DATA COLLECTION FRAMEWORK (DCF)' and this will be taken further by the relevant RCMs.

7 CONTACT DETAILS OF STECF MEMBERS AND EWG-16-12 LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

1 - Information on STECF members and invited experts' 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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8   LIST OF ANNEXES

Electronic annexes are published on the meeting's web site on:

http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/stecf/ewg1608

List of electronic annexes documents:

1. EWG-16-08 – Annex 1 – Annual Report Assessment by MS – template sheet
2. EWG-16-08 – Annex 2 – Data Transmission Results

9   LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background documents are published on the meeting's web site on:

http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/stecf/ewg1608

List of background documents:

1. EWG-16-08 – Doc 1 - Declarations of invited and JRC experts (see also section 7 of this report – List of participants)
2. EWG-16-08 – Doc 2 – DCF_AR-DT_eval_guidelines(docx)
3. EWG-16-08 – Doc 3 - AR_evaluation_template(xlsx)
4. EWG-16-08 – Doc 4 - 2015_data_calls(zip)

Annex 1 Agenda

Agenda (20/06/2016)

Attendance
DG MARE: Venetia Kostopoulou (Mon-Tue); Kenneth Patterson (Thursday)
JRC: Cristina Ribeiro and Jordi Guillen (STECF focal point)
Experts: 30 independent experts
Observers: Cristina Morgado – ICES. (Wed-Fri) and Susana Godinho (DGRM - Portugal)

Daily timetable
> Morning session: 9h – 13h (Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu and Fri)
> Afternoon Session: 14h – 18h (Mon, Tue, Wed, and Thu)
> Breaks: 10h45 and 15:45h

Monday, 20 June
Afternoon Session (13h-18h):
(1)   Welcome and housekeeping
(2)   Presentation & discussion on ToR and agenda
(3)   Introduction from the Commission (Venetia Kostopoulou)
(4)   Results from Pre-screening (Christoph Stransky)
(5)   Subgroup formation
(6)   Perform a joint assessment of a chosen AR. Objective: set a common assessment ground, calibration of criteria and principles across subgroups.

Tuesday, 21 June
Morning Session:
> Sub-groups: **Tor 1** & **2** in SG (cont.)
Afternoon Session:
> Sub-groups**: Tor 1** & **2** in SG (cont.)
> 17h30 – 18h00: Plenary session

Wednesday, 22 June
Morning Session:
> Sub-groups: **Tor 1** & **2** in SG (cont.)
Afternoon Session:
> Sub-groups**: Tor 1** & **2** in SG (cont.)
> 17h30 – 18h00: Plenary session

Thursday, 23 June

09h00 - 10h30 Plenary: Results from Sub-groups (**ToR 1 and 2** - expected final results to be presented).
10h45 - 13h00 Plenary: **Introduction to ToR3**.
> **10h45** Quality Guidelines for the DCF (Carlos Moura)
> **11h15** Strengthening regional cooperation in the area of fisheries data collection in the- Mediterranean and Black Sea - Work Package 4 (Paolo Carpintieri)
> **11h45** - Fishpi project – Work package 4 (Laurent Dubroca)

Afternoon Sessions:
> Paralell sessions:
> > **ToR1 & ToR2**: MS final overview and collation of SG outputs (Each expert work individually on the assigned MS).
> > **ToR3** in subgroup
> > **ToR4** in Subgroup

Friday, 24 June

Morning session (9h-12h)
  Plenary: Presentation & Discussion on the results on ToR3 and ToR 4
   Draft Report

Annex 2 EWG 1608 Rules/criteria to support the assessment:

1   Guidelines defines that **EWG will focus on major issues.**

2   Criteria to be followed while assessing in subgroups:

      All cells must be duly filled-in, ie, No cell to be left in blank.

      <u>The EWG evaluation to be filled-in in the 3 columns:</u>

- EWG comment
- EWG judgment
- Action needed

3   How to proceed from the pre-screening assessment:

- **If** assessment is (Yes, Yes) or (Mostly, Mostly) or in the case of single pre-screening without any further comment **then accept as final.**

- **If** assessment is (Yes, Yes) or (Mostly, Mostly) but a comment was added **then**:
    - If the comment could result on a different judgement, verify again;
    - If the comment in any way cannot justify a different judgement. Accept the comment and the judgement.

- **If** outcome from both pre-screeners is **not concordant**: verify again.

Particular situation must be given to issues that have already been identified in previous years. This must be **thoroughly scrutinized and good note must be taken so a proper feedback to include in the report can be prepared.**

4   What to verify when filling in the EWG Comment:

- **if** no comments to enter then **"No comments"**
- **if** a comment needs to entered then:
    - if related with moving to 4S sampling (sections IIIC and IIIE), then:
        - The question that compare the AR with NP, the following comment must be added: "Moved to 4S sampling."
        - All related with other questions should be properly assessed; if the MS has properly explained the new sampling approach, then the assessment should reflect that deviations were justified; if the explanations on the new approach are not good enough then the comment should be properly done and an action is to be entered.
    - If related with any other issue: Add a proper comment that should be concise, clear and self-explanatory.

5   What to verify when filling in the EWG judgement:

Judgment categories are: "**Yes**", "**Mostly**", "**Partly**", "**No**" . Not applicable was agreed to be used when the question is not at all relevant but must be at all means avoided, e.g when the NP is outdated and there are no means to compare the AR with NP, as everyone is aware of this (typically 4S sampling).

A **Yes can never lead to an action to very same year. I**nstead if anything to be required it can only be for the subsequent years.

6   What to verify when filling in the Action needed:

- if **no action** needed **then:** insert "**No action needed**"
- if **an action** is needed **then**

    - the action should related to the comment such as something to be done in consequence of that comment, ie, "comment is missing information on importance of the fleet segments clustered" then the action should be: "the MS should provide the information missing on the importance of the fleet segments clustered."
    - in case of major issues such as of incomplete tables then MS should be asked to resubmit the AR with a fulfilled set of tables, and when relevant, the text has to be amended accordingly.
    - If the action is related with minor issues, Minor issues (i.e. Variables not applicable, table formats, etc) Then: Action needed should be "Next year and onwards MS to…"

7   Recurring issues:

Over the last years, evaluators found recurrent issues for several MSs. Repetitive issues should be marked as such in the revised evaluation form. Furthermore, these issues should be briefly described by the evaluators in a separate document, referring to the MS(s), the corresponding AR section(s) and/or DT failure(s) and brought to the attention of the EWG. Based on the collated information, the EWG is then able to discuss a common solution to these issues and recommend further action if necessary.

Due to lack of information for some MS – the assessment of AR2014 haven't been finalised yet by the COM - the column where to mark whether an issue is recurring or not must be deleted from the evaluation sheet from the report.

2014 AR Approved by the COM: Croatia; Finland; Germany; Ireland; Italy; Latvia; Poland; Spain; Sweden and United Kingdom.

Annex 3 Pre-screening AR & DT 2015: General observations

Annual Reports

General:

- Evaluation guidelines should contain instructions which cells to fill in during pre-screening and which cells to fill in during the EWG

- In future, any major changes to sampling plans / fleet structure requires the MS tables to be updated – it was very time consuming to try and compare those provided given the time lag of the original submission and changes to plans.

- MS to ensure text doesn't contradict itself (for example MS will continue metier sampling and then providing text for 4S)

- If a section is referred to for general comments (which helps to shorten the text and avoids having to reread unnecessarily), ensure that it is provided.

- The quality of the data it is impossible to evaluate with the current structure of template.

- The issue of derogations still should be better and clearly investigated. Sometimes, MS mentioned a derogation that it is not present in table, and for others, it is not clear if this derogation has been approved. In general, it is not clear who is going to evaluate the different requests and who should approve it.

- Very difficult to compare old NPs with the current ARs, as there are too many differences in the planned activities

- A drop-down menu for common fields (name of the region, species, etc.) could help both MS and the whole evaluation process

- MS should be aware of the decisions/recommendations carried out during the different RCMs. The different agreements should be always reflected both in the NP and AR (e.g. naming convention, codes, sampling activities, etc.)

- The comparison of achievements in relation to the NP proposal will become less time-consuming when all NP proposal information from the tables is available in a database together with the achievements reported in the AR tables. This also prevents confusion about the NP proposal version and unintentional misreporting of NP proposal goals (e.g. III_E_1, III_E_2), and unintentional mismatches between tables that should correspond to some extent (e.g. III_E_2 and III_E_3).

- The comment column in the tables is very helpful as most of the deviations can be easily described in a few words.

- Add text to the Evaluation Guidelines on when the previous year's information will be available for the pre-screeners. We now had to wait for the latest version of the final pre-screening file. I would expect that those files are ready prior to pre-screening (e.g. 31 May) so pre-screeners can immediately detect recurrent issues.

By module:

- III.A: Guidelines say that 'X' should be filled in, when the MS has a fishery in a particular area-target assemblage/species combination, but the table template only allows 'Y' and 'N' as entries.

- III.B: The determination "unpaid labour" is part of the NP, but usually an imputed annual salary is applied. This salary could be provided in the AR. This information is not yet explicitly requested.

- III.B: "Table III.B.1 should be filled in separately for each individual data source/survey performed." Apparently this is not applied consequently. However, it is questionable if this information is useful as it is not linked to certain variables. That information is basically available in Table III.B.3. Comparison with NP is impossible anyway.

- III.B: According to the AR guidelines, "Table III.B.1 should be filled in separately for each individual data source/survey performed. Insert separate lines for each sampling scheme per segment". The application of different type of surveys is more common among variables, rather than for population by segments, thus this requirement is more applicable to Table III.B.3. As some of MS applied different types of surveys for separate variables and indicated this information in Table III.B.1, particular segments were duplicated together with other related information as frame population, sample size, achieved sample size and etc. population. Therefore, as a pre-screener, it was very complicated to evaluate the quality indicators and compare whether provided total population is consistent with fleet register, when several segments are duplicated, and some of them not.

- Identification of segments between the tables in III.B and Table III.F.1 should be compatible, to measure whether economic and transversal variables were collected in the same comprehensiveness and were available for data transmission at the same segment level. In AER meetings, common issues arise, when economic and transversal data are at different aggregation level and not compatible. Evaluation of this problem at data collection level is complicated, for example in Table III.B.1, a MS indicates a data collection scheme at the particular segment level (PG1012, DTS1218 etc.) and in Table III.F.1 presents a population as "all segments >10 m." In this case, the comparability per segment and variable (Tables III.B.1, III.B.3 and III.F.1) is hardly achievable.

- In Tables III.B.1 and III.B.3, the guidelines clearly indicate that tables should contain information on segments which are not clustered or, in case of clustering, for clusters. It was a common issue for several MS that they still provided separate clustered segments in these tables instead of clusters.

- Table III.B.3 in the drop-down list "energy consumption" (transversal) was provided as economic variable and in the footnotes indicating that all transversal variables should be in Table III.F.1. For MS, it was not clear where to place it.

- III.B: "Clustering for statistical purposes" should be further elaborated. What kind of justification is expected? Issue for NP.

- III.B: The names of variables in the AR tables which were derived directly from fleet economics call data are not all consistent with the names in the regulation.

- Table III.E.1: The current guidelines allow for the entry '<200 tonnes'. Given that a MS has to identify the actual tonnage to fill in the table, the value should be inserted. Where TACs are below <200t, this can be a significant part of the catch (for example <200t exceeding 20% of the TAC with 3-4 MS prosecuting the fishery) and major components

can remain unsampled (we came up with a rule covering this in EWG 16_01 but it will be hard to check significance if the actual value is not available).

- Table III.E.3: not all columns defined in the AR guidelines.

- III.F: How is "region" specified? Does it refer to Appendix II (Decision 2010/93/EU)? Is that a meaningful way of classification? End users?

  - III.F: Transversal variables (effort): fleet segments are characterized by predominant gear. What if they temporarily perform other techniques that require specific effort variables (e.g. soaking time for trawlers)?

Annex 4 MS Specific Issues

Member State: BELGIUM

Overall performance and compliance

The overall performance and compliance was very good without any major issue

Fleet-economic data collection

It was performed properly; however some issues were reported regarding the sample rate calculation, the clustering of inactive vessels and the name of clusters.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

It was performed properly, no issue has been reported

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

MS is moving to 4S, it seems that the achievements were performed properly and no major issue has been reported.

Recreational fisheries sampling

It was performed properly, no issue has been reported.

Surveys-at-sea

It was performed properly; an issue that has been reported is that data from DYFS and data from older surveys of BTS has still not uploaded to DATRAS

Data transmission to end-users

It was performed properly, no issue has been reported.

Member State: BULGARIA

Fleet-economic data collection

Bulgaria has been asked to re-submit tables IIB1, IIB2 and IIB3

Overall performance and compliance

Overall compliance was an improvement but there are still some major and minor issues.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

Overall compliance was good but some variable are missing from the tables.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Bulgaria only listed 2 species and 2 metiers and it's not clear whether they were collected at sea or in port. The MS has been asked to re-submit tables IIIC1, IIIC3 and IIIC6. Under sampling was achieved for biological parameters for nearly all species.

Recreational fisheries sampling

Bulgaria has no listed species present in the area but they do sample a 'forbidden' fishery

Surveys-at-sea

Two surveys did not take place due to financial constraints

Data transmission to end-users

There were rather a lot of data transmission issues for Bulgaria in 2015. 9 from the total of 15 were assessed as unsatisfactory. Eight of the nine were deemed to be of medium or high severity.

Repetitive issues

In 2014 and 2015 no minutes available as no national coordination meeting was arranged.

Economic variables: sampling schemes inconsistent with NP

Economic variables: 2014 = 'partly', in 2015 = No regarding an explanation for deviations

Economic variables: in 2014 and 2015 no justifications given (scored No both years)

Biological: module C: all métier names (except one) are incorrect according to RCM agreement

Biological: module C: in 2014 and 2015 no explanation for deviations

Recreational fisheries: module D: if species are not present in the area, the MS should apply for a derogation. (advised in 2014 and 2015).

Surveys: module G: spring surveys not carried out due to financial constraints.

Aquaculture: section IV table IV_B_2: missing variables

Member State CYPRUS

Overall performance and compliance

Regarding data transmission 3 out of 5 issues were considered unsatisfactory answered by MS

Regarding the rest of modules, MS comply with the requirements except for a minor issue in module III.B,

Fleet-economic data collection

MS showed some problems with the name of clustered segments and also with the reporting of quality information which is missing.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

These modules were performed properly and no issue arises

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

These modules were performed properly and no issue arises

Recreational fisheries sampling

This module were performed properly and no issue arises

Surveys-at-sea

This module were performed properly and no issue arises

Data transmission to end-users

5 data transmission failures were highlighted for Cyprus, all of which were rated as being of either low or medium severity. Replies from Cyprus on these issues have been classified as "unsatisfactory" by the EWG in 3 cases and these data transmission failures require further clarification.

Member State: GERMANY

Overall performance and compliance

MS performed all modules without major issues arise.

Fleet-economic data collection

MS performed the module well with no issues arise.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

MS performed the module well with no major issue arise

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

MS performed the module well, with minor editorial issues. MS has moved to 4S sampling in specific region and direct comparison is not possible

Recreational fisheries sampling

MS performed the module with minor issue concerning alignment of table I.A.1 and III.D.

Surveys-at-sea

MS performed the module with no issues arise.

Data transmission to end-users

MS done data transmission to the end users satisfactory

Member State: DENMARK

Overall performance and compliance

The overall performance and compliance was quite good without any major issue. However, there are some repetitive issues from previous year that MS should take action to remedy them. These issues are the following: i) MS failed to provide the minutes of national coordination meetings, ii) MS should clarify the issue with the derogation on Baltic sharks mention in table IIID1 and not mentioned in table I.A.1

Fleet-economic data collection

It was performed properly; however some issues were reported regarding the description of methods and assumptions made for estimation of capital value and capital costs and the classification of segments which have been clustered

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

It was performed properly, no issue has been reported

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

MS moved to 4S, it seems that the achievements were performed well; however some inconsistencies were reported in the naming of sampling frames. Also the text for section E should be revised.

Recreational fisheries sampling

It was performed well; however MS should clarify the issue with the derogation on Baltic sharks mention in table IIID1 and not mentioned in table I.A.1

Surveys-at-sea

It was performed properly, no issue has been reported

Data transmission to end-users

For 2 out of 23 data calls for data transmission to end users the MS's compliance was judged as unsatisfactory

Member State ESTONIA

Overall performance and compliance

The Estonian Annual Report (AR) is performed and complies with the present revised guidance (January 2016) for the submission of AR. Overall, the compliance level has been evaluated as quite high. Some minor issues have been highlighted in the evaluation for consideration in future submissions.

One recurring issue was found in AR: MS has been asked to provide minutes of the national coordination meeting. The evaluators were missing information of attendances on several international meetings, list of references, annexes and the complete copies of bilateral agreement. Also starting from next year, Estonia is requested to provide the link to the DCF-website. As such, the link provided was deemed as incorrect.

Fleet-economic data collection

The overall execution of this module exercise was performed very well. Only one issue was noted: MS has been asked to clarify the method used to calculate capital value and capital cost.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

The data concerning aquaculture and processing industries was collected as listed and defined in Appendix XII of Commission Decision 2010/93/EU. The method of data collection were described. Deviation from NP proposal has been justified. No issues raised.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Achieved samplings were performed exhaustively. A minor issue was highlighted on consistency: the sampling frame code was not listed in table IIIC4. MS was encouraged to provide catch data by quarter from next year, to grey out métiers, that have not been selected for sampling. The closure of shrimp fisheries has affected samplings achievement relating to other stocks. The proposed actions to avoid deviation are deemed reasonable.

Recreational fisheries sampling

Recreational fisheries are not in NP. MS provided text and completed table in accordance to the guidelines. Deviations were not indicated by MS. All recreational fisheries are covered by catch estimate. No issues raised.

Surveys-at-sea

All planned surveys were performed. No issues raised.

Data transmission to end-users

CCAT, ICES and JRC highlighted 12 data transmission failures for Estonia. Most of these were rated as being of low or medium severity. Only one coverage issue was indicated as high severity. EWG assessed all MS responses as "satisfactory".

Member State: FRANCE

Overall performance and compliance

The AR does not seem to be complete which is a repetitive issue: The MS keeps the deadline for AR submission, but the AR appears to be incomplete. Therefore, the report is partly insufficient. However, EWG notes that the MS represents a highly complex fishing sector with involvement in all regions (with the exception of the Baltic) and numerous fishing métiers and target species. In this context it has to be appreciated that MS has made an effort to fulfill the obligations. Nevertheless, there is a clear need for internal organization and cooperation in order to produce a concise report.

Fleet-economic data collection

For all regions: Table III.B.1 should contain information on segments which are not clustered or, in case of clustering, for clusters. In table III.B.3 not all segments are reported for all variables. Furthermore, the table should contain information on segments which are not clustered or, in case of clustering, for clusters. There is some missing information in table III.B.3 which is not described in the text and it is not clear if all segments/variables are covered. Deviations reported in the tables are not justified in the text.

For other regions: Tables III.B.1 should contain information on segments which are not clustered or, in case of clustering, for clusters. Only target population is reported. No

survey is implemented. Achieved sample rates, response rates, data sources and type of data collection schemes are missing for several segments/variables. Sampling scheme only covers two segments. No derogations exist for not collecting data in other regions. There is only very limited information on data quality. No explanation is given on deviations in the achieved accuracy compared to what was planned in the NP proposal. No actions are described to improve data collection in other regions.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

Concerning aquaculture: Tables should be filled according to the Guidelines and should not contain blank cells. In the Table IV.A.2 the reference year is 2015 while in Table IV.A.3 it is 2013. This is contradicting and due to this reason the quality indicators are also inconsistent. The achieved sample rate and response rate should be equal in case of Census.

Concerning processing industry: Some variables are missing. Achieved sample rate and Response rate should be equal in case of Census. The information about data quality should be consistant with the information provided in the tables. No justification is provided on missing variables.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Sampling of commercial fisheries:

A considerable number of metiers selected in table IIIC1 do not correspond with the metiers sampled and presented in tables IIIC3 and IIIC4. There is inconsistency in the sampling frame codes used in Tables III.C.3 and III.C.4. What is reported in the text is not in line with the tables. The planned total number of trips to be sampled differs between NP and AR2015 (III.C.4). The judgement over the achieved trips per metier is very difficult because of the inconsistency in the sampling frames and frame codes. Furthermore, it is very difficult to compare the tables since the names of metiers, codes, sampling frame codes do not correspond. Explanations for deviations are given only for some cases, MS just make general statements repeated for all regions.

For the mediterranean region no data from GSA 8 are reported although a private initiative is mentioned in the text. The length sampling was realized only in GSA 7 and for some species in all areas. Only 2 out of 6 species met the target. No sampling for *Thunnus thynnus* is reported. In the table IIIC1 the region WECAF is not mentioned at all whereas it is present in tables III.C.3 and III.C.4 of the AR2015. From the selection only 3 metiers are reported in other regions, but it seems that more metiers have been sampled.

Biological stock-related variables:

Region North Sea and EA: MS needs to look into tables III.E.1 and III.E.2, in order to assure that all selected species are consistently presented. Species that are selected for sampling are not included in the tables III.E.2 and 3 (*Micromesistius poutassou, Merlangius merlangus, Merluccius merluccius, Psetta maxima, Scomber scombrus*). The achievements cannot be judged as not all the species selected for sampling are included in Table III.E.3 of AR2015. However, in the AR2015 text it is reported that intensity for stock-based variables was achieved for nearly all the species.

Region Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea: Species that are selected for sampling are not included in the tables III.E.2 and 3. With the exceptions of some shark species no data for demersal species are reported in the table but in the text is more info. The achievements cannot be judged as not all the species selected for sampling are included in Table III.E.3 of AR2015.

Other regions: Some species selected in the first table are not reported in Table IIIE2: for ICCAT for example *Xiphias gladius, Thunnus thynnus, Thunnus alalunga* are missing. *Istiophoridae* in IOTC have been selected in IIIE1 but no presence in IIIE2. Furthermore, for the 7 species selected in table III.E.1, parameters are reported for only 3 species in table III.E.3 (for ICCAT and IOTC areas): *Katsuwonus pelamis, Thunnus albacares and Thunnus obesus.*

All regions: Deviations are not reported, just a statement that the "Analysis of levels of precision has started." To avoid shortfalls MS only mentions that a quality-focused approach is being developed.

Recreational fisheries sampling

In 2015, in all regions very few sampling activities were planned. It is not clear in the text if more sampling should have been carried out. MS states that they will take new actions when EU-MAP starts running. On the basis of the results of the pilot study conducted by MS on the recreational fishery of sharks, it states that a derogation from EU should be granted. Regarding deviations MS states that there is nothing to report in 2015. In order to avoid shortfalls MS states it "will most definitely redefine its works on recreational fisheries when new DC-MAP requirements will be published".

Surveys-at-sea

No issues

Data transmission to end-users

For a number of data transmission issues France again refers just to another issue ID number instead of answering every single data transmission issue specifically. In last year´s EWG it was decided that this is unsatisfactory. France is urgently asked to respect the EWG decisions.

Regarding the sampling of plaice in the Eastern channel (VIIe): Since several years ICES WGCSE states that the assessment relies heavily on the age composition data derived from UK (E+W) sample data and would benefit from the addition of age composition data from France that accounts for 25% of the landings. France replies that it cannot sample the stock because the catches are under 200 tonnes, it is only by-catch and the landings are scattered along the coast and throughout the year. EWG is the opinion that this is unsatisfactory and that this issue should be resolved as soon as possible. Although MS catch is <200t (175t in 2015) its share of the TAC is approximately 20% of the TAC for plaice in VIIe. RCMs have discussed the problems associated with the <200t limit when related to species with low TACs and small landings. There are agreed sampling plans at the regional level (sole VIIa for example) and it was a recommendation at RCM NA in 2008 that France should put in place a sampling plan for this stock.

Member State: FINLAND

Overall performance and compliance

In overall the performance of the MS was very good.

Some specific issues however, should become in the attention of the MS. Several relevant meetings like PGDATA and WKISCON2 are missing from the relevant II.B.1 and also no reasons are provided for non-attendance to the meetings. Consequently, the table II.B.1 should be resubmitted. Moreover, some relevant LM2014 recommendations are also missing, e.g. LM2, LM3, LM4 and thus, MS should update the Table II.B.2 in line with the guidelines next year.

Fleet-economic data collection

There were some major issues in regards to this module and the Member State needs to resubmit the tables III.B.1 and III.B.2. According to the relevant EU guidelines these tables should contain information both on unclustered segments and clusters. Finland carries out two different surveys and for each segment these two different surveys are reported. In addition to this MS should describe which variables are collected with the two different surveys.

It is noted that the content of clustered segments should be provided in table III.B.2. When clustering is used by a Member State information about clustering should be provided and thus, Finland should explain and justify the approaches of clustering used.

Furthermore, in table III.B.3 the Response rates and the Achieved sample rates should be provided for each source separately.

Member State: GREECE

Overall performance and compliance

The overall performance for AR 2015 was assessed to compliance class "Mostly".

The module on the evaluation of the Recreational fisheries was one of several modules where the achievement was very good.

Three modules that were good, but still would benefit from some improvements in future AR, are the module on Fleet-economic data collection, Biological metier related variables and the module on the Biological stock related variables.

Regarding the modules on the Surveys at sea and Economic data collection on aquaculture, here further improvements would be beneficial in the future.

Fleet-economic data collection

Part of the population was excluded from the data collection scheme

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

For some segments quality data are not provided

The quality indicators are not properly provided

MS provide segments in population of aquaculture data (IV.A.2) which are not in NP and have no data on total population number and etc.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

A lot of metier were under sampled

Deviation of LPF issue is not explained

A lot of species have been under sampled for all the biological parameters

Recreational fisheries sampling

No comments.

Surveys-at-sea

MEDITS not conducted; MEDIAS only less than half of the planned days & activities

Funding for DCF programme should be available from the start of the year

It is not clear to what extent the quality can be maintained

Data transmission to end-users

No comments.

Member State CROATIA

Overall performance and compliance

YES for all modules except for Module IV, which was Mostly. No major issues.

Fleet-economic data collection

No major issues. MS to revise and resubmit table III.B.1.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

No major issues. MS to revise and resubmit tables IV.A.1, IV.A.2 and IV.B.2.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

One repeated minor issue in sampling frame codes in table III.C.3 and discrepancy with AR text and table III.C.6 with reported undersampling of large pelagics. MS to revise and resubmit the tables and the AR text accordingly.

Recreational fisheries sampling

No major issues. Tuna is reported to be missing from the species list in table III.D.1, but no action is required as it is clearly explained in the AR text.

Surveys-at-sea

No issues.

Data transmission to end-users

There were nine issues raised, mostly concerning data that were not delivered from the period before Croatia's membership in EU and therefore not relevant, and about data of discards that haven't been a problem in Croatian fisheries according to the answer of the MS. All issues raised seemed not to be relevant and they were considered to be satisfactorily explained to STECF by the MS.

Member State: IRELAND

Overall performance and compliance

MS performed all modules without major issues.

Fleet-economic data collection

Compare to previous years, MS made an improvement in data collection strategy and returns rates of data deliveries. Nevertheless, EWG considered that sampling plan is still too low to achieve adequate coverage, even with a 100% response rate. Sample size should be improved to assure adequate coverage and data quality of the whole fisheries sector. MS should take additional measures and further increase effort to improve planed sample rate and response rate. Number of issues was observed in reporting AR tables and compliance with guidelines.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

No major problems were detected in aquaculture and fish processing sector, except the inconsistency between AR text and tables, where different type of surveys were provided for collection of fish processing turnover statistics. MS should also consider the effort in order to improve response rates for Companies <= 10.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues were observed, just some minor editorial amendments in the AR text should be considered for description of sampling in future.

Recreational fisheries sampling

No comments

Surveys-at-sea

No comments

Data transmission to end-users

Substantial amount of missing economic data at the fleet segment level for small vessel length groups was detected and it was a recurring issue. MS should comply with DCF requirements where submission for all variables and segments is mandatory, unless MS

has derogation. In the case of small population, clustering schemes and estimation methods could be applied to overcome data deficiency.

Member State ITALY

Overall performance and compliance

The overall performance and compliance for Italy was very good .Some minor issues have been highlighted in the evaluation for consider ion in future submissions.

Fleet-economic data collection

Overall Italy did very well in this module. Only Income from landing is missing, and Italy has been asked to resubmit Table II.B.2 to include this missing data.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

Italy did very well in this module, with only one issue highlighted for action. "Non-Probability Sample Survey was implemented as a type of data collection instead of Probability Sample Survey which was planned in NP.   MS has to clarify the differences of sample scheme between NP and AR. Then MS should resubmit the table or explain differences in the text

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Achievement within the biological modules was generally good. Only some minor issues highlighted on consistency within and between tables and on explanations on deviations.

Recreational fisheries sampling

Very good achievement, no issues raised.

Surveys-at-sea

Very good achievement, no issues raised.

Data transmission to end-users

Several data transmission failures were highlighted for Italy, all of which were rated as being of either low or medium severity. Replies from Italy on these issues were satisfactory in the most part, and only one issue has been classified as "unsatisfactory" by the EWG. This data transmission failure query requires further clarification by Italy.

Member State: LITHUANIA

Overall performance and compliance

The Lithuanian overall compliance is "Yes".

National data collection organization

EWG 1608 noted an issue regarding the data collection website. Although Lithuania has a more general website in place, MS should make available information as requested in COM Reg. 665/2008, Art. 8(2). Regarding attendance of international meetings, MS marked some relevant meetings with 'not planned'.

Within the follow-up of regional and international recommendations and agreements MS listed recommendations from 2011-2013 and comments from STECF 14-13 (EWG 14-07). MS should not list recommendations from 2011-2013 nor AR evaluation follow-ups in the future.

Fleet-economic data collection

No comments

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

No comments

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

EWG 1608 observed that selected métiers are not highlighted. MS should highlight relevant métiers in grey in the future, according to the guideline.

MS should consider asking for a derogation on biological métier related variables and stock-related variables for the North Atlantic region.

EWG 1608 considered that descriptions of the actions to avoid deviations in the future are not sufficient enough and do not cover all deviations from the NP proposal. Therefore a brief description of the actions to avoid deviations should be provided in the future AR.

Recreational fisheries sampling

No comments

Surveys-at-sea

The sampling scheme is not completely consistent with the NP proposal. BIAS has not been conducted, and BITS had only 75% (Q1) and 50% (Q4) of target achieved. MS should describe concrete actions to ensure the realization of the survey despite of breakdown of the vessel.

Data transmission to end-users

13 data transmission were raised:

End user	data call	N	End user	Severity	STECF Assessment
ICCAT	none	2	ICCAT	Unknown	2 Satisfactory
JRC	fleet economic	2	JRC	2 Medium	1 Unsatisfactory 1 Satisfactory
JRC	FDI	6	JRC	Unknown	6 Satisfactory
ICES	2015 Update assessment	8	ICES	1H/6M/1L	8 Satisfactory

EWG 1608 assessed that 17 answers are "satisfactory" whereas one is "Unsatisfactory".

Member State: LATVIA

Overall performance and compliance

The Latvian overall compliance is "Mostly".

National data collection organization

Some imprecisions in Module II about meetings minutes and non participation to meetings were noticed by EWG 1608.

Fleet-economic data collection

A minor issue is mentioned: Table III.B.3. contained Capital value and capital costs . Moreover, a specific section should include a description of methods and assumptions made for estimation of capital value and capital costs in the Annual Report.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

No comment

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No comments

Recreational fisheries sampling

No comments

Surveys-at-sea

The sampling scheme is not consistent with the NP Proposal due to technical problems or bad weather. MS did not clarify at all how these deviations could affect the data quality.

Module for management and use of the data

MS did not provide details on this chapter. Only a brief text was written on the database. and it is not sufficient to understand achievements on Management and use of data

Data transmission to end-users

13 data transmission were raised:

End user	data call	N	End user	Severity	STECF Assessment
ICCAT	none	4	ICCAT	Unknown	3 Satisfactory 1 Unsatisfatory
JRC	fleet economic	2	JRC	1 Medium 1 High	2 Satisfactory
JRC	FDI	1	JRC	Unknown	1 Unsatisfactory
ICES	2015 Update assessment	6	ICES	5M/1L	6 Satisfactory

Member State: MALTA

Overall performance and compliance

It is not clear why 2013 data for fleet processing were not available in 2015 data collection period when fish processing data collection is based on n-2 basis timing.

Fleet-economic data collection

As it is reported in AR and NP, Malta is not using clustering but for a certain segments population is lower than 3 vessels. For protection of confidential data MS could consider to use clustering.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

The provided tables should contain the data only for reference year. In this case 2010-2012 data is present and is not clear why 2013 data were not available in 2015 data collection period when fish processing data collection is based on n-2 basis timing. MS have to clarify the availability of data for 2013.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Most of the sampling was done on-shore. MS should put more effort on sampling at sea and should ensure a good coverage both of sea and shore sampling.

Recreational fisheries sampling

As requested by the EU Guidelines all the species for recreational fishery (including eels and sharks) should be listed independently if they are present or not. MS to fill the table with all the relevant species with the appropriate indications.

Surveys-at-sea

No comments.

Data transmission to end-users

Fleet economic:

Significant amount of missing data for several fleet segments and years. Submission for DCF is mandatory for all variables and segments unless MS has a derogation. MS reply does not include any action to overcome the problems in the future.

Med and BS:

The data for discard for 2013 and data before 2009 were not provided.

Member State: POLAND

Overall performance and compliance

The overall execution of the Annual Report 2015 exercise was performed very well. There are only minor issues in the Polish AR. The majority of these issues can be dealt with in the next annual report. EWG judgements were "Yes" for almost all modules except module III B-Economic variables which was appreciated with "Mostly"

Fleet-economic data collection

In the table III.B.1 EWG comments: "number of inactive vessels is missing. Pelagic trawlers 18-24 is indicated as clustered, but it is not reported in table III.B.2". As action needed: MS should revise the table according to the guidelines. The EWG judgement is "Mostly".

Also judgement is "Mostly" for table III B3 where the comment is:" Achieved sample rate is calculated incorrectly, the rate should be reported and not the actual size of the sample". MS should revise the table according to the guidelines.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

No comments and no action needed

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

The EWG Comments: "One query over sampling of Salmo trutta. From Table III.C.4 we can see that 9 trips were planned to be sampled at sea in TN5, and 41 self sampling trips were achieved. However only 38% of the planned targets for *Salmo trutta* were achieved and reported in Table III.E.3. MS must clarify why such a significant shortfall in *Salmo trutta* biological sampling occurred.

Recreational fisheries sampling

No comments and no action needed

Surveys-at-sea

EWG comments: "Slightly different planned targets given in AR and NP: BITS Q1: AR 49 hauls, NP 35 hauls; BITS Q4: AR 33 hauls, NP 31 hauls; BIAS: AR 34 hauls, NP 31 hauls, AR 830 Echo Nm, NP 1000 Echo Nm. NP targets were, however, reached as well".

MS requested to fill in targets from NP proposal in columns H and K

Data transmission to end-users

EWG assessment for data transmitted to all end-users (ICES, NAFO and JRC) is "Satisfactory".

Member State: PORTUGAL

Overall performance and compliance

It was the opinion of EWG16_08 that Portugal only partly complied in its achievements as submitted in the 2015 AR.

There were continuing problems associated with Modules II and Module IIB

There were significant problems, especially relating to the North Atlantic area, with Module IIIC and IIIE.

As is the previous report for 2014 minutes of the national co-ordination meetings are missing and these should be reported

Table I.A.1 In the future MS should not delete table but indicate in the table that no relevant agreements are in place

Table II.B.1 List of meetings is incomplete MS should provide a complete list of meetings in the future and should provide reasons for non- attendance.

Fleet-economic data collection

As is the previous report for 2014 there are major issues with Tables III.B.1, III.B.2, III.B.3 and MS is requested to resubmit these tables following the guidelines

MS mentions in the text that the Mediterranean fleet is merged with SUPRA-REGION Baltic Sea, North Sea, Eastern Arctic, North Atlantic. Only 2 vessels operated in the Mediterranean. However, there is no section for the Med supra-region in AR text. Tables however include information on the Med.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

In general sections were well covered and improved since the previous report. The issues that need to be resolved are listed below:-

Table IV.A.2 MS should insert the missing name of the segment within the table (line 12)

Table IV.A.3 Reference year is not correct. Achieved sample rate and response rate should be in percentage. In column H is not clear what is provided, should be indicated in footnotes.

MS is requested to resubmit the Table

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

There were major issues with the métier allocations for the North Atlantic region. 73 % of total trips (all regions) are allocated to "MIS_MIS_0_0_0" indicating poor data quality.

MS is requested to provide a detailed explanation on this deviation.

The majority of stock parameter combinations are significantly under sampled. In many instances no actions are suggested to remedy the observed deviations.

MS is requested to provide the actions proposed to remedy those shortfalls not already covered.

Recreational fisheries sampling

Not all mandatory recreational species are listed in table III.D.1. Besides sea bass, the table should include salmon, sharks and eel. However, all species are mentioned in the text.

In the future MS to include all relevant species in table III.D.1

Surveys-at-sea

All sections were completed in line with the guidelines and MS fulfilled all surveys as required.

Data transmission to end-users

In most instances the EWG felt that MS responses to perceived DT failures were justified, the main outstanding issues are detailed below:

ICES

MS should take appropriate measures to prepare and provide data in due time where there is actual data collected under the NP. The EWG is aware of the problems caused by restricted time frames but this is a recurring issue for all MS.

VMS Data Issue ID 1546:- Formal rules for submission of VMS data for scientific purposes to ICES need to be put in place. MS to confirm that all relevant fleets have been covered within the DT

JRC

Fleet economic Issue ID 2385:- Regarding missing variables, MS should comply with requirements; submission for DCF is mandatory for all variables and segments unless MS has a derogation

Member State: ROMANIA

Overall performance and compliance

MS mostly performed well, with some inconsistencies regarding biological sampling and fleet-economic data, but the performance of MS regarding recreational fisheries was not satisfactory.

Fleet-economic data collection

MS mostly completed the AR module III.B, with an issue regarding Table III.B.3 and clustering. EWG requests MS to revise the table and to update the AR text.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

MS fully completed the AR modules III.F, IV.A and IV.B.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

MS completed the AR module III.C partly, with inconsistencies in the sampling frame and achievement. EWG requests MS to revise and resubmit Tables III.C.1., III.C.3, III.C.4 and III.C.6.

MS completed the AR module III.E mostly, with an inconsistency in the sampling scheme. EWG requests MS to revise and resubmit the AR text for Module III.E.1, following the regional agreement. MS should provide information of the quality of the data achieved as well.

Recreational fisheries sampling

MS did not complete the AR module III.D. EWG requests MS to update and resubmit Table III.D.1.

Surveys-at-sea

MS fully completed the AR module III.G.

Data transmission to end-users

There are no DT issues for the MS.

Member State SLOVENIA

Overall performance and compliance

The overall performance for AR 2015 was assessed to compliance class "Mostly". This result is the same as the Slovenian AR 2014 was assigned for overall performance last year.

The module on the evaluation of the economic situation of the aquaculture and processing industry was one of several modules where the achievement was very good.

Two modules that were good, but still would benefit from some improvements in future AR, are the module on recreational fisheries and the module on the research surveys at sea.

Regarding the modules on the biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks, here further improvements would be beneficial in the future. This holds especially for the biological métier-related module.

Fleet-economic data collection

Overall the achievement in this module was satisfactorily.

There was only one comment regarding minor inconsistencies when comparing Table III.B.3 to AR guidelines.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

In this module the achievement was also satisfactorily.

There was only comment here as well which reminded Slovenia to always use the latest version of AR tables.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Achievements within these modules were only partly satisfactorily.

Several issues were raised for the "Métier related variables" and Slovenia is requested to provide further information in AR 2015 on for example data quality and actions to avoid deviations in the future.

Slovenia is also requested to provide additional information for the "Stock-related variables". In here, an under-sampling for all species (sardine and anchovy) and all variables is noticed and Slovenia is in the future urgently advised to ensure better coverage of sampling.

Member State: SWEDEN

Overall performance and compliance

The overall performance of the MS was very good and marked as a 'Yes'. Just a few issues were raised in relation to four AR tables which need to be revised in accordance to the guidelines.

Fleet-economic data collection

Tables III.B.1, III.B.2 and III.B.3 are not consistent with the guidelines. There are issues with the name of fleet segments and vessel length; also, inactive vessels should not be clustered and name of cluster is recommended to be merged instead of repeated in each line. Capital value and capital costs should not be reported in Table III.B.3. The issues with Tables III.B.1 and III.B.2 are repetitive, as they were pointed out in last year's evaluation of the AR as well. The MS is asked to revise and resubmit Tables III.B.1-3.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

Eight variables are missing from Table IV.A.3, although data collection for these variables was planned in the NP. These variables are: net investments, debts, livestock volume, fish feed volume, volume of sales, number of persons employed, and FTE national. Also, achieved sample rate is not equal to planned sample rate in the case of a census. The MS is asked to revise Table IV.A.3 and relevant text in accordance to the guidelines, and provide an explanation for the missing variables.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No issues.

Recreational fisheries sampling

No issues.

Surveys-at-sea

No issues.

Data transmission to end-users

Most issues raised by the end-users (JRC, ICES and ICCAT) were addressed in a satisfactory way by the MS. One issue raised by the JRC was attributed by the MS to an error in the JRC database, and this needs to be checked by the JRC.

Member State: THE NETHERLANDS

Overall performance and compliance

The overall performance and compliance was very good without any major issues.

Fleet-economic data collection

Some issues were reported regarding table III.B.2 and III.B.3. The MS has been asked to re-submit both tables.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

It was performed properly, no issues have been reported.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

It was performed properly, no issues have been reported.

Recreational fisheries sampling

It was performed properly, no issues have been reported.

Surveys-at-sea

It was performed properly, no issues have been reported.

Data transmission to end-users

It was performed properly, no issues have been reported.

Member State: SPAIN

Overall performance and compliance

Overall very good performance without any major issues.

Fleet-economic data collection

MS should consider to put more efforts in order to increase sampling size for of a number of fleet segments. MS is advised to increase planned sample numbers in order to achieve statistically reasonable sample numbers. This issue is repetitive.

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

Some variables have a low Achieved sample rate even zero. MS should make effort to increase Achieved sample rate for the future.

Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Some under- and oversampling occurred in all areas.

Recreational fisheries sampling

Surveys-at-sea

Data transmission to end-users

For 9 out of 56 data calls for data transmission to end users the MS's compliance was judged as unsatisfactory.

ICES

MS should take appropriate measure to deliver data on time (WGDEEP).Deadlines should be adjusted in order to smooth the working flow. This is an issue, which should be dealt with by the WG and MS.

IOTC

Concerning issue 2570, MS answer fits partially with the request of clarifications. MS should deeper investigate the data failures and provide a justification

JRC

Failures in FDI data call were not explain. No justification is given and no precise actions for improvement are reported.

In Med&BS area MS is not collecting stock related variables at GSA level (level 4 of Appendix VII of EU Decision 93/2010) claiming that level 3 is required.

Member State: UNITED KINGDOM

Overall performance and compliance

The overall performance and compliance for UK was very good. Some minor issues have been highlighted in the evaluation for consider ion in future submissions.

Fleet-economic data collection

Overall UK quality is good. UK should resubmit table III.B.1, and III.B.3 (including Energy consumption) and to provide separate section for capital value.

Research at sea survey

Good general overview. MS should check Table III.G.I for formatting issues

Economic data collection on aquaculture and processing industry

General overview is good. MS should resubmit Table IV.A.2. For module IV.A. 1 MS should clarify which sample schemes were used and resubmit the table if necessary

Recreational fisheries sampling

Very good achievement, no issues raised.

Surveys-at-sea

Very good achievement, no issues raised.

Data transmission to end-users

Several data transmission failures were highlighted for UK, all of which were rated as being of either low, medium or high severity.

Replies from UK on these issues were all judged satisfactory except WGNSSK_bll-nsea_all and the update assessment_WGWIDE_mac-nea_all were judged as "Unsatisfactory" on

the basis of the importance for assessment to have in hands all data previous to the WK in order to run the models properly; UK should also the fact that all institution involved in the data provision send their data in time

Five data-transmission were rated of high severity for timeless issue, WGWIDE, WGNSSK ple-eche, WGSCE_cod-scow, HAWG_her-47d3, WGWIDE_mac-nea_all, HAWG_her-47d3, WGWIDE_mac-nea for ICES, EWG judged the MS reply 'satisfactory' while UK document the cases for timely data submission (for WGCSE_cod-scow)

Annex 6 – Compilation of "Comments, suggestions and reflections" by MS

Belgium:

- Page 12 of the Guidelines refer to 4 sections: 'sections III.B.1-4 should be given'. However, in the template, this is not present. This can create confusion.

- Table III.E.1: initially it was not clear what needed to be used as reference years (discrepancy between Guidelines and example in template), which led to confusion.

- Headings in chapter VI from Guidelines not consistent with rest of document.

Croatia

- In regards to the evaluation of the Annual Report for 2015 it is important to emphasize that the NP 2014-2016 represents a modified NP 2012-2013, for which the data for 2011 was used. The modification of NP 2014-2016 relates only to derogations, while data had not been updated.

- At the Workshops on transversal variables I and II, held in 2015 and 2016, it was concluded that DCF is not fully aligned with the coding in the latest Master Data Register lists available for the Control Regulation or the FAO code list. As most MS use control data for transversal variables, additional effort may be done in order to align the coding lists. This is important as discrepancies between the two lists create an additional burden to the MS, with implications also on funding as mapping procedures must be set to align the codes. For example, traditional Croatian gears which fall under the FAO category MIS (miscellanea) could not be included as such in the data call tables as the code is not available in the data call coding list, therefore NK for unknown had to be inserted.

- Additionally, there is a need to further describe and give guidelines to MS as to calculation of effort variables for passive gears, in order to harmonize reporting across MS.

- In regards to aging techniques, significant discrepancies reading the otoliths were encountered among readers due to uncertainty of false growth rings determinations. Additional exercise for harmonization of reading the otoliths for *E. encrasicolus, M. merluccius, M. barbatus, M. surmuletus, T. trachurus* and *T. mediterraneus* among readers is strongly advisable.

- Cooperation with JRC, in terms of JRC data quality reports, has greatly aided in improving the establishment of a data validation system and improved data quality in general.

- Overall, we find it difficult to comply with all requirements and data call obligations, therefore we support the development of a database and central access point for end users.

Germany

- Layout of standard tables: Drop-down menus in all cells are not helpful for filling the cells in the standard tables. Overall, the set of standard tables needs to be cleaned from formats and linkages to old data files. In the current format, various error messages pop up when opening the file and filling the cells.

Latvia

- Latvia considers that the proposed indication of the landing values (<200 t) in Table III.E.1 could be quite misleading for several species which have much lower landing values but for which Latvia collects the biological data. Thus such species as salmon, sea trout, eel, common whitefish and turbot has annual landings below 10 t and some species even around 1 t. Latvia proposes to present the actual landing figure.

The Netherlands

Comments to the tables

- The pre-defined lists referring to RFMO/RFO/IO are not consistent with the guidelines. MS used the pre-defined lists. E.g. guidelines definition 'IO: ICES', drop-down list table 'ICES'.

- The pre-defined lists in Table III.E.2 (columns A and C) did not provide the correct or incomplete information to fill in the sheet. MS put in the values as mentioned in the guidelines.

Other comments

- NLD requests to make the LM recommendations available for all MSs well before the submission deadline for AR. LM 2014 report states that 'The LM considers that recommendations on DCF issues from STECF and other relevant groups (e.g. PGMed, PGECON) should also be included in the ICES database. The LM agreed, however, that only those recommendations that have been approved by the LM should enter the database. The Commission informed LM members that it will contract a person to compile all recommendations approved by the LM by early 2015 so that MS can use this compilation when preparing their Annual Reports for 2014.'.

- The recommendations agreed upon by LM 2014 are however not mentioned in the ICES recommendations database.

- NLD requests to reconsider the deadline of 31 May for submission of the AR. Almost all data requests for 2015 and data analyses in international working groups took and will take place in the first two quarters of the year. This causes a high work peak in this period and problems in resource management to produce these data timely. In addition, in the same period, data need to be processed for the production of the AR. This increases the risk of not being able timely to comply with all requests. NLD therefore proposes to defer the deadline for the submission of this report to later in the year (e.g. August)

- In response to the comments on the Annual Report 2014, The Netherlands provided a revised version of the AR 2014 by September 2015. At the time of writing the AR 2015, no response to the adapted AR 2014 has been received. Hence, the AR 2015 contains similar descriptions and explanations as the revised AR 2014. The Netherlands would have preferred to incorporate the final findings on the AR 2014 in its 2015 report. The Netherlands requests to produce the final response to an annual report, prior to the production of the report covering the following year.

Sweden

- In table VI.1, a column for economic data on aquaculture is lacking. Sweden suggests that such a column is added, to report the transmission of those data.

- In table VI.1 the achievement rate "F" was selected for most data since Sweden has delivered, in general all data requested for in the data calls within the timeframe given.

However, in some cases there might be minor shortfalls in the data transmission but this was not the level of details that could be handled efficiently in the current table.

Slovenia

- It would be very useful that the forms for submission of the data for data calls will remain the same for a few consecutive data calls. Also because of the changes in forms for submission we have some extra costs related to preparation of data.

United Kingdom

- In view of the substantial amount of expenditure spent on eels and salmon monitoring, under the DCF and the Eels Action Plan, Annex 2 to this report provides details about these activities in the UK.

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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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