



JRC SCIENCE FOR POLICY REPORT

Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)

Evaluation of the 2018 Annual Reports for data collection and Data Transmission issues (STECF-19-09)

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Commission Decision of 25 February 2016 setting up a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, C(2016) 1084, OJ C 74, 26.2.2016, p. 4–10. The Commission may consult the group on any matter relating to marine and fisheries biology, fishing gear technology, fisheries economics, fisheries governance, ecosystem effects of fisheries, aquaculture or similar disciplines. This report presents the STECF findings based on the Report of the Expert Working Group (EWG 19-09) which was held from 24-28 June 2019 in Gothenburg, Sweden, to evaluate MS Annual Reports on data collection for 2018, the MS's data transmission to the end users during 2018. The report of the EWG was reviewed by the STECF during its 61st plenary meeting held from 1-5 July 2019 in Brussels, Belgium.

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SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR FISHERIES (STECF) – Evaluation of the 2018 Annual Reports for data collection and Data Transmission issues (STECF-19-09)

Background provided by the Commission

Article 11 of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017 (recast) prescribes that Member States shall submit to the Commission an annual report (AR) on the implementation of their national work plans (NWP) and that STECF shall evaluate: (a) the execution of the NWP; and (b) the quality of the data collected by the Member States. Therefore, the role of EWG 19-09 is: 1) to evaluate the Annual Reports submitted by Member States by 31st of May 2019, describing national data collection in 2018; and 2) to evaluate the apparent data transmission failures as reported by end users for the data obligations/ data calls launched during 2018, for the data collected by Member States until 2017.

A pre-screening exercise will take place to facilitate the work of the EWG. In that respect, the EWG 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. This type of assessment may take the form of specific questions addressed to the EWG, based on the outcomes of the pre-screening exercise.

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

The EWG should produce the following:

1. Overview of the assessment and overall evaluation of Annual Reports, including performance of Member States, major issues and recurring issues across many Member States
 - Per 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.
 - In their feedback, the EWG 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.
2. Overview of the assessment and overall evaluation of data transmission failures, including performance of Member States, main issues per end user and recurring issues across many Member States
 - Per Member State: (i) an evaluation of the data transmission failures to end users, via the online IT platform, (ii) Member State-specific issues relating to data transmission.
 - In their feedback, the EWG should identify the comments that require a reaction by the MS and those that are 'for information' only.

All produced files will be communicated to Member States in order to help them improve data collection, reporting and transmission for next year. The EWG should take into consideration the relevant files from previous STECF EWGs (STECF EWG 15-15; STECF EWG 16-08, STECF EWG 17-10; STECF EWG 18-10; STECF EWG 18-18) and particular attention should be paid to the Evaluation guidelines and guidance for the submission of documents produced by EWG 17-17, EWG 17-13, EWG 18-10 and of the 7-8/02/2018 technical meeting on the AR template.

Request to the STECF

STECF is requested to review the report of the STECF Expert Working Group meeting (specifically, an overview of the assessment and overall evaluation of Annual Reports and Data Transmission failures, including a general outlook of MS' performance, major issues and recurring issues across many Member States), evaluate the findings and make any appropriate comments and recommendations. STECF is also requested to suggest any improvement action if needed.

Summary of the information provided to STECF

EWG 19-09 met in Gothenburg the 24-28 June 2019. Since the meeting took place the week before STECF PLEN 19-02, the final EWG report was not yet available to PLEN 19-02. The following STECF comments and suggestions are consequently based on discussions among STECF members based on: (1) a presentation of outcomes from the EWG 19-09 meeting made by the chairperson, (2) an preliminary draft of the EWG 19-09 report, (3) a proposal for the revised Annual Reports (AR) evaluation template with regional separation, (4) an Excel file with data transmission (DT) issues and access to the online DTMT including the outcome of the evaluations of DT issues done by EWG 19-09.

STECF comments

Evaluation of the 2018 AR reports

STECF 19-02 observes that the evaluation of the 2018 AR was based on the AR evaluation template updated by EWG 18-18, and the Guidance for the Submission and Evaluation of ARs (Commission Implementing Decision 2018/1283)¹. As was the case in previous years, pre-screening of ARs prior to the beginning of the meeting was an important prerequisite for an efficient evaluation during the EWG. This year a total of 15 experts pre-screened all sections of the ARs. This was facilitated by the submission of complete ARs by all Member States (MS) within the deadline.

STECF notes that pre-screeners and experts at EWG 19-09 consider that some changes in the AR evaluation template and in the Guidance for the Submission and Evaluation of ARs are necessary in order to ensure that the evaluation is carried out more efficiently. The proposed changes are so far only preliminary, and STECF observes that further work is required to finalise the EWG proposals. STECF further notes that the need for further assessment criteria to ensure a more consistent and less subjective approach to evaluating ARs, originally flagged by EWG 18-10 and PLEN 18-02, has not yet been addressed. PLEN 19-02 considers that in addition to the existing AR evaluation criteria (Annex 2 of EWG 18-10), the preparation of a separate stand-alone document containing a comprehensive list of assessment rules and criteria should be compiled. The required revision of the AR evaluation template and the guidance for the evaluation of ARs should preferably be addressed by an ad-hoc contract in preparation for next year's EWG on the assessment of 2019 ARs.

MS are required to report relevant sections of their AR and Work Plan (WP) by regions. The regional dimension was included in the AR evaluation template until 2017. The meeting TORs requested EWG 19-09 to revise the evaluation template and reintroduce the regional separation per section, and to work on the basis of this finalised AR evaluation template. STECF observes that although EWG 19-09 re-introduced this regional dimension in the AR evaluation template, the EWG was not able to fully address TOR1; since an overall evaluation of the execution of data collection at regional level was not performed. This was because the pre-screeners had not been tasked to evaluate the ARs by regions. STECF considers that in principle it is useful to consider the regional dimension when evaluating ARs to help ensure an overview of the data collection across all the MSs with activity in a particular region. Such an overview is required so that any deficiencies in data collection in relation to end user needs at the regional level can be addressed in future WPs. STECF agrees with EWG 19-09 that next year's assessment of 2019 ARs should

¹ Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2018/1283 of 24 August 2018 laying down the rules on the format and timetables for the submission of annual data collection reports in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors (notified under document C(2018) 5270)

take into account the regional dimension. STECF however reiterates the advice of STECF PLEN 18-02 that the regional dimension and the related separation per region in the assessment should also be discussed by the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs).

STECF observes that the evaluation of 2018 ARs showed that the overall scores of performance level by Member State were similar to previous years. A marked improvement in the AR of Romania meant that AR report sections receiving a poor compliance level score of <10% decreased from 6 for 2017 ARs to only 2 for 2018 ARs. The number of AR sections receiving a compliance level score of 10-50% remained the same as for 2017 ARs.

STECF observes that common recurring issues across several MSs included:

- The adopted national WPs in some cases include errors. Since Member states are not allowed to change the approved WP such errors cause issues when the execution of the WPs are assessed by EWGs. EWG 19-09 encountered cases where MSs were in compliance with their formally adopted WP, but not with the requirements of the DCF. STECF considers that these issues should be corrected by MSs when drafting WPs for the 2020-2021 period.
- In some MS ARs the text on the sampling intensity for biological variables (Box 1C) was not divided by region. This shortcoming should be addressed in order to facilitate the evaluation of the regional dimension in next year's assessment of the 2019 ARs.
- The rules on the format for the submission of national Work Plans (Decision 2016/1701) and Annual Reports (Decision 2018/1283) state that Table 5C (Geographical stratification for fleet economic data) of the EU-MAP should be followed for presenting biological sampling by regions. Regions defined in Table 5C, however, do not match those used for biological data. STECF suggests that the WP and AR guidelines be revised and refer to the geographical stratification in Tables 1A-1C of the EU-MAP to provide the regions to be applied for biological sampling in the national WPs and ARs.

Data transmission issues

STECF observes that EWG 19-09 assessed data transmission issues using the modified Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT). In addition, the EWG used the DTMT guidance document recently drafted by STECF PLEN 19-01. STECF notes that overall the use of the DTMT and the DTMT guidance document worked well, facilitating a more consistent and objective evaluation of DT issues. STECF notes that a more effective assessment of DT issues was also facilitated by the fact that EWG 19-09 had fewer ToRs compared to previous EWGs.

In total 85 DT issues related to 10 data calls in 2018 and from 4 end-users were uploaded to the DTMT tool and evaluated by EWG 19-09. STECF observes that this was a significant decrease compared to the 292 issues from data calls in 2017. There were several reasons for this decrease: for 2018 there was no fish processing data call, the number of DT issues reported by the Mediterranean and Black Sea assessment group decreased substantially, and there were no DT issues reported from RCMs. Incidentally, STECF notes that in the DTMT guidance document end-users are encouraged to merge related issues into a single DT issue. The total number of DT issues is therefore not directly comparable between years.

As was the case in previous years the end-user which raised the most DT issues was the STECF EWG on the Mediterranean and Black Sea (40% of DT issues). STECF notes that one of the four grants funded under the EU Call for Proposals MARE/2016/22 "Strengthening regional cooperation in the area of fisheries data collection" is the STREAM project, which *inter alia* developed tools such a routines, R scripts, and methodological approaches to help improve data precision, completeness and accuracy in the Mediterranean and Black Sea. The project is close to completion and once available MS should be encouraged to use the tools developed to check data

prior to submission in response to data calls. A reference to the existence of these tools could be added in the cover letter for the data call (cf ToR 6.6. of this PLEN 19-02 report).

STECF notes that EWG 19-09 suggested a number of improvements to the DTMT and to the DTMT guidance document in order to ensure assessments are consistent and not open to subjective interpretations. STECF agrees with EWG 19-09 that:

- The basis for the evaluation of the DT issues should be whether the MS has provided a response to the issue raised by the end-user that clearly justifies whether the requirements of the relevant data call were fulfilled or not.
- The response from the MS should be considered as *Unsatisfactory* in cases when the work of the end-user was affected, regardless of whether a MS states that data has been corrected and resubmitted after the deadline for the data call/the finalisation of the EWG.
- The introduction of a data call-specific ID would be useful to facilitate more effective DT issue assessments in future. This will also require a modification of the current version of the DTMT tool.

STECF notes that the DTMT guidance document asks end-users to group related DT issues, although sub-issues still need to be listed separately. This approach facilitates the assessment of DT issues since related sub-issues can be assessed concurrently. However, it is currently not possible to give separate assessments for different sub-issues if the reason for each sub-issue differ, and as a result EWG 19-09 had to assign the category *Unknown* for several grouped DT issues. STECF agrees with EWG 19-09 that the current version of the DTMT tool should be modified slightly so that the results of DT assessments can in future be assigned at sub-issue level.

STECF considers that it is ultimately up to the Commission to assess whether a DT issue is a DT failure or not, and whether any follow up action is needed.

STECF considers that STECF EWGs working with data should continue working with the current version of the DTMT and the DTMT guidance document until the end of 2019. STECF PLEN 20-01 should be tasked with reviewing the changes to the DTMT guidance document suggested by EWG 19-09, as well as any additional changes suggested by other users of the tool. STECF PLEN 20-01 should finalise the DTMT guidance document and provide a list of required changes to the DTMT to the JRC.

Regional databases

As in previous advice (STECF PLEN 14-02, 14-03, 15-02, 16-02, 17-02, 17-03, 18-02), STECF reiterates that regional databases coupled with an online reporting tool would be a more efficient way to monitor the execution of MS ARs, and to assess data transmission issues raised by end-users. A regional database would also allow for a more effective assessment of DCF data quality.

STECF conclusions

STECF endorses the outcomes of EWG 19-09 presented by the chairperson during the STECF PLEN 19-02; the final EWG report was not yet available at the time of writing.

With regards to the AR evaluation STECF reiterates its conclusion from STECF PLEN 18-02 and PLEN 18-03 that there is a need to adopt a more consistent and less subjective approach to the evaluation of ARs. Besides the suggested changes to the AR evaluation template and to the Guidance for the Submission and Evaluation of ARs, a separate stand-alone document containing a list of assessment criteria should be prepared ahead of the evaluation of MS 2019 ARs in 2020. STECF considers that these tasks could best be addressed through ad hoc contracts prior to next year's assessment of 2019 ARs.

With regards to DT issues, STECF concludes that overall the use of the DTMT and the DTMT guidance document worked well, facilitating a more consistent and objective evaluation of DT issues. STECF reiterates its previous conclusion from STECF PLEN 18-02 and PLEN 18-03 that the most important element in evaluating MS performance is whether the data has been transmitted and is of sufficient use to end-users. STECF thus considers that reporting on DT issues should continue to be mentioned in the ToRs for all STECF EWGs making use of data.

STECF notes that EWG 19-09 is proposing some changes to both the DTMT and the DTMT guidance document. STECF nevertheless considers that STECF EWGs working with data should continue working with the current version of the DTMT and the DTMT guidance document until the end of 2019. STECF PLEN 20-01 should then be tasked with updating the DTMT guidance document with the changes suggested in 2019.

STECF notes that despite improvements to the current evaluation procedures, regional databases together with a web-based application would be a more efficient way to evaluate the execution of WPs by Member States and the DT issues. The use of regional databases could shift the focus from reporting and transmission aspects to the quality of the actual data collected by MS. STECF considers that the need for regional databases should be considered by the upcoming STECF EWGs on the EU Multiannual Plan for data collection (EU-MAP) after 2020.

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REPORT TO THE STECF

EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON Evaluation of 2018 Annual Reports for data collection and Data Transmission issues (EWG-19-09)

Gothenburg, Sweden, 24-28 June 2019

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 EWG 19-09) met in Gothenburg, Sweden from the 24th to the 28th of June 2019 to evaluate EU Member States Annual Reports (AR) on data collection in 2018 and Data Transmission issues (DT issues) raised in relation to data calls made in 2018.

Under the process of evaluation and approval of the outcomes of the Work Plans (WP), the European Commission is legally bound to consult STECF on the execution of the WPs approved by the Commission and the quality of the data collected by the Member States (MS) in accordance with Article 11 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004².

The evaluation was conducted by 25 independent experts. The list of participants is included in Section 4 and the draft agenda is included in Annex 1.

The evaluation of ARs and DT issues was undertaken by subgroups to which experts were allocated according to their expertise. Prior to the EWG assessment, all sections of Member states ARs for 2018 and DT issues raised in response to 2018 data calls underwent a pre-screening process. All pre-screening was undertaken by experts under contract to DG MARE.

1.1 Terms of Reference for EWG-19-09

Background

Article 11 of the Data Collection framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017 (recast) prescribes that Member States shall submit to the Commission an annual report (AR) on the implementation of their national work plans (NWP) and that STECF shall evaluate:

- (a) the execution of the NWP; and
- (b) the quality of the data collected by the Member States.

In preparation for the above, EWG 19-09 will be convened in Göteborg from 24-28 June 2019.

Request to EWG 19-09

EWG 19-09 is requested to evaluate Member States' AR on the implementation of their NWP in 2018, which have been submitted to the Commission by 31st of May 2019, and to report their findings to the plenary meeting of the STECF, which will take place in Brussels from 1-5 July 2019.

In particular, the EWG 19-09 is requested to report its findings regarding:

- (a) the execution of the NWP, including the results of the pre-screening of ARs as described below and
- (b) the apparent data transmission (DT) issues reported by end users for data calls launched during year 2018.

² REGULATION (EU) 2017/1004 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (recast).

Prior to the EWG 19-09 meeting, a pre-screening of Member States' ARs will be undertaken through a series of ad hoc contracts (refer to background for details). The Commission may address additional requests to the EWG in relation to specific issues that arise from the pre-screening exercise.

EWG 19-09 report

The report of the EWG 19-09 should contain the following:

1. At the EU and regional level:
 - (i) An overall evaluation of the execution of data collection, including an estimate of the performance of Member States, major issues and recurring issues across Member States. The overall evaluation should also aim to highlight any deficiencies in data collection in relation to end user needs at the regional level in order that such deficiencies can be taken into account in planning future regional work programmes. The EWG should revise the AR evaluation template at the beginning of the meeting in order to reintroduce the regional separation per section and work on the basis of this finalised AR evaluation template.
2. For each Member State:
 - a. With regard to ARs:
 - (i) An overall evaluation of whether the Member State executed its data collection activities in accordance with its agreed NWP for 2018.
 - (ii) A detailed evaluation of the AR, based on the AR evaluation template provided by the Commission, which will already include the result of the pre-screening exercise. The completed template should highlight:
 - any persistent or recurring issues regarding execution of data collection activities
 - any persistent or recurring issues regarding reporting of data collection activities
 - all issues that may require the Commission to take remedial action (request for resubmission of the AR or clarification of specific issues). The Commission will seek clarification from Member States on any issues raised during the EWG meeting and feedback from Member State should be evaluated by the EWG during the meeting. The EWG is not required to evaluate feedback from Member States received after 27 June (one day before the EWG meeting ends).
 - any issues that are 'for information' only.
 - (iii) A summary list of follow-up actions to be addressed by Member States at the end of the EWG.
 - b. With regard to DT issues:
 - (i) An overall evaluation of Member State performance, of main DT issues per end user and of recurring issues by Member State.
 - (ii) An evaluation of Member States' responses via the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool online platform to issues raised by end users of scientific advice (i.e. the STECF, RCGs, ICES, GFCM, ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, NAFO and other RFMOs to which scientific data is provided by Member States) in relation to data calls issued in 2018. The EWG is requested to identify and report any issues that have not been adequately accounted for by Member States, by:

- classifying the DT issues according to whether they relate to data coverage (data not reported), data quality (the agreed collection procedures were not adhered to or the planned number of samples was not achieved) or timeliness of submission (legal and/or operational deadlines not met)
 - evaluating DT issues in terms of content by closing issues which have been clarified or highlighting failures (recurrent and or having an important impact on the activity of the stock assessment working group and the quality of the assessment etc). The data sets affected shall be underlined.
- (iii) Identify in the evaluation per Member State the comments which require a reaction from Member State (draft a summary list) and those points which are for information only.
 - (iv) Use and provide feedback on the Guidance on the use of the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT) ver.5.2 (30 April 2019) for the reporting and evaluation of the DT issues in the DTMT online platform by end users, Member States and STECF experts. If needed, to update Table 2. Experts are also requested to consider how the section "end user feedback" in the DTMT platform can best be completed and by whom.

Following review and endorsement by the STECF plenary in July 2019, all resulting documentation (annual report evaluation and summary list of follow-up actions and evaluation of data transmission failures and summary list of points which require reaction) will be communicated to Member States by DG MARE.

Background information

The EWG should take into consideration the relevant files from previous STECF EWGs (STECF EWG 15-15; STECF EWG 16-08, STECF EWG 17-10; STECF EWG 18-10; STECF EWG 18-18) and particular attention should be paid to the Evaluation guidelines and guidance for the submission of documents produced by EWG 17-17, EWG 17-13, EWG 18-10 and of the 7-8/02/2018 technical meeting on the AR template. The EWG should take into account as well information from relevant ICES WGs (e.g. WGCATCH), JRC reports, PGECON reports, ESTAT relevant work and other end users.

Prior to the EWG 19-09 meeting, a pre-screening of Member States ARs was undertaken through a series of ad hoc contracts. The template for evaluation of ARs as well as the Q&A document for the submission of ARs has been revised by EWG 18-18 but the AR evaluation template is still missing the regional dimension which should be included at the beginning of the meeting so that experts work on the basis of the most updated and finalised template. During the STECF spring plenary in March 2019 a parallel workshop produced a draft guidance on the use of the DTMT for end users to report, MS to comment on the issues, and STECF EWG dealing with DT issues to evaluate the issues and MS comments. In EWG 19-09 STECF experts are requested to use it for the evaluation and to provide feedback and to finalise it if needed (last version, 5.2 from the end of April). In particular experts are requested to update table 2, if necessary, and to consider how and by whom the column "end-user feedback" in the DTMT should be completed.

The EWG shall work on the basis of the submitted ARs by Member States, the DTs uploaded on the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool platform, the results of the pre-screening and the Guidance on the use of the DTMT.

1.2 Structure of the report

The report is divided into the two main terms of reference, evaluation of ARs (section 2) and evaluation of DT issues (section 3). Each part is sub-divided into the sections, setting the scene and results.

To ease navigation and comprehension, an overview of the structure of Member States Annual Reports is given in Table 1 below. For a more detailed description, please consult the Guidance for submission and evaluation of Annual Reports³.

Sections of MS Annual Reports	
1A	List of required stocks
1C	Sampling intensity for biological variables
1D	Recreational fisheries
1E	Anadromous and catadromous species data collection in fresh water
1F	Incidental by-catch of birds, mammals, reptiles and fish
1G	List of research surveys at sea
1H	Research survey data collection and dissemination
2A	Fishing activity variables for data collection strategy
3A	Population segments for collection of economic and social data for fisheries
3B	Population segments for collection of economic and social data on aquaculture
3C	Population segments for collection of economic and social data for the processing industry
4A	Sampling plan description for biological data
4C	Data on the fisheries by member state
5A	Quality assurance framework for biological data
5B	Quality assurance framework for socioeconomic data
6A	Data availability
7A	Planned regional and international coordination
7B	Follow-up of recommendations and agreements
7C	Bi- and multilateral agreements

Table 1 –Sections of MS Annual Reports.

1.3 Pre-screening exercise

Prior to EWG 19-09 15 independent experts were contracted by DG MARE to pre-screen all sections of the AR as well as all DT issues that had been reported in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT) and referred to data calls in 2018.

To undertake the pre-screening exercise the Commission provided the pre-screening experts with the AR evaluation template⁴ that had been updated in accordance with the outcomes from EWG 18-18 in Bremerhaven. The regional dimension that was previously included in the AR evaluation template had not been reintroduced prior to the pre-screening exercise. The pre-screeners were also provided with the recently drafted DTMT guidance, Q and A and previous assessments of ARs.

The pre-screening output was made available to the EWG in the AR evaluation template and in the DTMT, respectively.

³ EWG-19-09 – Background document 2 – Guidance for the submission and evaluation of ARs.

⁴ EWG-19-09 – Background document 1 – AR evaluation template.

2 EVALUATION OF MEMBER STATES ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2018

2.1 Setting the scene

2.1.1 Formation of subgroups and task allocation

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

AR sections	Subgroup	Expertise	Subgroup facilitator
1A, 1C, 4A, 4C	Subgroup 1	Biology	Jens Ulleweit
1D, 1E, 1F, 1G, 1H	Subgroup 2	Biology	Harriet van Overzee
2A, 5A, 6A, 7A, 7B, 7C	Subgroup 3	Economics and Biology	Jörg Berkenhagen
3A, 3B, 3C, 5B	Subgroup 4	Economics	Evelina Sabatella

Table 2 – Allocation of AR sections by subgroup and expertise.

The AR sections were reviewed by the EWG and an overview of the EWG findings by subgroups (section 2.2.3) and by MS (annex 3) as well as in the evaluation template in Excel (EWG-19-09 Electronic annex 1 - Evaluation of ARs by MS) are provided.

During the EWG, the Commission contacted 14 Member States for clarification on various AR sections (13 replies were received), which led to the improvement and finalisation of assessments for UK, Spain, Sweden, Estonia, Bulgaria, Denmark, Belgium, Croatia, Slovenia, Ireland, Portugal, Lithuania and Latvia.

2.1.2 Background Information

To carry out the evaluation, the EWG was provided with access to supporting information such as the results from the pre-screening, the updated AR evaluation template, the Guidance for the submission and evaluation of ARs, the ARs and WPs for all Member States as well as the DTMT and the recently drafted DTMT guidance.

2.1.3 Tools and criteria for the assessment

In order for Member States to be able to respond to the evaluation results, the comments from the EWG need to be clear and self-explanatory. In addition, it is necessary that the evaluation is carried out coherently across subgroups so that the results are comparable and transparent.

Annex 2 includes a first set of agreed rules/assessment criteria (developed during EWG 18-10) with the aim to increase consistency in the responses from different evaluators. The EWG did not develop the assessment criteria further and reiterates the conclusion from EWG 18-10 that a final version should be prepared before next year's evaluation of ARs.

As in previous years, four main categories were used to judge AR achievements. These four categories are shown in Table 3:

% achievement of	Classification
<10%	No
10-50%	Partly
50-90%	Mostly
>90%	Yes

Table 3 – Performance levels for the assessment of Annual Reports.

In addition to evaluate the ARs, each subgroup considered and provided answers to six questions related to the ARs. The questions provided to the sub groups were:

1. How was the overall performance of the Member States on your sections?
2. Overall, what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation? How would you resolve these? Make recommendations.
3. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the execution of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?
4. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the reporting of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?
5. Any feedback on the evaluation process including the re-inclusion of the regional dimension?
6. Any comments or suggested improvements for the Q and A document?

2.2 Results

2.2.1 EU overview

The overall evaluation shown in Table 4 is the summary evaluation of each Member State based on the traffic light system in Table 3 above. Each subgroup assessed the performance of their allocated sections and then the overall evaluation by Member State was agreed in plenary. The overall scores of performance level by Member State were similar to previous years. Notably, Romania improved the performance from No to Yes in 4 sections and the overall performance was hence improved from Partly to Mostly.

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

Table 4 – Summary of the assessment of Member States 2018 Annual Report.

The EWG agreed that sections 7A, 7B and 7C (marked in grey in Table 4) should not have a weight in the overall assessment by Member States because there are no reference lists of meetings, recommendations and bi- and multilateral agreements.

Overview tables on the MS DCF performance for the years 2010-2016 can be found in the following STECF reports; STECF12-01⁵; STECF-OWP-12-05⁶; STECF13-14⁷; STECF14-13⁸, STECF15-13⁹, STECF16-12¹⁰, STECF 17-07¹¹ and EWG STECF 18-10¹².

⁵ 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.

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ Reports of the 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); Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg; EUR 27758 E; doi:10.2788/352294.

¹¹ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Evaluation of DCF 2016 Annual Reports & Data Transmission to end users in 2016 & preparation for the new assessment of Annual Reports and Data transmission (STECF-17-10). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2017, ISBN 978-92-79-67482-2, doi:10.2760/036445, JRC107502.

¹² Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Evaluation of DCF 2017 Annual Reports (STECF-18-10). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2018, ISBN 978-92-79-79393-6, doi:10.2760/03593 JRC112750.

The detailed evaluation template for each Member State is presented in the electronic annex of this report (EWG-19-09 Electronic annex 1 - Evaluation of ARs by MS).

2.2.2 Revision and reintroducing the regional dimension of the AR evaluation template

It was the second year that the current version of the evaluation template was used. The EWG encountered a variety of issues concerning the evaluation questions. These are highlighted in section 2.2.3. A preliminary review of the AR evaluation template was also performed by some of the pre-screeners and briefly discussed during the EWG. The EWG proposes that the work on these issues continues with an ad-hoc contract prior to next years evaluation of ARs.

Member States are required to report relevant sections of their AR and WP by regions. The EWG was requested to revise the evaluation template and reintroduce the regional separation per section and work on the basis of this finalised AR evaluation template.

The EWG noted that the regional dimension has been included in the AR evaluation template up until 2017 but afterwards removed. Regional sampling plans are currently not in place and the EWG concluded that the regional separation would become more relevant for the evaluation when these are in place. Furthermore, reintroducing the regional dimension at the beginning of the EWG would make a large part of the pre-screeners output obsolete since they were not tasked to perform the pre-screening per region. For these reasons, the EWG agreed that the regional dimension could not be included in the evaluation of 2018 ARs. However, since the regional dimension can be useful for Member States and the Commission if issues need to be addressed at the regional level, the EWG revised the evaluation template and reintroduced the regional separation per section (EWG 19-09 Electronic annex 2 - AR evaluation template with regional dimension). Furthermore, the experts agreed to highlight any identified regional issues in the comment field of the AR evaluation template.

The EUMAP states that Table 5C under fleet economic data should be followed for geographical stratification by regions. However, these regions do not match those generally used for biological purposes or those in Table 1A -1C of the Commission Decision currently in place. The EWG therefore considers that it would be beneficial if tables 1A -1C could be used in the future to provide the regions to be applied for biological sampling in the national WPs and ARs.

2.2.3 Results by subgroups

2.2.3.1 Subgroup 1

Sections dealt with: 1A, 1C, 4A, 4C

1. Overall performance of the MS in the sections covered by the subgroup

Subgroup 1	Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA	Sum
	1A	23				4	27
	1C	10	10	3		4	27

	4A, 4C	14	9			4	27
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2. Overall, what were the four major issues that arose in the evaluation? How would you resolve these? Make recommendations.

Overall performance of the Member States was good and again improved in comparison to previous years. In comparison to last year, the evaluation was easier for the EWG subgroup in most cases since the remaining questions for the evaluation are more targeted. However, some questions are still not clear:

Table 1C

Concerning the question "Does the number of individuals correspond to the planned number of individuals in Table 1C?": It is not possible to answer this question for MS who adopt the statistical sound sampling scheme (4S) due to planning numbers to sample is not possible. Some MS still follow the old approach of metier sampling which is also according to the guidelines. This approach allows targets to be set. However, as these different approaches are not comparable, the EWG has scored all MS "NA".

It is possible to have a "mostly", or "partly" as an EWG Evaluation to questions relating to Table and Text Box 1C, and for the evaluator to conclude, that no action is needed. This is based on the fact, that the MS has clearly identified the deviations, and has already taken or is proposing clear actions to address these deviations in the AR. Based on this information, the evaluator can conclude that the proposed actions are sufficient and therefore comment that no further action is needed.

Tables 4A, B, C

With regards to the evaluation question: "Are strata with no coverage reported in Text Box 4A? If not, are they reported in Table 4A?" MSs as well as the pre-screeners/evaluators at the EWG seem to interpret the AR guidelines differently. Some referred to the listed sampling strata in tables 4A and 4B only which are for the selected sampling strata by each MS whereas others were also referring to 'not for sampling' selected fleet metiers in table 4C. A document summarising comments and proposals (from email discussions) for revisions to the guidelines and evaluation questions was presented in plenary. It was proposed that these be sent to the Chair of EWG 19-12 for consideration.

Text Box 1C

There were also some common issues with Text Box 1C: In some MS's ARs the text was not divided by region. In others only very generalised text on under or over sampling was provided, with no specifics on issues with certain stocks/areas/variables. It is important to add detailed text to Text Box 1C, if no specifics are given in Table 1C. Other major issues:

Errors in the WP

One of the common issues encountered was that the WP included errors and when the MS corrected these errors in the AR, it caused issues with the evaluation. In some case errors were copied over from the WP, as MSs are not allowed to change the original WP, which led to cases where MSs were in compliance with their formally approved NWP but not with the requirements of the DCF. It is important for MSs to be aware of these issues and to correct the NWP eventually.

Issues with naming of regions

The other most common problem was with the naming of the regions. Different sources were used for categorising/naming different regions. This is a problem that should be taken into account in the next version of the EU-MAP. The Guidelines state that Table 5C (fleet economics) should be used for naming Regions. However, these do not match those generally used for biological purpose or Table 1A -1C of the Commission Decision currently in place. It would be beneficial if these Tables could be defined as those used to provide the Regions to be applied for biological sampling in the WP and AR in the future revision. It is possible that Table 1A Stocks in Union waters, Table 1B Stocks of outermost regions of the Union and Table 1C Stocks in marine

regions under regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOS) and Sustainable Fishing Partnership Agreements (SFPAS) of the current EU MAP could be combined to give a single Table source.

ICCAT Data transmission issues

In most of the cases data were submitted, but however did not pass the filter due to formatting issues. Nevertheless, later on the mistake was corrected by ICCAT and the data was considered ok. In many cases the end users have stated that the MS have reported the data after the deadline while those MSs state the data was sent before the deadline. There appears to have been some technical issues with the data transmission to ICCAT. The EWG suggests that dates of transmission of ICCAT data by MS and further transmission to ICCAT are well recorded.

General comment concerning the indication in table 1G and 1H (yellow columns) if MS is requested to make comments based on the target measure obtained.

The EWG 19-09 discovered that the formula in the yellow columns in Table 1G and 1H, which indicate if the MS is requested to provide a comment about the achieved effort, did not contain the formula. Even for MS, which have not filled in any records (lines) in the table, the formula was missing. This might indicate that the formula was not removed deliberately but might have been removed as a consequence of various security procedures applied during upload of the AR template provided by DG MARE.

It should be investigated if the formula is erased during upload of the template or if the formulas deliberately, and against the guidelines given in the Guidance for the submission and evaluation of ARs, have been removed by the MS.

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

One repetitive issue was the under sampling of species regarding the number of individuals. As EWG we do not consider this as a problem because of the different possible approaches in the sampling plans.

Another repetitive issue is still that access to boats for observer trips continues to be an issue for some MSs with regards to sections 4A and 4C.

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

As already stated with question 2 some MSs changed information in the cells of the WP (white cells) which is not according to the guidelines. The white cells can only be changed in a resubmitted workplan. This is a repetitive issue for some MSs.

Another issue is related to Q "Is Table 4A consistent with AR guidelines?" and "Does the MS provide sufficient justification on deviations from the NWP either in Table 4A or Text Box 4A?" Here in some cases more detailed explanations are required in either table 4A or textbox 4A for significant deviations from the sampling plan.

In several cases MSs report in table 4C, column R, that they have no coverage of any stratum but sampling is achieved and reported for most strata in table 4A.

5. Any comments or suggested improvements on the DTMT guidance document? Strengths and weakness.

The DTMT guidance document is a useful manual for the DTMT tool as it is laying down some general rules for the dealing and documentation of data transmission failures. However, as the guidance document cannot give clear recommendations and rules for all possible raised issues there is still room for some misinterpretations.

The new regime of ICES is to contact every MS several weeks before the AR DT failure evaluation takes places. This has drastically reduced the number of DT issues being considered at the meeting. STECF should consider a similar regime for all end-users as MS could provide explanation for apparent failures so issues would be clarified before the evaluation process started.

6. Any feedback on the evaluation process including the re-inclusion of the regional dimension?

The regional dimension for the evaluation of the ARs, especially for countries who have vast programmes that span many different regions should be reintroduced.

It is important in order to weight the evaluations per section to ensure that the most important region of the MS gets the greatest weighting in the final evaluation of that module.

It may be useful to conduct the pre-screening on a regional basis, per section, to help ensure an overview of required sampling across all the MS's with activity in a particular region. It should be considered that to start the re-inclusion of the regional dimension with regards to the evaluation it would be useful if the pre-screening and evaluation should be done by people familiar with requirements of the area e.g. evaluator from the Baltic should not evaluate MSs in the Mediterranean and vice versa.

7. Any comments or suggested improvements for the Q and A document?

The Q and A document can be very useful, it would be good to ensure that the Q&A document is a live document, and is circulated to MSs as it is updated. Is it possible to highlight main conclusions from the EWG on common or recurring issues in this document? This would be useful for MSs when preparing future ARs.

2.2.3.2 Subgroup 2

Sections dealt with: 1D, 1E, 1F, 1G and 1H

1. Overall performance of the MS in the sections covered by the subgroup

Subgroup 2	Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA	Sum
	1D	20	1	0	0	6	27
	1E	4	12	0	0	11	27
	1F	19	3	0	0	5	27
	1G, 1H	14	9	0	0	4	27

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

Section 1D, 1E

- 1) Regarding the Pilot study on recreational fishery the question included in the Evaluation template "Does the sampling design for Pilot Study 1 follow internationally agreed protocols or recommendations?" refers more to the WP than the AR. Therefore, in most cases no reference was given. Recommendations for existing or future Pilot Studies are expect to be delivered in upcoming WP.

Section 1F

- 1) For columns P-T in Table 1F, the instructions in the guidelines indicate that recording marked by "Y" can also include zero bycatch (no by-catch recorded), as long as the observer was looking for bycaught individuals, i.e. there was observation effort for bycatch. Some MSs have answered there columns with a "Y" if there have been records of bycaught individuals for the groups of vulnerable species and with a "N" if there have been no records of bycaught individuals while there was an observation effort for bycatch. Due to the known problem of inconsistency between the header section of the AR 1F which states "has there be an occurrence of bycatch" and the guidelines the subgroup has not marked this as negative.

One of the possible solutions (and the most pragmatic) could be to change the heading of Table 1F into e.g. "has there been observation effort for bycatch" during the revision of the EU MAP in the part relating to the format of the WP.

- 2) Because some MSs have chosen to report on groups of vulnerable species (e.g. "birds", "mammals" etc.), columns P-T have become somewhat redundant for those MSs.

A common format to report the information on Table 1F will facilitate the evaluation process.

- 3) For columns K and M of Table 1F ("Total number of PSU in the sampling year" and "Achieved number of PSU in the sampling year") the AR guidelines indicate that values should match those reported in the columns with the same headings in Table 4A. Some MSs presented inconsistencies for these columns.

In the case of minor inconsistencies, the MS was encouraged to correct these numbers in the next ARs. In the case of major inconsistencies, MS were asked to correct the tables.

- 4) In one case, a MS provided different strata coding between Tables 1F and 4A in the NWP. This has prevented the assessment of the AR since it was not possible to match the two tables.

As long as coding is not consistent between table 1F and relevant tables (e.g. 4A), no overview of the sampling carried out by a MS can be provided and ultimately, as already stated by STECF 18-10, no effect of fisheries on bycatch species can be given.

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

Section 1D, 1E

All species from Table 3 of EU-MAP are often not listed in Table 1D of the AR. This is mostly due to their absence in catches or non-presence in the area. The guidelines require a full list of groups of species, therefore special attention must be paid during the assessment of the NWP to avoid copying incomplete contents in the following AR.

The same applies to wrongly planned units in the fishery independent sampling (Table 1E), which often resulted in undersampling. In the future submission of the NWP it is recommended to plan number of sites/gears instead of unpredictable number of individuals in scientific survey/sampling.

Section 1F

For some MSs Pilot Study 2 has been delayed. Furthermore, the answers to the questions that needed to be addressed in Text Box 1F show that some MSs are delayed in updating their observer protocols accordingly. Reliable bycatch data collection is important and MSs have been encouraged to modify the sampling protocols, so observers are instructed to collect the appropriate information.

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

Section 1F

MSs have indicated that data collected is mostly stored in national databases. Some MSs have indicated they have responded to the ICES WGBYC data call. While no issues arose under this section, it is important to stress that data should be made available for end-users to evaluate the level of bycatch.

Section 1G, 1H

The EWG 19-09 discovered that the formula in the yellow columns in Table 1G and 1H, which indicate if the MS is requested to provide a comment about the achieved effort, did not contain the formula. Even for MSs that have not filled in any records (lines) in the table, the formula was missing. This might indicate that the formula was not removed deliberately but might have been removed as a consequence of various security procedures applied during the upload of the AR template provided by DG MARE.

It should be investigated if the formula is erased during upload of the template or if the formula has been removed by the MS, against the guideline given in the Guidance for the submission and evaluation of ARs.

5. Any comments or suggested improvements on the DTMT guidance document? Strengths and weakness.

-

6. Any feedback on the evaluation process including the re-inclusion of the regional dimension?

No feedback

7. Any comments or suggested improvements for the Q and A document?

Section 1F

The subgroup considered the text included for Table 1F in the Q and A document is useful; it helps to clarify what data should be included in the relevant sections. MSs should be encouraged to read the Q and A document.

2.2.3.3 Subgroup 3

Sections dealt with: 2A, 5A, 6A, 7A, 7B and 7C

1. Overall performance of the MS in the sections covered by the subgroup

Subgroup X	Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA	Sum
	2A	21	0	2	0	4	27
	5A	19	3	1	0	4	27
	6A	22	2	1	0	2	27

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

Overall, there were no major issues to be accentuated. The most common issues in reporting fishing activity in table 2A were linked to the disregard of the guidelines concerning the provision of achievements by variable. In many cases MSs used the aggregation of “all variables” instead, thus not allowing evaluation of achievements per each indicator, which is important in case of complementary data collection. Improper calculation of achieved sample rate and response rate were also observed as repetitive issues which prevented proper evaluation of achievements. MS should give more attention to the available guidance.

Some of the questions in the evaluation template hampered the assessment as they are relevant to WP, not AR. For example, questions 3, 4, 6, 8 are related to the WP content and do not reflect AR implementation. Many MS had work plans approved with inconsistencies to guidelines and EUMAP. Therefore, repetitive comments on the WP content in AR templates deviate from the main task – to evaluate and comment on AR implementation.

Section 7A

Currently the Member States lists meetings in the WP that they plan to attend. The EWG questions the relevance for assessing the list of meetings, in particular since a minimum list of legally binding meetings is missing. The number of meetings will be very different for each MS. If 7A should be left for evaluation the EWG urge the Commission to update the minimum list of meetings from 2017.

Section 7B

In the introductory text above the table all recommendations, whether applicable to the MS or not should be listed. Further down under Guidance for evaluators it says Are all relevant regional and international recommendations listed.

List of recommendations

There is no list of recommendations for the MS to follow in the WP. The EWG suggest that the Commission provides a minimum list of recommendations as a separate guidance document consisting of the recommendations to MS from the RCGs and PGECON (see Liaison meeting reports).

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

Overall, there was no evidence for massive problems in executing the data collection. Few MS stated that they faced certain difficulties with the complementary data collection due to low responses. Moreover, some MSs estimate certain variables based upon Control Regulation data (e.g. days at sea estimated through sales notes). In these cases sampling rates or response rates might not be suitable measures for assessment.

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

The subgroup experienced difficulties due to the fact that the NWP is to be taken as reference, but in several cases the NWP is not in line with the guidelines. The AR table for module 2A was extended by including a column for "variable" whereas the NWP requests only "variable group". This causes a mismatch and should be amended in the future.

Some MSs reported variables or segments in table 2A as "all". Even though this is not in line with the guidelines, a manual evaluation was feasible. As soon as the WP and AR formats are made suitable for a database approach, an entry like "all" would no longer be manageable.

5. Any comments or suggested improvements on the DTMT guidance document? Strengths and weakness.

The subgroup had no specific comments on this issue.

6. Any feedback on the evaluation process including the re-inclusion of the regional dimension?

Several lines in module 2A are redundant (e.g. 109, 111 and 112) or refer to the WP (e.g. 108, 110-112) and are thus inappropriate for AR evaluation. In the (WP) template the reference to % of trips for complementary data collection appears inappropriate and should be amended.

The subgroup faced difficulties when dealing with clustered segments. In contrast to the previous version, the NWP no longer contains information on the MS clustering scheme nor on the number of vessels. The re-introduction of this information for future amendments is highly recommended. The subgroup highly recommends a database approach to link these different types of information (e.g. population size, sample size, clustering scheme, planned and achieved sampling rates etc.).

Module 2A requests information on data collected under the Control Regulation (CR) as well as on complementary data collection in case that is regarded insufficient. It turned out that the focus of the assessment is on the complementary data collection, where applicable. Literally, there is no need to evaluate the specifications on data collected under CR. Therefore, the subgroup suggests considering an amendment of future AR in a way that the evaluation of the complementary data collection is facilitated and the table is not clogged with lengthy information on CR data. Information on capacity could be fully excluded from module 2A.

According to the Guidance, the main purpose of the evaluation of section 5A is not to assess the achievements and conformity but to show the current situation and remark any significant improvement done by MS. And the general idea is that MS should have clear, transparent and agreed documentation of their procedures made publicly available, at the end of the period covered by the WP. The general view is that we are far from the goal for a lot of MSs. A variety of approaches are being taken e.g. referring to NWP textboxes, link to a webpage with no information, a webpage with information one need to find by herself/himself and sometimes links to appropriate document and even link to a webpage where the sections correspond to the requirements and the documentation is available (very rare). MS often refer in ARs to documentation that leads to their own internal websites and/ or to the other sources in MS

language. Therefore it is hard to evaluate the MS compliance. A clear message to all MS shall be sent with the reminder of the general idea and what would be expected in the near future.

In the guidelines column 'Scheme' of the table 5A it is specified: "Names of sampling schemes shall be identical to the names used in Tables 4A and 4B of this Annex, in Table 1D of this Annex ('type of survey') and in Table 1E of this Annex ('species' *'method')".

- There is a column referring to Scheme in table 1D for the AR only,
- There is no column Scheme in table 1E,
- There is no column Scheme in table 4B,
- There is a column Scheme in table 1F (not referred to in the text above for 5A).

Concerning module 6A, in general almost all MSs fulfil their NWP: information on data availability table (6A) is properly provided in Annual reports. The EWG did not face major issues during the evaluation of this section from Annual reports.

The subgroup faced uncertainties when evaluating modules 7A-C as there is no reference for comparison.

Concerning module 7A, thus far there is no legal obligation for participation in meetings. Moreover, it is extremely tedious for evaluators to assess which meetings should be relevant for which MS. The subgroup suggests that for the assessment of the participation in meetings a reference list is provided, containing all relevant meetings and indicating which meetings are relevant for which MS.

Moreover, the purpose of this table might be re-considered. If it just serves as an indicator for participation and thus as reference for expense claims, it might not be subject to evaluation anyway. An evaluation appears meaningful only if the participation in meetings would be mandatory.

Module 7B lacks a reference list of binding recommendations as was available as long as the Liaison Meeting had the mandate to endorse recommendations of relevant bodies. Therefore, the EWG has no standard to compare MS information on implementation of recommendations.

The same applies for module 7C – bi- and multilateral agreements. It is impossible to assess if the list provided by MS is comprehensive.

If reference lists for modules 7A-C were available the evaluation of MS achievements could be performed automatically through a database approach.

Moreover, the subgroup would like to highlight that the Guidelines for "Section 7: Coordination" shows some inconsistencies. E. g. regarding Table 7B, guidelines state at the beginning "MS should transfer the information from their accepted WP Table 7B to this table" and also "All recommendations, whether applicable to the MS or not, should be listed". On the description of table fields, it is stated in the guidelines: "Member State shall refer to the relevant recommendations to the work plan reference period and to the Member State. There is no need to list recommendations and agreements that do not apply to the Member State". Several inconsistencies like these can be found in the guidelines. This opens space for personal interpretation, thus complicating the task for both MSs and evaluators. Guidelines should be amended in order to minimise these inconsistencies.

From the subgroup's point of view a regional dimension would not suit the evaluation purpose. There is no benefit from assessing MS achievements in a regional context as it would result in a compilation of findings for MS without any linkage.

7. Any comments or suggested improvements for the Q and A document?

No comments.

2.2.3.4 Subgroup 4

Sections dealt with: 3A, 3B, 3C and 5B

1. Overall performance of the MS in the sections covered by the subgroup

Subgroup 4	Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA	Sum
	3A	16	7	0	0	4	27
	3B	13	5	3	0	6	27
	3C	15	1	2	2	7	27
	5B	14	10	1	0	2	27

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

In some cases, the AR tables are in line with the approved WP, but not with EUMAP tables. Therefore, the evaluation of the AR is positive, but it would be better if the evaluation template did not ask if tables are in line with EUMAP but instead if they are in line with WP (see lines 131, 133, 134, 162, 192). However, these lines are relevant for the WP evaluation and should be kept in the WP evaluation template.

AR template only considered the achievements of pilot studies for social variables, while most MSs already implemented pilot studies in 2017 and a systematic data collection in 2018. In these cases, MSs should have included achievements in table 3A/3B/3C and should have described the data collection activities under "Incorporation of results from pilot study into regular sampling by the Member State". AR template should be adapted to consider regular data collection for social variables and not only pilot studies.

Improvements in QAF are difficult to be evaluated. Most MSs are providing link to methodological documents, but the content of these documents is not homogeneous and in several cases, they are not translated into English. It would be useful, also for improvement in the evaluation of AR, to request the Methodological report only in WP and provide for AR deviations from WP methodology in appropriate Text Box paragraph if any may arise. The deviations from methodological report should be provided in AR in a standard format and following the same structure and the same Text Box of contents.

For land-locked MS, the level of achievements is missing in several cases. An ad hoc meeting with these MSs would be beneficial in order to inform on all the different steps of data collection reporting and implementation.

Some MS informed in the AR text and/or tables that they implemented a pilot study on raw materials for the processing sector. However, it was not possible to provide a full picture of the implementation and of the achievements of these pilot studies because AR guidelines do not include provisions on how to report on these activities.

EWG considers that all files submitted by MS should not contain any macro-links or security access to avoid problems in handling them in the evaluation process.

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

For some Member States, the level of achievements is low compared to the planned sample rates, thus implying a low statistical quality of final estimates.

Several MS did not implement pilot studies on environmental variables for the aquaculture sector or provided very little information on achievements and methodologies.

Unavailability of transversal data or inconsistency with economic data are issues affecting the economic survey for the fleet in some MSs (in particular, Greece and Spain).

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

The reporting by MS has improved and most MS followed AR guidance. UK, Spain and Swedish tables showed major inconsistencies in table 3A and resubmission of the table was requested during the meeting.

A different situation refers to land-locked MS for which several issues in reporting have been detected for tables 3B and 3C.

Formulas of calculation of "Achieved Sample Rate %" and "Achieved Sample no/Planned sample no." have been deleted in the excel files by several MS. This should be avoided because evaluators have to check the consistencies of figures. It would be useful if DGMARE includes the checks on the presence of formulas during the admissibility checks of the AR. However, if a database approach was applied, this issue would be solved implicitly.

According to guidelines, all variables from EUMAP should be listed. However, there are several cases where one or few variables are not listed most probably for typing errors. It would be useful to include in the excel template the complete list of variables. In addition, a sheet with all the reference lists for all variables/segments/supra-regions, etc. could be helpful. Again, a database approach would solve all these codification and completeness issues.

5. Any comments or suggested improvements on the DTMT guidance document? Strengths and weakness.

The DTMT guidance document improved the evaluation process of data transmission issues from EWG. The structure of the document could be improved by adding a list of contents.

End users comments are still vague in many cases and should be more precise. Different issues should be listed separately. The use of the DTMT guidance document by end users should solve these problems in the future.

Table 2 has been reviewed and it is considered complete and clear. The only proposal is to add a comment in case of MS mistaken on data transmission; the comment could be: "Failure concerning data transmission".

6. Any feedback on the evaluation process including the re-inclusion of the regional dimension?

Some suggestions on improvements of the evaluation templates are listed below:

- Guidance is needed on naming of cluster segments in table 3A. At present, MS are using different approaches to indicate clusters but an harmonization would facilitate the evaluation.
- Lines in section 3A 142-144, section 3B 171-173, section C 200-203 are repeated from the previous lines and therefore should be deleted.
- Lines 136 and 137 should only be included in the evaluation template for the WP and not for the AR. The question is: Are the planned types of data collection provided and are they consistent with the NWP? But MS cannot report different types of data collection in table 3A, they can eventually just describe in the text a change with respect to the WP.
- For the improvement of the evaluation of AR is suggested to move the question "Has the planned sampling been achieved?" in the beginning under each section (3A, 3B, 3C). The following evaluation should be based on the implemented data collection results.

7. Any comments or suggested improvements for the Q and A document?

No comments.

3 EVALUATION OF MEMBER STATES TRANSMISSION OF DCF DATA TO END USERS IN 2018

3.1 Setting the scene

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

The tool is available at <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/dcf/dtmt>.

Following up on the recommendation from PLEN 18-02 a sub-group of EWG chairs, JRC experts and the Commission met during PLEN 19-01 to discuss improvements of the DTMT tool and the evaluation process of DT issues. The sub-group drafted a DTMT guidance document for the submission of data issues by end-users, technical changes to the DTMT as well as for the evaluation of DT issues¹³. The DTMT guidance was used by pre-screeners and experts during the EWG.

In total 85 DT issues, from 10 data calls in 2018 and 4 end users, were reported in the DTMT. 45 DT issues were related to COVERAGE, 28 to QUALITY and 10 to TIMELINESS. The number of DT issues has substantially decreased from previous year where 292 DT issues were reported in the DTMT. The decrease is mostly due to the fact that there was no data call for processing in 2018 (102 DT issues were reported in 2017). Also the number of DT issues from the STECF EWG on Mediterranean and Black Sea decreased from 128 to 34. However, since end-users can aggregate similar data issues into one single DT issue in the DTMT the number of DT issues between years are not comparable.

END USER	DATA CALL	COVERAGE	QUALITY	TIMELINESS	UNKNOWN	DT issues in 2018
GFCM	Aquaculture	1				1
ICCAT	Task I	4	5	4		13
	Task II		4	5		9
ICES	WGCSE	1				1
	WGDEEP	2				2
	WGSFD			1		1
STECF EWG	Aquaculture	2	2			4
	FDI	11	2			13
	Fleet economics	6	1			7
	Med and BS	18	14		2	34
SUM		45	28	10	2	85

Table 5. DT issues by end user and type.

¹³ EWG-19-09 – Background document 3 – DTMT Guidance (version 30 May 2019).

The initial assessment of the DT issues was carried out in subgroups, related to the expertise in the group. As for the Annual Reports, the DT issues had undergone a pre-screening assessment prior to the EWG. The pre-screeners were requested to run a first assessment of the issues and to propose draft comments in the DTMT to be adopted by the EWG.

3.1.1 Tools and criteria for the assessment

It was the first time the assessment criteria in table 2 of the DTMT guidance was used for the assessment of DT issues.

According to the DTMT guidance STECF should comment and assess DT issues reported by end-users in the DTMT tool in the fields "STECF comment" and "STECF assessment". The STECF comment should provide further information on the data issue and the field "STECF assessment" has the following options: NOT ASSESSED, SATISFACTORY, UNSATISFACTORY or FOLLOW-UP NEEDED. As specified in the ToRs the EWG was requested to provide feedback on the DTMT guidance.

Issue	EWG Assessment and associated comments
Unclear MS comment in reply to the issue flagged by the end-user.	Follow up needed ecessary + a comment: "The comment by the MS is unclear."
The DT issue identified by an end-user is not clearly and explicitly described (End-user must always provide a self-sufficient comment/feedback to the EWG.)	Not assessed + a comment: "The end-user should be more specific in defining the deficiencies"
Information provided by end-users and MS is contradictory and there is no evidence to allow the EWG to give an assessment.	Follow up needed ecessary + a comment: "The information provided by end-users and MS is contradictory".
<u>Failure concerning on data transmission:</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
<u>1. If flagged by the End-user with "HIGH" or "Impact on the WG".</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
<u>2. If flagged by the End-user with LOW/MEDIUM severity and it proves to be a repetitive issue from past years.</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
<u>3. If flagged by the End-user with LOW/MEDIUM severity and it proves not to be a repetitive issue from past years.</u>	<u>Expert should judge according to the MS justification (no fixed rules agreed).</u>
The issue raised relates to lack of data collection and not data transmission. Hence, data will not be available but	Unsatisfactory A standard comment must be included.

Issue	EWG Assessment and associated comments
situation must be flagged.	"Failure concerning data collection and not data transmission"
Data exists but MS fails to submit.	Unsatisfactory
When the issue raised is related to lack of <u>timeliness</u> punctuality on data transmission:	
1. If flagged by the End-user with "HIGH" or "Impact on the WG".	Unsatisfactory
2. If flagged by the End-user with LOW/MEDIUM severity and it proves to be a repetitive issue from past years.	Unsatisfactory
3. If flagged by the End-user with LOW/MEDIUM severity and it proves not to be a repetitive issue from past years.	Expert should judge according to the MS justification. (no fixed rules agreed)
If MS according to the agreed NP, plans to collect additional data beyond DCF requirements and does not transmit these data in response to a data call (this additional collection must be however clearly stated in the NP)).	Unsatisfactory
If the issue relates to data collected and called for in the past and data transmission has previously been evaluated.	Satisfactory. The Standard comment: "Issue is assumed to be closed since it relates to the past and data transmission has previously been evaluated."

Table 6. The DTMT guidance (table 2) is an update of the assessment criteria agreed at EWG 18-10. Track changes show proposed changes by EWG 19-09.

In order to ensure a consistent and harmonised evaluation of the DT issues as far as possible, all DT issues that had been assessed as UNSATISFACTORY by the experts were discussed in plenary. During these discussions it became apparent that the assessment criteria in table 2 in the DTMT guidance still leaves room for inconsistent and subjective assessments. The EWG therefore agreed that even though the DTMT guidance has improved the evaluation process from previous years the following aspects need to be considered (and included in the DTMT guidance) for the assessment of DT issues:

- The basis for the evaluation of the DT issues should be whether the Member State has provided a response to the issue raised by the end-user that clearly justifies whether the requirements of the relevant data call were fulfilled or not.
- The assessment of DT issues should only consider the current state of the issue. For example, if a Member State states that data has been corrected and resubmitted after the deadline for the data call/ the finalisation of the EWG, the response from the MS should be considered as UNSATISFACTORY since the information in the relevant data call was not met and did affect the work of the end-user.

- The category “MS mistaken on data transmission” should follow the same sub-categories as the category referring to punctuality on data transmission. Hence, if the end-user flags the issue as HIGH or “Impact on the WG” it shall always be assessed as UNSATISFACTORY, which should not be the case for LOW/MEDIUM severity and if the issue is not repetitive etc. (see proposed changes above). In this way an issue such as the MS has mistaken on ‘Longitude’ and ‘Latitude’ will not be given the same assessment as a DT issue in which a Member State has not submitted any data at all.
- For good reasons multiple linked DT issues can be merged into one DT issue. However, if multiple issues for which a single summarised assessment cannot be given have been merged into one DT issue, it should be possible to give individual assessments to each issue. In order to be able to do so, a facility in the DTMT tool to split a given issue into sub-issues should be provided. For this year’s assessment UNKNOWN was used for DT issues for which an individual assessment could not be given.
- Quite often when making an assessment it is necessary to refer to the individual sections in a given data call. For that reason, the introduction of a data call and data call section specific ID would be useful. This would guaranty that for any DT issue it would be possible to identify the exact request for that specific data. Furthermore, it would also be useful if the end-user had the possibility to select the specific data call ID when the DT issues is reported in the DTMT.
- The EWG is assessing whether the MS has provided a response to the DT issue raised by the end-user that clearly justifies whether the requirements of the relevant data call were fulfilled or not. It is up to Commission to judge whether DT issue is a failure or not and if further action is needed.

After agreement of the above criteria a sub-group of experts cross-checked all DT issues for consistency and flagged complicated issues in plenary where an agreement was reached.

3.1.2 Feedback on the Column “End-user feedback” in the DTMT.

The EWG was specifically requested to consider how the section “End-user feedback” in the DTMT platform can be best completed and by whom.

Since many of the end-users (in particular the STECF EWGs) dissolve after the finalisation of the EWG the end-users have not used the possibility to provide comments in reply to the MS comment so far. However, the EWG agreed that these columns should remain in the DTMT to provide the possibility for end-users (e.g. ICES, ICCAT, etc.) that do not cease to exist to provide a response to the MS comment.

3.2 Results

The evaluation of the 85 DT issues concluded that 44 issues were justified as SATISFACTORY, 28 as UNSATISFACTORY and for 5 DT issues FOLLOW-UP was needed since the response from the Member State was either not clear or contradictory to the issue raised by the end-user. In addition, 6 DT issues could not be assessed since the description of the issue by the end-user was not sufficiently well described. As stated above, the EWG choose the classification UNKNOWN for multiple issues with different assessments.

END USER	DATA CALL	FOLLOW-UP NEEDED	NOT ASSESSED	SATISFACTORY	UNKNOWN	UNSATISFACTORY	DT ISSUES 2018
GFCM	Aquaculture					1	1
ICCAT	Task I		1	12			13
	Task II			9			9
ICES	WGCSE			1			1
	WGDEEP	1		1			2
	WGSFD	1					1
STECF EWG	Aquaculture			2		2	4
	FDI	1		5		7	13
	Fleet economics	1	2			4	7
	Med and BS	1	3	14	2	14	34
SUM		5	6	44	2	28	85

Table 7. Evaluation of DT issues referring to data calls in 2018.

The 22 DT issues raised by ICCAT were related to either formatting issues flagged by ICCAT's uploading filter, or by technical issues in the transmission of the data to ICCAT. Since Member States submitted data within the deadline and the data submitted to ICCAT were considered correct by ICCAT, these issues were all classified as SATISFACTORY. The EWG considers that issues related to technical issues in the transmission of the data to ICCAT should not have been included in the DTMT tool.

4 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

The EWG considers that the improvements of the DTMT as well as the DTMT guidance, following the recommendation from PLEN 18-02, have improved the assessment process of DT issues. However, the EWG realised that the assessment criteria in table 2 of the DTMT guidance need further consideration and have suggested changes that will allow for a more objective and consistent evaluation of DT issues.

In previous years assessment meetings the ToRs contained additional points not related to the evaluation of Annual Reports and DT issues of the relevant year. That resulted in less time for cross-checking of assessment results within the sub-groups and in plenary. To allow for less subjective and inconsistent assessment in the future the EWG considers that the ToRs also in the future should be limited to the assessment of ARs and DT issues.

Since DT issues differs widely in terms of severity the number of unsatisfactory DT issues should not to be used as an indication of the performance of execution of the Work Plans as is currently in described in the working paper on definitions of EMFF common indicator (FAME SU: CT03.1).

As in previous years evaluation the pre-screening of ARs and DT issues played a key role for a more efficient evaluation of ARs and DT issues during the EWG.

5 CONTACT DETAILS OF EWG-19-09 PARTICIPANTS

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

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6 LIST OF ELECTRONIC ANNEXES

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<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg1909>

List of electronic annexes documents:

1. EWG-19-09 Electronic annex 1 - Evaluation of ARs by MS.
2. EWG 19-09 Electronic annex 2 - AR evaluation template with regional dimension.

7 LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg1909>

List of background documents:

1. EWG-19-09 – Background document 1 – AR evaluation template
2. EWG-19-09 – Background document 2 – Guidance for the submission and evaluation of ARs.
3. EWG-19-09 – Background document 3 – DTMT Guidance (version 30 May 2019).
3. EWG-19-09 – Declarations of invited experts

ANNEX 1: AGENDA

Attendance

Chair: Jenny Nord

DG MARE: Jaana Mettala, Blanca Garcia-Alvarez

JRC: Hendrik Doerner (STECF focal point)

Experts: 25 independent experts

Daily timetable

Start of meeting: Mon (24/6) at 14 h

Morning session: 9h - 13h (Tue, Wed, Thu and Fri)

Afternoon session: 14h - 18h (Mon, Tue, Wed and Thu)

Breaks: 10:30 h and 15:30h

End of meeting: Fri (28/6) at 16h

Monday, 24 June

Afternoon session:

1. Welcome and housekeeping; introduction of participants (Chair)
2. Introduction from JRC on STECF rules and FTP access (JRC)
3. Introduction of the ToRs and update on EU MAP from the Commission (Jaana Mettala)
4. Status of DT issues and concrete example of DTMT (Blanca Garcia-Alvarez)
5. Subgroup formation AR and DT issues (Chair)
6. Setting of a common assessment ground (AR assessment criteria from EWG 18-10, DTMT guidance, evaluation template, Q and A) (Chair)
7. Revision of the AR evaluation template in order to reintroduce the regional separation per section (Chair)

Tuesday, 25 June

Morning session:

1. Subgroup work: TOR 2b and 2a

Afternoon session:

2. Subgroup work: ToR 2b and 2a
- 17h30 – 18h: Daily wrap up in plenary

Wednesday, 26 June

Morning session:

1. Subgroup work 2b and 2a

Afternoon session:

2. Plenary assessment and agreement of DT issues
- 17h30 – 18h: Daily wrap up in plenary

Thursday, 27 June

Morning session:

1. Subgroup work 2a

Afternoon session:

2. Plenary session AR evaluation. MS final overview and collation of subgroups output.
- 17h30 – 18h: Daily wrap up in plenary

Friday, 28 June

Morning session:

1. Plenary session: draft report and conclusions

Afternoon session (14h – 16h)

2. Plenary session: draft report and conclusions

ANNEX 2: CRITERIA FOR ASSESSMENT OF ANNUAL REPORTS

Introduction

The evaluation of ARs and DT issues are conducted by experts with knowledge and expertise from all areas of the DCF. To efficiently address the large amount of information to be evaluated, the work during the EWG is carried out in sub-groups based on the expertise of the evaluators.

In order to ensure that the results from different evaluators are comparable and transparent, the EWG considers that there is a need to adopt a consistent approach to for evaluation of Annual Reports and data transmission issues.

A proposal of a first set of rules/assessment criteria to guide future evaluators and to increase consistency in the responses from different evaluators is provided. The aim of the set of criteria is to, in addition to the existing guidelines for evaluators, provide guidance to the pre-screeners and evaluators at future EWGs and should not have legal status.

The agreed criteria are based on assessment criteria agreed during the EWG and during last year's EWG on evaluation of ARs and DT issues (EWG 17-07).

The EWG did not have sufficient time to finalise the documents and it is still far from complete. The EWG therefor considers that more efforts should be put in to completing the document before next year's EWG on evaluation of ARs and DT issues.

General

In order for DGMARE to be able to judge whether further clarification or action is required from MS or end-users, all EWG comments need to be clear, self-explanatory and consistent.

Evaluation of Annual Reports (AR)

- For each AR section assess whether the MS executed the data collection in accordance with the NWP in the provided evaluation template in Excel. The results from the manual pre-screening is included in the evaluation template. If the issue has not been marked as Y, the pre-screeners have identified whether the issues is considered minor or major. If minor, the pre-screener have provided a proposed final comment from the pre-screener. The EWG are requested to make a final judgement and provide a comment and a potential action needed.
- Complete the assessment of the relevant sections of the AR in the assessment template in Excel. The assessment results from the EWG should be filled in the below columns:

EWG comment	EWG judgement	EWG: Action needed?
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- Assess issues flagged by the pre-screeners as minor and major. If pre-screeners have put Y (in the column "manual pre-screening") fill the below cells accordingly:

EWG comment	EWG judgement	EWG: Action needed?
No comment	Yes	No action needed

- No cells should be left empty. If the section is not relevant for the MS fill the cells accordingly:

EWG comment	EWG judgement	EWG: Action needed?
NA	NA	NA

- Concerning the question: Are there any deviations? Answer from MS: No, fill the cells accordingly:

EWG comment	EWG judgement	EWG: Action needed?
No deviations	Yes	No action needed

- Concerning the question: Are there any deviations? Answer from MS: Yes, fill the cells accordingly:

EWG comment	EWG judgement	EWG: Action needed?
Deviations exist	No, mostly, partly	Action needed

- If the question is unclear and cannot be assessed fill the cells accordingly:

EWG comment	EWG judgement	EWG: Action needed?
Not able to assess due to unclear question in the evaluation template	NA	NA

ANNEX 3: MS OVERVIEW

Member state: AUT Austria

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

Austria is currently undertaking three pilot studies therefore no annual data is yet provided.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

This section is not applicable to Austria as it is landlocked and those species being sampled in Pilot Study 1a of the WP do not fit in this section. Although the data being collected is important in terms of the fisheries at a national level.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Not applicable.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Not applicable.

5. Incidental by-catch

Not applicable.

6. Surveys at sea

Not applicable.

7. Fishing activity variable

Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Some of the information collected in Pilot Study 3a: Socio-economic data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors in Austria may be appropriate for this section as well as section 9. Austria should use the comments in the full evaluation sheet to ensure that the data collection methods follow the appropriate guidelines for variables required and reporting.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Austria should consider if the variables being collected are in line with the guidelines for Pilot Study 4: Environmental data on aquaculture as detailed in the full evaluation sheet.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Not applicable.

11. Data transmission issues

Not applicable.

Member state: BEL Belgium

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

Although overall reporting and execution of the national work plan is mostly satisfying there again remain some repetitive issues with regards to follow-ups on the guidelines and STECF recommendations. The overall performance is especially hampered by the non-fulfilments within the collection of socio-economic data for aquaculture and processing. MS should address these issues in future.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Section 1A/1C: As regards reporting Belgium is not following the guidelines in all cases and some repetitive issues occur. As regards execution deviations are not explained in all cases and no actions to avoid shortfalls are given.

Section 4A/4C: As regards reporting: In terms of follow-up of guidelines and quality of information contained in the AR tables and text Belgium reiterated the same mistakes as last year, without giving consideration to STECF comments and recommendations on their AR 2017. As regards execution Belgium tested a new solution in 2018 to overcome a low realization of the sampling plan in 2017, but the result was an even lower rate. However, deviations are explained in the text box. Belgium is encouraged to continue to make all effort to improve their sampling.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No major issues.

5. Incidental by-catch

As regards reporting table 1F is not in accordance with Table 4A (sampling strata from 4A is separated into regions in 1F). This results in, as commented by the MS, double counting of observed trips in Table 1F, and a lack of match between "Total number of PSU" and "Achieved number of PSU" values between both tables. In future Work plans this inconsistency should be removed.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Belgium states that it was decided not to collect education levels and it does not provide information on achievements concerning social variables. Reliable data sources have been identified, but apparently Belgium failed to implement this information in the data collection thus far. Here, MS should provide more information how they are going to organise the social data collection in future.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No information was provided by the MS for this module except for frame population and the fact that the survey resulted in only one useful response. It remains unclear within the AR if the data collection on aquaculture will be conducted in future or if the production is below threshold. Therefore, a proper evaluation of achievements and conclusions is not possible. It should be clarified by the MS if the collection of aquaculture data is done in future. The MS should increase the achievement rate in order to produce more clear conclusions.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Belgium did not perform any data collection on fish processing in 2018. It is only stated in the AR that "since 2018, Belgium has been seeking to hire a data collector who will be able to ensure a regular and improved data collection for the fish processing industry". This situation is not satisfactory and should be avoided in future.

11. Data transmission issues

One data transmission issue with regards to fleet economics with medium severity applies to Belgium. This issue was scored unsatisfactory by the EWG.

Member state: BGR Bulgaria

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP was good without major issues.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

The overall performance and compliance was good without any major issue. However a number of species were under-sampled or not sampled at all. *S. acanthias* was under-sampled for length and weight variables while for the same variables *T.mediterraneus*, *R. cavata*, *R. venosa* were oversampled. *P.maxima* was over-sampled for all the variables. Fecundity was under-sampled for *M. merlangus*, and not sampled at all for *E. encrasicolus* and *M. barbatus*.

3. Recreational Fisheries

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

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

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

5. Incidental by-catch

The overall performance and compliance was good without major problems. For future AR submissions Bulgaria should adjust the following: 1) indicate in the AR whether the recording of incidental bycatch by fishermen is mandatory 2) provide more concise information in Text Box 1F and 3) include Stratum ID code / Name of the survey in Text Box 1F.

6. Surveys at sea

The overall performance and compliance was good without any major problems. However, Bulgaria should provide the links to survey manuals in future ARs.

7. Fishing activity variable

The overall performance and compliance was good.

8. Fleet socio-economic

The overall performance and compliance was good without any major issue. Bulgaria should provide more detailed information about methodologies applied in the national data collection.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

The overall performance and compliance was good without any major issue. Bulgaria should provide more detailed information about methodologies applied in the national data collection.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

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

11. Data transmission issues

Three DT issues were reported for Bulgaria. Two were assessed as satisfactory and one as unsatisfactory.

Member state: CZE Czech Republic

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The EWG was not able to evaluate the overall performance for the Czech Republic because it is a landlocked country and most sections are not applicable for the MS.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Not applicable.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Not applicable.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Not applicable.

5. Incidental by-catch

Not applicable.

6. Surveys at sea

Not applicable.

7. Fishing activity variable

Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Not applicable.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

In 2018 the project "Analysis of data collection for aquaculture in the CR" was approved and funded. The first data collection of socio-economic data in Czech Republic is scheduled for 2019.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Not applicable.

11. Data transmission issues

Not applicable for Czech Republic in 2018.

Member state: CYP Cyprus

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 NWP

Cyprus had good overall performance in 2018 with an overall evaluation of Mostly.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issues.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

Cyprus indicates complementary data collection in the WP, but does not collect additional data. Instead, Cyprus estimates the related variables. This deviation is not reflected in the text box.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Response rate for all segments at 100% could not be correctly reported. The AR text with regards to response rate deviates from the table.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Cyprus does not collect aquaculture data as the production is below the threshold.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Cyprus does not collect data on fish processing industry as it is on voluntary basis.

11. Data transmission issues

Two data transmission issues reported. The "follow -up needed" from end-user for the clarification if the data for the Capital value (Tangible asset value (replacement)) in most years was submitted for inactive segments in the frame of the Fleet economic data call. Information provided by end-users and MS is contradictory. The second issue about delay for the data submission to ICCAT was clarified and assessed as "satisfactory".

Member state: DEU Germany

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The performance was very good with an overall assessment of Yes.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues but some inconsistencies in the naming of the stocks, between the planned and sampled stocks and reporting of unsampled strata. Germany should ensure that the AR complies with the AR guidelines.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issues but some minor inconsistencies with the guidelines. MS to ensure that the AR complies with the AR guidelines.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

No major issues. Germany should follow the guidelines in future AR submissions.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No issues.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Major issues were detected and Germany is asked to resubmit the table according to AR guidelines. Germany should clarify the achieved sample rate, and correct the achieved sample rate, which is much lower than the planned and the possible impacts on final assessments should be discussed.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

Two data transmission issues were reported. One for aquaculture and the other for WGDEEP, both related to coverage. The data transmission issue for aquaculture was assessed as Unsatisfactory.

Member state: DNK Denmark

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

Overall Denmark provided a good Annual report.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

The sampling as such is good but the main issue in this section is the lack of explanations for under-sampling.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Denmark should ensure they achieve the planned number of fishery dependent variables (table 1E-now only 19% achievement) and they should provide explanation in case of deviations (eel sampling).

5. Incidental by-catch

No issues.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No issues.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No issues.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

One DT issue was reported for Denmark. After evaluation by EWG 19-09, the issue was assessed as Unsatisfactory.

Member state: ESP Spain

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The Spanish AR is well written and information was presented clearly by region in both the tables and the text, which facilitated for the overall performance.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues in the biological sampling section. Spain has a vast sampling programme, across many regions, and had generally good levels of achievement across all regions and variables.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues with the recreational fisheries section and very good achievement of targets.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No major issues. Generally good achievement, except from some minor under sampling of eel.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issues. Some minor inconsistencies were found between Achieved Number of PSUs in Tables 1F and 4A, with higher numbers reported in table 4A for strata L3 and T6. Spain is reminded to match tables 1F and 4A in future ARs.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues were found with survey programme, which was well executed in 2018.

7. Fishing activity variable

No major issues with fishing activity variables. Generally, well achieved.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Generally, well achieved, however, it is unclear if PGECON methodology is applied, and Spain is asked to clarify this.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No issues with this section.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Some issues have been identified within this section. Spain has been asked to resubmit Table 3C and Text Box 3C to report the missing variables, with the description why the Employment by gender was not collected. As well as actions taken to avoid deviations in the future. The reference year 2016 should be clarified because it is not in line with WP.

11. Data transmission issues

18 data transmission issues were highlighted for Spain. Four of these issues related to quality of the data, and one related to coverage. Seven were assessed as Satisfactory, eight as Unsatisfactory, one needed follow-up, one was not assessed and one was classified as unknown since it contained multiple issues that resulted in different assessments.

Member state: ESP Estonia

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

Overall good performance for all sections except for the sampling for biological variables.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

In most cases, significant deviations were recorded, but only some explanations on under sampling are provided. No actions have been proposed to avoid deviations in the future.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issues.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

Minor issues related to incorrect entries originating from the WP transferred to AR. Unsampled strata are not listed but it is not clear if they are actually unsampled strata.

8. Fleet socio-economic

For several variables achievements are much lower than planned. For some variables response and achievement rates reported as "NA".

Estonia should fully implement the improvements described in the text box 3A in order to guarantee an adequate coverage of the economic survey.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Not applicable.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Not applicable.

11. Data transmission issues

No issues.

Member state: FIN Finland

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The overall performance for Finland was assessed as a Mostly. A few minor issues were raised.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Some issues were highlighted for this section. Finland should ensure that achieved sampling is in line with planned targets in future programmes. Details of deviations from planned sampling for *Perca fluviatilis*, *Coregonus lavaretus*, *Sander lucioperca* and actions to avoid deviations should be provided.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

A minor issue that arose for this section refers to that Finland should ensure that planned numbers are achieved.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issues. Finland is encouraged to provide details on the Pilot Study (aim, scope, methodology, etc.) together with results in the next AR (2019) and extend the current Pilot Study to other groups of vulnerable species.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues. Several cells were merged in Table 1G preventing automatic checks. This should be avoided in future submissions.

7. Fishing activity variable

No major issues. A minor issue that was raised for this module was that the MS should follow guidelines in future submissions and list all required variables. Furthermore, the MS should use proper codification for the fishing technique in the future.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No major issues.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No major issues.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No major issues.

11. Data transmission issues

No data transmission issues were reported for Finland.

Member state: FRA France

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The overall performance of the AR 2018 was assessed as Mostly. Significant improvements have been made in reporting to the guidelines especially in section 1 compared to the 2017 AR.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

1A-C: There is still the issue of sampling in the Northeast Arctic to fully resolve and more detailed information on actions to avoid to future deviations is needed.

4A-C: Allocation to subarea/fishing ground has improved since the last submission, although there are still minor errors.

5A: France has shown progress in providing information on data quality

3. Recreational Fisheries

Data for all species listed in the guidelines (mostly Mediterranean) are still not included in the AR.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

France should only include WP sampling frame units in the AR. Data for species taken in recreational fisheries should be presented under part 1D.

5. Incidental by-catch

France should match tables 1F and 4A in future AR and follow the guidelines when completing the Table.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

France should follow guidelines in future AR and WP submissions and provide consistent fleet segments in 2A and 3A.

8. Fleet socio-economic

France should follow guidelines in future AR and WP submissions and also provide all variables and data sources.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

France should apply the segmentation recommended by EU-MAP for future data collection and submission. Links to the methods used are needed in Table 5B.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

France should apply the segmentation recommended by EU-MAP for future data collection and submission.

11. Data transmission issues

There were 15 DT issues relating to France. Seven were assessed as Satisfactory, three as Unsatisfactory, three need to be followed-up and two were not assessed.

Member state: GBR United Kingdom

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The overall performance of the United Kingdom was assessed as Mostly.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

There are stocks that appear in 1B planned for sample however they are not reported as sampled in 1C (Crangon and Pandalus as examples). Furthermore, some stocks were marked for sampling in table 1A but are not included in table 1C: ie Phycis phycis, Seriola lalandi. All large pelagics species are split by species in table 1B but grouped as "large pelagics" in 1C.

Some stocks were not marked for sampling or were not included in table 1A and were sampled. The addition of species, for which sampling was not planned, should be clearly justified in AR Comments column.

United Kingdom should ensure that the species planned to be sampled are consistent between tables 1A, 1B and 1C for the next WP submission. Inconsistencies in the naming of the stocks between tables 1A and 1C should be avoided.

Actions to avoid deviations should be stated by MS at least for Anguilla anguilla and Salmo salar.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

The United Kingdom should justify the under sampling that occurred for eel and salmon and explain actions taken to avoid this issue in the future. In particular for eel: 7 out of 27 samplings frame units were under sampled because of administrative problems; for salmon: 2 out of 6 sampling frame units were under sampled.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issue. However, the United Kingdom should strictly follow the guidelines for AR in future submissions.

6. Surveys at sea

The United Kingdom should use codes and not delete formulas in future submissions as it prevents automatic check of the data. Furthermore, UK should upload litter data to DATRAS when applicable. Reference to international coordination groups should be the most recent ones. In the present AR, IBTSWG and WGBEAM feeds back to 2017 report.

7. Fishing activity variable

No major issues. However, the United Kingdom should strictly follow guidelines for AR in future submissions (fishing techniques should be listed separately and not grouped as "all", capacity and landings should be listed by variable.).

8. Fleet socio-economic

No issues.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No issues.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

One DT issue for the FDI data call was reported. It was assessed as Satisfactory.

Member state: GRC Greece

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

No major issues. There is a notable improvement from last year since the Greek Programme has been fully operational since the beginning of 2018.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues. Some suggestions for the future WP regarding: (1) numbers planning and (2) strata not covered by sampling. Clarifications about one species in AR are required.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No major issues but administrative issues have prevented the sampling of all Eel Management Units (EMUs). MS needs to ensure sampling of all EMUs is carried out.

5. Incidental by-catch

No issues.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues but the targets in surveys were not fully achieved due to technical problems of the vessels which are considered a case of "force majeure".

7. Fishing activity variable

Minor issue with the validation of the >12 m part of the fleet. This issue is expected to be solved next year.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Minor issues for four fleet segments.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No major issues but clarification if the agreed methodologies, guidelines and practises in PGECON are implemented.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

Four DT issues were reported. Two DT issues were assessed as Satisfactory and two as Unsatisfactory.

Member state: HUN Hungary

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The overall performance for the reporting and execution of Hungary is assessed as Partly.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Not applicable for Hungary.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Not applicable for Hungary.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Not applicable for Hungary.

5. Incidental by-catch

Not applicable for Hungary.

6. Surveys at sea

Not applicable for Hungary.

7. Fishing activity variable

Not applicable for Hungary.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Hungary suspended all commercial fisheries on its natural waters since 01.01.2016. Accordingly, economic data for the fleet are not available.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Referring to Table 3B, there are inconsistencies between the WP part in AR template and approved WP, differences in segmentation, two missing segments, as well as technical issues.

Hungary should follow AR guidelines in the future submissions and try to be consistent with WP or should justify any deviations. In the future, MS should implement additional effort to increase the level of sampling achievements. Regarding the data availability (6A), Hungary shall indicate the availability of data for pilot studies in future AR submissions.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No data collection was conducted in 2018, although it was planned in the WP and Hungary indicated that is ongoing for the years 2017 and 2018. Hungary should implement data collection activities as reported in the WP.

11. Data transmission issues

No data transmission issues for Hungary in 2018.

Member state: HRV Croatia

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The overall performance and compliance for Croatia is assessed as Mostly, as was also the case in previous years evaluation. The AR (both tables and texts) were well structured and organized. Some issues concerning Surveys at sea and Socioeconomics for aquaculture exists.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

There were no issues within this section.

3. Recreational Fisheries

There were no issues within this section.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

There were no issues within this section that refers to prolonged pilot study due to the development of the management plan for eel and consultation of the fisheries sector and administration.

5. Incidental by-catch

There were only some minor issues within this section regarding some inconsistencies in Tables 1F and 4A.

6. Surveys at sea

There were deviations regarding temperature by haul that were not explained.

7. Fishing activity variable

There were no issues within this section.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Croatia successfully filled table 3A and there is only one minor issue referring to the lack of a link to the national methodological documents.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

There is one major issue regarding 'Achieved Sample no/Planned sample no.' Croatia included the wrong formula for calculations and therefore all numbers are incorrect. In addition, there is no link to the national methodological documents.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

There were no issues within this section.

11. Data transmission issues

Four data transmission issues were raised. Two were assessed as Satisfactory and two as Unsatisfactory.

Member state: IRL Ireland

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The overall performance of the reporting and execution of the 2018 WP is in general very good. An exception is module 3B (Socio-economic for aquaculture) where the guidelines are not followed.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No issues within this section.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues related to recreational Fishery.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Ireland has made alterations in the WP part of the Annual Report, which is not permitted according to guidelines. Furthermore, some releases have not been carried out as specified in the WP. Otherwise, no issues.

5. Incidental by-catch

The most prominent issue is that table 1F does not correspond to table 4A, which affect the evaluation of the data collected for estimation incidental bycatch as it become difficult to evaluate the coverage of the sampling.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues discovered in the surveys at sea section.

7. Fishing activity variable

Ireland has not followed the guidelines in all cases resulting in some minor issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

In many cases, the table is not filled in according to the guidelines. The mistakes include incorrect variables names, empty cells and deleted formulas. Furthermore, information for inactive vessels are missing.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

The table contains a significant amount of mistakes caused by non-compliance with the guidelines provided for the section. Cells are merged, the WP part of the AR is changed and formulas are disabled. All are issues which complicate the evaluation and prevent a streamlined and automatic evaluation of the tables. In several cases the figures substituting the results of the deleted formulas are not correct which gives a false picture of sampling intensity achieved.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Only minor issues are discovered in this section of the Annual Report.

11. Data transmission issues

Five DT issues were reported in connection with data calls in 2018. All were assessed as Satisfactory.

Member state: ITA Italy

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

Italy had a performance in 2018 with an overall evaluation of Mostly. No major issues were detected.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues but Italy should explain the reasons behind the low numbers of sardine and anchovy age samples in GSA 16.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No major issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No major issues. Italy is carrying out a pilot study. In the next submission of WP, Italy should include stock related variables in table 1 E.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issues but Italy should answer columns P-T of Table 1F following the guidelines and is encouraged to include information on both on-going pilot studies in future ARs.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues. There were some technical problems that prevented DRESS to be implemented in all districts of GSA17.

7. Fishing activity variable

No major issues but variables "Number of trips" and "Number of fishing operations" were missing. Italy should list all required variables in future ARs.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No major issues but Italy should follow the guidelines to fill the cells and not leave cells blank.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No major issues but Italy should follow the guidelines to fill the cells and not leave cells blank.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No major issues but the codification for group segmentation, was not in line with EU-MAP (although it was the same as reported in the WP).

11. Data transmission issues

Italy had 23 DT issues, the majority related with coverage (16). Out of these, 7 issues were considered Unsatisfactory.

Member state: LTU Lithuania

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The overall performance and compliance for Lithuania was classified as Mostly. The compliance class for most modules is Yes, for five sections, i.e. 1D, 1E, 1F, 4A-C and 5A is Mostly. Like in the case of AR 2017 evaluation, it means that there is still room for improvements in the future, particularly with regard to realistic sampling planning process and Quality Assurance Framework.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

As already pointed out during AR 2017 evaluation, Lithuania should pay more attention to process of planning sampling of biological variables of fish stock in order to make it realistic and to avoid inclusion in the WP the variables for stock for which data collection is very difficult or not possible. Improvements were noticed regarding quality assurance framework. However, MS should make an effort to document Quality Assurance regarding biological data capture and processing and made them publicly available.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No essential issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No essential issues.

5. Incidental by-catch

No essential issues.

6. Surveys at sea

No essential issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

No essential issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No essential issues.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Data collection and reporting on aquaculture section is not applicable for Lithuania.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No essential issues.

11. Data transmission issues

No DT issues were recorded in 2018.

Member state: LVA Latvia

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

Latvia indicated a very comprehensive and satisfactory execution of the 2018 work plan.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues. Latvia should follow the guidance that rows from Work Program should not be deleted when transferring to Annual Report. Latvia should try to find a solution to sample the vessel in NEA and EA or find a regional solution.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No major issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

The achieved number of samples of stock related variables and catch quantity by area/life stage not corresponding to the planned number of samples in Table 1E – undersampling occurred. In the future Latvia shall ensure achievements of planned numbers.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issues.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues related with compliance, just a format issue that Latvia shall avoid in the future.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No major issues. In future WP submissions Latvia shall indicate the frequency for collection of social data.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No major issues. In future WP submissions that Latvia shall indicate the frequency for collection of social data.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

In 2018, no data transmission issues were recorded for Latvia.

Member state: MLT Malta

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

The overall reporting and execution of the 2018 NWP was assessed as Mostly.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

There were a few minor issues relating to increase sample sizes for species with low sample sizes.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues.

5. Incidental by-catch

No significant issues identified, and no action required.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

Achieved coverage of data collected under complementary data collection and response rate are not reported for the most of segments.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No major issues.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No major issues.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

No data transmission issues.

Member state: NLD The Netherlands

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 AR

The overall reporting and execution of the 2018 AR of the Netherlands was good without major issues.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

The overall performance and compliance was good without any major issue. In general deviations are justified in the table (column comments and in the textbox). However, for some species no information on Achieved number of individuals measured at the national level and no justification is given: Clupea harengus IV, VIIId & VIa/VIaN/VIaS,VIIbc/VIIa/VIIj ; Mullus surmuletus ICES all areas; scomber scombrus II & VI, VII, VIII, IX; Trachurus trachurus IIa, IVa, Vb, VIa, VIIa-c, e-k, VIIIabde/X & IV, VIIId... Deviations for Clupea, Mullus, Scomber, and Trachurus should be explained by MS.

3. Recreational Fisheries

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

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

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

5. Incidental by-catch

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

6. Surveys at sea

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

7. Fishing activity variable

The overall performance and compliance was good. However, MS did not consistently use % in column K ("expected coverage"), but it is in line with WP. MS should follow guidelines in future AR and WP submissions.

8. Fleet socio-economic

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

The Netherlands should provide more detailed information about methodologies applied in the national data collection.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

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

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

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

11. Data transmission issues

No DT issues.

Member state: POL Poland

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 NWP

The overall performance for AR 2018 was assessed to compliance class Yes. No major issues were detected.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues were detected. MS shall consider in future to revise the species to include in sampling to avoid non compliance.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No major issues were detected.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No major issues were detected.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issues were detected.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues were detected.

7. Fishing activity variable

No major issues were detected.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No major issues were detected. MS should provide further information is regarding variables with no information's about type of data collection.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Poland does not collect data on aquaculture.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No major issues were detected.

11. Data transmission issues

In 2018, no data transmission issues were recorded for Poland.

Member state: PRT Portugal

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

Overall the reporting and execution of the WP were very good in 2018. There were a few issues with economic and processing data where the variables were not assigned properly and should be listed separately. MS should adjust these in the next WP.

For biological sampling most issues were resolved throughout 2018. MS should take note of the comments below regarding their surveys-at-sea information.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Portugal's biological sampling is good overall. Perhaps the sampling plan will be adjusted to lessen the amount of over and under sampling but this is difficult when following 4S sampling.

Portugal has a complex sampling plan and experienced a difficult year in 2018 with different locations and fishing regions on the mainland, Madeira and Azores. Portugal made a lot of effort to resolve their issues with most of them having a positive result by the start of 2019, except for the on-board observation in the cod fishery in I and II. The AR would gain clarity if Portugal would stick to the region convention in order to structure the AR and text boxes.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Portugal fulfilled all the requirements of sampling recreational fishing through a pilot scheme.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues.

5. Incidental by-catch

Portugal should match tables 1F and 4A in the next WP submission and future AR and follow the guidelines in the future ARs. Portugal is encouraged to instruct observers to record information on the presence of PETS species.

6. Surveys at sea

There are a few omissions in the report. Please see the evaluation comments and the notes below:

- The Nephrops Survey Offshore Portugal NepS (NepS (FU 28-29)) is listed in the text box but not listed in the table. This survey should be added to the table 1G & 1H.
- The PELAGO survey was carried out outside official time period and the justification should be provided in the table comments or text box.
- PELAGO (acoustic) survey - MS should justify why only biological data were uploaded and why data were not uploaded to DATRAS.
- No type and place are given for data dissemination in the text box for ARQDAÇO, PELAGO, FCGS, PTGFS and IBTSQ4 even though MS has indicated in table 7B that additional data exists.

7. Fishing activity variable

Not all variables were assigned to the proper variable group. For example, the national fleet register is not the proper source for "Value of landings total and per species"; sales notes are not the proper source for effort variables.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Portugal did well in their socio economic data provision except in future AR submissions the variables should be allocated correctly. Social variables should be listed separately and achieved sample rates should be clarified.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Social variables should be listed separately.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

One DT issues was reported from the FDI data call. The correct data was not submitted in time for the EWG. MS should respect the deadlines set by each data call.

Member state: ROM Romania

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 NWP

The performance was generally good. Only some issues were identified, such as data availability of Incidental by-catch, and Pilot Studies which is missing in AR and WP. Also as regards follow-up of regional recommendations and agreements, where MS should provide information for all recommendations and to specify action taken.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Minor issue (*R. clavata* and *D. pastinaca* were not sampled for sex ratio although it was planned according Table 1B). MS to give a full description in the next AR about data quality evaluation including testing procedure and validation.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Minor issue. Romania did not present all species from Table 3.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

NA

5. Incidental by-catch

Table 1F is not consistent with AR guidelines thus there were problems in the evaluation. Romania should adjust table 1F to match 4A, following the guidelines, in the next WP (and AR) submission.

Data availability of Incidental by-catch, and Pilot Studies is missing in AR and WP (mentioned also by STECF EWG 18-10). Romania is kindly invited to provide data availability for all variables.

6. Surveys at sea

The 2 surveys are in one text box. This is in line with the work plan, but not in line with the guidelines. MS should correct Table 1G.

7. Fishing activity variable

Romania should follow the guidelines in Table 2A in future submissions.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No issues.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

The type of data collection is census, but achieved sample rate are lower than 70% for most techniques/variables. No comment is given to explain why the response rate was lower than expected from a census. Romania should provide the explanation about low response rate and make methodologies available for end users.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No major issues. In future submissions Romania should make methodologies available for end users.

11. Data transmission issues

One DT issue concerning data collection and data transmission on Aquaculture, where no data were reported, with impact on the WG. No MS comment on this is reported in the DTMT.

Member state: SVK Slovakia

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 NWP

This was the first time Slovakia reported data and several issues were detected.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Not relevant.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Not relevant.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Not relevant.

5. Incidental by-catch

Not relevant.

6. Surveys at sea

Not relevant.

7. Fishing activity variable

Not relevant.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Not relevant.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Several issues were noticed on the reporting of Table 3B and Text Box 3B (e.g. techniques and species groups were not provided, type of data collection scheme was incorrect, threshold was indicated, but not provided what type of it was applied, achieved sample rate was not provided).

Issues were also noticed in the execution of the WP. Techniques and species were not specified and only few economic variables were collected, the planned types of data collection were not described and the data collection scheme was not identified. Slovakia is requested to resubmit both the Table and the Text Box 3B.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Several issues were noticed both in the reporting and the execution. The main issues were that no segments were provided for the sector and many variables were missing. Slovakia is requested to resubmit both the Table and the Text Box 3C.

11. Data transmission issues

No data transmission issues were reported for Slovakia.

Member state: SVN Slovenia

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 NWP

The overall performance was assessed as Yes.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues. Minor comments were addressed such as that Slovenia should follow the guidelines and not change the white cells in future AR. As a new sampling stratum was added, MS is advised to take into account any changes and include them in the next WP, including this sampling stratum. Some issues on the reported landings which are very low and Slovenia should attempt to improve sampling rates and to reconsider the sampling design.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issues. Slovenia is encouraged to include strata BCD-OTBVOL in Table 1F in future WP or provide clarification as to why not.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues, only inconsistencies in data assimilations 1H (Y) and 1G (N) for both MEDIAS and MEDITS were mentioned.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No issues.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No issues.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

One data transmission issue was observed, but it was evaluated as satisfactory.

Member state: SWE Sweden

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2018 WP

Sweden indicated a very comprehensive and satisfactory execution of the 2018 work plan.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Except for the fact that not all planned sampling was fully achieved, no issues were identified.

5. Incidental by-catch

No major issues.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues.

7. Fishing activity variables

No major issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No major issues.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No major issues.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

In 2018, no data transmission issues were reported for Sweden.

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