



JRC SCIENCE FOR POLICY REPORT

Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF)

Evaluation of the 2019 Annual Reports for data collection and Data Transmission issues (STECF-20-08)

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Abstract

Commission Decision of 25 February 2016 setting up a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, C(2016) 1084, OJ C 74, 26.2.2016, p. 4–10. The Commission may consult the group on any matter relating to marine and fisheries biology, fishing gear technology, fisheries economics, fisheries governance, ecosystem effects of fisheries, aquaculture or similar disciplines. This report presents the STECF findings based on the Report of the Expert Working Group (EWG-20-08) which was held virtually from 22-26 June 2020, to evaluate MS Annual Reports on data collection for 2019 and the Member States' data transmission to the end users during 2019. The report of the EWG was reviewed by the STECF during its 64th plenary meeting held virtually from 6-10 July 2020.

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EWG-20-08 repo

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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-20-08)**

EXPERT WORKING GROUP EWG-20-08 REPORT

Background provided by the Commission

Article 11 of the Data Collection framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017 (recast) requires Member States to submit to the Commission an annual report (AR) on the implementation of their national work plans (WPs); and requires STECF to evaluate: (a) the execution of the WPs; and (b) the quality of the data collected by the Member States. These tasks have been conferred to EWG 20-08. In addition, EWG 20-08 was asked to review and approve guidance documents, originating from ad-hoc contracts run in March 2020 (task 2, 3, 4).

A pre-screening exercise has taken place to facilitate the work of the EWG. The EWG evaluation is actually run as a second level assessment, focusing on topics where the pre-screeners have raised an issue or where the pre-screeners assessment have not been conclusive. This type of assessment may be based on specific questions addressed to the EWG by the Commission, based on the outcomes of the pre-screening exercise.

The EWG should produce the following:

1. An overview of the assessment and overall evaluation of Annual Reports, including performance of Member States, major issues and recurring issues across many Member States.
2. A review and approval of AR evaluation grid and guidance, produced by March 2020 ad-hoc contracts, and used by the pre-screeners; a feedback on the documents used in the evaluation process by EWG 20-08, in view of the upcoming EWG 20-18 work on AR/WP templates. Per Member State: (i) an evaluation of the annual report in the grid provided by the Commission, pre-filled with the pre-screening exercise results (ii) Member State-specific issues relating to data collection. In particular, an evaluation of the observers coverage for highly migratory stocks fisheries and is compliance with current legal obligations.

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.

3. An overview of the assessment and overall evaluation of data transmission issues, including performance of Member States, main issues per end-user and recurring issues across many Member States.
4. Per Member State: (i) an evaluation of the data transmission issues related to end-users, via the DTMT tool, (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.

Request to the STECF

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

In particular, STECF is requested to comment on:

- the evaluation of observers' coverage for highly migratory species fisheries and their compliance with legal obligations;
- the review and approval of AR evaluation grid and guidance, produced by March 2020 *ad-hoc* contracts and provided in an annex to the report. The grid has been streamlined and simplified, while a split per regions have been reintroduced. STECF should evaluate if the grid and guidance are coherent and complete for the purpose;

the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool guidance, provided in an annex to the report. During 2019 spring plenary a parallel workshop produced the DTMT guidance document, later used and amended by the EWG 19-09 This last version was used by EWG 19-18. STECF should evaluate if the final version of the DTMT guidance fits the purpose and propose modifications if necessary.

Summary of the information provided to the STECF

EWG 20-08 met virtually on 22-26 June 2020. Since there was just one week between the end of the EWG and the start of STECF PLEN 20-02, the final EWG report was not yet available to PLEN 20-02. The following STECF comments and suggestions are consequently based on discussions among STECF members based on: (1) a presentation of outcomes from the EWG 20-08 meeting made by one of the two chairpersons, (2) a preliminary draft of the EWG 20-08 report, (3) the AR evaluation grid and guidance document produced within *ad-hoc* contracts in March 2020, used by the EWG 20-08, (4) an Excel file with data transmission (DT) issues including the outcome of the evaluations of DT issues done by EWG 20-08.

STECF comments

Evaluation of 2019 Annual Reports

STECF observes that the evaluation of the 2019 ARs was based on the updated evaluation grid used by the pre-screeners prior to the meeting (Task 2-3 of March 2020 *ad-hoc* contracts), the Guidance for AR-WP evaluators with comments (Task 4 of March 2020 *ad-hoc* contracts), and the Guidance for the Submission and Evaluation of Annual Reports (as updated in 2018). In addition, experts used agreed assessment criteria from EWG 19-09 to ensure coherent assessment in sub-groups and comparable results. As was the case in previous years, pre-screening of ARs a few weeks prior to the beginning of the meeting was an important prerequisite for an efficient evaluation during the EWG. This year, a total of 13 experts pre-screened all sections of the ARs.

As in previous years, following the requests from the EWG experts the Commission contacted Member States for clarifications and/or asked for re-submission of AR files during the EWG. STECF notes that due to the time required to collate all EWG 20-08 sub-group comments into one single communication addressed to each MS and the time needed for MS to reply, MS responses arrived on the fourth day of the meeting. This left only the last day of the EWG for the experts to re-assess the new incoming information and compile the assessment by MS. STECF agrees with EWG 20-08 that it would in future be more efficient for any major issues to be resolved prior to the beginning of the EWG based on the outcome of the pre-screening exercise. STECF considers

that in future it would be useful to ask one of the pre-screeners to take on a coordinating role to collate and review comments raised during the pre-screening exercise together with the Commission. Following this filtering exercise the Commission could raise serious issues with AR submissions (such as gross inconsistencies, serious formatting issues, or missing tables) with MS at the end of the pre-screening exercise and before the EWG. When contacting MS, the Commission should clarify that comments are from pre-screeners and may not represent the final view of the EWG, and that the EWG might raise additional or follow-up questions during the meeting.

STECF observes that the evaluation of 2019 ARs showed that there was a general improvement in the overall performance level by MS compared to previous years. Only one (landlocked) MS was given an overall performance score of 'partly', compared to three following the evaluation of the 2018 ARs. The number of AR sections receiving a compliance level score of 10-50% ('partly') also decreased, from 17 in the 2018 ARs to 11 in the 2019 ARs. STECF considers it could be useful to summarise changes in achievement scores over time by showing how classifications for all AR sections have evolved for each MS over the last three years.

Evaluation of observer coverage

STECF notes that the EWG 20-08 attempted to evaluate observer coverage for fisheries exploiting highly migratory large pelagic stocks, and to assess whether the coverage is in line with the requirements of RFMOs and EU legislation transposing RFMO management measures (in particular Article 20 and Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2019/1154, transposing ICCAT Recommendation 16-05), as requested in the meeting TORs. In order to achieve this, the EWG 20-08 attempted to extract swordfish observer coverage information from Table 4A of the 2019 ARs, which outlines the sampling plan description for biological data. This exercise was not successful, mainly because (i) in most cases, the sampling strata include both on-board sampling and fish market sampling combined, and (ii) the sampling plans generally combine several species of large pelagics. STECF notes that further issues related to sampling of large pelagic stocks were identified by the STECF EWG 19-19 on Outermost Regions, including the fact that the sampling programmes of several MS are not split in sufficient detail to reliably extract information for Outermost Regions.

STECF agrees with the EWG 20-08 that the information available in ARs is only useful to identify which MS have longline fisheries targeting large pelagic fish, but not to produce any further detailed information. STECF considers that a request for more detailed information would need to be addressed to MS in order to gather data on observer coverage for specific fisheries targeting highly migratory species. The responses given by MS would then need to be compared to legal obligations under RFMO requirements and EU legislation.

AR evaluation grid and guidance

STECF notes that the AR evaluation grid and guidance produced by the March 2020 *ad-hoc* contracts improved the evaluation exercise by making it more concise and reducing the number of repetitive questions. STECF notes that the EWG 20-08 is suggesting further improvements to the grid and guidance document.

The updated grid and guidance document reintroduced the regional dimension, which was included in the AR evaluation template up until 2017 but was omitted in the later version. STECF considers that separating assessments by region is important for countries that have fisheries in several regions since the evaluation outcome can be different for each region. Moreover, the regional dimension can contribute to the planning of regional work programmes by identifying issues with data collection at regional level. STECF notes that the EWG 20-08 could only carry out a regional evaluation where MS submitted the required information. Where this was given, the EWG regarded the availability of regionally resolved information as improvement of the evaluation process.

Evaluation of DCF data transmission issues

In total, 106 data transmission related to seven data calls in 2019 and from three end-users were uploaded to the DTMT tool and evaluated by EWG 20-08. 43 data transmission issues were related to coverage, 43 to quality, and 20 to timeliness. STECF observes that this was an increase from the 85 issues evaluated by EWG 19-09 in the previous year. However, STECF notes that the DT issues evaluated resulted from different data calls / end users. Moreover, multiple issues are sometimes reported as one single issue in the DTMT. The total number of DT issues is therefore not directly comparable between years.

STECF notes that the number of DT issues raised by the STECF EWG on Mediterranean and Black Sea has decreased slightly from 2019 to 2020. The number of DT issues flagged by ICES WGs on the other hand increased, mainly due to DT issues raised by the Working Group for the Bay of Biscay and the Iberian Waters Ecoregion (WGBIE).

Data Transmission Monitoring Tool

STECF notes that the DTMT web platform was not operational during the EWG due to technical problems. The EWG was nevertheless able to assess DT issues based on the DTMT Guidance document (version 30 May 2019), using an Excel file provided by the Commission. STECF notes that although the DTMT guidance document worked well, EWG 20-08 suggested some further modifications, in particular the inclusion of changes proposed during EWG 19-09, more concrete examples, and making the guidance document more user friendly.

STECF recalls that PLEN 19-03 had concluded that a separate session at the next STECF spring plenary 20-01 should be dedicated to assessing and adopting changes proposed by EWGs 19-09 and 19-18, and to updating the DTMT web platform accordingly. Due to Covid-19-related restructuring of the spring plenary 20-01, this session could not be held. STECF considers such a separate STECF PLEN session is still required to finalise the DTMT guidance and web platform, and that this could be held during PLEN 20-03 in November. The session will require some preparation in order to ensure that (i) all the comments made by EWG 19-09, 19-18, and 20-08 are compiled, (ii) feedback from any other users of the tool is considered to the extent possible, and (iii) JRC experts responsible for maintaining the DTMT tool are consulted regarding changes that need to be made to the web portal. STECF considers that STECF EWGs should continue using the current version of the DTMT Guidance document (version 30 May 2019) until the DTMT tool and guidance document have been updated.

Reporting Tool

As in previous advice (STECF PLEN 14-02, 14-03, 15-02, 16-02, 17-02, 17-03, 18-02, 19-02), STECF reiterates that an online platform dedicated to WPs and ARs coupled with an online reporting and automatic checking tool would be a more efficient way to monitor data collection by MS, and to assess data transmission issues raised by end-users. Such a tool could build on the preliminary automatic Screening Support Tool (SST) developed in preparation of EWG 18-10. Linked to a regional database, such a reporting tool would also allow for a more effective assessment of DCF data quality, both at the MS and at the regional level. However, STECF understands that such a tool might not be developed before the regional databases under development are operational.

STECF conclusions

STECF endorses the outcomes of EWG 20-08 presented during the STECF PLEN 20-02; the final EWG report was not available to STECF PLEN 20-02.

With regard to the AR evaluation, STECF considers that the updated AR evaluation grid and updated guidance produced for AR-WP evaluators by the March 2020 *ad-hoc* contracts are a significant improvement and allowed for a more consistent and less subjective approach to the evaluation of ARs. STECF notes that additional recommendations for improving the grid and guidance document were made by the EWG 20-08. STECF considers that the compilation of this feedback and integration into the grid and guidance document could best be addressed through an *ad-hoc* contract prior to the EWG 20-16. EWG 20-16 could then be tasked with finalising the evaluation grid and guidance document, prior to endorsement by PLEN 20-03.

In order to streamline the process of contacting MS for clarifications, STECF concludes it would in future be more efficient for any major issues to be resolved prior to the beginning of the EWG based on the outcome of the pre-screening exercise. STECF considers that one of the pre-screeners could be appointed to filter issues flagged by the various experts during the pre-screening exercise together with the Commission so that serious issues with AR submissions can be communicated to MS by the Commission before the start of the EWG in a coherent and consistent manner.

STECF concludes that the information on observer coverage that can be extracted from the ARs in their current format is insufficiently detailed to allow for an evaluation of observer coverage for fisheries targeting highly migratory species and their compliance with legal obligations.

With regard 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 notes that due to challenges faced as a result of having to hold both PLEN 20-01 and EWG 20-08 as remote virtual meetings due to the Covid-19 pandemic, it was not yet possible to finalise the DTMT guidance and make technical changes to the DTMT web tool. STECF considers that STECF EWGs working with data should continue working with the current version of the DTMT and the DTMT guidance document for the time being. STECF PLEN 20-03 should be tasked with finalising the DTMT guidance document and providing details of the required technical changes to the DTMT web portal to the JRC.

STECF notes that despite improvements to the current evaluation procedures, a web-based reporting tool linked to regional databases would be a more efficient way to evaluate the execution of WPs by Member States and to assess DT issues. The use of regional databases could shift the focus from reporting and transmission aspects to the actual quality of the data collected by MS.

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REPORT TO THE STECF

EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON Evaluation of 2019 Annual Reports for data collection and Data Transmission issues (EWG-20-08)

Virtual meeting, 22-26 June 2020

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

1 INTRODUCTION

The assessment of Annual Reports (ARs) on data collection in 2019 and Data transmission issues raised in relation to data calls in this year were carried out by the STECF Expert Working Group (STECF EWG 20-08) between the 22th to the 26th of June 2020.

Under the process of evaluation and approval of the outcomes of the Work Plans (WP), Article 11 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004¹ 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).

Thirty independent experts conducted the evaluation. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the EWG meeting was held as a virtual meeting using Skype for Business as platform. 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 2019 and DT issues raised in response to 2019 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 20-08

Background

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

(a) the execution of the WPs; and

(b) the quality of the data collected by the Member States.

In preparation for the above, EWG 20-08 will be convened as a teleconference from 22-26 June 2020².

Request to EWG 20-08

EWG 20-08 is requested to evaluate Member States' AR on the implementation of their WPs in 2019, which have been submitted to the Commission by 31st of May 2020, and to report their findings to the plenary meeting of the STECF, which will take place as a teleconference from 6-10 July 2020.

¹ 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).

² STECF EWG were planned to take place physically in Belgium, but Covid-19 situation obliges to hold this meeting on-line and through video-conference.

In particular, the EWG 20-08 is requested to report its findings regarding:

- (a) the execution of the WPs, including the results of the pre-screening of ARs as described below; and
- (b) the apparent data transmission issues (DTi) reported by end users for data calls launched during the year 2019.

Prior to the EWG 20-08 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.

In addition, at the beginning of the EWG meeting experts should agree on (i) the use of the evaluation grid and guidance to assess the annual reports; and (ii) the use of guidelines to assess the DTi.

- A. Based on the comments received from last year exercise (STECF EWG 19-09 and others), several experts in March 2020 ad-hoc contracts compiled and analysed observations from past years exercises and provided an updated AR evaluation grid (Task 2-3 of March ad-hoc) and an updated Guidance for AR-WP evaluators with comments (Task 4 of March ad-hoc). This grid and guidance could not be approved by STECF 2020-01 spring plenary, yet they are going to be used by the pre-screeners prior to EWG 20-08.

STECF EWG 20-08 is requested to review and approve these documents and agree on their use.

- B. During STECF 2019-01 spring plenary, a parallel group worked on a guidance to fill in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool. The group produced DTMT guidance 5.2 document, later used and modified by EWG 19-09 on AR and DTi, and updated as a Doc 3 DTMT Guidance version 30052019. This document was later used by the EWG 19-18 on WP and DTi.

STECF EWG 20-08 is requested to review comments to Doc 3 DTMT Guidance version 30052019 and agree on the common rules and use of this document.

EWG 20-08 report

The report of the EWG 20-08 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.

- (ii) A review and approval of the AR evaluation grid and guidance (see previous point A), documents that serve as a basis for a harmonized assessment of all MS AR.
- (iii) A feedback on the documents used by EWG 20-08 (AR template and guidelines, AR evaluation grid and guidance, DTMT guidance), in view of the upcoming EWG 20-18 work on the AR/WP templates. The compilation of such observations from previous AR/WP assessment cycles has been produced under Task 1 of March 2020 ad-hoc contracts.

2. For each Member State:

a. With regard to ARs:

- (i) An overall evaluation of whether the Member State executed its data collection activities in accordance with its agreed WP for 2019.
- (ii) A detailed evaluation of the AR, based on the AR evaluation grid provided by the Commission, which will already include the result of the pre-screening exercise. The completed grid should highlight:
 - any persistent or recurring issues regarding execution of data collection activities;
 - any persistent or recurring issues regarding reporting of data collection activities;
 - all issues that may require the Commission to take remedial action (request for resubmission of the AR or clarification of specific issues). The Commission will seek clarification from Member States on any issues raised during the EWG meeting and feedback from Member State should be evaluated by the EWG during the meeting. The EWG is not required to evaluate feedback from Member States received after 25 June (one day before the EWG meeting ends);
 - any issues that are 'for information' only.
- (iii) An evaluation of the observers coverage of the fisheries exploiting the highly migratory (large pelagic) stocks, for the estimation of catch composition (by species and size) and discards; in particular, whether the coverage is in line with the requirements of the tunas RFMOs and of the EU legislations transposing RFMO management measures (e.g. Article 20 and Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2019/1154 (OJ L 188; 12.7.2019, p.1) transposing ICCAT Recommendation 16-05).
- (iv) A summary list of follow-up actions to be addressed by Member States at the end of the EWG.

b. With regard to DT issues:

- (i) An overall evaluation of Member State performance, of main DT issues per end user/data call and of recurring issues by Member State.
- (ii) An evaluation of Member States' responses via the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool online platform to issues raised by end users of scientific advice (i.e. the STECF, RCGs, ICES, GFCM, ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, NAFO and other RFMOs to which scientific data is provided by Member States) in relation to data calls

issued in 2019. 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 and highlighting outstanding issues (recurrent and or having an important impact on the activity of a stock assessment working group and the quality of the assessment etc.). The data sets affected shall be underlined.

(iii) Identify in the evaluation per Member State the comments which require a reaction from Member State (draft a summary list) and those points which are for information only.

(iv) Use and provide feedback on Doc 3 DTMT Guidance version 30052019. If needed, 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.

3. Documents A (Guidance for AR-WP evaluators with comments) and B (Doc 3 DTMT Guidance version 30052019 or new version of it) mentioned above should be provided as Annexes to the final report for STECF plenary examination.

Following review and endorsement by the STECF plenary in July 2020, all resulting documentation (annual report evaluation and summary list of follow-up actions and evaluation of data transmission issues 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 (including STECF EWG 15-15; STECF EWG 16-08, STECF EWG 17-10; STECF EWG 18-10; STECF EWG 18-18; STECF EWG 19-09; STECF EWG 19-18). 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 20-08 meeting, a pre-screening of Member States ARs will be undertaken through a series of ad hoc contracts. The pre-screener will use a grid for evaluation of ARs and a Guidance for AR-WP evaluators revised by March 2020 ad-hoc contracts. These documents need a review and approval of EWG 20-08 prior to the assessment work.

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 20-08 STECF experts are requested to use the updated version of this document, Doc 3 DTMT Guidance version 30052019 for the evaluation, and to provide feedback and to finalise it if needed. 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 ARs submitted 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.

The fleet economics 2019 data call, the only STECF data call from the first half of the year 2019, has been already assessed by STECF EWG 19-18.

The EWG 20-08 is requested to focus on the following data transmission issues from 2019, recorded in the DTMT:

- 36 DTissues from the Med&BS
- 23 DTissues from Fish Processing
- 22 DTissues from FDI
- 3 DTissues from ICCAT
- 21 individual DTissues from ICES (grouped in 3 events)

If access to the DTMT cannot be granted, data issues will be provide in an Excel file.

1.2 Structure of the report

The report is divided into the two main terms of references, evaluation of Member States Annual Reports (ARs) in section 2 and evaluation of DT issues in section 3. Each part is sub-divided into the sections; setting the scene and results. In addition, section 4 describes the evaluation of observers' coverage for highly migratory species fisheries and their compliance with legal obligations.

To ease navigation and comprehension, an overview of the structure of Member States Annual Reports is given in Table 1 below.

Sections of Member States 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 Member States Annual Reports (ARs).

1.3 Pre-screening exercise

Prior to EWG 20-08, 13 independent experts were contracted by DG MARE to pre-screen all sections of the ARs as well as all DT issues that had been reported in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT) and referred to data calls in 2019.

To undertake the pre-screening exercise the pre-screeners were requested to use the updated evaluation grid for pre-screeners (Task 2-3 of March ad-hoc)³, the Guidance for AR-WP evaluators with comments (Task 4 of March ad-hoc)⁴, the Guidance for the Submission and Evaluation of Annual Reports (as updated in 2018)⁵ and to take due account of relevant files from all previous STECF EWGs dealing with Annual Reports, Data Transmission issues and National Work Plans for the years 2017-2019, including final evaluation per Member State for Annual Reports and Work Plans.

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

³EWG 20-08 - Background document 1 - Updated AR evaluation template (Task 2-3 of March ad-hoc)

⁴EWG 20-08 - Background document 3 - Guidance for AR-WP evaluators with comments (Task 4 of March ad-hoc)

⁶EWG 20-08 - Background document 2 - Guidance for the submission and evaluation of ARs (as updated in 2018)

2 EVALUATION OF MEMBER STATES ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2019

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, 5B	Subgroup 3	Economics and Biology	Joel Vigneau
3A, 3B, 3C	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-20-08 Electronic annex 1 - Evaluation of ARs by MS) are provided.

As in previous years, based on the evaluation by experts at the EWG, the Commission contacted Member States for clarifications and asked for re-submission of AR files during the EWG (“Ping-pong” process). Only major issues, which needed urgent actions for resubmission or clarification and which were essential to evaluate the ARs, were sent to Member States. In order to make this process more streamlined and to avoid sending the Member States questions that arise for the AR sections in multiple e-mails, a new approach where all questions for each Member State were collated and sent in only one e-mail, was tested.

The EWG agreed to start with the assessment and identification of questions for the Member States with the most comprehensive ARs, i.e. Spain, France, The United Kingdom, Portugal and Italy. After those Member States, the remaining coastal states were assessed and contacted and finally all land-locked countries. As input to the assessment, the EWG experts had comments raised by the pre-screeners. These comments however had not been agreed by the EWG and could not be sent directly to the Member States.

The EWG agreed that this process in which the Member States are only contacted once during the week allows Member States to deal with the comments within a single communication and also

caters for efficient documentation of the questions and answers. However, since all sub-groups had to finalise the assessment for the agreed Member States before the Member States were contacted, it shortened the time period for which the EWG received responses back from the Member States. A substantial amount of feedback from the Member States therefore arrived on the fourth day of the meeting, leaving only the last day of the meeting for the experts to re-assess the new incoming information and compile the assessment by Member States.

During the EWG, the Commission contacted 19 Member States for clarification on various AR sections (17 Member States replied), which led to the improvement and finalisation of assessments for Belgium, UK, Spain, France, Latvia, Sweden, Bulgaria, Croatia, Portugal, Italy, Malta, Romania, Lithuania, Finland, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic. The questions for the Member States and related responses by AR sections have been documented for future reference.

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 with the reintroduced regional dimension, the Guidance for the submission and evaluation of ARs, the ARs and WPs for all Member States as well as an extract of DT issues from the DTMT and the DTMT guidance.

2.1.3 Tools and criteria for the assessment

As in previous years, the EWG agreed that the STECF assessment provided in the AR evaluation template need to be clear and self-explanatory. It is also necessary that the evaluation is carried out coherently across subgroups so that the results are comparable and transparent. For these reasons, the EWG agreed to use the assessment criteria from EWG 19-09 in addition to the Guidance for AR and WP evaluators⁶ as basis for the assessment. The assessment criteria is available in annex 2 and includes a set of agreed rules/assessment criteria with the aim to increase consistency in the responses from different evaluators.

Four main categories were used to judge AR achievements. These four categories are shown in Table 3:

% of achievement	Classification
<10%	NO
10-50%	PARTLY
50-90%	MOSTLY
>90%	YES

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

⁶ EWG 20-08 - Background document 2 - Guidance for the submission and evaluation of ARs (as updated in 2018)

As regards the EU overview, the EWG agreed that the overall performance by Member States is only for illustrative purpose and that Commission and Member States primarily should refer to the assessment of each section of the AR evaluation template.

It was also agreed that the overall performance by Member State is based on expert judgement and no fixed assessment criteria can be set. In particular since the sections of the AR do not carry the same weight within the overall performance. However, as a general guide (in addition to table 3 above) for the overall performance the EWG agreed that two MOSTLY can still generate a YES and if one section has been assessed as NO the overall performance can only be MOSTLY, PARTLY or NO.

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

1. How was the assessment performed in your sub-group?
2. Overall performance of the MS on your sections.
3. Overall, what were the four major issues that arose in your evaluation? How would you resolve these?
4. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the execution of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?
5. Any persistent or recurring issues regarding the reporting of the data collection referring to the relevant and previous year?
6. Any comments on the updated AR evaluation grid (Ref: task 2-3 March a-hoc)
7. Any comments on the updated guidance for AR-WP evaluators with comments (Ref: task 4 March a-hoc)
8. Any comments or suggested improvements on the DTMT guidance document (Ref: Doc 3 DTMT Guidance version 30052019)?
9. Any comments on the compilation of all relevant input for the on new WP/AR templates in line with new EU-MAP (Ref: task 1 March 2020)

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 before the overall evaluation by Member State was agreed in plenary.

The overall scores of performance level by Member State have improved somewhat from last year. Notably, the number of Member States that had an overall performance assessed as 'partly' have decreased from three to one and the number of AR sections receiving a compliance level score of 'partly' also decreased, from 17 in the 2018 ARs to 11 in the 2019 ARs

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	M	Y	Y	NA	M	M	Y	Y	Y	M	M	Y	Y	M	M	Y	M	M	M	M	M	M	M	P	M	M
1A-C	NA	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	M	Y	M	M	M	Y	Y	NA	M	Y
1D	NA	Y	NA	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	NA	Y	Y
1E	NA	Y	NA	NA	NA	M	M	M	Y	M	M	M	M	NA	NA	M	Y	M	M	NA	M	M	M	NA	NA	NA	M
1F	NA	P	Y	M	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	P	M	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	P	NA	Y	P
1G-1H	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	NA	M	Y
2A	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y
3A	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	M	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	M
3B	NA	Y	Y	NA	NA	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	P	Y	Y
3C	NA	Y	Y	NA	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y
4A-4C	NA	M	Y	M	NA	M	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	NA	M	M	M	M	M	M	Y	Y	M	NA	P	M
5A	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	M	Y	P	Y	Y	M	Y	NA	M	Y
5B	NA	Y	Y	Y	NA	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	P	Y	Y
6A	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	P	Y	Y	M	M	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	M	M	M	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y
7A	M	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y
7B	N	M	Y	M	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	M	Y	Y	Y	M	M	Y	Y	Y	M	P	Y
7C	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	M	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Table 4 – Summary of the assessment of Member States 2019 Annual Report.

The EWG reiterates the conclusion from EWG 19-09 that sections 7A, 7B and 7C (marked in grey in Table 4) should not have a weighting in the overall assessment by Member States because there are no reference lists of meetings, recommendations or bi- and multilateral agreements. In addition, the EWG agreed that section 1A and 1C could be merged into one section since Table 1A "Stocks selected for sampling" is filled based on the thresholds on landings and TACs when the WP is prepared. As these stocks are the basis for sampling plans, they are not expected to change during the sampling year. The EWG therefore concludes that there is no need to assess 1A individually but it can be useful for a correct evaluation of table 1C.

Overview tables on the MS DCF performance for the years 2010-2018 can be found in the following STECF reports; STECF12-01⁷; STECF-OWP-12-05⁸; STECF13-14⁹; STECF14-13¹⁰, STECF15-13¹¹, STECF16-12¹², STECF 17-07¹³, EWG STECF 18-10¹⁴ and EWG 19-09¹⁵.

The detailed evaluation template for each Member State is presented in the electronic annex of this report (EWG-20-08 Electronic annex 1 - Evaluation of ARs by MS).

⁷ 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.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

¹⁰ 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.

¹¹ 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.

¹² 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.

¹³ 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.

¹⁴ 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.

¹⁵ Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Evaluation of the 2018 Annual Reports for data collection and Data Transmission issues (STECF-19-09). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019, ISBN 978-92-76-09518-7, doi:10.2760/434566, JRC117489.

2.2.3 Results by subgroups

2.2.3.1 Subgroup 1

1. Overall performance of the Member State on your sections.

Of the Member States in your sections how many were Yes, Mostly, Partly, No based on the evaluation criteria below?

Subgroup 1	Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA	Sum
	1AC	15	8			4	27
	4AC	10	12	1		4	27

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

The route taken by the EWG, in which Member States are only contacted once during the EWG, allows Member States to deal with the comments within a single communication and caters for efficient documentation of the questions and answers. After discussion of the experience gained with this system, however, the SG would prefer if major issues identified beforehand by the Commission and pre-screeners would be sent to the Member States before the meeting. This would have speeded up the evaluation process. Nevertheless, this process needs to be transparent for all countries and evaluators and a list of agreed issues to be sent to Member States, to ensure a standard practice, should be agreed beforehand.

During physical meetings many issues can be discussed and explained more fluently but that is less possible during a remote video conference. In addition, technical limitations have slowed the progress of the meeting.

The major issue encountered in the sub-group was the inconsistencies in region naming between tables and text boxes. Another issue was that in some cases the biological variables were compiled in one row. This made the evaluation of the biological variables difficult.

Mistakes made in the national WPs have been transmitted to the reporting of the AR. WPs submitted in the wrong format should in fact have been rejected. The EWG encourage Member States to resubmit their WP according to the EWG comments to avoid repetitive issues between the WP and AR in the evaluation process.

Major issues with regards to tables and text boxes:

Tables 1C and 4A/TextBox1C and 4A: Lack of explanations for each deviation. Member States usually give justifications for some or most of the deviations, however there should always be explanations when the deviations refer to under sampling. To this purpose, the levels in both tables should be defined (i.e. less than 90% in table 1C).

TextBox1C and 4A: Lack of actions to avoid deviations for each case. Member States usually describe some actions, however there should always be specific measures in the "Actions to avoid deviations" section of the TextBox 1C and 4A. As in the previous case, that should be mandatory from certain levels of non-compliance.

Table 4A: Some Member States are not including or reporting the fishing activity not covered by the sampling design. As explained in the Guidance text, this should appear as lines with a zero value in the column "Planned number of PSUs". This information is fundamental in order to evaluate the real coverage of the sampling design developed. This non-coverage activity should exist at least for any Region/RFMO/Scheme/PSUtype.

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

Table 4A: There is a recurrent issue relating to the alignment of length measurements between Table 1C and 4A. This issue is causing some discussions and it is time consuming for the EWG, while it is probably not a major issue for the evaluation of the relevant aspects related to commercial sampling in Table 4A (stratification, adequate allocation of effort, etc).

Table 4A: It was unclear sometimes to the EWG if MS had any unsampled strata. Cases where stratum ID codes or strata are not matching between 4A and 4B. An issue that happens in both directions.

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

The region naming already mentioned is recurring in some countries. Also, the Field "Subarea/Fishing ground" could be better filled, more adjusted to definition in some cases.

Eels in tables 1ABC/1E: The EWG noticed that Member States use different approaches for completing the templates and this highlighted the need to add additional clarification for the future guidance version. Inconsistencies were observed for planned sampling of diadromous species in marine waters and freshwater. While some countries listed their planned sampling in Table 1C, other MS listed their plans in Table 1E. Some Member States duplicated the planning by listing in both tables. The EWG suggests that the sampling of diadromous species in marine waters must be included in Tables 1A, 1B and 1C but not in table 1E, while the description of sampling in freshwater should be presented in Table 1E only. This table is considered more appropriate to hold the information on life stages, basins, etc. required. This issue should be clarified in the next WP guidelines.

There are still inconsistencies among tables, as well as between tables and texts, although they have been used for several years now. A workshop addressed to AR authors on how to understand the functioning and the linkages of templates would be useful. This workshop could be organized by RCGs.

Table 1C: The parameters planned for sampling in table 1B should have for each variable a corresponding line in table 1C. The variables should not be grouped.

2.2.3.2 Subgroup 2

1. Overall performance of the MS on your sections.

Of the MS in your sections how many were Yes, Mostly, Partly, No based on the evaluation criteria below?

Subgroup 2	Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA	Sum
------------	----------	-----	--------	--------	----	----	-----

	1D	21	0	0	0	6	27
	1E	3	14	0	0	10	27
	1F	16	3	4	0	4	27
	1GH	20	3	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: In the Annual Report multiple Member States have not clearly differentiated between pilot studies and regular sampling surveys in the WPs which resulted in difficulties in the evaluation. Some Member States repeatedly did not follow the guidelines when it comes to filling out the tables. Some Member States did not provide unique survey IDs or did not link the respective table 1D with table 5A.

Section 1E: Several Member States under sampled due to many different reasons. As a result, evaluation had to rate the performance as "Mostly", even though the Member State may have not been responsible for the shortfall in achievement. Some Member States repeatedly did not follow the guidelines when it comes to filling out the tables. Some Member States did not provide unique survey IDs or did not link the respective table 1E with table 5A. Another example: If a fishery does not exist or is not legal (salmon or eel), Member States should indicate so also in the respective tables (1E).

Section 1F: The evaluation has shown that the guidelines in relation to columns P-T in Table 1F have resulted in Member States not being consistent in using the available codes (i.e. Y, N and NA). 'Y' can include zero by-catch as can 'N'. The way the codes are presented in the AR at present means that there is no clear way to identify zero by-catch. The subgroup has not marked this as negative but has evaluated as to if the Member States have endeavoured to provide meaningful information.

Because many Member States have chosen to report on groups of vulnerable species (e.g. "birds", "mammals", etc.), columns P-T in Table 1F have become somewhat redundant for these Member States.

Some text currently provided under Pilot Study 2 would be more appropriate for Text Box 1F

It is not mandatory to provide data by Region for the Text Box and some Member States give data for combined areas in Table 1F. Where possible evaluation was undertaken by Region where a Member State provided this level of detail

Section Pilot Study 2: Where there is more than one Pilot study identified Member States have reported in different ways from reporting each individual Pilot studies separately, following the guidelines, as separate Text Boxes to reporting all Pilot studies in a single text box with the results at the end of the section. This can make evaluation of the individual Pilot study difficult.

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

Section 1D: The internal administration of some Member States can hinder the correct or timely execution of their WP data collection tasks.

Section 1E: The internal administration of some Member States can hinder the correct or timely execution of their WP data collection tasks.

Section 1F

For some Member States Pilot Study 2 has been delayed.

The AR submission guidance states that: - Member States shall provide information on sampling protocols and sampling design for incidental by-catch collection. As a minimum the Member State should indicate if existing sampling protocols, mostly observer programs at sea, have been updated to include the collection of data relating Incidental by- catch of the four species groups concerned to in order to answer the questions on data quality. Although this is stated in the guidelines some Member States have interpreted this to be applicable for Pilot Studies only.

Section 1G, 1H: Fail in sampling during the surveys due to technical problems with equipment. No execution of surveys due to administrative issues at national level.

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

Section 1D: No obvious recurring issues.

Section 1E: No obvious recurring issues.

Section 1F: The strata defined in Tables 1F and 4A do not always match and Achieved and Sampled PSU numbers for the strata is often different in the two tables.

Where strata are combined in 1F it is not possible to evaluate coverage against the individual strata presented in 4A.

Section 1G, 1H: Some sections regarding surveys (section 6-9) are added at the end instead of relevant sections of the text or all surveys are in one text block. Comprehensive summary of results and analysis of the surveys are included in the AR.

5. General Comment on Pilot Studies (to be discussed for new EU MAP)

The current titles for the Pilot Studies can lead to confusion and the section title should be changed so that they relate more to the sections which the study applies to rather than including a number in the section heading which can be confusing. If a Member State is undertaking more than one pilot study for the section (by Region, variables for investigation) they should be identified in the AR and evaluation sheet as separate Text Boxes / sets of questions in order for evaluators to assess all aspects of each study. It is difficult to evaluate when several studies are included in a single Text Box – especially if all results and deviations are given at the end of the section.

2.2.3.3 Subgroup 3

The evaluation tasks were shared among the sub-group by groups of two experts, one duo dealing with tables 2A and 5B, one for table 5A and one for tables 6A and 7ABC. A virtual meeting room was opened permanently to share issues among the subgroup, and each duo worked in specific virtual meeting rooms for their work. The DTMT issues were addressed during a subgroup plenary.

To increase consistency in the responses from different evaluators, the document on “criteria for assessment of annual reports (annex 2)” were used as a reference in addition to the existing guidelines for evaluators. To ensure consistent and objective evaluation, the final assessment were agreed in sub-group plenaries.

The subgroup appreciates that recommendations from last year were implemented in the current procedure. It has to be pointed out that most observations remain relevant and should be kept in mind, though.

As in previous years, the overall performance of Member States on module 2A (fishing activity variables) was good. The vast majority of data under this header is collected under the Control Regulation (CR), thus the focus of this table should be on additional collection of data in case the CR data are insufficient for scientific use. In general Member States put considerable effort in collecting these data, most of which are related to small vessels which are very big in numbers.

Concerning quality assessment for the economic modules (5B) most Member States provided comprehensive information. For some landlocked countries with short DCF history some major gaps had to be filled, though. Some of them have not yet moved from a pilot study stage to a regular data collection.

In 2A, some Member States did not provide the full list of effort variables for all segments. This appears to be reasonable as not all variables which are listed in Table 4 (Commission Implementing Decision 2016/1251) are applicable to all fleet segments. As an example the variable "number of hooks" should apply to long-liners only. However, it is not always that evident: "Number of fishing operations" could be collected for several fishing techniques, but apparently it is only regarded relevant for purse seiners. The former legislation (Commission Decision 2010/93/EU) was more specific on that issue, and some Member States implicitly still applied the principles laid down there. The subgroup accepted this approach during the evaluation.

2. Overall performance of the Member States on your sections.

Of the Member States in your sections how many were Yes, Mostly, Partly, No based on the evaluation criteria below?

Subgroup X	Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA	Sum
	2A	21	2	0	0	4	27
	5A	18	4	1	0	4	27
	5B	23	1	1	0	2	27
	6A	16	8	1	2	0	27
	7A	23	4	0	0	0	27
	7B	17	6	1	3	0	27
	7C	26	1	0	0	0	27

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

1 – virtual meeting is not fit for this exercise where a lot of issues, in normal times, are dealt with in bilaterals between experts. If this type of virtual meeting was to be reconvened in the future, a pre-requisite would be to have the possibility to develop private chat during the meeting. Moreover, whatever the application used, each expert is dependent on the quality of his internet connection.

2 – Member States often do not follow the guidelines (e.g. Schemes reported in 5A and 5B, links to documentation not updated, leading nowhere, missing documentation, ...). A way forward could be to simplify the messages in the future guidelines to be developed for the new EU-MAP (2022 onwards).

3 – STECF is missing historical perspective on Member States performance on execution and data quality – to be discussed in future guidelines and templates to allow this to happen.

4 – DTMT comments. In the normal sequencing of events, the end-user should comment and assess Member State responses to their concerns before STECF comments and assessments. In absence of such end-user response, STECF is left with the only option to acknowledge Member State response was the one expected from the end-user perspective.

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

The most recurring issues were linked to the inconsistencies arising from WP which it is not surprising since the execution in AR is linked to the plan in WP. Reporting on inconsistent WP has always proved difficult both for Member States and STECF. This is why a specific effort needs to be made next year when approving the WP for the years 2022-2024 (see section 7).

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

Most of the issues observed during the evaluation of module 2A refer to formal aspects. As in previous years, the evaluation was hampered by the fact that templates for WP and AR differ due to an introduction of a new column "variable" in the AR. This increased the number of rows considerably and a direct comparison was impossible.

5A: inconsistencies in guidelines: the main inconsistencies this year were between the general comment of the table 5A where it is specified that names on sampling schemes and strata shall be identical to those in Tables 4A and 4B of the Annex of the Decision (EU) 2016/1701, and the information in the text table where it is said that 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'). This has led to several misunderstandings in ARs, and some Member States arguing against EWG on the corrections to be made.

6A: inconsistencies in guidelines: In the guidelines for ARs, it is specified in column "Date when data was available" that Member State shall indicate the date when data was made available. This statement is unclear, since it is not specified if it was the dates when data were available during the AR year (e.g. 2019 here) or if it was linked to the information in column "Reference year". EWG witnessed both cases in MS AR for 2019, with some Member States stating "Not available" when the data for reference year 2019 would not be available before the 31st May 2020. There was no consensus in the EWG to which data these availability dates should refer to and this should be clarified during the review of these guidelines.

7ABC: reference list: On tables 7ABC the inconsistencies were mainly the same as spotted by EWG in 2019, so the comments on these tables from EWG-19-09 remain valid.

6. Any comments on the compilation of all relevant input for the on new WP/AR templates in line with new EU-MAP (Ref: task 1 March 2020)

Concerning module 2A it would be advisable to focus only on data collection which is performed in addition to data collection under CR.

Substantial effort should be spent on the development and pre-testing of new templates and to a creation of automatic check routines. This pre-testing should comprise the entire workflow, from creating the WP to evaluating the AR.

The subgroup observed some ambiguity in COM Implementing Decision 2016/1251, table 4. The footnote, referring to some effort variables for passive gears, states “Collection of these variables for vessels less than 10 metres is to be agreed at marine region level”. The decision does not specify whether these data have to be collected if or unless there is an agreement on regional level. The same issue can be found in COM Decision 2019/910. No subgroup member was aware of any regional agreement of that kind.

2.2.3.4 Subgroup 4

The assessment of ARs was performed individually by the experts in the sub-group. To ensure consistent and objective evaluation, the final assessment were later agreed in the sub-group.

To increase consistency in the responses from different evaluators, the document on “criteria for assessment of annual reports” (Annex 2) was used as a reference in addition to the existing guidelines for evaluators.

The evaluation was carried out in 3 steps: 1) evaluation aimed at identifying important issues to be addressed soon by the Member State; 2) final evaluation for Member State for which there was no need to contact the National Correspondent; 3) re-evaluation of the ARs resubmitted by the Member State identified in the first step. This procedure creates a heavy workload on experts, but it is considered efficient compared to previous years.

Most of the Member States resubmitted the AR in time to be re-evaluated. Comments received only by email have been considered for the evaluation but a comment is reported under “EWG action needed” to consider that Member States should resubmit the table to include comments received by email during the EWG.

The sub-group discussed the issue of providing a complete assessment of the QAF, and, for the reasons explained later, it was agreed that questions of the evaluate template on the availability of the methodology have to be assessed but not considered in the overall judgment.

The assessment of DT issues was performed in two groups of experts. The number of issues to be assessed were 23 and involved only 6 MS. The evaluation followed the EWG document on assessment criteria for DT issues from EWG 19-09. A final assessment of the “unsatisfactory” issues was agreed by the whole sub-group.

2. Overall performance of the Member States on your sections.

Of the Member States in your sections how many were Yes, Mostly, Partly, No based on the evaluation criteria below?

Subgroup X	Sections	Yes	Mostly	Partly	No	NA	Sum
	3A	18	5	0	0	4	27

	3B	18	2	1	0	6	27
	3C	19	2	1	0	5	27

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

The major issues that arose from evaluation are:

- Low achievements rates or “0” achievements not explained/justified in table or text.
- Methodologies not publicly available and/or links to methodologies not always provided. It has been considered that even for Member States with good data collection systems, in some cases references to methodologies are not reported or they are not clear. As already recommended by PGECON, each Member State should provide a methodological report following a common structure, preferably in English.
- For land-locked Member States, the level of achievements and the presentation of tables/text are missed in several cases. The sub-group recalls the suggestion from last year EWG meeting that an ad hoc meeting with these Member States would be beneficial in order to inform on all the different steps of data collection reporting and implementation.
- Data by supra-regions are reported in Table 3A according to Table 5A of EUMAP, but the same structure is not always followed in Text Box 3A. The guidance for AR submission should clarify this issue.

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

The recurring issues can be listed as follows:

- some Member States, the level of achievements is low compared to the planned sample rates, thus implying a low statistical quality of final estimates;
- For the aquaculture and processing sections, several Member States plan to implement census, but then the response continue to be low. If a census is not feasible, Member State should implement statistical sound surveys.
- For the aquaculture and processing sections, some Member States still report uncertainty in identifying the frame population. This leads even to change in the final estimates and in inconsistent time series.

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

The reporting by Member State has improved and most Member State followed the AR guidance. A different situation refers to land-locked Member State for which several issues in reporting have been detected for tables 3B and 3C.

For 4 Member States, tables 3A showed major inconsistencies and resubmission of the table was requested during the meeting.

For 8 Member States, tables 3B and 3C showed major inconsistencies and resubmission of the table was requested during the meeting.

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, the sub-group recalls that if a database approach was applied, this issue would be solved implicitly.

6. Any comments on the compilation of all relevant input for the on new WP/AR templates in line with new EU-MAP (Ref: task 1 March 2020)

The sub-group considers that questions on QAF in 3A, 3B, 3C should be moved under text 5B. In this way, the QAF is all covered in section 5.

A minor comment, but relevant in terms of presentation for end users, is the need to homogenize the editing of formulas in different tables (% or number).

Suggestions for the document "Assessment criteria AR"

Some suggestions are reported to standardize the evaluation exercise of pre-screeners and experts in EWG:

Column		
F	Manual pre-screening	Evaluation - "Yes, Mostly, Partly, No" or comment if the issue is Major.
G	Is the issue identified during pre-screening repetitive vs 2018? (mark with 'X')	Issue should be checked with the previous EWG AR Evaluation grid per MS. If issue is new "No" should be provided.
J	If minor, please compile in this column the final comment from pre-screening. Otherwise leave blank	Provide comment if issue is Minor or "No comments"
K	EWG comment	Could be taken from pre-screener comments or new comment from EWG group.
L	EWG judgment	The Manual Pre-screening should be considered, however, to avoid subjective judgement the final judgment should be done by EWG as a group decision.
M	EWG action needed	Follow-up actions to be taken by the MS. In case of issues in formats/editing of the table/text, the standard comment is: <i>MS has to follow guidelines in</i>

		<i>future AR submissions</i>
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3 UPDATED AR EVALUATION GRID AND GUIDANCE FOR AR AND WP EVALUATORS

Prior to the EWG the Commission launched several ad-hoc contracts to update the AR evaluation grid (Task 2-3 of March ad-hoc) and the Guidance for AR-WP evaluators with comments (Task 4 of March ad-hoc) based on comments from EWG 19-09 etc.. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic these could not be approved by STECF 20-01 spring plenary but were nevertheless used by the pre-screeners for the assessment of ARs prior to EWG 20-08. At the start of the meeting, the EWG agreed that the updated grid and guidance should also be used as basis for the assessment during the EWG.

In line with the ToRs the EWG also evaluated the documents and suggests that the Commission takes the following into consideration.

3.1 Updated evaluation grid for the assessment of ARs

General: The EWG considers that the updated AR evaluation grid has improved the evaluation exercise. The current version of the grid is more consistent and repetitive questions on the same issues are no longer included.

Reintroducing the regional dimension of the AR evaluation template: The regional dimension has been included in the AR evaluation template up until 2017 but afterwards removed. This was the first year that the regional dimension was reintroduced in the evaluation template. The EWG considers that a separation of the assessment by regions is important for countries that have fisheries in several regions and hence the evaluation can be different for each region. The EWG further considers that the regional approach in the evaluation give the dimension and the importance of each region in the total fisheries of the country.

Tab 4A Question: Is the total number of length measurements in alignment with the number of individuals (length parameter from the commercial data source) in Table 1C? This question is contradictory to the guidance document provided to the evaluators. In this document it is stated that "Columns "Number of species with length measurements" and "Total number of length measurements" are added to provide a brief snapshot of the length data collected. These values should not be compared with values in Table 1C during the evaluation process: Table 1C refers strictly to the stocks planned for sampling - which are specified in Table 1A - while Table 4A includes the total sum of all species that could have been sampled (this being equal or larger than individuals in Table 1C)." This question should be deleted for future evaluations.

Question in section 1: Are all Regional Sampling Agreements and Bilaterals in 1C detailed in 7C and being implemented? This question should be rephrased to apply only for cases a Member State states that it has an agreement and is therefore not obliged to sample. It needs to be checked by the evaluators that this agreement is listed in 7C.

Section Pilot Study 1: Question 3 refers to conclusions drawn from WP or AR. The EWG concludes that since WPs are not evaluated through EWG 20-08, this question should refer to ARs only. Work plans should be excluded from the AR evaluations, since WPs cannot be changed at this point anymore.

Section 1F: In order to look at the regional aspect correctly, the guidance should be changed to make regional reporting mandatory for the Text Box and Table. Currently there is a different approach taken by the Member States that are active in more than one region. This may also impact the WP.

Section Pilot Study 2: As previously stated in order to evaluate the Pilot studies more easily each study should be reported in a separate Text Box and labelled (Pilot study 2.1, 2.2 and so on) this should be included in the guidance. (This could impact on the WP).

The question "Has the planned complementary data collection been achieved?" is unclear and should be specified. Yet there is no criteria defining the achievement, and the question could only be answered "no" if a planned complementary data collection was not performed at all. The questions concerning capacity in 2A appear redundant as there is no alternative option to derive capacity data. No MS has declared any other data source.

Table 2A : The question "Have all variables been listed for each data source?" should be reworded. One option could be "Have all data sources been listed for all variables?". Also line 129 is name of section and shall not be pre-screened, hence Y/N should be removed.

Section 3: Line 177 has a reference to Pilot study 4 (environmental), whereas, a question in line 204 refers to Pilot study 3 (social).

Table and textbox 5A : 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 Member States. And the general idea is that Member States 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 Member States. A variety of approaches are being taken e.g. referring to WP 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). Member States often refer in ARs to documentation that leads to their own internal websites and/ or to the other sources in the language of the Member State. Therefore it is hard to evaluate the Member State compliance. A clear message to all Member State shall be sent with the reminder of the general idea and what would be expected in the near future.

3.2 Updated guidance for AR-WP evaluators with comments

General: The EWG considers that the updated guidance for evaluators is an improvement compared to the previous versions as it allows for a more consistent and less subjective approach to the evaluation of ARs.

Table 4AC TextBox4A: The guidance document for evaluators is providing relevant elements for evaluation and for internal reflection for the Member States to design the commercial sampling plan, to improve execution and even to improve procedures related to data collection methodologies. Nevertheless, some key issues have not been included in the eight questions in the evaluation excel template. By doing that, we do not avoid a wider evaluation but we are not strengthening the evaluation and not ensuring consistency through the whole process (which includes different people).

By focusing only on eight questions it is not clear that other aspects should be taken into consideration. These aspects could include important issues such as:

- the number of unique vessels sampled (to be regarded in relation to the number of total vessels with activity and the number of trips sampled thus informing on the implementation of good sampling practices as the randomization of selecting vessels);
- coverage of the sampling strata in relation to not sampled strata (according to the corresponding Region/RFMO/Scheme/PSUtype);

- considerations made in the guidance about stratification and effort allocation. Especially in this case, it seems that Member States have understood this only affects the acceptance of a given WP.

Nevertheless, this EWG, in line with the guidance text, stresses the relevance of considering such elements in the evaluation. For example the considerations about the stratification in regards to repetitive poor sampling achievement that could recommend merging strata. Such elements should be addressed specifically in the questions of the excel template.

In relation to the previous comment, it is surprising to see a specific check on the number of individuals between 1C and 4A is included within the eight questions when this is specifically not recommended (and explained) in the guidance text. The selection of questions for the next AR evaluation process should be reviewed.

Section 3A-3C: The updated guidance for evaluators is considered an improvement compared to the previous version. In particular, new questions were included in the evaluation templates (line 166-170 for 3A; line 197-201 for 3B; line 227-231 for 3C) for the assessment of the Quality Assurance section in Annual Reports.

For all sections: If "EWG judgement" is "YES", comments should still be possible, even though this is not intended by guidelines. If, for example, the WP was accepted before, even though something was overseen, the pure fulfilment of the faulty WP should not be a pass / "YES" without at least leaving a comment on this in the evaluation.

Section 1F: The text provided highlights the need for a review of the guidance to address the issues with columns P-T. Regionalisation needs to be included – this could affect both the AR and WP.

Improvements in QAF are still difficult to be evaluated. The decision should be made by trust of content if a valid link is found to methodologies or detailed description under the appropriate sections in AR. However, only the completeness of information provided in Annual Report could be evaluated but not a quality of the data collection process for each Member State.

Most Member State are providing links 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.

Another challenge is line 239 'Has the Member State showed improvement in the quality assurance framework versus the WP?' Also in this case, the only assessment that can be done is by comparing table 5A of the WP with the one in the AR.

4 THE EVALUATION OF OBSERVERS' COVERAGE FOR HIGHLY MIGRATORY SPECIES FISHERIES AND THEIR COMPLIANCE WITH LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

The EWG was requested to evaluate the observers coverage of the fisheries exploiting the highly migratory (large pelagic) stocks, for the estimation of catch composition by species and size and discards. In particular, whether the coverage is in line with the requirements of the tunas RFMOs and of the EU legislations transposing RFMO management measures¹⁶.

¹⁶ Article 20 and Annex I of Regulation (EU) 2019/1154 (OJ L 188; 12.7.2019, p.1 transposing ICCAT Recommendation 16-05).

For this exercise the EWG attempted to extract observer coverage information from 2019 ARs (table 4A) referring to the drifting long line fisheries for Swordfish as a first priority and when that was not possible LPF (large pelagic fish) was selected.

The EWG concluded that:

- in most cases the sampling strata included both on-board sampling and fish market sampling and the weight of each sampling in the total stratum is unknown, and
- in other cases the target species of the sampling consist of several species of large pelagics and not only Swordfish, which makes it impossible to separate the percentages of the target species in the stratum.

For these reasons, the EWG concluded that it is not possible to infer the observer sampling coverage for Swordfish from the drifting long lines fleet. However, the exercise provided a useful overview of Member States that have drifting long line fisheries targeting Swordfish/large pelagic fish that can be addressed in a specific data call for retrieving this data.

	Region	RFMO/RF O/O	Sub-area / Fishing ground	Scheme	Stratum ID code	PSU type	Total number of PSU in the sampling year	Achieved number of PSU in the sampling year	%	COMMENTS
Croatia	Mediterranean Sea	ICCAT	GSA 17	at markets, at sea	LLD_LPF_0_0_0 (SWO)	Fishing day	284	15	5,28%	the scheme includes market, not only observers
Croatia	Mediterranean Sea	ICCAT	GSA 18	on site	BGF REC	Fishing day	24	24		Big game fishing (recreational fisheries). Targeted species are Thunnus thynnus and Xiphias gladius.
Cyprus	Mediterranean Sea	ICCAT	All GSAs	Sampling at sea and on shore	LLD_LP_SWO&BFT	vessel x trip	63	12	19,05%	LLD are targeted to SWO and BFT and the scheme includes market, not only observers
Slovenia	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	No SWO fisheries reported
Greece	Mediterranean Sea	ICCAT	BIL 95	at sea & on shore/market	LLD	fishing trip	4855	242	4,98%	The scheme includes market but actionally is practiced at sea and onshore by observers. The fisheries can only be practiced by professional fishermen with a special license issued annually and refer to SWO, ALB, BFT
Malta	Mediterranean Sea	GFCM, ICCAT	GSA 15	At sea/market	LLD_LPF_0_0_0	vessel	1850	4	0,22%	LLD are targeted to SWO and BFT and the scheme includes market, not only observers
Italy	Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea	ICCAT, GFCM	all areas	Sampling at sea, at landing and at market	all areas_LLD_LPF_0_0_0	Fishing trip	31003,09	274	0,88%	LLD are targeted to all LPF and the scheme includes market, not only observers. Species targeted Auxis rochei, Auxis thazard, Coryphaena hippurus, Euthynnus alletteratus, Sarda sarda, Thunnus alalunga, Thunnus thynnus, Xiphias gladius, Istiophoridae
France	Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea	GFCM	GSA 8	DACOR	DACOR-PEL=Pelagic fisheries in Corsica (all vessels having european license to fish swordfish or tuna and having the autorisation to embark an observer)	vessel x trip	375	19	5,07%	LLD are targeted to SWO or tuna
France	Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea	GFCM	GSA 7	At-sea sampling - Observer	M0346=lines (All vessels targeting swordfish)	vessel x trip	376	0	0,00%	Target species Swordfish. (From Table 4C derives that in GSA 7 for the metier LLD_LPF_1_0_0 during 2019 1418 trips were realized by 64 vessels)
Spain	Mediterranean & Black sea	ICCAT	AL35, BF55	Large pelagic fish at sea	T1=Drifting longlines Mediterranean Sea (observers on board)	Fishing trip	2099	53	2,53%	LLD are targeted to SWO, ALB, BFT (from table 4C can be deduced that: SWO represents 84% in trips, 88% in days and 75% in vessels)
Spain	Mediterranean & Black sea	ICCAT	AL35, BF55	Large pelagic fish at m	T4 =Drifting longlines in the Mediterranean Sea (at port)	Fishing trip	2099	708	33,73%	since the market sampling is given for all the countries we add T4 for Spain as additional information.

Table 5. Coverage of Swordfish in the Mediterranean. The data is extracted from table 4A of the Annual reports.

5 EVALUATION OF MEMBER STATES TRANSMISSION OF DCF DATA TO END USERS IN 2019

5.1 Setting the scene

End-users are requested to report data issues that 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.

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 issues. During EWG 19-09 the guidance was updated and this year was the first time that the updated version of the guidance¹⁷ was used by end-users, pre-screeners and experts during the EWG.

The tool can be accessible at <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/dcf/dtmt>. However, at the time of the meeting the tool was not operational due to technical issues. The EWG experts were instead provided with the content from the DTMT in Excel.

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. In order to ensure harmonisation and consistency, two EWG experts re-assessed all issues for consistency after the sub-group assessment were finalised. Table 6 below shows that in total 106 DT issues, from 7 data calls in 2019 and 3 end users, were reported in the DTMT. 43 DT issues were related to COVERAGE, 43 to QUALITY and 20 to TIMELINESS. The number of DT issues increased from 85 issues raised in the previous year. 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	Issue type			Grand Total
		COVERAGE	QUALITY	TIMELINESS	
ICCAT	Task I	3			3
ICCAT Total		3			3
ICES	WGBIE	1		14	15
	WGCSE	1			1
	WGNSSK			5	5
ICES Total		2		19	21
STECF EWG	FDI	5	16	1	22
	Med and BS	17	19		36
	Processing	16	8		24 ¹⁸
STECF EWG Total		38	43	1	82
Grand Total		43	43	20	106

Table 6. DT issues in the DTMT by end-user and type.

5.1.1 Tools and criteria for the assessment

During STECF 19-01 spring plenary, a parallel group worked on a guidance to fill in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool. The group produced the DTMT guidance 5.2 document, later used and modified by EWG 19-09 on AR and DT issues, and updated as a Doc 3 DTMT Guidance version 30052019. This document was later used by the EWG 19-18 on WP and DT issues.

¹⁷ EWG-20-08 Background document 4 - DTMT Guidance version 30052019

¹⁸ In the ToR, there is 23 DT issues for the processing industry data call. This difference is due to the wrong coding by the end-user: ID 3511 was reported as 2015 Update assessments (issued 3 Feb 2015), but for the ID numbering, data request and issue it is easy to understand that it refers to processing data call.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the DTMT version 30052019 could not be approved by STECF 20-01 spring plenary but were nevertheless used by the pre-screeners for the assessment of DT issues prior to EWG 20-08. At the start of the meeting, the EWG agreed that the DTMT Guidance should be used as basis for the assessment during the EWG (but with some minor editing suggested by the EWG 19-09, see table 7 below).

Issue	EWG Assessment and associated comments
Unclear MS comment in reply to the issue flagged by the end-user.	Follow up needed <u>ecessary</u> + 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 <u>ecessary</u> + a comment: "The information provided by end-users and MS is contradictory".
<u>Failure concerning</u> on data transmission:	Unsatisfactory
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).
The issue raised relates to lack of data collection and not data transmission. Hence, data will not be available but situation must be flagged.	Unsatisfactory A standard comment must be included. "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

Issue	EWG Assessment and associated comments
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 7 of the DTMT guidance (version DTMT Guidance version 30052019 with edits from EWG 19-09)

In addition to table 2 of the Guidance the EWG reiterates the conclusions from EWG 19-09 and based the assessment of the DT issues on the agreed assessment criteria from EWG 19-09 as given below:

- 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.

- 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 do so, a facility in the DTMT tool to split a given issue into sub-issues should be provided. For this year's assessment it was not necessary to use UNKNOWN for any DT issues.
- 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.

The EWG further concludes that 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 in the DTMT 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.

5.2 DTMT Guidance

As specified in the ToRs the EWG was requested to provide feedback on the DTMT guidance for future revisions. The EWG concludes that the use of the DTMT guidance document worked well, facilitating a more consistent and objective evaluation of DT issues.

In addition to the points raised by EWG 19-09 and reiterated above, the EWG concluded that the DTMT Guidance could be made more user-friendly and that more examples and details on the assessment should be included.

5.3 Results

The evaluation concluded that out of the 106 DT issues that were reported in the DTMT and referring to data calls in 2019, 72 issues were justified as SATISFACTORY and 26 as UNSATISFACTORY. In addition, 8 issues could not be assessed because the MS and end-user comment were either contradictory or the MS comment unclear (FOLLOW-UP NEEDED).

End User	Data Call	Issue type								Grand Total
		COVERAGE			QUALITY			TIMELINESS		
		F	S	U	F	S	U	S	U	
ICCAT	Task I		3							3
ICES	WGBIE		1					10	4	15
	WGCSE		1							1
	WGNSSK							4	1	5
STECF EWG	FDI		3	2	3	9	4		1	22
	Med and BS	2	15		1	18				36
	Processing		4	12	3	3	2			24
Grand Total		2	27	14	7	30	6	14	6	106

Table 8. Overview of EWG assessment by issue type and end-user. F=Follow-up, S=Satisfactory, U=Unsatisfactory.

The data call for data from the processing industry resulted in the highest number of DT issues that the EWG assessed as UNSATISFACTORY. None of the issues raised by ICAAT or STECF EWG Med and the Black Sea was judged as UNSATISFACTORY.

End User	Data Call	Issue type			Grand Total
		COVERAGE	QUALITY	TIMELINESS	
ICES	WGBIE			4	4
ICES	WGNSSK			1	1
STECF EWG	FDI	2	4	1	7

STECF EWG	Processing	12	2		14
Grand Total		14	6	6	26

Table 9. Overview of issues where the EWG judgement been assessed as unsatisfactory.

The RCG large pelagic that was held the same week as the EWG was asked to review the DT issues that had been identified by ICCAT. The EWG was informed on the last day of the meeting that the RCG large pelagic agreed with the comments put forward by ICAAT.

6 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

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

Assessment of 2019 ARs

For the forthcoming years, the EWG suggests to move the start of the 'ping-pong' process of contacting Member States for clarifications to the week before the EWG by sending the pre-screening comments already before the start of the meeting. Within the current system, the pre-screeners communicate with each other to ensure that a common approach is taken in the initial evaluation, especially where sections are being looked at by more than one expert. The pre-screeners can easily highlight where text or tables are missing and where the Member State is not following the guidelines for submission of the AR. If the Member State were able to respond to and provide the missing information or correct the submission to what was requested in the guidelines before the meeting, it would allow for important issues to have been dealt with before the start of the meeting and free more time within the EWG for the assessment process. For this process to be efficient, the pre-screeners need to be provided with criteria for what type of issues that should be addressed in the ping-pong. The pre-screening also needs to be coordinated to ensure harmonisation of the comments to Member States. In addition, it is crucial that the Member States are informed of the new process in which the first communication they receive containing input from pre-screeners may not represent the final view of the EWG and that the EWG might also post additional or follow-up questions during the meeting.

The EWG concludes that the updated AR assessment grid, as prepared through ad-hoc contract work prior to the EWG, is an improvement compared to the previous versions. The updated version is more consistent and repetitive questions from previous versions have been removed. Furthermore, the reintroduction of the regional dimension is considered useful. It allows for assessment by regions which is important for Member States that have fisheries in several regions for which the evaluation can be different. The EWG further considers that the regional approach in the evaluation provides the dimension and the importance of each region in the total fisheries of the country. The EWG also concludes that the updated Guidance for AR-WP evaluators provides better guidance for the evaluation than previous versions. During the assessment of ARs, some additional suggestions for further improvements of the assessment grid and evaluation guidance have been identified for the consideration of the Commission.

Evaluation of Member States transmission of DCF data to end-users in 2019

The EWG concludes that the DTMT guidance, following the recommendation from PLEN 19-02, has improved the assessment process of DT issues. However, the EWG considers that the DTMT guidance should be further developed and incorporate the additional assessment points that EWG based its assessment on. In addition, it could benefit from including concrete examples of assessment results of various issue types.

The EWG reiterates its conclusion from EWG 19-09 that since DT issues in the DTMT tool differ widely in terms of severity (also within the agreed issue types) 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 indicators (FAME SU: CT03.1).

Evaluation of observer coverage for highly migratory species fisheries and their compliance with legal obligations

The EWG concludes that it is not possible to infer the observer sampling coverage for swordfish from the drifting long lines fleet since it is not possible to extract the relevant information from the AR (Table 4A). However, the exercise provided a useful overview of Member States that have drifting long line fisheries targeting swordfish that can be addressed in a specific data call for retrieving this data. The EWG concludes that a request for more detailed information would need to be addressed to Member States in order to gather data on observer coverage for specific fisheries on highly migratory species. The responses given by Member States would then need to be compared to legal obligations under RFMO requirements and EU legislation.

7 REFLECTIONS ON THE FUTURE PROCESS

Article 11 of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017 (recast) gives the mandate to STECF to evaluate both the execution of the WPs and the quality of the data collected by the Member States. STECF has conducted this work since the start of the Data Collection Regulation (in 2002) and continuously proposed improvements to its evaluation, working also on improving the WP and AR templates and the guidelines. For the evaluation of the AR 2019, STECF had to adapt to a specific context summarised as follows:

- Member States are not expected to propose a revision of their WP 2021, unless there are significant issues to address in contrast to their approved WP 2020-2021;
- The modifications from the AR 2019 evaluation will have little consequences on the reporting exercise foreseen in 2021, i.e. AR 2020 based on a new WP 2020-2021 and WP 2022-2024 based on new templates and guidelines.

Moreover, there will be no bilateral between the Commission and Member States after the end of the EWG and the opportunity to finalise the AR after the EWG is optional for the Member States.

The current procedures also mean that Member States can only resolve main issues identified in the so-called ping-pong process and cannot allocate the necessary time to address all the small inconsistencies between the tables, naming convention etc. during the EWG. These minor issues will therefore continue to be part of the evaluation template sent to Member States by the Commission after the EWG meeting, for their own consideration and national validation procedure. In preparation for the revision of AR templates and guidelines, it will be necessary to gather the elements raised by the EWG to each Member State in order to validate the execution of the WP. The end-users will have a role to play also in expressing their needs, e.g. for documentation and quality control.

The evaluation of the ARs has often been the occasion for the EWG to test the consistencies of the WPs. A recurrent issue during the EWG meetings has been to consider how to address the inconsistencies in already approved multi-annual WPs. Some of the main problems encountered by the EWG when evaluating Member State submissions are due to the fact that the approved WP is in fact not in line with the submission guidelines and the AR can only be evaluated taking this into account. These inconsistencies have prevented the EWG from conducting the assessment (e.g. missing information in the WP implied no need to report in the AR) and this is consistently the main reason for some sections being highlighted as having a recurring issue when the EWG evaluates the AR.

To address these problems, the Member States have been asked to consider these issues when redrafting a new WP. In some instances, Member States have presented an updated WP which has been approved but these recurring issues have not or partially been addressed and the problem remains. This is still the case for some 2020-2021 WPs (which have been approved), where problems identified in the evaluation of ARs for 2017/2018 have not been addressed. This means that the EWG will still be reporting the same issues in the AR 2020 evaluation in 2021. In order to address this recurring issue and mitigate as much as possible its consequences in the forthcoming years, it is therefore important that STECF gives a special consideration at the end of 2021 for a thorough evaluation of the WP 2022-2024, to agree and guarantee fewer errors in the WP for each Member State.

8 CONTACT DETAILS OF EWG-20-08 PARTICIPANTS

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

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9 LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS AND ELECTROINIC ANNEX

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

<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/ewg2008>

List of background documents:

1. EWG 20-08 - Background document 1 - Updated AR evaluation template (Task 2-3 of March ad hoc)
2. EWG 20-08 Background document 2 - Guidance for the submission and evaluation of ARs (as updated in 2018)
3. EWG 20-08 Background document 3 - Guidance for AR-WP evaluators with comments (Task 4 of March ad-hoc)
4. EWG 20-08 Background document 4 - DTMT Guidance version 30052019
5. EWG 20-08 Electronic annex 1 - Evaluation of ARs by Member States

ANNEX 1: AGENDA

Attendance

Chair: Jenny Nord and Christoph Stransky

DG MARE: Monika Sterczewska, Blanca Garcia-Alvarez

JRC: Hendrik Doerner (STECF focal point)

Experts: 30 independent experts

Daily timetable

Start of meeting: Mon (22/6) at 9 h

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

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

End of meeting: Fri (26/6) at 16h

Monday, 22 June

Morning session:

8:30h Connect to the meeting (follow the Skype link sent by email).

9:00h Start of meeting

1. Welcome and house-keeping: introduction of participants (Chairs)
2. Introduction from JRC on STECF rules and FTP access (JRC)
3. Introduction of the ToRs and update on EU MAP from the Commission (Monika)
4. Adoption of agenda (Chairs)
5. Status of DT issues (Blanca)
6. Subgroup formation AR and DT issues (Chairs)
7. Agreeing of a common assessment ground. Agreement of the use of the updated evaluation grid and guidance to assess ARs and the uses of the DTMT guidance to assess DT-issues (Chairs).

Afternoon session:

Subgroup work: TOR 2a and 2b

17h30 – 18h: Daily wrap up in plenary

Tuesday, 23 June

Morning session:

9:00h daily check-in

Subgroup work: ToR 2a and 2b

Afternoon session:

Subgroup work: ToR 2a and 2b

17h30 – 18h: Daily wrap up in plenary

Wednesday, 24 June

Morning session:

9:00 h daily check-in

Subgroup work 2a and 2b

DT issues finalised by the sub-groups and sent to Henrik.

Afternoon session:

Assessment of ARs finalised.

17h30 – 18h: Daily wrap up in plenary

18:00 – 20:00 Social event for those that want, join when you can with or without a drink ☺

Thursday, 25 June

Morning session:

9:00h daily check-in

Finalisation of AR assessments.

Afternoon session:

Plenary session: AR evaluation – Draft EU overview agreed in plenary.

Plenary session: assessment of DT issues.

17h30 – 18h: Daily wrap up in plenary

Friday, 26 June

9:00h Daily check-in

Draft report and compilation of results per MS.

Plenary session: AR evaluation – Final EU overview agreed in plenary (after response from MS), text on future improvements.

16:00 close of meeting

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-screener 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-screener 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-screener as minor and major. If pre-screener 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	NA	NA

evaluation template		
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ANNEX 3: OVERVIEW OF REPORTING AND EXECUTION OF THE 2019 WP BY MEMBER STATE

Member State: AUT Austria

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The Member State should submit the WP and AR table 3B with the list of economic and social variables planned for the data collection (see section socio-economic variables).

The pilot project which had to be finished in 2019 was extended and it is not clear about the state of play and level of completion. The Member State should present the results from the Pilot study and provide a clear explanation to why the Pilot Study was extended.

Concerning the data availability the Member State shall follow the guidelines in order to provide an overview of the availability of data to end users.

The Member State provides no information on quality assurance.

Regarding regional recommendations and agreements the Member State should check which recommendations from PGECON are relevant for the Member State and list all of them.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Not applicable.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Not applicable.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Not applicable

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Not applicable.

6. Surveys at sea

Not applicable.

7. Fishing activity variable

Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Not applicable.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

The Member State should submit the WP and AR table 3B with the list of economic and social variables planned for the data collection. In a reply to EWG The Member State argued they think "it doesn't make sense to fill in the tables that have been designed for a regular data collection (...)".

According to the description given for the table 3B in the Guidance for the submission and evaluation of Annual Reports "table fulfills paragraph 6 points (a) and (b) of Chapter III and Chapter V of the multiannual Union programme and Article 2, Article 3 and Article 4 paragraph (1) of the Decision (EU) 2016/1701. This table is intended to specify data to be collected under Tables 6 and 7 of the multiannual Union programme. Use this table to give an overview of the collection of economic and social data of the aquaculture sector."

Taking into consideration that the Pilot study was planned in the Member State and in the frame of multiannual Union programme paragraph 6 points (a) and (b) of Chapter III where the pilot study as well as regular data collection are mentioned, the list of variables planned for the Pilot study should be listed in the table 3B of WP and AR which are official documents.

If the thresholds are applied due to the low level of production, the Member State should provide a description in the text box 3B about threshold application.

The Member State should follow the WP and AR guidelines and provide the list of variables in table 3B of future WP planned for data collection in the frame of Pilot Study. The variables should be in line with table 6, 7, 8 and table 9 of EUMAP.

At the same time, the Member State should present the results from the Pilot study and the clear reason why the Pilot Study was extended.

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 2019 WP

Overall reporting and execution of the national work plan is good with only a few repetitive issues with regards to follow-ups on the guidelines and STECF recommendations.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

1A/1C: Overall performance is good. However, the Member State should provide actions to avoid deviation per region as indicated in the guidelines. Also some more details should be provided because not all deviations have the same origin.

4A/4C: There is a recurrent issue with regards to some wrong information in certain columns.

3. Recreational Fisheries

The Member State should include "data collection for recreational catch" survey in textbox 1D in future submissions.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

The Member State should include information on fisheries dependent sampling on eels in future submission of WP.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

There are some inconsistencies between tale 4A and 1F which should be taken into account in future submission of WP.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No issues.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No data collection on aquaculture.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

There are remaining issues with regards to missing processing data from 2016.

Member State: BGR Bulgaria

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 AR

The overall reporting and execution of the 2019 AR of MS was very 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- or oversampled. Under-sampling of *Engraulis encrasicolus* & *Trachurus mediterraneus* occurred due to low catches obtained in research surveys. Over-sampling of several variables for 6 species performed to obtain a higher level of significance. Regarding the documentation on sampling design, the link provided for information on the methodology leads to an empty page when you try to have access to "Material and methods for biological sampling in the Bulgarian Black Sea area". For data capture the documentation is not publicly available and for data processing the link provided lead to a web page where the report of Working Group on the Black Sea (WGBS) can be found. The WGBS report is not proper documentation on data processing.

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. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems/ Incidental by-catch

The overall performance and compliance was good without major problems.

6. Surveys at sea

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

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.

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 issues.

Member State: CYP Cyprus

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

Cyprus had good overall performance in 2019 with an overall evaluation of "Yes".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Fleet segments/metiers identified in 4C not covered by any sampled strata are not reported as unsampled in 4A. Although explanations are given in Text Box (not selected under the "ranking system" and agreed in RCM Med) these missing stratas should be listed. The Member State should list unsampled strata in the future WP and AR.

Deviation derived due to problems in assigning scientific DCF observers (no applicants for the tender). Therefore coverage was done under a control observer scheme. The Member State should try to ensure that under sampled strata are covered by employing enough observers.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Not applicable.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No issues.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

The response rate is provided incorrectly - 100% value pasted for all lines even in the cases where response rate was below 100%. For Census type of data collection response rate is equal to achieved sample rate whereas in probability sample survey is a percentage expression of achieved sample no/planned sample no. The Member State should follow the guidelines in future transmissions.

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

FDI data call: follow up needed to clarify data for Spatial landings and Spatial effort - the Information provided by end-users and the Member State is contradictory and there is no evidence to allow the EWG to give an assessment.

Member State: CZE Czech Republic

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 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 for Czech Republic.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Not applicable for Czech Republic.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Not applicable for Czech Republic.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Not applicable for Czech Republic.

6. Surveys at sea

Not applicable for Czech Republic.

7. Fishing activity variable

Not applicable for Czech Republic.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Not applicable for Czech Republic.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

In the 2018 project, "Analysis of data collection for aquaculture in the CR" was approved and funded. The first data collection of socio-economic data in the Czech Republic was scheduled for 2019 but was cancelled because no contractor was selected. At the beginning of 2020 was prepared a new project "Data collection in aquaculture in the Czech Republic for 2017 and 2018". The results are expected in the second half of 2020.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Not applicable for Czech Republic.

11. Data transmission issues

Not applicable for Czech Republic in 2019.

Member State: DEU Germany

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 NWP

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

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Age samples were missing for *P. flesus*, *S. maximus* and *L. limanda* in the Baltic region even though length and other biological variables were collected. Explanation for not sampling and actions to avoid this was missing from the report. There was an inconsistency of reporting for *A. anguilla* and region names among tables 1B and 1C. No action needed however, the MS was requested to ensure the consistency among tables. in future submissions.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No significant issues identified, and no action required.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Minor issues with missing fisheries dependent information, survey ID and achieved number for *S. salar*. Major issue of under sampling of biological variables in surveys due to limited availability of eels from fishermen. Full data coverage was requested from the Member State in future submissions.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Some minor inconsistencies were detected. However, no action needed. The Member State was requested to correct in future submissions.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues identified, and no action required.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issues identified, and no action required.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Some minor issues. No explanation was given for 0 sampling rate neither in table nor text box. The Member State was requested to resubmit including comments during the EWG meeting, however, the Member State was unable to submit an amended Table 3A, as there were no responses for certain variables. In these cases, the Member State applies an estimation procedure as described in the national Work Plan so that reasonable estimates can be delivered for the data call. It has to be borne in mind that the related segments consist of very few vessels only.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Two major issue were detected where achieved sample rate is much lower than planned and the text does not discuss the possible impact on final estimates. It is noted that WP2020-2021 is planning a data collection without any thresholds. The Member State should ensure consistency in data collection activities over time. The Member State should justify the low rates of achievements and take actions in the future to avoid failures in data collection.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues identified, and no action required.

11. Data transmission issues

No issues identified.

Member State: DNK Denmark

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

Overall the Member State provided a very good report. Few issues were raised during the AR evaluation. However, the Member State should ensure that they take into account the EWG recommendations related to the general section – data availability – table 6A.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No issues.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

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

Only one Data Transmission issue was listed for Denmark. After evaluation by EWG 20-08, the case was judged satisfactory.

Member State: ESP Spain

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The overall performance and compliance were very good without any major issue.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

The Member State has performed properly and no major issue has been reported.

3. Recreational Fisheries

The Member State has performed properly and no major issue has been reported. The only issue that has been reported was for over-regional pilot study approach that the Member State should fix.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

The Member State has performed properly and no major issue has been reported.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

The Member State has performed properly, however some issues were reported:

One issue was that the on-board observer program had to be cut short in the Mediterranean Sea and in the "Other regions" due to budgetary and administrative problems. The Member State should ensure that full funding will be in place for the monitoring of bycatch.

Another issue was that the Member State has not provided information on sampling protocols and/or on the calculation of observation effort. The Member State should provide this information in future submissions.

Regarding the pilot studies, each pilot study should be indicated separately by the Member State in future submissions.

6. Surveys at sea

An issue that has been reported was that the links for the report of some surveys were not working, so the Member State should correct and update the links for the following surveys:

MEDIT (latest update in 2001), Flemish Groundfish Survey (not working but noted in text box), ECOCADIZ (link not working), ECOCADIZ RECLUTAS (link not working), PALPRO no electronic link, BFT Index no electronic link and Link to SCRS species group meeting in 2018 and 2019 is not working, ISUNEPKA TV SURVEY no report available yet, TUNIBAL no survey report available.

7. Fishing activity variable

The Member State has performed properly and no major issue has been reported. The only issue that has been reported was the missing information on the availability for variable "Number of fishing operation" for "vessels < 10 meters" that MS should provide in future submissions of AR.

8. Fleet socio-economic

The Member State has performed properly and no major issue has been reported.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

The Member State has performed properly and no major issue has been reported. The only issue that has been reported was the lack of data collection for "Hatcheries trout" segment. The Member State should explain the lack of data collection for this specific segment.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

The Member State has performed properly and no major issue has been reported.

11. Data transmission issues

Five issues were assessed as unsatisfactory.

Member State: EST Estonia

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The Member State performance was generally very good, only a few minor issues were identified.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Minor issue, under sampling for some stocks occurred but explanation has been given. The Member State should keep the consistency in region naming between tables and texts in future submission of WP.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Minor issue, the Member State shall include information on complete sampling scheme into Table 5A in future submissions.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Sampling schemes for Anadromous and Catadromous species (table 1E) have no entries in table 5A.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No issues.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No major issues. The Member State should provide complete information in text box 5b.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

NA.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

NA.

11. Data transmission issues

One DT issue concerning failure to report GT hours at sea, hours at sea and kW hours at sea was reported.

Member State: FIN Finland

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The performance was very good with an overall performance of a yes.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No issues.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No major issues. A minor issue arose that was raised was that unique survey IDs were missing. Furthermore, Salmo (F) was partly under sampled.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

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

No data transmission issues were reported for Finland

Member State: FRA France

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The overall performance of the AR 2019 was assessed as compliance class Mostly.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

1A-C There is still the issue of sampling in the Northeast Arctic to fully resolve but actions are in line with current WP.

4A-C Some minor issues still exist. More detail on deviations is needed in some instances and the Text Box "other Regions" could be improved.

5A France continues to show progress in providing information on data quality.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Much improved – Data was provided by region which was beneficial to the evaluation.

Recreational surveys for eels detailed in 1E should be presented under this section as stated last year.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

The Member State should use catadromous & anadromous instead of eel and salmon in future reporting. France should also report how data for weight, age & sex is sampled.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Data was provided by region which was beneficial to the evaluation.

There are still a few minor inconsistencies between Tables 1F and 4A.

6. Surveys at sea

There were only minor issues relating to the ORHAGO survey – Map of station positions could not be read and text relating to the impact of the reduced coverage was not given.

7. Fishing activity variable

Although France resubmitted Tables 2A and 3A there are still some issues that were not fully addressed.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Table 3A was revised by France during the EWG and clarification was received for some issues. In future submission France should follow the guidelines and take actions to cover all the segments and variables.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Table 3A was revised by France during the EWG and clarification was received for some issues.

Main point to note is the lack of information on methodology.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

More detailed explanations on deviation from achieving the stated aims should be provided in future submissions.

11. Data transmission issues

There were 24 DT issues relating to France.

Member State: GBR United Kingdom

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The UK had an intermediate high performance in 2019 with an overall evaluation of "Mostly".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

As commented last year by STECF, tables 1A and 1B do not match for a number of species due to differences in area/stock naming. These should clearly be addressed in a future WP. Large pelagics in the Indian Ocean are attached to ICES in table 1B and correctly to IOTC in 1C. Again the issue comes from the WP inconsistencies.

Lots of species/stocks have been added compared to the WP, and an explanation is given in the textbox, so no immediate action is needed. MS should refer to the name convention used in table 5C (Leve 2) of the EU-Map.

The EWG understands the complexity of reporting on the sampling in UK with different regions and countries participating, but the structure proposed in the textbox (proposed sub-sections and then a mix between country, region, type of species) makes it impossible to understand and find the searched information. MS should propose a clear structure by region and use the predefined sub-sections underneath every region. There may be explanations for clarifying comments of the table 1C but due to the structure of the textbox the pre-screener cannot allocate sufficient time to identify all of these. No immediate action is needed. In the future submission the MS should propose a clear structure.

For region 1: North sea and Eastern Arctic, the section covers regions in the AR named 'North Sea and Eastern Channel' and 'East Arctic, Norwegian Sea and Barents Sea.

Maja squinado was planned to be sampled for individual weight in table 1B and is missing in table 1C. Some region for eel that are planned in 1B are wrongly specified in 1C (e.g. 'IVb, IVc, VIIId (GB_Angl)'). No immediate action is needed. In the future submission the MS should make sure that all species planned in table 1B are sampled in 1C. The MS is missing comments for e.g. Sprattus sprattus. No immediate action is needed, in the future submission the MS should make sure that all deviations are explained in the comments, either in the tables or the text box. Actions to avoid deviations have been provided by the MS for all regions combined. No immediate action is needed. In the future submission the MS should make sure to provide actions by region/case.

For region 2, North Atlantic, the section covers regions in the AR named ""North-East Atlantic and Western Channel". Some issues of inconsistencies between tables for eel, Nephrops and Salmo salar exist, but no immediate action is needed. In the future submission the MS should make sure that all species planned in table 1B are sampled in 1C. The MS is missing comments for e.g. Molva dypterygia and Squalus acanthias for all planned variables. No immediate action is needed. In the future submission the MS should make sure that all deviations are explained in the comments. Either in the tables or in the text box. Actions to avoid deviations have been provided by the MS for all regions combined, so no immediate action is needed. In the future submission the MS should make sure to provide actions by region/case.

For region 3, other regions, the section covers regions in the AR named 'All regions', 'Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas' (referring to large pelagics) and 'Indian Ocean Western and Eastern'. A line in table 1C has been added for Thunnus alalunga in Atlantic Ocean and adjacent seas and

referred to IOTC as RFMO. Clarification is needed on which information is correct Atlantic region and ICCAT as RFMO or Indian ocean and IOTC. Large pelagics in Indian ocean are often given ICES as a RFMO instead of IOTC. The issue comes from table 1B and is corrected in table 1C, creating an inconsistency. No immediate action is needed. In the future submission the MS should make sure that there is consistency for tables 1A, 1B and 1C.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Regions are not listed separately. The Member State shall list ICES regions separately.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

For Salmo F: 3 out of 6 surveys were not implemented, but no action is needed. For eel I: 9 out of 26 surveys were undersampled. 4 were not implemented and 5 were undersampled (40-89%) due to poor river conditions. Salmo I: 3 out of 24 were undersampled (34-78%) mainly due to poor river conditions, but no action is needed.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Regarding incidental by-catch, 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. No action needed at present, guidance needs clarification.

For region 1, Minor inconsistencies between 1F and 4A (e.g. 1F E+W 6NW_C1 and 4A E+W 6NW_C3).MS is to update in future submissions.

The data for "Incidental by-catch" from section 1F and data for pilot study 2 are missing initially in the WP and respectively are missing in the AR. UK should provide additional justification for missing types of data from Table 6A, or to add additional line for the missing data.

6. Surveys at sea

Column E in Table 1G (NWP) is not filled in, columns F (NWP) and V (AR) only partly filled in. It is assumed that an empty cell in column V is a "N". No action needed. Survey results from the PELTIC survey cannot be uploaded to DATRAS (only demersal). MS should give correct information of where the data are uploaded.

7. Fishing activity variable

No comments were provided from the EWG or the prescreeners and not action is needed.

8. Fleet socio-economic

There are deviations from the estimation procedures with regards to investments, total assets, debts and other income, for some segments. In the WP a sampling plan is presented, while the Member State is now providing estimates based on similar groups or previous year survey. Existing deviations are presented and partially justified in the 3A textbox and/or the AR tables. The Member State should fully justify deviations from WP in future submissions (e.g. why it fails to reach some segments and used previous years' results, why it uses Seafish's segmentation and how this segmentation is defined).

The Member State should report social variables in table 3A even if data collection for these variables has not been implemented in 2019. Most of the existing deviations are presented but partially justified in the 3A textbox and/or the AR tables. The Member State should include in the text all the deviations in type of data collection in future submissions.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

The Member State should report social variables in table 3B even if data collection for these variables has not been implemented in 2019. MS should follow guidelines in future AR submissions.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

The Member State should report social variables in table 3B even if data collection for these variables has not been implemented in 2019. The Member State should follow guidelines in future AR submissions. Deviations from WP are reported and justified, with no action required.

11. Data transmission issues

In the 2019 data call CEFAS (England) were not able to provide the Sole VIIId CBT (Commercial beam trawl indices) for WGNSSK, this was highlighted due to a change in systems housing fishing activity data and in particular the hours fished data.

ICES specifies that there are data missing: 2017 and 2018 data from the UK CBT tuning fleet. Later, the UK team contacted the stock assessor to ensure they were happy with the way the communications had been handled and that the solution was workable.

Member State: GRC Greece

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The overall performance for Greece was assessed as a `Yes`. A few minor issues were raised.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

This section was performed properly.

3. Recreational Fisheries

This section was performed properly.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No major issues but administrative issues have prevented the sampling of all EMUs. The Member State needs to ensure sampling of all EMUs in the future.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No major issues.

6. Surveys at sea

This section was performed properly.

7. Fishing activity variable

Minor issues were raised for this section related with the fact that the data source was not provided in table 2A and with some mistakes in codification and validation. The Member State is asked to correct all in future ARs.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No major issues. The Member State is asked to correct, in future ARs, an issue related with codification.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

A minor issue was raised for this module related with the calculation of response rate. The Member State is asked to be aware of guidelines in the future.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

A minor issue was raised for this module related with the calculation of response rate. The Member State is asked to be aware of guidelines in the future.

11. Data transmission issues

1 out of 4 data transmission issues are flagged as “unsatisfactory”.

Member State: HRV Croatia

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The overall performance and compliance for Croatia is “Mostly”, as in previous year evaluation. The report (both Tables and Texts) were very well structured and organized, however few issues appeared that cost the Member State the “Yes” in overall compliance. These issues mainly concern Surveys at sea and Socioeconomics for aquaculture. In addition, there were four data transmission issues, three of which were successfully addressed by the Member State.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

There were no issues within this section regarding AR. However, the Member State is advised to include other highly migratory species in the next WP submission.

3. Recreational Fisheries

There were no issues within this section regarding AR. However, the Member State should present the results of the pilot study in future submissions and it is advised to include other highly migratory species in the next WP submission.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

There were no issues within this section.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

There were only some minor inconsistencies between Tables 1F and 4A.

6. Surveys at sea

There were some recurrent issues regarding probe failure and temperature by haul measurements.

7. Fishing activity variable

There were no issues within this section.

8. Fleet socio-economic

The Member State successfully completed Table 3A.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

There is one issue regarding the false estimate of response rate in the case of probability sample survey.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

There were no issues within this section.

11. Data transmission issues

Three data transmission failures of low severity were raised. All of them regards the "Med and BS" data call" For the two of them, EWG assessed that answers are "satisfactory", while only for one issue, follow-up is needed.

Member State: HUN Hungary

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 NWP

The overall performance for the reporting and execution of Hungary was assessed as “Mostly”.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Not applicable.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Not applicable.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Not applicable.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Not applicable.

6. Surveys at sea

Not applicable.

7. Fishing activity variable

Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Not applicable.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Referring to Table 3B, the Member State should take action in the future to increase the response rates and provide correction of the variables.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

The Member State should ensure the completion and correction of the variables of the table 3C in the future.

11. Data transmission issues

No data transmission issues were reported for Hungary.

Member State: IRL Ireland

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 NWP

The Member State performance was generally good, only minor issues were identified, such as missing unique survey IDs, structuring issues with data tables, missing details on planned timeframes for Pilot studies and some minor undersampling.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

The Member State states that bilaterals to cover landings abroad are in place. Not mentioned in text relating to deviations from plan.

No immediate action needed. The Member State should provide all actions taken in table and text box regarding the bilateral agreements.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No Issue.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

The table does not include Eel Fisheries dependent rows. Survey IDs is missing, but is included in Table 5A. The Member State slightly under sampled Salmo and Anguilla. Member State to provide survey IDs and to ensure full data coverage in future submissions.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Some minor issues with the structuring of table 1F, as it should mimic Table 4A. No action needed at present, guidance needs clarification.

6. Surveys at sea

No Issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

No Issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No issue.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No Issues.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No Issues.

11. Data transmission issues

NA

Member State: ITA Italy

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

Italy had a performance in 2019 with an overall evaluation of "Yes", an improvement compared to last year. The report (both Tables and Texts) are well structured and organized.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues but Italy should update Table 1A in future work plans to reflect their fisheries in other regions.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Significant differences in achieved number of PSU between tables 1F and 4A. Italy should ensure the consistency between the tables in the future submissions.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues but some sections were not included in the relevant sections of the text. The Member State should follow the guidelines.

7. Fishing activity variable

There were inconsistencies between WP and AR text and no explanation was provided for under sampling all strata. The Member State should follow the guidelines. Also, the Member State should ensure in future that actions to avoid deviations are developed, especially for strata which receive 0 or very few samples.

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

Many DT issues are raised but most of them are of low severity and the assessment by STECF is "satisfactory" in most cases.

Member State: LTU Lithuania

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The overall performance and compliance for Lithuania was classified as 'Mostly' (Compliance class for most sections is "Yes", for four sections, i.e. 1A-C, 1E, 1F, 4A-C and 5A is "Mostly"). Like in the case of ARs 2017 and 2018 evaluations, it means that there is still a 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 and 2018 evaluations, the Member State 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, the Member State should make an effort to document Quality Assurance regarding biological data capture and processing and made them publicly available.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No essential concerns have been raised by the EWG.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

The Member State to include Fisheries Dependent information for salmon and Fisheries Independent information for eel, and also unique survey ID into the table 1E in future submissions.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No essential concerns have been raised by the EWG.

6. Surveys at sea

No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

7. Fishing activity variable

No essential concerns have been raised by the EWG.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Data collection and reporting on aquaculture section is not applicable for the Member State.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No concerns have been raised by the EWG.

11. Data transmission issues

No data transmission failures were recorded in 2019.

Member State: LVA Latvia

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The overall performance of the AR 2019 was assessed as compliance class Mostly.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

1A-C Latvia shall consider in the future to revise the planned numbers for the Baltic Sea Region.

4A-C In the next AR, the Member State shall insert additional rows in Tables 4A-B to include missing stratum with explanation note in the 'AR comments' column.

Progress in improvement of the QA framework during the AR period is well described in Text Box 5A.

3. Recreational Fisheries

It was not clear if the Member State conducts regular sampling or only Pilot studies. This was clarified by the Member State during EWG: Latvia conducts regular sampling and pilot study.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

The Member State to provide planned numbers (without text), and to ensure full data coverage in future submissions.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

There are still a few minor inconsistencies between Tables 1F and 4A. MS to adjust in future submissions.

6. Surveys at sea

No comments.

7. Fishing activity variable

No comments.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No action needed.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No action needed.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No action needed.

11. Data transmission issues

There was 1 DT issue relating to Latvia and the EWG assessment was SATISFACTORY.

Member State: MLT Malta

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

Malta had a performance in 2019 with an overall evaluation of "Mostly".

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Some inconsistencies are coming from the WP so, according to guidelines the MS couldn't correct them e.g "MS participating in sampling" NA instead of MLT, "sampling year" 2017-2019 instead of different rows for each year. In future NWP, MS should correct this minor issues."

In future AR the Member State should indicate the name of the region in the text box.

For the undersampling of some biological parameters of *Sardinella aurita*, all the biological parameters of *S.japonicus* and no sampling of *S.scombrus*, explanation is related with the number of samples from the metier-based sampling scheme provided in Table 4A. On the contrary, in Text box 4A MS states that ""For purse seiners targeting small pelagic fish (PS_SPF_>=14_0_0), the achieved number of trips was higher than planned since data was collected from both market and onboard observations to ensure complete coverage of metier and to obtain measurements of weight, sex and maturity samples of *Scomber spp.* and *Sardinella aurita*. MS should clarify the inconsistency between explanation for *Scomber spp.* and *Sardinella aurita* given in table 1C and the explanation given in Text box 4A. Ms should provide action to minimise the deviation related to *Scomber spp.* and *Sardinella*.

Sampling plan description: the Member State added 26 new rows with the indication "New Fleet segment / Metier in Sub-area / Fishing ground" in "Comments" column. This information was not included neither in the amended WP for 2019 nor in the WP for 2020-21 delivered in October 2019. Thus, if the new fleet segments entered into fishery during 2020 this information should be given in the next amendment of WP for 2021 and in the AR of 2020. MS should make sure the 26 new fleet segments/Métier in sub-area incorporated in the future WPs (and annual reports)

The explanation provided to describe deviations is not clear for LLD_LPF_0_0_0, as ICCAT set the lower limits for the percentage of trips. For GTR_DEF_>=16_0_0, it is unclear for which MSs most of the trips were made and then the MS poststratified them in a wrong way (MS stated that when both trammel nets and gillnets were used in a trip, the trip is stratified as GTN. This is a wrong interpretation of the metier GNT by MS because GNT (combined gillnets-trammel) is a separate type of net that consists in two parts, an upper one being a standard gillnet and - lower part being a trammel net (see <http://www.fao.org/fishery/geartype/252/en>.) MS should take into account the EWG comments in future AR submissions and make sure they meet the planned targets.

To enable appropriate evaluation in the future of the Quality Assurance Framework, the Member State shall make the web pages with documentation of sampling designs/quality and accuracy checks publicly available.

Information missing or not available in Table 5A shall be provided in Text Box 5A. MS should strictly follow the Guidance in future AR submission

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No detailed text provided for the Pilot study. The Member State should to provide clearer text according to the guidelines for this text box in future submission.

6. Surveys at sea

For clarity, text from WP giving reasons why the Member State no longer undertakes MEDIAS should be included in Text Box.

7. Fishing activity variable

In the column "variables" the Member State indicates "all" instead of listing it by variable. The Member State should follow guidelines in future AR submissions.

8. Fleet socio-economic

There are several variables and segments for which a census was planned but the achieved rate is low. The Member State should explain why achieved rate is low for some variables/segments and take action in the future to cover all variables of the EUMAP.

Methodologies are organised in shared folder with restricted 'read and write' access. However, methodologies should be publicly available.

Data is stored in excel and in an organised shared folder with restricted 'read and write' access. MS should store data in accordance to the provisions of DCF Regulation.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Methodologies are organised in shared folder with restricted 'read and write' access. However, methodologies should be publicly available.

Data is stored in excel and in an organised shared folder with restricted 'read and write' access. The Member State should store data in accordance to the provisions of DCF Regulation.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

Malta had six DT issues for the FDI, Processing and MedBs data calls. 4 have been assessed as "satisfactory" and 2 have been assessed as "unsatisfactory" (one related to FDI and one to Processing data call).

Member State: NLD The Netherlands

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

Overall reporting and execution of the national workplan is good with only a few repetitive issues with regards to follow-ups on the guidelines and STECF recommendations.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

1A/1C: Overall performance is good. However, the Member State should provide textbox sections per region as indicated in the guidelines. Also some more information should be provided since all deviations are not listed for remedies, especially for the Eastern Arctic fisheries.

4A/4C: the Member State has not listed in the WP or the AR any strata where activity is not covered.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Some surveys were under sampled.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No issues.

6. Surveys at sea

Recurrent issue to resolve in table 1G where each type of sampling activities has to be reported in a separate line.

7. Fishing activity variable

The Member State used wrong template (without column "variable"). Weight and value of landing as well as average prices for dredgers are not achieved (0% response rate), the Member State indicated that additional actions taken to obtain prices.

8. Fleet socio-economic

All "Fleet variables" from the Regulation Table 5A are missing and social data are not reported. The methodologies are still not available to end-users.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No issues, apart from the availability of methodologies used.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No data collection.

11. Data transmission issues

For STECF FDI data call, providing a dummy c-square as only spatial information was not considered to be an acceptable response.

Member State: POL Poland

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

Poland did mostly well in terms of conformity with the EU-MAP legislation, no major issues were assessed during the evaluation.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues were found during the evaluation, the performance is rated as mostly. No immediate action needed. In the next submission the Member State is asked to include deviations for all the variables.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No major issues were found during the evaluation, the performance is rated as mostly. The Member State is asked to ensure full data coverage in future submissions.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

No issues.

6. Surveys at sea

No issues.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issues.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No major issues were found during the evaluation, the performance is rated as mostly. The Member State should follow AR guidelines in future submissions and to include all the mandatory variables.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No issues.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

No issues.

Member State: PRT Portugal

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The overall evaluation was recorded as Mostly. Portugal is undertaking their work plan well.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks.

The textbox is well documented but structured by Area (eg ICES area X) rather than Region. The Region names in text box 1C do not match the Region names in table 1C. The Member State should modify these errors in future submissions of WP. Some sampling schemes have been missed and most of the documentation is still missing from Table 5A. These should be provided in the next WP.

3. Recreational Fisheries

The recreational fisheries module Text Box is missing from both the WP and the AR. The Member State should ensure the text box is included in the next WP. The Pilot study information is good.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water.

The survey ID is provided for each sampling plan but they are not mentioned in Table 5A. The Member State should correct this.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

There are some inconsistencies between 1F and 4A in the Achieved number of PSU which the MS should correct in the next WP and AR.

6. Surveys at sea

A thorough explanation was provided by the Member State in the re-submitted AR Version [2] during the evaluation meeting – [June 25, 2020] about the unfeasibility of hiring crew and vessel for the 2 surveys that were not undertaken - IBTS Q4 and NepS (FU28-29). These explanations were accepted.

7. Fishing activity variable

Well executed and documented.

8. Fleet socio-economic

This has been well executed and reported except the Member State should provide clear descriptions about methodologies for quality assurance.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

The Member State has followed the guidelines and changed previous errors.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Not applicable.

11. Data transmission issues

None.

Member State: ROM Romania

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The Member State performance was generally good, however some issues were identified, such as inconsistencies on total number of PSUs and achieved number of PSUs between tables 1F and 4A and missing sampling schemes, data availability of incidental by-catch, and pilot studies which is missing in AR and WP. Also no unsampled strata are listed so it is not clear if the Member State samples absolutely every fishery (in which case there would be no unplanned/unsampled strata). No action needed. The Member State to clarify in next AR.

The Member State should also make methodologies available for end users, since no documentation is available for data capture and data processing, thus the Member State should ensure the construction of the web page for aquaculture the sooner.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No unsampled strata are listed. It is not clear if the Member State sampled absolutely every fishery (in which case there would be no unplanned/unsampled strata). No action needed. The Member State to clarify in next AR.

Also a minor issue is that no valid link is provided for documentation on sampling design. No documentation available for data capture. MS declares that the manual of methodologies currently developed and used for data collection and verification is under processing.

3. Recreational Fisheries

NA

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

NA

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Major inconsistencies on total number of PSUs and achieved number of PSUs between tables 1F and 4A (e.g. SCT FPN 3-2) and missing sampling schemes (e.g. SCT FPN 4-2 is missing in Table 4a).

Data availability of Incidental by-catch, and Pilot Studies is missing in AR (Mentioned also by STECF EWG 18-10; STECF EWG 19-09).

6. Surveys at sea

This is a recurrent issue and the Member State is encouraged to follow the guidelines by splitting the text box into sections containing each survey for future submissions of WP and AR.

7. Fishing activity variable

No issue.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No issue.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

The Member State should ensure the construction of the web page the sooner.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No documentation available for data processing. The Member State declares that the manual of methodologies currently developed and used for data collection and verification is under processing.

11. Data transmission issues

There were two issues.

One issue concerning FDI for 2019 of medium importance, where on spatial effort data requested there was correspondence between no c-square notation and the geographical coordinates. However, information provided by end-users and MS is contradictory and there is no evidence to allow the EWG to give an assessment. Thus, follow up is needed.

The second one is on processing on low importance about missing data on number of hours worked by employees and unpaid workers (in number), where the Member State send a correct document on 4th June 2020 and now the issue is considered as satisfactory.

Member State: SVK Slovakia

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The overall performance for AR 2019 was assessed to be partly within the compliance class. In sections 'socio-economic for aquaculture' and 'socio-economic for processing industry issues were detected as having major inconsistencies with WP and guidance.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

Not applicable.

3. Recreational Fisheries

Not applicable.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

Not applicable.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Not applicable.

6. Surveys at sea

Not applicable.

7. Fishing activity variable

Not applicable.

8. Fleet socio-economic

Not applicable.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

Issues were obtained by EWG on the reporting of Table and Text Box. The Member State indicates the list of variables for data collection which are inconsistent with EUMAP. Only 4 economic variables were collected out of 24 from EUMAP. Frame population of economic data was different from social data, and the type of data collection and threshold was not provided. Slovakia have been requested to resubmit both the Table and the Text Box as well as collect data according to EUMAP, following requirements and guidance.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

Several issues were noticed: The major issues indicated by EWG has not followed guidance. Not all variables were correctly attributed to the type. The type of data collection was not provided correctly. The template structure was changed. They have not been using group segmentation. Information on quality assurance framework is not provided in AR.

11. Data transmission issues

4 data transmission failures was indicated with low or medium severity.

Member State: SVN Slovenia

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

The overall performance and compliance for AR evaluation was given as Mostly.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No major issues were observed. However, the Member State is asked not to modify WP tables, therefore AR resubmission was asked by EWG. As the Purse seine fishery has stopped its activity The Member State should consider to redirect its effort to other metiers and collect biological variables from the most abundant demersal species.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Concerning the results from the pilot study, the Member State described the study as agreed by RCG Med&BS 2016 for incidental bycatch, but in the results section only the issue of the ecosystem indicators of MEDITS survey was raised. Therefore, the Member State should put effort to present the results of the relevant pilot study in future submissions.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues were observed, however AR submission on Surveys at sea were not according to guidelines. MS should put more effort and follow guidelines in the reporting.

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 indicated, but after the Member State clarification, Satisfactory assessment was given

Member State: SWE Sweden

1. Overall reporting and execution of the 2019 WP

Sweden indicated a comprehensive and satisfactory execution of the 2019 work plan with some room for improvement left for reporting of bycatch.

2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks

No issues.

3. Recreational Fisheries

No issues.

4. Anadromous, catadromous data collection in fresh water

No issues identified, except for the fact that not all planned sampling was fully achieved.

5. Impact of fisheries on marine ecosystems

Due to the way the report was structured the coverage by stratum could not be evaluated.

6. Surveys at sea

No major issues identified, one activity was misrepresented.

7. Fishing activity variables

No major issues identified, some codification inconsistencies were observed.

8. Fleet socio-economic

No major issues identified, some codification inconsistencies and some failures of collecting certain variables were observed.

9. Socio-economic for aquaculture

No issues.

10. Socio-economic for processing industry

No issues.

11. Data transmission issues

In 2019, no data transmission issues were reported for Sweden.

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