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**Chair:** Cecilia Pinto and Ralf Döring

**Proposed dates:** 27 February 2023 – 3 March 2023

### **Background provided by the Commission**

In adopting the western Mediterranean multi-annual management plan (West Med MAP), Member States agreed to implement several management measures, such as fishing effort reduction, closure areas and maximum catch limits, to secure the achievement of MSY by 1 January 2025 for all demersal stocks in the western Mediterranean.

The work of the STECF expert working group will continue building on the previous evaluations by STECF expert working groups to focus on the socio-economic aspects of the management scenarios. Building on the work done in previous EWGs of the West Med MAP (e.g. EWG 20-13, 21-13 and 22-11) and the expertise built on the preparation of the Annual Economic Report, the EWG could look at a number of key socio-economic indicators (mentioned in the TORs of EWG 22-11): including indicators related to **gross profit** and the **employment in FTE**. These are important elements for the socio-economic analyses of the MAP management measures.

*[Placeholder: Depending on data, the STECF expert working group could also look into new proposal stemming from Member States for the delineation of additional closure areas.]*

*Regarding closure areas, Article 11.1, alternatively Article 11.2, aims at protecting juveniles of European hake. All three concerned Member States adopted Article 11.3 and agreed to establish additional closure areas by 17 July 2021 and on the basis of best available scientific advice, where there is evidence of a high concentration of juvenile fish, below the minimum conservation reference size, and of spawning grounds of demersal stocks, in particular for the target stocks of the West Med MAP. In addition, France and Spain adopted in December 2020 targets of capture reductions of demersal stocks and committed to reduce between 15% and 25% the capture of juveniles and spawners in each GSA.*

*STECF PLEN 19-03, PLEN 20-01 and STECF EWG 21-01 have reviewed the proposals of closures (placement and period) submitted in 2020 and 2021 by the 3 Member States and determine their efficiency to protect juveniles of hake (as planned in Article 11.2) and juveniles and spawners of all six target demersal species included in the West Med MAP (as planned in Article 11.3).*

*However, in view of Article 11.4, the closure areas should be reviewed for Member States to update the closure areas based on STECF advice.]*

### **Request to the STECF**

#### **TOR 1.**

**TOR 1:** STECF is requested to continue the development of socio-economic indicators to be used in the evaluation of management measures for the West Med MAP in both West Med management units.

For this, it should be discussed how to further improve the estimation of current socio-economic indicators and how far a socio-economic assessment would be possible by, this could be done by conducting a scoping exercise with the development of a roadmap. STECF should investigate if in 2023 it could be feasible for the EWG to provide improved economic information on the changes in the short period (i.e., one/two years, i.e. until

2025 the legal deadline of MSY achievement) in profitability due to estimated future effort levels for trawlers.

STECF is also requested to discuss as part of the roadmap a longer-term approach to further estimate socio-economic indicators to evaluate the management measures in the West Med MAP. This includes the possibility to expand the bio-economic models to the whole area. The models should then also include a spatial component to assess distributional effects of implemented management measures. Those models should allow the socio-economic assessment of measures following from the West Med MAP and to show trade-offs between different management measures.

## **TOR 2:**

For the harmonization of the economic indicators provided by the models applied to evaluate the West Med MAP STECF is requested to:

- provide a matrix of model assumptions for the economic component of the models
- propose a list of indicators those models shall provide for the second EWG meeting in 2023.

## **TOR 3. *[depending on submission of new closure areas]***

Based on new proposals for additional closures to be submitted by Member States, EWG 23-01 is requested to review the existing closures and the proposed additional closures (i.e. terms of placement and period). In view of the objectives set in Article 11 of the West Med MAP, STECF is requested to estimate their efficiency to protect juveniles and spawning aggregations of the demersal species covered by the West Med MAP, using the models used in previous EWG for the West Med MAP. The additional closures should result in a reduction of between 15% and 25% in the total catch, if possible looking at juveniles and spawners separately, of each stock covered by the MAP. For each GSA, in case the closures proposed by Member States are not meeting this criterion, the EWG is requested to propose recommendations for designing alternative closures based on information collected during an ad-hoc contract to update MEDISEH results and based on criteria such as, but not limited to, bathymetry, depth, type of substrate, stock seasonality, establishment of a buffer area etc. STECF is also asked to comment on possible fishing effort displacement arising from the proposed additional closures. Finally, STECF is asked to conclude whether the objectives of Article 11 have been met by each concerned Member State.

## **TOR 4. *[if not feasible during the EWG, ToR would be asked again in Spring Plenary]***

In view of Article 8 of the Fishing Opportunities Regulation for Mediterranean and Black Seas for 2023 *[publication in Official Journal on 31 January 2023<sup>1</sup>]*, and based on the information collected in STECF PLEN 22-03 for ToRs 6.4 and 6.7, STECF is requested to:

- review each of the criterion listed in Article 8 and its use by the concerned Member States in 2022 and 2023;
- compare the existing temporary closures set to help the hake stocks recover and determine the optimal characteristics of temporary closures to protect hake, if possible looking in particular at spawners, in each GSA of the West Med in terms of duration of closures, bathymetry etc.;
- provide an advice on additional criteria that could speed up the recovery of hake stocks in the West Med.

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<sup>1</sup> Link to publication will be circulated after 31 January 2023