

Terms of Reference EWG 23-17 Social Data in Fisheries

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Background information

One of the objectives of the Common Fisheries Policy¹ (the CFP Regulation) is to promote social sustainability. The current legal framework refers to labour conditions, health and safety, as well as to job creation and training, social inclusion and a fair standard of living. Fisheries throughout Europe have undergone major structural changes, leading to important social consequences for both individual fishers as well as for fishing communities. In a number of fishing communities and regions of the EU, the social importance of the fisheries sector outweighs its direct economic contribution.

The collection of data for calculating the social indicators for **the EU fishing fleet and aquaculture** is required under the Data Collection Framework (Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 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 CFP). The multiannual program for data collection (EU MAP) (Decisions (EU) 2021/1167 and 2021/1168) specifies social variables to be collected every three years from 2018 onwards:

- Employment by gender;
- Full Time Employment (FTE) by gender;
- Unpaid labour by gender;
- Employment by age;
- Employment by education level;
- Employment by nationality;
- Employment by employment status;
- Total FTE National.

This data is collected within the [Annual Economic Data Call](#).

STECF Expert Working Group (EWG) 19-03 reviewed the social data in the EU fisheries sector collected under the Data Collection Framework (DCF / EU-MAP) in 2018. The [EWG 19-03](#) report provided a [comprehensive overview of the social data](#) collected under the EU MAP for the EU fishing sector on the social and demographic characteristics of the labour force both at EU and Member States level over the year 2017. It discussed potential improvements and refinements in the collection of social data in EU fisheries.

STECF EWG 20-14 was tasked with building upon the findings of EWG 19-03. The EWG was requested to further develop the methodology for:

- 1) the collection of social data in fisheries, to be applied for the collection of social data for the data call 2021
- 2) the subsequent analysis and
- 3) the use of these data.

¹ REGULATION (EU) No 1380/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 December 2013.

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Additionally, the EWG was tasked with assessing the impact of the CFP and the implementation of its Articles 5.2 (access to waters) and 16 and 17 (fishing opportunities) on the social situation of small-scale coastal fishers and their communities.

STECF [PLEN 20-03](#) concluded that if the suggestions for National and Community profiling of the fishing sector were operationalised, as recommended under EWG 20-14, this would indeed allow for more data and information to become available to implement assessments of the social impacts of fisheries management measures. The EWG 20-14 report provides a first detailed description and methodology which would enable the construction of both National and Community profiles. To further expand this deliverable, STECF concludes that there is a necessity to produce clear and unified definitions of concepts and variables used. This unification should be achieved across all bodies currently involved in the development of social indicators such as STECF, RCG ECON and ICES WGSOCIAL².

STECF [EWG 22-14](#) took the process of developing and operationalising a framework for the analysis of the social dimension of the CFP a step further. An important discussion was held on the framework, definition, method, and operationalisation of National and Community profiles. The development of these profiles, along with data collected under the EU data collection programmes, are of utmost importance, as they will constitute the backbone of the analysis of developments in the social domain of fisheries. EWG 22-14 also notes the importance of end-users and/or stakeholders' involvement in the process of developing the framework and its indicators in order to allow data collected to become useful information.

EWG 22-14 proposes two parallel actions to achieve progress in operationalising the social dimension: a) to launch a stepwise process that ensures relevance and credibility of the indicators to be developed; b) to implement short-term actions that take advantage of ongoing developments. Designing a stepwise process responds to the fact that indicators need an underlying conceptual framework.

In addition, alignment of definitions and methodology is needed across the different fora currently developing social indicators (STECF, RCG ECON and ICES WGSOCIAL) as well as across STECF reports themselves. EWG 22-14 notes that additional capacity on social science being available to STECF would facilitate this process.

² For the sake of completeness, GFCM developments should be cross-checked in this discussion.

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Building on the conclusions of STECF PLEN 23-01, STECF PLEN 23-02, EWG 22-14 and 20-14 reports, the RCG ECON 2021³ report, the national profile pilot study carried out under the FISHN'CO deliverable 3.4 (on the Netherlands), and the ad hoc contracts supporting this EWG that developed two additional national profiles (ES & DK), EWG 23-17 is requested to carry out the following tasks:

1. Provide an assessment and conclusion of the feasibility and usefulness of the three developed national fisheries profiles in delivering data and information for community profiling and fisheries management impact assessments. Based on the profiles developed, finalise a format for future national profiles.
2. In order to progress the inclusion of additional social indicators in the Annual Economic data call or a possible separate data call and making use of:
 - the national profiles created, and
 - the scoping exercise (delivered by DG MARE ahead of the EWG 23-17) with policy-makers to scope the questions that need to be answered with the data collected and determine the specific policy relevance of individual concepts and indicators,

the STECF is requested to work out a suggested process (via the following three consecutive stages) for developing social indicators (STECF EWG 22-14, section 6.2)

1. Develop a conceptual framework which positions the social indicators in the suit of fisheries indicators (ecological, environmental, economic), providing the linkage for integrative analysis and advice.
2. Implement a conceptual validation of the methodology and data proposed. Make a start with the conceptual validation, methodological and data considerations.
 - Selection of the initial set of criteria to be embedded in other ongoing activities such as the ICES WGSOCIAL systematic review and the EWG 22-14 findings under TOR 1 and 2.
3. Based on the online survey transmitted to Member States in the summer of 2023 on the transparency and criteria of allocation of fishing opportunities in each Member State⁴ under article 17 of the CFP Regulation, EWG 23-17 is requested to examine the responses from Member States. For each of the 2 topics (transparency and allocation of criteria), the EWG is requested to provide:
 - a. A detailed analysis about each national system.
 - b. Specific indications about missing information or information that does not allow a meaningful assessment of the different systems or criteria applied by Member States. These indications should be formulated as questions for Member States.
 - c. A synoptic overview of all national systems, potentially in table format.
 - d. A list of best practices (best practices being understood as practices with positive impact) or, *if best practices cannot be identified*, a list of novel practices (understood as practices that differ from traditional practices).

³ As well as 2022 report, if this is available at the time the EWG 22-14 takes place.

⁴ Article 17 concerns the coastal member states only, as only they have marine fishing fleets.