

## **STECF EWG 24-15**

### **Evaluation of work plans for data collection and data transmission issues**

**In-person meeting, 28-31 October 2024 (4 November online)**

#### **Terms of Reference (ToR)**

Chair: Christoph Stransky

MARE focal: Monika Sterczewska

JRC focal: Zeynep Hekim

### **Background**

Article 6 of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017<sup>1</sup> requires the Member States to submit to the Commission a national Work Plan (WP) for approval. It requires the Commission to request STECF to evaluate the WPs prior to their approval.

Article 9 of the DCF Regulation (EU) 1004/2017 allows the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) to submit to the Commission regional Work Plans (RWP) for approval. It requires the Commission to request STECF to evaluate the RWPs prior to their approval.

Article 11 of the DCF Regulation (EU) 1004/2017 requires the 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 the coverage and quality of the data collected by the Member States.

Following the STECF request for IT tools to facilitate the WP evaluation, the Commission launched a project to develop a dedicated DCF IT platform for drafting, submitting and assessing the WPs and ARs. The IT platform will be used on a voluntary basis by Member States to submit their WP for evaluation by EWG 24-15.

EWG 24-15 will report the findings to the plenary meeting of the STECF, which will take place 11-15 November 2024. EWG 24-15 will evaluate:

- 1) (new or revised) WPs 2025-2027 submitted by at least 21 Member States in the traditional manual way and through the IT platform; prescreened by ad-hoc experts,

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 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. [\(consolidated version of 14.07.2021\)](#)

- 2) the data transmission issues (DTi) uploaded on the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT):
  - a. 1 high-severity data transmission issues from the 2024 Fleet Economics data call (EWG 24-03 and EWG 24-07), and
  - b. 157 medium- and low-severity issues from 2023 data calls (Med&BS EWG 23-09 and EWG 23-12, FDI EWG 23-10, Processing EWG 23-14, ICES, IOTC, ICCAT).

The number of submitted WPs (at least 21) will be confirmed on 16 October, as the submission deadline is 15 October 2024.

## **Request to EWG 24-15**

EWG 24-15 is requested to:

### **ToR 1: Evaluate the (revised) WPs 2025-2027 and their link to RWPs**

Experts are requested to evaluate the WPs submitted by Member States, in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004, considering:

- the consistency of national WPs with regional WPs, as published on RCG/DCF websites (and uploaded in the IT platform)
- the conformity of the WPs with the contents of Articles 6 and 9 of the DCF Regulation, and with the EU MAP from 2022 onwards,
- the scientific relevance of the data covered by the WPs for the purposes laid down in Article 1(1) of the DCF Regulation, and the quality of the proposed methods and procedures,
- the conformity with the format and guidelines on the WP template (for the national WPs).

The experts shall summarise the evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027 per MS and region. The experts should pay particular attention if the Member States considered the comments provided by STECF EWG 21-17 and the Commission during the WP 2022-2024(2027) assessment, as well as the STECF assessment of the WP amendments (EWG 22-18, EWG 23-16), and of AR (EWG 23-08, EWG 24-08). They should also verify if remaining 2017-2019 pilot studies have been integrated to regular data collection where appropriate.

Prior to the EWG 24-15 meeting, a pre-screening of Member States' ARs will be undertaken through a series of ad-hoc contracts. The pre-screeners will use the grid for the evaluation of WPs and the guidance for AR evaluators. The pre-screeners may comment and propose amendments to the grid and guidance which in turn should be considered by EWG 24-15 before the WP evaluation starts.

Pre-screeners will signal issues that can be fixed by the Member States before the EWG 24-15 starts. The Member States will provide explanations and resubmit the WPs if necessary at the latest on the first day of EWG 24-15. The Commission may address additional requests to EWG 24-15 in relation to specific issues that arise from the pre-screening exercise.

During the EWG 24-15, the experts will communicate to the Member States outstanding issues that require clarification and/or resubmission. The Member States will provide explanations and resubmit the WPs if necessary. The communication will be streamlined in a dedicated feedback table, provided in Teams by the Commission. For Member States that submit their WP in the IT platform, the feedback should be also communicated via comments in the platform.

The experts will use the evaluation grid (background document 2). They should use clear and neutral language in the evaluation for self-explanatory and fact-based comments. The comments must be aligned among sections and Member States, i.e. similar issues must be assessed and summarised in a similar way. More guidance is included in the stand-alone document of assessment criteria (background document 3), and in the guidelines on the WP/AR templates (background document 4).

The experts should pay particular attention that the submitted national WPs:

- address the issues raised in the assessment grids during past evaluations
- address the issues raised in COM assessment grids
- consider recommendations from end users, RCGs and STECF

**ToR 2: Evaluate high-severity DTi from the 2024 Fleet Economics data call (EWG 24-03 and EWG 24-07) and medium- and low-severity issues from 2023 data calls**

Following EWG 24-08, the MS were requested to take actions on medium- and low-severity 2023 DT issues, and report on these actions in the DTMT.

As a result, EWG 24-15 is requested to evaluate the high-severity issues from:

- the 2024 Fleet Economics data call (EWG 24-03 and EWG 24-07) recorded in the DTMT (1 issue reported), and
- the medium- and low-severity issues from 2023 data calls (Med&BS EWG 23-09 and EWG 23-12, FDI EWG 23-10, Processing EWG 23-14, ICES, IOTC, ICCAT) where MS should have taken actions (157 issues reported).

The DTMT guidelines with a decision tree must be used for the evaluation; the experts may agree to further modify the guidance if necessary. All changes to the guidance must be documented for future reference in a separate electronic annex. The DTMT table and guidance have been modified in 2024, to better capture the follow-up that Member States undertake to address the recorded issues.

### **Tor 3: Test and provide input on the DCF IT platform**

In 2021, the Commission initiated an IT project to build a DCF IT platform for submitting and evaluating the WPs and the ARs. Throughout 2024, the IT platform was tested for AR and WP submission by a group of users from several Member States, and in November 2024, it will be deployed in the production environment. The Commission intends to further test the use of the platform during the real assessment cycle, involving the STECF experts, and requests EWG 24-15 to participate in this exercise and to provide feedback on the experience. In parallel to the traditional communication channels, the experts should use the platform to comment on WPs, and the Members States should address these comments and try updating their WPs through the platform.

### **EWG 24-15 report**

The EWG should produce a Word document with general explanations and an Excel file with the assessment grid and comments of each WP. The Word document should include an overview of the assessment and overall evaluation of the Work Plans (horizontal issues, spanning many MS/ sea basins):

- 1) per Member State (National Work Plans):
  - a) an evaluation of the WP content (compliance with DCF Regulation, EU MAP and end user needs); in particular, integration of pilot study results in the regular data collection and the follow-up on STECF and COM comments from previous evaluations,
  - b) conclusions from the consistency check with all relevant regional work plans,
  - c) conclusions from the format check (template guidelines) in general and per WP section;
- 2) a summary of the evolution in national WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027, per MS and per region;
- 3) regarding Data Transmission issues (DTi):
  - a) an evaluation of Member State performance (main and recurring issues) by Member State, complimentary to and following EWG 24-08 findings,
  - b) an evaluation of Member States' responses via the DTMT online platform to issues raised by end users of scientific advice. EWG 24-15 is requested to evaluate DTi, and close issues which have been clarified and require no further action,
  - c) in the evaluation of high-severity (fleet economics) issues, identify the comments which require a reaction from Member State (draft a summary list).
- 4) At EU level:
  - a) a feedback on the DCF IT platform testing.

## Background documents

### For WP assessment ToR 1:

- 1) WP 2025-2027 submitted by the MS and RWPs 2025-2027 submitted by RCGs (folder 01)
- 2) WP evaluation grid (as used by EWG 23-16)
- 3) Stand-alone document for WP evaluation (approved by EWG 21-17: <https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/d/dcf/wp-assessment-instructions-for-evaluators> )
- 4) Guidance on WP/AR templates (COM Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39, updated September 2024 online: [https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/wps-and-ars/wpar-templates\\_en](https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/wps-and-ars/wpar-templates_en) )
- 5) 2021 COM assessment grids (folder 02)

### For DTi assessment ToR 2:

- 6) [https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/d/dcf/dtmt-guidance-version\\_2024-06-03](https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/d/dcf/dtmt-guidance-version_2024-06-03)
- 7) DT issues recorded in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool: [https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/dtmt\\_en](https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/dtmt_en) (Excel export file will be provided)
- 8) STECF EWG 24-03 and EWG 24-07 report (Annual Economic Report)

### For DCF platform ToR 3:

- 9) <https://acceptance.work-plans-reports.dcf.ec.europa.eu/work-plans>

### Additional background documents:

The experts should consider relevant assessment files from previous STECF EWGs, including STECF EWG 21-17 (WP), EWG 22-18 (WP), EWG 23-08 (AR), EWG 23-16 (WP), EWG 24-08 (AR).

The experts may also consult previous WPs and ARs:

[https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/wps-and-ars/work-plans\\_en](https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/wps-and-ars/work-plans_en)  
[https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/wps-and-ars/annual-reports\\_en](https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/wps-and-ars/annual-reports_en)

and other relevant documents (e.g. ICES reports for meetings relating to the relevant data calls, Liaison Meeting and RCG recommendations etc.)