Terms of Reference for the EWG 26-11

Assessment of balance indicators for fleet segments and review of national reports on Member States' efforts to achieve balance between their fleet capacity and the available fishing opportunities

The Commission requests that an analysis of balance between fleet capacity and fishing opportunity be made using a standard approach across all EU fleet segments, based on DCF information and in line with the Commission Guidelines COM(2014) 545 final[1] and COM(2025) 798 final[2]. Where possible, evaluation should use data reference years 2011 to 2025.

An Expert group of the STECF (co-chairs, John Casey, Fabio Grati), EWG 26-11, will be convened from 28 September to 2 October 2026 to undertake the following tasks and report to the STECF.

The STECF EWG is requested to:

1. Based on the data submitted by Member States under the 2026 DCF Economic data call and the most recent assessments and advice from relevant scientific bodies on stock status and their exploitation rates, **compute values for the technical, economic and biological indicators specified in the European Commission Guidelines.**

   JRC will provide tabulated values for all indicators as detailed in items i) to vi) below, covering all Member State fleet segments wherever the necessary data are available.

   Values for the following indicators to be provided as specified in the 2014 and 2025 Balance Indicator Guidelines:
   (i) Sustainable harvest indicator (SHI)
   (ii) Stocks at risk indicator (SAR)
   (iii) Return on investment (ROI) and/or Return on Fixed Tangible Assets (RoFTA)
   (iv) Ratio between current revenue and break-even revenue (CR/BER)
   (v) The inactive fleet indicators
   (vi) The vessel use indicator

   For fleet segments for which the indicator values can be calculated, the Expert group is requested to present the trend over the last 5/6-year period.

2. **Provide country chapters containing the following information for each Member State**, **in order to allow the STECF to issue an informed advice both as regard the balance situation of the fleet segments and concerning the quality of the assessment provided by the Member States in their national fleet reports and, where relevant, action plans**:

   a) Based on the biological, economic or technical indicator values and their recent trends as computed under task 1, provide an overview of whether, according to the Commission Guidelines (COM (2014) 545) fleet segments can be considered in or out of balance with their fishing opportunities.

      i) For each Member State, the overview should include a summary table indicating: i) the total number of fleet segments assessed and the total number of vessels concerned; ii) the number of fleet segments considered to be in balance and the corresponding number of vessels and; iii) where relevant, the number of fleet

[1] COM (2014) 545 final. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Guidelines for the analysis of the balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities according to Art 22 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy.

[2] COM(2025) 798 final. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. Guidelines for the analysis of the balance between fishing capacity and fishing opportunities according to Art 22 of Regulation (EU) No 1380/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council on the Common Fisheries Policy.

segments for which no assessment could be made due to missing or insufficient information and the corresponding number of vessels.

ii) For each Member State, provide a concise summary of the balance situation at national level, indicating, on the basis of the assessment under task 1, how many fleet segments and vessels are considered to be in balance, out of balance, or not assessable. The summary should clearly distinguish between fleet segments identified as out of balance on the basis of biological, economic and technical indicators, respectively.

iii) Where a Member State considers that a fleet segment is in balance with its fishing opportunities, despite one or more indicators computed under task 1 suggesting otherwise, review the arguments and supporting evidence provided by the Member State in support of that conclusion. The Expert group is requested to assess whether such arguments and supporting information are sufficiently substantiated, coherent with the available data and consistent with the Commission guidelines. Where appropriate, the Expert group should provide comments on the robustness, plausibility and limitations of the justification provided, and indicate whether it considers that the Member State's conclusion is adequately supported.

iv) Where a Member State departs from the balance assessment that would result from a strict reading of the indicator values under the Commission guidelines, indicate clearly for each fleet segment concerned:
   a. The indicator(s) pointing to a potential imbalance;
   b. The Member State's conclusion as reported in the national fleet report;
   c. The justification provided by the Member State; and
   d. The EWG's view on whether the justification is supported by the evidence provided.

v) Provide for the Union as a whole, a summary overview aggregating the Member State assessments, indicating the total number of fleet segments assessed and the total number of vessels concerned, as well as the number of fleet segments and vessels considered to be in balance, out of balance, or not assessable. Where possible, this overview should also distinguish between imbalances identified on the basis of biological, economic and technical indicators.

b) For each fleet segment, compare the biological, economic or technical indicator values as computed under task 1 with the equivalent values and trends in the fleet reports submitted by the Member State under Article 22.2 and 22.3 of Regulation (EU) 1380/2013. Highlight any discrepancies between the Member State's assessment of balance between capacity and fishing opportunities and the Expert group's assessment based on the indicator values computed under task 1. Where possible, identify the reasons for such discrepancies.

c) Assess whether the analysis of balance between fleet capacity and fishing opportunities in the latest fleet report submitted by the Member State under Article 22.2 and 22.3 of Regulation (EU) 1380/2013 is based on DCF information in accordance with the Commission's Guidelines COM(2014) 545 final and COM(2025) 798 final.

d) Evaluate whether any discrepancies between the STECF assessment of the balance between capacity and fishing opportunities relating to the Member States's previous fleet report have been appropriately addressed in the latest fleet report.

e) Advise as to whether the report identifies structural overcapacity and estimates the long-term profitability by fleet segment.

f) Advise on whether the new or revised action plans submitted with the latest fleet reports set out the adjustment targets and tools to achieve a balance and a clear timeframe for its implementation.

g) Identify the number of vessels targeted by each action plan.

h) Provide a summary overview of the action plans (AP) currently implemented by each Member State. The overview should include the year each AP was launched, if it is a renewal or a new one and identify the changes between the current AP and its previous version. The number of fleet segments and their respective vessels concerned should be identified.

3. **For each Member State, the Expert group is requested to list in the Annex to its report those fleet segments that according to the most updated set of data (2017 or later if available) for**

either i) the SHI or ii) the SAR, as computed by the STECF, were indicated to be out of balance with their fishing opportunities together with the fish stocks on which such segments rely and the fishing area to which such segments are attributed. Separate lists should be provided for each indicator. The fish stocks on which a fleet segment is reliant shall be determined by ranking the landings from all stocks caught by that fleet segment in descending order in terms of landings value and listing those stocks that account for at least 75% of the total value of the landings by that fleet segment. The area to which a fleet segment is attributed shall be given as FAO area 27, FAO area 37 and for other fishing regions (OFR).

4. **To list for the Outermost Regions of France (Reunion, French Guiana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Saint-Martin and Mayotte), Portugal (Madeira and Azores) and Spain (Canary Islands), those fleet segments that according to the most updated set of data (2019 or later if available) for either the biological, economic or technical indicators in the Commission Guidelines, as computed by the STECF, were indicated to be out of balance with their fishing opportunities.** The list should contain information on the fish stocks on which such segments rely and the fishing area to which such segments are attributed. Separate lists should be provided for each indicator. The fish stocks on which a fleet segment is reliant shall be determined by ranking the landings from all stocks caught by that fleet segment in descending order in terms of landings value and listing those stocks that account for at least 75% of the total value of the landings by that fleet segment. The Expert group is furthermore requested to provide a list of the fleet segments for which information available does not allow to calculate the above indicators and to indicate for which indicators what kind of information was not available.
5. **Provide summary tables and associated text for the fleets in the Outermost Regions**, as provided by the STECF 25-03.