

STECF EWG 26-15

Evaluation of work plans for data collection and data transmission issues

online meeting, 26-30 October 2026

Terms of Reference (ToR)

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Background

The Commission requests the STECF to evaluate DCF work plans (WPs) and their amendments, prior to their approval¹.

In January 2025, the Commission deployed a dedicated DCF IT platform for drafting, submitting and assessing the WPs and annual reports (ARs). The IT platform will be used on a mandatory basis by Member States to submit their amended WP and by Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs) to submit their regional WPs (RWPs) for evaluation by the EWG 26-15.

The EWG 26-15 will report the findings to the plenary meeting of the STECF, which will take place 9-13 November 2026. The EWG 26-15 will evaluate:

- 1) amended WPs 2027 and RWPs 2028-2030
- 2) the data transmission issues (DTi) uploaded on the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT)

xx medium and low severity issues from 2025 data calls (Med&BS EWG 25-09 and EWG 25-11, FDI EWG 25-10, Processing EWG 25-15, Social EWG 25-13, ICES, IOTC, ICCAT). There are also high-severity issues from the 2025 social data call and from IOTC; these issues have been recorded in the DTMT after EWG 26-08 and must be assessed by EWG 26-15.

The number of submitted WPs will be confirmed on 16 October, as the submission deadline is 15 October 2026.

¹ The legal base for the process is set in articles 6, 9 and 11 of 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](#)).

Request to the EWG 26-15

The EWG 26-15 is requested to:

ToR 1: Evaluate the amended WPs 2027 and the RWPs 2028-2030

Experts are requested to evaluate the amended WPs 2027 submitted by Member States and the RWPs 2028-2030 submitted by the Regional Coordination Groups, in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004, considering:

- the consistency of national WPs (NWP 2027) with regional WPs (RWP 2025-2027), as published on RCG/DCF websites (and uploaded in the IT platform)
- the conformity of the national and regional 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 national and regional 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 – mostly covered by validation in the DCF IT platform (for the national WPs, as the RWP have no official template).

The experts should pay particular attention if the Member States considered the comments provided by the STECF EWG 24-15 and EWG 25-17 evaluating the WPs 2025-2027 and WPs 2026-2027, the comments on AR evaluations (EWG 23-08, EWG 24-08, EWG 25-08, EWG 26-07), and the DTMT comments on gaps in data collection.

During the EWG 26-15, the experts may 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 through the IT platform. The exchanges with the RCGs will take place after the EWG 26-15.

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 comments on data transmission issues concerning the data collection
- consider recommendations from end users, RCGs and STECF

ToR 2: Evaluate issues from 2025 data calls

Following the EWG 26-07, the Member States were requested to take actions on medium and low 2025 DT issues, and report on these actions in the DTMT. Additionally, some 2025 social data issues and ICCAT issues were recorded in the DTMT after the EWG 26-07.

As a result, the EWG 26-15 is requested to evaluate the outstanding issues from 2025 data calls (Med&BS EWG 25-09 and EWG 25-11, FDI EWG 25-10, Processing EWG 25-15, Social EWG 25-13, ICES, IOTC, ICCAT) where MS should have taken actions (xx issues reported).

The DTMT guidelines version 2026-03-09 with a decision tree must be used for the evaluation; the experts may agree to further modify the guidance if necessary. Any proposed changes to guidance must be documented for future reference in a separate electronic annex.

The experts are requested to use the DTMT guidelines for the evaluation, and to encode the assessment into the DTMT (the credentials will be provided by the JRC focal).

Tor 3: Trial evaluating quality annexes using the new assessment criteria and guidance

Since 2022, Member States submit quality annexes with their work plans, describing quality aspects of their data collection strategies. So far, these annexes have been evaluated for completeness, without a thorough analysis of the content quality.

The EWG 25-16 recommended to set up ad hoc contracts during spring 2026 to develop the quality evaluation guidelines for the annexes. They suggested a two-fold approach, first focusing on annexes included in the regional work plans 2025-2027, in view of the RWP 2028-2030 submission in October 2026.

Several experts working under ad hoc contracts in May prepared a first draft of STECF evaluation guidelines that were presented to the EWG 26-07 evaluating the annual reports in June. After consultation in RCGs and NC meetings, the guidelines and criteria are now ready to be applied to the first batch of quality annexes. EWG 26-15 is requested to evaluate the following sets of annexes:

- RWP annexes: all submitted annexes for RWP 2028-2030
- NWP annexes: at least 30% of annexes to WP 2025-2027 (updated in 2025 and 2026 for some Member States), distributed across all regions and subjects. A table below quantifies the annexes per Member States and subject. The internationally coordinated surveys and references to regional WP annexes are accounted for in the International column, and should be excluded from the NWP test evaluation:

	MS total	commer- cial	survey s	diadrom- ous	recreational	socioeconomic	International
Aut	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bel	13	2	1	4	3	3	0
Bgr	8	2	2	0	1	3	0
Cyp	18	12	0	0	2	4	1
Cze	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Deu	35	6	4	7	4	14	11
Dnk	24	4	3	7	3	7	0
Esp	73	23	13	30	2	5	6
Est	16	4	2	7	1	2	5
Fin	29	5	1	14	1	8	1
Fra	45	17	5	7	3	13	7
Grc	13	2	1	2	2	6	2
Hrv	14	3	1	3	2	5	3
Hun	8	0	0	0	0	8	0
Irl	46	20	5	12	5	4	7
Ita	23	5	3	3	2	10	3
Ltu	22	6	2	6	1	7	8
Lva	42	12	7	17	2	4	7
Mlt	9	3	0	0	1	5	3
NLd	28	10	7	4	1	6	1
Pol	18	2	1	8	4	3	8
Prt	42	24	4	5	7	2	5
ROU	8	3	0	0	2	3	4
SVN	8	2	2	0	1	3	3
SWE	35	5	8	12	5	5	8
Sub total	484	172	72	148	55	130	93
Total	577						

Tor 4: Follow up on EWG 26-07 recommendations

The EWG 26-07 recommended some improvements in the WP/AR evaluation cycle (background document 11&12). These recommendations were reviewed and endorsed by STECF 2026-02 plenary. DG MARE provided comments to these background documents. EWG 26-15 experts are requested to revise the proposals and propose modifications to the evaluation process and guidelines accordingly where necessary. The modified evaluation guidelines can be used as of new 2028-2030 cycle.

The EWG 26-15 is also requested to reflect on adding new codes for the WP template:

- 1) Table 2.2 column 'Biological variable', values 'genetic profile' and 'trophic relations', to enable specifying more detailed planning of metagenomic and stomach sampling in the

biological data collection. If stomach sampling planning is included in Table 2.2, it may lead to discarding Table 4.1 for the future planning cycle.

- 2) Table 2.3 column 'Diadromous variable', values 'landings' and 'releases', as requested by ICES WGEEL in September 2026.

Tor 5: Provide input on the DCF IT platform

Since January 2025, the DCF IT platform for submitting and evaluating the WPs and the ARs is used for the WP/AR submission and evaluation process. The experts as platform users are requested to file their feedback on the encountered problems and on possible improvements.

Another technical consideration is the potential alignment of the Master Code List and the drop-down lists in the WP/AR template with the updated close list values used for validation in the platform, in particular the non-mandatory research survey names or the research activities. The experts are requested to discuss next steps.

EWG 26-15 report

The EWG report should contain general sections on each ToR and electronic annexes. The file with assessment grids and comments on each WP should be an electronic annex. Other electronic annexes may contain draft guidelines, quality annex evaluations, the recommendations for future WP/AR evaluation groups etc. The report should include:

- 1) per Member State (National Work Plans):
 - a) an evaluation of the WP amended content (compliance with DCF Regulation, EU MAP and end user needs); in particular, the follow-up on STECF and COM comments from previous evaluations,
 - b) conclusions from the consistency check with relevant regional work plans for the amendments,
 - c) conclusions from the format check (template guidelines) in general and per WP section;
- 2) per Member State (Quality annexes 2025-2027):
 - a) an evaluation of quality annexes according to the agreed criteria and guidelines.
- 3) per Member State (data transmission issues):
 - a) an evaluation of Member State performance (main and recurring issues) by Member State, complimentary to and following the EWG 25-08 findings. The report section must reflect the fact that some 2025 data transmission issues have already been evaluated by the EWG 26-07 and are out of scope for the current exercise.
 - b) an evaluation of Member States' responses via the DTMT online platform to issues raised by end users of scientific advice. The EWG 26-15 is requested to evaluate DTi, and close issues which have been clarified and require no further action,

- 4) per region (Regional Work Plans):
 - a) an evaluation of the planned regional coordination in research surveys and other data collection activities
 - b) an evaluation of quality annexes according to the agreed criteria and guidelines.

- 5) at EU level:
 - a) EWG final proposal on guidelines and templates
 - b) a feedback on the DCF IT platform
 - c) EWG recommendations for AR evaluation group (follow up on EWG 26-07).

Background documents

For WP assessment ToR 1:

- 1) amended WP 2027 submitted by the MS and RWPs 2028-2030 submitted by RCGs (folder 01 if not submitted through the platform) <https://work-plans-reports.dcf.ec.europa.eu/work-plans>
- 2) WP evaluation grid (as used by EWG 24-15)
- 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 November 2025 online: https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/wps-and-ars/wpar-templates_en)

For DTi assessment ToR 2:

- 5) https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/d/dcf/dtmt-guidance-version_2026-03-09
- 6) DT issues recorded in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool: https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/dtmt_en (Excel export file will be provided)

For quality annex evaluation ToR 3:

- 7) Quality annexes to WP 2025-2027 in the DCF platform <https://work-plans-reports.dcf.ec.europa.eu/work-plans>
- 8) Quality annexes to RWP 2028-2030 in the DCF platform <https://work-plans-reports.dcf.ec.europa.eu/work-plans>
- 9) Evaluation criteria and guidelines from ad hoc contracts as presented to EWG 26-07
- 10) EWG 26-07 report sections and annexes on quality annex evaluation

For WP/AR evaluation guidelines and other EWG-to-EWG recommendations ToR 4:

- 11) EWG 26-07 annexes 3 and 4 – recommendations from SG2&3 with MARE comments
- 12) EWG 26-07 annex 2 – recommendation table

For DCF platform ToR 5:

- 13) <https://work-plans-reports.dcf.ec.europa.eu/work-plans>
- 14) Expert log – internal document

Additional background documents:

The experts should consider relevant assessment files from previous STECF EWGs, including EWG 24-15 (WP), EWG 24-08 (AR), EWG 25-08 (AR), EWG 26-07 (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/annual-reports_en

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