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Evaluation of work plans for data collection and data transmission issues (STECF 24-15)

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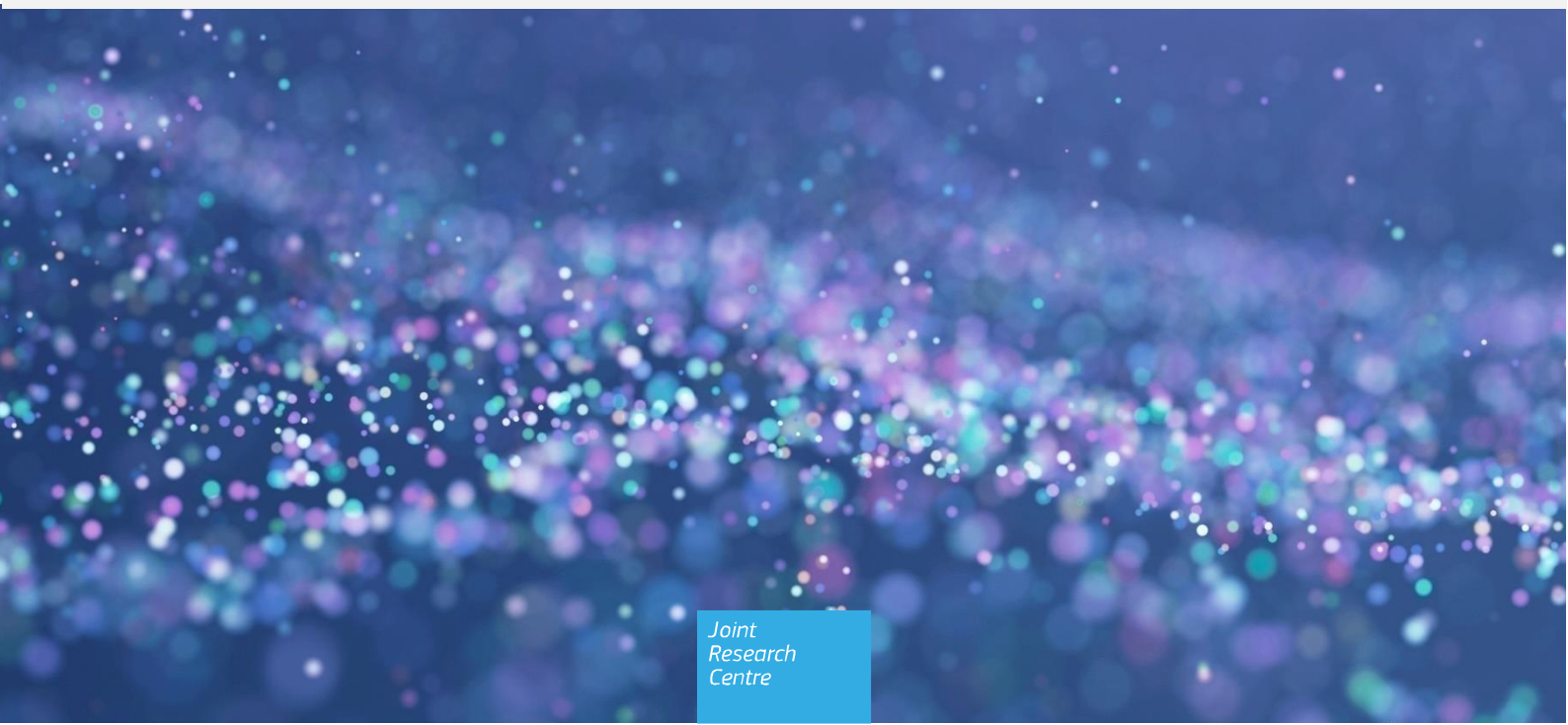

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Abstract

Commission Decision of 25 February 2016 setting up a Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries, C (2016) 1084, OJ C 74, 26.2.2016, p. 4–10. The Commission may consult the group on any matter relating to marine and fisheries biology, fishing gear technology, fisheries economics, fisheries governance, ecosystem effects of fisheries, aquaculture or similar disciplines. This report on the evaluation of work plans has been reviewed by STECF during the 2024 winter plenary meeting.

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STECF Report on EWG 24-15 Evaluation of work plans for data collection and data transmission issues (STECF-24-15)

Request to the STECF

STECF is requested to review the report of the STECF Expert Working Group meeting, evaluate the findings and make any appropriate comments and recommendations.

The following topics are particularly pertinent for DG MARE:

1) MS follow-up in new work plans on RCG recommendations, previous STECF evaluations (WP, AR, DT)
2) Evolution of MS work plans compared to 2022-2024, also including policy development (e.g. Marine Action Plan) and integration of previous pilot studies, if not done until 2024.
3) Integration of regional WP into national WP: observed progress towards more coordinated data collection to satisfy end-user needs, recommendations for improvement

STECF comments

STECF notes that EWG 24-15 met in Brussels from 28 to 31 October 2024 and virtually on 4 November 2024 to:

- evaluate the Member States national Work Plans (WP) and their link to the Regional Work Plans (RWP), under the Data Collection Framework (DCF) for the years 2025-2027,
- evaluate high-severity Data Transmission issues (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, uploaded on the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT),
- test and provide input on the DCF IT platform.

STECF considers that the EWG adequately addressed the TORs and has the following specific comments on the ToRs.

1. Evaluation of Member States' national WPs and their link to the RWPs

STECF notes that 24 Member States submitted their national WP for 2025-2027, of which 20 were new WPs and 4 revised WPs.

STECF notes that prior to the EWG, all national WPs were pre-screened through a series of ad-hoc contracts and a so-called ping-pong information exchange was conducted between DG MARE and the Member States as in previous years. Member States were requested to reply to the issues identified by the EWG experts during the meeting and after the third round of this ping-pong process (including the pre-screening), issues identified in 16 national WPs were unsolved by the end of the meeting, leaving those issues to be re-assessed during the STECF plenary meeting (PLEN 24-03).

STECF notes that 15 out of 16 Member States provided feedback on the outstanding issues and/or resubmitted their national WP by the end of the STECF plenary meeting. The final cross-check of the outstanding issues by the STECF plenary, in cooperation with DG MARE, resulted in that minor issues remained unresolved in eight WPs at the end of the STECF plenary. Some of these issues require bilateral communication between the Commission and Member States to be resolved. STECF notes that the evaluation sheets (so-called assessment grids) and guidance for evaluators developed by STECF during 2020-2022 were used for the evaluation. The detailed outcomes of the evaluations by each Member State were reported in the evaluation sheets (assessment grids) to keep track of the adjustments and comments made during the multiannual WP evaluation process.

STECF observes that effort has been made to further refine the national WP templates, WP guidelines and assessment grid for future WP evaluations and/or submissions, e.g. the EWG agreed to amendment the guidance to specify that table 2.1 ('List of required species/stocks') only refers to commercial sampling and that in table 2.5 ('Sampling plan description for biological data') an 'out-of-frame' row must be provided for each Sampling scheme identifier. STECF observes that the proposed revised assessment grid is available in the electronic annexes of the EWG report and reflects e.g. the addition of a consistency check between the sampling scheme identifiers in the tables and the quality annexes and the option to include additional comments.

STECF observes that during the evaluation of the national WPs, the EWG was also asked to check the consistency of the national WPs with the regional WPs (RWPs) and to verify the alignment with the Marine Action Plan objectives regarding the by-catch of sensitive species and impact of fishing on the seabed.

STECF observes that the EWG identified discrepancies between RWPs and national WPs, and emphasized that in case of an error in the RWP, it should not be transferred to the national WP. Instead, the inconsistency with the RWP should be clarified with a comment in the national WP and the error in the RWP should be addressed by the respective RCG. The EWG also noted a common issue in several national WPs regarding references to specific tables that do not exist in the RWPs.

STECF observes that although five out of six RWPs are formally approved by STECF, the EWG still identified inconsistencies in the RWPs. A frequently occurring issue is the incorrect application of the threshold rules for not sampling when a Member State has no landings or catches of a species.

STECF observes that the EWG conducted a cross-check of the references to the Marine action plan in the national WPs and asked the Member State to provide the reference if it was missing in the national WP.

STECF observes that the EWG was asked to assess the progress compared to the previous national WP submissions, including how effectively the issues identified in past evaluations have been addressed, whether test studies have now been integrated into the regular sampling programmes and if RCG/end-user recommendations have been followed.

STECF notes that the EWG provided an overview of the main changes in national WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027 per Member State and section of the WP, along with comments on those changes. The EWG used the Member States summaries of the changes and amendments in the national WPs to compile those overviews. However, STECF observes

that, due to the lack of a standardized approach, the level of detail and focus in the overviews of the Member States varies widely and hampers the assessment of the progress.

STECF observes that the EWG did not address the follow-up on RCG recommendations in the national WPs. STECF notes that, unlike in the AR template, the WP template does not include a table for Member States to document follow-up actions, as those recommendations are incorporated in the RWPs and do not often require multiannual follow-up.

2. Evaluation of Data Transmission issues (DTi)

STECF observes that the EWG evaluated one high-severity DTi from the 2024 Fleet Economics data call (EWG 24-03 and 24-07), and 157 medium- and low-severity DTis from the data calls in 2023 (49 issues from the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES), 8 issues from Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC), 32 issues from Fisheries Independent Information (FDI), 52 issues from Mediterranean and Black Sea (Med&BS) and 16 issues from processing industry).

STECF notes that 5 DTis related to the ICES data calls, were assessed as 'Follow-up needed,' with DG MARE appointed as the 'Follow up responsible', following the updated DTMT guidance and decision tree (version March 2024). 33 DTis were assessed as 'Unsatisfactory' and 52 as 'Unsatisfactory-to be revised', of which the majority is related to the IOTC and Med&BS data call.

STECF notes that the high-severity DTis lacked a response from the Member States and was therefore assessed as 'Unsatisfactory'.

STECF notes that the additional time allocated in the new DTMT assessment cycle for end users to provide feedback on the responses provided by Member States, resulted in end user feedback for the DTis, related to the FDI data call, Mediterranean and Black Sea data call and the processing industry call. STECF notes that the feedback facilitated the assessments.

STECF observes that the EWG suggested amending the DTMT Guidance document to clarify that when a DTi is assessed as 'Unsatisfactory', a 'Follow up responsible', should not be assigned, as this closes the issue.

3. DCF IT platform

STECF observes that although submission via the platform was optional, the majority of the Member States successfully submitted their national WP to the DCF IT platform before the pre-screening and during the EWG meeting. STECF notes that the EWG acknowledges the great progress in functionality of the DCF IT platform, which resulted in fewer editing errors compared to traditional submissions in previous years.

STECF observes that the use of the DCF IT platform in the pre-screening process resulted in faster and more comprehensive issue identification. However, the ability to assign comments to specific parts in the text or to multiple cells, rows or columns at once would further enhance the process.

STECF observes that the DCF IT platform was also tested in relation to the EWG assessments and communication with MS for 2 national WPs.

STECF observes that the EWG provided suggestions for the improvement of the cross-checking rules within the DCF IT platform.

STECF conclusions

STECF endorses the outcomes of EWG 24-15 presented during STECF PLEN 24-03 and concludes that all ToRs were appropriately addressed.

STECF concludes that the extended ping-pong evaluation process (i.e. communication of issues with the WP between DG MARE and Member States), consisting of four cycles, extended into the STECF plenary meeting which caused additional work during the plenary meeting, but will benefit future AR evaluations.

STECF concludes that there is a need for guidance on the level of detail required in the summaries of the Member States regarding changes in the WPs, as this information is used to assess the progress of Member States WPs compared to previous submissions.

STECF concludes that the follow-up on RCG recommendations by Member States in the WPs was not addressed and cannot be easily verified, as there is no documentation reflecting follow-up actions by the Member States. For this reason, STECF concludes that this documentation should be requested in future WP submissions.

The EWG provided suggestions for improving the WP templates, WP guidelines and assessment grid used. STECF concludes that these should be considered in future WP submissions and evaluations.

STECF concludes that a comprehensive operational test of the DCF IT-platform was conducted for the first time, demonstrating its valuable functionality in enabling faster error detection during the submission and evaluation of the WPs. However, the functionality of adding and saving comments could still be improved.

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REPORT TO THE STECF

EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON
Evaluation of work plans for data collection and data transmission issues
(EWG-24-15)

28-31 October 2024, Brussels and 4 November 2024, virtual

This report does not necessarily reflect the view of the STECF and the European Commission and in no way anticipates the Commission's future policy in this area

1 INTRODUCTION

The STECF Expert Working Group (EWG) 24-15 met in Brussels from 28 to 31 October 2024 and virtually on 4 November 2024 to (i) evaluate Member States' (MS) national Work Plans (WP) 2025-2027 under the Data Collection Framework (DCF), (ii) evaluate Data Transmission issues (DTi), (iii) comment on the DCF IT platform.

The work was conducted by 28 independent experts (see the list of participants in section 6). The Terms of Reference are given below.

1.1 Terms of Reference for EWG 24-15

Background

Article 6 of the Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017 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,

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, complementary 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)

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

7) DT issues recorded in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool: 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/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.)

2 EVALUATION OF MEMBER STATES' WORK PLANS 2025-2027

2.1 Background information

To carry out the evaluation, the EWG was provided with the Work Plan (WP) tables and WP text (boxes) of the 24 MS which submitted WPs for 2025-2027 (except Austria and Slovakia). The EWG used various supporting information such as relevant EWG reports, guidelines and templates, see ToRs above.

2.2 Pre-screening

As in previous years when a new set of WPs was submitted (e.g. in Oct 2021 for the 2022-2024 period), all WPs were subject of thorough pre-screening performed by a group of ad-hoc experts. The pre-screening comments were sent to MS on 22 Oct 2024 with a deadline of providing responses and revised WP tables/text (where necessary) by 28 Oct 2024, i.e. the first day of the EWG 24-15.

The preparatory work by the pre-screeners was an enormous help to the evaluation process. The MSs who resubmitted their WP based on the pre-screening, generally tried to address the comments and recommendations from the pre-screening. However, not all MSs provided a supplementary information on how the pre-screeners comments were dealt with. In future, the evaluation would benefit from such information to identify how the comments were processed.

2.3 Evaluation criteria, assessment grid and procedures

The EWG used the evaluation sheets (assessment grids) and guidance for evaluators developed by STECF during 2020-2022 (mainly within the EWG 20-18).

2.4 Sub-groups and task allocation

The evaluation of WPs was split by sub-groups and experts were allocated to each sub-group according to their expertise. Each sub-group was tasked with the assessment of particular sections of the WP according to Table 2.4.

Table 2.1. EWG 24-25 sub-groups by sections and expertise

Sub-group	Section	Expertise
1	Biological data (sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5), corresponding parts of Annex 1.1	Biologists
2	Diadromous species (section 2.3), Recreational fisheries (2.4), corresponding parts of Annex 1.1	Biologists
3	General information (section 1), Research surveys at sea (section 2.6), Impact of fisheries on marine biological resources (section 4), corresponding parts of Annex 1.1	Biologists

4	Fishing activity data (section 3), economic & social data (sections 5, 6 and 7), corresponding parts of Annex 1.2	Economists

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

2.5 Evaluation process

The EWG took the pre-screening comments and MS replies into account in the EWG assessment, sent further comments (via DG MARE) to the MS by 29 Oct c.o.b., with a deadline of 31 Oct 2024 lunchtime. After consideration of those replies and revised WPs, the EWG had further comments and questions for some MS, which were again communicated to the MS via DG MARE, with a deadline of 11 Nov. Those MS replies were dealt with by STECF Plenary during 11-15 Nov 2024, i.e. one week after the EWG. The continuation of this so-called 'ping-pong' process between STECF and MS beyond the EWG is, however, not optimal as not all experts of the EWG are available for reviewing the information coming in from MS after the EWG has finished.

2.6 General information

In section 1 of the WPs, all MSs provide the relevant information in a harmonized way following the guidelines and the requirements of the regional work plans (RWPs). However, some minor editorial issues were detected during pre-screening and solved during the EWG.

In the Marine Action Plan (document COM(2023)102 final of 21 Feb 2023), MS are asked to "*By the end of 2024, submit updated national DCF work plans to improve data collection planning and efforts, including in relation to by-catch of sensitive species and impact of fishing on the seabed."* MSs that did not refer to the Marine Action Plan in their WP were asked during EWG to include such a reference. In the end, most MSs included this reference, although, as was mentioned by one MS, there is no formal basis to include such a reference.

As part of the ToRs, the EWG was asked to "*summarise the evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027 per MS (...)"*. The following table provides an overview of the main changes and EWG comments on those.

Table 2.2. Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Section 1 on "General information".

Member State	Main changes	EWG comments
BEL	Table 1.3: New bilateral agreement was added between Belgium and The Netherlands about support for quality in age reading. Text Box Data Collection on national level: new partner is involved in eel data collection and recreational fisheries. Text Box 1a: new test studies inserted. Text Box 1b: regional activities and new projects inserted.	No comments
BGR	Textbox 1b: New activities added from RWP ECON 2025-2027, RWP Med&BS 2025-2027.	No comments

CYP	Text Box 1b: According to RWP Med&BS Table 1.2: a new table with meetings relevant to Med&BS was included and Text Box 1b: 2 regional activities concerning RWP Med&BS 2025-2027 were inserted.	Text Box 1.b: During the EWG, MS provided justification for not including the test study on CKMR on Bluefin tuna from the RWP LP.
CZE	Text Box 1.b: funding of RCG secretariat was added	No comments
DEU	Tables 1.1, 1.2, 1.3. and Text Box: Data collection at National Level are updated. Text Box 1a: RWP Baltic and NANSEA test studies listed. Text Box 1b: - RWP Baltic and NANSEA planned; - other data collection activities listed; - update of text box WFD-Diadromous; - new text box for eDNA-Diadromous; - new text box for Telemetry-Diadromous.	No comments
DNK	Table 1.2: updated according to RWP NANSEA & Baltic 2025-27 All RWP NASEA & Baltic agreed test studies with relevance for DNK have been added: Genetics, Diadromous species data collection, Regionally coordinated stomach sampling program, North Sea bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) stock marine recreational fisheries sampling. A national test study on EM on Kattegat trawlers has been included Text Box 1.b: updated according to RWP NANSEA & Baltic 2025-27	No comments
ESP	Text Box 1a: a number of test studies have been added and three test studies that have been completed have been removed. Text Box 1b: updated following the RWP 2025-2027; several activities removed (as they will not be funded by the EMFAF Data Collection) and several activities included due to national interest. Tables 1.1, 1.2, 1.3: updated to be consistent with the corresponding table in RWP 2025-2027	No comments
EST	Table 1.3: Agreement between Estonia and Finland giving permission to board the vessels in harbour and share the samples at landing was left out from WP. There has been no need to use that agreement for several years, thus it was decided by the parties to cancel the agreement.	No comments
FIN	Data collection framework at national level - DCF-related elements in the Marine Action Plan are added, as well as linking to RWP Baltic. Text Box 1a: two new test studies are added (EM monitoring of bycatch, social indicators). Text Box 1b: two new activities are added (IMPROFISH, Scientific cod fishing in Åland islands). Table 1.3: only relevant agreement with EU MS's is included.	No comments
FRA	Table 1.3: No continuation of NLD/FRA agreement. Text Boxes 1a and 1b: New activities added from RWP NANSEA 2025-2027, RWP LP 2025-2027, RWP Med&BS 2025-2027, RWP ECON 2025-2027 Text Box 1a: Five new national test studies added to Text Box 1a related with the aims to increase knowledge on recreational	No comments

	fisheries, follow-up on recommendations from ICES working groups, improving data collection in the outermost regions and Corsican small scale fisheries.	
GRC	Table 1.1: updated to be consistent with the corresponding table in RWP Med&BS 2025-2027 and to follow to guidelines. Table 1.2: updated to be consistent with the corresponding table in the RWP Med&BS 2025-2027. Also to include all guideline-specified meetings and the most commonly attended meetings by the MS. Text Box 1a: new test study: additional social variables for fisheries. Text Box 1b: two new text boxes inserted for the relevant regional studies.	MS supplied justified information why it did not include the activity "Regional data base development" related to the RWP LP.
HRV	Text Box 1a: New test studies on CKMR on bluefin tuna (CKMR-BFT) was included, Monitoring spawning intensity of European pilchard and European anchovy in the Eastern Adriatic (SPAMon) and were included. Text Box 1b: New activities on Regional Coordination taking place in ISSGs and pan regional cooperation between RCGs, Med&BS Regional data base (RDBFIS), Regional data base development for large pelagics data and Monitoring of tuna fisheries and farming (PRUT) were included.	No comments
HUN	Data collection framework at national level - contacts updated. Text Box 1b: dates, weblinks updated, minor wording supplementation for better understanding; Activity RCG Secretary updated.	No comments
IRL	Updated and corrected respective tables.	No comments
ITA	No amendments reported by MS	No comments
LVA	Text Box 1a, Text Box 1b: New test studies and other data collection activities as specified in the RWP BAL 2025-2027, RWP NANSEA 2025-2027, ECON RWP 2025-2027, RWP_LDF_2025-2027 and five new national activities were added to the WP.	No comments
LTU	Text Box 1a: Information from BALTIC RWP, NANS&EA RWP, Nacional test studies added. Text Box 1b: Information from BALTIC RWP, Long Distance Fisheries RWP, NANS&EA RWP, ECON 2025-2027 is added; Information from RWP ECON 2025-2027 is added.	No comments
MLT	No amendments reported by MS	No comments
NLD	Table 1.1: MS does not participate in NSMEGS anymore based on end-user needs, and therefore won't submit any data. Text Box 1a and 1b: New test studies and other data collection activities as specified in the RWP NANSEA 2025-2027, ECON RWP 2025-2027, RWP_LDF_2025-2027 were added.	No comments
POL	Table 1.1: - Due to low activity of Polish fleet in the North Sea and Eastern Arctic region in the reference period, no stocks were selected for sampling in 2025-2027 according to Table 2.1. - Sampling in the North Pacific is included according to multilateral agreement on NPFC sampling. - Minor update on data availability for data subset "Recreational catches". Table 1.2: Update only	No comments

	Table 1.3: - adjusted multilateral agreement on sampling in CECAF and SPRFMO - multilateral agreement on sampling in NPFC area added - renewed two bi-lateral agreements - added SWE-POL agreement Text Box 1a: text box added as follow up of RWP Baltic 2025-2027 Text Box 1b: updated following the RWPs.	
PRT	Table 1.1: Updated. Table 1.2: Meetings in which Portugal typically does not participate were removed. Text Box 1a: Six new test studies added Text Box 1b: New Activities added	No comments
ROU	Text Box 1a: added a new national pilot study and regional studies. Text Box 1b: environmental data on aquaculture added.	No comments
SVN	Table 1.2 was updated. Text Box 1a: a new test study was included (Collecting data from costal free time fishing) in order to get more information from recreational fisheries	No comments
SWE	Table 1.1: Minor changes; specified N+1, specified regions. Table 1.3: Updated following updates in RWPs. Text Box 1a: Split by region. Test studies listed following RWPs. One national test study on eDNA described. Added information concerning the studies since SE will analyse two social indicators during 2025. However, these analyses do not require any additional data collection therefore no added rows in excel-file or additional information in annex 1.2. Text Box 1b: Activities listed following the RWPs.	No comments

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

2.7 Biological data

All MS were requested to supply an overview of the changes compared to the previous period of the WP. The EWG 24-15 used this information to compile an overview of the evolution of the WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027 (Table 2.7.1). Additionally, previous evaluations of WPs (EWGs 21-17, 22-18 and 23-16) were used to determine whether any actions were followed and that previous issues have been solved.

As the reference period to which the data refers has changed, the WPs of all MS have changed accordingly. Due to these changes, it is not possible to conduct a numerical comparison of the number of species or variables. It is possible that a decrease in numbers planned to be sampled does not reflect a decrease in quality, but only a change in the fishery resulting in lower landings. It is therefore only possible to comment on the overall picture from a subjective point of view.

With the Regional Work Plans (RWPs) coming in from 2025 onwards, the EWG 24-15 acknowledges the fact that each MS takes into account the RWPs in their WP. The introduction of the RWP in the WP could also result in some cases in a significant change in numbers and the WP quality, which are difficult to assess.

During the evaluation of the WPs 2025-2027, although in the previous WP period, a separate in-depth evaluation of the annexes has not taken place yet, the EWG experienced that the overall quality of the Annexes 1.1 have in general improved.

Table 2.3.1. Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5 on biological data.

Member State	Main changes	EWG comments
BEL	The Table 2.1 was amended according to NANSEA RWP as well as the list of species selected for sampling in Tables 2.1, 2.2. Table 2.5. Some changes in the sampling design in Belgium were noted as two sampling schemes instead of three are reported.	No comment
BGR	Table 2.5: disaggregation of sampling on polyvalent fisheries to reallocate observation days at métier level	Improvement of the WP through minor changes
CYP	Table 2.1: Six species with MCRS of national interest were excluded. Reduces by two Sampling scheme identifiers: PG_DEF_GSA25_<6m and PG_DEF_GSA25_>=6m	No major changes were made.
CZE	NA. No Table 2.1, 2.2 nor 2.5	No comments
DEU	Improvement of commercial sampling design (Table 2.5) by merging sampling frames for more efficient allocation of effort. Update of all tables	No comments
DNK	The At-Sea observer scheme has been changed: one unique observer scheme for all the fleet (At-sea observer) but every fleet segment has its own “Sampling frame identifier”. Main reason being the improvement for reporting by fleet segment. MS has upgraded the sampling of program on small pelagic and industrial fishery sampling to a more comprehensive at sea co-sampling program with additional sampling at a lower lever from shore on the smaller vessels	Improvements in the sampling design for at-sea scheme
ESP	Sampling scheme identifier: ESP_AZTI_AtSea_Catch&ETP_ICES combines two old ones: ESP-AZTI_AtSea_ICES and ESP-AZTI_AtSea_PET_ICES Sampling scheme identifier: ESP_IEO_P2_StockSpecific is split into new ones: ESP_IEO_P2_StockSpecific_AtSea and ESP_IEO_P2_StockSpecific_OnShore Sampling scheme identifier was updated with the description of current situation of SFPAs: ESP-IEO_P3_AtSea_Africa Sampling scheme identifier was included, following the RWP LP: Tuna Sampling On Shore scheme including sampling scheme identifier: ESP_IEO_P4_OnShore_sp Sampling scheme identifier was included, following the RWP LP: Observe scheme. In Table 2.5 included a new sampling scheme for PETS ESP_SGP_PET_ AtSea to increase the coverage for PET sampling.	A new sampling scheme for PETS was added. Additionally minor changes to sampling schemes were made.
EST	EST included for some stocks the collection of maturity. In the North Sea and Eastern Arctic and NAFO area, biological variable maturity, EST added to the sampling plan of *Gadus morhua, Hippoglossoides platessoides, and Reinhardtius hippoglossoides*. In the NAFO area, additionally *Limanda ferruginea* and *Sebastes spp.* are sampled for maturity	No comments

FIN	No major changes have been done.	No comment
FRA	In all the biological tables, FRA adjusted the tables to fit the DCF IT platform. Text 2.5: FRA has extended their WP with sampling salmon and sea trout (WGTRUTTA) and with sampling on-board trawlers in Corsica based on end-user needs.	No comment
GRC	Table 2.1 is derived from RWP Med & BS and Large Pelagic RWP. Minor changes have been made in Tables 2.1 and 2.2 according to the landings of the new reference period. Table 2.5: Changes occurred in the number of PSUs planned (about 150 on-board trips were allocated to small scale fisheries métiers to increase coverage and PETS sampling (one métier removed, PSU reallocated).	No major changes were made
HRV	Table 2.1 is derived from RWP Med & BS and RWP Large Pelagic. In Tables 2.1 and 2.2, the list of species to be sampled for length and biological variables has been updated according to the landings of the new reference period and the exclusion from sampling of certain gears targeting these species. Table 2.5: The sampling coverage has been increased; the seine nets and small purse seine nets have been excluded from sampling as they are no longer used in Croatia; the fixed nets métiers were aggregated to update sampling scheme with the statistical methodology for catch declaration scheme.	No comment
HUN	Not applicable for Table 2.1, 2.2, and 2.5	Not applicable for marine fisheries
IRL	Table 2.1 has been updated with agreed statistics, also some national adjustments were made for some species. In Table 2.2, some species were removed at all from sampling while for some other species certain variables were removed. No changes have been made to Table 2.5, only typo errors have been corrected.	Table 2.5: Although the MS included all out-of-frame (OOF) parts of the population, there are still some issues pending like filling in with a number (not NA) all the cells in the column "Average number of PSUs during the reference years" in the next NWP submission and to correct the columns S and T referring to PETS in the cases of OOF sampling.
ITA	Table 2.1 is derived from RWP Med & BS and RWP Large Pelagic. In Tables 2.1 and 2.2, the list of species to be sampled for length and biological variables has been updated according to the landings of the new reference period. In Table 2.2 the sampling has changed to opportunistic only. Species-area combinations have been changed to follow the guidelines. The typo error regarding the sampling for biological variables for some large pelagic species was restored in this edition. In Table 2.5, a new métier was added due to the existence of a local multiannual plan and one more for the sampling of incidental bycatch of sensitive species. The estimation of the optimal number of primary sampling units (PSUs) was based on a sampling optimization tool.	Improvement of the NWP through the changes made for 2025-2027
LVA	Tables updated, no major changes detected	No comments
LTU	adjustments according to the guidelines and the linkage to RWP	No comments
MLT	Tables 2.1, 2.2 & 2.5 have been amended according to Med &BS RWP. Fields copied from previous NWP, updating ‘Reference Year’ and ‘Implementation Year’ as needed. Only major	Improvement of the WP through minor changes

	change is increasing the 'Planned number of PSUs' of market samples of 'Trammel nets in the Maltese fleet' from 3 to 4 for each year; in order to have better representation of the fishery across each quarter.	
NLD	Species included/excluded based on identified (inter) national data needs and usage for commercial sampling data: the selection of L. piscatorius (3a,4,7d), M. merlangus (3a,4,7d) and L. vulgaris (4,7d) to be included in the commercial sampling plans, while T. lucerna is discontinued. Updated species/variable list for commercial fisheries sampling schemes to reflect (inter)national end-user needs based on the application of data collected previously. Collection of biological variables (other than length) for M. kitt, L. Limanda and P. flesus from area 3a,47d, is discontinued under the commercial fishing sampling schemes, while M. merlangus has been added For the sampling scheme DEMPAS, the planned number of PSUs increased from 10 to 20. For the sampling scheme DEMACT1, the planned number of PSUs has been increased from 10 to 16. For the sampling scheme DEMACT2, the planned number of PSUs has been increased from 160 to 180. Sampling schemes for CECAF, SPRFMO and NPFC added based on multilateral agreements as part of RWP_LDF_2025-2027.	No major changes were made
POL	According to Baltic, LDF and NANSEA RWPs, the list of species selected for sampling has been amended. Following the Multilateral agreement on NPFC (RWP_LDF) the sampling of *Scomber japonicus* from commercial fisheries in the North Pacific is now included. A new sampling scheme identifier: NPFC at-sea sampling has been added in the WP and a description of it is included in Annex 1.1. Because of lower activity of the Polish fleet in the North Sea and Eastern Arctic region, the sampling of *Gadus morhua* in this area is not planned anymore. Correspondent sampling scheme identifier and Annex 1.1 have been revised accordingly.	No comments
PRT	Two stocks not listed in the COMMISSION DELEGATED DECISION (EU) 2021/1167 and not included in the WP 2023-2024 were added. Two Sampling frame identifiers were added to accommodate end user needs in terms of ETPs bycatch risk.	Improvement of the WP through minor changes
ROU	In Table 2.1, EU TAC (%) for turbot and sprat updated in accordance with Council Regulation (EU) 2021/90 of 28 January 2021. In Table 2.5. MS changed the method of PSU selection (from SRSWR to SRSWOR).	No major changes. No comments.
SVN	Tables 2.1 & 2.2 have been mainly implemented following the Med &BS RWP. A new sampling scheme identifier "Discard and incidental by-catch (BCD)" is added in the WP, meaning that onboard fishing vessel observation will occur.	Major improvement from previous WP. For the next WP submission, MS should consider the request from regulation GFCM/40/2016/2 and update Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5 accordingly. In Table 2.5, MS has to add comment for the rows where "Catch fraction" is selected has "other".

SWE	SWE listed changes which are mainly adjustments according to the guidelines and the linkage to RWP.	No comments

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

- *Relation between national Work Plans (WPs) and regional Work Plans (RWPs)*

With the introduction of Regional Work Plans (RWPs), MS are encouraged to follow these plans and incorporate elements from them into their national Work Plans (WPs). This year marks the first experience working with RWPs and the EWG has encountered some challenges. For example, some RWPs contained errors that, when introduced by MS in their WPs, led to issues stemming from these mistakes.

The EWG has identified the need to establish a framework to address such cases (see below). Given that this is our initial experience, we anticipate that this framework and the general recommendations will be expanded and refined in future meetings, with input from Regional Coordination Groups and the Commission as necessary. The framework focuses on biological data, addressing Table 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5, but it could be applied and extended to all WP sections.

Additionally, the EWG has identified the need to allocate time specifically for RWP review, as the number of mistakes found shows that a thorough assessment is required even after those regional plans are approved. In section 3, a brief summary of errors identified in the RWPs is provided.

Currently, one RWP (RWP LDF) is not endorsed yet by STECF. But, in any case, even if all RWPs reach this status, the EWG agreed that the most efficient approach for the RWP review is to identify the issues and develop solutions (table 2.7.2).

The EWG agreed that MS should be requested to modify their WPs according to the Commission Implementing Decision 2021/1168 and, in parallel, DG MARE should identify a way to communicate the identified issues of the RWPs to the Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs). This would enable RCGs to promptly address and amend the corresponding RWP as needed. The EWG did not discuss the specific details of how and when the RWPs should be amended.

Table 2.4.2. Identification of discrepancies between RWPs and national WPs and possible solutions.

RWP	WP	EWG recommendation
CORRECT	CORRECT	No comments to MS – no action needed
CORRECT	INCORRECT	Comments sent to MS: MS to revise and resubmit the incorrect part of the WP based on EWG comments.
INCORRECT	CORRECT	After the identification of issues by EWG, the identified issues will be transmitted to the respective RCGs. Modification of RWP needed. MS should be informed about this process.
INCORRECT	INCORRECT	Comments sent to MS: MS to revise and resubmit the incorrect part of the WP based on EWG comments. MS to put in 'WP Comments' column that the differences between RWP and WP are because of mistakes found in RWP. After the identification of issues by EWG, the list of identified issues will be transmited to the respective

		RCGs. Modification of RWP needed. MS should be informed about this process.

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

A frequent issue that has been identified in several WPs was that references to RWP tables or parts that don't exist (yet). It is not recommended to refer to a RWP in a specific table if no such specific Table exists in the RWP. This refers to the "Comments" column in Table 2.1 and to columns "Regional work plan name" in Tables 2.2 and 2.5. As an example, the column "Regional work plan name" in Table 2.2 and Table 2.5 cannot be filled with "NANSEA_RWP_2025-2027" because Table 2.2 and Table 2.5 are not included in the NANSEA RWP.

2.8 Diadromous species and recreational fisheries

Work plans generally evolved well and appear more harmonized across the regions. Some of the formerly common formal errors (empty cells) have been reduced, potentially through the experiences of the screening process and the use of the DCF IT platform. Another issue that recurred during evaluations was that there was confusion regarding information whether sampling was agreed upon on regional level. A positive example for recreational fisheries data collection is the use of multi-species survey approaches, mainly in the Med&BS region. This approach was broadly adopted by most MS. For eel data collection, one central issue was that it had been unclear how biological data including age, length and sex are relevant for end-users (here especially ICES WGEEL), as DCF data for a long time have not been used nor specifically asked for. This changed in 2022, when WGEEL for the first time included a new table "Annex 10 other sampling data" which included individual biological variables including age, as defined in the EU Delegated Decision 2021/1167 to be collected under the EU-MAP. To advance assessment methodologies and to foster the use of available data in eel assessment, a designated project (DIASPARA) currently aims at specifically making recommendations to enhance DCF data collection and specify end-user needs as well as to tackle the challenge of providing for regional work plans for diadromous species. MS often provide links and documents for sampling and quality documentation in national languages, which poses issues for evaluation. MS have therefore been asked to provide this information in English in future submissions.

As part of the ToRs, the EWG was asked to "*summarise the evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027 per MS (...)"*. The following table provides an overview of the main changes and EWG comments on those.

Table 2.5. Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 on diadromous species and recreational fisheries.

Member State	Main changes	EWG comments
BEL	Text passages for diadromous were shortened in Text Box 2.3 and descriptions of data collection population were moved to Annex 1.1. Regarding Table 2.3: comments were added to column U. Information was added to Annex 1.1.	EWG suggested to introduce different SSIs for different sampling purposes for eel sampling (e.g.: for recruitment, standing stock and for silver eel escapement).
BGR	No indication of changes in submitted summary of changes document for 2.4. Most important change in WP is that a new telephone off-site survey is planned for 2027 (the last one was 2024). In the new survey, all species present in the Black Sea are included. MS therefore submitted a WP in line with RWP and includes triennial multi-species off-site survey.	EWG asked the MS to indicate when the results from the 2024 survey will be available.

CYP	Regarding recreational fisheries data collection, MS submitted a WP in line with RWP and includes triennial multi-species off-site survey.	EWG asked for more elaborate description of planned methodologies in the WP.
CZE	CZE did not indicate relevant changes in their summary of changes document. CZE has reduced information on the planned methodologies in eel data collection and provided incongruent information of data collection plans and purpose.	EWG asked to clarify.
DEU	Germany introduced eDNA sampling as described in the respective text boxes and annexes.	No comment
DNK	Indicated changes in the summary document were: Text Box 2.3 was updated, national specifics for sampled rivers were reported. MS stated that age data collection for eel was not conducted due to no end-user need. This was discussed during communication. While quality annexes for salmonids are elaborate and informative, those for eel data collection are still poorly described. Regarding 2.4: Some specifics were updated for relevant regions. MS stopped collecting salmon biological data and claim salmon fishing is prohibited. This is not true. Salmon fishing in Danish coastal and marine waters is possible.	EWG highlighted the need to still collect age data for eels, due to existing end-user need. The MS revised the WP accordingly.
ESP	Table 2.3: MS reduced electrofishing efforts for eel and stopped sampling in Valencia. Regarding recreational fisheries data collection, MS submitted a WP in line with RWP and includes triennial multi-species off-site survey.	No comment
EST	Annual silver eel sample size has been reduced to 50 individuals due to a low number of silver eels in the catches of commercial fishermen.	No comment
FIN	MS added sampling schemes for eel for one river.	No comment
FRA	Regarding diadromous species, MS added information on sea trout sampling. Regarding recreational fisheries data collection, MS submitted a WP in line with RWP and includes triennial multi-species off-site survey.	No comment
GRC	MS plans reduced sampling effort for eels, age data will be derived from growth functions. Regarding recreational fisheries data collection, MS submitted a WP in line with RWP and includes triennial multi-species off-site survey.	No comment
HRV	MS clarified that only marine fisheries for eel exist. MS provided separate Annexes for SSIs	No comment
HUN	No changes due to no data collection	No comment
IRL	A slight reduction in silver eel sampling has been implemented, while new elver traps have been introduced. Additionally, the number of fishing nights has been decreased for one sampling scheme.	No comment
ITA	Regarding eel inland fisheries, MS improved its organisation of eel fishery-independent sampling efforts. Covering different environments (lagoons & rivers). Regarding recreational fisheries data collection, the off-site multi-species survey fulfils the strategic approaches of the RWP Med & BS.	No comment
LVA	Regarding diadromous data collection in freshwaters: The number of sampling sites for *Salmo salar* in certain rivers was increased. Also new traps for eels were added.	No comment
LTU	The updated Table 2.3 introduces new data collection methods using questionnaires on the number and weight of harvested and released salmon, sea trout, and eels in	No comment

	inland waters, improving data accuracy. Changes in Text Box 2.3 reflect these updates and include information from the BALTIC RWP and NANSEA RWP. Table 2.4 has been supplemented with new information on recreational fisheries in line with the latest WP guidelines.	
MLT	Regarding recreational fisheries data collection, MS submitted a WP in line with RWP and includes triennial multi-species off-site survey.	No comment
NLD	No major changes	No comment
POL	The number of samples for salmonids was increased, while the biological samples from commercial eel fishing were reduced. According to MS, the sample sizes are statistically adjusted to meet the requirements of stock modeling. Regarding recreational fisheries, no sampling is planned for *Gadus morhua* and *Anguilla anguilla* due to fishing ban.	No comment
PRT	Regarding recreational fisheries, the on-site survey sampling scheme identifier in the WP 2022-2024 was removed and replaced by an off-site sampling scheme.	No comment
ROU	NWP is not compliant with RWP of Med & BS. No big changes compared to old NWP.	No comment
SVN	National work plan does not comply with first RWP for Med & BS because MS has good coverage of recreational fisheries data collection in their national strategy.	No comment
SWE	In Text Box 2.3, descriptions were clarified, and information on the ongoing evaluation of the eel management plan was added. Unclarities with planned units for sampling. Table 2.4 removed cod sampling in recreational fisheries due to a new ban and introduced a new scheme for sea trout catches in the Baltic Sea. The Baltic Sea trap net catches salmon survey will now be on a triennial basis instead of annual.	MS was asked to clarify units for sampling, so evaluation is made possible

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans..

2.9 Surveys

For one MS, two surveys, one mandatory and one non-mandatory, were removed from the WP 2025-2027. This was justified by the MS as, following the results of an ICES Benchmark assessment workshop, both surveys are not used anymore by the corresponding assessment working groups.

Another MS removed two surveys. The first removed survey was incorporated in the sampling for a triennially executed mandatory survey in another survey which resulted in shifting the execution of the survey by one year. This would interrupt the triennial cycle of the survey. The MS explained that there is a need to optimize research surveys at sea (in terms of the monitoring methods used, days at sea, number of fishing hauls and specialized human resources) whilst taking end-user needs into account. The MS provided reference to the interaction that has taken place between them and the end-user on this proposed change in the triennial survey. However, as no formal approval from the end-users was provided by the MS, the MS is still requested to provide full documentation, justification and evidence on approval by the end-users. For the second removed survey, two actions are implemented by the MS, namely to test (i) methodology that is internationally agreed within ICES Working

group within Test study with the aim to use it as a routine monitoring method in future WPs and (ii) the sampling of depth strata to provide data on geographical distribution in space and time as well as on biological parameters of species that were covered with the sampling design of the removed survey.

As part of the ToRs, the EWG was asked to "*summarise the evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027 per MS (...)"*. The following table provides an overview of the main changes and EWG comments on those.

Table 2.6. Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Section 2.6 on surveys-at-sea.

Member State	Main changes	EWG comments
BEL	No amendments reported by MS	Minor editorial comment
BGR	No amendments reported by MS	No comments
CYP	Only minor changes were made in the name of sampling activities in accordance with RWP Med&BS 2025-2027	No comments
CZE	NA	NA
DEU	Table 2.6 is updated: Days at sea and number of sampling activities were checked and updated, when necessary, adapted to guidelines (only numbers in days at sea and number of sampling activities planned, only one type of sampling activities per line etc.)	Minor editorial comment
DNK	Table 2.6: has been entirely updated to be consistent with the RWPs NANSEA& Baltic 2025-27 and to follow the guidelines. National surveys presently not in regional coordinated or mandatory were added Text Box 2.6: has been updated. For some surveys, it is indicated that reduced funding might result in reduced survey activities	No comments
ESP	Text Box 2.6 and Table 2.6: - Surveys have been updated to be consistent with the RWP 2025-2027 and national changes. - ECOCADIZ and BOCADEVA are not included in the WP from 2025 onwards as both surveys are not used anymore by corresponding assessment working groups. Text Box 2.6: for a number of surveys the links to manual and 2023 survey plan were updated.	ECOCADIZ and BOCADEVA are not included in the WP from 2025 onwards. MS justified in the changes summary document; both surveys are not used anymore by the corresponding assessment working groups. This reasoning was also added to Section 1 of the NWP.
EST	The National survey Estonian Fish Larvae Survey (ELFS) to study the distribution and abundance of fish larvae and juveniles with the aim to provide primary information on herring year class abundance and to understand the affecting environmental background was left out from WP. It was decided to conserve resources, as the study had limited applicability for the assessment and management of Baltic herring stocks.	No comments
FIN	No amendments reported by MS	No comments
FRA	Stomach content analysis on 2 surveys (MEDITS and IBTS_Q1) and survey The NourDem was added. The NourDem monitoring network is based on scientific sampling campaigns using a Large Vertical Opening trawl in the estuaries of the Seine River. Its aim is to produce abundance and biomass indexes for all animal species that can be sampled by trawl (and of a size greater than 3 cm due to the size of the trawl mesh), whether benthic (epigeal), demersal or pelagic.	No comments

GRC	Table 2.6: has been updated to be consistent with the RWP Med&BS 2025-2027 and to follow the guidelines. In Table 2.6 of the RWP Med&BS some errors were detected in columns P “Days at sea planned” and R “Number of sampling activities planned”. These values have been corrected in the NWP and justified in the WP comments column. Text Box 2.6: for both surveys only national specifics are reported. For MEDIAS, the egg and mesozooplankton surveys are also reported for the first time.	No comments
HRV	No amendments reported by MS	No comments
HUN	NA	NA
IRL	Table 2.6: updated Text Box 2.6: Updates to accurately capture the changes/improvements to the programme.	MS has indicated and clarified that an estimation for the number of sampling activities cannot be given for certain sampling activities in Table 2.6.
ITA	One non-mandatory survey was deleted and added as commercial sampling	No comments, MS gives justification for deletion of non-mandatory survey.
LVA	Three new national research surveys are planned: ICHTHYO (Ichthyoplankton survey), NEKTOBENTHOS (Nektobenthos survey), ZOOPLANKTON (Zooplankton survey). Additional zoobenthos sampling is added to GORDEM survey. The aim of these new surveys to support ecosystem and food web analysis.	No comments
LTU	Table 2.6: Research surveys at sea: Updated with new information and information from BALTIC RWP. Text Box 2.6: Updated with new information and information from BALTIC RWP.	No comments
MLT	Text Box 2.6 for MEDITS and MEDIAS was updated according to the requirements of both surveys following the recommendations and decisions of the RWP MED&BS.	No comments
NLD	National surveys not contributing to DCF-related advice deleted (ENSIS, MOSKOK, FYOE). Survey description IHLS-DRS updated according to current situation. The IHLS-DRS design is updated upon request of the end user, based on evaluation of the first five years of sampling	No comments
POL	Text Box 2.6: rearrangement due to follow up of RWP Baltic 2025-2027.	No comments
PRT	Text Box 2.6: Research survey at sea “MEGS” (which is triennial and was expected to be implemented in 2025) will be incorporated into research survey at sea “SDEPM” (which is triennial and will be implemented as initially expected in 2026). Research survey at sea “NepS” will not be implemented in 2025-2027, and two actions will be implemented, namely: (i) an essay will be implemented to test the methodology of Underwater Television (UWTV) surveys, which is internationally agreed under ICES WGNEPS for estimating the density of Nephrops burrows and distribution of Nephrops aiming at its use as a routine monitoring method for FUs 28 and 29 in future WPs and (ii) an essay will be implemented in IBTS_Q4 to test the sampling of a 4th depth strata to provide data on geographical distribution in space and time as well as on biological parameters of species that were covered with the sampling design of NepS but not with the current design of IBTS_Q4.	MEGS: MS indicates that the mandatory MEGS is now incorporated in SDEPM and will be carried out in 2026 instead of 2025. MS was asked during the EWG to provide justification for this incorporation and that it has been accepted by the MEGS planning group (WGMEGS). During the EWG provided interaction between the MS and WGMEGS. However, the MS did not provide a formal approval from WGMEGS. The EWG acknowledges that the interaction that has taken place between PRT and WGMEGS. However, no formal approval from the end-users was provided by PRT. Full documentation, justification and evidence on approval by the End-users is needed from PRT. NepS: Integrated in ICES WGNEPS that coordinates Nephrops surveys.
ROU	No amendments reported by MS	No comments
SVN	No amendments reported by MS	No comments

SWE	Table 2.6: Survey SSS_Q4 is stopped 2025-2027 (not a mandatory survey). Text Box 2.6: Surveys described in RWP s- only a reference is included. Survey SSS_Q4 is not included 2025-2027. Cod Kattegat Survey National specifics is described. UWTV Megafauna described as National Specifics.	No comments

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

2.10 Impact of fisheries on marine biological resources

The EWG briefly verified on basis of the report on "Assessing pilot studies under EU-MAP 2017- 2019 (2020-2021) - Pilot Study 2: Level of fishing and impact of fisheries on biological resources and marine ecosystem" whether MSs have integrated the results of their pilot studies into their regular sampling programmes. The sampling activities described in the pilot studies were included in NWPs 2025-2027 of most MSs.

As part of the ToRs, the EWG was asked to "*summarise the evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027 per MS (...)"*. The following table provides an overview of the main changes and EWG comments on those.

Table 2.70. Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Section 4 on the impact of fisheries on marine biological resources.

Member State	Main changes	EWG comments
BEL	Text Box 4.1: Text box on RWP inserted. Text Box 4.2: Text box on RWP inserted; National study inserted.	No comments
BGR	Text Box 4.2: The activities planned for monitoring of fisheries by observers on board also fully contribute to the specific national measures to minimize by-catch of sensitive species with regard to the EU Marine Action Plan: Protecting and restoring marine ecosystems for sustainable and resilient fisheries.	No comments
CYP	Cyprus amended this part in line of the RWP Med&BS The study on mapping of trawling activity in GSA 25 identification of areas that are mostly impacted on the trawling activity was not prolonged for 2025-2027 period.	No comments
CZE	NA	NA
DEU	Text Box 4.1: updated. Text Box 4.2: Text was updated with additional information. Text Box 4.3: Study SeaPen was added.	No comments
DNK	Table 4.1 has been updated to be consistent with the RWP RCG NANSEA & Baltic 2025-27 and follow the guidelines. Text Box 4.2 has been updated to be consistent with the RWP Baltic and NANSEA 2025-27 and the Marine Action Plan. Text Box 4.3 New study on fisheries impact on marine habitat has been added to be consistent with the RWP Baltic and NANSEA 2025-27 and the Marine Action Plan	No comments
ESP	Table 4.1: changes following the RWPs and national changes.	No comments

	Text Box 4.2: text boxes included following the RWP 2025-2027 some sampling scheme identifiers updated with new information. new sampling scheme added that focuses on PETS. Text Box 4.3: new text box included to explain the different actions that are carried out and one text box included following the RWP 2025-2027.	
EST	No amendments reported by MS	No comments
FIN	No amendments reported by MS	No comments
FRA	Stomach analysis on MEDITS and IBTS added based on end-user needs. Information box on two future programs on accidental bycatches: risk analysis (FEAMPA ARP) and a LIFE project in North-East Atlantic and Med&BS (Life MMS) added, information on OBSCAMe+ programm updated.	No comments
GRC	Table 4.1: has been updated to be consistent with the RWP Med&NS 2025-2027 and follow the guidelines. Text Box 4.3: New study on fishing footprint of small-scale fisheries.	No comments
HRV	Text Box 4.2: MS has adjusted the planned PETS sampling activities and significantly increased the number of PSUs to ensure optimal coverage of by-catches of PET species in line with GFCM and ICCAT requirements. Text Box 4.3: Regional activities (stomach sampling for demersal species) and national projects (METAGENOM and SSCF-IMPACT) were updated.	No comments
HUN	NA	NA
IRL	No amendments reported by MS	No comments
ITA	alignment with RWP Med&BS	No comments
LVA	Text Box 4.3: Discontinuation of the assessment of fisheries impact on marine habitats. In recent years, demersal trawling effort in the Latvian EEZ has been significantly reduced due to the cod fishing ban and the low interest of fishermen in the flounder fishery.	No comments
LTU	Table 4.1: Updated with information from BALTIC RWP. Text Box 4.2: Updated with information from BALTIC RWP, Long Distance Fisheries RWP, NANS&EA RWP. Text Box 4.3: Updated information.	There is no Table 4.1 in the Baltic RWP. However, BITS Q1 and Q4 are included in the RWP which also included stomach sampling. As MS is mainly active in the Baltic region and only operating in the other region with a few vessels, the risk assessment was only conducted for the Baltic. MS is recommended to seek guidance within WGCATCH, WGBYC etc. to solve the methodology difficulties it faces in future WP submissions.
MLT	Text Box 4.2 and text for two studies in Text Box 4.3 were updated.	No comments
NLD	Table 4.1, Text Box 4.3: Stomach sampling related to RWP NANSEA 2025-2027 was added. Text Box 4.2: Increased number of PSU for sampling scheme DEMPAS and sampling scheme DEMACT1.	No comments
POL	Text Box 4.3: rearrangement due to follow up of RWPs.	No comments

PRT	Text Box 4.2: In regions “North-East Atlantic” and “North Sea and Eastern Arctic”, responses were added to the first two questions of the text box template, which concern assessments of bycatch risks. Text Box 4.3: Text Box not included.	No comments
ROU	Text Box 4.3: only kept the regional coordination on fish stomach contents collection and analysis in the Med&BS. The previous national study mentioned in this box will have the final results next year.	No comments
SVN	Table 4.1: Planned sampling was increased.	No comments
SWE	Table 4.1: Updated with new list of species following the list in RWP NANSEA. Text Box 4.2: Minor updates.	No comments

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

2.11 Economic and social data

Recurrent issues:

In previous Annual Report (AR) submissions, it had been occasionally observed that a MS has justified the lack of data collection for certain variables with the lack having existed in the WP already. In order to address this issue, EWG 24-15 made use of the 24-08 AR evaluation grid, thus checking for issues which had been raised with respect to the WP. In some cases, MSs had justified a lack of data collection with reference to the WP where the respective variable was not listed. This approach was meaningful. This time, however, all the gaps that could be found were already detected independently during the pre-screening and EWG evaluation procedure.

Work Plans approved for 2022-2027

Some MSs had submitted WPs for the period 2022-2027 which had been approved. The relevant Implementing Decision 2022/39 came into force after the approval of the “2022+” WPs. The EWG 24-15 assessed the WPs submitted for 2025-2027 irrespective of what had been approved in the past.

Availability of CR data

The EWG 24-15 discussed the indication of data availability in Table 1.1 for data which are collected under the Control Regulation (CR). The CR defines by when data have to be collected by MS. This deadline is within few days, i.e. there is no need to describe the availability of CR data within the WP.

Cluster names

According to WP Guidelines, the activity indicator for fleet Tables 3.1, 5.1, 5.2 should be reported in a separate column and not be a part of cluster name.

Quality reporting on PIM

There are basically two approaches for the collection of data related to the capital value for the fleet sector: PIM and sampling. The EWG 24-15 recommends that if PIM is used, MS should provide a separate Annex 1.2 on this topic, providing details on input parameters (percentage rates, useful lifetime, price per capacity unit). It appears advisable to **develop a template for this particular part of Annex 1.2** (task e.g. for RCG ECON). If PIM is not applied, quality information on the respective variables should be provided in the “regular” Annex 1.2.

Implementation years for social variables

The EWG 24-15 observed that several MSs presented a range of implementation years (2025-2027) for the collection of social data. Experience has shown that in some cases, this

is a copy-and-paste entry from the economic variables. It is regarded helpful if MS could confirm in the WP comment column that data are collected annually. In any case, data availability as indicated in Table 1.1 should be consistent with the indication of the implementation year(s) in the respective rows in Tables 5.2, 6.1 and 7.1.

Thresholds application in aquaculture

The relevance of the aquaculture threshold in Table 6.1, column 'I' remains unclear. The threshold options A and B imply that data collection is not implemented. Therefore, only options "C" and "NA" can literally be used in Table 6.1. Option C implies that MS can apply a "simplified methodology", but the meaning of this is not defined anywhere. Hence, there is no sensible value added in the distinction between C and NA for thresholds in Table 6.1.

The EWG 24-15 supports the general idea of requesting specific information on MS aquaculture production in Text box 6.1. The information which is relevant for the WP evaluation is in the total aquaculture production as EU % as well as a list of species with more than 5% of total production, where applicable. Decision 2022/39 is less specific in this respect.

On fish processing:

Legislation is unclear with respect to requirements of data collection on fish processing. The EWG 24-15 states that there is a request to provide a justification why MS perform a complementary data collection (Decision 2022/39 for Table 7.1:"*Specify data collection for variables not covered by Eurostat or for which additional sampling is required*" and for Text Box 7.1: "*The Member State should justify complementary data collection for fish processing in addition to Eurostat data*").

The EWG 24-15 observed that some MS did not provide this kind of justification.

It is stressed that the PGECON 2020 [1](p. 21 pp.) report provides a list of reasons why complementary data collection on fish processing is justified.

The EWG also discussed the requirements for filling Table 7.1. Legally there is no document specifying that all variables from the MasterCodeList (MCL) have to be listed in Table 7.1. Hence, it would be up to the MS which variables to collect.

The EWG concludes that it is up to the MS which variables from the MCL are collected and provided in Table 7.1.

However, for the future, the EWG 24-15 recommends that if MS collects fish processing data, it should provide a complete list and indicate 0% sampling in case of using other data (e.g. Eurostat data) for that particular variable. Currently, **the MCL does not provide the code "NA" for data source and data collection scheme** which would be appropriate for this case. This **should be amended**.

The reference for fish processing variables should be Annex V of the PGECON 2020 report, as referred to in Decision 39/2022 "Type of variables (E/S)" for fish processing (p.40).

However, this might not apply to data related to raw material as in the past most MS had faced serious problems with the collection of data on raw material (see STECF 2023-14:

"*nine (9) out of the twenty […] MS participating in the Fisheries Data Reporting scheme provided data about raw materials used in 2020 and 2021*". The Regional Work Plan ECON 2025-2027 characterises data on raw material (weight and value) as optional.

Concerning the evaluation of the WPs 2025-2027, the EWG 24-15 decided to accept any set of variables in Table 7.1, regardless of completeness (as long as they are in line with the MCL).

First element of Annex 1.2

For many MSs, it was not clear how to prepare the first, almost empty "survey specification record" of the quality report in Annex 1.2 and how to proceed with providing sector name for the rest of the boxes in the annex. The guidance could be more descriptive (maybe with an example) with providing information that a reference to the RWP should be provided only once in the field for sector name in the first box with Sampling scheme identifier RWP ECON.

[1] https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/d/dcf/2020_pgecon

Table 2.81. Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Economic and social data.

Member State	Main changes	EWG comments
BEL	The test study 5 is planned under section 1a aimed at improving data collection on actual 'capital value' and capital costs' data for the fleet, and Test study 6 planned for aquaculture. Table 5.1 and 5.2: Inclusion of the Activity indicators for all fleet segments. Sections 6.1 and 7.1: Changes in methodology to improve the data collection. Annex 1.2 MS improved methodological Annex for the fleet, aquaculture and fish processing.	Improvements based on considered previous EWG comments and MS experience in previous WP implementation.
BGR	No main changes	No comment
CYP	No main changes	No comment
CZE	No main changes	No comment
DEU	Sampling scheme of fleet social data was change to Census Change in aquaculture data collection scheme for some variables (from PSS to CENSUS or IND) Change in processing data collection scheme for some variables (from PSS to CENSUS)	MS introduced improvements in the data collection scheme for several variables for fisheries, aquaculture and fish processing industry.
DNK	Section 3.1: Improvement in fleet segmentation methodology for coherence between fishing activity variables in 3.1 and fleet economic data provided in 5.1 and 5.2.	MS follow the RWP Baltic and NANSEA 2025-27.
ESP	No main changes	No comment
EST	No main changes	No comment

FIN	3.1. MS stopped collecting complementary data for the fish prices as data are now received under Control regulation 5.1 - 5.2 textboxes and tables: updates fleet segments upon guidelines 7.1 textbox and table: no more data collection for some economic variables	No mandatory data collection for Processing Industry
FRA	Table 5.1 and 5.2: Inclusion of the Activity indicators for the regions French Guiana and Guadeloupe fleet segments. Table 6.1 Deleted oysters nurseries	No comment
GRC	Table 5.1: Significant changes in fleet segmentation Table 5.2: Different sample rates per segment, based on the new structure of the Greek Fishing fleet Text Box 5.2: Different clustering scheme	No comment
HRV	No main changes	No comment
HUN	Table 6.1: changes on sources for variables “Gross sales per species” and “Weight of sales per species”	Improvement of consistency on variables
IRL	No main changes	No comment
ITA	No main changes	No comment
LVA	No main changes	No comment
LTU	In the fish processing industry, segments were added	More detail information for fish processing stakeholders
MLT	No main changes	No comment
NLD	No main changes	No comment
POL	Table 6.1: the data collection was extended to cover sturgeon, divided into two identified production methods: enclosures and pens, and tanks and raceways. Table 7.1: data collection is extended for non-main activity.	Improvement in aquaculture and fish processing data collection.
PRT	No main changes	No comment
ROU	No main changes	No comment
SVN	No main changes	No comment
SWE	No main changes	No comment

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

2.12 Amendments of the guidance and templates for WPs

- *Change of column name in Table 2.1*

The EWG noticed a discrepancy in the use of **column O** ('Selected for sampling of biological variables') in Table 2.1 between MSs. Some MS marked this column with 'Y' when the biological samples will be collected during a research survey at sea, while other MS only entered a 'Y' in this column if the biological variables are collected by commercial sampling.

Therefore, the EWG recommends adjusting the guidelines to specify that Table 2.1 only refers to **commercial sampling**.

The following text in bold could be added to the guidelines for Table 2.1; "General comment: This table fulfils Article 5(2)(a), Article 6(3)(a), (b) and (c) of Regulation (EU) 2017/1004 and Chapter II point 2.1(a) of the EU MAP Delegated Decision annex. This table is intended to specify data to be collected under Table 1 of the EU MAP Delegated Decision annex. Use this table to give an overview of the collection of data **from commercial sampling** at the level of area/stock. All individuals sampled shall be identified to species level and have length measurements taken, where possible. Other biological data different from length are specified in Table 2.2, and may include data collected under the surveys at sea."

- *Out-of-frame population in Table 2.5*

The EWG identified that some MS had incorrectly addressed the unsampled part of the population ('out-of-frame population') in Table 2.5. It is necessary to identify and provide the size of the out-of-frame population to accurately assess the coverage and scope of the sampling design, as well as to understand the potential bias of the resulting estimates derived from the collected data.

According to Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/39 laying down rules on the format and timetables for the submission of national work plans and annual reports, in Table 2.5, an 'out-of-frame' row must be added by Sampling scheme identifier, that is, for all sampling scheme identifiers:

Sampling scheme identifier (Table 2.5):

> "Indicate a unique name (free text) to identify each combination of 'Observation type' * 'Sampling scheme type' * 'Species coverage'. Use identical references in text boxes and in Annex 1.1.
>
> If your Member State's landings are sampled by another Member State under a bi- or multilateral agreement, put a row in this table referring to the other Member State's sampling scheme identifier.
>
> Add an 'out-of-frame' row per sampling scheme identifier, even if all sampling population is covered. In this case, enter '0' for the planned PSU number, and duplicate other specifications (eg. observation type, frequency, PSU type etc.)."

However, in the Interactive Guidelines (https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/wp-templates_en), the definition is incorrect. Instead of the correct text from the Decision, the definition for the "Sampling Frame Description" was used in place of the "Sampling Scheme Identifier". As a result, what appears is:

"*To inform on the actual coverage of the sampling design, enter at least one row per 'Region'*'RFMO'*'Sampling scheme identifier' combination for out-of-frame parts of the population [e.g. unsampled (on-shore), unsampled (at-sea)]. It is recommended for all combinations, but it should be provided at least for the ones where 'Sampling scheme type'='commercial fishing trip'.*"

This discrepancy between the Decision and the Interactive Guidelines has led some MS to omit a row for each out-of-frame entry. During the EWG, the Commission was informed of this error to facilitate corrections in the Interactive Guidelines. MS that did not address the out-of-frame entries were asked, through the 'ping-pong' process, to resubmit and provide the WP in accordance with the legal framework.

- *Inconsistency between "NA" and "N/A"*

Inconsistency between the Interactive Guidelines and Commission Delegated Decision on applying 'NA' and 'N/A' indicating the number of individuals to sample using opportunistic sampling allowed MS to use both. To prevent an incorrect display of percentages of 'Achieved % of sampled individuals at national level' of AR in the DCF platform, some formulas of achievements presentation and formulas on indication of result of achievement, which is require a comment in AR, were corrected. For correct display, 'N/A' indication is required

2.13 Amendments of the evaluation procedures and assessment grid

- *Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5*

The EWG reviewed the assessment grid for WP evaluation and identified areas for improvement to enhance clarity and reduce potential confusion in Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5.

Where specific questions had been interpreted differently by experts, modifications are proposed to prevent misunderstandings (7 cases). Questions that were deemed unhelpful are recommended for removal (2 cases). Additionally, a new question has been added in each table to allow for a more in-depth analysis of the WP in case the experts need it (3 cases).

The proposed revised assessment grid is available in the electronic annexes of this report.

Table 2.1:

- Table 2.1. The question "Are the justifications provided for not sampling required stocks/species acceptable?" should be **modified to**: "In case that no threshold rules used, are the justifications provided for not sampling required stocks/species acceptable?" (The reason for this change is that when a threshold is used, it is a justification by default).
- Table 2.1. The question "Are the data subsets from Table 2.1 correctly referred to in table 1.1?" should be **modified to**: "Is "Commercial length structure" included in the "Data subset" in Table 1.1.?"
- **New question is proposed**: "Are there any other remarks to be considered regarding Table 2.1?"

Table 2.12. Assessment grid for WP evaluation and identified areas for improvement to enhance clarity and reduce potential confusion in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 - List of required stocks/species	Table 2.1 - List of required stocks/species	
Are all regions in which MS fleet is operating listed in the table?	Are all regions in which MS fleet is operating listed in the table?	MAINTAINED
Are all stocks/species from Table 1 from EU MAP Comission Delegated Decision required to be sampled by MS identified in Table 2.1?	Are all stocks/species from Table 1 from EU MAP Comission Delegated Decision required to be sampled by MS identified in Table 2.1?	MAINTAINED
Are the justifications provided for not sampling required stocks/species acceptable?	In case that no threshold rules used, are the justifications provided for not sampling required stocks/species acceptable?	MODIFIED
Is there any supplementary stocks/species, not included in EU-MAP Table 1, identified for sampling in Table 2.1?	Is there any supplementary stocks/species, not included in EU-MAP Table 1, identified for sampling in Table 2.1?	MAINTAINED
In case "Y", is the reason explained?	In case "Y", is the reason explained?	MAINTAINED
Are the agreements mentioned in this Section, if any, also listed in Section 1.3	Are the agreements mentioned in this Section, if any, also listed in Section 1.3	MAINTAINED
Did MS follow the guidance for filling Table 2.1?	Did MS follow the guidance for filling Table 2.1?	MAINTAINED
	Are there any other remarks to be considered regarding Table 2.1?	NEW QUESTION
Are the data subsets from table 2.1 correctly referred to in table 1.1?	Is "Commercial length structure" included in the "Data subset" in Table 1.1.?	MODIFIED

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

Table 2.2:

- Table 2.2. The question “Are all the Observation types*sampling scheme types*Sampling scheme identifiers listed in Table 2.2 clearly documented in a quality report (Annex 1.1)? should be **modified to** “Are all the Observation types*sampling scheme types*Sampling scheme identifiers listed in Table 2.2 documented with a quality report (Annex 1.1)?
- Table 2.2. **New question is proposed**: “Are all ‘Sampling scheme identifiers’ listed in table 2.2 with identical names in all relevant Tables (2.4, 2.5, 2.6) and in Annex 1.1?”. The purpose is to clarify the existence of the Annex (previous question) and ensure a precise match of names, enabling unambiguous identification of the scheme and allowing an automatic match.
- Table 2.2. The question “Are all the variables covered by an Observation type*sampling scheme type*Sampling scheme identifier?” is proposed **to be deleted**. The reason is that the question is asking for empty cells, and according to Guidance there is no possible to have empty cells.
- Table 2.2. The question “In case that different sampling schemes apply to the same stock and not all of them are regionally coordinated, is it well explained in Table 2.2?” Proposed **to be deleted**. It’s unclear. EWG don’t see what the reason/added value behind this question is.
- Table 2.2. The question “Are the data subsets from Table 2.2 correctly referred to in table 1.1?” should be **modified to**: “Are "Individual biological parameters" or/and "Commercial age structure" included in the "Data subset" in Table 1.1.?”
- **New question is proposed**: “Are there any other remarks to be considered regarding Table 2.2?”

Table 2.13. Assessment grid for WP evaluation and identified areas for improvement to enhance clarity and reduce potential confusion in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 - Planning of sampling for biological variables	Table 2.2 - Planning of sampling for biological variables	
Are all stocks/species selected for sampling of biological variables in Table 2.1 listed for a sampling plan in Table 2.2?	Are all stocks/species selected for sampling of biological variables in Table 2.1 listed for a sampling plan in Table 2.2?	MAINTAINED
Are all the variables covered by an Observation type*sampling scheme type*Sampling scheme identifier?	Reason: Question is asking for empty cells, and according to Guidance there is no possible to have empty cells.	DELETED
Are all the Observation types*sampling scheme types*Sampling scheme identifiers listed in Table 2.2 clearly documented in a quality report (Annex 1.1)?	Are all the Observation types*sampling scheme types*Sampling scheme identifiers listed in Table 2.2 documented with a quality report (Annex 1.1)?	MODIFIED
	"Are all 'Sampling scheme identifiers' listed in table 2.2 with identical names in all relevant Tables (2.4, 2,5, 2,6) and in Annex 1.1?"	NEW QUESTION
In case that different sampling schemes apply to the same stock and not all of them are regionally coordinated, is it well explained in Table 2.2?	Reason: Unclear. We don't see what the reason/added value behind this question is. The proposal is to delete this question	DELETED
In case of oportunistic sampling, is the sampling scheme type listed for each species in acordance with sampling schemes in Tables 2.4, 2.5 or 2.6	In case of oportunistic sampling, is the sampling scheme type listed for each species in acordance with sampling schemes in Tables 2.4, 2.5 or 2.6	MAINTAINED
Are the agreements mentioned in this Section, if any, also listed in Section 1.3	Are the agreements mentioned in this Section, if any, also listed in Section 1.3	MAINTAINED
Did MS follow the guidance for filling Table 2.2?	Did MS follow the guidance for filling Table 2.2?	MAINTAINED
	Are there any other remarks to be considered regarding Table 2.2?	NEW QUESTION
Are the data subsets from table 2.2 correctly referred to in table 1.1?	Are "Individual biological parameters" or/and "Commercial age structure" included in the "Data subset" in Table 1.1.?	MODIFIED

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

Section 2.5:

- Table 2.5. the question "Are all parts of the population, including in and out of frames, reported? (at least for 'Sampling scheme type'='commercial fishing trip')" should be **modified to** "Are all parts of the population, including in and out of frames, reported?"
- Table 2.5. the question "Are all the "Sampling scheme identifier(s)" listed in Table 2.5 clearly documented in a quality report (Annex 1.1)?" should be **modified to** "Are all the Sampling scheme identifiers listed in Table 2.5 documented with a quality report (Annex 1.1)?
- Table 2.5. **New question is proposed**: "Are all 'Sampling scheme identifiers' listed in table 2.5 with identical names in all relevant Tables (2.2) and in Annex 1.1?"
- Table 2.5. The question "Are the data subsets from Table 2.5 correctly referred to in table 1.1?" should be **modified** to: "Are "PETS occurrences" included in the "Data subset" in Table 1.1.?"
- **New question is proposed**: "Are there any other remarks to be considered regarding Table 2.5?"

Table 2.14. Assessment grid for WP evaluation and identified areas for improvement to enhance clarity and reduce potential confusion in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5 - Sampling plan description for biological	Table 2.5 - Sampling plan description for biological	
Are all regions in which MS fleet is operating listed in the	Are all regions in which MS fleet is operating listed in the	MAINTAINED
Are observation type*sampling scheme type* species coverage*catch fraction and PSU type correctly identified and have coherence between them?	Are observation type*sampling scheme type* species coverage*catch fraction and PSU type correctly identified and have coherence between them?	MAINTAINED
Are all parts of the population, including in and out of frames, reported? (at least for 'Sampling scheme type'='commercial fishing trip')	Are all parts of the population, including in and out of frames, reported?	MODIFIED
In case of "Other" is selected in "catch fraction", is there an explanation in the comments?	In case of "Other" is selected in "catch fraction", is there an explanation in the comments?	MAINTAINED
Are all the "Sampling scheme identifier(s)" listed in Table 2.5 clearly documented in a quality report (Annex 1.1)?	Are all the Sampling scheme identifiers listed in Table 2.5 documented with a quality report (Annex 1.1)?	MODIFIED
	"Are all 'Sampling scheme identifiers' listed in table 2.5 with identical names in all relevant Tables (2.2) and in Annex 1.1?"	NEW QUESTION
Are the agreements mentioned in this Section, if any, also listed in Section 1.3	Are the agreements mentioned in this Section, if any, also listed in Section 1.3	MAINTAINED
Did MS follow the guidance for filling Table 2.5?	Did MS follow the guidance for filling Table 2.5?	MAINTAINED
	Are there any other remarks to be considered regarding Table 2.5?	NEW QUESTION
Are the data subsets from table 2.5 correctly referred to in table 1.1?	Are "PETS occurences" included in the "Data subset" in Table 1.1.?	MODIFIED

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

- *Diadromous species and recreational fisheries*

For the evaluation, include the comments for Annex 1.1 into the same group of questions of 2.3 and 2.4 so it is not disconnected.

Currently, there is no feedback question or cell in the evaluation grid to give feedback on the text boxes. The following question has been added to the assessment grid: "*Does Text Box 2.3 (2.4) contain all necessary information and is it consistent with the AR guidelines?"*

While the summaries of changes in WPs from the MS are supposed to highlight the most important changes and amendments of their 3-year WP compared to the last timeframe, MS do not follow a harmonized approach in providing this information. The level of detail differs and the understanding of what is important is subjective. There should be clear instructions what information should be provided and how this should be summarized in the summaries document, in order to make it valuable and usable for the evaluators to comment on the evolution of WPs.

3 EWG COMMENTS ON REGIONAL WORK PLANS 2025-2027

3.1 Latest status of RWPs

The regional Work Plans (RWPs) for all regions apart from the Long-Distance Fisheries (RWP LDF) have been commented by STECF previously (EWGs 21-17, 22-18 and 23-16). The RWP LDF has been submitted in September 2024 for the first time. In the RWP Med&BS, several changes have been made, which the EWG looked at.

3.2 Baltic

Inconsistency between the provisions in COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION (EU) 2021/1168 Chapter II point 1(a) on the certain species sampling requirement when the sum of the shares of the Member States concerned exceeds 25 % of the TAC and the absence of indication of that species sampling in RWP was noticed by EWG 24-15. One MS was excluded from small pelagic species sampling, when the threshold rules should not be applicable. Any further comments following that decision was not given in RWP.

When both average landings and threshold are marked as 'None' in the RWP, the EWG considers this an improper application of threshold rules. To prevent inconsistencies, the EWG recommends that the RCG apply the 'Landings < 200t' indicator in such cases. This applies to all species except diadromous for which no threshold applies, and then “none” in average landings and “none” in threshold is possible.

In Table 2.1, for the species selected for sampling in “Covered by commercial sampling scheme for length”, then, for those species the “Threshold rules used” should be “None” as it is specified in Com. Impl. Dec 2022/39. Some mistakes were found in the RWP.

In table 2.5, no “out of frame” parts of the population. We consider it should be included to understand if RWP includes all the population or does not.

3.3 North Atlantic, North Sea and Eastern Arctic (NANSEA)

Section 1:

For test study 5 (North Sea bass (*Dicentrarchus labrax*) stock marine recreational fisheries sampling) in the RWP NANS&EA 2025-2027 it is indicated that it is applicable for all MS. However, one MS indicated that it does not conduct any recreational fisheries outside the Baltic Sea region. Therefore, there is no basis to be part of that study. Consequently, the MS did not include the study in their NWP. This should be adjusted in the next RWP NANSEA.

Section 2:

When both average landings and threshold are marked as 'None' in the RWP, the EWG considers this an improper application of threshold rules. To prevent inconsistencies, the EWG recommends that the RCG apply the 'Landings < 200t' indicator in such cases. This applies to all species except diadromous for which no threshold applies, and then “none” in average landings and “none” in threshold is possible.

In Table 2.1, for the species selected for sampling in “Covered by commercial sampling scheme for length”, then, for those species the “Threshold rules used” should be “None” as it is specified in Com. Impl. Dec 2022/39. Some mistakes were found in the RWP.

Section 4.3:

While it is mentioned within the text of the RWP test study “Regionally coordinated stomach sampling programme” which MS are involved in this regional coordinated programme, under the agreements and commitments it is stated “MS involved: ALL”. Here only the participating MS should be listed.

3.4 Mediterranean and Black Sea (Med&BS)

Section 2:

In Table 2.1 there is an error in column L "Threshold rules used". When in column G "Average landings, in the reference years (tonnes)", the value is “none”, then in column L the value should be Landings < 200t. This applies to all species except diadromous and the elasmobranchs *Mustelus asterias, Mustelus mustelus, Mustelus punctulatus, Prionace glauca, Squalus acanthias* (species whose exploitation is regulated of the Barcelona Convention), for which no threshold applies.

In Table 2.1, the species *Callinectes sapidus, Galeus melastomus, Portunus segnis, Raja asterias, Raja clavata, Squalus acanthias,* which are defined in different GSAs in Table 1 of Com.Del.Dec 2021/1167 and in GFCM-DCRF Appendix A.3, are reported twice by several MS, one under the area defined by Com.Del.Dec 2021/1167 (in comments column) and another one under the area defined by GFCM-DCRF Appendix A.3. This is particularly confusing when MS selects the species to be sampled. The RCG must revise the RWP accordingly and find a solution to avoid these situations.

Section 4.1:

Two discrepancies were found between the RWP Med&BS and the WPs.

- For MSs who have a separate Annex 1.1 for stomach sampling for the MEDITS Survey, sampling scheme identifier “MEDITS_stomachs” should be filled in table 4.1. This has not been done in the RWP.
- For commercial fishing trips a generic sampling scheme identifier was filled in the RWP Med&BS. This does not correspond with the national sampling scheme identifiers reported in tables 2.5 and 2.2

Both discrepancies were acknowledged by the RCG Med&BS and MSs were advised to either follow the RWP or change accordingly in their NWP.

3.5 Large Pelagics (LP)

In the WP section 1, several MSs provided justification during the EWG of not including the test study on CKMR on Bluefin tuna from the RWP LP into their WPs.

3.6 Long-Distance Fisheries (LDF)

Section 2:

When both average landings and threshold are marked as 'None' in the RWP, the EWG considers this an improper application of threshold rules. To prevent inconsistencies, the EWG recommends that the RCG apply the 'Landings < 200t' indicator in such cases. This

applies to all species except diadromous for which no threshold applies, and then “none” in average landings and “none” in threshold is possible.

In Table 2.1, for the species selected for sampling in “Covered by commercial sampling scheme for length”, then, for those species, the “Threshold rules used” should be “None” as it is specified in Decision 2022/39.

Brama brama was excluded from the MS sampling when species is listed in Table 1 of the EU MAP Delegated Decision annex and Member State’s fishing fleet catches exceeded 200 t. Therefore, threshold rules are not applied. However, this species was not requested for sampling by the end user (CECAF), not included in multilateral agreement between 5 MS and not identified for sampling in RWP, even there is mandatory sampling by MS. This kind of derogation for sampling should be endorsed as an agreement by the respective RCG.

Section 4.2:

Data on by-catch including incidental catches of sensitive species are collected as a standard procedure provided in the observer manual relevant for the particular area.

3.7 Economic Issues (ECON)

The EWG does not have any comments on the RWP ECON.

4 EVALUATION OF DATA TRANSMISSION ISSUES (DTI)

With the new assessment cycle for Data Transmission Issues (DTi), the evaluation of the DTi for data calls in 2023 were done during the EWG 24-15 meeting. These issues were low and medium severity issues from the 2023 data call which had one year to complete the cycle to give the opportunity for the MS to resubmit missing or erroneous data. From the 2024 data call only high severity issues from the Fleet Economics data call were assessed.

4.1 Assessment of DT Issues from 2024 data calls

There was only one high-severity issue from the Fleet Economic data call 2024. This issue had no response from the MS, so it was assessed as 'Unsatisfactory' following the decision tree in the Guidance document (DTMT- Guidance Version_2024.06.03.pdf).

4.2 Assessment of DT Issues from 2023 data calls

The DT Issues from the 2023 data call contained 49 DT Issues from ICES, 32 from FDI, 8 from IOTC, 52 from Mediterranean and Black Sea. These issues were low- and medium-severity issues and MS, when responding to the issues and when relevant, also indicated resubmission of missing or corrected data in the 2024 data call. For FDI, the end-user (STECF EWG 24-11) checked if the data were submitted and included this information in the columns 'End User check' and 'End User comment'. This really helped the prescreeners and the EWG 24-15 when assessing the issues. A check was also provided by the Processing EWG (23-14) and for the Mediterranean and Black Sea EWG 23-09 indicating if the MS has resubmitted missing or corrected data.

Experts followed the decision tree in the DTMT Guidance document (DTMT-Guidance Version_2024.06.03.pdf). The issues were assessed by prescreeners and then again by experts with the expertise in the field for the specific data call during the EWG. The experts found that the decision tree is very helpful and speeds up the assessment process.

The issue was assessed as follow-up needed when the information provided by end-users and MS was contradictory. The follow-up responsible was then chosen as DG MARE. There were 5 DT Issues that were marked as 'Follow-up needed' which were all from ICES.

In cases when no response was provided from MS, the assessment was 'Unsatisfactory'. There was confusion by the prescreeners and experts assessing the DT Issues whether to allocate a follow-up responsible when the issues were assessed as 'Unsatisfactory'. The EWG discussed and decided that in cases of 'Unsatisfactory' assessment, there will be no follow-up responsible, as the cycle already enables the MS to fix the issue until after the data call. This should be added to the DTMT Guidance document (Decision tree) when the document will be updated in in the STECF Spring Plenary 2025. The DT issues were also assessed in cases of failure concerning data collection and MS commitment to improve data collection in the future. This was following the decision tree. The EWG 24-15 noticed that the MS responses to IOTC and Med&BS data calls were mostly evaluated as 'Unsatisfactory' or 'Unsatisfactory-to be revised'. The reasons behind these submission deficiencies remain unclear.

The DT Issues were assessed as 'Unsatisfactory - to be revised' where the MS had not submitted missing or corrected data set even if they have indicated that they would do it in the next data call. In these cases, the follow-up responsible was selected as 'MS' or 'End User' in cases where it wasn't checked if they had resubmitted the data.

Table 4.1. Assessment of the DT Issues from the data calls 2023, evaluated by EWG 24-15.

Data Call 2023	STECF EWG DTi Assessment	Number
ICES	FOLLOW-UP NEEDED	5
	SATISFACTORY	34
	UNSATISFACTORY	8
	UNSATISFACTORY – TO BE REVISED	2
Total		**49**
FDI	SATISFACTORY	17
	UNSATISFACTORY	2
	UNSATISFACTORY – TO BE REVISED	13
Total		**32**
IOTC	UNSATISFACTORY	5
	UNSATISFACTORY – TO BE REVISED	3
Total		**8**
Med and BS	SATISFACTORY	11
	UNSATISFACTORY	15
	UNSATISFACTORY – TO BE REVISED	26
Total		**52**
Processing Ind.	SATISFACTORY	5
	UNSATISFACTORY	3
	UNSATISFACTORY – TO BE REVISED	8
Total		**16**

Source: Member States submissions to 2024 Work Plans.

- *Suggestion for guidelines*

The EWG 24-15 noticed inconsistency between DTMT Guidance (version March 2024) and DTMT platform on the End User Check selection list. The Table 1 of DTMT Guidance shall be updated, where the selection from drop-down menu for End User Check field should be as follows: Cannot be checked/Checked not Ok/Checked ok/ Unknown.

4.3 Link between DT issues and WP

The EWG checked the list of DT issues with a focus on the relevance for the current WP in relation to economic and social data. Overall, the EWG found no DT issues which referred to gaps in MS WP which have been used as explanation for failure in data transmission.

5 DCF IT PLATFORM

5.1 Upload of MS WPs to the platform

17 Member States (MS) successfully submitted the National Work Plans (NWP) to the DCF IT platform before pre-screening and during the EWG 24-15 meeting. No major issues were reported by MS. The EWG noticed that the platform came up with warnings when uploading WPs, which required the MS to edit some parts to eliminate inconsistency with the EU-MAP or inaccurate typing.

5.2 Pre-screening comments using the platform

The pre-screeners observed significant progress in the functionalities of the developed IT platform, which facilitates coherent and timely reporting of issues identified during the MS WP assessment to MS. In 2024, submitting the WP via the IT platform was not mandatory. However, 16 MS and 5 RWP successfully completed all required validations and submitted the WP through the platform. The WP submitted through the IT platform contained only minor editing errors compared to those submitted traditionally in previous years. Since the pre-screened issues were commented on in grids and communicated to MS through both the traditional manual method and the IT platform, some additional time was required. Nevertheless, the MS and pre-screeners have learned to communicate at an advanced level and had the opportunity to investigate some deficiencies in facilities and functionalities. Pre-screeners noticed that comments could not be added to text within sections. As a result, comments were provided by adding them to one of the column headers. In one instance, the issue definition could not be attached to the Annex, while in another, it was successfully added. Additionally, if the same comment needed to be applied to several cells in the sheet, there was no option to select multiple cells simultaneously to apply the comment.

5.3 EWG working with the platform

The Bulgarian and Lithuanian national WP were selected to test the functionality related to EWG assessments and communication with MS on the IT platform. No major issues were observed.

The EWG reviewed both MS WPs, provided comments on identified issues, and the MS subsequently updated and re-uploaded their revised WP. While there is room for further improvement, it remains unclear how WP with outstanding issues should be communicated to MS for follow-up actions.

Additionally, the number of comments from the EWG and the corresponding responses should be counted separately and displayed clearly for better tracking.

5.4 EWG Feedback on ID rules from the IT platform

Drawing from the expertise of the EWG, several examples of ID rules that do not appear to be working properly were highlighted. This is not an exhaustive analysis of all ID rules due to time constraints; rather, it is a note on certain issues that may assist IT developers.

- *Table 2.2*

Rule ID: 80

Example of message: "*Species "Buccinum undatum" is not found in region "North-East Atlantic". Please check Table 1 for reference.*"

There were a lot of species for several, if not all MS, which the platform identified as not found in the regions. The Guidelines state: *"You may add additional rows, at the end, for species or stock not included in Table 1 of the EU MAP Delegated Decision annex, for which sampling is conducted by your Member State, RFMOs or is agreed at marine region level. Justify such an inclusion in the 'WP comments' column.*"

Therefore, to restrict the species list does not make sense as the warning appears very often.

Possible solution: The IT platform must have two lists of species, one from the EU-MAP decision (decision list) and another from Master Data Register (master list MDR_FAO_species.xls) where all species are listed. The IT platform firstly checks consistency with the decision list and if it isn't found there, it checks in the master list and if the species name isn't found in the master list, error is highlighted and this species name shall not be accepted.

Rule ID: 86

Example of message: "*Biological variable is not unique for combination of NLD, 2025, Pleuronectes platessa, North Sea and Eastern Arctic, ICES, 4, 7d Age. Items count: 7*."

But it has not to be unique. In this case, there are several "Age" lines because the "Sampling scheme identifier" is different. We have the sampling scheme identifier in Table 2.2 to allow that.

This could be a mistake in the rules of the platform.

Possible solution: unique combinations shall be revised probably by adding sampling scheme identifier. The same biological variable for the same species could be collected by different sampling schemes.

Rule ID: 186

Example of message: "*PSU type has incorrect format. Value: vessel x time is given.*"

The problem is the values accepted for PSU type are wrong in the WP template guidelines (https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/wpar-mastercodes_en#psutype)

PSU type	2.5	SRSWR, SRSWOR, UPSWR, UPSWOR, SYSS, CENSUS, NPQSRSWR, NPQSRSWOR, NPQSYSS, NPJS, NPCS, FIXED

The options for PSU there are “SRSWR, SRSWOR, UPSWR, UPSWOR, SYSS, CENSUS, NPQSRSWR, NPQSRSWOR, NPQSYSS, NPJS, NPCS, FIXED” and that are “Methods for PSU selection”, not “PSU type”.

6 CONTACT DETAILS OF EWG-24-15 PARTICIPANTS

[1] - Information on EWG participant's affiliations is displayed for information only. In any case, Members of the STECF, invited experts, and JRC experts shall act independently. In the context of the STECF work, the committee members and other experts do not represent the institutions/bodies they are affiliated to in their daily jobs. STECF members and experts also declare at each meeting of the STECF and of its Expert Working Groups any specific interest which might be considered prejudicial to their independence in relation to specific items on the agenda. These declarations are displayed on the public meeting's website if experts explicitly authorized the JRC to do so in accordance with EU legislation on the protection of personnel data. For more information: http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/adm-declarations

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List of Annexes

Electronic annexes are published on the meeting's web site on:
Data Collection Framework reports - European Commission (europa.eu)

List of electronic annexes documents:

EWG-24-15 – Annex 1 – Final WP evaluation grid by MS

EWG-24-15 – Annex 2 – Revised WP evaluation grid

EWG-24-15 – Annex 3 – Revised WP assessment instructions

EWG-24-15 – Annex 4 – Revised WP AR guidelines

List of Background Documents

Background documents are published on the meeting's web site on:
EWG 24-15: Evaluation of Work Plans for data collection and data transmission issues - European Commission
List of background documents:

EWG-24-15 – Doc 1 - Declarations of invited and JRC experts (see also section 6 of this report – List of participants)

List of Tables

Table 2.4 EWG 24-25 sub-groups by sections and expertise

Table 2.6 Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Section 1 on “General information”.

Table 2.7.1 Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Sections 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5 on biological data.

Table 2.7.2 Identification of discrepancies between RWPs and national WPs and possible solutions.

Table 2.8 Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Sections 2.3 and 2.4 on diadromous species and recreational fisheries.

Table 2.9 Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Section 2.6 on surveys-at-sea.

Table 2.10 Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Section 4 on the impact of fisheries on marine biological resources.

Table 2.11 Evolution in WPs from 2022-2024 to 2025-2027. Economic and social data.

Table 2.12 Assessment grid for WP evaluation and identified areas for improvement to enhance clarity and reduce potential confusion in Table 2.1.

Table 2.13 Assessment grid for WP evaluation and identified areas for improvement to enhance clarity and reduce potential confusion in Table 2.2.

Table 2.14 Assessment grid for WP evaluation and identified areas for improvement to enhance clarity and reduce potential confusion in Table 2.5.

Getting in touch with the EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you online (european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us_en).

On the phone or in writing

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

— by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),

— at the following standard number: +32 22999696,

— via the following form: european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/write-us_en.

Finding information about the EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website (european-union.europa.eu).

EU publications

You can view or order EU publications at op.europa.eu/en/publications. Multiple copies of free publications can be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local documentation centre (european-union.europa.eu/contact-eu/meet-us_en).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1951 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex (eur-lex.europa.eu).

EU open data

The portal data.europa.eu provides access to open datasets from the EU institutions, bodies and agencies. These can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes. The portal also provides access to a wealth of datasets from European countries.

STECF

The Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) has been established by the European Commission. The STECF is being consulted at regular intervals on matters pertaining to the conservation and management of living aquatic resources, including biological, economic, environmental, social and technical considerations.

Science for policy

The Joint Research Centre (JRC) provides independent, evidence-based knowledge and science, supporting EU policies to positively impact society

EU Science Hub
Joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu

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