STECF EWG 24-08

Evaluation of the 2023 Annual Reports for data collection and data transmission issues from 2023[1]

24-28 June 2024

<u>Terms of Reference (ToR)</u>

Background

Article 9 of the Data Collection Framework (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 Data Collection Framework (DCF) Regulation (EU) 1004/2017 requires 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:

(a)   the execution of the WPs; and

(b)   the quality of the data collected by the Member States.

In preparation for the above, EWG 24-08 will be convened online on 24-28 June 2024.

First regional work plans (RWP) for several RCGs were submitted for the STECF evaluation in October 2023. Following STECF EWG 23-16 remarks, the RCGs prepared updated versions and submit them for STECF consideration on 31 May 2024. After the final STECF approval, the RWP will be published in the DCF website, so that the MS can incorporate them into their national WP, to be submitted on 15 October 2024.

Following STECF request for IT tools to facilitate the AR evaluation, the Commission launched a project to develop a dedicated DCF platform for drafting, submitting and assessing the work plans and annual reports. The IT platform will be used on voluntary basis by MS to submit their AR for evaluation by EWG 24-08.

EWG 24-08 will report the findings to the plenary meeting of the STECF, which will take place 8-12 July 2024, EWG 24-08 will work on:
  − the ARs submitted by Member States, in traditional electronic way and through the IT platform,
  − the RWP submitted by RCGs in traditional electronic way,
  − the DTi uploaded on the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT),
  − the results of the pre-screening,

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[1] Only high severity issues from 2023 data calls should be assessed by EWG 24-08; medium and low severity issues will be left for assessment to EWG 24-15.

following relevant guidance documents.

Following review and endorsement by the STECF plenary in July 2024, all resulting documentation (annual report evaluation and summary list of follow-up actions and evaluation of data transmission issues and summary list of points requiring reaction) will be communicated to Member States by DG MARE.

Request to EWG 24-08

EWG 24-08 is requested to:

1. Evaluate Member States' AR on the implementation of their WPs in 2023, submitted to the Commission by 31 May 2024. Failures to implement the plan have to be reflected in the overview table (the traffic lights), even if correctly justified. EWG 24-08 must ensure that all AR modules are assessed in a consistent and comparable way, and that the MS performance and reporting are reflected in the STECF assessment.

   Prior to the EWG 24-08 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 ARs (background document 2), and the guidance for AR evaluators (background document 3). The pre-screeners may comment and propose amendments to the grid and guidance which in turn should be considered by EWG 24-08 before the AR evaluation starts.

   Pre-screeners will signal issues that can be fixed by the MSs before EWG 24-08 starts. The MS will provide explanations and resubmit the ARs if necessary at the latest on the first day of EWG 24-08. The following rules will apply to the prior communication:

   – All identified issues will be reviewed by another expert when flagged for sending to the Member States.
   – The issues will be collated and reviewed by the Commission before relaying them to the Member States at the end of the pre-screening exercise.

   The Commission may address additional requests to EWG 24-08 in relation to specific issues that arise from the pre-screening exercise.

2. Evaluate the severe data transmission issues (DTi) reported by end users for data calls launched during the year 2023. According to the revised DTMT guidelines, the MS can remedy the low and medium severity issues before STECF assessment, e.g by uploading missing data in a following data call. This approach may reduce the number of issues assessed in the past as 'follow-up needed'. In line with the STECF meeting calendar, the October EWG evaluating the WP will assess low severity issues after MS corrective actions, except for the fleet economy data call issues, that will be assessed by EWG evaluating AR.

   For data transmission issues, EWG 24-08 is requested to assess the issues from 2023, recorded in the DTMT[2]:

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[2] 31 issues reported for the 2023 Fleet Economics data call were evaluated by STECF EWG 22-16 (October 2023).

high severity DTi from the Med&BS (5 issues reported)
high severity DTi from FDI (1 issue reported)
high severity DTi from Fish processing (3 issues reported)
high severity DTi from ICCAT (xx issues reported)
high severity DTi from ICES (xx issues reported)
high severity DTi from IOTC (xx issues reported).
medium/low severity DTi from 2023 Fleet economics data call where MS took corrective actions (31 issues reported).

The experts are requested to use the DTMT guidance (version March 2024) for the evaluation.

3. Approve the final RWPs.
4. Comment on the trial use of the DCF IT platform for work plans and annual reports.

EWG 24-08 report

The report of the EWG 24-08 should contain the following:

1. At the EU (and regional) level:

   An overall evaluation of the execution of data collection, including an estimate of the performance of Member States, major issues and recurring issues across Member States. The overall evaluation should also aim to highlight any deficiencies in data collection in relation to end-user needs at the regional level so that such deficiencies can be taken into account in planning future regional work programmes.

2. For each Member State:

   a. With regard to ARs:

      (i) An overall evaluation of whether the Member State executed its data collection activities in accordance with its agreed WP for 2023.

      (ii) A detailed evaluation of the AR, based on the AR evaluation grid provided by the Commission, which will already include the result of the pre-screening exercise. The completed grid should highlight:

      - any persistent or recurring issues regarding *execution* of data collection activities;

      - any persistent or recurring issues regarding *reporting* of data collection activities;

      - all issues that may require the Commission to take remedial action (request for resubmission of the AR or clarification of specific issues). The Commission will seek clarification from Member States on any issues raised during the EWG meeting and feedback from Member State should be evaluated by the EWG during the meeting. The EWG is not required to evaluate feedback from Member States received after 27 June (one day before the EWG meeting ends);

      - any issues that are 'for information' only.

      (iii) A summary list of follow-up actions to be addressed by Member States at the end of the EWG.

b. With regard to DT issues:

(i) An overall evaluation of Member State performance, of main DT issues per end user/data call and of recurring issues by Member State.

(ii) An evaluation of Member States' responses via the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool online platform to issues raised by end users of scientific advice (i.e. the STECF, RCGs, ICES and RFMOs to which scientific data is provided by Member States) in relation to data calls issued in 2023. The EWG is requested to evaluate DTi in terms of content by closing issues which have been clarified and highlighting outstanding issues (recurrent and or having an important impact on the activity of a stock assessment working group and the quality of the assessment etc.). The data sets affected shall be underlined.

(iii) Identify in the evaluation per Member State the comments which require a reaction from Member State (draft a summary list) and those points which are for information only.

3. Final approval of the RWPs.

4. Comments on the DCF IT platform project

Background documentation

1. AR 2023 submitted by the MS, possibly updated following pre-screeners remarks (folder 01 background)

2. Pre-screening results, in evaluation grids (version from STECF PLEN March 2023) (background document 2)

3. Guidance for AR evaluators WP/AR assessment - European Commission (europa.eu) (version from STECF PLEN March 2023) (background document 3)

4. DTMT guidance (version from STECF PLEN March 2024) (background document 4)

5. DTissues recorded in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool: https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/dcf/dtmt.

6. Excel file with exported DTissues

7. RWP 2025-2027 submitted by RCGs

8. Documents related to the DCF IT platform

9. EWG 24-08 should take into account relevant assessment files from previous STECF EWGs, including:

– (WP): STECF EWG 21-17; STECF EWG 22-18; STECF EWG 23-16
– (AR): STECF EWG 22-07; STECF 23-08
– Liaison Meeting reports for RCG recommendations:
   o https://dcf.ec.europa.eu/regional-coordination/liaison-meetings_en

10. For data transmission issues, EWG 23-08 should also consider reports from the following STECF EWGs reporting DTi to the DTMT:

– (Med&BS): EWG 23-09 and EWG 23-12
– (FDI): EWG 23-10
– (Processing): EWG 23-14

- Relevant ICES reports on data coverage