



JRC SCIENCE FOR POLICY REPORT

Scientific, Technical and Economic  
Committee for Fisheries (STECF)

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Evaluation of  
DCF Work Plans 2020-2021  
and Data Transmission issues  
(STECF-19-18)

Edited by Christoph Stransky and Antonello Sala

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JRC119003

EUR 28359 EN

PDF

ISBN 978-92-76-11251-8

ISSN 1831-9424

doi:10.2760/049734

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STECF

ISSN 2467-0715

Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2019

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How to cite this report: Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries (STECF) – Evaluation of DCF Work Plans 2020-2021 and Data Transmission issues (STECF-19-18). Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2019, ISBN 978-92-76-11251-8, doi:10.2760/049734, JRC119003

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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 deals with the evaluation of DCF National Work Plan amendments for 2020-2021 and Data Transmission issues of the first half of 2019. The report was reviewed by the STECF at its 62<sup>nd</sup> plenary meeting held in Brussels, Belgium from 11-15 November 2019.

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# **SCIENTIFIC, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COMMITTEE FOR FISHERIES (STECF)**

## **Evaluation of DCF Work Plans 2020-2021 and Data Transmission issues (STECF-19-18)**

**The report of EWG 19-18 was reviewed by the STECF at its 62nd plenary meeting held in Brussels, Belgium from 11-15 November 2019.**

### **EWG-19-18 ToR**

The EWG 19-18 was asked to:

- evaluate the national work plans (WP) submitted by Member States and the regional work plans submitted by regional coordination groups (RCGs) by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019, in terms of conformity, scientific relevance of the data and quality of the methods and procedures;
- assess the data transmission issues reported by end users through the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool during the first half of the year 2019 (January to June).

### **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.

### **Summary of the information provided to STECF**

EWG 19-18 met in Bremerhaven 4-8 November 2019. Since the meeting took place the week before STECF PLEN 19-03, the final EWG report was not yet available to PLEN 19-03. The following STECF comments and suggestions are based on discussions among STECF members and (1) a presentation of outcomes from the EWG 19-18 meeting made by the chairperson, (2) a preliminary draft of the EWG 19-18 report and (3) the outcome of the evaluation of DT issues.

### **STECF comments**

#### Evaluation of amended national DCF Work Plans 2020-2021

STECF observes that 27 Member States submitted amended national work plans to the Commission within the legal deadline (31 October 2019). During the EWG, some Member States were contacted to update or clarify issues. Nevertheless, all amended work plans were successfully evaluated at the end of the meeting and there are only few outstanding issues to be followed up bilaterally between a Member State and the EU Commission.

STECF notes that the submission of amended Work Plans by Member States were of high quality and that most Member States used the instructions from EWG 18-18 on how to amend the work plan correctly. However, there are still some ambiguities in the guidance for the submission of Work Plans, the submission template and the evaluation template for which the EWG proposed improvements. These will be taken up by STECF and the Commission during the revision of those documents.

STECF observes that due to the absence of an online reporting tool, the EWG had to perform tedious manual comparisons between tables as well as between original and amended work plans.

STECF observes that common issues across several Member States include:

- Recreational fisheries: Most Member States extended pilot studies into 2020-2021, while a few converted pilot studies into regular sampling.
- Diadromous species: Inconsistencies observed for a few Member States, referring to sampling in marine waters to be included in Tables 1A-1C (stocks in commercial fisheries) and sampling in freshwater in Table 1E, were clarified with those Member States during the EWG.
- Surveys: 15 Member States submitted small updates. Some minor issues were solved during EWG.
- Social data (pilot studies): There were slightly different approaches in Member States, with some referring to extension and others commencing regular data collection. The EWG requested missing information from a few Member States during the EWG.
- Aquaculture: It was not clear how some Member States applied thresholds and the reasons for not collecting data is unclear for some Member States. The EWG requested missing information from a few Member States during the EWG.
- Processing industry: Some Member States excluded certain variables from data collection and inconsistencies with the WP template/guidelines were observed for a few MS.

#### Evaluation of Data Transmission (DT) Issues

STECF notes that new procedures, where DT issues from the first half of a calendar year are assessed by the EWG on Work Plans in November of that year, and DT issues from the second half of the calendar year are assessed by the EWG on Annual Reports in June of the following year, have been implemented in 2019. STECF notes that this procedure is an improvement from previous years since it reduces the time between the identification of DT issues by Experts Working Groups using data and their assessment by the dedicated EWGs.

During PLEN 19-01, a stand-alone DTMT guidance document for end-users on how to report DT issues in the DTMT tool and to guide the assessment of DT issues during EWGs was produced. The EWG 19-09 on Annual Reports updated the document in June 2019, and applied it in its assessment of DT issues reported in 2018. During PLEN 19-02, it was however agreed to treat 2019 as a pilot year and formally adopt changes to the DTMT guidance only next year during PLEN 20-01. Hence, the assessment of DT issues reported in 2018 and assessed by EWG 19-09 is not fully consistent with the EWG 19-18 assessment of DT issues reported in the first half of 2019.

STECF observes that 51 Data Transmission (DT) issues (from 16 Member States) from the EWG on the Annual Economic Report were reported in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT). Out of the 51 DT issues reported from the first 6 months of 2019, 7 were assessed as satisfactory, 5 as follow-up needed, 2 not assessed and 37 as unsatisfactory. Apart from the DT issues assessed as satisfactory, STECF advises DG MARE to follow-up on the DT issues with the corresponding Member States.

#### **STECF conclusions**

STECF endorses the outcomes of EWG 19-18 presented by the chairperson during the STECF PLEN 19-03. The final EWG report was not yet available at the time of writing.

With regard to the evaluation of amended Work Plans, STECF considers that the Work Plan guidance for the submission, template and evaluation sheet need to be updated, following the proposals from the EWGs on the evaluation of Work Plans and Annual Reports. This revision should occur before the submission of Work Plans 2021, to ensure a more efficient submission and evaluation of Work Plans in the future.

As in previous advice (STECF PLEN 14-02, 14-03, 15-02, 16-02, 17-02, 17-03, 18-02, 19-02), STECF reiterates that regional databases coupled with an online reporting tool would be a more efficient way to monitor the execution of Member States' Work Plans and Annual Reports, and to

assess DT issues raised by end-users. A regional database would also allow for a more effective assessment of DCF data quality.

With regard to DT issues, STECF concludes that the overall quality of the end-user feedback, and correspondingly, the quality of the STECF assessment of DT issues, has been improved through the DTMT guidance.

STECF concludes that dividing the assessment of DT issues in two EWGs allows for a timelier assessment of DT issues. STECF further concludes that in order to ensure a consistent evaluation of DT issues, a separate session at each spring plenary should be dedicated to assess and adopt proposed changes to the DTMT guidance.

### Contact details of STECF members

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## **REPORT TO THE STECF**

### **EXPERT WORKING GROUP ON Evaluation of DCF Work Plans 2020-2021 and Data Transmission issues (EWG-19-18)**

**Bremerhaven, Germany,  
4-8 November 2019**

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) 19-18 met in Bremerhaven, Germany, from 4 to 8 November 2019, to (i) to evaluate amendments in Member States' (MS) national Work Plans (WPs) under the Data Collection Framework (DCF) for the years 2020-2021, (ii) evaluate Data Transmission (DT) issues from the first half of 2019.

The work was conducted by 28 independent experts (see the list of participants in section 4). The Terms of Reference are presented below and the agenda is included in Annex 1.

### 1.1 Terms of Reference for EWG-19-18

The aim of this EWG was:

1. To evaluate the national work plans (WP) submitted by Member States and the regional work plans submitted by regional coordination groups (RCGs) respectively, by 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019, in terms of conformity, scientific relevance of the data and quality of the methods and procedures.
2. To assess the data transmission issues reported by end users through the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool during the first half of the year 2019 (January to June, which only includes the fleet economy data call).
3. AOB

## Background

### Work Plans

The **Work Plan** describes the planning of data collection on a national or regional level. Under the EMFF, the MS Operational Programmes must be supplemented by a work plan for data collection (Reg. 508/2014, Article 21)<sup>1</sup>. In addition, regional coordination groups may prepare draft regional work plans which shall be considered to replace or supplement the relevant parts of the national work plans of each of the Member States concerned (Reg. 2017/1004, Article 9)<sup>2</sup>. The deadline for submission of work plans to COM is 31<sup>st</sup> October of the year preceding the application in a specified format<sup>3</sup>.

The evaluation criteria for the Work Plans were discussed for the first time in 2016 in relevant DCF groups (Regional Coordination Meetings, Liaison Meeting) and compiled by a number of ad-hoc contracts. In addition, the COM compiled the general principles to be followed during the evaluation. A first evaluation of WPs for 2017-2019 took place in November 2016 during EWG 16-16 ([Evaluation of DCF National work plans and regional plans for 2017](#)). The evaluation of WP revisions for 2018 took place in November 2017 during EWG 17-13 ([Evaluation of DCF National work plans amendments for 2018/19](#)), following resubmission of 2017-2019 WP by 17 Member

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 508/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 May 2014 on the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund and repealing Council Regulations (EC) No 2328/2003, (EC) No 861/2006, (EC) No 1198/2006 and (EC) No 791/2007 and Regulation (EU) No 1255/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 17 May 2017 on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy and repealing Council Regulation (EC) No 199/2008 (recast).

<sup>3</sup> Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2016/1701 of 19.8.2016 laying down rules on the format for the submission of work plans for data collection in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors

States. The evaluation of 16 amended WPs for 2019 was carried out in November 2018 during the EWG 18-18 ([Evaluation of Work Plans & Data Transmission failures](#)).

### **Data Transmission Issues (TBC)**

The current procedure on the evaluation of **data transmission issues** does not provide for a timely improvement of data collection yet. It currently takes longer than one year to finalize the cycle and previous EWGs on data transmission issues have considered that the evaluation of data transmission issues should be done soon after the submission of data

For the first time as a pilot exercise during the EWG 18-18, DT issues from 2018 data calls evaluated by several STECF EWG, were uploaded on the online compliance platform to be assessed during the same year. Due to the amount of workload during EWG 18-18, DT issues were not assessed, but experts agreed on the need of doing so. The EWG 18-18 suggested that the DT issues of the first half of the year should be evaluated at the November meeting (EWG on WPs evaluation) and the DT issues of the 2nd half of the year should be evaluated at the June meeting (EWG on AR evaluation).

For this reason, experts are requested to evaluate data transmission issues from the first half of current year (January to June 2019), which means data call on fleet economics.

### **Specific tasks for the EWG**

#### **Work Plans**

Experts are invited to evaluate the **work plans** submitted by Member States **and** regional coordination groups (if any) for **2020-2021**, in accordance with Article 10 of Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004<sup>4</sup>, taking into account:

- the conformity of the work plans and any amendments thereto with the contents of Articles 6 and 9, and
- the scientific relevance of the data covered by the work plans for the purposes laid down in Article 1(1) and the quality of the proposed methods and procedures.

Taking into consideration that the EU MAP 2020-2021 is an extension of the preceding one, although split into two legal acts<sup>5</sup>, the same evaluation criteria and procedure will be used for this year's evaluation (see below) as in the past three years. The EWG should produce the following:

- Overview of the assessment and overall evaluation of the (amendments of) Work Plans (horizontal issues, spanning many MS/ sea basins)
- A list of running or planned pilot studies by topic and MS, including expected outcomes and the finalisation date. This information should serve as a basis to plan next steps at regional level, to analyse specific pilot studies and to incorporate specific outcomes in a regional sampling plan, where appropriate.
- Per Member State:
  - a) an evaluation of the work plan and any links to related section(s) of the work plans in the template provided by the Commission. The number of new work plans expected is 27. However, as the EU MAP has not changed in substance, some MS will resubmit amendments to their current WP rather than complete modifications.
  - b) Member State-specific issues relating to data collection as described in the work plan.
- Per region, in case of submission of a regional Work Plan:

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<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EU) No 2017/1004 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a Union framework for the collection, management and use of data in the fisheries sector and support for scientific advice regarding the common fisheries policy

<sup>5</sup> Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/909 of 18 February 2019 establishing the list of mandatory research surveys and thresholds for the purposes of the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors; and

Commission Delegated Decision (EU) 2019/910 of 13 March 2019 establishing the multiannual Union programme for the collection and management of biological, environmental, technical and socioeconomic data in the fisheries and aquaculture sectors.

- a) an evaluation of the coverage for the whole region for the specific section submitted and
- b) an evaluation of the added value of a regional work plan vs a national one.

In their feedback, the EWG should identify the comments that require a reaction by the MS(s) (resubmission of the Work Plan or clarification to the Commission) and those that are 'for information' only.

The evaluation will be based on the evaluation criteria used by the STECF EWG 17-13. The EWG should pay particular attention that the submitted work plans:

- address the issues raised by STECF EWGs 16-16, 17-13 and 18-18 and COM assessment grids during past evaluations.
- take into account RCG and PGECON recommendations
- where running or planned pilot studies is described, the MS should provide the expected outcomes and the finalisation date, and take into account the information provided by the recently finished grants (fishPi2, STREAM, RECOLAPE and SECFISH).

### **Data Transmission Issues**

The EWG is invited to provide its evaluation in the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool, following the guidelines provided for their assessment and reviewed by EWG 19-09. The EWG should produce the following:

- I. An overall evaluation of Member State performance, of main DT issues per end user 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, GFCM, ICCAT, IOTC, WCPFC, NAFO and other RFMOs to which scientific data is provided by Member States) in relation to data calls issued in the first half of 2019. The EWG is requested to identify and report any issues that have not been adequately accounted for by Member States, by:
  - classifying the DT issues according to whether they relate to data coverage (data not reported), data quality (the agreed collection procedures were not adhered to or the planned number of samples was not achieved) or timeliness of submission (legal and/or operational deadlines not met)
  - evaluating DT issues in terms of content by closing issues which have been clarified or highlighting failures (recurrent and or having an important impact on the activity of the 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.
- IV. Use and provide feedback on the Guidance on the use of the Data Transmission Monitoring Tool (DTMT) ver.5.2 (30 April 2019) for the reporting and evaluation of the DT issues in the DTMT online platform by end users, Member States and STECF experts; and the amended table 2 by EWG 19-09. Experts are also requested to consider how the section "end user feedback" in the DTMT platform can best be completed and by whom.

## **1.2 Structure of the report**

Sections 2 and 3 present the results produced by the STECF EWG 19-18. Section 2 contains a description of the Work Plan evaluation process of the EWG (ToR 1). In section 3, the EWG observations on the evaluation of Data Transmission (DT) issues are provided (ToR 2). Specific issues per Member State on their WPs 2020-2021 and DT issues are given in Annex 1.



## 2 EVALUATION OF MEMBER STATES' WORK PLANS FOR 2020-2021

### 2.1 Background information

To carry out the evaluation, the EWG was provided with the Work Plan (WP) tables and WP text (boxes) of all MS, documents explaining the amendments and supporting information, such as relevant EWG reports (from EWG 16-16, 17-13, 18-18, 19-09) and a guidance document on Data Transmission issues for end-users. For a full list of background documents, see Section 6.

### 2.2 Evaluation criteria, sheets and procedures

The EWG used the same evaluation criteria and evaluation sheets for the Work Plan (WP) amendments as the previous EWGs on WP evaluation (EWGs 16-16, 17-13, 18-18).

Overall, 27 MS submitted WPs. MS DCF National Correspondents were asked by DG MARE to be available during the EWG meeting to answer eventual questions for clarification raised by the EWG. Several MS were contacted by the Commission during the EWG with the aim to solve the issues bilaterally ('ping-pong') before the end of the EWG. For 6 MS, not all issues could be clarified during the EWG: Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Malta, Slovakia and Spain.

### 2.3 Formation of 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 the table below.

**Table 1 – Allocation of sections by sub-group and expertise**

Sections	Sub-group	Expertise
Biological sampling of stocks and fisheries, by-catch and environmental impacts of fisheries (sections 1A, 1B, 1C and 1F; Pilot study 2; sections 4 and 5A)	1	Biologists
Recreational fisheries, diadromous species (sections 1D and 1E; Pilot study 1); Data availability (section 6A)	2	Biologists
Research surveys at sea (sections 1G and 1H), section 7	3	Biologists
Fishing activity data (section 2); economic & social data (sections 3A, 3B, 3C and 5B; Pilot studies 3 and 4); Data availability (section 6A)	4	Economists

### 2.4 Evaluation process

MS generally replied fast to the requests of the EWG for clarification, which helped to finalise most of the WP evaluation. DG MARE appreciated this effort very much, including those MS who asked for more time to address the EWG questions. This procedure allowed DG MARE to plan and conduct the acceptance of WP amendments during the EWG and thereafter efficiently.

### **Biological data from sampling commercial fisheries**

The sub-group on biological data split into teams of two experts and one group of three which included an expert who had not undertaken evaluation of WPs yet to assist him with understanding the process to ensure consistency. Group plenaries were held at the start of each session to highlight the issues raised and identify those which were common across MS to ensure a common approach. Where these were identified, they have been detailed in the main text of this report to highlight them as well as including them in the MS evaluations. The available evaluation and comments from the previous WP evaluations were taken into consideration to identify recurrent issues and also identify progress especially in relation to data quality. The sub-group made the following observations:

### **Reference and sampling years**

During the preparation of the national WP 2020-2021, based on the WP submission guidance, it was not fully clear to the MS, if the reference years needed to be updated. As a result, during the evaluation of the national work programs, the EWG 19-18 noted that some MS updated the reference years, some MS did not.

The update of the reference years may mean setting up a new sampling plan for species which are now over the threshold but were below the threshold before the update. Therefore, after consultation with the Commission, it was decided to accept the different approaches, for this year's submissions. However, the EWG experts were requested to comment those cases in the evaluation tables, requesting MS to update the corresponding WP tables using data from the most recent available years and to submit an amended WP for 2021 by 31 Oct 2020.

The EWG noticed that due to unclear WP submission guidelines with regard to 'sampling years' and 'sampling period', MS often indicated the sampling period instead of the sampling year(s). In accordance with the guidance for Tables 1C and 1D, MS should state the year of planned sampling. For all sampling years concerned, the different years of sampling should be listed in different rows.

### **Legal references**

The EWG 19-18 noticed that some of the MSs did not update the legal references in the text boxes, but in some cases also in front page of the WP text file. All MSs should in the next submission ensure that all legal references are updated to the legislation in force for the period of the WP.

### **Table 1A completion**

When MS are completing Table 1A, there are two specific issues that are not addressed in the WP submission guidelines:

- Species landings where the TAC and landings are at the grouped species level and data are required at the species level. This impacts on providing average landings.
- Where the TAC is combined for two different species, this impacts on the % share of the TAC at the species level for identifying sampling requirements in relation to thresholds.

### **Species landings where the TAC and landings are at the group level and data are required at the species level:**

For example, in the case of *Lophiidae*, the TAC and landings are at the level of *Lophiidae* but the requirement in Table 1A is landings at the species level, *L. budegassa* and *L. piscatorius*. There is no 'correct way' to provide data in Table 1A in this instance and has resulted in MS using several different options to provide these data which can result in some difficulty in assessing the table and also in insuring that the correct value has been provided. The most commonly used options taken are as follows:



- Input the total landings in the first of the two species as listed and zero in for the second species with a comment stating that the landings are for both species combined in each of the comments fields.
- Input the total landings in the first of the two species as listed and a text comment ('comb') in for the second species with a comment stating that the landings are for both species combined in each of the comments fields.
- Input the total landings in both of the two species as listed with a comment stating that the landings are for both species combined in each of the comments fields.

As can be seen, all of these options rely heavily on the comments field being completed. It should also be noted that for some of the species where the landings are usually given at the grouped species level, some MS may only have one individual species present in the landings, so no comment would be needed and the landings can be allocated to the correct species. In Tables 1B and 1C, planned sampling is presented at the species level based on historic proportions of the two species within the landings and meets MS obligations.

Where the TAC is combined for two different species:

For example, in the case of *Scophthalmus rhombus* and *Psetta maxima*, there is a single TAC for both species combined. Depending on the proportions of the two species taken in the catches, it can be difficult to identify MS sampling responsibilities in relation to TAC share at the single species level.

**Table 5A (Data quality assurance)**

The EWG 19-18 noticed that there is an inconsistency in the Work Plan guidance 2020-2021 in the general comment of the Table 5A on "Quality assurance framework for biological data" and the instructions for the variable "Name of sampling scheme". In the general text, it is noted that data should be collected under Tables 1(A), 1(B) and 1(C) of the Delegated Decision, while in the guidance for variable "Name of sampling scheme", reference is also made to Tables 1D (recreational fisheries) and 1E (diadromous species), which are related to data collected under Tables 1(D) and 3 of the Delegated Decision.

As a result, during the evaluation of the national Work Plans, the EWG 19-18 noted that some MSs included documentation for sampling schemes from Tables 1D and 1E into Table 5A and some did not.

After consultation with the Commission, it was decided to accept the different approaches and to comment on those cases in the evaluation sheets, requesting an update in future Work Plan submissions if regular sampling is applied.

**Table 7A (List of meetings)**

Concerning section 7A of the national WP, there is no legal obligation for participation in meetings. The EWG 19-18 repeats the opinion expressed by the EWG 18-18 that without a list containing all relevant meetings and indicating which meetings are relevant for which MS, the table is just an indicator for participation and should not be subject to evaluation. Also, at the time of submission of the WPs, the full list of meetings for the upcoming sampling year is not yet complete.

Regarding this table in the Annual Report, in the current version of the guidance, it is written that MS should transfer the information from their accepted WP, before filling in the additional columns highlighted in grey. The EWG 19-18 considers that it should be allowed to include the addition of rows at the end of the table to reflect the attendance to those meetings which were not planned in Table 7A of the WP.

**Table 7B (List of recommendations)**

The EWG 19-18 noticed that MS did not have all information available for completing Table 7B. Although the reports of some RCGs and the PGECON report were final and published at the time of WP preparation, the Liaison Report, containing the overview of the recommendations and agreements, was not yet available.

The majority of the recommendations from the RCGs and PGECON are regional and supra-regional and orientated towards the further development of future Regional Work Plans. The EWG 19-18 repeats the opinion expressed by the EWG 18-18 and previous EWGs on WP and AR evaluation, that without a list compiled by the Commission, containing all relevant recommendations (RCGs, PGECON, STECF, WGs), it is difficult for MS to fill in this table. Moreover, such an overview would help the MS significantly in keeping track of the different recommendations and agreements and the actions and follow-up needed. For this year's WP submission, there was neither an endorsed list of recommendations available for the MSs or a specified period (from the guidelines) that limit the list of historical recommendations that have to be included in the table when compiling their national WPs. Consequently, there was not a coherent approach by the MSs when amending Table 7B and it was not possible to check the completeness of the entries by the EWG. The EWG 19-18 proposes the process that was followed in the past, where the latest recommendations that are made by PGECON and the RCGs are discussed, prioritized and approved during the Liaison Meeting (LM) is reintroduced. The endorsed list of recommendations should be made available in the LM report before the WP submission deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> of October which will assist National Correspondents in compiling their national WPs.

### **Table 7C (Bi-/Multilateral agreements)**

The EWG 19-18 did not have the full information on existing bi- and multilateral agreements between the Member States. Therefore, the EWG 19-18 was not in the position to evaluate the agreements between Member States presented in Table 7C in depth. Most of the agreements are existing agreements, extended for the period 2020-2021. The EWG 19-18, however, notes that in a number of cases of bilateral agreements, the information provided by the contracting parties has been slightly different. Therefore, the EWG 19-18 recommends that in future, the MS who have such agreements should harmonise the information between the respective partners. With regard to bi- and multilateral agreements, most MSs indicate a rollover of the existing agreements. In future, it is expected that the agreements will be replaced by regional sampling plans coming from the RCGs. Moreover, it is not clear from the guidelines what kind of other international agreements should be listed, e.g. cost-sharing agreements on surveys etc.

### **Recreational fisheries and diadromous species**

The sections for recreational fisheries (1D), diadromous species (1E) and pilot study 1 of the resubmitted work plans were reviewed by a subgroup of four experts. In most cases, amendments were minor updates of text and tables. Several Pilot Studies 1 were extended and adjusted based on the experiences made during the 2017-2019 phase. In one WP, Pilot Study 1 was converted into regular sampling of recreational fisheries, and another MS proposed to include a regular sampling of recreational fisheries on the basis of the main species identified in the 2017-2019 period.

Inconsistencies were observed in how sampling of diadromous species in marine waters and freshwaters were included in the WP tables. Sampling of diadromous species in marine waters must be included in Tables 1A, 1B and 1C, while a description of sampling in freshwaters should be presented in Table 1E. These issues could mostly be solved during the meeting. According to the WP guidance, EMUs should be indicated for *Anguilla anguilla* in the area columns of Tables 1D and 1E. Especially in Table 1E, this was not done by a number of MS, most likely because EMU was not mentioned in the column heading. In addition, it was repeatedly observed that MS did use results of surveys or samplings as "planned numbers" in the WP. This is not appropriate since results are not known *a priori*. Due to inconsistencies in the WP guidance, a number of MS did not include documentation for sampling schemes from Tables 1D and 1E into Table 5A. After consultation with DG MARE, these MS were requested to do so in future WP submissions.

The EWG 19-18 noticed that there is an incorrect reference in the Work Plan guidance 2020-2021 in the general comment relating to the text box for *Pilot study 1: Relative share of catches of*

*recreational fisheries compared to commercial fisheries. The correct text should be 'This Box fulfils paragraph 2 point (a) (iv) of Chapter III of the Delegated Decision on the multi-annual Union programme'* instead of mentioning Chapter V.

### **Research surveys at sea**

The sub-group evaluating the modules related to surveys at sea (sections 1G and 1H) worked on 15 amended Work Plans. Overall, the amendments included small alterations that were explained by the MSs and some editorial changes. Some minor issues arose and were all solved with the concerned MSs during the EWG.

### **Economic and social data**

A common evaluation approach was proposed at the beginning of the sub-group work. The WPs were checked according to the List of Amendments submitted by MS. The evaluation and comments of previous EWGs (EWGs 16-16, 17-13 and 18-18) were taken into consideration.

An additional line was included to the evaluation template for the information provided for Pilot Study 3 - "Social data for fleet and aquaculture (Pilot Study 3)".

The following amendments for the WP 2020 -2021 templates were proposed:

- Revised definition for Table 3A (economic and social data collection for fisheries), column "Fishing technique" and "Length class":
  - "Member State shall refer to the naming convention used in Table 5(B) of the multi annual Union programme. Put an asterisk in the case the segment has been clustered with other segment(s) for data collection purposes. Inactive vessels shall be included as separate **segments.**"
- Sampling year/period should be better specified in the WP guidelines for Table 5B:
  - **"The year should refer to the actual year of the implementation of the survey and not to the reference year for the data collected."**

In general, the economic sections in most MSs' WPs have a high level of quality and only minor issues were found. The corrections were requested from the MS during the meeting to minimise the possibility of mismatch between the approved versions of Work Plans with future Annual Reports.

The following issues were found:

#### **Section 2A Fishing Activity Data**

- The planned coverage was not provided when additional data collection was planned.
- The inactive vessels were missing from the table.
- The gears and segmentation were not in line with the WP submission guidelines.
- Supra-regions, Fishing technique and Length classes were not reported according to naming convention used in the EU-MAP.

#### **Section 3A Economic and social data for fisheries**

- Inconsistencies between Planned sample rate and Type of data collection scheme were detected (e.g. the Planned sample rate for Probability Sample Survey reported as 100%. The Type of data collection scheme for the social variables was not in line with the text provided in Text Box 3 where Census is indicated etc.)

- Supra-regions, Fishing technique and Length classes were not reported according to naming convention used in the EU-MAP.
- Types of data collection in Table 3A were not consistent with those provided in Text Box 3A.
- Some economic and social variables were missing from Table 3A.

#### Pilot Study 3 Social data for fleet and aquaculture

Three possible cases were detected for the Pilot Study 3 for the social data collection:

- The Pilot Study was implemented for 2017 and the results are incorporated into the regular data collection for 2021, when the data will be collected for 2020.
- The Pilot Study was committed in 2017 and MS continued to implement the Pilot Study due to the difficulties to collection of the social data.
- No information provided about the previous Pilot Study and information about how the future social data collection will be organised (e.g. lack of information provided on methodology, duration and expected outcomes for the Pilot study 3). In such case, the additional information was requested from MS during the EWG 19-18.

#### Section 3B Economic and social data for aquaculture

- No justification provided why the aquaculture data collection is not going to be implemented.

#### Thresholds for aquaculture

- The thresholds for aquaculture data collection were not applied and reason was not described in the Text Box 3B. According to the COM Implementing Decision 2019/909, three types of the threshold could be applied: *"No social and economic data on aquaculture need to be collected if the total production of the Member State is less than 1 % of the total Union production volume and value. No data need to be collected on aquaculture for species accounting for less than 10 % of the Member State's aquaculture production by volume and value. Additionally, Member States with a total production of less than 2,5 % of the total Union aquaculture production volume and value may define a simplified methodology such as pilot studies with a view to extrapolate the data required for species accounting for more than 10 % of the Member States' aquaculture production by volume and value."*

#### Pilot study 4 Environmental data on aquaculture

- No information provided on methodology and expected outcomes for Pilot study 4.
- No justification provided why environmental data collection is not going to be implemented.

#### Section 3C Economic and social data for the processing industry

- Some variables from EU-MAP Table 10 were excluded from data collection.
- The Data source, Type of data collection scheme and Planned sample rate were provided aggregated in a single line. However, each type of data collection, planned sample rates and data source should be reported separately due to the difference in achievements rates.

#### Table 5B Quality assurance framework for socioeconomic data

- The information when documentation will be publicly available was not provided.
- Incorrect links to the quality documentation were provided.
- The names of the sectors (fleet, aquaculture, processing), to which the Quality Assurance Framework refers, were missing from Table 5B.
- The name of data collection scheme and name of data sources were provided in aggregated format.

#### Table 6A Data availability

- Years of implementation were not updated.
- No information provided about availability of social data.

#### Table 7B Follow-up of recommendations and agreements

Table 7B was not evaluated and comments have not been made due to lack of recommendations from PGECON addressed to MS.

## **2.5 Evaluation results**

The detailed evaluation results by MS are given in Annex 1 and in the electronic annex.

## **3 EVALUATION OF DATA TRANSMISSION ISSUES**

The EWG 19-18 evaluated Data Transmission (DT) issues of the 2019 fleet economics data call, using the JRC online tool (Data Transmission Monitoring Tool, DTMT). For the first time, the DCF EWG in November assessed DT issues from the first half of the year (fleet economics data call). The next DCF EWG in June 2020, on the evaluation of Annual Reports, will assess DT issues from data calls of the second half of 2019. This exercise already provides faster feedback to MS, allowing a better solution for the issue.

51 issues were addressed. It was recognized that the number of issues follows a decreasing trend. Using the online tool again proved to be efficient and convenient. When applying the DTMT end-user guidelines (Background doc. 2), it turned out that the meaning of the 'STECF DTF assessment' was unclear, in particular in context with the 'STECF DTF comment': The explanation of the issue by the MS could be clear and thus satisfactory, but the situation itself, i.e. the lack of certain data might still be unsolved, which would by default be unsatisfactory. In fact, the prescriptive nature of the guidelines, i.e. the link between issue and assessment, makes the assessment virtually redundant.

There is still some ambiguity within the DTMT guidelines: It is unclear if STECF should assess the MS comment or the issue itself. In the first case, the judgment could be 'satisfactory' even if according to the DTMT guidelines, the issue is 'unsatisfactory'. For instance, a variable has not been collected because the response rate from the survey was too low. The MS is aware of this and it comments that actions are taking place to avoid in the future this issue. In this case, the MS comment is acceptable, but the data were not collected, so, according to the DTMT guidelines, the final STECF assessment is 'unsatisfactory'. In the DTMT guidelines, it is written that the judgement should be 'satisfactory', where the end-user considers that the MS response is satisfactory, covers the issue and no further action is needed. But according to Table 2 in the DTMT guidelines, the final assessment considers if data have been actually sent or not.

The DTMT guidelines are helpful to evaluate the DT issues for standard cases, such as:

- No data was submitted due to non-implemented data collection;

- Data are confidential;
- Unclear MS comment in reply to the issue flagged by the end-user;
- Information provided by end-users and MS is contradictory.

However, for cases when the data was collected but not submitted due to the different reasons, the final conclusions and DT evaluation should be based on the expert knowledge and should not have to be a standard comment.

For this reason, a clear and detailed end-user comment about the use of the requested data is necessary. The issue should be clearly identified by an end-user in the DTMT and the following information should be provided:

- Name of variable (as listed in the EU-MAP);
- Share in % of the missing information from the national totals;
- Years of the missing data;
- The use of data (for example, some data are requested annually but not used in the AER calculations);
- How the lack of data influences AER quality (for example, MS excluded from the chapter or figures in the AER due to lack of the data).

During the EWG, the implications of the judgment were briefly discussed. Unless the issue was judged 'satisfactorily' addressed by the MS, it was the understanding of the EWG that the Commission would follow-up on the issue, regardless if the STECF DTF assessment was 'unsatisfactory' or 'follow-up needed'.

It has to be borne in mind that the vast majority of DT issues for the economic data calls is relatively straightforward to assess: data are either available, but not delivered, or data are not available. In general, there is no exemption from the obligation to deliver data in accordance with the WP. To address the first type of issues, the EWG 19-18 recommends to further improve the already well-proven JRC 'early alert system' of DT issues to allow MS to upload missing (but available) data on time. For the second type, a more standardized workflow appears advisable, laying down consequences executed by COM, which is a task beyond the scope of STECF. Some issues have been repeatedly flagged by the end-user, the communication between MS and COM ended up in a loop, and the issue appears in the list of DT issues for evaluation again. Finding a solution for these cases would further lower the number of DT issues to be assessed.

## 4 CONTACT DETAILS OF EWG 19-18 PARTICIPANTS

<sup>1</sup> - 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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## **5 LIST OF ELECTRONIC ANNEXES**

Electronic annexes are published on the DCF dedicated report section of the STECF website on:  
<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/dcf-dcr>

List of electronic annex documents:

EWG-19-18 – Annex 1 – Work Plan evaluation sheets by Member State (Excel file)

## **6 LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Background documents are published on the meeting's web site on:  
<http://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/web/stecf/ewg1918>

List of background documents:

EWG-19-18 – Doc 1 - Declarations of invited and JRC experts (see also section 4 of this report – List of participants)

EWG-19-18 – Doc 2 - DTMT Guidance (version 30 May 2019), 19 pp.

EU MAP:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019D0909&from=EN>  
<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019D0910&from=EN>

Work Plan template:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016D1701&from=EN>

Relevant STECF EWG reports (EWG 16-16, 17-13, 18-18, 19-09):  
<https://stecf.jrc.ec.europa.eu/reports/dcf-dcr>

**Annex 1: Member State specific issues on the Work Plans 2020-2021 and Data Transmission issues from the 2019 fleet economic data call**

**Member State: AUT - Austria**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Austria, as land-locked country, is just preparing for data collection of fresh water aquaculture. They plan to conduct some pilot studies in the period 2020-21, and not any regular study or regular data collection. Therefore, the evaluation of Austrian WP template, regarding conformity with the legislation, is not applicable.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

Not applicable

**3. Recreational fisheries**

Not applicable

**4. Diadromous species**

Not applicable

**5. Incidental by-catch**

Not applicable

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

Not applicable

**7. Fishing activity variables**

Not applicable

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

Not applicable

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

Austria plans to conduct some pilot studies in the period 2020-21.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

Not applicable

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Not applicable

**Member State: BEL – Belgium**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines in the presentation of their WP without any major issues.  
Minor issues and comments are briefly stated below.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

Unclearities regarding *Rajidae* in Table 1B were clarified during meeting.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues

**4. Diadromous species**

For the next WP submission, MS is encouraged to provide further details (derived from the data collection in line with Eel management plans conducted from INBO) to fit into the Work Plan / reporting scheme of the EU-MAP.

**5. Incidental by-catch**

RCG intersessional work in progress, no further issues.

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues

**7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

MS encouraged to include length class also for inactive vessels.

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

Minor issues were clarified during meeting. No actions needed.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Six issues were identified with low severity related to coverage.

**Member State: BGR - Bulgaria**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Bulgaria did very well in terms of conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines.

No major issues were found during the evaluation. An outdated web link was amended during the meeting. Some minor advice was given on nomenclature for the future.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No issues.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues.

**4. Diadromous species**

Not applicable.

**5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues.

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues.

**7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues.

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues.

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues.

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

One issue identified with low severity related to coverage.

## **Member State: CYP Cyprus**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and no major issues were identified.

Minor issues are briefly stated below.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

In Table 1C, *Scomber japonicus* needs to be updated to *S colias*.

Table 5A Sampling Design - the link to sampling design for the ICCAT region is incorrect.

For data processing - Documentation on editing and imputation for the ICCAT Region is available and script is being tested. MS is advised to check links and to provide documentation on data processing as it becomes available.

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues

### **4. Diadromous species**

No issues

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

MS was requested to provide more information on the delay of their proposed pilot study 2.3. MS replied that the pilot study will be completed by the end of the current EMFF. This was accepted.

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

The Fishing gear in some segments is provided with redundant information ("category C"), which is not according to the EU-MAP.

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

The Fishing gear in some segments is provided with redundant information ("category C"), which is not according to the EU-MAP.

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Three data transmission issues of low severity were identified.

**Member State: CZE - Czech Republic**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

The Czech Republic, as a land-locked country, is planning data collection of economic and social data for aquaculture and activities for anadromous and catadromous species. Overall conformity is good with some recommendations for further improvements in WP format and content.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

Not applicable.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

Not applicable.

**4. Diadromous species**

The Czech Republic plans several new activities to investigate management success for eel. Some issues for future submission are required.

**5. Incidental by-catch**

Not applicable.

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

Not applicable.

**7. Fishing activity variables**

Not applicable.

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

Not applicable.

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

The Czech Republic is planning data collection of economic and social data for aquaculture. Some improvements for the WP format and variables needed.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

Not applicable.

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Not applicable.

**Member State: DEU - Germany**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied mostly with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and no major issues were identified.

Minor issues are briefly stated below and were resolved during the EWG 19-18.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

For the next submission of Work Plans: MS should insert in Table 1C, for all sampling years concerned, the different years of sampling in different rows of the table.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

For the next submission of Work Plans: MS is encouraged to document in Table 5A each sampling scheme from Table 1D, if regular sampling is applied.

**4. Diadromous species**

For the next submission of Work Plans: MS is encouraged to document in Table 5A each sampling scheme from Table 1E, if regular sampling is applied.

**5. Incidental by-catch**

No actions needed

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

No actions needed

**7. Fishing activity variables**

No actions needed

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No actions needed

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No actions needed

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

For the next submission of Work Plans: data on precision and bias for data processing is still not available – MS is encouraged to continue to investigate sources of tools for evaluating precision and bias.

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

One issue identified with low severity related to coverage.

## **Member State: DNK - Denmark**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines in the presentation of their WP, but one major issue was identified. In the WP submission, there were inconsistencies in the sampling years. The sampling year of 2021 is missing in Tables 1C and 1F and a redundant year (2022) is in Table 1B.

Some economic variables are missing.

Minor issues and comments are briefly stated below.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

See above for the comments on the missing sampling years

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

MS is asked to use EMU as unit in "area" column, following the guidelines.

### **4. Diadromous species**

Regarding the WP table, MS should follow the guideline terminology concerning frequency. MS should avoid giving result / outlooks as planned numbers for independent sampling.

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

The sampling year of 2021 is missing in Table 1F. This should be done for next submission of WP.

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

In Table 2A, gear ("all fleets") and length class provided are not in line with the EU-MAP (e.g. <8m, 12m or larger). However, Table 2A is intended to contain information only *"where data are not to be recorded under Regulation (EU) No 1224/2009 or where data collected under Regulation (EU) No 1224/2009 are not at the right aggregation level for the intended scientific use"*. All Danish data in Table 2A are collected under the Control Regulation and appropriate for scientific use.

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

Variables "FTE national" missing for all segments. "Value of physical capital", "consumption of fixed capital" and "value of quota and other fishing rights" missing for inactive vessels.

In Table 3A, planned sample rate is 100% when type of data collection "Non-Probability Sample Survey" is applied.

Other minor inconsistencies amended during the meeting.

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

Minor inconsistencies amended during the meeting.

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

Minor inconsistencies amended during the meeting.

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

For Denmark, five issues were observed, one with medium severity, four with low severity.



## **Member State: ESP - Spain**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS WP is in conformity with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. Some information is missing in different parts of the WP (Tables 2A, 3A and 3C) and MS is encouraged to closely follow the Guidance in future WPs to avoid inconsistencies between tables.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

The MS should follow the guidelines for WP submission in future WPs in order to avoid inconsistencies between tables.

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues

### **4. Diadromous species**

Some information on planned sample numbers and number of sites are missing in Table 1E.

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

MS is encouraged to provide range of number of fish hauls, CTDs and dives and align with the comment box for fish hauls and to adjust the text box describing the survey designs according to the added information in future WP submission.

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

Several effort variables missing for vessels <10m. Information is still missing in Table 2A.

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

"Consumption of physical capital" and "value of quota and fishing rights" missing for inactive vessels. Both missing variables should be listed in Table 3A.

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

MS does not plan to collect several variables. If data collection is performed, it should include all variables in Table 3C.

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Three issues were identified with medium or high severity related to coverage and quality.

## **Member State: EST - Estonia**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Estonia has followed the legislation and guidelines according to the overall WP conformity. No major issues have been observed during the STECF evaluation. Some minor issues could be clarified during an EWG 19-18 expert interplay with MS satisfactorily.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

Planned numbers are given for commercial landings. No targets are provided for sampling at sea. No action needed.

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues.

### **4. Diadromous species**

No issues.

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues.

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

MS was requested through expert-MS interplay during EWG 19-18 to clarify, except for the amendment of the hydro-acoustic recordings to core variable in Table 1H, why the amendments have been made in Tables 1G and 1H. Explanations were given and accepted during expert-MS interplay as this regards non-mandatory surveys. Also, the column 'agreed at RCG level' of Table 1G has to be filled according to the WP submission guidelines, i.e. 'Y' or 'N'. After ping-pong, this variable was filled as 'N'. After expert-MS interplay, amendments are satisfactory; no further action needed.

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues.

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues.

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues.

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues.

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

One recurrent issue identified with medium severity related to coverage.

## **Member State: FIN - Finland**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and no major issues were identified.

Minor issues are briefly stated below and were resolved during the EWG 19-18.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No issues.

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues.

### **4. Diadromous species**

No issues.

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues.

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

Modification to the BIAS survey are editorial and justified. With regard to BITS, as the Finnish share of the Baltic cod TAC for both eastern and western Baltic cod is less than 3%, the MS has no obligation for participating in the survey. Therefore, the removal is justified but the MS is encouraged to participate in the survey again in future.

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues.

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues.

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues.

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues.

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Three issues of low severity have been identified.

## **Member State: FRA – France**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and most issues that were identified were resolved at EWG 19-18.

Overall good progress has been made in the provision of data relating to Data Quality Assurance.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No issues

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues

### **4. Diadromous species**

No issues

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues – Acronyms for surveys should follow those as given in the regulation in future WP and AR submissions.

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

Unpaid labour is a mandatory variable and cannot be dismissed. Following PGECON guidelines, the MS should provide an approximation/estimation of these variables to discriminate them from the total employment/personnel costs. The MS should resubmit Table 3A and Text Box 3A accordingly. In addition, social variables should be entered in Table 3A (only FTE National is provided).

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

In Section 6, data availability from Pilot Study 3 should be reported on a separate line in future WP submissions.

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

In Section 6, data availability from Pilot Study 3 should be reported on a separate line in future WP submissions.

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

There are 13 issues for France. Nine of them of low severity, two of medium and two of high severity. One of the medium severity issues has not been assessed as the end-user should be more specific in defining the deficiencies.

**Member State: GBR – United Kingdom**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and no major issues were identified. For the next WP submission, MS should update WP as stated below.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No major issues. For the next WP submission, the MS should update all relevant tables with the most recent available reference years. Also, the MS was requested to update the text of *Anguilla anguilla* in the next revision of the WP.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

No major issues. MS was requested to add planned activities in 2021 to Table 1D.

**4. Diadromous species**

No issues

**5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues

**7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

No issues

**Member State: GRC - Greece**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. No major issues were identified.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No issues

**3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues

**4. Diadromous species**

In future, Greece should provide documentation in Table 5A for each sampling scheme from Tables 1D and 1E if regular sampling is applied.

**5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

No amendments made by MS

**7. Fishing activity variables**

No amendments made by MS

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

After requested by the EWG, Greece included the variable "Medicines or treatments administrated" in Pilot Study 4.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

One recurring issue identified (reported as three issues on the DTMT) with high severity related to coverage.

## **Member State: HRV - Croatia**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and no major issues were identified.

In the next WP submission, Croatia should provide documentation in Table 5A. MS should have a clear plan to improve the availability of their documentation and have some or all available in the next Annual Report (for 2019, due May 2020) and WP (for 2021, due Oct 2020).

Other minor issues are briefly stated below.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

List of species is updated to include new species added to the GFCM G1 Species Group. Planned biological variables are updated. MS must update column M in Table 4A (avg. PSU), as the numbers have not changed since the last submitted WP, even though the reference years have changed. Also, in Table 4D, all columns with average numbers should be updated to correspond to the new reference years. In the 2017-2019 WP submitted in Oct 2018, the MS commented that all documentation would be available by the end of 2018. In the 2020-21 WP, however, the MS states that all documentation will be available by the end 2019. MS should have a clear plan to improve the availability of their documentation and have some or all available in the next Annual Report (for 2019, due May 2020) and WP (for 2021, due Oct 2020).

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

Pilot study is prolonged until 2020-2021. No issues.

### **4. Diadromous species**

Pilot study is prolonged until 2021. No issues.

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues.

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

No relevant changes submitted by MS.

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

No relevant changes submitted by MS.

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No relevant changes submitted by MS.

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No relevant changes submitted by MS.

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No relevant changes submitted by MS.

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

No issues.

**Member State: HUN - Hungary**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

As a land-locked country, Hungary is only obliged to parts of the fisheries data collection. Overall conformity is good, with some recommendations for further improvement in next WP and AR.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

Not applicable.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

Not applicable.

**4. Diadromous species**

Not applicable.

**5. Incidental by-catch**

Not applicable.

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

Not applicable.

**7. Fishing activity variables**

Not applicable.

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

Not applicable.

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No major issues, but some room for improvement for next WP and AR with regard to the completeness of the table.

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

No issues.



## **Member State: IRL - Ireland**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

MS WP is generally in line with the EU-MAP. Most amendments submitted are satisfactory, only some issues to be corrected for the next submission, such as: In Table 1F, stratum ID code did not match all with the strata in Tables 4A and 4B, some of them corrected, but still there are missing strata. For Pilot study 4, social data for the data sets should be added. Regarding the agreement with Denmark in future, MS should clarify the period of agreement and if boarfish is included.

The WP is in accordance with the template, only minor issues to be corrected for next submission, such as avoid creating blank lines in the tables, sampling year period to be updated in some tables, only list relevant recommendations to be included.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No issues

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues

### **4. Diadromous species**

No issues

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

In Table 1F, the stratum ID code did not match with the strata in Tables 4A and 4B, some of them corrected but still there are missing strata from Table 1F regarding sampling onshore that are present in Table 4A and 4B.

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

The Pilot study 4 should be added and social data for the Data sets in the column B in future WP submissions.

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Four issues identified with medium severity, out of which three are related to coverage and one to quality. One issue has not been assessed, as the end-user should be more specific in defining the deficiencies.

**Member State: ITA - Italy**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and no major issues were identified.

Minor issues are briefly stated below.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

Amendments made regarding the sampling year/period, the biological requirements and the values of several variables. Minor issues detected related to stratum ID codes in Tables 1F and 4A.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

Pilot study was prolonged. No issues.

**4. Diadromous species**

Minor issues, Textbox and Table 1E updated.

**5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues.

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

No amendments made.

**7. Fishing activity variables**

No amendments made.

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No amendments made.

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

Pilot Study 3 was updated. No issues.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

Changes in the sampling scheme to solve previous years' problems. No issues.

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

No issues.

**Member State: LTU - Lithuania**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

The WP is in line with the EU-MAP. MS is encouraged to adjust minor deviations from the guidelines in the next WP submission (Text Box 1G, Text Box 3A and Table 7A)

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No issues

**3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues

**4. Diadromous species**

No issues

**5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues

**7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Two issues, clarified by MS.

## **Member State: LVA - Latvia**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. No major issues were identified. Some minor issues regarding Tables 1D, 1E and 5B are expected to be solved by the MS in next submissions of the WP.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No issues.

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

No major issues, but for the next submission, the MS should distinguish in the tables between recreational fisheries in freshwater and marine waters.

### **4. Diadromous species**

No major issues, but for the next WP submission, the MS should follow the WP submission guidelines and name EMUs in the area column in Table 1E.

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues.

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues.

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues.

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No major issues and no action is needed now, but in the next WP submission, the MS should include the name of the sector (fleet, aquaculture, processing) to which the Quality Assurance Framework refers (in the comment) in each line of Table 5B.

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No major issues and no action is needed now, but in the next WP submission, the MS should include the name of the sector (fleet, aquaculture, processing) to which the Quality Assurance Framework refers (in the comment) in each line of Table 5B.

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No major issues and no action is needed now, but in the next WP submission, the MS should include the name of the sector (fleet, aquaculture, processing) to which the Quality Assurance Framework refers (in the comment) in each line of Table 5B.

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

No issues.

**Member State: MLT - Malta**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied mostly with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template). Most of the issues are briefly stated below and were resolved during the EWG 19-18. Regarding fishing activity variables, the MS should resubmit Table 2A. In the Text Box for Pilot study 4, the MS should clearly state if it will be carried out.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

For the next WP submission: MS should insert in Table 1C, for all sampling years concerned, the different years of sampling in different rows of the table.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

No actions needed

**4. Diadromous species**

Not applicable

**5. Incidental by-catch**

No actions needed

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

No actions needed

**7. Fishing activity variables**

Table 2A should be resubmitted and filled according to the WP submission guidelines.

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No actions needed

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

In the Text Box for Pilot study 4, the MS should clearly state if it will be carried out.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No actions needed

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Two issues identified with low severity related to coverage, which could not be assessed due to contradictory information provided by end-user and MS (follow-up needed).

## **Member State: NLD – The Netherlands**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and no major issues were identified.

Minor issues are briefly stated below.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

In Table 1A-1C, the area/stock should be in line with the EU-MAP. In Table 1A and Tables 4A, 4C and 4D, the reference years should be updated to the three most recent years (where data are available). The regions and area/stocks in Tables 4A to 4D are not always in agreement.

The MS should rectify these issues in a WP resubmission in Oct 2020.

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues

### **4. Diadromous species**

No issues

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

The strata codes in Table 1F do not agree with codes in Table 4A and 4B. *PeI 2* is missing. Also *Auction\_Dem* and *Auction\_Shrimp* should be listed even if no occurrences are expected.

The MS should rectify these issues in a WP resubmission in Oct 2020.

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

No issues

## **Member State: POL - Poland**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Poland's WP is fully conforming with the legislation and WP guidelines. Overall, the WP plan is well-written and there are no remaining issues or any action needed.

There are only few suggestions from the EWG that could be considered in the future WP submissions, regarding: a) Commercial fisheries and stocks, b) Research surveys at sea and c) Planned regional and international coordination table. However, these suggestions do not imply any lack of quality of the WP.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

For the next WP submission: The MS should insert in Table 1C, for all sampling years concerned, the different years of sampling in different rows of the table.

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues

### **4. Diadromous species**

No issues

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Two issues identified with medium and low severity related to coverage.

## **Member State: PRT - Portugal**

### **1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and no major issues were identified.

There are only few suggestions from the EWG that could be considered in the future WP submissions regarding information on quality assurance for biological and socio-economic data.

### **2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No relevant issue, but for the next WP submission, the MS must update Table 4C with the most recent available reference years, as per Implementing Decision 2019/909.

### **3. Recreational fisheries**

No relevant issues, but in the next WP submission, in Table 5A, documentation should also be provided for each sampling scheme from Table 1D if regular sampling is applied.

### **4. Diadromous species**

No relevant issue, but in the next WP submission, in Table 5A, documentation should also be provided for each sampling scheme from Table 1E if regular sampling is applied.

### **5. Incidental by-catch**

No issue.

### **6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issue.

### **7. Fishing activity variables**

No issue.

### **8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issue.

### **9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issue.

### **10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issue.

### **11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Two issues identified with low severity related to coverage. One issue could not be assessed due to contradictory information provided by end-user and MS (follow-up needed).



**Member State: ROU - Romania**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines and no major issues were identified.

Minor issues are briefly stated below.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No issues.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

Pilot study 1 was added. No issues.

**4. Diadromous species**

NA. No action needed.

**5. Incidental by-catch**

Minor issues in Table 1F regarding incidental by-catch group naming. Pilot study 2 updated.

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

No amendments made by MS. No issues.

**7. Fishing activity variables**

Minor issues in Table 2A regarding Fishing technique naming.

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

Minor issues in Table 3A regarding type of data collection. Pilot Study 3 was updated.

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No amendments made by MS. No issues.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No amendments made by MS. No issues.

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

No issues.

**Member State: SVK - Slovakia**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Slovakia is a land-locked country, only a proposal for a pilot study on collecting environmental data and analysis of micro-pollutants in pond aquaculture is proposed.

Overall, the MS complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines regarding WP text (after the resubmission during EWG meeting) and no major issues were identified. Slovakia, however, should have submitted the entire set of WP tables and should have included Tables 3B, 5B and 7A as well as Table 6A.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

Not applicable.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

Not applicable.

**4. Diadromous species**

Not applicable.

**5. Incidental by-catch**

Not applicable.

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

Not applicable.

**7. Fishing activity variables**

Not applicable.

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

Not applicable.

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

Not applicable.

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

Not applicable.

**Member State: SVN - Slovenia**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Slovenia did very well in terms of conformity with the EU-MAP and no major issues were assessed during the evaluation. The WP is generally in accordance with the WP template.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No issues

**3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues

**4. Diadromous species**

No issues

**5. Incidental by-catch**

No issues

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

Amendments are satisfactory, no action needed. For improvement, MS should follow the guidelines with regard to Table 1G, column G, and list all participating MSs and also clarify which vessel is used in Text Box 1G in future AR and WP.

**7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No issues

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

No issues.

**Member State: SWE - Sweden**

**1. Overall WP conformity with the legislation and guidelines**

Overall, Sweden complied with the legislation (EU-MAP and WP template) and WP guidelines. No major issues were identified. Minor issues that could be considered in future WP submissions are briefly stated below.

**2. Biological sampling of commercial fisheries and stocks**

No issues.

**3. Recreational fisheries**

No issues.

**4. Diadromous species**

No major issues, but for future WP submissions, eel EMUs should be named in the Area column and the text for "Planned numbers" and "Method" in lines 42 and 43 of Table 1E should be refined.

**5. Incidental by-catch**

No major issues, only Sweden should put each stratum ID code in different row in the future WP submissions.

**6. Surveys-at-sea**

No issues.

**7. Fishing activity variables**

No issues.

**8. Fleet socio-economic data**

No issues.

**9. Socio-economic for aquaculture**

No issues.

**10. Socio-economic for processing industry**

No amendment submitted by MS.

**11. Data transmission issues (AER/fleet economic data)**

No issues.

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Publications Office  
of the European Union

doi:10.2760/049734

ISBN 978-92-76-11251-8