



Regional Coordination Group
North Atlantic
North Sea & Eastern Arctic



Regional Coordination Group
Baltic

Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic Regional Coordination Group Baltic

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC REPORT

Part I

7 – 11 June 2021

Virtual Meeting

Supported by



RCG's Secretariat
SECWEB

**Co-funded by
the European Maritime
and Fisheries Fund**





RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Recommended format for purposes of citation:

RCG NANSEA RCG Baltic 2021. Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic and Regional Coordination Group Baltic. 2021. Part I Report, 78 pgs. Part II Decisions and Recommendations, 16 pgs. Part III, Intersessional Subgroup (ISSG) 2020-2021 Reports, 350 pgs. (<https://datacollection.jrc.ec.europa.eu/docs/rcg>)

The material in this report may be reused using the recommended citation. The RCG may only grant usage rights of information, data, images, graphs, etc. of which it has ownership. For other third-party material cited in this report, you must contact the original copyright holder for permission. For citation of datasets or use of data to be included in other databases, please refer to the latest RCG and ICES data policy on the ICES website. All extracts must be acknowledged. For other reproduction requests please contact the authors.

This document is the product of two Regional Coordination Group under the auspices of the Expert Group on Fisheries Data Collection (EC - DCF) and does not necessarily represent the view of the EU Expert Group (NCs).

© 2021 Regional Coordination Group



RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Contents

Acronyms.....	5
Executive summary.....	6
1. Administrative details.....	13
2. Terms of Reference.....	14
3. Summary of Work plan RCGs 2019-2021.....	15
4. List of Outcomes and Achievements of RCG NANSEA and Baltic in this delivery period.....	16
5. Progress report on ToRs and workplan.....	17
5.1 ToR 1 Propose ways to improve the alignment between data collection and end-user needs (by region) 17	
5.1.1 Feedback from the European Commission.....	17
5.1.2 Feedback from ICES.....	18
5.1.3 Feedback from ISSG ‘End users and RCGs’.....	22
5.2 ToR 2 Implement and maintain data quality in data collection.....	23
5.2.1 Feedback from the ‘WGRDBESGOV’.....	23
5.2.2 Review of RDB 2021 data call.....	26
5.2.3 Feedback from the ISSG & SG ‘RDB catch, effort and sampling overviews ‘.....	26
5.2.4 Feedback from the ISSG on "Métier issues".....	31
5.2.5 Feedback from the ISSG & SG ‘Surveys’.....	32
5.2.6 Feedback from the ISSG on ‘Data quality’.....	33
5.2.7 Feedback on ‘New data sources and technology’.....	35
5.2.8 Feedback from SG ‘WP and AR template testing’.....	41
5.2.9 HELCOM Roadmap on Fisheries data and ASCOBANS needs.....	42
5.3 ToR 3 Review impact on management measures on data collection.....	45
5.3.1 Brexit-implication on sampling, surveys and thresholds.....	45
5.4 ToR 4 Development and implementation of Regional Workplans (RWP).....	47
5.4.1 Feedback from ISSG “Development of Draft RWP” and project Fishn’Co.....	47
5.4.2 Feedback from ISSG ‘Optimized and Operational Regional Sampling Plans’.....	50
5.4.3 Feedback from ISSG ‘Case study of fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic’.....	51
5.4.4 Feedback from ISSG & SG ‘Case study freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic’.....	52
5.4.5 Feedback from ISSG ‘Towards a regional sampling plan - Case Study of the trawl fishery in Iberian Waters’.....	54
5.4.6 Feedback from ISSG & SG ‘Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level’.....	55

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

5.4.7	Feedback from ISSG & SG ‘Identification of case studies for PETS bycatch monitoring’	56
5.4.8	Feedback from ISSG ‘Diadromous Fishes’	58
5.4.9	Feedback from ISSG & SG ‘Recreational fisheries’	59
5.4.10	Feedback from ISSG ‘Regionally coordinated stomach sampling’	61
5.5	ToR 5 Propose ways to improve the regional coordination and feedback on regional issues	64
5.5.1	Feedback from ISSG & SG ‘National Correspondents’	64
5.5.2	Feedback on ISSG & SG from ‘RCG support Secretariat and Website’ and project SecWeb	65
5.5.3	Review the process made in the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic in 2019-2021	68
5.5.4	ISSGs for season 2021-2022	69
6.	AOB	71
7.	Conclusions	72
8.	Next meeting	73
	Annex I: List of Participants	74



RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Acronyms

Acronyms

ACOM	Advisory Committee
ASCOBANS	Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas
COM	Commission
DCF	Data Collection Framework
DGMare	Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries
DLS	Data Limited Stocks
DM	Decision Meeting
ECON	Economics issues
EMFAF	European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund
FDI	Fisheries Dependent Information
HELCOM	Helsinki Commission
IC	InterCatch
ICES	International Council for the Exploration of the Sea
ISSG	Intersessional Subgroup
JRC	Joint Research Center
LDF	Long Distance Fisheries
LM	Liaison Meeting
LP	Large Pelagics
LTPS	Linux Terminal Server Project
Med & BS	Mediterranean Sea and Black Sea
MRF	Marine Recreational Fishery
MS	Member State
NAFO	Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation
NANSEA	North Atlantic, North Sea and Eastern Arctic
NEAFC	North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission
NWP	National Work Plan
PETS	Protected, Endangered and Threatened Species
QAF	Quality Assurance Framework
RCG	Regional Coordination Group
RDB	Regional Database
RDBES	Regional Database & Estimation System
REM	Remote Electronic Monitoring
RFMO	Regional Fisheries Management Organisation
RSP	Regional Sampling Plan
RWP	Regional Work Plan
SCICOM	Science Committee
SID	Stock Information Database
SG	Sub Group
SSF	Small Scale Fisheries
STECF	Scientific, Technical and Economic Committee for Fisheries
TAC	Total Allowable Catch
TM	Technical Meeting



RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Executive summary

Executive summary

This was the third interim year for the multi-annual Terms of References (ToRs) for the Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic (RCG NANSEA) and for the Regional Coordination Group Baltic (RCG Baltic).

After the Technical Meeting (TM) in 2020, it was agreed that the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic, would meet again in a back to back meeting in 2021. Depending on the status and development of the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting would either be digital or to be held in Gdansk, Poland from 7-11th of June 2021. After consideration of the pandemic situation in spring 2021, the meeting took place virtual by using ZOOM.

The overall aim for RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic is to review the status of current issues, achievements and developments of regional coordination and identify future needs in line with DCF regulation (EU 1004/2017) requirements and the wider European environmental monitoring and management.

Five ToRs were handled during the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic 2021 TM, all of which were intersessionally carried out by designated ISSGs and by SGs during the RCG. The intersessional work 2020-2021 was setup of 17 different ISSGs including the two ICES RDB groups.

Almost all the groups conducted their tasks as planned and were presenting the results during the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic 2021 TM. The output of the ISSGs were extremely valuable for the work of the TM, and were the basis of the discussions at the meeting. Next to the ISSGs, seven subgroups (SGs) were planned during the RCG TM.

ToR 1

Relating to the improvement of the alignment between data collection and end-user needs (by region) was progressed this year through the work of the ISSG on End Users and RCG and feedback from the COM and ICES (as the main end-user of the RCG work).

The ISSG has more generic focus than it used to. The annual information meetings between ICES and the RCG chairs will continue and ensure good cooperation and enable a follow-up on the progress over time. Three virtual meetings took place between the RCG chairs and ICES in 2021, mainly focusing on RCG's Covid-19 commercial sampling overviews and their impact on upcoming stock assessments and the further mechanism for streamlining recommendations.

ToR 2

Relating to quality in data collection was progressed this year through the work of several intersessional subgroups and RCG sub-groups as follows:

The ISSG on RDB catch, effort and sampling overviews improved the annual catch and effort overviews and introduced a first version of a multi-annual overview document. An R-script was developed for the automatic generation of the overviews. Three documents in html format were produced (Baltic, NA and NSEA) and presented to the RCG TM. The shiny R application to display sampling overviews was improved and functionalities added to create CS inventory files and interactive maps showing sampling effort and intensity in different aggregation levels.

After receiving the feedback from RCGs, the subgroup aims to continue to improve the existing scripts. Collaboration will also be established with WGBIOP to gather feedback about the sampling inventories and overviews. The Shiny app will be developed further to include fisheries data (CL and CE) as well as stock

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Executive summary

overviews (e.g. age-length overviews, distribution, weight-length per area, etc.). The markdown for the RDB catch and effort overviews could be integrated into the shiny R and thus allow more flexibility to the end-users and make the data gathering more easily accessible.

The SG on RDB Catch Effort and Sampling overviews formulated a roadmap for all three section and replied to a recommendation by WGBFAS.

The ISSG on métier issues had an operational focus on the development and testing of the presented 2020 Métier list, reference lists on species and area codes and the development of R script implementing the agreed best practices. The métier list with suggested standardized and harmonized codes (especially on mesh-size ranges) was presented after last year's RCG TM and is implemented by several MS and ICES data calls. The reference to old codes was uploaded to the RDB (2009-2017 data).

The list will be used for the RDBES test data call in 2021, the ISSG will follow-up on issues and problems that might occur during this data call. The development of R script for assigning métier codes to transversal data, implementing the best practices agreed on and an additional module that analyses vessel patterns was improved. The reference lists and scripts available on GitHub (<https://github.com/ices-eg/RCGs/tree/master/Metiers>). The ISSG will collaborate with the ISSG SSF on further development of gear codes and effort calculations, as well as with the RCG MED&BS to implement more regional métier codes.

The ISSG on Surveys discussed the future UK contribution to the combined surveys and cost-sharing agreements of the ASH and blue whiting survey. As these negotiations are still ongoing, the ISSG formulated three possible decisions on the cost-sharing, each depending on the decision if UK will participate in these surveys or not.

The ISSG also discussed the proposed changes to the design and planning of the North Sea mackerel egg survey as the responsible survey planning group (WGMEGS) decided to change these without taking the DCF obligations of the MS involved into consideration. Such a decision is not within the remit of WGMEGS. In reflection to WGMEGS, WGWIDE (being the end-user of the survey data) is asked to provide a scientific justification for the proposed changes, including the impact on the assessment as well as on the MS obligations and a roadmap describing the steps to reach the proposed change to the survey. The ISSG will follow-up and convene with the relevant end-user during the next intersessional term and feedback to the RCG. The ISSG formulated two decisions and two recommendations for the DM in September.

The ISSG on data quality and confidentiality defined six tasks for the intersessional term. At the stage of planning the work of the ISSG, it has been noticed that some of the tasks thematically correspond to the Biological Data Quality Objectives of the WPI in the Fishn'Co project. Therefore, some of the work is being outsourced using the Fishn'Co project resources. For task 1, the ISSG compiled quality assurance indicators based on Table 5A of the National Work-plans and Annual Reports (WP/AR) and evaluated the overall documentation on quality of sampling programmes. The second task of the ISSG was to create sampling design document template for Regional Work Plans (RWPs). The third task was to prepare templates/guidance for the other data quality questions for RWPs. In addition, the ISSG designed a questionnaire which allows to identify types of data checks, editing and imputation which are used by the institutes involved in the RCG and Fishn'Co project. The task 5 – "RDB upload logs" was accomplished by the ISSG with the aid of the RCG chairs and ICES Data Centre. Upload logs have been compiled and important issues have been highlighted in the ISSG report (Part III of this report), some of which have recurred for a number of years.

The group will finish and follow-up on pending issues until end of 2021. It is suggested to inactivate the ISSG afterwards for the rest of the intersessional term.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Executive summary

Within the ToR 2 feedback was also given from the output of the WGRDBESGOV (previously the SCRDB). The roadmap for RDBES development was reviewed. Whilst the focus remains on detailed commercial fisheries data, the potential inclusion of different types of fisheries data in the RDBES was discussed and the RDBES Data Policy was discussed and some changes recommended. For 2021-2022, the focus will be on making the RDBES work optimal and correct bugs during the test data call.

Later specifications and development of more refined exports, extended security and the possibility to view data are needed and will be developed during 2021, ranging into 2022. Several WK are planned for autumn 2021 and spring 2022 focusing on the estimation routines and assessment estimate, using RDBES formats.

The feedback on the RDB data call reviewed the success and timing of the RDB data uploads. While all MS uploaded their 2020 commercial fisheries data (census data and sampling), some MS struggled with keeping the deadline. As a lot of ISSGs work depends on the RDB data, the data call in 2022 will emphasize the importance of the deadline and MS should be supported to match it.

To expand fisheries-dependent data collection and accessibility, and improving data quality and validity, more and more it is looked at new data sources such as electronic monitoring (EM), artificial intelligence (AI), genetics, etc. Four different sessions on “New data sources and technology” were presented during the meeting to tackle this new field:

- Developments within ICES around industry collected data, including the GAP project (2008 to 2015) and the WKSCINDI – Workshop on Science with Industry Initiatives.
- icrOS is an open source Sampling system (IEO, CSIC) developed for switching from the traditional sampling to the more efficient approach of paperless sampling.
- SmartDots is a platform for quality assurance of biological parameters as input for stock assessment which allows the standardisation of procedures and data output. The group supported the request for financial support to develop the maturity and ichthyoplankton.
- Rayscan is an automatic artificial intelligence identification application which supports fishermen with the accurate identification of skates on board of fishing vessels and in fish auctions

In addition, a new ISSG “Electronic Monitoring Technologies” will be launched for the new intersessional term 2021-2022. In addition,

The SG on “WP and AR template testing” reviewed the questions and feedback on the templates received beforehand the TM. Ahead of the meeting of the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic and the WP/AR template testing workshop, a consolidated feedback document on the proposed guidelines for filling the work plans and annual reports was received from COM, with some revised drafting and COM replies. There were quite a few unclear points that the subgroup discussed and proposed some solutions. In parallel, MS were asked by the chairs of the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic to test the templates and comment on issues that needed clarification. Six countries replied and all were compiled into a final excel sheet for consideration. Over 120 separate queries were received and were partly reviewed by the subgroup.

It was agreed that a Google Doc approach for correspondence of exchange of questions when filling of these templates will be set up by the RCG Secretariat. This will enable countries to pose questions to the group and have them answered by either MS or by the COM.

External presentations were given by ASCOBANS and HELCOM regarding the estimation of marine mammal bycatch in the NASEA and Baltic area. The Jastarnia Plan deals with the Belt and Baltic Proper harbour porpoise populations and concluded that >0.7 animals bycaught from Baltic Proper population per year would risk the survival of the population (NAMMCO & IMR 2019) and that a zero bycatch would allow the population to

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Executive summary

recover. However, bycatch data and commercial effort estimates are too scarce to allow for reliable bycatch estimates. A similar problem was presented for the NANSEA area. Alternative measures for commercial fishing effort were presented and discussed and also the lack of finer scaled data on gears, e.g. on a métier basis were mentioned. Days at sea and métier definition are presently being improved by the RCG ISSG on métiers, and this will hopefully improve some of the present effort data.

Data such as soak time, net length etc. are derived from logbooks and to improve this effort data the information needs to be mandatory in the control regulation, and it is now too late to suggest improvements into the new control regulation. However, the monitoring could be improved by an increased communication between ASCOBANS and RCGs, to share information and work together.

ToR 3

relating to impact on management measures on data collection tackled the Brexit-implication on sampling, surveys and thresholds and, in a more general approach, the future involvement of other third-party countries. The UK has signed an MoU with ICES on the provision of scientific information and advice which includes a Data Collection Agreement. Currently the UK plans to have a similar approach to data collection as the DCF with a multi annual program.

In the short-term, it is proposed to hold informal bilateral/multilateral meetings with the UK on technical/scientific issues of immediate concern. These include the continuation of existing bilateral agreements, existing cost sharing agreements for surveys and continuation of UK upload of RDB data.

In the longer terms, it is proposed that the RCGs engage with UK as a third party and initiate collaboration with the UK and other third parties (Iceland, Norway, the Faroes, Russia). There have been significant changes in the structure of the RCGs and the issues they are dealing with, which merits a renewed invitation by the RCG to third parties to work together.

9

ToR 4

relating to the development and implementation of regional work plans was progressed this year through the work of several intersessional subgroups and RCG sub-groups as follows:

Feedback from ISSG 'Development of Draft RWP' and project Fishn'Co: The project Fishn'Co started January 2021 and was established to help the data collection community to further develop the RWP and the work has been moved from the ISSG "Development of Draft Regional Work Plan" into this project instead. The strategic objective of the Fishn'Co project is to provide benefit to the RCG/ISSGs and work in complement to them with the specific goal of proposing a full structure/process and elements of RWP for each of their activities. The project aims to align with the RCG plenary sessions of 2021 and 2022 in order to be fully embedded in the mechanism of proposing RWPs within the framework of EU-MAP, coordinate, and manage all experts participating to the project (partners and non-partners). Furthermore, it aims to compile, identify and fill information gaps for elements to be considered for inclusion in a RWP, then establish decision-making structures/processes for RWP, and develop RWP templates and gather all regionally coordinated elements and propose these in the form of RWP.

Feedback from ISSG 'Optimized and Operational Regional Sampling Plans': The group was in charge of developing guidance for development of optimized and operational RSPs and addressing the 'theoretical gaps' encountered when evaluating the RSPs with present simulation tools. The ISSG structured a list with 12 steps/bullet-points that need to be considered in the process of a RSP. With regards to the identification of

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Executive summary

theoretical gaps, it was concluded that research is still needed with regards to regional optimization of biological measurements, namely in what refers to multi-level optimization. During RCG plenary the issue of what tools are available for identifying new RSPs, was raised. It was concluded that tools for the identification of case-studies already exist, e.g., those developed during fishPi2, but at the moment no one is looking into new possibilities of case-studies that lead to future RSPs.

Feedback from ISSG 'Case study of fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic': RCG Baltic agreed to use the fisheries for small pelagic species as a case study for the development of a regional sampling program in the Baltic Sea. The RSP pilot is progressing; changes to the sampling protocols were discussed to enable every MS to have a regional sampling protocol. A common sampling name was decided on and all participating MS managed to upload the data from the pilot study to the RDBES. Further a workshop was conducted on optimization of subsampling for age and length. Results of another workshop indicate misreporting between sprat and herring in some Baltic fisheries and some MS, generally with herring being over-reported. This issue will be addressed via a decision to review sales notes of the respective fishing fleets. The group will continue the pilot study in its final phase, ideally as a full regional program and organize a workshop on estimation and optimal sampling size for small pelagics in the Baltic. The ISSG forwarded two decisions to the decision meeting in September.

Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Case study freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic': the group presented the updated simulation results of the EU freezer trawler fleet along with outputs for a number of potential sampling schemes. Simulations were conducted to investigate annual sampling coverage for a suite of preselected stocks under various sampling schemes, including random selection of individual fishing trips and from a reference fleet. Results indicate that improvements in coverage can be achieved by regionally coordinating sampling of this fleet. The next step for this group is to investigate how to practically implement a regional sampling schemes based on the end-user needs.

Feedback from ISSG 'Case Study of the trawl fishery in Iberian Waters': The ISSG revised the work done in FishPi2 with a focus on the scenarios proposed and feasibility/suitability issues. It was concluded that a regional sampling plan for this CS can be based on the best scenarios defined in the project, but that it should increase the number of ports sampled to cover the otter bottom trawl for crustacean species, and that the stratification and the allocation of sampling effort needs to consider port, fleet and quarter. In addition, a preliminary version (1.0) of the common sampling protocol was developed based on the template for commercial sampling programs from ISSG data quality. The protocol allowed to identify similarities/differences in current sampling practices used by the institutions involved (AZTI, IEO, IPMA). This ISSG plans have a regional pilot implemented once everything is ready for that, thus having 2 schemes (national and regional) running in parallel. The details of this test will be decided in the future.

Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level': based on the RDB data for each region a fisheries overview report was produced for Small Scale Fisheries. These overviews were considered as a very useful tool to have a general overview of this specific fleet in the three regions covered by the RCGs. Furthermore, the collaboration and cooperation between this ISSG and RCGECON and sharing the methodologies used in the data collection of the SSF for both, biological and economic variables was considered as relevant by this ISSG. With this aim in mind, both groups tried to identify topics that could be covered between both groups. In collaboration with ICES WGCATCH SSF subgroup, the coverage of both, onshore and onboard sampling programmes for the SSF was also analysed. Finally, the integration of the SSF data to the RDBES is an important issue that was discussed. Although the SSF sampling programmes could follow a similar approach to the Large-Scale fisheries, it is important to test that the RDBES allows to follow

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Executive summary

the different data models developed also in the case of the SSF. This test will be carried out during the next working period in collaboration with the RDBES SC.

Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Identification of case studies for PETS bycatch monitoring': this group used the Bay of Biscay and the high-risk fisheries concerning common dolphins bycatch as case study to analyse the coverage of these risky fisheries under the DCF at sea sampling programmes and specific monitoring programmes to collect bycatch data. It was discussed that the quality of the data may differ between those trips with observers focused on bycatch data against observers collecting biological data. The group also looked into the discrepancies in effort estimates between different databases used to analyse bycatch information. Different reasons were identified which will allow to improve the next WGBYC data call. Once the RDBES is fully implemented it is expected that these discrepancies will be significantly reduced. Finally, the ISSG the HELCOM roadmap and ASCOBANS view about bycatch issues was also discussed during the meeting in a specific session.

Feedback from ISSG 'Diadromous fishes': the group focused on communication with end-users (ICES WGNAS, WGBAST and WGEEL). A questionnaire was conducted on electrofishing surveys in order to improve and harmonize the methods applied for electrofishing methods. Collaboration with Fishn'Co project is ongoing and degree of ambition to progress towards RWPs for salmon and sea trout was drafted. As the issues handled in the ISSG are divers, then region and species specific workshops are needed and work is carried out to promote those workshops in end-user (ICES and GFCM) level. A workshop for Baltic salmon could potentially take place in autumn 2022 when the benchmark meeting is scheduled.

Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Recreational fisheries': Four candidate species were selected as case studies to be included in a RSP: cod, seabass, eel, and salmon. Considering that the incorporation of recreational data in the RDBES is planned to be done by 2023, the group has started to arrange a test data call using a format based on the one developed in FishPi2. This work will be carried out with tight communication with the RDBES Core Group to guarantee that the transition to the RDBES will be as easy as possible. After plenary discussions in the TM, it was decided to build a regional list of species based on the results of the Pilot Studies. It was also suggested that this ISSG should be pan-regional and collaborate closely with RCG LP & RCG Med & BS and RCG ECON.

Feedback from ISSG 'Regionally coordinated stomach sampling': The ISSG has designed a coordinated stomach sampling program in the North Sea and Skagerrak, using IBTS as a powerful platform to collect stomachs. A rolling sampling scheme is proposed, which will lead to a large number of species sampled over a DCF cycle. A questionnaire sent to national correspondents to estimate the costs expected for the proposed stomach sampling program, being the major source of variation in the cost associated with the analysis of stomachs. In addition, a method to intercalibrate IEO stomach analysis protocol (ongoing for three decades) and the protocol recommended by WGSAM was explored, and an historical overview of the stomach content projects was made based on an online survey. The result of the surveys will be used to identify points that could be easily included in regionally coordinated protocols, and the gaps that should be addressed before being implemented. A decision was proposed to agree to start sampling stomachs during the IBTS survey in the North Sea.

ToR 5

relating to ways to improve the regional coordination and feedback on regional issues was progressed this year through two ISSGs and reviewing processes made during the TM.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Executive summary

Feedback from ISSG & SG 'National Correspondents': the only task for this ISSG in 2020-2021 was to amend the rules of procedures (RoPs) for RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic. It was agreed that as a first step no major and specific changes will be made and the aim is to get aligned RoP that can in principle fit to all RCGs. As MSs are involved with more than one RCG, then it would be beneficial if same RoPs apply to all groups. Additionally, the ISSG discussed issues related to the current EU-MAP process and paragraphs from Control Regulation that relates to data collection. In the coming season a task to deal with the potential effects of Brexit will be undertaken and a task to start a coordination between RCGs and third countries will be initiated.

Feedback on ISSG & SG from 'RCG support Secretariat and Website' and project SecWeb: The project SecWeb started January 2021 and was established to develop the necessary tools to provide support and increase the visibility of RCGs' work. It includes developing and setting up the framework for an RCG secretariat and dedicated website, promoting of good practices of communication, and to design scenarios for funding structures to be put in place for continued operation of administrative support to RCGs and updating the content of the dedicated website. During the Technical Meeting the draft website was discussed. Furthermore, it was noted that NCs need to foresee funds allocation for the RCG Secretariat in the new WP 2022-2027.

Review the process made in the RCG NANSEA Baltic in 2019-2021: The period 2020-2021 is the last year of a three-year term with relevant changes in the setup of RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA. A questionnaire was made using SurveyMonkey to evaluate the current RCG set up and decide the way forward for the following years. In general, the current set up is perceived as a valid way forward for the RCG. Main concerns are about the workload of the participants, and the difficulties to engage new people; the need for a secretariat; and the need to allocate enough time for discussions. In addition, participants complained that the NAFO Fisheries do not receive enough attention. After some discussions, the group endorsed the current set up, including the separation between a Technical Meeting and a Decision Meeting; the joint (back to back) Technical Meeting for the RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA, with a day for regional aspects if needed; the work of the ISSGs, which would start just after the Technical Meeting; and the report splitted in three parts. The group also agreed that the final decision about the format of the meetings will be taken by the chairs. Rules of Procedures will be changed to include the main elements of this set up, and to clarify the enforceability of recommendations and define consensus.

ISSGs for season 2021-2022: the setup of working intersessional has proven to be successful to achieve the goals to make regional coordination efficient on a regional scale. The suggested next steps for the different ISSGs were endorsed by the TM and details can be found in this report under each ISSG chapter. For next season two existing groups (Development of Draft Regional Work Plan and Implementation of generic tools for the RCGs) will be on hold until the accompanying projects (FishN'Co and SecWeb) will be finished and one new ISSG on Electronic Monitoring Technologies is suggested. In total 18 groups (including two ICES RDB groups) are suggested to work actively on different tasks within different topics during season 2021-2022.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Administrative details

I. Administrative details

Regional Coordination	Regional Coordination Group North Atlantic, North Sea & Eastern Arctic (RCG NANSEA) Regional Coordination Group Baltic (RCG Baltic)
Year of Appointment with the current cycle	3
Reporting year within the current cycle (1,2 or 3)	3
Chair(s)	RCG NANSEA: Lucía Zarauz, Spain & Harriet van Overzee, Netherlands RCG Baltic: Elo Rasmann, Estonia & Sven Stötera, Germany

Meeting venue	Meeting dates
Virtual Meeting (Covid-19 restrictions)	7-11 June 2021

2. Terms of Reference

1. Propose ways to improve the alignment between data collection and end-user needs (by region)

- Define end-user needs and assess how they are met by current and future data collection.
- Define and suggest mechanisms for communication and implementation of end-user needs.
- Feedback from ICES end-user groups and RCG feedback on their recommendation.
- Improve regional cooperation for small scale fisheries and assessing effects on the ecosystem.
- Formulate recommendation(s) for revision of EU-MAP to ensure that it is in line with end-user needs.

2. Implement and maintain data quality in data collection

- Assess the documentation of data quality procedures.
- Update on fisheries overview and sampling overview.
- Update on development of RDB and RDBES.
- Review the outcome of regional orientated projects and other groups.
- Develop strategy for implementation of electronic data capture.

3. Review impact on management measures on data collection

- Assess Implication of the landing obligation.

4. Development and implementation of Regional Work Plans (RWPs)

- Identify and propose the building blocks of RWP.
- Review and evaluate the outcome of regional orientated projects to identify template, content, actions to be incorporated in regional workplan.
- Optimizing the use of surveys: efficiency, multi-purpose & task sharing Decisions and actions to be taken.

5. Propose ways to improve the regional coordination and feedback on regional issues

- Review and evaluate the outcome of regional orientated projects.
- Develop & adopt tools and working procedures for more effective regional cooperation and coordination.

6. Support of ToRs

- Promote publication on findings, likely in the form of peer-reviewed publication (e.g. CRR) that documents the development of methodologies in the field of regional coordination & data collection and the state of scientific knowledge on the topic at the end of the 3-year ToR period.
- Identify pilot studies. Decisions and actions to be taken.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Summary of Work plan RCGs 2019-2021

3. Summary of Work plan RCGs 2019-2021

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
End-user Needs	<i>Fine tune dialogue & assess additional needs</i>	<i>Fine tune dialogue & assess additional needs (cont.)</i>	<i>Fine tune dialogue & assess additional needs (cont.)</i>
	Review & improve feedback mechanism (benchmark, data call, SID)	Cont. review end-user feedback (Benchmark, SID, Data calls, Surveys)	Cont. review end-user feedback (Benchmark, SID, Data calls, Surveys)
	Cont. review end-user needs Propose recommendations for EU MAP revision to address end-user needs	Identify new and obsolete data parameters under new EU MAP	Agree on additional/obsolete parameters
Data Quality	<i>Procedures and documentation</i>	<i>Transition to RDBES, electronic data capture</i>	<i>Transition to RDBES, electronic data capture</i>
	Review/Develop documentation on inventory and quality of DCF data	Finalise documentation on inventory and quality of DCF data and elements to be forwarded to regional work plan)	Complete transition to RDBES
	Coordinate automation of data flows	Agree on adoption of automated processes First draft strategy on coordinated electronic data capture	Complete strategy for implementation of electronic data capture
Regional Sampling Plans	<i>Review & progress</i>	<i>Review & progress</i>	<i>Finalise</i>
	Review outcome of regional oriented projects (Demersal, Pelagic, bycatch), agree on next steps to develop operational proposals for regional sampling plans	Finalise and agree on operational proposals for regional sampling plans to be forwarded to regional work plan	Refine text and content for adoption
Regional Work Plan	<i>Set up basic structure, test procedure</i>	<i>Enhance structure, review procedure</i>	<i>Finalise</i>
	Agree on basic building blocks, develop structure and content, and agree on 1st proposal for testing	Add further content and documentation, review and refine process	Incorporate agreed sampling regional plans and data quality documentations, finalise STECF proposal



RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

List of Outcomes and Achievements of RCG NANSEA and Baltic in this delivery period

4. List of Outcomes and Achievements of RCG NANSEA and Baltic in this delivery period

During the third year of the 3-year term of RCG NANSEA and of RCG Baltic the work under each ToR has been carried out by designated inter sessional subgroups (ISSGs). During the RCG TM ISSGs presented their main outcomes and asked for feedback to the group. As a result of the discussions, decisions, recommendations, and tasks for the ISSGs were agreed.

The RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic 2021 report is composed of three parts:

- The overview of the work done by ToR at the 2021 Technical Meeting (TM) can be found in this [Part I](#) of the report.
- In [Part II](#) the recommendations and decisions endorsed by the RCG are presented. They will be looked at during the Decision Meeting (DM) in September.
- Detailed progress, outcomes and deliverables achieved in all ISSGs are described in [Part III](#) report “Reports on intersessional subgroup (ISSGs) work 2020-2021”.



5. Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.1 ToR I Propose ways to improve the alignment between data collection and end-user needs (by region)

During this year's meeting, progress has been made under ToR I as follows:

- Feedback from the European Commission
- Feedback from ICES
- Feedback from the ISSG 'End-users and RCGs'

5.1.1 Feedback from the European Commission

The COM adopted the new **EU MAP** proposal on 27 April 2021 that went then to the European Parliament and the Council for scrutiny during the following two months, May and June. The publication will follow in July, to entry into force from 1 January 2022.

There is no big change in data requirements between the current EU MAP and the final draft produced by STECF plenary in November 2019. The most visible relative novelties include:

- More pronounced regional coordination. Already the current EU MAP provided for regional coordination of sampling frequencies and selection of methodologies. In the current draft this aspect will be extended to:
 - species, regions and methods of data collection on recreational fishing
 - methodologies and sampling schemes of data collection on diadromous species
 - methodologies in collecting data on impact of the fisheries on marine biological resources
- Some structural pilot projects are integrated into regular data collection. MS will still have an option to include testing new methods in the work plans.
- Other optional activities: economic and social data on fish processing, stomach sampling and analysis.

RCGs prepare RWPs that will amend or replace part of NWP. RWPs will also be approved by COM implementing decision, but in a longer process as this include a new step: the approval on the Fisheries and Aquaculture Committee.

The COM sent the draft **Work Plan (WP) and Annual Report (AR) templates**, as well as the guidelines, to national correspondents and RCG chairs after the work done by STECF and the presentation in the national correspondents meeting on 20 April. The COM expect some input on testing it during the June technical meeting, running in parallel with the inter-services consultation. Once the STECF plenary in July will endorse the final version of the templates, the COM will distribute it by mid-July for the submission of WP by 15 October. The adoption of the legal text depends directly on the adoption of the EMFAF legal text, and it is not expected until the fourth quarter of 2021. Nevertheless, MSs should send their WP for 2022 and beyond in the new templates, to meet the submission, assessment and adoption deadlines in 2021. The novelties include:

- A single document for both WP and AR templates, instead of two different legal texts currently used, with no examples of the tables. The tables and text boxes are explained as in previous legal acts. The table and text box templates will be accessible on the DCF website, together with a guidance document with further explanations.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

- The COM aims at having an automated system to report and check the WP/AR and STECF provided already some basis for this automation. First tab of the excel file includes a Master Code List, predefining values to put in WP/AR tables.
- Similar order of sections in the EU MAP and the WP/AR templates
- MS should fill in only text boxes and tables that apply to their activities, avoiding the empty pages. This is of special relevance for land-locked countries.
- The templates give some flexibility to interlink national and regional work plans.

The COM also provided a quick update on the MARE/2020/08 grants launched at the beginning of 2021, with a duration of 24 months. Those are: Streamline, on regional work plans for the Mediterranean and Black Sea region www.streamlineproject.eu; Fishn'Co, on regional work plans for the NANSEA and Baltic, including RCG ECON and large pelagic fisheries fisheries-rcg.eu/fishnco; SecWeb, on setting up a secretariat for the RCG work fisheries-rcg.eu/secweb/; and RDBFIS on the Mediterranean and Black Sea data base <https://medbsrdb.eu/>.

Finally, the COM requested MS to send a report on the pilot studies carried out under the EU MAP 2017-2019 and the extension to 2020-2021. STECF is evaluating the reports and after the endorsement of the outputs in a plenary session, the evaluation will be publicly available on the STECF website.

STECF EWG 21-09 on the evaluation of annual reports and data transmission issues will provide an overview on the first two pilot studies, by mid-July. Pilot Study 1 - Relative share of catches of recreational fisheries compared to commercial fisheries and Pilot Study 2 - Level of fishing and impact of fisheries on biological resources and marine ecosystems.

STECF EWG 21-17 on the evaluation of work plans will do the same for the other two by the end of November. Pilot Study 3 - Data on employment by education level and nationality and Pilot Study 4 - Environmental data on aquaculture.

Some links of interest:

- [Report to the European Parliament and the Council on the DCF Regulation \(EU\) 2017/1004 COM\(2020\)664 final](#)
- [Tables and diagrams \(report\) Commission Staff Working Document \(2020\)229 final.](#)
- [DCF website](#)

5.1.2 Feedback from ICES

ICES gave an overview of communication means regarding data needs and data transmissions as well as general issues concerning data for advice. Developments in terms of setting up data calls and data transmission through the Stock Information Database (SID) facilitating a more streamlined process were presented as well as the Benchmark Oversight Group (BOG) and the recommendations put forward to the RCG from ICES expert groups. The presentation generated some discussions of which the main points are listed below.

Communication in general

ICES finds that there is a very good dialogue with RCGs chairs, both formal and informal. ICES has now a dedicated Officer for the RCGs linked to the Benchmark Overview Group and data groups which should facilitate that the overall information flow is coherent across relevant groups in ICES, at least in the Secretariat.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

ICES Secretariat is following the development of the SecWeb project with great interest and see this as a potential good communication platform.

In terms of recommendations, a new process has been established by the RCG chairs and the ICES Secretariat.

Stock Information Database (SID)

Using SID as a repository for the data needs for each of the stocks has been implemented and it has facilitated more efficient and streamlined data calls. The ability for data providers to access and download upcoming data needs immediately after the working group termination is working well, though experts still need to be encouraged/helped to get this done. A more user-friendly access to up-to-date Issue Lists for all the stocks (SID) is being implemented, the format is still being developed in terms of accessibility, etc. Functionalities will be links to previous benchmarks and reports and potentially a list of data used in the assessment (in collaboration with RCG's). Additionally, other fields are being updated/implemented. Finally, the landing page for SID will be available soon with links and instructions for all modules making it easier to navigate and a user-handbook is being developed, including among other things R-scripts for easy extraction from SID.

In terms of data transmission failures and their reporting, the data submitter feedback module has been implemented ([SID data call](#)). Access to this module is granted individually (77 data submitters already have access). This pre-screening by data providers has reduced the non-transmission failures.

Data calls

Having the expert groups as early as possible to draft the data call text was encouraged and the SID module for data calls facilitate the 'pre-warning' of upcoming data calls. The 'big' data call is kept as stable as possible between years to facilitate an easy handling and as well some sort of predictability of data needs for the data submitters.

The RCGs asked for a more structured overview of the end-user needs on survey and catch data, ICES will explore whether SID could be useful for this in terms of getting a structured, condensed overview of these needs.

So far data calls are being drafted for upcoming work and there are potential data calls for DLS (data limited stocks) data call given the implementation of the WKLIFE X Annex 3 rules in late 2021/early 2022 and benchmark data calls yet to be completed by experts, see table [Table 5.1.2.1. ICES Data Calls](#).

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Table 5.1.2.1. ICES Data Calls

Description of data	Approximate issue date	Aim	Additional information
Data call on Collection bags	June/July 2021	Support for special request on collection bags in the North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) Regulatory Area	
Data call on WKCAPELIN benchmark	July/August (tentative) 2021	Support the benchmark for capelin stocks	cap.27.1-2; cap.27.2a514
Data call on WKPRAWN benchmark	July/August (tentative) 2021	Support the benchmark for northern shrimp stocks	pra.27.1-2; pra.27.3a4; NAFO 3M
Data call on WKCNS benchmark	July/August (tentative) 2021	Support the benchmark for Celtic and North Sea stocks	cod.27.7a; ple.27.7fg; had.27.46a20; ple.27.420; her.27.6a7bc
Data call on WKNORTH benchmark	July/August (tentative) 2021	Support the benchmark for North western stocks	reb.27.5a14; ghl.27.1-2; ghl.27.561214; cod.21.1; cod.21.1a-e
Data call on WKELASMO benchmark	July/August (tentative) 2021	Support the benchmark for elasmobranch stocks	por.27.nea; rjc.27.8; rju.27.7de; rjn678abd
Data call on WKMEGANG benchmark	July/August (tentative) 2021	Support the benchmark for megrim and anglerfish stocks	ldb.27.8c9a; meg.27.7b-k8abd; meg.27.8c9a; mon.27.8c9a; mon.27.78abd; ank.27.78abd
Data call WKSALMON benchmark	July/August (tentative) 2021	Support the benchmark for salmon stocks	sal.nac.all; sal.neac.all; sal.wgc.all
Landings, discards, biological sample and effort data from 2021	January 2022	Support of ICES advice on fisheries opportunities	Deadlines for data submission for each WGs to be shared in December 2021.
Indicators of species distribution for advice on VME	February 2022	Provision of ICES management advice on VME's	Similar to previous years
VMS/Log book data for fishing activities in the Northeast Atlantic and Baltic Sea	February 2022	Provision of ICES management advice on spatial distribution and impact of fisheries	Similar to previous years
Annual observed bycatch, effort and estimates of bycatch rates for relevant species (marine mammals, seabirds, turtles and large elasmobranchs), associated to specific fishing gear types.	Q2 2022 (tentative)	Support of the ICES advice on bycatch of marine mammals, bird, turtles and large elasmobranchs	

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Benchmarks

A list of planned benchmarks, associated issue lists and data calls are available on the SharePoint for benchmarks (accessible by RCG chairs). The benchmark process is under continuous development/scrutiny; The Benchmark Oversight Group (BOG) has been established under Advisory Committee (ACOM). This group will explore and propose solutions to address generic issues with benchmarks and conduct an annual review of benchmarks conducted and recommend any remedial actions to address unresolved issues, inconclusive or incomplete benchmarks to ACOM as well as provide a recommendation to ACOM whether to accept the benchmark. The BOG will be using a prioritization process in order to recommend the list of benchmarks to be conducted in year+1 and year+2 to ACOM.

Survey naming

With offset in the STECF evaluation of surveys for a couple of years ago, initiatives have been taken to align the survey naming in the ICES advice sheets to be consistent and easily identified as input to the assessment. ICES will make this change stepwise, where 2021 will be the use of a controlled vocabulary. The controlled vocabulary will be developed into an online database, facilitating searches as well as governance from 'both ends' (data providers and data users). This is for 2022. Once this is operational, a mapping interface will be included, making it even easier to identify surveys and quickly get to the relevant metadata.

ICES will check the controlled vocabulary with the names in the Annex of the EUMAP to see if a link is needed. This could be done in the online database.

Recommendations

The current recommendation system is including RCGs, where ICES groups can put forward recommendations to RCGs and the RCGs can also put forward recommendations to the EG groups, ACOM, Science Committee (SCICOM) and Secretariat through this system.

ICES has established a group of relevant steering group chairs and the SCICOM chair who will review and 'sense-check' the recommendations put forward to the RCGs prior to sending them on. The RCG chairs have been participating in a couple of meetings with the new 'revision group' where the remits of the RCGs were clarified and a guidance as to what type of recommendations could be operational for the RCGs and what information is needed to support the recommendation. The review of recommendations will be done annually early in the year (or if needed, ad hoc) to feed the recommendations forward to the RCGs in due time before the June meeting.

Sampling – Covid-19 disruption

The overviews provided by the RCGs to ICES concerning the allocation of effort and sampling under the Covid-19 disruption were considered very informative during the assessment group meetings, providing good background knowledge for interpreting the data collected during 2020. ICES will provide a feedback to the RCGs next year on the uptake of these overviews and appreciates the continued sampling of this knowledge in 2021. ACOM has made a guide to all assessment working groups concerning reporting of data deficiencies and their handling. These are included as an annex to all reports this year. In terms of data transmission failures, ICES will report these including the reasoning for them.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.1.3 Feedback from ISSG 'End users and RCGs'

The aim of this subgroup is to review and streamline the dialogue between data providers (RCGs) and end-users in order to identify effective processes to meet end-user needs and allow the RCGs to prioritize its activity relating to future data collection, storage and transmission functions. The subgroup was established as a pan-regional group in 2018.

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

During the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic TM in 2020 it was decided that this ISSG should have a more generic focus. It was therefore decided to keep the annual information meetings between ICES and the RCG chairs to ensure the good cooperation and to be able to follow the progress over time. As a result, three virtual meetings took place between the ISSG and ICES in 2021. The two main topics discussed were:

- (i) RCG commercial sampling Covid-19 overviews
Due to the positive feedback from ICES on the RCG Covid-19 overviews in 2020 it was decided that these overviews will also be created for 2021.
- (ii) Defining a mechanism for streamlining recommendations
The RCG has been discussing with ICES secretariat and ICES SG & SCICOM chairs how to improve both the contents and the route of the recommendations. A mandate and remits document from the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic, written by the respective chairs, was provided to ICES so that recommendations from the Expert Groups can be aligned with what the RCGs can actually facilitate. Furthermore, a route of the recommendations was proposed.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

Main tasks defined for 2021-2022:

1. Continue the RCG commercial sampling Covid-19 overviews for 2021
2. Communication channel between ICES and RCG chairs
 - Finalize and start communicating the mandates and remits documents within ICES
 - Implement the proposed route of recommendations
3. Communication channel between COM and RCG chairs
4. Communication channel between end-user and RCG chairs

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

No proposals for recommendations nor decisions.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.2 ToR 2 Implement and maintain data quality in data collection

During this year's meeting, progress has been made under ToR 2 as follows:

- Feedback from the 'WGRDBESGOV'
- Review of RDB 2021 data call
- Feedback from the ISSG & SG 'RCG catch, effort and sampling overviews.'
- Feedback from the ISSG 'Métier issues'
- Feedback from the ISSG & SG 'Surveys'
- Feedback from the ISSG 'Data quality'
- Feedback on 'New data sources and technology'
- Feedback from SG 'WP and AR template testing'
- HELCOM Roadmap on Fisheries data and ASCOBANS needs.

5.2.1 Feedback from the 'WGRDBESGOV'

The WGRDBESGOV has the following ToRs for 2020 – 2022:

- Review the status of the development of the new commercial fisheries Regional Database & Estimation System (RDBES) and its implementation.
- Provide a platform for user feedback to the Regional Database & Estimation System (RDBES).
- Oversee and summarize how the existing commercial fisheries Regional Database (RDB) and the new Regional Database & Estimation System (RDBES) are used in the EU Regional Coordination Groups (RCGs), and ICES expert groups.
- Review the data governance framework of the commercial fisheries Regional Database (RDB) and Regional Database & Estimation System (RDBES).

23

RDBES work during 2020 included:

- Second workshop on populating the RDBES data model (WKRDB-POP2).
 - 68 participants from 27 different institutions.
- Second workshop on design-based estimation using the RDBES data model (WKRDB-EST2).
 - More than 20 experts combining programming, statistical and fisheries knowledge.
- RDBES test data call.
 - Most of the relevant MS submitted data.
- RDBES development roadmap updated (Table [Table 5.2.1.1. Timetable for the ICES data bases](#)).
 - RDB and InterCatch planned to still be in use in 2022 – RDBES to take over their functions in 2023.
 - WKRDB-POP3 planned.
 - WGRDBES-EST 3 year working group proposed to build on the 2 WKRDB-EST workshops.
 - The RDBES workshop to replicate current InterCatch estimates (WKRDB-RAISE & TAF) postponed from 2020 to 2021.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Table 5.2.1.1. Timetable for the ICES data bases

Year	RDB	InterCatch	RDBES	Data calls	Core Group
2021	Production Data in/out	Production Data in/out	Development Test data in/out	Test all stocks CL and CE; Test selected stocks CS 2018- 2020; test bycatch	WGRDB-EST continue design-based estimation package WKRDB-POP3 target all stocks of data-call. WKRDB-RAISE&TAF to help countries with migrating estimation routines
2022	Production Data in/out	Production Data in/out	Production Data in/out	All stocks 2021 data. Bycatch/PETS data and/or recreational data	WGRDB-EST to accommodate ratio estimators in the design- based estimation package. Specify any further RDBES changes required.
2023	Stay alive Data out	Stay alive Data out	Production Data in/out	All stocks 2022 data, and historic data if possible. Bycatch/PETS data and/or recreational data	WGRDB-EST to finalize design-based estimation package. Specify any further RDBES changes required.

24

- Review of Data governance
 - Current situation: Multiple data policy (and similar) documents in ICES with no common structure and a mix of information provided in each.
 - Future situation:
 - Single ICES Data Policy: The data policy states the general principles for the ICES data life cycle in order to facilitate the production of science-based advice and status reports, and serve the scientific community.
 - Multiple Data Licenses: The data licenses state who can access specific data sets and what they can (and cannot) do with them.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

- For unrestricted data ICES is proposing to use the CC-BY 4.0 license <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>
- For restricted data such as that in the RDB/RDBES a specific data license has been written that follows the same structure as the CC-BY 4.0 license but includes the restrictions on data access and use relevant to that data.
- The WGRDBESGOV has reviewed the current RDB/RDBES Data Policy and drafted two new replacements:
 - An RDB/RDBES Data license that clearly defines who can access the RDB/RDBES data and what they are allowed to use it for.
 - An RDBES Data Governance documents that includes the remaining content of the Data Policy that is not relevant for a Data license.
- The intention of moving from a policy to a license was not to change the usage conditions of the data, but just re-format the document that defines these and align with similar licenses for data managed at ICES.
 - Some minor changes to the allowed data usage were also made at the same time following recommendations from the RCG and discussion at the WGRDBESGOV 2020 meeting.

The following related topics were discussed at the RCG meeting:

- Are there links between the RDBES development and the EU Fisheries Dependent Information (FDI) data call?
 - It is difficult to guarantee compatibility since the FDI data call is issued by the EU and the requested data might change without consultation with the RDBES development team, however it is certainly a desire that the RDBES can be used to fulfil the FDI data (providing MS have uploaded the required data). The JRC have attended previous WGRDBESGOV meetings and have expressed an interest in attending the December 2021 meeting to discuss this topic - this will be welcomed by the group.
- Confidentiality of fisheries statistics / transversal data
 - This topic has been raised in previous discussions. The essential problem is that at the required level of disaggregation it is possible to only have small groups of vessels in each segment. Previous RCG meetings have expressed the position that MS should still upload all data in this case, but that its public use is restricted so that no data is presented where it could be possible to identify individual vessels. However, some MS have said that national laws might prevent them from even uploading that data where only a small number of vessels are in a segment.
 - The COM's position is that data should be uploaded at the required level of disaggregation whilst also respecting confidentiality.
 - It was pointed out that it will always be possible for MS to aggregate data further before uploading so that confidentiality is maintained e.g. by grouping métiers or vessel length classes together, however this might have an effect on analyses performed using this data. For example, it might show that many more vessels are fishing in vulnerable areas than is actually the case in reality.
 - It was agreed that it would be useful to collate examples of the Data Sharing Agreement (DSAs) that MS have in place to access and use official/control data.
- RCG access to UK data

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

- Under the RDB Data Policy since the UK is no longer a MS it does not automatically grant access to its data to the relevant RCGs. Instead, the UK gave explicit permission to enable use of its data in the RCGs in 2021.

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_D01: Approve new RDB/RDBES Data license.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R01: WGRDBESGOV to collate examples of the Data Sharing Agreement (DSAs) that MS have in place to access and use official/control data.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R02: WGRDBESGOV to take into account non-ICES data calls in future developments of the RDBES.

5.2.2 Review of RDB 2021 data call

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

The RDB data call was launched by RCG chairs the 1st of March of 2021, being the deadline the 1st April 2021.

Both in the Baltic and in the NANSEA regions, all MS answered to the data call and provided the respective upload logs. However, there were some significant delays in the submission, which hampered the progress for some ISSGs such as the ISSG on 'RDB catch, effort and sampling overviews' and the ISSG on 'Small Scale Fisheries', whose work depended on up-to-date RDB data. Delays in data submission are becoming a recurrent problem. Both, RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic urge MS to respect the deadline as the work of some ISSGs depends on this data call.

26

5.2.3 Feedback from the ISSG & SG 'RDB catch, effort and sampling overviews'

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021 (Intersessional)

The work performed by ISSG 'Catch, Effort and Sampling Overviews' was developed between January and June 2021 on weekly WebEx meetings, and involved 14 participants that worked in two separate subgroups: one dedicated to the catch and effort overviews; and other to the sampling overviews. These meetings allowed to deal with specific tasks, review progress and adjust workloads. Minutes were circulated after each meeting to keep a record on progress achieved and tasks ahead.

Achievements

The group continued using the RCG [Github](#) (in the ICES EG section) as the repository for the R-scripts in development and the restricted [SharePoint](#) to hold documents, protocols and RDB data extracts. The common extraction and preparation format defined in the previous years was updated with regards to 2020 data and the graphical functions improved. R *Markdown* reports were significantly improved by including a description of the data used, automating captions and graphic labels formatting. From the initial workplan, only tasks 2.c, 2.d, 3.c and 4 were not fully accomplished and were postponed. A brief account of the ISSG work developed in 2020/2021 follows.

Annual catch and effort overviews: Some minor changes were implemented in comparison to last year overviews and they included the incorporation of previous feedback (suggestions from RCG and National Correspondents) and the development of the introduction text. The work on the national version of the

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

overviews and on limiting the size of the overviews was postponed. Three documents in *‘.pdf’* format were produced (BA, NA and NSEA) and presented to the RCG TM.

Multiannual catch and effort overviews: An R-script was developed for the automatic generation of the overviews and a first version of the multiannual overviews was created. Three documents in *‘.html’* format were produced (BA, NA and NSEA) and presented to the RCG TM.

Sampling overviews: The code from the previous year was reorganized; a new layout was prepared using the *‘Shiny’* R application, and a lot of new functionalities and options were created. It was also included an option for downloading static maps and it was taken a first step towards the Sampling vs Landings analyses. The *‘Shiny’* interface, its functionalities and present/potential analyses were presented to the RCG during this TM. Indications on how to use that interface were also given for the participants to be able to use, explore, test and give some feedback on the sampling outputs therein included to the group. The preparation of the *Sampling overview* in *‘.pdf’* format was postponed, along with the multiannual part of the analysis.

The stock allocation to be used in these analyses (catch and sampling data) was not easy to perform because the stock variable in the RDB is not updated. The group made a big effort to try and merge the RDB data with the stock definition table from the InterCatch but, in some cases, the stock assignment was not very straightforward, resulting in renamed/re-assigned stocks. The group requested input from the RCG Baltic, and RCG NANSEA on the way forward for solving this stock issue.

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021 (Meeting)

Subgroup work on 7th and 9th June:

During the RCG meeting, subgroup work on ISSG *‘Catch, Effort and Sampling Overviews’* was scheduled to discuss the main outcomes of the reports delivered and to get some feedback for their improvements. The main part of the topics discussed in the subgroup follow below.

Discussion on the request from WGBFAS to have access to RDB data products to be used in the report and advice, and enhance the quality of descriptions used.

- Considering in sending all total allowable catch (TAC) species from WGBFAS is working with, for not having the same request of other group of species in the coming year - to be agreed in the DM.
- Use the *‘sprat’* as an example for the test data to provide, and to be agreed on; concerns that all the graphs and maps can end up in the publicly available report of the WG; it was referred the possibility of only using the data in the work developed and not reproducing the figures in the report.
- Participants involved in the work developed by WGBFAS provided the list of figures that are needed.
- The date for delivering the overviews is quite important – would make sense if it’s ready before the WG meets. And this highly depends on when the ISSG gets the data from the ICES, which in turn depends on if the countries reply to the data call on time.

Feedback from the reports on *Multiannual Catch and Effort Overviews:*

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

- The table with fishing effort information (extracted from “Fleet Register”) should clarify if they are active/licensed vessels or total national vessels. This applies also to the annual overviews.
- Introduction part includes an RDBES text that is not relevant for the report and can be deleted.
- ‘.html’ format allows for more information to be included - however, some figures grouping result in very small graphics, difficult to analyze (e.g. to read the country names); it would also be useful to include more interactive plots.
- The country code ‘CHA’ is not straightforward and needs to be clarified in the text (suggestion to include the link for country code list from ICES vocabulary)
- The selected effort measure ‘days at sea’ is not a mandatory field in the CE table – countries that are not reporting that information is not included in these summaries. Suggestion to use a mandatory effort measure instead (e.g. number of fishing trips) or to include information clarifying the missing data (e.g. the % of missing records)
- Some series have only 1 or 2 points – needs some text explanation (e.g. one year, one country? Is it some kind of ‘error’? Or, is it useful to be included?)
- UK is not a member of RCGs/EU - Is there the need of disclaimer/explanation of previous status and why is the data included in these reports?
- Country colors need to be more distinct and harmonized between the graphics.
- Stocks renamed because RDB stock list is not updated – this is not clear in the text from the reports.
- Stocks graph - ‘Landings by 10 top stock’
 - o Some of the colors are very similar so it can be difficult to tell if a graph refers to ENG or ESP, for example.
 - o The axis says “Landings (Ton)” but is actually the proportion of landings.

28

Suggestions for improvements of the ‘Shiny’ R application - *Sampling Overviews*

- Add links to the RDB data policy.
- Inclusion of the RDB TR summary table: will allow to obtain, for example, the frequency of occurrence of a species in the sampling trips.
- Add option to choose the Year (or information which Year is being displayed).
- ‘Sampling Type’ drop down values aren’t meaningful e.g. ‘D’, ‘M’, ‘S’ - include its meaning instead of letters.
- Suggestion for more clarification of the variables to be used for producing the maps by replacing the ‘No’ by ‘Num’ (e.g. ‘NoAges’ - ‘NumAges’).
- Add pop-up with information when clicking over a marker.
- Possible bug in the static map legend – to be verified.
- Ability to save the map also as a report may be useful.
- More inputs for developments on the *Sampling vs Landings* analyses may be found in the PGDATA 2018 report.
 - o The number of trips (effort) can also be used to analyze the sampling coverage (picture similar to the one of the sampling vs landings).
 - o Add options to choose variables displayed: stocks, species, catch groups, species assemblage, métiers, areas, gears, countries.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

- Interest in visualizing change over time rather than absolute number of sampled trips in the year (e.g. PGDATA 2018 report, Figure 2)
- For all tabs:
 - o Order alphabetically the list of species.
 - o Remove 'all' when another item is selected.
 - o Make data available as a table also (downloadable).
- Use the RDB information to prepare the information for the table 2.1 from the WP.
 - o preliminary 'evaluation' of the effort needed to accomplish this task.

Outputs from the presentation on 9th June

RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA found the work developed by the group very good and productive, with useful results.

There was a suggestion for the possibility of the data submitter using this R-scripts for performing check in the data. However, this will already be contemplated in the RDBES data submission.

The RDB stock/area codes used need to be revised, since the RDB will be soon replaced by the RDBES, it will have the corrected stock/area codifications and also stocks will be cross checked in the data submission.

There was a suggestion to contemplate a regular publication of these reports because RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA is using all the RDB data and other entities may also be interested in this type of information. The type of RDB data request cannot violate the confidentiality rules and WGBFAS will be the testing group. Since the goal is to have this information public because other people may be interested in the work developed, maybe the inclusion of aggregated data figures at some level can make it possible.

Regarding the UK data, the RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA needs to consider a process of approval for producing the outputs.

The RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA highlights that the information provided by these reports is very useful for stock assessors and that this ISSG work should continue. With the type of information provided to RDBES, these reports can be further improved to include other type of information which will allow the expansion of the analyses to be performed and presented. The confidential issues can be solved with the type of data aggregation used. Last year, NCs showed some reservation and concerns of setting these reports publicly available because it may not be the 'final data'. It was also referred that the tools are available and should be more used, so expert groups could have access to this data and use it for the analyses, but not turning it public. However, it's difficult to keep it confidential if it's in a SharePoint.

There was one opinion that, as an RCG, there is the need to know what information should be analyzed for a better coordination on the use of the data, and it seems that that goal cannot be achieved with these outputs; there is also interest in having the information on the '*Landing country vs Flag country*' to analyze the foreign landings. However, the outputs to be produced by the group will include the type of information requested under the RCG meetings, and these overviews are examples of what can be performed but it's supposed to have RCG inputs on what are the outcomes needed; probably the 'Shiny' app will allow for a better understanding of the Sampling vs Landings, for example. There was a suggestion to produce graphs and maps by region without mentioning the MS e.g. stock distribution by region and then this could be made public.

RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA agreed that 'Shiny' app work may produce very good outputs, benefiting all the other ISSGs, VGs and other end-users but, in the present, it needs more input work and volunteers are

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

requested for this group of developers. There was a reference that, in the long run, this could be the basis for the overall picture of what is being done and that's a brilliant way to show to the RCG and others what is there -> maybe it could be included in the RCG website. There can be created a data policy friendly for publicly availability in the RCG website, with aggregated information.

During the discussion there was a question on the possibility of the overviews being the basis for the next WP (RWPs): if it would be possible to prepare tables for the WP. In table 2.1: % share in EU landings. The ISSG group agreed that at the present, there might be some issues with the stock by area codifications, creating some difficulties to produce those numbers. The Fishn'Co project participants informed that the project had already got the task for producing the stock codifications (but not the numbers) until the end of June. After that, this ISSG group may use that codification from Fishn'Co project to prepare the information on % share in EU landings for filling the table 2.1 from the WP, to be delivered by the end of August.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

After receiving the feedback from 2021 RCG, the subgroup aims to continue to improve the existing scripts, extending them to the remainder of the documents and new analyses.

It is also intended to produce an R-package and a Shiny app that will give more flexibility to the end-users and make the data gathering more easily accessible.

The subgroup will continue their work on a regular basis throughout the year to improve their achievements and give feedback to the RCG chairs in regular intervals.

In summary the next tasks are:

1. Prepare table 2.1 (share of EU landings & TACs (?)) by the end of August 2021.
2. Incorporate feedback from the RCG, NC, LM.
3. If accepted prepare the overviews replying to the WGBFAS request.
4. Maintaining annual overviews and further development of the multiannual overviews.
5. Further development of the sampling overviews:
 - Add new functionalities.
 - Extend Sampling vs Landings part.
 - Include CL and CE information in the analyses.
 - Include stock overviews.
6. Collect feedback on multiannual overviews and shiny application overviews from the different MSs.

30

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC 2021_D02: Agree on provisioning the requested data products for WGBFAS. (DK, SE, DE, FI, PL, LT, LV, EE)

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.2.4 Feedback from the ISSG on "Métier issues"

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

During RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021 TM progress of work of ISSG on 'Métier issues' was presented. As result of subgroup work the new standardized and harmonized list of métier codes with links between new and old codes is accepted and is available for the use and implementation by the MS. Also, reference lists for areas, fishing gears and on to which target assemblage group each fish species need to be assigned were agreed. Taking into account all new reference lists and additional comments from MS the script was adjusted to include functions to assign missing métiers and to conduct a vessel pattern analysis to avoid "rare" métiers. During the subgroup work the manual, which is explaining the background, script, input format and reference lists was created.

All the materials (reports, métier list, reference lists, script and the manual) which are related to work of ISSG are published in GitHub repository (<https://github.com/ices-eg/RCGs/tree/master/Metiers>). The manual for assigning métiers to transversal data is available in HTML format and it fully describes the assigning process and provides information about the workflow of the script.

RCG changed the name of this ISSG to 'Métier and transversal variable issues', in order to better reflect the additional tasks which has been assigned to the ISSG.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

1. Follow up on and support implementation of métier codes and script (it should also be possible to include participants from outside EU). Approve and update métier list if new codes are needed.
2. When data have been submitted for the RDBES test data call, métier descriptions can be made (following up on 2019 work within the ISSG) and, in the future, it may be further developed in collaboration with the ISSG on RDB Catch, Effort and Sampling Overviews.
3. Continue testing the script on national data and improve the script if needed.
4. Collaborate with ISSG on SSF regarding:
 - a. métier assignment for the small-scale fishery to avoid MIS_MIS_0_0_0
 - b. effort calculation (harmonize between different data calls if possible)
5. Collaboration with RCG MED&BS on métier codes.

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R03: WGRDBESGOV to provide data extraction from RDBES.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R04: STECF to implement new RDBES métier codes into the FDI data call.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R05: ICES to implement new RDBES métier codes into the data calls.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.2.5 Feedback from the ISSG & SG ‘Surveys’

Cost-sharing ASH and blue whiting survey

Apart from the intersessional progress of the ISSG Surveys as reported in Part III of this report, the ISSG met during the technical meeting to discuss current topics and recent developments. One of the topics for discussion was the future UK contribution to the combined surveys and cost-sharing agreement. Lack of participation from the UK hampered these discussions and led to postponement of these discussions.

To prepare for future discussions with UK, three options for the setup of new agreements were listed:

A: Agreements including UK as previously and based on updated TAC shares.

B: Agreements excluding UK without effort reduction by MS based on updated TAC shares.

C: Agreements excluding UK with effort reduction by MS, based on TAC shares and in consultation with end-users.

Under option C, a reduction of survey effort in line with the reduced contribution is anticipated. During the 2020 RCG meeting the planning group for the blue whiting survey (ICES WGIPS) was asked to review the survey effort and coverage of the IBWSS and evaluate the impact of a 10% and 20% reduction in survey effort by Ireland and the Netherlands on the data quality of the survey indices. So far, no response has been received while this would be very welcome to fuel the discussions on possible effort reduction.

The cost-sharing options as well as the subsequent agreements will be discussed and followed-up over summertime as the ISSG aims for a decision on at least the intention to cost-share during the RCG decision meeting.

Governance and proposed changes to survey designs

The 2020 RCG stated ‘Given the expectation that survey designs, planning and task-sharing might change in the foreseeable future, RCGs are expected to play a more substantial role in the decision-making process when it comes to budget and/or national implications. The scope of the RCG will continue to focus on the budgetary aspects and national obligations in relation to proposed changes to a survey’ in addition, the proposed EU-MAP defines the governing RCG for each mandatory survey.

In this light, the ISSG discussed the proposed changes to the design and planning of the North Sea mackerel egg survey as the responsible survey planning group (WGMEGS) decided to change these without taking the DCF obligations of the MS involved into consideration. Apart from that, such a decision is not within the remit of WGMEGS. For the next ISSG term, a ToR will be added concerning the review of proposed changes to survey design. In reflection to WGMEGS, WGWIDE (being the end-user of the survey data) is asked to provide a scientific justification for the proposed changes, including the impact on the assessment as well as on the MS obligations and a roadmap describing the steps to reach the proposed change to the survey. Furthermore, clarification for the initial request to change the survey design shall be provided. The full justification shall be ready prior to the September decision meeting. Should this justification not be ready by then, or considered unsatisfactory as basis for the decision to change the survey design, the current design and planning shall continue. Thus, allowing for more time to fully explore the impact, implications and added value of the proposed change prior to the MEGS survey in 2025. The original planning will then continue triennially as currently planned in the MS’s Workplans: 2022 Atlantic survey, 2023 North Sea survey (DK, NL and ideally UK), 2024 gap year.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

ISSG surveys plans to continue its work under the same ToRs as set for 2020-2021. However, to ensure continuation of the discussion on proposed survey changes, a fifth ToR is added for 2021-2022. The ISSG will start working on the following ToRs already from July 2021 onwards:

1. Renewal and finalisation of the multilateral agreements on cost-sharing of the two surveys: International Ecosystem Survey in the Nordic Seas (IESNS, also known as ASH under the EU-MAP) and International Blue Whiting Survey.
2. Monitor Covid-19 implications on surveys from a DCF perspective and react when appropriate and requested.
3. Monitor the follow-up of WKREO proposals and act as focal point for RCG contact.
4. Review survey aspects of the renewed EU-MAP in the light of cost-sharing and set up methods to identify candidate surveys for future cost-sharing.
5. Review proposed substantial changes to the design, set-up or other aspects of the survey having an impact on MS's Workplan, effort and/or budget allocation, or obligations. Consider requirements to facilitate future review processes.
6. Main focus on identification of candidate surveys for cost-sharing: Plan dedicated meeting e.g. January once TAC shares 2022 are known. Follow the existing methodology to identify candidates.
7. Add ToR to review proposed changes to surveys (method, timing etc.) having a potential impact on DCF obligations and MS's Workplans.
8. Work on WP/AR Table and Textbox 2.6 (surveys).

33

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_D03: Renewal cost-sharing agreements for WHB survey.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_D04: Renewal cost-sharing agreements for IESNS survey (blue whiting).

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R06: ICES WG WIDE to provide justification and roadmap for changing the design and setup of the North Sea Mackerel egg survey.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R06-DI: Decision on the future setup and timing of the North Sea Mackerel survey. [*Having this decision depends on the results of the previous recommendation R06*].

5.2.6 Feedback from the ISSG on 'Data quality'

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

The aim of the ISSG on 'Data quality' is to facilitate quality assurance of data and sampling programmes. In 2021 the subgroup had six tasks defined. At the stage of planning the work of the ISSG, it has been noticed that some of the tasks thematically correspond to the Biological Data Quality Objectives of the WPI in the Fishn'Co project. Therefore, some of the work is being outsourced using the Fishn'Co project resources. In this case, the role of the ISSG is to specify the scope of the outsourced work and then review the results.

The first task of the ISSG was to compile quality assurance indicators based on Table 5A of the NWP and Annual Reports and evaluate the overall documentation on quality of sampling programmes. The analysis of

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

the indicators shows that there have been relatively small inter-annual changes in the previous years. Having that in mind and taking into account the large amount of work needed for this type of analysis, it was decided not to repeat the evaluation of the indicators in 2021. Moreover, the format of the NWP and Annual Reports is being changed and Table 5A will no longer be present in future templates. This entails the need to develop a new approach for the analysis of data quality in the future. Previous work done for this task was presented at the IMDIS conference in 2021.

The second task of the ISSG was to create sampling design document template for RWPs. This task is linked to the Fishn'Co Biological Data Quality Objectives 1 and 2 which are to produce guidance for sampling design and to produce guidance for sampling implementation. Other relevant input for this task is the outcome of STECF EWG 20-18, in particular the proposed biological data quality documents in Annex I.1 of the templates that MS will be required to submit as part of their NWP and Annual Report. A significant amount of work has already been done on developing a sampling design document template. However, this work focused mainly on national sampling programmes. The current work of the ISSG is to identify changes needed to be made in the existing template to adapt it for regional sampling programmes. The Fishn'Co case study on Baltic small pelagic regional sampling was selected for evaluation of the existing data quality document and catch sampling summary templates as documents describing a regional sampling programme.

The third task was to prepare templates/guidance for the other data quality questions for RWPs. This task has been found to be related to Fishn'Co Biological Data Quality Objectives 3, 4, 5 and 6, which are:

- Objective 3 – Produce guidance for Data Checks.
- Objective 4 – Produce guidance for Data Storage.
- Objective 5 – Produce guidance for Evaluating data accuracy (precision and bias).
- Objective 6 – Produce guidance for Documenting methods of editing and imputing.

34

It was agreed to use a combined methodology for Objectives 3 and 6. The ISSG designed a questionnaire which allows to identify types of data checks, editing and imputation which are used by the institutes involved in the RCG and Fishn'Co project. The next steps of the work related to the questionnaires will be carried out by an outsourced resource from the Fishn'Co project. At first, the questionnaires are sent to relevant people in the institutes. The results will be collated, categorised and analysed. Finally, using the results a template will be designed, which will enable MS participating in regional sampling programmes to identify which data checks and methods of editing and imputing they are implementing. Having the results of the outsourced work reviewed, the ISSG will suggest any changes required in the template.

In terms of data storage, which is connected to the Objective 6, the previously collated tables 5A from National Work-plans and annual reports were examined. All answers related to data storage were summarized with an emphasis on identifying the reasons why data has not been uploaded to international databases. The most common reason for not submitting data was found to be the lack of an appropriate international database. However, when a suitable database exists, MS generally submit data to it.

Regarding the Objective 5, the work on guidance for evaluating precision and bias is planned for the second half of 2021 and will be outsourced to the Fishn'Co project resources.

The task 4 of the ISSG was to catalogue software tools. No further work was done on this task in 2021.

The task 5 – “RDB upload logs” was accomplished by the ISSG with the aid of the RCG chairs and ICES Data Centre. Upload logs have been compiled and important issues have been highlighted in the ISSG report (Part III of this report), some of which have recurred for a number of years.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Task 6 was related to data checks for the new RDBES. No work has been done on this task yet.

More details on the ISSG work can be found in the 2021 report of the ISSG on 'Data quality' in Part III of this report. Among the description of the work done, the following resources can be found in the report Part III:

- Appendix 5. 2 Data Quality document example,
- Appendix 5. 3 Catch Sampling summary example,
- Appendix 5. 4 Questionnaire about data checks, editing and imputation.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

1. Create sampling design document template for RWPs.
 - Work with Baltic small pelagic case study to complete documents.
2. Look at creating templates/guidance for the other table 5A questions for RWPs.
 - Analyse questionnaire results and produce template for data capture checks, editing and imputation.
 - Produce guidance/tools for evaluating data accuracy (precision and bias) in regional programmes using the RDBES.

The two tasks above should be completed in 2021 and the direction the group takes after that needs to be decided. A new chair of the ISSG will be required if the group is to continue in 2022 and beyond. It was agreed that the ISSG will have an internal discussion on whether there is a volunteer to be chair and in what direction the group should proceed. If there is no new chair, then it could be decided to let the group become dormant for a year.

35

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

No proposals for recommendations nor decisions.

5.2.7 Feedback on 'New data sources and technology'

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

Four different sessions on "New data sources and technology" were presented during the meeting, namely:

- I. Developments within ICES around industry collected data
- II. icrOS
- III. SmartDots
- IV. RayScan

I. Development within ICES around industry collected data

ICES gave an overview of the developments within ICES around industry collected data, beginning with the GAP project (2008 to 2015) bringing Fishers, Scientists and Policy together, exploring what goes on in the

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

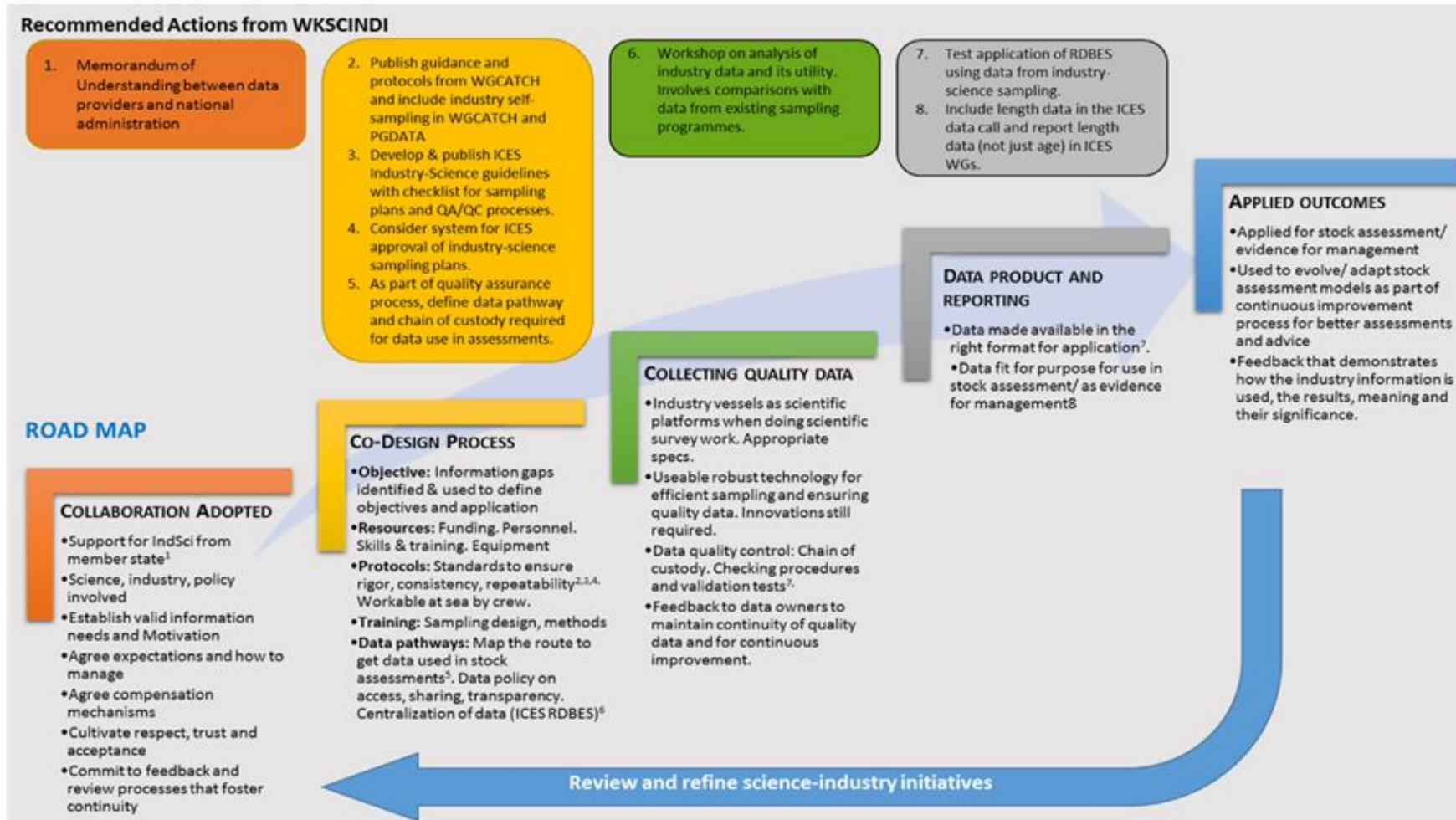
transition zone between top-down management and participatory governance, with a focus on the knowledge basis for management. The exclusion of fishers in knowledge provision was in the past recognized as an important weakness in fisheries management and ICES has engaged in a series of workshops to explore the uptake of industry collected data in the stock assessment process.

WKSCINDI – Workshop on Science with Industry Initiatives took place in 2019 with participation of a wide range of industry representatives, scientists and policy actors. The main outcomes were the provision of an up to date overview on the roles that industry can play in delivering scientific information relevant to ICES advice and marine research, as well as a roadmap (Fig. 5.2.7.1) for taking measurable steps toward the inclusion and application of scientific data from industry.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Figure 5.2.7.1. Roadmap for WKSCINDI



RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

The roadmap is applied by ACOM in the further development of the use of industry-based data in stock assessment. The subsequent steps agreed is a series of workshops:

Workshop to establish standards and guidelines for industry data collection initiatives, their quality assurance process, and the pathway for making the data useful to ICES - WKDSG 2020. This workshop evaluated documentation on Standards and Guidelines and the requirements for quality assurance that should be applied to data used in supporting ICES advice. The conclusion was that there is a need for guidance on data collection initiatives that fall outside of the scientific institutions that routinely participate in ICES, such as the fishing industry or other third-parties. Participation of more (and different) data-collectors may provide new opportunities for ensuring that ICES advice is based on 'the best available data', and can assure its quality, credibility and legitimacy.

Workshop to evaluate the utility of self-sampling data from industry for enhancing scientific knowledge and providing data for stock assessments - WKEVUT 2021. The ToRs for this workshop are still being finalised; it is scheduled for November 2021. WKEVUT will test the quality and utility of new data derived from industry-science data collection or sole industry initiatives by comparing it with existing data collected under national sampling programs and routinely used by ICES in stock assessment or for other research and advisory purposes. ACOM would like to identify a test case of the Regional Database and Estimation System using industry derived data.

Finally, the Workshop on Stakeholder Engagement Strategy (WKSHOES) will meet online 22-24 June 2021. WKSHOES will examine stakeholder interactions across ICES expert groups, assess needs and opportunities, and develop elements for a strategy to formalize stakeholder involvement in ICES groups. It was pointed out by the RCGs that ICES should remember to include/seek out other stakeholders than the ones from the large-scale pelagic fisheries. These stakeholders may have other data available and as well also have other themes of importance to discuss in the light of stakeholder involvement in the advisory system.

38

II. IcrOS

[IcrOS](#) is an open source Sampling system developed for switching from the traditional sampling to the more efficient approach of paperless sampling.

The IcrOS sampling system has been developed at the *Centro Oceanográfico de Cádiz* of the *Instituto Español de Oceanografía* (IEO, CSIC) by Jorge Tornero, thanks to the support of the internal subprojects from the IEO *PELCOSAT* and *ERDEM*, linked to the Spanish Data Collection Program.

The IcrOS tool has been thoroughly tested in three of the acoustic surveys carried out by the IEO (*ECOCÁDIZ* and *ECOCÁDIZ-RECLUTAS* since 2014, and more recently on the *PELACUS* survey), and also on the PORCUPINE IBTS survey. In addition, IcrOS has also been used at the laboratory of Cádiz since 2014 to carry out biological sampling of anchovy and sardine.

The IcrOS sampling system includes two main tools to perform the different types of sampling:

- An electronic measuring board for length frequency distribution (LFD) samplings, based on Arduino, a flexible open source platform based on free hardware and software. This measuring board uses tactile switch technology, providing no pointer, magnets or gadgets operation of the device. Data transfer is done through Ethernet PoE (a single cable supplies both power and data connectivity to the device), but wireless, battery operated device is undergoing testing.
- Biological sampling, catch sorting and haul related information data are recorded by applications running in sampling kiosks based on Raspberry Pi cards, working as fat clients of a LTSP (Linux Terminal Server Project) server what makes easier the maintenance and distribution of the system's software.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Regarding the icrOS software, it follows this scheme:

- Data storage and management:
 - PostgreSQL + PostGIS server.
 - Linux Terminal Server Project (LTSP) server for easy application distribution.
- Sampling distribution and management:
 - Python desktop applications for data input.
 - R-Shiny apps for quality controls and reports.

The icrOS sampling system captures haul data, such as geographical positions or fishing depths directly from the vessel instrumentation (GPS, echosounders...). It also captures weight data from marine scales. IcrOS has applications for raising catches and for management and control of the sampling tasks.

icrOS is able to integrate LFD information from three different sources: from the electronic measuring board, from the classical *pen & paper* and from the conversion of biological samplings to LFD. Sampling LFD with the measuring board makes possible to inspect the length distributions on screen as they are recorded.

Biological sampling is carried out using sampling protocols, so any species can be sampled if a protocol is defined for it. Protocols are defined in icrOS by means of the Sampling protocol creator. The user can choose from a wide range of variables to collect or can create their own variables (numerical, categorical, boolean or annotations) if needed. Variable sampling order, default values, mandatory fields, field blocking (so the same value will be applied for the subsequent specimens if needed) are defined in the protocols as well.

icrOS allows *shared sampling*: more than one person/team sampling the same species at once. Also, marine scales can be shared from different kiosks if needed. Capturing weight data is as simple as pressing a key in the form fields enabled to capture weight from scales. This makes it possible to optimize working time, as people usually recording the data with pen&paper are able to perform more specialised tasks like otolith extraction, sample preservation, labelling, species identification, etc. The icrOS system is able to capture data from electronic calipers as well.

Label printers can also be connected to the icrOS system to label samples as they are being collected or make labels for otolith slides, etc.

Quality control tools are still under development. icrOS currently has tools allowing checking length/weight relationships data immediately after or while the biological sampling is being carried out, so outlier identification and error checking can be performed in early stages of the process.

Different types of Reports & data output can be provided by R shiny apps: biological samples listing in PDF/excel, catch sorting reports...

icrOS is a system still under development. Three main objectives have been identified for its upcoming development:

1. Improvement of icrOS measuring board design (weight, connectivity, battery operation), and overall system hardware.
2. System development efforts will be focused on Quality Assurance & Quality Control.
3. As a last step, the code, database schemas, diagrams, and blueprints of the system will be shared in a public repository.

For further information on the icrOS sampling system, requests can be sent to jorge.tornero@ieo.es

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

III. SmartDots

SmartDots is a platform for quality assurance of biological parameters as input for stock assessment which has become a core tool in calibration and training of technicians across national laboratories, supporting the standardisation of procedures and data output. Launched in 2018 and developed by The ICES Working Group on SmartDots Governance (WGSMART) who oversee all improvements and ensure all developments are in line with the ICES quality assurance framework (QAF) in close cooperation with the ICES Working Group on Biological parameters (WGBIOP). There are a number of modules which are inter linked; the software, (currently only otolith images), a database, a web application and a reporting module which produces a report template based on a standardised statistical analysis run from an r-script, the output of which can be directly included in some stock assessment model runs. Hosted at ICES, it currently has 661 users registered from 36 countries.

The SmartDots software supports the age reading module that facilitates age reading based on otolith images. The software enables the age readers to participate in ICES age reading workshops and exchanges. User-friendly functions within the age reading software include image sorting, image adjustment, measurement, and identification of specific features for discussion and assignment of a scale for quality control purposes. Three other modules are supported by the web application; a maturity staging module developed in 2019, a larvae identification module developed in 2020 for the online Workshop 2 on the identification of clupeid larvae (WKIDCLUP2) and an egg identification module currently in development for the online Workshop on Mackerel, Horse Mackerel and Hake Eggs Identification and Staging (WKMACHIS). The shortcomings of not having these modules available in the software are manifold; tools are not as intuitive and need to be developed separately for each module, future developments cannot be streamlined across modules, the reporting environment has to work with different output formats and users require training to work on different interfaces.

It is essential that the maturity and ichthyoplankton modules become available in the software and module developments are streamlined. Resources for maintenance and development will be optimised. Resources required for user training will be greatly reduced. The reporting module will benefit, as resources will focus more on the statistical analyses and its incorporation into the advice process.

Support is required for module development, a formal recommendation has been made from WGSMART to ACOM, and RCG's to support these developments. A detailed outline of specifications and associated costs are available. A suggestion is to have a joint request from DGMARE, UK, Norway and Iceland to ICES. This and other possible routes should be discussed at the 2021 Liaison Meeting (LM). WGSMART chairs can be contacted for any further information.

RCG discussed this issue in plenary and decided to support WGSMART in their request to ICES as SmartDots is a key tool enabling regional coordination and quality assurance in biological sampling of fisheries.

IV. RayScan

To support fishermen with the accurate identification of skates on board of fishing vessels and in fish auctions, ILVO (Belgium) and the Federal Public Service Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment in Belgium are developing a smartphone app, called *RayScan*. *RayScan* is an automatic artificial intelligence identification application that supports the determination of some European skate species. After a picture of the skate is taken, or uploaded the application automatically determines the species.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

The first and crucial step in this app development was the collection of enough data, i.e. images of skates, into a proper database. One of the nice things about this app is the fact that it will grow more accurate over time through use. Every time an identification is made, people have the option to share that observation. If they do, the picture of skate will be added to the database allowing for increasingly accurate scans. This way *Rayscan* hopes to provide an answer to the problem of misidentification.

Currently the model of the app has an accuracy of about 85% which need to be further increased before releasing the app to the broad public. At the moment the ILVO sea going observers are testing the app on board and are taking more pictures of the species. In the near future the Belgian fishermen will be requested to use this app and as such increase the pictures in the database.

At the moment the application is only available in Dutch and the identification focusses on the most commercially important Belgian skate species. However, in the future ILVO is aiming at expanding this app and make it available in different languages and as well add more species of skates and eventually also sharks.

For further question, information or for becoming involved in the project, contact Laura Lemey (ILVO, laura.lemey@ilvo.vlaanderen.be).



Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

No proposals for recommendations nor decisions.

5.2.8 Feedback from SG 'WP and AR template testing'

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

During 2021 MS will commence formulating their work plans and filling in the requisite tables and text boxes for the new work plans for their data collection programmes. Ahead of the meeting of the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic and the WP/AR template testing workshop, a consolidated feedback document on the proposed guidelines for filling the work plans and annual reports was received from COM, with some revised drafting and COM replies. There were quite a few unclear points where the subgroup discussed and proposed some solutions.

In parallel, MS were asked by the chairs of the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic to test the templates and comment on issues that needed clarification. Six countries replied and all were compiled into a final excel sheet for consideration. Over 120 separate queries were received and were partly reviewed by the subgroup.

A focus was made in addressing obvious errors, reference to wrong tables etc.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Because not all of the questions/clarifications were addressed it was decided that these would be opened again to the countries and ask them to prioritise the queries.

COM will put forward the final proposals from the workshop to STECF EWG 21-09 and July plenary for the experts' view and rubberstamp. This will be before distribution the final templates to MS.

It was agreed that a Google Doc approach for correspondence of exchange of questions when filling of these templates be set up by the RCG Secretariat. This will enable countries to pose questions to the group and have them answered by either MS or by the COM.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

Not applicable.

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

No proposals for recommendations nor decisions.

5.2.9 HELCOM Roadmap on Fisheries data and ASCOBANS needs

42

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

ASCOBANS is a legally binding UN treaty with 10 parties. Covers any species, subspecies or population of toothed whales (*Odontoceti*) occurring in the Agreement Area (with the exception of the Sperm Whale).

Baltic - Jastarnia Plan

The Jastarnia Plan deals with the Belt and Baltic Proper harbour porpoise populations and has been meeting since 2005. They have concluded that >0.7 animals bycaught per year would risk the survival of the population (NAMMCO & IMR 2019) and that a zero bycatch would allow the population to recover. This indicates that even 1 harbour porpoises bycaught per year can put the stock in risk. The political committee BALTFISH has advised on a better monitoring of bycatch of harbour porpoise in the Baltic.

HELCOM road map on fisheries data.

1. We need bycatch rate (bycatch numbers related to monitored effort)
2. Fishing effort of all vessels
3. Data on distribution and population of relevant species.

The ASCOBANS group mentioned the challenges with data gaps:

- Not enough catch data especially for smaller vessels.
- Further, the smaller vessels lack information on position and gear.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

- Modifying observer programs with the métier. Include gillnets (GNS), trammel nets (GTR), set longlines (LLS), fyke nets (FYK), pots and traps (FPO) and especially in vessels below 15 meter.
- Improve effort data. Especially if fishing net length could be included and soak time (especially below 12 meters)
- In addition to observer program use remote electronic monitoring (REM) as an alternative monitoring, especially on vessels < 15 m for the entire Baltic Sea, or by establishing reference fleets.

Access to ICES data. HELCOM would like to get access to ICES bycatch data.

North Sea and North Atlantic

In the North Sea bycatch of Harbour porpoise with mainly bottom set gill nets, trammel nets and semi-driftnets have been of concern. In the North Atlantic the concern is towards common and striped dolphin with high bycatch rates in the pelagic trawls and seine nets, and bottom set gill nets & trammel nets.

In the area the aim from ASCOBANS is to restore the populations to 80% of the carrying capacity and that bycatches in should not excite 1.7% of the abundance, with a precautionary objective at 1%. The Harbour porpoise bycatch in the North Sea has been estimated to 3% and 6% in the Celtic Sea.

Regarding the status of the bycatch reporting in 2020, 19 out of the 24 countries contacted responded (ICES and non-ICES members) and some countries just reported same information as last year. Further, most countries rely on the DCF sampling program to monitor protected species bycatch; only the UK has a dedicated onboard observer bycatch monitoring program for the purposes of meeting the requirements of Reg. 812/2004.

The methods used to collect bycatch information is:

- Independent observers (fisheries and marine mammal observers)
- Remote electronic monitoring
- logbooks, questionnaires, strandings

Deficiencies:

- insufficient sampling (small vessels, reluctance to report bycatch, to take onboard observers or use REM without incentives, lack of funding, unstandardised methods & reporting formats).
- Inadequate metrics for fishing effort (need for net lengths, soak times, areas swept **rather than** days at sea).
- Inappropriate spatial and temporal scales.
- Inaccurate species identifications.
- Need to link DCF with non-EU fishing fleets in European waters with common logbook format & data standards.

In the group there were discussions on the effort data. Days at sea and métier definition are presently being improved by the RCG ISSG on métiers, and this will hopefully improve some of the present effort data. However, data such as soak time, net length etc. are derived from logbooks and to improve this effort data the information needs to be mandatory in the control regulation as it is not possible for the RCG to collect



RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

these data from other vessels than the vessels where an observer is onboard. The new control regulation has not yet been adopted, but this will happen within a short time frame. It is likely too late to suggest improvements into control regulation.

There were further discussions on the coverage that needs to be very large to cover bycatch of PETS as this is a rare event. There will be many 0 observations and how can this be raised in a good way. This indicates it is not only an issues of coverage, but also on how dedicated we can find the problematic métiers to have a more targeted sampling program.

The monitoring could be improved by an increased communication between ASCOBANS and RCGs and to have easy access to reports. The RCG would like to get access to the risk assessment conducted by ASCOBANS. It is important that we share information and work together. HELCOM would like to have access to the ICES Bycatch database. As this information is very detailed, an official request needs to be delivered to the NCs who can agree on this in the September meeting. HELCOM needs to clarify the data needs and describe the aggregation level needed in an official request to ICES.

The group discussed the most cost-effective way to sample bycatch. We still have too few REM examples to see how cost-effective this sampling method is and the vessels participating are presently not randomly selected. A new RCG subgroup has been suggested on technology improvement and this group could be a place to gain more experience in monitoring with REM.

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

No proposals for recommendations nor decisions.



RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.3 ToR 3 Review impact on management measures on data collection

During this year's meeting, progress has been made under ToR 3 as follows:

- Brexit-implication on sampling, surveys and thresholds

5.3.1 *Brexit-implication on sampling, surveys and thresholds*

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

During the meeting the group tackled the following points for discussion:

- Involvement of UK in data collection
- Interaction of the RCGs with UK and third parties in general
- Brexit impact on TAC and landing shares and the impact on thresholds
- Identification of potential data gaps (if any) & changes to commercial samplings
- Continuation of any bilateral agreements
- Survey-cost sharing implications
- Other issues - brainstorming

Future involvement of the UK in data collection

The UK has signed an MoU with ICES on the provision of scientific information and advice which includes a Data Collection Agreement. Currently the UK plan a similar approach to data collection as the DCF with a multi annual programme. The Data Collection Agreement covers the main headings of the data collection agreement and aligns with the requirements of the DCF: fisheries independent survey data; fisheries dependent data; including biological data; data to assess the impact of fisheries on the marine ecosystem; data on the activity of fishing vessels in and outside UK waters; socioeconomic data on fisheries and marine aquaculture as well as other data that supports the ecosystem approach and the fisheries and ecosystem overviews.

Interaction of the RCGs with the UK and other third parties

There are short-term requirements to engage with the UK to resolve any immediate issues that potentially impact on the drafting of the national work plans 2022. This includes the possible continuation of existing bilateral agreements and survey cost sharing agreements. There is also the long-term desire and need to collaborate and coordinate EU data collection activities with the UK as a third party.

In the short-term, it is proposed to hold informal bilateral/multilateral meetings with the UK on technical/scientific issues of immediate concern. These include:

- Continuation of existing bilateral agreements.
- Existing cost sharing agreements for surveys.
- Continuation of UK upload of RDB data.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

In the longer terms, it is proposed that the RCGs engage with UK as a third party and initiate collaboration with the UK and other third parties (Iceland, Norway, the Faroes, Russia). There have been significant changes in the structure of the RCGs and the issues they are dealing with, which merits a renewed invitation by the RCG to third parties to work together. The RCG would explain recent developments and its evolved structure and invite third parties to participate in its technical meeting in 2022 to discuss the prospect of coordinating data collection activities. Discussion points include:

- Information sharing on changes in sampling strategies and or survey designs.
- Identification of potential data gaps.
- Invitation to join regional sampling plan initiatives as third parties.
- New bilateral agreements (if not part of a regional sampling plan).
- Cost and/or task sharing of surveys at sea after the ISSG Surveys has reviewed the new table of mandatory surveys and identified cost sharing candidates.

To address the shorter and longer terms requirements or collaborating with third parties, it is proposed to work through the ISSG NCs with the active participation of NCs of implicated MSs covering the NS and NEA and in close coordination with the RCG chairs.

Brexit impact on TAC and landing shares and the impact on thresholds

Preliminary analyses have been carried out by some participants on the impact of changes in TACs and quota shares on the thresholds for sampling and survey obligations. Further analyses need to be carried out to identify particular stocks where there might be changes in sampling responsibilities and arising issues.

46

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

The following tasks related to Brexit and other third-party engagement will be tackled under the ISSG NCs and ISSG Surveys:

In the short term (2021):

- Initiate communication with the UK to resolve immediate issues impacting on the drafting of 2022 NVPs, including survey cost sharing agreements and bilateral agreements to sample commercial catches.
- Evaluate implications of the quota share and threshold changes.
- Identify potential stocks/fisheries of concern.

In the medium term (2022):

- Coordinate interaction of RCGs with third parties and initiate first step in 2022.
- Develop open communication channel between the RCGs and third parties to inform on changes in sampling and survey strategies as well as new initiatives for regional sampling plans.

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

No proposals for recommendations nor decisions.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.4 ToR 4 Development and implementation of Regional Workplans (RWP)

During this year's meeting, progress has been made under ToR 4 as follows:

- Feedback from ISSG 'Development of Draft RWP' and project Fishn'Co
- Feedback from ISSG 'Optimized and Operational Regional Sampling Plans'
- Feedback from ISSG 'Case study of fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic'
- Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Case study freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic'
- Feedback from ISSG 'Towards a regional sampling plan - Case Study of the trawl fishery in Iberian Waters'
- Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level'
- Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Identification of case studies for PETS bycatch monitoring'
- Feedback from ISSG 'Diadromous fishes'
- Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Recreational fisheries'
- Feedback from ISSG 'Regionally coordinated stomach sampling'

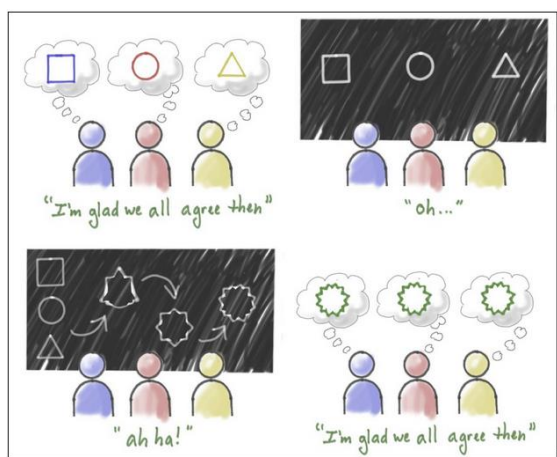
5.4.1 Feedback from ISSG "Development of Draft RWP" and project Fishn'Co

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

To move from NWP to RWP is a challenge and needs effort, time and engagement to harmonise the ideas on content as well as establishing new ways of planning, working and reporting. The process we are in could be illustrated as following and we are moving towards the lower right corner (Fig 5.4.1.1).

47

Figure 5.4.1.1. Moving from NWP to RWP



The project Fishn'Co (MARE/2020/08) that started 1st January 2021 was established to help the data collection community to further develop the RWP and the work has been moved from the ISSG "Development of Draft Regional Work Plan" into this project instead.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

The strategic objective of the Fishn'Co project is to:

- provide **added value** to the RCG/ISSGs and work in complement to them with the specific goal of proposing a full structure/process and elements of RWP for each of their activities. It still belongs to the RCG to prepare a draft RWP (EU Reg. 2017/1004, Art. 9(8)).
- **Strengthen regional or EU-wide cooperation** on data collection and enhance data quality, by developing the knowledge and support to accomplish further regional or EU-wide cooperation.
 - All outcomes of the project will be addressed to all MS.
 - All RCG experts and NCs should be involved in Fishn'Co work.
- **Align with the RCG plenary sessions** of 2021 and 2022 in order to be fully embedded in the mechanism of proposing RWP Regional Work Plans within the framework of EU-MAP.
 - Fishn'Co expects feedback from RCG for (i) finalising the development of RWP 2022 by September and (ii) preparing the ground during the next inter-session for the development of RWP 2023 and further.

Further, Fishn'Co aims to:

- **Coordinate and manage** all experts participating to the project (partners and non-partners).
- **Compile, Identify and Fill** Information Gaps for elements to be considered for inclusion in a RWP.
- **Establish decision making** structures/processes for RWP.
- **Develop RWP** templates and **Gather all regionally coordinated elements** and propose these in the form of RWP.
- **Develop communication** activities on RWP.

48

For further details of the project see (<https://www.fisheries-rcg.eu/fishnco/>).

The test run of RWP 2021 sent in October 2020 has been evaluated by STECF and relevant and valuable feedback to consider in the further process is to found in the report ([STECF-20-16, 2020](#)).

A lot of effort has been put into the development of WP/AR Templates for WP 2022 onwards. These Templates are under finalization and will serve a template both for writing the NWP and also RWP.

During the RCG 2021 technical meeting it was decided to go for the non-binding test of the RWP 2022, and it was discussed what is achievable to include. A number of sections were defined as “low-hanging fruits” and are suggested to be included (Table 5.4.1.1). The final proposal on the content will be made by Fishn'Co.

Table 5.4.1.1. Sections suggested to be included in the non-binding RWP 2022. This table is preliminary and final proposal on the content will be made by Fishn'Co.

	NWP for all MS	RWP NANSEA	RWP Baltic	ISSG responsible
stocks and areas Table 2.1 prefilled	Table 2.1			
Script to fill in the landings and TAC shares available	Table 2.1			
Meetings		Table 1.2 Textbox 1.2	Table 1.2 Textbox 1.2	NC

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

	NWP for all MS	RWP NANSEA	RWP Baltic	ISSG responsible
Bi and multilateral agreements		Table 1.3 Textbox 1.3	Table 1.3 Textbox 1.3	NC
Recommendations		Table 1.4 Textbox 1.4	Table 1.4 Textbox 1.4	NC/end-users
Case Study Small pelagic fish RSP			Table 2.5 Textbox 2.5 Annex 1.1	CS SPF
Surveys		Table 2.6 Textbox 2.6 Annex 1.1	Table 2.6 Textbox 2.6 Annex 1.1	Surveys
Stomach sampling		Table 4.1 Textbox 4.1 Annex 1.1		Stomach sampling

The following parts in WP needs further work within Fishn'Co and ISSGs:

Table and textbox 2.3 - Recreational fisheries

WGRFS (2020) recommended to progress towards RSP for the main shared stocks defined in EU-MAP. No regional species has not yet been suggested, but this task will be followed up in WGRFS 2021. The list as well as work around ambitions and gaps will be continued in Fishn'Co

Table and textbox 2.4 - Diadromous fishes

Ambitions and gaps have not yet been circulated to end-users and more work is needed. Work to be continued in Fishn'Co.

Table 2.5 - Biological sampling plan

- **Case Study Baltic Small Pelagic fish**
 - Prepare a RSP by the end of July 2021 with the common agreements and a RSP with all MS willing to participate will be included in the RCG Baltic RWP 2022.
- **Case Study of the trawl fishery in Iberian Waters**
 - Common sampling protocol in Part III of the report under the ISSG Case Study of the trawl fishery in Iberian Waters.
 - RSP to continue as a pilot and to be developed during upcoming intersessional work
- **Case Study freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic**
 - Progress on protocols and RSP to be further developed during upcoming intersessional work.
- **Umbrella group for Case Studies**
 - Nothing to be put in a RWP at this stage.
- **PETS sampling**
 - Bycatch in Bay of Biscay (FRA and ESP), is a good candidate for specifying a RSP, but needs further coordination. With the first results expected soon, further development needed during upcoming intersessional work.

Table and textbox 3.1 - Small Scale fisheries (SSF)

At the moment it is too early for the SSF to put something forward to RWP.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

If the decision is taken to make the comparison between transversal vs scientific surveys data estimates, the methodologies used for this aim should be standardized and agreed. In this case, these agreements could find a place in the RWP.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

1. Prepare table 2.1 (stocks and areas) by the end of June 2021
2. Fishn´Co to make the compilation of the RWP
 - Deadline 31st July 2021 for the test non-binding RWP 2022 to be presented at the DM 2021.
 - Deadline 1st of May 2022 – for binding RWP 2023-20xx to be presented and discussed at the TM 2022 and decided at the DM 2022.
3. Fishn´Co support the ISSGs in filling in tables and textboxes in a coherent way
 - ISSGs to decide on the content.

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_D05: MS to agree on the non-binding RWPs for 2022.

50

5.4.2 Feedback from ISSG ‘Optimized and Operational Regional Sampling Plans’

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

During 2020 and 2021 the ISSG was in charge of developing guidance for development of optimized and operational RSPs and addressing the ‘theoretical gaps’ encountered when evaluating the RSPs with present simulation tools. The work was done in parallel to the development of the RSPs in other ISSGs, using as input questionnaires and meetings on the issues the ISSGs report facing and how they were addressed. Three ISSGs provided input each reflecting a case-study of RSP under analyses: “Fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic”, “Trawl fishery in Iberian waters” and “Freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic”.

With regards to RSP guidance, and based on the input received, the ISSG structured a list with 12 steps/bullet-points that need to be considered in the process of a RSP. The list contains the following aspects “End-user involvement”, “MS involvement”, “MS role”, “Objectives and main aspects of the RSP”, “Identification of the fleet”, “Sampling protocol”, “Estimation procedures”, “Feasibility and implementation tests”, “Quality checks”, “Data sharing”, “Agreements needed” and “Expectations”. The content of each of these topics is further explained in the ISSG 2020-2021 report.

With regards to the identification of theoretical gaps, it was concluded that research is still needed with regards to regional optimization of biological measurements, namely in what refers to multi-level optimization; also that more focus needs to be put into a proper and systematic methods for documentation of the sampling design so that the former simulations can ultimately be done.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

During RCG plenary the issue what tools are available for identifying new RSPs was raised. It was concluded that tools for the identification of case-studies already exist, e.g., those developed during fishPi2, but that at the moment no one is looking into new possibilities of case-studies that lead to future RSPs. Given the limited time availability of the community working on these matters, full focus is being put on making the most out of the present studies and prospection of new case-studies is not presently being considered.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

The following work-plan was proposed for 2021-2022

1. Provide guidance on operational Regional Sampling Plans (RSPs)
 - Organize the guidance.
 - Continue the development of guidance based on examples / lessons learned from the RSPs. This work will be based on a questionnaire to the RSPs
2. Provide guidance on optimized Regional Sampling Plans (RSPs)
 - Keep the overview of existing optimization tools updated, summarise the optimizations done in the RSPs, and summarise the ‘theoretical gaps’ encountered in the RSPs. This work will be based on a questionnaire to the RSPs.

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

No proposals for recommendations nor decisions.

51

5.4.3 Feedback from ISSG ‘Case study of fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic’

RCG Baltic agreed to use the fisheries for **small pelagic species** as a **case study** for the development of a regional sampling programme in the Baltic Sea. It was agreed to establish a subgroup for in-depth analyses how a regional sampling programme for small pelagics can be established and suggest how it can be implemented. The pelagic fisheries target western Baltic herring, central Baltic herring, herring in Gulf of Bothnia, herring in Gulf of Riga and sprat. This year is the 3rd year of the subgroup.

Progress during RCG NANSEA2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

The countries participating in this subgroup continued the case study in Q1, including more MS in 2021 compared to the year before. The group had three meetings - in December 2020, in January 2021 and in April 2021. We lacked participation from Germany.

At the first meeting, the flow chart (Report Part III under the chapter for ISSG ‘Case study of fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic’) was discussed and each MS presented the challenges it faced during the present pilot programme. Changes to the sampling protocols were discussed to make every MS join a regional sampling protocol. Further, it was discussed if it would be possible to upload the pilot study to the RDBES in a common format so that estimates could already be produced using a common algorithm in 2021.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

The second meeting was on design-based estimation and how to upload the data in RDBES. A common sampling name was decided on and all participating MS managed to upload the data from the pilot study to the RDBES. Further a workshop was conducted on optimization of subsampling for age and length. The code developed was for a random sample and not for a length stratified sampled. It was however possible to run the code on the 2 countries data who sample age and length non stratified and it was decided to develop the code to fit to a length stratified sampling.

As a final meeting a workshop on species misreporting were conducted based on a comparison of Danish control samples with the national logbook/sale-slips for the same vessels. Here some countries showed the results between the control sample and the logbook information and there were some indication of misreporting between sprat and herring, generally with herring being over reported.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

1. Continue the pilot / or as a full regional program
 - To have a more overarching sampling program, but less detailed for all MS – not only as a pilot.
 - Larger trawlers.
 - Vessels random selected probabilistic.
 - Refusals -> Non-responses (e.g., refusals).
 - Upload with a common sampling name in RDBES.
 - Use a common sampling protocol (5 kg / 50 fish).
 - Participation in regular age reading VWS.
2. Work on WP/AR Table and Textbox 2.5 (biological sampling)
3. Set a deadline for MS to investigate species misreporting between herring and sprat in a historic context. Either by using Danish control data or another data source.
4. Participation in the workshop on estimation and optimal sampling size

52

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_D06: Decide on regional cooperation on small pelagics in the Baltic.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_D07: Decide to analyse “historical” misreporting of herring and sprat in national data.

5.4.4 Feedback from ISSG & SG ‘Case study freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the Northeast Atlantic’

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

Catch sampling for the EU freezer trawler fleet is currently carried out at a national level by Dutch and German programmes. Although a degree of cooperation exists between the programmes, there are distinct differences in sampling protocols and sampling cannot be considered either fully randomised or harmonised. As a result,

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

overall sampling coverage for the freezer fleet as a whole is unlikely to be optimised for the total allocated resources and is potentially less efficient than a regionally coordinated sampling programme.

Based on information submitted in response to a data call for trip level landings by species, an analysis of the fleet structure and its operations indicates:

- There are six stocks exploited by the freezer fleet that would be suitable for the development of a regionally coordinated sampling plan. These stocks are exploited by the majority of the fleet flag nations, and follow a traditional pattern of seasonal fisheries.
- The fleet structure is stable with relatively few vessels participating. Annual changes in the participating vessels are minimal.
- The fleet operates from and lands into a small number of readily accessible major ports

The analysis was finalized and the results were presented at the technical meeting of the RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

1. Design a questionnaire for stock assessment end-users, requesting feedback in relation to:
 - The proportion of total catch by the freezer fleet, for each stock.
 - Data issues (coverage, numbers measured, aged).
 - Comparison with other fleets exploiting the stock (location, length frequency, age structure).
 - Any other data issues deemed relevant.

The questionnaire will be designed and circulated in time for consideration by the WGWISE 2021 meeting (25th August), possibly via Survey Monkey.
2. Both The Netherlands and Germany conduct at-sea sampling for the purposes of monitoring of bycatch. It is proposed to investigate the pooling of the resources currently assigned to the individual national schemes into a single scheme to cover the fleets currently sampled by the individual national programmes. The following will be undertaken in support of this proposal:
 - In a first attempt the “Commercial Catch Sampling” template for each of the national sampling programmes *i.e.* the Dutch observer scheme, the German observer scheme and the Dutch reference fleet (self/market sampling) will be completed before compiling a harmonised protocol for both observer schemes taken also the results of the questionnaire into account.
 - The utility of haul level data for stock assessment end-users will be investigated *e.g.* while haul level bycatch reporting is important, is this also the case for the sampling of landed (assessed) species? Furthermore, any barriers to the practical implementation of a combined observer scheme *e.g.* issues with placing observers of one nationality onboard vessels operating from ports in another country, operating under another flag or owned by a foreign company will be investigated.
 - Conduct additional simulations to investigate potential sampling coverage using the current Dutch sampling scheme, based on the selection by fishing company (weighted by the number of company vessels).
3. Follow up on the availability of French data (under the 2019 data call) in order to finalize the simulations with all data.
4. Work on WP/AR Table and Textbox 2.5 (biological sampling).

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R07: ICES WG WIDE, ICES HAWG, ICES WG DEEP to respond to a questionnaire to capture end-user needs on the pelagic stocks.

5.4.5 Feedback from ISSG 'Towards a regional sampling plan - Case Study of the trawl fishery in Iberian Waters'

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021

Work of this case study has been achieved through intersessional work during 2020-2021 by the ISSG (including 4 meetings), and the main progress has been distributed in two tasks:

i) Revise in detail what was done in project Fishpi2, specifically in relation to the selection of scenarios and the feasibility/suitability issues.

The ISSG highlights that the approach of the simulation study (assessing bias and precision) was welcomed as a means to obtain a robust / balanced sampling design. The RSP (regional sampling plan) to be selected can be based on the best scenarios from project Fishpi2, but with modifications to avoid suitability issues identified in the project. The selected scenarios (S35 – Major ports 90 mix; S55 – major ports 90 mix own; equivalent but with and without sampling of foreign landings) included ports with 90% of landed weight and covered most important trawl fleets in ICES divisions 8c and 9a (1-4 below) but left out one fleet and stocks targeted by it, because it is important in landed value but not as much in landed weight (5 below):

1. Otter bottom trawl in Gulf of Cadiz.
2. Otter bottom trawl in 27.8.c and 27.9.a.n.
3. Pair bottom trawl in 27.8.c and 27.9.a.n.
4. Otter bottom trawl for demersal species in 27.9.a.c.n, 27.9.a.c.s, 27.9.a.s.a.
5. Otter bottom trawl for crustacean species in 27.9.a.c.s and 27.9.a.s.a.

The ISSG finds that the RSP should increase ports covered (add two specific ports to cover the fifth fleet not covered) and that the stratification / allocation of sampling effort between institutions / countries needs to consider port (considered in Fishpi2) but also fleet and quarter.

ii) Define a common sampling protocol for the RSP

A preliminary version (1.0) of the common sampling protocol was developed based on the template for commercial sampling programs from ISSG 'Data quality'. The common sampling protocol developed by the ISSG Iberia represents an important new element needed for the future implementation of a regional sampling protocol of trawl fisheries in Iberian waters. The sampling protocol is included in the ISSG Report in Part III of this report under the chapter 'Case study of the trawl fishery in Iberian Waters'.

This development allowed to identify similarities/differences in current sampling protocols of this fishery by institutions/countries (AZTI, IEO, IPMA) and assess if differences can be changed aiming at similar procedures. The ISSG expects that revised versions of the common sampling protocol may be needed as the work of the ISSG develops.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Additionally, aiming at the definition of the pilot study, the ISSG identified elements that will receive no further development (simulations) and on the other hand, elements that will receive development (feasibility / suitability issues - in 2021-2022 - 2023; how / when to implement, joint quality framework, policy for data sharing and use - in 2022-2023).

During the technical meeting of the RCG, one of the topics discussed was how the different case studies are facing the implementation phase. This ISSG has from the beginning proposed that a pilot will be implemented once everything is ready for that, thus having 2 schemes (national and regional) running until design is tested on the field. How to implement that will be decided in the future.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

1. Define RSP for pilot study and allocate sampling effort to institutions/countries
 - Define scenarios for sampling design of the Regional Sampling Plan.
 - Project FishPi2 defined scenarios and identified preferential scenarios based on bias, precision, feasibility and suitability.
 - Selection of scenario for implementation in a pilot study needs to take into account the output from FishPi2 and the sampling protocol.
 - Allocation of sampling effort needs to take into account the final scenario selected.
 - Work will be done under the scope of Project Fishn'Co.
2. Work on WP/AR Table and Textbox 2.5 (biological sampling)

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

No proposals for recommendations nor decisions.

55

5.4.6 Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level'

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

During the technical meeting of the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic 2021 progress of work of ISSG on Small Scale Fisheries (SSF) was presented. The ISSG SSF report can be found in Part III of this report. As a result of the work done, it is agreed to follow providing the fisheries overviews report for the SSF for the three regions, following the approach used with the Large-Scale fisheries. This overviews report allows to have updated information about the activity of the SSF in the three regions covered by these RCGs. In addition, it is agreed to continue collaborating with the ISSG Métier, trying to improve the codification of the SSF trips at métier level 6. Although it seems that most of the MS are able to allocate this code at the required level, it is not always the case. These fisheries have very specific characteristics that make this codification more complex and the standardize code developed by ISSG métier could be adapted for the specificities of these fisheries. Furthermore, both ISSGs will collaborate during the next period in the harmonization of effort estimates of these fisheries. The collaboration with RCG ECON is also considered essential when covering these fisheries. The sharing of methodologies used by both, biologist and economist regarding SSF data collection will improve the data collection of these fisheries considering the different variables essential to be collected. In particular

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

how to treat and cover the different vessels depending on their degree of activity (very low active vs high active). This collaboration will also be carried out in the framework of the Fishn'Co project.

The validation of the reported data by SSF fishers under the EU Control Regulation (EU, 1224/2009) is also essential and for this it is important to evaluate this information with the data collected under the different sampling programmes specific for the SSF. The biological data collected for these fisheries is also important to be analysed as it seems that it could be under-sampled compared to the Large-Scale fleet. This will be done in collaboration with ICES WGCATCH, especially with the subgroup dealing with issues related to the SSF. Finally, the integration of the SSF data to the RDBES is an important issue. Although the SSF sampling programmes could follow a similar approach to the Large-Scale fisheries, it is important to test that the RDBES allows to follow the different data models developed also in the case of the SSF.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

- In collaboration with ISSG Métiers, métier assignment for the SSF to avoid MIS_MIS_0_0_0 codification at métier level 6.
- In collaboration with ISSG Métiers, effort estimate calculation and harmonization for the SSF.
- Continue providing catch and effort overviews for the SSF.
- In collaboration with RCG ECON, sharing data collection methods and estimation and the analysis among SSF based on their activity level.
- Sampling coverage of the SSF and estimation methodologies in collaboration with ICES WGCATCH.
- Revise the RDBES data model from a SSF perspective.

56

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R08: ICES WGCATCH to provide support to evaluate the sampling coverage of SSF.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R09: ICES WGCATCH to provide support to estimate catch, effort and biological parameters of SSF.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_R10: ICES WGRDBESGOV to provide support about the RDBES data model for SSF.

5.4.7 Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Identification of case studies for PETS bycatch monitoring'

Progress during RCG NANSEA2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

During the technical meeting of the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic 2021 progress of work of ISSG on PETS bycatch was presented. The ISSG PETS report can be found in Part III of this report. The Bay of Biscay and the high-risk fisheries concerning common dolphins bycatch were used as case study to analyse the coverage of these risky fisheries under the DCF at sea sampling programmes. The coverage of these fisheries is less than 1.5% of the total effort and lower in the case of trips using passive gears. In addition to the coverage, it is also important to analyse the quality of the data collected. The possible differences in the quality of the data between those trips with observers focused on bycatch data against observers collecting biological data,

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

discards etc. was discussed. Spain and France are carrying out specific at sea sampling data collection to collect bycatch data. The results obtained on these trips will be also analysed to identify if these differences occur and how this could be improved.

Discrepancies between effort estimates between different data bases (e.g., RDB, WGBYC) used to analyse bycatch information were identified by ICES WGBYC. Trying to solve this issue, under the ICES 2020 WGCATCH meeting, a questionnaire was sent to researchers involved in responding WGBYC data calls. The results were also provided during the meeting. Different reasons were identified as possible reasons for these discrepancies. These would allow to improve next WGBYC data call as some actions will be taken. In addition, once the RDBES is fully implemented it is expected that these discrepancies will be significantly reduced.

Finally, the ISSG reviewed the HELCOM roadmap. This roadmap and ASCOBANS view about bycatch issues was also discussed during the meeting in a specific session. Some of the issues highlighted by these two end-users are related to the role of the RCGs to improve the coordination to collect bycatch data. It was mentioned that it would be important the participation and collaboration of these end-users with this ISSG. In the next work period, HELCOM and ASCOBANS will be contacted and invited to participate in the work to be carried out by this ISSG. Another important point highlighted by the group was that although the DCF and the RCGs have an important role on the data collection of bycatch data, not everything could be covered under this regulation and by this group. Another potential funding should also be considered to improve the data collection on PETS bycatch. It would be beneficial to learn from different practices used in MSs to arrange the fundings. With this aim in mind, it is essential to have a discussion about how much effort is needed to provide robust bycatch estimates, how to improve the quality of the data collected and the resources needed and if this is feasible and realistic.

57

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

1. Together with WGCATCH and WGBYC
 - Cover this task about “How much effort is needed?” and Data quality issues.
2. Together with WGBYC
 - Improve and update the Risk assessment analysis considering new criteria coming from WGBYC.
3. Logbook requirements for bycatch purposes
 - Identify mandatory fields.
 - Differences among regions, fleet segments.
4. Other end-users needs (e.g. COM, ASCOBANS, HELCOM)

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_RI1: ICES WGBYC to provide advice about how much sampling effort is needed for estimating bycatch.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_RI2: ICES WGBYC to provide advice to improve the risk assessment evaluation methodology.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.4.8 Feedback from ISSG 'Diadromous Fishes'

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

- Communication with end-users focusing on coordination, prioritization, usage, needs and quality assurance in the data collection. ISSG Diadromous has raised the data collection issues in the meetings of ICES WGNAS, WGBAST and WGEEL.
- Report of the ISSG Diadromous Fishes presents the end-users of eel, salmon and sea trout data in NANSEA and Baltic region. In addition, the data used presently in the assessments is described as well as potential future data needs. Designated end-users include ICES expert groups, member states and potentially other stake holders e.g. HELCOM.
- ISSG Diadromous conducted a questionnaire on electrofishing surveys in order to improve understanding on degree of harmonisation of applied electrofishing methods on European level.
- In the Fishn'Co project the first drafts of evaluating the degree of ambition to progress towards the RWPs for salmon and sea trout in Baltic and NANSEA regions was done (WPI in Fishn'Co).
- ISSG Diadromous convened in a 3-day web meeting April 2021 with 26 participants from 13 countries, Baltic, NANSEA and Mediterranean regions. The Baltic Sea region was well represented. From the other regions more diadromous experts would benefit the group's work in future.

Questions and points raised in the RCG meeting:

1. Will updated data needs for the diadromous species be available by October when the test RWPs will be written? No, possibilities to fit parts of data collection for diadromous species into RWP framework will be evaluated together with end-users and work will continue beyond October 2021.
2. Addressed to WGBAST: Recommendations from the WG regarding recreational catch data needs and diverse sampling issues have been addressed to the RCG Baltic several years in a row. RCG has taken a notice on these data needs but is not in a position to carry out studies, development of methods or executing monitoring of biological parameters. Therefore, the RCG asks for recommendations to be re-formulated and preferably prioritized and re-addressed to the MSs in such a coordinated work plan format that would be possible for them to execute as part of their national programs (or later on in RWP). Question will be forwarded to WGBAST by the ISSG.

58

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

Bidirectional communication with end-users will continue to better report the diverse and potentially changing data needs of assessments to the RCG level.

Promotion of data workshops. In general, the regional coordination of data collection on diadromous species is still in rather early stage. Regional and species-specific ICES and GFCM data workshops are a key factor to improve tailored data collection to fit the specific data needs for assessment. Baltic salmon data workshop could potentially be included to the scheduled Benchmark in autumn 2022.

Work that potentially will come from Fishn'Co. Developing RWPs for the diadromous data collection requires more preparatory work. Outcomes from Fishn'Co will provide input regarding planning of RWPs for the diadromous species.

Work on WP/AR Table and Textbox 2.4 for diadromous fishes.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

No proposals for recommendations nor decisions.

5.4.9 Feedback from ISSG & SG 'Recreational fisheries'

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

During the technical meeting of the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic 2021, the progress of the ISSG on Recreational Fisheries was presented. The aim of this ISSG fits on preparatory work for decision making, including input for regional work plans. The ISSG on Recreational Fisheries work is coordinating with the relevant ICES EG (WGRFS) and the Fishn'Co consortium. Some of the initial work plan objectives proved to be very ambitious for this newly formed ISSG, and adjustments were made, including the proposal for some subgroup work during the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic 2021 TM. The ISSG on Recreational Fisheries report can be found in Part III of this report.

As a result of the work done during the TM, several outputs can be settled regarding the tasks for this ISSG:

- Regarding RSPs, four candidate species should be included in the RSP: cod, seabass, eel, and salmon.
 - Concerning main end-users needs, it was agreed that WGRFS should prepare a questionnaire to be sent to relevant Assessment Working Groups (Are they using the data? How are they using it? Which difficulties encountered? etc.).
 - Key WG members should be invited to relevant WG meetings to promote better communication between data collectors and stock assessors.
 - Also, the Regional WP will serve as an essential roadmap for MS action on Recreational Fisheries data collection.
- Considering what was discussed during the WGRDBESGOV meeting, the incorporation of Recreational data in the RDBES should be done by 2023. It was agreed that the best way forward would be to arrange a test data call using CSV/Excel file submission based on the proposed recreational data format. It was also deliberated that progress can be made on recreational data without waiting for the commercial data developments to be completed.
 - This work will be carried out with tight collaboration between the RCG ISSG on Recreational Fisheries, the ICES WGRFS, and the Fishn'Co Project;
 - In addition, we need to ensure that this work is done in communication with the RDBES Core Group to guarantee that the transition to the RDBES will be as easy as possible.
- Regarding Regional species list, the outcome should be a species list proposal at a regional level based on end-user needs. It was asked to the ISSG Recreational Fisheries members to identify priority species for each MS and Region, based on the RCG Med & BS approach (with the criteria defined by GFCM). The different opinions expressed (and how different MS filled out the table) clarified that there were concepts and expectations diverse concerning this issue, probably due to some divergences in the interpretation of the legislation. A suggestion to build a list of mandatory species came after plenary discussions at the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic 2021 technical meeting:
 - Separate data collection on the core-group list of stocks (already required by end-users – where we already know recreational catches and in some cases length and other biological

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

data); and on the prospective data collection on catches of species that we are still not sure if they are essential or not (coarse catch data on a broader range of stocks).

1. Assessment groups are asked what additional stocks they might need data on recreational fisheries – based on expert judgment, a sort of risk-based analysis.
2. Relevant Working Groups should screen that list of stocks, and a dialogue is established on deleted cases and a final version set forward.

It was also discussed in the plenary that the list of species to incorporate at the Regional level should also be decided by analysing the results of the pilot studies (Pilot Study I - Relative share of catches of recreational fisheries compared to commercial fisheries). COM will provide access to Pilot Study I reports to this ISSG. Another suggestion was that this ISSG should be pan-regional, and so, a close collaboration with the other (relevant) RCGs will be promoted – RCG LP and RCG Med & BS. It is also foreseen to liaise with these RCGs to harmonize the methodologies used. The collaboration with RCG ECON is also considered essential to define the social and economic perspective of the recreational fisheries.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

The following workplan was proposed for 2021-2022:

1. Work on the RSP: cod, seabass, eel, and salmon.
2. In liaison with WGRFS (and other relevant WG), analyse the end-user needs regarding regional data collection and the results of the pilot studies.
3. In collaboration with WGRFS (and other relevant WG), species selection criteria and thresholds (always based on end-user needs) should also be decided. Discuss the suggestions to build a list of required species.
4. As this Subgroup is pan-regional, a close collaboration with the other (relevant) RCGs will be promoted – RCG LP, RCG Med & BS and RCG ECON. It is also foreseen to liaise with these RCGs to harmonize the methodologies used.
5. To arrange a test data call using CSV/Excel file submission based on the proposed recreational data format and liaise with the RDBES Core Group to guarantee that the transition to the RDBES will be as easy as possible.

60

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_RI3: ICES WGRDBESGOV to support about the inclusion of MRF data into the RDBES.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_RI4: WGRFS to provide support about the development of a RSPs for the MRF.

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_RI5: WGRFS to define the criteria to propose a regional list of species based on end-users needs.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.4.10 Feedback from ISSG ‘Regionally coordinated stomach sampling’

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

During the 2020-2021 period, the ISSG “Stomach sampling” worked on the four ToRs listed below.

ToR 1 was dedicated to the construction of a coordinated stomach sampling program in the North Sea and Skagerrak, using IBTS as a powerful platform to collect stomachs. ISSG adopted the rolling sampling scheme proposed by WGSAM as a working baseline: each year, stomachs of one or two species already sampled for biology and one or two species not sampled for biology will be included, leading to a large number of species sampled over a DCF cycle. Sampling 2 stomachs per 5 cm size class on each haul would result in sampling up to 20 000 stomachs over a 5-year cycle, i.e. less than 1% of all measured individuals during that time period in the IBTS. The number of expected samples for each participating nation depends on the spatial distribution of the species and the individual allocation of the ICES statistical rectangles.

This work then fuelled ToR 2, dedicated to the estimation of costs for the presented stomach sampling program. This work was based on the result of a questionnaire sent to national correspondents. Four types of expenses were considered: (1) costs associated with onboard tasks (i.e. extra staff and material), (2) costs associated with transportation of samples toward stomach analysis centres and storage, (3) costs for the analysis of stomachs and (4) costs associated with data storage and management. The major source of variation of the cost was associated with the estimation of unitary costs associated with stomach analysis. In addition, exchanges with WGIBTS members revealed that the costs associated with onboard work may have been underestimated, and that extra staff should be considered.

ToR 3 was dedicated to the exploration of a method to intercalibrate IEO stomach analysis protocol and the comparison of these data with those collected with the protocol recommended by WGSAM. IEO has been operating for three decades a protocol based on stomach content volume. Changing methodology would break the ongoing time series. Results of the analysis conducted seemed to demonstrate that values obtained with the volumetric method could be then extrapolated within the format requested by WGSAM.

Finally, ToR4 was dedicated to an historical overview of the stomach content projects. This work is based on an online survey, shared with personal interest of projects involving stomach content. Even if the survey was incomplete, some trends could be observed. Some long-term stomach content surveys do exist in European waters, including species of major fisheries interest, cod in the North and Baltic Sea, and hake in the Bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean. This survey also confirms the heterogeneity of methods, even if this could result from a lack of accuracy in the survey resolution. This synthesis is nonetheless powerful to identify points that could be easily included in regionally coordinated protocols, and the gaps that should be addressed before being implemented.

Presentation and discussion of the results

At the technical online meeting, the results of the work on the four ToRs were presented. The main question that was discussed in plenary after the presentation was: “Can we move towards an operational implementation of the stomach collection?” with specific questions regarding the decision process and the inclusion of non-EU countries:

- Validation of the species list?
- Decision about funding?
- Who will analyze the stomachs? Each country or in specific stomach analysis centers?
- Who will coordinate the sampling?

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

- Inclusion of non-EU countries in the program? Possible? How?

Discussion during the plenary: Questions & Answers:

1. *Were the outcomes of the WKBECOSS considered? Why should the existing data base of ICES not be used for the stomach data storage?*
Yes, the outcomes and results of WKBECOSS were considered and used in the ISSG stomach sampling work. The group has been in contact with the experts at the ICES data center and was told that for an efficient use of the stomach data portal, adjustments are needed.
2. *A workshop was planned for making stomach samplings operational. Was that postponed?*
Yes, it was postponed due to Covid-19. Christina Follesa will be chair of the workshop.
3. *The National Natural History Museum in France is planning to take samples from elasmobranchs at fish auctions. Would that be an option for getting stomach samples?*
The stomach contents are decomposed very fast after the catch, this is not a very promising option, as results from stomachs stored differently will be hard to compare and use jointly.
4. *Do we continue as an ISSG after this technical meeting?*
Results were presented at the IBTSWG meeting this year. In general, the group was positive towards the North Sea/Skagerrak/Kattegat sampling program. The need for stomach samplings comes from the ICES community since the last extensive stomach sampling were in the 1980s and 1990s and since then a regime shift has been observed. In addition, the end-users (i.e. ICES WGSAM) have identified the need of regionally coordinated stomach samplings for gaining better estimates of natural mortality for improving the stock assessments. Taking all this in mind, the Case Study on stomach sampling may be a good candidate for a future regional Work Plan.
The funding of this is seen as important, and since this work is directly related to the status of fish stocks and the state of the environment, the funding is there. The stomach sampling needs to be incorporated into the national plans of the EMAF, to get funding available. It is a good example for a new data need and collection.
5. *What about non-EU countries (e.g. UK, Norway), how do we treat them or get them involved?*
Non-EU countries have agreed within the ICES work to conduct the samples need for the stock assessments and deliver the data to ICES.

62

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

1. Specifying the IBTS North Sea case study on the coordinated stomach sampling:
 - a. Decide on the sampling design and options to choose.
 - b. Specify the expected costs for on-board sampling.
 - c. Propose different options for coordinating the regionally coordinated stomach sampling.
 - d. Funding.
2. Identification and collation of the specific end-user needs with regards to stomach sampling in the different areas covered by RCG NANSEA and Baltic.
3. Participation in the Fishn'Co workshop on end-user needs and presentation of results from ToR 2.
4. Work on WP/AR Table and Textbox 4.1 (stomach sampling)



RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Timeline

Tasks 1 and 2: This work will be conducted during the entire 2021-2022 ISSG cycle, the results will be presented at the ISSG meeting in spring 2022.

Task 3: The work will be presented, whether at a dedicated “stomach content” workshop, or during the general Fishn’Co workshop. Date will be decided in conjunction with Fishn’Co project and WVPI leaders.

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_D08: Agree to start sampling stomachs during the IBTS survey in the North Sea.



RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.5 ToR 5 Propose ways to improve the regional coordination and feedback on regional issues

During this year's meeting, progress has been made under ToR 5 as follows:

- Feedback from ISSG & SG 'National Correspondents'
- Feedback on ISSG & SG from 'RCG support Secretariat and Website' and project SecWeb
- Review the process made in the RCG NANSEA Baltic in 2019-2021
- ISSGs for season 2021-2022

5.5.1 Feedback from ISSG & SG 'National Correspondents'

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

During the RCG TM the ISSG NC decided to recommend the DM in September 2021 to adopt an aligned version of the RoPs for RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic.

The remaining time until September will be used to correct any obvious errors in the document. All NCs in RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic are asked to submit any proposals for corrections to ISSG-chair Anna Hasslow (anna.hasslow@havochvatten.se) no later than 30 June, 2021, by using Track Changes in the aligned proposal. Anna Hasslow is responsible for compiling a final version of the RoPs document that the DM can decide on.

A more thorough review of the aligned document may be relevant later on (within a one-two year period). However, such a revision later on does not mean that the DM should not decide on an aligned version already in September.

64

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

During the TM it was also decided to put some additional tasks to the ISSG NC group task list. In addition to completing the aligned RoP document as described above, the task list for the ISSG NC during 2021-2022 season is as follows:

1. Work on WP/AR Tables 1.2; meetings, 1.3; bi-multilateral agreements, 1.4; recommendations (**this task needs immediate attention as it feeds into the NWP**)
2. Continue discussions regarding potential effects of Brexit and start communication with other third countries
 - a. Initiate communication with the UK to resolve the issues on sampling commercial catches.
 - b. Evaluate implications of the quota share and threshold changes.
 - c. Identify potential stocks/fisheries of concern.
 - d. Coordinate interaction of RCGs with third countries and initiate first step in 2022 with chairs.
 - e. Develop open communication channel between the RCGs and third countries to inform on changes in sampling and survey strategies as well as new initiatives for regional sampling plans.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_D09: Agree on combined Rules of Procedure for the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic.

5.5.2 Feedback on ISSG & SG from 'RCG support Secretariat and Website' and project SecWeb

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

Abstract of the report

The ISSG was provided with the following tasks:

- Task 1: To identify how to move forward with the project call.
- Task 2: To establish a consortium for the DGMare project call.
- Task 3: To involve all RCGs and PGECON in the project proposal.
- Task 4: To establish the fundament for long-term funding and establishing of supporting tools for RCG and PGECON.

During 2020, a project call from DGMare was launched and with the members of the ISSG on Supporting Tools, a project proposal SecWeb was submitted. The proposal was accepted and the project is being carried out since the 1st of January 2021 onwards, ending 31st December 2022.

The SecWeb project objectives are completely aligned with those of the ISSG. Its overall concept builds upon the work of the RCGs and previous projects to develop the necessary tools to provide support and increase the visibility of RCGs' work. It includes developing and setting up the framework for an RCG secretariat in support of fluent administrative procedures and establish a long-term script; the development and setup of a dedicated website; promotion of good practices in communication within and among the RCGs, and engaging with all the stakeholders and the general public; and a design of scenarios for funding structures to be put in place for the continued operation of administrative support to RCGs and the update of the content of the website.

The proposed work plan is satisfactorily evolving, there is a draft website in place under evaluation of RCG participants and the RCG NANSEA and Baltic 2021 technical meeting has been a very useful pilot experience to feed the process of setting up the secretariat.

The long term funding issue of the Secretariat work and the website was briefly discussed as the SecWeb project ends at the end of 2022. NCs need to foresee funds allocation for the RCG Secretariat in the new WP 2022-2027.

Discussion on the website

- General impressions and comments

The general impression on the available draft website is very positive. Participants are very much in favour to have a single entry point to all the relevant information regarding the RCG work. However, attention

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

must be paid in order to avoid duplications with other existing document repositories by using links instead of uploading the whole files.

Participants are requested to keep visiting the website and sending feedback to the project partners to make it as comprehensive and complete as necessary.

- Outreach

Attracting traffic to the website will be a challenge. The relevant public needs to be reached and to achieve this all RCG participants are invited to act as ambassadors by spreading the word when attending relevant meetings. To do so, they are suggested to introduce a line with the link in their ppts. In short, all the RCG participants need to be active for making the website a useful communication tool.

The need to have an agreed strategy before the official launch of the website has been highlighted. A careful thought must be given to the target public that should be addressed, the message to be delivered and the information that should be included. The website could be a powerful tool also in attracting new members to the ISSGs. In this regard, it is suggested to keep a restrained level of ambition, targeting RCG participants in the first place and then a set of primary users such as the COM, MS and ICES. Actually, the primary objective of having a dedicated website was to organize the information for RCGs' participants and this should be kept in mind.

- Suggestions on contents

The RCG participants inform that they would be willing to contribute with images and notes from the ISSG work. The communication channel for doing so will be the RCG Secretariat (secretariat@fisheries-rcg.eu) and the project coordinator, Els Torrelee.

A periodic newsletter is foreseen to be issued twice a year. It will be automatically generated from the News section of the website using the MailChimp tool, which allows us to generate content along the year. We will work on press releases that we build on progressively to feed this section and subscribers would receive the newsletter once or twice a year.

Furthermore, the DG Mare communication team have been contacted for support, and their instructions were to provide only precise information that can be relevant for the target public in each case. The European Commission is also available to ensure that the contents are aligned with the DCF.

It is suggested to produce short video pieces (about 30 seconds) as communication products. Those can be used in any platform to promote the work of the RCGs and ISSGs. A video explaining the basics of the DCF was also suggested. However, this is something that needs careful thinking and planning, as additional work will be necessary for synthesizing the information, crafting the messages and production, which takes time and resources.

The website should be the single entry point for accessing any relevant information for the RCGs, as at the moment the information is spread between different sources and it is difficult to find. Furthermore, this could make the site a useful starting point for newcomers into RCGs.

Having a private area only accessible by participants was also suggested. This possibility has been already discussed within the project framework but, having the ICES SharePoint and other collaborative tools available, the convenience to set an additional site for storage is not clear enough, as it would entail the risk of having the information spread, instead of concentrated as it is intended. Furthermore, creating a private area will increase the maintenance requirements and the existing SharePoint can be linked from

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

the website. All these considerations will be taken into account for reflection within the project and participants will be timely informed about the final decision.

Discussion on other communication channels

- E-mail

It is suggested to create a specific e-mail address/mailbox for the chairs to facilitate participants to keep tracking of the communications regarding the RCG, as they are currently receiving messages from four different people. This way, when chairs are replaced, the newcomers will also have access to the communication history and the chance to see how things have been managed in previous years. This proposal also needs a further assessment within the context of SecWeb.

- Twitter

The Twitter account has been created but it is not fully operational yet. The Secretariat is preparing a brief manual that will be distributed among participants to boost its use.

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

- Finalize basic content of the website and visual identity.
- Integrate feedback gathered through the website questionnaire and during the RCG meeting.
- Develop materials for RCGs accessible on one spot - for different users.
- Collect information from ISSGs.
- Assess the convenience/ create a private part at the website for RCG participants.
- Evaluate Secretariat test case carried out during the technical meeting.
- Build a stakeholder database.
- Draft business scenario's for the long-term sustainability of the secretariat.
- Enhance the use of the website within the different RCGs.
- Spread the message on different platforms.

During the preparation of the last ISSG on Supporting Tools meeting, it was decided that this subgroup will be inactive during the SecWeb project, as the tasks are already covered by SecWeb. The few ISSG participants that are not partners of the project consortium will be kept in the communication process and will be invited to participate in discussions and meetings of the SecWeb project.

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_RI6: MS to foresee funds allocation for the RCG secretariat in the new WP 2022-2027.

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

5.5.3 Review the process made in the RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic in 2019-2021

Evaluation of the RCG set up

The period 2020-2021 is the last year of a three-year term with relevant changes in the setup of RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA. A questionnaire was made using SurveyMonkey to evaluate the current RCG set up and decide the way forward for the following years.

25 people answered the complete questionnaire, although some questions had a higher participation (30). Different types of RCG participants (COM, End-Users and Scientist) responded to the questionnaire. The complete results of the questionnaire can be consulted in the following link <https://es.surveymonkey.com/stories/SM-ZKGCWFPC/>.

In general, the current set up is perceived as a valid way forward for the RCG. This includes the separation between a TM and a DM, the work of the ISSGs, and the joint TM for the RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA (back to back meeting).

Main concerns regarding the current setup are about the workload of the participants, and the difficulties to engage new people; the need for a secretariat to support RCG work; and the need to allocate enough time for discussions, so that the RCG does not become just a conference to share ISSGs results. In addition, participants complained that the NAFO Fisheries do not receive the same attention as other areas (more details under section 6 AOB).

Participants reported that the topics covered by the ISSGs are all relevant. In most cases, ISSGs do not have problems to recruit enough participants or to engage all participants that were in the list. However, some ISSGs do have difficulties. The 40h assigned to participants for ISSG work were perceived as enough in some cases, but insufficient in others. Main suggestions proposed to improve ISSG work were to prioritize the tasks which can be tackled every year (realistic tasks); and to better distribute the work during the year (specially, to start working earlier before the TM).

The back to back meeting is seen as more efficient and better for pan-regional work, as most ISSGs cover both regions and both meetings can be attended by a single person. If needed, area-specific issues could be scheduled separately (preferably at the start or end of meeting/day). On the contrary, the meeting has become larger and more heterogeneous and that can be a drawback for some discussions. Balance between plenaries and subgroup work needs to be found.

Participants were also asked for their preferred format for the meetings. The main advantage of online meetings is that they increase participation and reduce costs and travel time. However, participants showed a preference for joining the TM physically or with a combination of physically and online (i.e., online to present ISSGs feedback and physically for discussion and subgroup work; or consecutive one year physically and one year online). Regarding the DM preferences were evenly distributed between online and physical. Given the diversity of preferences, the group decided that the decision of which format to choose will be the responsibility of the chairs.

When asked for the content of the RoP, participants recognized the need for flexibility (e.g. for the ISSGs deadlines) and the risk of introducing too much formalisms. But also that decision-making should be very strict and clear. It is important to distinguish the difference in enforceability between recommendation and decision, and also to define what is meant by consensus (more attendees in favour than against? at least 51% of the attendees in favour? all in favour?).

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

Some suggestions were proposed to improve the communication with end-users, such as using the new RCG website, improving the following up of the recommendations, supporting a closer involvement of assessment groups, and defining more clearly the input that RCG need from the end-users. The Secretariat may also help in finding the correct ways to communicate with the COM.

The group endorsed the separation between a TM and a DM; the joint (back to back) TM for the RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA, with a day for regional aspects if needed; the work of the ISSGs, which would start just after the TM; and the report splitted in three parts. The group also agreed that the final decision about the format of the meetings will be taken by the chairs. RoPs will be changed to include the main elements of this set up, and to clarify the enforceability of recommendations and define consensus.

5.5.4 ISSGs for season 2021-2022

Progress during RCG NANSEA 2021 and RCG Baltic 2021

The intersessional work 2020-2021 was setup of 19 different ISSGs (including two ICES RDB groups that are not a proper RCG ISSGs). Almost all the groups conducted their tasks as planned and were presenting the results during the meeting. The setup of working intersessional, was again proved to be successful to achieve the goals to make regional coordination efficient on a regional scale. The suggested next steps for the different ISSGs has been endorsed by the RCG Baltic and RCG NANSEA and is covered in this report.

Two existing groups (Development of Draft Regional Work Plan and Implementation of generic tools for the RCGs) will be on hold until the accompanying projects (FishN'Co and SecWeb) will be finished and one new ISSG on Electronic Monitoring Technologies is suggested to start 2021-2022. In total 18 groups (including two ICES RDB groups) are suggested to work actively on different tasks within different topics. The overview of the suggested ISSGs for the next period are presented below (Table 5.5.4.1).

69

Workplan for 2021 – 2022

Table 5.5.4.1 orange rows indicate new ISSGs, grey rows indicate inactive ISSGs and red in chairs field indicate ISSGs where chair for the new season is missing.

Table 5.5.4.1. ISSGs overview for season 2021-2022

TOR	Topic	ISSG	ISSG short name	chairs
TOR 1	End-users and RCGs	End-user and RCG interaction	End-user and RCG	RCG chairs
TOR 2	Data Analysis and Quality	RDB catch, effort and sampling overviews	RDB overviews	xxx
		Métier and transversal variable issues	Métier/transversal	Josefine Egekvist
		Data Quality	Data quality	David Currie
		Electronic Monitoring Technologies	EMT	Jørgen Dalskov

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Progress report on ToRs and workplan

TOR	Topic	ISSG	ISSG short name	chairs	
	Regional Database	ICES WGRDBESGOV		David Currie Katja Ringdahl	
		RDB Core group		Henrik Kjems-Nielsen	
TOR 3	<i>Implication of management measures on data collection</i>	<i>Implications of the Landing Obligation</i>	LO	NA	
TOR 4	Diadromous Fishes	Diadromous Fishes	Diadromous	Tapani Pakarinen Marko Freese	
	Surveys	Surveys	Surveys	Sieto Verver Christoph Stransky	
	Regional Sampling plans	Optimized and Operational Regional Sampling Plans		Umbrella	Kirsten Håkansson Rita Vasconcelos Harriet van Overzee
		Case Study on the trawl fishery in Iberian Waters		CS Iberian Waters	Rita Vasconcelos
		Case Study on freezer trawler fleet exploiting pelagic fisheries in the NEA		CS pelagic freezer trawler	Andrew Campbell Jens Ulleweit
		Case study on fisheries for small pelagics in the Baltic		CS small pelagics Baltic	Katja Ringdahl Marie Storr-Paulsen
		Evaluation of the data collected for the SSF at EU level		SSF	Estanis Mugerza
		Optimisation of PETS bycatch sampling		PETS	Estanis Mugerza
		Regionally coordinated stomach sampling		Stomach sampling	Pierre Cresson Matthias Bernreuther
		Recreational fishery		Recreational	Dália Reis
TOR 5	Governance	<i>Development of Draft Regional work plan</i>	RWP	Joel Vigneau Leonie O'Dowd	
		<i>Implementation of generic tools for the RCGs: Web, secretariat</i>	Secretariat	Els Torreele	
		National Correspondents	NC	Anna Hasslow	

70

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_D10: Agree on proposed ISSGs to work during season 2021-2022.

6. AOB

Proposal for moving NAFO from RCG NANSEA to RCG LDF

In 2021, ESP and PRT National Correspondents, supported by scientific teams responsible for implementing collection of biological data, propose that NAFO is moved from RCG NANSEA to RCG LDF. The issue was presented during the plenary describing the background, rationale and content, highlighting the following pros and cons.

PROS

- NAFO region has its own RFMO with its own management and scientific bodies and WGs.
- In NAFO, the EU is a Contracting Party (and not individual EU MS) and RCG LDF was created for the management of RFMOs where the EU is a Contracting Party.
- NAFO fishery is in international waters and operated by long-distance fleet of EU countries. And RCG LDF work is devoted specifically to fishing fleets that operate outside EU waters. NAFO is considered as “Other Regions” in the New Regulation (jointly with other RFMOs coordinated in RCG LDF and RCG LP, etc.).
- Different main end-users (NAFO for NAFO region, ICES for regions currently in RCG NANSEA).

CONS

- Biological sampling programs have similarity with regions currently in RCG NANSEA.
- Need to check if there are any legal constraints to the transition.
- All MS with fishery in NAFO should be involved in the RCG where NAFO is included. Need to check if EST is available for participating in RCG LDF.

The proposal was generally agreed, but further discussion and view from the RCG LDF is also needed. It was agreed that the discussion will continue during the RCG LDF 2021 meeting.

Proposals for Recommendation and Decisions

NANSEA BALTIC_2021_D11: MS to agree moving NAFO to the RCG LDF [*this decision depends on the discussions and outcomes from the RCG LDF meeting*].



7. Conclusions

Also in 2021, the approach of having the ISSG as the back bone of the RCG NANSEA and the RCG Baltic was very positively evaluated and will be continued for the next year. The timing will change slightly as the ISSGs are encouraged to start their work earlier. The output produced in these ISSGs is very productive and forms the basis of the discussions and future development of the RCG work. The back to back meeting of the two RCGs (i.e. RGG NANSEA and the RCG Baltic) was continued and again positively received by members of both RCGs. It was perceived as a more efficient way to address the common issues and to improve coordination and synergies between the two RCGs. During the evaluation of the RCG set up it was agreed to keep the back to back meeting for the new RCG term 2022-2024. It also represented an important time-saving for people attending both RCGs. During the 2021 TM of the RCGs, subgroups met in allocated sessions. In general, participants reported that the subgroup had enough time for the needed discussions, however they missed some extra time dedicated to writing the subgroup results.





RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Next meeting

8. Next meeting

The RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic 2021 meeting will be followed up with a **RCG DM**, taking one-day meeting for the NCs (**20th of September 2021**).

Preliminary dates and venue for the next **RCG NANSEA and RCG Baltic TM** are **6-10 June 2022 in Poland**.

For the RCG NANSEA 2022 the chairs are *Harriet van Overzee* and *TBD*, for RCG Baltic 2022 *Sven Stötera* and *Maciej Adamowicz*.



RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Annex I: List of Participants

Annex I: List of Participants

Country/ Org.	Name	Email	Comment
EE	Elo Rasmann	elo.rasmann@envir.ee	Chair of RCG Baltic, NC
DE	Sven Stötera	sven.stoetera@thuener.de	Chair of RCG Baltic
NL	Harriet van Overzee	harriet.vanoverzee@wur.nl	Chair of RCG NANSEA
ES	Lucia Zauraz	lzarauz@azti.es	Chair of RCG NANSEA
PT	Ana Cláudia Fernandes	acfernandes@ipma.pt	
IE	Andrew Campbell	andrew.campbell@marine.ie	Chair of ISSG CS pelagic freezer trawler NEA
PT	Ângela ML. Canha	angela.ml.canha@azores.gov.pt	Only taking part on Monday, PETS
SE	Anna Hasslow	anna.hasslow@havochvatten.se	NC, Chair of ISSG NC
COM	Annette Hurrelmann	Annette.HURRELMANN@ec.europa.eu	Only taking part on Thursday, Helcom/Ascobans session
SE	Annica de Groot	annica.isaksson.de.groote@slu.se	
LT	Antanas Kontautas	antanas.kontautas@ku.lt	
COM	Blanca Garcia Alvarez	Blanca.GARCIA-ALVAREZ@ec.europa.eu	
NL	Bram Couperus	bram.couperus@wur.nl	Only taking part on Monday, PETS
DE	Christoph Stransky	christoph.stransky@thuener.de	NC, Chair of ISSG Survey
PT	Dália Reis	dalia.CC.Reis@azores.gov.pt	Chair of ISSG Recreational
IE	David Currie	David.Currie@Marine.ie	Chair of ISSG Data quality
SE	David Gilljam	david.gilljam@slu.se	
LV	Didzis Ustups	Didzis.Ustups@bior.lv	NC
PT	Edgar Afonso	eafonso@dgrm.mm.gov.pt	Only taking part on Wednesday
BE	Els Torrele	els.torrele@ilvo.vlaanderen.be	NC, Leader of project SecWeb
PT	Emília Batista	ebatista@dgrm.mm.gov.pt	NC
ES	Estanis Mugerza	emugerza@azti.es	Chair of ISSGs PETS and SSF
PT	Filipe Henriques	filipe.f.henriques@madeira.gov.pt	Only taking part on Wednesday, Recreational fishery
FR	Florent Renaud	Florent.Renaud@ifremer.fr	
SE	Göran Sundblad	goran.sundblad@slu.se	
DK	Hans Jakob Olesen	hjo@aquadtu.dk	
DE	Harry Strehlow	harry.strehlow@thuener.de	Only taking part on Wednesday, Recreational fishery
FI	Heikki Lehtinen	heikki.lehtinen@mmm.fi	NC
BE	Heleen Raat	Heleen.Raat@ilvo.vlaanderen.be	
IE	Helen McCormick	Helen.McCormick@Marine.ie	
ICES	Henrik Kjems-Nielsen	henrikkn@ices.dk	

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Annex I: List of Participants

Country/ Org.	Name	Email	Comment
SE	Hongru Zhai	hongru.zhai@slu.se	
PT	Hugo Diogo	hugo.mc.diogo@azores.gov.pt	
SE	Ida Ahlbeck Bergendahl	ida.ahlbeck.bergendahl@slu.se	
PT	Inês Ferreira	ifferreira@dgrm.mm.gov.pt	
PL	Ireneusz Wójcik	iwojcik@mir.gdynia.pl	NC
LV	Irina Davidjuka	Irina.Davidjuka@bior.lv	Only taking part on Wednesday
LT	Irina Jakovleva	irina.jakovleva@zuv.lt	
ES	Isabel Bruno	isabel.bruno@ieo.es	
ICES	Jan de Haes	jan.dehaes@ices.dk	
DE	Jens Ulleweit	jens.ulleweit@thuenen.de	Chair of ISSG CS pelagic freezer trawler NEA
PL	Joanna Pawlak	jpawlak@mir.gdynia.pl	
FR	Joel Vigneau	Joel.Vigneau@ifremer.fr	Leader of project Fishn'Co
SE	Johan Dannewitz	johan.dannewitz@slu.se	
BE	Jolien Goossens	Jolien.Goossens@UGent.be	Only taking part on Tuesday, Recreational fishery
FI	Joni Tiainen	joni.tiainen@luke.fi	
DK	Jørgen Dalskov	jd@aquadtu.dk	NC
ES	José Lorenzo González	jose.lorenzo@ieo.es	
ES	Jose Rodriguez	jose.rodriguez@ieo.es	
SE	Josefin Sundin	josefin.sundin@slu.se	
DK	Josefine Egekvist	jse@aquadtu.dk	Chair of ISSG Métier issues
FI	Jukka Pönni	Jukka.Ponni@luke.fi	
DK	Julie Olivia Davies	joco@aquadtu.dk	presentation on "SmartDots", only taking part on Thursday
PL	Katarzyna Krakówka	kkrakowka@mir.gdynia.pl	
SE	Katja Ringdahl	katja.ringdahl@slu.se	Chair of ISSG CS small pelagics Baltic
DK	Kirsten Håkansson	kih@aquadtu.dk	Chair of ISSG Optimized RSP
LT	Kristina Maknavičienė	kristina.maknaviciene@zuv.lt	
DK	Laura Diernæs	ldie@aquadtu.dk	
BE	Laura Lemey	Laura.Lemey@ilvo.vlaanderen.be	Presentation on "Ray scan project", only taking part on Thursday
IE	Leonie O'Dowd	leonie.odowd@marine.ie	NC , Leader of project Fishn'Co
BE	Lies Vansteenbrugge	Lies.Vansteenbrugge@ilvo.vlaanderen.be	
SE	Lisa Sörman	lisa.sorman@slu.se	

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Annex I: List of Participants

Country/ Org.	Name	Email	Comment
ICES	Lotte Worsøe Clausen	Lotte.worsoe.clausen@ices.dk	
FR	Louise Véron	louise.veron@agriculture.gouv.fr	NC
PL	Maciej Adamowicz	madamowicz@mir.gdynia.pl	
LV	Maksims Kovsars	Maksims.Kovsars@bior.lv	
NL	Mandy Doddema	a.p.doddema@minlnv.nl	NC
FR	Manon Troucelier	manon.troucelier@ifremer.fr	
SE	Maria Hansson	maria.hansson@slu.se	
ES	María Korta	mkorta@azti.es	
RCG secretariat	María Pérez	mperez@cetmar.org	Technical support
DK	Marie Storr-Paulsen	mstp@aqua.dtu.dk	Chair of ISSG CS small pelagics Baltic
ICES	Mark Dickey-Collas	Mark.dickey-collas@ices.dk	Only taking part on Wednesday
DE	Marko Freese	marko.freese@thuenen.de	Diadromous
PL	Marta Szymańska	msuska@mir.gdynia.pl	Chair of ISSG RDB Overviews
DE	Matthias Bernreuther	matthias.bernreuther@thuenen.de	Chair of ISSG Stomach sampling
FI	Mikko Olin	mikko.olin@luke.fi	Only taking part on Tuesday, Recreational fishery
COM	Monika Sterczewska	Monika.STERCZEWSKA@ec.europa.eu	
FR	Niamh Smith	Niamh.Smith@ifremer.fr	Only taking part on Wednesday, Recreational fishery
SE	Nuno Prista	nuno.prista@slu.se	
FR	Pierre Cresson	Pierre.Cresson@ifremer.fr	Chair of ISSG Stomach sampling
LT	Remigijus Sakas	remigijus.sakas@apc.ku.lt	
COM	Renée Melkert	Renee.MELKERT@ec.europa.eu	Only taking part on Thursday, Helcom/Ascobans session
ES	Ricard Buxó	rbuxo@mapa.es	
PT	Rita Vasconcelos	rita.vasconcelos@ipma.pt	Chair of ISSGs Optimized RSP and CS trawler Iberian Waters
LT	Romas Statkus	romas.statkus@zuv.lt	
RCG secretariat	Rosa Fernández	rfernandez@cetmar.org	Technical support
ICES	Ruth Fernandez	ruth.fernandez@ices.dk	
IE	Ryan Diarmuid	Diarmuid.Ryan@fisheriesireland.ie	Only taking part on Tuesday, Recreational fishery
ICES	Sarah Louise Millar	sarah-louise.millar@ices.dk	takes part in RDB overviews (for WKFO)
NL	Sieto Verver	sieto.verver@wur.nl	Chair of ISSG Survey

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Annex I: List of Participants

Country/ Org.	Name	Email	Comment
BE	Sofie Vandemaele	Sofie.Vandemaele@ilvo.vlaanderen.be	
COM	Stanislovas Jonusas	Stanislovas.Jonusas@ec.europa.eu	
RCG secretariat	Susana Rivero Rodríguez	srivero@cetmar.org	Technical support
SE	Susanne Tärnlund	susanne.tarnlund@slu.se	
FI	Tapani Pakarinen	tapani.pakarinen@luke.fi	Chair of ISSG Diadromous
NL	Tessa van der Hammen	tessa.vanderhammen@wur.nl	Only taking part on Tuesday, Recreational fishery
BE	Thomas Lanssens	Thomas.Lanssens@ilvo.vlaanderen.be	
EE	Tiit Raid	tiit.raid@ut.ee	
DE	Uwe Krumme	uwe.krumme@thuenen.de	
LT	Vilda Griuniene	Vilda.Griuniene@zum.lt	NC
FR	Youen Vermard	Youen.Vermard@ifremer.fr	takes part in RDB overviews (for WKFO)
JRC	Zeynep Hekim	Hekim.ZEYNEP@ec.europa.eu	
IT	Monica Gambino	gambino@nisea.eu	Chair of RCG ECON
MT	Jurgen Mifsud	jurgen.a.mifsud@gov.mt	Only taking part on Monday
ASCOBANS	Ida Carlén	ida.carlen@ccb.se	Only taking part of Helcom/Ascoban session on Thursday
ASCOBANS	Jenny Renell	jenny.renell@un.org	Only taking part of Helcom/Ascoban session on Thursday
ASCOBANS	Peter Evans	peter.evans@bangor.ac.uk	Only taking part of Helcom/Ascoban session on Thursday
HELCOM	Katarzyna Kaminska	Katarzyna.kaminska@minrol.gov.pl	Only taking part of Helcom/Ascoban session on Thursday
HELCOM	Markus Helavuori	Markus.Helavuori@helcom.fi	Only taking part of Helcom/Ascoban session on Thursday
HELCOM	Sven Koschinski	sk@meereszoologie.de	Only taking part of Helcom/Ascoban session on Thursday

RCG NANSEA AND RCG BALTIC 2021 REPORT - Part I

Annex I: List of Participants

